

*This is part of a letter written by Enfield Shaker Sister Melissa Chase to Elder Henry Greene of the Alfred, Maine Shaker Community. Melissa is remembering with great pleasure a visit she recently made to the Maine Shakers. She recalls her trip to the beach, her ugly bathing suit, and all the delicious food she was introduced to while visiting. She then reports on her return to life at Enfield, including her work preserving food for the winter.*

*For most Shakers a trips to another Shaker village was a rare treat. The time away became a precious memory, relived through letter writing.*

Please tell Elder John that I often think of that happy day spent by the seaside, our walk in the splendid Park, the St. Cloud house, and more than all how frightfully I looked robed in my regimentals for bathing. You know the sisters with me said that I looked like that bad creature, and what is worse they still say the same; I admit that my appearance could not be envied, but am aware how much easier it is for any of us to see another's faults than our own; be this as it may I had just enough of this kind of amusement to want more, but I never expect it in this life. I thank all concerned for my privilege.

Just say to Eldress Eliza, and sister Mary Vance, that I want to see them and if they will take the Cars next Spring and come to Enfield they shall have some stick chops, the best that can be made; they know that a little change would do them no harm and the ride must sure would do them good. I do not expect that I shall have so many different kinds of luxuries to treat them with as they gave us, and if it produce the same effect upon them that it did upon me it would be quite as well, to change my diet so suddenly from Pine-apples, Coconuts, with various other nuts, Lemonade, and other nice beverages, besides fresh Salmon and all other kinds of fresh fish; and what is more precious to be remembered than all the rest the smiling faces of all the dear brethren and sisters was a change that showed itself quite vividly upon my frame. However the change has not done me any lasting injury, for I am at the present time as well as ever.

Now dear brother you asked me to write you when I had finished canning my fruit, and inform you how many bottles I filled. I have seven hundred stored away in the cellar, some are quite small, the largest hold but 2 quarts, not a great abundance but enough I think to make us quite comfortable until the harvest time comes again. I am now in the kitchen with a very pretty company of young sisters; namely Ella Briggs, Emma B. Atwood, Eliza Houston, these are with me in the cooking department; the bakers are Almira Elkins, Eva Mellen. Those in the dining room, Fannie F. and Celia Mellen, all of whom send love the best and sweetest with many thanks for the beautiful ministrations and living testimonies received thro' the dear Ministry and yourself while visiting our place. One point I forgot to mention which may prove to you that my time is fully occupied thro' each successive day. Since I have been in the kitchen which is six weeks tomorrow I have made 100 and 50 gallons of sour cider sauce to sell besides giving my attention to the kitchen duties as a care sister. I think that perhaps I have written all that may be of interest.