SHADOWS ON THE LAND: SONOMA COUNTY'S
NINETEENTH CENTURY UTOPIAN COLONIES

by

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study:

Between 1875 and 1900, Sonoma County was the site of four utopian
colonies, Fountaingrove, Preston, Icaria Speranza and Altruria.
These colonies had religious and social reform origins, an
agricultural economic base, and a message to present to the world.

The purpose of this study is to examine generally the architecture,
use of space and land, and community relationships of these colonies
to determine if they built in contemporary styles, used spatial
arrangement to facilitate their communal lifestyle, were good
stewards of the land, and perceived as good neighbors by nearby
communities. This is intended as an overview of the four colonies
to determine how they fit into Sonoma County culturally.

Procedure:

To determine how these colonies used architecture, space and land,
and fit into their community, books, newspapers, and personal
memoirs were consulted. In addition, personal interviews and
inspection of the sites were conducted where possible.

Conclusions:

The four Nineteenth Century Sonoma County utopian colonies did not
stand out architecturally from neighboring farms. They used spatial
arrangement to further their utopian lifestyle and, in the case of
Fountaingrove, to control members and insure their adherence to
beliefs and principles espoused by their leader. The colonists were
excellent agriculturists, caring for the land well and reaping
abundant harvests. All fit into the community and were considered
good neighbors.

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PREFACE

Between 1875 and 1900 Sonoma County was the site of four utopian colonies - Fountaingrove, Preston, Icaria Speranza and Altruria (see Appendix A for map). My thesis is that these colonies built in contemporary styles, used spatial arrangement to facilitate their communal lifestyle and sometimes control their members, that they were excellent stewards of the land, and were perceived as good neighbors by nearby communities.

There are many definitions of utopia, but for purposes of this thesis the following was used: A utopian community is basically a critique of society which attempts to bring society to perfection by providing an example of alternative spiritual, social, economic or political relationships. These communities may or may not include a pivotal figure, but they must include a recognizable doctrine or worldview aimed at bringing about that perfection within clear spatial boundaries.¹ This definition was applied to each colony to determine which ones should be included in this thesis. The only one that might not be considered a true utopian colony was Preston. Because Preston met at least two of the criteria, it was included. No other set of criteria was applied because the concept of utopia is subjective and it is difficult to formulate sets of criteria for this topic.

Photographs of Sonoma County's Nineteenth Century utopian colonists show that the members dressed and looked like their contemporaries, and the colonies looked like neighboring farms and ranches. What set

¹Definition courtesy of Daniel Markwyn, Professor of History, SSU.
them apart from their neighbors? How could they be recognized by their neighbors as utopians? They were set apart by their communal lifestyle, which was evident to colony visitors. These visitors saw people working together in harmony, sharing possessions, and enjoying social and cultural activities to which neighbors were often invited. The colonists’ lifestyle was their statement of commitment to their utopian beliefs.

In order to better explain the Sonoma County colonies, information on utopian history is included. Two chapters are devoted to literary utopias and early American utopias. I felt it was important to devote this amount of space to background information because the concept of utopia is imprecise and subjective. Also, it is important to understand that a history of utopian thought and literature existed before actual utopian communities existed. The search for perfection has continued for hundreds of years. Utopian literature and utopian experiments appeared during times of political or social unrest or change and also at times of scientific advances. Knowledge of this background helps modern readers understand that Sonoma County utopian colonies were not isolated or new phenomena.

One chapter discusses why utopian works of literature have appeared over the years beginning in the 14th or 15th century. There are descriptions of selected literary utopias which stress their architecture and use of space and land, with a cursory overview of other aspects such as their method of government. A chapter on American utopias discusses why many European groups came to this country to found colonies. There are some examples of specific colonies, with information about their origins, architecture, use of space, impact on the land, and relationships with neighbors.

California colonies are not discussed in detail because of their number and variety. It is difficult to categorize California’s utopian colonies because of their diversity. They ranged from labor cooperatives such as Kaweah to those based on exotic Eastern philosophies such as the
Theosophists. The Introduction includes comments on why, beginning in the mid-Nineteenth Century, utopians moved west and began settling in California. A separate section on each Sonoma County colony discusses its background, architecture, use of space, impact on the landscape, and community relationships. There is a chapter comparing and contrasting the Sonoma County colonies and discussing their architecture, spatial arrangements, land use and community relationships. The Epilogue comments on the current state of each of the four utopian sites.

An Epilogue was used to discuss the current situation at each site rather than placing this information at the end of each colony chapter. This was done because none of the colonies ended neatly. Some Preston residents met at the church to worship after Emily's death. Fountaingrove Winery continued operation after Harris left the colony. When Altruria disbanded some of the colonists remained at the site for a while before it was sold. Icaria Speranza was purchased by the Dehay family, and remained in the family until Marie Dehay died in the early 1950's. Another reason for concluding each chapter in this manner is that after a certain point, the land of each colony, with the exception of Preston, was broken up among various owners. Detailing the various land sales relating to the colonies from the time each disbanded was not relevant to this thesis. The exception was Altruria because Dr. Burke, who purchased it for use as a sanitarium, completed the hotel started by the Altrurians. I also felt it was easier to discuss the current situation of each site in the same section rather than have this information scattered in four different places in the thesis. This arrangement was carefully considered before I chose to use it to conclude the discussion of the four Sonoma County utopian colonies.

Because utopianism is a broad topic, some aspects of the Sonoma County colonies are not discussed at all or are touched on briefly. These include the question of sexual relationships at Fountaingrove, details of Madam Preston's healing methods, and close examination of the political
philosophy of the Icarians. An in-depth discussion of some aspects of colony life is not particularly relevant to the topic at hand.

Research methods varied. Books provided information on literary and early American utopias. Newspapers, property records at the Sonoma County Recorder's Office, unpublished manuscripts, the material in the Sonoma County History Room at the Sonoma County Library, and oral interviews with descendants of Sonoma County utopians and modern researchers provided much information about the County's utopian colonies. Researching Preston was the most difficult since much of the information was obtained through oral interviews, unpublished manuscripts and newspaper articles. There is very little published material about Preston except in a few books on Sonoma County history.

I wish to thank those who assisted and encouraged me throughout the research and writing of this thesis. Thanks to Daniel Markwyn, thesis committee chair, and Peter Mellini and Dennis Harris, committee members, for their guidance and patience. Edwin and Lisa Ellis, former caretakers of Preston, provided unlimited access to the property and invaluable information, both oral and written, about the history of Preston. They also introduced me to Dale Ross of the Icarian Heritage Society. Dale is an Icarian descendant and provided information on Icaria Speranza and introductions to other Icarian descendants. I received help and encouragement from family and friends during this process and appreciate their support and patience.
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INTRODUCTION

From 1850 to 1950, California witnessed the formation of a number of utopian colonies (see Table 1). These experiments in communal living encompassed a wide range of divergent beliefs including mysticism, spiritualism, Christian Socialism, and labor reform. According to Robert Hine, author of several works on California utopian colonies, the impetus behind these late Nineteenth Century utopian experiments came from a combination of Marxism, Christian Socialism, the excesses of the Gilded Age, the single-tax and Populist movements and the Nationalist followers of Edward Bellamy. Hine states that "all of these streams of protest ran at one time or another into a communitarian course."¹

Among the reasons utopians came to California were its unusually vigorous bursts of population growth and industrial expansion, mild climate and fertile soil. Also, its aura of being a new land, ripe for social experimentation, attracted seekers of perfection who felt California was the ideal site for their experiments in perfection.

Southern California attracted colonists such as the Mormons at San Bernardino, Polish refugees at Modjeska's Farm, and the Theosophists at Point Loma near San Diego. Sonoma County in northern California also attracted utopians and was the site of four utopian colonies between 1875 and 1900. Fountaingrove, Preston, Icaria Speranza, and Altruria found in Sonoma County the ideal setting for their activities. It was a flourishing agricultural area with diverse crops such as vegetables, fruits, and wine grapes. Santa Rosa and Cloverdale were thriving towns, providing a market for produce and shipping facilities for products not marketed locally. It was near the Bay Area which had active Socialist and

| Year | Mormons (San Bernardino) | Fountaingrove | Modjeska's Farm | Icaria Speranza | Preston | Joyful | Kaweah | Winters Island | Altruria | Point Loma | Temple Home | Little Landers | Fellowship Farm | Ilano | Army of Industry | Pisgah Grande | Holy City | Tuolumne Farms |
|------|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------|--------|--------|--------------|---------|------------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------|----------------|--------------|----------|----------------|
| 1850 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |
| 1851 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |
| 1852 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |
| 1853 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |
| 1854 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |
| 1855 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |
| 1856 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |
| 1857 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |
| 1858 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |
| 1859 | XX                       | XXX           | XXX           | XXX           | XXX     | XXX    | XXX    | XXX          | XXX     | XXX        | XXX        | XXX            | XXX            | XXX            | XXX    | XXX            | XXX          | XXX     | XXX            |

SOURCE: Robert V. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 8.
Christian Socialist movements. The area was lovely, with mountains, hills, plains, valleys and a scenic coast. The colony sites were beautiful and also secluded enough to allow privacy, but not so isolated that the colonists were unobserved by their neighbors.

Sonoma County’s utopian past was recalled by the "hippie" communes of the 1960’s, the best-known being Morning Star Ranch and the Wheeler Ranch. Although founded for different reasons, and for the most part without the charismatic leaders or more organized forms of government of their predecessors, these communes demonstrated that the search for an ideal society did not die when the last of Sonoma County’s Nineteenth Century utopian experiments disbanded.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the architecture and spatial arrangements of Fountaingrove, Preston, Icaria Speranza, and Altruria to determine if they built in contemporary style and if their spatial arrangements facilitated their communal lifestyle. Also the use of land by the colonies and their relationship with their neighbors are studied to determine how they impacted the land and their role in community life, both socially and economically.
CHAPTER 1

UTOPIAN LITERATURE

Thomas More, one of the first creators of a literary utopia, called his mythical island Utopia, which is derived from the Greek for "not a place" or Nowhere. If Utopia should be achieved, it would become Eutopia, "the good place." These two words combined provide an excellent description of Utopia: the ideal place which does not exist.¹ A study of literary utopias helps modern readers understand why the idea of perfection in society became, and remained, popular over the centuries. Special attention will be given to the architecture, arrangement of space, and use of land in the utopias of More and later writers.

Sir Thomas More (1478-1535)

More grew up in the household of Archbishop Morton, counselor to King Henry VII. He studied Greek literature and philosophy and became a lawyer, an arbitrator in trade disputes, and Lord Chancellor of England.² An age of exploration and discovery gave birth to More's Utopia, published in 1516. His knowledge of national and international problems, along with boyhood exposure to tales of the discovery of America and other foreign lands, inspired his book detailing plans for an ideal society.

More's Utopia is an island of agricultural abundance, willing workers, no private property or money, few laws, and a simple government. The cities are spacious and, so far as location allows, all are built on


the same plan. "If you know one of their cities, you know them all."3

In More's Utopia there is no privacy, no freedom of choice or freedom of speech, and the daily life of each citizen is regimented by the government for the good of all. Architecture and use of space play a major role in enforcing this regimentation. The cities all have the same design and every ten years everyone changes houses. This forced moving and identical design help enforce the rule of no private property. Since there are no hiding places or spots for secret meetings, no one can shirk their job unobserved or plot against the state. The good of the state is the paramount goal in Utopia and the lack of privacy, reinforced by spatial arrangements, contributes significantly to achieving this goal.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639)

Two major utopian works, New Atlantis and City of the Sun, appeared during the seventeenth century. Both reflect the increasing interest and progress in various fields of science of the period, and both are set on distant, undiscovered islands. Aside from these similarities, they contain significant dissimilarities arising from the differences in background and interests of the authors.

Francis Bacon was a noted intellectual and politician of his time. He was intended for the ministry, educated for the law, and eventually became Lord Chancellor of England. He was driven from office in 1621, charged with accepting bribes, sentenced to life imprisonment and fined forty thousand pounds. He was released from prison by the King and the fine remitted. Bacon then retired to his home, devoting himself to science and philosophy until his death.4

New Atlantis, published in 1611, is actually a fragment. Bacon intended to include a framework of laws and government in addition to his


4Laidler, History of Socialism, p. 31.
model for a college interpreting nature and producing scientific works for the benefit of mankind. However he was diverted by the natural history and science and did not carry out the original plan.

Bacon describes in detail the island of Bensalem's only formal institution, Solomon's House, which is dedicated to the study of the works and creatures of God. Solomon's House is efficiently organized to collect data and carry out experiments throughout the island. There are fresh and salt water lakes, violent streams, fountains, artificial wells and a "water of paradise" which is used to maintain health and prolong life. Large chambers demonstrate meteors and weather phenomena, while others contain pure air to cure disease and preserve health. Experimental orchards and gardens produce new and better varieties of produce. Parks containing animals and birds are used not only as zoos but also for experiment and study. Brewhouses, bakehouses, and kitchens experiment with different food and drink. Shops of medicines contain an endless supply of herbs, drugs, and ingredients for medicines. Eyeglasses and hearing aids are known, and sounds are transmitted long distances through trunks and pipes. The scientists have learned to fly and to build ships that go under the water. These are only a few of the experiments carried out on Bensalem.

Bacon makes no mention of the laws and government of Bensalem but sometimes describes in detail the rich apparel worn by the inhabitants on ceremonial occasions. From his description of Solomon's House, it is clear the architecture and use of space and land are devoted to the goal of furthering every type of scientific research and that these experiments are often dominant features of the landscape.

Tommaso Campanella was a Dominican monk who saw himself as a reformer of human institutions, both secular and spiritual. Because of his vigorous advocacy of unpopular opinions, his own and those of others,
he spent almost half his life in prison. He never ceased writing.5

City of the Sun was written in 1602 and published in 1637. The city is located on an island but is very different from Bensalem and Utopia both in appearance and in the concept of what constitutes an ideal society.

The city is circular, spiraling up for seven levels, each level named after a planet, with a grand temple on the hill in the center of the city. This arrangement keeps the religious aspect of life in view of the city's inhabitants by leading the eye to the temple from every level of the city. The city walls are covered with writing and pictures that embody the educational system of the Solarians. They attach great importance to education, but instead of using formal classrooms, they cover the walls of their city with laws, alphabets, paintings of natural phenomena, and all other subjects, including science and mathematics. Teachers lead students through the city, instructing them from these educational walls. This is a novel and practical use of space that might otherwise be left blank. It continually educates all citizens as they move about the city.

Campanella saw many things in contemporary society he felt should be changed, and presented his ideas for achieving a better society. His society is repressive toward individuals, and all aspects of personal life are controlled, even matters of dress and choice of sexual partners. His best ideas relate to making work and the environment more pleasant for everyone.

Charles Francois Marie Fourier (1772-1837)
Etienne Cabet (1788-1856)

Fourier and Cabet were Frenchmen, born during the period of social unrest that culminated in the French Revolution and the overthrow of the

monarchy. The battlecry of the Revolution was "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality;" however, these ideals did not reach down to the French working class, and Fourier and Cabet set forth their ideas on how to correct this failure to achieve liberty, fraternity, and equality for all French citizens.6

Charles Fourier was a commercial traveler whose fortune was lost during the French Revolution. He did not write any one book that could be called utopian, but three of his works, Theory of the Four Movements and the General Destinies (1808), Theory of Universal Unity (1822) and The New Industrial and Social World (1822), were the basis of his utopian social and economic theories.7

His work freely mixed the practical and fantastic. Some of his wilder notions included the belief that the time was near when the world would reach such a state of perfection that lions would pull chariots, whales pull ships, and the sea turn to lemonade.8 He was a pacifist who believed that one honest experience in communal living, following his principles exactly, would convince the world of the correctness of his ideas. Fourier was able to test his ideas when a member of the Chamber of Deputies gave him the use of an estate at Versailles. This experiment failed after a few years because of mismanagement.9

Fourier devised a social system in which work and play systematically merged. This system is based on two laws: Association and Attraction. The Law of Association is based on the belief that in a society in which all the passions are gratified, human beings will associate together spontaneously for the purpose of work. The Law of Attraction is based on the premise that every task, even the most

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8Laidler, History of Socialism, p. 57.
9Ibid., p. 58.
repellent, has an attraction for someone at some time, and if we choose to impose monotony and drudgery on ourselves, it is our own fault.  

Architecture and use of space play an important role in Fourier's plan. He proposed that groups of from four hundred to two thousand people form units called phalanxes throughout the settled world. Each phalanx is located on good land since each is to be self-supporting. The heart of each phalanx is the phalanstery, a large building containing living quarters, dining facilities, and a social center for all members. This arrangement eliminates the waste arising from individuals living in separate houses. The phalanstery reinforces the idea that everyone in the phalanx is a family member and encourages cooperative working and social relationships. The arrangement of private and communal spaces allows little opportunity for privacy, and observation and control of residents' activities is achieved in a subtle, effective manner.

Etienne Cabet was educated as a lawyer, became Attorney General of Corsica, was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, edited a newspaper advocating communist ideas, and was condemned to two years in prison for criticizing the King. He escaped to England where he read More's Utopia which inspired his book, Voyage to Icaria.

Voyage to Icaria, written in 1840, became a best seller among French workers five years after its publication. Cabet's book describes a dictatorship, Icaria, founded by a man named Icar. Icaria has numerous bureaus, departments and committees to oversee every detail of the daily lives of all citizens. The State arranges and attends to


11 At the time Cabet was editing a newspaper, communism meant communal ownership of property and was an economic arrangement with no specific political connotation.

12 Laidler, History of Socialism, P. 56 and Mumford, Story of Utopias, p. 151.

13 Mumford, Story of Utopias, p. 151.
everything, and there are no upsetting complications and diversities.\textsuperscript{14}

The State is the only employer, owns all facilities for production and service and regulates every individual activity. There is no escaping State supervision.

