

The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from The Museum at Lower Shaker Village

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The Mob at Enfield - Part I

by Elizabeth A. DeWolfe

Beth deWolfe earned her PhD in American and New England Studies from Boston University. She teaches at the University of New England, Portland, Me, and is currently working on a book about Mary Marshall Dyer and Shaker apostasy. She lives in Alfred, Maine, with her husband Scott, who is a dealer in Shaker books and ephemera.

For five days in May 1818, a mob set fear into the hearts of the Enfield, New Hampshire, Shakers. This little known confrontation, provoked by two women whose husbands and children were with the Enfield Shakers, rallied public opinion against the Shakers and their way of life. In addition to very real dangers from physical violence, the Shakers were publicly accused of immoral deeds and charged with

conduct "subversive to Christian morality," and "detrimental to the well-being of society."

Shaker Believers were targets of public scorn and collective violence from their earliest days in post-Revolutionary New England. From harassing mobs that stoned and assaulted founder Ann Lee and her followers on their proselytizing journey, to an enormous mob of more than 500 that descended on the Shaker community in Union Village, Ohio, the non-believing public had used mob activity in attempts to force Shakers to act more in line with societal norms.

At issue in Enfield were the rights of wives whose husbands and children were members of the Shaker religious sect. Mary Dyer and Eunice Chapman were outspoken in

arousing public opinion against the Shakers. They forced Enfield into the forefront of legal controversy by demanding support from their husbands who were living with the Shakers, and demanding access to or release of their Shaker-held children. Gaining widespread attention from the local community, this conflict brought notoriety to the Shakers, publicly questioned their claims to retain rights to children, and resulted in an eventual change to New Hampshire divorce law.

In the broadest view, the Shakers and the surrounding townspeople were one large community. They shared a geographic location, history, business relationships, and kin connections, for the Shakers were largely converts from the local area.

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SPRING FORUM APRIL 12 "SHAKER JOINERY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE"

Have you ever found yourself wondering what characteristics make a piece of furniture "Shaker"? Did you marvel at the red-painted Enfield blanket chest that *Art & Antiques* magazine recently chose as one of its "Top 100 Treasures of 1996"? Would you like to know more about collecting or appreciating the buildings and furniture made by the Shakers of Enfield and Canterbury, New Hampshire?

Come to the Museum's Spring Forum on Saturday, April 12, and get some answers. Three recognized experts will discuss "Shaker Joinery in New Hampshire" in a day-long presentation that will include lectures, a diagnostic workshop, and walking tours of the Village and Dana Robes Wood Craftsmen.

Presenters will be Scott T. Swank, Director of Canterbury Shaker Village, Canterbury, N.H., Jean M. Burks, Curator of Decorative Arts, Shelburne Museum, Shelburne, Vt, and co-author with Timothy D. Rieman of *The Complete Book of Shaker Furniture*, and Philip Zea, Deputy Director and Curator of Historic Deerfield, Inc., Deerfield, Mass., who, as a Museum trustee, conceived and organized this conference. Registration of \$70 (\$60 for Museum members) includes lunch and all events from 9 am to 4:30 pm. To register or for more information, call the Museum office.



Enfield or Canterbury, NH, blanket chest.

Photo courtesy of Skinner, Inc.

Sage Thoughts

by Happy Griffiths

Thyme - The Herb of the Year. The International Herb Association has named thyme "Herb of the Year" for 1997. This versatile and popular plant adds flavoring to many dishes and is valuable for the medicinal properties of its leaves.

Thyme has many different forms. Most are hardy perennials in this New England climate - some are upright in form while others are more prostrate. The leaves range from blunt to pointy, from shiny to woolly, and vary in color from green to gray, golden or variegated. In one catalog alone there are over 70 different varieties of this genus. Thyme grows well in rock gardens, tucked in stone walls, or as a ground cover between flagstones. It can be interplanted around bulbs and grown around sundials.

