

The William A. Hinds *American Communities* Collection

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Men will not be content to live every man for himself. In work, in art, in study, in trade—in all life, indeed—the children of God, called by a Savior's voice, will wish to live in the common cause. They will live for the common wealth,—this is the modern phrase. They will bear each other's burdens,—this is the phrase of Paul. They will live in the life of Love.

—Edward Everett Hale.

In 1982 the Oneida Community Historical Committee transferred to Syracuse University the extant records of the Community and thereby established the Syracuse University Library as the official repository for the records of the Oneida Community. With certain exceptions, these records will be largely inaccessible to researchers until 1991 to allow for the processing and microfilming of the manuscripts, and the preparation of a documentary edition of selected papers. However, included in this larger collection are thirteen archival boxes of original research files developed by William Hinds for the revised editions of his *American Communities* which are now open to scholars. These files include his correspondence with individuals and communities, together with those documents which he received in connection with a questionnaire which he employed in his research. This collection is an important and largely untapped resource available to those interested in the history of nineteenth-century communal societies in America.

William A. Hinds lived for more than sixty years in the Oneida Community. His choice of the Hale quotation for the title page of the 1908 edition of his *American Communities* well expressed his own commitment to communistic and cooperative living.

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Born in 1833 and apprenticed to John Humphrey Noyes' brother-in-law, John Miller, at age fourteen in Putney, Vermont, Hinds became a part of the Perfectionist Putney Community in its earliest years. He remained associated with the Oneida Community, the successor community, through its entire existence as a communistic society. When the Community was reorganized as a joint-stock company in 1881, Hinds was chosen to be a member of the first board of directors. He afterwards filled the offices of secretary and treasurer, and president of Oneida Community Ltd., a position he held from 1903 until his death in 1910.

As a member of the Oneida Community, Hinds played a prominent role as contributor to and editor of the *Oneida Circular*, as frequent superintendent of the Community's principal industries, and, throughout, as a leading member of the governing committees. At the advanced (for that time) age of thirty-four, he entered the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale and graduated with honors in 1870. A lifelong disciple of John Humphrey Noyes, Hinds was said to have committed to memory, on a wager for one dollar, the whole of Noyes' argument for "Salvation from Sin in this World," as printed on about forty octavo pages. His remarkable energy, inquisitiveness, and memory were cited often by his contemporaries.

The study of the history of American communistic societies was largely initiated in the Oneida Community as a result of Noyes' interest in communicating with other groups through the exchange of visitors and by the publication of reports in the Community's newspapers. In 1870 Noyes published his *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia: Lippincott), a survey of forty-seven communities deriving from the researches of A. J. MacDonald. MacDonald's manuscripts,¹ the result of extensive travel to communities and correspondence with founders and members of numerous groups between 1842 and 1854, had passed into Noyes' hands and provided him with rich primary sources for his study.

Journalist Charles Nordhoff issued in 1875 his *Communistic Societies of the United States* (New York: Harper & Brothers). That work was based on the author's visits to communities and offered a more current and somewhat more detached view of communal societies than Noyes' work. Nordhoff was generally sympathetic toward these communal undertakings, seeing in them alternatives to the labor-oriented socialism that was gaining strength in his native Germany.

The year after the appearance of Nordhoff's work, Hinds was dispatched by the Oneida Community to visit many of the same communistic and socialistic societies and report his findings in the *American Socialist*, the Community's last serial publication. These findings were

1. A. J. MacDonald, "Communities in the United States," Manuscript collection in Beinecke Library, Yale University.

collected in 1878 and issued under the title *American Communities* (Oneida: Office of the American Socialist). Hinds' work was not intended to compete with the work of Noyes and Nordhoff; rather, he suggested that "thousands who might be glad to acquaint themselves with the results of practical Communism in this country cannot afford to purchase these large and comparatively expensive works" and that the availability of his book would possibly stimulate demand for those more comprehensive studies.

