

American Communal Societies Quarterly

Volume 7 | Number 2

Pages 55-79

April 2013

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Cover Page Footnote

From a talk given on July 21, 2012, on the Tyringham Shakers, at Union Church, Tyringham, sponsored by Bidwell House Museum.

The Tyringham Shakers

By Stephen J. Paterwic

Introduction

A number of factors have caused the Tyringham Shakers to be almost ignored in works about the Believers. First, the society was the smallest of the eleven major Shaker villages in New York and New England. At its height around 1840, it barely had more than one hundred members, and this included a disproportionate number of children. In addition, the community closed so early that when the first Shaker histories were written by non-Shakers, it was basically overlooked. Indeed, the handful of survivors who made it into the twentieth century were no longer living by the time of Edward Deming Andrews and Marguerite Fellows Melcher.¹ Furthermore, few records from the society seem to have survived. In this aspect, the Tyringham Shaker society is similar to the other two communities in the bishopric—Hancock, Massachusetts, and Enfield, Connecticut. Consequently, those writing about the Shakers during the last forty years, with one exception, seem content to give Tyringham just a cursory glance and then dismiss it.² This has created a situation in Shaker studies akin to a “self-fulfilling prophecy.” Since so little is known, it is easier to move on to the more famous Shaker settlements to study their people, artifacts, trade, etc. This has caused Tyringham to be perpetually relegated to the sidelines. The ninety-five-year history of the Shakers in Tyringham remains as shadowy as the hillsides they lived on.

It is the goal of this work to provide new insights, facts, and connections that will bring the Shaker presence at Tyringham out into the open. Hopefully scholars in the field of Shaker studies will be able to find sufficient resources here to enable them to integrate the Tyringham community into their works. When this is done, Tyringham will find its rightful place in the ongoing study of the Believers.

Part 1: How the Shakers Came to Tyringham

Popular accounts of the arrival of Shakerism in Tyringham always seem to begin the story in April 1782. That is when six men, newly arrived from Coventry, Connecticut (according to the tale), began holding Shaker religious meetings. Actually, Shakerism came to Tyringham almost two years before this, and those involved had not just moved to Tyringham from Coventry. Yet the popular version has enjoyed widespread circulation since it was first published in 1829.³ Indeed, it is always repeated, without challenge, by anyone either speaking or writing about the Tyringham Shakers. That is not to say, however, that some parts of the *History of the County of Berkshire* are not useful. For example, there is a key portion that is often omitted in the first section of the narrative. It states that “near the close of the Revolutionary war ... several individuals living in the southwestern part of Hop-brook or North Tyringham began to attend the meetings of the Shakers in New Lebanon and Hancock.”⁴ This is the real start of Shakerism in Tyringham. Three significant questions flow from this passage, and these are essential to answer: Who visited New Lebanon and Hancock? When did they do this? How did folks from such a remote community even know about the Shaker activities around the border country to the north? An examination of the answers to these questions puts the Shaker history of Tyringham on a firm, contextual foundation—something that has not been done before.

Although the Believers had been in America since August 6, 1774, the Testimony did not open until May 19, 1780. At that time, the Shakers were living near Albany at a place called Niskeyuna, later known as Watervliet, and today part of the town of Colonie. For years they had been praying and preparing for converts. An event in 1779 yielded a harvest from which the Shakers gathered thousands of souls. This occasion was “the westernmost surge of a wave of spiritual concern, sometimes called the New Light Stir, that swept through much of the New England back country.”⁵ This revival electrified various towns from New Providence (now Adams), Massachusetts, to Little Hoosac, New York, but the center was in the New Lebanon section of Canaan, New York. After the intensity of the revival had spent itself, seekers made their way to Niskeyuna and sought out the Shakers in an attempt to fulfill their millennial expectations. Not since the Great Awakening of 1736-1745 had there been such a strong desire for “spiritual rebirth, moral purity, and emotional engagement with religion.”⁶

The cause of the New Light Stir was the alignment of various factors that had been building up for years. After the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, large areas, such as the hills and valleys of western Massachusetts, were safe for settlement. For the next three decades, thousands of people made their way into the Berkshires from eastern Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. “In 1761, there had been three towns and 700 families in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. By 1790, there were 30,000 people and twenty-five incorporated towns.⁷ This “societal shock” of mass migration was coupled with the fact that “many, perhaps, most of these settlers were pro-revival New Lights of some kind: Separate, Baptist, or Congregationalist. This massive encounter with the frontier was unprecedented in New England and American history, and it introduced grave problems of social and cultural fragmentation to a generation already bent on establishing national and regional autonomy.”⁸ Thus, the Revolution, life on the new frontier, and a population already prone to heterodoxy were forces that in combination made the New Light Stir inevitable.

One of the earliest and most strident of the converts the Shakers made was Baptist preacher Valentine Rathbun of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. He had arrived in the area in 1770 as part of the mass migration from coastal Connecticut. His brothers Amos and Daniel had already established themselves in nearby Richmond, Massachusetts.⁹

Throughout the Revolutionary period, Rathbun had been a strong patriot in the long fight against the British. He was elected to the Pittsfield Committee of Inspections and Correspondence, represented Pittsfield in Boston at the General Court in 1779, and was delegate in 1780 to the state Constitutional Convention.¹⁰ The month after the Shaker Testimony opened, he went to Niskeyuna and immediately converted.

His acceptance of Shakerism caused most of his congregation to become Shakers and this secured many of the most important people who would eventually be the bedrock of the Hancock society. His conversion not only affected his flock, it also had a major impact on his family. For example, his brother Amos converted and went on to be the elder of Hancock’s Second Family. At the time of Valentine’s conversion, his first cousin Jonathan Rathbun was living in Tyringham.¹¹ He and his family had migrated from Exeter, Rhode Island, to Tyringham late in 1774 or early 1775.¹² While still living in Exeter, he married Susannah Barber, and they had at least four children. Not long after moving to Tyringham,

Susannah died, perhaps in childbirth.¹³ Given the strong personality of Valentine Rathbun, it is inconceivable that a party of family members from Tyringham would not have at least visited him after his conversion. In truth the Rathbuns of Tyringham probably participated fully in the New Light Stir of 1779. When they did so, it is almost certain that they were accompanied by William Clarke of Tyringham because he was also a close relative of theirs and lived nearby.

The Tyringham Rathbuns and the Clarkes were originally from Rhode Island and were related many times over through intermarriage with the Rhode Island Barber and Tefft clans. For example, William Clarke's mother was named Bridget Barber. His maternal grandparents were Moses, Jr., and Elizabeth Barber.¹⁴ Moreover, his paternal great-grandmother was Mary Clarke.¹⁵ The wife of Jonathan Rathbun was Susannah Barber. Her father was Joseph Barber.¹⁶ Her uncle and aunt both married Tefft siblings, and Mary Tefft was William Clarke's wife's maiden name.¹⁷

Traditional accounts always mention that it was William Clarke's farmstead that became the nucleus of the Church Family of Tyringham Shakers, so it is necessary to say a little more about him.

