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An Interview with Steve Miller

Conducted by Christian Goodwillie

Christian Goodwillie: Where did you grow up?

Steve Miller: I grew up in Brooklyn, New York. The neighborhood was called Fort Greene.

CG: Was it a poor neighborhood when you were a kid?

SM: It became that after I was about the age of maybe seven or eight.

CG: And how long did you live there?

SM: Until I was seventeen. Let me add that I returned there about a year ago and it is much improved.

CG: So you went to high school there?

SM: Actually I went to high school far from there because my choice of local high schools when I completed eighth grade were all “low caliber” ones. I had to take two buses each way for four years to go to a school which was actually the largest high school in the United States with 8,000 students.

CG: This was a public school?

SM: Yes it was. And there were no special admission exams needed but I had to use an illegal address in order to be able to gain admission since it was considered “out of the district.”

CG: And where was this school?

SM: In the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn.

CG: In what kind of things were you active in high school?

SM: Absolutely nothing.

CG: And why was that?

SM: I had no interest in any after school programs. I left school, went all the way back home, not knowing anybody my own age in my neighborhood. I had close friends but they didn't live nearby, they lived within the school district, and I lived way outside of that area. But it was a very interesting existence. At the time I accepted it as the norm. Now that I look back on it, it's kind of scary how outside of the mainstream I really was for four years.

CG: It's really surprising to me because I know you as someone of tons of interests, only one of which is the Shakers. It's interesting to think of you in that kind of routine of going back and forth so far each day, being sequestered from a lot of different things.

SM: Yes, but the truth is that's what it was.

CG: I know that you were in the army, I don't know if that was before or after your undergraduate years.

SM: First I had four years at the University of Florida in Gainesville. My major was English literature but I also took a pre-med program, "just in case." Very late in my studies I decided that I wanted to be a dentist more than *anything in the world!* I had to hustle to catch up with some science courses, especially organic chemistry, so that I could apply to dental schools. I was accepted at my first choice, Columbia University, and that is where I spent the next four years.

CG: Any particular reason that that came to you—dentistry?

SM: I can actually remember where I was standing at the moment the thought—obsession, actually—hit me. It is impossible, however, to say exactly why. Although I don't believe in deities, it was as though a directive came from above and it said, "Dentistry is for you." As it turned out, it was!

CG: When would that have been, what year?

SM: That was 1962. I graduated from Columbia in 1966 and went directly into the Army as a dentist.

CG: '62? And I guess we should just say for the record, what's your birthday? When were you born?

SM: December 12, 1940.

CG: Was it during the summers of college and dental school that you worked up in the Berkshires in Massachusetts?

SM: Exactly. I worked for seven summers as a waiter and headwaiter in various resorts.

CG: That's when you met the classic southern blues singers Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, right?

SM: Yes, but how did you know that?

CG: Well you told me about that.

SM: Yeah, I was very much into folk music. I taught myself to play the guitar. I was playing and singing and sometimes going to cafes. The Kingston Trio and the Weavers started something big. Folk music was all around me.

CG: And you met [your wife] Miriam in the Berkshires, right?

SM: I did. I was her waiter.

CG: And nothing's changed, right?

SM: Well, as she used to say, at the time I waited *on* her and ever since then I've been waiting *for* her. She often runs late!

CG: Where and when did you get married?

SM: In New York City in 1968.

CG: Was your term in the army done by then?

SM: My time in the army had just finished. I was in Virginia for the two years and Miriam was living and working in Washington, D.C.

CG: Were you at that point already licensed to practice as a dentist?

SM: Yes. I was in the service from '66 through '68. And then I thought I wanted to be a pediatric dentist. From 1968 until 1970 I had a fellowship at Yale in pediatric dentistry. Next, I started a general practice outside of New Haven and worked at that for three years. Then, I decided that what I really wanted to do with my career was to be a periodontist. I went back to school for two more years in a residency at the University of Connecticut. We settled in West Hartford and have stayed here ever since. I opened a practice with a fellow resident in New Britain and we practiced together for thirty years. We both retired seven years ago.

C: So you've been in that house since 1973? I had no idea you'd been there

for so long.

SM: But in 1976 we tore the house apart. We left the house; we moved out. We worked with an architect and a builder and completely redid everything so the house does not resemble its original self.

CG: So that takes us fairly close to your first encounter with Shaker stuff.

SM: You're right. That happened in 1977.

CG: So what was that?

