

The Friends' Quarterly

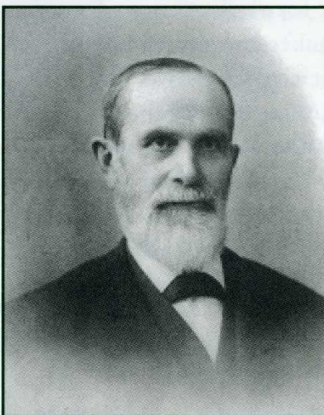


A Newsletter from the Enfield Shaker Museum

Henry Cumings and the Public Press

By Mary Ann Haagen

When Henry Cumings left the Shakers in 1881 his community was devastated. He had grown to manhood as an Enfield Shaker and was deeply loved and respected. For over twenty years he had carried the banner of the faith. As Elder of the North Family it was his job to gather souls to a Shaker life. He was the public voice of the Society, preaching on Sundays in the Shaker meetinghouse, responding to written inquiries for membership, and counseling, guiding and encouraging those who were trying the life. The idea that he would leave his Shaker family at the age of 47, to marry a Shaker Sister no less, was almost unbelievable.



Henry Cumings, 1834-1913.
Image from the collection of the
Enfield Public Library.

Two years earlier the regional paper The Granite State Free Press had gotten wind of a possible "scandal" brewing. The write-up went so far as to suggest that:

"There is evidently need of a great moral reformation among our neighbors across the lake. Interesting developments in regard to some of the inside life of the Shakers are likely to be made before long, and if their preaching and practicing do not better agree as far as some in high positions are concerned, it will be well for them to 'step down and out.'"

The Shakers were outraged by what they considered an unfounded accusation being circulated in the press. Usually circumspect about responding to gossip, the community weighed in.

"Now we should consider such innuendoes as beneath notice, only our silence might be construed into acknowledging that there was some truth in the insinuations. This we deny."

For weeks the newspaper published what the community must have considered a regrettable series of written exchanges between friends and foes of Shakerism. Detractors had more to say than their friends.

"Personally we have much respect for many of the Shakers, as men and women, but for their doctrine, which they admit would not do for the world to embrace, we see nothing in the teachings of the Bible or nature to uphold, and in the light of recent as well as former 'cases' it would be better that the institution should more rapidly than now die out as an institution for moral and religious instruction."

When Henry Cumings did in fact leave the society two years later the community kept its own counsel, and suffered the loss in silence.

Henry, on the other hand, gave an interview to the Granite State Free Press. It was published under the headline "Elder Henry Cummings Renounces Shakerism!" This willingness to share his story with the press would continue for the rest of Henry's life. Much of what we know about his transition to life "in the world" comes from the local newspapers. "Enfield Notes" in both the Granite State Free Press and The Enfield Advocate allow us to follow his employment history after leaving the Shakers, his hopes of starting a new life in Grand Haven, Michigan, his decision to return to the Upper Valley, and many details of his and wife Arabella's married life in Enfield, NH. Though they never had children they were host to "fresh air" kids. Arabella was responsible for gathering Christmas gifts for all the children of the town. They were strong supporters of women's suffrage, and participants in the fellowship of the Methodist Church. Henry kept hens and planted a large garden. He reported his successes as community news.

"Oct 18, 1895: Henry Cumings has kept an account of the income of 13 hens. They laid in 11 1/2 months, 158 dozen eggs which he sold for \$32.34, an average of 146 eggs for each hen and netting after paying for all food, \$1.55 to each hen. He also reports as having picked 21 pumpkins from one vine."

The couple shared information about their houseguests, their trips to visit relatives and their vacations.

York Beach, ME July 26, 1897

We thought you might like to know how we were enjoying the beach. Well, we find York Beach a very nice place to spend a vacation. The air is clear, cool and refreshing. There are to be had boats for sailing and fishing, teams for driving, etc. We went fishing one day and Mrs. Cumings caught three fish that weighed about 4 lbs each and drew one partly up that she estimates that must have weighed at least 25 to 30 lbs as it broke the cod line and so got away. The ocean in its grandeur reminds one of the Almighty Power of its maker and ruler. Like Niagara it never ceases its action and one never tires of watching and listening to its mighty voice.

