

# The Friends' Quarterly

A Newsletter from the Enfield Shaker Museum

Volume XI/No. 1

Winter 1999

## Long Live the Apple, Part 1

By Galen Beale

*"Long live the apple and next live the peach.  
Long live all fruits that live within our reach."*<sup>1</sup>

Apple trees have always played an important part in the Shakers' lives. Shaker songs, drawings and diaries reflect the importance of this agricultural crop and its many uses. Sources frequently mention the concerns of tending the orchards and harvesting and preserving these fruits. The writing of Eldress Bertha Lindsay of Canterbury remind us of the spiritual significance of the apple tree as well, noting the many Biblical references to the tree with which the Shakers were so familiar, from the Serpent's temptation of Eve to the biblical expression, "the apple of one's eye."

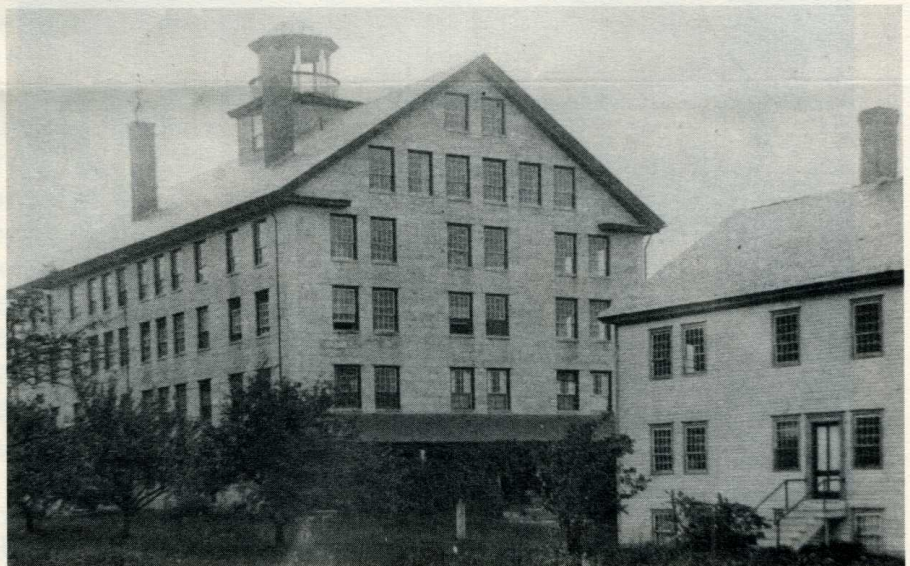
A spiritual message received in a meeting at the Watervliet community in 1839 illustrates such symbolic use of fruit trees: Mother Lucy said that Mother Ann had planted a ... *beautiful tree here, bearing twelve different kinds of fruit; namely "Faith, Hope, Charity, Meekness, Humility, Thankfulness, &c"* And on the top of this tree was spread the gift of Love, which spread luster over all its branches, [and] greatly beautified all the variety of Fruits... Mother wanted that we should partake very largely of the gift of Love, it's, she said, a gift we very much needed. She would have nothing of any other kind of fruit, but such as was found to grow upon this tree.<sup>2</sup>

Shaker settlements inherited a long tradition of apple cultivation. When Europeans began to settle in America and discovered that the indigenous

apple was a sour crab, they brought their favorite fruits, seeds and scions from the Old World. The first American apple orchard was planted in 1625 on the slopes of Beacon Hill in Boston. The distribution of the apple kept pace with the progress of settlement, seeds being carried by Indians, traders, and white missionaries far into the wilderness.

Elder Henry Blinn of the New Hampshire Shaker Bishopric acknowledged the importance of orchards when describing the early settlement of this country: *"The first thing that occupied the mind of the pioneer of the new country was to find a shelter for the body, and then to arrange a section of land for an orchard."*<sup>3</sup> Most of these early settlers planted apple seeds around their small homesteads. Fruit grown from seeds often does not resemble the fruit of the parent, so these indeterminate varieties were known as "natural"

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*This view of the southeast corner of the Great Stone Dwelling and the 1794 Dwelling House reveals some of the many fruit trees planted around the community.*



## From the President

Dear Friends,

Once again winter holds the Museum in its grasp. The parking lot is rimmed with snow banks, and the cold air forces us to hurry between buildings now. Unlike in the warmer months when we are thronged with visitors, most of our time in this season is spent planning for next year. Our Calendar of Events will be out soon and offers an excited and varied program: a lecture series on the Millennium, classes in Shaker trades, a Sacred Music Weekend, and new exhibits.

