

Harmony in Business: Christian Communal Capitalism in the Early Republic

JOSEPH P. SLAUGHTER

Scholars increasingly acknowledge the contingent, varied, complex nature of capitalism, yet overlook a viable vision of the early nineteenth-century United States: communal capitalism. Communal societies proliferated in the early United States as a way to regulate the market. The most industrious, materially successful model of this approach was George Rapp's Harmony Society, established in 1805. Rapp was a radical Pietist, immigrating with his followers from Württemberg in order to establish a purified community that would persevere into the millennium he predicted was imminent. Despite a ban on private property, the Harmonists embraced the market, building textile factories and conducting market activity under the moniker "Rapp & Associates." Technologically innovative, shrewd in business, and dogged in pursuit of a "divine economy," the example of the Harmony Society helps us better understand how religious businesses helped shape the early American capitalist system and, specifically, the contributions of German Pietism to economic thought in the Atlantic world. Ultimately, we discover how the Harmonists' communal capitalism

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forsook wages and private property, while embracing stocks, bonds, leases, mortgages, patents, trademarks, licenses, litigation, and contracts as they built an incredibly successful and wealthy manufacturing community in the then-western United States, even as George Rapp's authoritarian leadership style created tensions within his workforce of immigrant women, men, and children.

Introduction

George Rapp (Figure 1) surveyed the fields surrounding Harmonie, Indiana, with pride. Well-tilled and fruitful, they were not only sustaining his society, but also producing a healthy export profit. As his gaze panned, he caught sight of Harmonie's hotel/tavern, well-known for the simple, yet warm hospitality it extended to travelers and curious visitors. Within the town, streets were laid out in an organized, tree-lined fashion. Solid, practical, comfortable homes surrounded the town's center: the church. Not far away, cotton, flour, and woolen mills reflected the industry for which Harmonie was famous.¹ By the 1820s, visitors and commentators from all over the Atlantic world discussed the amazing productivity of Rapp's Harmony Society and its communal, capitalist organization.²

Founded in 1805 by immigrants from Württemberg to Butler County in western Pennsylvania (near Pittsburgh), Harmonie was a Lutheran Pietist community that developed successful agriculture and textile manufacturing, all while eschewing private property. Feeling crowded by increased settlement, in 1814 the Harmony Society moved to southwestern Indiana. Hoping to connect to domestic and international markets via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, the Society found instead an

1. Society members and visitors alike referred to these towns in the German convention ("Harmonie" vice "Harmony"). I follow that practice here, unless referring to the Society itself.

2. The foremost historian of the Harmony Society, Karl Arndt, used the term "communist-capitalist" in his description of the Society, although I use "communal capitalism" because "communist" is burdened with anachronistic Marxist connotations. Arndt, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society*, vol. I, xvii-xviii (hereafter DHID1). While acknowledging the contingent and shifting nature of the idea and practice of capitalism, I find Jurgen Kocka's conception helpful: the need for legal frameworks that allow economic actors to make autonomous economic decisions; coordination through markets, prices, competition, coordination, demand, supply, and the exchange of commodities; and the centrality of capital. Kocka and van der Linden, *Capitalism*, 4–5. This does not preclude divergences and alternate realities that exist below this macrolevel definition. This article advocates for one such vision of the financial and industrial capitalism emerging in early nineteenth-century North America. For a recent overview of this and related debates within the field of the history of capitalism, see Rockman, "What Makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?" and Matson, "Introduction: Economic History at a Crossroads."



Figure 1 George Rapp.

ExplorePAHistory.com, <http://explorepahistory.com/displayimage.php?imgId=1-2-30C&storyId=1-9-5>. (accessed January 4, 2016). Public Domain.

underdeveloped economic system, further destabilized by the Panic of 1819. Additionally, Harmony found that its relative prosperity during the Panic generated intense resentment among its neighbors, leading the Society to purchase a cannon for the granary, which could function as a fort. Rioters, concerned with the economic and political clout of Harmony, threatened its economic agenda. Disgruntled members of the community were abandoning the Society, demanding recompense for their work. Harmony's business avatar, Rapp & Associates, struggled to make its customers pay their debts. By 1824, it was all too much, and Harmony moved back to western Pennsylvania, less than twenty miles from its original location. Harmony's move back eastward revealed the tensions within and without the Society as it attempted to reconcile

religion, communalism, and capitalism during an era when the new United States was confronting an expanding, transforming economy.

Religious belief and practice lay at the heart of this tension. Harmony was two things at once: an intensely religious community and a business enterprise. Grossly understudied, work on Harmony has focused on its peculiar religious beliefs and eccentric leadership, failing to appreciate how the Society functioned as a wildly successful business: Rapp & Associates. Partly this is because the religious utopias of the early nineteenth-century United States are often presented as “alternative,” aberrant, or reactionary visions of capitalism.³ Such presentism imposes teleological order and certainty on the United States’ so-called market revolution, producing a story of how “capitalism ‘took command’ in nineteenth century America.”⁴ In this narrative, communal capitalism did not offer serious answers to the question of how to construct a moral economic community.

The example of the Harmonists, whose communal capitalist community lasted almost a century, provides a resounding rebuttal to this narrative. They were the most materially successful communal capitalists in the first half of the nineteenth century, providing the model for the proliferation of similar groups, both secular and religious, including the Hutterites, Owenites, Mormons, Shakers, and Zoarites. Despite its fame throughout the nineteenth-century Americas and Europe, Harmony continues to fly under the radar of early American scholarship and is completely absent from America’s cultural memory.⁵ Chris

3. Johnson and Wilentz, *Kingdom of Matthias*, is one prominent example.

4. Quote: Luskey and Woloson, *Capitalism by Gaslight*, 2. For an introduction to the concept of the market revolution and its enormous literature, see Feller, “The Market Revolution Ate My Homework,” 408–415, and Larson, “The Market Revolution in Early America: An Introduction,” 4–7. Foundational works on the market revolution include Hacker, *The Triumph of American Capitalism*; Handlin and Handlin, *Commonwealth*; Hartz, *Economic Policy and Democratic Thought*; Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution*; Dawley, *Class and Community*; Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine*; Horwitz, *The Transformation of American Law*; Henretta, “Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America,” 3–32; Hahn and Prude, *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation*; Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*; Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism*; Henretta, *The Origins of American Capitalism*; Sellers, *The Market Revolution*; Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism*; Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy*; Licht, *Industrializing America*; Feller, *The Jacksonian Promise*; Stokes and Conway, *The Market Revolution in America*; Gilje, “The Rise of Capitalism in the Early Republic”; Matson, “Capitalizing Hope”; Bruegel, *Farm, Shop, Landing*; Martin, *Cultural Change and the Market Revolution in America*; Matson, *The Economy of Early America*; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*; Larson, *The Market Revolution in America*; Zakim and Kornblith, *Capitalism Takes Command*; Luskey and Woloson, *Capitalism by Gaslight*.

5. Karl Arndt wrote the most complete account of the Society (*George Rapp’s Harmony Society*) more than fifty years ago, whereas the most recent treatment of the Harmonists, Alice T. Ott’s *The Sunwoman in the Wilderness*, focuses on the Society’s theology. Arndt’s account is limited by its lack of citations, although he is primarily

Jennings's *Paradise Now: The Story of American Utopianism* is an example of a recently published work aimed at a broad audience that should have included Harmony in its narrative. Despite picking "five representative movements," Jennings did not select Harmony. With the exception of the Shakers, whom he erroneously claims were the inspiration for the other four communes he chronicles, all the sects he studied existed for the briefest of moments in the nineteenth century.⁶ Similarly, a 2019 op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* stated that of some 40–50 communal societies founded in the nineteenth century, "all collapsed quickly" after two-year median lifespans.⁷

Historians have famously sought out links between the United States' early national period religious movements and the proliferation of capitalist systems, endeavoring to construct a narrative that explains a period of intense revivalism, political democratization, economic expansion, and social transformation.⁸ Despite debates over the usefulness of metanarratives and categories, a near hegemonic narrative

responsible (not without some controversy) for assembling much of the massive archival and documentary collections of the Harmony Society. Older works on Harmony include Williams, *The Harmony Society at Economy* (1866); Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities* (1902); Bole, *The Harmony Society* (1904); Lockwood, *The New Harmony Movement* (1905); Duss, *The Harmonists* (1943); Knoedler, *The Harmony Society* (1954); Kring, *The Harmonists* (1973).

6. Harmony only surfaces in Jennings's work as the group who sold British socialist Robert Owen his commune. Jennings, *Paradise Now: The Story of American Utopianism*; Jennings's work attracted widespread attention and was reviewed by both *The Wall Street Journal* (John Matteson, "Building an Earthly Eden," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 16–17, 2016, C9) and *The New York Times Review* (Swinehart, "Where We Ought to Be"). Another recent work that focuses on critiques of capitalism in the early nineteenth century, but neglects Harmony, is Gura, *Man's Better Angels*. A recent work that demonstrates Harmony's place as a model to other aspiring utopians, while neglecting the story of Harmony itself, is Morris, *American Messiahs*, 142–148.

7. Joshua Muravchik, "Socialism Fails Every Time," *The Wall Street Journal*, April 10, 2019, A17.

8. Much of the literature on religion and capitalism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century United States can be divided into what I term the "Social Control School" and the "Democratization School." In the former, religion served to discipline the workforce, tame democracy, and reinforce the established order while instilling middle-class values. In the latter, religion destabilized the established order, very often led by lower-class upstarts who undermined institutions while empowering populist movements such as the Jacksonian Democrats. Standard works of the Social Control School include Foster, "The Urban Missionary Movement"; Cole Jr., *The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists*; Griffin, *Their Brother's Keepers*; Johnson, *A Shopkeepers' Millennium*; Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*; Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*; Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*; Stansell, *City of Women*; Kasson, *Rudeness & Civility*; Sellers, *The Market Revolution*; Davenport, *Friends of the Unrighteous Mammon*. Works of the Democratization School include Bilhartz, *Urban Religion and the Second Great Awakening*; Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*; Johnson, *Islands of Holiness*; Wosh, *Spreading the Word*; Lazerow, *Religion and the Working Class in Antebellum America*; Sutton, *Journeyman for Jesus*; Perciaccante, *Calling Down Fire*; Nord, *Faith*

presently suggests that a “market/communication/ transportation revolution” caused the churching of the United States through the revivals of the Second Great Awakening, elevating broadly middle class Protestant values and mores into cultural dominance. Some might object to this characterization as an oversimplification of how scholars understand nineteenth-century America. However, despite some helpful correctives, the assumption that material factors led to an explosion in religiosity persists. Not only does this materialist approach fail to take religious belief seriously, but it fails to adequately explain the emergence and fuller vision of Christian communal capitalism.

The Harmony Society corrects this narrative in three ways. First, the Harmony Society’s primary reason for existence was not economic, but religious. As this article will explore, its vision of economics was one of a “divine economy” that would serve humanity in Christ’s new millennial kingdom. Birthed by a Pietist frustration with the Lutheran church, the Harmonists imported their religious and economic ideas to Pennsylvania and Indiana, the latter newly “opened” to settlement, thanks to the violent dispossession of indigenous peoples. Second, business enterprises with religious identities such as Rapp & Associates were shaping the United States’ economy in profound ways. This article explores this through Harmony’s relationships with its neighbors, customers, and local, state, and federal governments. Third, Harmony illuminates Pietism’s contributions to American culture. As the “third stream” of American theology, along with Calvinism and Arminianism, Pietism is comparatively understudied even though its focus on spiritual purity continues to inform the attitudes of conservative Protestants toward American culture in the twenty-first century. Ultimately, the example of Harmony helps us understand how religion shaped the US economy during the early national period.

This article begins with background on the migration of over eight hundred Harmonists from Württemberg to “Harmonie” in western Pennsylvania from 1803 to 1805, providing an overview of their religious views and how these shaped their economic ideas and activity. Next, the focus shifts to explaining how communal capitalism played out internally at Harmony’s first two sites in Pennsylvania and Indiana. Harmonists struggled and slowly grew in size and business at the

in Reading; Noll, *God and Mammon*; and Perry, “*Cosmopolite’s Mount Sinai Domains*.” *The literature on religion and capitalism in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Atlantic world is enormous. Classics such as Bailyn, The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century; Hirschman, The Passions and the Interest; Innes, Creating the Commonwealth; and Heyrman, Commerce and Culture; as well as recent works, such as Valeri, Heavenly Merchandize, and Engel, Religion and Profit, have also enriched and informed my thinking and approach to religion and capitalism more broadly.*

Pennsylvania site from 1804 to 1815, before moving to southwest Indiana in stages, from 1814 to 1815. After ten years of confronting numerous obstacles in Indiana they sold the second Harmonie (in 1824) and moved back to western Pennsylvania during 1824–1825, where they established their third site, Economie. The manner of governance, labor organization, family structures, and property sharing are all integral to this part of the Harmony story. Equally fascinating is how Harmony dealt with its neighbors and customers, in other words, the marketplace. A focus on these external relationships forms the article's third segment. In fact, during its time in Indiana, Harmony was involved in local, state, and federal politics to a degree that alarmed its neighbors. If this seemingly contradictory attitude toward the broader state surprises some readers, that only serves to underscore how scholars have misunderstood and overlooked the complex nature of Christian communal capitalism.