Thyme can be grown from seed, usually starting 8 to 10 weeks before the young seedlings are to be set out in the garden. Root divisions can be taken any time during the growing season. Thyme can also be propagated by layering the stems in the soil while they are still attached to the mother plant. The roots go quite deep but the crowns should not be covered as this can encourage mold and fungus to form. Thyme likes a sweeter soil than most herbs, so an extra sprinkling of garden lime or some ground up egg shells will help keep the Ph level up. Every three years thyme should be dug up and divided because the plants will become woody and straggly.

Harvesting can be done throughout the season by cutting just before the herb flowers. However, if you cut the entire plant back too late in the season, it will go into the winter as a weaker plant and thus be less hardy.

These are some of the most popular and easy to grow of the many confusing varieties of thyme:

Common Thyme (*thymus vulgaris*) grows 8 - 10 inches in height. The flowers are light pink to white on upright stems. It is the culinary thyme of choice.

Lemon Thyme (*Thymus citriodorus*) has shiny green leaves, pink blossoms and a citrus aroma. In the herb garden at Lower Shaker Village it is even hardier than the common thyme. It is wonderful with fish and chicken dishes.

Caraway Thyme (*Thymus herba-barona*) has shiny dark green leaves, lavender blossoms, and a strong caraway scent. It makes a nice ground cover. The flavor of meats and curry dishes are greatly enhanced with the addition of this herb.

Woolly Thyme (*Thymus pseudolanuginosus*) has minute silver gray hairy leaves and pink flowers. It is a good creeper which grows to only 2 to 3 inches high.

Bees' attraction to thyme is well known and the honey that is produced when they have pollinated fields of thyme has a flavor all its own.

Thyme is one of the herbs, along with parsley and bay leaf, that is found in bouquet garni. This flavorful addition can be added to soups, stews and marinades. Thyme is also used in stuffings and can be sprinkled on fish (especially lemon thyme). It is one of the herbs in Benedictine liqueur. Unlike many other fresh herbs, thyme retains much of its flavor during the cooking time. It is one of the few herbs the early Shakers used in cooking.

They also used the leaves for a number of illnesses. The powerful antiseptic properties of thyme are contained in the volatile oil Thymol which among other remedies, helps preserve herbarium species and will also protect paper from mold. Thyme helps indigestion and can be used externally as an antiseptic wash for sores. The same properties make thyme useful in cough preparations and commercial mouthwashes. Used in a massage oil, it will help arthritic joints, sore throats and colds.

Another old fashioned practice was using thyme to preserve foods. Chefs used to pack meats and other foods in thyme to prevent spoilage. The USDA now says thyme as well as peppermint and cinnamon seem to be effective in keeping potatoes from sprouting- a natural alternative to irradiation and chemical spraying. Worth a try!

In the golden days of chivalry, thyme was considered an emblem of courage. Such a versatile herb, easy to grow, and useful in so many ways, thyme of at least one variety should be in every good cook's garden.



Thyme

Manuscript Volume Given to Library

The Museum is pleased to announce an important gift to the Shaker Library: a manuscript volume of pieces collected at the North Family, Enfield, over a period of almost a hundred years.

The contents of the bound, hand-written volume include three tongue-in-cheek remedies for the age-old ailments of Bigotry, Quarreling, and "a terrible disorder in the mouth commonly called Scandel." (sic) The volume also contains a dialogue between a "Perfect Believer" and a "Partial Believer," dated North Family, Enfield, June, 1839. The Shaker Way required union, a harmonious agreement between those who lived in community. As in any closely ordered group, gossip, quarreling, envy, intolerance, and petty dislikes were enemies that had to be rooted out. So these cures contain a great deal of common sense, prepared with a dose of humor that must have helped the prescriptions to be more palatable as the Shakers struggled to overcome their shortcomings.

