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CHAPTER I

THE SETTING IN HISTORY

Man had been known to take a distance, divide it in half, and in half again, repeating the process ad infinitum in an effort to reach the end of the measure. He has never been able to reach the end; though in reality it is so close, in actuality it is so far. Similarly, man has tried to reach Utopia, that elusive ideal place which is somewhere, but nowhere. Many men have tried to reach it; all have failed. The account that follows is the history of one such attempt. It is an account of one of the longest lasting of the nineteenth century communities, The Koreshan Unity, founded in 1880 in Moravia, New York, by Dr. Cyrus R. Teed.

1. Definition of "utopian community"

"What's that?" is a most common reaction to the term "utopian community". To define it has been like a plague to numerous authors, for the diversity of these communities is akin to the perception of Chinese characters to the uninitiated eye. In Utopia is found the state of ideal perfection. It is a community where a group of people act as a unit in meeting their common need, with congenial affect and concern.

A utopian or intentional community is a group of people who have withdrawn from normal interaction with the rest of society, in an effort to create and live a life of ideal perfection. The vision of that ideal perfection has been as varied as the snowflakes of winter. These communities are rooted in visions that have not been unique to any period of time. They are visions that have influenced such diverse characteristics as communalism, communism, celibacy, moral freedom, religiousness, secularism, charisma, and millennialism.

2. Essenes to New Harmony

History has been witness to many utopian experiments. One of the earliest known communities was that of the Essenes, who lived in scattered groups throughout Judea. They held their property in common and practised a strict religious and celibate life. Their ways of life "were based in a profound pessimism and were intended not as a solution of social difficulties but as a mechanism of escape therefrom."¹ Mark Holloway writes that the Essenes were possibly connected with the Pythagorean and Orphic religions, helping to form a link between the Indo-Persian religious ideals and the ideals of Gnosticism.² Recent findings of Dead Sea Scrolls show the existence of another very early utopian communal group, the Qumran Community.

The period of six hundred to three hundred B.C. saw the expansion of the Greek city-states. With the multitude of new cities being built, there was ample opportunity for experiment and variation. It seems that many plans were proposed for construction and reconstruction of both the cities and their social order. Little remains of these plans, though Aristotle discusses the ideal states designed by Phaleas and Hippodamus.³

The early Christians at Jerusalem, as described in Acts 3:44-46, made an apparently unsuccessful experiment in communistic living. The members of this group held property in common, sharing all they had with one another, selling their goods and belongings, and dividing the

¹Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America (New York: Abingdon Press, 1949), p. 136.

²Mark Holloway, Heavens on Earth (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), p. 26.

³Lewis Mumford, The Story of Utopias (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), pp. 29-30.

proceeds according to individual needs. Though this voluntary group ate together and prayed together, their community did not succeed in establishing itself permanently.

The Christian community experiment at Jerusalem gave rise to others. In the fourth century there can be found the community of the Circumcellions of North Africa. Later, by the twelfth century, the Waldenses entrenched themselves in Moravia and Germany. This zealous religious group lived within a communistic economy and by the end of the fifteenth century had an estimated 150,000 members.⁴

The Reformation followed, and many utopian groups sprang into existence. One such community is the Hutterian Brethren, an Anabaptist group, who led by Jacob Hutter evolved into a solidified body in the early sixteenth century. This group still exists today in over a hundred and fifty withdrawn communistic communities in Canada and the United States.⁵

Within the great thrust of the Industrial Revolution and with the growth of socialism can be found the establishment of ideal communities, such as New Lanark in Britain. Robert Owen, in 1797, when he became managing partner of a textile factory, started a humanitarian experiment in creating model living conditions for his workers and their families. After reasonable success and increased profits, he attempted to start a utopian colony at New Harmony, Indiana, which will be discussed later. It was a dismal failure.

⁴Holloway, op. cit., p. 27.

⁵Victor Peters, All Things Common: The Hutterian Way of Life. (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1965).

When some of the utopian communities are traced through history, a common element of greatly manifest social problems can be found in the times of their occurrence.

"Outbreaks of the utopian spirit were strongest in such troubled times and places as the Israel of the prophets; the Athens of the Peloponnesian wars; the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus; at the breakdown of European feudalism; and during the industrial revolution."⁶

Today the nuclear age is a period of troubled times, a time when the utopian spirit is again rampant.

3. Early American communities

In overlapping succession, Europe saw the Age of the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and the rise of socialism. All three movements were interactive and interdependent, all fostering in the minds of men the promise of a more ideal way of life. At the same time America became free; the United States was born out of the ideals of men, who wanted a better society separated from the troubles of the old world.

The promising future for mankind was taken up in the United States in many ways, with one of the most obvious being its proliferation of utopian colonists. As early as 1694 there was the community of the Woman in the Wilderness, with the following century witnessing an increasing number of "utopias". The nineteenth century set the scene for an onrush of diversified communities, that can be delineated (at times with a shoehorn) into three types: religious, secular, and

⁶T.D. Seymour Bassett, Socialism and American Life, 2 vols., eds. Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), II, p. 63.

charlatan. Today, in the twentieth century, can be found an increasing proliferation of intentional communities.⁷

During the eighteenth century, there were a number of communities such as Ephrata, Zionitic Brotherhood, and the Baumites. The present town of Ephrata, Pennsylvania, had its roots in the Ephrata colony started by Johann Conrad Beissel in about 1733. This pacifist group considered celibacy desirable and denied the doctrines of original sin and eternal punishment. They were vegetarians and led a very ascetic way of life. There was a strong emphasis on religious devotion, education, and an all pervasive simplicity of life. This charitably oriented group adhered to the doctrine that the sabbath should be on the seventh day of the week. The fact that this doctrine had resulted in the expulsion of Beissel and a few followers from a Dunker community, and the fact that Beissel fled to America to escape religious persecution in Germany, account for the existence of Ephrata. A related community, formed due to differences in belief with Beissel, was the Zionitic Brotherhood, on nearby Zion Hill. Matthias Bauman, who came from the same area of Germany as Beissel, started about 1725 a community of the Newborns at Oley, Pennsylvania. His followers held

⁷Some good surveys are: John Humphrey Noyes, History of American Socialisms, reprint of 1870 ed. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966); Frederick A. Bushee, "Communitistic Societies in the United States", Political Science Quarterly, XX (Dec. 1905) 625-64; William A. Hinds, American Communities and Co-operative Colonies. 3rd ed. (Chicago: Kerr and Company, 1908); Ernest S. Wooster, Communities of the Past and Present (Newllano, Louisiana: Llano Colonist, 1924); Ralph Albertson, "A survey of mutualistic communities in America," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, XXXIV (Oct. 1936) 375-444; Julia Elizabeth Williams, An analytical tabulation of the North American utopian communities by type longevity and location (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of South Dakota, 1939); 1967 Directory of Social Change: Intentional Communities, Psychedelic Churches, Scientific Honeymatching, Social Change Agencies (Medford, Mass.: The Modern Utopian, 1967).

extreme views such as attaining sinlessness through "new birth". The colony lasted only a short time because of outside social pressure. Towards the end of the century, the seeds of other communities were sown, and in the future years these communities reached the pinnacles of success.

4. American communities of the nineteenth century

Religious communities. Among the many religiously oriented groups of the nineteenth century were the Shakers and the Rappites. The Shakers or United Society of Believers can be traced back to France at the time of Louis XIV, when a small group of peasants began preaching a return to the way of the primitive Christian Church. Later their followers in England, including Ann Lee Stanley, faced persecution. While in jail in 1770, Ann Lee claimed that she had visions and divine manifestations presented to her. In 1774, she and a group of followers came to New York State and by 1772 established their first community at Mount Lebanon, New York. The group was still struggling by 1800, but thereafter it thrived. As religious revivalism swept the country, the Shakers followed its path, gaining many adherents and founding new communities along the way. They are a celibate ascetic group, who believe that Mother Ann Lee was the second coming of Christ upon Earth.⁸

Another religious group was the followers of George Rapp, who first settled in 1805, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, later moving west to New Harmony, Indiana, and then back east to Economy, Pennsylvania.

⁸Edward Deming Andrews. The People Called Shakers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953).

This group of German pietists and separatists came to America for freedom of worship, away from the persecution of Lutheran Germany. The existence of the community was mainly attributable to the very strong and able leadership of George Rapp, so that after his death in 1847 the community slowly deteriorated. The members spoke German, and practised celibacy and community of goods. They based their livelihood on agriculture with both men and women working the fields and vineyards. Asceticism was the way of life, with toil and suffering revolving around a long work day that included five meals. When Robert Owen wished to start his experiment in America he bought outright from the Rappites their community of New Harmony, Indiana, for \$150,000 in 1825. The Rappites were happy to sell it even at a devalued price, for they "had suffered from fever and ague and unpleasant neighbors, and were determined to move",⁹ and return again to Pennsylvania. In addition to the Rappites and Shakers there were a good number of other religious utopian communities, such as Oneida, Amana, Zoar, Adonai Shomo, Bethel, and Aurora.

Secular communities. During the 1800's the secular communities included Owenite New Harmony and the Fourier Phalanxes. Owen arrived in New York, in November 1824, and promptly began to barnstorm the country and talk the popular leaders of public opinion into support of his ideal community. In the spring of 1825, his colonies from the nearby west started to arrive; they were misfits, a heterogeneous collection of individuals with little appreciation for the ideals of

⁹Charles Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States, reprint of 1875 ed. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), p. 76.

Robert Owen. The spring of 1826, saw an influx of better qualified workers from the east come to the aid of the ailing community. Many were intellectuals, scientists, and teachers who knew not not desired to learn the frugal work by which the Rappites built, sustained, and made the colony prosper. With red tape and a great mobility among the diverse residents, no unifying spirit could be developed among the community members. There was a lack of financial success and finally insolvency. The community ended in ideological dissension. Owen's experiment to cope with the growing industrial revolution, within the context of a liberal non-sectarian socialism, ended in relative un-successfulness.¹⁰

The next basically secular utopian movement in America was begun around 1840 and was known as Fourierism, though more aptly it should be known as Brisbaneism. Albert Brisbane took the theories of a Frenchman, Charles Fourier, amended and adopted them to American life, giving emphasis to those theories which he felt were important. Brisbane achieved publicity and support through a daily column, starting in March 1842, in Horace Greeley's New York Tribune. A national organization was started in April 1844. "Setting out upon its Pauline mission, the American movement proposed to be all things to all men, a veritable popular front of reform."¹¹ Brook Farm, which began as a

¹⁰For a full description of this movement see: Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., Backwoods Utopias; The Sectarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America, 1663-1829. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950).

¹¹T.D. Seymour Bassett, Socialism and American Life, 2 vols., eds. Donald Drew Egbert and Stow Persons (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), II, p. 176.

Transcendentalist community in 1841, was won over to the cause of Brisbaneism and became the Brook Farm Phalanx in May 1845. This farming community was noted for the great number of visiting intelligentsia, its excellent boarding school, and its social and cultural life. This new socialistic community had an elaborate government and changed the emphasis from mere education to an education of missionaries for socialistic ideals. Their school was neglected and indebtedness and financial distress increased. With hope of projected expansion, the community constructed a large new building or phalanstery, which was destroyed by fire when almost finished in March 1846. With no insurance to cover the loss, bankruptcy seemed inevitable, and thus, it was decided in 1847 to close the books of the community. The community that had developed to spur on the cure-all for the problems of American society, such as producing a congenial atmosphere for the intelligentsia, in the final analysis had failed. Brook Farm was only one Brisbaneian community, of which there were at least thirty others throughout the United States. All these similarly planned Phalanxes had a short life span of about two and a half years.

Charlatan communities. The United States in the nineteenth century was also the scene for what this author designates as charlatan-led communities. These communities are defined as being led by men, who in the perspective of history seemed to be insincere in their moral, ethical, and/or business dealings, as revealed in contemporary historical sources including court records. Also, it is most important to take into account the degree of deviation between their espoused ideals and their apparent and known behaviours. The communities of Thomas Lake Harris and Benjamin Purnell are of this charlatan variety.

Harris, in 1861, founded the Brotherhood of the New Life which had a community first at Brocton, New York, and later at Santa Rosa, California. The community was celibate and patriarchal-authoritarian, centering around Harris who believed in a vague mystical, esoteric spiritualism.

Robert V. Hine writes that: "The Brotherhood of the New Life was thus the product of ecclesiastical revolt, a deep feeling for social reform, Christianity, spiritualism, and Swedenborgianism mixed in the mind of Harris with later additions of Oriental mysticism and late nineteenth-century anti-monopoly socialism."¹² Converts included (until withdrawal and lawsuit) wealthy Lady Oliphant; her son Lawrence, who was a former secretary to Lord Elgin when England signed the Treaty of Tientsin with China in 1858; and Lawrence's wife. Lawrence was soon separated from his wife and mother, who joined celibate Harris and his other lady followers in Harris's central house at Brocton. When the Oliphants decided to withdraw, they were able to recover only a small amount of their total assets from Harris. Though Harris did not believe in private ownership, he personally held title to all the former assets of his adherents. Though he preached celibacy, he married his chief secretary and assistant Jane Lee Waring, in February 1892. Later with his wife he toured Europe and then settled down in retirement in New York City, with winters in Florida, all the while living off his frugal workers at his community in California.

Few charlatans can rival the life of Purnell, better known to his followers as the "seventh messenger" or King Benjamin. Purnell received

¹²Robert V. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 16.

his revelation in 1895, and it was just beyond the end of the century when he established his House of David at Benton Harbor, Michigan. His community was communistic though Purnell held title to all possessions. Purnell preached that he was on earth to prepare for the end of time, as the divinely appointed. He was supreme in all temporal and spiritual affairs in the eyes of his followers. Elmer T. Clark writes that:

...King Benjamin lived in great luxury at Shiloh "palace" surrounded by the young girls of the colony, whom he clothed in the finest silks. There were sordid tales of sexual "initiations" and the seduction of these girls by the sixty-two-year-old "angel." To avoid exposure the girls were at intervals married in groups to the young men of the community; at one time twenty couples were thus united at the command of the leader. These and similar allegations were proved to the satisfaction of the court.¹³

In 1923, members of the community obtained a judgment against Purnell for irregular sexual practices. The case then went to the Supreme Court of Michigan, but Purnell died before the verdict was delivered.¹⁴

Concluding comments. Utopian communities have not been limited, whether they have been religious, secular, or charlatan, to the nineteenth century. For the twentieth century also abounds in experiments that have continued up to the present day and promise to proliferate in the future. Most of the current groups want to get away from the militarism and materialism of American society and attempt to live a creative life in harmony and fellowship with others. Some of these communities such as Koinonia near Americus, Georgia, are farming communities. Others, such as Father Divine's Peace Mission and Reba Place Fellowship, are urban communities.

¹³Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America (New York: Abingdon Press, 1949), p. 154.

¹⁴Since writing this brief survey of Purnell, the author has visited the community and is unsure as to the validity of the negative impressions that occur in all the accounts he has seen, including Clark's.

Utopian communities, there have been; utopian communities, there are; utopian communities, there will probably be. As long as man can idealize and want something better, there shall probably be utopian communities.

CHAPTER II

TEEDSVILLE TO CHICAGO AND BEYOND, 1839-1903

Dr. Cyrus R. Teed has been regarded by many people as the leader of a charlatan-led community, the Koreshan Unity. He was a man of peculiar and varied talents. In the words of The Chicago Herald, "A man of such unusual persuasive powers, of such tremendous energies is well worth studying."¹ An examination of his life shows the growth of his powers and energies, and how they were strong enough to influence the lives of others even after his death. Some have considered Teed a rogue; others have considered him a sincere, unselfish individual. Many have labelled and dismissed him as a charlatan, but a close scrutiny of his life shows that he should be neither easily labelled nor dismissed to the oblivion of history.

1. Early life

Cyrus Read Teed² was born on October 18, 1839,³ in a small settlement called Teedsville, in Delaware County, New York, on the site of present day Trout Creek. Cyrus was the second son of Sarah Ann Tuttle Teed and Jesse Sears Teed. During the childhood of Cyrus, the Teed family moved

¹April 8, 1894, p. 30, col. 1.

²The middle name of Cyrus Teed may be: Read, which is used by The Koreshan Unity; Reed, which is used by the Library of Congress; or Romulus, which occurs in early sources, such as Tuttle, below.

