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Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers, 1782-1850: An Expanded Table of Contents with Annotations and Notes

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Writings of Shaker Apostates and Anti-Shakers, 1782-1850:

Author / Abridged Title	Author a Shaker Y/N	Date	Where published	Principal griev- ances against the Shakers	
VOLUME ONE					
Valentine Rathbun <i>/ A Brief Account of a Religious Scheme</i>	Yes	1782	Worcester, Mass.	Fanaticism Lewd behaviors Political subversion	
Amos Taylor / <i>A Narrative of the Strange Principles, Conduct, and Character of the People Known as the Shakers</i>	Yes	1782	Worcester, Mass.	Theological objections Manipulation of followers	
P.A. / <i>Three Curious Pieces</i>	No	1782	Boston, Mass.	Fanaticism Political subversion	

An Expanded Table of Contents with Annotations and Notes

Notes*
<p>Rathbun was part of a Baptist congregation near New Lebanon, New York, that experienced a revival beginning in late 1779 and sought out Ann Lee and the Shakers in nearby Niskayuna, New York, in late May 1780, after the infamous “Dark Day” of May 19th. He almost immediately fell in with the Shakers, but repudiated them within three months. In the meantime, though, many of his family also joined, along with other Baptists from his congregation. Rathbun probably never actually lived with the Shakers—and at the time there were no Shaker “villages” and no gospel order.</p> <p>His account offers valuable observation of how the followers of Ann Lee worshipped, their daily customs, how they interacted with visitors, how they proselytized, how Ann Lee herself behaved, and their mode of singing.</p> <p>His main objections concern the excessive and irrational nature of Shaker worship behaviors. His account also introduced the powerful idea of the Shakers being a political scheme launched by the British crown to undermine American social stability.</p>
<p>Taylor lived in a town neighboring Harvard, Massachusetts, when Ann Lee and followers came there in mid-1781. He claims to have lived with them for ten months, which would have been during Ann Lee’s tenure at the “Square House.”</p> <p>Taylor describes an ongoing period of open-house worship at Harvard, with people coming and going daily.</p> <p>Taylor lays out his impression of Shaker doctrine, point by point. His is the first attempt at an orderly explanation of Shaker theology. He acknowledges the sheer power of the Shakers and their success in affecting people who were in need of spiritual change. He also refers to how widespread Rathbun’s writings had become and seems to want to add a slightly milder take on the Shakers, in contrast to the scandalous views of Rathbun.</p>
<p>This excerpt from a larger piece satirizes several denominations, including Shakers. The short portion directed at Shakers includes general remarks about fanatical behaviors, along with the warning that the Shakers are a political tool sent from England to undermine American society. It seems derivative of other anti-Shaker writing, rather than based on original observation.</p>

* These notes reflect points provided by Goodwillie in his headnotes, along with my summary observations gleaned from the texts themselves and other research.

Benjamin West / <i>Scriptural Cautions</i>	Yes	1783	Hartford, Conn.	Theological objections Authoritarianism	
Daniel Rathbun / <i>A Letter, from Daniel Rathbun... to James Whittacor, Chief Elder of the Church, called Shakers</i>	Yes	1785	Springfield, Mass.	Fanaticism Lewd behaviors Personal misconduct Authoritarianism	
Spectator / “The People Called Shakers”	No	1786	Worcester, Mass.	Theological objections Excessive misconduct	
William Scales / “Mystery of the People Called Shakers”	Yes	1789	Boston, Mass.	Personal grievances	

