

# American Communal Societies Quarterly

---

Volume 2 | Number 3

Pages 122-134

---

July 2008

## Harmonisches Gesangbuch 1827: The Hymnal of a Religious Community in Early Nineteenth-Century America

Hedwig T. Durnbaugh

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.hamilton.edu/acsq>



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#)

---

This work is made available by Hamilton College for educational and research purposes under a [Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 4.0 license](#). For more information, visit <http://digitalcommons.hamilton.edu/about.html> or contact [digitalcommons@hamilton.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@hamilton.edu).

---

## Harmonisches Gesangbuch 1827: The Hymnal of a Religious Community in Early Nineteenth-Century America

### Cover Page Footnote

Originally presented in German at the German regional conference of the Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Hymnologie in Tallinn, Estonia, December 2-3, 1994, under the title, "*Harmonisches Gesangbuch* 1827. Das Gesangbuch einer religiösen Gemeinschaft im Amerika des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts."

## ***Harmonisches Gesangbuch 1827:* The Hymnal of a Religious Community in Early Nineteenth-Century America\***

***Hedwig T. Durnbaugh***

The subject of this essay, *Harmonisches Gesangbuch*, 1827<sup>1</sup> was the hymnal of the Harmony Society, a Christian community of German origins in America in the early nineteenth century. This society is defined neither as an American denomination nor as a sect, but as a religious communal society.

This essay will first present a brief overview of the history and theology of this society, followed by an analysis of its hymn book.

### **Historical background**

The spiritual head of the Harmony Society was George Rapp, born the son of a farmer on November 1, 1757 at Iptingen in Württemberg. He grew up and was confirmed in the Lutheran Church, learned the weaver's trade, went out as a journeyman weaver, returned to Iptingen in 1783, married, and became the father of two children.

Since the early eighteenth century Württemberg had been fertile ground for Pietist and Separatist movements which, over the course of time, took root among the population and manifested themselves in numerous different groups. What all had in common was their criticism of the established church, where they noted signs of profound decay. They claimed that its preaching the gospel bore no fruit either among the clergy or the church members, that infant baptism was merely a rule established by humans, and that obligatory attendance at Communion as a means of grace was not absolutely necessary for adults.

Despite the edict of 1743, which denied the Separatists the right to assemble, Separatist ideas continued to spread widely and thrive among the

---

\* Originally presented in German at the German regional conference of the Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Hymnologie in Tallinn, Estonia, December 2-3, 1994, under the title, "*Harmonisches Gesangbuch 1827. Das Gesangbuch einer religiösen Gemeinschaft in Amerika des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts.*"

population. Thus it was not surprising that in this atmosphere of spiritual ferment, Rapp, after his return to his home community, developed into a revival preacher, deeply convinced of his calling to be a prophet and to fulfill this office. Before long a sizable following from ten surrounding districts gathered around him.

As a consequence of his activity as preacher and of the great attraction which his meetings held, Rapp was called before the church authorities twice during the 1790s, who feared uprisings among the populace and who demanded a declaration of his religious and political views. Specific theological teachings of George Rapp will be discussed below. Here it will suffice to point out their obvious Millennialism.

As a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars and their aftermath, the political and military situation in Württemberg led Rapp to immerse himself increasingly in the contemplation and calculation of the imminent end time and the return of Christ. Influenced by the thoughts on the history of humankind expressed by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* which first appeared in 1784, Rapp began to seek the site of the new Jerusalem prepared by God—that is, the community of Rapp’s followers.

According to Karl Arndt,<sup>2</sup> the actual motivating forces within the Harmony Society originated in what was basically a double illusion. The first was based on the conviction that all evil in the world could be overcome by the restoration of the early church as it is described in Acts of the Apostles (4:32 NEB): “The whole body of believers was united in heart and soul. Not a man of them claimed any of his possessions as his own, but everything was held in common.”

The second illusion of the Rappites was their belief that they represented the woman in the wilderness of the Revelation of John. In the eyes of his followers Rapp united these two expectations in his own person and had become at the same time one with the Word of God.

