

The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from The Museum at Lower Shaker Village

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Winter 1989

A Move Without Much Ceremony

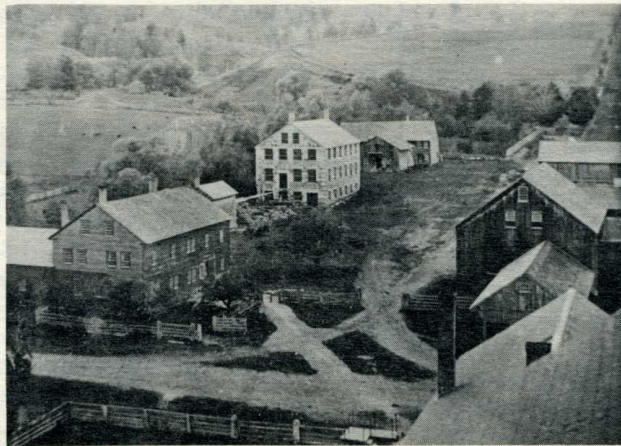
One of the challenges facing The Museum is reconstructing the plan for the Enfield Shaker community as it once existed. Records of the construction, location, destruction, and /or relocation of the buildings from this community provide clues to the architectural history of the village. One source of information about the buildings and their history is a series of articles written for a local newspaper in 1910 by Henry Cumings titled "Village History". During the early 20th century, Henry Cumings, a member of the Enfield Shaker community for almost 20 years, wrote a number of accounts of Shaker life and history for the *Enfield Advocate*.

The third article in the series, "Some of the Houses that have Been Moved in Enfield", gives the following account of moving the Currier's Shop.

"The first I shall mention is the house known as the Laffee house on Baltic Street. About 1852, houses being in great demand, C. M. Dyer with the consent of the Church Family Shakers, decided to move a building known as the Currier's Shop, which stood just above the stone mill near the tan house. This building was erected about 1835 to finish leather in. After the burning of the old grist mill in 1849 some machinery was put into it and used until the stone mill was completed in 1850.

The building was got ready to move by placing it on two long spruce trees, the end being shaped like a sled runner. A day was set and invitations were sent to the farmers about town who owned

oxen to come to the moving bee. The Shakers had a dozen yoke of heavy oxen and enough responded to swell the number to thirty-six yoke. A pair of heavy cart wheels were attached by a strong cable to each shoe and the heaviest oxen were put next the building, the



The Currier's Shop was part of this complex of buildings until 1852. Today the Stone Mill building stands alone.

others were arranged something according to size and when all was ready there were two strings of cattle, eighteen yoke in each team with a driver to each pair.

The route taken was across the field towards the North Family Shakers coming into the highway just south of the brick office, following the road to the North Family Shakers boat landing, then on to the lake. It was February and the ice was twenty-eight inches thick and did not give perceptibly.

John Jones of this place was in charge of the job and everything went smoothly, the only mishap being the breaking of a chain or two.

At noon the building was fairly on the ice. Then the oxen were baited, not being unhitched and

the men were served a bountiful lunch, all eating from the hand without much ceremony.

In those days those who went to such a bee gave their service as a neighborly act and neither expected or received any other compensation but thank you and the remembrance of a kindness freely rendered to others.

After the lunch was over and the team well rested a start was made as I recollect no stop was made till the shore was reached. A landing being made where the Cox orchard was afterwards set out, thence up the hill to where Wells Street now ends, and following near where that street now is, down Union Street crossing the railroad, near where the passenger station now stands, and across the mill pond on to the spot where it was to

stand.

This building was 26 X 36 feet, two stories. It was raised up, the basement put under and finished for two tenements. I do not know whether Dyer rented it for a time or not, at any rate T. Laffee bought it before very long."

