

CAT. NO.
10,593

THE CHURCH FAMILY MEETING HOUSE AT MOUNT LEBANON, NEW YORK

Some information from the records of Brother Alonzo Hollister, a member of the Church Family. Copied from a paper found inserted in a book by Sister Jennie of the North Family. This paper was a page from a diary, and it was dated July 22, 1896.

The cost of our Meeting House reckond \$15,391.61.

Not including 486 days work by Brethren from Watervliet and 1 from Enfield, N. H. Nor cost of glass furnisht by Harvard Believers. Nor 1968 ft. of scantling, 200 ft. of plank, & 70 ft. of Girths 10 x 10 furnisht by 2nd Order, & other items that would bring it up to \$15,700., if not to \$16,000.

A man's days work, of which 9323 are set down separately, was reckond at 50 cents. Ox teams, 1472 reckond separately at 50 cents. Horse teams, 656 days at \$1.00. Brethren & teams together are set down at 4,448 \$ _____. A large part of the teaming was drawing dirt, from East of the road beyond the Elm to bank the west side & N. end. 501 hands & teams at 50 cents.

Canterbury contributed in money	\$300.00
Enfield, N. H.	200.00
Enfield, Conn.	400.00
Hancock	<u>200.00</u>
In all	\$1100.00

Chh. (Church Family?) at Harvard furnisht glass. Shirly furnisht Jonas Nutting from July 12 to September 15-60 days includ Sundays.

I will venture the opinion that it cost \$16,000. even at the low prices of labor & teams.

INTERESTING DATES FROM SHAKER HISTORY

- 1800 - March 8 North Family Organized
- 1829 - April 27 Land and Buildings Dedicated by David
1829 - April 27 Built Brick Shop
- 1831 - April 30 Built Wood House + Laundry
- 1835 - June 16 Raised the New House
- 1838 - October Built this season a Granary
1838 - November Repaired the Saw Mill
- 1843 - Jan. 16 Addition to Dwelling
- 1846 - December Laid new Aquaduct from Pond to Brick Shop
- 1848 - June House for Young Believers
- 1849 - Aug. 25 Soap House
- 1851 - Took away the Grant House
- 1852 - June 27 Raised the Sisters' Shop
- 1854 - Built this season a Wood House
- 1858 - July Commenced digging Artesian Well
- 1859 - January Commenced to Build a Stone Barn
1859 - January Artesian Well a Failure
- 1860 - October Lay pipe to convey water from Drift
- 1861 - October Post Office is Established at North Family
- 1862 - Feb. 12 Union Grove
- 1863 - April 28 Raised roof to Dwelling House
1863 - April Put Steam in Dwelling House
1863 - Sept. Took out Old Wheel, Brick Shop
- 1864 - April Second Order put up New Dwelling House
- 1865 - July Built a Cistern in Garden
- 1866 - March Addition to Dwelling House
- 1868 - June Meeting Room and Garret Floor Relaid
1868 - Sept. Connect Overflow of Cistern with Barn