William Clarke was born March 5, 1734, in Richmond, Rhode Island. His parents were Thomas and Bridget (Barber) Clarke. He married Mary Tefft (born 1734), and on October 11, 1757, their first child, William, was born.¹⁸ Around 1760, they and other Richmond families moved to Voluntown, Connecticut. While living there, William and Mary Clarke had seven more children.¹⁹ Though living in Voluntown, he made periodic trips to Tyringham starting around 1770. A Shaker journal entry written immediately after the community closed states: "This society of Shakers were situated on the mountain Side south of Lee_The site was chosen & Settled on by Wm Clarke of Rhode Island about the year 1770. purchased with Continental Money_about halfway up Henry Mountain he erected a log hut & 'squatted' Some 10. or 12 years afterward he and his wife Mary were with their children converted to Shakerism_5 boys & 3 Girls_"²⁰ Since their youngest child was born at Voluntown in 1778, that is the earliest year the family could have actually moved to Tyringham. Other Clarkes eventually lived in Tyringham and appear in the census of 1790. They are likely related to William Clarke and two Clarkes who are not his children, Temperance and Rachel, were Tyringham Shakers for a time.

In addition to the Rathbun and Clarke families, there was another family caught up in the excitement of Shakerism. The *History of the County of*

Berkshire mentions the name Henry Herrick as one of those holding Shaker meetings. The earliest Shaker land records for Tyringham indicate that on May 31, 1775, Samuel Herrick bought seventy-five acres from Thomas Orton for £31.²¹ Six years later, on November 22, 1781, Orton sold seventy-five more acres to Henry Herrick for £40.²² It may be conjectured that Samuel and Henry were the brothers of Hezekiah Herrick who also lived in Tyringham. He was the son of Ezekiel and Abigail (Wilson) Herrick and born March 4, 1758, in Coventry, Connecticut.²³ Other Tyringham siblings may have been John, Sibel, Amasa, and Ezekiel Herrick, all of whom had probably come from Coventry, Connecticut, as well.

Therefore, it can be said that, from Tyringham, those attending the Shaker meetings at New Lebanon and Hancock in 1780 were members of the Rathbun, Clarke, and Herrick families. Since this group formed a fairly large group of Believers, it may seem curious that Tyringham was not a stop on the two-and-a-half year Shaker missionary tour which began in May 1781. Through personal contact, Mother Ann and her companions desired to strengthen the faith of the scattered Believers in New England and New York who had converted at the time of the opening of the Gospel the year before or subsequently. After leaving their home base at Watervliet (Niskeyuna), New York, Shaker leaders travelled to Tuconock Mountain (now Mount Washington), Massachusetts, to visit Benjamin Osborne and his family.²⁴ The Osbornes had been land owners there since at least the 1750s, and they had relatives in Richmond, who converted to Shakerism at the first opening.²⁵ These Osbornes knew the Rathbuns of Richmond and had attended Valentine's church in Pittsfield. The *Testimonies* clearly mention that Mother Ann "went directly there" from Watervliet and then after "about ten days" proceeded to Enfield, Connecticut, sixty-seven miles away.²⁶ During the long missionary tour, Mother Ann visited every place that had any hope for an opening of the Shaker Gospel. Shaker missionary practice was "residential evangelism."²⁷ That is, Shaker leaders would visit families that seemed promising or had invited them. They would stay a few days with these groups "laboring" to make them Believers. It seems inconceivable that they would not have visited Tyringham if there were Shakers there.

The reason for omitting Tyringham from the itinerary is quite clear, however. By the fall of 1780, Valentine Rathbun had withdrawn his support of the Shakers and became one of their major detractors. Indeed, he has the dubious distinction of being the first in a long line of apostates

who wrote works attacking the Believers. In 1781, he penned *An Account of the Matter, Form, and Manner of a New and Strange Religion, Taught and Propagated by a Number of Europeans, Living in a Place called Nissequenia, in the State of New-York*. About a dozen versions of this work were reprinted and widely circulated. According to Mary Richmond, “His relentless anti-Shakerism damaged the Shaker missionary efforts and must have been in some degree responsible for Shaker persecution during 1781-1783.”²⁸ Though a few Rathbuns did remain Shakers, most eventually left the community. Two of them—Daniel, Valentine’s brother, and Reuben, Valentine’s son—also wrote anti-Shaker pieces. Therefore, it would have been very foolish for Mother Ann to have stopped at Tyringham. Whatever the Shakers may have hoped to gain would have been lost in a direct confrontation with the Rathbuns, and Valentine Rathbun would have made a formidable opponent. Not only was he a skilled Baptist preacher, he had been a close friend of Mother and her companions so he could claim equal footing in any debate. A contemporary Shaker, Brother Arnold Hadd of Sabbathday Lake, supports this theory and said, “While in England Mother sought out confrontations, but, after she moved to America, she tried to avoid them whenever possible.”²⁹

It is not a surprise, therefore, that none of the Tyringham Rathbuns were long-term converts, if they ever converted at all. Between 1778 and 1791, Jonathan and Susannah Rathbun’s three daughters—Lydia, Patience and Susannah—married in the town. Their son Clark, no doubt named after the family of William Clarke, also married and eventually moved to New York State, where he died in 1815.³⁰ By contrast, William Clarke and his wife remained Shakers for the rest of their lives as did two of their children, Ruth and Rebecca. Henry Herrick, his wife Experience, and their three children—Christina, Darius, and Molly—all remained Shakers from 1780 until their deaths.

Shakerism in Tyringham has long been associated with the families of Joshua, Abel, and William Allen of Coventry, Connecticut. Before these Allens are considered, however, it is necessary to discuss another branch of the Allen clan because from the earliest years of the town there had always been a few people named Allen. These were all descendants of Joseph and Hannah Allen of Medfield, Massachusetts. Their grandson Joseph (1702-1776) married Sarah Parker Allen in 1727. By the 1750s they had moved to Tyringham, for Sarah Parker Allen died there February 13, 1751.³¹ They had at least nine children.³² References to three of these—

Asa, Olive, and Miriam—can be found in Tyringham town records.³³

Joseph's sister Miriam also had a Tyringham connection. She married Daniel Thurston of Marborough, Massachusetts, in October 1732.³⁴ By the 1750s, they too lived in Tyringham, and Miriam Thurston died there in 1758.³⁵

Tyringham records mention a Benjamin Allen, “a soldier” most likely in the French and Indian War, who died in 1758.³⁶ He is no doubt a cousin to Joseph Allen (1702-1776) whose father, also named Joseph, may have had a brother named Benjamin. The soldier Benjamin could have been his grandson.

Another Allen of this family was Rufus. According to Eloise Myers, he served in the Revolutionary War.³⁷ Town records indicate that he had an unnamed daughter born on November 5, 1775. This would put him in the generation of Asa Allen, Jr. (b. 1756). Perhaps he is the son of Benjamin Allen.