³Other possible dates of birth are July 3, 1839, George F. Tuttle, The Descendants of William and Elizabeth Tuttle (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle & Co., 1883), p. 256, and October 13, 1839 (see fn. 23).

to join his clergyman grandfather, Oliver Tuttle, on his land in New Hartford, New York.⁴ It was here that Cyrus attended school about the year 1850, while his father was a local farmer, and his uncle, Samuel F. Teed, was an allopathic physician at the age of twenty-five.⁵ It is undoubtedly due to the influence of Samuel, that Cyrus became interested in medicine and began his early training in the late 1850's under his uncle's guidance in New Hartford.

It seems highly probable that the social climate of Utica in the middle years of the nineteenth century had a marked effect on the life of Cyrus. He and his family lived nextdoor to his Baptist clergyman grandfather, so that Cyrus would have had first-hand exposure to the evangelical emotional missionary work of the Baptists and their conflicts with equally emotional and dogmatic groups, such as, the Methodists and Presbyterians. Religious revivalism, hell and brimstone, was pervasive throughout the atmosphere of Upper New York State, for this was the Burned-Over District, seared by the flames of the waves of revivalism. There was a pervasive spirit of optimism in the belief of an early occurrence of the millennium in the area. "Just as the American political system would lead the world to equality and justice, so would American revivals inaugurate the thousand years' reign of Christ on earth before the second coming and the end of the world."⁶ From the age of thirty, Cyrus took up this theme of millennialism and used it to his own advantage.

(⁴Oncida County Deeds, Book 262, pp. 512-513.

⁵Oncida County Census 1850, II, New Hartford, p. 70.

⁶Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 79.

In 1859 when he was twenty years old, Teed married Delia M. Rowe, the daughter of William and Polly Maria Tuttle Rowe--another Teed married another Tuttle.⁷ Delia and Cyrus had a son, Douglas Arthur Teed, who was born shortly after their marriage on February 21, 1860. Douglas was destined to become in later years a leading American artist.⁷

Cyrus moved his family to New York City at about the same time the Civil War broke out. He enlisted to serve the Union cause in August 1862 and was mustered in as a corporal in Company F of the 127th New York Infantry. After serving for only fifteen months, Cyrus was discharged for "disability" from the hospital of Alexandria, Virginia, in October 1863.⁸ But from this point on Teed is no longer a normal complacent citizen.⁸

Cyrus is next said to have lived in Hamilton New York; but the only evidence that seems to exist is a short newspaper article, which may not be wholly truthful.

In 1867, Dr. Teed appeared in Hamilton, it is said, representing himself as a single man just from the University of Ann Arbor, Mich. He was the possessor of an extraordinary knowledge of anatomy and soon found employment in the office of Dr. Kimberly. He made himself a social favorite in the village in an almost incredibly short time, but in a few weeks after his arrival here Dr. Kimberly, it is said, received a communication from a lady claiming to be the abandoned wife of Dr. Teed, and enclosing a snapshot photograph of a man in prison garb, taken through the grated window of a cell. When confronted with the communication and picture, Dr. Teed is alleged to have acknowledged that the photograph was a likeness of himself and went to Trenton, where he opened a photograph studio, but became involved in trouble there.⁹

⁷Tuttle, op. cit., pp. 256-257.

⁸Annual Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of New York for the Year 1903, 4 vol. (Albany, N.Y.: 1904), III, 1144.

⁹Utica Herald-Dispatch, December 29, 1908, p. 7 and also in Utica Daily Press, December 29, 1908, p. 9, col. 2.

Later in 1867, Cyrus returned to New York City to attend the Eclectic Medical College of the City of New York.¹⁰ In February of 1868, the Eclectic Medical College of the City of New York graduated one Cyrus R. Teed, M.D.¹¹

Dr. Cyrus R. Teed soon returned to Utica, New York, to join his uncle Samuel in a joint medical practice.¹² Among other things their office gained dubious distinction from a large sign, with letters nearly a foot in length,¹³ proclaiming a slogan. The sign was plainly visible from Genesee Street, the main street of the city. The slogan the two Teeds put on their sign possible read "He Who Deals in Poison Deals in Death",¹⁴ but the wording was more probably as reported in the Utica Daily Press:

The two had an office on the second floor of Wells House at the corner of Columbia and Seneca Streets. Their medical school was one of their own, a mixture of medicine and religion, and it accomplished the purpose for which it was designed--to make money. To show that they had no faith in drugs the Teeds put out a sign with the inscription, "He who deals out poison, deals out death." It was a large sign extending clear across the front of the building. The first floor of the building, which is still standing, was occupied as a saloon by a man who had formerly been a policeman. And the public reading the sign, applied it not to the medical methods of the Teeds, but to the dispenser of beverages on the first floor, and the boys about town had a good deal of fun at the expense of the saloon-keeper. The Teeds got more notoriety through that sign than in any other way, and it all helped business, for both occupants of the building.¹⁵

¹¹Eclectic Medical College of the City of New York, Register of Graduates: 1867-1908 (New York: 1908).

¹²Joseph Arnott, comp., Arnott's Utica City Directory, 1869-70 (Utica: Roberts, 1869), p. 399; see also John H. Francis, comp., Utica City Directory, 1869-70 (Utica: White & Floyd, 1869), p. 319.

¹³The Utica Observer, December 26, 1908, p. 4, col. 6.

¹⁴The Utica Sunday Tribune, December 27, 1908, p. 3, col. 3.

¹⁵Utica Daily Press, December 28, 1908, p. 7, Col. 2.

It seems that Dr. Cyrus R. Teed did not prescribe drugs in accordance with his training in New York City, for an established and busy drug store of the time, a half block away from his office, apparently has no record of filling a Teed prescription.¹⁶ In late 1869, Cyrus left the joint practice with his uncle and set up his office next door to his residence.¹⁷

2. The illumination

In the winter of 1869-1870, Teed at the age of thirty, claims to have had a most unusual and mysterious experience. He called in an "illumination", and though there is no contemporary evidence,¹⁸ he did describe what happened in writing, probably about twenty years later. This illumination was to become the central justification for Teed's leadership and view of life. Appropriately, he further justified his mission with biblical reference.

Isaiah 11:10, "In that day the root of Jesse shall stand as an ensign to the people; him shall the nations seek, and his dwelling shall be glorious." Isaiah 44:28, "I am the Lord...who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose.'" Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, son of Jesse Sears Teed wrote:

In the autumn of 1869, I sat contemplating in my electro-chemical laboratory...

I had succeeded in transforming matter of one kind to its equivalent "energy," and in reducing this "energy," through polaric influence, to matter of another kind...

The "Philosopher's Stone" had been discovered, and I was the humble instrument for the exploitation of so magnitudinous a result...

¹⁶This statement was concluded after a search of the relevant years from a collection of all prescriptions filled since 1853, (when the store started) of the Watford Drug Store, Utica.

¹⁷John H. Francis, com., Utica City Directory, 1870 (Utica: Curtiss & Childs, 1870), p. 283.

¹⁸No confirmation was found in a search of Utica newspapers for the years of 1869 and 1870.

I sat in a thoughtful attitude, with all the "energies" of my mental soul concentrated in desire to materialize the concept of my innermost realm. I bent myself to the task of projecting into tangibility the creative principle. Suddenly, I experience a relaxation at the occiput or back part of the brain, and a peculiar buzzing tension at the forehead or sinciput. Succeeding this was a sensation as of a Faradic battery of the softest tension about the organs of the brain called by Lyra, crura pinealis, and conarium.

There gradually spread from the center of my brain to the extremities of my body and apparently to me, into the auric sphere of my brain, miles outside of my body, a vibration so gentle, soft, and dulciferous that I was impressed to lay myself upon the bosom of this gently oscillating ocean of magnetic and spiritual ecstasy.

I realized myself gently yielding to the impulse of reclining upon the vibratory sea of this, my newly-found delight...

I looked to behold myself, but failed to find my visible presence; instead, I saw before me the most fascinating, gloriously regal and majestic vision possible to human conception and contemplation. In sweetest cadence, most musically orate, so tender, with voice so unaccountably modulate as to thrill me with profoundest and most intense passion of supermundane filial felicity, she said:

"My Son, behold the formulation of thy Maternity! I am the Goddess, and the environment of that which thou hast become - the inherent psyche and pneuma of my own organic form. I have brought thee to this birth to sacrifice thee upon the altar of all human hopes, that through thy quickening of me, thy Mother and Bride, the Sons of God shall spring into visible creation..."

Gracefully pendant from the head, and falling in golden tresses of profusely luxuriant growth over her shoulders her hair added to the adornment of her personal attractiveness. Supported by the shoulders and falling into a long train was a gold and purple colored robe. Her feet rested upon a silvery crescent; in her hand, and resting upon this crescent, was Mercury's Caduceus...

She turned to go from me, hesitated for a moment, then turned, and with a look of pathetic yearning and sadness, raised her hand and pointing downward said: "Look there, my Son! In that surging mass of human woe, thou seest one into whom I shall in time descend in my sensory ultimates, and for a time in the future - not now - shall walk with thee. In this, thy going, the divine hand shall lead thee lest thy feet stumble"...

...I had made the discovery of the insulating law, and the actual process of the creation of the medium of astral projection. The great mystery was solved. To the formulation of my anthropobiologic battery, and to the ushering into being of the organic form of immortal life, henceforth all my energies should be devoted.

I left my laboratory and proceeded to my home...¹⁹

¹⁹Cyrus R. Teed, The Illumination of Keesh: Marvelous Experience of the Great Alchemist at Utica, New York (n. imp.) pp. 1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16.

A new era had begun for Teed. The female part of the Mother-Father God had appeared to him and had told him that sometime in the future he would be led by the divine hand. He now knew the secret of the Philosopher's Stone and the knowledge of the creation and structure of the universe. While the language used in describing the illumination may pose a problem in understanding it, many have claimed not only to understand it unquestioningly, but also to believe in it. Cyrus in later life changed his name to Koresh, which is the transliteration of כּוֹרֶשׁ , the Hebrew transliteration of the Persian translation of Cyrus, as mentioned in the book of Isaiah.

Dr. Teed soon left Utica, and during the next ten years lived in various places in New York and Pennsylvania.²⁰ In 1873, he visited the Harmonist community at Economy, Pennsylvania,²¹ where he saw at first hand the operation of communal life.

3. Moravia, Syracuse and New York City

Moravia, New York, had become the home of the parents of Cyrus, about 1878.²² About 1880, Cyrus arrived home with his now invalid wife and his son Douglas. It was here in Moravia that Teed's first community was founded in 1880. Little is known about this community and its members. It was probably small in numbers and may have included two later followers, his sister, Mrs. Emma Norton, and a friend from Binghamton, Dr. Andrews.

²⁰Binghamton, New York, The Press, May 25, 1929 and City of Binghamton Directory, 1877 (Binghamton, N.Y.; 1877).

²¹Letter from Miss Hedwig Michel, President of the Koreshan Unity, May 27, 1968.

²²Moravia Valley Register, January 28, 1878, in a letter from J. Luther, local historian in Moravia, New York, December 28, 1967 and Census 1880, Cayuga County, North Portion of the Town of Moravia, p. 81.

It seems that in Moravia, Cyrus was thought of as a crank.²³ But crank or not, the New York Times on its front page, one day in 1884, said:

When he was in Moravia it was supposed that he was at the head of an establishment after the order of the Oneida Community. He lived in a house just outside of the village, it was said that he had eloped with Mrs. Elia Wolsely, whose husband keeps a livery stable in Moravia.²⁴

Whether the elopement occurred or not is uncertain, but what is certain is that the community had started. In later years rumors of his sexual misdeeds became lawsuits against him. Though Cyrus, despite rumor and charges gained converts, his family did not wholeheartedly join his communal group.²⁵

About this same time, Dr. Teed was reported as being the editor and publisher of a daily newspaper called the Herald of the Messenger of the New Covenant of the New Jerusalem, supposedly published at both Moravia and Sandy Creek in Upper New York State.²⁶ One issue of this paper had an article entitled "Message, Preparatory to the Real Message of Elijah, the Lord's Anointed."²⁷ There do not appear to be

(²³The Syracuse Standard, August 10, 1884, p. 4, col. 4.

(²⁴New York Times, August 10, 1884, p. 1, col. 5.

²⁵Leslie L. Luther of Moravia, wrote in his letter of December 28, 1967, the following remembrance of the Teed family and Cyrus' brother Wilson. "There evidently was a strain of unbalance in the family. Our electric lighting plant, two miles from the village on a stream in a gorge was started in 1891, and Wilson Teed was its first operator. One night the village lights kept getting brighter and brighter, and there was no answer to the primitive telephone in the plant. Teed was found on a hill above the plant waving his arms and talking with the spirits on the wires! (I ran this plant, 1904-1908)."

(²⁶New York Times, August 10, 1884, p. 1, col. 5.

²⁷The Syracuse Standard, August 10, 1884, p. 4, col. 4. I have taken the liberty to change the first word to "Message" from "Massage" as it seems to have been a typographical error, and other contemporary reprints use "Message".

any known copies of this paper in existence. Claude J. Rahn, a former Vice-President of The Koreshan Unity, is silent on the above newspaper, but states that, "Koresh published the 'Herald' in 1879, followed by 'The Herald of the New Covenant' in 1880." None of these publications are available, but a few articles from these were reprinted in the 'Flaming Sword' of October 18, 1901.²⁸

The influence of his publications is uncertain. In Moravia little is remembered or recorded of his activities. When he died a Moravia newspaper noted: "Here Teed gathered around him several followers, principally if not all, women, and leaving his family took them to Syracuse where he hung out a doctor's sign."²⁹

After being left by Cyrus, Mrs. Teed, who was in failing health since the mid 1870's, went with her son to live with her sister, Mrs. Wickham, in Binghamton, New York. Mrs. Teed died there in 1885.³⁰

Cyprus

Cyrus Teed's son, Douglas Arthur Teed, was for many years a leading artist in Binghamton. He apparently had little to do with his father, but was more concerned with his art. While in his twenties he spent five years painting in Europe and later:

...His portraits of Charles E. Whitman, former Governor of this state and of the late Fra Elbertus Hubbard won him national fame...Teed pictures have been displayed at the

²⁸"Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology", The American Eagle (March 1967), XLV, 23, p. 7. There seems to be no other confirmation of Mr. Rahn's report, and it seems likely that the Herald and The Herald of the New Covenant are possibly merely later abbreviations for the Herald of the Messenger of the New Covenant of the New Jerusalem, for which there is contemporary evidence.

²⁹Moravia Republican-Register, January 1, 1909, in Leslie L. Luther, Moravia and Its Past (Indianapolis: The Frederick Luther, Co., 1966), pp. 199-200.

³⁰Letter from Miss Hedwig Michel, President of The Koreshan Unity, May 27, 1968.

Royal Academy of Canada, the Guild Hall exhibition in London, England, the Crystal Palace at Munich and the International Exhibition of Fine Arts at Rome.³¹

Douglas died in May 1929, at his home in Detroit, Michigan.

The germ of the community temporarily withered when Cyrus moved to Syracuse, where in 1883 he lived with his sister Emma,³² and later was joined by his brother Oliver in a combined medical office, the Syracuse Institute of Progressive Medicine.

. wld. Artel, h. 20 Kellogg wld. Charles E. h. 152 E. West cametress, h. 61 S. Salina Id. James, h. 31 Baker mestic, 84 E. Genesee schulist, h. 70 Soyntour L carpenter, h. 71 Center h. 84 Madison anloon, 190 E. West, h. do	Syracuse Institute of Progressive Medicine, WITH A SPECIAL DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL LABORATORY. We are giving special attention to the treatment of Chronic Diseases. 1 Wolf Block, W. Onondaga St., Syracuse, N. Y. Office: 1111 to 12 A. M. Hours: from 10:30 to 7:30 P. M. C. R. Teed, M.D.
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Insurance

Throughout this time in Syracuse, Cyrus was gaining "friends", as well as positively and negatively influencing people. It was a slow process that culminated in the summer of 1884, when people in Syracuse overtly reacted to Cyrus. In the following newspaper article of 1884, there can be gleaned the persuasive power of the man and some of his early and basic philosophy.

SURE HE IS THE PROPHET CYRUS

A Doctor Obtaining Money on the

Ground That He Is A New Messiah.

Syracuse, Aug. 9.---Dr. Cyrus R. Teed has an office in West Ononodaga-Street, in this city, which is considered one of the most aristocratic streets in the city. He has been here for only a few years, but has gained a lucrative practice among some of the best people in the city...

Mrs. Charles Cobb, a member of the Plymouth Congregational Church here, has been treated by Dr. Teed for nervous prostration.

³¹Binghamton, New York, The Press, May 25, 1929.
³²Syracuse City Directory, 1883 (Syracuse, N.Y., 1883).
³³Syracuse City Directory, 1884 (Syracuse, N.Y., 1884), p. 371.

