

# IMMIGRATION OF THE ICARIANS TO ILLINOIS



LES COLONIES ICARIENNES AUX ETATS-UNIS



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Editors



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Proceedings  
of the  
Icarian Weekend in Nauvoo

Lillian M. Snyder  
Robert P. Sutton  
Editors

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July 19 & 20, 1986

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Etienne Cabet  
(1788-1856)

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## INTRODUCTION

Lillian M. Snyder

During the course of his genealogical research, Lloyd Gundy found a journal of the voyage on which his ancestor, Jules Leon Cottet, traveled from Le Havre, France, to Nauvoo, Illinois, to join the Icarian Colony. The journal (author unknown) was published in French by Cabet and had been translated by Lloyd and Wilma Gundy. Subsequently it appeared in print in the 1986 issue of *Western Illinois Regional Studies*.<sup>1</sup>

The diary gave a detailed description of the daily life of a band of 51 Icarians who left France on September first and arrived in Nauvoo on November sixth of that year. On board the ship the Icarians organized themselves to share the work, to handle dissension, and to aid other shipmates. Gundy's report of his research prompted the Descendants of the Icarians and other interested groups such as the Center for Icarian Studies at Western Illinois University to select the topic "Immigration of the Icarians" for a Symposium to be offered in July, 1986 at the site of the Icarian Colony at Nauvoo. The project also received the enthusiastic support from the Center for Icarian Investigations at the University of Nebraska, Omaha.

About the same time I received a brochure from Jane Hood, the Director of Grants at the Illinois Humanities Council, in which she requested proposals on the topic "The Peopling of Illinois." She explained that the Council had adopted a six-year emphasis on the theme "Inventing Illinois" to encourage Illinoisans to look for the "interaction between peoples and places emphasizing their different values, customs and histories." The brochure pointed out, in Miss Hood's words, "that Illinois has been shaped in rich and complicated ways by peoples who settled her land and populated her cities—in ways that are truly characterized more accurately as a 'cauldron of values' than as a 'melting pot.'" "While census figures, demographic profiles, and population projections are important," she explained, "an exploration of the values and cultural heritage of Illinois' people is essential to understanding our state."

The Illinois Humanities Council recognized that the waves of some 500 mostly French-born emigrants who came at one time or another to Nauvoo between 1848 and 1860 left a unique cultural contribution to the Prairie State, a heritage with which more Illinoisans should be better acquainted and should be more fully appreciative. The Council, accordingly, awarded a grant to cover partially the expenses of speakers and to publish an account of the proceedings of the Symposium.

At the Symposium, held at Nauvoo on July 19 and 20, 1986, Charles T. Parish, Moderator of the program, introduced the Symposium by dealing with the topic "Who Were the Icarians?" His presentation was followed by Professor Jacques Rancière of the University of Paris, France, who spoke on "Why Did the Icarians Leave France?" Jules Renaud, a native of Keokuk, Iowa and now living in Alexandria, Virginia, gave an account of "Icarian Migrations from Europe to Illinois" based upon his findings in the Ship Manifest Lists of the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Gundy then read his report on "Glimpses of the Immigration of the French Icarians to America, 1854." The three papers were critiqued by Dr. Robert P. Sutton, Director of the Center for Icarian Studies, Dr. Wayne Wheeler of the Institute for Icarian Investigations, and Dale W. Ross, an Icarian Descendant, of Sunnyvale, California.

The French Consul, Max De Calbiac, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the gift of the Statue of Liberty to the United States, concluded the Symposium that evening with a cogent summation of the entire weekend. He noted that the Statue of Liberty was a symbol of freedom and a remembrance of the binding American relations which go back over 300 years. Both countries, he said, cherish the same values of liberty. He pointed out that equality and fraternity symbolized in the logo of the Descendants of the Icarians are symbols of the two nations. He suggested that such a commemoration of Cabot and the Icarians was an auspicious occasion to remember the importance of the goal of equality in both of our societies. "It is not an easy task," he said "and it is far easier to succeed in liberty." The challenges facing Cabot find his followers almost a century and a half ago, he concluded, are the same challenges facing us today.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd Gundy, Wilma Gundy, and Robert P. Sutton, "An Icarian Embarkation: LeHavre to Nauvoo, 1854 (Macomb, Illinois: *Western Illinois Regional Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring, 1986), pages 19-33.

See also, Etienne Cabet, *Prospectus de la Colonie Icarienne* (Paris: by Cabet, 1855).

<sup>2</sup> "Inventing Illinois, the IHC Program 1985-1991" *Humanities* A Publication of the Illinois Humanities Council, Vol. 7, No. 1, Winter 1986.

## WHO WERE THE ICARIANS?

Charles T. Parish

The founder of the Icarians was Etienne Cabet, author of the best selling *Travels in Icaria*, first published in France in 1840. Cabet himself, born in 1788, was a precocious youth who taught mathematics in high school and at the age of twenty-one earned a Doctor of Jurisprudence at the University of Dijon. Throughout his life he was involved with writings and activities to bring about liberty, equality, and fraternity.

After a study of the history of the French Revolution and the rise and fall of nations, Cabet set forth his views of how a correct social organization of a humanistic society could bring about peace, brotherhood and justice for all mankind. His central idea was to build a society of complete equality without either property or money. Every citizen in Icaria, in Cabet's plan, had equal access to the performing arts, museums, and education. In Icaria there were public hospitals, libraries, recreational facilities, and gardens.

Cabet's followers by 1848 finally insisted that his ideas be put into practice not in his native France but in the United States. The First Advance Party of Icarians left Le Havre on February third to establish the first community in Texas. The initial location proved disastrous. So they chose Nauvoo as the permanent site of their colony. A group of 180 Icarians arrived in Illinois on March 15, 1849. At Nauvoo they built a model of their ideal society. Children both boys and girls, were given a free education in science, mathematics, geography, history, literature, and the arts. Every Sunday afternoon they gathered in their "cours Icarien" to discuss matters of love, brotherhood, and beauty. Sunday evenings the Icarian orchestra performed regular concerts. Each month, a theatrical play was given in the dining hall. All members, young and old, borrowed books from the Icarian library of over 5,000 volumes—the largest in the state at the time.<sup>1</sup> Its newspaper, the *Colonie Icarienne* published detailed accounts of their new life in Illinois. The Icarian community, first began in the Prairie State, reestablished itself again and again over the next fifty years—in St. Louis, in Corning, Iowa and in Cloverdale, California.

The Icarians were mostly French although a number of them were from other European countries. Nevertheless, most were from the middle class. Many were, by and large, educated. Some were craftsmen. A few were rich, others quite poor. Each applicant, regardless of status or wealth, had to have his "entry money" to join the community and his steerage money to pay for the passage to America. Naturally there were factions, squables, and differences of opinion but all embraced common goals.

What were these goals that caused the Icarians to emigrate to Illinois? There were three goals. The first goal was liberty. They felt that each person should be able to have individual freedom of thought and of expression. The second goal was equality. They felt that each person was equal, yet different, and could bring to the community according to their own particular gifts (one a doctor, one a farmer, one a cabinetmaker, one a tailor, for example) but that each stood equal as a person in the society. The third, and perhaps most important, was fraternity. They felt that people would receive according to their needs and give according to their talents. This was the ultimate purpose of the "Community of Goods" as they termed their Icaria.

We have a lot to learn from these Icarians. They developed a pure republican form of government. They endured tough economic and political times. They survived internal difficulties and dissensions. They championed education and the arts. At Nauvoo they laid the foundation for the longest-lived, non-religious communal experiment in humanistic living in American history.

#### ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup> Albert Shaw reported that "a library of five or 6,000 volumes, chiefly standard French works, seems to be much patronized . . ." Albert Shaw, *Icaria* (New York: G.P. Putnam's—Sons, 1884) p. 51. See also Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son Fondateur Etienne Cabet* (Philadelphic, reprint: Porcupine Press, 1972) p. 292.

## WHY DID THE ICARIANS LEAVE FRANCE?

Jacques Rancière

Why did they leave? At first the answer might seem obvious: they left to found Icaria, to implement a plan of social organization about which they had been amply instructed through the words and writings of Cabet.

However, the obviousness of this answer comes up against several problems. What exactly does it mean to *found Icaria*? In Cabet's view the ideal proposed by the *Voyage en Icarie* is that of a communist country that would take perhaps fifty years to build as the consequence of a democratic revolution which would, after a long period of transition, result in communism. Cabet is against the projects of partial colonization proposed by the Fourierists and other schools. He accepts only those small communities of "devotees" who join together for the purposes of communist propaganda.

Now in 1847 the project for the departure for Icaria acquires a completely different meaning. It is a question of going to found a people and Cabet confides to a correspondent that he thinks he will be able to count on 100,000 men. This project of massive emigration will itself be ruined by the 1848 revolution in France. But the departure for Icaria then takes on two contradictory aspects. On the one hand, it takes on the character of an exodus of persecuted believers: "As we can no longer live here," wrote Cabet at the time, "let us leave for Icaria." But, on the other hand, Icaria cannot be founded by a band of runaways, by men driven solely by their material interest. Those who would go to found Icaria should be "workers full of courage, intelligence and education," "an elite" chosen as were the first Christians. Icaria is thus two things at once—a land of exile for men whose situation has become unbearable in France and a sacrifice to be realized by devoted men.

This ambiguity encounters an ambiguity concerning the moral and social identity of the Icarians. In order that devotion and not self-interest should be the motivating force for the departure for Icaria, Cabet especially fixed high financial conditions. The contribution of 600 francs per person which

was required of each participant, represented, even for a skilled worker, six months wages. The communist volunteer had therefore to be a worker of some means. But the dividing line set out in this way is not a stable one. As well as the fluctuations in work and the economic situation, the social situation of the militant communists depended on the political situation and on the very consequences of their involvement. Among communists we fairly frequently come across workers who earn a good living—shopkeepers, small businessmen. It is not poverty that drove them to communism, but rather it was their communism which frequently reduced them to poverty, by turning away their customers or their orders. "In the past," writes an Icarian tailor from the provinces, "I employed six workers, not counting my work and that of my wife. Today I have hardly enough work for myself." Paradoxically, the Republic that everyone had been yearning for reinforced this threat. Besides the loss of business the communists would become the favorite scapegoats against whom the popular demonstrations of Spring 1848 would be organized or directed. Thus a worker of means and a disinterested militant of 1847 could in 1848 become a ruined and hunted man, driven by necessity towards a promised land which was at the same time a land of exile.