The connection of these Allens to the Shakers is thin, and may lie in the fact that Joseph Allen's daughter Azubah or Dinah may have had an illegitimate child in Brimfield named Lucy Allen, and she may have married Elijah Fay. Another connection is that Asa Allen, junior, married Patience Rathbun, and their daughter Patience married Nathan Culver. Patience and Nathan Culver became Shakers during the 1780s.

Although Joshua, Abel, and William Allen have been identified with Coventry, Connecticut, no town or church record mentions that they or their children ever lived there. Moreover, there is no record of these Allens in the Barbour Collection or in church archives at the state library in Hartford.³⁸ This means that the origins of Joshua, Abel, and William Allen are exceedingly difficult to trace. It has long been asserted that they converted to Shakerism in Coventry and then moved to Tyringham.³⁹ This scenario is not possible, however, given Shaker historical facts and the vital records of Tyringham. When researching the “Coventry” Allens, a couple of questions seem to present themselves, and these give clues that ultimately help sort out their story. If, indeed, the Allens had come to Tyringham from Coventry, why, according to Tyringham vital records, was at least one child of Abel Allen born in Belchertown, Massachusetts, and at least one child of William Allen born in Wilmington, Massachusetts?⁴⁰ Also the Fay and Stanley families came to Tyringham from Belchertown in 1784. What is their connection with the Allens?

One key is to realize they had all been soldiers in the Revolutionary

War. In the *History of Belchertown in the 18th Century*, there is a list of some of the citizens of Belchertown who had fought in the Revolution. This record was compiled by the Reverend Payson Lyman in 1877. There are at least five names of future Shaker men who were living in Belchertown. Though no specifics of service are provided, “it is probable that the greater part of those whose names are given, saw actual campaigning at one time or another.” This enumeration does not include Abel Allen, but his brothers Joshua and William appear along with James Moseley, James Hulet, and Elijah Fay. Another list, providing actual service information, states that Abisha Stanley commenced his time in August 1777.⁴¹ The author admits that the general list is likely incomplete, and as it was compiled one hundred years later there are no doubt omissions. Abel Allen perhaps should have been included. Whether he fought during the Revolution or not, however, clearly all three Allen brothers were at one time living in Belchertown. We know Abel lived there because that is where at least two of his children were born. We know Joshua and William lived there because they are listed as Revolutionary soldiers from the town.

Although it is true that there is no tangible evidence from either the town or the state of Connecticut that would indicate the Allens lived in Coventry, Shaker death records and a strong, consistent Shaker oral tradition connect them with that place. Given the great gaps that exist, even now, in the reporting of vital statistics, it is safe to assume that Joshua, Abel, and William Allen actually did come from there and Joshua and Abel likely married there as well. In addition, they did not belong to the First Parish of Coventry since membership lists from that church are extant. They may have attended the Second or North Parish of Coventry, a church that did not begin to keep records until 1800.⁴² They were most likely, however, “separates” or Baptists. As such they would have tried to live as isolated as possible from the Congregational Church and all its privileges as the Standing Order.⁴³ We may never know the specific date[s] when they moved to Belchertown, but we can make fairly firm conjectures.

Abigail Allen was the matriarch of the family. She was born around 1709 and died a Shaker at Tyringham at the age of ninety-seven. Her daughter Abigail, born in 1738, was the wife of Abisha Stanley, born in 1737. If they married around 1760, this might date the beginning of the migration of the Allens out of Coventry. Although we do not know the date or the place of their marriage or where they lived, their third child, John, was born in Brimfield, Massachusetts, in 1769. Their second

youngest child, Freeman, was born in Union, Connecticut, in 1774 and their last child, Eleazer, was born in Belchertown in 1777. Thus Abigail and Abisha Stanley moved to Belchertown between 1774 and 1777 and lived there till 1784 when they moved to Tyringham.

Two of the children of Abel Allen were born in Belchertown—Leonard around 1774 and Ruth (Phebe) about 1779. Abel's wife was Rhoda, born ca. 1751. This means that they got married in the early 1770s and may have moved to Belchertown at the same time as the Stanleys.

If Lucy Allen is not the granddaughter of Joseph Allen of Tyringham, then she is the daughter of Abigail Allen, Sr., and her brothers are Abel, William, and Joshua. She married Elijah Fay in Brimfield, Massachusetts, in 1775. Not long after, they moved to Belchertown because Elijah Fay is listed among the Revolutionary War soldiers from Belchertown. His career as a soldier must have been lengthy because he is also enumerated as a Revolutionary War veteran from Brimfield. Their daughter Chloe was born in Massachusetts in 1778, almost certainly in Belchertown.

William Allen was born in Coventry around 1751. When his sister Abigail got married he was only about ten years old. He perhaps lived in Belchertown as a teenager and young man before marrying and moving to Wilmington. He married Priscilla (maiden name not known), and they had at least two children. Their daughter Mary (Sarah) was born in Wilmington, Massachusetts, around 1778. Their son John was born three years later, probably also in Wilmington.

Joshua Allen was born in Coventry, Connecticut, ca. 1738. His wife was named Mehitable. They had at least two children—Mehitable, born in 1766, and Luther, who was born in 1770. Tyringham death records indicate who Luther's parents were, and that he was born in Coventry. Given the nature of society in those days, it is highly likely that there were more children, but we can surmise from Luther's birth that his parents still lived in Coventry until the early 1770s and moved to Belchertown after this.

Thus it seems that the Allen brothers lived in Coventry until the early 1770s when they moved to Belchertown, possibly as early as 1774. In the late 1770s, William Allen moved to Wilmington where he may have gotten married and had two children before converting to Shakerism.

Though the Allens were living either in Belchertown or Wilmington when the Gospel opened in 1780, it is highly likely that they attended the New Light Stir in 1779 and subsequently heard about the Shakers

that way. Samuel Johnson, a Presbyterian minister, and Joseph Meacham, a Baptist minister, were the leaders of this revival. Meacham's grand uncle, also named Joseph Meacham, was the founding minister of the First Congregational Church at Coventry, Connecticut. During the Great Awakening he fully supported the new ideas and defended the "separates," especially the Reverend Timothy Allen of West Haven who had taken radical steps in 1842 to start a college, "Shepherd's Tent," in New London, to train ministers in the new theology "free from the rationalism and Arminian errors of Harvard and Yale."⁴⁴ The Allens of Coventry may be related to the Reverend Timothy Allen, who had descendents there, and the Allens were perhaps already "separates" and may have soon become Baptists in the 1750s as did the Enfield relatives of Rev. Joseph Meacham of Coventry. In addition, while attending revival and later Shaker meetings at New Lebanon and Hancock, they would have associated with the Herricks of Tyringham, who had once lived in Coventry. The bond between the three Allen brothers was strong, and they decided to relocate near each other. "A situation was offered them in Stockbridge," but the Allens "preferred Tyringham."⁴⁵ No doubt the "Coventry" connection played a key role in this decision. It is unlikely that the Allens received the faith later during Mother's missionary tour of 1781-83. If this had been the case, they would have joined the Harvard community as the Shakers were headquartered there during those years.

