

Review Essay

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The Inspirationists, 1714-1932.

Edited by Peter Hoehnle. London: Pickering & Chatto Publishers Limited, 2015. 3 Vols. 1,072 pp. £275.00.

In the fall of 1959 the graduate students in the German program at the University of Iowa visited the Amana Colonies, about twenty miles west of Iowa City. Even though this was the Community of True Inspiration, *Gemeinde der Wahren Inspiration*, our primary goal was to eat in one of the restaurants. As luck would have it, we were also able to drink beer with a local retired major league baseball player, Bill Zuber. William Henry Zuber, born in 1913 in Middle Amana, became a professional in 1932, an important year for the Colonies, as we will see. Zuber pitched for eleven years in the American League, including stints with Cleveland, Washington, New York, and Boston. When he retired he returned to Homestead, the seventh Amana Colony, and in 1949 opened a restaurant in the old hotel. We spoke German with him, and were amused at the Amana dialect he spoke. Our program of study in the German Department was typical for the time. We adhered strictly to *Hochdeutsch*, and Amana German was merely a dialect. Our course work was devoted to German literature, concentrating for the most part on the eighteenth through the early years of the twentieth century, with only a little attention paid to earlier periods. “Linguistic” study was classical Germanic-German philology, with large doses of courses and seminars on Gothic, Old High German, Middle High German, and the History of the Language, as spoken in the German world of Europe. There was no real interest in dialectology, and while the department did not discourage—it did not encourage—research on the many German speakers in the immediate vicinity, including those in

Amana,¹ and the Old Order Amish of Kalona, also just a few miles south of the University.

Even so, I found myself returning repeatedly to Amana, and soon became personal friends with many locals, in the beginning in the restaurants but also in the budding Amana Heritage Society. Before long I attended a German *Versammlung* in the *Saal*, sang from the *Psalter-Spiel*, and participated in reading aloud from the *Bezeugungen*



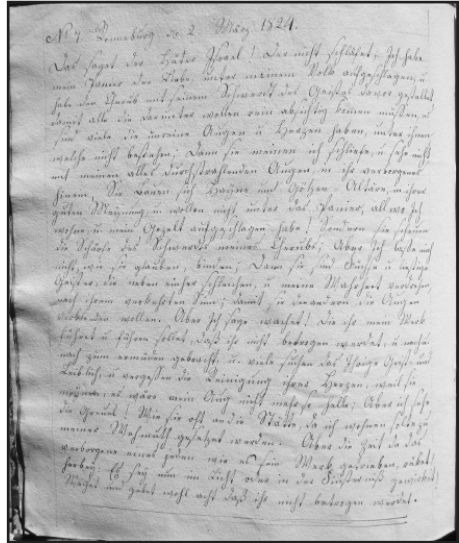
Der Saal, where regular *Versammlungen* were held. Courtesy of the Amana Heritage Society.

der Werkzeuge.² In time I published a few articles on their folk art (1977) and on the earliest testimonies (1991), from the early eighteenth century. In recent years I have once again become a regular in the Colonies, using Amana as home base for conducting fieldwork on the singing repertoire of the Amish in Kalona.

I offer this personal note to show that I have a long term interest in and commitment to the Community of True Inspiration, and felt that I knew a lot, but having just read this three-volume, 1072-page document collection, I realize how little I actually know. The editor, Peter Hoehnle, the administrator of the Amana Church Society, a life-long resident of the Colonies, with a doctoral dissertation on Communal Studies from the History Department of Iowa State University—Agricultural and Rural History division—has placed before us a huge, I really should say massive, selection of items that documents the individuals, their inspired testimonies, personal lives as found in their diaries, as well as the historical contexts surrounding their long progression from a small Pietist prayer meeting on November 16, 1714, in Himbach in the Wetterau, to the creation of an incorporated stock holding company on June 1, 1932, in Iowa. All of the original documents by the elders of the Community, the *Bruderrath*, are in German, many in the old script. This collection assembles a thousand pages of what has been translated into English. There have been many who transcribed and translated the documents, and there is something very gratifying to read names of people I know and have known through five and a half decades, who have contributed to these three volumes. It does, however, represent only a very small portion of the holdings of the three societies that make up Amana today: Church, Heritage, and Amana Society, Inc. Some of these holdings even reach back to

a time prior to the beginning of the *Gemeinde*, back into the earliest years of Pietism, and some to the weeks and days immediately preceding the prayer meeting in the Wetterau. It is safe to say that the materials found in Amana are some of the oldest in any American archive, covering more than three centuries, even some from the late seventeenth century.

All three volumes have a similar format, with each individual item preceded by the editor's introduction, and in most cases contextualizing comments by the original author, or in some cases, the scribe who recorded the orally delivered *Zeugnis*. There were two kinds of inspirations: the *Einsprache* was received and recorded by a person referred to as the *Werkzeug* while the *Aussprache* was received by the *Werkzeug* but recorded by a scribe who accompanied him or her. Since the last *Werkzeug* by the name of Barbara Landmann was effectively illiterate, virtually all of her testimonies were *Aussprachen*. Even



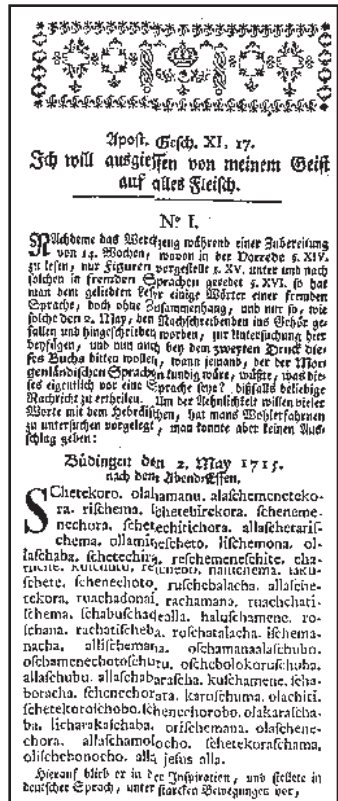
Zeugnis, an original *Einsprache*. Courtesy of the Amana Church Society.

