Soil and the Soul: The Healing Effects of Farming in Nineteenth-Century America

An Honors Thesis for the Department of History

Perri Meldon

Tufts University 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

> Our objects, as you know, 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;…and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose regulations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life, than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions…
>
> To accomplish these objects, we propose to take a small tract of land, which, under skillful husbandry, uniting the garden and the farm, will be adequate to the subsistence of the families; and to connect with this a school or college, in which the most complete instruction shall be given, from the first rudiments to the highest culture. Our farm would be a place for improving the race of men that lived on it; thought would preside over the operations of labor, and labor would contribute to the expansion of thought; we should have industry without drudgery, and true equality without its vulgarity."[1]

In 1840 George Ripley wrote to Ralph Waldo Emerson, announcing that he was to establish a community out in West Roxbury, Massachusetts. This community, which came to be known as Brook Farm, was intended as a gathering site for thinkers and workers, a place where all coalesced around the farm. There these community members sought to rebuild their connection with nature, something they thought they had lost with the rise of industrialization and urbanization. By working with the soil, these individuals believed that they would be able to purify themselves and restore their spirituality. According to certain groups of thinkers in the nineteenth-century, farming held the possibility of a transformative healing, and this therapeutic technique was not limited to the Transcendentalist community. Farming was widely viewed as a promising solution to a number of problems in nineteenth-century American society, especially poverty, dissatisfaction with industrialism, and mental illness. Many physicians, philosophers, and public administrators agreed, as Ripley indicated here in his letter, that sowing the land

[1] George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, November 9, 1940. Originally published in O.B. Frothingham, *George Ripley* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882): 307-312. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958).

strengthened the mind and body. The use of agriculture was used across many different institutions, with the overall aim of improving the American people.

Why did a number of establishments consider farming as having many practical benefits? Among almshouses and other institutions working with the poor, it was believed that farming served the purpose of providing work structure and sustenance, as well as a means of saving money. The objective of the almshouse farm was to feed the inmates and cut costs by eliminating the need for outside sourcing. Farming at mental hospitals had a similar appeal, but utilized the therapeutic ideas of agriculture that came from practices in Europe. Psychologists at mental hospitals in Europe reported that patients who worked with soil experienced healing benefits to their souls. Similarly, some philosophers and pastors, often tied to the Transcendentalist community, believed that farming built a spiritual connection between individuals with nature. These ideas built on a tradition of the myth of American agriculture, where the farmer was held up to a heroic status. The farmer, as imagined among nineteenth-century Americans, represented self-sufficiency and self-improvement, and this idea was transposed to these institutions and communities in the nineteenth century. The word "healing" is used loosely to refer to the benefits received from farming across many institutions. Here, this thesis explores the healing qualities of working with the land, be it through providing labor and employment, relieving mental instabilities, or connecting with nature in a spiritual way. With this in mind, the phrase, "soil and the soul," harks back to the writings of many Transcendentalist and nineteenth-century philosophers who examined the connections that individuals built when they went "back to the land."

This thesis uses the example of almshouses, mental hospitals, and Transcendentalist utopian communities to examine the rise, fall, and recurring cycle of the belief that farming was

a cure for society's ills in nineteenth-century America. It argues that sowing the ground and working with the soil was considered good for the soul, according to these institutions and communities. With a number of most Transcendentalist communities, mental hospitals, and almshouses rejecting the sole use of farming by the mid- to late 1800s, agriculture faded from popularity and other practices were utilized. However, the presence of farming in the nineteenth century was just one part of a recurring cycle of the popularity of agriculture, as can be seen by the number of agrarian revivals in the early twentieth century, 1960s, and today. By analyzing these three movements in the context of industrialization and religious revivalism, particularly in New England, this thesis examines why farming became the predominant activity utilized by a number of nineteenth-century institutions, and why the ideal faded and transformed in the later decades of the 1800s.

Agriculture and Industrialization

In examining what many early to mid-nineteenth century Americans thought about farming's curative promise, it is necessary to explore the root causes that inspired the therapeutic use of farming. The idea of cultivation of the land as inherently virtuous and uniquely American has been deeply entwined in US thought and policy, with Thomas Jefferson promoting agrarian ideals in the late eighteenth century. Jefferson believed that the American farmer represented patriotism and independence in both his connection to the land and love for his country. These agrarian virtues were emphasized in early American society, but transformed with political and economic changes of the 1800s.[2] The idea of farming as therapeutic was in part a reaction against industrialization, as the American experience changed tremendously between the

[2] Peter S. Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2000.

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The small-farm New England farming family was largely reliant on subsistence agriculture through the beginnings of the nineteenth century, as the mid-Atlantic and South commercialized their agricultural economy. The fertile soil of the southern colonies promoted the commercialization of farming, which increased the demand for labor in the South and gave way to the urbanization of villages and cities.[3] Northern manufacturing relied on this Southern economy as the region depended on cotton and other goods from the more favorable climate and soil in the southern colonies. Manufacturing became an importance source of employment, especially once agriculture in New England faced competition from westward expansion. With nutrient poor-soil and the encroachment of Midwest agriculture, New England sought to rebuild its economy beyond one reliant on farming.[4]

The influence of industrialization spread through New England in the first decades of the nineteenth century, and enacted monumental change upon the American people in general. According to Walter Licht, industrialization can be defined as the switch from an agricultural-based society to one dependent on manufacturing and the development of factories. The United States, as inspired by the wave of industrialization in England, shifted to such a society in the early 1800s, becoming a more capitalistic and market-oriented system. The process of industrialization and the rise of capitalism was a long and uneven process with many criticisms received along the way, as will be explored later in this thesis. A number of factors enforced industrialization, including an array of natural resources, a history of trade, increasing population, and a greater demand for commercial products.[5]

Industrialization changed the face of New England from merely a settlement of pastoral, church-centered communities to ones heavily dependent on rivers and the factories that were

[3] Walter Licht, *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1995), 8.
[4] David R. Meyer, *The Roots of American Industrialization* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2003), 163.
[5] Licht, *Industrializing America*, 40.

constructed beside them. Shoemaking and textile factories emerged throughout the Northeast, as individuals with capital in New England shifted to and invested in manufacturing. Technological innovation went hand in hand with the development of new consumer goods and markets.[6] The nation's product variety, diversity of work setting, specialization in both operations and products, and the varied sizes of businesses spurred the development of metropolitan areas.[7] The increased consumption of manufactured goods decreased prices, and created a competitive market focused on efficiency.[8] Improvements in agricultural productivity, reduced prices in food, land scarcity, and a search for capital all contributed to decreased wages for farm laborers. These laborers left and abandoned farms in search of other jobs, oftentimes turning to urban areas where there were greater opportunities for employment.[9] This, as Alexander Keyssar writes, was one of the effects of the severing of the link between agriculture and industrialization. In addition to the decline of household manufacturing and the increase in employment of full-time industrial workers, more people were leaving their farms and staying in industrialized areas as they started their families.[10]

The success of the business sector that emerged from industrialization was also challenged by a number of complaints, in part deriving from a recurring cycle of booms and busts in the economy, as well as concerns about the loss of the agricultural origins of America. Arguments arose that base laborers had become mere cogs in a capitalist machine. Reform leaders focused on moral and spiritual health, as well as social justice, demanded that labor be only one aspect, rather than all-consuming, of an individual's life. They demanded a more egalitarian society where there was a smaller gap between the upper and lower classes. Among

---

[6] Meyer, *Roots of American Industrialization*, 64.
[7] Licht, *Industrializing America*, 33.
[8] Meyer, *Roots of American Industrialization*, 6.
[9] Ibid, 23.
[10] Alexander Keyssar, *Out of Work: The First Century of Unemployment in Massachusetts* (New York: Cambridge University, 1986), 17.

these reform leaders, the Unitarian minister, Theodore Parker, spoke out on several socioeconomic issues of the time in his "Thoughts on Labor," published in *The Dial*, the Transcendentalist newsletter, in 1841. Parker saw labor as a gift, though he recognized that others saw it as the greatest loss brought on by the Fall of Adam. He identified a trend of children rejecting their parents' hard work and toils with the plough, as if this were an embarrassing occupation.[11] This was problematic, for, not only was agriculture the foundation of America, it was also the foundation of any society. Farming feeds the people. It is a vital and needed component that, according to Parker, should not be treated with disdain. Rather, he argued that it was a greater sin that the wealthier classes were treated better than the working class.

Historically, a tension has always existed around the social status of laborers, being denounced for working with their hands while maintaining some mythical status as the backbone of American self-sufficiency. Parker wrote that "[t]he class of Mouths oppresses the class of Hands, for the strongest and most cunning of the latter are continually pressing into the ranks of the former, and while they increase the demand for work, leave their own share of it to be done by others."[12] Parker used the imagery of "Mouths" and "Hands" throughout his essay. The mouths, that Parker contrasted to the laboring hands, devour all there is for consumption. As capitalism took root in America's industrializing society, people seemingly lost sight of the value of working for others. The national culture exuded a more competitive atmosphere, rather than

---

[11] Theodore Parker, "Thoughts on Labor," in *The Critical and Miscellaneous Writings of Theodore Parker* (Boston: Rufus Leighton, 1859), 124, accessed April 16, 2013, http://books.google.com/books?id=EGyLAXKavgAC&pg=PA123&lpg=PA123&dq=theodore+parker+thoughts+on+labor&source=bl&ots=_Vda1Pb4Rh&sig=IxeNR-KHiMeHLlzTkEDwuR2cvHc&hl=en&sa=X&ei=0-pFUfCjBc--4APD_YDoDw&ved=0CDAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=theodore%20parker%20thoughts%20on%20labor&f=false.

[12] Ibid, 132.

being more egalitarian in nature. According to Parker, any man who worked purely for himself was worthy of being stripped of his dignity.

Parker called for reform of the age-old division between economic classes, demanding that they work together to labor and feed the other. He argued in favor of remodeling society toward one that focused more on cultivation of the self through labor. He contended that

> the work of a farmer... is a school of mental discipline... Each day makes large claims on him for knowledge, and sound judgment. He is to apply good sense to the soil. Now these demands tend to foster the habit of observing and judging justly; to increase thought, and elevate the man.[13]

Parker used the farmer as an example of a profession worthy of this remodeled society he proposed. Besides just providing a harvest for himself, his family, and possibly a wider community, the farmer must also know the seasons and changes in the land. This integrated job must occupy an individual nearly all day, so Parker argued that the farmer must really love it in order to pursue it. The love and patience Parker believed one garnered from farming may be seen as giving way to cultivation of the soil, as well as the soul. By achieving these qualities, Parker saw that the farmer becomes a more active participant in and contributor to society. The idea that agriculture had healing benefits was not limited to Parker and contributed to a broad set of movements that sought to reform and strengthen farming as well as often romanticize it.

Second Great Awakening

As industrialization spread across the US, a resurgence of Christianity also emerged among the American people; the Second Great Awakening encouraged the people to become religiously pure, reject the supposedly unnecessary material goods produced in the textile

[13] Ibid, 147-8.

factories, and appreciate the laborious tasks set in front of them. In the 1790s through the first decades of the 1800s, Christianity faced a decline with westward expansion and the post-war years of the American Revolution.[14] The large influx of immigrants and their migration west introduced a greater population of citizens, and this massive increase in population also presented a larger community of impoverished peoples. This poverty stemmed from a number of structural problems that clergymen sought to remedy through Christian revivalism. Such structural problems included, but were not limited to, "geographic mobility, status aspirations, alienation, class division, and the power of market values."[15] Orestes Brownson, a Unitarian minister and peripheral member of the Transcendentalist movement, argued that there was a need to revitalize God's work, where each man was equal to another. Brownson believed a true Christian reforms society according to God's will, and this belief, as advocated by Brownson and others, contributed to the Second Great Awakening in the United States.[16]

People may have taken comfort in religion during these periods of financial insecurity, as well as during the great migration from rural to urban areas.[17] Ministers preached that one's love for God would guide the believers, emphasizing that conversion was a spiritual experience of both the mind and body. Revivalism, defined as a preaching method that aims to immediately convert people to Christianity, became commonplace in the first decades of the nineteenth century.[18] At the same time, expansion of transportation allowed for a wider dissemination of Christian gospel. Preachers asked people to question the changing reality around them and how they could insert the purity of God's will into their lives.

---

[14] Barry Hankins, *The Second Great Awakening and the Transcendentalists* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 3.
[15] Anne C. Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement, 1830-1850* (New Haven: Yale University, 1981), 2.
[16] Philip F. Gura, *American Transcendentalism: A History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 138-139.
[17] Licht, *Industrializing America*, 71.
[18] Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movemen*t, 5.

As preachers of revivalism dared their audience to improve society, reform movements in New England were affected by the enthusiasms and social conscience of the Second Great Awakening. Among the preachers themselves, pulpit exchanges were common, where a number of ministers gathered and discussed philosophical, spiritual, and religious ideas.[19] These conversations were similar to the ones held among members of the Transcendental Club, and it is no coincidence that many of its members were also Unitarian ministers, as will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter Three. Ministers preached in favor of a simpler way of living, which was in direct response to the rise of industrialization. They argued that conversions led to contentedness with fewer worldly possessions. This desire for reform was a major component of the Second Great Awakening, as it was believed that anyone could choose to be saved. Christian followers were called to put their faith in action, which inspired the voluntary impulse to fix societal problems.[20]

William Ellery Channing, a prominent Unitarian minister in New England, argued that, as a result of industrialization, society had lost sight of some of its values. Though his lectures postdate the development of farming at almshouses and mental hospitals, Channing's ruminations were provoked by the impacts of industrialization and the Second Great Awakening. Channing was concerned with people's philosophical relationship with Christianity, and saw that each person contained an inherent godliness by which they could enact great change in society. In his speech, "Elevation of the Laboring Classes," Channing acknowledged that the lecture was unique to the time period of the 1840s when it was written. He gave this speech to an audience of mechanics, a group that emerged with the mechanization of production in the nineteenth century. Channing told the audience that

[19] Hankins, *Second Great Awakening and Transcendentalists*, 15.
[20] Ibid, 87.

> The wonders achieved by machinery are the common talk of every circle; but I confess that, to me, this gathering of mechanics' apprentices...is more encouraging than all the miracles of the machinist. In this meeting I see, what I desire most to see, that the mass of the people are beginning to comprehend themselves and their true happiness, that they are catching glimpses of the great work and vocation of human beings, and are rising to their true place in the social state.[21]

Channing considered the working man's interest in attending lectures on science and revolution as a great transformation in society. He was moved more by the attendance and interest of the mechanics than the advent of machinery. Channing, always emphasizing the greatness of man and his likeness to God, was moved by the workers' potential to find joy in their work. However, he believed that labor is only one form of work, and that "[s]tudy, meditation, society, and relaxation should be mixed up with his physical toils."[22] He argued that leisure is a necessary part of life, and individuals must integrate a philosophical attitude on life in order to find pleasure in the work that one does. Channing tried to elevate the status of manual labor, even while encouraging manual laborers to elevate their minds and souls.

Emphasizing hard work and self-sufficiency, much like the Jeffersonian ideal of the yeoman farmer in the late eighteenth century, Channing considered agriculture as being intrinsic to American culture. He believed the combination of physical and mental labor improved the individual and society overall:

> The body as well as the mind needs vigorous exertion, and even the studious would be happier were they trained to labor as well as thought. Let us learn to regard manual toil as the true discipline of a man. Not a few of the wisest, grandest spirits have toiled at the work-bench and the plough.[23]

Channing believed that the teaching of aesthetics improved both farming and mechanics, as it gave the farmer or mechanic a greater sense of reward. With the perceived decline of farming

---

[21] "Modern History Sourcebook: William Ellery Channing (1780-1842): On The Elevation of The Laboring Classes, 1840," last modified August 1998, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1840channing-labor.asp.
[22] Channing, "Laboring Classes."
[23] Ibid.

and the increase of urbanization, he saw society as having become more dependent on a competitive market, and people more likely to cheat one another out of honest work. Channing, like Jefferson and others who promoted an agrarian philosophy, believed that a society of disciplined, self-sufficient producers could strengthen the country.

~

This thesis aims to look at how farming was believed to be a solution for these societal problems plaguing nineteenth-century America. It focuses on three communities that put agrarian ideas into practice—almshouses, mental hospitals, and utopian communities—and the ways in which these three institutions and communities intersected with, differed from, and inspired each other. The use of farming as therapy and its so-called ability to cure society's ills has been explored in individual settings, but never as a general topic. Farming appears in a wider history of the institutions of mental hospitals, almshouses, and Transcendentalist communities, but it has never really been pulled out and addressed across these institutions and communities. It has been most explicitly addressed in the study of Transcendentalist and utopian communities, especially in works by the author Richard Francis, but has not been connected with the institutions that preceded them. [24] By viewing farming as a supposedly therapeutic method that cut across

[24] Philip F. Gura's *American Transcendentalism*, Anne C. Rose's *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*, and Barry Hankins's *The Second Great Awakening and the Transcendentalists* provide a background on the Transcendentalist movement. Walter Licht's *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century* and David R. Meyer's *The Roots of American Industrializaton* define the role that industrialization played in nineteenth-century America.For a detailed look at the almshouse experience, see David Wagner's *The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution*, Alexander Keyssar's *Out of Work: The First Century of Unemployment in Massachusetts*, Heli Meltsner's *The Poorhouses of Massachusetts: A Cultural and Architectural History*, and Michael B. Katz's *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America.* For histories of the mental hospital in America, see *The State and the Mentally Ill: A History of Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, 1830-1920* by Gerald Grob, *The Mad among Us: A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill* by Gerald Grob, and *Discovery of the Aylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* by David J. Rothman. The author Richard Francis has explored Fruitlands and Brook Farm in his books *Fruitlands: the Alcott Family and Their Search for Utopia* and *Transcendental Utopias*. John Matteson also sheds light on Fruitlands in his book, *Eden's Outcasts: The Story of Louisa May Alcott and her Father*.

different institutions and societal classes, this thesis seeks to understand why and how farming was considered to be a solution to fixing nineteenth-century American problems.

