

THE PITTSBURGH LEADER'S ANALYSIS OF THE 1890 CRISIS IN THE HARMONY SOCIETY AND ITS INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS

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As I have pointed out in my book *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs, 1847-1916* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971), 1890 was a year of crisis in the long history of the Harmony Society, because death was taking a particularly heavy toll of its membership. Gertrude Rapp, the granddaughter and last surviving descendant of "the most famous communist of the age," had died on December 29, 1889, and soon afterward George Kirschbaum, who had directed the music at her funeral, made the mistake of taking a lantern with him to investigate the cause of falling pressure in the Society's gas system. He was burned alive in a matter of minutes. The old members of the Society had not yet recovered from this shock when on January 23, 1890, death claimed the junior trustee of the Society, Jonathan Lenz. The man who was elected to succeed him, Ernest Wölfel, died suddenly on July 28, 1890.

These deaths only tended to accelerate the decision of former Harmonists and workers serving the Harmony Society to seek membership and above all a share in the enormous wealth of the Society. Among those interested were two rivals: the Dusses and the Feuchts. The former, John S. Duss, was a one-time employee of the Society, while the latter were descendants of one of the founding fathers. Both the Feuchts had been forced out of the Society because they married, but upon their readmission to membership under the trusteeship of Jacob Henrici, Dr. Benjamin Feucht should have become a trustee. This was prevented through the powerful alliances Duss quickly managed to make with new joiners, for Duss had joined the Society on January 24, 1890, just a few weeks before the Feuchts returned. On July 26 of that year, Duss became junior trustee. Now things began to get very restless in quiet Economy, so much so that the *Pittsburgh*

Dr. Arndt, who has contributed many articles to the magazine, has recently returned home from a visit to Germany where he has been working on a new book on the history of the Harmony Society which will be published in that country.—Editor

Leader assigned a reporter to write two long articles analyzing the situation at Economy in order to bring its readers up to date on the happenings in the famous nearby town. The writer of these two articles is not named, but because they reflect the popular opinion of the time and in turn greatly influenced public opinion not only in the Pittsburgh area but far beyond, these articles are of great historical importance. There is, of course, truth mixed with fiction and folklore, much as we find it in Goethe's autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*Poetry and Truth*), yet, in general, the author's contemporary sources were very good, and he tells of some experiences which George Rapp had in his youth which I have not found anywhere else, here or in Germany. Because the two articles seem to have survived in only one preserved copy of this newspaper, they become as valuable as original manuscripts existing only in an original copy, and this single copy is not destined to have a very long life due to the composition of the paper on which it is printed.

The first article appeared on August 3, 1890, and carried the following headlines: "Warring Economites. Futile Efforts Made to Depose the Aged Patriarch Henrici. Only Four of the Original Members Still Alive — The Council and Trustees, Who They Are, and How They Became Identified With the Society — Growth and Decline of the Harmonists — Legal Advice Being Sought for the Purpose of Disrupting the Colony — Inside Facts Pertaining to the Life and Mode of Government of a Peculiar People."

Under these headlines the article reads as follows.

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Jacob Henrici, the venerable leader of the Harmonists, is now the only barrier to the disruption of the society which has for almost a century existed in the quaint old town known the world over as Economy. In the course of natural events Mr. Henrici cannot live much longer. He has now reached the ripe old age of 86. The past year his nearest and dearest friends have been brought to a realization that the time is nigh at hand when dissension and legal strife will usurp the place where harmony and good feeling existed for so many years. Already the dark cloud of jealousy and a scrambling after the wealth of the society is hovering over the little town, now almost deserted, ready to burst into an endless number of legal suits, and with the death of President Henrici it will descend with all the fury that the so called legal heirs can bring to bear.

One of the first principles on which the society was founded, and one that the founder, George Rapp, imposed upon the members under penalty of banishment and thousands of years of future punishment, was that no member save those in the council and the head of the society should hold intercourse or converse with the outside world. The fact of their being of foreign birth and speaking a foreign tongue was of vast assistance to Father Rapp in carrying out this monarchical law. Father Rapp realized that ignorance and servility were the only feasible means of keeping the society together, and this could not be accomplished if the working members were educated in American customs and the English language. Father Rapp was an autocrat in the strictest sense of the word, and no king or earthly potentate ever wielded as mighty a power over a nation as did Father Rapp over the Economites. His word was law, and no one was permitted to even question his slightest wish.

Mr. Henrici has made a long but none the less futile effort to perpetuate the society by taking in from time to time new members, training them up in the manners and customs of the society and placing them in positions of authority over the legal and direct descendants of the original members, and it is attributed to this that the disruption has been brought so nigh at hand. As the sons and daughters of the founders of the society attained the age of maturity, they could not be kept in the ignorant and servile state by which their parents were ruled,¹ even by the venerable president, and while there has not yet been a public clamor for personal rights, it is only out of respect for Mr. Henrici that the smoldering embers of dissatisfaction have not already been fanned into a raging flame.

It is owing to the conservative methods imposed upon all who join the society that little or nothing is given to the outside world of the inner life of the Harmonists, for any one so divulging is liable to immediate dismissal. An article written by the late Rev. D. E. Nevin, which appeared in the March number of *Scribner's*, 1879, probably revealed more clearly to the outside world the religion and customs of this peculiar sect than anything that has yet been published. Mr. Nevin defines the Economites as being honest, upright and conscientious in

1 This is not true. From its inception the Society had many very poor members who had had only an elementary worldly education but who were thoroughly educated in the more important matter of eternal life. See the catalog of the library of the Society in my *George Rapp's Successors and Material Heirs, 1847-1916*. They were neither ignorant nor servile but obedient to the laws of God in which they firmly believed, and this belief was the secret of their success.

their mode of life, but censures the leaders for exiling the members to a life of ignorance and beastly toil,² compelling them to remain in servility to their master, Father Rapp, by rules more rigid and severe than the most exacting of monarchs, for these members were taught that a refusal to live up to the command of Father Rapp not only invited dismissal from the society but eternal punishment in the world to come, and it was this religious fear that kept them in the most abject abeyance to the mighty word of Rapp.

For years past, innumerable have been the ways and means adopted by different parties to secure control of the vast estate of the Economites. Sharp, shrewd men, it is alleged, have even gone so far as to join the society, in expectation that after a few years they would be able to grasp within their hands the much-coveted prize. But all such efforts have been futile, for there seems to be a strange fatality connected with all who are appointed to the position second in command to the aged patriarch. Others, however, who have remained outside the fold have been more successful, as it is rumored that they are in a position when the disruption occurs to forward claims that will put them in possession of much of the wealth of the Economites. For the first time in the history of the society, it is said, the Economites are borrowing money to enable them to carry on the vast works that are dotted over the western portion of the state.

