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# NEW HARMONY

AN ADVENTURE IN HAPPINESS

PAPERS OF  
THOMAS AND SARAH PEARS

*Edited by*

THOMAS CLINTON PEARS, JR.

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## THE SETTING

THE community of New Harmony, founded by Robert Owen of New Lanark, Scotland, upon the Wabash River in Posey County, Indiana, has been so often described and is so well known that a brief review of its history will suffice for the background of the letters presented here.<sup>1</sup> In Owen's opening address at New Harmony, on April 27, 1825, he said: "I am come to this country, to introduce an entire new State of society; to change it from the ignorant, selfish system, to an enlightened, social system, which shall gradually unite all interests into one, and ~~remove all~~ cause for contest between individuals."<sup>2</sup>

The Preliminary Society of New Harmony, according to its constitution adopted on May 1, "is particularly formed to improve the character and conditions of its own members, and to prepare them to become associates in Independent Communities, having common property.

"The sole objects of these Communities will be to procure for all their Members the greatest amount of happiness, to secure it to them, and to transmit it to their ~~children~~ to the latest posterity."<sup>3</sup>

The chief underlying principle was equality both of privilege and responsibility. Ultimately, the members of the new society were to share equally in the labor of production, and in the enjoyment of the rewards of their common industry. Owen, himself, had purchased the town of Harmony from the Rappites

<sup>1</sup>The best general account of the community is George B. Lockwood's *The New Harmony Movement* (New York, 1905). Upon his work, and the *New-Harmony Gazette*, published from October 1, 1825, to March 1, 1829, which provides an excellent contemporary record of the movement, this comment is chiefly dependent. See *The New Harmony Movement*, pages 381 to 385, for a bibliography of material relating to the Owens and New Harmony.

<sup>2</sup>*New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, p. 1; Lockwood, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup>*New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, p. 2; Lockwood, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

(for something less than \$150,000); the constitution quoted above was prepared by him, and he retained the right to appoint for one year the committee which was to "direct and manage the affairs of the society." Owen's ardent faith in the undertaking drew people to the community immediately.

Within three weeks eight hundred persons had gathered at the little village on the Wabash, and before the end of the year 1825 the population was estimated at a thousand. Early in June Owen left to return to New Lanark for his family and to gather other recruits. He returned to New Harmony in January, 1826, with a group of persons of such distinguished intellectual attainments that it has ever since been referred to as the "Boatload of Knowledge." Owen was so well pleased with his experiment that he proposed the immediate formation of a permanent "Community of Equality, based on the principle of common property."<sup>4</sup>

The drawing up of a "permanent" constitution was begun on January 25, and on February 5 the completed document was adopted. Most of the members subscribed to the new constitution, and on February 17, six new families were admitted. Within the first month, however, branch societies began breaking away from the parent community, and by June many members had been expelled, or had left of their own accord. Just two weeks after inauguration of the Permanent Community, Owen was asked to assume the "directorship" of the community for one year; a virtual dictatorship was established at New Harmony, although the constitution remained in effect. On July 4, 1826, Owen made his Declaration of Mental Independence, which he fondly hoped would mark an epoch comparable with that marked by the political Declaration of Independence fifty years before, but it did little to stop the disintegration of his community. Less than a year afterward, on Sunday, May 27, 1827, he delivered his "farewell address to the citizens of New Harmony and the members of the neighboring communities"; and the following year was reluctantly forced to admit that his dream had failed to materialize, and that the great experiment had fallen through.

<sup>4</sup>Owen, Robert Dale, *Twenty-seven Years of Autobiography. Thread- ing My Way*, p. 285 (New York, 1874); Lockwood, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

The writer of many of the following letters was elected secretary of the meetings which formulated the permanent constitution in January and February of 1826.<sup>5</sup> He had come to New Harmony with his family, lured thither by the Utopian promises of Owen. The fact that he had embarked in all good faith upon this adventure of happiness, the successful outcome of which he was at first no less firmly persuaded of than was his leader, lends peculiar force to his comments and criticisms, and to his estimate of the causes of the eventual failure.

Thomas Pears was a resident of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when he decided to join in the social experiment of Robert Owen, and he returned thither when he left New Harmony. He had previously—1815-1816—been a partner of John James Audubon, the naturalist, and Thomas Woodhouse Bakewell in an attempt to run a steam gristmill at Henderson, Kentucky.<sup>6</sup> Audubon's wife was Lucy Bakewell, sister of Thomas Woodhouse Bakewell, and niece of Benjamin Bakewell. The venture was a failure and all three of the partners lost money. Pears shortly after made a journey to Europe to bring back glass blowers from France and England for the Bakewell factory, and returned to Pittsburgh.

Mrs. Thomas Pears was Sarah Palmer, daughter of the Reverend John Palmer, of Birmingham, England, who was associated with Joseph Priestly in his revolt against intolerance, and in editing the *Theological Repository*. He was the author of an ingenious system of shorthand.<sup>7</sup> Sarah Palmer came to this country in 1794 with her mother and her mother's sister, the wife of Benjamin Bakewell. She lived for a while in New York, where in 1806 she married Thomas Pears.

The Pears family in 1825 consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Pears and their seven children: Maria, eighteen years old; John Palmer, sixteen; Sarah Ann, thirteen; Benjamin, eleven; Ellen Mary, eight; Thomas, five; William De Witt Clinton, the baby,

<sup>5</sup>*New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, p. 161; Lockwood, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>6</sup>Herrick, Francis Hobart, *Audubon the Naturalist. A History of His Life and Time*, Vol. 1, p. 254 (New York and London), erroneously dates the beginning of the enterprise in 1817.

<sup>7</sup>See the sketch of Palmer in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. 43, p. 135.

one year old. The family left its home in Pittsburgh in May, 1825, and early in June we find it established in New Harmony.

Benjamin Bakewell, who figures largely in the following exchange of letters, went to Pittsburgh in 1808, where he bought the Pittsburgh Flint Glass Works, founded the year before. He made it the "first successful flint glass factory in this country" and is known as "the father of the flint glass business in the United States." His factory was the show place of Pittsburgh for many decades.<sup>8</sup> There is in the Carnegie Library of Allegheny an autograph letter from Lafayette thanking the Bakewells for the glass service made for him upon the occasion of his visit to America in 1825, the very year the Pearses went to New Harmony. The firm continued under different names until the year 1881. For a long time the firm name was Bakewell, Page, and Bakewell; during the last forty years of its history it was Bakewell, Pears, and Company.

Both Benjamin Bakewell and his wife, the latter the aunt of Mrs. Thomas Pears, were intensely interested in the New Harmony venture. Bakewell had repeatedly requested that he be fully informed of the progress of the experiment. It is because the letters were written with this definite purpose that they possess a value even beyond that of their vigorous style. Some of the letters, moreover, cover phases and periods of the development in New Harmony about which we find elsewhere little information.

It is the plan of the editor to permit the letters to speak for themselves, supplying only a few notes and arranging the correspondence in a convenient outline which will clearly mark the

"Mr. Bakewell from England, who has been established here about two years, politely shewed us his manufactory of pottery and queensware. He told us that the business would answer very well, could workmen be got to be depended upon; but that those he has hitherto employed, have always quit his service before the term of the expiration of their contracts, notwithstanding any law to the contrary; and two of them have actually set up small manufactories in Charlestown, one of queensware in opposition to him, and the other of tobacco pipes. Bakewell's ware is very good, but not so fine, nor so well glazed as that manufactured in England, owing probably to the difference of materials, as the process is the same." Cuming, F., *Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country . . . 1807 . . . 1809*, pp. 109-10 (Thwaites, Reuben Gold [ed.], *Early Western Travels*, Vol. 4, Cleveland, 1904).



successive stages of the development and the disintegration of Owen's dream. A few passages of purely personal or family interest have been omitted; otherwise the letters are printed as written.

## THE ADVENTURE EMBARKED UPON

**T**HE Constitution of the Preliminary Society of New Harmony provided that each member should have, within a fixed amount, the free choice of food and clothing; to effect this, a credit, to be fixed by the committee, was to be opened in the store for each family. Each family and individual member was to have an account, upon which they would be charged with what they received, and credited with the value of their services as estimated by the committee. The value of their services over their expenditure was to be placed to their credit in the books of the society at the end of each year.

Robert Owen, before he left New Harmony, had "recommended that the inhabitants meet together three evenings in each week—one for the general discussion of subjects connected with the welfare of the community, another for a concert of vocal and instrumental music, and a third for a public ball."<sup>1</sup> We shall look in upon all three of these occasions, but it is the first, or the Wednesday evening meeting for the purpose of discussing the affairs of the community, that will play far the largest part in the drama that is about to unfold. It was at this meeting that the committee made public its rules and regulations for the conduct of the society, and the members sought to effect some degree of self-government through the drawing up of resolutions and petitions to the committee.

THOMAS PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL<sup>2</sup>

June 2, 1825

DEAR SIR,

I do not keep all the resolutions which I make, or I should not now write to you; for I had determined before I left Pittsburgh not to write a word about this establishment for at least six months. But weak are our resolves when circumstances oppose them.

<sup>1</sup>Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>See *ante*, p. 10.

I will not pretend to give you an account of our situation farther than to say that with me all is astonishment. 'Tis but a little month since the last of the Harmonians left this place, and it is now so filled that we scarcely know where to put those who arrive. Hundreds are still on the road, and we are now fitting up the cabins the Dutch had deserted, for their reception.<sup>3</sup> The schools are nearly organized, boarding houses established, smiths, carpenters, turners, etc., all employed, and agriculture going on almost as well as tho' we had been here a twelvemonth. And this has been accomplished by one man, who has drawn together people from all points of the compass, various in habit and disposition, to mix together like brethren and sisters.

You will perhaps smile at this but I have just returned from hearing Mr. Owen, and I am then always in the hills. I do not know how it is,—he is not an orator; but here he appears to have the power of managing the feelings of all at his will. The day before our arrival here, the report of the committee of which I send you a copy, was made public; and when all found the credit they possessed to be very small, dissatisfaction prevailed. A day or two after, Mr. Owen spoke, and it vanished.

I must confess that I did not like the \$80 regulation, and that before I knew what I was to do, my feelings were not of the most agreeable kind; and Pittsburgh and its smoke and its friends were never more valuable in my eyes; and grievous indeed would have been my disappointment if I had come here with any view of making money. That, you know, was not my object, and I felt that restrictions were necessary. I was confident that Mr. Owen would furnish us with every necessity.

You will perceive by the report that no member of the society if put upon the maximum, can draw for provisions and clothing more than 180 \$ per year; and thus a family of children under twelve years of age will, until the boarding schools and boarding houses for children be established, be maintained at the expense of the parents. Women, not actively employed,

<sup>3</sup>The Rappites, who first occupied Harmony, are referred to here. After the sale of the property to Robert Owen, they removed to Pennsylvania, where they built the town of Economy. Lockwood, *op. cit.*, chs. 2-4.

are not considered as members; and can only receive credit for the amount of sewing, washing, etc., they may be able to do for the society, when not engaged in family concerns. These regulations or credits may from time to time be extended by the Committee as far as the maximum; but in a discourse Mr. Owen delivered yesterday, he stated, I think, that each family were to be permitted to draw on the store sufficient for their support. But it is so variously understood that I am not certain about it; and unless the subject were sometimes forced upon me by my situation, I should cease to think of it.

When I arrived I found the counting house in possession of a Mr. Sergentfree, who is said to be the best Book-keeper in Illinois. He set me to making books and ruling the first day, and we worked on very quietly until the Pittsburgh Book-keeper got the arrangement of the books, and is now suffered to go on as quietly in his own way.

My comrade seems to be of an amiable disposition, and I am perfectly contented. There is something pleasing in the midst of all the toil of arranging a set of books for such an undertaking as this. My head is full of Debits and Credits, and I should feel perfectly at home had I the books necessary; but the chief clerk of the Harmony establishment had such a *correct* idea of the concern that he has sent us a journal and ledger hardly as large as your salesbooks! Mr. Welman will call, and I shall be much obliged by your showing him your ledger for 1823, that he may have some idea of what they ought to be. I have directed him to get the largest he can procure.

I am not yet a complete Harmonite, but I am beginning to think that I have caught some of Mr. Owen's spirit; for the more I see of the Social System the more I wish it to succeed, and the more I am convinced it will succeed. But whatever may be the fate of this establishment, its principles will never be lost; and if not suddenly, they will gradually bring about that change in society so ardently desired by its founder.

Is it not food for reflection that whilst the world was convulsed by war, whilst all the energies of man were directed to the destruction of his fellows, that an individual should be preparing a System that should banish hatred and self interest, and

induce mankind to consider themselves as brethren? Harmony now presents to the world a novel and, I think, a sublime spectacle,—an assemblage of people met together to try to do the utmost good to each; and my hope is that we shall act as tho' the eyes of the world were upon us. For my part, I rejoice that I am among those who have so devoted themselves, and I feel confident that the laurels of Owen of Lanark will be green, when those of the destroyers of mankind shall be no more remembered.

On many accounts I regret Mr. Owen's departure,<sup>4</sup> but as it is necessary, perhaps I ought to think it is for the best. He will not fall a sacrifice to climate, and he needs relaxation; and the obliging us to rely upon ourselves may be productive of much good. All I fear is party spirit, a good deal of which was shown in the election of our committee.<sup>5</sup>

It is, however, time to say something of ourselves. Our passage was as short as I had anticipated, and we arrived here in good health. The journey from Mount Vernon was the most fatiguing part of it. My health has been much better than in Pittsburgh, and that of all the family no worse. We are scrimped in house room, but that is all we could complain of; and to one who has lived at Henderson [that] is no great hardship.<sup>6</sup> Please present my affectionate remembrances to Mrs. Bakewell, and to Mr. Thomas and Mr. John' also to Mr. Page and family, and believe me

Ever yours very sincerely,

THOMAS PEARS

<sup>4</sup>Robert Owen left New Harmony for New Lanark early in June, and did not return until the following January.

<sup>5</sup>"Our Government is vested in a Committee (at present consisting of seven, four of whom were appointed by Mr. Owen, and three were elected by the members,) who have the regulation of all the affairs of the Society." *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, p. 102. Six members of the committee are listed in the "Letters of William Pelham, written in 1825 and 1826." They were Jacob Schnee, William Owen, Warner W. Lewis, T. M. Bosson, Robert L. Jennings, and Dr. Elias McNamee. Lindley, Harlow (ed.), *Indiana as Seen by Early Travelers . . .*, p. 369 (*Indiana Historical Collections*, Indianapolis, 1916).

<sup>6</sup>Henderson, Kentucky. See *ante*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Thomas Bakewell was Benjamin Bakewell's oldest son; an expert chemist, he was a most valuable assistant in the glass business. "Mr. John" was a younger son, John Palmer Bakewell.

P. S. I was promised a profile of Mr. Owen, but am fearful I shall not get it in time enough to send. I have tried two or three times to catch it whilst he was speaking, but could not please myself in it, for he moves much about, and seldom holds his head so as to give a good profile. Like the ladies I am going to add a long postscript but it will be a melancholy one. Mr. Birkbeck came here three days ago in good health and to-day he is an inhabitant of the narrow tomb. He lost his life yesterday in<sup>8</sup>

MRS. THOMAS PEARS TO MRS. BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

June 3, 1825

MY DEAREST AUNT,

I regret very much that I have been necessitated to defer writing so long; but things have been in so very uncertain a state here, that I felt it utterly impossible to give any satisfactory account of our situation. That we have experienced much disappointment in some respects, cannot be denied; but we look forward to better times, and we feel perfect confidence in Mr. Owen's sincere desire to promote the happiness of all. This society is in its commencement, and we must, I know,

<sup>8</sup>The rest of the manuscript is missing. Morris Birkbeck, an educated farmer of Surrey, England, dissatisfied with the social and political system under which he lived, determined to establish a settlement for others in similar circumstances, in the republican United States. In association with George Flower, he began his agricultural experiment in Edwards County, Illinois, in 1818. Before it had a fair start, the settlement was divided by a break between Flower and Birkbeck. It is said that Birkbeck's visit to New Harmony in June, 1825, was to enlist the aid of Robert Owen in securing a reconciliation. Returning homeward with his son, he was drowned while crossing Fox River. The date of his death is given variously as June 3 and June 4, 1825. Pears's letter is dated June 2, but its length suggests that its writing may have extended over several days. Birkbeck was buried at New Harmony. See Vincennes *Western Sun*, June 11, 1825; Flower, George, *History of the English Settlement in Edwards County Illinois . . .*, pp. 115, 255-56 (Washburne, E. B. [ed.], *Chicago Historical Society's Collection*, Vol. 1, Chicago, 1882); Alvord, Clarence W. (ed.), *Governor Edward Coles*, p. 161 (*Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, Vol. 15, Springfield, 1920); *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. 2, pp. 289-90.

expect to meet with difficulties; but the state of doubt and fluctuation in which my mind has been kept since our arrival here has been extremely depressing. And though I believe all will be right in the end, I cannot help casting "many a long lingering look" toward Pittsburgh and its kind inhabitants.

We arrived at Harmony after a most fatiguing and disagreeable journey from Mount Vernon.<sup>9</sup> The roads were terrible, and though the distance is but sixteen miles, it was many days before we recovered from the effects of our ride. We were immediately provided with a house containing three rooms, and a kitchen which is about the size of your little room over the passage. In this little tenement, our family and that of Mr. Pearson (the person who came in the boat with us), are all crowded, except that we have a room for the boys in a house occupied by a Mrs. Grant, in whom Maria and myself unexpectedly found an old acquaintance. You will undoubtedly recollect Hectorina Grant, daughter of the late Mr. Grant of Carmi. She has married a young man of the same name, and has a sweet little girl about five months old. She asked a great deal about your family and Mrs. Page's.

