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William Hobson and William Keil: Religion and Polity in Nineteenth Century Oregon

Connor Fitzgerald Edmonds

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WILLIAM HOBSON AND WILLIAM KEIL: RELIGION AND POLITY IN
NINETEENTH CENTURY OREGON

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGICAL STUDIES)

BY
CONNOR FITZGERALD EDMONDS

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Title: WILLIAM HOBSON AND WILLIAM KEIL: RELIGION AND
POLITY IN NINETEENTH CENTURY OREGON

Presented by: CONNOR FITZGERALD EDMONDS

Date: April 17, 2006

We, the undersigned, certify that we have read this thesis and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the degree of Master of Arts in Theological Studies.

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ABSTRACT

In 1925, Ione Juanita Beale-Harkness compared the Quaker settlement in Oregon's Chehalem Valley (Newberg) to another Christian communitarian settlement less than twenty miles away in Aurora. Harkness' research showed how differing Protestant faith traditions, separated in doctrinal beliefs, were united in their choice of settling in Oregon as a place to practice and preserve their lifestyle. By focusing on the administrative structure of both settlements and by providing more detail in respect to the historical antecedents of each settlement, this writing aspires to learn why these settlements, with such similar beginnings, are today very different in terms of the religious heritage left by their original settlers.

Harkness' comparison is brief, yet what she lacks in brevity is fulfilled in the originality of her subject matter. Other scholars have studied nineteenth century Christian settlements in Oregon, but none of these scholars have attempted to reproduce Harkness' side-by-side comparison. This research attempts not only to revisit Harkness' dual comparison but also to make a contribution to the discussion on nineteenth century religious settlements in the Pacific Northwest.

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii.
ABSTRACT	iv.
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of Thesis	
Historiography	
II. THE AURORA COLONY: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS	12
Rappite Separatists in Germany	
Rappite Separatists in the United States	
No Harmony at New Harmony	
The Rapp/Keil Connection	
III. WILLIAM KEIL AND AURORA	28
Bethel	
Wagons West	
Aurora	
Daily Life at Aurora	
Aurora's Relationship with its Neighbors	
Drafting an Official Agreement	
IV. NEWBERG: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS	43
Quakerism and Authority	
Quakers Quietism	

Chapter	Page
Enter William Hobson and the North Carolinian Quakers	
Hobson and the Iowa Yearly Meeting	
V. WILLIAM HOBSON AND THE QUAKER COMMUNITY AT NEWBERG	58
Quakerism in the Pacific Northwest Before Hobson	
Hobson First Journey to Oregon	
Hobson's Second Journey to Oregon	
More Friends Arrive in the Chehalem Valley	
Midwest Quaker Evangelism in Oregon	
VI. CONCLUSION	70
BIBLIOGRAPHY	77

I. Introduction

Prominent historical figures like Jason Lee, F. N. Blanchet, and Marcus and Narcissa Whitman are often referred to in general studies of Oregon's religious history. Other figures, however, while being less prominent, still made contributions to the shaping of the religious make-up of Oregon both in their day and in ours. This paper will touch upon two of these lesser-known figures like the German Methodist,¹ William Keil (1812-1877) and Quaker, William Hobson (1820-1891).

Three miles west of Raymond Washington, on highway 6 stands a roadside historical marker that makes reference to the final resting place of little Willie Keil, son of Dr. William Keil² leader of a colony of German Christian communists from Bethel Missouri. The brown sign with yellow lettering calls the traveler's attention to a little knoll about a hundred yards beyond a barbed wire fence. It is on this gentle slope that Willie Keil was laid to rest after the completion of a long wagon's ride west in a tin-lined³ whiskey-filled coffin.

A hearse that served as the lead vehicle in the journey from Bethel Missouri to southwest Washington's Willapa Bay carried Willie's body. This wagon train differed from any of the wagon trains that had ventured across the continent via the Oregon Trail; for, aside from being led by a hearse, the train also had its own band, which played music all along the journey much to the consternation and amusement of many would-be Indian

¹ Keil and his followers called Methodists partially due to Keil's conversion to Methodism. Later, however, Keil disassociated himself from membership in any denomination.

² William Keil did not possess the formal education and training to be a doctor but was so called by his followers.

³ Some sources have the coffin lined with lead (see Hendricks, 52-53).

raiding parties. The wagon train also had its own traveling school complete with a red colored canvas tent. The story of the wagon ride west from Missouri will be retold in more detail later; it remains, however, one of the most fascinating tales told about the settlers who came to the Pacific Northwest. Perhaps more interesting than this mysterious wagon train, however, was the personality and purpose of William Keil and those who followed him.

The settlers (hereafter referred to as Bethelites due to their origin in Bethel, Missouri) who came across the Oregon Trail in 1855 arrived in present day Washington state to live out a lifestyle to which Keil, according to his interpretation of Scriptures, called them. Keil exhorted his followers to share all personal property and to take care of one another's needs out of a common stockpile of stored goods. Ultimately the Bethelites settled in Aurora, Oregon after finding the location around Willapa Bay to be an unsatisfactory place for a permanent settlement due to its isolation from major centers of trade.

The lure of land in Oregon not only attracted Keil and the Bethelites but members of the Society of Friends (Quakers). William Hobson, the other subject of this piece, came to Oregon for land but was disheartened by the spiritual state of other Quakers already living in Oregon. Marie Haines writes about William Hobson's journeys as "disturbing evidence that Friends in the West were living in a very scattered condition," and that, "they were losing their spiritual zeal and devotion through lack of that group life and fellowship which the Quaker meeting for worship nurtures."⁴ It was this scattered

⁴ Marie Haines, *Remembering 75 Years of History* (Newberg, Oregon: Barclay Press, 1967), 3.

condition and loss of spiritual zeal that contributed to Hobson's promotion of the formation of a Quaker community in the Chehalem Valley at present day Newberg Oregon.

Hobson, like Keil, was well acquainted with community building. Hobson contributed the founding of several Quaker communities throughout Iowa. Living a communal lifestyle where everything was held in common was not the motivation behind Hobson's community building efforts, however. Hobson, having arrived in Oregon full of the revivalist feelings of the Midwest, was interested in education, and the propagation of scriptural knowledge among Quaker youth. Settling a community where Friends could work and worship in close proximity, was one way of achieving Hobson's goal of providing an environment where Quakers could preserve their way of life.

The study of the life and times of these two religious figures and their corresponding communities will be the subject of this work. The 1925 unpublished Masters thesis by Ione Juanita Beale Harkness is the impetus for this paper.⁵ In it Harkness briefly compares the Friends settlement in Newberg to another contemporaneous settlement of Christian communists not more than 20 miles away in Aurora. Though Harkness is brief in her comparison of the two settlements, what she lacks in brevity, she makes up in the originality of her subject. Her initial thoughts on

⁵ Ione Juanita Beale Harkness, "Certain Community Settlements of Oregon" (Masters Thesis, University of California, 1925); Myron Goldsmith, William Hobson and the Founding of Quakerism in the Pacific Northwest," (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1963); Ralph K. Beebe, *A Garden of the Lord: A History of Oregon Yearly Meeting of Friends Church* (Newberg, Oregon: Barclay Press, 1968); Robert J. Hendricks, *Bethel and Aurora: An Experiment in Communism as Practical Christianity* (New York: George Banta Publishing Company, 1933); Eugene Edmund Snyder, *Aurora, Their Last Utopia: Oregon's Christian Commune* (Portland, Oregon: Binford and Mort Publishing, 1993); Robert P. Sutton, *Communal Utopias and the American Experience: Religious Communities, 1732-2000* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003).

these two nineteenth century Oregon communities have served as the catalyst for the author's increased interest in not only Harkness' conclusions about the two communities, but also in what others had to contribute to the discussion on early Oregon Christian communities.

Harkness' analysis is unique in that she is the only scholar to include both the Aurora community and the Quaker community at Newberg. To gain a better idea of what is said about these two communities by others it is necessary to look at what they have written about the two communities individually.

For the settlement of Friends in Newberg, Myron Goldsmith and Ralph Beebe serve as good sources for early settlement and polity; for the Aurora colony, Robert Hendricks and more recently, Eugene Snyder and Robert P. Sutton (though Sutton relies heavily upon Snyder). None of these scholars have attempted to duplicate Harkness' dual study of the Friends settlement and the "Germanic communal society based upon early Christianity"⁶ known as the Aurora Colony.

Purpose of Thesis

The purpose of this paper is to revisit Harkness' comparison, while avoiding what Goldsmith calls her "hasty scholarship"⁷ and to explore aspects of her original dual comparison which were left unexplored and unaddressed. It is the author's intention not only to focus on the lives and times of William Hobson and William Keil, but also briefly

⁶See Snyder pp. 2-4 for a discussion on the description of the political and religious makeup of the settlers both at Bethel MO. and Aurora OR. Snyder nuances the words "German" and "Communist" so that the words are more appropriate when applied to the settlers at Aurora. The author will also discuss these words in context to the Aurora settlement where appropriate.

⁷ Goldsmith, 5.

to explore the polities of both settlements. This paper asks: "How were these settlements governed and administered and how did the polities of each contribute to the endurance of the community?" By asking these questions, it is hoped that some progress can be made in discovering why on the one hand, the Aurora settlement, while having been so vibrant in the nineteenth century, is little more than a point of interest on a scenic byway in the twenty-first. The Newberg settlement, on the other hand, having had modest growth in the nineteenth century, is today the headquarters for the Evangelical Friends churches of three states and is the birthplace of a nationally renowned private Christian university.

It is the author's assertion that Keil's autocratic style of leadership led to a community that was solely reliant upon him for guidance and that upon the occasion of his death in 1877 Aurora was unable to continue on as a Christian communist settlement. In contradistinction to the polity at Aurora, Newberg was run in a more open and participatory manner. This allowed the community to survive the death of its founder, William Hobson, and continue on to be an important center for the Evangelical Friends in the Pacific Northwest.

Historiography

The sources for this comparison begin with Harkness' *Certain community settlements in Oregon*, 1925. The whole unpublished Masters thesis is 48 pages in length and is divided into three semi-equal sections, two of which deal with the settlements that are the foci of this piece.⁸

⁸ The third community explored in Harkness' thesis was a Basque community in eastern Oregon.

Harkness uses the two religious settlements, Aurora and Newberg, “to show the divergence of belief between settlers who were attracted to this utopia in the west.”⁹ Harkness’ view of the diverging beliefs of the Quakers in Newberg and the German Methodists at Aurora keeps to surface-level differences. By concentrating on Hobson’s desire to preserve Quaker traditions, Harkness portrays Hobson as somewhat of a curmudgeonly old man. Harkness’ portrayal of Keil is hardly more charitable. Keil, through Harkness’ lens, is portrayed as a man who used the idea of holding the wealth which the community held in common, to his advantage. Both descriptions are somewhat inaccurate, but Harkness’ main observation that Oregon attracted people with widely diverging traditions and beliefs is accurate.

Harkness was able to obtain personal interviews with settlers of the Aurora colony who were still living in 1924-25, which proved valuable for her perspective on the Aurora colony. These personal interviews, however, colored most of Harkness’ conception of what type of person Keil was. Many of her personal interviews appear to have been with disgruntled colonists¹⁰.

⁹ Harkness, 1. Though Harkness sees a divergence in belief between the Bethelites and the Quakers, the author has discovered that this divergence is not as pronounced as Harkness would lead the reader to believe and that the Bethelites and Quakers were very similar.

¹⁰ Jacob Geisy, a colonist at the Aurora Community wrote in a letter that “The Colony days are best forgotten.” Harkness mentions, in a footnote, that Geisy and his wife had a child, Sarah, out of wedlock. If we take what the traveling journalist, Charles Nordhoff had to say about Keil’s “insistence on celibacy for the majority of his [Dr. Keil’s] followers” (See Harkness pp. 22) then this could be a reason for Geisy’s desire to forget the Colony days. Harkness fails to take the breaking of this, “most notable tenet” as Nordhoff says, into account and allows Geisy’s sentiment regarding the Aurora Colony, specifically, Dr. Keil, to become her own.

While reading Harkness' section on Keil and the Aurora colony it is evident that Harkness held a negative view of Keil. Harkness' tone verges on hostility toward not only Keil himself but the whole idea of a communist community at Aurora. That is to say, Harkness believed Keil failed to live out the communal life, insofar as not adhering to his own requirement that all possessions be held in common, for all the property was in Keil's name. This, according to Hendricks, had to be done for practical legal purposes and did not necessarily mean that Keil was unfaithful to communal living.¹¹

Harkness takes Keil to task on many issues but primarily on Keil's views concerning education and marriage. This is where Harkness' scholarship falls short. Regarding education, Harkness writes, "The 'Doctor' did not believe in higher education and no encouragement was shown to those with a desire 'to be different.'"¹² Keil, according to Harkness, did not want anyone in the colony "who wished to learn anything that could not be directly useful to the colony."¹³ The only colonists to leave the colony to study, according to Harkness, were A. G. and Martin Geisy.¹⁴ Her citation of these two examples, however, is illustrative of her hasty scholarship for it completely ignores the fact that the first student to enter Harvard University from Aurora, indeed from the state of Oregon, was Henry T. Finck.¹⁵

¹¹ Hendricks, 14.

¹² Harkness, 16.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Hendricks, 152.

Finck authored eighteen books including one that dealt with his life growing up in the Aurora colony entitled, *My Adventures in the Golden Age of Music*, which was completed in 1924. Finck in 1881 went on to be the music editor of the *New York Evening Post*, a position he held for over forty years. The omission of Finck's academic and career successes is a glaring example of Harkness' haste and an example which weakens her assertion that Keil discouraged education. In fact, Keil had two professors in whom he confided, Professor Wolff who was instrumental in preparing Finck for Harvard and Professor Ruge, who helped Keil in the decision making of the colonies both at Bethel and Aurora. These three men formed a "triumvirate"¹⁶ of leadership in the Aurora colony.

