

Koreshan State Historic  
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Boomer Family

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Lest we forget the most influential events related to our ultimate connection with the Koreshan Unity and the inauguration of its pioneer efforts to build a city in Lee County, Florida, in the township of Estero, we will record a few of them as an introduction to the story of the greatest event of 1893.

In the year 1884? business necessities caused the removal of the Boomer family (Mr. L.S.Boomer and wife, and three children: L.M?B., H.B.B. and B.M.B.) from Chicago to Johnstown, Pa. There they found a home in the suburb of Woodvale, and Mr. Boomer became the business manager of the Gautier steel department of the Cambria Iron Company's works.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Boomer had from childhood an intense interest in religious movements. In Chicago they were active members of the Immanuel Baptist Church and Dr. George H. Lorimer. They were much interested in Bible study, particularly of the prophecies relating to the second coming of the Lord, to establish his visible kingdom of heaven in earth. This kingdom in earth the Lord had taught his disciples to pray for, work for, and anticipate as the crowning glory of human life.

Mr. Boomer had been a member of the Y. M. C. A. at Yale University and in Chicago, and missed its fellowship advantages in Johnstown. The opportunity came for a local organization, largely through the work of the local W. C. T. U. This society at the time of the Boomers' coming to Johnstown had been holding religious meetings for the cause of temperance. They were conducted by two evangelists named Swartz. Many Johnstown young men under this influence had signed the W.C.T.U. pledge, and to aid each other in keeping it, desired some form of organization for close fellowship.

During the last three or four weeks of the temperance campaign the Swartz brothers were guests of the Boomers, and they were eager to have Mr. Boomer serve as chairman of the reformed men's organization. Then the idea was suggested that the organization might well take the form of a nucleus of the Y.M.C.A. Soon a social gathering of these men was held at the Boomer home. The proposed form of organization was talked over and met with such approval that seventy-five men decided then and there to join it, with Mr. Boomer as President, and a cousin of Mrs. Boomer as Secretary.

The Organization prospered and with the aid of a Woman's Auxiliary also organized soon after, suitable headquarters for the Johnstown Y.M.C.A. were opened, and served their purpose well during the four years of Mr. Boomer's service.

Frequent talks were given in Johnstown by the Boomers on the importance of a thorough knowledge of the biblical prophecies. These talks led the Secretary, Mr. H to purchase one day from a colporteur a copy of the "Millennial Dawn" by G. T. Russell of Alleghany. This book called the Boomers' attention to the importance of many unfamiliar prophecies relating to "the times of the restitution of all things" to be instituted by the coming of Elijah the Prophet, as the forerunner of the Second coming, and gave a new impulse to a still more careful study of the Bible's "sure words of prophesy" and all the signs of the time.

After four years residence in Johnstown, the call of a better position in Pittsburg, better opportunities for the education of children etc., led the family to move to that city, with many regrets, but also many pleasant anticipations, among them the possibility of a better acquaintance with Mr. Russell, his Zion's Watch Tower Society etc.

The family located in a comfortable home on Neville Street, next door to a most cultured and neighborly family named Bidwell. One of its members, a widowed daughter, was a most thorough and thoughtful seeker for truth, and read with interest the book Millennial Dawn, loaned her by Mrs. Boomer. This common interest led Mr. and Mrs. Boomer and Mrs. S to attend Mr. Russell's lectures in Alleghany. While all felt they learned much from this enthusiastic Bible-teacher, tho he seemed to lack rational light on many important subjects and offered his disciples no scientific basis for considering his private interpretations of the prophecies correct. A correct interpretation that could be made acceptable to all rational minds, seemed absolutely essential to a faith and zeal according to knowledge, that would enable one to give a reason for the faith avowed. This dissatisfaction with everything short of a demonstratively scientific interpretation led many of the students of C. T. Russell's publications to read those of others, in their search for more scientific interpretations.

What is known as "the higher criticism" of the scriptural record of the involution of the Universe as the "Word made flesh" was at this time exceedingly busy destroying the faith of many in the divine or supernatural origin of the scriptures constituting what is called the Holy Bible. These scriptures, written by men inspired by the Mind or Spirit of God, having and being the supreme source of Eternal life, and having been the source of the highest inspiration to human endeavor to become Godlike in word and deed, lovers of these precepts, prophecies and promises could not surrender without effort to reconcile their authority with the discoveries of Modern Science interpreted - as Koresh found them to be - on a false basis of reasoning: from an hypothesis rather than a demonstrated premise.