There are many agreeable people here if one has but time to visit. I have called upon Mrs. Lewis<sup>10</sup> and she on me. She appears to be a very friendly woman. Miss Ronald, who

<sup>9</sup>Mount Vernon, Indiana, the Ohio River port for New Harmony. The tortuous course of the rivers, especially of the Wabash, made the distance by water interminable. The shorter trip, by road, had little to recommend it. "We hired a two-horse wagon, to carry us to the village of New Harmony, which is sixteen miles distant from Mount Vernon . . . . The road passed through a hilly country, thickly grown with green-leaved trees. The way was made very bad by former rains, and the most miry places were mended with logs, forming a grievous causeway . . . . As the road was very bad, and the horses went very slow, I walked at least ten miles, and arrived at New Harmony, before the carriage." Bernhard, Karl, duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, *Travels through North America* . . . 1825 and 1826, Vol. 2, p. 106 (Philadelphia, 1828).

<sup>10</sup>Mrs. Lewis was the wife of Warner W. Lewis, secretary to the standing committee, and later of the permanent community. He was spoken of as "Mr. Lewis, secretary of the society, from Virginia, and a relation of the great Washington. He was already pretty far advanced in years, and appeared to have united himself to the society from liberal principles." Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, *Travels through North America*, Vol. 2, p. 110.

mentioned having visited you on her way to this country, called upon me twice. She seems a fine, lively, sensible girl. I am sorry that she does not return through Pittsburgh. She told me that her route is to Cincinnati, from thence to the falls of Niagara, to Canada, down the Hudson to New York, and from thence to England.

.....

Maria has been very poorly for a few days past, but I believe her illness chiefly proceeds from fatigue and a bad cold caught with washing. I really feel more grieved on her account than on any other. All the hard work falls upon her, and it is more than she is able to bear. We had hoped she would have been rather relieved from her heavy labor than otherwise by coming here; but at present it is far from being the case, and I feel seriously afraid that her health will sink under it. She has hardly ever washed or scrubbed for a long time past without getting a severe cough and cold. However I hope that by degrees I shall be enabled to take a more active part in our family business, and then perhaps we may do better.

The rest of the family are tolerably well. Mr. Pears is book-keeper, which in such an establishment as this is a pretty difficult post. Palmer is working with the carpenters, and the four younger ones go to school. Clinton is very well, and grows very much.

.....

I forgot to mention that we stopped part of a day at Shippingport. Eliza looks very well, though rather altered. She has three fine little boys at home, but her eldest daughter is with Sarah at New Orleans.<sup>11</sup> I did not go to Louisville as our time was so short. I therefore did not see Mrs. Bakewell. I was very sorry to hear from Mrs. Berthoud that she had given up her intention of visiting Pittsburgh. Mr. P was fortunately just in time to give Mr. Campbell my letter. I

<sup>11</sup>Eliza was Mrs. Berthoud, a younger sister of Lucy Bakewell Audubon. She married, on March 6, 1816, Nicholas Augustus Berthoud, whose father, the Marquis de Saint Pié, and mother, *dame d'honneur* to Queen Marie Antoinette, were *émigrés* who fled from Paris during the French Revolution, and assumed the name of Berthoud on coming to this country. Sarah Anderson was a still younger sister of Mrs. Audubon.



was much pleased to hear that Ann was going to you. I hope you find her a great comfort to you. I feel very anxious to know whether your arm is better, and if you are yet able to use it. I hope if that is not the case that either Uncle or Cousin Thomas will write for you soon, for I assure you that I feel very anxious to hear [from you. How] often do I think of the circle around your comfor[table fire], my dear Aunt, may you long enjoy it. The idea that [I may never] again join it is too melancholy to reflect upon, but [so many] things have come to pass that I will not think it [impossible] that I may again see you. I hope you will send me a particular account of my friends in Pittsburgh when I hear from you.

If you please to remember me to Mrs. Page, Mrs. Oliver,<sup>12</sup> etc. I do not intend to write to any of them now, unless I should have time to add a few lines in Sarah's letter to Jane Oliver. But Mr. Owen is going so soon that it is rather uncertain. . . . With kind love to my dear uncle and cousins, and the best wishes for your health and happiness, I remain, dear Aunt,

Your affectionate and grateful niece,

SARAH PEARS

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL TO THOMAS PEARS

July 6, 1825

DEAR SIR,

I should have been very sorry had you kept your resolution not to write to Pittsburgh till after a six months residence at your new place of abode. I am very glad to find you are so comfortably situated, and hope by this time you have got through the unpleasantness of being with a parcel of strangers.

Your letter telling of the regulations of the Society afforded us much amusement. I had part of the former inserted in the

<sup>12</sup>In 1825 Mrs. Mary Oliver opened in Pittsburgh the first boarding school west of the Alleghenies. After a few years the school was removed to Braddock's Field, to the present Collingwood house, where Judge Wallace entertained Lafayette on his visit to the United States in 1825. It was known as the Edgeworth Ladies' Seminary. In 1839 a second move was made, to Sewickley.

*Gazette*, and by the last paper of Walsh's I find he has done you the honor to copy it.<sup>13</sup> I hope you will favor us with a full and particular account of your progress. If the Society continues as amicable as when you last wrote, I shall think miracles have not ceased. Are the good folks satisfied with their credits, and have they any interest in the results? After Mr. Owen is reimbursed for the outgoings, how are the profits shared? Are tea and coffee included in the stores allowed? What is the plan upon which the schools are conducted?

We are trying to form a society here, and this must be my apology for asking so many questions. We have about six and thirty subscriptions, and when we have fifty the society chooses its officers and organizes itself. Mr. Page will be appointed one of the council. Mr. Owen recommended that a person should be sent down in the Fall and spend the winter at Harmony to learn the ways and methods of the Society. You will, I doubt not, have your eyes about you, and if we should proceed, if you are in any way disappointed you might be thought useful in this society,—if you find the climate or any other thing disagreeable. There are a good many “ifs” in the way; but IF Mr. Owen's views are at all realized, superintendents of communities will be in demand.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Page, Mr. Belknap, Thomas and myself went to look at the lot at Pine Creek on the 4th July. On examination I think more favorably than I did, and if we are able to proceed, and this tract can be had at a fair value, I think we shall fix there.

<sup>13</sup>Bakewell speaks of the Pittsburgh *Gazette*, later the *Gazette-Times*, and now the *Post-Gazette*, which was founded in 1786. From 1822 to 1829 it was in the hands of D. and M. MacLean, who will be mentioned in these letters. Robert Walsh was editor of the Philadelphia *National Gazette*.

<sup>14</sup>It must be remembered that Robert Owen's plan contemplated the general reorganization of society by the establishment throughout the country of societies similar to that of New Harmony. I find no mention of the projected Pittsburgh society in Lockwood except the name. According to the eccentric nomenclature which was to have indicated the latitude and longitude of the different communities, Pittsburgh was to have been called OTFU VEITOU. It never went beyond organization on paper. See note 19, p. 23. The system of names is described in the *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, pp. 226-27.

Mr. Flower Sr. and Jr. accompanied Mr. Owen part of the way. They do not seem to accord with his views, tho' I think it arises from circumstances which occasion the exclusion of the son from Harmony.<sup>15</sup> Infidelity of Mr. Owen is the plea, but as that was known before, it won't pass for much. While in Pittsburgh Mr. Owen had an interview with Miss Herron and Miss Brown, and proposed that May next the western division should send a delegation to Cincinnati, where he would meet them, and guarantee they should all accord in all opinions of consequence, and that all unkind feeling on account of religious opinion should thenceforth cease. Wonderful as are his works, they should be the most wonderful of them all; and if he brought it about, I should set him down as having dealing with superior spirits.

We expect Clinton and Clay here to-morrow or next day from the state of Ohio, where they have been to commence a canal from the Lakes to the Ohio.<sup>16</sup> Mr. Oliver left us yesterday to assist Mrs. Oliver in her school which is flourishing. . . . We often wish that we could take a peep at you. I hope your harmony and good will have not been interrupted, tho' it is strange if it has not.

Yrs. very sincerely,

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

[Inclosure]

THOMAS BAKEWELL TO THOMAS PEARS

DEAR SIR,

I suppose ere this you have got the books of the Society into good order. So many accounts must be complicated. We are rather shorthanded now in consequence of John's de-

<sup>15</sup>Richard and George Flower. Richard Flower had negotiated the sale of Harmony to Owen. George Flower met the Bakewell family on his first trip westward to Illinois in 1816. He says: "When at Pittsburgh, to Mr. Thomas Bakewell, and others, I was indebted for many civilities." Flower, *History of the English Settlement*, p. 34. This history does not disclose any reason for his "exclusion" from Harmony.

<sup>16</sup>De Witt Clinton, governor of New York, had sponsored the Erie Canal, then nearing completion. Henry Clay was secretary of state.

parture.<sup>17</sup> Prentice passed some time here. He is very bitter against Mr. Owen's System. Do you find the men in general work as well as if they had the whole profits of their exertion? We are making a new article in commode knobs for which John took out a patent. The pin is put hot in an open and shut mould. When you begin to make furniture you would find them cheap and useful. I suppose you have heard the Catholic question is lost in the House of Lords.<sup>18</sup> There appears a good deal of excitement about it. We expect John will bring a reinforcement to the Glass House and cutting shops. Give my respects to Mrs. Pears, and believe me, Dr. Sir,

Yrs. truly,

THOMAS BAKEWELL

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL TO THOMAS PEARS

August 6, 1825

DEAR SIR,

We cannot permit Mr. Welman to depart without saying a few words. We have been expecting to hear again from you for some time back. It is not merely curiosity which occasions so many to cast their eyes toward Harmony. News from it is received with pretty much the same eagerness and anxiety as if a mail had arrived from Jupiter or Saturn. It must appear like a new world to its inhabitants, though perhaps not quite so cold as in the planets just mentioned.

We have organized (as the parson said of his church) a Society here, the Constitution of which I sent you in the *Gazette*. I fear little except the difficulty of obtaining ways and means to commence. We have only about 60 shares

<sup>17</sup>John Palmer Bakewell had just left on a special mission to England.

<sup>18</sup>This was the period when the removal of disabilities preventing Roman Catholics from voting and holding office was being agitated in England and Ireland. Daniel O'Connell had founded the Catholic Association in 1823. Catholic Emancipation was finally carried in 1829.

subscribed at \$100, and there should to ensure success in my opinion be five hundred.<sup>19</sup>

Pray send us particulars of your proceedings, that what is good may be copied, and what is inconvenient may be avoided. I hear they are going on swimmingly at Cincinnati, or rather in the neighborhood of the little Miami.<sup>20</sup>

De Witt Clinton was here, and ordered some glass. We had a very respectable company to dine with him, and I think will stand fair for Pennsylvania, Jersey and York to start with in 1829.<sup>21</sup> Thomas sent you a Clinton Tumbler, and as I have not time to write to Mrs. Pears, I have sent her in No. 14 of Mr. Owen's Boxes, a few yards of flannel for the coming winter.

Yours very sincerely,

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

<sup>19</sup>See note 14, page 20. The *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, p. 7, reports:

"COOPERATING SOCIETY.—A Society has just been established at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, styled the Cooperating Society of Alleghany County, founded on the principles of Mr. OWEN.

"The number of members required by the Constitution having been placed on the subscription list, the Society has been organized by the election of the following gentlemen as officers for the present year:

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL, *President*

JOHN SNYDER, *Treasurer*.

"Mark Stackhouse, Isaac Lightner, Samuel Smith, M. M. Belknap, J. Jones, Martin Rahm, Asa Waters, John Marshal, Jas. Byington, Benj. Page, Joseph Armorer, W. Eichbaum, jr. *Committee*.

MAGNUS M. MURRAY, *Sec'y.*"

<sup>20</sup>The society at Yellow Springs, near Dayton, Ohio, founded September 19, 1825, was the first one outside New Harmony founded on Robert Owen's principles. Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, pp. 100-1. See also p. 177.

<sup>21</sup>This was a suggestion for the presidential or vice-presidential nomination for 1828. Clinton was evidently a favorite with the Bakewells and one of the Pears children was named for him.

## DISCORD IN HARMONY

THOMAS PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

September 2, 1825

DEAR SIR,

I will now try to answer your queries. From the commencement of the harvest I cannot say that there appeared to me to be much Harmony among us; for our farmers suddenly became of such importance as to seem to think none of any account but themselves. And instead of striving who should do most, the most industry was manifested in accusing others of doing little. To this succeeded the Reign of Reports; and they were so plentiful and various, that there was no dependence to be placed on any. They are now somewhat diminished, and I believe we may be said to be regaining some of the Harmony we had lost. But the Master Spirit is not here, and I fear we shall advance but slowly until his reappearance.

The Good Folks, as you call us, are not satisfied with their allowance, and indeed it is impossible they should be, as it will not support them; and alterations are therefore continually making therein by order of the Committee, either for special sums, or for a certain per centage on the stated allowance; which being partial cannot give satisfaction.

The young men under it also think they, doing as much, and paying as much board, ought to have the same credit as their Seniors. The idle and the industrious are neither of them satisfied. The one contending that they do enough for their allowance, and the other thinking themselves entitled to more. Information is collecting on these heads, and various are the schemes for obviating these sources of dissatisfaction.

But I believe that nothing permanent will be determined until Mr. Owen's return. Expectation hangs on him, and should he be delayed till Spring, the spirit of Harmony will be severely tried in many.

Winter clothing must be had, and I believe is most wanted

by those who will have the least to get it with. Some have already left us, a few have been turned off, and I now hear of three or four more who are going away. The causes assigned are various, but I believe this is the foundation.

Tea and coffee are generally used, and I have known but few instances in which they have been refused to any, although I understand when the following rates of boarding for the boarding houses were established the committee did not calculate upon their use: one to ten years (of age) \$15; ten to fifteen years—\$22.50; fifteen years and upwards—\$30 per annum. These rates are now general, and by comparing them with rates in regulations forwarded to you, you will find that the board from ten to fifteen years invariably exceeds the amount allowed.

I do not know of any other application of profits than what are mentioned in the regulations forwarded, viz. the establishment of a new community. What Mr. Owen's views on the subject of reimbursement may be I know not; and he not being here it is impossible to ascertain. I have heard that he had set apart \$100,000 for the experiment, but this is report; although from my opinion of Mr. Owen I should not be surprised if his philanthropy should carry him thus far. I have, however, had little curiosity about it, knowing the impossibility of having any profits to divide or set apart this year; and indeed lately I have thought we should be well off to pay our expenses next year. You may, if you please, set this down as one of my gloomy ideas, and I should be glad it may prove so.

Most of those who come to look at us seem highly pleased; but they see only the outside, and we have not forgotten the "fair side of London." And many among us think all is going on swimmingly, whilst to me there appears so much want of system and arrangement that I can scarce anticipate a different result. Great numbers here have large families, and thus the consumers bear too great a proportion to the producers.

Our factories did I say?—it should be our cotton factory,—has not yet, I believe, produced its expenses, for all was out of order. The woolen has not commenced; and as to blacksmiths, shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, coopers, brickmakers,

masons, etc. their labors will be all absorbed by the Society for I do not know what length of time; and in all these which work for the Society there appears to me a great misapplication of labor.

But it is still more so in the farming department. The hogs have been our Lords and Masters this year in field and garden. We are now, as we have been, without vegetables except what we buy; and I believe that we shall go without potatoes, turnips, or cabbages this winter, unless they are purchased—which is but a slender thread to hang hope upon. Indeed until lately our Committee gave up all idea of farming till Mr. Owen's return, except the sowing of fifty or sixty acres of winter barley, which they wisely concluded would be wanted for our beer the ensuing year. In conjunction with some others I drew up a report, or rather a set of queries intended to lead to a report, but there it ended.<sup>1</sup> They did however give the direction of three or four ploughs to some Englishmen, and they are doing as well as the time and implements will allow, having finished ploughing the barley, and are now beginning to plough for wheat.

The plan of education is the Pestalozzian.<sup>2</sup> I sent you last week a pamphlet on the subject by R. Dale Owen which I thought you might not have seen, and which will give you more information than I can in a letter.<sup>3</sup> Ben is in the boarding school, and appears contented and improved. He comes home on Sunday when we keep him (tho' contrary to rule), and on Wednesday for his clothes. I have some idea of going into the day school, but it is uncertain. Good teachers are wanted; but pray do not connect this period with the former.

<sup>1</sup>See Inclosure 1 following this letter.

<sup>2</sup>William Maclure, a partner of Owen's in the New Harmony venture, had visited Pestalozzi, and was the first, or one of the first, to introduce his system of education in the United States. Joseph Neef, Madame Marie D. Fretageot, and William Piquetal d'Arusmont came to New Harmony to develop this system. Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, pp. 3, 79. See also Monroe, Will S., *History of the Pestalozzian Movement in the United States*, chs. 2 and 6 (Syracuse, N. Y., 1907).

<sup>3</sup>This was perhaps *An Outline of the System of Education at New Lanark* (36 pp. Cincinnati, 1825). An edition had been issued in Glasgow in 1824.



I received the constitution of the Co-operating Society, and heartily wish you success; but you must expect to meet with many difficulties. Mr. Owen's heart, I think, ran away with his head here. He collected his numbers, or rather perhaps they flocked to him indiscriminately, and the Belle Vision he displayed captured their imaginations; and happy then, they saw not the rugged passage which they had to travel. And tho' I believe it will be safely reached, the promised land is farther off than most of us anticipated.

You must be particularly careful in the selection of your members. It is better to have too few than too many; for with means and elbow room a man may maintain himself, tho' he might find it difficult to maintain many more. The different trades and occupations should bear a due proportion to each other, and in their interchanges with each other every article should be charged at the lowest rate, say cost. For every one ought to be convinced that he is laboring for the benefit of the whole; and that it would only tend to create jealousies by the blacksmith's endeavoring to make his establishment appear profitable at the expense of the farmer, or the store at the expense of the community,—by charging them more for articles than cost, and what may be necessary to pay for care and the labor of distribution.

It is from your exports you must expect your profits, from your intercourse among yourselves your happiness. The strictest economy consistent with comfort should be practiced, for it is folly to expect a man to exert either his mental or his physical powers unless he be placed in a situation of rational enjoyment, or he be urged forward by necessity.

