

Communal Studies Association Annual Conference – Amana Colonies
October 9 – 11, 2025
(DRAFT 7/25 /25)

Wednesday, October 8

Preconference Tour - Amana Today. By reservation only. 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Lunch as a group is part of this tour) We will meet at the Hotel Millwright.

Thursday, October 9

CSA Board meeting at the Amana Church

Afternoon – Amana Historical Sites Tour. By reservation only. 1:30 – 4 p.m. We will meet at the Amana Heritage Museum.

4 – 5 p.m. Registration open at the Amana Heritage Museum

Welcome to Amana - Social Hour - 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.

On the grounds of Amana Heritage Museum, Amana

Dinner at 6 p.m. at the Hotel Millwright, Merino Loft “Dinner and a Movie”
Brief Introductions and a Welcome

Following dinner at the Hotel Millwright, Merino Loft, we will be screening,
“Far Out: Life On and After the Commune,” about Packer Corners and other communes in the Vermont-Massachusetts area, from their founding to the present. About 90 minutes. Archival footage and interviews of communal members past and present.

We’ll take a short break (15 – 20 minutes) between dinner and the movie.

Hospitality room open at Hotel Millwright after banquet, during and after movie

Friday, October 10

8 a.m. Registration open at the Amana Church

8 – 10 a.m. Complimentary coffee, beverages, fruit, yogurt, rolls
Amana Church

8:30 a.m. Session locations will be determined two weeks prior to the conference, but all sessions will take place in the Amana Church or the Amana Heritage Museum – within walking distance of one another.

Session 1 Plenary “Choosing the Way” Amana community members share challenges the community faces today. At the Amana Church.

10 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. Sessions 2 and 3

Session 2 Shakers Stirred

Becky Soules, Pleasant Hill Shaker Village, *"Not Worth Bringing Back": Backsliders Among the Pleasant Hill Shakers*

Misha DeBoef-Misyuk, University of Iowa, *Liberation in Church Doors: Women and LGBTQ+ Experiences in the Shaker Community*

Session 3 Roads to Success or Failure

Monica Bhatia, Washington State University, *Successes and Challenges in Fighting Inequality in Cooperatives*

Greg Brown, University of Southern Indiana, *Loose-Tight Coupling as a Path to Community Vitality*

Aleta Toure, Parable of the Sower Healing Center, *Pathways to Self-Determined Blueprints: Expelling Anti-Blackness, Resistance of Divine Feminine and the Grassroots Working Class in Our Movement*

Noon – Lunch on your own.

1:30 p.m. Sessions 4, 5, 6

Session 4 Paved with Good Intentions: Workers Rights, Forest Preservation

Cheryl Coulthard, CSA, *Paved with Good Intentions: Frances Wright and Worker's Rights*

Dan McKanan, Harvard Divinity School, *Sylvester Baxter's Path from Communalism to Forest Preservation*

Thomas Guiler, Oneida Community Mansion House, *The Handcrafted Utopia: Arts and Crafts Communities in America's Progressive Era*

Session 5 20th & 21st Century Communities Chart Their Course

Lyda Jackson, Jesus People USA, *It's All About the Circles: After a Half Century, Jesus People USA Finds a New Path*

Sadie Trichler, Harvard Divinity School, *"Unintentional Community": Pathfinding in the Imaginal Field – Apple Farm Community*

Olivia Casey, nonaffiliated scholar, *Children of the Love Israel Family: An Internal Compass*

Session 6. Why Him? Why Here? How are we related?

Janet Zuber, Amana Church Society, *Considering Christian Metz Today*

Elise Heitman, Amana Heritage Society, *"I am the Vine You are the Branches" The Amana Family Tree Project*

Emilie Hoppe, Amana Church Society, *Why Amana? The Idea that Made it Happen*

3 p.m. Break. Coffee and homemade cake (baked by Amana Church bakers) at the Amana Church.

3:30 p.m. Session 7, 8 and 9

Session 7 "Cooking in Community" Cookbooks Produced By and Used by Communal Societies. With Tom Guiller, Emilie Hoppe, Heather Van Wormer, Susanna Pyatt, Stephanie Carpenter and Cheryl Coulthard.

A panel presentation with time for discussion.

Session 8 Did We Intend for Visitors?

Megan Andress, University of Iowa, *Influencing the History of Communal Societies through Tourism in the United States*

Jennifer Greene, University of Southern Indiana, *Signs of Community*

William C. Kostlevy, Asbury Theological Seminary, *Coming to Terms with Uninvited Guests: The Burning Bush Encounter with Waukesha*

Session 9 Individual Crossroads and Community

Jeff Bach, Young Center, Elizabethtown College, *Pietists, Prophets and Celibates, Oh My! Christ's Assembly's Ohio Congregation at the Intersecting of Old and New Paths*

Tom Kendig, Old Economy Village, *Could Wagon Trains be Considered a Communal Group?*

Rick Marshall, University of Indianapolis, *Shakers: Mindless Automatons or Autonomous Individuals?*

4:45 p.m. Walking Tour of the Village of Amana. Meets at the Amana Heritage Museum. Lasts about 1 hour,

6:30 p.m. Ox Yoke Inn – Dinner
Auction for the Benefit of the CSA

Hospitality Room at Hotel Millwright open after dinner.