SM: Our first encounter was almost an accident. It happened on a rainy Sunday in the Berkshires. We wanted to go to Tanglewood but we did not have seats in the shed, and so instead of going in we decided to go to this place called Hancock Shaker Village that Miriam had heard about when she was a camp counselor up in the Berkshires in her teen years. We wandered in there at about 11:00 in the morning figuring we'd spend an hour have some lunch and then come home. And at about 5:30 in the afternoon (because it used to be open until then), a guard or one of the staffers, tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me sir, we have to close now, but you're welcome to come back another time." Something happened to me that day and I've never been the same.

CG: When you went home from that experience were there any books that you'd purchased that day that you started to read?

SM: That day, no, but within the next six months I bought Margaret Melcher's *The Shaker Adventure*; the 1953 Andrews book, *People Called Shakers*; and June Sprigg's *By Shaker Hands*. Those were the first three books that I bought. I can't remember which came first but I think it was actually the June Sprigg book. So I read those and visited the Shaker Museum and Library in ... I think it was May or June of the next year. This would have been 1978. Then, sometime in July, I saw a little notice in our Hartford Courant newspaper that there was going to be an exhibition and sale of Shaker material at a place called Greenwillow Farms Gallery in—I think it's Chatham, New York. I said to Miriam, "Hmm, why don't we go up there. I bet they'll let us even touch things." And so we went up there the next day, which was Saturday, and we touched things and we bought two—a work table and a can label.

CG: And which can label is that?

SM: It's for string beans from Mount Lebanon, from about 1890.

C: And that's obviously one of the items from your ephemera collection that's coming to Hamilton College, right?

SM: It certainly is!



CG: So I'm kind of intrigued about this because a lot of people tend to collect either furniture or paper. And from the beginning on your first day you bought one of each thing. So what can you say about that?

SM: Well, about the table, I said to Miriam, "I would love to own just one thing—one thing made with love and used with love." And Miriam still kids me about it—"Oh yeah, one thing!" And it was something that we could afford, and I just liked the looks of it. It was very simple, very basic. It had no drawers; just a top, a double-pinned skirt, and simple, straight-turned legs. But it was in nice condition, still is. And it spoke to me of who I thought the Shakers were at the time from the readings I had done in the previous year. As for the can label, the graphics of it just grabbed me. I knew nothing about any of the Shaker industries; I didn't even know they had industries at that point. I just liked the looks of it. It was "eye candy." Also it was pretty inexpensive as it was already framed up. And that was it. Those were the first two things.

CG: If I remember correctly, was your dad a pharmacist?

SM: Yes he was.

CG: Now, I wonder: do you think that any exposure in your childhood to labels of medicinal and drug store-type products somehow in your subconscious made you be drawn to those types of things?

SM: I don't actually see any influence or connection. No. Actually we have thirteen pharmacists in my immediate family—my father, both grandfathers, aunts, uncles, and cousins. But this had little impact on me that I know of. I used to spend a lot of time in my father's drug store helping out, but I don't think that that had any bearing. Certainly my parents never collected anything. We grew up in a very small apartment where my sister and I shared a bedroom. Sometimes we also had our grandmother in there with us.

CG: Oh really, you and your sister and your grandmother, all in one room?

SM: Yeah. It was tight, but that's the way we did things. And so my parents didn't collect anything. There was no room for anything; they didn't have any money for anything either. Although my father was a pharmacist, we were really quite poor.

CG: So, those first acquisitions, was that still in 1977?

SM: That was 1978.

CG: But the year of your first visit was 1977?

SM: Yes.

CG: How did you feel your impulse to collect Shaker material kind of quickening? How did that happen?

SM: It happened very innocently, and without my really being aware of it. It was another full year before I was poking around in the Berkshires, and found a couple of things I liked. An oval fingered box, a strip of peg rail, and a lift top desk. We still own all three.

CG: And where did those come from?

SM: Three different places. The oval box came from Greenwillow Farms, the peg rail came from Charles Flint, and the lift-top box was from a dealer named Molly Hamilton. As it turned out, the lift-top desk is actually one terrific piece of Shaker work.

CG: And what was your next paper acquisition?

SM: I don't recall specifically, but I know I started buying paper wherever I found it, whether it was one item, or groups of labels. And I just kind of started gathering it up, and gathering it up, and gathering it up with no particular collecting goal in mind. There was just something about it that

I found appealing. And then, when Hancock asked me in 1987 to organize an exhibit of Shaker ephemera, because I just had a whole bunch of stuff, for the first time I really began to think about what I had, and what I was doing, and why I was doing it. And I started to come up with some serious thoughts about what this was really all about.