Anticipating another season of site work, we are finalizing designs and lining up contractors. The most visible change by this summer will be the removal of the central parking lot. This area will be regraded and planted to grass and an orchard, restoring a more Shaker-like appearance and keeping the modern intrusions outside the core of the village. New parking lots on the perimeter of the site will provide the necessary accommodations for vehicles.

In recognition of our historic importance, Route 4A (from Interstate 89 into Enfield Center) has been designated a NH Scenic and Cultural Byway. This program is designed to focus attention on lesser known routes and regions of the state, helping to attract recreational driving, bicycling, and tourism. The Museum is pleased to have taken part in this designation process. Now we are cooperating with the Shaker Inn and Canterbury Shaker Village to develop a new historic driving tour between both villages that will debut this spring.

Our search for a new Director continues. We are committed to finding the right individual to lead us on into the next century, and hope to have the position filled by late spring. In the meantime, we continue apace. Our new store in the Great Stone Dwelling has been very successful and the increasing responsibilities of two stores will require a new store manager this year. Michael and I are working hard to ensure that there is no lost time during this transition. The Museum is open every weekend throughout the winter and we'd love to see any of you who might make it out our way.

Best wishes for the New Year, and thank you for your support in 1998.

Sincerely,  
Galen Beale



*Kate Howard leads the group in song and dance as part of the Sacred Music Weekend. Other singing leaders were Peter and Mary Alice Amidon and Mary Ann Haagen. The weekend event was sponsored by Shaker Workshops, of Ashburnham, MA.*

*The Friends' Quarterly* is a publication of The Enfield Shaker Museum. It is mailed as a service to Museum members. For information on membership write:

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## Museum Adopts New Vision Statement

Based on the premise that if you do not know where you are going, you will never get there, the Museum's Board has just completed a Vision Statement for the Museum in the year 2010. The Board met three times last November to develop the statement, ably guided by local resident and long-time Museum supporter, Don Gamache. Don has worked with senior level management at a variety of major US corporations and non-profits including Gillette, PPG and Habitat for Humanity.

"We are fortunate to have someone with Don's skill and experience facilitate this process for the Museum," acknowledged Museum Board President Galen Beale. "This newly created document, along with our long range plan will create an outline for our efforts over the next decade."

The process began over a Friday evening dinner at the Shaker Inn, where the group brainstormed all the positive aspects of the Museum, then consolidated and prioritized the list by consensus. The following day, the Board worked through a series of exercises designed to stretch and challenge its notions of where the Museum might be as an institution in the year 2010.

Don arranged all this new information into a page of text which became the working document for the third day of exercises, and eventually evolved into the final Vision Statement. The process worked extremely well and was a credit to the skills of the facilitator. As Don reminded the participants at the beginning of each session, "all of us are smarter than one of us."

The Board plans quarterly reviews of the Vision Statement and the Long Range Plan, and updates as necessary over time, to keep the Museum on track with its goals .

### **Vision Statement for the Enfield Shaker Museum in the Year 2010**

The Enfield Shaker Museum is the focal point of a dynamic community with a strong pulse and a broad range of activities and interests. People -- the vibrant staff, strong volunteer network, and dedicated Board -- are our strongest resource in the continuing realization of the Museum's mission and success. We are a welcoming place where one can bring talents, interests, and contributions and, in turn, find supporting resources. Our total setting, featuring restored Shaker buildings, rural landscape, Mt. Assurance, Mascoma Lake and the Shaker gardens, combines a contemplative quality with a sense of history, drawing many visitors. We have built on the spiritual history of our site and seek to exemplify Shaker ideals of social responsibility. The Museum is an identified resource for Shaker architecture, trades, organic gardening, foods, sacred music and dance, and other relevant topics.

Our strong financial position is the product of our ever-growing, multifaceted financial support. This strength enables us to effectively staff the expanding Museum and its programs. We are a model for profit and non-profit collaboration. The Shaker Inn is a fitting extension of our environment. Our unique gift shop, by providing items tied to our exhibits and themes, is a continuation of the Museum visitor's experience.

We maintain momentum by the ongoing creation of new educational programming on Shaker life and its relevance to contemporary society. These programs, characterized by unexpected combinations and opportunities for active participation, are designed to expand our visitors' curiosity, broaden their understanding, and leave them feeling enriched. We accomplish this, in part, by recognizing each visitor's individuality, allowing room for their imagination and creativity, and providing choices for differing levels of participation. Presenters of living history demonstrations are known for their knowledge, skill and enthusiasm. This contributes to a personal and potentially transforming experience for our visitors. The Library and Archive, which we continue to develop and improve, is an emerging center for Shaker studies.

