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John Kaime

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A Journal of a Journey from Canterbury to Enfield [Connecticut]

Introduced and Edited by Stephen J. Paterwic

Introduction

By the mid-1840s, the Shakers seemed to be entering the final phase of the long Era of Mother's Work. The enthusiasms of earlier years had given way to mystical names, feast grounds and fountain stones, with the blessing but under the control of the Ministry. Just as the fervor waned, however, and the era wound down, the Adventists made their appearance among the Believers. They anxiously sought religious truth after the Great Disappointment of 1844 and many of them wanted to explore Shakerism.

In 1846, the Enfield Shakers hosted an Adventist camp meeting that attracted thousands of souls. Although the Connecticut Shakers did not gain a large number of converts from this event, there were many who wanted a continuation of the Adventist-Shaker dialogue. Adventists preachers asked the Shakers for another meeting, and the Shaker agreed. This time, however, the Adventists would be represented by no more than perhaps twenty-five preachers and supporters. The Believers at Enfield, however, did not have a public preacher or an elder skilled enough to debate with the Adventists. Consequently, as they had done the previous August, it was necessary for the Shakers to assemble a high powered team from other communities. Both groups met from Thursday, February 18, 1847, until Sunday, February 21, at the Church Family Office at Enfield, Connecticut. At this meeting, representing the Shaker side from were Frederick W. Evans (1808-1892), second elder of the North Family or Gathering Order; Isaac Newton Youngs (1793-1865), from the First Order of the Church; and Giles B. Avery (1815-1890), second elder of the Second Order of the Church, all from New Lebanon. This was a very articulate team. Evans was a spokesperson for the Gathering Order. In this capacity his task was to preach at the public meeting held each Sabbath morning during the warm months of the year. This experience made him a natural at explain Shakerism to outsiders. Isaac Newton Youngs was a gifted man whose talents were many including being a musicologist, master mechanic, tailor and scribe. He was an example of person who had thrived under the Testimony and, no doubt, made an impressive presence. Moreover, he lived

in the First Order at New Lebanon, a place of honor and privilege. Giles Avery, had a deep understanding of Shaker theology and natural gifts as a leader. His companions at the Second Order were outstanding Shakers and many of them would be great “burden bearers” later in the century. In addition to the trio from New Lebanon, there were three others.

Barnabas Sprague (1799-left 1854) of the East Family or Gathering Order at Hancock traveled to Enfield and represented the seat of Enfield’s bishopric. In addition, Sprague was an experienced preacher at home and abroad. Another luminary was John Lyon (1781-1862), elder of the Gathering Order at Enfield, New Hampshire. Apart from the trustees at Enfield, he was the public face of Shakerism to the world when they inquired about the Gospel or attended meeting at New Enfield. Finally, from Canterbury’s Gathering Order was second elder John Kaime. Since he is the author of the poem below, a more detailed biography is necessary.

John Kaime was born May 9, 1791, in Barnstead, Belknap County, New Hampshire. His parents were James Gowen Kaime (1765-1805) and Hannah Kaime (1766-1795). During the War of 1812, he enlisted in the army for one year at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The record of his enlistment supplies important details about him. When he was inducted into the army, July 31, 1814, he stood five feet and eleven and a half inches; this was three and a half inches taller than the height of the average man of the time. His eyes were hazel and he had brown hair and a light complexion. His occupation was given as a chair maker. Kaime became a sergeant and gunner at Fort Constitution on the island of New Castle, New Hampshire, at the mouth of the estuary of the Piscataqua River.¹ Shortly before his enlistment, on July 19, 1814 he married Joanna L. Jones (1792-1834) of Exeter in Kensington, New Hampshire. They had nine children, but since we know the names of only eight of them, one may have died when quite young and the name lost. John and Joanna’s children were: Mary Frances (1815-1864), John Kingsbury (1816-1846), Hannah Kingsbury (1818-1893), James Smith (1823-1894), Betsey J. (1825-1867), Joanna (1826-1898), Lydia (b. 1828) and Martha S. (1829-1848). Not only was Kaime engaged in the chair making business, he was active in town, state, and religious affairs. After the war, he was elected as a selectman for the town of Barnstead in 1818, 1819, and 1822, and during 1825 and 1826 he was a state representative in the legislature at Concord. In 1840, a strike of lightening at midday caused a fire that destroyed his home, barn, and shop. That same lightning strike also destroyed the home,