<p>Goodwillie's headnote develops the theory that Benjamin West probably encountered Ann Lee and Shakers in 1782 during the ten days they stayed in Rehoboth, Massachusetts (a scenario Goodwillie has since discovered not to have been the case, see his article in this issue of <i>ACSQ</i>). He was initially captivated, but ultimately changed his mind. It is a short account that presents mainly theological objections and concern about authoritarian control within Shaker circles. The absence of any remarks about excessive practices suggests he did not see the Shakers in action for very long. But his account is the first to develop the historical connection between Shakerism and the French Camisards, something later developed by the Shakers themselves. So this serves as evidence that he had genuine substantive interaction with the Shakers.</p>
<p>Daniel Rathbun was the brother of Valentine Rathbun, and he was a Shaker for about three and a half years. He claims to have witnessed a range of excessive behaviors, from nakedness to sadistic abuse to drunkenness on the part of the principal Shaker spiritual figures. Much of his narrative frames Shakerism as tantamount to Roman Catholicism, with the Shakers forced into the "popish" idolatry of their leaders.</p>
<p>This anonymous author briefly lists nineteen points of doctrine, making this account one of the earliest explications of Shaker theology, predated only by the writings of apostate Amos Taylor (above). In addition to noting a range of improper conduct, the account characterizes the Shakers as engaging in behaviors not inconsistent with the worship patterns of the Era of Manifestations, from the late 1830s through the 1840s. In all, this account seems derivative of other authors, as opposed to based on firsthand observations.</p>
<p>William Scales joined the Shakers in early 1780s and was an ardent defender. A gifted theological writer, he was possibly the author of the earliest version of the Shakers' first published doctrinal statement, the <i>Concise Statement</i> of 1790. But he had a disagreement with the Shaker leadership and left the Shakers sometime in the first half of 1787. We learn that later Shaker scribe Isaac Newton Youngs implies that Scales had lofty ambitions and was frustrated that he was not able to advance into leadership ranks.</p> <p>Scales's account gives readers one interesting twist: the author's claim that he had in fact joined the Shakers deliberately to expose and discredit them. In effect, he claimed to be a double agent. According to Goodwillie, other apostates would make similar claims, probably in an effort to save face before a public that might well have wondered why they had allowed themselves to be duped into accepting Shakerism for so long.</p> <p>Scales also sought financial compensation for the labor he had expended while a Shaker. This also became a common pattern among apostates.</p>

Anonymous / “For the Western Star”	No	1796	Stockbridge, Mass.	Authoritarianism	
Caleb Rathbun / “Caleb Rathbun Aged Nearly 17 Yrs...Maketh Oath”	Yes	1796	Stockbridge, Mass.	Fanaticism Lewdness	
Amos Taylor / Letter to the <i>Western Star</i>	Yes	1796	Stockbridge, Mass.	Retraction of earlier anti-Shaker narrative	
Valentine Rathbun / “For the Western Star”	Yes	1797	Stockbridge, Mass.	Codicil to earlier publications	
Reuben Rathbone / <i>Reasons Offered for Leaving the Shakers</i>	Yes	1800	Pittsfield, Mass.	Personal grievances	

<p>Though anonymous, the writer of this account appears to have resided close to the Shaker community of New Lebanon and had opportunity to observe. The author provides an interesting look at social relations at New Lebanon in the 1790s. The writer's main concern is for the Shaker youth, who appear to receive meager education and to be oppressed under the intimidating authority of Shaker elders, similar to how Roman Catholics are subjugated to papal authority.</p>
<p>The tone of this account is strikingly different from earlier anti-Shaker writings. The writer presents the Shakers as a group that is so calmed down from their former mania as to be essentially harmless, and to be somewhat productive in the neighborhood. While the writer recalls earlier alleged excesses, such as naked worship and drunkenness, he also assures the reader that the Shakers are not growing in numbers, their members are aging, and their society will probably soon collapse.</p>
<p>Caleb Rathbun is the grandson of Valentine Rathbun. His account is short, but quite damning and incendiary, because of his descriptions of alleged physical abuse that was both sadistic and prolonged. Caleb was a toddler when his family came to the Shakers around 1781, and he "escaped" from the Shakers in 1795 when he was around fifteen years old.</p>
<p>In this very short piece, Amos Taylor retracts and disavows his earlier piece of anti-Shaker writing from 1782.</p>
<p>This very short publication from Valentine Rathbun is a sort of codicil to his much earlier works of the early 1780s. Rathbun was prompted to write when he learned that two Shaker missionaries were going abroad in the countryside trying to appeal to listeners with the claim that the once fiercely anti-Shaker Valentine Rathbun had recently softened his stance. Here Rathbun wishes to set the record straight—that he has not, in fact, repudiated his earlier anti-Shaker writing.</p>
<p>Reuben Rathbone is the son of Valentine Rathbun. While a Shaker, he had publicly renounced his father, seemingly justifying the truth of the common claim that Shakers deliberately turned children against parents. He had been twenty-one years old then and had remained a Shaker. When Shaker elder Calvin Harlow died, Reuben expected to be elevated to a higher position, but was was disappointed, prompting his apostasy.</p>
<p>Reuben Rathbone delves further into the alleged excessive worship behaviors of the 1780s. Rather than just presenting the behaviors to shock the reader, he offers more insight into the excesses of the early period by treating the physical mortifications and other self-destructive behaviors with a bit more subtlety.</p>

