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Front cover illustration: Benjamin Green, Shaker apostate from Enfield, New Hampshire. This image probably dates to c.1860. This version was sourced from the article by Frank West Rollins, “The Old North End: Concord,” Granite Monthly 22, no. 6 (June 1897): 337.
From the Editor —

This issue is devoted to a review of and an addendum to Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers, 1782-1850, edited by Christian Goodwillie, and published by Pickering & Chatto in 2013.

This three-volume work is a comprehensive collection of apostate and anti-Shaker writings. It is not often that a publisher of the stature of Pickering & Chatto would seek to publish such a work on its own initiative. It is a major development in the publication of Shaker-related works. Moreover, Pickering and Chatto has commissioned Glendyne Wergland and Goodwillie to compile a collection of more than sixty narratives by faithful Believers, titled Shaker Autobiographies, Biographies and Testimonies, 1806-1907. This three-volume set is due out in May of this year.

In this issue of ACSQ, Carol Medlicott offers a review of Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers, 1782-1850, in addition to constructing an annotated expanded table of contents for the three volumes. Medlicott is a well-known Shaker scholar with particular interest in western Shakers, Shaker music, and geography. She is an associate professor in the department of history and geography at Northern Kentucky University. She has authored a recent biography of Issachar Bates (Issachar Bates: A Shaker’s Journey, University Press of New England, 2013), coauthored a book with Christian Goodwillie on Richard McNemar (Richard McNemar and the Music of the Shaker West: Branches of One Living Tree, Kent State University Press, 2012), and published numerous articles on the Shakers in Common-Place, ACSQ, Timeline, and White Water Village Voice.

Inevitably, once Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers was completed Goodwillie discovered additional information. He has, therefore, put together a postscript to his three-volume work, and gives this description: “This brief piece will share some of what has since come to light about Benjamin West, William Scales, and Benjamin Green (whose texts were in the collection), as well as the discovery of a previously unknown Shaker apostate work by Zebulon Huntington.” Goodwillie is the director and curator of special collections and archives at Hamilton College Library, and associate editor of the Richard W. Couper Press. He has published extensively on the Shakers.

Zion’s Whistleblowers: Reflections on Shaker Apostle and Anti-Shaker Writings

By Carol Medlicott


Introduction

During the summer of 2013, Americans were both captivated and scandalized by the revelations of Edward Snowden, a former CIA employee and intelligence insider, who abruptly left his post with a National Security Agency contractor and sought asylum overseas while at the same time handing over a mass of classified documents about US intelligence gathering practices. The American press continues to reel over Snowden’s revelations, which have generated considerable criticism of the Obama administration and its intelligence-gathering procedures. In particular, what appears to be a policy of broad-based telephone surveillance of American citizens and foreign allies alike has come under considerable scrutiny. Some have hailed Snowden as a hero and an American patriot, while others have criticized his motives and called into question his competency. Snowden has insisted that his aim was to reveal to an unsuspecting American public the extent of what he believes are aggressive and unscrupulous technology-based surveillance practices.

At exactly the same time that Britain’s Guardian newspaper was making public the extensive revelations of intelligence insider Edward Snowden, another British press was releasing to the reading public the most extensive collection of Shaker apostate writings ever assembled. While considerably less explosive today, many of these Shaker apostate writings would have been every bit as provocative to readers at the time of their initial release in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. Like the Snowden revelations,
the anti-Shaker writings presume to afford the reader an inside look into a system that would otherwise remain murky to outsiders.

This essay will begin with some brief background on the Shakers and on the dynamics of insider-outsider information before turning to Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers, 1782-1850, the three-volume set newly released by British publisher Pickering & Chatto and edited by Christian Goodwillie. I will present a descriptive summary of the volumes, then turn to a discussion of key themes, motives of the writers, and the reasons that such writings diminished in number and intensity, along with some specific highlights. In closing, I will consider the utility of such writings for the contemporary reader. Further, as an appendix to this essay, I have compiled a table that provides a complete listing of the contents of the three volumes, specific categorical facts about each, and a very brief abstract of the themes addressed by each writer.

 Seeking the Insider’s Perspective

The Edward Snowden controversy should be instructive for students of communal and intentional groups. We are all too aware that most intentional groups, past and present, define boundaries to separate themselves from the broader society and that penetrating those boundaries to learn the “truth” of what goes on within self-isolated groups can be difficult. Likewise, for the majority of Americans, the U.S. intelligence community is a mysterious walled-off entity, whose shadowy ranks are accessible only to those secretive specialists who hold the requisite security clearances. For most of us, it is a world beyond our ken, and we can only achieve a glimpse on a few rare instances. Perhaps someone on the inside might be “outed,” generating tales of hidden intrigue, or someone insider might choose to release a scandalous tell-all memoir. Or perhaps a defector announces his willingness to expose the secrets of the intelligence organization he has decided to renounce.

Any system or institution based on strict separation is uniquely vulnerable to the potential for damage from disaffected former members. Whether from an intelligence service, as in the case of Snowden, or from a totalitarian state, a company, or an enigmatic intentional community, a defector is an ambiguous figure. His information is welcomed by some, yet at the same time regarded by others with suspicion. Some might expend considerable effort to “debunk” the defector’s revelations. But because of his insider status, the defector holds singular power to effect real damage on the system he has left behind. Still, for all his potential power, the defector’s ultimate fate is usually uncertain. Whether from North Korea or a contemporary religious group, an exit from any closed and secretive community often leads to a sadly troubled life in which the apostate is unable to adjust.

It is an easy matter to find examples of withdrawn and secretive intentional communities whose opaque practices become a little more transparent as a result of the public revelations of disaffected former members. Often such information is mishandled and any scholarly value is diminished. In contemporary America, for instance, revelations from former members across a range of intentional communities—from Hutterites and Amish to “fundamentalist” Mormons—have become popular fodder for “reality” television. But far from being mere entertainment, firsthand observations from former insiders of intentional communities hold considerable value, even though the scholarly use of such information demands critical consideration of the testifiers’ motives and perspectives. Through their long history, the Shakers have had abundant experience with apostasy and persecution and have survived despite the circulation of slanderous accounts generated by former insiders and aggrieved individuals.

Commonly known as the “Shakers,” the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing is the longest-running religious communal group in American history, with origins older than the nation itself. From the Society’s beginnings, the Shakers sought separation from the American mainstream. That separation quickly became one of the Shakers’ key distinguishing features and the basis of provocation. The majority of religious denominations in America were content to share a diverse social landscape with a range of churches and spiritual groups. For most Americans, membership in a religious congregation offered structure for part of one’s social, cultural, and spiritual practice, but seldom for all of it. But from the beginning, the Shakers sought a comprehensive commitment from each convert, a commitment which meant that each convert agreed to make a conscious separation from the World and to allow his or her entire existence to be governed and dictated by Shaker principles, rules, and guidelines. For most other Americans, one’s religious denomination might impose relatively few obligations beyond recommended periodic
worship practices. But for Shakers, the chosen religious life was both all-encompassing and sequestered. Shakers established separate settlements, separate housing, separate economic practices, separate schools, separate social spheres, separate forms of artistic and cultural expression, separate value systems. When one also factors in the radical nature of Shaker theology, the unusual social mores, and the curious worship practices, it is not surprising that the Shakers have provoked strong reactions from observers through much of their long history in America.

During a prolonged period of their history, from the early 1780s through at least the 1850s, the Shakers were regarded by many Americans as a group so withdrawn and enigmatic as to elude critical scrutiny. Initially, the Shakers published little about their beliefs and practices and they withdrew from mainstream society, even while they aggressively proselytized. Because practically no objective information about the Shakers was available, the publicized accounts of Shaker “defectors”—one-time followers who later repudiated their conversion and departed—found a ready audience. The publications of the ardent Shaker apostate Valentine Rathbun in the early 1780s opened this genre of writing. Rathbun had been among the very first Baptists from the region near Albany, New York, to seek out Ann Lee and her followers on their plot of land in the bleak marshlands of Niskayuna. Rathbun visited her there in late May 1780. It was only one week after the infamous Dark Day, and the members of Rathbun’s New Light Baptist congregation were all filled with spiritual expectations. Rathbun was utterly captivated by Ann Lee’s words and demeanor, as well as her singing, and became instantly infatuated with Shakerism. Whether he ever resided at Niskayuna is questionable. At that early period, becoming a Shaker meant simply making a confession of sin to Ann Lee or a member of her retinue and adopting their unorthodox mode of worship. No formalized theology existed, nor did communal property ownership, collective economic practices, or regulated lifestyles. Three months later, Rathbun repudiated his new faith. But during that summer of 1780 Rathbun witnessed Shaker worship at its most frenzied. Apparently dazed by the experience, he took it upon himself to publicize his observations, in the hope that his writing could be instrumental in preventing others from falling in with what he ever after regarded as a dangerous and misguided sect. From this genesis, a steady procession of anti-Shaker accounts by former Shaker insidmers was launched on the American public for more than seventy years, on through to the middle of the nineteenth century.

Figure 1. Title page of Valentine Rathbun’s A Brief Account of a Religious Scheme... Commonly called Shaking Quakers. Rathbun was one of the earliest Shaker apostate writers, and his main objections concern the excessive and irrational nature of Shaker worship behaviors. His account also introduced the powerful idea of the Shakers being a political scheme launched by the British crown to undermine American social stability.
An Assemblage of Insider Voices

Thanks to the British publisher Pickering & Chatto, a three-volume set representing the most complete array of anti-Shaker publications ever assembled is now available to the reader and researcher. Pickering & Chatto specializes in assembling edited collections of primary sources ranging across a broad array of themes in Anglo and American history. In 2010, Pickering & Chatto launched an American Communal Studies series, which will present edited sets of obscure primary sources pertaining to an extensive assortment of American intentional and communal groups drawn from well over two centuries of American religious history. Many of the titles in this series will be multi-volume sets. The aim of the series is to make available for the student of communal society history a range of primary sources that would otherwise be difficult—or in some case, virtually impossible—to access. Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers, 1782-1850 represents the first title in this series. This three-volume set contains a rich and extensive collection of anti-Shaker writings drawn from the earlier generations of the Shaker experience in America. Although the contents were published by their various authors in the past, most are virtually unknown today.

The editor of Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers is Christian Goodwillie, whose credentials as a Shaker historian and researcher are well known. This project was an outgrowth of Goodwillie’s passion for early Shaker history together with his impressive expertise in early American print culture. Strong themes in Goodwillie’s work have been how the early Shakers intersected American print culture, as well as how the image of the Shakers evolved through early imprints of their own and others’ making. As a scholar and curator of early American religious history, Goodwillie is devoted to promoting antiquarian study. It is impossible to imagine any Shaker scholar besides Goodwillie who could have brought this ambitious and creative project to fruition.

