

# American Communal Societies Quarterly

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## Hamilton College Library "Home Notes"

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## Hamilton College Library "Home Notes"

### A New Publication from the Couper Press

The Richard W. Couper Press is pleased to announce publication of *Robert White Jr.: "Spreading the Light of the Gospel,"* by Sandra A. Soule. This work provides a detailed examination of the role Robert White Jr. played in spreading and defending the Shaker message. His activities ranged from persuading the Shaker leadership to publish certain important works, to funding their publication and actively taking part in their distribution. Although White toiled tirelessly to advance the cause of Shakerism in the mid-nineteenth century, little had been written about him and his efforts in the area of Shaker publication. Soule fills that void with her meticulous research based on Shaker manuscript records.

Soule's work is the inaugural issue in the series *Shaker Studies* from the Richard W. Couper Press. This series provides an additional outlet for scholarship pertaining to the Shakers, complementing two other offerings from the Press—the *American Communal Societies Quarterly*, and the *American Communal Societies Series*. While the former publishes journal articles and the latter full-length monographs on intentional communities, the focus of *Shaker Studies* be on short monographs specifically on the Shakers.

Two additional publications are in the works and should be available later this year. The first is another collection of traveler accounts compiled by Glendyne Wergland. These accounts cover 1850-1899 and are a sequel to her earlier work covering 1778-1849. The second publication is a reprint of David Lamson's *Two Years Experience with the Shakers*, with an introduction by Peter Hoehnle. There will be more information about these publications in the next issue of the *Quarterly*.

## **Review of Robert White Jr.: “Spreading the Light of the Gospel”**

Once when I was speaking with one of the Shakers about Robert White, he said, “He is sketchy.” With the publication of *Robert White Jr.* by Sandra A. Soule, this description is no longer true. In fact, this short book contains a wealth of information about White’s unique life as a Shaker. This work, *Shaker Studies* no. 1 from the Richard W. Couper Press, is a strong start to what promises to be a great boost to Shaker scholarship.

Often books written about the Shakers try to tell the whole Shaker story. Soule avoids this mistake; her book is about what it says it is. In addition, misinformation or the perpetuation of myths often abound because too many authors when writing about the Shakers rely on secondary or tertiary sources — or worse, fail to provide citations at all. In contrast, Soule is very careful to document everything, and her 142 footnotes are a resource unto themselves and make fascinating reading. When she encounters perplexing facts, she clearly states that she is speculating while offering reasonable and informed possibilities.

In the larger sense, a discussion of Robert White unearths the giants of early Shaker theological and historical writing, especially John Dunlavy and Calvin Green. Indeed an examination of White’s life helps bridge the decades between the early nineteenth century and the age of Frederick Evans. This in-between time has often been seen solely as the “Era of Manifestations” and the focus placed on “Mother’s Work.” Someone not familiar with the publication efforts of Robert White may be surprised at the range of his projects. His important contribution to Shaker missionary efforts had not heretofore been adequately delineated.

This thorough book leaves the reader with some important questions to consider. Hopefully interested scholars of Shakerism will try to come to terms with these questions as they seek to move Shaker studies forward. *Robert White Jr.* helps fill some gaps in Shaker history and challenges the reader to think anew about those almost forgotten times.

Stephen J. Paterwic

## **Communal Societies Collection**

### **New Acquisitions**

#### **Ephrata Cloister Manuscripts**

The Communal Societies Collection has recently been enriched by the addition of our first manuscripts from the Ephrata Cloister, Ephrata, Pennsylvania. Founded by Conrad Beissel in 1732, the Cloister was a celibate communal society based on the ideas of German Pietist mystics. It existed, with the assistance of local “householder” members, until the last celibate member died in 1813. Remaining householders were then incorporated into a German Seventh Day Baptist church. The documents added to the CSC include early nineteenth-century manuscript copies of the wills of two Cloister brethren, Jacob Funk and John Mayle. These documents are fascinating in terms of what they reveal about the role of individual will in the disposition of personal property in a communal society. The most important new acquisition in this group is a three-page manuscript entitled “A true statement of Matters in Fact, concerning our Rights and Privileges of Ephrata.” This document outlines the assembly of the properties that constituted the Cloister’s landholdings at their height, and the litigious process of disposing of many of those same parcels. The issues surrounding land ownership, and legal challenges thereunto by apostates, greatly complicated life at the Cloister in its waning days. This document gives a clear chain of ownership—detailing a number of legal challenges to land titles beginning in the 1760s and continuing into the 1810s. Possibly it was prepared as a legal brief for one of the lawsuits regarding Cloister property in the late 1810s. Additionally, the CSC has added an Indenture which was printed by the Bruderschaft at the Cloister’s press. The Ephrata Cloister engaged in for-profit printing and served the local Mennonite communities for printing theological works as well as the populace in general through printing currency and blank legal forms. This Indenture is a wonderfully large example, measuring 19½ inches wide by 15½ inches high. It was used on May 1, 1764 in Lancaster County.

