

THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

THE KORESHAN UNITY IN FLORIDA

1894-1910

BY

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PREFACE

The Koreshan Unity, a post-Christian community of religious socialists, came to Florida in 1894, cleared land near the Estero River, built an experimental utopian town and began to prosper, then suffered a disaster from which it never fully recovered. The Unity's activities in Florida during the dynamic years of growth, and the disaster and its immediate consequences, are the subject of this essay.

A number of people assisted me in this study. My indebtedness to them can only be inadequately expressed. Nevertheless: Mrs. Mildred Merrick originally suggested the topic and contributed to every phase of my research. Miss Hedwig Michel, president of the Koreshan Unity, Incorporated, kindly allowed me to read many books and documents in Unity archives and graciously consented to interviews. Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau, who guided my research and writing, helped me in a thousand ways. Others to whom I am indebted include: Dr. C. Harold King, Dr. James W. Foley, and Mrs. Alice G. Palm, members of my thesis committee; Mr. David T. Alexander, director of the Historical Museum of Southern Florida; Miss Elizabeth Alexander, librarian of the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History;

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INTRODUCTION

"The accentuation of character called eccentricity of genius is generally a normal departure from the artificial deformities of social etiquette with which the fashionable world labels its accepted associates."¹

--Koresh

Fort Myers, 1906

Five passengers from Baltimore were among those on board the train which pulled into Fort Myers, Florida, on the afternoon of October 13, 1906.² Their final destination was Estero, sixteen miles further south, but at that time the Atlantic Coast Line's tracks ended at Fort Myers, and the last part of their journey was to be made by boat.

The five passengers were members of the Koreshan

¹The Immortal Manhood (3rd ed.; Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1931), p. 106.

²The information contained in this section is taken, except as noted, from affidavits sworn by Drs. Cyrus R. Teed and C. Addison Graves, Messers W. Ross Wallace, Claude J. Rahn, and Rollin W. Gray, and Masters Roland Sander and George Henry Danner, in the American Eagle (Estero, Florida), November 8, 1906, Supplement, pp. 1-2. /The American Eagle will hereafter be cited as AE./

Unity, a religious and fraternal commonwealth which had incorporated the town of Estero as the headquarters of its socialistic experiment, and the boat on which they planned to travel was owned in common, as were all material things, by the Unity. The party consisted of Mrs. Elizabeth Rahn, a woman of about seventy, her son Henry N. Rahn, her twenty-one year old grandson Claude J. Rahn, and two boys of fifteen and fourteen, Roland Sander and George Henry Danner. This was the first trip to Florida for each of them, but they had written ahead to Estero and expected to be met at Fort Myers. The three boys planned to join the Koreshan community; Henry Rahn, the Unity's representative in Baltimore, expected to stay at Estero with his mother for only a few weeks.

The train arrived at about one-thirty and the boys recognized Richard Jentsch, another young Koreshan, who was waiting for them on the platform. The party descended from the train and were introduced by Jentsch to Dr. C. Addison Graves, the mayor of Estero. After collecting their hand baggage they set out for the Hill House Hotel in the center of town, Dr. Graves conducting Mrs. Rahn and her son, Jentsch taking in charge the three boys.

After walking two blocks they came upon a crowd gathering in the street before R. W. Gilliam's grocery store. In the middle of the crowd a bareheaded man in light clothing

yelled, "Don't you call me a liar." He seemed to be yelling at a stocky man who was wearing glasses and was dressed in a black suit and hat. He shouted, then hit the bespectacled man three times in the face with his clenched fist. The man in black quickly moved toward his assailant, putting up his hands to protect his face, but he did not strike back.

Richard Jentsch, followed almost immediately by Claude Rahn, sprang forward into the crowd. They had quickly realized that the man in black was Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, founder and Prime Counselor of the Koreshan Unity, and they were anxious to defend the man whose teachings, so they believed, would lead them to immortal life. Jentsch, attempting to prevent a further attack on Dr. Teed, struck the bareheaded man, J. I. Sellers, and was then himself struck down by blows from the surrounding crowd. Claude Rahn, while trying to separate Sellers and Dr. Teed, was hit in the mouth by a stranger. George Danner, seeing this, dropped his valise, ran forward, kicked Claude Rahn's attacker, and then retreated. The man yelled, "Grab the kid." Someone did, and Danner was knocked into the crowd.

Roland Sander, who also recognized Dr. Teed, was pushed into the crowd as people milled about. His valise was pulled from his hand and thrown in the street; when a

stranger asked him if he were a Koreshan and he answered "Yes," he received a blow in the face which sent him sprawling to the gutter. From there he saw Sellers draw a knife on Dr. Teed, but another man seized Sellers' arm and forced him to put the knife away.

The town marshal of Fort Myers, S. W. Sanchez, who had been standing no more than three feet from Sellers and Dr. Teed, but who had not hindered Sellers' attack, is reported to have then seized the doctor by his coat and to have said, "You struck him and called him a liar."

"I did not strike him," Dr. Teed replied, "nor call him a liar."

Thereupon Marshal Sanchez is said to have replied, "Don't you tell me you did not strike him," while at the same time giving Dr. Teed a slap which dislodged his glasses. The marshal then took hold of the doctor and Claude Rahn, telling them that they were under arrest. Before he could proceed, he was hit in the face by Richard Jentsch who had freed himself from the crowd. Felling Jentsch by four or five blows with his billy-club, the marshal was then heard to say, "You hit me again and I will kill you."

Dr. Graves, who had witnessed this scene with Mrs. and Mr. Rahn, hurried his charges down the street into a

store as the crowd began to attack Richard Jentsch and his defenders. The free-for-all was short-lived, however. Henry Rahn collected the boys and took them to the Hill House. Dr. Teed, Richard Jentsch, and another Koreshan, W. Ross Wallace, were arrested and forced to post ten dollars bond each against an appearance in Fort Myers municipal court.³

They did not, however, appear in court the following Monday,⁴ but in neither Estero nor in Fort Myers was the incident in the street forgotten. Nor should the attack on Dr. Cyrus Teed--who, in his capacity as leader of the Unity, called himself "Koresh"--be forgotten in any consideration of the history of the Koreshan Unity. The attack foreshadowed and caused an event which was to be the turning point in the history of the Koreshan Unity at Estero.

Beginnings

Cyrus R. Teed was born in Delaware County, New York, in 1839. Although he once listed his middle name as Romulus,⁵

³"Teed Starts a Street Fight," Fort Myers Press, October 17, 1906, p. 7.

⁴Ibid.

⁵George Frederick Tuttle, The Descendants of William and Elizabeth Tuttle (Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle and Company,

he later decided upon the use of a family name, Read, and customarily used the initial letter R in signing his name. His birth date is also unclear. He once listed it as July 3,⁶ but later in life celebrated the anniversary on October 18.⁷

Cyrus was the second son and second child of the eight children of Jesse R. Teed and Sarah Ann Tuttle Teed of Moravia, New York. Jesse, a farmer and inventor, and his wife both sprang from educated, mildly-distinguished pioneer stock.⁸ Shortly after the birth of Cyrus, the family moved to just outside Utica, New York; at the age of eleven, according to later Koreshan tradition, little Cyrus left school and took a job on the nearby Erie Canal.⁹

1883), p. 256. (Courtesy of the Newberry Library, Chicago, and the Utica Public Library, Utica, N.Y.) Dr. Teed supplied the compiler of the book with the record of himself and his family. Hereafter cited as Tuttle, *Descendants*.⁷

⁶Ibid.

⁷"Solar Festival at Estero," AE, October 24, 1907, p. 1.

⁸Tuttle, Descendants, p. 256.

⁹Carl Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1949 [1965]), p. 266; John S. Duss, The Harmonists: A Personal History (Harrisburg, Penn.: The Pennsylvania Book Service, 1943), p. 297. Mr. Duss was Trustee (president) of the Harmony Society from 1890 to 1903 and a friend of Dr. Teed and of the Koreshan Unity for many years. Hereafter cited as Duss, *Harmonists*.⁷

While still a boy, Cyrus is reported to have exhibited a precocity of feelings and a desire to help his fellow men. Urged to join the ministry of his parents' Baptist faith,¹⁰ Cyrus initially chose instead the study of medicine. Ultimately he combined science with religion and founded a new church.

This fusion of faith and science was not surprising. Cyrus, born and brought up in that district called "burnt" or "burned-over," could hardly have been immune to the effects of the religious excitements which had so often swept like fire across the region. Running westward from upstate Vermont across New York from Albany to Buffalo, the Burned-Over district had fathered or fostered a variety of original faiths and cults.¹¹ Among the leaders of these movements were John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Perfectionists at Putney, Vermont, and Oneida, New York; the Fox sisters, mediums through whom spirits rapped messages;¹² Joseph Smith, to whom the golden plates of the Book of Mormon were given;¹³

¹⁰Claude J. Rahn, "Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology," AE, March, 1967, p. 7.

¹¹Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 68-69.

¹²Ibid., p. 69.

¹³Ibid., pp. 88-91.

and Thomas Lake Harris, founder of the Brotherhood of the New Life.¹⁴

The years of Cyrus's youth were also a time of growing public excitement over the new wonders of science. Practical inventors and pure scientists were together introducing to America such servants as the telegraph, vulcanized rubber, and long-distance railroading. There was a growing interest within American universities in the natural sciences, including--not incidental to Cyrus Teed's ultimate theory of the cosmos--the beginnings, at Harvard, of scientific study of astronomy.¹⁵ Conversely, the quality of American physicians and medical science declined between 1830 and the Civil War.¹⁶ But it is hardly uncommon for a bright young American to enter a field in which considerable advancement is both possible and needed.

Cyrus began his medical studies with his uncle, Dr.

¹⁴Robert V. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 12.

¹⁵Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 209-217; Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of the American People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 533-536.

¹⁶Morison, The Oxford History of the American People, pp. 473-474.

Samuel F. Teed of Utica, in 1859.¹⁷ In that year he also married a distant cousin, Delia M. Row, of Meredeth, New York. A son, Douglas Arthur, was born the next year.¹⁸ Cyrus moved his family to New York City in 1862,¹⁹ later joining the Union Army in which he served for fifteen months.²⁰ After the end of the war he attended the Eclectic Medical College of New York City,²¹ graduating in February, 1868. Returning to Deerfield, near Utica, he began the practice of eclectic medicine, a discipline which includes the use of many diverse remedies and herb cures.²²

In Deerfield Dr. Teed set up an "electro-alchemical" laboratory in which to conduct experiments in the transmutation (or "reciprocal interchange") of matter and energy. It was his theory that the two are different forms of one substance. Proving the truth of such a theory would, he hoped,

¹⁷Tuttle, Descendants, p. 256; Rahn, "Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology."

¹⁸Tuttle, Descendants, pp. 256-257. Mrs. Teed has also been referred to as "Fidelia."

¹⁹Rahn, "Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology."

²⁰Tuttle, Descendants, p. 256; Duss, Harmonists, p. 297.

²¹Tuttle, Descendants, p. 256.

²²Rahn, "Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology."

help him in the practice of medicine by showing him a way of winning "victory over death."²³

In the autumn of 1869, alone in his laboratory late one night, Dr. Teed succeeded in discovering--so he later claimed--the secret of "transforming matter of one kind to its equivalent energy, and in reducing this energy, through polaric influence, to matter of another kind":²⁴ "The 'philosopher's stone' had been discovered, and I was the humble instrument for the exploitation of so magnitudinous a result."²⁵

This discovery proved, he later said, that the universe is all of one substance--limited, integral, balanced, "constantly regenerating itself from and in itself"--originating in and returning to one center: God.²⁶

²³Koresh Cyrus R. Teed, The Illumination of Koresh (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, ca. 1900), pp. 17-4. Dr. Teed did not immediately inform his family or friends--so far as is known--of his illumination, nor did he publish his account of the experience until several years had passed.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 17, 5.

²⁵Ibid., p. 6. Dr. Teed is elsewhere quoted as saying that: "Knowledge is power; and the knowledge of the universe at once puts into the hand of the Discoverer, the supreme power over the world of mind and matter. It is the key to all realms of thought--the Philosopher's Stone." See: Richard S. Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity: An Economic History of a Communistic Experiment in Florida" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Florida, 1928), p. 10.

²⁶Ibid.

Deity, if this be the term employed to designate the Supreme Source of being and activity, cannot be comprehended until the structure and function of the universe are absolutely known; hence mankind is ignorant of God until his handiwork is accurately deciphered. Yet to know God, who, though unknown by the world is not 'unknowable,' is the supreme demand of all intellectual research and development.

If we accept the logical deduction of the fallacious Copernican system of astronomy, we conclude the universe to be illimitable and incomprehensible, and its cause equally so; therefore, not only would the universe be forever beyond the reach of the intellectual perspective of human aspiration and effort, but God himself would be beyond the pale of our conception, and therefore beyond our adoration.

The Koreshan Cosmogony reduces the universe to proportionate limits, and its cause within the comprehension of the human mind. It demonstrates the possibility of the attainment of man to his supreme inheritance, the ultimate dominion of the universe, thus restoring him to the acme of exaltation,--the throne of the Eternal, whence he had his origin.²⁷

The limitation of the universe was defined in the same place in an axiom: "Form is a fundamental property of existence; therefore, that which has not form has no existence. Limitation is a property of form. The universe has existence; therefore it has form, hence it has limitation."²⁸

On the night of his discovery in 1869, elated because

²⁷Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], in Koresh and U. G. Morrow, The Cellular Cosmogony, or, The Earth a Concave Sphere (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1898), pp. 6-7. [Hereafter cited as Cellular Cosmogony.]

²⁸Ibid., p. 15.

of the success of his experiment, Dr. Teed felt that he could cause God the Father to appear before him in bodily form. Concentrating upon this thought, he fell into a trance. Strange sensations affected his brain as he moved into a state of disembodied ecstasy. Soft, sweet music sounded as though from a thousand miles away. A feminine voice, that of the Divine Motherhood, began to speak, telling him that she had, though a virgin, borne him and that she was both his mother and his bride "from which the Sons of God shall spring into visible creation."²⁹ She told him that she had nurtured and supported him through countless incarnations, and that he was now at the end of his transmigrations: "The broken continuity of perpetual dying is gone from thee forever."³⁰

Then, appearing to Cyrus in an aurora of purple and gold light, the Divine and beautiful Mother revealed to him the duality of the parental God (i.e., God the Father-and-Mother in one). She also told him that he had been chosen to redeem the race and that, although his struggle in this would be difficult, she would lead and assist him in the future by again assuming mortal form and joining him in the

²⁹Koresh, The Illumination of Koresh, pp. 6-12.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 10-12.

world. Adding that the light of Jesus's life was to be considered truth and a model of earthly perfection, she turned, and Dr. Teed fell deeper into the trance.³¹

The vision and trance-state at an end, Cyrus returned to his home and slept for two hours. Upon arising he heard the sound of a hurricane and the voice of chariot wheels in the night. These sounds were twice repeated. When silence returned, Dr. Teed began to hear delicate, rhythmic murmurings. Slowly these sounds revealed to him, by gradual unfolding over a period of time, "the mystery of Immortal Life."³²

Although the period of time necessary for the complete unfolding of the mystery is not formally recorded, Dr. Teed continued to write and lecture on the subject, explaining and elaborating, for the rest of his life, and major works from his pen appeared regularly for at least thirty years after the vision. In the meantime, while continuing the practice of medicine, Dr. Teed began to spread word of the prophecy with which he had been favored. His patients did not generally, however, accept his combination of physical and spiritual healing, so he began to move from town to town

³¹Ibid., pp. 14-18.

³²Ibid., pp. 18-22.

in New York State. Ridiculed by the public, estranged from his wife, he gathered few disciples during the 1870s.³³

Among the conversions he did effect in that period, the most important were those of Dr. and Mrs. A. W. K. Andrews of Binghamton, New York. They aided Dr. Teed in establishing a society of communists in Moravia, New York,³⁴ which was later moved, with the doctor's practice, to Sandy Creek. In both towns they issued a periodical which was generally referred to in later years as the Herald³⁵ but which was apparently published under several names including the Herald, the Herald of the New Covenant and the Herald of the Messenger of the New Covenant of the New Jerusalem.³⁶

Doctors Teed and Andrews corresponded with the trustees of the Harmony Society at Economy, Pennsylvania, during

³³Laurence W. Bubbett, Biographical Sketch of Dr. Cyrus Read Teed (Koresh) (leaflet, Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, n.d.), p. 27; Duss, Harmonists, pp. 297-298.

³⁴Duss, Harmonists, p. 299; "Sure He is the Prophet Cyrus," New York Times, August 10, 1884, p. 1.

³⁵Rahn, "Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology."

³⁶Ibid.; Duss, Harmonists, p. 299; "Sure He is the Prophet Cyrus," New York Times, August 10, 1884, p. 1. This writer has not seen copies of the Herald.

the 1870s, and visited Economy in 1878 in order to study the organization of that successful socialistic community.³⁷ Dr. Teed moved to Syracuse, New York, early in the 1880s, to join in a lucrative medical practice with his youngest brother, Dr. Oliver F. Teed. Cyrus, who had begun publicly referring to himself as the Biblical Prophet Cyrus, there began receiving the national notoriety which was to follow him until his death. In an article appearing on the first page of the New York Times on August 10, 1884,³⁸ it was alleged that he had gained a large amount of money from a female patient by posing as a "Second Christ." Dr. Teed is reported to have defended himself against the charge by saying that indeed he was not a second Christ but, rather, the prophet Cyrus, a fact which he could prove.³⁹

Dr. Teed and his band of disciples moved on to New York City from whence, in 1886, he was called to Chicago to address a convention of the National Association of Mental Science meeting in that city. So impressive was his eloquence upon that occasion that he was elected president of the organization. Deciding to remain in Chicago, Dr. Teed quickly

³⁷Duss, Harmonists, p. 299.

³⁸"Sure He is the Prophet Cyrus," New York Times, p. 1.

³⁹Ibid.

began gathering converts in increasing numbers.⁴⁰ A church and an educational institution were organized in the fall of 1886, and a magazine, the Guiding Star, began to appear in December.⁴¹ The church was initially named the Assembly of the Covenant, or Church Triumphant;⁴² the educational institution, called the World's College of Life, was "essentially a school of metaphysics" teaching mental healing and "the science of Immortal Life."⁴³

The Society Arch Triumphant, "a sort of vestibule or porch to the church" into which prospective members of the church itself might be taken, was organized by early 1887.⁴⁴ Mrs. Annie G. Ordway, perhaps most important among Dr. Teed's converts, became president of the Society Arch Triumphant, and soon rose in the hierarchy of Dr. Teed's church to assume the position of dual associate prophesied by the Divine Motherhood in 1869.⁴⁵ The duality and equality of divine and earthly

⁴⁰Bubbett, Biographical Sketch of Dr. Cyrus Read Teed, p. 27; Duss, Harmonists, p. 299.

⁴¹Guiding Star, I, 1 (December 1886).

⁴²Ibid., 3 (February 1, 1887), p. 23.

⁴³Ibid., 1 (December 1, 1886), p. 15.

⁴⁴Ibid., 3 (February 1, 1887), p. 23.

⁴⁵Ibid., 4 (March 1887), p. 64. Mrs. Ordway seems to

authority was reflected in the Unity's strong emphasis on women's rights. This compassionate concern for the liberation of women led to misunderstandings and difficulties for Dr. Teed and the Unity and was the cause of much unpleasant notoriety.

On September 6, 1888, a cooperative home for members of the church was established in Chicago. From this occasion the Koreshan Unity later dated its founding.⁴⁶ A print shop, the Guiding Star Publishing House, was established in 1888⁴⁷ and from this began to flow leaflets, pamphlets, books, and periodicals issued as educational propaganda by the group. Publication of the Guiding Star was abandoned in May, 1889, but another magazine, the Flaming Sword was begun the following November.⁴⁸ A cooperative business organization aimed

have influenced, at least in part, the Unity's emphasis on celibacy and women's rights, see: A. G. O'rdway, "The Function of Women, in the Coming Government," Guiding Star, II, 5 (May 1888), pp. 148-150.

⁴⁶Rahn, "Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology."

⁴⁷Kenneth Edwin Anderson, "The American Eagle: A Unique Florida Weekly Newspaper" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Florida, 1970), p. 13. [Hereafter cited as "American Eagle, Unique Florida Weekly."]]

⁴⁸Guiding Star, III, 5 (May 1889); Flaming Sword, I, 1 (November 30, 1889). [Hereafter cited as FS.]

at laboring men, the Bureau of Equitable Commerce, was established by late 1890 or early 1891.⁴⁹

Dr. Teed, while living in New York State, usually referred to himself as Cyrus. In Chicago he began using an alternative title, Koresh--a transliteration of Cyrus from Hebrew to English. Gradually the group which he led came to call itself the Koreshan Unity.

A colony of the Chicago group, the Golden Gate Assembly of the Koreshan Unity, was established in San Francisco in 1890. This colony included branches of the College of Life, the Bureau of Equitable Commerce, and the Guiding Star Publishing House, from which issued pamphlets and a radical newspaper. The Golden Gate Assembly lasted for less than two years. Upon dissolution, late in 1891, the remaining members joined the Unity group in Chicago.⁵⁰ Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the colony was its newspaper, first called the Pruning Hook, later the Plowshare and Pruning Hook.

⁴⁹The constitution of this organization, dated May 31, 1891, may be found in The Constitutions of the Koreshan Unity and its Departments (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1896), pp. 33-40.

⁵⁰Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," pp. 35-36; The Pruning Hook (San Francisco, California), I, 1 (February 23, 1891); The Plowshare and Pruning Hook (San Francisco, California), I, 1 (May 1, 1891)-I, 26 (November 14, 1891).

Publication of the paper was continued in Chicago for a few years after the colony in California was dissolved.⁵¹

Dr. Teed's fame and notoriety grew as he continued to travel and lecture.⁵² The number of his converts also grew, as did the amounts contributed to him by audiences and by new members of the Unity.⁵³ A union of the Koreshans and the then declining Shakers was proposed in 1892 but came to nothing.⁵⁴ Dr. Teed also attempted, at about the same time, to organize a cooperative confederation of the various communistic societies in the United States; this plan, however, was also unsuccessful.⁵⁵

⁵¹Ibid.; The Plowshare and Pruning Hook (Chicago), II, 1 (July 7, 1894)- III, 4 (January 26, 1895).

⁵²Duss, Harmonists, pp. 299-302; which gives some examples of the headlines and sensationalism with which the press surrounded Dr. Teed.

⁵³Mrs. Jeannie L. Miller allegedly gave Dr. Teed \$5,000 upon joining the Unity, see: "Teed Sued for \$100,000," the New York Times, June 10, 1892, p. 6.