Time and decay worked upon the mental as well as the physical powers of Mr. Henrici until he is no longer capable of exhibiting the shrewd, sharp business principles that so marked all his investments and transactions. The brief term in which he served as president of the P. & L.E.R.R. was disastrous to both body and mind. That was the straw that broke the camel's back; the incessant worry and additional labor was too much for even his powerful intellect, and he was compelled to rely largely upon the counsel and advice of outsiders in the management of the society's affairs.

The town of New Harmony, lying just beyond Leetsdale, on the P., Ft. W. & C.R.R., was laid out in opposition to the judgment of Mr. Henrici; he foresaw that the labor and money necessary to push it to successful completion would have to be largely intrusted to outsiders, but Mr. Lenz, who was then second in power, insisted that

² Writers from the outside frequently made statements like this because they did not have access to the heart of the Society. The Harmonists actually did not toil as beasts, because their combined efforts made their labors lighter. They were also free from the curse of intellectualism and unbelief under which our generation of vipers is suffering.

the investment was a judicious one, and the farm was purchased in opposition to the protests of Mr. Henrici. The manufacture of brick was engaged in on a scale never before attempted in this vicinity, houses were erected and at least \$250,000 invested in putting the new town in working order. The dissension that arose between Mr. Henrici and Mr. Lenz resulted in a breach of friendship which had previously existed for almost three-quarters of a century, and which was not healed at the time of the latter's death, which occurred last winter. Mr. Ernest Woelfel undertook to carry the new town to completion and success, but he, too, has died, and the village of New Harmony is without a head. The brick business was not the financial success its founder had hoped for, and thousands of dollars of the early Economites hard savings have been expended in order to avert the financial ruin of the new town. It is this alleged mismanagement of the so-called carpet-baggers that has caused such a wail of indignation to arise from the claimants to the Economites' estate, who are scattered from one end of the United States to the other.

Early History of the Harmonites.

George Rapp, the organizer and founder of the Harmonites, was by trade a weaver in Germany. Not meeting with financial success that he had been led to expect, he finally drifted into the vineyards where he labored for a mere pittance.³ Mr. Rapp was a man endowed with more than ordinary natural ability, and an ardent and zealous advocate of the doctrines of the Lutheran church. The manner in which Father Rapp formulated the plans by which the Harmonists were organized, as he told frequently to the members in the little church at Economy, savors strongly of the supernatural, and it's from this statement that the Economites looked up to Father Rapp as one inspired with the Spirit of God and a leader of people that was sent from heaven to guide his little flock until the reappearance of the

³ This charge was thoroughly investigated in Germany before Rapp came to America and found to be untrue. George Rapp was a man of some property, and his emigration certificate states that his estate amounted to two thousand guilders. This was not enough to finance the founding of the Society, but by sharing this amount with others he was able to pay the passage of many indigents who became members of the Society, although they contributed absolutely nothing but their goodwill and labor. It has been generally overlooked that the Deutsche Gesellschaft (The German Society) of Philadelphia in 1804 took up a collection to help Rapp's followers upon their arrival in Philadelphia, where many spent at least a part of the winter. On October 6, 1804, Daniel Sutton and Mühlenberg turned over to Frederick Rapp the sum of four hundred and sixty-one dollars which had been collected.

Messiah on earth, an event that was looked forward to take place in 1836. Mr. Rapp was an exhorter of great renown in the village where he toiled, and it was while addressing a revival meeting that he told the following, and which was repeated to the reporter by one who had an intimate acquaintance with Father Rapp:

While working alone in the vineyard on a clear summer's day the angel of God made himself known and called him to cease labor for man and come to work in His garden. In order to fully test the divine call Father Rapp made supplication to his Father, asking for a reappearance of the Holy Ghost. The prayer was this: That if it was the Lord's will that he should forsake his country and church that it be made known to him in a convincing manner. Mr. Rapp said: "Lord, if it is Thy will, let the call come in the form of rain from the heavens. If within the hour the rain fall from a clear sky then will I come to Thee."⁴ Almost instantly great torrents of rain fell, and the future of the Harmonist was a foreordained circumstance — the will of God. As an exhorter Father Rapp wielded a mighty influence over his fellow-workmen. When he made known to them the vision he beheld in the vineyard little difficulty was encountered in gathering a little band of followers about him. Owing to the conflicting nature of the teachings of Father Rapp with the mother church it was impossible for the little band to obtain a foothold in their native land. Being a great reader, Father Rapp knew of the richness of America, and it was there that he determined to establish his colony. Without money it was a difficult task to put these plans into operation. George Bentel, grandfather of Charles Bentel, the Beaver county banker, a man of considerable wealth, was persuaded that all earthly treasure was vanity, and that in order to walk with the Messiah he should forsake all else, deposit his fortune at the feet of the Apostle Rapp and fly to the new country. This was brought about by the gifted oratorical and persuasive powers of Father Rapp. Once this was obtained but little delay was experienced in getting ready for the long journey. Father Rapp came to America with the intention of settling in Louisiana.⁵ He start-

⁴ Probably an interesting bit of folklore. For the true story see Rapp's own statement of April 17, 1785, pages 18-19 of my *George Rapp's Harmony Society, 1785-1847*, rev. ed. (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972).

⁵ The original destination was to be Louisiana because of the extensive earlier propaganda of John Law in behalf of Louisiana. Law's publications and agents made such an impression on Württemberg that the government issued a special decree warning against migration to Louisiana. So many Germans had settled there, including Württembergers who had previously emigrated to Louisiana and the Arkansas Territory because of John Law's promises, that Louisiana maps from that time until today call the

ed from the fatherland with this object in view, but before reaching that point he was so struck with the beauties and future prospects of the country round about Zelienople that he purchased a large tract of land there and sent word back for his followers to come. In the meantime he prepared for their government by drafting an iron-clad resolution requiring all the members of the society to give their all to the apostle, out of which a city was to be built which would be held and owned by all in common. One by one the members of the little band arrived and yielded up their earthly possessions to Father Rapp, signing the article of agreement binding themselves to submit to the guiding care of one whom they fervently believed to be inspired of God. In order to the more clearly carry out his instructions, Father Rapp appointed a council of twelve members to aid him in perfecting Harmony, the name given the society. While these men were supposed to have a voice in the management, there was never a dissenting voice against a decree issued by the leader. In place of being counselors in fact as well as in name, the council's duty was chiefly to look after and have the people adhere closely to the rules issued and laid down by Father Rapp. From the very first his word was law. He took the money that was brought and laid at his feet, and used it as he pleased, and no one dared to say him nay. Even those who brought with them fortunes were compelled to submit to the iron-clad rules that were laid down for the government of all, and take from the common fund only an equal share with the poorest and most degraded member.

