

The Friends'



Quarterly

A publication of the Enfield Shaker Museum

Archeological Excavations at Shaker Sites

By David R. Starbuck, Ph.D.

Archeological excavations have now been conducted at most of the Shaker communities in the eastern U.S. I am fortunate to have participated in "Shaker Archeology" since 1978, having directed excavations at Canterbury Shaker Village from 1978 through 2002 and at Hancock Shaker Village in 1983 and 1984. The work in Canterbury was part of a long-term preservation effort including many years of surface documentation, interviewing, archival research, and the preparation of historic structure reports for all of the still-standing Shaker buildings.

Even before our work began in Canterbury, professional archeology was conducted at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, by Dr. Donald Janzen, who dug the site of a grist mill on Shawnee Run, beginning in 1975. He was later succeeded by Dr. Kim McBride of the University of Kentucky, who has been holding summer archeology field schools at a variety of sites at Pleasant Hill since 1980. Elsewhere, archeology has been used to interpret – or to rescue – sites at Sabbathday Lake, Maine; New Lebanon, New York; Enfield, Connecticut; Watervliet, New York; Watervliet, Ohio, and elsewhere.

My early projects at Canterbury focused on mapping the surface of hundreds of acres of landscape and digging only when sites were threatened by the construction of utility lines or by land-clearing activities. Beginning in 1994 we began to concentrate on more explicitly "research-oriented" digs, examining some of the popular beliefs about the Shakers as we recovered artifacts from Shaker dumps, crawlspaces and cellar holes. We dug in mill areas, in the cellar of a Church Family garden barn, in the foundations of two blacksmith shops, in a ramp from the Church Family cow barn, an enormous dump that filled the original Church Family hog house, and even inside a well outside the Church Family trustees' office. All of this was perilous territory, indeed, because it was difficult to report our findings without encountering responses from those who believed that no Shaker community could possibly contain evidence for the items we found, including sometimes-banned substances such as tobacco and alcohol. Still, these are precisely the types of behavior that are routinely studied by archeologists when approaching any community, whether explicitly religious or not.

After all, most available Shaker documents have been examined over and over, and very few new primary documents will ever be encountered by scholars. Archeology, on the other hand, has the potential to recover a seemingly endless supply of new source materials – artifacts – that are uniquely suited to studying change. The Shakers were not frozen in time, positioned in the 19th century in a world where they denied themselves any "extras," made everything themselves, and lived a life that was "plain and simple." Shaker life has forever been evolving. Fortunately, archeology has



Excavations at Canterbury Shaker Village, 1994, unearthing the Church Family Garden Barn.

the potential to examine life at the very beginning of Shakerism – when religious fervor was so very strong – and then later, as Shakers matured in their faith; and still later, as they are today. Artifacts are able to provide insights into relative prosperity, consumption patterns, wealth differences from Family to Family, and to examine the degree to which Shakers made their own things, versus buying from the outside world. Artifacts also have the potential to document industries for which little primary documentation has survived: Unfinished products, wasters, molds and machine parts

all have the capacity to bring forgotten industries back to life. Among the findings during excavations in Canterbury and elsewhere, archeologists have been able to demonstrate that the Shakers were really quite neat in their habits, not leaving behind a lot of surface scatter. Instead, most Shaker artifacts have been found in cellar holes (plentiful since buildings were often moved), in crawlspaces under buildings, in barn ramps, and in wells.

In examining archeology conducted at other Shaker communities, there are several arguments for considering archeology at the Enfield Shaker Museum. For example, archeology can help to determine where buildings and fences used to stand; it can help to find debris from various crafts and industries that may be described in new exhibits; and ultimately the Shaker dumps will tell us which behaviors were or were not allowed. And archeology always is required prior to the construction of modern utility lines. Sites often need to be salvaged before water, electrical or gas lines are placed through each former Shaker community.

Archeology invariably provides artifacts for exhibits, new stories for the telling, and opportunities for volunteers and college students who really want a hands-on involvement with the past. The Enfield Shaker Museum has a wonderful wealth of mill sites, Shaker dumps created when crafts went out of business, potential post molds that may reveal where fence lines once ran, and filled-in cellar holes that may contain much-needed exhibit materials. As with many other Shaker villages, perhaps the time is fast approaching when archeology will have a useful role to play at the Enfield Shaker Museum!

