

The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from the Enfield Shaker Museum

Volume XV/No. 1

Fall 2004

An Intimate Look at the Shaker Family One Hundred Years Ago

By Robert P. Emlen

One hundred years ago this fall a Boston-based photographer named John Henry Tarbell visited the Shaker village at Enfield, where he made a number of photographic studies of the Shaker family at work. Carefully staged in domestic settings in and around the buildings of the Church Family, Tarbell's charming images portray the family members industriously engaged in dignified labor. A century later many of these photographs are familiar to us—Tarbell's Shaker photographs have been reproduced as illustrations in Stephen Stein's *The Shaker Experience in America*, Flo Morse's *The Shakers and the World's People*, Timothy Rieman and Jean Burks's *The Complete Book of Shaker Furniture*, and Ray Pearson and Julia Neal's *The Shaker Image*, among other titles. In these books Tarbell's photographs represent a generalized Shaker life, a vision of how Shakers everywhere lived and worked at the turn of the 20th century. But these images have particular meaning for the Enfield Shaker village, for they picture known members of the family in identifiable settings, in the days when the brothers and sisters were still vital and actively engaged in productive work. Tarbell's 1903 pictures show the village in the last years when it resounded with young voices, and the elderly brothers and sisters still imagined a future was possible for their community of believers.

The details of John Tarbell's encounter with the Enfield Shakers remain obscure. No information has yet come to light about how he managed to introduce himself to the family, or how he convinced the Elders and Eldresses, brothers and sisters, and girls of the children's order all to pose for his elaborately contrived photographs. Even the date of his visit is conjectural—the pictorial evidence suggests that he visited the village in late September or early



Sister Marinda Keniston (1848-1911)
Photograph by John Tarbell c. 1903

October of 1903—that is, before the death in July, 1904, of Elder John Bradford, who appears in a well-known scene of the family picking apples in the dooryard of the stone dwelling; but after the meeting house was dismantled and carted away in mid September of 1902. Tarbell's panoramic view from the hillside to the west shows only open ground where the meeting house once stood.

Tarbell sold his Shaker photographs to *New England Magazine*, which published some of them in 1910. He also sold prints to the public through the Boston Camera Club, and made presents of others to members of the Enfield Shaker family. But after that visit he seems never to have returned to the Shaker village. Thereafter his photographs picture scenes in Boston and in Rhode Island, and in other rural New England locations. However, in that one passing acquaintance with the Enfield Shakers he seems to have

captured an important moment in their history, during a serene season when the family was willing to open their doors and have their lives recorded by the camera's lens.

John Tarbell's photographs of the Enfield Shakers are the subject of a forthcoming exhibition at the Enfield Shaker Museum. Tarbell made his Shaker photos on 6" x 8" glass plate negatives, which he printed directly onto exactly the same size paper. Tarbell's photos are slightly larger than the more formal photographs of the Shaker family made by Col. Frank Churchill in the 1890s, which are thought to have served as Tarbell's inspiration in seeking out the Enfield Shakers. Readers who may know of the whereabouts of early photographs fitting the description of Tarbell's work are encouraged to contact the Enfield Shaker Museum.

From the President

The real work of the Museum is collecting, restoring, interpreting and preserving. We are fortunate to have an enthusiastic collection of volunteers, who organize, plant, weave, tinsmith, demonstrate, and carry out a bunch of other tasks that are our real reason for existing in the first place. We can also count on lots of help for the Harvest Festival and other public affairs that help put us on the local map. In fact, nonprofits tend to sink or swim on the strength of their volunteers, people such as you and me. Every year we get an amazing amount of help from Elderhostel, folks from out of the area who pay to come here and work for us. They even pay for many of the materials they use. Last month the entering class at Tuck School painted the entire downstairs of the Ministry House while completing a number of other jobs.

There just isn't enough staff to do everything, nor is there enough money to hire more staff and outside services. The sad truth is that we have not recovered from the financial hole we were placed in by a former operator of the Inn, even after refinancing our mortgages to the limit of available equity. The company that we set up to run the Inn for nine months in 2003 is still being shut down. On top of that, the Chapel has developed serious problems and several buildings need roofing work, and we need it yesterday.

Since joining the Board four years ago, I have come to see that we are a special organization. A small group, including staff, several very committed volunteers and our Board members, do the majority of the work that must be done. They act as carpenters, electricians, plumbers, painters, plasterers, accountants, pigeon-habitat controllers, structural engineers, property managers, gardeners, musicians, grounds and road crews, and even an Inn operator. They do this in addition to their regular Museum roles. We have a strong team but we need more help. The old buildings we are trying to preserve have not been properly maintained since the days of the Shakers, and it shows. While I had hoped to raise money from the federal government to stabilize the buildings, at this point that seems very unlikely. Thus it is up to us, not just to keep things going, but improve them. In fact it is essential that we improve our buildings in appearance, and more importantly, in structural integrity and security. Our appearance is the first impression visitors take away from the Museum.