Father Rapp took from the Catholic ritual the most salient points and added them to the ritual of the Lutheran church, forming a ritual exclusively his own, and compelling the members to separate themselves from all other denominations. It was this fact that caused the Harmonists to be called by the name of Separatists in their own country.

Under the guidance of Father Rapp the little band grew and prospered. Scores of members were added to the little society, until, about 1815, the membership had reached almost 1,000. The little town was so cut off from shipping facilities, entailing much difficulty in disposing of their product, that Father Rapp decided to move to a more

stretch approximately from Baton Rouge to New Orleans "The German Coast" — in French and English! See *Ausführliche Historische und Geographische Beschreibung Des an dem grossen Flusse Mississippi in Nord-America gelegenen herrlichen Landes LOUISIANA*, etc. Leipzig, bey J. Fried. Gleditschens seel. Sohn, 1720. Rapp had written to the French government about settling there but the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 changed these plans.

convenient locality. It was made imperative with males and females that to till the soil was a privilege accorded by the Divine Being. Father Rapp taught this, and there was consequently no difficulty in developing the wilderness into one of the finest equipped farms in the state. In 1815 Father Rapp took his colony to Wabash, Vincennes county, Ind., but their stay there was only a temporary one, for Father Rapp had already secured the option on a large tract of land lying on the north bank of the Ohio, in Beaver county, but which could not be sold until some years later, owing to the property being entailed.⁶ This tract of land afterward came into the possession of the Economites. It was originally held by the ancestors of Hon. James G. Blaine. It was in 1825 that the Harmonists moved to the newly found haven of rest, the Blaine family having gone to Washington county. Although the Harmonists had prospered wonderfully their possessions were not sufficient to pay for the vast tract of land, it comprising an entire township, located 18 miles west of Pittsburg. From time to time the relatives of George Bentel contributed to the common fund until the whole tract was paid for and the permanency of the new town established.⁷

How Economy Received Its Name.

The original settlement of this peculiar sect was named Harmony because its inhabitants dwelt in peace and happiness. When they removed to Wabash the name New Harmony was given by Father Rapp to distinguish it from the original settlement. The new possessions were called Economy for the reason that the members of the colony had all the qualifications that the name implied. viz. honesty, industry, sobriety and a guarded manner in hoarding up the fruits of their labor.⁸ From the date of settlement up until the early sixties the town grew amazingly. Economy was noted for its raw silk and woolen

6 This is not entirely correct. For the real reasons for the various moves and the purchase of the Economy site see my *George Rapp's Harmony Society*.

7 Incorrect. The Society had enough money to pay in cash. Bentel probably is confusing this with inheritances collected during the Indiana decade of the Society by a special two-man commission sent to Württemberg for that purpose. They did collect quite a sum and also brought along generous presents from Johannes Huber of Honfleur, France, a relative of the Bentels (also Bendels). Huber and Rapp had been schoolmates in Iptingen, and Huber generously remembered Iptingen with large gifts and was buried there. He got started on the road to riches by furnishing shoes for Napoleon's army.

8 It was named *Okonomie* or Economy because this was to be the *Göttliche Okonomie*, i.e., the Divine Economy where God would dwell with his people. The term is taken from their Berleburg Bible.

fabrics. The whole town was one vast workshop. Even the death of Father Rapp, which occurred in 1847, did not interfere with the progress of the Economites. His successor, R. L. Baker, was a man of remarkable executive ability and sagacity. His administration of the Society's affairs was not governed with such a monarchical hand. Under his regime more and better buildings were erected in the town and additional manufacturing establishments built. Although the Harmonists had been sorely tried in being disappointed over the failure of the Messiah to appear at the time and place stated by their leader and organizer Father Rapp, they never lost faith; some few discontented ones loudly demanded a division of the property, but they were in the minority. They were dismissed from the society and given a proportionate amount of the property, amounting to \$105,000. When Mr. Baker died Mr. Henrici was elected to fill the vacancy. Although not one of the original members of the society Mr. Henrici as a protege of Father Rapp's, had won the respect and reverence of the entire society, and his being elevated to the highest position in the gift of the Economites met with the unanimous approval of all. That his reign has been a satisfactory one is evidenced by the largely increased possessions now held by the trustees of the Economites society, variously estimated at from twenty to thirty millions, the larger portion of which has been accrued since Mr. Henrici has figured as president of the society. Of the original members of the society all are sleeping their last sleep in the orchard, with but four exceptions, and these are women now so aged and decrepit that they are seen on the street only on state occasions.

The idea that celibacy was one of the fundamental principles of the Economy society is an erroneous one, as the society had been flourishing for many years previous. Celibacy was made incumbent upon the members by Father Rapp about 1820, and it was agreed to by the members signing an article, in which, although husband and wife were still to be permitted to live under the same roof, they were to occupy separate apartments under penalty of dismissal from the society.

Celibacy and its Effect on the Economites.

As better illustrating the almost perfect subjection to which Father Rapp had brought his followers when he made the statement that in order to attain perfection in the life all members must follow the life of celibates there was not one dissenting voice when the article

was handed around for the signature of the members.⁹ Father Rapp had been extremely careful as to the time when this important step should be announced, for he realized what dangerous ground he was treading upon in asking the male members to forsake wife and family ties and cleave only unto the Messiah who was shortly to appear on earth. By frequent exhortations and promises that the appearance of the Messiah was near at hand he worked his people into a religious frenzy that brought them almost to the verge of insanity. It was during this meeting that to be a true Economite and a disciple of God the members of the society must bind themselves to live apart from their wives. Men and women who had been legally married in the sight of God and man were torn assunder by the word of Father Rapp. Although the Economites had not yet reached the zenith of their career, the beginning of their downfall may be attributed to the introduction of celibacy among the members, for while there had not been a dissenting voice to the new law when it was proposed, when left to quiet meditation in their own homes these men realized what a burden they had assumed. The consequence was that dissatisfaction and ill-feeling was engendered to such an extent that when Count Leon came to this country he came very near causing the complete overthrow of the Harmonists. That leader's stirring address against the outrageous and inhuman practice of celibacy caused a revolution in which Count Leon succeeded in getting 200 members to secede and join forces with him in Phillipsburg. These revolting members took with them what was considered an equal portion of the society's wealth. But Count Leon had made so many visionary promises that he never fulfilled that in less than two years his followers were scattered to the four corners of the earth, quite a number of whom became penitents and returned to the society and were again taken into the fold and the Economites were infused with new life which with the careful and loving kindness daily manifested for the prosperity of the colony by Mr. Henrici the society prospered and increased the already enormous wealth.

The Beginning Of The End.

Conspiracy to dethrone Mr. Henrici — The Trustees have a wrangle over an investment, in which the Leader is overpowered.