The three chapters of this thesis span the nineteenth century chronologically; in doing so, this sheds light on how each of the farms at these institutions or communities emerged or changed as a result of societal demands and problems. The first chapter explores the almshouse and how the farm served the sole purpose of employing the inmates in order to relieve poverty. The almshouse was an institution fraught with problems, from financial resources to treatment of the inmates. The mental hospital grew out of the almshouse and forms the central focus for Chapter Two. The use of farming at mental hospitals expanded beyond just the need for employing the patients; psychologists argued that farming purified the soul and relieved the patients of their insanity. Similar to this belief, utopian communities advocated that farming cleansed the mind and body. However, Chapter Three indicates that utopian community members took it one step further by making the farming voluntary and an attempt at connecting spiritually with the earth. By examining these institutions and communities, this thesis seeks to understand why farming was considered as an antidote to societal problems in nineteenth-century America and how their missions affected the viability of a beneficial farming movement.

CHAPTER ONE
FARMING AS WORK: THE ALMSHOUSE

> If the poor are to be substantially benefited, they must be employed; it is therefore necessary, that while we provide for them a house, food and clothing, we must give them work suited to their age and strength; to this end it is found best to place them on a farm; from this produce of which they can have a supply of food; the men and boys can be constantly employed in cultivating the ground... and the women and girls, in spinning, weaving, knitting, &c. Placed in such a situation, they cannot easily obtain spirituous liquors; they are removed from the haunts of vice, and as they are regularly fed and employed, they become more healthy, and in fact more happy.[25]

When this statement was made in 1824, it was the sincere belief of John Yates, a government official in New York, and members of his committee that the almshouse must be improved from an inhumane stowaway of the poor and transformed into a revitalizing institution for the country's impoverished. The almshouse, interchangeably known as the poor house or workhouse, had been the United States' way of controlling and hiding the poor from the public eye, and a method of instilling fear for all prone to idleness. No one wanted to go to the almshouse: it was a filthy shelter for society's "degenerates," be they the insane, alcoholics, single mothers, orphans, or elderly. Though the almshouse endured through the nineteenth century, Yates and others advocated for the improvement of this institution. By installing a farm on the site of the almshouse, authorities such as the Overseers of the Poor gave the poor (or "inmates," as they were called) a source of work and a sense of purpose.

When studying the poor in America, it is important to remember that farming served not as a form of healing; it provided employment, and authorities agreed that this improved society and allowed it to prosper. The almshouse was the first institution to use farming as a way to solve societal problems, this particular problem being poverty. Though there has been no work pertaining directly to the history of almshouse farms, there have been a number of excellent

[25] John Yates's "Report of the Secretary of State in 1824 on the Relief and Settlement of the Poor" Reprinted from the *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the New York State Board of Charities*, January 28, 1901. In David J. Rothman, ed., *The Almshouse Experience: Collected Reports* (New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1971).

histories of the almshouse that refer to the existence of these farms. Alexander Keyssar gives a background on the history of poverty and unemployment in his book, *Out of Work: The First Century of Unemployment in Massachusetts*. This book provides the reader with an understanding of the shift from the eighteenth-century assumption that everyone could live self-sufficiently to the realization that the new industrial economy created a class of people who could not fend for themselves and should be supported to some extent by society. The almshouse emerged from the need to house the poor, and both Michael B. Katz and David Wagner shed light on this American establishment in *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* and *The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution*, respectively. Their texts provide an overview of the role of the almshouse in American history; Heli Meltsner, meanwhile, gives a more regional perspective in *The Poorhouses of Massachusetts: A Cultural and Architectural History*. Despite the thorough nature of these books, none provides a detailed look at the almshouse farm. This is a neglected piece of history that deserves some attention in order to understand the use of labor and the role that agriculture played in early American society.

Poverty and Idleness in the United States

Like any other country, the United States had always struggled with the poor, but the face of American poverty shifted between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The US was originally an agricultural economy dependent on seasons and side trades; for this reason, early American people were fairly self-sufficient and produced some or most of the food they ate. Before the nineteenth century, much of the country's population was concentrated in the Northeast or in regions where the farming season was regulated by climate. Labor and work

opportunities relied on seasonality; work came and went, so leisure was common and other laborious activities took the place of farming.[26] Leisure was a necessary component of eighteenth-century society, largely based on religious notions of Sabbath and made even more valuable due to the exhaustive work that came with self-sufficiency. Many families at this time were largely reliant upon home production. Early Americans often combined trades within their own households, such as farming in the summer, storing food in winter, and taking up crafts such as coopering, smithing, and manufacturing in the colder months. Much of these goods, such as leather and lumber, were produced on their farmsteads, so there wasn't the same need for outside materials that families wanted for in the 1800s.[27] Industrialization in the first half of the nineteenth century, however, allowed for more idleness.

In nearly every nineteenth-century text about poverty and how to deal with this issue, idleness arises as the number one problem that must be confronted and combatted. Moments free from work and labor were few and far between for the eighteenth-century household, so those times were cherished and usually limited to days of Sabbath. This idea had been emphasized in Puritanical society in New England, where repression of pleasure and dedication to labor were emphasized. For this reason, idleness was a rarity in eighteenth-century America, and the few who were considered idle—often due to their inability to work for various reasons—were outcasts from society. However, the rise of industrialization sometimes created an involuntarily idle group of people. As Keyssar indicates, the shift from a largely self-sufficient farming community to one rooted in farming "led to a pronounced decline in the control that many people wielded over the distribution of their own working and nonworking time."[28] In an industrial capitalist society, jobs required specialization, something that not all citizens were capable of

[26] Keyssar, *Out of Work*, 10.
[27] Ibid, 12.
[28] Ibid, 15.

doing. As the presence of idleness seemingly became more common, Americans came to believe that the state should take a role in moderate the effects of involuntary idleness, which came to be known as unemployment.

As industrialization spread, a massive influx in immigrants also arrived in the United States. Many of these immigrants spent all of their money to reach America, and oftentimes arrived poor and sick. In search of any job, these immigrants faced miserable work conditions, inadequate diets, poor sanitation, and insufficient medical care.[29] In farming communities, a surplus of immigrants offered to help, leading to an overabundance of seasonal farmhands. This reduced the income of seasonal laborers and left many migrants without jobs when the first frost arrived.[30] Crop failures also presented hardships on the harvest, and people moved west in search of more land. This shift in state populations contributed to the decline of agricultural economy in New England, as the west began to outcompete Northeastern farming. Many farmers faced periods without money, government aid, or a bountiful harvest to feed themselves and their families.[31] More people requested help from their local governments, and the government needed to respond to the increased necessity for aiding the poor.

It is worth noting that poverty and joblessness produced different consequences depending on people's race, gender, and country of origin. In New England in particular, a great number of Irish immigrants arrived in the first half of the nineteenth century. Their arrival increased the competition for work, as they largely clustered around cities.[32] Prejudices against the Irish and African-Americans challenged their likelihoods to work, as well as the type of work that they were offered. African Americans, Keyssar argues, may have actually been more likely

[29] Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 9.
[30] Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, 6.
[31] Keyssar, *Out of Work*, 16.
[32] Ibid, 18.

to find work, as they were often employed in service positions. These service positions were considerably steadier compared to work in factories, though African-Americans were also, though to a lesser extent, employed as agricultural workers and laborers.[33] Female labor, meanwhile, was largely dominated by single, widowed, or divorced women. It was expected that women were not to work continuously, and it was often assumed that women would work without pay. This is due to the ingrained tradition of women's focus on their families and homes; work outside of the home was considered only secondary.[34] As opportunity for permanent jobs emerged in the late-nineteenth century, however, it became more common for women to work year-round. Still, women were largely expected to be supported by men. Joblessness, though still a problem, was not as grave for women as it was for men.[35] Just as unemployment and the market economy had varied effects on different communities, it also impacted towns and local governments in a number of ways.

Methods of Dealing with Poverty, Pre-1820

Once the colonies established the United States, it was necessary to reevaluate their methods of dealing with poverty. Having once relied upon Great Britain's practices, the US government needed to weigh the most feasible and effective options as the number of poor increased. Colonial governments had originally relied upon the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601, which identified those in need of aid and based its classifications off of British family norms. First responsibility went to the family, followed by local government, and so on. The poor were

[33] Keyssar, *Out of Work*, 88. Though slavery in the South was contemporaneous with industrialization in the North and largely impacted how said industrialization progressed, this thesis chooses to focus solely on the Northern institutions that utilized farming. It is, however, worth considering the contrast between the simultaneously advocated ideas of farming as healing versus farming as slave labor.
[34] Ibid, 97.
[35] Ibid, 100-104.

divided between the "able-bodied," those who could function without the aid of others, and the "impotent," or the physically deficient.[36] In addition to this law, it was common in the United States to sell off and auction the poor to households in need of an extra hand. In many cases, farming families purchased paupers who worked in exchange for housing. These paupers were frequently treated inhumanely and suffered from disease and death as a result of neglectful conditions.[37] Precursors to welfare and institutionalization took the form of outdoor and indoor relief, respectively. Indoor relief included services, such as housing and caretaking, which were offered to paupers in an institutional setting. Outdoor relief provided financial aid to individuals who could take care of themselves and live on their own, but needed assistance due to physical ailments, financial instability, or other personal problems.[38] Outdoor relief was seen as a massive tax burden on the public, as many believed that all able-bodied men should find jobs instead of rely upon the public to care for them financially.[39] Overseers of the Poor recognized that the system for caring for the impoverished needed some revamping, and this came in the form of almshouses.

Though the first workhouse in Boston was built in 1662, the spread of almshouses and poor farms really took off in the early 1800s. Workhouses originally served the able-bodied and criminal poor, providing them with work in exchange for housing. Almshouses, which transformed and grew in popularity during the nineteenth century, sheltered the able-bodied, elderly, the indigent poor, and sometimes criminals, thus replacing the earlier workhouses of America. David Wagner identifies four purposes of the almshouse: to provide bare minimum services so inmates would not starve or take action against their masters, to categorize the groups

[36] Heli Meltsner, *The Poorhouses of Massachusetts: A Cultural and Architectural History* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2012), 7.
[37] David Wagner, *The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 8.
[38] Meltsner, *Massachusetts Poorhouses*, 11.
[39] Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse*, 38.

of people depending on their worthiness of support, to put them to useful work, and to enforce discipline against "intemperance and sexual immorality."[40] A handful of these almshouses had farms attached, for almost all reports stated that the best remedy to poverty was employment. A town report from Haverhill, MA, dating to 1821 states that "we believe the inhabitants of this town are generally satisfied that the farm will be, by far, the best method for supporting their poor." This almshouse hired a farmer and his wife to look after the inmates and teach them how to sow the land. These almshouses often had at least 30 acres of land to cultivate, on which a number of crops were to feed the poor.[41]

The Quincy and Yates Reports

By the second decade of the nineteenth century, many almshouses had become well established in their communities and required reevaluation. Almshouses were seen as blights upon the town, for they had become a place for merely housing the poor. The poor, however, often arrived with diseases, special needs, or addictions, and there were no facilities to improve the public health of the institution. Governments wanted to revamp this image, for they had not yet come up with any alternative to caring for the poor. As long as almshouses were to persist, local and state governments would need to change the general outlook and purpose of the institution.

In 1821 the state of Massachusetts organized a committee to evaluate the quality of poorhouses and how they could be improved; the committee's leader, Josiah Quincy III (will here on refer to him as Quincy or Josiah Quincy), argued in favor of the farm as a check against idleness and costly expenses. Quincy, a member of the famed Quincy family, served on the US

[40] Original source, as quoted in Wagner, *The Poorhouse*, 49.
[41] Wagner, *The Poorhouse*, 46.

Senate and was elected mayor of Boston five times. In 1820 he was asked by the House of Representatives to head a committee examining pauper laws. Quincy promoted farming, as it was believed that the able-bodied poor could help support the workings of the institution. In the summer months they could harvest produce to feed the inmates and sell the excess, thus cutting down costs of labor, purchasing food, and making up for debts by selling food to the public. Another town in the Report described how "the health, morals and comforts of the poor are much increased by employing them in cultivation of land, and it operates as a check upon those disposed to be idle and vagrants."[42] This labor, they argued, cleared paupers' minds of evil and inspired them to contribute to society. Despite the comfort some paupers found within the confines of the almshouse, this quotation cannot be considered as wholly accurate. The use of agriculture primarily served the function of reducing costs, and therefore often ignored the treatment purposes of the poor farm.

When weighing the costs and benefits of a farm on the site of an almshouse, it was necessary to consider the initial expenses of establishing such a farm. This concern was of the utmost importance for Josiah Quincy and government authorities, as taxes and debt were a constant concern when running almshouses. Though government aimed to reduce poverty, they were more intent on providing for the poor at the lowest cost possible. Unlike farms of the eighteenth century where families made many of their own tools on the property, institutionalized farms at almshouses usually relied on buying their tools from external resources. Additionally, it may have sometimes been necessary to hire other help if there were not enough able-bodied inmates, which would require extra costs. The Overseers of the Poor needed to take a leap of faith when building a farm on the property, assuming that the help of the able-bodied

[42] Josiah Quincy, "The Quincy Report on Poor Relief." In David J. Rothman, ed., *The Almshouse Experience: Collected Reports* (New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1971).

paupers and produce to feed the inmates would make up for the initial costs. Members of the Quincy Report did not doubt this.

> Let it be once settled, that all who are admitted into this Alms House will be required to work with constancy and diligence, and few of the idle or dissolute will incline to become its inhabitants. Thus the common stock of labor and industry will be increased, and institutions for the support of the poor, instead of being the means, as many political economists have supposed, of promoting indigence and idleness, will have a direct and certain tendency to suppress them.[43]

Here Quincy argued against critics of the almshouse who suggested that it was not a good way to spend money and relieve the poor. Critics believed that poorhouses enticed paupers to stay poor, for there they were ensured shelter and meals. However, Quincy argued that the requirement of labor served as a check to any possible idleness or increased costs to cover a greater population of the poor.

The Quincy Report was followed by the Yates Report in 1824, which similarly argued in favor of ways to cut down costs by putting inmates to work on the farm. This report, commissioned by the State of New York, was for the purpose of collecting information on poorhouses and offering suggestions for improvement. The report first proposed that newly established houses be connected to a farm with the "paupers there to be maintained and employed at the expense of the respective counties, in some healthful labor, chiefly agricultural, their children to be carefully instructed, and at suitable ages, to be put out to some useful business or trade."[44] Yates agreed with the earlier Quincy Report, stating that the almshouse farm should be more focused on teaching discipline and work ethic that could be translated to other settings, as well as enabling people to grow their own food. This idea was emphasized by the City of Amsterdam, NY, which contributed to the Yates Report by stating

[43] "Quincy Report."
[44] "Yates Report," 956.

> The remedy which has most been insisted on as a preventive, is the supplying of the poor with such description of labor as their talents and abilities will permit them to perform. This, if it could be effected, would no doubt tend to reduce the number of applications for public bounty. But the chief difficulty lies, in furnishing suitable labor for this description of persons, as those who apply for or require assistance, are principally such as have no mechanical profession, and consequently they are unable to perform any thing except the ordinary avocations of a laborer.[45]

Part of the almshouse's objective was to teach the pauper useful skills, and the construction of a farm introduced a learning experience for the inmates.

Agriculture was the most valuable life skill a pauper could learn, according to many town reports. On behalf of the state of Massachusetts, one government official posited "[t]hat of all modes of employing the labor of the pauper, *agriculture affords* the best, the most healthy, and the most certainly profitable, the poor being thus enabled to raise, always at least their own provisions."[46] Farming required excruciating and demanding work that rewarded both the farmer and his family. They directly reaped the benefits by eating their harvest, thus reinforcing the idea that farming was the most economical option for many impoverished families. This reflected the Jeffersonian idea that self-sufficiency and agrarianism were the backbone of a democratic citizenry. In New Castle, Delaware, paupers cost the institutions five cents per day, "owing to the supplies of meats, vegetables, butter, &c. raised on the farm attached to their poor house."[47]

The New Castle poor farm supported the idea of cost effectiveness, but certain barriers to feasibility existed, as identified by Heli Meltsner. The poor farm's constant demand for help often led to inadequately trained staff hired in sufficient numbers. Despite the Quincy and Yates' Reports calls for reform, serious change never happened because, as Heli Meltsner argues, the farms lacked the staffing and those who did work were often inexperienced with agriculture and

[45] Ibid, 1016.
[46] Ibid, 1075.
[47] Ibid, 1101.

working with the poor.[48] Though these reports recognized the needed changes, the infrastructural problems surrounding the almshouse and funds necessary for implementation remained unsolved.