The *History of the County of Berkshire* states that in April 1782, the Allens had "just moved into the place."⁴⁶ This dovetails nicely with the fact that Mother Ann and the elders visited Belchertown in March 1782, during their missionary tour. Between the visit of her entourage to Granby and Montague, we read, "they visited Jonathan Bridges', and some other Believers in Belcher."⁴⁷ The Allens, the Fays, the Stanleys, the Pratts, and the Pattens were among these "other" Believers. A month after this encounter, the Allens, excited and spiritually renewed, moved to Tyringham. Though the Clarkes and Herricks were Believers, they had to contend with the Rathbuns. When the Allen brothers moved to Tyringham, the community was ready to prosper and thrive. They had land, good leadership, and sufficient numbers to make it all work. The momentum unleashed would last for the next fifty years.

Mother Ann and the elders returned from their missionary tour in early September 1783. One evening during the winter of 1784, "Asa Patten and Joshua Allen, of Tyringham" were among those in attendance

at the meeting house in Watervliet. “The Elders came forth with a sharp testimony against sin, showing the necessity of every soul’s waking up, and laboring to feel their union with God.”⁴⁸ Until the community began to be formally organized in 1792, this wise counsel was the hallmark that guided the little band of Believers in Tyringham.

Part 2: Expansion

The Believers needed a good deal of fortitude and spiritual strength to endure the persecutions that soon followed the Gospel to Tyringham. During 1782 and 1783 Shakers were attacked, especially when they were holding religious services. One time the mob tried to either suffocate or smoke the Shakers out of the house where they were meeting. Miraculously, the door that had been placed to block the chimney flew off into the crowd which frightened them since it was a calm evening. The town appointed a committee in 1783 to watch the Shakers and prevent out-of-town Believers from entering Tyringham. This also included checking on their food supply so that they would not be able to feed large numbers of visitors. This work certainly sounds like it could have been instigated by the Rathbuns. For example, Samuel Fitch, a Shaker from Richmond, Massachusetts, was whipped out of town. Richmond is where a number of the Rathbuns lived. The town passed laws forbidding people from doing blacksmith work or grinding grain for the Shakers.⁴⁹ The inhospitable climate of Tyringham, however, did not deter out-of-town converts from joining. The largest group came in two waves from Belchertown. In 1782 the Allens and the Fays arrived. In 1784, the Stanleys, the Pratts, and the Pattens came. The Thayers were from Peru, Massachusetts, and the Bigelows from Williamstown, Massachusetts. Other neighbors such as Nathan Culver and his wife, Patience Allen Culver, also joined. By the time of the first federal census in 1790, these families numbered seventy-one individuals in all. There were thirty-four males and thirty-seven females. This census did not have any specific divisions of age for females, but males were enumerated in two parts, those under sixteen years of age and those sixteen and older. Thirteen of the Shakers males were under sixteen years of age and twenty-one males above sixteen.

With the death of the last English Shaker leader, Father James Whittaker, in July 1787, the focus of Shaker life became the settlement

at New Lebanon, New York. Father Joseph Meacham succeeded as head of the Church, and he began to organize the Shakers into community in a pattern known as gospel order. This plan called for groups of scattered Believers to come together at various places and form societies. These communities were grouped into a bishopric with a Ministry consisting of two men and two women. This Ministry spent time visiting the communities of the bishopric but had a primary residence at one of the places. In turn each community had at least two groups called “families” housed in large dwellings. Each family had a pair of elders and a pair of eldersses. Their job was spiritual guidance and general supervision. Each family also had deacons and deaconesses who organized Shaker family life. Finally, each family had what would later be called trustees.⁵⁰ These lived in a building called the Office, and from here they interacted with the world on business matters.

By 1790, the first bishopric, including New Lebanon and Watervliet, New York, had been sufficiently organized that attention could be paid to other groups of unorganized Believers. That year, a second bishopric, including Hancock and Tyringham, Massachusetts, as well as Enfield, Connecticut, began to be organized. The primary society was at Hancock so the bishopric was called the Hancock bishopric. The Ministry consisted of Father Calvin Harlow, Elder Brother Nathaniel Deming, Mother Sarah Harrison, and Elder Sister Cassandana Goodrich.

In 1792, Father Calvin Harlow and William Clarke began to organize the Church at Tyringham, though it was not until the next year that most of the Shakers gathered into community.⁵¹ Elders of the Church at Tyringham were William Clarke, Asa Patten, Elisabeth Pratt, and Hitte Allen, Jr. Timothy Bigelow and Thomas Patten were Office deacons whose responsibilities were “the care and management of the estate or temporal interest in trust.”⁵² During the 1790s, all those not gathered into the Church lived in a few “out families,” headed by the owners of those properties. These were concentrated north of the Church Family and gradually formed a Second Family. Toward the end of the decade, the elders were Joshua Allen, Elijah Fay, Hitte Allen, Sr., and Rhoda Allen. When the family was fully organized in 1800 Abigail Stanley had replaced Rhoda Allen. Abisha Stanley served as the principal Office deacon.

By the time of the second census in 1800, the Tyringham Shakers consisted of two families totaling fifty-three members. They were youthful in age, but not dominated by children. In fact, those under sixteen

numbered just 5 or 9 percent of the whole. This was a healthy situation, especially in light of what would later befall the society.

Starting in late 1799, efforts were made at New Lebanon to create a Gathering Order so that new adult converts would have a place to go when they wanted to join. The original plan was for those who were interested in becoming members at Watervliet, New Lebanon, Hancock, or Tyringham to come to the North House at New Lebanon. This quickly was found to be unwieldy because of the large number of converts to Shakerism. As a result, each society was encouraged to form its own Gathering or Novitiate Family. By 1820, all Shaker communities had created at least one of these. Some communities reorganized existing families, others had to purchase land to do so. The possible exception might be Tyringham. As the society was so small, new converts could be easily accommodated by the existing families. In addition, there are no covenants from Tyringham that were designed especially for a novitiate family. In fact, there seems to have always been just one covenant at Tyringham and when it was revised all adults signed regardless of where they lived.⁵³ This does not mean that newly arrived adults lived with the Church or Second Families. They may have been accommodated in a separate location known as the North Family, but really and more properly called the North House since it did not have financial independence from the other families. It merged into the Second Family in 1837. The federal census of 1810 indicates that Shakers were divided into three locations: forty-eight at the Church Family, twenty-one at the Second Family and six under the supervision of Amasa Bigelow at the North Family. By 1810 the Tyringham Shakers were fully organized and were a small version of the many other Shaker communities.

Various accounts give the total land area occupied by the Tyringham Shakers as between 1,000 and 1,300 acres.⁵⁴ Since there are almost no Tyringham Shaker journals known to exist, information on the society has to be gathered from outside sources. Visitor accounts are able to provide us with valuable information. One of the best of these gives us an excellent glimpse of the Tyringham Shakers at their height:

The principal object of their farming, at Tyringham, is the raising of stock; neat cattle especially. Their dairy is well managed; and they have a garden of four or five acres, devoted to the raising of garden seeds and medicinal herbs, under skilful and successful cultivation.

