

# The Friends' Quarterly

## Newsletter of the Enfield Shaker Museum

Sharing history and hospitality



Vol. XXXIII No. 2  
Spring 2024

### UPCOMING EVENTS

For more details, visit our website at [shakermuseum.org](http://shakermuseum.org)

- July 3 Upper Valley Community Band Concert
- July 4 Pie Sale and Garden Opening
- July 7 Infused Herbal Vinegars and Salts Workshop
- July 12 Farm-to-Table Shaker Cooking Workshop
- July 17 Footworks Concert
- July 19 Oval Box Making Workshop
- July 20 Turkey Wing Whisk Broom Workshop
- July 20 Herbal Remedies for Better Digestion
- July 21 Herbal Tea Ritual
- July 31 Cardigan Mountain Tradition Concert

We are adding programs and events to our website calendar weekly. Check often for details.

A publication of Enfield Shaker Museum  
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## “A Place to Gather To” The Enfield Shakers' North Family (Part 2)

By Mary Ann Haagen

But for many, Shakerism was a brief stop on life's journey – a place to escape, regroup, or recover from the challenges they faced in the world. Some came with a clear religious or social agenda that proved incompatible with Shaker theology and communal life. Many individuals, commonly called “Winter Shakers,” stayed only for the cold winter months when jobs were scarce and the weather unfor-giving. Others timed their arrival and departure to duck the yearly poll tax. Some of those taken in were so inconsequential to the life of the community that their names were never even entered in a Shaker record. Yet Shakerism depended on adult conversion to the faith, and it was in the North Family that the spiritual work of becoming a Shaker began. The viability of the Society as a whole depended to a large extent on the North Family leaders' ability to gather and retain converts.

Shepherding new members into a fully consecrated Shaker life was not the only challenge that the Society faced. Twice the North Family was severely impacted by devastating fires, and twice the community was betrayed by dishonest trustees. Though fires destroyed property at great cost to the family economy, it was the dishonesty of trusted leaders that wounded and demoralized Believers at a more profound level.

North Family Elder and Trustee, Henry Cumings, reported the first of two such betrayals.

*The first serious blow at the financial prosperity of the Society came on the North family in 1860, when it was found that Austin Bronson, who had been trustee of that family for eight years, had allowed debts to accumulate against him to the amount of \$12,000. When Bronson took the business from True W. Heath in 1852 the family was free from debt, did not owe any bills. True was one of the old style financiers who went without what he could not pay for.<sup>10</sup>*

This staggering debt did not come to light until Bronson had left the society. Most of the money was owed to non-Shaker citizens and banks. According to Cumings it took until 1877 to fully repay what was owed. This was done primarily under his leadership. He revived and modernized the family's pail and tub factory – and with new steam powered machinery generated enough new business to retire the debt.<sup>11</sup>

In 1900 the North Family again fell victim to a scoundrel – this time Trustee George Baxter. The financial toll on the family was less onerous this time – he had only managed to make off with a few hundred dollars in cash. But it was a terrible blow to the now seriously diminished society at Enfield.<sup>12</sup>

(Continued on pg. 2)



North Family Elder and Trustee Henry Cumings



North Family Trustee George Baxter.

**“A Place to Gather To”** *(continued from page 1)*

Fortunately, in the long arc of Enfield’s North Family history, the integrity and purposefulness of its leaders and converts outshines the glaring disappointments. Although they misjudged these two individuals, the Ministry consistently made its best effort, often with few options, to appoint capable leaders.

*Eldress Lucinda has gone to the North under a heavy cross but felt willing to go and do the best she could. She has done well thus far and if she gains a gift (and we see no reason why she may not) we think her well calculated to make a nice woman in that place as she is possessed of that turn of mind and character that is qualified to gather souls, to know what is going on in a family, and a person we know where to find.*<sup>13</sup>

Despite the important role the North Family played in the recruitment and nurturing of converts, Shaker records of Enfield’s gathering order are few and scattered. So we can construct only fleeting impressions of daily life in the family. Elizabeth Chandler’s note to her friends back in Peru, Vermont provides a glimpse of one seeker’s hope for a fresh start at Enfield’s North Family:

*Dear Friends,*

*I have seated myself to write to you so that you would know where we had finely settled down. We have concluded to try the Shakers a while and I think that we shall like it well. I like them very much so far and so does Ezra, They are a jolly set - always some joke a going the rounds We live in one of their houses, only a little ways from the Office that is the first family of Shakers. Bub likes them first rate - they are most of them very fond of children. We went up to the church to meeting last Sabbath I like their meeting - they have good singing, but it pleased me to see some of the old fat men and women go round a singing and hoppin’ it is a sort of march. They go in order around the room two by two something as children bippe toe hop. I cannot think of anything else any nearer to compare it to.*