Religious Views: Pietism, Eschatology, and Self-Will

Pietism is central to understanding the religion of the Harmony Society.⁹ Lutheran Pietism emerged from seventeenth-century religious revivals led by Philipp Jakob Spener, who himself culminated a hundred-year-old movement initiated by John Arndt (1555–1621).¹⁰ Spener's movement called for a grassroots effort to reform the Lutheran Church and transform individuals' hearts through the process of sanctification (becoming more like Christ) and was particularly influential in shaping the Pietism of Württemberg, George Rapp's hometown.¹¹

9. A short introduction to Pietism is Brown, *Understanding Pietism*.

10. I follow Alice T. Ott by using a "narrow" definition of Pietism, referring to a specific renewal movement in German Lutheranism. Ott, *The Sunwoman in the Wilderness*, 11–14; Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 202, 230. One may consider Rapp a "radical Pietist" due to the role mysticism played in forming his theology and eschatology and the extremes to which he and his followers went to find purity. Stoeffler, *German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century*, 168–216; Weeks, *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein*. The roots of the broader Pietist movement are much older, dating to sixteenth-century England and Netherlands. Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 24–108, 109–179. Spener and Arndt are each referred to as "the father of Lutheran Pietism." For Arndt, see Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 202–212. For Spener, see Stein, *Philipp Jakob Spener*; Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 228–243. For more detail on the emergence of Lutheran Pietism, see Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 180–246, and Stoeffler, *German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century*, 39–87. For Pietism in North America predating the Harmonists, see Stoeffler, *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*, and Strom, Lehmann, and Melton, *Pietism in Germany and North America*, 33–49, 107–123, 127–214; Engel, *Religion and Profit*.

11. Spener, *Pia Desideria*; Maschke, "Philipp Spener's *Pia Desideria*," 187–204.

Eventually the movement spread to England, where it influenced the Wesleys, and to North America, where it was a part of the Great Awakening of the 1730–40s.¹²

Pietism is not only a set of theological doctrines, but also is characterized by a specific posture toward one's spiritual and secular communities. Foremost, the Pietist strives for holiness or sanctification in all aspects of life, to include her or his vocation and economic relationships. By living a thoroughly perfected life, Pietists strive to demonstrate to their larger church denomination, state government, and culture what an orthodox, sincere, Christian life looks like. Pietists stress a "personally meaningful relationship of the individual to God," emphasizing perfectionism or sanctification, intense Biblicism, and an oppositional posture toward the larger society, government, and the institutional church.¹³ The more extreme outcome for Pietists such as George Rapp was separation from the Lutheran Church. As the Harmonists came into increasing conflict with the established Lutheran Church over doctrine, education, military service, sacraments, and spiritual authority, spiritual separation and physical immigration to America seemed like the best solution for all concerned.¹⁴ Pietism influenced nearly everyone in colonial America, as both Puritan Calvinists and Wesleyan Arminians reflected the influence of Pietism, as well as colonial era religious minorities such as the Dutch Reformed, Mennonites, Moravians, various German sects, and the Brethren.¹⁵

Inspired by the communal ethos of early Christ followers, Rapp interpreted two New Testament passages to mean that the first-century church forsook private property. These passages were Acts

12. For Spener's influence on Württemberg, see Stoeffler, *German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century*, 88–130. For influence on the Wesleys, see "Pietism, the Wesleys, and Methodist Beginnings in America," in Stoeffler, *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*, 184–221, and Noll, *Turning Points*, 229–235. The spread from Germany reflects the "broader" Pietist movement that historians often cite as influential in eighteenth-century American and English revivalism. For more detail and nuance on the various sources of the Harmony Society theology see Ott, *The Sunwoman in the Wilderness*, 3–11; Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 100–107; Mead, Hill, and Atwood, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 149; "George Rapp's Explanation for His Break with the Established Church," April 17, 1785, in Arndt, *George Rapp's Separatists*, 70–74 (hereafter GRS).

13. Stoeffler's shorthand for these characteristics is "experientialism, perfectionism, Biblicism, and protest." Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 9–23, 29. Frederick Rapp used similar phrases—"true imitation on Jesus" and "model picture of Jesus"—in a letter to his family in Germany. Frederick Rapp to family, May 17 1813, Business File, Outgoing Correspondence, 1801–1871, 2335, Harmony Society Records, 2335, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, PA (hereafter HSR).

14. GRS:96–226, 238–242, 368–398.

15. Campbell, *The Religion of the Heart*, 44–57, 71–75, 99–124; see also Stoeffler, *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*. For a short summary of Pietism's influence in early America, see Noll, *Turning Points*, 229–235.

2:44–45—“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need”—and Acts 4:32–35:

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.¹⁶

This description of the early community of Christ followers formed the theological foundation of most Christian communal capitalist societies, including notably the Mormons, in which all property was seen as the Lord's and was to be for the “benefit of all the people.”¹⁷ A more complete summary of beliefs reveals a key component of radical Pietists separatists such as the Harmonists: a belief that the world was headed for imminent catastrophe, and only the true church would survive the looming destruction. Economic upheaval, the disintegration of the village social structure in Germany, and the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars only seemed to reinforce the imperative for true believers to separate from the institutions of an unraveling world.¹⁸

Underpinning this sense of impending doom was the certainty with which Rapp told his followers that they were fulfilling biblical prophecy, a conclusion he derived from Revelation 12:1–6. This passage paints a scene in which a pregnant woman (“clothed with the sun”) flees a vicious dragon by escaping into the wilderness, where God will have prepared a safe haven for the “Sunwoman” and her child. Harmonists, hardly unique among Pietists in identifying their community with this woman of Revelation, were convinced this apocalyptic imagery prophesied how God would preserve them in the United States as a remnant to enjoy the coming millennial kingdom of Christ.¹⁹ This picture of deliverance was powerful for pious believers, perhaps none

16. All scripture from King James Version.

17. Quote: Pitzer, *America's Communal Utopias*, 135.

18. “Pastoral Letter of George Rapp,” undated, GRS:281–284; “Emigration Songs,” Spring 1804, GRS:441–449; “Decree to Arrest French Soldiers,” November 1, 1805, GRS:461–462; George Rapp to Jacob Neff, March 3, 1807, Arndt, *Harmony on the Connoquenessing*, 215–218 (hereafter HOTC); Ott, *The Sunwoman in the Wilderness*, 33–35.

19. “Emigration Songs,” Spring 1804, GRS:441, 445–448; Ott, *The Sunwoman in the Wilderness*, 106–107; Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society*, 56.

more so than for the many pregnant Harmonists who made the arduous voyage across the Atlantic, including at least four who gave birth en route in 1805.²⁰

Upon arriving in North America, one of the most urgent issues was financial: how to pay for the land Rapp purchased on behalf of the Society. Rapp himself did not possess assets to pay the one-third down payment (\$3,405.91), and in a prelude to how the Society would handle its members' wealth, Rapp billed each of his followers according to his means. Some paid for twenty acres, some fifty, others over one hundred, while the most destitute paid nothing at all.²¹ Whereas other Protestants had little trouble reconciling their faith and the acquisitive nature and excesses of the emerging market economy, Rapp found them in conflict with the teachings of Christ. This view of personal property rested on two foundations: first, on how the aforementioned first-century church handled personal property, and second, on the group's theology of self-will.

Rapp's theology of self-will was straightforward: the annihilation of one's self-will was essential to become like Christ. Rapp absorbed this principle through the teachings of German eighteenth-century revivalist Gerhard Tersteegen, who argued that egoism undermined the process of sanctification and inhibited one's relationship with God. Consequently, the answer for Tersteegen was radical action: One must deny all that was most important to the individual—"honor and reputation, money, property, house and home, friends and relatives"—in order to find true communion with God.²²

Even as Rapp was establishing communalism as a founding principle of the Society, he was also shaping Harmony so that it resembled a corporation, despite its failure to achieve formal incorporation from Pennsylvania. From the beginning, he conducted business transactions under the auspices of "Rapp & Associates" vice "Harmony Society."²³ Rapp's eschatology (view of the end times) is key to understanding how and why he fused a corporate structure onto a communal society. Harmonists believed the new millennium was at hand, which would usher in a new age when "God's economy" would reign supreme. Theirs was both an attempt to create a "divine economy" and cultivate the perfectionism they believed would hasten the return of Christ.²⁴

20. Passenger List, *Margaret*, HOTC:103–107.

21. Settlement of Accounts, December 31, 1804–January 14, 1805, HOTC:60–77.

22. "Pastoral Letter of George Rapp," January 28, 1800, GRS:308–310; HOTC:42–43; Ott, *The Sunwoman in the Wilderness*, 72–86.

23. Examples: HSR:2322:Legal File, Deeds, 1796–1822, November 1805.

24. Frederick Rapp to family, May 17, 1813, 1801–1871, HSR:2335; George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, July 5, 1824, Arndt, *Harmony on the Wabash in Transition*, 69–70 (hereafter HOTW); George Rapp Sermon, February 11, 1838;

Outsiders consistently struggled to comprehend this union of religion and business, incredulous that they could coexist in “harmony.” Instead, critics countered with the accusation that Harmony was far from a holy utopia, but in fact was dominated by “avarice, envy, hatred, disunity and even the most disgraceful vice of grasping for yourself the property of others....”²⁵

Understanding the basics of Pietism—how it often impelled Protestants to hold themselves at a distance from the surrounding culture in an attempt to promote holiness and godliness—is essential to understanding the Harmonists’ internal and external tensions with the expanding market economy. Their expression of Pietism meant the Harmonists did their best to keep some aspects of the market (“corruptions” of private property and culture) at arm’s length, even moving farther into isolation in the West to preserve the purity of the community. This was a direct result of their understanding of what God primarily wanted from people: holiness or piety in all aspects of one’s life, including one’s vocational and economic relationships.²⁶

Internal Relationships: Governance, Family, Labor, Property

George Rapp and three other associates disembarked the *Canton* on October 7, 1803, in Philadelphia. Their purpose—find a spot in America suitable for the emigration of Rapp’s followers, some 150 families.²⁷ Rapp was immediately impressed with the quality of the land in the Middle Atlantic states, the character of the people, the tradition of religious freedom, the abundance of food, and the varied financial opportunities. He quickly abandoned his previous fixation on Louisiana and concentrated on securing property for the Society in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, or Ohio.²⁸

Rapp was particularly smitten with the lands of Ohio, calling on President Thomas Jefferson on July 12, 1804, in a failed effort to purchase forty thousand acres on the Muskingum River. Despite Jefferson’s

Arndt, *George Rapp’s Years of Glory*, 322–323 (hereafter GRYG); Buckingham, *The Eastern and Western States of America*, II:229.

25. Jacob Eckensperger to Friedrich Eckensperger, March 5, 1808, HOTC:282.

26. Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, 9–12.

27. “Arrival of the Exploratory and Preparatory Commission of Rapp’s Separatists in America,” October 7, 1803, HOTC:1; Cuming, *Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country*, 493.

28. George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, October 12, 1803, HOTC:1–3; “Legal Review (Gutachten) of the Electoral Government,” February 21–22, 1804, GRS:412–416; George Rapp to Johannes Rapp, February 3–11, 1804, HOTC:3–8.

desire to accommodate the migrants, Rapp's request went unrealized for insufficient cash. Rapp petitioned Congress to have the time of payment extended on a tract of land in the Indiana Territory. The Senate passed a bill to sell a township near Vincennes, but it was defeated in the House by the Speaker's tiebreaking vote.²⁹ Rapp faced pressure to find a spot to build his community, as three hundred of Rapp's society onboard the *Aurora* landed in Baltimore on July 4, 1804.³⁰ Subsequent ships bringing hundreds more arrived throughout the fall of 1804, who along with other German separatists settled in several locations across Ohio and Pennsylvania, some forming rival communities to Harmony.³¹ Finally, on October 17, a colorful German-American, D. B. Miller, persuaded Rapp to purchase from him 5,700 acres in Butler County, Pennsylvania (about twenty-five miles north of Pittsburgh). George Rapp could finally begin the project of building his first Sunwoman utopia on the banks of the Connoquenessing Creek: Harmonie.³²

The emerging democratic and individualistic dynamics of early nineteenth-century America were especially troubling to Rapp because they were in tension with both his concept of the first-century church's approach to private property and his theology of self-will. Consequently, the first article of the Harmony Society's February 15, 1805, Articles of Association (Figure 2) stipulated that members of the Society would "Deliver up, renounce, and transfer all our estate and property consisting of cash, land, cattle, or whatever else it may be, to George Rapp and his Society in Harmonie, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as a free gift or donation, for the benefit and use of the congregation there, and bind ourselves on our part, as well as on the part of our heirs and descendants, to make free renunciation thereof, and to leave the same at the disposal of the superintendents of the congregation, as if we never had nor possessed the same." (The articles of 1805 were probably modified later to include a provision for the return of personal property if one were to leave the Society, an element missing from the Articles submitted two years later

29. Thomas Jefferson to Albert Gallatin, Adams, *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, I:199–200; *Maryland Gazette*, July 12, 1804; *Annals of Congress*, 9th Cong., 1st Sess., 45, 52–53, 68–69, 72, 74, 78, 409, 414, 463–477; "The Harmony Society Memorial to Thomas Jefferson and Congress," January 6, 1806, HOTC:137–141.

30. "Port of Baltimore, July 4, Arrived," *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, July 10, 1804; *Maryland Gazette*, July 12, 1804; Heinrich Muntz to Friedrich Wilhelm, August 1804, HOTC:28–30; Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society*, 65.

31. Passenger Lists, *Atlantic, Margaret*, September 15, 19, 1804, HOTC:30–38; *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, September 17, 1804.

32. Articles of Agreement, D. B. Miller and George Rapp, October 17, 1804, HOTC:46–49, 52–54; Cuming, *Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country*, 493.