David Starbuck is Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology at Plymouth State University, where he was given the Distinguished Scholarship Award in 2008. He received his Bachelors Degree in Anthropology at the University of Rochester, and his Master's Degree and Ph.D. at Yale University. He has published many articles and books on the Shakers. He is editor of The New Hampshire Archeological Society, newsletter editor for the New England Chapters of the Society for Industrial Archeology, and the editor of the Council for Northeast Historical Archeology.

Museum News

Shaker Craftspeople Demonstrated at the Sunapee Craft Fair



Eight craftspeople from the two New Hampshire Shaker villages demonstrated together on the opening weekend of the 75th Anniversary of the Sunapee Craft Fair, the oldest craft fair in the U.S. As the demonstrators explained the connection between craftsmanship and the Shakers' lifestyle, visitors were drawn into the Shaker "world." These outreach programs often result in introducing new visitors to our museums. The crafts were varied and engaging: Canterbury's print shop was represented by Jennifer and Kristen Gingris, who used their hand printing presses and type to instruct people how to set type and print their names on small cards. Textile crafts were represented by Enfield's Sue Hammond doing rug hooking, and Canterbury's Sarah Dunham spinning on a double-pedaled wheel. Enfield's Barbara Brady (left) showed how to tape a Shaker chair, and Judy Balyeat caned a chair. (Enfield Shaker cane-seated chairs are considered to be one of the most beautiful types of Shaker chairs.) Clinton Pitts brought his antique tinsmithing equipment, and Galen Beale demonstrated making poplarware.

Barbara Beeler represented Shaker woodworking in her demonstration of oval box making. It is clear from the interest of the crowds that the historic crafts demonstrated by the volunteers from the Canterbury and Enfield Shaker Villages are still of great interest.

Galen Beale

Annual Meeting Planned for Sunday, November 2, 2:00 p.m.

Members, mark your calendars! You are invited to the Museum's Annual Meeting, when we will review past achievements and share our vision for the future. As members, you have the benefit and privilege of voting on the Museum's governance at this meeting. Refreshments will be served after the meeting. Free admission.

Volunteers Needed!

Do you have a special skill you would like to share with the Museum? Do you have an interest you would like to explore here? If so, don't be shy—give us a call! We are looking for talented people like you who have a few hours to spare. Here are a few examples of activities that need volunteers:

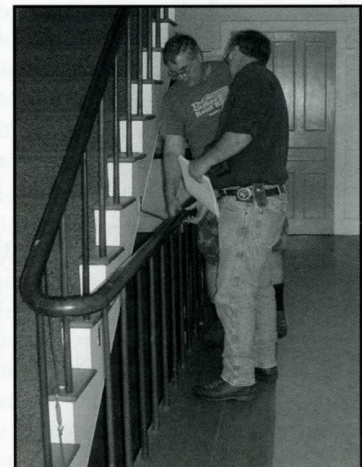
- Update the Museum's scrapbook a few hours per week
- Give tours a few hours per week
- Assist with the Harvest Festival, Saturday, October 4

Stone Mill Interior Renovations Made

Property Manager Tom Boswell, with the help of Wayne Eshelman and the Elderhostel, made several renovations to the Stone Mill last April. The work included scraping and replastering the walls, repainting parts of the ceiling, and adding energy-saving lights. Tom Boswell also patched a hole in the roof. The Exhibit Committee, led by Galen Beale, installed interpretive materials in August. With these improvements, the building is open daily as part of the tour. Several weddings and two concerts were held there this summer.

Preservation of the Stone Dwelling Staircases Addressed

The 1841 Great Stone Dwelling was built with the intent of housing 100 Shaker Brethren and Sisters. Even today, with so many visitors and meetings at the Museum, the east and west staircases are in constant use. Over the years many attempts have been made to stabilize them, but these efforts have since failed. When approached to make a donation to the Capital Campaign, Museum friend Walter Paine designated his gift to the preservation of the staircases. Property Manager Tom Boswell (in the photo, left) is seeking estimates for this work and will present the conclusions to the Preservation Planning Committee, with final approval by the board of trustees.



Fall 2008 Programs

Saturday, September 13, 6:30 p.m.

Shaker Harvest Dinner

Enjoy an elegant dinner in the Great Stone Dwelling, the Shakers' greatest architectural achievement. Designed by Ammi Burnham Young (later the architect for the U.S. Treasury), and completed in 1841, the "stone house" captures many Shaker ideals. Executive Chef Betsy Oppenheer's menu will be corn chowder, curried sweet potato salad, lemon poppy seed sour cream muffins, ham croquettes with egg mustard sauce, Hancock tomato pudding, Shaker sweet garden peas and gingerbread with lemon sauce. \$30/member and \$35/non-member, includes two glasses of complimentary wine. Register by Sept. 10.



