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# LIFE AFTER COMMUNITY: THE COMMUNITARIAN WOMEN WHO TRANSFORMED NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN SOCIETY

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## Abstract

Life After Community: The Communitarian Women Who Transformed Nineteenth-Century American Society

Amy Hart

This dissertation examines the lives of women who joined Fourierist intentional communities across the United States throughout the 1840s, highlighting the ways they used their experiences in the communal environment as a launching point to engage in other social reform movements of the period including the women's rights and abolitionist movements. This dissertation utilizes textual analysis of letters, journals, meeting minutes, and newspaper articles among other written media in order to analyze the experiences of these women during their time in the communal setting and afterward. Particular attention is paid to the religious practices explored within the Fourierist communities and the rituals created within the group as a means of creating social bonds between members that lasted beyond the existence of the communities themselves. The dissertation contends that these female communitarians used the social connections and personal experiences cultivated within intentional communities to engage with other social reform movements and even help shape the ideological underpinnings of those movements. Due to the role of female communitarians in shaping and contributing to various nineteenth-century social reform movements, the dissertation contends that intentional communities should be analyzed as a critical part of the history of social movements in the United States.

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## Introduction: Intentional Communities and Social Change

In the 1840s the United States was a country in transition. Reeling from an economic panic in 1837 that had led to a prolonged depression, the residents of the country were facing uncertain futures in a dynamic and evolving market economy they were only just beginning to learn to navigate. At the same time, the federal government continued to acquire control of new territory to the west of the Mississippi River through treaties and warfare with Indigenous populations, and thus the United States was geographically expanding despite the economic downturn. Congress grew increasingly divided between Northern and Southern factions as the nation failed to decide a clear path forward for introducing or prohibiting the institution of slavery in western territories. A social and political divide was forming, which would culminate in Southern secession and the Civil War.

During this period characterized by instability and unease, numerous individuals formed themselves into organizations bent on steering the political and economic institutions of the country in a different direction. Social reformers in the mid-nineteenth century advocated for a variety of causes from temperance to abolition, and some of them chose to enact their reform goals by forming themselves into planned communities where they could live out their ideals together without distraction from outsiders. These plans for communal organizations were diverse and numerous enough among some social circles that Ralph Waldo Emerson commented in 1840, "not a reading man but has a draft of a new community in his

waistcoat pocket."[1] While many intentional communities arose during this period, this dissertation is centered on the series of socialist communities inspired by French utopian Charles Fourier.

Fourier created a blueprint for the ideal society based on "attractive" labor, religious pluralism, and gender equality.[2] His plans were adopted and executed by individuals across the United States during the 1840s who found his challenge to economic, social, and religious norms appealing. Women of various economic and social backgrounds joined Fourierist communities for their promise of recognizing women's labor as equally valuable to society as men's labor. Though the Fourierist communities were largely dissolved by the end of the decade and thus fell short of their social reform goals (including gender equality), women who joined them nevertheless gained material and social benefits from their time at these communities. As part of their participation in these cooperative organizations, women cultivated social networks and learned organizational skills that they took with them into their involvement with other social reform movements in later years. This dissertation highlights the experiences of those women, focusing particularly on their lives after they left these communities and the ways they used their communal experience to transform American society through reform activism.

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[1] Letter, Emerson to Thomas Carlyle, 30 Oct. 1840, in *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1834-1872, Vol. I,* ed. Charles Eliot Norton (Project Gutenberg EBook, 2004 [1883]).

[2] Unlike other socialists of the period, Fourier did not see labor as inherently unappealing, but believed it could be made enjoyable, or in his words, "attractive." See Charles Fourier, *Selections from the Works of Fourier,* trans. Julia Franklin (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1901), 163-170.

## Utopias, Communes, and Intentional Communities

Individuals formed themselves into planned communities with other like-minded people long before the creation of the United States. Though references to "utopia" reach as far back as Thomas More's first usage in 1516 in his book, *Utopia*, the planning and formation of utopian communities also found expression beyond the pages of literature.[3] Regardless of their existence in literature or in the material world, utopias represent an imagined response to current problems. Proposed utopian solutions typically take the shape of a nostalgic longing for the past or an incorporation of present technology to produce a more just or rational future, and often involve a combination of both. The communities imagined by Fourier recalled the simplicities of a rural agrarian past while also harnessing elements of industrial technology for the purpose of maximizing human pleasure and fulfillment.

The term "intentional community" is unfamiliar to most individuals outside of the academic niche of communal studies scholarship. Yet the term becomes more familiar to historians and literary critics when its other iterations are referenced, including "utopias," "communes," or "cooperatives." These names for planned communities have enjoyed popularity at various periods throughout the decades of communal studies scholarship, but the object they reference has remained relatively constant: those groups of people who consciously formed themselves into communities with a shared goal in mind. The term "intentional community" remains the most widely utilized among scholars in recent years due to its relative lack of

[3] Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516).

pejorative connotations, unlike "commune," which conjures ideas of countercultural youth, or even "utopia," which itself now conjures ideas of naïve fantasy.

While many definitions of an "intentional community" have been proposed, the prevailing definition currently utilized by communal studies scholars was offered by Timothy Miller, who defines intentional communities as including the following criteria: a sense of common purpose and of separation from the dominant society, some form and level of self-denial, a voluntary suppression of individual choice in favor of the good of the group, geographic proximity of members, personal interaction, economic sharing, real existence, and critical mass (at least five people who are not all related).[4] Throughout United States history, various religious, ethnic, and social groups have formed themselves into intentional communities that meet this definition, starting arguably as early as Jamestown in Virginia and the Plymouth colony in Massachusetts.[5] Their goals have been alternatively religious, economic, or social in nature, though in many cases the community attempts to address all of these elements in some form.

Intentional communities have traditionally been analyzed as isolated, semi-autonomous communities of extremists. Undoubtedly, some intentional communities

[4] Timothy Miller, *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1999), xxii-xxiv. A clear summary of the definitions offered by communal studies scholars is also provided by Eliezer Ben-Rafael, Yaacov Oved, and Menachem Topel, eds., *The Communal Idea in the 21st Century* (Boston: Brill, 2013): "All in all, communal societies have gone by many names depending on their time, place, and economic arrangements. All can be broadly defined as voluntary social units, whose members usually share an ideology, an economic union, and a lifestyle." (6).
[5] See "Intentional Communities in the United States and Canada," In *Encyclopedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World Vol. 1*, eds. Karen Christensen and David Levinson (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), 762-763.

were relatively self-isolating, attempting to exist apart from society and allowing few interactions with those outside of the community. These were often religious groups who feared persecution from outsiders, including the Shakers, the Oneida community, and the Mormons.[6] However, some groups who formed intentional communities in United States history did not desire to escape from society, but instead to transform it through the influence of their communal experiment. Those socially-integrated intentional communities attempted to provide a model of alternative living for the rest of society, consciously making their goals and lifestyles visible by printing publications, welcoming visitors, holding events or lectures, and advertising their way of life. This latter kind of community, which integrated social reform activism into communal life, constitutes the subject of this study.

Among the collection of new communities organized in 1840s United States were a loose collective of living experiments inspired by the socialist writings of Charles Fourier.[7] Their distinctive character included a focus on facilitating social

[6] Yaacov Oved analyzes the extent to which religious communities achieved total isolation from surrounding society, concluding that while retreat is often stated as a goal of the community, complete isolation was impractical as community members often had to engage in business dealings, land purchases, and petitioning the government. See Yaacov Oved, "Communes & the Outside World: Seclusion & Involvement," *Communal Societies* Vol. 3 (1983): 83-92.

[7] The socialist-leaning intentional communities of the nineteenth century are often referred to as "proto-socialist," or "utopian socialist" to indicate their distinction from Karl Marx's "scientific socialism." The notion of a utopian and scientific form of socialism was introduced by Friedrich Engels in his attempt to uplift Marx's socialism as the truly modern, rational response to capitalism. Engels's critiques of utopian socialism include the argument that the utopian vision was only gradual, implementing few people at a time who would join utopian societies based on the founder's singular vision. Instead, Engels argued, Marx's response to capitalism addressed the source of class struggle: the ownership of the means of production. Thus, only Marx's response could alleviate the systemic exploitation of the working class. In addition, Engels contended that utopian socialists lacked an overarching theory of history that explained the trajectory of economic and social systems, thus making their plans short-sighted. Though these two visions differed in many ways, both offered critiques of capitalism and unregulated industrialization, and provided a blueprint for an alternative

reform activism among their members. These communities did not isolate themselves from society the way some communities of the period did. While self-isolating communities often focused inward in their attempt to secure boundaries to the outside world, Fourierist communities strove instead to provide a visible model of economic and political transformation for the United States. Life within the Fourierist community setting often provided opportunities for collaboration, organization, and correspondence among interconnected groups of reformers. This dissertation centers these communities as essential sites for cultivating reform networks for numerous reform efforts including abolitionism, temperance, women's rights, labor rights, Spiritualism, and health cures.

In this dissertation, I highlight the social networks that were developed within the Fourierist communities and argue that these communal environments inspired future social and political activism by community members. This study focuses primarily on female members, who are often overlooked in the study of Fourierist communities due to the primarily male leadership that acted as the public face for these communities. While men left numerous written records that shaped the historical memories of these communities for the following generations, those (comparably fewer) written records left by women reveal that women often

economic system. These alternative economic theories reveal that capitalism was not universally viewed as the inevitable global economic system during the nineteenth century, or even most of the twentieth. See Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1918 [originally published 1880]); see also Jonathan Beecher's introduction of the term "romantic socialism" as an alternative to the terms "utopian" and "scientific" socialisms in *Victor Considerant and the Rise and Fall of French Romantic Socialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), esp. pgs. 3-7.

experienced those communities differently than their male counterparts. Instead of seeing the communities as public platforms through which bold ideas and proclamations could be made, women often viewed the communal environment as a space to cultivate friendships and find educational and financial opportunities. Though women left fewer written records during their time in community, the lasting imprint of communal living can be uncovered by following their lives after they left the communities, as well as the lives of their children who were influenced by the communities.

By highlighting these female community members' sustained social reform efforts, as well as their political engagement during and after their time in community, this dissertation challenges prevailing notions of intentional communities as universally serving as places of isolation and removal from the surrounding society. Many studies of intentional communities approach the communities as "dots on a map," separate from each other and their surrounding society.[8] In this dissertation I reimagine that map as a series of overlapping lines, connecting communitarians to each other, as well as to other social reformers not directly involved in the communitarian movement. While scholars have previously explored the interconnections between communities themselves, sparse attention has been paid to the interactions between communitarians and their contemporaries within other,

[8] Robert P. Sutton, *Heartland Utopias* (Northern Illinois University Press, 2009), 181.

non-communitarian reform movements.[9] By expanding the study of intentional community members beyond the timeframe of their community's organized existence, the influence of the communal environment on shaping subsequent reform movements in the United States becomes clear.

The dissertation chapters are organized around four specific communities: Trumbull Phalanx in Ohio, Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Massachusetts, Wisconsin Phalanx in Wisconsin, and Brook Farm in Massachusetts. My focus is primarily on the links between these communities and the social reform movements of the period. However, each chapter also highlights select female members of the communities, tracing their lives from their time in community through their lasting dedication to social reform activism afterward.[10] As will be explored in the subsequent chapters, many female communitarians experienced social and material advantages in these intentional communities compared to their lives before joining the communities, but these advantages rarely reached the levels proposed by the communities' constitutions and by-laws. While women's equality was a stated goal of many Fourierist communities, social norms and material realities in each community often prevented communitarians from enacting these ideals to the fullest extent possible.

[9] Otohiko Okugawa analyzes the interdependence of nineteenth-century communities through a variety of interpersonal ties among members. See Otohiko Okugawa, "Intercommunal Relationships among Nineteenth-century Communal Societies in America," *Communal Societies* Vol 3. (1983): 68-82.
[10] The form of this dissertation is inspired by the organization and writing style of Natalie Zemon Davis' *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Charles Fourier's ideas lie at the center of this study, and thus an adequate background on his writings and their reception in the United States is important to establish first. However, this research also rests upon three primary subfields of history: the history of intentional communities, the history of social movements in the nineteenth century, and the history of gender and race in the United States. This dissertation contends that Fourierist communities of the antebellum era should be seen as lying at the nexus of these subfields. Thus, after introducing Fourier and his worldview, the history of the evolving study of intentional communities and their role in shaping community members' lives will be explored. Next, the wider context of social reform movements and the shifting understanding of gender and race during the nineteenth century will be examined in turn. Each of these aspects of social and cultural history add to the layers of analysis necessary to understand the impacts of Fourierist communities and their female members in shaping nineteenth-century American society.

## Charles Fourier

Charles Fourier was motivated to create blueprints for the ideal society following his own disappointment with economic and political instability in his home country of France. Born in 1772 to a family of merchants, Fourier reluctantly entered commerce at the behest of his father, who threatened to withhold his inheritance if Fourier chose a different path. While apprenticed to a cloth merchant in Lyon, Fourier maneuvered through the violent years of the French Revolution and subsequent

insurrection in Lyon, barely escaping with his own life.[11] His disgust with the chaos and abuses of power instigated by his government mirrored his opinions of industrial factory life. As a merchant he saw laborers completing seemingly meaningless and repetitive tasks for little pay. In a cruel cycle, he recognized that as the government set price controls on goods, producers refused to sell their products, leading to both widespread poverty and hunger as the working class possessed little money and could buy nothing with it. Disillusioned with both his government and the industrializing economy, Fourier began to imagine a better world where individuals found fulfillment in their labor and had their personal needs met. In his early-nineteenth century texts, Fourier described this world as comprised of multiple planned communities existing in mutual harmony.[12]

Fourier's ideas were also largely a reaction against the French Revolution and its supporters' apparent ideological commitment to forcing financial equality through violent and unjust means. Instead, Fourier posited that humanity is made up of diverse persons who possess natural talents or predispositions that must be put into balance by placing them alongside a proportional group of people with complementary talents. Individuals should not be forced to become identical, but instead should allow their natural differences to flourish. Communities that had

[11] Fourier's early adulthood during the French Revolution is chronicled by Beecher and Bienvenu in *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love, and Passionate Attraction*, eds. Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 3-7.
[12] Fourier's first book was a meandering text called *Théorie des quatre mouvements et des destinées générales*, published in 1808. An English translation of the text was first published in 1857 titled Charles Fourier, *The Social Destiny of Man, or, Theory of the Four Movements, by Charles Fourier*, Henry Clapp, Jr. and Albert Brisbane, trans. (New York: Robert M. Dewitt, 1857).

achieved this balance of talents would form self-sustaining and mutually-beneficial microcosms of society in which every person could follow his or her desired vocation without being forced into conformity nor restricted by social forces like gender norms, poverty, or discrimination. To Fourier, planned harmonious communities such as these represented the future of the world and the best response to the cruel and unstable societies being produced by unchecked capitalism and violent governments.

Fourier's vision of the world depicted humans as generally good, though corrupted by institutions. He interpreted the political and economic systems that surrounded him as placing undue limitations on individuals based not on their personality differences, but on superficial differences including gender. Fourier represents an early feminist voice in France, who traced many societal ills back to the unequal treatment of women. Combating the oppression of women became a primary goal of Fourier's utopian vision, as evidenced through his writings, in which he repeatedly pointed to the degradation of women as harming society as a whole. As he summarized: "As a general proposition: Social progress and changes of period are brought about by virtue of the progress of women towards liberty, and social retrogression occurs as a result of a diminution in the liberty of women."[13] Fourier's female disciples in France were part of the early women's rights movement there, including Jeanne-Désirée Véret and Flora Tristan, who fought for women's economic independence as the key to liberating women from their present servile state.[14] In

[13] Charles Fourier, as quoted in *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier,* 195.
[14] For more on Flora Tristan's feminism, as well as her involvement with Fourier and his ideas, see Susan K. Grogan, *French Socialism and Sexual Difference: Women and the New Society, 1803-1844*

many ways, the women who were attracted to Fourier's ideas in France were combatting similar social and legal restrictions on women as those women in the United States who would later join Fourierist communities. Under the Napoleonic Civil Code of 1804, divorce was essentially illegal, the father held legal custody of children, and husbands controlled all family property.[15] These laws also existed in the United States throughout the early nineteenth century and were partially addressed in Fourierist communities, where women could buy shares in the community property and earn their own wages. Fourierist ideas thus appealed to women in both France and the United States who were contending with similar laws regarding marriage, divorce, and financial independence.

Fourier's feminist ideas would gain him popularity among the political left in France by the end of his life, as well as posthumously once his writings were condensed and distributed by his followers across France and the United States. But during his life, the meandering and unfocused style of his writings left most of his contemporaries baffled, as his social theories weaved fantasy with reality and often blurred the line between the two. Despite his eccentricities and their effect on delaying his popularity among the public, Fourier succeeded in influencing his fellow

(London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), esp. Chp. 8: "Flora Tristan and the Moral Superiority of Women," 155-174. Véret was involved with both Saint-Simonian and Fourierist social circles as a means to promoting women's equality. She founded *The Women's Tribune* to enable female writers to offer women's perspectives on social issues of the period. See Grogan, *French Socialism and Sexual Difference,* 100-103.

[15] For more on the Napoleonic Civil Code and its impact on women, see Jennifer Ngaire Heuer, *The Family and the Nation: Gender and Citizenship in Revolutionary France, 1789–1830* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), esp. Chp. 5: "Tethering Cain's Wife: The Napoleonic Civil Code," 127-142.

European utopian writers, who would also have a large impact on the utopian movement in the United States.[16]

Unlike other European utopians of his era, Fourier died before he could witness his writings brought to life in the form of communal experiments initiated across the United States, though there is little doubt that each of the experiments would have been a disappointment to him.[17] Fourier's model for the ideal society was meticulously produced through mathematical equations and formulas based on the exact number of different propensities or "passions" existent in humanity and, thus, approximations of these formulas would not suffice.[18] Based on the number of passions in humanity, Fourier deduced that 1,620 people would ideally inhabit each community for each passion to be adequately represented. To Fourier, achieving these population numbers was crucial to the success of a community, though it was a requirement that each of the Fourierist communities in the United States failed to achieve.[19] Even as Fourier mocked philosophers as fools who were disconnected from

[16] On Fourier's feminism paired with his eccentricity, see Claire Goldberg Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century* (Albany, State University of New York, 1984), esp. 92-93.
[17] The terms "communitarian" and "Fourierist" are now used by scholars to describe Fourier's followers and the communal experiments they initiated across the United States, though at the time these reformers primarily referred to their communal projects as experiments in "Association" or "social science" to distinguish themselves from the most eccentric ideas of Fourier. See Carl Guarneri, "Importing Fourierism to America," *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 43, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1982): 583.
[18] Fourier describes the passions and passionate attraction in his first book, translated most succinctly as *Theory of the Four Movements*, eds. Gareth Steadman Jones and Ian Patterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp. 74-78.
[19] See Charles Fourier, *Design for Utopia: Selected Writings of Charles Fourier*, trans. Julia Frankli (New York, Schocken Books, 1971); Charles Fourier, *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier*, 49; Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 241-242.

actual human suffering, he simultaneously advocated his own all-encompassing theory of humanity based on his purportedly superior powers of observation.[20]

## Fourier's American Followers

When Fourier's self-appointed disciple, Albert Brisbane, returned to the United States from a European tour ready to expound Fourier's teachings for all willing audiences, he altered many of Fourier's most controversial ideas to present a more palatable version to his middle class audiences.[21] As the primary source of Fourier's insights for American audiences, Brisbane held a powerful ability to filter Fourier's message to make it as appealing as possible. This process involved eliminating all references to Fourier's ideas on radical gender equality, the elimination of monogamous marriage, and the value of communal sexual practices.[22] These modifications allowed American audiences to find resonance in Fourier's cooperative economic model while avoiding public criticism for becoming associated with a sexually deviant figure.[23] Brisbane also presented a more approximate

[20] Fourier, *Theory of the Four Movements*, 65-66.
[21] Brisbane's writings on Fourier appeared in the *New York Tribune*, his journal *The Phalanx* (to be renamed *The Harbinger* in 1845), as well as his books, including *The Social Destiny of Man* (Philadelphia: C.F. Stollmeyer, 1840); *Association: Or a Concise Exposition of the Practical Part of Fourier's Social Science* (New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1843); *A Concise Exposition of the Doctrine of Association, or Plan for the Re-Organization of Society* (New York: J.S. Redfield, Clinton Hall, 1843); *Theory of the Functions of the Human Passions: Followed by an Outline View of the Fundamental Principles of Fourier's Theory of Social Science* (New York: Miller, Orton, & Mulligan, 1856).
[22] These were primarily outlined in a series of notebooks, never published until 1967 as *Le Nouveau Monde Amoureux*, ed. Simone Debout-Oleszkiewicz (Paris : Editions Anthropos, 1967).
[23] Fourier's ideas on marriage were only translated into English and published in the United States in 1849, after the dissolution of the majority of Fourierist communities. These ideas were then adopted by "sex radicals," reformers who used Fourier's economic arguments to demonstrate women's oppression under the institution of marriage. See Joanne Passet, *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

blueprint for Fourier's communities, leading aspirational Fourierists to believe they could begin their own Fourierist community with fewer than 1,620 people and without the particular architectural structures required by Fourier. The result was the emergence of over twenty diverse communities—primarily based in the Northeast but extending as far west as Texas—which were based on Fourier's economic principles and typically included goals of religious tolerance and the social elevation of women, yet with few additional areas of common ground.[24]

The groups of artisans, craftsmen, and professionals who formed themselves into Fourierist communities primarily sought a new economic organization that would solve the instability and unpredictability of the industrializing markets. As market capitalism advanced across the United States in the early nineteenth century, boom and bust economic cycles became more frequent and severe, impacting urban professionals and rural agriculturalists alike. After the Panic of 1837 and subsequent economic depression, bold new models for reorganizing society under a more just economic system suddenly seemed less outlandish than in economically-prosperous years.[25] Yet those who joined Fourierist communities were not protesting

[24] The exact number of Fourierist communities developed in the United States differs depending on how strictly a community must follow Fourier's community blueprints to be considered "Fourierist." Carl Guarneri places the exact number at twenty-nine. Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 153.

[25] Some scholars trace the popularity of Fourier's ideas in the United States directly to the Panic of 1837, arguing that the rise in Fourierist communities aligned with economic downturn just as their decline aligned with economic recovery, which made communal living less of a financial necessity by the late 1840s. For more on intentional communities as emerging in alignment with economic downturns, see Brian Berry, *America's Utopian Experiments: Communal Havens from Long-Wave Crises* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1992). However, Timothy Miller has challenged this perceived pattern, stating that the emergence of communal experiments throughout United States history cannot be directly traced to economic downturns, but include a variety of other factors as well,

industrialization or even the system of market capitalism itself, but instead its failure to offer financial protections to the most vulnerable group: the laborers. Fourierist community members can even be interpreted as internalizing the same dedication to industriousness proposed by the very capitalists they protested.[26] As one Fourierist community stated in its list of resolutions: "As industrial labor, whether man's, woman's, or child's, is sure preventive to many evils, it should be rewarded, according to its productiveness, consequently encouraged by being reputable and attractive."[27] Their critiques of market capitalism did not extend to a critique of private ownership or corporation, but focused instead on the fair distribution of profits. Fourierist communities did not propose the "centralization of all instruments of production in the hands of the State," as Karl Marx later proposed in his *Communist Manifesto,* but instead favored more equitable distribution of profits and

including population increases, mobility, and political turmoil. See Timothy Miller, "Does communal activity come in waves? If so, when have they occurred?" Presentation, Communal Studies Association Conference, Zoar, Ohio, 6 Oct. 2017.

[26] Recently economic historians have analyzed nineteenth century market capitalism as creating a new code of ethics that became understood in similar terms as religious morality. For instance, Jonathan Levy argues that the legal understanding of "risk" was integrated into American cultural norms, religious ideology, and notions of freedom as it became a commonly used term during the rise of market capitalism in the nineteenth century. Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); John Larson also comments on freedom and liberty as being reinterpreted in American society in response to market capitalism. Freedom became a "free-labor ideology that equated freedom with wages and the *hope* of owning property, but very little else—not property itself, not independence, not self-sufficiency, not even self-defense." Larson, *The Market Revolution in America,* 140; See also Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith, eds., *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).; see also Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon.*; and *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development*, Sven Beckert, Seth Rockman, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

[27] "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle,* Vol. 81, No. 42 (May 5, 1897), 9-10.

services to the benefit of the laborer.[28] The Fourierist communities thus represent socialist organizations later deemed not-quite socialist by theorists who defined "true" socialism for subsequent generations.[29] In addition to the evolving understanding of Fourier's vision, the shifting field of communal studies scholarship has led to various conclusions on the importance of the Fourierist communities in United States history.

## Method and Theory in the Study of Intentional Communities

The field of communal studies has evolved significantly over the past century, particularly in the evaluation of the "success" or "failure" of intentional communities. When Oneida community leader and amateur historian John Humphrey Noyes published his survey of communal experiments in United States history in 1870, his conclusions on the success or failure of those experiments were based almost solely on their longevity.[30] Noyes marked as failures those communities that lasted only a few years, while deeming successful those communities that existed for numerous decades. Communal studies scholars continued to employ this same measurement of community success and failure into the mid-twentieth century, when Sociologist Rosabeth Moss Kanter published *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (1972), in which she analyzed a series of factors that make intentional communities "successful." In her discussion of nineteenth-

[28] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Project Gutenberg EBook, 2005 [1848]).
[29] Jonathan Beecher discusses the transition from Fourier's socialism to Marx's socialism as the "true" socialism in public opinion in *Victor Considerant and the Rise and Fall of French Romantic Socialism*, 6-7.
[30] John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Mount Tom Printing Press, 1870).

century communities, she concluded that certain "commitment mechanisms" are necessary to ensure the longevity of a community, including sacrifice, investment, shared ideology, and group loyalty.[31] Her book proved influential among communal studies scholars, though her assumption that longevity equaled success reflected a traditional and unnuanced understanding of the wider impacts of intentional communities.

In 1983, Donald Pitzer rejected communal studies scholars' focus on longevity as the primary measurement of success for communal experiments.[32] His critique found echoes in 1997 with the release of his edited volume *America's Communal Utopia*s. Instead of arguing that a community "failed" when its communal group dispersed, Pitzer and fellow communal studies scholars advocated a "developmental communalism" approach, which "examines whole movements and how they change over time, from their idealistic origins to their communal stages, and beyond."[33] Pitzer argued that intentional communities should be approached as a means to an end, rather than an end in themselves, for the goals and visions that

[31] Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).
[32] Donald Pitzer, "The Uses of the American Communal Past," Presentation, National Historic Communal Societies Association Conference, New Harmony, Indiana, October 13, 1983.
[33] Donald Pitzer, "Introduction," in *America's Communal Utopias*, Donald Pitzer, ed. (Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press, 1997), 12. Joshua Lockyer built upon Pitzer's theory by advocating "Transformative Utopianism," or an approach to analyzing intentional communities that highlights the ways their utopian idealism lives on as part of larger social movements. This dissertation builds upon both theories. See Joshua Lockyer, "From Developmental Communalism to Transformative Utopianism: An Imagined Conversation with Donald Pitzer," Communal Societies Vol. 29 (2009): 1-21.

inspired the communities were often incorporated later into the wider society.[34] With Pitzer's intervention, the notion that communal experiments live on through their individual members emerged as a more nuanced approach to the study of communities and their social impact.

This dissertation builds upon Pitzer's thesis by arguing that the failure or success of a community should not be determined by their longevity alone, as a communities' impact on individuals or localities does not necessarily end when the communal structures are abandoned or repurposed. Instead, I consider whether the community's stated goals and missions lived on through the actions of individual members following their departure from community. While communal studies scholars have, in recent years, almost unanimously rejected longevity as the sole indicator of success, Kanter's work is still commonly cited, and thus requires continued response.[35] This dissertation builds on recent scholarship that has advanced Pitzer's thesis, including that of Joseph Manzella and Paolo Magagnoli, who argue that memory, nostalgia, and the tie to geographic place stimulate continued bonds with the community among former communitarians.[36]

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[34] Donald Pitzer, "The Origins and Applications of Developmental Communalism from Amana to Zoar," Presentation, Communal Studies Association Conference, Zoar, Ohio, October 6, 2017.
[35] Even if not explicitly accepting Kanter's success/failure framework, many communal studies scholars continue to end their narrative of communities with the end of the collective communal experiment, implying its expiration, or irrelevance beyond this point. See, for instance, Sterling Delano's *Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia.* For a critique of this success/failure framework within a contemporary study of intentional communities, see Jade Aguilar, "Assessing Success in High-Turnover Communities: Communes as Temporary Sites of Learning and Transmission of Values," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* Vol. 6, No. 1 (2012): 35-57.
[36] Joseph Manzella, *Common Purse, Uncommon Future: The Long, Strange Trip of Communes and Other Intentional Communities* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2010); Paolo Magagnoli, *Documents of Utopia: The Politics of Experimental Documentary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015);

By focusing on community members' lives after their community's dissolution, this dissertation challenges previous and lingering assumptions among communal studies scholars regarding the "failure" of a community by shifting the focus toward the ongoing influence of the communal experience in the lives of community members. In using this framework, this dissertation upends the most common approach used in traditional studies of intentional communities, which applies a timeframe that bookends the beginning and end of the communities themselves. By extending the period of focus beyond the lifespan of the community, the leadership roles that communitarian women adopted in later reform movements come into view, revealing a new picture of the influence of communitarian women in various reform efforts.

Reframing the impact of intentional communities beyond the success/failure binary does not just shift the analytic valence away from failure but actually changes the analysis itself. Christopher Clark observed this in his opening remarks in his monograph on the Northampton Association:

> Now the work of an entire generation of social and cultural historians has taught us that attention to failures is essential to understanding the past: that 'success,' 'failure,' power, and the lack of it serve as filters to distort our

Eagle Glassheim contributes to the discussion of nostalgia in his analysis of utopianism as a tie to a region, analogous to the German notion of *Heimat*. Glassheim, *Cleansing the Czechoslovak Borderlands: Migration, Environment, and Health in the Former Sudetenland* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016). The historical community that perhaps most upends the notion of longevity indicating the "success" or memorability of a community is arguably "Fruitlands," the vegetarian, quasi-transcendentalist community founded by Bronson Alcott. This community is frequently referenced by historians as one of the most well-known and frequently studied of New England nineteenth-century communities, often placed alongside the other transcendentalist community, Brook Farm. But while Brook Farm existed as a community for six years, Fruitlands lasted merely seven months. Despite this brevity, it remains a success today, if only in the level of historical research dedicated to it.

> retrospective view, and that a rounded analysis depends on our ability to recover perspectives that have been lost in the processes of historical change.[37]

Clark's words reveal the importance of looking closer at those communal experiments that have been dismissed as failures by the gatekeepers of history and analyzing them in new ways that no longer silence their efforts. Expanding on Clark's and Pitzer's scholarship, this dissertation contends that communitarians' experiences served as forays into social reform efforts that lasted far beyond the years of their communities' physical presence.

## Group Identity Created within Community

Fourierist communitarians attempted to produce a new social group separate from the given society that the members had been born into, with its implicit and unspoken norms of behavior, rituals, and traditions. To substitute for this loss of long-standing social norms, Fourierist communities produced their own rituals, traditions, and in-group activities. These rituals took the form of common meals, celebrations of Fourier-inspired holidays, and shared work and leisure schedules. These identity markers were meant to produce internal group identity that drew boundaries between Fourierists and the rest of society.[38] While these group identity markers failed to produce lasting communities (most Fourierist communities dissolved within five

[37] Christopher Clark, *The Communitarian Moment: The Radical Challenge of the Northampton Association* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), xii.
[38] For more on ritual within Fourier communities, see Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), esp. 215-217. Benjamin Zablocki discusses the various ways communities create stable social bonds that lead to group consensus and commitment from members in *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: Free Press, 1980).

years, leading to the popular quip that Fourierist communities should really be called "four-year-ist" communities), they seemed to initiate shared bonds between community members that lasted beyond the existence of the communities themselves.

The scholarship on group identity development has evolved significantly since Fredrik Barth's anthropological study of ethnic groups and their formed boundaries of membership in 1969, and now offers new perspectives that can be meaningful for scholars of intentional communities.[39] In recent years, scholars have emphasized the fluid process of group identity formation, observing that as individuals meet and form new modes of interaction through "contact points," these markers can come to the forefront, and groupness can crystalize as a result.[40] These markers of identity can then act as symbols for in-group members, distinguishing the in-group from those outside, while also remaining ambiguous enough to be interpreted in different ways by each member of the in-group.[41] Groups may crystalize and disperse depending on surrounding social or political events, and may or may not hold lasting meaning for one-time members of these groups.[42] Thus, facilitating the crystallization of groups can temporarily serve the function of producing interpersonal cohesion or camaraderie where there was previously no "natural" or assumed connection between

[39] Frederik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969).
[40] Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara, "Introduction," in *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America*, eds. Andrew B. Fisher and Matthew D. O'Hara (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 22.
[41] A.P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (Chichester: Ellis Horwood Limited, 1985), 19.
[42] Rogers Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* XLIII, no. 2 (2002): 170.

individuals. As will be explored in the following chapters, these group connections were formed among Fourierists and strengthened through their development of shared rituals, as well as a shared language of affinity used to identify insiders from outsiders.

Social psychologists have analyzed the ways individuals and groups perceive their world through the application of "identity theory," or the theory that an individual's internal perception of herself, particularly in relation to others, impacts her behavior. According to this theory, individuals will feel discomfort if their actions do not align with their understandings of themselves, or their identity within the world. As will be explored below, the functions of group cohesion, and its impact on individual identity, can be seen through the group rituals of the Fourierist communities, which served to produce social bonds, shared traditions, and common perspectives. The formation of a common Fourierist identity within these communities holds important implications for the ability of the communities to develop social networks and group commitment to political causes that lasted beyond the dissolution of the community. In the following chapters, I draw on this research to analyze the ways Fourierist group identity shaped the ways members perceived, communicated, and acted within their social setting even after the dissolution of their communities.[43] The creation of communal rituals rooted in shared religious

[43] For more on the ways identity impacts moral, or value-driven, decision making, see Jan E. Stets and Michael J. Carter, "The Moral Self: Applying Identity Theory" *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (June 2011): 192-215.; and Michael J. Carter, "Advancing Identity Theory: Examining the Relationship between Activated Identities and Behavior in Different Social Contexts" *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (September 2013), 203-223.

perspectives helped create lasting social bonds between community members that they then carried with them beyond the communal setting.

The self-perception of Americans in the Jacksonian era is also important to consider in analyzing communal experiments of the mid-nineteenth century. Communal studies scholar Arthur Bestor argues that the communitarian wave of the mid-nineteenth century can be partly attributed to the rapidly-expanding industries and landholdings in the United States during the period, instilling in Americans a sense that large-scale institutional change was possible. Bestor contends that this belief in the plasticity of social institutions was necessary for the communitarian wave to have occurred in the United States. These (primarily white, land-holding) Americans thought they could shape the institutions of the future because their experiences in the rapidly-expanding territories of the country gave them reason to believe so.[44] Whether the community was based on the blueprints of Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, or John Humphrey Noyes, these nineteenth-century communitarians held a common belief that they could shape the world through their actions.

While Bestor's analysis primarily provides insight into the perspectives of white, financially-independent males, the popular narrative of Manifest Destiny implicated in Bestor's thesis also included a "civilizing" duty for white women in the American West.[45] Female Fourierists in the West also contributed to expansionist

[44] Arthur Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian Origins and the Owenite Phase of Communitarian Socialism in America, 1663-1829* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), 270-271.
[45] Amy Greenberg analyzes white women's role in Manifest Destiny in *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

ideology that justified the removal of Indigenous Peoples in favor of constructing utopian communities on the frontier. Some of the women who had been children in Fourierist communities continued this expansionist worldview into the next generation by working at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and boarding schools meant to "civilize" Indigenous children and train them to achieve the white female domestic ideal. As will be covered in the following chapters, Fourierist communitarians sometimes challenged the institutions they found immoral or unjust in the United States, including unchecked market capitalism and slavery, while they also served to further other American institutions, including through expansionism and the removal of Indigenous Peoples. Their self-identification as Fourierists did not necessarily come into conflict with other personal identities, including as white, geographically-mobile pioneers on the frontier.

## Reforming Society by Rejuvenating the Body and Soul

Among the social movements that proved popular with Fourierists were those that connected the health of society with the health the individual body and nature. Social reformers of the mid-nineteenth century argued that the health of body, nature, and society were intimately tied together, and each must be addressed in turn to assure the successful transformation of humanity. In the mid-nineteenth century a series of health reformers popularized theories on health cures that appealed to social reformers due to this body-society connection. Many of these health reformers were also involved in social reform efforts and are perhaps better remembered by historians for their social reform activism than their health cures, including Sylvester Graham

and Mary Gove Nichols. These reformers advocated health and environmental reforms including vegetarianism, cold water bathing methods known as the "water cure," and organic farming strategies. These health cures were just emerging at the time the Fourierist communities peaked in popularity, and thus the experimentation with health cures in many of these communities contributed to the growth and acceptance of these health practices through word-of-mouth into the 1850s. As will be explored in the following chapters, health treatments, most notably the water cure, found support at numerous Fourierist communities.[46]

In the perspectives of these social reformers, the health of the body was directly tied to the health of society, and even to one's connection to God and the afterlife. In the nineteenth century, religion in the United States was undergoing a shift: religious denominations multiplied with the Second Great Awakening, millenarians preached the imminent return of Christ to Earth, and new religious movements like Spiritualism brought the afterlife into this life through séances.[47] New religious movements that incorporated recent scientific discoveries offered novel ways to address the intersection of the material and spiritual for Fourierists. As

[46] The connection between bodily control and societal reform was perhaps most explicitly made at Bronson Alcott's Transcendentalist community called "Fruitlands" in Massachusetts, which notoriously lasted only seven months due to the rigorous physical requirements placed on members. On Fruitlands, see Richard Francis, *Transcendental Utopias: Individual and Community at Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and Walden* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).; and Richard Francis, *Fruitlands: The Alcott Family and Their Search for Utopia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010). Community members followed strict diets, only bathed in cold water, and restricted their clothing to particular materials that were not products of slave labor, nor derived from animals.

[47] John Modern discusses the peculiar phenomenon of expanding religious diversity that came to be seen as a shift toward "secularism" in the nineteenth century in *Secularism in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 4.

will be discussed in the following chapters, many Fourierists went on to become Spiritualists in the 1850s, but began their path toward this religious movement while living in their communal experiments.

For many Fourierists, introduction to a spirit-infused world was guided by the writings of Swedish philosopher and scientist Emanuel Swedenborg. Swedenborg recorded his mystical visions in a series of eighteenth-century writings that became popular in the United States by the mid-nineteenth century. As his writings permeated through reformer social circles, they reached Fourierist communities, which provided a receptive audience. Numerous communitarians found connections between the writings of Swedenborg and those of Charles Fourier, and thus became followers of Swedenborg and Fourier concurrently. Both Fourier and Swedenborg interpreted the social world through a scientific lens, highlighting patterns that could explain and provide order for humanity just as science was increasingly doing for the material world. But Swedenborg also wrote of a spirit-infused world, which made a transition to Spiritualism by the 1850s possible in the minds of many Fourierists.[48]

At Fourierist communities, the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg were sometimes studied alongside the theories of Franz Mesmer, an eighteenth-century German doctor whose work also found popularity in the United States during the nineteenth century. Mesmer's writings offered philosophical and scientific insight

[48] John Modern argues that the "conceptual space of spiritualism became increasingly viable with the publication of the mystical writings of Swedenborg…" see *Secularism in Antebellum America*, 40, n105. On Fourierist followers of Swedenborg see Robert H. Kirven and David B. Eller, *Scribe of Heaven: Swedenborg's Life, Work, and Impact*, eds. Jonathan S. Rose, Stuart Shotwell, and Mary Lou Bertucci (West Chester, Pennsylvania: Swedenborg Foundation, 2005), 227-231.

into humanity and the universe that were also deemed complementary with Fourier's social reform ideas.[49] Mesmer's theory of magnetism, or magnetic energy running throughout the body, offered new potential cures for bodily ailments that could be extended from the individual to broader society. Mesmeric "sessions" were conducted by practitioners to move magnetic fluids in a patient's body, initiating a "crisis" state which could disrupt mental and physical ailments and lead to healing. In the early nineteenth century Mesmerism became a method for combatting both physical and mental ailments, and for reinterpreting those experiences that had previously been understood as demonic possession for a generation who wished to incorporate new scientific discoveries.[50]

Mesmeric sessions could induce sleep-like states in the patient which made the patient susceptible to healing. In the 1840s, Mesmeric healer Andrew Jackson Davis re-interpreted this sleep-like state as not only a pathway to healing the subject, but as a means for the subject to communicate with the dead.[51] This new understanding of the trance created a role for clairvoyants who could harness this state to communicate with spirits through a "sleeping" human being serving as a communicating vessel. Popular experimentation with Mesmerism and the moving of magnetic energy, including in Fourierist communities, paved the way for Spiritualism

[49] Carl Guarneri discusses these perceived similarities in detail in *The Utopian Alternative*, 116-117.
[50] The "magnetic states" induced by mesmeric sessions, and the religious excitement induced by religious revivals were compared by observers throughout the 1830s and '40s. As one man observed, religious trances were a sign of "the magnetic state—or more properly…the spiritual state." As quoted in Anne Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 134.
[51] On Davis's interpretation of the mesmeric trance state, see Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions,* esp. 168-177

to gain popularity over the next decade. By the 1850s, séances and belief in a spirit-infused world had gained prominence among progressive social reformers.[52] While most of the Fourierists who engaged with Swedenborgiansim, Mesmerism, and Spiritualism continued to identity as "Christians," their exploration of these alternative worldviews and spiritual phenomenon indicate a new approach to religion that incorporated evolving understandings of science and the body.[53]

Some Fourierists saw Spiritualism as offering a means for putting the power of medical treatment, religious guidance, and contact with the afterlife into the hands of women. Spiritualism was dominated by female mediums, who used their talents as a way to gain financial independence, mobility, and fame.[54] Following the reported communications with the spirit world conducted by the Fox sisters in Rochester, New York in 1848, women became publicly acclaimed as mediums in the United States. In a period when women were largely excluded from leadership roles in Protestant churches, they found leadership opportunities in the unregulated and emerging movement of Spiritualism. As women travelled the country to communicate with spirits in the presence of curious onlookers, they also found economic independence

[52] On the overlap between Spiritualism and other social movements, see Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001 [1989]).
[53] On Christianity and Spiritualism, see Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions*, esp. 185-190
[54] See, for example, Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits*.; "Unseen (and Unappreciated) Matters: Understanding the Reformative Nature of 19th Century Spiritualism," *American Studies* Vol. 40, No. 3 (Fall, 1999): 99-125; Marlene Tromp, *Altered States : Sex, Nation, Drugs, and Self-Transformation in Victorian Spiritualism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006); Robert Cox, *Body and Soul : A Sympathetic History of American Spiritualism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003); Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

and mobility that they could find in few other professions. As will be examined in the following chapters, many Fourierist women valued Spiritualism as a spiritual practice untainted by the sectarianism and dogmatism of Protestant churches, and some of them even moved to towns known as Spiritualist gathering places following the dissolution of their Fourierist communities.

Despite the new leadership opportunities offered to women in the Spiritualist movement, shifting religious norms in mid-nineteenth century United States did not always translate into the expansion of women's professional opportunities or legal rights. In his 2007 book, *A Secular Age*, philosopher Charles Taylor describes a process of secularization occurring throughout the nineteenth century that led to the loss of power and authority of a single religion in favor of multiple religious options to choose from. According to Taylor, religious expression moved from public to private life in Western Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century. But this depiction of religious expression as moving increasingly into the individual level has come under scrutiny by scholars in recent years.[55] Historians now contend that religion did not necessarily lose authority in society in nineteenth-century United States, but was instead reimagined to integrate the scientific and industrial world forming during the period. This shifting approach to religion meant that arguments

[55] See Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), esp. part 4.; For a critique of this argument (written before Taylor) see Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003) esp. 24-25. Asad argues that secularism is not a break from, nor a continuation of religion, but a concept that should be studies for its own unique history, "a concept that brings together certain behaviors, knowledges, and sensibilities in modern life."; For a more recent critique that analyzes secularism's role (or lack thereof) in producing gender equality in the United States, see Joan Scott, *Sex and Secularism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

purportedly rooted in science and rationalism were used to justify those same arguments once made on religious grounds.[56] In *Sex and Secularism*, Joan Scott argues that these shifting trends in religious life did not lead to linear progress on social reform issues, and particularly did not initiate progress toward expanding women's rights in the United States. Developments in natural science and biology were instead applied to already-existing public assumptions regarding men and women's roles in society. Shifting religious perspectives did not lead to gender equality, but instead offered new arguments on the "natural differences" between men and women that were folded into the crystalizing spheres of public and private domains for men and women. Women were depicted as naturally nurturing and meant to reside in the private sphere associated with the church and the home, while men were depicted as naturally suited for the public sphere associated with business and politics.

In a shifting religious environment, women were faced with new arguments about their intellectual inferiority based in presumed biological differences as opposed to God-given differences, though the underlying assumptions remained similar. While shifting trends in religion and scientific engagement did not alter the underlying assumptions about gender difference, they did open space for new arguments based in the presumption of women's natural propensities. Women in Fourierist communities challenged these common assumptions, disputing the

[56] Scott, *Sex and Secularism*, 31

assumed idealism of the "isolated household" over communal living spaces, the treatment of women's domestic labor as uncompensated work, and the loss of women's property rights upon marriage. Though Fourierist communities did not create spaces of complete gender equality, they nevertheless served as sites of critique and debate on the assumed middle-class family ideal and the gendered hierarchy that accompanied it. Fourierists utilized new approaches to navigating the shifting religious, scientific, and medical trends in their efforts to reform society, most notably toward achieving greater legal equality for women.

## Gender and Race in the Nineteenth Century

The expansion of market capitalism and urbanization led to a reconfiguration of gender roles during the antebellum period. Though many northern working-class women worked outside of the home in factories or as domestic servants, many women of the emerging middle-class increasingly stayed at home while their husbands left the home for work in shops or factories. These shifting labor patterns were subsequently sanctioned through periodicals, journals, novels, and other media of the period. The American-Revolutionary ideal of "Republican Motherhood" gave way to the "Cult of True Womanhood." While both of these ideals failed to capture the reality of most women's experiences, they nevertheless held different implications for the public perception of women's worth and place in society. As will be explored in more detail in the following chapters, the ideal of Republican Motherhood presented white, American women as valuable to society primarily for their role as the wives or mothers to patriots. The Cult of True Womanhood, in contrast, presented

white women as rulers of the domestic sphere, a space of respite for working husbands and a space for the moral training of children.[57] In the years following the American Revolution, women's participation in partisan politics was increasingly interpreted as bringing social conflict and ideological division into the home. Despite their crucial political and material support for the Revolution, by the nineteenth century women were encouraged to rise above partisan politics and act as nonpartisan "domestic pacifiers," who focused on making the home into a safe haven for husbands and children.[58] This political pressure, as well as the changing market that brought men off of farms and into labor pursuits outside of the home, led to the notion of distinct domestic and public spheres; a reality produced among the middle class by market capitalism, but later determined to be expressions of inherent differences between males and females. Women's domestic labor went unpaid and was seen as the natural occupation for women, who were ideally meant to stay in the home with children.[59] Historians have analyzed this notion of nature-driven spheres of existence first as an ideal that limited a woman's ability to gain political rights and

[57] This ideal was promoted in literary journals, magazines, pamphlets, speeches, and other mass communication methods of the period. For example, *The Godey's Lady's Book*, a women's magazine published from 1830-1878, distributed ideals for women's domesticity and dress. On the presentation of women's domesticity as patriotic, see Joseph Michael Sommers, "Godey's Lady's Book: Sarah Hale and the Construction of Sentimental Nationalism," *College Literature* Vol. 37, No. 3 (Summer 2010): 43-61.

[58] Women supported the Revolution through leading boycotts of British goods, writing to newspapers, and creating a homespun movement, among other means. On the economic pressure women placed on the British to aid in the Revolutionary effort, see T.H. Breen*: The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).; Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980).; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), esp. 137-153.

[59] Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

then as a notion that increased women's authority over domestic affairs.[60] Regardless, this ideal symbolized and justified the inequality in economic and political power available to men vs. women more than it represented the realities of their everyday lives. The ideal of the leisurely housewife could only be achieved by a small group of elite white women with other sources of income from their families or husbands, but the image of women as naturally suited to domesticity nevertheless came to be applied as a universal ideal.[61]

The domestic ideal was challenged by Fourierist communities, which strove to recognize women's labor as equal to men's labor and deserving of financial compensation, thus bringing their labor into the public economy. The Fourierist challenge of the traditional household (which Fourierists referred to as the "isolated household") would have future implications for the institution of marriage in the years following the decline of Fourierism and rise of the free love movement in the United States. However, gendered assumptions about male breadwinners and female domestic caretakers also infiltrated Fourierist communities, leading to women typically being assigned traditional domestic tasks within the community such as

[60] On the shifting understand of separate spheres by historians over time, and of its ultimate meaning as an indication of power differentials between men and women, see Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 75, No. 1 (Jun., 1988): 9-39. As will be discussed in chapter three, historian John Savagian argues that women gained social power in the domestic sphere, and thus moving into a communal experiment in Wisconsin actually resulted in a regression of women's social and political power. See Savagian,"Women at Ceresco," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* Vol. 83, No. 4 (2000): 258-280.
[61] Painter, *Standing at Armageddon,* 231.

washing clothes, cooking, and cleaning, and sometimes receiving lower rates of financial compensation for their labor than their male counterparts.[62]

Notions of an increasingly dichotomized public and private sphere served to justify white women's continued exclusion from formal political engagement.[63] Adjusting to this political landscape, women focused on moral reform efforts that were perceived as falling outside of the masculine political sphere.[64] Women found socially-acceptable avenues for political engagement, particularly through religious organizations. Church-based organizations offered women a socially acceptable platform through which they could advocate for social reform and political changes. Essentialist understandings of gender during the antebellum period meant that women came to be seen as the morally-responsible gender. Gender roles were intricately tied to race, and behavioral expectations of white women differed dramatically from those of women of color. However, class status could sometimes complicate race-based gender distinctions and create space for free, middle-class African American women in the North to participate in social reform movements, even if prevailing notions of

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[62] For more on women's work placements within the Fourierist communities, see Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America*, esp. 205-210; John Savagian, "Women at Ceresco," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* Vol. 83, No. 4 (2000): 267.; Luisa Cetti, "Women in the Phalansteries," *Quaderni Online*, 1996.; Christopher Clark, "A Mother and Her Daughters at the Northampton Community: New Evidence on Women in Utopia," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (Dec., 2002): 592-62.; Kathryn Manson Tomasek, "The Pivot of the Mechanism: Women, Gender, and Discourse in Fourierism and the Antebellum United States." (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995).

[63] Black women were also excluded from political engagement, first through slavery and then through the exclusion of all women from formal political involvement until the passage of the nineteenth amendment in 1920. Even after the passage of the nineteenth amendment, African American men and women faced racial discrimination that effectively prevented them from voting in parts of the country until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

[64] Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), esp. 130-145.

female benevolence were often conflated with whiteness.[65] Antebellum women used the narrative of female benevolence as a mandate to advocate for political changes that would improve social welfare including education reform, temperance, and abolition. Thus, women-led social movements of the nineteenth century typically encouraged the cultivation of self-control and personal responsibility, particularly among the working classes.

The conflation of morality and femininity offered opportunities for women to engage in social reform efforts, but also created avenues for delineating limits to a woman's political influence. When a woman overstepped the boundaries of acceptable political activism deemed feminine, she was accused of acting masculine. These public critiques sometimes served to regulate and limit elite women's involvement in more revolutionary causes, such as abolition. Despite the disapproval of religious and political leaders, the abolitionist movement nevertheless continued to attract women, many of whom would later become involved in the suffrage movement, including women living in Fourierist communities. Though it would become the most contentious political issue in the United States by the 1850s, in the 1840s the abolitionist movement was still seen as a radical movement of reformers

[65] See Willi Coleman, "Architects of a Vision: Black Women and Their Antebellum Quest for Political and Social Equality" in *African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965* edited by Ann Gordon (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 24-40; and Bettye Collier Thomas, "Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Abolitionist and Feminist Reformer 1825-1911" in *African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965*, 41-65. In this dissertation, I attempt to analyze these interconnected and overlapping categories of power and privilege in the effort to help shape the discipline of History into a field in which, as Susan Lee Johnson puts it, "power and privilege of all sorts would be rendered visible and then interrogated." See Johnson, "Nail This To Your Door: A Disputation on the Power, Efficacy, and Indulgent Delusion of Western Scholarship That Neglects the Challenge of Gender and Women's History," *Pacific Historical Review* Vol. 79, No. 4 (Nov. 2010): 613.

who allowed women to speak publicly in front of "mixed audiences" of both men and women; a socially condemnable act in the antebellum period.[66] As the chapters that follow will explore, women used Fourierist communities to cultivate broad networks of reformers in a similar manner to that of women in the abolitionist movement.[67]

Historians have increasingly highlighted the race and class distinctions present in women's social reform efforts, emphasizing the divisive class politics that often excluded all but elite women from leadership in national women's rights organizations. Instead of advocating for the empowerment of all women, some nineteenth century social movements amplified class differences and sometimes ignored or furthered racism.[68] In the vein of current scholarship that expands study of the women's rights movement beyond the fight for suffrage and the leadership of white, elite women, this dissertation addresses the activities of women traditionally

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[66] On the popular condemnation of females who dared to speak in public during the antebellum period, see Carolyn Eastman, *A Nation of Speechifiers: Making an American Public after the Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

[67] On the anti-slavery movement as creating networks of female reformers and introducing women to organizational skills, see Bettina Aptheker, *Woman's Legacy: Essays on Race, Sex, and Class in American History* (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982); Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Ellen Carol DuBois, *Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women's Movement in America, 1848-1869* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999). Historians have also noted the importance of the temperance movement in bringing earl women's rights reformers together. See Sylvia Hoffert, *When Hens Crow: The Woman's Rights Movement in Antebellum America* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1995), esp. 16-17.

[68] See the roundtable response to Mary Kelley's *Learning to stand and Speak*, Jeanne Boydston "Civilizing Selves: Public Structures and Private Lives in Mary Kelley's 'Learning to Stand and Speak.'" *Journal of the Early Republic* 28, no. 1 (2008): 47–60. Boydston criticizes previous scholarship on women's reform movements for focusing too much on the efforts of white bourgeois women at the expense of poor women and women of color. Lisa Tetrault emphasizes the tension that developed between some African American women activists and some white women suffragists through debates over the Fifteenth Amendment. See Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls: Memory and the Women's Suffrage Movement, 1848-1898* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

considered as acting outside of the women's rights movement.[69] Women who joined socialist communitarian experiments contributed to the women's rights movement in part through joining communities that challenged social hierarchies based on race and gender. While their rejections of these hierarchies were not always radical, they contributed to emerging conversations regarding the expansion of legal rights and citizenship. Fourierists across the United States were largely anti-slavery and supported expanding women's legal rights. While few African Americans joined Fourierist communities (few intentional communities throughout the nineteenth century and only one community analyzed in this dissertation, the Northampton Association of Education and Industry, attracted African American members) many were home to community members who became outspoken abolitionists following their time in a Fourierist community. The women who joined these Fourierist communities participated in women's rights and abolitionist efforts both through their involvement with these reform communities, and afterwards through continued activism.

In addition to challenging prevailing notions of intentional communities as failed experiments due to their brevity, this dissertation also approaches intentional communities as an important element of the bourgeoning women's rights movement of the 1840s, as well as other social reform movements of the period. While women utilized various outlets for political and social reform activism throughout the

[69] For a discussion on the expansion of scholarship on the women's rights movement, see Cornelia H. Dayton and Lisa Levenstein, "The Big Tent of U.S. Women's and Gender History: A State of the Field," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (December 2012): esp. 807-809.

nineteenth century including unions, churches, and clubs, intentional communities have typically not been included within these studies.[70] By overlooking or excluding intentional communities as an avenue through which women cultivated social ties and focused their reform efforts, scholars have neglected a key element that may produce a more complete genealogy of reform efforts during the nineteenth century.

This dissertation challenges conventional timelines that position the women's rights movement as beginning in 1848 with the Seneca Falls convention, and instead looks to the political and social activism conceived by groups of women within the intentional community setting during the early 1840s.[71] In doing so, this dissertation builds upon scholarship that traces the women's rights movement back to the national anti-slavery societies of the 1830s. By extending the timeline of the women's rights movement, evidence of women's social reform activism in the communal

[70] A series of books on women's history published in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries approached the topic of women's involvement in social reform primarily through churches and clubs. See: Lori Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the 19th-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Lori Ginzberg, *Women in Antebellum Reform* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 2000); Nancy Isenberg, *Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Megan Marshall, *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006).; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Nancy Hewitt argues that the various social movements that women in Rochester, New York engaged with during the nineteenth century depended on their socioeconomic status, religious backgrounds, a geographic setting. See Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822–1872* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).; While she focuses primarily on women of the late-nineteenth century, Lillian Faderman also analyzes women's use of moral benevolence to further social reform while evading male dominance in *To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have Done For American—A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999).; Ellen DuBois briefly mentions the role of "utopian socialism" in the early years of the emerging women's rights movement in "Woman Suffrage and the Left An International Socialist-Feminist Perspective," in *Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 254.

[71] Lisa Tetrault challenges the traditional timeline of the women's rights movement in *The Myth of Seneca Falls.*

environment can find a place within the larger history of the movement.[72] This dissertation introduces intentional communities into the arena of possible spaces within which women navigated and negotiated a public and politically-active role in American society, an effort which these women continued to pursue after the dissolution of their communities.

## Chapter Breakdown and Reflection on the Sources

Each chapter in this dissertation is organized around a communal experiment, and within each experiment, each chapter highlights the lives of select female community members during and after their time living in the community. The chapters are not ordered based on the chronological beginnings of each community, but instead on the social and political links created by community members, which expand in each chapter until the interconnectedness of these community members with broader social reform efforts becomes apparent. These social links culminate in the final chapter on Brook Farm, where social and political reformers from across the country convened for lectures, attended social gatherings, or connected through correspondence. The links grow more complicated with each chapter, and the connections more overlapping.

The first chapter explores the women of Trumbull Phalanx, highlighting the social reformer Angelique Le Petit Martin and her daughter, Lilly Martin Spencer.

[72] While this dissertation focuses primarily on the period of the 1840s, the women's rights movement can be traced back to anti-slavery organizations of the 1830s including the Female Anti-Slavery, which advocated women's equality as well as African American equality. As Bettina Aptheker argues, "By 1840, the American anti-slavery movement was committed to women's equality, at least in organizational principle." Aptheker, *Woman's Legacy*, 20.

This Fourierist community in Ohio focused primarily on industrial pursuits and was home to numerous social reformers engaged in the emerging women's rights, abolition, labor, and temperance movements. Martin's participation in the Fourierist movement connected her to women involved in these other social movements, all of whom shared a common interest in Fourierism. Lilly Martin Spencer continued many of her mother's social reform efforts, though she took a very distinct approach from that of her parents. Instead of advocating for the communal living environment as offering liberation to women, as Martin did, Spencer instead lived in the "isolated household" with her husband and thirteen children, but embodied feminism by becoming a professional artist and the breadwinner for her family. While Fourierism and communal living was not pursued by the next generation in the case of Angelique Le Petit Martin and Lilly Martin Spencer, the social reform efforts advocated at the community were carried on in unexpected but significant ways.

The second chapter focuses on the reformers of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry in Massachusetts, where abolition lay at the center of social reform priorities. As a community that mimicked the organizational structure of Fourierist communities but insisted on identifying themselves as distinct from explicitly Fourierist communities, Northampton was home to primarily ardent abolitionists. Northampton was one of the only intentional communities of the era to invite African American members to participate in the community as social equals to white members. Female members were seen as valuable to the social and political operations of Northampton, including African American women. Abolitionist

Sojourner Truth launched her career as a travelling lecturer and social reformer while living at the community. While at Northampton, Truth also met fellow abolitionist Olive Gilbert, who would transcribe Truth's slave narrative, thus altering the abolitionist movement and the course of both of their lives.