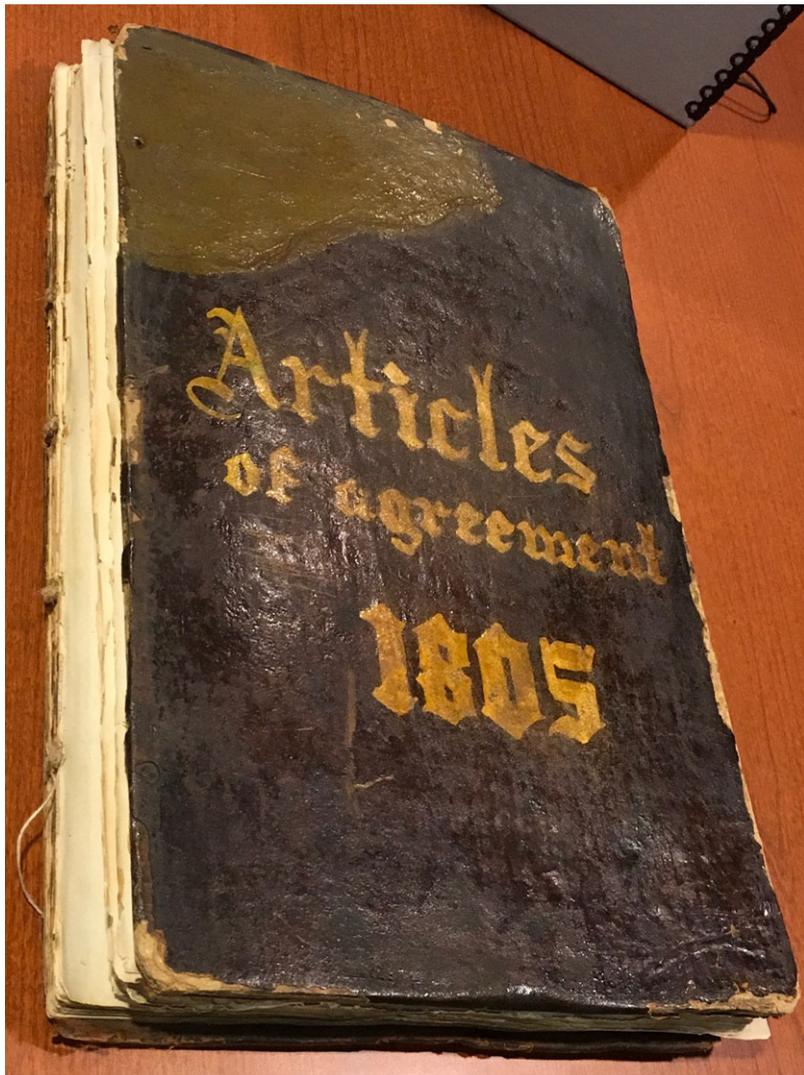


Figure 2 Original Articles of Agreement (or Association).

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Old Economy Village Archive, 2313 (hereafter OEVA). Photo by author with permission of OEVA.

to the Pennsylvania legislature on December 15, 1807, in the Society's request for incorporation.)³³ The second article continued the communal spirit of the first:

33. Various referred to as both "Articles of Association" and "Articles of Agreement" in the Harmony records. Articles of Association, February 15, 1805, HSR:2313:Administrative File. Articles of Association, February 15, 1805, HOTC:80, 89; Harmony Society Memorial, December 15, 1807–January 23, 1808, HOTC:253–256; Ott, *The Sunwoman in the Wilderness*, 132–133.

George Rapp and his Society promise to supply the subscribers jointly and severally with all the necessaries of life, as lodging, meat, drink, and clothing, etc., and not only during their healthful days, but also when one or several of them should become sick or otherwise unfit for labor, they shall have and enjoy the same care and maintenance as before; and if, after a short or long period, the father or mother of a family should die, or be otherwise separated from the community and leave a family behind, none of those left behind shall be left widows or orphans, but receive and enjoy the same rights and care as long as they live or remain in the congregation, as well in sick as healthful days, the same as before, or as their circumstances or needs may require.³⁴

The communal provisions for individuals' welfare and the promise of care as one aged and became less productive economically was significant in an era with few safety nets. In part, it reflected Rapp's belief that society was unraveling and that true believers had a duty to care for all within their community. Referencing New Testament prophecies found in Mathew 24:2, Mark 13:2, and Luke 21:6, Rapp wrote, "You will know what faith can do when there is grace, as not one stone remained upon the other of Solomon's temple, according to the word of Jesus, much less will there remain any of Babel's temple, but all must fall which is called property, within and without throughout, Christ had nothing except that he served his brethren. So naked, so poor, so deprived of all things inwardly and outwardly the church of Christ must stand ... so that no one likes to possess or hold on to anything that is his own...."³⁵ Here, Rapp pinned the ills of early nineteenth-century society on private property and connected its elimination with true, purified communion. One can almost imagine Rapp railing against the corrosiveness of the speculative, individualistic capitalism advanced by financiers such as Andrew Dexter Jr.³⁶

More than a chief proprietor, George Rapp was a Christian "economist-philosopher," responsible for all spheres of life in his commune: political, business, and spiritual.³⁷ Rapp & Associates reflected this, functioning as a corporation embedded into Winfred Barr Rosenberg's definition of a "moral economy," exhibiting the following:

34. Articles of Association, February 15, 1805, HSR:2313; Articles of Association, February 15, 1805, HOTC:90.

35. "George Rapp to Jacob Neff," April 10, 1806, HOTC:182.

36. For the story of Dexter, see Kamensky, *The Exchange Artist*.

37. Leshem, *The Origins of Neoliberalism*, 28, 101.

1. The subordination of the individual to community norms
2. An internal system of exchange governed by “need” rather than profit and insulated from external exchanges
3. The absence of contracts and private property within the Society³⁸

A fourth characteristic of moral economies partially fits Harmony: a process of collective decision-making. In Harmony, George and his adopted son Frederick made all of the decisions, with communal assent, so it was similar to a moral economy from the perspective of an absence of individual decision-making. Collectively, these principles define Christian communal capitalism: a communal society organized along the lines of a traditional business, integrated into the market economy but distinguished by an absence of private property and the centrality of religion to its most basic organizational and philosophical principles. As George Rapp explained in his *Thoughts on the Destiny of Man*, communal life could never work apart from a spiritual motivation and foundation:

This can be rendered practicable, only by the sublime spirit of Christianity, which must influence the conduct of a large majority of the members, or nothing of the kind can ever be accomplished. The human heart must be warmed by the religion of Jesus Christ, exalted to its God, and transformed into his image, before it can be qualified for the pure enjoyments of that brotherly union, where the true principles of religion, and the prudent regulations of industry and economy, by their united influence, produce *a heaven upon earth—A true HARMONY*.³⁹

As we will see, Rapp’s certitude regarding the centrality of Christianity to the success of communal capitalist societies was consistently discounted by early nineteenth-century secularists, such as Robert Owen, who sought to extricate Harmony’s communal principles and industriousness from its religious dogma.

George Rapp was not only a chief proprietor and economic-philosopher, but also a patriarch in the Old Testament sense. Despite

38. Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy*, 28–33. James Henretta taught my first graduate seminar and served on my MA thesis committee, so his work on moral economy has certainly influenced my thinking. See Henretta, *The Origins of American Capitalism*.

39. Emphasis in original. Rapp, *Thoughts on the Destiny of Man*, 65. Whereas the “new moral economy” of the rural 1790s United States described by Ruth Bogin in her classic article “Petitioning and the New Moral Economy of Post-Revolutionary America” was based on enlightenment language of natural rights, Harmony and Christian communal capitalists based their moral economy on religious dogma.

his stated goal of harmony and spiritual piety, Rapp's powerful personality and autocratic tendencies made many enemies, especially as patriarchal norms gave way to the democracy and paternalism of the early republic United States.⁴⁰ As a disgruntled former member, Jacob Eckensperger, wrote to his Harmonist brother Friederich, "... I would rather live among the Indians, there I would not see such horrors as among you..."⁴¹ Accused of bullying, greed, and theft, Rapp was often at the center of the controversy over the Harmony Society.⁴² As the chief proprietor, he autocratically determined the shape and character of the workforce, evicting those who did not adhere to his theology, religious discipline, or work ethic. Butler County records refer to a "riot" in 1807 when George and Frederick Rapp tried to evict some members of the Society and the individuals in question resisted.⁴³ He also consistently pursued his debtors in court. Christian mercy and grace rarely described the business principles and leadership of George Rapp.⁴⁴ Tragically, families struggled with Rapp's psychological power, as parents separated and children mourned the breakup of their families in language that paints the Harmony Society in an unpleasant, even cultish light.⁴⁵

Nor did grace and mercy describe the business character of George Rapp's chief business partner and adopted son, Frederick Rapp. Early on, it was clear that of the two men, Frederick possessed superior business acumen, and his role as Society treasurer soon expanded to operational head of Rapp & Associates. Whereas George was the unquestioned spiritual leader of the community, Frederick attended to the minutia of running the day-to-day business of Rapp & Associates, from ordering supplies, to collecting debts, and developing new

40. Ott argues the patriarchal model of leadership was typical of the Pietist culture of Württemberg that birthed the Harmony Society. Ott, *The Sunwoman in the Wilderness*, 172–174. Enemies: Frederick Rapp to Peter Eyster, May 15, 1809, HOTC:327–329; Peter Eyster to George Rapp, May 27, 1809, HOTC:330–332; Jacob Schaal to Christopher Muller, May 31, 1809, HOTC:334–36; Butler County, Grand Inquest, June Sessions 1809, HOTC:336–340; Public Statements, September 25, 1809, HOTC:348–350; Franz Hilveti to Frederick Rapp, April 17, 1811, HOTC:433.

41. Jacob Eckensberger to Friedrich Eckensberger, March 5, 1808, HOTC:282.

42. "Johannes Seybert's Account," 1806, HOTC:172–178; Will of Henry Seybert, March 3, 1806, HOTC:170–172; D. B. Muller to Frederick Rapp, December 24, 1805, HOTC:128–130.

43. Butler County, Grand Inquest, June 1807, HOTC:232–233; Butler County, Verdict, June 1807, HOTC:233–234.

44. George Mutschler versus George Rapp & Associates, June 1807, HOTC:234–235; Esterle, Wilhelm, and Heckenlaible versus Frederick Rapp, June 1807, HOTC:235–238.

45. The Schaal family breakup is the most documented of numerous examples. HOTC:284–286, 293–296, 299–302, 322–324, 334–336, 708–710, 858–860, 939–942.

ventures. Frederick quickly evolved into a businessman who aggressively built the Society into an efficient business enterprise through hard bargaining. Despite the pious nature of the commune, he was not afraid to employ power plays and tough bargaining tactics, including lawsuits, to advance Harmony's economic position.⁴⁶

Harmony's communal capitalist system quickly proved productive. Within five years, the Harmonists, now numbering 140 families, had built over 50 log homes, a 220 foot bridge, two barns, two gristmills (one with a three-quarter mile race), an inn/tavern, two oil mills, a tannery and dryer's shop, two brick storehouses, two sawmills, a brewery, a fulling mill, a bee house, a large brick wine cellar, and a hump mill. In a symbolic union of religion and business, the upstairs of the church doubled as a granary capable of storing several thousand bushels of grain.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, Rapp & Associates initially focused on agriculture, exporting corn, potatoes, wheat, whiskey, and wine, augmented by the contract work of its skilled laborers. Tradesmen included twelve shoemakers, six tailors, twelve weavers, three wheelwrights, five coopers, six blacksmiths, two nail smiths, three rope makers, ten carpenters, four cabinet makers, two saddlers, two wagon makers, twelve masons, two potters, one soap boiler, one hatter, one doctor, and one apothecary. Hiring out these tradesmen was an important early source of income, bringing Rapp & Associates \$3,013 of income in 1809 and \$5,921 in 1811—no small percentage of its total revenue. For context, wine and whiskey production only yielded \$670 in 1808, so the hiring out income was certainly significant.⁴⁸ The output of the tradesmen was also vitally important in the cash-poor early nineteenth century, as Rapp used it to trade for commodities such as iron and gudgeons (cylindrical hinge devices used to hang shutters, among other applications).⁴⁹ In fact, by 1809, Rapp & Associates was proving increasingly profitable in these ventures, although the decision to produce whiskey garnered predictable criticism, as some outsiders concluded the Harmonists were “going down stream with the

46. Rapp wanting to have a local businessman “in his power”: P. Neville to Joseph St. Leger d'Happart, October 26, 1810, HOTC:410–411; James Gibson to George Rapp, December 29, 1810, HOTC:418–419; Frederick's reputation for driving a hard bargain: Frederick Rapp to Franz Hilveti, April 5, 1811, HOTC:432; Franz Hilveti to Frederick Rapp, April 17, 1811, HOTC:433–434; Franz Hilveti to Frederick Rapp, February 17, 1812, HOTC:508–509; lawsuits: [Frederick Rapp] to David Shields, July 9, 1819, DHID1:739–740.

47. Cuming, *Sketches*, 494–496; Robert Stubbs's Account, 1809, HOTC:357–359.

48. Harmony Society Business Accounts, 1808–1809, 1811, HOTC:316–318, 354–357, 500–501; Thomas Collins to Frederick Rapp, April 15, 1809, HOTC:324; Cuming, *Sketches*, 494–496.

