

*THE SHAKERS AND SHAKER MY PLATE*

THE SHAKERS PROGRAM BY

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SHAKER MY PLATE SHAKER FOOD TASTING

PLANNED BY PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

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SUBMITTED BY

Mrs. Elmer W. Meyer, Program Committee Chairman  
ELI SKINNER CHAPTER, NSDAR  
Arlington Heights, Illinois  
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PROGRAM PRESENTED TO

Eli Skinner Chapter, NSDAR  
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Following the program given by Mrs. Murray, refreshments consisting of Shaker foods were provided by a committee of members under the direction of Mrs. Meyer. All present were given a copy of the recipes used at the food tasting. See recipes at end of program.

Today I am going to give you some background and history on all the Shaker societies, but in particular on the society at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky.

In thinking back, the first time I really became aware of the Shakers was nineteen years ago. Had I grown up in New England or perhaps from the Chicago area where no exposure to them, although I suppose I had heard the word "Shakers" and knew they were some kind of religious sect.

It was in 1974 that my husband and I began planning a trip to Smoky Mountain National Park with our six children. After going over the maps, it looked as if a trip across Kentucky might be a good way to return home. I sent for information on attractions, and after receiving many pamphlets and going over them, it appeared that a stop for a day or two in Harrodsburg, Kentucky might be a nice idea. Not only did they have Ft. Harrod and an outdoor drama presentation about Daniel Boone but there was also a place called "Shakertown," a renovated village with guides in period costume demonstrating crafts of an earlier time.

As I studied the map a little more, I realized that Burgin, Kentucky, right outside Shakertown was the birthplace of my great-grandmother, Sarah Ellen Bonta England. I had just begun working on my genealogy the preceding year and I was becoming more aware of areas my ancestors had lived. Well, with all of these attractions to lure us to Harrodsburg, we decided that would be an interesting place to spend a couple of days on our way home from the Smokies.

We arrived in Harrodsburg around noon our first day there and visited Ft. Harrod. Later I suggested to my family that perhaps they would like to spend the next morning at the motel swimming pool, which

they did, while I went to the courthouse, and there in the basement I met another genealogical researcher who gave me the name of a Banta in Kansas City who was interested in family history.

That same afternoon we went out to Shakertown at Pleasant Hill, the renovated Shaker village. It was a delightful place to visit - beautiful architecture, interesting craftsmen, spinning, weaving, quilting, woodworking. The grounds were much the same as they had been a hundred years before - a peaceful and tranquil place. But the strange beliefs of the inhabitants of the former village as relayed to us by the tour guides left me with a very quizzical feeling. How could people leave their husbands, wives, and children and join a celibate religious society?

Shortly after arriving home, I contacted the man in Kansas City whose name I was given by the researcher in the courthouse basement. He answered me rather quickly and sent me some preliminary information on the Banta family. Further correspondence I received a few months later from him, told of how Samuel Banta, My g-g-g-grandfather, had been a member of the Shaker sect in Kentucky. I was absolutely astounded because nothing of that nature had been passed down in records given to us by my grandmother. Reflecting on that some years later, I came to the conclusion that because the Shakers ~~were~~<sup>6</sup> looked upon with ridicule and scorn in their own time period, that this information was just not something someone would want passed on.

Over the next few months, as I was working on the genealogy of these people, questions kept running through my mind. What kind of people were these Bantas? All I really knew about them ~~was~~<sup>6</sup> names, dates, places of births, marriages, deaths, etc. How could they be Shakers if

they were married and had children? And how could they leave their families and enter this religious sect? And what was the attraction to their joining such a society? For a hundred years previous to their entrance into the society, the family genealogy had said they were members of the Dutch Reformed Church. Samuel was a Revolutionary War veteran who had served from Pennsylvania. He came from a family who were early pioneers to Kentucky. They had left Conewago, York County, Pennsylvania in 1780 with a group of 75 Dutchmen, travelled to Pittsburg, down the Ohio River to the Falls, then overland fifty miles. For ten years, they lived in forts and stations, struggling to stay alive and to remain true to the Dutch Reformed religion which was the very backbone of their existence.