Saturday – Oct. 11

8 - 8:30 a.m. Registration is open Amana Church

8 – 10 Coffee/ etc. Amana Church

8:30 a.m. Saturday, Sessions 10, 11 and 12

Session 10 War and Community

Zachary Rubin, Lander University, *Military Veterans and Intentional Communities*

Jon Childers, Amana Heritage Society, *Minnie Dickel Setzer's War – One Amana Pacifist's Response to WWI*

Session 11 Individual Health and Community Wellbeing

Savannah Flanagan, Baylor University, *Women's Health in Utopia: Reimagining and Challenging Reproductive Medicine in 19th-Century Religious Communities*

Jason Stahl, Hutterite Way Pilgrimage Project, *Observations on Hutterite Medical Manuscripts: A Historical Analysis of Leonhard Gagasser's Writings*

Doug Hamilton, nonaffiliated scholar, *Communal TM Morbidity (Fairfield, Iowa)*

Session 12 The Methods We Use and the Questions We Ask

Warner Woodworth, University of Utah, *Survival, Not Utopia: Three Decades of Ouelessebougou Communal Methodologies in Mali, West Africa*

Lakshmi Piette, Earlham School of Religion, *The Difference in Our Dwellings: A seven-fold typology of intentional Christian community*

Timothy Miller, University of Kansas, *Against Generalization*

10 a.m. Break.

10:30 a.m. Sessions 13, 14, 15

Session 13 Retracing the Hutterite Journey and Building Mary's City of David

Jason Stahl, Hutterite Way Pilgrimage Project, *Retracing the Hutterite Way: Embodied Pilgrimage as Communal Historiography*

Sibylle Becker Kilian, Kilian Architekten, Dresden Germany, *From Cloistered Courts to Prairie Colonies: The Hutterites Five Centuries of Communal Architecture*

Evelyn Sterne, University of Rhode Island, *"Everyone is Pulling Together:" Building Mary's City of David*

Session 14 Fictional Communities plus a Reflections on the TM Movement

Luke Felix, University of Iowa, *Olga Tokarczuk's The Books of Jacob – Frankist Narrative*

Etta Madden, Missouri State University, *Pathfinding in a Fictional French Anarchist Commune: A Review of Rachel Kushner's Creation Lake (2024)*

John Estep, Maharishi International University, *Maharishi's Error: A Neurophilosophical Reflection on Left-Hemisphere Bias in the Transcendental Meditation Movement*

Session 15 Sustainability Frontlines Plus a Look at the Campbell Folk School

Susanna Pyatt, John C. Campbell Folk School, *Economic Cooperatives and the Early Years of John C. Campbell Folk School*

Jasper Lydon, Princeton University, *Grass-Roof Homes as Grassroots Hubs: Intentional Communities on the Frontlines of Sustainability Policy in the U.S. and Canada*

Noon – Indoor/ Outdoor Box Lunch Picnic at the Amana Church with cookie buffet from the Amana Church bakers.

1:30 p.m. Sessions 16, 17 and 18

Session 16 The Evolution of Communities

Brian Carroll, House of David, *One Island, Two Communities: The House of David and the Anishinaabe on High Island, 1912-1928*

Carista Davis, Missouri State University, *The Evolution from Seventh-Day Adventists to the Branch Davidians of Waco*

Michael Strezewski, University of Southern Indiana *Harmonie for Sale: The Harmony Society's Stores on the Indiana Frontier, 1824-1831*

Session 17 “Batter – Up!”

Monys Hagen, Metropolitan State University of Denver, *The Worldly Game in Amana*

Brandon Dean, University of Iowa, *Fields of Utopian Dreams: Baseball in the Amana Colonies and the House of David*

Session 18 Shaker Spiritual Force, Innovation and One Man's Feelings

Christian Goodwillie, Hamilton College, *Perverted Spiritualistic Forces: William Hepworth Dixon's Accounts of the Shakers and Oneida Perfectionists*

Carol Medlicott, Northern Kentucky University, *“This is the new creation” Spiritual and Social Innovations among the Western*

Tommy Hines, South Union Shaker Village, *“The Feelings of a Northern Man on Going South” Giles Avery's 1862 Visit to South Union*

3:30 p.m. Session 19

Session 19 2nd Plenary Utopia! The Second Annual Communal Studies Game Show
hosted by Deborah Altus and Tim Miller

4:45 Walking tour of Amana . Meets at Amana Heritage Museum - lasts about 1 hour.

6:30 p.m. CSA Dinner at the Amana Colonies Golf Club – ¼ mile north of the village of Middle Amana

CSA Awards Presentation

Hospitality Room at Hotel Millwright open afterward.

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