Unlike Keil, who claimed the title of 'Doctor' but lacked the formal education, Professor Ruge was "a finished German scholar"¹⁷ the same was true for Professor Wolff. The fact that these men were members of the colony, indeed, members who gave council to Keil, points to flaws in Harkness' assertion not only about Dr. Keil's misgivings regarding education, but also about the nature of Dr. Keil's "autocratic rule" which, as Harkness writes, "had a dwarfing, stupefying effect on the minds of his people, the results of which it will take years to overcome."¹⁸

Hendricks and Snyder are more charitable toward Keil and the Bethelites than Harkness. Hendricks sees the lifestyle of the Bethelites as exemplifying what he believes to be the way all Christians should live. Though Hendricks is more charitable toward

¹⁶ Ibid., 48.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Harkness, 25.

Keil and the Bethelites, at times his monograph reads like a panegyric. He highly praises Keil and the Aurora colony to the extent that the reader begins to wonder how any settler survived in Oregon apart from living in a communistic settlement like Aurora.

Hendricks goes so far as to provide a storyline which threads its way through his piece. He tells of a young, newly married couple living in the Aurora Colony who were conflicted over a decision about staying in the colony or leaving to strike out on their own. Eventually, the couple leaves and moves to, coincidentally enough, the Chehalem Valley (site of Hobson's community). Hendricks writes about how the couple became destitute and was forced to move to Portland to take a manufacturing job. This, according to the tenor of Hendricks' piece, was tantamount to the young couple relocating in Sodom and Gomorrah. As time went on, the couple could no longer bear being away from the safe haven (both financial and moral) of the Aurora Colony. They went back and were received with open arms. Hendricks' tale is reminiscent of the parable of the Prodigal Son and taxes the reader's credulity concerning the "utopia" of the Aurora colony, especially after reading Harkness' accounts of interviews with former colonists.

Snyder, trained as an economist, views the subject of Keil and the religious colony at Aurora through an economic lens. Snyder serves as a good source for gaining a sense of how the Aurora community, under Keil's leadership, prospered from the goods they sold to neighboring Oregonians. Snyder's piece provides details on the everyday machinations and inner workings of the colony. Hendricks also provides these details but Snyder is able to do so in a less biased manner. The reader who picks up Hendricks can discern an obvious agenda; not so with Snyder.

Snyder's more objective approach toward the Aurora Colony also provides balance to the opinions of the colony's detractors. Harkness speaks of a cloistered, austere life and of stupefied minds. And while Sutton's work on German Separatist¹⁹ communities seems to support Harkness' claims, Sutton makes the mistake of lumping the Aurora colony in with colonies like Amana, Zoar, and Bishop Hill. These communities did what they could to keep the outside world at arms length so that the purity of the community could be maintained. Snyder, however, tells of how Keil himself played a pivotal part in bringing a major rail road line that connected Portland to Salem right through the heart of Aurora, hardly the behavior that one would expect from a religious leader who wanted to keep the outside world away!²⁰

Goldsmith and Beebe serve as good sources on Hobson and the Quaker community in Newberg, Oregon. Goldsmith's concentration is on the life of William Hobson and stands alone as the only thorough secondary source available on this subject. Harkness had to go to the Hobson's diaries and glean from them what type of man he was. Goldsmith, however, delved much deeper into Hobson's life story through access to family letters and Yearly Meeting minutes from Iowa and North Carolina. Harkness did not incorporate these into her thesis and her thesis suffers for it. One area that suffered from Harkness' surface-level scholarship was her portrayal of Hobson as a dour man who was too serious. Goldsmith, to his credit, corrects this interpretation.

¹⁹ German Separatists: So named for their separation from the State, Lutheran Church of Germany not for their separation from society at large although this type of separation was common.

²⁰ Keil pushed for the railroad to come through Aurora so that the colony could generate revenue from tourists who stopped to stay at the colony's hotel to rest and eat a fine German meal.

Beebe serves as a good source to supplement details given by Goldsmith regarding the historical antecedents for the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends. Beebe's well-researched work with its thematic approach is a good primer for those interested in the history of Quakers in Oregon.

According to whether detractor or apologist was talking, George Rapp, whose followers called him 'Father,' was variously a saint and a holder of serfs; a Godly man and a dabbler in magic and Satanism; a celibate and a man who kept a young woman in his alchemical laboratory altogether too much; a loving father, and a patriarch who ordered the death of his son for rebellious behavior.

Everett Webber, *Escape to Utopia: The Communal Movement in America*

II. The Aurora Colony: Historical Antecedents

Determining the most appropriate point to enter into a discussion on the historical antecedents of both the Quaker settlement in Newberg and the German Separatist colony in Aurora can prove difficult. Chronology, therefore, will serve as a guide and so I will begin with the earlier of the two settlements, Aurora. Further, finding an *entré pot* into a discussion of the Aurora colony's historical antecedents, the focus of this chapter, is no less difficult. It may, however, be as good a place as any to begin with the history of the people who made up a large portion of the original followers of William Keil.

Keil was the recipient of a group of German colonists who were by no means new to the religious communitarian lifestyle. These people were former Harmonists or Rappites, named for George Rapp (1757-1847). Rapp was a German Separatist who gathered many to him through his chiliastic ideas. He exhorted people to live in a pure manner as preparation for the second coming of the Messiah and the thousand-year co-regency with Christ that would follow.

In this chapter I will provide a brief account of the journey that many of these German Christian communists made from Rappites, to Harmonists, to Harmonist secessionists, and to Bethelites, in order to better understand why they chose Keil for their leader. First, I will provide a brief history of the Separatist movement in Germany

during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and secondly, the motivation that bound these Separatists to George Rapp in the later eighteenth century.

Rappite Separatists in Germany

Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), “the father of Pietism,”¹ (a spiritual renewal movement in Germany), in his *Pia desideria* called Christians to a “deep[er] personal faith.” Spener “also called on preachers to set aside their academic tone” and to remember that the “purpose of preaching [was] not to show the preacher’s knowledge.”² During Spener’s day and on into the eighteenth century “Lutheran orthodoxy, dominated by the Faculty of Theology of Wittenberg, seemed lost in a new scholasticism of subtleties about ‘ubiquity’,³ the belief that Christ in his human nature was everywhere and a belief often used by Lutheran theologians of the day as support for consubstantiation.⁴ Pietism, therefore, was a response to the stultification of spiritual life in Germany as a result of religion being perceived as being overly concerned with “head knowledge” while not enough concern was given to “heart knowledge” that is, living in relationship with Christ and others. Pietism served as a critique on what was seen as the more academic nature of orthodox, state Lutheranism of the day.

¹Gonzalez, Justo, *The Story of Christianity: Complete in one Volume the Early Church to the Present Day* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Prince Press, 2004), 205. Justo Gonzalez asserts that “‘Pietism’ in its strict sense refers only to the German movement led by Spener and Francke and it is this *German* pietism the author refers to in this piece.

² Ibid., 206.

³ McManners, John, “Enlightenment: Secular and Christian (1600-1800)” in *The Oxford History of Christianity*, ed. John McManners: 277-309. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 302.

⁴ Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms, electronic version, s.v. “ubiquity.”

Where Pietists, like Spener, critiqued and sought reform from within the church, later Separatists, like Rapp, called for an outright rejection of the church. Karl Arndt refers to the Separatist movement in Germany as an “intensification of Pietism.”⁵ Separatists came in several different varieties as the following excerpt from a 1711 decree on guidelines for how to treat what the Württemberg government believed to be, the four classes of Separatists, attests to:

1. Such as separate themselves from the church for a time out of simplicity, prejudice, melancholy, or simple mental error, but who harbor no doctrines which could lead to unrest in the community, and who otherwise are useful members to human society. 2. Such who extend the tolerance granted them in infinitum, and in spite of all patience cling to their ideas so that their attitude is equivalent to zealous stubbornness. 3. Such as spread their erroneous opinions and try to make converts, thus seducing others. 4. Such as would become centers of turbulence for the common peace, who harbor doctrines freeing them from obedience to the government, and in word and deed come into conflict with civil government and try to build a following.

The first class is to be tolerated, and every means used to win them back. The second and third classes are to be advised to emigrate, not as a punishment, but to maintain inner peace, and their property is to be held in security for them so that they may return to it in case of improvement. Only the fourth class is to be treated according to the severity of the law.⁶

According to Sutton, “Johann Georg Rapp, the founder and charismatic leader of the Rappites and later Harmonists, was born November 1, 1757, in the village of Iptingen, near Stuttgart, Germany, the second of five children of Adam Rapp, a farmer and

⁵ Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Separatists 1700-1803: The German Prelude to Rapp's American Harmony Society* (Worcester, Massachusetts: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 6. See also Delburn Carpenter, *The Radical Pietists: Celibate Communal Societies Established in the United States Before 1820* (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1975), 171. Carpenter uses the term Radical Pietists to describe the Rappites and states that Jacob Boehme was most important in influencing their beliefs, which shared Böehme's mystical tone. See Arthur Versluis, *The Esoteric Origins of the American Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 46-7.

⁶ Arndt, *George Rapp's Separatists*, 12. Arndt states that decrees like this were still used by the Church in Rapp's case.

vineyard owner.” Toward the later part of the eighteenth century, church and state relations in the duchy of Württemberg, where Rapp lived, were close; too close for men and women who, like Rapp, felt that the Duke Karl Eugen, ruler of Württemberg, was a “playboy” who “sucked the blood of his subjects.” Indeed, as Arndt opines, the Duke’s , “corrupt” and “offensive” behavior largely contributed to the success of the Separatists during this time.⁷

Rapp, at first, fell in line with the more moderate tone of the Pietists regarding the perceived spiritual stagnation of the church⁸ but later began to take a more extreme stance when he rejected infant baptism and confirmation, and refused to pay the church tax. It was at this point, Sutton writes, that “the civil authorities, prodded by Lutheran pastors, cracked down.”⁹

Rapp became a marked man. The official Lutheran state church, in particular, the Civil and religious Affairs Office (*Germeinschaftliche Oberamt*) closely watched people who separated from it. Upon the occasion of nonpayment of church taxes in 1785, the

⁷ Arndt, *George Rapp’s Separatists*, 65. See also Sutton, 38. Sutton writes, regarding Rapp’s success, “By 1802, the Separatists had grown in number to about 12,000 and the Württemberg government decided that they were a dangerous threat to social order, perhaps a precursor to a repetition of the Peasant War of 1525.” This low-tolerance policy in the opening years of the nineteenth century may have contributed to Rapp’s Separatists migrating to Pennsylvania a year later, in 1803.

⁸ Sutton, 37. Sutton mentions that “the writings of Michael Hahn and other Pietist teachers caused Rapp to question the structure, rituals, and formal dogma of the Lutheran Church.” Rapp even became a good friend of Hahn but they parted company after Rapp’s sentiment toward the church worsened and he called for people to leave, what he referred to as “Babel,” or the Church in Germany. Hahn’s refusal to join Rapp in departing from the church put a strain on their relationship. See also Arndt, *George Rapp’s Separatists*, xxiii for a brief discussion on Rapp’s Pietism in relation to Hahn.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

church police summoned Rapp before a *kirchenkonvent* (church council) to inquire into his negligence. The issue of Rapp's lack of church attendance was also addressed. When asked about his attendance, Rapp replied that "as a journeyman his conduct had been bad. He had been advised by his mother, by others and himself to abstain from communion until he improved his ways." He tried this and then was converted by the inner light.¹⁰ He further "rejected all trained preachers because they demand money."¹¹

Upon release, Rapp continued to meet with other Separatists despite a decree dating back to 1743 regarding a prohibition against special private religious meetings.¹² The Württemberg government also watched Rapp's followers; Rappite Separatist, Christian Hornle, had a son who was investigated by Iptingen's Pastor Genter for truancy. Arndt says, "It is significant that the boy objects to pastors because they are the product of the 'Weltgeist' (worldly spirit). In that word the *worldly* spirit of the times of Duke Karl Eugen is reflected."¹³

¹⁰ Arndt, *George Rapp's Separatists*, 102. The May 18, 1787 Minutes of George Rapp's hearing at Iptingen shows the "... importance attached to the direct inspiration and the power of the Holy Spirit working directly on the individual through an inner light ...". Cf. this to the Quaker doctrine of the "inner light." See Proposition two, *Communication* in Robert Barclay, *Barclay's Apology in Modern English*, ed. Dean Freiday (Newberg, Oregon: Barclay Press, 1991), 16-45 for a discussion on Friends' theology regarding the 'inner light' or unmediated revelation. It is noteworthy to see the parallels between the German Separatists and the Quakers on this issue.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 67. Early Quakers were also averse to what they refer as a "hireling clergy."

¹² *Ibid.*, 20. The Decree states, "No persons who have separated themselves from the public congregation, from the attendance at church and the use of the sacraments shall either hold meetings of their own or come to the meetings of others."

¹³ *Ibid.*

Although the Church in the Duchy of Württemberg wanted to take punitive action against Rapp and his Separatists, the full weight of the law was not allowed to rain down upon them, because they were protected, oddly enough, by the very person against whom they most vociferously opposed: the Duke Karl Eugen!

On December 5, 1791 the Württemberg Synod wrote a report to the Duke advising that Rapp be exiled "without loss of property and in case of improvement be repatriated."¹⁴ The Duke, however, extended toleration to Rapp on advice given him by his advisory council and the Rappites were again given leave to practice religion the way they preferred.¹⁵

For some time after, tolerance was extended to the Rappites, which gave them ample opportunity for development, both in numbers and in theological formation. Rapp was able to use this period from the early 1790s on into the opening years of the nineteenth century to write and publish his *Articles of Faith* which highlighted the main tenants of his Separatists: Living honestly; toleration; compassion; a return to the way the Church was during the time of the Apostles (cf. Acts 4:32); making oaths to God only and opposing military service.¹⁶

Despite the decade of tolerance extended to the Rappites by the government of Württemberg, Rapp's prevailing plan for his followers was to move to the United States

¹⁴ We see from the Synod's recommendation that the Rappite Separatists during this period were seen as falling into either the second or third classes of Separatists referred to earlier in this piece (see pp. 14).

