New Harmony Bicentennial 1814-2014

New Harmony, a National Historic Landmark, was a small community which attempted, based on a religious idealism, to create a utopia. The Harmonist Community, led by Georg Rapp, a German religious ascetic, had been driven from Kissingen in Bavaria in 1809 by secular authorities. In 1814, they purchased the Indiana Territory and established the Harmonie Society, a pietistic society (1757–1847). It was originally called “Harmony,” a spiritual community committed to the sanctification of life, to labor and work, and to the development of a society in which all members would live in a perfect world.

In 1814, the Harmonists, led by Michael and George Rapp, arrived at the site of the present-day town of New Harmony, Indiana; when the Society advertised their Indiana settlement in the New Harmony Deseret News, an advertisement appeared that received wide distribution. The Harmonists, therefore, purchased the land, 2,000 acres of which was under cultivation. The Harmonists brought with them a unique social and educational philosophy. They were committed to the idea that all members of the society should share in the work of the community and that education should be open to all.

The Harmonists were successful in establishing a self-sufficient community and in creating a society that was dedicated to the principles of brotherhood and democracy. They were also successful in creating a community that was dedicated to the principles of democracy and brotherhood.