The thirty-nine texts assembled in these three volumes represent a broad geographic swath of the Shaker world, including both eastern- and western-oriented accounts. A slight majority (twenty-two) of accounts address events among the Shakers at the eastern New York communities, the New Hampshire communities, and the major Massachusetts communities of Harvard and Hancock. But a significant number (seventeen) of the accounts offer impressions developed among the western Shaker

Figure 2. Title page of Daniel Rathbun’s A Letter … to James Whittacor, Chief Elder of the Church Called Shakers. He claims to have witnessed a range of excessive behaviors, from nakedness to sadistic abuse to drunkenness on the part of the principal Shaker spiritual figures. Much of his narrative frames Shakerism as tantamount to Roman Catholicism, with the Shakers forced into the “popish” idolatry of their leaders.
settlements of Union Village, Ohio; Pleasant Hill, Kentucky; and West Union, Indiana. A few parts of the Shaker world are entirely missing, and the reader is left with the impression that Shaker settlements in Maine, Connecticut, western New York, and elsewhere happily eluded the attention of anti-Shaker writers.

Twenty-one of the texts assembled—over half the total—are authored by Shaker apostates. Some of these individuals had been among the Shakers for only a few months, while others had lived as Shakers for as much as twenty years or more. The remaining eighteen texts come from a variety of observers, some of whom had extensive direct contact with the Shakers, while others seemed to rely on the publications of others. The writings of over thirty individual authors are included. The four authors represented by multiple narratives include apostates well known for making careers out of their anti-Shaker diatribes, such as Valentine Rathbun, Eunice Chapman, and James Smith.

Yet, as editor Christian Goodwillie informs the reader, these thirty-nine texts are not a comprehensive collection of apostate and anti-Shaker narratives, nor even a representative one. Rather, they are texts that heretofore have been too obscure for the average reader to access. Many excellent Shaker apostate and anti-Shaker writings are, in fact, readily available to the contemporary reader, through modern scholarly editions, modern reprints, or web-accessible versions. Still, this new collection offers the reader an unprecedented array of anti-Shaker writings. And nearly as valuable as the texts themselves are the editorial additions by Goodwillie, who provides an excellent collection of scholarly headnotes to introduce and contextualize each of the thirty-nine entries. Goodwillie's general introduction stands as an important scholarly contribution in its own right, as it masterfully interprets the historical backdrop against which the anti-Shaker literary genre developed. It should stand together with several of the individual anti-Shaker texts as indispensable "must-reads" for any student of Shaker history and culture.

Unfortunately, however, this three-volume collection is not aimed at the average reader of Shaker history. Although a handsome and impeccably produced set, its cost will present a barrier to most potential readers. Even serious scholars may find the set difficult to access in a practical sense, as budgetary constraints may limit its acquisition by libraries. Also, many of the texts are quite difficult to penetrate, as they are theoretically dense, impossibly long and labyrinthine in contrast to the fairly simple grievances that they contain, and flat-out difficult for the contemporary reader to follow. Even the editor seems aware of the daunting task facing the reader when he remarks on one particular text that "its brevity makes it a manageable read" (3:43) while another is "dense to the point of incomprehensibility" (2:203). Still, the opportunity to encounter anti-Shaker texts that have lain for so long in complete obscurity is indeed exciting. For the serious scholar of the Shakers or of early American religion, who wishes to deeply engage rare works across the full genre of anti-Shaker narrative, this collection is an impressive and important piece of work.

Listening to the Insiders' Voices

From the opening text by Valentine Rathbun in the first volume, a strong theme running throughout this set is how people reacted to Shakerism during the very early period of its establishment in a region. Whether the focus was New York and Massachusetts in the 1780s or Kentucky and Ohio in the early 1800s, anti-Shaker writers exhibited a similar array of objections: shock over the glossolalia, dancing, and other bodily contortions exhibited during worship; abolition of marital relations and denial of natural affections, leading to renunciation of cherished biblical principles governing family relations; apparent idolatry of Ann Lee as a female manifestation of the Christ Spirit; alleged covert connections to the British and to Native American tribes at a time of continued political unrest; and imposition of spiritual authoritarianism upon followers tantamount to the "popish" practices of Roman Catholicism.

Especially in the earliest period when Ann Lee was still living, her teachings were still evolving, and worship practices were still in flux, people exposed to the unregulated excesses of Shakerism might well have had reason to be justifiably concerned. Carried away in throes of spiritual travail, some early Shaker followers were apparently moved to harm themselves out of a desire to redress their own sinful natures, or they might physically abuse one another for similar reasons. Multiple observers testified to seeing people commit appalling acts of sadistic degradation against their own aged parents or other family members, in shocking contempt of the biblical injunction to honor one's parents. Many writers expressed concern for the physical health and survival of Shaker followers, because they deprived themselves of food and sleep and forced
themselves to endure prolonged physical exertions. Several anti-Shaker writers identify a particularly weird practice apparently common among early Shaker followers—namely, a compulsion to run in the direction of one’s outstretched hand or finger, while in the grip of spiritual excitement. And a theme repeated by many former Shaker followers in that earliest period was that Shaker followers, both men and women, sometimes threw off their clothes in the frenzied intensity of worship. While bizarre, the purpose of nude displays, if they happened, may have been desire for self-humiliation as a form of spiritual mortification, or the impulse to prove one’s freedom from carnality and return to childlike innocence. But whatever the reason, nakedness during religious worship obviously flouted the common standards of propriety and modesty, thus becoming a trump card in early apostate writing, signaling the utter depravity of the Shakers.

In a period when religion loomed large in daily life, Shaker practices and beliefs generated discomfiture in many, but sheer outrage in some. Early apostates and anti-Shakers were scandalized at witnessing the Shakers appearing to overturn and repudiate social mores of the time—children honoring parents, parents cherishing children, the reverencing of marital relations, spiritual obedience to ordained clergy, and secular obedience to political authorities and civil law. Ann Lee was alleged to have said that the Shakers were the people who would “turn the world upside down.” Several early converts—including 1782 apostate Valentine Rathbun and 1805 Ohio convert and lifelong faithful Shaker Richard McNemar—were known to use this exact phrasing when describing their early exposure to Shaker ideas.1 So it is no wonder that a common reaction to the Shakers would have been complete condemnation of what appeared to be bizarre excesses.

Another common theme in early anti-Shaker writing was that the Shakers were anti-American. Ann Lee and her followers had arrived from England on the eve of the American Revolution, yet refused to take up arms in the cause of American liberty. Later, they disavowed all political associations, refused to swear oaths or bear arms, and rejected such common social proprieties as use of honorific titles for civil authorities and office-holders. Yet within their own confines, the Shakers appeared to demand strict obedience from followers and converts to the spiritual and temporal authority of elders and eldresses. Many detractors believed that the exercise of authority within Shakerism, including the perceived near-idolatry of Ann Lee and her appointed successors, was tantamount to the

“popishness” of the Old World and had no place on free American soil.

Still other anti-Shaker writers were driven by theological objections. From the time of the Shakers’ first public preaching, listeners were shocked by their beliefs and doctrines. Neither during Ann Lee’s lifetime nor for many years after her death did Shakers commit their evolving theology to print.2 As Goodwillie points out, Shakers early on “ceded the power of the press” to their detractors, and the earliest published accounts of Shaker theology and beliefs come from apostates and anti-Shaker writers in the early 1780s. It was not until 1790 that a formal expression of Shaker theology, written not by detractors but by Shaker leaders themselves, was widely available. But by then the damage was done. Periodically over the next thirty-five years, critique of Shaker theology would be a dominant theme in anti-Shaker writing. Indeed, further elaboration by the Shakers in subsequent theological publications only provoked anti-Shaker writers more. During a period of twenty-five years after the 1808 publication of Testimony of Christ’s Second Appearing, the Shakers’ massive 600-page theological tome, several anti-Shaker writers produced dense theological critiques and refutations of Shaker doctrine, even while some grudgingly admired the Shakers’ ability to produce such a monumental piece of original theological expression. Some go out of their way to acknowledge the Shakers’ right to religious freedom, but nonetheless claim a compulsion to reveal the extent of Shaker theological delusion.

One finds an interesting geographical and chronological correlation in the anti-Shaker writings that focus on theological objections. Looking at the eastern writers represented in this collection, the anti-Shaker writings focused on theological objections come almost exclusively from the 1780s, the earliest period of Shaker evangelism. Nearly all of the remaining ones come from western writers, date from between 1811 and the mid-1820s, and exhibit references to the Testimony or other Shaker publications circulating in the western states. And all come from writers who are themselves clergy or at least very actively involved in organized denominations. It appears that after the initial scandal of radical Shaker theology in the eastern region, the substance of Shaker beliefs ceased to matter to most outsiders and did not play a major role in why insiders chose to leave the Shakers. In the West, where Shaker expansion took place over a twenty-year period from 1805, and always at the direct expense of frontier denominations that were themselves attempting to grow, theological differences mattered deeply to those church leaders who continued to see the Shakers as a threat. Of the
accounts in this collection, the last one to focus on theological objections is from 1826, from a Methodist minister who was aggrieved to see so many fellow Methodists in his neighborhood persuaded to convert to Shakerism.

It appears that theological objections to the Shakers were most potent at times when the Shakers were actively proselytizing and expanding in the East and West. Otherwise, the theology of the Shakers was not in itself all that provocative to anti-Shaker writers. Moreover, accounts that focus on theology are the least accessible to today's reader, and probably were similarly daunting to readers of the period. Consequently, they may have been far less influential than the more colorful accounts offering firsthand experiences and sensational observations. During the period of the Early Republic, when nearly all these anti-Shaker writings were produced, many Americans were genuinely committed to religious freedom, because so many could recall the struggle to obtain it. What the Shakers believed perhaps truly did not matter to many observers of the Shakers. However, the outward manifestations of those beliefs—alleged fanaticism, lewdness, abuse, the various sorts of misconduct to which the Shakers were led, all purportedly with spiritual justification—mattered a great deal more.

This points to another strong theme running through a significant number of apostate and anti-Shaker narratives: personal misconduct among the Shakers. The fanatical practices allegedly observed during the lifetime of Ann Lee and the earliest generation of 1780s, when Shakerism was at its most frenetic and unregulated, have already been discussed. Perhaps because such accounts were repeated and re-circulated for decades, later apostates and anti-Shaker writers were more likely to accuse Shakers of a range of improprieties. More importantly, readers were more likely to believe such accounts. By the 1810s and 1820s, anti-Shaker writings did not level new claims of naked dancing, but they did accuse the Shakers of a dizzying range of inappropriate and decidedly un-Christian behaviors. Not surprisingly, drunkenness was one popular theme. The earliest Shaker apostates had claimed to witness Ann Lee, William Lee, and other Shaker leaders in the throes of inebriation. The persistent circulation of those earlier accounts made it all the more plausible to believe the allegations made by later writers that abuse of alcohol continued to be rampant among the Shakers. In this set, the most powerful of such accounts come from several of the western writers, whose work alleges that western Shaker leaders kept personal supplies of liquor and lived in debauchery. Several accounts portray Shaker elders as hypocrites, living in luxury while...
common Believers struggled in meager conditions. Harsh treatment of children is another common theme: cruel corporal punishment, insufficient education, over-exertion. Financial misconduct is also frequently alleged, with Shaker elders portrayed as gleefully hoarding Believers' property and reaping profits from the uncompensated labor of the common worker.

