

The Friends' Quarterly

Newsletter of the Enfield Shaker Museum

Sharing history and hospitality.



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Spring/Summer 2019

UPCOMING EVENTS

For more details, visit our website
at www.shakermuseum.org

- Sept 1 **Eco-Dyeing Workshop**
- Sept 10 **Material Culture Tour**
- Sept 10 **Herbal Jelly Making Workshop**
- Sept 14 **Shaker Harvest Festival**
- Sept 14 **Widor's Symphony No 6 for Organ**
- Sept 24 **Enfield Shaker Water System Hike**
- Sept 28 **Beginning and Intermediate Timber Framing Workshop**

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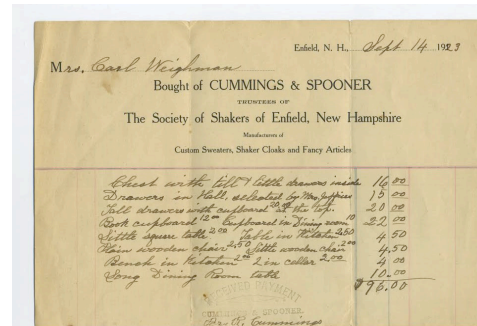
A Tale of Three Tables

by Richard Dabrowski

The Tale of Three Tables all began with an invoice dated September 14, 1923, which was discovered at the bottom of an oval sewing box that once belonged to Sister Rosetta Cummings of the Enfield, NH Shaker community. Mrs. Carl Weihman, a native of Narbeth, PA, had a summer camp in Bristol, NH and according to her granddaughter made several visits to Enfield to buy old things.

In the last several years, we have located four of the items on the invoice—The first item, “Chest with till and little drawers inside”, was discovered in a collection near Philadelphia. In Dec 2018, it was purchased by ESM and is now on display in the Rosetta Cummings exhibit. The third item, “Tall drawers with cupboard on the top”, is still owned by Mrs. Weihman’s grand-daughter. On the fifth line, the second item, “Table in kitchen”, was sold at a Willis Henry auction in 2007 and is now in a private collection. However, it was the last item that drew our greatest interest, “Long Dining Room table”

because we had often wondered why the long dining tables used at Enfield had not yet turned up at auction. The answer turned out to be that they had, but none with a correct attribution.



From our work with stereoviews, we knew that in the dining room of the Great Stone Dwelling there were originally four long dining tables, made for the building when it was first occupied in 1841. In “Fifteen Years in the Senior Order of Shakers,” former Enfield brother Hervey Elkins wrote in 1852, “The tables are long, three feet in width, polished high, without cloth, and furnished with white ware and no tumblers.” Henry Cummings, a former Shaker Elder writing in the *Enfield Advocate* in 1906, described the dining room as having quote “four long tables,

which each seat twenty persons”.

About the time that Henry Cummings wrote his article in the *Enfield Advocate*, a photograph was taken in the dining room of the Great Stone Dwelling. In it, we note several changes—only three full length dining tables remain in use; the table at the back on the right has been cut down to accommodate the installation of a soapstone sink with running water; table cloths are now in use; and there are significantly fewer chairs. We also get a clearer look at the shape of the arched foot on the tables themselves.

What ultimately became of these tables?

Continued on page 2.



A Tale of Three Tables - *Continued from Pg. 1* The “Long Dining Room table” listed on the Weighman invoice in September 1923 was eventually taken to Pennsylvania, where it was used as a display table in Mrs. Weihman’s flower shop and remained in the family until her death in Nov 1975. At this point we have no idea where the Weihman table is located, or even if it still exists in its original form. Nevertheless, three Enfield, NH Shaker dining tables have come to auction in recent years.

Jerry Grant (Shaker Museum | Mt Lebanon) discovered an article that appeared in “Antique Collecting” magazine in 1978: “Manhattan Dealer is High Bidder. Like a private collector, museums occasionally have reason to part with a significant piece of their collection. Such was the case recently when the Winterthur Museum offered their 21’ 6 1/2” long Shaker table to a selected group of museums, collectors and dealers. In a sealed bid mail offering to the highest bidder, the museum opened all written bids in one witnessed session. This method of bidding seemed more than fair and we particularly commend the museum for including antiques dealers in the offering. New York art/antiques dealer, John Gordon of the John Gordon Gallery was the successful high bidder on the table.”