Well I soon began checking out from the library and reading every book I could find on the history of the Shakers. I learned that the Shaker sect was first heard of in England around 1750 when James Warley and his wife, Jane, seceders from Quakerism were influenced by French prophets, a group of five or six hundred Frenchmen who in 1688, claimed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost. Soon they had thousands who adhered to the beliefs. Strange "fits" with trembling and shaking often occurred during their meetings. By 1706, this group had greatly diminished in number, but a few of them had moved over to England in the interim. Jane Wardley, in particular, claimed to have spiritual illumination and to have "received a call." The Wardleys soon had many followers. Their meetings began in much the Quaker fashion with everyone sitting silently in meditation, but then afterwards some would be taken with "mighty trembling" which supposedly expressed the indignation of God against all

sin. Shaking, singing, shouting, walking the floor and shoving each other about was supposed to sweep out their sins. Soon outsiders were calling them "Shakers." Ann Lees (who dropped the "s" from her name after arrival in the Colonies) was one of their followers. She was married to Abraham Standerin and they had four children, all of whom died in infancy. These tragic experiences strongly conditioned her attitude toward sex and the institution of marriage. Following the deaths of her children, Ann Lees began to take a more active role in the Shaker movement. Several years passed, however, before she replaced Jane Warley as leader. After she assumed the role of leadership, the sect became more strict in its moral discipline. As their membership increased the sect became more open, criticizing the established church of England for "condoning marriage." Denouncing worldliness of every kind, they were met with much hostility, charges of fanaticism, heresy, and even witchcraft. When the church authorities finally recognized the Shaker heresy, they brought charges of blasphemy against Ann which led to her imprisonment. It was while she was in prison that Ann beheld "the grand vision of the very transgression of the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden, the cause wherein all mankind was lost and separated from God." Here in prison Christ appeared to her, comforted her, and commissioned her to preach the gospel of the stainless life. Later she said "It is not that I speak, it is Christ who dwells in me."

In 1774 to escape from further persecution and in order to carry out her mission in life, Ann Lees emigrated to America where she established the first Shaker community in New Lebanon, New York. While the name Shakers had been imposed on them by the outside world (the non-

believers) it was a term they, themselves, had not used, since the outsiders used the name as a sort of ridicule. It was shortly after their establishment in New Lebanon that they began to call themselves "The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing." As a shortened version, they called themselves "The Believers." They all devoutly believed that Ann Lee was the second Christ, and in her role she was referred to as Mother Ann.

Subscribing to the true principles of almsgiving as set forth in the Biblical commandment "To sell all thou hast and give it to the poor" and to the belief "Give and it shall be given to you," the believers signed their first family pact. Through these beliefs, they established their church as a communal celibate sect. They maintained a belief in Divine Healing, Spiritualism, Visions, Dreams, Prophecy, Revelation, Testimony, Tongues and Sanctification. By the 1820's, their shaking had turned to dancing and music was a large part of their worship.

Within twenty years, eleven Shaker communities had been established and spread throughout New England and New York - Watervliet, New York, 1787; Enfield, Connecticut and Hancock, Massachusetts, 1790; Harvard, Massachusetts, 1791; Canterbury, New Hampshire and Tyringham, Massachusetts, 1792; Alfred, Maine, Enfield, New Hampshire and Shirley, Massachusetts, 1793; and Sabbathday Lake, Maine, 1794. By 1800 their disciples had begun to travel westward to Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana where eventually another seven communities were established. Later still four more communities were added in New York and New England and later still one in Florida and one in Georgia.

Mother Ann Lee did not live long enough to see the growth of her

church. She died in 1784 and from that point onward the church was governed by the Elders. Father John Meacham and Mother Lucy Wright became their spiritual parents.

As the Elders of the church pushed westward with their message of Shakerism, many ministers, ordained in other sects, converted to Shakerism. Their missionaries soon began to preach at revivals all over the south and midwest. It was on the 8 August 1805 at a revival meeting held in Concord, Bourbon County, Kentucky where ten thousand were said to be in attendance that the word of the Shakers was first heard by those in that area. Many in the audience were opposed to the Shaker teachings and threatened the leaders with persecution, and attempted to disrupt the meeting. But there were a few who wanted to hear what these people had to say. Among them were Elisha Thomas and Samuel Banta (both from Mercer County, Kentucky) and Henry Banta, Samuel's brother. The three men invited the Shaker missionaries (John Meacham, Benjamin Youngs, and Issachar Bates) to come to a private house for the purpose. It is thought by historians that the house was the home of John Banta, another brother of Samuel and Henry, who lived in closest proximity to the location of the revival meeting. When the men had heard the testimony spoken by Benjamin S. Youngs, an elder from the eastern Shaker communities, they embraced the faith and within a few days following all three, Elisha Thomas, Samuel Banta and Henry Banta confessed their sins. This was considered to be the beginning of the Shaker gospel planted in Mercer County, Kentucky and the foundation of what was to become the order at Pleasant Hill. The missionaries continued to visit Kentucky from time to time over the course of a year during which time a number of other