While living in Pittsburg as neighbors to the Bidwells, Mrs. Stotler - Mrs. Bidwell's widowed daughter-obtained from her mother's friend, Mrs. Oliver, who was an interested student of prophecy, a great variety of publications devoted to its interpretation. Having looked them over, she passed them on to her neighbors the Boomers. Among them was found a copy of "The Flaming Sword". This paper avowed the discovery by Dr. Cyrus R. Teed in 1870 of a genuine science of the earth as embracing the material universe. This he proved as the prophetically foretold "Man with a plumb line in his hand." With the plumb line he established the premise of the Koreshan System

and proclaimed the Science of the Koreshan System as the promised science of truth, to be given to the begotten of God - Jesus, the Jehovah of Israel - by His prophetically credentialed Messenger, in whom as His "New Name" of the promised "Spirit of Truth" He would ultimately appear at the end of the Age.

The Science of the Koreshan System proved to be to the writer of this record the promised appeal to reason on a scientific basis, which the scriptures of both old and new testaments led one to hope for and await, as the fulfillment of the promise that the begotten of Jehovah the Lord Jesus shall know the truth and be freed by the love of it from sin and death. Soon after discovering "The Flaming Sword" events in the business world caused the Boomer family to return to Chicago. Ruth Sterling Boomer was born in Johnstown shortly before their removal to Pittsburg. So they returned to Chicago with four children. Ruth was born in a house on Napoleon Street, and which being on a slight elevation and well built of brick and stone, withstood the devastation of the Johnstown flood and proved a refuge for many.

Shortly after locating in Chicago, Mr. Boomer became the representative of several Pennsylvania steel companies and sold rails and structural steels on commission, and the family resided in Madison Park, on Madison Avenue between 50th and 51st Streets. Not long after locating there, Mrs. Boomer riding one day in a Cottage Grove Avenue Car, spied near 31st Street the printing office of the Koreshan Unity, "Office of the Guiding Star and Flaming Sword." The desire for truth caused her at once to leave the car and call at the office. There she met Mrs. Bubbett and several pioneer students in the College of Life which Koresh had chartered, for such as elected to learn the Koreshan System and make a practical effort to apply its principles to all the normal uses of life: this involved cooperating industrially for their commonweal.

Having secured most of the Koreshan literature then published, she began its careful perusal, with Mr. Boomer. Its statements seemed irrefutable, but "too good to be true" to our "doubting Thomas" spirits. The Scriptures teach however that the things prepared by the God of divine origin and destiny, the God of Israel, the Savior, are good beyond mortal power to conceive. Seeking the knowledge of the best ever in the mind of God, they felt they had located the source of divinely scientific instruction, and became members of the Society Arch Triumphant, organized by Koresh for the benefit of his students desiring to learn how to live righteously, guided by the science of the Living Word of truth. Koresh as the Messenger, which he had become by virtue of being born of the quickening spirit of the Word, thru his illumination and mental conjunctive unity with that spirit in 1870, was the Prime Counsellor of each institution he founded: The College of Life; The Society Arch-Triumphant; and the Church of the New Covenant; a triunity of departments of one Institution, later incorporated for essential business with the world - a world to be conquered by the science of truth.

Having joined the Society Arch-Triumphant, we returned no more to the churches of the old order, which we now knew were to pass away as the old heavens and old earth were foretold to do when the promised Sign appeared who was to mark the end of the old, Piscatorial, dispensation and the beginning of the new, Aquarian, age. This Sign, being the man with the spirit of truth in its scientific aspect, is foretold to be the Elijah (meaning: God the Lord) the Prophet, who was destined to sweep away every refuge of lies created under the dominion of false science, by false prophets upheld as educators by the Church in adultery with the pagan competitive system, which unwittingly serve as the disciplinary system of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, which is ultimately known to be the tree of life.

To become the Sons of God men must learn to know good and evil, and wisely shun that which is evil and cleave to that which is good; therefore they must eat of the fruit of that tree, to gain wisdom and understanding. Gaining this they are ripe to receive the Science of God which bringeth joy. Joy comes to the world thru the applied knowledge of Godliness. This knowledge is in the Science of the Decalogue as given by Koresh, with the science of its application to all the uses or functions of life, to be learned from the analysis of the universe in least and greatest form.

The least form is that of the Seedman, Jehovah, called Jesus or Savior. The greatest form is the earth or physical universe with its contents, which include all things visible and invisible: sun, moon, stars, planets, atmospheres, terra firma, etc., etc., to the outermost rind or shell of platinum. The whole earth is the Lord's, with the fullness thereof, the heavens and they that dwell therein. There is nothing else to want and know how to enjoy. It has inherent power to

reproduce itself from its seed or microcosm, with every conceivable variety of attractiveness.