barn, and outbuildings of the Reverend Enos George (1781-1859), who was the minister of the First Congregational Church in Barnstead.² Later Shaker references to John Kaime at the time of his conversion call him “Deacon John Kaime.”³ By his proximity to the property of the Reverend Enos George, it might be assumed that Kaime was a deacon in the First Congregational Church.

John’s wife Joanne died in 1834. Perhaps not long after this, he decided to learn about the Believers. This may have been prompted by his discovery first of Adventists beliefs. The Adventists had a presence in the Proctorsville section of Barnstead.⁴ In 1842, Kaime’s son John Kingsbury Kaime married Mary Proctor (1814-1853). Her family may have been Adventists. John Kingsbury and Mary Kaime, moreover, settled directly south of Barnstead in Pittsfield, which had many Adventists. Whatever John Kaime’s relationship with the Adventists may have been, years before the Great Disappointment, he may have turned from Adventism and looked to Shakerism to find answers. By the early 1840s he and a number of his children converted to the Gospel. His oldest daughter Mary Frances married Harry J. Roby in 1837 so she did not become a Shaker when her father did. After her husband died in 1853, however, she joined the Canterbury Shakers and died there in 1864. As noted, John’s oldest son, John Kingsbury married Mary Proctor in 1842. He died in 1846 and was never a Shaker. Daughter Martha also did not join and died in 1848 when she was nineteen. The remainder of the children followed their father into the faith.

After his conversion, John became anxious to live near the Shakers. To accommodate him and his family, the Canterbury Shakers moved a house from some property they owned to a spot near the North Family or Gathering Order. They “thoroughly cleansed revised and refitted” the so-called Moore house which now stood on the west side of the main road.⁵ In October, 1842, Deacon John Kaime and two of his children, Hannah and Betsey, moved into the home prepared for them. Lydia Kaime may have joined them shortly after, but in 1843 she became a member of the Church Family. James and Joanna joined their father at the North Family in 1846.

On March 9, 1846, John Kaime, who was now second elder at the North Family, accompanied Eldress Maria Witcher (1807-1853) on a missionary tour to New Bedford, Massachusetts. On January 15, 1847, just a month before the Adventist conference at Enfield, John Kaime went

to Enfield, New Hampshire, to attend a convention of ministers who were discussing Shakerism. This most likely was Adventists as well. By the time Kaime left Canterbury to engage in a dialogue with the Advents who gathered at Enfield, Connecticut, he was a very seasoned Shaker preacher and leader. Having perhaps once been an Adventist or at least familiar with them, his knowledge and experiences made him an invaluable asset. His talents were quickly noted by the New Hampshire Ministry and Kaime became first elder of the North Family at Canterbury on April 2, 1848.⁶ In 1858, he became first elder of New Gloucester's Gathering Order at Poland Hill, Maine. His tenure there was not successful, however. The people at that Shaker family found him very odd. For example, he grew a long beard and articulated ideas about "Spiritual Marriage."⁷ In addition, the second elder at Poland Hill was Philemon Stewart (1803-1875), a difficult person at the best of times. As time went on, the members wanted him to go back to Canterbury, and he did so in 1864. He died there at the age of 85 on February 26, 1877.

