

The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from the Enfield Shaker Museum

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The Ann Tarney Collection

By Mary Ann Haagen

The Shakers have been important to Ann Tarney for as long as she can remember. Since the Enfield Shaker Museum first opened its doors as the Museum at Lower Shaker Village in 1986, Ann has shared her knowledge with visiting students of Shakerism, and has loaned her cherished Enfield Shaker artifacts for exhibitions.

In celebration of the Museum's recent acquisition of the Great Stone Dwelling and other Church Family Shaker property, Ann has generously given many of her important Enfield Shaker objects to the Museum's permanent collection. Ann's gift significantly enlarges and enriches the Museum collection, and by extension, enhances our visitors' experience of the Enfield Shaker story. Much of the Ann Tarney Collection is on display this summer.

Ann Nichols Tarney was born in Enfield, New Hampshire in 1904, the second daughter of Ralph and May Morse Nichols. Her childhood home, probably built before 1840 by Thomas C. Burnham, was the only house on a road that ran from High Street (Route 4) to south Main Street. It sat on open land surrounded by apple trees, and overlooking Mascoma Lake. Ann's father was a loom fixer at the American Woolen Company (later the Baltic Mills) which was located in North Enfield on the Mascoma River. In the summers he left the mill to operate a passenger launch on Mascoma Lake, delivering summer residents and their luggage to lakeside cottages and carrying the daily mail and supplies.

When Ann was a child the Shakers were still very much a presence in Enfield, and she recalls that her family not only traded at the Shakers but counted individuals in the Society as their friends. Some of Ann's most prized Shaker possessions were purchased for her at the Shaker Store of the Church Family, or given to her family by the Enfield Shakers. Other artifacts that she has given to the Museum were first given to her by her friend, Nellie Pierce, a fellow Enfield resident whose collection of Shaker scrapbooks and other materials is now at Dartmouth College.

As a young woman Ann taught school for

several years in southern New Hampshire. The Enfield Shaker Community closed in 1923, and by the time Ann returned to Enfield about 1945 to take a position

Continued on page 5



Ann Tarney with a Shaker doll and other items she has recently donated to the Museum's permanent collection.