Periodically the Lord of the whole earth appears to make all things new. He appears as a man among men who know him not, and he takes their measure, and renews their knowledge of Himself, for their renewal and age-lasting benefit. Sometimes He is most apparent thru the office of the Priest, at others in that of the Prophet, and again in that of the King. The one office however always involves the others. In each he is perfect after his kind. The Spirit of Elias was in Jesus, and the fatherhood of Jesus becomes manifest in Elijah the Prophet as the Spirit of the Word. Christ, i.e. the Anointed prophet, came to Chicago and found things there as Wm. T. Stead's book, "If Christ came to Chicago," indicated He would find them.

He worked faithfully there, and travelled from coast to coast trying to enlighten the people of the great cities with this Science of the truth. But few welcomed the light. To do so involved too much self-sacrifice of this world's glory. After residing in Chicago as his headquarters, and finding it generally unripe to receive his message, His Wisdom led him to determine to start the building of a new city with his handful of followers, as the vitellus of a new civilization, on a platform of scientific righteousness, providing for the welfare of all humanity. About the time of this determination, he became active in visioning the city to be prepared for the descent of the New Jerusalem. The architects of the Chicago Columbian Exposition or World's Fair at this time began having their visions of the Great White City as it was called / Koresh having visions of the Holy City to become to the New Era, the New Jerusalem of the Glory of God. Koresh once told the writer when visiting the Exposition that it was but a reflex of his own visions into and through the minds of the aspiring architects.



Abput this time Koresh when returning from a lecture tour in the east by train, sat in the seat with a gentleman whom in the course of conversation he interested somewhat in the Cellular Cosmogony, and the bearing its reception would have on the coming new civilization. As the conversation proceeded Koresh disclosed to his listener his plan to build a city, from which the science of the laws of the universal new life of the world would shine forth as the Sun. He further declared that his Science of Astrobiology had led him to locate the site of the vitellus of that city in south Florida, and that without ever having been there. Thereupon the interested listener declared, "Well, I know just the place for you to begin your work, and possibly I can secure for you a railroad pass that will take you to see it." He then described the work of a certain development company that had been undertaken at a place on Pine Island they had named St. James City. The company had built a fine large dock and erected a good ship chandler's store, also an attractive hotel of some 60 rooms, and a number of good dwelling houses. The hotel was called the San Carlos.

The gentleman said the whole development could be had at a sacrifice price, with a large area of valuable land. The promised pass being again referred to, Koresh said he could hardly profit by it, as when he went to south Florida he felt it necessary to be accompanied by the lady, Mrs. Annie G. Ordway whom he had made the President of his Society at large, and that if she went she would need a lady in attendance. The friendly traveler on parting told Koresh he would see what he could do about the railroad passes required.

The Columbian Exposition was due to close the last of October, and Professor Totten of Yale had been predicting some definite great event of world importance to take place about that time, which

failed to come off as predicted, but Koresh said one of greater importance did take place unrecognized by all save the Lord, despised and rejected Messenger, due to make a most important move himself, which He did. This great event was the move he made to establish the local vitellus of a new civilization to be evolved from the heterogeneous group of followers who welcomed His leadership out of the old order into the new.

His effort was furthered by the arrival of three railroad passes from the gentleman he had met on the train, to enable the parties mentioned to visit St. James at Pine Island, not far from Ft. Myers in Lee County. The writer was the lady Koresh invited to accompany Mrs. Ordway (or as she was known in the Koreshan Unity - by the title, Victoria Gratia Koresh) on her journey with himself, to inspect the site suggested for the City to be founded for the dissemination of the science of truth, to be known as the Koreshan System of Universology.

The living as the wife of Mr. Boomer and the mother of their four children, both Mr. and Mrs. Boomer had found the Koreshan System of interpreting Biblical prophecy such an appeal to their rational faculties that they were quite ready to aid in any movement that would tend to educate Bible students in the knowledge of it and its application to the uses of life, thru the creation of a City in harmony with the plans of Koresh, which He revealed to be admirable beyond anything hitherto presented for human contemplation.