This instability of social positions warns us against analyses which would link the Icarian utopia or other such doctrines to one particular material condition, more or less disadvantaged or to a job sector, more or less technically advanced or economically threatened. Undoubtedly Christopher Johnson, in his book *Utopian Communism in France*, rightly pointed out the preponderance amongst Icarians, as in all anti-establishment movements of the time, of two trades—tailors and shoemakers. He suggested that their commitment could be explained by the conscientiousness of highly skilled workers, proud of their skills, but threatened by modern methods of manufacturing. Personally I have a different explanation. These are in fact the *most common* trades. That is to say that one finds here the greatest number of people not having been able to afford a more expensive apprenticeship and for whom it is either a temporary, a secondary or a fall-back trade. The apprenticeship is limited, the pay, for the most part mediocre and uncertain, the seasonal unemployment and the *turn-over* very high. It can be said that the circulation of ideas follows the mobility of the people. It is here that one finds the greatest number of those whose intellectual aspirations cannot

be satisfied within the professional framework and who are looking for *something else*. It is more a breeding ground for new ideas and strong personalities than professional groups highly structured by an ideology rooted in their professions.

Thus the Icarians are not first and foremost the representatives of a particular social group but individuals who are looking for a way out of the routine and repressiveness of the old society. Thus it was that the shoemaker of Orsay, Pierre-Jean Vallet, started his militant career by reforming his village carnival. He substituted the pranks and nasty games which consisted of showering passersby with excrement with a superb procession of carnival floats. To his shoemaking occupation he added all kinds of activities which were at the same time lucrative, entertaining and educative: rabbit breeding for the market, a bath house, cheap boat rides on a small lake, an assortment of fancy dress costumes and a library of 1,200 volumes, the care of which was added to the functions of postman and town crier. It is as a result of this "moral reform" of his village that he conceived the ideal of a moral and egalitarian republic, summed up thus by his son: "Establish a society where reason and awareness reign. Without kings or priests, the only 'nobility' that of the heart, without poverty or riches." Like Vallet, but often in a more dramatic way, the Icarians are generally individuals who suffer less from their material condition than from their attitude towards a world corrupted by wealth and inequality. "Though still young, I had been crushed by that selfish society and I desired death as the only remedy for my torment," wrote a typefounder from Lyon. This same theme is found in a respected shopkeeper from Nancy: "Your idea to realize Icaria gives me new life, for death is preferable to life in today's wretched society. Though my establishment is well patronized and I have numerous customers, I long for nothing more than the moment when we will leave for Icaria." And a mirror manufacturer from Perigueux also states: "Many of us here are not living. We are weary of seeing so much absurd prejudice in the 19th century. But our courage revives us and gives us the certitude of a better future. Not that we are unhappy; on the contrary, we consider ourselves amongst the privileged." Almost everywhere, in Paris as in the provincial towns, small or large, industrial or not, one finds those individuals who have distanced themselves from the logic of economic reproduction and the intellectual and moral attitudes that it engenders. They conceive the



community above all in the form of those small circles of brethren where one comes together, amongst those who have "seen the light," in order to share their opinions, to educate themselves or to sing out their faith: a sort of Sunday communism that many would remember with nostalgia when they found themselves at the plough in Icaria under the critical eye of those whose ideas they had so recently shared.

It also means that the precision of the doctrines and the plans of organization that they adopted counted for less than the means these provided them with to begin a new way of life through ideas and actions. Many of these emancipated workers can simultaneously or successively claim to draw on several doctrines more or less hostile to each other. One Icarian presents himself as a former St. Simonian, another a former Phalansterian or disciple of Swedenborg. Many are former revolutionaries, members of secret republican societies that Cabet converted to the way of non-violence. In these diverse theories they are above all searching for something which replies to their primary concern—that of a new moral world founded on social equality—an equality that is neither mere political equality nor economic levelling out. The Icarians, like others who reject the status quo of their time, complain less of economic exploitation than of social discrimination, of the contempt in which they are held. They wish to be recognized as men with a right to be full members of society, in all the domains of social life, from work relations to the relations of everyday life or of the intellectual world. They would have a society without arrogance or servility. Equality is above all a question of recognition which expresses itself in language, in behaviour and in appearance. It is also for this reason that workers in the clothing trade are often in the front line. Those trades where one works directly "for the bourgeois" are contact areas bearing contradictory results: it is in this way that the ideas and the issues which rock society from above reach the working classes. It is here too that the question of appearance and of dignity are most deeply experienced.

This means that behind the adhesion to the Icarian doctrine lies a more fundamental utopia which is none other than the Republic itself. For those rebels and dreamers who are subjected to the bourgeois monarchy of Louis-Philippe and the reign of what was then called "material interest," the Republic is not only a political form, it is an idea of the new humanity

freed from the selfish preoccupation of material interests and caste differences. It identifies itself with what was then called emancipation; the acknowledgment and the establishment of the rights and capacities of every human being. These give to the different and rival socialist theories the colours of that fundamental utopia. Hence the paradox of the Icarian emigration: it is in fact the Parisian Revolution of 1848 and the blossoming of the republican utopia which, as it were, nipped it in the bud. The first vanguard left for Texas on February 3rd, 1848. On the 24th the Parisian Revolution brutally revealed the fragility of the Icarian decision: for the majority, Icaria was only the dream which brightened up the colourless nature of the monarchical society. It is the Republic at hand rather than the far off lands of Texas which realizes the egalitarian dream. Cabet himself declared at the time "I have often said that Communism and Republic were one and the same thing." Naturally he had never before pronounced such a heresy. But he was led to this point by a public for whom this heresy perhaps had always been the deepest conviction.

We know what the consequences were: Instead of the 100,000 men hoped for in 1847, only a few groups of a dozen militants would leave, taking the risk of going to distant parts in search of that union of dream and reality which was being realized in France itself. In what state of mind did they nevertheless decide to leave? As an example, let us listen to the farewell that the Icarians addressed to their brethren on leaving Bordeaux on May 19th, 1848, those brethren who would continue the fight to consolidate the Republic here in France. "We leave full of joy for we go to establish the kingdom of God on earth, to put into practice the three regenerative principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity that the France of the Republic inscribed on all its monuments; and full of hope because we believe that the *entente cordiale* between all soldiers of the democracy, the politicians, the socialists and the communists, will see to it that these three liberating words will be engraved in all our hearts as they are on our monuments. Then, and only then, will you have true social Republic, that Republic beloved of the poor and of those who suffer. And we, in establishing it in all its purity on the virgin soil of Texas, will help you to prove to all classes and all races that the practical brotherhood which our dear and venerated father, the successor to the works of Christ, always preached, is not an empty ideal."

Thus a single idea, the social republic, defines a sharing of tasks between the old and the new world. In France, most of the groups would, through the impure struggle of the old society, look to consolidate that Republic from which the universal communism of the future would establish itself. In America the pioneers would establish an example of the pure Republic of the future. They would help those continuing the struggle in the old world by supporting their discourse and their action with practical demonstration. They would show that communism is possible even with men formed by—or rather deformed by—the old society. The Icarians of Nantes, in response, explained to their comrades who were leaving France what the nature of this demonstration should be: "You have to prove to the world man's *innate goodness*, the absurdity of that terrible blasphemy on which an entire religious system is constructed, *man born to crime*. You have to prove that religion can exist without priests and without the cancerous presence of prostitution; that ownership can and must exist without being a cause of misery and ignorance . . . that finally good and evil are social realities and not providential ones; that, from now on, man can and must entirely do away with evil." Before smiling at this optimism, it is necessary to point out the fact that these are the words of those *who are not leaving*, of those who prefer to savour at home the days of the Republic and the Icarian Sundays, to dream of the America of others.

Those who leave often have more divided opinions. We too often give to naive enthusiasm the attribute of militant activism. This is to forget that the most determined militant is also he who is the most weary of a world in which he perceives less the material hardship than the moral corruption; a man who dedicates himself with all the more obstinacy because he is less sure of being rewarded in return; who would provoke a moral revolution in men made slaves to material interests, but who knows that the promise of tangible material results is often the only way of advancing the diffusion of his ideal. This pessimism can be felt in the motivations that the Icarians of Lyon expose to those who criticize their departure: "The time when the apostles converted entire towns by their words is passed. Our century, like Saint Thomas, asks for miracles; Well! at our risk and peril we are going to prepare one." This sentiment is taken to its climax by the man who would be in turn the most demanding of Cabet's lieutenants and the architect of his downfall, the jeweler Jules Prudent. In 1851, while he was managing the colony in Cabet's absence,

he wrote to Béluzé, the head of the Icarian bureau in Paris which organized the departures for Icaria: "It is a fact that dominates our epoch: everything has become material: faith, hope, liberty, equality, fraternity or love of one's neighbour . . . . The attitudes of Society are formulated in the mind as coldly as a mathematical question, we have arrived at a state of individual, sensual happiness while waiting for the inoculation of collective happiness . . . . The task that we have taken upon ourselves is immense." This pessimistic report to a world waiting for material miracles is reflected in a mistrust of those coming to join the Icarian colony, always suspected in Prudent's eyes and by purists like himself of coming to enjoy the benefits of Icaria and not to found it. Thus he never ceases in his attempt to make admissions more difficult, to put the determination of new arrivals to the test, and to hasten the departure of the Nauvoo Colony for the virgin lands of Iowa, to a place where the settlers would be obliged to "burn their boats," a place which would no longer hold out the possibility of travelling between the Old World and the New, but also, within the new American world, between communism and an individualism which displays its seductions at the very gates of the colony.