The third chapter turns to the western frontier, where the Wisconsin Phalanx was founded in territorial Wisconsin in 1844. At this community's site, land claims were still contested and Indigenous communities were being forced out of their ancestral land through federal treaties and military interference. In the midst of Indigenous removal, Fourierists arrived to create a new type of community, supposedly in opposition to the social and economic norms of the rest of American society, yet mimicking them in many ways. Though they supported the free-soil movement and women's property rights, this group of farmers also aided in American expansionism through their efforts to "improve" the land by taking ownership from Indigenous Peoples. The female members of the Wisconsin Phalanx enjoyed material, political, and social advantages compared to their counterparts on the Wisconsin frontier, yet were not treated as true equals by men due to the community's elevation of the farm labor completed by men over the domestic tasks completed by women. This chapter specifically highlights the family of Garrett and Elmina Baker, who joined the Wisconsin Phalanx in 1848 and whose children would become social reformers with a conflicted relationship to American social norms that mimicked that of their parents' generation.

The Fourth chapter focuses on Brook Farm, a Transcendentalist community located outside of Boston, Massachusetts, which transitioned into an explicitly Fourierist community two years after its founding. Historians have long been fascinated by Brook Farm due to its famous members and visitors from among the literary-elite including Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller. The two women highlighted in this chapter, Georgiana Bruce and Anna Blackwell, have received far less attention by historians. These women each experienced one of the two distinct periods of Brook Farm history: Bruce lived at the community during its Transcendentalist phase, while Blackwell lived there during its Fourierist period. Each woman was thus impacted differently by the community and by the individuals present there during each of these periods. Bruce's introduction to Transcendentalist and feminist Margaret Fuller initiated a lifelong friendship that influenced the direction of Bruce's life. Blackwell was introduced to Fourierist disciple Albert Brisbane and, through him, embarked on a career as a journalist and translator in France. This chapter analyzes the ways that their time spent at Brook Farm introduced them to the social reformers and ideas that ultimately helped shape the trajectory of their lives.

The concluding chapter brings the aforementioned communitarians into dialogue by exploring the meandering paths taken by community members in the years and decades following the dissolution of their communities and highlighting the ways these paths diverged and intersected through involvement in new social reform movements. Many religious, social, and political groups that gained popularity in the

1850s attracted former Fourierists, most notably the women's rights movement, the free love movement, health cures, and the emerging Republican party. Former communitarians translated their earlier commitment to economic cooperation and gender equality into engagement with the emerging social reform movements that were grounded in the same principles. Most Fourierists returned to life in the isolated household following the dissolutions of their communities during the late 1840s. But even if they no longer physically resided in intentional communities, they continued to apply their experiences in communal organization, and the social networks they had cultivated, to new reform projects.

While each of the women highlighted in the following chapters used intentional communities as an avenue through which to create social networks of reformers, they represent only a small portion of the women and men who lived at Fourierist communities throughout the 1840s. The Fourierist communities each housed at least 200 people during the duration of the community, with over two dozen Fourierist communities emerging throughout the 1840s.[73] Of these thousands of members, many inevitably did not pursue social reform activism during their time within community, nor afterwards. In some cases, their involvement in social reform efforts were not recorded and thus are not part of the historical record. Regardless, the importance of these communities to the history of social reform lies not in those

[73] Communal Studies scholars have claimed that as many as 100,000 people were involved in the communitarian movement of the mid-nineteenth century, though exact numbers are difficult to verify. See John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 22; Carl Guarneri, "Reconstructing the Antebellum Communitarian Movement: Oneida and Fourierism," *Journal of the Early Republic* Vol. 16, No. 3 (Autumn, 1996), 487-488.

members who did not become social reformers, but in those who did. Those women who used their communal living experience as a launching point for a life of social reform activism offer an important element to understanding the history of women's activism, social reform, and political engagement in the United States.

The four communities highlighted below represent only a fraction of the over-two dozen Fourierist communities founded across the United States. Each of these four communities offer insight into the various configurations of reform networks in which Fourierist community members participated. Trumbull Phalanx represents an industrial community, financially tied to the mills at the center of communal operations, and thus it offers a glimpse of the labor equality advocated by Charles Fourier in action. The Northampton Association represents the most racially diverse of the Fourierist communities, in which white abolitionists, escaped slaves, and free African Americans alike resided and coexisted. The Wisconsin Phalanx represents a frontier community attempting to introduce progressive legal reforms into the evolving political landscape of the Wisconsin territory, while also navigating conflict and coexistence among Indigenous communities. Brook Farm represents a community in transition, shifting from Transcendentalist ideological commitments to a more industry-focused Fourierist vision two years into the community's existence. Each of these factors created a distinct social and material environment through which female members navigated their role within community and afterwards.

While it is difficult for historians to truly understand the motives, intentions and mindsets of their historical subjects, the written records in the form of letters or

journals left by the historical actors help historians get as close as possible to accessing their internal lives. The impact that communal life had on these historical actors is difficult to discern, and perhaps even harder to separate from the power of memory and the nostalgia that often accompanies it. For many of the women studied here, their time living in a Fourierist community was self-reportedly one of the most impactful periods of their lives, though it was often brief. As Georgiana Bruce Kirby said of her time at Brook Farm: "It must always remain a mystery to those not directly connected with the movement, why it made so lasting and so happy an impression on those who were members."[74] Isabella Town said of the Wisconsin Phalanx: "Those were among the happiest days of my life. We were like brothers and sisters, living together in the sweetest harmony, and the friendships of those days have lasted through all the years."[75] Even James Stetson, who had convinced his wife, Dolly, to move away from the Northampton Association, later pined, "I have ever been thankful that I went…altho [*sic*] I returned as poor as I went, in money, the advantages to my family were very great in schooling, and in association with the best people I ever knew."[76] The period of time spent in one of these communities did not correlate to the impact of the communities on their lives. Though probably tinged with nostalgia, the records left by community members years after their departure from their communities still recall a period of happiness and friendship, which for

[74] Georgiana Bruce Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 175.
[75] Ada C. Merrill, "Reminiscences of Isabella MacKay Town Hunter," Milwaukee Sentinel, January 31, 1904, p. 4.
[76] James Stetson, as quoted in *Letters from an American Utopia: The Stetson Family and the Northampton Association, 1843-1847*, eds. Christopher Clark and Kerry W. Buckley (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 187.

some of them would translate into shared professional pursuits or social reform activities with those same people years later. The dedication required to adopt a different lifestyle, as well as the intensity of consciously examining and justifying that lifestyle, helped make the time spent in community more memorable and life-altering than most other periods in their lives.

Both during their time living in the communal environment and afterwards, many Fourierist community members were portrayed in newspapers and other publications as idealists and dreamers, unwilling to offer practical solutions to societal problems. Communitarians' writings are thus often tinged with a tone of defensiveness in reaction to this criticism. This feeling of being "othered" by outsiders helped strengthen the social bonds of community members, who often described themselves as living together in an unfriendly world that foolishly misunderstood their purpose. This tone can be perceived in Marianne Dwight's writings from her time at Brook Farm, in which she identified her fellow communitarians as happily living outside of "civilization," the code word used by Fourier to describe the current, unhappy state of competitive, industrial life.[77] While those who mocked Brook Farm members believed themselves to be the rational actors, those inside Brook Farm and at other Fourierist communities saw themselves as the true witnesses to the shortfalls of life outside of community. These self-

[77] For example, in one letter, Dwight pines: "I have spoken to you perhaps of our domestic animals—our cats and dogs—who go from house to house and are equally at home in either—a thing I never observed in civilization." Marianne Dwight, Letter to Anna Parsons, May 16, 1845, as printed in Marianne Dwight, *Letters from Brook Farm: 1844-1847*, ed. Amy L. Reed (New York: AMS Press, 1974), 98.

identities, and the way they were formed through the rhetoric and public opinions of the period, must be taken into consideration by historians studying these historical actors. While communitarians' written records represent their thoughts at the time, they also represent the ways the historical actor's understanding of events were shaped by their current setting and the current events to which they were responding.[78]

Perhaps just as importantly, historians must also consider the ways their interpretations of their subject's words are impacted by their own surroundings and professional training[79] Historians are constantly interpreting the past through the lens of the present and reading the historical actors' social activism through the frameworks made available to them. Thus, historians must constantly recognize the motivations behind their own interpretations of events and ordering of history. In an effort to move beyond traditional frameworks that have historically shaped scholars' understanding of social movements, I have attempted to expand time periods and reframe women's actions as representing a feminism significant to the cause of women's rights. For example, I challenge the notion that the women's rights movement occurred between 1848 (the Seneca Falls convention) and 1920 (the

[78] This references an excerpt from Kathryn Lofton's book. Lofton argues that by portraying our subjects as important to the historical narrative (or in her case, to religious studies scholarship), we have perhaps forgotten the ways their actions are reflective of larger systems of power and control: "I have become increasingly concerned that in our scholarly ambition to translate our subjects— to, as the phrasing often goes, take our subjects seriously —we have become sycophants to our subjects, reframing every act as an inevitably creative act." Kathryn Lofton, *Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon* (University of California Press, 2011), 16.

[79] The problem of the scholar's objectivity is addressed by Donna Haraway in "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 3. (Autumn, 1988), 575-599.

passage of the nineteenth amendment), instead looking at the nontraditional approaches to political activism demonstrated by women in Fourierist communities before 1848. Similarly, I consider the negative impacts of some social and professional advances for white women in the United States on the lives of others, including Indigenous Peoples. While the anti-slavery activism and simultaneous involvement in Indigenous removal displayed by some Fourierists may seem contradictory in contemporary analyses of racism and reform, to many Fourierists in the mid-nineteenth century, these perspectives were not contradictory at all. In placing Fourierists within their social context and analyzing their actions through their own perspectives, while also recognizing the broader implications for groups often left out of the history of social movements, a more nuanced understanding of their behavior and its significance in the history of the United States becomes evident.

Beyond exploring the experiences, memories, and actions of communitarians, this dissertation is primarily a study of women's lives. Exposing and examining women as historical actors is a project that has now been foregrounded by women's historians and feminist scholars for decades, and a project that continues to evolve. In the vein of those past scholars, this dissertation approaches women as historical actors who faced social and political pressures unique to their gender, while also remaining subject to many of the same power structures as their male contemporaries of the antebellum period, including social hierarchies determined by class and race.[80] Their

[80] "Gender" in this instance refers to the public's perception of these women's gender identities as women, though the terms "sex" and gender" are complex and somewhat fluid across historical periods.

identities as women determined their experiences throughout their lives, in combination with numerous other identity markers, and thus an intersectional approach is necessary to study each woman's unique place in her Fourierist community and larger society.[81]

In studying women's experiences within these communities, this dissertation contends that Fourierist communities were influential in the development of feminist consciousness. Gerda Lerner defined feminist consciousness as:

> The awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group; that they have suffered wrongs as a group; that their condition of subordination is not natural, but is societally determined; that they that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs; and finally, that they must and can provide an alternative vision of societal organization in which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self-determination.[82]

Fourierist communities served as a site in which feminist consciousness developed and was used to advance the goal of gender equality for years to follow.

## A Note on Terms

While the term "community" references many different social arrangements in contemporary colloquium, within this dissertation the term is used to reference intentional communities specifically: those communities consciously organized into a

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Judith Butler discusses the performative role of gender in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

[81] The term "intersectionality" refers to the notion that individuals experience life through the lens of interconnected social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, and that these categories create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. The term was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw. See Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique or Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* Vol. 1989, Issue 1, Article 8.

[82] Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-seventy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 14.

shared ownership and labor structure. I refer to those individuals who resided in intentional communities as "communitarians."[83] While some early scholars of intentional communities used the term "communists" to refer to those who lived in intentional living environments, the term communist has since been used exclusively to describe those who align with Karl Marx's political ideology. Those who participated in the intentional communities described here aligned with some of the ideas later termed "communist," but not all of them. For example, communitarians encouraged a peaceful transformation of society through the creation of communal living environments, as opposed to the revolution envisioned by Marx. While Fourierist communitarians advocated cooperative labor structures in which laborers owned stocks in their commonly-owned joint stock company, as mentioned above, they did not advocate the elimination of all private property. Thus, some inequality continued to exist in the form of varying investment levels and different numbers of shares owned by each person. Though the term "socialist" has also been used to describe these community members, the term "communitarian" is most the specific term for describing those who lived within intentional communities.

The term "Association" was used by the followers of Fourier to reference the communal living model. It also represented social reform movements that extended

[83] Two studies of Fourierist communities analyzed in comparison with other American communitarian projects were published in the 1870s. These works were meant to show the peaceful transition to social equality offered by these "communitarians" in the context of utopian societies, as opposed to the violent rejections of capitalism expressed by "communists." William Alfred Hinds, *American Communities* (Chicago: C.H. Kerr Co., 1902 [1878]); Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States: 1794-1875* (New York: Hillary House Publishers, 1961 [1875]).

beyond Fourierism, including "trade associations" of the early labor rights movement or social clubs that entailed no communal living element. Instead of the current term for this living style used most often by communal studies scholars—intentional community—the nineteenth-century communitarians preferred "Associationism" to describe their communal movement. To avoid confusion with other associations emerging during the period that did not involve communal living arrangements, this dissertation largely avoids that term except in reference to the Northampton Association of Education and Industry, shortened in subsequent chapters to the "Northampton Association." While "intentional community" and "communal experiment" are the terms used most often in this dissertation to describe the Fourierist communities, the term "Association" is also used in letters written by communitarians, and thus appears occasionally in quotations or references.

Charles Fourier referred to his planned communities as "phalanxes," derived from the Greek term for a basic military unit of tightly-linked fighting men. This term was meant to signify the connection of individuals formed into a cooperative unit in a Fourierist community. In Fourier's imagination, located at the center of the community would be the "phalanstery," a term constructed by combining "phalanx" with "monastery." This large building would provide the dormitory-style housing for community members.[84] In the United States, Fourierists also called their formed communities "phalanxes" to indicate their foundation in Fourier's vision, though

[84] For more on the specifications of the "phalanx" and "phalanstery," see Charles Fourier, *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier,* esp. 240-242.

many also took on alternative names, including the Ceresco community, officially named the Wisconsin Phalanx.

I have tried to use the names of specific bands or tribes when discussing Indigenous Peoples, though when speaking broadly of the encroachment of white American settlers into Indigenous lands, I alternate between using "Indigenous communities," "Indigenous Peoples," and "Native Americans." I also refer to westward-moving Americans both as "settler-colonists" and as "settlers." Reference to them as settlers is in no way meant to diminish or erase the colonial nature of treaties that pushed Indigenous Peoples off their lands, but instead to indicate white families' movement into lands already bought by the federal government, and thus their movement into spaces where Indigenous Peoples' removal or reservation status had already been determined. The settlement of white families contributed to the depletion of Indigenous populations through further introduction of disease and changing of the landscapes, even if they were not directly responsible for negotiating removal treaties with Indigenous tribes and nations.

Finally, I have tried to replicate the language used by communitarians as closely as possible when describing their goals, visions, and desired outcomes for their communal experiments. However, for clarification purposes, these terms are sometimes translated into more current nomenclature describing a similar social or legal demand. For example, the notion of "gender equality" and "economic equity" were referenced directly in some instances by Fourierists and by Fourier himself, but at other times other, related terminology was used to describe a similar

phenomenon.[85] For example, some Fourierists called for improving women's status in society, liberating women, or challenging women's servitude, degradation, or oppression.[86] Throughout the dissertation I have attempted to represent the spirit of the ideas, if not the actual words, expressed by these communitarians as accurately as possible.

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Cooperative living environments introduced community members to a variety of reform pursuits that continued to shape their lives for years following their departure from the communities. For the female members who joined Fourierist communities, the opportunities to cultivate social networks and develop social reform strategies shaped their lives and their public influence in the following years. While

[85] Charles Fourier used a variety of terms to describe women's liberation, including referencing women's "freedom," "privileges," and "liberty," and reversing their "subjugation." See Charles Fourier, as printed in *The Theory of the Four Movements*, eds. Gareth Stedman Jones and Ian Patterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [originally published 1808]), 130-132. On the equal treatment of men and women, see "Constitution and Bylaws of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry," as reprinted in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 240.; See also Constitution of Brook Farm Phalanx, adopted May 1, 1845, pg. 10, GEN MSS 1394, Box 1, Folder 3, A. J. Macdonald Writings on American Utopian Communities, General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.; On economic equity, see "Constitution of Trumbull Phalanx," Ohio Wesleyan University Library, Cleveland, Ohio. Even when the terms "equality" or "women's rights" were used by women, they could mean different things, as some women (particularly in the early 1840s) focused primarily on property ownership, child custody, equal access to education, or the opportunity to divorce. Others who discussed these terms (particularly in the late 1840s and 1850s) included suffrage in this discussion.

[86] On challenging the servitude of women, See Albert Brisbane, letter to Angelique Le Petit Martin, Sept. 28, 1846, Angelique Le Petit Martin Papers, Marietta College Library.; On the degradation of women, see Angelique Martin, draft letter to Garret Smith, January 22, 1852, Angelique Le Petit Martin Papers, Marietta College Library.; Also on the degradation and servitude of women, see Letter from Warren Chase, Senate Standing and Special Committee Reports, 1836-1945, Series 170 MAD 3/43/D5-6, Box 2, Folder 19, Wisconsin Historical Society.; On the oppression of women, see Albert Brisbane, letter to Angelique Le Petit Martin, May 23, 1846, Angelique Le Petit Martin Papers, Marietta College Library.

their time in these communities was often shorter than they had imagined it would be, it was in their lives after community that they went on to transform nineteenth-century American society. This dissertation follows the paths of these female communitarians and the important roles they played in advancing social reforms across the United States. Collectively, these Fourierist women represent an important and overlooked chapter in the story of the women who shaped the nineteenth century and the future of the United States.

# Chapter 1: Reverberations of Reform Activism: The Lasting Impact of Trumbull Phalanx

In 1843 in Trumbull County, Ohio, a group of aspiring Fourierists assembled to discuss their shared interest in the Associationist movement, eventually leading to the formation of a Fourierist community known as Trumbull Phalanx. Physically located around a saw mill and housing numerous other industrial centers on the property, Trumbull Phalanx represents one of the most industrially-diverse Fourierist communities. But beyond their economic endeavors, Trumbull Phalanx members engaged in an experiment in social reform that would create reverberations for generations to come. Their trial with economic cooperation and communal living would attract attention from labor activists and women's rights reformers across the United States. The members' involvement in social activism, both within and beyond the Fourierist movement, make Trumbull Phalanx residents significant to the study of communitarianism and wider reform activism alike.

The catalysts behind Trumbull Phalanx's eventual deterioration overlap significantly with the stories of many other Fourierist communities. Despite their aspirations for achieving economic self-sufficiency, the Trumbull Phalanx was plagued by perennial debt. The community's mix of ardent Fourierists and profit-seeking settlers drawn to affordable land in Ohio led to conflicting priorities among members, many of whom chose to protect their own investments over ensuring the community's survival. Historians who focus on these economic and interpersonal failings can find patterns with other failed communitarian movements. However, by

focusing instead on the continuous pursuit of social reform that occurred at the Trumbull Phalanx, another narrative can be constructed, one which demonstrates the long-lasting commitment to social change shared between communitarians and other reformers of the period. Like other Fourierist communities, the reformers who lived at Trumbull Phalanx saw themselves not as pursuing a distinct, isolated path toward societal change, but as contributing to other, comparable reform efforts of the period, including labor reform, women's rights, and abolitionism. This chapter focuses specifically on the reform efforts of Trumbull Phalanx member Angelique Le Petit Martin and her daughter, Lilly Martin Spencer. Angelique Le Petit Martin advanced the cause of women's rights during and after her time living at Trumbull Phalanx, and Spencer would advance her mother's feminist reform efforts in the next generation through her career as a professional artist.

## Forming a Community: The Founding of Trumbull Phalanx

Trumbull Phalanx was founded in the midst of the Fourierist community boom in the United States. As with other Fourierist communities, Trumbull Phalanx was led by white, male social reformers who advocated abolitionism, women's rights, and labor rights to varying degrees. Also like many other Fourierist communities, Trumbull Phalanx's founding followed the westward path of United States settler-colonialism, though by the mid-1840s Trumbull County was no longer considered a frontier outpost in the same way as the Wisconsin Phalanx would be at its founding in

1844.[87] Nevertheless, Ohio and the other states formed from the former Northwest Territories were still implicated in popular depictions of the Western frontier, a space of small towns and wilderness needing the civilizing and Christianizing forces of native-born settlers to populate it.[88] This mythology, perpetuated by newspapers, speculators and pro-expansion politicians, laid the groundwork for envisioning Ohio as a perfect location for new utopian experiments by the mid-1840s. At least five Fourierist communities were founded in Ohio alone (all in 1844 and 1845), demonstrating the desire of local groups to fashion their own version of the ideal Fourierist community rather than unite under one national Fourierist experiment.[89] Albert Brisbane's writings and lectures inspired the creation of these small Fourierist communities across the American West, to the disappointment of Brisbane himself. His hope that aspiring Fourierists would show restraint in founding new communities in favor of developing one model phalanx proved impossible to enforce, as local Fourierist clubs stoked excitement to start new communal experiments within their own localities. The increasing number of Fourierist communities produced the

[87] The mid-1830s saw the removal of the Shawnees from Ohio. The Treaty of 1842 officiated the removal of the Wyandots. See James H. O'Donnell III, *Ohio's First Peoples* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004), 122-125.

[88] See DaMaris B. Hill, editor, "Introduction," *The Fluid Boundaries of Suffrage and Jim Crow: Staking Claims in the American Heartland* (London: Lexington Books, 2016), 4-7; see also Robert Sutton, *Heartland Utopias* (DeKalb: Northern University Press, 2009), esp. 182; Rokicky, *Creating a Perfect World: Religious and Secular Utopias in Nineteenth-Century Ohio* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 124.

[89] For more on the zeal of Fourierist social groups that hastily created their own Fourierist communities, see Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 154-157. In a report to the *Harbinger* printed February 20, 1847, Trumbull Phalanx members claimed that eight Fourierist communities were founded in Ohio. See Henry Steele Commager, *The Era of Reform, 1830-1860* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1960), 49. Catherine Rokicky also reports eight Ohio communities "that embraced some elements of Fourierism." Rokicky, *Creating a Perfect World*, 124.

unintended consequence of dividing the funds of wealthy donors and sympathetic patrons, leading to financial turmoil within each of Ohio's communal experiments.

Trumbull Phalanx served as a mid-nineteenth-century experiment in cooperative labor reform made up of a group of reformers who implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) critiqued the slave labor system of the South while simultaneously critiquing the emerging wage labor system of the North. Trumbull Phalanx, and other Fourierist communities, offered instead a cooperative model of labor that was rooted in the emerging free labor ideology of the time but protested elements of the market capitalism it relied upon. Scholars of the nineteenth century have only recently begun examining the tie between communal experiments, labor reform, and abolitionism, but Trumbull Phalanx represents one such confluence of movements.[90]

In November 1843, the planning for Trumbull Phalanx began at a meeting in Warren, Ohio, held by a group that called itself the Society of Inquiry. In a series of follow-up meetings held that winter, the group created a list of "resolutions" culminating in a constitution for the developing community. By April 1844, the Trumbull Phalanx was in operation.[91] Though this quick organizational period was not unusual for Fourierist communities, the zeal of the organizers led to lofty goals for the community that were not easily established on the ground for the new arrivals.

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[90] See, for example, Manisha Sinha, *A Slave's Cause*, and Sean Griffin, "Antislavery Utopias: Communitarian Labor Reform and the Abolitionist Movement," *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (June 2018): 243-268.

[91] The Trumbull Phalanx was incorporated by the Ohio Legislature in February, 1846. *Ohio State Journal* (Columbus, Ohio), Feb., 3, 1846, 2.

Though a constitution and statement of goals were agreed upon before the community's operations began, few residential structures or common buildings were in place before the first wave of new residents arrived at the community.

The community's founding documents outlined a blueprint for community based primarily on cooperative labor and economic equality, with women's social and economic advancement positioned as one necessary element of achieving those goals. The community's constitution challenged some of the social and legal restrictions placed on women in the United States, though in less radical ways than Charles Fourier had originally intended. The institution of marriage was left intact and unchallenged at Trumbull Phalanx, as at other Fourierist communities across the United States. Yet the constitution established conditions for greater gender equality through the explicit recognition of women's labor as equal to that of men's labor. In reference to women's labor, the constitution states, "labor performed by females shall be paid as high, in proportion to its productiveness, as that by males."[92] This is the only direct mention of gender in the constitution, apart from the oblique reference that required three of the five members of the Board of Education to be "heads of families." The constitution also did not exclude women from voting on matters concerning the community, nor from electing the Board Members. As the constitution

[92] Constitution of Trumbull Phalanx, article VII, pg. 4. Ohio Weslyan Unversity Library, Cleveland, Ohio. This aspiration perhaps demonstrates the intention of the community's founders more than the practical application of gender equality. As Kathryn Tomasek argues, work commonly completed by women was often deemed less productive or valuable than men's work within the Fourierist phalanxes, thereby often leading to lower compensation for those tasks. See "The Pivot of the Mechanism: Women, Gender, and Discourse in Fourierism and the Antebellum United States" (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1995), esp. 263-274.

stated: "In the election of officers and all other business every resident member of legal age shall be entitled to one vote," though records do not indicate whether any woman served as an officer during the community's existence.[93] The Trumbull Phalanx Constitution represented the founders' concern with gender-based economic inequality, expressed as a part of the primary goal of the community: rectifying what members interpreted as flawed economic policies in the United States.

In the originating documents of Trumbull Phalanx, the community's leaders reproduced elements of existing national political and social structures within the community, even as they roundly critiqued the economic model present in the United States. For example, the resolutions penned by the founding members in November 1843 aligned Trumbull Phalanx with republican principles outlined in the United States Constitution. Mimicking the United States Constitution's validation of individual rights, one resolution states: "Resolved, that as we are all created with certain inalienable rights, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it is our duty and our privilege as laboring men and as freemen, to preserve life, to defend our liberty, and to pursue business."[94] Another resolution referenced United States

[93] "Constitution of Trumbull Phalanx," Ohio Weslyan Unversity Library, Cleveland, Ohio.
[94] H.U. Johnson "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, Vol. 81, No. 42 (May 5, 1897), 9-10. The language here also references the community members' status as non-slaves by identifying members as "freemen," thereby defining their right to liberty in comparison to the enslaved. Their specification here of "men" and "freemen" as opposed to specifically identifying "women" does not seem to be meant to exclude women, as they are later mentioned as deserving equal voting rights and compensation for labor. Instead, this appears to be a use of "men" to reference all members. The use of the term "freemen" instead likely refers to these Fourierists' association with the emerging Free Labor movement, a convictions which would motivate many Associationists to become active members of the Free Soil Party and abolitionist movement, eventually evolving into engagement with the new Republican Party in the 1850s following the dissolution of the Fourierist phalanxes. For

military history and the United States Constitution as guaranteeing the rights claimed by the members of Trumbull Phalanx, thus implying that these community members were simply demanding the expression of their due rights as citizens of the nation. As one resolution states: "Resolved, that under the present system of things, the laboring class do not enjoy the rights given them by their Creator, redeemed by the blood of our fore-fathers, and warranted to us by the constitution of the United States."[95] Those resolutions that tied Trumbull Phalanx community members to the United States' political tradition were presented alongside those that critiqued the emerging market capitalist system. Thus, these communitarians' economic critique was presented as a protest against the failure of the United States economic system to uphold those individual rights supposedly guaranteed by the United States Constitution.

Trumbull Phalanx, like other Fourierist communities across the United States, required no religious test to join the community, though community members simultaneously referenced the Bible to justify their communal cause. The Trumbull Phalanx resolutions cited Biblical passages to frame the community's critique of market competition as being demanded by God. For example, one resolution states: "Resolved, that the present system of commercial business is a system of oppression and consequently discouraging to the poor, and is a positive answer to the question or

more on Fourierists' evolution from free labor activists to abolitionists and Republicans, see Sean Griffin, "Antislavery Utopias."

[95] H.U. Johnson, "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 10.

a sort of affirmation of the Apostle, 'Do not the Rich oppress you?'"[96] The moral imperative for reform is also found in a following resolution, which condemns the United States' economic system as morally defective: "Resolved, that the evils of the present system are beyond the reach of political reform, as the history of the past does abundantly prove." In a more just system, the resolutions state, "industry and economy should be the index of real worth rather than wealth and fine equipage." Thus, the critiques of capitalism also drew from Biblical authority interpreted by communitarians as condemning the inherent injustices present in the capitalist system.[97] As will be discussed further in subsequent chapters, this interpretation of the Bible and Christianity as promoting economic reform activism to aid the oppressed laborer found support across Fourierist communities.

In response to the economic and social ills laid out in the resolutions, the group determined that a new community of laborers must be formed. Fourierists must "propose an association of productive laborers upon the above principles, as an adequate remedy for the present evils..."[98] Through these resolutions, Trumbull Phalanx members declared their intention to form a distinct physical space in which greater economic equality could be enacted, while drawing from patriotic, nationalist sentiments to justify the worthiness of their cause. The primary reform agenda of

[96] H.U. Johnson, "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 9.
[97] For more on Fourierists' interpretation of Christianity as justifying and necessitating socialism, see Jonathan Beecher, "Fourierism and Christianity," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3/4 (Spring—Summer 1994): 391-403; and Carl J. Guarneri, "The Associationists: Forging a Christian Socialism in Antebellum America," *Church History*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (Mar., 1983): 36-49.
[98] H.U. Johnson, "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 2.

Trumbull Phalanx (and the other Fourierist communities) is made clear from their founding documents: economic reform would constitute the community's primary concern, followed by their attempt to address gender inequality, while keeping the legal institution of marriage intact.[99] These two emphases in the community's founding documents foreshadow the development of reform partnerships between Fourierists, labor reformers, and women's rights activists.

The organizational process of the Trumbull Phalanx echoed the history of white settlement in the Western Reserve from the late eighteenth century. Following the American Revolutionary War and the United States' attainment of the Ohio River Valley from Britain, a series of companies were established by private investors from numerous states in the attempt to gain control of the land within the new territories. Companies including the Connecticut Land Company created "articles of association and agreement," outlining the means by which land would be divided and sold to settlers. Though these early "associations" eventually lost their right to distribute land parcels to the federal government, this early attempt at organizing western territories was reverberated in the language used in the founding documents of the Trumbull

[99] The founding members called upon their rights as citizens while simultaneously forming a new social and economic paradigm under an internal, Fourierist constitution. This comingled self-understanding of communitarians as simultaneously citizens and subverts of the nation's capitalist economic model are exemplified by the actions of Giles Martin, a French immigrant and eventual Trumbull Phalanx community member. Martin sought United States citizenship while also repeatedly pursuing his interest in communal living models, indicating his perception that loyalty to principles of communal organization and to the constitution of the United States were not mutually exclusive nor incompatible ideals. Martin's citizenship appears to have been granted in 1837, between his first attempt at living communally upon arrival in the United States and before his move to Trumbull Phalanx. See MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

Phalanx, which arranged for a new type of association that would provide land for its members.[100]

Trumbull Phalanx was also founded in a region boasting a rich history of abolitionist activity. Trumbull County had long been an active site in the networks of the underground railroad, and due to the abolitionist leanings of many of the founding members of Trumbull Phalanx, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that this abolitionist activism continued at the community during its existence.[101] However, records do not explicitly indicate any involvement with on-the-ground abolitionist activity by Trumbull Phalanx members, only the involvement of members in abolitionist conferences, lectures, and publications.

At the initial planning meetings for Trumbull Phalanx, a farmer from the nearby town of Windham, Benjamin Robbins, was elected president of the community. Robbins was well-known within Trumbull County: in the late 1830s he served as county treasurer, and later served as county sheriff.[102] Robbins proved a charismatic leader, and primarily served as booster for the Trumbull Phalanx, travelling and writing to potential financial patrons while recruiting families to move to the community and engage in cooperative living.[103] The founding group determined that their community would be located on Eagle Creek in Trumbull

[100] On early land use companies in Ohio, see H.Z. Williams, *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties* (Cleveland: H.Z. Williams and Bro., 1882), 26-28.
[101] For discussions of Trumbull County's history with the underground railroad, see Williams, *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties*, esp. 31.
[102] Williams, *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties,* 350.
[103] Grace Sells, *The History of Braceville Township, Trumbull County, Ohio* (Warren Historical Society: 1976), 19-20; "The History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 4-5.

County, northeastern Ohio, due to both the fertile agricultural land and already-existing mills on the property. In addition to the saw mills and grist mill purchased along with the agricultural fields, the communitarians soon added a tannery, ashery, shoe shop, wagon shop, and wool spinning machinery.[104] The community experienced rapid economic growth in its first months, partially due to the existence of already-cleared agricultural fields and several mills already in operation.[105]

By the summer of 1844, over 200 community members resided on the property, primarily in temporary and make-shift dwellings while awaiting the construction of additional accommodations. The first year passed with generally high spirits at the community, and members expressed confidence that the community would be able to quickly pay off the debt it had accrued through the purchase of the property and achieve financial solvency.[106] Farming and working at the community's mills served as the primary labor pursuits at Trumbull Phalanx, though some of its early members also started a school for the community's children. Nathaniel Meeker, one of the teachers at the community's school, also served as community librarian,

[104] See H.U. Johnson, "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 13. Grace Sells also indicates that the community added woodenware machinery, a bark mill, blacksmith shop, hatter's shop, and an oil mill that made linseed oil. See Sells, *The History of Braceville Township, Trumbull County, Ohio*, 20; An article in *The Harbinger* also claims the community took part in shoe making. *The Harbinger*, Sept. 12, 1846, 223.
[105] Catherine Rokicky, *Creating a Perfect World*, 132.
[106] Benjamin Robbins and H.N. Jones, Letter A.M. Watson, President of the Union of Associations, Oct. 1, 1844, Published in *The Phalanx* on Dec. 9, 1844; J.D.T. letter to *The Harbinger*, Jul 12, 1845; This optimism was expressed by Nathaniel Meeker as late as August 1847 in letters to *The Harbinger*. Meeker, Letter to *The Harbinger*, Sep 11, 1847.

and his wife, Arvilla Delight Smith Meeker, established a nursery and kindergarten at the community.[107]

Certain aspects of Trumbull Phalanx made the community appear well poised for longevity, more-so than other, hastily-organized Fourierist communities emerging across the United States in the mid-1840s. Two working mills were already located on the site, thus requiring no construction time during which profits would be delayed, as was the case in many other Fourierist communities.[108] The 275 acres originally purchased by the community were relatively affordable and well-suited for agriculture, so the dream of making profit from agricultural production was also not as unrealistic at this community as it was for others.[109] Yet, in the end, the community followed many of the other patterns that made fellow Fourierist communitarians struggle to find financial solvency and social harmony. A liberal admission process for new members meant that most of those who applied to live at Trumbull Phalanx were accepted, leading to the arrival of community members with incompatible priorities and motives for joining. While the Trumbull Phalanx Constitution set the required investment for becoming a member at $25 per person, in practice many members were admitted to the community if community leaders determined that their "movable property" equated to that amount, leading to an abundance of cattle, swine,

[107] According to Grace Sells, this was the first kindergarten in the country. Rokicky states it was only the first in the Western Reserve. *Creating a Perfect World*, 134.
[108] The initial investors in the community's property were listed as Nathaniel Swift, James Madden, R. S. Brooks, John Madden, John L. McDonald, Chas. McMillen, David Filson, Geo. W. Pomeroy, Charles Colton, Joseph A. Madden, Benjamin Robbins, and Samuel Robbins. H.U. Johnson, "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 4.
[109] For example, at Brook Farm, where the founding members quickly discovered that the soil was not suited for agricultural production.

poultry, and wagons at the community, but little cash.[110] This leniency with new members appears to have occurred due to the over-confidence of the community's leaders, who saw youthful, physically-fit new members (who were typically accompanied by their families) as offering the labor necessary for building the new community, while underestimating the need for financial resources in addition to physical labor. This optimism regarding the financial state of the community is evident in the financial "plan" for the communal school, which initially proposed to raise funds for textbooks from the proceeds that would come from a school garden organized by the children, though these proceeds never materialized.[111] Instead, inept financial planning during the early years of the community led to financial instability and insufficient capital with which to repay the loan on the property or build suitable housing structures. In addition, illness perennially plagued the community, leading to widespread complaints of "ague" (likely malaria) that slowed production and increased the community's debt.[112] Despite these material hardships, social life in the community presented opportunities for political debate, organization, and activism among members.

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[110] H.U. Johnson, "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 13. From 1846 on, Trumbull Phalanx experienced financial hardship. Though a group of donors from Pittsburg offered temporary debt relief, the unpredictability of harvests and rampant illnesses meant that members continuously needed to seek outside sources of funding. Community members wrote letters to potential donors, approached friends of the Association movement, and published pleas for donations in *The New-York Tribune*. See Letter, Trumbull Phalanx to Horace Greeley, March 24, 1845, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection; Letter from Trumbull Phalanx for publication in the *Tribune*, December 19, 1845, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection.
[111] H. U. Johnson, "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 5.
[112] H. U. Johnson portrays the illness as having "slipped into a number of cabins from the mill pond" and the perceived solution for the subsequent ailments was quinine. H. U. Johnson, "History of the Trumbull Phalanx," *Western Reserve Chronicle*, 7.

## The Community's Members: Angelique Le Petit Martin and Nathaniel Meeker

Records left by Trumbull Phalanx community members indicate that at least some of them were social reformers who harbored an interest in communal living experiments before their participation in Trumbull Phalanx and after its decline. For one member in particular, Angelique Le Petit Martin, the experience with communal living served to widen her correspondence and social involvement with fellow reformers outside of the communitarian movement. Martin's experience at Trumbull Phalanx represented one approach to Fourierism, an approach which emphasized Fourier's goal of improving women's social status through compensating their labor, offering them opportunities to vote and share ownership of the community, and questioning their relegation to purely domestic roles. Martin's approach stands in stark contrast to that of Nathaniel Meeker, another member of Trumbull Phalanx. Meeker resisted most aspects of Fourier's ideas on gender equality, preferring to focus instead on the economic benefits that could be found in cooperative living environments. His privileged position as a male leader in the community often led him to present his narrow perspective as the universal opinion of the community. Though Meeker often presented his views as those of the entire group, the presence of Martin's contrasting opinions reveals Meeker's viewpoint to be that of one individual. Comparing these two members of Trumbull Phalanx exposes the diversity of the membership of the Fourierist movement, and the variety of ways members interpreted Fourierism as working toward wider social reform.

Nathaniel Meeker was born in Euclid, Ohio, in 1817 and gravitated toward various social reform movements throughout his early adulthood, including abolitionism, dietary reform, and temperance. His interests in individual and societal transformation were encouraged and cultivated during his time at Oberlin College, a progressive institution that allowed both women and African American students to attend.[113] Meeker sought radical transformation of the economic and social inequalities prevalent in United States' society (particularly expressed through slavery), and in the effort to initiate a new economic and social path for the country, he became part of the original leadership of Trumbull Phalanx. The Fourierist model of community aligned with some aspects of Meeker's vision of the ideal society, though for him that vision maintained some elements of racial and gender hierarchies. Meeker saw agriculture-based settlements as inherently "civilizing" and believed the communities inspired by Fourier would lead to public acceptance of a series of progressive reforms across the nation. While he publicly advocated an elevated social status for women and African Americans, Meeker's notions of the ideal and civilized life also included reforming Indigenous Peoples and the poor of all ethnic backgrounds to meet his standards of civilization.

Meeker despised the shared, crowded housing provided for residents at Trumbull Phalanx, arguing that communal living spaces undermined the marriage

[113] Brandi Denison, "Plowing for Providence: Nathan Meeker's Folly," in *Ute Land Religion in the American West, 1879–2009* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 49.

bond and harmed families.[114] His primary critique of Trumbull Phalanx—its communal housing model—may reveal his resistance to one of the more controversial ideas of Fourier: that of breaking down the hierarchies implicit in nineteenth-century marriage, and through extension, the distinction between gendered social spheres. Though Fourierist communities in the United States never opted to upend monogamous marriage as Fourier had recommended in his writings, many of the communities—including Trumbull Phalanx—housed families in shared, dormitory-style dwellings in an effort to encourage communal bonds over family isolation. Residents living in the dormitories shared domestic duties with the goal of reducing the workload expected of women in individual houses. While domestic tasks largely still fell upon women despite efforts at equalizing gender roles, this domestic work was also recognized as a necessary group task, thus making women's labor visible and worthy of financial compensation. This shift of women's domestic tasks into publicly-recognized labor challenged the public and private sphere dichotomy emerging in antebellum period, which identified (white, middle-class) women's labor as belonging in the home and meant to be given to their husbands without financial compensation.[115] Though Meeker never explicitly equated his distaste for shared family dwellings with his distaste for sharing his wife's labor with the community, he

[114] Meeker's comments on the community's eventual decision to move away from a shared housing model are noted in Commager, *The Era of Reform*, 1830-1860, 50.
[115] See Boydston, *Home and Work*.; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). Anthony Wonderley argues that Fourierists' decision to respect marriage within their communities inevitably led to labor inequality, particularly when compared to the Oneida community, which operated within their "complex marriage" model. See Wonderley, *Oneida Utopia: A Community Searching for Human Happiness and Prosperity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), esp. Chp. 5: "Gender and Sex."

clearly expressed his preference for the privacy of the isolated household over that of the Fourierist communal model. In an article to the *New York Tribune* in 1866, Meeker described his negative experience with shared housing at Trumbull Phalanx, stating:

> Sometimes one had a few words to say to his wife when he was not in good humor on account of bad digestion. When some one overheard him, they would think of her delicate blooming face, and her earrings and finger-rings, and wonder, but keep silent; while others thought that they had a good thing to tell of...Disaster will attend any attempt at social reform, if the marriage relation is even suspected to be rendered less happy. The family is a rock against which all objects not only will dash in vain, but they will fall shivered at its base.[116]

Meeker's comments seem to defend the presumed dominance of a husband over his wife, even alluding to the husband's right to verbally or physically abuse his wife without facing the scorn of onlookers. His dissatisfaction with the living arrangements at Trumbull Phalanx may thus point to his underlying frustrations with his loss of authority within the household, both physically and economically, as women sought recognition of their labor at the community level. Meeker's social reform goals thus found their limits at Trumbull Phalanx. While he continued to express desire to reform some inequalities produced by the market capitalist system, Meeker remained unwilling to restructure the inequalities found within the institution of marriage and the isolated household.[117]

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[116] Nathaniel Meeker, "Post Mortem and Requiem, by an old Fourierist," *New York Tribune*, November 3, 1866, in Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 506-507.

[117] Kathryn Tomasek analyzes Meeker's resistance to communal housing as reflecting his loss of male authority over the household, and representing the reaction of many male members of Fourierist communities to the communal household model. See Kathryn Tomasek, "The Pivot of the Mechanism:" 247-248.

Near the end of his life, Meeker expressed his bitter disappointment with his experience of communal living. Writing to the *American Socialist* in 1877, Meeker argued that while communal living experiments claimed to offer a superior social model to that of the present economic and social order, in actuality these communities only offer a fantasy. Meeker came to realize that "men and women are, to a great extent, given to laziness and cheating. They can not be trusted to do what is fair, they will expect others to bear their burden, and so their lives will pass, they constantly sinning away their 'days of grace.'"[118] Meeker's frustrations with communal housing arrangements, as well as his disappointing interpersonal interactions, resulted in his negative portrayal of the communal experience.

Angelique Martin's experience with communal living proved quite different. Martin's opinions on the isolated household directly opposed those of Nathaniel Meeker. Martin referred to the isolated household as the aspect of social life most in need of reform: "Nothing so enervates the human family and stops more its progress towards its noble destiny; nothing from which woman and her little children suffer more; nothing which cries louder for reform."[119] By writing these words to *the Harbinger* after living at Trumbull Phalanx, Martin offers a different perspective on the advantages of communal living and disadvantages of family isolation, one which contrasts sharply with Meeker's perspective. Martin's letter to *The Harbinger*, titled "Woman in the Isolated Household," laments the drudgery, overwork, and stress that

[118] "A Case of Despair: The Combined Order," *The American Socialist*, January 4, 1877, pg. 2.
[119] Angelique Le Petit Martin, "Woman in the Isolated Household*," The Harbinger*, February 27, 1847, 191.

accompanies wives and mothers who must bear the burden of household duties entirely upon themselves. In order to relieve women of these duties and create opportunities for them to contribute to other aspects of society, Martin argues that these duties should be more broadly distributed among groups.

Martin combined her views on gender equality with her interest in communitarianism, leading her to work with both women's rights activists and Fourierist reformers throughout her adult life. Angelique arrived in the United States with her husband, Giles Martin, in 1830. Both originally from France, Angelique and Giles had met while aboard the same ship travelling to England, where Angelique planned to become a teacher. Soon after their meeting, Giles and Angelique married and found employment as French professors in Exeter. As early as 1829, the Martins were actively pursuing involvement in cooperative living experiments. After an acquaintance in the United States informed them of a new cooperative experiment in its early planning phase, Angelique and Giles Martin decided to resettle their family in the United States in 1830, in hopes of joining the communal endeavor.[120] Soon after their arrival, however, their plan for communal living fell apart before it could be initiated, seemingly due to insufficient funding.[121] The economic design for this proposed community resembled the Fourierist model of community in which

[120] Letter, Mr. Hebert to Giles Martin, July 30, 1829, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.
[121] The communal project was never given a name, but appeared to involve a Mr. and Mrs. Hebert, Mr. and Mrs. Beck, and Mr. and Mrs. Carter as initial members. Letter, Mr. Hebert to Giles Martin, July 30, 1829, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio; Letter, Mr. Hebert to Giles Martin, Feb. 22, 1830, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

Angelique and Giles would eventually settle, including its reliance on agricultural production for income, supplemented by a proposed school and store. However, the plan differed in significant ways from the Fourierist model as well. The organizer insisted that this community would avoid any disturbance of gender hierarchies implicit in the marital relationship, and would prohibit women's involvement in the business or political affairs of the community.[122] As the organizer stated in one letter describing his plan for the community, the political model would "limit the cooperation to the men, leaving the ladies to form their arrangements for and amongst themselves—this is the extent to which I think cooperation may be safely carried."[123] This relegation of women to engaging in the communal decision-making process only amongst themselves presented a very different approach to communal governmental structure than that which the Martins would find years later at Trumbull Phalanx.

Regardless of Martin's initial interest in this community, within a few years after her arrival in the United States Angelique Martin was engaged with the burgeoning women's rights movement. She joined local and state-wide women's rights organizations, sold subscriptions to women's rights publications, and maintained correspondence with women's rights advocates across the United States. Though she never took a leading role in planning suffrage conventions or lecturing publicly, Martin developed an approach to the women's rights movement that

[122] Charles Fourier advocated for the dissolution of monogamous marriage, though Albert Brisbane's interpretation of Fourier's ideas for an American audience omitted this aspect of Fourier's social vision.
[123] Letter, Mr. Hebert to Giles Martin, July 30, 1829, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

included a firm rejection of the so-called "Cult of True Womanhood."[124] This ideal womanhood, presented by religious literature and women's magazines among other written media, located the natural place for (white) women within the private, domestic sphere. The virtues of women were depicted as being situated in their sexual purity and submissiveness; an idea also promoted by some middle-class, white women as an avenue for carving a space for woman's influence in the home. However, Fourier rejected this model, claiming instead that women's labor should be recognized as a contribution to the market and that men and women should find equality in public life, employment, and educational opportunities. These positions, adopted by American Fourierists to varying degrees, may explain Angelique Martin's attraction to the Fourierist community model in the mid-1840s, when she became aware of a Fourierist community located near the Martin's family farm in Marietta, Ohio. Unlike the communal experiment that had originally piqued Martin's interest, Trumbull Phalanx offered leadership opportunities to women within the community, including the organizing of work groups and voting rights. Though they were not founding members of Trumbull Phalanx, records indicate that Angelique and Giles Martin began living there in 1846.[125]

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[124] As presented by Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Part 1 (Summer 1966): 151-174. The assumptions underlying this ideal of womanhood have also been referred to as the "Cult of Domesticity." This ideal glorified white women's natural ethical purity, their devotion to family life, and their avoidance of public life and politics.

[125] In "The History of the Trumbull Phalanx," H. U. Johnson states that the Martins arrived in Trumbull in 1847. However, his article also contained inaccurate statements about them, including that their daughter Lilly Martin accompanied them to Trumbull. Evidence suggests that the Martins arrived in Trumbull Phalanx in 1846, as they began receiving correspondence there during that year. In her dissertation, Kathryn Tomasek argues that Martin split her time between Trumbull and her farm near Marietta throughout the 1840s. See Tomasek, "The Pivot of the Mechanism," 334.

Angelique Martin saw her communitarian aspirations as tied to a larger web of reform movements she pursued both before and after her stay at Trumbull Phalanx. Throughout the 1840s and '50s, Angelique maintained correspondence with women's rights and labor rights activists including Sarah Bagley, Amelia Bloomer, Frances Dana Gage, and Lucretia Mott. Martin contributed to *The Lily* (a magazine edited by women and created to advocate temperance, and later expanded its scope to address women's issues more broadly), sold copies of Sarah Bagley's "Factory Tracts" (pamphlets describing women's labor conditions in factories), and distributed petitions for the women's rights issues in her community.[126] Instead of viewing communitarianism as an alternative approach to social reform, or a distinct and isolated movement, Martin saw the Fourierist communities as complementary to other reform efforts. Martin's perspective challenges depictions of communitarians as self-isolating and distinct from more gradual reform efforts that encouraged political engagement. While engaging in conversations on women's rights and labor rights, Angelique Martin also engaged in communal living as one avenue for reform.

Martin's correspondence with fellow female reformers reveal that they discussed and shared organizational tactics and advice on furthering their social reform causes. In one letter from Lowell labor activist Sarah Bagley to Martin, dated January 1, 1846, Bagely described her experience with labor organizing, explaining

[126] In a letter to Angelique Martin, Amelia Bloomer discusses her own part in the Seneca Falls convention of 1848, and her decision to transform *The Lily* from a temperance paper to one that addresses women's rights. Letter, Amelia Bloomer to Angelique le Petit Martin, December 26, 1853, Box 1, Folder 4, Angelique Le Petit Martin Letters, Marietta College Library.

that it had been one year since she started her own association (the Female Labor Reform Association) and the women reformers had "pledged our material assistance to each other." Bagley included in the letter one of the papers published by their union's press, and thanked Martin for offering to help distribute the paper "in behalf of women's rights." After discussing their shared desire to assist laboring women, Bagley turned to their shared interest in the communitarian movement. Bagley described her "personal acquaintance with Mr. [Albert] Brisbane," and shared that she interpreted his reform efforts as contributing to the broader effort of "human improvement." Bagley also commented on the hypocrisy of New Englanders who allow women to be forced to labor for thirteen hours each day in hot, crowded rooms with insufficient ventilation, while also claiming moral high ground by gesturing at aiding other marginalized groups, including by protesting the annexation of Texas and supporting the anti-slavery cause.[127] Bagley's critiques could be applied to Nathaniel Meeker, an ardent abolitionist who nevertheless found women's subservience necessary and desirable within the family unit.

The overlap between Fourierist community members and other social activists is evident in these shared social ties and the exchange of ideas and strategies for producing successful social movements. Female reformers sought advice from women engaged in various reform movements in order to share tactics, ideas, and gain financial and social support from each other. As Sarah Bagley discussed with

[127] Letter from Sarah Bagley (Lowell, Mass.) to Angelique Martin, Jan. 1, 1846, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

Angelique Martin, gaining support for the Lowell workers' movement had required procuring a printing press of their own and actively seeking financial support from donors. Bagley's efforts were aimed at preventing women from being made into what she called "living machines," a cause which united the goals of the women's rights and labor rights movements. Angelique Martin adopted Bagley's strategies to garner support for her Fourierist community. In a letter to *The Harbinger*, Martin urged fellow female Fourierists to "command a press" just as her friend Bagley had done.[128] In early 1846, Martin expressed her willingness to assist Bagley and her labor association in the payments to maintain their press.[129] For Martin and Bagley, assisting fellow reformers did not mean losing a competition that determined which reform organizations would receive financial aid or public attention, but meant the advancement of their shared causes, leading to mutual benefits.

Throughout her time at Trumbull Phalanx, Angelique Martin balanced her interest in communal living with her other valued reform causes. She maintained correspondence with Albert Brisbane for over ten years, seeking out his advice concerning both questions related to Trumbull Phalanx as well as her other reform pursuits. Martin sent Brisbane a manuscript she had prepared on the topic of women's rights, seeking publishing and editing advice from him. In November 1847, she also asked his advice regarding her future at Trumbull Phalanx. By that time, at least

[128] Letter from [Angelique Martin] Tupperford near Marietta, Ohio, June 23, 1847, printed in *The Harbinger*, August 7, 1847, 130.
[129] Letter from Sarah Bagley to Angelique Martin, March 13, 1846, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

fifteen Fourierist communities had already dissolved across the United States, and Trumbull Phalanx was experiencing financial hardship, making Brisbane less enthusiastic about the future of Fourierism in the United States than he had been in previous years. In his response to Martin, Brisbane reflected on the perennial hardships that had plagued Trumbull Phalanx, thus recommending that Martin refrain from selling her other property in case she needed somewhere to turn upon the collapse of the community.[130]

In private letters to Angelique Martin, Brisbane warned Martin about the foolish enthusiasm which led many past Fourierists to give their fortunes and futures to their new communities without thoroughly researching the community they were about to join. He explained: "When we first visit a little Association, we are generally carried away with a feeling of enthusiasm; we sympathize with the people, for there are no discords between them and us, we being strangers, and the sympathy with which we are met by new faces, reassures us." He went on to say that Martin could not be sure of whether a particular association would satisfy her until she had resided there for an significant period of time, and thus he recommended that she avoid selling her other property in Marietta, Ohio, until she had made an adequate trial of the community: "As I have been instrumental in converting you to association, I should not wish that any loss or other misfortune should happen to you in consequence." Brisbane's pessimism regarding the future of Trumbull Phalanx

[130] Brisbane focused primarily on the perennial presence of malaria faced by Trumbull Phalanx community members. See Letter from Albert Brisbane to Angelique Martin, November 1847, Angelique Le Petit Martin Papers, Marietta College Library, Marietta, Ohio.

revealed his broader frustration with small Fourierist communities that siphoned resources from a theoretical model Fourierist community, and even his willingness to sabotage those experiments in favor of pursing one model phalanx. Despite Brisbane's doubts regarding the future of Trumbull Phalanx, he struck a more optimistic tone in the second half of his letter to Martin, in which he turned to her work on women's rights. Brisbane praised her manuscript and offered to assist Martin in finding a publisher. Despite his growing frustration with Fourierist experiments, Brisbane continued to use his connections with fellow reformers to assist Fourierists in pursuing other reform movements. Communitarians including Martin and Brisbane thus used their communal networks to bolster the efforts of their contemporaries who were pursuing social reform outside of the communitarian movement.

## Life After Community: Social Reformers

During the winter of 1845-46, "ague" spread throughout the Trumbull Phalanx community, stalling work and leading to the first financial downturn for the community, which would last throughout 1846. By 1847, despite receiving financial assistance from wealthy donors from Pittsburg, the community experienced increasing member turnover and community-wide illness, leading to the community's collapse by the next year. A wealthy investor, William Bale, revived and reorganized the community in 1849, though the community never again experienced its initial financial success or membership growth rate, and thus after sustaining a semi-communal existence for five additional years, in 1855 the property was sold. These material realities tell a story of initial financial success preceding economic downturn

and ultimate failure of the project. Yet underneath this narrative lie the stories of social reformers like Angelique Martin who used Trumbull Phalanx as a catalyst for involvement in other reform efforts, assisting those causes through her involvement with the community.

As mentioned earlier, Nathaniel Meeker's approach to social reform evolved in very different ways from that of Angelique Martin. His determination to maintain a single-family domestic structure, as well as race-based hierarchies, become clearer through his involvement in subsequent projects after the dissolution of Trumbull Phalanx. In 1869, Meeker partnered with Horace Greeley (editor of the *New York Tribune* and financial supporter of numerous Fourierist projects) to organize another experiment in cooperative living called Union Colony in Colorado.[131] Union Colony was designed with the autonomy of families in mind, prioritizing independent family housing to ensure the privacy of married couples. The community also prohibited alcohol and was portrayed as encouraging "industriousness," as Meeker described his labor model. The industriousness of its members proved insufficient to provide the community with adequate funds, however, and by 1872 the planned community was reorganized into the town of Greeley, Colorado.[132] Meeker left Greeley to act as a federal government agent at the Ute Indians reservation at White River, Colorado.

[131] Described in the Trumbull Phalanx Papers, UFM 3141, Ohio History Connection.
[132] Robert S. Fogarty, *Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 170-171.

To contemporary historians, Meeker's interactions with the Utes further reveal the contradictions inherent in his social reform agenda. Meeker and his family's disparaging view of the Indigenous Peoples they were charged with overseeing demonstrates the limits to his communal and socialist commitments. While Meeker advocated an equitable economic system in which the laborer was adequately valued, these goals were limited to white, "civilized" society in Meeker's worldview. While in Colorado, Meeker described the Utes as deprived of "religious and moral sentiments," and in desperate need of his guidance to improve their physical and psychological wellbeing.[133] Meeker's insistence that the Utes adopt farming was not well-received by the group, as male Utes in the region had traditionally relied on hunting using horses, a practice intimately tied to their own notions of gender-based social roles.[134] When Meeker suggested Utes' horses should be killed to encourage more cultivation on pasture land, a group of Utes resisted, killing Meeker and the nine other government agents on the reservation on September 29th, 1879.[135] Meeker's approach to the Utes revealed his conviction that only an agricultural-based lifestyle with appropriate gender-based divisions of labor constituted "civilized" labor, and the Utes labor structures fell outside of these norms.

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[133] Meeker quoted in Denison, *Ute Land Religion in the American West, 1879–2009*, 55. Meeker's son also recounts his father's time at Greeley, praising the success of the colony built in the Colorado territory, which previously housed "few inhabitants," overlooking the presence of Indigenous Peoples. See Ralph Meeker, "A Personal Recollection of the Founding of Greeley, Col.," *New York Tribune*, Aug. 1, 1920, 2.

[134] Ned Blackhawk analyzes the gender-based social roles of Utes, arguing that the tribes of Utes that did not incorporate horses into their society were perceived as weaker and more effeminate by other Utes and white settlers alike. See *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[135] Meeker's death was announced in *Helena Weekly Herald*, Oct. 23, 1879, 4.

Following Meeker's death, his family's public response further revealed Meeker's understanding of Indigenous Peoples as less-than-human, an idea he instilled in his family as well. Meeker's daughter wrote a letter to the *Weekly Chillicothe Crisis*, lamenting her father's death:

> The life of one common white man is worth more than the lives of all the Indians from the beginning of their creation until the present time. And yet such a man as my father, with brains, intellect, and power to move the thoughts of men—his life is now ignominiously put out by the hand of a savage foe, whose life or soul are not worthy of a dog.[136]

Thus, despite Meeker's self-proclaimed interest in producing greater economic equality across racial categories, his (and his family's) vision of reform remained tied to white, Northern notions of correct land-use, free labor, and gendered social roles.[137] In communal environments, his understanding of gendered labor led him to feel unease with a communal household structure that challenged the traditional domestic roles of wives and mothers. At the White River reservation, his racist assumptions regarding "civilized" labor led him to attempt to strip Utes of their livelihood and culture. Meeker's personal convictions and approaches to social reform competed with those of other Fourierist reformers, most notably, Angelique Martin.