The last of October saw the party off for Florida, anticipating divine guidance made evident in all attending circumstances. The railroad ended at this time at Punta Gorda, where a boat was taken to St. James. The great hotel, a favorite resort for sportsmen fond of fishing, and at the present time owned by Mr. Barron Collier, was

the objective of tourists to that part of the west coast. While waiting for the boat to St. James we were entertained by an interesting and enthusiastic pioneer couple from Kentucky, Mr. and Mrs. Trébeaux. Mr. Trébeaux felt quite sure Koresh would do well to locate his proposed colony at Punta Gorda. That location on the Gulf is truly beautiful and will doubtless be included in the area of the Sun City to be. Mr. Trébeaux wished to know if we had ever eaten fresh guavas. Learning we had not, he proceeded to find some of the strawberry variety, which he sliced and served us with sugar and canned cream. To his satisfaction we pronounced them delicious, and the pleasant memory remains of their hospitality.

On the way to St. James, Koresh talked with people as he had opportunity and distributed literature presenting the fundamentals of the system. At St. James the man in charge of the development company's store and interests generally, a Mr. Whiteside, met us and took us to a very comfortably furnished house next his own, where his wife met us with most cordial hospitality and invited us to take our meals with her, which we were glad to do. She made such an impression with her cooking, with her well-fried mullet, a fish new to us, that after thirty years it is recalled as a rare treat. Mr. Whiteside was most attentive to us, and faithful to the company represented.

Everything had to be seen by riding on an old surry thru a dense growth of great weeds and clouds of mosquitos and other insects. I remember how they settled on the back of Koresh's neck to a tormenting degree - without lessening his interest the slightest degree in the evident possibilities of the place, properly equipped and cared for. The price however at the time, tho most reasonable, was beyond the Unity's available resources. So a return trip to Chicago had to be made, without anything apparently accomplished. Nevertheless en-

thusiasm for the scientifically indicated location - South Florida - was increased in the natural minds of the three travelers, and the conviction established that something great would come of the trip in the near future.

Stopping en route at Punta Rassa, where there was a good-sized hotel kept by Mr. Shultze, who also had charge of the U. S. cable station there. Koresh sought to interest those he met there in his system and his plans, and left with them a supply of his magazine, The Flaming Sword, and his leaflets. The return trip was apparently uneventful, but delightful. It was always delightful to travel with Koresh. He was so practically considerate of his companions, and so entertainingly instructive in expressing his thoughts by the way. He thoroughly enjoyed a good joke and was inclined by hearty quiet laughter. He was very observing of all forms of earth culture and animal life.

We had been long at home in Chicago, when letters came relating to property for sale in the section of Florida we had visited. Among them was a letter from an elderly German who had taken up a section of government land in Lee County, on the Estero River. The letter was in German, and in an envelope issued by the Zion's Watch Tower Society headquarters in Allegheny. On the envelope's sealed side were printed many prophecies relating to the second coming of the Lord, together with the biblical quotations. The letter was in German - our sensitive Victoria Gratia said when she held it in her hand unopened that she seemed to know that it would lead us back to Florida that winter and to the right place to begin.

On translating the letter, it was found to communicate the desire of the man that, since reading the leaflets giving the fundamentals of the Koreshan System, he felt sure the Lord had come, as the scientific prophet and Messenger promised, and not to consider the choosing of

any land on which to establish the assembling of his people till he had seen the land which he, Gustave Damkoeler had held for the Lord, whose coming he had awaited on it for eight years. Naturally the desire to know all the facts regarding the offer awoke a great desire on the part of the Master and Victoria to meet the man and see the place, but funds for the trip and the start were lacking. Another letter was from a real estate man in the little settlement called Ft. Myers, a village or town of possibly 800 or a thousand people, about forty miles from the railroad terminus at Punta Gorda, and reached by a small boat line. He told of an empty cattle-men's hotel at a cattle shipping point called Punta Rassa, Lee County - where we had stopped at the Shultz Hotel and cable station. This with its small stock of furniture he offered the Unity for \$7000 and highly recommended the place. Seven thousand dollars sounded very reasonable to obtain, as compared with the \$150,000 asked for the Pine Island development.

Much thought was given to the matter, but ~~xx~~ every cent obtained was required to maintain the Guiding Star Publishing House and its family of co-workers. Koresh had said in regard to the matter of reaching thinking people seeking the knowledge of the truth, that at that time the way of the press was the line of least resistance, and wise to follow. He also said that is science which he committed to his writings. He often talked as a natural man among men, to suit the occasion's requirements, without regard to the requirements of serious-minded students. In his Home Talks, like Lincoln he illustrated counsels with stories and correspondences etc., making them very potent, as to the requirements of courageous pioneer work in this work-a-day world.