James Smith / “An Attempt to Develop Shakerism”	No	1810	Chillicothe, Ohio	Personal grievances Political subversion
James Smith / <i>Remarkable Occurrences, Lately Discovered Among the People Called Shakers</i>	No	1810	Paris, Ky.	Personal grievances Political subversion General misconduct
Anonymous / “Who Are the Shakers?”	No	1810	Baltimore, Md.	Authoritarianism Political subversion
Anonymous / “Mobbing the Shakers At Union Village”	No	1810	Chillicothe, Ohio	Descriptive reporting of mob event in Ohio

James Smith was not himself a Shaker, but he had had ample exposure to Shaker preaching in his home area, and his son and namesake did convert around March 1810. Smith went to stay at the Shaker settlement at Turtle Creek, Ohio, for about two weeks to observe.

His main grievance is that the Shakers are politically subversive, their authoritarian structure is anti-American, and they deny “rights of conscience.” In a pointed reference to slavery—coming from a resident of antebellum Kentucky—Smith bemoans the Shakers’ status as “voluntary slaves.” But Smith’s real motivation is personal. James Smith was an aged man living in his son’s household and mostly dependent on his son. By joining the Shakers, breaking up his household, and signing his property over to the Shakers, the younger Smith was depriving his father of his only means of support and essentially abandoning him.

The venerable James Smith was left bereft and impoverished when his son joined the Shakers in 1810, and he spent part of the short balance of his life attempting to air his anti-Shaker grievances in print. In this longer account, Smith delivers a more extensive version of his message, that the Shakers are dangerous political subversives who pose a threat to the human race itself, because of their practice of celibacy.

Smith recounts details of his attempts to visit his grandchildren at Turtle Creek, along with the mistreatment of his non-Shaker daughter-in-law at the Shakers’ hands. He also includes extensive allegations of misconduct and un-Christian behavior on the part of the Shakers: hypocrisy, drunkenness, luxurious living, and financial scheming.

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

Goodwillie notes that the massing of mobs at the Turtle Creek, Ohio, settlement in August 1810 was at least a partial consequence of the anti-Shaker diatribes of James Smith. This account comes from Chillicothe, Ohio, then a major town and crossroads in the south-central part of the state.

Anonymous / “Expedition Against the Shakers”	No	1810	Philadelphia, Pa.	Descriptive reporting of mob event in Ohio
James Smith / <i>Shakerism Detected</i>	No	1810	Paris, Ky.	Argument over credibility of previous writings
John Bailey / <i>Fanaticism Exposed</i>	No	1811	Lexington, Ky.	Theological objections
VOLUME TWO				
Christopher Clark / <i>A Shock to Shakerism</i>	No	1812	Richmond, Ky.	Theological objections Authoritarianism
Eunice Chapman / Letter to Lucy Wright	Yes	1817	Albany, N.Y.	Personal grievances
Eunice Chapman, Thomas Brown, and Mary Dyer / <i>An Account of the Conduct of the Shakers, in the Case of Eunice Chapman</i>	Yes	1818	Lebanon, Ohio	Personal grievances

	<p>A more extensive account of the August 1810 mobbing at Turtle Creek, Ohio, reported for an eastern audience.</p>
	<p>James Smith took further action later in 1810 against the Shakers. After his earlier publications, Shaker Richard McNemar wrote publicly to defend the Shakers against Smith's accusations. Smith was upset that some of McNemar's writing impugned the record of his past military service. This account is aimed mainly at clarifying his own credibility, to which cause he brings in the depositions of supporters. A further point he develops is that the Shakers pose a real threat to public safety because they are aiding and abetting the frontier Indians in Ohio and Indiana territory into committing violent acts.</p>
	<p>John Bailey lived in Lincoln County, Kentucky, where he would have been exposed to Shakers. The location is in the midst of Danville to the northwest, Harrodsburg to the north, Paint Lick to the east, and not at all far from Pleasant Hill. He had acquired a copy of Benjamin Seth Youngs's <i>Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing</i>, and he was responding to the theology it presents. Not a particularly vivid account, it may have been inconsequential.</p>
	<p>Clark was probably from around Danville, Kentucky, close to Pleasant Hill, and probably had some contact with the Shakers there. He does not really take on any practices of the Shakers, but rather their published theology and doctrines. He objects to the hierarchical structure and likens it to "popery." He also strenuously objects to celibacy, which he says is as much a threat to society as whoredom. This long and tedious account became quite obscure almost immediately, and probably had little impact.</p>
	<p>This letter written by Eunice Chapman is addressed to Mother Lucy Wright by her married name, "Mrs. Goodrich," attempting to persuade her to release the Chapman children from the Shaker village where their father lived, permitting them to return their mother, Eunice Chapman.</p>
	<p>In this long account, Eunice Chapman presents her grievances against the Shakers by recounting her interactions with them in lively detail, step by step.</p>