Like many other European religious Separatists, Rapp set his sights on America. During the years 1803 and 1804 several hundred Rappites emigrated from Württemberg to Pennsylvania. On two thousand hectares of land in Butler County near the present-day city of Pittsburgh arose the village of *Harmonie* [Harmony], which name in the course of time came to signify a perfect economic and spiritual unity, referring not only to the settlement but also the society living there. Community of goods and a strict patriarchal-communal government under George Rapp, combined

with the business acumen of Friedrich Reichert, a stone mason who later became Rapp's adopted son, created within a few years a flourishing and wealthy enterprise. Although the communal rules were strictly enforced, membership remained completely voluntary. Signers of the articles of communal association were given all the civic and religious privileges of the society.

The rapid settlement of Western Pennsylvania with its concomitant problems persuaded George Rapp after only a few years to seek new land. In 1814 eight thousand hectares land along the Wabash River in the southernmost tip of the state of Indiana were purchased. The land in Butler County was sold and the Society was resettled. The new settlement was named *Neu Harmonie* [New Harmony]. Here both the agricultural as well as the business enterprises were greatly enlarged, through which the Harmony Society gained great economic influence not only in the state of Indiana but in the entire United States at that time.

Community of goods was an essential element in the establishment of Harmonist settlements and communities, which were designed not only to await but also to last during the Millennium. Rapp, however, soon introduced the teaching that the proper preparation also included celibacy or marital continence. Although in regards to the two teachings of Millennium and community of goods a certain degree of unity and harmony had been achieved, these new spiritual demands, especially those of celibacy, caused ongoing internal trouble. Nevertheless, the community grew during this period due to the arrival of numerous new immigrants from Württemberg.

The unfavorable climate and the concomitant fatal illnesses, as well as the difficulties associated with travel by river boats, led in time to consideration of another move. In 1842 the Society purchased twelve hundred hectares of land northwest of Pittsburgh. New Harmony was sold for about \$150,000 to the social reformer Robert Owen, who intended to found a communal society here himself.

Again, it did not take much time until the new settlement, now named *Ökonomie* [Economy] was in full swing. The economic basis of the community was no longer agriculture but manufacture, in particular the raising of silkworms and silk weaving, in which field the Rappites soon held a leading position in the United States.

It was during the first years of this third phase — at Economy — that their hymnal, *Harmonisches Gesangbuch*, was produced.

The Harmony Society endured just past the turn of the twentieth century. Following a very turbulent history filled with internal and external difficulties and tensions, it was officially dissolved in 1906.

## **Theological Background**

The theology of the Harmony Society bore the stamp of its founder George Rapp. The key words are “Pietism” with its emphasis on the renewal of hearts and minds and its love of God and neighbor, and “Separatism,” which meant that Rapp’s followers stayed away from the established church and its ways, which they considered the corrupted Babylon, and that they prepared themselves for the return of Christ and the Millennium.

The following teachings and practices are characteristic of the Harmony Society:<sup>3</sup>

Community of goods: This was based on Acts of the Apostles 4:32ff.: “The whole body of believers was united in heart and soul. Not a man of them claimed any of his possessions as his own, but everything was held in common ... they had never a needy person among them, because all who had property in land or houses sold it, brought the proceeds of the sale, and laid the money at the feet of the apostles; it was then distributed to any who stood in need.”

Androgyny of Adam: Adam was not only an ethical image of God in wisdom, justice, and sanctity; as “the anthropogene” he was an actual image of God. Adam’s androgyny was based on Genesis 1:26-27, where the pronoun of the third person plural, “them,” refers to the androgynous Adam: “Let us make man in our image and likeness ... So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

The Fall: Adam’s desire for a partner and for the female aspect of his nature led to his dissatisfaction with God’s plan despite the fact that God had declared it good (Genesis 1:31). Adam succumbed to his base animal nature and God permitted Adam’s fall to become complete by giving him woman, an independent being, to be his partner. God’s original commandment in Genesis 1:28, “Be fruitful and increase,” had been accomplished in a manner incomprehensible to us by mingling the male and female elements in the human being. From this perspective, Jesus was as androgynous as the original Adam.