Icaria emphasizes hygienic conveniences and sanitary regulations. There are special dust collectors, sidewalks are covered with glass against the elements, and streets are paved and well-lighted. Stables, slaughterhouses, and hospitals are on the outskirts of town. Factories and warehouses are located on railway lines and canals. Each quarter of the city contains a school, hospital, temple, shops, public places and monuments. Streets are straight and wide. Each block consists of fifteen houses on each side, with a public building in the middle and one at each end. Between the rows of houses are gardens.

Architecture and arrangement of space are important in carrying out the goals of Icaria. The rigid regulation of life is mirrored by the regimentation and order of the city streets and buildings. Health is an important issue, and the city is built to be clean and to protect citizens from the elements. The use of restaurants and communal dining rooms allows the State to monitor and regulate the amount of food consumed by everyone. As in other utopias, regimentation and order aid in the goal of preserving the good of the state over the freedom of individuals.

Cabet felt his version of utopia was possible within fifty years, and that teachers, not soldiers, were the instrument to bring this ideal society to reality. He advocated passing minimum wage laws, training children in the doctrines of communism, and progressively taxing the rich as a beginning toward the ideal industrial state. He also believed, as did Fourier, that establishment of an experimental colony in an undeveloped area would convince doubters of the virtue of his plan. His ideas gained widespread acceptance in France, but it was not until they reached America that they were tested.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 154.
Edward Bellamy (1850-1889)

Edward Bellamy was born in Massachusetts, the son of a Baptist minister. He studied law and was admitted to the bar, but chose journalism as his profession. His major work, *Looking Backward* (1888), sold over one million copies and was translated into a score of foreign languages.

*Looking Backward* is set in the American city of Boston. The hero, Julian West, is hypnotized in 1887 and wakes in the year 2000. Since the setting is an existing city, most of the architecture and use of space are predetermined. Utopian Boston is cleaner than the original city, but the major change is that, aside from contact with others at work, everything is arranged to limit personal contact. The public kitchens and neighborhood restaurants with private family dining rooms, public laundries and centralized shopping avoid waste and duplication of effort, but also lead to personal isolation. Families remain in their homes to listen to piped in concerts and sermons, and in this way have few social contacts. This lack of personal contact is an effective means of controlling the population and insuring that the good of the state is put before individual freedom.

Bellamy recognized the problems caused by industrialization and presented his solution to these problems. He would subordinate the machine to provide abundance for all, but in so doing would also subordinate the individual human spirit in the best interest of society as a whole.

William Morris (1834-1896)

William Morris was born in a small village near London. He was well-traveled and well-educated. He began studying theology but abandoned that subject for art, then was attracted to handicrafts as a means of earning his living. In 1861 he organized the firm of Morris and Company

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15 Davis, *Contemporary Social Movements*, p. 37.
to produce handcrafted items such as furniture, carpets and fabrics. He joined the Social Democratic Federation in the early Eighties, and was active in the Socialist movement until his death. He was a prolific writer of poetry, plays, and romances of reform.\textsuperscript{16}

Morris responded to Bellamy's vision of utopia with his own in News From Nowhere, published in 1890.\textsuperscript{17} He had read Looking Backward and was appalled at the dehumanized, impersonal society created by Bellamy's use of machines and nationalization of all aspects of life. Morris envisioned utopia as a series of small villages set in woodlands and meadows, with no large cities and no central government. Nothing could have been further from Bellamy's vision, and it is interesting to note that Morris and Bellamy used the same framework for their stories - a man who falls asleep in one world and wakes in the future.

The narrator of News from Nowhere is William Guest who, after a discussion of the future, goes to sleep in his house in Victorian Hammersmith and wakes to a changed world. This new world is green and wooded, dotted with small villages, with no large cities or central government.

There is great emphasis on building, and the architecture and decoration of town halls and common dining halls are important. The atmosphere of the dining halls promotes conversation and these buildings play an important role in the social life of the villagers. Buildings do not intrude on their setting but seem to almost grow from the earth. Villages are surrounded by green fields and the water and air are pure. Everyone Guest meets appears healthy and happy.

The architecture of Morris's utopia reflects his ideas about beauty and enjoyment of work. Each village is self-governing. The town halls and dining halls encourage a pleasant social life among villagers.

\textsuperscript{16}Laidler, History of Socialism, pp. 115-16.

\textsuperscript{17}Peter Faulkner, Against the Age: An Introduction to William Morris (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), p. 132.
There is no noise and smoke from factories. It is a healthy place to live. The state does not exist and the individual is the primary focus of this utopia.

Morris believed that industrialization had an adverse affect on contemporary society. The industrial revolution brought poverty, overcrowded slums, grim factories, a dying countryside, glorification of cheap and shoddy goods made by machines, and the destruction of quality workmanship. New From Nowhere reflected Morris' belief that beauty was as necessary to human survival as food, shelter and a living wage, and that this could only be achieved in a society where men enjoy their work.18

It is clear from the foregoing that world events and changes they witnessed inspired some writers to create utopias of escape or change as one way to deal with change and adverse conditions. These utopias reflected advances in scientific research, the need for clean, safe cities, and the need for improved working and social conditions. Emphasis was on the good of society as a whole, with a corresponding disregard of individual rights.

Architecture and spatial arrangement played an important part in carrying out utopian goals. Architectural features such as those in More's Utopia in which there was no way to escape observation, or the City of the Sun which enforced worship by placing the temple where it was continually in view, helped control the actions of utopian populations. Lack of privacy, coupled with strict laws such as those in Utopia regarding changing houses every ten years and restricting travel, were effective in controlling recalcitrant citizens and in forwarding the humanitarian aims of the state. Conversely, the literary utopia that emphasized individual freedom and enjoyment, also used architecture and spatial arrangement to achieve these goals. All utopias that sprang from the imagination achieved their goals, and most used structures and spatial arrangement as an important component in that achievement.

CHAPTER 2

UTOPIAN COLONIES IN AMERICA

From the time the Pilgrims landed in America and founded their settlement at Plymouth in 1620, America provided the setting for a series of utopian experiments that continued for over two hundred years. America was perceived as a place of freedom and opportunity, with limitless land and a small population. Unlimited land, the need for population, and an atmosphere that allowed social experiments made it the perfect setting for utopian dreams to become reality.

Communal living was adopted by most utopian groups in order to survive as a community. For some, such as the Shakers and Perfectionists, it was also part of their religious belief to live in this fashion. The degree of communism ranged from total common ownership of all property to common ownership of land or land and buildings, with personal property remaining individually owned. They adopted a communal lifestyle to buy and develop land, support their children, infirm and elderly, and provide employment opportunities for members. Without communism many of these communities would not have been built, or would have lasted only a few months before exhausting their financial resources.

Early Sectarian Communities

Early sectarian communities included "The Woman in the Wilderness," Ephrata, the Shakers, Rappites, Society of Separatists at Zoar, Inspirationists at Amana, Bethel, Aurora, and Bishop Hill. Immigrants founded most sectarian communities until well into the nineteenth century, with the exception of New Jerusalem which was established by Jemima Wilkinson, a New England woman influenced by Baptist fervor and Shaker belief in celibacy.
Social Reform Colonies

Early in the Nineteenth Century, in response to changing social conditions such as urbanization, industrialization and unemployment, utopian communities based on social or political reform ideas rather than religious beliefs appeared in America. These secular communities did not require adherence to specific religious beliefs, although individual religious observance was usually permitted. Founders of these secular colonies sought to change economic or social conditions they felt exploited the poor and working classes and favored the rich.

Robert Owen, wealthy English industrialist and social reformer, established the first American colony based on social reform ideas\(^1\) when he purchased Harmony, Indiana from the Rappites in 1825.\(^2\) New Harmony, with no leadership from Owen, and lacking a binding force to unite members, disbanded in June of 1827. Although unsuccessful, New Harmony inspired Americans to form communities based on Owen’s ideas and prepared the way for later experiments. Between 1825 and 1830 there were nineteen of these communities, including several on the New Harmony estate.\(^3\)

Fourieristic and Icarian Colonies

Between 1842 and 1848, disciples of the French utopian writers, Fourier and Cabet, founded colonies based on their books. Albert Brisbane, an American journalist, wrote *Social Destiny of Man* in 1840. This book introduced Fourier’s ideas to Americans. Horace Greeley’s, *New...

\(^{1}\)Robert Owen saw the problems arising from crowded industrial cities and sought to reform social conditions by providing a cleaner, healthier, less crowded environment for workers. He believed the main object of societies should be the happiness of all, and that this goal would be reached by establishing communities where both labor and distribution were equal. He also believed that character was influenced by social environment, and that all should cooperate for the common good in the production and distribution of wealth. Laidler, *History of Socialism*, pp. 94–96.


\(^{3}\)Holloway, *Heavens on Earth*, p. 112.
York Tribune provided a forum for Brisbane, and many Americans became interested in adopting a communal lifestyle. At least twenty-four phalanxes were formed between 1842 and 1846, but without the careful planning stressed by Fourier and Brisbane. Only three phalanxes survived longer than two years. The North American Phalanx near Red Bank, New Jersey lasted twelve years; the Wisconsin Phalanx near Fond du Lac lasted six years; and Brook Farm, West Roxbury, Massachusetts, lasted five years, but spent only two years as a phalanx.4

In 1848, shortly after Fourieristic enthusiasm abated, followers of Etienne Cabet sailed to New Orleans and from there went to Texas where they had purchased land to establish a colony. The Texas site, located on the Red River near what is now Dallas, proved unsuitable for development, some of the colonists died, and the thousands of Icarians expected failed to arrive.5 The Icarians returned to New Orleans where they met Cabet and two hundred more colonists who had just arrived from France. They decided to find a more suitable site and in March 1849 two hundred and eighty Icarians settled in Nauvoo, Illinois, which they rented from the Mormons. The Icarians experienced a series of schisms and secessions which led to the founding of five additional colonies. The first secession occurred when some members disagreed with Etienne Cabet on how to govern the colony. Cabet and those loyal to him were ousted and in 1856 moved to Cheltenham, Missouri. The remaining Nauvoo Icarians moved to Corning, Iowa in 1859. In 1879 the Corning acreage was divided in half by a court decision after the younger progressive members brought suit against the older conservative members. The younger members called their colony Jeune


5These reinforcements never arrived mainly because the revolution of 1848 in France occurred three weeks after the advance party left for America. The Revolution divided the Icarians - some wanted to devote themselves to the new French Republic while others wished to pursue the Icarian cause in America. William Alfred Hinds, American Communities, (New York: Corinth Books, 1961; orig. 1878, rev. 1902 & 1908), p. 63.
Icarie and the older members called theirs New Icaria. The last Icarian colony was Icaria Speranza near Cloverdale, California.  

**American-founded Communities**

While English and French utopians attracted attention and founded colonies, Americans also began establishing utopian communities in response to spiritual and social needs of nineteenth century America. One of the first and best-known American utopians was John Humphrey Noyes. Noyes, a young New England preacher, founded the colony of Oneida, based on his doctrine of Perfectionism.  

Noyes and his followers purchased forty acres of land near Oneida, Lenox County, New York, and began building their community. The first years were difficult, but everyone worked hard and the colony stayed together. The colony prospered until 1869 when Noyes instituted a system of eugenics which he called stirpiculture. The young men of the colony rebelled against the authority of the older leaders, threatening to bring the law against Noyes for this practice. Rather than face public humiliation, Noyes fled to Canada in 1879, and died there in 1886.  

Adin Ballou, another New England preacher, established the community of Hopedale near Milford, Massachusetts. He was a leading figure in the Universalist Society but withdrew and became a Christian Socialist because he felt his formerly liberal church had grown complacent. In 1841, starting with joint stock of $4,000 and thirty members,  

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7 Perfectionism, as taught by Noyes, was the belief that anyone who sinned was not a Christian and that some men could be Christians on earth, and free of sin. Noyes included himself in the elite and declared himself purged of sin, thus perfected. Michael Fellman, *The Unbounded Frame: Freedom and Community in Nineteenth Century American Utopianism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 42.  

8 Stirpiculture: A form of human genetics through which reproduction was controlled by the community. This practice contributed to the rebellion of the young men of Oneida because the ideal pairings were usually older men and younger women. Weisbrod, *Boundaries of Utopia*, p. 11.  

9 Fellman, *The Unbounded Frame*, p. 60.
Ballou purchased six hundred acres to establish a community based on practical Christianity. The colony grew to 235 members, but by 1856 was in serious financial difficulties. At that time Ebenezer Draper, a stockholder, and his brother managed to gain control of three-fourths of the community’s stock. Alarmed at the ambitious plans of the community, they withdrew their stock, investing it in their own manufacturing company. The Draper brothers became virtual owners of Hopedale and the community disbanded, victim of the failure of its constitution to restrict individual holdings in the company.¹⁰

Another American-founded utopian colony, notable mainly because one of its founders was Thomas Lake Harris, was the Mountain Cove Colony started in Virginia in 1851.¹¹ This community lasted two years, and few details are known about it. After the failure of the Mountain Cove experiment, Harris developed his own religion—the Brotherhood of the New Life—and founded three colonies in New York state. He then moved to Santa Rosa, California where he established Fountaingrove, his final utopian endeavor.¹²

ARCHITECTURE, SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT, LAND USE AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Architecture and Spatial Arrangement

America’s utopian colonies utilized contemporary architecture and local building materials in their construction. With the exception of the Shakers, the Perfectionists, and colonies following Fourier’s model, they were designed as agricultural villages and differed very little in general

¹⁰Holloway, Heavens on Earth, pp. 120-25.


appearance from neighboring agricultural settlements. The large communal buildings of the Shakers, Perfectionists, and Fourierists stood out because of their size. However, their architecture was also contemporary. A communal lifestyle did not necessitate a radically different style of architecture although some colony buildings were larger than those of surrounding villages. Utopian colonies required the same facilities as other settlements - buildings for the activities of daily life and buildings for work activities. Their major difference was that they worked and ate communally. To accommodate these differences they adapted existing building forms and materials.

Colonies fortunate enough to move into developed facilities were New Harmony and the Icarians. When Robert Owen purchased Harmony from the Rappites, he had only to move his colonists into the ready-made community. The new residents did not live communally although communal living was part of Owen's plan. Lack of leadership and disagreements and schisms in New Harmony prevented anything more than superficial community, consisting of "meetings, balls, their frequent occasions of congregating in the hall, and all their pretence of cooperation." The colony never achieved a communal lifestyle and disbanded within two years of its inception.

The Mormons abandoned their flourishing town of Nauvoo, Illinois, and moved west because of intense persecution. The Icarians rented eight hundred acres at Nauvoo and purchased a mill, distillery and several houses in the colony. Other buildings used by the Icarians included a large main dining hall and assembly room, schoolhouse, workshops, a forty room dwelling house, and a number of smaller houses. They had an

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13Two Nineteenth Century writers, Charles Nordhoff and William Hinds, visited American utopian colonies and wrote extensively about those colonies. Their descriptions, and also photographs and drawings of the colonies, indicate utopians used contemporary architecture.

14Holloway, Heavens on Earth, p. 106.

orchestra and theatrical company, published a weekly magazine, and had a library of six thousand volumes. Nauvoo provided space and facilities for all these activities. 16

Shakers and Perfectionists built their colonies around a large communal dwelling. These dwellings contained kitchen, dining room and living quarters. Shaker dwellings had meetings rooms and the communal dwelling of the Perfectionists had social areas. The Shakers guarded their celibacy, separating men and women except when they came together for worship or meals. This separation was aided by their architecture which featured separate quarters, reached by separate staircases, for men and women. There were also separate rooms for the brothers and sisters to occupy before meals, and separate retiring rooms adjoining the worship room. The large main building was surrounded by outbuildings for livestock, agricultural activities and separate workshops for the brothers and sisters.

The architecture and spatial arrangements of the Perfectionists helped achieve religious and economic goals by providing a common dwelling for all. They built a large manor house with a common kitchen, dining room, laundry and childrens' nursery. The house also contained bedrooms and social areas with nooks where couples could be together but still be observed by other members. This inability to be unobserved for any length of time reinforced their doctrine of "complex marriage" which meant that couples did not form permanent attachments, but participated in a marriage system that was a combination of polygamy and polyandry. 17

Other colonies that had a large main building surrounded by outbuildings were the ones based on Fourier's doctrines. The North American Phalanx, Wisconsin Phalanx, and Brook Farm all built phalansteries surrounded by outbuildings and workshops. The North American Phalanx

16 Mumford, Story of Utopias, p. 117.
17 Weisbrod, Boundaries of Utopia, p. 223.
began with a membership of less than eighty and capital of $8,000. Within a short time of its founding, the temporary dwelling house was replaced by a three story phalanstery 150 feet long. A large grist mill, other mills, and workshops, were built and fields of wheat, potatoes, tomatoes, melons and other vegetables, and orchards planted.\textsuperscript{18} The Wisconsin Phalanx began with twenty members, increasing to 180 in a year. They built a large dwelling house and sawmill, and a small township called Ceresco.\textsuperscript{19}

Brook Farm was founded by a group of intellectuals in 1840. This colony was not intended to be self-sufficient - members were expected to pay their way. Brook Farm was dedicated to "enjoy the arts, cultivate the mind, and shape a humanitarian social philosophy."\textsuperscript{20} In 1844 Brook Farm became The Brook Farm Phalanx. The conversion to a phalanx brought new members to Brook Farm and these new members brought dissension and disturbed the balance of social unity of the colony. The colonists spent two years and most of their funds building a phalanstery. This building was within two days of completion when it burned to the ground in the spring of 1846. Within a year of the fire the community dissolved and the property was sold.\textsuperscript{21}

Land Use

All of America’s utopian colonies were based on agriculture and most colonists were excellent agriculturists. Many colonies depended on the food they produced to help them survive their first few years then, as their resources permitted, developed their land as extensively as possible. Many also engaged in light manufacturing and small commercial ventures to augment their income.