¹⁵ Ibid., 196.

¹⁶ Sutton, *Communal Utopias*, 38. one can see the close parallels between the German Separatists' beliefs and those belonging to the Quakers, esp. prohibitions against oath taking and military service.

and found a communal Christian settlement. This settlement would put into practice other central beliefs he held beliefs which were not published in his 1798 *Articles of Faith*, namely, communitarianism and celibacy. Rapp's "radical Pietism" called for a life of purity in which he and his followers attempted to adhere to the example set by Christ and the Apostle Paul regarding celibacy, a role more conducive to a lifestyle of carrying out the work of God. Celibacy would, however, figure prominently in the Rappites' eventual dissolution, to be shown later in this piece.

Rapp and his wife, who chose to be celibate as early as 1785, believed that Adam was originally created as both male and female and that Adam was able to procreate by bearing children from out of him/herself. One day, however, Adam became lonely and asked for a companion; God "humored" Adam and separated Eve from out of him. "The Fall of Man," therefore, according to the Rappites, was sexual intercourse.¹⁷

The decade long tolerance extended to Rapp and his followers came to an end, when in 1803 he was "summoned to Maulbronn for an interrogation" and for the confiscation of his "Separatist books, most controversial of which was the *Gülden Rose*."¹⁸ Upon his release in the summer of 1803, "Rapp told the Separatists to pool their assets and follow him on a journey for safety to the 'land of Israel' in the United States."¹⁹

¹⁷ Delburn Carpenter, *The Radical Pietists: Celibate Communal Societies Established in the United States before 1820* (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1975), 171. See also Hilda Adam Kring, *The Harmonists: A Folk-Cultural Approach* (Metuchen, New Jersey, Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1973), 12-13.

¹⁸ The controversy was partially due to the esoteric mystical nature of the books.

¹⁹ Sutton, 38.

Rappite Separatists in The United States

The Rappites (hereafter, *Harmonists*) officially became a society upon their arrival to the United States through the formalization of their *Articles of Association*, which were signed on February 15, 1805. The *Articles* “formally required everyone to deed their possessions to Rapp and a group of officers called associates.”²⁰

Once in the United States, the Harmonists settled in Butler County Pennsylvania on the banks of the Conoquenessing River where they were able to utilize hydropower for their grist and saw mills. Paul Douglas provides many of the details for their first settlement at Harmony, Pennsylvania (1805-14) and the two subsequent settlements of New Harmony, Indiana (1815-24) and finally, Economy, Pennsylvania (1825-1904).²¹ It is his scholarship that shows how the Separatists realized tremendous financial success.

Douglas prefaces much of what he says, concerning the economic success of the Harmonists, by stating, “A good deal of [their] success resulted from the ability to balance religious ideals with the economic necessities of the time and place.”²² In other words, while other utopian communities sought to separate themselves from the external world so as to avoid outside influences, the Harmonists were able to balance this need for separation with the need to generate revenue for their survival by not allowing their religious beliefs to trump their need for outside connections. This balancing of the

²⁰ Ibid. This, formal deeding of personal possessions over to the community leader through some sort of charter was common among collectivist communities in the nineteenth century and would be repeated with Keil in the Bethel and Aurora communities.

²¹ Paul H. Douglas, “Town Planning for the City of God” in *Utopias: The American Experience* eds. Gairdner B. Moment and Otto F. Kraushaar (Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1980), 103-25.

²² Douglas, 103.

religious with the economic was a common feature that will be seen not only with the Harmonists, but with their successors the Bethelites as well.

When the Harmonists first arrived in Pennsylvania, they hoped to continue in the same line of work they undertook back in Germany, wine production. They learned rather quickly, however, that Pennsylvanian winters were too long for them to bring in a crop that would yield the returns they had planned on.²³ After about ten years in Harmony,²⁴ "the leaders of the community were convinced that the growing economic market in the west could be served more efficiently and more profitably if a western location were used as a center of manufacturing and distribution."²⁵

No Harmony at New Harmony

The Harmonists arrived in New Harmony, Indiana, in 1815. Over 20,000 acres of land were acquired bordering the Wabash, "a river substantially larger than the Conoquenessing and one that was both navigable and easily accessible by steamboats from the Ohio River, the main route of transportation from the East to the West."²⁶

²³ Ibid., 105.

²⁴ Sutton, 42. "There was Rapp's growing concern that life had become too comfortable, too easy." He thought that building a new society about every 10 years was essential in order to reinforce communal bonds and promote discipline and morale. Cf. Everett Webber, *Escape to Utopia: The Communal Movement in America* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1959), 102. Douglas says, regarding the move from Harmony to New Harmony: "Worldly neighbors declared that Rapp wished to move only because his people, in prosperous leisure, had time to reflect upon his one-man rule, and that he desired the hardships of a new wilderness to occupy them."

²⁵ Douglas, 106.

²⁶ Ibid.

Harmonist settlements were built in a manner that was seemingly formulaic. Their streets were laid down in precise grids and Rapp always had the largest house built for him. This was, as Douglas says, done because at "at New Harmony ... only the house of George Rapp was larger than the others, indicating a consolidation of his power and a waning of the influence of others."²⁷ Settlements were designed in a manner where those who most adhered to the tenants of the community were able to live closer to Rapp's big house. Dormitories were built for the single males and females, and individual family dwellings for those who remained married. Married couples were able to maintain the prohibition on sexual relations by sleeping on separate floors of two-story dwellings. Outsiders observed that Rapp "fancied the idea of tunnels connecting the buildings that he might rise up 'as if out of the earth' to mystify the ignorant workers."²⁸

The intentional placement of the faithful in proximity to Rapp, along with the underground tunnels whereby Rapp could check up on his followers fell into a process which Rosabeth Kanter refers to as a mortification mechanism. This mortification mechanism was instituted by Rapp, and later by Keil at the Aurora and Bethel communities, to "provide a new identity for the person that is based on the power of meaningfulness of group membership"²⁹ Kanter, in reference to this mortification mechanism, which contributed to an individual's commitment in the community writes:

²⁷ Douglas, 120

²⁸ Webber, 105.

²⁹ Rosabeth Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), 103.

Mortification processes provide a new set of criteria for evaluating the self; they reduce all people to a common denominator and transmit the message that the self is adequate, whole, and fulfilled only when it lives up to the model offered by the community...[O]ne intended consequence of the mortification processes...has been to strip away aspects of an individual's sense of self-determination and making him acutely aware of the presence of others.³⁰

Celibacy, as has been mentioned, was one of the messages of the community that was transmitted from the leader to his followers, but proved to be the Harmonists' undoing. "It had been adopted in 1807 for use as preparation for the millennium and Rapp had always banished those who would not remain chaste." In 1826, however, this all changed. The tenet of celibacy was undermined by none other than Rapp himself when he "began a sexual relationship with young Hildegard Mutschler...even the most loyal members of the community could not ignore this unfairness, inconsistency, and hypocrisy." Initially, the celibate example was established through biblical examples, (Jeremiah, Jesus, Paul) and the contemporary example, Rapp and his wife. This contemporary example, however, was significantly weakened and lead to division within the community.³¹

Rapp's relationship with Mutschler, coupled with his failed attempt at prophesying the Second Coming of Christ (September 24, 1829),³² presented an opening for discontent within the community, a discontentment which was exploited by the charlatan, Bernard Mueller.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Sutton, 43.

³² Ibid.

Mueller, who referred to himself as "Count Leon," claimed that he was a descendent and potential heir to the Hapsburg throne.³³ Among other things, he also claimed to have a secret knowledge of alchemy and to possess the Philosopher's Stone. These claims fooled Rapp.³⁴ Mueller had a charismatic personality and was able to attract people to him through his wild claims. A convenient string of strange coincidences seemed to support his claims, especially when some of his detractors suddenly fell ill or died. He claimed to be the "anointed one," a claim to which the chiliastic Harmonists were especially prone. Rapp, perhaps sensing that he was losing control of his followers because of the Mutschler affair, accepted Mueller's claims and invited Mueller to stay with the community.

The first thing that Mueller proclaimed to the community, however, was that celibacy, in the millennium to come, would be done away with. This proclamation rendered the prohibition on sexual relations unnecessary.³⁵ This was against Rapp's ideology and plan for the community, but Rapp could be held just as culpable for the erosion of the communal tenet of celibacy as Mueller. Furthermore, it appeared that Rapp supported Mueller's proclamation when Mueller was allowed to stay in the community.

Eventually, Mueller's presence in the community became so divisive that a schism occurred. The "internal dissension came to a head in the spring of 1832," when

³³ Karl Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society 1785-1847*, 2nd ed. (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1972; reprint, 1972), 539.

³⁴ Webber, 110.

³⁵ Sutton, 43.

"176 members of Economy went with Count Leon to found a schismatic community, which they called the New Philadelphia Society, at Phillipsburg (now Monaca), Pennsylvania, some ten miles downstream from Economy on the Ohio River."³⁶ Rapp was able to get rid of Mueller and his Harmonists secessionists through a settlement that gave Mueller \$105,000. It seemed, however, as if the ten miles and the \$105,000 were inadequate, because Mueller continued to antagonize Rapp and his followers.³⁷ Finally, Rapp would have no more of Mueller's meddling with his community and got the civil authorities involved.

On September 1, 1833 "a day before the trial was to begin," Mueller (who had been indicted) and "an indefinite number of remaining faithful...embarked on boats...and started down the river in search of a locality which God had revealed."³⁸ The "divinely revealed" location was Natchitoches, Louisiana "a spot [Mueller] chose because of its having the same latitude as Jerusalem which he said made it a likely spot for Jesus to choose for the Second Coming."³⁹ Shortly after arriving in Louisiana, Mueller, as Webber writes, "was snatched off almost at once to his eternal reward in a bout with cholera."⁴⁰

³⁶ Arthur Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), 35. See also Sutton, 42. The Harmonists left New Harmony, Indiana in 1824 after selling the colony property and assets to another famed utopian socialist leader, Robert Owen.

³⁷ Webber, 112.

³⁸ Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society*, 534.

³⁹ Webber, 112. It was more likely chosen because Mueller was told that there was gold in the area.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Despite Mueller's migration with some of the Harmonist secessionists to Louisiana, Arndt writes that "most of the [Harmonist] seceders remained at Philipsburg and vicinity."⁴¹ In Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, after the death of Bernard Mueller, we pick up our story with William Keil. Snyder writes, "It is highly probable that he [Dr. Keil] visited Father Rapp, who was still living [in] Economy."⁴² Whatever occurred at this meeting, if it did take place, is speculative however, the Harmonist secessionists once again placed their trust in a charismatic leader, this time, William Keil.

The Rapp/Keil Connection

It is hoped that background information on the makeup of the people who began their Christian collectivist days with Rapp and eventually ended with Keil, has provided some insight into the Rappite/Harmonist/Leonist/Bethelite movements. What initially began as discontent and distrust of the German state Lutheran Church in Württemberg during the eighteenth century, later branched out into several tertiary points that should be briefly mentioned here.

The Rappite communities of Harmony, New Harmony, and Economy no longer exist as such. Economy, the last place the Rappites settled, has become part of Ambridge, Pennsylvania. New Harmony, Indiana, was sold to Robert Owen and exchanged hands a number of times to end up as a museum and interpretive center.

Those who followed Bernard Mueller into Louisiana stayed in that state to form another community after Leon's death. Years later, in 1965, Karl Arndt caught up to a man in Kingsville, Texas, who claimed to be Leon's descendent. Many in this area of

⁴¹ Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society*, 534.

⁴² Snyder, 29.

Texas, well into the twentieth century, believed that Leon was related to the Hapsburgs. Arndt tells of his encounter with Leon's descendent by saying that he had "taken up the very American calling of an automobile salesman, and when asked whether he was the descendent of Count Leon, said: 'Yeah, this is what's left of him.'"⁴³

As for the people who finally attached themselves to William Keil, their story will be told in the next chapter. Some parallels between Rapp and Keil can be noted. Keil and Rapp were kindred spirits in that they both wholeheartedly believed that the Scriptures taught a lifestyle that was best lived out within a communal setting. They shared an affinity for the mystical nature of spirituality and both dabbled in alchemy. Both Rapp and Keil felt that they were living in the last days just before the Millennium and their messages to their people were heavily laden toward preparation for the end of days. In terms of his chiliastic fervor, Keil was, perhaps, more cautious than Rapp. Keil never made the mistake of setting a date for the second coming of the Messiah; this, as has been shown, contributed to Rapp's downfall.

Many lessons that Keil learned from Rapp and former followers of Rapp were incorporated into the administration of his communes at Bethel, Nineveh, Willapa, and Aurora. One of the most important lessons Keil learned from Rapp, by observing the fallout over Mueller's interaction with the schismatic Rappites, concerned the issue of celibacy. Keil did, however, honor celibacy. Keil's synthesis maintained Rapp's feelings on celibacy and those of Mueller by maintaining the importance of celibacy for those who held fast to it while acknowledging that it was not practical for everyone. By

⁴³ Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society*, 539.

steering between the Scylla of the celibate life and the Charybdis of free love, *à la* the Oneida community, Keil was able to avoid many of the pitfalls of these systems.

Other lessons Keil may have learned from Rapp include the Keil's incorporation of what Kring referred to earlier as "mortification processes." Keil had a slight variation of these processes, and opted for a system of rewards rather than punishments, as will be shown in the next chapter.

Finally, Arndt had a favorable opinion of William Keil and recognized the need for more contributions to Keil's history. It is hoped that this piece can in its own small way join the voices of those who have already added to the discussion on Keil and, therefore, answer Arndt's call.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Arndt, *George Rapp's Harmony Society*, 539-541.

If when he (Dr. Keil) dies, the presidency should fall into the hands of a person who, with tact enough to keep the people together, should have the intellectual culture enough to desire to lift them to a higher plane of living, I can see nothing to prevent his success. The difficulty is that Dr. Keil's system produces no such man.