Celibacy: According to Rapp's teaching on the Fall, all sexual intercourse defiles, and every child is tainted with original sin. This was the basis for the doctrine of Jesus' miraculous conception. In practice, this meant that the sleeping quarters for women and men were on different floors. Infraction against this rule led to expulsion from the Society, which resulted in the loss of all legal claims to compensation for any assets brought into the Society and for labor performed for it.

Millennialism: Rapp's community saw itself as the woman of the Revelation of John (12:1ff.) who had fled into the wilds where she was to be sustained for 1260 days. This logically led to Rapp's teaching on the Millennium, in that the mentioned span of time, reckoned from the founding of Harmony in 1805, predicted the return of Christ in the year 1829.<sup>4</sup> The Rappites' belief in the Millennium was based on various Scripture passages both in the Old and the New Testament, as well as on their understanding of salvation not only for the spiritual but also the physical universe. The transfiguration of the saints and the restoration of all things at Christ's return was to take place at the beginning of the Millennium and not at the Last Judgment only.

### **The Hymnal of 1827**

Even before their emigration to America, Rapp's followers had formed a community who met for simple worship services with prayer, a sermon, and singing. The hymn books available to them were the official Württemberg hymnal, Gerhard Tersteegen's *Geistliches Blumen-Gärtlein inniger Seelen* [Spiritual flower garden of sincere souls], and the hymnal of the Community of True Inspiration (the present-day Amana Church Society of Amana, Iowa), titled *Davidisches Psalter-Spiel der Kinder Zions* [Davidic psalter of the children of Zion].<sup>5</sup> The latter was used by individual Rappites even after publication of their own hymnal.

As early as 1820 the Rappites published a collection of hymns at Allentown, Pennsylvania, with the title, *Harmonisches Gesangbuch* [Harmonious hymn book].<sup>6</sup> Four years later Johann Christoph Müller (1777-1845), the multi-talented physician of the Society, printed on the press of their second colony, New Harmony, a hymn book as a kind of experiment and practice. It had the title *Eine kleine Sammlung Harmonischer Lieder* [A small collection of harmonious hymns].<sup>7</sup> Both hymn books were unsatisfactory in the long run. The hymnal that was to have lasting significance for the Society was compiled by Müller during the following years, and in 1827 printed by

him. Although it had the same title as the hymn book of 1820, its structure and contents were very different.

Unfortunately, the brief preface of the 1827 hymn book, which is signed “*Von dem Verfasser*” [by the compiler] says nothing about the hymnal’s structure, but regarding the contents, “a considerable number of hymns had been carefully [selected]” for the use of the young people. In particular, the hymnal was “especially planned” to include “the contemplation of nature” which, along with “*Sittlichkeit und Religion*” [moral conduct and religion] also contributes to “the occupation of minds and thoughts.” “*Gefühl, Betrachtung, Lernung und Erfahrung*” [feeling, contemplation, learning, and experience] were thus said to be reflected in the hymn texts. The table of contents reveals how the hymns are “*eingrichtet*” [useful and adapted] to various states of the soul and experiences both inward and outward. The hymn texts themselves are arranged in alphabetical order of their first lines.

The table of contents, which consists only of an unnumbered list of twenty-nine subjects or rubrics, without subheadings, does not reveal a systematic structure. Two groupings of subjects can be discerned in the table of contents. The first six represent by and large a short version of the hymn rubrics for the church year or the creed. The next ten, with the exception of “Hymns of praise and thanksgiving” (no. 13) are taken from the Pietist economy of salvation. The remaining rubrics switch back and forth between these two categories. Specific Harmonist teachings occur in “Nature and grace” (no. 22), and in the hymns for special occasions.