The Harmonists "made the wilderness blossom as the rose,"

\textsuperscript{18} Holloway, \textit{Heavens on Earth}, pp. 147-48.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., pp. 150-51.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 151.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 153.
surrounding themselves with orchards, vineyards, well-cultivated fields, and a variety of small shops.\textsuperscript{22} The Amana villages were surrounded by the colony's large farms where they grew corn, oats, wheat, hay and potatoes and raised cattle, sheep, swine and horses. Shaker communities engaged in raising garden crops, seeds and medicinal herbs which proved to be more profitable than their returns from farming the large tracts of land they owned.\textsuperscript{23} This is possibly because they owned more land than they could work by themselves and had to employ outside labor to help them. The Jansonists at Bishop Hill raised flax to make linen and also sold the flax seed. They raised broom corn, improved their cattle until they were famous for the quality of their livestock, and in 1859 owned 10,000 acres of land "all neatly fenced and in excellent order."\textsuperscript{24}

The Oneida community engaged in agriculture but became better known for its manufacturing activities. During their first year the colonists at Oneida engaged in farming, logging, milling and clearing swamps. They soon began canning fruits and vegetables, manufacturing silk, steel traps, satchels and silverware. After Noyes left the community the Oneida factory was rechartered as Oneida, Ltd., a corporation which still exists.\textsuperscript{25} Today Oneida is familiar as the "silverware of brides."\textsuperscript{26} The Perfectionists were excellent workmen and their products enjoyed a high reputation.\textsuperscript{27} Although agriculture was not its primary occupation, Oneida grew much of what it needed and also raised livestock. The grounds surrounding the manor house were beautifully land-

\textsuperscript{22}Hinds, \textit{American Communities}, p. 10.
\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., p. 82.
\textsuperscript{26}Hinds, \textit{American Communities}, pp. 133-34.
\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 222.
scaped and cared for, providing a pleasant place for social activities.

All the colonies had the barns, outbuildings, mills, and small shops necessary to carry on their activities. Sawmills, gristmills, blacksmith, wagon and carpenter shops were part of every community. Most villages also had commercial establishments such as a general store, post office, hotel, and shops providing necessities such as shoemaking, tailoring, printing, and dressmaking. Many colonists had small vegetable and flower gardens near their homes and many also grew grapes for winemaking.28

Some of the colonies engaged in the manufacture of woollen, cotton, or linen fabric. Amana raised sheep to supply wool for its mills and also purchased wool from neighboring farmers. Amana produced enough wool material to supply their own needs and even exported some as far as New York.29 Oneida manufactured silk and, across the road from the manor house was the silk dye-house and a small factory where their children made boxes for the spool silk.30

Whatever America’s utopian colonists undertook as a means of financial survival - farming, agriculturally-related activities, or light manufacturing, they did well. Nordhoff comments that the barns and other farm buildings of communists are "usually models for convenience, labor-saving contrivances and arrangements for the comfort of the animals. Their tillage is clean and deep; and in their orchards one always finds the best varieties of fruits."31 Amana had an excellent reputation for the woollen cloth it made.32 Fruits and vegetables grown by the North

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28Descriptions and pictures in various works on Nineteenth Century utopian colonies clearly indicate the types of agricultural, residential, and commercial buildings built by colonists.

29Holloway, Heavens on Earth, p. 173.

30Nordhoff, Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 278.

31Ibid., p. 391.

32Hinds, American Communities, p. 49
American Phalanx sold at a premium price in New York because of their high quality and honest weight.\textsuperscript{33} It is said of Oneida that, "Whatever they undertook, they did carefully and thoroughly and their products soon acquired high reputation in the market."\textsuperscript{34}

It is clear that the colonists engaged in good land use and management practices. They were also good workmen whose products were respected in the marketplace. The combination of agriculture, light manufacture and craftsmanship provided work for everyone in the colony. This practice also provided most necessities for the colonists as well as goods and services for neighboring farmers. America's utopian colonists made the most of the land they acquired, using it wisely and well.

Community Relations

An important aspect of communal success was the relationship of a colony with its neighbors. It is likely that acceptance by neighbors was especially important to colonists who had experienced prejudice and persecution and wished to pursue their beliefs in peace. With most colonies this relationship had two components - economic and social. The economic aspect included providing services to neighboring farmers, allowing outsiders to trade at colony businesses, and hiring outside laborers when necessary. Social relationships included neighbors attending colony events such as plays, concerts or picnics.

Many colonies became quite active in business. The Harmonists and the Amana villages had stores that were patronized by residents of neighboring towns. Harmony, Indiana became an important business center and even established branch stores in other towns in which to sell colony products.\textsuperscript{35} The Amana colony bought wool from neighboring farmers; Zoar

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Weisbrod, \textit{The Boundaries of Utopia}, p. 222.
\item Holloway, \textit{Heavens on Earth}, p. 91.
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earned money from nearby farmers who patronized their blacksmith, carpentry and joiner shops; Oneida, in its early days, sawed lumber for neighboring farmers; members of the Aurora colony in Oregon managed the restaurant and owned the buildings where food was prepared for the Oregon State Agricultural Fair; and the Icarians derived income from their sawmill and gristmill.

Colonists not only provided services to neighbors, they were known as honest and fair in their dealings and as good workmen. Nordhoff's comment about colonies he visited was that, in general, they had a reputation for honesty and fair dealing among their neighbors and wherever their products were bought and sold. He also stated that neighboring farmers were fortunate as nearby colonies provided a market for their produce and also provided necessary mechanical skills.36

Colonies employing outside labor were Oneida, the Rappites, Zoar, and the Shakers. All were excellent employers who paid well and treated employees fairly. Although Oneida engaged in religious practices that could have made enemies of its neighbors, the colony was rarely attacked since it provided employment and capital for the region because of its manufacturing operations. Oneida paid good wages, treated employees well, and even built houses for those who had families.37 The Rappites had the reputation of being "careful of their servants and laborers."38 All colonies that hired outside labor were sought after as employers because of their fair and kind treatment of employees.

Another business in which colonies engaged was hotelkeeping. Many colony hotels, including those at Harmony, Aurora, Zoar and Amana, were popular stopping places for visitors. The hotel at the Rappite colony of Economy was a favorite stopping place on the main stage road.

37 Ibid., p. 263.
38 Ibid., p. 93.
the hotel at Bishop Hill did a good business, and the hotels at the Amana villages were popular with neighboring farmers who brought their families with them for a holiday when they brought wool to sell. Even though colonies were separate from the world, they did not isolate themselves. They provided comfortable accommodations and good, plain food for visitors. welcoming outsiders for holidays as well as to conduct business. 39

Although Oneida did not have a hotel, according to Hinds it attracted more visitors than any other American utopian colony. Visitors came from as far as Europe and California, and large excursion parties visited during the summer. 40 The attraction was probably a combination of Oneida’s reputation for sexual freedom and the extensive, beautifully landscaped grounds surrounding the main dwelling. Entertainment was another attraction that brought visitors to some of the colonies. The Icarians welcomed neighbors to their school exhibitions, dramatic performances and musical presentations, 41 the band at Zoar was popular, attracting visitors from some distance, 42 and Aurora had a large picnic ground that was open to Sunday school and other picnics, and the Aurora band played at festivities in Portland. 43

The foregoing indicates that utopian colonies adopted regional styles of architecture, the major deviation being size. With the exception of Shaker communities and Oneida, utopian villages did not look out of place in the landscape. Their spatial arrangements were often designed to control members. This is especially true of the Shakers and

39 Colonies that operated hotels were: the Rappites, Amana, Zoar, some Shaker societies, Bishop Hill, Aurora, and the Amana villages. Information on colony hotelkeeping was gleaned from various accounts about colony businesses.

40 Hinds, American Communities, p. 120.

41 Nordhoff, Communistic Societies of the United States, p. 405.

42 Hinds, American Communities, p. 44.

Perfectionists. Utopians used the land well, growing crops suitable to the region, contour plowing, neatly fencing their pastures, and raising healthy livestock. The combination of business, hotelkeeping and entertainment kept utopians in touch with the surrounding population. They fit in well with their neighbors, helping by providing needed services as well as entertainment. In short, utopians were excellent workmen and valued neighbors and employers.
CHAPTER 3

FOUNTAINGROVE

Thomas Lake Harris, founder of Fountaingrove, was born in England in 1823 to strict Calvinist parents who moved to Utica, New York when he was five years old. As a young man he became a Universalist, then a spiritualist, then began reading Swedenborg where he found a combination of Christianity and spiritualism which influenced his later teachings. Harris's interest in communal living became evident in 1850 when he and James Scott, a fellow spiritualist, founded a psychical community experiment at Mountain Cove, Virginia. The community broke up in 1853, apparently because of quarrels among members. Harris then became a Swedenborgian, ministering to a congregation in New York City for several years in the mid-Fifties. In 1857 he was denounced by the Swedenborgians after he received a series of mystical revelations, including that of Divine Respiration, a supernatural method of breathing enabling man to communicate directly with God. In 1858 Harris went to England and Scotland with his new revelations. While there he formed the nucleus of the Brotherhood of the New Life, a combination of Swedenborgian and spiritualist beliefs flavored by Oriental mysticism and Harris's own unique poetic inclination.

Harris returned to the United States in 1860 with two ambitions: the expansion of his group into a universal brotherhood, and the

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1Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 13.

2Fogarty, Dictionary of American Communal & Utopian History, p. 46. The term "psychical" refers to the belief in spiritualism of Harris, Scott, and their followers at Mountain Cove.
realization of this aim through communitarian living. He began carrying out these ambitions in 1861 with the formation of a small colony at Wassaic, New York. Membership increased and the colony moved to a more extensive property at Amenia. In 1867-68, with a membership of about seventy-five, the colony moved again to a property at Brocton, New York that Harris called Salem-on-Erie.

Harris received donations from Brotherhood members in England and America who were not colonists, and gifts of money and property from colony members. Regular infusions of money from new members helped keep the communities on a sound financial basis and allowed the purchase of new facilities for expansion when necessary. Harris was a good manager, having learned from the Mountain Cove experience the importance of a sound financial base.

In 1875, after eight years at Brocton, Harris decided to move his colony to California. He gave esoteric spiritual reasons for the move, telling his followers an inner light guided him to Pacific shores for richer revelations to come. He also said a "disintegration of the internal states of the majority of the members at Brocton made it hard for him to achieve the mental attitude necessary for revelation," and that "staying in Brocton had caused him to become wasted of the fine elements forming for my own new naturehood." Kanaye Nagasawa, a Japanese

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3 Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 15.


5 Many of Harris's followers, such as Jane Lee Waring (heiress), James Requa (banker), Laurence Oliphant (diplomat and journalist), and his mother, Marie Oliphant, were well-to-do. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 15, 22; Jack T. Ericson, Thomas Lake Harris and the Brotherhood of the New Life: Books, Pamphlets, Serials and Manuscripts 1854-1942: A Guide to the Microfilm Edition (Glen Rock, NJ: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1974), p. 11.

6 Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 17.
Christian, who was Harris's lifelong follower, personal secretary, and winemaker, stated that the move was made because the severe eastern winters were hard on Harris's health.

In 1875 Harris purchased 400 acres of hilly land north of Santa Rosa in Sonoma County, for $21,000 and began relocating the Brocton community to the western site he called Fountaingrove. At first Harris moved only four of his most faithful followers: Celia Requa, her son, and Kanaye Nagasawa and Arai, two of his Japanese converts. The Brocton community remained in existence until 1881. It served mainly as a testing place for prospective colony members, effectively screening out those who were unfit for communal life before they reached Fountaingrove. Between 1875 and 1883, Harris purchased additional land, more than quadrupling his initial 400 acres at Fountaingrove.

Harris and his four colonists built a small house to live in until a main house was built. Work began on the main house in July, and was

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7Paul Akira Kadota & Terry Earl Jones, Kanaye Nagasawa: A Biography of A Satsuma Student, Regional Studies Series No. 4 (Kagoshima, Japan: Kagoshima Prefectural College, 1990). This is a study of the life of Nagasawa, one of a group of young Japanese who met Harris in Europe. Some of these young men joined Harris in his communal lifestyle. These young men, of the Samurai class, had been sent to Britain to study Western customs. At the time Japan was a closed society but some Japanese leaders felt their country could not compete militarily or economically with the United States and Europe unless some Japanese youth learned about Western economic and cultural matters.

8Kagan, New World Utopias, p. 21 and Kadota and Jones, Kanaye Nagasawa, p. 104. The esoteric reasons given by Harris for the move may have been intended to make colony members amenable to the move. It is more likely the move was made for the benefit of Harris's health as stated Nagasawa, one of his followers, who would have observed winter illnesses suffered by Harris.

9The property was purchased from Henderson Holmes on April 24, 1875. Sonoma County Book of Deeds, book 49, page 637.

10Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 17.

11Many transactions showing Harris as purchaser are recorded in the Grantee/Grantor records at the Sonoma County Recorder's Office. It is difficult to sort out which ones actually added new acreage, since transactions between Harris and individual colony members appear from time to time. Also, some of the microfilm records are difficult to read, and it is almost impossible at times to make out the details. Fountaingrove eventually grew to about 1500 acres.
completed in November. When the manor house was completed, Harris sent for more of the Brocton colonists, including his wife Emily, Jane Lee Waring, and Alice Oliphant, wife of Laurence Oliphant. The main house, called "Aestivossa" by Harris, was impressive with its marble, modern plumbing, gas lights, paintings, antiques, rugs, tapestries, and stained glass. It was two stories high with a spacious attic, wide entrance porch on the north and sunrooms on the south. There were several sitting rooms, a library, a communal dining room and a ballroom on the first floor. Bedrooms were located on the second floor. The landscaping around the house included fountains, goldfish ponds, a greenhouse, and beautiful gardens. It was comparable to the homes of wealthy Santa Rosans, and the extensive gardens gave it the air of a country gentleman's estate.

Other structures built on the property included a two story Familistery for the women, a Commandery for the men, winery, wine cellar, brandy house, blacksmith shop, print shop, barns and sheds. The Familistery and Commandery housed members who did not live in the main dwelling, and the first house built on the property, before construction

12 Local contractor and architect, C. H. Bumpus, was engaged to build the manor house. Local workers were employed to build the manor house, the Familistery and the Commandery as well as necessary barns and outbuildings. The manor house was built in the Italianate style which was popular at that time. Kadota & Jones, Kanaye Nagasawa, p. 106.

13 Harris married his first wife when he was twenty-five. She bore him two sons within five years. She died in 1850. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 23. After the death of his first wife, Harris married Emily Isabella Waters, a devoted spiritualist, in 1855. They lived in celibacy (according to Harris) for thirty years until her death in 1885. Kagan, New World Utopias, p. 21.

14 In his first book published at Fountaingrove, The Lord: the Two-in-One, Declared, Manifested and Glorified (1876), Harris claimed that Heaven was now on earth, and he called this realm "Aestivossa." Ericson, Microfilm Guide, p. 17.


16 This structure burned in the 1890's. Kagan, New World Utopias, p. 19.

17 The wine cellar, built in 1881, was 50 x 130 feet, with a stone first story and a second story of brick. Cloverdale Reveille, 3 September 1881.
of the main house, sometimes also housed members. The outbuildings supported the colony's agricultural activities which eventually revolved mainly around vineyards and winemaking. The print shop was important to the colony as all Harris's writings were printed there. The round barn was built in 1899, after Harris left Fountaingrove and the colony disbanded. Harris also planned to build a social palace containing a portico, vestibule, Rotunda of the Dance, Hall of Ascent, Hall of the Feast, and a kitchen. This building was never constructed but copies of the plans are still in existence. 18

The main house was the center of colony religious and social activities. Members gathered there for meals, dancing, communal singing, 19 and were encouraged by Harris to "be aware of the household as a place where angels and fairies dwelt." 20 Harris, as the pivotal figure around whom the colony revolved, used the separate dwellings to control his followers and exact obedience to his dictates. The elect lived in the main house with him while the rest of the members were relegated to the secondary dwellings. Harris also used this arrangement to separate husbands and wives and to separate children from their parents. 21 He was aware of the use of spatial arrangement as one means of exerting control

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18 This writer opened a large drawer in the History Room at the Sonoma County Library (main branch) and found these plans. The proposed structure resembles an Oriental fantasy palace with domes, arches and towers.

19 Harris, without any previous musical training, played the piano for communal songfests. The songs sung were usually written by Harris. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, pp. 22-23.


21 Harris often separated husbands and wives because he believed that contact with an earthly partner would inhibit the relationship with the spiritual counterpart. This pattern of separation began in Harris' eastern colonies and continued at Fountaingrove. He separated children from their parents to allow their fullest spiritual development without any adverse influence from their parents. There were only five births among his followers in seventeen years at Brocton and Fountaingrove. It is not clear where colony children lived or how they were educated, or who cared for them. Kagen, New World Utopias, p. 21.
over his followers and often used it to enforce his dictates.\(^{22}\)

The property that became Fountaingrove was a dairy farm when purchased by Harris. The colonists continued to run the dairy and also farmed, producing milk, butter, mutton, wool, lemons and oranges, which were sold in Santa Rosa and San Francisco. Winemaking, a mainstay of the Brocton colony, had proved profitable. When Harris selected California as the site for his new colony there is some indication he was aware that Sonoma County was an ideal location for vineyards.\(^{23}\) Kanaye Nagasawa transformed the pastures and rocky slopes of Fountaingrove into vineyards, planting cabernet, pinot noir and zinfandel vines. He was assisted by a number of Chinese and Italian laborers who did most of the work.\(^{24}\) By 1884 the vineyards were established and Fountaingrove wines were being made. In 1886 the colony produced 70,000 gallons of wine.\(^{25}\) Harris created Lay, Clark and Company to market Fountaingrove wines. The

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\(^{22}\) Laurence Oliphant and his mother were separated by Harris at the Brocton colony. They were not permitted to meet or talk. Harris claimed Laurence needed undisturbed seclusion to prepare for the New Life. Later, when Laurence married, he and his bride, Alice, were forced by Harris to live separately at Fountaingrove. Laurence left Fountaingrove for a time to pursue his profession of journalism in order to bring needed money to the colony. After his return, Harris allowed him to live with Alice but, according to Laurence, the marriage was not consummated until after the Oliphants left Fountaingrove in 1881. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, pp. 25-26.