The White City of Chicago went up in the smoke of a raging fire, and its congress, "Congress of Religions", set fire to the discontent

of the masses who attended it, with modern paganized Christianity. On the peristyle of the White City's nobly-arched water way entrance was transcribed the quotation from the apostolic epistle: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Under the peristyle walked the reincarnated spirit of truth of Elijah the Prophet as its promised Messenger, and the world knew him not. As of old, He was not admitted to proclaim the promised knowledge of the truth, at the congress of modern religions, the numerical strength of His disciples being too small to meet the requirements of its organization.

He was quite interested in the marvelous symbolism of the accepted groups of statuary, much of which he translated for the writer. He commented on the Ferris Wheel, symbol of the Iron age of which, as the most Marked Man of its close, was referred to by Ezekiel the prophet in his exclamation called forth by his visions of God:

"Oh Thou Wheel." He enjoyed a ride in it one day with Sr. Esther

Stotler and had a grand view of the humanity beneath. In November, the night before Thanksgiving of 1893, the Boomer family was awakened by a violent ringing of the door-bell followed by the announcement from next door, that the building was on fire. All had to make a very hasty half-clothed exit into the park, covered with snow. The alarm having been given, the firemen were soon busy. The children were cared for by kind neighbors. After the fire was out, the parents returned to the house rendered uninhabitable by fire and water, and paddled about doing what they could to save their cinder-loaded water-soaked lares and penates rendered so dear by the love of home.

At the same time the writer's mind tended to get busy with the proposition to find a way to secure a location for the vitellus of the higher civilization (to be inaugurated by Koresh, as the "Overcomer")

of fallacy and evil) in South Florida. It flashed into the mind of the writer that possibly she could help more than she knew, by the sale to a relative of her right in some valuable Bridgeport property, at a sacrifice. The thought soon filled her mind, and in the midst of the debris of the fire she sat at her desk and wrote her offer to sell, hopeful of the consent of her husband, who had the habit of being helpful in the service of truth, he being a man of finely trained mind, and an earnest student of the Bible.

The letter brought a prompt offer of \$4000 cash. With the cash in hand and land offered by the German lover of the Lord, another trip could be made and something accomplished in gaining a foothold. So, as Koresh was delighted, he summoned the writer again to accompany himself, Victoria, and her private secretary Mary C. Mills, the day after Christmas 1893 to spy out the lands offered, and requested the agents to meet us at Punta Rassa.

Arriving safely, but finding no agents to meet us, to save unnecessary expense we proceeded to camp in the vacant cattlemen's hotel. It contained several old beds and cook-stove, tables and chairs, and cooking utensils of a sort. Victoria with motherly forethought of possibilities had partly filled her trunk with bedding. So we cleaned up the soiled beds and the rooms so unclean, and Koresh seeing a passing schooner at the dock, obtained some fine fish and salt pork, coffee etc. and we made a good meal in high and hopeful spirits, and slept well.

The next day, Gustave Damkoeler, en route from Ft. Myers to Estero, stopped at the cable station for his mail, that being the distributing point of mail for all settlers for many miles around. While there he heard of the campers at the old hotel, and learning their leader's name, came over to meet him. For two days the old man and his small boy of eight or ten lingered there, asking the Master for the solution of his many problems and telling Him his own sad story of affliction so disciplinary.

He had settled on his land with his wife and several children. His wife and all but one child, Elvin, died and were buried not far in the rear of the old post office. He related that thus left so alone he sought to get away from the place, but every time he did so, as a result of his studies of the biblical prophecies relating to the Lord's coming in His Prophet, which ~~was~~ truth was his comforter, he seemed to hear the Lord say to keep it till He came. The Koreshan literature which he found at the cable station, left there by Koresh on his first trip to Pine Island, led him to feel that Koresh was really the long-desired Lord of the harvest in His prophet; hence the letter he wrote to him.

As Koresh expounded the doctrines of the Lord, from the standpoint of his Science of Universology, tears of joy rolled down his cheeks, and he would often exclaim, "Master! Master! the Lord is in it! The Lord is in it!" He then besought us to look no further for land, but to come with him, and see the land he had held for his Master.

The query then was how could we all get there, as his sail boat was quite too small to carry us with baggage. He said he could borrow a larger sailboat from some coast-dweller friend, so we consented to go if he could obtain the boat and the needed supplies, and this he did with alacrity; and on the morn of January 1st, 1894 we started off with joy in our hearts.