The final journal entries, starting about 1893, are a collection of funeral songs, the last written in ballpoint pen and sung at the funeral of Eldress Edna, April 30, 1924. The music is written in standard notation rather than the Shaker letteral notation that had been used until the 1870's. Many of the pieces are in two-part harmony, including two hymns written for the funeral of Elder Timothy Randlett on November 12, 1892. Documents from the Gathering Orders of Shaker communities are particularly rare. The Museum is honored to be made custodian of this important Enfield manuscript.

Over the past several years, the Education Committee has been working to build up the Museum's library, to acquaint ourselves with Enfield Shaker manuscripts in other libraries, and to establish a dialog with other Shaker researchers throughout the country. It has been our hope that we would also become custodians of important Shaker resource material, particularly writings by, or relating to, the Enfield Shakers. Such resources deepen our own understanding of Enfield's Shaker history and enrich the Museum's interpretive program.

The Education Committee is eager to share our knowledge and resources with the Museum membership. We also urge you to share information, scrap books, photographs, books, articles, and insights with us. We are particularly grateful for donations to the permanent collection, but we also appreciate temporary access to information. Please call the Museum office or Board President, Mary Ann Haagen (603-632-4372) if you are interested in sharing your knowledge or resources.

From the Director

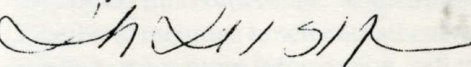
Dear Friends,

Changes are coming to the Museum at Lower Shaker Village with the turn of the season. First of all, the Museum is changing its name to the **Enfield Shaker Museum**. The new name was approved by the Board of Trustees in February, and will be phased in over the next six months. We are very pleased with the new name - we think it gives a more accurate picture of what and where the Museum is. Our incorporated name, Chosen Vale, remains unchanged. You will see the new name in up-coming editions of the "Friends' Quarterly," in our 1997 program guide, and in promotional materials this summer.

Second, you can now visit the Museum through cyberspace. Our e-mail address is chosen.vale@valley.net and our web page address is <http://www.valley.net/~esm>. We are very grateful to ValleyNet, our local internet service provider, for giving the Museum one year's access and free installation of the web page. The web page was designed by our Educator/Building Manager, Michael O'Connor, who is eager to hear your suggestions for adding to or improving the site.

You will read elsewhere in this newsletter of the wonderful success of our 1996 Annual Appeal and of Jay Lowery's generous gift of stock. The building and land acquisition fund established by the latter is very important, as the situation vis-à-vis the historic village core remains in flux. Donations to this fund ensure that we will be able to save more of Enfield's Shaker heritage for generations to come. Please call me to discuss the many benefits to you and to the Museum of making such a gift this year.

I hope to see you at the Museum often this season - be sure to get your reservation in for the Spring Forum, "Shaker Joinery in New Hampshire," and look for your invitation to the Garden Party Gala in the mail.



Sarah Saville Shaffer

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 write: The Museum at Lower Shaker Village, #2 Lower Shaker Village, Enfield, NH 03748. Or call (603) 632-4346.

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Summer Exhibit Showcases Exciting New Research on Enfield

"Precious Gospel Kindred" a ground-breaking exhibit on the Enfield Shakers, will open in the Stone Mill Building on June 28. Curated by Board President Mary Ann Haagen, it will focus on her on-going research into the demographics of the Enfield membership, her topic at the annual meeting last November.

Biographical vignettes of 28 Shakers, whose stories span the 140 year history of Shakerism in Enfield, NH, will be at the heart of this exhibit. Following the stories of these individuals traces the communal story of early conversions, the "gathering into order," the years of economic and spiritual prosperity, the seeds of decline, and the ultimate closing of the community. Documentation, including maps, deeds, photographic images, portraits, music, and artifacts, will supplement the text and place the stories of individual Believers in the context of the community with whom they shared a "united inheritance."

Stone Mill Building renovations continue at a brisk pace. The second entrance alcove, as well as the wainscoting on the main level (both non-Shaker additions), have been removed, and Dana Robes Wood Craftsmen are progressing with the window restoration project. We hope to have a much-improved exhibition space for this summer's important presentation.

