

The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from The Museum at Lower Shaker Village

Volume I / No. 3

Winter 1988

Sister Fannie Fallon

A Shaker School Teacher

by Wendell Hess, Museum Trustee and Local Historian

Sister Fannie Fallon (Frances Charlotte Fallon) was the last Shaker to teach in the Church Family one room schoolhouse - the last of a long line of teachers, many of whom became leaders in the Community.

Fannie came to the Community at the age of 9 in 1864. Her own education was in the same schoolhouse in which she eventually became a teacher. Town records as well as Church records indicate that Fannie was appointed assistant to Sister Mary Elkins in 1882. In 1888 Sr. Mary retired from teaching, and Fannie became the full teacher, assisted by Sr. Agnes Newton. (During this period, the classes were so large that there was a need for an assistant.) From this time until 1914, Sr. Fannie taught the scholars in that one room schoolhouse - a total of 32 years; and the longest record of teaching by any one person in any one-room schoolhouse in the town of Enfield.

Through the years the reports of the Enfield School Committee on the Church

Family school under Sr. Fannie's leadership were only of the highest praise. Some were extensive and others were terse, to wit:

"1889 - SHAKER SCHOOL, Fannie C. Fallon, teacher for the year, assisted by Miss Jones in the summer. Winter term now in session. Register not received. The penmanship and reading of this school is the best of any in the district. The pronunciation conformed to the highest and most recent authority. In both manner and method this school excelled any former one."

"1896 - SHAKER SCHOOL -



Sister Fannie Fallon and her pupils salute the flag in front of the Enfield Shaker schoolhouse.

Teachers Fannie C. Fallon and Sadie Y. Weber. The characteristic of this school is to do the right thing in the right way at the right time."

The following is the last entry in the Enfield School Report on the Church Family School, 1915:

Teacher's Salary, Fannie C. Fallon, teacher	\$156.00
Janitor Service, Fannie C. Fallon, Shaker	3.00
Fuel, 3 cords wood, Fannie C. Fallon, Shaker	12.00
Enrollment, Fannie C. Fallon, 3 terms, 10 pupils	
School year ending July 15, 1914"	

From the time the school closed until the remaining Enfield Shakers went to live with those in Canterbury, Sr. Fannie was a bulwark of strength to Eldress Rosetta Cumings in the tremendous task of closing out the Enfield Community. Buildings had to be emptied of their furnishings, either to be sent to Canterbury, or put in the dining room of the Great Stone Dwelling to be sold to the "World's People." The everyday details of life and living had to be tended, and Sr. Fannie was there to help.

After the community closed in 1922, Sr. Fannie went to Canterbury with the remaining 8 Sisters and 1 Brother. But, the youngest of the sisters became an apostate shortly thereafter. She soon fell on bad times, and Sr. Fannie, who had raised her from a small child, left the Society to care for her until she got over her troubles.

The Society at Canterbury would not allow Sr. Fannie to return to live with

them. Instead, a very Christian woman in Enfield Center took Sr. Fannie into her home, where she cared for her until she died of pneumonia on February 6, 1928.

Fannie had expressed to her friends, "it would be the happiest moment in her life if she could be buried beside her lifelong friends." In the end, the Ministry at Canterbury allowed her remains to be buried in the Church Family cemetery. She was the last Shaker to be buried there. A true Shaker, a devoted teacher, a loyal friend, and a Christian woman, those who knew her loved her dearly. □

