

The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from The Museum at Lower Shaker Village

Volume IV/No. 2

Spring/Summer 1991

The Real Shaker Sweater

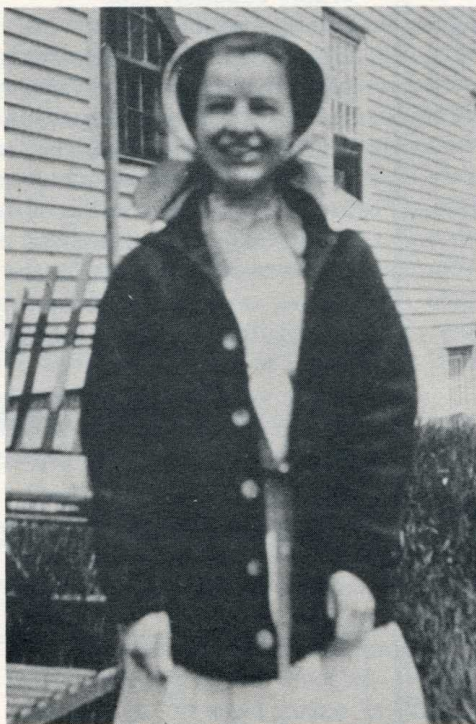
excerpts from an article by

Jean Burks, Former Curator of Collections, Canterbury Shaker Village

Will the real Shaker sweater please stand up! We have all seen catalogue ads for Shaker Sweaters which seem to be cotton, rib knit, crew neck pullovers. But where do these sweaters come from? The Shakers first started producing sweaters for sale in response to the needs of the "World's" people. According to a document in the Canterbury archives entitled "About the Shaker Sweater" "A man who had been to England upon his return to America, brought a sweater to us, and asked if we could make one like it. We had no machine for that purpose but in April 1886 Mr. S.W. Kent came with a big order for the sweaters, if we could fill it." Unfortunately, we do not know the pattern of the original design or whether it was made or hand knit. In order to take advantage of the potential market, the Canterbury Shakers ordered a single web knitting machine from Jonas Aiken which was delivered in October of 1886. "According to our records, we commenced to knit on the machine at once and before December 25, had shipped an order of 60 dozen sweaters to New York. This was the beginning of a very profitable trade."¹

What is a Shaker sweater? Textile and knitting dictionaries define it as a "heavyweight rib knit fabric developed by members of the Shaker sect."² Today, several mail order catalogues (among them LL Bean, J. Crew, Lands' End, and Eddie Bauer) and department stores (JC Penney) manufacture and market their "classic" Shaker sweaters. They all claim to knit them the authentic way, using the Shaker created half-cardigan stitch

(a modified form of machine ribbing which thickens the fabric).³ Furthermore, all of these modern reproductions are crew neck cotton cardigans with raglan sleeves.



Sister Ethel Hudson, Canterbury, NH in her auto collar cardigan.

In reality, the original Shaker sweater was very different in style, material and construction. Although we don't know whether they invented any of these distinctive patterns or adapted them from the World, they produced two basic types: coat or jacket sweaters, which buttoned in front and pullover sweaters, all with a variety of collars. They came in eleven sizes 30 through 50 and were made of extra heavy (01), heavy (1), medium (2) and light weight (3) wool yarns which were obtained from S.B. and W.B. Fleisher of Philadel-

phia. The company produced a two-ply yarn from pure Australian wool exclusively for the Canterbury Shakers. The sweaters were available in a variety of colors, including white, blue, gray, black, and garnet.

Unlike today's mail order catalog sales, Shaker sweaters were sold wholesale, through a middleman named Charles Dudley from Hanover, New Hampshire, and retail through sporting goods houses, in the Shaker store at Canterbury, and on special sales trips to hotels, beaches and mountains frequented by summer vacationers. Pairs of Shaker sisters traveled to resorts in Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey as well as to the major urban centers of New York, Philadelphia, and Washington.

