20. Inns and Taverns

An important reason Heinrich and Maria would have wanted to use the National Road was the many inns and taverns along the way. Let's look at this overview from *touringohio.com*.

Inns and taverns are the most celebrated commercial property types from the heyday of the National Road. They reflect the extraordinary historical development of the road as a route for immigration and commerce in Ohio during the early 19th century, when travel was slow and arduous—by horse, wagon, carriage or stagecoach over a rough and unpredictable road.

An inn or tavern was typically located about every 10 miles or so—about one day's travel by horse and wagon. Wagon stands or drovers' inns were typically located on the outskirts of towns where there was ample space to house the draft animals in a pasture or corral. Often a barn or stable was associated with the inn. Taverns or inns where the stage horses were kept and the stagecoach passengers slept and ate were sometimes called "stage houses."

Large numbers of inns and taverns existed along the National Road in its heyday; but less than 40 remain today. These buildings remain in use as museums, restaurants, commercial businesses, and private homes. Many are well preserved and cared for, while others are less so. The city of Whitehall, was named after a National Road tavern: *Ye Olde White Hall Tavern*.

The Red Brick Tavern in Lafayette, Madison County was established in 1837 and is still used as a restaurant. The Red Brick Tavern is a good example of this historic building type along the National Road Scenic Byway. Even though they served a commercial purpose, early inns and taverns appear more residential than commercial. Typical is a gable-roofed, two-story main block that is set with its long side to the street. Chimneys are placed at each end or in the center, reflecting the location of fireplaces that were essential to heating and cooking. The front or facade usually has regularly spaced window openings on both first and second floors. Most common are five bays (or windows and doors) with the entry door at the center. The entry may be no wider than the door itself, or it may have a more elaborate surround. Front porches were sometimes added later, but most early 1800s inns and taverns did not have them originally. Additions often were made to enlarge the most successful of the inns, typically through a rear "ell" that would join the main building at a 90-degree angle.

It is easy to imagine Heinrich and Maria and their three little ones stopping at these inns to spend the night, happy to find warm hospitality, good food, safe barns and fodder for their animals, and

the camaraderie of hosts and other travelers along the road. Here are some final thoughts about the National Road, reminding us that it was from the beginning a work in progress and an important part of our national history that was doomed to obsolescence by the relentless march of progress. (*marshall.k12.il.us*.)

The National Road, according to *A Guide To The National Road*, was both obsolete and premature from the time that it was built--obsolete because the emerging technology of the railroad would soon offer a far more efficient means of overland transportation, and premature, because the technology that could make use of an improved road network, the automobile, was nearly a century away.

Travel was difficult on the Old National Road, as stated by 90 year old Branson Harris of Green Fork. Harris's recollections are possibly the earliest record of travel in Indiana on the National Road, recorded in his book, "Some Recollections of My Boyhood." Harris remembers a visit made to an uncle living in Indianapolis that took all of two days. Harris recalls that the National Road had recently been "chopped and grubbed out," meaning that his journey took place after the fall of 1829 since the government had issued contracts in October of that year for cutting and grubbing. Cutting and grubbing contracts were made to clear brush and timber from a roadbed 80 feet in width to allow future expanding. All stumps within the center 30 feet were to be grubbed out and rolled to the outer edge of the road.

The National Road has many names: The Cumberland Road, Ohio's Road, Uncle Sam's Road, U.S. 40, The Great Western Road, and simply The Road. Travel and westward expansion along the National Road was greatly encouraged and therefore was regulated by the government so that high prices would not discourage settlers. A person wishing to open a tavern was required to obtain a license, have good behavior, and observe all the ordinances relating to the innkeepers within the state. The court fixed rates on most products. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner were all 25 cents. Horse stabling was 50 cents per night, lodging was 12.5 cents per night, one-half pint of whiskey was 12.5 cents and one-half pint of rum was 25 cents.

