

## COMMUNISTIC SOCIETIES

### GENERAL STATEMENT

Under this head are included in 1926 two bodies, similar in general type but not affiliated in any way. The Shakers were the first to establish a communistic settlement in the United States, their first group emigrating in 1774 and establishing a small settlement at Watervliet, N. Y., in 1776. Their numbers increased, and the society has historic interest from the fact that most of these settlements have been maintained for more than a century.

In addition to the Shakers and the Amana Society, there are other bodies, such as the Seventh Day Baptists (German, 1728) and the Hutterian (Mennonite) Brethren, which are communistic in their general character, but are presented with the Brethren (Dunkers) and the Mennonite bodies, as being more closely affiliated with them. A number of similar bodies were presented in the report for 1890, but in 1906 they had either disbanded or refused to answer inquiries.

The only two bodies included in 1926 under this head, therefore, as distinctively religious communal organizations, with the principal statistics as reported in 1926, 1916, and 1906, are listed below.

#### SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR COMMUNISTIC SOCIETIES, 1926, 1916, AND 1906

DENOMINATION AND CENSUS YEAR	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
1926								
<b>Total for the group</b> .....	13	1,577	11	\$77,500	3	\$600	3	47
Amana Society.....	7	1,385	7	50,000				
United Society of Believers (Shakers).....	6	192	4	27,500	3	600	3	47
1916								
<b>Total for the group</b> .....	19	1,901	14	37,050	3	750	6	96
Amana Society.....	7	1,534	7	16,300				
United Society of Believers (Shakers).....	12	367	7	20,750	3	750	6	96
1906								
<b>Total for the group</b> .....	22	2,272	10	31,190			5	103
Amana Society.....	7	1,756	7	14,090				
United Society of Believers (Shakers).....	15	516	3	17,100			5	103

# AMANA SOCIETY

## STATISTICS

The data given for 1926 represent 7 active congregations of the Amana Society, all reported as being in rural territory, in the State of Iowa. The total membership was 1,385, comprising 640 males and 745 females. The classification by age was reported by all of the 7 churches, there being 297 members under 13 years of age.

There was no debt on the 7 meetinghouses reported. The society does not have regular ministers and reported no parsonages. They maintain no Sunday schools; and expenditures for 1926 were not reported.

The membership as here reported includes minors, as well as legal members who have signed the constitution of the corporation.

**Comparative data, 1890-1926.**—Table 1 presents, in convenient form for comparison, a summary of the available statistics of this society for the censuses of 1926, 1916, 1906, and 1890.

TABLE 1.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1890 TO 1926: AMANA SOCIETY

ITEM	1926	1916	1906	1890
Churches (local organizations).....	7	7	7	7
Members.....	1,385	1,534	1,756	1,600
Increase <sup>1</sup> over preceding census:				
Number.....	-149	-222	156	
Per cent.....	-9.7	-12.6	9.8	
Average membership per church.....	198	219	251	229
Church edifices:				
Number.....	7	7	7	7
Value—Churches reporting.....	7	7	7	
Amount reported.....	\$50,000	\$16,300	\$14,090	\$15,000
Average per church.....	\$7,143	\$2,329	\$2,013	

<sup>1</sup> A minus sign (-) denotes decrease.

## HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION <sup>1</sup>

### HISTORY

About the time that the Dunkers in Germany were developing under the influence of Pietism there arose a community more thoroughly representative of the mysticism of the period, the members of which were convinced that the days of direct inspiration by God had not passed, but that persons then living were endowed with the same divine power. Gradually they gathered strength, and in 1714 a small company of them, under the leadership of Johann Frederick Rock and Eberhard Ludwig Gruber, met in Himbach, Hesse, and gave expression to their belief by a somewhat loose organization. They increased in numbers and in influence but suffered severely at the hands of the Government. On the death of Johann Frederick Rock, in 1749, "the gift of inspiration ceased."

<sup>1</sup> This statement, which is substantially the same as that published in Part II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1916, has been revised by Peter Stuck, registrar of vital statistics, Amana Society, and approved by him in its present form.

His successors continued the work along the lines of the founders, but the congregations diminished in number until 1817, when a new impulse was given by Michael Kraussert and a peasant girl of Alsace, Barbara Heinemann, both of whom were recognized by a number of the older members as inspired and endowed with the gift of prophecy. With them, later, was associated Christian Metz, and these leaders traveled considerably and gradually strengthened the scattered organizations. By 1826 it became apparent that the Inspirationists, of whom there were many in Wurttemberg and other provinces, would have to renounce their faith and return to the fold of the state church, or leave their homes and seek refuge where they could follow their religious customs unmolested. A large estate at Marienborn, Hesse, was leased, to which other properties were added, and by 1835 the community was quite prosperous. Difficulties with the government, however, arose again. The authorities would not accept affirmation as the equivalent of the oath, which the members of the society refused to take. Already a revelation had come to Metz that they should be led out to a land of peace, and in 1842 it was decided that he and some other members should come to America.

