

# AMERICA'S EARLIEST ANARCHIST

The Man Who Invented the Cylinder Printing Press Was the Father of the Cult of Peaceful and Philosophical Anarchism--Reminiscences of Josiah Warren's Celebrated "Equity" Stores and Communities of an Earlier Generation

BOSTON, June 13, 1908.—Who the anarchists are has become pretty well known in the past few weeks. Uncle Sam has been busy discovering some of those whose disposition is most violent. Most Americans have undoubtedly approved his activity against the Reds.

Just what anarchism is, though, is still unappreciated by ninety-nine people out of a hundred.

That is to say, philosophical anarchism, although it has existed as a philosophy of life for countless centuries and under its present specific name for a good many years, is not popularly understood. Most people think of it as having some connection with inflammatory oratory and bomb throwing. They don't associate it with such men as Tolstoy, Ibsen, Walt Whitman, William Lloyd Garrison and many others who have not been wild-eyed fanatics, but who have believed so thoroughly in the freedom of the individual that they have stood opposed to what is called "coercive authority." Such men believe that in power there is a quality which leads to its abuse and that the ideal condition is one in which enlightened selfishness and intelligence make each individual a law to himself.

It is the fashion to speak of anarchism as a foreign and un-American product. Very few people seem to be aware that the founder of the cult of philosophical anarchism was an American, a member of one of the most famous families of Massachusetts, a man of strictly moral and helpful life, and a mechanical genius to whom we owe, among other inventions, that of the cylinder press, which throws hundreds of newspapers in less than it took the old flat press to print ten. This very able American, Josiah Warren, born in Boston in 1798, and resident during a considerable part of his career in and near Cincinnati, has had very little attention in the books on American history and it is only very recently that a little biography, written by William Baillie, a Boston manufacturer, who is especially interested in the doctrines of philosophical anarchism, has thrown much new light on a most remarkable character of the nineteenth century, one whose theories and observations had a large influence upon such English leaders as Robert Dale Owen, John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. Personally, Josiah Warren was, of course, a very different kind of anarchist from the fierce reds of France, the story of whose strained relations with the police has lately been described graphically by Alvan F. Sanborn in his "Paris and the Social Revolution," the best book ever written on the subject of the foreign brands of anarchism against which President Roosevelt's activities have been directed. Warren, who was a versatile Yankee individualist of the same stock as the hero of Bunker Hill battle, was a man whom no one would have wanted to deport, even if there had been an anti-anarchist agitation in his day. He simply carried to its logical conclusion the belief of Thomas Jefferson and the anti-federalist leaders of our early history to the effect that that government is best which governs least. His favorite doctrine was that "Everyone should be free to dispose of his reputation as he pleases, but always at his own cost." He claimed that "man seeks freedom as the magnet seeks the pole or water its level, and society can have no peace until every member is really free." Mr. Baillie's investigations, recalling very interesting incidents in the history of what was then the far West, show that although Josiah Warren was not by nature a great organizer, his undertakings were much more successful than the socialistic and communistic ventures which were popular back in the nineteenth century and which without exception failed because they did not take into account the differences which Nature has established among individuals.

In Cincinnati, where Mr. Warren got his start in life as a manufacturer of lamps, he opened on May 18, 1827, the first "equity store," designed to illustrate what he called the "cost

principle." This was known as the "Time store" because of a peculiar and original method adopted to fix and regulate the amount of the merchant's compensation. All goods had a certain price which was fixed by their cost in money together with a fair loading charge to cover the running expenses of the store and then a charge was also made for as much of the merchant's time as was consumed in making the purchase. In-



JOSIAH WARREN.

Inventor of the cylinder printing press and founder of the cult of Philosophical Anarchism. From a bas relief.

Incidents were not unknown of economical persons grabbing for goods from the counter and getting off with only one cent's worth of the merchant's time. In payment for the time service the customer ordinarily gave his labor note, something after this form: "Due to Josiah Warren on demand thirty minutes in carpenter work. John Smith." After Mr. Smith had accumulated notes representing, say, half a day's work he would be engaged by Mr. Warren to make needed repairs at the store or in his house. Profit in the ordinary sense of the word was eliminated, and yet there was abundant incentive to the merchant to exert himself to increase his business.

The equity store was successful, was imitated elsewhere, and many of the principles laid down by Mr. Warren have been put into practice by the great department stores of today. On account, however, of his personal feeling against land speculation and because the store was located on land which he had leased from Nicholas Longworth for ninety-nine years, and which was likely to make him a rich man without his giving an equivalent service to the community, the enterprise was given up.