⁹ This is hearsay because such an article never became part of the Articles of Agreement. Rapp did teach that the celibate state was the higher state, as has been practiced in the Roman Catholic Church for centuries. As the Society grew older, he became more and more impatient about backsliders who lapsed into sexual cohabitation.

Worn out by age and toil the original members were carried to the orchard and laid side by side in the narrow tomb in the sleep that knows no waking till the resurrection morn. Death and feebleness were such frequent results to the society that it became necessary to hire men and women to do the work that had heretofore been done by the members themselves, and it was out of this importation of outside labor that has ultimately brought the Economite society so near the verge of disruption. For the most part the laborers that were brought in were ignorant and illiterate, but there were some few who early in their connection with the society realized that it could not but be only a few years until the older members would die, and their vast possessions would revert to the new stock. With this object in view quite a number of new recruits were gladly welcomed by Mr. Henrici and Mr. Lenz, the trustees for so many years. Inch by inch these "carpet-baggers" worked their way into the good graces of the trustees, and some were finally elected as members of the council. Honest, faithful and sincere himself Mr. Henrici did not realize that others were not so conscientious. Weighed down by age and enfeebled in mind by the burden of overlooking the affairs of the society Mr. Henrici and Mr. Lenz were in a way imposed upon and while Mr. Lenz was supposed to be the father of the scheme to build the town of New Harmony the scheme was proposed by an outsider, but who had obtained a voice in the management by being a member of the council.

George Kirschbaum, who was generally supposed to be the protege of Mr. Henrici, was in fact a rival for his position. He talked and reasoned with Mr. Lenz until he had him completely imbued with his ideas and when Mr. Henrici interposed his objection a war of words took place between him and Lenz, Woelful and Kirschbaum that for a time threatened to break into a revolt. Judge Hice, the legal adviser, was called in, and he counseled harmony, advising Mr. Henrici to withdraw from the management of the new town, and from that time on Mr. Henrici's power has been on the decline. In fact, at that time it was talked of deposing Mr. Henrici, but Mr. Lenz was not in favor of such severe measures, and his counsel prevailed against the hot-headed young members. Mr. Henrici then and there predicted that the revolters would never prosper, and his prophesy has so far been fulfilled, for all three of the revolters have since died, all having met with sudden deaths, George Kirschbaum being killed by a gas explosion, and Mr. Lenz and Ernest Woelful having died from heart trouble and apoplexy. At the meeting of the council called to elect a new

member caused by the death of Ernest Woelful, Mr. Henrici once more undertook to assert his authority and have Henry Feicht appointed to the position, but he was outgeneraled and outvoted by the young members and Fishern, a recent acquisition to the society, elected. The council is now composed of nine members, who from their own body elect trustees. John Duss, who had been a member of the council since last January was proposed for the trusteeship in place of Mr. Woelful, who was buried last Tuesday and elected, notwithstanding the fact that John Sheib and Mike Steub have been members of the society for sixty-four and forty-five years respectively.

The body of men who now control the large possessions of the society is mainly composed of members who have joined the Economites within the past ten years. According to the articles of agreement the surviving members of the council elect new members, and when that body is full a trustee is elected. No member can become a trustee until he has first officiated as a member of the council.

Of the new council, which was elected at the meeting last Tuesday, Jacob Henrici is still president. Although not an original member himself Mr. Henrici has been for so many years identified with the Harmonist's society that he is looked upon as a father.

John Sheib joined the Harmonists early in life; he having been for many years a farm hand engaged to assist in the management of the farm work, he was impressed with the mode of life and customs of the Economites and became a member almost a half century ago.

Mike Steub came to Economy in 1855 and joined the society about the same time as Montz Frederick, also a member of the council.

Gottlieb Laube worked for Mr. Henrici as a laboring hand and joined the society only a few years ago, having first made his appearance in Economy ten years ago.

Herman Nicklaus' early connection with the Economites was in the capacity of teamster. A few years ago he was appointed as stable boss and became a member of the society.

John Duss, the recently appointed trustee was born in Economy;¹⁰ his mother was a hired woman about the town, and never joined the society. When Mr. Duss attained the age of manhood he went to

¹⁰ Incorrect. He was born in Cincinnati, and his mother joined the Society on Feb. 15, 1887, to prepare the way for her son, who was not getting anywhere in Nebraska as a farmer. She had gone to live with him and bitterly complained to Henrici about life there saying that their house was comparable to chicken coops in Economy. She returned to Economy and begged Henrici to give Duss another chance and to let him work for the Society.

Nebraska and engaged in the cattle business. He bought a farm there but did not meet with the success he anticipated. Mr. Henrici sent for him and engaged him as school teacher at Economy. Being endowed with marked ability he decided to join hands with the Economites and last winter he was elected member to the council, and is now holding the second highest office in the colony. It has been stated that Mr. Duss has brought with him a goodly sized fortune. This is, however, said to be erroneous, as Mr. Henrici is reported to have cleared the farm of a heavy mortgage when Mr. Duss joined the colony.

Herman Fishern, who was spoken of for the position of trustee in place of Mr. Duss, but who was persuaded to withdraw in favor of the latter in consideration of finally being appointed president of the society in case of the death of Mr. Henrici, came from Germany only a few years ago, where he spent an inherited fortune rapidly. Landing at Economy without a dollar, it is said, he occupied for a few nights a bed in the tramp headquarters. He applied for and was given permission to join the society and won his way into the good graces of the new acquisition to councils so that he was at the death of Jonathan Lenz elected a member of the council.

All is not serene over the recent election as it is claimed that now that the council is in the control of young members, having no legitimate claim on the society, steps will be taken to reorganize the old articles of agreement. As previously stated there are but four of the original members left, Barbara Nix, Barbara Vogt, Sebilie Henger, and Anna Bauer, the last of the male members having died about one month ago. There are however, three members who are entitled by birth to positions of prominence in the management of the society's affairs, and who, did Mr. Henrici have the same control he formerly exerted over the society, would now be in council. They are the only living direct descendants of the original members of the Harmonists. They are the children of Dr. Feicht. Owing to the special decree that was granted by Mr. Rapp in behalf of Dr. Feicht and his wife a brief sketch of their career will no doubt be of interest. When George Bentel joined Father Rapp he gave him the money that enabled him to buy a home for his people. With his wife Mr. Bentel was among the first to attach their names to the original articles of agreement.¹¹ The fruit of this union was a daughter who married a man named Mutchler.

¹¹ His name is signed at the bottom of page 16 with 12 pages of signatures before him, but he was among the founders.