Their annual sales have sometimes amounted to \$3,100 and they

allow to their agents twenty-five per cent commission on sales, and take back what is unsold. They produce some wheat, corn, and oats; and they are now effecting with great labor and admirable skill the redemption of extensive, alluvial meadows of Hop brook, by draining, rooting out the stumps, and cultivating the soil, which will bring these lands under a course of most productive improvement.⁵⁵

Clearly, the primary business of the Tyringham Shakers was the seed industry. Their average annual income then of \$3100 would be \$67,425 today.⁵⁶ Also they were clearing the meadows below their settlement in order to shift from farming on a steep hillside that only enjoyed partial sun each day. At the Second Family a mill dam was completed in 1847 and during the years 1847 and 1848, their grist mill at West Stockbridge was rebuilt and converted into a flour mill.⁵⁷ Certainly no one seeing all this activity could have guessed that in less than forty years the Tyringham Shakers would be no more.

Part 3: The End of the Tyringham Shakers

The key to understanding the demise of the Tyringham Shakers is demographics. Someday a closer analysis of other Shaker communities may reveal that most of the earliest converts were related by strong family ties, yet the situation at Tyringham in this regard seems extreme. It appears that almost everyone there was related. For example, in 1800, Tyringham's first Shaker covenant was drawn up. All adults in the society twenty-one years old or older signed it. Of the forty-eight signers, thirty-nine were Clarkes, Herricks, Pratts, Fays or Allens.⁵⁸ This is 81 percent of the whole. Of the remaining nine, seven were either Culvers or Bigelows. The other two were Markhams who may have been sent to live at Tyringham from Enfield, Connecticut. Of these forty-eight, forty-six remained faithful to death. This is 96 percent of the whole!

As the decades passed, however, the natural diminishment of numbers due to death thinned the ranks. This was eased for a time by the additions of the Johnson family (a couple with six children) in 1811 and the Hulets (a man with at least five of his children) from Belchertown in 1812-13. Calvin and Electa Parker came in 1822 and Aaron Manchester also came in as an adult. Of course there were others who came and went, but during

the 1820s a very ominous shift occurred in Shakerdom. Instead of relying on adults and families to increase their numbers, the Shakers began the disastrous policy of taking in children without their parents. As long as Mother Lucy Wright was the leader of all of the Shakers, the traditional practices of trying to get new members from revivals and interested adults remained in place. In fact, sensing a change, she warned against the policy of taking in children without believing parents. She died in February 1821, however, and it was not long after this that the Shakers started indenturing large numbers of homeless children. As a result there was an ever-accelerating shift downward in average age among Tyringham Shakers that occurred from the 1820s until 1860.

Because almost no Shaker manuscript records exist that list Tyringham population figures, we are left to rely on the federal, and later state, census figures. Of course, these are limited because they do not offer yearly totals but ten- or five-year numbers. As we have seen, on the eve of the gathering of the society, there were seventy-one Shakers. Of this number, perhaps forty-five were adults. In 1800, of the fifty-three Shakers there were forty-eight over the age of sixteen; by 1810, of the seventy-five Shakers, sixty-two were over the age of sixteen and in 1820, seventy-three out of the ninety-two Shakers were over the age of twenty. The high water mark of the number of adult Shakers at Tyringham was in 1820. Even though the community had grown steadily, according to the federal census there were never more than nineteen children.

The census of 1830 no longer used sixteen years of age as a benchmark to enumerate people. Using the new benchmark of twenty years of age instead, we see that that year, of the 101 Shakers, thirty-two were under twenty years of age. This was 32 percent of the total, and meant that only sixty-nine were adults. Something had shifted during the 1820s. The percentage and numbers of children was accelerating while the number of adults diminishing. During the 1820s, moreover, eighteen Shakers had died, sixteen of them adults. This was as many as had died in the previous thirty years. According to the Shaker census of 1846, there were ninety-seven in the Tyringham community.⁵⁹ This showed that not only was the number of adults declining, the whole community was shrinking. By 1850, those under twenty-one numbered forty-five, or half of the community of ninety-one.⁶⁰ The large percentage of children at Tyringham meant a community virtually out of control in terms of stability. In every way, the 1850s were the end for Tyringham. The momentum unleashed by the

arrival of the Allens in 1782 had finally sputtered out.

A close look at that time period reveals an almost impossible situation. Thirteen Shakers died during that decade and by the state census of 1855, children made up 52 percent of the community; there were forty children and thirty-seven adults.⁶¹ Of these adults, fourteen were over seventy years old. This meant just twenty-four men and women were between the ages of twenty and seventy. In 1830 there were sixty-three Shakers in this age bracket.

It is in this context that the often-talked-about departures in 1858 occurred. According to tradition, twenty-three people left in January 1858.⁶² Though subsequent legends have grown up to make the event connected with a sexual scandal, this was not the case. All of the people who left were from the Church Family and they ranged in age from nine to twenty-one, fourteen being the average. Looking at the previous numbers, it should be clear that if twenty-three people left, most of them would have to have been children. There were only twenty-four Shakers between the ages of twenty and seventy in 1855. If twenty-three adults left in 1858, there would not have been any remaining, as Phebe Wilcox died in 1857 at age forty-eight. Of course, it makes a much more interesting story to claim that a large number of adults decided to forego celibacy and leave the society. The fact that no Shaker journals that we know of remark on the departure makes it seem that there was something shady. In truth, why would any person from another Shaker community comment on the departure of children? Their own villages were undergoing the same stress as at Tyringham!

If seen as a badly needed correction, the departures of 1858 were actually a very good thing. By 1860, the numbers were much less unbalanced, thirty-eight adults out of fifty-five members.⁶³ The number of children was down to just 31 percent of the whole, a percentage that had not been seen for twenty years. More importantly, the Shakers decided to merge the two small families into one in December 1861. In 1860, the Church Family had only thirty-four members, twenty-four of whom were adults. The Second Family had fourteen adults and seven children. By combining they had a very strong single Shaker family at the Church Family site. A large part of their strength was financial. The three communities of the bishopric had always been secure in temporal matters. Unlike many other Shaker communities, they had honest and faithful trustees. The result was a comfortable accumulation of assets. When the two families were united,

an inventory was made of the personal property of the entire community. They had \$10,680.18 in cash, notes, and stock. When their indebtedness was subtracted they had a healthy balance of \$6,802.17 or \$177,810 today. Their industries included seeds, brooms, measures, cheese hoops, and dried sweet corn. Materials on hand connected to the industries had a value of \$4,210.00, or \$97,672 now. Thus they had \$275,482 of goods and money and this did not include their 561 animals or crops on hand.⁶⁴ In addition, they owned their buildings and land free and clear.