For the ambiguity of the Icarian dream which keeps with ease one foot in each world is added to the ambiguity of the place where Icaria is to be built. The America of 1850 is two things at the same time: the virgin land where it is hoped to create a new moral world, but also the country where land is to be taken, gold and fortune for the unassuaged greed of the old European society. In 1850, ships set out from Le Havre in two opposing directions. Those of the builders of Icaria and those of the Californian gold diggers. An article in the *Populaire* dwells on this coincidence of the opposing factors. There are two major types of men: the Californians, that is, in general "men of arrogance and vanity," "brutes with a human face," the "hungry pleasure seekers," persons "corrupted and degraded by the influence of the privileged;" and the Icarians that one finds "everywhere where all men as God's children and consequently as workers are sovereign in the full sense of the term." But this opposition contrasted by the Icarian journalist in Paris is immediately challenged by the first lieutenant of Icaria. In contrast Prudent lays stress on the ambiguity of the new world." This, he says attracts "all those irresolute men who only consider the realization of communism from a single standpoint, that of their future. Such men are constantly swayed by

uncertainty; their diseased imagination is always looking for a refuge against misery, and as a result, they clutch at any straws, now one, now another. "America," he continues, "lends itself wonderfully to this deceptive illusion—like the wolf which leaves its prey for a shadow—until the day when the sad reality awakens you more despairing than ever. And so you resume your worker's chains and consider yourself fortunate."

This bitter judgment is without doubt a simplification. It is less a question of an illusion of the weak minded as an ambiguous reality which presents itself to those whose attitudes are themselves ambiguous. In reading the letters which were written by those newly arrived to their brethren in France to encourage them to join them, one notices the superposing of two arguments. On the one hand, they urge them to work for and to sacrifice themselves to the foundation of Icaria in the desert: on the other hand, they describe a country where the life is easy and where the earth yields almost without effort. "The land," writes one, "is so fertile that it is hardly even necessary to turn the soil." "The idle American, assures a second, works barely three or four hours a day for six months of the year and rests the other six." And yet another writes: "There are no beggars in America; the Americans are almost all owners."

A strange argument from the pen of a communist writing to another communist. Obviously there is a certain cunning in these naivities; the Icarian settlers would like the Sunday communists to come and set their hand to the plough. And with this end in mind they do not hesitate to paint in glowing terms the marvels of the owner's paradise, even if it means they will, on arrival, find the real Icarian labours somewhat rude and will be accused of coming with intention of "enjoying themselves" and not of founding the community. One often hears talk in the community of pleasure seekers and of deserters, of traitors and of false Icarians. It would be truer to say that the land where communism is to be built strangely resembles the land of individualism and that the Icarian emigrants have a double identity: they are workers and they are communists. The real problem is to be communist workers. Here again, the problem is easy to resolve in Paris and in *Le Populaire*. "In all humanity" one reads, "one can only come across *Workers, Brothers, or Thieves*. The Worker and the Brother will always agree amongst themselves well enough to form but a single family; but the Thief will

always remain outside . . . . Our Brotherly community, in expulsing from its midst the idlers, is only expulsing thieves." But those in America realize that the denunciation of the "thieves" is a means of avoiding the fundamental question: can one be certain that *brothers* and *workers* are made to get on? Is it even certain, in the same individual, that the brotherly communist is in harmony with the emigrant worker? Icarian communism was for these men, above all a means of escape from the brutality of work relationships, to get away from the selfish world of material survival. They were brothers outside their work and the one identity helped them to put up with the other. But it is another thing to be all day and every day, workers and brothers at the same time. An old Icarian who decided, after ten years hesitation, to rejoin the Cheltenham colony, sadly confided in his friend Béluzé: "My dear friend Béluzé, a year ago we were together. I was happy and at peace with myself, surrounded by friends who I loved, sustained by the principle of love and fraternity for which I have sacrificed everything." What he had found in the Community on the other hand was the permanent division between the workers who accused the others of being idlers and the brothers who accused the former of their lack of brotherly love.

This mutual distrust exacerbated the dual motivations of each side. The communists, pure and strict, who accused the others of being idlers come to profit from the American way of life instead of to found Icaria, find themselves justified by the moral weakness of the others which led them to return to their individualist ways and to take their chance in the new American world, without for all that giving up the communist dream. Thus we see multiply, in New Orleans, Saint Louis and everywhere where the Icarian group has left behind those combatants disappointed by the community, what could be called solitary communists, Icarians who call themselves "Communists but not from Nauvoo." Such was the case of Bourgeois who had taken part in the disastrous undertaking of the first Icarian colonization in Texas. He did not follow his brethren into their retreat but stayed in Texas "waiting for the Community to firmly establish itself somewhere." He had not the courage to begin again at Nauvoo because he had "given of his best to receive only ingratitude." "But," he said "It is of no matter: It may be a feature of human nature that all men are not made to live in a community. It is none the less true that real happiness can only be found within the Community." While waiting

for this improbable community to become a reality, he describes, undoubtedly somewhat romantically, his life in Texas: a sort of Robinson Crusoe island where money had disappeared, where at the same time one could enjoy the most unrestricted liberty, the advantages of solidarity and the beautiful Icarian dream. "Here payments are mostly made in kind. Grains, pigs, cows, chickens, butter, eggs etc. are exchanged . . . . which means that I am more often paid in goods than in money . . . . I am not a hunter, but my nearest neighbour satisfies my needs in meat and game . . . . Fishing also provides me with abundant resources. I have not to go farther than half a league and then a couple of hours fishing with my line in order to provide myself with a good provision of fish at each time . . . . Such is my position, such is the life that I lead. I come and go when and where it pleases me. The little work that I have does not prevent me from being free: all things considered, in one year I have only two days work per week." I could be said that this is a strange ideal for a communist. But forty years later, Bougeois, having become a shopkeeper in Dallas, would still be a communist, corresponding with his brethren of the Corning community and promising to go and visit them in Icaria.

Why did they leave France? It could be answered that they never completely left. They took with them all the complexity of the democratic and French socialist dream of the time. Their communism was an ideology of emancipated workers, of men who rebelled against a world where the egoism of the rich and the disdain of the powerful would not recognize the individual rights of the proletariat to enjoy an individual life to the full. This desire for emancipation, this desire for complete individuality for all, was paradoxically sought after through the form of the ideal of the community of work and brotherhood. More or less obscurely they felt that the world of work forceably led to egoism, but that this was compensated for by the dream of brotherly love. They carried this contradiction with them. It was not entirely an illusion. In Icaria the work was rude and often not very brotherly. But in the Icarian assembly, each man had the right to speak and to take part in the legislative process. Cabet is, I believe, the only leader of a utopian community whom we have ever seen overthrown by universal suffrage. The foundation of communism was also that access to the public platform which goes hand in hand with the modern development of the life of the individual. Their dream is diametrically opposed to the rules that made a success of certain emigrant

communities; religious faith, absolute obedience, and sexual restriction. Their communism was a dream of men who wanted to keep a foot in each world. Even in the midst of defeat, they succeeded rather well.



## ICARIAN MIGRATIONS FROM EUROPE TO ILLINOIS

Jules Renaud

My search for information about the Icarian migrations resulted from the habit of my father, Emile F. Renaud of saving photographs, news clippings and other records of our family history. He was born and lived for 76 years at 103 High Street in Keokuk, Iowa. He continued as an optometrist until he retired in 1947 and, with my mother Eleanor Renaud, moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, where my family and I were living.

With their furniture and other belongings, my parents brought to Colorado two trunks full of photographs, clippings and other items of family interest.

My father died a few years later in Fort Collins. We moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico and in 1953 I was transferred to Washington, D.C. and the trunks of photos went along with us. Finally, in the past five years, since I retired, I have been able to go through the material and learn more about the Icarians. I mention this because I think it illustrates one of the problems we have these days when so many of us are on the move so much that many of our family records get lost. Ours could have, but I am glad we were able to hold on to them as my wife and I lived in over 20 different homes.

It was not until the nineteen fifties that I learned more about the Icarians from our daughter. One of her high school assignments, in Virginia, was to prepare a report on her family history, back to the first emigrant from overseas. Fortunately, we were living just 12 miles from the Library of Congress in Washington, so we were soon able to find out more about the Icarians.

After my retirement, I began a more detailed search.

I am not a professional genealogist, but I am curious about my ancestors, and being located close to the National Archives, the Library of Congress and the DAR libraries, it seemed a shame not to search out new material

and prepare a short family history.

One of the first things I found was my lack of knowledge about the migration of the Icarians from Europe to Nauvoo. How did it happen? How did they get here, by train, by boat, or ox team, or did they walk?

A faded newsclipping told me of an interview in 1901 by a Keokuk newspaper reporter with my grandfather, Jules Renaud and my grandmother, Amanda Couloy Renaud.

The mention of Texas in this clipping gave me the first clue that the Icarians emigrated to Nauvoo via Texas and New Orleans—at least the first groups followed this route. I then visited the National Archives and found that they have microfilm records of the passenger lists of all ships arriving in New Orleans from 1820 to 1900. However, I did not know the exact dates of the Icarian emigration except that it was around 1848, and I found that during that year nearly two hundred thousand British alone emigrated to the United States.