One of the most enduring grievances brought against the Shakers was the manner in which authority was exercised. Of the accounts presented, objections to despotic authoritarianism run through a multitude of the texts, ranging across most of the seventy-year period covered in this collection. Many of the writers who object to the Shakers' alleged authoritarianism contend that it flies in the face of the hard-won American values of liberty and freedom of conscience. Also, many writers compare the Shaker eldership's demand for strict obedience to the papal authority of the Roman Catholic Church, and by doing so they accuse the Shakers of idolatrous practices tantamount to Catholicism.

One writer who is particularly effective in portraying the Shakers as anti-American authoritarian despot was James Smith. Smith was a retired army colonel renowned for his patriotic service during both the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. Retired and living with his son's family in Cane Ridge, Kentucky, he witnessed the arrival of the Shaker missionaries in 1805 and was horrified when his son abandoned the family to join a Shaker community in Ohio. Smith pointedly claims that the blind spiritual and temporal obedience demanded by Shaker elders of their followers violates those followers' "rights of conscience," to which they are entitled as American citizens. He even goes so far as to compare Shakers to slaves, a potent charge in a region where slavery was legal. Smith is saying that the Shakers were willing to utterly debase themselves. Smith may have been aware that the recently published Shaker theological tome, *Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing* (1808), written at Turtle Creek, Ohio, by Benjamin Seth Youngs, opened a discussion of the Shaker understanding of "rights of conscience," as established by George Washington. And it is perhaps not a coincidence that at about the same time as Smith's first anti-Shaker publication, Shaker poet Issachar Bates, who was one of the principle Shaker missionaries in the region and well known to Smith, penned a hymn titled "Rights of Conscience," which further elaborated on the theme of how the Shakers practiced true rights of conscience while other Americans remained bound up in politics and sectarian creeds.

Smith's writings rank as among the most important anti-Shaker texts of the period, in that they portray not only one man's personal grievances but also address the friction between Shakers and mainstream Americans in the highly charged patriotic atmosphere of the Early Republic.

But many of the accounts in this collection are in fact motivated by highly personal grievances. Many people simply could not accept Shaker life, either for themselves or for their loved ones, and they were motivated to publicize their experiences out of a sense of loss, betrayal, and injustice. Several of the writers believe themselves to have been deeply wronged by the Shakers. Reading the accounts in which the writers are clearly burdened with personal loss, one is reminded that there are truly at least two sides to every story and that stress and trauma prevent anyone from keeping an unbiased perspective. In fact, any Shaker scholar who has spent time reading journals and correspondence from any Shaker community can affirm that most large families that joined the Shakers had members who failed to adjust to Shaker life and who felt traumatized at what had befallen themselves and their families. Some of these reluctant converts departed, while others remained. Sadly, there are abundant examples of Shaker life inflicting genuine misery on people, with the result being apostasies, elopements, insanity, and suicides. Some of the most prominent Shaker convert families, both East and West, were not immune from personal trauma. In the earliest generation of Shaker converts, Seth Youngs died by cutting his own throat, even while most members of his large family prospered as Shakers. Both Issachar Bates and Richard McNemar were disappointed by apostate sons, even though others of their children remained faithful. Some children of the first Ohio convert Malcolm Worley apostatized and later accused the Shakers of driving their father mad. At both Union Village and Pleasant Hill, members of large prominent early convert families committed suicide.

The sad fact is that while Shaker conversion was the ticket for some into a rich and productive life of spiritual fulfillment, for others it led to spiritual anxieties and anguished separation from loved ones. As Goodwillie notes, the cases of Eunice Chapman and Mary Dyer have been fully and effectively explored by scholars. Modern readers cannot help but sympathize with these women who felt abandoned by their husbands, deprived of their children, and manipulated by the Shakers, all at a time when women were generally devalued and disadvantaged in society. The case of James Smith is particularly poignant. As an elderly
Peter Youmans was a Methodist figure reacting to the widespread Shaker conversion of Methodists around southern Butler County, Ohio. His narrative, *An Appeal to Scripture and Common Sense* (title page pictured above) includes a nicely constructed side-by-side comparison of Ann Lee and Jesus, as well as a summary distillation of the Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing.

Man in his seventies living at a time well before today's modern social safety nets, Smith was dependent upon his son for security in his old age. Having raised a righteous son who seemed intent on obeying the biblical injunction to honor his aged father by providing him a secure home, Smith believed his remaining years would be stress-free. He was horrified when his son's Shaker conversion destroyed his household, leaving the elder Smith and his daughter-in-law bereft of support. Probably anyone who has reached middle age and has begun to wonder if one's assets are sufficient for a financially secure future can sympathize with Smith's distress. While the accusations made by the deeply aggrieved writers such as Smith, Dyer, and Chapman can seem harsh and unjustified, the reader must take into account the genuine anxieties that those writers probably suffered.

Throughout this three-volume collection, the reader encounters hidden gems—lively passages conveying fresh information about previously unknown or little understood circumstances. Even the most sophisticated scholar of the Shakers will find surprising new insights. Though inflammatory on some points, many of the apostates and anti-Shaker writers are dispassionately neutral in their remarks about Shaker premises, modes of dress and speech, habits of eating and housework, patterns of sitting or standing or moving in worship. Many of these anti-Shaker writings illuminate mundane details of life in specific Shaker villages to an extent rarely seen in Shaker manuscripts. For instance, from Absolem Blackburn's account, we learn the configuration of the meeting house interior at Union Village, the placement and design of the stairwells, and the exact position and purpose of the interior window from the upper stairwell into the worship interior. Considering that this meeting house is no longer standing and no interior images of it are known to survive, this is valuable information indeed. Also from Blackburn, we learn of the complex symmetrical layout of the gardens at West Union, Indiana, in the early 1820s, including the arrangement of colorful flower beds and paved walkways. Moreover, Blackburn identifies a feature of West Union's gardens that I have never heard of in any Shaker garden—namely, the presence of "pleasant summer houses, arbours, &c, which are delightful to people of taste and fancy" (2:249). As far as I am aware, features intended primarily for recreational and aesthetic enjoyment were virtually unknown in Shaker villages of the early 1820s. It is possible that these features at West Union may have been a consequence of the Shakers' regular exposure to the Rappites of New Harmony, Indiana, where Believers were encouraged...
to stroll in the flower and shrubbery gardens adorned with ornamental pavilions. The history of the West Union, Indiana, Shaker community continues to be one of the most enigmatic episodes in Shaker studies. For sheer volume of detail on West Union alone, and circumstances affecting its fortunes, this set is remarkable. In addition to Blackburn's account, others such as that of John Woods also impart some important insights on the relatively obscure West Union.

Several of the earliest reports from the 1780s portray the Shakers engaged in the very peculiar practice of "running after the hand." This is first reported in 1782 by Valentine Rathbun: "Sometimes their hand will stretch out, and after it they run, - through woods - cross lots - over fences, swamps, or whatever" (1:12). Other apostates report similar practices, noting that the Shakers "walk about with extended arms" (1:128). An anonymous account by a satirical anti-Shaker writer begins the remark that it is unlikely that anyone will be "so fortunate as to meet a Shaker when he is not running after his own finger" (1:43), which suggests that, like dancing, the practice was so common as to become a basis for mockery. Yet no references to such a practice are known in Shaker accounts of worship, nor is the rationale for it well understood. And although apparently commonplace early on, the practice apparently did not persist beyond the 1780s.

Shaker apostates and anti-Shaker observers impart other rich details of Shaker life and worship. For instance, Absolem Blackburn provides rich description of the diet and clothing of Ohio and Indiana Shakers, down to the type of wood shavings used in the men's woven brimmed hats and the cloth material of women's shoes. Several apostates provide useful details of later worship settings in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s. We hear, for instance, of how worship was managed in the 1820s—who sat on the floor and when, who sat on benches, who stood, where the elders stood in relation to singers (2:249-50). We hear the words of specific songs and detailed descriptions of the specific hand and arm gestures that accompanied the songs, line by line (3:200). In several cases, the words match tunes that are known to Shaker music scholars and have already been identified as popular songs. Two apostates identify "Come Life Shaker Life" as being sung in the 1840s (3:122, 202), a popular song that originated with Issachar Bates in 1836. And an apostate also identifies an earlier Bates song, "Shaker Slave," being sung at Harvard in the 1840s (3:218).

Admittedly, the scope and complexity of this three-volume set makes
Consequences of the Insider’s Voice

Shaker defectors have likely been more numerous than we know. Not all went out and published scandalous diatribes. But many were likely quite active in dissuading others from becoming Shakers. In my own biographical research on work on Shaker preacher Issachar Bates, I discovered his reference to a Shaker apostate, “one Job Picket,” strenuously warning him to avoid any entanglement with the Shakers. That was around the mid-1790s, in Bates’s community of Hartford, New York, over seventy miles from the nearest Shaker settlement, and Picket had claimed to have lived among the Shakers for seven years. I never succeeded in discovering anything more about Job Picket or his circumstances, except that there were indeed Shaker converts named Picket in the region. Looking further at Bates’s experience, he writes of hearing the confession of more than 1200 adult persons during the first several years of the western Shaker enterprise. Since Bates was one of several leaders, men and women, who were empowered to hear confessions of converts, we can safely assume that at least triple that number of people made confessions in that time. Even assuming a high degree of mortality from disease in early western settlements, we are still left with a far greater number of people confessing their sins and professing to convert than actually remained as Shakers for the long term. Thus, we are brought back to the point previously raised—that Shaker conversion offered satisfaction only for some, while many others were simply not suited to the demands that Shaker life imposed. Analyzing these volumes prompts one to reflect on how little we know about the multitudes of people who were with the Shakers for a time, before leaving for a multitude of personal reasons. This could present a fruitful new avenue of scholarship.

Despite seventy years of unrelenting published assaults from apostates and disaffected individuals harboring a range of grievances against them, the Shakers survived. But collectively the damage appears to have been not inconsequential. One can never prove a negative, of course. But as a scholar of early Shakerism, pre-1840, I see that the public was assaulted by some extremely potent anti-Shaker writing at a time when the Shakers were trying desperately to grow and to retain members. Having spent time studying this set of apostate and anti-Shaker narratives, I have come to believe the damage to the Shakers from such writings was very real indeed. Readers have long been able to access anti-Shaker writings. But the relative difficulty of doing so, and the sporadic appearance of references to anti-Shaker writings have made it appear to the modern scholar of Shakerism that anti-Shaker writing was itself a sporadic and inconsequential enterprise. The opportunity to examine and study this set, as a critical mass, is quite powerful. The set impresses upon the reader that the genre of anti-Shaker writing was not so inconsequential after all. This forces the reader to grapple with the challenge from outside persecution that the Shakers have always faced and to conclude that the tactical response from the Shaker leadership, particularly at times when the movement was vulnerable, might well have been more effective.