Thus I am appealing to all of you to pitch in and help in any way you can. All we need is money, time, and effort. The improved appearance of the newly painted buildings is a clear example of what we can do. Since Rob Rudd left, Michael O'Connor simply doesn't have time to organize and conduct many workdays for volunteers. We need volunteers to organize and carry out projects using other volunteers. Painting the exterior of the Ministry House would be a good place to start, but countless other projects are also available, including everything from managing our rental property to placing a visual barrier around our dumpster.

If you possibly can, please pitch in and help. And lastly, thanks for everything you already do.

Sam Colbeck, President

Museum Acquisitions Update

Over the years, the Museum has added to its collections almost solely through donations. In recent years, the Museum has been given a monumental Enfield tailoring counter, an Alfred, ME spinning wheel, Enfield poplarware, oval boxes, and a rare Enfield rocking chair.



Enfield Shaker Worktable

Last year, an Enfield worktable was donated to the Museum. The table which is featured in a number of books on Shaker furniture, is a rare surviving example of the form and retains most of its original red paint. The worktable stayed in one family after its purchase from the Shakers. The donors, who wish to remain anonymous, wanted the table to "come home."

Additionally, we have received numerous historic photographs and post cards featuring the Enfield Shaker community members and buildings.

On a curatorial note, volunteers Jean Beard and Cynthia Bartlet are continuing to catalog the extensive and important Leavitt collection.

Center for Advanced Musical Studies

The Museum is proud to announce that we are working with the Center of Advanced Musical Studies (CAMS) to host their 2005 seminars. CAMS is a non-profit organization which offers advanced training for musicians in a variety of disciplines. Formerly located in Lake Placid, NY, the program's strength is the quality of its teaching staff, comprised of world-renowned musicians for each of the disciplines offered. The partnership between CAMS and the Museum will not only benefit each organization, but will be a tremendous cultural resource for Enfield and the Upper Valley.

Ed Carroll, director of CAMS reports they are hard at work toward making a series of music seminars and concerts a reality for the summer of 2005. During the past 12 months, they have:

- Completed a business plan, formed a NH non-profit corporation, and applied to the IRS for tax-exempt status.
- Published 10,000 brochures with the assistance of the California Institute of the Arts, created a webpage, and recorded sampler CDs.
- Engaged a national fund raising organization, submitted numerous grant proposals and initiated a local fund raising appeal which raised \$175,000 during the fall of 2004.
- Enlisted 17 internationally renowned musicians to serve on the faculty for 2005.

Participants in their seminars will play a vital role in forging our nation's cultural life in years to come. If you are interested in learning more please visit <<http://shoko.calarts.edu/~ecarroll>> or contact Edward Carroll at 603-643-9712 or edward.carroll@dartmouth.edu.

Thank you, George and Donna Butler!

For much of their adult lives George and Donna Butler have loved the Mary Keane Chapel and the 1932 Casavant organ that it holds. Acoustically the organ is beautifully matched to the chapel, and it has been fortuitously matched to the dedication and passion of these two musicians. During the last quarter century the organ could easily have languished, but George and Donna chose not to keep this extraordinary instrument their special secret. They recognized it as a treasure to be shared with fellow musicians and with audiences who love the great organ repertoire. In 1983 they organized and hosted the first of what would become a twenty-one year series of summer organ recitals. Local guest organists as well as musicians from the great metropolitan churches and cathedrals of the United States, Canada and Great Britain have graced us with their talent and musical insight. Rather than falling into disrepair, these concerts have generated the funds needed to allow Watersmith Organ Company of Hartford, Vt. to keep the instrument in fine condition.

At this summer's final concert George and Donna shared some thoughts for the future. "So now, the time has come to pause, to reflect, to remember what has taken place and rest. To consider the future and dream of new ways, new ideas, new formats of performance." At the heart of their message are these important words: "Music is to be shared."

As they take a much-deserved break from the work of organizing, performing in, and hosting the Mary Keane Chapel Organ Recital Series, we celebrate the gift of music that they have offered freely to the museum community and the Upper Valley. They remind us that at Chosen Vale our passions can be shared. Whether our attraction centers in its architecture, religious history, craft traditions, gardens, cultural geography, or its music, it is a place where dreams have been realized, and new projects can take flight. The Enfield Shaker Museum thanks George and Donna for their untiring commitment and generosity. Stabilizing the chapel's foundation, and making the portico safe for visitors looms large on the list of challenges that we face as a museum. But we know, in part through their commitment to the chapel and its organ, that it is a challenge we must meet.

Enfield Shaker Museum Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 7, 2004 2:00 pm

The business meeting will begin at 2:00 pm followed by a brief talk by architect Michael Gohl who is developing an historic structures report for several of our buildings along with a site plan. He will discuss the use and importance of an historic structures report and summarize his findings to date.

Museum Membership Update

Many of you have not received a membership renewal reminder this year, but we have not forgotten you. In order to streamline the renewal process, everyone is being switched to a June 1 to May 31 membership year. This calendar revision is at the request of many of our current members. You will receive a membership notice in May. Until then your current card will continue to be honored for Museum admission, class and Museum store discounts. Thanks for your patience.