In comparison with the previous hymn book of 1820, several important Pietist rubrics were omitted, such as “*Vom menschlichen Elend und Verderben*” [Of human misery and damnation], “*Vom geistlichen Kampf und Sief*” [Of spiritual battle and victory], “*Vom göttlichen Frieden*” [Of divine peace],” and “*Vom hohen Adel der Gläubigen*” [Of the high birth of believers]. Two rubrics from 1820, “*Vom Reich Gottes*” [Of the realm of God] and “*Vom Himmel und himmlischen Jerusalem*” [Of heaven and the heavenly Jerusalem] were combined in 1827 in the rubric, “*Die Kirche Christi und ihre Herrlichkeit*” [The church of Christ and its glory]. Completely dropped since 1820 were “*Ueber Wehmut*” [Of melancholy] and “*Von der Freiheit*” [Of liberty/freedom], as well as, surprisingly, “*Von der Zukunft Jesu*” [Of the coming of Jesus]. The Pietist rubric, “Of the mystery of the cross” was rephrased in 1827 to “*Von Kreuz und Leiden*” [Of cross and suffering].

The numerically strongest rubric of 1827 is “*Von der wahren Weisheit*” [Of true wisdom] with forty-three hymns, followed by “*Von der Liebe zu Christo*” [Of the love for Christ] with thirty-seven, and “*Von der Nachfolge Jesu*” [Of



following Jesus] with thirty-four hymns. The rubrics “*Von der Zukunft Jesu*” [Of the coming of Jesus], “*Uebergabe des Herzens*” [Surrender of the heart], “*Von der Hoffnung*” [Of hope], and “*Frühlings-Lieder*” [Springtime songs] are represented with twenty-eight hymns each. The weakest rubrics, with only four hymns each, are “*Von den Werken der Schöpfung*” [Of the works of Creation], “*Von der Auferstehung Christi*” [Of the resurrection of Christ], “*Tugend und Bescheidenheit*” [Virtue and modesty], and “*Sommer Abend-Lieder*” [Songs for summer evenings]. Even the rubric so important for the Harmonists, “*Nature und Gnade*” [Nature and grace] is represented by only six hymns.

### The Hymns of the Harmonists

The hymnal of 1827 contains 518 hymn texts with melody references. The majority of the texts were written by the Harmonists themselves, while forty-three are from the hymnody of the Ephrata Community. The provenance of the remaining texts at the time of this writing could be determined only for about thirty-five additional texts. Ten of those occur also in the Separatist hymnal used primarily by the Inspirationists, *Davidisches Psalter-Spiel der Kinder Zions*.<sup>8</sup>

The Harmonists were firmly convinced that each person had poetic ability, and thus began even before their emigration to write hymn texts of their own which, however, later on were not included in their hymn books. Arndt lists three texts which are characteristic of different phases in the history of Harmonist emigration.<sup>9</sup> The first song calls them in fifteen stanzas to emigration into the New Jerusalem. The second reinforces this call, and the Harmony Society is identified with the sun-woman of the Apocalypse, who was snatched into safety during the “evil time.” The third song is a final call to leave “for the promised land.”

Of course, George Rapp also wrote hymn texts, such as the following example, in which he sings — to its own melody — in twelve stanzas about his new foundation. Select stanzas are given below in the original and a close prose translation into English:\*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Harmonie, du Bruder-Stadt,</i><br><i>Friede soll dich decken.</i><br><i>Gott sei mit dir früh und spat,</i> | Harmony, you city of brothers/brotherly city,<br>Peace protect you.<br>God be with you early and late, |
|---|--|

---

\* All texts are taken from *Harmonisches Gesangbuch*, 1827, but adapted to current standard spelling for easier comprehension.

*kein Feind darf dich schrecken:  
denn die Zeit ist nunmehr da,  
wo du kannst bestehen;  
Gott ist seinem Volke nah,  
er wird dich erhöhen.*

no enemy may frighten you:  
for the time is now here  
when you can prevail.  
God is near his people,  
He will raise you up.

2. *Brüder, auf und säumet nicht,  
Bürger hier zu werden;  
es ist noch nicht ausgerich't,  
alles, was soll werden:  
Nur in dieser Harmonie  
find't der Geist das Wesen;  
alles and're ist nur Mü'h  
und kann nicht genesen.*

Brothers, arise and tarry not,  
to become citizens here;  
it has not yet been completed,  
all that is yet to come.  
Only in this Harmony  
the spirit finds the essence;  
all else is but trouble  
and cannot become well again.