families embraced the gospel, including that of John Banta. In 1806 the families of William Shields, Willis Ballain, Tobias Wilhitz, James Gass, Stephen Manue, Joseph McCarver, Henry Hutton, Samuel Harris, Francis Sasseen, John Woods, John Fields, Francis Taylor and Drury Woodrum all joined with them. The records give no indication of how other family members felt about being brought into a communal, celibate sect. These were still the days when the husband's decision was generally abided by. In addition to the families mentioned, there were also single men and women who joined them.

At this point, their "gathering together" or communal living in the Kentucky group had not yet begun. They still lived in their individual homes. But they were already causing a commotion in Mercer County when they met in private homes and attempted to live their lives of purity. However, their meetings were said to be attended with a great deal of "power and gift."

In 1807 they began to group together and to live according to the Shaker laws. At this time, William Shields sold his farm and moved onto Elisha Thomas' family farm along with Thomas' family. Thomas' daughter, Betsy was married to Cornelius Banta, a nephew of Samuel, Henry, and John. Cornelius and Betsy (Thomas) Banta and their three children also entered the society and moved onto Elisha's farm at that time. Elisha owned 140 acres on Shawnee Run six and a half miles from Harrodsburg.

At that time Samuel Banta owned a farm in Danville, Kentucky. In 1807 he sold this farm and bought from the Hoard family a farm located one and one-half miles from that of Elisha Thomas. This farm consisted of 230 acres. In addition he purchased another tract of 48 acres

a joining it. Samuel then moved to this farm with his family. At the time Samuel and his wife, Dyna (Dorland) Banta had eight children, all of whom had grown to maturity. When Samuel and Dyna entered the Shakers they took in with them, all except two of their children. Their daughter, Mary, was then married to Charles Riker and their son, Lambert, unmarried, chose not to follow their parents. Lambert is my great-great grandfather. However, the other six children of Samuel and Dyna did enter the society. When Samuel acquired the Hoard farm he moved there with him six of his children and their families. This included his oldest daughter, Ruth, who was married to Jacob Bruner and had two children, Jacob and Calvin. Ruth left her husband to enter the society. It is said in the records that she felt him too dissipated to live with. Samuel and Dyna's second oldest daughter, Lyney was the widow of Lawrence Verbrycke at the time she entered the society. She had three children who she brought into the society with her: William, Samuel, and Dotie. Samuel and Dyna's son, Henry, also entered the society with them. He was married to Geertje Banta, a second cousin. His wife entered with him. Then lastly, the three youngest daughters of Samuel and Dyna entered with them: Rachel, Peggy, and Dinah. All were unmarried. At the same time that they all moved into this one farm, there were also other families who moved in with them: the Joseph McCarver family, the Joab Lyson family, and Samuel's brother, Henry's family which consisted of a wife and three children.

The records indicate that John Banta, brother of Samuel and Henry, moved onto the grounds in 1807 and lived where the present "tanyard" is located. John entered with his wife Polly (Riker) Banta and their six

children.

In 1806 the believers at Pleasant Hill drew up their first covenant. In summation the covenant read that they professed to be of one faith in the gospel which they believed to be the only way to salvation. That it was their duty to live peacefully with all men and endeavor to build up each other in the truth, and not to do anything to cause discord or disunion and that they would live together as one family for the upbringing, protection and safety of each other. It indicated that they were agreeing to this upon their own free will and voluntary choice. They further agreed that all land would be held in common but that an inventory would be kept of all that each had contributed. They further agreed that the covenant could be jointly renewed, altered, and amended. It stated that any withdrawing member had full liberty to take with him the property he had contributed. And that should any member wish to withdraw 60 days notice need be given to allow for the convenience of restoring such property, or the value thereof, expressed in the inventory. The covenant was first signed on 3 December 1806 and amended on 28 July 1807. It was signed by 44 people which included the wives and husbands, 17 of whom were Bantas or Thomases.

Within a year the society was well underway. Their house of worship had been built, their school was operating. But as yet no Elders or Ministry from the eastern societies had moved in with them. By 1810 the records read that Samuel Banta's family moved from its location on the "Hoard" farm to the Centre family house. Samuel Banta's daughter, Ruth, moved to the North family to become their Elder, and his daughter, Lyney moved to the "stand" to become their deaconess.