In the collection’s Preface, editor Christian Goodwillie remarks, “Admirers of the ... Shakers, might object to the collection of this critical mass of information originally intended to discredit and damage the sect.” This comment points to an interesting feature of Shaker studies, namely, that objective scholarship of Shaker history can sometimes be at odds with the Shaker “heritage” enterprise. Shaker heritage is carefully nurtured and preserved today through the efforts of individuals and institutions alike, all over the United States. Shaker-made objects are valued as among America’s most iconic examples of artistic material culture. A Shaker song, “Simple Gifts,” ranks as one of America’s most recognizable folk songs. Not only have the Shakers tenaciously survived slanderous assaults over their long history, Shaker culture is now enshrined as a celebrated American treasure. Though seen as quaintly anachronistic by many, the few practicing Shakers are beloved figures who draw sustenance from the work of a wider circle of admiring supporters. Bringing together a set of texts that offer the reader a concentrated dose of reminders of just how persecuted and reviled the Shakers once were—to say nothing of the shocking behaviors of which they have been accused—is understandably troubling. For one thing, the collective value contained in the Shaker heritage enterprise—ranging from collectors’ marketing of treasured
Shaker antiques to the operation of Shaker museums and historic sites to the publication of books and music recordings to the reproduction of Shaker aesthetics by interior designers—all rests on affectionate esteem for the Shakers themselves, past and present. And beyond that, the notion of deliberately drawing attention to negative aspects of the past history of a devout and admirable group that now quite simply cannot be regarded as anything other than a positive force in the world could come across as a bit uncivil.

But the Shakers have always been and remain a somewhat closed circle, vulnerable to efforts of former insiders to reveal their private practices. In that, they share characteristics with many other groups and institutions. The ongoing Snowden drama is a stark reminder of the power of the insider to wreak havoc on the group or institution with which he or she was once affiliated. The U.S. intelligence community and the Obama administration continue to grapple with the challenge of mitigating the damage. The Shakers of the nineteenth century could perhaps have shared some suggestions. As frustrated as today’s intelligence officials must be over how to counter Snowden’s barrage, Shaker ministry elders of the past must have felt similar aggravation when faced with the salvos from Valentin Rathbun, Mary Dyer, James Smith, Eunice Chapman, John Whitbey, John Woods, and others.

Most of us prefer to think of the Shakers as a charmingly spiritual and otherworldly sect that graced the American landscape with beauty, integrity, devotion, and energetic creativity. And although the Shakers certainly were all that, the Shaker heritage enterprise runs the risk of mythologizing the past. We must recognize the value of looking to the candid voices of the critic and the apostate insider, even while we must also recognize that reminding today’s readers that beneath the “myth” of Shaker heritage lay a tumultuous complex reality is indeed a risky business.

Notes

1. For Rathbun's remark that his “mind was turned wholly upside down,” see Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers, 1782-1820, 1:17; for a discussion of Richard McNemar’s remark in 1805 that the new Shaker teachings “appeared to turn things upside down,” see Carol Medlicott, Issachar Bates: A Shaker’s Journey (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2013), 89.
2. Goodwillie remarks that ongoing research by David Newell suggests that the Shakers’ earliest printed theological work, the Concise Statement of 1790, may have been printed in an undated edition in 1785, but with very limited circulation (1:113).
6. Polly Hooser of the Pleasant Hill Hoosers hanged herself in 1815, according to records shared by Lame Curry, curator, Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill. The suicide of Hannah Valentine, also by hanging, is recorded in multiple manuscripts of 1837, such as the journal of Joanna Kitchel, an eastern Shaker visitor to Union Village, WRHS V B 238.
7. The song reported in vol. 3, p. 200, by an anonymous apostate writer who was a Harvard Shaker sister begins “Hark! hark! my holy, holy, Vicalun selun voo.” I have located its tune recorded by Enfield, Connecticut, Shaker music scribe Russel Haskell in his monumental compilation of Shaker music, WLCM 2131. S4E5, p. 386.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author / Abridged Title</th>
<th>Author a Shaker Y/N</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Where published</th>
<th>Principal grievances against the Shakers</th>
<th>Notes*</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VOLUME ONE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Valentine Rathbun / A Brief Account of a Religious Scheme</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>Worcester, Mass.</td>
<td>Fanaticism, Lewd behaviors, Political subversion</td>
<td>Rathbun was part of a Baptist congregation near New Lebanon, New York, that experienced a revival beginning in late 1779 and sought out Ann Lee and the Shakers in nearby Niskayuna, New York, in late May 1780, after the infamous “Dark Day” of May 19th. He almost immediately fell in with the Shakers, but repudiated them within three months. In the meantime, though, many of his family also joined, along with other Baptists from his congregation. Rathbun probably never actually lived with the Shakers—and at the time there were no Shaker “villages” and no gospel order. His account offers valuable observation of how the followers of Ann Lee worshipped, their daily customs, how they interacted with visitors, how they proselytized, how Ann Lee herself behaved, and their mode of singing. His main objections concern the excessive and irrational nature of Shaker worship behaviors. His account also introduced the powerful idea of the Shakers being a political scheme launched by the British crown to undermine American social stability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amos Taylor / A Narrative of the Strange Principles, Conduet, and Character of the People Known as the Shakers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>Worcester, Mass.</td>
<td>Theological objections, Manipulation of followers</td>
<td>Taylor lived in a town neighboring Harvard, Massachusetts, when Ann Lee and followers came there in mid-1781. He claims to have lived with them for ten months, which would have been during Ann Lee’s tenure at the “Square House.” Taylor describes an ongoing period of open-house worship at Harvard, with people coming and going daily. Taylor lays out his impression of Shaker doctrine, point by point. His is the first attempt at an orderly explanation of Shaker theology. He acknowledges the sheer power of the Shakers and their success in affecting people who were in need of spiritual change. He also refers to how widespread Rathbun’s writings had become and seems to want to add a slightly milder take on the Shakers, in contrast to the scandalous views of Rathbun.</td>
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<tr>
<td>PA. / Three Curious Pieces</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>Boston, Mass.</td>
<td>Fanaticism, Political subversion</td>
<td>This excerpt from a larger piece satirizes several denominations, including Shakers. The short portion directed at Shakers includes general remarks about fanatical behaviors, along with the warning that the Shakers are a political tool sent from England to undermine American society. It seems derivative of other anti-Shaker writing, rather than based on original observation.</td>
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* These notes reflect points provided by Goodwillie in his headnotes, along with my summary observations gleaned from the texts themselves and other research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Headnote</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin West</td>
<td>1783</td>
<td>Hartford, Conn.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Theological objections Authoritarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Rathbun</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>Springfield, Mass.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fanaticism Lewd behaviors Personal misconduct Authoritarianism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spectator</td>
<td>1786</td>
<td>Worcester, Mass.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Theological objections Excessive misconduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Scales</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>Boston, Mass.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Personal grievances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anonymous / &quot;For the Western Star&quot;</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Stockbridge, Mass.</td>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
<td>Though anonymous, the writer of this account appears to have resided close to the Shaker community of New Lebanon and had opportunity to observe. The author provides an interesting look at social relations at New Lebanon in the 1790s. The writer’s main concern is for the Shaker youth, who appear to receive meager education and to be oppressed under the intimidating authority of Shaker elders, similar to how Roman Catholics are subjugated to papal authority. The tone of this account is strikingly different from earlier anti-Shaker writings. The writer presents the Shakers as a group that is so calmed down from their former mania as to be essentially harmless, and to be somewhat productive in the neighborhood. While the writer recalls earlier alleged excesses, such as naked worship and drunkenness, he also assures the reader that the Shakers are not growing in numbers, their members are aging, and their society will probably soon collapse.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caleb Rathbun / &quot;Caleb Rathbun Aged Nearly 17 Yrs...Maketh Oath&quot;</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Stockbridge, Mass.</td>
<td>Fanaticism, Lewdness</td>
<td>Caleb Rathbun is the grandson of Valentine Rathbun. His account is short, but quite damning and incendiary, because of his descriptions of alleged physical abuse that was both sadistic and prolonged. Caleb was a toddler when his family came to the Shakers around 1781, and he “escaped” from the Shakers in 1795 when he was around fifteen years old.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amos Taylor / Letter to the Western Star</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Stockbridge, Mass.</td>
<td>Retraction of earlier anti-Shaker narrative</td>
<td>In this very short piece, Amos Taylor retracts and disavows his earlier piece of anti-Shaker writing from 1782.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentine Rathbun / &quot;For the Western Star&quot;</td>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Stockbridge, Mass.</td>
<td>Codicil to earlier publications</td>
<td>This very short publication from Valentine Rathbun is a sort of codicil to his much earlier works of the early 1780s. Rathbun was prompted to write when he learned that two Shaker missionaries were going abroad in the countryside trying to appeal to listeners with the claim that the once fiercely anti-Shaker Valentine Rathbun had recently softened his stance. Here Rathbun wishes to set the record straight—that he has not, in fact, repudiated his earlier anti-Shaker writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reuben Rathbone / Reasons Offered for Leaving the Shakers</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Pittsfield, Mass.</td>
<td>Personal grievances</td>
<td>Reuben Rathbone is the son of Valentine Rathbun. While a Shaker, he had publicly denounced his father, seemingly justifying the truth of the common claim that Shakers deliberately turned children against parents. He had been twenty-one years old then and had remained a Shaker. When Shaker elder Calvin Harlow died, Reuben expected to be elevated to a higher position, but was was disappointed, prompting his apostasy. Reuben Rathbone delves further into the alleged excessive worship behaviors of the 1780s. Rather than just presenting the behaviors to shock the reader, he offers more insight into the excesses of the early period by treating the physical mortifications and other self-destructive behaviors with a bit more subtlety.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Personal Grievances</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Smith / “An Attempt to Develop Shakerism”</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Chillicothe, Ohio</td>
<td>Personal grievances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Smith / Remarkable Occurrences, Lately Discovered Among the People Called Shakers</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Paris, Ky.</td>
<td>Personal grievances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous / “Who Are the Shakers?”</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Baltimore, Md.</td>
<td>Authoritarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous / “Mobbing the Shakers At Union Village”</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Chillicothe, Ohio</td>
<td>Descriptive reporting of mob event in Ohio</td>
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</table>

James Smith was not himself a Shaker, but he had had ample exposure to Shaker preaching in his home area, and his son and namesake did convert around March 1810. Smith went to stay at the Shaker settlement at Turtle Creek, Ohio, for about two weeks to observe. His main grievance is that the Shakers are politically subversive, their authoritarian structure is anti-American, and they deny “rights of conscience.” In a pointed reference to slavery—coming from a resident of antebellum Kentucky—Smith bemoans the Shakers’ status as “voluntary slaves.” But Smith’s real motivation is personal. James Smith was an aged man living in his son’s household and mostly dependent on his son. By joining the Shakers, breaking up his household, and signing his property over to the Shakers, the younger Smith was depriving his father of his only means of support and essentially abandoning him.

The venerable James Smith was left bereft and impoverished when his son joined the Shakers in 1810, and he spent part of the short balance of his life attempting to air his anti-Shaker grievances in print. In this longer account, Smith delivers a more extensive version of his message, that the Shakers are dangerous political subversives who pose a threat to the human race itself, because of their practice of celibacy. Smith recounts details of his attempts to visit his grandchildren at Turtle Creek, along with the mistreatment of his non-Shaker daughter-in-law at the Shakers’ hands. He also includes extensive allegations of misconduct and un-Christian behavior on the part of the Shakers: hypocrisy, drunkenness, luxurious living, and financial scheming.