CG: I was going to ask you, was the Ephemera Society even in existence in 1987?

SM: It was formed in 1980 and I became a member in '81.

CG: But would you have considered yourself a collector of ephemera in 1981?

SM: Yes, I would have, but without any real idea of what I was quite trying to do. I hadn't thought of articulating a collecting philosophy or goals.

CG: But you did think of these things that you were buying as ephemera.

SM: Oh yeah, I did. I joined the Ephemera Society in its second year. I think I went to the very first ephemera fair that was ever held, which was actually in Southbury, Connecticut. And again, I'd just walk around and if anybody had anything for sale I usually bought it. And I just kept buying stuff, because the paper appealed to me, it was available, and it was cheap. Also, nobody else seemed to want it. Those were the good old days!

CG: So in terms of the specific things that appealed to you, was it the color of the paper, the texture of the paper, the color of the printing, the design? Can you talk a little bit about that?

SM: Okay. I think I was first attracted to graphic design, and so the things that I looked for had color, they had interesting graphics, and they had illustrations with text.

CG: In the beginning—say you were presented with a range of objects or pieces of paper from a graphic billhead with an illustration of a Shaker washing machine, versus a pile of just very simply printed labels for herbs—would you have chosen one over the other, or would you have just bought it all?

SM: I would have bought it all!

CG: So you were collecting pretty holistically in terms of paper from the get-go.

SM: Indiscriminately, I'd say. If it said "Shaker" on it, I bought it.

CG: What was the market for Shaker ephemera like then? Was there one, and did you have any competitors or fellow collectors at the time.

SM: I don't really think there were any competitors or other collectors of Shaker ephemera. There were some dealers that were gathering up some materials from here and there and would offer them for pretty low prices. The only thing I really tried to adhere to as a principle was condition. I would not buy something that was not in really good condition. Condition was critical to me, more so than even what the piece was. I also tried to avoid duplication.

CG: And these were criteria that you arrived at fairly early?

SM: Yes. Condition and uniqueness to me at least, were the two guiding principles that I started with.

CG: How early in your collecting career of Shaker paper did you look into using the services of conservators to conserve your collection?

SM: The first pieces that I conserved, I think, were the Lemon Syrup broadsides.

CG: And that's the story you retold in the Andrewses' book [*Gather Up the Fragments*], right?

SM: Yes, so you can look in there for any of the specifics.

CG: And what year did you conserve the Lemon Syrup broadsides, roughly?

SM: My recollection would be, mid-1980's.

CG: So, fairly early?

SM: Fairly early, yeah.

CG: There is one of those in the Hancock catalog, and you actually donated one to Hancock around that time, right?

SM: It was called a gift, but it wasn't a gift, it was a trade. I have no memory of what I traded it for; I never kept records of that.

CG: Right, right. So, having mentioned the Andrewses, I know that you were friends with Faith Andrews right?

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PURE
LEMON SYRUP,

PREPARED FROM
Positively Pure and Best Double-Refined Fresh
CONCENTRATED LEMON JUICE,
Doubly-Refined and Positively Pure Lemon Oil,
AND THE
BEST REFINED WHITE SUGAR.

One table spoonful of the Syrup in a Tumbler of Water, furnishes a Superior Lemonade at one-twelfth the cost of the Lemonade commonly made at Hotels.

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SM: I was acquainted with her. It's hard to know who was a friend and who wasn't when it came to Faith. I never bought anything from her. She gave me a couple of minor things—paper things—at some point. And I visited with her probably fifteen times over the years, maybe even more. But it's hard to call her a friend. I think she kind of liked having company and I liked having somebody who went back to a previous generation, actually two generations, and could tell me things that I wouldn't otherwise have known about. She was highly opinionated and I got a kick out of that. She didn't pull any punches.

CG: So, did she die in 1990, is that right?

SM: Yes, that's right.

CG: How long did you know her? Right up to the end?

SM: Actually I knew her from about 1983 until the time of my ephemera exhibit at Hancock in 1988. When I did the exhibit at Hancock I almost felt as though I were betraying her trust because she had such negative feelings about Hancock and I didn't really want to be confronted by her. I felt that I had made my decision to go with Hancock at that point. The first thing she would tell me every time I arrived there was her distaste for Amy Bess Miller and Hancock. And she would just recount that story again, and again, and again. I really got tired of hearing it, but knowing that I was doing something that would have been antithetical to her character, I just decided to separate myself from her. I didn't see her again after 1988.