In looking through my father's trunk, I found the Jules Prudhommeaux's book about the Icarians, all in French, of which I understand very little. However, on page 238 I found a listing of the Icarian migrations with the dates of the departures from France, usually from LeHavre. Also, a list of the number of emigrants on each ship and name of the leader of each group. This list totaled 485 including 259 men, 125 women and 101 children.<sup>1</sup>

## Départs pour le Texas (1847-1848)

DATES	DESIGNATION Des Départs	NOMBRE DES PARTANTS	DELEGUES
2 déc. 1847	Première Commission . . . . .	1	Sully
3 févr. 1848	Première Avant-garde . . . . .	69	Gouhenant
3 hyub 1848	Deuxième Avant-garde . . . . .	21	Farvart jeune
12 août, 1848	Commission des Cinq . . . . .	5	Caudron aîné
28 sept. 1848	Troisième Avant-garde . . . . .	23	Mazet
25 oct. 1848	Départ par Bordeaux . . . . .	56	Pèpin
2 nov. 1848	Premier grand départ . . . . .	82	Prudent
12 nov. 1848	Deuxième grand départ . . . . .	74	Witzig
21 nov. 1848	Troisième grand départ . . . . .	114	Berthier
18 déc. 1848	Quatrième grand départ . . . . .	40	Coutellier
	TOTAL . . . . .	485	259 hommes 125 femmes
	Admis à la Nouvelle-Orléans	11	101 enfants
	TOTAL GÉNÉRAL . . . . .	496	

However, having the departure date did not give me the date of their arrival in New Orleans or the name of the ship. A little scanning of the Archives microfilms showed there to be—in some cases—as many as ten ships per day arriving in New Orleans from Europe with up to 3,000 passengers. Also, weather and wind delayed some ships so the passage time varied widely. However, I did learn that the first Icarian group of 69 young men, led by M. Gouhenant, left LeHavre February 3, 1848, after a trip of 52 days from LeHavre and the captain had listed 69 mens names in a group and indicated they were Icarians—"Followers of Cabet." So I had a nucleus of Icarian family names, but to my sad concern, no mention of my grandfather. I thought this was strange. He had told the Keokuk newspaper reporter that he was with the first group in Texas. So, I went back and reread the clipping. What it actually said was the first settlement was in northern Texas. He did not actually say he was with them. But, further on he did say "We went *back* to New Orleans." This sent me back to the Icarian book and I noticed there were two "avant garde partes"—two advance parties—with the second having left LeHavre on June 3 1848, and, there in perfect alphabetical order in the Captain's own handwriting

was the name of Jules Renaud. Also, to further confirm it, the Icarian leader was Pierre Favard, who I know was a close personal friend of my grandfather. There were also other well known names of Icarian families.

I decided to continue my search for additional ships and passenger lists. But I did not have enough names of Icarian emigrants to be able to select them from the ship's passenger lists which usually totaled two to three hundred names. Which were Icarians? And which were not? I was pretty well stymied. I was able to pin down the names of most of the first ten ships, but on these I could not pick out the Icarians. A list of 276 names of Icarians living in Nauvoo on June 1, 1850 from the federal census was useful but there was no information about when they had arrived.<sup>2</sup>

However, a second list prepared by Mary H. Siegfried in 1961 gave the names of members of the Icarian commune as listed in the naturalization application records of Hancock County, Illinois. After each name was the birthdate, where born, when the person had applied for U.S. citizenship, but most important to me, the dates of emigration from Europe and the arrival date in New Orleans or in New York City.<sup>3</sup> This gave me two dates, leaving and arriving, which made it easier to find the names of the ships matching these dates.

This still did not tell me *who* were the Icarians on board, but again, the habits of sea captains helped. In his report for customs purposes, the Captain would almost always list groups of passengers alphabetically. If there were no groups traveling together, all passengers would be listed alphabetically. By knowing many of the prominent Icarian names from the naturalization list, I could usually backtrack and find the Icarian group on each ship. This is not an absolutely accurate method, but it worked well for me. By marking the names of the ships alongside families on the census list of 1850, I found another interesting thing. All but one of the first ten houses in Nauvoo visited by the census taker were occupied by men and their families who came over on the ship "ROME." Then the next few houses by those who traveled on the "HANNIBAL." These included the single men's bunkhouse where my grandfather and 25 other men lived, plus a few from the ship "VICTORIA" which arrived in New Orleans November 24, 1848.

Later on, for example, two houses on the census list included 30 names found on the passenger list for the "BRUNSWICK" which arrived December 7, 1848. Going back and forth between these lists and spending considerable time reading microfilms at the National Archives, I have located many of the Icarian emigrants who arrived in 1848-49 and 1850. But not all, as some came through New York City.

You may be interested to know that those who came through New York City would usually go across New York State to Lake Erie, take a boat down the Ohio river to Cape Girardeau, then by packet up the river to St. Louis and Nauvoo. Again, these listings are not absolutely accurate as the data I have collected is not complete, but I believe it will give the future Icarian history scholars a few more dates and other data with which to work.

As a sidelight, we should remember that many emigrants did not make it. A Nauvoo, paper printed during the Icarian occupation tells of the steamboat, "JOHN ADAMS" which had sunk a week earlier near Cairo, Illinois. The report said 120 emigrants drowned, but that no ships officers or cabin passengers were lost.

After a while, I found I was developing too many different lists of emigrees to keep them straight in my mind. So I started a card file alphabetically by the name of the emigrant Icarian for the period 1848 to 1856. I have put on the card only the information I have developed about that name.

This is not a complete history of these emigrants, but may be useful to future researchers.

So, to sum up what I have learned about our Icarian ancestors. In comparison with the histories of other socialistic enterprises, the Icarian story is a peculiarly romantic and interesting one. Icaria's illustrative value is far out of proportion to its membership, wealth or success. Most of the utopian societies had a religious basis rather than a socialistic origin. Their socialism was incidental to their religious creeds. They believed themselves to be favored with a special or divine revelation. Their governments were therefore theocratic. Icaria, however, was an attempt

to realize the *rational, democratic* beliefs of the utopian philosophers. Icaria's difficulties were political, not religious.

As Thomas Rees said, "Icaria in Illinois finally demonstrated that a truly altruistic society, where man must work, not for his own advancement, but for the common good of all, is destined to be a failure until man has reached a much higher plane of self sacrifice than existed then, or now."<sup>4</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son Fondateur Etienne Cabet* (Paris; Edouard Cornely et Cie, 1907), page 238.
- <sup>2</sup> 1850 Federal Population Census Schedule of Hancock County, Illinois taken as of June 1, 1850 by Wesley Williams, Assistant Marshall.
- <sup>3</sup> Names of members of the Icarian Commune, listed in the naturalization records of Hancock County, Illinois, Books 1, 2, and 3. Compiled for the Nauvoo Historical Society by Mary H. Siegfried, 1961-62.
- <sup>4</sup> Thomas Rees, "Nauvoo, Illinois Under Mormon and Icarian Occupation," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (January 1929) pp. 514-521. pp. 506-524.

# GLIMPSES OF THE IMMIGRATION OF FRENCH ICARIANS TO AMERICA

Lloyd W. Gundy

## Why Did They Come?

The number of French immigrants to the United States historically has been low compared to that from other European countries. One writer accounts for this by suggesting there was less pressure from population growth in the home country.

The revolution had changed the social organization of agriculture; . . . there was plenty of fertile land to which a free peasantry could feel attached. Any surplus of country people could be absorbed in industry, in towns, or in North Africa . . . Few Frenchmen left French territory altogether . . . Evidently the political upheavals of the century had little effect on emigration: perhaps institutions offered the discontented opportunities for change at home.<sup>1</sup>

The Icarians would have taken exception to that last sentence. They saw the situation from an entirely different perspective as the masthead on their newspaper, *Le Populaire*, whose editor was Etienne Cabet, proclaimed:

Work diminishes and unemployment increases, salary declines and the price of rents are raised. All careers are obstructed; the struggle extends its ravages: families multiply and solid firms collapse; bread is lacking for the lowest classes; the future is uncertain and dreadful, in great disarray. That is the evil.

What is the cause? It is the extension of industry, the multiplication of machines, the vices of social organization based on individualism or selfishness.

The remedy, according to us Icarians, cannot be found

without a better organization of work in . . . Fraternity, Equality, Liberty and Unity. Although we seek nothing but justice, order and the goodwill of all . . . some hinder us, some slander us, so that the establishment of our Community will always be more difficult and slow in France than in a new country.

In this situation, to enjoy our natural rights and the benefits of nature, we Icarians . . . emigrate to America in order to establish our Icarian Community.<sup>2</sup>

Parenthetically, we do not intend to indicate that Icarian immigration was entirely French in nature. In July, 1854, 405 people resided in the colonies at Nauvoo and in Iowa. There were 65 Germans, 6 Swiss, 3 Italians, 3 Spanish, 1 each from Sweden, England and the United States, and 325 French.

### **Preparations For The Trip**

Many preparations were necessary in order to leave one's country forever. There was the past to clear up, the present to look after, and the future to prepare for. A pamphlet was prepared to aid the Icarians in this regard.

A prospective immigrant must know how to read and write and sign his name since he would have forms and documents to read and sign along the way. He also had to be familiar with Icarian literature.

A person wishing to go must be committed to the Icarian philosophy. For example, he must renounce private ownership of property. Money, jewels, clothing, tools, weapons, etc. must be surrendered to the Colony as a whole. He must forego anger and resentment; be prepared for privation and fatigue; be devoted to his wife, children and Humanity. He must

consent to that which the Community completely arranges for the children . . . from their birth, without doubt, the mother will have the right to suckle her child; but all questions which concern the physical, intellectual and moral education of the



child belong to the Community.<sup>3</sup>

There were many tangible steps to be taken. He must have a clothing outfit sufficient for two years. He must be able to pay for his voyage to Nauvoo and contribute at least \$60 to the Community per adult, and \$30 for each child under ten. One must have a birth certificate, passport, record of military discharge. If he was a worker he needed to have his written record of employment, which all workers were required by the government to keep, signed by his patron and witnessed by the police commissioner or mayor.

Finally, all things being in readiness, there was a rendezvous at Paris with other companions to be. The émigrès signed a promise that their intention was to go directly to Nauvoo, not stopping at New Orleans or St. Louis; that they fulfilled all conditions for admission to the Colony; that they had the necessary money and clothing outfit. If the departing group was about 30 in number, or more, they organized a formal system of management, otherwise they traveled as individuals, not segregated on board ship and not having a contract with the Captain for certain group benefits. They were to take along provisions for 70 days, purchasing at Paris such things as prunes, jams, cheese and tea; at Le Havre, wine, salt, sugar, coffee, meat and bread. At all times they had to be vigilant not to get cheated; merchants were known to sell short weights and spoiled commodities.