Though this account is published in Baltimore, its anonymous author comes from central Kentucky. It seems to be the first anti-Shaker writing to tie the Shakers of the western and eastern regions together. The author remarks that the Shakers were on the decline in the eastern U.S. when they launched their western missionary enterprise. The author’s main points are that Shaker authoritarian structure is tyrannical to their believers. While suggesting that their belief in a female component to the deity is blasphemous, he also defends their right to exist. But the writer suggests the Shakers should “be reckoned among the foes of liberty and the constitution.”

Goodwillie notes that the massing of mobs at the Turtle Creek, Ohio, settlement in August 1810 was at least a partial consequence of the anti-Shaker diatribes of James Smith. This account comes from Chillicothe, Ohio, then a major town and crossroads in the south-central part of the state.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Anonymous / “Expedition Against the Shakers”</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>1810</th>
<th>Philadelphia, Pa.</th>
<th>Descriptive reporting of mob event in Ohio</th>
<th>A more extensive account of the August 1810 mobbing at Turtle Creek, Ohio, reported for an eastern audience.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Smith / Shakerism Detected</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Paris, Ky.</td>
<td>Argument over credibility of previous writings</td>
<td>James Smith took further action later in 1810 against the Shakers. After his earlier publications, Shaker Richard McNemar wrote publicly to defend the Shakers against Smith’s accusations. Smith was upset that some of McNemar’s writing impugned the record of his past military service. This account is aimed mainly at clarifying his own credibility, to which cause he brings in the depositions of supporters. A further point he develops is that the Shakers pose a real threat to public safety because they are aiding and abetting the frontier Indians in Ohio and Indiana territory into committing violent acts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bailey / Fanaticism Exposed</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Lexington, Ky.</td>
<td>Theological objections</td>
<td>John Bailey lived in Lincoln County, Kentucky, where he would have been exposed to Shakers. The location is in the midst of Danville to the northwest, Harrodsburg to the north, Paint Lick to the east, and not at all far from Pleasant Hill. He had acquired a copy of Benjamin Seth Youngs’s Testimony of Christ’s Second Appearing, and he was responding to the theology it presents. Not a particularly vivid account, it may have been inconsequential.</td>
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<td>VOLUME TWO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher Clark / A Shock to Shakerism</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Richmond, Ky.</td>
<td>Theological objections Authoritarianism</td>
<td>Clark was probably from around Danville, Kentucky, close to Pleasant Hill, and probably had some contact with the Shakers there. He does not really take on any practices of the Shakers, but rather their published theology and doctrines. He objects to the hierarchical structure and likens it to “popery.” He also strenuously objects to celibacy, which he says is as much a threat to society as whoredom. This long and tedious account became quite obscure almost immediately, and probably had little impact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eunice Chapman / Letter to Lucy Wright</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1817</td>
<td>Albany, N.Y.</td>
<td>Personal grievances</td>
<td>This letter written by Eunice Chapman is addressed to Mother Lucy Wright by her married name, “Mrs. Goodrich,” attempting to persuade her to release the Chapman children from the Shaker village where their father lived, permitting them to return their mother, Eunice Chapman.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eunice Chapman, Thomas Brown, and Mary Dyer / An Account of the Conduct of the Shakers, in the Case of Eunice Chapman</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Lebanon, Ohio</td>
<td>Personal grievances</td>
<td>In this long account, Eunice Chapman presents her grievances against the Shakers by recounting her interactions with them in lively detail, step by step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous / Indoctum Parliamentum</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1818</td>
<td>Probably N.Y.</td>
<td>Satire</td>
<td>An anonymous author penned this satirical “play” version of the Eunice Chapman affair. Its audience and circulation are unknown.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel Doty / An Address to the People at Union Village</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Lebanon, Ohio</td>
<td>Hypocrisy, Financial wrongdoings, Mistreatment of members, General misconduct, Personal grievances</td>
<td>Goodwillie’s headnote relates the interesting and complex genesis of this account. An anti-Shaker publisher in Lebanon, Ohio, had reprinted some of the scurrilous writings of Eunice Chapman, along with his own additional accusations against the Union Village Shakers. To that, Union Village Shaker Richard McNemar had replied with his own tract, titled <em>The Other Side of the Question</em>. Daniel Doty lived in nearby Middletown, Ohio, and had been well acquainted with McNemar and others who became Shakers. From his home only about ten miles from Union Village, Doty often encountered Shakers, Shaker apostates, and estranged family members of Shakers. Reading <em>The Other Side of the Question</em> seemed to prompt Doty to reflect on his past friendship with McNemar and to brood over the many grievances he had heard others express about life at Union Village. Much of what he writes is from the secondhand allegations of others, as opposed to his own observations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anonymous / A Brief Exposition of the Fanaticism... of the People Called Shakers</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Poughkeepsie, N.Y.</td>
<td>General misconduct, Theological objections</td>
<td>The anonymous author is a Quaker who has been upset by the Shaker conversion of several relatives. Also, he has done business with the Shakers. His objections are mostly theological. It is a dense account, difficult to read, and may have had little influence or circulation. Significantly, of the accounts in this collection, this is the only one produced anywhere in the eastern region after the 1780s to stress theological objections as a major theme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absolem Blackburn / A Brief Account of... the People Usually Denominated Shakers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Flemingsburg, Ky.</td>
<td>Authoritarianism, General misconduct</td>
<td>Absolem Blackburn published this account from a town only thirty miles from Cane Ridge, Kentucky, an area where the Shakers had been active and were well known. He was with the Shakers at Union Village initially, for about a year, in 1819-1820. He left Union Village, apparently with the intent of remaining independent of the Shakers. But circumstances caused him to present himself at the West Union, Indiana, settlement in 1823. He was ill and in need of nursing. Blackburn remained at West Union another eight months. Blackburn’s objections to Shaker life are relatively mild. He resents the authoritarian pressure placed on Believers by Shaker elders, he claims that converts are misled as to the more radical aspects of doctrine, and he resents the Shakers for withholding compensation to former members for the work they performed while Shakers. He is also scandalized by personal conduct that he regards as hypocritical and un-Christian. But his account is immensely valuable for its unparalleled descriptions of the physical premises of Union Village and West Union, along with some of the best surviving details on daily life at West Union. Overall, Blackburn is very objective in his description and quite complimentary to the Shakers in many respects.</td>
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| Samuel Brown /  
| A Countercheck to  
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Shakerism</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>1824</th>
<th>Cincinnati, Ohio</th>
<th>Theological objections</th>
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<td>Samuel Brown was a Methodist minister from the area northwest of Cincinnati near the Indiana-Ohio border, who was scandalized when many of his congregation converted to the Shakers in the early 1820s, later forming the Shaker village of White Water. Brown acquired a copy of Benjamin Seth Youngs's <em>Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing</em>, and this account comprises his point-by-point reaction to it. It is difficult to imagine that this dense narrative would have been read by many.</td>
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| Peter Youmans /  
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<tr>
<th>An Appeal to Scripture and Common Sense</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>1826</th>
<th>Butler County, Ohio</th>
<th>Theological objections</th>
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<td>Like Samuel Brown, Peter Youmans was a Methodist figure reacting to the widespread Shaker conversion of Methodists around southern Butler County, Ohio. His narrative includes a nicely constructed side-by-side comparison of Ann Lee and Jesus, as well as a summary distillation of the 600-page <em>Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing</em>. But only one copy of this rare work survives, and there is no evidence that it ever circulated very far.</td>
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| John Whitbey /  
| Beauties of Priestcraft | Yes | 1826  | New Harmony, Ind. | Personal grievances  
| | | | | Authoritarianism  
<table>
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<th>General misconduct</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Whitbey was a former Pleasant Hill Shaker. He had an intellectual and philosophical bent, and was stimulated by intellectual conversations with fellow Shakers. His grievances appear to have arisen primarily from a sense of intellectual oppression. He wanted to think and express himself freely, to be at liberty to debate theology on a hypothetical level, and he felt stifled. He began to resist the authoritarian structure of Shaker life and wished to make decisions for himself. He began to learn of the ideas of utopian leader Robert Owens at New Harmony, Indiana, and he left to go to New Harmony in 1826. He was a destructive force for the Kentucky Shakers, because he returned to retrieve belongings and to persuade others to leave, ultimately instigating the apostasies of several other young adults.</td>
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The many condemnatory references to Whitbey found in Shaker manuscripts of the period suggest that the Shakers felt real damage from both his apostasy and from his writing. His writing portrayed the Shakers as narrow, rigid, petty, and lacking in intellectual depth.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>John Woods /</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1826</td>
<td>Paris, Ky.</td>
<td>Hypocrisy General misconduct</td>
<td>John Woods' seventeen-year experience as a Shaker began in the period of early missionary expansion in the West, and lasted until the early 1820s. His is the longest of any western apostate account. It was immediately regarded by others as important, and it was incorporated in full by early nineteenth-century author Burton Carr into his 1829 book on unusual religious sects, <em>Gleanings of Religion</em>. Woods main points of criticism focus on hypocrisy and general misconduct among the Shaker leadership. He charges that the elders indulged themselves, placed strict demands on those they governed, and were petty and manipulative. He portrays the trademark dancing not as a joyous practice, but as a drudgery intended for physical mortification. In fact, Woods' writing was probably quite harmful to the Shakers, and especially to Shakers in the West. It was circulated widely, and at a time when the Shakers were experiencing a difficult generational transition and problems on multiple fronts. Negative, yet authentic-sounding, Woods' writing may have played a role in stimulating other apostasies, and could easily have discouraged potential new converts from seeking out the Shakers.</td>
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<td>Shakerism Unmasked</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benjamin Green /</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Concord, N.H.</td>
<td>Personal grievances Hypocrisy General misconduct</td>
<td>Benjamin Green was an English seafarer who migrated to Quebec as a young man in the early 1820s. A spiritual quest took him to New Hampshire where he sought out the Enfield Shakers. Green lived at Enfield for seven years. His account includes no theological condemnations or sensationalized charges, but is a mild criticism of pettiness and other un-Christian behaviors. On a personal level, Green seemed particularly resentful of the expectation at Enfield for women and men to work together cooperatively.</td>
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<td>The True Believer's Vedemecum, or Shakerism Exposed</td>
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<tr>
<td>John McBride /</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Cincinnati, Ohio</td>
<td>Authoritarianism Religious conduct</td>
<td>With over twenty years experience as a Shaker at Pleasant Hill and his signature on two covenants (1809 and 1830), John McBride appeared to be a committed Believer. He left in the early 1830s, turbulent times throughout the Shaker West, with some communities experiencing a veritable hemorrhage of apostasies. His text takes the form of a succinct list of points, and his main objections seem to center around the practice of authority and modes of religious conduct, such as manner of prayer and confession. Later McBride must have had a change of heart, because he returned to Pleasant Hill, signed a further covenant in the early 1840s, and died there in 1844.</td>
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<tr>
<td>An Account ... of the Shakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author/Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Primary Grievance(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Hodgdon</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Concord, N.H.</td>
<td>Personal grievances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hodgdon’s Life and Manner of Living Among the Shakers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Horatio Stone / Lo Here &amp; Lo There</td>
<td>1846</td>
<td>New York, N.Y.</td>
<td>Personal grievances</td>
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<td>Authoritarianism, Fanaticism</td>
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Charles Hodgdon was a young tradesman’s apprentice in southern New Hampshire in 1820 when he heard of the Shakers through the slanderous publications of Mary Dyer. His curiosity was piqued, and though only fourteen, he went to Canterbury to learn more about the Shakers for himself. He remained, and lived at Canterbury from 1821 through 1824. During that time, he became attracted to a young sister, and eventually they left together and married. She died in 1828, leaving him widowed at age twenty-one with two babies. Apart from a few “creeds and ceremonies” that were hard for him to accept, Hodgdon describes a happy and productive life at Canterbury, and largely pleasant relationships with the Shaker elders. His account seems to be aimed more at discrediting Mary Dyer than discrediting the Shakers, and he strenuously asserts that Dyer’s publications are entirely false and slanderous.