With A Little Help From Our Friends



During the last week of October participants in Hulbert Outdoor Center's Service Elderhostel at the Enfield Shaker Museum will be welcomed to our historic site.

Elderhostel co-ordinator Deb Williams has organized an exciting week of classes, guided tours, hikes and performances that will familiarize the group with the museum, and introduce them to important aspects of Shaker life and culture. Presentations will be made by acting director Michael O'Connor, herbalist Happy Griffiths, the Enfield Shaker Singers, and George and Donna Butler. Throughout the week participants will also have the opportunity to "put their hands to work", contributing their skills and energies to a variety of work projects that directly benefit the museum.

The service elderhostel is offered each year in October and April. Participants reside at the Great Stone Dwelling for the week. They also spend a day touring Canterbury Shaker Village. For more information about this important work/study program contact the museum or deb_williams@alohafoundation.org.

Upcoming Museum Programs

Dried Flower and Herb Wreath Workshop

Sunday, November 7, 2004 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Create a lovely wreath from the everlasting flowers and herbs grown in the Museum's Herb Gardens. Take home a beautiful finished wreath (approx. 15" diameter). All materials supplied. Please bring scissors or small clippers. Instructor: Happy Griffiths, Museum Herbalist. Fee \$45.00/\$41.00 Museum Members.

Medicinal Herbs Workshop

Sunday, November 21, 2004 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

With winter fast approaching there is much interest in the healing herbs that are grown in our garden and found in the wild. Examine a number of familiar and not so familiar herbs to use as nature's pharmacy. Teas, tinctures, oils, poultices and a healing salve will be made. Take home samples, charts and recipes. Instructor: Happy Griffiths, Museum Herbalist. Fee \$45.00/\$41.00 Museum Members.

Wreath Sale in the Museum Store

Sunday, December 5, 2004 Noon to 4:00 pm

Herbalist Happy Griffiths will be selling evergreen wreaths, both plain and decorated, in the Museum Store. Decorated wreaths will be made to order with your choice of selected dried flowers, pine cones, and ribbon. Plain wreaths - \$10.00 each and decorated wreaths - \$15.00 each.

Holiday Shopping? Think Museum Store!

The Museum Store has a wonderful range of gifts that will be particularly meaningful to everyone on your list. Most items are locally made in the Shaker aesthetic, many are one of a kind. What better remembrance of the Upper Valley and Enfield's Shaker heritage. Members receive a 10% discount, **and** you will be supporting the Enfield Shaker Museum, as all store profits directly benefit the ESM!

We will be open most Fridays (call ahead or ring the doorbell), and every Saturday (10 - 4) and Sunday (12 - 4).

SPECIAL – Get a head start on your shopping and save even more. Take **20%** off all your purchases (except Shaker Workshops furniture) Thanksgiving weekend (Nov. 26 - 28), during the Custom Wreath Sale (Dec. 5), and Cookie Fair Day (Dec. 12).

Some NEW gift ideas:

- For the men on your list, pure silk ties designed for the Museum with a pattern of Shaker chairs
- Tin ornaments and tree-toppers made here at the Museum
- Amazing hand-made folk art dolls from Pig Pen Hill
- Frye's Measure Mill specialty Shaker-style boxes, including game boxes, potpourri boxes, candleboxes, glass cruet and herb jar carriers
- Bird's eye maple oval boxes from Canterbury, NH
- Red barn birdhouses
- Museum-label herbal soaps and lotions

And of course:

- One of a kind quilted hangings
- Collectors' quality Shaker-style baskets
- A plethora of Shaker books and CDs
- And ESM ballcaps, tennis visors, t-shirts, mugs, key chains, etc. etc.

Remember, we also offer gift certificates, good in the Museum Store or for ESM workshops.

Christmas Cookie Fair

Sunday, December 12, 2004. 1:00 pm.

An annual favorite! Select from more than 100 different varieties of homemade cookies. All cookies sold by the pound. Come early, we often sell out. If you are willing to bake cookies to help with this important fundraiser, call the Museum at (603)632-4346.

December is Enfield Appreciation Month

Admission to the Museum is free for residents of Enfield, NH during the entire month of December. Bring an ID to verify residency.

The Friends' Quarterly is a publication of the Enfield Shaker Museum.

The Enfield Shaker Museum

24 Caleb Dyer Lane
Enfield, NH 03748

www.shakermuseum.org
chosen.vale@valley.net
(603) 632-4346

Board of Trustees:

Richard Blodgett
Caroline Cannon
Dr. Samuel Colbeck
Rob Emlen
Karen Hambleton
Keith Oppenneer
Stephen Powell

Museum Staff:

Michael O'Connor
Suzanne Hinman
Happy Griffiths, Herbalist

Newsletter Editor:

Carolyn Smith



01430+8001

Mr. Richard Dabrowski
PO Box 8001
Ashburnham, MA 01430-8001

Enfield Shaker Museum
24 Caleb Dyer Lane
Enfield, New Hampshire 03748
(603) 632-4346

