historians which are based upon what they think rather than upon a study of developments.

John D. Barnhart


This attractive paper-bound pamphlet from the pen of the Director of the New Harmony Memorial Commission will appeal to everyone interested in the Rappite period of New Harmony history. Others who may read it will become interested in the unique annals of the Rappite community on the banks of the Wabash. The story is more than a description of the Labyrinth as it includes a brief study of its creators, the New Harmony Society. In addition, interesting material is presented dealing with five other historic labyrinths, with a general statement relative to various church labyrinths and the Etruscan labyrinths. There are also sections dealing with the labyrinth in literature, art, games and pageantry.

The New Harmony Labyrinth, which was permitted to pass out of existence in the years following the return of the Rappites to Pennsylvania, has been recently restored. The design of the restoration is as nearly as possible the same as that of the original. The new site is a plot of ground adjacent to the space occupied by the original. The plants marking the winding and intricate paths of the restored Labyrinth consist mainly of Amoor River Privet. The old hedgerows were formed of “wild river privet together with flowering trees and shrubs and some thorn trees.” Trees have not been used in the Restoration. The building placed in the center of the Labyrinth by the Rappites was constructed of wood. The new building which will be known as the Temple is constructed of stone.

In his description of the original Labyrinth, the author quotes from several persons who observed it while still preserved. The description by Robert Dale Owen which was included in his autobiography, Threading My Way, seems the most reliable of all. Owen refers to the Labyrinth as a playground, but he believed that it had a significance in relation to the lives that Rapp wished the members of his com-
munity to follow. "Thus George Rapp had sought to shadowforth to his followers," says Owen, "the difficulties of attaining a state of peace and social harmony." This much was symbolized by the maze of paths by which the shrine could be reached by a successful seeker. Owen adds this keen interpretation: "The perplexing approach, the rough exterior of the shrine, and the elegance displayed within were to serve as types of toil and suffering, succeeded by happy repose." Mr. Lockridge accepts this view as stated by Robert Dale Owen and found in other writings, and presents it in his own way, saying that, "it may be assumed that the Labyrinth symbolized their [the Rappites'] belief in the early comings of the millenium. It also typified their conception of the winding ways of life by which a state of true social harmony was to be attained ultimately. It seems, furthermore, to have been regarded by them and by those who visited them, as a pleasure ground. Thus, it integrated truly the harmony of those devout people."

The brochure is well written and represents much careful work. There are some slips such as "divigation" for "divination" (p. 22), and the failure to indicate an omission from a quotation (p. 77). Readers will certainly appreciate the many fine things included in the pamphlet, perhaps the finest piece of writing that Mr. Lockridge has ever done. The reviewer has enjoyed the study and recommends it to others.

William O. Lynch