She charges him with obtaining money from her and from her mother, Mrs. Willis, of Camden, N.Y., under the plea that he is "Second Christ". Dr. Teed claims that he is now the Prophet Cyrus, who, according to the prophecy in Isaiah, XIV, 12, was to appear on earth. He also claims that when he was 30 years of age he received divine manifestation, and that when he is 46 he will be translated to heaven, whence he will return in 50 days to found a kingdom where all will be love. By love he means only mind love of great purity and elevation. Those who follow him as the great exponent of this belief will live forever in this world.³⁴

In the above article is seen the first contemporary evidence of the revelation and role of Cyrus. The actual allegation against Teed, by Mrs. Cobb, was that he extorted the total sum of twenty dollars from her, and that her little boy gave Cyrus five dollars from his bank.³⁵ Cyrus, in a letter to Mrs. Cobb, offered "the return of your free donation....if that is required to satisfy your feelings."³⁶

Cyrus seemed to have both friends and enemies:

Dr. Teed is the exponent of what the Rev. J. F. Clymer, pastor of the First M. E. Church, calls "a peculiar religious belief which is altogether too advanced for the present materialistic world." The honesty of the doctor is endorsed by Mr. Clymer and other reputable citizens...Attempts [Dr. Teed] says, were made, to intimidate him into leaving the city, tar and feathers even being threatened. But he defies his enemies.³⁷

It also seems true that he politely defied his "friends". On the following day Teed wrote to the editor of the Syracuse Journal, concerning Rev. Clymer. "I believe him to be my personal friend, but no an expositor of my religious principles, as they are exactly diverse from any presentment of Biblical interpretation made at the present day."³⁸

* → ³⁴New York Times, August 10, 1884, p. 1, col. 5.

³⁵The Syracuse Standard, August 10, 1884, p. 4, col. 4.

³⁶The Evening Dispatch, (Auburn, New York), August 13, 1884, p. 4, col. 1.

³⁷The Syracuse Standard, August 10, 1884, p. 4, col. 4.

³⁸The Evening Dispatch, (Auburn, New York), August 13, 1884, p. 4, col. 1.

Cyrus stayed on in Syracuse for a while, and on Sunday, August 31, 1884, gave a free public lecture on "The Science of Immortal Life."³⁹ Soon, for one reason or another, Cyrus left Syracuse for "better" fields beyond.

It has been reported that Cyrus next lived in "a third-floor New York flat at 135th Street near Eighth Avenue. Koresh established there the nucleus of his colony--four ladies, of whom one was his sister and one his cousin. A year later he had failed again."⁴⁰ It seems that Cyrus may have been in New York City, until he appeared elsewhere in 1886.⁴¹ From Teedsville to New York City was a long struggle for Dr. Teed, a struggle that lasted about forty-six years; however, his next move was to be more fruitful.

4. Chicago--the early years; the growing group

Chicago in 1886 was the scene for the Haymarket Riot. It was the year for the Mental Scientists convention and also the year in which Dr. Teed moved to Chicago. Compared to the financial depressions of the mid and late 1870's and the middle 1890's, this period was a time of relative prosperity.

The convention of the Mental Scientists was held at the old Church of the Redeemer in Chicago, from September 8th to September 13th, in

³⁹The Syracuse Standard, August 29, 1884, p. 4, col. 1.

⁴⁰Carl Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1965), pp. 269-270.

⁴¹There are no listings in the New York City Directories of the 1880's that would appear to belie or confirm his residence in that city. Furthermore, there is no record of Dr. Cyrus Teed, for the same years, in the Physicians and Surgeons Records of the New York County Clerk's Office, which is a register of "all" physicians and surgeons who have practised or do practise in New York County.

1886 and seemed to enjoy a good deal of popularity.⁴² The Saturday afternoon session was attended by about fifty people who wished to be cured and by:

a still larger number brought by curiosity to see what the metaphysical believers were like and what they could do. For over an hour before the meeting opened a steady stream of ladies was entering the church, filling it to its utmost capacity. Chairs were placed in the aisles, and many availed themselves of the steps leading to the platform to use them as seats.⁴³

The session was presided over by a Mr. Swarts, who attempted through metaphysical power and prayer to cure those who so desired. He failed. Later an appeal was made for contributions. "The hint of the contributions cleared the church in quick time."⁴⁴

The following afternoon, the last day of the convention, Dr. C. R. Teed of New York delivered a lecture of "The Brain". This time the room was only about half-filled, primarily by women. Following ten minutes of prayer, Dr. Teed took his place at the front of the room between two buxom matrons.

Taking up a Bible, Dr. Teed held it out in full view of the audience. This book, he said, is sometimes called the word of God, but nowhere in the book itself is it stated that it is God's word. In his opinion there was but one God's word, and that was God himself. As a book, the Bible was the greatest scientific work extant....An exposition of metaphysical theory followed, in which the lecturer was assisted by a chart, showing 'the longitudinal division of the brain and its left hemisphere.' The scientific features of the subject were dwelt upon technically and the lecturer attempted to illustrate the battery which generates the brain forces and how it can be applied in restoring invalids to health...Dr. Teed said that it was for the metaphysician to rid the world not only of suffering, but of death itself. Religion and science must be married and the result will be the wedding of heaven and earth.⁴⁵

⁴²The Chicago Herald, September 4, 1886, p. 2, col. 2.

⁴³The Chicago Herald, September 12, 1886, p. 3, col. 7.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 3, col. 7.

(⁴⁵The Chicago Herald, September 13, 1886, p. 2, col. 4.

evidence? ✓
 The reception given Dr. Teed and his views must have been congenial for he remained in Chicago. His views, as expressed at the convention, had not changed significantly from the time he was in Syracuse. He was still emphasizing the scientific, and the possibility of eliminating death, but he had added a new bent, for there was now a battery which generated the brain forces.

Cyrus lost no time in capitalizing on whatever popularity he had won. By December 1886, C. R. Teed, M.D., was proprietor of the Guiding Star Publishing House and editor of a monthly periodical, The Guiding Star, which was "A Magazine Devoted to the Science of Being" with "Spiritual Healing an Essential Department."⁴⁶

✓
 In October of 1886, Cyrus had chartered, The World's College of Life, also headquartered in Chicago. The College published a leaflet of advertisement called "Metaphysics". It shows that Teed was finally on his way in establishing a stable following of believers. He had founded the three basic divisions of his society, the College of Life, the Church Triumphant and the Society Arch-Triumphant. While Cyrus was still not referring to himself as Koresh in print, he was using such terms as "Koreshan Theology" and "Koreshan School".⁴⁷

Teed continued in his mobility by moving around the Chicago area. Eventually he and his College of Life appropriately settled down in a home on College Place.⁴⁸ This home was where a utopian community,

⁴⁶From the front page of Vol. 1, No. 1, in a letter from Miss Hedwig Michel, President of The Koreshan Unity, May 12, 1968.

⁴⁷World's College of Life, Metaphysics (Chicago, hand dated June 11, 1887), 4 pp. From the collection of the Chicago Historical Society.

⁴⁸Reuben H. Donnelley, comp. The Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago. 1839 (Chicago: The Chicago Directory Co., 1888), p. 1660; 1889 ed., p. 1754.

The Koreshan Unity, was finally to grow and blossom. The monthly Guiding Star was packed away to oblivion in May 1889 and in its place in December 1889 rose the monthly Flaming Sword, under Teed's editorship. By 1889, Teed was publishing material under the name Cyrus,⁴⁹ and by 1891 he was calling himself Koresh.⁵⁰

It was during these years that Cyrus met the men and women who were to become his most ardent supporters. There was Professor O. F. L'Amoreaux from Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, who wrote pamphlets and endless articles among the publications of the Koreshans.⁵¹ Dr. A. W. K. Andrews became the Vice-President of the College of Life, among his many other titles and duties. Mr. James H. Bubbett was secretary of the Guiding Star Publishing House,⁵² and later Mrs. Evelyn Bubbett was its manager.⁵³ And then there was Ulysses G. Morrow, former principal of the Corning School of Shorthand in Corning, Iowa, who had taught "the Isaac Pitman System as improved or revised by Mr. Andrew J. Graham."⁵⁴ After joining the Koreshans, he collaborated on writings with Cyrus and became an instrumental figure in conducting the scientific experiments that "proved" the world's surface was really concave. Finally, there was Mrs. Annie G. Ordway, also known as Victoria Gratia, who was to become Teed's co-leader.

⁴⁹For example see Cyrus, Koreshan Science and its Application to Life (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1889), 43 pp.

⁵⁰For example see Koresh, Proclamation (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1891), 4 pp.

⁵¹Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, reports no record of Professor L'Amoreaux having been there.

⁵²Donnelley, op. cit., 1889 ed., p. 732.

⁵³Ibid., 1891 ed., p. 939 and other years to 1898.

⁵⁴Ulysses G. Morrow, Phonography; or phonetic shorthand. What it is and how to learn it (Corning, Iowa: Published by the author, 1888), pp. 2-3.

5. San Francisco and the confederation scheme

With growing popularity and optimism, Cyrus R. Teed, the "young man Koresh" went west. In late 1890, Koresh appeared before a small audience in "lower Metropolitan Hall"⁵⁵ in San Francisco. He told this group--"the ladies represented the bulk of his hearers"⁵⁶--"that he was the re-incarnated Messiah who was promised to come for the final redemption of the race."⁵⁷

Koresh stayed in San Francisco for a number of months while converting potential followers and then established the Golden Gate Assembly of The Koreshan Unity. The Assembly was a community of celibates who lived in a Noe Street house.⁵⁸ It was reported that: "They live under one roof and are fed and clothed from one purse, which is the property of the community."⁵⁹ Dr. Teed at this time explained that his new religion was "divided into four general departments, the ecclesiastical or churches, the collegiate system, the society and the military arm."⁶⁰

Cyrus, at the time he founded his San Francisco community, seemed to envision the creation of a confederation of celibate societies. For this end he ventured on an eastern tour of the country. Apparently he first went to the Harmony Society at Economy Pennsylvania, for a few days, arriving on October 20, 1891.⁶¹ Cyrus spoke with two trustees,

⁵⁵San Francisco, The Wave, November 14, 1891, p. 7, col. 1.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Back leaf of Proclamation and Judgment, printed as one pamphlet (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, ca. 1892).

⁵⁹The San Francisco Morning Call, February 11, 1891, p. 7, col. 2.

⁶⁰Ibid. For a description of the different departments see Chapter 4.

⁶¹Pittsburgh Post, October 22, 1891, p. 1, col. 8.

Mr. Henrici, who was over eighty years of age and reported as going senile and Mr. Duss, a firm believer in Teed.⁶² The Pittsburgh newspapers charged Teed with attempting to gain control of the Harmonists' assets, but Cyrus scoffed and said this was not at all his object and anyway his society in San Francisco "had a surplus of over \$1000,000."⁶³

At this time John S. Duss was trying to hide Economy's great financial crisis from its bankers and creditors.⁶⁴ The press claimed that Dr. Teed was at Economy negotiating a loan of one hundred and fifty million dollars from Duss and Henrici. According to Duss these reports were printed long before Teed's visit and so Duss concluded that "some newspapermen have amazing imaginations, even more fantastic than that which they assigned to Dr. Teed."⁶⁵ According to Duss:

After a time, Dr. Teed did appear on the scene, but his main object, as I remember, was to enlist our moral support in his endeavors with the Koreshan Unity, and simply for his own benefit, to find out about our communal organization. He seemed to be an altogether sincere and friendly man, with endless courage and spirit. We treated him with utmost cordiality. He was even given a hearing by the Board of Elders; it was a pleasant affable, but non-committal meeting.⁶⁶

Teed "was trying to bring about a confederation of various communistic societies."⁶⁷ On leaving the Harmonists, he said: "I will visit the Shakers' society, and I also have a mission to Washington to fulfill before going back West."⁶⁸ While seemingly little occurred regarding

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, October 23, 1891, p. 2, col. 1.

⁶⁴John S. Duss, The Harmonists; a personal history (Harrisburg, Penn: Pennsylvania Book Service, 1943), p. 286.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 300.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 301.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 286.

⁶⁸Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette, October 23, 1891, p. 2, col. 1.

a confederation with the Harmonists, probably because they were a dying community, Teed's visit to the Shakers was in a sense more fruitful as evidenced by future events.

After his eastern tour Koresh returned to San Francisco. A newspaper, The Wave, felt that in going east, Cyrus had taken the money of his San Francisco disciples.⁶⁹ The Wave described Cyrus' trip east:

The day dawned at length when the Messiah was no more, and it was then found that he had flown with golden wings of hard cash and left the faithful flock exceedingly short grass to nibble on. This displeased many, and there was much dissension on Noe Street. In the course of time it was learned that Cyrus was sojourning at Economy with a view of affecting an affiliation between the societies of Koreshans and Economites. He designed to return the other day, and reported his mission a success, and that he had come to take back with him half a dozen of the most worthy of his fold. The Economites are reputed to be worth \$40,000,000 and Cyrus Teed expects to get control of it all.⁷⁰

Being in San Francisco, Dr. Teed was next able to visit the Brotherhood of the New Life at Fountain Grove, near Santa Rosa, California. This "celibate" group was led by Thomas Lake Harris, who like Teed, began his community in Upper New York State. Teed, after speaking to Harris, said "his object had been simply to try to combine their material interests to establish the nucleus of a commercial and industrial system."⁷¹ Cyrus then planned to extend this system to all the celibate societies in the United States.⁷²

⁶⁹This report may have been caused by an outcry by former Koreshans, Royal O. Spear and his wife, that Teed was "an ultra-religious exhorter ...base imposter, a man whose fanaticism is assumed for purposes of gain." Pittsburgh Post, October 22, 1891, p. 1, col. 8.

⁷⁰The Wave (San Francisco), November 14, 1891, p. 7, col. 1.

⁷¹San Francisco Chronicle, February 26, 1892, p. 5, col. 1.

⁷²Ibid.

In February, 1892, a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle interviewed Cyrus:

... the Koreshan Home on Noc Street is not exactly palatial, but it is more than comfortable. When the reporter first called there yesterday the "doctor" was not in. "He has a room and a welcome at the homes of many Koreshans," explained a matronly lady who came to the door. "Sometimes he spends the night with one friend and sometimes with another. We all have the utmost freedom," said she, and the pretty young girl who just then came down the stairs, dressed in a charming negligé, gave silent testimony to the statement...The Koresh sat in one of the cosiest of apartments imaginable while talking to the reporter...he seemed particularly anxious to impress upon the visitor the absence of everything monastic from the establishment. "We are not ascetic," said he. "We are a family of nearly forty here and we try to enjoy ourselves. Our interests are common. There is but one purse, the strings of which are held by a board of trustees. My people would give me all their money if I would let them, but I only get my living with the rest." The "doctor" smiled as he spoke and appeared perfectly satisfied with himself.⁷³

In spite of his apparent satisfaction at the community's situation, Koresh found it necessary to leave San Francisco within two months of this interview because of bickering that broke out in the group. He and about twenty-five of his supporters moved to Chicago in 1892.⁷⁴

6. Problems in Chicago, the Shakers and the way out

Shortly after arriving in Chicago, Teed began to encounter problems that were to drag on for years. In the first in a series of law suits, on May 14, 1892, legal action against Teed was begun by Sidney C. Miller,⁷⁵ who was at the time President of the National Publishing Company,⁷⁶ an independent Chicago firm. Teed fought the charge.⁷⁷

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Chicago Record-Herald, December 25, 1908, p. 3, col. 6.

⁷⁵Miller vs. Teed, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois, Case G. 103382.

⁷⁶New York Times, June 10, 1892, p. 6, col. 6; see also Chicago Evening Journal, June 9, 1892, p. 9, col. 5.

⁷⁷Cyrus R. Teed, "Plea", Miller vs. Teed.

Miller's Declaration contained a long list of charges against Cyrus. The charges centered around Teed's depriving "him of the comfort, affection, fellowship, society, aid, services and assistance of Jeannie L. Miller..." and poisoning the mind, and alienating and destroying the affection of Miller's wife.⁷⁸ He accused Teed of fraudently representing himself as Elijah the Prophet on his second advent on earth, and for claiming miraculous powers including "the power to give and take life, and [that he] would eventually destroy the world."⁷⁹

...Teed and the wife of the said Plaintiff would on the 18th day of Oct. 1890, be translated and arise and that the wife of the said Plaintiff would be made Goddess--Maervia...⁸⁰

Miller stated that his wife was persuaded by Teed to believe "that a woman's body was her own," that marriage, "sex and sexual love" should be abandoned, that she should "leave her husband and join the Koreshan Community" and that she should also turn over all her "earthly possessions" (which Miller valued at \$5,000.) to Teed.⁸¹ Miller contended that his wife was harbored by Teed and that Teed persisted "in harboring the wife of the said Plaintiff, for a vile, unlawfull and wicked purpose."⁸² As redress for all these wrongdoings, Miller asked Teed for damages in the sum of \$100,000.⁸³ When the case went to court on March 13, 1894, the suit was dismissed by Judge Hanecey on motion of the defendant, as the attorney for the plaintiff was sick. The case was reinstated and again dismissed on April 28, 1896.⁸⁴

⁷⁸Sydney C. Miller, "Declaration", Miller vs. Teed, p. 1.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 2.