⁵⁴Edward Deming Andrews, The People Called Shakers (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1963), pp. 222, 335, which cites a Shaker pamphlet entitled Shakers and Koreshans Uniting (Mount Lebanon, New York, 1892).

⁵⁵Duss, Harmonists, pp. 286, 297.

Beliefs

The Koreshan Unity describes itself as a religious and fraternal commonwealth and calls its entire system of religious, scientific, and social beliefs Koreshan Universology. The doctrines taught by Dr. Teed and accepted by his followers are, as a system, probably unique in the history of religion. Many separate parts of the system, however, were possibly derived from--and may certainly be compared to--other beliefs and theories. An investigation of Koreshan-ity moved the respected author of American Communities, William Alfred Hinds, to observe that "Startling as were the claims of Ann Lee, Rapp, Janson, Harris, and other community founders, they are not to be named with those of the Koreshan founder, which outrival those of any human being since time began."⁵⁶

A summary of the main points of Koreshan Universology, necessarily brief and without the rich elaboration of Dr. Teed's explanations, appeared in the Flaming Sword, February 1, 1901, and is quoted as follows:⁵⁷

⁵⁶William Alfred Hinds, American Communities (rev. ed.; Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, 1902), p. 387.

⁵⁷"A Glance at Koreshanity," FS, XV, 2, inside front

Koreshan Universology is a complete system of Science of the great Universe of Life; and it involves the knowledge of the Creator and his creation. The name by which it is designated, in contradistinction to perverted Christianity, is Koreshanity; and the new Religion must supplant Christianity, as Christianity supplanted Judaism . . .

What does Koreshanity teach? We present a brief summary of the System--a few cardinal points . . .

Cosmogony. - The universe is a cell, a hollow globe, the physical body of which is the earth; the sun is at the center. We live on the inside of the cell; and the sun, moon, planets and stars are all within the globe.* The universe is eternal, a great battery, and perpetually renews itself through inherent functions, by virtue of which it involves and evolves itself.

cover. An explanation of the details of Koreshan Universology is beyond the scope of this essay. See the Koreshan works starred in the text below for further explanation.

*Dr. Teed further describes the universe thus:

"The alchemico-organic (physical) world or universe is a shell composed of seven metallic, five mineral, and five geologic strata, with an inner habitable surface of land and water. This inner surface, as the reader already understands, is concave. The seven metallic layers or laminae are the seven noble metals,--gold constituting the outermost rind of the shell. This shell or crust is a number of miles in thickness. Within this shell are three principal atmospheres, the first or outermost (the one in which we exist) being composed of oxygen and nitrogen; the one immediately above that is pure hydrogen, and the one above the hydrogen we have denominated aboron. Within this is the solar electro-magnetic atmosphere, the nucleus of which is the stellar center. In and occupying these atmospheres are the sun and stars, also the reflections called the planets and the moon. The planets are mercurial discs moving by electro-magnetic impulse between the metallic laminae or planets of the concave shell. They are seen through penetrable rays, ultra electro-magnetic, reflected or bent back in their impingement on spheres of energy regularly graduated as the stories in the heavens." Koresh, The Cellular Cosmogony, pp. 13-14; see

Alchemy. - The Science of Alchemy is the Philosopher's Stone, the Key to the mystery of life. Chemistry is false; alchemy is true! Matter and energy are interconvertible and interdependent; they are correlates; matter is destructible; the result of its transmutation is energy. Alchemy is the key to the analysis of the universe.

Theology. - God is personal and biune, with a trinity of specific attributes. God in his perfection and power is the God-man or the man-God, the Seed of universal perpetuity. Jesus the Christ was God Almighty; the Holy Spirit was the product of his transmutation, or the burning of his body.

Messianic Law. - The coming of the Messiah is as inevitable as the reproduction of the seed. The divine Seed was sown nineteen hundred years ago; the first-fruit is another Messianic personality. The Messiah [Kōresh] is now in the world, declaring the scientific Gospel.**

Reincarnation is the central law of life--the law of the resurrection; reincarnation and resurrection are identical. Resurrection is reached through a succession of re-embodiments. One generation passes into another; the millions of humanity march down the stream of time together.***

The Spiritual World. - Heaven and hell are in humanity, and constitute the spiritual world; the spiritual domain is mental, and is in the natural humanity,--not in the sky.

Human Destiny. - Origin and destiny are one and the same. The origin of man is God, and God is man's destiny. God is the highest product of the universe, the apex of humanity. Absorption into Nirvana is entrance into eternal life--in the interior spheres of humanity, not in the sky or atmosphere.

also ibid., pp. [57]-63. Dr. Teed's theory of the hollow globe is not unlike that of the earlier John Cleves Symmes, the principal difference being that Symmes thought that there were openings at both poles and life on the outside as well.

**See also: Kōresh [Cyrus R. Teed], The Mystery of the Gentiles (Esterio: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1926).

***See also: Kōresh [Kōresh [Cyrus R. Teed], Reincarnation (2nd ed.; Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1896).

Immortality in the Flesh. - Koreshanity declares and defines the laws of immortality, and its attainment in the natural world. The first step is recognition of the Messiah and the application of his truth . . . ****

Celibacy. - The saving of human life consists in the conservation and appropriation of life in humanity. To become immortal, one must cease to propagate life on the plane of mortality. The standard of Koreshan purity is the virgin life of Jesus the Messiah. The Central Order of the Koreshan Unity is Celibate and Communistic. Celibacy obtains in the central nucleus, never in the world at large [only members of the Ecclesia or church are by law celibate]. *****

Psychology. - Koreshanity points to the basis of all psychic phenomena--the human brain. It explains the phenomena of spiritism, mental healing, etc., and teaches the science of the revelation of mind and matter.

The Bible. - The Bible is the best written expression of the divine Mind; it is written in the language of universal symbolism, and must be scientifically interpreted . . . There is no conflict between the Bible and genuine science; the Bible and the natural universe must agree in their expression of the divine Mind.

Communism. - Koreshanity advocates communism, not only of the goods of life, but of life itself. It has not only the scientific theory of communism, but is practically communistic in the relations and affairs of its own people. In this it corresponds to the primitive Christian church, where all things were held in common. The bond of the true communism is the true religion, and the central personality of the divine communism is the Messiah.

Koreshan Socialism. - Our Social System is patterned after the form of the natural cosmos; that form is the natural expression of the laws of order. We demonstrate the fallacy of competitism [competition]; advocate the destruction of the money-power; the control of the

**** See also: Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], The Immortal Manhood (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1902).

***** See also: Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], Judgement (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1900).

products of industry by the government, and the equitable distribution of the goods of life . . .

Church and State. - The true form of government is the divine Imperialism, the unity of church and state; such will be the Kingdom of God in earth. The Koreshan Government is the unity of the empire and the republic, involving the principles of all present forms of government, which are but fragments of the perfect system which existed in ancient times--in the Golden Age of the past. The government of the universe is imperialistic and humanity will constitute a unit only when every class is emplaced at rest and liberty as are the strata, stars and spheres of the physical cosmos.

Beyond the Frontier

After some years in Chicago, Dr. Teed decided to remove the Unity from that city. The Koreshans had moved into a large communal home which they called Beth-Ophra, and life there was often pleasant and placid. The newspapers of Chicago were not, however, content to ignore the Unity, nor were the husbands of women who went to live at Beth-Ophra content to let their wives depart in peace. Several suits for alienation of the affections of wealthy women were filed, including one for \$100,000,⁵⁷ and formation of a committee to lynch Dr. Teed was at one time proposed.⁵⁸ The newspapers of Chicago and the nation reported these events in lurid detail, often

⁵⁷"Teed Sued for \$100,000," The New York Times, p. 6.

⁵⁸"Came Near Lynching Teed," Fort Myers Press, October 25, 1906, p. 1 (reprinted from the Chicago Times, 1892).

printing sensationalized articles on Dr. Teed and on the beliefs and alleged practices within the Unity.

Dr. Teed proposed to build a new city, a New Jerusalem, where the Unity might dwell in peace, and from which the doctrines of Koreshanity might be spread until the whole earth was converted. He found land on which such a city might be built on the banks of the Estero River, just beyond the frontier, in Lee County, Florida.

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS IN FLORIDA

1894-1903

"The world stands waiting on the
verge of metamorphosis,
On the cusp of transposition into
that era which initiates the Golden
Age."

--Koresch

"Armageddon: The Last Battle"¹

New Jerusalem

When Dr. Cyrus R. Teed set out for Florida in 1893, he had decided upon the eventual relocation of the headquarters of the Unity, but it is clear that he had chosen no definite site for this new venture.² Although it was later to be maintained that Estero had been "scientifically located" at "the vitellus of the great Cosmogonic Egg,"³ one account states

¹FS, XX, 21 (October 30, 1906), p. 5.

²Allen H. Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler," AE June 30, 1927, p. 2, reprinted AE, August 1967, p. 8.

³Koresch, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 194.

that he became interested in Lee County through the efforts of a local real estate broker, and another, probably more reliable, that he heard of it by chance. He inspected several large tracts of land, including one which was later purchased by the Unity, but he returned to Chicago without finding a site that suited his requirements. His first trip did not include a visit to the Estero Creek area and it is doubtful that he heard more than passing reference to it.⁴

The land which was to become the town of Estero was still a wilderness in 1893. The first settlers had been homesteaders. Gustave G. Damkohler, a native of Berlin, had pitched a tent for his family near Estero Creek on April 10, 1882, more than eleven years earlier. He had built a small cabin and homesteaded 160 acres, later purchasing an additional 160 acres, but by 1893 he had cleared only about an acre of his land and this was planted in tropical fruit trees.⁵

⁴Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler"; Berry, "The Koreshan Unity," pp. 37-38.

⁵E. E. Damkohler, Estero, Fla., 1882: Memoirs of the First Settler (Fort Myers Beach, Fla.: Island Press, 1967), pp. 5, 20. [Hereafter cited as Estero, Fla.] Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler."

It is not known how Gustave Damkohler became aware of Dr. Teed's interest in southwest Florida; it is nevertheless reasonable to assume that he read a newspaper account of the trip or came across one of the Unity's pamphlets. Damkohler's wife and all but one of his four young children had died at Estero, the children under mysterious outside circumstances. It may be supposed that Damkohler was receptive to any promise of immortal life.⁶ If Damkohler had attempted to contact Dr. Teed while the latter was in Florida he was unsuccessful, but correspondence soon began passing between Damkohler and Unity officials in Chicago. Dr. Teed, accompanied by Mrs. Ordway, her secretary Mrs. Mary C. Miller, and Mrs. Bertha S. Boomer, left Chicago by train late in December, and met Damkohler and his fourteen year old son, Elwin, at Punta Rassa early in the first week of January, 1894.⁷

Dr. Teed and the women were installed in Damkohler's cabin within a few days. Although the cabin consisted of only one room, a loft, and two porches, and was furnished with wooden boxes and home-made furniture, the Koreshans were pleased with their tropical surroundings. The land, though

⁶Damkohler, Estero, Fla., pp. 18-20.

⁷Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler"; ibid., p. 22.

uncleared, was high and well drained, the river teemed with fish, and the winter weather was decidedly better than that of Chicago.⁸ Dr. Teed evidently decided almost immediately during this visit that the Estero Creek area was to be the site of the "New Jerusalem"; Gustave Damkohler's son, Elwin, remembers that the doctor "had a big, beautiful map showing the streets of his dream place. Father's place was to be the center with streets running in all directions about like the streets from the Capitol in Washington, D.C."⁹ Damkohler deeded his land to the Koreshan Unity in return for lifetime care for himself, and care and schooling for his son until the latter was twenty-one. Elwin Damkohler later charged that his father had been "pampered" by the women and "hypnotized" by Dr. Teed before giving up his land,¹⁰ but, in view of the fact that title was not transferred until November 19, 1894,¹¹ it would seem that the elder Damkohler had ample time in which to consider his bargain.

⁸Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler."

⁹Damkohler, Estero, Fla., p. 23.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 23-24.

¹¹Lee County, Fla., Deed Record, Vol. 8, p. 50.

There were no plans in 1894 for an immediate and wholesale removal of the Unity headquarters from Chicago to Lee County. Estero was first organized as a branch colony and volunteers were solicited from among the membership.¹² Four men, including a doctor, left Chicago on January 11, joining Dr. Teed and the women on January 20.¹³ Almost immediately upon their arrival they were sent into the nearby cypress swamps by Mrs. Ordway to cut logs for building materials, but the men's work was unsatisfactory and the project was not a success.¹⁴

A second group of pioneers, made up mostly of men but including some women, numbering between sixteen and twenty, left Chicago on January 31, arriving at Estero on February 6.¹⁵ They traveled by rail to Punta Gorda where the tracks

¹²Allen H. Andrews, A Yank Pioneer in Florida (Jacksonville, Fla.: Douglas Printing Co., Inc., 1950), pp. 17-2.

¹³Claude J. Rahn, "Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology," AE, March 1967, p. 7, supplies the date of departure; O. F. L'Amoreaux, quoted in William Alfred Hinds, American Communities (rev. ed.; Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, 1902), p. 384, gives the date of arrival.

¹⁴Damkohler, Estero, Fla., p. 25.

¹⁵Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 2 supplies the date of departure; Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler," gives the date of arrival; Andrews, as is often his practice, notes no sexual differentiation, but Leroy Lamoreaux, Early Days on Estero Island (Fort Myers Beach, Fla.: Estero Island

then ended, and remained overnight before going aboard the five-ton sloop Ada which Dr. Teed had purchased. The journey to Mound Key, in Estero Bay, was a pleasant one, enlivened by two young musicians who sang and played the guitar and the harmonica. After camping for the night at Mound Key, the pioneers went aboard flat-bottomed boats which were able to pass over the mud flats blocking the mouth of the Estero River.¹⁶

Progressing upstream the boats first passed through the red mangrove jungle of the river's delta. Swamp soon gave way to high pine woods with saw palmetto ground cover, and this in turn was followed by still higher ground over which extended scrub oak and palmetto topped by an occasional pine. Suddenly, rounding a bend, the pioneers came upon Damkohler's cabin almost hidden in thick vegetation. Tents were pitched on the river bank, and in these the pioneers lived for several weeks.¹⁷

Publishers, 1967), p. 4, states that women were included.

¹⁶Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 2-5.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 6, 427; at least one young man who accompanied the first Koreshans to Estero was not a formal member of the Unity, although he and members of his family had been and were to be intimately connected with it--see, "Lucius M. Boomer Dies," AE, July 3, 1947, p. 2.

Clearing of land was the first important task attempted. Pine trees were easily felled, but the removal of the closely-rooted saw palmettoes was more difficult. Palmetto leaves were gathered for use in thatching roof tops, and useless brush was piled up by day to be burned at night. The settlers gathered around these fires for warmth and conversation. The smoke from the fires also discouraged the swarms of mosquitoes which drifted in at nightfall from the swamps. Not so easily discouraged were the ground fleas. Attacking those pioneers who slept outside, these fleas caused one man to exclaim, "My, but this is a turrible [sic] country." At length the settlers discovered that if they slept inside their blankets the fleas became entrapped in the woolen lint and were thus easily caught and destroyed. One pioneer reports finding forty-two of the pests in his blanket one morning, but as the land was cleared the fleas gradually disappeared.¹⁸

Food is generally recalled to have been very plain during the early years at Estero but it was usually, though not always, plentiful. Preparation was accomplished by the women over an open fire on the back porch of Damkohler's

¹⁸Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 6-8.

cabin during the early months of settlement, and meals were eaten outdoors under a long thatched shed. Necessary commercial supplies for cooking were brought in by sloop to Mound Key and then transported up river by skiff. A large part of the colony's foodstuffs, however, was gathered or produced in the area.¹⁹

Gustave Damkohler was placed in charge of agriculture and apiculture. His bees furnished plenty of honey, and his fruit trees provided small amounts of oranges, key limes, lemons, guavas, sapodillas, mangoes, and pomegranates.²⁰

Fish and seafood were plentiful in the river, the bay, and the Gulf, and two men were regularly assigned to gather them for table use. Mullet were particularly numerous, and in the lower reaches of the river were found snapper, jewfish, sheepshead, sand perch, and jack. Large oysters were gathered on the bars surrounding the delta of the river, the eggs of loggerhead and green turtles were collected on the Gulf beaches, and from the bar at Caxambas below Marco Island an abundance of clams was taken.²¹

¹⁹Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler"; ibid., pp. 8, 24.

²⁰Damkohler, Estero, Fla., pp. 20, 25.

²¹Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 5, 12, [22], [34]-35.

This abundance was partly responsible for the loss of the sloop Ada a few years later. Mrs. Ordway sent Captain Gus Faber and four or five helpers to gather clams at Caxambas, and the boat was quickly loaded down. Faber, however, probably acting under orders, set a mark of ten thousand clams, and refused to sail until that number had been put aboard. On the homeward trip, the decks nearly awash, the sloop encountered a squall near Big Hickory Pass, and sank. Faber and his crew reached shore with little difficulty. Shortly afterward, however, Faber decided to become a farmer, and took up a homestead on Black Rock Island.²²

Several methods of catching fish were used, the most popular of which seems to have been fire-fishing. This method was introduced to the colonists by Elwin Damkohler upon the arrival of a substantial group of pioneers. A sailboat, sent for supplies, had been delayed by bad weather, and Dr. Teed, having neither hooks nor nets, told young Elwin to gather fish any way he could.²³ Fire-fishing was later thus described in the American Eagle:

²²Ibid., p. 35; Damkohler, Estero, Fla., p. 28 places the clam bar at "Clam Pass, near Naples" but this is probably incorrect.

²³Damkohler, Estero, Fla., p. 26.

Choose a night in the dark of the moon, when the tide is coming in, and about this time of year summer, as later the fish become too fat to jump. Take a small launch, with a bright pitch pine torch in the stern. Have a few small boats in tow, and cruise up and down some small tidewater creek or river. If there are any mullet around, there will soon be something doing. Once you strike a school of them the air becomes a mass of rockets and shooting stars At Estero we have caught as many as two hundred fish a night in this manner.²⁴

The colony's primary aim, in the view of the Unity, was to lay the foundations for the projected New Jerusalem, the world capital of the Koreshan system. Estero was to become a place where millions of people might "aggregate on the basis of industry, economy, and morality, subject to the communistic, social, and co-operative principles of Koreshanity."²⁵ And, during the first year, the handful of Yankee pioneers made excellent progress in clearing and planting land and erecting frontier buildings for their own use. They were not, however, ready to receive many additional settlers for several years.²⁶

²⁴"Estero Fish Story," AE, July 26, 1906, p. 3.

²⁵Frank 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), pp. 17, 4-5. Hereafter cited as Koreshan Unity.⁷

²⁶Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 7, 9-10.

Virgin land in the area is acid, gradually sweetening under cultivation; the colonists learned from county farmers that the best crops on this newly-cleared land would be sweet potatoes and cow peas. Much of the considerable amount of land cleared the first year was planted according to this advice, with what degree of success is not now clear. The colonists were not endangered by starvation in any case, but, while Allen Andrews intimates that he and his fellow farmers enjoyed a bountiful winter harvest from their summer planting,²⁷ Elwin Damkohler, whose father was in charge of agriculture for a time, states that the crops failed, placing the blame on Professor O. F. L'Amoreaux who came to Estero in the spring of 1894: "Father and the Professor could not agree on the best crops to plant, nor how to grow them. Father then turned the growing of vegetables over to the Professor. Soon, there were no vegetables for anyone to eat."²⁸

Allen Andrews supplies additional information on the professor's agricultural qualifications and his successes with fruit trees:

During the earlier months of my residence in Estero I was assigned to assist in the newly established plant

²⁷Ibid., p. 34.

²⁸Damkohler, Estero, Fla., p. 26.

nursery under the direction of an old college professor who had taught Greek and Latin in an Illinois college and had occupied his spare house by growing nursery stock of various fruit trees in his back yard. From far-off California he had received cuttings of figs, pears, jujubes, grapes and other fruits too numerous to mention, and although we tended them assiduously they failed to respond satisfactorily and eventually died.²⁹

The loose, dry sand of Florida, compared to the rich, black soil of Illinois, seemed to the colonists extremely unpromising for any sort of agricultural production. They soon discovered, however, that the loose surface soil was underlaid with sand-clay and lime rock, and was ideal for citrus and other trees adapted to the area. The first experiment in large-scale production of fruit was the planting of an orange grove. The colonists had learned of a man at Surveyor's Creek (now the Imperial River) who wanted the trees removed from a grove he had planted, and who was willing to pay a few cents per tree to have this work performed. Although the trees were budded on four different rootstocks--lime, lemon, grapefruit, and sour orange, the colonists were unaware of any differences and the entire grove was carefully removed and the trees set out at Estero. The colonists discovered within a few years that only those trees budded on sour orange

²⁹Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 11.

rootstock were dependable, satisfactory producers; the others died or necessitated eventual replacement.³⁰

Of a somewhat more successful nature were those early horticultural experiments conducted with ornamental and useful shrubs, plants, and trees. A visitor reported that the Koreans were "planting every variety of grain, grass, fruit, shrub, or flower they could find."³¹ Although this report undoubtedly refers in part to Professor L'Amoreaux's ill-fated fruit cuttings from California, several of the other experiments were successful, and the Estero colony later became well-known for its horticultural activities. Giant bamboo, from cuttings obtained at the Thomas Edison estate in Fort Myers, were among the early plantings, as were eucalyptus trees grown from seeds secured from California during the summer of 1894. Several of the young eucalyptus survived the freezes of the following winter and twenty varieties were subsequently tested, though successful adaptation to the area was induced in only a few cases.³²

³⁰Ibid., pp. 7, 11-12.

³¹W. W. Foose, "The Koreshan Community," Fort Myers Press, September 13, 1894, p. 1.

³²Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 36, 424.

An adequate supply of drinking water was a problem during the first year. Elwin Damkohler speaks of "a nice spring of good flowing water on the south side of Estero Creek The spring, which provided our drinking water, became our greatest treasure."³³ That spring had perhaps dried up by the arrival of the Koreshans, for Allen Andrews reports that

Drinking water was brought in by cask on a wheelbarrow . . . from a surface well out in the woods. It was warm and unsatisfying and having no ice, we hit upon the expedient of adding the juice of limes There is reason to believe that this water was the direct cause of a fever epidemic that ultimately developed, as with the drilling of a deep /i.e., artesian/ well no more fevers were experienced.³⁴

The first permanent living quarters constructed by the Koreshans was "a two-story log house, with north, west, and east wings, the whole connected by a central breezeway to afford ample ventilation." Logs for the house were cut by settlers, peeled to avoid decay, and notched on the ends to overlap. Cypress poles were used for rafters, and the roof was of one-by-three inch sheeting thatched over with cabbage palm leaves. Lumber for flooring was ordered, and delivered by boat. The spaces between the logs were at first

³³Damkohler, Estero, Fla., p. 9.