Two of John Kaime's children, James Smith Kaime and Joanna Kaime became important leaders at Canterbury and occupied the highest places of trust and care. Betsey Kaime, who lived for a few years at Poland Hill with her father, served there as second eldress. Unlike her father, however, she was well loved. Moreover, she was very successful in running their desk making business.⁸ Though she did not go back to Canterbury immediately after her father did, she did not want to live in Maine without him, and in spite of pleas for her to remain, she also moved back to Canterbury and died a faithful Shaker there in 1867. Hannah Kingsbury Kaime served as a teacher and was an eldress of the North Family. She left the Shakers, however, in 1867 and became the housekeeper for Robert Shepard (1808-1899) who also left the Canterbury Shakers that year. Shepard had been a Shaker since 1846, but his wife Olive Shepard (1813-1880) remained in the community. In order to marry Hannah, Robert obtained a divorce in 1874. The next year, Hannah and Robert were married in Boston.⁹ Robert Shepard was the father of well-known Shaker trustee and business leader Lucy Ann Shepard (1836-1926). Lydia Kaime like her sister Hannah also served as a teacher at the Church Family. She left the community in 1854.

In summary, John Kaime's conversion ultimately resulted in five talented men and women joining the Canterbury Shakers and remaining for life. For a large portion of his Shaker life he was an elder in the Gathering Order at Canterbury and later at Poland Hill, Maine. Though he was fifty-

one years old when he became a Believer, his fervor never seems to have waned. Though in the following poem, he thanks his elder for the privilege of going to Enfield, Connecticut, the Shakers were actually quite fortunate to have a man of his abilities representing them.

Shaker poetry offers a way learn about the hopes and dreams of individual Believers and to catch a fleeting glimpse of a long vanished community life. Aside from strictly religious verse and “in memoriam” poems, there are many examples of self-revealing poetry that open a way of learning about a fairly unknown Believer and allowing the reader to experience being in a Shaker village. Both of these ideas are true in the following poem. John Kaime is not hesitant to show his love for the Shaker life, especially his fellow Believers. Of course, he also indicates what he finds irksome such as the noise of big cities, factory towns, and those who refuse to see the truth of Shakerism and cling to other beliefs.

Poems may be over analyzed to fit known scansion and rhyme schemes, but a few words on poetic structure are helpful. Kaime wrote sixty octaves, mostly in iambic trimeter. The rhyme scheme is aabccddcc. The unrhymed third and seventh lines help add emphasis and this device seems to impart energy as each octave ends. The unrhymed lines also help break up what might have become a monotonous sing-song. Please note that the spelling and punctuation are exactly as written by John Kaime.

A Journal of a Journey from Canterbury to Enfield, Con Between the 15th & 26th of Febry—1847 By John Kaime¹⁰

1. From a top Canterbury,¹
Both pleasant & merry,
We set out for Enfield
The City of Peace;²
To Concord we travel'd,
On snow, ice & gravel,
And there took the Steam cars³
Our speed to increase.

2. Thus being both seated,
& boiler well heated,
The cars set in motion,
& soon left the place,
And onward were going,
With snorting & blowing,
A challenge to John⁴
For running a race.

3. First Manchester City⁵
We passed by in pity
And then down to Nashua
Trembled along,
And next in good order
We pass'd Lowell's border⁶

-
1. The Church Family literally sits at the top of a large hill.
2. Hancock was known as the City of Peace, not Enfield.
3. The Concord Railroad, linking Boston with Concord, was completed in 1842. Therefore railroad travel would have been new and adventurous.
4. A self-reference by author John Kaime.
5. The Concord Railroad ran to Nashua by way of Manchester. Both were large mill towns.
6. Lowell was the best known textile manufacturing center in America.

And rush'd into Boston,⁷
To mix with the throng.

4. While there amidst numbers
We fell into slumbers,
To gain some refreshment
And stay for the night:
But that place of motions,
Where all is commotion,
With fire bells ringing ,
Soon put sleep to flight.

5. So on the next morning
We gave our host warning
That we must be moving,
So hied us away.
The coachman said he'd go
Right off to the Depot
And do it quite willing
Because of the pay

6. The carsons soon enter'd,⁸
Which the eight forward number'd,
Regardless of eyesight,
Propelled by the steam;
Continually rolling,
All distance controlling,
Almost as the lightening
Or magnetic stream.