The Museum is an important contributor to the Town of Enfield, the Upper Valley, and beyond. The Enfield Shaker Museum is a leader in the museum profession and has a world-wide reputation for excellence in its presentation of the Shaker story.





*This posed photograph is taken from the dooryard of the Church Family Trustee's Office looking west across Route 4A*

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or "common" fruit, and were used chiefly for feeding stock and making cider.

Grafted fruit, which produces varieties true to the parent stock, gained a following after the American Revolution. By 1800, when the Shaker movement was well underway, the ordinary farm orchard usually had many of these grafted apple varieties. Stock for these trees came from commercial nurseries such as the Prince Nursery, established in 1730 on Long Island.

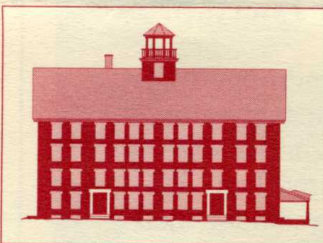
Prince's 1845 catalog listed the "best" 350 varieties of apples, covering a wide range of maturity rates, flavors, and keeping qualities.

Before 1800 all of the Shaker Villages cultivated fruit trees planted in plots, in rows dividing fields, or set out between buildings. The formal orchards contained a large variety of trees to yield fruit for sauce, pies, eating, storage or cider. According to Eldress Bertha Lindsay, Canterbury's early orchards were "planted [with] peach or pear trees between the apple trees. Being short lived, the peach trees were cut down and the apple trees were trees that lasted many years longer." <sup>4</sup> These old apple trees became cherished symbols of the founding Shakers, as this 1913 Canterbury's sister's journal indicates.

*"An old apple tree now standing just south of the Schoolhouse fence preserves to us an old landmark, viz; the 1<sup>st</sup> tree of the original Whitcher orchard."* <sup>5</sup>

While the Shaker villages at Harvard and Shirley, Massachusetts, and in Kentucky, had more significant fruit industries and sold huge quantities of nursery stock, canned fruit and applesauce, the New Hampshire Shakers also derived food, drink and sales products from their orchards. Apples, peaches, pears, plums, cherries and apricots were all cultivated in

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Canterbury and Enfield.

Much of the continual care that these orchards required was provided by the younger members of the Shaker community. Tending of young trees that would grow and mature along with the children instilled a love of the earth and its crops at an early age. Nicholas Briggs described how the boys were encouraged to learn agricultural skills at Canterbury: *"On Saturday afternoon no work was required of the boys. Until 3 o'clock their time was spent on their little gardens at the 'island,' an acre of land in one of the mill ponds that the boys, assisted by their caretaker, had redeemed from its wildness of rocks and bushes, and made it suitable for tillage, also making a road connecting it with the main land. This land was set with apple trees which served as dividing lines, and every boy large enough to use tools was given a plot for his very own to raise therein anything he desired."*<sup>6</sup>

Hervey Elkins, caretaker of the boys at Enfield, sounds a similar note: *"The boys had much leisure time; in general, they were supplied with work, but not confined to it. In the summer they worked about six hours per day. During the spring, summer and autumn, we spent much of our leisure time in cultivating and beautifying a pomonal garden, one acre in extent, set apart on purpose for us, and containing two hundred apple, pear and plum trees of the choicest varieties. The Green, the Purple, the Columbian and Imperial Gages, the Washington, the Jefferson, the Lombardy, the magnum Bonnum or Egg Plum, and other model varieties were there planted by us, and grew and prolifically yielded their luscious fruits."*<sup>7</sup>

Fruit trees yielded rich rewards. Harvesting, processing, and storing of the fruit crops was intensive activity on every farm. In Shaker villages, the fruit harvest continued day and night until the crop was secured, for the fruit needed to be picked at the moment of ripeness and quickly processed to ensure the best quality. Nicholas Briggs fondly recalled his introduction to the Canterbury harvest:

*"My first job ... was picking apples at the East Farm orchard .... This orchard yielded this year one thousand bushels of fruit for the cellar, quite as much more of sauce apples, and a large amount for cider. A large company of both sexes were occupied a full week in this orchard. The young men picked the apples and the sisters sorted them into number one and number two for storage, and sauce apples to be cut and dried."*