Of course they had to get new members if they ever were to remain a viable society. From 1860-1865, eight adult Shakers died and others left. To fill up the ranks, more children were indentured. This really was the last stand for the community. Of the forty members in 1865, fourteen or 35 percent were children.⁶⁵ The long-standing tradition of trying to add members by adopting children was too strong a pattern for them to break. For decades at Tyringham, all of the adult Shakers signing the children's indentures on behalf of the society—Freeman Stanley, Willard Johnson, Hastings Storer, and Albert Battle—had themselves been raised from childhood as Shakers.⁶⁶ Freeman Stanley, Willard Johnson, and Hastings Storer were from whole families that had joined and had believing parents. Albert Justus Battle (also spelled Battles) was the illegitimate child of Lieutenant Justus Battle of Tyringham and the widow Katherine Johnson. She was most likely the sister of Willard Johnson's father Stephen Johnson. Thus Albert Battles, though his parents never were Shakers, was part of a Believing family, and he may have joined the Shakers as a toddler in 1811 when the Johnson family did. As mentioned previously, this indenturing of children was not unique to Tyringham, but it had a very negative affect on the community because there were so few Shakers even at its height in membership. Other societies slowed down the adoption of children without parents by the 1880s, but for Tyringham it was too late because the society had closed.

Events at Enfield foreshadowed the eventual consolidation of Tyringham into that society. Early in 1867 John Wilcox, elder of the North Family at Enfield, left the Shakers. This was a serious defection as Enfield was suffering from a lack of available men to fill leadership positions, and John Wilcox was the brother of George Wilcox, the long serving elder of Enfield's Church Family. Robert Aitkin, who had been an Office deacon at the Church was sent to be elder at the North Family.⁶⁷ To fill Robert Aitkin's place at the Office, the Ministry chose Richard Van Deusen of

Tyringham. Elder George Wilcox brought him to his new home on March 4, 1867. He would have arrived earlier, but he was in the process of selling off Tyringham's Second Family property there. Since late in 1861, when the Second Family closed, he had managed the place in preparation to finding a buyer. His appointment to Enfield may have hastened his desire to sell the land and be free of that duty. In any event, in March 1867, the Tyringham Shakers sold the property for \$12,000 to John Canon.⁶⁸ After the completion of the sale, Van Deusen moved to Enfield.⁶⁹ Eight years later almost all of the remaining Tyringham Shakers would follow him.

In the meantime four more Shakers died, and the young continued to depart so that by 1870 there were twenty-seven in the community, three or 11 percent being children.⁷⁰ This paucity of numbers and continued diminishment prompted the Ministry of New Lebanon to take a rare interest in them. Although the Ministry of New Lebanon routinely visited Shaker communities, especially those in the East, they rarely went to Tyringham.⁷¹ In their stead, ministerial visits were regularly performed by the Hancock Ministry. Shaker life had ebbed so far at Tyringham, however, that the New Lebanon Ministry came there on a fact-finding mission on August 2, 1870. Yet even that visit seems somewhat in haste and sandwiched in between other matters. The Ministry left New Lebanon at 5:15 AM and arrived at Tyringham before noon. Usually the Ministry visited the members in their shops and spoke to the family. This time, the very afternoon after they arrived, accompanied by Elder Thomas Damon of the Hancock Ministry and Elder Albert Battle of the Church Family "they went upon the mountain west of the village to see their pasture lands, and wood lands, and make up our minds relating to the question of selling out the place."⁷² They returned to New Lebanon late that day or early the next morning. The decision was made a little more than three months later and announced at Hancock on November 15, 1870. Elder Giles Avery of the New Lebanon Ministry writes, "It is resolved to break up the Tyringham Society, moving them to Enfield, Connecticut probably."⁷³

The last signer of the Covenant at Tyringham occurred on April 11, 1870, before the decision was made to close the community.⁷⁴ After it was clear that the society would be sold, few efforts were made to keep the place going and the ranks of the twenty-seven that had lived there in July 1870, at the time of the census, eroded slowly. So insignificant did Tyringham appear that Charles Nordhoff did not even bother to visit there during his tour of the Shaker communities starting in December 1873. He dismisses

Tyringham (and Hancock too), in two sentences: “The societies at Hancock and Tyringham lie near the New York State line, among the Berkshire hills. They are small, and have no noticeable features.”⁷⁵ By the time Nordhoff enumerated the Shakers, there were seventeen Shakers at Tyringham—six men and eleven women.⁷⁶ In spite of the small numbers, no great efforts were made to sell the property until Michael McCue and Hastings Storer died in 1873 and 1874. Without these younger men, who had been the leaders, there was no way Tyringham could continue. Richard Van Deusen could not be spared at Enfield, and no one in the bishopric was available to take up the vacant leadership positions at Tyringham.

Part 4: The Closing

What to do about Tyringham was, no doubt, one of the most perplexing and embarrassing questions faced by the Shakers. In the past, one community had changed its location, but it had not been since 1827 that a Shaker community had closed. That society—West Union, Indiana—had not suffered from a lack of numbers, but rather was in an unhealthy location. It was willingly closed, and its members scattered among a number of other Shaker communities in the West. Tyringham was a totally different case. What had happened there was similar to what was going on everywhere in Shakerdom. Every place was declining, but to get to the point where an entire society could no longer continue was a very ominous sign of what the future might hold.

Although the remaining Shakers of Tyringham would have been a boon to any of the Shaker communities because they all needed members, it was only natural that they would go either to Enfield or Hancock. Elder George Wilcox of the Church Family of Enfield was especially desirous that they move to his community. Always a schemer and shrewd operator, he knew that Tyringham was well off financially, and if he could lure the members to his society, the bulk of their assets would go there as well. To make Enfield appear attractive, he had the community build a state-of-the-art brick dwelling. This magnificent structure was not needed but could offer the Tyringham Believers a comfortable place to live out the remainder of their lives. In addition, the North Family at Enfield under the capable hands of trustee Omar Pease had just completed a huge sisters’ shop. This and the many other improvements made by Omar Pease gave

quite a bit of competition to the Church Family and Elder George wanted to outdo him.

It is not a surprise, therefore, that twelve of the fourteen Shakers who remained went to live at Enfield. The last of this group died in 1895. In fact it may seem odd that they didn't all go to Enfield, but it can be surmised that Elizabeth Thornber and Eliza Chapin went to Hancock because they were life-long friends with Julia Johnson. She had been sent away from Tyringham in 1860 to live at Hancock. When the *Berkshire Gleaner* did an article on the Tyringham Shakers in 1906, Julia Johnson and Elizabeth Thornber were living together at Hancock's East Family. Elizabeth Thornber, the last Tyringham Shaker, died there in 1920.

Since we have been so concerned with the Tyringham Shakers, it is very easy to lose sight of the fact that they were part of a much larger whole. The February before Tyringham closed, the Church Family at Mount Lebanon suffered a disastrous fire. The whole core of the village burned, including the dwelling house. Not long after, another fire struck the family and this burned the herbarium, home of the family's largest industry. Though the Tyringham Shakers gave the Church Family at Mount Lebanon \$3,000 to help rebuild, the Ministry of Mount Lebanon was using all of its energies to cope with an array of other problems as well and had no time for matters at Tyringham. If things had been left in the hands of the Hancock Ministry, the financial legacy from Tyringham would have been guarded and used more wisely than it was. Unfortunately Shakers from the North Family of Mount Lebanon got involved.