This anonymous author apparently lived at Watervliet, New York, for a short time during a quite lively period of the Era of Manifestations. His account is an objective description of the “visitations” that were common in the Shaker world during the 1840s—manifestations of the spirits of the dead representing multiple races and nationalities. The author remarks that he assumes such exhibitions are undoubtedly still going on among the Shakers, since his own departure, and his aim is simply to describe what he has seen, since the Shakers themselves closed their meetings to the outside world. His reasons for leaving the Shakers are not stated. The fact that his tone is neither derisive nor mocking, but rather somber, and tinged with awe, suggests he left for reasons other than the unusual worship practices themselves. Goodwillie tells us that later Shakers verified the author’s account as an accurate reflection of events during the period.

Horatio Stone believed the Shakers were delusional and was upset when his siblings joined at New Lebanon, New York. The sometimes bizarre worship practices of the Era of Manifestations were underway. Stone objects to what he sees as authoritarian despotism among the Shakers. He believes the society to be a theocracy and the people completely deluded. The Preface to the work is written by another author, Dan Mendon, who uses references to modern technologies of the steamship, railway, and telegraph to assert that all obscure places in the world are now being illuminated, and therefore so should the Shakers be illuminated. This would have strongly resonated with readers of the period, who would have been aware of the vigorous missionary enterprises being launched by American Protestant denominations in distant lands and the need to “shine the light of the Gospel” into the hidden corners of the world. As such, it is quite a powerful introduction, as Stone is implicitly comparing the Shakers to a pagan people deserving of sympathy, not condemnation.

Stone correctly repeats the words of a song, “Come Life Shaker Life,” as being sung in the community. Still popular today, the song was written in 1836 by the aged Issachar Bates, a popular Shaker figure and long-time missionary.
| Anonymous / “The Shaker Concert” | No | 1847 | Dedham, Mass. | Deliberate caricature | This is a newspaper account of the performance of the Hammons family, a theatrical troupe of ex-Shakers who performed mock worship for a paying public. Goodwillie tells us that media was not always kind to them. We are reminded that the future lives of defectors could be troubled. Cold War defectors often were criticized for attempting to personally capitalize on their experiences. |
| William Pillow / *Trial of the Shakers* | Yes | 1847 | Lowell, Mass. | Personal grievances Authoritarianism | William Pillow’s wife was a follower of the Millerites, who, like many Millerites, was drawn to the Shakers after the “Great Disappointment.” Pillow was briefly persuaded, and indentured his children to the Shakers. He almost immediately relented, and he tried to get his wife and children to leave the Shakers, which resulted in a court battle. The account amounts to a rather tiresome combination of closely described events, together with depositions and court testimonies. To borrow a contemporary expression, Pillow “over-shares,” as do most of the apostate accounts in which personal grievances are at the forefront and children are at stake. |
| Anonymous / *Extract from an Unpublished Manuscript on Shaker History* | Yes | 1850 | Boston, Mass. | Fanaticism Abusive conduct | This writer is unidentified, but is known to be a Shaker sister from Harvard, who was also the mother of a young child at Harvard. Her observations are a valuable window into the visionary outpourings of the Era of Manifestations. Among other things, she correctly identifies several songs and describes their performance in a way that brings a more accurate interpretation well within the reach of contemporary Shaker music scholars and performers. The writer alleges abuse of children, along with frightening spiritual excesses that occurred during worship. |
| Mary Dyer / *Shakerism Exposed* | Yes | 1852 | Hanover, N.H. | Personal grievances | Mary Dyer had joined the Shakers along with her husband and young children in 1813. She left in 1815, but she was not allowed to take her children with her. She spent the next fifty years waging an unrelenting anti-Shaker campaign, during which she published multiple pamphlets attacking the Shakers in the most vivid and ferocious manner. Although this account dates from 1852, she essentially recounts the same litany of grievances that date from the 1810s, along with some recent depositions attesting to her good character. |
A Postscript to *Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers, 1782-1850*: New Light on Benjamin West, William Scales, Benjamin Green, and Zebulon Huntington

By Christian Goodwillie

The collection, annotation, and editorial writing associated with the set of apostate and anti-Shaker writings I published in 2013 consumed much of my free time for two years prior. With the advantages offered by the internet and the friendly community of Shaker scholars and researchers I felt that I had left very few, if any, stones unturned. The *Writings* set is intended as a gateway to any of the texts/authors therein, and certainly not as a final word. Book length studies of individual apostates such as Elizabeth De Wolfe's *Shaking the Faith*, about Mary Dyer, or Ilyon Woo's *Great Divorce*, about Eunice Chapman, demonstrate the end result of years of research on a given story. In my case, months of intensive research yielded quite a bit of new information about many heretofore obscure ex-Shakers, but I knew as I concluded my work that much was left to be found. This brief piece will share some of what has since come to light about Benjamin West, William Scales, and Benjamin Green (whose texts were in the collection), as well as the discovery of a previously unknown Shaker apostate work by Zebulon Huntington.

Benjamin West

In 1783 Benjamin West published *Scriptural Cautions against Embracing a Religious Scheme Taught by a Number of Europeans, who came from England to America, in the year 1776, and style themselves the Church... by Benjamin West, who has been Deluded by Them.*¹ West was threatened by the social upheaval that Shakerism fomented. He lamented: "Wives disown all natural affection for their husbands and children. Thus women become monsters, and men worse than infidels in this new and strange religion."² He also claimed that Shakerism puts its adherents "under temptations to murder themselves."³ This is a novel accusation that West was the first to level at the sect. He amplified claims made by previous apostate writers Valentine Rathbun and Amos Taylor in charging that those who follow the Shakers "[seek] to witches, wizards, charmers, and those that have familiar spirits."⁴ West also charged the Shakers with adultery.⁵ At the completion of my previous research on West, I was unable to firmly identify him among the numerous Benjamin West's of eighteenth-century New England. Thanks to googlebooks we now have firm information as to his identity.

West was a member of the Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) Church at Westerly, Rhode Island. Westerly is in an odd little outcropping at the extreme southwest edge of Rhode Island. It borders Stonington, Connecticut, across the Pawcatuck River. Originating in the religious tumult of 1650s England, the Seventh Day Baptists were active in Rhode Island by 1671. Seventh Day Baptists observe Saturday, the seventh day of the week, as the Sabbath in accordance with their interpretation of biblical tradition. The Westerly SDB Church was founded in 1708, separating itself as a distinct body from the founding SDB Church at Newport, Rhode Island. Today this congregation is known as the First Hopkinton Seventh Day Baptist Church.

In the mid-1740s "New Light" ideas began to divide the congregation. Some New Lights rejected the Lord's Supper, or communion, reasoning that Jesus only intended its observation during the period of the second coming of his spirit immediately following the resurrection. Other New Lights rejected both outward, or water, baptism and the observation of the Sabbath.⁶ The New Lights gained many adherents and in the mid-1750s a large number of withdrew from the church. On November 7, 1754, the church accepted the withdrawal of "Joseph Davis and said Benjamin West and their said wives, are gone out, or off, and from us and therefore from under our watch and care, and that they have no right to the privileges of this church for the future." The withdrawing members formed an independent New Light Society that continued to observe the Sabbath. However, the historian of the Westerly Church recorded with delight that "convulsed with internal dissensions, this sect was soon scattered like 'sheep without a shepherd.'"⁷

Surprisingly, more than twenty-five years later, on February 26, 1776, West returned to the Seventh Day Baptist Lower Meeting House in Hopkinton, Rhode Island (the original site of his Westerly Congregation).
Church minutes record that “after a full hearing from the said West, the reasons which he assigned for withdrawing from the church as he did, for which he confessed he had since received many convictions that he had not done right, and were it to be done again, he would not do as he did do then, and manifesting a real desire to be restored to his place again in the church; and after having answered sundry questions relating to his sentiments and belief in a very serious manner ... it was voted, that brother West be received again into full communion with this church.”

By 1781 Joseph Davis, who had been the leader of the New Lights, had also returned to his former congregation. Having made peace with their former brethren, Davis and Benjamin West were once again adjudged to be doctrinally sound and possibly fit for leadership roles. Elder John Burdick was dispatched to Burlington, Connecticut (a small town about twenty miles west of Hartford), to oversee the establishment of a SBD church there. Elder Burdick saw fit to appoint Davis as elder of the new church, and Benjamin West as deacon. This new church was unstable from the beginning. Davis and West had recently quarreled, and journeyed back to the SBD lower meeting-house in Hopkinton, Rhode Island, to have the matter settled. Shortly thereafter West, along with other members, became sympathetic to the doctrines of the “Shaking Quakers.” It is unknown exactly when or where West was initially exposed to the Shakers. Likely it was either during Mother Ann’s initial visit to Enfield, Connecticut, in June 1781, or her return visit to the area in February and March 1782.

Elder Davis was anxious to maintain order in the infant SBD church at Burlington and summoned West to appear before the church to explain his connection with the Shakers. West, however, did not appear but sent word to his former brethren that he had joined the Shakers. Accordingly on April 7, 1782, the church voted, “Whereas, brother Benjamin West has certified to this church that he has joined himself to a people called Shaking Quakers, this church now looks on said West as one that has gone out from us and [does] now not belong to this church.” Significantly, Elder Davis was formally ordained at the same meeting, and a letter was sent to Elder Burdick requesting a formal acknowledgment of the Burlington church as a sister church to the Westerly church. Perhaps the squabble between Davis and West helped to drive West away from the Seventh Day Baptists and into the arms of the Shakers. We may never know, but it is clear that the mercurial West seriously regretted his dalliance with Shakerism.

