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American community experiments of the early nineteenth century: their significance in American literature

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THESIS

AMERICAN COMMUNITY EXPERIMENTS
OF THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY: THEIR
SIGNIFICANCE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

by

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Outline

I Background of the Period

1840-1850

A. List of Communities...........page 1
B. Philosophical Influences.... 3
   1. French........................ 3
   2. German......................... 3
   3. English........................ 4
C. Fourierism...................... 5
D. Unitarianism.................... 5
E. Transcendentalism............... 6
F. Other Reforms................... 6
G. Panic of 1837.................... 7
H. Earlier Communities in America 8

II Fourierism

A. Albert Brisbane................. 10
B. Fourier Theory Explained..... 11
C. North American Phalanx........ 13
D. Other Phalanxes............... 15
   1. Alphadelphis.................. 15
   2. Wisconsin..................... 15
   3. Northampton................... 16
E. Converts to Fourierism........ 17
F. Orestes Brownson Controversy 18
Outline

III Fruitlands
   A. Alcott's Trip to England............. page 22
   B. The "English Mystics".................. 22
   C. Purpose of Community.................... 24
   D. Practices............................... 25
   E. People of Community..................... 26
   F. Failure.................................. 27
   G. A. Bronson Alcott........................ 29

IV Brook Farm
   A. Transcendental Clubs "Dial"............ 31
   B. Brook Farm--Description................ 34
   C. Purpose................................ 35
   D. Work.................................... 35
   E. School.................................. 36
   F. Members.................................. 37
   G. Hawthorne at Brook Farm................ 38
   H. Visitors................................ 42
   I. Brook Farm as a Fourier Phalanx........ 42
   J. Failure.................................. 43

V. Hopedale, Mass and Conventions
   A. "Practical Christian".................... 45
   B. Founding................................ 47
Outline

C. Notice from Outsiders................. page 48
D. Relation to Other Communities........ 49
E. Activities.............................. 51
F. Conventions............................ 53
G. Failure of Hopedale.................... 53
H. Reform Interest......................... 56

VI Conclusion

A. Journalistic Influence............... 57
B. Spirit of Period....................... 60
C. Manual Labor and Intellectual Activities 61
D. Influence of American Literature..... 61
Introduction

The period between 1840 and 1850, sometimes referred to as the "fabulous forties", saw the establishment in the United States of innumerable experiments in communal living. These communities were both of sectarian and of non-sectarian nature, but all, regardless of background, were primarily interested in the establishment of a new order of society. Whatever other factors led to their beginnings, or led persons within their folds, reform was the outstanding concern. This was an age of reform, and all "thinking Men" as Emerson put it, were interested in the various types of humanitarianism that were springing up.

This thesis attempts to throw light on the background of this interest in reform. It means to give the history of the establishment of communities in the period, with concentration on those groups in whose founding and in whose progress and ideals American Men of letters of the day were interested. Fourier phalanxes, Amos Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands, Brook Farm, Hopedale, Mass. and Northampton, Mass. are important in the story.

Conventions of the Associationists, and the journalistic attempts of the different communities are taken up. The influence of communal experiments on the tone of American journalism at large and American literature are considered.
The purpose of the thesis is to determine the significance of the communities in the history of American letters and the development of American literature.
I

Background of Community Experiments

For convenience in discussing communities in America in and after 1840, we can divide the list as follows:1

Sectarian—in 1840 or before

Rappists at Economy
Zoar Separatists
Putney Community (Oneida after 1843)

—after 1840

Amana, at Ebenezer, New York
Bethel Community
Bishop Hill Community

Non-Sectarian

*Hopedale, Massachusetts (Reverend Adin Ballou)
*Fruitlands, Harvard, Massachusetts (Amos Bronson Alcott)
*Skaneateles, New York (Joseph Collins)

Fourier Phalanxes (forty-fifty)²

*North American Phalanx, Red Bank, New Jersey
*Brook Farm, West Roxbury, Massachusetts
Marlboro Association (Ohio)
*Northampton, Massachusetts
Sylvania Phalanx (Pennsylvania)
La grange Phalanx (Indiana)
Ohio Phalanx
Prairie Home Phalanx (Ohio)

1 List taken from Short History of American Literature by George Harrison Orians, New York, F.S.Crafts and Company, 1940, page one hundred forty-seven

2 Phalanx is the name given by Charles Fourier to his proposed community, or social unit
Of all this list, those most involved in the history of American letters are the Fourier Phalanxes. Brook Farm, which in the later years became Fourieristic; Amos Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands; Hopedale; Northampton; and Skaneateles. The last three are important for the interest they aroused even though they were not directly sponsored by literary personalities, and for the part they played in conventions held by all groups. All communities which will be mentioned are starred in the list above.

This early part of the nineteenth century was a period of great social unrest in the United States. It was a new country with great tracts of land lying untouched to the West. The Revolutionary War and the problems of the establishing of a government were now less in the foreground. Influences from Europe began to come in more abundantly. French, German, and English authors came to be more widely read, and from their pages came some of the social and philosophical ideas which brought about interest in reform in the United States.

1 seven in New York, six in Pennsylvania, six in Ohio, two in Massachusetts, two in Illinois, two in New Jersey, two in Wisconsin, one in Michigan
In 1817 George Bancroft and George Tinkner, American historians, had done graduate study in a German University and had brought back a new philosophy. Ticknor became holder of Smith Chair of Modern Languages at Harvard. At the same period Edward Everett, and Frederick Henry Hedge\(^1\) also became interested in German philosophy. Immanuel Kant's theory of innate ideas, or "transcendental farms", and Schelling's idea that nature and the mind are at bottom one and the same substance, attracted their attention. Ralph Waldo Emerson's had contact with Everett and Hedge and his philosophy owes much to these Germans for its concept of the current of divinity running through man and the eternal world.

There were French influences from the reformer, St. Simon from Abbe de Lamennais, who had written "Book of the People". William Henry Channing, nephew of the famous William Ellory Channing, and a prominent figure in the spread of Fourier phalanxes in this country, began his study of social reform about 1839 and read the works of both these men. He read also from Swedenborg, who felt himself a divinely appointed prophet of a new order. Horace Greeley, editor of the "New York Tribune", and Parke Godwin, editor of the "New York Sun", who like William H. Channing, were in the end ardent followers of the Frenchmen, Francois Marie Charles Fourier, also studied Swedenborg, as did

\(^1\) prime mover in the Boston Transcendental Club which was often called "Hedge's Club"
William Lloyd Garrison. Henry James pere was the most outstanding American follower of Swedenborg.

Rousseauism, of course, was an important influence. The ideas of liberty, fraternity, equality were current in this country before and during the Revolution with Thomas Paine and the Jeffersonian Democrats. They were in the wording of the Declaration of Independence and had become part of the American tradition. Rousseau's ideas of man's essential goodness and of the failure of government along with a deification of nature and the going back to the simple life case in more strongly after 1800, largely through the writings of the English Romanticists, Wordsworth and Coleridge.

William Godwin was also read widely in this country. Thomas Carlyle was known; Emerson, who had met Carlyle, was carrying on a correspondence with him. In a preface to writings on Fourier by Parke Godwin of the New York Sun, there is a quotation from Carlyle's "Past and Present", in keeping with the general spirit of the times:

"All human interests, combined human endeavors, and social outgrowths, have at a certain stage of their development required organizing: and WORK, the grandest of human endeavors, soes now require it."

1 Parke Godwin: A Popular View of the Doctrines of Charles Fourier, 1944, dedication
Charles Fourier was undoubtedly the greatest single influence of these thinkers, since he laid down definite principles for the establishment of communities, or "phalanxes",\(^1\) based on his pseudo-scientific ideas of the influence of earth-cultivation on climate and life. Forty or fifty of these phalanxes actually existed in America, inspired by the writings of Fourier's American translator and spokesman, Albert Brisbane.

Many of these influences had a significance in the history of Unitarianism in America, and Unitarianism, in turn, was itself an influence in the spread of social reform in this period. This trend of religious thinking in America followed the break-down of the Calvinistic theology of the Massachusetts Bay Colony -- a break-down which came about with the rise of the non-church member, free-landholding Yankee class; with the broadening horizons provided by a flourishing sea trade out of New England ports; and with the influx of new philosophical ideas particularly from Germany. Unitarianism was interested in the progress in the search for truth, and held to a belief in man's essential goodness, and hence perfectability under the right influences. The tenets of the creed were outlined by William E. Channing in a speech at Baltimore in 1819.

This idealistic belief in man's goodness is part of the story of the New England Renaissance in literature and the so-

\(^1\) Name given by Charles Fourier to his communities or social units
called Transcendental movement of the early nineteenth century. Transcendentalism was largely influenced by German thinking also. Unitarianism outlined its principles as the fatherhood of God, leadership of Christ, Brotherhood of man, and reform.

The whole emphasis of the thinking of the period then was laid on the natural goodness of man and the concept of the brotherhood of men. Sympathy became the chief virtue, as with Rousseau, and an interest in reform resulted. Besides the interest in establishing a new order of society, there were movements for abolition of slavery, for peace and non-resistance, for temperance, for women's rights, and for relief for the laboring classes.

It is interesting to note that this interest paralleled a similar one in England. In the British Isles this was the period of the "hungry forties" with disease, squalor, and the horrors of child labor among the industrial groups, but with a growing interest in humanitarianism, an expression of which found its way into the novel with Disraeli's "Two Nations", Mrs. Gaskell's "Mary Barton", and in 1839 Dicken's "Oliver Twist". The Great Reform Bill, moreover, had just been passed. (1832).

Believing the perfectability of man possible from his very nature, Unitarians in America took an active lead in reform. George Ripley, founder of Brook Farm, was a Unitarian minister, as were his friends of the Transcendental Club--Theodore Parker, a strong advocate of abolition.
James Freeman Clarke. William Henry Channing was also a Unitarian minister. In fact, a great majority of the names of men of letters connected with communities were those of prominent Unitarians.