49. J. Boyd to Frederick Rapp, June 3, 1811, HOTC:440.

corrupted world, in order to get rich soon.”⁵⁰ However, whiskey was an important bartering item in western Pennsylvania and its manufacture continued.⁵¹

Guests of Harmony often remarked on Rapp & Associates’ workforce, wondering how it encouraged industriousness, despite the prohibition on private property. As a curious New Englander, Samuel Worchester, put it to Frederick, “Many among us, who think a Society established upon principles analogous to those of the Harmonists, would be useful and delightful, *if possible*, believe also that a prohibition of individual and exclusive property would operate as an inherent and irresistible [sic] principle of disorder & decay; and consequently, that all schemes, which act upon such a prohibition must be visionary and impracticable [sic].... I am at a loss to know what necessity you find of stimulating its members to exertion....”⁵² Below Frederick, superintendents directed artisans, factory workers, and farmers. Family units lived in a simple house on an acre lot. Families maintained their own milk cows, hogs, and poultry, while the Society furnished all else. The output of a family’s labor, excepting that involving one’s livestock, went into the Society’s common economy.⁵³ Frederick stressed the community’s solidarity and unity because, according to Frederick, as “the interest of each lies in the whole,” each worked “according to ability.”⁵⁴ He also stressed spiritual and religious factors, agreeing with Worchester that self-interest plagued humans, a manifestation of humanity’s Fall (Genesis 3). Frederick argued that the key to Harmony’s successful transition to communal living was a desire to care for one’s brothers and sisters and for the good of the community, an attitude that could only be fostered by “the Religion of Jesus, which teaches to renounce and do without whatever may cause a hindrance, to obtain [sic] from what is only a habit and no necessary of Life and deny self to be usefull [sic] for others ... all Schemes to form Societies similar to Harmonie without practicing the Religion of Jesus and prohibiting individual [sic] property have gone to wreck.”⁵⁵

50. Godfrey Haga to Frederick Rapp, December 20, 1810, HOTC:417; Simon Snyder to George Rapp, September 1813, HOTC:716; Caspar Beyrer to George and Frederick Rapp, February 14, 1814, HOTC:796.

51. John Boyd to Frederick Rapp, October 18, 1811, HOTC:483–484.

52. Samuel Worchester to Frederick Rapp, May 23, 1822, Arndt, *A Documentary History of the Indiana Decade of the Harmony Society*, vol. II, 402 (hereafter DHID2).

53. Rapp also experimented with large communal dorms, or *Bruderhäuser*, at Harmonie, Indiana. Cuming, *Sketches*, 493–496; Ott, *The Sunwoman in the Wilderness*, 132.

54. [Frederick Rapp] to Edward P. Page, March 7, 1822, DHID2:363.

55. [Frederick Rapp] to Samuel Worchester, December 19, 1822, HSR:2335.

Religious belief also informed Harmony's overarching attitude toward work. Frederick argued that before the Fall the nature of men and women was "activity", that "this primitive Instinct exists yet in the essence of Man, and (becomes predominant) as soon as the inner feeling Mediately [sic] or immediately are unfolded through the Light of truth, then this Stimulus for activity and Social life awakes with it...."⁵⁶ Not only was work written into humanity's fabric, the Society earnestly believed in the eternal significance and urgency of its holy endeavor. The Harmonists believed their work was ushering in the kingdom of God and would form the foundation of Christ's millennial rule. This created an acute sense of eternal significance and a strong sense of urgency. On the other hand, Frederick allowed that if a member did not have this set as his or her "chief object," then he or she would find submission to his or her superintendent very difficult.⁵⁷

There was no prescribed workday, although outsiders commented that laborers worked long and hard at Harmonie. Despite visitors' wonder at the work ethic of Harmonists, members of the Society contended, "they did not work hard, but were always working at their leisure & just as they liked it."⁵⁸ Likewise, there was no limit to sick days. On the other hand, Rapp & Associates did not pay wages.⁵⁹ Men and women spoke Swabian, wore simple, homespun, uniform clothing, and shared work in the field. J. S. Buckingham, a member of the British Parliament, visited the Society in 1840 and provided a detailed record of Rapp & Associates' workforce, observing their "ordinary" dress of gray trousers, hats, and coats, accented by lilac or brown waistcoats. The women wore dark colored, lightweight, coarse, woolen, long-sleeve gowns with a silk or cotton handkerchief over the shoulders, complete with white or checked apron and a black (working) or white (Sundays, evenings) hat. "Simplicity, neatness, comfort, and economy" also characterized their grooming habits, which for men meant beards with shaved cheeks and lips and long, white locks among the elderly. Women parted their hair in the middle, pulling it tight underneath their hats.⁶⁰ Frugality, simplicity, and tradition dominated the Harmonists' habits and manners. Isolation from the cultural trends of the US early national period

56. *Ibid.*

57. Romelius Baker and John Reichert to the Royal District Office, Shorndorf, DHID2:491–492; [Frederick Rapp] to Samuel Worchester, December 19, 1822, HSR:2335; "chief object" in Frederick Rapp to Chester Chadwick, September 28, 1822, HSR:2329:Business File/Letter Books and Correspondence, 1812–1822.

58. Snedeker, *The Diaries of Donald MacDonald*, 230; Herbert, *A Visit to the Colony of Harmony*, 3, 9.

59. [Frederick Rapp] to Abishai Way & Co. (enclosure), July 6, 1822, DHID2:423.

60. Buckingham, *The Eastern and Western States of America*, II:218; Swabian: Frederick Rapp to Chester Chadwick, September 28, 1822, HSR:2329.

reinforced the Harmonist tendency to preserve the cultural norms of late eighteenth-century rural Württemberg.

Women working in the fields dismayed American geologist and ethnologist Henry Schoolcraft, who thought such work inappropriate for young girls and women. Others found such arrangements enlightening. Robert Owen's friend Donald MacDonald applauded how genders mingled in Harmonie's fields.⁶¹ Despite his reservations about the employment of women, Schoolcraft described Harmonie's labor system as a masterful division of labor in which "every individual is taught that he can perform but a single operation." Schoolcraft suspected this was the key to Rapp & Associates' efficiency and innovation, because "no time is lost by changing from one species of work to another: the operator becomes perfect in his art, and if he possess any ingenuity, will contrive some improved process to abridge or facilitate his labor."⁶²

It was not all work for the Harmonists. Visitors also remarked upon how singing was an important part of the cultural life of Harmonie, and the Rapps seemed to take special pride in the end of the workday singing when they showed off the Society to outsiders.⁶³ Order, discipline, efficiency, joyful singing—it all added up to the capitalist's dream workforce. Of course, presiding over all of this, and the ultimate source of labor discipline, was George Rapp, who both Frederick and visitors described as an all-powerful "king-priest" of the community in the order of Melchizedek.⁶⁴ Visitors often did not see or comprehend the darker side of this patriarchal authority structure.

Much of this criticism derived from the character of George Rapp himself, powerful in personality and stature. There was no question who was in charge at Harmonie. Like a twenty-first-century Silicon Valley CEO, critics accused Rapp of bullying, greed, megalomania, and even fraud.⁶⁵ In an otherwise complimentary account of a visit to the Society in 1831, Moravian botanist David von Scheweinitz

61. Schoolcraft, *Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley*, 167; Woods, *Two Years' Residence in the Settlement on the English Prairie*, 238; William Newham Blane, [December 1812], DHID2:524; Snedeker, *The Diaries of Donald MacDonald*, 291–292; Hiatt, *Diary of William Owen*, 54–55.

62. Schoolcraft, *Travels*, 168.

63. Hiatt, *Diary of William Owen*, 76; Snedeker, *The Diaries of Donald MacDonald*, 248; Bernhard, *Travels through North America*, vol. II:165; Frederick Rapp to Gertrude Rapp, January 11, 1825, HOTW:404; Wetzel, "J. C. Muller and W. C. Peters at Economy," 158–174.

64. For Melchizedek see Genesis 14:18, Psalm 110:4, and Hebrew 5:6. [Frederick Rapp] to Samuel Worchester, December 19, 1822, DHID2, 515; Englishman William Newham Blane called George a "Governor and Priest," William Newham Blane, [December 1812], DHID2:526.

65. "Bishop Johannes Seybert Account," 1806, HOTC:172–178; Henry Seybert Will, March 3, 1806, HOTC:170–172; D. B. Muller to Frederick Rapp, December

described George's rule as absolute, and that he "speaks in a rough and commanding tone with everybody."⁶⁶ Rapp's imposing stature of over six feet further reinforced his dominant personality, described by a visitor as projecting an "erect and robust" frame, "ruddy" complexion, framed by long white hair and beard. Even late in life he still struck people as "the most vigorous and most venerable man at eighty-four that could be seen or conceived."⁶⁷

Internal friction transcended Rapp's personality. Initially, dissent over the imposition of a communal structure at Harmonie induced some followers to break with Rapp and form a rival settlement at Columbiana, Ohio, where they maintained individual property rights.⁶⁸ The remnant only gradually embraced the spirit of communalism, despite the presence of many poor and destitute members.⁶⁹ Rapp struggled to tame the pride of the largest contributors to Harmony's common treasury, so much that when the group migrated to Indiana, he had the records destroyed.⁷⁰ Many individuals decided communal living was not all it was cracked up to be, and after departing Harmony, they sued to recoup their initial contributions to the communal treasury.⁷¹ As one critic succinctly put it, Rapp preached a doctrine that "stinks."⁷² In return, George Rapp grumbled about families that "wanted a comfortable living," including meat, which was scarce in Harmony's trying initial years.⁷³

Departing members routinely demanded the funds they contributed upon entering Harmony, which in the early years Rapp could not pay, even when he was so inclined. Frederick acknowledged in 1822 that "poor" members were supposed to receive a donation upon leaving, but

24, 1805, HOTC:128–130; Friesen, "An Additional Source on the Harmony Society of Economy, Pennsylvania," 308–309, 311.

66. Gerber, *The Journey of Lewis David von Schweinitz*, 279.

67. Buckingham, *The Eastern and Western States of America*, II:222.

68. George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, August 13, 1805, HOTC:96–100; George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, August 1805, HOTC:100–103; Receipt from Frederick Rapp, June 7, 1808, HOTC:283–284; Johannes Rapp to Frederick Rapp, December 5, 1808, HOTC:310–311; J. Georg Munz to Frederick Rapp, December 27, 1808, HOTC:312–313; Melish, *Travels in the United States of America*, II:79–80.

69. Inventory, January 1, 1806, HOTC:131–132; Andrew Leibbrandt to John Munz, February 18, 1808, HOTC:276–279; Godfrey Haga to Frederick Rapp, undated, HOTC:313–316.

70. George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, September 4, 1805, HOTC:113–115; Settlement of Accounts, December 31, 1804–January 14, 1805, HOTC:60–77; Record of First Contributions to Common Treasury, December 1, 1805, HOTC:126–127; Annulment of Article 6, 1827 Articles of Association, October 31, 1836, GRYG:220–233.

71. Frederick Rapp to George Sutton, September 13, 1806, HOTC:201–202; Schaa-len, Rapp, and Muntz versus George Rapp, December 1806, HOTC:210–211; Esterle, Wilhelm, and Heckenlaible Summon Frederick Rapp, March 7, 1807, HOTC:218–219; Johannes Rapp to Frederick Rapp, December 5, 1808, HOTC:310–311.

72. Michael Hagmann to the Harmony Society, nd, HOTC:288

73. George Rapp to Jacob Neft (or Neff), April 10, 1806, HSR:2335.

the actual implementation of this was inconsistent and controversial. For one family that departed over its want of a more “comfortable” lifestyle, George was able to repay the family thanks to a loan from a friend, something George attributed to divine deliverance.⁷⁴ Often with little other recourse, departing families sued to recoup their initial contributions to the communal treasury and unpaid wages for their years of work on behalf of Rapp & Associates.⁷⁵ The legal disputes sometimes lasted years. Consequently, the Rapps became much more careful in admitting new members because they felt too many people “deceived” them into believing they could adhere to their way of life, only to find “the path to follow Jesus too narrow.”⁷⁶ Not only was the prospect of reimbursing departing members a problem, but Frederick lamented the loss of productive, skilled workers and time required to train their replacements.

External Relationships: Neighbors, Customers, Local, State, and Federal Government

The year 1810 was significant because it marked Rapp & Associates’ entry into the textile market, with the purchase of Merino sheep (from Italy) and construction of a wool factory that, when completed, contained a wool-carding machine, six spinning jennies, and sixteen looms for the production of wool cloth.⁷⁷ In addition to milling its own wool, in less than two years, regional herdsmen were petitioning the Society to process their wool.⁷⁸ Frederick was demonstrating his growing

74. [Frederick Rapp] to Samuel Worchester, December 19, 1822, HSR:2335; George Rapp to Jacob Neft (or Neff), April 10, 1806, HSR:2335.

75. Abishai Way to Frederick Rapp, January 29, 1822, DHID2:348–349; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to Sheriff Allegheny County, [January 29, 1822], DHID2:349–350; Abishai Way & Co. to Frederick Rapp, January 31, 1822, DHID2:350–351; [Frederick Rapp] to A. Way & Co., February 22, 1822, DHID2:358–359; [Frederick Rapp] to David Shields, [May 11, 1822], DHID2:397–398; Abishai Way & Co. to Frederick Rapp, June 7, 1822, DHID2:407–410; Depositions: *Miller v. Rapp*, [June 6, 1823], DHID2:599–612.