7. Each place in succession
We passed by progression

7. The Boston terminal occupied about a block on the east side of Nashua Street, near today's North Station.

8. John's somewhat whimsical name for a railroad car.

Untill we reach Springfield⁹
A quarter past noon
Where we found another
True child of our Mother
By whose kind assistance
We found Enfield soon

8. So on our arrival
We felt a revival,
To see the old Pilgrims,
So pleasant & good;
To see them so clever,
And willing to sever
The chaff from the kernel,
& Burn up the wood.

9. Much joyful the meeting
To find such a greeting,
With such a full welcome
To that happy land,
To me it was pleasing,
And thanks are increasing,
To all the pure children
Of that blessed band.

10. We surely had reason
For that blessed season,
To offer thanksgiving
To Father above,
For bringing together
The fulcrum & lever
To work into motion
This system of Love.

9. Constructed in 1839, Springfield's first depot may have startled John since the building was in Egyptian Revival Style. Although the mill area of Enfield known as Thompsonville had had a railroad since 1844, it was more convenient for him to be picked up in Springfield where the Enfield Shaker trustees constantly visited.

11. The first of all others
Was Earl, our good brother¹⁰
Who came to the Depot
To take us along
To join in commission
That City of Union,¹¹
Where love is triumphant,
And union is strong.

12. While Jonathan Terry¹²
Attentive was very
To minister comfort,
When first we came there.
And good sister Clarissy¹³
Appear'd never weary,
In waiting attending
For service & care.

13. These brothers & sisters
Are true gospel twisters,
And walk in Obedience
To heaven's true rule:
What shows by profession,
They have in possession,
And practice the lesson
In blest Mother's school

14. There's good Elder brother,¹⁴
And George is another,¹⁵
Who live in Church Order,
Where harmony reigns:

10. Earl Jepherson (1776-1864), North Family trustee.

11. Mystical name for Enfield during the Era of Mother's Work.

12. Jonathan Terry (1775-1856), Church Family trustee.

13. Clarissa Pease (1812-1872), Church Family Office deaconess.

14. Asa Tiffany (1772-1855), Church Family elder.

15. George Wilcox (1819-1910), Church Family elder.

With kind Elder sister,¹⁶
And Elsa that's with her,¹⁷
All sharing the blessing
Which faithfulness gains.

15. The trio, so lowly,¹⁸
That came from Mount Holy,¹⁹
And Barnabas,²⁰ with them,
So humble & free;
With Elder John Lyon,²¹
Which all might rely on,
Mark out a safe refuge,
A Shaddow for me.

16. Now here's half a dozen,²²
Almost nearer than cousins,
Who ate all together
At one common board,
Where Sister Lovicy,²³
And Phebe,²⁴ so nicely
The best of provisions
Profusely afford.

17. The members I mention,
(With pious intention.)

16. Anna Ervin (1804-1885), Church
Family eldress.

17. Elsa Parsons (1800-1874), Church
Family eldress.

18. Isaac Newton Youngs (1793-1865),
Giles Avery (1815-1890),
and Frederick Evans (1808-1892).

19. The mystical name of New
Lebanon was Holy Mount.

20. Barnabas Sprague (1799-left 1854)
from the East Family, Hancock.

21. John Lyon (1781-1862) from
the North Family, Enfield, New
Hampshire.

22. Youngs, Avery, Evans, Sprague,
and Lyon.

23. Lovicy Davis (1801-1874), likely
Church Family deaconess.

24. Phebe Wilcox (1822-1902), likely
Church Family deaconess

Came forth to this village
The Advents to hive;²⁵
To set forth the beauty
We find in our duty,
And faithful have labored
The first mentioned 5.

18. The Adventists truly
Were somewhat unruly,
But finally yielded
To quite wholesome rules;
While Evans & Lyon
Portray the Mount Zion,
And skillfully handled
The true gospel tools.

19. While they were affirming
The Adventists were squirming
At Christ's last appearing
In Blest Mother Ann;
But what has soon followed
Is proof that some swallowed,
And now are digesting
The true gospel plan.

20. The leader, Matthias,²⁶
Dispos'd to run by us,
And rise into glory
By litteral height,
Has pour'd out his vials
Of torments & trials,
On all who're unwilling
For Jesus to wait.