CG: So you did acquire, you said, not too much but a few things from her?

SM: The primary object that came to me from Faith did so in a roundabout way. She had a medium-sized chest in her basement that was made from many layers of paper, with glue in between. She had sold it to a dealer, who sold it to a dealer, who sold it to me. The inside-most layer was a series of large broadsides for "Shaker's Lemon Syrup" but there was a layer of mold over all of them. I took a chance by buying it and having a paper conservator remove the broadsides and carefully treat them. The result was nothing short of amazing!

CG: And how many, do you remember, did you get out of there in the end?

SM: Four. Four intact, whole copies.

CG: Oh wow. So, when you were collecting in the 1980s—and, as you know, there wasn't much awareness of Shaker ephemera or fellow collectors—you eventually acquired probably the earliest major private collection of ephemera from Elmer Ray Pearson, isn't that right?

SM: Yes, I ended up buying the Pearson Collection in 1988. The Pearson Collection actually went to a dealer in Illinois. In Pecatonica, I think it was. Anyway, it went from Ray Pearson's sons to one dealer, and then that dealer gave it to Tom Queen, an old friend, to try to sell. Tom brought it to me and I bought the whole thing.

CG: So did you know Pearson at all?

SM: No, I didn't. I had spoken with him on the phone once or twice but I had never met him in person.

CG: I never really knew that whole story. I just thought the collection had gone directly from him to you. So, in your estimation, other than that of the Andrewses, was that pretty much the only major private collection of ephemera before yours?

SM: No, no, there was another one that belonged to...um... he was the director of an art museum in Maine...

CG: Oh, not Marius Peladeau?

SM: Marius Peladeau, yes. He had a large collection, and I bought the entire collection.

CG: So you bought his whole collection too? By 1989 did you have the Peladeau Collection as well?

SM: No, the Peladeau Collection came a year later. By 1989 all I had was the Pearson Collection plus all the other little things I had picked up along the way. By then dealers had gotten to know who I was and were moving materials my way. Also in 1989 I first met Scott De Wolfe.

CG: And, so by that time had you acquired material from the Andrewses family beyond Faith?

SM: What I got from Faith were just a couple of things and they were very minor, and she just gave them to me. And I'd have to figure out exactly what they were but it was nothing of any real importance.

CG: So the remaining contents of the New Lebanon herb shop, or

whatever shop it was—those labels had not come to you by that time?

SM: That huge group came in late 1990 or early 1991 and came from the Andrewses' grandson Ted.

CG: And was that a direct transaction?

SM: Yes, it was.

CG: Okay. So by the early 1990s, we know there was the big hubbub about Shaker furniture and Oprah setting the record for the most ever paid for a piece of furniture, and, you know, there was quite a lot of media attention on the Shakers. Kind of a real cultural interest with a lot of publications about Shaker material culture, exhibitions, international exhibitions, and the market obviously picked up. Did you see the market for Shaker paper pick up as well?

SM: Yeah, it did. After the exhibit that I curated at Hancock in 1988, "A Century of Shaker Ephemera," there seemed to be more interest in Shaker paper. Also I published a series of articles, at least one a year, in the *Shaker Messenger*. And that also seemed to stimulate some interest, and at the same time almost a flood of fakes started to show up.

CG: Do you want to comment on any of that, or tell any stories about it?

SM: Yeah, well if you go back to the *Shaker Messenger*, I published three articles about Shaker fakery. In fact it's called "Shaker Fakery."

CG: Oh, right.

SM: When I published the first article, my basic point was that there was no way of knowing all the products of the Shakers that labels could be faked for. What you need to know is printing *processes*. That is, the process of printing is more important than the products of the printing. If you understood the process, you could figure out what was legitimate and what wasn't. And the process of letterpress printing is a very specific one, and it leaves some very telltale signs behind. And if you don't see those signs you probably don't have something that was printed by a letterpress but was printed offset, maybe at a copy machine in 1980 instead of 1880. And so the focus of the whole article was talking about the various processes that were used for early printing. There were even some fake printing blocks made up. And I talked about those and what I alleged was confirmed by the printing division of the Smithsonian Institute. I went down to Washington

and showed them these things and we talked about how these plates were recently made and they then showed me that rather than some fake labels being the products of these plates, the plates were actually products of genuine labels! There was the technology for lasers to cut printing plates from existing labels. For a while there was a flurry of fake labels bearing the name “New Lebanon,” but it has almost completely abated now.