Saturday, October 4, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Harvest Festival

Enjoy hands-on activities for the whole family! Take a horse-drawn wagon ride - hunt for pennies in a haystack! Make your own cider, churn butter and crank your own ice cream! Other traditional hands-on activities include crafts and animals. Our harvest lunch includes Eldress Bertha's Rosewater Apple Pie! Admission includes tour of the museum and gardens. Adults \$7.50, children ages 6-18, \$3. Members admitted free.



Saturday, October 25, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Shaker Chair Weaving Workshop

Artisan Barbara Brady will teach you how to tape a chair with fabric Shaker tape. Your chair should be in good condition and finished. Shaker tape - in a beautiful array of colors - is for sale in the Museum Store. Registration is limited. \$35/member; \$40/non-member.

Friday, November 7, 6:30 p.m.

Taste of the Upper Valley

Join us for an evening of food, fun and festivities! Caterers and restaurants from the Upper Valley will offer "signature" appetizers, entrees and desserts. A brief auction, featuring auctioneer Josh Steenburgh, will highlight Upper Valley goods and services. A \$50 per person admission fee supports the Museum and includes complimentary wine and non-alcoholic beverages. Don't miss the action! Please reserve your place by Nov. 5.



Staff from Guzanox Mexican Restaurant and Alpborn Bistro welcome guests at last year's event.

Saturday, December 6, 6:30 p.m.

Holiday Dinner by Candlelight



Enjoy a candlelit dinner for the holidays in the Great Stone Dwelling. Executive Chef Betsy Oppenheer's menu will be cranberry bean soup, chilled apple slaw with cranberry orange pecan dressing, Believer's Bread, Prime Roast, Shaker parsnips, broccoli with red peppers, and chocolate whipped cream roll. Betsy is an award-winning member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals and has made many national TV appearances. She just returned from Russia, where she was invited to advise on improved breadmaking and production. Admission of \$35/member and \$40/non-member includes complimentary wine. Register by Dec. 3. ***Come early for some wassail and do your holiday shopping in our expanded new gift gallery!***

Sunday, December 14, 1:00 p.m.

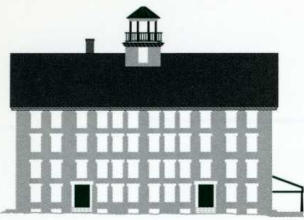
Cookie Fair

Select from 100 varieties of homemade cookies, festively arranged for the season! Sold by the pound. Free admission. We'll hold this event regardless of rain, snow or shine!

Free admission to all Town of Enfield residents in December!

The Museum and Store will be open 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday and 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. Sunday. The Museum will be closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1st.





Enfield Shaker Museum

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Enfield Shaker Museum's Capital Campaign Projects Continue



*Capital Campaign Honorary Co-Chairs
Happy and Clark Griffiths*

We are proud to announce that Museum donors have more than matched the Butler Foundation's challenge to raise \$35,000 by August 1, 2008. Our generous friends, in fact, donated a total of \$37,497. These combined gifts covered the cost of new electrical wiring for the basement of the Great Stone Dwelling, a project judged by the board to be a high priority. With this funding, we were able to bring the wiring up to code and upgrade the sprinkler system and other life safety measures. Many thanks to Clara W. Butler, to her daughter Barbara Butler, and to the other trustees of the Butler Foundation for presenting this opportunity to us.

Do you have a favorite window in the Great Stone Dwelling? Consider sponsoring one and helping further the Museum's Capital Campaign! The Development Committee is launching an "Adopt-a-Window" Campaign this fall. You may select from 152 windows to adopt with a contribution of \$500 or more apiece. Our goal is to raise \$76,000 to fund the installation of new storm windows for the Great Stone Dwelling. The Preservation Planning Committee has ensured that the methods and materials meet the Federal standards for historic preservation. The Finance Committee and the board have approved the project budget, so now we are set to go! The work will include removing the old storm windows, repairing the outer wooden frame of the original windows, and re-painting them with the historic dark green color. The aluminum trim of the new storm windows will also match this dark green color. The new storms will not only provide additional energy conservation, but they will also protect the original fabric of the building. Sign up today!