Charles Nordhoff, *Communal Societies of the United States*,

III. William Keil and Aurora

William Keil was born in 1812 in the little village of Bleicherode in Germany.¹

Little is known concerning his early years in Germany; however, at some point Keil broke "with the Lutheran church and joined with the Methodists, but had finally come to oppose every sectarian creed, having convinced himself that the implication of the lessons of the New Testament was against all sects."²

Keil immigrated to The United States in 1831. He made New York his first North American home. While in New York, he worked as a ladies milliner for roughly six years before moving his wife and eldest son, Willie, to the Pittsburgh area where he heard that there were a good number of Germans settling.³ Keil moved to this region of western Pennsylvania during a period of time in which the United States experienced an economic crisis known as the "Panic Year of 1837."⁴

¹ Snyder, 7. Snyder provides the most precise location of Keil's birthplace Harkness provides other details of his birthplace to include Erfurt and Nordhausen. (See Harkness, footnote 1, pp. 4).

² Hendricks, 3. Common traits can be seen between Kiel and Rapp concerning their shared aversion to denominational differences in favor of the structure of the Early Church as described in Acts (See Carpenter, 176).

³ Clark M. Will, *The Story of Old Aurora in Picture and Prose* (Salem Oregon: Panther Printing Company, 1972), 18.

⁴ Ibid.

In western Pennsylvania Keil found a more receptive audience to whom he could more readily disseminate his views on communitarianism as seen in the Bible. The economic environment of 1837, coupled with the increasingly popular topic of collective living, may have contributed to the more favorable reception of Keil's message of Christian communitarianism. Another contributing factor to Keil's early success in Pennsylvania, other than his powerfully magnetic personality, was the fact that communitarianism had proven itself to be successful, as was shown in the last chapter with George Rapp and the Harmonists.

It was in Pennsylvania that Keil, now in his mid-twenties, met up with some former Harmonists. Clark Will writes:

Keil's magnetism and forceful manner of expression soon drew the attention of some of Rapp's society members, who were well experienced in communal activity. So it soon came about that some thirty odd Rapp Colonists joined with Keil . . . These Rapp "Wurttembergers" became the backbone of Keil's organization.⁵

These "Rapp 'Wurttembergers'," as Will refers to them, provided more than just a backbone for Keil in these early years, they provided a protective shield as well. For although it was true that the people in western Pennsylvania were warmer recipients of Keil's radical communistic views, there were still those who were bent on persecuting him. Some younger men among the former Rappites, who joined Keil at this time, protected him from what seemed like a constant barrage of hostility from outsiders.⁶ The hostility ranged from general scoffing and heckling to death threats. Sometimes, when Keil preached, he had eggs and vegetables thrown at him. Later, as Keil's life was

⁵ Will, 19.

⁶ Hendricks, 7.

"threatened by mob violence...young men who followed him were ready to defend his right to expound his doctrines." Some of Keil's followers armed themselves, much to Keil's chagrin. When Keil learned of this he "counseled patience." Keil informed them that "God would protect them and him and show the scoffers and disturbers the error of their course."⁷ Some scoffers eventually came around, adopted Keil's teaching and became his followers.⁸

Hendricks, writing about Keil's intentions regarding the establishment of a community, noted, "There is doubt as to whether Dr. Keil had in his first plans visioned anything more definite than the preaching of what he had come to believe [was] the true Christian religion."⁹ Nevertheless, Keil's teachings, regardless of his initial intentions, resulted in the formation of a colony wherein the practical Christian communism he preached was put into practice.

Bethel

In 1844, Keil and some of his followers journeyed to Shelby County, Missouri to claim four sections of government land. It was on this land, and upon its later purchased additions, that Keil's first colony was built. It should be stated here that though this was the first colony built by Keil, it was, for the former Harmonists who followed Rapp, their fifth!¹⁰ In addition to the colony at Bethel, a small tract of land was purchased in nearby

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 8.

⁹ Ibid., 5-6.

¹⁰ By this time, some among Keil's followers were experts in colony building. Starting out with Harmony, Pennsylvania; New Harmony, Indiana; Economy Pennsylvania; and Phillipsburg after the Harmonist secession as the result of the Count

Adair County, Missouri, which was named Nineveh. Nineveh became a Bethel satellite community and Keil was the chief overseer of its business in the same way he was for Bethel.

Upon the formation of the Bethel community, a "constitution," or rules for living in Christian community was drafted. It may be useful to provide these rules in full here so that the reader can gain an idea of the different items upon which the Bethelites placed importance. The rules, though having been drafted by the community, also provide a glimpse into what Keil stressed in his teachings. What follows was adopted August 30th, 1844:

Having united ourselves into a Christian society we have drawn up the following rules for a faithful observance and unanimously adopted them:

1. Every member must lay all he possesses into a common treasury and labor for the common welfare of the society during three years, in order to establish the beginning of the common welfare, so that each one might to his own during these three years.
2. This society must not rest on anything else than the love of God, so that every opportunity for selfish gain be excluded. But our diligence and activity must be as an open fountain in order to do good to the poor, that by our means we might be of benefit not only to the brethren that are with us at present, but also to the poor in the future. To this end also shall serve those of the poor who are strong. Therefore a common treasury is attainable, where in all diligence and activity on the part of each member is shown in abundance, and this must be the source from which we must draw continuously.
3. If one or another brother should leave us during these three years, we cannot promise to any one a large requital, because the purpose of this society is not to lay up treasures, but to administer continuous help to the poor, and in this we base ourselves on the Word of God: "Having therefore food and raiment let us be content." But should one or another brother be no longer willing to remain with us, the Word of God also says: "You shall not let your brother go away from you empty." Thus, in this matter also, we shall find a way to deal with the brother, that we might abide in love.

Leon affair. See also Hendricks, 12 for more information regarding the purchase of land in Missouri for both Bethel and Nineveh.

4. Although we cannot promise much to any one at the beginning, nevertheless to the single brother who leaves the society shall be given, from the society, yearly twenty dollars and to the single sister twelve dollars, provided she is eighteen years old, and this applies to such as live with their parents as well as those who live outside their families. In regard to the fathers (men who have families) who leave us, it shall be granted for them, for their wives and their children, under age, the sum of forty dollars for each year as compensation.

5. Should a brother who has brought in property leave us, then one-fourth of this will be refunded to him, and within three years the other three-fourths, that is every year one-fourth, without interest. The house or land is left to the society with all its belongings; the same with the craftsman in town.

6. In case some one should marry within these three years and make a claim for the house or land, this shall not be conceded to him, until all other families which have already been with us are taken care of, after which they shall in their turn be also taken care of. This society, moreover, does not allow them to marry with such as do not believe in our teaching.¹¹ This, however, does not mean that no one shall marry with a person of the outside world, because if such a person is or will be a believer in the Word he is welcomed by us.

7. Twelve men from among us must be elected who will look after the welfare of the society in all things; every single community having the right to choose two men, to whom it must bestow its full confidence, so that when a person wishes to give money for the good of the society it will be handed and entrusted to their care. These twelve men also have the right for the good of the society and for the advancement of the same, from time to time, to draw up rules which are suitable to circumstances, so that we may always be enabled to abide with love and peace, Amen.¹²

Hendricks went on to mention that this constitution was “nothing more than a scrap of paper” and that the real rules for the community were written on the hearts of Keil’s followers, no doubt an allusion to the way the new covenant between God and his people was phrased in book of Isaiah.

¹¹ Parallels can be drawn here to the more conservative among the Quakers of William Hobson’s time in regards to exogamous marriages.

¹² Hendricks, 18.

One follower of Keil, when the subject of drafting a constitution came up, said: "I am willing to put in all the money and property I have, and I ask no receipt or contract – as for me and mine, we ask only the word of Dr. Keil that he will guide us and protect us; we want that, but we wish only that."¹³ According to Hendricks, this kind of statement was the consensus of most of the men who were assembled.

Bethel became very successful and was able to accrue wealth partly due to its location. Many Americans were moving west and many communities in Missouri served as critical preparation points for the long journey west. Shops in Bethel and Nineveh provisioned many of the westward bound wagon trains throughout the mid-1840s and early 1850s. The lure of the west served not only as a strong pull for many Americans outside of the Bethel community, but it also enticed many within the Bethel community as well, including Keil himself.

Wagons West

After about ten years in Bethel, Keil decided it was time to form a new colony in Oregon.¹⁴ Much was done in the way of preparing for the long journey west. Keil, in a manner reminiscent of the thirteenth chapter of Numbers, sent out spies to survey the land. The "spies," selected by Keil, agreed upon "the densely timbered district of the Willapa River in southwestern Washington a short distance above the head of Willapa

¹³ Ibid., 13-14.

¹⁴ Note the similarity in the duration of time that Keil stayed on at Bethel with the duration of time Rapp stayed at Harmony and New Harmony (cf. pp. 20, n., 25). One cannot help but draw the conclusion that there may have been more motivating Keil's desire to form a new colony in the Oregon Territory besides the lure of available and inexpensive land. Could it be that Keil was losing some control over some of his adherents in Bethel?

Bay, which is a part of Shoalwater Bay” as the location of their colony home.¹⁵ Word was sent back to Bethel and preparation efforts were increased.

It was at this time, just before embarking on the journey westward, that Keil’s eldest son, Willie, contracted malaria and died. Before Willie’s death, however, Keil promised his son that he could ride in the lead wagon on the journey west. Keil kept this promise and, without too much delay, had the shops at Bethel fashion a coffin for Willie and reconfigure one of the wagons into a hearse in which Willie’s body could be transported. This open-sided hearse allowed the coffin to be out in plain view of all passersby.

Hendricks claims how 1855 was a bad year for pioneer migration across the continent.¹⁶ According to Hendricks, there were many rumors of hostile Indian activity

¹⁵ Hendricks, 21.

¹⁶ Hendricks makes claim here that immigration by the overland route, in 1855, was significantly impaired because of the “threatening attitude of the Indians.” He cites a letter received from George H. Himes, former secretary of the Oregon Pioneer Association, wherein Himes tells of an unknown number of people who held off migrating for this very reason. Terence O’Donnell, however, puts forward some evidence that casts doubt on Hendricks’ claim. See Terence O’Donnell, *Arrow in the Earth: General Joel Palmer and the Indians of Oregon* (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1991), 215. O’Donnell, mentions that Joel Palmer, (responsible for Indian affairs in Oregon during the territorial period) upon concluding a treaty with the Confederated Coast tribes in September of 1855, returned to his home in Dayton and that once home in “Dayton, he found that in his absence a fair number of new emigrants had arrived[.]” It could be that many of these emigrants came via ship but given O’Donnell’s description of a “fair amount” and the additional consideration that traveling via ship around the horn of South America or over the Isthmus of Panama was cost prohibitive, migration by ship *en masse* seems unlikely. Hendricks, as has been mentioned before, wrote about Keil with seemingly panegyric flair and may have wanted to bestow more heroism on Keil than was warranted. Given this, it wouldn’t be too far out of the main to hold Hendricks’ claim suspect. The benefit of the doubt, however, will be given to Hendricks. Everett Webber also comes to support Hendricks’ claim of 1855 as a hostile year but in Webber’s bibliography Hendricks is cited as the source for Webber’s

and actual hostile Indian activity; when coupled together, overland migration slowed to a trickle. Many of the colonists, though fearful of what could happen to them out on the trail, were confident that Keil would see them through safely to the end of the journey.

Everett Webber describes Keil's adventure across the continent by saying, "At every fort and hamlet – for 1855 was a bad year for Indian massacres – attempt was made to turn the Keilites back." The fallout of one encounter between the German pioneers and the Indians had Keil order the band, which played music all along the route to the accompaniment of the Bethelites' voices, to play. The colonists took up Luther's hymn, *'Ein' feste Burg ist unser Got.'*¹⁷ Here, Webber picks up the scene: "The startled Indians drew up, listened to the music, stared at the coffin in the hearse, and finally left, considerably baffled."¹⁸ Keil and his followers received safe passage throughout their journey. Hendricks made further reference to the Bethelites' kindness toward the Indians they met all along the way.

On one occasion, some cattle went missing and a search party was formed in order to locate the wayward livestock. To their surprise, the search party was given help by some Indians who were shown kindness and fed by Keil's followers the night before. The Indians, upon finding the cattle, were on their way back to the wagon train to deliver the lost cattle.¹⁹ There is little doubt that there were civil relations between the Bethelites

treatment of the Keil and the Germans at Bethel and Aurora. Webber also makes mention of Hendricks' account of Keil as "friendly." See Webber, 431.

¹⁷ Ibid., 61

¹⁸ Webber, 279.

¹⁹ Hendricks, 72.

and the Indians all along the way and, though "wagon trains were massacred before and behind them," Keil and his followers made it through unscathed.²⁰

Further tales of the relations between the Bethelites and the Natives include Hendricks' account of the Indian named Friday (no doubt an allusion to Defoe's character in Robinson Caruso) who attached himself to one of the Bethelites, Rudolf Geisy. Friday remained with the colony until he died, but was "never a member who was held in good standing."²¹ Despite the otherwise good relations with the native inhabitants of Willapa Bay in Washington Territory, the Bethelites struck a cautious stance and went ahead with plans to build themselves a block house similar to the one that Phil Sheridan built, which now resides at the city park in Dayton, Oregon.²²

Upon their arrival in the southwestern corner of what is present day Washington State on November 1, 1855, Keil and his followers started at once in their task of building up a new colony. Before getting too far into the preparation for building, Willie Keil was finally laid to rest along with a few others who died along the route.

It did not take long for Keil to determine that the spies he sent out ahead of the main group took his orders concerning the criteria for a good place to settle too literally. Their instructions were to "select a timbered site, with supplies for their prospective saw mill and other wood working operations, and one removed from troublesome neighbors and with room for expansion." It was determined, however, that the selected location

²⁰ Webber, 279.

²¹ Hendricks, 24.