The picture is not complete, however, until we mention the fact that the economic situation at this period gave reality to all this thinking of reform. The Panic of 1837 had been a great shock; business cycles and depressions were not understood at this time, and when Orestes Brownson, in an article, "Social Evils and Their Remedy", *Boston Quarterly Review*, July, 1841, explained how some such principle was at work, he was to far ahead of his day to be understood. Between 1838 and 1843, wages declined, and even when business began to pick up again, wages did not rise accordingly. In 1844 there were fifty-one thousand six hundred paupers in New York City. At this period, however, George Henry Evans published the first labor paper in America, *The Man*, and five other papers followed in quick succession. In June 1846 the first meeting of the New England Working Men's Association was held, and it is interesting that the leaders were George Ripley and Charles Dana (both from Brook Farm), Albert Brisbane, and Wendell Phillips. It is quite safe to say that economic reasons led many into joining communities. This is most true of the Fourier phalanxes, since religious zeal led persons into sectarian communities, while

1 strong advocate of abolition
non-sectarian Brook Farm and Fruitlands were smaller ventures with nearly all the members stockholders and interested idealistically. Yet it is said that economic reasons led Nathaniel Hawthorne to join Brook Farm; for he is supposed to have had a scorn for all schemes of reform.

The communities were not entirely new and without predecessors. Robert Owen, fresh from his successful ventures in New Lanark, Scotland, had taken over an unsuccessful German Rappite colony at New Harmony, Indiana, about 1827. There were Moravian communities, and also the Shaker communities in New York State, New England, Ohio, and Kentucky. The latter (Shakers) were founded at Niskayuna, New York, near Albany, by Mother Ann Lee of Manchester, England, prophetess of the order; they had a strange theology and advocated celibacy. It is an interesting fact that a Shaker community existed just across the river from Alcott's community at Harvard, Massachusetts. Moreover, leaders of communities in "the forties" often studied the experiences of Shakers before beginning their own ventures (this is true of Hopedale).

The background of these communities then lies in this social unrest; in this idealistic thinking colored by reading of French, German, and English writers; in the new influence of Unitarianism in religion; and in social theories like the one of Fourier. This is the scene behind Emerson's remark in a letter to Carlyle:

"We are all a little world here with numberless
Not a reading man, but has a draft of a new community in his pockets."¹

Ralph Waldo Emerson was too individualistic to be a member of any communal venture, and he was always skeptical of the practicability of such reform experiments. Yet he was interested in the betterment of human society, and his writing was an inspiration to members of these community groups.

¹ Short History of American Literature, Grians, page one hundred forty-seven
Fourierism

François Marie Charles Fourier, a follower of Rousseau, was born the son of a French linen-dyer in 1772, and died in 1837, at least three years before his elaborate plans for social reform became generally known in this country. Douglas Branch characterizes him as "a solitary philosopher with a chess-player's mind," the pieces in the game being, according to Fourier's own classification, labor, capital, and talent.

During his life he wrote six volumes on his social theories, the most famous of which was published in 1821 and was entitled "Traité de l'Association Agricole Domestique."

It was this volume that Albert Brisbane discovered in 1831. Brisbane was born and grew up in Batavia, New York. In 1827 he managed to go abroad to study, and again in Branch's words, "he shifted between several universities and as many social theories," becoming finally an ardent convert to Fourierism after meeting Fourier and after reading his works. In 1835 he was back in the United States, but was in very poor health. Consequently it was not until 1840 that he undertook to propagate Fourieristic ideas in America.

Fourierism, in the meantime, had spread widely through France, Germany, and Great Britain. In England "The London


Phalanx" was published as a vehicle for the theory and in Paris, a periodical known as "La Democratie Pacifique".

Brisbane's first work was a translation of Fourier's "Traite", which he called "The Social Destiny of Man". This he followed with "Concise Exposition", an explanation of a phalanx, "phalanx" being Fourier's term for an ideal social unit, or community. In 1842 Brisbane made his greatest conquest; he interested Horace Greeley, editor of the "New York Tribune" in the "Social Destiny". From then on Brisbane's articles began to appear in the "Tribune", weekly and at times even more often. Thus began the spread of Fourierism in America.

Fourier and his followers liked to consider their theory as scientific. Parke Godwin, in the preface to his book on Fourier, said:

"Fourier and his disciples hold that his social principles are entitled to rank as a science, being as capable of that rigorous demonstration which only wilfull prejudice rejects--"1

At best, however, Fourier was pseudo-scientific.

The crux of the theory concerned land cultivation. Man has been trusted with the cultivation and improvement of the earth's surface, Fourier said, but he has become so neglectful, that now only one-tenth of the earth's surface is under cultivation. All our evils result from this. Lack of tilling of Arctic soil has deranged the winds and caused the extreme cold

there. Likewise at the equator, neglect of the land has resulted in extreme heat and parched vegetable life.¹

Fourier went on to say that Divine Will, moreover, has instituted one all-inclusive order, in which there are the Botanical Series, the Astrological Series, the Zoological Series, and the Human Series, all of which must exist in perfect harmony. Man alone upsets the harmonic relationship and labor is the all-important factor.

There were other fantastic corollaries as well. Fourier had figured out what he called the passional harmonies of the planets, and he believed that the sea would someday no longer be salty, but sweet. This idea amused Hawthorne, and he refers to it in "Blithedale Romance"; an entry in his American Notebooks for August 7, 1851 makes this comment:

"Fourier states that, in the progress of the world, the ocean is to lose its saltiness and acquire the taste of a peculiarly flavored lemonade."²

By far the most important part of Fourier's theory and the part which interested Brisbane most was Fourier's plan for a phalanx or joint-stock association, where labor, capital, and talent would cooperate with profits to the producers, but none to the idlers. Brisbane was imbued with the patriotic idea that America was the place for this theory to work itself out.

¹ This is all in Fourieristic terminology

² Hawthorne, Nathaniel, "American Notebooks", Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1883 - page four hundred seven
He felt that about two thousand people would be a sufficient number for a phalanx and planned to preserve family groups. (Fourier's theory had allowed a system of free love but this found no favor in America).

"Attractive Industry" was worked out in the following groups or departments of labor:

- Agriculture
- Domestic Industries
- Mechanic arts

The cottage system of living would be followed for the most part, and in small enough communities there would be common board. All communities would have a "phalanstery", i.e. a main unit building and meeting hall; and, wherever possible, there would be a library and reading rooms.

The first convention in the interest of establishing a phalanx was held in Albany in the autumn of 1843. Elaborate plans were sketched, including the plan for a Fourieristic journal in America. Subscription amounted to about eight thousand dollars, and six hundred acres of very good land were purchased at Red Bank in Monmouth County, New Jersey. To this spot a few families went immediately and by December 1844 there were eighty persons there.

This first phalanx was named the North American Phalanx. At the peak of its activity, it boasted only one hundred and twenty-five people, but it was by far the most influential of all the...

1 Fourier's terminology
phalanxes (possibly owing to its proximity to New York). Two farm houses were built, also one large common building, numerous workshops and mills, and a community bathing house. Douglas Branch, in "Sentimental Years" describes the reading rooms. There were, he says, a few books in the library, and a few papers to which the community subscribed, including the "New York Tribune" and the "Nauvoo Tribune".

In the end the emphasis on the intellectual life of the community was slight. Horace Greeley, Parke Godwin, and Rev. William Henry Channing were by this time converts to Fourierism, but they never resided in any of the communities. They established in October, 1843, "The Phalanx" or "Journal of Modern Science" which carried the motto:

"Our evils are Social not Political,
and a Social Reform only can eradicate them." The Phalanx advertised for persons interested in joining a community about forty miles outside of New York City, and requested that any such persons give information on age, business, family, amount of stock desired—all negotiations to be carried on with one Ransom Smith, seven and a half Bowery, New York.

1 Branch, Edward Douglas, "Sentimental Years", 1934, page 90

2 The periodical of a contemporary French community called Icaria in Illinois. This was disbanded in 1856 owing to internal bickering.

3 "Phalanx", bound issue, volume one
By 1851, however, the North American Phalanx was going down hill.
One record of that year describes the men as "unshaven and un-
shorn". In 1853 a group of schismatics went to Perth Amboy to
establish a separate community.

The country in the forties was afire with Fourierism.
Forty or fifty communities sprang up and the news of their pro-
gress was reported monthly in "The Phalanx". Names connected
with their founding and maintenance mean very little today.
Most of the groups were in the middle west where they seemed to
take on a different character since they were nearer the fron-
tier and the new land.

Alphadelphis Phalanx, established in Kalamazoo County,
Michigan in 1844 is one of the better known; it had as many as
five hundred members at one time, but in less than three years
was disbanded owing to the constant internal bickering.

The Wisconsin Phalanx, also established in 1844, had thirty-
two families, two thousand acres of land, near Green Lake, and
an expert manager in one Warren Chase. In 1850 when land prices
went up, it was sold out at a profit of 8% to investors. This
is especially notable as no other community is recorded as hav-
ing ended operations with a profit. Finances badly managed and
lack of capital were the usual story.

The names of many of the smaller communities are now almost
forgotten. Many were the result of secessions from larger

1 Branch, Edward Douglas, "Sentimental Years", page 91
groups. Charles Dana, never an ardent supporter of Fourier, but always a loyal member of Brook Farm, which in its later days became a phalanx, replied—in the twenty-third issue of the "Phalanx" on May 23, 1945—to notices in the papers about failures of Fourier communities. He pointed out that much failure was a result of too hasty organization, and he called on members to avoid quarreling and leaving groups, to strengthen those communities already in existence.¹

Two other names are important in the story of Fourierism. They are those of communities which existed before the North American Phalanx, but were reorganized later as phalanxes. Brook Farm, the first will be taken up in a later chapter. The second is the community at Northampton, Massachusetts, memorialized in Bronson Alcott’s Journals along with Hopedale, Massachusetts (which was never Fourieristic) as stopping places on his tours of "Conversations".

Northampton Association had three hundred of its five hundred acres of land under cultivation; six dwellings housing fourteen families; a brick factory where sewing silk was made, the upper two floors of which were for persons who boarded in common; and a mill for grinding grain. George Benson, leader of the group, was an important figure at various associationist conventions held in the forties.