In a 2014 email Leah Gordon, John Gordon’s widow, recollected that they had owned a large Shaker table that they sold to Adelaide de Menil and Ted Carpenter. We were able to trace much of this table’s history using documents generously provided by Sotheby’s. We received copies of invoices, correspondence between Winterthur and Sotheby’s, accession sheets from the de Menil/Carpenter collection, and a photograph of the table from 1978.

I am delighted to report that the de Menil trestle table is



now in the collection of ESM and on exhibit in the Dining Room of the Great Stone Dwelling. The table is constructed entirely of yellow birch. The top measures exactly 21 feet 6 inches long by 35 inches wide, made up from two boards that are joined with a full-

length spline joint. The two boards are of unequal width, which means that the spline joint is slightly off-center.

Now let’s consider the second table: In Nov 1994, at an auction in Sturbridge, MA, Willis Henry offered as Lot 80 a trestle table described as “Birch two-board top, retains original finish, rounded corners, three cherry trestles with chamfered shafts, double pinned into simple arched base and foot, de-acquisitioned from Winterthur Museum, 1994, originally sold to H. F. duPont by Edward Ford, Marshfield, MA, dealer who purchased directly from the Shakers of Canterbury, NH

in late 1920’s.” The table measured 21 feet 5 inches long by 36” wide. It was 29 1/8” in height.

Although the table did not sell during the auction, it sold afterwards to theatre historian Stefan Brecht. Brecht died in 2009 and in 2013 Will Henry arranged the sale of the table to Philippe Segalot, a New York-based private art dealer. It is presently located in Segalot’s Paris apartment.

Let’s now consider the third table. In Oct 1985, Skinner Auctioneers held an auction at a very large home in Gloucester, MA known as Stillington Hall. The mansion had been built in 1926 by Col. Leslie Buswell. A 1967 photograph from the *Boston Globe* shows a former ballroom in the house. It features a long table that was used by the family. In fact, this is the last of our three Enfield Shaker dining tables.

The auction catalog listed as Lot 257 a “Shaker Maple Community Table, possibly New Hampshire, mid-19th century, the rectangular two board top with rounded corners, rests on three flat flange arched legs (originally with six drawers under top, three drawers missing).” The table measured 21 ft 3 in long by 35 in wide, made up from two boards that quite clearly have parted at the middle joint.

The successful bidder for the Stillington Hall dining table was a collector of American decorative arts from Shelburne Falls, MA—Bill Cosby. It remains in the Cosby collection today.

And that completes the Tale of Three Tables—except for one unanswered question: how is it possible that Winterthur actually owned and deaccessioned two Enfield dining tables?

Eldress Josephine Wilson wrote in her diary on Aug 6, 1924, “Eld[er] Arthur goes to Enfield by train to meet Mr. Ford from Marshfield who wants to buy the long Dining Room tables at that place.” On the same day, Brother Irving Greenwood wrote in his diary, “Richmond takes Arthur to Concord early this morning. He meets Mr. Ford an antique collector & [they] go up to Enfield on the early train. Mr. Ford buys dining room tables & some other old things.” In fact, Edward C. Ford was not an antique collector, but an established antique dealer from Marshfield, MA. According to Willis Henry, who has located the Edward Ford Journals, in a letter he wrote to Robert Trent at Winterthur, Ford purchased two long Enfield dining tables from the Canterbury Shakers and sold them to H. F. DuPont. The tables were not immediately accessioned into the Winterthur collection.

One of the dining tables was accessioned in 1965. This was the table deaccessioned in 1994 and sold by Will Henry, first to Stefan Brecht and second to Philippe Segalot. The only record that Winterthur appears to have of the second table appears to be a photograph, perhaps circulated before the sealed bid sale. This was the table sold in 1977 to John Gordon, then to Adelaide de Menil and Ted Carpenter, and in 2019 to Enfield Shaker Museum. Make sure to stop by and see the table on your next visit to the Museum.