The T. Laffee referred to in the article was Thomas Laffee whose granddaughter, Mary Laffee Hill, still lives in Enfield. Mrs. Hill provided The Museum with a copy of a bill of sale which shows that Thomas and Catherine Laffee bought the building and land described above from William and Betsey Smith in 1864 for \$750.00. The Laffee family owned and lived in the house for the next 110 years. Today the house is the home of the Langley family. □

Sage Thoughts

by Happy Griffiths, Herbalist

The seed business was probably the most lucrative of the Shaker industries during the first three-quarters of the 19th century. The Shaker sisters helped the brethren gather and sort vegetable, flower and herb seeds ensuring their reputation for seeds of quality and high germination count. These carefully selected seeds were then packaged in handmade paper envelopes. The records show that in 1845 the Enfield, NH Shakers made 52,000 of these envelopes. In the springtime, the brethren would travel the country roads peddling their seeds to farmers along the way.

Today a wide variety of catalogs and stores offer seeds for sale. Once you have selected your garden seeds, keep in mind the following basic principles for successful seed raising. Before you plant, read the back of your seed package for special instructions on light, moisture, germination temperature, etc. When planting indoors a soilless mix, available from your local garden center, is safer to use than garden loam because it does not contain micro-organisms which can kill the germinating seeds. Sow seeds in a flat of the dampened mix at a depth equal to the diameter of the seed. Cover the flat with a clear plastic wrap to keep the seeds moist and place in an area where the temperature will stay about 70°. As soon as the seeds begin to germinate, remove the plastic wrap and place the flats where they will receive plenty of light. Be careful at this stage to water the seedlings gently so they will not be dislodged. Once the second set of true leaves appear seedlings can be transplanted to individual pots.

You can acclimate your transplants by placing them in a cold frame outdoors for a few days before planting them in your garden. Gradually expose them to full sun, keep them moist and bring them in at night if there is any danger of frost. When you are sure all danger of frost is past, transplant young plants to the desired location in your garden. As you plant seeds this spring try to remember this Shaker saying: "If you would have a lovely garden, you should have a lovely life."

May We Introduce...

On January 3 Elaine Loft joined the Museum staff as the new Education Coordinator. Elaine will be taking over many of Caryn Bosson's responsibilities, including coordination of the volunteer, workshop and garden programs as well as publicity for the Museum. Caryn Bosson has taken on a much bigger responsibility—motherhood—and will return to the Museum on a part time basis in June.

Elaine and her husband moved to Enfield in August. Shortly after their arrival she walked into the Museum and naively asked if there were any volunteer opportunities and was quickly tapped for the Shaker Oral History Project. Throughout the summer

and fall Elaine continued to volunteer for such diverse projects as the archaeological dig, the Harvest Festival and miscellaneous office projects. After passing through an extensive application and interview process with a dozen other applicants, Elaine was chosen to be the newest member of the Museum's staff.

A graduate of Hamilton College, Elaine holds a Bachelor's degree in English and has done post-graduate work in art history, architecture and business administration. Prior to assuming her new position at the Museum, Elaine was the assistant to the director of the Public Policy Research Organization at the University of California in Irvine. □



Volunteers Dig for Shaker Treasure

While preparing the parking area next to the Laundry/Dairy Building for repaving this fall, **Richard Dionne** and his crew noticed large pieces of broken pottery and glass in the ground. Upon closer inspection they found several metal kitchen utensils and two intact Shaker bottles. The prospect of other finds encouraged them to alert the Museum staff.

With the help of **Charlie Bosson**, Lower Shaker Village project manager, we were able to stop the construction in the area to allow time for further digging. Trustee **Greg Schwarz** was called in to help evaluate and mark the site and calls were made to other volunteers to help with the excavation.