Two children were born to them, Hildegard and Doretha. When celibacy was imposed upon the members Hildegard took up her abode with Father Rapp in the mansion. She was his special pride and he bestowed upon her all the affection of a father. It was this intimate relationship that caused the rumors that were freely circulated at the time that Hildegard Mutchler was the mistress of Father Rapp. There never was any foundation for such slanderous stories, as Father Rapp's apartments were in an entirely different building. Hildegard was given charge of the flower garden of the mansion and looked after the management of the household affairs. Dr. Feicht was a well-to-do merchant in Wabash, prior to which he practiced medicine in Butler county. Notwithstanding the eternal punishment that Father Rapp said awaited all who broke the vow of celibacy Hildegard Mutchler and Dr. Feicht determined to marry. Knowing how bitterly Father Rapp would oppose such a step, the young couple determined to run away. This they did in the dead of the night, going to Rochester, where they were married by Squire Sholes, of Rochester, Pa. Their whereabouts remained a mystery for some time, but, after diligent search, Father Rapp found out where they were living and sent for them to return to the fold and all would be made right and forgiveness extended to them by the members. In the meantime, Father Rapp had Mr. Henrici, then a young man in the society, circulate a petition among the most influential members asking that a special decree might be made in the case of the newly-married couple. Naturally, this course met with bitter opposition, but Father Rapp's will was law, and when the bride and groom arrived the members were all called together in the little church to welcome home the return of the refugees. When it was announced by Father Rapp that in the sight of God and man Hildegard Mutchler and Dr. Feicht were husband and wife, and as such must still remain, and were to be taken into full membership and continue the marital relationship, it was as though a bomb had been thrown into the camp. Every member was exceedingly indignant that an exception should be made, but Father Rapp's plans had been well prepared beforehand; when one after another of the council arose and sanctioned the special decree, it was not long before the bitterness had disappeared and harmony once more prevailed. So, in spite of the strongest vows of celibacy made incumbent upon the Economites, Dr. and Mrs. Feicht were singled out and made exceptions to the rule of celibacy, owing to the love that had previously existed between Father Rapp and Hildegard Mutchler. Three children were born unto them, two sons

and a daughter. Mrs. Feicht met with an accident which finally caused her early death. With what proved to be her dying words Mrs. Feicht implored George Rapp to be a father to her children, as he had been to her. Mr. Rapp said in reply: "My race is almost run; I am now standing with one foot in the grave, but the charge you give in my keeping I repose to Mr. Henrici." And there in the presence of the dying mother Mr. Henrici became the foster father of the Feicht children. When the two boys reached the age of manhood they were taken into the society as full members, and remained such for about three years, when they left the society to get married. Two years ago they were sent for by Mr. Henrici and decided to again take up the link that had been broken. Mr. Henrici was rejoiced, but his joy was short-lived, for when he proposed their names for membership Lenz and Kirschbaum worked up such a feeling in the community against them that they were rejected. Henry, who had been placed in charge of the brick works, was discharged by Kirschbaum. Mr. Henrici protested against the injustice but was powerless to stop the younger members. After Mr. Kirschbaum died, the Feichts were taken into the society, Mr. Lenz and Mr. Henrici stating in church that the broken cord had once more been united, and the Economites were again represented by two of the legitimate descendants of the first members. It was Mr. Henrici's intention to give them a seat in the council, but the sudden death of Mr. Lenz gave the majority vote to outsiders who were opposed to the Feichts, and the places intended for them were filled by Herman Fishern and Frederick Hermendorfer.

Of the large number of heirs to the vast estate of the Economites, Theodore Bentel, the Beaver county banker, is a claimant, he being a descendant of George Bentel, the man whose wealth formed the basis for the Harmonists' society. Within the past month it has been talked about in Economy that the vow of celibacy was to be abolished when the new council got control of the management, and dared assert their authority, and that the workshops, which have for so many years been allowed to remain idle, would be started and an effort be once more made to perpetuate the society formed by George Rapp, on principles entirely foreign to those of the early history of the Economites. It is this ambition of the new council to control the property and adopt new rules that has led some who call themselves legitimate heirs to consult lawyers and engage legal counselors to take steps preparatory to dissolving the society as soon as Mr. Henrici is entirely deposed, either by death or by the young men who have now a majority in the council.

Enormous Wealth of the Society.

As yet Mr. Henrici is in complete charge of the finances of the society, and it is probable that no one, a member of the society or an outsider, save Hon. Henry Hice, who has for many years been President Henrici's legal adviser, can form any correct estimate of the Economites' wealth. The Economy savings institution, of which John Reeves and Hon. Henry Hice are the head officials, is controlled and almost the whole of the capital stock, \$450,000, is in the possessions of Mr. Henrici.

The town of Economy, which has been the home of the Harmonists since 1825, has a front on the Ohio river of about two miles, extending back in the country about the same distance, comprising about 2,000 acres of the most valuable land in Beaver county. In addition to this the trustees of the Economites hold large blocks of stock in the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie railroad company, large tracts of land in and about Zelenople and Wabash. Beaver Falls is also a town where much of the wealth of the Economites is invested. The most valuable portion of the town is owned by the society, and several of the largest manufacturing establishments there are controlled by them. When the oil excitement first broke out Mr. Henrici, with the keen foresightedness that has so marked his rulership of his little flock, bought large tracts of land in and about Oil City, Titusville and Franklin, and for a number of years, the money from their producing wells run into the coffers of Economites in a steady stream. Of late years they have abandoned the drill, but they still own immense tracks of land in Armstrong and Venango counties.

Quite a number of people intimately associated with the Economites are predicting that unless death intervenes within the year another attempt — which cannot but be successful owing to the majority of the councils being held by the young members — will be made to depose the aged patriarch, Henrici, who has for almost a half century stood at the head of the Economite society.

Superstition among the Members.

Many of the Working Hands Alarmed at the mysterious Deaths of New Members.

Superstition, always a potent factor among the Harmonists, now pervades the whole town. The mysterious and large number of sudden deaths that have so rapidly diminished the ranks of the new members is being looked upon as an omen from God that all who oppose or aid

in the dethronement of the venerable president will meet with a violent death at the hands of the Messiah, whose coming has been so anxiously looked forward to by the band of faithful followers who have been preparing for his reception for almost a century. As forcibly illustrating that the hand of a Divine Providence is watching over the faithful, old residents point to the sudden death of John Wolfingle, George Kirschbaum, Ernest Woelful, Jonathan Lenz and a half-dozen others, who have died within the past year.

During a recent visit to the quaint old settlement the LEADER reporter talked to a number of the working people in the town, they were all of one mind that a kind Providence was guarding the interests of the Economites. Jno. Wolfingle was a young man with the brightest of prospects, well educated, and in every way calculated to be a fitting successor to the head of the society. But scarcely had he gained a foothold — for he was, when he first came to the society, a tramp — until he was stricken down by what these poor creatures say the hand of the Almighty for attempting to introduce measures for the government of the society that were in opposition to the will of Mr. Henrici;¹² and so it is with the case of each who have been raised to the dignity of trustee, they have all met with violent death and have never been permitted to prosper. Quite a number of those spoken to said they would not have the position given John Duss even were it offered them, as not one of those who have been appointed in recent years has lived a year. The taking off of all these dissenting members for daring to differ from the will of Mr. Henrici, these superstitious people aver, was ordered by the Almighty, who brooks no interference from worldly men with those whom he has chosen to lead the Harmonists and bring them into that perfect state that they may take up their cross and follow after the Messiah when he shall again appear on earth and dwell with man here below.