her autobiography was dictated to and recorded by a scribe (I:195). Each volume also includes extensive notes by the editor, and concludes with the list of sources from which the items are drawn. The seven-page index for all three volumes is found at the end of Volume III. There are no photos, musical notes, charts, maps or any other graphics, although several are mentioned by the author of the document or by the editor.³ A goodly selection of *Zeugnisse* is found in each volume, and often includes comments by the scribe concerning the actual bodily behavior of the *Werkzeug*, both kinetic and proxemic. The materials in each volume are presented in more or less chronological order. Included in the editor's comments are the names of the many transcribers and translators, with the clarification that he and the primary translator, Janet W. Zuber, have "smoothed out" the translations, and have paid considerable attention to consistency in formatting and orthographic conventions, e.g., capitalizing any reference to the Holy Trinity, correcting the spelling of personal and place names, etc. An intriguing comment is found on page xxii of the general introduction in Volume I, where Peter Hoehnle says he has found "sources previously unknown until discovered by the editor during

two decades of research.” These are thus sources that now appear in English before perhaps being published in German. While there are commonalities in all three volumes, each is different, and we now need to look at each one separately.

Volume I includes an eleven-page “General Introduction,” a surprisingly brief five-page bibliography, and a two-page chronology. The Introduction traces the origins of the community back to the Protestant revolt of the Camisards in the late seventeenth century, in the Cevennes Mountains of France, but quickly relates it to German Pietism centered in the German university city of Halle, home to one of its leading lights, August Hermann Francke (1663-1727).⁴ It is interesting to note that in our graduate German literature courses at the University of Iowa, we did read works by Franke as well as by Gerhard Tersteegen, both excellent examples of Pietism, but their relationship to nearby Amana was never mentioned, and perhaps not known. This is even more surprising since the chair of the department had completed his doctorate in Halle and had done some recordings of the Amana dialect in 1934.

Public worship in Halle and elsewhere, where some professed to being “inspired,” speaking God’s own words out loud, soon attracted converts, and so it is not surprising that Eberhard Ludwig Gruber (1665-1728), a Lutheran minister, came under the influence of Pietism. His doubts about the “authenticity of their revelations,” soon reversed and made him an “ardent apologist and supporter.” The prayer meeting that took place in his home in the fall of 1714 was attended by his friend, Johann Friedrich Rock (1678-1749), and marks the birth of what came to be known as the Community of True Inspiration. Each volume reveals an editorial focus, and Volume I is clearly devoted to “Inspired Testimonies,” delivered by both male and female *Werkzeuge*. On page 16 we find reference to an important testimony by Johann Carl Gleim in Büdingen, on May 2, 1715. “After a two-week preparatory period, the *Werkzeug* was moved



Das Geschrey zur Mitternacht, zum zweytenmahl nach dem ersten Exemplar in Quart-Format abgedruckt. Im Jahr 1758. Courtesy of the Amana Heritage Society.

to speak out in inspiration and began this testimony in a foreign language. We are including some of these foreign words as they sounded to this writer. [Hereafter follow eighteen lines of what is referred to as an Eastern language, somewhat resembling the Hebrew.] After this, Br Gleim remained in the inspired state and presented the following in the German language as God's unconstrained pronouncement concerning spiritual gifts or talents—using a parable about a potter.” It is the only reference to glossolalia, speaking in tongues, found in the three volumes under discussion.⁵ In line fifteen of the original, we read: “Hierauf blieb er in der Inspiration, und stellte in deutscher Sprach, unter starcken Bewegungen vor GOTTES FREYE MITTHEILUNG DER GEISTESGABEN: unter dem Bild eines Toepffers.” It can be assumed that the author and finally the Inspirationists quickly understood that they could reach the members emotionally through glossolalia. In order to present specific testimonies for their spiritual and secular guidance, however, they had to return to the language which the members understood, German.

In the section of Volume I, listed as “Johann Carl Gleim et al.,” there are thirty-nine testimonies delivered between 1714-49, by five men and three women, including Johann Adam Gruber, the son of Eberhard Ludwig Gruber. Also included here are forty-nine inspirations by Johann Friedrich Rock, a small selection of more than 900 by Rock in the Amana archives. One was delivered on September 24, 1716, in tandem with fellow *Werkzeug* Johann Adam Gruber and Johann Carl Gleim (I:80-81).⁶ Following these testimonies there is a compelling account of Rock *in inspiration*: “I looked back and saw that he [Rock] was issuing short, intense sounds by blowing through his mouth, as well as turning his head rapidly back and forth, like the movement of a pocket watch's balance wheel. His eyes were closed and both of his hands (especially the right hand which had been resting on his knee) were moved powerfully back and forth. Thereupon, amid continuing movement of his body, he began, what was completely astounding to me, the presentation of a testimony . . .” (I:163).