The Rediscovery and Exploration of the 1823 Boys' Shop

Archaeological Field School 2017 - 2019

by Kyle Sandler, Education Program Coordinator

For the last five years, Enfield Shaker Museum has sponsored an annual Archaeological Field School led by Dr. David Starbuck of Plymouth State University and staffed by dedicated students and volunteers. Each of these annual field schools has informed our understanding of the Enfield Shakers' consumption practices and the location of non-existent buildings. Past archaeological sites have included the Trustee's Office, the Blacksmith Shop, the Schoolhouse Privy, and the Horse Barn. For the 2019 Archaeological Field School, the Museum decided to continue the excavations begun on the site of the Boys' Shop in 2017. Originally constructed as the West Woodhouse in 1823, the Boys' Shop was relocated to its present location just north of the two Brethren's Shops in 1833. Once in this location, the building served as both a workshop and dwelling space for the boys of the Church Family and their caretakers.

The work on this site began in May 2017 when board member Paul Waehler laid out the presumed location of the building using historic photographs. Based on his approximation, the dig team were able to begin excavations on the second-to-last day of that year's field school. The following day, the team discovered a thick cache of artifacts under a layer of bricks. Unfortunately, given the timing, the diggers had to delay further progress till the following year.

In May of 2018, we reopened the pits dug the year before. What began as a slow trickle of artifacts gradually increased as the team dug deeper. After exposing the southeast corner of the building, it became clear that the Boys' Shop had at least a partial cellar. We also discovered that Paul Waehler's plot of the southeast corner was within a foot of the actual corner. The confirmation of the existence of a basement under the Boys' Shop held out the possibility that this foundation might have been used by the Shakers as a dumping ground.



Clay marbles and dice.

Over the course of the next four weeks, the dig team was able to expose about a third of the east-side basement of the Boys' Shop. Among the artifacts discovered in these pits were clay marbles, dice, and even a kazoo. Additionally, the site revealed large numbers of intact glass bottles representing the different production techniques used over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The range of bottles not only included those which held Shaker-produced patent medicines, but also medicinal and non-medicinal items purchased from the world.

Possibly the most significant items discovered in 2018 were a music staff pen tip developed by Isaac Newton Youngs of New Lebanon, NY and a cast-iron chimney cap system designed by Elijah Myrick of Harvard, MA. The discovery of Shaker designed items from other communities, particularly the staff pen, represents the desire of the New Lebanon Ministry to create union throughout the Shaker world.

Based on the large number of artifacts discovered in 2018, the Museum felt that work should continue on the Boys' Shop in 2019 with the goal of exposing more of the east-end foundation. At the start of this year's program, the diggers were confident that they would continue to find the type and level of artifacts discovered the previous year, but few would have imagined that they would unearth twice as many pieces as the year before. By the end of the four weeks, our 2019 dig crew had exposed two-thirds of the Boys' Shop cellar, including a beautifully installed schist floor comparable to those found in extant Shaker buildings at Enfield. The team was also able to investigate the west side of the Boys' Shop and confirm that only the east side of the structure had a basement. Some artifact highlights of the 2019 dig include several intact ink wells, a gun barrel, a liquor bottle, and early telephone batteries. Now that the 2019 field work is complete, we will be able to better assess the direction of future archaeology at Enfield Shaker Museum.



2019 Boys' Shop Archaeological Finds (listed left to right).

Intact stoneware jug, no hallmarks.

Brass water tap

Gun barrel with sight

Enfield Shaker Day Opens 2019 Season



Animal friends at Enfield Shaker Day

This year's **Enfield Shaker Day**, held on May 5th, was a rousing success! Despite the overcast day, almost 100 people showed up to help us celebrate our season opening, joining us for a day chock-full of hands-on crafts and activities, live animals, tours all day, and a special visit from the NH Lakes Association. Hands-on crafts and activities included peg boards, May Day crowns, spinning, pollinator seed planting, butter churning, maple candy making, pony rides, and even candling incubated chicken eggs! Our visitors also had the opportunity to pet baby steers and chicks and enjoy refreshments like popcorn, lemon verbena cookies, and lemonade.

A HUGE thank you to everyone who came out and made Enfield Shaker Day such a success, particularly **Shirley Green**, **Nan Munsey** and all the rest of our wonderful volunteers, as well as **Jane Carpenter**, **Christopher Lambert**, and **Dylan McDermott** and family, who brought our live animals. We hope to see you all next year!