### **Final Moments In France**

The first group sent to America left Paris for Le Havre on January 29, 1848, amid the cheers and well wishes of a crowd gathered at the railroad station to bid them goodbye. Monsieur Cabet accompanied them as far as the port of Le Havre, where they spent a few days in final preparations for the voyage. During the night of February 2, Cabet, who was called a forcible and eloquent orator by a contemporary,<sup>4</sup> addressed those who would leave and led them in taking an Icarian vow.

Do you persist in declaring that you know perfectly the system, doctrine and principles of the Icarian Community?

Do you adopt, above all, the principle of Fraternity and

Community?

Are you resolved to endure all weariness and privation, to brave all danger, in the general and common interest?

Is your acceptance, in your eyes, a genuine choice?

Do you vow to put yourself under control of the Director, as I vow to consecrate all my existence to the realization of the Community based on Fraternity?<sup>5</sup>

In his account of the evening, Cabet says that "each question was received with a religious silence, and responded to with unanimous cries in the middle of raptures of enthusiasm." There must have been no sleep for the people involved since it was two the next morning when this scene took place. At 3 A.M. they went aboard the ship *Rome*, which took them to America.

This first group of Icarians, all men, called the "Premiere Avant-Garde," arrived March 27, 1848. The next three departures were also composed entirely of men, followed by five more that year with men, women and children.

### The Voyage

Thus began the flow of Icarian emigration from France. Other groups followed, first to Nauvoo, later to Cheltenham; some by way of New York, others through New Orleans. I have chosen to highlight four journeys, the first being that of M. Cabet.

The trip of Cabet himself differed from that of most other Icarian voyages.<sup>6</sup> He apparently traveled with only one other person; he made the crossing on a steam powered vessel; and he left in a hurry without much advance planning. He set out from Paris precipitously on December 13, 1848, for two reasons. First, the Icarians already in America were in dire straits and needed his help. Second, in late November the National Guard raided the offices of his newspaper and found some guns deposited there. Cabet was sentenced to prison for this and expected to be taken any day. He had to forego the pleasure of having what he would have said heard by twenty thousand Icarians. He hurried to Boulogne where, on December 14, he missed a boat to England by three minutes. He

caught the next one at 3 A.M. the next day. Making his way through Dover and across England to Liverpool, he embarked for New York on the 16th aboard the steamship *Europa*.

Sidewheel paddle steamers had been making the Atlantic crossing since 1843 in a faster time than sailing vessels. These steamers were equipped with masts on which sail could be hoisted to furnish additional power in case of favorable winds. The *Europa*, 251 feet long, 1825 tons, was equipped with two engines totaling 2000 horsepower. She was operated by the Cunard Line as a mail packet with an average speed of 10.5 knots. Second class passage cost seventy dollars.<sup>7</sup>

With contrary winds and rough seas all the way, the voyage was not pleasant. As the ship wallowed through the waves, water was dashed across the deck, and people going to the dining room, or to their bunks, were in water up to the knees. Many passengers were understandably seasick as the ship powered its way through rain, snow, sleet, hail, and even a hurricane. Having been unable to make reservations in advance, Cabet found himself installed in the bow, a most undesirable location, "where the movements of the vessel are felt the most."

After passing by way of Halifax, where mail was delivered, the *Europa* arrived at New York, December 31, 1848, after a voyage of 15 days. The city presented a spectacle of "snow, cold and sleds, as in a city of Russia."

The next day after Cabet had left Paris, the Paris office received some important letters from America addressed to him. The letters were copied and sent to him at Liverpool in care of "some vessel which is leaving for New York." They were put in a sack with other mail at Liverpool and made the crossing, as Cabet says, "beside me without my being able to suspect it." The letters finally reached his hands in New York.

There was an unwelcome delay to the trip in New York caused by a shortage of transportation. Gold fever had gripped the East and passenger bookings for sailing ships, steamships, steamboats, railroads and stagecoaches were not available. Cabet was finally able to leave on January 7, 1849, probably taking the railroad overland and boats on the Ohio and Mississippi down to New Orleans.

One well documented voyage was that of the American sailing ship, *Ashland*, which departed Le Havre on September 1, 1854. It was a three-masted vessel of 100 tons, commanded by Captain Edward Stone. Fifty-one Icarians were among the 186 passengers on board together with a cargo of 350 cases of sardines, 236 barrels of herring, and 300 baskets of champagne.<sup>8</sup>

As the *Ashland* was preparing to leave, the wife of M. Mercadier, who could not bear the thought of leaving, broke away from her husband and disembarked. Mercadier himself, a lawyer and secretary of the departing group, later wrote that his courage and resolution never left him and he was more than ever convinced to be a good Icarian and a useful member of the Colony. In 1856, he, and a minority of the members of Nauvoo, went with Cabot to St. Louis where he became president of the Cheltenham-Sulphur Springs Colony. He later became a successful merchant of the city.<sup>9</sup>

While the ship was leaving, the Icarians left the top deck and descended stairs into the between-decks where they were quartered for the next 54 days. Here they united in singing which helped them deal with the emotions of departure.<sup>10</sup>

In the between-decks—the deck between the top deck and the hold, sometimes called “steerage,”—one side was lined with bunks for men and boys; the other side had bunks for women and girls. The Icarians screened off each area by the hanging of mattress ticking and sheets. Down the middle ran a large table with benches to sit on. It was a forbidding prospect to live here for most of two months, the only natural light coming through a hatch for stairs to the top deck, and ventilation very poor at its best. It was suffocating in tropical heat and must have had a terrible odor. Small wonder that most immigrants mention seasickness as one of the first experiences on board. We find this graphic description in the *Journal of Health* kept by the Icarians on board the *Ashland*:

Seasickness proceeds from rolling of the ship, a rolling which produces a void in the chest and stomach, and which renders the head heavy, and the sick ones insensible to everything . . . The women are not more subject to it than men; the nursing

mothers little or none; the small children not the least in the world.<sup>11</sup>

Generally speaking, the Icarians kept to themselves on these voyages. On the *Ashland* they occupied the rear third of the between-decks and were separated from the other passengers by a board railing. They had their own kitchen, group administration, and their own activities. All the passengers, however, mingled on the top deck and most were sympathetic to the Icarians, but one man, a sort of tragi-comic figure, roused their ire.

. . . it is a Frenchman, a Parisian, a man having expansive notions, although superficial, speaking several languages, and discussing on every point.<sup>12</sup>

One Icarian, Vaudran, with whom this man was friendly, ultimately deserted the group upon arrival, taking his family with him.

Early in the morning of October 24, following an expectant night, "the hospitable soil of the American Republic" came into view. The ship halted at a point called the "Balizes," at the mouth of the Mississippi, to take on a customs agent and a doctor, then proceeded up the Mississippi with the help of a steam tugboat to the "beautiful port of New Orleans."

This tugboat, the *Mary Kingsland*, had a greater claim to fame, however, working the same waters in early November, 1847, she steamed north to New Orleans with General Zachary Taylor on board who was returning from the Mexican War. "Old Rough and Ready" went to his home in Baton Rouge where he remained for more than a year until taking office as 12th president of the United States.<sup>13</sup>

Sometime in late 1848, or early in 1849, then President-elect Taylor met with the Icarians at New Orleans. He advised them not to pursue any further efforts in Texas, but, instead, to settle in the North.<sup>14</sup>

### **Immigration After 1856**

That part of the Colony at Nauvoo which broke away and went to St. Louis continued to encourage immigration. A party of seven men and two

women answering the call embarked at Le Havre, September 4, 1857, aboard the *Johannisberg*. They were 63 days enroute to New Orleans, a somewhat slow passage. Being small in number, the group decided not to elect a president, considering only a treasurer and secretary to be necessary. They were unable to reserve a segregated area for themselves and were intermingled with the other 300 passengers. They did, however, manage their own kitchen.

Generally, on immigrant voyages, the ship's master provided water for the passengers, but they had to supply their own provisions. On board the *Johannisberg*, after 30 days at sea, potatoes that were stored in the damp, dark hold began to rot. After 50 days, rationing was necessary, with only ham, rice and biscuits being left in good supply to the Icarians. Their cook must have been a genius for their journal says he found "the means to reconcile our appetites with the exigencies of our situation." Biscuits and flour were enough to permit selling some to other passengers who ran out of food.

The weather enroute was changeable, alternating between storms and dead calm. One such weather shift occurred in early October.

The evening of the 7th, we are surprised by a rather violent squall, rain falls in torrents and the wind blows with a crash in our sails. It is a veritable tempest. The cries of the officers and of the sailors who pass each other in the darkness to work the rigging, the roaring of the waves which break themselves on the sides of the ship, all is tumult, and all the thundering gives to the scene a solemn and majestic work. We contemplate avidly that magnificent and terrible spectacle. But soon the sails are taken in and after some hours, the tempest completely subsides.<sup>15</sup>

Fire on board a wooden vessel at sea is terrifying. On the morning of October 29, a cry of Fire! Fire! produced a scene of scrambling panic. A potful of grease on the cookstove ignited, and the flames spread throughout the kitchen area. Calm under stress (the word used is *sang-froid*), the sailors ran to the pumps and soon extinguished the blaze.

Another scene of human interest occurred three days later. The sea was smooth, the wind mostly calm, when an American sailing ship pulled close enough to permit the Captains to talk with each other by the use of megaphones.

Finally, the *Johannisberg* came to the Balizes where she was taken in tow, together with two other vessels, by the towboat, *St. Charles*. They docked at New Orleans on the 6th of November.

In point of time, the next departure from France was on February 22, 1858.<sup>16</sup> Having received a royal sendoff by 400 people at the railroad station in Paris, eight Icarians boarded the train for Le Havre, where they went aboard the *Kate Dyer*, a three-masted vessel of 1300 tons, the master being Captain Dyer. After a few days at sea the first storm hit, very violent in nature, at four in the morning. As the crew swarmed into the rigging to furl the sails, six sails were torn to shreds. One sailor was wound up in the ropes and crushed against the frame of the foresail. People who were not braced in position in the between-decks could not stay upright. Trunks were thrown about. Pieces of pottery and glass were broken with a crash. Afterward, some sails "resembled lint," and they had to be manufactured anew, while others could be repaired.