After the death of Gruber (1728) and Rock (1740), the movement entered a “precipitous decline,” only to be revived in the early nineteenth century by a haughty journeyman tailor from Strasbourg, Michael Krausert. Krausert was a controversial figure who was perceived by the faithful as failing both spiritually and personally—today we would call him a flim-flam man—something that happed a few other times in the history of the Inspirationists. In an attempt to erase him from the historical record, Elder Phillip Mörschel ordered Krausert's books of testimonies burned, as well as those of Barbara Heinemann, in 1819.⁷ Only four Krausert testimonies delivered between 1817-18 survived the purge, all four of which are included in Volume I. Included here are also seventeen testimonies by Barbara Heinemann Landmann, delivered between

1820-83. There is a noticeable gap in Landmann's testimonies between 1823-49, for the simple reason that Barbara Heinemann married Georg Landmann in the spring of 1823 and ceased to speak *in inspiration*, since carnal knowledge had been gained through the union. For a time after their marriage, they were even banished from the Inspirationist community. It is somewhat similar to Old Order Amish shunning, but with the Inspirationists this practice was limited to marriage, even though it was scripturally justified: "Marriage is good, but to remain unmarried is better" (1 Corinthians 7:38). In the summer of 1849, Landmann delivered a short testimony on the death of a friend, and on December 23 gave a testimony at a funeral service. Until the death of Christian Metz in 1867 Barbara Landmann continued to deliver testimonies, the printed versions of which are published along with those of Metz in the collection otherwise devoted to his Inspirations.⁸ She continued to be inspired until her death in 1883, since which time there has not been an inspired *Werkzeug* among the Inspirationists.



Sammlung, 53 volumes, *Zeugnisse* by *Werkzeuge* Christian Metz & Barbara Landmann. Courtesy of Susan D. Dow.

Central to Volume I, as one might expect, are the testimonies delivered between 1819-42 by Christian Metz, the charismatic *Werkzeug*. More Metz testimonies appear in Volumes II and III but there are no testimonies by other *Werkzeuge* in the latter two volumes. There are a total of 3,654 testimonies by Metz in the Amana archives, forty two of which are included here in Volume I, none more fascinating than those recorded in the years 1840-42, the years immediately preceding the migration and relocation to North America.⁹ There are, of course, many reasons why a group of around eight hundred people would choose to leave their homeland and move across the ocean in search of

a new life, a little of which we read in the letters published here. There were clearly social and financial reasons which can be seen in the testimonies of the time, and by early 1842 Christian Metz realized that the situation for his Inspirationists, “even in liberal Hessen” (I:224), was untenable. Thus, on July 21, 1842, Christian Metz presented an *Einsprache*, which stated:

So, Human Child, give witness thereto and allow your Lord’s instructions and commandments to flow forth: You cannot stay here any longer. You are to move a great distance to a destination I will disclose. Look to where the land is open and to where, through My Spirit, My hand shall direct. There you shall seek and prepare a place where you may live. Obtain a place for you and for your children, all who acknowledge My name and respect it with righteous hearts. Then I shall erect My dwelling place of rest and peace among you. I shall be your God and the God of your children for as long as you and they uphold My Word. (I: 277)

An earlier testimony by Johann Friedrich Rock, in 1726, contains a prophecy that, in fact, proclaimed the eventual removal of the community from Germany to America (I:115).

Volume I also includes other important documents from the early years: English translations of the *24 Regeln der wahren Gottseligkeit* (1716), selections from the *Davidisches Psalter-Spiel* (1718-1854), and the *Glaubensbekenntnis: Der Wahren Inspirations Gemeinde* (1839). Concluding Volume I is a compelling section on the establishment of the woolen mills in Germany, their destruction by fire, and the part played by its owners in financing and providing individual loans to poorer Inspirationists for the great move across the Atlantic. Peter Hoehnle’s introductory text to an otherwise legalistic “Contract Establishing the Inspirationist Woolen Mills” (1840), traces the role played by its founders through the last years in Germany, the relocation to New York, and finally to its final days in communal-era Amana.

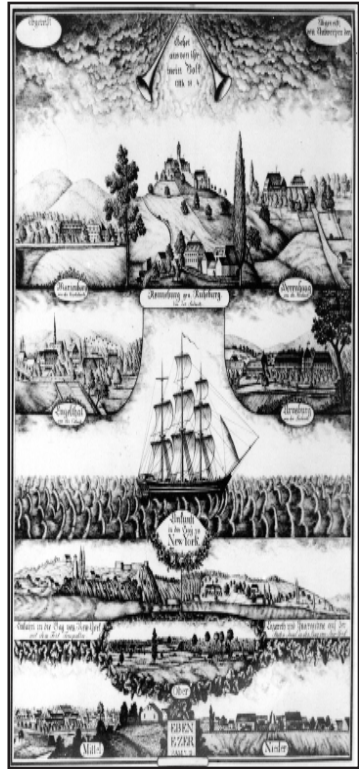
Volume II is devoted to the early years of the first colony, in Eben-Ezer¹⁰ near the city of Buffalo in New York. This is where the Inspirationists



Title page of the 8th edition of the *Davidisches Psalter Spiel*, the hymnal used since 1718. An unknown firm in Buffalo, New York cast the stereo plates, used in 2014 at the Homestead print shop as a keepsake for the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Community of True Inspiration. Courtesy of Amana Heritage Society.

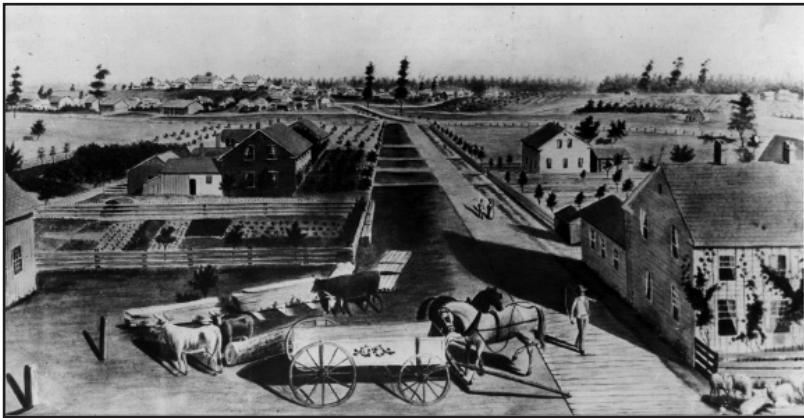
began to live and work as a communal society in 1843. At the beginning we find a series of letters, short descriptions of the community by an anonymous G. W. H., and one by Horace Greeley, the legendary editor of the *New York Tribune*, the most influential newspaper in the United States at that time. It was entitled “Co-Operative Life in America” and was published in the *Harbinger* on October 30, 1847. The core of Volume II, however, is clearly the story of the recording of Inspirationist history, beginning with a testimony by Christian Metz on November 1, 1846, that refers to the need to preserve the records of the Inspirationist community. Metz testifies: “Listen to the counsel and will of Divine Love: Let nothing be lost, rather guide those of your youth who are willing and able, for the sake of a worthy pastime, to renew and transcribe, particularly that which has not been printed” (II:43). Throughout its history this particular testimony has been referenced as the motivating factor in preserving and organizing the historical record.