They arrived in New York on the 26th of October of that year, and learning that the Seneca Indian Reservation, near Buffalo, was available, secured the property. Little by little the entire community, numbering some 800 people, came over from Germany, and the society was organized in 1843 under the name of the Ebenezer Society, and houses were arranged in four villages—Lower, Middle, Upper, and New Ebenezer. Each village had its store, meetinghouse or place of worship, and school, and its own local government, consisting of a board of elders. As the numbers increased the quarters became too narrow and another change was suggested, which resulted, in 1855, in removal to the present location in Iowa County, Iowa, where the villages of Amana, East, Middle, High, West, and South Amana, and Homestead were established.

In 1859 the society was incorporated as a religious and benevolent society under the name of the "Amana Society," although the term "Community of True Inspiration" is also used. The purpose of this association is declared to be an entirely religious one, for the service of God, the salvation of souls, and the demonstration in the community of faithfulness in inward and outward service. In order to accomplish this in full for all members, the entire property remains as a common estate with all improvements and additions. Every member, at the time of joining the society, is in duty bound to give his or her personal or real property to the trustees for the common fund. For such payments each member is entitled to a credit on the books of the society and to a receipt signed by the president and secretary, and is secured by a pledge of the common property of the society. All claims for wages, interest, and sharing income are released and each member is entitled to support through life. All children and minors, after the death of parents or relatives, are under the special guardianship of the trustees, and credits not disposed of by will, or debts left by parents, are assumed by their children. Persons leaving the society, either by their own choice or by expulsion, receive the amount paid by them into the common fund, without interest or allowance for services during the time of their membership.

#### DOCTRINE

The confession of faith is founded on the revealed Word of God manifest in the Scriptures and in the words of the instruments of true inspiration. Since the death of Christian Metz in 1867, and of Barbara Heinemann in 1883, no one is believed to have had the gift of inspiration. A holy universal Christian Church is acknowledged and the communion of saints, including all of every nation who fear God and work righteousness. They believe in the remission of

sin, the resurrection of the body, the punishment of the wicked, and the life everlasting. Baptism with water is not practiced, as it is held to be only an outward form of true spiritual baptism. The true baptism is by "fire and the spirit." Confirmation or reception into the covenant of grace occurs at the age of 15 years; the vow is made in the presence of the whole congregation. There are three orders or classes of members—a young people's class; an intermediate class of those who are further advanced in religious faith; and the highest order, including principally the older members who have proved through many years their faithfulness to the principles of the community. The distinction is purely a religious and honorary one.

The Lord's Supper is held biennially and foot washing is practiced by the highest spiritual order as a solemn service, after the example of Christ. The members are noncombatant, as war is believed to be contrary to the will of God and the teachings of Christ. Oaths are forbidden, though affirmation is allowed. In wearing apparel emphasis is placed on comfort, comeliness, and propriety; the men dress practically in the style in general use, with but slight modifications, while the women still retain the plain dress as worn by the German peasant. The younger generation, however, conforms somewhat to the more conservative styles worn at the present time. Amusements were not countenanced, previously, as they were believed to divert the mind from religious matters; but the attitude toward them has grown more lenient in recent years.

#### ORGANIZATION

The general government of the society is in the hands of a board of 13 trustees, who are elected annually out of a board of elders, and these elect their own president, vice president, and secretary, who have full power to sign public and legal documents. New members are admitted by vote of the trustees, but only as they give proof of being fully in accord with the religious doctrines of the society, and they usually pass through a period of probation. The trustees also have power to expel any member whose conduct is not according to the rules of the society.

Religious meetings are held in the meetinghouses twice on Sunday and sometimes on week days, while a short prayer meeting is held every evening. These meetings are conducted by the "elders," who are appointed by the board of trustees. The testimonies and writings left by Christian Metz and Barbara Heinemann are read in the meetings.

Membership in the society is conditioned on the signing of its constitution. Only those who are of legal age and have signed the constitution of the corporation are considered members in a legal sense.

#### WORK

The society carries on agriculture, manufactures, and trade, and out of the income from these industries all the expenses are met; while any surplus is applied to improvements, the erection of schools and meetinghouses, the care of the old and sick, the founding of a business and safety fund, and benevolent purposes in general.

Great emphasis is laid upon education, and graded schools are provided which children between the ages of 5 and 14 years are expected to attend all the year round. The schools are under the control of the State laws, and the teachers, while members of the society, are under the supervision of the county superintendent. Secular branches are taught in English; religious instruction is in German and is usually given on Saturday forenoons. The younger generation uses the English language almost exclusively in its daily work.