A few days later, a French passenger was walking around the ship when suddenly he was knocked down by the Captain. He did not speak English so the Captain could not communicate to him the reason for this action. Later, after discussion, the Icarians decided the incident was due to some noise made by the Frenchman in front of the cabin where the injured sailor lay. No ill will resulted because, later on, the Icarians were able to bake bread in the Captain's cabin.

Thefts were numerous on these journeys and the voyage of the *Johannisberg* was no exception. One passenger, who had lost two watches, complained to the Captain. A subsequent search found them, but not the culprit, in a hideaway in the stern of the ship, together with eight keys belonging to one of the Icarians. Later, some trunks were stolen at New Orleans, and three more trunks disappeared off the steamboat deck on which the Icarians went to St. Louis.

Of course there were many other voyages, but we make one final observation here. One reads of a group departing France in July, 1859, that when they reached New York, they had a very poor meal at a hotel for which they were "fleeced" of \$1.40 each. This group traveled from New York to St. Louis (and Cheltenham-Sulphur Springs) on several railroads and boats. Having to pay a high transport cost, and being charged \$50.00 for excess baggage, they were forced to sell 30 gallons of wine and a trunk of table service.<sup>17</sup>

### Health Care Enroute

Before departure, the Icarians would lay in a supply of medicines to call upon to combat seasickness as well as dysentery, fever and convulsions, contusions, burns, constipation and even yellow fever. These therapeutic preparations belonged to one of three classes: the Raspail system, the Leroy system and the homeopathic system. A passenger might have experience along these lines and so would be put in charge.

To elaborate upon the first system. In the nineteenth century, Monsieur Raspail, a French politician, scientist and pharmacologist, had developed a pharmacopoeia based on the use of camphor and other medicinal herbs and plants.<sup>18</sup> These were recommended for migraine, toothache, cough, cold, asthma, whooping cough, heartburn, rheumatism and skin diseases. He opened a clinic to treat the poor and made known some of his formulas which any practitioner in the provinces could use. Even as late at 1968 there was a *Pharmacie Raspail* in Paris, and camphor, of course, is still in use by modern medicine. Raspail also published a health manual which was used by the Icarians. Coincidentally, in June, 1847, Etienne Cabet sent an acquaintance to Raspail for consultation, and both Raspail and Cabet were posed as candidates for President of France in 1848.

Many of the drugs used in the mid-nineteenth century had a scientific foundation. For example, wintergreen oil for arthritis, witch-hazel, tincture of Arnica for compresses and mustard plasters were known and used. The practice of homeopathy, however, seemed to have no basis in scientific fact. Part of the procedure involved mixing certain liquid preparations, shaking them, and the molecules thus vibrated supposedly produced material having magical properties.<sup>19</sup>



To date, I have been unable to find information about the Leroy system.

The Icarian medical history produced some happy events, as well as some abysmally dark moments. On the one hand, on board the *Ashland*, an infant was restored to health whose lips were "already faded by the icy countenance of death," and a case of dysentery was cured. At the end of the journey, this entry appears in the *Journal of Health*:

Our health has been good, graced by the practice of cleanliness, joined to it the hygenic prescriptions. We do not have any death to regret. As to illnesses, the care and medications given and distributed with devotion and intelligence made them disappear without recurrence.<sup>20</sup>

On the other hand, there were the ravages of cholera. The 280 Icarians who, with Cabet, made the 1300 mile trip up the Mississippi to Nauvoo in March, 1849, traveled in the midst of a cholera epidemic which gripped the entire trans-Mississippi basin. New Orleans reported many deaths, 200 on one day, 100 on another. Farther south, Brownsville, Texas was said to have lost one half of its population. Boats on the inland waterways were stopped by the illness of their crews. The disease unhappily made its effects known among the Icarians. One is saddened to read the detailed medical report of deaths which took 5 people on the river and 18 more at Nauvoo prior to April 17. Cholera was the cause of death in at least fifteen of the cases.<sup>21</sup>

The enlistment of professional medical people seemed to be a constant problem. For example, when the first Avant-Garde arrived in New Orleans, Dr. LeClerc promptly deserted it, taking his surgical tools and four other Icarians with him.<sup>22</sup> Dr. Roveira, although incompetent, remained with the group during the summer in Texas, only to die by his own hand after they had been forced back to New Orleans. One doctor in the colony at Nauvoo left after a term of one year, taking two orderlies with him, and another doctor lasted only four months.

### New Orleans and the Mississippi

We have already noted how New York appeared to Cabet like a city

in Russia. The immigrants' impression of New Orleans was mixed. The *Ashland* group saw it as a "beautiful port." Another man, Pierre Roux, thought it was a busy commercial city, where "one day one sank to the eyes in mud, the next day one is blinded by dust."<sup>23</sup> Auguste Roinè wrote home that one December 10, 1848, he saw five ships arrive, each having 300-350 immigrant passengers, and a group of 1000 Irish milling about on the quai.<sup>24</sup> The city completely put off Monsieur Prudent who said "New Orleans is the most disgusting and coarse city that it is possible to see . . . imagine a large Bohemia where all is a resume of the word 'dollar.' "<sup>25</sup>

The Mississippi was admired. "Wide as an arm of the sea, profound as the ocean, it justifies its reputation and one understands why the Indians named it 'the Father of Waters.' "

In spite of some members being sick to the death on board the *Marshal Ney*, Cabet, with the group of 280 in March, 1849, commented:

We took joy at the magnificent spectacle of the superb Mississippi, always bordered by forests, and nearly always flooded, . . . Many times we spent the evening in a vocal and instrumental concert during which, by a fine moonlight, the Mississippi could be surprised to hear our Icarian songs.<sup>26</sup>

There were painful moments on the river as well. The steamboat, *City of Memphis*, carrying the 1858 group who came over on the *Kate Dyer*, collided with another boat descending the river, apparently without serious damage as they proceeded after a few hours. We have already mentioned the terrible cholera deaths on the river in March, 1849.

### **"Je Suis Citoyen Americain"**

Many of the Icarians, having established themselves in the United States, and with the passing of the years, took steps to become naturalized citizens. According to Cabet, sixty-three of those who arrived with the original group declared their intention at Carthage, the county seat, on July 30, 1852. Twenty-nine received their citizenship papers in October of 1854, including Cabet.<sup>27</sup>

An examination of the record leads one to speculate about loose application of the naturalization procedure on the part of county officials. Rule one was that the candidate must be three years in continuous residence in the U.S. before declaring his intention to become naturalized. On July 30, 1852, some were permitted to declare who had been residents for only a few months. Indeed, Hancock county records of Cabet himself show that he swore on his declaration that he had, ever since his first arrival, remained within the limits of the United States. Two citizens, at the time of his naturalization, October 9, 1854, swore that Cabet had been a resident for at least five years. In point of fact, he left the United States in May of 1851, and returned June 30, 1852, an absence of over a year.

But this is not to detract from the good intentions in the hearts and minds of those who undertook to become American citizens. To lift a quotation from Nordhoff, " 'Please deal gently and cautiously with Icaria . . . It, and it alone, represents in America a great idea—rational, democratic communism.' "28

#### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Philip Taylor, *The Distant Magnet: European Immigration to the U.S.A.* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), page 47.
- <sup>2</sup> *Le Populaire*, September 2, 1849.
- <sup>3</sup> Cabet, *Prospectus de la Colonie Icarienne* (Paris: by the author, 1855), page 23.
- <sup>4</sup> Emile Vallet, *Communism: History of the Experiment at Nauvoo of the Icarian Settlement* (Nauvoo, Illinois: The Nauvoo Rustler, sans date), page 19.
- <sup>5</sup> For the complete version see "Célébration du 10<sup>e</sup> Anniversaire," *Nouvelle Revue Icarienne*, February 15, 1858, page r.
- <sup>6</sup> "Voyage de M. Cabet," *Le Populaire*, February 18, 1849, page 1.
- <sup>7</sup> F. Lawrence Babcock, *Spanning the Atlantic* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931), page 90.
- <sup>8</sup> Cabet, *Prospectus*, pages 47-63; U.S. National Archives, *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, 1820-1875*; *New Orleans Bee*, October 26, 1854, classified section, "Marine News."
- <sup>9</sup> Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son Fondateur Etienne Cabet* (Paris: Édouard Cornèly et Cie, 1907), page 469. Reprinted by Porcupine Press, Inc., Philadelphia, 1972.

<sup>10</sup> The Icarians had a repertoire of songs and during the *Ashland* voyage a singing teacher gave lessons to occupy the children. A verse from one of these songs, called the *Icarian Departure Song*, went as follows:

Rise O Worker stooped in the dust,  
The hour of awakening has rung.  
On the American shore watch the banner  
of the holy Community wave.  
No more depravity, no more suffering,  
No more crimes, no more pains,  
Majestic Equality marches forward;  
Proletarian, dry your tears,  
Let us found our Icaria,  
Soldiers of the Brotherhood,  
Let us found in Icaria  
Humanity's happiness.  
-from Prudhommeaux, page 611.

<sup>11</sup> *Colonie Icarienne*, November 29, 1854, page 1, ff.

<sup>12</sup> Cabet, *Prospectus*, page 55.

<sup>13</sup> Brainerd Dyer, *Zachary Taylor* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946), page 253.

<sup>14</sup> Ou le Communisme peut-il s' établir?, *Le Populaire*, April 15, 1849, page 3.

<sup>15</sup> "Journal de Voyage," *Nouvelle Revue Icarienne*, December 1, 1857, page 2.

<sup>16</sup> "Dèpart du 22 Fevrier," *ibid.*, June 1, 1858, page 1.

<sup>17</sup> "Dèpart de Juillet, 1859," *ibid.*, October 1, 1859, page 3.