⁸⁰Ibid., Miller probably means the goddess Minerva.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 3.

⁸²Ibid., p. 4.

⁸³Ibid., p. 5.

⁸⁴Miller vs. Teed, passim.

Three days after Miller began action against Teed, a second Chicago husband took similar action.⁸⁵ The charges of Thomas Cole were substantially the same (even worded the same) as those of Miller, and it should be of no surprise that both men retained the same attorney, Wm. H. Hill.⁸⁶ Koresh, again represented by Charles W. Greenfield (in later years a Koreshan), denied the charges. In his Declaration, Cole echoes Miller word-for-word, except that his wife was not to become the goddess Minerva. However, he charged that on many occasions before and after June 20, 1890, "the said Defendant committed the crime of adultery with Annie the wife of the said Plaintiff."⁸⁷ Cole, like Miller, claimed \$100,000 in damages against Teed.⁸⁸ The case was dismissed and reinstated a number of times.⁸⁹ It would appear that the dismissals were the result of the plaintiff's lawyer's being absent from court.

On February 25, 1897, Teed in answer to Cole's charges, signed an affidavit for Continuance.⁹⁰ Teed said he had a material witness Sarah Crosten Teed, the sister of Anne M. Cole, who lived with the Coles from the time they began living together until their marriage broke up eight years later.⁹¹ Basing his statement on the sworn accounts of the two sisters,⁹² Teed stated that:

...scarcely a week passed without a quarrel between the Plaintiff and said Anne M. Cole, most of which quarrels grew out of the fact that said Anne M. Cole was continually in ill health, and

⁸⁵Chicago Evening Journal, May 17, 1892, p. 2, col. 1 and also Chicago Evening Journal, June 8, 1892, p. 7, col. 2.

⁸⁶Cole vs. Teed, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. Case G. 103461.

⁸⁷Thomas Cole, "Declaration", Cole vs. Teed, p. 3.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 5.

⁸⁹Cole vs. Teed, passim.

⁹⁰"Notice and Affidavit for Continuance", Cole vs. Teed.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 1.

⁹²Ibid., p. 5.

frequently consulted Physicians, and that the Plaintiff was always accusing said Anne M. Cole, his wife, of sustaining improper relations with her Physicians, and often threatened to kill her;...early Spring of 1890, and on one Sunday Morning... Plaintiff several times declared that he would leave...and never return, and packed his goods and personal effects...Anne M. Cole begged him to remain, and...said to the Plaintiff, that if he crossed the thresh-hold of their home with those threats on his lips, he should never return to her...the Plaintiff then and there left her...⁹³

The sisters shortly afterward moved to another apartment, went to work, and sold their furniture and belongings to support themselves. Anne made repeated applications to join the Koreshans and was only admitted after becoming ill at the Koreshan home during a lecture. She was allowed to stay the night, but "prevailed upon them to allow her to remain, for the reason that she was homeless, and seemed to have no one to whom she could look for home or shelter."⁹⁴ Teed further stated that he could completely defend himself against all the charges of Thomas Cole.⁹⁵ On June 23, 1897, Judge Burke, on motion of the Plaintiff, granted a judgment of non suit, and thus the whole matter was dropped.⁹⁶

A week after Cole began action against Teed, on May 25, 1892, A. A. Exline began an action for \$200 (the specific grievance is not recorded) and was awarded \$59 and costs. The judgment was appealed and the appeal was dismissed on May 28, 1894.⁹⁷

⁹³Ibid., p. 2. Punctuation and spelling are as in the original.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 4.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 5.

⁹⁶Cole vs. Teed, passim. Mr. Cole's "affections have been transferred since...to second helpmeet". Fort Myers Press, July 1, 1897, p. 1, col. 6.

⁹⁷Exline vs. Teed, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. Case G. 104606, passim.

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With the beginning of this period of legal crises in May 1892 and while it dragged on through the years, Koresh seems to have begun looking for a more congenial climate to live in. Just after these cases were instituted against him, in the late spring of 1892, he revisited the Shakers in the east. "Cyrus and three Sisters visited Mt. Lebanon (North Family, spring of 1892)",⁹⁸ in an effort to form a union with the Shakers.⁹⁹ His "dual-associate", Mrs. Annie G. Ordway, became a member of the North Family of Shakers at Mt. Lebanon, New York, on June 26, 1892.¹⁰⁰ This marked the time when the leaders of the Koreshans, Teed and Mrs. Ordway, were also Shakers.

One of the leading Shaker elders, Frederick W. Evans, wrote to Teed on July 3, 1892. He at first expressed some doubt about Teed's aims, not in regard to Teed's being called by the Spirit, but rather, the use that Teed would make of this calling.¹⁰¹

The wonderful document you have sent for us to sign, clears up the little doubt and plainly shows you as a Christian and that it is not your intention to 'set up a post by God's post' and to build up yourself with the spiritual truths revealed to open the second degree of the seven that will constitute the full testimony of Christ's Second Appearing.¹⁰²

The document that Elder Evans mentioned concerned Mrs. Annie G. Ordway's confirmation as an eldress of both communities and her authorization to publish "the Gospel of Sexual Holiness."¹⁰³ In his letter Elder Evans warned Teed of some of the pitfalls that the Shakers had fallen into, such as over expansion of land holdings and poor selection of members.

⁹⁸Catharine Allen, mss., inside cover of bound Koreshan pamphlets. Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

⁹⁹Frederick W. Evans, Shakers and Koreshans Uniting (Mt. Lebanon, New York: 1892), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 3.

Because of this situation, Evans reported, the Shaker communities became "eleemosynary institutions."¹⁰⁴ Elder Evans wished the Koreshians better fortune than that of the Shakers:

And we pray that you dear people may clean escape all the evils, corruptions and abominations of the world inherent in your own natures, the products of fleshly lusts that war against the soul.¹⁰⁵

While Elder Evans's doubts were abated in July, other doubts were soon to develop among the Shakers. Another elder, Daniel Offord, wrote to Teed on November 16, 1892, asking crucial questions concerning recent Shaker discoveries and interpretations of basic differences in belief between themselves and the Koreshians.¹⁰⁶ There was a concern with differences in theology, such as the interpretation of marriage, the nature of their god and whether Teed saw himself as the Messiah.¹⁰⁷ Teed answered Offord's letter point by point. On the matter of Messiah, Teed answered in the affirmative---in terms of his own definition. "Our idea of Messiah is an authoritative teacher, or one who has the right to teach by the authority of having the truth... I am anointed... because the Shaker authority regard me as called of God..."¹⁰⁸ Whether Teed's reply satisfied the Shakers is still uncertain. Shortly afterwards, Koresh asked the Shakers for a loan of eight thousand dollars, which they refused to give him. "Cyrus became vehement,"¹⁰⁹ and contact between the two groups ceased by the end of the year.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 7-8.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰⁶Daniel Offord and Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Koresh, Letter from Daniel Offord with reply by Koresh (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1892).

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 1-3.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰⁹Allen, op. cit.

The year of 1893 appears to have been relatively quiet for Koresh. Apart from the usual threats and harangues of society, and a possible attempt to lynch him,¹¹⁰ little happened until Koresh went to Florida in the last quarter of the year. By early 1894 he had begun the establishment of his New Jerusalem at Estero, Lee County, Florida. Slowly he moved his followers from under the noses of the press, to the relative seclusion of Estero.

The community in Chicago was not finding life as pleasant as possible. In 1895, two of its members wrote:

... When we opened our work in Chicago nine years ago, the press of Chicago opened a warfare of slander which it has pursued almost uninterrupted till the present time. We do not object to being called cranks, visionaries, impracticables, etc.; but it has been difficult for us to stem the tide of the lying slanders of a vituperous and monopolistic press like the great dailies of Chicago. Despite the efforts of the press of Chicago and the country, abetted by the orthodox clergy, we have made some progress. We have held our community together in the great Babylon of modern church and court.¹¹¹

With such an uncomfortable atmosphere in Chicago the members looked to the south for a haven.

7. The latter years in Chicago

Teed spent considerable time during 1894 and 1895 in Estero, giving impetus to the building of his New Jerusalem. When not at Estero, he

¹¹⁰Utica Herald-Dispatch, December 26, 1908, p. 8, col. 2., and other newspaper articles.

¹¹¹Frank D. Jackson and Mary Everts Daniels, Koreshan Unity. Communistic and Co-operative Gathering of the People. Bureau of Equitable Commerce (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1895), p. 7. Jackson later left and married the notorious criminal of fraud (convicted on several counts), Dis Debar. See Fort Myers Press, January 5, 1899, p. 1, col. 6. Daniels after moving to Estero left the Koreshans and joined the Shaker's Florida community, Olive Branch. See Russell H. Anderson, "The Shaker community in Florida", Florida Historical Quarterly (1959), XXXVIII, p. 37.

was often in Chicago, where the court cases continued to drag on. Here he lived at the Koreshan home, "Beth Ophrah" (home of Gideon; see Judges 6:11), on West 99th Street.¹¹² The house was a very large luxury mansion often referred to as the "Milliard Mansion", after a former owner.¹¹³

The Koreshan publishing house was the primary means of support for the community. The followers proselytised in and around Chicago with their leaflets, magazines, and street corner meetings. As members joined they brought into the community all their assets, skills, and talents. Sometime between 1890 and 1895, the Koreshans were reported as having one hundred and sixty communicants in Illinois, fifteen in California, and fifteen each in Massachusetts and Oregon.¹¹⁴

Teed returned to San Francisco on August 29, 1896, for about a month.¹¹⁵ He claimed that he had about one hundred followers in San Francisco, Cyrus was out to win converts. On September 7th, he lectured "to an appreciative audience upon 'The Coming Crises'".¹¹⁷ He told them about the coming order and kingdom in the new time of Christ, when men shall be immortal. To prevent exclusion from this new kingdom, he urged his audience to join one of the three orders or levels of membership of The Koreshan Unity, namely, the celibate order, the marital order, or the co-operative relation and be active in one of the four general departments mentioned earlier.¹¹⁸

¹¹²Reuben H. Donnelley, comp., The Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago. 1895 (Chicago: The Chicago Directory Company, 1894), p. 1708.

¹¹³Letter from Chicago Historical Society to Mrs. F.M. McConnell, Tampa, Florida, September 14, 1962.

¹¹⁴H.K. Carroll, The Religious Forces of the United States, rev. ed. (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1896), p. 118.

¹¹⁵The San Francisco Morning Call, August 30, 1896, p. 16, col. 5.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 16, col. 5.

* — (¹¹⁷The San Francisco Morning Call, September 8, 1896, p. 16.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 16, col. 2. For a description of these groupings see

Later in a letter to the Call Teed defended his teachings. In particular, he said that, "My demonstration of the cellular cosmogony is geometrically accurate, and will stand the test of true science when all the modern and scientific fools are dead."¹¹⁹ During a lecture a few days later he "proceeded to prove by scriptural quotations...that the beliefs of modern scientists were erroneous."¹²⁰ He used the theory of cellular cosmogony to illustrate his point. This theory of the shape and construction of the world was the reason for a lengthy interview by the Call, which occurred shortly before Teed left San Francisco for the last time.¹²¹

In 1897 Koresh was once more in the midst of legal action, with a number of charges being brought against him in Chicago and Estero.¹²² In Chicago, in December 1897, Vienna A. Parsons sued Teed along with his fellow Koreshans, Annie G. Ordway, Virginia K. Andrews, Bertha Boomer, Mary Maycomber, Henry G. Silverfriend, Eveline Bubbett, and James H. Bubbett for thirty-five hundred dollars.¹²³ Mrs. Parsons, in the form of a promissory note, had lent this money to Teed on July 13th and November 21st, 1895, at Estero, apparently for the use of the Koreshan Unity. It was on Teed's shoulders that the suit actually rested.¹²⁴ Teed answered the charge by pleading that he

¹¹⁹The San Francisco Morning Call, September 13, 1896, p. 21, col. 4.

¹²⁰The San Francisco Morning Call, September 14, 1896, p. 12, col. 2.

¹²¹The San Francisco Morning Call, September 19, 1896, p. 12, col. 1-2.

¹²²Parsons vs. Teed, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. Case G. 179040. For cases in Florida see the next chapter.

¹²³"Præcipe", Parsons vs. Teed.

¹²⁴Parsons vs. Teed, passim.

was unlawfully imprisoned and detained by the plaintiff (and others in collusion with her)...until by the force and duress of imprisonment, he made the said notes and delivered the same to the plaintiff...and this he is ready to verify...¹²⁵

Vienna Parsons denied that Teed had signed the note while imprisoned or under duress.¹²⁶ When judgment was handed down on May 23, 1900, Vienna Parsons was awarded \$2,244.11 and costs.¹²⁷ The Sheriff went out on April 23, 1901, to raise the judgment awarded from the assets of the defendants. (He was only able to find Cyrus R. Teed in Cook County, and from his resources the money could not be raised.¹²⁸) Teed listed his assets to the Sheriff as follows: "Necessary wearing apparel. One share of the capital stock of the Daily Englewood Company, a corporation. Membership in Koreshan Unity."¹²⁹ He also listed: "Cash on hand -- None. Debts due and owing to me -- None."¹³⁰ There were no further proceedings in this case.

Meanwhile his followers were slowly transferring themselves, their printing equipment, and possessions to Florida and "happiness". Koresh continued to write books, pamphlets, and articles, which were published by his Guiding Star Publishing House and printed from 1898 to 1902 by his Englewood Publishing House in Chicago.¹³¹ Cyrus was President of both publishing concerns.¹³²

¹²⁵Cyrus R. Teed, "Plea", Parsons vs. Teed. Spelling as in original.

¹²⁶Vienna Parsons, "Replication", Parsons vs. Teed.

¹²⁷Parsons vs. Teed, *passim*.

¹²⁸"Execution", Parsons vs. Teed.

¹²⁹Cyrus R. Teed, "Debtor's Schedule", Parsons vs. Teed.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*

¹³¹Donnelley, *op. cit.*, 1901 ed., p. 624; 1902 ed., p. 643. See also different addresses, 1898 ed., p. 1764; 1899 ed., p. 585; and 1900 ed., p. 604. The Englewood Publishing House was also known as The Daily Englewood Company, see fn. 129.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 1898 ed., p. 740; 1903 ed., p. 370.

By 1903, the Koreskans had disposed of most of their assets in Chicago, and Teed had moved from Beth Ophrah to a smaller house in 1902.¹³³ The last Koreskan move was apparently made from Chicago to Estero, on November 17, 1903.¹³⁴

¹³³Ibid., 1903 ed., p. 2086.

¹³⁴Claude J. Rahu, "Some Brief Phases of Koreskan Universology", The American Eagle (March 1967), XLV, 23, p. 7, col. 3.

CHAPTER III

ESTERO: STABILITY AND GROWTH, 1893-1909

1. The arrival and early plans

insufficiently developed

With social pressure mounting against the Koreshans, Koresh had to look for more comfortable surroundings in which he could continue building his community. Florida appeared warm and friendly and was sparsely inhabited in its southern reaches. Apparently, Teed first went to Florida in October 1893, to explore possible places for his settlement. One newspaper reported:

Dr. Teed, the founder of Coreshanity passed through Bartow a few days ago on his return from an inspection of Pine Island. He was very much pleased, and will purchase the whole island, including hotel, cottages, etc. He will transport a colony of three hundred of his faith from Chicago at once, and many others will join them later on.¹

It seems that Koresh went back to Chicago and returned to Florida with a few followers around the first of the new year. The Fort Myers Press hoped he could "be induced to locate in Lec" County.² Teed's plans to settle at Pine Island seemingly failed and on Friday, January 5th, he arrived in Fort Myers and remained until Monday.

On Sunday at the request of a number of our citizens he delivered two discourses, afternoon and night, at the Baptist church. Those who attended were well pleased with the doctor's remarks, and no one, as far as we have heard, takes any exception to his religious teachings or beliefs. At any rate he was accorded a fair and impartial hearing and made many friends in our city.