Hastily,
Henry Cumings

(Continued on page 2.)

(Continued from page 1)

Henry provided progress reports on the construction of their new home that they would call "Sunny Side". His campaign for a new public library in Enfield was closely followed in the local press. In 1906 the Cumings' twenty-fifth wedding anniversary became the occasion for a big story in the Boston Herald under the Headline "Loved as Shakers, Wedded 25 Years." In case anyone missed the Shaker connection, sub-headlines in bold print included **"Renunciation of the Faith Caused a Great Shock in Shakers"** and **"Their Love Making Was Secret: Told of Leaving at Meeting."**

Whatever the Shakers response to this rehash of Henry's apostasy and marriage, they were supportive of his use of the public press to put forward a series of articles on Shakerism. Between 1904 and 1913 he wrote essays on various aspects of Shaker communal life, history, theology, and business relationships. In them we have our most important single record of the Shaker Society at Enfield, and its impact on the larger Upper Valley community. Unlike many other apostates who were bitter about their experience as Shakers, Henry fully embraced life "in the world" without needing to vilify or discredit his Shaker experience. He was an historian by nature. Having maintained a cordial and trusting relationship with the Shakers, he had access to their records and documents when he needed information that went beyond his personal experience. His most moving accounts are of the men and the work he knew so well.

Mary Ann Haagen Haagen is a former trustee of the Museum and chairs the Development Committee. She conducted the research and wrote the text for the exhibit, "Cumings: A Family Transformed by Shakerism," now on view at the Museum.

Museum Nears its \$1.1 Million Capital Campaign Goal for the Great Stone Dwelling

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This list, which includes the Adopt-A-Window Campaign, was presented at the Capital Campaign Cookout on August 22. We thank these donors for their support. We still must raise approximately \$160,000 to reach our \$1.1 million goal to fund work on the main roof, porch roof, cornice trim, lighting, landscaping and stair rails spanning the upper stories. A full report will be presented at the Annual Meeting on November 1.

(Continued page 6.)

Fall Programs and Events

Daily: Guided tours of the Great Stone Dwelling are held Monday - Saturday, beginning at 10 a.m. and on Sundays, beginning at 12 noon. Self-guided tours of the site and use of the trails are also offered.

Weekly: The **Enfield Farmers' Market** continues on Wednesdays, from 4 to 7 p.m., through October 7. On those days, the Great Stone Dwelling first floor will be open until 7 p.m. **Herb Walks**, given by Museum Herbalist Happy Griffiths, are held each Thursday at 11 a.m., through September 17.

Sat. Sept. 26, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Wood's Tea Company Concert and Dinner



Join us for a concert and light supper with the Wood's Tea Company in the 1849 Stone Mill. The four-piece band gives a lusty performance of Celtic tunes, sea shanties and folk songs peppered with their dry Vermont wit. The WTC has toured nationwide, including the Lincoln Center, Chautauqua Institute and college campuses, and has appeared on National Public Radio. The quartet is a recipient of the Irish Heritage Foundation's Outstanding Innovations Award. \$10/Members; \$15/non-members; \$5/child under age 12. A light supper, at 6:30 p.m., is \$15. *Sponsored by Morin Contracting Services.*

Friday, October 9, 6:30 p.m.

Fall Foliage Harvest Dinner

Start off Columbus Day weekend with a Fall Foliage Celebration and Harvest Dinner in the 1849 Great Stone Dwelling! Choose either a traditional Shaker Baked Chicken Breast or Shrimp Oregano for the entrée, followed by a garden salad, fresh vegetables, vegetable broth and tortellini soup, and Shaker Fall Fruit Cobbler for dessert. All for only \$35/Member and \$40/non-member.