Metz himself then begins the work with his own “Historical Account of the True Inspirations Community,” in the same year as the testimony that admonishes the preservation of the record, 1846. An eleven-page sample is published here, covering the years 1817-18. It is, however, Gottlieb Scheuner’s “History and Documents Concerning the Relocation of the Community of True Inspiration” which dominates nearly half of Volume II. Scheuner had been a favorite of Christian Metz, living in the latter’s house, serving for many years as his scribe, and as a teacher in the school. He also took on the task of assembling the documents of the Inspirationists, eventually chronicling everything in his *Inspirations-Historie*, from 1714 until the year of his death in 1897. Prior to writing his *Historie*, Scheuner compiled original documents and handwritten manuscripts in seven notebooks, the published version of which is listed in the bibliography in Volume I. In 1934, after Amana no longer existed as a communal society, the corporate secretary of the Amana Society, Peter Stuck, began to publish a regular series of translations of



Lithograph by Joseph Prestele, circa 1850. Courtesy of the Amana Heritage Society.

Scheuner's work in the local *Amana Society Bulletin*. The *Bulletin* had been founded in 1932 to provide information to Society members during the period of transition—from a communal society to a stockholding company—and Stuck decided to translate and publish selections of Scheuner's *Historie* as "Old History," to fill his columns. The project ended in December 1941 when events of World War II began to dominate the *Bulletin*. Stuck had actually completed the first five notebooks compiled by Scheuner, covering 922 pages of translation, but an additional 988 pages remained untranslated, totaling 1,910 pages. Scheuner had certainly attempted to carry out the Metz inspiration of 1846. Of particular note is the elaborate cross-referencing, by the editor of this series, of the documents and the testimonies, particularly those by Christian Metz.



Nieder Ebenezer, New York, created by Friedrich Jeck Courtesy of the Amana Heritage Society.

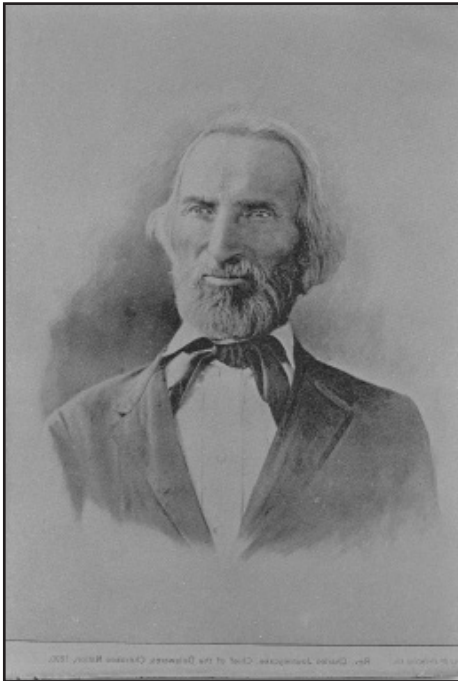
Gottfried Scheuner's collection includes an important chronology of the events—and testimonies—that eventually lead to the relocation of the Inspirationists from New York to Iowa, particularly on pages 142-53. Life in Eben-Ezer was getting more difficult. The large city of Buffalo was too close for separatists' inclinations,¹¹ and difficulty with the Seneca Indians in regard to land purchases continued. Thus, in the fall of 1854, a small party of four was sent west to survey land in Kansas, just across the Missouri River from the Town of Kansas, now known as Kansas City. Even though there is only one specific reference here, and none in other published works, we might arguably assume that members of the Community were aware of the recently passed Kansas-Nebraska Act on May 30, 1854, offering "Congressland" for as little as \$1.25 per acre, in an attempt to lure settlers into the region beyond the Missouri River. In the one reference, on page 141 of Volume II, Peter Stuck, writes: "Some time ago while the editor of this *Bulletin* was looking for some old records he came across a detailed report [by Gottlieb Scheuner] of the

removal of our society from Eben-Ezer in the State of New York to the new home here in Iowa. . . . The first notice of the great change was given in a testimony of the Lord on *May 30, 1854* [delivered by Christian Metz].” The testimony stated:

There is only one remedy against this decline; namely to change the place of abode so that there will be struggle and hardship – a separation. You will have to leave your property and go to a place where it is bare and scant, like the children of Israel in the desert on account of your disobedience, dissatisfaction and ungratefulness. (*Sammlung* 29, No. 25)

It is ironic that the congressional act and the testimony by Christian Metz both took place on the same day in 1854. Rumors of relocation were rampant, but were quickly quelled by another testimony by Metz in June.