<sup>18</sup> Dora B. Weiner, *Raspail: Scientist and Reformer* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pages 135-163.

<sup>19</sup> For information in this paragraph I am indebted to Albert Kalisker, Ph.D., of Wheatridge, Colorado.

<sup>20</sup> *Colonie Icarienne*, November 29, 1854, page 1, ff.

<sup>21</sup> "Etat des Icariens morts . . . etc.," *Le Populaire*, July 1, 1849, page 3. Some authors such as Gallaher, Cohen and Shaw inaccurately say 20 died between New Orleans and Nauvoo. Rees states the deaths were kept secret so prospective members would not be discouraged. This does not seem to be the case, since the above reports of deaths were written up on later than April 17 for publication.

<sup>22</sup> This defection left 64 people who made the trek into Texas, not 69 as sometimes stated. See "Etat de la 1<sup>re</sup> Avant-Garde au 1 mars, 1849," *ibid.*, page 2.

- <sup>23</sup> Sherman B. Barnes, "An Icarian in Nauvoo," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, XXXIV (June, 1941), page 236.
- <sup>24</sup> "Extrait d'une lettre de Roinè Auguste," *Le Populaire*, February 18, 1849, page 2.
- <sup>25</sup> "Lettre de Prudent á son ami Ar-," *ibid.*, February 18, 1849, page 2.
- <sup>26</sup> "Lettre de M. Cabet," *ibid.*, May 20, 1849, page 1.
- <sup>27</sup> "Naturalization des Icaris," colonie Icarienne, October 18, 1854, page 1.
- <sup>28</sup> Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (New York: Schocken Books, 1875), second printing, 1966, page 339.

## THE ICARIAN ZION: NINETEENTH CENTURY PURITANS

Robert P. Sutton

Each of the three fine papers read this afternoon stress, in their own way, the unique circumstances which compelled Europeans in the 1850s to settle at the Nauvoo Icaria. The reasons for the embarkation were varied—economic, ideological, and political—but all of the immigrants, being Icarian converts, had a common eschatology. Icarians, it seems, believed that salvation lay in a community based upon the brotherhood of man created in America. The initial feeling about the actual founding of Icaria was intense and, like so many earlier expectations of a New Jerusalem, was short lived.

Professor Rancière's paper, evidence of thorough research in original sources in European libraries, details the inescapable frustrations which the Icarians felt toward life as it was. "Death is preferable to life," one of them lamented, "in today's wretched society." And, since they perceived their world as being so wretched it was, in fact, totally miserable for them. In addition to being miserable, Rancière sees the Icarians as being torn, emotionally, by a series of contradictions within themselves as Icarians versus Frenchmen. On one hand, they stressed middle class "cohesiveness" yet were outlandish elitists in their perception of themselves as Icarians: most of the middle class could not hope to qualify for admission to their community. They condemned materialism (as opposed to spiritual values) yet had to tackle the nuts and bolts problems of running a new community in America. They embraced the community based on the brotherhood of mankind but were, as it turned out, prideful individualists. They were, as a group, urban idealists—even Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie* was cast entirely in an urban setting—yet had to face the realities of an agrarian environment in Illinois. They posed as Rationalists but at the core, I believe, were emotional Romantics. Hence, because of these dichotomies in their background and make-up Icarians were predestined, in their community at Nauvoo, to failure.

Mr. Renaud shows, by exhaustive research in the National Archives spanning a decade of continuous excavation, that indeed, Icarians

embarked from divergent geographical backgrounds and practiced different occupations. The Manifest Lists are a gold mine of hard data which reinforces, on this side of the Atlantic, Professor Rancière's investigations. Mr. Renaud is, in my opinion, a paragon of the historian as detective. Here is a scholar who, bit by bit, painstakingly reconstructs the picture of Icarian immigration. Moreover, Renaud's data, added to some work I have done in the Illinois Census, add another insight into the Icarians at Nauvoo. Despite their disparate origins, once in Illinois they lived in an ethnic ghetto within the city of Nauvoo itself. During the 1850s the Icarians counted only 25 percent of the total Nauvoo population and while they were there they kept to themselves politically, and above all, culturally.

Mr. and Mrs. Gundy have focused upon the ship crossings to America. The Gundys, too, see severe contradictions in the Icarians on the trans-Atlantic steamers. Icarians insisted upon complete dedication to the needs of the community yet at the same time stressed unquestioned obedience to the leaders of the group. They felt themselves a model of universal brotherhood but appeared reluctant to welcome with enthusiasm any new members encountered on the trip. The Gundys' research provides new glimpses into hitherto neglected aspects of the Icarian immigration: Cabet's hasty departure from France and his frustrations in getting from New York to New Orleans. The Gundy's investigations, like that of Rancière and Renaud, are thorough and accurate.

In all, the portrait of the Icarian immigration given by these three scholars is one of latter-day Puritans. Like their seventeenth-century predecessors to a New Zion in Massachusetts Bay, these nineteenth-century dissenters from the orthodoxy of Industrial Capitalism set out on a clearly defined series of steps to erect a model society on earth and, by example, to show others divine will in human action. They believed in a moral *emancipation*, first, in renouncing the sins of capitalism, money and property. Then, through *participation* in an errand into the wilderness of frontier America they expected from the start to find in their new life a spiritual *regeneration*. Finally, there was *salvation* itself in living together where each would give according to his ability and would receive according to his needs. "In one word," Cabet wrote in the first chapter

of the *Voyage en Icarie*, "Icaria is truly a second Promised Land, an Eden, and Elysium, a new Earthly Paradise." His followers believed him.



## CABET'S DREAM, TOCQUEVILLE'S REALITY

Wayne Wheeler

America, the land of the future, was also the land of individual materialism and egalitarian communalism.

These are basic truths that Cabet and the Icarians shared by vision and experience with their contemporary, Alexis de Tocqueville. It was to America that both Cabet and Tocqueville looked in their attempts to bring intellectual and political order to the great upheavals of their time. It was to America that both traveled, Cabet to construct what he hoped would become a model for the future, Tocqueville to understand the great democratic experiment from which the future would be constructed.

In their performance on the stage of history, the Icarians attempted to enact a medieval script, written from the Christianity of St. Thomas More but inappropriate except as it was to be re-written by events and experience. Cabet's Icaria promised both a familiar, closed, and finite community and its opposite, an opportunity for a new life of full belonging and total access. His optimistic vision offered hope to those who were dispossessed and declassed and seeking freedom from the uncertainty and injury inflicted by the transition to the new era.

The vision was fraught with paradox. On the one hand, it promised the destruction of the routines and repressions of community. On the other hand, it promised the retention of community. It promised both the belongingness of community and unrestricted opportunity for the development of personal ambition.

Tocqueville recognized the irony. Democratic America was redefining liberty and freedom in terms of material well-being, or the expectation of it, for those who by ambition and talent would exploit nature and their fellow man. This was the juncture at which the medieval world was destroyed and the modern world was constructed. America, the land of the future, would become the anti-utopian community in which all citizens were at once alike in their thinking, behavior, and aspirations, equal

individuals unfree in their brotherhood.

Tocqueville's sense of the irony of history enabled him to foretell these developments. Cabet's romantic ideology prevented him from coming to terms with them. Tocqueville, the analyst, saw the inherent paradox in a society whose orderliness depended on egalitarian suppression of dissent and the restriction of personal liberty. Cabet's utopia depended on that suppression and restriction.

The great upheavals of the early 19th century and the visions they generated, properly understood, foreshadowed the future of humankind in modern society. Tocqueville the scientific pessimist set down his observations; Cabet the romantic optimist set down his dreams. It was America, the great experiment in utopian realism, that appealed to the many levels and divisions in French society. Each group saw what it needed to see.

In the end, in America, as Tocqueville anticipated, the social republicanism of Cabet, like all gardens, contained the seeds of its own destruction. Equality became personal action without personal responsibility. The abundance of resources redefined liberty and channeled personal talent and initiative into material well-being and personal indulgence. Good will and moral community were not sufficient to mitigate against new opportunities for greed in the mass society. The latter years of the 20th century seem destined to prove both Cabet and Tocqueville, the two 19th century visionaries, correct.

# ONE MAN'S VOYAGE TO ICARIA

Dale W. Ross

## Early Life Influences

Armel Alexis was born on December 15, 1813 into the family of the blacksmith Claude Armel Marchand and his wife Helene (Le Gal) in the small town of Ploermel in Brittany (see map, next page).<sup>1</sup>

It was a large family, with five other brothers and one sister. The blacksmith father worked in the shop on the lower floor of the home. The upper floor, where the family lived, consisted of only one room; all the beds were arranged like those of a ship's forecabin (a portend of Armel's later voyage from France on the ship, *Rome?*). Most nights, the children fell asleep to the song of their father's anvil—as he fashioned horseshoes, nails and other hardware. Claude Armel was a man of small stature but skilled in his craft to the point that plenty of work came his way, and he even employed an assistant.

The family's life was spartan in every way. The home had barely enough space for such a large family, and their meals were meager too. In fact, the daily fare prepared by their mother Helene was usually buckwheat cakes and clabbered milk.

In such simple surroundings, one can imagine a young Armel Alexis frequently dreaming of other worlds far away to the worlds of—ideas and literature, not hammers and anvils;—cities and civilization, not a small country town.

Armel Alexis' mother Helene died while he was a boy, and his father remarried. The hard blacksmith's life must also have taken an early toll on his diminutive father, Claude Armel, for he died in 1829 at age 45. Armel Alexis was only 16 years old when his father died. Both parents had been lost before he was barely an adult; Armel Alexis would have to make what he could of his own life.



Armel's boyhood days from 1813 to 1830 coincided with France's restoration of the Bourbon monarchy and France's return to conservatism.

The Bourbons (Louis XVIII during 1814-24 and Charles X during 1824-30) came back to power after the most tumultuous time in French history. The 25-year period ending in 1814 included the French Revolution,

the Reign of Terror, and the Napoleonic empire.