Throughout Illinois and along the entire National Road stage coach stations often developed into villages and towns overnight. As the railroads expanded westward, Illinois maintained a steady growth while others along the National Road dissolved into ghost towns. Marshall is in its present location as a result of the intersection of Illinois Route 1 and the National Road or Route 40. The original stagecoach stop was located on the west edge of town next to the present property of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Fitzjarrald and was torn down during the 1960's. Another stagecoach stop is located

two miles east of Martinsville. Currently the home of Jesse Shaffner, it has been moved across the present Route 40 and is said to still contain some of the woodenpegged timber, part of the original structure. Just outside of Martinsville to the west, a small shingle-sided dwelling is said to have been another stagecoach stop. It is located on the south of the old pavement about one-half mile past Turkey Run Hill. West of Marshall, Old U.S. 40 crosses a stone arch bridge, in an area known at one time as Calvert Hollow. The Stone Arch Bridge was built by army engineers over a century ago as part of the original National Road. Each stone was shaped to exact size by hand and no mortar or concrete was used. The stones were clamped together with keys to prevent slipping. One other bridge is remaining in Clark County. It is located one and one-half miles east of Auburn on the land of Odie Starkey. This is also the only known area where three different positions of the road can be seen in Clark County.

The National Road changed the way that the people of the United States traveled. The Road also opened up a passage way to the west and was a key player in westward expansion. The Road is a reminder of the pioneers who came west with nothing but high hopes, searching for a better life with more freedom, trying to fulfill all their expectations, and striving to achieve their goals and dreams. The National Road never reached the Mississippi River. The National Road did, however, show the federal government's power to open the gateway to the West. Travelers on the National Road today owe something to the pioneering efforts of their ancestors.

As the usda.gov reminds us, not all historic roads are as well-known as the National Road, and many that were major transportation routes in the past centuries have been lost to history. Sometimes remnants remain, or stories and folklore about them, and sometimes archaeological digs provide new information about them. Ones like the Buffalo Trace, the famous natural migration route for American bison or "buffalo" from the grasslands and salt licks of Kentucky to the prairies of Illinois and beyond became a Native American trail and then a trail for the early American settlers to move their livestock, facilitate commerce, and ultimately settle the Northwest Territory. Some of these old paths are being given the designation "Historic Pathways National Scenic Byway." There are two important and historic trails leading out of Cincinnati that we should review more closely, one the Old Miami Trail, from *History of Campbell County Tennessee,* and the other the Bullskin Road and other trails used by the members of the Church of the Brethren who settled the area near Cincinnati in southwestern Ohio, from *cob-net.org*. It is possible that Heinrich and Maria used one or both of these trails.

OLD MIAMI TRAIL HAS TRAVERSED THE AGES by Dallas Bogan.   One of the most formidable and most historic trails in the Middle West is the Old Miami Trail. It was from prehistoric times the eminent trading and war path between the northern and southern Indian tribes of Ohio. In later times it became the great military trail which experienced the passage of men and armies, they making history for both the Native American and the White Man.

   The countless treacherous twists of this old path tell a tale of blood and tragedy, not only for the

Indian, but for the tattered soldier and pioneer who first followed this trail. Along this famous trail Gen. St. Clair met a devastating defeat at Ft. Recovery, while in 1794 along this same trail the Indians were dealt a fatal blow by Gen. Clark at the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

It seems that the Indian name of this old trail is unknown, but it was a part of the great trunk trail which ran from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. The land layout between the Great and Little Miami rivers offered a natural highway from the Lake region to the mountains southward through the valley of the Licking. This old trail is sometimes called the Tennessee River - Ohio - Great Lakes Trail. It was an old buffalo trail which the Indian, and later the white man, followed and essentially set up their own towns.

One branch went southeast through the Cumberland Gap and was known as the Wilderness Road or Boone's Trail, while another division swung southwest through Nashville and was called the Natchez Trace, or Boatman's Trail. The main branch of the Old Miami Trace traveled due north up from the Indian town of Chattanooga on the Tennessee and then connected with the other Indian trails branching off toward the Gulf of Mexico.