\(^{23}\) Herbert W. Schneider & George Lawton, A Prophet and a Pilgrim: Being the Incredible History of Thomas Lake Harris and Laurence Oliphant; Their Sexual Mysticisms and Utopian Communities Amply Documented to Confound the Skeptic (New York: Columbia University Press, n.d.; reprint ed. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1970), p. 277. These writers state that Kanaye Nagasawa said Harris could not stand the eastern winters and that he had read an article praising Santa Rosa as an ideal location for vineyards.

This statement by Schneider and Lawton is confirmed by Kadota and Jones in their biography of Nagasawa. Harris discussed the move with Nagasawa, his personal secretary as well as his viticulturist and winemaker and indicated he wished to move the colony to a more agreeable climate and a place where grapes of higher quality could be grown. Kadota and Jones, Kanaye Nagasawa, p. 104.

\(^{24}\) Kadota & Jones, Kanaye Nagasawa, p. 110.

\(^{25}\) Kagan, New World Utopias, p. 22.
corporation had offices in Santa Rosa and New York and shipped wines to the eastern United States and Britain.²⁶

Fountaingrove traded its cows for sheep in 1880²⁷ and raised hay and some feed crops. However, the colonists concentrated on winemaking and vineyards soon covered the low rolling hills. Harris’s followers were hard workers and successful vintners and the colony prospered through their efforts. Members of the Brotherhood believed that products took on the qualities of their makers. They referred to each person’s occupation, use, or special talent as the Use, and this concept was extended to everything Brotherhood members produced. Therefore, their wines were not simply excellent, they were infused with the divine energy of their makers.²⁸

There were several facets to Fountaingrove’s relationship with neighbors and the community of Santa Rosa - social, economic and political. Santa Rosans must have been impressed as Fountaingrove grew from a dairy farm to a large estate surrounded by vineyards. The main house, a large, Italianate style mansion, was built in about five months. Its beautifully landscaped grounds were often used for picnics by visitors.²⁹ Although Harris was a prolific writer, and his pamphlets and books were published at Fountaingrove, the townspeople seemed to view him as a country squire with a theology they saw as a "harmless quirk."³⁰ Beside seeing how quickly a large, sumptuous house was built, neighbors of Fountaingrove saw the Commandery and Familistery, a large winery, and other service buildings erected on the property. They also saw that the


²⁷Schneider & Lawton, A Prophet and a Pilgrim, p. 279.


³⁰Santa Rosa Daily Democrat, 23 November 1875; J. P. Munro-Frazer, History of Sonoma County (San Francisco, 1879), pp. 428-29; and An Illustrated History of Sonoma County, Calif. (Chicago, 1889), p. 367.
colonists worked hard at farming, producing enough milk, butter, mutton, wool, lemons and orange to sell locally and in San Francisco. In 1881 the colonists built a large winery of brick and stone and by 1884, nine years after Harris purchased the property, the vineyards were established and Fountaingrove was marketing its wine.

Fountaingrove was an economic asset to Sonoma County agriculture because it fit into the County's winemaking industry. The wines produced at Fountaingrove were marketed in New York and Britain. Kanaye Nagasawa selected excellent vines and worked hard at producing the fine wines for which Fountaingrove became known. The vineyards were well maintained, productive and healthy and the vines flourished in Sonoma County's climate.

Thomas Lake Harris developed his own unique theology and was interested in politics, the labor movement, and American Socialist organizations. He also had some intercourse with local Freemasons. In July 1883 he was a guest at a festival of the Knights of the Red Cross and in August of that same year was invited to address the Knights Templar in the Masonic Hall in Santa Rosa. In March 1886 thirty-five Knights attended a banquet at Fountaingrove.\(^{31}\) In 1891 Harris attended labor meetings and wrote songs for labor gatherings. He also wrote pamphlets and books dealing with political and social subjects.\(^{32}\) Although Harris himself attended various labor and socialist meetings and wrote on these

\(^{31}\) Schneider and Lawton, *A Prophet and a Pilgrim*, pp. 424-25. Emily Preston's obituary (Press Democrat 27 January 1909) notes that her son, Wellington, was a member of the Santa Rosa Commandery of the Knights Templar. It is possible he met Harris and may have visited Fountaingrove.


The songs he wrote for labor meetings were called "Battle Bells: Verse Studies in Social Humanity." (Schneider and Lawton, *A Prophet and a Pilgrim*, p. 455 and Ericson, *Microfilm Guide*, p. 19.)
subjects, there is no indication that his followers were involved in these activities. They worked hard at their assigned duties and when not working engaged in dancing, communal singing, and other activities centering around the beliefs of the Brotherhood.

Harris and his followers lived peacefully at Fountaingrove until 1891. Early in that year Margaret Oliphant, cousin of Laurence Oliphant, one of the Brotherhood’s former members, published Memoir of Laurence Oliphant and of Alice Oliphant His Wife. This book eulogized Laurence and his wife Alice and implied that Harris was guilty of immorality and financial chicanery.33 Shortly after Margaret Oliphant’s book appeared, Miss Alzire A. Chevaillier, a reporter hired by Frank Millard, editor of The San Francisco Chronicle, arrived at Fountaingrove with her mother.34 They posed as potential converts, stayed for six months, then returned to San Francisco. Miss Chevaillier wrote articles for the Chronicle35 and delivered lectures about the immoral activities of Harris and his followers. She claimed Harris had told her of his intimate sexual relations with some female members of the Brotherhood and had also made advances to her.36

Soon after Miss Chevaillier’s articles appeared other area newspapers also wrote about the alleged improprieties at Fountaingrove.37 Letters regarding the controversy appeared in Sonoma County newspapers, many of them favorable to Harris. The Sonoma Democrat of January 30, 1892 reprinted a letter from the Glasgow Citizen of December 29, 1891, which

33 Hine, California’s Utopian Colonies, p. 30.

34 Miss Chevaillier, described by Ericson as a “sort of religious muckraker,” had previously written exposés, most of them concerning questions of orthodoxy in the Episcopal Church. Ericson, Microfilm Guide, p. 20.

35 Miss Chevaillier’s articles about her experience at Fountaingrove appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle issues of December 13 and 27, 1891 and February 15, 1892.


37 Articles appeared in the San Francisco Wave of February 13, 1892, and the Morning Call of March 4, 1892.
supported Harris. Miss Chevaillier responded to this letter with a letter to the Sonoma Democrat stating her charges were based on evidence and also announcing her forthcoming lecture in Santa Rosa, "Mysticism and Harrisism: Secrets of the Sonoma Eden Unveiled." On February 27, 1892, the date that Harris married Jane Lee Waring, his follower and secretary of many years, the Sonoma Democrat published a letter signed by thirty-one business and professional men of Santa Rosa. This letter stated the signers were personally acquainted with Harris and the other residents of Fountaingrove, that the colonists and Harris were respectable, honorable, worthy people, and that "the attack upon Mr. Harris and people residing at Fountaingrove is unkind, unwarranted and not prompted by any good motive."

Although he had many supporters, Harris did not defend himself publicly and, after marrying Miss Waring, he and his new bride left Fountaingrove for New York. They settled in Manhattan, and later spent time at their summer home in New Jersey and at another home in Florida. Thomas Lake Harris died in 1906 at the age of eighty-three. He never returned to Fountaingrove, and in 1900 sold his remaining interest in the colony for $40,000 and deeded the property to Kanaye Nagasawa, Robert and Mary Hart, Miss Eusardia Nicholas and Mrs. Margaret Parting, all members of the Fountaingrove colony. The deed stipulated that the grantees should hold a life tenure and that the property should eventually revert to the one who lived longest.

Without Harris's charismatic presence, Fountaingrove became a commercial venture, operated by the Brotherhood members who did not leave the estate after his departure. Nagasawa outlived all the other partners except Robert Hart. The Harts sold their share to Nagasawa, but later

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38 Sonoma Democrat, 20 February 1892.

39 This transaction is recorded in the Sonoma County Book of Deeds, Book 192, page 204 in which Kanaye Nagasawa, et al. purchased property from Thomas L. and Jane L. W. Harris.
Robert Hart attempted to regain his share of the property. He sued Nagasawa but the court decided in Nagasawa’s favor.

After he became sole owner of Fountaingrove, Nagasawa managed the winery with the assistance of his nephew, Tomoki Ijichi, his niece-in-law, Hiro Ijichi, and another nephew, Eikichi Sasaki, who had come from Japan. Tomoki and Hiro had two children, Kosuke and Amy, both born in Santa Rosa. Nagasawa died March 1, 1934. He was eighty-two years old. After his death the property passed into the hands of outsiders, and the idyllic days of the colony were all but forgotten.

Kadota & Jones, Kanaye Nagasawa, pp. 150-156. This is a detailed account of the controversy between Hart and Nagasawa over Hart’s alleged financial interest in Fountaingrove.

California’s Alien Land Law of 1913 was responsible for Kanaye Nagasawa’s family being unable to inherit Fountaingrove. Since Nagasawa became a landowner prior to passage of this law, which forbade all Orientals not eligible for citizenship to own land, he was unaffected by it. A later addition to the Law made it illegal not only for an alien to own property in California, but in addition prohibited any unnaturalized resident from becoming guardian of any estate which consisted in whole or in part of real property. Nagasawa wished to leave his property to Kosuke Ijichi, but since Kosuke was a minor, and his parents would not be allowed to serve as guardians, other provisions had to be made. Nagasawa named his long-time attorney, Wallace Ware, executor of his will, with instructions to liquidate the estate within five years and distribute the proceeds among the heirs in designated shares. After Nagasawa’s death, the Ijichi family, Eikichi Sasaki, and Kiichi Isonaga, another nephew, continued living on the ranch. Tomoki died in September of 1935. On December 14, 1936, Earl MacBoyle purchased Fountaingrove (Sonoma County Probate File #11886). Early in 1937, Ware informed the family they must leave Fountaingrove immediately. They left the ranch, staying on in Santa Rosa for a short time, then moved to the Bay Area. (Kadota & Jones, Kanaye Nagasawa, pp. 148, & 159-60.)
CHAPTER 4
PRESTON

Oak Mountain north of Cloverdale is a beautiful spot with steep and gentle slopes, sunny tree-ringed meadows, a lake, streams and, according to Indian legend, a healing spring. 1 The land is suitable for orchards, feed crops, vineyards, and livestock. Colonel Hartwell Preston purchased the 1500 acre property from James Mowbray, a long-time Cloverdale resident, in 1873, and he and his wife, Emily, moved to the ranch in 1875.

Residents of Cloverdale welcomed their new neighbors. The Colonel was tall, handsome, and something of a mystery man. He had emigrated from Ohio in 1849 and lived in Idaho, Oregon and possibly Humboldt County before settling in Cloverdale. 2 His obituary referred to him as "a lawyer and jurist who gained great political distinction in Oregon in his younger days." 3 Gaye Lebaron, Santa Rosa columnist and historian, describes him as "a well-connected Virginian with a Harvard degree and a successful law practice". 4

Emily Preston was a charismatic healer with a large following of patients in the San Francisco area. She also diagnosed health problems

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1 During a visit with Preston caretakers, Edwin and Lisa Ellis in 1990, Lisa said she and Edwin thought they had found the healing spring but would tell no one where it was.

2 Janice Payne, "Go Tell It On The Mountain: An Account of Madam Emily Preston With Prefatorial Notes on the Preston Papers," M.A Thesis, Sonoma State University, 1976, p. 5. Payne found this information in the Preston Papers, a collection of letters and miscellaneous documents found in the mansion by Eugenia and Fred Oster, who purchased Preston in 1942. The information on the Colonel was apparently contained in personal letters written to and by him.

3 Santa Rosa Daily Democrat 14 December 1889.

4 Santa Rosa Press Democrat 29 November 1987. Lisa Ellis, former caretaker of Preston, attempted to obtain information about Hartwell Preston before he arrived in Cloverdale. She wrote to possible sources of information in Idaho and Oregon but with no success to date.
and sold home-compounded remedies by mail throughout the United States. Emily was married twice before meeting Hartwell, first to a man named Marsh then to a Mr. Appleton. She had a daughter from her first marriage and a son from her second. Little is known of Emily Preston’s early life. She was born in New York or Connecticut, her maiden name was Lathrap, she had three brothers, two sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews. The exact date of her arrival in California is not known but was probably in the early 1850s.

The move to Cloverdale could have ended Emily’s work as a healer, but by 1873 the railroad had reached Preston and the ease of transportation allowed patients from as far away as the Bay Area to consult the Madam (Emily Preston was referred to as Madam Preston or the Madam by many people in the Cloverdale area) about their health concerns. She also kept a rented flat on Leavenworth Street in San Francisco and went there.

Mary S. Mowbray, "My Memories" (Manuscript, written August 1949), ch. 1, pg. 1. Mary Mowbray married Frank Mowbray, member of a pioneer Cloverdale family. They lived near Preston and Frank and his mother consulted Madam Preston when they were ill. The Mowbray manuscript covers the period between 1895 and 1909.

Emily’s children were Emma Eliza Marsh (10/18/46-12/17/75) and Wellington Appleton (10/23/50-3/19/02). "Wellie" lived with his mother and step-father at Preston until his marriage in 1896. He moved into a nearby house with his wife where he lived until his death in 1902.

Madam Preston’s healing methods were based on observing, talking with, and touching her patients, then prescribing anything from the "blister treatment" to one of her homemade cordials or salves. In many cases she prescribed outdoor exercise such as chopping wood. Many of her treatments were in keeping with those used by contemporary medical doctors, including the "blister treatment" and cordials and wine bitters. People often came to her after doctors had given up on them. She cured many of these, but if she knew a case was hopeless, she always told the patient so. She did not charge for consultations, only for medicines and supplies. If anyone was too poor to pay, she charged nothing for the required treatment. Mary Mowbray heard that Emily Preston’s father and brother were doctors and surmised she had learned something from them about contemporary medicine. Mowbray, "My Memories," ch. 1, pg. 3; and Nathan A. Bowers, "Emily Preston - The Madam," pg. 4.

Emily Preston’s Price List of Medicines and How to Use Them contains descriptions of various treatments and medications used by Madam Preston.
about once a month to see patients who could not come to Preston. 8 The beauty of the Cloverdale area, "one of the favored spots on earth," 9 encouraged some of those who came to consult Madam Preston to return regularly for holidays or to settle in the area.

There is no record of what buildings were on the property when the Prestons purchased it, but because it was an established ranch, there were probably the usual barns and outbuildings needed on a ranch. There was a cottage that Hartwell enlarged to become the main house. 10 When completed, the main house was two stories high with a full basement and attic and contained seventeen rooms. The house had a double parlor that could serve as a large meeting room or be divided into two smaller rooms by a red velvet curtain. Two fireplaces in the parlor had redwood mantels, tile hearths, and handpainted tiles surrounding the openings. The large sash windows were unscreened when closed, but when opened from the top or bottom a screen, attached to the window frame, filled the open space. These screens were clear from the inside, but when seen from the outside an intricate grey and white scroll pattern appeared. Madam Preston's consulting room was on the second floor. It was spacious and sunny with large windows and an adjoining bathroom-dressing room. The mansion was built in Italianate style and resembled neighboring homes of comparable size.

About two miles from the main house at Preston is a small lake. In the fall of 1884 the Colonel built a four room, two story house by the lake. He and Emily used this as a retreat, and it was also the center of

8Mowbray, "My Memories," ch. 4, pg. 2.

9Cloverdale Reveille 29 March 1889. This statement was included in an article extolling the virtues of the Cloverdale area, including its excellent agricultural prospects, its growth as a community, and its scenic beauty.

10According to Preston caretaker, Edwin Ellis, the mansion started as a cottage that was already on the property and was enlarged to seventeen rooms. The original cottage became Emily's workroom where she compounded her medicines. The workroom was torn down after Emily's death, but it was possible to see the marks on the east side of the mansion where the workroom was attached.
activities for summer picnics and parties. When this house was completed the local newspaper reported that the Prestons planned to take a rest of several months in the "very comfortable cottage at the romantic lake on their beautiful ranch."\textsuperscript{11}

Emily's patients rented cottages on the ranch while undergoing treatment under her supervision.\textsuperscript{12} The more seriously ill patients stayed in the "hospital," a two story building near the main house. This structure was built on a slope and the second floor, used as the hospital, was at ground level. The first floor, used to store the wines, tonics, cordials and elixirs made by the Madam, backed up against the slope.

On October 1, 1886 "Madam Preston's free school" opened. It was a one-room schoolhouse attended by children of Preston residents.\textsuperscript{13} The school was closed around 1900 because there were no children of school age in the colony. Madam Preston enjoyed children and was interested in their education and upbringing. Mary Mowbray described one Christmas party, held at the school, for which she helped decorate the "biggest Christmas tree she had ever seen."\textsuperscript{14} The party was short, as the Madam decreed it would begin at 7:00 p.m. and end at 8:00 p.m.. The party began and ended on schedule and everyone had a good time.

After moving to Cloverdale Emily Preston developed a simple theology based on the golden rule and treating others with kindness. She was the spiritual mentor of her community, and by the late Eighties about one hundred people attended her meetings\textsuperscript{15} which were held in the main

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Reveille}, 18 October 1884.

