

The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from The Museum at Lower Shaker Village

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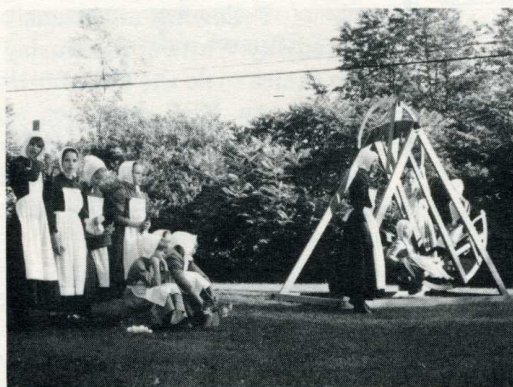
The Young and Tender Buds: Children in Shaker Life

by Mary Ann Wilde

This July, Eric Gesler of Dana Robes Wood Craftsmen in Enfield made a beautiful swing for our Shaker Revels production, "In Yonder's Valley." (See **Faith...**, p. 4) It now sits in front of the Museum, inviting young swingers, and reminding us of the presence and importance of children in Shaker communities. Eric designed and built the swing from a photograph I found while doing research at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, OH. The elegance of the swing's design was clear in the photograph. Recreating a glider that would light the faces of children, as it did those of the young Shakers in the picture, was the task Eric set for himself. The sign on the swing, "12 and under, please!", reminds those older that we must stand by and only imagine the sense of lift and glide and wind blowing through. But as we watch, or take a turn at pumping, we can perhaps reflect on the place of children in the Shaker community.

We are fortunate to have the memoirs of Hervey Elkins, "15 Years in the Senior Order of Shakers: A Narration of Facts Concerning that Singular People." In it he offers a detailed remembrance of his youth amongst the Enfield, N.H. Shakers. Daily life for a child raised in community in 1810 was radically different from that of a child of the 1870's or 1790's or 1920's. And within any given era, a child's experience was strongly influenced by the particular adults responsible for the children's order; by the other children living in community at the time; and by the particular circumstances that

brought each child into Shaker life. Whether indentured by parents for economic, personal or disciplinary reasons; whether orphaned, homeless, or part of a family conversion to Shakerism, the child must have



Children swing during Revels performance

experienced placement in a Shaker community as traumatic; emotionally linked to feelings of change, upheaval and rejection.

Yet the Shakers gladly accepted the challenge of drawing children into Shaker life. The society provided generously for the physical needs and education of the children in their charge. Living separately in the children's order, the young had their own space, activities, and work load. But they participated fully in the communal life of the larger body. The hallmarks of Shaker life—separation from the world, separation of the sexes within the community, and a shared spiritual and material inheritance—also characterized a child's experience.

Children were instructed in, and expected to demonstrate, re-

spectful, industrious behavior. Corporal punishment was not forbidden, but was not relied on as a means of shaping character. Public shaming was particularly discouraged. One admonition from "Mother's Word to the Caretakers of Children" that stands out is: "Always fold your hands and stand erect, when anyone is instructing you in your duty; and if you cannot promise to obey or to reform, then say nothing at all, only to thank your instructors kindly for their good counsel." In this teaching I hear profound respect for the child, as well as for the person offering counsel. It is the child's responsibility to know his or her own heart, and if unable to accept what is offered, to refrain from pretense, while acknowledging the relationship with the instructor.

From the many rules relating to rough play, rude language, laziness, teasing, etc., we know that Shaker children shared the same human behaviors we know in ourselves and in each other. From journal accounts it is clear that the job of children's caretaker was more than once surrendered with relief, if not delight. Yet the strongest impression I receive in reading Shaker history is that children were valued and respected. Some believers clearly had a particular capacity for communicating to children the love in which they were held. But all were reminded by the presence of children to seek the child-like in their own spiritual life, and to be a witness for the life choice that they dared to hope these young people might one day make their own.

Sage Thoughts

by Happy Griffiths

One joy of herb gardening is harvesting culinary herbs and preserving their wonderful flavors to enjoy all year. Perhaps the simplest way of enjoying this flavorful bounty is to make herbal vinegars.

All you need to make herbal vinegars is good commercial vinegar, a bunch of fresh herbs, small bottles, and patience. Japanese or Chinese rice vinegar has a subtle, delicate flavor-- probably the least acidic. Apple cider vinegar is light brown with a strong apple flavor. Wine vinegars are mild but a bit expensive. Distilled white vinegar is quite acidic but can make a good base for herbs of your choice.

Put the herb, or herbs, you wish to use in a large glass jar with a non-metal cover. A general rule is 2 cups herbs, rinsed and dried, to 4 cups vinegar. Place the jar outside in the sun for 2-4 weeks. Chive blossom vinegar becomes a lovely pink color, but fades if left out longer than 2 weeks. Purple basil makes a wonderful, slightly sweet, red vinegar. Tarragon goes well in apple cider vinegar, making a delicious base for salad dressing. Try combining the lemon-flavored varieties: thyme, verbena, balm and basil, with a long spiral of lemon peel for more zip. Try a clove of garlic in dill vinegar. When ready to decant, put a sprig or two of the herb in a small bottle and pour in the strained vinegar. Add a non-metal top and a nice label. As a final touch, dip the cap in paraffin and attach a ribbon.