¹ "Phalanx"—bound issues, Volume one, number twenty-three May 23, 1945
Northampton (like Brook Farm) had a boarding school, which association children attended free of charge, while outsiders paid one hundred dollars tuition. The curriculum included languages, higher mathematics, philosophy, science, music, and painting. In September, 1844 the community became a phalanx. At one time one hundred fifty persons lived there, most of whom, however, held no stock.

An evidence of the spread of Fourierism is the resolution passed by the senior class of Western Reserve College at Hudson, Ohio, on January 27, 1844: "to send thanks through the "Journal of Modern Science" to a gentleman in Louisiana who gave the editors of the 'Phalanx' one hundred dollars to send their paper to send their paper to the senior class of every college in the United States for six months." ¹

In a list of the contributors to the "Phalanx appear the names of Francis Shaw, Osborne Macdaniel, Henry James pere, Parke Godwin, William Henry Channing, Charles Dana, Horace Greeley, John S. Dwight, George Curtis, and as Branch puts it facetiously "many another eminent dabbler in uplift" ²

Orastes Brownson, editor of the "Boston Quarterly Review" (later called Brownson's Quarterly Review") and an erstwhile member of the Symposium, was at one time interested in Fourierism. In 1841 he regarded it "with moderate favor". ³ Brisbane at this

time contributed to the "Boston Quarterly Review", and Brownson borrowed Brisbane's copy of Fourier.

In 1844, however, in the July number of "Brownson's Quarterly Review", the editor attacked the system as anti-Christian. The Phalanx lashed back:

"Mr. Brownson seems absolutely incapable of understanding any one of the fundamental principles of Fourierism, and his pretended objections have only inspired us with a painful conviction that he has wandered so long in the meshes of metaphysics that he has lost the power of recognizing truth even when it is presented fully to his mind". 1

In two subsequent issues the "Phalanx" then proceeded to explain to Mr. Brownson that Fourier was not irreligious. In his thinking, Brownson, of course, was by this time well on his way toward Catholicism. 2

William Henry Channing, as early as his college years, was interested in reform. In 1837, aroused by the question of the annexation of Texas, he sent a letter to "North American Review" 3 ending it with a poem, "The Freeman's Rally Call". In 1842 his ministry in New York at the Stuyvesant Institute on Broadway brought him in contact with Margaret Fuller, who was in New York as literary critic on the New York Tribune; they talked on reli-

1 "Phalanx"—bound issues, Volume one, number twelve, May 1844
2 Brownson studied various philosophies; finally joined the Catholic church
3 Published in Boston. Begun in 1815
gious and philosophical subjects, just when she was fresh from her interest in Brook Farm. Channing suggested to her that she write a book depicting the growth of her own mind, and in his enthusiasm said to her:

"You shall write nobler books than ever George Sand could conceive."¹

At this same time, Channing associated with Horace Greeley and Henry James, and attended meetings at the North American Phalanx. At Clinton Hall in New York (Convention of Friends of Association in the United States) in 1844, he said:

"We stand today, as we believe, amid the dawn of a new era of humanity; and as from Pisgah, look down upon a promised land"²

Enthusiasm for Fourierism was a real force in American thinking and journalism at this time. Others, like George Ripley and John Dwight at Brook Farm, Greeley and Godwin in New York, and Henry James on the lecture platform (this was the age of the Lyceum in America), had caught Brisbane's enthusiasm. And Brisbane was certainly enthusiastic. Emerson speaks of "Brisbane who believes in 'stellar duties' and introduced Fourierism into this country":

"He told me once that he had the good fortune to silence Carlyle—a great thing if it were true;

¹ Frothingham, Octavius Brooks, "William Henry Channing", Boston, Toughton Mifflin company, 1886, page 264
² Frothingham, Octavius Brooks, "William Henry Channing" page 267
but Carlyle may have been only bored by our countryman, who is a sad button holeer. The railway train is the place to talk with Brisbane where time is long and at your own disposal".1

1 Sanborn, F. B. "Recollections of Seventy Years", Richard Badger publisher, Gorham press, 1909, page 317
Fruitlands

Fruitlands, the experiment of Amos Bronson Alcott and his English friends, at Harvard, Massachusetts, began in June, 1843 just a little before the launching at Albany of the Fourier phalanxes, and more than two years later than the beginning of Brook Farm. It is justifiable, however, to save the story of Brook Farm until that of Fruitlands has been told, because the West Roxbury Community combines in its short history elements of both Fruitlands and the phalanxes. Fruitlands, like Brook Farm before it became a phalanx, was an idealistic venture influenced by the spirit of the time but by no particular social theory.

Bronson Alcott was a member of the Transcendental Club. When the members of the club first began to talk of establishing a community, and published their ideas in the Dial\(^1\) (edited at that period by Margaret Fuller), Alcott was a prominent figure in the discussion. On one particular occasion he met with Margaret Fuller, George Ripley, and Emerson at Emerson's house to discuss plans for communal living. In August 1840 when Brook Farm was about to become a reality, Ripley asked Alcott to join, but Alcott refused on the grounds that it was not "ideal\(^2\) enough, "ideal" having a special "Orphic\(^3\) connotation for him. Later

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1 Organ of Transcendental Club, 1840-1844
3 Alcott wrote "Orphic Sayings" for the "Dial", quarterly published in Boston, 1840-1844
he remarked that the people at Brook Farm had "no thoughts". And it must be admitted, as Ripley would have readily acknowledged, that Brook Farm was not so transcendental as Fruitlands.

In 1843 Emerson furnished Alcott with money for a visit to England, during which he was to visit "Alcott House" (a school named for Alcott and about ten miles from London at Ham Common Surrey), and also to bring back a collection of books. At the school, Alcott met William Oldham, Charles Lane, H.C. Wright, and Samuel Bower, who were to figure in the story of Fruitlands. It was while in England, in fact, that the idea of a "New Eden" occurred to him, and he interested these men in his ideas. In 1843 then, Lane and his son, Wright, and Bower returned to America with Alcott, bringing with them a library of books on philosophy and mysticism which Lane and Alcott had collected, and which was soon to rest in what Louisa May Alcott called "the best room" at Harvard.

Lane, Wright and Bower caused a mild sensation in Concord, and were dubbed by the Concord group (Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and young Ellory Channing) the "English Mystics". When negotiations for the farm at Harvard were finally completed, and Lane had paid Alcott's debts in Concord so that they could leave, Emerson was loathe to see them go. His interest in the plan at that period is shown by the fact that he signed his name as a

1 Alcott, Amos Bronson, "Journals", edited by O. Shepard p. 157
2 Alcott, Louisa May, "Transcendental Wild Oats" in Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands by Clara Sears, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1924, page 156
trustee to the deed for the land in Harvard. In July he went out to visit the Alcott group and recorded in his journal:

"The sun and the evening sky do not look calmer than Alcott and his family at Fruitlands ----young men and young maidens, old men and women, should visit them and be inspired"

And then with greater insight:

"I will not prejudge them successful. They look well in July; we will see them in December”[1]

In September, Charles Lane, writing to William Oldham in England says:

"Mr. Emerson is, I think, quite stationary: he is off the Railroad of Progress, and merely an elegant, kindly observer of all who pass onwards, and notes down their aspect while they remain in sight: of course, when they arrive at a new station, they are gone from and for him."

And in the same letter about Carlyle:

"I suppose that Thomas Carlyle with all his famous talking, does not yet ACTUALLY lead people out of their troubles. These worthy and enlightened scribblers will do little to save the nation”[2]

1 Emerson, Ralph Waldo "Heart of Emerson's Journals" Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1926, page 200

2 Sears, Clara, "Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands", 1924 page one hundred sixteen
In many ways Fruitland was unique. Alcott, in a letter to Isaac Hecker said:

"Our purposes as far as we know them at present are briefly these:

First to obtain the free use of a spot of land adequate by our own labor to our own support, including, of course, a convenient plain house, offices, wood-lot, garden, and orchard."2

Alcott goes on to talk of the "bigness to all creatures and purest charity" aimed at, and then concludes:

"Doubtless such a household, with our library, our services and manner of life, may attract young men and women, possibly also families with children-------- and we are not without hope that Providence will use us progressively for beneficial effects in the great work of human regeneration and the restoration of the highest life on earth."3

In his diary Alcott says:

"Labor will be attractive (this is Fourieristic terminology); life will not be worn in anxious and indurating toils; it will be a scene of mixed leisure, recreation, labor, and culture."4

1 Hecker was then at Brook Farm; he later went to Fruitlands and finally became a convert to Catholicism and the founder of the order of Paulist fathers
2 Sears, Clara, "Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands, 1924, page twelve
3 Sears, Clara, "Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands", 1924, page thirteen
4 Ibid, page seventy-two
The farm at Harvard fitted Alcott's specifications very well. It stood amid fields and woods on the Nashua River, just opposite a Shaker village at Shirley. The house accommodations were scanty, but here only Mrs. Alcott realized the privations. Alcott and his colleagues agreed that this good soil would be devoted entirely to the raising of grain, fruit, and vegetables. At first they hoped to work entirely with a spade, but this plan had to be given up and a plough bought.

The earth, moreover, was not to be polluted by use of fertilizers or manures. Animal products were entirely forbidden; members of the community wore only linen and cotton, and ate no meat, fish, milk, butter, cheese, eggs, or cocoa. They scorned also the use of molasses and rice, of spices in cooking, and of "false stimulants" like tea and coffee. Isaac Hecker explains these restrictions:

"A gross feeder will never be a central thinker---
Reasons for not eating animal food:
"It does not feed the spirit.
"It stimulates the propensities.
"It is taking animal life when other kingdoms offer sufficient and better increment. Slaughter strengthens the lower instincts. It is the chief cause of the slavery in the kitchen.
"It generates in the body the diseases animals are subject to, and encourages in man their bestiality.
"Its odor is offensive and its appearance
unaesthetic."¹

This stand explains Charles Lane's disdain of Brook Farm when he discovered on a visit there that there "were no less than sixteen cows, besides four oxen, a herd of swine, a horse or two, etc."² He recorded that the milk was sold in Boston, and "they buy butter to the extent of five hundred dollars a year."²

Fruitlands was always a small community. Besides the Alcotts (Mr. and Mrs. Alcott and their four daughters--Anna, Beth, Louisa and May who was then three years old), there were Charles Lane, whose entire worldly goods were sunk in the venture; Lane's son, William, a companion to the Alcott children; Samuel Bower; a Christopher Green of Providence, Rhode Island; a Sam Larned, also of Providence, who afterwards went to Brook Farm; an Abraham Everett; Joseph Palmer of Fitchburg, called "Jew Palmer" for the long beard which he wore and Abrem Wood, who changed his name to Wood Abram. H.C. Wright, the third of the "English Mystics", was at Harvard only for a short time, as was a Miss Anna Page, who was expelled by the most righteous members when she was caught eating fish at a neighbor's. Isaac Hecker was a late comer.