While not broadly distributed, Hinds' work was, nonetheless, well received. Following the breakup of the Oneida Community, Hinds devoted his energies toward the business concerns of Oneida Community Ltd. However, he remained committed to the principles of communistic living and was extremely active in developing community organizations and structures to supplant those lost by the dissolution of the old Community. He also continued to gather information to revise and expand *American Communities*. Using the structured survey approach of a twentieth-century social scientist, Hinds contacted as many colonies as he could identify to bring his work "down to date." Fortunately, a copy of this questionnaire survives in the Collection and is appended below (Appendix 1). While most of the respondents were not systematic in providing answers to each question, the document is both revealing of Hinds' own orientation and special interests and suggestive of the type of material, including printed and manuscript constitutions, bylaws and incorporation documents, photographs, pamphlets, and newspapers, that he received in reply.

In 1902 Hinds published a new edition (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr), which he again expanded as a "second revision" in 1908. These extensions of his work, based on the results of his correspondence and survey of communities, enlarged its coverage to more than 140 communistic enterprises and secured its place as an authoritative primary source for information on American communistic societies before 1908. Other surveys have been prepared in this century carrying on the tradition established through the seminal work of MacDonald, Noyes, Nordhoff, and Hinds.²

A list of communities represented in the Hinds Collection is appended (Appendix 2), and scholars interested in further information are invited to communicate with the author.

2. From the important survey and census literature can be mentioned: Alexander Kent, "Cooperative Communities in the United States," *Bulletin of the Department of Labor* 35 (July 1901): 563-646; F. A. Bushee, "Communistic Societies in the United States," *Political Science Quarterly* 20 (December 1905): 625-664; Ralph Albertson, "A Survey of Mutualistic Communities in America," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 3 (October 1936): 375-444; and Robert S. Fogarty, *Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980).

Appendix I

American Communities Questionnaire

1. Name of the communistic or cooperative society described.
2. When and where was this society started?
3. How many members are there of each sex; also how many children under 15 years of age?
4. What was the nature of the site chosen?
5. What property does the society own, and what is its valuation?
6. Is the society in debt? If so, to what extent?
7. Has the society received help from outside sources?
8. Is the society incorporated?
9. What are the requirements for admission into the society?
10. What nationalities are represented in the society?
11. What are the industries of the society?
12. What are the hours of work?
13. Do they employ outside help?
14. What are the regulations respecting the distribution of the products?
15. What comprises the executive head of the community, and what is the form of government?
16. Do all members, male and female, have equal rights and privileges?
17. What are the rules of discipline?
18. Is the society on a religious basis? If so, what is the form of their belief?
19. If they are not on a religious basis, what is their attitude toward religion?
20. What is their attitude toward the relation of the sexes?
21. Has the society met with any losses, either from dishonesty in management, or from any other causes?
22. Can I obtain a copy of the constitution or of any other document which will help me to understand the principles of the society?
23. If the society has disbanded, please state as fully as possible the reasons for the action. Was there disagreement, or lack of funds?
24. Further remarks may be made on the other side of this sheet.

Appendix 2

Communities Represented in the William A. Hinds
American Communities Collection³

Adonai Shomo Corporation, or Community of Fullerites (1861-1897),
Petersham, Worcester County, Massachusetts
Altruist Community (1907-1911), Sulphur Springs, Jefferson County,
Missouri

including:

Mutual Aid Community (1883-1887)
Amana Society, or the Society of True Inspiration (1843-1932), Ebenezer, Erie County, New York; and Amana, Iowa County, Iowa
Aurora Community (1856-1881), Aurora, Marion County, Oregon
Bayside Communistic Colony, Bayside, Long Island, New York
Bethel Community (1844-1880), Bethel, Shelby County, Missouri
Bishop Hill Colony (1846-1862), Bishop Hill, Henry County, Illinois
Brook Farm (1841-1847), West Roxbury, Norfolk (now Suffolk) County, Massachusetts

Brotherhood of the New Life (1851-1900)

including:

Mountain Cove Community (1851-1853), Mountain Cove, Virginia (now West Virginia)
Amenia Community (1863-1867), Amenia, Dutchess County, New York
Brocton Community (1867-1881), Brocton, Chautauqua County, New York
Fountain Grove Community (1876-1900), Fountain Grove, Sonoma County, California
Buena Vista Colony, or Great Western Co-operative Home-Building Association (19017-1919), Buena Vista, Colorado
Celesta (1852-1864), Celesta, Sullivan County, Pennsylvania
Christian Commonwealth Colony (1896-1900), Commonwealth, Muskegee County, Georgia

including:

Right Relationship League, Chicago, Illinois
Christian Cooperative Association (1898-1902?), Clay Center, Clay County, Kansas
Christian Social Association (1899-1904), Sarona, Wisconsin
Civic Brotherhood Church, Washington, D.C.

3. Community names, time periods, and locations have been somewhat standardized using Otohiko Okugawa's "Annotated list of Communal and Utopian Societies, 1787-1919," in Fogarty, R., *op. cit.*

- Colorado Cooperative Company (1894-1910), Nucla, Montrose County, Colorado
- Co-operative Association of America (1900-1906?), Lewiston, Androscoggin County, Maine
- Co-operative Brotherhood, or Burley Colony (1898-1908), Burley, Kitsap County, Washington
- Co-operative Christian Federation (1902), Christadelphia, Benton County, Oregon
- Cooperative Commonwealth of Idaho (1898?)
- Cooperative Industrial Colony (1899?-1901?), Milner's Store, Camp Creek, Georgia
- Co-operative Union (1901), Ocala, Florida
- Cosme Colony (1901-1902?), Paraguay, South America
- Dansville Sanitarium—see: Our Home on the Hillside
- Davisite Kingdom of Heaven (1867-1881), near Walla Walla, Walla Walla County, Washington
- Doukhobor (1899-), Transcaucasus, Russia; and Manitoba, Canada
- Eclectic Phalanx—see: Virginia Phalanx
- Eden Society (1907-1908), Baxter Springs, Cherokee County, Kansas
- Ephrata Colony, or the Solitary Brethren of the Community of the Seventh Day Baptists (1732-1770), Ephrata, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania
- Equality, or Brotherhood of the Cooperative Commonwealth (later reorganized as Freeland) (1897-1907), Equality, Skagit County, Washington
- Equality Industrial Association (1899?-1901?), Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma
- Esoteric Fraternity (1893?-1907), Applegate, California
- Fairhope Industrial Association (1895-present), Fairhope, Baldwin County, Alabama
- Farist Community (1870?), Monticello, Minnesota
- Farmers and Mechanics Co-operative Association (1870?), Missouri
- Farmers' Incorporated Co-operative Society (1889-1902?), Rockwell, Iowa
- Freedom Colony (1897-1905), Fulton, Bourbon County, Kansas
- Freeland Association (formerly Equality, or Brotherhood of the Cooperative Commonwealth) (1901-1907), Whidby Island, Island County, Washington
- Friendship Community (1872-1877), Buffalo, Dallas County, Missouri
- Fullerites—see: Adonai Shomo Corporation
- Gibbs Cooperative Colony (1901-1905?), Gibbs, Santa Cruz County, California
- Golden Life Community (1904?), Independence, Minnesota
- Great Western Co-operative Home-Building Association—see: Buena Vista Colony