In the Name of God Amen I Jacob Funk of Ehrata in Lancaster County Being weak in body but of Perfect mind and memory (thanks be given to Almighty God) Do hereby with make my last Will and Testament in manner and form following First I order that my two Sisters Eigenia and Sophia Esh shall have a Silver tea spoon and they shall have the priviledge to choose to themselves of my German Books such as they like and also of my linens before the ~~app~~ appraisement but the remainder of my German Books and my English Books shall be sold at publick vaunt and also my joiners tools Kitchen furniture Pewter plates and spoons tables and chairs Bed and bedstead Boards and Scantlings apple and Beech wood for Plains and also my cloths except such of my cloths as is of the order of Ehrata which may be devide to as my Executors shall think proper among the so called Brethern as Moses Ash Lebrecht Treas John Fridrich and John Gorgas and further I give and bequeate unto Daniel Funk son of my Brother Henry Funk deceased my house block and my house and lot in Flowers Town in Virginia and further I give and bequeate two dollars to Widdow Juliana Gorgas two to Widdow Martha Simons two to Widdow Salome Gorgas one to Widdow Sweitzer Anna one to Widdow Catharina Neagly 2 to Widdow Bruntle two to Widdow Spirra two to Moses Ash two to Lebrecht Treas and to the sisters that live together in one house little Barbary included each two Dollars and the Residue of money when my goods is Sold I give all to my two above named Sisters. And Lastly I ordain and institute Executors of this my last will my trusty friends Daniel Neagly and John Senseman. Acknowledging this to be my last will and Testament In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand & Seal this 9<sup>th</sup> day of January 1797. A.P. my Executors are hereby Impowered to make conveyance of my above said house and lot to the said Daniel Funk and John Senseman.

Fig. 1. First page of the will of Jacob Funk.

**Philos Harmoniae [Richard McNemar], *A Selection of Hymns and Poems for the Use of Believers*, Watervliet [sic], O.: 1833.**

The many variants of works printed by the western Shaker leader Richard McNemar is one of the more complex issues that confronted Shaker bibliographers John Patterson MacLean and Mary Richmond, and it remains no less vexing today. In fact, the computer age has only added to the large number of questions surrounding the myriad variant printings and bound collections of McNemar's highly idiosyncratic—and extremely charming—presswork. One such example has recently arrived in the CSC—a copy of the 1833 *Selection of Hymns and Poems* with a large number of additional pages. The standard copies of this work have 180, [4] pages. Some copies have variant or duplicate signatures, and nearly all have errors in pagination. However, a handful of copies have something far more special—additional pages, some continuously paginated after page 180, that bring the total number of pages in the work to over two hundred, depending on the copy. Furthermore, some copies have additional unnumbered pages bound either before the main work, or interleaved with the supplementary pages. The copy lately acquired by Hamilton College collates as follows: 180 [i.e. 172], [4], [199]-207, [189]-200. Page 205 contains the following at the bottom: "W.V. [Watervliet, Ohio] Jan. 8th, 1836." Beyond creating a nightmare for Library catalogers, this copy provides fascinating insight into the continuing evolution of McNemar's work on the *Selection*, well beyond the initial signatures printed in 1833. These pages contain many additional hymns and poems, including McNemar's musings on the closing of the West Union community and legal challenges brought against the Society at Pleasant Hill by apostates. Copies recognized by Carol Medlicott at Washington University in St. Louis, and Christian Goodwillie at The Shaker Library, Sabbathday Lake, Maine, contain additional material similar—but not identical—to the one in the CSC. Unraveling the printing history of the *Selection* is a work in progress, but each new substantial variant gives us more clues to the full scope of McNemar's magnum opus as a printer. The CSC copy also bears his inscription under his pseudonym "Eleazar Wright" on the front flyleaf.