Martin continued to pursue reform efforts following the dissolution of Trumbull Phalanx, particularly in the areas of women's rights and abolition. Her moderate perspectives often put her at odds with other, more radical reformers. She

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[136] *Weekly Chillicothe Crisis* (Chillicothe, Livingston Co., Mo.), Oct. 30, 1879.
[137] Denison, *Ute Land Religion in the American West, 1879–2009*, 25-62.

advocated for the immediate abolition of slavery and for women to take public leadership roles in the anti-slavery cause, all issues supported by William Lloyd Garrison and his fellow radical abolitionists. However, Martin also advocated for political engagement in the fight for abolition, as opposed to the rejection and protest of the current political system. This perspective aligned Martin with the moderate wing of abolitionist organizations. In a letter to the abolitionist Wendell Phillips in 1854, Martin reprimanded Phillips for neglecting his duty to remain politically engaged in the abolitionist cause, urging him to continue working with the federal government despite his frustrations. Martin argued that the institution of slavery was inconsistent with the principles expressed in the United States Constitution, in which the authors did away with the omnipotent power of kings. In turning her argument toward women's unequal social status, Martin argued that even those white men who were not slaveholders "gave way to the inconsistent desire of being themselves kings at home and excluded from their natural rights in disenfranchising one half of the nation, that is your mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters!"[138] She urged Phillips to restore the spirit of the Constitution by participating in government, either by voting for those who will not compromise the principles of the document, or by seeking election himself.[139] Phillips, a member of the American Anti-Slavery Society, found the Constitution to be an inherently flawed document that approved of slavery. He

[138] Letter, Angelique Le Petit Martin to Wendell Phillips, 1854, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.
[139] Martin signs the letter "A Mother," though the draft letter was among her collection of correspondence and appears to be authored by Martin. MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

thus saw political engagement as a sign of tacit approval of the Constitution. As William Lloyd Garrison proclaimed at an American Anti-Slavery Society Convention in 1850:

> …If, to sustain the Constitution, we must shed innocent blood; we must return the fugitive slave; we must conspire to keep our enslaved countrymen in their chains; no matter what that instrument contains that is valuable, allegiance to it is a crime; no matter what choice ingredients may be mingles therein, the poisoned chalice is to be dashed to the ground. Hence it is that we call for a dissolution of the Union.[140]

Phillips, like other Garrisonian abolitionists, denounced the Constitution and avoided direct political engagement, favoring political protest and moral suasion. Martin's advice to Phillips indicates that her tactical approach to abolitionism favored government participation over the political nonengagement preferred by Garrisonian abolitionists.

While Martin rejected the radical abolitionists' stance on political nonparticipation, she agreed with radical abolitionists' stance on women' rights. William Lloyd Garrison and his fellow radical abolitionists in the American Anti-Slavery Society (including Wendell Phillips) welcomed and encouraged female abolitionists to speak publicly for their cause, while some moderate abolitionists opposed women speaking in public settings with mixed-gender audiences.[141] Martin's position indicates the complex approaches to abolitionism emerging in the 1840s, and the difficulty faced by historians in identifying individuals who fit neatly into one

[140] "Remarks of Wm. Lloyd Garrison," *The Liberator,* June 14, 1850, 94.
[141] Bettina Aptheker discusses the creation of rival abolitionist societies, including the Massachusetts Abolition Society, for the purpose of excluding women from their proceedings. See Aptheker, *Woman's Legacy*, 16-17.

school of thought concerning both abolitionism and women's rights. Martin's position was likely influenced by her experience at a Fourierist community, where reform movements including women's rights and abolitionism were advocated (in varying degrees among members), but political engagement continued to be encouraged, despite common perceptions of communitarians isolating themselves from society.[142]

[142] Phillips' own abolitionist convictions increasingly included a commitment to Northern labor reform as well as abolitionism, as evidenced in a speech he gave to the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1847, in which he reportedly stated that "the rights of the peasants of Ireland, the operatives of New England, and the laborers of South America, will not be lost sight of in sympathy for the Southern slave," though he clarified that he did not see the struggle of the Northern laborer as equal to the struggle of the slave. As reported in "The Question of Labor," *The Liberator*, July 9, 1847. Fourierists such as Angelique Martin linked the causes of abolition and Northern labor reform throughout the 1840s through engagement with the Free Soil Party and, later, the Republican Party. Sean Griffin notes the overlap between the movements, stating: ""By pushing abolitionists to expand the parameters of what could and could not be commodified in a capitalist society beyond the benchmark of "selfownership," Associationists helped to pave the way for the rehabilitation of free labor that eventually became the basis of Republican Party ideology." See Sean Griffin, "A Reformers' Union: Land Reform, Labor, and the Evolution of Antislavery Politics, 1790–1860," (PhD Diss, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2017), 167. Many former abolitionists (including Phillips) turned their attention toward labor reform activism following the Civil War. William Henry Channing, Stephen Foster and Josiah Warren represent abolitionists who joined and led the New England Labor Reform league in the postwar years. See Peter Wirzbicki, "Wendell Phillips and Transatlantic Radicalism: Democracy, Capitalism, and the American Labor Movement," in *Wendell Phillips, Social Justice, and the Power of the Past,* ed. by A.J. Aiséirithe and Donald Yacovone (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016), 172-173. Minasha Sinha argues that the link between abolitionists and labor reformers grew stronger during the 1850s. See Sinha, *A Slave's Cause,* esp. 358. Bruce Laurie argues that moderate abolitionists allied with labor reformers earlier than Garrison and the radical abolitionists, who preferred to focus on abolition. See *Beyond Garrison: Anti-Slavery and Social Reform* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), esp. 135-136. Historians who address this history of labor reform activism include: Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)*;* Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009; Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Michael Zakim and Gary Kornblith, eds. *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

In her letters to abolitionists, Martin often steered the topic toward the cause of women's rights. In both her letter to Phillips mentioned above and a letter to abolitionist Gerrit Smith in 1852, Martin praised the recipients for their abolitionist convictions while imploring them to remember the continued degradation of women. In her letter to Smith, Martin stated that she admired his efforts in fighting the cause of abolishing slavery, "that disgrace of the United States!", but goes on to say that the other disgrace of the country is the treatment of its women. Martin identified women's rights as "the foundation to social reform—that all the other reforms fall into insignificance without it!" Martin implored that if she could only convince Smith and his fellow abolitionists, who have dedicated so much energy to the plight of the "colored man," to also put that energy toward the plight of women, then women's cause would be won.[143] Though she continued to support abolition, Martin argued that true societal change would not occur without advancements in the cause of women's rights, a stance that may have been partly shaped through her exposure to Charles Fourier's writings while living at Trumbull Phalanx. Martin's comments to Smith mirror Fourier's own theory of the progress of civilization, on which he writes: "…the best countries have always been those which allowed women the most freedom" and "to sum up, *the extension of the privileges of women is the basic principle of all social progress.*"[144] Martin's conviction that the improvement of

[143] Draft letter from Angelique Le Petit Martin to Gerrit Smith, January 22, 1852, Angelique Le Petit Martin Papers, Marietta College Library. It is interesting to note that Angelique Martin writes her address as being located at "Trumbull Phalanx" still, despite the reorganization of the community.
[144] Italics in original. Charles Fourier, as printed in *The Theory of the Four Movements*, 130, 132. Fourier also adds that "It can similarly be observed that the most corrupt nations have always been

women's social and legal status is critical to broader societal reform mimicked the early-nineteenth century writings of Fourier and may indicate Fourier's influence on Martin's approach to social reform in the United States.

Due to the absence of any religious requirement for membership in Trumbull Phalanx, the community also became a site where religious reform efforts were expressed and cultivated. Trumbull Phalanx served as host to numerous lecturers, reformers, and conferences meant to inform community members on a variety of religious reform movements. Church attendance was not required at the community, though the community allowed church services to be held on the property every Sunday. The denominational preference of most members was Disciples of Christ, but the community also included Presbyterians, Methodists, and Unitarians.[145] This denominational diversity meant that diverse religious expressions could co-exist at the community, but this effort at religious tolerance did not prevent tensions from arising in response to religious reform efforts.

On August 12, 1847, Trumbull Phalanx hosted a "convention of reformers," advertised by the organizers as being aimed at those who wished to become "messengers of Jesus." The lecture series hosted at the community was millennialist

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those in which women were most subjugated." Charles Fourier, *The Theory of the Four Movements,* 131.

[145] This diversity among Christian denominations reflected the diversity of the surrounding county; the county seat of Warren held churches from the First Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, German Reformed, and Disciples of Christ denominations. H.Z. Williams, *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties* (Cleveland: H.Z. Williams and Bro., 1882), 259-268; On the denominations present at Trumbull Phalanx, see *The Harbinger*, July 26, 1845, 98; On the church services held at Trumbull Phalanx, see William Bae, Jane Bale, Amos Coiles, Elizabeth Ann Coiles, et. al., "The Trumbull Phalanx," *The Harbinger,* May 30, 1846, 389-390.

in bent, and the guest speakers proclaimed that "the millennial dispensation of 'good will and universal peace' amongst all mankind will be established upon this earth." The convention was organized by Peter Kauffman, an Ohio businessman, reformer, and communitarian, along with Andrew Smolnikar, who identified himself as "formerly Roman Catholic Priest…now messenger of the Dispensation of the Fullness of the Times." [146] Though they were not members of Trumbull Phalanx, the community hosted Kauffman and Smolnikar and their convention in the spirit of religious tolerance and social reform.

The Kauffman-Smolnikar convention claimed no denominational loyalty, but was aimed at attracting those reformers who had left their churches because the churches did not adequately pursue social reform. These groups of ardent reformers were common in communal experiments, and came to be known as "come-outers."[147] They included women's rights advocates and Garrisonian abolitionists who felt that religious institutions were not doing enough to progress society. As Smolnikar wrote to Kaufmann before the conference, "Ladies now step forward to be Christ's messengers, while preachers neglect their duty."[148] For these conference organizers,

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[146] Letters 9. 10a, 10b, 12, box 7, folder 4, MSS 136, Peter Kaufmann Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio; *The Kalida Venture.* (Kalida, Ohio), 03 Aug. 1847.

[147] Smolnikar references his preference for "come-outers" at the convention in his letter to Peter Kaufmann, June 18, 1847, box 7, folder 4, MSS 136, Peter Kaufmann Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio; The term "come-outer" is a reference to Revelation 18:4: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." The relative ubiquity of the term is evident from its use in literature of the period: Nathaniel Hawthorne uses this term to describe "reformers, temperance lecturers, and all manner of cross-looking philanthropists," in *The House of Seven Gables* (Boston: Tricknor, Reed and Fields, 1851), 80.

[148] Letter, Andrew Smolnikar to Peter Kauffman, June 18, 1847, box 7, folder 4, MSS 136, Peter Kaufmann Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

religion and social reform were intimately connected, a spiritual outlook with which Trumbull Phalanx members could relate.

In a letter to Peter Kauffman, written on August 29, 1847, just after the convention was held at the community, Trumbull Phalanx resident Electa Newton informed Kauffman that she expected to be evicted from the community for defending the principles Kauffman had advocated during his lecture at the convention. Despite disapproval from the rest of the community, Newton encouraged Kauffman to "go on with your worke (*sic*) of love, walking in the footsteps of your Master, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth."[149] Newton's correspondence reveals the tension caused by the seminars, conventions, and religious gatherings hosted at the community. In their attempt to achieve Fourier's blueprint of a religiously diverse community, Trumbull Phalanx members encouraged religious reformers to visit their community, and thus, in their minds, move the community toward the ideal of "free toleration."[150] However, the movement toward free toleration was resisted by some members, and when it came to eccentric religious figures, the limits to toleration were revealed. Exploration into progressive

[149] Letter, Electa Newton to Peter Kauffman, August 29, 1847, box 7, folder 4, MSS 136, Peter Kauffman Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

[150] A visitor to Trumbull Phalanx, C. Woodnousk, described their willingness to host speakers such as Smolnikar as a sign of their tolerance. See "Correspondence," *The Harbinger*, August 21, 1847, 163. Nathaniel Meeker also believed the communion of religions at Trumbull would lead to tolerance of all, predicting: "They will all unite, Presbyterians, Disciples, Baptists, Methodists, and all; and if any name be needed, under that of Unionism." As quoted by Brandi Denison in *Ute Land Religion in the American West, 1879-2009*, 52; Smolnikar also attempted to start his own intentional community called the Peace Union Settlement, but this plan apparently failed. He was also a member of the Convention of Associationists in New York City. See Fogarty, *Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History*, 105-106.

modes of religion, including come-outers' rejection of formal religious institutions, was a point of contention for some community members at Trumbull Phalanx. These events challenged members' ability to live together, but also created space for novel approaches to religious reform.

Social reform was often discussed among Fourierists through a shared lexicon that Angelique Martin employed in her writings. Commonly-used Fourierist phrases helped create comradery among Fourierists, identifying them as participating in a shared cause. This common vocabulary tied them to other members within their community, as well as to the international Fourierist movement. Common terminology included references to "social harmony," "attractive labor", and "passionate attractions," language used by Fourier in describing his blueprint for the ideal society.[151] In addition to this shared language among Fourierists, female members of Fourierist communities frequently referred to each other as "sisters in Association," creating a gender-based comradery and the feeling of a shared struggle within their communal movement.[152] While their shared cause led some of the female Fourierists to remain focused on preserving the communitarian movement over other reform movements of the period, many female communitarians translated the language of "sisters in Association" to "sisters" across various reform causes.[153]

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[151] According to Fourier, labor would become "attractive," or enjoyable, once each individual was matched with the type of labor best suited to his or her natural "passions," or inclinations. For more on Fourier's understanding of humanity, see Jonathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier*, esp. 65-67.

[152] For example, Anna Parsons' letter to Angelique Martin, August 27, 1847, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

[153] This shared language among female Fourierists is evidenced through letters written by female Trumbull community members. In a letter asking fellow reformer Angelique Martin to join Trumbull

The shared language among "sister Associationists" mimicked and replicated shared language among other reformers of the period. Abolitionists, labor activists, and temperance advocates alike frequently used the nomenclatures of "brothers" and "sisters" to identify fellow reformers.[154] In letters written to Angelique Martin by women's rights activists including Mary Emerson and Amelia Bloomer, these women commonly signed their letters as "your sister in the cause" or "your daughter in right."[155] This familial language presented a feeling of common purpose and struggle to reform American society from the shared perspective of womanhood. Trumbull Phalanx members like Martin utilized this familial language to build trust and camaraderie among women reformers of various causes, using both the shared

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Phalanx, Trumbull resident Electa Newton argues that the Fourierist communal model will successfully make labor "become more attractive" (a Fourierist phrase) by shifting the popular understanding of labor to offering skill, rather than providing desperately-needed money to the laborer. Because Fourierist communities were ideally meant to support the basic material needs of their members, Fourier argued that labor would be pursued within the community without fear of earning insufficient funds for survival, an assurance which would subsequently make labor more creative and enjoyable. See Letter from Electa Newton to Angelique Martin, 1845, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Center, Columbus, Ohio; After joining the Trumbull community, Angelique Martin also used Fourierist terminology to appeal to her fellow female reformers within the Fourierist movement, referring to them as "sister Associationists." Angelique Le Petit Martin, "Woman in the Isolated Household*," The Harbinger*, February 27, 1847, 191.

[154] William Lloyd Garrison frequently utilized fraternal language to describe fellow abolitionists and fellow abolitionist societies, particularly in letters writing in his capacity as leader of abolitionist organizations. See, for example, Letter from William Lloyd Garrison to John H. Tredgold, Jan. 29, 1841; Letter from William Lloyd Garrison to Sumner Lincoln, Nov. 8, 1841; Letter from William Lloyd Garrison to Erasmus Hudson, Sept. 12, 1845. Numerous additional examples exist. See *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Vol. III: No Union with Slaveholders*, Walter M. Merrill, ed. (Cambridge, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1974); Abolitionists also used the language of "brother" and "sister" to depict African Americans in their abolitionist pamphlets, thereby emphasizing their shared humanity to the reader. An early example is Josiah Wedgwood's seal engraved with the image of an African American kneeling, alongside the words "Am I not a man and a brother?" The image was distributed by the Society of Friends in the 1780s and became a symbol of abolitionism.

[155] See letter from Mary Emerson to Angelique Martin, 1848-1849 [illegible], Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, MSS 119, OHC; Letter from Mary Emerson to Angelique Martin, May 25, 1849, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, MSS 119, OHC; Amelia Bloomer signs "Yours for the Right," in Letter from Amelia Bloomer to Angelique Martin, Nov. 9, 1852, Box 1, Folder 4, Angelique Le Petit Martin Letters, Marietta College Library.

language of Fourierists and of their shared female identity to connote their common interests.[156] Thus, through shared activities and shared language, the Fourierist communal movement cultivated social bonds amongst its own members, as well as with fellow reformers in complementary reform movements.

During and after the decline of Trumbull Phalanx, Angelique Martin continued her correspondence with female reformers, offering them advice on their reform efforts based on her experiences in communal living. Martin provided Sarah Bagley with emotional support and encouragement during a period when Bagley doubted the possibility of success for the women's rights and labor rights movements. In a letter to Martin from Springfield, Massachusetts on March 28 (probably 1847), Bagley expressed frustration with the slow pace of progress in labor reform and women's rights.[157] Bagley described herself as sickened by the sight of women's labor being continuously exploited for men's uses; turning women into "a mere donkey for his use."[158] She described herself as defeated; she had labored for years

[156] For more on the language of sisterhood as used by female reformers, albeit in the Women's prison movement, see Jodie Michelle Lawston, "'We're All Sisters:' Bridging and Legitimacy in the Women's Antiprison Movement," in *Gender Through the Prism of Difference*, edited by Maxine Baca Zinn, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, Michael A. Messner, Amy M. Denissen (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016 [5th edition]), 544-558.

[157] Bagley also states in this letter that she had left Lowell three months earlier and was now a telegraph operator in Springfield. Bagley expresses frustration with the new editor of *The Voice of Industry*, John Allen, who had pushed the paper toward a more conservative direction, and subsequently forced Bagley to resign. Bagley argues that Allen "thinks truth ought to be spoken in such honeyed words that if it hits anyone, it shall not affect him unfavorably." Allen had forced Bagley out of the paper because, as Bagley interpreted it, he did not want a female department that might offend the "mushroom aristocracy.".

[158] For example, Bagley reports to Martin that the man who held her job before her made $400 per year, but due to her gender alone, her payment for the same task was greatly reduced. See letter from Sarah Bagley to Angelique Le Petit Martin, [1847], MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, OHC.; Bagley's comments about the exploitation of white female factory workers strikes a similar tone to that of Nanny, Zora Neale Hurston's character in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, who laments of the

but had little to show for it: "To labor year after year and have only an ungrateful return from those you are striving to bless is truly discouraging. But it is the way of the world." She wrote to Martin of her profound disappointment, but tried to find hope in the next generation: "let us trust on and try to leave a little seed on earth that shall bear fruit when we shall pass away." Bagley's own hope in the next generation would be shared by Martin, who would pass on her feminism to her daughter, Lilly Martin Spencer.[159]

Martin also maintained correspondence with Bagley's colleague and fellow labor rights activist in Lowell, Mary Emerson, throughout the 1840s and '50s. A dedicated women's rights activist who also harbored an interest in Fourierism, Emerson shared many of the same reform goals as Sarah Bagley and Angelique Martin. Emerson was elected vice president of the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association in January 1846. In February of the same year, the Lowell Fourier Society was organized, which would change its name to the Lowell Union of

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plight of black women: "De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as Ah can see." Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, (New York: HarperCollins, 1937), 14.

[159] MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio. Bagley worked at *The Voice of Industry*, and had contributed articles to the *Lowell Offering* in its early years of publication. *The Voice of Industry* served as an outlet for working-class women to voice their frustration with production expectations at the mills, as well as providing a way for women's perspectives to reach a large audience. By giving women a literary platform, this publication expressed the evolving ways working women were beginning to think about marriage, children, and work through their experiences at the mills. As historians of the Lowell mill workers have noted, these women's experiences in the mills, even if only lasting for a few years, impacted their lives in vast and diverse ways, including affecting the spouses (if any) they chose, whether they had children, and their future careers. Lowell workers shared their skepticism of marriage through labor tracts including *The Voice of Industry*. See Lori Merish, *Archives of Labor: Working-Class Women and Literary Culture in the Antebellum United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 62-66.; In a similar way, Angelique Martin's experience in a Fourierist community framed the way she approached the rest of her life. Angelique and Giles Martin would remain at the site of Trumbull Phalanx until their death, though Angelique Martin never stopped pursuing other reform efforts in addition to Associationism.

Associationists in July, 1846.[160] Sarah Bagley served as Vice President of the Lowell Union of Associationists in 1846, and Mary Emerson served as secretary in 1847.[161] The overlap of these social reform movements placed Fourierism at the center of an interconnected web of female reform activists.[162]

In 1851, Martin published her manuscript titled *Essays on Woman's True Destiny*, which offered her perspective on the cause of women's rights.[163] She dedicated her book to Albert Brisbane and Horace Greeley, reformers who both actively supported the Fourierist movement and who also expressed support for the women's rights movement. In her prologue, Martin asked the two men to turn their attention fully toward women's rights, imploring them to become activists for the cause of women just as they had been for the cause of communitarianism: "How happy I should be, gentlemen, if I could reckon such talents as yours among our advocating friends."[164] In the series of essays that followed, Martin described women's current state as ignorant and degraded, comparable to the description of women provided by fellow women's rights activist Margaret Fuller in her book,

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[160] *The Voice of Industry*, Feb. 27, 1846; *The Harbinger*, May 7, 1847, 390.
[161] *The Harbinger*, August 29, 1846, 191; "To the American Union of Associationists, in Convention Assembled," The Harbinger, May 29, 1847, 390.
[162] Mary Emerson was also involved in the women's rights movement, and kept Martin informed of upcoming women's rights conventions. See Letter, Mary Emerson to Angelique Martin, April 1848 or 1849 (illegible), Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, MSS 119, OHC Letter, Mary Emerson to Angelique Martin, May 25, 1849, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, MSS 119, OHC; Letter, Mary Emerson to Angelique Martin, Nov. 1, 1850, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, MSS 119, OHC.
[163] The complete title is *Essays on Woman's True Destiny, Responsibilities and Rights, as the Mother of the Human Race, Contrasted With Her Subordinate Subserviency to Adult Man, Assigned to Her By His Grossly Selfish Social Regulations; Their Baneful and Unjust Effects on Woman, Her Offspring, and Even Grown-Up Man; the Primitive Cause of All This, and Its Remedy* (Warren, Ohio: J. Dumars, 1851).
[164] Angelique Martin, *Essays on Woman's True Destiny*, v.

*Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, published six years earlier.[165] Martin advocated for a shift in the public's understanding of women's societal roles to help women move beyond their stifling identity as "a pretty little thing, intended for the sexual gratification of man."[166] After Martin circulated the manuscript among her reform-minded friends, Brisbane had offered to edit and publish the work with the help of "Miss A. Blackwell," likely referring to Anna Blackwell of the famed Blackwell family, a fellow Fourierist who had lived at Brook Farm (and who will be highlighted in a later chapter).[167] After years of receiving editing and publishing advice from Fourierists, but finding no one to print the manuscript, Martin finally printed her book with James Dumars, the printer of the *Western Reserve Chronicle* and a political Whig-turned-Republican.[168] Throughout her editing and publishing process, Martin turned to her reformer friends both within and outside of the Fourierist movement to aid her in refining and distributing her ideas on women's rights.

Martin was never a charismatic leader of reform movements, but instead utilized her Fourierist social ties to contribute to reform movements through a wider

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[165] Angelique Martin, *Essays on Woman's True Destiny*; Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1845).
[166] Angelique Martin, *Essays on Woman's True Destiny*, iii.
[167] Letter from Albert Brisbane to Angelique Martin, November 7, 1847, Angelique le Petit Martin Letters, Marietta College Library, Marietta Ohio.
[168] James Dumar was a printer, publisher, and editor of numerous newspapers across Ohio, including The *Western Reserve Chronicle*, *Western Reserve Transcript and Whig* (founded in 1848 as the *Trumbull County Whig*). His newspapers were consistently anti-slavery, and supported Whig politics until the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which prompted his turn toward Republican politics. See Harriet Taylor Upton, *A Twentieth Century History Of Trumbull County Ohio: A Narrative Account of Its Historical Progress, Its People, and Its Principal Interests* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1909), 176; William T. Coggeshall, *The Poets and Poetry of the West* (Columbus, Follett, Foster & Company, 1860), 581.

network of support than she might have otherwise found access to. Her involvement in these movements was always somewhat subdued: she contributed financially to women's magazines like *The Lily* but never edited them, nor wrote articles frequently for them; she became a member of Ohio temperance and women's rights organizations but never spoke at their conferences; and she wrote impassioned letters to abolitionists but never became an outspoken advocate of their cause.[169] Martin represents a progressive middle-class woman who was always one step outside of the inner circles of social reform movements, yet able to move in the outer circles due to her social network of fellow reformers. Her experiences in communitarianism, women's rights, and labor rights movements reveal the potential linkages women were able to create between these reform efforts, thus contributing to the advancement of each of them.

## The Next Generation: Lilly Martin Spencer's Social Activism Through Art

The connection between Fourierism and other social reform movements of the nineteenth century is perhaps best represented through the next generation of reformers. Reverberations of the reform activism found at Trumbull Phalanx can be traced through Angelique Martin's eldest daughter, Lilly Martin. Lilly Martin left her home in Marietta, Ohio for Cincinnati to study art and exhibit her paintings in 1841, a few years before her parents moved to Trumbull Phalanx. Despite Lilly's seeming

[169] A letter from Amelia Bloomer to Angelique Le Petit Martin indicates that Martin had also written articles for publication in *The Lily*, but Bloomer had rejected them, claiming that she did not have enough room to publish them. Letter, Amelia Bloomer to Angelique Le Petit Martin, November 29, 1852, Box 1. Folder 4, Angelique Le Petit Martin Letters, Marietta College Library.

indifference toward her parents' communal endeavors in her letters, Lilly was nevertheless involved in the communitarian social circles of her parents. Through letters to Angelique and Giles Martin, their Fourierist circle of friends commented on their interactions with Lilly during her years living in Cincinnati and New York in the beginning of her career.[170] These interactions with Fourierist reformers would influence Lilly's professional and personal life.

Before experiencing the perennial presence of Fourierist communitarians during her early adult life, Lilly had already been exposed to her parent's communitarian ideals throughout her formative childhood years. Her mother Angelique was acutely aware of the need to raise reform-minded children and, thus, surely exposed Lilly to her reform causes including communitarianism. In a letter to fellow communitarians published in *The Harbinger*, Angelique Martin pled with other mothers to demonstrate gender equality to their children: "Remember that the union of woman's moral and intellectual powers with man's for the organization of a just, equitable, and truly harmonic society, is as necessary as her physical powers in the organization of her offspring."[171] Martin was aware of the important role her fellow female communitarians played in coaxing their children toward adult lives as

[170] Letter from Margaret D. Bale to Angelique Le Petit Martin, May 1851, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio; Letter from Margaret D. Bale to Angelique Le Petit Martin, Aug. 23, 1852, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio; Ralph Waldo Emerson is also discussed in Lilly's letters to her parents as visiting Lilly and discussing her parents' correspondence with him. Though he never lived in a communal setting, Emerson was involved in communitarian social circles, particularly those of the Brook Farm communal experiment. Letter, Lilly Martin Spencer to Angelique and Giles Martin, July 14, 1847, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.
[171] Angelique Le Petit Martin, "Woman in the Isolated Household*," The Harbinger*, February 27, 1847, 191.

reformers. Though Lilly took a very different approach to social reform than that of her parents, the lessons instilled by her feminist, Fourierist parents nevertheless found expression in Lilly's adult life.

Lilly Martin expressed her feminism primarily through her career as an artist, and particularly in the subject matter she chose for her paintings. While some art historians argue that Lilly Martin's life as a wife and mother in the "isolated household" should be interpreted as a challenge to Angelique Martin's outspoken feminism and zeal for cooperative living, other scholars see the remnants of those reform messages revealed in Lilly's artwork.[172] Unlike other (male) genre painters of the period, Lilly Martin (literally) placed women at the forefront of her artwork. While other painters typically positioned women on the side or background of a public scene, often consumed by domestic or menial tasks, Lilly Martin centered women in her paintings and often painted them facing outward toward the viewer, thus presenting them as masters of the space they were inhabiting.[173] As one of the few female painters to paint primarily female subjects during the antebellum period,

[172] Albert Boime argues that her parent's feminism "never occupies the foreground of her imaginative realizations." *Art in an Age of Civil Struggle, 1848-1871* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 415. However, April Masten argues that Spencer's artwork represents a challenge to women's exclusion from economic and political life prevalent in the Jacksonian era. See Masten, "'Shake Hands?' Lilly Martin Spencer and the Politics of Art." *American Quarterly* Vol. 56, No. 2 (Jun., 2004): 348-394. Before the 1970s scholars neglected any race or gender analysis of Lilly Martin Spencer's work, focusing instead on the technical skill displayed in her art. For an example of one such work that focuses on technical skill, see National Collection of Fine Arts, *Lilly Martin Spencer: The Joys of Sentiment* (Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973).

[173] See Elizabeth Johns, *American Genre Painting: The Politics of Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 163-164. Both Johns and Masten focus on Lilly Martin's painting, "Shake Hands?" as a particularly complex project that portrays a woman demanding social equality while remaining rooted firmly in the domestic sphere. See April Masten, '"Shake Hands?", 348-394.

Lilly Martin offered an image of woman in charge of her surroundings, rather than reduced to marginal existence under the male gaze.[174]

Lilly Martin (who took on the name Spencer after her marriage to Benjamin Rush Spencer in 1844) had developed her talent for painting within many different genres through her years of exhibiting in Cincinnati during her early twenties. However, after she and her growing family moved to New York in 1848 she was pressured to work within a domestic genre that audiences deemed fitting for a female artist. Critics and reviewers subsequently assumed domestic scenes to be her natural specialty. As a result, Spencer temporarily pursued the role of a domestic scenes painter, but was simultaneously criticized for not painting more complex subjects.[175] Today, Spencer is remembered primarily as a domestic genre painter, despite the relative brevity of her pursuit of this style in her career. However, her domestic genre paintings found the most public acclaim and were the most likely to be lithographed and widely distributed, and thus their quantity indicate the taste of art consumers at the time more than the primary interests of Spencer.[176] Commissioned portraits and still-life represent a large portion of Spencer's paintings, but because Spencer did not typically sign or date these types of paintings, art historians argue that many remain unattributed, further skewing the public perception of Spencer's preferred style. Regardless of the many paintings that Spencer may not have signed, those paintings

[174] Johns, *American Genre Painting*, 160.
[175] Johns, *American Genre Painting*, 161-163.
[176] Ann Byrd Schumer, "Lilly Martin Spencer: American Painter of the Nineteenth Century," (M.A. Thesis, The Ohio State University, 1959), 57-59.

that were reproduced also indicated the subjects that the public expected to see painted by a female artist, and were thus awarded with public approval. Even within the limits of the genre she was able to pursue, Spencer still used her paintings to challenge middle-class expectations of (white) domestic life.

The complexities of being a professional female painter in the antebellum period are revealed through Spencer's multifaceted portrayal of women of the period. Art historian David Lubin argues that Spencer's paintings should be interpreted as challenging the conservative hierarchies of the time by portraying women's equality in social relationships, and particularly by challenging the dominance of the male within the family unit. Though her paintings presented the domestic scenes that audiences expected of a female artist in one sense, they simultaneously challenged traditional understandings of the domestic sphere in their style. Rather than simply relegating women to a domestic life absent of political or social power, Spencer attempted to elevate women's role within the family by highlighting the "circularity, the reciprocity, of familial love."[177] Spencer claimed women's place as social guides and moral superiors to men. She often painted women in scenes with no men present, in which women were sometimes even taking over the roles assumed be best suited to men.[178] This "domestic feminism" served as a source of self-worth for her middle-

[177] David M. Lubin, *Picturing a Nation: Art and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 165.
[178] In her war-time painting, *War Spirit at Home*, Spencer depicts the mother as both head of household and caretaker of children during the absence of her husband. The mother holds a newspaper, reading news of the casualties on the battlefield, thereby bringing the public realm into the domestic space. See Jochen Wierich, "War Spirit at Home: Lilly Martin Spencer, Domestic Painting, and Artistic Heirarchy," *Winterthur Portfolio* , Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 2002): 30.

class white female audiences, who could claim autonomy within the home, whether it truly existed or not.[179] Though this approach to elevating the social status of women differed dramatically from that of her mother, Angelique Martin, who critiqued the assumptions underlying the "Cult of True Womanhood" and the isolated household, Spencer's interpretation of women in domestic life was meant to bring women further into a leadership role within the household than Angelique Martin thought was possible within her understanding of feminism.

Spencer's paintings mimicked her own life. After marriage, Benjamin Spencer abandoned his career in favor of supporting Lilly's art career, which involved moving to New York with her to seek out wider audiences and wealthier patrons. Benjamin Spencer cared for the children and acted as Lilly's agent, connecting her to buyers and delivering her artwork. Lilly remained the primary breadwinner of the family throughout her married life, even as she eventually gave birth to thirteen children. Lilly thus represented the independent yet maternal figure she is best known for painting. Lilly's art studio was located within her home, often leading to the conflation of professional work and domestic duties or distractions. By elevating women as leaders of the domestic domain in her paintings, she elevated the work she

[179] Wendy Jean Katz, *Regionalism and Reform: Art and Class Formation in Antebellum Cincinnati* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 40. The perception of female autonomy within the home was an ideal limited to white, middle class women, but perpetuated by numerous public platforms including etiquette guides, art, and novels.

accomplished within her home as part of the legitimate sphere of labor completed by women.[180]

Spencer also saw her artwork as morally benefitting society, and thus well within the benevolent work publicly deemed acceptable for middle-class women. Art historians have noted Spencer's aim to bring the viewer into her artwork by often painting characters facing outward, looking beyond the frame and toward the audience. This perspective granted her female subjects power in the scene as they challenge and confront the viewer, but has also been interpreted as indicating Spencer's self-defined role as social reformer (see "Self-Portrait," Figure 1).[181] Spencer's paintings placed her characters in conversation with her audience, indicating that they possessed knowledge of the social transgression occurring within the scene and what must be done to correct it.[182] These lessons varied from a commentary on the democratic ideal of social equality across economic classes and even genders (see "Shake Hands?" Figure 2) to commentary on the learned practice of female domesticity, as opposed to its inherent presence in women (as seen in

[180] For commentary on Spencer as defining herself as a professional female painter, see Jean Gordon, "Early American Women Artists and the Social Context in Which They Worked," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Spring, 1978): 64.
[181] Lubin discusses Spencer's use of "direct address" in her paintings in *Picturing a Nation*, 176-178; Wendy J. Katz discusses Spencer's use of figures gazing at the viewer as a way to establish a sense of shared knowledge between the figure and the viewer in "Lilly Martin Spencer and the Art of Refinement," *American Studies*, 42:1 (Spring 2001): 14.
[182] Elizabeth O'Leary notes Spencer's portrayal of a woman peeling onions as both vulnerable and powerful: "Tears come from the stinging vapor of the cut onion, yet the woman's soft weeping acts as a reminder—or perhaps a parody—of the sort of tender sensibilities ascribed to females in this period." O'Leary, "Lilly Martin Spencer, Peeling Onions, [ca. 1852]," in *Seeing America: Painting and Sculpture from the Collection of the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester*, eds. Marjorie B. Searl and John W. Blanpied (New York: University of Rochester Memorial Art Gallery, 2006), 55.

"Peeling Onions," Figure 3).[183] Her paintings challenged stereotypes of women as a uniform group of naturally-domestic persons by differentiating their portrayal based on their class, age, or setting. By painting her characters as looking directly at the audience, Spencer encouraged a feeling of mutual social understanding and camaraderie in a comparable way to that which other social reformers of the era accomplished through riveting lectures or publications.[184] Spencer was aware of this effect her paintings could have, and was conscious about inspiring it. In a letter to her mother, Angelique Martin, Spencer discloses: "I want to try to make my paintings have a tendency toward morale improvement at least as far as it is in power of painting."[185] Spencer thus pursued her own version of social reform activism, even if it differed from the outspoken activism of her mother and her social circle of Fourierists.

[183] See Elizabeth Johns, *American Genre Painting*, esp. 165-170.
[184] Katz, *Regionalism and Reform*, 42
[185] Lilly Martin Spencer to Giles and Angelique Martin, Sunday, July 11, 1847, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio. The date is illegible, though in 1847, Sunday would have either fallen on the 4th, 11th or 18th.

**Figure 1**: "Self Portrait," Lilly Martin Spencer, ca. 1840. Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection, H 24656.

**Figure 2:** “Shake Hands?” Lilly Martin Spencer, 1854. Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection, H 24655.

**Figure 3**: "Peeling Onions," Lilly Martin Spencer, ca. 1852. Courtesy of the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, 88.6.

While Spencer's paintings can be interpreted as a response to the conservative commitment to male dominance over the family unit, they can also be viewed as a response to the progressive collectivism of her mother and other Fourierists. Though Spencer rejected male control over the family, she also valued the family unit, and advocated its preservation over the goals of communal living.[186] Spencer's expression of female domestic authority mimicked Catherine Beecher's domestic ideal more than it mimicked Charles Fourier's ideal of the communal household.[187] Spencer's painting of domestic scenes and their transgressions helped define and reaffirm the social order emerging in mid-nineteenth century United States, while also allowing her to claim her place within that social world as a female professional. Thus, while in one sense Spencer's professional pursuits echoed the feminism her mother had instilled in her, in other ways Spencer expressed this feminism in a way that was frustrating and confusing to her mother. Spencer rejected Angelique Martin's pleas for her to attend women's rights conferences and explicitly declare her support for women's rights causes. At the same time, Spencer chose a life trajectory as a career woman, breadwinner for her family, and mobile, independent professional; possibilities that were only just becoming available to women during Spencer's lifetime, and which had not yet been possible during Angelique Martin's early life. Angelique Martin's feminism was expressed through the fight for recognition of

[186] Lubin, *Picturing a Nation*, 166.
[187] The opposing perspectives offered by Beecher and Fourierists are summarized by Dolores Hayden in *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982), Chp. 3: "Feminism in Model Households."

women's contribution to the political and economic evolution of the nation; a fight which Spencer was adopting and navigating in a new political and social era. Spencer saw her work as contributing to social reform and frequently wrote long explanations of her paintings to make the moral lessons of them clear to her audiences.[188] Spencer's focus on art at the expense of political engagement through reform organizations does not necessarily speak to her apathy toward reform efforts, but instead to the possibilities and limitations for women in the Civil War era, as well as to Spencer's belief in the power of art to serve as a catalyst of social reform.

Spencer's lived experience as a female professional and mother reflects the particular approach to gender equality advocated by Fourier's disciple Albert Brisbane and reiterated by Angelique Martin. Brisbane proposed a gradual transformation of gendered spheres that involved simultaneously praising female domesticity while expanding the professional opportunities available to women. Michael Mattek argues that Brisbane's ideas shaped Margaret Fuller's approach to feminism, though his argument can be applied here to Lilly Martin Spencer as well:

> By promoting a social system that challenged the occupational limitations imposed upon women by the Cult of True Womanhood, while simultaneously expanding the social power of domesticity, Brisbane's writings and the Associationist movement that was a direct result of Brisbane's promotions provided an important *interim* step for women who, with hesitation, resisted the limits of the 'Cult of True Womanhood,' but who were not yet ready to assume the role of the 'New Woman,' one with the vote and occupational

[188] This is perhaps best represented by her explanation of the allegory present in the painting titled "Truth Unveiling Falsehood." This explanation, as well as others written by Spencer, are printed by Schumer in "Lilly Martin Spencer," esp. pgs. 32, 101.

> freedom, but without the psychological comfort of narrowly defined gender roles.[189]

While Angelique Martin saw this expansion of women's roles as occurring in the communal setting, Spencer instead took part in the expansion of women's professional roles through her career as an artist, while remaining in the isolated household. Despite Spencer's rejection of her mother's communitarian lifestyle, Spencer nevertheless internalized the feminist ideas she proposed, as well as those proposed by Fourier's disciple, Brisbane.[190] Spencer's lived experience as a female professional served to broaden the occupational possibilities open to women during the mid-nineteenth century, while simultaneously reaffirming the importance of women to the domestic sphere. While she may have rejected the communal model as the key to elevating women's social status, in many ways Spencer embodied the feminist ideals that her mother found to be the most compelling aspect of Fourierism.

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[189] Italics in original. Michael Mattek, "Brisbane and Beyond: Revising Social Capitalism in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," (PhD Diss., Marquette University, 2002), 52.

[190] Spencer's political views seem not to have extended into the abolitionism for which her mother advocated, if scholars take her art as evidence. In the few paintings that centered African American subjects, Spencer portrayed them through the minstrel style popular in Jim Crow theatre during the period. Presenting an African American boy and girl each dressed in upper class couture and sitting with lap dogs portrayed them as mimicking white society, while never being able to truly join it. Though the condescending implications of these paintings indicate a mockery of African Americans similar to the minstrel shows that reinforced white superiority, Spencer's political stance on abolitionism in the antebellum period is harder to uncover. Her mother Angelique expressed anti-slavery sentiments in many of her correspondence, yet a commitment to racial equality did not necessarily follow those abolitionist sentiments. Spencer may have opposed slavery as well, while still using art to reflect on the inherent inferiority of African Americans, and the humor that is produced when they attempt to dress or act like whites. These views are most evident in her paintings "Power of Fashion" and "Height of Fashion." Analyses of these paintings as reflecting minstrelsy can be found in Katz, *Regionalism and Reform*, 63-69; see also Boime, *Art in an Age of Civil Struggle, 1848-1871*, 417-420.

## Conclusion

Trumbull Phalanx has traditionally been analyzed by historians as a failed community that thrived for only a few years before its members dispersed. Today, few material remnants are left at the community's original site to mark its existence, signaling an erasure of the Trumbull Phalanx community in physical presence as well as in local memory.[191] However, the ideals of the community continued on through the reformers who had lived there, including Angelique Martin. Martin's concern for women's social equality was not shared by all members of the community, as the life trajectory of Nathaniel Meeker demonstrated. However, for those who embraced social activism, Trumbull Phalanx could be used as platform through which other reform movements could be engaged and supported. For Angelique Martin, Fourierism linked her with well-connected reformers across the United States, each of whom shared her interest in Fourierism as well as in other reform movements. These like-minded acquaintances enabled her to influence reform efforts through her financial contributions, organizing efforts, and publications. Those social connections lived on after the collapse of Trumbull Phalanx, and remained significant to her throughout her life. Though we cannot know the reform work in which Martin may have engaged had she not chosen to live communally, we can track the ways that communal living cultivated additional networks of reformers, rather than leading to her isolation from society.

[191] The author visited the former site of Trumbull Phalanx in Fall 2017 and found only a pile of boulders upended in Eagle Creek, left from the final demolition of the original mill at the community. Local residents knew little about the historical community.

Though Angelique Martin's daughter Lilly never lived in the communal setting, she was significantly influenced by her mother's reform commitments, and reacted in both positive and negative ways. The theme of benevolent womanhood appears in many of her paintings, carving out a place for women through artwork that, in Spencer's vision, helped audiences envision the importance of women's influence on society. Though Spencer clearly rejected the communal living model in her paintings, choosing to base them instead on domestic family life, Spencer's own marriage and family model exemplified Fourierist principles of gender equality. Spencer's position as the economic head of her household defied norms of the period and challenged a simple understanding of the benevolent and submissive woman that a viewer might initially see in the domestic scenes of her paintings. By complicating the woman's assumed social role, Spencer lived the ideals her mother proposed and advocated through her reform activism. The social impacts of her art are difficult to measure, yet they speak to a feminist tradition passed from mother to daughter through a life committed to social reform, including through communal living.

## Chapter 2: Demonstrating Racial Diversity within Community: The Northampton Association of Education and Industry

In 1846, white abolitionist Olive Gilbert met former slave Sojourner Truth at their shared communal property in Northampton, Massachusetts. Their similar religious worldviews and shared dedication to the anti-slavery cause drew them to each other, and over the course of the next four years, Truth would dictate her personal story of slavery and freedom to Gilbert. These interviews would culminate in the publication of Truth's slave narrative in 1850, one of a growing number of slave autobiographies that would be published throughout the decade in the attempt to convince Northerners to abolish slavery and to prevent its expansion into the Western territories.

Gilbert and Truth's meeting was made possible through the multiracial setting consciously created in their shared community. The Northampton Association of Education and Industry (hereafter referred to as the "Northampton Association") was one of the only intentional communities in the United States with a multiracial membership, and one of the few spaces in the United States where African Americans shared dwellings and work spaces with whites without any race-based hierarchies in place. The unique racial equality established at the Northampton Association provided a space in which friendships and reform partnerships across racial categories could develop and thrive. Not only were African American members treated as equals in terms of voting abilities in community matters, but as I will discuss below, they also experienced social equality and held leadership roles in the community.

Because it existed as an organized community for only a short period, the Northampton Association is rarely recognized as part of the history of the abolitionist movement, and even when mentioned, it is often treated as only a footnote to that history. But this New England community provided a space for the cultivation of personal connections among some of the most renowned abolitionists of the antebellum period. Truth's own time at the Northampton Association proved crucial to advancing the abolitionist cause, for it was through the Northampton Association that Truth was introduced to Olive Gilbert, as well as to other influential abolitionists including William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, David Ruggles, and Jonathan Walker. It was there that she first lectured publicly on abolitionism and, over the following years, developed her public speaking skills as an anti-slavery and women's rights activist. Letters and community records preserved from members of the Northampton Association have shed light on the ways the social environment at the Northampton Association was conducive to producing reform partnerships that would bolster the abolitionist and women's rights movements for years beyond the community's existence.[192] This chapter challenges past historical narratives of the American abolitionist movement that have relegated intentional communities like the Northampton Association to a peripheral role. Instead, this chapter reframes this intentional community as space that facilitated collaboration among anti-slavery activists and, thus, a space that served to advance the abolitionist movement in

[192] Truth was illiterate throughout her life, thus any records left by her were transcribed by the various "readers" and "writers" who assisted her.

subsequent years. In that effort, this chapter highlights some of the members of the Northampton Association who went on to become outspoken members of the abolitionist movement, giving particular attention to abolitionist and preacher Sojourner Truth, as well as Olive Gilbert, the woman who transcribed Truth's slave narrative.

## A Fourierist Experiment?

A group of abolitionists and friends founded the Northampton Association in Massachusetts in April 1842 and positioned abolitionist goals at the forefront of the community's mission.[193] Inspired by the radical abolitionism of William Lloyd-Garrison, the members of the Northampton Association emphasized the importance of creating a racially diverse space that would demonstrate the feasibility of a post-slavery nation. While many members were white abolitionists, the community also attracted black anti-slavery advocates and former slaves as members. While members highlighted the importance of communal living by sharing housing, meals, labor endeavors, and financial profits with each other, the community also emphasized its racial equality goal as fundamental to its operation. The Northampton Association

[193] The founders of both the Northampton Association and Brook Farm were heavily influenced by social movements and ideas beyond Fourier's writings, with Brook Farm dedicated to Transcendentalism and various social reform efforts, and the Northampton Association dedicated primarily to radical abolitionism. Both communities thus represent hybrid communal models. However, the community members' participation in Fourierist networks (common meetings of Fourierist community leaders, attendance at inter-community conventions, written communications, publications in common journals) makes the Northampton Association and Brook Farm appropriate case studies for this dissertation. Many of the members in both communities also became active in the abolitionist movement afterwards, a common movement joined by other Fourierist community members across the country.

thus offers an example of communal goals intersecting with abolitionism and, in the process, forming and strengthening both abolitionist and communitarian networks.

Unlike other Fourier communal experiments of the 1840s, which attracted members who were both committed to Fourier's ideas and those who simply desired an affordable and profitable living arrangement, the Northampton Association appealed primarily to abolitionists. The Northampton Association's founding documents reveal a communal experiment dedicated to overturning prevalent social and economic inequalities, though not a community explicitly tied to any single approach or model for enacting that reform. The community's constitution and bylaws espoused equality "without distinction of sex, color, or condition, sect, or religion."[194] Thus, a dedication to social equality was paramount to Northampton Association members, but not necessarily a commitment to any particular communitarian model aimed toward establishing that equality.

Many of the community's members harbored personal ties with leaders of the abolition movement, making the community a close collaborator with leaders of that social movement much more so than with other reform movements of the period. In turn, abolitionists found the communal experiment to be a positive contribution to the anti-slavery cause. One of the community's founders, George Benson, was the brother-in-law of William Lloyd Garrison and participated in his radical abolitionist lectures, publications, and conferences. Garrison, who married Benson's sister,

[194] "Constitution and Bylaws of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry," as reprinted in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 240.

Helen, encouraged the creation of the Northampton Association and frequently visited the community to give lectures and hold meetings on the cause of abolitionism. Garrison saw similarities between the communal experiment and his own rejection of the country's corrupt economic and political institutions.[195]

Because of the community's only cursory nod to Fourier's principles in its founding documents, communal studies scholars have treated the Northampton Association as an outlier among Fourierist communities, and some have refrained from referring to it as a Fourierist community at all.[196] However, the community's commitment to profit sharing, labor reform, religious tolerance, gender equality, and on-site education, through a combination of intellectual training and practical labor skills, aligned them closely with Fourierist communities of the period. The community also hosted a regional convention of Associationist leaders in 1843 and participated in subsequent conventions of regional communitarians, during which a significant minority of Northampton Association members favored explicit adoption of Fourierist principles into the community's organizational structure.[197] However, their relationship to the network of Fourierist communities remained only implicit and indirect. Within this chapter, the Northampton Association will be analyzed as a

[195] For more on Garrison's support of Northampton as an abolitionist community, see Manisha Sinha's *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 354-356.
[196] In *The Utopian Alternative*, Carl Guarneri excludes Northampton from his list of Fourierist communities, referring to it as an independent experiment. *The Utopian Alternative*, 83.
[197] On participation in the convention of Associationists, see "Convention at Boston of the Friends of Association, Dec. 1843," Microfilm Reel 5, Macdonald Collection, Wisconsin Phalanx Microfilm Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

community that operated in communion with the principles and goals of Fourierist communities, though which maintained some independence in its self-definition.[198]

During these conventions of regional communitarians, tensions arose at those meetings that addressed Northampton Association members' perspectives on Associationism (or communal living) vs. abolitionism as the most pressing reform movement. A letter from Dolly Stetson, a member of Northampton, to her husband, James Stetson, on June 16, 1844, illustrates some of the tensions. Dolly writes,

> …those that are here are more Abolitionist than Associationist and if I could judge by the meeting I attended this morning Association will have the go by.—the principle matter of debate this morning was the slavery of the north and south compared—Garrison objected to the term slave being applied to us at the north…[199]

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[198] Scholars have debated the relationship of the Northampton Association and Fourierism. Alice McBee refers to the Northampton Association members as "warming themselves at the fires of transcendentalism and Fourierism" in "From Utopia to Florence: The Story of a Transcendentalist Community in Northampton, Mass. 1830-1852," *Smith College Studies in History Volume XXXII*, edited by Vera Brown Holmes and Hans Kohn, (Northampton, 1947), Preface; Arthur Bestor adamantly rejects any analysis of Northampton as a Fourierist community in "Fourierism in Northampton: A Critical Note," *The New England Quarterly* Vol. 13, No. 1 (Mar., 1940): 110-122; George K. Smart offers a rejoinder to Bestor's analysis, arguing that the spirit of Northampton's constitution reveals influence by Fourier in "The Approach to Utopian Socialism: A Brief Rejoinder," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Jun., 1940): 322-323; Most recently, Christopher Clark noted the distinctions between the general outlook of Fourierists and that of Northampton members. While Fourierists argued for a change in the material conditions of the laborer which would help transform society, Northampton members combined morality and material reality, arguing that a moral regeneration of individuals was necessary to transform society, just as much as a material change. See Christopher Clark, *The Communitarian Moment: The Radical Challenge of the Northampton Association* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 11. However, the extent of "material" vs. "moral" concerns differed among Fourierist communities. For example, at Trumbull Phalanx, moral imperatives were mentioned in their list of resolutions explaining why the creation of a community was necessary. Thus, the debate is not yet settled, though Northampton exhibits many similarities in organizational structure and stated mission to other Fourierist communities of the period.

[199] In this letter, "the go by" seems to indicate Dolly's prediction that the community will forgo a closer tie with Fourierist communities in favor of focusing on establishing closer ties with the abolitionist movement. Letter, Dolly Stetson to James Stetson, June 16, 1844, as reprinted in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 40. Dolly's letter references a frequent debate between Garrisonians and other Northern abolitionists, as well as among Southern slaveholders. Southern defenders of slavery negatively compared Northern labor conditions to those of slavery, arguing that "wage slavery" of the North did not offer a better, nor more enlightened approach to labor as

Stetson goes on to write that the motion put before the Northampton Association over whether to adopt an explicitly Fourierist organizational model was narrowly rejected by the group, though letters show that she and her husband James had supported a closer alignment with Fourierism.[200] Garrison's reported remarks reveal the disagreements within the abolition movement over whether the term "wage slavery" should be applied to Northern factory laborers to describe their exploitation, or whether slavery in the South should be condemned in favor of the comparably superior wage labor system. Garrison, along with most Northampton Association members, emphasized the distinction between a laborer selling labor power in the Northern economic model vs. a slaveholder selling human beings within the Southern economy. Their stance put Garrison at odds with many Associationists, and particularly with Fourierists, who sought to reform the labor system of the North in conjunction with abolishing the institution of slavery in the South. Nevertheless, members at the Northampton Association would institute their own internal labor

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Northerners contended. Some Northern labor rights activists, including Fourierists, adopted a similar critique of Northern wage labor, arguing that the Northern factory labor system needed reform, as did slavery in the South. However, Garrison and other radical abolitionists argued that the evils of slavery in the South far outweighed those of the wage labor system, and that slavery must be abolished before Northern labor issues could be addressed. This disagreement seems to have contributed to the Northampton Association continuing to distance itself from Fourierism, at least in name.

[200] See letter from Dolly Stetson to James Stetson, Sept. 1, 1844, as reprinted in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 62-63 and letter from Dolly Stetson to James Stetson, October 26, 1844, as reprinted in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 75-76, in which Dolly states that she wishes James was present at the meetings on whether the community would adopt Fourierism officially to "help the cause along." Christopher Clark argues that some members of the Northampton Association leadership also advocated an official adoption of Fourierism, including George Benson. See Clark, *The Communitarian Moment*, 174.

reforms as well, indicating their shared dissatisfaction with the Northern wage labor model emerging in the United States at the time.

While the immediate abolition of slavery remained the priority of the Northampton Association, the community's founders also revealed other, secondary motivations that overlapped significantly with other Fourierist communities. The constitution and list of resolutions (called the "Preliminary Circular") of the Northampton Association secured the equal voting rights of men and women of all races, as well as the equal wages paid to men and women for work done within the community.[201] Married and single women alike were allowed to vote, and records show that married women sometimes voted differently than their husbands.[202] Thus, the community created a space for the political engagement of women by enabling their participation in the internal governing processes of the community. This differed from other Fourierist community constitutions only in its emphasis on extending voting rights across gender *and* racial identities explicitly in the document. This language was meant to attract and include the perspectives of African American members as equal participants in communal government affairs. Indeed, records show

[201] This wage system would change to an allotment system in 1843, but remained equal for men and women members. Clark, *The Communitarian Moment*, 106-107

[202] See, for example, Meeting Notes on June 30, 1844, in Microfilm Vol. 2, Northampton Association of Education and Industry Records (NAEI), American Antiquarian Society; Women and men also served together on committees. See pg. 69, Microfilm Vol. 2, NAEI records, American Antiquarian Society.

that Sojourner Truth participated in meetings, voted, and led communal gatherings, affirming her equal treatment in official communal matters.[203]

The Northampton Association was also concerned with reforming the economic system of the United States to ensure greater financial protections for laborers. Similar to other Fourierist community constitutions, the Northampton Association constitution was focused on ensuring economic cooperation and profit-sharing among community members through communal participation in on-site labor activities. At the Northampton Association, these economic pursuits were more focused than at other communities. At Trumbull Phalanx, labor was divided among numerous industrial pursuits as well as agricultural endeavors, while at the Northampton Association the primary revenue of the community was made through the on-site silk factory, which was included as part of the purchase of the property. The silk factory served as the organizing force of the community: students' academic schedules, as well as communal meal times and meeting times, were planned around silk production timelines.[204] As it became increasingly clear that the silk produced at the factory was not creating sufficient profits to sustain the community, work shifts were increased for adults and children alike, making many parents question the

[203]On Sojourner Truth participating in meetings, see, for example, Meeting Minutes on June 30, 1844, Microfilm Vol. 2, NAEI Records, American Antiquarian Society; See also Clark, *The Communitarian Moment*, 94.

[204] Marjorie Senechal explores in detail the process of silk production at Northampton, from the growing and hatching of silk worms to distribution through regional markets. See "The Camel and The Needle: Silk and the Stetson Letters," In Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 199-238.

benefit of communal living for their children.[205] The financial difficulties faced at the Northampton Association mirror those of the other communities explored here. Yet the social ties cultivated by its members, and community members' lasting participation in social reform activism even after the community's dissolution, demonstrate the important role this community played in contributing to the wider women's rights and abolition movements.

## Life at the Northampton Association: Experiences Filtered Through the Lens of Gender and Race

Within one year of its establishment, the Northampton Association housed 120 residents. Facing overcrowding, community leaders turned away numerous applicants whom they deemed unlikely to contribute (often financially) to the community, or who could not be vouched for by other community members.[206] Because most leadership roles at the community were filled by men, male community members largely controlled the acceptance or rejection of new members, led the community meetings, and recorded the meeting minutes. Recognizing the important role that women played within the community thus requires looking beyond this small group of community leaders and into different types of written records. Women participated in business and political matters of the community, as well as the

[205] See Christopher Clark "We Might be Happyer Here," in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia,* esp. 177-179.
[206] Letter records left by David Mack on May 10, 1843, indicate the number of Northampton residents was 120. See letter, David Mack, May 10, 1843, Microfilm Vol. 4, NAEI Records 1836-1853, American Antiquarian Society. The same page of records kept by Mack indicate four letters of rejection sent out to applicants. Clark also discusses the rigorous application process in *The Communitarian Moment,* 62-69.

everyday tasks that enabled the community to thrive, including food preparation, cleaning, and childcare. Letters from members of the community reveal the important role that shared domestic labor among women and families played in everyday community life, as well as revealing the imperfect execution of gender equality at the community.

In the letters written by community members, it is clear that the ideal of gender equality found only partial expression within the everyday realities of communal life. While the Northampton Association's constitution allowed for women to take part in governing matters in the community, the everyday responsibilities of caring for young children often prevented mothers from being present at community meetings. As a result, some community meeting records show only male attendees, either by design or accident. Though an on-site school offered childcare for older children, infants and toddlers remained primarily under their mothers' care, thereby limiting new mothers' time to participate in business and governing matters of the community.[207]

However, shared housing arrangements still offered women at the Northampton Association some relief from domestic duties, as they had at Trumbull Phalanx. Similar to Angelique Martin's experience at Trumbull Phalanx, Dolly

[207] In one letter from Dolly Stetson to her husband she complains: "I cannot take care of children and go to meeting at the same time" and in another letter she describes the period just after the birth of her son as a lonely period in which "opportunities for observing the works of nature and art, are limited to the brick walls of my room or at most the prospect from windows." Letter, Dolly Stetson to James Stetson, Sept. 1, 1844, in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 62-63; Letter, Dolly Stetson to James Stetson, "Sunday Afternoon" [May 1844], in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 32.