As Louisa May Alcott says in her short story, "Transcendental Wild Oats":

"Reform conventions of all sorts were haunted by these brethren, who said many wise things and

1 Sears, Clara, "Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands", 1924, page eighty-three.
2 Sears, Clara, "Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands", 1924, page thirty.
did many foolish ones.\textsuperscript{1}

Besides convention, there were always Alcott's "Conversations". One of these walking tours with Lane, which took in Northampton, Hopedale and Brook Farm, was undertaken just at harvest time when the grain lay cut in the field. During the absence of the men (the others besides Lane and Alcott were also away), Mrs. Alcott began to see signs of an approaching storm, and faced with the loss of the winter's food, she and the girls rushed into the field with baskets and managed to save some of the barley.

Mrs. Alcott seldom rebelled, but she insisted upon having an oil lamp by which to do her mending; the others used bayberry candles because oil contained animal fat. Lane somehow always felt Mrs. Alcott lacking in understanding of "spiritual ties",\textsuperscript{2} but admitted readily that she worked hard.

Fruitlands began to fail before a year was up. For some reason no new converts to the community appeared. Food was short and some of the crop had been ploughed into the ground to enrich the soil when it was needed for the winter ahead. All in all, the improvident methods of the community began to show the weaknesses of the ideas behind them. Finally in January 1844, the venture was abandoned, and the Alcotts returned to

\textsuperscript{1} Alcott, Louisa May, "Transcendental Wild Oats" in "Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands" by Clara Sears, 1924, page one hundred sixty-six

\textsuperscript{2} Refers to Mrs. Alcott's reluctance to enlarge the group beyond her natural family
Concord. Palmer stayed on at the farm. Lane had lost more than Alcott in a material way, but Alcott was in despair. A poem written by him a little later expresses this:

The Return

"Patriae quis exul
Se quoque fugit?
As from himself he fled
Outcast, insane
Tormenting demans drove him from the gate:
Away he sped
Casting his joys behind—
His better mind.

Recovered
Himself again
Over his threshold led,
Peace fills his breast,—
He finds his rest,—
Expecting angels his arrival wait."

Fruitlands had been so-named because fruit was to be a principal item of food, but Louisa May Alcott in "Transcendental Wild Oats" has Sister Hope (Mrs. Alcott) suggest ironically that it might have been better called "Apple Slump". 2

Diaries of Louisa and Anna Alcott kept at Fruitlands, show

1 Sanborn, F. B., "Recollections of Seventy Years", 1909 page 471
2 Alcott, Louisa, "Transcendental Wild Oats", in Bronson Alcott's "Fruitlands"
some of the happier times, like days in the woods, or Beth's birthday party. Louisa tells in different places of rising at five and taking a cold bath, of doing dishes and having lessons, of having bread and fruit for dinner. She mentions Lane's giving the children singing lessons and reading to them from "Judicious Father"1 They read too from their "beloved 'Pilgrim's Progress'"2 Lane had been disgusted to find that the children at Brook Farm were taught languages. At Fruitlands the children were taught by each of the adults in turn and suffered somewhat from the confusion of different methods.

Alcott is an unusual personality. Perhaps his greatest contribution was as an educator, at his famous Temple School in Boston. He seems to have been an imposing figure, but his utterances were often confusing. Emerson once said to F.B. Sanborn:

"Mr. Alcott is Don Quixote, and his audience always
Sancho."2

Cairns says of the "Orphic Sayings" which Alcott contributed to the "Dial":

"a series of sententious observations which were often unintelligible and which did as much as any one thing to expose the transcendentalists to ridicule."3

1 Alcott, Louisa, "Life, Letters, Journals", Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1883, pages 35-36
2 Sanborn, F.B., "Recollections of Seventy Years" 1909, page three hundred sixteen
3 Cairns, W.B., "History of American Literature", Oxford University, 1921, page 244
In a letter to Elizabeth Peabody from Newport, Rhode Island in September 1840, William E. Channing writes

"I do not care for Orpheus in the 'Dial'; his flights there amuse rather than edify me, but Orpheus at the plough is after my own heart. There he teaches a grand lesson--more than most of us teach by the pen." 1

This was written about Alcott's having hired himself out as a laborer in 1840, and not about Fruitlands, but the figure of speech peculiarly fits Alcott three years later at Harvard--"Orpheus at the plough". Another symbol of this impractical venture is contained in the mulberry trees planted at the farm with a view to ultimately raising silk worms.

A euphuistic way of expressing the failure of this community is Louisa Alcott's, when she says with loyalty in "Transcendental Wild Oats":

"The world was not ready for Utopia yet, and those who attempted it only got laughed at for their pains." 2

1 Peabody, Elizabeth, "Reminiscences of William Ellory Ellory Channing", Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1880, page 414

2 Alcott, Louisa, "Transcendental Wild Oats" in "Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands" by Clara Sears, 1924, page one hundred sixty-nine
IV

Brook Farm

The Transcendental Club began its meetings in 1836. It was, in general, a discussion group for those around Boston interested in the new idealism (dubbed "Transcendentalism" in ridicule by outsiders), or "The Newness". In 1840 the members began the publication of the "Dial", a quarterly devoted to discussion of religious and philosophical ideas.

In 1841, through the pages of the "Dial", the idea of Brook Farm began to take form. In the October issue of that year appeared a long article written by Elizabeth Peabody on "Christ's Idea of a Society"\(^1\) at the end of which it was promised that a specific plan for such a colony would be outlined in the next issue. Accordingly in the January issue of 1842 was the "Plan of the West Roxbury community";\(^2\) It should be noticed that by this time Brook Farm was already under way, since the land had been bought in August of 1840.

The outline of the plan as published included these points:\(^2\)

1. stock for all members
2. house and board in common
3. provisions purchased wholesale or raised on the farm
4. board to be paid by work
5. all members to have a trade

\(^1\) "Dial"--bound issues, volume one, second issue 1841

\(^2\) "Dial"--bound issues, volume one, third issue, 1841--"Plan of West Roxbury Community" by Elizabeth Peabody
The article continued:

"All labor, whether bodily or intellectual, is to be paid at the same rate of wages; on the principle that as labor becomes merely bodily, it is a greater sacrifice to the individual laborer to give his time to it, because time is desirable for the cultivation of the intellect, in exact proportion to ignorance. Besides intellectual labor involves in itself higher pleasures, and is more its own reward than bodily labor."¹

The members wished also to express by this plan the idea that "all labor is sacred."² Any sect was to be welcomed, and the community was to maintain a school.

Although the community was of interest to nearly all members of the Transcendental Club, and was meant to be a practical embodiment of the transcendental movement, in the end only three members went out to West Roxbury--George Ripley, John Dwight, and Nathaniel Hawthorne.² It is possible that Elizabeth Peabody might also have gone, but she was kept in Boston by the famous bookstore which she and her father operated on West Street (the gathering place of men and women of literary taste, and the scene of Margaret Fuller’s Saturday Conversations on women’s rights with the young ladies of Boston).

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¹ "Dial"--bound issues, volume one, third issue, 1841--
² "Plan for the West Roxbury Community" by Elizabeth Peabody

² Hawthorne, although a member of the club, was not a transcendentalist; he remained skeptical of these transcendental ideas.
The plan had been discussed at Emerson's home, but Emerson held himself more or less aloof, usually distrusting these ventures. His famous statement on reform appeared in the "Dial" in July 1842; in his article, "Lectures on the Times":

"These reforms of our contemporaries, they are ourselves, our own light, sight and conscience; they only name the relation that subsists between us and the vicious institutions which they go to rectify.

They are the simplest statements of men in these matters; the plain right and wrong. I cannot chose but allow and honor them. So much for the Reforms; but we cannot say as much for the Reformers. Beautiful is the theory; the practice is less beautiful."

As for Alcott— at this time, he was looking for something more aesthetic. And Margaret Fuller was editing the "Dial" as well as conducting "Conversations." William Ellory Channing, although he did not join, was interested, as Miss Peabody makes clear in her biography of him. When Channing returned to Boston, she says his first interest was in Ripley's plan:

"Manual labor schools had long been a favorite idea of his and he had written an article about them in 1836 in the "Moral Reformer" when Mr. Brownson was editor of it." 1

1 "Dial"—bound issues, volume two, first issue, 1842

2 Peabody, Elizabeth, "Reminiscences of William Ellory Channing," Boston, Roberts Brothers, 1880, page four hundred eighteen
At this time (that is 1841), Miss Peabody says:

"—he felt as much interest in the Mendon Association (Hopedale) as in Mr. Ripley's and corresponded with Rev. Adin Ballou and read the 'Practical Christian' to the end of his life".1

Ripley was the real founder of Brook Farm. In 1870 John Humphrey Noyes of the Wallingsford Community, Oneida2 published a book, "History of Socialism" in which he credited Dr. William Ellory Channing with the founding of Brook Farm. William Henry Channing wrote to him immediately on January 13, 1870 and said:

"—it was George Ripley, and George Ripley alone, who truly originated Brook Farm".3

Ripley was a Boston Unitarian minister. In 1840 dissatisfied with his own ideas of the ministry, he resigned his pulpit, and negotiated for the land in West Roxbury at a spot which he knew and loved, as he and his wife had spent summers there. The place had been a milk farm and was about eight miles from Boston. There were one hundred and eighty acres of land; a main house which became known as the Hive; a barn; and a small house across the road, later called The Nest, and used as a school.