* * *

The second article appeared a week later, on August 10, 1890.

12 Names of members of the Society rarely were spelled correctly or uniformly. Feicht appears as Feucht and Feight and Ficht but should be Feucht; Feicht is the Swabian pronunciation of Feucht. Wolfingle should really be Wolfangel. He got involved with a sinister and designing "Economite," who was not a member but a gossip close to the situation in the Society, and in his distress poisoned himself. He left a pathetic note stating that he could no longer sleep and was going to face his judge because he could find no success on earth. His opposition to Henrici was probably untrue because he was too religious and sincere and respected Henrici too highly. His last note complained that his brain had become affected and that he could no longer do his work as he wanted to.

Again I quote from the only copy known to have survived, according to *Gregory's Union List of Newspapers*.

* * *

A Queer People.

Agreement by which George Rapp bound the Harmonists.

Trouble rising in the Colony.

Will the Society be changed from a religious to a business organization? Charles Bentel says a disruption is near at hand — How it will be brought about — Is celibacy to be abolished? — A trustee who is reported to have gone crazy to avoid banishment from the Society — Jonathan Lenz said to have broken his vow of celibacy and wedded a lady in Venango County — Facts concerning the early history of the Economites.

The article published in last Sunday's LEADER giving an insight into the home life of the little colony now living at Economy and exposing the so far fruitless efforts that have been made to depose the aged patriarch, Henrici, created quite an excitement, not only among the Harmonists, but in every locality in which the customs and quaint life which the Economites lead, has been so frequently the topic of conversation. The article in question referred to Mr. Charles Bentel, of Freedom, Pa., as being one of the direct heirs, and one who in case of any serious departure from the agreements so sacredly entered into by George Rapp and his followers by the new members who had but lately joined the society would take legal steps to dissolve the society, and have the possessions, amounting to fully twenty million dollars, divided among the heirs of the original members.

In order to ascertain what Mr. Bentel had done in the matter, or what he proposed doing in the event of the "shelving" of President Henrici by the young members of the council, a LEADER reporter called on him at the banking house in Freedom, and of which he is the head.

In reply to the question: "Is it true that you or any of your relatives have engaged counsel looking towards making an effort to dissolve the Harmonist society?" Mr. Bentel said:

"While I am one of the few living heirs who have a direct claim on the society by reason of my grandfather, George Bentel, being one of the original members and the one who furnished most of the money to put the society on a sure footing, I do not propose to take any action at present for the reason that any attempt to disrupt the society by any one outside of the council could but result in failure. Years ago I was

firmly convinced that as long as they chose so to do the society could be perpetuated.

"Hon. Edwin Stanton, after looking carefully into the wording of the articles of agreement by which the society is governed and controlled, gave it as his opinion that the society was nothing more or less than a stock company, the members of which were equal shareholders. The trustees were empowered to contract debts and disburse money at their own pleasure, and according to the rules to which the members had bound themselves to abide by, they were also privileged to take in new members from time to time provided of course these new members subscribed and agreed to be governed by the same rules and regulations as the older members.

"My father, P. Bentel, was one of the seceders who left the society about 1837 when Count Leon took with him over 200 members and attempted to organize a new colony. These members were the bone and sinew of the old society, and after they left, the state of harmony and ready obedience to the dictatorial methods of Mr. Rapp were not so readily agreed to by the humble, submissive people that Father Rapp had originally brought over with him. In fact, Father Rapp's power over these people was largely due to the ignorance and religious state that they were kept in. Although I was never a member of the society I had extensive dealings with these people, having made frequent visits to my grandparents, who lived and died in Economy, and I am free to say that a more ignorant set of people I never came in contact with. They had little or no idea of money or the wealth they at that time possessed.

"When the 200 or more members seceded they were given \$105,000 by Father Rapp, which, so he said, was a proportionate share of the estate. In return these seceders signed a quit claim to the remainder of the wealth held by Father Rapp and his society. Under these conditions many who now imagine they are heirs have no claim whatever. My claim is, however, based upon my grandparents' estate, they nor their heirs never having been given a dollar.

"As to the threatened removal of President Henrici by the younger element, I do not believe any concerted attempt will be made, although did they so desire, by getting a majority vote, Mr. Henrici's place as trustee could be declared vacant. My opinion is that if such a step was taken it would cause such a wail of indignation to go up from the public that those who had started the movement would gladly restore him to the position he has for so many years filled with honor

and distinction. In Judge Hice Mr. Henrici has an able counselor and a truthful advisor.

"I do not hesitate to say that some of these young members are joining the society in expectation of shortly getting control of the estate, and in conversation with Ernest Woelful, one of the trustees, only a few weeks ago, I so told him. He was very indignant, but nevertheless he did not deny the truth of the assertion. The whole system of perpetuating the society is an injustice to the legal heirs, but I do not see how anything can be done to stop it.

"There is no questioning the fact that Mr. Henrici has lost almost all his power as a leader. He is now so aged and feeble that as president he is little better than a figure-head.

"I have but very little confidence in a man who has a wife and family, and who will forsake them and all family ties, uniting himself with the Harmonists in expectation that he will some day get control of the millions now held by Mr. Henrici. I am firmly convinced that the days of the Economites' society are numbered, but the disruption will be brought by these young members fighting for control among themselves. When that time comes perhaps these new members will find that their efforts to get control have been futile, and the heirs who have waited for so many years will come into their just rights."

Is There a Split in the Council?