For the present I should strongly recommend living in families. Houses capable of containing a family of eight or ten persons, or two smaller families, appear to me to be the best: and they can with you be constructed at a small expense. And I think, if your funds will admit, that a number of these with workshops, etc., should be built before moving on the grounds. If it retards the commencement of the Society some time, it will save the expense of maintenance; and perhaps the members might be induced to appropriate the profits they

accumulated during the longer residence in general society to the formation of an additional capital.

In everything, however, the whole must be kept in view and self forgotten, remembering always that inasmuch as you increase your neighbor's happiness, so much you add to your own. Individuality ought not to be thought of,—if unfortunately you should have one half as much as we have here, I fear you would not long hang together. Do you ask how it is done here? I can only answer—Robert Owen will be here.

Avoid being a show society. Recreations are both pleasing and necessary: but we have Monday nights—parade and drill; Tuesdays—dancing; Wednesdays—public meetings for business; Thursdays—unappropriated; Fridays—concerts, etc.; Saturdays—fire engine, debates, etc., & so far every evening playing at ball, cricket, etc.

The weather has been extremely hot and dry this summer, the thermometer frequently as high as 100 and 102 degrees, and the Mosquitoes, which they told us on our arrival were to disappear the first two or three hot days, have entertained us with their music ever since. It is well I did not believe the Dutch report, or we should have had no Mosquito bars. This place and the surrounding country have been healthy—that is few deaths. We have buried nine small children, one about five and the rest about two [?] to one month old. No adults. But we have prickly heat and slight bilious fever and sca [?] humorous and Boils and boils and sore eyes in plenty and all the lassitude consequent on a drought and extreme heat of six weeks continuance. For several [?] past I have not been well, and Mrs. Pears has suffered much by the heat. We are now better and the children are well, but I would not willingly pass another such a summer. We want much to hear from you but we blame the post only. If I find anything worth communicating will write again soon. Please give my best respects to all your family, as also to Mr. Page, and believe me

Yours very sincerely

THOMAS PEARS

P. S. Please tell Mr. Thomas\* that I do not think the men

\*Mr. Thomas Bakewell. See his letter to Pears, pp. 21-22.

generally do work as well as they would for themselves. Many do, but not the majority I think. The accounts are complicated. There are now five in the counting room, and the books not up.

[Inclosure 1]

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS

GENTLEMEN,<sup>5</sup>

Inclosed you will find a number of Resolutions which were passed at a private meeting lately held in this town, and which are with deference presented to you for your consideration.

The meeting was composed of practical Agriculturalists, who having seen with regret the want of system, met together for the purpose of expressing their opinions freely on the subject. The harvest being ended, their views all tended to one point, the securing a sufficiency of bread stuffs for themselves and food for the cattle the ensuing year. The enclosed therefore must be viewed not as a system of Agriculture, but as a sketch of what they conceived should be done to obtain that object; and the form of Resolutions was adopted not with any wish to dictate, but because they thought that in this way they could place their ideas in a more prominent light and express them in fewer words.

It is hoped that they are all sufficiently explicit, but we cannot forbear remarking that an examination of the 3rd Resolution will show the necessity of exertion. It is supposed that the town contains at least 800 inhabitants, and we believe that we should not be wrong in saying that a family of eight persons will consume a barrel of flour or five bushels of wheat per month, which means 500 bushels per month, or 6000 bushels per year for the whole population. To produce this quantity would require 300 acres each producing 20 bushels, and this is an extent of tillage which we believe the means of the Society are unequal to. We do not know the number of oxen and horses now owned by the Society, and can only there-

<sup>5</sup>This report was addressed to the committee which governed New Harmony.

fore say that one bushel of rye per week would be a very moderate allowance for them when at work.

The distillery also claims attention, for it is believed that the mash will fatten nearly as much bacon as the corn and rye would before they were converted into spirits; which would then be either an article of consumption, a source of profit, or would enable us to procure those things we cannot produce ourselves. The value of the grains from the brewery, either for milk cows or as an aid in fattening oxen is also well known, and we mention it to show the necessity of sowing as much winter barley as possible, not only that we may enjoy a wholesome beverage, but that our cattle may be well fed, and that we may be enabled to send the greater part of our exports to another market.

As a means of enlarging the breadth of winter grain we would suggest the propriety of keeping the corn crops in such a state of tith as to permit them to be sown with rye if needful; and also whether, if on examination the quantity of grain necessary to be sown should be found to be more than the strength of the Society can accomplish, it would not be advisable to "farm some of it on shares," as according to an old adage "half a loaf is better than no bread."

The best makes of fencing for the present will be suggested, and much other valuable information will be obtained should the Committee see fit to appoint . . . persons for the purpose mentioned in the last Resolution. Heartily wishing success to the Institution,

Yours very respectfully,

#### "THE RESOLUTIONS

*"Resolved*—That it is of the first importance immediately to ascertain the situation of the land which is to receive the crops of winter grain :

- 1—Its location ;
- 2—Whether it be subject at any time to inundation ;
- 3—The quality thereof ;
- 4—The state in which it now is ;

5—Whether any steps have been taken toward its preparation;

6—What are now the best and most efficacious and expeditious means of bringing it into the state necessary to receive the seed in due season.

*“Resolved*—That it is also necessary to know as speedily as possible what are the means now in possession of the Society which can be applied to this purpose, viz. the putting in of the winter crops:

1—The physical force, or number of hands which can be employed;

2—What number of horses and oxen are in the possession of the Society applicable to this and other purposes;

3—What number of wagons, tools, ploughs, harrows, axes, spades, etc. now possessed by us, and whether fit for service;

4—What number of men and cattle are needed to finish the corn crops, supposing it necessary to seed them.

*“Resolved*—That there is an imperative necessity for ascertaining the quantity of corn and grain which are required for the support of the Society, and the stock necessary for it to maintain:

1—The quantity of wheat, rye, and corn needful for the Society;

2—The quantity of rye, corn and oats for the stock;

3—The quantity of rye and corn for the distillery;

4—The quantity of barley necessary for the brewery.

*“Resolved*—That it is necessary to enquire how we best can procure the quantity of mowing and meadow and pasture ground which will be requisite for the ensuing year:

- 1—What portion of that which has been mowed this year will afford a good swarth next season ;
- 2—Whether buckwheat can now be sowed with a prospect of a crop, and if not whether it would not be good policy to sow it as a covering crop to timothy and clover which would give good mowing next year ;
- 3—Could not the ground which is now clearing of potatoes be thus appropriated ;
- 4—Whether clover and timothy could not be sowed among the turnips ;
- 5—Whether . . . acres of ground could not be prepared for sowing timothy alone in September or October, which would give good pasture or mowing next season.

*“Resolved*—That it is necessary to adopt the most efficient means to secure the growing crops, and also for the security of those crops to be put in hereafter ; and in order to accomplish this great object our physical force must be ascertained and so organized as to be employed to the best advantage.

*“Resolved*—That — number of persons be appointed to inspect the ground, implements, etc., and report to the Committee in order that every facility may be given towards carrying into effect the wishes expressed in the foregoing Resolutions.”

T. PEARS, *President*

W. ELSTON, *Secretary*

J. LAIDLOW

JNO. WOOD

JNO. NICHOLS

C. RIDGEWAY”

[Inclosure 2]

MRS. PEARS TO MRS. BAKEWELL

MY DEAR AUNT,

I cannot express to you how much pleasure the sight of your handwriting afforded me. I had almost begun to fear

that I should never again hear from those dear friends, and had left the old world, and all its inhabitants seemed to have vanished from my sight, and alas! nothing in the near seemed at all likely to compensate for what I had relinquished. I know I ought much sooner to have answered your kind letter; but sick and debilitated in body, distressed and disappointed in mind, oppressed by extreme heat night and day such as I never before experienced, I felt utterly incapable of writing.

Were I to enter into particulars I could fill volumes, but I have but little room and but very little time. I assure you *that* is very much wanted in this place. I find it so especially in respect to sewing, as my eyes were for a long time so bad that I could scarcely see, and so extremely painful that I could obtain no rest at night; and when they grew better, the excessive heat rendered sleep till nearly daylight almost out of the question. But the nights are now much more comfortable, and I believe I am now making up for lost time; for I seem as if I could hardly have enough sleep. We have often, when conversing of our dear Pittsburgh friends, rejoiced that they were not with us; and we all thought that you, my dear Aunt, would never have been able to stand it one month.

However to show you the heat is not so great and inconvenient to every one as it is to me, I must inform you that our balls have never been put off for the most sultry night of the season. The young girls, too, here think as much of dress and beaux as in any place I was ever in. I have been to but one ball, and two or three concerts. I derive much the most amusement from the latter, as they have some pretty good music.<sup>6</sup> At the last the children of the school sang together, which has a very pleasing effect. Maria begs you will give her love to Mary Page. She thinks that she would like Harmony very well for a little while, as it certainly is at least quite gay. . . .

<sup>6</sup>Saxe-Weimar comments on both the balls and the concerts. Of the dances he says: "New figures had been introduced among the cotillions, among which is one called the *new social system*." At the concert which he attended, he found most of the members of the society present. "The orchestra was not numerous, it consisted at first only of one violin, one violoncello, one clarinet and two flutes. Nevertheless the concert was surprisingly good, especially as the musicians have not been together a year." *Travels through North America*, Vol. 2, pp. 110, 118.

Mr. Pears mentioned that we had lost nine children here this summer, but he did not tell you that the first death was in our own house, Mrs. Pearson's little babe about seven months old. Poor Hectorina Grant has also lost her lovely child. It was, I think, the sweetest little creature that I have seen here. It was a very severe stroke indeed for her. I think she is a very good hearted young woman, and that you would be much pleased with her.

I ought to apologize for bad writing and bad composition, and I think you will excuse me in some measure when I tell you that my right thumb is sore and that Clinton has been in my arms kicking about almost all the time I have been writing.

Sarah goes in the morning to braid straw, and in the afternoons to school. If you should see any of the Craigs, if you please to remember us all kindly to them. I wish much to hear from Mrs. Page, Mrs. Oliver, etc. etc. I mean to write again very soon, but now I have neither room nor time for any more. . . .

Your affectionate niece

SARAH PEARS

P. S. Pray write soon and give me as many particulars as possible, as everything is interesting that comes from Pittsburgh.

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL TO THOMAS PEARS

September 10, 1825

DEAR SIR,

I wish you had been more explicit about [Ms. illegible] preventing discord at Harmony. I hope nothing serious will take place before Mr. Owen's arrival, and then I fear nothing, and that the present difficulty arises from letting off a little high steam merely. Do let us know all about it, and so authentic that I may give it to the public, part of which are already prepared to crow over the downfall of Mr. Owen's "anti-religion system." Nothing which relates to it will be uninteresting.

I am sorry to say our society goes on very slowly, and I fear will die for want of the one thing needful. Mr. Owen



was sadly mistaken in representing money as nearly useless even at commencement. His own experience does not accord with his theory. Mr. Flower told me the maintenance of his people this summer would require an amount of 20,000 dollars.

How goes on Mr. Jennings?' He never answered my letter about the magnesium earth. We shall find it useful. Pray enquire of him where it can be had. I have no information either in head or books about pottery beyond the general principles. John was to pay to obtain some information. We have heard from him this month. He was at New Castle Wells on the 18th July.

Dr. Sir. Yrs. sincerely,  
B. BAKEWELL

THOMAS PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

September 29, 1825

DEAR SIR,

I ought to have replied to your favor per Mr. Welman sooner, but I felt reluctant to write as I have nothing pleasing either of myself or of the Society to communicate. We ought to be in a new world, but most of its inhabitants have yet to put off the old man and become new creatures before it will be the world its founder anticipated, or its friends wish it to be. In short we have not yet done with scandal, calumny, nor self-interest, nor the love of power or distinction; and tho' I expect we shall ultimately succeed, yet the time will be longer than I wish.

I mentioned in the letter Mrs. Pears wrote last week<sup>a</sup> that I had been dismissed from the counting room. It was as

<sup>a</sup>Robert L. Jennings was later editor, with William Owen, of the *New-Harmony Gazette*, which began publication on October 1, 1825, and a member of the committee which drafted the constitution for the Permanent Community. The Duke of Saxe-Weimar speaks of him as "Mr. Jennings, from Philadelphia, a young man, who was educated as a clergyman, but had quitted that profession to follow this course of life, and had united himself to Mr. Owen." *Travels through North America*, Vol. 2, p. 110. See also *ibid.*, p. 122; Lindley (ed.) *Indiana as Seen by Early Travelers*, pp. 370, 376-77, 399; Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, pp. 105, 125, 195.

<sup>b</sup>This letter is not in the collection.

unexpected as disagreeable, for I did not know that there existed any dissatisfaction until after I had been tried and dismissed. About a month ago, a note was left on my desk whilst I was at breakfast containing the order, and Mr. Owen<sup>o</sup> coming in shortly after, I delivered up the cash to him; and this was nearly the only symptom of authority belonging to me, having given up journal and ledger to avoid the disputes they created between the person who succeeded the gentleman who was first here, and myself. His plans and mine were as opposite as our dispositions, and I believe, tho' at first he wore the mask of friendship, he was determined I should not remain there. Another was called in during my sickness, and he was a gentleman to whom I resigned any direction I might have had, as much from a wish to avoid collision in opinion, as because I could not conceive that any system of book-keeping in which double and single entries were combined could be correct.

The charges against me as given by the Committee when I required them, were intoxication, incivility, and blundering; to neither of which I could plead guilty. I had, it is true, made an error in copying an account, for I had debited and credited the same sum twice; but they could not have been posted without discovery, and I believe had been corrected before I left the counting house, and is the only one I have yet heard of. There were no instances of incivility pointed out, and I am not conscious of having used any one rudely. There was much dissatisfaction with some of our regulations, but they were necessary, and it is not improbable that some may have thought themselves ill-used in being obliged to comply with them. As to the former—I drink whisky here, for we have nothing else. I sometimes used it too freely, but never in business hours. I was voluntarily offered the certificates of five in the store that they had never seen me otherwise than competent to transact any kind of business; but the decision was passed, and as it would have been looking for more than I could expect from human nature that the Committee would reverse a decision, I did not get them. I believe that Mr. Owen would have let me keep my station, but he only acts as one of

<sup>o</sup>William Owen, one of the sons of Robert Owen, who remained in New Harmony during his father's absence.

the Committee, and the majority were against it. I believe their opinion was produced by the secret insinuations of the man I first mentioned; and from what I learned combined with what I knew, it cost him some time and trouble to produce it. If I were to complain, it would be of being condemned unheard, and of partiality in being punished for what others do with impunity.

Since then I have been sorting and picking wool; and for proposing some shorter, and I thought better, way of doing it, did not please the person who was there. But he is now employed elsewhere and I am left to my own ways. Sometime since one of the Committee asked if I would like to go into the school, and promised to propose it. I answered in the affirmative, but have heard nothing of it lately. I should have commenced the pottery, but there were no tools, the Dutch having taken away all but the oven; and having no books that could give me information on that subject, I did not like to undertake it. And where I am now I am as much at a loss for dyeing. If therefore you have received the money from New York, I should be much obliged if you would let me have as much as will purchase Park's Essays and Catechism, and forward them to me at the first opportunity, as they would be very useful to me.

We have had a troublesome time these last few weeks in our Wednesday meetings, and I send you some Resolutions which I hope you will not copy.

*Resolved*—that owing to the loss and inconvenience arising from the boys over twelve attending the school one half the day, that for the future they be employed during the regular hours for business [September 6th].

*Resolved*—that when settling the accounts of members when leaving the Society, they shall have credit for their services per annum proportioned to their usefulness and industry, not in any case exceeding the maximum price of labor, and that the following deductions be made for the following enumerated articles: House, brick or frame—\$40; Log Cabin—\$10; Fuel—\$25; Cow—\$25; Medicine, etc.—\$10; Schooling—\$20; Lost time—\$10; Board—\$1.00; Washing—25 cents per week; and for the better settling the accounts of

members having children in either school, they shall be charged at the rate of \$2.00 per week for boarding and 20 cents per week for day scholars, and credited at the discretion of the Committee by profit and loss for the difference of expense between these charges and their annual proportion of school expenses as members of the Society, and shall receive only that which shall remain after these deductions have been made [September 6].”

The boys, who had done little but mischief all the summer, but who now according to their teachers had shown great anxiety to learn, and were actually become more useful, were deprived of any motive for exertion; for their allowances will not clothe and feed them. The second is a good specimen of ambiguity (acknowledged so by a Committee man), and the best explanation that I can get is that the regulation for schooling does not increase the charge to parents leaving the society. Thus, suppose I have two at boarding school, I am charged \$200, and if it please the Committee credited 190 dollars, leaving \$10 the annual charge for a family. The other charges with the exception of medical advice are completely new, and under their operation it will be impossible for any but rich or single people to leave.

One explanation was that the labor would be estimated according to its price in the world, and this is the only one which seems to me just. But that was soon explained away, and after a night of explanation and re-explanation we were obliged to separate with this additional knowledge “that no Resolution of ours was binding on the Committee.” They would consider till next week and in the meantime explain. The next night we had no explanation but a debate, during which after a speech pointing out sundry mismanagement, Mr. Weeks from Pittsburgh moved that the Committee be dismissed and a new one appointed. This caused much talking but was lost. The next day the Committee had it under consideration to dismiss him, and he took in his book for a settlement; but the affair was somehow arranged, and he is still here. I believe the Committee were to have altered or expunged these Resolutions, and then he was to have said something in their favor. Neither have been done.

The succeeding Wednesday produced the reading of the Constitution, and the Committee's explanation thereof "that all power was vested in them alone." And only their leniency had prevented their exercising it, for if they had many persons would have had their walking papers. Their determination not to read their Resolutions, but to paste them up for inspection and reading produced hasty and incorrect decisions and opinion, and these produced ill feelings which it was necessary to avoid; and that it appeared the wish of a few to set the people against the Committee, and to consider them as two distinct bodies, etc. After this a motion was made and carried that the Resolutions be read; but the book was not there, and the rest of the evening passed in foolish motions, and the book came not.