Herb vinegars have endless uses. Add a teaspoon to soups and stews. Marinate fish, chicken, or beef, or use in stir fries, adding a little gingerroot, garlic and lemongrass. A simple recipe for salad dressing is 1/2 cup olive oil, 2 Tb. herb vinegar, 1 tsp. dijon mustard, 2 shakes Worcestershire sauce, freshly ground pepper. Shake well and enjoy! When making mayonnaise try tarragon vinegar instead of lemon juice. Dip a piece of cheesecloth in herb vinegar, wring out and wrap around cheese to prevent moulding.

As a special touch, attach a recipe to bottles of vinegar you give as gifts. The next time you are in your garden, gather a handful of herbs and put them in a bottle of vinegar: you may surprise yourself.

What's Next for Museum's Home?

The Museum's dream of purchasing the Laundry/Dairy Building was finally realized in December, and celebrated by a gala reception in February. With ownership a reality, many people connected with the Museum were itching to get out scrapers, paint and brushes, but the staff and Board of Trustees realized that now was the time to get a full, professional review that would help determine how the building could best be restored and adapted for Museum use.

The formal term for what needs to be done is an historic structures report (HSR). This report, done by an architect specializing in historic work, documents the building's history, analyzes its current condition, and presents recommendations for restoration and adaptive use, including such considerations as handicapped access, fire safety, and climate control. The report includes a suggested schedule and sequence for restoration and development, along with schematic plans and projected costs for each step.

Following an intensive search, the Board of Trustees selected Jay White of the Burley Partnership in Waitsfield, VT, as its top choice to do the HSR for the Museum, once the funds have been raised. An HSR does not come cheaply. The estimated cost is \$15,000. But the money will be well spent, in providing the Museum with a blueprint to ensure that restoration moves forward in a logical, careful way. (See **Grants** story, below.)

Museum Receives Two Grants

In its quest to have an Historic Structures Report done for the Laundry/Dairy Building (see **What's Next**, above), the Museum has already received strong support this summer through the awarding of two grants.

The Ellis L. Phillips Foundation of Lyme, N.H., awarded \$7,500 to the Museum. This generous grant brings the Museum halfway toward funding the estimated cost of the Report. That good news was reinforced by a grant of \$1,500 from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Trust's Preservation Services Fund annually holds three competitive funding rounds to support local projects by nonprofit groups and public agencies. The award is recognition of the fact that the Museum's work "actively ensures that America's architectural and cultural heritage is preserved."

Award for Revels Director

Mary Ann Wilde, director of and artistic force behind the Shaker Revels (see **Faith...**, page 4), has been named a 1992 award winner by the American Association for State and Local History representing the Museum and the New Hampshire. These prestigious awards are given to honor achievement in the preservation and interpretation of local, state and regional history. Mary Ann's research in Shaker music and history, particularly in connection with Enfield, led to the existence of Shaker Revels, and as a result thousands of people have been exposed to the rich tradition of the Shakers through the power and beauty of their music. We congratulate Mary Ann on this richly deserved award.

Tree of Life Quilt Raffle

A handsome quilt featuring the classic Shaker Tree of Life design has been gracing the Shaker Store this season, drawing much comment and admiration. It is the work of the Soo-Nipi Quilters, from the greater Sunapee area, who donated it to the Museum for a benefit raffle. Many quilters gave generously of their time, work, and talent to complete this work of art, which was over a year in the making. Softly shaded prints of maroon and dark teal



Betty Caterino and Ada Gendell
at work on the quilt

blue, against a natural background, are the predominant colors of the queen-size quilt.

Tickets for the quilt raffle may be purchased by mail at \$1.00 each, and at the store through June, 1993. Proceeds from the raffle will go toward development of new exhibits. Buy some tickets for your-

self or as a gift; you'll get a warm feeling from supporting the Museum, and may be keeping warm under this beautiful quilt next winter!

Annual Campaign Announced

The Board of Trustees announced October 19 as the kick-off for the Museum's Annual Appeal. The goal of this year's campaign is \$50,000.

Now that the Laundry/Dairy Building has been purchased, we are involved in new and exciting negotiations which we hope will result in the protection of 1,100 acres of land on the hillside across from the Village, and the addition to the Museum's holdings of two historic buildings on ten acres of land. The Museum would also gain ownership of its collection, much of

which it does not currently own. The Museum's costs, while substantial, will be far less than the value, both historic and monetary, of the property the Museum is poised to acquire. Funds raised through this year's Appeal will go toward this acquisition.

Members will receive a letter in late October with more details about the campaign and the opportunities awaiting the Museum. Watch the *Friends' Quarterly* for more news about the land and buildings under negotiation.

Auction Raises \$7000

Over 200 items donated by craftspeople and antique dealers from all over the region, as well as by local businesses, went to lucky bidders at the Museum's first live benefit auction in August. Well-known auctioneer William Smith of Plainfield, NH, donated his services as auctioneer, keeping the bids coming and the crowd of 125 in stitches, as he helped them forget the gloomy weather outside with his lively wit and banter.