Anonymous <i>/ Indoctum Parliamentum</i>	No	1818	Probably N.Y.	Satire
Daniel Doty / <i>An Address to the People at Union Village</i>	No	1820	Lebanon, Ohio	Hypocrisy Financial wrongdoings Mistreatment of members General misconduct Personal grievances
Anonymous / <i>A Brief Exposition of the Fanaticism... of the People Called Shakers</i>	No	1822	Poughkeepsie, N.Y.	General misconduct Theological objections
Absolem Blackburn <i>/ A Brief Account of... the People Usually Denominated Shakers</i>	Yes	1824	Flemingsburg, Ky.	Authoritarianism General misconduct

<p>An anonymous author penned this satirical “play” version of the Eunice Chapman affair. Its audience and circulation are unknown.</p>
<p>Goodwillie’s headnote relates the interesting and complex genesis of this account. An anti-Shaker publisher in Lebanon, Ohio, had reprinted some of the scurrilous writings of Eunice Chapman, along with his own additional accusations against the Union Village Shakers. To that, Union Village Shaker Richard McNemar had replied with his own tract, titled <i>The Other Side of the Question</i>. Daniel Doty lived in nearby Middletown, Ohio, and had been well acquainted with McNemar and others who became Shakers. From his home only about ten miles from Union Village, Doty often encountered Shakers, Shaker apostates, and estranged family members of Shakers. Reading <i>The Other Side of the Question</i> seemed to prompt Doty to reflect on his past friendship with McNemar and to brood over the many grievances he had heard others express about life at Union Village. Much of what he writes is from the secondhand allegations of others, as opposed to his own observations.</p>
<p>The anonymous author is a Quaker who has been upset by the Shaker conversion of several relatives. Also, he has done business with the Shakers. His objections are mostly theological. It is a dense account, difficult to read, and may have had little influence or circulation.</p> <p>Significantly, of the accounts in this collection, this is the only one produced anywhere in the eastern region after the 1780s to stress theological objections as a major theme.</p>
<p>Absolem Blackburn published this account from a town only thirty miles from Cane Ridge, Kentucky, an area where the Shakers had been active and were well known. He was with the Shakers at Union Village initially, for about a year, in 1819-1820. He left Union Village, apparently with the intent of remaining independent of the Shakers. But circumstances caused him to present himself at the West Union, Indiana, settlement in 1823. He was ill and in need of nursing. Blackburn remained at West Union another eight months.</p> <p>Blackburn’s objections to Shaker life are relatively mild. He resents the authoritarian pressure placed on Believers by Shaker elders, he claims that converts are misled as to the more radical aspects of doctrine, and he resents the Shakers for withholding compensation to former members for the work they performed while Shakers. He is also scandalized by personal conduct that he regards as hypocritical and un-Christian. But his account is immensely valuable for its unparalleled descriptions of the physical premises of Union Village and West Union, along with some of the best surviving details on daily life at West Union. Overall, Blackburn is very objective in his description and quite complimentary to the Shakers in many respects.</p>

<p>Samuel Brown / <i>A Countercheck to Shakerism</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>1824</p>	<p>Cincinnati, Ohio</p>	<p>Theological objections</p>	
<p>Peter Youmans / <i>An Appeal to Scripture and Common Sense</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>1826</p>	<p>Butler County, Ohio</p>	<p>Theological objections</p>	
<p>John Whitbey / <i>Beauties of Priestcraft</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1826</p>	<p>New Harmony, Ind.</p>	<p>Personal grievances Authoritarianism General misconduct</p>	