Last Wednesday we had two Resolutions read, one of which was that all boys learning trades should have the board and clothing found by the Society; the necessity for which you will see when I inform you that when Palmer's board is deducted from his allowance, there remains nine and one half cents per week for clothes.<sup>10</sup> The rest of this evening was spent in discussing the right of minors to vote, and determining whether they were members. The Constitution was referred to. It says all may become members, and we had definitions of the words, "all" and "may;" and that none are members who do not sign—minors not being permitted to sign are not members. Widows whose husbands have died here are not members till they have signed. Wives of members are not members, and it was finally decided that they should not vote. Indeed I believe owing to an erroneous wording of the question, we decided that none of us has a vote. Shall members over 18 be entitled to a vote—decided in the negative—the words "and under 21" were omitted. This omission caused some laughter after it was over, and as I was making some remarks upon the uselessness of our meetings, a stranger asked why I attended them. For amusement, was my reply.

Two things occurred this evening which will show what voice the people have in legislation. The first was an enquiry

<sup>10</sup>John Palmer, sixteen years old, was the oldest son and second child of Thomas and Sarah Pears.

for the copy of the Rules and Regulations and orders voted some weeks ago by the people to be taken from the Committee books and deposited in some public place for the inspection of all. We all knew that it had been commenced, but the reply to the question came from the person employed for the purpose: "that he had stopped in consequence of a Resolution by the Committee to that effect." The other was a motion by one of the Committee "that the Resolution respecting minors should be recorded in a book where it could be referred to when wanted"; and this brought forth the knowledge that our Wise Resolutions had ceased to be recorded along with the Resolutions of Wiser Heads.

Thus you see we are living under an aristocracy, and must continue to do so until Mr. Owen returns. I do not envy the Committee their station. It is a difficult one, but I cannot help thinking they have made it more so than needful. I never knew the unnecessary proclamation of power productive of good effects, and good feelings I am sure cannot result from it. I am obliged to conclude on account of post, but intend to write again next week. . . . With affectionate remembrance to all, I am dear sir,

Yours, etc. sincerely,

THOMAS PEARS

[Inclosure]

MRS. PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

DEAR UNCLE,

Mr. Pears tells you that our government is an aristocracy. He ought to have called it a despotism. Our feelings are perpetually irritated by some or other of their acts and Resolutions; and if we should unfortunately be so bold as to express our sentiments upon them, we are told that we are liable to expulsion. It makes my blood boil within me to think that the citizens of a free and independent nation should be collected here to be made slaves of. I believe Mr. Pears' chief crime was the freedom with which he spoke his sentiments, and because he scorned to cringe to the Committee, or to turn in-

former,—of which gentry there is an abundance here. Ah my dear Uncle, how do I regret that we ever left Pittsburgh. If ever I should be fortunate enough to get into civilized society once more, I think I should never wish to leave it again. But the post will be going and very soon. I must conclude with love to my dear Aunt to whom I wrote a long letter last week. I remain

Your affectionate niece

SARAH PEARS

Pray write soon, for a letter from Pittsburgh is our greatest consolation.

MRS. PEARS TO MRS. BAKEWELL

November 11, 1825

MY DEAR AUNT,

I have yet to acknowledge your kind letter, and I know I ought to apologize for suffering it to remain unanswered so long; but as I had written to Mrs. Page since, I knew that you would hear of its arrival, and I felt very anxious to have an answer to one of my former letters before I wrote again. But in vain have we watched with anxious expectation for the arrival of the post, and I have determined to wait no longer although I think I have seldom felt more dissatisfied or completely disqualified for writing. I have nothing new to relate. I believe that we are going on pretty much in the same way as when I last wrote. Mr. Pears' health and my own are but indifferent. The children are well. Tom <sup>5</sup> grows a fine fellow and Clinton <sup>4</sup> is very entertaining. There are very few little ones in the community who have enjoyed their health as well as he has done, although he is exceedingly delicate in his appearance. I wish, my dear Aunt, that you could see him sometimes, and oh how I do wish that I could see you all once more in Pittsburgh! But when I think that I am a thousand miles from you, almost as it were at the end of the world, it is almost too much for me. I feel so forlorn that I could say with Cowper, "I am out of Humanity's reach." But it will not do to look that way. My lot is fixed. I feel like a bird in a cage shut up forever. O my dear Aunt, you cannot conceive what a

dismal thought that is. But I must try to get out of this dismal strain. I know that I have abundance more than I deserve to be thankful for and will endeavor to look more on the bright side of the picture—if I can find it.

We are in some hopes of seeing Mr. Owen soon, but it is said that his family are not coming with him. His son who is here is in ill health. I hear that our society bears a very ill name in the neighborhood, and I believe very undeservedly. There are a few bad members among us, but it seems hard that the whole should suffer for the faults and follies of a few.

The new costume, which I mentioned in Mrs. Page's letter, is become universal; and the ladies are decreasing the length of the petticoat more than I think is either becoming or seemly. However there are comparatively few married ladies who have put them on, and I have declared absolute war against them both for myself and my daughters.<sup>11</sup>

On Monday last there was a grand Masonic meeting. They had a dinner and Ball. Owing to its being very muddy I did not go, but the girls were very much pleased. To show you that we do not keep late hours, I must tell you that our balls generally break up between 9 and 10.

I really feel so excessively stupid and dull, that I am ashamed to send this wretched scrawl; but as I fear you will either think me neglectful or that your kindness will render you uneasy about us, I will send it, hoping that when I next write I shall be in better spirits and more in the letter writing mood. Mr. Pears seems very unwilling to write. He is well assured that when Mr. Owen returns all will be well, but at present as he has nothing good to write he prefers saying nothing.

When you see Mrs. Oliver please to give my love to her and tell her that I sometimes see her friend Mrs. Lewis. She has suffered very much by sickness herself, and her family have been frequently indisposed. Indeed I have seldom called when they have all been well together. She has a very fine little girl about 3 or 4 months old, quite as large as Clinton and

<sup>11</sup>The costume of the women included "a coat reaching to the knee and pantaloons such as little girls wear among us." Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, *Travels through North America*, Vol. 2, p. 111. See also p. 82.



almost as forward. I will thank you to remember me to all friends. Give my kind love to my dear Uncle and Cousin Thomas. Kiss little Ann for me, and do not forget to mention me kindly to Mrs. Sharkey. Hoping dear Aunt, that I shall hear good news of you soon, I remain

Your affectionate niece,  
SARAH PEARS

## NEW HARMONY AND RELIGION EXPECTATION HANGS ON ROBERT OWEN

**H**OPES of betterment at New Harmony with Robert Owen's expected return were expressed in the fall of 1825 in letters both to and from that place. He came back to the United States from England, whither he had gone to bring other members of his family and additional recruits. William Maclure, a wealthy scientist of Philadelphia, the "father of American geology," the principal founder of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, and the first to introduce into the United States the Pestalozzian system of education, had been associated with Owen in the founding of the New Harmony community. He now planned to go to New Harmony in the early winter of 1825-26. Robert Dale Owen, son of Robert Owen, who also rendered eminent services to his generation, landed in New York in November, 1825, accompanied by Captain Donald McDonald, a young English officer who was an enthusiastic Owenite.

Through the influence of the Owens and of William Maclure, a most distinguished coterie of scientists and educators were enlisted abroad and in this country. Among them were Thomas Say, the "father of American Zoology," Charles Alexander Lesueur, who first classified the fishes of the Great Lakes, Constantine Rafinesque, the pioneer ichthyologist, Dr. Gerard Troost, the Dutch geologist, John Chappelsmith, a wealthy English artist and engraver, Professor Joseph Neef, who came from Pestalozzi's school at Yverdon at the solicitation of Mr. Maclure to take charge of the educational system at New Harmony, Madame Fretageot and Phiquepal d'Arusmont, also Pestalozzian teachers (the latter married Frances Wright, also a New Harmonyite and the first American agitator of women's rights), and Miss Sistare, afterwards the wife of Thomas Say. The Minutes of the Preliminary Society, which are in the possession of the editor, show the presence of

Dr. Troost in New Harmony as early as December, a fact which seems to have escaped the notice of historians.

The Owens and most of those just mentioned, together with others almost equally distinguished, made the voyage from Pittsburgh down the Ohio in a keel boat which has ever since been known as the "Boatload of Knowledge."

The anticipations with which the adventurers in happiness awaited the arrival of this unique group and their expectation that the return of Robert Owen would make all things right, constitute a hopeful interlude in the story of disappointment and disillusionment.

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL TO THOMAS PEARS

December 8, 1825

DEAR SIR,

By Mrs. Pears' letter to her Aunt, and by your silence, I fear you think your friends in this part of the world have forgotten you; but you may perhaps not recollect that in your last of September 29th, you said you should write again in the following week,—which letter has never reached us. The expectation of seeing it, and subsequently the expectation of seeing Mr. Owen, induced me to postpone writing. At length he and his party, consisting of forty, have arrived, and will at 12 o'clock be ready to embark in a light keel fitted up for the occasion. Unhappily for them it has set in cold, and both rivers are closed just above the town.<sup>1</sup>

We have strange contradictory accounts from your settlement. The major part are, however, very sombre; and had we no experience how active the organ of invention is in some fine

<sup>1</sup>Ice in the river delayed the famous Boatload of Knowledge for several weeks. Apparently the voyage was begun about December 8, but Robert Dale Owen says that "About eight miles from Beaver, Pennsylvania, the ice, closing in upon us, arrested our voyage for a full month." Beaver was about thirty miles downstream from Pittsburgh. Owen's statement explains away the apparent discrepancy between Mrs. Benjamin Page's comment of December 28, that "He [Mr. Owen] left this place about three weeks since," and Benjamin Bakewell's remark in a letter of January 2, 1826, that "Mr. Owen's party may probably move today." See Owen, Robert Dale, *Thread- ing My Way*, p. 268, and the letters mentioned, *post*, pp. 48 and 52.

craniums, it would be discouraging in the extreme. But as a set-off Pearson writes he is got quite into a new world, and never knew what existence was before. Patterson's son received a letter last week from Harmony, stating that everything was delightful to the highest degree, and that the inhabitants formed a terrestrial paradise. With the interest we may be supposed to take in the welfare of your family, in addition to what is excited by a regard to the system, and an anxious desire to see it develop itself, you may be sure any intelligence bearing upon these points will be acceptable. Especially shall we be glad to hear that the Master Spirit is well received, and that he may be able to unite all hearts. Owen?

Have you a sufficient accession of strength in the well-disposed to commence a community with the prospect of success? I understand it is intended, as soon as ever the Spring opens, to commence preparations for one.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Owen says that the disobedience of the rules, and the difficulties which may have arisen from it, will ultimately be of great benefit. I imagine, however, things have not been represented to him exactly as they are.

Mr. Prentice has taken up the cudgels with zeal and bitterness against the system, and suffered himself to have been made the humble tool of retailing slander and detraction from the wholesale store and manufactory of Captain Miller. Do let me hear from you at least once or twice a month.

We cannot find a copy of Parks in Town, and Thomas had returned from the Eastward before your letter from the West arrived. We have therefore sent what we had. . . . Mr. Owen delivered a lecture last night to a very crowded and respectable audience in the Methodist Church. Mr. Page,<sup>3</sup> though somewhat roused by the representations, or rather misrepresentations, of Mr. Prentice, was delighted with it beyond

<sup>2</sup>Bakewell refers to the organization of a "permanent" society, to supplant the "preliminary" society already in existence.

<sup>3</sup>Benjamin Page was a friend of the Bakewells and the Pearses, and of Robert Owen's system. He had been a shipping merchant in New York. When his friend, Benjamin Bakewell, also in the shipping business, had failed in 1807 because of Jefferson's Embargo, Page helped him to buy the glass establishment in Pittsburgh. In the autumn of 1814, Page moved with his family to Pittsburgh, where his descendants still live.

measure, and is, I believe, quite restored to the true faith. . . . Mrs. Pears will discover increased debility both in her Aunt's corporeal and mental powers, but not one particle in her regard to our friends at New Harmony. With kind love I am

D<sup>r</sup>. Sir, your most, etc.

B. BAKEWELL

THOMAS BAKEWELL TO MRS. PEARS

DEAR COUSIN,

I embrace the opportunity Mr. Owen affords of sending a few lines.<sup>4</sup> We regretted that Mr. Speakman<sup>5</sup> did not pay us another visit, as we intended writing by him. Mr. Owen has many very valuable men with him, whether education is with you so far advanced as to employ them usefully is another question. Madame Fretageot seems an agreeable well informed woman. . . .<sup>6</sup> I hope you will find a rapid improvement after Mr. Owen's arrival. He has it in contemplation to erect buildings to a large extent next summer. . . . I hope the balls and concerts do not occupy too large a portion of the attention of your good folks. The reports are various, and generally unpromising; but I hope are too highly colored. . . .

Yours affectionately,

THOMAS BAKEWELL

Fav'd by Mr. Owen

MRS. BENJAMIN PAGE TO MRS. PEARS

ALLEGHENY TOWN

December 28, 1825

MY DEAR MRS. PEARS,

What a contrast your account of the state of society in

<sup>4</sup>The letter was probably written about December 8, 1825. See note 1, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup>John Speakman.

<sup>6</sup>Madame Marie D. Fretageot, a Frenchwoman who had formerly kept a boarding school in Philadelphia, and who was to be one of the teachers in the school at New Harmony. Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, pp. 131-32, 236.

New Harmony forms to the one promised by Mr. Owen. According to his statement I was led to believe that the selfish principle under his auspicious government would be entirely abandoned, and the social, friendly, benevolent feeling abound through that society. I grieve for your disappointment, and exceedingly regret that Mr. Page and myself were amongst the number of your friends who advised you to go.

You must have had a melancholy time of it during Mr. Owen's absence, but I hope when he returns things will wear a new aspect. For I have no doubt that he will do all in his power to remove all your causes of complaint, and to introduce a state of harmony and peace which he thinks his scheme so well calculated to bestow. He left this place about three weeks since.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Page seems more pleased with him and his system than ever, and from every account I have had he appears to be the most amiable and benevolent of men, as far as these qualities can exist without Christianity. But alas! for him and for all who think as he does! Their glory and happiness ends when this frail tenement of clay returns to its original dust. They have no higher aim, they seek no other happiness than this poor world can give. Oh what short lived pleasure is theirs!

Can it be possible that we were sent into this world for no higher enjoyment than to eat and drink and laugh and sing, and then lie down and die without hope that the spirit, that deathless thing, will be happy in a future state of existence? We know that there is an aching void in all our bosoms which the world can never fill. Nothing but the love and approbation of Him who made us can satisfy the desire of an immortal soul. Do you not feel, my dear Mrs. Pears, from your own experience that this is the case? You once had all that you could ask or wish for of the good things of life; and were you happy? And can you picture to yourself any situation however elevated where you could be perfectly happy in this fluctuating, sick and dying world? I think you will answer in the negative.

Oh then, my dear friend, let us not cheat ourselves out of

<sup>7</sup>See note 1, p. 45.

a happiness and peace which will endure throughout endless eternity for the transient pleasures of a few short years. If we were to live like the brute creatures who have no understanding, we might say, Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die. But as we have an immortal principle that must be happy or miserable, let us be anxious above all things to know how we shall secure the blessedness which is promised to the faithful. Let us read the Word of God, not in a careless way, but as one who expects to find a rich treasure contained in it. Let us ask that we may receive. Let us seek that we may find.

There are the terms which our great King has proposed to us, whereby we may know His will and be enabled to do it. But if we reject the terms because we think we can by our own wisdom find a better way, we must not be surprised if, when the judgment is set and the books are opened, we should be treated as rebels. We are not wiser than Wisdom itself, and if we break the law are we not justly obnoxious to punishment?

Be not grieved at my pursuing this subject, for altho' I know I cannot do it justice, I would try in my weak manner to arouse you to better hopes and brighter prospects than this world can give. My heart yearns for your happiness, and I have been wounded to the soul by the fear that you have read The Book to criticise and to bring its holy, spiritual meaning to your own preconceived notions; instead of reading it with deep attention and prayers for divine light and guidance to know and understand its sacred truths.

On other subjects you have bestowed great pains and research, and have received the fruit of your labor by having your understanding well furnished with knowledge in the things of time and sense. While the things of eternity have, I feel, had but a secondary influence on your time, talents and affections. Forgive my plainness, and be assured I shall heartily rejoice if I have judged you wrongfully in this matter.

It seems as if in your arrangement at Harmony the time was entirely absorbed in the profits and pleasures of this world. There seems no calculation for futurity. Business in

the day, and pleasure at night continue until the eyes are closed in sleep, and no time left for consideration. The prophet exclaims, Oh that they were wise! Oh that they would consider their latter end! Let me know when you write again whether you have any Sabbath and Sabbath pleasures. I pray that you may have them for we cannot be the people of God unless we keep the day He has set apart for His service. For He has declared, This is my covenant which I will make with my people, they shall keep my Sabbath.

Mr. Page begs to be affectionately remembered to you and Mr. Pears. He is glad to find that the hope of better days keeps up his spirits. Pray present my respects to him, and tell him I hope he will not take amiss my writing to you in so serious a strain. It flows from my affections and a desire for your happiness for time and eternity.

Your sincere friend,

MARTHA PAGE

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL TO MRS. PEARS

January 2, 1826

DEAR SALLY,

Yours of the 7th December to your Aunt with great justice complains of a deficiency in our correspondence that my letter by Mr. Owen will I hope explain the cause and satisfy your mind that it was not intentional. I should have been glad to receive the letter promised by Mr. Pears which was to give us a full account of the proceedings of your new society.