Victoria was a fine contralto singer of choir fame in Chicago, and Mary Mills a fine soprano who had sung in choirs in Brooklyn and St. Louis, and the writer sang naturally from the heart but with much less musical instruction and choir fame. We indulged in much song en route, to the delight of our new German friend. He was a tall man, rather distinguished looking with rather long gray hair and beard, and minus the sight of one eye. His favorite among our songs was the old Sunday-school song, "I will guide thee with Mine Eye." We would



sing it over and over for him at his request. "Sing it again, my Sisters," he would say, and exclaim: "Master, the Lord is in it," meaning, I thought, in our responding to his invitation. He seemed like one of the                    in his state of spiritual exaltation.

Toward sunset we stopped at Mound Key, not far from the mouth of the Estero River. The bay was glorified by the sunset, as we made a beach fire, and then a pot of coffee. We looked in wonder at the name of our sail boat which till then we had not noticed, and found it to be "The Guide." Well our traveler's guide told us we would next have to take his row-boat and that of a fisherman friend, as he and Elvin would have to pole us up the Estero River, in the way open through the logs with which the river was then filled.

The short winter day was closing with a wonderful sunset light as we rowed across the bay, and the brilliant stars sparkled their brightest as we neared the mouth of the river where the poling was to begin. Our songs were again asked for by Gustave. Once the Master rose for a change of position and sang the verse of a hymn. It was,

"Oh happy day that fixed my choice  
On thee my Savior and my God,  
    Well may this glowing heart rejoice  
    And tell its rapture all abroad."

He sang with sweet clear tones, and never having heard him sing before, we were thrilled by the words and melody. We found poling up the nine miles of the winding river's length - "said to have 52 turns" - among the logs, and with the water as molten silver, filled with schools of mullet radiant with the phosphorescence, very exciting. The magnificent wildness of the starlit scenes so unique and awesome finally silenced us all and held us spell-bound in the cool darkness of the deepening night.

At about half past ten of January 1st, 1894, we stopped at a little board landing, tied the boats and climbed the bank of the river in a tiny pathway from what is now the beautiful Bamboo Landing with fine stone steps leading to the broad parkway above the river. A little further on we came to a one-room cabin with a small attic above the room reached by a short step-ladder. The cabin had a front porch and a back porch, where work could be done, meals eaten etc. On the back porch at the south end was a broad shelf the height of the table, where we sat on boxes and ate our meals.

We were quite cold and weary on arriving, so that coffee would taste good; and Gustave made a fire on the ground in the rear of the cabin and put on water to boil; but before going further the Master gathered us all near the fire-light and in words and tones most solemn and sweet dedicated the land held for his use so long by Gustave ~~for~~ to his coming Master's Use) to the descent of the New Jerusalem which St. John saw descending in his visions of the coming of the King of Kings to create the kingdom of Heaven in earth. Then we ate together and prepared for the night. The chief bed was in the one living-room cabin; the Master assigned it to the three sisters, while He and Gustave and the boy contented themselves with camp cots or piles of old sails on the floor of the attic to which they climbed by a short step-ladder.

The Master found it all amusing and kept us busy seeing the funny side of our pioneer situation, and we needed to see that, as the place lacked all common creature comforts. The big bed was of rough pine lumber, its only mattress a stretch of sail-cloth, piled

with old sails. Victoria got out her stock of bedding, and did her best with it to make us all comfortable. We sisters slept crosswise of the bed. Victoria being tall, her feet had to rest on some soap boxes. Of chairs there were none, boxes being used for seats. Being out on the water all day made us equal to sleeping most anywhere.

The morning dawn was most welcome to all eager to see our new "heavenly home" site. There was a little clearing about the cabin and a few citrus trees growing in it, and Gustave maintained quite an array of beehives, and from their honey he derived part of his living income, which he further increased by sales of oysters, when he went for supplies. Trips to Ft. Myers and St. James, Pine Island, for our immediate necessities had to be made by boat almost immediately. Good cots, chairs and beds were secured, and a few dishes, bed screens etc.

The keen interest we all felt in the Master's plans, and doing our work, made the days fly by in great joy. We saw visions and dreamed dreams, as we did all we could with ~~our~~our hands to make things clean and attractive in simplicity. Ere the first Sunday came around, the Master and Gustave had made a little clearing near what is now called the Imperial Landing, and placed a great log across the big ditch - the home of numerous alligators - and then they invited the ladies to the clearing beyond the log, where the Master agreed to give us a Sunday discourse.