When the Shakers now spoke of families, they did not mean it in the usual sense. Their celibate families were composed of men, women, and children, but the two sexes did not live together, in the same house. Every house was built with separate entrance ways. There were two separate staircases going to the second floors (where all the bedrooms were located). On the second floor there was a solid wall down the middle of the house. In other words, when men or women, went up their designated staircase, there was no way that either could make their way to the other side of the house. Only on the first floor was there any communication between the men and women, although even in the dining room they ate on separate sides of the room. It was even forbidden for them to speak with someone of the opposite sex if a third party was not present to witness the conversation. They referred to each other as brother or sister.

At Pleasant Hill there were soon five "families" in operation, named according to their location in the village which was rapidly developing: the West Family, Centre Family, East Family, North Family, and West Lot Family. Each family had its own Elder and Eldress and Deacon and Deaconess. The Elders had charge of the spiritual welfare of the society while the Deacons were entrusted with the temporal side. Samuel Banta was Deacon of the Centre family in 1811 (it is not known how early he held that position). Others held the position at later times.

In 1812, Dyna (Dorland) Banta, former wife of Samuel, died on 15th of May of consumption. She was 59 years old at the time. Her obituary in the Shaker records indicated "she was a kind, charitable, motherly woman." It further stated that she died at the East family.

On November 12th of that same year, their daughter, Ruth (Banta) Bruner died at the North family, where she was Eldress. Ruth, too, died of consumption, and she was 40 years old.

There were a number of deaths from consumption in the early years of the society, and one cannot help but wonder if they brought the disease into the society with them, and whether it began to spread because of the very crowded living quarters in the first few years of the society.

In the course of my researching the society at Pleasant Hill, I borrowed from the University of Kentucky at Lexington, 19 reels of microfilm covering the records at Pleasant Hill. Very detailed records were kept of the everyday proceedings of the society. Records books were kept in every single "family," and found were such things as obituaries, the covenant, occurrences such as when they planted their crops, how much they harvested, how much profit was realized, etc. Each family of believers provided for their own financial support, but of course all profits went to the society as a whole. These day-to-day records kept by the various families told of other happenings as well. For instance on 6 November 1816, a notation was made in the records that Samuel Banta returned home that day from South Union in the company with John Danielson. The records also indicate that on December 16th of that same year, the Shakers hired some millwrights to work in their mill. The same day they began to tear down and move away the old frame house where Samuel Banta first collected his family in 1807. Their intent, they stated, was to build a new family dwelling house in its place, which would be known by the name of the North Lot.

John Banta, the brother of Samuel, who entered the society with his wife and children, was transferred from the Pleasant Hill Shaker Society to the South Union Shaker Society in southwestern Kentucky by 1811. John was a blacksmith by trade, and perhaps his services were needed more in that community. Although he was living at South Union at the time, he made a will which appears in the Pleasant Hill records. Although he had no intention of withdrawing from the Shakers, his will was stated in such a way that his wife and children each be allotted a certain portion of his estate. Although the will does not state that his land was then owned by the Shakers, he asked that the trustees of the society, in order to make a just settlement of his estate, sell his lands and give to his wife and children (various shares which he names) should any family member wish to leave the society. Probably it was because of wills such as John's that the trustees felt a new covenant should be written.

In 1814 another Covenant was drawn up and all believers, of legal age, were required to sign whether or not they had already signed the 1807 covenant. There were 128 signers indicating that there were that many believers of legal age living in the society at Pleasant Hill at that time. Article 4 of that covenant stated that all members of the society who had immediate heirs as children must settle with them as they reach lawful age or offer to them at least as much or more than the law required, and if convenient receive from these children, a discharge. If the children were not of legal age, then a reserve of sufficient property must be set aside to settle with them in the same manner. The 1814 covenant also voided the statement in the first covenant that members would receive reimbursement for any property brought into the

society with them. In addition at this time, all property still held in members' names was deeded to the trustees of the society.

In the early days some twenty buildings were erected at Pleasant Hill. The houses the families lived in were strongly built of brick or stone, with walls 3 to 4 feet thick. They were substantially furnished with plain, but functional furniture. Ultimately Pleasant Hill became the second largest Shaker community. The largest was New Lebanon, New York. Pleasant Hill's highest membership reached upwards from 500 people by 1850. Eventually a total of 280 buildings were erected at the village.