76. Frederick Rapp to Chester Chadwick, September 28, 1822, HSR:2329.

77. Stephen Stone & J. Hull to Edward Gibbs, March 15, 1810, HOTC:374; Contract, Abram Baldwin and Frederick Rapp, March 22, 1810, HOTC:378–379; John Whatmough to Frederick Rapp, August 10, 1810, HOTC:403; Cumming, *Sketches*, 495; Melish, *Travels*, II:70; Francis Hilveti to Frederick Rapp, September 24, 1811, HOTC:474–476; Francis Hilveti to Frederick Rapp, October 23, 1811, HOTC:484–485; David Ruff to Frederick Rapp, January 1, 1812, HOTC:502; Francis Hilveti to Frederick Rapp, February 17, 1812, HOTC:508–509. For a helpful discussion of factories in the early republic, see Prude, “Capitalism, Industrialization, and the Factory in Post-Revolutionary America.”

78. William Rayen to John Langenbacher, February 5, 1812, HOTC:507; Increase Mathews to Frederick Rapp, June 11, 1812, HOTC:526; John Walwork

expertise in evaluating the quality of wool, while purchasing a cotton-carding machine to expand production into that fabric as well. The carding machine was a source of much frustration. Frederick spent most of 1812 trying to acquire the carding machine—it was shipped to Harmonie in November of 1812. However, the Society struggled to bring it online, finally succeeding the following June.⁷⁹ Accordingly, the Rapps showed increasing concern with their access to the market, specifically the all-important postal routes. The Rapps understood that the postal service was vitally important to Rapp & Associates' economic success, hence their request that the postmaster general establish a post office in Harmonie and incorporate the new village into existing postal routes. The Rapps also petitioned for the removal of their regional postmaster over assertions he was not fulfilling his duties properly.⁸⁰

By 1811, Harmonie, Pennsylvania, consisted of approximately 9,000 acres (2,500 cultivated), 800 persons (100 of which were farmers), and Rapp & Associates had dramatically increased its net worth from approximately \$20,000 to \$220,000, a sum that attracted attention on both sides of the Atlantic thanks to Scottish mapmaker John Melish's widely read account.⁸¹ The material success of Rapp & Associates was reflected by the Rapps' large, attractive homes (Figures 3 and 4).

However, George and Frederick were discovering that further expansion was difficult. Early attempts to market their wool cloth in Baltimore met with resistance, as merchants deemed Rapp & Associates' product too expensive and not of the right type to be competitive with competing wool textiles.⁸² Rapp & Associates' woolens were more successful in Philadelphia, at least when its colors conformed to current fashion. For example, in 1812, bright green was not in style and

[Walworth] to Miller, July 27, 1812, HOTC:538; John Baker for Frederick Rapp to John Walwork [Walworth], August 6, 1812, HOTC:544; Seth Adams to Frederick Rapp, August 15, 1812, HOTC:548–549.

79. Frederick Rapp to Thomas Rotch, September 1, 1812, HOTC:551–552; Frederick Rapp to Daniel Norton, August 12, 1812, HOTC:546–547; Daniel Norton to Frederick Rapp, September 3, 19, 1812, HOTC:552–554; Frederick Rapp to Daniel Norton, September 25, 1812, HOTC:560; Daniel Norton and Abram Baldwin to Frederick Rapp, November 8, 1812, HOTC:577; Account with Daniel Norton and Abram Baldwin, January 30, 1813, HOTC:618–619; Frederick Rapp to James Mosher, April 14, 1813, HOTC:645–646; Frederick Rapp to Daniel Norton, May 24, 1813, HOTC:657; Frederick Rapp to Daniel Norton, June 18, 1813, HOTC:662; Frederick Rapp to Increase Mathews, November 16, 1813, HOTC:741–742.

80. Memorial to Postmaster General, undated, HOTC:213–214; Isaac Burneston to Alexander McKim, February 17, 1813, HOTC:625; Samuel Smith to Frederick Rapp, February 25, 1811, HOTC:427–429.

81. Melish, *Travels*, II:77, 80.

82. Frederick Rapp to George Heide, undated, HOTC, 476–478; Georg Heide to Frederick Rapp, September 27, 1811, HOTC:478–480; John Bedford to Frederick Rapp, June 11, 1820, DHID2:63–64.



Figure 3 Goerge Rapp's home (1808), Harmonie, PA
(Photo by author)



Figure 4 Frederick Rapp's home (1811), Harmonie, PA
(Photo by author)

Rapp's agent, Godfrey Haga, recommended darker green as being more "fashionable."⁸³ The proximity to Pittsburgh made it a natural destination for Rapp & Associates' manufactures, iron as well as textiles.⁸⁴ Frederick continued to engage the more resistant markets, such as Baltimore's textile and whiskey markets, protesting that Rapp & Associates' textiles had acquired "such a good renown ... that it was sold till now as fast as we been able to make it."⁸⁵ By fall 1813, even Pennsylvania's governor was joining the ranks of those who admired how Harmony combined "practical Christianity" and "flourishing manufacturers."⁸⁶ Frederick used the growing notoriety of Rapp & Associates to establish relationships with other early nineteenth-century businessmen, such as the Du Ponts, who referred to Frederick Rapp as "owner of the Cloth Factory at Harmony."⁸⁷ As a sign of the growing reputation of Rapp & Associates' textile industry, Frederick fielded an increasing number of requests to buy his sheep and process the region's wool from as far away as Kentucky.⁸⁸

The acclaim of Pennsylvania's governor represented a dramatic turnaround for Harmony's public image. Suspicion and alarm had

83. Godfrey Haga to Frederick Rapp, January 4, 1813, HOTC:590.

84. Frederick Rapp to E. Finley & Son, May 14, 1812, HOTC:522; Isaac Bean to Frederick Rapp, June 18, 1812, HOTC:528; Articles of Agreement, Frederick Rapp and Isaac Bean, April 1, 1813, HOTC:639–640; sale of iron castings: Frederick Rapp to Montgomery Clendinen & Co., July 20, 1812, HOTC:534.

85. Quote in Frederick Rapp to Isaac Burneston, June 29, 1812, HOTC:531; Frederick Rapp to George Sutton & McNickle, November 4, 1811, HOTC:490–491; Frederick Rapp to Finly & Son, November 4, 1811, HOTC:491–492; Sutton & McNickle to George Rapp, November 5, 1811, HOTC:492; Sutton & McNickle to Harmony Society, January 30, 1812, HOTC:506; Welsch & Sterrett [Sterrit] to Frederick Rapp, February 14, 1812, HOTC:507–508; Frederick Rapp to Welsh & Sterrett [Sterrit], March 10, 1812, HOTC:513–514; A. Welsh to Frederick Rapp, March 24, 1812, HOTC:516–517.

86. Simon Snyder to George Rapp, September 1813, HOTC:716.

87. Du Pont Bauduy & Co. to William McKinsie, February 26, 1813, HOTC:630; Frederick Rapp to E. I. DuPont, May 5, 1813, HOTC:652–654; Frederick Rapp to B. Burneston, March 6, 1813, HOTC:634–635. For DuPont, see Fagal, "The Mills of Liberty."

88. Godfrey Haga to Frederick Rapp, September 23, 1812, HOTC:555–558; William Hoge to Frederick Rapp, September 19, 1812, HOTC:553–554; Judah Colt to Frederick Rapp, September 19, 1812, HOTC:554–555; John Street to Frederick Rapp, June 4, 1813, HOTC:659; Frederick Rapp to George Parsons, June 10, 1813, HOTC:559–560; Chiljon Lichtenberger to Frederick Rapp, June 19, 1813, HOTC:662–664; Increase Mathews to Frederick Rapp, June 23, 1813, HOTC:665; William Barr to Frederick, June 29, 1813, HOTC:667; William Rogers to Frederick Rapp, July 12, 1813, HOTC:677–678; Chiljon Lichtenberger to Frederick Rapp, August 14, 1813, HOTC:695–696; Contract, Frederick Rapp and Chijon Lichtberger, October 1, 1813, HOTC:722–723; John L. Baker to Frederick Rapp, November 21, 1813, HOTC:744; John Templeman to Frederick Rapp, February 4, 1814, HOTC:792; Frederick Rapp to William Barr, August 16, 1813, HOTC:697–698. Kentucky: William Chambers to Frederick Rapp, March 2, 1814, HOTC:800–802.

greeted their arrival in the western part of the state in 1804. Attempting to legally secure their communal and economic endeavors, the Rapps submitted a request for incorporation in 1807. The Pennsylvania Legislature reacted with alarm. Noting that the prohibition on property ownership was potentially in violation of federal and state constitutions, a committee report concluded that granting incorporation to the Harmonists would be “extremely impolitic, inasmuch as it would tend to damp and discourage that spirit of individual exertion and enterprize [sic], that self-dependence, that conscious dignity and consequence, which each individual should attach to himself in a free republic.”⁸⁹ Harmony’s request never made it to a vote, and neither Harmony nor Rapp & Associates was ever incorporated.

The first hint of a westward move appears in reports George Rapp sent to Frederick dating to April 1814, as the Rapps weighed what they felt were their declining economic prospects in western Pennsylvania.⁹⁰ George was on a trip investigating new sites for the Society, because as Frederick wrote two years later in reflection, western Pennsylvania had grown crowded with “quite a few inhabitants and no more land could be purchased except at very high prices.... The climate was not quite suitable to us because the winter was somewhat too long which made the raising of sheep and viniculture somewhat difficult....”⁹¹ Additionally, Frederick did not like how Harmonie, Pennsylvania, was located twelve miles from navigable waters. Critics mused that the real issue was that George Rapp feared losing control of his followers as the surrounding population increased.⁹² By May 9, 1814, after touring sites in Ohio and Kentucky and not finding any that fully satisfied, George and his team of two other Harmonists finally executed a series of purchases for land on the banks of the Wabash River that would become the Society’s spacious new commune in the Indiana Territory. The second Harmonie was approximately twenty-five miles northwest of the newly founded village of Evansville (in the southwest corner of Indiana). Initially, the purchase was for 2,435 acres, although within one year, the new settlement encompassed 17,000 acres. By July 1816, the second Harmonie encompassed over 20,000 acres.⁹³

89. “Harmony Society Memorial,” HOTC:255.

90. George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, April 20, 1814, DHID1:1–3; John L. Baker and George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, April 26, 1814, DHID1:3–5.

91. [Frederick Rapp] to Joseph Leobold, July 20, 1816, DHID1:235; Romelius L. Baker to Henry Eddy, February 8, 1820, DHID2:18–19. Schoolcraft, *Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley*, 165.

92. de Montule, *Travels in America*, 146–147; Jeremiah Warder Jr. to George Flower, August 28, 1817, DHID1:382–383; Lockwood, *The New Harmony Communities*, 24.

93. George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, May 10, 1814, DHID1:7; Thomas Rogers to George Rapp, May 9, 1814, HOTC:834; Memorandum of Purchase of Wabash Lands,

Even as the Society was selling Harmonie, Pennsylvania, and moving its nearly eight hundred commune members westward, the Rapps planned an expansion of their burgeoning industrial production. (Harmonie eventually sold for \$100,000, although the Society never realized the full amount. It was an especially difficult time to collect payment, as money was scarce thanks to the disruption of the War of 1812.)⁹⁴ According to Frederick, the determining factor in selecting the new location was a place where “culture, trade, and situation would offer more advantages for factories of various type.”⁹⁵ George assured Frederick that the Wabash River would afford them newfound access to New Orleans, and from there to ports in the West Indies, England, and Europe. A companion with George on the advance scouting mission, John L. Baker, a founding member of the original settlement in Pennsylvania, also stressed the nearby coal banks and potential for waterworks, wood for building, and the need to buy up as much land as possible before the Society’s advertised move caused the local land prices to rise prohibitively.⁹⁶ Frederick responded that they should buy land on the other side of the Wabash (Illinois Territory) in order to “have the command of the River.”⁹⁷ He was certainly not moving from western Pennsylvania to abandon the market. If anything, the Rapps were simply doing something other early Americans were considering: taking advantage of the ongoing displacement of indigenous peoples in the Northwest Territories to make money.⁹⁸

After opening a store (licensed by the Indiana Territory in December 1814), the Rapps focused again on linking Harmonie to the federal postal service and rerouting water sources to serve the new commune’s industry.⁹⁹ There was a sense of urgency as current customers were still looking to Rapp & Associates for their textile needs even while it was

undated, DHID1:5–6; Unsigned to Nathaniel Ewing and John Badollet [register for Vincennes Land Office], undated, DHID1:9–10; *Niles’ Weekly Register*, October 28, 1815, DHID1:146; [Frederick Rapp] to Joseph Leobold, July 20, 1816, DHID1:236.

94. Power of Attorney for Frederick Rapp, June 14, 1814, HOTC:842–847; “The Town of Harmonie,” *Pittsburgh Mercury*, June 15, 1814, HOTC:850; John Heckewelder to Frederick Rapp, November 27, 1814, HOTC:915–917; Articles of Agreement for Sale of Harmonie, May 6, 1815, HOTC:970–974; Frederick Rapp to George Rapp, May 8, 1815, DHID1:124–128.

95. [Frederick Rapp] to Joseph Leobold, July 20, 1816, DHID1:235–236.

96. John Baker to George Rapp, July 20, 1814, DHID1:17–20; [Frederick Rapp] to John L. Baker, August 11, 1814, DHID1:27; Arndt, *George Rapp’s Harmony Society*, 133–134.

97. Frederick Rapp to Nathaniel Ewing and John Badollet, August 8, 1814, DHID1:24–25; [Frederick Rapp] to John L. Baker, August 11, 1814, DHID1:27–28.