21. But what need of waiting,
Or long hesitating,

25. Shaker-Adventist conference,
February 18-21, 1847 held at
the Office of the Church Family.
This event was requested by the
Adventists.

26. He was "the principal manager on
the side of the Adventists."

Where such testimony
Invariable springs,
From what we've experienced,
As Mother's adherents,
As gives better substance
Than litteral things.

22. There's born—(brother Lewis),²⁷
Who gathers unto us,
And if he is faithful
May enter the gate:
While he that's called Boutelle²⁸
I fear won't come out well,
Unless he seeks wisdom,
Before it's too late.

23. And then there is Mixer,²⁹
Who took the ellixer;
Which surely will help him,
If he perseveres.
And tall brother Hastings³⁰
Is secretly tasting,
Altho he's unconscious,
It plainly appears.

24. Tho Stark behaved roughly,³¹
And Williams clung toughly³²
To doctrines of Devils,
As mentioned by Paul;
The spirit's inflection
May end in conviction,
And they in the future

27. This may be Allen Lewis who
joined with his family in 1851.

28. Second Adventist preacher
Luther Boutelle (1806-1898), Groton,
Massachusetts.

29. An unknown man who may have
briefly converted to Shakerism

30. King Solomon Hastings (1805-
1854) of Blandford, Massachusetts.

31. Richard Kimball Stark (1819-
1886) of Hartford, Connecticut.

32. Williams also lived in Hartford.

Will both have a call.

25. At this odd convention
There's more Insight mention,
But these are sufficient
To bring out to view;
Because those are leaders,
Supporters & pleaders,
In system & practice
And theory too.

26. They've laid their foundation
On old revelations,
And rear'd up the building,
& think it will stand.
But all true Believers
Should be undeceivers,
And show by example
The true gospel plan.

27. I now turn attention
To what I may mention
Relating to Shakers,
Who live in that clime
Who seem to be willing
Old self to be killing,
And travel strait forward,
To closing of time.

28. We feasted with pleasure,
On Elder Grove's treasure,³³
In whom the true pattern
Is plainly in view:
Which nought was kept from us
By Lov'd brother Thomas,³⁴
But favors unnumbered
Distilled as the dew.

33. Hancock Ministry Elder Grove
Wright (1789-1861).

34. Hancock Ministry Elder Thomas
Damon (1819-1880).

29. And far above many
We prize Sister Dana,³⁵
For zeal that's untiring
In God's holy way:
With kind sister Wealthy,³⁶
Whose soul's bright & healthy,
And pray our kind Father
Their labors to pay.

30. The Elders & Brothers
And daughters of Mother
Escorted their utmost
To welcome us there,
With labors availing,
And patience unfailing,
They made us all happy,
& serv'd us with care.

31. Their love too, exploded
With which we were loaded,
To bring to our branches,
When we should return:
And truly we felt it,
In blows as it pelted,
The pure flames of kindness
So brightly did burn.

32. A blessed relation
Who live in that station,
To me they were dearer
Than kindness of earth;
So faithful, so lovely,
So patient, so holy,
There's nothing so lovely

35. Most likely Hancock Ministry
Eldress Dana Brewster (1792-1883);
Cassandana Goodrich (1769-1848)
was still in the Ministry but she was
very infirm.

36. In 1846 Wealthy Storer (1820-
1846) of Tyringham moved to
Hancock to assist the Ministry sisters;
she went into the Ministry when
Goodrich died.

As children of mirth.

33. There's one of those brothers,
Among many others,
Who is a Chh Deacon,
His name is J. White,³⁷
He seemed so devoted,
By me it was noted,
Tho soft in his motion,
Yet all was down right.

34. And there's brother Perry,³⁸
Or Perry Grine Terry,
Who lives in the Office,
With other Trustees,
Who daily attended,
And many befriended,
And so did our sister,
Kind Clarissa Pease.

35. There's still Sister Eunice³⁹
Who wanted to do nice,
And but for her sickness
Her wants have gone thro';
But yet in her station
She made preparation,
And then in Submission
She meekly withdrew.