Cost-Benefit Analysis of Poor Farms

Feasibility was not the only issue that threatened the almshouse; the specialization of institutions and redistribution of inmates further challenged the existence of farms. In 1842 in Massachusetts, town almshouses were institutionalized at the state level. The towns of Monson, Bridgewater, and Tewksbury housed special categories of the poor: the state almshouse for the chronic insane was located in Tewksbury; Monson held school-aged children; and Bridgewater controlled the criminal poor and insane.[49] Town almshouses continued to function, but their numbers were greatly reduced by the introduction of state poor institutions. Town farms struggled to provide for themselves, for many of their able-bodied poor had been relocated to larger state institutions. To make up for the loss of able-bodied individuals, the overseers of the poor often had to hire outside help to keep up with farming, as well as buy food that could not be supplied by the harvest. In an address to the Mayor of Salem, Massachusetts, it was declared that

> The far greater number of persons in the Alms House are prevented by age, mental or bodily infirmities, and other causes, from contributing towards their own maintenance… The small number of inmates of the House sufficiently able bodied to labor effectively on the Farm, has rendered it necessary to hire much labor in order to conduct its operations properly or render it successful.[50]

Part of the success of almshouses in the early 1800s, albeit also highly problematic, was the mixture of able-bodied and incapacitated poor in one place. The elderly and disabled would

[48] Meltsner, *Massachusetts Poorhouses*, 48.
[49] Ibid, 32.
[50] Reprinted from Address of the Mayor, March 1847, *Salem City Documents*, 10, in Piccarello, "Poverty, the Poor, and Public Welfare," 267. In Meltsner, *Massachuetts Poorhouses*, 68.

always need some sort of care, but the able-bodied poor had made the load easier for authorities by providing some of the work on site. In maintaining the able-bodied population, however, authorities also demanded higher taxes from the public and more services to care for the overall inmate population. Therefore, the presence of able-bodied poor created a catch-22 for government officials and the overseers of the poor.

Conclusion

Maintaining the poor farm became increasingly difficult due to institutional changes that brought with them even greater problems. In addition to challenges faced by the loss of able-bodied individuals to specialized institutions, the poor-relief system on the whole was threatened by a number of issues that arose concurrently across the United States. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution had spread across and affected all parts of the country. This increased the rural-to-urban migration and inspired more immigrants to cross the ocean to America. At the same time that there were a number of economic downturns, progress in the field of medicine and treatment greatly improved mortality rates. The increased life expectancy of people in general, combined with the financial struggles present due to economic crises, gave way to an overpopulation of the poor in almshouses.[51] Financial crises in 1873 and 1893 led to massive job cuts and a new wave of paupers, but by the late 1800s the face of the almshouse had changed.[52] It was increasingly understood that almshouses were a place for the elderly and helpless, as the mentally and physically handicapped were placed in other institutions and the able-bodied sought work.[53] No longer were they shelters for the able-bodied poor, as many of them were thrown in mental institutions, prisons, or back onto the street in search of

[51] Wagner, *The Poorhouse*, 61.
[52] Ibid, 75.
[53] Meltsner, *Massachusetts Poorhouses*, 76.

work; almshouses had too many to accommodate and too little space. By 1911, only six percent of inmates under 65 in all almshouses were able-bodied. By the 1930s, the large plots of land at almshouses were no longer in use; many acres were sold or rented, and today much of the land is still publicly owned or used as recreational space.[54]

If farming was to succeed as a practice for poorhouse inmates, plots of land, infrastructure, and financial provisions were necessary. The almshouse farm, however, was found not to be a sustainable endeavor. The able-bodied no longer sought jobs in farming, as fewer people wanted to return to labor-intensive land cultivation. Factory life became an easy way to find work and agriculture grew less feasible. Individuals struggling to stay afloat flocked to the cities in search of urban work. The employment of American citizens and how to provide for them financially persisted as a problem for government and all state-sponsored institutions for decades to come, and the image of the American farm and the work that came with it continued to shift with different movements that emerged throughout the nineteenth century.[55]

[54] Ibid, 79.

[55] The methods of caring for the poor have changed significantly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With the emergence of specific poverty aid group, welfare organizations concentrated on relieving the most poverty-stricken, whereas the Industrial Aid Society and labor unions—such as the American Federation of Labor, founded in 1887—provided support for the temporarily poor and jobless. According to Alexander Keyssar, who gives a more thorough examination of Massachusetts unemployment, by the late 1800s, "formal institutions played only a marginal, and in key respects insignificant, role in helping the unemployed to cope with the consequences of being out of work." Keyssar, *Out of Work*, 151.

CHAPTER TWO
FARMING AS THERAPY: THE MENTAL HOSPITAL

Government sought to relieve poverty in almshouses, but the inability to find a job was not the sole factor that contributed to the rise of those living with government aid. As is discussed in Chapter One, a significant percentage of the poor living in almshouses required extra care and services. The mental hospital first emerged in the early decades of the 1800s, providing a supposed sanctuary for those struggling with mental conditions. "Treatment" initially included solitary rooms, severe punishment, and mishandling of the patients. Eventually, however, hospital supervisors advocated the use of farming as therapy in the early nineteenth century, a technique that was already well established in Europe.

American psychiatrists looked to their European colleagues for sources of inspiration, as well as criticism, to shape the American mental asylum. Their findings led them to, among other therapeutic treatments, agriculture, something so ancient and against the grain of industrialization that many psychiatrists saw it as radical or improbable. As much of American society turned to factory work and business, the nineteenth-century asylum reverted to farming. By turning back to the land, patients nurtured themselves and the crops they harvested. Advocates of the mental hospital farm promoted the argument of farming one step further than that used at almshouses. At almshouses, the farm merely served as a way to employ the inmates. For the mental hospital patients of the 1800s, hospital directors argued that farming held therapeutic benefits, as well as a lesson in care for other living things.

A number of texts have examined the history of mental hospitals in the United States, but none have thoroughly explored the use of farming as therapy at these nineteenth-century institutions. For a detailed and philosophical background on the history of mental instability and hospitalization, Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of*

Reason provides an excellent analysis on society's changing perceptions of insanity. Foucault tells a history of how the treatment of and care for the insane was originally disciplined by monarchical rule, and over time these ideas shifted to ones focused on self-discipline and family care. In time, this gave way to the establishment of the mental hospital and therapeutic treatments both within and outside hospital facilities. David J. Rothman and Gerald Grob have built upon this history by analyzing the rise of mental hospitals in the US. Rothman's *Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* and Grob's *Mad Among Us: A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill* proved especially fruitful in providing a background for this thesis. Though both Rothman's and Grob's texts refer to the use of farming and its apparently healing qualities at a number of mental institutions, these books do not explore the reasons behind the argument for agricultural therapy. By using these books and a number of primary sources, this thesis expands upon a well-documented history and sheds light upon the lesser-known, yet still important, farming therapy that shaped it.

The European Influence

Bleeding, corporal, punishment, and seclusion were typical treatments for patients in European mental institutions during the eighteenth century; Philippe Pinel, however, did not consider these practices a solution for curing insanity. Pinel was a French doctor at the Salpêtrière and Bicêtre Hospitals in France, and, upon his appointment as physician, he was horrified to find what he described as the destitute and neglectful conditions in which his patients lived. Often hailed as the "father of modern psychiatry," Pinel advocated for the use of moral therapy, a treatment that emphasized exercise, recreation, employment, and as little use of mechanical restraint as possible. He believed that changes to one's environment—in particular,

something other than the dirty and unkempt confines of the hospital—could improve the patient's state of mind.[56] Pinel, first and foremost a man of science, argued his points by backing them with scientific reason. "Recreation and hard work arrest the senseless and incoherent speech of the alienated, prevent cerebral congestion, distribute the circulating blood more uniformly, and dispose towards a more tranquil slumber."[57]According to Pinel, the absence of labor induced innumerable health problems. In order to avoid the extra costs and care of unhealthy patients, it would be beneficial, he stated, to employ the patients in some form of work.

Pinel argued for such labor in the form a farm, stating that

> ...it would be desirable to add a large enclosure to every hospital for the alienated, to be converted into a sort of farm where the work in the fields would be performed by the convalescent patients and where the products of the farm would be used for their consumption and help defray the hospitals.[58]

Pinel's argument was not just for the benefit of the patients; much like the case of poorhouses discussed in Chapter One, a farm was also an economical option for the staffing. The board of directors could cut costs by employing the patients and using their skills to harvest the hospital's produce. It was an optimal situation for both the hospital staff and inmates, as it gave inmates purpose to their time there. According to hospital staff, patients could feel good about helping with the operations of the hospital, that they were a vital contribution to its workings. Working patients made the hospital more functional, as well as the patient himself. Pinel proposed that the farm served as

> a sort of counterpoise to the mind's extravagances by the attraction and the charm inspired by the cultivation of the fields, by the natural instinct that leads man to sow the

[56] Gerald N. Grob, *The Mad among Us: A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 27.
[57] Philippe Pinel, "Medical Philosophical Treatise on Mental Alienation," in *Occupational Therapy Source Book*, ed. Sidney Licht (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1948), 20.
[58] Pinel, "Medical Philosophical Treatise on Mental Alienation," 20-21.

> earth and thus to satisfy his needs by the fruit of his labors. From morning on, you can see them... leaving gaily for the various parts of a vast enclosure that belongs to the hospital… The most constant experience has indicated, in this hospital, that this is the surest and most efficacious way to restore man to reason.[59]

Here he argues that it improved patients' states of mind due to the aesthetic pleasure that came from being outdoors, as well as by the tangible result of reaping the harvest. Pinel indicates that it is necessary to balance mental and physical stimulation in order to relieve insanity.

Pinel's beliefs were later put into practices at the Farm of St. Anne, which was affiliated with the Bicêtre and Salpêtrière Hospitals in Paris in the 1830s and '40s. A portion of the 1200 patients were offered labor, reading, writing, music lessons, and other activities to keep occupied.[60] As was typical at hospitals in both the US and Europe, men were mostly assigned to mechanical and agricultural labor, while women maintained the domestic work.[61] It was argued that the use of farming at mental institutions benefitted the able-bodied patients in multiple ways.

> The principle and practice of occupying them in bodily labour have been observed there for almost fourteen years, and with the most gratifying results; there being now two-thirds of the patients constantly engaged in some kind of employment, out-door work being particularly attended to, on account of its suitableness to males. They are often sent to cultivate the gardens at the Salpêtrière; and the "Farm of St. Anne" has been recently formed for the purpose of carrying out the agricultural and out-door work principle.[62]

By referring to two-thirds of the population being employed, the author indicates that the majority of patients were able-bodied. Being able-bodied, they required a different sort of attention from patients who were physically disabled or mentally deficient. The able-bodied

---

[59] Philippe Pinel, quoted in Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Pantheon, 1965).
[60] John Webster, "Art. X—Observations on the Admission of Medical Pupils to the Wards of Bethlem Hospital, for the Purpose of Studying Mental Diseases," in *The Monthly Review* 3 (1842), 530, accessed April 17, 2013, http://books.google.com/books?id=RJAeAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false.
[61] Gerald N. Grob, *Mental Institutions in America: Social Policy to 1875* (New York: Free Press, 1973), 328. Women's and men's duties at the hospital reflected the social norms of the time; most notably that the man was associated with manual labor, while the woman was assigned to keeping the interior clean and orderly. These gender norms were commonly practiced at mental institutions in both Europe and the United States, as these societal expectations endured throughout the nineteenth century.
[62] Webster, "Art. X—Observations" 529.

required something to keep both their minds and bodies active, in order to ward off troubling thoughts and emotional outbursts. This, as Pinel pointed out, also reduced their chances of becoming ill: given work to do, patients gained both a sense of purpose and distraction from their insanity. Pinel's same arguments applied to the hospital at Bicêtre, where they found that

> those employed in bodily active bodily labour are always better fed than the idle and indolent. M. Mallon stated that the work of the insane patients of Bicêtre had realised 120,000 francs during the year 1841 and that 20,000 francs had been paid to the labourers themselves, as an encouragement to industry.[63]

Just as Pinel argued for farms as an economical option, staff at Bicêtre discovered they both saved and made more money by putting their patients to work. Staff reported that patients could feel even better about themselves when they received an income—albeit minimum—for the work they contributed to the hospital.

Alternatives to the hospital system also existed in Europe, where individuals afflicted with "insanity" could find work and a sense of purpose free from the confinement of institutions. Gheel is a town in Belgium that had become a pilgrimage site for the unwell after a woman named Princess Dymphna died in the seventh century and became the town's patron saint. Those who were tormented physically and mentally believed that a visit to Gheel could save their souls, and so it became that people with and without mental instabilities lived together in this community. New arrivals increased exponentially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which caught the attention of physicians and hospital superintendents in the United States. With hundreds of insane citizens, Gheel impressed visitors that the "insane may live in the enjoyment of almost unrestrained liberty, not only with little danger to the community which harbors them, but even as useful members of that community."[64] This was due, visitors argued, to the self-

[63] Ibid..
[64] John M. Galt, "The Farm of St. Anne," in *The American Journal of Insanity* 11 (1854-5), 354, accessed April 17, 2013,

respect that citizens retained when they were not guarded at all hours and were granted a certain degree of freedom.

Emergence of Mental Institutions in the US

Though Massachusetts was not the first state to establish mental hospitals, it was monumental in creating and responding to reforms needed in the hospital system. McLean Hospital, the first private institution in Massachusetts, began accepting patients in 1818. This hospital was different from many in Europe, in that it required fees and therefore excluded paupers. Despite the exclusive status, McLean still employed traditional modes of "therapy," including drugs, bloodletting, restraining devices, and solitary confinement.[65] McLean was originally located in Somerville, Massachusetts, but by 1825 the town had become an unpleasant place to live. The rise of industrialization encroached upon Somerville, as "[f]ilthy metalworking factories, a bleaching and dying plant, and even a hog slaughterhouse moved into the neighborhood."[66] The directors of McLean Asylum decided to relocate the hospital to Belmont, where they enlisted Frederick Law Olmsted to help with designing the campus. Olmsted had already designed the Retreat Park at Hartford, the Buffalo State Asylum, and Bloomingdale Asylum in New York; he was a natural choice for reconstructing McLean. Olmsted believed that institutions should look more like a community setting, with mansions and cottages for the patients and staff. His landscaping crew spread gardens, trees, and bushes, and by the time Olmsted was complete, there was a "working farm, with separate beef and dairy barns; two

---

http://books.google.com/books?id=axETAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA352&lpg=PA352&dq=american+journal+of+insanity+john+galt+farm+of+st+anne&source=bl&ots=tjAaG7ZrTy&sig=ShPtnYZ9jEO91faMjGZDSXjz_oM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=jODFUOa0CbOq0AHT0YHgBg&ved=0CDwQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=american%20journal%20of%20insanity%20john%20galt%20farm%20of%20st%20anne&f=false.

[65] Grob, *Mad Among Us*, 35.

[66] Alex Beam, *Gracefully Insane: The Rise and Fall of America's Premier Mental Hospital* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001) 30.

piggeries; extensive vegetable and flower gardens; a working apiary for honey; and apple and pear orchards..."[67] In addition to Olmsted's keen landscaping eye, he also reinforced the reputation of McLean. This is exemplified at his other work sites, such as Hartford Retreat in Connecticut, where, in 1863, Olmsted built a horticultural museum open to the public. Olmsted was well known for his other commissions and, by contracting him to work at McLean, the hospital boosted its prestige and the type of patients that arrived.

The exclusivity of McLean and the increasing awareness of the insane poor created a demand for a public institution; thus in 1830, legislature approved a bill to erect a state lunatic asylum. When deciding where to build the state mental asylum, psychiatrists had to consider the causes of patients' insanity. They all agreed that the presence of insanity in American society had increased with the rise of industrialization. People appeared to be not at ease with cities and factory life, as it was argued that they naturally felt the inclination toward rural settings. These psychiatrists ascribed to the still very widespread American agrarian notion that purity and a good Christian life could be found by returning to the land. By rusticating oneself, individuals could connect with their ancient Biblical figures, all the way to the Garden of Eden. The hard work and distress that came with factories and mechanization of goods reminded people of the Fall of Adam, and certain psychiatrists believed this induced insanity. They agreed that they could not build in Boston, for it was already too crowded and filled with other similar institutions. However, they still wanted the hospital to sit close to the outskirts of a city. This way, the hospital could have access to goods and municipal services.[68]

[67] Beam, *Gracefully Insane,* 64.
[68] Gerald N. Grob, *The State and the Mentally Ill: A History of Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, 1830-1920* (Chapel: University of North Carolina, 1966), 55.

In 1833 they decided on the city of Worcester, fifty miles from Boston and with many stage lines passing through.[69] The hospital's buildings originally housed 120 patients, with a great hill descending to the Quinsigamond River. This hill was harvested with gardens and crops, becoming the hospital farm for all patients desirous to work outdoors. By 1838, supervisors of Massachusetts State Hospital for the Insane (what would become Worcester State Hospital) purchased more land to meet the demand of farming therapy among patients.

Massachusetts needed to find an economic alternative to the construction of public hospitals. In many cases, the state turned to Thomas Kirkbride's plan of mental institutions and their locations. His 1854 *On the construction, organization, and general arrangements of hospitals for the insane* was a seminal work that took hold at many hospitals along the east coast. Kirkbride had worked at three institutions, most notably the Pennsylvania Asylum for the Insane, for sixteen years before he published his pamphlet. As he indicated at the beginning, Kirkbride believed that his plan was "not for the pauper portion of the community alone, but for every class of citizens."[70] He advocated that hospitals hold 250 patients maximum, as that was, to him, a reasonable number to which doctors and nurses could attend. Of the utmost importance was the hospital's location: Kirkbride mandated that institutions be built into the countryside, where patients and doctors could be distant from, but not inaccessible to, large towns, railroads, and turnpikes.[71] The more rural the setting, the more the patients could return to that so-called purer, more Edenic sense of living. Just as the patients of McLean Asylum had to escape the dirty air of factories in Somerville, so, too, did all patients of public hospitals need this supposed refuge

[69] Grob, *State and the Mentally Ill*, 30.
[70] Thomas Story Kirkbride, *On the construction, organization, and general arrangements of hospitals for the insane* (Philadelphia: 1854),4, accessed April 16, 2013, http://collections.nlm.nih.gov/muradora/objectView.action?pid=nlm:nlmuid-66510280R-bk.
[71] Kirkbride, *On the construction*, 7.

from urbanization and industrialization. This came at no extra expense for directors of the public hospital, and the rural setting and purer air were the first step to curing insanity.