-2-

- 1871 - Jan. 22 Made a Donation of 1/2 acre of Land to
Episcopal Church
- 1871 - April 28 Set Out 50 Northern Spruce in Union Grove
- 1872 - January East Family Broken Up
- 1872 - May 9 Range in Kitchen
- 1872 - July 6 Run Drift Water to West Barn Yard
- 1872 - July 6 Sent Overflow of Cistern to Stone Barn
- 1873 - April 22 Relay Dining Room and Hall Floor
- 1873 - Aug. 12 Construct Water Works at East Farm
- 1875 - July Pond Above State Road 200 by 50
- 1875 - Feb. 6 Fire at Church Family
- 1876 - Jan. 10 Put Pipe through Chimney to Bath Room
- 1877 - Dec. 8 Move Cistern in First Garden
- 1878 - Oct. 17 Lay 137 rods of Pipe from Spring to Cistern
- 1878 - Oct. 16 Lower Drain at Second House
- 1878 - Oct. 31 Built out of Kitchen Ice House a Cistern
- 1878 - Nov. 7 Iron Boiler in Wash House
- 1878 - Dec. 19 Remove Stairs at Second House by Visitors Room
- 1879 - July 1 New Wash House
- 1880 - Aug. 8 Pipe from East Farm
- 1882 - Feb. 7 Work Over Kitchen and Bake Rooms
- 1882 - March 14 Iron Pipe from East Farm
- 1883 - May 4 Lay Water Pipe from Brickyard to Pond
- 1883 - Oct. 18 Telephone
- 1883 - Nov. 1 Work at Mountain Pond (Third pond)
- 1884 - Nov. 18 Built Well on East Side of Pond
- 1885 - Nov. 12 Built Drain Across Road by Ice House
- 1886 - Nov. 22 Fill in Artesian Well
- 1886 - Dec. 1 Fix Water in West Barn Yard
- 1887 - Aug. 16 Personal Taxes Lifted
- 1887 - June 13 Lay Over Walk to Church
- 1888 - April 18 Work Over Brick Shop
- 1888 - Nov. 15 New Boiler in Wash House

-3-

1889 - Nov. 2 Empty Mountain Pond. Put in Large Iron Pipe.
1889 - Nov. 11 Put Rustless Iron Pipe in Upper House Chimney

1890 - Jan. 8 Lay Over Wood House Floor with Planks
1890 - Oct. 20 Hot Water to Second House
1890 - Jan. 9 Steam in Second House
1890 - Dec. 19 New Boiler in Dwelling

1891 - Dec. 8 New Motor in Dairy

1893 - Jan. 3 600 Bricks to Line Wall in Wood House Cellar
1893 - June 17 Setting Iron Tub in Cow Barn Yard
1893 - July 30 Bring Water from Spring to Shoe Tub

1894 - June 14 Pipe in Cow Barn Vault

1896 - February Pipes Taken from Chimney

1900 - February Water Pipes and Bowls put in No. 6 & 16 & 10.

THE CHURCH FAMILY PLANT:

In 1790 the Community became organized. The oldest building in the community is the one immediately north of the Church. It formerly was used for the Church. When the new Church was built, in 1824,
(Wicks, of Watervliet drew the plans for the building)
it was used for the school house, then the seed department, medical department, and finally, the farm storehouse.

The present "Store" was the Trustees' Building and Guest House. It was built in 1827.

On the present site of the brick building, they had the first dwelling house. Where the Infirmary now stands was then the second dwelling house. Originally, they were the earliest dwellings. The building of big dormitories did not begin until after 1850.

The Ann Lee Cottage was built in 1861.

The Architect of the large brick building was George Wickersham. He drew all ~~the~~ the plans for the dwelling houses in other Shaker societies. He also drew the plan for the Infirmary building. (There were no new dwellings in the Lebanon Village for over 100 years except the ones in the Shaker community.)

George Wickersham was a young man in his twenties when he first came to the Shakers. He came from Philadelphia. His father had educated

him in wood work and his brother, Bartlett, in iron work. (The brother never came into the Shaker life.) George, however, came to New Lebanon to make a visit. He wondered about the Shaker Village and an Elder from the North Family saw him and invited him to "come in and look around." George thought he never saw a man like Richard Bushnell, of the North Family, and he said he wanted to come and be one of them.

The big fire in the community occurred on February 6th, 1875. It was 6° below zero. The following buildings were destroyed:

- Dwelling house
- Store house
- Wood-shed and sisters' work-shop
- Ice house
- 3 barns

A hired man named Harris, who worked in the Press Room, set the buildings on fire. He was a natural incendiary. He not only burned the buildings then, but a fortnight later, he burned the Herb business.

Washington got him by the collar. He took him and called for help.

He locked him the the dress shop and went for a constable. The whole herb house went. You could not see two feet ahead from the smoke.

All that could be taken from the building was put in the School house

where I (Sister Emma) was.

Harris was sentenced to 14 years in prison. For good behavior he got 2 years off, and the night before he was to be ~~set~~ released, he hung himself to the bed post."