Stetson perceived the three years she spent at the Northampton Association as a period of expanded educational and professional opportunities, both for herself and for her children. Her husband James's position as the community's silk salesman meant that he often travelled to regional hubs where he could sell the community's products, thus necessitating the exchange of numerous letters between husband and wife. In her letters to James, Dolly first expressed hesitancy about moving to the dormitory dwellings above the Northampton Association's silk factory, but later found her workload there lightened, as many of the tasks that fell upon women in individual households became shared in the dormitory setting. In numerous letters, Dolly explains to her husband, James, the reduction in daily tasks including cooking, washing clothes, ironing and cleaning of the house. Dolly expressed relief at sharing household duties with other community members, stating: "After allmost (*sic*.) seventeen years of more or less care of housekeeping concerns it is a great change to have no responsibility about what we shall eat and what we shall drink."[208] After Dolly gave birth at the community, she particularly appreciated the ways that communal living offered some relief from the domestic duties she would otherwise have needed to attend to along with caring for a newborn: "glad that I am in the family here for I do not see how I could ever get along with my own family if I was expected to keep boarders and take care of my baby too.[209]" In addition to her own personal benefits, Dolly believed that her children were receiving a better education

[208] Letter, Dolly Stetson to James Stetson, April 21, 1844, in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 30.
[209]Letter, Dolly Stetson to James Stetson, May 26, 1844, in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 33.

and social experience at the Northampton Association than they could have received elsewhere.

Dolly's focus on her relatively improved domestic support system was at odds with her husband's focus on the profitability of the community and, particularly, on his personal ability to make a profit for his family. Similar to the complaints of Nathaniel Meeker at Trumbull Phalanx, the cooperative model of profit-sharing challenged James Stetson's ability to act as primary breadwinner for his family. This cooperative model thus threatened his financial authority over the household while it simultaneously required sharing his wife's labor with other Northampton Association members and their families. Despite Dolly's pleas to remain at the Northampton Association, James increasingly expressed frustration with his inability to make sufficient profits at the community. By 1846, James had determined that his dissatisfaction with the community's financial state warranted moving his family elsewhere. Thus, despite the political or social equality sought by women at the Northampton Association, the legal marriage relationship still positioned the husband as the decision-maker for the family unit.

The debate between Dolly and James Stetson over the costs and benefits of communal living raises important questions about the role of gender in determining individuals' perspectives within communal experiments of the 1840s. Unfortunately, the written records left by men and women alike are not always conclusive, and communal studies scholars offer varying analyses of men's and women's satisfaction with communal living arrangements. Northampton Association historian Christopher

Clark notes that some women at the Northampton Association preferred the privacy of their own household over communal housing. In her study of the nineteenth-century intentional communities inspired by Robert Owen, Carol Kolmerten also found numerous examples of communitarian women who were displeased with shared housing structures.[210] Kolmerten specifically argues that women's status as either single or married may have played a significant role in determining their happiness within communal living environments, with single women more likely to report satisfaction with communal living arrangements. However, Kolmerten's conclusions regarding the Owenite communities neglects a class analysis that proves useful when examining the members of the Northampton Association. Those middle-class and elite families that had inhabited large estates with domestic servants were sometimes more likely to express dissatisfaction with the small, cramped communal dormitories.[211] However, those who would otherwise be independently caring for a homestead and farm, like Dolly Stetson, might have been in a better position to appreciate the benefits of sharing domestic duties with fellow community members.[212] Despite these complications, Dolly Stetson, as well as Angelique Martin (of Trumbull Phalanx), represent women from different levels of financial security

[210] See Carol Kolmerten, *Women in Utopia: The Ideology of Gender in the American Owenite Communities* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), esp. 172-174.
[211] Christopher Clark analyzes the various responses to communal living environments among male and female Northampton members in *The Communitarian Moment*, 122-126.
[212] Dolly Stetson's parents owned a farm in Brooklyn, Connecticut, to which the Stetsons would move after their departure from Northampton. See Clark, "We Might Be Happyer Here," in *The Communitarian Moment*, 186-187.

who both celebrated communal living arrangements and the benefits they provided women.[213]

Disagreement over the benefits of communal housing also extended to male members of the community. Contrary to James Stetson's and Nathaniel Meeker's (of Trumbull Phalanx) dissatisfaction with communal housing, some communitarian men advocated communal housing arrangements over individual households. In a letter to *The Phalanx* published February 8, 1844, one "gentleman residing in an Association" wrote: "The isolated household is wasteful in economy, is untrue to the human heart, and is not the design of God, and therefore it must disappear…"[214] Thus, communal housing preferences did not universally fall along gender lines, though patterns can be found that indicate women's preference for communal housing.

In addition to gender or class impacting perspective, the problem of the trustworthiness of the sources must be considered. Historians have only limited access to women's views in many of these communities, as most written records and public statements were made by men. Women's opinions on this issue are often accessed only through their husband's writings or those of other male members of the community, and thus cannot be taken as women's unqualified opinions. As in Dolly Stetson's case, the husband often decided whether a family should seek more isolated housing within the community, or even leave the community altogether. In these

[213] The Martin's owned their own farm in Marietta, indicating a higher level of wealth than that of the Stetson family, who relied on a family farm to house multiple generations of their family.
[214] "Letter from a Member of an Association to a Friend," Feb. 8, 1844, in *Charles Fourier's The Phalanx, or Journal of Social Science, Issues 1-23* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1843-1845 [reprinted 1967]), 318.

situations, the husband might express his housing preference as representative of the opinions of the rest of his family, when in reality he is only expressing his own views. Male communitarians, including the "gentleman residing in an Association," who wrote to journals such as *The Phalanx* also potentially presented a qualified version of their opinion on communal housing, knowing they were publicly advocating the housing model proposed by Charles Fourier. Thus, men's and women's opinions on communal housing are difficult to access, though private letters from members, such as those written by Dolly Stetson at the Northampton Association or Angelique Le Petit Martin at Trumbull Phalanx, can offer some evidence. Records from these women indicate that, far from universal dissatisfaction among communitarian women, women were sometimes more likely to find satisfaction in communal housing than men.[215]

The intersection of gender and race at the Northampton Association also represents a new dimension to social interaction unseen in other antebellum intentional communities. Investigating communal labor assignments and communal activities can reveal insights into the relationships between members of distinct genders and races at the Northampton Association. Overall, records reveal a general equality among both male and female African Americans and their fellow white communitarians. For example, Stephen C. Rush, an African American community member, worked in the washroom along with Dolly Stetson (a white, female

[215] Clark also comes to this conclusion, at least in the case of Dolly and James Stetson, in his article "A Mother and Her Daughters at the Northampton Community: New Evidence on Women in Utopia," 592-621.

community member) and Sojourner Truth (an African American, female community member). Washing laundry was a task typically assigned to female members in most intentional communities and, thus, could be interpreted as demeaning for a man to perform, and perhaps as only assigned to Rush because of his identity as an African American man. However, evidence shows that a white male community member also worked in the washroom, and that Sojourner Truth served as director of the laundry department, overseeing both white and black men (and women) who worked there.[216] Thus, while Rush's position might at first glance seem degrading within typical models of gender-determined labor of the period, at the Northampton Association the intersection of race and gender seems to have produced new opportunities for the transgression of both gendered and racialized labor roles.

Beyond labor assignments, the intersection of gender and race may have also intertwined with social status to determine the authority an individual held in the community. Some of the African American community members at the Northampton Association, including Sojourner Truth and David Ruggles, held positions of respect and esteem within the social life of the community due to their burgeoning reputations within the abolitionist lecture circuit. Sojourner Truth's charisma and self-assurance led her to become a moral authority in the Northampton Association, just as those same qualities were bolstering her popularity as an abolitionist lecturer. Her evangelical Christian worldview informed her conservative stance on social activities

[216] In a letter to her husband, Dolly Stetson describes Truth as director of the laundry department. Letter from Dolly Stetson to James Stetson, March 6, 1845, In Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 93.

("amusements") within the community, including her disapproval of dancing, playing cards, and flirtations between younger members.[217] Factions emerged between members who approved of these social activities and those who opposed them, including Truth. In the end, Truth's impassioned speeches and charismatic lectures against social extravagances won the prolonged debate, and members who had previously been outspoken in their support of these activities, including William Bassett and Charles May, left the community.[218] Truth's ability to determine social decorum within the community demonstrated that her position as a black woman did little to diminish her influence within the community. In fact, her experience as a charismatic preacher and her growing investment in the abolitionist movement seems to have led her to receive greater respect among community members.

Likewise, David Ruggles, a well-respected black abolitionist in the community, worked as a water-cure agent (or hydro-therapist) first within the Northampton Association, then through an independent office nearby after the dissolution of the community. His expertise in curing patients through cold water regiments was praised throughout the abolitionist circuit, including by Sojourner Truth and William Lloyd Garrison.[219] Ruggles also led abolitionist meetings and conventions for African American activists at the Northampton Association,

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[217] Christopher Clark, "We Might be Happyer Here," in, Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia* 182-183

[218] Christopher Clark, "We Might be Happyer Here," in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 183.

[219] On Garrison and Truth's own submission to Ruggles' water-cure regiment, see Graham Russell Gao Hodges, *David Ruggles*: *A Radical Black Abolitionist and the Underground Railroad in New York City* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 179, 190-192.

including one in 1844 at which Truth gave her first anti-slavery speech.[220] Ruggles' position as chair of that conference gave him significant power in determining who would be offered time to speak and thus who would have the opportunity to become spokespeople for the radical abolitionist stance. The social status of African Americans in the community was thus somewhat reliant on factors such as their charisma and fame within abolitionist circles. Regardless, the Northampton Association clearly provided a space for African American men and women members alike to exhibit social influence.

The Northampton Association openly welcomed African American members, though it only attracted a few African Americans who stayed on to become long-term members. The community was host to numerous African American visitors, including some who had escaped slavery through the underground railroad and had found safe haven at the Northampton Association. Though evidence of the presence of these escaped slaves is rare due to the need for secrecy at the time, some mention of these former slaves' appearances at the Northampton Association were occasionally recorded, including records of James Willson and George W. Sullivan.[221] Some former slaves who had escaped slavery through other channels, including Basil Dorsey and George Latimer, also seem to have spent time at the community.[222] Black

[220] Hodges, *David Ruggles*, 184.
[221] Records are not clear on the status of Sullivan as an escaped slave, though the cryptic letters from Northampton Association members seem to indicate this status. See Paul Gaffney's commentary on the underground railroad at Northampton in "Coloring Utopia," in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an Americaan Utopia*, 248-249.
[222] Hodges, *David Ruggles*, 184. Gafney argues that Dorsey likely stayed only in the nearby town, not in the Northampton Association itself, though the evidence remains unclear. See Gafney, "Coloring Utopia," in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an Americaan Utopia*, 242 and 270, footnote 10.

abolitionists also frequently visited the community, either to visit friends and fellow activists or to participate in lectures and anti-slavery conventions held at the community. Frederick Douglass lectured at the Northampton Association during a cross-country speaking tour before travelling across the Atlantic Ocean to continue his abolitionist lectures in Britain. The powerful lectures he delivered in Britain had been auditioned in the interracial setting of the Northampton Association, where he spoke among African Americans including David Ruggles, the Northampton Association member who had served as Douglass' "officer" on the underground railroad journey that had led him to freedom.[223] Ruggles had convinced Douglass to settle in Massachusetts instead of travelling to Canada, as Douglass had originally planned, thereby leading Douglass on a path toward anti-slavery activism in the United States.[224] Ruggles' direct involvement in the underground railroad, the abolitionist movement, and communitarianism at the Northampton Association represents the links between these social reform efforts emerging in the 1840s. The Northampton Association served as both a place of refuge for escaped slaves, and as a place of congregation and organization for anti-slavery activists.[225]

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[223] Gaffney, "Coloring Utopia," in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 257. See also Douglass' reference to Ruggles as an "officer of the underground railroad" in Eric Foner, *Gateway o Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015), 6.
[224] Hodges, *David Ruggles*, 133.
[225] Hodges, *David Ruggles*, 152-153. Ruggles' involvement in the underground railroad, as well as in abolitionist causes in New York, were interrupted when he became embroiled in a scandal in which fellow abolitionists accused him of squandering and pocketing abolitionist organization money. See Hodges, *David Ruggles*, 150-152.

## Everyday Life: Rituals and Religions

The everyday experiences of African Americans at the Northampton Association are difficult to determine, though evidence points toward their integration into all aspects of community life. In the records of the Northampton Association store, African American members Stephen Rush and David Ruggles appear as frequently as white members, indicating their regular purchasing of goods and normal standing in the community. Sojourner Truth appears less often in the store's records, possibly indicating her extended periods spent away from the community on lecture tours and at women's rights conferences. When she does appear in the store records, only her first name, Sojourner, is recorded with her purchase.[226] This differs from all other members of the community, including David Ruggles and Stephen Rush, who were always recorded through both first and last names. This may indicate informality, or her less-respected status as an African American woman, though it is also possible that it reflected Truth's own preference. She used both "Sojourner Truth" and her previous name Isabella Van Wagenen through the 1850s. In 1854, her house deed also left off "Truth."[227] Thus, while discrimination cannot be ruled out, Truth also appears to have fully participated in many aspects of communal life that were open to white women and men as well.[228]

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[226] Store Records, December 1844- August 1845, Microfilm Vol. 7, NAEI Records, American Antiquarian Society.
[227] Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 112.
[228] Truth's daughters also lived with her periodically during her time at Northampton. Truth also appears to have been the only independent black woman living at Northampton, thus putting her in a unique position in the community, as both a single woman and an African American woman.

The organization of everyday life at the Northampton Association was consciously designed by community members to challenge and upend the traditions and norms of their surrounding society to which they most objected. As part of their Garrisonian abolitionist loyalties, Northampton Association members criticized the weak (or nonexistent) resistance to slavery expressed by many Protestant churches, advocating a nonsectarian approach to abolitionism instead. To the frustration of the largely Congregationalist surrounding town, Northampton Association members eschewed Sunday church services in favor of community gatherings. Such gatherings, often organized under a large tree on the community grounds, were led by men and women alike, further upsetting local clergy who objected to women leading gatherings of "mixed audiences" of men and women. The decision to hold these meetings on Sundays was a conscious rejection of Christian understandings of the Sabbath as a day of rest, and community members became known as "Sabbath breakers" in the surrounding area.[229] Topics of these meetings could be as diverse as dietary restrictions, community business, or education reform, demonstrating the often-overlapping realms of social, religious, and bodily reform among communitarians.[230] Their commitment to religious tolerance and their rejection of the clergy's authority led them to reshape their weekly schedule toward focusing on

[229] Clark, *The Communitarian Moment*, 91-93.
[230] For example, at one such meeting the health reformer Sylvester Graham spoke to the community. On Graham's lecture at the Northampton Association, see Clark, *The Communitarian Moment*, 113.

matters important to community members, while redirecting members' loyalty to respect communal authority over that of the church.[231]

Everyday activities during the rest of the week also reframed members' interactions with each other and their wider society. For children, days were divided between educational lessons and work at the community's factory. This time at the silk factory was meant to provide students with an industrial skill set, while also helping repay the community for the education provided them. Although work was required of both children and adults throughout the existence of the community, after the community's policy changes of 1843, financial compensation was no longer determined based on hours worked, but simply based on membership in the community. While labor was still expected of each member, the wage labor system (an category of labor emerging in the United States outside of the Northampton Association) was rejected at the Northampton Association. It was replaced with a more egalitarian system offering members equal compensation across genders and regardless of hours worked, though rooted in a sliding scale based on age.[232] Thus, the Northampton Association's approach to labor organization, communal rituals, and everyday life all served to upend the norms and customs from their lives before

[231] Christopher Clark discusses the conscious rejection of clerical authority within the community, to the chagrin of religious residents in the surrounding region. Community-wide events held at the Northampton Association also indicated the rejection of Christian clergy as authorities of ritual**.** Marriages and funerals held at the community were purposefully held without a minister, in simple settings, often outdoors. Holding these rituals without clergy was meant to challenge clerical authority, and particularly expose church ineffectiveness in condemning slavery. See Clark, *The Communitarian Moment***,** 112-114.

[232] Christopher Clark describes the debates surrounding this change in detail in *The Communitarian Ideal*, 98-108.

communal living. Community members' motivations for rejecting social, religious, and economic norms become apparent by studying the personal backgrounds of its influential members, particularly that of Sojourner Truth.

## Truth's Sojourn

Sojourner Truth lived under the name Isabella for almost twenty years before her arrival at Northampton. She had spent the first years of her life as a slave held initially by a Dutch family in Ulster County, New York. Throughout her early life, Isabella was sold to various slaveholders across the state. In 1826, Isabella's slaveholder, John Dumont, promised to free her, knowing that the New York Graduation Emancipation law would free the slaves of New York State in 1827. When he reneged on his promise, Isabella found refuge with a nearby family who opposed slavery and who offered to pay Isabella's slaveholder for the final year of her legal slavery. Through this course of action, Isabella eventually found her freedom.[233] Isabella then took the last name Van Wagenen to commemorate the family who had assisted her in claiming her freedom; the first time she could claim a name other than Isabella. She retained that name until she became a travelling preacher in 1843, when she claimed a new name: Sojourner Truth.

Isabella Van Wagenen's freedom from slavery coincided with the vivid experience of receiving visions from God. Following those visions, Van Wagenen

[233] The timetable of Truth's emancipation is described by Painter in *Sojourner Truth*, 21-25. Truth was likely in slavery for thirty years of her life. Slavery was gradually abolished in New York between 1799 and 1827.

perceived God as her ever-present protector; a conviction that would direct the rest of her life.[234] While working as a domestic servant at the house of Elijah Pierson in New York City in 1831, Van Wagenen met the self-proclaimed Prophet Matthias when he arrived at Pierson's house with the purpose of making Pierson one of the first disciples of the Kingdom of Matthias. Moved by Matthias's nontraditional appearance and demeanor, and believing him to be a messenger of God, Van Wagenen joined the group of followers who made up the Kingdom of Matthias along with Pierson.[235] In their semi-communal household, Van Wagenen acted as both servant and disciple to Matthias for three years, during which the group primarily lived in Sing Sing, outside of New York City.[236]

Van Wagenen's attraction to the self-proclaimed prophet appears to historians as inconsistent with her later career as a travelling preacher, women's rights activist, and abolitionist. Matthias claimed that only men were given spiritual gifts by God, and women should not be allowed to preach. To Matthias, women's place was in the home, in obedient service to their husbands. Matthias blamed women for the social ills and spiritual depravity he perceived in his surrounding society, arguing that

[234] Painter describes her initial visions following emancipation in *Sojourner Truth*, 26-31.
[235] Matthias had grown out his hair and beard, making him resemble common portrayals of Jesus.
[236] Members of the Kingdom of Matthias lived communally in that they shared financial resources and housing, though different members seem to have been given different statuses by Matthias. While the white members intermarried and directed affairs at the community, Truth and another female black member were relegated to domestic service for the other members. See Wendy E. Chmielewski, "Sojourner Truth: Utopian Vision and Search for Community, 1797-1883," in *Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Societies in the United States,* eds. Wendy Chmielewski, Louis J. Kern, and Marlyn Klee-Hartzell, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993), esp. 27-28.

"Woman is the capsheaf of the abomination of desolation–full of all deviltry."[237] Matthias also frequently arranged marriages among his followers whom he deemed to be "match spirits," even sometimes annulling their previous marriages so they could enter new marriages that Matthias deemed more suitable. These planned sexual arrangements might have initiated painful memories of the forced marriage and sexual assaults to which Van Wagenen had been subjected during her time as a slave. Yet, Van Wagenen remained a loyal disciple of Matthias until the dissolution of his community.[238] After the suspicious death of Van Wagenen's former employer and fellow disciple of Matthias, Elijah Pierson, Van Wagenen became embroiled in scandal as one of those accused of his murder, along with Matthias. In response to the accusations of murder made against her by another disciple, Van Wagenen sued the accuser for slander and eventually won her case, taking the winnings and applying them toward her future career as a travelling preacher.[239]

Van Wagenen's life after the Kingdom of Matthias in some ways represents a complete reversal of her life with Matthias. Matthias had forbidden women to preach,

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[237] Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 93.

[238] Painter offers an analysis of Truth's attachment to Matthias as offering a familiar, if abusive, patriarchal family relationship. See Painter, *Sojourner Truth*, 59-61.

[239] The most complete historical account of the Kingdom of Matthias is Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias.* The two most thorough accounts from the period are written by William Leete Stone and Gilbert Vale. Stone depicted Isabella Van Wagenen as a deceitful woman who helped Matthias poison Pierson, while Vale portrayed Van Wagenen as an honest, and innocent, witness to the sexual licentiousness occurring in the Kingdom. See William L. Stone, *Matthias and his Impostures: or, the Progress of Fanaticism. Illustrated in the Extraordinary Case of Robert Matthews, and Some of His Forerunners and Disciples* (New York, 1835); Gilbert Vale, *Fanaticism; Its Source and Influence, Illustrated by the Simple Narrative of Isabella, in the Case of Matthias, Mr. and Mrs. Folger, Mr. Pierson, Mr. Mills, Catherine, Isabella, &c. &c.* (2 vols.; New York: 1835). Matthew's Wife, Margaret, also wrote an account of Matthew's life before becoming the Prophet Matthias, titled *Matthias. By His Wife* (New York, 1835).

even stating that they should receive little to no religious instruction, as they were not meant to be religious leaders. But after Matthias's downfall, Van Wagenen herself became exactly what Matthias most detested: a feminist female preacher.[240] She even changed her name (to Sojourner Truth) after receiving messages from God—just as Matthias had done—and became God's messenger. Truth became a charismatic speaker; lecturing across the United States on abolition and women's rights issues.

Van Wagenen first transcribed events of her life story not at Northampton, but after her time with Matthias—as part of her slander case. Gilbert Vale's two-volume account of the Kingdom of Matthias, published in the years following its demise, took most of its evidence and information from Vale's interviews with Van Wagenen. In this book (as well as in Olive Gilbert's later transcription of Truth's narrative), Vale assured his readers that all parts of Van Wagenen's account were confirmed and verified, by other "respectable" witnesses, presumably white sources.[241] Vale's repeated assurances to his audience that his African American witness could be trusted revealed the public expectation that a black woman's account was suspect.

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[240] While applying the term "feminist" to Truth is arguably applying a more contemporary term than Truth herself would have recognized, Truth's actions and self-identity in many ways embody later understandings of feminism. Painter also argues that Truth can be understood as a feminist. See Painter, *Sojourner Truth*, 3-4. Margaret Washington adds that "antebellum womanist consciousness was not modern feminist consciousness, but nonetheless struggled against white patriarchy. See Margaret Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 92.

[241] See Gilbert Vale, *Fanaticism; Its Source and Influence, Illustrated by the Simple Narrative of Isabella, in the Case of Matthias, Mr. and Mrs. Folger, Mr. Pierson, Mr. Mills, Catherine, Isabella, &c. &c.*, 4-5. At the end of Truth's later book compiled with Gilbert, an appendix of "Certificates of Character" is included, through which Truth's acquaintances attest to her trustworthiness and good character. These certificates originally appeared in Vale's book *Fanaticism*, 10-12. See Sojourner Truth, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, edited by Olive Gilbert; (Boston: The Author, 1850). The testaments of white abolitionists who assured readers of the authenticity of a black authors' words can also be found across the slave narratives of the antebellum period, including Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.*

Vale's publication included a brief history of Van Wagenen's life as a slave but primarily focused on her time as a member of Matthias's Kingdom, which Van Wagenen exposed as involving sex scandals and emotional abuse.

Both Van Wagenen's account of her time at the Kingdom of Matthias, and her much later slave narrative after she took on the name Sojourner Truth, indicated the financial and social benefits she was able to procure from working with white writers who were interested in telling her story. Both of these white writers worked toward their own aims—Vale as a Deist who wished to undermine Matthias's religious extremism, and later Gilbert who wanted to contribute to the abolitionist movement she believed in—but their work also benefitted Van Wagenen. The first publication reestablished Van Wagenen's character and countered the accusations of murder that were being lobbied against her. This aided Van Wagenen in her slander case, which would eventually award her $125 and help her escape of the poverty she faced as a result of giving most of her possessions to Matthias. Her later book with Olive Gilbert would bring in enough profit to allow her to pay off the loan on her first house and launch her public career as a women's rights and abolitionist lecturer.

After Matthias's trial and acquittal for murder (though he served a short prison term for a lesser charge), he moved West and disappeared from Van Wagenen's life. Van Wagenen resumed work as a domestic servant in New York for another eight years until she felt an irresistible calling from God to begin a preaching tour across the East Coast. She left New York and transitioned her name to Sojourner Truth, eventually ending up at the Northampton Association. Her time at the Northampton

Association was essential to her transformation into a public lecturer and anti-slavery advocate. There, David Ruggles mentored Truth and helped develop her abolitionist ideas.[242] Her first anti-slavery speech occurred in Northampton in the Fall of 1844, marking the beginning of her career as a reform lecturer.[243] Truth's complete reversal in self-identity and life path is glaring. While it is difficult for historians to reconcile her dedication to the emotionally (and sometimes physically) abusive Matthias and her later role as a feminist public lecturer, these shifts also reveal Truth as a dynamic historical actor.[244] Truth was motivated and impacted by a variety of life events, most importantly her mystical experiences with God, which over the course of her lifetime led her on a career and personal path far removed from her oppressive upbringing in slavery.

Yet, as historians have noted, Truth's motivation also stemmed from her need to lift herself out of poverty after escaping slavery. Her photographic representations, published slave narrative, and speaking tours were all arguably aimed at this practical

[242] Hodges, *David Ruggles,* 183-184.
[243] Painter, *Sojourner Truth*, 114; Hodges, *David Ruggles,* 184.
[244] The identity transformations that Truth experienced as a slave, then free woman, then abolitionist and women's rights advocate are difficult for historians to measure. Her group identity seems to have remained tied to the anti-slavery cause along with fellow freed slaves of the abolitionist movement, though the intersectionality of Truth's identity may have impacted her association with both the women's rights movement and abolitionist movements, particularly as those white women who initiated splits in those movements did not consider the complex identities of being both African American and female. For more on group identity among African Americans in recent studies, see Gabriel R. Sanchez and Edward D. Vargas, "Taking a Closer Look at Group Identity: The Link between Theory and Measurement of Group Consciousness and Linked Fate," *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (March 2016): 160-174. Margaret Washington analyses the struggle among African American women reformers to choose sides during debates over the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. See Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America,* 346-348.

goal in conjunction with her social reform goals.[245] If Truth's life trajectory can be interpreted as a long path of redemption and healing from the first half of her life spent in slavery, Truth's experiences at the Northampton Association played an essential role in facilitating this transition. Though her records at the Northampton Association are incomplete and tell us little of her daily interactions, the social connections Truth made at the community would shape the rest of her life.

## Reformers Meet

Beyond her mentor-mentee relationship with Ruggles, Truth met two abolitionists at the Northampton Association who became significant to her later life: Jonathan Walker and Olive Gilbert. Walker, a white abolitionist and sea captain, met Truth after being released from prison, where he had served a one-year sentence for aiding runaway slaves. Shortly after his release he began an abolitionist lecture tour, but first he briefly lived at Northampton, a decision that initiated a life-long friendship between himself and Truth. Their friendship was based on their shared interests including communitarianism, abolitionism, and smoking tobacco, a vice that they both eventually overcame, as they were happy to share with each other.[246] Like

[245] Painter analyses Truth's utilization of material culture to create a reproducible image of herself that is still prevalent in popular culture today. See "Representing Truth: Sojourner Truth's Knowing and Becoming Known," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 81, No. 2 (Sep., 1994): 461-492.

[246] Jonathan Walker, letter to Sojourner Truth, Muskegon, Michigan, Jan. 1, 1869, as printed in Truth, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth; a Bondswoman of Olden Time, Emancipated by the New York Legislature in the Early Part of the Present Century; with a History of Her Labors and Correspondence Drawn from Her "Book of Life;" Also, a Memorial Chapter, Giving the Particulars of Her Last Sickness and Death* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Office, 1884), 305-306. The letter from Walker printed in this edition of Truth's *Narrative* includes a post-script in which Walker purportedly adds: "P. S. I am not sure, but I think I met you twenty-five years ago at Bronsonville, North Hanston, Mass., soon after my return from imprisonment in Florida. J. W." This post-script was likely added by Amy Post or the editor of this edition of the *Narrative*, Frances W. Titus, to introduce Walker to the reader. The mention makes little sense coming from Walker, as he

Truth, Walker was at the beginning of a long career of anti-slavery activism when he arrived at Northampton. As was the case for numerous runaway slaves, Northampton served as a safe haven for Walker, where he spent time recovering from the previous year spent in prison and the branding of his hand with the letters "S.S." for "slave-stealer." Walker held up his deformed hand at abolitionist lectures for years following the branding, symbolizing the real threat that the government-backed slave system posed to all Americans.[247] Walker and Truth's friendship was one of the many abolitionist social connections Truth developed through her time at Northampton.

But perhaps the most significant connection Truth made was with Olive Gilbert. Historical records on Olive Gilbert are relatively sparse, but those available are worthy of note. Records reveal that Gilbert was a single, female abolitionist who hailed from a middle-class family, with whom she which she primarily lived throughout her life. Her step-brother resided in Kentucky, where Gilbert visited in her adulthood and witnessed slavery (possibly for the first time), but most of her life was

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and Truth had been in contact throughout the years since their meeting at the Northampton Association. In *Sojourner Truth's America*, Washington mentions Walker and Truth's reunion at an abolitionist meeting in Livonia in the mid-1850s, which had helped inspire her move to Michigan in 1857 (Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 277). Truth also seemed to acknowledge the need for Walker's identity to be explained to her readers, as she wrote in a letter to Amy Post in February, 1869. In this letter to Post, Truth asks Post to publish Walker's letter to her in the *Anti-Slavery Standard*, adding "I will look for Walkers letter in the Standard & please have it understood who Walker is. 'The brand-ed hand.'" Sojourner Truth, letter (transcribed) to Amy Post, Detroit, Michigan, Feb. 8, 1869, Isaac and Amy Post Family Papers, D.93, Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester.

[247] Walker's branded hand came to symbolize the brutality to which the United States government would resort in the effort to defend the institution of slavery. Walker's wounded hand was particularly effective for abolitionists who wished to identify slavery as a nation-wide issue, not one simply limited to the South, as it was a U.S. Marshall who had branded the hand. See Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 171; Alvin Oickle, *The Man with the Branded Hand: The Life of Jonathan Walker* (Yardley, Penn.: Westholme Publishing, LLC, 2011), 190-194.

spent between Brooklyn, Connecticut and Northampton, Massachusetts.[248] This pattern of living with various family members fits the trajectory of many single women during the antebellum period, when opportunities for women to achieve financial independence were sparse. Gilbert recognized her own proclivity to continuously move between the homes of various family members and friends, perhaps as a way to avoid being perceived as a burden to any. In a letter to Truth, Gilbert compared their busy lives, writing: "you and I seem to move around as easily as soap bubbles--now here--now there--making our mark, I suppose, everywhere, though mine is a very quiet mark compared to yours."[249] Though she moved throughout her life, Gilbert's geographic region of origin, as well as her family ties, introduced her to a stable network of abolitionists who shaped her life.

Gilbert's path to the Northampton Association also originated with family connections. Gilbert was born August 6, 1801, in Brooklyn, Connecticut, the town that would make up the largest single locality from which Northampton Association members were drawn.[250] Gilbert was Unitarian and, like Sojourner Truth, she was drawn to Perfectionist ideas of the period, bridging Gilbert's Unitarianism and Truth's own religious convictions through their shared views on human spiritual

[248] On Gilbert's visit to her brother in Kentucky, see Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 186. Gilbert's uncle, Theodore Scarborough, was one of the founders of the Northampton Association, which also contributed to her draw to the area.
[249] Olive Gilbert, letter to Sojourner Truth, circa 1870, in Sojourner Truth, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (1884 Reprint), 276-277.
[250] Birthplace and date found in "Connecticut Births and Christenings, 1649-1906," database, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:F7WD-HLC), Olive Gilbert, 06 Aug 1801; For information on Brooklyn as a significant place of origin for Northampton Association members, see Christopher Clark, *The Communitarian Moment*, 80; The most thorough account of Gilbert's life is by Margaret Washington in *Sojourner Truth's America*.

potential.[251] Gilbert attended Samuel May's church in Brooklyn, where May advocated social and legal equality for African Americans. May and Gilbert became engaged in defending white schoolteacher Prudence Crandall, who had spurred public backlash by allowing an African American girl to attend her Canterbury, Connecticut school in 1833.[252] Gilbert was friendly with the Benson family, who were also from Brooklyn, and stayed with the Garrison family for weeks at a time following Helen Benson's marriage to William Lloyd Garrison.[253] In a letter from Gilbert to William Lloyd Garrison in 1876, Gilbert reminisced on her days spent with the Garrison family during her young adulthood as "among the happiest of my life."[254] Letters indicate that Gilbert was particularly close with Helen's sister, Sarah Benson, who also remained unmarried throughout her life and died at age 51 in 1850.[255] Sarah Benson and Gilbert served together as officers in the Brooklyn, Connecticut Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1834.[256] Like Gilbert, Sarah Benson lived with various family

[251] Perfectionism was the idea that humanity would continue improving itself in morality and spirituality. See Margaret Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 181-182.
[252] Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 183-184; On Prudence Crandall's school, see Donald E. Williams Jr., *Prudence Crandall's Legacy: The Fight for Equality in the 1830s, Dredd Scott, and Brown vs. Board of Education* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2014); Susan Strane, *A Whole-Souled Woman: Prudence Crandall and the Education of Black Women* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990).
[253] William Lloyd Garrison, letter to George W. Benson, Boston, June 12, 1843 states that Olive Gilbert had been staying with them for a fortnight. *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Vol. III.*
[254] Olive Gilbert, letter to William Lloyd Garrison, May 22, 1876, MS Am 1906 (18), Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[255] To George Benson, Boston, July 24, 1847. In it, Benson writes that he is attaching a letter from Olive Gilbert to Sarah Benson, who will be happy to receive it. *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Vol. III; The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, Vol. II, A House Dividing against Itself*, Louis Ruchames, ed. (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), xxiii; Painter also indicates Gilbert's close relationship with Sarah Benson in *Sojourner Truth*, 103-104. Letters from Dolly Stetson to James Stetson also indicate that Gilbert and Sarah Benson were frequent travel partners. See Dolly Stetson, letter to James Stetson, June 12, 1845, in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 116-117.
[256] As reported in *The Liberator*, Aug. 16, 1834, pg. 4.

members throughout her life, providing them aid with domestic tasks, child care, and the medical care of sick children or elderly family members. Sarah Benson was the primary caretaker of her mother, also named Sarah Benson, until her death in 1844, as well as the caretaker of her sister, Anne Elizabeth Benson, until her death from Tuberculosis in 1843.[257] Gilbert and Benson likely bonded over their shared roles as single women bound to aid their extended families in any way they were needed. Through this friendship, Gilbert would spend a significant amount of time staying with the Bensons at the Northampton Association. Northampton Association store records indicate Gilbert's presence at the community from at least January through June, 1846, though likely dating back to at least 1845.[258] Truth's own whereabouts during those months are difficult to pinpoint, as she often travelled in and out of the community on speaking tours. Nevertheless, at some point in 1846 Truth met Gilbert, and began arranging future meetings with her to transcribe her slave narrative.[259]

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[257] In a letter from William Lloyd Garrison to Helen Benson's mother, Sarah Benson, Garrison asks whether "dear sister Sarah" could help them with childcare for the next six weeks. Letter, William Lloyd Garrison to Sarah T. Benson, April 8, 1837, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Reel 1. On Sarah as the caretaker of Anne Elizabeth Benson, see Letter, William Lloyd Garrison to George Benson, April 15, 1843, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Reel 1. On Sarah as the caretaker of her mother and Garrison's children see Letter, William Lloyd Garrison to Sarah Benson, Oct. 14, 1843, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Reel 1.

[258] Store Records, Microfilm Vol. 7, NAEI Records 1836-1853, American Antiquarian Society. Records indicate Gilbert had purchased postage stamps during the month, as recorded on the end-of-the-month store reports on Jan 31, 1846, Feb. 28, 1846, and March 31, 1846. Store purchase records indicate she made store purchases on May 14, 1846, May 23, 1846, June 9, 1846, and June 19, 1846. Store records from Jan. 31, 1846 also indicate past postage stamp transactions for November and December, 1845, which may indicate an earlier arrival.

[259] Historians disagree to what extent the narrative was Truth's story or Gilbert's interpretation of that story. Manisha Sinha argues that "her story….is more biography than autobiography, though Gilbert relied on information provided by Truth." Sinha, *The Slave's Cause*, 433. Margaret Washington, in contrast, argues that the narrative was Truth's, writing: "her consistent verification of the *Narrative* confirms that she exerted more control than modern writers have acknowledged." Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 187. Painter describes the Narrative as a struggle between the interests of

Whether or not any other reformer at the Northampton Association or outside was in a position to transcribe Truth's narrative is difficult to determine, though it appears that Gilbert was particularly suited to take on the task. Scholars of women's history have noted that many female leaders of the nineteenth-century reform movements were unmarried, as Gilbert was.[260] Gilbert and Truth's shared interest in Perfectionist ideas of the period bridged Gilbert's Unitarianism and Truth's Methodism.[261] Gilbert and Truth were thus able to develop a congenial working relationship, and the causes important to them would benefit as a result.

The social networks cultivated at the Northampton Association also provided Truth with someone who could print her narrative. Truth had originally met William Lloyd Garrison in 1844 at the Northampton Association.[262] By 1845, Garrison was familiar with publishing slave narratives, including Frederick Douglass's, and in 1849 he connected Truth with the same printer of Douglass's book, George Brown Yerrinton. Yerrinton (who also printed Garrison's abolitionist journal, *The Liberator*)

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Truth and her transcriber: "…Gilbert the abolitionist is often at odds with Truth the autobiographer. The abolitionist presses Truth to provide examples of the iniquities of slavery, which Truth delivers and Gilbert amplifies, but which must be tacked on Truth's own, more enigmatic story." Painter, *Sojourner Truth*, 106.

[260] Lillian Faderman argues that single women were able to support each other partly through their involvement in "Boston marriages," or intimate partnerships with fellow unmarried women. Together, these women encouraged each other to live professional and politically-active lives without men. Single women were able to spend more time and financial resources on activist work if they did not have the burden of continuous childbirth in this period without birth control methods. See Faderman, *To Believe in Women: What Lesbians have done for America—A History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

[261] Perfectionism was the belief that humanity would continue improving itself in morality and spirituality, as opposed to becoming more spiritually depraved over time. See Margaret Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 181-182. By the time she met Gilbert, Truth spoke English, which she had learned from her slaveholders in upstate New York, though Dutch was her first language, as her first slaveholders had been Dutch.

[262] Margaret Washington argues for the 1844 date in *Sojourner Truth's America*, 169.

printed Truth's book on credit, which she repaid within a few years after an extended marketing campaign to sell her book.[263] Thus, Truth's social connections at the Northampton Association resulted in the telling of her slave narrative, its successful publication, and her introduction to abolitionist lecture circuit through which she marketed and sold her book.

## The End of a Community, Continuation of a Movement

As noted above, the Northampton Association faced increasing indebtedness with the dismal sales of its silk products. In 1845, the height of this desperate financial period, Northampton Association secretary David Mack wrote to Lowell labor activist Sarah Bagley, inquiring whether she would be interested in leasing the factory along with her fellow female Lowell colleagues. Mack's attempt to attract a labor activist to the community primarily signified the community's past neglect of such labor reform activists in favor of admitting only their inner-circle of abolitionist friends as Northampton Association members. As discussed in the previous chapter, Sarah Bagley had expressed interest in the Association movement through correspondence with other Fourierists at Trumbull Phalanx. Bagley had eventually settled on Northampton Association as the community she hoped to join. Her choice of the Northampton Association, despite her correspondence with communitarians elsewhere, was perhaps due to its proximity to her town of Lowell, Massachusetts compared to the western Fourierist communities, or perhaps due to its emphasis on

[263] Painter, *Sojourner Truth,* 110-111.

cooperative ownership of the on-site silk factory, which Bagley likely found to be an appealing approach to labor reform.

Bagley's correspondence with the leadership of the Northampton Association offers insight into the slow financial decline of the community. In a letter written by the Northampton Association secretary in response to Bagley's initial request to join the community in 1844, Mack explained to Sarah Bagley that the Northampton Association could only accept applicants who can "effectively aid us to get out of debt and to build a community house."[264] Bagley's application for joining the community was thus denied, partly because she fell outside of the intimate groups of New England abolitionists who made up the vast majority of residents, but also due to her perceived lack of personal funds to contribute to the community. Members at the Northampton Association could not vouch for her, nor confirm her contribution to the abolitionist cause, two critical elements that determined acceptance into the community during its early years.[265]

But just one year later, when financial troubles plagued the community, Bagley suddenly appeared to be a much more appealing potential member due to her experience in textile mills and her successful organizing of the Lowell female labor force. But by then it was too late, and there is no evidence that Bagley responded to

[264] Letter to Sarah Bagley, March 21, 1844, Microfilm Vol. 4, NAEI Records 1836-1853, American Antiquarian Society. No special mention is added by the secretary regarding particular discussion over Sarah Bagley, the secretary simply writes that a similar rejection letter was written to her as was written to the above applicant on March 19th, quoted above.
[265] By Feb. 1844, David Mack was actively seeking new members who could "help pay our debt by the subscription of stock." Secretary Notes, Feb. 25, 1844, Microfilm Vol. 4, NAEI Records 1836-1853, American Antiquarian Society.

these appeals from the community. Bagley's experience with initial rejection and then latter requests for reconsideration from the Northampton Association leadership reveal the ways the community remained insular from some social movements with which it could have collaborated in its early years. Though these undeveloped alliances between social reform leaders could have helped the Northampton Association survive its financial struggles, community leaders realized this too late. Northampton Association members were instead primarily committed to the cause of abolitionism throughout the community's existence, and this commitment led members to contribute primarily to this area of reform for both during the community's existence and afterwards.

The Northampton Association in its original form ended in 1846, largely due to these lingering financial struggles. However, in many ways its ending represented a continuation of its abolitionist activism and interracial community model. When the community disbanded, its remaining debt was absorbed by Samuel L. Hill, an early leader of the community who would sell the communal property to previous members as individual lots of the once-shared land. Over sixty former community members settled in the surrounding area of Northampton, including many of the young adults who had spent their childhood at the community.[266] Almira Stetson, the daughter of James and Dolly Stetson, stayed at Northampton after her parents left, and became a teacher, and their other daughter Mary soon followed Almira back to Northampton

[266] Clark, "We Might be Happyer Here," in *Letters from an American Utopia*, 189-190.

where she also began teaching. David Ruggles and Sojourner Truth, two of the long-term African American members of Northampton Association, remained in the newly-developed township. They joined other African American individuals and families who settled in Northampton in the late 1840s, thus aiding in the creation of a multiracial neighborhood that enacted the Northampton Association's original mission.

After the community disbanded, the remaining members transformed the site into a manufacturing village, developing new silk factories and a water-cure center in Greenville (the township developed from the Northampton Association changed its name from "Bensonville" after George Benson, then later to Greenville, then finally to Florence).[267] Water cures had become popular in the 1840s and were started at the Northampton Association by David Ruggles, who later expanded his operation into the town where he continued treating fellow abolitionists.[268] Ruggles' entrepreneurial business was succeeded by additional, competing water cure centers.[269] Despite the new competition, Ruggles continued to find success in his water-cure business until his death at his water-cure center in 1849.

In 1850, the same year her slave narrative was published, Sojourner Truth obtained a loan from Samuel Hill to purchase her own house in the Northampton

[267] See Charles A. Sheffeld, *The History of Florence, Massachusetts: Including A Complete Account of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry* (Florence, Mass.: Published by the Author, 1895), 107.
[268] Hodges, *David Ruggles*, 191-192.
[269] McBee, "From Utopia to Florence," 71-72.

area. Within four years, largely through the proceeds of her book, she was able to pay off the loan, making her a homeowner.[270] The publishing of her narrative made homeownership a possibility, and the profit she made from the book made it a reality. While establishing her home base in Northampton, Truth began travelling across the country to speak at abolitionist and women's rights conventions, relying on the social contacts she had made at the Northampton Association throughout her travels.

## The Outcomes of Community

The lasting effects of communal life at the Northampton Association are difficult to measure, as they are at any intentional community, though some conclusions can be made from the records left by community members. George Stetson, the son of Dolly and James Stetson, who spent three years of his childhood at the Northampton Association from the time he was six years old, remembered it as a successful experiment, at least in terms of its impact on the children:

> As I reflect on the methods adopted for our cultivation and government, I am led to believe that the hope of our parents and the controlling minds in the Community was so to educate the children that, in their mature years, the ideas of a broad, liberal, and moral character should have an influence in the improvement of society. In reviewing the lives and characters of those who have grown out of the Community, the conclusion is forced upon me that the results desired have been generally obtained.[271]

Stetson's analysis of the impact of the community speaks to the difficulty of measuring success or failure in communal experiments. Stetson reflects on that difficulty in adding: "The enterprise failed materially, but among the eternal forces

[270] Paul Gaffney, "Coloring Utopia," in Clark and Buckley, *Letters from an American Utopia*, 264.
[271] George Stetson, "When I was a Boy," in Sheffeld, *The History of Florence, Massachusetts*, 118.

that live and influence the world, I believe the Community still has its being."[272] Stetson's analysis mimic those of many communitarians who recognize the failure of the community in its original form, yet nostalgically recognize the lessons of the community that continued to guide them in later life. These lessons drawn from the Northampton Association were generally described by George Stetson as forming a "broad, liberal, and moral character," for the youth of the community, but the community's impacts on other individuals can be specifically traced back to its cultivation of abolitionist social networks.

For runaway slaves, the Northampton Association served a critical role: a safe haven offered through the "interlocking series of local networks" known as the underground railroad.[273] David Ruggles and Samuel Hill served as "conductors" on this railroad, most actively throughout the 1830s, though likely during their time at the Northampton Association as well. The number of runaway slaves that travelled through the community are unknown, though multiple letters from community members mention their presence.[274] Some of the slaves who escaped slavery through these networks, like Frederick Douglass, would go on to become lecturers and activists in the anti-slavery movement. The role the community played as a station on the underground railroad complemented the community's larger abolitionist goals while offering immediate relief for those who had just escaped bondage.

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[272] Gerorge Stetson, "When I was a Boy," in Sheffeld, *The History of Florence, Massachusetts*, 123.
[273] Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 15.
[274] As discussed by Hodges in *David Ruggles*, 184-185; See also Sheffeld, *The History of Florence, Massachusetts*, 165-167

Undoubtedly, more abolitionist lecturers and activists were drawn to the Northampton Association and brought into contact through the existence of the community than would have otherwise if the community had not existed. Within the abolition movement, perhaps the most significant outcome of the Northampton Association was its role in introducing Sojourner Truth to anti-slavery activists including Olive Gilbert. After the dissolution of the community in 1846, Truth continued to live in the surrounding town of Northampton, living at the residence of the Bensons before purchasing her own home. It was there that Gilbert likely visited her long-time friends, the Bensons, and held the interviews with Truth that would lead to her published slave narrative. In 1857, after years of marketing and selling her book across the country, Truth moved West, first to another intentional community in Michigan called Harmonia, then finally to Battle Creek, Michigan, where she would spend the rest of her life.[275] There she would continue to work as an anti-slavery advocate, while staying in touch with the contacts she had met at the Northampton Association, including Gilbert and Jonathan Walker.

Walker and Truth's movements seemed to occur in tandem following their meeting at Northampton. Walker left Northampton to travel across the United States as an anti-slavery advocate from 1845-1852, a time when Truth was also frequently travelled to abolitionist conventions.[276] Like Truth, Walker eventually came to rely

[275] Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 278; Transcribed letter, Sojourner Truth to Amy Kirby Post, Nov. 4, 1867, Battler Creek, Michigan, Isaac and Amy Post Family Papers, D.93, Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester.
[276] From 1847-1848, Walker was accompanied on his lecture circuit by John Jacobs, an ex-slave and the brother of Harriet Jacobs, who would later write the slave narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave*

solely on his book sales, which he also marketed through his abolitionist lectures.[277] Like Truth, Walker was also attracted to the communitarian movement, and following his anti-slavery lecture tour he settled in Wisconsin, where he dreamed of starting an intentional community that would serve as a safe haven for African Americans and a station on the underground railroad. In 1854, Walker and his family moved to Mitchell, Wisconsin, to begin their first attempt at realizing their communitarian vision. There Walker tried to revitalize Spring Farm, a Fourierist community started in 1846 and led by New Yorker Benjamin Trowbridge. By 1854, when the Walkers arrived, the community was struggling, with only a few of the original families still living on the property.[278] Walker was unable to revitalize the community, and in 1855 the Walker family moved on to the village of Winooski in the town of Lyndon, Wisconsin, to start a new communal experiment of their own. Walker purchased sixty acres of land where he lived for a decade trying to attract people to the community, but there is little record of its success. Walker submitted ads to anti-slavery newspapers to seek out like-minded members, and he likely used the community as a stop on the underground railroad.[279] Walker's mission in Wisconsin, and later in Michigan, was to counter the westward expansion of slavery by creating communities

*Girl*. On Walker and Jacob's lecture tour, see "The Walker Meetings," *The North Star*, February 4, 1848; "Correspondence," Jonathan Walker to Frederick Douglass, printed in *The North Star*, February 25, 1848.

[277] Oickle, *The Man with the Branded Hand*, 199-200.

[278] Oickle, *The Man with the Branded Hand*, 224-226. Oickle also mentions that Horace Greeley once visited this community, as he visited many Fourierist communities. Carl Guarneri also mentions Spring Farm, assigning its dates of existence as 1846-1849 in *The Utopian Alternative*, 408; Widdicome, Morris, and Kross date the community at 1846-1848 in *The Historical Dictionary of Utopianism*, eds. Toby Widdicome, James Morris, and Andrea Kross (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017 [second edition]), 169.

[279] Oickle, *The Man with the Branded Hand*, 225-227.

of fellow abolitionists and freed slaves to populate the western states. After Walker and Truth reconnected at an anti-slavery convention in New York, Truth decided to move West as well.[280]

In the late 1850s, Truth also moved to another intentional community, settling in the Spiritualist community of Harmonia in Michigan. Walker began building a house in Michigan in 1863, settling there in 1866 after another period of travel and lecturing. In 1864, in the midst of the Civil War, both Truth and Walker travelled to Virginia, aiding the freed and escaped slaves seeking refuge in Union-controlled territory.[281] In the years following the Civil War and emancipation, it appears that Truth and Walker lost touch. Then in 1869, Walker reached out to their mutual friend, Amy Post, to convey an invitation for Truth to visit him at his Michigan home "next summer if not longer, [I] will try to make her as comfortable as I can. I am alone and shall be pleased of her company."[282] There is no account of Truth' reply to Walker, though she later wrote to Amy Post that she was "very glad and thankful to Mr.

[280] Julius A. Laack's account of Walker's movements vary somewhat from the dates given by Oickle. However, Laack mentions that Walker's first home in Wisconsin was in Fond du Lac County, the same county as the Fourierist community, Ceresco, which is analyzed in a subsequent chapter. There is no evidence as to whether the presence of that Fourierist community inspired Walker to move there, however he only stayed for 1-2 years before moving on to Spring Field. See Julius A. Laack, "Captain Jonathan Walker, Abolitionist," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* Vol. 32, No. 3 (Mar., 1949): 320; On Truth and Walker's meeting in New York, see Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 277.
[281] Oickle places Walker at Fort Monroe, while Washington places Truth at the Freedman's Village in Arlington, though their simultaneous travels to Virginia imply they might have crossed paths. See Oickle, *The Man with the Branded Hand*, 240-243; Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 317-320.
[282] Jonathan Walker, letter to Amy Post, Jan. 1, 1869, Michigan, Isaac and Amy Post Family Papers, D.93, Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester.; His mention of loneliness appears to reference the isolated, rural area, as Walker's biographer, Alvin Oickle, claims that Walker's wife, Jane, did not die until 1871. See *The Man with the Branded Hand*, 251.

Walker for his letter and invitation."[283] Walker and Truth's friendship represent one of many that were formed at Northampton between abolitionists whose lives would continue to be dedicated to the abolitionist movement long after the dissolution of their shared community.

In the years following the release of Truth's slave narrative, Truth and Olive Gilbert also lost touch, only to reconnect again in 1870 following Truth's visit to the rural community of Vineland, New Jersey, where Gilbert's brother lived.[284] In letters subsequently exchanged between Gilbert and Truth, the significance of their religious faith to their self-identities and everyday lives seemed to unite them even in old age, and serve to reveal why Gilbert and Truth worked well together. Discussing the high death toll of young soldiers during the Civil War, Gilbert writes:

> ….It makes me almost speechless when I contemplate the hosts of men, and those the flower of their country, that were thus sacrificed to Moloch. There is but one reconciling thought, and that is, The Lord is all-wise and reigneth over all. He sees and knows what we observe, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice.[285]

Gilbert notes the mysteriousness of their lives, attributing the unpredictability to the "spirit world," perhaps indicating Gilbert's interest in Spiritualism, a practice with which Truth and many other former abolitionist friends were experimenting

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[283] Sojourner Truth (transcribed), letter to Amy Post, Jan. 18, 1869, Isaac and Amy Post Family Papers, D.93, Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester.

[284] Gilbert appears to have visited or lived with her brother, George Scarborough, at Vineland for a time after the death of his wife prompted his move away from Kentucky. See Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 186, 359.

[285] Letter from Olive Gilbert to Sojourner Truth, circa 1870, in Sojourner Truth, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (1884 reprint), 277-278. "Moloch" is a Biblical reference to a Canaanite God of child sacrifice.

throughout the late nineteenth century. Gilbert writes: "How strange are the events of our lives. How little we know of the world we live in, especially of the spiritual world by which we are surrounded. But we may see enough to know that it is at least marvelously interesting."[286] Gilbert goes on to reference Truth's slave narrative, informing Truth that she, also, had been selling copies of the book, writing: "Of the little book I wrote for your benefit, some of the copies I took are sold; others I gave to my friends as keepsakes, &c."[287] Truth and Gilbert were brought together through the abolitionist ties that were forged and strengthened at the Northampton Association, though their common outlook would sustain their friendship for years afterwards. Truth went on to give numerous sermons and lectures on abolition and women's rights, rooted in her faith in God and the eventual justice and redemption that would greet the slave. Truth and Gilbert's shared worldviews were cultivated and directed toward reform activism at Northampton.

During the first years of the Civil War, Truth travelled throughout the West, spending much of her time speaking to hostile and violent pro-slavery crowds in Indiana.[288] In 1864, Truth moved on to working for the Freedmen's Aid Society in

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[286] Letter from Olive Gilbert to Sojourner Truth, January 17, 1870, in Truth, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (1884 reprint), 276-277.
[287] Letter from Olive Gilbert to Sojourner Truth, circa 1870, in Sojourner Truth, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (1884 reprint), 278. Gilbert's reference to giving away or selling Truth's books, seemingly without care to which, might be interpreted as Gilbert's lack of understanding of the financial benefit those books offered Truth. However, Painter analyzed Truth's book as "appreciated by its purchasers more as than object than as a text," indicating that for many abolitionists, the book was not valued for the words within it, but that the mere possession of the book indicated solidarity with the abolitionist cause. Gilbert was thus perhaps attempting to build support for the cause by offering those interested the "keepsakes" of the movement, which could broaden knowledge of the book and lead to further sales. See Painter, "Representing Truth," 473-474.
[288] Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 294-296.

Arlington, Virginia, aiding recently freed or escaped slaves.[289] Truth was to eventually meet with President Abraham Lincoln in the midst of the Civil War, after his signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Through a transcriber, Truth wrote of the conversation she had with the president: "…I then said, I thank God that you were the instrument selected by him and the people to do it. I told him that I had never heard of him before he was talked of for president. He smilingly replied, 'I had heard of you many times before that.'" Lincoln is doubtless referring to the many lectures Truth had given on abolition and women's rights, but also of the book that she had dictated for Gilbert. By then, the book had undergone multiple reprintings and was expanded to include Truth's "Book of Life,' which included newspaper clippings, correspondence, and other reports on Truth. Truth continues, "He took my little book, and with the same hand that signed the death-warrant of slavery, he wrote as follows: 'For Aunty Sojourner Truth, Oct. 29, 1864. A. Lincoln.'" Truth's work at Northampton would live on to bring her fame and public recognition during her life and beyond.

After the Civil War, Truth continued fighting for the other reform cause most important to her: women's rights. On her lecture tours, Truth would point to the common experiences of African American women and white women to highlight their shared struggle, stating in one speech: "Are not we colored women human? We

[289] Letter (transcribed) from Sojourner Truth to Diana Truth, Nov. 3, 1864, Isaac and Amy Post Family Papers, D.93, Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester.

suffer as much when our little ones are torn from us, as you white mothers do." At the same time, the intersectionality of Truth's lived experience informed her perspective on women's rights, sometimes putting her at odds with white female reformers.[290] When Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton refused to support the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment due to its guarantee of suffrage for only black men, Truth could not reject the amendment so easily.[291] Instead, Truth supported the Fifteenth Amendment but later attempted to repair the rift that had emerged between some suffragists and abolitionists. Truth's reform activism was aimed toward ameliorating all forms of inequality, a goal that had also been stated, and worked toward, at the Northampton Association.[292]

## Conclusion

The Northampton Association played a significant role in linking abolitionists together into a social chain of anti-slavery activists who would eventually form a force strong enough to break the material chains of slavery. By creating opportunities for new partnerships and friendships to form, the Northampton Association served to strengthen those reform movements to which its members dedicated themselves,

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[290] On the quote by Sojourner Truth, see Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America*, 201.

[291] Frederick Douglass and other former abolitionists argued for the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment even if it didn't offer women the vote, arguing that it was a necessary step toward equal rights for African Americans, and a positive step for all of American society. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony disagreed, and argued that only an amendment that included women would be acceptable. See Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls*, 30-31.; See also Eleanor Flexner, *A Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1959), 146-151.

[292] On a material level, Truth reached out to her Northampton Association friends in times of financial struggle throughout her life. See Letter (transcribed) from Sojourner Truth to Amy Kirby Port, August 26, 1873, Battle Creek, Michigan, Isaac and Amy Post Family Papers, D.93, Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation, River Campus Libraries, University of Rochester.

particularly abolitionism. For some Northampton Association members, departure from the community meant a disillusionment with the radical approach to abolitionism. But for many others, the Northampton Association shaped and cultivated their reform activism, while simultaneously serving the immediate needs of those who were most vulnerable within the United States at the time: slaves. Northampton Association members met the material needs of escaped slaves through their participation in the underground railroad, but also aided the abolitionist movement by housing black and white abolitionists who were just starting their activist work. David Ruggles found respite at Northampton, where he could also host escaped slaves, contribute to Garrison's newsletter *The Liberator* and Frederick Douglass's *North Star,* and organize conferences for black abolitionists, all while living in a supportive, multiracial community.[293] Sojourner Truth was welcomed into the radical abolitionist cause at Northampton, and from her stay there she would find the financial resources and social support to travel around the country advocating for the abolitionist and women's rights movements (see Appendix 1). Her connections with abolitionists including Jonathan Walker provided her with inspirational friendships that directed and focused her abolitionist activism. Her friendship with Olive Gilbert would enable her story to live beyond her lifetime and become a valuable account of slavery in the United States. Northampton Association's place at the center of these individuals' relationships and activists' efforts reveal that the

[293] On Ruggles' contributions to *The Liberator* and *The North Star*, see Hodges, *David Ruggles*, 193; See also David Ruggles, "Communications, Northampton, Jan. 1, 1848," printed in *The North Star*, Jan. 28, 1848.

community's importance to social reform activism in the United States continued on for years beyond its existence as an intentional community.

# Chapter 3: Contested Community: The Wisconsin Phalanx and the Western Frontier

Throughout the 1840s, covered wagons carried families and speculators across the United States, moving them westward toward rural landscapes they would claim as their new homes. By the end of the decade, the United States would claim territory reaching to the Pacific Ocean, and a new wave of wealth-seeking Americans and immigrants traveled from the East Coast in eager pursuit of gold. But in the early 1840s, the "far west" for American settlers still referred to Wisconsin and its surrounding territories. These lands, occupied by Indigenous Peoples for thousands of years, would be overtaken by the federal government and white settlers over the course of the nineteenth century. One such group that envisioned their future on Indigenous lands was a group of Fourierists who formed the Wisconsin Phalanx. This chapter examines this community and its members, highlighting the community's impact on Indigenous populations, Wisconsin's legal history, and women's social and political rights.