Saturday, October 10, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Harvest Festival

Enjoy a day of family fun! Take part in horse-drawn wagon rides, pony rides and crafts – make candles, butter, cider, ice cream, cookies, bird feeders, bookmarks, cornhusk dolls and pint-sized scarecrows! Storyteller Mary Lyn Ray will read from one of her popular books. Our Harvest Lunch includes Eldress Bertha's rosewater apple pie. Admission is \$7.50/adult, \$3/child aged 6-18 and includes a tour of the site. (Free to members and children under aged six.) *Sponsored by Retail Control Systems.*



Friday - Saturday, October 9-10:

Make it a Fall Foliage Weekend!

Begin Columbus Day weekend with our Harvest Dinner on Friday and spend Saturday at the Museum. Our Fall Foliage Weekend packages are \$149/person, including two nights in the Great Stone Dwelling, dinner, two breakfasts, lunch and admission to the Harvest Festival.

October 18-22

Service Alumni Week



In the Shaker tradition, we offer this program to anyone who wishes to put their "hands to work and hearts to God" at the Museum. Although this is not an official Elderhostel program, the format is similar, with work projects that match your interests and skills. Enjoy delicious meals and choose from a variety of work activities and educational programs. Our projects will include woodworking, sewing, gardening, light building maintenance and office work. This is a great opportunity to be involved in a significant way and to help the Museum where it is needed most! Deb Williams, who leads our Service Elderhostel programs, will be a consultant, but you do not have to be affiliated with Elderhostel to sign

up for this Museum program. Register with a friend! Admission is \$500/person, including all programs, meals and room, double occupancy; \$625/person, single supplement.

For reservations, contact the office at (603) 632-4346 or info@shakermuseum.org.

More Fall Programs and Events

Saturday, October 24, 9:00 a.m.

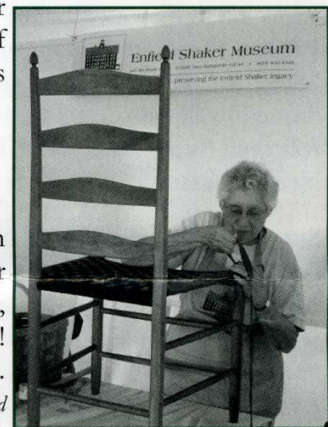
Food for Thought: A Culinary History Symposium

Nationally known panelists and speakers will present their ideas and experiences in this study of the past through food. Sandra Oliver, editor of *Food History News* and author of *Saltwater Foodways: New Englanders and their Food at Sea*, will speak on "Every Dish Has a Past: Doing a Recipe's Genealogy." Anne Mendelson, the author of *Milk, The Surprising Story of Milk Through the Ages* and *Stand Facing the Stove: The Story of the Women Who Gave America The Joy of Cooking*, will speak on "Back to the Future with Small Scale Dairy Farming." Mendelson is the 2007 recipient of the Sophie Coe Prize, one of the most prestigious in the study of culinary history. John Porter, co-author of *The History and Economics of the New Hampshire Dairy Industry*, will moderate a group of distinguished panelists. The program includes a tour, vendor booths, breakfast, lunch and a Growers' Reception featuring wines and cheeses. A NH Grower's Dinner will follow. \$75/day includes all activities except the dinner, which is \$40/symposium registrant, \$45/Museum member, \$50/non-members. Enhance your experience with an overnight stay in the 1841 Great Stone Dwelling: \$85-\$125 for single and double occupancy, includes breakfast. Call (603) 632-4346 info@shakermuseum.org for reservations.

Saturday, October 24, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Chair Tape Weaving Workshop

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



Friday, October 30, 7:00 p.m.

Puppet Show: Legend of Sleepy Hollow

The PuppeTree presents a program based on Washington Irving's classic story, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, for "children" of all ages! Held in the Great Stone Dwelling, the program combines art, history, science and laughter! You will be spellbound by the dreamlike performance. \$5/adult; \$2.50/child. Children under aged 3, free. Funded in part by the New England Foundation for the Arts, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the NH State Council on the Arts.

Sunday, November 1, 2:00 p.m.

