



Harmony Society Cemetery Historical Marker

The Harmony Society, established by George Rapp and his followers, created a unique and prosperous religious utopian community in nineteenth-century Pennsylvania. The first Harmonists arrived in the state in 1803 and the following year built their first permanent settlement, Harmony, north of Pittsburgh. Believers devoted themselves to communal living, hard work, and prayer to prepare themselves for the Second Coming of Christ, which they expected to occur within their lifetime.



Two Harmony Society cemeteries are located in Pennsylvania: one in the group's first settlement of Harmony, in Butler County north of Pittsburgh, where the Harmonists lived from 1803 to 1815; the second at Economy, where they lived from 1824 to 1905.

The Harmony cemetery at Harmony is circled by a stone wall and an arched entranceway with an unusual pivoting stone gate, constructed by Mennonite craftsmen hired by the Society. One hundred Harmonists are buried here, including Johannes Rapp, the son of founder George Rapp. In accordance with Rapp's teachings, the graves are unmarked. No written account records the Harmonists' reasons for not marking the graves of deceased members, but according to Daniel Reibel, a former curator of Old Economy, "it probably had something to do with their belief in" the Second Coming. After all, he reasons, "the grave was meant to be a temporary home-so why mark it?"



Cover image and above:Harmonist Society's cemetery



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