As time went on the Shakers became well known for taking in orphans, widows and widowers, and they even purchased slaves, whom they then emancipated allowing them to live among them as equals. In their midst, too, were those they called "winter shakers." Arriving at their doorsteps every year as cold weather approached were often poor families, who professed a desire to join their religious faith. Often these were people who knew their own supplies would not last them the winter. When spring came, and it was time to put out a new crop, these winter shakers often collected their spouse and children and left again for the outside world to resume their own normal family life.

The Shakers were known as very industrious people. Next to their religion their main preoccupation was work. Day in and Day out they toiled in the fields, mills, kitchens, and shops. And, their labor was not in vain because their many activities brought prosperity and an accumulation of goods that would have brought credit to any community. To keep members from becoming bored, they had a system of changing jobs every so often. For example, a woman might be assigned to a two month

period of spinning wool or flax or silk, and then be given a two month period of time wherein she cooked, etc.

The Shakers maintained large herds of horses, sheep and cattle - high class animals, which brought good prices in the world market, which increased the revenue of the society. At Pleasant Hill they farmed 1600 acres and grew oats, wheat, corn, potatoes and broom corn. Their orchards produced apples, peaches, pears, strawberries, and raspberries. When harvesting crops, they often found it necessary to hire outside help sometimes employing as many as sixty outsiders who were paid from 75 cents to \$2 per day (plus meals) depending upon their ability.

Farming was not their only livelihood. They ran a saw mill, grist mill, fuling mill, oil mill, paper mill and a tanyard. They spun and wove silk and other cloth, produced straw hats, furniture and brooms. They made butter, cheese, preserves, and canned vegetables. They originated the idea of drying corn for food. They were responsible, too, for new ideas in medicines. They had a printing office, made their own farm implements and wagons and turned out nearly everything they used in their everyday life. They used only their own doctors and dentists. In the mid-1800's they sent some of their own promising believers off to medical schools.

In 1821, the Millennial Laws of the society were first printed and circulated among the various Shaker communities. They were divided into nine categories, and laid out in unconditional terms the behavior that was expected of all believers.

To give you an idea as to just how rigid they had become I will share with you just a few of the more than ninety rules by which they

were to abide:

- It is contrary to order: for a brother and sister to be in a room together -for a brother to pass a sister on the stairs - for a sister to go to the barn, wood-house or road alone - to shake hands with a world's woman without confessing it.
- It is contrary to Order: - to borrow money among the world - for a person to go out of door-yard after evening meeting - to employ a world's doctor - to read newspapers in the dwelling house at any time without the Elders permission - to receive or write a letter without the Elder's permission.
- It is contrary to order: to go to meeting without sin unconfessed; to cut hair, pare nails, wash feet, clean shoes, or shave on the Sabbath - to go into meetings with boots on - to go into meetings without sleeve strings.
- It is contrary to order: to wear hats above the height given by the Elders - to fold the left thumb over the right in prayer, or when standing up to worship.
- It is contrary to Order: to eat any fruit after supper - to eat bread until it is out of the oven 24 hours - to leave the lower sash of the window up at night.
- It is contrary to order: for anyone to write the orders - to expose counsel or tell what the Elders say.

Early in the nineteenth century all the Shakers adopted a uniform set of clothing to be worn by each sex. In 1825 at Pleasant Hill the men were wearing suits of light-colored domestic cloth, with coats and waistcoats of the long worsted fashion with outer pockets. Their shirts were of coarse cotton and were without a neck cloth. The women wore long-

waisted gowns of dark color, long checked aprons extending from the neck and white "long-eared" caps. Their clothing was not generally admired and a visitor remarked that their clothing was designed for concealing all personal advantages.

It soon became evident that the more demanding rules of Shaker life proved to be too difficult for some members to follow and before long many brothers and sisters were leaving the communities.

By 1827, lists of "defaulters" began to appear in the records. Although some of those leaving were young people who had entered with their parents, others who left were older respected members of the society.

On 27 April 1827, Samuel Banta, disgruntled with the society, left. Upon leaving he demanded an equal share of what he originally brought into the society with him in spite of the fact that he had signed the 1814 Covenant. It was undoubtedly obvious to him and others that selling the property he had once bestowed upon the society and reimbursing him was out of the questions, as now there stood upon that property a village housing hundreds of people. But in 1827 the records show they did attempt to repay him in various amounts of money, \$3.50; \$20.00, furniture and tools totalling \$100.00, \$51.00 in cash, \$2191.00 (with \$515.00 in cash and a note for \$1676.00.) The next year he received the sums of \$25.00, \$50.00, \$16.16, \$400.00, \$465.00. The last two sums were paid to his son-in-law Charles Riker and his son, Lambert.