In this rural area, Kirkbride necessitated that institutional property span at least 100 acres, for all able patients needed space to walk, exercise, and work in the outdoors. Though many patients were chronic, feeble, or invalids, the other patients needed treatment separate from the confinement within institutional buildings. Kirkbride believed that these 100 acres of land would "enable [the hospital] to have the proper amount for farming and gardening purposes, to give the desired degree of privacy and to secure adequate and appropriate means of exercise, labor and occupation to the patients, for all these are now recognized as among the most valuable means of treatment."[72] Though this had been a method practiced throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, farming served an importance purpose at Kirkbride's hospitals. Farming was key to the hospital's success and the patient's recovery, for, on the most basic level, directors and psychiatrists believed that the land was aesthetically pleasing. By casting one's gaze on the "pleasure grounds" and gardens, it was believed that patients and visitors alike were naturally set at ease. As Kirkbride noted, relatives of patients trusted the hospital staff when they saw that the grounds were well-maintained and that their loved ones who were confined within the hospital had found purpose by cultivating the land.[73] Cultivation of the land supposedly served the dual purpose of employing the patients and providing them with recreation. Even the attendants of patients were required to spend time in the outdoors; otherwise, these attendants could become restless, find "their health impaired, their tempers rendered irritable, and ultimately incapacitated for the efficient performance of their duties."[74] These same qualities could define the causes of

[72] Ibid, 7.
[73] Ibid, 12.
[74] Ibid, 48.

insanity, therefore highlighting the importance of work in the open air as a means of fending off mental instability.

The increased demand for land coincided with the rise of more patients in treatment, causing disruption and fiscal issues for Worcester State Hospital. Moral treatment was expensive, and labor costs to maintain the institution burdened the supervisory committee. The directors needed to be economically efficient in their decisions, as patients flooded the hospitals and not enough checked out annually. The majority of patients came from working-class backgrounds, serving as farmers, laborers, merchants, shoemakers, and seamen before they were institutionalized.[75] In turn, the directors of the Massachusetts State Hospital employed these men in various trade shops and on the farm to provide food and services for the asylum.[76] These patients were not only there for treatment; they became the backbone of the hospital's maintenance. By the 1850s, all healthy patients were employed, amounting to about a quarter of the patient population. The rest of the patients required constant attention due to their violent tendencies, vegetative states, and varying degrees of need. Although directors argued that work benefitted the patients with physical and mental relief, it could not be denied that as "the hospitals increased in size, work was assigned more to meet the needs of the hospital than the needs of the patient."[77]

Mental Hospital Reform Movement

By the 1840s many hospitals along the east coast in general and New England in particular had been in operation for over a decade; during this time period, many of these

[75] Grob, *State and the Mentally Ill*, 93.
[76] Women, meanwhile, were tasked with domestic labor, such as sewing and washing. They were often also employed in the gardens, rather than the farm. For more information regarding gender issues, see Grob, *Mental Institutions in America*.
[77] Ibid, 136.

hospitals had stagnated and begged the need for reform. In 1843 Dorothea Dix delivered her speech, "Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts," and proceeded to print it out as a pamphlet and hand it out to the public. This caused a stir among both the public and psychiatric hospital directors, for it unveiled the inhumane and harsh "treatments" inflicted upon these patients. Who was this young woman that brought great shame to the hospital system? Dorothea Dix grew up in Boston with her uncle, Unitarian minister Thaddeus Mason Harris. Largely self-educated, Dix was deeply religious and inspired by her Christian faith to take responsibility for the injustices in society. She had extensive experience with teaching, from opening her own school to tutoring the family of William Ellery Channing.[78] In 1841 she was hired to teach at the Middlesex County House of Correction in Cambridge, Massachusetts; there she first became aware of the horrific conditions of inmates.[79] Her interest in reform took shape when she began visiting other prisons, almshouses, and mental hospitals throughout Massachusetts, and she eventually visited many institutions along the East Coast. Her plea for change came in the form of these "Memorials," of which she wrote one for each of the states she visited.

Dix felt this memorial was her duty, as the patients and inmates she visited were not given a voice. "I come as the advocate of helpless, forgotten, insane, and idiotic men and women; of beings sunk to a condition from which the most unconcerned would start with real horror..."[80] She highlighted the need for mental and physical activity, "refer[ring] to idiots and insane persons, dwelling in circumstances not only adverse to their own physical and moral improvement, but productive of extreme disadvantages to all other persons brought into association with them." She used the word "productive" here in an interesting way, where,

---

[78] David Gollaher, *Voice for the Mad: The Life of Dorothea Dix* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 67.
[79] Gollaher, *Voice for the Mad*, 126.
[80] Dorothea L. Dix, *Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts* 1843 (Boston: Directors of the Old South, 1904), accessed April 16, 2013, http://openlibrary.org/books/OL6629613M/Memorial_to_the_legislature_of_Massachusetts_1843.

instead of it referring to a harvest or an individual's purpose in life, "productive" was altered to a negative action By chaining up patients and inmates, not only did they become more restless and prone to bad behavior, but the staff was also put at a disadvantage. The absence of mental and physical activities *produced* a negative environment for all who came into contact with these institutions. Dix often discovered inmates kept in solitary rooms with no heat and no provision, and many almshouses accepted the insane and prisons served as almshouses. This call for reform resulted in the establishment of New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum, a direct result of Dix's efforts.[81] She even brought a bill to Congress which was passed in 1854, demanding there be funding for better care for the mentally ill using federal land grants. President Franklin Pierce, however, rejected this bill, stating it was a gateway to other demands for federal aid.[82] Despite this great disappointment, Dix's "Memorials" and erection of the New Jersey State Lunatic Asylum was vital to the hospital reform movement of the nineteenth century. By highlighting the absence of physical and mental activity, Dix called for a reform toward occupying patients with laborious activities, thus indirectly reinforcing the importance of the hospital farm.

Edward Jarvis was another important figure in the movement toward hospital reform from the 1840s until the 1870s, bringing attention to the reasons behind the supposed increase in insanity. Jarvis was a psychiatrist who had worked at institutions and with patients in his home in Massachusetts and Kentucky. He published books on public health and helped with gathering statistics on mental health in the United States. He worked with the Federal Census Bureau in conducting these studies, all the while presenting many lectures on his findings on mental and physical health.[83] Jarvis posited that the need for more mental hospitals had increased with the

[81] Gollaher, *Voice for the Mad*, 194.
[82] Ibid, 325-6.
[83] "Diseases of the Mind: Highlights of American Psychiatry through 1900," U.S. National Library of Medicine, accessed April 17, 2013, http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/diseases/note.html.

rise of insanity. In looking for reasons for the increased presence of insane persons, Jarvis argued that "insanity is part of the price we are paying for the imperfection of our civilization and the incompleteness of our education."[84] The increase in accessibility of education led to mental exhaustion, as well as a greater awareness of wealth, material products, and travel. These desires were not based in reason; they were rooted in passion.

As long as education, travel, and machinery were to remain present in American society, there would need to be adjustments to the system. Jarvis argued that, alternatively to industrialization, "...the observation and pursuit of the laws of nature to obtain crops or grain, and other products in agriculture... all demand mental action, they develop and train the mind, they discipline the perceptive and reasoning faculties..."[85] Farming was an alternative solution and an economic option, and he witnessed the viability of this option at the mental hospitals where he visited. In another lecture, Jarvis pointed out that it "is not unusual to see two men ploughing in the field, quiet, and attentive to their work, and performing it well, both insane, both having committed homicide, and had therefore been confined many years in prison..."[86] If two men who had committed homicide could work peacefully beside one another, Jarvis could argue that it was a result of farming that had eased their minds. Hence, farming healed the mind and relieved one of insanity, according to Jarvis. Both Jarvis and Dix were vital to the development and changes to the mental hospital system in the second half of the nineteenth century, their ideas spurring further improvements and ideas for reform in the following decades.

John Galt and Alternative Hospital Systems

[84] Edward Jarvis, *Relation of Education to Insanity* (Washington Government Printing Office: 1872), 11. Courtesy of Massachusetts Historical Society.
[85] Jarvis, *Relation of Education to Insanity*, 3.
[86] Edward Jarvis, *Insanity and Insane Asylum* (Louisville: Prentice and Weissinger, 1841), 12. Courtesy of Massachusetts Historical Society.

As has been made clear, the use of farming as therapy dated back to the beginnings of the mental institutions. A hospital farm sat on the site of McLean, but it must be noted that this was an exception in that it was a private institution. Worcester State Hospital, the first public institution, eventually contained a farm; Edward Jarvis and Dorothea Dix emphasized the need for labor; and Thomas Kirkbride wrote in 1854 about the necessity of a farm on the grounds of each hospital. A fourth demand for the need for reform in the hospital system recommended farming as the *primary* method of treatment. Physician John Galt was made supervisor of the Eastern Lunatic Asylum in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1841 and there introduced moral treatment. He advocated for what we would now call deinstitutionalization and community-based mental health care, proposing a transformation from the typical confinement of one large hospital building to an open setting of cottage-style living. He discovered these ideas when he visited the Farm of St. Anne and caught wind of the practices in the town of Gheel in Belgium.[87] The Farm of St. Anne and Gheel, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, were two experiments with farming and community living in Europe. The Farm of St. Anne at the Salpêtrière Hospital employed patients with the argument that it gave them a sense of purpose and open-air treatment. Gheel was a community for people living with and without mental and physical afflictions. The attitude of the townspeople toward occupying patients and letting them live as liberated individuals inspired Galt to take action on the other side of the Atlantic.

After his return to Eastern Lunatic Asylum, Galt published a report in *The American Journal of Insanity* in 1854, in which he declared that "[w]e propose that to every asylum there should be a farm and farmhouse attached."[88] Unlike the report that Kirkbride also wrote in 1854 that favored institutionalization, Galt stated that the deinstitutionalized hospital should be

[87] "The History of Eastern State," Eastern State Hospital, accessed April 17, 2013, http://www.esh.dmhmrsas.virginia.gov/history.html.
[88] Galt, "Farm of St. Anne," 352.

composed of a farmer and his family along with a large community of able-bodied patients. "The mass of these patients are intended to be working-men—those of quiet demeanor—laboring under chronic insanity. These will spend a happier life than in the crowded wards of an asylum, and also a more useful one, tending by their work to be self-supporting."[89] According to Galt, being outdoors would reduce the number of diseases and upset patents, while the patients who could not work on the farm could receive greater attention from the staff. Galt proclaimed, "How refreshing, then must be a plan, to these patients, which sends them to breathe the pure air and experience the quietude of the country!"[90] This piece echoed the same suggestions for farming that had been made for the fifty years preceding its publication, but differed in that it took a radical look at the construction of the hospital grounds and treatment of the patients.

The hospital's court of directors prevented Galt from implementing this system on three different occasions.[91] Though his recommendations were rejected, other hospitals throughout the US realized the potential of farming as being therapeutic among their patients. The Willard Asylum of the Chronic Insane in New York emphasized the importance of work performed by the patients, with men on farm and construction and women covering sewing and washing.[92] The Eastern Hospital for the Insane in Illinois, as well as a number of hospitals in Wisconsin, were stylized like small villages and gave patients access to farming labor and leisure activities.[93] These hospital directors in New York, Illinois, and Wisconsin believed that it was beneficial to deconstruct the typical hospital establishment. They reported that patients were calmer and more cooperative when they were employed on the farm and with other activities. Agricultural labor seemingly kept patients focused and stimulated by the work they were doing, and they were,

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] "The History of Eastern State."
[92] Grob, *Mad Among Us*, 108.
[93] Ibid, 114.

according to the hospital directors, rewarded by seeing their seeds grow and ultimately feeding themselves and their fellow patients. For Galt and likeminded physicians, this was proof that hospitals did not need to remain the dreaded houses of confinement; by teaching the patients the value of working together and sowing the land, hospital directors sought to impart how to contribute to society and relieve the patients of their physical and mental conditions.

Decline of Farming as Therapy

Much like the case with poorhouses, however, the presence of farming decreased as states took greater control of mental institutions, for similar reasons.[94] Agriculture no longer proved as economically viable, as many able-bodied patients were relocated to a number of state institutions. With fewer patients able to sow the land, hospital directors needed to look for outside help but lacked the funds to do so. Because the farm was not of utmost importance at these mental institutions, it was relegated to a lower priority and more focus was placed on controlling the patients. Though employing patients at hospitals was still practiced, it had become less common by the late 1800s. More emphasis was placed on keeping the patients safe and away from society, not unlike the inmates at almshouses. The almshouse and mental hospital both faced issues of feasibility that created barriers to the use of occupational activities such as farming. This inaccessibility resulted in degradation of the hospital's treatment of patients, and inspired another call for reform in the beginning of the twentieth century.

With new therapeutic ideas of how best to treat patients, the focus on farming as the sole method of occupying patients as therapy expanded in the twentieth century. In the first decades of the 1900s, Dr. L. Vernon Briggs of the American Psychiatric Association argued for better treatment of patients. Once again, patients were subjected to neglectful conditions and wanting

[94] Ibid, 121.

for work. He blamed much of this on the attendants who came from untrained backgrounds and had inadequate experience with patients.

> These attendants should be instructed in manual training. They never should be idle. They should always be helping the patients to do something in the way of occupation or entertainment. This is more true on stormy days when the patients are indoors, where the demoralizing effect of the sight of patients sitting about on benches in corridors, doing nothing, makes one feel that the State of Massachusetts is rather making people more insane instead of less... I think it is true that quite a number of insane criminals at Bridgewater would gladly return to the State Prison for occupation.[95]

By employing untrained attendants, the hospital worsened the conditions for many patients. Patients were subjected to the abusive "care" of attendants, who did not and could not understand the needs of the patients if they did not know how to respond to the patients in the first place. Briggs advocated that nurses and attendants be taught arts, crafts, manual training, and kindergarten work to share with patients.[96] From this document, it is clear that farming was no longer of primary therapeutic importance; rather, doctors were focused on just keeping the patients occupied.

Only a few years after Briggs proposed the two bills on occupation as a substitute for restraint, the term "occupational therapy" was first coined. By 1917, when the phrase was first used, it had become common to employ patients with a variety of laborious activities. The staff at Worcester State Hospital had become practitioners of occupational therapy by the 1930s; in their Annual Report of the Trustees it was announced

> The program of placing all the industrial work of the hospital in the category of occupational therapy has been continued with what is believed to be increasing success. As our experience has accumulated it is possible to better fit the patient to the job and

[95] L. Vernon Briggs to Owen Copp. December 22, 1910. In L. Vernon Briggs, *Occupation as a Substitute for Restraint in the Treatment of the Mentally Ill: A History of the Passage of Two Bills through the Massachusetts Legislature*, (Wright & Potter, Boston, 1923).
[96] Briggs, *Occupation as a Substitute for Restraint*, 70.

> keep the assignment on the basis of the need of the patient for the occupation rather than the necessity of the institution for the patient's labor.[97]

In addition to realizing difficulties with logistics and economic feasibility, hospital directors and doctors had discovered that one form of labor may not suit all; they therefore expanded beyond the realm of agriculture. This challenge was reflected in much of the rest of agriculture in society, where industrialization presented other labor-intensive opportunities and only the best-capitalized farms could endure in the more mechanized and commodity-oriented farm sector.

Conclusion

The mental hospital farm experienced varying degrees of success and struggle over the span of the nineteenth century for a variety of reasons. Similar to the almshouse from which it grew, the mental hospital had difficulty making ends meet as the farming operation became more costly. Farming itself had faded from being the primary occupation for many American families by the late 1800s, and a lack of government funds resulted in the downsizing of many activities at mental hospitals. Despite the institutional and therapeutic problems with maintenance, a smaller garden and farm were still cultivated in Worcester for decades to come. Proponents of the mental hospital farm truly believed that farming had healing qualities for its patients. This idealized notion of farming persisted among many communities during the nineteenth century, and the difficulties that the mental hospital farm ran up against sheds light upon the viability of the romanticized farm.

[97] *Annual Report of the Trustees of Worcester State Hospital* (Department of Mental Diseases, November 30, 1936), 5. Courtesy of Worcester Historical Museum.

CHAPTER THREE
FARMING AS A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE: THE UTOPIAN COMMUNITY

> [T]heir enlightened culture of the soil, and the virtues which they sanctioned their life, had begun to produce an effect upon the material world and its climate. In my new enthusiasm, man looked strong and stately! -- and woman, oh, how beautiful! -- and the earth, a green garden, blossoming with many-colored delight![98]

In 1852, Nathaniel Hawthorne published the novel *The Blithedale Romance*, about a fictionalized utopian community not unlike the one at which he lived for a time; his account of this community highlighted the lofty ideals that members strove for as they sowed the land. In the above excerpt, this visitor recognizes a connection between the soil and the soul: that cultivating the land gave way to a heightened awareness of and appreciation for one's surroundings. Hawthorne reinforced that intellectuals came to this community seeking philosophical fulfillment by way of farming. Farming aimed to serve the purpose of employment and improving mental health at almshouses and mental hospitals; utopian communities took this one step further by emphasizing that farming healed the soul and connected the individual with the divinity of nature. This thesis explores two communities located in Massachusetts, Brook Farm and Fruitlands. George Ripley, a Unitarian minister, and Bronson Alcott, a philosopher, lecturer, and schoolteacher, realized their goals at these respective communities. Both were inspired by Transcendentalist thought and considered farming as a therapeutic and transformative experience. Unlike the institutionalized farming at almshouses and mental hospitals, however, these utopian communities and their experiments with agriculture were short-lived. Their failure was rooted in their ideologies and lack of experience with farming, combined with the voluntary nature of a utopian community.