As was mentioned, the trail started at Chattanooga, bounded along the west bank of the Tennessee River, branched off at Harriman, Ky., moved up the valley of the Emory River over to the Valley of the Cumberland River. Thence to the Indian settlement at the junction of the north and south forks of the river at Burnside, Ky. It then proceeded to the Indian settlements of Central Kentucky at Danville, Lexington and Paris, where it followed the ridge of the Licking to its mouth; it then it crossed the Ohio to what is now Cincinnati. (The Wyandotte name for Cincinnati was Tu-ent-a-hab-whag-ta, "the place where the road leaves the river.")

At this point numerous important trails met. From the Ohio northward the trail is called the Old Miami Trail, obviously the name being taken from the powerful Indian tribe, the Miamis, who occupied this region. The old trail was sometimes called the Fort Miami Trail, simply because it led to old Fort Miami, the oldest fortification in the State of Ohio. This fort was built under the direction of Fontenac, Governor of Canada, in 1680, as a military trading post. Its location was about fifteen miles up the Maumee from Lake Erie. The French later moved it farther up the river; the English, in 1785, rebuilt it.

The Native Americans followed certain routes for both trade and warfare. The water courses and the ridges along the watersheds were used as their earthworks now show. Both the Indians and the whites followed these same trails and used the same sites for their towns, such as Cincinnati, Hamilton, Dayton, Xenia, Piqua and Urbana. (A route is given from my source that was taken from an old English trading map in 1755, and a pioneer map of Ohio in 1803.) *(Note: This is a route Heinrich and Maria may have followed either to Eaton on 127 or to Dayton on 127 and 4).*

The Miami Trail led from the waterfront at Cincinnati, wound its way over the hills east of Mill Creek, continued northeastward to Sharonville, Ohio, moved up the north side of Sharon Creek and over the hills toward Mason, where it crossed Turtle Creek to Lebanon (U.S. 42). Five miles to the right was the Little Miami River. The Little Miami regressed on the right crossing the high plateau, and while continuing north, Holes Creek was the next identifying point for the trail. *(Note: This is the route Heinrich and Maria might have taken to join the National Road northeast of Dayton.)*

The trail leaned eastward around the head of the creek and then dropped into the lower section

east of Dayton. It then crossed the Mad River to the heights north of the city, all the time keeping the Miami River on the left, and, eventually, descending into the flatland northeast of the Indian town, Tippecanoe.

Crossing the Great Miami again, the trail passed through Troy and followed the west bank to Piqua (Old U.S. 25). Continuing through Piqua, the trail passed the mouth of Loramie Creek to Ft. Loramie (S.R. 66). From this point the trail divided, one extended eastward toward the Shawnee towns and the other led northwest up Loramie Creek.

The trail apparently changed names at this juncture, becoming Loramie Trace. This trace veered west onto the plateau and, turning north, continued across the stream at Newport (S.R. 66). Proceeding through Fort Loramie, the trail led northwest across the flatland to Celina (U.S. 27) to the foot of the St. Mary's Lake. Crossing the outlet of the lake, it continued northwest to the lower St. Mary's River in Indiana (U.S. 27). Here one branch went north along the Bean River to the Straits of Mackinaw, while the other continued along the Maumee to Ft. Miami and then on to Detroit.

One Cincinnati branch went up Main Street to McMicken Avenue, around the foot of the hill to Colerain Avenue, on to Queen City Avenue, thence to Knowlton's Corner. One extension led from this point to Colerain Avenue, another went up to College Hill and on to Hamilton, while the another continued up Queen City Avenue to the Mill Creek Valley, coming again into the main trail. At Reading Road and the junction of the "Old Road" (Florence Avenue) a branch extended out the Montgomery Road to Pleasant Ridge, and on to Mason where it joined the main trail.