Early in 1828, Samuel Banta and James Gass (another defaulting Shaker, who had joined the first year the society was forming) filed suit in court in an effort to obtain what they felt was rightly theirs. It

was six years before the case was finally settled, and by then it had reached the Supreme Court and a decision was made in favor of the society on 5 May 1835. Although the case was still named Gass & Banta vs Wilhite et al (Wilhite being a trustee of the society), Samuel Banta had died before the final decision was made.

The trustees at Pleasant Hill viewed the proceedings as an attempt to break up the society, and were relieved at the decision. Similar suits were presented in courts against the Shaker villages in South Union, Kentucky, New Lebanon, New York and Enfield, New Hampshire.

Although Samuel was gone from the Shakers, other family members still remained in the society. His three youngest daughter's died there by 1828. His grandson, Samuel, left the society, married, and went to live in Indiana. His grandson, William, remained until his death in 1851, his daughter Lyney died at Pleasant Hill in 1852 and his granddaughter, Dotie, remained until her death in 1881. Samuel's son, Henry and his wife, Geertje, along with their children left the society early on (before the signing of the covenant of 1814), resumed their family life and eventually moved to Illinois where Henry died in 1843.

In 1845 the Millennial Laws were revised once again. Almost not a waking moment of their lives was not to be governed by the rules of the society.

Part I, Section IV, 16. When two or more are out together, they should as far as possibly consistent, all eat on one tavern, and lodge in one room, and when you walk in the streets, you should keep so close together that there wouldn't be room for even so much as a dog to run between you and your companion.

This rule was probably made because the Shakers were now trading and selling their wares extensively with the "outside world" and the Shakers at Pleasant Hill made continuous trips down to New Orleans and other markets to sell their products.

Part I., Section VI. 2. Girls should be kept in school in the summer, and boys in the winter, and they should never be schooled together.

Part I., Section XVII. 3. A corpse should be dressed in a shirt and winding sheet, a handkerchief and a muffler if necessary and for a female add thereto a cap and collar.

In the 1840's at Pleasant Hill saw numerous changes in the society. The Believers were writing their own hymns, one found was written by Samuel Banta's granddaughter, Dotie. Testimonies were written by younger members as they reached the legal age. One such written by Abram Banta, son of John Banta appeared in 1841 wherein he stated he was brought up under the sound of the gospel his parents having confessed their sins in August 1805, and that he is truly thankful that he was brought into the Shaker society. How firm his faith is, and how he will abide by the Shaker teachings to his death. A year later, however, he defaulted the society and left for the outside world.

Visions seen by inspired instruments were making their way into Pleasant Hill. Members, Sarah Pool and Katherine McCullough, both began to come forth with messages they supposedly received from deceased Shakers (among them several Bantas) as well as other personalities, such as George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. The messages they received from these people were all meant to inspire those believers to know and feel the privilege of being a Shaker. Many of so called messages in the

form of letters such as these appear in the records. Along with these letters, many of their spirit drawings were also received.

In 1854, Samuel Banta's brother, Hendrick died at Pleasant Hill. His obituary read Hendrick (Vestus) Banta died 28 February 1854. He was 76 years and 25 days old. There is a long description of the funeral and eulogy written for him. I think we can be certain that Vestus was buried in his shirt, handkerchief and winding sheet as required by the Millennial laws.

Still living in the society at that time was Henry's former wife, and one daughter, Ann. Two other daughters had already deceased.

By 1850 6,000 Shakers lived in the chain of Shaker societies spread across the Eastern half of the United States. They believed God's kingdom had come and they were living in it - celibate and unsullied angels. Mother Ann had taught them there was no dirt in heaven and there was none to be found in a Shaker village. One observer noted that even the dust in the road seemed pure in a Shaker Village. "Gospel order meant not only cleansed souls, but productive farms, well-scrubbed shops, carefully-tended grounds, and clean rooms in all their airy dwellings. In spite of being met with ridicule, scorn, and suspicion, they survived and prospered. At Pleasant Hill they led the state in scientific farming, in the propagation of new sheep, cattle, and hog strains, and in the development of agricultural implements. The sale of their first flat brooms, preserves, garden seeds and herbs throughout the Midwest and the South made the Shaker name a hallmark of excellence. The Pleasant Hill community is credited with selling the first packaged seed in America, inventing the circular saw and the spring clothespin. The Shakers at

Pleasant Hill had a water system sixty years before the town of Harrodsburg. Their motto brought them great reward "Hands to Work and Hearts to God."