Enfield Shaker Museum

447 NH Route 4A ♦ Enfield, NH 03748

Enfield Shaker Museum is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational institution whose mission is to protect, enhance, and utilize its historical structures, landscape and Shaker cultural heritage. Gifts and donations are tax-deductible.

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Grills Fellow to Complete Garden Project at ESM

William Anderson (son of Diana Kimball-Anderson, ESM's Garden Coordinator), a student at Woodberry Forrest School in Virginia, has been awarded a Grills Fellowship for 2019.

William submitted the following proposal to the Grills Foundation: "Enfield Shaker Museum has received permission from the NH Dept. of Agriculture to transfer at least 3 varieties of grapes developed by the Shaker Community between 150 and 200 years ago. They are also hoping to plant a gooseberry variety developed by the Shakers of which there are only 4 plants left in the whole USA. They have not received permission for the gooseberry yet, but are hopeful. The museum has asked if I would be willing to learn basic Shaker woodworking from their hired craftsman and build trellis workings for the varieties this summer. As the summer season in NH is short they don't generally have extra time for new projects. As this one has minimal detail work, they thought it could be done by a dedicated volunteer."

Additionally, William will spend at least one day hiking Grafton Mt in search of the fabled "Shaker Berry" which Darryl Thompson (a Shaker scholar with a particular interest in Shaker developed plant varieties) have been reportedly sighted there. He will bring back samples in order for us to determine if it is indeed a different variety so that we may move forward with that.

Two other Woodberry Forest students were also awarded fellowships. John Meeks will intern at the Oatlands Plantation in Leesburg, Virginia for eight weeks, while Sam Stelter will do similar work for five weeks at Montpelier, the historic home of James Madison located near Woodberry.



William Anderson (shown on left) recipient of 2019 Grills Fellowship will complete a project at ESM this summer.

Thanks to the generosity of Joe and Marge Grills, the Grills Fellowship covers costs and provides a stipend for Woodberry students to undertake summer internships in any area of government as well as public history venues such as museums and national historic sites. "The students who have engaged in these internships have had uniformly positive experiences," notes history department head Fred Jordan, who chaired the selection committee. "These are experiences that can't possibly be duplicated in a classroom."

2019 Spring Shaker Forum Highlights

With eight outstanding presenters—**Dick Dabrowski, Rob Emlen, Kerry Hackett, Matthew Kirk, Richard Marshall, Stephen Paterwic, Ned Quist, and Tom Sakmyster**, two key note speakers—**Tommy Hines**, South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky, **Susan Buck**, Conservator and Paint Analyst, a newly launched exhibit—“Rosetta Cummings, A Shaker Life of Consecrated Work”, and 85 interested and interesting attendees, our 2019 Spring Shaker Forum was a huge success! As stated by one of our participants in the end of Forum survey, “this weekend keeps getting better every year...I wouldn’t miss it.”



Some of the 2019 Shaker Forum participants gather for a group photo.

Ned Quist's presentation “Photogenic Ghosts: Three Shaker Mills” was the recipient of the annual Shaker Workshops \$500 cash prize for demonstrating the highest standard in new and outstanding scholarship. The award was chosen by our readers **Roben Campbell, Christian Goodwillie, and Jerry Grant**, all former presenters and outstanding Shaker scholars themselves.

Tommy Hines, Executive Director at South Union Shaker Village presented “Kentucky Shaker Furniture: A Southerner’s Interpretation of the Rules”. Over the course of the

19th Century, the Kentucky Shakers interpreted traditional eastern Shaker design through the cultural lens of the American South. In his presentation, Tommy illustrated the characteristics which made Southern Shaker furniture unique in a visually stunning power point presentation.

On Saturday afternoon **Mary Ann Haagen** gave a presentation on Shaker Feast Grounds, in particular the Enfield Shaker Feast Ground and its construction. Following her presentation a number of hardy souls braved the weather for a hike up Mt. Assurance to the Feast Ground.