The other trail branched off toward Lebanon and Xenia, while still another extension of this trail, Montgomery Road, went out to Foster's Crossing, now Foster. Another went northwest at Florence Avenue and Reading Road up along the steep ravine to Mt. Auburn Church, thence to Vine Street out along the Carthage Pike. This extension was known as Wayne's Trail and was used by Wayne's soldiers.

Minor trails were an integral part of the trail system. Such trails were established along both the Little Miami and the Great Miami rivers. The east side, or the buffalo trail, was preferred by the Indians. There was a ridge trail along the west side of the Great Miami where it crossed the river at Dunlap and came down to the Ohio at about Anderson Ferry. *(Note: this may be the current highway 128 that follows the west side of the Miami River from Cincinnati to Hamilton, and Heinrich and Maria may have taken it.)*

It seems that all the trails, including the Old Miami Trail, were used by the Indian in his travels going down to the salt springs at Big Bone Lick, Ky. Possibly the most important crossing of the Ohio for the Indians was the ford at the Eight Mile Bar, which was the lowest part of the entire Ohio. This location is about five miles above Coney Island. The trails from this point connected with the Little Miami Trails and the Old War Path near Williamsburg.

The Miami Trail, in the northern section of Ohio, is known as the famous old Wabash Way. This was the most prominent travel and trade route between Canada and Louisiana, it being used by the early French colonies. It also makes up part of the "Great Trail" of Ohio which extended from Detroit to the forks of the Ohio, to Ft. Duquesne, later Ft. Pitt. This was a great fur trading trail, LaSalle being the first to discover this section. He helped to establish Fort Miami and other military trading posts along the Wabash Way. Many early missionaries traveled this trail, among them, the French Jesuit, Pere Allouez. This group traveled more or less with the Miami tribes and were the first whites

to roam the trail. The French fur traders followed the missionaries and established their trade with the Indians, setting up a station in 1740 at Shawnee Town at the mouth of the Scioto.

The Old Miami Trail has many tales to tell. Only since the white man traveled it has some sort of history been recorded. It has been reformed from a bloody trail of the past to what is now a grand highway system.

Bullskin Road

The first State Road in Ohio, 1807, the Xenia State Road was the official recognition by the new State of Ohio of the old Shawnee Indian Road from British Fort Detroit to Bullskin Landing on the Ohio River, through the major Shawnee center, Old Chillicothe (Oldtown, at Xenia). It was long called the Old Xenia Road. It was down this road in 1778, that Daniel Boone ran the gauntlet at Old Chillicothe, and didn't stop running - clear to the Ohio River, outrunning the pursuing Shawnees. Down this road had come raiding armies of British Regulars and Indian allies as they attempted to destroy the Kentucky settlements. Up this road had gone the Kentucky militia when they attacked the Indians at Springfield in retaliation. In these new lands on the Northwest frontier, the Bullskin Road was a major thoroughfare. '

Bullskin Creek is flooded by the Ohio River for half a mile back from the River, a wide valley opening. It was the first major landing for Ohio River flatboats above Fort Washington (Cincinnati). Here the flatboat was protected, off the river, with easy unloading facilities. This settlement in Clermont County is called Utopia. The Brethren settled on the Bullskin about 1800. (Miller, Moyer, Metzgar, Rohrer, Hoover, Houser; the old Olive Branch Church. It converted en-mass to Church of Christ in the New Light Revival of 1830's.) Being farmers, they lived mostly on the level lands above the high riverbank hills, at the head of Bullskin Creek.

The Road went north through Felicity and Bethel, now Ohio 133, and crossed the East Fork of the Little Miami at Williamsburg. It crossed Stonelick Creek at Edenton (just 2 miles from the Stonelick Church). A stone marker at the east edge of Edenton is on the old Road as it goes cross-country to Clarksburg. A line of old trees shows part of the route. From Clarksburg it followed old Ohio 380 to Xenia, going through New Burlington, now submerged below the lake at Caesar's Creek State Park. It was called the Bullskin Road.