The Civil War years caused them great hardship. Although pacifists, they found the war taking place right on their own property, when first the Union and then the Confederate encamped upon their grounds. This so depleted their supplies and ruined their crops it was nearly impossible for them to recover. When the war was over and reconstruction began, they found themselves being robbed by brigands.

1881 saw the last of the Banta family members to die at Pleasant Hill. Dotia Verbryke, Samuel's granddaughter was the last surviving member. She died on 11 January, when the Mercury stood at 18 degrees and six inches of snow fell on the ground. She was 76 years of age, having entered the society as a child, had remained steadfast to their cause and was viewed as a true peacemaker whom everyone loved and respected.

By the end of the century, industrialization was putting a great strain on the societies. Membership had been shrinking ever since the 1850's when the Millennial laws had been tightened. By 1875, Tyringham, Massachusetts closed; North Union, Ohio in 1889; Groveland, New York, 1892; Watervliet, New York, 1901; White-water, Ohio, 1907; Shirley, Massachusetts, 1908; Union Village, Ohio in 1912; Enfield, Connecticut in 1917; Harvard, Massachusetts in 1918; and Pleasant Hill in 1920. Others followed. Canterbury, New Hampshire and Sabbathday Lake, Maine are the only two still in existence. Less than a dozen Shakers are still living in those two villages. Some villages, like Pleasant Hill have reopened as tourist attractions. These include: New Lebanon, New York;

Watervliet, New York; Hancock, Massachusetts; Enfield, New Hampshire; and South Union, Kentucky.

Today Shaker artifacts command high prices in the antique market. Pieces of furniture such as chests of drawers have sold for as much as \$33,000, their tall case clocks have brought as much as \$20,00. The rockers for which they are famous bring as much as \$3000.00 Seed boxes with labels intact have sold for \$5,000; oval pantry boxes for \$5,000.

While the Shaker religion is nearly extinct, the craftsmanship the Believers displayed will long live in history.

This concludes my program, and before I take questions I would like to invite you to look over the items on the display table. There are pictures of spirit drawings, a few pieces made at the present Shaker colonies (none are original pieces), books, pictures, etc.

#### *SHAKER MY PLATE*

Chapter members volunteered to make the refreshments for the Shaker Food Tasting under the direction of Mrs. Elmer W. Meyer. Recipes were typed, printed and assembled by Mrs. James E. Vogt, Regent, and distributed at the end of the meeting. The following recipes are arranged so that they can be printed three to a page and cut to recipe card size.

#### SHAKER SEED CAKES

1/2 C Butter	1 t Anise Seed
1 1/2 C Sugar	3 C Flour
3 Eggs	1/2 C Blanched Almonds

Cream butter extremely well. Add sugar gradually & beat. Add 1 egg at a time and beat after each is added. Mix in the anise seed and gradually work in the flour. Roll to 1/2" thickness. Place on lightly buttered cookie sheet and cut into diamond shapes (1 1/2" long) with a pastry wheel or sharp knife. Brush with lightly beaten egg white & press whole (or 1/2) blanchd almond into center of each diamond. Bake in 350 degree oven - (time not given - about 8 minutes.)

#### SISTER LETTIE'S SAND CAKES

1 C Butter	1 t Salt
2 C Sugar	1 t Baking Powder
1 t Grated Lemon Rind	1/2 C Nuts, blanchd & chopped
3 Egg Whites	Topping: 1 T Cinnamon
3 1/2 C Flour, sifted	1 C Sugar

Cream butter & sugar together; add grated lemon rind & egg whites & mix well. Sift flour, salt & baking powder together. Blend with butter mixture & chill well. Roll very thin & sprinkle with chopped nuts. Cut into small squares. Place on cookie sheet & bake at 350 degrees for 8 min.; dust with sugar & cinnamon & return to oven for 2 minutes. Makes 5 dozen small cakes.

#### SISTER JENNIE'S PLAIN COOKIES

1/2 C Butter	3/4 t Soda
2 t Flavoring - Rose Water	
1 1/2 C Sugar	1 t Salt
2 Eggs	1/2 C Sour Cream
4 C Cake Flour (variable)	

Cream butter & rose water. Add sugar a little at a time - cream well after each addition. Add eggs one at a time - cream well. Mix soda & salt with the sour cream & add this to the creamed mixture alternately with the flour. Mix well. Roll out and cut into desired shapes OR roll 1/8" thick in a greased jelly roll pan. Use a cookie stamp - make your own from a potato - or use a patterned glass bottom (wine glass, punch cup, small goblet, etc.) dipped in sugar. Cut cookies into squares & bake at 375 degrees for 8-10 minutes. May be sprinkled with sugar after taking from oven, if needed.