In the early 1870s, Elder Frederick Evans and trustee Brother Levi Shaw of the North Family at Mount Lebanon bought a half share of a large timber lot at Promised Land, Pike County, Pennsylvania. The other half was owned by a man named Dr. Joseph Jones of Honesdale, Pennsylvania. Brother Levi had been in lumber business with Dr. Jones and was confident that the 10,000 acres was worth \$120,000. To finance their share of \$60,000, they asked the Ministry of Hancock and the Church Family there to help them financially. Ministry Elder Thomas Damon loaned them \$27,000 and Brother Ira Lawson, principal trustee of Hancock, loaned them \$2,000. The North Family paid the difference of \$31,000 themselves and bought the half share. The terms of the agreement were that Evans and Shaw pay Damon and Lawson 10 percent annual interest. In the fall of 1875, Evans and Shaw urged Damon and Lawson to buy Dr. Jones' half share. They proposed that the Hancock Ministry let

Dr. Jones have Tyringham for \$25,000, absorb \$3,000 of unpaid interest, and contribute \$2,000 extra cash. Since they already had given the North Family \$29,000, their total contribution would be \$59,000. Lawson and Damon agreed and completed the transaction on January 6, 1876. The North Family then gave their half share of a steam sawmill in Windsor, New York, farms in Honesdale, and other assets to Dr. Jones on January 8, 1876. This turned out to be one of the worst deals the Shakers ever made. Very little of the intended income from the sale of bark, lumber, and wood ever materialized. From June 1876 until 1899, Lawson paid \$7,200 in taxes on this land. From 1881 until 1889, the income was \$26,641.86 In 1888 the Shakers tried to sell the whole lot for \$25,000, but it would not sell. Finally in 1901, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania bought the land for \$13,000. Lawson only recovered \$5,000 from this amount. The total paid out by Lawson was \$67,700 including the purchase price, taxes, and sale commission. Lawson's ultimate financial realization from his share of the income and the sale was \$31,641. At *simple* interest of just 10 percent, his investment of \$59,000 in 1876 would have made a profit of \$147,500 by 1901!! When reviewing the entire affair, Ira Lawson, trustee of Hancock, commented that it was "one of the worst deals and heaviest loss this Society ever met with."⁷⁷

When contemplating the very peaceful and quiet places in Tyringham where the Shakers once lived, it is almost impossible to envision the open fields and the industrial activity that once "for a season" was here. A natural question that always seems to come to mind is, could the Shakers have done anything differently that may have allowed them to continue here as a society? From today's perspective it is quite easy to see the folly of taking in hundreds of children without their parents, or the excesses of the Era of Mother's Work. Later financial mismanagement seemed to close the history of the Tyringham Shakers on a sad note. Maybe for a moment we need to ask ourselves the question asked by the Shakers themselves in 1875, "Zion is shorn of one branch now leaving but 17 Societies_& some of them bid fair to come to the same end_ Has God forsaken his people? Or have his people forsaken him?!"⁷⁸

Notes

1. Edward Deming Andrews was active in Shaker collecting and publishing from the early 1920s until the early 1960s. Marguerite Fellows Melcher's *The Shaker Adventure* (1941) is the first large-scale Shaker history written by a non-Shaker.
2. The exception is *The Shaker Cities of Peace, Love and Union*, written by Deborah Burns in 1993. This was a pioneering work, and it provides an inviting, general overview of the three communities of the Hancock bishopric but was never intended to be an in-depth study of any one of the particular places.
3. David Dudley Field and Chester Dewey, et al., *A History of the County of Berkshire, Massachusetts* (Pittsfield, Samuel W. Bush, printer: 1829), 285-86.
4. *Ibid.*, 285
5. Clarke Garrett, *Spirit Possession and Popular Religion* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 164.
6. Stephen A. Marini, *Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 4.
7. Richard Birdsall, *Berkshire County: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 17-22; cited in *Spirit Possession and Popular Religion*, 163.
8. Marini, 5.
9. Deborah E. Burns, *Shaker Cities of Peace, Love, and Union* (Hanover: University of New England Press, 1992), 9. According to the information in the Barbour Collection, Valentine (named for his mother's father) was born in Stonington, Connecticut, on December 23, 1724. He married Tabitha Brown on January 8, 1744, in Stonington, and they had twelve children. According to genealogy.com genforum "re: Charlotte Rathbun Married William Kent on 13 March 1841/Mich" posted by Daniel A. Rathbun on April 16, 1998. Valentine's parents were Joshua Rathbun and Mary Wightman, who operated a fulling mill. They did not migrate but stayed in Stonington where they died in the late 1770s. Valentine's mother died in 1777 and his father in 1779.
10. Burns, 10.
11. Jonathan was the son of John Rathbun, a brother of Joshua Rathbun, Valentine's father.
12. "Rathbun Genealogy" www.valley.com/rathbuntree.htm. This information is listed under G (generation) 5, G 6, and G 7 Parents.
13. There is an unnamed daughter born to "-----, Rathbone" in 1775 according to *Vital Records of Tyringham, Massachusetts to the Year 1850* (Boston : New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1903), 51. Susannah Barber Rathbun would have been about thirty-eight years old and she died that same year.
14. Genealogy.com; genforum on the Barber family, "Washington County, Rhode Island births late 1600s to mid 1800," posted August 28, 2007 by CSWKresearcher.
15. Genealogy.com; genforum on the Barber family, "Re: Barbers/Rhode Island," posted January 12, 2005 by James Schultz.
16. Genealogy.com; genforum on the Barber family, "Washington County, Rhode Island births late 1600s to mid 1800, posted August 28, 2007 by CSWKresearcher."
17. Genealogy.com; genforum on the Tefft family, "Washington County, Rhode Island vital records late 1600s to mid 1800," posted by CSWKresearcher.