From Xenia north to Detroit, it is U.S. 68, the Detroit Road. It goes to Yellow Spring, where it leaves the Little Miami. Then to Springfield, where it follows the Mad River of the Great Miami to Urbana. Other cities on the Road are Bellefontaine, Kenton, Findlay, Bowling Green, Toledo. From Cygnet, north of Findlay, it becomes Ohio 25 and from Toledo to Detroit it is U.S. 24.

Earliest records show another old Indian path, that connected to the Bullskin Road (Ohio 133), just north of Williamsburg (on Ohio 276). Just before Owensville it turned north to the Ford on the Great Miami River, Franklin Ohio, then headed north along the Great Miami and Stillwater rivers, where many of the early Brethren settled on the west side of Dayton.

The earliest Brethren settlement in Ohio was in Clermont County, the Obannon Church, near Goshen (1795). The Olive Branch Church near Bullskin Landing soon followed (1800). But this was heavy clay soil, and many decided to move north to the good farmland on the Great Miami River.

Frederick Weaver (in whose home the Obannon Church first met), Gabriel Kerns, and David and Daniel Miller lived in the western part of the Obannon Church area, near Manila Road, which goes southeast from Goshen. Just above Gabriel Kerns' farm is Linton Road, which was the OLD route before Manila road was built, going through Goshen past the Cemetery, meeting the Murdoch/Lebanon Road above town. It now stops at the Cemetery.

The Road went north from Goshen to those families of the Obannon Church (the Millers at Murdock and Bowmans unknown) who lived in Warren County. At Murdock it went on north to Lebanon (Ohio 48). Then an angling Indian path was followed (Ohio 123) to the ford over the Great Miami at Franklin. This put them on the west side of the River, where Elder Jacob Miller lived on Bear Creek (1800). *(Note: this is another road Heinrich and Maria could have followed to reach either the National Road in Ohio west of Dayton or to reach Richmond, Indiana and connect with the National Road.)*

The exact route north, on the west side of the Great Miami, is not known. There are a couple of early references (1830's) to an old River Road on the banks of the Great Miami. Probabilities are that it followed the Soldier's Home Road along the River and then went nearly strait north on the Gettysburg Road to the Wolf Creek Road, the Salem Road and the Covington Road (Stillwater River). *(This also may be a road that Heinrich and Maria took out of Cincinnati, possibly to Hamilton to connect in Preble County with highway 177 to Indiana on the way to the Whitewater Valley and up to Richmond.)*

The John Aukerman family likely used this road to the Great Miami River Ford, then followed what became the extension of the Kanawha Trace, along the Twin Creek, into Preble County, Ohio. The John Bowman family likely used this route for their migration from the Obannon to Montgomery County, about 1800. David Miller left about 1802, and already others of the Obannon Brethren had moved north. These families seem to have been displaced from their Hamilton County homesteads (now Clermont and Warren) when the government gave these lands to the Virginia Military District and Ohio land grants were given as bounties to Revolutionary Veterans in lieu of their pay. Local settlers, like the Aukermans and Bowmans, could not purchase their homesteads and had to move.

Most of the earliest Brethren settlers to Ohio seem to have stopped among the Brethren already at Obannon / Stonelick, before they found lands north (the Land Office was in Cincinnati, a day's walk away), then followed one or the other of the Indian Roads north. Many Brethren moved up the Bullskin Trace to the east side of Dayton, to Green and Clark Counties, Ohio, to the old Beaver Creek and Donnels Creek Church areas. Other Brethren crossed the ford on the Great Miami, and settled in the fertile lands west of the River, the Lower Miami Church, the Bear Creek Church, the Stillwater Church.