Shaker production was prolific and surviving diaries record that during 1910 1,489 sweaters were made.⁴ The sweater industry continued to grow until 1923 when the commercial end of the trade closed. The reason for this may have been the unavailability of quality yarn and/or the difficulty in obtaining a new knitting machine. This shortage of raw materials and equipment certainly contributed to the decline of this most successful Canterbury industry.

1. "About the Shaker Sweater," Shaker Village, Canterbury, NH, Archives, MS #1371.

2. Dr. Isabel B. Wingate, *Fairchild's Dictionary of Textiles* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 1979, 6th ed.).

3. *ibid.*

4. Jessie Evans, Diary, 1910, Shaker Village, Canterbury, NH, Archives, Memorandum section, MS #1985.24.

Sage Thoughts

by Happy Griffiths

Anyone who has taken the Museum walking tour in late summer, spends extra time in the 1854 Cow Barn admiring the everlasting flowers that line the barn from front to back. Harvesting in the Museum gardens begins in early June when Chive is in bloom and continues as each herb, everlasting flower or common roadside weed reaches its prime. It doesn't take much to dry Mother Nature's bouquet - just some warm air, a dark or shady space (like an attic), and a place to hang or spread the flowers out.

A few basic steps should be kept in mind when collecting for dried arrangements. Pick the flowers at the right stage. Most flowers should be harvested just short of full bloom. Annual statice is an exception and should be picked when in full flower. First, strip excess leaves from the stems to reduce drying time, then bundle 8-10 stems together with a rubber band and hang on a wire or rod. The rubber band will shrink as the stems lose their moisture and become smaller.

Some of the more popular everlasting flowers we grow are:

Yarrow (wide array of colors, cerise, shades of pink, yellow & white), **Silver King & Silver Queen Artemisia** (harvest when flower buds are full but before they open. Silver Queen is ready to pick 2-3 weeks before Silver King), **Nigella or Love-in-a-Mist** (flower pods that take on a distinct striped burgundy color when mature), **Larkspur** (ready when 4/5 of flower stem is in bloom, comes in white, shades of pink and blue), **Globe Amaranth** (wonderful range of colors, can be picked all summer), **Celosia** (plumed and crested varieties have high moisture content, dry quickly to avoid color loss), **Strawflower** (pick before flower fully opens, clip off stem at base of flower and insert a wire into remnants of stem, as the stem dries it will shrink around the wire), **Tansy, Pot Marjoram, Costmary, Lamb's-Ears, Sage, Summer Savory and Thyme** (herbs that dry well), and **Pearly Everlasting and Goldenrod** (roadside weeds that must be picked before full bloom.)

By the time the first frost covers the garden our barn is full to overflowing with the results of the harvest. But it won't be long before all those flowers are made into beautiful wreaths and arrangements to decorate our doors and homes.

Uniformity of Appearance - An Exhibit of Shaker Clothing

Shaker clothing is an emblem of a self-contained communal life, the self-imposed "uniformity of appearance" sets the Shakers apart from the outside world. By their dress the Shakers express fundamental principles of their faith such as union, permanence, order, celibacy, simplicity, and thrift.

Despite its general uniformity, however, Shaker clothing does allow for individual differences.

"Uniformity of Appearance: The Expression of Community in Shaker Clothing" features dresses, scarves, shoes, and other items of Shaker apparel on loan from a variety of sources. It offers a first-hand look at the quality of materials and construction, as well as the clothing manufacturing processes. In addition, a new acquisition is being exhibited for the first time. This is an Enfield Shaker sewing table, a gift of the estate of James Harvey.

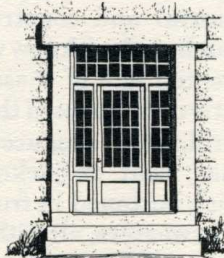
Visitors also have a chance to see themselves in Shaker outerwear, thanks to two reproduction Dorothy cloaks available for trying on. These were sewn for the exhibit by volunteers **Becky Brady** and **Becky Jennings**. "Uniformity of Appearance" will be on exhibition through October 15.



