

The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from The Museum at Lower Shaker Village

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The Enfield Shaker Rooms at Winterthur Museum

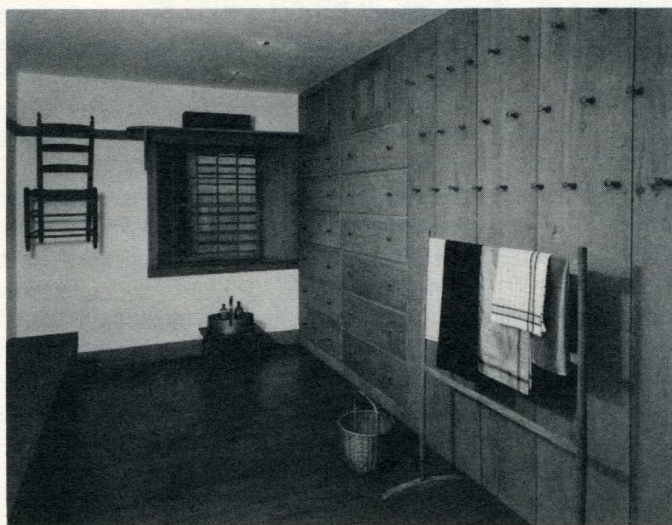
by Robert P. Emlen

In the spring of 1962 a new exhibition of Shaker artifacts was opened to the public at the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum in Delaware. Visitors to Winterthur saw the Museum's Shaker collection displayed in room settings with architectural woodwork from the Shaker village at Enfield, New Hampshire. The following year, when the first photographs of the two rooms were published in *Winterthur Illustrated*, their built-in cupboards were described as having "come from the large stone dwelling house built about 1840 in the Shaker community at Enfield, New Hampshire." By 1966, when Edward Deming Andrews and Faith Andrews illustrated the Museum's installation in their book *Religion in Wood*, the rooms at Winterthur were among the best known Shaker exhibitions in the country.

I got to know the Enfield Shaker community in the mid-1970's when, with the help of Robert Leavitt and Wendell and Viola Hess, I was preparing the nomination of the village to the National Register of Historic Places. I examined each of the buildings, but as I went through the Great Stone Dwelling, I could not imagine where Winterthur's woodwork had come from. I could find no evidence of existing built-in cupboards with vertical panelling, nor evidence that anything like that had been removed from the building. Besides, the dimensions of the rooms now at Winterthur were wrong for the proportions of the stone dwelling.

I set off for Winterthur to see the

Shaker rooms for myself. After reading through the archives, examining the woodwork, interviewing the curator who had purchased it, and reviewing the installation with the architect who had designed it, I learned that the wood-



Courtesy, The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum

work had indeed been purchased from the Enfield community, but had not come from the Great Stone Dwelling. The story goes like this.

In the summer of 1957, while the Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette were constructing the Fourteen Stations of the Cross, they were dismantling old buildings on the site and selling building fragments. Word reached Winterthur Museum that a particularly fine storage wall of built-in cupboards was available. Winterthur's curator, who wanted to install a Shaker exhibition at the Museum, drove to New Hampshire to investigate. He was shown to the North Family's 1831 Laundry and Dairy, where a wall of cupboards and drawers had survived unscathed over the years.

The woodwork he discovered there was a wonderful example of Shaker cabinetry, complete with its original painted finish. It was designed in alternating bays, so that one half contained eighteen-inch deep built-ins, and the other half was vertical board panelling. The wall was double sided, so one set of built-ins backed up to a reciprocal arrangement on the opposite side of the wall. The woodwork was approximately the right dimension for the new Museum gallery, and a deal was struck.

At Winterthur, the architect had to work around existing structural supports and ventilation shafts, and the design and installation of the new Shaker exhibition was not completed for many years. By the time the rooms were finished, their

provenance had unaccountably drifted across the road from the stone Laundry and Dairy to the Great Stone Dwelling.

In 1975 a La Salette brother, who had been at Enfield when the wall was sold, took me to the third floor of the Laundry and Dairy and pointed out the site in the northwest corner where it had originally stood. It is a much smaller space than Winterthur's gallery, the room in the old building having evidently been used as a storage and workroom. Sheltered in this far corner of the village for 144 years, the storage wall is now the focal point for a large gallery of decorative arts, and the pride of one of the great museums of America.

*Robert P. Emlen is the author of
Shaker Village Views*

Sage Thoughts

by Happy Griffiths

It seems appropriate that I should write about sage, *SALVIA OFFICINALIS* as this is the title of this column. *Salvia* is derived from the Latin verb "salvare", meaning to save. The old saying, "Why should a man die when he has sage in his garden?" is certainly an expression of faith in the medicinal and preventive properties of sage.

The Chinese so valued the leaves of sage that they traded their own fine green tea for it in a ratio of 3 to 1. The American Indians used it as a medicine, mixing it with bear grease for a healing salve to cure skin disorders. They also used the leaf to help polish their teeth.