CG: What is your favorite story about an acquisition, whether by happy accident or a long-sought piece that finally became available to you?

SM: Single acquisition? I think that being able to score both the Peladeau and Pearson collections were definitely coups for me.

CG: What about a random piece you found at a show, or at a dealer—any great stories there?

SM: Okay, here’s one. You’ll see it in a couple of books—it’s a display card for Shakers’ Toothache Pellets, with a photo engraving of Sister Mary Hazard on it. And that came out of a small auction in Connecticut, and I don’t remember now how I heard about it. I think it was one of the local dealers who told me that there was going to be a Shaker piece in this sale. Maybe it was the auctioneer, maybe it was a dealer, I don’t recall. But it’s the only one I’ve ever known of or seen, and so I put in a pretty strong bid, and it turns out I was underbid by Sabbathday Lake, who had also heard about it. I believe it may be a unique survivor. I love finding unique surviving copies of ephemera. But what was also important about it is that there is some information on the back that led me to begin to follow up on what these Toothache Pellets were all about. That led to my article in the *Shaker Messenger*, which was maybe one of my favorite articles to do because I did months of research that took me all over the place to find out more about these Shaker Toothache Pellets since I became convinced that although it said Shaker on it, it had to have been written by a real dentist, somebody who understood teeth and toothaches and what that’s all about. After months and months of research, it finally resulted in this article, which proved the relationship between the pellets and a former Shaker brother, James V. Calver. He had become a dentist after leaving the Shakers. I just had a lot of fun doing it.

CG: What about just plain favorite pieces?

SM: Well, I’m sitting here in my study looking at some of my favorite

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SHAKERS



A Shaker Sister.

Tooth-Ache Pellets.

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Price, 10 Cents.

pieces. The Dyspepsia Cure is interesting because it is also a display card, and it's also, as far as we know, a unique survivor. But on the back is an illustration from a music magazine called *Etude*. Does that magazine mean anything to you?

CG: It doesn't, but it certainly sounds like a title for one.

SM: Well, somebody cut out an old *Etude* cover and wanted a piece of board to glue it to so they could frame it. So they got this old Corbett's Shaker Dyspepsia Cure display card, which is about 15 x 12 inches, and glued this image on it. Then at some recent time somebody took it out of the frame and saw that the backing said "Shaker" on it, and called Doug Hamel, a New Hampshire Shaker dealer, who said to me, "You know I've got this thing, I paid nothing for it. I'll send it off to you, just send me a check for what you think it's worth." Which is what I did. And it turns out that it's something really pretty special. So that's another one of those fortuitous kinds of things. And because of that it's again one of my favorites. And also I'm looking at this broadside of a Shaker Maine Mower, that that was found in a barn in Maine, not too long ago—within the last couple of years. And it came to me from a member of the Ephemera Society of America; I served as its chairman of the board in the mid-1990s.

CG: Is the Corbett's Dyspepsia Cure unique as far as you know?

SM: Yes. And then there are these two very graphic pieces advertising the Tisane des Shakers Curative Syrup that were printed in France and are in French. They are colorful, in great condition, and from the early twentieth century.

CG: So those are prized possessions of yours?

SM: Yes, those are pretty neat because they speak to the Shaker's international reputation. In fact, the Shakers even provided the raw materials for this medicine early on. By the time these posters printed, probably no longer were the raw ingredients coming from New Lebanon, but they certainly did earlier on.

CG: Some of the objects in your collection that have always really fascinated me are the intact herb bricks you have from, I think, Harvard and maybe Watervliet, New York.

SM: Actually Harvard, Watervliet, and New Lebanon.

CORBETT'S SHAKER



Shaker Village, Merrimack County, N. H.

DYSPEPSIA CURE

PREPARED AT

SHAKER VILLAGE, N. H.

A SPEEDY RELIEF FROM

**Sour Stomach, Colic, Cholera Morbus, Cholera Infantum,
Diarrhea, and Stomach Difficulties of
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CG: When was the first time you saw one of those, and were you just knocked off your feet that such a thing could have survived?

SM: No, because I didn't know then how rare they were. I used to find these things occasionally, and I have about twenty from Watervliet and Lebanon and thirty or thirty-five from Harvard. I haven't seen another one in reasonable condition in many years. But back when I was getting them they just seemed to be far more common, like almost everything in the way of Shaker ephemera. Now it's just rare to find anything really unusual in the way of Shaker ephemera!

CG: Did all the Harvard ones come together?