* (¹Fort Myers Press, October 26, 1893, p. 4, col. 4. Reprinted from Bartow Courier-Informant.

(²Fort Myers Press, January 4, 1894, p. 4.

We acknowledge a pleasant call from the doctor and are impressed with the fact that he is a gentleman and a scholar, and can, from his standpoint, ably present his cause and battle for the right as he sees it.³

Whether Koresh gained followers, as well as friends, is uncertain. He was in need of a site for his settlement and by January 13th, had acquired land from William T. Dodd.^{4,5} Four days later, Teed returned to visit the city of Fort Myers with the first group of Koreshans. It seems that around this time, an elderly German homesteader, Gustave Damkohler, met Koresh and his party and welcomed them into his home in Estero.⁷ He soon became a member of the Koreshans and later formally gave them his 320 acres on November 19, 1894.⁸ On this land a great city, the New Jerusalem of the Koreshans, was to be built.

³Fort Myers Press, January 11, 1894, p. 4, col. 2.

⁴Lee County, Florida, Closed Index to Deeds, I-Z; Grantee from 1887 to July 1, 1922, p. 334.

⁵Another account of how Teed acquired Florida land is that he met Gustav F. Damkohler at Punta Rassa on January 4, 1894. In the ensuing days he persuaded Gustav to become a Koreshan and give his holding of 320 acres at Estero to the Koreshans for the site of their New Jerusalem. See Elwin E. Damkohler, Estero, Fla., 1882, Memoirs of a First Settler (Fort Myers Beach, Fla.: Island Press, 1967), pp. 22-23. The Chicago Herald (April 8, 1894, p. 30, col. 4) reported that an elderly German and recent convert, Gustav Damkohler sent Teed an offer that Gustav wished to cede 340 acres in Lee County to The Koreshan Unity. See also Fort Myers Press, August 5, 1897, p. 4, col. 2. For another different account see Karl A. Bickel, The Mangrove Coast; The Story of the West Coast of Florida (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1942), p. 269.

⁶Fort Myers Press, January 18, 1894, p. 4. Those who came down with him to Florida may have been "Mrs. A. G. Ordway, Mrs. L. M. Boomer and Mary Mills", see Damkohler, op. cit., p. 22. More likely they were "Victoria Gracia, Virginia H. Andrews, Evelyn Bubbett, James H. Bubbett, Geo. W. Hunt", anon., "Names - 1893", ms. from the files of The Koreshan Unity in Estero, Fla.

⁷Damkohler, op. cit., p. 22.

⁸Lee County Florida, Deeds, Vol. 8, p. 15.

Cyrus envisaged his new city as the center of the world (see Diagram 1).⁹ The city was to be thirty-six square miles and would have a population of 8,000,000 faithful Koreshans.

The shape of the city is to be octagonal. In its center is to rise the most magnificent temple the world has ever seen--the great fame of the Koreshans...Two principal streets each 400 feet wide, are to intersect the whole city...The whole city is to be surrounded by a circular boulevard, and the length of the octagon has been taken for the diameter of the circle, the diagonal of the square of which is ten times that distance--- "which is our way for squaring the circle," says Dr. Teed. Placed at equal distance, near the circumferences, are to be twenty-four distribution centers or stores. That, in short, is the ground plan of the New Jerusalem as it exists on paper and in the vivid imagination of Dr. Teed.¹⁰

The scheme was large and ambitious, but it did not deter the Koreshans in frontier Estero from trying to make their New Jerusalem in reality.

2. Early life in Estero, the hard years

The first large group of Koreshans left Chicago for Florida on January 11, 1894.¹¹ On arriving they found life to be different and certainly not heaven. Times were hard but not for the reasons that made times difficult in Chicago. The people of Fort Myers were generally friendly and helpful and did not immediately attack the Koreshans through the local press. This area of Florida was susceptible to revivalism, and as time passed converts were gained from the local population. However, life in the south was unlike that of urban Chicago. Virgin land had to be cleared and crops planted, while the people fought off mosquitoes. Slowly the Koreshans won out over rugged Nature.

⁹The Chicago Herald, April 8, 1894, p. 30, col. 1-3.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 30, col. 4.

¹¹Claude J. Rahn, "Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology", The American Eagle (March 1967), XIV, 23, p. 7, col. 3.

¹²Fort Myers Press, August 31, 1893, p. 4.

In June of 1894, the Koreshans were ready to begin planting. Prof. O. F. L'Amoreaux, Capt. Gustav Faber, Messrs. Allen Andrews, Will Morgan, and Geo. Ordway made their way to Fort Myers and "gathered a lot of shrubs, trees, seed, etc., for planting at their place at Estero."¹³ The citizens of Fort Myers were most kind and made the Koreshans liberal gifts of these plantings. The Koreshans received them as "valuable contributions to [their] future groves and grounds."¹⁴ By August, the gifts had withered and L'Amoreaux wrote a letter, to the Fort Myers Press, that was an indirect, sarcastic denunciation of those in Florida who gave him incorrect advice and seeds to grow pumpkins and squashes.¹⁵

When W. W. Foose, editor of the Fort Myers Press, visited the community in September 1894, he was accorded a warm welcome. He found the community located on fine, dry and scrub land with one of the finest citrus producing tracts in the county. He was impressed by the two-story, thirty by sixty or seventy foot dining-hall, in which the second floor was used as a dormitory. The dining room on the lower floor had tables that ran cross-wise, with one table reserved for ladies and several others for men. Dr. Teed introduced Foose to the Koreshans; they sang a hymn and "sat down to a meal of four or five courses, the fare of which was bountiful and sumptuous."¹⁶

¹³Fort Myers Press, June 28, 1894, p. 4.

¹⁴Fort Myers Press, July 5, 1894, p. 4.

¹⁵Fort Myers Press, August 23, 1894, p. 4.

¹⁶Fort Myers Press, September 13, 1894, p. 1, col. 2.

Contrast with
Newcomb

Foose reported:

There are in this colony about thirty odd in all, mostly men every one a worker, no drones in the hive. Those here now are only laying the foundation, there being large accessions ready and anxious to come as soon as the colony is ready to receive them. They are making quite an opening in that oaky woods, and although they are giving much attention to peas, potatoes and other staples of the country, they are also, planting every variety of grain, grass, fruit, shrub or flower they can find. I apprehend they will have one of the finest experiment stations in the state, and if their enterprise succeeds, "Koresia", will some day be the gem of the peninsula.¹⁷

Life for the Koreshans was relatively peaceful during this period of preparation. In November, Koresh delivered another lecture in Fort Myers on the aims and beliefs of the Koreshans. The lecture was well received and he accomplished "the feat of receiving the attention and interest of his hearers for the space of three hours."¹⁸ He lectured that the Koreshans obey the commandments to love God and their neighbors. "They are peaceful, law-abiding citizens who interfere with no one, owe no man anything, but love one another."¹⁹

Unfortunately, while the social climate was warm and friendly to the Koreshians, the weather was soon to become cold for all Floridians. On December 29, 1894, the Big Freeze struck. The temperature dropped to twenty-four degrees in Fort Myers and all the truck crops were lost. Lee County was more fortunate, for the frost did not last long enough nor did the temperatures drop low enough to affect the citrus trees. The weather turned warm, but on February 9,

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Fort Myers Press, November 29, 1894, p. 10.

¹⁹Ibid. See also p. 1, col. 1.

1895, Florida was again hit by a freeze. Again, the trees in Lee County escaped,²⁰ including the Koreshan groves. The colonists had the misfortune of losing their garden crops and plants; however, they had no reason to starve for the Estero River and Bay were teeming with fish.

Life began to partake of some of the unpleasant aspects experienced in Chicago. In 1896 and afterwards, the Koreshans were faced with lawsuits filed in Lee County. Generally these suits were filed for damages against The Koreshan Unity.²¹ In one case H. K. Harvey, in 1897, sued for \$2,000. over a boat.²² In another case, Gustave Damkohler sued the Koreshans for the return of the property he gave them upon entering the Unity as a member. At this time he valued the three hundred and twenty acres, his house and trees at \$6,000.²³ Throughout the years other law suits followed and were weathered by the Koreshans.

On the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, just south of Naples, Florida, the Koreshans set out to scientifically prove that the Copernican system was wrong. Their experiment, conducted over many months of 1897, was avidly followed by the local press.²⁴ The experiment was

²⁰Karl H. Crismer, The Story of Fort Myers; The History of the Land of the Caloosahatchee and Southwest Florida (St. Petersburg, Fla.: St. Petersburg Printing Company, Inc., 1949). pp. 134-135.

²¹General Index to Civil Cases - Defendants - Lee County, Florida [to April 1, 1968] K sheets, p. 39.

²²Harvey vs. Koreshan Unity, Circuit Court of Lee County, Case number 207, passim.

²³Damkohler vs. Koreshan Unity, Circuit Court of Lee County, Case Number 211, passim. In settlement he received back some land but he had to turn all or most of it over to his lawyer to cover the legal fees.

²⁴For example see Fort Myers Press, April 22, 1897, p. 5, col. 1; June 24, 1897, p. 5, col. 1; July 22, 1897, p. 5, col. 1-2. See also the following three articles and the following chapter for a description of the experiment.

hailed as an event, that would "make Lee County famous",²⁵ "and bring forth the greatest wonder of the twentieth century".²⁶ As work progressed on the experiment and success appeared imminent, the leading Koreshans expressed anxious desires to meet other scientists in another survey as a crucial test of their projected results.²⁷

The editor of the Fort Myers Press, together with a local doctor, visited the community in April 1897. Dr. Teed and Mrs. Ordway were in Chicago at the time, and so, the visitors were entertained by Prof. L'Amoreaux and a Mr. Strain.²⁸ Following their visit they had this to report:

Having been at the colony about a year ago, we noted

but very little improvements, more than the completion of the large three storey building, which is used as a dining hall, a place of worship, with the female departments in the two upper stories. They have made little advancement, so far as cleaning up grounds and planting out fruit trees and truck are concerned. They all seemed perfectly happy and are strong believers in the theory of Prof. Morrow's concavity scheme.²⁹

The visitors did not note any unpleasant aspects. By local standards the Koreshans were faring well at Estero.

The fame of the Koreshan experiment to prove the concavity of the world spread through the newspapers of the country. Curiosity seekers were attracted. Newspaper reporters from the urban centers of the north began to arrive. Not used to the frontier, let alone the mosquitoes of Lee County, they could not help but view Estero as a dismal place to live. They were repelled by the hard work of frontier life and the fish instead of meat diet of the colonists. They even saw the frontier roads as

²⁵Fort Myers Press, March 25, 1897, p. 4, col. 3.

²⁶Fort Myers Press, April 1, 1897, p. 8, col. 2.

²⁷Fort Myers Press, April 22, 1897, p. 1, col. 2.

²⁸Fort Myers Press, April 29, 1897, p. 8, col. 2.

²⁹Ibid.

primitive. Life was very different from that of the urban, industrialized, civilized north.

When a photographer and reporter for the Pittsburgh Daily News visited the Koreshans in May, less than a month after the editor of the Fort Myers Press, they put together an astonishingly different account. The community was far from a haven of rest, the colonists experiencing "hard work, no pay and little food".³⁰ A meal they attended "was served without any apologies, ceremonies or blessings... It was a 'free-pitch-in' for what there was. The menu would have suffered in comparison with that of a cheap boarding house..."³¹ The meal included tomato gravy or sauce, light bread, boiled fish and pennyroyal tea. According to this account the colony dwelt "in poverty and deprivation",³² and when visited on a Sunday the residents "were found loitering around the grounds, with seemingly no object in life more than to believe the earth is concave..."³³ "Teed is what is commonly known as a hustler and a boomer. He was cut out for a land agent, but seems to have missed his calling".³⁴ The representatives of the Pittsburgh Daily News were apparently not sufficiently impressed with the several thousand acres of land, the products of the recently burnt sawmill and machine shop on Estero Island, the newly built wooden buildings, the white linen on the dinner tables, the children's school, the hats made by the women, the experimental poultry yard, and the fields of vegetables. They were not impressed sufficiently

³⁰Fort Myers Press, August 5, 1897, p. 4, col. 1. Reprinted "From the Pittsburgh Daily News, May 19".

³¹Ibid., p. 4, col. 4.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid., p. 4, col. 5.

³⁴Ibid., p. 5, col. 1. They reported 44 members in the colony.

for their account; entitled "Misery in Estero", was certainly unfriendly to the Koreshans. Perhaps one of the reasons for their sour report was the four hour, fifteen mile ride to Estero from Fort Myers, through a primeval forest along a bridle path that was like being in the "secluded jungles of darkest Africa".³⁵

The attacks on the Koreshans, published in various newspapers at the time, made them uneasy when they ventured beyond their community.³⁶ When Rev. Elcanore M. Castle of the Unity gave a lecture in Fort Myers in late January 1899, she was nervous about her audience.

The lady spoke throughout in a defiant tone and manner, as if she expected her statements to be challenged, but she was listened to throughout her long talk with the greatest respect... But with this outward show of defiance and superior knowledge, she was evidently feeling her way, not knowing just how far she could go with her audience.³⁷

The people of Fort Myers were seemingly not antagonistic toward the Koreshans at this time. The local newspaper took the position that it was an upholder of the constitution and the right of free thought: "and be [a] belief ever so radical and peculiar to established ideas, we would not hold this against any one".³⁸ If one could characterize the attitude of the Lee County residents at this time, towards the Koreshan community, it would be benign neglect.

³⁵Ibid., p. 4, col. 1-6 and p. 5, col. 1.

³⁶Fort Myers Press, January 5, 1899, p. 1, col. 5-6;

³⁷Fort Myers Press, February 2, 1899, p. 1, col. 4.

³⁸Ibid.

3. Later life in Estero

The first few years of the new century were without troublesome circumstances for the Koreshans at Estero. Apart from the usual comings and goings,³⁹ there was little excitement until the Unity was incorporated and more settlers began to arrive from the north.

The Koreshan Unity is a legal corporation holding a charter under the laws of the State of New Jersey, dated September 26, 1903 and is capitalized at \$200,000, with authority to issue twenty thousand shares, the par value of which is \$10 each.⁴⁰

Incorporation made legal life easier for the Unity, by making it harder for former members to sue it.

In Florida preparations were proceeding to accept the new arrivals. On October 24, 1903, Teed arrived in Estero with thirty-five new colonists, claiming he would soon bring a hundred more.⁴¹ About forty more arrived on November 20th, to swell the community's population to a new high of about two hundred residents.⁴² With them they brought their printing plant with which they planned to continue publishing the Flaming Sword.⁴³ On December 2nd, Dr. Teed and Mrs. Bubbett returned from what was probably their last trip to Chicago.⁴⁴

The work of the Koreshans was to make the coming year noteworthy for the people of Lee County. In Fort Myers around the middle of January, the Koreshan band "composed of excellent musicians" gave a

³⁹See Fort Myers Press, June 12, 1902, p. 8, col. 2; October 9, 1902, p. 8, col. 1; November 29, 1903, p. 8, col. 2.

⁴⁰Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Koresh and E. B. Webster, The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative. The solution of industrial problems (Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1907?), p. 15.

⁴¹Fort Myers Press, October 29, 1903, p. 8, col. 1 and 4.

⁴²Fort Myers Press, November 26, 1903, p. 1, col. 4.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Fort Myers Press, December 1, 1903, p. 8, col. 1.

free concert accompanied by a lecture from Koresh.⁴⁵ Work also progressed, "surely but slowly on the new publishing house".⁴⁶ As publishing got underway, Prof. U. C. Morrow, editor of the Flaming Sword, wrote a series of articles for the Fort Myers Press. These articles describing the advantages of life in the Estero area were written under the pseudonym of Veritas.⁴⁷ The articles dealt with such topics as orange groves, Koreshan production of molasses;⁴⁸ Koreshan farming of sugar-cane, cassava, sweet potatoes, cow peas, peanuts and garden vegetables;⁴⁹ Koreshan plans to build a city;⁵⁰ bee keeping;⁵¹ and the healthful climate.⁵² Also described were the following Koreshan inventions: the oscillating steam and gasoline engines by Teed and Chas. J. Raby respectively, a wireless telegraph relay by Raby, a rotary explosive motor by Thos. P. Gray, a machine shop centering device by John Irving, a rectilineator and triplex map of the world by U. G. Morrow and a number of inventions by W. McCreedy, a loom temple and shuttle guide, a sanding device for cars and locomotives, a double-flange car-wheel, and a burglar-trap.⁵³

The community was a hive of activity and while living became more fruitful for its residents, storm clouds were soon to appear. First, there was a minor setback caused by nature, and then, the ire of area

⁴⁵Fort Myers Press, January 14, 1904, p. 8, col. 4.