Auctioned items ranged from Shaker-inspired furniture and oval boxes to pewter, pottery, paintings,

and food baskets. The proceeds go towards the Museum's building ownership, restoration and maintenance costs.

The Museum extends sincere thanks to the generous donors of goods and services, to all who attended, and to the volunteer committee members who worked to make the auction a success: **Jean Beard, Lynn Boardman, Linda Boucher, Barbara Brady, Debbie Ford, Nancy Gray, Kelly Green, Sue Hammond, Patti Laurie, Ken Robb, and Brownie Smith.**

Intern Brings Order to Photos

The Museum is lucky to have had Alex Shepard, recent Dartmouth graduate, as an intern during the summer. Alex received her B.A. in history and has experience working in special collections at Dartmouth's Baker Library. Her project, which is ongoing, is to catalogue and put into proper storage the Museum's photo archives. "The Museum has several hundred photographs, most of them undated, from all periods of the community's history," according to Alex. Once she has gone through all of the photographs, Alex will create a topic index, allowing researchers to locate all the Museum's pictures of a specific building, for example. Her cheerful presence and professional work will continue to be welcome additions to the Museum.

The Friends' Quarterly is a publication of The Museum at Lower Shaker Village. It is mailed as a service to Museum Members. For information on Membership opportunities write: The Museum at Lower Shaker Village, #2 Lower Shaker Village, Enfield, NH 03748. Or call (603) 632-4346.

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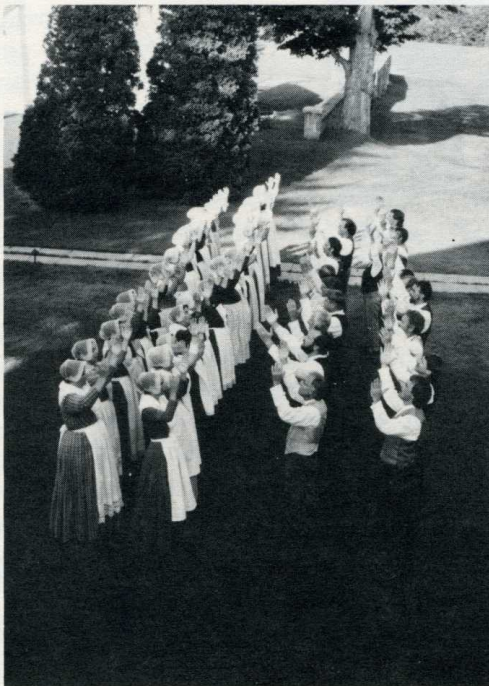
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Faith and Questioning in the Valley

"In Yonder's Valley", the 1992 Shaker Revels production, brought Lower Shaker Village to life on four July evenings, three of which were sold out. Nearly 500 people participated in this celebration of Shaker life and music, following the cast from garden to barn to the Great Stone Dwelling, and joining enthusiastically in many of the Shaker songs on which the show is based.

The production invited the audience to walk through history's door and become guests in the world of the Enfield Shakers. Time rolled back as the performance's opening words, from a 1923 newspaper article about the Shakers, led to a haunting solo. In the hush that followed, the ringing of the bell in the Great Stone Dwelling cupola commanded the listener's attention, as it once guided the Shakers through their daily activities. Each subsequent scene and song added to the portrait: the sound of children playing; the serenity of the men at their woodwork and the women at their gardening; the harsh interruption of Mary Dyer's venomous accusations against the Shakers; then the re-

affirmation of voices rising in song from the barn's lower level to the audience above, with the sun streaming through the barn door

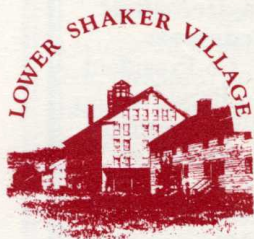


(if you came on one of the sunny evenings!) in echo of the illuminating testimony within. While not meant as a literal representation of Shaker life, the cast's portrayal of emotions, joys, and daily rhythms rang true to the Shaker spirit.

Shaker Revels is produced jointly by Revels North and the Museum. The cast is a group of volunteers, ranging in age from three to sixty-five, who come from communities throughout the area and participate in Shaker Revels for the sheer joy of it. As one cast member was heard to say after a performance, "I could sing this music all night!" That love of the music shines through: hours of rehearsal time and repeat performances never seem to diminish the cast's enthusiasm or the music's power to move. We hope that the tradition of Shaker Revels at Lower Shaker Village, now four years old, is here to stay.

This year the show went on the road as well, traveling to Canterbury, NH, to be part of that community's bicentennial celebration.

Following the first Shaker Revels four years ago, thirty-four songs were recorded on a tape and CD called "O Hear Their Music Ring." They can be purchased for \$12.95 and \$15.95, respectively, (plus postage and handling) from the Shaker Store. To order call (603) 632-4346, or write to: The Museum at Lower Shaker Village, Enfield, NH, 03748.



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