However, just three months later, on September 4, 1854, a committee consisting of Christian Metz, Charles M. Winzenried, C. L. Mayer and Ferdinand Weber was appointed to go to the newly opened territory of Kansas, to seek out a new home for the society. Scheuner documents virtually



Charles Journey Cake. Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society.

every day of the trip, using the letters he received back in Eben-Ezer. The party crossed Lake Erie, then traveled by railroad to Chicago and on to St. Louis where they boarded a steamship up the Missouri to Parkville, right outside the Town of Kansas. They arrived on September 18 and the next day met an Indian who had been hired to travel along as a guide. They bought provisions and planned to set out on the 21st. Alas the guide did not show up, but by noon the following day he joined the small survey crew. The next paragraphs are intriguing, occasionally outright humorous. The guide had the fascinating name of Charles Journey Cake and was in fact the last chief of the Leanape

(Delaware) Nation.¹² They traveled first to Journey Cake's home to meet his family. Their guide was well educated, a member of the Baptist Mission there and said that his grandfather had been a German. The group was invited to visit Journey Cake's Mission church, which Mayer and Metz did, and heard him preach a sermon in "their language." When the group finally set out, two rode in a wagon and two on horseback, over rolling prairies, beautiful hills, and verdant creek beds. In the distance there were small patches of timber and much limestone, which they said "looked very good for mason work." Christian Metz later added personal comments to a testimony that he had received on September 27: ". . . our spirits became dark and diminished as we heard from other travelers that the best land had already been claimed . . . Thus, for the first time, we realized why the Lord stood in the way of our continuing this trip" (III:71). The land over which they were traveling belonged to the Delaware Indians, but could only be sold upon unanimous agreement of the Indians, *and* with the permission of the government. After they stopped for lunch they realized that one of their horses had wandered off, the tracks suggesting that it was homeward-bound. Bravely they stayed in place, waiting for another horse, but still carrying out their survey of the land. All around were large trees, but the young trees and undergrowth had been destroyed by prairie fires; with the auger they had brought along they found red, sandy soil mixed with gravel, "not by far as good as the Eben-Ezer soil" (II:147). Pioneers passing by on wagons had found their lost horse and returned it, but by then Brother Christian Metz was afflicted with diarrhea, and Brother Mayer had a high fever. On October 2 a heavy storm came up and they had to get up several times in the night to save their tent. The party then returned to Charles Journey Cake's home, where on October 8 some Indians held a meeting in Charles's home to discuss the land purchase. When they finally rode out to meet "Captain Ketchum," the first chief, they found him not in favor but he said he would present the matter to the other chiefs at their council meeting, to be held that same day. Negotiations did not really continue, however, and on October 16 Metz traveled to nearby Parkville, to meet with the Indian council. Other chiefs were not able to attend "on account of some heathenish celebration" (II:149). Then, on October 25, 1854, they "received an inspired testimony regarding [their] return journey:"

Seid nur getrost, dann euer Jesus will euch über die Schwachheit und den Geist der Krankheit hindurch führen; aber ihr müsset eindringlich sein, Ihn einzuziehen mit euren Glaubensbegierden, und so will Er Bahn brechen zu eurer Rückreise, und will Sich gewißlich nicht von euch abwenden; aber seid immerdar kindlich und leidsam.¹³

Completely discouraged about the land itself, and the difficulty with the Indians—not unlike the problems they were having with the Seneca Indians of New York—and following the testimony received by Metz, the group returned to Eben-Ezer. *This is not the place!* The Inspirationist pioneers were, however, not to be discouraged from finding a new home. On November 13, 1854, a testimony was spoken by Sister B. Landmann “wherein the wandering was again confirmed and, soon after that, a meeting of the *Bruderrath* was held in which an agreement in unison was made for some land purchase” (II:129). On November 17 a new committee of four was appointed to sell the Eben-Ezer land and to continue searching for a new tract in the west. Two of this committee, Jakob Wittmer and Johann Beyer made a trip to Iowa to gather information, and on December 23, upon their return to New York, they reported favorably on what they had found.

Much of the rest of the Scheuner “History and Documents” contains the details of the financial and logistic relocation to their new home, interspersed with problems encountered in selling the land in New York, anecdotes of the movement, and most interestingly a few statements about the mental anguish Christian Metz frequently suffered. On page 202 we read: “I had several sorrowful days feeling strong opposition by the enemy . . .,” and on page 236 he wrote: “After the depression that I experienced during the week of Pentecost, there was considerable improvement and there is also a good prospect of blessings from without. Everything has to go through worries and trouble, including the worldly blessings, as we have experienced so many times.” We also read about the new name for the Iowa community. At first they called it simply *Bleib-treu*, but because they found it difficult to translate into English, they looked through the Bible and found in the Song of Solomon, chapter four, verse eight the name “Amana,” which means “Believe Faithfully.”¹⁴

**EBENEZER LAND
FOR SALE.**

The undersigned offers for sale, in parcels to suit purchasers, the lands on the Buffalo Creek Reservation, in the town of West Seneca and Lancaster, Erie County, New York, occupied by the Ebenezer Society as called. They consist of 7,436 acres in a contiguous body, situate from five to ten miles from the centre of the large and progressive city of Buffalo, and are intersected by the Clinton street road, the Aurora and Buffalo plank road, and other good highways. About 4,000 acres of the tract are now in the market, and the remainder will be offered as soon as the present occupants can effect a removal to their new home in the west. The lands offered embrace farms in the highest state of cultivation; lands well fitted for gardening and fruit cultivation; wood and timber lots, with a variety of timber, which always meets with a ready sale at high prices in Buffalo. The lands are well watered by the Big Buffalo, Caumcutic and other creeks, and in close proximity to mills and factories of various kinds. The whole tract is remarkable for richness and variety of soil, pleasant situation and freedom from all causes of insalubrity. Apply at No. 330 Main Street, Buffalo.

GEO. R. BABCOCK, Attorney for the Owners.