Annual Meeting for Members

Members, 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. The Development Committee will report on the projects of our \$1.1 Capital Campaign. Refreshments will be served after the meeting. Free admission.

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

Taste of the Upper Valley

Join us for an evening of food, fun and festivities! Sample classic appetizers, entrees and desserts from the Upper Valley's top restaurants and caterers of fine food. Based on past years, we expect the participants will include Blood's Catering & Party Rental, Duck Soup Catering, Gusanoz Mexican Restaurant, Margaritas Mexican Restaurant, The Norwich Inn, Mickey's Roadside Café, Peter Christian's Tavern, Screwie Lewiez Ristorante and 5 Olde Nugget Alley Restaurant. Complimentary wines and non-alcoholic beverages will be served. A Live Auction, emceed by the entertaining Leigh Webb, will include Upper Valley art, handcrafted items, catered meals, overnight stays, donated services, gift certificates, jewelry and tickets to events. The whole experience is only \$50 per person!



For reservations, call (603) 632-4346 or email info@shakermuseum.org.

Programs for the Holidays

Sunday, November 15, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Natural & Sustainable Gifts For the Holiday

Museum Herbalist Happy Griffiths will prepare herb rubs, sauces and tea blends. She will discuss how to grow and preserve your favorite herbs and will demonstrate how to make wonderful gifts such as a peppermint foot balm, natural cosmetics, and an anti-microbial cleaning agent. Everyone will take home samples, recipes and information sheets. Members \$45; Non-members \$50.

Thursday, November 26, noon and 1:30 p.m.

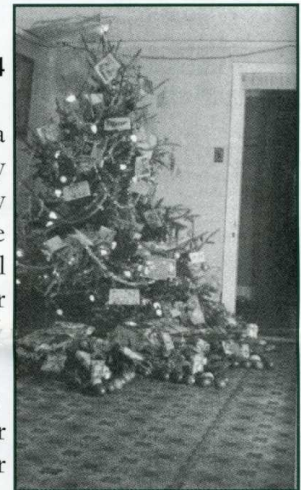
Thanksgiving Dinner



Create a special memory with your family and enjoy a Thanksgiving Dinner at the Museum in the Shaker tradition. The menu includes curried pumpkin soup, rolls, salad, turkey, apple sausage dressing, pan gravy, fresh cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, butternut squash, green beans, apple crisp and pumpkin pie with vanilla ice cream. Coffee, soda and two glasses of complimentary wine are included. Members \$35, non-members \$40, children under 12 are \$12. Reserve by November 24.

December 1 – 24 Festival of Trees

In the 20th century, the Shakers decorated a tree for the holidays. This year, the Great Stone Dwelling will have a tree in every dwelling room! Businesses are encouraged to sponsor a tree, which they may decorate or encourage a nonprofit organization, school or family to decorate. Vote for your favorite tree in the children's and adult categories. The two winners will each receive a \$100 prize! The winners will be announced on Sunday, December 20, at noon. Admission is \$5; members and Enfield residents are admitted for free.



Saturday, December 5, Noon – 5:30 p.m.

Holiday Open House

Stop by at our holiday celebration! The Great Stone Dwelling will be decorated for the holidays. Our Museum Store will feature locally handcrafted items. Author Mary Lyn Ray will provide storytelling. Enjoy wassail, music and more! \$5 admission; members and Enfield residents are admitted for free.

Saturday, December 5, 6:30 p.m.

Holiday Dinner by Candlelight



Enjoy a candlelit dinner for the holidays in the 1841 Great Stone Dwelling. Museum Executive Chef Betsy Oppenheimer is an award-winning member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals and has made many national TV appearances. This will be her last dinner here. Her menu: Red Pepper Cream Soup, Winter Green Fruit Salad, Cheese Biscuits, Shrimp and Grits Boursin, Green Beans Sautéed Mushrooms and Caramel Chocolate Torte. Betsy is an award-winning member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals and has made many national TV appearances. Sign up today! \$35/member; \$40/non-member, includes complimentary wine. Register by December 2. *Come early for some wassail and do your holiday shopping in our Museum Store!*

Sunday, December 13, 1:00 p.m.