36. There's still another,
A daughter of Mother
Who lives with the sisters,
In outer court style,⁴⁰
It is Sara Dana⁴¹

37. Thomas Jefferson White (1805-
1859), famous seedsman.

38. Peregrine Terry (1781-1861),
Church Family trustee.

39. Eunice Tiffany (1778-1847),
Church Family Office Deaconess. She
died less than three months later.

40. Meaning that these sisters lived at
the Office.

41. Sara Dana Burlingame (1820-

The youngest of many,
& daughter of Philip⁴²
Who came from Rhode Isle.⁴³

37. Behold Amaziah,⁴⁴
Who's passed thro' the fire,
Is now Elder Brother,
Just up at the North:
And good Mitty Munsell,⁴⁵
The birth right she won't sell,
For that scarp of pottage
That's nothing but broth. (froth).

38. Next Timothy Terry,⁴⁶
Who never would marry,
A faithful old soldier,
Who stands at his post;
And the Anna Granger,⁴⁷
A strait forward manager,
Makes out the full number
Of this little host.

39. And now come the Deacons,
Who stand forth as beacons,
To guide the poor stranger
To that blest shade;
There's Earl J. & Joseph,⁴⁸

1853), Church Family Office
Deaconess.

42. Philip Burlingame (1794-1866),
first brother at the West Family

43. Many converts from Foster, Rhode
Island joined in 1826-27.

44. Amaziah Clark, Jr. (1779-1852),
North Family elder.

45. Mitta Munsell (1780-1863), North
Family eldress.

46. Timothy Terry (1790-1858), North
Family elder.

47. Anna Granger (1808-1892), North
Family eldress.

48. Earl Jepherson, previously
mentioned and Joseph Fairbank, Jr.,
(1782-1862), North Family trustee.

And each of them knows if
There's any thing wanting,
At home or abroad.

40. There's Betsey and Anna,⁴⁹
Who both Tasted manna,
To fill up the circle
In that Northern hive.
And still many others,
Both sisters & brothers,
All inmates of Zion,
Awake & alive.

41. There's Joshua Allen,⁵⁰
Who honors his calling,
And Needham his brother,⁵¹
Both live at the east:
With sister Azubah,⁵²
Who's clever as you be!
And then sister Achsah's⁵³
A crown for the feast.

42. Now Elder Elisha,⁵⁴
Who's done more than I shall
Is down to the Southward,
Where souls gather in;
And full compensation
He finds in his station,
A perfect salvation
& freedom from sin.

49. Elizabeth Farrington (1776-1864),
North Family Office deaconess and
Anna Jepherson (1778-1852), North
Family Office deaconess.

50. Joshua Allen (1780-1853), first
brother at the East Family.

51. Needham Allen (1782-1853),
second brother at the East Family.

52. Azubah Clark (1772-1854), first
sister at the East Family.

53. Acksah Ely (1782-1864), second
sister at the East Family.

54. Elisha Allen (1772-1857), South
Family elder.

43. And there's brother Medad,⁵⁵
The spirit which he had
Was good & so freshing,
And won't be forgot—,
Likewise Agnes Munsell,⁵⁶
Who stands in God's counsel,
With sister S. Benton,⁵⁷
Who fills up the Lot.

44. Then Deacon Erastus,⁵⁸
We saw as he past us,
With brother H. Lyman,⁵⁹
Which fills the male part;
And next sister Martha⁶⁰
Who walks Zion's pathway,
With good sister Judith,⁶¹
United in heart.

45. The western Location
Arrives next in rotation
And there Brother Philip⁶²
Is planted as head.—
And with him, to help jag,
Is brother H. Kellog,⁶³—
Thro these earthen vessels
The Members are fed.

46. And then Polly Foster⁶⁴
Comes next in the roster,
The first of the sisters
In that little crew.
And Mercy is with her,⁶⁵
As her helping sister,
Which fills up the number
Of this two & two.

47. This beautiful station
Is on the foundation
That's laid in true order,
As God's holy plan.
The way of beginning
Is to forsake sinning,
And live in obedience
To blest Mother Ann.