²² Ibid., 23.

was too far from markets.²³ Keil decided that he would resume the search for a more suitable location in the spring. It was at this time that Keil heard from a man, who had settled in a region of Oregon's Willamette Valley known as French Prairie, that there was good land for the taking. Keil determined to look in this area but in the meantime he relocated his family to Portland and took up a medical practice there.

Aurora

Keil's medical practice in Portland was not typical of most practices; he had a passion for making his own folk medicinal tonics and potions. He showed a great interest in alchemy and this interest might have contributed to forming a relationship with George Rapp, another alchemy aficionado. Keil, before his conversion, was called "among his German acquaintances . . . 'Der Hexen-Doktor,' that is, the Doctor of Magic, the Magician, or the Wizard!"²⁴ Eventually, Keil found land about twenty miles south of Portland and made preparations to leave his practice in Portland.

The land that was found was "already occupied by two enterprising American mill-men, Dave Smith and George White, who had built a small grist mill and saw mill there in 1847-48."²⁵ The area was called Aurora Mills but was later changed to Aurora. The purchase of this property marked the end of Keil's long search for a place to establish a Christian commune. Keil sent word to those of his followers who were still in the Willapa bay area of Washington.

Aurora was built in a way that was typical of the way that Bethel was built and other communes like Harmony, New Harmony, and Economy. There was a large, multi-

²³ Ibid., 107.

²⁴ Snyder, 9.

²⁵ Will, 5.

purposed building built for Keil called the *Grosse Haus*, which also had quarters for bachelors and a great hall where the colonists could gather for meals and meetings. Keil, not being one to shy away from the cult of personality, had "a large-sized crayon bust portrait of the himself draped with flags which adorned one end of this hall."²⁶

Barns were built for animals, machine shops were erected, and a church designed with a balcony that wrapped around the steeple for the band to play from. Later, a hotel was built for those traveling between Portland and Salem, via stage initially and railroad later on. The hotel became famous for its German cooking.

After the first colonists arrived, many more followed, arriving via wagon train and boat from San Francisco and the Isthmus of Panama. The population of the colony grew to include about three-fourths of all of Keil's followers both in Oregon and Missouri, about a thousand people.²⁷

Daily Life at Aurora

According to Hendricks, daily life in the colony seemed to be easier than it was for those who lived outside of the community. Both men and women worked at those things that they were best suited, but there was movement of workers between occupations. Keil allowed for the cycling of people in and out of occupations so that everyone got a chance at something different or more enjoyable. Regardless of regular occupation, however, everybody helped out with the harvest.

Keil used some jobs as rewards for those who practiced what Keil preached. One of the biggest rewards for a colonist was the opportunity to travel to Salem during the

²⁶ Harkness, 12.

²⁷ Hendricks, 116.

State Fair and help out in the kitchen of the Aurora colony's restaurant. Another reward was being allowed to go hunting. Harkness writes, "In the fall, after harvest, a 'Ring' hunt was called by the 'Doctor' who was fond of hunting, though a very poor shot. He often wounded the men stationed near him."²⁸ These were, if one managed to avoid getting shot, rewards that served as what Kring referred to "mortification processes," but in reverse.²⁹

Aurora's Relationship with its Neighbors

The colony was fairly self-sufficient. They made their own repairs and it was a rare occasion that called for a trip outside of the colony for goods. The colony was so successful at providing for itself that they sold from their surplus to those who lived outside of the colony.

Keil took Christ's command "love thy neighbor" to heart and so did his followers. For example, John Wolfer came to the aid of a neighbor who was not a part of the colony. The neighbor was very sick with the smallpox and Wolfer felt it his duty to give succor. Wolfer brought his concern for his neighbor to Keil and obtained permission from Keil to care for the neighbor. Wolfer did so, but upon returning to the colony, brought with him the deadly disease. Lucinda Wolfer, John's wife, died of smallpox in 1862 along with

²⁸ Harkness, 19.

²⁹ Ibid., 200. Within the story Hendricks tells, of the young couple, Asa and Ruth Cushman, who left the colony at Aurora only to come back later, is a side narrative of another couple that they met in the Chehalem valley (coincidentally, with the last name of Hobson). The Hobsons joined the colony and were rewarded by being allowed to go to Salem to help with the State Fair. Silas Hobson, the head of the Hobson household wrote, "It was the treat of my life; to see everything at the fair, and enjoy the visit with the colony folks, and have all of us fed and lodged in a style we never dreamed of – and then to be paid good wages for merely having such a wonderful time – it was too much."

four of Keils' children.³⁰ Keil was devastated and, understandably, slipped into a deep depression.

Drafting an Official Agreement

Keil took seriously his self-appointed role as chief mediator and confessor of the colony and was always ready to settle any dispute that arose. The communist arrangement at the colony was not without its disagreements. One of the main sources of tension was Keil's policy on not letting a brother or sister, when they wanted to leave the colony, depart empty handed. This policy was taken advantage of and Hendricks describes one such incident:

A sum of a thousand dollars was asked for upon pain of lawsuit from a family who made no initial contribution to the colony. They claimed it was owed them for services rendered during their stay at the colony. The money was given to them and it was promptly lost on some real estate deal gone bad. Keil likened this event with the Ananias and Saphira story of the Early Christian church. But this incident led to an agreement of Dr. Keil under which he covenanted with the board of trustees that he would convey to them all the property in his name, save his two dwelling houses, garden and a mule team.³¹

This agreement, signed in 1872, required the signature of all the members of the colony. Colonist Peter Ziegelmeier mistook this process of collecting the signatures of the colony members as the board of trustees taking power away from Keil, and refused to sign. Hendricks writes about how a committee was appointed to "go wrestle with (Ziegelmeier)."³² He learned of the time that the committee was supposed to come and

³⁰ Ibid, 126-127.

³¹ Ibid., 138.

³² Hendricks, 140.

persuade him to sign, and ran away to Portland just before their arrival at his home.

Hendricks continues the amusing tale:

He kept going till he reached East Portland. At that time the old Stark Street ferry carried all the traffic to the west side of the Willamette, where most of the city was located. There were then two cities, Portland and East Portland . . . When stages arrived, the hotels sent their runners with their 'buses to the east side of the river, and at the ferry landing on that side they made a great hullabaloo, calling the names of their hotels. It was a new experience for (Ziegelmeier). He was alarmed. He did not understand. He conceived the idea that the news of his running away had reached Portland, and everybody was after him with hue and cry and a demand for his capture – so he bolted again.³³

Ziegelmeier ran all the way back to Aurora, arriving worn out from his marathon run from Aurora to Portland and back again. Upon his arrival, his wife persuaded him to sign the agreement.

Death and Denouement

In December of 1877, Keil became ill. His illness did not seem severe enough to cause any alarm among the colonists and Keil unexpectedly died. Everything at Aurora came to a halt. Leadership of the colony fell to Andrew Geisy, a trusted member of the colony.³⁴

The colony continued as best it could, even to the point of taking on new members up until 1880. In the absence of a leader of the caliber of Keil, however, the colony dissolved its commonly held possessions and divided the property. There was the added difficulty, however, of having the property located in two states, Oregon and

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 212-13.

Missouri. The division of the property, therefore, became a matter for the federal courts, delaying finalization of the settlement of the property until 1883.³⁵

As late as 1933, when Hendricks' book was published, there was still a neighborly atmosphere among the former colonists who remained in Aurora. Today, Aurora retains some of its charm and is still a destination for antique shoppers. There is a museum where the curious can gather to learn about the life and times of nineteenth century Aurora, but beyond this, there is little that sets Aurora apart from any other town its size in Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley.

³⁵ Ibid., 227.

Sarah Pearson, a Hicksite . . . expressed her belief that Jesus Christ was only a man, and that his mission was confined to the Jews, and that we received no benefit from either his sufferings or death, etc. etc. We were much shocked to hear such doctrines advanced, and expressed our entire disunity therewith, But whilst denying the only foundations upon which the Christian builds his hopes of salvation, S. P. professes to be guided by an inward light, and to hold communion with George Fox, and other spirits of just men made perfect.

Sarah Lindsey, *Travels of Sarah and Robert Lindsey*

IV. Newberg: Historical Antecedents

Many accounts of Quaker history appropriately begin with a description of the foundation of the Society of Friends in the turbulent era of seventeenth century England. It would be appropriate to begin here as well for this research; however, less detail will be provided in order to focus on the main issues that William Hobson encountered in the nineteenth century. I will, however, briefly touch upon George Fox's writings and thoughts along the way in the hopes that what he had to say might help mediate between opposing sides of Quakerism's schismatic nineteenth century, each claiming to be the true heirs of Fox.

Wrestling with Authority

First generation Quakers from the time of George Fox in the mid-seventeenth century, experienced life in a nation that went through a civil war. In addition to the civil war and the subsequent reconstruction, first generation Quakers dealt with a state church, which at that time was lacking in spiritual vitality. These events contributed to the Society of Friends' early emphasis on pacifism and the avoidance of "dead formalism,"¹

¹ Dead formalism refers to sacraments and/or liturgical worship that no longer hold spiritual meaning or vitality, not because they in and of themselves have lost meaning, but because the person, performing what is meant to be an outward sign of an inward, spiritual change, goes through the motions without any real inward change. For a

often cited by early Quakers as a characteristic of the Church. Although Quakers have remained somewhat consistent on their stance concerning peace down through the last three and a half centuries, the first generation's stance against dead formalism of the Church, though accepted by the several generations of Quakers, was not always carried out in practice by succeeding generations of Friends. Dead formalism of the Church, and what the Friends did to avoid it, would be, and continues to be, an issue for many in Quakerism.

Perhaps the problem with authority, or what Quakers held out as a standard by which they based their decisions (e.g. the Bible or the leading of the Holy Spirit) could be cited as a contributing factor to the Quaker tendency, at one point in their history efficiently remain spiritually vital in the midst of the dead formalism around them, while at other points their history to sink into a dead formalism of their own design. The Quaker inability definitively to provide an answer to the question "On what does one base one's authority upon, the Holy Spirit or the Scriptures?" presented problems throughout the development of Quakerism.

The inherent bifurcation in the question above leads the reader into an either/or dichotomy regarding authority. It should be mentioned at the outset, however, that this bifurcation did not exist with Fox. According to Quaker historian, Errol T. Elliot, "it seems clear that Fox and his contemporaries accepted both."² Fox exhorted others to live

more thorough discussion see Jack L. Willcuts, *Why Friends are Friends* (Newberg, Oregon: Barclay Press, 1984), 17-35.

² Errol T. Elliot, *Quakers on the Frontier: A History of the Westward Migrations, Settlements, and Developments of Friends on the American Continent* (Richmond, Indiana: The Friends United Press, 1969), 69.

a life that reflected the working of the Holy Spirit. This emphasis of an experiential life lived in obedience to the Lord through the leading of the Holy Spirit was not, however, a departure from the Scriptures; for as Fox, put it: "I had no slight esteem for the holy Scriptures. They were very precious to me; for I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth; and what the Lord opened in me I afterwards found was agreeable to them."³ Elliot, in support of Fox's claims about the importance of Scriptures says, "the fact that Fox urged of that life 'out of which the Scriptures came' did not mean that he made the Scriptures secondary."⁴

Fox's emphasis on the indwelling Christ came about through Fox's own spiritual awakening. In his early adulthood, Fox experienced a season of deep spiritual turmoil that was little helped by the state of the church in England of his day. He went from one priest to another seeking guidance and was given various forms of unhelpful advice ranging from the singing of Psalms and taking up tobacco smoking to bloodletting.⁵ Fox began to wonder if the need for an intermediate step between humanity and God was necessary. Fox describes the dramatic moment when he came to the realization that there was no need for an intermediary between him and God writes in his Journal:

But as I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those esteemed the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do, then,

³ George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox* (Richmond, Indiana: Friends United Press, 1976), 103.

⁴ Elliot, 69.

⁵ Fox, 72-73.

oh, then, I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition'; and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.⁶

After this revelation,⁷ Fox took to the task of journeying from town to town throughout the English countryside with a message that was sure to upset the established practices of the Church of England. He imparted a bold message, which challenged many of the notions held by the Church. He spoke out against the establishment of the clergy by speaking about the priesthood of all believers. He railed against what he saw as the dead forms of the church – practices, which had spiritual meaning and vitality at one time, but which had become, in Fox's day, dead forms that were not life giving.

Fox saw that people, upon being baptized, returned to old lifestyles and failed to exhibit any spiritual change. Because of this, he emphasized the Baptism of the Spirit rather than water baptism. Fox often imparted his message in churches, many of which were still in session when he spoke. For these, and many other portions of his message, Fox was imprisoned, and so too were many of his followers; some even died for their convictions.

It may be sufficient to say, for this piece, that the first generation of Friends were very evangelistic and risked all to impart their message. This early stage of the Quaker movement is highlighted in order to provide a "baseline," of sorts, by which following generations of Quakers can be compared.

The evangelistic fervor of the first generation of Quakers continued up through the end of the seventeenth century and many were added to their number. One who

⁶ Ibid., 82.

⁷ For a more in depth discussion on Fox's spiritual quest see John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey: A short History of the Quakers* (London: Invicta Press, 1986). esp. Punshon's section, "The Years of Searching", pp. 42-45.

proved to be a very influential addition was Robert Barclay (1648-1690). Barclay joined the Society of Friends in 1667, along with his father. Barclay was a Scottish theology student, who became the preeminent apologist for the Society of Friends. One of Barclay's theological propositions, in his major work, *Apology*, that would prove to alter the style of worship in the Quaker meetinghouses of the eighteenth century was his second proposition, "Concerning Immediate Revelation."⁸

It was within this proposition that Barclay averred that "the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is and can be only revealed."⁹ Barclay did not provide guidance for how the Holy Spirit was to be heard. And where Barclay was either silent or ambiguous, later Quaker writers attempted to describe this process. In their description, however, they unwittingly altered the tenor and mood of the Quaker Meeting for Worship from the evangelistic, charismatic tone, which was characteristic of the first generation, to one of silence in the second and third generations.