⁴⁶Fort Myers Press, January 28, 1904, p. 4, col. 4.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 1, col. 1.

⁴⁸Fort Myers Press, June 30, 1904, p. 6, col. 1.

⁴⁹Fort Myers Press, August 4, 1904, p. 1, col. 4.

⁵⁰Fort Myers Press, August 11, 1904, p. 1, col. 3-4.

⁵¹Fort Myers Press, August 18, 1904, p. 4, col. 3-4.

⁵²Fort Myers Press, September 15, 1904, p. 4, col. 2.

⁵³Fort Myers Press, October 27, 1904, p. 5, col. 2-3.

residents was aroused by Koreshan plans. On July 18th, a Koreshan dwelling was struck by lightning. No sooner were the repairs made than on July 22nd, a fire broke out in their naphtha launch "Victoria". The boat was pushed from the dock and was sunk to extinguish the fire. The damage however was light, and she was expected to make her usual run a week and a half later.⁵⁴

The Koreshans plans for their New Jerusalem included an early incorporation of Estero as a city. In the summer of 1904 they began preparation for the legal incorporation and aroused the wrath of some Lee County neighbors. The Koreshans pointed out many advantages to the establishment of a city. The cultivation of a public spirit and the work of a board of trade could attract industry and commerce to the area better than individual citizens. The incorporation of a large area could lead to the orderly development of the city, and a constitution and laws to bar the elements of vice and crime. There would be no saloons, "no bawdy-houses, no tobacco shops, no distilleries, no breweries, no gambling houses, nor other forms or dens of vice."⁵⁵ Not all of these advantages appealed to all the residents of the proposed city, many of whom were not followers of Teed and had homesteaded their land long before the Koreshans came to Florida.

Those who opposed the plan met, formed a committee of Fred Schauer, Jos. Hafner, and E. Frantz, and drew up a platform. Their opposition centered around three points. First, they did not feel they needed the incorporation as they were strictly engaged in agriculture. Second, they

⁵⁴Fort Myers Press, July 28, 1904, p. 4, col. 1.

⁵⁵Fort Myers Press, August 11, 1904, p. 1, col. 3-4.

had worked hard to clear and cultivate their land and did not think it was just to put streets three hundred feet wide through their groves. Third, they felt they would shoulder the burden of taxation as they owned the greater part of the improved lands. These settlers saw the move as basically benefiting the Koreshans.⁵⁶

Schauer, Hefner, and Frantz continued their charges against the Koreshans. They did not want to block the incorporation; they just wanted to be left out. They proposed to continue their opposition to the scheme so long as they felt sure that they could have their property set aside from the incorporation.⁵⁷ As incorporation day approached these men became more bitter in their attacks⁵⁸ and ceased to do business with the Koreshans.⁵⁹

why?
The Koreshans studied the situation and decided that Estero would be incorporated as a town.⁶⁰ It was on September 1, 1904, but not before the Koreshans were wildly attacked and called cranks by the press.⁶¹ While the Estero incorporation took place on time, it was only after a compromise in which the lands of the dissenting Lee County residents were excluded.⁶² The town was twelve miles long and twelve miles wide, but due to its shape was one hundred and ten square miles.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 10, col. 4.

⁵⁷Fort Myers Press, August 18, 1904, p. 1, col. 3.

⁵⁸Fort Myers Press, August 25, 1904, p. 1, col. 4; and September 1, 1904, p. 4, col. 1-2.

⁵⁹Fort Myers Press, August 25, 1904, p. 4, col. 1-3; and September 1, 1904, p. 4, col. 1-2.

⁶⁰Fort Myers Press, September 1, 1904, p. 4, col. 3-4.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 6, col. 3.

⁶²Fort Myers Press, September 8, 1904, p. 1, col. 3; September 15, 1904, p. 4, col. 3.

Eighty-two square miles were land and the rest covered by water. About one-eighth of the land, was owned by The Koreshan Unity and comprised 7,500 acres or eleven square miles.⁶³

An election of officers was held on September 1st at the store of The Koreshan Unity in Estero.

The people of Estero proper are very much pleased with the character of the ticket elected. The representative men of Estero are to be placed in charge of the new municipality: Mayor, Charles Addison Graves; Clerk, Henry D. Silverfriend; Marshal, Chas. H. Hunt; and nine alderman: John S. Sargent, W. Ross Wallace, Thomas P. Gray, James M. Bubbett, Moses G. Weaver, George W. Hunt, Rollin W. Gray, Elum C. Miles and Samuel Armour--they being chosen to serve on and two years as determined by lot. W. Ross Wallace was elected president of the board.⁶⁴

With the Koreshan ticket elected, municipal life settled down and local political liveliness was temporarily subdued.

The Koreshans were always interested in education. Early in their community building, they constructed a children's school. Later, when the incorporation of Estero was proposed work began on establishing a university.

The Koreshan Unity is preparing to establish a regularly incorporated university at St. James City, on the San Carlos hotel property. A branch of this university, a public school or college, will be established at Estero.⁶⁵

These plans apparently did not materialize. Seemingly in its stead, the Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology was established about 1904.⁶⁶ The curriculum concentrated on the useful trades, such as

⁶³Fort Myers Press, September 8, 1904, p. 4, col. 1.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Fort Myers Press, August 25, 1904, p. 4, col. 3.

⁶⁶The Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology (Estero, Fla.: The Koreshan University System, ca. 1904, reprinted 1964).

construction, pattern making, electrical, mechanical, and stone construction. There was a music department and an art department. Lecture courses were offered in Cosmology, Osteopathy, Dentistry, History and Ethnology and Higher Mathematics. In addition there was a Chautauqua Department. Students were required to follow a "total abstinence from profanity, tobacco, intoxicants, and licentiousness."⁶⁷

Through the years in Estero, life had become easier for the Koreshans. Each October 18th and April 10th, they celebrated the respective birthdays of their co-leaders Teed and Ordway. Slowly they established their industries, their band, and their schools. With the incorporation of Estero, the future seemed to look brighter.

5. Political involvement

With the achievement of political power in Estero, the Koreshans wished to extend their influence. On June 7, 1906, they published the first issue of The American Eagle, a weekly political newspaper.⁶⁸ With the byline "Riches and Poverty Cease where the Commonwealth Begins", the newspaper began a struggle for increased political power for the Unity.⁶⁹ Then, as the election of 1906 approached, the Koreshans were turned out of the Democratic Party by the local county organization. As a result they formed their own party, the Progressive Liberty Party, which was immediately labelled by the press as the tool of Koresh.⁷⁰

The entrance of Koresh into the political sphere caused much bitterness between his followers and the residents of Fort Myers and Lee

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 3.

⁶⁸See reprint of part of page in The American Eagle (May 1965), Vol. 44, No. 1, p. 2.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Fort Myers Press, September 27, 1906, p. 4, col. 1-2.

County. It also engendered vicious attacks by the local press against the Koreshans.⁷¹ In October, what began as an isolated incident further inflamed the antagonism of the press. A Koreshan, Ross Wallace, telephoned Mrs. Sellers of the Florida Home, a Fort Myers hotel, inquiring if an individual was there. Mrs. Sellers was unable to locate this individual but telephoned Wallace later when the individual arrived. Wallace insultingly accused her of withholding information. As a result, when Wallace came to Fort Myers he was physically attacked by her husband. On Saturday October 13th about six or eight Koreshans, including Wallace and Koresh, went to Fort Myers. About two o'clock, Marshal Sanchery noticed Wallace and brought him together with Mr. Sellers. The two men agreed to drop the matter and the incident was closed.⁷² As the political enemy of the Koreshans, the Fort Myers Press reported:

...it was evident that Dr. Teed was not satisfied.
 ...He came into town with a chip on his shoulder
 ...Thus in this spirit of defiance, walked up to the group just as the peace protocol had been signed...he accosted Mr. Sellers and opened the old sore by defiantly stating, that no one had insulted his wife, and the controversy was on again, ending with Dr. Teed boldly calling Mr. Sellers a liar.

That was a fatal remark for Teed...for no sooner were the words out of his mouth than Mr. Sellers, who by the way, is a man of 65 years, struck the Pretender a blow on the cheek. But did Teed...turn the other cheek? No, he doubled up his fists and landed several times on Mr. Sellers in rapid succession...

In a twinkling of an eye all was excitement. Men sprung up from every direction. The mayor was one of the first on the ground and used his efforts to separate the combatants, Marshal Sanchey then placed both men under arrest...Teed balked...The

⁷¹Fort Myers Press, September 27, 1906, p. 4, col. 3; October 4, 1906, p. 4, col. 1; October 11, 1906, p. 4, col. 1-2 and 3-4; October 18, 1906, 1st ed., p. 1, col. 1-2 and p. 4, col. 1-2 and 2nd ed., p. 1 col. 2-4.

⁷²Fort Myers Press, October 13, 1906, 2nd ed., p. 3, col. 4. The identity of the individual sought at the hotel is unknown.

marshal told him he was under arrest for fighting, and still full of fight he hurled back the epithet at the marshal, "you lie!" On the impulse of the moment the marshal slapped the face of Teed, and for a second time, all was humiliation in the camp of the Koreshans.⁷³

At this point a strong young man entered the situation and dealt the marshal a vicious blow in the face. The fight started again but was soon over.

While the political situation is pretty heated just now, politics did not in any manner enter into the above trouble.

Dr. Teed and two other Koreshans were permitted to go, on giving bond for ten dollars each. They failed to appear in mayor's court, Monday, choosing to forfeit their bond, and the incident is settled.⁷⁴

In the political arena, the Fort Myers Press intensified its attacks on Teed.⁷⁵ It labelled his party "The Progressive Lying Party" and outlined its platform as including: that all men should bow down to Koresh, that the county funds should be held by Koresh with no questions asked, "that the man who squeals and wants a showing for his money should be given a chunk of salt fish and turned out into the cold world", that they were opposed to taxation if they could get the other fellow to pay the taxes and that every candidate should lie so fast and frequently that the truth can not get within one hundred miles of him.⁷⁶ The week before the election, the Fort Myers newspaper called Teed "the greatest charlatan, bombastic and humbug of the 20th century."⁷⁷ All the incitement⁷⁸ by the newspaper and

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Fort Myers Press, October 25, 1906, 1st ed., p. 1, col. 1-3 and p. 4, col. 1-4 and 2nd ed., p. 1, col. 3-4 and p. 3, col. 4-5.

⁷⁶Fort Myers Press, October 25, 1906, 1st ed., p. 1, col. 3.

⁷⁷Fort Myers Press, November 1, 1906, 1st ed., p. 1, col. 1.

⁷⁸Fort Myers Press, November 1, 1906, 1st ed., p. 4, col. 1-3 and 2nd ed., p. 1, col. 2-5 and p. 2, col. 3.

animosity of some Fort Myers's residents led to Koresh being hung in effigy the night of the election.⁷⁹ In the final analysis the Koreshan candidates all lost,⁸⁰ but Koresh felt encouraged by their show at the polls.⁸¹

After the election, the Progressive Liberty Party faded from the political scene. The Koreshans showed no great concern with the election of 1908⁸² and 1910,⁸³ although in the latter the women joined with others in the county in an appeal to the voters (male suffrage) to support prohibition as an amendment to the state constitution.⁸⁴ Political life settled down after 1906 for Dr. Teed, however; in addition to a pair of broken spectacles, he was left with an injury that lingered on.

evidence

6. The death of the founder and aftermath

With the fight of 1906, Koresh no longer found southern Florida to be a haven from his enemies. His community which had experienced stability and growth under his dynamic leadership, now felt the growing wrath of its foes. The pressure of the attacks against them was psychologically wearing down Koresh and his followers.

The Fort Myers street fight of 1906 eventually took its toll. On Tuesday December 22, 1908,⁸⁵ Cyrus R. Teed, Koresh, was dead at the age of sixty-nine. According to the Koreshan periodical, The Flaming Sword:

⁷⁹Fort Myers Press, November 8, 1906, p. 4, col. 1.

⁸⁰Fort Myers Press, November 8, 1906, p. 4, col. 2-3; November 15, 1906, p. 1, col. 3-5. For registered voters see October 25, 1906, 2nd ed., p. 2, col. 1.

⁸¹Fort Myers Press, November 15, 1906, p. 4, col. 1.

⁸²Fort Myers Press, November 19, 1908, p. 8, col. 4 and voters list October 22, 1908, p. 7, col. 3.

⁸³Fort Myers Press, October 20, 1910, p. 3, col. 3; October 27, 1910, p. 8, col. 1-2.

⁸⁴Fort Myers Press, October 27, 1910, p. 8, col. 1-2.

⁸⁵Fort Myers Press, December 24, 1908, p. 1.

DR. TEED, then in full possession of his vigor, never passed a day free from pain from the time this attack was made by the mob October 13, 1906...until relieved December 22, 1908, from a period of the most prolonged and agonizing suffering possible for man to experience. Four physicians, two from Fort Myers, one from Illinois, and one from Estero, gave it as their opinion that death was due to neuritis, following the concussion of the mastoid cells of the brain, from whence the nerve sheaths transmitted the action of the first three dorsal vertebrae, hence to the brachial plexus. The four doctors concurred in the belief that the injury was first sustained by the blows received at Fort Myers.⁸⁶

The Koreshan followers waited for Koresh to rise again, for his body to rematerialize through theocrasis.⁸⁷ On Wednesday two Fort Myer's physicians, Dr. William Hanson, and Dr. J.E. Brecht arrived and pronounced Koresh dead.⁸⁸ For three days his followers waited in anxious anticipation for him to rise again, but the body only decayed. After four days had passed, the local health officer, Dr. William Hanson, ordered the body interred immediately.⁸⁹ The same day, Mrs. Annie Ordway, Victoria Gratia, dual-associate of Koresh and now the sole leader, returned to the community from Washington.⁹⁰ On the following day she telegraphed the Tampa Tribune, "Dr. Cyrus R. Teed is entombed in a vault especially prepared for him for that purpose."⁹¹ Koresh was placed by his followers

...in a brick reinforced concrete tomb at the end of Estero Island. There it remained year after year, until the great hurricane of October 25, 1921. Waves swept over the island and when the storm died down, the tomb of Koresh was gone. Not a trace of the remains was ever found.⁹²

⁸⁶W. Ross Wallace, "Cause of Dr. Teed's Tragic Death", The Flaming Sword, Vol. 23, No. 2, February 15, 1909, pp. 58-59.

⁸⁷For a description of theocrasis, see the following chapter.

⁸⁸Fort Myers Press, December 24, 1908, p. 1.

⁸⁹Karl H. Grismer, The Story of Fort Myers; The History of the Land of the Caloosahatchee and Southwest Florida (St. Petersburg, Fla.: St. Petersburg Printing Company, Inc., 1949), p. 190.

⁹⁰Fort Myers Press, December 31, 1908, p. 3.

⁹¹Reprinted in Fort Myers Press, January 7, 1909, p. 3.

⁹²Grismer, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

Though Koresh had now left the community, the strong influence of his personality and the ideology he had developed were able to keep the Koreshans going.

Whether Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, founder, strongest advocate and guiding star of The Koreshan Unity, was a rogue or a sincere unselfish individual is most difficult to assess, for he shows traits of both classifications. Though he presented himself as a man of high principles with the greatest of integrity, relatively few people saw him in this light. While the followers of his dogmatic person and soul believed in him as a "messiah", the writers and newspapers of his time and since have almost singularly regarded him as a rogue, fraud and blasphemer of the American way of life.

An examination of the evidence available seems to show that many of the charges against Teed were based on hearsay, misunderstanding, and conjecture. The multiplicity of the charges, however, add to the probability that some must have had substantiating evidence. Some of this adverse evidence can be seen in the breakdown of relations between Cyrus and the Shakers, and it undoubtedly played some part in causing people to threaten his life with tar and feathers in one city and lynching in another. That many have labelled Teed a charlatan should thus be no surprise, for with a conglomeration of hearsay, conjecture and kernels of fact, the label becomes justly deserved in the eyes of the undiscerning public. For those who look closer into the life of Koresh, there will be found a man who appears to have considered himself progressive, serious, honest, idealist, and realist.

Dr. Cyrus R. Teed is a man who has been described by many as an "odd genius". He was able to establish a community and leave it with

enough motivation to persist over a period of time. Perhaps the community's ability to continue, after his death, is in part due to the complete system of thought and life that he developed and left with his believers.