\textsuperscript{12}Nathan Bowers, "Emily Preston - The Madam," p. 9. The Bowers family spent summers at Preston, beginning sometime in the 1880's, because of Mrs. Bowers' ill health. During this time the family lived in rented cottages. When Nathan was twelve year of age the family became permanent residents of Preston. Nathan lived at Preston for the next seven years.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Cloverdale Reveille}, 15 January 1887.

\textsuperscript{14}Mowbray, "My Memories," ch. 2, pp. 1, 2.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, ch. 1, p. 2.
house until 1886. Emily had successfully treated Frederick Rindge, a Boston millionaire married to her niece May, and he showed his appreciation by building a church near the main house. The church was twenty-four by fifty feet with a clock tower. The interior was panelled in redwood, with a fireplace at the back, a low speaker's platform at the front, and plain wooden benches. The front and back walls had inscriptions, composed by the Madam, in black lettering (see Appendix B for text of inscriptions). The first meeting in the Free Pilgrims' Covenant Church was held September 19, 1886, and Frederick Rindge delivered the sermon.

Hartwell preached at the weekly services until his death in 1889. From that time until her death Emily gave a weekly message. According to Madam Preston, her messages appeared in the air above the heads of the congregation and she described the scenes shown to her in this fashion. Her messages were wide-ranging in content. She described scenes of heaven, talked of brotherly love, and setting an example by deeds not words. In later years she was concerned about the young people of the community as they went their own way and ignored her teachings and advice.

In addition to the cottages rented by Emily's patients, some of her followers built rough cabins in a tree-ringed meadow halfway between the main house and the lake. This was called the Inland Camp and was used as a retreat for about two months each summer. All those attending the camp were expected to withdraw from the outer world and spend time in

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16. This writer first visited the church in May 1988 and at that time a friend of the Ellis's had just completed restoring the lettering on these walls.

17. Julia Lewis, letter to her husband, 19 September 1886. Julia Lewis was one of Madam Preston's patients who lived on the ranch for a number of years.

18. Transcripts of some of Madam Preston's sermons delivered between 1906 and 1909 give more details of her beliefs and also her concern for the young people of Preston. Her theology was simple, but her sermons were somewhat incoherent and repetitive.

19. One of the these cabins was still standing in May 1988 and the exterior was fairly well intact.
solitude and quiet contemplation. There was a small chapel at the camp, and every evening during the encampment there was a prayer meeting. These meetings consisted of hymns, prayers, and simple testimonials from everyone, even the children. Each Sunday the Madam led a service in the chapel. These camps were a combination of solitude and sociability that refreshed the participants so they could return to their everyday lives with new vigor.

As followers of Madam Preston settled near her, the ranch became the center of an informal community. Emily was the central or pivotal figure and her followers looked to her for guidance. However, there is no indication that spatial arrangement, in order to control Emily's followers, played a major part in the planning of the ranch. The Prestons may have exercised informal control by selling land to some who wished to buy it to build homes near Preston, while declining to sell to others. The main house, the church, the Inland Camp, and the lake were centers of social and religious activities. However, because they were located according to the dictates of the landscape, their location was not planned to control the activities of Prestonites. The main house was located in an area of existing ranch buildings. The church was located on land owned by Frederick Rindge, who built the church for Madam Preston. The Inland Camp was located in a sheltered, tree-ringed meadow that was ideal for camping in the summer. The lake lent itself to summer picnics and was also a peaceful retreat for Hartwell and Emily after they built the lake house. It is evident that, although Madam Preston was revered by her followers and that they often obeyed her, she controlled or guided by the force of her personality, not spatial arrangement of ranch buildings and facilities.

Nathan Bowers, in recounting some of his personal experiences at Preston, describes it as "a community of earnest and sincere people drawn and held together by the common bond of belief, confidence and dependence
The community grew to include the Preston Store, a Wells Fargo office, a United States Post Office and a railroad station, all located along the Russian River south of the main house. Colonel Preston owned the commercial buildings and various Preston residents ran the businesses.

In addition to Preston's role as a utopian colony, it was a successful working ranch, developed and managed by Hartwell from the time he purchased the property until his death in 1889. In addition to the mansion and the lake house, he built barns, stables, a bunk house, and other outbuildings, planted orchards, vineyards, hay and grain, and raised livestock. Nathan Bowers, who studied surveying and was familiar with the area, comments that the Colonel "must have been vigorous, capable and possessed of vision and imagination" because the land he selected was sure to increase in value. He further stated that the Colonel must have had some engineering training because he surveyed and built miles of access roads connecting developed areas of his property. These roads are still used today.

The Preston ranch had hilly areas suitable for grazing livestock, and it also had level areas suitable for crop cultivation. Hartwell raised cattle and also kept horses for use on the ranch. He planted prune orchards and it is apparent that the orchards were productive because of items that appeared in the "Local Notes" column of the Cloverdale Reveille. Between 1881 and 1884, the Colonel bought a "fine fruit dryer," hauled plums for shipment to canneries and had two dryers "working night

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This writer visited Preston in May 1988, and at that time Ed Ellis confirmed that the roads in use today are the roads surveyed and built by Hartwell.
and day on prunes." His trees must have been excellent because, at the
time he was working two prune dryers, the Reveille commented that "P.P's"
(Preston's Prunes) will be a noted brand in the market."23 Emily used
grapes from the vineyards to make wine and cordials for medicinal
purposes. In addition to feed crops, grapes and prunes, there was an area
known as "The Gardens" where all the vegetables used on the ranch were
grown. This may have been in the same area where Emily grew herbs and
plants used in the remedies she compounded.24

Preston has its own cemetery which is situated on a hill above the
mansion overlooking the river, town and valley to the south of the ranch.
Many Prestonites are buried there, but the exact number is unknown because
in 1923 a fire destroyed all the wooden grave markers.25 Hartwell, Emily
and Emily's son, Wellington, are buried in a family vault made of stone.
There are several other family vaults and many stone markers in the
cemetery. Although no longer in use, it is a reminder that Preston was a
community for many nearby families.26

In addition to running the ranch efficiently and productively,
Hartwell seemed to have no problem having a number of people on the
property both as residents and visitors. There were several areas where
people lived or gathered for social activities. These were the mansion

23 Cloverdale Reveille 23 July 1881, 11 August 1883, 11 October 1884.
24 Alice Elmers Theuer, "Memories of Preston and Mr. Fred Elmers," p. 1.
Fred Elmers' first job at Preston was working in The Gardens. During a visit to
Preston in 1988, this writer saw the garden where Madam Preston grew herbs and
medicinal plants, many of which were still growing there. These plants took up
a small area but there was a much larger area of level, sunny ground, and that
may have been where the large vegetable garden was planted at one time.

25 Theuer, "Memories of Preston," p. 3. Mrs. Theuer was a niece of Fred
Elmers who became the caretaker of the Preston estate after the death of Joseph
Zahner who had been the caretaker for many years. Mrs. Theuer and her family
spent vacations at Preston beginning in 1919. She was there at the time of the
cemetery fire and helped put it out.

26 For more information on the Preston cemetery, see two works by Kathryn Rae
Crabtree, "Gone to the Land of Peace: A Preliminary Report on the Preston
State University, 1982.
and the buildings clustered around it, the church and school, the Inland Camp, the lake, and the rental cottages. Roads connected these areas and it was not necessary for visitors to disturb land used for growing crops or grazing cattle. Preston was well managed and arranged to accommodate all the activities carried on there.

Hartwell and Emily Preston got along well with their neighbors in Cloverdale. The only apparent problem occurred when some of the medical doctors in Sonoma County attempted to have Emily prosecuted for selling medicines without a license but finally gave that up. Although the attempted indictment of Emily Preston was unsuccessful, Sonoma County physicians continued to discourage their patients from using her remedies. Some later efforts to prosecute the Madam were made, including an attempt to arrest her for operating a still. These efforts all ended in failure. Madam Preston's problems with medical professionals was not confined to Sonoma County. In 1888 she received a letter from the Board of Examiners of the Medical Society of the State of California regarding legal registration of medical practitioners. The Madam responded that she did not profess to be a physician. She further stated the letter had given her the idea of becoming a doctor and requested that they forward to her the necessary forms and instructions to enable her to comply with the law. These efforts to discourage her from seeing patients had no visible effect on the Madam's habits and she continued to see those who sought her advice about health problems.  

The Prestons invited friends and neighbors to the annual Fourth of July picnic at the lake. Also, anyone interested in attending church at Preston was welcome, including reporters from area newspapers. On June 10, 1895, a reporter from the Santa Rosa Daily Republican, accompanied by George Baer of the Cloverdale Reveille, visited the Inland Camp to hear

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27Mowbray, "My Memories," chap. 1, p. 3. Marjorie Mowbray commented that "The Madam was wise -- she always kept within the law."

Madam Preston preach. The unidentified reporter was favorably impressed by the beauty of the ranch and by Madam Preston. He stated "She would be noticed in any crowd as a remarkable woman," and that her influence over her people "is very great."

Hartwell also evidently made an excellent impression on his neighbors because in 1882 the Reveille reported "We would be pleased to name Col. Preston for a place on the Republican ticket if he would accept. He is a scholar and a finished orator." This proposal is not mentioned in future issues of the Reveille, but it indicates he was a popular, highly regarded member of the community.

As a successful ranch, Preston contributed to the agricultural economy of Cloverdale. Many of Emily's patients settled in the area permanently, contributing to the economy by ranching or other work. By 1881 so many people were in Cloverdale consulting the Madam that Mr. Werth's hotel was crowded with "Mrs. Dr. Preston's patients" and Werth had to build four additional rooms to accommodate the overflow. It is evident that the Prestons were welcome in Cloverdale and considered good neighbors who contributed to the economic well-being of the community.

Hartwell died suddenly in December 1889 (see Appendix C for background information and text of his obituary). After his death Emily remained at Preston. She continued her work as a healer and religious leader, remaining on the ranch but putting "little emphasis on ranching, preferring to reap profits from the sale of medicines." Madam Preston also purchased nearby property from time to time. She purchased a ranch called "Buzzards' Roost" from Janie Mowbray, mother-in-law of Mary

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29 *Cloverdale Reveille* 4 March 1882. The publisher and editor were the same person at this time.

30 *Cloverdale Reveille* 30 August 1881.

Mowbray. After the purchase, the ranch was called "Emilyville." 32

According to Mary Mowbray, the Madam always had plenty of help around the ranch after Hartwell’s death. She had a foreman, Joseph Zahner; an assistant foreman, Fred Eimers; and a cook. From time to time she took in families who needed help and gave them work on the ranch. The women and girls who worked for Emily lived with her in the big house and the hired men had a bunkhouse (formerly the "hospital") over the wine cellar. She was good to her workers, but strict, requiring them to come to meals when the bell rang, and locking out anyone who was out after 8:00 at night. This strictness was tempered by her kindness to those in need and also by continuation of the Fourth of July picnic, Christmas Eve parties, the Inland Camp, and other social gatherings of Preston and Cloverdale residents. 33 Life at Preston continued in this fashion until Emily’s death January 22, 1909. She often helped with household chores and was drying dishes after a meal when she dropped to the kitchen floor, dying instantly from a heart attack (see Appendix D for texts of her obituaries). 34

The death of the Madam signalled the end of the loosely structured Preston community. After her death the church service became a gathering of members of the Free Pilgrims’ Covenant Church who remained near Preston. They sang hymns and each offered a short prayer. There was no longer a formal service or sermon. 35 All that remained of Preston was a group of people who lived near each other and had memories of a beloved mentor and friend.

32 Mowbray, "My Memories," ch. 2, p. 3. Madam Preston’s ownership of Emilyville, located in Mendocino County, is confirmed by probate papers filed after her death.

33 Mowbray, "My Memories," ch. 4, p. 3.

34 According to Lisa Ellis, caretaker, there was no prior indication of ill health.

After Madam Preston's death, her property went to her heirs. She had intended that everything go to charity but, ignoring the advice of a friend to see a good lawyer, she wrote the will herself. Her heirs contested the will, it was thrown out of court, and nothing went to charity.\textsuperscript{36} Fred Elmers remained on the property as caretaker until it was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Oster in 1942.\textsuperscript{37} The Osters used the property as a boys camp or school while they owned it, then in 1967 sold it to Dr. Russell Lee of Palo Alto. The Lee family owned the property until 1990 when it was sold to a group of developers.

\textsuperscript{36}Mowbray, "My Memories," ch. 4, p. 3. Mowbray's recollection is confirmed by a study of Probate Case No. 4629, record of probate proceedings of the will of Emily Preston. A handwritten will was found by Emily's nieces, May Rindge and Augusta Knight Green. The contents of this handwritten will are not disclosed in the probate records. Because it was undated, this will was set aside by the court and the estate was divided among twenty-one heirs, all children of Emily's deceased brothers and sisters.

Another item of interest was found in the probate records. Apparently there was a claim on Emily Preston's estate by a Silvia Elizabeth Preston, as she was notified of the time of different proceedings during the course of probate. However, there is nothing in the records to identify her or to indicate where she lived. She was represented by Charles Wheeler, a San Francisco attorney.

\textsuperscript{37}Theuer, "Memories of Preston," p. 3.
CHAPTER 5

ICARIA SPERANZA

The Cloverdale Reveille of September 24, 1881 reported the sale of "the fine place known as the Bluxome Ranch" to A. Dehay and Company. The property consisted of 885 acres of prime agricultural land, suitable for vineyards and orchards. The purchase price was $15,000. According to the Reveille the new owners intended to put "all available land out in grapes immediately." This short statement heralded the founding of Icaria Speranza, the last of seven Icarian colonies in the United States and one of four utopian colonies in Sonoma County in the Nineteenth Century.

Armand Dehay, the A. Dehay referred to above, emigrated from France to the United States in the early 1870's. He worked as a barber in the east, then moved to Kansas where he farmed on the homestead of his friend and countryman, Jules Leroux.1 He married Leroux's youngest daughter and they soon moved with the Leroux family to Iowa. His association with Jules Leroux exposed Dehay to Icarian principles and philosophy, and the move to Iowa brought him close to several Icarian colonies in the Corning area.2

Corning, Iowa was where the remaining Illinois Icarians settled

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1Jules Leroux, as a young man in France, had enthusiastically followed the social thinker, Saint-Simon. After coming to America Leroux lived in various Icarian colonies, earning a living as a farmer and printer. He never formally joined the Icarians. Although he severely criticized the Icarians, he printed their publications, as well as his own, to repay them for their hospitality. He criticized them for their failure to actively spread their beliefs, failure to indoctrinate their young in Icarian principles, their political isolation, and the deviation of some colonies from the strict principles of Cabet. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, pp 66-67 and Kagan, New World Utopias, p. 42.

2Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, pp. 63-68.
after Cabet and his followers left the Nauvoo colony for Missouri. After the colonists settled in Corning there were more disagreements which resulted in the founding of two more colonies in Iowa. Table 2 shows each Icarian colony, its location, duration, and relationship to the other colonies.

TABLE 2
UNITED STATES ICARIAN COLONIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas, near the Red River</td>
<td>1848 (3 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>near what is now Dallas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauvoo, Illinois</td>
<td>1849-60 (11 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheltenham, Missouri</td>
<td>1858-64 (4 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corning, Iowa</td>
<td>1860-78 (18 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Icaria, Iowa</td>
<td>1878-98 (20 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeune Icarie, Iowa</td>
<td>1878-86 (8 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icaria Speranza, California</td>
<td>1881-86 (5 years)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: Robert V. Hine, California’s Utopian Colonies, p. 58.

Armand Dehay wanted to experience communal living, and in 1879 moved his family to Jeune Icarie to begin the six-month initiation period. The Dehay family anticipated a rewarding experience as colonists, but soon after their arrival the colony began to decline. At the end of their initiation period, the Dehays did not join Jeune Icarie; instead, Armand announced his intention to form a new colony in Texas or California. He stated that he sought a location "where we can develop industry and export our products easily. Another reason - and not the least - which determines me to leave you, is my wife’s poor state of health." This statement indicates both economic and personal considerations were behind

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3See pages 16-17 for details of this move.

4By the end of 1880 the colony’s debt totalled $7,000, its shops in Corning were closed, forty acres of land was sold, and membership decreased. By 1881 only thirty members remained. Hine, California’s Utopian Colonies, pp. 63-4.

5La Jeune Icarie, 15 June 1880. Letter to newspaper from Armand Dehay announcing his intention of leaving the Jeune Icarie colony. The name of the translator of this letter is not available, but it appeared in Hine’s work, as well as other publications about the Icarians.
Dehay's decision to found the seventh, and last, Icarian colony.

The fall of 1881 found Armand Dehay staying with his brother, Theodore, in St. Helena in California's Napa Valley, while he searched for a site for his venture into utopianism. California held many advantages for a utopian agricultural colony. It had a temperate climate, a variety of crops and livestock thrived on its rich soil and lush pasturelands, and orchards and vineyards produced abundantly. The port of San Francisco and the transcontinental railway provided transportation which would open the way to the new markets Dehay sought. Also there was an active Socialist movement in the San Francisco area, and Dehay believed this would provide new supporters and members for the colony. One of the original Icaria Speranza members, Emile Bée, was an active Bay Area Socialist before joining the colony. Because of these favorable aspects, California was the logical site for a western Icaria.

When Dehay found the old Bluxome Ranch near Cloverdale he knew this was an ideal place for the colony. The price was reasonable, there was ample acreage for vineyards, orchards and pasturage, it was private but not isolated, the large ranch house was suitable for a communal building, and rail transportation to the Bay Area was nearby. In addition to these advantages, the climate was mild, the scenery beautiful, and Cloverdale was a growing agricultural community. The colony was named Icaria Speranza, signifying its Icarian roots and also expressing the hope the colonists held for its success.