³⁴Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 8.

left open for ventilation. Due to insects and to the "horizontal" rain of the sub-tropics, however, these spaces were eventually chinked.³⁵ A barn for livestock was completed by fall, and domestic hay was cut for horses.³⁶ A frame school building was finished in December, though apparently no formal classes were held for several years.³⁷

Perhaps the most important building completed during the first year was a two-story dining hall and kitchen, with dormitories overhead. A third story was later added to the building. Reports on its size vary, and it does not now exist, but it is reported to have been from twenty by forty feet to thirty by sixty or seventy feet in size.³⁸ It was built of peeled cypress logs and poles, the roof and sides shingled with shakes hand split in the swamps. A visitor in September who was given lunch reported that the men and the women ate separately on opposite sides of the hall. The meal, which was preceded by a hymn in which all joined, consisted of four

³⁵Ibid., pp. 9-10, for this quote and the further information contained in the paragraph.

³⁶Foose, "The Koreshan Community."

³⁷Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 227; Damkohler, Estero, Fla., p. 28. Damkohler complains that the schooling he received at Estero was unsatisfactory. The Unity's rebuttal may be found in Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler."

³⁸Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 10; Foose,

or five "bountiful and sumptuous" courses.³⁹ The ample space of the ground floor hall also provided room for entertainments given by the younger members of the Unity: a string quartet was organized the first year.⁴⁰

Building was hampered by the unavailability of lumber, so in December, 1894, Dr. Teed bought a saw mill in Fort Myers. The mill was dismantled by the Koreshans, transported to the point at the south end of Estero Island in the bay, and there reassembled. Leroy Lamoreaux, the son of Professor L'Amoreaux, who had come with a friend to Estero the previous February, and who helped tear down and reassemble the mill and spent much of the next four years on the island, later recalled part of the process of acquisition of the land:

When the Koreshan Unity wanted that point to put a saw mill on there was a squatter by the name of Carl Briant living on it . . . he sold any claim he had to it for \$20.

.
The K.U. had one of their members try to file on the land. He got back a letter from the Gainesville land office that it wasn't available for homestead While they were trying to find out about this a new little cabbage house was discovered hidden in the brush. The man that was trying to homestead it got me to go with him and when we came away there was no shack there.

"The Koreshan Community"; AE, November 1966, p. 2. The building was dismantled in 1949.

³⁹Foose, "The Koreshan Community."

⁴⁰Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 10.

The land was later purchased.⁴¹

The site was chosen, Allen Andrews writes, "because of our intention to saw lumber not only for ourselves, but for sale to others, and location on deep water was desirable as we had no hard roads and practically all heavy hauling was done by boat."⁴² Logs were cut on the island, and on the mainland and rafted across the bay, sawed and dressed in the mill, then sold, used in the Unity boat yard and marine ways which had been established nearby, or retransported to the mainland for use in construction.⁴³

Housing was built on the island for the mill workers, a machine shop was installed, and a well was drilled to supply fresh water. A sizable settlement grew up in a short time, and a post office was established in 1896 under the name "Estero." Supplies and mail were transported in and out by boat, mail arriving from Punta Gorda for redistribution

⁴¹Lamoreaux, Early Days on Estero Island, pp. 15-18.

⁴²Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 23.

⁴³Barratt Brown and Adelaide Brown, A Short History of Fort Myers Beach: Estero and San Carlos Islands, Florida (Fort Myers Beach, Fla.: Estero Island Publishers, 1965), p. 22 [hereafter referred to as History of Fort Myers Beach]; Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 23; Damkohler, Estero, Fla., p. 28.

to the mainland settlement.⁴⁴

The saw mill on the island was the first industry established by the Koreshan Unity at Estero, and a considerable sales trade was quickly built up. The destruction of the mill in 1896, in what was to be the first in a long series of disastrous fires suffered by the Unity, was therefore a serious financial blow to the growing community. Activities on the island were necessarily curtailed, and most of the workers transferred back to the mainland settlement. Another mill was purchased in 1900 and located at the mouth of the Estero River.⁴⁵

Koreshan plans, as of 1895, projected that the city of eight to ten million people would be laid out "to contain thirty six square miles, on the start" (emphasis added); the principal avenues were to be four hundred feet wide with parks of fruit and nut trees extending the entire length of these streets.⁴⁶ The land on which the city was to be built

⁴⁴Brown and Brown, History of Fort Myers Beach, p. 22; Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 23.

⁴⁵Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 34, 39; "Scribo" Allen H. Andrews, AE, October 10, 1907, Supplement, p. 1 Andrews regularly contributed an Estero community events column to AE, signing it "Scribo"; hereafter cited "Scribo"; Lamoreaux, Early Days on Estero Island, p. 18.

⁴⁶Jackson and Daniels, Koreshan Unity, p. 3.

would be owned in common by the members of the Unity forever. Land was acquired in a number of ways.⁴⁷

The nucleus of three hundred and twenty acres, as has been noted, was given to the Unity in exchange for certain cooperative considerations; this arrangement seems to have been followed in other cases: a co-operator could exchange his property--whether or not it was in the vicinity of Estero--for Unity stock.⁴⁸ Land was cheap on this frontier, selling for around \$2.50 an acre in 1894,⁴⁹ and much of the Unity's connected holdings on the mainland was purchased outright. Considerable island and beach front acreage on Estero, Big Hickory, and Little Hickory islands and on Mound Key was gradually acquired by purchase⁵⁰ and by homesteading. Homestead land was gained by the Unity in two ways: by individual members claiming property for themselves and, in some cases,

⁴⁷An examination of the Koreshan Unity's acquisitions and disposals of land, in Florida alone, from 1894 to the present, might well result in an essay of greater length than this one. Rather than attempt such a study I will merely list, in the paragraph which follows, the various ways in which land was acquired.

⁴⁸The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative (Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1907), pp. 28-29.

⁴⁹Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler."

⁵⁰Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 25.

later conveying it to the Unity;⁵¹ and by members who homesteaded property with the covert intention of acquiring it for the Unity.⁵² Active members of the Unity "proved up" claims as late as 1908,⁵³ and one inconstant member proved up in 1918.⁵⁴ Some other lands were privately held but managed by the Unity or by individual members.⁵⁵

The city, with its buildings, its growing acreage, its opening to the sea from which the Bureau of Equitable Commerce would operate steamships "to every point along the coast of Mexico, on the Caribbean Sea, the West Indies, also along the coasts of North and South America, and thence to the entire world,"⁵⁶ was the subject of elaborate planning by the Unity in the years immediately following initial colonization. These plans, perhaps in part the natural reaction

⁵¹Lamoreaux, Early Days on Estero Island, p. 10.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 7, 18, 20.

⁵³James Bubbett, later president of the Unity, proved up in April, see: "Notice for Publication," AE, April 2, 1908, Supplement, p. 1; Lauritz Pederson had done so in February, see: "Scribo," AE, February 20, 1908, p. 3; both men used Koreshans as witnesses for their claims.

⁵⁴Leroy Lamoreaux, see Early Days on Estero Island, p. 3.

⁵⁵Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 130.

⁵⁶Jackson and Daniels, Koreshan Unity, p. 7.

of a group subjected to, in its view, "the lying slanders of a vituperous and monopolistic press like the great dailies of Chicago,"⁵⁷ were, in some important aspects, extremely unrealistic. There are to be found, however, many visionary points of interest in the Koreshan plans for New Jerusalem. Although some details of the following passage, written in 1895, are the stuff of science fiction, an interest in conservation and what we now call "ecology" is clearly evident as is an intelligent grasp of modern city planning; the idea of the multi-level city, for instance, is only now being seriously explored as a possibility in America.

The construction of the city will be of such a character as to provide for a combination of street elevation, placing various kinds of traffic upon different surfaces; as for instance, heavy team traffic upon the ground surface, light driving upon a plane distinct from either, and all railroad travel upon distinct planes, dividing even the freight and passenger traffic by separate elevations. There will be no dumping of sewage into the streams, bay, or Gulf. A movable and continuous earth closet will carry the 'debris' and offal of the city to a place thirty or more miles distant, where it will be transformed to fertilization and restored to the land surface to be absorbed by vegetable growth. There will be no smudge or smoke. Power by which machinery will be moved will be by the utilization of the electromagnetic currents of the earth and air, independently of steam application to so called 'dynamamos.' Motors will take the place of motion derived from steam pressure. The city will be constructed on the most magnificent

⁵⁷Ibid.

scale, without the use of so called money. These things can be done easily when once the people know the force of co-operation and united life, and understand the great principles of utilization and economy.⁵⁸

Construction of the city was to be financed by the industry and economy of the masses who, freed from wage slavery and united under the banner of Koreshanity, would equitably share the luxuries of the triumphant commonwealth system.⁵⁹ The unusual percentage of profit generated by Koreshan economy and industry, together with that portion of the expenditures of a local government which goes for salaries, corporate profit, and graft, were to be used for upkeep and beautification.⁶⁰

The center and capital of the Koreshan system, like the center of the collegiate system which would spread its teachings, was to be New Jerusalem, and from there would be directed the branch Bureaus of Equitable Commerce to be established "in every city and town of America and the world."⁶¹ This centrality, it was stated, was necessary because

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 3.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 9.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 7, 13.

"successful cooperation can only be the result of a single plan, projected by a single brain and carried to perfection through a central leadership, and then only when the system attains to universal sway."⁶² The system was one of "organic unity and order" which could be compared in its pattern to the physical cosmos: "The general relation of the parts constructed into the grand integration of universal form."⁶³

Fulfillment of these plans required pioneers and laborers, and it was stated, with perhaps some exaggeration, that the Unity was prepared to receive "as many into the outer courts at New Jerusalem as are willing to enter into the system of united life," though it was also stated that they would have to occupy "preparatory homes."⁶⁴ There were places for both Koreshans and those others free from the use of whisky, beer, tobacco, opium, and related vices (though outside New Jerusalem the Unity would "receive mankind as we find it").⁶⁵

There is no evidence of extraordinary growth of Estero's population between 1895 and 1900.

⁶²Ibid., p. 12.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 14, 5.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 14.

The Earth A Concave Sphere

One of Dr. Teed's reasons for locating New Jerusalem in Florida near the seashore was that there the Koreshans might conduct a series of experiments designed to prove his contention that the earth is a concave sphere with all of life and a limited universe contained inside its hollow shell. Upon this contention rested the whole body of Koreshan scientific-religious doctrine: limitation of the universe is one of the cardinal points in the Koreshan demonstration of the existence of God, and from that all else follows.⁶⁶

After Dr. Teed's discovery of the cellular cosmogenic form in the winter of 1869-1870, he had undertaken a search of twenty-seven years duration for a man who could help him scientifically prove his theory.⁶⁷ He felt, in 1897, that he had found such a man in Ulysses Grant Morrow.⁶⁸

⁶⁶See Introduction, pp. 10-11.

⁶⁷Koresh and Morrow, Cellular Cosmogony, p. 57.

⁶⁸Ibid. It is likely that Dr. Teed and Morrow had met and had some association before 1896. Morrow, assisted by Eleanore M. Castle, Berthaldine S. Boomer, and Alice Fox Miller, had edited a small periodical called The Salvator and Scientist which carried on its masthead the legend "Evangel of Koreshanity the Religion and Science of Life." The first number appeared September 13, 1895, the second was dated

Out of the association of Dr. Teed and Morrow came a series of experiments in 1896 and 1897 which proved, to the doctor's expressed satisfaction, the legitimacy of his contentions. Out of the experiments came a book, The Cellular Cosmogony, or, The Earth a Concave Sphere, which was to be the most important volume in the Koreshans' considerable body of publications.

The first edition of The Cellular Cosmogony, issued in Chicago in 1898 by the Unity's Guiding Star Publishing House, contains an introduction and an essay by Dr. Teed, writing under his religious pseudonym Koresh, an essay by Morrow (who ordinarily signed his writing "U. G. Morrow" and often used the title "Professor"), statements by witnesses to the experiments, reprints of several favorable newspaper accounts, and illustrative drawings, diagrams, charts, and photographs. Dr. Teed's essay, "The Universology of Koreshanity," is a statement of Koreshan scientific and religious doctrine; Morrow's essay, "The New Geodesy," is an explanation

January 1896 and announced that the periodical, which had been published in Allegheny, Pa., was being removed to Chicago where it would be either continued or combined with the Flaming Sword. Morrow subsequently became editor of the Sword and Castle became active in the Unity; Mrs. Boomer had been a member of the Unity since at least 1893.

of the principles involved in the practical demonstration of the earth's concavity and an account of the various experiments performed. The book ran through many editions, the last in 1951, and many alterations of text were made; Morrow's name was dropped from the title page after his withdrawal from the Unity in 1908, and much of his essay was then attributed to Koresh.⁶⁹

In the first edition, however, Dr. Teed gives Morrow credit for conducting the experiments and for constructing the mechanical devices by which the earth's concavity was proved,⁷⁰ and Morrow admits the truth of these statements, though modestly pointing out that his actions were performed only "at the instance of the Founder of Koreshanity."⁷¹

The first in the series of experiments was performed on the Old Illinois Drainage Canal near Summit, Illinois, on July 25, 1896, but the results were apparently inconclusive.⁷²

⁶⁹See, for instance, Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], The Cellular Cosmogony, or, The Earth a Concave Sphere (Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1922).

⁷⁰Koresh, in Cellular Cosmogony (1898), p. 6.

⁷¹Morrow, in Cellular Cosmogony (1898), p. 95.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 67-68.

This was followed by a number of visual experiments conducted with telescopes in Florida around Naples Bay and the Gulf of Mexico from January to early March, 1897; these experiments tended to show why scientists had been deceived by optical illusion into acceptance of the Copernical theory of the earth's convexity.⁷³

The third series of experiments, those which did demonstrate the earth's concavity to the stated satisfaction of Dr. Teed and Morrow, was conducted on the beach at Naples, Florida, between March 18 and May 11, 1897.⁷⁴ The method of the experiment was this: to first locate an absolutely level air line 128 inches above a fixed water line; to then extend this air line in an absolutely straight direction.⁷⁵ Dr. Teed's figures concerning the size and concave surface of the earth--that the curvature is about eight inches to the mile, that it has a diameter of eight thousand miles and a circumference of twenty-five thousand--approximated the figures of those who accepted the theory of the earth's convexity.⁷⁶ Thus, according to the terms of the experiment,

⁷³Ibid., pp. 76-87.

⁷⁴Table of measurements, Cellular Cosmogony (1898), p. 123.

⁷⁵Morrow, in Cellular Cosmogony (1898), p. 97.

⁷⁶Koresh, in Cellular Cosmogony (1898), p. 57;

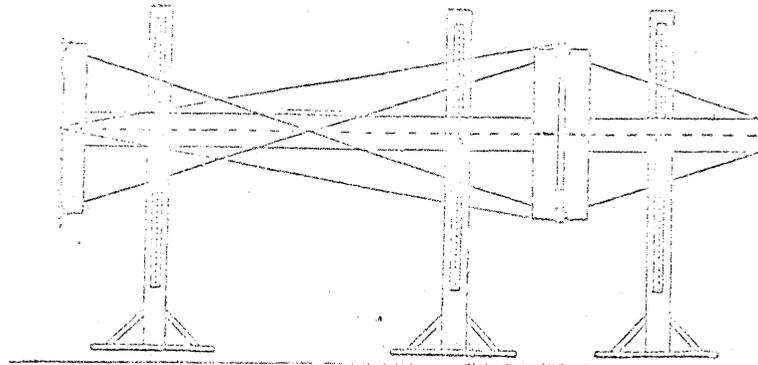
if the air line was extended and the Copernican theory was correct, the distance between the air line and the fixed water line would be increased by eight inches at the end of the first mile, by thirty-two inches at the end of the second, by seventy-two inches at the end of the third, and so on ("For every mile after the first, curvature downward would increase as the square of the distance in miles multiplied by 8 inches").⁷⁷ If, however, Koreshan theory was correct, the distance between the air line and the fixed water line would decrease according to the same ratio.

The apparatus designed by Morrow to extend the air lines was called the rectilineator "(from rectus, right, and linea, line)." It consisted of a number of sections in the form of double T squares twelve feet long with braced and tensioned cross arms four feet high. The double T squares were of seasoned mahogany cross-braced with steel tension bars; the facing of each vertical cross arm was fitted with brass flanges through which screws could be inserted. Each section was supported by two platform standards fitted with adjustable cleats with clamps.⁷⁸ (see illustration on page 54)

Charles A. Young, A Text-Book of General Astronomy (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1893), pp. 91-93.

⁷⁷Morrow, in Cellular Cosmogony (1898), p. 647.

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 95-96. One double T square section of



THE RECTILINEATOR

(from The Cellular Cosmogony, 1898, p. 96)

When the first section was accurately leveled, the vertical bar of a second was carefully attached to it by interlocking the flanges of each with screws, the second section being supported by carefully adjusted platform standards. A third section was then joined to the second, continuing, by the use of right angles, the straight line. The first section could then be removed and joined to the third section.⁷⁹

The actual experiment began on the morning of March 18, 1897, when the first section was pronounced level. By

the rectilineator is on display in the Art Hall at Estero, the other parts of the apparatus were lost in the fire which destroyed the print shop in 1949: Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, January 25, 1971.

⁷⁹Morrow, in Cellular Cosmogony (1898), p. 97. Morrow's explanation, through most of this essay, is elaborate and often verbose, and, at the risk of missing some small details, I have considerably simplified his account.

April 1, the rectilineator had progressed one mile and the straight line was 8.02 inches closer to the fixed water line, a difference of .02 inches from mathematical calculations of the earth's curvature. At the end of the second mile, reached on April 16, the line was 30.62 inches closer than at the beginning, a difference of 1.38 inches from the calculation of 32 inches. On May 5, another half mile had been covered and the line's distance from the fixed water line was 54 inches closer than at the beginning, a difference of 4 inches from calculation.⁸⁰ At this point, however, the beach curved away and, in any case, the vertical bar of the double T square was within seven inches of the ground, and so it was necessary to employ another method of survey. Using telescopes, poles in the water, and the sloop Ada, the line was projected another mile and five-eighths on May 5 and repeated on May 8. Return surveys were performed on May 6 and 11.⁸¹ This projected line met the water four and one-eighth miles from the starting point, indicating to Morrow that the earth's surface had curved upward 128 inches; mathematical calculations predicted a

⁸⁰Morrow, in Cellular Cosmogony (1898), p. 111; Table of Measurements, ibid., p. 123.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 119-120; ibid.

curvature of 136.125 inches, a difference of 8.125 inches.⁸² Morrow considered this deviation negligible;⁸³ the earth had, according to the terms of his experiment, curved upward, proving the validity of the cellular theory.⁸⁴

The statements of both Dr. Teed and Morrow throughout The Cellular Cosmogony assert their joint satisfaction that the experiments recounted in the book offer proof that the earth is indeed a concave sphere. And so, thereafter, Koreshans were able to state with added conviction the words which were to become one of their favorite public mottoes: We Live Inside.⁸⁵

Commonwealth

Agriculture, industry, and commercial food production

⁸²Table of Measurements.

⁸³Morrow, in Cellular Cosmogony (1898), p. 122.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 121.

⁸⁵Some Koreshans wore lapel buttons which depicted the hollow earth surrounded by the following inscription: "The Koreshan Unity, Estero, Fla. We Live Inside," see: an advertisement for the buttons, FS, XIX, 9 (August 8, 1905), p. 13; a somewhat similar sign marks the entrance to the Unity grounds at Estero today.

were not among the Unity's principal motives in establishing New Jerusalem, but, during the early years at Estero, the Unity came to recognize the benefits to be gained through these pursuits. By 1901 about thirty acres were under cultivation near the mainland settlement and on Mound Key and Estero Island. Vegetables were plentiful, pineapples had been bearing for four years, the citrus grove was beginning to bear (though, as noted above, these trees were a mixed success), guavas were abundant, and sugar cane was producing fine syrup. Fish were so plentiful that establishment of commercial fisheries had been proposed; a slightly more exotic source of food had been introduced with the acquisition of a number of imported Belgian hares.⁸⁶

The pioneers at Estero were a healthy and hard-working band. A number of comfortable cottages and a handsome home for Dr. Teed and Mrs. Ordway had been added to the mainland settlement,⁸⁷ and a new sawmill had been purchased and located at the mouth of the river.⁸⁸

⁸⁶Hinds, American Communities, p. 384. Hinds' account (1902) is based almost entirely on Koreshan sources and Koreshan reprints of favorable articles.

⁸⁷Ibid., p. 383; AE, November 1966, p. 2.

⁸⁸Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 39.

The Unity claimed to own 2,000 acres of land in 1901 and proposed to continue adding to its holding until it possessed thirty square miles.⁸⁹ At least one piece of property had been lost, however. Gustave Damkohler, whose 320 acres had formed the nucleus of the settlement, had suffered a change of heart and had filed suit for the recovery of his land on April 19, 1897.⁹⁰ His suit was settled out of court by compromise, the Unity agreeing to return half of his original holdings. Damkohler, however, had previously agreed to convey half of whatever he received to his attorney in lieu of fee, resulting in his actual recovery of but eighty acres, forty of which he later deeded to his son.⁹¹

The number of Koreshan settlers in actual residence at Estero or nearby from 1894 to 1901 seems to have remained fairly constant at around forty, the most generous estimate being "about sixty" in 1901.⁹² Though numbers remained constant, there seems to have been some replacement of individuals

⁸⁹Hinds, American Communities (1902), p. 383.

⁹⁰General Index to Civil Cases - Defendants - Lee Co., Fla., to April 1, 1968, K sheets 39.

⁹¹Damkohler, Estero, Fla., pp. 30-31; Andrews, "Replying to E. E. Damkohler."

⁹²Hinds, American Communities (1902), p. 383.

by new pioneers. The Unity had, during its first two or three years at Estero, advertised its colony as a tropical paradise and had, in effect, opened its doors to all, and it may be assumed that these policies had resulted in a number of disappointments and departures.

Dr. Teed and the leaders of the Unity were undoubtedly aware that wholesale acceptance of unqualified applicants had caused the failure of a number of previous utopian experiments,⁹³ and they seem, by 1902, to have become somewhat more cautious and selective in the recruitment of pioneers, and more emphatic in their warnings that Estero was not yet a heaven in earth. A pamphlet issued around that time quite honestly sets forth the hardships, discipline, and requirements of life at Estero; and, because it presents many aspects of both policy and reality at Estero, the pamphlet deserves consideration in some detail. This pamphlet, The Koreshan Unity: General Information concerning Membership and its Obligations,⁹⁴ is not, of course, pessimistic of eventual

⁹³As noted in Introduction, Dr. Teed had some association with the Harmonists and the Shakers.