Mr. Owen is more sanguine than ever. He says the difficulties which have occurred will all be for the ultimate benefit of the Society. I most sincerely wish him success, and hope and trust he will not be disappointed; but unless he has boundless resources, I fear from his very liberal views he must in a pecuniary view be a sufferer, and with him his plan will suffer too.

I wish most devoutly also that he had not discarded the sanctions of revelation, and the doctrine of responsibility. Upon the broad principle of perfect mental liberty no form of



religion that was erroneous would long stand its ground; for when restraint is removed Truth will soon prevail. But then it ought to have fair play, and if there be no predilection in its favor, let there be no prejudices against it.

What any member of the Society could lose by adopting a rational system of religion such as I conceive the Christian in its purity and simplicity to be, I am at a loss to determine. All the practical part of Christianity it is intended shall be adopted by the Harmonians. All the restraints upon the improper and vicious indulgence of the propensities of human nature, are to operate in that system, if education does not stifle them in their birth, or prevent their being conceived.

The motives for the practice of virtue and benevolence upon the Christian system are infinitely stronger, some are peculiar to it, and all that the other system can boast of operate in this with a thousand times more force. As Lord Byron said of a young lady who prayed for his conversion to Christianity: The real Christian must in all events be safest and happiest. The hope of an hereafter animates and cheers him through life, is his solace in every bereavement or distress that can befall him, supports him and cheers him in death, and if after all he should be mistaken, he has received all the consolations which are neither few nor small, those hopes are calculated to afford.

Unfortunately Mr. Owen was brought up in the midst of the most revolting system of ultra Calvinism. The thing there called religion, both in its doctrines and its practice, he could not believe proceeded from that great and good Being "whose tender mercies are over all His works;" and without examining further, seems to have rejected revelation altogether.

This I think a great misfortune, and that Christianity when undefiled and the Social System are one. That they belong together, that they ought to go together, and that the perfect mental liberty Mr. Owen's system adopts is best of all adapted for the reception of a rational system of Christianity. But then it must be presented fairly and examined with all the earnestness and impartiality which the importance of the subject demands.

I fear I have tried your patience before I have said half

I intended, but your fear respecting the tendency of Harmonism to infidelity led me to introduce the subject. I shall be very sorry to hear that in order to be a good Harmonian a person must be a good sceptic. Mr. Owen's party may probably move to-day.<sup>8</sup> The river broke up yesterday and the ice is gone. My kindest regards to Mr. Pears, and all yr. big and little folks who remember us. I am, D<sup>r</sup>. Sally,

Y<sup>r</sup>. aff<sup>t</sup>. uncle,  
B. BAKEWELL

MRS. PEARS TO MRS. BAKEWELL

January 6, 1826

MY DEAR AUNT,

I once more take up the pen to scribble a few lines, though almost in despair of ever again hearing from you. The same disappointment is reiterated every postday, and we begin to feel like isolated beings forgotten by all the world, nay, even by our best friends whose invariable kindness has accompanied us thus far on our weary pilgrimage, and whose friendship will surely not be annihilated by the distance which separates us. But you can hardly wonder at our anxiety when I tell you that four months have elapsed since we have had a line from any of you. This is either the 4th or 5th letter I have written to you, my dear Aunt, besides one to Mrs. Page, without receiving an answer. Mr. Pears has also written several. Sometimes I imagine that owing to some negligence in the post our letters on both sides may have miscarried, but surely some must have been received. I will still, though almost hopeless, continue to write at intervals.

I know not what to relate concerning the affairs of the Society. All are in anxious expectation of Mr. Owen's return, but I fear there is small prospect of seeing him at present as we hear that he is waiting for water. Our store is in want of a great number of necessary articles, and nobody is sent on for goods, because they wished to consult Mr. Owen first. We are out of coffee, sugar, sewing cotton, thread, paper, etc., etc., and how we are to go on with our sewing I really do not know.

<sup>8</sup>See note 1, p. 45.

Mr. Speakman and family arrived here a few weeks ago. We have exchanged several calls, and I hope we shall find them an agreeable addition to our society. I was, however, sadly disappointed that they brought us no letters. They buried a very fine little boy a few days after their arrival, of the croup. We have heard that there are a great number of families coming on. How they are to be housed I am sure I cannot tell. What is very extraordinary is that there is more sickness in the place now than in the summer. The hooping cough is very prevalent amongst children. . . .

I should like to know how you like our Harmony papers. Mr. Pears has sent them on ever since their commencement. We should have been much pleased to have received the Pittsburgh papers, as we have had but one since our arrival, and Pittsburgh news is always welcome. I hear very little more of the old world than if I were an inhabitant of a different planet. I believe there are papers at the reading room, but only the male part of the community have as yet assumed the privilege of reading them.

I will thank you to remember me to all my friends, and believe me, ever your most affectionate niece,

SARAH PEARS

P. S. I should be very glad to hear from Cousin Nancy, but I do not like to commence the correspondence, as I suppose she thinks that we are all on the road to destruction.<sup>9</sup>

"Cousin Nancy" was Nancy White Bakewell, Benjamin Bakewell's oldest daughter, who was married in the year 1817 to the Reverend Allan D. Campbell, D. D. Dr. Campbell was at this time pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Nashville, Tennessee, and Andrew Jackson was one of his parishioners. A year after this letter was written the Campbells returned to Pittsburgh, and in the fall of 1828 settled at "Maple Grove," the house built for Mrs. Campbell by her father. She was devoted to horticulture, and it is concerning her garden at Maple Grove that Margaret Deland wrote *The Old Garden*. Dr. Campbell took a leading part in the establishment of the Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny City in 1827. Mrs. Campbell wrote and published among other things a pamphlet entitled, *Why am I a Presbyterian?*

## BENJAMIN BAKEWELL TO THOMAS PEARS

January 19, 1826

DEAR SIR,

Mr. Armorer has just been in and left the enclosed. I fear your woolen manufacturing establishment will not be sufficiently extensive to require supplies of wool from this quarter, nor am I quite free from apprehension that your present population will taken together consume more than they will produce. I shall be glad of some information on this particular, as the ultimate success of the plan must inevitably be materially affected by it. Several of our good folks are intending to proceed to Harmony in the Spring, viz. Cairns, Brown, Smith, and about a half dozen others. None of them are I think overdone with industry, but Mr. Owen has prepared their minds to believe that much work is unnecessary. We have just heard that we are going to have an establishment for the dressing [?] and weaving of flax. It is said Mr. Snyder is concerned in it. Our rivers have just broken up and let the S. Boats at liberty after an interregnum of six months. Four have arrived today.

Pray omit not to let us hear how you come on when Mr. Owen gets amongst you, and how the schools progress. They will form the most interesting figure in the picture, and I hope will not be a greater burden than the system will support. . . . Please to tell Mr. Owen the box from Washington was shipped to the care of Stewart, Louisville. With every good wish I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate friend,

B. BAKEWELL

[Inclosure]

DEAR SIR,

As an appendage to my regular business I have for some years been pretty extensively in the wool business. I beg to introduce myself through you to your Community as a dealer in that article. And as the season is not very distant when we shall be again employed in buying, I desire you to let me know your prospects of getting supplies,—if your Stock Farming is

so far successful as to answer your present wants, or in plain language if you will want a supply from Pennsylvania. For the sake of further information I have thought proper to add the present prospects of what I think I could furnish your Community the article at.

Waiting your reply I am respectfully Y<sup>r</sup>. M<sup>o</sup>. O<sup>b</sup>. S<sup>t</sup>.

JOSEPH ARMORER

Common and quarter blood washed	
wool .....	@ 31 cts.
Half blood washed .....	40 "
Other qualities not so well known	
Washed Lamb Wool	31 cts.

## THE COMMUNITY OF EQUALITY

ROBERT OWEN arrived at New Harmony on January 12, 1826.<sup>1</sup> "He announced that in consideration of the progress which had been made, the Preliminary Society would be cut off two years before its time, and a community of perfect equality inaugurated."<sup>2</sup> The regular Wednesday evening meeting of the Preliminary Society, January 25, resolved itself into a constitutional convention with Dr. Philip M. Price as president and Thomas Pears as secretary. The minutes of the Wednesday evening meetings and of the convention in Mr. Pears's handwriting are in possession of the editor. A brief summary will be of interest.

At the regular Wednesday evening business meeting of the Preliminary Society on January 25, it was "Moved by Judge Wattles that a Community be formed as soon as possible out of the present Society, and that from the formation of this Community the Preliminary Society do cease." The motion was carried, and it was then "Moved by W. Owen that this Society do form itself into a Constitutional Convention for the purpose of forming a constitution for the Community about to be established."—Carried unanimously.

At this first session of the Convention the president and secretary were elected as recorded above, rules for voting were adopted, and it was decided that at the next session a committee of seven be elected to draft the constitution.

The second session was held on Thursday, January 26. At this meeting it was moved and carried that Mr. Robert Owen, Senior, and Mr. Maclure be excused from serving on the committee, and that the seven highest on the list of votes form the committee.

<sup>1</sup>*New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, p. 135; Lockwood says in his *New Harmony Movement*, page 104, "On January 18, 1826, Robert Owen, with his 'boat-load of knowledge,' arrived again at New Harmony." Apparently Owen took the overland short cut from Mount Vernon, arriving six days before the boat.

<sup>2</sup>Lockwood, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Thirty-eight candidates were voted on. Robert Owen received the highest number of votes, 136. Of those elected, Warner W. Lewis received the greatest number of votes, 122; James O. Wattles, 94;<sup>8</sup> John Whitby, 82; William Owen, 74; Donald McDonald, 74; Robert L. Jennings, 73; and Robert Dale Owen, 63. William Maclure had received 69 votes, and there were several, including Philip M. Price, William Pelham,<sup>4</sup> and John Lewis, who received from 25 to 50. The rest were scattering, but we find among them Thomas Say, 12; Dr. Gerard Troost, 1; and M. Piquéal d'Arusmont, 4.

The convention then adjourned until the next day, Friday, January 27, when they met and having appointed a doorkeeper, again adjourned until Monday, January 30.

At the fourth session of the convention, which was held on January 30, the draft and preamble of the constitution drawn up by the committee were read, also a declaration by Captain McDonald. After some debate the meeting was adjourned until Wednesday, February 1.

Under this last date the original draft and Preamble are transcribed. Robert Owen then read a paper which is incorporated in the minutes. It was then moved that Mr. Owen read the ninth article and explain his view thereon. This article reads: "Every person in the Community shall enjoy the most perfect freedom on all subjects of human knowledge and opinion, especially on the subject of religion."<sup>5</sup> The meeting was then adjourned until the following day.

The sixth session was held on Thursday, February 2. At

<sup>8</sup>"Judge Wattles was an albino, white hair and white skin, with the peculiar red eyes of that race, dreadfully near-sighted, had to turn the paper upside down, and put it close to his spectacles, to enable him to read it. Notwithstanding, he was a rapid reader and writer, an excellent lawyer, and a good presiding-judge. He went to Harmony, when Mr. Owen began there." Flower, *History of the English Settlement*, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup>William Pelham came to New Harmony from Zanesville, Ohio, where he had been a newspaper editor, and postmaster. A biographical sketch, and a series of letters written to his son, William Creese Pelham, from August 1, 1825, until March 16, 1826, are printed in Lindley (ed.), *Indiana as Seen by Early Travelers*, pp. 360-414. Pelham was one of the editors of the *New-Harmony Gazette*.

<sup>5</sup>In the constitution as adopted on February 5, 1826, this appears in slightly amended form as Article XI. *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, p. 162.

this session the Preamble was read and considered by sections; several amendments—minor ones in wording—were made. The Preamble was then adopted as amended, and the convention was adjourned until the following day.

On Friday, February 3, the seventh session was held. At this session a motion by Donald McDonald to reject the committee's draft was negatived. After some debate it was moved that "the further consideration of the Constitution be postponed for three weeks and that during that time the present Society be arranged according to a plan proposed by D. McDonald." This motion was negatived, and it was then moved that Robert Dale Owen be requested to read the draft of a constitution drawn up by himself. This was done and his draft is incorporated in the minutes for this day.

It was moved that the constitution prepared by the committee and the one prepared and read by Robert Dale Owen be submitted to Robert Owen, and that he be requested to draw up such a constitution as he might judge adapted to the state of the society. Upon Mr. Owen's declining, the constitutions prepared by the committee and by Robert Dale Owen, and the paper read by Robert Owen on the first, were recommitted to the committee and the meeting adjourned until Sunday morning at eight o'clock.

The eighth session was held on Sunday, February 5. The revised constitution was then read and commented upon by Robert Owen. It is found under the minutes of that day. Donald McDonald and Robert L. Jennings moved adjournment several times, but the convention voted to go into the second reading. The constitution was then read and adopted with slight amendments, section by section, through Article V.

Adjournment was then had until half past six o'clock when work was begun where it had left off. After the last article had been considered, it was moved by Jennings that the convention waive the third reading, and adopt the constitution as amended. This was carried unanimously. It was then moved by Judge Wattles that the chairman and secretary "do copy the Constitution as adopted into a book that all members of the Preliminary Society who wish to form a Community may thereunto attach their signatures." The official name of the



community was to be the "New Harmony Community of Equality." The meeting then adjourned until half past six the next day.

The final session was held on Monday, February 6, at which the constitution was read, and the motion carried unanimously that "as the object of the Convention is accomplished it be now dissolved."

On February 8 a committee report was read which contained the "Valuation List" of the services of members of the society as provided for in the constitution of the Preliminary Society. Gradually the affairs of the Preliminary Society were liquidated, and at a meeting held on February 28 it was voted that it "do cease on Sunday night next."

As will be seen in the following letters, defections began at once, and as early as February 19 "the executive committee unanimously requested Mr. Owen to assume the directorship of the community for one year. Practically a dictatorship was established, although the constitution remained in effect."<sup>6</sup>

MRS. PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

January 28, 1826

DEAR UNCLE,

I was extremely glad to hear by yours and my Aunt's kind letter which we received last night, that you had recovered from your illness, of which we had been previously informed by Mr. Owen. We had a letter on the preceding day by Mr. Dale Owen, but of the parcel of books you mention having sent he appears to know nothing, and we feel very anxious about them. We have been a good deal disappointed in not receiving any Pittsburgh papers, as Mr. Pears has sent the New Harmony Gazette ever since its first appearance. He was in hopes to have one in return. He also paid Mr. Scott<sup>7</sup> a year in advance for the Reformer, not one number of which has been received. There is one copy comes to the place, but they say it has no name, and they of course claim it, and we

<sup>6</sup>Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, p. 113; *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, p. 175.

<sup>7</sup>James Scott.

have never seen anything of it. Mr. Pears will thank you to make some enquiries about it of Mr. Scott.

We are at present in such a state of uncertainty and suspense as to our future prospects here that I have very little spirits to write. The new Community is to be very speedily commenced. They last night chose a committee of seven to draw up a constitution for it. The members are Mr. Dale, Mr. W. Owen, Mr. Jennings, Capt. M'Donald, Judge Wattles, Mr. Lewis, secretary to the standing committee, and Mr. Whitby, lately arrived from a settlement of shaking Quakers.<sup>8</sup>

{ I feel more distressed at the thought of entering this new community than I can express. It appears to me that all the troubles I have formerly experienced, and they have not been few, never affected my heart with so deep a gloom, so hopeless a sense of absolute despondency. There appears nothing cheering, nothing consoling on which to rest. Hope which had never before quite deserted me seems now to have taken her flight. Mr. Owen has delivered several lectures here, but as I always return from them more unhappy than I went, I have half determined to go to no more. But I shall probably break my resolution to-night.

I am confident I shall never be able to perform what he appears to expect from the women. My strength, which never was great and is much diminished since I came here, is unequal to taking my turn in the kitchen, which I find it is required that all should do by turns for six weeks together. No one is to be favored above the rest, as all are to be in a state of perfect equality.

Oh, if you could see some of the rough uncouth creatures here, I think you would find it rather hard to look upon them exactly in the light of brothers and sisters. Mr. Owen says we have been speaking falsehoods all our lives, and that here only we shall be enabled to speak the truth. I am sure I cannot in sincerity look upon these as my equals, and that if I must appear to do it, I cannot either act or speak the truth. I believe it will only do for those who are deep in the System to speak the very truth. The rest must be content to say nothing. I

<sup>8</sup>Mr. John Whitby. See the record of votes for committee members, p. 57.

think the person who wrote that this was a terrestrial paradise must have very odd ideas of paradise, or it must be meant as a joke. As to the Pearsons they are raised considerably in importance since they came here, and I do not wonder at his giving a high-flown description.

What you say upon the subject of Christianity is very just, but I ~~fear there are very few of the male~~ part of the Society who have the slightest desire to examine anything of the kind. They appear perfectly settled, and wish for nothing more than what this world affords. As an instance, Mr. Pears in a speech which he made a night or two ago, mentioned the necessity of deliberation in a step of so great importance as the formation of this community, that it would probably influence our happiness both in this world and the next. He was afterwards asked by one of the members what he meant by the next world. From what Mr. Owen says he certainly rejects the Scriptures, and to me his system, or rather his opinions, stand so perfectly opposed to them that I cannot see how a Christian can be a perfect Owenite. I may be wrong, but this is in truth my sentiment upon the subject.

I hope, my dear Uncle, when I write next to be able to do it rather more cheerfully. At least we shall be at more certainty with regard to our future destiny. . . . I must leave a little room for Mr. Pears to add a few lines.

Yours most affectionate and grateful niece,  
SARAH PEARS

[Inclosure]

THOMAS PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

DEAR SIR,

Never was any news more welcome than your letter. We were so long without letters or news from any of our friends that we might well be excused if we thought they had forgotten us.

When I wrote last I intended to continue my account of Harmony, but I got tired of telling of Difficulties; and when you wrote that you wished I had been more particular that you might publish it, I can assure you I did not wish to appear in

print. More than that, tho' I did not expect letter for letter, I did wish to hear from Pittsburgh. No letters or accounts arrived, and I almost concluded that Communities were all our Resource,—that we had been forgotten. But pardon me, I like not writing. And tho' I ought to have written, I must defer it till next week, or perhaps the week after.