<p>Samuel Brown was a Methodist minister from the area northwest of Cincinnati near the Indiana-Ohio border, who was scandalized when many of his congregation converted to the Shakers in the early 1820s, later forming the Shaker village of White Water. Brown acquired a copy of Benjamin Seth Youngs's <i>Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing</i>, and this account comprises his point-by-point reaction to it. It is difficult to imagine that this dense narrative would have been read by many.</p>
<p>Like Samuel Brown, Peter Youmans was a Methodist figure reacting to the widespread Shaker conversion of Methodists around southern Butler County, Ohio. His narrative includes a nicely constructed side-by-side comparison of Ann Lee and Jesus, as well as a summary distillation of the 600-page <i>Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing</i>. But only one copy of this rare work survives, and there is no evidence that it ever circulated very far.</p>
<p>John Whitbey was a former Pleasant Hill Shaker. He had an intellectual and philosophical bent, and was stimulated by intellectual conversations with fellow Shakers. His grievances appear to have arisen primarily from a sense of intellectual oppression. He wanted to think and express himself freely, to be at liberty to debate theology on a hypothetical level, and he felt stifled. He began to resist the authoritarian structure of Shaker life and wished to make decisions for himself. He began to learn of the ideas of utopian leader Robert Owens at New Harmony, Indiana, and he left to go to New Harmony in 1826. He was a destructive force for the Kentucky Shakers, because he returned to retrieve belongings and to persuade others to leave, ultimately instigating the apostasies of several other young adults.</p> <p>The many condemnatory references to Whitbey found in Shaker manuscripts of the period suggest that the Shakers felt real damage from both his apostasy and from his writing. His writing portrayed the Shakers as narrow, rigid, petty, and lacking in intellectual depth.</p>

John Woods / <i>Shakerism Unmasked</i>	Yes	1826	Paris, Ky.	Hypocrisy General misconduct
VOLUME THREE				
Benjamin Green / <i>The True Believer's Vedemecum, or Shakerism Exposed</i>	Yes	1831	Concord, N.H.	Personal grievances Hypocrisy General misconduct
John McBride / <i>An Account ... of the Shakers</i>	Yes	1834	Cincinnati, Ohio	Authoritarianism Religious conduct

John Woods' seventeen-year experience as a Shaker began in the period of early missionary expansion in the West, and lasted until the early 1820s. His is the longest of any western apostate account. It was immediately regarded by others as important, and it was incorporated in full by early nineteenth-century author Burton Carr into his 1829 book on unusual religious sects, *Gleanings of Religion*.

Woods main points of criticism focus on hypocrisy and general misconduct among the Shaker leadership. He charges that the elders indulged themselves, placed strict demands on those they governed, and were petty and manipulative. He portrays the trademark dancing not as a joyous practice, but as a drudgery intended for physical mortification. In fact, Woods' writing was probably quite harmful to the Shakers, and especially to Shakers in the West. It was circulated widely, and at a time when the Shakers were experiencing a difficult generational transition and problems on multiple fronts. Negative, yet authentic-sounding, Woods' writing may have played a role in stimulating other apostasies, and could easily have discouraged potential new converts from seeking out the Shakers.

Benjamin Green was an English seafarer who migrated to Quebec as a young man in the early 1820s. A spiritual quest took him to New Hampshire where he sought out the Enfield Shakers. Green lived at Enfield for seven years. His account includes no theological condemnations or sensationalized charges, but is a mild criticism of pettiness and other un-Christian behaviors. On a personal level, Green seemed particularly resentful of the expectation at Enfield for women and men to work together cooperatively.

With over twenty years experience as a Shaker at Pleasant Hill and his signature on two covenants (1809 and 1830), John McBride appeared to be a committed Believer. He left in the early 1830s, turbulent times throughout the Shaker West, with some communities experiencing a veritable hemorrhage of apostasies. His text takes the form of a succinct list of points, and his main objections seem to center around the practice of authority and modes of religious conduct, such as manner of prayer and confession. Later McBride must have had a change of heart, because he returned to Pleasant Hill, signed a further covenant in the early 1840s, and died there in 1844.

<p>Charles Hodgdon / <i>Hodgdon's Life and Manner of Living Among the Shakers</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1838</p>	<p>Concord, N.H.</p>	<p>Personal grievances</p>
<p>Anonymous / <i>A Return of Departed Spirits</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>1843</p>	<p>Philadelphia, Pa.</p>	<p>Unknown</p>
<p>Horatio Stone / <i>Lo Here & Lo There</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<p>1846</p>	<p>New York, N.Y.</p>	<p>Personal grievances Authoritarianism Fanaticism</p>