⁹⁴Koresh, The Koreshan Unity: General Information concerning Membership and its Obligations (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1902 or early 1903); "By Koresh" appears on the first page of the pamphlet (there is no title

success. The Koreshan system, predicts its author, will grow from its capital city of Estero "until . . . It . . . fills the whole earth."⁹⁵ But the warnings are notably clear that "People coming to us in Estero come to a 'simon pure' pioneer life, one of strenuosity and sacrifice,"⁹⁶ and that "we have not yet reduced labor to a luxury, for our people are performing some drudgery."⁹⁷

The life of Jesus and the customs of primitive Christianity are recognized as desirable standards of performance, and the organization of the Unity briefly outlined, in the first two pages. Special attention is given to the "Ecclesia or Home Centers," inner circles of the Unity "to be developed and located throughout the world," wherein immortality will be gained through virginal, chaste, and celibate conservation of "the potencies of life."⁹⁸ Candidates for membership in

page) but Victoria Gratia Annie G. Ordway and Koresh "sign" the last page jointly. Internal evidence suggests to this writer that Dr. Teed is not the author of the pamphlet.

Hereafter cited as Koreshan Unity: Membership and Obligations.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 2.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 3.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 3, 2.

the Ecclesia will ordinarily remain for six months in the investigative order, freeing themselves, during that time, of vice. Individual, or "selfish," love is to be given up, as is property, and any children brought into the Unity are surrendered to the organization for care and schooling until the individual child reaches majority--twenty-one for males, eighteen for females.⁹⁹

Membership in the marital, or co-operative, order is also offered for those wishing to retain property or family, but this form of association is not strongly emphasized.¹⁰⁰ The pamphlet is principally aimed at those already sympathetic to more orthodox socialism and to unorthodox religion, but this emphasis was to change within a few years.¹⁰¹

Prospective members are warned that there is no room in the Unity for those who cannot accept the messianic law. The basis of the Koreshan system is religion, a religion of discipline and industry which has taken as its chief aim the establishment of the Kingdom of Koreshanity which will supplant all other kingdoms and insure immortality to its

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 10-12.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁰¹See: The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative.

adherents.¹⁰²

The system is one of common interest in all material things. In terms of financial claims, "there is no difference between one who has placed one penny in the common treasury, and the one who has contributed one hundred thousand." This "commonwealth," though in contrast to "the satanic system of competism," is not to be confused with orthodox socialism, however. Socialism is said to be an experiment which will ultimately prove to be a disastrous failure; Koreshanity will inevitably gain the world.¹⁰³

The author carefully differentiates between "commonwealth" and equality in all things: "equitable adjustment" and order, rather, are considered more realistic goals than total equality. Land is owned in common by the Koreshan state, commerce and industry are conducted on the basis of collective property, and private transactions between members are discouraged.¹⁰⁴

Warnings that Estero is not yet a utopian paradise are scattered throughout the pamphlet. Conditions at the new

¹⁰²Koresh, Koreshan Unity: Membership and Obligations, pp. 4, 2.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 5-6.

capital are characterized as "the best under the circumstances"; some friction between members is admitted; and those people "who want a good time at the present stage of our progress" are assured that they will receive no warm welcome.¹⁰⁵

Nor are the aged and impecunious, the irreligious, the half-hearted wanted at Estero: nothing must stand in the way of building the new city.¹⁰⁶ Always correlative to these warnings, however, are predictions and expectations of eventual success, a certainty that today's drudgery brings tonight's contentment and tomorrow's triumph.

We have people that have been with us for years, who came from luxury in the outside world, and yet are content and happy in our institution, because they have come with the purpose of abiding in the creation of the Utopia of their expectations.

No one is satisfied with the conditions of our present growth as the climax of our desires; but there are some who are willing to endure, in the expectation of the better things, because they have come to help make things better. If the Founder of the Koreshan System can endure the conditions, then others ought to be willing to participate in these conditions and the future attainment of perfection.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 7, 9.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 8.

But prospective pioneers had not only to work and dream of the future. An acceptance of the laws of the Koreshan order, after reading the Unity's literature, is essential, and full membership, with all that that encompassed, is most desirable if one is to become a part of New Jerusalem.¹⁰⁸

The pamphlet ends, not surprisingly, with application instructions and detailed directions for reaching Estero.¹⁰⁹

A considerable number of pioneers did arrive at Estero in 1902. They were, however, active Koreshans sent from the Unity's home in Chicago to speed construction work in preparation for the relocation of the entire Chicago community.¹¹⁰ Several of the settlement's principal buildings, including the Planetary Court, residence of the Unity's female leaders, were completed about this time.¹¹¹

Numerous factors prompting the removal of the Unity's headquarters from Chicago may be cited. First of all, of course, many members did believe that Estero, in time and

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 10-11.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹¹⁰Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 38.

¹¹¹Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, 27 January 1971.

with work, would become New Jerusalem, the world-center of a revolutionary commonwealth system. Secondly, strong feelings of resentment had been generated by the suits filed against Dr. Teed,¹¹² and by the unfavorable publicity which caused the Flaming Sword to "appeal to the true nobility of Chicago": "For ten years the disciples of Koresh have been subjected to public persecution of the most injurious character. Our enemies, with tongue and pen, have defamed our reputation for purity of life and righteous intent."¹¹³ Additionally, the Unity's quarters in Chicago were leased, and rental payments, medical and heating expenses incident to northern winters, and other unavoidable expenses consumed much of the Unity's income. These expenses, it was felt, would decrease considerably when living on the Unity's own land in the subtropical weather of Florida.¹¹⁴

✕ Thus, during 1903, the Koreshans began the enormous task of relocating a community of more than one hundred people.

¹¹²"Teed Sued for \$100,000," New York Times, p. 6.

¹¹³Bertha S. Boomer, "An Appeal to the True Nobility of Chicago," FS, XII, 1 (November 19, 1897), p. 7.

¹¹⁴Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 38.

Publication of the Flaming Sword was suspended with the issue of October 16,¹¹⁵ and the equipment of the printing plant was disassembled and packed. Fifteen freightcars were required to transport the personal effects, household furnishings, and equipment, from Chicago to Punta Gorda. The move was officially effective as of November 1,¹¹⁶ and the last group of Koreshans, numbering about forty, left Chicago on November 17.¹¹⁷

It is pleasant to suppose that when the Koreshans were united at Estero they joined in the following hymn:

Long we wept by the waters of Babel,
 A restless, a heart-broken land;
 For we were a people unstable,
 And the stranger destroyed our fair land.
 But the Lord God of heaven hath spoken,
 And Cyrus, again as of old,
 The power of Babel hath broken:
 Hail his flag of the red, green, and gold!

'Tis the day that of old was appointed--
 The Kingdom is brought to the birth;
 And Cyrus, of God the Anointed,
 Shall possess all the nations of earth.

¹¹⁵FS, XVII, 48 (October 16, 1903), p. 48.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 38-39.

Now he goes forth to conquest before us;
His glory the land shall behold!
Hail his colors that float bravely o'er us!
'Hail his flag of the red, green, and gold:118

118 "The Red, Green, and Gold," Koreshan Songs, words
by E/leanore M. Castle n.p., Guiding Star Publishing House,
n.d.7, p. 4.

CHAPTER II

GOLDEN DAYS

1904-1907

"Then shout! For God hath done it--
Redeemed a fallen son;
The victory, we have won it!
The many made in One."

--Koresh
"The Resurrection"¹

The Guiding Star City

Ten years' hard work had transformed the small clearing near the Estero River into an attractive and substantial community. The principal buildings of the town were set in a garden park laid out along the south bank of the river. This park, which extended along the shore for about a mile, was filled with flowering shrubs, tropical plants, and fruit trees of many varieties. Paths and driveways paved with crushed shells passed among trees carefully placed by Dr. Teed and his assistants. Mounds of earth crowned with exotic

¹Koreshan Songs, p. 1.

trees framed pleasant vistas. Fan-shaped steps, shaded by clumps of giant bamboo, led down to the boat landing on the river. A ravine, excavated to prevent flooding of the park, had been disguised as a sunken garden and was crossed by several artfully constructed foot-bridges. Flowering vines covered the verandas of the houses. Ripe fruit could be picked from the trees.²

The buildings set in this park, although spare and utilitarian in design, and bare of unnecessary outside embellishment, were comfortable and very clean. Most were built of lumber cut in the Koreshan Mill at the mouth of the river, some had thatched roofs, all had been built by the pioneers and were owned by the Unity.³ Estero's buildings included the large three-story dining hall and dormitory; the Planetary Court, residence of the Unity's female leaders; smaller dormitories and cabins for men and for women; a house for Dr. Teed and Mrs. Ordway; bakery, steam laundry and other industrial

²William Alfred Hinds, American Communities and Co-operative Colonies (2nd rev.; Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1908), pp. 479-480; Hinds' 1908 account relies on two main sources: a press release by U. G. Morrow (pp. 473-475) and a letter to Hinds from a Shaker who visited Estero (pp. 475-481), both written in 1906. Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 397.

³The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 42-43.

buildings, several with adjoining dormitory rooms for the men who lived near their work; print shop, school, store, boat house, and green house. Barns for livestock, dairy and other necessary buildings were placed beyond the limits of the park. Farms and forest surrounded the community, and many industries and agricultural sub-stations owned and operated by the Unity were located in the woods, along the river, and on the shores and islands of the bay.⁴

The fifteen carloads of Unity property which had arrived by rail at the Punta Gorda terminal had been transported by barge to Estero Island and stored in sheds. Gradually, during the winter and spring of 1904, the pianos, printing presses, furniture, clothing, and other articles were brought upriver in smaller barges and distributed. By summer the community was completely established and in full operation.⁵

The population of Estero during that year was about two hundred. Although new members were accepted from time

⁴Hinds, American Communities (1908), pp. 476-480; Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 39-40; The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 31-32, 37-58, passim. Erection of buildings at Estero was virtually complete by 1905.

⁵Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 39; publication of the Flaming Sword resumed with vol. XVIII, No. I (June 14, 1904).

to time, the total population never significantly surpassed this peak.⁶ The Koreshans were generally of American, English, and German Protestant backgrounds, although several members were of different stock, including, at one time, two Jews.⁷ No Negroes were members of the Unity at Estero. It has been reported, nevertheless, that Dr. Teed had proposed, and continued to propose, that they be colonized on separate land near the settlement. They were to be enrolled in the marital order, subjected to the elevating influences of the Unity, and offered relief from Southern racial antagonisms.⁸

The land upon which Estero was built was owned by the Unity; certain pieces of land in the surrounding area were, however, owned by other interests.⁹ The Koreshans'

⁶See an interview with Laurence W. Bubbett: Stan Windhorn, "Communal Life Unpopular, Inside-Out Cultists Find," Sarasota Herald-Tribune, August 5, 1956, p. 25. U. G. Morrow set the 1906 population at 170, reported in Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 473. The population sharply declined after Dr. Teed's death.

⁷Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 475.

⁸"Dr. Teed's New Jerusalem," Fort Myers Press, May 3, 1894, p. 1; Hinds, American Communities (1908), pp. 475-476.

⁹The information contained in this paragraph is drawn from: "Veritas" /U. G. Morrow/, "The Incorporation of Estero," Fort Myers Press, September 8, 1904, p. 4; Dr. Teed's letter to the editor of the Press, ibid. See also Rules of the Town

relations with their neighbors in Lee County had been relatively, if not entirely, free of friction since settlement in 1894. Upon consolidation of the Unity in 1903, however, these neighbors became less cooperative. As a precaution against interference, therefore, and to gain certain county tax revenues, Dr. Teed decided upon municipal incorporation of Estero. This incorporation became effective on September 1, 1904, upon the vote of the affected area's male residents, all but a few of whom were Koreshans. The Town of Estero's corporate limits conformed to the Koreshan plans for New Jerusalem: one hundred and ten square miles were contained within its boundaries. Eighty-two square miles of this was dry land, including the mainland and the islands enclosing and contained in Estero Bay; twenty-eight square miles was covered with water. Of the land territory the Unity claimed to own about one-eighth, or about 7,500 acres. The property of several neighboring, non-Koreshan land owners who objected to incorporation on various grounds was not included within municipal limits. Municipal ordinances were adopted and town officials elected within a few days. Also adopted at

Council and Ordinances of the Town of Estero, Lee County, Fla. (Estero: Koreshan Unity Press7, September 8, 1905 and November 6, 1905).

that time was Estero's new motto: "The Guiding Star City."

Although Dr. Teed was not among the elected officials, there is no doubt that the mayor, the marshal, and the nine aldermen functioned under his direction. Nor is there any doubt that the town ordinances were drawn under his supervision. The Unity's affairs were controlled, directly or indirectly, by Dr. Teed until shortly before his death.

The Unity characterized its internal government as "Imperio-Republico-Regal"¹⁰ and the system was in theory not unlike a constitutional monarchy. Measures were proposed by the Pre-Eminent of the Unity (Mrs. Ordway) through the Prime Counselor (Dr. Teed) to a three-chamber Pre-Eminent Concilium for adoption or disapproval. Measures might also be proposed in the Concilium, over which the Pre-Eminent presided; such measures, if adopted, were then endorsed by the Pre-Eminent and the Prime Counselor. Measures thus adopted and endorsed were then submitted to the general membership, or a representative body of this membership, for ratification or disapproval by acclamation.¹¹ The Unity's constitution and by-laws fully set forth offices, duties, relationships, and

¹⁰The Constitutions of the Koreshan Unity and its Departments (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1896), p. 19.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 2, 5.

statutes; these documents also state, however, that the Unity is to gradually become so organic a union as to preclude schism, division of opinion, or need of coercion.¹²

The practical effect of the system was that members followed Dr. Teed's suggestions or left the Unity. Some members did leave; those who stayed seem to have been generally satisfied with arrangements as they were. Strong leadership was necessary to the continued development of the community and the members accepted this fact.

The Unity had been incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey on September 23, 1903, with a capitalization of \$200,000 and a legal right to conduct almost any businesses save banking and the construction of railroads in that state.¹³ The Koreshan Unity, Incorporated, operated under a

¹²Ibid., p. 3. Titles were plentiful and their character in keeping with the spirit of Imperio-Republico-Regalism. Examples include: Lords and Ladies Naturo-Spiritual, Eminent Grand Matron of Commerce, and Eminent Grand Superior of Agriculture and Arts. Members of the Unity otherwise without title were to be known as Patrons of Equation. See ibid., pp. 2, 4.

¹³The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 15. This charter, under which the Unity still operates, was based on the original papers of incorporation of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey; Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," pp. 54-57.

board of directors, the president of which was Mrs. Ordway. Dr. Teed reserved for himself the title of Prime Counselor to this board, and his suggestions were relayed through Mrs. Ordway and the board members to the heads of the various departments for implementation.

Esteros development as a utopian experiment reached its height under the leadership and direction of Dr. Teed. This development and the day-to-day activities of the Koreshans during this period may be conveniently examined by division into three general areas: Education, Industry and Agriculture, and Social and Religious Life.

Education.

Dr. Teed considered education an indispensable part of the Koreshan system. Free education was therefore offered to all adults and children affiliated with the Estero community.¹⁴ This emphasis on education had begun in Chicago. The establishment of the World's College of Life was announced

¹⁴The Koreshan Unity: Its Work and Policies (leaflet, Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, [probably 1904]); The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 18. That not all of Dr. Teed's social and scientific theories were of such a nature as to guarantee immediate acceptance may have been one of the reasons behind this policy.

by Dr. Teed during 1886, the year he and his followers moved to that city.¹⁵ The curriculum of that informal institution reflected the doctor's concerns of the period: metaphysics, mental healing, and the mental science necessary to gain immortal life.¹⁶ Though the term "College of Life" was retained by the Unity in designating the second of its three principal departments, a "Koreshan University" was registered as a corporation under the laws of the State of Illinois on May 31, 1893.¹⁷ Dr. Teed's plans for the New Jerusalem at Estero included "magnificent palaces of education,"¹⁸ plans which were eventually, although more simply, realized in the establishment of the Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology at Estero. This institution, operated under the Illinois charter of the Koreshan University, offered instruction in Koreshan theory and doctrine as well as practical and theoretical training in vocational and academic subjects.¹⁹

¹⁵Guiding Star, I, 1 (December 1, 1886), p. 15.

¹⁶Ibid.; ibid., I, 6 (May 1887), p. 116.

¹⁷A copy of the corporate charter is reproduced in AE, May 1966, p. 2.

¹⁸Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 472.

¹⁹The Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology (leaflet, Estero, Fla.: The Koreshan University System /ca. 1906/7).

Soon after the consolidation in Florida in 1903 the Unity had purchased the San Carlos Hotel at St. James City, on Pine Island, some miles up the coast from Estero, intending to use it as the seat of the Koreshan University. During renovation, however, the second in the Unity's series of disastrous fires destroyed the hotel, and the property was later sold.²⁰ There was some subsequent talk of locating the university on Mound Key,²¹ but, after the fire, Koreshan educational activities were conducted in and around Estero.

Koreshan educational theory was progressive--practical rather than strictly academic. Students were expected to learn by doing, to perform some work under the direction of competent instructors.²² Memorization was theoretically discouraged by Dr. Teed: "It is to draw forth what is in the mind, and to develop its powers, that cultivation is applied . . .

²⁰The Koreshan Unity: Its Work and Policies; Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 40; unpublished letter, Hedwig Michel to writer, March 8, 1971.

²¹Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 479.

²²Co-Operative Industry for the Millions: Explanatory Introduction to the Booklet The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative (pamphlet, Estero, Fla.: Koreshan Unity Press, 1908), p. 6; The Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology.

Teach the mind to think, not to repeat automatically what other minds have taught . . ."23 Recitations in history and geography, spelling contests, and dramatic and musical performances by the school children were, nevertheless, frequent features of the community's entertainments.24 Sexual excesses and other dissipations were thought to cause premature mental decay and depletion, and the University catalogue warned that "Total abstinence from profanity, tobacco, intoxicants, and licentiousness will be required of all students."25

There were about twenty-five children at Estero in 1906 and it is probable that most of them attended school;26 by 1908 "several" outside students were reported to be enrolled.27 Small children attended school daily and their classes included elementary subjects, singing, and instrumental

²³Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], Mnemonics, or, The Science of Memory (Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, n. d.), p. 8.

²⁴AE: December 27, 1906, p. 3; January 3, 1907, p. 3; January 2, 1908, p. 3.

²⁵Koresh, Mnemonics, pp. 17-2; The Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology.

²⁶Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 475.

²⁷"Scribo," AE, January 2, 1908, p. 3.

music. Older children were given both academic and practical instruction. Boys were taken to the woods for a demonstration of surveying, or taught carpentry, printing, bee-keeping, or similar trades in the industrial or agricultural departments. Girls were offered courses in baking, needlework, and other domestic sciences, attending some of the industrial and commercial courses as well.²⁸

Both adults and young people were encouraged to attend the classes conducted in the Art Hall. This building, completed in 1905, was used for lectures and concerts, religious services, and entertainments. It had a seating capacity of about three hundred and was fitted with a stage and theatrical equipment.²⁹ Instructions in musical performance and composition were given here, as were lectures on art, Koreshan cosmogony and doctrine, osteopathy and dentistry, history and ethnology, and "Higher Mathematics from the Koreshan standpoint."³⁰ Specialized study was offered as interest

²⁸Hinds, American Communities (1908), pp. 478-479; The Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology.

²⁹The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 78. The building is now used as a museum as well as an auditorium.

³⁰The Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology.

demanded. A class of twelve was formed in 1907 for the study of Esperanto.³¹ Lectures on topics of more general interest--the history and natural resources of Florida, for example--were occasionally presented by visiting speakers.³²

The Unity's emphasis on education and refinement resulted in a determined effort to expose the membership, both children and adults, to selected forms of cultural activity. Music was most strongly stressed and the frequent concerts by orchestra and band were well attended. Although the programs of these concerts usually included selections by the popular song writers of the period, the majority of the music performed was the work of serious composers. The orchestra's repertoire included works by Wagner, Grieg, Verdi, Gounoud, von Suppe, Beethoven, Flotow, and the operettists Victor Herbert and Franz Lehar.³³

✕ The literature available to the community was of

³¹"Scribo," AE: November 28, 1907, Supplement, p. 2, and December 12, 1907, p. 7.

³²"Scribo," AE, December 12, 1907, p. 7.

³³AE: February 7, 1907, p. 3; August 1, 1907, p. 3; August 22, 1907, p. 3; March 19, 1908, Supplement, p. 1; March 26, 1908, Supplement, p. 2; May 28, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

similar quality. Among the authors represented were Shakespeare, Robert Burns, Emerson, Longfellow, Gibbon, Goethe, Tolstoy, Dickens, and Cooper. There were, in addition, medical, religious, and philosophical works. A library building was planned but never erected.³⁴

Industry and Agriculture.

Printing and publishing, perhaps most important among the Unity's industries, had been centered in Chicago prior to the move to Florida and was resumed at Estero by early summer of 1904. The equipment of the printing plant had been dismantled and packed, shipped south with the Unity's other property, and stored at Estero Island. A site fronting the county road (now the Tamiami Trail) near the river was selected for the print shop and was cleared of brush and palmetto during the winter of 1903-1904. By spring a two-story frame building, 38 by 70 feet, had been constructed using lumber cut in the Unity's mill. A small barge was built at the same time to transport the machinery upriver. The printing equipment and machinery were gradually installed in the new

³⁴Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 479.

building,³⁵ and publication of the Flaming Sword resumed with the issue of June 14, 1904.³⁶

Guiding Star Publishing House was essential to the growth and operation of the Unity. The general offices of the Unity were located in the print shop building, facilitating coordination between the two agencies. Second only to Dr. Teed's lectures as the agency of proselytization, Guiding Star produced books, leaflets, pamphlets and periodicals designed for use in gaining converts and contributions.³⁷ Sale of these and other publications was an important source of revenue as well as the means by which information was transmitted to Koreshans living at distant points. Miscellaneous items such as prayer cards, printed programs of entertainments, and collections of hymns, prayers, religious doctrines and social ordinances were produced for use within the community.³⁸ Profitable printing work for clients outside

³⁵Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 387; Andrews, "How The Eagle Was Hatched," AE, January 22, 1948, p. 2.

³⁶Flaming Sword, XVIII, I.

³⁷Lou H. Staton, a long-time Koreshan, reported buying a copy of the Flaming Sword one evening in Chicago, reading it in bed that night, and experiencing conversation before going to sleep, see: Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 262.

