

Enfield Shaker Museum

2021 Spring Shaker Forum Online

Schedule of Programs

April 29: “The Changing Face of Shaker Life: How Pictorial Images in the Popular Press Reflect the Growing Acceptance of the Shakers in 19th-Century America”, Robert Emlen

The first published pictures of Shaker life appeared in the late 1820s, and over the course of the next fifty years some 200 visual images of the Shakers made their way into print. Overtime the tone of these printed images evolved from derogatory or skeptical depictions of peculiar people to respectful portrayals of the Shakers as solid citizens and good neighbors. Based on his new book *Imagining the Shakers*, Robert explores the shifting visual portrayal of the Shakers and explains the importance of these images to understanding the Shakers and their place in American Society.

Robert Emlen is a Visiting Scholar in American Studies at Brown University in Providence, RI. For over twenty years, he was the University Curator and Senior Lecturer in American Studies at Brown University. He was also an adjunct faculty member in the History of Art and Visual Culture at the Rhode Island School of Design. Robert has published several books on Shaker History including *Imagining the Shakers: How the Visual Culture of Shaker Life Was Pictured in the Popular Illustrated Press of Nineteenth-Century America*, *Shaker Village Views*, and *Picturing the Shakers in the Era of Manifestations*.

May 4: “Motive, Means, and Opportunity: Amateur Shutterbugs Shoot the Harvard Shakers”, Ned Quist

From the 1880s to World War I, a group of amateur photographers in Ayer, Massachusetts traveled around Ayer, Harvard, and environs taking pictures of historic buildings, landscapes, train disasters, outdoor recreation, construction projects, their neighbors, and themselves (the “selfie” is not new). Among the several thousand surviving photographs from these amateurs, are a group of images visually documenting the last years of the Shaker community in Harvard. Ned will focus his discussion on the images taken of the Harvard Shakers and their Village.

Ned Quist is a retired academic librarian who served as an Associate University Librarian for Research and Outreach for Brown University from 2011-2018. Prior to that, he was the Music Librarian at the Orwig Music Library at Brown University from 2001-2011 and the Head Librarian at the Peabody Conservatory of Music at Johns Hopkins University from 1976-2001. Currently, he is an independent researcher working on in the field of Shaker Studies with a focus on Shaker mills.

May 6: “First in the West: The Shaker Experience of Visionary Malcolm Worley and His Family”, Christian Goodwillie

Malcolm Worley was an educator, leader in the Kentucky Revival, and the first convert to Shakerism west of the Appalachians. Despite his prominence, many questioned his sanity. Worley's capacity for theological speculation and innovation, as well as visionary experiences, marked him out as a singular man, even among the Shakers. This paper will trace the life of Worley and his family's tragic experience with Shakerism, the institution they were key in establishing west of the Appalachians.

Christian Goodwillie is the Director and Curator of Special Collections and Archives at the Burke Library, Hamilton College in Clinton, NY. In addition, he is an Associate Editor at Richard W. Couper Press. Christian has published several books including *Shaker Autobiographies, Biographies, and Testimonies* and *Gather up the Fragments: the Andrews Shaker Collection*. He has also published numerous articles touching on many different aspects of Shaker Studies.

May 11: “Seen & Received: Continuing Reflections on the Shakers’ Private Art”, Sharon Koomler

Among the lesser-known creative works produced by American Shakers is the body of drawings that came out of a period of spiritual revival in the mid-19th century, known as the era of “Mother’s Work.” Many depict complex imagery from nature, enhanced with writings that express love and encouragement from elders in the spiritual world sent to Shakers living on the earthly plane. Other works appear to be spiritual writing – perhaps a form of writing in tongues. A few are simple line drawings.

This illustrated presentation introduces some of the creators of these works of spiritual art and looks at the experiences that likely influenced their work. Shaker gift drawings will be considered alongside a larger body of spiritual/visionary art and artists. Shaker visionary art is not without influence from worldly experience. It rests squarely alongside non-Shaker visionary art in its significance in American folk art.

Sharon Koomler has been Director and Curator at the Shaker Museum and Library, Old Chatham, NY, Curator at Hancock Shaker Village, and Director of Education at the Shaker Museum at South Union. Sharon’s research interests have focused on the daily and spiritual lives of the Shakers. She has also published several works such as *Seen and Received: The Shakers’ Private Art* and “No Strange Gift Ever Came from God: A Discussion of Shaker Gift Drawings” in *As It Is in Heaven: The Legacy of Shaker Faith and Design*.

May 18: “Both Sides of the Lens: The Mount Lebanon Shakers and the Men and Women Who Photographed Them”, Jerry Grant

Historic photographs provide a snapshot into Shaker life at Mount Lebanon during the Age of Photography. In this illustrated talk, Jerry will discuss the Mount Lebanon Shakers and those who captured their likenesses.

Jerry Grant is the current Director of Collections and Research at Shaker Museum. Jerry has also been a Director at Hancock Shaker Village. Jerry has published several works on the Shakers including *Shaker Furniture Makers* with Douglas Allen, *Noble but Plain: The Shaker Meetinghouse at Mount Lebanon, New York*, and “Oval Box Making at Mount Lebanon, New York” in *Inspired Innovation: A Celebration of Shaker Ingenuity*.

May 20: “Brother Philemon Stewart as New Lebanon Church Family Physician: Re-imagining a portion of his ‘toiling, stormy, industrious, valuable life’”, Kerry Hackett

Although Brother Philemon Stewart is perhaps best known for the part he played in the Era of Manifestations, he was also had a profound impact on the practice of medicine at New Lebanon – through his role as principal male instrument in the Era of Manifestations and during his almost three-year tenure as physician from January 1844 to December 1846.

Recent original research has uncovered new details with regards to this Shaker Brother that may offer scholars a further understanding of his life and zealous personality. This presentation will focus on Stewart’s attempt to change medical practice at the Church Family Nurse Shop, and through the use of contextual primary materials seek to re-imagine a portion his life.

Kerry Hackett has been a Medical Herbalist for almost two decades. From an early age, plants and cultural history have fascinated Kerry. She holds a Master of Science degree from the University of Central Lancashire (UK). She is a professional member of the National Institute of Medical Herbalists (UK), the American Herbalists Guild, the Ontario Herbalists Association (Past-President), and the Veterinary Botanical Medicine Association. She frequently lectures on these topics in both Canada and the US and is currently writing a doctoral dissertation on botanical medicines in the nineteenth century. Kerry also gardens extensively and grows a wide variety of organic fruits, vegetables, and herbs.