On Saturday, October 1, under the guidance of **Andy Green**, archeologist and Museum volunteer, **Nancy King**, **Elaine Loft**, **Jim Loft** and **Carolyn Smith** began to sift through layers of soil and ashes. The excitement grew as several intact bottles, Shaker spoons and forks, and hundreds of pottery and glass shards were uncovered and separated by type. The site of the dig also yielded a Shaker water culvert, the large iron rings still neatly in place despite the total deterioration of the wooden water pipe they once held. The artifacts found during this impromptu dig will be on exhibit once they can be cleaned and catalogued. We hope this is only the beginning of many more such finds in the future! □

'89 Season Includes Many New Programs

Although the winds of winter are still blowing across Mascoma Lake, the Museum staff has been busily making arrangements for the 1989 season. Several new programs have been created and the "old favorites" have been improved and expanded. The 1989 Calendar of Events will not be available until April, but here is a sneak preview of what lies ahead...

Workshops: Exciting additions to the workshop program include **Shaker Cat Head Basket Making** taught by nationally known author and instructor, John McGuire; **Shaker Swing Handle Carrier Making** led by John Wilson an expert in the craft of oval boxes; and **Rug Braiding** with Carolyn Brooks who also teaches the popular Chair Reseating class.

Summer Sundays: An impressive group of historians and authors will be presenting this year's Sunday afternoon lectures. Check your Calendar of Events for details on the following: The Iconography of Shaker Life by **Robert Emlen**; Preserving Your History by **Philip Cronenwett**, Shaker

Cooking in Its 19th Century Perspective by **Cheryl Anderson**; and Shaker Connections by **Flo Morse**.

Special Events: A Festival of Shaker Crafts and Herbs (June 3), **Antique Show and Sale** (August 20), **Old-Time Shaker Harvest Festival** (October 7) and **NEW** this year, **Shaker Revels** (July 13-15), an outdoor production featuring songs, dance and history of the Shakers produced by Revels North in cooperation with the Museum. Look for details in the next issue of *The Friends' Quarterly*.

Shaker Teas: Beginning in May, the Museum will be serving tea once a month on Sunday afternoon. An array of baked goods with names like "Rosewater Flower Cookies," "Honey Bee Cake," and "Herb Jelly Roll" will be prepared from Shaker recipes. Shaker herbal

teas will accompany the delectable cookies and cakes. Each tea promises to be a simple, but elegant affair.

Shaker Meals: Expanding on the well-liked holiday dinners, the Museum will work in conjunction with the restaurant to present a series of Shaker Meals. Each month, from May to December, the menu will highlight specialties of the season—like summer herbs and autumn produce. All meals will be prepared from Shaker recipes and served in the dining room of the Great Stone Dwelling.

As you may have noticed, our calendar has been lengthened this year. We will now be offering workshops, meals and lectures from May through December. We hope that you will join us at many of the exciting events planned for the 1989 season. □

Village Gardeners

Last summer witnessed the inauguration of the Village Gardeners Program. Seven dedicated individuals led by Happy Griffiths, participated in the thirteen week session which included workshops, field trips and hands-on experience in the herb and vegetable gardens. In addition to maintaining the gardens and answering questions for Museum visitors, the Village Gardeners hosted tea in the herb garden after the organ concerts and Summer Sundays.

The 1989 Village Gardeners Program will be improved based, in part upon suggestions offered by the 1988 participants. This year the program will focus solely on the herb garden. Each Village Gardener will be responsible for his or her own herb bed. The group will meet bi-weekly, reprising the popular pot-luck dinner/instruction format. Each of the seven sessions will concentrate on one of the herb garden beds, including: dye, fragrance, everlasting, roses, medicinal, and culinary.

Museum Herbalist Happy Griffiths will once again be directing the program. In addition to presenting information about each of the garden's beds, Happy will teach a craft relating to the "bed of the week" (ie. lavender wands) and will lead the group on a troubleshooting tour of the garden.

Each Village Gardener will be asked to spend 3 hours/week in the herb garden, maintaining his or her own bed. In addition to Happy, other specialists will be available in the garden at pre-arranged times so that program participants will be able to have their gardening questions answered as they work.