³⁸A number of these items are on display in the Art Hall at Estero.

the Unity was also contracted in Chicago and at Estero.³⁹

The Koreshans boasted that they possessed "the most modern machinery obtainable" and that their press room was "the best equipped in the state."⁴⁰ Good equipment was necessary to their operation, however, and the boasts were not empty. The print shop was capable of printing and binding books, pamphlets, and magazines; printing and folding newspapers and leaflets; printing commercial forms, legal documents, maps and charts, and other similar items.⁴¹ Included among the plant's equipment and machinery were: three cylinder presses, three job presses, two power paper cutters, two paper folders (book and news), and other necessary machines.⁴² A steam engine powered the plant.⁴³ Color printing equipment, engraving equipment, and a dark room for developing photographs were added in 1906 and 1907.⁴⁴ The composing

³⁹In Chicago, for instance, the Unity printed the Quarterly Bulletin of the Chicago Veterinary College, I, 4 (June 1903); the 1908 telephone directory of the Lee County Telephone Company was printed at Estero, see: "Scribo," AE, December 5, 1907, Supplement, p. 1.

⁴⁰AE, June 7, 1906, p. 3.

⁴¹The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 37-38.

⁴²AE, June 7, 1906, p. 3.

⁴³Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. /387.

⁴⁴The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 37-38.

room was stocked with type of at least two dozen fonts and, although four or five women set the type by hand, the printing done at this time was uniformly excellent in composition, symmetry, clarity, and design.⁴⁵

Evelyn Bubbett had become manager of Guiding Star in 1888, and continued in this position until her death in 1935. Her husband James was mechanical supervisor of the plant, responsible for much of the actual printing.⁴⁶ U. G. Morrow remained as editor of the Flaming Sword when publication was resumed in Florida. By 1907 the Unity reported that about twenty-five people were employed in the printing and publishing industry at Estero.⁴⁷

Marine activities began at Estero with the purchase of the sloop Ada in 1894, and the development of marine industries continued with the establishment of the boat ways

⁴⁵Anderson, "The American Eagle: Unique Florida Weekly," pp. 29-30. For an excellent example of the fine work done by Guiding Star Publishing House, see The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, a book printed, bound, and illustrated by the Koreshans.

⁴⁶Anderson, "American Eagle: Unique Florida Weekly," pp. 13, 20.

⁴⁷The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 38.

and shops adjacent to the sawmill at Carlos Point on Estero Island. Estero's location and the characteristics of the surrounding area dictated that boats and marine activities assume an important role in the development of the settlement and the outlying sub-stations.

The center of the settlement lay six miles upriver from the bay and sixteen miles overland from Fort Myers. Communication and transportation of passengers and freight, between Estero, Fort Myers, and the intermediate points in Estero Bay and at the Estero River's mouth, were essential, and boats provided the only practical means of linking them. Although the water route between Estero and Fort Myers was more than twice as far as the distance by the county road, the road at that time was no more than a heavy sand trail through the woods, and was often impassable.⁴⁸

Marine industries added to the economy of the Unity in several ways. Building and repairing boats created a market for the products of the sawmills, and these, together with the sale of new and refurbished boats, were a steady source of income. Expenses were lowered by the Unity's construction and repair of boats necessary for its own use, by

⁴⁸Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 14.

the operation of its own transportation system, and by the extensive harvesting of fish and seafood for Unity consumption. Ease of access to Estero must also have contributed indirectly to appreciation of the value of the Unity's property.

Pleasure boating added to the enjoyment of life at Estero, and moonlight cruises were often organized. Assembling the brass band in one boat, the Koreshans would follow in others, music filling the night as the little flotilla cruised up the river and around the bay.⁴⁹ The Koreshans were also enabled to spend time in town as regular service between Estero and Fort Myers was established. By 1907 three boats were each making the six-hour trip at least once a week,⁵⁰ and in 1908 it was reported that the motor launch Arrow had made the run in three hours and fifty-five minutes.⁵¹

Unity proposals to make Estero a center of world sea trade had begun as early as 1895,⁵² and similar plans were

⁴⁹The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 48 and photographs, pp. 21, 30.

⁵⁰"Scribo," AE, February 14, 1907, p. 3.

⁵¹Ibid., April 13, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

⁵²Jackson and Daniels, Koreshan Unity, p. 7.

subsequently offered. These proposals became somewhat more realistic in 1907, however, with the Unity's proposal to "co-operate" "with men of some means" in establishing a coast line trade by water between several points in South, Central, and North America for mutual profit.⁵³ Establishment of commercial fisheries was also proposed under similar conditions,⁵⁴ and the Unity proposed to manufacture an improved marine gas engine.⁵⁵ Nothing came of these plans.

Other Koreshan industries and businesses included the machine shop, the concrete works, a bakery, a steam laundry, and the Unity store.

The store was located near the river across the county road from the site of the print shop. Goods were dispensed to Koreshans and co-operators as necessary. Items normally carried by a country general store, as well as Koreshan products, were sold to the public, and trade was in both cash and kind.⁵⁶ The Estero post office was located

⁵³The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 51.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 47.

⁵⁶Alligator hides, for example, were exchanged for provisions by hunters, see: "Scribo," AE, April 30, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

in the store except for a brief period around the time of municipal incorporation when the uncooperative neighbors succeeded in having it removed to their own property.⁵⁷

The steam laundry, located at Estero, employed five or six persons. Using heavy washing and drying machines they washed and ironed the laundry for two hundred people in eleven houses. This service was provided free to all residents.⁵⁸

The bakery, located near the dining hall, had an oven capacity of five hundred to six hundred loaves of bread per day.⁵⁹ Koreshan "risin' bread," made with yeast, was popular with the Unity's neighbors who were more accustomed to corn pone, and some bread was sold.⁶⁰

The concrete works near the sawmill at the mouth of the river, produced concrete blocks and artificial stone, paving stones, and decorative items for sale and for use at Estero. Gradual replacement of the wooden buildings at Estero

⁵⁷Dr. Teed's letter to the Editor of the Press discusses the post office affair: Fort Myers Press, September 8, 1904, p. 4.

⁵⁸The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 33.

⁶⁰Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 40.

with structures of a more permanent nature was proposed in establishing this industry,⁶¹ but only one such project was undertaken, the veneering with artificial stone of an existing house.⁶² Many improvements were made to existing buildings and to the decorations of the park through the use of concrete, however, and a machinery hall and council building was erected in Fort Myers by the Koreshans under contract to the county.⁶³ Attached to the concrete works was the department of sculpture. In this shop were produced busts, medallions, and piece-molds for reproduction of decorative items.⁶⁴

The machine shop was fitted for repair work on the heavy steam and gasoline engines used by the Unity. Repairs were also made on the smaller tools and articles in constant use at Estero which otherwise would have had to be sent away

⁶¹The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 42-43.

⁶²The house was Mrs. Ordway's. See: "Scribo," AE, April 30, 1908, Supplement, p. 1, and October 15, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

⁶³Ibid., March 28, 1907, p. 3; October 3, 1907, p. 7; December 5, 1907, Supplement, p. 1.

⁶⁴The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 46-47. Some of these items are on display in the Art Hall and the park at Estero.

for maintenance. The shop's equipment included engine lathes, drill-presses, power metal saws, grinding and polishing machines, and necessary tools.⁶⁵

Agriculture, animal husbandry, and related activities were not the basis of Koreshan plans for the development of Estero. Farming and gardening lowered expenses and provided items not otherwise available for Koreshan tables, horticulture improved the appearance of the community and contributed to the pleasures of life, but husbandry was never the central activity that it had been for such orthodox communarians as the Shakers, the Harmonists, or the Inspirationists of Amana. Of the 7,000 acres that the Unity claimed to own in 1906,⁶⁶ it is probable that less than five percent was under cultivation. Nor was all the cultivated land conveniently located near the settlement. Many of the smaller farms were scattered through the woods, down the river, and on the shores and islands of the bay,⁶⁷ and it is improbable that such an arrangement would contribute to an economical

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 47; Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 40.

⁶⁶Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 477.

⁶⁷Ibid.; The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 57-58; Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 26-27; "Scribo," AE, February 6, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

farming operation.

Citrus fruit was the single most important agricultural product of Estero. By 1907 the Unity was reported to have under cultivation near the settlement about seventy acres of oranges, containing over 3,200 trees, of which forty percent were bearing high-quality fruit. Grapefruit was also grown commercially.⁶⁸ The Koreshans did not, however, restrict their fruit growing to the commercial production of citrus. Among the different fruits grown at Estero between 1904 and 1908 were cumquats, pomegranates, bananas, pineapples, pawpaws, guavas, lemons, loquats, limes, pears, coconuts, melons, scuppernong grapes, strawberries, and garden huckleberries.⁶⁹ Some of these fruits were cultivated on the farms around the bay but the majority of the more exotic varieties were grown in the garden park along the river at Estero.⁷⁰

Garden fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes,

⁶⁸Jacksonville Times-Union /1907/, quoted in The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 50.

⁶⁹Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 478; The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 33, 57, 77; "Scribo," AE: November 14, 1907, p. 3; December 12, 1907, p. 7; February 6, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

⁷⁰Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 478.

strawberries, beans, and greens were produced for Koreshan tables on the smaller farms; some of these were also commercially grown and shipped.⁷¹ Fancy items were also occasionally grown: a shed for mushroom culture was erected during the winter of 1907-1908.⁷²

Sugar cane was grown to produce molasses for community use and for sale. Several varieties of cane were introduced, including Ribbon, Bourbon, Green, and Japanese, and cane mills and boiling vats for molasses making were purchased.⁷³

As is usual in farming, some crops had several uses. Ground sugar cane stalks were used for animal forage;⁷⁴ cassava, used in bread making and as a substitute for the Irish potato, was fed to cattle, as was the velvet bean, a soil rejuvenator.⁷⁵

A herd of about twenty Jersey cattle was kept for dairy products and meat. "Hundreds of hogs" owned by the Unity were allowed to run free in the woods. These common pigs were

⁷¹"Scribo," AE, February 6, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

⁷²Ibid., January 23, 1908, p. 3.

⁷³The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 53-54; ibid., December 27, 1906, p. 3.

⁷⁴"Scribo," AE, December 27, 1906, p. 3.

⁷⁵The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 54-55.

crossed with Red Jersey Duroc stock about 1907 to improve the breed.⁷⁶ Horses and cows were housed in separate barns and sheds at Estero, and poultry was penned.⁷⁷ The apiary was judiciously located about two miles south of Estero, at Winfield Park, a farm in the woods.⁷⁸

The Unity endeavored to train young farmers in the practical and theoretical aspects of husbandry. Children at Estero were expected to perform some tasks "adapted to their age and moral tendencies"⁷⁹ and the Pioneer University's curriculum included courses in agriculture and bee-keeping.⁸⁰

Social and Religious Life

The Koreshans as a group were attractive, intelligent, individualistic men and women, and they seem to have been

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 48-49.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 82 (photograph); "Scribo," AE, October 10, 1907, Supplement, p. 1.

⁷⁸The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 58.

⁷⁹Co-Operative Industry for the Millions: Explanatory Introduction to the Booklet "The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative," p. 6.

⁸⁰The Pioneer University of Koreshan Universology.

devoted to Dr. Teed and Mrs. Ordway. A visiting Shaker reported in 1906 that he had "never beheld a people who seemed so united in spirit and so confident of the fulfillment of all their hopes."⁸¹ This spiritual union, however, was in large measure the love of disciples for a master. The socialistic spirit was secondary, and Dr. Teed did not develop leaders for the future capable of sustaining the growth of the community he had built. Estero, with its music, writing, art, gardens, and individualism was closer, during Dr. Teed's lifetime, to the idea of Brook Farm than to the actuality of Amana or a Shaker village.

The young people were an especially handsome group. Photographs recording outings on the beach, gatherings at the bamboo landing in the park, or the membership of the brass band show pretty girls in shirtwaists and long skirts; handsome, smiling, clean-shaven young men in fresh white shirts, neckties, and trousers. These young men and women seem relaxed and happy; their faces are not those of religious fanatics.⁸²

Their elders are more stern of face, less serene in

⁸¹In Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 481.

⁸²See photographs in Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 26-A, and The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 31.

attitude. Formally posed in groups for the photographer they smile behind their elaborate dresses, their suits and beards or mustaches. But they do not smile in the same way as the young people.⁸³

Life at Estero was one of brotherhood, with the sexes separate and yet united. The men and women were almost entirely of the socialistic order⁸⁴ and they worked well together in celibate equality. Sleeping quarters were segregated by sex; brothers and sisters dined together and attended entertainments and meetings together, seating themselves, in each case, on opposite sides of the room. At dances brothers danced only with brothers and sisters with sisters.⁸⁵ The laws of the Town of Estero and of the Unity forbade licentiousness, alcoholic beverages and tobacco, opium, and other vices. But there seem to have been few transgressions of the Koreshan moral code and little need of law enforcement. The constant social intercourse between the sexes was joined

⁸³See photographs in The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 14, 16.

⁸⁴The Unity attempted, over the years, to develop marital and co-operative orders within the organization, but met with little success. The book Koreshan Unity, Co-operative marks the last important attempt.

⁸⁵Hinds, American Communities (1908), pp. 474-475,

to high ideals, hard work, and many diversions.⁸⁶ There were frictions,⁸⁷ there were a number of marriages,⁸⁸ but there seems to be no reason to suspect any sexual promiscuity at Estero during Dr. Teed's lifetime.

All members resident at the settlement gathered together for meals in the common dining hall. Tables for ten were set with linen cloths and napkins on each side of the large room.⁸⁹ The meal began with a hymn or a prayer from the specially printed book of Koreshan Daily Graces from which the following examples are taken:⁹⁰

Monday: evening--

478. This is the only apparent reference to social dancing at Estero I have found although there seems to have been no rule against it.

⁸⁶Hinds, American Communities (1908), pp. 474-475.

⁸⁷Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, January 25, 1971.

⁸⁸Laurence W. Bubbett remembered that "many of the single men and women succumbed and got married": Stan Windhorn, "Communal Life Unpopular, Inside-Out Cultists Find," Sarasota Herald-Tribune, August 5, 1956, p. 25. Bubbett's sister, Elizabeth, and Claude J. Rahn, both children of Koreshan leaders, were among these. They preserved their affiliation with the Unity, however, as members of the marital order.

⁸⁹The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 31-32.

⁹⁰Koreshan Daily Graces (Estero, Fla.: Koreshan Unity Press), n.d., pp. 2, 4.

OUR Father and our Mother God, Parent of our being, promise of our hope of future joy in the home of bliss and peace, fill our souls with adoration and praise. Have we filled this day with a devotion to our obligations to you and our neighbor? Have we been dutiful children in our service? Wherein we have failed, forgive and help. Renew us as we eat and drink, and supply us with the Bread and Water of Life, and thus fit us to serve you faithfully. Amen!

Wednesday: morning--

OUR Glorious Sun of Righteousness, we behold in you the climax of all that toward which the race should reach in its aspirations for God. We know that in your life of lives there may be found every attribute of the perfect man, every function of the essences of regenerative life, by which regeneration and redemption are wrought. We behold in you the biunity of those sex forces in which the universe is renewed and perpetuated. Make us grow into your likeness and image, that in being like our God, we may regard ourselves his offspring. Feed us with the Bread of Life, and thus enable us to perform your service in our devotion to the neighbor. We are grateful for everything which may be effectual in rounding the character and constituting us men. Bring us into fellowship and into the states of mind and body that will insure to us our full redemption. Amen!

Breakfast was served before work, which began at seven o'clock; dinner was at noon and supper at six.⁹¹ A well-cooked but plain bill of fare was offered, consisting generally of those items produced or caught by the Koreshans.⁹²

The dining hall was sometimes used for informal Sunday

⁹¹The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 85.

⁹²"Why Koreshans Eat Plain Food," FS, XXI, 4 (April 15, 1907), p. 30; Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 478.

services⁹³ consisting of hymns, prayers, and sermons. Similarly Protestant in spirit was the ceremonial service occasionally held in the Art Hall. This service included songs, readings from scripture, invocations and responses, a solo musical performance, and a sermon. During formal services the leaders of the Unity were seated on platforms of various levels on the main stage of the Art Hall. The different platforms provided places for Dr. Teed and Mrs. Ordway as well as for the members of the Pre-Eminent Concilium. This governing body, based on the cosmos, was composed of the six women of the Planetary Chamber, the four men of the Stellar Chamber, and the six men and six women of the Signet Chamber.⁹⁴ Regular informal services were usually held in the Art Hall on Sunday mornings at eleven o'clock.⁹⁵

The diversions and entertainments offered at Estero were, like the items of the Koreshan menu, largely of home production, and seem to have been designed, as were Shaker

⁹³Hinds, American Communities (1908), p. 476.

⁹⁴Ibid.; FS, XX, 1 (June 12, 1906), p. 5, and XX, 6 (July 17, 1906), p. 9.

⁹⁵"Scribo," AE: October 10, 1907, Supplement, p. 1; November 14, 1907, p. 3; December 12, 1907, p. 7.

dances and night meetings, as substitutes for, or sublimations of, sexual desires.⁹⁶ Concerts by orchestra and brass band were given at least twice a month and usually included recitations or dramatic programs by the school children.⁹⁷ "Victor concerts" were also frequently held, there being more than two hundred phonograph records in the collection of one Koreshan lady. These concerts, too, were well attended.⁹⁸ The younger Koreshans amused themselves in 1907 and 1908 by assembling a zoo in the park. Included in the collection were a black bear, three foxes, an eagle, an opossum, a wildcat, and a pair of otters.⁹⁹

Picnics were frequently organized and held in the woods around Estero or on one of the islands in the bay. These were "enlivened with music by the band, speeches, jokes, and the playing of various games."¹⁰⁰ There were, in addition,

⁹⁶"Substitution" is suggested by Dr. Teed. See: Koresh Cyrus R. Teed, Judgement (Chicago: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1900), p. 16.

⁹⁷See, for example, AE: December 27, 1906, p. 3; January 3, 1907, p. 3.

⁹⁸Ibid.: August 29, 1907, Supplement, p. 1; November 28, 1907, Supplement, p. 2; February 6, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

⁹⁹Ibid.: May 16, 1907, Supplement, p. 2; May 23, 1907, Supplement, p. 1; July 11, 1907, Supplement, p. 2; April 2, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., February 14, 1907, p. 3.

moonlight cruises, fishing and hunting expeditions, classes, rehearsals, and trips to various points of interest in the area.

The principal holidays celebrated were the Solar and Lunar Festivals of October 18 and April 12, these being, respectively, the official birthday anniversaries of Dr. Teed and Mrs. Ordway.¹⁰¹ Christmas, Independence Day, and Washington's Birthday were also celebrated. Special festival days usually including a morning prayer meeting in the Art Hall with remarks by Dr. Teed and Mrs. Ordway, followed by an elaborate dinner or picnic. On festival evenings the Koreshans wore fanciful costumes and often entertained guests. The park was illuminated with torches, refreshment booths were set up under the trees, music was played by the band.¹⁰² It is safe to assume that on such nights the Koreshans were full of hope for the eventual success of their utopian experiment at Estero.

¹⁰¹"Solar Festival at Estero," AE, October 24, 1907, p. 1.

¹⁰²AE: March 7, 1907, p. 3; October 24, 1907, p. 1; April 16, 1908, pp. 1, 3.

From The Inside Out

With the extension of the railroad to Fort Myers in 1904¹⁰³ that town became the principal link between Estero and the outside world. Koreshan boats ran regularly between the New Jerusalem and the county seat, social and commercial intercourse between the citizens of both towns increased, and there seemed to be a growing atmosphere of mutual tolerance, cooperation, and respect.

The Fort Myers Press carried an Estero community events column written by the editor of the Flaming Sword, U. G. Morrow, under the pseudonym "Veritas." This and other editorial favors were given in return for Koreshan support of the Press's editor, Philip Isaacs, in an election for county judge in 1904. The Koreshans block voted, helping to elect Isaacs and other candidates.¹⁰⁴

Cooperation was also evidenced that year by the inclusion of a Unity booth in the Lee County exhibit at the

¹⁰³Brown and Brown, History of Fort Myers Beach, p. 22.

¹⁰⁴FS, XIX, 1 (June 13, 1905), p. 14; "Two Sides to Every Question," AE, October 18, 1906, Supplement, p. 1; U. G. Morrow, "Liberty of Citizens," AE, March 21, 1907, Supplement, pp. 1-2.

South Florida Fair at Tampa.¹⁰⁵ And, in May, 1905, upon the opening of the Unity's Art Hall, many citizens of Fort Myers and other county towns and villages visited Estero for an exhibition of paintings by Dr. Teed's son, Douglas Arthur Teed.¹⁰⁶

This relatively tranquil coexistence was shattered by events surrounding the election of 1906, however, when the public show of cooperation between Lee County officials and Dr. Teed was proved to be but an uneasy truce. Economics, politics, and, to a lesser extent, pride, and religious and sectional prejudice were the reasons for the breaking of this truce. The conflict which followed brought into existence a Unity periodical, the American Eagle, which has served well the people and the state of Florida. But the events of 1906 ultimately proved disastrous to the development of the Koreshan Unity at Estero.

The seeds of the conflict were sown in 1904 with the

¹⁰⁵The Guiding Star Publishing House Visitors' Register, an unnumbered volume still in use at Estero, provides a list of the visitors to the booth.

¹⁰⁶"O.E.S.," "A Visit to Estero," FS, XIX, 1 (June 13, 1905), pp. 12-13, reprinted from Fort Myers Press, May 25, 1905; the Guiding Star Publishing House Visitors' Register provides a list, dated May 18, 1905, of the visitors and their addresses.

municipal incorporation of the one-hundred-and-ten square mile town of Estero. Several land owners affected by this action had been angered, and, in retaliation, had caused the Estero post office to be removed from Unity property. Moreover, municipal incorporation entitled Estero to certain County road tax funds. Estero officials proceeded to press this claim but County officials were understandably loath to divert funds from their own projects, particularly those in Fort Myers.¹⁰⁷ In addition, there was in Fort Myers a certain resentment and prejudice against the ambitious group of northern newcomers who sought to establish a university before they had homes to live in, who boasted that they would revolutionize the world, and who followed a scientific religion which taught that the earth is outside-in.¹⁰⁸

The official truce had been declared prior to the incorporation, however, when the Koreshans registered to vote

¹⁰⁷"Shall Koreshan Ideas Prevail in Lee County?", Fort Myers Press, October 4, 1906, p. 4; "Protection of the Taxpayers," AE, May 16, 1907, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸Anderson, "The American Eagle: Unique Florida Weekly," p. 17. This attitude is evident in almost every reference to the Koreshans by the Fort Myers Press in 1906 and 1907 but was obviously not shared by all citizens of Fort Myers.

and were permitted to take part in the Democratic Party primary of 1904. Victory in that primary was tantamount to election for state and county offices, and the Koreshans, by block voting, helped elect several candidates, including Philip Isaacs. In that year's general election, however, the Koreshan votes for President went to Theodore Roosevelt whom they considered superior to the Democratic nominee, Alton B. Parker. The Koreshans otherwise supported the entire Democratic ticket, but this defection angered the county Democratic executive committee and other Lee County politicians and provided an excuse to disenfranchise the Koreshans for the election of 1906.¹⁰⁹

The instrument of this disenfranchisement was a pledge which participants in the first Democratic primary of May 1906 were required to sign if challenged. The pledge stated that the voter would support all Democratic nominees of 1906 and that he had "SUPPORTED THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINEES OF 1904, BOTH STATE, COUNTY AND NATIONAL."¹¹⁰ This pledge,

¹⁰⁹Allen H. Andrews, "Open Letter to the Florida Times-Union," AE, June 14, 1906, p. 3.