Sage was grown by the Shakers in all of their communities. In the Enfield community alone at least one half an acre was planted with sage each year, a portion of which had been forced in early hot beds. At harvest time the leaves were gathered and used either in leaf form or ground and pulverized for use in the community or sold to the "World".

We are all familiar with the culinary talents of sage. The oil in the sage leaf has an emulsifying effect on fat which is one of the reasons sage is used in sausage, stuffing mix and cheese. But it also has a reputation for its medicinal value. Tea made from the leaves can be used as a mouthwash and is effective for infected gums and mouth ulcers. An infusion made from the leaves and cider vinegar makes a gargle for sore throats. This summer I found rubbing a fresh leaf of sage on a bee sting eliminated the pain after a few minutes. I also found the antiseptic qualities of the fresh leaf to be beneficial in treating minor cuts when rubbed directly on the affected skin.

Sage is a hardy perennial and will grow well for about 4 years, then new plants should be set out since the old plants become too woody to produce a profitable crop. Sage grows easily from seed started indoors in March or it can be propagated from cuttings taken in the fall and put in a mixture of equal parts of perlite and peat, watered regularly and placed on a sunny windowsill. When the growing season has begun they can be placed in the garden to produce another bountiful harvest.

Gardens Have Bountiful Season

A Shaker once stated that a garden "is an index of the owner's mind." The beauty of the Museum's gardens is due to their many "owners."

The display herb garden continued to flourish this past summer under the guidance of **Happy Griffiths**, Museum Herbalist, with assistance from **Kitty Scherer** and fourteen volunteer Village Gardeners.

Thanks to contributions from Museum Friends who became "Friends of the Garden" by sending an additional contribution with their membership dues, the Museum was able to pay for 130 permanent, engraved labels for the display beds. These were made and installed by **Karl and Kitty Scherer** who donated all their labor.

The remaining 1.6 acres of garden space were devoted to soil building and to a new experiment in raising culinary herbs



Kitty and Karl Scherer install permanent garden labels

for sale. **Sonia Swierczynski**, last year's farm coordinator, managed this production garden. A one woman show, she planted, weeded, harvested and provided a steady supply of fresh herbs for sale at the Hanover Co-op and Purity Supreme supermarkets all season long.

Friends of the Garden help preserve the Shakers' agricultural tradition. If you would like to contribute, send a donation of \$5 or more to "Friends of the Garden," at The Museum at Lower Shaker Village, Enfield, NH 03748. All donations are acknowledged and greatly appreciated.

Seminar Series Focuses on Utopian Communities

Beginning April 14, The Museum is offering a series of discussion seminars on past Utopian communities and the challenges they present today in solving social and environmental problems. Funded through a grant from the New Hampshire Humanities Council, "Utopian Communities: Challenges to Modern Society" will be led by Carl Krieg, Ph.D., Religious Studies.

Part I, "The Story of the Earliest Christian Church," looks at the community established by Jesus' disciples, examining how an intimate family of friends developed into the institution which was the model for many communal societies in America. Part II, "Two Famous 19th Century American Experiments: The

Shaker and Oneida Communities" looks at the history and growth of each group, comparing their approaches to creating a utopia.

Throughout the sessions, historical examples will be discussed in light of modern day issues. How could a communal perspective help us to re-shape and re-think such issues as housing, child care, geriatric care, ethics, energy conservation, environmental stewardship, poverty, education, and labor productivity?

The series is free of charge and takes place on Sundays from 7 to 9 PM at the Museum, Part I on April 14 & 21, and Part II on April 28, May 5 & 12. Each part may be attended singly, although each complements the other. Call the Museum for further information.

1990 Museum Attendance Breaks All Records

With all the talk of recession, we are happy to report the Museum's pattern of steady growth has continued. In fact, the results of this past year could be called dramatic. Attendance for 1990 was up 31% over last year with a total of 7,662 people paying admission. Sales in the Shaker Store were up 40% over 1989's figures.

The number of Museum Friends increased by 27% from the year before, and participation in 1990's crafts workshops, festivals, and Shaker meals increased by 41% over 1989! Total participation for 1990 was almost 13,000, a far cry from our 1986 total of 2576.

This is cause for celebration, but should not make us feel too complacent. The staff and volunteer committees are now hard at work preparing for the 1991 Summer Season and what we hope will be our best year yet!

The Friends' Quarterly is a publication of The Museum at Lower Shaker Village. It is mailed as a service to Museum Friends. For information on the Friends program write: The Museum at Lower Shaker Village, Route 4A, Enfield, NH 03748, or call (603) 632-4346.

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Caryn Bosson, Publicity Co-or.
Happy Griffiths, Herbalist

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Museum to Hold First Annual Meeting

You are invited to attend the Museum's first Annual Meeting to be held on Sunday, April 21, 1991 beginning at 4:00 PM in the second floor meeting room of the Great Stone Dwelling. The meeting will be followed by a potluck supper and some time for socializing.