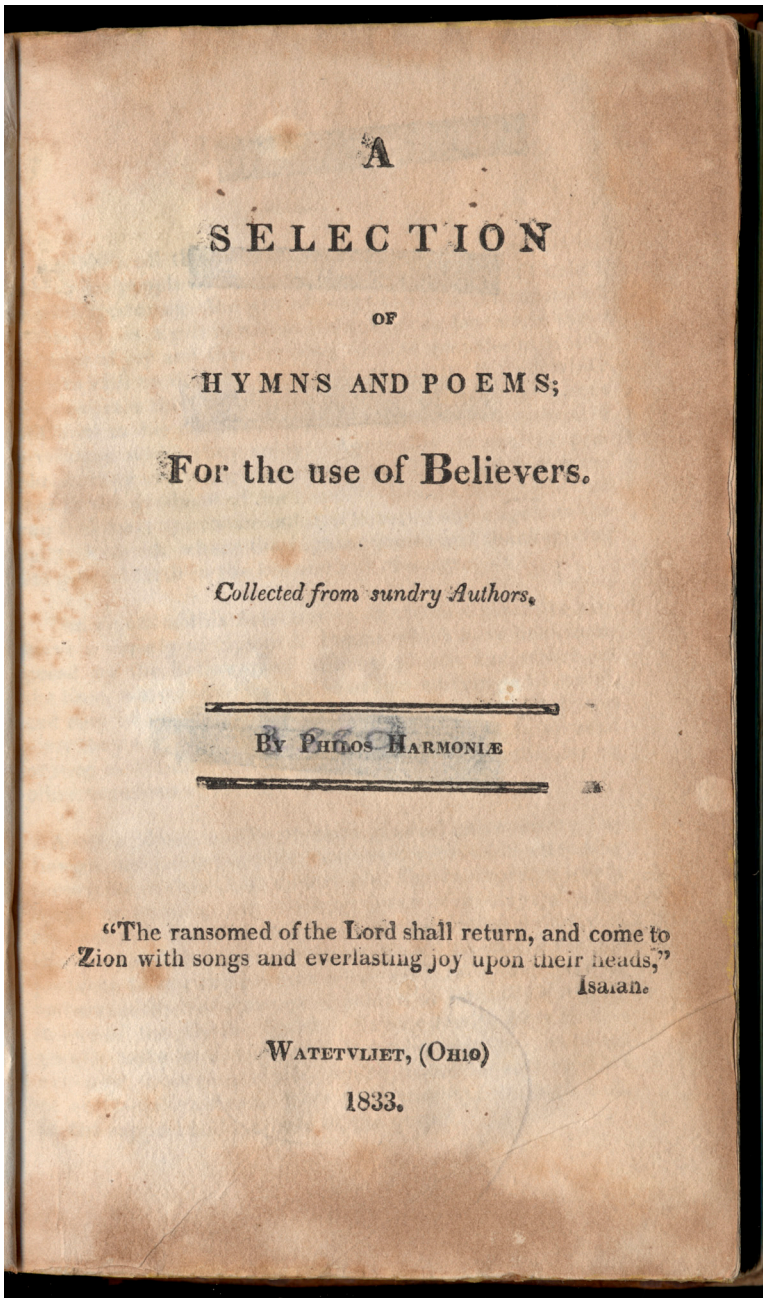


Fig. 2. Title page of McNemar's *Selection of Hymns and Poems*.

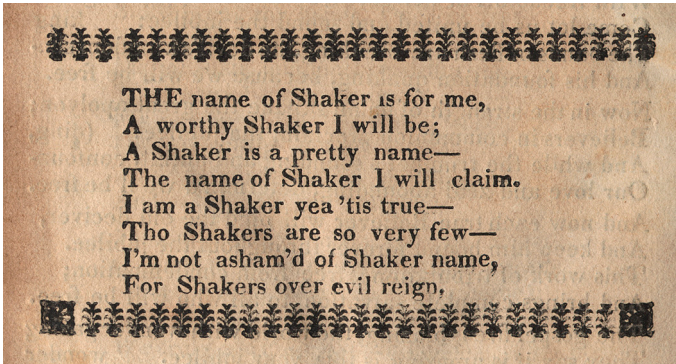


Fig. 3. Hymn from McNemar's *Selection of Hymns and Poems*.

### Sabbathday Lake Fancy Goods

Early twentieth-century Shaker imprints can be surprisingly scarce, particularly those from Sabbathday Lake, Maine. Brother Earl Campbell operated a printing press there during the 1930s, during which time he printed a handful of pamphlets and product catalogs. It is not known for certain that he printed this *Catalog of Fancy Goods*, but the likelihood is high that it is his work. This list was not cataloged by Richmond, and was unknown to Shaker book dealers until its recent discovery. It is a wonderful document of the handcrafted fancy goods made and sold by the sisters of the Sabbathday Lake community. Among the products listed are jewel cases, work boxes, oval wooden carriers, and satin cushions. A paradox for those studying Shaker material culture is that oftentimes it is easier to confidently attribute many nineteenth-century Shaker handcrafts than those made in the early twentieth century. Product lists like this one are invaluable in that they provide not only evidence of what the Shakers were making, but also nomenclature for decorative arts scholars to use when researching and writing about the topic. The list was folded in four sections and taped at the edges, possibly for distribution through the mail.