¹¹⁰"The Pledge Required of the Koreshans," Fort Myers Press, May 31, 1906, p. 4.

based upon laws passed to exclude Negroes from the franchise, was so worded as to exclude both those Koreshans who had voted for Roosevelt in 1904 and those who had not been in Lee County in 1904 and had therefore not voted. The Koreshans proved to be less easily intimidated than those at whom the spirit of the law was aimed, however. They appeared at the Estero precinct polling station on the day of the first Democratic primary, protested against the pledge but then signed it after crossing out certain of the qualifications, and block voted for the candidates of their choice.¹¹¹ The Democratic executive committee, of which Philip Isaacs was chairman, thereupon threw out the entire vote of the Estero precinct, including eight votes by non-Koreshan electors, and instructed election inspectors to bar Koreshans from voting in the second primary.¹¹² Isaacs' term as county judge had not expired in 1906 and he had therefore not found it necessary

¹¹¹W. Ross Wallace, "Decadence of the Ballot," AE, June 14, 1906, p. 1; W. Ross Wallace, "The County Judge Suffering from Aberration," AE, June 7, 1906, pp. 1, 3; Allen H. Andrews, "Open Letter to the Florida Times-Union," AE, June 14, 1906, p. 3; "Results of the Primary," Fort Myers Press, May 17, 1906, p. 4.

¹¹²"Election Committee Canvassed," Fort Myers Press, May 24, 1906, p. 4.

to curry Koreshan favor in return for votes.¹¹³

The Koreshans decided to retaliate by opposing the Democratic candidates in the November general election, although this election was ordinarily but a certification of the results of the Democratic primaries. The Koreshans were probably not staunch Democrat loyalists in any case, having dealt, according to the Fort Myers Press, with Republicans and Socialists as well as Democrats for Unity benefit. The Republican Party in Florida was powerless in local politics and so the Koreshans first turned to the Socialist organization.¹¹⁴

The Socialist Party had no effective means of public communication, however, and so the Unity--with printing presses, professional writers and printers, and a distribution organization at its disposal--decided to begin publishing a weekly political newspaper.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Allen H. Andrews, "Open Letter to the Florida Times-Union," AE, June 14, 1906, p. 3.

¹¹⁴"The Pledge Required of the Koreshans," Fort Myers Press, May 31, 1906, p. 4.

¹¹⁵Ibid., which states that the Unity issued a circular giving notice that the paper would be a weekly exponent and organ of the Socialist party; this writer has not been able to locate a copy of the circular.

The Koreshans apparently decided rather quickly against formally joining the Lee County Socialists. That party was disorganized, and union was discarded in favor of the formation of a new party in which Koreshans, Socialists, Republicans, dissatisfied Democrats, and other dissidents (but, notably, not Negroes) could band together in opposition to the Democratic organization. The party was called the Progressive Liberty Party and it, too, needed an organ of public communication. The Koreshans correctly assumed that Isaacs' Press would not favor the activities of the opposition with full and unbiased coverage. Thus was hatched the American Eagle.¹¹⁶

The first issue of the American Eagle was published at Estero on Thursday, June 7, 1906,¹¹⁷ and this initial edition gave notice that the paper was to be no ordinary country weekly. Printed on sixty to seventy pound book-quality paper, and hand set by the Koreshan experts, the Eagle displayed typographical innovations not found in metropolitan

¹¹⁶Koresh /Cyrus R. Teed/, "Opportunity for the Public Voice," AE, June 7, 1906, p. 1; "Our Initial Scream," ibid., p. 2; R. W. Reynolds, "To the Socialists of Lee County," AE, June 21, 1906, pp. 1, 3.

¹¹⁷Thursday was, not incidentally, the Press's day of publication.

dailies until years later, and was far superior in every way to the weekly Florida newspapers of the period.¹¹⁸

Allen H. Andrews, a printer with no editorial experience, was chosen editor¹¹⁹ by Dr. Teed and was assisted by associate editor Rollin W. Gray. Most of the early articles and editorials were written by Andrews, Gray, John S. Sargeant, U. G. Morrow, and Dr. Teed.

Because the Eagle was begun as a means of rallying independents to the political banner of the Progressive Liberty Party, the only reference to Koreshan non-political beliefs in the first issue was the motto, "Riches and Poverty Cease where the Commonwealth Begins," which ran just below the paper's nameplate. More expressive of the paper's early intentions was the wording of the masthead: "The American Eagle: Exponent of Purity in Politics." The first issue ran four pages and the editorial content was almost entirely partisan political. The tone was set in the lead-off editorial:

¹¹⁸Anderson, "American Eagle: Unique Florida Weekly," pp. 1, 29-33, which provides an excellent technical description of the early issues of the Eagle. The first issue is remarkably "clean." No typographical errors, for instance, were apparent to this writer.

¹¹⁹Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 437.

OUR INITIAL SCREAM

As heat is one of the necessary factors in incubation, so from out of the heat of the recent political strife has been hatched The American Eagle, full-fledged and strong of beak. His flight is lofty,--no place, though high, escapes his keen, far-seeing eye. From time immemorial the eagle has been the symbol of liberty from the thralldom of the oppressor's yoke, therefore The American Eagle--friend of the downtrodden and oppressed--is an adversary to be reckoned with by those who 'are thirsting for power' and dominion over others.

Several features which were to continue in use appeared in this issue, including political cartoons and "The Week's News Boiled Down," a wrap-up of state, national, and international news items. Twenty-four business card advertisements appeared on the back page, each set in a different type face. Only two of these ads were placed by residents of Estero. Eleven of the remaining twenty-two were placed by financial and community leaders of Fort Myers and Lee County. This would seem to indicate that although the Koreans were in dispute with the county's politicians they enjoyed the respect of other elements of the population.¹²⁰

The Eagle was an immediate success. By July 12 circulation was 532, and a month later it had risen to 668.¹²¹

¹²⁰Anderson, "American Eagle: Unique Florida Weekly," p. 30.

¹²¹AE: July 12, 1906, p. 3; August 16, 1906, p. 3.

Subject matter was broadened with succeeding issues but remained in line with Dr. Teed's views. The Jungle, Upton Sinclair's exposé of the meatpacking industry, was favorably reviewed in the fourth issue,¹²² and "muckraking" articles on national, state, and local questions followed. The same issue introduced the use of color. The first page was printed over the drab green silhouette of an eagle with outstretched wings. Community events columns from the county's small towns also began appearing with that issue. The Eagle went "up" to six pages on August 23 with the inclusion of a "supplement" page.

The Progressive Liberty Party (PLP) was organized at Estero by Dr. Teed and Unity members. A proposed PLP platform had appeared in the first issue of the Eagle and the first official meeting of the Estero Voter's League had been held on June 15.¹²³ In order to arouse the interest of independent voters, however, a PLP organizing convention was held in Fort Myers on June 24. The proposed platform was amended and adopted, the Eagle named official organ of the party, and

There were no more than one thousand voters in Lee County, but about one third of the issues cited in the first figure were sent out of the county.

¹²²W. Ross Wallace, June 28, 1906, p. 3.

¹²³June 7, 1906, p. 1; "First Shot of the Campaign,"

a slate of candidates elected. The elections to be contested included those for state representative, and county commissioners, school board members, tax assessor, tax collector, and treasurer.¹²⁴ Only one nominee, W. Ross Wallace, candidate for county commission from the Estero district, was a Koreshan. The others were, of course, generally friendly to the Koreshans and to their ideas of political independence from the county Democratic leaders.¹²⁵

The Eagle printed editorials on several political issues, including drainage of the Everglades and tax equalization, and the paper continually alleged corruption and political favoritism in reports on Lee County affairs.¹²⁶ These seem to have hit their marks. The Eagle reported receiving threats of a visit to Estero by armed men if the

AE, June 21, 1906, p. 1.

¹²⁴"New Party Launched," AE, July 26, 1906, p. 1.

¹²⁵Two nominees later declined to run but were replaced on the ticket: "Decline to Run," AE, August 2, 1906, p. 1.

¹²⁶W. Ross Wallace, "Steel Bridges and Politics," AE, August 2, 1906, p. 1; "The Drainage Discussion," AE, August 9, 1906, pp. 1, 3; W. Ross Wallace, "'Way to the Egress'," ibid.

reports continued. The Koreshans replied in the Eagle that their own guns were ready and that they would continue to expose corruption and incompetence in public affairs.¹²⁷

The election was to be held on November 6, and the PLP campaign intensified in September with a series of rallies held in most of the small towns and villages of the county. Democratic candidates were invited to attend these rallies to debate PLP nominees, but none apparently appeared.¹²⁸ Speeches were given and music was provided by the Unity brass band which accompanied the PLP caravan from town to town during September and October.¹²⁹ A genuine interest in the party was aroused among the citizens of the smaller towns. Lee County politics was certainly no better than it should have been and the practical and equitable ideas of the ambitious reformers were not lost on the less wealthy members of the population.

The PLP platform contained many ideas which, although

¹²⁷W. Ross Wallace, "Reaching the Vitals," AE, August 16, 1906, p. 1.

¹²⁸"Meetings Next Week," AE, September 20, 1906, p. 3.

¹²⁹AE: ibid. and p. 1; October 4, 1906, p. 3; October 18, 1906, Supplement, p. 2; Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 437.

suspect to Florida conservatives of the period, were subsequently written into law. Other ideas gained strength in the United States but were never adopted. Among these proposals were: public ownership of utilities, taxation on an equitable basis, "government in the sunshine," free schooling, extension of good roads, equalization of wealth, and government conservation of resources and protection of the environment.¹³⁰

Much of the PLP's campaign invective was aimed at Philip Isaacs. The conflict between his interests as county judge, journalist, and political committeeman was made symbolic of the corruption in Lee County Democratic affairs.¹³¹ The editor of the Press struck back, aware that the PLP campaign was making serious inroads in the strength of the Democratic regulars. One of Isaacs' strongest objections to

¹³⁰The full text of the revised and adopted platform may be found in AE, September 27, 1906, Supplement, p. 2.

¹³¹Among the uncomplimentary nicknames applied to Isaacs were "Judge (and Jew-ry)" and "Fill-up Isaacs,": Editorial, AE, June 7, 1906, p. 2; "Screams," AE, October 4, 1906, p. 2. Isaacs referred to the Koreshans as "sneaking," "underhanded" "dupes," and to Dr. Teed as "voracious" and a "schemer," going further when charging various offenses: "Shall Koreshan Ideas Prevail in Lee County?" Fort Myers Press, October 4, 1906, p. 4.

Koreshan participation in the May primary had been that they block voted, thus breaking "into the calculations of many."¹³² In early October, however, he lashed out in an editorial blasting Dr. Teed's alleged financial, moral, and political intrigues and irregularities, singling out for special wrath the Unity's practice of block voting for benefit. The editorial, headed "Shall Koreshan Ideas Prevail in Lee County?", ends with the statement that it is the duty of "Democrats and all other citizens~~s~~/sic of Lee County" to block vote against the PLP.¹³³

Isaacs and his fellow Democratic politicians acted as if thoroughly alarmed by the intrusion of the PLP into their theretofore inviolate political garden.¹³⁴ It may be that the Fort Myers regulars were looking for an excuse for violence; certainly there were those who wished to cause Dr. Teed and the PLP more thorough embarrassment than was possible through the medium of intemperate editorials. The excuse came by telephone.

A man named W. W. Pilling who was, among other things,

¹³²"Results of the Primary," Fort Myers Press, May 17, 1906, p. 4.

¹³³Fort Myers Press, October 4, 1906, p. 4.

¹³⁴Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 437.

a song writer,¹³⁵ had arrived in Fort Myers on September 24 on his way to Estero. Finding no Unity boat at the municipal docks he went to the Post Office and sent a note to Estero announcing his arrival. He then retired to the Florida House, a hotel operated by "Col." and Mrs. J. I. Sellers, for the night. Someone at Estero called the hotel by telephone at 7:00 the next morning asking for Pilling but was apparently told by Mrs. Sellers that "he is not here." Whether she was unaware that Pilling was registered or whether she meant that he had not yet come downstairs is unclear. A few hours later she again spoke to the caller from Estero and then called Pilling to the phone. Before summoning him she was asked by the caller, "I thought you told me no one by that name was stopping there," or words to that effect. A few more words may have been exchanged but Pilling later recalled that Mrs. Sellers had not seemed upset by anything that might have been said.¹³⁶

¹³⁵An advertisement for a song entitled "The San Francisco Earthquake," by W. W. Pilling, appeared in FS, XX, 1 (June 12, 1906), p. 15, and in other issues of the magazine that year.

¹³⁶Letter, W. W. Pilling to Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, October 30, 1906, in AE, November 8, 1906, p. 3; "Two Sides to Every Question," AE, October 18, 1906, Supplement, p. 1.

Two weeks later, however, on October 8, Col. Sellers met W. Ross Wallace in a Fort Myers street, accused him of calling Mrs. Sellers a liar, and physically attacked him. Wallace, the Koreshan candidate for the county commission, was at that time unaware of the telephone incident. After attempting to defend himself, and failing to secure protection from the mayor of Fort Myers who was standing nearby, Wallace fled.¹³⁷

Wallace had been campaigning at Caxambas, fifty miles south of Estero, on the day of the alleged insult and had clearly taken no part in the conversation with Mrs. Sellers.¹³⁸ Dr. Teed was attempting to explain this to Sellers, and to clear up the entire misunderstanding, when he was struck in the face on October 13 in the Fort Myers street.

Dr. Teed had gone into Fort Myers that day to meet a group of Koreshans due to arrive from Baltimore on the afternoon train.¹³⁹ On his way to the station he met Ross Wallace,

¹³⁷Affidavit of W. Ross Wallace, AE, November 8, 1906, Supplement, pp. 1-2.

¹³⁸Ibid., E. D. Weese, AE, November 8, 1906, p. 3.

¹³⁹This account of the altercation, like that which begins this essay, is taken from affidavits sworn by Drs. Teed and Graves, Messers Wallace, Claude Rahn, and Rollin W.

Sellers, and the town marshal, S. W. Sanchez. They were, at Wallace's request, discussing the telephone incident and Sellers' subsequent attack. Wallace told Sellers that he had not been in Estero on the day of the call and asked him to explain his actions. Sellers had just replied that he had heard that the caller was Wallace when Dr. Teed approached the group. Observing that telephone conversations were often misunderstood, the doctor repeated to Sellers what several people had overheard the Estero caller say. Almost before these words were out of Dr. Teed's mouth, Sellers yelled, "Don't you call me a liar," and hit the doctor three times in the face with his closed fist. The town marshal did not move to stop the attack. Dr. Teed quickly stepped forward to prevent further blows and raised his hands to protect his face but did not strike back.

A crowd quickly gathered around the four men. The train had by that time arrived, and the Baltimore Koreshans, escorted by Dr. C. A. Graves and young Richard Jentsch, had begun walking toward a hotel in the center of town. Upon meeting the crowd they recognized Dr. Teed. Richard Jentsch, followed almost immediately by the three Koreshan boys he

Gray, and Masters Roland Sander and George Danner, AE, November 8, 1906, Supplement, pp. 1-2.

was escorting, sprang forward to protect the doctor.

Jentsch struck Sellers and was then struck down by blows from the crowd. The boys--Claude Rahn, Roland Sander, and George Danner--began fighting the hostile crowd. Their faces were soon bloodied and their hand baggage dumped in the gutter.

As the crowd was beating the boys, Marshal Sanchez is reported to have seized Dr. Teed by the coat saying, "You struck him [Sellers] and called him a liar." When the doctor demurred Sanchez gave him a slap in the face which dislodged his glasses.

The marshal then took hold of Claude Rahn and the doctor, telling them that they were under arrest. Before he could proceed further, however, he was again struck by Jentsch who had freed himself from the crowd. Sanchez felled Jentsch with four or five blows with his billy-club, and was heard to say, "You hit me again and I will kill you."

Claude Rahn's father quickly collected his son and the two younger boys and removed them from the milling crowd. Sanchez arrested Dr. Teed, Richard Jentsch, and Ross Wallace, and each was forced to post ten dollars bond at the jail against their appearance in court the following Monday.

The Koreshans wisely forfeited bond and postponed and then cancelled a PLP rally scheduled to be held in Fort Myers.¹⁴⁰ Other rallies were held, however, in the small towns and villages--Sanibel, Marco, Caxambas, Buckingham, Alva.¹⁴¹ For in the smaller settlements were voters who would listen to PLP charges of political corruption and lawlessness in Fort Myers. The pages of the Eagle were full of the charges: PLP candidate wrongfully attacked by Myers Democrat; Dr. Teed beaten while Myers officials refuse to intercede; Koreshan political activity brings arrests by Democrats; Lies fill the pages of Isaacs' slanderous Press.¹⁴²

The Press and the Democratic regulars replied in kind. The account of the altercation in Fort Myers was headed "Teed Starts a Street Fight!"¹⁴³ Marshal Sanchez and the mayor of Fort Myers both swore that Dr. Teed had been the aggressor in the affair.¹⁴⁴ The Press began running a series of years-

¹⁴⁰"Teed Starts a Street Fight!", Fort Myers Press, October 18, 1906, p. 7; "Rally at Myers Called Off," AE, November 1, 1906, Supplement, p. 4.

¹⁴¹AE, October 18, 1906, Supplement, p. 2.

¹⁴²AE, October 18 and 25, November 1 and 8, 1906 passim.

¹⁴³October 18, 1906, p. 7.

¹⁴⁴Fort Myers Press, October 25, 1906, p. 7.

old exposé articles, reprinted from a Chicago newspaper, under such sensational headings as "Came Near Lynching Teed" and "For the Price of a Wife."¹⁴⁵ These reprints dealt with allegations and events which had, almost without exception, been thrown out of Chicago courts years before, but were initially presented by the Press as news items.¹⁴⁶

The Progressive Liberty Party won no elections. In several races, however, the results were extremely close. One PLP candidate for the school board ran ahead of his Democratic opponent in unofficial returns,¹⁴⁷ but when the results were certified by the entirely Democratic election board a number of votes were thrown out and he lost.¹⁴⁸

The Fort Myers vote made the difference. Although the PLP received a surprising twenty percent of the vote in that town, the large number of voters in Fort Myers, together

¹⁴⁵Ibid., October 18, 1906, pp. 1, 5; ibid., October 25, 1905, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶Dr. Teed later countered the allegations in "Sensation for Revenue," AE, March 28, 1907. Supplement, p. 1. Isaacs admitted the age of the reprints in an editorial, Fort Myers Press, October 25, 1906, p. 4.

¹⁴⁷AE, November 15, 1906, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸"Progressive Voter," AE, January 24, 1907, p. 3.

with mixed returns in about half the smaller settlements, was more than enough to offset the PLP majorities in Denaud, Immokalee, LaBelle, Wulfert, Captiva, and Estero.¹⁴⁹ Although the PLP won no elections, the party's campaign was one of considerable achievement. Hastily organized, new and independent in a traditionally one-party county, the PLP captured at least one-third, but usually much more, of the vote in every race contested.¹⁵⁰

The Eagle, in a post-election editorial, congratulated itself upon its successes and predicted PLP victory in the elections of 1908. Publication would continue, readers were assured, and the paper's muckraking policy would remain unchanged.¹⁵¹

Meanwhile, although Philip Isaacs and his Democratic associates still controlled county affairs, the Koreshans and the politicians seemed to have agreed upon another uneasy truce. Estero settled down to cane grinding and crop planting. Dr. Teed, perhaps convalescent from the beating in Fort

¹⁴⁹AE, November 15, 1906, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Ibid., November 8, 1906, p. 2.

Myers, began to write a book. Mrs. Ordway, who seems to have taken no public role in the election campaign, went to Cuba with a female companion. Picnics were held near Estero, and Dr. Teed conducted Sunday services in the Art Hall. The Unity brass band played at a private garden party and a public hotel dance in Fort Myers, and gave a concert at Immokalee.¹⁵²

The winter seemed quiet. There was a momentary editorial interruption in February when Philip Isaacs accused the Koreshans of child-stealing.¹⁵³ The Eagle carefully and at some length explained the facts of the situation to the "little Judge-editor" and the truce seemed to have resumed.¹⁵⁴ In March, however, it became apparent that Isaacs would not be content with peace.

A journal in the state capital, the Tallahassee Sun, printed a sensational article on Dr. Teed and the Unity on March 2.¹⁵⁵ Many of the facts cited in the article were

¹⁵²"Scribo," AE: December 27, 1906, p. 3; February 7, 1907, p. 3; February 28, 1907, p. 3. AE: February 14, 1907, p. 3; March 28, 1907, p. 3. Publisher's Note, The Great Red Dragon, or, The Flaming Devil of the Orient, by Lord Chester [Cyrus R. Teed], (Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1908), p. 67.

¹⁵³Fort Myers Press, February 14, 1907, p. 4.

¹⁵⁴"The Judge Borrows Trouble," AE, February 21, 1907, p. 1.

¹⁵⁵"Here's Koresh King of Fakirs," March 2, 1907, pp. 3, 10.

incorrect, the scandalous articles reprinted by the Press in October were apparently used as part of the writer's background material, and the general tone was hardly unbiased. The Unity and the Eagle exploded editorially¹⁵⁶ and, when it became apparent that Isaacs was behind the article, the Eagle began heaping ridicule on the "Judge" as well as his colleague in the capital.¹⁵⁷ Isaacs soon proposed to Dr. Teed to "forget that you are living" if the doctor would stay out of Lee County affairs.¹⁵⁸

Isaacs and the Democratic regulars did not propose to keep out of county affairs affecting Estero, however. On May 1, the county commission petitioned their state senator and representative to introduce a bill in the legislature abolishing the Town of Estero or reducing it to smaller size. The reasons given were that the "present charter covers so

¹⁵⁶Allen H. Andrews, "Open Letter to the Tallahassee Sun," AE, March 7, 1907, p. 2.