**Ebenezer Land
zum Verkauf.**

Die Unterzeichneten bieten hiermit die an der Buffalo Creek Reservation, in den Town von West Seneca und Lancaster, Erie County, N. Y., an der Aurora und Buffalo Plank Road und Clintonstraße situierten, von der Ebenezer Gesellschaft genutzten Ländereien, in ungetrenntem Ganzen zum Verkauf an. Das Land besteht aus 7436 Acker in einer zusammenhängenden Tract in einer Entfernung von 5 bis 10 Meilen von dem Hauptquartier der grossen und blühenden Stadt Buffalo. — Umfänglich 4000 Acker better Landes sind jetzt im Markt zum annehmlichen Verkauf und der Rest, sobald als der jetzigen Besitzer ihre Abwanderung nach ihrer neuen Wohnort im Westen auszuführen im Stande sein werden. Das jetzt offerirte Land besteht aus Obst- und Garten- und Acker- Feldern von hohem Ertrage für Obstbau und Viehzucht, als auch aus schönem Holzland für Feuer- und Baumaterial von den vortheilhaftesten Sorten, welche allzeit in Buffalo einen guten Markt zu finden werden können. Die ganze Landtracht ist ausgezeichnet durch ihre Fruchtbarkeit und die Befindlichkeit der Boden, ihre reichhaltigen und vielfachen Quellen Wasser und angenehme Situation, und freie Lage zu Bächen und Flüssen. Der Tract ist unbeschreiblich schön gelegen. Verkauf-Bezeichnungen und Karten von Lande werden man sich an

George H. Babcock,
von Aurora der Eigentümer, No. 330 Mainstraße, Buffalo, N. Y.

BRUNCK, HELD & COE Steam Press, 124 Washington st. BUFFALO.

Broadside of Ebenezer land sale. Courtesy of the Amana Heritage Society.

Other items included in Volume II are letters describing the woolen mill fire at the Arnsburg Estate (1843), actually one of the major reasons the community decided to migrate across the ocean. There is also a lengthy “Diary and Memoir (1822-1856)” by Wilhelm Mörschel. This diary-memoir is of great significance for the simple reason that Mörschel was one of the key financial leaders of the Inspirationist community, reaching back to the early years while the Inspirationists were still in Germany. It was Wilhelm Mörschel, along with Carl Winzenried and a few others who combined their resources to create the firm of Mörschel, Winzenried and Company which was to create the wool manufacturing business and would hire the Inspirationists gathering in the Wetterau. It was these two and their company that emerged as the financial agents of the entire community. Mörschel was also one of the authors of the Eben-Ezer Society Constitution of 1846, the document that made permanent the communal economy adopted after arriving in the United States. He played other significant roles in the community, many of which are described in his diary-memoir. Ironically, a “great grandson by marriage, Peter Stuck, in collaboration with a natural great-grandson, Henry Moershel, was largely responsible for initiating and guiding the process by which the communal system, first codified by their ancestor in the Eben-Ezer Constitution of 1846, was abandoned.” Tucked away in a footnote on the same page, we read: “The editor is himself a descendant of Wilhelm Mörschel and the current custodian of the original manuscript” (II:94).

Volume III is slightly more difficult to categorize, since it describes the relocation from New York to Iowa, daily life in the new communal villages, and finally the Great Change of 1932. The Eben-Ezer Land Sale broadside of 1856, the new constitution and by-laws of the Amana Society of 1859, which included in Article 5 provisions in “case of reorganization of the Society,” and testimonies by Christian Metz which call for the move, are all found in the first half of Volume III.¹⁵ After Jakob Wittmer and Johann Beyer reported on their trip to the Iowa River valley in Iowa, Metz delivered in his testimony on Christmas day of 1854 these words:

Hear now and understand: Go there again as soon as possible and look upon this place which is to be your new home-land. Regard and consider it as the place designated by the Lord. Overcome all obstacles. Consider all possibilities, still and always perceiving the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ of your own heart. (III:72)

Upon arrival in their new home the Inspirationists set about successively building six villages and finally purchasing a seventh, Homestead. Before the move was completed, however, signs of civil war were on the horizon, and the

Werkzeug recorded a total of six inspired testimonies urging peace. All six of the testimonies that Metz delivered towards the government of the United States during the early years of the Civil War were translated, printed, and sent to various governmental offices.¹⁶ After the war, life in the new community continued and soon new traditions were being created. Following Abraham Lincoln's solemn proclamation of a Day of Thanksgiving, the Inspirationists conducted a "Covenant Renewal Service" on that day, a practice that continues to the present.

For the next hundred pages we are treated to a series of diaries, minutes of the *Bruderrath*, and some choice excerpts from Scheuner's *Historie*. It is here that we get a little, almost private information regarding the declining spirits, the increasing expenditures, and the difficulties arising from members' involvement with the outside world. These pages read like a cross between memorates and local geography. There are local stories of accidents, suicides,



Mill workers in the Amana woolen mills around 1900. Courtesy of the Amana Heritage Society.

rampant alcoholism, nightly wanderings of insolent youth, card playing in the brewery, forbidden dogs, dancing bears, guns in the hands of pacifists, not to mention dresses, hair styles and *photography*. On page 311 in note no. 23 we learn that Jesse James most likely did *not* rob the South Amana store of \$1600, even though there is to this day a "long-standing tradition that the notorious outlaw was involved." Reports of train wrecks, fires in the elevators, barns, and once again in the woolen mill, fill the diaries and memoirs of this section. Included here are also materials documenting contact, primarily through correspondence, with the Shakers. The central point of the discussion was their practice of celibacy. In a lively exchange between a Shaker elder and three members of the Inspirationists, Shaker Elder Charles Julius Preter says:

“goats mate at all times and it is with them (the rams) humans in a fallen state are compared” (III:186). Gottlieb Scheuner replies rather bluntly but politely, rejecting the goat-human analogy: “Therefore we can, and may also, live in marriage. [Although] we give preference to celibacy, in the right manner and do not despise it . . .” (III:189).