98. Oliver Wolcott to Caleb Lownes, October 10, 1814, DHID1:56–57.

99. License, December 14, 1814, HSR:2326; Licenses, Commissions, and Appointments, 1811–1913; William Barber to Frederick [George] Rapp, September 8, 1817, DHID1:388–389.

nowhere near ready to resume production.¹⁰⁰ Congress helped by altering the Vincennes to Shawneetown postal route so that it passed through Harmonie (April 20, 1816) and established a post office at Harmonie which opened in early September, 1816.¹⁰¹ Although by March 1815, the new settlement had built log homes for every family, tilled over eight hundred acres, including orchards and vineyards, resumed alcohol distillation, and started construction of a sawmill, Rapp & Associates was still far from resuming its textile manufacturing. Compounding things was the seasonal unpredictability of neighboring creeks, which drove Frederick to purchase a steam engine from Pittsburgh to power Harmonie's mills. Taking delivery of the engine (and getting it working) was a struggle, and the delay caused financial loss as Rapp & Associates continued to struggle in bringing its textile production back on line. River ice impeded initial delivery of the steam engine. Then when replacement pieces for the carding machine were not included on the boat carrying the steam engine, Frederick resigned himself to another four to six weeks of the carding machine sitting idle. Even this proved to be false optimism, as the engine did not become operational until mid-May 1816, limiting Rapp & Associates to finishing cloth left over from the stock brought from the original Harmonie.¹⁰²

In fact, just getting a letter to and from southwestern Indiana was often surprisingly slow, especially in the winter, as Frederick's associates discovered when a letter he mailed on January 6 did not arrive in Pittsburgh until February 9.¹⁰³ Five weeks, the standard time frame for a letter to travel from Harmonie to points in Pennsylvania, was fast

100. A deadly fever slowed building at the new settlement throughout the fall of 1814. William Chambers to George Rapp, January 28, 1815, DHID1:103–104. For the sickness: DHID1: September 1814–January 1815, DHID1:34–100; esp. [Frederick Rapp] to A & J Wilson, July 3, [1815], DHID1:131.

101. Nathaniel Ewing to George Rapp, November 6, 1814, DHID1:66–67; Frederick Rapp to John Woods, December 23, 1815, DHID1:170–171; Nathaniel Ewing to Frederick Rapp, May 8, 1816, DHID1:214–215; [Frederick Rapp] to Jonathan Meigs, June 4, 1816, DHID1:220–221; [Frederick Rapp] to David Shields, September 14, 1816, DHID1:250.

102. George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, November 29, 1814, DHID1:77; David Shields to Frederick Rapp, December 6, 1815, DHID1:164–165; John Arthurs to [Frederick Rapp], December 12, 1815, DHID1:166; Frederick Rapp to Bean & Butler, January 5, 1816, DHID1:176–177; Frederick Rapp to David Shields, February 1, 1816, DHID1:182–185; [Frederick Rapp] to James Douglas, February 2, 1816, DHID1:186–187; Frederick Rapp to William Chambers, February 3, 1816, DHID1:188; Frederick Rapp to George Sutton, March 28, 1816, DHID1:203–204; [Frederick Rapp] to David Shields, March 29, 1816, DHID1:206–207; [Frederick Rapp] to John Arthurs, May 14, 1816, DHID1:218–219; Frederick Rapp to David Shields, May 14, 1816, DHID1:219; George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, June 22, 1816, DHID1:227; [Frederick Rapp] to David Shields, September 14, 1816, DHID1:249; Robert Hamilton to Frederick Rapp, September 1816, DHID1:253–254.

103. Bean & Butler to Frederick Rapp, February 9, 1816, DHID1:189.

compared to the saga of the letter he sent another associate on January 17, which did not arrive at its destination in western Pennsylvania until April 22.¹⁰⁴ Unprofessional postmasters and letter carriers only exacerbated the situation. For example, two postal carriers on the route between Harmonie and Corydon were fired for incompetence. During this time, Frederick complained that the St. Louis postmaster was similarly inefficient.¹⁰⁵ By 1822, Frederick had grown so sick of the poor mail service that he petitioned Indiana's governor to intervene, writing "... the injury occasioned through neglect of Postmasters & Mail carriers in this Western District is very great to its inhabitants and particularly to those engaged in Mercantile business is so obvious, that perhaps it may not have escaped your attention before now."¹⁰⁶ For businessmen such as Frederick, timely postal service was of utmost importance in the expanding market economy. This commercial imperative animated Frederick's complaint to Governor Jonathan Jennings: "Not long since I recd. Two Letters at different times from Cincinnati (Ohio) one four-and the other five Month on the Way coming, Each containing urging matters of great importance ... at present we have been for three Weeks without a Mail from Corydon, and are thereby debarred of every Necessary Commercial advise from the East..."¹⁰⁷

In addition to communication problems, the landscape of credit in the western territories was vastly inferior. The Harmonists left a state in Pennsylvania that by 1830 possessed nine times the bank money per capita and fourteen times the bank credit as Indiana could claim.¹⁰⁸ Unsurprisingly, Frederick's business correspondence is replete with frustration over the confusing, unreliable, and occasionally nefarious currency landscape of the West, which probably led him to become a stockholder in the Bank of Vincennes, which became the State Bank of Indiana in January 1817.¹⁰⁹ Attempting to stabilize the local credit

104. Detmar Basse to Frederick Rapp, April 22, 1816, DHID1:211; Godfrey Haga to Frederick Rapp, May 4, 1816, DHID1:213; [John Baker for Frederick Rapp] to John Bedford, July 3, [1817], DHID1:353; [Frederick Rapp] to David Shields, February 8, 1818, DHID1:458–459.

105. [Frederick Rapp] to David Shields, June 9, 1817, DHID1:338–339; William Smith to Johnathan Meigs, undated, DHID1:462; William Smith to John T. Gray, undated, DHID1:495; William Smith to Jonathan Meigs, April 17, 1818, DHID1:498. [Frederick Rapp] to Tracy & Wahrendorff, April 12, 1822, DHID2:382.

106. [Frederick Rapp] to Jonathan Jennings, December 14, 1822, DHID2:510.

107. [Frederick Rapp] to Jonathan Jennings, December 14, 1822, DHID2:511.

108. Bank money = circulation + deposits – notes of other banks. Bank credit = loans and discounts + bills of exchange. Bodenhorn, *A History of Banking in Antebellum America*, 63–64.

109. Currency/counterfeiting: John Caldwell to Frederick Rapp, July 22, 1815, DHID1:133; John Baker to Frederick Rapp, June 26, 1816, DHID1:230; David Shields to Frederick Rapp, April 18, 1818, DHID1:502; Abishai Way & Co. to Frederick Rapp,

system, Frederick was also heavily involved in organizing local branches of the state bank, including the Farmers' Bank of Harmony. The branch banks at Posey and Gibson Counties (which Harmony overlapped) were both authorized \$10,000 of capital stock, and Frederick was named director of the Posey branch.¹¹⁰ This is just one of many examples of how the Pietists of Harmonie enmeshed themselves into the market economy, even as they fought to maintain their purity through cultural isolation.

Frederick's involvement in the state banking system is particularly interesting given the Society's misgivings toward lending and interest. In a December 3, 1821, letter, Frederick declined to extend a loan to the founder of Vandalia, Illinois, explaining the practice was "against our Rule."¹¹¹ In another instance, Frederick refused a loan to the Governor of Indiana, even though just days before Frederick himself proposed to loan the State of Indiana his stock in the Bank of Vincennes. This was quite a scheme, as Frederick's proposal was to loan back to the state its own bank's stock in payment of debt owed the state bank! The terms of the loan were ultimately beneficial to Rapp & Associates because it recouped \$4,000 worth of worthless bank stock in exchange for a loan to the State of Indiana, while erasing debt. Clearly, this loan was all about recovering Rapp & Associates' losses from the failure of the disastrous Bank of Vincennes, more than concern for the bank's stability.¹¹² A few years later, Rapp & Associates was again lending \$5,000 to the state at nearly 15 percent interest.¹¹³

December 18, 1818, DHID1:620; Frederick Rapp to John Baker, January 19, 1819, DHID1:629; Frederick Rapp to George Rapp, January 22, 1819, DHID1:631; [John Baker] to Dent & Rearick, February 4, 1819, DHID1:637; John Baker to Frederick Rapp, February 4, 1819, DHID1:640; Abishai Way & Co. to Frederick Rapp, February 8, 1819, DHID1:643; Samuel Campbell to Frederick Rapp, October 15, 1820, DHID2:120–121. Bank of Vincennes: Nathaniel Ewing to Frederick Rapp, November 24, 1815, DHID1:159; Frederick Rapp to David Shields, March 1, 1816, DHID1:194–195; Nathaniel Ewing to Commissioners Frederick Rapp, Thomas Casselberry, and Thomas Givens, March 17, 1817, DHID1:315–316.

110. Esarey, "The First Indiana Banks," 147; Esarey, "State Banking in Indiana," 227; Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society*, 178–179.

111. Frederick Rapp to Ferdinand Ernst, 3 December 1821, DHID2:332.

112. [Frederick Rapp] to Charles Battell, November 30, 1821, DHID2:330–331. Governor: The loan was for \$1,000 at 10 percent interest. Jonathan Jennings to Frederick Rapp, August 12, 1822, DHID2:439–440; [Frederick Rapp] to Jonathan Jennings, August 24, 1822, DHID2:449–450.

113. Samuel Merrill to Frederick Rapp, October 4, 1823, DHID2:691; [Frederick Rapp] to Samuel Merrill, October 25, 1823, DHID2:701–702; *Journal of the Senate of the State of Indiana*, 9th Sess., 29, 34, 45; *Journal of the Senate of the State of Indiana*, 11th Sess., 40–41, 44; William Hendricks to Frederick Rapp, December 19, 1823, DHID2:754; Frederick Rapp to Samuel Merrill, November 20, 1824, HOTW:284; Samuel Merrill to Frederick Rapp, December 6, 1824, HOTW:333; Frederick Rapp

Rapp & Associates loaned money to public institutions, just not private individuals. Even close business associates, relatives of George Rapp, and longtime friends of the Society need not apply. (The one exception seems to be a loan to the Society's lead lawyer, Walter Forward. The fact that it occurred after Frederick died was probably not coincidental. After Frederick's death, R. L. Baker recorded a loan of \$1,000 to Forward, made during the Panic of 1837.)¹¹⁴ Eventually, Frederick even dispensed with Rapp & Associates' practice during its Indiana days of extending credit to its business partners.¹¹⁵ The practice of institutional loaning was not just a necessary product of the financial landscape of Indiana, but continued after the Society's eventual move back east, such as when Rapp & Associates loaned the city of Pittsburgh \$20,000 and the city of Wheeling \$2,000.¹¹⁶ Frederick offered a business rationale behind Rapp & Associates' lending policy: It preferred to reinvest its capital into the Society and its business operations, rather than loaning it out to interested individuals, especially given the poor state of the economy in the 1820s.¹¹⁷ Harmony's interest in the economic well-being of its community was limited by its eschatology, which saw little benefit in helping its neighbors because they would not survive to see the new millennium. Instead, these investments served Harmony's mission in building the foundation of the new "divine economy." Consequently, it needed to be as robust and well positioned as possible to make its way in the remade earth to come. Of course, this indifference toward Harmony's materially struggling neighbors led to friction and played a significant role in the Rapps' decision to move the Society back to western Pennsylvania.

The practice of lending to cities and states was not the only surprising way in which Harmony inserted itself into the emerging institutional

to Samuel Merrill, October 24, 1825, HOTW:669; Samuel Merrill to Frederick Rapp, March 21, 1826, EOTO:21–22.

114. Walter Forward to George Rapp, September 30, 1837, GRYG:287–288; R. L. Baker to Walter Forward, October 4, 1837, GRYG:289; John McLure to Frederick Rapp, August 28, 1830, Karl J. R. Arndt, *Economy on the Ohio, 1826–1834, George Rapp's Third Harmony, A Documentary History* (Worcester, MA: The Harmony Society Press, 1984), 524 (hereafter EOTO); John McLure to Frederick Rapp (with Frederick's reply attached), August 30, 1830, EOTO:525; J. Solms to George Rapp, May 7, 1840, GRYG:493–494; R. L. Baker to J. Solms, February 18, 1846, GRYG:911–912; Jacob Henrici to David Benzinger, July 13, 1846, GRYG:984–985.

115. Frederick Rapp to Frederick Dent, November 4, 1824, HOTW:250.

116. John M. Snowden to [Frederick Rapp], March 11, 1826, EOTO:18; John McLure to Frederick Rapp, November 10, 1830, EOTO:547; R. L. Baker to J. List, January 15, 1835, GRYG:62.

117. Frederick Rapp to Henry Jones, February 24, 1821, DHID2:196–197; Frederick Rapp to Ferdinand Ernst, December 3, 1821, DHID2:332; Jonathan Jennings to Frederick Rapp, August 12, 1822, DHID2:439–440; Frederick Rapp to Jonathan Jennings, August 24, 1822, DHID2:449–450.

framework of the early republic United States. In 1816, the Indiana Territory called for a constitutional convention, and Frederick was elected as one of forty-one delegates, representing Gibson County.¹¹⁸ His role at the convention included serving on the “committee relative to the executive department” and “committee relative to the militia”—the latter ironic, considering Harmony frequently paid a territorial exemption tax to excuse the male members of the Society (between eighteen and forty-five years) from military service, which they opposed on religious grounds.¹¹⁹ Frederick also played an important role in picking the site of Indiana’s new capital city, serving on the board of commissioners that ultimately selected Indianapolis.¹²⁰ This foray into politics was not an exception, but a consistent trait of Harmony in both Pennsylvania and Indiana. The Society was active in voting, to the point that its neighbors complained of block voting: Harmonists typically voted how the Rapps instructed. The common denominator, like its policy on lending, was economic. If the Rapps saw an opportunity to shape their regional economy to their advantage, they seized it. Accordingly, they were reliable supporters of the “American System” of national banking, tariffs, and internal improvements. Conversely, they were ardent and vocal opponents of Andrew Jackson’s economic policies.