<p>Charles Hodgdon was a young tradesman's apprentice in southern New Hampshire in 1820 when he heard of the Shakers through the slanderous publications of Mary Dyer. His curiosity was piqued, and though only fourteen, he went to Canterbury to learn more about the Shakers for himself. He remained, and lived at Canterbury from 1821 through 1824. During that time, he became attracted to a young sister, and eventually they left together and married. She died in 1828, leaving him widowed at age twenty-one with two babies. Apart from a few "creeds and ceremonies" that were hard for him to accept, Hodgdon describes a happy and productive life at Canterbury, and largely pleasant relationships with the Shaker elders. His account seems to be aimed more at discrediting Mary Dyer than discrediting the Shakers, and he strenuously asserts that Dyer's publications are entirely false and slanderous.</p>
<p>This anonymous author apparently lived at Watervliet, New York, for a short time during a quite lively period of the Era of Manifestations. His account is an objective description of the "visitations" that were common in the Shaker world during the 1840s—manifestations of the spirits of the dead representing multiple races and nationalities. The author remarks that he assumes such exhibitions are undoubtedly still going on among the Shakers, since his own departure, and his aim is simply to describe what he has seen, since the Shakers themselves closed their meetings to the outside world. His reasons for leaving the Shakers are not stated. The fact that his tone is neither derisive nor mocking, but rather somber, and tinged with awe, suggests he left for reasons other than the unusual worship practices themselves. Goodwillie tells us that later Shakers verified the author's account as an accurate reflection of events during the period.</p>
<p>Horatio Stone believed the Shakers were delusional and was upset when his siblings joined at New Lebanon, New York. The sometimes bizarre worship practices of the Era of Manifestations were underway. Stone objects to what he sees as authoritarian despotism among the Shakers. He believes the society to be a theocracy and the people completely deluded. The Preface to the work is written by another author, Dan Mendon, who uses references to modern technologies of the steamship, railway, and telegraph to assert that all obscure places in the world are now being illuminated, and therefore so should the Shakers be illuminated. This would have strongly resonated with readers of the period, who would have been aware of the vigorous missionary enterprises being launched by American Protestant denominations in distant lands and the need to "shine the light of the Gospel" into the hidden corners of the world. As such, it is quite a powerful introduction, as Stone is implicitly comparing the Shakers to a pagan people deserving of sympathy, not condemnation.</p> <p>Stone correctly repeats the words of a song, "Come Life Shaker Life," as being sung in the community. Still popular today, the song was written in 1836 by the aged Issachar Bates, a popular Shaker figure and long-time missionary.</p>

Anonymous / "The Shaker Concert"	No	1847	Dedham, Mass.	Deliberate caricature
William Pillow / <i>Trial of the Shakers</i>	Yes	1847	Lowell, Mass.	Personal grievances Authoritarianism
Anonymous / <i>Extract from an Unpublished Manuscript on Shaker History</i>	Yes	1850	Boston, Mass.	Fanaticism Abusive conduct
Mary Dyer / <i>Shakerism Exposed</i>	Yes	1852	Hanover, N.H.	Personal grievances

	<p>This is a newspaper account of the performance of the Hammons family, a theatrical troupe of ex-Shakers who performed mock worship for a paying public. Goodwillie tells us that media was not always kind to them. We are reminded that the future lives of defectors could be troubled. Cold War defectors often were criticized for attempting to personally capitalize on their experiences.</p>
	<p>William Pillow's wife was a follower of the Millerites, who, like many Millerites, was drawn to the Shakers after the "Great Disappointment." Pillow was briefly persuaded, and indentured his children to the Shakers. He almost immediately relented, and he tried to get his wife and children to leave the Shakers, which resulted in a court battle. The account amounts to a rather tiresome combination of closely described events, together with depositions and court testimonies. To borrow a contemporary expression, Pillow "over-shares," as do most of the apostate accounts in which personal grievances are at the forefront and children are at stake.</p>
	<p>This writer is unidentified, but is known to be a Shaker sister from Harvard, who was also the mother of a young child at Harvard. Her observations are a valuable window into the visionary outpourings of the Era of Manifestations. Among other things, she correctly identifies several songs and describes their performance in a way that brings a more accurate interpretation well within the reach of contemporary Shaker music scholars and performers. The writer alleges abuse of children, along with frightening spiritual excesses that occurred during worship.</p>
	<p>Mary Dyer had joined the Shakers along with her husband and young children in 1813. She left in 1815, but she was not allowed to take her children with her. She spent the next fifty years waging an unrelenting anti-Shaker campaign, during which she published multiple pamphlets attacking the Shakers in the most vivid and ferocious manner. Although this account dates from 1852, she essentially recounts the same litany of grievances that date from the 1810s, along with some recent depositions attesting to her good character.</p>