Since the death of Ernest Woelful rumors of important changes that are to be made in the society have gained circulation. From a reliable source it was learned that notwithstanding the dissenting voice of President Henrici the town of New Harmony would be pushed to completion; that celibacy, for so many years the fundamental principle of the Economites, will be abolished and that members will again marry and be given in marriage. The LEADER'S informant said further: "That the young blood was now in control and they were going to revive the mills and industries that made the Economites so noted in early days. Even now the question of establishing breweries for the purpose of making beer has been discussed. The idea now is to entirely abolish the religious principles that Father Rapp so imbued his followers with, and place the society and regulate it by stern business principles. As to the solution of the question of celibacy, once it is brought before a council meeting its abolishment is certain, for already the young element are in the majority, and no matter how bitterly it might be opposed by Mr. Henrici, Michael Steub and John Scheib, the right to marry and live together as man and wife would be made part of the

agreement. Even in the palmy days of the society when the members were still imbued with that morbid religious fear keeping the sexes apart was one of the most difficult things Father Rapp and Mr. Henrici had to contend with. Even that venerable leader Jonathan Lenz did not escape the slander of the scandal monger, and among a few who know something of the inner working of the society, it has been asserted that Mr. Lenz was married to a Lady in Clearfield county, and by whom he had two children. Mr. Lenz as one of the trustees made frequent visits to the oil country to look after the large holdings of the society there, and it is said that while on one of these visits he became so infatuated with a young lady that he married her in secret. For a long time this knowledge was kept a secret even from his most intimate friends. As such things always do the marriage finally leaked out and reached the ears of Mr. Henrici. Quite a sensation was created over the falling from grace of such a prominent member, and for a time Mr. Lenz was in danger of dismissal; his reason became unbalanced and he was incarcerated in Dixmont for a few months. When his mind was restored, the question of his committing a breach of the agreement was attributed to his, at that time, weak mental condition, and he was restored to his former position, but he never went back to the oil regions. There are some people who can remember the facts connected with the case, who say that Mr. Lenz chose a brief term of confinement in a lunatic asylum in preference to incurring the risk of being brought before the council and probably be dismissed.¹³

"Numerous other cases can be cited in which the names of prominent members have been dragged to the ground by the tongue of the scandal gossip who said that even the revered Father Rapp kept a mistress in his house. Whether or not this is true, it is certain, that celibacy was not always as closely adhered to as the articles of agreement called for."

The original articles as drafted by George Rapp in 1805 consisted of but six clauses. At different times during the history of the society it was found necessary to revise and add additional and more stringent rules for keeping the members in complete subjection. In Father Rapp's time he constituted council, teacher and trustee, but since his death the society has been governed and controlled by two trustees

¹³ This story to date has not been verified and may be entirely fictional, because Lenz's letters show a deep devotion to the ideals and beliefs of the Society. He was much loved and highly respected. It seems unlikely that a man of this character and in such an exposed position would have become involved in this manner.

and a board of elders. From one whose parents were in former years members of the society, the LEADER obtained a copy of the original articles of agreement. It is all written in German. The document is fire-proof and iron-clad, so far as the subjection of the members are concerned, a feature that Father Rapp considered a stern necessity in keeping his little flock together. The following is a literal translation from the original articles:

Articles of Unity.

A Society founded on Christian Brotherhood — An Estate that is Common to all and Undividable.

By the help of Almighty Providence a society or community has been formed by George Rapp and many others on the basis of Christian brotherhood, the principles of which have been taken from the Holy Scriptures, including the form of government of Patriarchal times; also the idea of having one property in common to all, which was the accepted form in the days of the Apostles and which was intended to fulfill the Word of God as far as human imperfections by carrying out, so far as possible, the happiness of man through time and eternity.¹⁴

Whereas, It is necessary for the good order and well-being of the society that conditions of membership should be understood, that the rights, privileges and duties of each person should be made plain in order to avoid misunderstanding and deception on the one side and strife and dissension on the other; we the persons whose names are attached to this document vow and bind ourselves to the following articles and rules that have been formulated by George Rapp for our protection and future prosperity.

Article I. The undersigned for himself or herself, their heirs, executors and assigns give over and yield forever to George Rapp and to his society and heirs and those who may hereafter join the society our property, real, personal and mixed, lands, houses, estates, cattle, cash, capital invested, including any or all earthly possessions which we now have or expect to have by inheritance where or what it may be without reserve as a free gift for the use of the society to which we unite ourselves, and we promise and bind ourselves, our heirs and assigns to do everything and fulfill any obligation that may be necessary to give

¹⁴ This translation is not from the original documents but probably from the later version as printed by Ernst Luft in Pittsburgh. I give the translation as printed by the *Pittsburgh Leader*, although this deviates considerably from the original as given in my *George Rapp's Harmony Society*.

to the society a right and claim to all the property now in our possession or that may hereafter come to us without delay.

We unite in vowing and binding ourselves and our heirs to hold now and forever the possessions of George Rapp and his society as common stock never to be separated in any way, each member being a joint and equal owner which shall be considered equal. This article is to be good for all time, binding not only on the present members but all those who may hereafter unite with George Rapp and his society. This confession is made voluntary and absolute never to be recalled or revoked.

Should a member or members leave said society by death or otherwise, neither himself or representative, heirs or assigns can ask for a statement or have any rights whatsoever, nor have the power to make a claim by right of law, but it shall be left to the option of the trustee, George Rapp, what and how much of a present shall be given. Asking the blessing of Almighty God to fall upon all who have made this noble sacrifice, we subscribe ourselves to the foregoing document.

Article II. We vow and bind ourselves further to and with said George Rapp and his company that each and every one of us will subjugate ourselves to such laws and ordinances that may be made for said society and will show at all times a ready and cheerful obedience, considering ourselves bound to further the well being of said community, not alone by our personal handiwork but by our children, our families and all others who may in the future come under our control.

Article III. If against our expectation it should so happen that any member or members of the society cannot adhere to such laws and regulations as may be imposed upon the company by George Rapp and should be led by this or any other cause to leave said society, we vow and promise in this case especially to never make a claim to George Rapp, either for ourselves or our assigns either directly or indirectly, for wages or any equivalent for services rendered or money or stock that we may have at this or any other time given to the society, nor will we ever, so long as one of the members survive, present or permit to be presented by our heirs any claim or right to the property now held by the society. This we do voluntary and of our own free will, knowing it to be for the best interest of all connected, or those who may hereafter connect themselves with the society.

Article IV. On the other hand George Rapp and his society accepts each and every one whose names are hereto attached as an equal member of the society, whereby each has the right to attend any or all

religious services, and the children and families of all members are to receive all such instruction as George Rapp may deem necessary for the timely and eternal welfare of the faithful.

Article V. Said George Rapp and his company promise further : To provide all members and their families with the necessities of life, such as clothing, food, house, without money and without price, provide for their temporal and eternal welfare in times of adversity, as well as in prosperity, in sickness or in death. To furnish such medical assistance, attendance and consolation as their situation may demand ; and furthermore, if after they have become members, father or mother should die, or in any other manner be separated from their children, George Rapp and his society agree to provide and care for them in the way above described.

Article VI. If it should so happen, as mentioned above, that a member should break his or her agreement and would not abide by the laws of the church and society, and should thus become separated from the flock, then George Rapp and his society promises the value of all such property which they may have brought to the society, to pay back, but without interest, in payments of one, two and three years, as the said George Rapp may in his judgment deem best. If persons in this way separate themselves from the society who brought nothing into the country, and shall move away peaceably and with the consent of George Rapp, such persons shall receive a present of money or land in such amount as George Rapp may decide. Signed at Harmony 1805, and re-signed March 9, 1827, at Economy.