Crossing on this log was quite a feat for us city women, but we managed to accomplish it, with our soap-box seats in one hand and long/cheese-cloth veils on heads to keep us from the

insects. With his congregation of five assembled, the Master invited the sisters to sing. This we did with a most inspiring Spirit. Then the Master called down blessings upon us all, and proceeded to discourse on the descent of the New Jerusalem and what it would accomplish for humanity. His eloquence was simply wonderful - his countenance radiant with his illumined Spirit! Time was forgotten. It was a day to be remembered!

As Brother Gustave continued elated by the thought of having a part in so wonderful an undertaking as the Master had planned: so he was eager to deed the property over to the Unity, with the understanding that he and his son should have a home on it as long as desired. As the Unity was not then incorporated the deed was made out to the writer, with the understanding that it would be turned over to someone representing the Unity in case of her death; and she turned over to the Master the \$4000 to meet the expense of the immediate requirements of the pioneer builders the Master immediately sent for to come from the Chicago home. Among these requirements was a sloop large enough for the transportation of several people and supplies, and soon the sloop "Ada" was found in the vicinity and purchased. Then builders were sent for, these being Bro. John Sargent, Bro. Enoch Morgan, Bro. Lauritz Peterson.

They came gladly and promptly. Their work necessitated a good farm team, and the writer accompanied the Master and Victoria on a boat-trip to Punta Gerda, having heard that some horses, a carload, had come there by freight from Colorado. The Master and Victoria had a great love for animals, and were so fearless among them as to astonish this timid scribe, who when the horse field

was entered for the selection of the team, clung to a fence corner, remote from the animals. The Master and Victoria made friends with the horses patting and stroking them lovingly - which I longed to be equal to but feared to do. I once asked the Master if Victoria's love for animals was something to be overcome, or was an attainment desirable. He said a desirable attainment, as the divine kingdom was to come now in the Natural.

A good team was finally selected and purchased, which served the Unity long and well. Every trip by boat added a few comforts to the initial camp. The Master and the trio of Sisters called in those days "the Triangle", became more and more delighted with the new situation, which delight kept song active with their efforts to make things more homelike. And the Master showed himself to be a very practical worker. With Bro. Gustave, He donned stout corduroy pants and grubbed more of a clearing and tramped two miles or more through the pine woods to the Allan place where he made friend with the family and purchased two little black pigs called "razor-backs," which he carried back to our home, one in each hand, making a very novel picture to his three disciples who had known him only in his city garb of black broadcloth and white tie, and always so immaculately clean and neat.

He and Gustave soon made a good stout pen for the little pigs. The writer had thought pigs rather unclean beasts that had better be left uneaten, and remarked to the Master, "Is the New Jerusalem City to begin with building pig-pens etc.?" He replied, "Well, you want some people to come to build the city, don't you? and if they are coming you would like to have them have something good to eat, wouldn't you?" and remarked, "there is no healthier better meat to be had down here" than these razor-back hogs. He was always so

rationally practical. He defined divine wisdom once for a friend as "good common sense" or "prudence." Later the Master tramped off somewhere and returned bringing a rooster and one or two hens, for which he built a coop.

"The Triangle" attended to the domestic affairs, Sr. Maria Mills being chief camp-cook; the boy Elvin was chief fisherman and roustabout. Maria was very stout, and cooking over a smoky fire on the ground, pestered with biting insects, was not pure fun; so Bro. Gustave tried to lighten the labor by building a sort of log cabin stove of green pine-logs filled up to the top, good table height, with sand, - on which a small hot fire could be built and the dutch oven, a big black iron pan with cover, could be used and a kettle of water heated.

Our meals were of the simplest, meal mush and coffee, fish pork and sweet potatoes, with some canned goods for variety. Once an alligator was killed and the sliced tail brought in for a meal, and cooked like veal cutlets; it proved to be very good. This scribe thought if the tail was so good, some other part of the "gator" might be cooked to the queen's taste too. So armed with a carving knife, she went down to the river bank where lay the remains of the gator, and attempted to carve some of the gelatinous body, but found it too much that was repulsive to the stomach, and returned empty-handed.

> Victoria being eager to start some colony-supporting industry, noticed two or three castor bean trees near by, and became thrilled with the idea that the ripe beans on them could be planted and a castor oil grove developed, so she bade us gather all the beans we could find, and we'd shell them. So we got industrious and gathered a lot of the thorny-shelled beans, and tore our fingers shelling them, while the men were working elsewhere. When they returned, we lost our industrial enthusiasm on being told that ours were not the

castor beans of commercial use.