As we are speaking of churches, Little Dear One, an interesting side note is that while we believe that Heinrich and Maria were Roman Catholics and preferred to settle in a German Catholic community, they would certainly have been aware of other religions around them, particularly one as large as the Church of the Brethren that had settled close to Cincinnati. According to *germanheritagecom* it is believed that the first German immigrants in America came seeking land and the promise of religious freedom. Francis Daniel Pastorius, an agent for a land purchasing company in the city of Frankfurt am Main, organized the original party of settlers. It was a group largely made up of German Quakers and Mennonites from the Rhineland. They had heard that land and religious freedom could be found in the newly chartered colony of Pennsylvania, which was governed by a Quaker, William Penn. This, of course, is how the large Quaker community in

Pennsylvania was started. There seems to have always been a rapport between German Catholics and Quakers and Mennonites. Perhaps, as we have learned in previous sections of this Story, the common language of German, whether high or low, was more important to German settlers than religious affiliation or political beliefs or other ideologies.

There may have been that kind of rapport with the Church of the Brethren also, because it too had its origins in Germany. The Church of the Brethren is a Christian denomination that started with the Schwarzenau Brethren, organized in 1708 by Alexander Mack in Schwarzenau, Germany. It was a melding of the Radical Pietist and Anabaptist movements and holds the New Testament as its only creed. Historically, the church has taken a strong stance for nonresistance and pacifism. Interestingly, these three churches, the Quakers, the Mennonites, and the Church of the Brethren, are considered the three historic peace churches because of their common fundamental belief in pacifism and non-violent resolution of conflict. The Church of the Brethren eventually branched off into a number of denominations including the Brethren, evangelicals, and some Baptists.

The strength of the common German language bond is the foundation on which we will base another assumption for our story: that Heinrich and Maria stayed with German-speaking hosts when possible, starting, perhaps, with one of their Church of the Brethren acquaintances from Cincinnati as they finished their first day of travel either north or northwest. Other likely hosts would be found in the Quaker compounds of the Whitewater River Valley in Indiana if they chose that route. In fact, I think we can propose a sort of "referral" system for Heinrich and Maria, wherein their lodging hosts referred them to friends, relatives and acquaintances along the routes they chose. We saw that practice in the story of the Ellisons, and I believe Heinrich and Maria would have used that referral system extensively, especially among the Quakers of Indiana. As we see in this article from *muse.jhu.edu* the strongest geographic center of the Quaker communities in Indiana was in Randolph County on the Ohio border, just above Wayne County and the National Road through Richmond.

Southern Friends in the Settlement and Organization of Randolph County, Indiana, 1814–1830. The story of the migration of southern Friends (Quakers) to the old Northwest Territory has been told many times and in many places. Where it has been told, however, the story has been incomplete. For much of period since the state was settled, Indiana Friends have exercised considerable influence in Quaker circles, yet no one has carefully looked at the patterns of settlement and community organization in Indiana pioneer Quaker communities. A dozen or more Indiana counties can claim Friends among their earliest and most important pioneers, but in few places was the Quaker influence so strong and as enduring as in Randolph County, Indiana, a rural county in the heavily Quaker district of eastern Indiana. From the first settlement, through the organization, and, in a sense, until the present, Quaker pioneers from the South and their descendants have exercised a disproportionate influence on this county. This period of settlement represents the dichotomy then present among American Friends: moving westward in an effort to preserve their faith and guard their youth, while at the same time confronting the increasing outside influences of the world. The Friends studied here created a community that was notable in many ways. First, while they often moved in groups and continued to maintain their old connections, their new communities usually brought together Friends and non-Friends from various places. Second, they entered fully into civic life, exercising political, legal, and economic power in nearly every imaginable way. Third, as the Hicksite Separation rent eastern Friends, most Indiana Friends,

including those in Randolph County, cast their lot with the Orthodox faction almost without question.

