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ChLA 2019 Abstract

Messages of Hope for a Better World from Hopedale:

The Utopian Children's Stories of Harriet Newell Greene Butts

Hopedale was one of several Utopian communities that sprouted up in the New England countryside during the Antebellum Era. Founded in 1841 under the leadership of Unitarian pacifist minister Adin Ballou, the Hopedale community supported a press which issued a series of children's stories titled *Lida's Tales of Rural Home* authored by community member Harriet Newell Greene Butts (1819-1881). With titles like *Ralph or I Wish He Wasn't Black*, the *Lida* series provided a progressive message to nineteenth-century American children on issues like race relations, feminism, and spiritualism generally shied away from in the mainstream children's press. Married to printer Bryan J. Butts, Harriett Butts' cultural work of writing reform-infused stories for children outlasted the Hopedale community's dissolution in 1856, extending at least into the 1870s. I intend to examine these stories in the context of the time in which they were written, and will work to unearth the historical underpinnings of the Hopedale community's commitment to publishing an alternative literature for children.