I am Secretary to our Meetings on Wednesday for business, and to the Convention for forming a Constitution for a perfect Society. You may say what you will about Deism in the old world, but I never had less of it than I have here. Your letters by Mr. Owen have arrived, but not the books. Indeed they do not know what they have brought with them, nor do we know what we are going to be. If Mr. Owen's principles can be practiced, we shall not be far from being the most perfect Christians of our Day.

Dear Sir, yours sincerely,

THOMAS PEARS

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL TO THOMAS PEARS

February 3, 1826

DEAR SIR,

I hope long ere this you have seen Mr. Owen, and that he has begun the work of reformation. I addressed a line to him on the eve of his departure, requesting he would enquire into the propriety of your dismissal from the desk where you could appear to such advantage. He promised to see into it. Did any enquiry take place? I shall be very glad if you will let me know how you go on, and whether there is any prospect of the Society's paying their own expenses. Mr. Prentice contends that individuals will produce more than societies, and this may [be] true in some cases. But if the economy in other respects will make up more than this difference, they may still maintain themselves, though not without a larger portion of time be directed to production than I think has been held out. Be so good as to ask Mr. Jennings to put the reply to MacLean in

the Gazette. Our rivers are still fast bound. With affectionate good wishes to you and yours, I am, dear sir,

Y<sup>r</sup>. a<sup>f</sup>. friend,

B. BAKEWELL

On dit que M. Pearson va revinir ; est ce vrai ?

[Inclosure]

THE EDITOR OF THE NEW-HARMONY GAZETTE<sup>9</sup>

SIR,

The following reply to the Editor's unauthorized assertion respecting the Social System was sent to the Pittsburgh Gazette, but was refused admission. As your paper circulates here, can I beg its insertion? And you will oblige

A SUBSCRIBER

PITTSBURGH, December 21, 1825

MR. MACLEAN,

I was surprised to find it asserted in your Gazette of the 9th instant, that "since Mr. Owen had so openly and so ostentatiously set up his plan in opposition to the general experience of mankind and the religion of the Bible, it has evidently lost much of its popularity."

If indeed Mr. Owen's object is opposed to the religion of the Bible, I would say the more unpopular it was the better; but if I understand the Bible, its purport is to correct the errors and vices which prevail amongst mankind, to lead men to abandon every vicious practice, and correct every unholy feeling, and to show them that their present and future happiness depends upon the cultivation of those virtuous and benevolent affections, which alone can qualify them for the ever increasing happiness for which they are destined.

I differ from Mr. Owen as to some of the means; but his end being the correction, if not the extirpation, of the exclusively selfish feelings (the prolific source of all crime and almost all misery), and the engrafting on the juvenile mind by precept and example the principles of kindness, benevolence

<sup>9</sup>This letter appeared in the *New-Harmony Gazette* of March 15, 1826, Vol. 1, p. 195.

and universal good will, I cannot believe that in doing this he is opposing the Bible.

The numerous and respectable audience which attended his lecture, and the profound silence and attention which prevailed during its delivery, are not very strong indications of the growing unpopularity of Mr. Owen's plan.

To the farmer, the mechanic, or the laborer,—those who are the real producers of all the wealth in society,—a system which should enable them to enjoy the entire fruits of their united industry, and to procure for their children the most rational and useful education, it surely can not be unpopular.

I am willing to admit there are two descriptions of persons to whom it may so appear. The first are those who live entirely on the industry of others; and the second are those who are willing enough that good should be done provided it be done in their own way or by their own sect or party.

To the former I would recommend the injunction of the Apostle Paul: "He that will not work, neither let him eat;" and to the latter the command of the Savior: "Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us."

#### A FRIEND TO THE SOCIAL SYSTEM

THOMAS PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

February 16, 1826

DEAR SIR,

I had begun a long letter, but I have been interrupted; and I can now only thank you for the contents of the box per Mr. Owen and say a few words about our present situation. You will receive by this mail the paper containing the Constitution we have adopted, and of some of the articles of which, though it contains the united wisdom of Harmony, we have begun to discuss the precise meaning.<sup>10</sup>

The admission of members is now under discussion:—some contending that it only requires a majority of a quorum, and others that it requires a majority of the assembly as defined in the fourth article. It's a bone to pick for this night.

<sup>10</sup>The Constitution was published in the *New-Harmony Gazette* of February 15, 1825, Vol. 1, pp. 161-63. See also Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, pp. 105 ff.

For my own part I still like the System, but am completely out of humor with the practice here. The accounts of the Preliminary Society when settled will probably decide my opinion. They have not by their Valuation List of labor allowed me and the children who work, enough to pay the board of the family according to the low rates of board established by the Committee themselves.<sup>11</sup> How those who are in debt to the Preliminary Society will pay their accounts, or how any member of the Community of Equality can settle with the Community are matters of doubt. Certain it is to me that in the latter case numbers and interest will be decidedly against the individual.

There is no decision about wool at present. As to the money received from Hall I wish you to keep it for the present. I hope not to want it, but all is in such uncertainty here (or I view it so) that I know not whether it may not be wanted to place me in some other situation. . . . For I find Baker's opinion more correct than I once thought it "that money was desirable even in Harmony."

I have sent a paper to Mr. Baldwin, and another to Mr. Belknap containing the Constitution. Please call upon Mr. James Scott and tell him that I have sent our two last papers to him but that I have not received a single number of the Reformer since I came here. You do not mention receiving our Gazette, tho' I have sent it from the commencement under the idea that you would forward the [Pittsburgh] Gazette in lieu thereof. None have come, and I have heard that Mr. McLean had written that he would exchange; but whether his proposal was accepted I know not. With best remembrances to all, I am,

dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

THOMAS PEARS

<sup>11</sup>The Valuation List submitted by the committee at a meeting of the Preliminary Society held February 8, 1826, tabulates the services of 232 members of the society. Their work is valued at sums varying from \$45 to \$234, with a total valuation of \$30,849.50. Thomas Pears was allowed \$143, and his daughter Sarah Ann, \$45.

[Inclosure]

MRS. PEARS TO MRS. BAKEWELL

DEAR AUNT,

It is so late that I have scarcely time to add a few lines, but as Mr. Pears has not filled up his paper, I cannot suffer the letter to go without expressing our thanks for your kind presents, which as you may believe were very gratifying to us. A new book is indeed a rarity and a very great treat. If it had not been for the cotton which you were so kind as to send I must entirely have stopped sewing, which I assure you would have been a very awkward circumstance in a family so large as ours.

You ask me to write particulars, but indeed that is very difficult in this unsettled period. I feel so very much dissatisfied with the arrangements that are talked of that I wish not to mention them till they are brought before the public. There are so many rumors and flying reports, that I have sometimes been half crazy. I now believe that the best way is to wait with as much patience as possible till the truth or falsehood of them can be ascertained.

We have all had our time very much occupied in the evening with the meetings for settling the business of the Community, at which, as you may see by the Constitution, the ladies are permitted to vote. I have not, however, as yet availed myself of the privilege. . . .

Believe me your affectionate niece,

SARAH PEARS

THOMAS PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

March 4, 1826

DEAR SIR,

I cannot write you any account of our proceedings, for they vary so much from day to day that all here is uncertainty. I once thought that Mr. Owen's heart had run away with his head, and now I am convinced that this was the case.



The Constitution which was published, and which nearly all the members of the Preliminary Society signed, is now as nothing.<sup>12</sup> The people here are divided into four classes: the Conscientious, as advertised in our papers; another called the English Society; and within two days another which originally was composed of seven who made out a list which includes all the Literati, and none even in the secret but those whose names were on the list. These resigned all membership, and many led by their example did the same. This has to-day been reconsidered, and such as please are yet considered as Constitutionalists.<sup>13</sup>

The Preliminary Society expires by a note obtained (before the arrangements were known) on Sunday evening next, and we are now in such confusion that I cannot tell what will be the result. Mr. Owen is, I think, misled, and I fear this will prove a second Birkbeck Establishment.<sup>14</sup> Be this, however,

<sup>12</sup>According to the constitution, the executive power of the community was to be vested in a secretary, treasurer, and commissary, and four superintendents of departments. The secretary, treasurer, and commissary were to be chosen by the assembly. Six departments were provided for—Agriculture, Manufactures and Mechanics, Literature, Science and Education, Domestic Economy, General Economy, and Commerce. The commissary was to be superintendent of the Department of Domestic Economy, which for administrative purposes was to be grouped with the Department of General Economy, and the treasurer was to be superintendent of the Department of Commerce.

The *New-Harmony Gazette* of February 22, 1826, Vol. 1, p. 175, listed the following superintendents: Dr. William Prince—Agriculture; J. K. Coolidge—Manufactures and Mechanics; Thomas Say—Literature, Science, and Education; Richeson Whitby—Domestic Economy; Stedman Whitwell—General Economy; William Owen—Commerce. These superintendents, with Warner W. Lewis, secretary, composed the Executive Council. The same issue of the *Gazette* recorded the request of the Executive Council for Owen's aid in directing community affairs.

<sup>13</sup>These four classes—"Conscientious," "English Society," "Literati," and "Constitutionalist" are to be understood as Mr. Pears's versions of factions at New Harmony. The population was not divided along these lines, nor were these factions, as described, formed into separate communities.

<sup>14</sup>Governor Edward Coles, of Illinois, summarizes the difficulties which beset Birkbeck's community of English settlers in Edwards County, Illinois. He says: "Although emigrants . . . soon followed him, and . . . in a year or two amounted to some 6 or 800 people, yet owing to an unfortunate schism . . . between Mr. Birkbeck and Mr. George Flower . . . and

as it may, I am heartily tired of it; and if I knew how, I would get out of it quickly. . . . I would rather be a teaser (in the Glass House) than be here.<sup>15</sup> Anything by which I can get my living would to me be preferable. Every object for which I came here is disappointed, and instead of endeavoring to show THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS to others, I know not how to secure my own. . . . ] I leave Mrs. Pears to fill the sheet, for unhappy as she is, her passions are more under command than mine. I am, dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,  
THOMAS PEARS

[Inclosure]

MRS. PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

DEAR UNCLE,

Mr. Pears has told you that I will fill up the paper, but my health is so much affected by my extreme distress of mind, and the confusion of my ideas is such, that I scarcely

this feud spreading through the settlement, had a bad influence on the social intercourse and joint action of the . . . settlement. . . . Another cause which had influence in retarding its progress was Rapps settlement . . . called 'Harmony,' in which . . . there was . . . a great deal of . . . friendly communion which contributed to its prosperity. Such were the effects of discord at the one place, and harmony at the other, that with all the skill . . . of English laborers, they found it cheaper . . . to buy many agricultural productions & other necessaries . . . at Harmony than to make them." And again: "It was perceptible to a practical American agriculturist, that his knowledge . . . was better adapted . . . to an old Country where land is of the first consideration, and labor of the second—than to a new and sparsely settled Country, where land is plenty and cheap, and labor scarce and dear."

Birkbeck's project influenced the development of prairie lands more than this would indicate. The evolution of scientific agriculture, the vigorous opposition to slavery, and the attention attracted to the region by the writings of Birkbeck and Flower were of great value. See Coles to Barry, June 25, 1858, in Alvord (ed.), *Governor Edward Coles*, pp. 372-73; Birkbeck, Morris, *Notes on a Journey in America, from the Coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois*: . . . (Dublin, 1818); Pease, Theodore C., *The Frontier State*, pp. 12-17, 87-91 (*Centennial History of Illinois*, Vol. 2, Springfield, 1918). See also note 8, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup>The teaser was the stoker or fireman who attended the furnace.

know how to write at all. Not a hope remains to me. I seem indifferent about going or staying. My health and strength have received a shock in this place which they will probably never recover. I fear that a premature old age and inability for usefulness will be the consequence. Only in the grave can I see any prospect of rest.

It is impossible to enter into any particulars now with respect to the late transactions. My mind is in too unsettled a state to descend to particulars. In short we do not understand how the future is to be conducted at present sufficiently to give any regular account; and the late transactions are of a nature to involve some people of the highest standing amongst us in obloquy. When we have a clear information respecting all things we will write again.

Give my love to my kind Aunt, and assure her that in health or in sickness, in prosperity and adversity, I shall ever think of her with the sincerest affection. Adieu, dear Uncle. Excuse this imperfect scrawl. And believe me,

Ever your grateful niece,

SARAH PEARS

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL TO THOMAS PEARS

March 9, 1826

DEAR SIR,

Yours and Mrs. Pears' letters were received yesterday, also the paper containing the New Constitution. The articles I have not had time to examine, but am afraid that for one family you have admitted numbers from the Preliminary Society with too little discrimination.

It is next to impossible that the heterogeneous mass with all its humors and habits, which was in a great measure collected at Harmony by chance, should suddenly become converted into an assemblage of peaceful, disinterested and benevolent members forming one common family. If it is so, I must necessarily become a convert to sudden conversions, which heretofore I disbelieved. I think also whether a majority of the quorum or of the general assembly decide the question of admission, in either case the terms are too easy to admit

an inmate into the House without more than two weeks acquaintance.

I shall be glad to know the ground on which the members from conscientious motives have an intention to separate and form a distinct Community. Does it proceed from an aversion to military duty, dancing duty, or from religious considerations? I wish you had sent the "long letter" you had begun, as your settlement has now assumed a more interesting aspect; and I long to see by experiment whether man is altogether the creature of habit, and that he may be formed into an angel or a devil, according to the circumstances with which you surround him. That you may make a good Mohammedan, a Jew or a Christian, as far as a belief in the generally received dogmas of those sects go, I have no doubt; but in my opinion we have implanted in our natures a capacity to know right from wrong which is superior to all circumstances. Altho' I am willing to admit this sense of right and wrong may be and is influenced by them in some degree, in proportion as the mind is more or less enlightened.

Admit the existence of this consciousness of moral and immoral action, and your doctrine of no rewards and no punishments (I do not mean vindictive punishments) falls to the ground or vanishes into air. In your Preamble you say: "That freedom in the direction of every action, is the unalienable right of each human being, and cannot justly be limited except by his own consent." Is not this aphorism liable to be abused?

With love to Mrs. Pears and the children, I am dear Sir,  
Y<sup>rs</sup>. very sincerely,  
B. BAKEWELL

MRS. PEARS TO MRS. BAKEWELL

March 10, 1826

MY DEAR AUNT,

I wrote a few hasty lines last week, but my mind was in such a state of confusion that it was impossible to enter into

particulars. The differences are now in a great measure settled, but it will be long ere the ill feelings, as Mr. Jennings calls them, which have been general in the bosoms of one part of the Community against the other part, will entirely subside.

A scheme seemed to have been formed by Mr. Jennings, Mr. Dale and William Owen, together with the whole 'boat load of knowledge' and a few others whom they had selected, to form a separate Community, and to monopolize the town of Harmony. This scheme, as you may suppose, when discovered put the whole town into confusion. We were completely two parties, and the plainness with which my husband spoke is by some said to have led to present arrangements with respect to the re-union of the two communities.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the individuals here assembled came principally on account of educating their children. How was this to be accomplished when those who were brought here for the express purpose of taking this important charge were going to separate themselves from the rest?

"These divisive and separatist movements are dealt with more fully in Thomas Pears's letters of March 4 and 21, 1826. The New Harmony Community of Equality went into effect in February, 1826. The first secession, led by Captain Donald McDonald, who had opposed the adoption of the permanent constitution, was variously attributed to religious grounds and other reasons. It resulted in the establishment of Community Number 2, or Macluria (named for Robert Maclure). *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, pp. 166, 190, 209-10; Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, pp. 112-13, 127-28. Community Number 3 was organized in March, 1826, under the name Feiba Peveli. *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, pp. 190, 225-26; Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, pp. 114-16, 127-28. The Duke of Saxe-Weimar Eisenach describes these two communities: "No. 2, lies two miles distant from New Harmony, at the entrance of the forest, which will be cleared to make the land fit for cultivation, and consists of nine log houses, first tenanted about four weeks since, by about eighty persons. They are mostly backwoodsmen with their families, who have separated themselves from the community No. 1, in New Harmony, because no religion is acknowledged there, and these people wish to hold their prayer meetings undisturbed. . . . The community No. 3, consisted of English country people, who formed a new association, as the mixture, or perhaps the cosmopolitanism of New Harmony did not suit them; they left the colony planted by Mr. Birkbeck, at English Prairie, about twenty miles hence . . . after the unfortunate death of that gentlemen. . . . No. 3, is to be built on a very pretty eminence, as yet there is only a frame building for three families begun." *Travels through North America*, Vol. 2, pp. 115-16.

I can scarcely tell the motive which influenced this No. 4 Community, as it was called, to act as it did, except it was the desire they had to get rid of some of the members whom they disliked, or the love of power. However, after having several meetings, upon their making application to Mr. Owen for funds to commence with, he refused to recognize two communities in the town of Harmony; but told them he would give them as much woodland as they wanted where they might go and cut down trees and build log cabins as fast as they pleased. But this did not quite suit them, as they were not in general very well calculated for hewing down timber. They, therefore, after sending several deputations to Mr. Owen without producing the desired effect, were obliged to return to Community No. 1, who had in the meantime on the motion of Mr. Pears agreed to suspend the Constitution for the space of one year, and make Mr. Owen sole director. We are now therefore again united, but it is impossible entirely to forget the conduct of these people, notwithstanding they declare it was all fair and open.

I will now, if I can, give you some account of our new rules and regulations, which have given almost general dissatisfaction. I will now endeavor to give you a statement of facts, and ask you if you think it possible for any mother to be satisfied. I for my part am pretty near out of my senses. It is impossible to express how completely miserable I am, nor how I can sufficiently deprecate my own folly in ever consenting to come so far at such an uncertainty.

In the first place, all our elder children, those whom we expected to be comfort and consolation and support in our old age, are to be taken away from us, at an age, too, when they so peculiarly require the guardian care of their parents; and are to be placed in large boarding houses. The single males and females above the age of fourteen are to live together in one house, over which there is to be one married woman to superintend. I ought rather to have said three houses, as there are three boarding houses; but they are all to be conducted on the same plan, and to be for the sole reception of single males and females.