Garden Party Gala June 6

The old Shaker roses in the herb garden will perfume the evening air as we celebrate the late-spring beauty of the village with our 4th annual garden party. Come prepared for a very special evening of inspiration and refreshment from 5 to 8 pm under a tent on the broad lawn adjacent to the garden.

Happy Griffiths, Museum Herbalist, and her dedicated staff of volunteers, will offer tours of the well-tended beds of medicinal, culinary, fragrant, and everlasting herbs, as well as other useful and ornamental annuals and perennials. The Shakers Singers, with their resonant a cappella voices, will perform traditional Shaker songs against the backdrop of ChosenVale's Holy Hill. Complementary wine-tasting and delicious hors d'oeuvres from the kitchens of Museum trustees and hosts will add an elegant touch to this festive occasion.

Tickets are \$25 per person, and may be obtained from the Museum. Look for your invitation in the mail.



Trustee Marty Pusey and Sisters Frances Carr and June Carpenter singing at the 1996 Garden Party



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Thanks to All for a Record Annual Appeal

One hundred forty-five donors made gifts and pledges totalling over \$37,000 to make our recent annual appeal one of the most successful in the history of the Museum. Key to the success of this end-of-year event was the hard work of board members in conducting a phone-a-thon ten days before Christmas. "It was a great opportunity for the Board to get in touch with members, tell them about Museum activities, and answer any questions they might have," commented Museum Director Sarah Saville Shaffer.

The Hanover Co-op contributed offices, telephones, and long-distance lines for our use, as did Defiance Electric of Enfield. Many thanks to both, to President Mary Ann Haagen for coordinating the event, and to callers Ron Boehm, Monte Clinton, Charlie DePuy, John Crilley, Janet Milne, Steve Powell, Stephen Priest, Nancy Scovner, and Sybil Williamson for their tremendous fund-raising efforts.

Appeal funds are used to support the on-going activities of the Museum and form an essential component of our yearly budget.

Building and Land Purchase Fund Created with Gift of Stock

In addition, we are very pleased to announce a gift of stock in the amount of \$10,700, designated to begin a fund for the purchase of buildings and grounds in the village. James Lowery, a summer resident of Grantham and a long-time supporter of the Museum, saw a critical need for this institution and chose to have his gift applied directly toward our long-term goal to acquire more Shaker buildings and lands on our site. We sincerely hope that others will want to follow the lead of his very generous and timely gift. Gifts of stock made with the intention of immediate sale provide great tax benefit to the donor: the whole amount can be taken as a deduction and no capital gains tax is collected. For further information on how you can contribute to this special fund, please contact the Museum.

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The Mob at Enfield, continued from page 1

This conflict split the larger community, setting the Shakers apart and forcing townspeople to choose between supporting the Shakers or opposing them.

The internal dynamics of the faction opposed to the Shakers revolved around three principal groups of players: the co-leaders, Eunice Chapman and Mary Dyer, whose husbands and children were among the Enfield Shakers; local town officials who supported Dyer and Chapman; and sympathetic townspeople who formed the mob. The mob's goal was to force the Shakers to release the children of Mary Dyer and Eunice Chapman. The mob event revealed the town's desire to uphold high standards of moral and ethical behavior in asserting the rights of mothers, but also betrayed an economic concern—its unwillingness to provide public support for wives whose husbands, by virtue of their membership with the Shakers, were no longer financial providers.