*Please write and tell us all the news you can think of.*

*Yours in Friendship*

*Elizabeth C. Chandler.*<sup>14</sup>

The North Family Sisters kept their doors open to inquirers until 1913. When the decision was made to close, Sister Martha Wetherall and 3 young novitiates relocated to the Mt. Lebanon’s Shakers. The other North Family Sisters returned to Enfield’s Church Family. The North Family buildings stood vacant until the Shakers closed their community, united with the Society at Canterbury, New Hampshire, and finally sold their property to the Catholic Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette. On Christmas eve, 1927, Father Chouinard said Midnight Mass in the front room of the Shaker North Family Trustees Office, marking the start of the next chapter in the communal and religious history of Enfield’s “Chosen Vale.”

Footnotes:

10. “The Collected Writings of Henry Cummings.” Mary Ann Haagen, ed. Richard W. Couper Press, Hamilton, NY.

11. “The Cooperage Industry of Enfield’s North Family.” Galen Beale. Friends Quarterly, v. 7 no 1, “Shaker Sap Buckets, Pails and Tubs from Enfield, New Hampshire.”

Shaker Messenger, v. 4 no. 2

12. “Enfield Advocate, Special Notices: January 19 and 26, 1900.”

13. “Ministry Correspondence, Chosen Vale, August 31, 1848.” IV A 13, Western Reserve Historical Society Shaker Collection, Cleveland, OH.

14. “Elizabeth C. Chandler to Friends in Peru, Vermont.” # 113K ALS 1854, Dec. 18. New York Public Library, Shaker Manuscript Collection, NY, NY.



North Family Trustee’s Office (1853). *Real Photo Postcard.* Private Collection.

## Enfield Shaker Museum Receives 2024 Preservation Achievement Award from NH Preservation Alliance

The New Hampshire Preservation Alliance selected Enfield Shaker Museum’s acquisition of the former North Family Shaker and La Sallette landscape and buildings for a 2024 Preservation Achievement Award. The Preservation Alliance is the state-wide non-profit organization that strengthens communities and stimulates local economies by encouraging the protection and revival of historic buildings and places. For over three decades, they have recognized exemplary projects and people that illustrate these tenets.

The awards recognize individuals, organizations, or businesses in the categories of restoration and stewardship, rehabilitation, compatible new construction, public policy, and educational and planning initiatives across the state.

On May 7, 2024, along with 11 other honorees, the Museum was recognized at a gala reception held at the Currier Museum in Manchester, NH. We are honored to be part of the state’s on-going promotion and support of the preservation of historic New Hampshire structures and landscapes.

# New Visitor Maps

by Carol Medlicott

The acquisition of the land and buildings formerly owned by the Missionaries of La Salette has altered the experience of visitors to Enfield Shaker Museum. Early this year, the ESM board identified the need for a new site map and guide. A working group of board members (Carol Medlicott, Becky Powell, and Rebecca Carson Rogers) began to carry out needed updates with a target deadline of May 15, 2024, the Museum opening date.

Drawing upon contacts within the region, the working group established new local professional partnerships with the needed skills to produce these outcomes. Identifying people with skills in map design and the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) software was the most critical. The working group researched a range of visitor brochure maps and webpage-only maps from numerous sites and attractions across New England and beyond.