10. *Gott mit uns in Harmonie,  
was soll uns noch hindern,  
dass wir nicht die kleine Mü'h  
durch ihn überwinden:  
die in unserm Pilgerlauf,  
in den Kreuzes-Orten  
nach der Not und dem Gebrauch  
uns zum Teil geworden.*

God with us in Harmony,  
what is to hold us back,  
that we, the small hardships/trouble,  
could not overcome through Him.  
that, which in our pilgrimage  
at the stations of the cross  
after the misery and as we used to do it  
had been allotted to us.

11. *Nun, O Gott, du höchstes Gut,  
sei mit deiner Herde,  
dass durch deine Liebes-Glut  
wir geheiligt werden;  
und dein Will der Ewigkeit  
in uns mög geschehen:  
dass wir die Erlösungszeit  
bald, bald mögen sehen.*

Now, O God, you highest good,  
be with your flock,  
that through the fire of your love  
we may be sanctified;  
and your will of eternity,  
may it be realized in us:  
that the time of salvation we  
may soon, soon see.

The euphoria of this song can be juxtaposed with the following one which describes the hardships of pioneer life on the frontier and of beginning over and over again:

1. *O ihr lieben Bunds-Genossen,  
die ihr bisher unverdrossen  
euren Samen ausgestreuet  
unter vielem Kampf und Streit,*

O dear fellow covenanters,  
you have been uncomplainingly  
sown your seeds  
under much struggle and strife.

2. *tut in Hoffnung euch mit freuen,  
euer Same wird gedeihen  
und im Segen wachsen aus  
unter vielem hartem Strauß.*

join the hopeful rejoicing,  
your seeds will sprout  
and grow in blessing  
after many hard battles.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>3. <i>Müsst ihr schon mit Schmerzen säen,<br/>oft betrübt und traurig gehen,<br/>so wird doch die Ernte-Zeit<br/>euch versüßen alles Leid.</i></p>   | <p>Even if you must sow in pain,<br/>often walk in sadness and sorrow,<br/>still, the harvest time will<br/>sweeten for you all your sufferings.</p> |
| <p>4. <i>Ist vertrocknet euer Saft<br/>und verzehrt die Lebens-Kraft,<br/>O so dringt in Gott hinein,<br/>der wird euer Labsal sein</i></p>             | <p>If your sap is dried up<br/>and your life force used up,<br/>O, then immerse yourselves in God,<br/>he will be your refreshment</p>               |
| <p>5. <i>und euch schenken neue Kräfte,<br/>um zu treiben fein Geschäfte,<br/>wozu ihr berufen seid<br/>und so werdet ganz befreit</i></p>              | <p>and give you new strength<br/>to pursue the tasks<br/>to which you have been called,<br/>and thus become completely free</p>                      |
| <p>6. <i>von den Lasten, die euch drücken<br/>und den Geist oft niederbücken<br/>dass er nicht kann steigen auf,<br/>zu vollführen seinen Lauf.</i></p> | <p>of the burdens that lie heavy on you<br/>and that often bow the spirit down,<br/>so that it cannot rise<br/>to complete its course.</p>           |
| <p>7. <i>Wenn ihr dann so seid genesen<br/>in dem wahren Gottes-Wesen,<br/>O so fangt aufs neue an,<br/>fort zu geh'n die Lebens-Bahn.</i></p>          | <p>When you have been made whole/healed<br/>in the true being/essence/nature of God,<br/>O, then start anew<br/>to continue on your life's path.</p> |
| <p>8. <i>So werd' ich auch mit bewogen<br/>und mein Geist wird angezogen<br/>durch die starke Liebes-Macht,<br/>die uns hat zusammen 'bracht,</i></p>   | <p>Then I shall also be motivated,<br/>and my spirit will be attracted<br/>through the strong power of love,<br/>that has brought us together,</p>   |
| <p>9. <i>dass wir laufen treulich fort,<br/>bis wir zu der Himmels-Pfort'<br/>allzusammen gehen ein,<br/>wo die Frommen Gottes sein.</i></p>            | <p>so that we continue to run<br/>until we at the heavenly portal<br/>enter all together,<br/>where God's devout are.</p>                            |