As in 1988, the cost of participating in the Village Gardeners Program will be \$25.00. The Village Gardeners Program will be widely advertised in the coming months, and is expected to draw an enthusiastic crop of gardeners. If you are interested in becoming a Village Gardener contact Elaine Loft as soon as possible. □

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: Membership Coordinator, The Museum at Lower Shaker Village, Box 25, Enfield, NH 03748, or call (603) 632-5533 or 632-4838.

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Happy Griffiths, Herbalist

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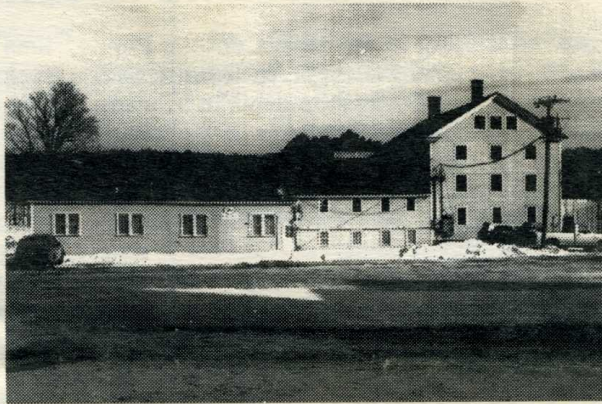
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A Home to Call Our Own?

The Properties and Exhibits Committee has been hard at work developing long range plans for The Museum related to the use of buildings and grounds. In developing these plans it became clear that the Church Family Laundry/Dairy Building (currently occupied by Dana Robes Wood Craftsmen) was the most appropriate spot for the Museum to have its permanent home. The building provides adequate space for planned activities, has an abundance of original Shaker detail, is capable of being restored, and will be available in June.

The next step was to begin negotiating with the owners of the building. Preliminary discussions have gone well and the committee is now researching areas such as fund raising options, restoration costs, and legal issues.

In the meantime a hardy group of volunteers has been busy taking measurements of the Laundry/Dairy Building to use in preparing architectural floor plans. On Saturday, January 21 **Charlie Bosson, Jim Loft, Steve Powell, John Taylor, Joe Thompson, Erik van Lennep** and **Judy Zimicki** spent several hours in sub-zero temperatures taking exact



measurements of the upper floors of the Laundry/Dairy Building. Then on Sunday, February 12 a second wave of volunteers including: **Caryn and Charlie Bosson, Jim Loft, Mary Noordsy, Becky Powell, John Taylor** and **Joe Thompson** fin-

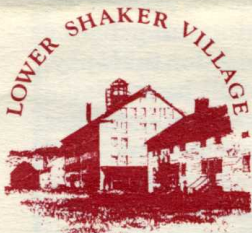
ished measuring the Laundry/Dairy Building and the West Brethren's Shop and began to tag and inventory all loose Shaker items. The completed architectural floor plans for the Laundry/Dairy Building have now been drawn by **John Taylor** and will be used to help determine plans for usage and restoration.

The team tagging Shaker items made a good start but there is still much work to be done, if you are interested in helping with this effort be sure to let us know. The future of The Museum continues to provide many opportunities for involvement and exciting progress we hope you will be an on-going part of this development. □

Now Available in Living Color

The Shaker Store is pleased to announce the availability of full-color notecards and postcards depicting scenes from around Lower Shaker Village. Included are spectacular views of the village from the Feast Ground, the Museum herb garden in full bloom, the 1854 Cow Barn on a clear summer day, the Great Stone Dwelling (exterior and interior) and herbs drying in

the barn. Doug Leitch took the photographs used for these cards last summer and they provide a striking look at the beauty of this area. Postcards are available at .50 each and notecards at 1.25 each. Next time you are in the area stop in the store for a look at these new cards or write for a "Friends Only" sample set (one each of six designs) for \$4.75 ppd. □



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