While Frederick was absent at the Indiana state convention, Harmonie received the first of many curious visitors searching for a way to reconcile republican values with successful manufacturing. This time it was the oldest such society in America, the Shakers, who had established a settlement in 1810 called West Union, near Vincennes.¹²¹ The Shakers were only the first of many pilgrimages to Harmonie in the Indiana Territory to learn how the Rapps were fusing industry, charity, equality, and spirituality in the wilderness. Those who could not visit in person attempted to satisfy their curiosity by correspondence.¹²² As historians such as John Kasson have pointed out, many early Americans embraced technology and the market economy, but searched for a way to avoid the squalor of Britain’s industrial cities. Lowell, Paterson, and

118. Tuesday morning, June 11, 1816, *Journal of the Convention of the Indiana Territory*; Alexander Devin to George Rapp, May 11, 1816, DHID1:216–217.

119. Wednesday morning, Nine o’clock, June 12, 1816, *Journal of the Convention of the Indiana Territory*; Receipt/exemption tax, March 25, 1815, DHID1:116; Receipt/exemption tax, September 1, 1815, DHID1: 143–144; Receipt/exemption tax, April 4, 1816, DHID1:208.

120. Commissioners, [June 7, 1820], DHID2:62–63; Frederick Rapp to David Robb, December 9, 1820, DHID2:159–160.

121. George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, June 22, 1816, DHID1:228–229; Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, 117; Pitzer, *America’s Communal Utopias*, 37, 44, 69.

122. Constantine Rafinesque to Christopher Miller, January 16, 1818, DHID1:450–454.

Pawtucket are the places that figure prominently in the standard narrative about the attempts to establish industrial order in early America, a historiography that neglects the alternative example of the two Harmonies, and the third site, Economie.¹²³ Kasson argues persuasively that towns such as Lowell were an attempt to purify industry and make it morally acceptable to skeptical Americans. Similarly, the Harmonists sought this goal, albeit through a Pietistic approach.¹²⁴

For many early nineteenth-century Americans, Harmonie offered a viable model for industry and society. Economist and publisher Mathew Carey wrote in one of several publications that raised Harmony's profile in England and America, "The settlement of Harmony ... is probably the only settlement ever made in America, in which from the outset agriculture and manufacture preceded hand-in-hand together."¹²⁵ Similarly, the curious merchant John Bedford wrote in 1816, one year prior to entering into business with Rapp & Associates, "I have examined with admiration ... the product of the ingenuity and industry of your society on the Wabash ... the equal perfection at least, exists among your society, in other branches of mechanical industry & the usefull [sic] arts." Bedford hoped and prayed that "they may diverge and be diffused throughout our land, contributing to & securing, with accumulating force, our national independence and individual comfort & happiness."¹²⁶ What these visitors described matches what one historian has termed "peasant republicanism," which grew out of Pietism and was characterized by "reciprocal relationships and localized mutual obligations" and "a delicate balance of obedience and vigilance."¹²⁷

What Bedford and other visitors found upon visiting was that by spring 1817, George Rapp resided in the "best" brick home in Indiana, and Harmonie had resumed manufacturing both wool and cotton textiles.¹²⁸ As Tamara Plakins Thornton demonstrates, early nineteenth-century economic tourists valued aesthetics, and visitors to Harmonie marveled at its order, cleanliness, and construction of its "pretty little town," noting as well that George Rapp and his closest advisors seemed to live better than his followers did.¹²⁹ This reveals one prominent characteristic of the

123. See notes 4, 8, and especially: Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine*; Wallace, *Rockdale*; Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*; Licht, *Industrializing America*; Johnson, *Sam Patch*.

124. Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine*, 55–106.

125. Carey, *The New Olive Branch*, 176. The most noteworthy, widely circulated description of Harmony: Melish, *Travels*, II:64–83.

126. John Bedford to Christian Rapp, November 28, 1816, DHID1:272.

127. Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land*, 30–45.

128. Fordham, *Personal Narrative of Travels*, 207; Unidentified, October 1819, DHID1:784.

129. William Blane, [December 1812], DHID2:523–526; Zakim and Kornblith, *Capitalism Takes Command*, 169–198.

Society's communalism: inequality of dwelling places. Frederick and some of the previously wealthy members of Harmony lived in much nicer homes than those of the ordinary members. Old Economy Village, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's caretaker of the Harmony records, explains this discrepancy by comparing the Rapps to other leaders of their era and concludes they were living simply in comparison and that the other inhabitants of Harmonie expected their leaders to have a higher standard of living.¹³⁰ The reality was that visitors sometimes discovered the material equality at Harmonie was not what they had expected.

Visitors appreciated Harmonie's order. Surrounded by the Society's cornfields, the village, estimated at 600 yards long and 400–500 yards wide, was organized along two main north/south (Mount Vernon to St. Louis) and east/west (Shawneetown to Vincennes) running streets that shaped the community into a series of squares, formed by two additional north/south and four other east/west parallel streets (Figure 5).¹³¹ Symbolically, two churches sat at the center of Harmonie (Figures 6 and 7), the larger brick Greek cross structure alongside the first, wooden church that proved too small and hot as the size of the Society grew during its time in Indiana. (Reflecting the Society's embrace of alcohol, the second church possessed two wine cellars.)¹³² As a traveling companion of Robert Owen described, taken in whole, Harmonie's aesthetics served to bolster the argument for the superiority of communal life, particularly for "a traveler just emerging from a forest where little or no improvement has taken place, and remembering the many days he has spent in wandering through a thinly peopled & badly cultivated country...." Once Harmonie came into view, the eye-pleasing panorama of a "flourishing village, and picturesque river winding through a magnificent forest, is highly gratifying," sparking an intense curiosity in the visitor as to what ideology underpinned such an orderly, industrious community of people.¹³⁴

It was not just the order and beauty of Harmonie that struck visitors. The Society's technology always impressed its guests, particularly its thirty-horsepower steam engine which carded, combed, and cleaned the wool before spinning on a machine run by children.¹³⁵ The engine then powered the weaving and cutting processes.

130. Shops, Factories, Mills, and Official Residences, 1824, HOTW:372–373; Tour, Old Economy Village, June 8, 2017.

131. Hiatt, *Diary of William Owen*, 72–73; Snedeker, *The Diaries of Donald MacDonald*, 245.

132. Snedeker, *The Diaries of Donald MacDonald*, 245, 247; Hiatt, *Diary of William Owen*, 77.

134. Snedeker, *The Diaries of Donald MacDonald*, 245.

135. The lone exception is the testimony of Donald MacDonald, a companion of Robert Owen, who visited in 1824, well after Frederick stopped upgrading Harmonie's equipment. Snedeker, *The Diaries of Donald MacDonald*, 247.



Figure 5 Harmonie, IN, sketched by W. Weingartner (c. 1825).

Bottom circle: factory and manufacturing activities; top center circle: first and second church buildings; top right circle: Rapp houses. OEVA, MG-185, Maps, Drawings, Sketches, and Lithographs, Map #19, 06.72.17.84. With permission of OEVA, circles added by author.¹³³

An eight-horse-driven threshing machine was equally imposing, also operated by children. The Society operated a horsepowered cotton gin as well.¹³⁶ (Harmony was often a dumping ground for orphans, but rather than hire them out, as outsiders frequently propositioned Rapp & Associates, Harmony instead trained them in a trade and put

¹³⁶ Ferdinand Ernst, "Visit to Harmonie on the Wabash," July 18, 1819, DHID1:744–746; Hiatt, *Diary of William Owen*, 88.



Figure 6 The second church at Harmonie, IN. Sketched by Charles Alexandre Lesueur.

Ewell Sale Stewart Library, Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, <https://www.anasp.org/research/library/archives/0100-0199/lesueur136b/> (accessed June 23, 2017). Public domain.

them to work within the Society.¹³⁷) To deal with wool-processing demands, in 1818 Frederick purchased two weaving looms (to produce stockings) from Frankfurt, Germany, and explored construction of a steamboat for trade with New Orleans.¹³⁸ Previously, at the first Harmonie, Frederick constructed a first-of-its-kind sheering machine, one that was the envy of other manufacturers.¹³⁹ He also obtained a fire

137. A. W. Sorgenfrey to Frederick Rapp, March 17, 1822, DHID2:372–373, including note.

138. Shipping damaged the looms, erroneously sent first to Lexington, Kentucky: Boller & Solms to Frederick Rapp, July 16, 1818, DHID1:550–551; Jacob Boller to Frederick Rapp, September 28, 1818, DHID1:575–576; [John Baker] to Vernon & Blake, February 13, 1819, DHID1:646; James Berthoud & Son to Frederick Rapp, March 19, 1819, DHID1:670; [Frederick Rapp] to Jacob Boller, May 14, 1819, DHID1:707–708. Steamboat: [Frederick Rapp] to David Shields, August 22, 1818, DHID1:561–562; Abishai Way & Co. to Frederick Rapp, October 10, 1818, DHID1:580–581; Abishai Way & Co. to Frederick Rapp, October 22, 1818, DHID1:582; [Frederick Rapp] to Fetter & Hughes, October 31, 1818, DHID1:597; Thomas H. Boggs to Frederick Rapp, June 11, 1819, DHID1:718–719.

139. Agreement, Frederick Rapp and Orth and Strohn, June 17, 1813, HOTC:660–661; Godfrey Haga to Frederick Rapp, August 7, 1813, HOTC:689–690; C. H. Orth to Frederick Rapp, August 19, 1813, HOTC:699; C. H. Orth to Frederick Rapp, August 23, 1813, HOTC:705; Isaac Bean to Frederick Rapp, December 13, 1813, HOTC:761; interest in sheering machine: Charles Brearley to Frederick Rapp, August 31, 1814, HOTC:884–885.



Figure 7 Greek Cross Church Plan (undated).

This architectural rendering of a church building found in the Harmony Archives is very similar to the Harmonie, Indiana, church Charles Alexandre Lesueur sketched in 1826 (see figure 6). OEVA, MG-185, Maps, Drawings, Sketches, and Lithographs, OE.80.2.9. With permission of OEVA.

engine and purchased a significant share in the nearby Bassenheim Furnace and Iron Works.¹⁴⁰ The marriage of technology, agriculture, cleanliness, and order always enchanted visitors, such as German nobleman Ferdinand Ernst, patron of Ludwig von Beethoven, who declared Harmonie, Indiana, “the most beautiful city of western America.”¹⁴¹

Visitors such as Ernst, who visited Harmonie during the Panic of 1819, were able to measure how Christian communal capitalism

140. Fire engine: Godfrey Haga to Frederick Rapp, October 19, 1812, HOTC:573; Frederick Rapp to Mr. Lyon, October 13, 1813, HOTC:729–730; Godfrey Haga to Frederick Rapp, December 17, 1813, HOTC:765–767; John Jordan to Isaac Bean, January 5, 1814, HOTC:781; Frederick Rapp to John Jordan, February 14, 1814, HOTC:798; iron furnace: Agreement, Frederick Rapp and Basse Muller, December 23, 1813, HOTC:764; John. L. Glasser to Frederick Rapp, January 24, 1814, 789–791; John L. Baker to Frederick Rapp, March 10, 1814, HOTC:805; Swank, *History of the Manufacture of Iron in all Ages*, 222.

141. Ferdinand Ernst, “Visit to Harmonie on the Wabash,” July 18, 1819, DHID1:745.

weathered economic crisis, mitigating what Cathy Matson has termed “the ambiguities of risk” in the early republic.¹⁴² Driven by a combination of land and currency speculation, the rapid expansion of credit by central, state, and local banks, and exacerbated by the Bank of the United States’ decision to restrict credit and Britain’s ban on US trade with the Caribbean, countless farmers, businessmen, and merchants, experienced economic ruin. Locally, Frederick struggled with the lack of circulating currency, and specifically worried about the health of the Bank of Vincennes. As it collapsed, he used his status as a director to secure outstanding debts owed the Society from the Bank’s debtors before the US Treasury could seize the Bank’s assets.¹⁴³ By summer 1821, the market was still depressed, constrained by the currency crisis of the West and exacerbated by abnormally low water levels, which collectively made trade extremely difficult.¹⁴⁴

Ernst and other visitors during the Panic found Harmony experienced comparatively little pain during economic depression, apart from falling prices for its agricultural and manufacturing products and difficulty paying debts due to the failure of many of its business associates and customers to pay debts owed to Rapp & Associates (both due to lack of circulating currency). Throughout the crisis, Rapp & Associates continued to operate two water-powered sawmills, two grinding mills (one water, one steam), one oil mill, one hemp mill, four wool carding machines, two cotton carding machines, four hundred wool spindles, 120 cotton spindles, four shearing machines, eleven weaving looms (wool and cotton), and four stocking weaver looms.¹⁴⁵ It was by far the most impressive industrial center in the western U. S. By pooling resources, reinvesting Rapp & Associates’ profits into the Society, and avoiding risky financial deals and loans, the Harmony model

142. Ernst was so struck with Harmonie he started his own colony, Vandalia, for poor German immigrants, which only lasted a few years. Paul E. Stroble, “Ernst Colony.” Matson, “Introduction: The Ambiguities of Risk in the Early Republic.”