### CHESSE PIE

1/2 C Melted Butter    1 1/2 t Vinegar  
1 1/2 C Sugar            3 Eggs  
1 1/2 t Corn Meal        Unbaked 9" Pie Shell

Use mixer at low speed for combining ingredients, and do not mix too much. Combine sugar and melted butter; then add eggs and remaining ingredients. Pour into unbaked pie shell; use 9" pie pan. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Put pie in oven and turn heat immediately to 400 degrees. Cook at 400 degrees about 15 minutes, then at 300 degrees about 20 minutes. Filling for pie will puff up full. Give a little jiggle to be sure center is firm before removing it from oven. Place on a rack to cool. May be browned before serving. (Cooking time varies as to oven & eggs; if eggs are fresh, it takes longer.)

### SHAKER LEMON PIE

2 Large Lemons            2 C Sugar  
4 Eggs, well beaten       9" Unbaked Double Pie Crust

Slice lemons as thin as paper, rind and all. Combine with sugar; mix well. Let stand 2 hours or longer, preferably blending occasionally. Add beaten eggs to lemon mixture; mix well. Turn into 9" pie shell, arranging lemon slices evenly. Cover with top crust. Cut several slits near center. Bake at 450 degrees for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 375 degrees and bake for about 20 minutes or until silver knife inserted near edge of pie comes out clean. Cook before serving.

### SISTER JENNIE M. WELLES' CUPCAKES

1 C Butter                3 C Cake Flour  
1 t Pure Vanilla         3 t Baking Powder  
1 1/2 C Sugar             1 Scant t Salt  
4 Eggs

Cream the fat; add flavoring & cream again. Cream in sugar a little at a time. Cream in eggs, 1 at a time. Sift flour baking powder & salt together, twice. Divide flour mixture in four parts and add to creamed mixture -one part at a time. Do Not beat while adding flour, just stir quickly. Place spoonfuls of batter in muffin cups, no more than 2/3 full. Grease & flour the muffin cups first or use paper liners. Bake at 375 degrees for about 12-15 minutes. Makes about 12 medium size cupcakes.

MAPLE ICING (For top of cupcakes) 2 C Maple Syrup            1/2  
t Baking Powder  
2 Egg Whites

Boil syrup until it will spin a thread. Beat egg whites until very stiff. Add the syrup slowly, beating constantly. Beat until frosting becomes cold & thick enough to hold its shape, adding the baking powder during the last part of beating.

#### HERMIT COOKIES

1/2 C Butter	1/2 C Raisins
1 1/2 C Brown Sugar	1/2 C Nutmeats, chopped
2 T Sour Milk	1 C Currants, chopped
2 Eggs	1/2 t Nutmeg (ground)
3 C Flour	1/2 t Cinnamon 1 t Soda

Cream the butter & sugar together. Beat the eggs & milk together. Sift 1/2 the flour & the soda together. Mix the nuts & fruit with the rest of the flour & add the spices. Combine all ingredients and beat thoroughly. Drop by teaspoonfuls on greased cookie pans & bake at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes.

#### SPICY GINGERBREAD

2 Eggs	1/2 t Salt
3/4 C Brown Sugar	1 t Soda
3/4 C Molasses (dark)	1 1/2 t Baking Powder
3/4 C Shortening, melted	2 t Ground Ginger
2 1/2 C Flour	1 1/2 t Cinnamon
1 C Boiling Water	1/4 t Ground Cloves

Add beaten eggs to the sugar, molasses & melted shortening. Add dry ingredients which have been mixed and sifted. Lastly add the hot water. (Raisins may be added to batter.) Bake in shallow greased pan at 350 degrees for about 35-40 minutes or until firm in center. Serve topped with Lemon Sauce.

#### LEMON SAUCE (Served over Gingerbread)

1/2 C Sugar	1 C Boiling Water
1 T Cornstarch	2 T Butter
Dash Salt	1 1/2 T Lemon juice
Dash Nutmeg	Grated Rind from 1 Lemon

Mix sugar, cornstarch, salt, and nutmeg; gradually add water, and cook over low heat until thick and clear. Add butter, lemon juice and lemon rind; blend thoroughly. Makes 1 1/3 cups.