Later, in the midst of various activities as a manufacturer and inventor Mr. Warren was concerned in the establishment of several "equity communities," the most famous of which was that at Brentwood, Long Island, where a little group of individuals settled on a desolate tract of land covered with scrub-oak, and built a village community which has had a very considerable degree of prosperity. The original pioneers were hardy people who believed thoroughly in Mr. Warren's idea of self help and individual initiative and who in a surprisingly short time provided themselves with homes and some of the comforts of life. Later as a result of sensational publicity given to the enterprise by the New York papers, the colony found itself almost overwhelmed with cranks, ignorant of the ideas on which the village was founded. True, however, to the principle of philosophical anarchism which gives equal rights to all in natural opportunities the pioneers refrained from taking any steps toward excluding the newcomers, so long as they did not invade the rights of others.

The invaders unquestionably, however, hurt the cause of the individualists. As Mr. Warren himself wrote: "One man began to advocate plurality

of wives and published a paper to support his views; another believed clothing to be superfluous, and not only attempted to practice his Adamite theories in person, but inflicted his views upon his hapless children. A woman with an ungainly form displayed herself in public in men's attire which gave rise to newspaper comment that: "The women dressed in men's clothes and looked hideous." Still another young woman had the diet mania so severely that after living upon beans without salt until reduced to a skeleton she died within a year."

The burdens which the real settlers at Brentwood had to bear on account of these unbalanced persons were very real but because they respected the rights of others and accorded liberty to do even the silliest things, knowing that experience and the principle which allows such things to be done at each one's own cost, would work the surest cure, they never interfered.

The financial depression of 1857 bankrupted the paper box manufactory which one member had established at Brentwood as a means of providing work for others and of making a living for himself. After that industrial conditions caused many of the pioneers and most of the cranks to leave, although the co-operative tendencies of the little community and the pleasant external features of Brentwood have lasted down to this time, two or three of the original pioneers still surviving.

Mr. Warren himself, although greatly interested in theories of individual initiative and although very practical and competent so far as his own work was concerned, had the weakness of his qualities in that he lacked the gift of leadership. This lack, together with the difficulty of co-ordinating the activities of a small community with a big business world run on extremely different principles, is held by Mr. Baillie to account for the circumstance that while his Equity villages never failed dismally as communistic and socialistic attempts have failed, none of them has proved an unqualified success. His press in the years 1830 to 1832 was his most monumental achievement. Improved methods of stereotyping also received a great deal of his attention about 1840 to 1845, and the processes which he invented are now in use in the finer classes of stereotype work. He died at Princeton, Massachusetts, in 1874.

The conceptions which now go under the name of "philosophical anarchism" spread from Mr. Warren's few public addresses and scattered writings to England and other countries, where the American idea of accomplishing results through individual effort and voluntary association instead of by governmental fiat appealed strongly to advanced original thinkers. In a letter written toward the end of his life Mr. Warren summed up his philosophy of society in the following statement: "Almost with fear and trembling I ventured years ago to offer one, on condition that I should preserve my freedom to change it whenever 'increasing knowledge' should show its defects; and I gave the 'SOVEREIGNTY OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL over his or her Person, Time, Property, and Responsibilities'; and here I add, Reputation." That is the kind of anarchism which first grew up on American soil.

### Sore Nipples.

Any mother who has had experience with this distressing ailment will be pleased to know that a cure may be effected by applying Chamberlain's Salve as soon as the child is done nursing. Wipe it off with a soft cloth before allowing the babe to nurse. Many trained nurses use this salve with best results. For sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.

### THOUGHTLESSNESS CRUELTY.

Most of the cruelty of the world is thoughtless cruelty. Very few people would intentionally add to another's load or make his burden in life heavier or his path rougher. Most of the great heart-wounds are inflicted by thoughtless thrusts, flung out often in a moment of anger, when perhaps, we were too proud to apologize or to try to heal the grievous wounds we had made.

Can anything be more cruel than to discourage a soul who is struggling to do the best he can, to throw stumbling blocks in the path of those who are trying to get on in the world against great odds?

No life is the same after you have once touched it. Will you leave a ray of hope or one of despair, a flash of light or a somber cloud across some dark life each day? Will you by thoughtless cruelty deep the shadow which hangs over the life, or will you

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## 4TH OF JULY

# BALL

AT

## Grays River, Wn

Saturday Eve., July 4

Dance Will Be Given in Meserve's New Hall

FLOOR MANAGERS: Jack Malone, M. Sverdrup, O. P. Sailing, Frank Sorensen

Music Will Be Furnished By Grays River Orchestra

Tickets for Dance, \$1; Including Supper, \$1.50

THE STEAMER WENONIA WILL RUN AN EXCURSION FROM ASTORIA, LEAVING CALLENDER DOCK AT 3:30 P. M. Will call at Knappton and all way points, arriving at Grays River at 7:00 O'Clock P. M.

A PICNIC DINNER will be served during the day in the beautiful park; a patriotic program is being prepared for the occasion by the Dramatic Club. All are invited to come.

W. N. MESERVE

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