CHAPTER IV

KORESHAN UNIVERSOLOGY

1. Theology

The early and middle years of the nineteenth century saw Upper New York State often swept by the fires of revivalism. It was an area of the country that was sensitive to religious influences and "characterized by unusual deviations from doctrinal orthodoxy."¹ Religious communities emphasizing salvation were often formed as an outgrowth of revivalism. These groups tended to be pietistic and interpreted the Bible literally. They often tried to emulate the faith and practice of Christians of apostolic times in their wait for the second coming of Christ.²

Koreshan theology is a reflection of these times. Dr. Teed grew up in the Utica, New York, area in the middle years of the nineteenth century. During this time his family lived with his grandfather who was a Baptist minister and farmer. It is this grandfather's influence that undoubtedly shows in Dr. Teed's theological formulations. Later when he began to preach, Dr. Teed was influenced by the scientism of the times.

Koreshanity is a post-Christian scientific religion.³ The Holy Bible is declared to be the best written expression of the Divine Mind

¹Clifton E. Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 325.

²Ibid., p. 339.

³About 1887-1889 it was called Koreshim, Koreshism or Koreshan Science and the followers were called Koreshans. By about 1890-1892 the religion was being referred to as Koreshanity. In the late 1890's the term Koreshan Universology came into use as an umbrella description.

Source?

and must be scientifically interpreted in the light of the theories of the second most important work, Teed's book, The Cellular Cosmogony.⁴ Koreshanity teaches that man should revert to the communistic way of the early Christian Church. Celibacy is to be practised by the leaders of men, with fecundation left to the masses. The mind of man contains heaven and hell, which constitute the spiritual world.

God is seen as the supreme source of being and activity. Christ was the Lord in his human perfection.

God is not a universal spirit; he is the Father-Mother within the son. He is the man, and from this Son radiate all the forces of the divine character. God is not a trinity, a tri-personality, but he is a triunity of attributed proceeding from the Son, and from the Son the regeneration of the Sons of God has its origin. The visible Lord, the Son of God, is the regenerator, reproducer, of all the offspring of Diety; he is the Creator of the Universe.⁵

God is biune, being the Father-Mother. He is both male and female in one and is "alternately male and female in outer manifestation."⁶ God is the origin and destiny of man.

Man as we know him, dies and rots. However, Koresh was the Messiah and after death was to experience what he called theocrasis. This process was the rematerialization of the body after death, because electromagnetic combustion resulted in incorruptible dissolution of the body without decay of the flesh. In fact, all men could become immortal if they followed the principles of immortal life. First, they must accept

⁴Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Koresh, and U.G. Morrow, The Cellular Cosmogony; or the Earth a Concave Sphere (Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1905)

⁵Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Koresh, The Immortal Manhood; the Laws and Process of its Attainment in the Flesh. 2nd ed., (Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1909), p. 76.

⁶Daniel Olford and Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Koresh, Letter from Daniel Olford with Reply by Koresh (Mt. Lebanon, N.Y.: 1892), p.8.

only to
appease the
Shakers

Koresh as the Messiah and Messenger of the Covenant. This acceptance also meant believing in the basic factors of the covenant, which were:

...The conjunction of God and Elohim, (Elijah) with the sensual man in whom God must come...The conjunction of this man's external with God, through the potency of desire to be one with God...The conjunction of God with all men through the final sex unity, which will be the blending of the two forms, the destruction of the sex dualistic state, and the substitution of the unistic state, which will be the neuter, the virgin man-woman, the eunuch state.⁷

Second, in order to obtain immortal life, man must also be obedient to the doctrines that Koresh taught. The most important of these doctrines was celibacy and the replacement of the selfish love of marriage with "the love of God and the love of man supreme over all the ties of selfishness."⁸

Another important doctrine was belief in cellular cosmogony. This theory, that we live inside a hollow sphere, was grounded in Biblical justification. Isaiah 40:12, "who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?" God would not create a limitless universe for man could not comprehend it. Only that which is finite is true, for the infinite is beyond the reach of human understanding. Thus, the universe is finite and contained within the sphere; the inside is all there is. Man lives on this inside concave surface. Teed merges the scientific, the cellular cosmogony, into his religious dogma. He reasons that all life is seen as developing in a shell, egg, or womb.

⁷Cyrus R. Teed, Re-incarnation or the Resurrection of the Dead. (Chicago: The Guiding Star Publishing House?, 1888?), p. 34.

⁸Ibid., p. 35.

"The earth, therefore, is the great womb of natural development, hence we are living in a shell."⁹ "To know of the earth's concavity and its relation to universal form, is to know God; while to believe in the earth's convexity is to deny him and all his works. All that is opposed to Koreshanity is Antichrist."¹⁰

2. Science; the world view

The concepts of cellular cosmogony can be traced back to early times. For Plato and Aristotle the finite universe is our world and contains all existent matter. "It is a world beyond whose spherical boundary there is...neither place, nor void, nor time, since there are no material bodies outside the heavens."¹¹ Years later, Dante viewed the universe as a closed system. The earth is surrounded by ten celestial spheres and its inside is hollow with Hell being "a conical cavity reaching to the center of the earth."¹² In later years, Dr. Edmond Halley, and a Scottish mathematician and physicist, Sir John Leslie, along with Leonard Euler all believed in a hollow earth with an internal sun in the center.¹³ In the United States in the early nineteenth century, John Cleves Symmes loudly espoused the view that the earth was hollow. He conducted lecture tours, gave numerous newspaper interviews, and twice petitioned Congress.¹⁴ In 1864, Jules

⁹Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Koresh, The Cellular Cosmogony; or the Earth a Concave Sphere (Esterò, Fla.: The Guiding Star Publishing House, 1922), p. 101.

¹⁰Teed and Morrow, op. cit., p. 9.

¹¹Milton K. Munitz, ed., Theories of the Universe; from Babylonian Myth to Modern Science (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957), p. 64.

¹²J.L.E. Dreyer, "Medieval Cosmology", in Munitz, op. cit., p. 136.

¹³Willy Ley, "For your information: the hollow earth", Galaxy, March 1956, p. 75.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 79.

Verne's The Voyage to the Center of the Earth was published, followed in 1868 by The Hollow Globe by W. F. Lyons.¹⁵ It was in 1870, that Dr. Teed claimed to discover that the earth was a hollow sphere, with man living on the inside surface of the sphere (Diagram 2).

For Koresh, the hollow sphere contained all. The sun is an invisible electro-magnetic battery, which revolves in the center of the universe once in every twenty-four year period. The sun we see in only a reflection, which seems to rise and set because it is half light and half dark. The moon is a reflection, and the planets are reflections of seven mercurial discs floating around the center of the sphere. The stars are focal points of light reflecting off these mercurial discs. "Comets are composed of crucic 'force', caused by condensation of substance through the dissipation of the cloric substance at the opening of the electro-magnetic circuits, which closes the conduits of solar and lunar 'energy'".¹⁶

The sphere has a diameter of 8,000 miles and a circumference of 25,000 miles. One cannot see across the sphere, from one side to the other, because the total atmosphere is too dense. The total atmosphere is composed of three atmospheres: the one we live in is primarily composed of oxygen and nitrogen, the one above it is composed of pure hydrogen, and the third one in the middle is composed of aboron. The shell is one hundred miles thick and made up of seventeen layers. The inner five layers are geologic strata, the middle five are mineral layers, and the outer seven are metallic layers. "The seven metallic

¹⁵Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁶Teed, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 105.

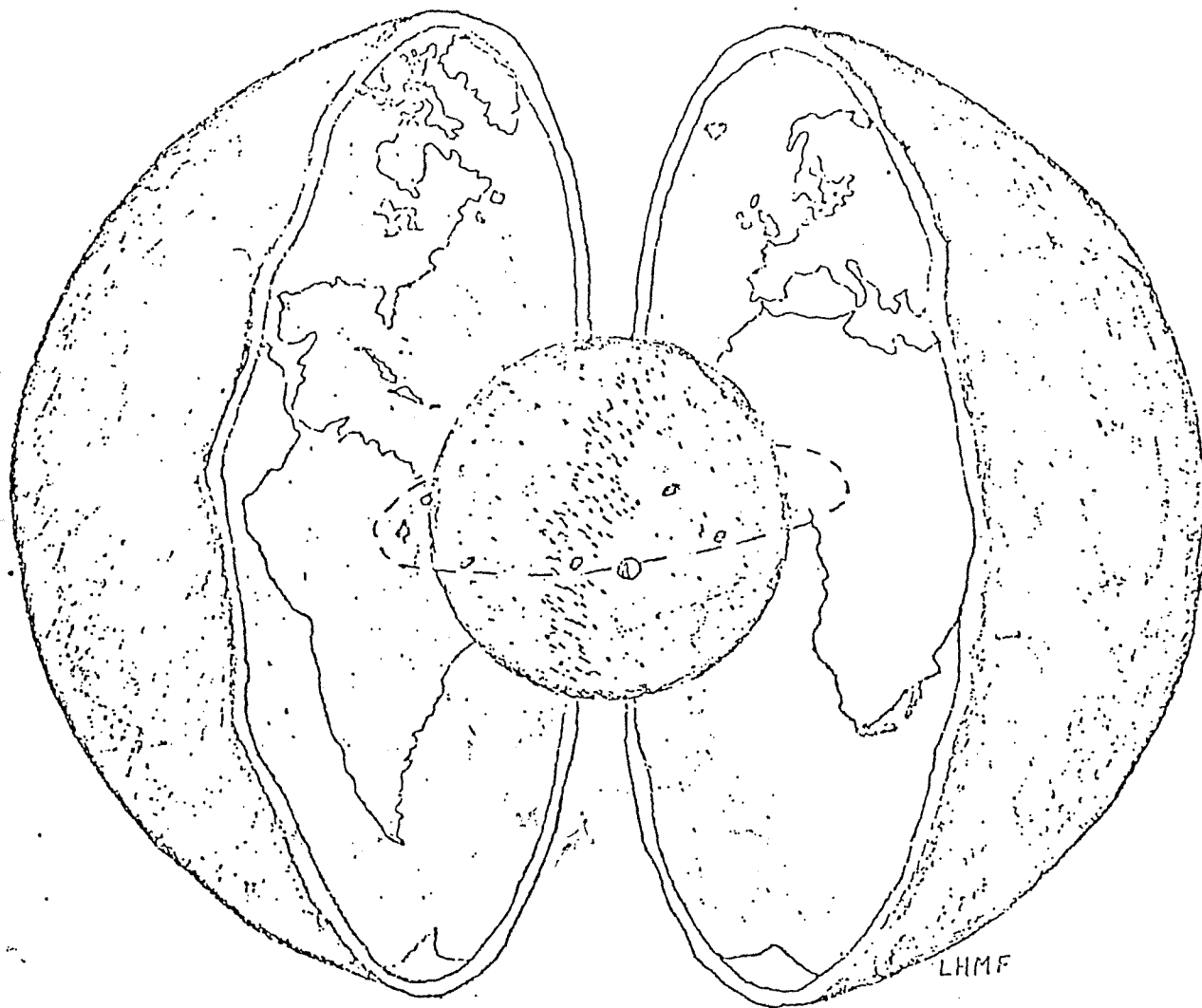


Diagram 2. The Cellular Cosmogony. Adapted from
front leaf of Der Kosmos.

layers or laminae are the seven noble metals, ---gold constituting the outer-most rind of the shell."¹⁷ Outside of the sphere is a simple void.

In 1896, the first experiments were conducted to prove that the earth's surface is concave rather than convex (Diagram 3). The geodetic staff of The Koreshan Unity carried out three experiments in the Chicago area within a month. The experiments were at the following locations: on July 25, 1896, on the Old Illinois and Michigan Drainage Canal from Summit, Illinois, northeast along five miles;¹⁸ on August 16, 1896, at the World's Fair grounds in Chicago extending along the shore of Lake Michigan;¹⁹ and on August 23, 1896, at Rody, Indiana, on the shore of Lake Michigan.²⁰ The chief instrument used in the experiments was the rectilineator, invented by one of the engineers of the staff. This device consisted of a number of sections of three rectangular panels, each of which contained double T-squares set end to end (Diagram 4). These experiments were apparently inconclusive.

The geodetic staff next moved their apparatus to Naples, Florida, on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and on March 18, 1897, began an experiment that did not end until May 11, 1897. Using the rectilineator, the Koreshan scientists constructed a perfectly straight air line over a distance of four and a third miles. At one end the air line was one

¹⁷Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Koresh, and U.G. Morrow, The Cellular Cosmogony; or the Earth a Concave Sphere (Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1905), p. 13.

¹⁸Teed, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 160.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 166.

²⁰Ibid., p. 167. Rody may be a misprint for Roby. "The extreme northwest corner of Hammond bordering on Lake Michigan is known as Roby." Powell A. Moore, The Calumet Region; Indiana's Last Frontier (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1959), p. 109.

hundred and twenty-eight inches in altitude above the datum line, and at the other end the air line was zero inches above or below the datum line.²¹ At one end it was one hundred and twenty-eight inches above the surface of the water, and at the other end it extended into the water. If the earth was convex, the Koreshans reasoned, the second end would not be in the water, but rather, would be higher in altitude than the beginning end. The Koreshans now had evidence that the world was a sphere, that the curvature of the earth was concave, and that the shell bent upward at a rate of one hundred and twenty-eight inches every four and a third miles. The Koreshans now had proof and loudly proclaimed their being scientifically right,²² in a religious-like favour.

3 Secular economy

The Koreshan Unity was to establish its New Jerusalem at Estero, Florida. From New Jerusalem, the Koreshans' system of secular economy would emanate to all parts of the world through its fame and their tract literature. This system of secular economy was an attempt to create, on a larger scale, the communal life of the early Christians of Jerusalem. It was in their New Jerusalem that "the competitive methods will all be overthrown and a thorough substitution of the united life system instituted."²³ The economy based on a theory of socialistic, communistic, and co-operative living, was to be managed

²¹Teed and Morrow, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

²²The result was many large newspaper articles, some being the Louisville Courier-Journal, May 2, 1897, Chicago Times Herald, July 24, 1897 and the Pittsburgh Daily News, May 19, 1897.

²³Frank D. Jackson and Mary Evert Daniels, Koreshan Unity. Communistic and Co-operative Gathering of the People. Bureau of Equitable Commerce (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House. 1895), p. 11.

by the Bureau of Equitable Commerce. Man was seen as a wage slave: "A horde of money kings, with their henching middlemen, absorb and waste the energies of the wage slave living only to eat and sleep."²⁴ They believed the wage slave would rise up in a final strike against the system, and an universal declaration of liberty would ensue together with the reconstruction of society.

The Koreshans followed the maxim that, "'The love of money is the root of all evil'".²⁵ To money, they attributed the problems of the world:

... it is also true that the love of money is the cause of all the degradation that proceeds from the poverty of the masses, consequent upon the tyrannical abuse of that power which labor has placed in the hands of the plutocratic oppressor...we reiterate the urgent annunciation of the twenty-five years of our public work; namely that the axe should be laid at the root of the tree, and the love of money be destroyed by the destruction of the necessity for its use. ...With the destruction of the money power will come the destruction of the wage system. This is the root of human degradation.²⁶

Money was to be eliminated, with the labor check or accountant method being substituted. A man's industry was to be calculated in units of labor and these units were to be entered on the books of the Bureau. The Bureau was to control "the universal exchange departments in regulation of supply and demand,"²⁷ and was to see that each individual's needs were met (from a cup of peanuts to a mansion), based on their accumulation of industrial credits.

Public administration of the community would be financed by a graduated income tax. The more labor credits one accumulated the

²⁴Ibid., p. 3.

²⁵Ibid., p. 5.

²⁶Ibid., p. 5-6.

²⁷Ibid., p. 10.

the percentage of income tax one would pay. Deceiving the tax collector would not be possible, as all labor credits would only exist and would always be recorded on the records of the Bureau.²⁸ Income tax would be collected by the collector by merely subtracting the appropriate number of labor credits from an individual account at the Bureau.

The amount of a man's assets, which he gave to The Koreshan Unity upon becoming a member, was not to give him any more or less credit on the books of the Bureau than any other member. The resources of each member were to be used to the fullest advantage of the community. An individual could join the secular order of The Koreshan Unity without embracing the religious beliefs of the Koreshans. If such a member later withdrew from the community, he was to receive the amount of his assets upon entering when he left.²⁹

In the comptroller of the secular economy, the Bureau of Equitable Commerce, both men and women stood together as equals. Races were also considered equal and the New Jerusalem was "to become a point for the aggregation of eight or ten millions of people, black and white...."³⁰

4. Social theory; woman's rights

For the Koreshans, God was biune, being both male and female. Womanhood originally before the fall had the same power as man. After the fall women were subjected to the domination of men, but through Koreshanity were to be restored to their rightful place in society.³¹ Koresh, as the new Messiah, proclaimed an end to the subjugation of women.