The agenda for the meeting will include a year end report for 1990, an update on the capital campaign for the Laundry/Dairy Building and election of the 1991 officers for the Board of Trustees. As a voting member of the Museum you have a say in the future of the Museum

and we would love to hear from you. If you have items you would like to see included on the agenda please let us know. This meeting is an opportunity to participate in the decision making process and we encourage you to put this date on your calendar and plan to attend.

If you are able to join us for the meeting and potluck and plan to bring a dish that needs to be kept warm please bring the equipment necessary to do that. The Museum will supply paper products and hot and cold beverages.

New Education Coordinator Hired

The Museum at Lower Shaker Village is pleased to announce that Deborah Coffin-Rearick has joined the staff as Education Coordinator. Deborah joins the staff after four years as a Museum volunteer and demonstrating craftsperson. She lives in W. Springfield, NH, has a part-time private practice in psychotherapy and operates a farm raising sheep for commercial purposes. Deb also teaches classes in spinning and weaving in her stu-

dio, Snowbound Spin-Offs.

Deborah brings to the Museum not only her crafts experience but her business management skills. She is a graduate of Colby Sawyer College with a degree in Business Administration and of New Hampshire College with a Masters in Human Services.

The Museum staff and trustees are pleased to welcome Deborah and look forward to working with her in the future.

Volunteers Make the Difference

The Museum has a very small staff of paid employees. Much of the work it accomplishes is due to a dedicated volunteer force. This past year 146 volunteers helped in a number of ways. These generous individuals are too numerous to list here by name, but even an abbreviated list of their accomplishments is impressive.

Thanks to a significant volunteer effort the 11,000 square foot Laundry/Dairy building was cleaned last spring and the Museum moved into its offices, store, and exhibit space. Volunteers worked at the Silent Auction fundraiser, Festival of Shaker Crafts and Herbs, the Old-Time Shaker Harvest Festival, and other fund raising activities and mailings. The Shaker Revels production last July

had an all-volunteer cast and crew.

During the summer museum visitors were greeted nearly seven days a week by volunteer Crafts-men-in-Residence. Every Friday through Monday a dedicated group of Tour Guides offered guided village tours. And volunteer Village Gardeners kept the display herb garden immaculate.

The Board of Trustees, also volunteers, put their energy into a major fundraising effort this fall. This project will continue throughout the year, and will be powered by...you guessed it...volunteers!

The Museum simply would not exist without volunteers. If you have an interest in lending your volunteer support, please call us at (603) 632-4346. No prior experience is necessary.

Laundry/Dairy Update

Heat and Lights Donated

Until very recently, much to the discomfort of Museum staff, volunteers and visitors, neither heat nor lights have existed in the Laundry/Dairy building in any practical form. We are delighted to report that thanks to a generous donation from **Defiance Electric Company** of Enfield, New Hampshire there is now bright overhead lighting in the offices and Shaker Store. The Museum is also deeply grateful to **Lenox Industries, Inc.** of Columbus, Ohio for its donation of two powerful gas furnaces, and to **Hayward Refrigeration Co., Inc.** of New London, New Hampshire for donating the installation of all this equipment. The warmth and increased visibility have done a great deal to improve the comfort of visitors, volunteers and staff.

Capital Campaign Begun

The Board of Trustees is in the midst of the most important project it has ever undertaken: a major fund raising effort to buy the historic Church Family Laundry/Dairy building to be the Museum's permanent home. The owners of



Tom Dowling, Lenox Industries, and Mike Hayward, Hayward Refrigeration with the newly installed furnace.

the historic core need to sell the building, and they want the Museum to be the buyer. All we need are the funds to do so.

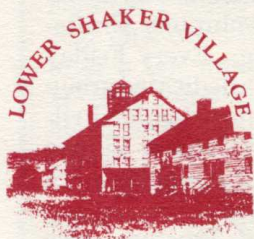
The first goal of the campaign is to raise \$300,000 over the next eighteen months. The funds will pay for the purchase of the Laundry/Dairy and for some initial restoration work. But the Museum also hopes to secure legal protection for the remaining Shaker buildings and grounds to ensure they cannot be altered, regardless of their owners or tenants. This combined effort is the first phase in a long term plan for restoring the Shaker village as a whole.

This is a major undertaking for a relatively new and small institution, but it is vital. The time to save the village is now. In December of 1990 we called on you, the Museum membership, to support this effort. Museum Board members and other volunteers spent four evenings calling as many of you as we could reach to answer questions and take pledges over the phone. The response was overwhelming, to date we have raised in cash and pledges more than \$27,000 as a result

of this calling campaign. Added to another \$40,000 raised among the Board of Trustees and through some grant proposals our total now stands at almost \$70,000.

New Entry Ramp Installed

Thanks to a \$500 grant from the Mascoma Savings Bank Foundation, Lebanon, NH and the donation of some building materials by the First Leader Corporation, Enfield, NH we were able to install a new entry ramp to the Shaker Store and Museum. This ramp allows for handicap accessibility to a portion of the Museum's exhibits and store as well as easier access for all Museum visitors.



The Museum
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