Instead of our own dear children each housekeeper is to receive two more families, one of which will have a child under two years old. The rest will be at the boarding school. These three families are each to live in community, and take the cooking by turns. We have already got one family with us, but as the people are leaving the Society very fast, I hope it will not be necessary to take a third. If it is, however, I shall prefer going into one of their miserable log cabins to being crowded so thick.

I have hitherto been able to do very little besides sew and take care of my baby; and my health is now, as well as my poor baby's, extremely delicate. How I am to go through cooking, washing and scrubbing I really do not know. But I know were I to consider this world only, I would rather, far rather, that Mr. Owen would shoot me through the head.

My mind is absolutely in such a state that I am almost incapable of doing anything, and next week expect my daughters will be taken away from me. If I am sick I cannot have my own daughters to nurse me, but must be taken to the hospital to be taken care of by strangers. I know not really how I can write such things and keep my senses.

Mr. Owen has been remonstrated with about the impropriety of putting young males and females into the same house, but he says that in six months they will become so used to it that they will not mind it. Can you, my dear Aunt, conceive of anything so absurd and cruel as breaking up and dividing families in order to make them comfortable? Comfort! Name not the word in Harmony, or at least in the Community of Harmony. And Equality!—it would be a total anomaly!

Instead of four or five hours labor being sufficient for one's maintenance, as people were led to imagine by Mr. Owen's representations, the bell is now rung at half past five to get up; at six to go to work; at seven for breakfast; at eight for work again; at twelve for dinner; at one to go to work; at six in the evening to return home. If those who are regularly employed are not punctual, they are liable to be reported at the nightly meeting of the intendants. If they are sick they must have a certificate from the physician. If this is not slavery I

know not what is. I absolutely begin to feel myself a complete slave.

When my children leave me I cannot tell them to do anything. They will be completely taken from under my control. As to the schools, the manner in which they have been conducted is really shameful. The boys have learnt nothing. I have heard that the girls have learnt a little geography, and a little sewing, but plenty of bad language, disobedience and contempt for their teachers they have certainly learnt. New arrangements are to take place, and things are to be placed on a better footing; but I have so long experienced that "hope deferred that maketh the heart sick" that I expect nothing but disappointment.

Here I am confident I never can be contented, put happiness entirely out of the question. Perhaps I ought to apologize for writing in so dismal a manner, but I can stand it no longer. I wish you to know things as they are in reality, and not to be deceived by the lies which they tell in the newspapers about happiness and contentment. I have spoken to a great number, but I have not found one who is contented with the new regulations. I hope, my dear Aunt, that some of you will write as soon as you receive this, as I shall be in a state of great anxiety till I hear. Mr. Pears will add a few lines. Adieu, dear Aunt. Remember me kindly to all your family, and believe me

Your most affectionate niece,

SARAH PEARS

[Inclosure]

THOMAS PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

DEAR SIR,

I wrote a short letter last week, and if my feelings were not under command then, I am afraid you will think Mrs. Pears' are not now. Our arrangements do not please me. There is, however contrary to the System it may appear, too much mastery about them, and consequently want of con-



fidence in everybody. They will ultimately have to come to what I told them months ago: "Make folks comfortable and then they will work with pleasure."

The attempt of Community No. 4 has completely failed. Mr. Owen could not support them, and if he had he must have lost everything that to him could be valuable. I intended to have written a long letter, but they have made me Clerk to the Commissary, a place which my bitterest enemy said required the best clerk in the Society; and for the last three days and part of the nights I have been too busy to write:—which place I expect to get all the trouble, whilst others will, if they can get such a thing here, get the reputation.

THOMAS PEARS

THOMAS PEARS TO BENJAMIN BAKEWELL

March 21, 1826

DEAR SIR,

Last night I had the pleasure of receiving yours of the 9th inst. with the enclosure, and am glad to find that your health [is] restored. I hate apologies, and I hope you will not look upon it as one when I say that since I wrote on the 4th March I have not had time to finish the "long letter" I mentioned.

Every day here produces something worthy of recording—I would I could say on account of its wisdom; but if I speak as I think or feel, it would be because it might warn others of dangers, and teach them that when men abandon practice for theory, they lose themselves in a wilderness. It might teach them that the march from imperfection to perfection is not to be effected in a day; that the best of men are liable to error; and that there is in a mercantile view little difference between good plans and bad ones, when both are continually changing, as they both produce the same result which is loss.

I have before given you my opinion of the probability of the Preliminary Society maintaining itself, and I think I once mentioned that I was afraid the second year would produce results similar to the first. Still I hoped that when Mr. Owen

returned, all would be so arranged as to ultimately succeed. I admired his abilities, his disinterestedness, and I had confidence in his knowledge of business, and more than half believed in his knowledge of human nature; but "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and I cannot look forward to another year of difficulty, and I may say distress, with the same light heartedness as I once viewed it. I am tired of the repetitions of: "These measures pursued, in a very short time you will yourselves be astonished at the change for the better which will be produced." We pursue no measures. A "nine days wonder" would be a wonder here.

Before Mr. Owen's arrival we were resigned to the management of the aristocracy he left to govern us, and peace and quiet reigned, for it was useless kicking against the pricks. After we had been told that their clemency had kept them from giving some their walking papers, it was apathy. We got our certificates and got credit for their paltry amount. It was repose, but only to enable us to make a stronger effort to shake off the yoke.

Mr. Owen came. He praised us; told us we had not suffered as he anticipated; that we had reached the "half-way house"; and all then was pleasant. Three days after, we had only got "one third of our way." The Committee had done as well as could be expected, tho' all was dilapidation around, and we were in the best state for commencing a community. We had experienced all the evil of the individual and Social System without the advantages of either. That we must go into community forthwith, and form a constitution for neither Mr. Maclure nor himself could act till they knew what principles were to guide, and what rules were to govern us.

To Constitution-making we went, and as you know the date of its foundation, you know how long it lasted, when I state that on the 4th of March we all signed a paper putting ourselves under the sole direction of Mr. Owen until the 1st January 1827, and agreeing to be responsible for the loss if any, and to keep the gain if any. We appointed a committee to value the property real and personal, Mr. Owen stating that he was perfectly willing we should do so, and also his willingness to abide by it. He expected that Mr. Maclure would do

the same. That he would advance the capital at 5%, and believed Mr. McLure would also be willing. It was proposed that Mr. Owen should nominate the committee, but he overruled it.

The valuation was made public the 18th inst. by himself. Being as he said the first time of seeing it, he could do nothing with[out] consulting Mr. Maclure; and on Sunday morning we had a long dissertation about the difference of cash and credit, a postponement till evening, and then a demand of \$20,000 additional for credit (tho' the contract is to bear interest from date), and every individual to become responsible for the whole of the personal property.

Before this happened more industry had been practiced than I have seen here. Since then all has been as heretofore. Scheming and talking, grouping and forming new communities. I never saw such a change from a prospect of success to a certainty of failure sooner or more completely effected. We shall lose this season as we did the last in the store, on the farm, in the tavern, and in the manufactories.

So determined was Mr. Owen on it that after being obliged to abandon his \$20,000, he has chosen with our consent twenty-four persons as nucleus (it was to have been twenty-five) of a new community, and we now are or shall be at the command of these.<sup>17</sup> I have the names and would you knew them. There is no man of business among them, and few whose securities I would take.

The valuation amounts to \$126,520, and the amount of loan proposed by Mr. Owen is \$20,000. The landed part of the valuation is \$88,000. To-night is to determine our fate. The terms are changed it is said so that each is only to be responsible for his proportion of the personal property. Such is the report, but report here is a common Liar. Whatever may be the terms I have no intention of making myself responsible, for I can see no prospect of producing enough to maintain us; and I shall willingly try the individual system again until I can find people who are not only willing but able to put

"Lockwood speaks of the number of persons forming this nucleus as twenty-five, evidently not being aware of the reduction to twenty-four. *New Harmony Movement*, p. 138.

the new into practice. I may I believe without vanity say, however, that stocks are rising with me since I have been deputy Commissary.

I wish I had time to give you the history of our Communities, but I am writing this in the store, and shall have to get Mrs. Pears to copy it that it may be legible. And frequent interruptions must plead for the want of connection.

No. 2 branched out either on account of religion or interest: the former was the ostensible, the latter the real reason I suppose. No. 3 took our best farmers and our best land, and I think went because they had no confidence in the System, or because they thought they could do better. No. 4 intended to get possession of the town of New Harmony, and to make all those who could not go away, hewers of wood and drawers of water for them. They failed and were obliged to come again to No. 1. Since the valuation business they have revived, and all is uncertainty. If I am correctly informed No. 1 has not land enough to farm to produce the articles necessary for life without clearing, altho' the tract contains 2,500 acres; Nos. 2 and 3 having obtained possession of all the valuable parts of the New Harmony farm except the orchard and vineyard, the former of which last year produced nothing but peaches which were chiefly wasted, and the latter about 300 gallons of wine.<sup>18</sup>

I must leave Mrs. Pears to say the rest, except to assure you that I should rejoice again to see Pittsburgh, and once more to find myself among friends.

Yours sincerely,

THOMAS PEARS

P. S. Since Mrs. Pears has copied the above I have been informed that I am to be made Commissary, the person who filled that place being so disgusted that he is going to leave here to-morrow.<sup>19</sup> I have not nor will not ask for offices here,

<sup>18</sup>See note 16, p. 71.

<sup>19</sup>Richeson Whitby was the commissary. He left New Harmony to join Frances Wright in her experiment for the gradual emancipation of slaves at Nashoba, and in December, 1826, became one of the trustees of the community. He married Camilla Wright, sister of Frances Wright. Waterman, William Randall, *Frances Wright*, pp. 105, 106, 117 (Columbia University *Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, Vol. 115, No. 1, New York, 1924).

and even the direction of the whole would not change my opinions or alter my wishes. The System I like, but I detest its practice here, and officers here are only marks for others to cast their dirt at; and they think, I believe, the blacker others are, the whiter they become themselves.

BENJAMIN BAKEWELL TO THOMAS PEARS

March 23, 1826

DEAR SIR,

Yours and Mrs. Pears' letters of the 10th inst. we received, and are truly concerned at the information they contain. Although I feared the assemblage at New Harmony was not prepared to form itself into a community, I did not imagine that in so short a period there should have been formed cabals and parties sufficient in number to overthrow any system, much more one in which the most powerful bond of union, that of individual interest is unknown.

I hope your feelings were under some peculiar excitement when you wrote, and that subsequent accounts from you will give us more encouragement as to the success of Mr. Owen's plan, for defeat will be ruin except he has resources which are inexhaustible.

Of the correctness of the principles of the System I have no doubt; but I fear Mr. Owen is of too sanguine a temperament to bring them into practice. Not being actuated by the same motives as other men, he will be misled in his judgment of their actions; and will find it necessary to have the members of his Society trained to the System before he attempts to carry it into effect, as a boy has to be instructed in any mechanical art, before he undertakes to set up for himself.

If you should really find that "every expectation you had formed in removing to Harmony is disappointed," your friends here are as much disposed as ever to assist in extricating you from the present difficulty, however in this case they may regret the cause, for the System's sake as well as that of your family.

You will, I hope, give us a full account of the causes which have led to the actual state of things with you, and their

probable consequences. That Mr. Owen would have found some advantage if his members had entertained some sense of religious obligation, I have no doubt; and I have equal confidence that his System cannot produce the happiness and moral improvement he anticipates without it. I dislike as much as any man bigotry and intolerance, which are no more recognized in the New Testament than Horsestealing, yet it appears that Mr. Owen from the revolting system of Calvinism with which he was surrounded, is bigoted against bigotry as well as religion, and seems to think they are inseparable; whereas nothing can have less affinity than it and the pure religion of the Gospel.

What were the reasons for the secession of a portion of the members for conscientious motives? Were they better or worse members of the body from which they seceded? Would not a little more of conscientious feeling be of advantage to some who remained? Do any of the conscientious stand foremost in promoting discord? How far does a sense of human responsibility operate to make men immoral? Is not reward in some shape or other the motive which actuates all rational beings, and if so what rationality in the doctrine of no rewards or punishments?

I have not time to pursue these enquiries further at present, but will just ask you what you think of the school and the plan of tuition intended to be pursued. Will it be a desirable plan for a parent to have his children educated in, and what will be the terms for children not belonging to members? . . . When we have further information from you I will write again. In the meantime, believe me, dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend,

B. BAKEWELL

Our united good wishes for yourself, Mrs. Pears and the children.

MRS. PEARS TO MRS. BAKEWELL

April 8, 1826

DEAR AUNT,

I promised to write this week, and as I have an opportu-

nity of sending a letter by Mr. and Mrs. Jennings, who leave here on Monday for Philadelphia,<sup>20</sup> I will endeavor to perform my promise; but you must excuse dullness and stupidity as I am almost worn out with fatigue and hard work, but I am glad to inform you that Maria's hand is much better, and that she is able to assist me a great deal. Palmer is also got pretty well.

I am really quite at a loss as to what to say with regard to our proceedings here; but most people seem pretty well persuaded that they will never come to any good, and I have no doubt that two thirds of the Society would go if they had the means. Mr. Owen is growing very unpopular even with the greatest sticklers for the System. I assure you that Mr. Owen of New Harmony is a very different personage from Mr. Owen in Pittsburgh, Washington, etc. As Mr. Pears is writing I suppose he will give you an account of the public affairs, but indeed that is a most difficult task as they are ever varying, ever changing, never at rest. What one writes one day is perhaps not true the next.

I believe I told you that we had another family in the house. They are now removed to our great satisfaction, and as our numbers are thinning, I hope it will remain so while we stay. My daughters remain with me at present, as the boarding school is not yet arranged for the younger children; but I am determined to keep Maria with me if I can, unless she could have the advantage of instruction which I fear it is vain to hope for. I am unable to sustain the fatigue of hard work without such complete exhaustion of strength that I have no power to sew, and scarcely to read in the evenings, so that you see how very unsuitable a person your poor niece is for a

<sup>20</sup>Robert L. Jennings, a prominent member of the community, and for a time one of the editors of the *Gazette*, had "decided to leave this place again, and return back to Philadelphia. Many other members have the same design, and I can hardly believe that this society will have a long duration." Saxe-Weimar Eisenach, *Travels through North America*, Vol. 2, p. 110. In December, 1826, with other members of the New Harmony and English settlements, he became a trustee of the Nashoba community at Nashville, Tennessee. After its failure he was associated with Frances Wright and Robert Dale Owen in editing the *New-Harmony Gazette*. Waterman, *Frances Wright*, pp. 106, 130, 147-48, 161, 182-83.

place where the worth of a woman is so much hard work as she can go through.

I wish I felt in sufficient spirits to give you a description of the new costume which Mr. Owen has been trying very hard to introduce, and which has actually been adopted by several of the beaux and belles. The female dress is a pair of under-trowsers tied round the ankles over which is an exceedingly full slip reaching to the knees, though some have been so extravagant as to make them rather longer, and also to have the sleeves long. I do not know whether I can describe the men's apparel but I will try. The pantaloons are extremely full, also tied round the ankle; the top garment also very full, bound round the waist with a very broad belt, which gives it the appearance of being all in one. A fat person dressed in this elegant costume I have heard very appropriately compared to a feather bed tied in the middle. They are tied round the neck like the girls' slips, and as many wear them with no collars visible, it is rather difficult to distinguish the gentlemen from the ladies. When I first saw the men with their bare necks it immediately struck me how very suitably they were equipped for the executioner.

There were two weddings last Sunday in the Hall. The parties with their bridesmaids and groomsmen were all dressed in the new costume, which is of black and white striped cotton, and as they have as yet but one apiece, and as one of the brides had been working in the boarding school kitchen all the preceding week, and had done a great deal of scrubbing in hers, it could not be very nice. She, poor girl, had first dressed herself very nicely in bridal white, but was persuaded by Mr. Owen and the bridegroom to lay aside these trappings of the old world, and to draw from its depository amongst the dirty clothes this elegant suit in which she was married. But I have been told that the change cost her many tears.

The ceremony was performed by Mr. Owen, who merely asked each if they were willing to take one another as man and wife; which on their answering in the affirmative, he required them to make a declaration that any after ceremony was unnecessary except in compliance with the laws of the state. They were then married in the usual manner by a Methodist minister.



After dinner the bridal party attended by many of the young ladies and gentlemen of the place, drums leading and music playing, took a long walk. Some of the parties were very anxious to have concluded the night with a dance at the Hall; but Mr. Owen very properly negatived the proposal, not that he has any idea of its being wrong himself, but because he thinks it better not to wound the feelings of those who may attach an idea of impropriety to it. One of the brides was a strict Methodist when she first came to Harmony.<sup>21</sup>

Mr. Pears has just come in, and he informs me that he will not be able to finish his letter as he will be obliged to write all day to-morrow as hard as possible. This has been the case every Sunday since he has been Deputy Commissary. Is this not too bad? I scold every Sunday about it, but alas! in vain. Mr. Pears is kept so very busy all the week that he cannot get through the accounts without working nearly all Sunday.

Indeed the day here is only used as a day of recreation, visiting and amusement, military operations, and with some few of work. Those ladies who are in regular employment, having no time allowed them, have some excuse for washing, ironing, and doing their own sewing on the Sabbath. Every Sunday evening there is a meeting at which Mr. Owen reads over the particulars of the expenditures of the Society, and the amount of work performed by each occupation, and also the names of the workmen and women, with the characters attached to each.