The Wisconsin Phalanx represents a community formed on the frontier, led by farmers seeking affordable land in the western territories. Community members' reliance on farming as the primary economic activity of the community differentiated Wisconsin Phalanx from many other Fourierist communities, most of which delved into a variety of artisanal and industrial pursuits alongside agricultural endeavors. Wisconsin Phalanx was also much more isolated from urban centers than the other Fourierist communities examined in this dissertation. As a result, community

members relied on agricultural production for both sustenance and profit in frontier markets, as opposed to other Fourierist communities that could sell manufactured products and offer services to nearby urban markets. The community members' identities as farmers on the western frontier, as well as their isolated beginnings in territorial Wisconsin, made this community unique in its respective approaches to labor, to neighboring Indigenous populations, and to the state government. Specifically, Wisconsin Phalanx members elevated agricultural production over all other economic pursuits, participated in the diminishing of Indigenous population levels, and introduced social and political reforms that shaped Wisconsin's transition to statehood. These elements of the community, and their impacts on the future lives of community members, are the focus of this chapter.

The elements of the Wisconsin Phalanx that made the community distinct from other Fourierist communities also led to the community's conflicting application of social reforms: first, Wisconsin Phalanx members' efforts to reduce economic inequality ironically resulted in the displacement of Indigenous communities and the elimination of their economic means of existence. Fourierists attempted to introduce a new economic system through cooperative organization that would counter the inequality produced by unchecked market capitalism. Nevertheless, they discounted the impacts of their cooperative economic system on the Indigenous Peoples of the region. As farmers, Wisconsin Phalanx community members were motivated by the

acquisition of affordable lands.[294] Wisconsin Phalanx members were thus contributors to the nation-building project of nineteenth-century United States and its expansionist goals, even if they stated their opposition to the economic elements of that nation-building project. As will be discussed below, former members of Wisconsin Phalanx later went on to become educators at boarding schools intended to "civilize" Indigenous communities, further participating in the erasure of Indigenous cultures and languages through forced assimilation. Their complex relationships with non-white communities were further complicated by the anti-slavery sentiments of Wisconsin Phalanx members. As will be explored below, evidence indicates that individuals associated with the Wisconsin Phalanx participated in the Wisconsin network of the underground railroad. Wisconsin Phalanx members thus protested and resisted some policies endorsed by the United States government (namely the spread of market capitalism and the institution of slavery) while simultaneously furthering other policies supported by the federal government (namely, the removal of Indigenous Peoples and their assimilation through "civilizing" efforts).

Members of the Wisconsin Phalanx also played a significant role in bringing women's rights reforms to the Wisconsin territory, and were specifically influential in introducing married women's property rights to the first legislature of the newly-admitted state of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Phalanx also provided opportunities for

[294] Wisconsin Phalanx leader Warren Chase advertised the area as ideal for industrious farmers, stating: "The whole of this part of Wisconsin is fast filling up, with a hardy, industrious and enterprising population….Persons occupying this Domain, can at once engage in profitable agricultural and other employments, with the full certainty also, that each year will greatly add to the value of the premises." See "Address to the Friends of Reform and Association," *The Spirit of the Age*, Vol. 1, 363.

economic independence to its female members that were largely nonexistent for other white female settlers in the Wisconsin frontier. But despite this progressive stance on women's rights, the community paid its female members lower wages than men and eliminated women's suffrage within the community upon the community's incorporation in the Wisconsin territory.[295] As I argue below, this contradictory approach to women's rights reflects the community members' particular approach to labor as farmers, as well as their geographic setting on the Wisconsin frontier, more than it reflects patriarchal practices of the Wisconsin Phalanx community. Despite their imperfect record on women's rights, the Wisconsin Phalanx was nevertheless influential in pushing the Wisconsin legislature toward becoming one of the earliest states to recognize married women's property rights in the country.

While the Wisconsin Phalanx has received attention from scholars of intentional communities as one of the longest-lasting Fourierist communities (1844-1850), these historians have primarily focused on the community's male leaders and the organizational structure of the community itself. The community members' navigation of gender and race-based hierarchies, as well as female members' experiences (both within the community and after its dissolution) have been largely absent from these histories. In addition, the Wisconsin Phalanx has largely been left out of broader discussions on the history of married women's property rights and, in

[295] The community compensated the completion of domestic tasks typically performed by women ("cooking, dining room work, ironing, domestic choring…") at a reduced rate than those tasks typically performed by men. See Meeting Minutes Nov. 15, 1844, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

general, the history of social and religious reform movements in nineteenth-century United States. This chapter addresses these missing elements in the scholarship by placing the Wisconsin Phalanx within the broader context of social and legal reforms occurring in Wisconsin during the 1840s, while highlighting the long-term impact of communal living on the community's female members and their children. In particular, the lives of Ceresco member Elmina Baker and her daughters, Elizabeth and Kate Baker, will be considered as examples of the notable, yet often disregarded, experiences of females within the communal setting and afterwards. Elizabeth and Kate Baker's pursuit of careers in education, as well as their participation in the women's suffrage movement can be seen as advancing the interests and goals of their parents and their fellow Wisconsin Phalanx members. Yet even as they contributed to expanding the professional and political opportunities for women of their era, they also participated in the nation-building process through their participation in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and "civilizing" boarding schools for Indigenous Peoples. In many ways, these women embody the continuation of the conflicting reform goals of the Wisconsin Phalanx.

## Founding a Community on Another's Land

In the 1820s, years before Fourierists arrived to establish their community in Wisconsin, the federal government considered the Wisconsin region so isolated from the rest of the United States that the area was declared an ideal reservation for

Indigenous Peoples who had been removed from the eastern states.[296] In the early 1830s, before Wisconsin was given territorial status, its population consisted of diverse Indigenous communities and a few thousand French and Métis fur traders.[297] By the time Wisconsin became a United States territory in 1836, white settler-colonists were streaming into southern Wisconsin from the East Coast, looking for land and financial opportunities in the area's lead mines. Indigenous Peoples were simultaneously removed from Wisconsin through treaties negotiated by federal agents, while also being exposed to "civilizing" efforts introduced by missionary-led boarding schools.[298] Regardless of treaties that legally reduced or eliminated their claim to their lands, some Indigenous tribes, most notably Menominee, Ho-Chunk, and Lac du Flambeau Chippewa communities, chose to remain in central Wisconsin and attempted to adjust to the changing landscapes and economies.[299] The removal processes initiated by federal treaties, and the cultural disruption initiated by boarding schools, were ongoing during the period when the Wisconsin Phalanx was founded.

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[296] Alive Smith dates the movement of eastern Indigenous communities into Wisconsin as beginning in 1821. See Alice E. Smith, *The History of Wisconsin: From Exploration to Statehood, Volume I* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1973), 142.

[297] Genevieve G. McBride, "The First Wisconsin Women: Introduction," in *Women's Wisconsin: From Native Matriarchies to the New Millennium*, ed. Genevieve G. McBride (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2005), 7-8.

[298] For more on Protestant missionary schools in Wisconsin, see Florantha Thompson Sproat, "La Pointe Letters," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 16, No. 1 (September 1932): 85-95 and 16, No. 2 (December 1932): 199-210.

[299] Historian Joan Jenson explores the various federal treaties signed by these three tribes during the 1840s and 1850s. The Ho-Chunk peoples were given no land ownership guarantees and were thus in the most precarious situation in the 1840s. Conversely, Menominees retained 236,000 acres of land through an 1854 treaty, and the Lac du Flambeau Chippewa maintained control of 70,000 acres through an 1854 treaty. See Joan Jenson, *Calling This Place Home: Women on the Wisconsin Frontier, 1850-1925* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2006), 31.

Fourierists arrived in Wisconsin in 1844, just two years before the territorial government applied for Wisconsin statehood. The community was founded primarily by reform-minded farmers who were compelled by Charles Fourier's writings to pursue a cooperative approach to farming in the Wisconsin territory. This group of founders were all living in Southport, located in eastern Wisconsin, when they organized their community, but many had initially immigrated from the East Coast, moving increasingly westward as they sought affordable lands for farming.[300] Their political and social sympathies thus aligned with many other former-Northeastern residents who had migrated westward over the preceding decades, including through their advocacy for the free-soil movement, the political movement opposing the introduction of slavery into the western territories in favor of allowing only free laborers. Most Wisconsin Phalanx members were initially Free Democrats and anti-slavery Whigs, though their commitment to "free soil" and "free labor" would eventually transition into membership in the emerging Free Soil and Republican parties.[301] In the West, the ideal of creating a country populated by free, property-owning citizens promoted American expansion into western territories. Like many pioneer farmers who moved west, Wisconsin Phalanx members supported this movement and thus its expansionist goals that ousted Indigenous Peoples from their

[300] Most of the Wisconsin Phalanx members whose birth places are recorded were born in New York and Vermont. See Joan Elias, "The Wisconsin Phalanx: An Experiment in Association," (M.A. Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968), 211.

[301] Warren Chase discusses his membership first in the Democratic party and then in the Free Soil Party in Chase, *Forty Years on the Spiritual Rostrum* (Boston: Colby & Rich, 1888), 67-68. On the importance of access to land in the West to the free soil and Republican ideology, see Eric Foner's revised introduction in *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), ix-xxxix.

lands.[302] The Wisconsin Phalanx thus provides a unique example of the sometimes-overlapping goals of mid-century pioneer farmers and Fourierist reformers through their shared advocacy of the free-soil movement and colonial settlement of indigenous peoples' lands.

Few Wisconsin Fourierists discussed the presence of Indigenous populations on the lands they were settling. Warren Chase, co-founder of the Wisconsin Phalanx, recognized the power of the federal government to oust Indigenous communities in favor of white American settlers when he stated in his autobiography, "Uncle Sam… being himself the highest tribunal of authority in this world, could not have his title tried…"[303] Nevertheless, when he and his fellow Fourierists founded the Wisconsin Phalanx, they failed to mention their indirect role in ousting the remaining Indigenous populations through the introduction of diseases and environmental change. Other white settlers' accounts from the period mentioned dwindling Indigenous populations in the area due to outbreaks of smallpox and cholera.[304]

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[302] Wisconsin Phalanx was not the most westward Fourier-inspired community: A more westward Fourierist community was founded in Texas by Charles Fourier's French disciple, Victor Considerant, in 1855. This community was not part of the Fourierist network of communities of the 1840s, but instead was founded primarily for French followers of Considerant. Considerant and his fellow French settlers presented a similar view of Indigenous communities as the members of the Wisconsin Phalanx, namely, identifying them as uncivilized. Considerant characterized the frontier as undergoing "the difficult transition from the savage to the civilized state." Considerant presented Texas as offering a timely opportunity for development, stating "The Indian tribes have recently departed thence; the whites have not yet come." See Victor Considerant, *The Great West: A New Social and Industrial Life in its Fertile Regions* (New York: Dewitt & Davenport, Fowlers & Wells, 1854), pgs. 5, 9.
[303] Warren Chase, *The Life-Line of the Lone One: Or, Autobiography of the World's Child* (Boston: Bela Marsh, 1861 [1857]), 116.
[304] See S. T. Kidder, "Recollections of Early settlers," (Ripon Historical Society, 1906), Microfilm Reel 4, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Louisa Sheldon, a member of the Wisconsin Phalanx, discussed the rapid decline of the local Menominee population in one of the rare recognitions by a Fourierist of the presence of indigenous communities. In a letter to her sister written in 1848, Sheldon writes: "There was some ague and fever here last fall but is quite healthy now except among the Indians. They are dying very fast. I heard that when one takes ague, they kill and bury them. The Menomonie [*sic*.] tribes are nearly all dead. The chief says they only last two moons longer..."[305] Sheldon then went on to describe her personal life and experiences at the Wisconsin Phalanx. Her tone is of a passive observer, with no mention of her own role in exacerbating the spread of disease in the area by increasing the population of potential disease carriers.

Mounting pressure from white settler-colonists led the federal government to force Menominees into a treaty that required them to sell their lands and relocate to Minnesota in 1848, though following violent protests by Menominees, a subsequent 1854 treaty allowed them to regain reservation land in Wisconsin.[306] These disputes occurred while Wisconsin Phalanx members were present, and they may have even played a role in pressuring the federal government to make more land available to white farmers. According to the federal census, only 139 non-Indigenous individuals

[305] Louisa Sheldon to Abigail Sheldon, January 28, 1848, Benjamin Sheldon Papers, Oshkosh SC 92.; Sheldon is likely referring to the 1847 cholera epidemic which devastated the Menominee community. See Jenson, *Calling This Place Home*, 33-34.
[306] For more on the 1848 treaty that forced Menominees to sell their lands, see Smith, *The History of Wisconsin*, 149. Menominees eventually protested this forced treaty and in 1854 they were granted a small reservation on part of their ancestral land in Wisconsin. See Gary Sandefur, Miguel Ceballos, and Susan Mannon, "Land and Population on the Indian Reservation of Wisconsin: Past, Present, and Future," working paper, No. 42, September 2000, Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 6.

lived in Fond du Lac county in 1840; thus the arrival of these Fourierist families four years later represented a significant portion of the increase in white settlers moving to the region.[307] Even if they did not directly demand Indigenous removal, Fourierists inevitably added to mounting pressure on the federal government to not only "civilize," but also to forcibly remove remaining Indigenous communities.[308]

The Wisconsin Phalanx members represent a group that both challenged American social and economic norms while also furthering the American settler-colonial mission.[309] By acting on favorable government treaties that diminished or eliminated the recognized territory of the Potawatomis, Chippewas, Menominees, Ottawas, and Ho-Chunk, white settlers were able to stream into Wisconsin and claim the territory for themselves.[310] Wisconsin Fourierists followed a similar pattern: after finding and laying claim to land in Fond du Lac County in the Spring of 1844, the pioneer group of the Wisconsin Phalanx immediately began constructing dormitories and clearing the land, turning the prairie into wheat fields.[311] By July of that year,

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[307] Consul Willshire Butterfield, *The History of Fond Du Lac County, Wisconsin*, (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1880), 258.
[308] David L. Clark also notes the role of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in settling the area. See Clark, "The Mormons of the Wisconsin Territory: 1835-1848," *Brigham Young University Studies* Vol. 37, No. 2 (1997-98): 57-85.
[309] Frederick L. Holmes, *First Constitutional Convention in Wisconsin, 1846* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1906), 227.
[310] Frederick L. Holmes, *First Constitutional Convention in Wisconsin, 1846*, 228; Robert E. Bieder, "The Arrival of the Long Knives*,"* in *Native American Communities in Wisconsin, 1600-1960* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), esp. 126-131; Newspaper reports suggest that numerous Indigenous tribes inhabited Fond du Lac County in the period of Ceresco's founding, for example, J. M. Little, "Pioneer Days: Interesting Sketch by One Who Knew," *Ripon Free Press*, Dec. 16, 1886.
[311] Samuel M. Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," published in *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at its Fiftieth Annual Meeting Held Dec. 11, 1902* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1903), 200.

most of the founders' wives and children had followed the pioneer group to the territory, initiating their experiment with communal living.

## A More Perfect Community

Six months before the founding of the Wisconsin Phalanx in Fond du Lac County, a group of Southport, Wisconsin (now Kenosha) residents gathered together through the local Lyceum to discuss the principles of Fourierism.[312] The group was made up primarily of farmers, carpenters, and other laborers who were already experienced with working on the land, and who had also struggling financially during the economic depression of the late 1830s.[313] They had been inspired to discuss this topic following the re-printing of several articles by Albert Brisbane in the local Southport newspaper, *The Telegraph*.[314] Responding to widespread interest in these articles, the organizers of the Lyceum decided to focus their lectures that winter on exploring Fourierism.[315] Following a series of debates on the benefits of Fourierism, a number of the Lyceum members became convinced that Fourier's cooperative economic model was worth attempting, and they subsequently formed a Fourierist interest group in Southport. This group, which would become the founding members

[312] Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 191-192.
[313] Historian Andrew E. Hunt also argues that Wisconsin Phalanx members were pioneers and laborers before they joined the Fourierist community, making them already accustomed to the physical hardship that lay in store for them during the founding of the community. As he states," since many settlers were pioneers themselves, it took little time for them to grow accustomed to the rigours of life on a Phalanx." See Hunt, "The Wisconsin Phalanx: A Forgotten Success Story," *Canadian Review of American Studies*, Volume 28, Number 2 (1998): 125.
[314] Joan Elias discusses the re-printed articles that originally appeared in *The Phalanx* and The *New York Tribune*. See "The Wisconsin Phalanx," 46-48.
[315] Butterfield, *The History of Fond Du Lac County, Wisconsin*, 400; Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 190-191.

of the Wisconsin Phalanx (all listed as males) then constructed a constitution and bylaws for the community. Consistent with other Fourierist communities, the Wisconsin Phalanx was organized as a joint-stock company, with each share valued at $25. Officers and a Board of Directors were then elected by the founders. Under the initial constitution, stockholders could vote on community matters, and both women and men could be stockholders.[316]

Among this group of farmers and reformers was Warren Chase, perhaps the most effusive and eccentric of the Wisconsin Phalanx founders. He was chosen to be among the "pioneer group" who would seek out and found the intentional community's site. The goals of the group were evident from its early days as a lyceum, including economic equity, religious tolerance, and financial compensation for women's labor. The by-laws created by the group laid out the plan for economic equity, with rent prices for communal buildings restricted to at no more than 10 percent the cost of the building, thus creating an affordable environment for residents regardless of market price.[317] Members formed into labor committees based on the type of work they performed, and divided communal profits each year among

[316] Wisconsin Phalanx Constitution, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society; Examples of both single and married women as stockholders existed at the Wisconsin Phalanx. Kathryn Tomasek argues that single women's stockholdings often served as a way for family members to pass on wealth to their single daughters before their marriage. Regardless of the reasons for becoming stockholders, both women and men technically owned shares in the community property. See Tomasek, "The Pivot of the Mechanism," 282-283.
[317] Constitution of the Wisconsin Phalanx, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

stockholders. As at other Fourierist communities, the cooperative economic sharing model proved the central focus of the community.

The founding members of the Wisconsin Phalanx, many of whom identified as Methodists or Baptists, pulled from biblical passages and agreed-upon codes of ethical conduct in forming their constitution and bylaws. For example, the bylaws of the Wisconsin Phalanx explicitly prohibited labor on the Sabbath and established strict ethical requirements for members in its constitution, threatening expulsion if any member stepped outside of those bounds.[318] Specifically, any member could be expelled for drunkenness, trafficking of intoxication drinks, licentiousness, profane swearing, and lying, among other purported vices. Many of these regulations revolved around alcohol, and to confirm the founders' commitment to temperance, another bylaw was added after the first few months of the community's founding that stated, "no member of this association shall ever be permitted to bring into the domain any spirituous liquors to be drunk as a beverage."[319] The temperance movement overlapped in membership with the Fourierist communitarian movement, and found particularly strong support at Ceresco due to its large population of Methodists.[320] However, the arguments for temperance tied the physical body, society, and virtue

[318] Prohibited behavior specifically included: "Rude and indecent behavior, drunkenness, trafficking in intoxicating drinks, licentiousness, profane swearing, lying, stealing or defrauding another, protracted idleness, or willfully injuring the property of the Association, knowingly consenting to the injury of the Association or any individual member thereof, gambling, habitually indulging in censoriousness and fault finding…" Bylaws of the Wisconsin Phalanx, Article 7, Section 2, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.
[319] Bylaws of the Wisconsin Phalanx, Article 9, Section 5, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society; See also Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 168.
[320] W. J. Rorabaugh explores the history of the temperance movement in the United States in *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

together in ways that appealed to many communitarians and other reformers beyond the Methodists of the Wisconsin Phalanx. As mentioned in the chapter on Trumbull Phalanx, antebellum publications such as *The Lily* advocated both temperance and women's rights, arguing for overlap between women's rights and the avoidance of alcohol. By outlawing alcohol, temperance advocates believed that wives would be better protected from alcoholic husbands who squandered the family's financial resources on alcohol.[321] Temperance was often referred to by reformers as simultaneously a virtue, individual health choice, and social good. The temperance convictions of Ceresco's founding members were evident even before the community's founding: the initial meetings of the Board of Directors in Southport were held at a temperance house.[322] Though temperance was tied to ethical behavior and morality by the founders, a single religious expression grounding those ethics was not universally agreed upon within the community. As discussed below, multiple religious forms, including experimentation with the emerging religious expression of Spiritualism, found advocates and adversaries at the Wisconsin Phalanx.

Similar to other Fourierist communities, the constitution of the Wisconsin Phalanx mimicked the language of the United States' Constitution. For the Wisconsin Phalanx, this was particularly evident in the constitution's preamble, which stated that

[321] As will be discussed more below, wives had no legal control over property or wages, and thus husbands determined how the family's finances were spent. Female temperance advocates argued that outlawing alcohol sales would help ensure that family finances were spent wisely, namely on improving the lives of wives and children. In 1850, Wisconsin would become one of the first states to grant married women property rights in the United States.
[322] Meeting Minutes, pgs. 12-15, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

the purpose of the community was "to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, promote our common welfare, and secure the blessings of social happiness to ourselves and our posterity."[323] Also like other Fourierist communities, the Wisconsin Phalanx required no religious test or denominational loyalty for membership in the community.[324] But beyond this lofty call for religious tolerance, much of the constitution and by-laws focused on practical matters: handling and payouts of stocks, the admittance of members, the elections of officers, and the organization of labor. Few mentions of broader ideological visions can be found in this constitution, which makes the Wisconsin Phalanx constitution differ from the constitutions or resolutions of the Trumbull Phalanx and Northampton Association. This difference may be ascribed to the practical elements of forming a community in the frontier, where no established towns nearby could offer large markets for selling goods or for buying necessary materials, and thus these elements pertaining to survival needed to be explicitly established.[325] Unlike the Fourierist communities in the East, or even in relatively recently established states such as Ohio, the Wisconsin Phalanx residents could rely on comparably few comforts of city life or government-funded infrastructure. Regardless of the reasons behind this practical

[323] Constitution of Wisconsin Phalanx, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society; Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 195.
[324] Constitution of the Wisconsin phalanx, microfilm reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society; Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 196.
[325] For example, a frequent expense of the community was the sending of horse teams and riders on trips to restock provisions for the community. See for example, Meeting Minutes, pg. 22, 28, 104, Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society; See also Eugenia Mason, who wrote of the community: "All transportation was by team, from Milwaukee or Sheboygan." S. T. Kidder, "Recollections of Early settlers," 263, Microfilm Reel 4, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

bent, the only social goals expressed in the constitution related to the prohibition of alcohol and guarantee of religious tolerance.

Though the community was officially termed the Wisconsin Phalanx, the unofficial name that the joint-stock endeavor received upon incorporation was "Ceresco." Co-founder Warren Chase bestowed this name on the newly-established township in which the Phalanx was incorporated, and in which it conducted all of its business.[326] The name "Ceresco" was based on "Ceres," the Roman goddess of agriculture. As the name suggested, the Fourierist community relied primarily on agricultural production to bring sustenance and profit. The new town's name became synonymous with the intentional community and was often used interchangeably with its official name.[327] Ceresco's agricultural endeavors proved profitable, and soon more pioneer farmers joined the community as the promise of financial success enticed them to the isolated area. At the height of the community's existence in 1846, the community was home to 180 members. Over the course of its existence, it housed 259 people total.[328]

As a self-identified Fourierist community, members were continuously in contact with other Fourierist communities in the West, collaborating and exchanging advice or materials. While the presence of numerous Fourierist communities in the

[326] "Ceresco" and "Wisconsin Phalanx" will be used interchangeably for the rest of the chapter.
[327] A saw mill was erected on the site by the first Fall of the community's existence, though it was primarily used to construct the buildings on the property, not for profit. Montgomery Eduard McIntosh, "Co-operative Communities in Wisconsin," in *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at its Fifty-First Annual Meeting Held October 15, 1903,* (Madison, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1904), 102.
[328] McIntosh, "Co-operative Communities in Wisconsin," 105; Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 411.

Northwest and Midwest sometimes served to create competition for funding among deep-pocketed donors in the West, the clustering of Fourierist communities away from the East Coast also served to create an alliance of Western Fourierist communities against their Eastern counterparts. Western Fourierists often felt forgotten by the national Fourierist organizers including Albert Brisbane, who spent most of his time at the North American Phalanx in New Jersey or at Brook Farm in Massachusetts.[329] Records from the Wisconsin Phalanx confirm their camaraderie was shared primarily with fellow Fourierists in the Western states, with whom they corresponded and shared tools and other supplies.[330]

Despite the camaraderie shared among Fourierists in the West, Ceresco was nevertheless one of the most rural and isolated Fourierist communities upon its founding. The community's positioning on the frontier meant that it was at the center of free-soil anti-slavery debates that were gaining national political prominence in the mid-1840s and into the 1850s. Their geographically-isolated position also meant that protestant missionaries were visiting newly developed townships in hopes of establishing a church for their denomination. Ceresco members participated both in

[329] Michael Mattek argues that the editors of *The Harbinger* (printed at Brook Farm) portrayed western Fourierist communities including Ceresco as a ideal settlements for poor emigrants seeking land out west; thus trying to differentiate the western communities from the supposedly more sophisticated communities in the East and attempting to prevent large donations from being directed toward western communities. See Mattek "Brisbane and Beyond," 119.

[330] Meeting notes from Jan. 11, 1847 show that they had received a letter from John Woods of Trumbull Phalanx. On May 31, 1847, a letter was received from the short-lived Spring Farm Phalanx in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. See Meeting Minutes, May 31, 1847, pg. 176, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

political activism to prevent the spread of slavery into Wisconsin, as well as religious debates over the role of religious leaders in their community.

## Race, Religion, and Ritual in Community

Ceresco's constitution and by-laws created specific ethical codes for community members seemingly derived from the Methodist and Baptist denominations that made up a large number of community members.[331] These practices included abstinence from alcohol and the suspension of community work on the Sabbath.[332] But despite these moral guidelines and religious restrictions, visitors and disgruntled members of the community complained of its anti-Christian sentiment. At its outset, the community's founders did not show signs of differing significantly in their religious leanings than other northwestern towns of the period, and in fact included multiple religious leaders among them: one of the founding members, Uriel Farmin, was a Methodist preacher, and another, George Stebbins, was a Baptist minister.[333] But over the following years, the eclectic religious tastes of its most eccentric members, including Warren Chase, caused discord in the community.

When Methodist preacher Wesson Gage Miller travelled through the area to evangelize to settlers, he found himself welcomed at Ceresco by fellow Methodist

[331] The community was also comprised of self-described Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians. See Elias, "The Wisconsin Phalanx," 211.
[332] Article 3rd, By-Laws pg. 49, Typed Meeting Notes, Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.
[333] Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 199. Another community member, William Stillwell, complained of the lack of an organized "Sabbath school" upon his arrival at Wisconsin Phalanx, which he attempted to remedy by forming his own Sunday class. See letter, William Stillwell to Sarah Stillwell, Ceresco, June 30, 1846, The Letters of William Stillwell, Oshkosh SC 96, Oshkosh Area Research Center.

preacher and Ceresco member, Uriel Farmin. Despite this warm reception, Miller was unimpressed by the community's apparent lackluster commitment to Christianity. He later wrote his mixed review of the community: "Though not a few of the leading men were professed Infidels, they always received ministers gladly and treated them with consideration."[334] Though Miller was invited to offer a sermon for the community during his stay, he nevertheless sensed religious dissent among the groups' leaders. Franklin Sherrill, another travelling preacher, also took issue with Ceresco, praising the eventual dissolution of the community but lamenting its legacy: "…the bitter fruits of infidelity and irreligion which Fourierism has left behind it, leave us much to contend with. Infidel meetings are still held, whose chief object seems to be to bring into disrespect the truths of evangelical religion."[335] Despite the presence of Methodist and Baptist clergy at Ceresco, pioneer missionaries in the region still found the community lacking in appropriate religiosity due to its tolerance of numerous Christian denominations among its members. In addition to this disapproval by outside clergy, community members debated the extent to which any religious leaders should be shown favor by being hosted at the community. Community members paid for the expense of hosting traveling preachers, and the question of whether those funds should be paid by the community at large became a

[334] Wesson Gage Miller, *Thirty years in the Itinerancy* (Project Gutenberg, 2004 [1875]), Chapter 5.
[335] Letter, Franklin Sherrill, Jan. 16, 1851, Franklin Sherill Papers, Oshkosh SC 93, Oshkosh Area Research Center.

heated topic.[336] Warren Chase became central to this debate due to his increasing animosity toward Christianity and explorations into alternative religious beliefs.

Chase's personal bias against Christianity was not expressed publicly in the early days of the Ceresco community, when he happily reported that "we have a Sunday school, Bible class, and divine service every Sabbath by different denominations, who occupy the hall (as we have but one) alternately; and all is harmony in that department, although we have many different members of different religious societies."[337] But throughout the years of Ceresco's existence, Chase became increasingly outspoken against the hypocrisies he perceived in Christian churches. Even before Chase became a co-founder of Ceresco he had shown interest in new religious movements that were gaining popularity across the United States, initially through a fascination with Mesmerism, or a method of healing the body and mind by inducing a trance state. Reflecting back years later, Chase saw Mesmerism as initiating his personal path toward Spiritualism, or communication with spirits through clairvoyants who could harness the trance state for this purpose. To Chase, this path toward Spiritualism was guided by both Mesmerism and the writings of Swedish theologian Emanuel Swedenborg.[338]

Spiritualism was in its infancy as a religious movement in the United States in the 1840s, but by the 1850s séances and belief in a spirit-infused world had gained

[336] Meeting Minutes, March 22, 1847, pg. 163, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.
[337] Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 203.
[338] Chase, *The Life-Line of the Lone One,* 112-113.

prominence among progressive social reformers.[339] To Chase, the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg and the experiments of Franz Mesmer offered philosophical and scientific insight into humanity and the universe, insights which made notion of a spirit-infused world possible. For Chase, these writers proved more convincing than the "superstitious" doctrines of Christianity. Chase became a self-described "opponent of theology, and the defender of new and unpopular truth."[340] Chase's disparaging of Christianity stemmed partly from the churches' seeming unwillingness to promote social reforms that Chase found moral and just, similar to the critiques of Christian institutions made by Northampton Association members.[341]

Chase's integration of Spiritualism and Swedenborg placed him outside of the norm of more orthodox Protestant community members at Ceresco, but he was not alone in seeing similarities between the ideas of Swedenborg and of Charles Fourier. Numerous Fourierists found similarities between the spiritual writings of Emanuel Swedenborg and the utopian blueprints of Charles Fourier.[342] Swedenborg's reported mystical experiences proved a primer for the Spiritualist movement that would

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[339] On the overlap between Spiritualism and other social movements, see Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits*; Chase's theology also crossed over into health reforms in his search for a spiritual-material connection: Chase reported in 1847 that his fellow community members were in good health, largely due to their increasingly vegetarian diet and reliance on hydropathy, demonstrating the frequent overlap within communal environments between personal health and social transformation. See Letter from Warren Chase, August 21, 1847, as printed in Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 431-432.

[340] Chase, *Life-Line of the Lone One*, 104; Sally Morita analyzes the interconnected rise of Mesmerism, Swedenborg, Fourier, and Spiritualism among social reformers of the nineteenth century in "Unseen (and Unappreciated) Matters," *American Studies* Vol. 40, No. 3 (Fall, 1999): 103-104. Morita traces the evolution of Mesmerism from the magnet experiments of Austrian physician Franz Anton Mesmer to the notion of an invisible spiritual force existing within humans.

[341] Mary Farrell Bednarowski, "Spiritualism in Wisconsin in the Nineteenth Century," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* Vol. 59, No. 1 (Autumn, 1975): 10-11.

[342] Carl Guarneri discusses these perceived similarities in detail in *The Utopian Alternative*, 116-117.

become increasingly popular in the United States following the spirit communications of the Fox sisters in Rochester, New York in 1848.[343] Chase formed a Spiritualist group at Ceresco, in which community members read Swedenborg's writings alongside Spiritualist periodicals, as well as exploring other emerging worldviews.[344] In a meeting held January 9, 1846, the Ceresco Board of Directors allowed for the community school house to be used for phrenology classes on Thursday evenings.[345] With Chase's encouragement, some members of Ceresco became drawn to the fascinating experiences of clairvoyants and their communion with the spiritual world.[346] By leading Spiritualist meetings and subscribing to Spiritualist periodicals at Ceresco, Chase and his fellow communitarians created an incubator for Spiritualism, bringing new adherents together and sparking interest in the movement.

Despite the various religious expressions at Ceresco, community members shared ritual observations tied to their common belief in Fourierism as an expression of an ideal Christian community. For example, Ceresco's anniversary celebration focused on the specific day that the community's founders laid eyes on the site which would become Ceresco for the first time following a six-day journey through the frontier. Warren Chase referred to that day, May 27, with religious overtones as "the landing of the pilgrims."[347] As Warren Chase reported to the *New York Tribune* in

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[343] See Morita, "Unseen (and Unappreciated) Matters," 99-125.
[344] Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 350.
[345] Phrenology became increasingly popular throughout the mid-nineteenth century. This was the study of the shape of a human's skull as a means for revealing that person's personality traits and intellectual ability. Meeting minutes Jan. 9, 1846, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.
[346] Chase, *Life-Line of the Lone One*, 167.
[347] Chase, *The Life-Line of the Lone One*, 116.

1846, the annual celebration of Ceresco's founding included a variety of religious "exercises," from reading biblical passages to praying for their fellow communitarians. Chase described the agenda as including prayers for the Earth, The New England Fourier Society, and "Life of Harmony, Unity, Industry, and Plenty: in perfect accordance with the laws of the Bible, of Nature, and of Mind."[348] For members of Ceresco, the religious reference point continued to be the Protestant Christian tradition, though the numerous denominations present within the community necessitated the identification of a shared figure that transgressed denominational differences. By placing Fourier at the center of their shared rituals, communitarians avoided openly advocating for any particular denomination while celebrating the communitarian principles they all agreed upon, and which they believed to be the expression of a Christian mode of living.

The historical record is less clear regarding the opinions of community members on race, and particularly on the institution of slavery. Members of the community were white, and there is no evidence that an African American was ever admitted to the community. However, records that indicate an anti-slavery presence emerged in Ceresco during the existence of the community. As mentioned above, community members were sympathetic to the free-soil movement and its accompanying rejection of slavery in Wisconsin.[349] Evidence suggests that some

[348] Letter from Warren Chase, printed in *The New York Weekly Tribune*, June 20, 1846.
[349] Records from the Wisconsin Phalanx indicate that most members initially identified as anti-slavery Whigs or Democrats and transitioned into the Free Soil Party in the late 1840s. Warren Chase eventually ran for governor of Wisconsin on the Free Soil ticket. On the movement of Whig and

community members may have gone further in their rejection of slavery through involvement in the regional network of the underground railroad. The clearest link between the underground railroad and Ceresco discovered by historians thus far is through James W. Sanders, a local blacksmith who moved to the Ripon area in 1846 and held ties to Southport, Wisconsin, where the founders of Ceresco originated. Sanders later became involved in an effort to free radical abolitionist Sherman Booth from prison, where he had been sent after aiding runaway slave Joshua Glover.[350] Sanders also became involved in the early meetings held in Wisconsin to form the Republican Party, which were also attended by former Ceresco members including Warren Chase and Garrett Baker.[351] Sanders' obituary in 1904 names him as a conductor on the underground railroad.[352] Though Sanders' role at Ceresco is not clear in the historical records, historians have argued that his ties to numerous Ceresco members and their shared origins in Southport indicates that he may have included Ceresco members in his activities with the Wisconsin underground railroad network.[353] His social ties to Ceresco members makes this theory plausible, as does

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Democratic associations into the Free Soil Party, see Griffin, "Anti-Slavery Utopias," 257. On the number of Whigs and Democrats at the Wisconsin Phalanx, see Elias, "The Wisconsin Phalanx," 211.

[350] On the legal struggles of Sherman Booth, see Diane S. Butler, "The Public Life and Private Affairs of Sherman M. Booth," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* Vol. 82, No. 3 (Spring, 1999): 166-197. Alvan Bovay was also part of the effort to free Booth. As will be discussed below, Bovay had moved to Wisconsin in an attempt to join Ceresco, but arrived after its dissolution.

[351]Butterfield, *The History of Fond Du Lac County, Wisconsin*, 923; Samuel Pedrick, "Sander, J. W.," in Pedrick Genealogy Notebooks, Ripon Public Library, Digitized 2006; For historians' and archeologists' speculations on the tie between James Sanders and the Ceresco community, see Paul Reckner, "Highway 44 Archeological Dig at the Sander's Blacksmith Shop," Presentation, Ripon Historical Society, Ripon, Wisconsin, May 19, 2016, https://riponchannel.viebit.com/player.php?hash=I2abRFN5P3Gs.

[352] See Obituary, James W. Sanders, *The Marquette Tribune*, April 28, 1904, 1.

[353] Warren Chase also mentions the presence of abolitionists at the Wisconsin Phalanx in a letter to the *Fond Du Lac Journal*. See "Communications," *Fond Du Lac Journal*, May 12, 1847, pg. 1.

the significant role later played by residents of Ceresco (later called Ripon) in the protest of the Kansas-Nebraska act and formation of the Republican Party.

Fourierists' simultaneous dismissal of Indigenous communities' interests and condemnation of race-based slavery present contradictions to contemporary observers who find overlap between these modes of racism, but for white pioneer farmers of the antebellum period, holding these opinions concurrently was not uncommon. In the minds of farmers seeking out available land, expansion into western territories necessitated Indigenous removal. However, free-soil sympathizers believed that slavery should not necessarily expand into the western territories along with white American settlers. The Fourierists of Ceresco thus mimicked the political sentiments of fellow western pioneers of the period through their complicity with the removal of Indigenous communities and their simultaneous resistance to slavery. These sentiments were primarily rooted in their support of the free labor model, though, as discussed above, evidence exists that some Ceresco members may have also harbored more principled abolitionist sympathies.

The geographic isolation of Ceresco necessitates a different analysis of this community's navigation of social interactions than at other Fourierist communities. At Ceresco the primary concern for community members was their survival in frontier conditions. As a result, clearing the land, plowing, planting, and harvesting crops took priority over intellectual pursuits or other tasks deemed less important. This calculation of necessary vs. superfluous labor meant that the tasks typically completed by women were paid less than those completed by men. As will be

explored below, the division and compensation of labor at Ceresco did not elevate women to financial equality with men nor bring them to the level of social equality envisioned by Fourier. However, the women of Ceresco nevertheless experienced greater social and political opportunities within the community than those experienced by the women of the Wisconsin frontier generally.

## Gendered Perspectives

With the arrival of wives and children within a few months of the community's founding, the gender-based division of labor at Ceresco commenced. From the early days of the community, labor that was deemed "women's labor" (cooking, ironing, dining room maintenance) was compensated at a lower rate than other labor.[354] In a November 1844 meeting of the Board of Directors (with all male members), these "feminine" tasks were grouped together under the category of "attractive" labor, or labor which presumably required less physical exertion and thus deserved lower pay.[355] Pay scales were not explicitly derived based on the sex of the laborer, though the outcomes clearly classified male and female laborers into a hierarchy of value: tasks typically completed by women were placed in the bottom rungs of the pay scale, while those typically completed by men gravitated toward the top of the pay scale. However, some tasks in which male community members participated but which required less physical exertion were placed in the lowest pay

[354] Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 202; Meeting Minutes Nov. 15, 1844, pgs. 26-27, Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.
[355] See Meeting Minutes Nov. 15, 1844, pgs. 26-27, Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

scale including "gardening, horticulture, care of fowls and bees and all necessary business of the Board of Directors."[356] This de-valuing of intellectual labor and "woman's labor" reflected the elevation of agricultural endeavors at the community. Wisconsin historian Alice Smith argues that this wage disparity reflected the common valuation of labor in frontier Wisconsin generally: "Any chore which a woman could possibly perform was left to her, to free her husband and any older sons for the all-important tasks of clearing, plowing, and planting."[357] While women also completed physically demanding tasks for which they were financially compensated, their labor was not seen as essential to the survival of the community. Though this perception clearly resulted in the devaluation of women's labor, it also reflects a pattern of labor hierarchy common across the frontier that was continued at Ceresco.

At the Wisconsin Phalanx, as in most Fourierist communities, the record-keeping was done exclusively by male community members, and most letters and other sources of information about community life were also created by men. For example, Warren Chase represents the best-known figure at Ceresco to historians due to his fastidious record-keeping, personal writings, and later career in politics. Chase also promoted women's social and political advancement while at Ceresco and in the years following through his public advocacy of women's property rights, liberal divorce laws, and suffrage. But despite his political credentials, Warren Chase offers

[356] The pay scales were not solely divided based on physical exertion required, but also by the perceived value of the task to the community. For example, bookkeeping was placed in the mid-level pay scale, despite the low level of physical exertion required. See Meeting Minutes Nov. 15, 1844, Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.
[357] Smith, *The History of Wisconsin*, 493.

a somewhat dubious source for information on the daily life of community members, particularly female members. He wrote lengthy pamphlets and an autobiography, though they often focused on his personal life or intellectual pursuits and were meant to inspire pity for the author, as evidenced by his autobiography's title, *The Life-Line of the Lone One: Or, Autobiography of the World's Child*. In this autobiography, Chase purportedly recounts his wife, Mary's, hesitation to move to Ceresco, portraying her as "fearful we shall not get a home of our own again."[358] These reported words represent one of few written records of women's sentiments about living in Ceresco, and thus historians have often cited Chase as a valuable source on women's perspectives about the community. Some historians have taken Warren Chase's words at face value, arguing that they accurately reflect his wife's hesitation to move to Ceresco. However, I contend that Warren Chase is not necessarily an accurate source of information on Mary Chase's sentiments, particularly given his strained relationship with her throughout their marriage and his perennial attempts to portray himself as a voice of reason surrounded by short-sighted people. Throughout his autobiography, Chase presents himself as the wise leader who convinces both his wife and the new Wisconsin Phalanx members that "our prospects are better there than here," and that devotion to the new communal experiment will be financially rewarded.[359] If Mary Chase's reported hesitation to move to Ceresco represent her true feelings, they represent a minority opinion among Ceresco's female members,

[358] Chase, *The Life-Line of the Lone One*, 118.
[359] Chase, *The Life-Line of the Lone One*, 118.

most of whom found life at Ceresco materially and socially more appealing than that which they otherwise would have found in frontier Wisconsin.

While historians disagree on whether women gained or lost social status by joining Ceresco, I contend that women's lives at Ceresco offered significant advantages over the lives of women in frontier Wisconsin generally.[360] For women in frontier Wisconsin mere survival proved a daily challenge and social pleasantries were few and far between. The women who moved to Ceresco were already living in Wisconsin and likely would have moved further west regardless of the creation of the community, as the records of their western movements after the community's dissolution prove.[361] A fair assessment of women's lives in Ceresco requires comparing them to the lives of women in frontier Wisconsin generally, as opposed to comparing them to women in the cities and towns of the East Coast.

Women and families who immigrated to territorial Wisconsin primarily lived in severe poverty.[362] Women were far outnumbered by men, who often moved to the

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[360] For example, John Savagian argues that women in Ceresco lost socials status and experienced greater hardship inside the community by essentially being forced to care for more men and children than those in their immediate families. The uneven distribution of men and women in the community thus made their tasks more difficult for women, who were essentially asked to care for more men that they otherwise would have. See Savagian,"Women at Ceresco," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* Vol. 83, No. 4 (Summer, 2000): esp. 280.

[361] See Elias, "Table IV: Comparative Data on Phalanx Members After They Left Ceresco," in "The Wisconsin Phalanx," 214-217.

[362] The hardship of the frontier is demonstrated in the history of a Swedish colony in territorial Wisconsin, in which wealthy immigrants were reduced to desperate poverty due to the harsh climate and isolation of the region. See Mabel V. Hansen, "The Swedish Settlement on Pine Lake," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 8, No. 1 (June 1925): 38-51. Kevin Starr portrayed the lives of frontier women as more difficult than those of nineteenth-century women in the rest of the United States, arguing, "Frontier women, by the very nature of their existence, worked longer hours at more exhausting tasks, stood in danger of a suppressed inner life, lost more children, enjoyed fewer consolations of home and good company." See Starr, "Foreword," in JoAnn Levy, *Unsettling the West: Eliza Farnham and Georgiana Bruce Kirby in Frontier California* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2004), ix.

territory first to speculate on land, start a business, or establish a homestead before bringing their wives and children out West. Women on the frontier were thus often plagued by loneliness, living without their extended family or friends nearby and with few, if any, neighbors to share their struggles with.[363] Mothers were often the sole educators of their children, and were required to educate them at home while completing numerous other daily tasks. If children were to receive formal education (particularly girls), they often had to travel east to attend one of the established "finishing" schools there, as so few educational opportunities existed in the territory, and none were without cost.[364] Maintaining the health of family members on the frontier was also a constant struggle. There were few doctors and many deaths on the frontier, particularly deaths of children.[365]

At Ceresco, by contrast, families pooled finances and benefited financially, as many of them (or their families) owned shares in a joint-stock company that reported a profit each year and compensated members upon the dissolution of the community. At Ceresco, female members undoubtedly still felt the pain of separation from their extended families, but loneliness was experienced to a far lesser degree, as women

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[363] For more on the intense loneliness experienced by women in the Wisconsin territory, see Lillian Krueger, "Motherhood on the Wisconsin Frontier," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 29, No. 2 (December 1945): 157-183 and 29, No. 3 (March 1946): 333-346.

[364] According to Louis Phelps Kellogg, the first college to accept women in Wisconsin was Lawrence College in Appleton, which opened in 1849. See Louise Phelps Kellogg, "The Origins of Milwaukee College," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 9. No. 4 (1925-1926): 385-408; Grace Norton Kieckhefer, "Milwaukee-Downer College Rediscovers Its Past," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 34, No. 4 (Summer 1951): 210-214 and 241-242; Smith discusses the slow development of public schools in the Wisconsin territory and the difficulties to establishing schools there in *The History of Wisconsin*, 575-582.

[365] For more on the hard tasks that awaited women who settled in territorial Wisconsin, see Smith, *The History of Wisconsin*, 493-494.

worked together to complete daily tasks.[366] While the daily tasks completed by women at Ceresco were not necessarily easier than the daily tasks of other frontier women, they were shared in camaraderie and were financially compensated. At Ceresco, children received an education at the school located on-site at the community, which operated at no additional cost to members and offered a much-needed respite for mothers of school-age children. Ceresco's school was held in such high repute that it eventually even accepted students living outside of the community for a fee.[367] Women at Ceresco still lived far from doctors, but received assistance and child-care from fellow community members when someone fell ill.[368] Thus, Ceresco women and their families arguably experienced a much higher quality of life, both socially and materially, when compared to other white settlers in the Wisconsin territory.

Historians have also commented on the limited social power Ceresco women experienced compared to that of other white women in the antebellum era, who controlled a domestic "sphere of influence" in the 1840s.[369] However, this analysis

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[366] Pedrick discusses the frequent social events held at the community in "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 221.

[367] Chase, *Life-Line of the Lone One*, 123. Perhaps ironically, the first free public school to open in Wisconsin began in Southport in 1845, one year after the pioneering members of the Wisconsin Phalanx left the town to begin their community. Tracey Haegler and Sue Fellerer, "One Community, One School: One-Room Schools in Fond du Lac County," in *Source of the Lake: 150 Years of History in Fond du Lac*, ed. Clarence B. Davis (Fond du Lac, Wisc: Action Printing: 2002), 72; On the school accepting outside children, see Francis Mason Allensworth, "Six Years of Communal Life," Prepared for the Mosaic Club, Galesburg, Illinois, November, 1939. Community member Isabella Hunter also noted that "…even the little ones were in infant classes." Ada C. Merrill, "Reminiscences of Isabella MacKay Town Hunter," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 31, 1904, pg. 4.

[368] Warren Chase describes visiting a doctor 20 miles away in *Life-Line of the Lone One*, 120.

[369] John Savagian takes this critical stance on Wisconsin Phalanx, arguing that women were essentially reduced to the role of domestic servants for the male residents, and "the association's gain was their loss." John Savagian, "Women at Ceresco," esp. 280; Not all historians agree: Gayle A. Kiszely refers

assumes that domestic life universally offered women control over family affairs.[370] While women at Ceresco experienced less control in their ability to purchase their own clothing for their children, or prepare meals simply for their own families, the control and freedoms allowed to women in domestic life during the antebellum era varied greatly.[371] Many women's lived experiences involved balancing domestic tasks, childcare, and for those outside of the elite and middle-classes, additional work as seamstresses or domestic servants. Gender-based laws limited women's agency by preventing married women of all classes and ethnicities from keeping their own wages, owning property, and voting. Thus, communal living offered more opportunities for property ownership and some relief from labor by allowing women to share everyday tasks with fellow women. Women in communitarian settings across the country recognized the benefits of communal living. Angelique Martin of Trumbull Phalanx clearly understood the life of the "isolated household" and roundly rejected it in favor of communal living. The same is true of Dolly Stetson of the Northampton Association, who pleaded with her husband to let their family stay longer at the Northampton Association, where childcare and educational opportunities were better than those they would find elsewhere. Thus, women in other Fourierist

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to Savagian's analysis of women at Ceresco as unconvincing in "Ceresco: Utopia in Fond du Lac County," in *Source of the Lake*, 11, 29.

[370] This analysis of domestic life during the antebellum era has become more nuanced in recent years as scholars of women's history and gender history continue to highlight the wide variety of women's experiences, as opposed to analyzing women as a single, uniform unit. On these changes in the field, see Dayton and Levenstein, "The Big Tent of U.S. Women's and Gender History," 793-817.

[371] Though the ideal womanhood referred to by Barbara Welter as the "Cult of True Womanhood" was the upper-class ideal that purportedly granted women power to control the domestic sphere, it was, nevertheless, not based in lived experiences of women. See Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," 151-174.

communities did not unilaterally find the communal lifestyle more oppressive than the "isolated household," despite their supposed opportunity to have total control over domestic life.

This perspective can also be found in the few records left by women at Ceresco. While the majority of Ceresco's records were left by men, some female members left records of their experience through correspondence, journals, or interviews following the dissolution of the community. Charlotte Haven and her sister, Harriot Haven were two single women aged 27 and 18, respectively, who joined Ceresco in 1848.[372] The Haven sisters both maintained regular correspondence with friends and family members outside of the community, and Harriot Haven kept a diary during her time there. Haven's perspective of the community was generally positive, noting its many charms, including the active social life in the community.[373] The Haven sisters complained about the seemingly endless work to be completed in the dining room, but they nevertheless felt a pang of loss when they left the community as it was nearing its dissolution. Harriet wrote to Charlotte later, "The natural beauty of the place, the hospitality and warmheartedness of the people…has left a lasting impression on my mind, which it is my delight to dwell upon."[374] The

[372] Meeting Minutes June 26, 1848, Record Book 2, pg. 34, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.
[373] See the Journal of Harriet Haven, Oct. 8-19, 1848, pg. 4, Charlotte Haven Mason Papers, SC 95 4/0/2, Oshkosh Area Research Center.
[374] Harriot Haven to Charlotte Haven Mason, March 10, 1850, Charlotte Haven Mason Papers, SC 95 4/0/2, Oshkosh Area Research Center.

Haven sisters remembered their experience in the community fondly, both during their stay and after their departure.

Largely left out of the standard historical narrative of Ceresco is the account of Eugenia Wilson, a female member of Ceresco who met her future husband, Robert D. Mason, at the community in 1848.[375] The couple was married in 1850 and chose to stay in the communal living arrangement after marriage. Eugenia Wilson Mason offers a favorable account of living in the community's "long house" or communal dormitory: "The common living house was very pleasant; our social times were delightful in fellowship."[376] Mason continued living in the long house despite the dissolution of the community occurring around the couple during 1849-1850. Mason gave birth to her daughter in the long house, before the family finally moved away from the communal buildings, which had by then been sold to an individual member when the community disbanded.[377]

Also largely overlooked by historians is the perspective of Isabella Town, whose records reveal the perspective of a widow and mother already living in Wisconsin when she decided that the financial opportunities available to her and the educational opportunities for her children would be greater in Ceresco. She decided to

[375] Gayle A. Kiszely and Carl Guarneri note Mason's words, though primarily in the context of her discussion of the community's decline, not on her personal experience in the community. See Kiszely, "Ceresco: Utopia in Fond du Lac County," in *Source of the Lake*, 25; Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, pg. 490 n35.
[376] Kidder, "Recollections of Early Settlers," Microfilm Reel 4, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society, pg. 261
[377] See Eugenia Mason, in Kidder, "Recollections of Early Settlers," Microfilm Reel 4, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society, pg. 263.

move her family to the community, where she also met and married a fellow community member. In remembering her time at Ceresco years later, she reminisced: "Those were among the happiest days of my life. We were like brothers and sisters, living together in the sweetest harmony, and the friendships of those days have lasted through all the years."[378] Town led the Domestic Department at Ceresco and noted the educational opportunities offered to her children, which awarded mothers time to focus on other matters. As she noted in a later interview, "…even the little ones were in infant classes."[379] Her positive experience at Ceresco shows the benefits the community offered to single mothers in the Wisconsin frontier.

Women in numerous Fourierist communities appeared to prefer communal living over life in a single-family household. Regardless, historians of Ceresco have assumed that women preferred to control their family's domestic affairs rather than participate in communal households. While women at Ceresco arguably experienced a loss of individual control over domestic affairs, this loss came with other gains. Women's domestic labor was compensated and recognized as labor that contributed to the wellbeing of the community, if to a lesser degree than agricultural work. Ceresco meeting minutes of Nov. 18, 1845 stipulate that "the secretary be instructed to deduct from each person's time his or her proportionate share of all labor expended in board and washing during the past year," indicating that washing was recognized as labor, even if this labor was counted differently than other labor categories in the

[378] Ada C. Merrill, "Reminiscences of Isabella MacKay Town Hunter," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 31, 1904, pg. 4.
[379] Ibid.

annual report.[380] Historians have also argued that families' decisions to prepare meals in their individual dwellings instead of at the common table reflected women's discontentedness with losing control over domestic affairs of their households. However, members of the community and outside observers argued that men and women were equally likely to serve as the impetus for eating in their individual dwellings.[381] In numerous areas of domestic life, female communitarians at Ceresco experienced financial and social advantages, and any complaints of communal living arrangements were often heard from men as well as women.

In addition to the social and financial benefits that women experienced at Ceresco, they also experienced expanded political rights. While the community failed to protect women's suffrage in its later years of existence, women's property rights and their political engagement through alternative avenues continued to be expressed and encouraged at Ceresco. At the time of Ceresco's founding, women's suffrage within the community was protected by the community's first constitution. Following the community's incorporation by the territory of Wisconsin in 1845, women could

[380] Kathryn Manson Tomasek argues that some labor completed by women was not recognized as official labor in Ceresco's annual labor report, including washing ("The Pivot of the Mechanism," 215). However, Ceresco meeting minutes of Nov. 18, 1845 show that it was still financially compensated. See Meeting Minutes Nov. 18, 1845, pg. 80, Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

[381] John Savagian and Kathryn Tomasek offer somewhat conflicting analyses of the symbolism of families dining separately: Savagian argues that this act was women's attempt to reclaim control over their domestic space, while Tomasek argues this was a method for the community to render women's labor in the community invisible and unpaid ("The Pivot of the Mechanism," 218-219). However, Warren Chase notes that opinions on communal dining were not divided along gender lines. As he states, "Both males and females were about equally divided on this subject." *The Life-Line of the Lone One*, 123.; McIntosh also points to a variety of reasons that individuals chose to eat in their own dwellings, including dietary preferences or their desire to say a blessing before meals. See "Co-operative Communities in Wisconsin," 106-107.

still become stockholders, but could no longer vote in annual meetings of the community's legislating body, nor on the expulsion of members.[382] This restriction on women's voting rights was implemented by Warren Chase, reportedly in order to conform with laws of the Wisconsin territory and thus ensure a smooth process of incorporation.[383] Nevertheless, women continued to hold stocks in the community, and thus held rights to yearly dividends and to their own property shares. Women at Ceresco thus enjoyed financial independence to a far greater degree than women in the rest of the United States at the time. This was particularly true of married women, who could not legally own property independently of their husbands in the United States.[384] While women's suffrage was not protected at Ceresco following the community's incorporation, other legal rights important to women were advanced at Ceresco long before they were established elsewhere in the territory or the rest of the country.

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[382] Meeting Minutes, pg. 35, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society. See also Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 207. The necessity of adding the word "male" to the voting requirements is not clear, as other Fourierist communities including Trumbull Phalanx did not restrict voting to males upon incorporation.

[383] The word "male" was inserted into the voting regulations of the community in the incorporation papers. See Sec. 9, "An Act to Incorporate the Wisconsin Phalanx," Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society. Chase discusses the necessity of incorporation to ensure the financial security of the community in *The Life-Line of the Lone One*, 115. Chase does not mention this change in women's suffrage specifically, only states that the bill of incorporation was "slowly and properly passed, with but slight amendments." *Life-Line of the Lone One*, 121. Joan Elias discusses the process of incorporation and the amendments debated by the legislature, but provides no mention of the addition of "male" to the voting requirements. See Elias, "The Wisconsin Phalanx," 85-97.

[384] New York became the first state to pass a comprehensive law regarding married women property rights in 1848, which became the model for subsequent states enacting married women's property rights over the following decades. Since the late 1830s, statues enabling married women to write their own wills or refuse to sell their property had been passed by states. On women's legal status before the passage of the New York Married Women's Property Act, see Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle*, esp. 57-60.

One particular family at Ceresco provides an excellent example of the female leadership opportunities made available at Ceresco. Garrett Baker and Elmina Clapp Baker joined Ceresco in July 1848, along with their three children, Ellen, Mary Elizabeth ("Lizzie"), and Hannah.[385] Elmina and Garrett quickly moved into leadership roles within the community: Elmina as the head of the committee overseeing the work of the Domestic Department and Garrett as head of various business endeavors within the community. Garrett Baker was elected to the community's governing body in December, 1848, after months of working on subcommittees within the community.[386] Elmina Baker is mentioned as one of the only women to be appointed to lead a committee in the community's meeting minutes, though Isabella Town Hunter pointed out in a 1904 interview that she, too, had once served as head of the Domestic Committee at Ceresco.[387] Garret and Elmina Baker became committed to the cooperative ownership model, and remained in the Ceresco area for years following the community's dissolution, managing a cooperative store. Their endeavor was meant to continue the cooperative spirit of Ceresco through a similar business model, though within a few years the store

[385] Meeting Minutes, June 21, 1848, pg. 33, Record Book 2, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.; See also Register of Names, pg. 29, Microfilm Reel 3, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.
[386] Meeting Minutes, Dec. 11, 1848, pg. 61, Record Book 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.; Baker was elected to a subcommittee to oversee grist mill operations on Nov. 20, 1848. Meeting Minutes, pg. 57, Record Book 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.; Baker was first tasked with committee responsibilities in the meeting minutes on Sept. 25, 1848 (pg. 47) then again on Oct. 9, 1848 (pgs. 50-51).
[387] On Elmina Baker's appointment, see Meeting Minutes, Sept. 25, 1848, pg. 48, Record Book 2, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society; On Isabella Hunter's appointment, see Ada C. Merrill, "Reminiscences of Isabella MacKay Town Hunter," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 31, 1904, pg. 4.

reverted to private ownership. The Bakers raised their children in Fond du Lac County alongside numerous other former Ceresco members until Elmina Baker's death in 1858. Though only limited opportunities for political involvement were found at Ceresco, the model of female leadership to which children were exposed at Ceresco would greatly influence the next generation, as will be explored below.

Warren Chase's willingness to eliminate women's voting rights within the community could be interpreted as the concession of women's rights in order to conform to social norms, but this critique does not represent the complexity of Ceresco's history.[388] To place Chase's actions into fuller context, historians must also analyze his involvement in the 1846 and 1848 Wisconsin constitutional conventions. Beginning in 1846, Chase began his political career by becoming a delegate representing Ceresco and wider Fond du Lac County during the convention meant to transition Wisconsin from a United States territory into a state. These conventions demonstrated the influence Ceresco's members could have in shaping the legal future of the new state of Wisconsin.