Handwoven linen neck kerchieves from the Enfield Shaker Community

New Self-Guided Walking Tour Introduced

A Walking Tour of CHOSEN VALE



The Museum at Lower Shaker Village
Enfield, New Hampshire

*Cover of New Self-Guided
Walking Tour*

After two years of research, revision and creative endeavor the Museum proudly introduced its new self-guided walking tour at the beginning of the 1991 Summer Season. The fifteen page booklet written by Sonja Hakala and illustrated by John Taylor includes general history of the Enfield Shakers, specific information about eleven buildings and significant sites in the village and a numbered map of the village to help guide the visitor through the tour. Museum visitors this summer have had very positive reactions to the format and information provided by the new tour. Next time you are in the area be sure to stop by and pick up your copy of "A Walking Tour of Chosen Vale".

Auxiliary Group Forms, Holds Cooking Demonstration

A new Auxiliary has been formed to provide operating funds for The Museum. Headed by Museum Trustee and veteran volunteer fund raiser **Jerry McNash**, the group's first project was a cooking demonstration on September 24 featuring **Carl Keller**, chef of the Restaurant at the Shaker Inn.

Keller, a third generation chef whose cooking has been praised as "accurate and vivid" by the *Boston Globe*, demonstrated Shaker and "New American" cuisine using herbs and vegetables from the Museum's gardens, while sharing tips, techniques, and cooking philosophy. This was followed by sampling of his creations, and a delicious luncheon.

The Auxiliary's vice-president



Chef Carl Keller choosing fresh herbs from the Museum's gardens

is **Lynn Anderson**. **Marga Griesbach** is treasurer. The group is looking for individuals interested in supporting the Museum through participation in a variety of entertaining and profitable activities. If you would like to be part of this exciting new venture, call The Museum at (603) 632-4346 for information.

Festival of Shaker Crafts & Herbs, Silent Auction Launch Season

On Saturday, June 1 The Museum's fifth annual Festival of Shaker Crafts & Herbs and Silent Auction final bidding day attracted nearly 1,000 people, launching a busy summer season.

The Festival's featured speakers were Shep and Ellen Ogden of The Cook's Garden in Londonderry, VT and Peter Gaylor, chef at D'Artagnan Restaurant in Lyme, NH. In addition, over 40 exhibitors displayed fine crafts, live plants and dried herbs and foods. Demonstrations included spinning by The Sugar River Spinners, poplarware making by Marjorie Gibbs and Galen Beale, tinsmithing by Roger Gibbs, chair taping by Julie Rockefeller of Shaker Workshops, and furniture joinery by Brad Purmort of Dana Robes Wood Craftsmen. Music was provided by Dennis Monroe.

This event was made possible by the efforts of a volunteer committee headed by Museum

Herbalist **Happy Griffiths**. Grateful acknowledgement goes to: **Dale Bryant, Betsy Mixer, Lauren Morris, Kitty Scherer, Maggie Steele, and Jean Watson**.

The Museum's second annual fund-raising Silent Auction was located in donated space in the showroom of Dana Robes Wood Craftsmen, and featured 129 items donated by nearly 90 craftsmen and artists. These included Shaker reproduction furniture, clothing, tinware, oval boxes, as well as woven shawls and throws, herbal wreaths, sweaters, quilts, books and paintings. The Silent Auction brought in nearly \$6,400 after two weeks of bidding.

A warm thank you again to the artists who donated their work, to all who bid, and to the hard working volunteer committee of **Lynn Anderson, Jean Beard, Barbara Brady, Sue Hammond, Brownie Smith, and Jean Watson**.