It is growing very late, and I must conclude my stupid scrawl. Remember me kindly to all friends. I should be much pleased to hear from Mrs. Atterbury, Mrs. Oliver, Mrs. Page, or any other of my friends who think me worth remem-

<sup>21</sup>The two marriages—Dr. Philip M. Price, late of Philadelphia, to Matilda Greentree, late of Washington City, and Robert Robson, late of Washington, to Eliza E. Parvin, late of Princeton, Indiana—are announced in the *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, p. 222, with an editorial comment on the community beliefs concerning marriage. Dr. Price was president of the committee which formed the constitution for the community, and wrote for the *Gazette* on medical matters. See also Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, pp. 191-92.

brance. . . . Adieu, dear Aunt. I hope shortly to hear  
from you again. Do not forget

Your affectionate niece,  
SARAH PEARS

## THE END OF THE ADVENTURE

MR. AND Mrs. Pears seem to have left New Harmony in late April or early May, 1826, returning to their home in Pittsburgh. On July 4 of the same year Robert Owen delivered his Declaration of Mental Independence, which he fondly hoped to be so epoch making, but which failed to cause even a ripple of excitement in New Harmony itself.

Two of the following letters are from a friend of the Pearses who remained in New Harmony after their return to Pittsburgh, and were evidently written in answer to a letter from Mrs. Pears manifesting an interest and curiosity in what was happening in the community after their departure. Thomas Pears also continued to watch the progress of the New Harmony experiment, and was still sufficiently interested to write to the *Pittsburgh Gazette* and the *New-Harmony Gazette* on the subject.

Some explanation is necessary with regard to Pears's letter to the New Harmony paper. When Robert Owen made his addresses before Congress he "exhibited a model of the buildings to be erected, first for the New Harmony community, and afterwards for each of the communities to be established. The buildings were to form a hollow square one thousand feet long, including a complete school, academy, and university. Within the squares were the culinary, dining, washing, and similar departments. In the larger buildings which marked the centers of the sides and the corners of the quadrangle were to be lecture-rooms, laboratories, chapel, ball, concert, committee, and conversation rooms. Between these larger buildings were dwelling-rooms occupying the first and second stories. On the third floor were to be departments for the unmarried and the children above two years of age. Each department was to be supplied with gas, water, and all modern conveniences.

"In concluding this memorable address, Mr. Owen declared

that he meant to carry these purposes of amelioration into immediate execution, to the full extent of his means."<sup>1</sup>

As for the "couplets" attributed by the writer of the letter to some anonymous wag, they are evidently a burlesque upon the "Owenite Poem, 1826" which heads Lockwood's chapter on "Community Progress." These couplets are likewise but one verse of the complete burlesque, which I have found among the papers of Thomas Pears and in his handwriting; so that though his modesty prevented him from acknowledging himself to be the "wag," there can be no doubt of their authorship. At the end of the letters, therefore, both the "Owenite Poem" and the complete burlesque are appended.

LYDIA E. EVELETH TO MRS. PEARS

March 29, 1827

DEAR AND RESPECTED LADY,

I have often thought I would write to you and commence a correspondence which I feel would be of such great advantage to me. But think not, my dear friend, that because I have delayed so long I know not how to estimate and to be grateful for the kindness you offer me in requesting such a poor correspondent.

I did hope that you would first write to me, and so delayed writing; but when you did me the honor to request my opinion of the much celebrated Declaration of Mental Independence, I did intend to write directly, and tell you what I did think of it.<sup>2</sup> And now tho' the impression it made is worn off, I feel it would be inexcusable in me to put off writing any longer, tho' I can give you no satisfactory account of matters and things here. And if I could it would be useless, as you will hear from those who will soon arrive in your town,—the great

<sup>1</sup>Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, pp. 69-70. Owen's addresses before Congress appear in the *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 2, nos. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34. The model for the community is described on page 257.

<sup>2</sup>The Declaration of Mental Independence was printed in the *New-Harmony Gazette*, Vol. 1, pp. 329-32. This and succeeding issues of the *Gazette* carried in addition to the regular date line a date line for the year of American Independence and the year of Mental Independence.

downfall of this mighty Community, and its once highly celebrated founder, who has now become the abhorrence of this people, as much as ever he was their idol.

Indeed so much is he out of favor here, that I do not believe there is one who would even listen patiently to anything he may have to say on his much loved System and Community, both of which he still continues to talk when he can get anyone to hear him—which is very seldom; for there are few strangers here, and his old friends are fast dropping off. Even father and Mr. Warren<sup>s</sup> are quite out with “old Bob,” as he is universally called here.

You wished to know what effect this said Declaration had on the minds and manners of this people. But it seemed to make less impression on the people here than it did on those who only read it; for they were not so accustomed to hearing such things as we were here. For my own part I have become almost indifferent to anything Mr. Owen may say, and do not feel the indignation I used to at his open declaration of sentiments which I once thought would be of such injury, but which I now think will be too little attended to, to be adopted, since their author is so fast lowering in the estimation of all. Methinks I have said enough on this subject, and will now answer your enquiries after your friends which you left here. . . .

Give my love to all your family, and be assured that you and they are all kindly remembered here. May heaven’s choicest blessings be yours is the sincere wish and prayer of

Your friend,

LYDIA

[Inclosure]

MRS. ALMA EVELETH TO MRS. PEARS

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I wish we were where we could visit. Then I could relate

\*Josiah Warren, an inventive genius, a social philosopher and reformer, stayed with the New Harmony Community two years, and returned to the town later. Lockwood’s *New Harmony Movement*, pages 294 to 306, contains his portrait and a biography by William Bailie.

a hundred things I cannot write, for really I have so much to do that it unfits me for using the pen. We have had these boarders all winter, and the girls stayed at home, and occasionally went to the sewing room.

The Community is at an end, and we have to face the trials of individual life. But I like it better. Now we can do as we please, tho' we have been very comfortable this winter in the Community, and have had a sufficiency of every substantial.

My neighbors are in the same houses, and we are at present; but this whole square is leased to the bricklayers for three years. The reason of this was that Mr. Eveleth talked of going some time ago, but has given it up now. But we must move soon.

You must not think too hard of me for not answering your good letter in good time. I have not been so negligent in thought, but it was impossible to write. I hope you will take this for an answer, and believe me

Your sincere friend and well wisher,

ALMA EVELETH

THOMAS PEARS TO EDITOR OF PITTSBURGH GAZETTE

MESSRS. EDITORS,

The extracts which I now send you are from a letter recently received from New Harmony from one who is now there. I wish you to publish them. The names of the writer of the letter will not be given now, and the name of the persons alluded to in it will be—Blanks; for most of them are still inhabitants of New Harmony, and I do not wish them to be subjected to the operation of that System of Universal Benevolence which now appears to prevail in that place,—which sends 19 or 20 large families to cultivate a half section of land. You will find other Blanks than those caused by the omission of names, and you may suppose them, as they really are, filled with family and friendly concerns. But that the public may know they are extracts from a letter dated New Harmony 2d February, 1827, I give you my name,

THOMAS PEARS

[Inclosure]

AN INHABITANT OF NEW HARMONY TO THOMAS PEARS

February 2, 1827

RESPECTED FRIEND,

After a lapse of 10 mos. I feel ashamed that I have been so long in fulfilling my promise. All that I can offer in apology is that the circumstances which have surrounded me have compelled me to the neglect. From the 30th April 1826 to the 19th October of the same year, I was continually employed for the Community, without any leisure, sewing, cooking, teaching, and nursing the sick. . . . From that period my time has been equally occupied, for here we have no assistance from hirelings. . . . If you can return an answer in a week or two after you receive this, you will greatly oblige me, as we dread great sickness this Spring. . . . I experienced enough last Summer. . . . I kept out of bed and that was all. Mr. —— has been in bed for a week past with a billious attack, and this is the second time. . . . The ——, wife and family, have had the fever and ague all the summer, and are scarcely recovered from it yet.

Last Summer when I heard that —— was coming, I seized every moment I could get to run into my room, and would scrawl a sentence at a time. . . . I know that it was an imperfect letter, yet I know there was enough in it to deter any rational person from running into the fire. . . . It was never answered, but in —— letter, it was called a miserable scrawl. I can only say that if he does not obey the dictates of that miserable scrawl he will only rue it once, and that will be forever.

—— has requested —— to write to —— and forbid him to come. —— is so surfeited that he and all who came from —— are seeking to form a community in the neighborhood of ——.

To tell all the transactions of New Harmony from my entrance until now would require a volume. Suffice it to say I saw nothing to constitute the happiness of the friends I left behind, else I should have written to them however hastily;

for nothing certainly could have gratified me more than to have an evening's chat with them again.

THOMAS PEARS TO EDITOR OF PITTSBURGH GAZETTE

MR. EDITOR,

I saw with pleasure in your Gazette the Communication from a Resident of New Harmony. The collision of opinion often elicits truth, and I hope it will do [so] in this instance. Truth was one of Robert Owen's first principles; and in "perfect conformity thereto" in quoting the words of a Late Inhabitant of New Harmony, before I left the thriving Community I told Robert Owen that he ought not to have invited any to join him but paupers. Your Resident represents him to have said "that no persons but paupers can carry into operation the principles of Social Communities." Is this fair? Is this true? Let the world judge.

The Late Inhabitant of New Harmony repeating his correspondent's words says, "Yours from Pittsburgh came to hand. The one from Harmony was received some time since in due course of mail, I believe, but with the seal broken; and was informed that it came in that situation. Whether it was done intentionally or accidentally I cannot say. It was sealed with wax, and apparently very carefully."

Your Resident of New Harmony construes this into a very serious charge, and which ought to be investigated by the proper authorities. Be it so, but what is it? A letter was received at Washington which had evidently been opened; and the Resident of New Harmony says this implicates the character of the respectable postmaster at New Harmony or some intermediate post. Let the galled jade wince! My withers are unprung!

I am informed that the letter is left at your office for inspection; and for a name I am told the name of the Late Inhabitant of New Harmony was left with you when he gave you the piece on which the Resident animadverted. But as we used to say of the *New Harmony Gazette*, "The animadversions are for the world."

THOMAS PEARS



THOMAS PEARS TO THE EDITORS OF THE  
NEW-HARMONY GAZETTE

Having seen in the *New Harmony Gazette* the remarks of the 'Mutualist' and the Editor's remarks thereon, I send you the following observations promising that tho' proceeding from one who has been an inhabitant of New Harmony, they are not dictated by any spirit of opposition to the great plan of extensive benevolence which gained Mr. Owen so many friends all over the United States. But I mean to show that the Editors of the *New Harmony Gazette* may be as much mistaken when they assert that the 'Mutualist' is not a practical man, as they are when they assume that Robert Owen is one.

The 'Mutualist' enquires: "Where have the square palaces been built which were to supersede all other buildings? Has even one been begun? Where are the gardens, conveniences, improvements, great machines, which were to provide for all those willing to work and unable to find a remuneration for their labor?"

The Editors of the *New Harmony Gazette* replies: "That he should enquire what had been done towards the establishment of communities is natural and reasonable; but that without waiting for an answer, without having seen our Colony, without having ever witnessed the progress slow or rapid which we are making, without having visited the various Communities that are now commenced in the different parts of the Union, he should proceed, 'Where are the square buildings, etc.,' is proof to us that he is no practical man."

They then proceed: "If any of the new Communities commencing as they do a novel and untried System on a small scale at first, and expecting to increase their members and their advantages in proportion as they gain experience, were to begin by a large expenditure for square palaces and great machines, we should say they acted imprudently. We should think they were beginning in a manner calculated to retard their success. Does the 'Mutualist' seriously expect in the very commencement all the advantages to which the steady and continued practice will ultimately lead? Is a complete change in the

whole arrangement of society a thing that can be effected in eighteen months? Or because everything has not been effected, is there therefore nothing done.”<sup>4</sup>

Taking it for granted, as the Editors of the *New Harmony Gazette* assert, “that the ‘Mutualist’ has never been at New Harmony, and lives, they believe, a thousand miles distant,” is this a fair answer to his query? He asked for information. They reply to him in the term of eighteen months bitter experience, “Can you in the very commencement have all these things Robert Owen preached about.” No, but I heard him in the world as well as the ‘Mutualist,’ and I saw him exhibit the palaces. I, as well as the ‘Mutualist,’ heard him expatiate on the advantage of labor saving machines,—the incalculable results of a good education—but of these I will not now speak. But it is first necessary to say that not only in the world, but at New Harmony also, did Robert Owen speak of palaces.

‘Many a time and oft’ have I seen him and others ride out to pitch upon the spot on which the palaces were to be built. And before his departure for Europe, I heard him declare in the church in Harmony: “Such is the progress which you have made, that what I did not think could be begun in less than three years from hence must be commenced next year.”

Does the ‘Mutualist’ ask now “Where are the palaces?” In the latter end of July or beginning of August, those of the Community who were willing were invited to go out and commence clearing the selected spot. The school children paraded, as did most of the men and boys armed with hoes and axes and shovels, prepared for war with the forest. The provision wagons and all arrived in safety at the Happy Spot. Some trees fell beneath the strokes of the woodmen. Many a sapling felt its roots assailed by the hoe; and it was said that 15 acres were cleared that day. The train returned in triumph, and

‘Mutualist’s “remarks” in the *New-Harmony Gazette* had reached considerable length by the time the communication quoted here (Vol. 2, p. 100), appeared. For others of his criticisms see Vol. 1, pp. 302-3, 309-10, 316-17; Vol. 2, pp. 26-27, 100. The reference here is to the elaborate community buildings which were a part of Robert Owen’s plan for New Harmony.

some wag who was with them is said to have made the following couplets on this exploit :

Yes, we shall see the happy day,  
It's e'en beginning now ;  
One Tree this day was cut away  
Where Harmony shall grow.<sup>5</sup>

The last time I saw the spot, there was one Log Cabin upon it, occupied by a member of the Society. The Mutualist must therefore be convinced that one palace was begun.

"Where are the gardens?" In Athens for aught I know. In Harmony there were none. Generally the first comers of the Owenites attempted to make gardens,—but these, and what the Dutch left, were demolished as if by magic—altho' the fences were not very good. But unluckily the hogs escaping from their confinement, after destroying the sweet potatoes, destroyed the gardens also; for it could not be worth while to repair old fences when we were promised new ones! So in 1825 we bought our vegetables.

Does the 'Mutualist' want to know about the great machines erected? The cotton and woolen establishment and dye house and steam grist mill erected by the Dutch, still existed when I left New Harmony. So did the Cut-off mill and tan yard. "Improvements, what moral evils are destroyed!" I can tell the 'Mutualist' that he will have to stay more than one day in Harmony before he will discover that.

Having thus endeavored to help the *New Harmony Gazette* Editors answer 'Mutualist's' questions, etc. I beg leave to ask them: Where did Robert Owen acquire this practice of a new and untried System? How many are now inhabitants of New Harmony were there on 1st June, 1825? I remain,  
Yours, etc., etc.

If Robert Owen ever spoke of small Communities, it was not to New Harmony he applied the remark.

<sup>5</sup>See the complete poem and the original which it parodies, page 94.

## OWENITE POEM, 1826

Ah, soon will come the glorious day,  
 Inscribed on Mercy's brow,  
 When truth shall rend the veil away  
 That blinds the nations now.

When earth no more in anxious fear  
 And misery shall sigh;  
 And pain shall cease, and every tear  
 Be wiped from every eye.

The race of man shall wisdom learn,  
 And error cease to reign:  
 The charms of innocence return,  
 And all be new again.

The fount of life shall then be quaffed  
 In peace by all that come:  
 And every wind that blows shall waft  
 Some wandering mortal home.<sup>6</sup>

## NEW HARMONY

Yes, we shall see that glorious day,  
 It's e'en beginning now;  
 For we one tree have cut away  
 Where Harmony shall grow.

And when we've got our palace built,  
 No Harmonite shall sigh;  
 Pain then shall cease and ev'ry tear  
 Be wiped from Misery's eye.

No more the Harmonite shall mourn,  
 Controlled by pass-book law;  
 But ev'ry man whate'er his claim,  
 Whate'er he please may draw.

Oh, how delightful it will be  
 In palaces to live;  
 And Hot or Cold whiche'er it be,  
 At pleasure we may give.

<sup>6</sup>Lockwood, *New Harmony Movement*, p. 141.

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE NEW HARMONY EXPERIMENT

(Indebtedness acknowledged to Lockwood)

1825

February 25 and March 7. Robert Owen addresses the Congress of the United States.

April 27. Owen's opening address at New Harmony.

May 1. Formation of "Preliminary Society" and adoption of first constitution.

June (early). Owen leaves New Harmony for New Lanark.

July 17. Owen embarks from New York for New Lanark.

July. First society founded on Owen's principles outside of New Harmony. The Yellow Springs Community, Greene County, Ohio.

October 1. *New-Harmony Gazette* established.

October 29. First marriage celebrated.

November 7. Owen arrives in New York. Remains in East to push his propaganda.

November 7. First secret society—"New Harmony Philanthropic Lodge" of Masons.

December 25. Population of New Harmony estimated at one thousand.

1826

January 18. The "Boatload of Knowledge" arrives at New Harmony.

January 25. "Preliminary Society" resolves itself into a constitutional convention.

February 5. Constitution of permanent community is adopted, and almost immediately the first off-shooting society, "Macluria," is formed.

February 17. Six new families admitted, but matters are already in a state of anarchy.

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February 19. Two weeks after the inauguration of the permanent community the executive committee unanimously requests Mr. Owen to assume the directorship of the community for one year.

March (early). The second off-shooting society formed under the name of Feiba Peveli.

April 2. A double marriage service performed.

April. Owen resists attempt to divide town into several communities and selects nucleus for new community.

July 4. The "Declaration of Mental Independence."

September 17. A general meeting of the societies and population of New Harmony held in the Hall, at which Owen proposes a new community.

## 1827

May 27. Robert Owen's Farewell Address.

June 1. Owen leaves New Harmony for England, stopping in several cities en route to New York to deliver lectures on the social system, and to paint hopeful pictures of conditions at New Harmony.

July 26. Last evidence of the existence of any of the communistic societies in a report of a Harvest Home celebration by Feiba Peveli.

## 1828

April 1. Owen's optimism fails in the face of the complete collapse of the social system, though his confession of defeat is a grudging one.