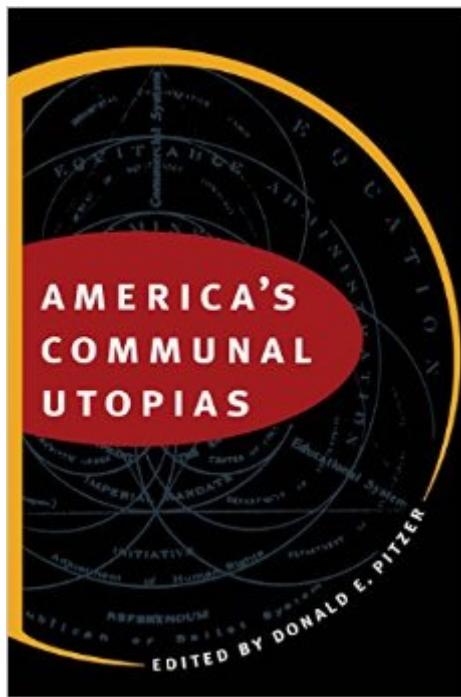


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America's Communal Utopias



Synopsis

From the Shakers to the Branch Davidians, America's communal utopians have captured the popular imagination. Seventeen original essays here demonstrate the relevance of such groups to the mainstream of American social, religious, and economic life. The contributors examine the beliefs and practices of the most prominent utopian communities founded before 1965, including the long-overlooked Catholic monastic communities and Jewish agricultural colonies. Also featured are the Ephrata Baptists, Moravians, Shakers, Harmonists, Hutterites, Inspirationists of Amana, Mormons, Owenites, Fourierists, Icarians, Janssonists, Theosophists, Cyrus Teed's Koreshans, and Father Divine's Peace Mission. Based on a new conceptual framework known as developmental communalism, the book examines these utopian movements throughout the course of their development--before, during, and after their communal period. Each chapter includes a brief chronology, giving basic information about the group discussed. An appendix presents the most complete list of American utopian communities ever published. The contributors are Jonathan G. Andelson, Karl J. R. Arndt, Pearl W. Bartelt, Priscilla J. Brewer, Donald F. Durnbaugh, Lawrence Foster, Carl J. Guarneri, Robert V. Hine, Gertrude E. Huntington, James E. Landing, Dean L. May, Lawrence J. McCrank, J. Gordon Melton, Donald E. Pitzer, Robert P. Sutton, Jon Wagner, and Robert S. Weisbrot.

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Customer Reviews

This is an excellent book with an intro. to the idea of communal movements in America, and then is divided into chapters regarding many of the communal movements throughout history. It is well written, and easy to read. We used it as a textbook in a college course I took entitled "American Utopianism". Not your typical, boring, gotta read it a couple times to make sense of it book. It has really inspired me to learn more.

While others can rightly be considered greater experts in specific groups or movements, no other scholar has done the work of Don Pitzer over the length of a career to understand the patterns and discontinuities of the massive number of experimental societies across American history and beyond. His theory of "developmental communalism" avoids the limited and misleading analysis found in many other sources to place the success of a group's efforts within the context of their development over time. And, it is exceptionally readable considering the wealth of material covered. A great teacher translates his guidance of students into this peculiar aspect of our heritage for all readers. It is the crowning achievement of a brilliant career. peace

This book is very well written and thorough about each of the utopian communities that it assesses. I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in this subject.

I'm surprised and disappointed that none of the reviews of this book mentioned that there are SEVERAL blank pages and missing text. I purchased the 1997 paperback edition published by the University of North Carolina Press. This is obviously a printer's error and I find it highly doubtful that only one book came off the press this way. TopSellinMedia refunded my money, for which i am most grateful, as the missing pages make this book rather useless from a scholarly perspective. Here's a list of the blank pages and missing text: pp 76, 77, pp 80, 81, pp 84, 85, pp 88, 89, pp 92, 93, pp 96, 97, pp 100, 101, pp 104, 105

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