As many celibates before them, the Harmonists found consolation and achieved sublimation through devotion to the divine *Sophia* of the mystics, about whom many of the songs are written. The following serves as example, although here *Sophia* is also understood as a mother figure and divine protector until the grave.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. <i>O Sophia, Tewe, Holde,<br/>deren Anblick mit entzückt,<br/>mit dem reinsten, feinsten Golde<br/>bist du köstlich ausgeschmückt.<br/>Gönne mir dein Liebs-Begehnen,<br/>fülle mich mit Ehrfurcht an;</i></p> | <p>O Sophia, dear one, lovely one,<br/>whose sight delights me,<br/>the purest, finest gold<br/>preciously adorns you.<br/>Grant me the contentment/pleasure of your love,<br/>fill me with adoration;</p> |
|--|--|

*lass dir meine Augen sagen,  
was mein Mund nicht fassen kann.*

let my eyes tell you  
what my mouth cannot express.

2. *Deiner Farben Schönheit Blüte,  
deiner Wangen Heiterkeit,  
ach, dein Herz voll Himmelsgüte,  
das der Unschuld nie entweicht;  
deiner Augen stilles Feuer,  
drin der Liebe Glut mir flämmt,  
hat die Saiten meiner Leier  
dir harmonisch mit gestimmt.*

The bloom of your complexion's/colors' beauty,  
your cheeks' cheerfulness,  
o, your heart filled with heavenly benevolence,  
that never flees innocence;  
the quiet fire of your eyes,  
in which the heat of love burns for me,  
the strings of my lyre  
all this has tuned harmoniously.

3. *Ach wie reizend bist du, Schöne,  
überall seh' ich dein Bild;  
wie aus freundlich zarter Miene  
die Annehmlichkeit mir quillt.  
Götterfreude! Ruft der Bach.  
Auch in kühlen Morgendüften  
such ich deinen Tritten nach.*

o how charming you are, beautiful one,  
everywhere I see your image;  
how from kind, tender mien  
pleasure/contentment springs up for me.  
Joy of the gods! the brook is shouting.  
Even in cool morning scents  
I follow your footsteps.

4. *Schönste Sophie, kann dies Wallen,  
die Beklemmung meiner Brust,  
kann ein Herze dir gefallen,  
das der Treue ist bewusst?  
Dann so schau mit holden Blicken  
deiner Götterhuld dahin,  
was für Wonne und Entzücken  
fasst den tief verliebten Sinn.*

Most beautiful Sophia, can this seething,  
the tightness in my breast,  
can a heart please you  
that keeps the faith?  
Then turn the kind gaze  
of your divine grace there;  
what pleasure and delight  
grips the deeply enamored mind/soul.

5. *Ganz für dich allein zu leben,  
O Sophia, welch ein Glück,  
wenn viel keusche Geister schweben,  
Gold geschwing, um meinen Blick.  
Offen, klar und morgenhelle  
wird's in meinem trüben Sinn;  
schwebend wie in Silber-Wellen  
eil ich, bis ich bei dir bin.*

To live entirely for you,  
o Sophia, what bliss,  
when many chaste spirits hover,  
golden, around my gaze.  
open, clear, and morning-bright  
my sad/dim senses become;  
hovering, as if on silver waves  
I hurry until I have come to you.

6. *Ach so führ mit Mutter-Händen  
mich vom Tränen-Berg herab;  
weissst, Gefahr und Not zu wenden,  
bist der Schutzgott bis zum Grab.  
Prächtig zierest du mein Kleide,  
mit dem goldenen Freiheits-Licht;  
und die himmlisch Strahlen-Freude  
rötet mir das Angesicht.*

O, lead me with the hands of a mother  
down from the mountain of tears;  
you can avert danger and misery,  
you are the guardian god until the grave.  
Splendidly you adorn my garment  
with the golden light of freedom;  
and the heavenly radiant joy  
reddens my face.