Rising from the ashes of the Napoleonic wars, the Bourbon restoration met with the acceptance of the allies who had fought Napoleon. Consequently the 1814 Treaty of Paris allowed France to retain its natural borders and to even recover some of her colonies.

However, Napoleon escaped from Elba in early 1815, pushed the monarchy aside, and rallied the French for one last "Hundred Days" war campaign. The Hundred Days ended in June when Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo and later imprisoned by the British on the isle of St. Helena. A second Peace of Paris in November of 1815 was harsher on France. An indemnity was imposed and foreign troops were to occupy French territory until it was paid.

Louis XVIII came back into rule under a constitutional monarchy. However, the constitution was not a covenant between ruler and people; it was a charter granted by the sovereign. In fact, the charter was dated "the nineteenth year of our reign"—as if the years of the French Republic and the Napoleonic Empire had never existed! France returned to rule by a conservative government, one influenced heavily by royalists and the Catholic church.

But these were times in which the political winds were blowing with liberalism, not conservatism. The industrial revolution was maturing in France, and as it did, it created large classes of workers in cities such as Paris. University students were also a force for liberalism.

Upon Louis XVIII's death in 1824, his brother came to the throne as Charles X. During Charles' reign, the forces of liberalism and conservatism collided. Liberals gained a majority in the Chamber, and between 1827 and 1830 the Chamber was constantly at odds with Charles X and his ministers. Finally, in May of 1830 Charles dissolved the Chamber, muzzled the press, and altered the electoral law to stretch his powers. These actions were too much for gagged journalists, university students, and the workingmen of Paris. In July, three days of street fighting in Paris toppled Charles X's government and sent him into exile. Liberalism had prevailed.

The events of 1814-1830 had such an enormous effect on all of France that Armel Alexis Marchand could hardly have been unaffected. The events of the time showed that France had moved all over the political spectrum in a single lifetime. He probably sensed early that almost any political turnabout was possible. And, the fact that Armel Alexis came from the working class must have had its imprint too. He had seen his family's struggle and seen both parents die before he was 16 years old. He knew, first hand, that the life of the French working class was not good.

In the early 1830's Armel Alexis finished his secondary education at the College Royal-Communal de Vannes, at Vannes, a city in Brittany near his hometown of Ploermel (see earlier map).

He was a good student. In particular, he excelled in mathematics; among papers he carried with him (even to America) is one document signed by the Principal of the College de Vannes awarding him "le Prix d'Excellence" in mathematics for the 1st academic semester of 1834-35.

Armel Alexis' education must have stimulated a need to seek work other than the hard manual labor that was the way of life in Brittany. So he moved to Paris in the early 1840's. Brittany could support rural or seafaring occupations; a city like Paris was the place for an eager young man.

### **Parisian Influences**

Armel Alexis Marchand came to Paris sometime after completing his education. There he worked as a legal clerk for barrister employers.

He was apparently a good employee; one barrister provided a written commendation in January 1843, and another gave him one in January 1848.

That Armel Alexis worked for the legal profession may do much to explain his later connections to the Icarian cause.

First of all, the founder of the Icarian movement himself, Etienne Cabet, was a barrister and served in public legal capacities. In fact, in 1830 on the threshold of the formulation of his utopian concepts, Cabet was

Prosecutor-General for Corsica. Cabet had friends and associates in the legal profession; undoubtedly this network of contacts later aided his organization of the Icarian movement.

Secondly, the legal profession was one in which political independence was possible. This independence allowed freedom of discussion about a variety of political and legal systems—other than that of the ruling monarchy.

Thirdly, because a liberal education at the university normally ended with the study of law, thousands of university students had legal training. The result was that the legal profession of France was vastly overcrowded in the 1840's. Young barristers or would-be barristers without clients, living from hand to mouth by private tutoring or literacy hack work, were a principal ingredient of the "intellectual proletariat." Young legal professionals espoused the causes of republicanism or even utopianism. Many of these young men were probably friends and associates of Armel Alexis.

In the late 1840's people could finally meet and form associations without restrictions. Hundreds of clubs or associations formed in Paris. Many young men's clubs were created—often around a political or social theme. One can imagine dozens of young men, like Armel Alexis, crowding small halls. The clamor of frenzied discussion and debate must have heightened the excitement of their cause.

Perhaps Armel Alexis joined a club of utopians. In this environment, it's quite likely they debated the political and social implications of Cabet's Icaria.

### **The Unsuitable Reign of King Louis Phillipe**

After the 1830 exile of Charles X, the last of the Bourbons, new leadership was needed. Such senior statesmen as Lafayette and Tallyrand lent their support to a new constitutional monarchy under the Orlean king, Louis Phillipe. Louis Phillipe was installed *not* as king of France, but as "king of the French." And the national flag once again became the tricolor flag of the French Revolution.

The new government set about coming to terms with the problems of developing French industry and the country's transport system. And, via the diplomatic skills of Tallyrand, France cultivated cordial foreign relations with its European neighbors—especially England. Domestic reconciliation with the Bonapartists was fulfilled too; the statue of Napoleon was restored on top of the Vendome column, the Arch de Triumph was completed, and Napoleon was put to final rest in the domed tomb of the Invalides.

But beneath these successes of the new regime, key issues remained unaddressed—namely, the issues of parliamentary electoral reform and male suffrage (voting rights were restricted to only heavy taxpayers). Liberals, utopians, and other factions all promoted their visions of a more participative government.

In 1830, at the start of Louis Phillippe's regime, Etienne Cabet was actually part of the regime! He had been appointed Prosecutor-General of Corsica. But he quickly became disappointed with the regime and became active in the liberal opposition. Because of his blind attacks on powerful vested interests in Corsica, he was dismissed from his position. But he went on to be elected a deputy for Dijon, and used his new position to demand a true republic, with votes, educations, and a decent living for the masses. His newspaper, *Le Populaire*, was distributed to the working classes. His actions repeatedly got him arrested and finally, in 1835 he was forced into exile in England. There, in 1840, he first published his famous utopian work, *Voyage en Icarie*.

1839 was the beginning of greater political strife in Paris. On May 12, 1839, a secret Society of the Seasons, which supported the working class, seized portions of Paris in an attempted coup. But, by nightfall of the same day, they were routed and the coup against Louis Phillippe failed. Armel Alexis' brothers Gabriel and Julien and a comrade they called Citizen Dorgal were arrested in the aftermath of the attempted coup. Although there is no record of an arrest, it's likely that Armel Alexis also participated in the attempted coup.



Throughout the 1840s, Cabet's vision of Icaria fired the imagination of thousands of French. Armel Alexis Marchand was one of those people, and he responded by helping to organize the Icarian movement in Paris.

By 1848, the calls for reform were taking the form of organized political campaigns. The campaigns had spread to all parts of the country and to all classes. But the government did not allow political meetings. Banquets were allowed however, and a great banquet in Paris on February 2, 1848 served as the event that began the toppling of Louis Phillipe. Someone panicked, shots were fired and the banquet turned into a riot. Barricades were put up throughout Paris, and street fighting began. Within the week, the National Guard had turned against Louis Phillipe and he fled to England in exile.

### To America

By the late 1840s thousands of French called themselves Icarians. So, in 1847, Cabet had sufficient support to announce a plan to establish an Icarian colony. Armel Alexis Marchand was one of the first Icarians to volunteer to leave France to found the first Icarian colony, in America. Because of its principles of personal and political freedom, America would be the ideal place to put Icarianism to work.

Armel Alexis and the other first Icarians were probably forced to hurry their departure by certain events of January, 1848. By that time, the government of Louis Phillipe was wary of all communist or socialist movements—including that of the Icarians. Increasingly the government looked upon them as a terrifying menace.

The catalyzing event for hastening the Icarians' departure from France may have been the article carried in the liberal *Journal des debats* on January 20, 1848. The article was headlined "The Communists are about to Rise" and warned that 30,000 communists were ready to take arms to overthrow the government. No doubt this article made both the Icarians and the government of Louis Phillipe fearful of one another. It appears that the Icarians waited no longer and immediately made way for Le Havre, where they boarded the *Rome* for America.

The original group of Icarians had already set sail as the final events of February 1848 ended the monarchy and sent Louise Phillipe into exile.

When Armel Alexis Marchand fled, with the other Icarians, for America—he left two brothers, Gabriel and Julien, in Paris. They had been involved in the attempted coup of 1839, and now they were to be involved in another larger Parisian uprising. In June of 1848, 100,000 unemployed workers and sympathizers barricaded the streets and workers fought the bourgeoisie. Workers fought shopkeepers and landlords. In the end, the workers paid a price; 11,000 of them were imprisoned or deported and another 1,500 shot without a trial. Civil liberties, such as the right to form organizations, to strike, and freedom of speech were ended.

Armel Alexis' brother Julien and his comrade, Citizen Dorgal, were among those deported. They were both deported to Africa (to a place called Lambessa). It was not until 1855 that they were allowed to return to France.

Armel Alexis had a long journey ahead of him, and an unsettled France was left behind.

<sup>1</sup> **Author's note:** Armel Alexis Marchand was the author's great-great grandfather. He was among the original group of Icarians who left Le Havre on February 3, 1848 for America. He was active in the Icarian community in Nauvoo, and later was president of the Iowa Icarian community for most of its existence. The information here is drawn principally from a letter from Armel Alexis' brother Gabriel who, with the rest of Armel Alexis' family, stayed in France. Gabriel Marchand's letter was headlined "Souvenirs, Necrologique, Chronologique, Genealogique, Historique, etc. etc. etc. . . ." dated le 1<sup>er</sup> Decembre 1881, and sent from Rue de Belleville 38, Paris. It updates Armel Alexis on the family in France. In the process, it tells much about Armel Alexis' past. Information in the letter was corroborated with family records and the author's correspondence and conversations with his late cousin Ernest Marchand, a grandson of Armel Alexis Marchand. Historical background material was obtained from: Albert Guerrard, *France, a Modern History*, University of Michigan Press, 1959; and Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848-1945*, Vol. 1, Oxford University press, 1973.