The Enfield mob had its origins in a private conversation between Mary Dyer, who had left the Enfield Shakers while her husband and children remained members, and Eunice Chapman of New York State, whose husband had taken their children and joined the Watervliet (NY) community without her knowledge. Acting on a tip that her husband and children had been smuggled to Enfield, New Hampshire, to prevent the law from retrieving them, Chapman traveled to Enfield where she met Mary Dyer at an inn belonging to a local opponent of Shakerism, James Willis. There they made a plan, confiding only in those who could help them retrieve their children. Mary Dyer and several women would travel to the Shakers and request a visit with Mary's children, as had happened on several previous occasions. Once admitted, the group would request to see Chapman's children as well. At that point, Eunice would burst in on the group and, taking the Shakers by surprise, steal away her children. One of the Dyer-Chapman confidants, however, alerted the Shakers to the impending visit and Mary and Eunice had to change their plan.

On Monday, 25 May, the Shakers learned that Eunice and Mary "with their forces" of supportive townspeople planned to come to the village the following morning at 8:00 a.m. With several of the male leaders absent from the Shaker village, the remaining Shakers had good reason to worry about the gathering mob. In an attempt to pre-empt violence, the Shakers sent Judge Evans, a local resident, to speak to Eunice and Mary. Evans, who had previously assisted Mary Dyer in her attempts to visit her children, agreed to escort the women to the Shakers the following morning.

The next day was Tuesday. Evans returned to Willis's inn to escort Chapman and Dyer to the Shaker village, but arrived to find himself in the midst of an already assembling mob. Joseph Merrill, an Enfield selectman and justice of the peace, was in the crowd and the two attorneys argued with one another. Merrill had also been at the Shaker village the day before and the Shakers had pleaded with him as "an officer of the peace" to quell any show of force. But contrary to the Shakers'

wishes, Merrill supported the notion of a public expression of town solidarity. Evans, on the other hand, argued that the Shakers would not allow such a large crowd to visit the children. Acting as a self-appointed mediator, he drew up a list of proposed visitors and carried it out to the Shakers. But as Evans returned to the inn with the Shakers' counterproposal, listing those whom they would permit to see the children, Dyer and Chapman, with an entourage behind them, were already headed toward the Shaker community.

At the Shaker village both the mob leaders and the Shakers attempted to gain control of the volatile situation. As Evans had surmised, the Shakers refused to expose the Chapman and Dyer children (eight in total) to such a large number of excited visitors, fearful that, as had happened at other Shaker villages, the crowd would simply surround the children and take them away. The Shakers agreed to permit Chapman and Dyer along with selectman Merrill, Jesse Fogg (Enfield's representative to the legislature), and their wives to visit the children in the Dwelling House. Chapman refused this offer and insisted the children be brought to her in the Trustees' Office. The judges and their wives accepted the visit with the children at the Dwelling House, and Dyer acceded and followed them. Chapman held out for two hours, until finally, after a personal invitation from her thirteen-year-old son George, she also made her way into the village for a visit with her children in the Dwelling House. The Shakers had gained a home court advantage in forcing the visitors to go to the Dwelling House—a private Shaker sanctuary as opposed to the more public and accessible Trustees' Office located on the road.

The visit was difficult for both women. Eunice had not seen her children in over two years. When she saw her daughters, she wept uncontrollably—joyful at the reunion but fearful of the changes in their manner. Her youngest daughter, Julia, refused to sit in her lap. Eunice had brought a gift of a doll, but to her dismay, Julia did not want it. The older child, Susan, age twelve, became alarmed when her mother reached out and tried to remove her Shaker cap. Both girls stated that they wished to remain at the village. Mary's visit was equally distressing. Betsy and Caleb Dyer, by then young adults, intervened between Mary and their three younger siblings and insisted that they were all well cared for and that none of them wished to leave. The Shakers attempted to keep an aura of civility about the proceedings and served supper to the six visitors before their return to Enfield. Although the judges and their wives appreciated the Shakers' hospitality, Eunice, the Shakers recorded, spoke to them rudely.

"The Mob at Enfield," will conclude in the next issue. Mob violence looms as the Chapman and Dyer children are hidden within the village, armed citizens threaten the Shakers, and the distraught mothers resort to public ranting in the road in front of the Trustees' Office.