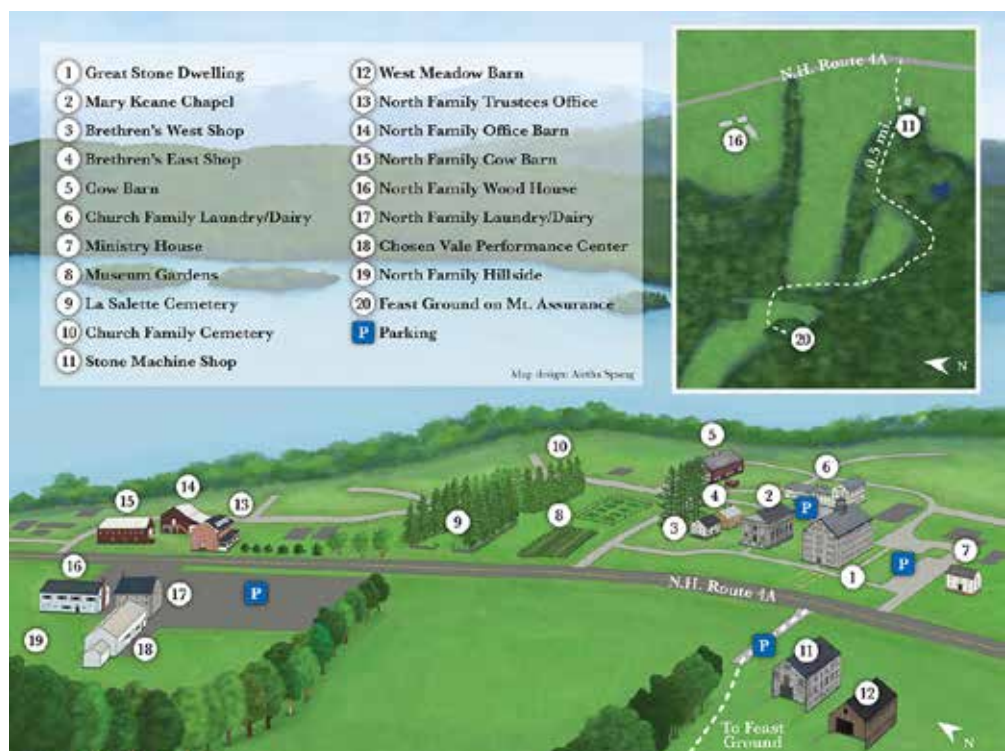
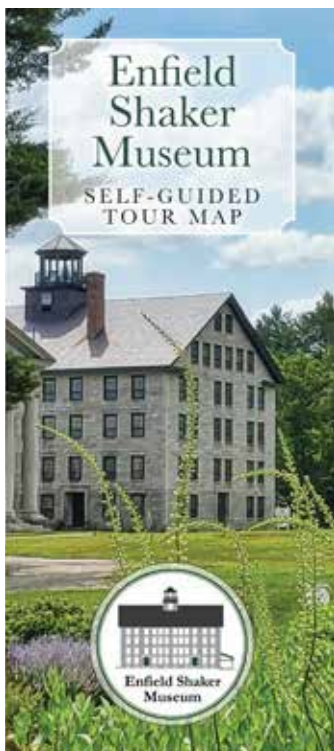
For the new Site Map the working group favored a “panoramic” map style. Also known as the “birds-eye” mapping style, this approach combines an artistic perspective with formal cartographic technique to show structures set in their surrounding landscape. Several historical maps of Shaker villages use the panoramic birds-eye style, including the well-known maps of Alfred and New Gloucester by Maine Shaker and mapmaker Joshua Bussell.

The working group was delighted to partner with Aletha Spang, Dartmouth College GIS specialist, who undertook design work on a new site map. Aletha used their skills in GIS, creative cartography, landscape architecture, and fine arts to produce a visually appealing panoramic site map showing the expanded array of ESM structures beautifully situated against the surrounding forested hills and the nearby lake.

At the same time, the working group also established a partnership with the GIS and Tourism program at Plymouth State University, working with Dr. Hyun Joong Kim and a GIS student, Thomas Panebianco, to develop a navigational map that could guide potential visitors to ESM from outside the region. The resulting map attractively locates ESM within the spatial context of the region’s road system, utilizing ESM’s logo and trademarked colors. See page 5.

The layout for the finished Site Map and Guide includes a new photograph of the Great Stone Dwelling, a QR code that leads to the ESM website, and site information. It is a full color four-fold brochure with graphic design by Douglas Lufkin of Lufkin Graphic Designs in Norwich, VT, and printing by R.C. Brayshaw of Warner, NH.

The new Site Map and Guide and the ESM regional navigation map represent beautiful additions to ESM’s tool kit for public outreach. ESM has also forged new and positive working relationships with Dartmouth College and Plymouth State University. The working group extends its thanks to all the community partners that assisted in the completion of this project. We are grateful for everyone’s creative enthusiasm and we look forward to working with them again in the future.



## Fountain Fence at the Feast Ground on Mt. Assurance

The Feast Ground, an outdoor worship space constructed by the Shakers in 1843, sits high up on Mt. Assurance, overlooking Enfield Shaker Museum and Mascoma Lake. A “fountain fence,” at the center of the grounds, marked the source of spiritual energy around which the community sang, danced, prayed and testified.

The Shakers discontinued their mountaintop spiritual feasts in the 1850s, and removed much of the physical evidence of these sacred festivals. But, in 1989, with the help of Dana Robes woodcraftsmen, the Museum constructed a replica of the fountain fence at the feast ground.

Over time, New Hampshire weather took its toll, rotting the posts that support the structure. This winter and spring, museum volunteer, **Charlie DePuy**, took on the task of reconstructing and reinstalling the fence. Its seven posts are of eastern white cedar. A hike up Mt. Assurance offers spectacular views of Mascoma Lake and Shaker Village. And, defined by the fountain fence, the feast ground rewards the visitor with its unique beauty and peace.