Of the farms that this thesis has so far explored, the farms at these utopian communities have already received the most scholarship. However, no book has yet covered the intersection

[98] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Novels. Selections* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1983), 685.

between the farms at utopian communities, almshouses, and mental hospitals. Despite this, a number of authors have provided a thorough analysis of the viability of the farms located at Fruitlands and Brook Farm. In his book, *Eden's Outcasts: The Story of Louisa May Alcott and her Father*, John Matteson looks at the relationship between Louisa May Alcott and her father as they lived at Fruitlands. Matteson argues that the failure of the Fruitlands experiment resulted in the loss of Bronson Alcott's credibility, and this is exemplified by his inability to successfully reap a harvest.[99] Richard Francis examines both Fruitlands and Brook Farm in his books, *Fruitlands: the Alcott Family and Their Search for Utopia* and *Transcendental Utopias*, respectively. Francis points out that Brook Farm materialized quickly but lasted an impressive six years.[100] This span of time is significant, as both communities struggled with feasibility and the ideals set forth by their members. The members of these communities were followers of Transcendentalist philosophy, which emphasized individuality in the midst of nineteenth-century community.

Transcendentalism

Ministers during the Second Great Awakening struggled to reconcile whether religion favored the head over the heart or vice-versa; this type of questioning expanded the conversation to a number of philosophers that became known as members of the Transcendental Club. In September of 1836, George Ripley, a Unitarian minister in Boston, invited friends over to discuss the "American Genius: The Causes Which Hinder Its Growth, Giving Us No First-Rate Productions."[101] This became an occasional meeting group for discussion of philosophy among

[99] John Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts: The Story of Louisa May Alcott and her Father* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007),118.
[100] Francis, *Transcendental Utopias* 38.
[101] Hankins, *Second Great Awakening and Transcendentalists*, 24.

such thinkers as Bronson Alcott, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, and others. From these conversations stemmed the idea of Transcendentalism, which scholars define in a variety of ways. Barry Hankins sees the spirituality of Transcendentalism as envisioning churches in the form of forests and mountains as cathedrals.[102] Building off of that, Philip K. Gura argues that the foundation of Transcendentalism can be defined as the idea that humans should connect with "universal divine inspiration—grace as the birthright of all."[103] All scholars can agree that Transcendentalism emphasized an individual's spiritual connection with and the divine power of nature.

Transcendentalism stemmed from the monumental changes of American society during the nineteenth century. As discussed earlier, industrialization and urbanization increased the efficiency of the US market-based economy, but it came at the cost of difficult labor conditions and worries that the American culture was becoming too materialistic. In turn, ministers found themselves in the midst of a Christian revival as the working class sought comfort, meaning, and enlightenment through spirituality during this tumultuous time. George Ripley was no exception to this; he was disturbed by the amount of poverty surrounding his church and was inspired to change the system by founding Brook Farm, an experiment with Christian agrarian beliefs. Gura identifies the emphasis on sin, salvation, and renewed life as common themes within both Brook Farm and Fruitlands.[104] Transcendental thought was inextricably tied to industrialization and Christian revival, as it was partially a response to the rise of cities and the mechanization of production, touted by a group of individuals largely influenced by Unitarianism.

Brook Farm

[102] Ibid, 28.
[103] Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 18.
[104] Ibid, 37.

In May of 1841, readers of *The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters* received notice that a group of Transcendentalists had formed the 'Practical Institute of Agriculture and Education.' This group had settled at Brook Farm in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, the site of a one-time almshouse; it had been revived from an institution of relieving poverty to one that provided alternatives to the traditional structure of employment and learning. Brook Farm was, indeed, an institution, but its mode of occupying members was

> intended to combine the study of scientific agriculture with its practical operations, to illustrate the great improvements of modern husbandry by actual experiment; to increase the attachment of the farmer to the cultivation of the soil, by showing the dignity of the pursuit, and the knowledge and ability which it demands, and thus to prepare young men, who propose to make agriculture the business of their lives, for the intelligent discharge of the duties of their calling.[105]

By connecting agriculture with education, Brook Farmers aimed to elevate the status of farming from base labor to a more respected trade. They empowered men and women who were used to getting their hands dirty, while providing intellectuals with a means of returning to the land. This pursuit of pastoralism attracted a group of people who sought refuge from industrialized cities, where neighborhoods were polluted and finances unstable. Brook Farmers promised to alleviate this by teaching the young and able-bodied through physical and mental labor, while providing a safe living space for the old and feeble. In this way, Brook Farm resembled institutions for the poor and inept, but differed in that people came here by their own volition.

It was believed that, by choosing this lifestyle, people relieved themselves of the threats of poverty and other societal issues, thus allowing them to comfortably pursue their own interests. This belief was propagated by George Ripley, the founder of Brook Farm, who had at one time been the minister of Purchase Street Church in Boston. Ripley had served the congregation for several years, bearing witness to the societal issues affecting his community.

[105] "Rev. George Ripley," Originally published in *The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letter*, May 1841, 293-295. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958).

Just as faith in God saved individuals from suffering, Ripley advocated that commitment to learning strengthened the mental and physical faculties. It was with this proposal that he left behind his role at Purchase Street Church and bought a plot of land in West Roxbury. In a letter to colleague Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ripley conveyed that Brook Farm would "prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life."[106] This was to be achieved by a school that would teach children until they were ready for college, a farm that would feed the community, and other laborious tasks that would teach discipline and self-restraint. As he wrote to Emerson, Ripley's goal was "in uniting the garden and the farm, will be adequate to the subsistence of the families; and to connect with this a school or college, in which the most complete instruction shall be given, from the first rudiments to the highest culture."[107] Ripley sought to balance the playing field between the educated and the uneducated. He believed that combining agriculture with education—which he referred to as attractive industry—made this possible, and that his community could serve as a model for society.

George Ripley's institution at Brook Farm isolated him and members further from the rest of society, at the same time that they tried to make an example of how the rest of society could live. By moving out to West Roxbury, members would supposedly not feel the temptations of an industrialized society, where the pursuit of wealth and luxury ran rampant. Instead of material goods, they sought a wealth of intellect, where "thought would preside over the operations of labor, and labor would contribute to the expansion of thought."[108] Labor and thought provided the two stilts on which Brook Farm would stand and prosper, but its foundation

[106] George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, November 9, 1940. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm*.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.

was inspired by Transcendentalism. By reaching out to Emerson, Ripley sought support from the Transcendentalist community. This community promoted self-exploration and contemplations of the individual in nature. Transcendentalism inspired Ripley, and this interest in Transcendentalist ideas allowed him to expand upon and put into action his community at Brook Farm.

Meanwhile, as Ripley finalized the design of Brook Farm, news of the farm project spread. Ripley and members set out to prove that equal division of work was just as productive as a hierarchical division of labor and could relieve the gap between poverty and the luxuriousness of current society. An August 1841 edition of *The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters* declared that

> the labour of society might be lessened by machinery and cooperation of numbers, while the desirable fruits of labour would not be in the least sacrificed;… that a diffusion of bodily labour would be equally a means of health to those who do not work at all, and to those who work too much; that there need be no want, if there were indulged no superfluity…[109]

This ideology served as the foundation of Brook Farm, further dividing them from the rest of society. By relying on human labor, Brook Farm did not need to use industrialized technology that had become commonplace in society. This machinery, though designed and considered necessary for efficient factory life, destroyed human work ethic in the eyes of community members. Brook Farmers would revitalize this purer lifestyle and reduce the chasm between superfluity and want, thus removing the pervasive sinfulness of an industrialized society.

This concept of right and wrong, of purity and sinfulness, was emphasized by the romanticized view of the farm at West Roxbury. Sophia Ripley, wife of George Ripley, kept friends and family updated on the daily affairs of Brook Farm as it grew and prospered in the months after they initially moved there. She wrote to friend John Sullivan Dwight that "I am not

[109] "The Community at West Roxbury, Mass," Originally published in *The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters*, August 1841, 113-118. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958).

at all disappointed in my expectations from seclusion, for even my lonely hours have been bright ones, and in this tranquil retreat I have found that entire separation from worldly care and rest to the spirit which I knew was in waiting for me somewhere."[110] This seclusion from the rest of industrialized society soothed Sophia Ripley, giving way to a perception of Brook Farm as being reminiscent of Eden. Without the laborious tasks of farming having yet dawned upon them, members envisioned Brook Farm as rejuvenating for the soul. Its isolation from society, combined with the untouched landscape, allowed Sophia Ripley to feel cleansed of the corruption and sin of city life. She exchanged one form of filth for another, this time in the form of dirt and soil. The Ripleys quickly learned of the toils that came with farming, discovering aching backs and blistered fingers the morning after a hard day's work. She continued to Dwight in a later letter, "All of us are agreeably disappointed in our physical power, particularly George [Ripley] who does a harder day's work each day than the last, and feels better than ever before..."[111] Though they struggled to sow the land, Brook Farmers maintained their work ethic as it was still new and exciting to them. They felt closer to God, even though Adam had never worked this hard when he was still in the Garden. This view was shared among many of the original members of Brook Farm, at least in their initial experiences there.

The allure of a Transcendentalist community situated on an agricultural plot of land tempted many, for it put into action much of what these philosophers believed; this experience would open doors for its members, for, ironically, this self-chosen isolation served as an outlet to reflect, write, and publish one's contemplations for the public to read. Nathaniel Hawthorne was one of these young men who joined Brook Farm and would go on to write about his time there.

---

[110] Sophia Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, May 6, 1841. In Zoltan Haraszti, ed., *The Idyll of Brook Farm: As Revealed by Unpublished Letters in the Boston Public Library* (Boston: Trustees of the Public Library, 1937): 17-18.
[111] Ibid.

Before his work was published, however, he maintained a steady journal and correspondences about his experience. Writing to his fiancée, Sophia Peabody, Hawthorne noted that "I shall make an excellent husbandman. I feel the original Adam reviving within me."[112] Like Sophia Ripley, Hawthorne romanticized his initial perceptions of Brook Farm, as well as persisted in the belief that this land was inherently attached to the Biblical idea of Eden. Though Brook Farm was not a religious institution, its members used this image of Eden to inspire themselves to work harder. It, in turn, gave way to greater self-discovery and sense of achievement. Hawthorne's devotion to the land was recognized immediately by Mrs. Ripley, who wrote to John Sullivan Dwight that "Hawthorne... is our prince-- prince in everything-- yet despising no labour and very athletic and able-bodied in the barnyard and field."[113] Initially, cultivating the land encouraged the feeling of becoming purified of one's sins.

As time went on, the monotony of and disillusionment with farming broke the spell that had originally been cast for many members of Brook Farm. Unlike Adam, Hawthorne had to work hard to achieve his Garden, and it was not easy work. After only two months of having been at Brook Farm, he had lost sight of his romanticized view of the place. In later letters to Sophia Peabody, he complained of cow manure, to which he referred as the "gold mine." He wrote to her,

> That abominable gold mine! Thank God, we anticipate getting rid of its treasures, in the course of the next two or three days. Of all hateful places, that is the worst; and I shall never comfort myself for having spent so many days of blessed sunshine there. It is my opinion, dearest, that a man's soul may be buried and perished under a dungheap or in a furrow of the field, just as well as under a pile of money.[114]

---

[112] Nathaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody, April 14, 1841. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958).
[113] Letter from Sophia Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, May 6, 1841, in Zoltan Haraszti, *The Idyll of Brook Farm*, 17-18.
[114] Nathaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody, June 1, 1841. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958).

According to Hawthorne, cultivating the land was no different from acquiring money, for both could destroy one's attempts at empowering the human soul. If this was so, there was no purpose to considering an agricultural lifestyle as a way to a purer life. Hawthorne continued to stay at Brook Farm several months after his complaints, giving him time for further reflection on the culture. In September of 1841 he wrote again to Peabody,

> Nevertheless, it is somewhat remarkable that thy husband's hands have, during this past summer, grown very brown and rough; insomuch that many people persist in believing that he, after all, was the aforesaid spectral horn-sounder, cow-milker, potato-hoer, and hay raker. But such a people do not know a reality from a shadow.[115]

As this was never a reality, Hawthorne's temporary connection to the soil was merely a façade. The romanticized notion that tilling the land brings one closer to God was destroyed when Hawthorne became submerged in the "gold mine." Hawthorne was no farmer, but his stint at play-farming allowed him to glimpse into a world in which he did not belong and did not want to become too familiar with. For people like Hawthorne who were interested in the possibly healing and transcendental effects of tilling the soil, Brook Farm served as a model farm that people could visit but maintain their distance from prolonged, difficult labor.[116]

Though Hawthorne did not continue to pursue farming, he used his experiences at Brook Farm as a model for his 1852 novel, *The Blithedale Romance*. Hawthorne took a satirical and critical look at his time there, using his initial perspectives to convey that romanticized notion of farming. New arrivals and those unfamiliar with farming were so blinded by their rose-colored lenses that they could not see the mistakes they made. Hawthorne wrote that neighbors

> told slanderous fables about our inability to yoke our own oxen, or to drive afield, when yoked, or to release the poor brutes from their conjugal bond at nightfall…They further averred, that we hoed up whole acres of Indian corn and other crops, and drew the earth

[115] Nathaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody, September 3, 1841. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958).
[116] For more information regarding model farms and the rise of agritourism in the nineteenth century, see Cathy Stanton's "Plant Yourself in My Neighborhood."

> carefully about the weeds; and that we raised five hundred tufts of burdock, mistaking them for cabbages; and that, by dint of unskilful planting, few of our seeds ever came up at all…[117]

Hawthorne admitted to many faults in farming, due to their lack of experience with it. However, by relaying the neighbors' taunts and criticism, Hawthorne relieved himself and his fellow members of the blame. Instead of taking responsibility, he used the neighbors as outsiders to recognize the mistakes made. By the time Hawthorne wrote *Blithedale Romance*, he was far from Brook Farm and more like one of the neighbors, for he had become an outsider to the whole experiment.

Hawthorne, who had been Brook Farm's "prince," was the shining example of their farming experiment. He was supposed to prove that farming could purify the soul and render it more philosophical. In some ways it did, for it certainly increased his productivity as a writer. His Brook Farm experience served as inspiration for a novel, where he wrote that

> The clods of earth, which we so constantly belabored and turned over and over, were never etherealized into thought. Our thoughts, on the contrary, were fast becoming cloddish. Our labor symbolized nothing, and left us mentally sluggish in the dusk of the evening. **Intellectual activity is incompatible with any large amount of bodily exercise**.[118] The yeoman and the scholar-- the yeoman and the man of finest moral culture, though not the man of sturdiest sense and integrity-- are two distinct individuals, and can never be melted or welded into one substance.[119]

Certainly, it made Hawthorne come to see a dungheap as akin to a pile of money, but reflections of his time at Brook Farm, as portrayed in this novel, indicate that bodily and intellectual exercise did not mix well, at least for him.

For others, hesitation to join the community did not stem from believing that physical and mental labor did not mix; rather, invitations to join Brook Farm were often rejected due to individuals' skepticism of such a utopian community existing. Of those invited, perhaps the most

[117] Hawthorne, *Novels*, 687-8.
[118] Emphasis mine.
[119] Hawthorne, *Novels*, 689.

well-known is the man most tied to the Transcendentalist movement: Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson, like Ripley, was a fellow Unitarian minister, and they shared social and philosophical circles. Though Emerson listened to Ripley's information about and offer to join them at Brook Farm, he immediately refused. He found it troublesome enough to maintain his own ideologies. Furthermore, he was skeptical of any community seeking to achieve utopian ideals. Emerson went on to write in his journal that "[p]erhaps it is folly, this scheming to bring the good and like-minded together into families, into a colony. Better that they should disperse and leaven the whole lump of society."[120] This belief highlights Emerson's disillusionment with any kind of community founded on philosophies and ideologies, regardless of which they were. It was more important to him that these enlightened individuals spread themselves out among society. He believed that, this way, their message could be better heard than when isolated in a community. He himself practiced this belief when he stood on the pulpit each Sunday and preached to the congregation; however, it is worth noting that, perhaps, the perspectives of those living in Concord did not differ greatly from Emerson's own beliefs.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, renowned teacher and journalist for the Transcendentalist newspaper, *The Dial*, remained skeptical of but kept an interest in Brook Farm. She kept the Transcendentalist community updated with her publication about Brook Farm in the January 1842 edition of *The Dial*. Peabody asked, "what absurdity can be imagined greater than the institution of cities? They originated not in love, but in war... This crowded condition produces wants of an unnatural character, which resulted in occupations that regenerated the evil,

[120] Ralph Waldo Emerson, September 26, 1840, Originally published in *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. E.W. Emerson and W.E. Forbes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911): 465. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958).

by creating artificial wants."[121] To alleviate this, individuals like Ripley offered Brook Farm and other agricultural communities as a refuge from urbanization. Even if the audience of Peabody's piece agreed with this notion of cities as institutions, many of them would not go on to join Brook Farm. They may have been lured in by the proposal of "a school for young agriculturalists, who may learn within the precincts, not only the skilful practice, but the scientific reasons of their work, and be enabled afterwards to improve their art continuously," but there were still many concerns in the early years of Brook Farm. In fact, they continued to persist until Brook Farm's demise.[122]

Elizabeth Peabody kept her friends updated by writing letters, letting them know of Brook Farm's achievements and challenges; most notably, she was disturbed by the lack of organizational structure. To John S. Dwight she wrote, "While they are so few, and the community plan is not in full operation, it is unavoidable that they must work very hard; but they do it with great spirit, and their health and courage rises to meet the case."[123] This reinforces the idea that the members were not farmers by profession, nor did they intend to permanently commit themselves to this experiment. It was just that: an experiment, and members were only giving farming a try, so that they could build their intellect and part ways when they felt they had gleaned all they could learn. In order for an institution to survive, a core group of members is needed. Though members may come and go, as do patients at mental hospitals or inmates at almshouses, a solid group must form a community dedicated to its infrastructure. Without a set governmental structure, Brook Farm could not, in Elizabeth Peabody's eyes, succeed. Brook Farm eventually established an Articles of Association, requiring its members to contribute to the

[121] Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, "Plan of the West Roxbury Community," Originally published in *The Dial* II (January 1842): 361-372. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958).
[122] Ibid.
[123] Letter from Sophia Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, May 6, 1841, in Zoltan Haraszti, *The Idyll of Brook Farm*, 17-18.

association in exchange for room and board. Even then, its design remained flawed and raised eyebrows from outsiders.