18. Rhode Island Births, 1636-1930. Accessible through ancestry.com.
19. Mary and William Clarke's children born in Voluntown: Wells in 1761, Rodman in 1764, Mary (Nancy) in 1767, Rebeckah in 1769, John in 1771, Ruth in 1776, and Weedon in 1778. Voluntown (Connecticut) Vital Records, Volume 1, 124.
20. South Union Record C, 420, 12 April 1875. Western Kentucky University, Kentucky Library, Bowling Green, Kentucky. This was written by Elder Harvey L. Eades when he was visiting the Shakers at Enfield, Connecticut. He spoke with former Tyringham Shakers who had just moved there.
21. Thomas Orton was born in 1709 in Farmington, Connecticut, and died in Tyringham in 1790. The probate of his will is available in Pittsfield.
22. Tyringham land records 1758-1819, WRHS I A-16.
23. Genealogy.com: Genforum for the Herrick family, "Hezekiah Herrick of CT, MA, and NY," posted by Bob Saunders, April 23, 2001.
24. *Testimonies of the Life, Character, Revelations and Doctrines of Mother Ann Lee and the Elders with Her*, (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1888), 65.
25. "Covenants, Laws, and Legal and Land Records," Tyringham, Mass., 1758-1819. WRHS I A-16,
26. *Testimonies*, 65-66.
27. Marini, 83.
28. Mary L. Richmond, comp., *Shaker Literature* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1977), 176.
29. Conversation with the author on July 17, 2012. Brother (actually Elder) Arnold has been a Shaker since 1978 and has studied the *Testimonies* quite extensively. This work on many others has been part of the ongoing "reading meeting" the Shakers have every Wednesday evening.
30. "Rathbun Genealogy" G 5, see note 11.
31. *Tyringham Vital Records to 1850*, 89.
32. Medfield Vital Records, 1:113. <http://ma-vitalrecords.org>.
33. Asa married Lidia Thurston, his first cousin on May 1, 1755. They had seven surviving children. Their son Asa, junior, married Patience Rathbun on December 10, 1778. In 1762, just one year after incorporation, Asa Allen, senior, helped build the town pound on the Smith farm, appointed a Hog Reeve in 1763, and served in the Revolutionary War. Joseph and Sarah's daughter Olive married Tyringham native David Brewer on November 30, 1757. They had six children. Joseph and Sarah's daughter Miriam married Tyringham native Robert Merriam on June 24, 1762. They may have had seven children.
34. Medfield Vital Records, 1:176. <http://ma-vitalrecords.org>.
35. *Tyringham Vital Records to 1850*, 104.
36. *Tyringham Vital Records to 1850*, 89.
37. Eloise Myers, *Tyringham: Hinterland Settlement*, (Pittsfield: Eagle Printing Company, 1963), 79.
38. This collection provides birth, marriage and death information from all of the towns in Connecticut from earliest settlement to 1850. It does not include church records, but these have also been gathered in a separate file, and none of the Allens "of Coventry" are included there either.
39. "More About the Shakers," *Berkshire Gleaner*, July 11, 1906.

40. Neither vital records in Belchertown nor those in Wilmington have any reference to Joshua, Abel, and William Allen or their families.
41. William C. Shea, *History of Belchertown in the 18th Century* (Amherst: Newell Press, 1968), 89-91.
42. Susan Whitney Dimock, copier, *Births, Marriages, Baptisms and Deaths from the Records of the Town and Churches in Coventry, Connecticut, 1711-1844* (New York: Baker and Taylor Company, 1897), vii.
43. "Separates" were those that retained membership as Congregationalists, but did not worship in the church building with others. They preferred their own separate places. These groups were a response to the Great Awakening that swept through New England during the 1740s. By the 1750s Baptists were also firmly established in New England. The Standing Order refers to the fact that in New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, the Congregational Church was the official religion. Its clergy were paid from tax money. Even after the Revolution, this church was the state-supported church of New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maine (which in those days was part of Massachusetts). The Standing Order was abolished in New Hampshire and Connecticut in 1818, and in Massachusetts in 1833.
44. Garrett, 123.
45. *Berkshire Gleaner*, July 11, 1906.
46. *History of the County of Berkshire*, 285.
47. *Testimonies*, 83.
48. *Testimonies*, 191-92.
49. "A True Statement of the Persecution in Tyringham to a Religious People Called Shakers in the Year of 1782 and 3." WRHS VII A-19 and "Elisha Parker's Book 1861," WRHS VII B-237.
50. Their original names were Office deacons and Office deaconesses.
51. Timothy Bigelow, clerk and recorder, *A Record of our Church in Tyringham Called Believers in Christ*, Library of Congress Shaker Collection, item 22.
52. Ibid.
53. These are the dates for the Tyringham covenant and its revisions: 1801, 1816, and 1832.
54. *History of the County of Berkshire*; "'Shakers' Establishment from Rev. H. Colman's Second Report of the Agriculture of Massachusetts," *The Farmers' Cabinet* 3 (August, 1838 to July, 1839): 338; and Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1875), 256.
55. *The Farmers' Cabinet*, 338.
56. This is based on the Consumer Price Index Estimate formula: (3100)(696 CPI of 2012/32 CPI of 1839)
57. "Records concerning building construction at New Lebanon and Watervliet, N.Y., Enfield, N.H., and Hancock and Tyringham, Mass.," Courtesy of The Winterthur Library, Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection, No. 1030.
58. Included in this number is Mary Thayre whose guardian had been William Clarke. "Covenant of the Members of Tyringham in 1800." Library of Congress Shaker Collection, item # 260.
59. "Society at Hancock ... society at Tyringham," [May 1846], Courtesy of The Winterthur Library, Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection, No. 1065.

60. U.S. Federal Census of [September 12] 1850.
61. Massachusetts State Census of [September 22] 1855.
62. A thorough treatment of this can be found in “Mysteries of Tyringham Unmasked: A New Examination of People, Facts, and Figures,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 1-20.
63. U.S. Federal Census of [July 18] 1860.
64. “1862. Brief Inventory of the Personal Property of the Shaker Community in Tyringham after the union of the two Families Dec. 1861.” Courtesy of The Winterthur Library, Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection, No. 1159.
65. Massachusetts State Census of [May 3] 1865.
66. “Covenants, Laws, and Legal and Land Records,” Tyringham, Mass., 1820-1843, 1844-1881 [last item is dated 1870, not 1881], WRHS I A-17, I A-18
67. “A chronicle of a few passing events of interest, and some not much interest, only to the writer;” [Amelia Lyman’s diary, Church Family, Enfield, Connecticut], 7 January, 1867. Courtesy of The Winterthur Library, Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection, No. 840.
68. Burns, 158.
69. Richard Van Deusen was Office deacon at the Church Family until the death of trustee Omar Pease at the North Family in 1883. He then moved to the North Family to be trustee and remained until his sudden death on August 6, 1893.
70. U.S. Federal Census of [July 27] 1870.
71. When the Ministry of New Lebanon visited Tyringham on August 13, 1857, they remarked that it was their first visit since before 1830. Reference from “A Journal or Register of passing events, continued from former Volumes, kept by Rufus Bishop (1850-1859),” New York Public Library Shaker Manuscript Collection, item #3.
72. “A Register of Incidents and Events ... kept by Giles B. Avery, 1859 Oct 20-1874 Dec. 21.” New York Public Library Shaker Manuscript Collection, item #4.
73. “A Register of Incidents and Events,” November 15, 1870.
74. Mary Elizabeth Mills, age twenty-one, signed the agreement to be a Shaker. Elder Albert Battle was the witness. Mills had come to the Shakers on May 11, 1853 with her brother Orrin from the poorhouse of Norwalk, Connecticut. Their mother Hannah Mills had given her consent. WRHS, I A-18.
75. Nordhoff, 195.
76. Nordhoff, 256.
77. “Record of Some Business Transactions with the North Family at Mount Lebanon,” Ira Lawson, trustee, July 1, 1904.” The original record is located at Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon, New Lebanon, New York. A copy is at Hancock Shaker Village.
78. South Union Record C, 420.