Scriptural Cautions, West’s renunciation of the Shakers, was published at Hartford in 1783. West’s name appears in large capital letters in the center of the title page, with this stern subtitle appearing immediately below: “Who has been deluded by them, to the great injury of himself and family.” The pamphlet served as a public mea culpa wherein West wrote: “With sorrow and grief I must confess I have been much captivated with, and deeply involved in this new and strange scheme, to the admiration of many of my former acquaintances, and was extremely zealous, being persuaded, it was the only way to perfection out of all sin; but alas, the great deception is this, to be ever going on in a way that never comes to the knowledge of the truth.” Perhaps West, like many seekers, never found a truth that suited him. His dissension from established church bodies dated back nearly thirty years by the time Scriptural Cautions was published. I have still not been able to determine West’s ultimate fate, but he does not seem to appear on the 1790 Federal census. Sadly the Seventh Day Baptist cemetery in Burlington, Connecticut, was terribly vandalized in the 1970s. It is the locale of one of central Connecticut’s greatest ghost stories, the “Green Lady.” I have been unable to determine if West is possibly buried there. It would be interesting to know if his brethren took him back for a third time.

William Scales

David Newell and I were able to uncover quite a bit of heretofore-unknown information about William Scales, who authored the important 1789 anti-Shaker newspaper attack, “Mystery of the People Called Shakers.” However, little more was known of his life during the 1790s and in the years leading up to his death in 1807. When I wrote the headnote in the Writings for his “Mystery of the People Called Shakers” I was aware that on March 14, 1798, Scales had written George Washington a letter. It was not particularly germane to my discussion of Scales’ apostate writing, so I made no mention of it. However, I have subsequently found two more letters written by Scales to Thomas Jefferson. In light of this evidence of Scales’ proclivity for writing the chief executive I will insert a brief discussion of these here.

The most intriguing part of Scales’ letter to Washington is its opening line: “Kind General, Many times I wrote to thee from the year 89 to the year 96.” Unfortunately, no other letter is extant between Scales and
Washington. Scales' letter reveals him to be every bit the self-absorbed enthusiast that his other writings illustrate. Frighteningly, Scales apparently confronted Washington personally at the President's Mansion during a trip he made to Philadelphia in 1796 in protest of the perceived pro-British Jay Treaty. Scales reminded Washington in his letter of 1798: "I visited thee personally and presented thee with a compendium of thy own laws, and when I fronted thee at thy door, thou didst pronounce them all nonsense." Access by members of the public to the President was very lax well into the nineteenth century, and General Washington was no exception. Scales' rambling letter is paranoid in tone, and warns Washington of the designs of the clergy upon the liberties of the citizens of the young United States. Additionally, he admonishes Washington for having been duped by Freemasonry, which Scales also sees as threatening to liberty. Scales unabashedly offered his candid opinion of Washington to the great man: "Thou art a man of substantial fidelity and nobility, but vastly damaged by clerical and masonic deception and villainy." It is unlikely that Washington took any notice. The whole text of the letter can be found on founders.archives.gov.

Scales' anti-Federalist tendencies also came to light in a scathing piece he co-authored for the *Aurora* newspaper. Founded by Benjamin Franklin Bache (the grandson of Benjamin Franklin), the *Aurora* was the most prominent radical Democratic Republican mouthpiece of the 1790s. Its pages featured scathing criticism of presidents George Washington and John Adams, who were both routinely accused of betraying the hard-won liberties of the country by their monarchist tendencies. The *Aurora* was also a vociferous advocate of the French Revolution, even at the height of its excesses. Scales' article was published on March 22, 1799, and co-authored with one Timothy Theophilus. Addressed "To the Christian Reader," the piece is anti-capitalist, anti-British, and anti-clerical. Scales charges that the "avarice, voraciousness, and deception" of the merchant class, which had led to the Revolutionary War, was now going to lead the young nation to war with France, "which in all probability would cost the country what can never be reckoned up; the utter loss of liberty and lives, and an eternal deluge into misery and desolation, murder, and immorality ... Oh! infinite imposition, deception, oppression, and madness!" It is not surprising, given Scales' paranoid views about government and organized religion (both of which were insidiously combined in his view of Shakerism) that he would embrace the anti-Federalist principles of liberty-loving Thomas Jefferson.
Figure 2. Address information from William Scales' letter to George Washington. The address was on the same sheet as p. 2, and when folded formed the outside of the letter.

Figure 3. Second page of William Scales' letter to George Washington. This page was on the same sheet as the address information.
Jefferson, notably reclusive in his personal life, made a point of personally handling all of his own correspondence, before, during, and after his presidency. The tumultuous election of 1800 has been called by some historians a second American revolution. Thomas Jefferson and his Republicans took power in a nation deeply divided between the wealthy, mostly northeastern, Federalist elite, and Jefferson's demagoging Republicans, many of whom were also elites, but able to sway the urban working and agrarian classes. Scales wrote two letters to Jefferson, the first from Lynn, Massachusetts, on May 5, 1801. Scales comes off as a Democratic Republican in his warm embrace of Jefferson, to whom he wrote: "I am much more pleased with your access to the helm of government over the United States, than I ever was with that of renowned Washington, or celebrated Adams." Even Jefferson's purported atheism did not deter the devout Scales, who opined "I must rather a liberal Atheist should govern the people, than a bigoted Saint, who knows not God." This lengthy letter offers deep insights into Scales' view of man's relationship to God, and of the role of religion in the world. In accordance with radical notions of individual liberty and religious freedom, he opined to Jefferson that religion "is an object that lies between the possessor and God its origin.... No human government can call any man to an account for his religion or religious Sentiments, without invading the throne and authority of the deity." Scales offered a lengthy indictment of organized religion and the numerous sects haggling about "motes and beams," as well as the private hypocrisy of most publicly religious people. Scales argued that if ministers "cannot support their ministries, by the excellency of their doctrines, the purity of their example, the Salubrity of their administration, the independence of their authority on human aid, and the beneficence and glory of their aspirations, let them work as other men do." Never averse to confrontation, Scales closed the lengthy letter by wishing Jefferson success, and calling for his letter to be printed to stir public debate "that calumny may be detected, and I obliged to answer for my own words."

A little more than three years later, on November 11, 1804, Scales wrote a letter jointly to Jefferson and the Congress. By then it seems his embrace of the Republicans' principles, as well as his own sanity, were greatly on the wane. Scales railed against Jefferson's signature achievement, the Louisiana Purchase, writing colorfully: "The purchase of Louisiana is like the dog, glutted with carens, that storming over the lake with a junk of carens in his mouth and seeing his own Shadow lost snapped at it and it and the Sight of the Shadow too and in diving after the junk was drowned." Scales' exact meaning here is unclear to this writer, as I'm sure it was to Jefferson. Continuing, in a clearer statement that has relevance to our own times, Scales asserted that the "government of the congress has no other basis but refinities of ignorance, absurdity, contradiction and nonsense. The people from whom you profess to receive your authority over them are like the owls, raccoons, porcupines and skunks, whose eyes are filled with sand full of plague, whilst their bodies are sunk in the bog to their eyes."

Through the rest of the screed Scales compared the American people to a hunk of beef about to be devoured, and lambasted Locke, Newton, and Painé as perpetrators of violence against the Almighty. Scales proposed to come to Washington and share his warnings with Congress, lest an "awful deluge" destroy the nation. Scales warned Jefferson that he must become "meek, benevolence, charitable and mercifully otherwise if I come, I shall fight against you as the destroyers of mankind." No response from Jefferson to either of Scales' letters exists, and it is likely that Jefferson made none. Scales died three years later at his sister's house in Dresden, Maine. His second letter to Jefferson may very well have been his last attempt at sharing his unique opinions on religion and national affairs with the public. Scales' wild career—from his early embrace of Quakerism and then Shakerism, his attacks on organized religion, multiple publications, confused rantings in the Harvard yard, and his late political-religious prophecies—are deserving of a full length study. Now that the existence of these letters is known, Shaker researchers have one more piece of the puzzle that is William Scales.

Benjamin Green

Researching biographical information to write the headnotes for the twenty-five named authors whose texts appear in the Writings of Shaker Apostates was a challenging task to say the least. Conducted over the period of about two years, my work drew on both electronic and print resources. For the most part I am pleased with the results, with one major exception. I failed to examine apostate Benjamin Green's Intellectual Fireworks! Biographical Account of the Life of Benjamin Green, in which are set forth His Pretensions to the Throne. Written by Himself (Concord: Published by the Author, 1848). The existence of this work, and one other brief pamphlet by Green, was brought to my
attention by David Newell after Writings was at press. The fact that Intellectual Fireworks! is autobiographical, and contains additional information on the Shakers makes my omission of the text that much worse. Had I read it, I would have been aware of details of Green's early life far more colorful than those he shared in The True Believer's Vademecum—details such as his drinking, whoring, surviving an attempted murder, and witnessing the hanging of two pirates in India. Additionally, his account of his life at Enfield portrays the Shaker sisters as a pack of lascivious harridans trying to entice the brothers to tie up their garters. As sorry as I am to have missed out on these (rather dubious) details for the Writings set, the silver lining is that Newell's suggestions have led me to delve more into Green's bizarre life after he left Enfield, and I have uncovered much of interest.

Green was resident at Enfield from December 17, 1817, until December 1824. Following his departure he returned to England and enlisted in the British Army. His service took him back to India. In 1830 he returned "to the land of pumpkin pies, Puritanism, overreaching and Yankee tricks," settling in Concord, New Hampshire. He returned to Enfield to confront the Shakers, who he claimed had "grossly imposed upon my confidence." However, the elder he spoke with (probably John Lyon) was "deaf to all reasoning."16 Probably as a result of this disappointment, in 1831 Green published his apostate narrative, The True Believer's Vademecum, or, Shakerism Exposed. That winter he met the woman he would marry, a Ms. Saunders. The second half of his Vademecum (Latin for "handbook") was a rambling visionary treatise intended for the religious edification of his readers. At its conclusion he assured them that he had "presented the key whereby any man or women in existence, may unlock the gates of heaven and draw from thence, such nourishment, as they may require. The key must not be filed or ground, not rubb'd nor polished, agreeable to man's natural conceptions; but taken and thrust into the key hole, and it will open in an instant."17 Green claimed that in 1825, shortly after he left the Shakers, the "sun of righteousness burst thro' the clouds" and God unveiled "his face, and cast the curtains from before him."18 Having been the object of God's personal notice, Green maintained these messianic tendencies throughout the rest of his life. Ten years later, in 1835, he placed this newly discovered advertisement in the New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette:

**NOTICE.**

The subscriber most respectfully begs leave to announce to the public, that he will exhibit to all desirous, the way to enter heaven, obtain forgiveness of former sins and receive eternal life, which alone has power to remove those maladies of the mind resulting from a misspent life.

**BENJAMIN GREEN.**

Concord, June 9, 1835

Green's lament of his misspent life is poignant, for it was around this time Green was burned in a business venture manufacturing brooms. This resulted in his defaulting on a large debt he had incurred. By 1836 he was making his living peddling alcoholic beverages on the streets of Concord from a wheelbarrow. Following his business failure, "not knowing what business to engage in, and seeing other people vending refreshments, wines and liquors, as they saw fit, I ventured to do the same."20 This newly discovered photograph of Green, which probably dates from the late 1850s or 1860s, shows him with said wheelbarrow—loaded with ceramic jugs of various kinds of beer.