48. This here is a center,
Adults do not enter,
Until by experience
They know what's required,
And gain a relation,
By full consecration,
And shine in such beauty
As will be admired.

49. The first limb is Northward,⁶⁶
The 2'd is Southward,⁶⁷
And each limb a branch has,
One east & one West.⁶⁸
And this situation

64. Polly Foster (1787-1860), first sister at the West Family.

65. Mercy Burlingame (1800-1847), second sister at the West Family.

66. The Second Family of the Church was the North Family.

67. The Gathering Order was the South Family.

68. The East Family was a branch of the North Family. The West Family was a branch of the South Family.

55. Medad Smith (1790-1859), South Family elder.

56. Agnes Munsell (1778-1851), South Family eldress.

57. Sarah Ann Benton (1816-1858), South Family eldress.

58. Erastus Webster (1785-1864), South Family trustee.

59. Harvey Lyman (1814-left 1854), South Family trustee.

60. Martha Pease (1805-1887), South Family Office deaconess.

61. Judith Emerson (1770-1860), South Family Office deaconess.

62. Philip Burlingame (previously mentioned).

63. Harvey Stoughton Kellogg (1816-1882).

In God's habitation,
Where all of the faithful
& humble are blest.

50. This soul saving city
On others has pity,
And open'd their houses
To give them a place,
For lodging & eating,
& holding a meeting,
And shone'd by their practice
The order of grace.

51. My soul asks "how is it—
That I had a visit,
To that blessed city
Of union & peace?
And I am delighted
That I was invited,
And suffer'd to travel
& find an increase.

52. My spirit expanded,
When there I was landed,
To see so much beauty
And harmony reign.
To see such a valley,
Where angels might rally,
And dance to sweet music,
On Paradise's plains.

53. It seems that the Devil,
Can't work on a level,
Because there is nothing
To hide him from sight:--
His work is so canting,
He wants the ground slanting,
And then in appearance
He'll make it look right!

54. The rocks & the mountains,
On which he is counting

Have often been noted
In anti christ's reign,
But those who are calling
On such to be falling,
Will find that this covering
Will all be in vain.

55. In sweet contemplation
We viewed our relation,
The neatness & order,
Which there did a bound,
And our compensation
Exceeds calculation;
In love and true freedom
We every where found.

56. We'd no disposition
To shorten our missions,
But subject to order
Our motto became;
And this in performing
The 25th morning
Would wind up the visit,
And start us for home.

57. With kindly caressing
They poured out a blessing
Which we seemed to linger,
Unwilling to leave,
That place of devotion,
Where Love, like the Ocean,
Roll'd over our failings
And all that could grieve.

58. At length we got started,
And from our friends parted,
And rode on to Springfield
And there took the cars;
And moving right onward,
We came round to Concord,
With nothing unpleasant
Our comfort to mar.

59. With thinkers & talkers
We put up at Walkers,⁶⁹
And tarried contented
Until the next day;
When my Elder Brother⁷⁰
Stepp'd into another
overnight.
Of old Nahum's charriots,⁷¹
And went on his way.

60. While I was still waiting,
With zeal unabating,
And exercis'd patience,
Until I saw James,—⁷²
Who, with sleigh & horse too
Came forth to my rescue.
And landed me safely
Where Zion's light flames.

Now to the good Ministry
I'm very thankful,
For this blessed privilege,
Granted to me

69. This almost certainly was the inn and tavern known as the Eagle Coffee House (1827-1851). The landlord from 1836-1849 was William Walker (1786?-1858?).

70. Apparently John's older brother Benjamin James Kaime (1787-1867) of nearby Chichester, New Hampshire, met him and stayed overnight.

71. The use of the Nahum 2: 3-4 reference is a colorful way of speaking of the vehicle that conveyed his brother away; perhaps John implies that his brother is racing around Ninevah in vain in contrast to the Shakers.