The final pages of Volume III lay out the progress toward the ending of the communal society. In 1928 Peter Stuck wrote an essay on the “Condition of the Amana Society,” and in 1931 William Noé and Peter Stuck sent a letter and a ballot concerning the choices the members had in regard to their future. Then, in 1932, the Committee of Forty-Seven sent out their “Plan of Reorganization of the Amana Society,” which rather dramatically, directly, and legalistically addressed Article 5 of the Constitution, in “case of reorganization of the Society.” The “Plan” was

written in English but translated into German for the benefit of members who were not proficient in the former. A translation of the “Questionnaire” appears on page 273, asking whether the membership wished to “go back to the old life of denial” or that “by reorganization . . . the building-up of our community can be effected.” The exact wording in German of the first choice is fascinating: “Sind Sie damit einverstanden, daß der vorgeschlagene Plan, die Amana Society zu reorganisieren, welcher Ihnen kürzlich zur Durchsicht vorgelegt wurde, angenommen und ausgeführt wird?” On page 276 we read that a total of 915 members voted, i.e., 96 percent, with 885 casting their votes for adopting the plan to reorganize.¹⁷ The “Plan” culminated on June 1, 1932, when the property of the Amana Society was transferred to the new corporation. The houses were to be sold, the communal kitchens were closed, provisions would have to be made for medical and burial benefits, and for the needy and elderly members of the Society who would be unable to work for a living, and all of the property had to be assessed. The Inspirationists were no

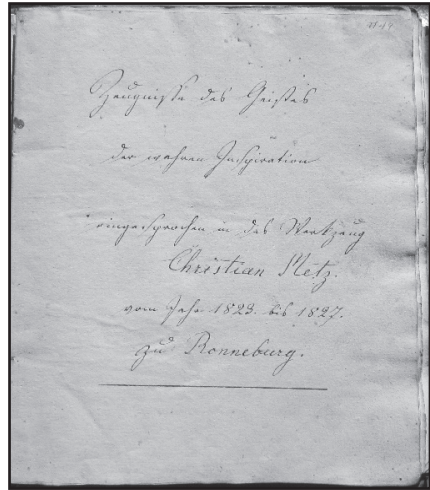


Wedding procession, August 22, 1907. William Foerstner set up his camera in an upstairs window of the Amana Church and had a friend trip the shutter as he and Christina Germand lead the procession to their wedding service. Courtesy of the Amana Heritage Society.

longer *employees* but now *owners* of the new corporation. I must say, it is an emotional experience to read this last volume, effectively concluding a two-hundred-and-eighteen year history with a simple vote.

This is an amazing and excellent piece of scholarship, and belongs in every research library interested in the full range of communal studies: historical, social, religious, and linguistic. Central, of course, are the *Zeugnisse*. To my knowledge, only one other work has directly addressed a large body of these testimonies, Jonathan Andelson's 1974 University of Michigan doctoral dissertation. For the most part Andelson dealt with testimonies delivered after the Inspirationists arrived in Iowa, beginning with 1855. He was most interested in questions of *who* delivered the testimonies, *when* and *where* they took place, and the *central message* found therein. Was it Christian Metz or Barbara Landmann who was inspired? Was the testimony delivered during the *Versammlung*, during a prayer meeting, a communal meal, or somewhere else? Andelson's work centered on the testimonies and the opening statements, often by the *Werkzeug* or by the scribe, Gottlieb Scheuner, but also included evaluations of the minutes of the *Bruderrath*. Andelson worked closely with a local informant, Richard Seifert of Homestead, and later with one of the individuals who had transcribed and translated many of the testimonies herself, Magdalena Scheurer, locally known as "Tante Lene."¹⁸

In this new collection, however, we have a large body of testimonies that are perhaps a representative selection for in-depth study, keeping in mind that they are only a small portion of the large number of testimonies cited above, e.g. the nine hundred by Johann Friedrich Rock and the 3,654 by Christian Metz. What becomes apparent by such an extensive overview in these volumes are both the similarities and the differences in the testimonies. I found that they all had some kind of opening and closing formulas, mostly letting the Inspirationists know that it was God's voice they were hearing or reading. These formulas were sometimes commands, often questions, and they read like mini-sermons, prayers, or paraphrases of the Bible, frequently invoking the Old Testament God or the New Testament messiah. They were virtually all directed toward



Handwritten cover sheet of *Zeugnisse* from July 1823 to 1827 with Christian Metz signature. Courtesy of Amana Heritage Society.

some spiritual or secular matter—sometimes with no clear distinction—as we have seen in the few cases quoted above. They were sometimes delivered in conjunction with some major historical event, most obvious was the Civil War, but also national economic recessions and depressions. The closing formula is usually an admonition to hear and carry out the words delivered in the testimony. It is also quite interesting to note how many times comments about the bodily movement and behavior of a *Werkzeug* are described, including how Metz walks up to a member who is being chastised, and delivers a testimony directly to him. Metz even says that he “reprimanded himself” in one testimony (II:215). As stated above, kinetics and proxemics repeatedly are mentioned and clearly played a role in the delivery of the testimonies.

Volumes II and III especially let us see just why we have such a large body of information in the three Amana archives. Certainly it was perceived as their Godly duty (see above, Metz’s testimony of November 1, 1846), but German interest in keeping records of their historical, social, and individual lives is on full display here. It is not just in the official records, *Glaubensbekenntnisse*, their hymns, Constitution, etc., it is dramatically reflected in the diaries and memoirs of a wide range of members, from the well-educated to the simple colonist, even in one case by a very young man, who persisted in waging a campaign for further education, but also “his willingness to accede to the rules and regulations of the society” (III:199). We learn that the Amana Heritage and the Amana Church Societies have full genealogical records for anyone who wants to explore their family background, including individual family information summarized by Jonathan Andelson. Of course, we also learn something immediately obvious to any visitor to the cemeteries in the individual villages: everyone is buried in chronological order of death. First burials in some of the cemeteries are recorded in several places in the published documents. Not mentioned anywhere in the work is the fact that Christian Metz, their charismatic leader who brought them to New York and on to Iowa, clearly has *two* grave plots and is buried in the middle. There is, however, no documentation in the three volumes, nor in the archives of the Amana Heritage Society, concerning this double grave site.