Most of the songs with nature motifs are purely secular poems, as the following one:

1. *An einem feierlichen Morgen,  
die Sonne ruhte duftig frisch,  
noch tief im Horizont verborgen  
wie Lieb im rosigen Gebüsch.  
Schon richtet leise Morgenkühl'  
die Blumen auf in jedem Kranz,  
der Hain, als ob er singend fühlt',  
taucht ihre Kronen all in Glanz  
und himmlisch tönte der Gesang*

One festive morning,  
the sun was lingering fragrantly fresh  
still low on the horizon,  
like love in rosy shrubbery.  
Now silently slight morning coolness raises  
the flowers up in every wreath,  
the grove, as if it, singing, felt,  
dips the treetops in light  
and heavenly sounded the singing.

2. *Jetzt fliegen die strahlten Tor'  
des jungen Tages flammend auf,  
in goldenen Wolken führt Aurora  
mit ihrem Götter-Zug herauf.  
Von schönem Purpurlichte glüht  
Gebirg und Hügel auf und ab,  
die Lüfte warfen Rosenblüthe  
auf die entzückte Flur herab,  
begeistert rauschten alle Bäum'.*

Now open the shining doors  
of the new day as if in flames,  
in golden clouds Aurora walks  
at the head of her train of the gods.  
In beautiful crimson light is glowing  
mountains and hills, high and low,  
the breezes scattered rose petals  
on the delighted meadows,  
enthusiastic, all trees rustled.

3. *Der Lenz belebt die Felsen-Mau'r  
zur schönen blühenden Gestalt  
und haucht geheimnisvolle Schau'r  
von schöner Ahnung in den Wald:  
wie trunken taumeln Laub und Halm,  
durch die ein geistig Säusel'n fuhr,  
in vollem Rauschen schon die Palm'  
begrüßt die Mutter der Natur  
und hebt bescheiden Kranz empor.*

Springtime brings the rock face to life  
embodying it with blossoming beauty  
and breathing mysterious showers  
of lovely anticipation into the woods:  
as if intoxicated, leaves and grasses sway,  
through which a spirit-breeze had blown,  
with loud rustling the palm tree  
greet the mother of nature,  
lifting up a modest wreath.

4. *Nun wehen süße Nymphen-Stimmen  
durch die besellte Maienluft  
von fernem Ufern her und schwimmen  
in wallendem Orangen-Duft:  
Der Friede rauscht im Grün der Blätter  
von Tauben-Zärtlichkeit umgirt  
dem Feste zu der Mensch-Götter,  
zur Freude Menschen führen wird,  
bei welcher Himmels-Lüfte wehn.*

Now the sweet voices of nymphs waft  
through the animated May air  
from distant shores, swimming  
on air-borne scent of oranges:  
Peace rustles in the green leaves,  
surrounded by the caressing cooing of the doves  
to the feast of the earthling gods,  
leading human beings to a joy,  
where heavenly breezes are blowing.

5. *Jetzt fliegt aus einer Rosenlaub'  
ein sanfter Flötenton empor,  
sanft wie das Gurren einer Taub',  
so in dem Echo sich verlor:  
Er singt dem Lenz, der frisch und luftig*

Now wafts from a rose bower  
the soft sound of a flute,  
soft like the cooing of a dove,  
that was lost in its echo:  
He sings of springtime that, fresh and airy,

*bekränzt am Zedern Walde steht  
und singet ihn so rosenduftig  
dass er die Wangen überweht!*

is standing wreathed by the cedar forest,  
singing it so full of the scent of roses  
that it brushes the cheeks!

Motifs from the tradition of the Freemasons occur in several texts, with the text of the famous aria from Mozart's opera *Magic Flute*, "*In diesen heil'gen Hallen kennt man die Rache nicht*" as the outstanding example.

## Conclusion

The hymnal of the Harmony Society differs from the hymn books of other German religious communal societies in America in three important aspects. First, it reflects not only the theology of the society but also the cultural interests and activities of its members. The Harmonists were not only religious enthusiasts but also extremely efficient agriculturalists, tradespeople, merchants, and manufacturers who cultivated and relished the fine arts in their leisure time. *Hausmusik*—with their own compositions, concerts, and public readings—were part of the Harmonists' lifestyle.