Tours and Meals for Groups

Thanks to the cooperative efforts of the Museum at Lower Shaker Village, The Shaker Inn, Dana Robes Woodcraftsmen and the LaSalette Shrine, groups of 10 or more wishing to visit Lower Shaker Village can now choose from six customized itineraries incorporating Shaker history, the La Salette story and a tour of Dana Robes Wood Craftsmen's workshop and showroom.

These tours can be tailored to the group's interests and abilities, are led by Museum trained tour guides and range from one to two hours. In addition, special group rates and menus for Shaker meals served in the Great Stone Dwelling are now available.

Promotional mailings have been sent to tour group operators in the northeast as well as garden clubs, historical societies and service clubs around New Hampshire and Vermont. So far we have booked seven tours for fall 1991.

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 opportunities write: The Museum at Lower Shaker Village, Route 4A, Enfield, NH 03748.

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Happy Griffiths, Herbalist

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'Tis Low in the Vale: Shaker Life and Belief in Song



The cast of 'Tis Low in the Vale performs a dance choreographed by Rachael Wilde as they sing "Yielding and Simple"

From July 26 through 28, nearly 200 audience members followed the cast of 'Tis Low in the Vale through the buildings and gardens at Lower Shaker Village and shared in the lives of the Enfield Shakers through their songs, dances, work and words.

Mary Ann Wilde, who created and directed the 1989 and 1990 Shaker Revels, was also the creative force behind this production. The Shaker Revels took place on Mount Assurance, overlooking the village. 'Tis Low in the Vale brought the performance down from Mount Assurance into the

valley and the village itself.

In the program notes Wilde observed that the Shakers saw "the valley" as a place of strength, safety, growth and possibility. But, as revealed in this production by outsiders such as the vengeful Mary Dyer, and by the Shakers themselves, that safety was challenged by the anger and distrust of those who did not

share their religious views, as well as by some of their own personal doubts and preoccupation with material concerns. "It was in the face of those tensions," Wilde writes, "that the community of Believers was called to articulate its commitment to the Shaker way."

A digitally recorded tape of thirty four songs of the Shakers called "O Hear Their Music Ring," by the Singers of Lower Shaker Village, can be purchased for \$12.95 (plus postage and handling) from the Shaker Store. To order write: The Museum at Lower Shaker Village, Route 4A, Enfield, NH 03748.

Craft

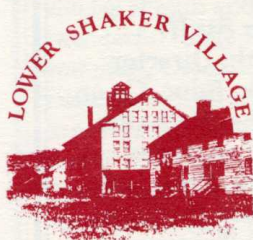
Demonstrators: A Labor of Love

Thanks to a group of talented craftspeople who volunteer their time, visitors to The Museum have the chance to see traditional Shaker crafts being practiced today. Our thanks to this group of committed artisans and artists who regularly demonstrate their skills to create "living exhibits": **Sue Hammond**, rug hooker, **Roger Gibbs**, tinsmith, **Marjorie Gibbs** and **Galen Beale**, poplarware makers, **Michael O'Connor**, cooper, **Dorothy Grubbs**, knitter, and **William Gusky**, artist.

Intern Kudos

For 12 weeks this summer, the Museum benefited from the dedicated work of **Jennifer Baskin**, an intern from the business program of Colby-Sawyer College, New London, NH. Jennifer coordinated advertising sales for our Calendar of Events, and was indispensable as a tour guide, brochure distributor and office helper. Thank you!

Fortunately, we will be seeing more of Jennifer this year as she will be here completing an independent study on children's educational programming.



The Museum
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(603) 632-4346

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Museum at Lower Shaker Village Nears Goal for Phase I of Campaign to Buy Laundry/Dairy Building

Heartfelt thanks to all of our members, volunteers and sponsoring corporations for your generous contributions and pledges toward the purchase and preservation of the Laundry/Dairy Building. Because of your support we are within \$20,000 of our Phase I goal and looking forward optimistically to reaching that by year's end.