CATALOG of FANCY GOODS  
made by the  
SHAKERS

SHAKER STORE  
Sabbathday Lake  
Maine

INTRODUCTION

A large portion of the goods here represented are made of woven poplar wood, which is taken from the woods in the log and carefully worked into delicate strips; after this it is woven in the old fashioned hand loom.

The goods are made up showing strands of sweet grass, thus making a variety as well as giving the goods more character. These articles being nicely lined in choice materials, as well as being decorated with ribbons which hold the many little furnishings in place, go to make up a display which is really hard to resist.

Beside the poplar goods will be seen also the Oval Carriers made from various kinds of choice woods.

The quaintness of the Shaker Doll draws attention to itself.

Last but not least, the Shaker Cloak will call for the lion's share of attention, as it always has since it has been placed before the public.

THE SHAKER CLOAK

has become very popular and supplies a long felt want, giving good satisfaction to all who have received it. Enveloping the whole person it falls in graceful folds to the dress, having silk-lined hood for use in storms. These cloaks are made in many shades of the finest domestics and imported broad cloth.

The latter is generally selected when one wishes a cloak lined throughout with silk. All cloaks are made from the measurements of the individual, thus insuring a perfect fit. Samples of cloth in colors desired and silks for trimming or lining will be furnished on application, also blanks for giving orders.

All orders and inquiries regarding the  
Shaker Cloak promptly attended to.

Fig. 4. Front of *Catalog of Fancy Goods* from Sabbathday Lake.

|                             |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| No.1 Ladies Jewel Case      | \$1.75       |
| No.2 " " "                  | 1.50         |
| Gentlemen's Jewel Case      | 1.00         |
| Glove Box                   | 1.75         |
| No.1 Handkerchief Box       | 1.25         |
| No.2 " " "                  | 1.00         |
| Bead Box                    | 1.00         |
| Unfurnished Box             | .50          |
| Hexagon Work Box            | 1.25         |
| Oblong Work Box             | 1.00         |
| No.1 Octagon Work Box       | 2.25         |
| No.2 " " "                  | 1.75         |
| No.3 " " "                  | 1.00         |
| No.1 Square Work Box        | 2.25         |
| No.2 " " "                  | 1.75         |
| No.3 " " "                  | 1.50         |
| Button Box                  | .50          |
| Knitting Needle Box         | 1.50         |
| Biford                      | 3.50         |
| Oval Wooden Carriers,       |              |
| Dark and Light Wood-        | not made now |
| No.1                        | 3.00         |
| No.2                        | 2.25         |
| No.3                        | 2.00         |
| No.4                        | 1.75         |
| Spoolstand                  | .60          |
| No.1 Trays                  | .50          |
| No.2 " "                    | .40          |
| Tray Oblong                 | .40          |
| " Round                     | .10          |
| Needle Books                |              |
| Emeries                     | .15          |
| No.1 Basket Cushion         | 1.50         |
| No.2 " "                    | 1.35         |
| No.1 Satin "                | 1.00         |
| No.2 " "                    | .90          |
| No.3 " "                    | .60          |
| No.1 Basket Cushion, Velvet | .75          |
| No.2 " " "                  | .50          |
| Laundry Bag                 | 1.50         |
| Shoe "                      | 2.50         |
| Apron                       | 1.00         |
| " "                         | .75          |
| " "                         | .50          |
| Darning Sets                | .50          |
| Traveling Sets              | .50          |
| Bed Socks                   | 2.50         |
| Knee Warmers                | 2.50         |
| Knitted Goods, Different    |              |
| kinds and prices.           |              |
| Quart                       | .60          |
| Home made Pickles           |              |
| Pint                        | .30          |
| Glass                       | .20          |
| Home made Jellies           |              |
| Glass                       | .10          |
| Home Made Chocolates        |              |
| Fancy Pound                 | 1.00         |
| Half "                      | .50          |
| Plain Pound                 | .80          |
| Half "                      | .40          |

Fig. 5. Back of *Catalog of Fancy Goods* from Sabbathday Lake.