Ripley organized a joint-stock association, and his explanation of his idea was in part as follows:

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1 John, "Reminiscences of William H. Channing", page four hundred and nineteen
2 Noyes, John Pierpont, "My Father's House" New York, Farrar and Rinehart Incorporated, 1937
3 A community advocating free love; planned by Noyes while at Andover Theological Seminary; begun in Putney, Vermont, his home-town; and in 1848 removed to Oneida near Madison, New York.
"Our objects are to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom by providing all with labor adapted to their tastes and talents and securing to them the fruits of their industry; \( \ldots \)\(^1\)

In short, as Orestes Brownson put it:

"Ripley tried in Brook Farm to strike the medium between society and solitude for an entire group"\(^2\)

The ideal was "plain living and high thinking."

The manual work was divided among the members of the community. There was plenty of carpentry to be done, and farming took a great part of the time. Vegetables were raised and taken to Boston to the market. At one time a number of the group were engaged in shoe-making. Hawthorne did farm work which included milking, and caring for the pig sty. Eyre House was soon built; then that cottage, which is known today as Margaret Fuller's cottage, although she never stayed there; and finally the Pilgrim House, built by Ichabod Morton of Plymouth (This house later

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1 Frothingham, Octavius Brooks, "William Henry Channing", Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1886, page two hundred and nine
2 Cooke, George Willis, "John Sullivan Dwight", Boston, Small Maynard Company, 1898, page fifty-one
3 Schlesinger, A.M., "Orestes Brownson", page 45
destroyed by fire).

Classes were held, and gradually the community built up a reputation for its boarding school. Crestes Brownson sent his son there; George Bancroft, the Harvard historian, sent his two sons. Other pupils were George and Burrill Curtis; James Lloyd Fuller, younger brother of Margaret; Ichabod Morton's daughter, Abby; the three sons of Mrs. Barlow (herself a boarder); Georgiana Bruce (later Mrs. Kirby); Hannah Ripley, niece of George; Sarah Stearns, Mrs. Ripley's niece; Horace Summer, younger brother of Charles, later to lose his life in a shipwreck along with Margaret Fuller D'Ossoli, her husband, and son; and Isaac Hecker, who went to Brook Farm on Brownson's recommendation.

Mrs. Ripley, a well-educated woman, taught history and modern languages; George Ripley, mathematics and philosophy; Charles A. Dana, Greek and German; George Bradford, literature; and John Sullivan Dwight, Latin and Music. Arthur Summer in "A Boy's Recollections of Life at Brook Farm" in the "New England Magazine" of May 1894 says of Dwight that he

"used to come in from his toil in the hot sun at noon to give me a lesson on the piano; and after doing that job, he would lie down on the lounge and go to sleep, while I played to him. What a piece of nonsense it was to have a man like that hoeing and stiffening his eloquent fingers! But the idea was, I think, that all kinds of labor must be made equally honorable, and that the poet, painter, and philosopher
must take their turn at the plough or in the
ditch. Mr. Dwight had quite a feminine sweet-
ness and delicacy of nature."

The real members of Brook Farm were these: Mr. and Mrs.
Ripley, George Bradford, Charles Dana, and John Dwight. George
Bradford was an intimate friend of Emerson and the man whom
Curtis later wrote: "the shifting presence of the Brook farmer
played like heat lightning around the room." Charles A. Dana
placed all his hopes in Brook Farm, stayed with it even when he
mistrusted Fourierism, and after its dissolution, became, in
Van Wyck Brook's words, "an active cynic," ridicule civil
service reform and advocating land grants to railroads and bank-
ing control of money.

John Sullivan Dwight was the musician of the group and was cal-
led "The Poet"; after his Brook Farm experience, he became music
editor of "Boston Commonwealth", and later editor of his own
"Musical Journal".

There were other late-comers. John Orvis was one of these
and was interested in farming; he married Marianne Dwight, sister
of John Dwight, and also a member of the community. Other members
were Warren Burton (an original stockholder); Charles Newcomb

1 Cooke, G.W., "John S. Dwight", 1898, page sixty-two
2 Cary, Edward, "George Curtis", Boston, Houghton Mifflin
   Company, 1894, quotation from essay "Homes of American Authors"
   by George Curtis, page thirty-two
3 Brooks, Van Wyck, "New England, Indian Summer", New York,
   E.P. Dutton and Company, 1940, page one hundred and twenty-one
(mystic and later convert to Catholicism); and Rev. John Allen, a Unitarian minister. Ichabod Morton, after a short stay, sold his interest to Minot Pratt (whose son, John, later married Anna Alcott). When the Fourier interest began, Lewis Ryckmann joined, and Francis G. Shaw became a constant visitor.

Hawthorne is purposely mentioned last, since his membership has a unique character. He was not a transcendentalist, nor was he a reformer. In his "American Notebooks" he has entered in 1835:

"A sketch to be given of a modern reformer——a type of the extreme doctrines on the subject of slaves, cold water, and other such topics. He goes about the streets haranguing most eloquently, and is on the point of making many converts, when his labors are suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the keeper of a mad-house, whence he has escaped. Much may be made of this idea."

It is usually supposed that Hawthorne went to Brook Farm for purely economic reasons. He had just left the Boston Customs House and was hoping to be married to Sophia Peabody (Elizabeth's sister). Perhaps he hoped to find at West Roxbury a solution for a temporary home.

He arrived at the farm on April 13, 1841 in a snowstorm and

1 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, "American Notebooks" 1883, page twenty
recorded:

"Here I am in a polar paradise." ¹

Entries in his journal from this point on show a progressive loss of enthusiasm for the venture:

April thirteenth, of the cows: "We have eight of our own; and the number is now increased by a Transcendental heifer belongling to Miss Margaret Fuller. She is very fractious-----"

April Fourteenth "---After breakfast Mr. Ripley put a four-pronged instrument into my hands, which he gave me to understand was called a pitchfork---"

April sixteenth "--I have milked a cow!!! I have not yet been twenty yards from our house barn; but I begin to perceive that this is a beautiful place." ¹

April twenty-second ""What an abominable hand do I scribble! but I have been chopping wood, and turning a grindstone all the forenoon.---It is an endless surprise to me how much work there is to be done in the world; but thank God, I am able to do my share of it---"

¹ Hawthorne, Nathaniel, "American Notebooks" 1883, pages two hundred and twenty-six to two hundred and twenty-nine
April twenty-eighth "--I read no newspapers and hardly remember who is President--"

June first "--It is my opinion that a man's soul may be buried and perish under a dung-heap, or in a furrow of the field, just as well as under a pile of money". (referring to the Customs House)

August twelfth "--Oh Labor is the curse of the world and nobody can meddle with it without becoming proportionally brutified! Is it a praiseworthy matter that I have spent five golden months in providing food for cows and horses! It is not so".

In September Hawthorne left Brook Farm and recorded:

"But I really should judge it to be twenty years since I left Brook Farm--. It already looks like a dream behind me."*

On the twenty-second of the same month, however, he was back, but not doing outside work.

September twenty-second--"Here I am again slowly adapting myself to the life of this queer community, whence I have been absent half a life time--" (actually about three weeks).

September twenty-fifth--"One thing is certain. I cannot and will not spend the winter here."

1 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, "American Notebooks", 1883, pages two hundred and thirty to two hundred and thirty-five
2 Ibid, page two hundred and thirty-seven
September twenty-seventh "--I was elected to
two high offices last night; that is, to be a
trustee of the Brook Farm estate and Chairman of
the Committee of Finance! --My accession to these
august offices does not at all decide the question
of my remaining here permanently. I told Mr. Ripley
that I could not spend the winter at the farm, and
that it was quite uncertain whether I returned in
the spring.--"1

Freed from his work in the field, Hawthorne enjoyed the
countryside more. He took long walks and entered descriptions
of them in his journal. Exactly when he left Brook Farm is un-
certain, as he gradually left off mentioning the place and mere-
ly jotted down stray thoughts and themes for stories. In the
"Blithedale Romance", which is "a story placed in a community
recalling West Roxbury, Coverdale says:

"What in the name of common sense had I to do
with any better society than that in which I had
always lived."2

Hawthorne's own attitude was perhaps not unlike this.

The visitors at the Farm were an illustrious group. Alcott
and Lane found the place more orderly than either Northampton or
Hopedale, but very frivolous. Of one of their visits Curtis

1 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, "American Notebooks" 1833, pages
two hundred and forty to two hundred and forty-four
2 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, "Blithedale Romance", in "Scarlet Letter;
Blithedale Romance", Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company 1883,
page three hundred and sixty-five
writes:

"--the solemn sphinx, Alcott, dispensing his great discourse on one of his visitations with L----, his solemn shadow, to Brook Farm, when he held a talk in the dreary Morton house one glorious June evening."¹

Theodore Parker, Unitarian minister, whose parish was in West Roxbury, came often, as did Margaret Fuller, William Henry Channing, Christopher Cranch (the transcendental poet), and Elizabeth Peabody. Brownson, an old friend of Ripley's came infrequently and talked with Newcomb, but his blustery ways made him an object of general humor.

In 1843 Brook Farm was reorganized as a Fourier phalanx, and received a new constitution. Brisbane and William Henry Channing had been visitors at West Roxbury frequently, and the Brook Farmers were readers of Brisbane's translations. Fourier was much discussed at meetings of New England associationists, and "The Phalanx" was widely circulated. Even Elizabeth Peabody, who had once looked on Fourier with horror, now rejoiced at the reorganization of Brook Farm. Emerson, however, continued to regard the theory with distaste. In an article for the "Dial" in 1842, he had remarked:

"Our feeling was that Fourier skipped no fact but one, namely Life"²

¹ Cary, E., "George Curtis", 1894, page twenty-three
² "Dial"--bound issues, volume two, third issue, "Fourier and the Socialists"
But in the same issue the editors printed Brisbane's article, "Means of Effecting Final Reconciliation between Religion and Science".1

With this change at the farm came the publishing of the "Harbinger", organ of Brook Farm Phalanx. Ripley was editor, and most of the material was contributed by himself and by Dwight, Dana, and Channing. Osborne Macdaniel, a Southerner and new resident at the community, contributed occasionally.