Outsiders often visited to gain insight on the lifestyle at Brook Farm, but Charles Lane, a member at Fruitlands, a contemporary utopian community, found the lifestyle insincere. Lane wrote in 1843, the same summer that he and his colleagues had established Fruitlands, that at Brook Farm

> [t]here are not above four or five who could be selected as really and truly progressing beings. Most of the adults are there to pass "a good time;" the children are taught languages, etc... We had a pleasant summer evening conversation with many of them, but it is only in a few individuals that anything deeper than ordinary is found.[124]

Fruitlands was struggling with its own issues, so it is perhaps for this reason that Lane ventured out to Brook Farm. There he was disappointed by their frivolous lifestyle. Though it is possible that Brook Farm members were not as committed as they should have been to the maintenance and progress of the community, Lane was extremely opinionated on matters of utopian societies. He had his own visions of a society, and Lane found Brook Farm to be lacking. So he returned to Fruitlands, in his own search for self-cultivation.

Fruitlands

In 1842 Charles Lane and Bronson Alcott met in England at the Alcott House, where Alcott's philosophies were put into practice; this introduction of the two men fueled their dream to establish a farming community rooted in these philosophies. Bronson Alcott had gained fame through his lectures, essays, and school teaching in and outside the Transcendentalist community. Charles Lane, an admirer of Alcott's philosophies, helped establish the Alcott House

[124] Charles Lane to the *New Age*, July 30, 1843. Originally published in F.B. Sanborn, *A. Bronson Alcott, His Life and Philosophy* (Boston: Roberts, 1893): 383. In Henry W. Sams, ed, *Autobiography of Brook Farm* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958).

to spread these ideas. Lane returned with Alcott to Concord, Massachusetts, later that summer and there they formulated plans as to how they could secure a plot of land and promote their philosophies. They found a property for sale and bought it from a farmer in Harvard, Massachusetts.[125] Bronson Alcott announced in his diary, "It is not in Old, but in the New England that God's Garden is to be planted, and the fruits matured for the sustenance of the swarming nations."[126] Alcott envisioned the recreation of Eden, as made possible by a group of compassionate beings working together and not causing harm to others. They would reject any animal-made products and rely entirely on their own hands for labor. By late spring the group had moved to the land in Harvard, which they named Fruitlands, thus perpetuating the idea that their toils would produce sustenance for its members.

Though Charles Lane and Bronson Alcott provided the structure for Fruitlands, it was the women who served as the backbone to the community. Abigail May and Bronson Alcott had four daughters, all of whom came with them to Fruitlands. They were expected to partake in the labor of the house and farm, for Bronson and Lane believed this work was conducive to building one's intellect and connection with God. However, as time passed, the women took over the majority of the work on the farm, as the men grew so focused on fostering this relationship with the Divine that they lost sight of the duties of maintaining a farm. This responsibility assumed by the women imbued the daughters with wisdom and criticism of their father's efforts. Years later, Bronson Alcott's famed daughter, Louisa, would write about her experiences in the satirical novella, *Transcendental Wild Oats*. Louisa May Alcott's fictional piece, strongly based on her experience at Fruitlands, lends insight to the daily operations at the farm in Harvard. Through her

[125] Charles Lane to Mr. Oldham, May 31, 1843. In Clara Endicott Sears, ed, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975): 14.
[126] John Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts: The Story of Louisa May Alcott and her Father* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007), 105.

eyes, readers understand the achievements and problems that contributed to Fruitlands' downfall. Of greatest importance, Louisa May Alcott indicates that Fruitlands failed due to visions and exaggerated expectations created by her father and his colleagues. By integrating Louisa May Alcott's perception of Fruitlands with that of her father's, readers gain a more nuanced view of the farm and responsibilities that came with it.

Louisa May Alcott capitalized on these ideas in her later writings, using her father's ideologies to poke fun at some of the quirks of Transcendentalism. In describing the pillars of this community's belief system, Louisa wrote that

> the land awaits the sober culture of the devoted man. Beginning with small pecuniary means, this enterprise must be rooted in a reliance on the succors of an ever-bounteous Providence, whose vital affinities being secured by this union with the uncorrupted field and unworldly persons, the cares and injuries of a life of gain are avoided.[127]

These small pecuniary means were necessary for Bronson Alcott, as the man was always in debt and struggling to find work. However, this worked well with his notion of self-sufficiency, for, by building one's intellect and physical strength, he needed not rely upon others to care for himself and his family. His daughter continued to describe the layout of the farm, explaining in her book that everyone took on jobs and chores aimed at the goal of building certain qualities specific for each individual. They would then reflect on their thoughtful labor at meal times, "when some deep-searching conversation gives rest to the body and development to the mind."[128] Because members of Fruitlands (and Brook Farm, as well) were so intent upon discovering spirituality in the soil, they romanticized each action they performed. Each step they took was part of the process of self-discovery and building a closer relationship with God.

---

[127] Louisa May Alcott, *Transcendental Wild Oats and Excerpts from the Fruitlands Diary* (Harvard: Harvard Common, 1981), 27.
[128] Alcott, *Transcendental Wild Oats*, 35.

Charles Lane had travelled across the Atlantic Ocean to build his connection with God, and his hardheadedness and intent shaped the experience at Fruitlands. He, like Alcott, held onto strong beliefs regarding their visions for Fruitlands. Farming was a devotional practice for both Lane and Alcott; they believed in it wholeheartedly, and, in giving themselves over to the land, they became closer to God. In a letter to a friend dated June 16, Lane wrote that

> Mr. Alcott is as persevering in practice as last year we found to be in idea. To do better and better, to be better and better, is the constant theme. His hand is everywhere like his mind. He has held the plough with great efficiency, sometimes for the whole day, and by the straightness of his furrow may be said to be giving lessons to the professed ploughmen, who work in a slovenly manner.[129]

It is worth noting that this letter was written early in their time there, for it indicates that Lane and Alcott had not yet experienced the ongoing and monotonous toils of farming. This early in the season, Alcott and Lane had no notion that Fruitlands was going to fail by the end of the year. Alcott was determined to see it succeed, and he felt inspired by all that he had written about and was certain he would discover by propagating the land.

Bronson Alcott believed that the soil was just as in need for human contact as the soul yearned for interaction with the soil. In his journals, Alcott addressed an interesting notion that, just as the human is rewarded by the toils of farming, the soil is also appreciative of the man's efforts. He wrote that

> The soil, grateful then for man's generous usage, debauched no more by foul ordures, no worn by cupidities, shall recover its primeval virginity, bearing on its bosom the standing bounties which a sober and liberal providence ministers to his need-- sweet and invigorating growths, for the health and comfort of the grower.[130]

Alcott gave human qualities to the soil, suggesting that it had become degraded by uncouth men since the Fall of Adam and Eve. He indicated that both the soil and man himself have suffered

---

[129] Charles Lane to Mr. Oldham, June 16, 1843. In Clara Endicott Sears, ed, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975), 27.
[130] Bronson Alcott's Diary. In Clara Endicott Sears, ed, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975): 72-73.

since that time, and Alcott aimed to revive this purity of society and the land. However, this could only be done by taming man, further indicating that man has become more animalistic and beast-like. By redeeming man of the corrupt society into which he was born, Alcott could then teach others how to sow the land in a spiritually connective way. In doing so, the soil, too, would be saved and give back more to man than just a source of food.

Many people came to Fruitlands seeking the guidance of Lane and Alcott, believing that their lifestyles could set them on a holy path. This was the case for Isaac Hecker, who left Brook Farm in July for the farming community in Harvard. As much as he had savored his time with the association at West Roxbury, he found himself dissatisfied with the lifestyle of attractive labor and education. It had become too frivolous for his tastes, so he parted for Fruitlands in search of self-discipline and a different sort of personal growth. Hecker described the place as

> on the slope of a slowly ascending hill; stretched before it was a small valley under cultivation, with fields of corn, potatoes, and meadow... Such was the spot chosen by men inspired to live a holier life, to bring Eden once more upon earth. These men were impressed with the religiousness of their enterprise.[131]

Here Hecker persists in the idea of Fruitlands as a Biblical garden. This garden, however, came with challenges. As he wrote later in his journal, Hecker noted that "this will be a lesson in patient perseverance to me. All our difficulties should be looked at in such a light as to improve and elevate our minds."[132] Hecker had not been satisfied with Brook Farm's practices, despite the pleasant company and amusements he found in West Roxbury; he went to Fruitlands to purge himself of frivolities and focus instead on self-cultivation. This search, however, was short-lived. By July 23, Hecker admitted in his journal that he must leave Fruitlands, for his soul did not

[131] Isaac Hecker's journal. In Clara Endicott Sears, ed, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975): 75.
[132] Ibid, 76.

connect with the others who lived there.[133] Perhaps the personalities there were too strong, or their denial of all things superfluous was too much of a challenge. Whatever the reason, Hecker did not return again to Harvard.

Years later, when Hecker was reminiscing of his times at Brook Farm and Fruitlands, he noted that "Ripley would have taken with him the good things of this life. Alcott would have rejected them all."[134] This stands as one of the greatest contrasts between Ripley and Alcott, as well as one of the most telling. Alcott could not succeed, for he denied himself and his fellow Fruitlands "family" of their most basic needs in the name of holy self-denial. Ripley, in contrast, eventually embraced the use of mechanization and livestock, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Fruitlands needed the rigidity to follow their pursuits, but this also required compromise with the changing times of the nineteenth century. Fruitlands' failure was due to the hubris of the entire project, the inability to follow through with their plans, and the strong personalities that caused tension on the plot of land in Harvard.

Hecker must have realized that the idyll of Fruitlands was struggling, as the farmers had begun to identify troubles in their "New Eden." On July 30, Lane wrote to a friend that their "obstacles are, I suppose, chiefly within, and as these are subdued we shall triumph in externalities."[135] Farming did not come easily to these philosophers, and it had been their hope that the vegetables they grew would pay off their debts to the farmer who had leased the land for Fruitlands. Their crops, however, produced an insubstantial yield due to the late planting and unfamiliarity with sowing.[136] This was especially toilsome for Lane, as he did not want to

[133] Sears, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*, 82.
[134]Hecker quoted in Claire Endicott Sears, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*, 83-4.
[135] Charles Lane to Mr. Oldham, July 30, 1843. In Clara Endicott Sears, ed, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975): 33.
[136] Francis, *Fruitlands,* 240.

succumb to such frivolous things as money and material goods. Lane did not trust the desires of men, including his own, as he continued to write

> If we knew how to double the crops of the earth, it is scarcely to be hoped that any good would come by revealing the mode. On the contrary, the bounties of God are already made the means by which man debases himself more and more. We will therefore say little concerning the sources of external wealth until man is himself secured to the End which rightly uses these means...[137]

Lane's disdain for man's behavior coincided perfectly with Alcott's philosophies, as both men believed that society had fallen from a pure path of self-denial and rejoice in God's offerings. Lane, however, took a more cynical approach. Whereas Alcott preached that the soil could nurture people's souls, Lane posited that increased cultivation of the land would only corrupt people. In identifying this issue, Lane sought greater self-denial and thus distanced himself further from the rest of society.

Meanwhile, society looked in and saw a different picture than the one romanticized by Fruitlands' members. People considered Lane and Alcott's rejection of so many necessities as a fantasy, one that, no matter how they strived, could not be fulfilled. In a letter to Margaret Fuller, Emerson wrote, "[o]urs is not, let our ideas be what they may, whilst we may not appear except in costume, & our immunity at the same time is bought by money & not by love & nature."[138] Emerson emphasized the idea that Fruitlands' farming pursuits were not natural, and their attempt to live a purer life was merely an act. Though these members sincerely wanted to become philosophical farmers, it was not in their nature to do so. Instead, they were play-farming, just as many who joined these utopian communities unknowingly sought to do. It is also interesting that Emerson spoke differently of Fruitlands than Brook Farm. Though he was

[137] Charles Lane to Mr. Oldham, July 30, 1843. In Clara Endicott Sears, ed, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975): 33.33.
[138] Ralph Waldo Emerson to Margaret Fuller. In Francis, *Fruitlands*, 191.

disdainful of both, Emerson highlighted the personal philosophies of Lane and Alcott and seemed to suggest that they had been successful with their project:

> The sun and the evening sky do not look calmer than Alcott and his family at Fruitlands. They seemed to have arrived at this fact-- to have got rid of the show, and so to be serene. Their manners and behavior in the house and the field were those of superior men-- of men at rest. What had they to conceal? What had they to exhibit? And it seemed so high an attainment that I thought-- as often before, so now more, because they had a fit home, or the picture was fitly framed-- that these men ought to be maintained in their place by the country for its culture.[139]

Perhaps he also believed that they did not belong in his Concord sphere, and that the country fitted their personalities better. This backhanded compliment reflects Emerson's ongoing wariness toward any farming projects and utopian communities, opting instead for his intellectual community in town. For Lane and Alcott, of course, they found Concord to be inadequate. They thought they needed the hard work that came with country life in order to truly feel fulfilled.

Despite Emerson's high praise, he, too, shared doubts of the success at Fruitlands; his outsider's perspective reflected the same concerns that arose among its members in late summer. Emerson continued to write in his journal

> Young women and young maidens, old men and women, should visit them and be inspired. I think there is as much merit in beautiful manners as in hard work. I will not prejudge them successful. They look well in July; we will see them in December. I know they are better for themselves than as partners. One can easily see that they have yet to settle several things...[140]

Emerson did not disregard Lane and Alcott's attempts to live purely; rather he admired and believed a lot could be gained from a visit to Fruitlands. However, he expressed concern, especially in regard to their ability to thrive as autumn set in. It was clear to members and visitors alike that there was an imbalance between farming and philosophizing at Fruitlands, and

---

[139] Ralph Waldo Emerson, July 8, 1843. In Clara Endicott Sears, ed, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975): 69-70.
[140] Ibid.

it would be a struggle to overcome this challenge once the harvest was reaped. It became increasingly apparent that Fruitlands needed revamping, what with the dwindling number of members and a low crop yield. Despite Alcott's update to his brother, stating that "their early harvest is all stored; and the ploughing for winter and spring grain and roots is in a state of forwardness," Alcott and Lane had begun looking elsewhere to re-envision their Eden.[141]

In September, Lane and Alcott took off on a journey in search of new recruits; this excursion proved very telling for the livelihood of Fruitlands and the balance of work among its members. They left once the barley had been cut, but they did not take the time to harvest it. Meanwhile, Mrs. Alcott and the children stayed behind to look after the farm. Over time, the wife and children had assumed more responsibility over the manual labor, as the men spent their time writing to others and in their journals. On this certain day in September when the men left, a storm rolled in over the unharvested barley. In the hours before the storm, Mrs. Alcott and the children had to rush about and gather the barley into the granary; otherwise, their harvest would have spoiled and further threatened the survival of the Fruitlands community.[142] It was in this moment that revealed the real problem of Fruitlands: the men had not organized their plans, and it was up to Abigail May Alcott and the children to think ahead. This would prove to be Fruitlands' downfall: Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane were so wrapped up in their ideals that they failed to apply them to reality.

As is seen in this case, the necessity of hard work only extended so far for Alcott and Lane. In this light, they can be compared to Nathaniel Hawthorne, who did the work despite complaining bitterly about it. Alcott and Lane could not even bring themselves to do the work; though their failure to harvest the barley was unintentional, their forgetfulness further proved

[141] Bronson Alcott to Chatfield Alcott, August 4, 1843. In Francis, *Fruitlands*, 203.
[142] Sears, Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands, 112-115.

their lack of dedication. Hawthorne applied himself as long as he was there. Alcott and Lane couldn't even do that. It was the voluntary nature and the ability to leave the community as members pleased that resulted in the downfall of Brook Farm and Fruitlands.