They began to rebuild immediately. A corp of Italians ^{was} ~~was~~ imported - 30 of them - who lived in a make-shift fashion in a building where wood had been collected.

Edward Fowler was head of the Community then, but the catastrophe broke him down. Benjamin Gates then took on the work of rebuilding.

Donations from all the other Shaker communities were received by the Church Family to help in the work of rebuilding. Canterbury, Maine, Enfield, all helped. (All the business records and accounts which Benjamin Gates had were scattered; part were in Florida, part in New York, but they were all lost.)

In February, immediately after the fire, they commenced to draw brick from Pittsfield and continued this all winter. All winter long they carried on the rebuilding; during the summer the sisters helped stain the inside ~~of the wood~~ ~~woodwork~~ woodwork, polish the wood, and get the building ready for occupancy. There were just 99 or 100 of

them who moved into the new brick dwelling and had their first dinner there on January 1st, 1876.

Mother Ann's Motto for the Shakers was "Hands to work and Hearts to God." The following industries were carried on by the Church Family in New Lebanon:

Blacksmithing

Seed Business

Tanning

Brook

Herb

Extract

Printing

Basket

Fancy work (poplar)

Cloak

Canning

Shoemaking

Cloth Weaving

Dairy produce (cheese, etc.)

(Sister Emma made the last cheese that was made in the Church Family.)

David Meacham of Enfield, brother of Father Joseph Meacham, also was converted by Mother Ann to the Shaker faith. His initials, D M can be seen on many of the old Shaker articles, since everything that was made by them had to pass his inspection and receive his mark of approval.

Although the Church Family, the first established communal home of the Shakers, should have been the one to be maintained by the other societies, the other societies came to it to take the wherewithal to build their own homes.

Notes:

Elder Arthur is the chief member of the Canterbury society.

There are over 60 sisters there. At this community is a fireproof vault where many of the Shaker treasures are stored.

Do you want mention made of:

"half of the land that the church stands on is filled in"

the fact that as a community dies out, whatever is left must be given to the needy in the other communal homes so long as there is an established Shaker family?

Sister Emma was the first woman Trustee?

Are the Record and Death Book the same? (Record of Deaths?)

What is the Deaconess' Journal.

Hymns Sister Emma likes:

Peaceful Victory

Prayer - p. 29 Canterbury Hymnal

Rise Ye Waves to Joyful Music - Anderson

White Mittin:

Knitted on needles by Sister Sadie when she was a girl at Watervliet, about 1860, from silk from the silk worms that grew on the Shaker farm at Watervliet. She knitted the silk mits with fingers, making gloves for the sisters.

Dark Gloves:

Belonged to Harriet Bullard, about 75 years old. Made from yarn, spun here, silk and cotton mixed, and were knitted about 1850. "H" on them designates the owner, Harriet.

Early History:

The Shakers, eight members in all, including:

Ann Lee

William Lee (her brother)

James Whittaker (her nephew)

Abraham Stanley (her husband)

Nancy Lee

John Hocknell (the only member financially
able to secure their passage
to America)

Richard Hocknell (his son)

Mary Partington

sailed from Liverpool, England, to America on May 19th, 1774. They brought with them the conception of a new religion, founded upon the belief that as Jesus was the Son of God, Mother Ann Lee was the Daughter of God. Their name "Shaker" was symbolic of their action, "Shaking against all that which is evil in the world."

After their arrival in New York, Mother Ann obtained lodgings and "employed herself in washing and ironing for her living. Her husband was employed as a journeyman in the blacksmith business."

John Hocknell journeyed up the Hudson River and purchased a site at Niskayuna (now Watervliet) near Albany, New York. He then returned to New York and journeyed ^{to} back to England to settle his affairs and bring his family back to America.

The remainder of the small company was scattered, seeking their livelihood by their hand labor, wherever they could find employment. Most of them went up the Hudson River and remained ~~at~~ in and about Albany.

During John Hocknell's absence in England, Mother Ann went to visit those who believed, but she continued her residence in New York.