Quaker Quietism

After the seventeenth century Friends became more established within their communities in England and North America. The earlier Quaker penchant for disruption within the course of their evangelism was replaced with meetings for worship that were characterized by silence and Quietism.

The earlier emphasis on being obedient to the voice of the Holy Spirit was still very much present, but the method by which the Quakers of the eighteenth and early

⁸ Barclay, 16.

⁹ Ibid.

nineteenth centuries went about listening, or waiting on this voice, shifted. Beebe writes regarding this eighteenth century Quaker era that Hugh Turford's *The Grounds of a Holy Life* played a prominent role in "setting the tone for the Quietist attitude." Turford wrote:

We must retire from all outward objects, and silence the desires and wandering imaginations of the mind; that in this profound silence of the whole soul, we may hearken to the ineffable voice of the Divine Teacher. We must listen with an attentive ear; for it is a still small voice . . . But how seldom it is that the soul keeps itself silent enough for God to speak.¹⁰

This retirement into silence out of the desire to be more attentive to the "still small voice" of the Lord's Holy Spirit became the main focus of the Quakers during the eighteenth century. When this voice was heard Friends hesitated to claim that what was heard was truly of the Spirit. This hesitation gave way to a "better safe than sorry" attitude wherein the Quaker meeting for worship often fell completely silent. A fear arose of engaging in "creaturely activity," or giving a message that was not of the Holy Spirit, an activity that had no place in the meeting for worship. Concerning this aversion to the presence of creaturely activity in the Quaker meeting for worship, Beebe writes:

The fear of 'creaturely activity' and 'running ahead of the Spirit' began to greatly inhibit the activist, expressive form of Christianity which had so characterized earlier Quakers. As a result, many Friends meetings were held in complete silence; one traveling minister recorded having sat through 22 consecutive meetings with only a single break in the silence.¹¹

The Quaker definition for "creaturely activity" would be broadened not only to include those who "ran ahead of the Spirit" – imparting a message that was not given of the Holy Spirit – but also to include congregational singing and Scripture reading. It was thought

¹⁰ Beebe, 15.

¹¹ Ibid., 15.

by some that these things were parts of the dead formalism, since the early Quakers opposed Hymn singing, preaching of prepared sermons, and Scripture study as aspects of a prepared program, not born of the spontaneity of the Spirit. Hymn singing, preaching, and Scripture study had been identified by the Quakers of the mid-eighteenth century as practices that were void of spiritual life, but by the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, these practices, outside of Quakerism, had regained their spiritual vitality. Nonetheless, many traditional Quakers failed to see this. Their failure to recognize the new life in these worship practices, and their continued preference for silence, presented a situation where the silent Quaker meeting for worship became a kind of dead formalism.

The Scriptures were losing their place of prominence among some of the Friends of this time, even though some later Evangelical Friends claim that Fox would not have wanted it this way.¹² Barclay's third proposition concerning divine inspiration could be representative of the feelings many Quakers held during this time. Barclay writes that "because the scriptures are only a declaration of the source, and not the source itself, they are not to be considered the principal foundation of all truth and knowledge."¹³ The ambiguity regarding the place of the Scriptures contributed to a decrease in their use as a standard by which messages claiming to be of the Spirit could be checked. This opened

¹² Cf. Beebe, Elliot and Goldsmith.

¹³ Barclay, 46. To be fair to Barclay, Goldsmith cites that Barclay "sought to place a check on wild subjectivism by declaring that there could be no discrepancy between the Scriptures and the inward voice of the Spirit, and that any who claimed a revelation contrary to the Scriptures must be considered as under delusion."

the door for men and women¹⁴ with powerful personalities to impart their own personal messages. One such man was Elias Hicks (1748-1830), whose message led to the first major schism of the North American Society of Friends in the early nineteenth century.

Elias Hicks possessed the "eloquence that was able to draw thousands to hear him preach."¹⁵ Hicks' message, however, upset many of the more Orthodox Friends especially because of the tendency of Hicks and his followers (the Hicksites)¹⁶ to de-emphasize the authority of Scripture and reshape doctrine concerning the divine nature of Christ. The schism to which Hicks contributed at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 1827 was essentially over a disagreement concerning the authority of Scripture. Hicks and his party believed that Fox and Barclay were clear about the ultimate source of authority, and that the Scriptures were a secondary source. The Orthodox party believed that Scriptures were authoritative and were not to be eschewed or ignored out of deference for messages that were understood to be of the Holy Spirit. That party believed

¹⁴ See Punshon, 171. Hannah Barnard, an American minister visited the London Yearly Meeting in 1801 but was not endorsed for ministry in London because she held similar views on the Scriptures as those held by Abraham Shackleton of Ireland who, in 1797, while performing the duties of clerk of the Carlow Monthly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, "refused to read the Advices and Queries." Upon an enquiry into Shackleton's refusal, it was "discovered that objection had been taken to the use of the word 'Holy' as applied to 'Scripture.'" (See Punshon, 157).

¹⁵ Punshon, 172.

¹⁶ Ibid., 174. Punshon mentions that the name 'Hicksite' did not actually mean that every Hicksite was a follower of Elias Hicks; rather, the Hicksites were comprised of non-Orthodox Quakers who, "much against their wishes, were lumped together under the eponymous misnomer, 'Hicksites.'"

that Fox and Barclay were clear in their views concerning the role of Scriptures in mediating messages given of the Spirit.¹⁷

After the split at Philadelphia in 1827, there was an additional split at the New York Yearly Meeting the following year and a ripple effect of subsequent splits throughout North American Yearly Meetings. The Hicksite parties of the various meetings usually came out in the majority. As the schisms moved westward across the continent to Ohio and Indiana, however, the outcome was different and the Hicksites were in the minority.

A possible factor for the Hicksite flavor of Quakerism being less represented as it moved west was the fact that the Hicksites in the more established east were able to maintain a certain level of separation from non-Quakers living around them. The situation on the frontier, however, was entirely different and there was a higher degree of Quaker interaction with non-Quakers, especially Methodists. This increased interaction of Quakers with other Christian denominations led to a departure away from the inclination toward the quietist style of worship. Maintaining Quaker numbers in the west called for an introduction and incorporation of worship styles that would be more

¹⁷ Ibid. The Hicksites believed that Quaker doctrine regarding inspiration of the Holy Spirit was settled and that the Orthodox party's insistence on the Scriptures as a check on the movement of the Spirit might lead to the loss of "the doctrinal tolerance of the Society." The Orthodox party, however, feared "... inroads of rationalism in the Society, and considered that the untutored traditions of quietism would be unable to resist" new doctrines without an objective standard of authority offered in the Scriptures. For more on the contributing factors leading the Hicksite schism of 1827-28, see Beebe, 19-20. Briefly stated, Beebe cites the low state of religious life among Quakers in the Quietist period as a reason for the inability of Quakers in facing the difficult issues of the nineteenth century and that when there was renewal of religious zeal in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, different evangelical methods had to be employed. These different methods of evangelism were inimical to those held by Quakers who were stuck in the rigid formalism of the Quietist era.

palatable to new converts to the Society of Friends. Thus, Quakerism in the west began to take on characteristics that would set western Quakers apart from their eastern brothers and sisters.

Despite the lower numbers of Hicksite Quakers in the west, however, there were still a good number of Orthodox Quakers who, in spite of having separated themselves from the Hicksites over core doctrinal issues, continued to value traditional styles of worship. A few of these traditionally held Quaker beliefs, which the Orthodox Quakers in the west maintained along with the schismatic Hicksites, were the aversion to having paid pastors, congregational singing, and teaching Scriptures in a more academic fashion.

These practices, if adopted would prove to alter the overall appearance of the Quaker meeting so as to make it unrecognizable as a conventional Quaker meeting. This alteration was too much for many of the more traditional Quakers. The controversy over whether or not to incorporate these practices into the Quaker meeting for worship set western Quakers on a course for another schism. This schism may have occurred sooner if it were not for the infusion of a large number of Quakers from a sector of the country that escaped the issues that fed the Hicksite split.¹⁸

Enter William Hobson and the North Carolinian Quakers

The Quakers of North Carolina found it necessary to leave the south *en masse* due to increasing tensions over slavery. Doing business as a Quaker in the Antebellum south was challenging for those Quakers who saw it as their religious duty to take no part in slavery. With so much of the economy tied to slavery, Quakers had difficulty

¹⁸ See Elliot, 70. Elliot opines on the reason for the absence of the Hicksite schism in North Carolina, by stating that "Perhaps they were too busy practicing their faith and facing issues of antislavery and other problems to have time for it."

maintaining separation from an economic system that was so intimately connected to this "peculiar institution."¹⁹ In addition to the intimate economic connections to slavery, many Quakers were upset over rigid manumission laws that were passed, which revoked the freedom of about 40 manumitted slaves living in North Carolina.²⁰ Louis Thomas Jones provides his explanation of why so many Quakers moved out of the south and into the Old Northwest Territories:

For many years there had been forces at work within the Society of Friends which had made the holding of slaves not only incompatible with membership in the order, but had also rendered the institution of slavery extremely repugnant to the Quaker mind. As the slave power seized with a firmer grasp the economic control of the South, the Quakers there, most of whom were agriculturalists with small holdings, were thrown into unbearable competition with cheap slave labor, and at the same time were held in contempt, because of their objection to the holding of 'property in man', by those in authority.²¹

Whatever the reason for the westward migration of many southern Quakers, their transfer from the south into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and later Iowa may have delayed the controversy regarding the nature of worship in meetinghouses throughout this region. But when the confrontation finally came, the Bible and the issue of its authority once again became the focus of the controversy.

First, it should be remembered that the Hicksite schism and the issues surrounding this schism were not experienced in the south. When the southern Quakers came west to

¹⁹ Stephen Hobson, William Hobson's father, was one such Quaker who involved himself in slavery in an oblique way. Stephen, though not a slave owner, hired a slave to perform some work on his land and was reprimanded for doing so by the Deep Creek Monthly Meeting of North Carolina. (See Goldsmith, 118).

²⁰ Goldsmith, 52.

²¹ Louis Thomas Jones, *The Quakers of Iowa* (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books Inc., 1914), 35.

join other Quakers who had moved from the east and were acquainted with the Hicksite split of 1827-28, the time for the southern Quakers to engage in some doctrinal catch-up was at hand. This issue was further brought to a head with the ministry of Joseph John Gurney and Hannah Chapman Backhouse.²² Goldsmith writes of the effects of Gurney's traveling ministry:

When Gurney came to America in 1837, his efforts were strongly directed toward acknowledgement of the Bible as the supreme religious authority and toward a literal interpretation of its meaning. In thus doing, he collided with the representatives of the Quietist way of thinking, who feared that education would hamper spirituality and who regarded the study of the Bible in the First Day Scripture Schools as an evidence of 'creaturely activity.'²³

Many of the recently transplanted Quakers from the south, who were among the first to settle west of the Mississippi, "kept largely to the ancient customs and ways."²⁴ And the First Day Scripture Schools that ministers like Backhouse and Gurney promoted conflicted with the beliefs held by many of these more traditional Friends. This conflict led to the second big schism within North American Quakerism.

John Wilbur (1774-1856), a prominent representative of the traditional Friends, opposed Gurney on several items of his message, which Wilbur believed to be "creaturely activity." Punshon tells of this confrontation by stating Wilbur was "strongly

²² Ibid., 142. Goldsmith writes, "the effects of the visits in America of Hannah Chapman Backhouse, Joseph John Gurney and other English Friends from 1830 to 1850 was to weaken the ties of Quietism upon American Friends, to lower the denominational barriers and to promote the study and reading of Scriptures." See also, Abel Bond, *Abel Bond's Foot Travels from Atlantic to the Pacific* (Carthage, Missouri: Press Book and Job Printing House, 1889), 4. Bond speaks of the time when Backhouse visited his family when he was 15 years old. Bond said of the visit, "it seemed to be the beginning of spiritual life in [his] family."

²³ Goldsmith, 140.

²⁴ Ibid., 138.

opposed to Friends' ecumenical involvement in philanthropy and Bible societies and anything that looked like preparation for worship."²⁵

Hobson and the Iowa Yearly Meeting

The beginnings of the evangelistic revival are uncertain, but as early as 1859-60 "some of the earliest documented stirrings of this movement were . . . among the students of a Bible class taught by Allen Jay, a young Friend living near Lafayette, Indiana." This group had a burden laid upon them and felt a need to "improve the quality of their devotional lives, such as yielding to the impression to pray aloud, or to close times of social visiting with a chapter from the Bible and prayer." Jones tells of how "a reviving influence gradually began to emanate from their circle as the spiritual lives of the group were deepened through having found a way of satisfying religious hungers."²⁶

Rhoda M. Coffin, a young Quaker woman who was a part of this new evangelical movement in Iowa, tells of how she enjoyed calling on some of her Methodist relatives:

Friends had much to say in their Meetings on the awful solemnity of prayer, of approaching God vocally, but in that family, they came simply to God and seemed, to my young mind, to be talking to him face to face, and I longed for the same privilege. The thought that it was awful to pray to God was repugnant to me. If he really was our Father, He would hear us at any time when we wanted to talk to Him.²⁷

Coffin and other youth like her in the Iowa Yearly Meeting were hungry for something more than the traditional silent meeting for Quaker worship. It became more evident at this time that the Yearly Meeting in Iowa was headed for division. The younger Quakers

²⁵ Punshon, 196.

²⁶ Jones, *The Quakers of Iowa*, 188-89.

²⁷ Ibid.

wanted to, escape “the dead hand of the long past.”²⁸ Coffin goes on to write about her account of a less solemn experience of talking to God through prayer: “At last I went out behind the barn, by a straw rick, and there knelt down, ...and told Him all about how I felt; ...and would he please make us all Methodists, so that we could all come together and talk with Him.”²⁹

William Hobson welcomed certain aspects of the evangelistic movement in Iowa. For example, Hobson did not have much adjustment to make when it came to learning the Scriptures, and so First Day Scripture Schools were not a big transition. Goldsmith writes that Hobson’s mother “very often read in the New-Testament with her little children around her, and much of the Alphabet was taught her children by and from the Testament.”³⁰ It could be that this early exposure to the Scriptures contributed to a more open-mindedness in Hobson that was not present in some of the “dear old Friends” who belonged to the more conservative Quakers.