Articles of Agreement, signed in 1883 by all members of Icaria Speranza, including those still in Iowa, set forth ambitious plans for all phases of development of the new colony. The colonists planned to engage in: "agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, milling, mechanical

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7Affairs relating to the split between Jeune Icarie and New Icaria had to be settled and some of the followers of Dehay remained in Iowa to take care of this.
arts, manufacturing and commerce in all various branches; also the building and establishing of schools, villages, colonies and the developing of sciences and fine arts.\textsuperscript{8} These were ambitious undertakings for a group with fifty-five members, including children.

Soon after completion of purchase arrangements, the Dehay, Leroux, Bée, and Provost families moved to their new home. There was a large two story house on the property when the Icarians purchased it. This house was white clapboard with a high attic and broad porches.\textsuperscript{9} The colonists planned to use this main house as their communal dining and social hall, and they probably all lived in it until family homes were built. The individual homes were small and clustered around the communal building. It is not clear what other buildings were on the property at the time of purchase, but since it was a working ranch when the Icarians bought the property, it undoubtedly had barns and outbuildings.

The Icarians built a sawmill to assist in clearing their land.\textsuperscript{10} They built several barns and sheds, including a small horse barn. The horse barn was made of redwood and its architectural features included thin lath, crossed diagonally, covering the vents and upper windows, and a small cupola on the roof.\textsuperscript{11} Late in 1881 the Icarians built a one room schoolhouse for their children, and later donated the land on which

\textsuperscript{8}\textit{Contract & Articles of Agreement of the Icaria Speranza Commune, Section V - "Production and Business."}

In order to accomplish their goals, the Icarians practiced partial community of property. They did not engage in total communal ownership of property, but allowed individuals to own personal property and any gifts not exceeding $50.00 in value received in the course of a year. All funds were used as community capital. The colony was administered by five elected committees - Works, Home Consumption, Education, Commerce, and Accounts.

\textsuperscript{9}\textit{Sonoma Democrat}, (Santa Rosa), 20 March 1886.

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Cloverdale Reveille}, 29 October 1881.

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ross, Photographic History of Icaria-Speranza}, p. 29. This barn stood until the winter of 1990 when it was blown down by heavy winds. At the time of this writer’s visit (1989) the barn was held together with interior guy wires.
it stood to form the Icaria School District.\textsuperscript{12} By 1884 the colony installed "immense tanks."\textsuperscript{13} in preparation for making wine from their grapes. According to the\textit{Sonoma Democrat} of March 20, 1886, visitors would find nothing of striking contrast with any other vineyard community of Sonoma County.

The Icarians were excellent agriculturalists and began clearing their property immediately in order to plant vineyards and other crops. They had to utilize as much land as possible as soon as possible for income-producing vineyards and orchards. According to the Cloverdale\textit{Reveille} of October 28, 1881, the colonists had forty-five acres planted in zinfandel vines and by spring this would increase to fifty acres. They were also working diligently clearing trees and brush to prepare the land for cultivation. By December of 1882\textsuperscript{14} the vineyard was thriving, and one hundred acres of wheat and a five acre orchard were planted. The\textit{Reveille} stated the Icarians intended to increase the area of the orchard as soon as possible, putting in French and German prunes, and that they planned to build a winery and distillery as soon as their production justified this expense. About three hundred acres of their property was suitable for pasture and they planned to raise cattle. They also had fine horses, including some Percheron work horses brought from Jeune Icarie.\textsuperscript{15}

The colonists were not only excellent agriculturalists, they kept their land neat and clean. Photographs of the colony show orderly rows of grapevines, clean corrals, and around the main house, grass, trees and flowers.\textsuperscript{16} All colony buildings were well maintained. In 1884 the road

\begin{itemize}
\item[12]\textit{Sonoma Democrat}, 30 October 1886
\item[13]Cloverdale\textit{Reveille}, 11 October 1884.
\item[14]Cloverdale\textit{Reveille}, 21 December 1882.
\item[15]Ross,\textit{Photographic History of Icaria Speranza}, p. 29.
\item[16]In\textit{New World Utopias}, Paul Kagan comments that he found traces of the old garden - small white flowers near the front steps, some daffodils, and a palm tree. This was around 1975.
\end{itemize}
leading west through Icaria Speranza was fenced in and a gate placed across the road. The colonists planned to fence the entire property in the future.\textsuperscript{17} The Icarians were industrious, knowledgeable workers and excellent stewards of their land.

The residents of Icaria Speranza had a good relationship with their neighbors in Cloverdale. Less than a year after the colonists arrived in Sonoma County the \textit{Reveille} published an article describing the work that had been accomplished at the old Bluxome Ranch and plans for future improvements.\textsuperscript{18} The writer of the article visited the property and was favorably impressed by its appearance, the industry and agricultural knowledge of the colonists, and the picturesque setting.

The "Local Notes" column in the \textit{Reveille} contained brief items about the doings of local residents, including the Icarians and Armand Dehay. Dehay did not confine his activities to agriculture and colony business. The Sonoma County Book of Deeds, Book 78, Page 237, shows that on February 24, 1881, A. Dehay purchased property from H. B. Christensen, for which he paid $1150. The \textit{Reveille} of February 24 shed more light on this transaction, stating that Armand Dehay had purchased the business and residence of "Christensen the barber." It went on to say that "Mr. Dehay is a barber, if report be true, of considerable ability, and we wish him success. He is a very affable talking gentleman and we think he will make many friends." Armand kept the barbershop until the colony disbanded.\textsuperscript{19}

One reason the Icarians got along so well with their neighbors may have been because they did not engage in political activity. They did not indoctrinate their children in Icarian beliefs, although they believed in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17}Cloverdale \textit{Reveille}, 22 March, 1884.
\item \textsuperscript{18}Cloverdale \textit{Reveille}, 21 December 1882.
\item \textsuperscript{19}Book 90, Page 34 of the Sonoma County Book of Deeds shows a transaction dated March 4, 1884 in which A. Dehay sold property located at the N/W corner of Third and West Streets in Cloverdale to John B. Hyatt for $1,300. This property was the house Dehay had purchased along with the barbershop. Profits from the shop and the sale of the house went into the colony treasury. Ross, \textit{Photographic History of Icaria Speranza}, p. 25.
\end{itemize}
educating them well,20 and also did not proclaim their beliefs publicly.21 The Reveille often referred to Icaria Speranza as the "French Colony," and this, along with their European origin, gave them an international aura that probably intrigued their neighbors. The colony was brought into close touch with the town by Armand Dehay's activities as a barber. In his shop on a regular basis, Dehay kept informed about happenings in the community and also kept the community informed about what happened at the "French Colony." After the Icarians donated land for a school district in 1884, non-colony children attended the one room school along with colony children.22 This also brought the colonists and their neighbors closer and keep each informed of the others' activities. It is clear from newspaper accounts that the Icarians were good neighbors and an asset to the community of Cloverdale.

The Icarians were not only good neighbors, they also fit well into the local business community. Sonoma County was a major vineyard and winemaking area in California at the time and the Icarians planted wine grapes on much of their acreage. The area also produced a variety of fruits, and the colonists had a large orchard on their property with plans to expand it by planting more prune trees. In this way they contributed

20 The Icaria-Speranza commune shall give to each minor member, at least until he shall have attained the age of sixteen years, as thorough and as complete an education, in both English and French languages, as shall be found reasonably compatible, at any time, with the various works, the financial means, and the professorial opportunities of the association." Contract and Articles of Agreement of the Icaria-Speranza Commune, Section XIV - Rights and Duties, Article 50.

The colony's children were educated in a one room schoolhouse built soon after Icaria Speranza was founded. The school remained part of the county school system even though the colony donated land to form an Icarian School District. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 71.

21 This lack of political involvement and failure to indoctrinate their children in Icarian beliefs was severely criticized by Jules Leroux. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 67.

22 In February 1989, this writer met Elsie Karr and Dave Ferrari, Cloverdale residents, a brother and sister who attended the Icarian school although they were not Icarians. They verified that non-Icarian children attended the school.
to the winemaking and fruit growing industries. Armand Dehay's barbershop was also part of the local economy and, from items appearing in the "Local Notes" column of the Reveille from time to time, he was a well-liked businessman.

During the winter of 1883-84 the remaining Iowa Icarians arrived in Cloverdale. The colonists filed a Certificate of Co-Partnership which was signed by twenty-four members. The entire membership of Icaria Speranza was together at last and officially established as a colony. With work going forward to improve the property, and with the acceptance and friendship of neighbors, the colony's future looked bright. However, all this hard work and optimism was not enough to insure success, for in December 1886, a little over five years after Armand Dehay arrived in California, the colony disbanded.

Colony members divided the land, and those who wished to remain in Cloverdale stayed on the property, owning and operating their share individually, while others moved to San Francisco. Armand Dehay, with other former colonists, formed the French American Wine Company, selling their wine at a store in San Francisco. Dehay also operated a restaurant in San Francisco. In the 1890's the Dehay family took over the wine company, changed its name to Dehay Winery, and operated it into the early 1900's. The Dehay family also acquired and lived in the colony's communal home after the dissolution of the colony. Armand died November 24, 1923, and as a well-known and respected citizen of the community, his death was accorded front page coverage in the November 30 issue of the Reveille.

Icaria Speranza failed mainly because of economic pressures. It lacked the two things vital to the success of any utopian colony - money and manpower. The colonists expected to receive a large amount of money from the dissolution of Jeune Icarie in Iowa but received very little from the settlement because most of the money went to investors and creditors who filed suit in Iowa to recover money owed to them by the colony. The

23Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, pp. 63-68.
amount that eventually reached Icaria Speranza from the settlement was too little and arrived too late to be of any help. Another financial blow occurred because of a depression in 1884 which may have affected crop prices and reduced expected profits. It is also possible that the colony had no wine press of its own at that time so had to dump most of their crop. These financial disasters eroded their capital, and debts increased until finally the colonists decided to disband and salvage what they could individually.

The problem of an inadequate labor force was as pressing as that of inadequate financial reserves. The colonists were diligent workers, but could not work such a large amount of land alone. They hired outside help at times and this was an additional drain on their already strained finances. Membership did not increase as expected because of their requirement that all members speak fluent French, their failure to indoctrinate their children in Icarian beliefs, and their inaction in seeking converts to their cause. This lack of growth coupled with increasingly severe financial problems prevented their achieving the self-sufficiency necessary for survival. The disbanding of Icaria Speranza

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24Hine, *California's Utopian Colonies*, p. 75.


26Ross, *Photographic History of Icaria Speranza*, p. 32. The author of the history was given this information in an April 1989 conversation with Mr. Jean Coleman, descendant of the Ardoin family of Icaria Speranza.

2While the requirement that all members speak fluent French would keep otherwise qualified people from joining the colony, it is difficult to judge if this was more significant than the fact that the Icarians did not indoctrinate their children with their beliefs and also did not actively seek new members. Non-members did live at Icaria Speranza and the other colonies. Jules Leroux lived in various Icarian colonies most of his life and never became a member. Also, Armand Dehay's brother, Theodore, did not join the colony because his wife did not speak French. However, he and his family did live at Icaria Speranza. The difficulty in judging the relative importance of these factors is that there is no objective way to measure the effect of each one on possible new colony recruits.
after a gallant struggle signalled the end of the Icarian dream in California.

After Armand's death his widow remained on the land until the early 1950s. At that time she moved to a newer house on the Dehay property because a freeway was built close to the site of her former home. After her death the land was sold and today is owned by approximately three hundred individuals. The colony property is now in an area being developed for homes and businesses and there is little evidence that it was once occupied by French Socialists hoping to spread their message throughout the world.

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28This information was obtained from Dale Ross, member of the Icarian Heritage Society and an Icarian descendant. He researched current ownership of the colony site in 1988-89 when preparing for the annual meeting of the Society which was held in Healdsburg, California.
CHAPTER 6
ALTRURIA

On October 15, 1894, readers of the Santa Rosa Republican learned that the old Rector Ranch on Mark West Creek north of Santa Rosa was to be the site of a "fraternal cooperative" community called Altruria.\(^1\)

President of Altruria Council No. 1, Edward B. Payne, was a Unitarian minister from Berkeley who had embraced Christian Socialism. This movement stressed the importance of saving society before saving the individual, sought to foster brotherhood among all classes, and stressed gradual change, interdependence and mutual obligation among men.\(^2\) Payne and his followers planned Altruria as a "refuge for those strained and tired by competition or defeated in the struggle."\(^3\) It was also meant to demonstrate that men would work together willingly for a common good, and that this could be accomplished peacefully by gradual change rather than through violent revolution. Early in 1894 the Altrurians had drafted a constitution, based on democratic suffrage and complete equality of community goods purchased with colony labor checks, for their proposed colony. Upon completion of the constitution they appointed a committee to find a site for the colony. After weeks of searching the committee agreed on 185 acres of rich, wooded meadowland in a canyon along Mark West Creek north of Santa Rosa. Money for purchase of the land came from entrance fees of the original colonists which totalled $900, small sums of gifts

\(^1\)Altruria, from William Dean Howells' A Traveler in Altruria, was based on a combination of Howells' utopian ideas and Christian beliefs.

\(^2\)Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, pp. 103-4.

and dues from Altrurian clubs throughout the state, and later, donations from members who sold their belongings for this purpose.

Altruria was administered by a system of committees. An Executive Committee composed of all the colony's officers, five in number, was to meet each Monday to administer affairs in the interim between meetings of the Grand Council. Local clubs in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, San Jose, Pasadena, and Los Angeles formed a network of subordinate councils. Terms of entrance to the colony were $50.00 and a moral character, with a six month probationary period for each applicant.

While still in the planning stages, the Altrurian, the movement's newspaper, made extravagant claims for the Sonoma County site. It described a coal deposit which would provide fuel for the colony and also be developed commercially. The property also had sandstone which would be quarried to make Altru-Aluminum Polish, an all-purpose burnisher. The creek would provide power when dammed, and the dam would create a lake which would attract enough tourists to support a large hotel. The Altrurian claimed success for the colony almost before it began.

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4Altrurian clubs, located in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, San Jose, Pasadena, and Los Angeles, were part of the initial plan for the Altrurian colony. They were involved in governing the colony, supported it with their dues and gifts, and served to educate the public about Altrurian beliefs and ideals. One of their major functions was to screen prospective colony members. The San Francisco club organized the Altruria Exchange, a cooperative grocery in 1894, and in 1895 the Oakland club founded the Altruria Cooperative Union which included a grocery store, bakery, and laundry. There is no indication how long these two cooperatives existed. (Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 108.)

5Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 105.

6The Grand Council was composed of officers from Altrurian clubs throughout California.

7Martin T. Honke, Jr. and William E. VerPlanck, Jr., Mines and Mineral Resources of Sonoma County, California (n.p: California Division of Mines and Geology, 1949), p. 93. This report verifies that Sonoma County had coal deposits but the coal was of poor quality and not mined. The Pierson Mine was located five miles north of Santa Rosa near what is now Wikiup. This mine was never developed. The Pierson Mine was about five miles west of the Altruria site so it is possible a vein of coal ran through Altruria's property.

8These predictions for the colony's success appeared in issues of the Altrurian dated 25 October 1894 and 22 November 1894.
Within two weeks of the purchase of the colony site settlers arrived to begin this experiment in communal living.\(^9\) The only buildings on the property were three old houses and a gristmill, all situated on a central level area of the property. These structures provided shelter until the colonists built small family cottages. The mill ground corn and barley, and its loft provided living quarters for the colony's bachelors, along with offices and storage space. Some of the steep hillsides at the site were suitable only for orchards, hay or pasturage, but twenty-five level acres were already cultivated as a market garden when the Altrurians purchased the property. This garden provided enough vegetables for the colony's use and a surplus of several wagonloads each week which they sold in Santa Rosa.\(^10\)

On February 4, 1895, the colonists laid the cornerstone of a large hotel on the bank of Mark West Creek. The plans were for a two-story building with overhanging gables and eaves. It was to serve as the community kitchen and dining room, and contain seven family apartments, offices, and a library, in addition to rooms for guests. Plans called for completion of the hotel in May, but in March the Grand Council decided to add a third story. This change further delayed the work which was already behind schedule. By May the kitchen and dining room were in use, but then work on the structure stopped.\(^11\) The plan for an additional story was too ambitious for the colony's strained finances and manpower. The hotel remained unfinished during the time remaining to Altruria.

There are no specific references to building activity other than the cottages and hotel. It is possible that various small manufacturing projects such as weaving, blacksmithing, woodworking, making bamboo furniture, and job printing were carried on in buildings that were on the

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\(^9\) Eighteen adults and eight children were the first colonists. Hine, California's Utopian Communities, p. 101.

\(^10\) Fogarty, American Utopianism, p. 111.

\(^11\) Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 107.
site when the settlers arrived. The colony did not last long enough for a variety of building projects and the hotel absorbed most of the colony’s capital and labor. The architecture of the hotel was contemporary. It is likely that the cottages were small and simple in design because the colony could not afford anything elaborate and also because they were built in a short time.

Spatial arrangement at Altruria appears to have been related to the buildings already on the property and to the landscape itself. Much of the site was hilly so the existing buildings were located on a level area near the creek. The hotel and family cottages were built in this area and weekend guests were also accommodated here. The hotel served as a communal center and the cottages and other buildings clustered around it for convenience and also because there was not a large amount of level ground on which to build.

Although the hotel was never completed, the colony did have guests during the spring and summer months. The site was beautiful, the climate mild, and this attracted visitors, usually members of Altrurian clubs, from as far away as Los Angeles. These guests were housed in tents and were welcome to take their meals with the colonists. The colony never derived the income originally anticipated from tourists because guest facilities were not developed during the colony’s existence.