After Count Leon visited Economy and succeeded in awakening dissension and strife to such an extent that 200 of the members seceded from the society, necessitating Father Rapp under the agreement specified in the sixth article, to pay back without interest all the money these revolting members had brought into the society, when a reorganization was made, Father Rapp determined to avoid a recurrence of secession. This he did by drawing up the following article and causing all his followers to sign it :

Whereas, It has been found that the original articles do not fully carry out the ideas and purposes of this society by giving to all an equal right in common. Now, be it recorded that this article be made a part of the original agreement. Whereas, It was the intention of George Rapp to have all the property of the Harmonist society held in common, and this being no longer possible under the sixth clause of

the original article, owing to all official records of the society having been destroyed in 1818 at Harmony. So be it made known that it is the intention of the present members of the society to do right. We unite in saying with George Rapp that Article 6 be revoked and stricken from the articles of agreement between George Rapp and his society, all others to stand as they now are.

After the death of George Rapp, which occurred in 1847, it was found necessary to again revise the articles. During Father Rapp's reign of forty-two years he was monarch of all he surveyed. He was the ruler, teacher and spiritual adviser in all things. He combined the office of trustee, elder and president, and held a tight rein over his subjects.

At the meeting of members held in the church August 12, 1847, the following revision was made and agreed upon by all present :

Whereas, By the will of Almighty God the Harmonist society has been robbed of our great and good ruler of temporal affairs, it becomes necessary for us to formulate plans for future government.

Therefore, be it known to all living members of the society, and to all whom it may in anywise concern, we each and all promise, grant and agree to and for themselves, and all others who may come into the society, to abide by the following additional and revision of the original agreement :

Article I. We each and all renew our solemn obligations to the original laws and articles drawn up by our venerable patriarch, Father Rapp, with the exception of article 6, and now in the presence of John H. Hopkins and Charles Volz we unite in binding ourselves, our heirs and assigns to the following, except in so far as it does not effect promises held out and made by George Rapp :

That we obligate ourselves to be governed in spiritual and worldly affairs by a board of elders to consist of nine members, their successors to be chosen not by the members, but by the survivors of the council, the first council to consist of John Stahl, John Schnable, Adam Nachtrieb, Matthias Scholle, Joseph Hoernle, Johannes Eberle, Romelius L. Baker, Jacob Henrici and John Lenz.

These elders shall have the following power :

I. Exclusively and without fear of contradiction to make such rules and regulations as they may deem expedient for the government of the members of the society, to appoint and discharge foremen, to give commands in regard to the business of the society, and to take care and see that the members fulfill the obligations they have taken upon themselves.

II. To settle all quarrels and misunderstandings, to administer counsel and direct reproof.

III. To take in or discharge members at their option, and to sign any agreement in the name of the society.

IV. To make laws for the advancement of the society and for the instruction of its members.

V. To appoint one or more religious leaders and teachers.

VI. Any member of the council violating any of the articles of the society can be discharged by a majority vote of the elders.

VII. The elders to hold the position until death or by reason of dismissal for a breach of agreement. All vacancies to be filled by a majority vote of council, the meeting to be held as soon after a vacancy occurs as is possible to get the council together.

VIII. When six members vote together, it shall be considered as a unanimous vote.

IX. When in the opinion of the council their meetings are of sufficient importance, minutes shall be kept and recorded, and this shall be the official testimony of the society. In all other cases the word of any one elder shall be sufficient to make it right in the minds of the members of the society.

Article IV. From the board of elders two trustees shall be appointed, and R. L. Baker and Jakob Henrici shall be made the first trustees.

Article V. These trustees shall have the power to carry out in their own name or in the name of the society, or in any other way they may see fit all outside affairs, such as buying or selling land, building houses, making contracts or agreements, placing money, etc. They shall have the authority to make or withhold presents to exclude members and their representatives, donate money or gifts for charitable or humane purpose. Said trustees shall have the combined power to buy property or sell all or anything belonging to the society, and are empowered to grant a title either in the name of the society or in their own name as trustees.

They shall provide and contest for any matters in law and enter suit for any cause or claims in the name of the society or as trustees.

The members whose names are here attached for themselves, their heirs and assigns vow and agree to resign any and all claims they have or may have had to the trustees so that they can faithfully defend the society's property.

This surrender of personal rights shall take in everything held either in our own names or in the name of George Rapp, Frederick Rapp.

Article VI. All the property now held by the followers of George Rapp, or all that may hereafter accrue or come into possession of the society in any manner, shape or form shall be held as common property to be held together and remain forever undivided. In so far as the former articles are not revoked by this revision we each and all of us renew our solemn vow and obligations to the articles of agreement as originally formulated and revised from time to time by our founder, George Rapp. Signed August 12, 1847, at Economy by 288 members.¹⁵

* * *

The *Pittsburgh Leader's* analysis attracted a great deal of attention and brought replies, inquiries, and suggestions from unexpected quarters. From Stuttgart, Germany, came a letter written on August 18, 1890, referring to the article and offering the trustees the aid of the Rapp heirs in their latest battle. This letter was answered by Duss stating that the claims made in the article were untrue and based on the actions of an enemy of the Society. He asserted that no attempt had been made to depose Henrici as trustee, that quite to the contrary Henrici enjoyed the good will and respect of all members. "Neither Mr. Henrici, our oldest Trustee, nor the members of the Society are in the least upset about these foolish and untrue statements, and while we thank you for your sympathy and good will toward Henrici and others named in your letter, we assure you that we stand in no danger or fear because of ourselves, or because of a lack of Harmony and unity among us." Duss assured Mr. Carl Schmidt, who claimed to be representing the heirs of George Rapp, in this letter of September 10, 1890, that they did not need his help. But the Rapp heirs were to be heard from again through the German consul at Philadelphia, and under the pressure of their action, even though futile, Henrici was to be forced to make the first and last accounting of the affairs of the Harmony Society under his trusteeship.

The *Leader's* report, in spite of Duss's denial, was essentially true insofar as it spoke of a rift in the Society. In the final analysis only a recorded, sworn legal record is legally true, even though the final legal record which settled the affairs of the legal entity called Harmony

¹⁵ This revision differs considerably from the printed Ernst Luft version and may have been condensed because of the legal terminology and difficulty of the original.

Society was morally and historically completely false, but legally true and binding.

The newly joined members of the Society were deeply concerned about the assets of the Society and wanted to get at them. It was a situation similar to that of the Count Leon difficulties. As at that time the newspaper reports contained basically truthful statements, so it was now. As at that time there were elements trying to depose the Rapps, so now there were those who wanted to take measures, perhaps not quite as drastic — because Henrici's age and condition of health assured even the most impatient of a solution which would not be too far off — measures to remove Henrici's lingering obstruction to their golden dreams.