## Reformers and the State

In the early 1840s, Wisconsin's territorial government began soliciting public opinion on transitioning to statehood. The response by white settlers, who valued their cheap land and unregulated access to natural resources, varied from apathy to

[388] Historians have, indeed, interpreted Wisconsin Phalanx's restrictive voting rules as indicative of their weak stance on women's rights. Guarneri offers a measured analysis of the Wisconsin Phalanx as both providing women with property rights but falling short in securing them voting rights. *The Utopian Alternative*, 206-207.

active resistance.[389] By 1846, the sentiment among eligible voters had shifted when insufficient infrastructure posed notable transportation challenges for settlers across the territory. As a result, the Wisconsin territorial government began the process of transitioning to statehood, which involved holding a state constitutional convention.

Warren Chase of Ceresco was elected to serve as a delegate at both constitutional conventions in Wisconsin, in 1846 and 1848. Chase's political positions in the constitutional conventions can be taken as representative of the opinions of many members of the Wisconsin Phalanx, due to the numerous leadership positions to which he was elected by the community.[390] At the Wisconsin 1846 constitutional convention, he served on the Special Committee for Married Women's Property Rights, in which he advocated for expanded property rights for women in the new state.[391] Chase, along with the other delegates on the committee, argued for the necessity of granting married women property rights and succeeded in adding an article granting this right to the 1846 draft constitution.

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[389] "Vote of Territory on Question of State Government, 1845", Senate Standing and Special Committee Reports, 1836-1945, Series 170 MAD 3/43/D5-6, Box 2, "Territorial Affairs, 1845" folder, Wisconsin Historical Society.; see also Holmes, *First Constitutional Convention in Wisconsin, 1846,* 229-230.

[390] Chase served first as Vice President and then as President of the Wisconsin Phalanx Council from the initial months of the community's organization in Southport through 1845. See, for example, Meeting Minutes, March 23, 1844, Pg. 11, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Historical Society; Meeting Minutes, Dec. 8, 1845, pg. 83, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Historical Society.

[391] Senate Standing and Special Committee Reports, 1836-1945, Series 170 MAD 3/43/D5-6, Box 2, Folder 19, Wisconsin Historical Society. Chase also notes in his autobiography that he argued for the elimination of capital punishment and for voting rights for women and African Americans. *The Life-Line of the Lone One,* 132-133.

Following its addition to the draft constitution, opposition to the article quickly materialized. Marshall Strong, another delegate, argued that the article would threaten the family unit, predicting: "Woman is to be transformed from her appropriate domestic sphere, taken away from her children, and cast out rudely into the strife and turmoil of the world, there to have her finer sensibilities blunted, the ruling motives of her mind changed, and every trait of loveliness blotted out."[392] Strong's objections were popularly perceived as a protest against the Fourierist reform agenda more generally. As one regional newspaper reported, "To him [Strong] chiefly will belong the honor of saving 'our beloved Wisconsin' from being converted into a Fourier phalanx—a playground for lunatics and idiots."[393] After fierce debate over the draft constitution, largely focusing on the article granting married women property rights, the constitution was rejected by popular vote.[394]

In the next attempt in 1848, Chase again submitted his committee's recommendation to grant married women property rights, arguing that the majority of the committee still believed that married women should have their own property rights so as to save them from the "tyranny of man."[395] However, the Wisconsin constitution ultimately included no mention of married women's property rights. After the more controversial 1846 Constitution failed to pass in the territory, the 1848

[392] As quoted in Catherine Cleary, "Married Women's Property Rights in Wisconsin, 1846-1872," printed in McBride (ed.), *Women's Wisconsin*, 119.
[393] *Madison Argus*, March 9, 1847, as quoted in Frederic L. Paxson, "A Constitution of Democracy--Wisconsin, 1847," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* Vol. 2, No. 1 (June 1915): 17.
[394] Smith, *The History of Wisconsin*, 664-665.
[395] Letter from Warren Chase, Senate Standing and Special Committee Reports, 1836-1945, Series 170 MAD 3/43/D5-6, Box 2, Folder 19, Wisconsin Historical Society.

draft constitution was purposefully less progressive, and thus, in most delegates' minds, more likely to pass a popular vote. Members of Ceresco would remain the only married women with property rights in Wisconsin.

By the 1840s, state legislatures had begun debating the benefits of granting married women various levels of protection over their property. When states began passing this legislation in the late 1840s, it was typically justified as a way to prevent creditors from taking a wife's property to help pay her husband's debts. Very few men who argued for married women's property rights did so with broader arguments on the progress of humanity in mind, except the reformers from Ceresco and their delegate to the Wisconsin constitution convention, Warren Chase. As Chase argued in a letter encouraging the inclusion of married women's property rights in the 1848 Wisconsin constitution, this political right would "emancipate women from that dependence, servitude, degradation of slavery to which she has been subjected in all past ages of barbarism and civilization."[396] Chase's argument for expanded property rights for women stemmed not from practical fears of debt and bankruptcy, but from his larger reform agenda consistent with the Fourierist movement more generally.

Following the passage of the 1848 state constitution and admittance of Wisconsin as a state, Chase was elected to serve as a senator in the first state senate of Wisconsin. His goal of granting married women property rights was finally achieved

[396] Letter from Warren Chase, Senate Standing and Special Committee Reports, 1836-1945, Series 170 MAD 3/43/D5-6, Box 2, Folder 19, Wisconsin Historical Society.; On previous arguments for married women's property rights, see Catherine Cleary, "Married Women's Property Rights in Wisconsin, 1846-1872," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 78, No. 2 (Winter 1994-1995): 110-137.

through one of the first legislative acts passed by the new congress. Chase later noted that the vigorous debate over women's property rights following the controversial draft constitution of 1846 was responsible for its eventual passage as legislation. Thus, while Chase was not successful in his initial attempt to obtain property rights for married women, his disruption of norms regarding women's property rights eventually led to a successful outcome by different means.[397] Due to the influence of Ceresco and their elected representative, Wisconsin became one of the earliest states to grant married women property rights.

Despite Chase's commitment to married women's property rights, Chase did not successfully advance the cause of women's suffrage. Women's suffrage never gained much traction in the Wisconsin constitutional convention nor in the state congress, despite the election of Warren Chase and the inclusion of women's voting rights in the original Ceresco constitution.[398] Chase presumably had numerous opportunities to advocate for this issue during his tenure in state politics, yet his personal support of women's suffrage did not translate into legislative action, and women did not gain the right to vote in Wisconsin until 1920 when the nineteenth amendment was ratified. This lack of dedication to women's voting rights perhaps gives some credence to critics of Ceresco's inadequate dedication to women's

[397] Chase, *The Life-Line of the Lone One*, 134; A.T. Glaze, *Incidents and Anecdotes of Early Days and History of Business in the City and County of Fond du Lac From Early Times to the Present,* (Fond du Lac, Wis: P.B. Haber Print Co., 1905), 94; Cleary notes that while the property women had owned before their marriage was protected under the 1850 law, any wages earned while married were still legally the property of her husband. See Cleary, "Married Women's Property Rights in Wisconsin, 1846-1872," 127.

[398] Holmes, *First Constitutional Convention in Wisconsin, 1846*, 240. According to Chase, he also liberalized divorce laws in Wisconsin. *The Life-Line of the Lone One*, 141-142.

political rights, and could explain why women lost voting rights so quickly upon incorporation of Ceresco. However, The notion of formal politics as the only type of political engagement forecloses the possibility of alternative political acts, including the many methods employed by women who could not engage in political office-holding or voting during the antebellum period.[399] Women across Wisconsin voiced their opinions by sending petitions to government representatives on social issues concerning abolition, education reform, land reform, and temperance. In 1848, a group of 123 Wisconsin women petitioned the United States Congress for land protection from speculators who sought to seek profit off of land made available by the federal government. Petitioners from Ceresco specifically wrote Congress to protest the negative effects of speculation on the development of roads and educational institutions.[400] The records of petitions show that Wisconsin women, including those at Ceresco, utilized means other than the vote to engage in politics, even if they did not achieve suffrage until 1920.[401] In social and political realms,

[399] Historians have noted that Wisconsin women also demonstrated a lackluster commitment to fighting for women's suffrage in the nineteenth century. Cleary discusses women's lack of involvement in politics in Wisconsin territorial history in "Married Women's Property Rights in Wisconsin, 1846-1872," 122; Warren Chase complains of Ceresco women's lack of involvement in Wisconsin politics, arguing that women's "slavery" is often self-sustained. Chase, *The Life-Line of the Lone One*, 133-134. However, Wisconsin women participated in political activism outside of voting.
[400] Smith, *The History of Wisconsin*, 432.
[401] The focus on suffrage as the primary goal of the women's rights movement also erases the activism of African American female reformers throughout the nineteenth century. See Bettina Aptheker, "Directions for Scholarship," in African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965, ed. Ann D. Gordon (Boston: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 205-206.; Within Ceresco, where the governing body was comparably much smaller and more amenable to social reform, those social issues often advocated by women were not only heard, but implemented on a community-wide scale. For example, temperance was not only encouraged, but enforced at Ceresco. Women's property rights were not only considered at Ceresco, they were enacted.

Ceresco residents represented a progressive force within the limitations of their time and place.

## Life in Ripon and Beyond

No consensus has emerged among historians on the reason for Ceresco's dissolution. In many ways, the community was a success financially, infrastructurally, and in members' reported satisfaction with the experiment. However, by 1850 the community had dissolved, and members chose to convert their shares of the joint stock company into individual land plots. Theories on the reasons for this dissolution vary from the assessment that personal differences led to perennial disagreements, to the monotony of communal life led to boredom of the members.[402] The emergence of the nearby town of Ripon, which competed economically with Ceresco, has also been cited, as well as the religious diversity of the members, which caused continuous strife.[403] One member of Ceresco hypothesized that the California Gold Rush and land speculation in the West drew members away from the community.[404] A final related theory posits that Ceresco's wealthiest investors saw financial opportunity in exchanging their stocks for cash, thus forcing the breakdown of the community

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[402] On personal differences and speculation, see Kiszely, "Ceresco: Utopia in Fond du Lac County," in *Source of the Lake,* 28; On disagreements between members, see McIntosh, "Co-operative Communities in Wisconsin," 106; on boredom and monotony, see *Milwaukee Journal*, "Depression of '40s Built Arcadia Here: Communistic Colony Established by 'Fourierites' Near Ripon, Wis., Prospered for Seven Years, but Finally Was Killed by the Monotony of Its Success," March 23, 1933; Warren Chase notes the disagreements over eating together vs, at a common table in *Life-Line of the Lone One*, 123.

[403] Kiszely, "Ceresco: Utopia in Fond du Lac County," in *Source of the Lake*, 11; Alice Smith cites disputes with Ripon among other reasons in *The History of Wisconsin*, 644.

[404] On speculation, see Pedrick, "Sketch of the Wisconsin Phalanx," 221-222; R. Shaw also mentions the California Gold Rush as one element leading to the community's decline in "Ceresco," *Ripon Commonwealth,* 1885, Microfilm Reel 4, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

despite the desires of most members to continue on.[405] The most convincing explanation for the community's dissolution is rooted in the community members' primary identity as pioneer farmers: the land around them had become more valuable since their arrival, and it was now economically viable to sell their shares in the community and continue moving further west, either to less populated land for the purpose of farming or to take their chances in the California Gold Rush.[406] Enough investors decided on this route that they forced the rest of the community to sell their shares or face bankruptcy. This theory, rooted in community members' primary identity as pioneer farmers, is supported by the fact that most former members remained in the West, moving to small towns or forming new settlements further west, as they had done years earlier with the Wisconsin Phalanx.[407] Regardless of the reasons, by the end of 1851 the profits and land of the community had been divided among its shareholders.[408]

Following the dissolution of the Ceresco community, the township of Ceresco merged with the new town of Ripon, eventually combining into the single town of

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[405] Dan Mckanan posits this reason in "Making Sense of Failure: From Death to Resurrection in Nineteenth-Century American Communitarianism," *Utopian Studies* Vol. 18, No. 2 (2007): 166-168. Eugenia Mason wrote of the community: "The spirit of speculation was what broke up the phalanx." See Kidder, "Recollections of Early Settlers," Microfilm Reel 4, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society, pg. 265.

[406] A statement released by Ceresco's Board of Directors upon the community's dissolution pointed to the increased value of the land and the desire by some members to speculate as a primary factor that convinced members to sell their shares and move on. See "Address to the Friends of Reform and Association," *The Spirit of the Age*, Vol. 1, 362-365.

[407] See discussion of the dissolution in Elias, "The Wisconsin Phalanx," 199-203.

[408] The final meeting minutes reveal the sale of land to stockholders, with sales continuing into 1852 to transfer remaining land to the city of Ceresco. Meeting Minutes, Record Book 2, pgs. 135-139, Microfilm Reel 2, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Ripon that remains in existence today. Some members of the former community decided to stay in Ripon, and many who left maintained ties to their fellow communitarians. Warren Chase remained in the town for the years immediately following the dissolution of the community but spent much of his time on the road as a travelling Spiritualist lecturer.[409] Following an unsuccessful bid for governor under the Free-Soil Party in 1849, Chase decided to move away from Wisconsin and pursue politics elsewhere. In 1855, Warren Chase moved his family to Battle Creek, Michigan, a gathering place for Spiritualists, and the same town to which Sojourner Truth had move and explored Spiritualism.[410] Following the death of his wife, Mary, Warren Chase settled in Santa Barbara in 1876 and became a state senator in California.[411]

Garrett and Elmina Baker remained in Ripon and attempted to start a cooperative store to retain the spirit of the community, but this store model failed within a few years and reverted to a private store.[412] Garrett Baker also became an influential voice in Wisconsin politics, and in 1854 he, along with Warren Chase, took part in the schoolhouse meeting that led to the founding of the Republican

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[409] On Chase, see Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 349-350; H. A. Tenney and David Atwood, *Memorial Record of the Fathers of Wisconsin Containing Sketches of the Lives and Career of the Members of the Constitutional Conventions of 1846 and 1847-8 with a History of Early Settlement in Wisconsin,* (Madison: David Atwood, 1880), 61-62.
[410] Sharon Hartman Strom, *Fortune, Fame, and Desire: Promoting the Self in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 153.
[411] H. A. Tenney and David Atwood, *Memorial Record of the Fathers of Wisconsin Containing Sketches of the Lives and Career of the Members of the Constitutional Conventions of 1846 and 1847-8 with a History of Early Settlement in Wisconsin,* 61-62.
[412] Kidder, "Recollections of Early Settlers," 265, Microfilm Reel 4, Wisconsin Phalanx Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.

Party.[413] Baker became Justice of the Peace of the town of Ripon and founded the school that would later become Ripon College, donating part Ceresco's remaining property to the school.[414] Baker continued his political engagement in Ripon until Elmina Baker's death in 1858 and his subsequent decision to move away from the area. Despite moving away from Ripon, Garrett Baker remained tied to his old friends at Ceresco. According to letters from his children, Baker continued to visit Ripon every year to reunite with fellow communitarians.[415] His children continued to receive updates on their old friends through correspondence.[416]

While Ceresco's leaders continued to pursue economic and political reform following the dissolution of the community, the community's lasting impact only became clear as the next generation reached adulthood. Garrett and Elmina Baker's daughter Mary Elizabeth (Lizzie) was just eleven years old when her family arrived at Ceresco, but she was impacted by her experiences at the community for the rest of her life. She and her sister, Nellie, maintained correspondence with residents of Ripon for years following the community's dissolution, including with Robert Mason and his wife, Eugenia Wilson Mason.[417] In her adult life, Lizzie experienced the benefits of

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[413] Ira Landrith, "1826 Keeping Pace with 1922: High Points in a Long and Useful Life," *The Congregationalist,* Vol. 107, May 25, 1922, pg. 655.
[414] Samuel Pedrick, "Early History of Ripon College, 1850-1864," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* Vol. 8, No. 1 (Sep., 1924): 22, 27.
[415] Letter, Lizzie Baker to Kate Baker, Sept. 26, 1880, Box 1, Folder 1, IHLC MS 830, Baker-Busey-Dunlap Family Papers, 1866-1933, Illinois History and Lincoln Collections, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (hereafter referenced as BBDFP); Letter, G.H. Baker to Kate Baker, Sept. 2, 1880, Box 1, Letters from G. H. Baker, BBDFP.
[416] In 1867, Lizzie baker would edit a children's book with Thomas Lund, which was contrived at Ceresco. See Theodore Lund, *The Children of the Frontier*, ed. Lizzie Baker Gow (New York: Appleton & Co., 1867).
[417] Letter, Carrie Stone to Nellie Dunlap, Oct. 12, 1890, Box 4, BBDFP.

the political rights for which her parents' generation had fought at Ceresco, and completed some the political battles they had only just begun. After divorcing her first husband, Lizzie Baker lived through a costly and stressful settlement agreement, in which the property she had inherited from her family was at stake.[418] After struggling through a legal battle to defend her property, Lizzie's awareness of the legal restrictions placed on women within marriage grew. Over the following years, Lizzie developed a commitment to women's rights, both within the institution of marriage and at the ballot. She eventually moved to Kitsap county, Washington, where she dedicated her life to the cause of women's suffrage.

In the multi-volume *History of Woman Suffrage*, the historicizing project initiated by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lizzie Baker is mentioned as a significant contributor to the achievement of women's suffrage in Washington state in 1910. One statement proclaims: "Kitsap was the banner county giving the highest ratio for the amendment. This was largely due to the remarkable house to house canvass made by Mrs. Elizabeth A. Baker…."[419] Baker gave numerous speeches and wrote many articles on the need for women to earn suffrage in order to

[418] Lizzie discussed her legal struggles with her ex-husband in numerous letters to her sister, Kate. See, for example, Letters, Lizzie Baker to Kate Baker, July 25, 1880, Aug. 3, 1880, May 5, 1881, June 5, 1881, Box 1, Folder 1, BBDFP.

[419] *The History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. 6: 1900-1920, ed. Ida Husted Harper (New York: J. J. Little & Ives Company, 1922), 701. Lizzie Baker's second husband was named Jesse Baker, and thus her married name became "Baker" again following her second marriage. Jessie Baker died before Lizzie Baker, and their son was also named Jesse Baker.

become independent legal entities within the institution of marriage—a need she recognized from first-hand experience.[420]

Lizzie Baker's arguments for suffrage were rooted in the gender-essentialism common in her era, but were also consciously rooted in the history of women's rights activism that found early expressions at Ceresco. Baker's numerous newspaper articles and speeches typically appealed to the men and women who wanted women to have more control over local issues with the assumption that they would use that political power to invest in their children's futures. Baker argued that women, if they achieved suffrage, would vote to support local education, health issues, and limit alcohol consumption. For example, in one article, Baker argues that mothers should have the right to vote on issues pertinent to their children's' health and safety, including "the pure milk supply, the pure food law, the anti-saloon, the educational facilities."[421] In addition to assuring voters that women's votes would improve society, Baker also appealed specifically to female audiences in her speeches by reminding women how difficult their lives were before the women's rights movement began. In one speech, Baker reminded her audience that only a few years earlier married women could own no property and were legally erased under the law, subsumed by the legal identity of their husbands. Baker's arguments framed suffrage as the next logical step in a women's rights movement that had already dramatically improved women's material prospects and legal standing, and by extension, society's

[420] Speech notes, Box 13, American Women and Education, BBDFP.
[421] "Manette," newspaper clipping, Box 12, Mary Elizabeth "Lizzie" Baker scrapbook, BBDFP.

condition.[422] Baker's commitment to women's rights developed throughout her life from her own experiences, but were arguably first shaped in her childhood by her reformer parents and the progressive community they joined. Ceresco members' advocacy for married women's property rights in the preceding generation became an early example of the legal rights women now took for granted. Baker used the example of legal accomplishments achieved in her parents' generation to motivate the next generation of women's rights activists in the fight for suffrage.

But Lizzie Baker's reform efforts, like those of many former Fourierist community members, were marked by contradictions and regressive ideas on race that accompanied her progressive ideologies on gender. Like many white farmers settling on the frontier, The Baker family valued the "civilizing" of Indigenous Peoples through various colonial endeavors. These included gathering Indigenous populations into reservations, sending missionaries to convert Indigenous Peoples, and establishing boarding schools in which Indigenous children would become indoctrinated in white, Protestant Christian worldviews. In numerous letters to her younger sister Kate, Lizzie Baker noted her involvement with multiple educational institutions for Indigenous children, most notably the Hampton Normal School in Virginia (Originally the Hampton Institute for African Americans). Established to educate freed slaves after the Civil War, in 1878 the school began accepting Indigenous students for the purpose of training them to become future teachers in

[422] Writings American Women and Education, undated "Considerations for Woman in the Measure of a Nation's Progress," undated, Box 12, BBDFP.

boarding schools for Indigenous children. Thus, the school was meant to culturally assimilate Indigenous students who would then assist in the cultural assimilation of future Indigenous students. Hampton Institute principal Samuel Armstrong advocated the importance of civilizing these children in the effort to mold them into contributing members of American society. To Armstrong, as well as to many advocates of Indigenous boarding schools, this project involved domesticating Indigenous women so that they, in turn, could help civilize their male counterparts.[423] White, female teachers travelled across the country to teach topics including cooking, sewing, laundry, and tailoring to female Indigenous students.[424] An essential aspect of the civilizing process thus involved hiring white women to teach Indigenous women to conform to white-middle class gender roles, a pursuit which ironically restricted the activities of Indigenous women while opening up additional professional opportunities for white women, including the Bakers.

In a fundraising program for Hampton, the school's purpose was described as "the practical Christian education of the Indian and Negro races of our country." The pamphlet included information on the "success" of civilizing Indigenous pupils: "Eleven have gone back to wild life, but not one has become a vicious character," and "Indians when properly taught, seldom relapse when they go back to the care of

[423] Cathleen D. Cahill discusses the feminine terms that Armstrong used to describe the Indian Service in his attempt to attract white, female employees to aid in domesticating female Indigenous students. See Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 66-67

[424] The catalogue for the Hampton Institute includes the "women's industrial department," a series of purportedly feminine skillsets taught by female teachers, and a "men's industrial department" of purportedly masculine skillsets taught by male teachers. See the Catalogue of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Hampton, Virginia, for the Academic Year 1885-1886, Box 7, BBDFP.

competent Agents and missionaries."[425] Lizzie Baker's glowing reviews of this school inspired her sister Kate to become an instructor there, beginning Kate's career working at Indigenous educational institutions and reservations for years to follow. Lizzie and Kate Baker's colonial approach to Indigenous communities follow a pattern of reform common among Fourierists. Though they advocated for social reform on a national or even global scale, American Fourierists expected even those outside of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds to conform to their particular vision for the ideal society. Particularly for Fourierists in the West, this vision often entailed territorial expansion of the United States and use of Indigenous Peoples' lands for the development of socialist communal experiments. While their communities offered a different model of territorial expansion than the capitalist-driven colonial expansion occurring across the United States, it was no less destructive to Indigenous cultures.

In addition to their colonialist approach to reform, the Bakers also expressed a white-centered understanding of social progress that contradicted the previous generations' tie to the underground railroad in Wisconsin. After divorcing her first husband, Lizzie Baker remarried and moved to Virginia, where she and her second husband maintained a vineyard and farm. In her letters to family members, Lizzie Baker discussed the overwhelming tasks involved in farm maintenance, many of which were completed by numerous African American farm hands and domestic servants. Her letters increasingly contained racist epithets used to describe the African

[425] Hampton is described as carrying on the legacy of freedman schools, meant to train new community leaders who will go on to educate former slaves. See pamphlet, "Public Meeting in Behalf of Negro and Indian Education," Box 7, Hampton Institute Materials, 1884-1928, BBDFP.

American laborers employed at their farm. Nevertheless, Baker still claimed to feel out of place and alone in Southern culture. Despite Lizzie Baker's continuous support of the Republican party and her claims of discomfort with Southern culture, racist remarks permeated her letters and revealed racism that was not yet explicit among the Fourierists of the previous generation. While Wisconsin Fourierists harbored free-soil sentiments and resisted the advancement of slavery into the territory, their less-than-radical stance on racial equality translated into racism in the next generation by the time they reach adulthood.[426]

The life of Lizzie Baker's sister, Kate, also reveals the limits to social reform pursued by Fourierists and the next generation. Kate was born in 1855, shortly before her mother Elmina Baker's death. In a similar pattern of multi-generational feminism traced from Angelique Martin at Trumbull Phalanx to her daughter Lilly Martin in a previous chapter, Kate Baker also expressed her style of feminism through her pursuit of art. Kate Baker was also exposed to progressive reform at an early age, yet wanted to enact reform outside of the communal environment. Baker even moved to Cincinnati to train as an artist, just as Lilly Martin had years earlier, though Baker was interested in woodcarving, an even more unusual endeavor for a woman in the

[426] Racist remarks and language can be found throughout her letters, including comments about her African-American domestic servants. For example, in a letter to Kate written on Feb.8, 1880, Lizzie describes her new sewing machine and states, "there a regular stampede of niggers who want a few seams stitched up." Subsequent letters use similar derogatory language and crude remarks concerning African American domestic servants and farm hands. See Letter, Lizzie Baker to Kate Baker, Feb. 8, 1880, Box 1, BBDFP; see also Letter, Lizzie Baker to Kate Baker, Jan. 15, 1882 (completed Jan. 22), Box 1, BBDFP; Letter, Lizzie Baker to Kate Baker, July 25th, 1880, Box 1, BBDFP. In a letter from Lizzie Baker to Kate Baker on Feb. 22, 1882, Lizzie states that she feels isolated and out of place around southerners, whom she finds to be ignorant. Box 1, BBDFP.

mid-nineteenth century. She did not pursue a career as an independent artist, however, but instead applied her woodworking skills to an educational environment.[427] In the mid-1880s, Baker went to work at the Hampton school in Virginia. There, Baker, taught art and woodworking to both male and female Indigenous students.[428] Baker was thus able to become a self-reliant, mobile, and independent woman through her role as teacher at Hampton, while also arguably limiting the independence of Indigenous students by participating in the colonization efforts of the school.[429] The contradictions of Fourierist communities became embodied in Baker's limited progressive views.

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[427] Jacqueline Emery analyzes spaces of resistance created by Indigenous students at Hampton, particularly through their student-run newspaper, in "Writing against Erasure: Indigenous Students at Hampton Institute and the Periodical Press," *American Periodicals* Vol. 22, No. 2 (2012): 178-198; Jacqueline Fear-Segal explores the identity conflict instigated in Indigenous students who attended Hampton in "'Use the Club of White Man's Wisdom in Defense of Our Customs': White Schools and Native Agendas," *American Studies International* Vol. 40, No. 3 (October 2002): 6-32 ; W. Roger Buffalohead and Paulette Fairbanks Molin examine the gender-based roles taught to Indigenous families at Hampton through its "model family" program in "'A Nucleus of Civilization': American Indian Families at Hampton Institute in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of American Indian Education* Vol. 35, No. 3 (Spring 1996): 59-94; Katherine Ellinghaus explores instances of interracial sexual relations and marriage at Hampton in "Assimilation by Marriage: White Women and Indigenous Men at Hampton Institute, 1878-1923," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 108, No. 3 (2000): 279-303; Paula Marie Seniors analyzes the use of theatre to express cross-ethnic alliances made between African American and Indigenous students at Hampton in "Cole and Johnson's 'The Red Moon', 1908-1910: Reimagining African American and Indigenous Female Education at Hampton Institute," *The Journal of African American History* Vol. 93, No. 1 (Winter, 2008): 21-35.

[428] Her teaching assignment is listed as "drawing" in the Catalogue of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, Hampton, Virginia, for the Academic Year 1885-1886, Box 7, BBDFP; Kate's sister Lizzie Baker describes Kate's artistic work as "carving" and "woodwork" in her letters. See letter, Lizzie Baker to Kate Baker, July 10th, 1879, Box 1, BBDFP.

[429] Marinella Lentis notes the role of art teachers at boarding schools like Hampton in shifting female Native Americans' understanding of gender roles by teaching them how to be effectively domestic within a white, middle-class understanding of domesticity: "….if arts and crafts provided "personal rejuvenation" for the maker, they were an ideal activity for the leisure time, particularly for young girls who could learn to make effective use of their idle moments. Sensible employment in arts and crafts ultimately encouraged character building and feminine identification with ideals and principles such as order, cleanliness, docility, dependence, industriousness, and 'love of home and family,' virtues that were associated with social improvement and the cult of domesticity." See Lentis, *Colonized through*

The contradictions of Fourierist reform continued to be enacted in the life of Kate Baker in her next professional endeavor. In the late 1880s Baker moved to Arizona, where she was appointed Matron of the Colorado River Indian Reserve school. Though she was recommended for the position of agency clerk, the commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs rejected this proposition by explaining that "the Office has not been in the habit of appointing ladies as agency clerks."[430] In Arizona, she met and married Indian agent George Busey.[431] In a letter to her future husband, Baker pined for the Indigenous students at Hampton, stating that she wished he could "sometime see some of the more civilized Indians such as I saw at Hampton."[432] Baker's desire to see every Native American become as "civilized" as the students at Hampton reveals the ways she used her own independence and mobility to mold Indigenous students to fit the white, middle-class ideal. As historian Virginia Scharff has argued, "the freedom to move is a marker of social power and of legitimacy," a power which historically belonged to men. Through her work at Hampton and with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Baker claimed the power of mobility while contributing to the loss of that power for Indigenous Peoples.[433]

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*Art: American Indian Schools and Art Education, 1889-1915* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017), 21.

[430] Letter, J. G. Cannon to acting commissioner A. B. Upshaw, July 26, 1888, Box 6, BBDFP.

[431] The same job held by Nathaniel Meeker of Trumbull Phalanx

[432] Letter, Kate Baker to George Busey, April 19, 1890, Box 1, Correspondence-- Sent, 1888-1920, BBDFP.; Cathleen Cahill analyzes ways that Indigenous pupils were sometimes able to use their experiences at Hampton and other Indigenous boarding schools to form resistance to the colonial project. Indigenous students who used their education to become future teachers at Indigenous boarding schools could undermine assimilation efforts and strengthen tribal ties. See Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers,* esp. 112-113.

[433] Virginia Scharff, *Twenty Thousand Roads: Women, Movement, and the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 3.

Kate Baker's path followed the westward movement of American settler-colonialists of the mid-nineteenth century, and yet the details of her life were shaped by the Fourierist community network in which she was raised. Elements of Garrett Baker's life that were cultivated at Ceresco were clearly carried on by Kate Baker, notably their shared fascination with Spiritualism. Following Garrett Baker's death, Kate Baker received letters from mediums sending her messages from her father.[434] Her continued fascination with the religious movement followed the footsteps of numerous other social reformers in the mid-nineteenth century, but also specifically followed the religious path chosen by community leaders at Ceresco. Kate Baker was born after the dissolution of Ceresco, though arguably was still influenced by the reform interests of its residents, particularly those who remained in the area following the community's dissolution.

The Baker family's continued pursuit of reform after the dissolution of Ceresco, both within the local community of Ripon and across the country with the next generation, shows the multigenerational impact of communitarian networks. While at the community, Elmina and Garrett Baker befriended numerous fellow reformers, including Warren Chase, who went on to play a significant role in the formation of the Republican party. Their daughters' interest in the education of

[434] Letters (undated), Box 1, signed Garrett H. Baker, 1875-1885 folder, BBDFP; by the 1880s and through the 1920s, Kate had moved on from Spiritualism to an interest in Clairvoyants. She was in contact with a clairvoyant who she asked for advice and predictions regarding future events, including the birth of her grandchildren. See Letter from Kate Baker to Nell Dunlap, March 14, 1889, Box 1, Correspondence sent, BBDFP; Letter, Alice Caskey of the Psychic Endeavor Society to Kate Busey, Oct. 18, 1927, Box 4, BBDFP.

Indigenous students simultaneously took advantage of expanded professional opportunities for white women, while also reaffirming colonial relationships between white Americans and the Indigenous students they were "civilizing." In some ways, their careers continued the colonial project implicit in the founding of Ceresco. While not all members of Ceresco went on to pursue social reform, some did, including the Baker Family, as well as the Haven sisters discussed above. Charlotte Haven would go on to become one of the organizers and presidents of the Society of Friends in Council, a social reform club that had among its lecturers Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton.[435] Haven's continuation of a feminist reform agenda cannot necessarily be traced back to her time spent at Ceresco, yet it represents a continuation of the reform efforts that were pursued at the community.

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As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Ceresco can perhaps best be characterized as a contradiction of goals. While it did not achieve the gender equality proposed in Fourier's blueprint for community, it did offer improvement in livelihood, financial opportunity, and political engagement for women than they could otherwise find in the Wisconsin territory. Though historians have criticized the community for its failure to achieve complete gender equality in political and social life within the community, these critiques judge the community by an inconsistent

[435] Elias, "The Wisconsin Phalanx," 207.; This Council is described as being created by women who "were desirous of securing increased facilities for self-improvement." Charlotte Mason is listed as a founding member, and Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are listed as speakers in 1876. See *Portrait and Biographical Album of Green Lake, Marquette and Waushara Counties, Wisconsin* (Chicago: Acme Publishing Company, 1890), 266.

standard of feminism instead of comparing women's experiences within the community to their opportunities in the broader Wisconsin territory. These critiques also overlook the words and actions of female community members themselves, including Louisa Sheldon, Isabella Town, and the Haven sisters, who found satisfaction and personal fulfillment in many aspects of their communal lives.[436] The community simultaneously challenged and mimicked gender inequality: in one sense, the community recreated women's role as domestically-oriented members of patriarchal families, while also critiquing aspects of that family model, including the isolated household and financially-uncompensated domestic labor.

In a similarly contradictory manner, the members of Ceresco also critiqued aspects of the American economic model, while simultaneously contributing to the speculation and westward expansion that strengthened the economy of the United States. Community members gained profit from their stocks in the community upon its dissolution, which many of those members then used to purchase property further west. As farmers, they were motivated to speculate on land further west once it became evident that they had increased the value of the land they shared at Ceresco. Though their intention was to produce a more equitable economic system, this system excluded the interests and livelihood of Indigenous communities, who were removed from their land as a result. As one Wisconsin settler boasted in 1854:

[436] See Letter, Louisa Sheldon to Abigail Sheldon, Oct. 1, 1847, Benjamin Sheldon Papers, Oshkosh SC 92. Hunter describes her contentment with community life for the benefit of her son as well as herself. Ada C. Merrill, "Reminiscences of Isabella MacKay Town Hunter," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 31, 1904, pg. 4.

> The howling of wolves and savage yells of the Indian no longer rend the air and chill the blood with sensations of horror. The wigwam and its inmates, with all the associations of rude and savage life, have disappeared, as the tide of civilization, like a prairie fire, has swept over the country.[437]

Ceresco members, while not taking a direct part in the treaties that forced Indigenous removal, were part of the "tide of civilization" that led to the removal of Indigenous Peoples.

Nevertheless, the members of Ceresco took part part in a larger social reform moment that continued with the suffrage movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Women who were only children at Ceresco grew up to become suffragists and leaders in their own localities. Lizzie Baker understood the importance of her role in expanding the opportunities for women in future generations, even if she did not explicitly recognize the importance of her own upbringing at Ceresco in shaping her outcomes. On the eve of the passage of the Washington amendment granting women the right to vote, Lizzie Baker wrote to her sister Kate: "suffrage will be such a matter of course [to our grandchildren] that they will never realize what this generation of women have gone through with to get it. Results always look easy."[438] While Baker complained that the results of reform activism would be taken for

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[437] As quoted in Butterfield, *The History of Fond Du Lac County, Wisconsin,* 435.

[438] Letter, Lizzie Baker to Kate Baker, Oct. 29, 1910, Box 2, BBDFP. Lizzie also discussed the overlap between temperance advocates and suffragists and argued that this connection was hurting the suffragists' cause. In a letter to her sister Kate, Lizzie posited that the same suffrage amendment that had passed in Washington had been defeated in other states because it was tied to the anti-liquor campaigns. When a "local option" measure appeared on the ballot at the same time as a suffrage amendment (as was the case in South Dakota that year), men who came out to vote for allowing localities to sell liquor also voted against women's suffrage. As Lizzie put it, "we said keep out of it—one issue at a time." Letter, Lizzie Baker to Kate Baker, Nov. 12, 1910, Box 2, BBDFP.

granted by the next generation, the origins of her own reform activism were perhaps even hidden from her own conscious awareness as well. Baker's upbringing at Ceresco placed her on a path toward achieving the social reforms that her parents had initiated in her youth. Ceresco provided a site in which social, political, and religious reforms could be initiated and then adopted and pursued by the generations to follow.

## Chapter 4: Brook Farm: Two Women, Two Distinct Paths After Community

The Brook Farm community of West Roxbury, Massachusetts has received more attention by historians and popular audiences than any other Fourierist community due to the renowned writers, preachers, and Transcendentalist leaders who were involved with the community.[439] In addition to being the most recorded community, Brook Farm was also the earliest of the Fourierist communities, as it was founded in 1841, though it only officially adopted Fourier's organizational structure in 1843. Brook Farm's history reflects shifting trends in religious and social reform occurring in the Northeast during the mid-nineteenth century. The community began first as a Transcendentalist experiment that challenged the sectarianism and lack of reform activism in Protestant churches and later transitioned into a Fourierist experiment that challenged the economic insecurity of market capitalism. This transition led to two distinct phases of the community and attracted different groups of reformers to join the community during each of these phases. Partially because of the community's proximity to the major reform hub of Boston, Brook Farm was well-positioned to connect reformers from across the country (and internationally) either in-person or through correspondence. This chapter will examine the impact of Brook Farm on the social reformers who visited and resided in the community, highlighting

[439] Historians have collected numerous accounts and letters from Brook Farm community members and published them as collections, including: Joel Myerson, *The Brook Farm Book: A Collection of First-Hand Accounts of the Community* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987); Myerson, *Brook Farm: An Annotated Bibliography and Resource Guide* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1978); Henry W. Sams, ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958); Marianne Dwight, *Letters from Brook Farm*.

the experiences of two women who experienced each of phases of Brook Farm and were each, in turn, shaped by the particular stage in which they found the community.

Most histories of Brook Farm have thus far focused on the community's organizational structure, the ideas espoused by its most famous members, or the personal experiences of those members.[440] Less attention has been given to the community's impact on later social reform movements, most notably the abolitionist and women's rights movements. Though Brook Farm never served as an experiment in racial equality (it was never home to African Americans members like the Northampton Association), the anti-slavery cause was openly supported at Brook Farm, and members cultivated an anti-slavery network which they continued to maintain long after the dissolution of the community.[441] The abolitionist fervor at Brook Farm was matched by the community's support of the early women's rights movement. The Transcendentalist community of Boston was led and supported by women who challenged the notion of "Republican Motherhood," which presented women's value as being derived from their role as mothers or wives of patriots, in favor of espousing the potential of women as independent beings. These feminist ideas found expression at Brook Farm, where Transcendentalist members and visitors like Margaret Fuller expressed notions of womanhood that reframed women as

[440] For an account that focuses primarily on the well-known leaders of the communal experiment, see Francis, *Transcendental Utopias.*

[441] Lindsay Swift describes the conversations held at Brook Farm about the morality of wearing cotton grown by slaves, as it was "woven with many sins." See Swift, *Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900), 64; As will be discussed below, Georgiana Bruce was exposed to Garrison's lectures while at Brook Farm and subsequently became an active abolitionist.

worthy of education and public engagement regardless of their relationships to men. This chapter explores Brook Farm's impact on these broader social reform movements by focusing on the female members and supporters of the community.

The first years of Brook Farm's existence have attracted the most attention from historians due to the famous Transcendentalists who moved to and visited Brook Farm during this period, including Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Margaret Fuller. The famous Transcendentalist circle of friends that supported Brook Farm also shaped its memory as a space where literary intellectuals gathered and shared ideas.[442] However, the early Transcendentalist phase of Brook Farm does not represent its complete history nor its lasting impact. In 1844, Brook Farm transitioned into a Fourierist experiment at a time when numerous other Fourierist experiments were emerging across the country. This transition changed the community's labor organization and social dynamics, leaving some of the early members feeling disgruntled while others embraced the change. Reformers who were involved with numerous social reform movements, including abolitionism, women's rights, labor reform, and education reform, visited Brook Farm after its transition to Fourierism, and many who were not involved in any these reform movements at the time of their arrival often left Brook Farm having joined one of these movements. By the time Brook Farm dissolved in 1847 many residents who had crossed paths there had

[442] Many of the former members of Brook Farm later published their letters or personal accounts from their time at the community, which often presented the community in nostalgic terms. These accounts include: John Thomas Codman, *Brook Farm: Historic and Personal Memoirs* (Boston: Arena Publishing Company, 1894) and John Van Der Zee Sears, *My Friends at Brook Farm* (New York: Desmond FitzGerald, Inc., 1912).

moved on from the community and were engaged in advocating for those reforms that had been supported at Brook Farm.

Brook Farm has typically been presented as an idealistic endeavor made up of pensive intellectuals who strove to read and write their way into utopia without performing the real manual labor required to maintain and finance that lifestyle.[443] The aloof idealism expressed by Brook Farm's founders has been presented by historians as foreshadowing the perennial financial struggles the community would face. While many historians of the community have cited this naive intellectual folly as ultimately leading to the failure of the community, others have challenged this simplistic success/failure binary by pointing to the long-lasting camaraderie among members as signs of real success within the community, and of its meaningful impact on the future lives of its residents. In this chapter I support this second narrative, arguing that regardless of the financial failures of the community, the experience of living in Brook Farm shaped the lives of its members and was remembered by many one of the most meaningful periods of their lives.

This chapter explores the lives of two women who each experienced one of the distinct phases of Brook Farm. Georgiana Bruce joined Brook Farm during the Transcendentalist phase and left feeling disappointed at the community's decision to

[443] Those authors who romantically portray Brook Farm as an Idyllic experiment include Edith Roelker Curtis, *A Season in Utopia: The Story of Brook Farm* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1961); Zoltán Haraszti ed., *The Idyll of Brook Farm: As Revealed by Unpublished Letters in the Boston Public Library* (Boston: The Trustees of the Public Library, 1937); Lindsay Swift, *Brook Farm*; For an example of a historian who criticized this idealism as translating into detachment form the practical elements of communal living, see Sterling Delano, *Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia (*Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004);

transition to Fourierism. She later became a teacher and education reformer while also advocating for women's rights and abolitionism from her home in Santa Cruz, California. As will be discussed below, Bruce's feminism developed through her friendship with Margaret Fuller while at Brook Farm and, thus, differed in significant ways from the feminism advocated by Bruce's lifelong friend and fellow California reformer, Eliza Farnham. Though Farnham was celebrated in Susan B. Anthony's *History of Woman Suffrage* as a pioneering figure of the suffrage movement in California, Bruce disputed this claim and critiqued Farnham for her unwillingness to advocate for the legal equality for which Margaret Fuller and her other Brook Farm friends advocated. Anna Blackwell arrived after Brook Farm's transition to Fourierism, and, unlike Bruce, Blackwell was attracted to the community due to its adoption of Fourier's organizational structure. While at Brook Farm, Blackwell was introduced to Fourierists including Albert Brisbane, who offered Blackwell a job in France, translating Fourier's writings. This translation opportunity launched Blackwell into a career as a writer, translator, and journalist in Europe, where she would remain for the rest of her life.

At first glance, these two women had much in common: Bruce and Blackwell were both born in Bristol, England, just two years apart. Both of them immigrated to the United States as young women, became engaged in reform networks in the United States, and spent time at Brook Farm before moving on to pursue professional opportunities and social reform activism in new places. Both reflected deeply on their own personal religious convictions in their writings, and both would eventually

become ardent Spiritualists. Despite these similarities, their life paths would take them in different directions geographically and professionally, which were influenced by their experiences at Brook Farm. Though distinct, each of these paths pushed the professional and political boundaries that existed for women of their era.

## From Anti-Sectarian to Christian Socialism

The early members of Brook Farm were part of the Transcendentalist movement, a movement that emerged from the Unitarian church in the early nineteenth century. Inspired by German idealism and Swedenborgianism, a group of young Unitarian leaders (many of whom were Harvard Divinity School graduates) began to question traditional approaches to Christianity and the Bible based entirely on rational interpretation.[444] This group, made up of George Ripley, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Elizabeth Peabody, Frederik Henry Hedge and Orestes Brownson among others, sought to combine the head and heart—the rationalism of Unitarianism with the emotional experiences being explored by the evangelicals of the Second Great Awakening. [445] A series of alliances emerged among Unitarians who branched off into the Transcendentalist camp, and two primary factions of Transcendentalists eventually emerged: one led by Emerson that valued self-reliance and self-discovery as the key to social change, another led by Ripley and Brownson that advocated

[444] The divinity school was established as a distinct institution from Harvard University in 1816.
[445] Philip Gura explains the evolution of the Transcendentalist movement as including a critique of rationalism and the study of language as the best ways to understand the meaning of the Bible. Instead, Transcendentalists advocated an appreciation of poetry as harking back to an "original" language which united all people and existed before language became arbitrary and corrupted by cultural influences. They came to see the Bible as a kind of "poetry of the soul." See Philip Gura, *American Transcendentalism: A History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 44-48.

institutional change and a "brotherhood of man" as the key to social reform, particularly through the Associationist movement.[446]

After graduating from Harvard Divinity School in 1826, George Ripley became a Unitarian preacher in Boston. He served as pastor at the Purchase Street Church until Spring 1841, when it became clear that his parish was no longer receptive to his social reform convictions, nor of his Transcendentalist sympathies. Ripley explained in a letter to his parish that he felt an urge to live a lifestyle more consistent with his values, which included a more communal, cooperative existence among reform-minded people.[447] He decided to begin enacting these goals through the creation of Brook Farm in the spring of 1841. George Ripley reached out to his friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson, while he was organizing Brook Farm, but Emerson's style of Transcendentalism called for isolated self-reflection, not communal interdependence. For Emerson, only through personal enlightenment and moral elevation could individuals come to transform society's corrupt institutions, not through the development of new, communal institutions. Ripley disagreed, arguing that the creation of new institutions in the form of cooperative communities would nudge individuals into a more morally-consistent lifestyle.

Brook Farm's founding by a Unitarian preacher might make the religious loyalties of the community seem evident, but in fact Brook Farm is often considered

[446] Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, xiv.
[447] George Ripley, Letter to his parish, Oct. 1, 1840, as quoted in Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *George Ripley* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1888), 63-91.

one of the earliest secular communities in the United States, at least in its early years of existence.[448] This label as a secular community is due primarily to Ripley's strong distaste for denominationalism, which led to his refusal to hold any religious services on the Brook farm property, nor to associate Brook Farm with any single Christian denomination. As one young boarder put it, "A person that comes here is apt to get into the habit of staying at home on the Sabbath."[449] Only after Brook Farm's transition to Fourierism did religious celebrations and gatherings begin to be practiced on the Brook Farm grounds.

For Ripley, the transformation of society was possible through the creation of institutions that reflected Christian principles. Ripley saw the Christianity being promoted in Boston churches as beholden to the immoral institutions of his era, including the unjust system of market capitalism. In a letter to his Boston parish announcing his withdrawal from ministry, Ripley discussed his rejection of the idea of depravity in the individual, arguing instead that it is the corrupt influence of society's structures which must be addressed: "If society performed its whole duty, the dominion of force would yield to the prevalence of love, our prisons would be converted into moral hospitals, the schoolmaster would supersede the executioner, violence would no more be heard on our land, nor destruction in our borders."[450] He

[448] Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 155; Sterling Delano, *Brook Farm*, 40.
[449] Letter, Sophia Eastman to Family, July 25, 1843, ABER MS MISC, Box 5 folder 1, Middlebury College Special Collections & Archives Repository.
[450] George Ripley, Letter to his parish, Oct. 1, 1840, as quoted in Frothingham, *George Ripley*, 88.

believed his Boston parish, with its social conservatism and elite classism, was not doing enough to transform society.

Ripley instead hoped to pursue a liberal Christianity that would "established the Kingdom of God, not in the dead past, but in the living present."[451] Ripley realized this nonsectarian goal through the creation of Brook Farm. Ripley described his vision for Brook Farm as the "city of God" enacted on earth, a place where God's plan for the humanity would be enacted on a societal level.[452] Brook Farm visitors and members, including William Henry Channing, John Dwight, and John Allen, argued that humanity's divine nature called for a "New Church," which would break away from the formal congregation model of contemporary churches and instead infuse morality into society as a whole.[453] This entailed creating a place where people could both follow intellectual pursuits together and complete manual work for profit and sustenance; a just and moral enactment of God's plan, in Ripley's view.[454] This plan would position community members to live close to nature, an important element of the Transcendentalist movement, while also treating each person with dignity, a goal which Ripley argued was not being pursued in the country at large.[455]

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[451] George Ripley, Letter to his parish, Oct. 1, 1840, as quoted in Frothingham, *George Ripley*, 67.
[452] Delano, *Brook Farm,* 34.; Liberal Christianity, to Ripley and his contemporaries, emphasized a non-doctrinal approach to Christianity. As Ripley expressed to his parish upon his departure, he saw the aim of this approach to Christianity as creating the Kingdom of God on earth through social reforms in society. Through this interpretation, Brook Farm attracted members from religious denominations that emphasized social reform. Brook Farm was home to liberal Swedenborgian-influenced non-sectarians like Nathaniel Hawthorne. It was also home to Universalists, Unitarians, Quakers, and Catholics.
[453] Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 278-283.
[454] Sterling Delano, *Brook Farm,* 34.
[455] Ripley explains his desire to "overthrow every form of slavery" to his parish through the letter announcing his departure. Ripley argues that each person should be offered the opportunity to receive an education and be free from forced bondage and penury. See Frothingham, *George Ripley*, 87.

The danger, for Ripley, was that Brook Farm would devolve into denominational divisions and lose sight of the larger goal of transforming society. Thus, there would be no religious test or statement of religious conviction required for membership at Brook Farm. In fact, Ripley proposed (and the community agreed through consensus) on a prohibition of religious services at Brook Farm, so as to prevent the appearance of any one denomination as gaining favor in the community.[456] In the first two years of its existence, membership at Brook Farm even came to represent a break from sectarian religion for some of its members.[457] Their avoidance of sectarianism, in essence, became an intricate part of their religious vision.

Ripley's own disappointment with inter-denominational squabbles and the rejection of the Transcendentalist movement by more conservative Unitarians led him to prohibit this type of dogmatism at Brook Farm. Ripley believed that implementing God's will in society required forming ethical institutions in all elements of society, not committing to any single denomination or living a solitary life removed from society's struggles. Those Transcendentalists who supported Ripley's emphasis on social reform moved to Brook Farm, while those that aligned more with Emerson's emphasis on personal transformation remained outside the community, though many of them still supported Brook Farm financially and visited often.

[456] Sterling Delano, *Brook Farm,* 28.
[457] Charles Crowe, "Christian Socialism and the First Church of Humanity," *Church History* vol. 35, no. 1 (Mar., 1966), 95.

The community's rejection of sectarianism and public displays of religion at Brook Farm did not mean that a strict secularism was enforced at the community. Members were not prevented from attending formal church services held outside of the community: in the early years of Brook Farm, a carriage was made available to take residents to the nearby churches, and some residents opted to walk to church. The community's constitution and founding members frequently cited biblical quotes to justify their project, indicating their shared background in Christianity despite their rejection of sectarianism. Transcendentalist and Brook Farm supporter Elizabeth Peabody described the emerging community to readers of *The Dial* through a series of biblical references:

> Everything can be said of it, in a degree, which Christ said of his kingdom, and therefore it is believed that in some measure it does embody his Idea. For its Gate of entrance is strait (*sic*.) and narrow. It is literally a pearl *hidden in a field*. Those only who are willing to lose their life for its sake shall find it. Its voice is that which sent the young man sorrowing away. 'Go sell all thy goods and give to the poor, and then come and follow me.' 'Seek first the kingdom of Heaven, and its righteousness, and all other things shall be added to you.'[458]

Peabody's description used biblical references to depict the community as a project that moved beyond sectarianism to enact the true intentions God held for his community of believers. Thus, Brook Farm members interpreted their community as representing a break from the churches of the past, towards a new understanding of Christianity incorporated into daily life.

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[458] Elizabeth Peabody, *The Dial*, Vol. 2, Jan. 1842. *The Dial* was a journal created by Transcendentalists in an effort to disseminate new insights on literature and theology, though it primarily remained popular within the social circle of New England Transcendentalists. The journal was published for four years from 1840-1844 and was edited first by Margaret Fuller, followed by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

As Brook Farm transitioned from a Unitarian and Transcendentalist-inspired community to a Fourier-inspired socialist community, it ironically moved toward shared quasi-religious expression within the communal setting. Though Fourier was criticized by many Americans as proposing a model of communal living that rejected religion in favor of a secular and scientific blueprint, Brook Farmers' interpreted Fourier as enacting the "Divine social code."[459] This interpretation of Fourierism as a model for the ideal Christian community opened a pathway for religious expression and communitarianism to became more intertwined than ever before at Brook Farm. In 1844, when Brook Farm became officially recognized as part of Fourier's socialist community network, some members of Brook Farm took conscious strides toward integrating public displays of religion at Brook Farm, albeit in a new form that incorporated aspects of liberal Christianity and socialist communitarianism. The members of Brook Farm essentially Christianized the socialism advocated by Fourier.[460]

At the one wedding performed at Brook Farm, attendees pledged themselves to unity within socialist communitarianism, which they called "The cause of God and Humanity."[461] The celebration of Fourier's birthday became a kind of "socialist Christmas," and weekly ritual services were in the planning phase when the Brook Farm community broke apart in 1847, which would have completed the "installation

[459] See Guarneri, "Importing Fourierism to America," 586.
[460] A similar process was also done in France by Fourier's French disciples. See Jonathan Beecher, "Fourierism and Christianity," 391-403.
[461] Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 216.; see also Carl Guarneri, "The Associationists: Forging a Christian Socialism in Antebellum America," *Church History* Vol. 52, No. 1 (Mar., 1983): 44-45.

of Fourier among the deities."[462] Brook Farm member John Dwight selected hymns and wrote toasts to be performed at ritualized events, and the words of Fourier were read aloud to followers of his socialist message.[463] Yet Fourierism did not replace Christianity at Brook Farm, but instead Fourier came to be seen as God's chosen messenger who revealed the path to creating the Kingdom of God on earth.[464] Integrating Fourier into liberal Christianity allowed Brook Farmers to stay true to their nonsectarian origins while introducing religious ritual and celebration to community life.

During the Fourierist phase, Brook Farm members presented Fourier as helping them to perfect their application of Christian ideals in society. While travelling throughout the country to seek financial investments for Brook Farm in 1846, Brook Farm member John Orvis introduced Fourierism to interested parties by speaking at length of "the growth of the religious sentiment in Brook Farm and of

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[462] Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 280-281. William Henry Channing planned to act as preacher at on-site Brook Farm services, but the dissolution of the community prevented the implementation of this plan. See Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 281.; On this centering of Fourier within Brook Farm's newly developed religious life, see Crowe, "Christian Socialism and the First Church of Humanity," esp. 95-98.

[463] One such toast written by John Dwight to commemorate Fourier's birthday read: "To Joy! to Liberty! to Childhood's Mirth, to Youth's Enthusiasm, to the warm life-thrill of Attraction felt through every fibre of existence! The times are coming — the Harmonic Times of Unity and Love — when the Passions in their purity shall prove themselves divine." John S. Dwight, 1849, as printed in George Willis Cooke, *John Sullivan Dwight, Brook-farmer, Editor, and Critic of Music: A Biography* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1898), 140.; Celebrations that incorporated John Dwight's "Fourierist prayers" increased in frequency and formality following the dissolution of Brook Farm and the creation of the Religion Union of Associationists in 1847. See Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 281.; The meeting minutes of the Boston Religious Union of Associationists include numerous mentions of Dwight's performance of "sacred music." See Sterling F. Delano, "A Calendar of Meetings of the 'Boston Religious Union of Associationists,' 1847-1850," in *Studies in the American Renaissance (1985)*, ed. Joel Myerson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1986), 187-267.

[464] Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 280; Anne C. Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement, 1830-1850* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981), 144-145.

Association as the fulfillment of the Christian idea."[465] This intertwining of Fourier's socialism and liberal Christianity allowed for the formation of a shared ritual life that married Brook Farm members' Fourierist convictions and their largely Unitarian backgrounds, while still not requiring explicit identification with any single Christian denomination. But despite this embrace of Fourier by some Brook Farm members, by the time Brook Farm transitioned to Fourierism many of the early Transcendentalist members had already stepped away from the community they had been so influential in founding.

## The Transcendentalists of Brook Farm

The Boston intellectual community, and particularly the women who moved in the Transcendentalist social circles of Boston, offered significant social and financial support to Brook Farm. Though numerous Transcendentalist men were responsible for giving public lectures and publishing advertisements for Brook Farm, women often completed the behind-the-scenes work necessary to grow and sustain the community. The Peabody sisters represent an example of a Transcendentalist family who became involved with Brook Farm on a variety of levels. Of the three sisters, Elizabeth, Mary, and Sophia, Elizabeth Peabody was most supportive of Ripley's style of Transcendentalism, though she also kept close friendships with more individualist Transcendentalists including Emerson. In her early adulthood, Elizabeth Peabody was drawn to a career as a public lecturer, but she soon realized this career

[465] Brook Farm member John Allen shared Orvis's words in a letter to fellow Brook Farm member and Orvis's future wife, Marianne Dwight. See letter, John Allen to Marianne Dwight, Feb. 13, 1846, Brook Farm Correspondence, C-151, folder 1, Middlebury College Special Collections and Archives.

path would be nearly impossible for woman to pursue, due to the social stigma against women speaking publicly in front of mixed audiences of both men and women. Peabody thus resigned herself to the reality that she would be unable to pursue financial success through the same means used by Emerson and other male Transcendentalists. Instead, she chose to take on a supportive role in the Transcendentalist movement, hoping that she could subtly direct the movement and its leaders toward her desired aims. Peabody opened a used book store in Boston, specializing in foreign titles that were otherwise difficult to find. This library provided resources to her Transcendentalist friends, as well as a meeting place for the Transcendentalist Club and for Margaret Fuller's lecture series, known as "Conversations." Elizabeth also managed a printing press, through which she printed the works of her friends including Nathanial Hawthorne, as well as printing the Transcendentalist journal, *The Dial*. Elizabeth recruited potential members to Brook Farm, allowed its leaders to hold meetings about the community in her bookstore, and wrote and published numerous articles on Brook Farm in *The Dial*. Though she was never a resident of Brook Farm, her support from neighboring Boston was critical to garnering financial support and additional members for the community.