In a final attempt to acquire new members, Lane and Alcott published a letter called "The Consociate Family Life." Originally written in August, only two months after Fruitlands's establishment, it was published in two separate newsletters in September and two others in November, well into the harvest season. Alcott and Lane presented their ideals, but, by this time, they understood that they struggled to live the lifestyle they wrote about. They admitted that "[u]ntil the land is restored to its pristine fertility by the annual return of its own green crops, as sweet and animating manures, the human hand and simple implement cannot wholly supersede the employment of machinery and cattle."[143] As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, Alcott and Lane equated the use of animal labor to Biblical sins, and saw their denial of livestock as holy to their cause. Despite their disdain for it, Lane and Alcott acknowledged the need for extra help from animal manures and mechanized labor. Not only was the human hand inadequate; they as individuals lacked experience with farming, and their desire to live self-sufficiently challenged the success of their harvest. However, this denial threatened their chances of a successful harvest during their first summer. Once again, however, their beliefs stood in the way of succeeding. They continued:

> Being, in preferences to doing, is the great aim, and this comes to us rather by a resigned willingness than a wilful activity; which is, indeed, a check to all divine growth. Outward abstinence is a sign of inward fullness; and the only source of true progress is inward. We may occupy ourselves actively in human improvements; but these, unless inwardly well-impelled, never attain to, but rather hinder, divine progress in man.[144]

[143] "The Consociate Family Life" published in the New York Evening Tribune, Herald of Freedom, the New Age and Concordium Gazette. Originally in Abigail May Alcott, "Diary of Abby May Alcott 1843-1844," Courtesy of Concord Public Library.
[144] Ibid.

This belief acted as a barrier to self-sufficiency, for prioritizing being over doing did not align with the functionality of a farm.

Conclusion

The fates of these two utopian projects exemplify the difficulties that both projects faced from the beginning. Despite the great minds that formulated these communities, these communities were exclusive to a small group of people. Their message did not spread far beyond the reaches of Transcendentalist followers, and this was due to a key tenet of Transcendentalism. Transcendentalism emphasized individualism; it was in direct response to the importance of community in general nineteenth-century society. By raising the status of the individual, Transcendentalists believed each person could become more divinely connected with God and nature. Among the reasons that Transcendentalist communities failed, one is that they could not balance the personal self-interest of each community member with the entire community overall. Both missions of Fruitlands and Brook Farm emphasized the personal cultivation of each individual, but this was far too abstract an ideal. Each member was so concentrated upon his or her own growth that they failed to let the community itself prosper. This, combined with the voluntary nature of these communities, made for an inconsistent group of people constantly in flux. Mental hospitals and almshouses forced their patients and inmates to work; members of Brook Farm and Fruitlands could come and go as they pleased, and many left once they discovered the hardships of farming.

By late November, with only the Lanes and Alcotts remaining at Fruitlands, tensions grew between the two families and caused a final rift in the community. Charles Lane had taken an interest in the Shakers, and had tried persuading Alcott to join him. Lane wrote to a friend that

"Mrs. Alcott has passed from the ladylike to the industrious order, but she has much inward experience to realize."[145] Lane, once again, focused here on personal self-cultivation, rather than the practical necessities of running a farm. He envisioned them living together as one family, but saw Abigail May as a barrier to this consociate lifestyle for she prioritized her kin over others. Instead, Lane found meaning with the Shakers, who lived similarly to the folks at Fruitlands, albeit with greater discipline and organization. Bronson Alcott, who could not abandon his family, rejected Lane's proposal, and Lane and his son left for the Shakers in early January of 1844. Alcott was deeply in debt and horribly humiliated by his failure at Fruitlands. The Alcotts left the property and stayed with other families until they had the financial means to return to Concord. This was a period of great strain on the Alcotts, with Abigail May writing in her journal

> in relation to our future subsistence-- wait in hope till something be revealed-- should like to see my husband a little more interested in this matter of support -- I love his faith and quiet reliance on Divine Providence -- But a little more activity and modesty would place us beyond most of these disagreeable dependancies on friends[146]

By not taking action, Bronson Alcott not only let the farm suffer, but he also lost sight of the family's needs. Abigail continued that "Mr. Alcott is right about not working... if thereby he violates his conscience-- But working for Bread does not necessarily imply unworthy gain."[147]

The family would, of course, regain their footing and their story would later become romanticized and revered in Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*; it was perhaps with Bronson's daughter's help that Fruitlands maintained a positive reputation. As she wrote in her satire, *Transcendental Wild Oats*, "for futile as this crop seemed to outsiders, it bore an invisible harvest, worth much to those who planted in earnest... Fruitlands was the most ideal of all these

[145] Francis, *Fruitlands*, 121.
[146] Abigail May Alcott, "Diary of Abby May Alcott 1843-1844," Courtesy of Concord Public Library.
[147] Ibid.

castles in Spain."[148] Fruitlands did not produce much in the way of crops, but it sparked many ideas. It reminded its members to rejoice in the soil's gifts, to let go of material goods, and its failure made clear just how necessary organization and discipline were to the survival of a Utopian community. As for the house and the land, one of the original members of Fruitlands stayed behind. Joseph Palmer maintained this house as a center for wanderers and tramps, with food always prepared for the poor and hungry. The town of Harvard sent the poor to the old house that had once been Fruitlands; though never institutionalized, it must be remembered that this poor house of sorts stemmed from the ideas and inspirations of a utopian community[149]

Brook Farm, meanwhile, continued to exist until 1846. In 1844 Brook Farmers experienced a transition from a community focused on Transcendentalist philosophy to one devoted to Fourierist belief. Charles Fourier was an early nineteenth-century philosopher who emphasized the importance of groups and series, and his beliefs demanded a "substantial rendering of the poetic vision that was at the heart of Transcendentalism," according to author Richard Francis.[150] This shift to Fourier thought required a restructuring of buildings, use of the land, and purpose of the members who lived there. The change in mission was exemplified by the altering of the site's name in the constitution of 1845: it had gone from being "The Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education" to "The Brook-Farm Association for Industry and Education."[151] There was a renewed focus on the mechanical arts, as well as a focus upon association rather than individual self-growth. The Brook Farmers in support of Fourier expected

[148] Louisa May Alcott, *Transcendental Wild Oats*, 48-49.
[149] Sears, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*, 137.
[150] Francis, *Transcendental Utopias*, 71. For a more thorough examination of Fourierist thought and its practices at Brook Farm, see Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu, ed. and trans.,*The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: selected texts on work, love, and passionate attraction* (Boston: Beacon, 1971)., and *Transcendental Utopias*.
[151] Francis, *Transcendental Utopias*, 90.

to work in association with each other, as opposed to the Transcendentalist philosophy that emphasized individualism.

Perhaps the shift from agriculture to industry can be seen in tandem with the shift from individual to community. Both occupations require collaboration between community members, but farming relies upon the individual hands that work in the soil. Fourierism disrupted the union of these individuals at Brook Farm. This caused discomfort for many members at Brook Farm, and this trouble culminated in 1846 when the Phalanstery, the Fourier-infused community center at Brook Farm, burned to the ground. This event symbolized the end of Brook Farm, and members disbanded not long after that.[152] Rather than being disappointed that it dissipated, one should be impressed that Brook Farm endured for so long. Like Fruitlands, it, too, was a utopian community focused on abstract ideas of self-cultivation and connectedness with the divinity of nature. The lack of a concrete purpose and mission led to the demise of both Fruitlands and Brook Farm.

Even though these utopian communities failed, the agrarian impulse behind Brook Farm and Fruitlands did not die. Henry David Thoreau articulated these thoughts in his speech, "Life without Principle." Written in 1854, this speech was first delivered at Railroad Hall in Rhode Island, and was published posthumously in 1863 in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Thoreau, a figure strongly associated with Transcendentalism, was known for his studies of nature and radical statements against the encroachment of industrialization. Thoreau noted the difference in interpretation between two men who spend their days in the woods, one out of love for nature and the other for land speculation. He saw a flaw in society, that "…if I choose to devote myself to certain labors which yield more real profit, though but little money, they may be inclined to

[152] Francis, *Transcendental Utopias*, 135.

look on me as an idler."[153] The "they" Thoreau referred to was society, and idleness was among the greatest sins one could commit in nineteenth-century society. If Thoreau chose the lifestyle he most wanted, then he was at risk of social condemnation. He considered this problematic, for a life of making more money would have been a life of yielding less real profit.

Thoreau's response to the societal expectation to make money was severe: he believed that one loses his morality when he subjects himself to a life of labor without love for his work.

> The ways by which you may get money almost without exception lead downward. To have done anything by which you earned money *merely* is to have been truly idle or worse. If the laborer gets no more than the wages which his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself. [154]

In this sense, this type of labor degrades an individual's soul. Thoreau believed that one's soul must be restored to the work a man commits in order to revive society from the harms of industrialization. The route to society's salvation was as follows:

> When we want culture more than potatoes, and illumination more than sugar-plums, then the great resources of a world are taxed and drawn out, and the result, or staple production, is, not slaves, nor operatives, but men, — those rare fruits called heroes, saints, poets, philosophers, and redeemers.[155]

According to Thoreau, this is what society should strive toward. Society should take the labor practices already in place and use those as a foundation on which to build. Once labor becomes something which people love to do, they will search for value in the other aspects of their lives. This is rooted in the desire for culture, which both Transcendentalists George Ripley and Bronson Alcott yearned for and sought after in their communities.

---

[153] "Life without Principle – 1," The Thoreau Reader, accessed April 16, 2013, http://thoreau.eserver.org/life1.html.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, a number of thinkers cropped up with similar notions as to the healing benefits of farming. Though this thesis does not examine these thinkers and their respective movements in great detail, it is worth briefly mentioning these groups as they point out a number of important ideas. The advocacy of farming as work, having therapeutic purposes, or as a way to connect with God did not happen in a bubble. By shedding light on other contemporaneous movements and thinkers, this thesis makes clear that almshouses, mental hospitals, and utopian communities were influenced in varying degrees by other ideas floating around and being disseminated.

Among these thinkers, Samuel Thomson promoted the use of herbal therapy in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Samuel Thomson spoke out against the traditional methods of medicine of regular physicians, offering herbal healing as an alternative to bloodletting, blistering, and other "treatments" advised by doctors. Thomson's work as an "herb and root" doctor was not unusual for the time, as many families were familiar with other such "Indian" and "witch" doctors who used foraging as a means of finding cures to ailments. Thomson differed from these other esoteric doctors, however, in that he to some extent institutionalized his work. Thomson established medical schools and infirmaries throughout the Northeast, and his popularity expanded into the South and Midwest. His book, *New Guide to Health: or, Botanic Family Physician, containing a Complete System of Practice, on a Plan Entirely New; with a Description of the Vegetables made us of, and Directions for Preparing and Administering Them, to Cure Disease, to which is Prefixed, a Narrative of the Life and Medical Discoveries of the Author*, first published in 1822, had immense success, essentially imparting his readers with the ability to heal themselves with herbal remedies from their backyards. This proved to be of

greatest importance to Thomson's work: by teaching herbal therapy, he reminded his patients of earlier generations of Americans who had seemingly cared and provided for themselves and their families. They did not need to rely on regular physicians to get treatment; according to Thomson, individuals needed only to visit the forest to find the cure.[156]

Contemporaneous with Thomson's writings, Sylvester Graham posited a similar line of thinking relating to healthier living. Sylvester Graham had been a Presbyterian minister in New England when he began to take interest in better diets as a means toward a moralistic lifestyle in the 1820s through 1850s. He believed that eating simple foods was the first step to working against the effects of technological change and increased commercialization of goods. According to Graham, the rise of industrialization had made the distribution of food more distant from its source of production and transformed food into a commodity. This caused concern for Sylvester Graham, who advocated that a simple diet of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains were key to promoting better living and moral reform in society.[157] Graham's followers came from all walks of life, including from other communities focused on spiritual renewal by way of eating well. The Shakers were one particular organization that formed in New England, and a handful of their members followed Graham's dietary beliefs.[158] The Shakers emphasized Christian faith, pacifism, celibacy, and cooperation between members.[159] Throughout the 1800s and into the current day, the Shaker communities have produced and traded goods, believing that coownership and working together, in addition to eating simply and healthfully, are integral to living well.

---

[156] William G. Rothstein, *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century: From Sects to Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1972), 125-151.
[157] Jeffrey Haydu, "Cultural Modeling in Two Eras of U.S. Food Protests: Grahamites (1830s) and Organic Advocates (1960s-70s), *Social Problems* 58 (2011).
[158] John E. Murray and Metin M. Cosgel, "Between God and Market: Influences of Economy and Spirit on Shaker Communal Dairying, 1830-1875), *Social Science History* 23 (1999), 53.
[159] Murray and Cosgel, "Between God and Market," 42.

The Thomsonians, Quakers, and Grahamites indicate how there was a shared interest of food and healthful living among and were intersections between a number of groups and individuals in the nineteenth century. It is worth noting, however, that these movements may have had a greater or more apparent impact on the utopian communities than mental hospitals and almshouses. Like Brook Farm and Fruitlands, the three related movements just examined were all voluntary. Members could come and go as they please, and many followers' interests were short-lived. As Cathy Stanton indicates in her report, "Plant Yourself in My Neighborhood," the nineteenth century gave way to a number of model farms where visitors could "play-farm" for a period of time before they returned to their actual lives.[160] In this way, those interested did not reject modernity or industrialization; rather, their industrialized lifestyles gave them a new lens to look at this pastoral lifestyle, and contributed to the nostalgic notion of the American farmer and bucolic ideals.

Despite this agrarian revival, it must be noted that there was a simultaneous thrust toward capitalist society and the rise of cities. As much as people pushed against the encroachment of industrialization, there was just as much of a push against rural living. One such author, Horatio Alger, emphasized these beliefs in his rags-to-riches stories for children. These tales told of young boys who pulled themselves up from their bootstraps in rural areas where few opportunities were presented. These children, with fantastical ideas of business and entrepreneurship, rose up to great success in American society. Alger's stories utilized the same early American notions applied to farming: self-sufficiency and self-reliance as the means to

[160] Cathy Stanton, "Plant Yourself in My Neighborhood: An Ethnographic Landscape Study of Farming and Farmers in Columbia County, New York" (Boston: National Park Service/Northeast Region Ethnography Program, 2012), 175.

success. Just as farming was romanticized by a multitude of authors, so, too, was capitalism and materialized romanticized by others such as Horatio Alger.[161]

The rises of industrialization and agrarian revival have both followed long and uneven paths, and no one particular movement can be seen as having had the greatest impact on nineteenth-century American society. They were constantly influencing each other, and this complexity continues to persist into today. In the twentieth century, people continued to advocate for specific diets and a variety of methods to connect spiritually with nature, as Rudolf Steiner stated that

> The most important thing is to make the benefits of our agricultural preparations available to the largest possible areas over the entire earth, so that the earth may be healed and the nutritive quality of its produce improved in every respect. That should be our first objective. The experiments can come later.[162]

Steiner was a philosopher and social reformer in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century. He developed the concept of anthroposophy, which combined spiritual and scientific thoughts with philosophies of Aristotle, Plato, and Thomas Aquinas.[163] In 1924 he delivered a series of talks that came to be known as the Agriculture Course. He examined the health of the soil as tied to the cosmos and the spiritual connection individuals have with the land. He promoted the idea of biodynamic agriculture, which was and still is used as a holistic approach to farming. It aims to be a diversified, balanced, closed-loop system of farming that focuses on ecological, social,

---

[161] Carol Nackenoff, *The Fictional Republic: Horatio Alger and American Political Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1994): 3-5.
[162] Rudolf Steiner, as quoted in "The Agriculture Course: Agriculture Course: Preface: Preface by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer, M.D. (Hon.)," Rudolf Steiner Archive, accessed April 26, 2013, http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/Agri1958/Ag1958_preface.html
[163] "What is Anthroposophy?," Waldorf Answers, accessed April 26, 2013, http://www.waldorfanswers.com/Anthroposophy.htm

and economic sustainability. This movement spread throughout the US and many countries in Europe, and many farmers today continue to employ techniques of biodynamic agriculture.[164]

~

When I first began this research, I assumed that the agricultural movement among institutions had faded out of existence. Of course, certain farming communities persisted, as did the use of gardens among specialized groups of (including institutionalized) people. However, as industrialization has transformed our country into an economic powerhouse with the majority of its cultivated land used for commodity crops, it seemed that therapeutic agriculture had been sown out of our lives. This, however, is not the case. American society is currently undergoing another agrarian revival, with a renewed distrust of industrialized food and First Lady Michelle Obama planting an organic garden at the White House. In the 1930s, there arose the concept of ecological agriculture, and in the 1970s organic gardening grew in popularity.[165] Today, we live in the midst of another back-to-the-land movement.

I recently drove thirty minutes from the closest city of Charlottesville, Virginia, to Innisfree Village. Innisfree is tucked into the rural landscape of the Blue Ridge Parkway, but its proximity to the city is intentional. Similar to many institutions of the nineteenth century, Innisfree aims to maintain a connection with the built-up and established neighborhoods of Charlottesville at the same time as rusticating its members on a 550-acre farm. Innisfree Village is a farming community for adults with intellectual and physical disabilities. Dating back to the 1970s, Innisfree has employed its residents at a variety of workshops and stations, including a weavery, woodshop, kitchen, bakery, gardens, and farm. The community is largely self-

[164] "What is Biodynamics?" Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association," accessed April 26, 2013, https://www.biodynamics.com/biodynamics.html.
[165] Edwin C. Hagenstein, Brian Donahue, and Sara M. Gregg, ed., *American Georgics: Writings on Farming, Culture, and the Land* (New Haven: Yale, 2012): 369-374.

sufficient, but it reaches out to the Charlottesville community by selling its wares and offering a farm-share program. This is one of the great aspects of Innisfree, as well as a number of other institutions and communities today: they value lessons from institutions of the past, at the same time as reaching beyond the confines of their property lines. By working with the outside community, they make their presence known and build relations in a supportive way.