¹⁵⁷"Isaacs the Conspirator," AE, March 14, 1907, pp. 1, 3; Allen H. Andrews, Editorial, ibid., p. 2; U. G. Morrow, "Liberty of Citizens," ibid., Supplement, pp. 1-2; Koresh [Cyrus R. Teed], "Sensation for Revenue," AE, March 28, 1907, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸"Advice to Koresh. Let the People of Lee County Alone," Fort Myers Press, March 28, 1907, p. 4.

much actual unnecessary territory, and only seems to give them the Unity a claim for one-half the road tax assessed in said boundaries." The charter was, therefore, "a farce and a sham."¹⁵⁹

The Fort Myers politicians were not, of course, anxious to give up the road tax money. But it is reasonable to assume that the petition was as much in retaliation for Koreshan political activity as it was a means of retaining tax revenue for projects in Fort Myers.

The Florida legislature duly abolished the charter of the Town of Estero by unanimous vote.¹⁶⁰ Governor Broward, over Unity protests, allowed the bill to become law without his signature.¹⁶¹ The bill was soon declared unconstitutional, however.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹"Protection of the Taxpayers," AE, May 16, 1907, p. 1.

¹⁶⁰Laws of Florida, 1907, Chapter 5801; "'Old cy's' Pet Scheme Knocked Out!", Fort Myers Press, May 23, 1907, p. 4; U. G. Morrow, "The Abolishment of Estero," AE, May 23, 1907, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁶¹Laws of Florida, 1907, Chapter 5801; "Resolution of Protest," AE, June 6, 1907, Supplement, p. 1; H.D.S., "Legislative Lawlessness," ibid.; "Somewhat Contradictory," AE, July 4, 1907, Supplement, p. 2.

¹⁶²The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, p. 56.

Estero remained. Philip Isaacs was beaten. Perhaps weary of political war and embarrassed by the well-aimed ridicule of the Eagle, he sold his interest in the Fort Myers Press and departed for the North.¹⁶³

The Eagle bade him farewell with a sharply satirical editorial in which he was compared to Icarus: ". . . soaring upon the pinions of fame, flushed with success and ambitious to break the record [of Icarus, he] . . . ran up against a warm proposition, the wax fastening of his wings melted, and he fell with a dull, sickening splash into the sea of oblivion."¹⁶⁴

The Unity suffered its third great fire with the burning of two livestock barns the first week in October. The horses and cows quartered in the barns were saved, however, and the Koreshans, undeterred, set about building new structures.¹⁶⁵ A new parlor game, based on the Cellular Cosmogony and called "The Cosmic Cell," was introduced for home enlightenment and enjoyment.¹⁶⁶ And outside guests were invited

¹⁶³Philip Isaacs, "Valedictory," Fort Myers Press, October 3, 1907, p. 4.

¹⁶⁴October 10, 1907, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵"Scribo," AE: October 10, 1907, Supplement, p. 1; January 23, 1908, p. 3; March 19, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁶⁶The game seems to have been something like Monopoly,

to the Solar Festival on October 18 and entertained with music, a play, and refreshments in the illuminated park.¹⁶⁷

Dr. Teed had gone North on what was termed "a business trip" during August and September.¹⁶⁸ Upon his return he and the publishing staff were occupied in the preparation of a book which marks what was to be the last concerted effort to recruit a marital and cooperative order for the Unity at Estero. The book, The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative,¹⁶⁹ is a very attractive illustrated prospectus describing the philosophy, industries, activities, and plans of the Unity. It concentrates not on religion but on the benefits of cooperative socialism for both poor and rich. Dr. Teed's philosophy of cooperation, as presented in the book, was outlined as follows:

- (1) That the laborers are the producers of wealth, and should enjoy the fruits of their labor.
- (2) That the competitive system is responsible for monetary and industrial crises.
- (3) That labor-saving machinery should be operated to lighten the burdens of the producers, not to enrich the corporations.

with question-and-answer cards. See: FS, XXI, 9 (September 15, 1907), p. 32.

¹⁶⁷AE, October 10, 1907, Supplement, p. 1; "Solar Festival at Estero," AE, October 24, 1907, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸"Scribo," AE: August 22, 1907, p. 3; September 5, 1907, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁶⁹(Estero, Fla.: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1907).

(4) That labor-unionism offers no practical solution of industrial problems.

(5) That labor-unionism is not socialism, but directly opposed to its every principle.

(6) That the Koreshan Unity Incorporated is the genuine organic and practical socialism, in actual application.

(7) That our object is to employ men, women, and children throughout the world.

(8) That our officers receive no salaries.

(9) And that investments of time and means in our industries are safe, and on lines of the liberation of the masses from wage slavery.¹⁷⁰

The plans for Estero outlined in the book were sweeping but less unrealistic than similar plans put forth in the past.¹⁷¹ Speculative ventures outside Florida complementary to the proposed shipping trade were also outlined.

In Honduras it was proposed to gain a government concession of 200,000 acres on which would be established colonies of "a 'well-to-do' class of Italians and Poles." The purpose of these colonies would be to develop agriculture, lumbering, turpentine, cattle-raising, fruit and rubber production, and shipping.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰Co-Operative Industry for the Millions: Explanatory Introduction to the Booklet The Koreshan Unity Co-operative, p. 3.

¹⁷¹Many of which have been discussed above.

¹⁷²The Koreshan Unity, Co-operative, pp. 79-83.

At Bristol, Tennessee, the Unity had acquired a wood-working plant capable of producing furniture, reeds for furniture manufacture, and dowels for various purposes. The plant was then beginning to operate on a cooperative basis as part of the Unity.¹⁷³

"Interests" in Cuba were also mentioned but not discussed.¹⁷⁴ Advertisements for this cooperative agricultural venture appeared in the Eagle about the same time, however. Colonization of a tract of land was proposed in order to produce tropical fruit for the New York market.¹⁷⁵

Neither the marital and cooperative order, nor the ventures outside Florida, were ever successes, and the plans conferred no long-term benefits on the general membership of the Unity.

Revelation

Perhaps nowhere are Koreshan dreams and plans for the

¹⁷³Ibid., pp. 58-69. The complicated affairs of the Ordway Manufacturing Company are outside the scope of this essay.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 19, 83.

¹⁷⁵AE, January 30, 1908, Supplement, p. 2.

future more fully expressed than in the novel Dr. Teed wrote during the post-election winter of 1906-1907.¹⁷⁶ Using fiction to reveal his vision of the future, Dr. Teed--under the nom de plume Lord Chester--predicts the eventual triumph of Koreshanity and describes life as it will be when Estero is the capital of the world.

The novel, entitled The Great Red Dragon, or, The Flaming Devil of the Orient, is millennialist in theme and serious in tone. In it Dr. Teed predicts that the Christian dispensation of almost two thousand years will falter during a war between the forces of capital and the forces of labor, and will be virtually ended with the invasion of America by the Oriental Horde (which is to say, the children of darkness). Western civilization will only be saved from annihilation, he says, by forces under the leadership of Koreshans (the children of light). This triumph will result in the general

¹⁷⁶Lord Chester /Cyrus R. Teed/, The Great Red Dragon, or, The Flaming Devil of the Orient (Estero: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1908), p. 67. The novel first appeared in FS, XXIII, 1-4 (January 15-April 15, 1909); this serialization immediately after Dr. Teed's death, was followed by publication of the novel as a book later in the year. It is probable that had Dr. Teed lived, he would have revised the text of the novel. Although Dr. Teed was no professional novelist he undoubtedly would have removed some repetitious sections and would have clarified some points.

adoption of Koreshan principles, and a new dispensation will begin with the completion of the building of the New Jerusalem at Estero.

The plot of the novel may be briefly summarized as follows: the leaders of capitalism and of western governments unite in agreement to enslave the masses, thus ensuring higher profits for themselves. The masses within the United States are organized by a partially-messianic general to meet this threat, and the forces of the capitalist-dominated United States government and its allies are eventually brought to terms. Japan, in the meantime, at the head of a Chinese horde, has begun a conquest of the world. Rome and Russia have been laid waste, and the Oriental forces, threatening to encircle the world, have gathered off all the coasts of the United States. The American navy is defeated, America begins to fall to the invaders, and the army of the masses--the only bulwark between Western civilization and Oriental savagery--withdraws to northern Florida. The Orientals are eventually defeated by an aerial navy of "anti-gravic" platforms which fire ball bearings upon the invaders. By the use of the platforms, which were manufactured at Estero, together with high ideals and truth, the forces of righteousness conquer

the world. Assisted by a beautiful young woman, the triumphant leader of the masses ushers in a new dispensation. The Divine Motherhood rules over this dispensation--she the duality of the miraculously unified leader and his assistant. Peace and tranquility reign in the perfected New Jerusalem. And the world follows principles identical to Koreshan Universology.

The hero of the novel has half-a-dozen faces, employing various disguises and playing many different roles. It could perhaps be maintained that his characterization is but a thinly-veiled self-portrait of the author, and that that of the heroine is based upon the personality of Mrs. Annie Ordway. The New Jerusalem of the future dispensation is unmistakably Estero.

Many Koreshan doctrines and theories are employed in the details of the novel, including the defeat of "competism" and the equitable distribution of the fruits of labor,¹⁷⁷ the end of Christianity,¹⁷⁸ the power of levity,¹⁷⁹ theocrasis,¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 100-01.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 77-79.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., p. 137.

and the bisexual duality of perfected man-woman.¹⁸¹ The most interesting aspect of the novel, however, is its confident prediction of Koreshan principles triumphant in the completed New Jerusalem. Koreshan readers could hardly have failed to appreciate this hopeful vision of the future.

¹⁸¹Ibid., pp. 147-148.

CHAPTER III

DARK DAYS

1908-1910

"The hour is spent; the dispensation
ends;
The wheel of time its circle now
completes."

--Koresh
"The Herald of the Angels"¹

Estero, 1908

The new year at Estero began with hard work and the expansion of several Unity activities. "The song of the cane mill is once more in the land," reported the American Eagle, "and the smell of molasses fills the air."² Christmas, quietly celebrated with an entertainment in the Art Hall and a special feast, had been swiftly followed by cane grinding, syrup making, and the planting of new cane. The number of acres planted in sugar cane was increased that year.³

¹Composed for the 1907 Solar Festival; typewritten copy on display at Estero.

²"Scribo," AE, January 2, 1908, p. 3.

³Ibid.; ibid., January 23, 1908, p. 3.

New barns for horses and cows, replacing the structures destroyed by fire the previous fall, were completed during the early months of the year.⁴ The Unity also completed work during those months on a fruit and vegetable packing house at Mound Key and an ice house at Carlos Point on Estero Island.⁵ The Unity concrete works continued to produce blocks for the Lee County machinery hall and council building being constructed under contract at Fort Myers. Transportation of the blocks on Unity boats and erection of the building by the Koreshans continued through the winter.⁶ New pressure molding machines for the production of improved concrete blocks were received and installed in May, making available many sizes of block for sale and for use at Estero.⁷

The continued, if limited, expansion of the settlement and of the Unity's activities gave the Koreshan brothers and sisters little reason to doubt the inevitability of future

⁴Ibid., January 23, 1908, p. 3, and March 19, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

⁵Ibid., February 6, 1908, Supplement, p. 1, and January 23, 1908, p. 3.

⁶Ibid.: December 5, 1907, Supplement, p. 1; December 12, 1907, p. 7; January 2, 1908, p. 3; January 23, 1908, p. 3.

⁷Ibid., May 7, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

successes, further expansion, and the culmination of their hopes in the completion of the star-shaped city of New Jerusalem. Estero, they firmly believed, would certainly soon become the world center of commerce, culture, and the Koreshan commonwealth. Only one question clouded this vision of future triumph: Would Koresh remain always with them? Koresh, Dr. Cyrus R. Teed, the prophet Cyrus foretold in scripture--would he continue forever to direct, as he did, every phase of life and work at Estero?

The question was perhaps in some small doubt during the winter of 1907-1908. Dr. Teed had begun to suffer violent attacks of neuritis, the pain centering in his left arm, soon after being beaten in Fort Myers in October, 1906.⁸ He rested and wrote a book during the subsequent winter; then, perhaps thinking that work would cause his condition to abate, he labored as usual--traveling, lecturing, conducting the affairs of the Unity--during 1907. The violent attacks of pain had not ceased more than a year after the doctor was hit in the head, however. The doctor's condition had in fact grown worse by the beginning of 1908, and the frequency of the attacks had increased. Although tortured by pain he did not allow himself

⁸Junius B. Van Duzee, "Astronomic and Cosmic Phenomena," *FS*, XXIII, 2 (February 15, 1909), pp. 56-57; W. Ross Wallace, "Cause of Dr. Teed's Tragic Death," *ibid.*, pp. 57-59. It is unlikely that a positive medical connection between Dr. Teed's beating and his violent attacks of pain could have been proved. The connection was accepted by the Koreshans and this writer has found no reason to doubt it.

to retire from public life or to neglect his duties to the Unity.⁹ His schedule during the first six months of 1908 was generally similar to that of any other year. In January he and Mrs. Annie Ordway were guests of honor at a banquet and reception given at Estero. He lectured to the Socialists of Jacksonville in February. When in residence at Estero he conducted regular Sunday services in the Art Hall and continued to do business in Fort Myers. In April he delivered two lectures in New York City, returned to Estero for a few weeks, and then departed once again for Baltimore and Washington, D.C.¹⁰

Mrs. Ordway, nominal head of the Unity, supervised day-to-day affairs and organized entertainments at Estero during this period as was customary. In May, however, she departed for Washington to join Dr. Teed who had decided to remain in that city for the summer.¹¹

⁹Ibid. Unity publications maintained silence concerning Dr. Teed's attacks of pain until shortly before his death.

¹⁰"Scribo," AE: January 23, 1908, p. 3; February 20, 1908, p. 3; March 19, 1908, Supplement, p. 1; March 26, 1908, Supplement, p. 2; April 16, 1908, Supplement, p. 1; April 30, 1908, Supplement, p. 1. "Two Remarkable Lectures by Koresh," FS, XXII, 7 (July 15, 1908), p. 12.

¹¹"Scribo," AE, March 26, 1908, Supplement, p. 2, and May 28, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

While Dr. Teed and Mrs. Ordway were absent from Estero the brothers and sisters spent a pleasant, if industrious, summer. Ross Wallace, director of the Estero concrete department, set a crew to work veneering Mrs. Ordway's frame house with brown artificial stone. Curving arches and a tower were included in the design, and by fall the building had taken on a somewhat Moorish appearance.¹² The Estero post office, located in the Unity store, was also renovated that summer. A new wall, consisting of service windows, letter boxes, and a glass partition, was fabricated and installed by Koreshan carpenters. Postal service was further improved with the acquisition of a new automobile for the mail route.¹³

Independence Day was celebrated with the closing exercises of the Unity school. An original skit with music was presented by school children, adults, and band. Other features of the holiday weekend's entertainment included an exhibition of student art work, recitations, and music by the orchestra.¹⁴

¹²Ibid., April 30, 1908, Supplement, p. 1, and October 5, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

¹³Ibid., July 9, 1908, Supplement, p. 2, and July 30, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁴Ibid., July 9, 1908, Supplement, p. 2.

The Koreshans continued their political activities in 1908, although not with the explosive passion which had marked the debut of the Progressive Liberty Party in 1906. Independent voters were warned by the Eagle to stay away from the Democratic primary on May 19. That party, the Eagle reported, intended to again use the pledge which would bind new voters to support the Democratic ticket in the fall general elections.¹⁵ A "wet-dry" referendum was held in July and the Estero Voters League gave Prohibition a block of forty-three votes.¹⁶ The Lee County Socialist party, expected to nominate a slate of candidates for the fall elections, decided, upon convening, not to do so. The Eagle thereupon announced a nominating convention of the PLP to be held in Fort Myers on September 15.¹⁷ A union of independent voters was agreed upon before the proposed PLP convention, however, and Socialists, Republicans, and PLP members met on September 15 and

¹⁵Editorial, AE, April 2, 1908, p. 2.

¹⁶"Scribo," AE, July 9, 1908, Supplement, p. 2.

¹⁷"Socialist Convention and Platform," AE, September 3, 1908, Supplement, p. 1; "Progressive Liberty Convention," ibid.

nominated an Independent ticket.¹⁸ A campaign was waged in the fall but the Democrat-controlled county election committee, profiting from the near defeats of 1906, refused to allow the names of the Independent candidates to appear on the ballot. Although the Independents filed suit to force the committee to include their names, the petition was denied by the circuit court, forcing the Independents to wage a write-in campaign on short notice. The Koreshan block vote went to the national Prohibition ticket, the state Socialist ticket, and the county Independent candidates. The effort elected no one.¹⁹

Disaster

Dr. Teed, accompanied by Mrs. Ordway, returned to Estero on October 5, announcing upon his arrival the establishment of a new Koreshan colony in Washington, D.C.²⁰ He conducted Sunday services on October 18, the official anniversary of his birth,²¹ although his condition had obviously grown worse. The Solar Festival's activities, presented the previous

¹⁸"Independent Ticket Nominated," AE, September 17, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

¹⁹AE, October 29, 1908, Supplement, p. 1; "Judge Wall's Decision," ibid., November 5, 1908, Supplement, p. 1; "Scribo," ibid.

²⁰"Scribo," AE, October 18, 1908, p. 3.

²¹Ibid., October 22, 1908, p. 3.

night, had included prayers led by Mrs. Ordway for the doctor's deliverance from pain. The doctor's attacks of pain had not theretofore been mentioned in Koreshan publications, but Mrs. Ordway's prayers were reported in the subsequent issue of the Flaming Sword.²² This would seem to indicate that the doctor's condition had declined to a point which could not be concealed.

The members of the Unity were apparently aware of the doctor's attacks, however. Gustave Faber, under whose command the sloop Ada had been lost ten years before, arrived at Estero during the Solar Festival from the state of Washington.²³ He had been living in Tacoma for several years, and, having been a nurse in the Spanish-American war, he traveled across the country to attempt to cure Dr. Teed. He removed his patient to La Parita, a Unity house at Carlos Point on Estero Island, for salt water baths and rest.²⁴ It has also been reported that Faber treated the doctor with an electrotherapeutic machine of his own invention.²⁵ Dr. Teed apparently received

²²"The Pre-Eminent's Invocation," FS, XXII, 11 (November 15, 1908), p. 21.

²³"Scribo," AE, October 22, 1908, p. 3.

²⁴Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 280; Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 41.

²⁵Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 280.

some temporary relief from these treatments for there seems to have been no thought that his life was in danger by the end of the month. Mrs. Ordway decided at that time to return to the new colony in Washington, D.C., and, when she departed, Dr. Teed accompanied her by boat as far as Fort Myers.²⁶

Mrs. Ordway, originally planning to remain in Washington no more than several weeks,²⁷ prolonged her stay into December. At Estero, meanwhile, U. G. Morrow, editor of the Flaming Sword, had decided that his views concerning astrology, while distinctly similar to Dr. Teed's, were not in detail precisely the same as the doctor's theories. He therefore left the Unity, resigning his editorial position with the issue of December 15, 1908.²⁸

Dr. Teed's condition seems to have become worse during the latter part of December. Emaciated, weakened with pain, he often cried out, "O Jerusalem, take me!"²⁹ Doctors were summoned from Illinois and, at length, from Fort Myers, but

²⁶"Scribo," AE, November 5, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸U. G. Morrow, "The Editor's Valediction," FS, XXII, 12 (December 15, 1908), p. 26.

²⁹Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 41; Walter L. Church, "The Irrepressible Conflict," AE, December 31, 1908,

they arrived too late.³⁰ Dr. Teed died peacefully on the morning of December 22, at La Parita on Carlos Point.³¹

The Unity was stunned and shaken by the loss of Dr. Teed. He had predicted his physical death many years before, saying that it would be caused by followers of Christ.³² Some members of the Unity, however, believing in the literal immortality of the chosen of God through reincarnation and theocrasis ("the incorruptible dissolution of the physical body by electro-magnetic combustion"³³), were firm in their faith and hope that Koresh would quickly pass through the necessary changes unaided and reemerge in an immortal body.³⁴

Dr. Teed's mortal body was therefore brought to Estero where it lay in state, surrounded by members of the Unity.

Supplement, p. 1.

³⁰"Scribo," AE, December 31, 1908, p. 3, and January 7, 1909, Supplement, p. 1. "Dr. Cyrus R. Teed Dead . . .," Fort Myers Press, December 24, 1908, p. 1.

³¹Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 41; AE, December 24, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

³²FS, March 26, 1892, quoted in Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 279, and noted in FS, XXIII, 1 (January 15, 1909), p. 20.

³³Koresh, The Immortal Manhood (3rd ed., 1931), p. 112.

³⁴George W. Hunt, Immortality, or, Life and How Attained (Estero, Fla.: Koreshan Unity Press, 1937), p. 67.

Hopeful Koreshans insisted that the body be allowed to renew itself for at least three days. The expected miracle might occur on Christmas Day.³⁵

Doctors William Hansen and J. E. Brecht, called from Fort Myers to attend Dr. Teed, did not arrive at Estero until December 23. It is reported that they were told by Unity members that Dr. Teed was merely in a trance from which he would emerge. Upon examination, however, they pronounced the doctor dead and returned to Fort Myers.³⁶

The American Eagle appeared as usual on Thursday, the twenty-fourth, with but a brief mention of Dr. Teed's death.³⁷ Setting-up of the paper had been virtually complete before news of the death reached the print shop. The paper was therefore printed. But many of Estero's usual activities came to a halt.³⁸

³⁵Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 41; Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 280; "Disciples Await New Breath of Life . . .," Tampa Morning Tribune, December 25, 1908, p. 1.

³⁶"Dr. Cyrus R. Teed Dead . . .," Fort Myers Press, December 24, 1908, p. 1.

³⁷AE, December 24, 1908, Supplement, p. 1.

³⁸Cane grinding, for instance, was delayed almost two weeks, see: "Scribo," AE, December 24, 1908, Supplement, p. 1, and January 7, 1909, Supplement, p. 1.

Uncomplimentary obituaries and reports of Dr. Teed's past and of the Koreshans' practices had meanwhile begun appearing in other papers. The Tampa Morning Tribune indelicately mentioned that Dr. Teed's body was beginning to decompose, and alluded to rumors of "queer beliefs" and free love at Estero.³⁹ Two days later the same paper printed a review of many of the old rumors and supposed scandals attributed to Dr. Teed and his followers.⁴⁰ The Fort Myers Press reprinted the report in its next issue.⁴¹ The New York Times reported that Mrs. Ordway, "said to be the wife of Teed, assumed the throne with much solemnity and declared that the body would not be buried until there was a manifestation of the Divine will."⁴² This report was erroneous in most respects. Mrs. Ordway had not arrived at Estero when it was filed and there had been no coronation.

