

Communal Societies

Journal of the National Historic Communal Societies Association



Volume Seven 1987

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PURPOSE

The Board of Directors of the National Historic Communal Societies Association has authorized the publication of *Communal Societies* to provide an outlet for manuscripts representing original research and analysis of historic and current communal groups. The widest range of academic disciplines shall be represented. Authors should write articles that will effectively transmit information across disciplines.

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

Communal Societies is published annually in the fall under the general sponsorship of the National Historic Communal Societies Association (NHCSA). The offices of the Association are located at the Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, Indiana 47712. The Executive Director is Donald E. Pitzer.

Address manuscripts and editorial correspondence to Professor Michael Barkun, Editor, *Communal Societies*, Department of Political Science, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-1090. Books for review should be addressed to Dr. James H. Sweetland, School of Library and Information Science, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201. Authors should prepare their manuscripts in accordance with guidelines in chapter two of *The Chicago Manual of Style for Authors, Editors, and Copywriters*, 13th ed., revised and expanded (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). Authors will find Kate L. Turabian's practical typists' version of the *Chicago Manual* much more usable: *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 4th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973). Except for quotations, manuscripts must be in English, although exceptional articles in major languages will be considered. Manuscripts should be submitted in three copies, one of which must be the original (no carbons), and they must be double-spaced with an inch-and-a-half margin on all sides.

Footnotes must be numbered consecutively throughout the manuscript; double-spaced; grouped together on pages separate from the manuscript; and modeled on the examples given in the *Chicago Manual* or Turabian. Authors alone are responsible for the contents of their articles.

BUSINESS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Address all business correspondence, including requests for reprint permission, to Professor Donald E. Pitzer, Executive Director, NHCSA, Center for Communal Studies, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, Indiana 47712. Annual membership in the NHCSA is currently \$10.00 for students, senior citizens; \$20.00 regular; and \$30.00 institutional.

Membership includes the annual issue of *Communal Societies*, the NHCSA Newsletter and the conference program. All changes of address must include both the old and the new address. Single copies of the journal are currently \$7.00 each.

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A Shaker group, probably at Canaan, N.Y. From a stereopticon photograph taken by a Troy, N.Y., photographer and once part of the personal collection of William A. Hinds, a member of the Oneida Community and author of *American Communities*. Courtesy of the William A. Hinds Collection, Syracuse University Library.

A Note from the Editor

VOLUME SEVEN marks a changing of the guard. Mario De Pillis, who saw *Communal Societies* through years of remarkable growth, has relinquished the editorship with what must be mingled feelings of pride and liberation. He brought to CS a rare combination of intellectual breadth and sensitivity to language. As in the past, the journal remains committed to multidisciplinary scholarship, for communal societies, more than most subjects, stands at the intersection of the humanities, the social sciences, and their constituent disciplines.

In recent years, no communal societies have excited as broad and intense an interest in both scholars and the public as the Shakers. In a sad irony, interest rises as their numbers dwindle away. The present issue of *Communal Societies* rides the crest of this boom in Shaker research, with four studies that range from art to the life cycle. Jane F. Crosthwaite's study of the art of Hannah Cohoon unpeels some of the layered historical puzzles of art produced by and for a people who had foresworn all decoration. Hannah Cohoon's most famous painting, "The Tree of Life," made a broadly noted reappearance in the Whitney Museum exhibition, "Shaker Design," last year. Although scholars of Shakerism have always noted the special role played by its women, a new sensitivity to gender distinctions requires a re-examination of role divisions in Shakerism, an enterprise Karen and Pamela Nickless advance in their study of the reluctance with which Shaker women were finally granted full economic equality. A similar insistence on the need to critically assess the "conventional wisdom" informs Priscilla Brewer's demographic study, which not only argues smaller than traditional size but an earlier than expected onset of Shaker decline. Finally, on an appropriately elegiac note, Barbara Rotundo describes the austerity with which Shakers marked the end of the earthly life-cycle.

The remaining articles define a terrain broader in both space and time. Focusing on the neglected Topolobampo Colony in Mexico, Bennett

Lowenthal reminds us that communitarians had a peculiar gift for seeking out geographically obscure spots, as if to give concrete meaning to the etymology of "utopia." If communitarianism has sometimes grown in strange and isolated places, its practitioners have interlocked in a complex network scholars are only beginning to map. Kit Firth Cress's study of the intertwined careers of Josiah Warren, Robert Smith, and Peter Kaufmann advances that enterprise, as well as describing bridges between Shaker and non-Shaker communitarians. The nineteenth-century claims most of the attention among authors in this issue, and indeed we may know more about communal societies of 150 years ago than those of more recent decades. This historical hyperopia receives some correction in Francis Shor's study of a community of the 1930's, Sunrise Colony. As the Association's members can attest, knowledge of past communal societies is often difficult to come by. Geographical isolation, social marginality, and the conventions of official record-keeping all work against it, which makes Mark Weimer's description of the files of William A. Hinds all the more welcome, for it gives access to the newly discovered working papers of one of American communalism's most indefatigable ethnographers.

In short, a rich communitarian stew, and, I hope, the harbinger of others to come.

Michael Barkun
November 1987