The year 1844 was the only year in which there was a favorable balance on the financial records of Brook Farm. After 1844 the venture failed gradually. A large building had been erected as the phalanstery2 on seven thousand dollars of borrowed money. On March 3, 1846 this phalanstery caught fire; firemen from Roxbury, Dedham, Boston and Cambridge were an hour and one half in arriving, and the building was a total loss. Shortly after this, Horace Greeley, who owned one hundred dollars worth of stock, let his share go. With the return of prosperity in general society, phalanxes in other parts of the country began to fail. In 1846 the crop at West Roxbury was poor, and the members began to find the work exhausting. Then as the final blow, Albert Brisbane suddenly announced that he had lost his interest in Fourierism.

1 "Dial"-bound issues, volume two, third issue
2 Fourier terminology
On March 4, 1847, consequently, Ripley was authorized to let the farm for a year at three hundred and fifty dollars, and the so-called Keith Lot at one hundred dollars more. Shortly afterwards the farm was sold at public auction.

Whatever the final estimate of Brook Farm may be, it must be said that none of its members ever lapsed into the commonplace. The writing which they did will be taken up in the last chapter, but it may be said here that Bradford and Pratt returned to Concord; Charles Newcomb, Mrs. Ripley and Sarah Stearns became Catholics; Dwight became a music critic and an editor; Dana was connected with the "New York Tribune" until he quarreled with Greeley, and he later became owner of the "New York Sun"; Channing took up the fight for abolition. The debts of the farm were many, and Ripley sold his library to William Ellory Channing to cover some of them. He made an attempt to take the "Harbinger" to New York and continue its publication there, but this proved impossible, and he became literary editor on the "Tribune" (in the position once held by Margaret Fuller).
Hopedale, Massachusetts and Conventions of Associationists

The one community still to be dealt with is Hopedale at Mendon, Massachusetts. This was a religious group founded by Rev. Adin Ballou and a group of Restorationists. While none of the members of the Hopedale community have figured in the history of American letters, the relation of Hopedale to other associations of the time gives a general interplay of ideas, the relations of communities, the spirit of conventions, and the common interest and activities.

Adin Ballou had been pastor of the First Church and Parish at Mendon for eight years previous to 1839, the year in which he first conceived the idea of establishing a community, and told his associates about it. In 1840 he began publishing a semi-monthly paper which he called "The Practical Christian". The first issue appeared on April first with the motto:

"Devoted to truth and righteousness"

Ballou was editor and publishing agent. The contributor were four ministers by the names of Lamson, Stacy, Whitney, and Fish.

1 A secession from the Universalist denomination in the interest of a more vigorous stand on issues of temperance, abolition and peace.
Ballou published in this first issue a "Standard of Practical Christianity", the salient points of which were—

"No earthly object is our chief good
"We are not cruel even to beasts of the earth
"We do not make a trade of preaching the gospel
"We can not live in idleness or be carelessly extravagant
"We do not indulge to excess in eating, drink, sleep recreation, labor, study, joy or sorrow
"We can not swear an oath
"We will not imbrute our children by neglecting their education". 1

In September, 1840 a study of Shaker and Moravian communities was made with the object in view of founding a community based on the standards of practical Christianity—a community of not more than one hundred persons, and perhaps only fifty, depending upon the facilities of the place chosen.

In Ballou's words:

"The Hopedale community was a systematic attempt
to establish an order of Human Society based on the sublime ideas of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as taught and illustrated in the Gospel of Jesus Christ"

1 Ballou, Adin, "Hopedale Community", Lowell, Massachusetts, Thompson and Hill, 1897, pages four and five
Subsequent issues of the "Practical Christian" printed the constitution of Fraternal community number one (Hopedale), which took the form of a joint stock association. A farm was purchased on Mill River in west Milford adjacent to the Mendon line, and on April 1, 1842, twenty-eight persons moved out there and all took up residence in one house owing to their small number (family groups were preserved).

The beginning of this community did not pass unnoticed. Ballou was very much flattered by William Lloyd Garrison's publishing unsolicited in the "Liberator" the constitution of Hopedale. William Ellory Channing addressed a letter to Ballou. In another letter to Elizabeth Peabody, from Newport, Rhode Island, August, 1841, Channing says:

"I have seen this last week a member of the Mendon Community. I look to THAT with a good deal of hope. I never hoped so strongly and so patiently." 

The letter to Ballou was filled alike with good wishes and cautions.

The "Practical Christian" now became the property of the community. Ballou was president of the association as well as editor of the paper. Other officers were

Secretary and auditor
Intendent of Finance and Exchange
Intendent of Agriculture and animals

1 Periodical devoted to cause of abolition, published in Boston
2 Appears in his "Memoirs", edited by William Henry Channing, pages one hundred and nineteen to one hundred and twenty-two volumes three
Intendent of Manufactures and Mechanic Industries
Intendent of Health and Domestic Economy
Intendent of Education, Arts, Sciences
Intendent of Religion, Morals, Missions

Rev. Mr. Whitney was in charge of Education, Arts, and Sciences and Rev. Mr. Fish of Religion, Morals, and Missions. Thereafter these two men alternated their positions.

The conduct of the community went on smoothly as the number of persons was small, but Ballou complains:

"Social, secular, and financial matters engrossed so much of our attention that our higher faculties were partially starved".  

At one meeting of the board a resolution was passed to read on Saturday evenings "such public papers and periodicals as may be taken by the community." On April 13, 1842 another resolution was passed to investigate the new sciences of phrenology and magnetism". The Community expressed itself in favor of the Non-Resistance Society of Boston.

Progress of other communities was watched with interest: the Come-outers, a sort of family community near Providence, Rhode Island which had left the church because of its "complicity with slavery"; the Northampton community under the leadership of George Benson; the several phalansterian associations;

1 Ballou, Adin, "Hopedale Community" page eighty-nine
2 Ibid, page eighty-one
3 Ballou, Adin, "Hopedale Community" page seventy-eight
4 Ibid, page twenty-five
notably the North American Phalanx in New Jersey "led by Bris-
bane who was following Fourier, seconded by the writing of such
men as Horace Greeley, Parke Godwin, Rev. William Henry Channing

Ballou, moreover, spoke of a group of "what are known as
transcendentalists in and about Boston" and their establishment
at West Roxbury. A correspondence sprang up between Ripley and
Ballou, and the Hopedale Community seriously considered coaliti-
on, but the Ripley group would not consider the standards of
practical christianity.

"So", says Ballou, "we parted amicably, but uncompromis-
ingly. They abounded in educational resources, in
literary accomplishments and in aesthetic tastes: and
also had in cheering prospect a gratifying amount of
capital. In these respects we were poor." 2

Brook Farm was one year ahead of Hopedale in getting started, but
Ballou felt some pride in pointing out that it was ten years a-
head in failing.

Hopedale was always interested in the abolition of slavery.
On April 7, 1842 Frederick Douglass, fugitive slave came to Men-
don and the community journal said a fast was held:

"Annual fast. Frederick Douglass, the fugitive slave,
is with us. O what a fast! A fast indeed." 3

1 Ballou, Adin, "History of Hopedale Community",
link, page twenty-five
2 Ballou, Adin, "Hopedale Community", page twenty-six
3 Ballou, Adin, "Hopedale Community", page seventy-seven
Douglass lectured in Milford Academy on April nineteenth, and news of his success reached Hopedale. When he spoke in Milford town hall, eleven persons from Hopedale went up to hear him.

Conventions among the Associationists of this period were frequent. Some of the most interesting accounts of such meetings are to be found in the records of the Hopedale group. Of all the conventions, the most famous was the Chardon Street Property Convention held June 8, 1843 in the Chardon Street Chapel, Boston. Odell Shepard gives Alcott credit for much of the organization of this call to friends of reform and it is certain that Alcott was one of the lions of the occasion. Ballou, in his history of Hopedale, fails to mention Alcott, and gives credit to one John A. Collins of the Anti-Slavery Society. It is noteworthy that Ballou does not mention Alcott at all in the history of his community, since it is certain that Alcott visited Hopedale. Lane, in a letter to Oldham said:

"The Northampton community is one of industry; the one at Hopedale aims at practical theology; this at Roxbury is one of taste." 2

Perhaps Collins loomed largest for Ballou at Chardon Street because he attempted to interest Ballou in a community which he planned to found at Skaneateles in Central New York. He told Ballou "he would so order the externals of society as to make

1 Ballou, Adin, "Hopedale Community"
2 Sears, Clara, "Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands", 1924 page thirty-one
men happy\(^1\), but Ballou could pin him down to nothing else. Collins went ahead alone to Skaneatales and established a community which failed after a few years. It is interesting that an article in "The Phalanx", tells of a social reform convention in Boston in June, 1844 at which Collins denounced church and religion. Whether Ballou chose to omit mention of Collins's religious views in telling the story, or whether Collins knowing of the practical Christianity, was carefully indefinite in 1843 is material for interesting speculation.

By far the most interesting account of Chardon Street is Emerson's (reported in the "Dial"):

"The singularity and latitude of the summons drew together from all parts of New England, and also from the Middle States, men of every shade of opinion, from the straitest orthodoxy to the wildest heresy, and many persons whose church was a church of one member only. A great variety of dialects, of costume was noticed; a great deal of confusion, eccentricity, and freak appeared, as well as of zeal and enthusiasm. If the assembly was disorderly, it was picturesque. Madmen, madwomen, men with beards, Dunkers, Muggletonians, Come-outers, Groaners, Agrarians, seventh day Baptists, Quakers, Abolitionists, and Philosophers—all came successfully to the top and seized their moment, if not their HOUR, wherein to chide

\(^1\) Ballou, Adin, "Hopedale Community", page one hundred and eighteen
or pray, or preach or protest. The faces were a
study—whilst many of the most intellectual and
cultivated persons attended its councils. Dr.
Channing, Edward Taylor, Bronson Alcott, Mr. Har-
rison, Mr. May, Theodore Parker, H.C. Wright, Dr. Osgood
William Adams, Edward Palmer, Jones Very, Maria Chap-
man."1

Other conventions followed Chardon Street. There was one
in Worcester in the summer of 1842, called by George Benson; at
which no one from Brook Farm was present. And a week later
there was a call to Friends of Social Reform in New England by
George Benson, H.C. Wright (Alcott's English friend), and others,
at which there was talk of Fourier and of the launching of the
"Phalanx" (accomplished in October, 1843).