³⁹"Disciples Await New Breath of Life . . .," Tampa Morning Tribune, December 25, 1908, p. 1.

⁴⁰"New Head of the Koreshans on the Scene," ibid., December 27, 1908, p. 1.

⁴¹"New Ruler of Koreshanity Gone to Take Charge," Fort Myers Press, December 31, 1908, p. 3. The Tampa Morning Tribune made partial reparation by printing a very fair article by a friend of the Koreshans: W. Stanley Hanson, "Passing of a Second Mohamet," December 29, 1908, p. 2.

⁴²"Koresh I Is Dead," New York Times, December 25, 1908, p. 7.

Koreshans from distant points had begun pouring into Estero soon after news of Dr. Teed's death was released.⁴³ Mrs. Ordway returned from Washington on the evening of the twenty-sixth.⁴⁴ Dr. Hanson, the Lee County health officer, had meanwhile ordered the interment of the remains of Dr. Teed, and, on December 27, Mrs. Ordway sent a telegram to the Tampa Morning Tribune which read, "Dr. Cyrus R. Teed is entombed in vault especially prepared for him for that purpose."⁴⁵

The rectangular tomb, hastily built of Unity concrete block, was on Estero Island near the house where the doctor had died. Stone vases were placed on each side of the vault and in the center of the front wall was a simple inscription:

CYRUS
Shepherd Stone of Israel⁴⁶

The surface of life at Estero seemed soon to return to normal. Impromptu concerts by the band were given in honor

⁴³"Scribo," AE, December 31, 1908, p. 3, and January 7, 1909, Supplement, p. 1.

⁴⁴Ibid., December 31, 1908, p. 3.

⁴⁵Tampa Morning Tribune, December 29, 1908, p. 2.

⁴⁶photographs of the tomb may be found in Lamoreaux, Early Days on Estero Island, pp. 16-17. The tomb was destroyed by a hurricane in 1921. No trace of Dr. Teed's remains was found, prompting the belief in some Koreshans that theocrasis had surely occurred.

of the visiting members of the Unity, and Victor concerts provided incidental entertainment.⁴⁷ The American Eagle, in an editorial which concluded "None but ghouls malign the dead for revenue," began a series of attacks on its old foe, the Fort Myers Press, and on a new enemy, the Tampa Morning Tribune.⁴⁸ And Estero's industries seemed to have once again resumed usual operations: "Syrup making is the center of activity at present. The whirr of the cane mill is heard above all else, and the air hereabouts is laden with the odor of boiling syrup."⁴⁹

Dissension

Beneath the quiet surface presented to the public, however, a struggle for leadership of the Unity had begun. Gustave Faber, according to later Koreshan reports, claimed that Dr. Teed had, in his dying hours, conferred the succession

⁴⁷"Scribo," AE: December 31, 1908, p. 3; January 7, 1909, Supplement, p. 1; January 14, 1909, Supplement, p. 1.

⁴⁸Editorial, AE, December 31, 1908, p. 2. See also: Editorial, AE, January 7, 1907, p. 2.

⁴⁹"Scribo," AE, January 14, 1909, Supplement, p. 1.

upon him through theocrasis.⁵⁰ This claim was not accepted by the Koreshans and the old nurse withdrew from the Unity in 1909.⁵¹

Mrs. Ordway remained Pre-Eminent of the Unity and president of the corporation until summer. She visited the colony at Washington shortly after Dr. Teed's interment⁵² but returned to Estero by the first week of April. The Lunar Festival was celebrated, contrary to custom, privately, on April 10. Mrs. Ordway marked the occasion by unveiling a portrait bust of Dr. Teed and delivering a speech.⁵³

The Ordway Manufacturing Plant at Bristol, Tennessee, failed a few months later. Foreclosure of the mortgage, which Dr. Teed had guaranteed, involved the Unity in a large debt. Mrs. Ordway, followed by a faction of her supporters, then left the Unity and its corporate debts, and attempted to establish a Koreshan community at Seffner, Hillsborough County, Florida. Upon the swift dissolution of this group,

⁵⁰Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 281.

⁵¹Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 4ln.

⁵²"Scribo," AE, January 14, 1909, Supplement, p. 1.

⁵³E. Benson Steele, "The Koreshan Lunar Festival," FS, XXIII, 5 (May 15, 1909), pp. 162-163.

Mrs. Ordway married Dr. C. A. Graves, former mayor of Estero, and went to live in St. Petersburg, Florida, where she resided until her death.⁵⁴

Another group of dissidents, which incorporated under the name "Order of Theocracy," left Estero in 1910 and settled in Fort Myers. Led by W. Ross Wallace, Thomas P. Gay, and other Koreshan leaders, the Order of Theocracy organized a Koreshan communistic community, published Koreshan tracts, and later operated Fort Myers' largest laundry. The Order published a short-lived magazine, The Double-Edged Sword, and continued its existence into the 1930s.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 47; Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," pp. 41, 78; John S. Sargent, "A Reply to Our Slanderers," FS, XXIII, 9 (September 15, 1909), p. 306; Mrs. Ordway's name was removed from the masthead of the Flaming Sword in XXIII, 8 (August 15, 1909). The business affairs of the Ordway Manufacturing Company, as noted in Chapter II, are outside the scope of this essay.

⁵⁵Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," pp. 41-42. Pamphlets issued in Fort Myers by the Order include: Celibacy (compiled from the writings of Koresh, n.d.); The Personality and Humanity of Deity (from the writings of Koresh, n.d.); and "Elijah the Prophet--Koresh," The Appearance of the Man of Sin (leaflet, n.d.). The Order of Theocracy did not hesitate to attack the leadership of the Unity at Estero. See: "Two Classes of Koreshans," Double-Edged Sword, I, 4 (November 1931), pp. 14-16.

The Koreshan Unity at Estero remained. James Bubbett became president upon the defection of Mrs. Ordway and he directed the community's affairs well. The Flaming Sword and the American Eagle continued to appear, the store, the machine shop, the print shop, the farms continued in operation. Some members "just drifted away"⁵⁶ and the settlement did not continue to develop, but a devoted band of brothers and sisters nevertheless remained. They firmly believed the teachings of Koresh and they continued to practice the life of commonwealth and brotherhood. Steadfast in their faith in reincarnation and cellular cosmogony, they looked forward to their Master's return and to the day when Estero would become the New Jerusalem and the center of the concave earth. Their faith did not fail. The Koreshan Unity exists at Estero to this day.

⁵⁶Interview with Laurence W. Bubbett: Stan Windhorn, "Communal Life Unpopular, Inside-Out Cultists Find," Sarasota Herald-Tribune, August 5, 1956, p. 25.

EPILOGUE

"None hath immortality but God,
The Oracle proclaims:
'Tis promised yet, withal, that
Through High Priest--Immortal Son,
Other Sons arise
Immortal as the Son himself."

--Koresh
"Immortality"¹

We Live Inside

Cyrus R. Teed had been founder, leader, teacher, and inspiration of the commonwealth to which he gave his adopted name. Had the Koreshan Unity collapsed during the dissension which followed his physical death few outside observers would have been surprised. Dr. Teed had not trained younger leaders during his lifetime and an inspired leader of Dr. Teed's stature did not arise from among the Koreshan brothers and sisters after the founder's death.

The Unity was preserved by the unshakable faith in Koreshan philosophy which sustained both the members who chose to remain at Estero and those who arrived after Dr. Teed's

¹The Immortal Manhood, 3rd ed., 1931, p. 57.

death. The Unity did not, in Dr. Teed's absence, continue to expand. Few new buildings were erected, fewer new industries were begun. Conversions to Koreshanity were sought but became infrequent and finally ceased. The half-finished buildings of the settlement fell into disrepair for lack of funds. Weeds and the woods began to reclaim the lush garden of tropical plants so carefully laid out along the river. The community's cultural and religious activities were held less frequently and finally abandoned. The original settlers, growing old, passed one by one out of the physical plane of existence. Nearly all of Estero's children, those born or brought into the Unity, abandoned the socialistic life, returning to the settlement only occasionally.² The group which numbered two hundred in 1904 had decreased to half that in 1918; sixty remained ten years later, forty in 1945, a dozen in 1948.³

²Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, January 25, 1971. See also the community events column in FS during the 1930s and 1940s.

³"A Communal Colony," FS, XXXII, 4 (April 1918), pp. 94-95, reprinted from Southern Ruralist, March 15, 1918; Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 62; Ruth D'Agostino, "The Koreshans," in Florida Cruise, Norman Alan Hill, ed. (Baltimore: George W. King Printing Co., 1945), p. 341; Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 286.

The leaders who guided the Unity through the difficult years after Dr. Teed's death were not inspired men and women. Although they managed the Unity's affairs as they thought best, they sometimes erred and their actions were not always unopposed by the membership.⁴ The rising value of Florida real estate aided the Unity in some instances,⁵ but in general the Unity continued to exist, though it never again prospered, because the Koreshans firmly believed that the teachings of Koresh would eventually be fulfilled. That Estero would become New Jerusalem there was no doubt: The Master would return.⁶

After the financial crises and the internal dissension and defections of 1909 and 1910, the board of directors of

⁴Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, May 14, 1971.

⁵Allen H. Andrews speculated in land in the early 1920s and with his profits bought an electric plant and a new typesetting machine for the Unity in 1924; see: Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 165. The Unity also sold its own property occasionally.

⁶The faith of the Koreshans in future triumph has been reported by many visitors. See, for instance, Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," pp. 61-62, 64 passim. Koreshan expressions of faith may be found, for instance, in Augustus Weimar, "The Unfinished Writings of Koresh," FS, XXXII, 1 (January 1918), pp. 13-15; and Hunt, Immortality, or, Life and How Attained.

the Unity decided that it should gain absolute control over all Unity property and business affairs. Agreements to that effect were signed by each member and by the board. Individual members agreed to give up all property then held by them and any property or benefits which might come to them at a future date; to perform duties as directed by the board; to allow the board absolute power in managing Unity affairs. The board, in which power was concentrated, agreed to deal justly with members who remained within the Unity as well as with those who might decide to depart at a later date.⁷ Of perhaps equal importance was the corporate structure of the Unity. As owners of the corporation the members tended to remain at Estero and to resist either dissolving the group or liquidating the assets of the Unity.⁸

James Bubbett, mechanical supervisor of the print shop, became president of the board upon Mrs. Annie Ordway's defection in 1909. Upon his death in 1924 he was succeeded by George W. Hunt who served until 1929. George Hunt was succeeded

⁷Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," pp. 57-59; the Article of Agreement may be found ibid., pp. 58-59.

⁸Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, May 14, 1971.

by Allen H. Andrews, editor of the American Eagle.⁹ James Bubbett's wife Evelyn, although never the Unity's official leader, seems to have exercised a great deal of influence over its presidents and over Unity affairs.¹⁰ She died in 1935.¹¹

The Unity's principal source of revenue over the years, aside from occasional sales of real estate, seems to have been the store on the county road (now the Tamiami Trail).¹² In addition to the ready-made merchandise stocked by any country store, the Koreshans sold the products of their own industries: honey, bread, dairy products, fruit, and Koreshan literature. A service station was located across the road in 1926. The original store had burned a few years earlier but was replaced with a larger structure.¹³ The store served not only as an enterprise for monetary gain but as a medium

⁹Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, January 25, 1971, and unpublished letter, March 8, 1971; AE, June 1965, p. 2.

¹⁰"Two Classes of Koreshans," Double-Edged Sword, I, 4 (November 1931), pp. 14-16.

¹¹AE, June 1965, p. 2.

¹²Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 73.

¹³Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, May 14, 1971.

through which the Unity bought goods cooperatively at wholesale prices for distribution to the members.¹⁴

Other industries which continued to yield smaller amounts of revenue until shut down were the boat ways and the machine shop, the bakery (which produced bread distributed to customers in Naples, Bonita Springs, and Estero), a horticultural nursery, and the print shop.¹⁵

Guiding Star Publishing House continued to issue Koreshan literature and periodicals printed at Estero until 1949. Although a few new titles were added from time to time most of the pamphlets, leaflets and books produced were reprints or revisions of previously published works. The Koreshan Unity Press continued to accept outside work when not engaged in printing Unity periodicals, gaining limited revenue from this work.¹⁶

Dr. Teed, U. G. Morrow, and their assistants had produced a handsome and literate magazine in the Flaming Sword. Primarily religious and educative in its aims, the Sword was useful in proselytization and in keeping members living at

¹⁴Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 73.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 72-73, 75-77.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 75.

distant points informed of developments within the Unity. Upon the defection of the editor and the death of the founder, however, the magazine began to grow moribund. Dr. Teed's millennial novel, The Great Red Dragon, was serialized in the Sword during the months immediately following his death, and was issued in book form by Guiding Star later that year.¹⁷ Thereafter, no original works of major importance by Dr. Teed appeared in the magazine. The pages reserved for the writings of Koresh were filled with reprints of previously published articles or pamphlets. Many of the magazine's departments were dropped over the years and the number of pages was gradually reduced.

The American Eagle continued to appear weekly and in the same format after Dr. Teed's death. In 1911, however, the Eagle's principal competitor, the Fort Myers Press, began daily publication. Allen Andrews and the Unity board thereupon decided to specialize the Eagle in order to continue to attract readers.¹⁸ The paper's emphasis was gradually shifted

¹⁷FS, XXIII, 1-4 (January 15-April 15, 1909); "Lord Chester" [Cyrus R. Teed], The Great Red Dragon, or, The Flaming Devil of the Orient (Estero: Guiding Star Publishing House, 1908). The plates set up for the magazine serialization were apparently reused in printing the book.

¹⁸Anderson, "The American Eagle: Unique Florida Weekly," pp. 38-39.

from county politics and news to agricultural and horticultural subjects, although the Eagle did continue to keep a sharp eye on politicians and to support reforms and public improvements.¹⁹ The Eagle's transformation into a horticultural journal was completed in 1922 with the appearance of Henry Nehrling's detailed notes on tropical horticulture. Nehrling's writings, serialized in the Eagle during the rest of that decade, were popular with Florida gardeners and of great interest to professional botanists and horticulturists. This series of articles, which caused the Eagle to flourish,²⁰ was later collected by Allen Andrews and published as My Garden in Florida.²¹ Although the Eagle's emphasis shifted over the years it did not officially become a horticultural journal until 1946. In May of that year the paper's nameplate was changed to read, The American Eagle and Horticultural Review.²²

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 39, 43-44, 52.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 50-52.

²¹Henry Nehrling, My Garden in Florida, edited by Allen H. Andrews (2 vols.; Estero, Fla.: The American Eagle, 1944-1946).

²²May 9, 1946.

Estero's community activities were continued as long as possible. The orchestra was not disbanded until the 1930s; Sunday religious services were discontinued in the 1940s, although celebration of the Solar Festival was continued.²³ The brothers and sisters continued to dine at separate tables as the founder had directed, and meals began with the same Koreshan Daily Graces composed by Dr. Teed.²⁴

The ambitious Yankee newcomers, whose entry into county politics in 1906 had caused a riot, gradually became outwardly indistinguishable from their Southern neighbors. Adapting to Florida as did the exotic trees they planted, the Koreshans acquired a Southern dialect and wore the same simple clothes their neighbors purchased in the Unity store.²⁵ Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, as well as less publicized friends and tourists, were cordially welcomed to Estero.²⁶ The Koreshans

²³Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, May 14, 1971.

²⁴Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 283; Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 65.

²⁵Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," pp. 64-65.

²⁶Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, p. 241.

treated all with kindness and their business was conducted upon the highest plane of integrity. Koreshan literature was offered to visitors, but if the world did not accept the teachings of Koresh his followers felt no malice. They remained secure in the belief that their way of life would someday triumph.²⁷ The seed of the new dispensation had been planted in Koresh, and the seed would sprout. The building of New Jerusalem, though delayed, was not forgotten.

And while waiting for the eventual triumph the Koreshans became gradually accepted as a not unusual aspect of the diverse Florida scene.

New Beginnings

Koreshan influence declined in America as the twentieth century progressed, but a new seed had meanwhile sprouted in Europe. Peter Bender, a German aviator, had applied himself to serious mathematical study after wounds received in the First World War incapacitated him for heavy labor. His mathematical calculations eventually led him to conclusions distinctly similar to Dr. Teed's theory of the hollow globe.

²⁷Berrey, "The Koreshan Unity," p. 68.

Bender's theory, which he called the Hohlweltlehre, or Hollow Earth Doctrine, gained a substantial following in Germany.²⁸ Not long after proclaiming this doctrine Bender chanced to come across a copy of The Cellular Cosmogony in a library. Dr. Teed's book confirmed his reckoning in almost every respect, and Bender was soon in touch with the Koreshans at Estero.²⁹ Bender, according to one report, later came to believe himself the reincarnation of Koresh.³⁰

Shortly before World War II, Bender accepted a position on the faculty of a school for Jewish children in Frankfurt am Main. The headmistress of the school, Hedwig Michel, a woman whose accomplishments included writing, drama, music,

²⁸Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, pp. 284-285; Martin Gardner, Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1957), pp. 26-27. Gardner notes that "Some idea of the popularity of Hohlweltlehre may be gained from the fact that during the last war, a party of ten men . . . was actually dispatched to the Isle of Rügen to photograph the British fleet by tilting an infrared camera upward at an angle of 45 degrees." A group of adherents to the Hohlweltlehre is still active in Germany, publishing a newsletter entitled Der Kosmos. They do not subscribe to Koreshan religious beliefs.

²⁹Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 285. Gardner, Fads and Fallacies, p. 26, infers that Dr. Teed's writings were the basis of Bender's theory.

³⁰Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, p. 285.

and teaching, soon became interested in Holweltlehre and Koreshan Universology. Miss Michel's cultural activities had been gradually curtailed by Nazi authorities because of her German-Jewish background, and, as conditions in Germany became more unsettled, she decided to remove her school from that country. Aided by Quakers in Philadelphia whom she had visited she obtained an American immigration visa and had the equipment of her school packed for shipment. Peter Bender wrote to the Koreshans at Estero, and to friends of the Unity in Fort Myers, asking if Miss Michel would be welcome in Florida. A letter of invitation soon arrived from Fort Myers and Miss Michel embarked for America. Miss Michel's school equipment was lost when the war began, and Bender and his wife later died in a Nazi prison camp. But Miss Michel arrived safely at Estero in 1940.³¹

Miss Michel's first impression of the settlement was that it desperately needed help. She felt, however, that it could and should be brought back to life. Old buildings had been allowed to rot, modern sanitary facilities had not been

³¹Hedwig Michel to writer, interviews, January 25-28 and May 14, 1971; Carmer, Dark Trees to the Wind, pp. 283-285.

installed except in the Unity store, and even inexpensive improvements had not been made for the convenience of the elderly Koreshans. Miss Michel, together with a group led by Lou H. Staton, Claude J. Rahn, and Laurence W. Bubbett, son of James and Evelyn Bubbétt, and editor of the Flaming Sword, began to consolidate the assets of the Unity and to make such improvements as the extremely limited income of the Unity afforded. Buildings worth saving were repaired, others were torn down. Provisions were made for the health and comfort of the aging Koreshans, and attempts to lower expenses by elimination of unnecessary expenditures and activities were begun.³² The efforts of this group were opposed by Allen Andrews, president of the Unity board of directors, who wished Estero to remain as it was. After a bitter struggle in 1947 and 1948 Andrews was replaced by Bubbett as president of the board and editor of the American Eagle.³³

Lack of operating personnel caused Bubbett and Miss Michel to discontinue publication of the Eagle with the issue of January 13, 1949. Publication of the Flaming Sword was

³²Ibid., January 28 and May 14, 1971; ibid., p. 283.

³³AE: November 13, 1947, p. 8; January 15, 1948, pp. 1-2; January 22 and 29, 1948, p. 2; February 19, 1948, pp. 1-2. Anderson, "The American Eagle: Unique Florida Weekly,"

suspended the next month when the printing plant was destroyed in the last of the Unity's disastrous fires.³⁴ Allen Andrews continued to live at Estero until his death in 1951, publishing his autobiography, A Yank Pioneer in Florida, the year before he died.

In 1952, the board of the Unity, determined to preserve the buildings, records, and memorabilia of Koreshanity, and to perpetuate the Koreshan Unity, Incorporated, for future generations, decided to offer the settlement at Estero, together with some outlying land, to the state for use as a park. Governor Leroy Collins expressed interest in the offer in 1956 but nothing further was accomplished until 1961. The gift was accepted by Governor Farris Bryant in December of that year as a result of efforts by the Florida chapter of the Nature Conservancy in cooperation with the Unity board and others.³⁵

Koreshan State Park, opened to the public in 1967,

pp. 56-75; Andrews, Yank Pioneer in Florida, pp. 513-515; Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, January 25, 1971.

³⁴Anderson, "The American Eagle: Unique Florida Weekly," p. 79; Claude J. Rahn, "Some Brief Phases of Koreshan Universology," AE, March 1967, p. 7.

³⁵Hedwig Michel, A Gift to the People (pamphlet; Estero, Fla.: The Koreshan Unity, n.d.), pp. 6-8.

consists of three parts. The park headquarters at Estero offers camp sites and limited tourist facilities on the river. Guided tours of the settlement are offered to the public at designated hours, and the town will eventually be completely restored as a historical monument. Mound Key in Estero Bay, and acreage on both sides of the mouth of the river are also included in the park. Mound Key is of particular interest to archeologists because its shell mounds are believed to have been erected by the Caloosa Indians. The land at the river's mouth provides protection of wildlife and native vegetation.³⁶

Preservation of the settlement at Estero has assured the continued study and influence of the ideas that built it. New seeds continue to sprout as students of history, science, architecture, religion, and philosophy discover the many sides of Koreshanity. All visitors receive a warm welcome at Estero, but students and the young are given particular assistance and attention. They are, as Miss Michel points out, part of the future for which Koresh was building. New facilities for study are high on the list of improvements

³⁶Ibid., pp. 7-8; Brown and Brown, History of Fort Myers Beach, p. 46.

planned by the Unity.³⁷

The Unity resumed publication of the American Eagle with the issue of May 1, 1965. Edited by Hedwig Michel, now president of the Unity, the paper appears monthly and is dedicated to "The Wise Use of Natural Resources."

The garden park along the river has also been restored to much of its former beauty. The encroachment of the woods has been arrested and the grass is now carefully mowed. Exotic trees frame pleasant vistas, and mockingbirds flit from branch to branch. Flowering shrubs and tropical plants fill spaces between the shell-paved paths and the buildings of the settlement. Clumps of giant bamboo shade the fan-shaped steps leading down to the fish-filled river. Sunken gardens are again crossed by foot-bridges, and ripe fruit can still be eaten from the trees.

³⁷Hedwig Michel to writer, interview, January 25, 1971.

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