Relatively few academic studies of Quaker communities exist. One of the few is Martha Paxson Grundy's *Evolution of a Quaker Community*, a study of Middletown Meeting and its community in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Grundy's two basic approaches, the role of faith development as an analytical tool and the use of Quaker families to search for patterns of orientation toward the meeting, political activity, or economic activity, can be used in studying any Quaker community, including Friends in Randolph County. Serious studies of Quaker migrations are even rarer, though two, James Harris Norton's "Quakers West of the Alleghenies and in Ohio to 1861" and Larry Dale Gragg's "Migration in Early America: The Virginia Quaker Experience," present conclusions that can be applied to the Quaker community of Randolph County.

Indiana was, unlike many other states, settled first from the south and the west, meaning that a disproportionate number of its early settlers came from southern states. This settlement pattern so influenced the state, particularly its southern two-thirds, that one modern Indiana historian has said that Indiana's long tendency toward southern-style conservatism is the "Indiana Way. The first Friends to settle in the Indiana Territory arrived in 1806, settling along the Whitewater River in what was then Dearborn County on Indiana's eastern border. *(Note: this Quaker community would where Heinrich and Maria probably spent the night if they took the Whitewater River Valley route to Richmond.)* Without exception, every Quaker family that arrived in the area before Whitewater Monthly Meeting was established in 1809 came from a monthly meeting in North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, or Virginia. The first settlers in the area were non-Friends who arrived in 1805. The area was organized as Wayne County in 1810, and, though Friends were active citizens, none of the original officers of the county were Quakers. Two Friends were appointed to the commission that was to select the location for the county seat of Wayne County.

In the northern part of Wayne County, which became Randolph County in 1818, settlement was also occurring. Thomas W. and Anne (Peele) Parker and their three children made the first white settlement in what became Randolph County in April 1814. The Parkers were members of Piney Grove Monthly Meeting of Friends in Marlborough County, South Carolina, but had been residents of Richmond County, North Carolina. They settled in what is now Greensfork

Township, Randolph County, on Nolan's Fork, just west of where the village of Arba today stands.

A different kind of denomination that settled not far from Cincinnati may have been a puzzle to Heinrich and Maria, and I am curious about it, too, so let's take a quick look at it. During the 19th century a new religion called Spiritualism sprang up and spread literally like wildfire among people of many different faiths, especially among the middle classes. The reason it spread so quickly is that it could be adopted and molded to personal beliefs and needs in a way that would fit in with any other religion, like putting frosting on a cupcake.

Spiritualism is a system of thought and knowledge which can be reconciled with **any religion**. The basic facts are the continuity of personality and the power of communication after death. These two basic facts are of as great importance to a Brahmin, a Mohammedan, or a Parsee as to a Christian. Therefore **Spiritualism** makes a universal appeal. (From *spiritualist.tv/spiritualism/history*)

Devotees of Spiritualism could keep their preferred societal religion and add spiritualist practices, in public or in private. And there was indeed something thrilling about reverting to old pagan beliefs.

Spiritualism is a religious movement based on the belief that the spirits of the dead exist and have both the ability and the inclination to communicate with the living. The afterlife, or the "spirit world", is seen by spiritualists, not as a static place, but as one in which spirits continue to evolve. These two beliefs — that contact with spirits is possible, and that spirits are more advanced than humans — lead spiritualists to a third belief, that spirits are capable of providing useful knowledge about moral and ethical issues, as well as about the nature of God. Some spiritualists will speak of a concept which they refer to as "spirit guides"—specific spirits, often contacted, who are relied upon for spiritual guidance. Spiritism, a branch of spiritualism developed by Allan Kardec and today practiced mostly in Continental Europe and Latin America, especially in Brazil, emphasizes reincarnation.[ ] Spiritualism developed and reached its peak growth in membership from the 1840s to the 1920s, especially in English-speaking countries. By 1897, spiritualism was said to have more than eight million followers in the United States and Europe, mostly drawn from the middle and upper classes. (*Wikipedia*)

This phenomenon is very surprising given the scientific advances of the 19th century. Perhaps it grew out of people's fear of rapidly progressing secular ideas.