*New Fountain Fence constructed and installed by Charlie DePuy. (l) Charlie DePuy puts the finishing touches on the fence. (r)*

### SAVE THE DATES

#### 2024 SUMMER OUTDOOR CONCERT SERIES

**July 3 - Upper Valley Community Band**

**July 17 - Footworks**

**July 31 - Cardigan Mountain Tradition**

**August 7 - The Twangtown Paramours**

**August 14 - The Flames**

Vending begins at 6 pm, music at 7 pm

#### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

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### Enfield Shaker Museum

447 NH Route 4A ♦ Enfield, NH 03748

Enfield Shaker Museum is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational institution whose mission is to protect, enhance, and utilize its historical structures, landscape and Shaker cultural heritage. Gifts and donations are tax-deductible.

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**Curator**

Michael O’Connor

**Garden Coordinator**

Susan Quinlan

**Hospitality Coordinator**

Lisa Rinella

**Historic Housekeeper**

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## Together Again: Our Capital Campaign By the Numbers

- ◆ Individuals, families, family foundations, companies, and friends from **28** states and the District of Columbia supported the campaign.
- ◆ To date we have received **452** contributions. The level of giving ranged from pennies collected in the Harvest Festival haystack to \$1,000,000.
- ◆ Our 2 year, \$3,000,000 campaign began July 25, 2023. To date we have raised **\$2,256,748**. (And 27 cents from the haystack.) We are grateful for every gift received. Thank You.
- ◆ **134** Enfield individuals, families, and businesses stepped up to make sure that this precious site would not be developed.

Together Again  
Contributions Since November 2023

- Shauna Murray Appel
- Jill & Gary Bujnowki
- Lindsay Dearborn
- Emily Landecker Foundation
- Enfield-Mascoma Lions Club
- Milton & Carolyn Frye
- Magda Gabor-Hotchkiss
- Kathryn Gips
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- Rosanne Sheridan
- Eleanor Upton Charitable Foundation
- Robert & Patricia Wagner
- Sherry Wittry
- Ashley & Joseph Wood
- Contribution Jars
- Commuity Carol Sing
- Upper Valley Ringers

## Enfield Shaker Museum Receives Donation of Important Historical Documents

The museum is delighted to announce La Salette of Enfield’s generous donation of several important historical Shaker documents. The documents include a North Family account book signed by James Pettengill covering the years 1812-1852, a manuscript journal kept by Caleb M. Dyer in the years 1836 -1837 during the planning and early construction of the Great Stone Dwelling, an 1858 manuscript history of the Enfield Shaker community entitled “A Historical Narrative of the United Society of Shakers, Enfield, N. H.,” and a collection of Cummings family letters dated 1871-1874.

The museum would also like to thank the New Hampshire Historical Society for their care and safeguarding of the documents on behalf of La Salette of Enfield. In 1977, concerned that they did not have the proper storage facilities for the historic documents, La Salette brought the documents to the New Hampshire Historical Society to be held on deposit until the time La Salette felt they could reclaim them.

With the museum’s purchase of the North Family land and buildings in September 2023, La Salette felt it was time to reclaim the documents and graciously donated them to the museum. The museum would especially like to thank New Hampshire Historical Society Director of Archival & Library Collections Sarah E. Galligan for her effort and kindness in facilitating the return of the documents.

The collection is currently at the Northeast Document Conservation Center where they will be photographed and conserved as necessary. NEDCC will produce high resolution photographs to digitally preserve the documents, lower resolution photos that can be published to the museum’s online catalog to provide access to researchers, custom storage containers, and possible conservation of the documents where necessary.

Future plans include the transcription of the documents to digital files in order to provide keyword searchability and improved researcher access to their contents. If transcription sounds like a volunteer opportunity you would enjoy, contact the museum to learn more about this important project to make this information available to as many researchers as possible.



*Navigational map developed by Plymouth State University GIS student, Thomas Panebianco.*



Enfield Shaker Museum  
 447 NH Route 4A  
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UPCOMING EXHIBITION

# Chosen Vale:

The Shakers of Enfield,  
 New Hampshire

August 1 - September 27, 2024

New Hampshire State Library  
 20 Park Street, Concord, NH

open Monday - Friday,  
 8 am - 4:30 pm

*admission is free*



## Brethren's West Shop Gets a New Foundation



*Early April 2024 Brethren's West Shop is lifted 5 ft off its foundation. Original Shaker chimney bases are restored and receive new granite caps. Late May 2024 the building is back on its new foundation. Photos: Susan Brown 2024*

ORGANIZED BY  
**Enfield Shaker Museum**



*supported by a grant from the  
 National Endowment for the Humanities*

**GUIDED TOURS**  
 Every Thursday in  
 September,  
 2 pm

[www.shakermuseum.org](http://www.shakermuseum.org)