Margaret Fuller, a frequent visitor to Brook Farm, represents another supporter brought to the community through Transcendentalist networks. Fuller offered lectures at the community and made informal visits to friends there. Fuller's experiences at Brook Farm influenced her work: Fuller's friendships with female Brook Farm members shaped and informed her feminist views, which were later

published in her 1845 book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*.[466] In it, Fuller argues that women must encourage each other to improve themselves as individuals, asking only that men step aside and allow women to improve their education and intellectual abilities.[467] Fuller highlights Swedenborg, Fourier, and Goethe as the three great thinkers who portrayed women as equal to men, and who inspired her insights into what she called "a new hour in the day of Man," in which women and men would form equal partnerships.[468] Fuller criticized the social expectations placed on women of her era, including the double-standard in marriage that excused men's promiscuous behavior while expecting faithfulness of women.[469] But Fuller did not blame societal forces alone, but also blamed women themselves for their unequal status, arguing that they must value education over vanity and flattery in order to prove to men that women are capable and worthy of advancement in society.[470] Thus, while criticizing the double-standards of the period, Fuller also placed some blame on women who were contributing to their own debasement through their vain conduct. Fuller concedes the common view of her era that men and women have different talents and propensities but argues that the extent of those differences have been exaggerated and should be explored by allowing women the freedom to pursue varied professions

[466] As will be explored below, Fuller and Georgiana Bruce would become friends while at Brook Farm. Bruce would later provide anecdotes about the female prisoners she worked with at Sing-Sing prison to include in Fuller's book. See Letter, Margaret Fuller to Georgiana Bruce, [December? 1844], printed in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller Vol. III, 1842-1844*, ed. Robert N. Hudspeth (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1984), 250-251.
[467] Gerda Lerner traces the history of the argument made by women that their lack of access to education has limited their intellectual development in *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, esp. Chapter 9: "The Right to Learn, the Right to Teach, the Right to Define."
[468] Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, 10.
[469] Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, 121-124, 136-140.
[470] Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, 49-50, 131-133.

outside of the home if they so wish.[471] Fuller's ideas represented an emerging feminist consciousness that found a receptive audience among the Transcendentalist members of Brook Farm, most notably, Georgiana Bruce, whom Fuller would befriend during one of her visits to the community.[472]

Other women involved in Transcendentalist circles went beyond financial support and actually became members of the Brook Farm community. Two of the female Brook Farm members most studied by historians include Marianne Dwight and Sophia Ripley. Dwight joined the community as a single woman but eventually married a fellow community member in the only marriage ceremony to take place at Brook Farm. Dwight started a "fancy group" at Brook Farm, in which female residents created lamp shades and clothing articles to sell for Brook Farm. Dwight is one of the best sources on everyday life at Brook Farm due to her proficient letter-writing. In one letter to her friend Anna Q. T. Parsons, Dwight expresses her satisfaction with the expanded opportunities for varied work beyond domestic tasks for women at Brook Farm: "I must interest you in our fancy group, for which and from which I hope great things—nothing less than the elevation of woman to independence, and an acknowledged equality with man." Dwight argued that financial independence was a necessary step toward women's social equality, stating: "Women must become producers of marketable articles; women must make money

[471] Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, 159-161.
[472] On Fuller reinterpreting women's value as stemming from their individuality, instead of in relation to men, see Tiffany K. Wayne, *Woman Thinking: Feminism and Transcendentalism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books. 2005), esp. 29-32.

and earn their support independently of man."[473] Dwight thus saw her fancy group as not simply contributing to domestic work at Brook Farm, but as symbolically moving women toward equality with men. Partly due to her unmarried status, Dwight experienced relative freedom in determining her labor pursuits and social interactions at Brook Farm, a freedom which provided Dwight the opportunity to imagine and pursue opportunities for financial gain.[474] Her vision of women's equality depended on women's achievement of financial independence, a goal that she saw as approaching reality at Brook Farm.

Sophia Ripley, another well-recorded female member of Brook Farm, was George Ripley's wife. Sophia Ripley took great interest in the boarding school started at Brook Farm, where she taught both young children and older pupils. Her intellectual capacities were admired by members of Brook Farm as well as the wider Transcendentalist community.[475] However, even in the socially progressive setting of Brook Farm, community members expressed disappointment in Ripley's inability to

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[473] This and the previous quote are from: Letter, Marianne Dwight to Anna Parsons, August 30, 1844, as printed in Marianne Dwight, *Letters from Brook Farm*, pgs. 32-33.

[474] Richard Francis notes the significance of Dwight's letters in revealing the comparably greater freedoms in professional pursuits and social interactions that unmarried woman such as Dwight could experience at Brook Farm. As he states: "relations between young men and women were certainly more informal and less tense than in the outside world, as one can see from Marianne Dwight's letters." Richard Francis, *Transcendental Utopias*, 94. These opportunities for professional advancement were perhaps more evident to women than to men at Brook Farm. While Nathaniel Hawthorne notoriously complained of the little time left for his writing after completing community chores at Brook Farm, Caroline Sturgis, a fellow Brook Farm member, found that the community allowed her more time for writing than that which she had previously been accustomed. While living at Brook Farm she wrote poetry, but ceased her writing upon leaving the Brook Farm and marrying in 1847. See Lucy M. Freibert, "Creative Women of Brook Farm," in *Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Societies in the United States*, eds. Chmielewski, Kern, and Klee-Hartzell, 77.

[475] Sophia Ripley attended Margaret Fuller's "Conversations" and, like Fuller, expressed the need for society to recognize women's worth as individuals, as opposed to their value in comparison to the men in their lives. As Ripley explained in *The Dial*, "Woman is educated with the tacit understanding, that she is only half a being, and an appendage." See Ripley, "Woman," *The Dial*, Vol. 1 (Jan. 1841): 364.

live up to their ideals for her as wife of the community's founder and thus "mother" to the community at large. Georgiana Bruce depicted Ripley's dedication to intellectual interests as unusual for women of the period and as coming into conflict with the matronly figure that girls in the community hoped to find in her. As Bruce wrote about Ripley years after the dissolution of Brook Farm: "Had Mrs. Sophia Ripley been a mother, possessing the prescience and tact begotten of maternal love, it would have been better for all of us. Unfortunately, she was a sisterly rather than a wifely woman."[476] Though Sophia entered teaching, a pursuit generally acceptable for women, she was still seen as masculine in her attitude toward community members, defying the expectations of womanhood even within a progressive communal environment.

While Ripley's professional pursuits were interpreted as inconsistent with her role as the founder's wife, single women at Brook Farm were often given much more freedom to pursue varied labor tasks and engage in social interactions that were often foreclosed to them outside of the communal setting. Due to the proximity of the community to Boston and the esteemed reputation of the community among the literary class, middle-class families allowed their unmarried daughters to travel alone to Brook Farm with the auspices of receiving a quality education and making valuable social connections. Thus, single women represented a higher proportion of the community than at most other communal experiments of the era.[477] Historians

[476] Georgiana Bruce Kirby, *Years of Experience: An Autobiographical Narrative* (New York & London, G. P. B. Putnam's Sons, 1887), 172.
[477] Kolmerten noted the relative social freedom and varied work opportunities available to women at Brook Farm compared to women in Owenite communities, and attributes this difference to the higher

have commented on the number of romantic relationships that were formed at Brook Farm, further reinforcing the notion that the community was seen for many as a socializing center for Boston intellectuals, where they could meet, exchange ideas, and connect with other prominent families and individuals.[478]

The women involved in Brook Farm were also socially connected to women of other communitarian experiments across the United States due to their shared membership in other reform organizations. Angelique Le Petit Martin of Trumbull Phalanx corresponded with Brook Farmers during her search for a publisher of her manuscript on women's rights.[479] In one letter to Martin, a fellow Associationist recommended that she contact former Brook Farm member Anna Blackwell regarding help on the grammatical issues in the Manuscript, as Martin's first language was French and Blackwell was then working as French translator.[480] Reformers across the country were connected through their ties to Brook Farm, even if they had

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proportion of single women at Brook Farm. See Kolmerten, *Women in Utopia*, 172-174. Guarneri also discusses the high proportion of single people at Brook Farm in *The Utopian Alternative*, 198.

[478] Lindsay Swift traces fourteen marriages resulting from friendships created at Brook Farm in *Brook Farm*, 117.

[479] These correspondence were primarily with Albert Brisbane, but also with Fanny MacDaniel, a member of Brook Farm. See letters from Fanny MacDaniel to Angelique Le Petit Martin, [no date] 1848, June 21st 1848, Nov. 23, 1848, Microfilm reel 2, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection.

[480] Letter to Angelique Le Petit Martin, unsigned, July 31, 1847, Microfilm reel 2, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection. The letter describes "Miss Blackwell" as currently residing in Philadelphia. Blackwell boarded with Dr. William Elder, an Associationist, for a short time after she left Brook Farm and while her sister, Elizabeth, was also applying to medical schools in Philadelphia. See Elinor Rice Hays, *Those Extraordinary Blackwells: The Story of a Journey to a Better World* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967), 63-64. Anna primarily lived in New York from 1846-1849 while working on translations with Albert Brisbane and before she departed for France.; In 1846, Albert Brisbane also told Martin that he would take her manuscript to "Miss A. Blackwell" who could help with translation issues. Letter, Albert Brisbane to Angelique Le Petit Martin, written from Brook Farm on September 28, 1846, Box 1, Folder 3, Angelique Le Petit Martin Papers, Marietta College Archives.

otherwise never met. In one letter sent from Lowell labor rights activist and Brook Farm supporter Mary Emerson to Brook Farm visitor and supporter Anna Q. T. Parsons, Emerson wrote of their common cause, "As you truly say, 'strong bonds have been formed by our little Unions, if no other good has been accomplished.'"[481] These women, whether labor reformers or women's rights activist, created connections through common social ties to Brook Farm. Transcendentalist social circles played a major role in creating these early connections, which were expanded as Brook Farm joined the larger Associationist movement.

Transcendentalism has been negatively portrayed by some historians as an ineffective movement for social reform, as many of its advocates were more interested in intellectual exercises than on-the-ground activism.[482] But Transcendentalism played an important role in forming arguments for women's rights that would be adopted by feminists in the following decades. Before the rise of the Transcendentalist movement, the notion of "Republican Motherhood" was popularized among white, elite women in the United States.[483] This ideal, espoused

[481] Mary Emerson to Anna Q. T. Parsons, Sept. 14, 1847, Brook Farm Correspondence, C-151, folder 6, Middlebury College Special Collections & Archives.
[482] Bruce Ronda depicts the Transcendentalists as a group of elitists who did not align with working-class movements in *Letters of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody: American Renaissance Woman*, ed. Bruce Ronda (Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1984), 24-25.; Gura explains that during the early nineteenth century, the term "Transcendentalist" was often used as an insult and this group instead called themselves "new thought" advocates, only later adopting the term Transcendentalist. Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 4.; Rose highlights contemporaries' critiques of Transcendentalism as an elite philosophy in *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*, 83-84.; Wayne counters the notion that Transcendentalism was only an intellectual exercise and argues instead that it contributed to the formation of the feminist movement in the nineteenth century. See Wayne, *Woman Thinking*, esp. 1-3.
[483] Sylvia Hoffert argues that the turn away from the ideal of Republican Motherhood represents the beginning of the women's rights movement of the antebellum period: "First, those who led the movement developed an ideology and a public language or idiom that helped women move beyond the limits placed on them by the domestic ideal and Republican Motherhood." Sylvia Hoffert, *When Hens*

during the American Revolutionary War and in the decades that followed, justified a level of women's education and political engagement by portraying them as playing a significant role in the future of the country by raising future patriot sons.[484] With the development of market capitalism and the movement of labor off of farms and into factories, notions of a predominantly female domestic space overpowered previous notions of female political engagement as necessary during the Revolutionary period. Women, as the moral protectors of the home, were identified with private life, while men engaged in public and political life. But even before notions of separate spheres took root in the mid-nineteenth century, women's worth in society was valued in relationship to the men in their lives. Women were depicted either as the guides to future patriots or as the moral anchors to their husbands. In a new interpretation of woman's value to society, Transcendentalists such as Fuller argued that women should be educated for themselves—as individuals, not in relation to men, whether husbands, fathers, or sons.[485] According to Fuller, only when women were treated as individual beings created by God will they be able to rise to an equal position in society to men. While Transcendentalists' message typically focused on reforming the individual (sometimes at the expense of affecting institutional change), their

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*Crow : The Woman's Rights Movement in Antebellum America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1995), 2. Gerda Lerner describes the notion of "Republican Motherhood" as containing "both conservative and liberating aspects," and traces its origins to an address given by Benjamin Rush in 1787. See *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, 213-219

[484] On Republican Motherhood, see Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); and Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

[485] Wayne, *Woman Thinking*, 46.

message also served to reframe women's societal worth as stemming not from their relationship to the men in their lives, but from their identity as creations of God and thus as important members of society in their own right. The "self-possession" endorsed by male Transcendentalists like Emerson sometimes resulted in stoic removal from political struggles and social activism, but for female Transcendentalists, it was an elevation of their intellectual capacities and meant a potential transition *into* public life through their own contributions.[486]

The Transcendentalist movement was thus not only comprised of navel-gazing men, but also of a group of women who influenced ideas on humanity, citizenship, and the importance of individual self-discovery within feminist thought.[487] Transcendentalists were of course not the only group beginning to challenge the essentialist notion of "female influence" and move toward women's rights; the same transformation in thought was occurring among other social reform groups that found one's sex to be an absurd basis for justifying legal inequality.[488]

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[486] On Transcendentalism as expanding the professional possibilities for female writers and influencing nineteenth-century feminism, see Phyllis Cole," Woman's Rights and Feminism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism* (Oxford University Press, April 16, 2010), http://oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195331035.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780195331035-e-16. For more on the connections between Transcendentalism and the feminist movement in the United States, see *Toward a Female Genealogy of Transcendentalism*, eds. Jana L. Argersinger and Phyllis Cole (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014); Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*, esp. 184.; and Barry M. Andrews, *Transcendentalism and the Cultivation of the Soul* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2017), esp. chapter 10, "Abolition and Women's Rights."

[487] Wayne, *Woman Thinking*, 100.

[488] Martha S. Jones analyzes African American social reformers who shifted from understanding women's worth through the notion of "female influence," to understanding women as deserving equal rights because the equally-absurd social categories of race and sex had led to legal inequalities for the African American female community. See Martha S. Jones, *All Bound up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 61-66.

However, the Transcendentalist women who joined Brook Farm represent a group that was cultivating new understandings of women's rights and institutional change through community building, an effort that would translate into broader reform efforts for many of them in later years.[489]

While Brook Farm began as a Transcendentalist experiment, its labor and financial structures aligned closely enough with those of the emerging Fourierist communal experiments that a transition to the Fourierist model was not impossible. Like Fourierist communities, Brook Farm was organized as a joint-stock endeavor, with both male and female members purchasing stock and thus receiving voting rights and labor compensation. The original constitution of Brook Farm was completed in 1841 and a summary was published in *The Dial*.[490] In the article, Elizabeth Peabody introduced the new community and its constitution to readers. The article explained the vague system of cooperative labor and financial sharing that would be enacted at the community, with few details:

> The plan of the Community, as an Economy, is in brief this; for all who have property to take stock, and receive a fixed interest thereon; then to keep house or board in commons, as they shall severally desire, at the cost of provisions purchased at wholesale, or raised on the farm; and for all to labor in

[489] Michael Mattek also argues that Brisbane's Fourierism aligned with this new understanding of women's place in society. Brisbane reinterpreted women's domestic tasks as "attractive" to women, instead of framing them as women's moral duties, as women's magazines and periodicals were arguing. Mattek argues that though Brisbane still held that women were more naturally attracted to domestic tasks than men, his argument was meant to be a step toward alignment with the emerging women's rights movement, as he advocated allowing women to choose the profession that suited them, even if most would presumably still choose domestic work. This argument was part of the overall goal of the Association movement to make labor more "attractive" for all workers. See Mattek, "Brisbane and Beyond," 67.

[490] The original articles of Association only commented on shareholding, the handling of debt, and interest rate payouts. See "Articles of Association of the Subscribers to the Brook Farm institute of Agriculture and Education," printed in Frothingham, *George Ripley*, 112-115.

> community, and be paid at a certain rate an hour, choosing their own number of hours, and their own kind of work.[491]

Labor was to be paid equally, regardless of the task completed or the identity of the laborer. Women were able to become shareholders, and in fact four of the first ten shareholders were women.[492] This plan for the community was meant to reward individual work ethic without favoring any caste or class; an ideal that appealed to Transcendentalist readers of *The Dial*.

While Ripley's plan for an agricultural haven located close to urban markets aligned closely with Fourierists' communal model, the faulty execution of this plan is often referenced by historians as a sign of the lofty idealism of the Transcendentalist community in general. For example, Ripley chose to position his community on a dairy farm outside of Boston, and without investigating the quality of the soil, he determined that he could transform the property into a working agricultural farm that would earn a profit. The subsequent disappointing harvests and inadequate financial planning, culminating with a devastating fire that destroyed the remaining financial assets of the community, eventually led to the community's collapse. The strengths of the community did not lie in agricultural pursuits but instead in the intellectual pursuits that had brought the group together in the first place. The community's most financially-successful endeavor was its boarding school, which attracted the young relatives of well-known Transcendentalists including Margaret Fuller and Ralph

[491] Elizabeth Peabody, *The Dial*, Vol. 2, (Jan 1842).
[492] See "Articles of Association of the Subscribers to the Brook Farm institute of Agriculture and Education," printed in Frothingham, *George Ripley*, 115.

Waldo Emerson. The Transcendentalist circle of friends was invaluable in funding the community by paying boarding fees for their young relatives. Throughout the community's existence, when other financial plans had failed, the esteemed reputation of the boarding school kept Brook Farm functioning.

In December 1843, George Ripley attended a conference of Associationists in Boston focused on the practicality of implementing Fourierist principles within communal experiments. The Northampton Association also sent delegates to this convention and five months later the Northampton Association hosted a similar convention of regional Associationists. However, the outcome for Northampton Association members was a vote to remain distinct from the Fourierist communal network of Associations (at least in name) in favor of focusing on their abolitionist goals. For Brook Farm leaders in 1843, the outcome was quite different. Stirred by the passion in the growing Fourierist movement and the financial support the network of Fourierist communities promised, Ripley returned from the convention to announce the imminent reorganization of Brook Farm to an explicitly Fourierist community.[493]

Over the winter of 1843-1844, Brook Farm was reorganized into a Fourierist community with clearly delineated labor groups and an increasing emphasis on

[493] For more on this convention of Associationists, see "Convention at Boston of the Friends of Association, Dec. 1843," Microfilm Reel 5, Macdonald Collection, Wisconsin Phalanx Microfilm Records, Wisconsin Historical Society.; See also, Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 57.; See also Megan Perle Bowman, "Laboring for Global Perfection: The International Dimension of Mid-Nineteenth-Century Fourierism," (Diss. UC Santa Barbara, 2013), 131-132. Representative of the crossover of reform movements in this period, health reformer Mary Gove also attended this convention.

manufacturing production. By 1844 a new constitution of Brook Farm had been created by George Ripley. In many ways this constitution mimicked a marketing pamphlet, which described the reasons why Brook Farm represented the ideal community in which to conduct a true experiment in applying Fourier's theories, unlike the other Fourierist communities organized across the United States thus far. If viewed as the true application of Fourier's communitarian blueprint, Book Farm would ideally receive the bulk of wealthy donors' attentions. Ripley hoped to underscore Brook Farm's present financial security, while simultaneously encouraging new donations:

> The fact that such a large amount of capital is already and at our service as the basis of more extensive operations, furnishes a reason why Brook Farm should be chosen as the scene of that practical trial of Association which the public feeling calls for in this immediate vicinity, instead of forming an entirely new organization for that purpose.[494]

The official name of the community was then changed to "The Brook Farm Association of Industry and Education," and later "Brook Farm Phalanx."[495] Like at other Fourierist communities, the constitution stated that no religious test would be required of members and access to education and housing would be made available to members in exchange for labor. A Board of Directors was elected to manage the various labor groups. The language of the constitution was gender-neutral, indicating

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[494] "The Constitution of the Brook Farm Association of Industry and Education, West Roxbury, Mass., With an Introduction," Oct. 1844, (Boston: I.R. Butts), 7.

[495] The final iteration of the Brook Farm Phalanx constitution was created in 1845 and continued to advertise to donors to the community, stating that by this time the Association was almost guaranteed to last for many years to come, and financial risk "hardly exists." Constitution of Brook Farm Phalanx, adopted May 1, 1845, pg. 3, GEN MSS 1394, Box 1, Folder 3, A. J. Macdonald Writings on American Utopian Communities, General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

no difference in voting rights or financial compensation for members based on gender.[496] In a reversal of Ceresco's gradual elimination of women's voting rights, the later iterations of Brook Farm's constitution were even more explicit in granting voting rights to men and women equally. As the Constitution of the Brook Farm Phalanx (1845) stated, "All rights, privileges, guarantees, and obligations of members expressed or implied in this Constitution, shall be understood to belong equally to persons of both sexes."[497]

The new Fourierist constitution resembled the previous Brook Farm constitution in many of its organizational principles. However, the community's beginnings as a Transcendentalist community meant that its material existence differed from that of other Fourierist communities. The community did not initially construct one large, dormitory style-housing complex as other Fourierist communities had constructed, but instead utilized many smaller buildings for residential housing.[498] Only upon the community's transition to Fourierism did they begin construction on one large Phalanstery, or dormitory-style house, which could house new Fourierist community members. This call for new Fourierist members initiated

[496] Of the original ten members of Brook Farm four were women, including married women, thus indicating their ability to own separate property shares from their husbands. Sophia Ripley initially invested $1,000. See Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*, 186.
[497] Constitution of Brook Farm Phalanx, adopted May 1, 1845, pg. 10, GEN MSS 1394, Box 1, Folder 3, A. J. Macdonald Writings on American Utopian Communities, General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
[498] Sophia Eastman describes these buildings in a letter to her parents. She explains that they are referred to as "The Pilgrim House, Eyrie, Cottage, and Hive." Sophia Eastman to family, July 25, 1843, Abernethy Manuscript Miscellany Collection (ABER MS MISC), Box 5 folder 1, Middlebury College Special Collections & Archives Repository.

the transition away from Brook Farm's Transcendentalist period into a period defined by broader reform interests rooted in Fourierist networks.

Georgiana Bruce, an unmarried, twenty-two-year-old woman was also introduced to Brook Farm through the Transcendentalist network. Her experience at Brook Farm occurred entirely during the Transcendentalist period of the community, and so she would never cross paths with Anna Blackwell, a fellow Brook Farm member with whom she shared so much in common. Despite their similar backgrounds and mutual involvement with reform movements, they took opposing stances on Fourier's communitarian model. Bruce, drawn to Brook Farm for its population of Transcendentalist intellectuals, was disappointed by Ripley's decision to bring Fourierists into the community, whom she saw as gruff and unsophisticated.[499] Blackwell, in contrast, admired Fourier's ideas before arriving at Brook Farm, and it was the community's advocacy of those ideas that eventually drew her to Brook Farm. Though this difference in opinion resulted in these women never meeting, their experiences at Brook Farm nevertheless influenced both of their professional and reform pursuits for the rest of their lives.

## Georgiana Bruce

Georgiana Bruce moved to Brook Farm in 1841, though she was introduced to the Unitarian theology of many of its members years earlier. Bruce was born in Bristol in December 1818 and travelled to the North American continent first as a

[499] Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 179-181

governess, arriving with her employer's family in Canada in 1835. Though she returned to England by 1837, she decided that England no longer felt like home, and by 1838, at nineteen, she decided to travel back, this time taking a boat to Boston with no clear plan, only the hope of finding domestic employment before reaching shore. While on the ship sailing to Boston, Bruce met Ezra Stiles Gannett, a Harvard-educated Unitarian minister and eventual president of the American Unitarian Society. Before they disembarked, she was hired to provide domestic help for his family.[500] It was this fortuitous meeting of the Gannett family that eventually set Bruce on her path to living at Brook Farm.

At the Gannett's residence, Bruce was introduced to the numerous social and religious reform movements centered in Boston. Authors and lecturers including Emerson and Hawthorne were just beginning to develop their ideas, religious reformers including Theodore Parker were pushing the Unitarian church toward a more progressive direction, and health reformers including Sylvester Graham were advocating new diets and health practices that would purportedly serve to improve society as a whole.[501] The Gannetts' neighbor was Horace Mann, the education reformer who would eventually marry Elizabeth Peabody's sister, Mary Peabody.[502] Gannett employed Bruce for three years before sending her to Brook Farm to receive the education that he found her to be lacking. Though Gannett was on the

[500] Kirby describes her experience travelling to Boston in her autobiography, *Years of Experience*, esp. 76-80.
[501] Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 85-86.
[502] "A Stormy Petrel," Box 1, Folder 2, pg. 11, MS 315, Helen S. Giffen Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.

conservative end of the Unitarian community and suspicious of the Transcendentalist branch of Unitarianism, he nevertheless respected those involved in the communal project and decided to send his niece, Deborah Gannett, along with Bruce to become pupils at Brook Farm's boarding school.[503]

Bruce thrived in the educational environment of Brook Farm, and according to her own accounts, Bruce's time at Brook Farm was the happiest period of her life.[504] Bruce recalled being introduced to strong, independent women who engaged with the social reform activism of their time and who introduced early feminist sentiments to her.[505] While there, she was exposed to numerous reformers who espoused philosophies that would have lasting impacts on her life, including Spiritualism and abolitionism. She experienced the emerging Spiritualist movement first through exposure to Mesmer's ideas on hypnotism and clairvoyance at Brook Farm, and she attended William Lloyd Garrison's lectures with other Brook Farmers.[506] The anti-slavery cause would remain a conviction of hers for years following her departure from Brook Farm. Perhaps the most important person Bruce met during this period was Margaret Fuller, who frequently visited Brook Farm. Bruce was immediately attracted to Fuller's intelligence and confidence, and soon became her mentee.

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[503] Delano, *Brook Farm*, 34.
[504] See Kirby, "Reminiscences of Brook Farm," *Old and New*, Vols. 3 (1871), 425-383; 4 (1872), 347-583; 5 (1873), 517-30.
[505] Bruce (Kirby) remembered Book Farm as introducing her to women's rights, stating: "An now began my first delightful experience of 'Woman's Rights': for in the meeting of the Association no distinction was made on account of sex…This new sense of power and responsibility widened my horizon..." Kirby, "Reminiscences on Brook Farm," *Old and New* Vol. 4, Issue 3 (Sept. 1871).
[506] Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 144, 161.

Partly due to meeting Fuller, Bruce presented her time at the community as filled with love and affection for other members. Bruce became both a pupil and a teacher to the community's youngest children, and began to feel that she was part of an extended family. This expectation that Brook Farm would mimic or replace the family led to disappointment for Bruce when the community changed around her, eventually leading to her decision to leave.[507] When Brook Farm adopted the ideology and organizational principles of Fourier in 1844, Bruce was devastated. She felt there was "no congeniality between the newcomers and those who had been so united under the first dispensation."[508] Though the Brook Farm constitution continued to affirm equality "to persons of both sexes," Bruce felt that the new women joining the community allowed themselves to be treated as inferior to the men.[509] To her, the new Fourierist women did not possess the same desire for gender equality that Bruce had come to respect and value from the earlier generation of Brook Farm women. By the spring of 1844, Bruce decided it was time for her to move on.

Bruce's departure did not represent the end of Brook Farm's influence over her life, however, and perhaps even ensured the survival of its principles long after an 1846 fire led to the community's dissolution. Bruce's activist career began when she

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[507] Sociologist Benjamin Zablocki argues that a high "love density," or a high proportion of people within an intentional community who see their relationship to other members as "loving" and like a "true family," actually predicts a community's collapse. Zablocki argues that more regulated relationships between community members predicts communal stability. See Benjamin Zablocki, *Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes* (New York: Free Press, 1980).

[508] Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 179.

[509] Constitution of Brook Farm Phalanx, adopted May 1, 1845, pg. 10, GEN MSS 1394, Box 1, Folder 3, A. J. Macdonald Writings on American Utopian Communities, General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

left Brook Farm, taking with her the social connections and reform convictions she had cultivated in the community. About her departure, Bruce wrote:

> On withdrawing, I did not leave behind one iota of my belief in the present necessity for a reorganization of society on a just basis. I only felt that nothing of further moment with regard to it would occur at the Community. I could not see how the change was to come about, how it was to begin, but I was certain that it was only a question of time.[510]

Bruce's departure did not signal an end to her pursuit of social reform; she felt determined to pursue the principles proclaimed at Brook Farm, but also to move on from the communal setting.

Bruce turned to her now-friend Margaret Fuller, who introduced Bruce to Eliza Farnham, the women's prison warden at Sing-Sing prison in New York. Farnham would employ Bruce as her assistant at the prison and become Bruce's life-long friend.[511] The two of them instigated a new and controversial program of reform at the prison, moving away from emphasis on the sinfulness of the female prisoners and toward emphasis on personal development and education of the women through music and reading classes.[512] They created a prison library filled with literary classics and organized lectures to be given by contemporary intellectuals, including Margaret Fuller.[513] Farnham and Bruce approached the prison as presenting an opportunity for

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[510] Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 184.
[511] Bruce and Farnham lived together as single women for a short time in California, though no evidence indicates whether the two women lived in a "Boston Marriage" in the sense that historian Lillian Faderman describes in *To Believe in Women.*
[512] Part of their program also included the practice of phrenology, or the study of the shape of the skull to determine a person's propensities and talents. Farnham was already interested in phrenology, and Bruce became a supporter as a result.
[513] JoAnn Levy, *Unsettling the West*, 10.

reforming women, not for punishing them.[514] However, Bruce was emotionally and physically exhausted by living and working with the prisoners, a sentiment which she expressed to Fuller in writing. Fuller reminded her of the valuable work she was accomplishing at the prison, and encouraged her to stay for at least one year, adding "I would not have you lose or abridge so fine an occasion and one which will not return."[515] Bruce stayed for the rest of the year, but then chose to leave while Farnham's prison and mental health reform efforts continued on.

Bruce's time at Sing-Sing would also prove to have a lasting impact on Margaret Fuller. By 1844, when Bruce began working at Sing-Sing, Fuller was also seeking out a new direction—her "Conversations" were becoming less popular and she had stepped away from editorship of *The Dial*, which was losing money. Bruce encouraged Fuller to write a book on womanhood.[516] Bruce invited Fuller to speak to the female prisoners at Sing-Sing and sent Fuller notes on the female inmates in an attempt to offer Fuller a variety of female perspectives to consider while writing.[517] In the fall of 1844, Fuller moved near Sing-Sing to finish her manuscript for *Woman in*

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[514] Janet Floyd argues that Farnham specifically used techniques that would bring middle-class domestic life into the rooms of the prison in order to property train the women in their appropriate role in society. This was accomplished by bringing a piano into the common area, reading to the women, and teaching them to sew items for the male prisoners, etc. See Floyd, "Dislocations of the Self: Eliza Farnham at Sing Sing Prison*," Journal of American Studies* Vol. 40, No. 2 (Aug., 2006): esp. 318-321.
[515] Letter, Margaret Fuller to Georgiana Bruce, July 16, 1844, printed in *The Letters of Margaret Fuller Vol. III*, 210.
[516] In a letter to Bruce, Fuller writes: "If you really think me capable of writing a Lehrjahre for women, (and I confess that some such project hovers before me) nothing could aid me so much as the facts you are witnessing [at Sing-Sing]." Letter, Fuller to Bruce, Aug. 15, 1844, *The Letters of Margaret Fuller Vol. III*, 221.; See also Megan Marshall, *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 218.
[517] Marshall, *Margaret Fuller*, 218.; see also Joan Von Mehren, *Minerva and the Muse: A Life of Margaret Fuller* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 189-190.

*the Nineteenth Century*. After finishing the book, Fuller moved away from her Transcendentalist social circle and took a literary editorship at the *New-York Tribune*, which would eventually take her overseas and lead to her untimely death in a shipwreck in 1850.[518] Though Fuller's potential life trajectory cannot be known, it is clear that Fuller and Bruce influenced and inspired each other since their meeting at Brook Farm.

After spending one year at Sing-Sing, Bruce grew tired of living and working at the prison, and decided to return to the profession she had developed at Brook Farm: teaching. Once again, Bruce turned to a friend from her Brook Farm days, this time the editor of the *New-York Tribune*, Horace Greeley, who put her in touch with a friend in Alton, Illinois, who could find her a teaching assignment in the area.[519] While on route to Illinois, Bruce was robbed and the money she required for the journey was stolen from her bag.[520] Bruce reached out to Margaret Fuller who came to her aid, sending Bruce the additional funds that enabled her to reach the town of Alton, bordering on the Mississippi River.[521] Bruce's time in Alton brought her into contact with the brutal realities of slavery and the personal risk involved in on-the-ground abolitionism, a movement she had become familiar with at Brook Farm. Now she witnessed slavery firsthand as her host in Alton and Greeley's friend, Moses

[518] Marshall, *Margaret Fuller*, 219.
[519] "A Stormy Petrel," Box 1, Folder 2, pg. 24, MS 315, Helen S. Giffen Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.
[520] This event occurred in Cincinnati; Bruce had originally intended to bring her brother along with her, but the robbery meant that she could not afford his fare. See Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 227-229.
[521] "A Stormy Petrel," Box 1, Folder 2, pg. 25, MS 315, Helen S. Giffen Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.

Atwood, hid runaway slaves in his barn. Even among the free black population, Bruce learned of the precarious meaning of freedom for African Americans living in a state bordering the South.[522]

When her temporary teaching appointment in Alton ended, Bruce was offered a teaching appointment with a large salary in neighboring Missouri. Her experience in the Southern state was difficult: she was accused of harboring anti-slavery sentiments and of attempting to free slaves. Slaves informed Bruce in private of their mistreatment, and Bruce felt powerless to help them. Bruce soon decided she could make a greater impact by teaching in a northern school that admitted African American children, and she placed an ad for such a job in William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper, *The Anti-Slavery Standard*. She received a response from a school in Ohio but found upon arrival that the school only agreed to admit children who were at least three-fifths white. Bruce later explained the procedure for determining a child's whiteness that was created by the school: "I should have to keep a card stained the approved shade, test the complexion of each applicant for admission, and reject those of too dark a color."[523] Bruce found these rules unacceptable and left, choosing to return to the more familiar East Coast. After moving back to New York and then Pennsylvania, Georgiana took a job as a teacher and later a governess at a household that served as a safe house on the Underground Railroad and was involved in the

[522] "A Stormy Petrel," Box 1, Folder 2, p. 26, MS 315, Helen S. Giffen Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.; see also Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 239-242.
[523] Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 268.

Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society.[524] Bruce's experiences in the South, and later in the free states that bordered the South, increased her dedication to the anti-slavery cause and later to her support of equal education for all children, regardless of race.

After this series of frustrating teaching appointments, in 1850 Bruce decided to join her friend Eliza Farnham in Santa Cruz, California to pursue a new sort of rural communal life at the territorial edge of the United States. Farnham had moved to San Francisco in 1849, when it was still a Gold Rush boom town primarily occupied by men. Farnham's husband had travelled to California in 1846 and prepared a farm for the family in the Santa Cruz area, but while there, he had fallen ill and died. Farnham travelled as a widowed mother by boat to settle her husband's estate in California. Farnham's independence and self-sufficient personality brought her notoriety even on her journey to California: on the boat, she was so disturbed by the captain's insensitive treatment toward the women aboard that she wrote a formal letter of complaint against him and succeeded in convincing most of the other passengers to sign it. Upon stopping en route at a port on the coast of Chile, the captain waited for Farnham to disembark and then pulled away, leaving her on shore and taking her children the rest of the journey alone. She eventually caught up with the boat, sued the captain, and moved to Santa Cruz to build her own house and start her farm.[525]

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[524] "A Stormy Petrel," Box 1, Folder 2, pgs. 34-35, MS 315, Helen S. Giffen Papers, Special Collections and Archives, University Library, University of California, Santa Cruz.

[525] Farnham was unsuccessful in her lawsuit. As her biographer, JoAnn Levy, writes: "At the appointed hour Captain Windsor appeared, was declared not guilty by a jury of men, and boarded the *Angelique*,

Farnham's fortitude was rooted in the gender-essentialist feminism common among female social reformers of the antebellum era. Farnham believed that women inherently possessed distinct traits from men, and that women could improve men's behavior through moral influence. As she wrote in her memoir, Farnham's motivation for moving to California stemmed from her gender-essentialist and racist belief that white women were needed in California to bring morality and civilization to the area. Farnham argued that California's vices were primarily caused by "the absence of woman, with all her kindly cares and powers, so peculiarly conservative to man under such circumstances."[526] Farnham planned to aid the "sick and disabled" upon her arrival in California, and hoped to raise a "company of intelligent and respectful females" to help her do so.[527] Farnham's commentary on white women's ability to "civilize" the men of the California speak to her perspective on white women's role in Manifest Destiny. While white men would tame the wild frontier environment, Farnham believed that women would then follow to tame the men.[528] Farnham arrived in California without the group of charitable women she had initially planned

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which cleared immediately and departed. Mrs. Farnham's California disappointments were destined to form a long list." Levy, *Unsettling the West*, 45.

[526] As printed in the circular, "California Association of American Women," New York, Feb. 2, 1849. Reprinted in Eliza Farnham, *California In-Doors and Out; or How we Farm, Mine and Live Generally in the Golden State* (New York, 1856), 25.

[527] As reported in the *New York Tribune*, Feb. 14, 1849. Also printed in JoAnn Levy, *Unsettling the West*, 2.

[528] In her writings, Farnham expressed her sadness over the nation's mistreatment of Native Americans and called upon white American women to join in the task of "improving and elevating the Indian" through philanthropic work and education. See Levy, *Unsettling the West*, 149.; Amy Greenberg analyzes white women's role in Manifest Destiny, both in public perception and actuality, in *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum Empire*.

to recruit, but she still believed her presence would bring a necessary feminine influence to California.

As Bruce prepared to meet Farnham in California, Horace Greeley once again offered his help to Bruce by financially supporting her travels west. When she arrived, Bruce and Farnham donned the feminist iconic clothing known as Bloomers and attempted to start and maintain their own farm, as had been the goal at Brook Farm. Bruce planned to open a school for girls in Santa Cruz, but Farnham's reputation as an independently-minded woman prevented Bruce from finding favor in the town as well, and parents refused to send their children to Bruce.[529] Nevertheless, Bruce was determined to pursue teaching, and thus decided to move away from Farnham and her farming operation the following year. With the help of yet another friend from her days at Brook Farm, James Bryant Hill, she moved to the Pajaro Valley in search of a new start. Bruce lived with Hill while seeking employment opportunities, but during this period she decided to marry a local tanner named Richard Kirby. Georgiana Bruce Kirby became absorbed in family life during her children's early years, but never forgot her ties to Brook Farm. She named her first daughter after one of her friends at Brook Farm and relative of the family who had first introduced her to Brook Farm, Deborah Gannett. Kirby eased back into teaching in the following years by starting a small school for girls in her home. She would give

[529] "The Journal of Georgiana Bruce Kirby, 1852-1860," printed in *Georgiana, Feminist Reformer of the West: The Journal of Georgiana Bruce Kirby 1852-1860*, eds. Carolyn Swift and Judith Steen, (Santa Cruz: Santa Cruz County Historical Trust, 1987), 64.

birth to three girls over the next few years, and her third daughter, Cornelia, was also named after a Brook Farm friend and fellow Spiritualist, Cornelia Hall.[530]

Kirby's reform convictions were influenced by her time at Brook Farm and her friendship with Margaret Fuller, and thus sometimes differed from those of Farnham. Both Farnham and Kirby followed the burgeoning Spiritualist movement, and described themselves as "firm believers" in the ability of mediums to access the "future life" and communicate "with those who have put off the natural body."[531] Kirby also supported Farnham's pursuit of phrenology, even comparing their own children's skull shapes upon their births.[532] However, their approaches to women's rights differed dramatically. Kirby advocated a women's rights platform that advocated women's professional development and suffrage, while Farnham's vision of women's rights involved advocating for the public recognition of women's inherent morality and ethical influence over society, but not necessarily legal equality (despite Farnham's own self-reliance for most of her adult life). Late in her life, Farnham's stance on women's rights broadened enough to gain her an invitation to speak at the Women's Rights Convention in New York City in 1858. After obtaining one of the first divorces in California from her abusive and alcoholic second husband,

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[530] Cornelia Hall is depicted in Kirby's autobiography, *Years of Experience*, esp. 144-147, 161.
[531] Georgiana Bruce's comments on communicating with "those who have put off the natural body" can be found in her letter to Charlotte Fowler Wells (no date, though likely 1850), re-printed in Madeleine B. Stern, "Two Letters from the Sophisticates of Santa Cruz," *The Book Club of California Quarterly Newsletter* Vol. XXXIII, No. 3 (Summer 1968): 60. Farnham's comments on the "future life" can be found in her letter to Fowler and Wells, Nov. 15, 1850, also re-printed in, Stern, "Two Letters from the Sophisticates of Santa Cruz," 55.
[532] As described in "The Journal of Georgiana Bruce Kirby, 1852-1860," Jan. 25, 1854, printed in *Georgiana, Feminist Reformer of the West,* 81-82. Phrenology placed great importance on the shape of a person's skull in determining the person's intelligence, aptitudes, and propensities.

Farnham had begun to argue that women were not only naturally distinct from men, but naturally superior. Farnham shared these ideas at the Women's Rights Convention, but was not received well there due to her failure to advocate for legal rights for women in favor of her preferred advocacy for the recognition of women's moral superiority.[533]

Farnham's ideas on gender cannot be separated from her ideas on race. Farnham encouraged western expansion by arguing that white men were best suited to "tame" California land, and white women were best suited to bring morality and self-control to men.[534] In one sense, her views represented a Revolutionary-era understanding of women as holding value only in relationship to the men in their lives: due to their ability to civilize and improve men, women should be seen as superior beings. This viewpoint contrasted with the independent value of women proclaimed by Transcendentalists like Margaret Fuller, as well as with the emerging

[533] Farnham described her idea of women's distinct and superior nature in her book, *Woman and Her Era* (New York: A.J. David & Co., 1864).

[534] Ellen Carol DuBois offers an excellent analysis of Farnham's views on gender as inseparable from her views on race and her belief in Manifest Destiny. See DuBois, "Seneca Falls in Santa Cruz: Eliza W. Farnham and the varieties of women's emancipation in nineteenth-century California," *Common-Place* Vol. 9, No. 2 (Jan. 2009), http://www.common-place-archives.org/vol-09/no-02/dubois/.; In her writings, Farnham reminisces on the early form of "civilization" brought to California Native Americans through Jesuit priests, followed by a period of chaos brought by the Gold Rush, which must become a period of civilization again through the presence of white women. See Farnham, *California, In-doors and Out*, esp. 323-333.; Bruce (Kirby) also played a role in Native American removal through the acquisition of her first farm after her marriage. The Kirbys used "squatter rights," which as utilized to oust native Californios whose land rights were questioned upon he arrival of white American settlers. See *Georgiana, Feminist Reformer of the West*, eds. Carolyn Swift and Judith Steen, 97 n3.

viewpoint of women's rights advocates, who argued that women were inherently equal to men and should thus be treated as such in the legal realm.[535]

In another sense, Farnham's expansionist views were ahead of her time, as these arguments would be used in imperialist circles in the postbellum suffrage movement. From the 1870s through the turn of the twentieth century, suffragists who were sympathetic with American imperialism argued that white American women were uniquely suited for civilizing the barbarian populations of the Caribbean and later, the Philippines. In the minds of some suffragists, the civilizing capabilities of white, American women necessitated their access to full citizenship rights in the United States.[536] As historian Allison Sneider argues, "In this imperial frame of reference, voting was less a right of citizenship than of civilization, and less defined by universal inclusion than by a shared capacity to exercise the privileges of democracy based on a combination of racial traits and religious commitments."[537] However, expansionist and imperialist viewpoints that emphasized white women's civilizing abilities failed to gain dominance in the women's rights movement, as evidenced by the rejection of Farnham's views on the moral superiority of white

[535] Years later, Elizabeth Cady Stanton also expressed the need for women to have legal rights as independent beings, not for the sake of the men in their lives. She presented a version of her writing on this issue as a speech given to the House Judiciary Committee in 1892. See Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "The Solitude of Self" *The Woman's Column*, January 1892, 2–3. Reprinted in Ellen Carol DuBois, ed., *Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Correspondence, Writings, and Speeches* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981).
[536] Allison Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the Woman Question, 1870-1929* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7-8.
[537] Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age,* 6.

women in 1858.[538] Kirby, in contrast, remained much more aligned with the stated goals of the emerging women's rights movement, including advocating for property rights, improved wages, and voting rights for women.[539] In 1869, Kirby began the first local suffrage association in Santa Cruz.[540]

Farnham died in 1864, before women's suffrage became a significant legal question in California. Nevertheless, Kirby later insisted that Farnham had always expressed a firm stance against suffrage, arguing that women's inherent differences from men meant that they should lead a different life, focused on domestic duties and

[538] On Farnham's complicit role in American colonialization of Western territories, see Deborah Gilbert, "Two Women Reformers in Gold Rush California**,** Review of Levy, JoAnn, *Unsettling the West: Eliza Farnham and Georgiana Bruce Kirby in Frontier California*," *H-California, H-Net Reviews*, November, 2004. The rejection of Farnham's views by most women's rights activists is also evidenced by the support for abolition and civil rights for African Americans expressed throughout the women's rights movement. Even through arguably the most divisive moments of the women's rights movement during the debates over the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment (which would grant voting rights to African American men but not to women) women's rights advocates felt conflicted on the issue and did not split on passage of the Amendment entirely along racial lines. Instead, activists including Lucy Stone saw support for African American voting rights and women's suffrage as complementary struggles for greater freedoms. Nevertheless, arguments that pointed to the civilized (and civilizing) nature of white women compared to supposedly less-civilized races found a voice in the women's rights movement, both before and after the Civil War. On the debates surrounding support for the Fifteenth Amendment, see Aptheker, *Woman's Legacy*, esp. 45-50.

[539] The goals of the women's rights movement of the antebellum period can be partially gleaned from the list of resolutions created at the Seneca Falls convention in 1848, which provided a blueprint for issues that would gain attention in the years to come. These included opportunity for equal education, opportunity to speak in religious services, the right for married women to keep their own property and wages, and the right to the "elective franchise." See "Report of the woman's Rights Convention held at Seneca Falls , N.Y., July 19th and 20th, 1848," printed by John Dick at the North Star Office. However, the issue of women's suffrage was still controversial at the Seneca Falls convention. Frederick Douglass, who was in attendance, was the first to "second" Stanton's resolution for women's suffrage when no woman in the room stood to express support. Historian Lisa Tetrault has argued that the Seneca Falls convention represented primarily the interests of the middle-class white women in attendance. See Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls*, esp. 198. Earlier statements on the condition of women include Sarah M. Grimké's *Letters on The Equality of The Sexes and The Condition of Women*, (Boston: I. Knapp, 1838) and Margaret Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1845).

[540] See *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. 3, eds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Brownell Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage (New York: Susan B. Anthony, 1886), 765. Kirby also remained committed to the anti-slavery cause throughout her life—she was appointment the American Anti-Slavery Society's Vice-President for California in 1859. Levy, *Unsettling the West*, 183.

child-rearing. This disconnect between Farnham's ideas of womanhood and her own independent lifestyle frustrated Kirby even years after Farnham's death, as Kirby expressed in later writings. Despite Kirby's frustrations with Farnham, Farnham's stance against woman's suffrage has largely been erased from the historical narrative of the women's rights movement. When Susan B. Anthony was compiling records for her *History of Woman Suffrage*, she wrote to Kirby and requested information on Eliza Farnham to include in the book. Kirby complained of this request to fellow California suffragist, Laura De Force Gordon, who had apparently also asked for information on Farnham. In her letter to Gordon, Kirby explained, "Mrs. F. [Farnham] was opposed to woman's suffrage and I can't see how she can be included in any such category…So sorry to disappoint you, but the facts are stubborn."[541] Kirby also described the ill treatment that her fellow female suffragists had received from the only man involved in the California Suffrage Association, Mr. John A. Collins. Kirby explained, "the treatment we county delegates received at the hands of the John A. Collins clique crushed out all the hope and enthusiasm with which we had started out…our society was born delicate and died before it could attain any vigor."[542] Kirby's memory of the women's suffrage movement in California involved many struggles, and did not involve the support of Farnham.

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[541] Letter, Georgiana Bruce Kirby to Laura Gordon, Dec. 31, n.y. Laura Gordon papers, BANC MSS 80/108 c, Box 1, Kirby, Georgiana Bruce, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Underline in original letter.

[542] John A. Collins was an anti-slavery activist before the Civil War and later became a Spiritualist. He was the only man listed as a member of the California Suffrage Association in the 1860s and '70s. Spiritualists, including Collins, Kirby, and Gordon, played a significant role in the California suffrage movement. However, the early California suffrage movement suffered from factionalism despite these commonalities among members. Collins was loyal to the American Woman Suffrage Association

Despite Kirby's objections to Farnham's depiction as a suffragist and her disappointment in her suffrage society's outcomes, Anthony's finished work presents a very different narrative. Farnham was presented in Anthony's book as an early advocate of women's suffrage and as someone whose pioneering efforts for suffrage made the work of later suffragists relatively easy. As Anthony's history claims:

> The advocacy of woman's rights began in Santa Cruz county, with the advent of that grand champion of her sex, the immortal Eliza Farnham, who braved public scorn and contumely because of her advanced views, for many years before the suffrage movement assumed organized form. Mrs. Farnham's work rendered it possible for those advocating woman suffrage years later, to do so with comparative immunity from public ridicule.[543]

Anthony's history does not match Kirby's accounts but instead demonstrates the power of those who write the historical record to shape the public memory of the women's rights movement. While Kirby was the lesser-known advocate of woman's suffrage, Farnham's public lecturing and charisma made her the adopted figurehead of the suffrage movement in Santa Cruz. In reality, Kirby's Transcendentalist perspective on the independent worth of woman and of woman's potential for

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(headed by Lucy Stone and Henry Blackwell) and quickly claimed a leadership role over the women involved in the state-level organization to the dismay of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, who did not allow men in their National Woman Suffrage Association for that very reason. Gordon also tried to stand up to Collins, but was forced from leadership of the suffrage organization until the late 1870s, when Collins left the organization. See Rebecca J. Mead, *How the Vote was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 21-23.; On Kirby's frustration with Collins, see Letter, Georgiana Bruce Kirby to Laura Gordon, Dec. 31, n. y. Laura Gordon papers, BANC MSS 80/108 c, Box 1, Kirby, Georgiana Bruce, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.; see also Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 193-194.; Kirby's bleak portrayal of her accomplishments in the California Suffrage Association did not do her justice: she served as an officer in her local suffrage association into the 1870s and succeeded in convincing Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to visit California on their national tour in 1871. Carolyn Swift and Judith Steen state that Anthony and Stanton came to California "at Georgiana's request." *Georgiana, Feminist Reformer of the West*, eds. Carolyn Swift and Judith Steen, 37.

[543] *History of Woman Suffrage, Vol. 3*, eds. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Brownell Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, 765. Contumely refers to the insulting treatment experienced by Farnham.

equality with men (as espoused by her friend, Margaret Fuller) brought her into ideological alignment with the women's suffrage movement more than Farnham's perspectives did.

Kirby's path after Brook Farm was directly influenced by the people she met at Brook Farm. Without meeting Margaret Fuller, Kirby would not have met Eliza Farnham, who pulled Kirby into prison reform work and furthered her love of education reform more generally. In 1865, twenty years after leaving Brook Farm, Kirby decided to write a history of the Brook Farm community. She remembered with nostalgia the happiness and camaraderie she had felt there, as well as the equality she had experienced as a woman with voting rights within the community and a voice in meetings, debates, and community decisions. Perhaps it was even these positive experiences at Brook Farm that led Kirby, in 1870, to participate in the National Women's Suffrage Association as a California delegate. At that meeting she was elected Vice President of the state suffrage society in California.[544] She hosted meetings of the local women's suffrage association and wrote regularly in the local Santa Cruz newspaper, *The Sentinel,* advocating for women's suffrage. Kirby also became an advocate of education reform, and publicly expressed her dismay when pro-slavery activists in California pressured schools to segregate African American students from white students.[545] Kirby's name lives on in Santa Cruz today through

[544] *History of Woman Suffrage*, Vol. 3, edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan Brownell Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, 753.
[545] Kirby, "The Journal of Georgiana Bruce Kirby, 1852-1860," July 25, 1858, printed in *Georgiana, Feminist Reformer of the West,* eds. Carolyn Swift and Judith Steen, 86-87.

the Georgiana Bruce Kirby Preparatory School, named after the education reformer and Brook Farm member. In the final decades of her life, Kirby turned to writing as a passion, penning fiction and nonfiction alike, including many articles recalling her time at Brook Farm. Near the end of her life, Kirby wrote her autobiography, over a third of which is dedicated to her time at Brook Farm.

Georgiana Kirby's experience at Brook Farm influenced her life both materially and psychologically. She was welcomed into a community of reformers, who introduced her to the love of education and social reform, values that she carried with her into her work as a prison reformer, a teacher, and as a women's suffrage advocate. She was introduced to friends at Brook Farm who would later find her employment, loan her money, and offer her advice and accommodation throughout the rest of her life.[546] While Brook Farm represented only a brief period of her life, its influence remained with her for another forty years. As Kirby said of Brook Farm in her autobiography: "It must always remain a mystery to those not directly connected with the movement, why it made so lasting and so happy an impression on those who were members."[547] Kirby's Brook Farm friend and her daughter's namesake, Deborah Gannett, wrote something similar of Brook Farm: "I cannot regard it as a failure. The influence of the fine, magnanimous living there must have carried blessings to all parts of our land, as its members scattered and planted in distant communities the

[546] Horace Greeley in particular remained a correspondent of Kirby's, updating her on the status of fellow Brook Farm members and discussing their shared interest in Spiritualism. See letter, Horace Greeley to Georgiana Bruce Kirby, Dec.6, 1852, Horace Greeley Papers, New York Public Library, MssCol 1231, b. 1 r. 1 f. 0342.
[547] Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 175.

seeds of the harvest they had themselves gathered at Brook Farm."[548] When Kirby recognized that Brook Farm was shifting away from its original goals of uniting agricultural work and intellectual pursuits, she chose to continue living out the community's original goals elsewhere, where she felt she could be more impactful. Georgiana seemed to recognize her departure as a type of continuation as well, as she states in her autobiography: "…neither do I admit that there was no result from the too-early attempt to reorganize society. Every loving word and deed produces results according to its kind; and an incalculable impetus to rational and generous thought was afforded by the apparent failures."[549] Though her reform goals developed during the Transcendentalist period of Brook Farm's history, they nevertheless overlapped significantly with those of Anna Blackwell, who joined Brook Farm during its second ideological iteration.

## Anna Blackwell

George Ripley's decision to transition Brook Farm to Fourierism did not attract the financial support that Ripley had hoped for, but it did attract numerous new community members who were either drawn to Fourier's principles or to the diverse industrial labor pursuits his communal model required. Over the winter of 1843-1844, Brook Farm transitioned from a primarily agriculture and education-based community to a more diversified and systematic economic structure. These changes would allow Brook Farm to adhere to the model of Fourierism encouraged by

[548] Ora Gannett Sedgwick, "A Girl of Sixteen at Brook Farm," *The Atlantic Monthly* Vol. 0085, Issue 509 (March 1900), pgs. 394-404.
[549] Kirby, *Years of experience*, 185.

Brisbane, add efficiency and structure to a thus-far lackluster workforce, and ideally gain the financial benefits of the Fourierist network.[550] The changes also attracted more reformers from a wider variety of reform causes: while most Brook Farmers supported the cause of abolitionism during their Transcendentalist years, the transition to Fourierism and the explicit call to end chattel slavery as well as "wage slavery" through the promotion of free labor attracted numerous anti-slavery activists to join the community including John Allen, Frederick Cabot, and John Orvis.[551] Brook Farm leaders advertised for regional artisans to join the community, attracting a new working-class population of shoemakers, printers, seamstresses and carpenters, as well as labor reform activists who learned of Fourier's ideas through the labor press.[552] By 1845, Brook Farm was publishing the Fourierist journal, *The Harbinger*, onsite and had purchased a new steam engine to aid in its new goal of producing pewterware as a source of income.[553] But the investments put into the equipment and buildings that would allow for profitable production stretched the community's budget beyond the amount that the actual production would bring into the community, thus leaving Brook Farm financially unstable. As a result of these changes, some disgruntled residents, including Georgiana Bruce, left the community.

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[550] Guarneri presents the transition from Transcendentalism to Fourierism as a natural progression of the community's already-existent ideals and goals in *The Utopian Alternative*, 51-59

[551] For a discussion on the anti-slavery activists attracted to Brook Farm following its transition to Fourierism, see Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*, 153-154.

[552] Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*, 155. John Allen was also a labor reformer and later acted as editor of *The Voice of Industry* in 1847, when Sarah Bagley accused him of diminishing working women's voices in the publication.

[553] Sterling Delano, *Brook Farm*, 209.

But others were attracted to the community's new direction, including Anna Blackwell.

Anna Blackwell was a member of the famed Blackwell family of social reformers. The Blackwell family consisted of thirteen children, nine of whom reached adulthood. None of the five sisters ever married, choosing instead to pursue pathbreaking careers that would create new opportunities for professional women for generations to come. For example, Elizabeth Blackwell became the first female physician to earn a medical degree in the United States, soon followed by her sister, Emily Blackwell, who became a physician five years later. The Blackwell sons were actively involved in women's rights activism as well, partially through their marriages to famous female activists. Henry Blackwell was a prominent abolitionist and women's rights activist who married the president of the American Woman's Suffrage Association, Lucy Stone. Samuel Blackwell married Antoinette Brown, the first female ordained as a mainstream Protestant minister in the United States.[554] As will be discussed below, Anna Blackwell also helped forge an emerging professional path for women by becoming a foreign correspondent and writer in France following her stay at Brook Farm.

Originally from England, the Blackwell family immigrated to the United States in 1832 and immediately became involved in reform circles in New York. Anna Blackwell was the eldest child and was sixteen years old when her parents

[554] Brown was a lifelong advocate for female religious leadership, though her own denomination did not acknowledge her ordination in her lifetime.

moved to the United States. Their move coincided with a period of financial hardship for the family and was soon followed by her father's unexpected death, and thus Anna Blackwell later characterized her early adulthood in the United States as defined by financial struggles and unhappiness.[555] Anna's family ran in abolitionist circles, befriending outspoken abolitionists including William Lloyd Garrison and Samuel May.[556] However, when Anna Blackwell's father, Samuel Blackwell, died in 1838, the family was left even more financially unstable and every child was required to work to contribute to the family income. Anna Blackwell and her sisters started a school out of their home. As the eldest child, Anna was the first to branch out of teaching and begin pursuing a career path in writing and journalism. Anna moved across the East Coast and across Ohio pursuing profitable teaching positions, but began writing poetry and short stories more in her free time in the hopes of turning writing into a career.

Throughout their early adulthoods in the United States, Anna and her sisters explored various denominational loyalties, transitioning from the pious Presbyterianism of their mother to experimenting with the Episcopal church to eventually becoming Unitarians after meeting Unitarian preacher William Henry Channing.[557] Channing not only introduced Anna to Unitarianism, but also to the

[555] Anna Blackwell describes her perennial unhappiness in the United States in a letter to her family, Dec. 16, 1853, MC 411, folder 22, Blackwell Family Papers (BFP), Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University.; On Anna Blackwell's unhappy childhood memories, see also Hays, *Those Extraordinary Blackwells*, 6-9.
[556] Hays, *Those Extraordinary Blackwells*, 27.
[557] Hays, *Those Extraordinary Blackwells*, 41-43.

Brook Farm community, which Channing frequently visited but never joined. Though Channing was part of the Transcendentalist social circle, he also sympathized with Fourier's theories on community, which he saw as providing "the means of *living* the law of love."[558] The Blackwells were impressed by Channing's ideas and charisma, and thus also impressed with elements of Transcendentalism as well as with the Fourierist ideas being espoused in newspapers across the United States in the early 1840s.[559] Fourier's principles, as presented by Albert Brisbane, also aligned with the Blackwell family's reform priorities, including economic reform and gender equality. Due to the Blackwells' introduction to Fourierism as a complement to both Unitarianism and social reform activism, Anna Blackwell was satisfied with Brook Farm's transition into Fourierism; it was this transition that persuaded her to join the community. Anna Blackwell moved to Brook Farm in 1845.[560]

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[558] As quoted in Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*, 144-145.

[559] Channing was firmly rooted in both the Transcendentalist and Fourierist elements of Brook Farm. He served as president of the Boston Union of Associationists, a Fourierist society, from 1847-1849. See Sterling F. Delano, "The Boston Union of Associationists (1846-1851): 'Association Is to Me the Great Hope of the World,'" in *Studies in the American Renaissance (1996)*, ed. Joel Myerson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), 10.

[560] The amount of time Blackwell spent at Brook Farm is unclear in the historical record, though letters place her in New York by 1846. See, for example, letter from Albert Brisbane to Angelique Le Petit Martin, written from Brook Farm on September 28, 1846, Box 1, Folder 3, Angelique Le Petit Martin Papers, Marietta College Archives.