Second, only very few hymn texts were taken from the general stock of German hymnody; many are purely secular poems. The Harmonists compiled a hymn book out of texts some of which they had written themselves and others that they very probably had found in secular sources. It was a hymnbook that was tailor-made to their own needs and tastes.

Third, the publisher of the hymn book is known by name. It was the Society's earlier-mentioned physician, Johann Christian Müller, who hailed from Heimerdingen, district of Leonberg. Just as George Rapp had left his stamp of the Harmony Society, could Müller have left his own personal stamp on their hymn book?

There were no further editions of *Harmonisches Gesangbuch* after its first in 1827. It even fell into some disuse in the course of time and other hymnals were occasionally used. The Harmony Society experienced its time of greatest flowering under the patriarchal leadership of George Rapp. Although very successful economically under his successor, the religious community gradually met its demise, paralleling the fate of its 1827 hymnal.

## Notes

1. *Harmonisches Gesangbuch. Theils von andern Authoren, Theils neu verfaßt. Zum Gebrauch für Singen und Musik für Alte und Junge. Nach Geschmack und Umständen zu wählen gewidmet* (Oekonomie, Beaver County, im Staat Pennsylvanien, 1827)
2. Karl J. R. Arndt, ed., *Economy on the Ohio 1826-1834. The Harmony Society during the period of its greatest power and influence and its Messianic crisis.* (Worcester: The Harmony Society Press, 1984), xvi.
3. Aaron Williams, *The Harmony Society, at Economy, Penn'a. Founded by George Rapp, A.D. 1805* (Pittsburgh: W. S. Haven, 1866), 96ff.
4. Julian Rauscher, “Des Separatisten G. Rapp Leben und Treiben,” *Theologische Studien aus Württemberg* 6 (1885): 295.
5. Richard D. Wetzel, *Frontier Musicians on the Connoquenessing, Wabash, and Ohio. A History of the Music and Musicians of George Rapp's Harmony Society (1805-1906)* (Athens [Ohio]: Ohio University Press, 1976), [37]-70. Wetzel does not realize (p. 38, footnote 3) that *Davidisches Psalter-Spiel* and *Das Kleine Davidische Psalterspiel* are two different hymn books. The latter was the first hymn book printed for the *Schwarzenau Täufer* (present-day Church of the Brethren and its branch denominations); see Hedwig T. Durnbaugh, *The German Hymnody of the Brethren 1720-1903* (Philadelphia: Brethren Encyclopedia, Inc. 1986). *Davidisches Psalter-Spiel* went through eight editions: [Schaffhausen], 1718; Schaffhausen, 1729; Homburg vor der Höhe, 1740; Frankfurt/Main, 1753; Büdingen, 1755 and 1805; Gießen, 1842; Ebenezer, N.Y., 1854.
6. *Harmonisches Gesangbuch* (Allentown: Heinrich Ebner, 1820).
7. *Eine kleine Sammlung Harmonischer Lieder als die erste Probe der anfangenden Druckerey anzusehen* (Harmonic, Indiana, 1824).
8. *Davidisches Psalter-Spiel der Kinder Zion's; von Allen und Neuen auserlesenen Geiste-Gesängen; Allen wahren Heyls-begierigen Säuglingen der Weisheit, Insonderheit aber denen Gemeinden des Herrn, Zum Dienst und Gebrauch mit Fleiß zusammengetragen, und in gegenwärtig-beliebiger Form und Ordnung, Nebst einem doppelten darzu nützlichen und der Materian halben nöthigen Register, ans Licht gegeben.* [s.l.: s.n.], 1718. This hymn book was widely used in Europe where it was published in seven editions, with the eighth printed in America.
9. Karl J. R. Arndt, ed., *George Rapp's Separatists, 1700-1903. The German Prelude to Rapp's American Harmony Society. A Documentary History* (Worcester: Harmony Society Press, 1980), 442-49.