The 19th century is generally remembered as a time of science and technology, when the ideas of Charles Darwin and the telegraph of Samuel Morse changed the world forever. Yet in a century seemingly built on reason there arose a profound interest in the supernatural. Even a new technology was coupled with the public's interest in ghosts as "spirit photographs," clever fakes created by using double exposures, became popular novelty items. Perhaps the 19th-century

fascination with the otherworldly was a way to hold on to a superstitious past. Or perhaps some really weird things were actually happening and people simply recorded them accurately.

The 1800s spawned countless tales of ghosts and spirits and spooky events. Some of them, like legends of silent ghost trains gliding past startled witnesses on dark nights, were so common that it's impossible to pinpoint where or when the stories began. And it seems that every place on earth has some version of a 19th-century ghost story. (*Thoughtco.com*)

Part of Catholic Church doctrine is the belief in the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit. There is as well the belief in a host of angels and the devil who reside in the spirit world, and personal guardian angels whose purpose is to protect and safeguard. So the idea of spirits was not foreign to Heinrich and Maria. Nevertheless, with their natural German practicality, they probably did not succumb to the temptation of immersion in this spiritualist fever. However, they would definitely have heard of the disaster that happened in 1847 to the spiritualist church in Utopia, about 50 miles upriver from them, two years after they had arrived in Cincinnati in 1845.

Utopia was one of a number of "phalanxes" established in America in the mid-19th century, social communes fashionable for their time. All of them failed, but none as spectacularly as this one.

The community was founded in 1844. The original inhabitants were followers of French philosopher Charles Fourier, who believed that all work and profits should be shared equally. Its residents built a 30-room communal brick house and many private dwellings. But two years later the people were all gone -- moved away because the commune wasn't making enough money. And, frankly, they didn't get along with each other. (*Utopia, Ohio* from *roadsideamerica.com*)

In 1845 John O. and his wife Esther Wattles moved to Cincinnati and learned about Utopia. By 1846 several communitarian sympathizers from Cincinnati – Moses Cornell, Lucius A. Hine, Hiran S. Gilmore, Pascal B. Smith - began to meet with Wattles to discuss church reform. Gilmore was the principal of a black high school in Cincinnati. Hine was a lawyer and editor of the *Quarterly Journal and Review*, which in January 1847 had merged with the *Herald of Progression*. Smith was a well-to-do merchant. Together, they and other sympathizers formed what they called the "Universal Brotherhood." In Smith's words, its intention "was to establish a Christian Church, on the broad principles of the gospel of Christ, with a view to remedy the great evils of society." The community took the name Excelsior. (*markharrisstudio.com*)

John Wattles, their leader, bought all of the land and the phalanx buildings of Utopia, possibly with Smith's money. Against the warnings of local people, Wattles had his followers move the main phalanx building, brick by brick, to the water's edge. On the rainy night of December 13, 1847, the members of the Excelsior Spiritualist Society gathered in the building for a party. As the dance progressed, there came a flash flood on the Ohio River. It surrounded the building and collapsed the walls, throwing the church members into the cold flood waters, where most of them drowned or succumbed to hypothermia. One account of the incident says there were 32 people in the building and 17 of those drowned, including Moses Cornell. Another account says there were 156 people inside the building and 150 of those drowned. Both accounts agree that Wattles and his wife Esther somehow survived. When the flood waters receded, the survivors tried to begin again, but when the new frame building they erected and lived in burned down in May 1848, the group

broke up. Then Esther is said to have told her husband, 'We have been tried by water, by whirlwind and by fire. I would like to try something else." But Utopia became famous in spirit lore. The ghosts of the drowned are said to rise in smoky spirals near the place of their death. Some people see them as wavering mists, while others have seen dancing lights and full-bodied apparitions dripping along the banks. (hauntedhocking.com)   The Utopia disaster became prime fodder for spiritualists and the ongoing cult of ghost legends.