

Five Prominent Utopian Societies

	Founders	Location/ Background	Principles/ Practices	Reasons for Decline
Shakers Communities 1830-1860 (peak years)	Mother Ann Lee <i>(later)</i> Joseph Meacham Lucy Wright	Originated in England In the U.S., established in Lebanon, NY By 1840s, settlements stretched from Maine to Kentucky At peak had 6,000 members	God was both Father/ Mother Both men and women equal in the eyes of God Celibacy was ideal; men and women lived apart, but could eat together Rejected accumulation of private property Ann Lee was the daughter of God Women had leadership roles in communities Marketed vegetables, flower seeds, and fine furniture	Reached peak membership in 1840 Did not grow internally through live births Gained new members only through conversion, indenturing children, adoption
Oneida 1848-1880	John H. Noyes	Central New York State Grew to about 300 members An economic success produced silk products, steel traps, silverware	Banned private property Communal property holdings Practiced “mutual criticism” of members Practiced a form of eugenics Enacted “complex marriages”—multiple sexual partners	Noyes fled to Canada, charged with adultery 1879: stopped practicing complex marriages 1881: became a joint stock company