Hobson’s cousin, John S. Bond could have also played a role in Hobson’s openness to some of the changes in the style of worship that was occurring in Iowa during the 1850s and 60s. Hobson, Bond and Stacey Bevan visited the Bear Creek Meeting in 1867 and witnessed an outcome that would be illustrative of things to come in Iowa as the evangelistic fervor swept through this region and took hold of Quakers, especially younger Quakers. Bevan writes of this experience:

²⁸ Rufus M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, vol. 2, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1921), 897.

²⁹ Jones, *The Quakers of Iowa*, 190.

³⁰ Goldsmith, 78.

We made a brief stay at Bear Creek and held one public meeting at least, where the power of the Lord was wonderfully manifested. Many hearts were reached and all broken up, which was followed by sighs and sobs and prayers, confessions and great joy for sins pardoned and burdens rolled off, and precious [sic] fellowship of the redeemed. But alas, some of the dear old Friends mistook this outbreak of the power of God for excitement and wild fire and tried to close the meeting, but we kept cool and held the strings, and closed the meeting orderly.³¹

Although Hobson was flexible where the learning of the Scriptures were concerned, in other areas adjustment was more challenging. Hobson was a traditional Quaker in the Quietist mold. He did not welcome the new styles of worship, which were brought on by the emergence of evangelicalism in the Midwest, but he did welcome its results in terms of young people being converted. Hobson was pleased that there was revival in Iowa and he drank in this new enthusiasm. He did not, however, attribute this renewal to the newer worship styles. Hobson stayed in Iowa long enough to experience the many good things regarding the spiritual renewal that was occurring, but not long enough for the backlash of the "dear old Friends."

When Hobson felt a call to visit the far west to start a Quaker settlement there, he took with him to Oregon his quietist, un-programmed style of worship. The confrontation, therefore, that came to Iowa over these issues of worship style in 1877 were put on hold in Oregon for another decade.

³¹ Jones, *The Quakers of Iowa*, 164. Goldsmith views the Bear Creek Meeting as, "this trip is especially significant, in that Hobson's record of it furnishes some of the earliest evidence of changes which eventually transformed much of Iowa Quakerism." (See Goldsmith, 177).

Neighborhoods around the meetings of the Society were almost untouched by the influence of its message. Its light did not shine; its voice did not carry; it was existing largely for itself and was inadequate even for its own membership. There was no promise of a great future – the most the faithful could hope for was a long-postponed death. Suddenly everything changed. Enthusiasm was kindled, hope was born, expectation returned, a real future appeared. The old crust of habit was broken through by the bursting force of new life.

Rufus Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*

V. William Hobson and the Quaker Community at Newberg

William Hobson's diary entries for the first of two trips west to look for a place for a Friends settlement have a lot of detailed information on the agricultural aspects of the land and its suitability for long-term settlement. So much information is given on these, more economic aspects of the Far West that it would be easy for one to draw the conclusion that Hobson's motivation for going to the Pacific Northwest was purely economic. This assumption would be incorrect, however, as Hobson felt a burden laid upon him to journey west. Hobson felt he needed to venture to the far west in order to respond to a request from the Friends in California to have the Iowa Yearly Meeting send ministerial help. Abel Bond, Hobson's cousin, was one Friend who answered this request and traveled to California and then to Oregon to pass out religious tracts and literature, but there were Quakers in the Northwest before Bond's travels. Quakerism had no real cohesive structure during the period between 1847 (the arrival of the first Quakers to Oregon) and 1875 (Hobson's arrival). A brief description of that period follows.

Quakerism in the Pacific Northwest Before Hobson

With regards to the regarding the numbers of Quakers living in Oregon before Hobson's arrival, Beebe writes, "There is no way to ascertain how many Friends lived in

Oregon before the Civil War, although it is probable that Seth and Henderson Lewelling ...were the first." The Lewellings arrived in Oregon via the Oregon Trail in 1847."¹

Beebe mentions the first traveling Quaker ministers, Robert and Sarah Lindsay, who in 1859 visited from the London Yearly Meeting in order to minister to "scattered Friends families and do further missionary work." Their travels brought them via the Columbia and Willamette rivers to the home of George Stroud in Salem. The Stroud home "may have been the first Friends meeting for worship in Oregon."²

Abel Bond traveled to Oregon in 1863 to distribute tracts with Quaker messages. Bond's journey shows that there were many people in Oregon who were interested in what he had to give them. Bond writes of his arrival in Portland after having traveled from San Francisco via ship:

When I got to Portland Oregon the wind was favorable for me to distribute tracts . . . I would throw up a handful of tracts and they would scatter around the people who would pick them up and motion for more. The platform being covered with people I would throw another and then another. . They would go for them like ducks for corn.³

Though there was a lot of enthusiasm shown to Bond from the people in Portland, he feared that the Friends were so disassociated from one another that there was a risk that the Friends who were in Oregon would join other Christian denominations. By the time Hobson arrived in Oregon in the mid-1870s, not much had improved regarding the scattered condition of the Friends.

¹ Beebe, 27. The Lewellings brought with them many varieties of trees and shrubs and later established a nursery in Milwaukie, Oregon.

² Ibid.

³ Bond, 36.

Hobson comes to Oregon

Upon feeling "the Quaker 'concern' or 'call' to visit the Pacific Coast"⁴ Hobson asked for and received permission from the Honey Creek Monthly Meeting and embarked on his first journey to the far west in 1871. "Hobson had gone with a minute (from Honey Creek Meeting) expressing the unity of Friends in his prospect of religious service." Hobson also felt that there should be "emigration of Midwestern Quakers to begin settlement of communities on the Pacific Coast." Hobson, having helped in the settlement of other Quaker communities in Iowa,⁵ understood the importance in maintaining Quaker traditions when Quakers settled in an area together. Community therefore, was in the forefront of Hobson's mind when he went west and "while traveling there he gave the major account of his time to the search for satisfactory sites of settlement."⁶

Goldsmith states that Hobson and other Quakers held religion as "a factor in the Friends Settlement at Honey Creek." The settlers wanted to locate "near enough together that they might have an organized meeting for worship and work." Hobson was similar to Keil in that there were specific requirements Hobson looked for before

⁴ Harkness, 30.

⁵ Goldsmith, 146. Hobson seemed to have moved from place to place quite often. This wanderlust was noticed by his relatives, Evan and Rachel Marshall, in a letter dated 1852 the letter stated: "I will here tell you that . . . Wm & Sarah have moved up to the Honey Creek Settlement. Whether there is really honey here or not I don't know & Wm seems to think it is very delightful country."

⁶ Ibid., 245.

deeming a location good for settlement. The factors, according to Goldsmith, "in the actual choice of the location were all decidedly economic."⁷

With the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, Hobson's journey to the west was considerably easier than that of his cousin, Abel Bond. Hobson arrived in California and his stay on the West Coast began in San Jose, California, where he visited his brothers. From there, Hobson went north to Oregon by stage. Hobson's initial enthusiasm concerning his mission to the west coast drained away the further north he went.

Hobson's diary entries, while on his way to Portland, "indicate that he had experienced a complete reversal in his thinking about Friends settlement in the Pacific Northwest." Hobson's entry for May 31, 1871 reads:

I have now seen and collected information of the soil, climate & productions of the Pacific States and am able to compare them with Iowa [,] Missouri and some other corn-growing states. And am of the opinion that mostly people will or can still do as well without crossing the plains.⁸

This change of heart could have been due to illness coupled with the extended period of time away from his home and family. Hobson believed that he had the Grippe and that the moist marine air from off the Pacific aggravated this illness.⁹

⁷ Ibid., 147. The instructions Keil gave his "spies" when he sent them away to the Pacific Northwest in search of a good location to build a community were similar to what Hobson sought in a location (cf. Hendricks, 107).

⁸ Ibid., 242-43.

⁹ Hobson's assessment of the moist air in relation to his illness, whether true or not, figured prominently in his decision of a final spot for the settlement in the Chehalem Valley. (cite the spot in his diary where he talked about the breeze from the coast being broken up twice by mountains and once more by fir trees).

Hobson went on to write: "Some portions of these counties on this coast appear very good: But as a whole it lacks much of being equal to the Old Northwest. My estimate of the N[ew] N W is not quite as great as before I saw it. Yet I have a high estimate of it still."¹⁰

Hobson's mood lightened after receiving news from home and more religious tracts to pass out to the people in Oregon. His attitude changed in relation to Oregon also, or so it would seem from his diary, but not enough to cause him to want to settle in Oregon. So Hobson, after a three-month stay away from home, returned to Iowa. He did not return to Oregon until 1875.

Hobson's Second Journey to the Pacific Northwest

Hobson returned to the west coast in 1875. There is little explanation for his return trip. Before his second westward journey, Hobson appeared to have arrived at a decision concerning Oregon's suitability for settlement; he felt that people could do without crossing the plains, and though he had a high estimate of the new Northwest, it was not comparable to the old Northwest. What then could have been the motivation behind the second journey to Oregon?

His diary entries for the interim years of his two visits give little clue about the reason for a second visit. In fact, in May of 1873, while back in Iowa, Hobson writes of his fondness of the place:

Iowa is becoming beautiful again as she doth each summer as she becomes clothed with a green coat. Soon she will show her flowers then quickly her fruit. After a long and cold winter she gives us a pleasant and productive summer so very good that it seems at least to largely make amends for the hardest winter.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ William Hobson, Diary, 5/20/1873.

Little in Hobson's diaries relate to a continued desire to form a Quaker settlement in the far west during the years between his two visits (1872-1875). One reason for Hobson's change of mind regarding a Quaker settlement in Oregon could be due to Iowa Yearly Meeting's increased evangelistic style of worship, away from traditional quietist styles of worship which Hobson was fond of. It should be mentioned, however, that Hobson did not appear to be as adamantly opposed to some of the changes that were taking place in Iowa as some scholars suggest.

Harkness' portrayal of Hobson, while more favorable than her portrayal of Keil, makes Hobson out to be a severe old man. Harkness' views may have been altered had she known that Hobson delighted in the conversion and spiritual renewal of Iowa's Quaker Youth. Hobson attended a series of sessions at New Providence, Iowa, and in his diary entry for June 8, 1874 wrote:

The last 3 sessions of this meeting were remarkably blessed seasons to many. Many of the youth renewed their covenants with their Lord to be his children. Many of the Old people spake a little to the general comfort of all. It seemed to be the experience of this meeting that in holding 3 sessions (added: per day) we have to cut off too much therefore we think it not the best way.¹²

Given the fact that Hobson considered it a blessing that the "youth renewed their covenants with their Lord" it would be difficult to maintain that Hobson was somehow averse to the movement of revival in Iowa during this time. There was among the traditional Friends, however, a growing disapproval, as has been mentioned in the previous chapter, of the new worship styles, Goldsmith lists some of the new innovations:

¹² Ibid., 6/8/1874.

Among the innovations were the use of the "mourner's bench" or "altar of prayer" calling for public professions of faith; use of congregational singing; calling upon individuals to pray, and working in the congregation to secure conversions. These revivalistic measures, popularized by Charles G. Finney, seemed to older Friends to be hardly consistent with the time-honored principle that religious decisions were made in response to the Spirit, rather than to external pressures applied under conditions highly charged with emotion. The revivalists seemed unwilling to attempt any rapprochement with the conservatives on this point, however, and many painful episodes and the unhappy schism of 1877 resulted.¹³

Hobson was in line with the traditional Quakers in Iowa who were averse to the idea of congregational singing. He said of congregational singing, "It always grieves me to hear people sing in a light manner, God wants nothing of man's contrivings in his own will by which to worship him."¹⁴

Though there is little evidence to support a definite reason for Hobson's return trip to Oregon, there is a lot of correspondence between Hobson and the Quakers living in San Jose, California. It comes as no surprise, given all this correspondence, that the first place Hobson visited on his return trip was San Jose, where he stopped to visit his relations.

From San Jose, Hobson went to San Francisco and purchased passage via ship to Coos Bay, Oregon. On the way, Hobson's ship encountered some high seas, and Hobson's diary entry for this passage is pretty direct in its description of the voyage:

¹³ Goldsmith, 209-210.

¹⁴ Ibid., 211. Hobson said this to a group of school children when he visited them to talk about religious music and singing.

"The wind was strong against us. We all got sick. I vomited 5 or 6 times the first night."¹⁵

Hobson and his traveling companions arrived in Coos Bay sometime around the 11th of June, 1875. From Coos Bay they walked inland. Hobson's view of Oregon had changed since his first journey, now he was struck with its beauty. Hobson did cover some new ground on this second trip but upon reaching the Willamette Valley, he generally visited the same people and places that he had visited on his first journey. He visited Friends in Silverton, Salem, and Dayton. While in Dayton, he stayed at the house of General Joel Palmer and was later able to visit his cousin Esther Markham, who lived in the Chehalem Valley.

Once there, he was very much impressed with the Chehalem Valley and the agricultural aspects of the area. Some of the other places that Hobson visited in order to check for a suitable place for a Quaker community included Walla Walla, Silverton, the Valley of the Little Washougal, the Clackamas Valley and Dayton. He finally decided upon the Chehalem Valley. Markham was unable to maintain the farm by herself, so Hobson moved her to Portland and then purchased the farm for \$20.00 from William Greenwood, a local blacksmith. The farm purchase ended Hobson's quest for the location for a Quaker settlement.¹⁶

Once having found a permanent place in Oregon, Hobson worked hard to repair his newly purchased farm. He worked long days mending fences and chopping wood.

¹⁵ Hobson, ca. 6/11/1875. Hobson's seasickness held on for many days even after he was back on land.