Cookie Fair

Select from 100 different varieties of homemade cookies – festively arranged for the season! Sold by the pound. (Free admission.)



As a courtesy to our neighbors, Enfield residents will have free admission to the Museum during the month of December. The Museum will be closed December 25. For reservations, contact the office at (603) 632-4346 or info@shakermuseum.org.

(Continued from page 2)

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"Foundation" Donors \$5 to \$499

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Enfield Shaker Museum Welcomes Office Manager Patricia Loven

"We are pleased to announce that Patricia Loven has accepted our invitation to join the staff as the Office Manager," said Executive Director Mary Boswell. "Patricia has many skills and much experience that will fit the Museum's needs," she added.

Patricia began her new responsibilities as the Office Manager on August 8. She has replaced Kami Stone, who left due to family obligations, but continues to volunteer at the Museum.

As the Office Manager, Patricia oversees the daily management and scheduling of the volunteers and staff. She assists the bookkeeper in creating reports for the committees and trustees.

"I am very excited to begin my new career with the Enfield Shaker Museum, and I see great things for its future," Patricia said.

Patricia has many years of management, retail and educational programming experience. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Arcadia University and has studied abroad. She has worked at Canterbury Shaker Village, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Everhart Museum of Natural History, Science, and Art. She is from Pennsylvania and now lives in the Upper Valley region of New Hampshire.

Shaker Workshops Contributes to the Capital Campaign Purchase a Drawer!

Our Capital Campaign has so far focused on practical improvements such as heating and wiring, but Shaker Workshops is offering a far more exciting project at this final stage. Dick Dabrowski, President of Shaker Workshops, has been affiliated with the Museum since its founding in 1986 and has long dreamed of restoring the built-in cabinets in the Great Stone Dwelling. As a gift to the Museum, he will have Guy Biechele, Shaker Workshops Production Manager and professional woodworker, reproduce 50 missing drawers for several built-in cabinets. The work will meet historic preservation standards. To support the Capital Campaign, individuals may donate \$250 for each installation. They will be able to have a name of their choice inscribed at the base of the drawer they sponsor. The Capital Campaign will formally close at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 1st.



Dick Dabrowski (center) demonstrates how the new drawers will fit into the original built-in cabinets. With him are, left from right: Guy Biechele; Capital Campaign Co-Chair Clark Griffiths and Development Committee Chair Mary Ann Haagen.

- ☐ Yes! I wish to purchase a drawer for installation in a built-in cabinet in the Great Stone Dwelling.

☐ My check, in the amount of \$____, for ____ drawer(s), payable to Enfield Shaker Museum, is enclosed.

☐ I wish to charge this on my credit card.
 My credit card #: _____ (VISA, MasterCard or Discover)
 Expiration Date: _____
 My signature: _____

Please cut out and mail to: Enfield Shaker Museum, 447 NH Route 4A, Enfield, NH 03748
 Or call (603) 632-4346 for your order. *Thank you!*



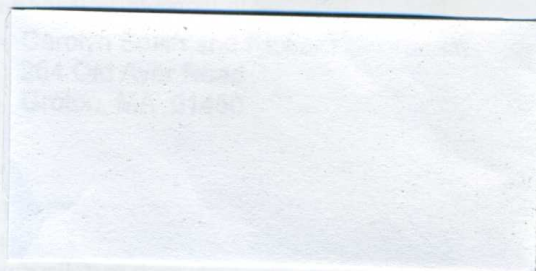
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HOLIDAY GIFTS

It's almost that time of year to begin your holiday shopping, so stop by the Museum to enjoy our local artisan gifts for your family, friends, and/or co-workers. Special items include colorful and beautifully crafted hand-knitted hats and mittens, unique note cards, oval boxes, music boxes, herbal soaps, candles and much more! The Museum Gift Shop opens at 10 a.m. Monday—Saturday, and at noon on Sunday. Call (603) 632-4346 or email info@shakermuseum.org.