In addition to the small manufacturing projects previously referred to, the Altrurians cultivated the twenty-five acre market garden that existed when they moved to the property. This provided them with much of their food, and also gave them extra produce which they sold in Santa Rosa every week. They raised poultry, fruit, bees and cattle for their own use. The colony existed for such a short time that it is

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12 Most of these guests were Altrurians who wished to see the colony they supported with their dues and gifts. Hine, California’s Utopian Colonies, p. 110.

13 Hine, California’s Utopian Colonies, p. 108.
difficult to comment on whether or not the Altrurians were good stewards of the land. The bounty reaped from the market garden indicates they cared for the garden well, and it appears that they raised enough food for themselves and their guests.

Life at Altruria was not all work. The colonists enjoyed Saturday evening socials with recitations, singing, and refreshments. On Sunday mornings, in good weather, they gathered under the trees for Bible readings or lectures. On Sunday afternoons they picnicked, hiked or pursued other recreational activities, and often ended the day with a songfest or story session. Their only Christmas and New Year holidays as a colony were exceptionally festive. At Christmas there were presents and games around a tree, followed by a turkey dinner. There was more merriment and feasting to celebrate the New Year. This holiday period marked the height of their hope, enthusiasm, and solid cooperative accomplishments.

Altruria did not attract hostility from neighboring communities. The colony conducted business in Santa Rosa, and when it broke up, some of the colonists moved into town and attempted to exist there as a cooperative unit. The colonists were hard workers and their neighbors would have noticed this. The most sarcastic criticism came from Ambrose Bierce who referred to the Altrurians as "amiable asses" and to the flower of reform as "gorgeous, exuberant and ephemeral."

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14 Each member could hold whatever religious opinion he or she desired. Fogarty, *American Utopianism*, p. 111.

15 One Christmas gift was a cow from the San Francisco Altrurian Club. Hine, *California's Utopian Colonies*, p. 110.

16 Although the holidays were merry, less than one month after the colonists arrived at Altruria the young son of one of the families had died of pneumonia. Hine, *California's Utopian Colonies*, p. 107.


18 Ibid., p. 112.

19 *Examiner*, October 21, 1894, weekly column "Prattle."
Altruria was a major center of Christian Socialist activity in California. The organization’s newspaper, published in the colony’s printshop, was the major means of spreading Christian Socialist principles. Altrurian clubs throughout California not only supported the colony with dues and gifts, they also screened prospective colonists, and functioned as study groups, propagating Altrurian ideals through lectures and debates.²⁰

Hard work by the colonists and the support of Altrurian clubs was not enough to sustain the fledgling colony. The Altrurian of June 3, 1895 announced that “Altruria, after seven months of experience, has found it expedient to make a thorough readjustment of its plans.” The June 24 issue explained in more detail the financial problems threatening to ruin the colony and presented two choices: Continue running in the red or reorganize into smaller units. Colony officials decided to reorganize. Members divided into three groups. Sixteen of them went to an eighty acre farm near Cloverdale, some moved to Santa Rosa and set up a cooperative organization, and fourteen members remained at Altruria. This latter group continued publishing the Altrurian and acted as a clearing house for the scattered Altrurians. Within a year after the colony disbanded, all three discontinued communal life.²¹

There are a number of reasons Altruria lasted such a short time, most of which were inherent in the organization itself. The site chosen for the colony had many advantages but Altruria’s failure began before the first colonists arrived in Sonoma County. Inadequate finances and poor planning were the major factors responsible for Altruria’s demise. The founders believed the fifty dollar initiation fee and the community’s cumulative production would supply sufficient capital, without colonists

²⁰Hine, California’s Utopian Colonies, p. 110.

²¹Hine, California’s Utopian Colonies, p. 107 and Harvey Hansen and Jeanne Thurlow Miller, Wild Oats in Eden: Sonoma County in the 19th Century, with a Forward by Gaye Lebaron (Santa Rosa, CA: 1962), p. 105.
turning over their individual assets to the community. The $900.00 realized from initiation fees of the original colonists was inadequate to purchase land and pay for other expenses involved in setting up the colony. The Altrurians did not have adequate financial resources to provide for economic emergencies, and the sporadic, unpredictable way in which money came in forced them to live on their capital, with nothing left to carry them through difficult times. The Colony's income soon proved inadequate to sustain basic operations, let alone to allow continued growth. This fluctuating income also made it impossible to do any long-range financial planning.

In addition to their precarious financial situation, the Altrurians' manufacturing practices caused problems. They emphasized diversification of production, and allowed each member to decide where and when to work. Although diversification and choice of type and hours of work provided members with variety and interest in their labor, these practices also resulted in disorganization and inefficiency. If the colonists had concentrated their energies on agriculture, job printing, and manufacturing one or two items, using their manpower and financial resources efficiently, the colony might have succeeded.

Altruria's downfall was assured by the decision to begin building a hotel four months after the colony was founded. Resources were already stretched thin as the colonists farmed, engaged in various manufacturing enterprises, and built a cottage for each family. In addition to these activities, everyone performed domestic chores such as washing, cleaning and preparing meals. In good weather they usually had a number of weekend guests for whom they provided shelter and meals. The Grand Council believed the hotel would generate income for the colony by attracting tourists in addition to serving as a communal center. The Altrurians managed to complete and use the kitchen and dining room, but as the hotel

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22 Some colonists voluntarily turned their holdings over to the colony, but most had only moderate means. This was not a requirement until after the June 1895 reorganization. Hine, *California's Utopian Colonies*, pp. 109-110.
drained their financial resources and manpower, work slowed, then stopped.

After Altruria ceased to exist as a utopian colony, the site was not idle for long. In 1895 Dr. Willard P. Burke arrived in Sonoma County to establish a sanitarium for his wealthy Bay Area patients. The following year he purchased the property at Altruria and on January 18, 1901, incorporated the Burke Medical and Surgical Sanitarium Company.23 Doctor Burke completed the hotel, converted it to a sanitarium, and built cottages along the creek for long-term patients. The sanitarium was successful until 1910 when Dr. Burke was accused of attempted murder.24

After Dr. Burke’s tenure the property was sold. Today it is in an area of small acreages and it is unlikely that any of the current property owners are aware of the utopian history of the land they now own. A colony founded with every hope of success is only a memory, with no traces left at the site to show it was once the heart of Christian Socialism in California.

23 Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 1/19/1901. A short article announced the incorporation, listed the board of directors and amount of capital stock, and noted that improvements were planned.

24 Dr. Burke was accused of dynamiting the tent cabin in which his mistress, LuEtta Smith, was sleeping. When this failed, he treated her burns with a salve containing arsenic. When the burns did not heal the woman took a sample of the salve to the District Attorney who had it analyzed. This was the most famous crime in Santa Rosa’s history up to that time. The trial attracted statewide attention. Big city reporters attended, and Hiram Johnson, future California governor and U.S. Senator, defended Dr. Burke. The doctor was found guilty and sentenced to ten years in San Quentin Prison. He was paroled in 1915 and returned to Santa Rosa. He went into private practice and did not reopen the sanitarium on Mark West Creek. (Press Democrat 8/16/87 - Gaye Lebaron’s Notebook).

This account, and Hiram Johnson’s role as defense attorney, is confirmed by a story in the Santa Rosa Press Democrat of February 19, 1910.
CHAPTER 7
THE FOUR COLONIES

After studying utopian history, it is clear that architecture, use of space and land, and community relationships played an important role in the survival of utopian colonies. Literary utopias used architecture and spatial arrangement to control their citizens and ensure the survival of the state. Actual utopian colonies utilized these elements to control their members, and also in order to survive economically by living communally. Land use and community relationships were also important to the survival of utopian communities.

Four utopian colonies were established in Sonoma County between 1875 and 1894. All of them used the elements of architecture, arrangement of space, land use and community relationships as part of their plans for economic survival. Although Preston was not specifically planned, it also had to survive economically, so much of what applies to the other three colonies also applies to Preston.

Architecture and Use of Space

Each colony had a large structure of contemporary design at its center. Fountain Grove's was a richly furnished Italianate style manor house set in beautifully landscaped grounds. Thomas Lake Harris planned the manor house to accommodate himself, his wife and several other female members of the colony. Also, all members of the colony gathered there for meals and social activities. The main house at Preston was also large and Italianate in design. Although not as richly furnished as Fountaingrove, it was commodious and comfortable. The Prestons built their home as the center of ranch activities and also to provide space for Emily's work as a healer. She had a large sunny room on the second floor where she saw patients, and a work room adjoining the house where she compounded
medicines and cordials. There was a large double parlor that could be used for meetings or divided by a red velvet curtain into two smaller rooms for family use.

Icaria Speranza and Altruria each had a central structure for communal activities, surrounding it with small family homes. Both colonies used their main house for cooking, dining, business meetings, and social activities. Both sites had an existing house large enough for immediate use so they did not have the expense of building a large communal structure as soon as they purchased their property. The plans for Altruria included building a hotel, which was started but never completed, although it was used communally for a short while before the colony disbanded.

Communal buildings played an important role in all four colonies. A large central structure allowed the Icarians and Altrurians to consolidate the activities of daily life such as cooking, laundry, dining, and also served as assembly halls for colony meetings and social events. The main house in each colony also served a symbolic purpose. For the Altrurians and Icarians it was a symbol of their unity and commitment to a communal lifestyle, and also a center from which they hoped to send their message of brotherhood and reform to the world. At Fountaingrove and Preston, the main house was the residence of the colony's pivotal figure. Harris showed his favor to select members of the colony by allowing them to live in the mansion with him. The Preston home was the residence of Madam Preston, a pivotal figure to Preston residents. Both homes served as centers around which faithful followers gathered. All the structures as all four colonies were built in contemporary style, adapted for communal use when necessary, by their large size and arrangement of interior space.

Land Use

All four colonies were based on agriculture and were built on the site of existing farms or ranches. Fountaingrove purchased a dairy farm
and continued operating the dairy business for several years while putting in extensive vineyards and developing its wine business. The Altrurian site had an existing market garden when the colonists arrived. The Altrurians cultivated the garden and helped support the colony by selling vegetables in Santa Rosa. The Icarians immediately began clearing their land and planted fruit trees and vineyards. They also considered selling timber for railroad ties but there is no evidence available to show that they carried out this plan. Colonel Preston planted fruit trees and a vineyard, and built roads so he could reach remote areas of the property. One feature of Preston, which none of the other colonies had, is a cemetery. It is situated on a hill facing south over the valley. There are many handsome, worn headstones, and a stone vault where Hartwell, Emily, and Emily's son Wellington, are buried. There are more graves around the edge of the cemetery but they had wooden markers which were destroyed by fire.

Members of all four colonies were excellent stewards of their land. Colonel Preston and the Icarians grew prunes, and the excellence of their crops was noted in the local newspaper. The Altrurians, although in existence less than a year, had a flourishing market garden and raised livestock, poultry, bees, and fruit. Altruria did not last long enough for an evaluation of the colonists' agricultural expertise, but they started out well in that respect. Members of the Fountaingrove colony had extensive prior agricultural experience at their colonies in New York. There they had raised fruit, hay, and wine grapes successfully. They continued their successful agricultural pursuits at Fountaingrove, producing milk, mutton, lemons, and wool, before devoting almost all the land to viticulture.

Each colony had an impact on the land it occupied and on the surrounding landscape. The Altrurians planned to dam the creek flowing through their property to provide power for the colony and also to form a lake for recreational purposes but this plan was never carried out. If
a dam had been built at Altruria, there would have been a major change in the landscape and impact on the site. Another major project was their hotel. This was a three story building designed for colony activities and also to accommodate the large number of visitors the Altrurians expected to attract. The hotel was not completed during their tenure on the site. However, there were numerous visitors who camped or stayed in rustic cabins and this increase in population would have made an impact on the site. These visitors created additional waste which had to be disposed of, and land for campsites and recreational activities such as hiking, had to be cleared. All these activities and projects changed the appearance of the land at Altruria.

The Icarians began clearing their site immediately for orchards and vineyards. They built small family homes around the communal building soon after arriving. They also raised some livestock - dairy cows and horses - for colony use. In 1884 they formed a school district and built a school house near the colony's communal building. The additional buildings changed the appearance of the site, and more people meant more wear and tear on the land.

Harris continued the dairy operation at Fountaingrove until extensive vineyards were planted. Fruit trees and vegetable gardens were also planted, and livestock raised for colony use. Fountaingrove had several major impacts on the land it occupied. The rolling, grass and hay-covered hills were plowed and grape vines planted. The mansion was large and imposing, and in addition to the usual farm outbuildings, there were two large communal buildings - the Commandery for the men, and the Familistery for the women. Beautiful gardens, with trees and fish ponds surrounded the main house. These all made major changes in the appearance of the site.

The Preston ranch was hilly with stretches of meadow and oak and eucalyptus trees. There were oak and eucalyptus trees, and feed crops and cattle were raised on the land. Hartwell continued to raise cattle and
feed crops, but also planted wine grapes and prune orchards. He laid out an extensive system of roads which allowed access to all parts of the property. He also built a large residence. All these things changed the appearance of the land, but the major change resulted from the number of people who were drawn by Madam Preston’s healing abilities. There were cabins and outbuildings on the property, and these were rented to patients who wished to stay near the Madam for a while. Also, those who could afford it, and who wished to remain in the area, purchased land from the Colonel and built homes near the ranch. The Inland Camp, a group of rough cabins in a tree-ringed meadow, was available for camping during the summer, and the summer house at the lake was used for picnics and recreational activities. So many people coming and going, on horseback, in wagons, and on foot, must have impacted the land. Waste had to be disposed of, brushy areas cleared for cabins, and trails made to avoid disturbance of crops. Although many changes occurred after Hartwell purchased Preston, these changes, and the many people living on and visiting the property, do not appear to have been disruptive or harmful to the land.

Fountaingrove, Preston and Icaria Speranza all planted vineyards. Preston made very little wine as the Madam did not believe in drinking. However, she did make brandy and wine cordials and used the grapes for this purpose. Fountaingrove and Icaria Speranza were different from Preston and Altruria because both planned to make wine the major economic support of their colony. Both colonies built a large winery and installed wine tanks on their property. These features also made an impact on the appearance of the properties. There is no evidence Altruria planned to plant vineyards or make wine.

Although all four colonies made major changes to their property, the land was well cared for and productive. No photographs of Altruria were found by this writer, but pictures of the other three colonies show clean, well-kept buildings and grounds, and inviting agricultural vistas.
The colonists built in the same style as their neighbors, had the same types of outbuildings, equipment and livestock and, except for the large number of people in some of the pictures, were indistinguishable from their neighbors.

Community Relations

Building good community relationships was necessary for the survival of a utopian colony. Most succeeded in doing this, and the four Sonoma County colonies were no exception. Altruria did not last long enough to judge what its long-term relationship with neighbors would have been. However, a favorable newspaper article about the planned colony appeared soon after the purchase of the property. Also, the colonists transacted business in Santa Rosa, selling their vegetables and other produce in town.

Santa Rosans, watching the speed with which Thomas Lake Harris built the mansion at Fountaingrove and developed the property, must have been impressed by the industry and also the wealth these accomplishments represented. Harris invited neighbors to picnic in the park-like gardens surrounding the mansion, and also to dinners and social evenings. He was regarded as a good businessman who was cultured and well educated. When scandal broke around him, a letter in his defense, signed by thirty-one business and professional men of Santa Rosa, appeared in the local newspaper. Although Thomas Lake Harris left Santa Rosa to avoid further scandal, Fountaingrove remained in existence as a business enterprise and Kanaye Nagasawa and the other colonists who remained at Fountaingrove continued a good business relationship with the community.

Hartwell and Emily Preston maintained an excellent relationship with their neighbors. The Colonel was mentioned as a possible political candidate by the local newspaper, which also kept track of his agricultural activities. When new construction was underway at Preston, Cloverdale residents were kept apprised of its progress in the "Local Notes" column of the Reveille. The paper also kept track of Emily’s activities. There
were social events at Preston and the townspeople were invited to picnics and parties along with colony residents. On several occasions, when Emily was preaching, newspaper reporters attended the service and later wrote of their pleasant experience at Preston.

Emily's life at Preston was not always smooth. On at least one occasion the doctors of Sonoma County tried to bar her from seeing patients, claiming she was practicing medicine without a license. Emily replied with a letter to the Board of Medical Examiners requesting the forms to apply for certification. The efforts to bar Madam Preston from seeing patients soon died down and she continued business as usual.

The Prestons had good business and personal relationships with their neighbors and were responsible for some of the population growth in the area. Some of Emily's patients decided to move to Cloverdale. They built houses, bought property, and started businesses, which helped the town's economy. The Prestons began as good neighbors and remained good neighbors as long as they lived.

Icaria Speranza attracted local attention before the site was occupied by the colonists. The Reveille announced the purchase of the property and also stated that the new owners intended to begin planting grapes as soon as possible. The colonists were not only hard working, knowledgeable agriculturists, they also engaged in business. They advertised grape vines for sale, hoped to sell timber for railroad ties, organized a cooperative store in Cloverdale, and Armand DeBay, their leader, bought a Cloverdale barbershop. DeHay kept the shop until the colony disbanded, and was the subject of several short news items in the Reveille. The Icarians, along with the other Sonoma County utopians, maintained cooperative business and social relationships with their neighbors, and were seen as a social and business asset to the community.

The four colonies were similar in many ways, but had diverse origins. Icaria Speranza was founded on social reform beliefs. The founders of Altruria believed in Christian Socialism - a doctrine of
social reform based on Christian beliefs. Both groups believed people could work and live together harmoniously, that everyone was equal, and that no one need accumulate wealth by oppressing anyone else. Although both colonies failed financially, they did not fail as examples of happy, hard working people who presented their message of hope to the world.

