

Collection Summary

ID Number: CS 232

Title: Friendship Community

Extent: 1 Folder(s)

Span Dates: 1975

Language: English

Geographic Location: Buffalo, Missouri

Abstract: This collection consists of an article written about the community.

Selected Search Terms

Subjects: Communal living; Collective settlements; Housing, Cooperative; Collective farms; Commune; Longley, Alcander, 1832-1918; Utopian socialism

Historical Notes: Born in Oxford, Ohio, on March 31, 1832, the son of a Universalist minister, Alcander Longley's childhood and early manhood included unique opportunities to experience Utopian life. Between 1844 and 1846 he lived with his parents at the Clermont, Ohio, phalanx colony and as a teenager joined the famous North American Phalanx in Monmouth County, New Jersey. In the mid-1850s Longley even founded his own but short-lived phalanx at Moore's Hill, Indiana.⁵⁰ All of these Utopian communities practiced communal living based on Albert Brisbane's 1840 discourse, *Social Destiny of Man*. In this work Brisbane introduced to the American people the theories of the French reformer and Utopian, Charles Fourier. In the late 1860s, after failing in additional attempts to establish successful phalanx-like colonies in the Old Northwest region, Longley and his wife became probationary members of the Icarian community near Corning, Iowa. This Utopian colony consisted of French-speaking communists who, while living in Nauvoo, Illinois, had refused to follow Etienne Cabet to St. Louis and had subsequently migrated to western Iowa. For reasons that are unclear, the Longleys withdrew after several months and moved to St. Louis. Here he began publication of a Utopian newspaper, *The Communist*. In an early issue of *The Communist* Longley expressed his philosophy of utopianism. He noted that man could only be in harmony with himself when he acted "in unison with his fellows." He, therefore, believed that it would be necessary to reorganize society "on the basis of mutual assistance, cooperative labor and common property. Longley's demand for common property indicates that he now had rejected the Brisbane-Fourier concept of joint-stock ownership and had accepted the basic tenets of Icarian communism. Longley's first Missouri Utopian colony, Reunion, began to take shape shortly after his arrival in St. Louis. For the next two and one-half years, the Reunion colony struggled to become a successful Utopian experiment. However, internal wrangling over marriage and sexual practices, exacerbated by continual financial problems, resulted in dissolution of the colony by December 1870.

The failure of the Reunion colony did not deter Longley from founding still another Utopian community. During the winter of 1871-1872 the indefatigable Utopian visited the Buffalo area in Dallas County to select an appropriate location for his new "Friendship Community." Longley planned to exercise more personal control over the new colony's affairs than he had at Reunion, thereby hoping to prevent internal dissent and financial problems. In the spring of 1872 Longley recruited a handful of followers, including William H. Bennett, "a gentleman of some property," and launched his second Missouri Utopian settlement. At Bennett's insistence and with his financial backing, the colonists leased a hotel, the Ohio House, and opened a general store in Buffalo. This gave them suitable living accommodations and an outlet for their corn and truck-garden goods which they raised on a nearby farm. Bennett, however, soon

became disgruntled over the colony's failure to grow, and withdrew, "taking with him the hotel, the co-operative store and the forty acres of corn—pretty much all there was to the concern, except the membership." Although the loss of William Bennett and his financial support proved to be a severe blow to the Friendship Community, it was not a fatal one. Longley quickly raised \$500 and purchased an unimproved farm four and one-half miles west of Buffalo. The colony's inauspicious beginning did not prevent Longley from either seeking new members or implementing his Utopian plans. Depressed conditions coming in the wake of the Panic of 1873 caused Friendship's membership to increase. Unemployed artisans and factory workers, mostly from Missouri, joined the colony, seeking temporary relief from hard times. With the return prosperity, however, the colony's membership rapidly dwindled. Sensing that new members could not be recruited and facing a financial crisis, Longley liquidated Friendship's holdings early in 1877.

http://capro.info/Cults_and_Isms/Mormonism/Research/Missouri_Historical_Review/1971_10_Missouris_Utopian_Communities-H._Roger_Grant.pdf

Administrative Information

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Contents	Date	Container	Location
Grant, H. Roger. "Alcander Longley and the Friendship Community: An 1872 Account."	1975	Folder 1	Filing Cabinet 13-B