While struggling to pay his debts Green worked as a job printer. In the winter of 1837 he was approached by a group of men who told him they "could not eat my cold apples nor drink cold cider; if I felt inclined to bring some more powerful stimulant they would purchase." Accordingly Green purchased a large quantity of strong liquor and wine at auction, enabling him to retire his debts and purchase a modest house.21

However, Green's newfound stability was short-lived. In June 1839 he was set upon by a temperance mob lead by the Rev. Mr. Taylor, who said that Green

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Figure 4. Benjamin Green selling beer on the streets of Concord, N.H.
“carried death and hell about upon a wheelbarrow.” In a small pamphlet he published recounting the event, Green challenged the moral rectitude of the “temperance” crowd, pointing out that he was a temperate user of alcohol, but that they violently advocated total abstinence, rather than temperance.

I have been induced to contest the doctrine of total abstinence upon certain occasions, knowing that its advocates (and I must acknowledge my folly in attempting to contend with them,) are destitute of reason, and as irrational as the hog, as stupid as the ass. I entertained the hope that by talking with them I might prevent their moblike attempts. ... I would ask, are your total abstinence people friends to man? the answer of their conduct says no! are they courteous, kind, gentle, humane, affable, polite, gentlemanly in their deportment—the answer of their conduct is no! ... Your cold blood fanatics are paralyzed, they stand aghast, and like all Pollywogs, the moment they are thrown upon dry land they dry up and wither; and find nothing to sustain them—They are overthrown by a simple puff—a mere reference to a common school dictionary overthrows their whole foundation—they turn round and exercise upon the friends of light and liberty, a volley of Billingsgate, vituperation and abuse, slander, villify, jeer, ridicule, and if they dare do it would crucify, rob, burn, murder and destroy the friends of light, life, and liberty.22

Green's life seems to have gradually deteriorated from that point on. In Intellectual Fireworks he mentions that in 1843 he had “little boys.” His obituary mentions a daughter (unnamed) and a son Timothy. After a brief and desperate last trip to England he returned to Boston, arriving “almost penniless, and literally covered with body lice.”23 In 1846, according to his own account, he ran into financial difficulties and tried his hand at fishmongering. For an unnamed offense he was sentenced to fifteen days hard labor in the house of correction.24 The New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette for March 19, 1846, carried the following notice: “Voted, that Joseph Eastman, Jr., Josiah Stevens and Nathan Stickney be authorized to sell and convey the Benjamin Green property on State street.”25 After another brief failed stint at work, this time as a restaurateur, Green departed for Canada in November 1846. He was back in Concord by January 1847, and published Intellectual Fireworks in 1848. It seems that all along Green had been subject to visionary flights of fancy, and possibly seasons of insanity. It was not until 1850 that he more permanently loosed his grip on reality. The New Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette for April 4, 1850, carried the following item:

State vs. Benjamin Green.—“Old Green,” a man whom thousands of our readers have seen about our streets “peddling” apples, oranges, candy, fish, &c. got into one of his crazy fits two or three months ago, and having an “old grudge” against Stephen C. Badger and Asa Fowler, Esqrs., he proceeded to the house of the former late in the evening and pretty essentially smashed the front windows; and he then very deliberately went to the house of the latter and served that in the same way. For this he was arrested and ordered to jail to await the action of the Grand Jury upon this matter. They found a “true bill” against him; and on Friday afternoon he was brought into Court to answer. The evidence against him was direct, positive, ample and conclusive. He managed his own case, and therefore, according to Lord Mansfield, “had a fool for his client.” He said he was “not guilty—but did the deed,” contending that it was right, proper and legal for him thus to “take his revenge” for past grievances. He made a long, rambling speech, some portions of which highly amused a crowded audience. The Court generously and kindly indulged him, and he had his say; after which, under the very judicious instructions of the Court, the jury rendered a verdict of “not guilty by reason of insanity”—a verdict which greatly amused him. He will probably be sent to the Insane Asylum.

Attorney General Sullivan, for State.26

If Green was sent to the insane asylum in 1850, he remained there in 1856 when Nathaniel Bouton, in his History of Concord, wrote the following: “This Benjamin Green is an Englishman by birth, a native of Yorkshire, aged at this time 61 years. He spent several years with the Shakers at Canterbury, left them, married and settled in Concord. He is subject to seasons of mental derangement, fancying himself a monarch, and authorized to put down all usurpation. He is now an inmate of the Insane Hospital.”27 Green was eventually released from the asylum, and seems to
have reversed his financial fortunes (as his obituary makes clear). However, at some point he returned to the asylum, where he died in 1869. His obituary paints a surprisingly flattering and nostalgic picture of the man who had become beloved locally as a harmless and entertaining old crank.

Mr. Benjamin Green, who has been a fixture of this city for some thirty odd years, died at the Insane Asylum, Sunday evening at eleven o'clock. Mr. G. has been failing since July, and has lately suffered from exposure to cold, which probably hastened his death. His age, was about 73 years. He was born in England, and had a good education. During his life he was connected with the British army. He soon became discontented and by doing all manner of odd jobs and manufacturing trinkets, &c. bought his discharge. He was afterwards in the navy, from which he is supposed to have deserted. He taught school in Canada for some time, and then came to Enfield, where he connected himself with the Shakers. He did not like [it] there, and came to Concord about thirty five years ago, and has remained here ever since. He married soon after coming to Concord. His wife came from Northwood, and was named Saunders. By her he has had two children, a son named Timothy, an industrious young man in the employ of the Messrs. Holden of West Concord, and a daughter, who died.

At one part of his life he was very dissipated and from this reason was confined in the Asylum. After his release, his habits underwent a total change and he became extremely frugal. At the time of his decease he was worth about $2000 in bonds, and had some $1500 in litigation. Mr. G. was a well known author on the subject of "original truth," and from time to time discoursed on the subject. He issued many political and other essays, all pointing out abuses that needed reformation and how to effect the desired object. The old man and his barrow will be missed from their accustomed place, but he has left a bright example of economy that it will be well to follow.28

Benjamin Green's fondest wish, in his role as God's messenger, was for the people and country of the United States to live up to their potential, and not squander God's providence in allowing humanity this chance to start over. Intellectual Fireworks closes with Green's warning to Americans to curb their hubris and selfishness, and rather embrace Christian principles, his nebulous "Holy City."

The American people have exalted themselves; hence their fall, in common with all antecedent nations. There is no way of extricating themselves and mankind in general, from the difficulties which now environ society, but to come out and recognize that guide the Holy City exhibits, by placing themselves under its dictates—it will teach them what to do.

I want to see elevated, here in America, a surrendering of ourselves to the guidance of the Spiritual King, according to the dictates of Jesus Christ and his servants; That we in love should serve one another... There are many instances of oppression I have encountered, whilst living in this town, that I could have enumerated, as far as concerns myself—the unbecoming manners of certain people—that I pass over without particularizing, but I really hope, if you wish to exhibit yourselves as lights to the world, that you will cultivate the genius of christianity more and self less.29

**Zebulon Huntington**

Finally, it was with great excitement that David Newell and Cassandra Nawrocki, part of the team working on a new bibliography of works by and about the Shakers, announced their discovery in late 2012 of an entirely unknown apostate work. Zebulon Huntington's *The Exile of Connecticut; Composed by Himself in the Decline of Life, Being a Concise Narrative of the Life of Zebulon Huntington, Till Almost Four Score Years of Age* (c1845) presents, in part, his experiences as a member of the Enfield, New Hampshire, Shaker community. Only two copies of the pamphlet are known to exist, one at the British Library, and one at the Smithsonian Institution (which was kind enough to share a copy with the bibliographic team). Newell and Nawrocki presented their further, and quite bizarre, findings about Huntington at the Enfield Shaker Museum's Spring Forum in April 2013. They plan to publish an article fully detailing their findings, as well as lengthy excerpts from Huntington's pamphlet, in a future issue of the *American Communal Societies Quarterly.*
The fields of Shaker studies—and its shadowy counterpart, Shaker apostate studies—continue to yield amazing and previously unknown stories of long-gone everyday people who either fully dedicated their lives to the “Christ Spirit” as revealed through Mother Ann Lee, or attempted to bring down a religion they viewed as a theocratic despotism bent on sundering the divinely ordained relationship between married couples and families. Having fully surveyed the latter, it is with great pleasure that I can announce the publication in May 2014 of Shaker Autobiographies, Biographies and Testimonies, 1806-1907, a three-volume set co-edited by Glendyne Wergland and myself. This set includes more than sixty narratives by faithful Believers, including Calvin Green’s monumental Biographic Memoir. The depth and sincerity of these texts stands as a powerful counterweight to the claims of the apostates and anti-Shakers. Together the two sets comprise a broad survey of the lived experience of ordinary men and women whose lives were intertwined with Shakerism.

Notes

1. Benjamin West, Scriptural Cautions against Embracing a Religious Scheme Taught by a Number of Europeans, who came from England to America, in the year 1776, and style themselves the Church … by Benjamin West, who has been Deceived by Them (Hartford [Conn.]: Bavil Webster, 1783).
2. Ibid., 7-8.
3. Ibid., 10.
4. Ibid., 13.
7. Ibid., 135-36.
8. Ibid., 169-70.
11. The full link to this letter is: http://founders.archives.gov/?q=William%20Scales%20Author%3A%22Scales%22%20http://founders.archives.gov/?q=William%20Scales%20Author%3A%22Scales%22%20William%22&rs=2&rs=2
14. The full link to this letter is: http://founders.archives.gov/?q=William%20Scales%20Author%3A%22Scales%22%20William%22&rs=2&rs=2&rs=2
15. Benjamin Green, Intellectual Fireworks! Biographical Account of the Life of Benjamin Green, in which are set forth His Pretensions to the Throne. Written by Himself (Concord: Published by the Author, 1848).
16. Ibid., 41.
18. Ibid., 54. Unfortunately, the date “1825” in the original imprint was poorly printed, with the “2” resembling a “3.” This fact led to a typesetting error in Green’s text in the Pickering and Chatto edition, where the date was presented as “1835” (putting it four years after the printing date of the Vademecum). Unfortunately, I failed to notice this error during the proofreading process.
20. Green, Intellectual Fireworks, 43.
21. Ibid., 44.
22. [Benjamin Green], A Letter in Reply to Rev. Mr. Taylor’s Attack Upon the Man whom he Stated Carried Death and Hell about Upon a Wheelbarrow—Whom he Suddenly Seized Aided by the Combined Forces of the Tetotallers, and Tried to Bury in the Depths of Hell Together with his Vehicle, but Being Happily in Company with the Good Samaritan Jesus Christ, is Able to Make this Reply, Send Him, His Coadjuitors and Doctrine to the Shades Below. Concord, June, 20, 1839 (Concord, N.H., 1839), 4, 7.
23. Green, Intellectual Fireworks, 43.
24. Ibid., 46.
26. Ibid., [3].
27. Nathaniel Bouton, The History of Concord (Concord: Published by Benning W. Sanborn, 1856), 430.