SM: The large ones—the bricks—came together. They were made at Harvard in two sizes: what they called one-ounce cakes and one-pound bricks. And all the bricks, the one-pounders, came together. They were found in the basement of an old drugstore in—I believe—Vermont.

CG: That's amazing.

SM: There were actually, I think, twice that number, and I said, "Well, I want them all sent to me and I'm going to pick out the twenty or thirty in the very best condition, and send back the rest." And that's what I did.

CG: Wow! And when was that, approximately?

SM: Oh boy, I would guess somewhere around the early 1990s, about twenty years ago.

CG: So, I guess I'll kind of steer things toward a conclusion. Are there any stories you would want to share, whether because they would occasion a great illustration, or a just a really funny story, or anything that comes to mind?

SM: Hmmm, okay, yeah, here's one. I don't know if it's funny or what, but maybe it's instructive. The full sheet that I have of chair decals is one of two that I know of.

CG: And how'd you come by that?

SM: Okay, the first time this sheet was offered to me, it was through a private collector. And I went to see it and when he told me how much he wanted for it I thought it was a ridiculously high amount. I had paid ridiculously high amounts before (for ephemera), but I also didn't like his

attitude so I turned it down and walked away. Maybe two years after that, this thing came up for auction. I ended up paying *twice* as much for it then! But at that point I knew I had to have it. And at that time the under bidder was David Schorsch and there aren't too many occasions when I beat out David Schorsch on anything that we both want.

CG: Yeah, I can imagine.

SM: So I paid, I think, over \$5,000 for it, and that was in 1991.



CG: You've been one of the collectors who has probably made the most educational and intellectual use of your collection of anyone that I'm aware of.

SM: I hope I'm the *most*—by far. [Laughter]

CG: Well, you probably are. [Laughter]

CG: I know that's been a passion of yours, but also something you've tried to use to help institutions and colleagues and friends. And recently you've done a number of exhibitions and books and I wondered if you wanted to say anything generally about those projects.

SM: Once I evolved a collecting philosophy that I could state to myself,

which was in 1987 in preparation for this exhibit at Hancock, it kind of rested on three legs. The first was to collect the very best possible copy of every example of printing for and by the Shakers; the second was to preserve and where necessary conserve all of these; and the third was to share—through publications, exhibits, loans—and to make everything freely accessible with no loan fees, reproduction costs, none of that. I feel as though I'm a repository and a guardian of these materials, and not so much the owner. So I haven't had as much of a proprietary interest in them as I've had in archiving them and preserving them for the future. And sharing in any way I can has always been really important. Using the materials to learn more about Shakers, and particularly their industries, is paramount. I think that's the one area of Shaker studies that has been underserved. There's been a glut of information about Shaker design and Shaker furniture of all kinds, and oval boxes, and textiles, and their music, and general histories, but not a lot about the economic life of the Shakers. This was really the underpinning of all communal activity. And I think the Andrewses' exhibit, "The Communal Industries of the Shakers" (1933), was an extremely important landmark. And I look to my own *From Shaker Lands and Shaker Hands* as being the second really important landmark in this arena. Anything I could do to advance that particular area of interest was important to me.

CG: So are there—for people who will continue that type of work and use your collection as a resource—are there certain aspects or certain particular Shaker industries that you would really like to see explored much more deeply in the future?

SM: I think everything that's presented in *From Shaker Lands and Shaker Hands* opens up an opportunity for further and deeper exploration. As much as I covered in that book, I actually covered it all on a relatively superficial level, and I think there is room for other scholars to take off from that point and go much further into it. It may have to be done using non-ephemera sources—through ledgers and journals, things that are not colorful, not graphic, not eye-popping, but require a lot of due diligence and scholarship. But I think every one of those industries that I covered, and ones that I didn't, is worthy of deeper exploration.

CG: Well, is there anything you would like to offer in the way of a last thought or summation?

SM: I think the keys for collecting ephemera are two: patience and persistence. Right now it takes more patience and perhaps more persistence because there is so little material available. But I think there is material out there in the world that has not come to light. I know of some of it and I'm sure there is a lot I don't know about. And I would hope that it works its way into Hamilton College one way or another, eventually, and that the College becomes *the* great repository, *the* great archive for it all.

CG: Well, that certainly is our goal, and we recognize there are aspects of the collection—for instance manuscript material—that there's really very little chance that we could ever have a major collection of, but with the addition of your collection we feel that our collection of printed materials by and about the Shakers, has grown exponentially stronger.