*The apples were laid very carefully in baskets and conveyed home in spring wagons, and as carefully transferred to bins in the cellars. No apple was number one that had dropped from the tree or had received the least bruise. Dinner was served in the old barn, across the floor on which was a long rude table. We knelt before and after eating as at home, but there was no restraint in conversation. Few young sisters and no girls were there. In those present the Elders gave careful attention to their selection to remove all possible danger of undue familiarity between the young people.*

*The brethren had an apple cellar for their own exclusive use, in which was stored the fruit from the pasture trees. These were trees that had from time to time been grafted to fine fruit. These apples were dealt out to the brethren in their shops all through the winter. The little boys also had a cellar of their own for the apples upon the Island, and some of the ungrafted fruit that otherwise would go for cider, and with their young and vigorous appetites they were not so fastidious as to their quality."*<sup>8</sup>

Each family in a Shaker community maintained its own orchards, with one individual in charge who also had other responsibilities within the Village. Several Enfield orchardists are particularly significant. Samuel Brown, an early and prominent member of the South Family, is best known for his medicinal preparation,

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Brown's Fluid Extract of English Valerian. In 1846, he furnished young fruit trees to Seth Bradford of the Church Family, who in turn planted them near the Drying House. At the time, Bradford was also maintaining a nursery in the south orchard where he grafted pear scions onto "thorn bushes."

The Bradford family, including ten children, had joined the Enfield Shakers in 1808. They were typical of many large families who settled with the Shakers in the early days of the community, and they provided the leadership and continuity for the growing village. The Bradford children held the hope for the rising generation. Perhaps Dr. Brown, the aging physician and early believer, saw special promise in the young Seth Bradford. In providing Bradford with young trees to grow, Brown may have hoped to encourage the young man to remain with the Society. But six years after Brown's death in 1850, Seth Bradford, age 30, left the community.<sup>9</sup>

John Cummings and William Wilson, also known to have care of the orchards, were Seth Bradford's contemporaries, and lived out their lives at Enfield. John Cummings cared for the Church Family orchards for many years. Writing later, his brother, Henry, described the orchards and comments on the new varieties attributed to John: "*several fine varieties originated with them, notable the quince apple, Shaker pippin and Shaker Greening and several fine sweet apples, also the Ahimaaz pear.*"<sup>10</sup>

William Wilson, who served as a Family Elder and Trustee in the South Family, "*set out about 200 young apple trees of every variety ... on a smooth part of the mountain side overlooking the valley.*" This new venture coincided with widespread improvement in regional transportation systems, most notably the railroad, which made commercial orcharding a more attractive venture. In 1861, Wilson moved to the North Family and may have assisted with the development of a new money making venture there— the sale of fruit trees. At his departure six years later, the family reported that they had for sale 2,000 apple and pear trees.<sup>11</sup>

**To be continued next issue...**

## Footnotes:

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2. Lindsay, Eldress Bertha. *The World of Shaker*, Summer, 1976. Vol. VI; Buckingham, David Austin. Letter to Mt. Lebanon, March, 1839. WRHS, [microfilm] IV A 29.
3. Blinn, Henry C., *Church Record, Canterbury, N.H. 1784-1879*. Canterbury Shaker Village, Archives. [hereafter SVI], pg. 22.
4. Lindsay, Eldress Bertha. Transcription of "Orchard" tape recorded at Canterbury Shaker Village by Charles "Bud" Thompson. 1970s. SVI.
5. Evans, Sister Jessie, *Diaries*, 1913. SVI.
6. Briggs, Nicholas, "40 Years a Shaker, Canterbury, N.H." *The Granite Monthly*, December 1920, vol. 52. New Hampshire State Library, Concord, NH, pg. 469.
7. Elkins, Hervey, *Fifteen Years in the Senior Order of Shakers*, 1853. Reprint, Dartmouth Press, Hanover, NH, pp 79-80.
8. Briggs, Nicholas, "40 Years a Shaker, Canterbury, N.H." *The Granite Monthly*, January, 1921, v. 53. New Hampshire State Library, Concord, NH, pg. 30.
9. Bradford, Seth. "A Diary or Memorandum kept by Seth T. Bradford", 1850. Copy at Enfield Shaker Museum, Enfield, NH.
10. Cummings, Henry. Newspaper article, April 21, 1905. Nellie Pierce Collection, Special Collections, Baker Library, Hanover, NH.
11. Cummings, Henry, Newspaper article, "Memories of Shaker Village," Nellie Pierce Collection, Special Collections, Baker Library, Hanover, NH.



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## Northern Spy

Apple label from Canterbury Shaker Village. Date unknown. Courtesy of a private collection.