On December 25th, 1775, John Hocknell returned to America with his family and, after visiting with Mother Ann in New York, journeyed to Watervliet. In the spring following, Mother Ann left New York and joined the rest of the society.

Mother Ann was at the head of the entire Shaker Movement here in America. She was born in 1736, in Manchester, England, and died at Watervliet, New York, in 1784.

Because of the hostility of the people in this section of the country, the Shakers were obliged to live in seclusion. James Whittaker, Mother Ann's nephew, was not content to stay at home; he wanted to go out to preach. Mother Ann said "the time is not right; we have to wait until there is a spirit of inquiry." (James, however, went out of his

own accord to preach. He met the daughter of a farmer and almost became married to her. (Since the Shakers did not believe in marriage this would have been a serious step for James.) When he returned, Mother Ann gently reminded him that he "did not wait until the proper time to preach.")

Mother Ann in a quiet way went through New England, stopping at each little home along the way asking permission to "sit a while." She would say to the housewife, "Let me stay a while and you shall not be opposed." There was a Revival, in the spring of 1784, which began in New Lebanon and went all through Massachusetts.

There was great opposition to the new religion, however, and Mother Ann was persecuted all the way from Lebanon to Albany and put in jail throughout this entire section, also in Poughkeepsie and Albany. She was torn from her carriage and thrown into the spring at New Lebanon. She was severely maligned by her opposers; they testified falsely against her and trumped up all sorts of charges against the Shakers. Strangely enough, Mother Ann was preaching against all the worldly things of which her opponents were accusing her.

James Whittaker, also, shared Mother Ann's persecutions. He was

thrown from his horse in New Lebanon and severely bruised and shaken.

(A stone there marks the spot of this attack.)

Although Mother Ann was the head of the Shaker Movement, she had nothing whatever to do with their community life. She died before the community was organized. She delegated to Joseph Meacham the authority to organize the community - "to draw the people together in communal life."

(Part of this information was given by Sister Emma; part was taken from a book loaned by Sister Emma, "_____".)

Organization:

Father Joseph Meacham was the clergyman of the Baptist Church at Lebanon Springs, a convert of Mother Ann to the Shaker faith.

(Olive Hand, nurse at the Hillcrest Hospital, Pittsfield, told Sister Sadie she had records to substantiate this.) He led the community in every way, designating the heads of Families, Elders, Eldresses, etc.

In 1787 Father Joseph Meacham began the establishment of the first communal home which was here, in New Lebanon. They were not thoroughly established, however, until 1790. Coming into the community, members consecrated their property to the families already established here. In this way, the following Families were founded: Brick Yard, Second Family at Mount Lebanon, South Family, and Hancock Family.

In the very beginning of their communal life in New Lebanon, Father Joseph formed the:

MINISTERIAL ORDER: Two brothers and two sisters were designated to look after the moral and spiritual concerns of the people. They were called Elders and Eldresses. As each community was founded, members were chosen from the Church Family, in Lebanon, and sent to the new community. After a certain length of time, if there were suitable persons in the new community, able to assume the duties of the Ministry,

they were recommended to the Elders and Eldresses of the Church Family. These four members of the Ministry would then authorize the appointment and journey to the new community to ratify it. The original preachers of this faith were sent out from the Church Family.

In the Church Family, the Ministry lived in the little rooms at either side of the Church. The two Eldresses had the two upper rooms and the two Elders, the lower ones. This arrangement lasted from the time the Church was built, until the time of the fire, in 1875.

After the fire they built the little brick house, at the side of the Church, known as the Ministry Building.

As you enter the Ministry building, to the left was the workshop of the two sisters. They did a little light hand work, making Shaker caps of lace for the sisters. On the right, the first room was the Secretary's room; back of that was the workshop of Elder Daniel Boler, where the basket-making was done.

On the upper floor, the two Eldresses lived on the south side, and the two Elders on the north side.