²⁸Ibid., p. 11.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 6.

³¹Annie G. Ordway, pseud. Victoria Gratia, Woman's Restoration to Her Rightful Dominion (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1900).

To the woman of this nineteenth century be it announced, that you are divinely authorized to mount upon the wall the ramparts of the citadel of immortal life, and from these heights, and from thy lips, and from between thy teeth pronounce the lifting of thy curse. It was said of old, because of thy fall, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee;" but now, by the authority of the Most High God, thou are commanded, O, woman, to lift thy hand to him and swear by his Most August Majesty, and by his throne, that the desecration of maternity shall hence-forth cease.³²

Koresh saw women as being tied down by maternity due to the sexual desires of man. He stood strongly against sexual intercourse for pleasure and that if it should be engaged in at all it should be for procreation. Instead, he felt the energies from sexual drives should be channeled into other areas of life. "The wild, lustful, and dissipating pleasures of sexuality have blinded the human mind to the sanctity of the potencies of proliferation and the higher uses to which the hidden energies of being should be devoted."³³

Woman had the right to deny men sensual indulgence.³⁴ She also had the right to her own religious conviction.³⁵ In the same way that American independence did not result from appeals to the British Parliament, so the independence of the American woman would not result from an appeal to men. By denying their husbands sexual pleasures, women could achieve their emancipation.³⁶

In the Koreshan system, women were treated as equals to men.³⁷ Koresh had a "dual-associate", Victoria Gratia, who was his co-leader.

³²Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Koresh, Proclamation and Judgment (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, ca. 1892), p. 2.

³³Ibid., p. 7.

³⁴Ibid., p. 11.

³⁵Ibid., p. 12.

³⁶Ibid., p. 13.

³⁷Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Cyrus, Koreshan Science and Its Application to Life (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1889), p. 40.

7 After his death she was destined to lead the 144,000 Sons of God.³⁸ If women were to be treated as equal to men then they must be allowed the same opportunities. One of the early managers of the Guiding Star Publishing House was a woman, Evelyn Bubbett. Other women took part in running The Koreshan Unity while others worked in various activities, such as teaching and printing. In Chicago, the Koreshans went out of their way to attract women to the movement by the establishment of a Woman's Mission.

In The Koreshan Unity, women were given the equality that they were fighting for in the society around them.³⁹ They were an integral part of the structure of the Unity and had a strong voice in the decision-making process as members of the Planetary and Signet Chambers of the leadership structure.

5. Structure of The Koreshan Unity

The structure of The Koreshan Unity can best be understood as being of two dimensions. One dimension involves the levels of membership. The second dimension is the Order of Koresh which contains the four functional departments, Church Triumphant, College of Life, Society Arch-Triumphant and White Horse Army. The level of a person's membership determined one's status in the community. A person's work activities were determined by his ability and interest and hence what department he worked

³⁸Teed, Immortal Manhood, p. 98.

³⁹This may be reason for the often reported high percentage of female members in various popular accounts. This author suggests that the sexes were probably nearly even in number during most of the history, e.g., for adult male members see "List of Qualified Voters", Fort Myers Press, October 20, 1910, p. 3, col. 3 and for adult female members see "An Appeal to the Voters of Lee County from the Good Women of the County", Fort Myers Press, October 27, 1910, p. 8, col. 1-2.

*evidence for
1910-1911*

in, e.g., a teacher would work in the College of Life.

The Koreshan community was comprised of three ascending levels of membership: the investigative, the marital and the celibate-communal. The investigative level was the third and most secular order which included the co-operative economic relation to the community and the common marital state.

All persons whose morals are not objectionable may unite with this order, on the basis that industry shall constitute the right to an equitable share in the production of the industrial unity of the organization. The object of this order is to provide for all who wish employment, education, and the resources of industry in equitable share, the wealth of the vidual being proportionate to the mass, --- industry and economy being the assurance of abundance.⁴⁰

The second level was the marital order, a system of monogamy in accord with the laws of the state and nation. This level, while giving members a higher status than those members of the investigative court, still allowed marriage. But there was a basic limitation, for "no member of the order shall violate the true principle of propogative law by prostituting the marital act. Any other purpose than that of propogation is a prostitution of the act, and a violation of the true natural marriage."⁴¹

The first, and highest level was the celibate-communal leve. Professor U. G. Morrow, a leading Koreshan, wrote concerning this level what follows: "The sexes are separate. The purest ideals of life are constantly inculcated. Celibacy is maintained as a stepping-stone to

⁴⁰Frank D. Jackson and Mary Evert Daniels, Koreshan Unity. Communistic and Co-operative Gathering of the People. Bureau of Equitable Commerce (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1895), p. 17.

⁴¹Jackson and Daniels, op. cit., p. 16.

higher natural and mental states. The communistic order is comprised of celibates."⁴² In Estero, men and women lived in separate buildings and there were apparently no children born to the community members. It has been basically the members of this group, who have lived first at the Chicago and then at the Estero community. It is uncertain whether there were ever any members in the other levels of membership.

The church or ecclesiastical system, called the Church Triumphant, is one of the four distinct departments of the Order of Koresh. It was to this department that the leaders of Koreshanity have belonged. "During the history of the Koreshan movement only the Church Triumphant, the church leaders, represented the celibate order."⁴³ The department had a definite leadership structure. The highest level was the central duality, which during their lifetime, was composed of Koresh and Victoria Gratia. Seven women were members of the Planetary Chamber, four men were members of the Stellar Chamber, and six men and six women were members of the Signet Chamber. The names of the chambers were apparently patterned from aspects of the cellular cosmogony.

The college system, known as the College of Life, was made up of teachers and students. While in Chicago, The World's College of Life advertised in a leaflet that, "the principles of the 'Metaphysical' or 'Mental Healing' Department, are given in a course of twelve lectures, embracing one month, for \$50."⁴⁴ These lectures were known as a full course in Psycho-Pneumic Therapeutics.

⁴²William A. Hinds, American Communities and Co-operative Colonies. 3rd ed. (Chicago: Kerr and Company, 1903), p. 474.

⁴³In correspondence from Miss H. Michel, President of The Koreshan Unity, July 26, 1967.

⁴⁴Metaphysics (leaflet) (Chicago: hand dated, June 11, 1887). In the Chicago Historical Society Library.

On May 31, 1893, Koreshan University was registered as a corporation in the office of the State Secretary at Chicago, Cook County, Illinois. Among its objects were the teaching of the academic and scientific subjects and Koreshan theology. The university soon moved to Estero where it became known as Pioneer University. James A. McCoy reported the following concerning its curriculum at Estero. "About one-half of the courses were: Cosmogony, Osteopathy, Dentistry, History and Ethnology, and Higher Mathematics from the Koreshan standpoint. Two courses were offered in Art, and the remainder, approximately one-third of all academic courses, were devoted to music."⁴⁵ This emphasis on education, and in particular music, resulted in the Koreshans developing a popular symphony orchestra and band.

The third department of the Order of Koresh is the Society Arch-Triumphant, the department of secular uses. This secular society comprised the general membership of The Koreshan Unity, and it was also the body that a prospective member had to join first. Few demands were placed on members other than that they try to follow the moral norms of the Universology.

We will not tolerate whiskey, beer, tobacco, and opium, nor the vices which usually accompany these factors in commerce...It must not be inferred... that we reject applicants on these grounds. People may bring their evil habits into the outer courts of the Koreshan System, for we must receive mankind as we find it; but it is the determination---through the all-pervasive potency of a new force in the government of man--to revolutionize their social lives for the kingdom of righteousness...Any person of moral character may enter the secular society...It does not require money to join. All we demand is the purpose and ability to be useful. We have a membership fee of two dollars per year, but this is expected only from such as are able to pay, and desire so to do for the purpose of facilitating the progress of the work.⁴⁶

⁴⁵The American Eagle, XIV (Estero, Fla.: July 1966), 15, p. 2.

⁴⁶Jackson and Daniels, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

It was not necessary for members of the Society Arch-Triumphant to believe in the scientific-philosophic or theological beliefs of Koreshan Universology, but rather only in the economic aspects as promulgated by the Bureau of Equitable Commerce.

A fourth department may have existed but was, in any event, to be of a temporary nature. It was called the White Horse Army and served as the military arm of the Koreshan system. It was to be disbanded after the great battle of Armageddon when the Koreshans would triumph over hell and death. To the Army belonged all those "who will voluntarily place themselves under military discipline and authority for the Propaganda of the Koreshan doctrine."⁴⁷ The Army was an indication of the war-like zeal that the Koreshans displayed while tackling the problems of life.

6. Koreshan Universology

Dr. Teed was a prolific writer and an imaginative thinker. Throughout the years he developed a complete system of thought and interpretation of life and the universe which he called Koreshan Universology. Within this system can be found a composite theology, scientific worldview, social and economic theory and the organizational structure of The Koreshan Unity.

The basis of the system is a literal interpretation of the Bible. In the Bible can be found that the world was created in the hollow of the hand and so Teed interpreted this as meaning we live on the inside surface of a hollow sphere which led to his theory of cellular cosmogony. God was seen as (dual) male and female and so men and women were equal.

⁴⁷Cyrus R. Teed, pseud. Koresh, Proclamation and Judgment (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, ca. 1892), p. 8.

The early Christians at Jerusalem lived communally and so the Koreshans believed that economics and life should be patterned in the same way. The structure of the Unity reflected the male-female duality of the God they believed in. Koreshan Universology was an organic and closed system of belief.

CHAPTER V

AFTERWORD

1. Estero 1910-1955

In the years after the death of Dr. Teed, there were no original developments in Koreshan Universology or in the community. Hence only a cursory account follows of the intervening years from Teed's death to the present.

Koresh was the creative force of the community. His personality had given the community continual motivation and drive to succeed but in his absence human nature took its course. With no strong leader to succeed Koresh, the community faltered for many years. Soon after his death a number of members left.¹ Among those leaving were Mrs. Ordway and Dr. Graves, who married and then went to live in St. Petersburg.² The relative prosperity of the community continued. The community "added an electric light plant, a wood-working plant, a machine shop, laundry and bakery to the list of its enterprises. A part of its beach land was developed and sold."³ From 1909 through to the 1930's few new members joined.

The 1930's were hard years. The orchestra did not appear after 1935 and the last of the annual music concerts was held in 1939. Membership had fallen from about two hundred in 1908 to about forty in the late 1930's. The war approached but the Koreshans were too

¹Some left and formed a splinter group, The Order of Theocracy, in Fort Myers.

²Part of the information for this section is from a conversation between the author and Miss Hedwig Michel, President of The Koreshan Unity, February 27, 1971, in Estero.

³Karl A. Bickel, The Mangrove Coast; The Story of the West Coast of Florida (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1942), p. 273.

old to fight. Because of the war, however, the Koreshans were to gain a new member who was to open the fourth chapter in the history of The Koreshan Unity.

In Germany about 1938, a private school administrator active in the arts was introduced to Koreshan Universology by Peter Bender, a mathematics teacher in her school. As she was Jewish, life was becoming difficult for her in Germany. When she received a visa, Peter Bender contacted the Koreshans in Florida. On May 30, 1940, Miss Hedwig Michel arrived in Fort Myers to begin life again.

Admission into the Koreshan Unity involved a waiting period of at least six months. With the aid of a Koreshan friend and the selling of sandwiches, Miss Michel waited until she was eligible to enter. She entered the Unity in December 1940. Skilled as a botanist, she voluntarily filed and labelled two hundred trees in two weeks. The beautiful botanical gardens developed by the early community members were again to be well cared for. In April of 1941, she began work in the Koreshan general store on the highway. During the war, co-operation with merchants in Fort Myers was outstanding. Through hard work, the store gained a reputation for having everything. After the war, part of the store was made into a restaurant.

The late 1940's saw dissension growing among the elderly members of the community. When about a dozen members were left, one group took legal action against another. By mid-1950 the legal action was over as the litigants were no longer available, old age had taken its toll. The now unproductive communal land holdings had risen in value and so had the taxes. There was little money but the cozeners came

to prey upon the land. In 1949, publication of The American Eagle ended. Shortly afterwards, the publishing house and corporation office burnt down. Many valuable records and possibly the only copies of Koreshan literature were thought lost. (Later, in 1963, Miss Michel found a military box trunk which contained copies of much of this material). Through the years some of the many minor fires of Lee County hit the Koreshan property. The property had become run down, yet there was hope.

Miss Michel returned to Germany in 1954 to arrange for war reparations and pension. In 1955 she received compensation. A new chapter was to be written in the history of The Koreshan Unity.

2. Influences

Throughout the years the Koreshan Unity has had far reaching but transitory influence on many people. In North America it attracted followers from many locales: Among them were Denver, Boston, Pittsburgh, Alleghany, Pennsylvania (where they published the monthly Salvator and Scientist) and Blackie, Alberta, Canada. During the experiments of 1897 and again with the founder's death, the national press gave the Koreshans prominence. Sometimes the coverage was complimentary; more often it was critical and sensational. Near Bristol, Tennessee, a branch community existed during 1907-1909.⁴ Here the Koreshans owned and ran a furniture factory that produced basically wicker furniture, including the Ordway Rocker. Another branch may have existed in Washington, D.C., about the same time.

⁴Correspondence from Mrs. Frank W. Defriece, a Sullivan County historian, Bristol, Tennessee, July 22, 1968, based on a search of Deed records.

In Lee County, Florida, The Koreshans left their mark. The community from its inception practised equality of the sexes and advocated equal rights for women. It was instrumental in the incorporation of Estero as a town. The group, with its publications and its Progressive Liberty Party, was a major factor in Lee County politics in the election of 1906. The Koreshan Band and Orchestra gave concerts for many years over southern Florida. Concerts were also staged at Estero, for neighboring residents and tourists. Among the accomplishments of the Koreshans can be found the introduction of several tropical and sub-tropical plants from around the world. The Cajuput and Eucalyptus trees from Australia may be an example of Koreshan resourcefulness. The Cajuput, a self-seeding tree, has since gone native to the area, resulting in forest where there was previously brush. Their work in horticulture brought them many friends including Henry Nehrling (1853-1929), a noted Florida naturalist, whom Miss Michel calls "The Patron Saint of Florida Gardens".

Before the Second World War a group was formed in Germany. The group still exists and although it has virtually no connection with the community in Estero. It has a similar scientific view of the world which is based on Koreshan measurements. One notable difference, however, is that in the center is a hollow heavenly sphere and the planets are smaller hollow spheres revolving around the heavenly sphere. They do not believe in the religious-cultural tenets of Koreshanity. This group publishes a monthly German-language newsletter at Munich, Germany, called Der Kosmos.

In later years the Koreshans kept to themselves and fought no battles.

They live quietly and at peace with their neighbors and the world. No member of the Koreshan sect ever burned an obdurate fellow-man at the stake for refusing to accept Dr. Teed's conclusions as to the hollow nature of our allegedly whirling sphere. No howling group of gesticulating Koreshans ever screamed about a bonfire made of books which do not concur in Dr. Teed's conclusions as to the inherent poison in the competitive system or the advantage of collective ownership. Perhaps tolerance is the key to their modest growth.⁵

They were an island of culture in the Florida frontier.

Activity began again in 1955. With an income from Miss Michel's war reparations, work began on a small scale to repair the buildings. Plans progressed concerning the future of their extensive land holdings. On November 24, 1961, The Koreshan Unity, Inc. through its President, Miss Hedwig Michel and its Board of Directors donated about three hundred and five acres to the State of Florida for the creation of the Koreshan State Park.⁶

In May 1965, The American Eagle under the editorship of Miss Hedwig Michel, again began publication as a horticultural conservation monthly newspaper with the byline, "For The Wise Use of Natural Resources". In 1965, The Koreshan Unity deeded eighty acres to The Nature Conservancy for a nature preserve. In April 1967, the Koreshan State Park was opened after the State of Florida had commenced work on restoration of the historic buildings.

The Koreshan Unity has had a relatively long life for a nineteenth century utopian community. It grew in strength from its beginnings

⁵Bickel, op. cit., pp. 273-274.

⁶Hedwig Michel, A Gift to the People (Estero, Fla.: The Koreshan Unity, 1962), p. 7.

in Moravia, New York, until its founder died in Estero, Florida. While Dr. Teed lived, there was a creative development of the community and its beliefs. After his death, with no one to replace him the community lost its momentum, and faltered. With the growing interest of government, the community property became a recreational, historical and educational site.

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