¹⁶ Goldsmith, 258.

On days it rained, and there were many, he worked on the interior of his house in preparation for his wife's arrival. There was one problem, however, as Hobson would shortly find out: Sarah, his wife had no desire to move again to the far west and leave her family behind in Iowa. It was crucial that Sarah Hobson be in agreement with her husband on settling in the Chehalem Valley, however, because there was, at this time, a requirement that the wife sign the mortgage.¹⁷

Due to this requirement, Hobson tried everything he could do to learn from other women in the area about their feelings about the Pacific Northwest. His correspondence to his wife in Iowa was laden with the positive anecdotes from Oregonian women concerning life in the far west. Letters would not do, however, and Hobson found himself headed back to Iowa to persuade his bride.

Beebe writes about Hobson's goals: he "said in 1876 that the Lord had called him to form a settlement which would become 'a garden of the Lord.'" And, according to Beebe, this "meant not only the geographic community which is now Newberg, but the spiritual community which has become Oregon Yearly Meeting of Friends Church."¹⁸ Hobson's vision to establish this "garden of the Lord" was apparently strong enough to eventually persuade his wife eventually, for "within a month after his arrival, [back in Iowa] all of Sarah Hobson's resistance had vanished."¹⁹

¹⁷ Ibid., 264.

¹⁸ Beebe, 3-4.

¹⁹ Goldsmith, 272.

More Friends Arrive in the Chehalem Valley

There was a good amount of growth in the community in the later 1870s and on into the 1880s. Within two years of the settlement's establishment, the Honey Creek Meeting received a request from the Friends in Oregon to be allowed to form a new monthly meeting. The request was accepted and, in 1878, the Meeting in Oregon was recognized as the Chehalem Monthly Meeting.

Numbers were added to the Chehalem Monthly Meeting not just from Iowa Friends, but there were also, as Goldsmith cites from Rufus Jones' *Later Periods of Quakerism*, "...thirty-two certificates ...received, and thirty members joined by request,"²⁰ Beebe interprets the influx of thirty new members within the first year of the settlement from the outside community as a positive sign that "indicat[ed] the favorable impact of Quakerism upon the early residents of the valley."²¹ By 1880, there were 54 members and this number, just two years later, increased to 202 members. The growth in Newberg may not have been meteoric in comparison to the growth that was experienced at the Aurora colony, but it was steady nonetheless.

In addition to the growth in membership, there was also an increase in the institutions that made up the settlement at Newberg. When it was determined that the upper room of the Wood family home, one of the early meeting places for the first Friends in the Chehalem Valley, was no longer adequate for the expanding numbers, a proposal was made to raise money for a new meeting house.

²⁰ Ibid., 278.

²¹ Beebe, 33.

The Quakers in Newberg, unlike the Colonists at Aurora, kept their money separate. When big projects were to be undertaken, however, money was raised through subscriptions, a sort of written agreement to provide a certain amount of money for a project. A failure to raise the required amount of money would render the subscriptions void and the building project would not go through. This occurred the first time the Friends attempted to raise money for the construction of a new meetinghouse. The second attempt at raising money through the subscription process was successful thanks in large part to a traveling minister who was able to urge people in other meetings to support the Friends in the Chehalem Valley.²²

The Quakers in the Chehalem Valley had a concern for the education of their youth and this concern manifested itself in the establishment of Pacific Academy, the precursor to what is now known as George Fox University. Money was raised through subscriptions and many of the Friends, both in the Northwest and elsewhere, contributed. Education was important to Hobson, and in addition to his support for Pacific Academy, Hobson also supported instituting First Day Scripture Schools. Hobson took a vested interest in both the First Day Scripture Schools and the Pacific Academy and was allowed free access to both.

Walter C. Woodward, a student of one of the schools frequented by Hobson, remembers "Uncle Wm Hobson bringing a sack of apples which he happily distributed among the boys and girls." Even in the midst of Hobson's twilight years, he continued to visit the children at their schools and the youth at the academy.²³

²² Goldsmith, 277-78.

²³ Ibid., 283.

Midwest Quaker Evangelism Arrives in Oregon

By 1885, a new railroad line connected the Midwest directly to Portland, Oregon. With the advent of this direct route, the major confrontation, which Hobson had avoided because of his moving out of Iowa, finally made its way to Oregon.

John Henry Douglas was a Quaker proponent of the more evangelistic style of worship that had come to the Midwest and with it revival and renewal. As mentioned earlier, Hobson was not fond of this development. Nevertheless, Hobson was pleased with the results of the renewal that occurred simultaneously with the arrival of the evangelical revivalist style of worship. Hobson, however, refused to allow that revival of youth had any connection to newer innovations in worship. With Douglas' arrival in Oregon, however, this connection became clear.

Hobson and Douglas debated the adoption of the evangelical pastoral system, which Douglas cited as a major factor in the conversion and renewal movement that was occurring in Oregon in 1890. Hobson lost this debate, in large part due to the recent success Douglas had in a meeting where "over a hundred people were converted" in May of 1890. This success served as evidence that proved Douglas' case. Hobson finally gave into the evangelical pastoral system after this clash. After the confrontation with Douglas, Hobson graciously wrote, "I united with Friends in movement under the Evangelistic System, It being now some of the approved Order of Iowa Y.M."²⁴

In 1891 Hobson became sick, and though he tried to maintain the usual rounds of visiting schools and attending meetings, these visits became fewer and further between. At one point it seemed as though he would rally, but after a few month's struggle he died.

²⁴ Goldsmith, 288.

The central idea was the complete elimination of majorities and minorities; it became the Quaker custom to reach all decisions in unity. The clerk of the meeting merely performed the function of reporting the corporate sense, i.e., the judgment of the assembled group, and recording it. If there was a difference of view, as there were likely to be in such a body, the consideration of the question at issue would proceed, with long periods of solemn hush and meditation, until slowly the lines of thought drew together towards a point of unity. Then the clerk would frame a minute of conclusion, expressing the sense of the meeting.

Rufus Jones, *Mysticism and Democracy*

VI. Conclusion

In terms of geography and logistics, Newberg and Aurora could be sister cities; they are both situated in Oregon's fertile Willamette Valley eleven miles from one another: and both are equidistant (approximately twenty miles) from Oregon's major metropolitan center, Portland. Highway 99 West goes through Newberg and Highway 99 East runs through Aurora. Both have a north/south railway line running through them and both have ready access to the west coast's major north/south interstate freeway.

Aside from geography, however, what both Newberg and Aurora have in common is their start as religious communities. Ione Jaunita Beale-Harkness first formally made this connection in her study regarding early Oregon communities. The main thrust of Harkness' comparison of these two religious communities, however, was to show how dissimilar they were.

It is my assertion that these two communities, in respect to their religious beliefs were not as dissimilar as Harkness proposed. Further, aside from the economics -- a difference that is also less pronounced than Hendricks would have the reader believe -- both Keil and Hobson intended to create safe havens where their religious beliefs could be practiced and preserved for their descendents. Preservation of these practices,

however, in the end did not occur, and this research attempts to answer the question: why not? Or, more appropriately, what happened?

To answer the question of what happened to the lifestyles and religious practices of William Keil and William Hobson with respect to their communities, a distinction needs to be made between the preservation of religious practices and the preservation of the religious community. Regarding the preservation of the religious practices of their founders, both Aurora and Newberg have come up short. This statement is an obvious one in relation to Aurora, for there are no more Christian communists of Kiel's style living there. But is it unfair to make this assertion in relation to the preservation of religious practices for Newberg?

Although Newberg is a thriving city in the twenty-first century, the non-Quaker population has dwarfed its Quaker population. Because of this, and the continued need for relevance in the world around them, the Evangelical Friends of Newberg and the broader Northwest Yearly Meeting have adopted new worship styles and practices that would be unrecognizable to Hobson. Indeed, even John Henry Douglas, the Quaker revivalist who brought the newer, more evangelistic style of worship into the Northwest in 1885, would be hard pressed to recognize the Friends meeting for worship of today.

New innovations for Hobson included congregational singing, paid pastors, altars, etc.; today, new innovations include drama ministries, audio/video clips, PowerPoint presentations and other "Emergent Church" ministries. What has remained since the time of Hobson, however, is the administrative structure of the Yearly Meeting.

This administrative structure, or polity of Hobson's Newberg, was much more democratic in its nature than that in Keil's Aurora. It may be that questions of polity,

especially the polity employed at Newberg, can direct us toward an answer regarding why the Quaker community at Newberg continues to thrive while the Christian communists in Aurora no longer exist. Polity may also be a contributing factor, along with other economic and social factors, for why Newberg has a population of 19,530 people and is ranked the 25th largest incorporated city out of Oregon's 241 cities, while Aurora ranks 159th with a population of 660 (little changed from its heyday under Keil).¹

The Yearly Meeting administrative structure at Newberg was, and remains, a system that allows for the necessary flexibility to weather the storms brought on by external religious climate changes. This flexibility in turn has contributed to the longevity of the Quaker community at Newberg.

Polity at Aurora

Aurora weathered whatever Keil sought fit to weather. If need arose for opening the community up to more outside commercial influences, Keil pressed for a railroad line to come through. Later, Keil pressed for a restaurant at the State Fair to promote public relations. Administration in Aurora was not at all complex; what Keil said became the law of the community. Hendricks did his best to offset this autocratic interpretation of Keil by introducing Professors Ruge and Wolff as advisors to Keil, and though they may have tempered Keil's dictatorial leadership, the colonists were still followers of Keil not Ruge or Wolff.

An autocratic polity in the absence of the autocrat ceases to exist. Many had hoped that upon Keil's death, his son Frederick would be able to take over; but this was

¹ Oregon Secretary of State, *Oregon State Blue Book 2205-2006*, Julie Yamaka ed.

not to be, and without an heir to the place of authority at the Aurora colony, the Christian communist way of life ceased. Many of the colonists held out and continued to live near one another for many years following Keil's death, but they no longer kept their goods in a common storehouse, nor did they work together on commonly held land.

After Keil's death and the core communist practices stopped being implemented, Aurora lost its character and began to resemble the other small towns up and down the Willamette Valley. The bands and good German cooking in time went away, as one generation passed on and the following generation failed to connect with the Christian communalism of their predecessors. The Church, the hotel, and other buildings fell into disrepair and eventually were torn down and their lumber sold off.

Polity at Newberg

The Friends of the Northwest Yearly Meeting, which administers the Evangelical Friends churches of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, have held to an administrative apparatus first introduced in the time of George Fox. From its initial level to its tertiary level, the formula remains roughly the same. Starting at the local church, elders are selected from among both the men and the women, and meetings are convened with a clerk (also selected) as the facilitator of the meeting. Meetings are convened for many different reasons, ranging from raising money to repave a church parking lot, on up to more "weighty" matters like spiritual authority or releasing a pastor. These bigger matters are ultimately decided upon at the Yearly Meeting level, however.

Above the local meeting level is the Monthly Meeting, which, as its name implies, meets monthly. This meeting runs much like the local meetings, but the churches from a certain region are involved. Monthly meetings from a major metropolitan region like

Seattle or Portland may address different ministry issues than monthly meetings from more rural or suburban regions of the Northwest.

The yearly meeting, as implied in the name, meets annually with smaller board and quarterly meetings convened throughout the year to address issues that cannot wait for the annual meeting. The yearly meeting has representatives attend from each of the churches. Though everybody is welcomed and encouraged to attend the yearly meeting, only the designated representatives have an official voice in making decisions. The Yearly Meeting has its own elders and a superintendent.

The superintendent has oversight of the several administrative issues that arise throughout the year, but is not the person who is solely responsible for making decisions. Decisions are made in either the several board and quarterly meetings or at the actual time the Yearly Meeting assembles. The term "Yearly Meeting," therefore, describes the aggregation of all the Evangelical Friends churches for a designated area; whereas, "yearly meeting" describes the time (usually one week) when these churches get together. Thus the decisions of the Northwest Yearly Meeting regarding what direction the churches that comprise it are to take in terms of doctrine, budget, recording pastors, expansion, etc., are made at the yearly meeting.

This administrative structure lends more to permanence. And, while there are strong, charismatic personalities within the Yearly Meeting, there is no one man or woman who has complete authority. The authority ideally is given to the Holy Spirit. This can have its own set of problems, however. How, for example, is one to determine what the Holy Spirit is leading the Yearly Meeting to do?

To answer this, Friends would say that there are standards by which the movement of the Holy Spirit is measured by in order to properly discern the true nature of the Holy Spirit's message. One standard for Evangelical Friends is the Scriptures. If a message is found to be contrary to Scriptures, the message's direction is less likely to be taken. The other standard used is consensus.

The premise here is that the Holy Spirit builds unity among the people of God. If a person or group of people proposed something, but failed to gain consensus from the meeting, it would be determined that either the proposed direction was not inspired of the Holy Spirit or, and often the more diplomatic option, that the person or group doing the proposing was unclear as to what the Holy Spirit was trying to communicate. If the meeting was split on something and factions began to form, then the Friends, in a manner reminiscent of the quietist days of Hobson, would "wait" upon the Lord for clarity, or "season" the request with time in the hope that clarity and consensus would eventually be gained.

The problem with consensus as a standard by which to discern the direction of the Holy Spirit is that consensus, uninformed by Scripture, renders the Yearly Meeting, or any other meeting for that matter, prone to societal changes rather than timeless Kingdom Truths. Irresolvable tension between factions that are unified on one way to approach an issue, against another faction that is unified in the opposite way creates discord and, as has been shown in this research, schism. The Northwest Yearly Meeting is alone, however, in being the only Yearly Meetings not to split based upon the issues of authority and worship styles that plagued other Yearly Meetings from the Atlantic to the Midwest. Hobson, Douglas, and their respective parties reached a consensus. And while Hobson

died to himself in terms of agreeing that the evangelistic style of worship was to be allowed in Oregon, Douglas and his party were gracious enough to wait for Hobson to die a physical death before fully implementing the evangelical system.

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