The time she spent there may have only lasted for a few months. Hays posited that Anna spent the summer and fall of 1845 at Brook Farm in *Those Extraordinary Blackwells*, 56-57. Anna Blackwell mistakenly remembered her time at Brook Farm as occurring in 1842 when she was interviewed about her experiences at the community in 1898. See "A Survivor of Brook Farm," in *Sketch: A Journal of Art and Actuality* (Aug. 24, 1898), pg. 210. No complete record of Brook Farm members exists, and thus determining Blackwell's time there is difficult, though records seem to indicate that she spent some or all of the year 1845 at Brook Farm. On the lack of a complete list of members, see Note, Day Book B, Brook Farm Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, pg. 1.

Fourier's ideas on reforming society through the creation of planned communities appealed not only to Anna, but to her sisters as well. Emily, Marian, and Elizabeth all shared an interest in Fourierism with Anna.[561] Elizabeth Blackwell was attracted to the idea of Association and even joined the Philadelphia Union of Associationists, a group which aspired to create its own Fourierist Phalanx near Philadelphia.[562] Elizabeth socialized with numerous Fourierists through her sister Anna, including Albert Brisbane, though Elizabeth never actually joined a Fourierist community. Elizabeth found Fourierism consistent with her religious and social ideal of creating a community of intellectual, mutually-supporting individuals living by Christian principles. She held on to this ideal in the abstract throughout her life, though her specific fascination with the Fourierists had peaked and dimmed by 1848.

By this time, most Fourierist communities in the United States had dissipated, and Fourierist journals, including *The Harbinger,* were publishing articles on social reform issues beyond Fourierism, most notably, free love and marriage reform; movements that had been too controversial for many Fourierists only a few years earlier. When health reformer and free love activist Mary Gove had requested her daughter's admittance to the boarding school at Brook Farm in 1843, the community rejected the application due to Gove's already-scandalous reputation as a free love

[561] See Letter, Anna Blackwell to Family, Jan. 14, 1848, Folder 22, BFP.
[562] See Hays, *Those Extraordinary Blackwells*, 64. Elizabeth was also invited to join a developing Fourierist community outside of New Jersey in 1852, though by then she had grown suspicious of Fourierism. See Letter, Elizabeth to Henry Blackwell, Nov. 7, 1852, Folder 62, BFP.

supporter.[563] While Elizabeth had been drawn to this censored version of Fourierism presented by Albert Brisbane and adopted at Brook Farm, Fourier's controversial ideas on love, marriage, and sexuality had largely been hidden from the American public throughout the early 1840s. This changed in 1848 when an English translation of Victor Hennequin's *Love in the Phalanstery* was released in the United States, and Fourier's controversial ideas on marriage and sex became widely available.[564] As Fourierist publications in the United States shifted from contemplating economic transformation within organized communities to contemplating marriage reform in the larger society, Elizabeth Blackwell (along with many other supporters of Fourierism) felt her propriety threatened through her association with the movement. She subsequently expressed her distaste for the new Fourierism in numerous letters to her family.[565] Nevertheless, she continued to express hope that the model of communal living could improve society, even if she believed that Fourierists specifically were misguided in their approach.[566] In contrast, Anna Blackwell continued to engage with Fourierist ideas in the late 1840s, becoming even more familiar with Fourier's original writings when she moved to France following the dissolution of Brook Farm.

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[563] Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 198.; See also Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*, 137-138.

[564] Victor Hennequin was a French Fourierist. *Love in the Phalanstery*, trans. By Henry James (Dewitt & Davenport, 1849 [1848]).

[565] Letter, Elizabeth to Henry Blackwell, Feb. 20th (no year, likely ca. 1848), Folder 61, BFP; Elizabeth to Henry Blackwell. Aug. 20, 1848, Folder 61, BFP.

[566] Elizabeth Blackwell wrote about her hope for the Association model of living even into the 1890s, despite her distaste for Fourierism. See Letter from Elizabeth Blackwell to Emily Blackwell, Jan 1, 1892, Folder 48, BFP.; Letter from Elizabeth Blackwell to Emily Blackwell, no date, Folder 50, BFP.

Anna Blackwell's literary career began in earnest while she was still in the United States. Following her stay at Brook Farm, Blackwell published her poems in regional newspapers including *The Columbian Magazine* in 1846.[567] Her transition to literary translations from French to English occurred in 1847 when Blackwell published her translation of George Sand's controversial novel, *Jacques.* Sand's novel criticized women's legal position within marriage and their inability to leave an unhappy marriage through legal divorce under Napoleonic law. Blackwell's translation caused tension within her family, who found the novel scandalous.[568] Despite her family's disapproval, in translating French writers Blackwell had found her niche. Blackwell moved to New York and began translating Fourier's writings, working closely with Albert Brisbane as co-translator.[569] In New York, she kept in touch with her former Brook Farm friends, even boarding with some of them while she completed her translation work.[570] By 1850, Blackwell had moved to Paris, France to continue translating Fourier's works. She translated with Brisbane, and for a while, lived with her sister Elizabeth while Elizabeth studied medicine. Blackwell's writing then expanded into fiction, current events, and social commentary. Blackwell became a free-lance newspaper columnist and reporter, working in a profession

[567] Her poems for *The Columbian Magazine* were printed in volumes 5-6 (1846) and include: "Night and Morning," pg. 6, "Invocation," pg. 128, "To the Artist," pg. 208, "The Persian Wife," pg. 280, "The Lay of the Lady Alice," pg. 286.
[568] See Hays, *Those Extraordinary Blackwells*, 57.
[569] Anna describes her work with Brisbane in letters to her family, including: letter, Anna Blackwell to family, Jan. 14, 1848, Folder 22, BFP; Letter, Anna Blackwell to Emily Blackwell, Feb. 20, 1848, Folder 22, BFP.
[570] Anna Blackwell wrote to Emily while in New York. In the letter she discusses "Mac" and Maria who will soon be married, and they will all get a room together in town. See letter, Anna Blackwell to Emily Blackwell Feb. 20, 1848, Folder 22, BFP; "Mac" refers to Brook Farm resident Osborne Macdaniel, who married Maria Dana. See Swift, *Brook Farm*, 152.

heavily dominated by men. She supported herself by sending articles to various newspapers around the world, including newspapers in England, the United States, and Australia.[571] Due to her position as an outsider with ties to the United States and England, she was hired to work as a foreign correspondent, most consistently with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, for which she provided articles for thirty years.[572]

In France, the first feminists in the nineteenth century had been tied to the utopian socialist movement, and thus Fourier was closely associated with feminism in public opinion.[573] This feminism that emerged under the constitutional monarchies of the early nineteenth century emphasized economic independence for women as essential to their liberation, an approach with which Blackwell also aligned and embodied through her career as a journalist and life as an unmarried, financially independent woman.[574] In the mid-nineteenth century few French women worked in the profession of journalism, but in the following decades it emerged as a feminist medium that was used to challenge public opinion of women's inferior intellectual capabilities while offering female writers economic independence. The power of journalism was just beginning to be utilized by feminists in France when Blackwell arrived and joined the profession.[575] Blackwell became part of a group of

[571] Blackwell's most consistent employment came from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, to which she contributed articles from the late 1860s to 1890. She also served as a foreign correspondent for Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune* and the *English Woman's Journal*.
[572] Hays, *Those Extraordinary Blackwells*, 222.
[573] Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century*, xi, xii.
[574] On early nineteenth-century feminism in France, see Steven C. Hause and Anne R. Kenney, *Women's Suffrage and Social Politics in the French Third Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 6-7.
[575] On the importance of journalism as a feminist project into the French suffrage movement of the early twentieth century, see Mary Louise Roberts, "Acting Up: The Feminist Theatrics of Marguerite Durand," in *The New Biography: Performing Femininity in Nineteenth-Century France*, ed. Jo Burr

pathbreaking women who expanded women's professional opportunities by proving that they could be serious reporters. Blackwell contributed to this feminist movement by interviewing influential female professionals and publishing extensive pieces on their work, including her articles on three French female artists for *The English Woman's Journal.*[576] The public attention that Blackwell brought to these female professional artists altered the stereotype of women as delicate and unserious, while also giving them media attention they could not otherwise receive in the male-centered art world.[577]

Despite Blackwell's support of the French feminist movement, the movement's close ties to the political Left in France meant that when political turmoil disrupted Leftist politics, the feminist movement was disrupted and stalled as well. The popular association of republicanism with men and masculinity in France excluded women from full citizenship status and reaffirmed their place in the home. The outcome would be a lurching and slow process of reform for the feminist movement in France, with legal accomplishments including suffrage occurring much later in France than in the United States.[578] Between 1870 and 1871, Blackwell was

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Margadant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 200), 180-188.; As historian Bonnie Anderson argues, "by appearing in print at all, women challenged the contemporary ideal of female domesticity." See Anderson, *Joyous Greetings: The First International Women's Rights Movement, 1830-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 101.

[576] *The English Woman's Journal* articles included: "Rosa Bonheur, An Authorised Biography," June 1858; "Madame Henriette Browne," April 1860.; On April 1, 1858, Blackwell also published a biography of her sister, Elizabeth Blackwell, in *The English Woman's Journal*, highlighting her career as a doctor.

[577] Deborah Cherry details Blackwell's depictions of female artists as professionals in *Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850-1900* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 52-53.

[578] Moses, *French Feminism in the Nineteenth Century*, 229. On the feminist movement's tie to socialism in France, see Anderson, *Joyous Greetings*, 11-12.; Women did not achieve suffrage in France until 1945. Until the eighteenth century, the Catholic Church's depiction of women as

forced to vacate her Parisian home during the Siege of Paris and the period of the Paris Commune. She wrote to her family about her escape to England during the violence in Paris, which disrupted her newspapers commissions until she could safely return home.[579] Nevertheless, Blackwell worked toward the economic and legal advancement of women's position in French society given the political constraints she faced.

Despite moving to France, Blackwell's life followed a similar path to many other former Fourierists still living in the United States. For example, like other Fourierists including Warren Chase and Sojourner Truth, Blackwell delved into Spiritualism in her later life, even winning a competition through the British National Association of Spiritualists for submitting the best article on Spiritualism in 1875.[580] Blackwell published numerous articles on Spiritualism and translated works by French Spiritualists.[581] Blackwell also supported the development of health cures including water cure and Mesmerism, causes that she (and other Fourierists) found to be linked to women reclaiming control over their health and the advancement of

simultaneously temptresses and as models of Christian virtue had also shaped their identity in French society. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the shifting political environment led to the reinterpretation of women's submission as necessary within the order of the State, as opposed to within Church doctrine. See Grogan, *French Socialism and Sexual Difference,* esp. 8-14.

[579] Letter, Anna Blackwell to George Washington Blackwell, Aug. 12, 1871, Folder 16, BFP.

[580] *The Probable Effect of Spiritualism Upon the Social, Moral, and Religious Condition of Society: Prize Essays* (London: British National Association of Spiritualists, 1876), Folder 29, BFP.

[581] Blackwell translated Spiritualist works, most notably Allan Kardec's *The Spirits' Book,* translated by Anna Blackwell. (*London: Trübner and Co,* 1875), *The Mediums' Book* (Translated by Anna Blackwell, *London: Trübner and Co.,* 1876.), *Heaven and Hell* (Translated by Anna Blackwell, *London: Trübner and Co.,* 1878). Her own book on Spiritualism was *The Philosophy of Existence* (London: J. Burns, Progressive Society, 1871).

society generally.[582] She supported these medical and social advances through her involvement in social reform associations located in both Britain and France. For example, Blackwell was one of the founding members of the Social Science Association in London in 1857, a group of social reformers who contributed to a series of political and legal reforms, including the introduction of the British Married Women's Property Act of 1870.[583] Blackwell's feminist efforts became rooted in Europe, though in many ways they mirrored the efforts being made by her feminist and Fourierist contemporaries in the United States.

Blackwell's social ties with other American Fourierists also remained strong after she left Brook Farm, as evidenced by the continued translation work she completed with Albert Brisbane and by the mention from a fellow Fourierist regarding her ability to help Trumbull Phalanx member Angelique Martin translate her manuscript on women's rights. Once she moved to France, Blackwell also established social ties with Fourier's French disciples, even sitting at the table of honor at a celebration of Fourier's birthday in April, 1867.[584] Though her professional life expanded beyond translations of Fourier's works, her connections to his

[582] Hays discusses Blackwell's attempts to provide her sister, Elizabeth with a magnetic cure in 1850 when Elizabeth suffered from a debilitating eye infection. Hays, *Those Extraordinary Blackwells*, 86-87. Elizabeth eventually lost her eye. Anna discusses taking magnetic treatments for her own ailments. See Letter, Anna Blackwell to Mr. L.C. Blackwell, On the loss of Elizabeth's eye, see Letter, Anna Blackwell to Eliza, August 31, 1850, folder 22, BFP.

[583] On the goals of the Social Science Association, see Lawrence Goldman, *Science, Reform, and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Social Science Association, 1857-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-4, on Blackwell's participation, see 31-32.

[584] Blackwell notes that Fourier's birthday falls on April 7th, but "the 7th falling on a Sunday, they were obliged to take the day before." Letter, Anna Blackwell to George Washington Blackwell, April 28 (no year, likely 1867), Folder 16, BFP.

supporters and advocates continued throughout her life. It was her introduction to American Fourierists at Brook Farm that helped shape this life path: Following her move to France to translate Fourier's works, Blackwell would remain in Europe for the rest of her life.

Blackwell's pursuit of social reform activism, including her involvement with the women's rights movement in Europe, could be traced back to her family's influence and their history of activism. While they were surely an influential force in her life, Blackwell's particular path toward social reform activism and her professional pursuits were demonstrably influenced by her interest in Fourierism and her time at Brook Farm. Her introduction to Albert Brisbane and his subsequent recruitment of her as a translator brought her to Paris, where she pursued a style of social reform distinct in geographical focus, yet similar in goals to those of her fellow Fourierists in the United States. Her perennial interest in Spiritualism, Mesmerism, and water cures, as well as her pursuit of financial independence, professional advancement, and women's legal equality, mirrored the pursuits of her fellow Fourierists and the social reforms they pursued following the dissolution of the Fourierist communities. Like Georgiana Bruce Kirby, Blackwell's life was influenced by her time at Brook Farm and the social connections she cultivated there.

## Conclusion

On the evening of March 3rd, 1846, members of Brook Farm smelled smoke on their property. They ran outside of their communal houses to see that their just-finished, three-story, dormitory-style house had caught fire. A hired laborer, finishing

up construction on the new building, had left a fire burning in the hearth, which had escaped its designated area and set the building ablaze. This fire destroyed their Fourier-inspired dormitory and proved devastating to the community, which had placed so much of its hope and financial resources into the completion of this new housing project. Brook Farm had been in the process of transitioning into a Fourierist community model over the preceding two years. This new building was meant to align them more closely with Fourier's blueprints for ideal communal housing and symbolically complete this transitional phase. Unfortunately, this fire proved devastating, both financially and psychologically, for the community, and the community slowly disbanded during the following year. For the community members who had experienced the fire, hope for reconstruction initially prompted calls to carry on in Association, but over the following months the extent of the financial loss became evident, and Brook Farm members resigned themselves to the dissolution of the community.[585] However, for Kirby and Blackwell, the community was already serving as a living memory that had influenced them from afar for years before the fire snuffed out its material existence.

Anna Blackwell's memories of Brook Farm mimic those of Georgiana Bruce Kirby and of many other female members of Fourierist communities, particularly when interviewed years after leaving the community, when the details of

[585] On the initial hope for reconstruction, see Letter, John Allen to Marianne Dwight, March 9, 1846, Brook Farm Correspondence, C-151, folder 1, Middlebury College Special Collections and Archives. On the religious undertones to this proposed "resurrection" of the community, see McKanan, "Making Sense of Failure," esp. 178-181.

interpersonal struggles or financial woes seemed less pertinent. As Blackwell said of her time at Brook Farm when interviewed years later: "Those days were the happiest of my life. Everyone was so genial, so happy."[586] Kirby reiterated these words in her own reminiscences of Brook Farm at the end of her life.[587] Though their stays at Brook Farm never overlapped, their experiences there nevertheless influenced both of their lives in material and measurable ways.

Brook Farm ended as a communal organization in the same manner as many other Fourierist communities: with members taking a financial loss and dispersing to pursue new projects. But as with those other communities, the financial loss and premature dissolution did not necessarily indicate a failure of the project. Even those who had been critical of the communal experiment during its existence recognized its positive impact on the individuals involved. One such critic, Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote years later when reminiscing on Brook Farm: "At the moment [of dispersion] all regarded it as a failure; but I do not think that all so regard it now, but probably as an important chapter in their experience, which has life-long value."[588] Emerson's conclusions regarding Brook Farm changed over time, as the long-term impact of the community on the lives of its members became clear.

The value of communal life for each of the two women studied here differed based on their distinct personalities: despite their common birthplace, Kirby felt no

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[586] Anna Blackwell Obituary, January 10, 1900, Folder 6, A 145, BFP.
[587] See Kirby, "Reminiscences of Brook Farm," in *Old and New*, Vols. 3 (1871), 425-383; 4 (1872), 347-583; 5 (1873), 517-30.
[588] "Emerson's Reminiscences of Brook Farm," as quoted in Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 106.

personal connection to Europe and never chose to return to England after departing for Boston in 1838. Even while visiting Canada to briefly reunite with her former employers in 1840, she noted how strange the place felt compared to her new home, the United States: "Only my dear friend, the councilor (sic.) and peacemaker of the place, stood in the original relation to me. I had outgrown the others. After the first week of my visit I accepted the situation, though with keen disappointment. Evidently freedom without culture was unsatisfactory."[589] Kirby returned to Boston and spent most of her life in California, using her Brook Farm experience to shape her life in the West. In contrast, Anna Blackwell never felt at home in the United States and returned to Europe when a professional translation opportunity presented itself, remaining in Europe for the rest of her life. Her experience at Brook Farm made this return feasible, and she used the social connections she had cultivated there to shape her life in Europe. Though each woman's experience of Europe and eventual place of settlement differed dramatically, their time in Brook Farm influenced each of their paths going forward. Brook Farm provided each woman an introduction to the social networks that gave them the tools to pursue reforms in religious, social, and political realms.

[589] Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 87.

## Fourierist Futures: The Lasting Impact of the Fourierist Communities in the 1850s and Beyond

Members of the 1840s Fourierist communities continued to engage with social reform movements long after the dissolution of their communities. In the late 1840s, the lasting impacts of these communities on their members and on other social reform movements were not yet identifiable to contemporary reformers, who viewed the "failure" of the Fourierist communities as representing the end of the ideas for which they stood. Other social reformers who had insisted on the greater importance of their particular reform efforts over that of Fourierism throughout the 1840s, now gloated that Fourierism had, indeed, accomplished virtually nothing of importance. As William Lloyd Garrison stated,

> General results are to be obtained by specific labor, not by indulgence in an ideal theory, however comprehensive. What is it that our Socialist friends are accomplishing? They hold a pleasant festival once a year—on the birth-day of Fourier; they pass the evening in gay communion; they eat and drink, they sing and dance; and then retire to bed. Is it in this way slavery is to be abolished, or the laboring classes of the world redeemed?[590]

Despite Garrison's critique of the Fourierist movement as an ineffective reform strategy, in the following years, the lasting impact of the Fourierist movement would slowly become clear. Though this impact would not necessarily take form in the way Fourierists had first imagined, (through the growth and expansion of communal living spaces across the United States and, perhaps, the world) it instead took form through

[590] "Remarks of Wm. Lloyd Garrison," *The Liberator,* June 14, 1850, 94.

the integration of Fourierist ideas and former Fourierists themselves into other social reform movements and formal political settings.

Fourierists moved in a variety of directions following the dissolution of their communities, but some patterns are evident. While many Fourierists clung to their faith in Association, this commitment had never been exclusionary. After the dissolution of their communities, communitarians remained committed to the social reform efforts with which they had been peripherally involved during their time in community. For these former communitarians, the promise of a transformed society was not over, but rather simply in transition. As Fourierists joined each other in new social reform movements of the 1850s and beyond, their experiences in Fourierist communities translated into organizational skills and lasting social networks that supported them and enabled them to continue to pursue their reform goals.

The various reform movements into which former Fourierists transitioned seem, to a casual observer, to be distinct and unrelated social causes. However, upon deeper investigation it becomes clear that these causes often attracted a network of activists who shared similar religious outlooks, political leanings, and social connections, some of which were cultivated within Fourierist communities. The reform movements pursued by former Fourierists include (but are not limited to) the women's rights movement, the abolition movement, the labor movement, the free love movement, and the Spiritualist movement. While some Fourierists became engaged in these movements even while living in their communities, after the dissolution of these communities they turned more directly towards activism within

these movements and others (including the free love movement) that had not yet gained traction with the public in the early 1840s. Beyond joining social reform groups that attempted to challenge social norms and legislation, some of these Fourierists also became involved in formal politics, taking part in organizing new political parties in the years leading up to the Civil War.

## Founding the Republican Party

In the western territories and states, Fourierists who engaged in politics typically did so through the free-soil movement, the Whig party, or, eventually, the emerging Republican party. These political parties appealed to Fourierists who moved West, primarily from Northeastern states, as they advocated for white farmers and families to have access to western lands at the expense of speculators or wealthy slaveholders. Though radical abolitionists including William Lloyd Garrison continued to publicly condemn what they saw as the pro-slavery United States Constitution and protest all involvement with politics, Garrison privately expressed support for the new Free Soil Party as a promising sign of growing abolitionist influence across the country.[591] In the 1850s, as slavery became a divisive national issue, many of these western Fourierists became members of the Republican party, and even played a significant role in its founding.[592]

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[591] See Stanley Harrold, *Lincoln and the Abolitionists* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2018), 27.

[592] Though slavery was already a divisive national issue during the 1840s, the passage of the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas Nebraska Act in 1854 galvanized former free-soil advocates to focus on slavery as opposed to free labor more generally as the primary political issue of the time. William Gienapp contends that Free Soil Party members began advocating for the creation of a new "party of freedom" once it became clear that the Kansas-Nebraska bill was likely to pass in early 1854.

The Republican party was founded through a series of meetings held throughout the winter and spring of 1854 across western states and territories, the most significant of which occurred in Ripon, Wisconsin, the town which had by then absorbed the former Wisconsin Phalanx within its borders. These meetings, held at the local schoolhouse and Congregationalist Church, were called in an attempt to protest the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which threatened to bring slavery into the western territories, a prospect which the free-soil sympathizers of the former Wisconsin Phalanx adamantly opposed. Warren Chase and Garrett Baker, former members of the Wisconsin Phalanx, as well as New York Tribune editor and zealous supporter of Fourierism, Horace Greeley, were all in attendance. The free-soil sympathies of Wisconsin Phalanx members transitioned easily into the anti-slavery sentiment of the new Republican party. Warren Chase saw such little distinction between the Free Soil and Republican parties that he recognized the change in name only, referred to these parties as "'Free Soil,' afterward changed to Republican."[593] Warren Chase ran as the Free Soil Party candidate for governor of Wisconsin in 1849, but lost the election to the Democratic candidate, Nelson Dewey. Though he changed political party loyalty throughout his life, in the 1870s Chase actively supported the presidential candidacy of a fellow founding member of the Republican party, Horace Greeley.[594] Always a

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See William Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 88-89.

[593] Warren Chase discusses his involvement in the organization of the Free-Soil Party of Wisconsin in Chase, *Forty Years on The Spiritual Rostrum* (Boston: Colby & Rich, 1888), 67-68.

[594] In 1872, Greeley ran on the Liberal Republican ticket, a party which had formed out of the Republican Party in order to oppose the re-election of Ulysses S. Grant. Chase served as a presidential elector from Missouri. See Tenney and Atwood, *Memorial Record of the Fathers of Wisconsin Containing Sketches of the Lives and Career of the Members of the Constitutional Conventions of 1846*

contrarian, when Chase moved to California in 1876 he became a supporter of the Greenback Party, a short-lived political party which advocated labor movement reforms, including the eight-hour workday.[595] Regardless of his subsequent political loyalties, Chase was significant in the founding the Republican party through his circle of free-soil friends.

Records from the 1854 schoolhouse meeting indicate that Garrett H. Baker, who joined the Wisconsin Phalanx in 1848, was actually chairman of the meeting in Ripon which established the Republican Party, though as the much more nationally-recognized name, Horace Greeley is often remembered as the leader and mastermind behind the meetings. Alvan Bovay, who was also influential in the formation of the party, and the person who is credited with recommending the name "Republican" for the new party, had originally moved west in the early 1850s in hopes of joining the Wisconsin Phalanx. Though it was just disbanding when he arrived, he decided to settle in nearby Ripon.[596] On March 20th, Bovay, Baker, and the rest of the group meeting in the Ripon schoolhouse  approved the same resolution being passed at anti-Kansas-Nebraska meetings across the West, promising the formation of a new political party committed to preventing the expansion of slavery should the Kansas-

*and 1847-8 with a History of Early Settlement in Wisconsin*, 62.; See also Chase, *Forty Years on the Spiritual Rostrum*, 72-73, 103

[595] Chase, *Forty Years on the Spiritual Rostrum*, 72-73.

[596] Mark A. Lause, *Young America: Land, Labor, and the Republican Community* (Champaign, University of Illinois Press, 2005), 113.; See also Griffin, "A Reformer's Union: Land Reform, Labor, and the Evolution of Antislavery Politics, 1790-1860" (PhD Diss., City University of New York, 2017), 307-308.; See also Frank Flower, *History of the Republican Party, Embracing Its Origin, Growth, and Mission, together with Appendices of Statistics and Information Required by Enlightened Politicians and Patriotic Citizens* (Springfield, Ill.: Union Publishing Company, 1884), 147–156.

Nebraska bill pass. Historians trace this particular meeting to the founding of the Republican party, begun by a group consisting of numerous Wisconsin Phalanx members.[597] While Warren Chase had previously participated in formal politics during the existence of the Wisconsin Phalanx, after its dissolution more members of the community became active in formal politics through their participation in the creation of the Republican party. The Fourierist community, which for years had served primarily as an outside influence of the formal politics of Wisconsin, became later a leading force in forming the political party that would collect together anti-slavery Americans from across the country into one political party.

Warren Chase particularly took on this role in Wisconsin, though other reformers came to support the Republican party when they clearly became the major anti-slavery party in the years leading up to the Civil War. Abolitionists who had lived in Fourierist communities including Angelique le Petit Martin of Trumbull Phalanx and Sojourner Truth of the Northampton Association eventually came to support the Republican Party when it became clear that it offered the best path toward universal emancipation.[598] In these continued reform efforts, the social networks they had cultivated during their time in community proved important for organizational and material support in the years following.

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[597] Griffin, "A Reformer's Union," 307-308.

[598] On Sojourner Truth's support, see Harrold, *Lincoln and the Abolitionists*, 104-105.; On Angelique Le Petit Martin's support, see letter to Wendell Phillips in which she tells him the southern slaveholders claim to uphold "republican principles" but he is the "true Republican." See Martin, Letter to Wendell Phillips, 1854, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection.

## Social Movements

At the same time that Wisconsin Phalanx members were engaging in formal political party activities, numerous fellow Fourierists were engaged in social reform activism with the goal of shifting formal politics through social influence. All of the women highlighted in the preceding chapters participated, to varying degrees, in the burgeoning women's rights movement.[599] Sojourner Truth became the most well-known of the communitarian women when she travelled across the country to lecture on both women's rights and abolitionism, movements that she saw as inseparable. Elizabeth Baker also became a leading figure in Washington's campaign for suffrage, as did Georgiana Bruce Kirby through her regional suffrage organization in Santa Cruz, California. Angelique Le Petit Martin and Anna Blackwell remained supportive figures of the women's rights movement without the same public engagement, though their efforts in legislative petitioning, distributing pamphlets, and writing articles supporting both women's rights and professional women themselves provided significant support for the women's rights movements of their respective countries of residence. In addition to the Fourierists who were engaged in the suffrage movement, women who are remembered primarily as suffragists in the historical record also expressed interest in Fourierism, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who visited Brook Farm in 1843 and pined for the relief from domestic drudgery that cooperative living might bring her.[600]

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[599] And as an extension of the women's rights movement, some of these women also supported the temperance movement, including Angelique Le Petit Martin.
[600] See Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 395-396.

In addition to their suffrage advocacy, Fourierist women engaged in other activities significant to the women's rights movement beyond the suffrage cause. Before African American and women's suffrage became the primary goals of the American Equal Rights Association following the Civil War, the women's rights movement involved a series of reform goals including gaining legal property rights for married women, improving wages and labor conditions for women, and liberalizing divorce laws. Fourierist women became engaged with these efforts through various methods, including by petitioning the government for formal political changes. However, these women also used more subtle methods to challenge commonly held beliefs on woman's limited intellectual ability and their subsequent relegation to domestic concerns. Lilly Martin Spencer challenged these assumptions through her paintings, which centered women and depicted them as capable persons who needed to learn how to complete domestic tasks, as opposed to presenting these skills as innate to women. As Spencer showed through her paintings of struggling new wives and mothers, these skills did not necessarily occur naturally to women, but were learned (see Figure 3). Spencer's own personal life also expanded professional opportunities for women, as she became the primary breadwinner of her family and worked from home and in art studios as her husband cared for their children. Anna Blackwell's personal life also embodied this elevation of the professional woman, as her career as a journalist offered her the power to give public attention to other professional women's accomplishments. Kate Baker was also less engaged in suffrage organizations than her sister Elizabeth, though her teaching position at the

Hampton institute and work with the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs demonstrated the professional opportunities that were increasingly made available to white women through the federal and private efforts at "civilizing" Indigenous children. Though Spencer's, Blackwell's, and Baker's professional pursuits fell outside of the traditional realms of the organized women's rights movement, their professional lives nevertheless contributed to advancing public perceptions of women as capable professionals.

As discussed in the preceding chapters, numerous Fourierists were also engaged in the abolitionist movement, which they continued to pursue following the dissolution of their communities. Activists in the Northampton Association became travelling abolitionist lecturers and participated in the underground railroad. Though in the early years of the Fourierist communal movement many Fourierists claimed that their call for the freeing of all "slaves" included free white laborers of the North as well as slaves in the South, many Fourierists became more focused on protesting the horrors of slavery in the South in the politically tumultuous years leading up to the Civil War. In addition, non-communitarian abolitionists sympathized with the Associationist movement as well. Despite his critiques of the Fourierist movement generally, William Lloyd Garrison was deeply involved in the Northampton Association. In addition, Sarah and Angelina Grimké helped run a Fourierist school in Raritan Bay Union, a utopian community based in New Jersey in the 1850s.[601] The

[601] On their time at Raritan Bay Union, see Gerda Lerner, *The Grimké Sisters from South Carolina: Pioneers for Women's Rights and Abolition* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004 [1967]), 222-224.; see also Sean Griffin, "A Reformer's Union," 163.

social networks cultivated at these cooperative communities served to strengthen the abolitionist cause years beyond the dissolution of the communities themselves.[602]

Following the dissolution of Fourierist communities, some Fourierists translated their rejection of the isolated household into support of the free love movement.[603] The free love movement gained momentum in the 1850s as the notion of "marriage slavery" gained traction with northern reformers as another metaphorical equivalent to the "wage slavery" of northern industrialism and the chattel slavery of the South.[604] Free love activists used the metaphor of women's enslavement to her husband to advocate for greater legal rights for women within marriage, including property rights, custody of children, inheritance rights, more lenient divorce laws, increased control over birth rates, and for some radical reformers, the free exchange of sexual partners at will. Fourierists had long been accused by the public of practicing free love and contributing to the breakdown of the traditional family within their communal experiments. These largely-unfounded criticisms had initially served to make Fourierists downplay their critique of marriage and the isolated household in order to avoid association with more outspoken advocates of free love. This public

[602] Ronald Walters analyzes abolitionists as a group bent on imposing morality on American society in a tumultuous economic and political environment. This analysis of antebellum reformers generally can also be applied to the goals of Fourierists. See Ronald Walters, *The Anti-Slavery Appeal: American Abolitionists after 1830* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).
[603] See Spurlock, *Free Love*, 24-25.; Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 353-363; Kathryn Tomasek and Adam-Max Tuchinsky, "'Spirits Bound to the Same Haven': American Fourierists, Marriage, and the Political Economy of Love," presentation, Les Socialistes et le Marriage, Laboratoire de Démographie historique de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France, October 5-7, 2006.
[604] For example, see Warren Chase's *The Fugitive Wife: A Criticism on Marriage, Adultery and Divorce* (Boston: Bella Marsh, 1861).

criticism had led to their reticence to engage with free love reformers, even when those reformers openly supported the Fourierist movement. This was evidenced by free love reformer Mary Gove's rejected application at Brook Farm. It is thus with some irony that former members of Fourierist communities would transition into becoming leaders of the free love reform movement in the 1850s.

By 1858, Albert Brisbane had openly accepted the free love movement as a necessary step towards the creation of Fourier's planned society, a dramatic reversal of his earlier depictions of Fourier's vision in the early 1840s.[605] Fourierists' reversal represented a broader critique of sexist marriage laws that emerged alongside the women's rights movement. In the early nineteenth century, the emerging middle-class increasingly argued that marriage should not be simply an economic relationship, but a romantic union of souls, and a marriage without love meant artificial relationships and oppressive contracts, particularly for women.[606] Through this association of love with marriage, Fourierists found a socially acceptable avenue to begin criticizing

[605] John Spurlock characterizes the transition by some Fourierists to the free love movement as representing the consolidation of reform movements into a new, overarching vision for society during the 1850s. See Spurlock, "The Free Love Network in America, 1850 to 1860*," Journal of Social History*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Summer, 1988): 766-767.

[606] On the role of Fourierists in encouraging marriage reform, see Kathryn Tomasek and Adam-Max Tuchinsky, "Spirits Bound to the Same Haven."; Nancy Cott analyzes the romantic expectations placed upon marriage in the early nineteenth century as leading to "marriage trauma," in which women who were unable to find the perfect mate increasingly chose to remain single. See Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, esp. 83.; Cott also explores the interpretation of marriage as a type of slavery for women under the interpretation of the emerging women's rights movement in the mid-nineteenth century in *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000), esp. 63-67.; Zsuzsa Berend supports this thesis on the importance of romantic connection on marriage in the nineteenth century. See Zsuzsa Berend, "'The Best or None!' Spinsterhood in Nineteenth-Century New England," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 4 (2000): 935–57.; Catherine E. Kelly also highlights the focus on romantic love among the white middle-class by the 1840s. See Catherine E. Kelly, *In the New England Fashion: Reshaping Women's Lives in the Nineenth Century* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1999).

marriage as potentially problematic for society.[607] When love was lost in marriage, all that remained was a legally oppressive institution for women, and thus women needed access to divorce to avoid abuse or perennial unhappiness. Warren Chase and Anna Blackwell became advocates of free love as a way to liberate women. Of course, not all Fourierists transitioned into an outspoken acceptance of free love. Nathaniel Meeker of Trumbull Phalanx doubled down on his commitment to marriage and the isolated family through his next communal experiment, the Greeley community in Colorado. Elizabeth Blackwell expressed her distain for Fourierism in letters to her family by the late 1840s, just when Fourierists were shifting toward open support of, and collaboration with, the free love movement. Even Horace Greely, editor of the *New-York Tribune* and enthusiastic supporter of Fourierism among numerous other social movements, could not align with those Fourierists who supported free love.[608] Regardless of the divisiveness of the free love movement, for some former Fourierists, the movement elegantly translated Fourierists' critique of the isolated household into a broader critique of legal marriage that also incorporated Fourierist ideas on women's equality. Though the free love movement was only in its infancy in the mid-nineteenth century, it successfully attracted former Fourierists who applied their own Fourierist convictions toward challenging the more oppressive elements of legal marriage for women.

[607] John C. Spurlock discusses this in *Free Love*, 2.; Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract.*
[608] Tomasek and Tuchinsky, "Spirits Bound to the Same Haven."

The labor movement also found supporters from Fourierist circles, including Angelique Le Petit Martin of Trumbull Phalanx. As discussed in the first chapter, Martin corresponded with labor activists including Sarah Bagley and Mary Emerson, both of whom were also interested in the Fourierist movement. By the late 1840s, Fourierist collectives for laborers (one of the many pre-cursers to labor unions emerging during the mid-nineteenth century) were organized across the East Coast, including the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association and the Lowell Union of Associationists. These groups adopted Fourier's arguments for the recognition of women's labor as essential to the marketplace in their efforts to organize for higher wages and better working conditions. In addition to contributing to early models of labor unions, Fourierists also started cooperative stores across the United States in an effort to continue the Fourierist cooperative economic model on a small scale following the dissolution of the Fourierist communities. As mentioned in the third chapter, the Baker family started one of these cooperative stores in Ripon, Wisconsin. Throughout the 1850s, former Fourierists publicized and helped organize cooperative workshops in which they introduced cooperative labor structures to laborers across the country.[609]

Fourierists also expressed camaraderie with the international labor movement. Fourierists held a banquet to celebrate the February Revolution in France in 1848,

[609] Guarneri describes these cooperative workshops as being organized "among ironmolders, tailors, printers, and seamstresses in Cincinnati, Boston, Pittsburgh, Providence, and New York." See Guarneri, "Brook Farm and the Fourierist Phalanxes: Immediatism, Gradualism, and American Utopian Socialism," in *America's Communal Utopias,* ed. Donald Pitzer, 174.

which had resulted in the end of the conservative reign of King Louis Philippe I and the creation of the Second Republic. At the banquet celebrating the revolution, Brook Farm founder George Ripley gave a speech declaring the democratic uprising a natural extension of Fourierism, stating:

> In view of the whole movement, what do we profess to claim in this Revolution as Associationists? We claim for it a recognition of the rights of labor, the importance of industrial organization, and of social guarantees. These important principles, so ably illustrated by Fourier, and so warmly contended for by the Associationists, are distinctly reproduced in the Provisional Government at Paris.[610]

Fourierists saw themselves as engaged in an international effort to improve the condition of the laborer. Former Fourierists also continued to be involved in the labor movement as it evolved through the development of labor unions in the late nineteenth century, including Brook Farm member John Orvis who became a leader in the Sovereigns of Industry and Knights of Labor.[611] Though Fourierists had initially hoped to reform labor in the United States by creating cooperative living environments, by the 1850s those goals had been transformed into the gradual improvement of labor conditions through participation in broader worker's movements.

## Religious Reform

Perhaps more than any other reform movement occurring in the late nineteenth century, the Spiritualist movement attracted many Fourierists including Sojourner Truth, Olive Gilbert, The Baker family of Ceresco, Warren Chase,

[610] As quoted in "Response to the French Revolution," *The Harbinger*, April 8, 1848, pg. 180.
[611] Guarneri, "Brook Farm and the Fourierist Phalanxes," 172.

Georgiana Bruce Kirby, and Anna Blackwell. Those former Fourierists found connections and overlap between Fourier's vision, Emanuel Swedenborg's writings, and the magnetism and hypnotism of Franz Mesmer. The Spiritualist movement was interpreted as a way to transcend this life and access spirits in other realms, a practice that offered leadership roles to practitioners regardless of gender, class, or race, and with no centralized system of authority. This religious reform movement, an extension of the shifting approaches to religion that had emerged from the revivalist movements of the early nineteenth century, reimagined a more democratic approach to religion that gave individual experience greater importance than doctrine or clergy. The equalizing aspects of this movement appealed to social reformers like Fourierists, who elevated personal responsibility and individualism in their efforts to transform society.

In addition to incorporating the individual responsibility so important to many social reformers in the nineteenth century, Spiritualism also incorporated notions of social responsibility and order essential to Fourierists. Mediums noted the messages conveyed from spirits regarding "spirit laws" that, if correctly applied to this world, would aid in transforming society. Isaac and Amy Post, ardent Spiritualists and friends of Sojourner Truth, recorded Benjamin Franklin's advice given to them through a séance: "it seems to be when spirit laws are understood, every one will rejoice to be governed by them."[612] The notion of a spiritual order that could be

[612] As quoted in Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America*, 223.

applied to the material world aligned significantly with Fourierists' attempted application of Fourier's utopian blueprints to social life. Fourierists found the integration of order and formula in the Spiritual movement appealing, explaining the easy transition many Fourierists experienced in becoming Spiritualists.

The social circles of Fourierists and Spiritualists also converged with free love activists by the end of the 1840s. Like free love activists, Spiritualists critiqued marriage as too-often a legal bond made between noncompatible individuals instead of a loving bond between two eternal spirits. The crossover between these three groups was further crystalized as Spiritualists adopted Fourierists' terminology, even using Fourier's theory of "passionate attraction" to explain their critique of marriage and the need to transform it from an oppressive institution based on social pressure to a union of souls, or "spiritual affinities."[613] Fourierist women were also attracted to progressive stance on women's rights espoused by both Spiritualists and free love activists. Spiritualists' and free love activists' support for women's rights was not limited to suffrage, but included a radical agenda familiar to Fourierists, including property rights and questioning the traditional, isolated home.[614] In the form of female mediums, the Spiritualist movement also offered social freedoms and leadership roles to women that mirrored some of the advantages offered to women in the Fourierist communities. Women in the Spiritualist movement experienced greater opportunity

[613] Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 119.
[614] Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits,* 78-79.

for geographic mobility, financial independence, and leadership in a group setting, all advantages that many women found within their communal experiments.[615]

Fourierist community members, as well as some of their most well-known supporters and visitors, were attracted to Spiritualism in the second half of the nineteenth century. Anna Blackwell merged Fourierism and Spiritualism throughout her life, writing Spiritualist articles even while remaining tied to Fourierist social circles.[616] In her early days in France, while still translating Fourier's works, Anna attempted magnetic cure on her sister, Elizabeth to help cure an eye infection (this treatment did not succeed, and Elizabeth eventually had the eye removed). Horace Greeley also became a dedicated follower of Spiritualism after attending a séance by the Fox sisters with Brook Farm founder, George Ripley. William Lloyd Garrison also showed signs of Spiritualist sympathies near the end of his life.[617] Greeley and Garrison represent only a sample of the numerous Fourierist supporters and sympathizers who became fascinated with Spiritualism in the 1850s.[618] However, Warren Chase represents the most dedicated Spiritualist of the former Fourierist leaders. He made a career out of lecturing on Spiritualism around the country, and did

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[615] Marlene Tromp argues that Spiritualists utilized essentialist views of women as naturally more passive to explain their talent as mediums, or as human vessels for spirits. This conservative argument ironically served to justify women's leadership within the Spiritualist community. See Tromp, *Altered States*, 23.

[616] Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 27

[617] On debates over the extent of involvement by William Lloyd Garrison in Spiritualism, see T.B. Taylor, "William Lloyd Garrison's Religion," *Banner of Light*, July 5, 1879, pg. 3.; See also Luther Colby, "William Lloyd Garrison," *Banner of Light*, June 7, 1879, pg. 8.

[618] Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits,* 16-17.; Guarneri notes Greeley's attraction to Spiritualism as stemming partly from his desire to communicate with his deceased son. See Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 350. On other Fourierist members and supporters who joined Spiritualist circles, see Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 350-353.

not shy away from the Spiritualist movement even as it received increasing public criticism following revelations of deception and fraud by mediums in the 1870s.[619] Chase's continued involvement in the Spiritualist movement did not seem to hinder his election to the California state senate in 1879. As he declared, "Spiritualism at that time was as popular in California as in any part of the Union."[620] Fourierists' attraction to Spiritualism reveal the two movements' similar intellectual foundation and mutual appeal to progressive reformers looking to integrate science and order into religion.

## Health Reform

Health reform trends also intrigued many Fourierists, who found in them another avenue for individual self-control and to reward both the individual and society. Health reforms of the mid-nineteenth century emphasized the importance of the individual in curing the body and, metaphorically, renewing the social body. Health reformers like Sylvester Graham encouraged lifestyle choices including vegetarianism, water cures, abstaining from alcohol, and resisting sexual gratification.[621] Fourierists were influenced by these thinkers and their advice first while living together in community: the Northampton Association invited Graham to speak at one of their Sunday meetings, and Brook Farm member Georgiana Bruce

[619]On public criticism of Spiritualism from both within and outside of the movement, see Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 180-181.
[620] Warren Chase, *Forty Years on the Spiritual Rostrum*, 109.
[621] On the connection between individual and societal reform, see John Spurlock, *Free Love: Marriage and Middle-Class reformism in America, 1852-1860* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 8-9.

Kirby noted residents' familiarity with Graham as part of the eccentric reform scene in Boston.[622] Warren Chase also credited the health of Ceresco residents with their vegetarian diets and use of water cure treatments in a letter to *The Harbinger*:

> We are in enjoyment of an excellent state of health, owing in part to our healthy location, and in part to the diet and regimen of our members. There is a prevailing tendency here to abandon the use of animal food; it has been slowly, but steadily increasing for some time, and has been aided some by those excellent and interesting articles from t he pen of Dr. Lazarus on 'Cannibalism.' When we have to resort to any medical treatment, hydrotherapy is the system, and the *Water-Cure Journal* very good authority."[623]

Regardless of whether these health practices were as widespread at Ceresco as Chase suggests, Chase's familiarity with them shows their geographic dispersion as far westward as Wisconsin within the Fourierist networks.

Health practices like water cures and the centers where they were administered also offered a space to recover and recuperate away from the frequent ignorance of women's health shown by professional male doctors. As doctors eliminated midwives from "professional" medical practice, female patients had few options for receiving medical care from other women (until Elizabeth Blackwell paved a path for women to become professional doctors). Water cures offered such places where women could take control of their health and often recover from

[622] On Kirby's familiarity with Graham, see Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 86. On Graham's lecture at the Northampton Association, see Clark, *The Communitarian Moment*, 113.
[623] Letter from Warren Chase, August 21, 1847. As quoted in Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, 431-432.

ailments in the presence of other women.[624] Water cures became popular among numerous social reform advocates, and water cure centers thus emerged as a social gathering place for reformers, including abolitionists, women's rights advocates, and Spiritualists. All of these factors made these centers popular among Fourierists, and consistent with their commitments to women's rights and societal transformation.[625]

Georgiana Bruce witnessed water cures conducted by fellow female community members at Brook Farm. As Georgiana Bruce said of water cure: "The novel propositions chimed in so well with the various attempts to purify the moral atmosphere and elevate the intellectual, that they met with ready favor."[626] The purifying of the physical body aligned with the societal purification sought by the Fourierist reformers. Water cures were also popular with the abolitionists at Northampton, where David Ruggles opened a water cure center frequented by Sojourner Truth and William Lloyd Garrison. After Anna Blackwell's failed attempts at curing her sister's eye infection through magnetic treatments, Elizabeth turned instead to water-cure treatments numerous times to help her afflictions. Anna Blackwell also visited water cure centers numerous times throughout her life. Her experience at Mary Gove Nichols' water cure center in New York in 1848 and subsequent befriending of Gove also reveals the way that these centers served as sites for introducing social reformers to each other in the decades following the dissolution

[624] For example, Mary Gove opened a water cure center in New York. On Gove's mission to educate women about health care methods, see John B. Blake, "Mary Gove Nichols, Prophetess of Health," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 106, No. 3 (Jun. 29, 1962): 219-234.
[625] Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits*, 154-157.
[626] Kirby, *Years of Experience*, 163.

of Fourierist communities.[627] The widespread acceptance of water cure treatments among social reformers led to a linking of the body, society, and spirit that connected other potentially distinct social reform movements in a visceral, material way for these reformers.

Fourierists in some communities also joined abolitionist efforts, even participating in the Underground Railroad at Northampton and likely at the Wisconsin Phalanx. However, the racial makeup of most Fourierist communities was white, primarily native-born Americans, though Europeans were also present in these communities, including Angelique and Giles Martin and Anna Blackwell. Only in the Northampton Association did the community actively promote and affirm the acceptability of African American members as equal participants in communal life.[628] Fourierists' support for abolitionism did not typically translate into advocacy for complete social equality of the races, unlike other abolitionist efforts including the American Anti-Slavery Society. However, while many Fourierists promoted a post-slavery society, they ignored or contributed to the oppression of Indigenous Peoples. Fourierists in the western states and territories supported a westward movement onto

[627] Mary Gove Nichols also introduced Anna Blackwell to Edgar Allen Poe's friend Maria Clemm, eventually facilitating a brief correspondence between Blackwell and Poe. See letter, Edgar Allen Poe to Anna Blackwell, June 14, 1848, box 1, John Henry Ingram's Poe Collection, 38-135, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.; Patricia Cline Cohen notes that Gove and Anna Blackwell's friendship also hurt Blackwell's reputation when Gove was criticized in literature. See Cohen, "The 'Anti-Marriage Theory' of Thomas and Mary Gove Nichols: A Radical Critique of Monogamy in the 1850s," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring 2014): esp 16.

[628] The Northampton Association mirrored abolitionist organizations in their support of both legal and social equality of African Americans. By explicitly recognizing the equality of men and women, as well as African Americans and whites, the Northampton Association constitution resembled the stated goals of the American Anti-Slavery Society. See Aptheker, *Woman's Legacy*, 16-18

Indigenous lands. Numerous Fourierists in this study participated in the so-called "civilizing" efforts conducted by American missionaries and government agencies, including teaching in boarding schools that were meant to assimilate Indigenous children into white Protestant culture. The perspective Fourierists held towards Indigenous Peoples reflected the view taken by many Americans at the time, but also reveals the limits to the demands of racial and gender equality expressed by many Fourierists. While Fourierists promoted the expansion of rights for white women, their advocacy did not extend to rights for Indigenous men or women. Thus, while cultivating networks of reformers who would go on to participate in numerous other social reform efforts, the Fourierist communities simultaneously furthered some of the expansionist and racist views held by the government and public in the United States.

## Conclusion: The Webs of Reform

Archival work can lead researchers to dead ends, where the written record stops and further information can only be guessed at. Much more often than dead ends, in my research for this dissertation I frequently ran into black holes—never-ending connections between historical actors, their Fourierist communities, and their additional reform efforts. Family and geography were frequent points of connection. For example, Olive Gilbert came to work with the anti-slavery movement through her social connection with the Benson family who organized the Northampton Association. More members of the Northampton Association came from Brooklyn, Connecticut than from any other town, and this was also the hometown of the Benson

and Gilbert families. Marriages and children were also a common connection that linked one group or individual to a reform movement: Lilly Martin Spencer learned feminism from her Fourierist parents, and particularly her mother, Angelique Le Petit Martin.

But beyond the familial and geographic connections that would have tied individuals together regardless of their involvement with Fourierism, I also found that intentional communities created more social links that otherwise would have ended at that family connection. The most apparent example is perhaps that of Georgiana Bruce, a young British governess who probably would not have met and socialized with Margaret Fuller had it not been for her stay at Brook Farm. These communities created new spaces for connections to be made and cultivated between reformers who might have otherwise remained strangers. Thus, the communities acted as incubators that established support networks for the social reform movements of the nineteenth century. With each new string added to the growing web of reformers, their movements became stronger, better able to withstand setbacks or financial hardships, and more widely permeated across localities. While Fourierist communities may not have served as the only sites of origin for the social reform movements of the mid-nineteenth century, they nevertheless strengthened each of these movements through the connections they created among enthusiastic reformers. These black holes of the archives demonstrated not just the frustrating vastness of nineteenth-century records, but the layers of connection that overlapped and multiplied through the creation of new modes of connection, whether through reform publications, traveling lecture

series, churches, marriages, or intentional communities. Fourierist communities represent a place within the political and social history of the United States that aided the goals of reform movements and thus provide a piece of the puzzle needed to uncover the reasons behind the progress and successes of those movements.

In this dissertation I center intentional communities as spaces where meaning and identity were shaped. In recent years, historians have increasingly focused on the importance of evolving, unregulated spaces as creating room for the disruption of social norms in numerous studies alternately focused on the nation-state, the city, rural spaces, or borderlands. As various spatial "turns" have refocused historians onto the role of shifting demarcated spaces in shaping historical narratives, intentional communities have continued to remain on the periphery.[629] Their peripheral place in historical memory may be the result of their small populations compared to those of nation-states or urban centers, or perhaps due to the common assumption that they primarily attract extremists who do not represent wider social trends. Yet by reframing them as a necessary piece of the web of social reform activists and their causes, their importance is brought into focus. The role that intentional communities played in creating new connections between individuals and furthering the reform movements of their era should not be ignored. Their place is at the center of the history of reform and protest of social and legal structures in United States history.

[629] See Jo Guldi, "The Spatial Turn in History" in *Spatial Humanities: A Project of the Institute for Enabling Geospatial Scholarship*, University of Virginia Library, http://spatial.scholarslab.org/spatial-turn/the-spatial-turn-in-history/index.html.

The "failure" of these communities can only be determined by applying a narrow focus on their material dissolution, which occurred in most cases after only a few years of existence to the dismay of their founders. But in many ways, these communities were great successes—in the political challenges they presented the country, in the social reform efforts they cultivated within the communities, and in the social networks they created and fostered for years following the communities' dissolutions. As John Allen, member of Brook Farm, stated in his planned defense of the faltering Fourierist communities in 1847: "I am to lecture on… 'Failures,' failures of the church, of politicians, commerce, of the school, and also the failures of Association. If I can get a hearing I will show them that Association can have no failures as disastrous as civilisation (*sic*.) itself."[630] Allen argued that the Fourierist communal model cannot be deemed a failure when judged in comparison to the countless failures and disappointments of American society as a whole.

In the hindsight gained from over 150 years of chronological distance from the Fourierists, it is now clear that what seemed like failure to those outsiders who saw Fourierist communities collapsing in front of them was in fact the transition of Fourierist social networks into greater engagement with the other social reform movements evolving and taking shape around them. Fourierists not only joined those new reform movements, but helped to shape them through their incorporation of Fourier's critiques of the isolated household, marriage, women's inequality, and

[630] John Allen to Anna Q. T. Parsons, Sept. 17, 1847, Brook Farm Correspondence, C-151, folder 1, Middlebury College Special Collections and Archives.

oppressive labor conditions. Instead of interpreting the social reform movements of the 1850s as evidence of what historian Carl Guarneri referred to as the "long, slow erosion of Fourierist doctrine," they should be interpreted as demonstrating the importance of Fourierist ideals to the intellectual foundation of social movements throughout the nineteenth century.[631] These social movements benefitted from the arguments that Fourierists developed during their time in cooperative communities, as well as from the contributions of former Fourierists who emerged from their communities with established social networks of like-minded reformers. Instead of being seen as a fringe movement of utopians, Fourierists should thus be seen as critical to historical studies of social reform activism in mid-nineteenth century United States.

Undoubtedly, this shift from away from Fourierist communities and into other social reform efforts entailed a shift in personal convictions and even personal identity for former Fourierists. While community members had lived as "sisters in Association," they now shifted away from that all-consuming lifestyle to becoming sisters and brothers in new reform movements.[632] This shift involved turning away from elements of reform that had once been central to Fourierists' vision for the ideal society, including the shared household and communal property. This shift out of community could be interpreted as a failure of the communal movement and would likely have been deemed so by Fourier's own metrics. But interpreting community

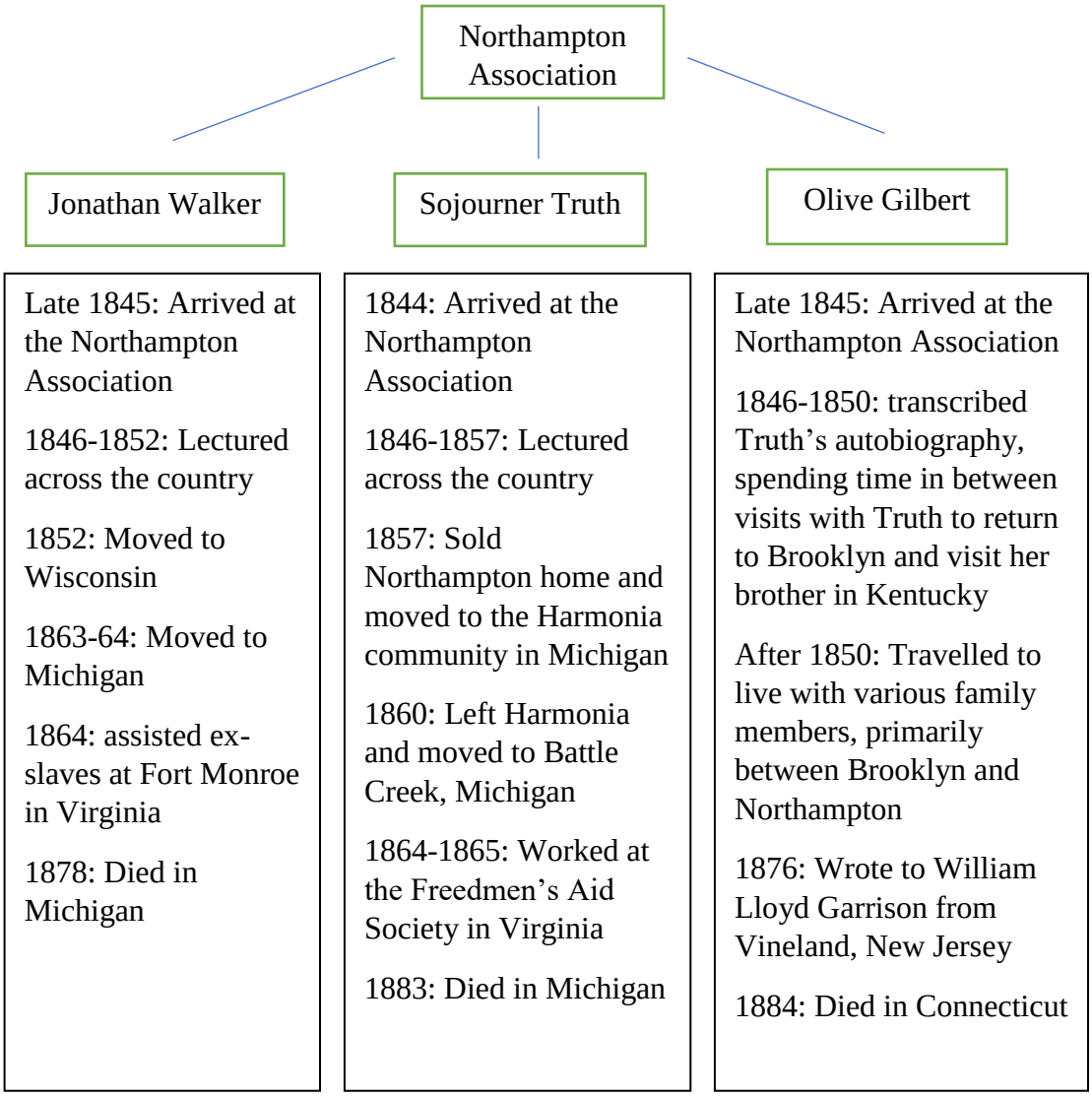
[631] Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative*, 349.
[632] This language references Anna Parsons' letter to Angelique Martin at Trumbull Phalanx, August 27, 1847, MIC 119, Lilly Martin Spencer Papers, Ohio History Connection, Columbus, Ohio.

success and failure through such a narrow definition erases the new opportunities for social engagement that emerged from this change in personal conviction and identity. By experiencing communal life, community members were changed in sometimes immeasurable ways, and new avenues for incorporating their ideals and visions became possible and more desirable moving forward. While this dissertation only followed a few former Fourierists in their lives after community, their examples reveal the possibilities for social change that were created and cultivated through this transformative experience.

By stepping back from the years of these communities' short existences and taking a wider view of the impact of the communities on multiple generations, the role of female Fourierists comes into focus. While women were rarely able to serve as the public faces or legal founders of these communities, they nevertheless found opportunities for leadership roles and for social connections through the Fourierist communities. Fourierist women who cultivated social connections with reformers involved in various causes received the material and social support necessary to pursue social reform activism, sometimes across the country. Similarly, some of the women who raised children in Fourierist communities and among Fourierist social networks shaped their children's lives to focus on advancing the social causes important to Fourierists into the next generation. Even if their actions have attracted less attention from historians, these female communitarians used their communal experiences to enact long-term change through various reform efforts. In their lives after community, they harnessed the tools offered to them in the communal

environment to aid in the slow transformation of American society in the nineteenth century and beyond.

## Appendix 1: Timeline of Northampton Association Abolitionists



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