There are some issues, which are abundant, but do not distract overly from the three volumes. It is clear that many, even most, of these documents have passed through multiple hands and been viewed by many eyes. There were the original authors, the *Werkzeuge*, scribes, transcribers, translators, various secretaries, and finally the series and copy editors. There are *many* typographical errors. Most conspicuous is the statement on “Printed



Tombstone of Christian Metz in the Amana Cemetery.
Courtesy of Susan D. Dow.

did not happen, not in any one of the three volumes. On the “Contents” page of Volume I, we see that page 79 actually precedes page 75. There are simple typos, lack of spacing between words, but most troubling are misspelled German place names found throughout the series: Goppingen, Wurtemberg, Zweibrucken, Frankfür, Geissen, Wterlau, Budingen, Wurzburg, to list a few. Finally, the seven-page “Index” is sparse for such a large work, and not particularly useful. There are about one-hundred-forty-one entries, with little refinement. For example there are seventy-six entries listed under “fire,” followed only by the volume and page number. Two fires were particularly important for the Inspirationists, both in the woolen mills. The first in 1842 was no doubt one of the main reasons for the relocation to North America, and the second in 1923 for the final financial collapse of the Amana Society in Iowa. A more detailed Index would have made this massive work far more useful.

I return, however, to my overall positive assessment of the work, and recommend that research libraries, interested in what I refer to as *Germanology*—more generally referred to as German Studies—add these works to their holdings. This set is one of three titles in the American Communal Societies series. The other two are devoted to the writings, autobiographies, biographies, and testimonies of the Shakers. If the other two are as detailed and informational as these volumes, they will likewise add a vast amount of information to our understanding of Inspirationists, utopians, and other separatist groups in America. All three sets would represent an excellent resource for graduate seminars in several university departments. Finally, these volumes might serve two other purposes. The digitized testimonies

Sources” at the beginning of each volume: “We have proofed our texts against a single original source and we give details of those sources *on p. 000*,” and on page 338, in note number 27, once again we find missing information: (West Seneca, NY: 0000, 1949). The intent, of course, was to supply the correct page number or bibliographical detail while reading the galley proofs. Unfortunately this

offer linguists a compact body of information for discourse analysis. German linguists might look to these same testimonies, encourage their digitization, and conduct similar research on the originals. Secondly, and clearly more personally, the 340 members of the Amana Church Society might well use this larger body of inspired testimonies in their English church services, or for their own private devotionals.

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Notes

¹ Lawrence Rettig produced both an MA thesis (1967) and a PhD dissertation (1970) on Amana German.

² The German words used most often are *Zeugnis* and *Bezeugung*, the English translations in this set are “testimony,” “inspiration,” and occasionally “prophecy.”

³ There are numerous publications with photographs of Eben-Ezer and Amana, including the very popular edition by Abigail Foerstner.

⁴ Franke was professor of Greek and Oriental languages as well as pastor in the nearby town of Glaucha. He was also the close friend of Philip Jakob Spener, known as the Father of Pietism.

⁵ The full glossolalia text is found in [Christian Gottlieb König's] *Das Geschrey zur Mitternacht*, 1714, 2nd edition 1758, pages 1-2, and in Dow 1991:163.

⁶ Barbara Landmann delivered a testimony on December 25, 1851, in tandem with Christan Metz.

⁷ “Because of Krausert’s errant ways, Philipp Mörschel went so far as to revoke and destroy all testimonies presented through Krausert, and also those presented through B. Heinemann prior to this time.” Scheuner 1987: 25.

⁸ The collection is referenced in the Bibliography in Volume I, on pages xxvii-xxix, and is referred to throughout the three volumes simply as the *Sammlung*.

⁹ While most of the new settlement was in Eben-Ezer in the state of New York, there was a small group of Inspirationists who lived across the international border in Canada, in Kenneburg.

¹⁰ The name Eben-Ezer comes from a passage in 1 Samuel 7: 12: “Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, [a] saying, “Thus far the Lord has helped us.”

¹¹ Scheuner writes of another testimony which speaks of “the danger of too much influence on the religious lives of the members from outside sources” (p. 142).

¹² An 1895 book on the life of Journey Cake, by the American Baptist Publication Society is available online at: <https://archive.org/details/indianchief00mitcrich>.

¹³ This testimony is not among those translated. It is found in the *Sammlung* 29: No.47.

¹⁴ The name Amana comes from a passage in Song of Solomon 4: 8: “Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, come with me from Lebanon. Descend from the crest of Amana, from the top of Senir, the summit of Hermon, from the lions’ dens and the mountain haunts of leopards.”

¹⁵ As we have seen, Barbara Landmann had *already* been inspired on November 13, 1854, “wherein the wandering was again confirmed.”

¹⁶ Details of these testimonies are supplied by the editor in Volume III, pages 307-8, note 26.

¹⁷ Peter Hoehnle found the signed questionnaires which his grandfather, a member of the *Bruderrath* at the time, had kept at home, *in a box under his desk*. See Hoehnle 2001.

¹⁸ Magdelena Schuerer, "Tante Lene," was also my informant for several years, and in addition to many hours of tape recorded interviews, produced forty pages of written reminiscences for me. They are now in the archives of the Amana Heritage Society, along with the tape recordings.

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