72. James S. Kaime (1820-1894) son of John Kaime.

And to Elder Jesse⁷³
Indeed I am grateful;
To praise this assertion
Obedient I'll be.—

To Elder John Lyon
I render thanksgiving,
For his kind instruction
Which he did extend.
I'll pray for the blessing
Of Heaven to crown him,
Both now & forever & ever
Amen

To Elder Grove & Sister D
To Wealthy S & brother T.⁷⁴
I dedicate these simple lines,
In meekness drawn, with pure designs.
If naught is found to edify,
I will unite & call them dry;
But if they're food for any Soul,
You're freely welcome to the whole—
John Kaim.

Sent by John Kaim to George Wilcox
—

Copied by Isaac Y on Monday
evening, September 13th – 1847—
In about 2 ½ hours --

[End poem.]

73. Jesse Danforth (1798-1863), elder of the North Family, Canterbury. This was the Gathering Order where John Kaime joined in 1842.

74. The Hancock Ministry: Grove Wright, Dana Brewster, Wealthy Storer, and Thomas Damon.

When John Kaime arrived at Enfield, the society was at its highpoint. Every decade large families or groups had come in, and the large property was on thousands of acres of rich Connecticut River Valley bottom land. In fact, Enfield was considered to have the finest land of any eastern Shaker society. Indeed, the Connecticut Shakers lived in “palaces” and were basking in a very high degree of temporal prosperity. A discerning person, however, may have observed a potentially disturbing trend. Of the thirty-five Enfield Shakers mentioned, eighteen or over half are from the generation of the children of the first converts. The Farringtons, Terrys, Jephersons, and Allens, in particular, dominate the leadership. The Gospel opened in Enfield in 1780. Almost fifty years later, the place was still being run by a few families with direct ties to the original Shakers. The other seventeen leaders are from individuals and families who joined after 1800. This is an indication that a transition of leadership was occurring and hopefully would continue.

During the next decade, however, the Enfield Shakers experienced crisis after crisis connected with the departure of young and middle aged men and women who could have kept the society viable. Harvey Lyman, a trustee at the South Family, left in 1854 to get married. Barnabas Sprague left Hancock, also in 1854. From that point onward, the Enfield Shakers fought an increasingly futile effort to stop the tide of defections. By 1860 they were doomed, and only a “miracle,” which never happened, could have saved them. That is one reason why John Kaime’s poem is so important. It offers a glance at a prosperous Shaker society at its apex. Few insider accounts written about Enfield after this if they were honest would have been so enthusiastic and hopeful.

Notes

1. Number 579 in "Records of Men Enlisted in the U.S. Army Prior to the Peace Establishment, May 17, 1815," in *U.S. Army Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914*, ancestry.com
2. Jeremiah P. Jewett, and "Since his Decease Revised, Enlarged and Published by Robert B. Caverly," *Barnstead from Its First Settlement in 1727 To 1872*, (Lowell: Marden & Rowels, 1872), 198.
3. "Record in brief of the accession of members and Building of the Church at Canterbury, N.H." Communal Societies Collection, Hamilton College, 65.
4. *Barnstead from Its First Settlement*, 64.
5. "Record in brief of the accession of members and Building of the Church at Canterbury, N.H." 65.
6. *Ibid.*, 68, 70, 71.
7. Information about John Kaime's experience at Poland Hill are from Brother Arnold Hadd of the Sabbathday Lake Shakers. In addition, Brother Arnold asserts that wherever the Adventists joined, at least in eastern Shakerism, invariably the concept of "Spiritual Marriage" later surfaces. This was certainly true at Harvard.
8. According to Brother Arnold, the Poland Hill Shakers made lap or table desks
9. The timing was perfect for their departure from Shakerism to be connected with "Spritual Marriage." If Hannah Kaime and Robert Shepard had such beliefs, they would been in good company with a few Shakers at Harvard who were advocating for the same.
10. "Journal in verse, of a visit to Enfield, Conn., in February by John Kaime." Western Reserve Historical Society, V B-4
11. Thomas Damon, *Memoranda*, February 18, 1847, Shaker Museum, Mount Lebanon, 13357. Damon referred to John Kaime as Brighton Kaime. Brighton means a person of bright intellect, and perhaps Damon was showing his admiration, but this seems too oblique.