In the quiet of the evenings the Master gave us many practical home-talks on the fundamentals of our scientific system. Gustave drank them in - as life-giving water to his thirsty soul - and we all got to looking for very immediate and marvelous results from the visions the Master gave us of the consequences of the descent of the New Jerusalem through the acceptance of the truth hetaught. The commonplace humdrum of our daily work, and remaining discomforts, probably made these visions necessary, and their anticipated immediateness.

The insect pests seemed the limit at times, and unendurable. Gustave harbored a couple of big black snakes under the cabin, which he said kept the rats from his honey, and more poisonous snakes away, and so would not have them killed. Having an extreme disgust for a snake of any kind, this was indeed disciplinary. I remember one time the Master got a tormenting bug in his ear, and our trying to remove it with sweet oil for a long time, and at last with success. At another time a tick buried itself in his chin, and was removed with difficulty making a bad sore. We had to live on high thinking, so as not to become absorbed with the disagreeable, such as insects, heat etc.

Maria was wonderfully adaptable to the needs of our extremely pioneer situation and took the brunt of the work of making us all as comfortable as possible. Victoria and Maria finally decided to remain with Gustave and Elvin in the little cabin and <sup>also</sup> care for the brothers from Chicago, while the Master and the writer returned to Chicago to arrange for the departure of some of the home members for the South.

The writer had a terrible struggle with herself because of the pleadings of Maria and Victoria, who thought that she should remain there also. The struggle nearly unbalanced her and had it not been for the Master's tender assurances, that He did not wish her to remain there at present, the upset might have been complete. Being still a devoted

wife and mother in her private home, she had not reached the requisite willingness essential to good service in a primary nucleus of such portent, yet had a willingness to help such as were willing to be of it. Koresh once told me he did not wish me to do anything for him, or his cause, the Service of his humanity, till ready to do so from my heart.

We had many delightful experiences in the companionship of the Master during the six weeks the Master and I remained there, and many essential improvements were made. Elvin, the young boy, had long needed motherly oversight and instruction in the care of himself, and Victoria and Maria were lovely to him; and Gustave showed Maria how to bake bread in his old Dutch oven, and we had good bread and honey and coffee all the time, and plenty of fish and oysters. I remember that one day when sitting near the end of a plank laid across the boat, helping Elvin open oysters, I pushed my heavy weight too near the end of the board and dumped myself into the river, much to Elvin's amusement. The boat was tied to a stake on the bank, and the water shallow, so no harm was done.

Much time was spent on the water going back and forth to St. James and Ft. Myers for needed tools and comforts. We made the combined bed and living room of the one cabin really attractive for those who were to be left behind. Their cheerfulness and pioneer courage seemed to me wonderful. I cannot pay too high a tribute to those two brave Sisters as pioneer home - makers. Both were such nature lovers and both so musical and artistic, and neither afraid of hard work.

I remember once going to Ft. Myers with the Master for supplies, and that while we were gone Victoria and Maria hunted up all the soiled clothes and had an old-fashioned wash-day, Maria doing the washing and Victoria the ironing; and when we came home I found my green and white gingham dress looking as if just in from a French laundry.



I think that our first boat buy was a big sailboat and later the sloop "Ada" - for I remember that on one trip to Ft. Myers we were first blown out into the gulf quite a ways and later becalmed for thirty-six hours out there, when we had to stay all night with no place for us to rest but in the bottom of the boat. However, with the Master on board, we felt like the disciples on the Sea of Galilee with Jesus on board. I recall my sense of rest and peace, with him sleeping there - beyond anything natural it seemed to me - while I watched the sea and sky so serenely, and listened to the booming of a big "drum-fish" beneath the boat, a sound new to me.

Ft. Myers was such a forlorn little seaport then, with razor-back and scrub cattle straggling through its main street. It was, as it is now, beautiful for situation, and even then had some homes with gardens showing much tropical beauty and the results of culture. Edison then had his winter home there, surrounded by grounds in which he was planting specimens of everything liable to grow there. Mrs. Hill of the oldtime Hill House always showed us kindly hospitality, to the Koreshans in the early days, whenever we stopped in Myers.

My early recollections of our visits to the village were all pleasant. I enjoyed every one so much, and the boat trips to there. We got to know Mr. Batey quite well and found him friendly. The ride to Myers over the wood trails and through the cypress swamps took five or six hours. There were no efforts apparent anywhere for public improvements, and no new settlements thereabouts till the Master came. He being the Colarium of the Grand Man of the New Era was a vortex of revolution in human thought wherever he went - whether so recognized or not.