
The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from the Enfield Shaker Museum

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Museum Buys Historic Village Core

On September 29, after a summer of frenetic activity, the Enfield Shaker Museum purchased four key buildings in the Enfield Shaker Village — a long-held dream for Museum supporters. Included in the purchase are the Great Stone Dwelling and Mary Keane Chapel, the East Brethren's Shop (also known as Bethany House), the West Brethren's Shop, the Shaker cemetery, and the land where the Museum's Shaker herb garden is now located. Total purchase price for the three parcels was \$530,000.

Over 800 individuals and businesses contributed to a summer-long campaign to raise \$275,000 in cash. The town of Enfield received \$75,000 in back taxes at the closing, and the balance of the purchase price was provided by a mortgage from Mascoma Savings Bank of Lebanon. Last minute efforts by U.S. Senators Bob Smith and Judd Gregg (both R-NH) helped secure a \$490,000 mortgage guarantee through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Program.

This important acquisition assures the future of the Shaker legacy in Enfield, complementing the Museum's current holdings, the Laundry/Dairy building, the Stone Mill Building and the West Meadow Barn. Supporters from throughout the Upper Valley, New England, and beyond responded

to the urgent request for funds, and contributed generously to see the village reunited under Museum ownership.

The Shakers sold their Enfield property in 1927 to the Catholic LaSalette order. In the mid 1980's, the LaSallettes sold the Church family property to a developer, retaining possession of the North Family buildings. Foreclosure proceedings by Winter Hill Federal Savings Bank, the major mortgage holder for the developers, were begun last spring. The only bidder at the May 13 foreclosure auction, Rev. Keith Marsh, decided in late June not to exercise his right to purchase the buildings.

The Museum's plans for the new properties include leasing a portion of the Great Stone Dwelling for use as a restaurant and inn, and expanded public programs in these new sites. Some repairs, especially to the Great Stone Dwelling, will need to be done immediately. As

a thank you to the many supporters of the Museum's campaign, public tours of the Great Stone Dwelling have already been offered on several occasions. The Museum will continue to raise funds toward building restoration, an endowment, and a rapid reduction of our substantial mortgage liability.



The Great Stone Dwelling

Photo by Ron Boehm