Fountaingrove was based on a religion developed by its founder, Thomas Lake Harris. He taught a mixture of spiritualism and Swedenborgian beliefs flavored with his own mystical, sensuous poetic imagination. He had followers in the United States and Europe, and spread his message through books and pamphlets printed at Fountaingrove. Preston was an informal colony composed of people attracted by Madam Preston's healing ability. After becoming the center of Preston, the Madam originated her own religion, a simple belief system based on the Bible, the Golden Rule, and living what you believe. She did not spread her message very far, but she lived her belief and was an example to those around her.

Fountaingrove, Preston, Icaria Speranza, and Altruria had many similarities, but each was unique in its beliefs. All were founded by people who felt a need to change the world they lived in and who worked hard to effect these changes. Each colony attracted public interest and attention. Each played a role in the social and economic life of Sonoma County and their community. Today they remain as symbols of the ability of people to work together to accomplish a common goal and achieve their vision of a better life while living what they believe.
EPilogue

Sonoma County has a rich utopian history, but time, fire, and progress have destroyed most physical traces of its four Nineteenth Century utopian colonies. Those interested in learning more about this unique aspect of Sonoma County history must rely mainly on newspaper accounts, colony publications, local histories, and unpublished memoirs. For anyone who is aware of Sonoma County's utopian history, visiting the colony sites is like chasing shadows¹—an occasional remnant of the past is visible, but the sites are now populated only in the searcher's imagination.

Today the site where Altruria stood is in an area of meadows, trees, and private residences beside a busy rural road. There is nothing left to show it was once the home of a utopian community that, for a short while, was the center of the hopes and dreams of Altrurians throughout California who gave their labor and money and, in one instance a life, so that the light of Christian Socialism might spread far beyond the borders of Sonoma County. Altruria's failure after only seven months of existence dashed the hopes of Christian Socialists that colonies based on their beliefs would eventually circle the globe. This failure does not mean that Altruria accomplished nothing during its short existence. It showed that people could work and live together cooperatively for a common goal while overcoming the dullness and monotony of farm life by a lively social and intellectual life. It was a "healthy experiment, which was

¹Two definitions of shadow, both of which apply to searching for Sonoma County utopian colonies, are: A phantom, ghost; A vestige, remnant. Webster's II: New Riverside University Dictionary, (The Riverside Publishing Company, Boston) 1988.
respected," and was "a success because the colonists were happy." Today there are only shadows where dreams once abounded and a small group of colonists worked to make those dreams reality.

The site of Fountaingrove still bears that name, but today is a combination of business park, upscale housing, a golf course, several restaurants, and a hotel. The Round Barn, built after Thomas Lake Harris left the colony, is modern Fountaingrove's major landmark. The barn and four acres surrounding it are currently for sale but, because it is an historic building, any development in and around it must be consistent with the style of the barn. Possible uses include restaurant, wine shop, convention center, or office building. One of the old wineries, built in 1892 after a fire destroyed the original building, existed until July 1991, when it too was destroyed by fire. Until its destruction, there were nebulous plans to turn the old winery into a restaurant or a group of specialty boutiques.

Fountaingrove's vineyards and mansion were destroyed to make way for modern development. The vineyards were plowed up in the 1930s and the property used for raising beef. The manor house was razed in 1970 to make way for development of the business park. Utopian history is evoked by names such as Fountaingrove Lake, Thomas Lake Harris Drive, Altruria Drive, and Round Barn Boulevard. Most people using these roads probably know nothing of the history behind the names. However, anyone familiar with the history of Fountaingrove can drive through the development and

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2Fogarty, American Utopianism, p. 113.
3Hine, California's Utopian Colonies, p. 113.
4Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 10 August 1990.
7Kagan, New World Utopias, p. 33. Kagan does not give the specific time during 1970 when the manor house was razed. He took photographs at the site while this work was in progress.
picture the site when Thomas Lake Harris was still in residence. The hills are once again covered with the vineyards that produced Fountain-grove wines. The mansion stands in the midst of its park-like grounds, surrounded by the various outbuildings. This vision may fade, but as long as the Round Barn stands and utopian street names remain, they are reminders of the search for perfection that once occurred at Fountain-grove.

This writer visited Preston for the first time in May 1987 at the invitation of caretakers Edwin and Lisa Ellis. It was serene and beautiful and the Ellis's gave an extensive guided tour of the property and the buildings. The roads we used to tour the property were the same ones laid out by Hartwell Preston when he developed the ranch over one hundred years ago. The buildings still in existence at the time of this visit were: the mansion, schoolhouse, caretaker and assistant caretaker houses, the old hospital/wine cellar, one of the barns, several small houses, the lake house, and the church. The lake house was occupied by the caretakers and the other structures, except for the mansion and church, were occupied by renters.

The tour included interiors of the mansion, church, lake house, and assistant caretaker's house, and visits to the cemetery, Inland Camp, and Madam Preston's garden where she raised herbs and plants for her medicinal compounds and tonics. It was interesting to see all these places and imagine the ranch as it was in Emily and Hartwell's day - alive with people and busy with agricultural activities. Preston is a special

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Daniel Markwyn, Professor of History, SSU, introduced me to Edwin and Lisa Ellis, caretakers at Preston, as resources for research on Preston. Edwin and Lisa have done much research into the history of Preston. They have been contacted by relatives of former Preston residents and learned more of its history from these people. Also, Lisa has done extensive research attempting to learn more of Hartwell Preston's background but, to this writer's knowledge, has been unsuccessful. The Ellis's were as active as possible in attempting to preserve the mansion, church, and the site in general. Once the property was sold to developers, the Ellis's moved and I have lost touch with them but will attempt to re-establish contact in order to see if they have any further information on Preston.
place for those who are aware of its history and the community that grew up around the Preston ranch.

In June 1989 a disastrous fire occurred at Preston. It started from windblown electrical wires whipping together. The caretakers had cut firebreaks but dry eucalyptus trees and brush fed the fire. It swept up the hill from Geysers Road, burning the old schoolhouse, the mansion, and most other buildings on the site. The church and lake house were spared.

Today the property is owned by Stagecoach Development Company. Before leaving Preston, Lisa Ellis stated that heavy equipment had been moved in and the land was being readied for building homes. According to an article in the Press Democrat dated July 21, 1990, Stagecoach Development no longer plans to build homes on the property. Because of geological instability and the County general plan, the company decided to plant vineyards instead of building homes. The ranch is no longer serene, with memories of Prestonites the only residents. The shadow of development hangs over the site and, unless the church and lake house are preserved, there will be nothing tangible left to show that there was once a utopian colony called Preston.

In February of 1989, Edwin and Lisa Ellis arranged a meeting for this writer with Dale Ross, an Icarian descendant and member of the Icarian Heritage Society. At that time Mr. Ross was involved in making arrangements for the Society's annual meeting in July of that year. The annual meeting rotates among four sites, and 1989 was the first time it was held in Sonoma County. We met at the Cloverdale Museum and in the late afternoon visited the site of Icaria Speranza.

It was nearing dusk as we walked onto the property located on Asti Road south of Cloverdale. There were two large concrete wine tanks, a mobile home, and a large modern house near the road. As we walked further, we located the foundation of the old main house. Nearby was the horse barn built by the colonists. The barn was so unstable it was held together by guy wires across the interior. Icaria Speranza was born with
high hopes and expectations of success as an example of utopian life. In the dusk, this hope lived once again, if only in the imagination of knowledgeable, interested visitors.

Changes have occurred at the site of Icaria Speranza since 1989. The Icaria-Speranza Utopian Colony site is now California Registered Historic Landmark No. 981. The plaque, located where the old schoolhouse once stood, was dedicated at a ceremony during the annual meeting of the Icarian Heritage Society on July 22, 1989 (see Appendix E for the inscription on the plaque).

The land around the old communal building is being bulldozed in preparation for development. The old wine vats are gone. The horse barn blew down in a windstorm in 1990. It is impossible to see if the foundation of the house has been destroyed and the cellar filled in because there is no longer free access to the property.

In spite of the ravages of time and the elements, memories of Sonoma County's utopian past survive. Gaye Lebaron, local historian and Press Democrat columnist, writes about this aspect of County history from time to time. Students at Sonoma State University have written research papers and theses on various aspects of Sonoma County's utopian colonies. The Cloverdale Historical Society is interested in the fate of Preston and protested the clearcutting of oak trees by the developer. The Fountain-grove round barn, visible from Highway 101, is a reminder that something unique once existed on the rolling hills behind it. Icarian descendants still live in the Cloverdale area and some of them attended the Icarian Heritage Society meeting in 1989. Also in attendance were Icarian descendants from Texas, New York, Oregon and the mid-west. These people are proud of their Icarian heritage and enjoy sharing their memories and history with anyone who is interested.

Most of the structures built by Sonoma County's utopian colonists have vanished. Much of the land they so carefully worked and made productive is covered with modern buildings or has been put to other uses.
by subsequent owners. Although physical evidence of the existence of these colonies is almost gone, their role in the history of Sonoma County should not be forgotten. All the colonies contributed to the agricultural economy of the County, especially in wine and fruit production. They participated in community life, and invited local residents to attend colony functions. These functions provided social and cultural activities that might otherwise not have been available to the community. There is one thing that will remain long after the few remaining colony structures disappear. That is the spirit of cooperation and brotherhood of people working together to spread their message of hope and social reform far beyond the borders of Sonoma County.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Location of Fountaingrove, Preston, Icaria Speranza and Altruria
APPENDIX B

Inscription on front wall over speaker's platform of Preston Church

We worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We go in secret and pray; and confess our sins, one and all. We meet together on Sundays and Thursdays for edification; when each in turn should lead, until we find our respective places in the Spirit. We are to live this religion everywhere; and especially in our homes. Otherwise we are not of the Covenant of God and Heaven. This do we voluntarily do. Amen.

Inscription on rear wall of church

House Dedication

Truth is our motto! Purity is our Password into Eternal Life! I do this day give unto God this Meeting-House as one covenant to keep, and I invite you, who wish to make a covenant with God to come and help me keep this covenant, and to place your name with mine, for strength in faith in this God, we talk about, that He will bless us and take us into Heaven.
APPENDIX C

BACKGROUND OF H. L. PRESTON

An effort, unproductive of results, was made in 1853 and 1854 to start a movement for the creation of a separate territory in southern Oregon, where the people felt a sense of remoteness from the seat of government, and where recent mining activity was creating a population whose interests differed somewhat from those of the Willamette Valley. General Lane received a letter from H. L. Preston, of Crescent City, California dated December 3, 1853, indicating that steps were being taken to carve new territories out of that state also, the ultimate aim being to create a Republican Empire on the Pacific Coast.

General History of Oregon, p. 491.

OBITUARY OF H. L. PRESTON

H. L. Preston, a highly respected citizen of Cloverdale, died Thursday morning. He was a noted lawyer and jurist in his younger days and gained great political distinction in Oregon many years ago. At one time he held in his power the State Senatorship of that state but refused it. He was known at that time all over the coast as a politician and jurist but on his marrying Mrs. Preston, whose fame is worldwide, he retired from active life and with his wife, located near Cloverdale on Oak Mountain where they have since resided and have a large following of devoted admirers. He had reached the age of 69.*

Santa Rosa Daily Democrat, 14 December 1889

*His age is given as 71 years on his crypt.
APPENDIX D

OBITUARIES OF MADAM PRESTON

Many Mourn at Her Bier

At 12 o'clock last Tuesday, at the Church of the Covenant at Preston, the funeral services of the late Mrs. Emily Preston were held. Besides practically the entire Preston community, there were many other friends present to pay the last tribute to the memory of this highly respected woman. The church founded by Mrs. Preston was beautifully decorated with the choicest flowers obtainable, many of which had been sent by friends from a distance upon learning of the death of their leader. Members of the Cloverdale Congregational Church assisted the congregation in the singing and V. Giorno gave a vocal solo, "When I Shall See Him Face to Face." Rev. Reuben H. Sink, pastor of the Congregational Church at Stockton, for many years a friend of Mrs. Preston, preached the funeral sermon. It was he who officiated at the funeral services of Mrs. Preston's son, Wellington Appleton, a number of years ago. Rev. Sink said in part:

We have met today to pay the last tribute of respect to the mortal body in which once lived a spirit whose sole purpose was to do good and be good. Her memory will live on and be cherished in the devoted hearts of those to whom she has been a comfort and a blessing. Madam Preston, as I have known her, and as some of you have known her, lived to be a blessing to others. This was the purpose of her heart and there are those who can rise and call her blessed. Here and in other places there are those who have had new visions and new purposes of light because she has lived and been made a controlling power in their lives. My acquaintance with Madam Preston extended over thirty years. She came to this region in 1876 or 1877. She heard the "still small voice" which speaks to the souls of men, and she has taught you to ask for the spirit to go with you to keep you from sin that you may enter heaven. She has taught you not merely to do good but to be good. One may be good from policy or selfishness, but to be good at heart will direct to good deeds regardless of other considerations. Cannot we almost hear from the lips that are so still today in our presence some such words as these: "My work on earth is finished. I can no longer minister to you as in other years, but you can carry on the work of doing good to others." The ripened grain gives seed for other harvests. So with these human lives of ours well lived. But the world grows better only as the good that we have done which has blessed other hearts with comfort and with cheer is still continued by those so blessed. This, I feel, would be her advice could she but speak to you today. Let us so believe and then so do. And as for her, while her mortal body is soon to be borne from our sight away, let it be our improved privilege to lift our eyes and pierce the veil that hides the future from our mortal sight and give it rest in the eyes of the unseen, where the weary cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

Perhaps at no funeral ever held in this vicinity was there more profound expressions of regret heard. Besides administering to her followers spiritually, Madam Preston had cured many of them of bodily ills. The extent of the good she did during her thirty five years residence in this vicinity will probably never be fully known. Her benefactions were many and given wholly without ostentation. Her fourscore years of life had been a busy one. Her religion found many followers. It is said of her that she taught that a pure mind and a pure living are essential to the cure of bodily ailments and the administration of her remedies is said to have produced in many people wonderful cures. Her followers came from many sections of this state and not infrequently did people come from other states to be treated by this noted woman. She had a large correspondence and kept in touch with patients in widely separate localities. She never paraded as a healer in the common acceptance of the term, but her followers have freely said she was
possessed of spiritual gifts of healing. The use of her herb medicines for bodily ills was accompanied by faith. Although eccentric in some ways, with a blunt manner of expression, she had one of the kindest of hearts. The pallbearers, all of the Church of the Covenant, were: D. W. Dineen, N. P. Wiswell, Henry Heidorn, F. W. Radtkey, Henry Meyers, Fred Elmo, Joseph Schneider and William Lloyd. The remains were deposited in the large family vault at the Preston cemetery.

The nearest relatives of Madam Preston are three nieces - Mrs. Frederick Rindge of Los Angeles, Mrs. P. Green of Willows and Mrs. Lottie Wheeler of Ontario - who arrived in time to attend the service.

Cloverdale Reveille, 30 January 1909

Sainted Mother is Laid to Rest

They laid the mortal remains of good, kind-hearted Madam Preston, head of the Church of the Covenant and founder of the Preston Colony in this county, to rest at noon yesterday in the family vault in the little private burying ground where sometime ago other loved ones were left in last repose.

Just after noon, while the cortege was wending its way from the church on the hillside towards the cemetery, there was a radiant dash of sunshine to penetrate the overhanging gloom, and the air was filled with the sweet perfume of the flowers that grow so luxuriantly in the terraced gardens about the many happy, delightful homes that form the Preston Colony.

There was a large and notable gathering of friends of the deceased at her funeral, many of whom came from a distance to affectionately pay the last token of esteem. Many of those present had personally benefited by the life and works of the departed one.

The flowers sent to adorn the interior of the little church, the edifice in which Sunday after Sunday, winter or summer, rain or shine, Madam Preston preached her doctrines, were surpassingly beautiful. The building was transformed into a floral bower. Hundreds of Easter lilies were among the blooms used. The casket reposed amid a scene of floral splendor. Scores of exquisite creations were arrayed about it.

The floral pieces ranged from the costly gift of the wealthy down to the single rose or the little bunch of violets that some poor friend's feeble hand laid gently with the rest - a gift just as valuable as the most costly for perchance it was presented with a more tender sense of devotion.

It was a simple burial service. Very fitting it was that an old friend of Madam Preston and of her family, the venerable and Reverend R. H. Sink, a pioneer Congregational minister of Stockton, well known to many old friends in Santa Rosa, should officiate at her funeral. Members of Santa Rosa Commandery Knights Templar will remember the time when they were present at the funeral of Madam Preston's son, the late Wellington Appleton, a member of the Commandery, that Dr. Sink, also one of their fraters, officiated. At the funeral of the sainted mother Dr. Sink spoke briefly and appropriately. There was a season of silent prayer, a feature that always marked the services in the Church of the covenant when Madam Preston officiated. A choir composed of singers from Cloverdale rendered the singing and among the selections were some of Madam Preston's favorite hymns. It was an impressive service.

With a short committal service at the vault the obsequies terminated and people left the scene filled with the sentiment that they
had tendered a last tribute of esteem to a much respected and honored woman.

Just who will carry on the good work that Madam Preston followed for many years or whether it will be continued in the church and Colony in that favored spot in old Sonoma county is not known. Just what Madam Preston's wishes were in the matter or whether she ever expressed any, has not been stated. She is said to have died possessed of considerable wealth. It is known, however, that she did a great deal of charitable work.

Madam Preston's nearest relatives are three nieces. They are Mrs. Rindge of Los Angeles; Mrs. Wheeler of Ontario, Cal., and Mrs. Green of Willows.

Icaria-Speranza was a utopian community based on the writings of French philosopher Etienne Cabet. In 1881, at Cloverdale, French immigrant families, led by the Dehay and Leroux families, began their social experiment in cooperative living based on solidarity and depending on an agrarian economy. It lasted until 1886. Icaria-Speranza was the only Icarian colony in California and the last of seven colonies established in the United States. On this site stood the Icarian schoolhouse deeded to the County in 1886.

California Registered Historical Landmark No. 981.

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