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1991 Tax Benefits Enhanced for Museum Donations

If you own Shaker artifacts and have considered donating them to a museum you may find that it makes good financial sense to do so during the 1991 tax year.

Donors of certain tangible items related to the mission of charitable and educational organizations, can deduct the full market value of the items from their tax bill during 1991.

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 allows donors who are subject to the alternate minimum tax (AMT) to receive a tax deduction for the current value of items donated during 1991. The AMT ensures that all citizens—including those who make use of special deductions and tax credits to reduce tax liability—pay some federal income tax.

Examples of tangible property that can be donated are furniture and manuscripts. So for example, if you are subject to the AMT and donate a Shaker artifact to the Museum at Lower Shaker Village, you can receive a tax deduction for the current appraised value of the item. (The intended use of the of donated item must relate to the purposes or functions that constitute the organization's grounds for tax-exempt status.) Since the 1986 tax law change and prior to the enactment of the 1990 tax act, the donor could claim only the original purchase price of a donation.

If you have something you are considering donating to the Museum please feel free to call or write Carolyn Smith at (603) 632-4346 to discuss the options.

'91-'92 Winter Calendar Available Soon

Deborah Rearick, Education Coordinator has been hard at work putting together an exciting Calendar of Events for the Winter and early Spring Season. Your copy of the Calendar should be arriving in the next few weeks.

Workshops being offered for the first time this winter include Rosemary and Scented Geraniums to be taught by Museum Herbalist, Happy Griffiths; Telling Stories from History offered by Sonja Hakala, local writer; Christmas Crafts for Children (Christmas Cooking, Wheat Weaving and Oval Box Finishing); Woven Wheat Christmas Ornaments taught by Marcy Buckman; and Beginning Great Wheel Spinning offered by Lorraine Carey Block.

For those of you who have been hoping to take one of our perennial favorites we are again offering Herbal and Advent Wreath Making by Happy Griffiths; Traditional Bannocks taught by Marge Gibbs; Shaker Woodworking with Dana Robes; Chair Taping with Barbara Brady; Beginning Weaving with Deborah Rearick and Beginning Knitting with Marjorie Foster.

A new addition to this year's calendar is a Holiday Gift Extravaganza to be held on Saturday, November 30 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. For the day three floors of the Great Stone Dwelling will be brimming with handcrafted gift items from some of New England's finest artisans, dried herbal decorative and culinary products, made in New England food specialties as well as an array of unique Christmas decorations. The Shaker Inn will be serving hot beverages and special pastries throughout the day in addition to their regular menu. The Museum will have a special booth featuring products from our garden and other handcrafted specialties. A great opportunity to get your Christmas shopping done in one day!

Your Support Now Will Make the Difference

We are within \$20,000 of our Phase I Goal for the Campaign to buy and restore the Laundry/Dairy Building. If we reach this goal by December 1, 1991 we can finalize the purchase of the Laundry/Dairy and be in a good position to begin the process of restoration and preservation. **You can make the difference at this crucial point.**

- If you have already made a contribution to this effort, please know that we appreciate your support and would welcome any additional support you feel capable of providing.

- If you made a pledge last December and have not fulfilled that pledge now would be a great time to do that. If you need a reminder of your pledge level or would like to increase the size of your pledge please feel free to call.

- If you have not made a contribution or pledge to this cause

please consider doing so now. Your support matters! A contribution now will help ensure the preservation of the Laundry/Dairy Building and the establishment of a permanent home for the Museum.

We have already outgrown the available exhibit and classroom space in the Laundry/Dairy and are poised to begin work on additional space as soon as we finalize the purchase. With your help this work can begin as soon as January 1992.

Remember that contributions of any size help. You may use the enclosed return envelope to send your donation to this exciting cause today. If you have questions please call Carolyn Smith at (603) 632-4346. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have about our plans and the progress we have made so far, I look forward to hearing from you.