Where two communities had one Ministry, the Ministry lived part time in each; the larger community had the Ministry with them for a

longer period of time. The following communities were grouped together and supervised by the same Ministry:

1. Mt. Lebanon and Watervliet ^(The Ministry lived eight weeks at Mt. Lebanon; four weeks at Watervliet.)
2. Enfield^{VIH.} and Canterbury
3. Maine and Gloucester
4. Tyringham, Hancock, Enfield.^{CT.}

The Ministry of the outlying districts came to Mt. Lebanon, to visit the central Mt. Lebanon - Watervliet Ministry, at stated periods. If there were not too far distant, they came at least once a year; if they were far away, especially those out west, they always came once in every two years. The purpose of these visits was to keep in union with all the societies; they came to the Church center for inspiration; it kept the people centered to their general community union. Appointments to the Ministry for outlying districts were made through writing.

When a member was appointed to the Ministry, the power appointing had to power to revoke. Each member of the Ministry appointed his successor before his death. It was an understood point that the remaining member would succeed to the position of the deceased.

There was no voting in choosing the new member for the Ministry. Their Covenant says "they shall be appointed in union with the Elders and brothers and sisters." They would ask among themselves "who would you select?" They took the consensus of \forall opinion. (Sister Emma said they were afraid one would buy up another's vote!) The Ministry perpetuated itself but always in consultation with the responsible people in the community.

THE JOURNAL shows the Ministry, year by year.

THE RECORD BOOK was compiled by Father Joseph Meacham. It contains the original record of the deaths of all the members of the Ministry and is entitled "A Record of Deaths - collected and kept by Mary Hazard, 1875." Mary Hazard recopied the entries from various books which they had. In this Record the following deaths are noted:

Father James Whittaker	died at Enfield,	7/30/1787
" Calvin Harlow	" " Hancock	12/30.1795
" Elezar Rand	" " Harvard	1808
	Mass.	
Brother Thomas Cushman	" " Alfred	1816
	Mass.	
Hortense Goodrich	" " Union Village	
	Ohio	1819
Mother Hannah Goodrich	" " Canterbury	1820

DEACONS AND DEACONESES: Each Family had two deacons and two deaconesses who looked after the material welfare of their Family. The Church Family, ^{Wt. Lebanon} because of its large numbers, had three deacons and three deaconesses, and when they had two separate dwellings, (see page) they had three deacons and 3 deaconesses in each of the dwellings, making 13 in all.

Before the New York State Trust Law was passed in 1839 (second Act, 1875) there were no Trustees in the Shaker Communities; the deacons acted in that capacity. The title to the property received from those joining the community stood in the names of private individuals and was held by the Deacons who were designated to hold the property for the community.

→ After the Trust Act, the Deacons became Trustees. In the Church Family, two of the deacons were designated for this new office. As Trustees of the property, they held in trust the real estate of the entire village from the North Family to the South Family so that no land could be sold without their signature. This referred only to the real estate. The Trustees were to act in all legal matters but the business transactions continued to be handled by the Deacons

and Deaconesses in each Family. (The Trustees were housed in the building which is now the "Store."

The Senior family at Mt. Lebanon was the Center Family. Father Joseph Meacham said he would take the younger people to drill and train for leadership. The Center Family was an annex. They had no Trustees of their own; the Trustees of the Church Family acted for them. The Center Family and Church Family were consolidated in matters of buying, - general supplies, men's and women's clothing, etc. The Church Family bought and distributed to $\frac{1}{2}$ each of the Families.

THE TESTIMONY BOOK contains the testimony of all the first believers, telling why they believed in Ann Lee. The members give their experience and tell what they found her to be; they also tell why and how they came into the Shaker faith.

Description
Property
of Shakers

BOND

91776

Edward Fowler: died †
Jan. 31, 1878

paid \$212.80 for
508 lb. bell~~x~~@ 35¢
per lb. plus \$35
for mounting.

gave order for bell †
on Feb. 27, 1875.

bells are 78% copper †
22% tin

Meneely also made bells
for Constitution when
it was remodelled, for
Admiral Byrd's boat,
and for the Mayflower
(the President's yacht)