As I drove from Charlottesville with one of the directors, she referred to Innisfree as an "intentional" community. This is not a term I had heard before, though this may just be due to my focus on historic institutions instead of current ones. Innisfree is intentional, because its members have come together with a specific purpose. The director pointed to Innisfree's endurance as being an intentional *service* community, rather than merely a community for self-cultivation. According to her, these latter communities struggle due to their focus on abstract notions such as personal growth and self-reflection. She believed that Innisfree has succeeded due to its commitment to caring for those with disabilities. This is a concrete goal, where medicine and caretaking support the existence of the entire community. Though farming feeds the community, it is the residents' care for and reliance upon each another that allows Innisfree to thrive.

In this light, Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and arguably many mental hospitals and almshouses coalesced in a similar way as these intentional communities. What are the values espoused at these nineteenth-century institutions and what lessons can be garnered from their existence? They all were established with specific missions, using farming as one component to reach their goal. The use of farming was interpreted differently with each group: it was used as a source of employment, a booster of morale, a way to connect with nature and God, and to build healthier behavior. Though these endgoals differ, they relate in that they all required hard work

and commitment to the job. Some succeeded better than others, and the staff member at Innisfree's argument can be applied here to explain the persistence or downfall of these farms at institutions and communities

Farming undoubtedly gives purpose to many people's lives, but the avenues people take to reach farming are not always sustainable. By this I mean that a large number of the institutions reviewed in the earlier chapters did not endure beyond the nineteenth century. For what reasons did some of these institutions survive, whereas others fell through the cracks of history? By the late 1800s, farming was no longer the predominant mode of occupation. Industrialization was no longer an exceptional phenomenon; factories and cities had just become a part of nineteenth-century life. As farming jobs were placed with industrial ones, it became more expensive and difficult to run farms, both privately and institutionalized. For this reason, it had become less feasible to continue farming operations on the sites of almshouses and mental hospitals.

The inefficiency of farming was not the sole reason for many of these institutions' failures. As the employee at Innisfree pointed out, much of Innisfree's success can be attributed to the service portion of the intentional community. I believe that a concrete mission or service is a necessary component for the survival of any institution that devotes a significant amount of its time to farming. This is why Fruitlands and Brook Farm only endured for a season or a few years at most. Both communities were Transcendentalist and utopian; their abstract ideals left them grasping for roots, but they remained ungrounded throughout their entirety. The farms at almshouses and mental hospitals endured, though they have transformed over the years. The almshouse has renewed itself in the form of the homeless shelter, and many rehabilitation programs offer farming as a way to get back on one's feet. The use of agriculture as a therapeutic and purpose-building technique is also applied at prisons and other social rehabilitative

institutions. Mental hospitals, meanwhile, still employ their patients with a variety of laborious activities. Though farming is not the only method of occupying their patients, the same arguments are made that farming gives one a sense of purpose, a connectedness with nature, and the reward of reaping the harvest.

~

On an overcast day in winter, I visited the Westport Town Farm. The Town Farm, though out of commission since 1950, now houses and is managed by the Trustees of Reservations, a non-profit organization that preserves significant sites throughout Massachusetts. Steve Connors, who one may consider today's caretaker of the Town Farm, showed me around. Immediately I noticed that the walls, windows, flooring, and ceilings were crooked. Though the foundation is sound, the crooked nature of the building stays true to how the house has aged over the centuries. This house, once a private residence in the 1700s, was later converted to the poorhouse in Westport, Massachusetts in 1824. The house's population varied in numbers, averaging to around 20 to 25 "inmates" at any given time. These inmates were the unemployed, drunks, single mothers, widows, orphans, elderly, and insane—all without a place to call home and seeking refuge at the town farm. The town farm, however, was anything but a home. The town farm served to isolate these impoverished individuals from the rest of society. Though one may have been lucky enough to find a quiet space with a roof to protect from inclement weather, the house was badly neglected and the inmates were sometimes abused. Here they lived and suffered together, but they also worked the 500 acres of farmland for the purpose of relieving idleness and becoming employed, as well as feeding each other and themselves. This rigorous, and oftentimes degrading, lifestyle endured until the middle of the twentieth century at Westport Town Farm.

Today, visitors cannot sense the struggles faced by those who sought employment at the poor farm; rather, I was surprised by the cheery nature of the painted walls. Though the house maintains the historic integrity of the poor farm, its interior serves a different purpose. In a way, the Trustees of Reservations does exactly the opposite of what the poor farm had intended: it welcomes and invites the public into its space, rather than isolating a group of people from the rest of society. By introducing the public to the grounds of the poor farm, the Trustees of Reservations reveals a history that is often left unknown or unacknowledged, for it is too dark and disturbing. It invites people to feel the layers of history and the reforms that took place that have brought us to this current period in the timeline of Westport Town Farm.

However, the Trustees' use of Westport Town Farm also maintains the original purpose of this almshouse. As Steve Connors showed me around the property, we visited the gardens and various cultivated plots of land. In this winter landscape, fourteen-foot stalks of dead sunflowers drooped, kale that resembled topiaries stood about, and leftover broccoli remained unclipped. These were just some of the flowers and vegetables that had grown this past summer season at the Westport Town Farm. The majority of these plants were given to food pantries; as Connors said, around 4000 pounds of vegetables were donated this past summer. By giving the harvest to the needy, those who work at today's Westport Town Farm allow the legacy of this place to endure. This food feeds and fuels a similar community to the original inmates of the Town Farm, those who may not have access to a nutritious diet otherwise. This is further emphasized by the Trustees' involvement with youth programs and other community services that involve troubled adolescents. Today's caretakers of the Town Farm integrate the past's commitment to relieving poverty with the current trend of increasing accessibility to quality fruits and vegetables, and in this way they are a part of a longer and surprisingly enduring, albeit uneven, tradition.

On this windy and overcast day in January, the grounds lay dormant and the soil frozen. Steve Connors talked fondly about the past growing season and his plans to expand this coming summer, but he also appreciated what the snow does for the soil. He understood that the pause for winter allows the soil to regenerate in nutrients and kill off any unwanted bacteria. Winter also gave him a moment to pause and reflect upon his participation in the annual harvest. As we stood by the barn, looking out on the shorn fields, he told me how gratifying it all was to help things grow. It gave him joy to see the first sprout pop above the soil, knowing that, once again, he had nurtured something so tiny to life. He understood that, if he continues to nurture this sprout, it would ultimately reward him by offering its fruits and vegetables. It can be a hard, labor-intensive day, lasting up to twelve hours. For Connors, though, his work in the garden is not tedious. He savors it. The farm work gives him a sense of purpose, not unlike those who stayed at the Town Farm hundreds of years ago. Only now, toilers of the land in Westport are employed and sow the ground of their own accord.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Alcott, Abigail May. "Diary of Abby May Alcott 1843-1844," Courtesy of Concord Public Library.

Bronson Alcott's Diary. In Sears, Claire Endicott, ed. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*. Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975: 72-73.

Bronson Alcott to Isaac Hecker, February 15, 1843. In Sears, Claire Endicott, ed. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*. Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975: 12.

Alcott, Louisa May. *Transcendental Wild Oats and Excerpts from the Fruitlands Diary*. Harvard: Harvard Common, 1981.

Annual Report of the Trustees of Worcester State Hospital. Department of Mental Diseases, November 30, 1936. Courtesy of Worcester Historical Museum.

L. Vernon Briggs to Owen Copp. December 22, 1910. In Briggs, L. Vernon. *Occupation as a Substitute for Restraint in the Treatment of the Mentally Ill: A History of the Passage of Two Bills through the Massachusetts Legislature*. Boston: Wright & Potter 1923.

"The Community at West Roxbury, Mass," Originally published in *The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters*, August 1841, 113-118. In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Cooke Dorothea. "Finding the Balance Between Work and Play," *The Hospital Messenger* 1 (1936).

Dix, Dorothea L. *Memorial to the Legislature of Massachusetts* 1843. Boston: Directors of the Old South, 1904. Accessed April 16, 2013, http://openlibrary.org/books/OL6629613M/Memorial_to_the_legislature_of_Massachusetts_1843.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. July 8, 1843. In Sears, Claire Endicott, ed. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*. Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975: 69-70.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. May 7, 1843, Originally published in Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Edited by E.W. Emerson and W.E. Forbes. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911: 393. In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Emerson Ralph Waldo, September 26, 1840. Originally published in Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Edited by E.W. Emerson and W.E. Forbes. Boston:

Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911: 465. In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Galt, John M. "The Farm of St. Anne." *The American Journal of Insanity* 11 (1854-5). Accessed April 17, 2013. http://books.google.com/books?id=axETAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA352&lpg=PA352&dq=american+journal+of+insanity+john+galt+farm+of+st+anne&source=bl&ots=tjAaG7ZrTy&sig=ShPtnYZ9jEO91faMjGZDSXjz_oM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=jODFUOa0CbOq0AHT0YHgBg&ved=0CDwQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=american%20journal%20of%20insanity%20john%20galt%20farm%20of%20st%20anne&f=false.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The American Notebooks*. New Haven: Yale University, 1932.

Nathaniel Hawthorne to Louisa Hawthorne, May 3, 1841 In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *Novels. Selections*. New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1983.

Nathaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody, April 14, 1841. In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Nathaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody, June 1, 1841. In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Nathaniel Hawthorne to Sophia Peabody, September 3, 1841 In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Isaac Hecker, July 7, 1843. In Sears, Claire Endicott, ed. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*. Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975: 76-77.

Isaac Hecker's journal. In Sears, Claire Endicott, ed. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*. Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975: 75.

Jarvis, Edward. *Insanity and Insane Asylum.* Louisville: Prentice and Weissinger, 1841. Courtesy of Massachusetts Historical Society.

Jarvis, Edward. *On the Causes of Insanity: An Address Delivered Before the Norfolk (Massachusetts) District Medical Society*. Vote of the Society: 1851. Courtesy of Massachusetts Historical Society.

Jarvis, Edward. *Relation of Education to Insanity*. Washington Government Printing Office: 1872. Courtesy of Massachusetts Historical Society.

Kirkbride, Thomas Story, *On the construction, organization, and general arrangements of hospitals for the insane*. Philadelphia: 1854. Accessed April 16, 2013. http://collections.nlm.nih.gov/muradora/objectView.action?pid=nlm:nlmuid-66510280R-bk.

Charles Lane to Mr. Oldham, July 30, 1843. In Sears, Claire Endicott, ed. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*. Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975: 33.

Charles Lane to Mr. Oldham, June 16, 1843. In Sears, Claire Endicott, ed. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*. Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975: 24-27.

Charles Lane to Mr. Oldham, May 31, 1843. In Sears, Claire Endicott, ed. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*. Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975: 14.

Charles Lane to the *New Age*, July 30, 1843. Originally published in Sanborn, F.B. *A. Bronson Alcott, His Life and Philosophy*. Boston: Roberts, 1893: 383. In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

"Modern History Sourcebook: William Ellery Channing (1780-1842): On The Elevation of The Laboring Classes, 1840." Last modified August 1998. http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1840channing-labor.asp.

Parker, Theodore. "Thoughts on Labor." *The Critical and Miscellaneous Writings of Theodore Parker*. Boston: Rufus Leighton, 1859. Accessed April 16, 2013, http://books.google.com/books?id=EGyLAXKavgAC&pg=PA123&lpg=PA123&dq=theodore+parker+thoughts+on+labor&source=bl&ots=_Vda1Pb4Rh&sig=IxeNR-KHiMeHLlzTkEDwuR2cvHc&hl=en&sa=X&ei=0-pFUfCjBc--4APD_YDoDw&ved=0CDAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=theodore%20parker%20thoughts%20on%20labor&f=false.

Peabody, Elizabeth Palmer. "Plan of the West Roxbury Community." Originally published in *The Dial* II (January 1842): 361-372. In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Pinel, Philppe. "Medical Philosophical Treatise on Mental Alienation." In Licht, Sidney, ed. *Occupational Therapy Source Book*. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1948.

Quincy, Josiah. "The Quincy Report on Poor Relief." In Rothman, David J. *The Almshouse Experience: Collected Reports*. New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1971.

"Rev. George Ripley," Originally published in *The Monthly Miscellany of Religion and Letters*, May 1841, 293-295. In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

George Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, November 9, 1940. Originally published in Frothingham, O.B. *George Ripley*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1882: 307-312. In Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Sophia Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, May 6, 1841. In Haraszti, Zoltan, ed. *The Idyll of Brook Farm: As Revealed by Unpublished Letters in the Boston Public Library*. Boston: Trustees of the Public Library, 1937: 17-18.

Thoreau, Henry David. "Life without Principle – 1." The Thoreau Reader. Accessed April 16, 2013. http://thoreau.eserver.org/life1.html.

Thoreau, Henry David. "Life without Principle – 2." The Thoreau Reader. Accessed April 16, 2013. http://thoreau.eserver.org/life2.html.

Webster, John. "Art. X—Observations on the Admission of Medical Pupils to the Wards of Bethlem Hospital, for the Purpose of Studying Mental Diseases," in *The Monthly Review* 3 (1842). Accessed April 17, 2013, http://books.google.com/books?id=RJAeAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false.

John Yates's "Report of the Secretary of State in 1824 on the Relief and Settlement of the Poor" Reprinted from the *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the New York State Board of Charities*, January 28, 1901. In Rothman, David J. *The Almshouse Experience: Collected Reports*. New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1971.

Secondary Sources:

Beam, Alex. *Gracefully Insane: The Rise and Fall of America's Premier Mental Hospital.* New York: Public Affairs, 2001.

Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association. "What is Biodynamics?" Accessed April 29, 2013. https://www.biodynamics.com/biodynamics.html.

Briggs, L. Vernon. *Occupation as a Substitute for Restraint in the Treatment of the Mentally Ill: A History of the Passage of Two Bills through the Massachusetts Legislature*. Wright & Potter, Boston, 1923.

Eastern State Hospital. "The History of Eastern State." Accessed April 17, 2013. http://www.esh.dmhmrsas.virginia.gov/history.html.

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Pantheon, 1965.

Francis, Richard. *Fruitlands: the Alcott Family and Their Search for Utopia.* New Haven: Yale University, 2010.

Francis, Richard *Transcendental Utopias*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1997.

Gollaher, David. *Voice for the Mad: The Life of Dorothea Dix.* New York: Free Press, 1995.

Grob, Gerald N. *The Mad among Us: A History of the Care of America's Mentally Ill*. New York: Free Press, 1994.

Grob, Gerald N. *Mental Institutions in America: Social Policy to 1875*. New York: Free Press, 1973.

Grob, Gerald N. *The State and the Mentally Ill: A History of Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, 1830-1920*. Chapel: University of North Carolina, 1966.

Gura, Philip F. *American Transcendentalism: A History*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2007.

Hagenstein, Edwin C., Brian Donahue, and Sara M. Gregg. *American Georgics: Writings on Farming, Culture, and the Land*. New Haven: Yale University, 2012.

Haraszti, Zoltan ed. *The Idyll of Brook Farm: As Revealed by Unpublished Letters in the Boston Public Library*. Boston: Trustees of the Public Library, 1937.

Hankins, Barry. *The Second Great Awakening and the Transcendentalists*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004.

Haydu, Jeffrey. "Cultural Modeling in Two Eras of U.S. Food Protest: Grahamites (1830s) and Organic Advocates (1960s-70s)." *Social Problems* 58 (2011). Accessed April 29, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/sp.2011.58.3.461.

Katz, Michael B. *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*. New York: Basic Books, 1986.

Keyssar, Alexander. *Out of Work: The First Century of Unemployment in Massachusetts.* New York: Cambridge University, 1986.

Licht, Sidney, ed. *Occupational Therapy Source Book*. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1948.

Licht, Sidney. *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1995.

John Matteson, *Eden's Outcasts: The Story of Louisa May Alcott and her Father* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007).

Meltsner, Heli. *The Poorhouses of Massachusetts: A Cultural and Architectural History*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2012.

Meyer, David R. *The Roots of American Industrialization*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2003.

Nackenoff, Carol. *The Fictional Republic: Horatio Alger and American Political Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University, 1994.

Onuf, Peter S. *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2000.

Rose, Anne C. *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement, 1830-1850*. New Haven: Yale University, 1981.

Rothman, David J. ed. *The Almshouse Experience: Collected Reports*. New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1971.

Rothman, David J. *Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1971.

Rothstein, William G. *American Physicians in the Nineteenth Century: From Sects to Science*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1972.

Sams, Henry W., ed. *Autobiography of Brook Farm*. Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1958.

Sears, Clair Endicott, ed. *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands*. Philadelphia: Porcupine, 1975.

Stanton, Cathy. "Plant Yourself in My Neighborhood: An Ethnographic Landscape Study of Farming and Farmers in Columbia County, New York." Boston: National Park Service/Northeast Region Ethnography Program, 2012.

Rudolf Steiner Archive. "The Agriculture Course: Agriculture Course: Preface: Preface: by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer M.D. (HON.)" Accessed April 29, 2012. http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/Agri1958/Ag1958_preface.html.

U.S. National Library of Medicine. "Diseases of the Mind: Highlights of American Psychiatry through 1900." Accessed April 17, 2013. http://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/diseases/note.html.

Wagner, David. *The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Waldorf Answers. "What is Anthroposophy?" Accessed April 29, 2013. http://www.waldorfanswers.com/Anthroposophy.htm.