143. Joseph Lockwood to Romelius Baker, May 28, 1820, DHID2:59, note 2; [Frederick Rapp] to John Hay, June 17, [1820], DHID2:66; John Hay to Frederick Rapp, June 20, 1820, DHID2:67–68; Abijah Bayless to Frederick Rapp, January 24, 1821, DHID2:183; Agreement of debt recovery, May 24, 1821, DHID2:225–226; John Law to Frederick Rapp, June 14, 21, 1821, DHID2:236–237, 239; Frederick Rapp to President Bank of Vincennes, June 23, 1821, DHID2 239–240; John Hay to Frederick Rapp, June 26, 1821, DHID2:240–241; David Brown to Frederick Rapp, July 4, 1821, DHID2:245–246; “E. No 5,” “E no 6,” “E no 7,” *American State Papers: Finance* III:738–739.

144. [Frederick Rapp] to David Shields, November 30, 1820, DHID2:154; Romelius Baker to Frederick Rapp, January 27, 1821, DHID2:185–186; Frederick Rapp to Henry Jones, February 24, 1821, DHID2:196–197; Frederick Rapp to David Shields, June 2, 1821, DHID2:230–231.

145. Report of 1820 Manufacturers’ Census, [October 24, 1820], DHID2:130–136.

offered an alternative to the speculative, individualistic capitalism characterized by figures such as Andrew Dexter Jr.¹⁴⁶ Here the religious views of the community expressed themselves economically, as the Rapps took a long view, with the new millennium at the forefront of their planning, not the individualistic get-rich-quick schemes that led to many of the cautionary tales of the early American capitalist system. Despite the downturn in business, no one was starving, Rapp & Associates was not reduced to selling assets to cover debts, and there was no unemployment, unlike many other places in America in 1819.¹⁴⁷ Harmony's communal capitalist model certainly offered undeniable advantages in times of economic crisis, even as Frederick stressed how hard the depression hit the western states and territories.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion: Christianity, Communalism, and Capitalism

The beginning of Harmony's end in Indiana came unremarkably, in the form of a letter of inquiry from the Welsh industrialist, social theorist, and utopian, Robert Owen. Owen's awareness of the Harmony Society demonstrates the notoriety it had acquired by the 1820s. Owen was specifically interested in how it addressed the "practical inconveniences which arise from changes to society from a state of private to public property...."¹⁴⁹ It was supremely ironic that Owen was seeking wisdom from a religious group, considering he viewed religion as "absurd and irrational" and, along with marriage and private property, "the only Demon, or Devil, that ever has, or most likely, ever will torment the human race."¹⁵⁰ Owen celebrated human reason, a "mental revolution," and an optimism that once evils such as religion were discarded, the true grandeur of the human soul would express itself, spreading happiness from "Community to Community, from State to State, and from Continent to Continent."¹⁵¹ Despite his disdain for the religious and social organization of the Society, Owen's son claimed that Harmony fascinated his father because "their experiment was a marvelous success in a pecuniary point of view." He marveled that the Society went from poverty "in twenty-one years (to wit, in 1825) a fair estimate gave them *two thousand dollars* for each person, -man,

146. Kamensky, *The Exchange Artist*.

147. [Frederick Rapp] to Abraham Aiegler, October 27, 1821, DHID2:311–312.

148. [Frederick Rapp] to Abishai Way & Co., March 30, 1820, DHID2:41–43.

149. Robert Owen to George Rapp, August 4, 1820, DHID2:89–90.

150. Robert Owen, "A Declaration of Mental Independence," *New Harmony Gazette* 1, no. 42 (July 12, 1826): 330.

151. *Ibid.*, 330, 332

woman, and child; probably *ten times* the average wealth throughout the United States....”¹⁵²

At the same time, the location of their second commune was giving the Rapps buyers’ remorse. Although the climate of southern Indiana was better than western Pennsylvania for some types of agriculture, it was not better for viniculture, and Frederick increasingly complained of the lack of market access in Indiana.¹⁵³ Both he and George had come to realize that Rapp & Associates needed a site located on a major river such as the Ohio, and near to a large city such as Pittsburgh, in order to participate more effectively in the East Coast’s textile marketplace.¹⁵⁴ Whereas George was willing to admit this privately to Frederick, in public he was more opaque on the motivations for the move, particularly in his discussions with Robert Owen over the sale of Harmonie. To the latter, George avoided material explanations and emphasized the spiritual, asserting that divine revelation had foretold and directed him to lead the move back to Pennsylvania. The most he would divulge was that the climate was not well suited to their Society, and that they tended to move every ten years to keep life fresh and challenging. As the Owen party journeyed to Harmonie, two of his entourage recorded that the public suspected instead that the Society was moving back east because Harmonie was “unhealthy” land.¹⁵⁵ On May 4, 1824, the Society purchased a new plot of land approximately eighteen miles from Pittsburgh (ironically, only fifteen miles from the original Harmonie).¹⁵⁶ The Society began planning its move, even before completing the sale of Harmonie to Robert Owen.¹⁵⁷

This irony—that Harmonie moved from western Pennsylvania to seek a fortune in the West, only to return to western Pennsylvania—is one of the more intriguing parts of the Harmony story. Harmony’s move did not avoid the tensions encroaching upon them at the original Harmonie, as the Society experienced as much conflict living with its neighbors in Indiana as it had in western Pennsylvania. Likewise, the

152. Emphasis in the original. Owen, *Threading My Way*, 240.

153. Frederick Rapp to Gottlieb Reichert, August 2, 1821, DHID2:263–264.

154. George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, April 8, 1824, DHID2:836–838.

155. Snedeker, *The Diaries of Donald MacDonald*, 231; Hiatt, *Diary of William Owen*, 53, 56; George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, December 6, 1824, HOTW:331–332.

156. Romelius Baker Journal, [February 26–June 15, 1824], DHID2:802–805; George Rapp to Frederick Rapp, March 6, 1824, DHID2:812–813; Article of Agreement, Frederick Rapp and James Blaine, May 4, 1824, HOTW:5–7; Harris, *Harris’ Business Directory*, 91–92.

157. Frederick Rapp to Richard Flower, April 15, 1824, DHID2:856–857; Richard Flower to Frederick Rapp, April 19, 1824, DHID2:857–858; [Frederick Rapp] to Richard Flower, April 28, 1824, DHID2:865–866; Richard Flower to Frederick Rapp, May 10, 1824, DHID2:870–871; Frederick Rapp draft advertisement, [May 11, 1824], DHID2:871–872; Frederick Rapp to John Solms, May 11, 1824, DHID2:872–874.

idea that Rapp & Associates could continue to engage the market more effectively in the West quickly proved erroneous. Harmony was ahead of its time, moving to Indiana before the construction of a more complete transportation infrastructure, and then moving away just as these “internal improvements” were beginning to materialize (such as the Erie Canal, finished in 1825). Out in Indiana, Rapp & Associates experienced the worst of the market in terms of lack of infrastructure and a horrendous credit and banking landscape. Spiritual reasoning aside, the state of the early national period economy in the early 1820s western United States made the decision for the Rapps quite easy. If they were to achieve their divine financial goals, they would have to move back east.

Even though the Rapps were frustrated with their Indiana location, accounts of visitors had stirred the interest of secularist utopians such as the aforementioned Robert Owen and his feminist friend, Francis Wright. Owen had big plans for Harmonie—it was central to his plans to reshape American society radically along the lines of his vision of secular communalism.¹⁵⁸ The influence of Harmony on Owen is evidenced not only in Owen’s name for his Indiana commune, “New Harmony,” but also in the naming of Owen’s second and last community in Hampshire, England, “Harmony Hall.” Frederick similarly provided Wright counsel on how to get her free love, emancipationist utopia, Nashoba, off the ground.¹⁵⁹ Privately, George Rapp scoffed at the naivete of secularist utopians, even as he provided them earnest advice. It was unthinkable to the Harmonists that a communal capitalist model could succeed divorced from its religious character, which was the central point of the Harmony mission in the first place. As George declared to Liverpool merchant and friend of Owen, John Finch, “The only binding principle in Communities is religion, and that Communities cannot prosper without it.”¹⁶⁰ After reading Owen’s declaration of the need to free humans from the chains of religion, Frederick wrote that Owen was a fool because he could not overcome the consequences of human fallibility, entrenched since the Fall of Adam, “Do we not know from history and from God’s revelation in the Bible, as well as from our own experiences, that our first parents lost their balance ... although many by far greater men arose than 100 Owens, and they all were not in a position to restore the original balance.”¹⁶¹ Communal societies asked people to do things that apart from divine intervention, were just not within the realm of human capabilities. A close confidant

158. Johnson, “A Welcome Attack on American Values.”

159. Arndt, “The Pittsburgh Meeting of General Lafayette, George Rapp, and Frances Wright,” 281–300.

160. Finch, “Notes of Travel in the United States: Letter VII,” 274.

161. Frederick Rapp to John Solms, July 26, 1826, HOTW:xxvii–xxviii.

to George summarized his opinion of Owen's assumptions, "... George Rapp thinks that whoever attempts to bend men into a community of interests upon any other grounds but a strong religious feeling, will not succeed. It is religion gives peace here ... and keeps the mind clear and steady." He argued that the eternal destiny of believers allowed Christian communal capitalists "to make sacrifices in this life, because they consider them as seeds sown to fruit hereafter in the life to come."¹⁶²

George and Frederick Rapp were no mere spiritual leaders of a group of utopian, Pietistic separatists, but industrial and manufacturing entrepreneurs. The members of Harmony were no mere gullible acolytes, but an efficient, skilled labor force. Together they made an incredible mark on the early United States' expanding market economy. In 1814, the Baltimore *Niles' Weekly Register* already described the Harmonists as "among the most persevering and industrious people in the world, and *have all things in common*. They now have mills and manufactories of many kinds.... They make broad cloths, cassimeres, flannels, paper hangings, whiskey, wine, flour, flaxseed-oil, leather, nails, iron-mongery, etc.!! and have a warehouse in Pittsburg [sic]...."¹⁶³ As founders of one of the earliest and most materially successful of the numerous nineteenth-century American communal capitalist utopias, they provided a model for others, such as the Shakers, Zoarites, Owenites, Mormons, and Hutterites. Across the Atlantic Ocean, Frederick Engels testified to the power of Harmony's model, suggesting, "The success enjoyed by the Shakers, Harmonists, and Separatists ... have caused many other people in America to undertake similar experiments in recent years.... However, it is not just in America, but in England too."¹⁶⁴ Long after many utopian societies disbanded in failure, the economic success of Harmony allowed the Society to endure to the close of the nineteenth century.

Ultimately, the Harmony Society is a case study in how Lutheran Pietists attempted to purify the United States' emerging capitalist order. Their Christian communal capitalism forsook wages and private property, yet regularly engaged in many of the other trappings of the market: stocks, bonds, leases, mortgages, patents, trademarks, licenses, litigation, and contracts.¹⁶⁵ Rapp & Associates boasted a skilled, hardworking workforce. Its market-savvy executives made astute business decisions and resisted the urge to overextend. Factories and machines increased industrial efficiency. The belief that Harmony was a divinely

162. Featherstonhaugh, *A Canoe Voyage up the Minnay Sotor*, 87.

163. Emphasis in original. *Niles' Weekly Register*, May 28, 1814, 208.

164. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, 222–223.

165. Stock purchase receipt, Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company, January 13, 1812, HOC:504; Frederick Rapp to Isaac Bean, June 15, 1812, HOC:526–527.

inspired construct imbued its members with a certainty, contentment, and sense of purpose that knit the community together and helped it weather internal and external crises.

At the same time, under the surface, the underlying tension of Harmony's communal capitalism bubbled. George Rapp's power as spiritual and business leader was absolute. Harmonists who disagreed with him had to leave, often ripping apart families and tying up the litigants for years. Not all of Rapp's decisions worked, either. Moving west was a risky business decision he was forced to repudiate by moving a second time and replanting near their original site. The Harmonists' name for their third commune, "Economie," reveals something of the way in which the Harmonists' Pietism intertwined with their market activities, for Harmony was both a material and spiritual economy. Consequently, by the 1830s, Economie, Pennsylvania, was both the site of a quirky, wealthy religious commune and a wildly successful factory town.

Much work remains to more fully understand Lutheran Pietism's contributions to the early American marketplace. Despite having influenced the other two streams of early American religion, Puritan Calvinism and Wesleyan Arminianism, Pietism continues to elude the attention of historians of American business.¹⁶⁶ The literature on Puritan Calvinism and the market is enormous and well established.¹⁶⁷ Likewise, Wesleyan Arminianism's ascendancy and eclipse of Calvinism in the early national period is increasingly well-trod territory.¹⁶⁸ In comparison, Lutheran Pietism often serves as a forgotten side tale, even though Franklin H. Littell argues that along with puritanism and utopian socialism, Pietism is one of the three most important sources of "intentional community" in American history.¹⁶⁹ Further investigation will not only better illuminate the economic lives of non-English-speaking American immigrants in the early national period, but also help us better understand the varied forms of nineteenth-century capitalism of the Atlantic world.

166. Two works that emphasize Pietism's influence in early America are Stoeffler, *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*, and Strom, Lehmann, and Melton, *Pietism in Germany and North America*. See also Stoeffler, *German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century*, and Stoeffler, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*.

167. Although the literature is too enormous to list here, the classic text is Bailyn, *The Merchants of New England in the Seventeenth Century*, whereas Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize*, offers an important recent reassessment.

168. See notes 4 and 8. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium*, is the classic here.

169. Franklin H. Littell, "Radical Pietism in American History," in Stoeffler, *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity*, 165. Stephen J. Stein, "Some Thoughts on Pietism in American Religious History," in Strom, Lehmann, and Melton, *Pietism in Germany and North America*, 23–32. A helpful survey of the state of Pietist studies is Dumbaugh, "Pietism," 11–29.

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