On April 4, 1844 in Clinton Hall, New York City, there was
a convention of Friends of Association in the United States, at
which officers were Ripley, Brisbane, Greeley, Godwin, Dana,
John Allen (of Brook Farm), Lewis Ryckmann, and Channing.

In June, 1844 the Social Reform Convention (mentioned above)
met in Boston and a Mrs. Rose of Poland spoke on Russian tyranny
to Poland. And finally there was a Saturday and Sunday conven-
tion in August, 1844 at which Ryckmann defended Fourier, and
Garrison and Ballou agreed that no community could exist without
being based on practical Christianity.

1 "Dial"—bound issues, volume three, fourth issue
"Chardon Street Property and Bible Convention", Ralph
"Waldo Emerson
In 1852 when most of the communities had broken up, a meeting was held to discuss Raritan Bay Union in New York, in which William Henry Channing was interested and of which Clement O. Read was the originator. The venture was short-lived.

By 1852 Hopedale was beginning to break up. Robert Owen had visited there in 1845 and created a rather poor impression. In 1846 typhoid had struck. Brother Lamson had left to join the Shakers at Pittsfield (and later to return to general society and a farm in West Boylston), and others began to drift away gradually.

Ballou records having received a letter from M. Etienne Cabot of the French community, Icaria, in Illinois—a letter written in French, which Edmund Soward, "one of our scholarly members," as Ballou put it, translated. This is the same community whose newspaper was in the reading rooms at the North American Phalanx. Cabot's community, however, broke up in 1856 over differences of opinion among the members.

Hopedale became Hopedale parish and developed as such after Ballou's resignation in 1857 as head of the communal organization. Ballou was convinced (as those at Fruitlands had been) that his group had been in advance of its day.

The interest of Hopedalers in a variety of reforms was the usual thing among associationists as a glance at the pages of the "Phalanx" will show. Besides articles on Fourier and

1 Ballou, Adin, "Hopedale Community", page two hundred and fourteen
2 "Phalanx"—bound issues, volumes one and two, 1843-1845
translations from his works, there were discussions of overproduction and the ten-hour system; a story of pity for the mill girls of Lowell, Massachusetts; poems by one John Critchley Prince, a poor weaver; Thomas Hood's "Lay of Labor" and "Bridge of Sighs"; Longfellow's "Springfield Arsenal"; commendation for the "North American Review" for a sharp criticism of "selfishness in the present system of trade"; a story by George and John Evans on slavery; an article by Harriet Martineau on Mesmerism; advertisement of "Mysteries of Paris" by Eugene Sue because it pictured evils of society; and announcements of Brisbane's lectures in Auburn, Syracuse, Utica, and Schenectady. A varied list all in all, the variety increasing as enthusiasm for communities began to peter out.
VI

Significance of the Communities

It is impossible in concluding the story of these communities, to make any single generalization as to their influence. It should be noted that none of the communities were established for the purpose of promoting literary activity. They were intended to be organs of social regeneration, and American literature enters the story, because in this period in England and America both, men of letters were interested in reform. The close combination of religious, social, and literary interests of men and women of the period is best illustrated perhaps by the New England group; witness there the connection between Unitarianism and Transcendentalism.

The communities do have a significance, and this significance may be divided into these four points:

(1) Community experiments did color American journalism of the early nineteenth century.

(2) Communities are one expression of the spirit of the period which found other ways of expression in the literature.

(3) Community experiences do teach a lesson about the limitations of manual-mental labor combinations, especially as regards literary productivity.

(4) This reform flare and enthusiasm for communal living has had a small direct influence in American literature.
Let us take up these points in order.

I

It is easy to see how theories of social reform through communal life made themselves felt in the journalism of the 1840's. In the first place they attracted the attention of the daily and weekly papers as news items. This is doubly true of the "New York Tribune" and of the "New York Sun", since the editors of these papers, Horace Greeley and Parke Godwin, were Fourier followers. Also, it must be remembered that in 1840 newspapers were not objective reports of events but were vehicles of editorial opinion.

Secondly these communities published their own periodicals, which were devoted to propaganda of their particular social theories. The "Practical Christian", in spite of its modest background in the Hopedale Community, circulated throughout New England and New York. "The Phalanx" operated on a grander scale from New York City and was distinguished, if not for the Fourier-istic concept behind it, at least for the calibre of the contributions to its pages by leading thinkers of the day.

Most notable of all are the contributions by members of the communities (and by persons interested in the communities although not members) to the secular periodicals of the day. In this regard, "The Dial" comes to mind first. Elizabeth Peabody contributed to its pages: "Christ's Idea of a Society" and "Plan of the West Roxbury Community". Emerson wrote "Lectures on the Times" and "Fourier and the Socialists", as well as "The Chardon
Street Property and Bible Convention. William Henry Channing wrote "Night and Day", giving his concept of future man for the "Dial".

Orastes Brownson wrote in July 1841 for the "Boston Quarterly Review" (Brownson was the editor) an article called "Social Evils and Their Remedy" in Brownson's Quarterly Review in July 1844 he printed his own article, "Come-outerism: or the Radical Tendency of the Day". In November, 1842 he spoke in the "Democratic Review"1 in favor of Brook Farm. Journalism of the forties, then, did reflect the interest in communities as these examples show.

II

The communities are part of, or an expression of, the spirit of the age which finds its way into American literature. Ralph Waldo Emerson comes to mind immediately here. Ripley's group was, in a way, attempting to find for a number of people together what Emerson found for himself. James Russell Lowell in his essay on Emerson2 as a lecturer expresses this with a line from a sonnet by Wordsworth. Of Emerson's lecturing he says:

"Perhaps some of us hear more than mere words and are moved by something deeper than thoughts? If it be so we are quite right, for it is thirty years and more of "plain living and high thinking."3

1 In 1842 Brownson was editor of the "Democratic Review".
2 "Emerson the Lecturer" by James Russell published in "Atlantic Monthly" in 1861.
Emerson speaks of going to his "sylvan home" and lauds nature as sanitary and a symbol of the Oversoul:

"One harvest from the field
Homeward brought the oxen strong;
A second crop thine acres yield,
Which I gather in a song."

Ripley similarly went out to Roxbury for
"a more simple and wholesome life than can
be led amid the pressure of our competitive
institutions."

Thoreau would certainly never have joined a community; for he "suspected any enterprise in which two were engaged together", but at Walden he sought for himself simplicity and a healthful combination of the work of his hands and the work of his mind."

In a different way, John Greenleaf Whittier, in his fight for abolition, expressed the spirit of reform. Lowell said of him in the "Fable for Critics":

"Our Quaker leads off metaphorical
defights

For reform and whatever they call human

rights."

1 Emerson, Ralph Waldo "Good-bye", line nineteen
2 Emerson, Ralph Waldo "Apology", lines seventeen to twenty
3 Calverton, V.F., "Liberation of American Literature", New York, 1932, page two hundred and sixty-eight
4 Cooke, G.W., "John S. Dwight", 1898, page fifty-one
5 Lowell, James Russell, "Fable for Critics", line
Lowell himself wrote forcefully for abolition, although he began his writings a little later with the Cambridge group, and in 1835 had a different perspective on

"...what was somewhat vaguely called the 'Transcendental Movement' of thirty years ago."¹

when

"Every possible form of intellectual and physical dyspepsia brought forth its gospel"¹

and

Communities were established where everything was to be common but common sense."¹

The American novel of the early nineteenth century reflects the new social criticism. For example, Cooper is a critic of manners and society in "The Crater". The Utopian interest comes in Herman Melville's stories of the South Sea Islands, and into William Starbuck Mayo's "Kaloolah" a story of projected rehabilitation of New York City. Sylvester Judd, in part three of "Margaret", accomplishes the reorganization of the community (here meaning the town) in which Margaret lives.

Men like George Ripley, Bronson Alcott, and John Dwight are then the minor lights, and their communities are a more extreme expression of a large spirit, important in American literature. The same is true of the Channing's with their interest in phalanxes, Hopedale, and the smaller communities.

¹ Lowell, James Russell "Thoreau", "North American Review", 1865
III

Although these communities did not aim at literary activity, writers lived in the groups, and it is interesting to note what their experience seems to teach about the possibilities of literary productivity under such conditions. The experiences of Hawthorne and Dwight have already been cited. Along the same line, Charles Lane begins a letter to Oldham:

"The morning being rainy I have taken advantage of the suspension of out-door labours to sit down and have a little chat with you."¹

Ballou found so much to be done at Hopedale that the "higher faculties were partially starved."¹

Eventually the reading-rooms at the North American Phalanx boasted only one periodical. These experiences seem to point to the impracticability of this community scheme for writers. The exceptional farmer might write in his free time. But what happens to writing (and incidentally to the farm) when, like Hawthorne, the poet has to be taught to recognize a pitchfork, or to milk a cow?

Mr. Coverdale, at Blithedale,² says of the groups discussion on their competing with the market gardeners around Boston:

¹ Sears, Clara "Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands", 1924 page twenty-three
² Hawthorne, Nathaniel, "Blithedale Romance", 1883 page three hundred and forty-three
"It struck me as rather odd, that one of the first questions raised, after our separation from the greedy, struggling, self-seeking world, should relate to the possibility of getting the advantage over the outside barbarians in their own field of labor."¹

Farming is a life work and a very different thing than making a living for one person, as Thoreau did at Walden. Even after being relieved of outside work at Brook Farm, Hawthorne writes:

"...I doubt whether I shall succeed in writing another volume of "Grandfather's Library" while I remain here. I have not the sense of perfect seclusion which has always been essential to my power of producing anything. It is true nobody intrudes into my room: but still I cannot be quiet. Nothing here is settled; everything is but beginning to arrange itself and though I would seem to have little to do with aught besides my own thoughts, still I cannot but partake of the ferment around me-------It will be good to have a longer interval between my labor of the body and that of the mind."²

III

As to the small direct reflection of the communities in American literature, it is (as would be expected) all in the writings of the new Englanders. Hopedale (like the Shaker

¹ Blithdale is the community in Hawthorne's "Blithdale Romance" 1883
² Hawthorne, "American Notebooks" 1883, page 241
groups) leaves a volume of hymns and short pieces written mostly by Adin Ballou and by Sister Abby Price, who, in Ballou's words, "wielded a facile pen and who was a sort of poet-laureate to the community for several years". 1

After the dissolution of Brook Farm, Ripley and Dana were in New York, and collaborated on the editing of "American Cyclopedia". This was not the first instance of cooperation of this sort among the Brook Farmers. While at West Roxbury Ripley had undertaken to prepare "Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature" in fourteen volumes (appeared between 1838-42). George Bradford had helped with a translation of Fenelon, and Dwight had translated poems from Goethe and Schiller.