Harmony Co-operative Industrial Association (1906?), East Assiniboia,
Canada
Harmony Society (1805-1814), Harmony, Butler County, Pennsylvania
including:
New Harmony, Posey County, Indiana
Helicon Hall Colony (1906-1907), Englewood, Bergen County, New
Jersey
Holy Band (1903?), Maysville, Brown and Adams counties, Kentucky
Home Employment Co-operative Company (1894-ca.1906), Long Lane,
Dallas County, Missouri
Home Industrial College (1901), Devers, Liberty County, Texas
Hopedale Community, or Fraternal Community, No. 1 (1842-1867),
Milford, Worcester County, Massachusetts
House of David (1903-1928), Benton Harbor, Berrien County, Michigan
Hutterite communities
Icarian Community (1847-1895), Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, and
Iowa
Industrial Brotherhood (1898?), Maine
Jerusalem, or the Society of Universal Friends (1788-1820), Jerusalem,
Yates County, New York
Kaweah Co-operative Commonwealth (1885-1891), Tulare County,
California
Kinderfarm—see: Ozark Kinderfarm
Koreshan Unity—Estero (1888-present), Chicago, Cook County, Illinois;
and Estero, Lee County, Florida
Labadist Colony (1683-1727), Cecil County, Maryland
Labor Exchange Colony—see: Freedom Colony
League of Brotherhoods (1900), Syracuse, Onondaga County, New York
Le Claire Village (1890-1918?), Edwardsville, Madison County, Illinois
Life Culture Society (1904), Los Angeles, California
Martha's Vineyard Cooperative Colony (1906?), Vineyard Haven,
Massachusetts
Mennonite and Moravian communities
Model City Colony (1899?), St. Joseph, Berrien County, Michigan
Mutual Home Association, or the Home Colony (1898-1921), Carr Inlet,
Pierce County, Washington
New Harmony—see: Harmony Society
New Jersey Cooperative Association (1901-1904?), Campgaw, Bergen
County, New Jersey
Newllano Co-operative Colony (1917-1938), Newllano, Vernon Parish,
Louisiana
Niksur Co-operative Association (1899), Lawrence (now Wahkon), Mille
Lacs County, Minnesota

Northampton Association of Education and Industry (1842-1846),
 Broughton's Meadows (now Florence), Massachusetts
 Oneida Community (1848-1881), Oneida, Madison County, New York
including:

Putney Community and other Perfectionist branch communes
 Ora Labora Community, or Christian German Agricultural and Benevo-
 lent Society of Ora Labora (1862-1868), Bay Port, Huron County,
 Michigan

Our Home on the Hillside, Dansville, Livingston County, New York
 Ozark Kinderfarm (1901-1906?), Licking, Texas County, Missouri
 Point Loma, or the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society-
 see: Theosophists

Rappists—see: Harmony Society

Reunion Community, or the True Family (1866-1870), Oronogo, Jasper
 County, Missouri

Right Relationship League—see: Christian Commonwealth Colony
 Rochdale Cooperative Association of Missouri (1900?), St. Louis, Missouri
 Roycrofters (1900-1915), East Aurora, Erie County, New York

Ruskin Cooperative Association (1894-1899), Tennessee City, Dickinson
 County, Tennessee

St. Nazianz Colony (1854-1874), St. Nazianz, Manitowoc County,
 Wisconsin

Shalam (1884-1901), near Dona Ana, Dona Ana County, New Mexico
 Skaneateles Community (1843-1846), Mottville, Onondaga County, New
 York

Snow Hill Nunnery, or Seventh Day Baptist Church of Snow Hill (1798-
 1870), Snow Hill, Franklin County, Pennsylvania

Social Reformers Cooperative Emigration Society (1843)

Society of Women in the Wilderness (1694), Pennsylvania

Southwestern & Western Co-operative Farm, Manufacturing, and
 Transportation Colony (1901?), Star, Nebraska

Spirit Fruit Society (1899-1908), Lisbon, Columbiana County, Ohio; and
 Ingleside, Lake County, Illinois

Straight Edge Industrial Settlement (1899-1918), New York, New York

Theosophists (1898-1942), Point Loma, San Diego County, California

Topolobampo Bay Colony (1884-1894), Topolobampo Bay, Mexico

Trappists

United Family (1896?), Worcester, Worcester County, Massachusetts

Vegetarian Colony (1901?), Highland, New York

Virginia Phalanx (1845-1850?), Gilmer County, Virginia

Wisconsin Co-operative Union

Wisconsin Phalanx (1844-1850), Ceresco, Fond du Lac County,
 Wisconsin

Women's Commonwealth, or the Sanctificationists (1874-1906), Belton,
Bell County, Texas; and Washington, D.C.
Zion City (1893-1906?), Chicago and Zion City, Lake County, Illinois
Zoar, or Society of Separatists of Zoar (1817-1898), Zoar, Tuscarawas
County, Ohio