Our after-dinner treat on Saturday evening was presented by **Susan Buck**. “Twenty Years of Shaker Paint Research:



Susan Buck presents her talk on “Shaker Paint Research”

Mysteries and Discoveries” twenty years of significant improvements in the microscopes and digital imaging techniques used to capture images of tiny remnants of paints, and the body of knowledge about traditional Shaker paints, varnishes and color combinations

has continued to expand. Susan explained how analysis of Shaker painted and varnished finishes is undertaken and how this revealed more recent discoveries about paint colors on furniture and architecture.

And finally, as is our tradition **Mary Ann Haagen** led an inspiring Sunday morning Shaker Sing in the Meeting Room. Thank you to all our participants for attending, participating in rousing discussions, and asking fascinating questions. We look forward to seeing you again next year!

ESM Launches New Website

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our new website! A portal for existing Museum members and new Museum visitors, the site offers a range of new functionalities, including:

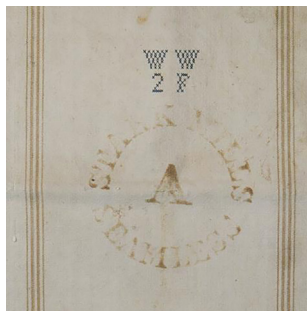
- a bright, modern design
- an **interactive event calendar** with workshops and fundraising events, as well as the ability to **purchase tickets** and **register for workshops** online at shakermuseum.org/events
- the ability to become a member or manage your **membership**, make a **donation** to our Annual Fund, learn about our new **corporate support program**, or even register to **become a volunteer** at shakermuseum.org/support!
- pages featuring **beautiful past gatherings** and **wedding and facility rental photos and information**, helping present the Museum’s event capabilities in a way that is attractive and accessible to everyone, at shakermuseum.org/gather
- perhaps most excitingly, an **online reservation system** for our 20 Overnight Rooms! Please visit shakermuseum.org/stay for more details

We are so excited to share this project, which has been years in coming, with our constituency – new and old!

Log on to shakermuseum.org and see what you think!

Recent Acquisition

We recently acquired a grain bag with an interesting Enfield Shaker connection. The bag was manufactured by Stark Mills, part of the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in Manchester, NH, and is printed with "Stark Mills/A/Seamless". They manufactured millions of seamless grain bags through the second half of the 19th C. and into the 20th C. Bags would often be marked with the owner's name so they were returned to the proper place after being filled with grain, provender, or flour. What makes this bag special are the initials embroidered on it in blue thread: "WW" and "2F". This stands for William Wilson, Second Family. William Wilson was a prominent Elder and Trustee at the Second Family and came to the Church Family when the Second Family closed in 1894.



We also received a pair of sturdy oak dry measures. Made of bent oak sides with a sturdy bent oak reinforcing rim.



The bottoms are pine, and are reinforced with iron strapping. These dry measures

are seen sometimes with, or sometimes without, the iron straps so it is unclear if they were part of the original construction or added after to strengthen the bottom. One of the measures has the letters "ND" stamped in the bottom. This refers to Church Family Trustee Nathaniel Draper. Interestingly, the Shakers continued to use this stamp on items made for sale long after the death of Nathaniel

Draper in 1838, so that alone cannot be used to definitively date the objects.

Also received in July was a beautiful Enfield side chair with cane seat, gifted from the Donald Smith family in memory of Rosemary A. Smith. This chair retains its original red paint and has an interesting old repair on one of the side seat rails. Cane seats require a long row of holes to be drilled into the seat rails and splitting along this row of holes is not uncommon. This repair has given long service and the chair has been in the Mr. Smith's family for generations.



Lastly there is a collection of photographs of Enfield Shaker sisters. The advent of the Kodak Brownie, and subsequent cameras, made it possible for informal snapshots to record the daily lives of the Shakers. The Brownie made it possible for anyone to be a photographer and often resulted in scenes with a casual or informal feel. Historic photos are a valuable resource and source of information, and we are always seeking any photographs of the Enfield Shaker village. Photos of the Shakers turn up surprisingly often in family collections, so please keep us in mind when you are going through your old family photos.

We can't mention photography at Enfield without a reminder that the museum is still displaying an unprecedented collection of every known stereoview of the Enfield Shaker community. Museum volunteers Dick Dabrowski and Carolyn Smith reviewed collections all over the country to assemble these images captured in the 1870's and 80's, along with information about the photographers who published series of stereoview photos of Enfield.