Orestes Brownson, although not a member of a community, may be mentioned here for his book, "The Spirit Rapper". Mesmerism and such spiritualistic interests were a kind of sidelight in the period. Brownson's book is an autobiography telling of contemporary matters and mentioning by name Emerson, Alcott, Garrison, Theodore Parker, Charles Newcomb, and Fourier.

F.B. Sanborn records that Minot Pratt, after his return to Concord, contributed to the "Commonwealth" (edited by Sanborn between 1863-5). John Dwight contributed to periodicals regularly. James Russell Lowell and Robert Carter when they undertook the "Pioneer" asked his help. In 1870 he contributed an article

1 Ballou, Adin, "Hopedale Community", page one hundred and twenty three
on music to the "Atlantic Monthly" in which he says:

"It is a fact of some significance that the interest felt here in Beethoven began at the same moment with the interest in Emerson and notably in the same minds who found such quickening in his free and bracing utterance. It was to a great extent the great souls drawn to Transcendentalism (as it was nicknamed) to escape spiritual starvation who were most drawn to the great deep music which we began to hear at this time."

George Curtis had been one of the students at the Brook Farm boarding school. During his residence there he lost his former enthusiasm for the scheme. In a letter to his father he says:

"--No wise man is long a reformer, for Wisdom sees plainly that growth is steady, sure, and neither condemns nor rejects what has been. Reform is organized distrust.--------and so deputes some Fourier or Robert Owen to improve the bungling work of a creator.".

When Curtis left Brook Farm he took up writing actively. In 1850 after a trip abroad he wrote "Nile Notes of Howadje" (traveler), which prompted Hawthorne to say in the preface to the "Elitedale Romance":

1 Cooke, G.W., "John S. Dwight", 1898, pages sixty-four and sixty-five

2 E. Cary, "George Curtis", 1894, pages twenty-five and twenty-six
"Even the brilliant Howadji might find as rich a theme in his youthful reminiscences of Brook Farm, and a more novel one, -- close at hand as it lies, -- than those which he has since made so distant a pilgrimage to seek, in Syria, and along the current of the Nile."  

Curtis continued, however, with "Howadji in Syria" "Potiphar Papers" (satires on New York society in the Thackeray style), "Lotus Eating", "Prue and I" (sketches with a thread of story), and "Trumps", a novel. In "Easy Chair Essays" begun in 1853 he did speak of his remembrances of Brook Farm, and one famous statement of his is this:

"--But there were never such witty potato patches and such sparkling corn-fields before or since."  

Louisa May Alcott's short story "Transcendental Wild Oats" (included in "Silver Pitchers") is a story of Fruitlands which gives the real characters fictitious names. Lane is Timen Lion; Alcott, able Lamb; Mrs. Alcott, Sister Hope. Louisa's making Lane the lion is interesting, as is her sub-title to the story, "a chapter from an Unwritten Romance".

Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance" is the most illustrious mark made in American literature by the communities. Blithedale is obviously a setting inspired by his remembrance of West Rox-

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1 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, Blithedale Romance", 1883, preface, page three hundred and twenty-three
2 E. Cary, "George Curtis", 1894, page twenty-eight
Coverdale, the teller of the story, arrives at his Arcadia in a snowstorm as Hawthorne arrived at Brook Farm, and catches cold, as Hawthorne did. The details of the story are of little interest here, but the question of Zenobia, the strong attractive woman—writer is interesting.

Hawthorne denied that she was Margaret Fuller, but most people have felt, nevertheless, that Miss Fuller inspired her. Of the end of Blithedale, Hawthorne makes this interesting remark:

"The experiment proved long ago a failure; first lapsing into Fourierism, and dying, as it well deserved, for this infidelity to its own higher spirit."¹

This, then, is the extent of the influence of these communities. Parke Godwin, in Chapter one of his book on Fourier, quotes from Reynaud:

"Thinkers who are inspired with the hope or knowledge of a better social state,--Utopians in the best acceptance of the word, have a right to the respect and attention of men. Some of them are fools; but some are revealers of Truth; and all are useful, because Time, the Refiner, will separate the gold from the dross."

V.F. Calverton says of these communities:

"It is important to observe what little success social movements of that day were able to secure.

¹ Godwin, Parke, "A Popular View of the Doctrines of Charles Fourier, 1844, page four
Their absence of success was certainly not due to their lack of numerousness. It was the individualistic tendency of the day and the fallacy in their social logic that caused their downfall."¹

¹ Calverton, V.F., "Liberation of American Literature" pages two hundred and sixty-seven and eight (footnote)
Conclusions

The significance in American literature of communities established between 1830 and 1850 (notably the Fourier phalanxes, Brook Farm, and Fruitlands) is this:

(1) These community experiments did color the American journalism of this period. Leading periodicals recorded the news of their progress and discussed the social theories they exemplified. Some of the community published their own periodicals.

(2) The communities are one expression of the spirit of reform which is reflected otherwise in the literature of the period.

(3) The experiences of these communal ventures do seem to point out the impracticability of manual-mental labor communities for writers.

(4) The reform flare and the enthusiasm for communal living has had a small direct influence on American literature. The most notable instances of this are Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance" (setting inspired by Brook Farm); George Curtis's "Easy Chair Essays" (some are reminiscences of Brook Farm); Orson Welles Brownson's autobiographical "The Spirit Rapper" (direct references to community members); and Louisa May Alcott's "Transcendental Wild Oats" (story of Fruitlands)
Abstract

The period between 1830 and 1850 saw the establishment in America of countless communities—all expressions of theories of the values of the simple life, of the brotherhood of man, and of cooperation. Sixty or seventy of these groups existed in the eastern part of the country and in the near middle west. Most of these have had no influence of the character of American literature. A few, however, were either sponsored by prominent nineteenth century men of letters, or engaged the attention of the literary figures of the period, nearly all of whom were interested in social reform. These few communities are taken up in this thesis; they are the Fourier phalanxes, Brook Farm, Fruitlands, Hopedale, Massachusetts, Northampton, Massachusetts.

The background of the communities lies in the influx into this country of the ideas of the new German philosophy, and of the social theories of French writer like St. Simon, Abbe de Lammenais, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Francois Charles Fourier. Out of this social thinking that resulted from this reading came the ideas of man's natural goodness and hence perfect ability, and numerous experiments in simplifying society in order to get back to the healing influence of nature. The social unrest in America after the financial Panic of 1837 made such thinking forceful for many.

Fourier phalanxes were among the first of the communities established in America. These "phalanxes", or social units,
appeared about 1840 and were based on the carefully worked-out theory of Charles Fourier, a pseudo-scientific French philosopher. Fourier's ideas were brought to this country by Albert Brisbane, a native of New York, who wrote continuously in the "New York Sun" about Fourier's ideas that more land should be cultivated, and that society should be broken in small social units for this purpose. These ideas caught popular fancy. A Fourier convention was held, and in the next five or six years forty or fifty phalanxes came into being. Among the prominent Americans who became interested in the theory were Ralph Waldo Emerson (who rejected it almost immediately), Horace Greeley, Charles A. Dana, Orestes Brownson, William Henry Channing, John Dwight, Henry James the elder, and Parke Godwin. Gradually many independently-established communities became phalanxes; the most outstanding of these is Brook Farm.

Brook Farm was established in West Roxbury in 1840, by George Ripley, a Boston Unitarian minister. The idea for the community grew out of the discussions of the Boston Transcendental Club. Its purpose was to attempt to combine the intellectual and manual labor of a group in a quiet atmosphere away from the confusion of more complex society. All members of the group were to do some of the work of running the farm as well as teach classes in a boarding school which was established. Long walks, discussions, writing, picnics, and trips to Boston filled the leisure time. Nathaniel Hawthorne went out to Brook Farm along with Mr. and Mrs. George Ripley, George Bradford, Charles A.
Dana, and John Dwight. George Curtis, the essayist, became a boarder. Margaret Fuller, William Henry Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Orestes Brownson, Christopher Cranch, and Elizabeth Peabody were frequent visitors. In 1844 Brook Farm became a Fourier phalanx, and began to publish a periodical, "The Harbinger". (There was already a Fourieristic journal, "The Phalanx", being published in New York at this time).

Shortly after the establishment of Brook Farm, Amos Bronson Alcott, and Charles Lane, whom he had met in England, began at Harvard, Massachusetts still another community which they called Fruitlands. Fruitlands was unique in many ways. Members of the group neither ate nor used animal products. They tried to enable labor and to spend their leisure in high thinking.

The community was always small, and Alcott remains its one outstanding member.

Other communities of the period were those at Hopedale, Massachusetts and at Northampton, Massachusetts. Hopedale was a religious community founded by Rev. Adin Ballou and the Restorationists (a secession from the Universalist denomination); it published its own paper "The Practical Christian" and attracted the favorable interest of William Ellory Channing. Bronson Alcott's tour of conversations took him to Hopedale and also to Northampton. The latter was an industrial group (sewing silk was manufactured there) which later became a phalanx.

All these communities took an interest in one another. Conventions among the associationists were very frequent. The
Chardon Street convention at Boston in 1843 is very famous. Emerson and Jones Very were there, and Emerson wrote a now famous account of it in the "Dial", (Boston Transcendental journal of the time). Similarly William Henry Channing gave a well-known speech on social reform at the Clinton Hall meeting in New York in 1844.

This great enthusiasm for communal living has a significance in American literature: first, for the small direct influence on the subsequent work of men like George Curtis, Nathaniel Hawthorne, George Ripley, and John Dwight; second for the color the movement gave to the American journalism of the period; third, for the type of expression it gave to a general widespread interest in reform that influences all the writing of the time.
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