Life at the Watervliet Shaker village: an archaeological and historical approach

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Life at the Watervliet Shaker Village:

An Archaeological and Historical Approach

A thesis presented to the faculty
of the University at Albany, State University of New York
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Department of Anthropology

Joseph Grygas
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Abstract

Life at the Watervliet Shaker Village: An Archaeological And Historical Approach

by Joseph J. Grygas

To date Shaker archaeology is currently in a relatively primitive stage. Most investigation at Shaker sites has resulted from construction projects and these surveys say very little about Shaker life. It was not until David Starbuck’s 2004 “Neither Plain Nor Simple: New Perspectives on the Canterbury Shakers” did a major interpretive work on the Shaker’s appear. An opportunity arose to work with the Shaker Heritage Society at Watervliet to do a limited survey at a Dwelling House site. This opportunity was used to test Starbuck’s conclusions at another Shaker village. The findings reveal that the Shakers were indeed not strictly plain nor simple and a wide variety of evidence ranging from historical documents to ceramic frequencies are used to demonstrate this point.
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Introduction

The Shakers have captured popular attention due to their eccentric social and religious practices, their numerous preserved historic sites, their architecture, and their unique crafting style. Popular portrayals of the Shakers generally include separation of the sexes, strict rules of behavior, plentiful crafting and agricultural work, isolation from the rest of the world, and the simplicity of Shaker life and material culture. Unfortunately it has been noted that Watervliet, America's first Shaker community, has been the victim of scholarly neglect. In fact Shaker archaeological studies are few and far between at any community. It was not until David Starbuck's enlightening 2004 work Neither Plain nor Simple: New Perspectives on the Canterbury Shakers did any Shaker archaeological study hit the mainstream.

Most archaeological work done at Shaker sites are cultural resource management projects or some other type of survey prior to a construction project. The historically rural locations of Shaker communities are now being increasingly encroached upon by urban and suburban sprawl. Watervliet is no different. The most recent work before my arrival was a cultural resource management survey completed prior to the extension of an underground pipeline leading to the Albany International Airport located across the road from the Watervliet historic site. These surveys generally contribute little to our understanding of Shaker life.

Recent years have marked a time of change for the Shaker Heritage Society. Although the site maintains respectable levels of visitation, numbers have declined in recent years. The closing of both the Ann Lee Nursing Home and Heritage Park, along with the rerouting of a major roadway, have all contributed to this trend. Simultaneously
they have been working to extend their lease with Albany County along with implementing a plan for the future that involves rehabilitation of historic structures and increased public use. Under such circumstances it is particularly unfortunate that there has been such a scholarly disinterest in the site and that the Shaker Heritage Society has a less than desired understanding of the archaeological resources present at the site.

From 2009 to 2011 I attempted to assist in organizing archaeological material already being held from previous surveys. Amongst this material were two boxes of artifacts, mostly ceramics with some glass, with no provenience. Although the context for this material is unknown at least two mends suggest an intimate relationship with the material later found during surface survey at the 1816 dwelling house site. I also reviewed earlier reports and historic materials. My work also came to include a limited survey of a particular location at the Watervliet Chuch Family site. A Shaker dwelling house was torn down in the late 1920's after Albany County purchased the property. The Shaker Heritage Society had an interest in knowing the specific location of this structure. Although many had a basic idea of its location because of extant historic maps, no one knew the exact location of the remains in real space. The survey thus included surface observation, soil probing, and surface collection. Surface material was collected because the site has a sizable annual visitation, the master plan calls for increased usage, and the site has had a number of cases of vandalism in recent years. Some subsurface testing occurred to get an idea of the soil deposits, but the vast majority of the site was untouched. The goal was to get as much information as possible while affecting the subsurface deposits as little as possible.

This project was constituted by both a practical aspect and an academic one. What
is most intriguing about Shaker sites is the increasing divide between popular portrayals and archaeological interpretations. The popular portrayals seem to represent an idealized past with some traces of reality. Archaeology is in the position to make such interpretations more realistic. David Starbuck (2004) has advanced one such interpretation. After lengthy field work Starbuck concluded that Shaker sites were more like their non-Shaker contemporaries than one might originally suspect. My work with the Shaker Heritage Society provided an opportunity to test this hypothesis at another Shaker site. Due to the limited scope of the field work I also constrained analysis to the most observable and relevant areas. These include a ceramic and glass analysis, preliminary observations of disposal pattern via surface collection, and notation of any “unexpected” artifacts. If Starbuck's interpretations are correct for all or most Shaker locations then we could predict a common non-Shaker style of disposal pattern to be present at the dwelling house site in opposition to the “cleanliness” interpretations often argued by Shaker enthusiasts. We would also expect the presence of “unexpected” artifacts such as alcohol related bottle glass, medicine bottle glass, and perfume bottle glass. The ceramic assemblage should not be any more “plain” than assemblages of contemporary sites. The findings are described after a brief background discussion of the Shakers and an overview of previous work done at Watervliet.
The Watervliet Shaker Site

Background and Description

The realm of religious sectarianism in eighteenth century England was full of strange and interesting groups, including the “Shaking Quakers” (Stein 1992:3). Ann Lee and her followers sought to create their own heaven on earth. The Shaker belief system regarded Mother Ann as the female personification of Christ. Very little was written during the time of the Shaker founders making it difficult to get a full understanding of the original beliefs and practices at that time. The laws of the sect were not officially written until 1821 (Stein 1992:25). But some main tenets remained stable throughout Shaker history. Lusting for earthly desires was highly frowned upon and led to a strict requirement of celibacy and a segregation of sexes to assist with such a practice. Ann Lee was originally married in England but had a number of miscarriages which may have influenced her thought on these issues (Stein 1992:4). Other practices included intense worship with dancing, singing, and supposed possessions. The odd nature of Shaker practices made them targets for persecution both in England and America (Stein 1992:4-5).

The historic occupation of

Figure 1: Survey area marked in red on a diagram of the modern Church Family site with “1” being the Meeting House, “11” being the herb garden and “7” being the ministry house.
Watervliet has beginnings in the year 1775. After religious persecution in England John Hocknell, William Lee, and James Whittaker, all prominent early Shakers, traveled to “Manor Rensselaerwyck” upon hearing of cheap land. Sometime during that year Hocknell leased a farm totaling 200 acres almost a mile north of the current location of the Ann Lee Nursing Home. It was not until 1776 that all the Believers were united at “Niskayuna”. There they constructed a small log cabin to live in while clearing their land of swamp and dense forest (Filley 1975:12). One account written in 1828 by a former Shaker states that the Believers lived in their first “log-hut for three and one-half years” prior to moving to the permanent Church Family site (Haskett 1828:30).

The Shaker's strict adherence to celibacy led to a decline in their numbers from the mid-eighteenth century onward. In particular there was difficulty retaining male members in late 1800's which led to increasing numbers of “working men” to be hired (Brewer 1984:32). As the sect declined demographically at Watervliet much of the land was sold to Albany County, later to be used for the Albany International Airport and Ann Lee Nursing Home facility. The actual Church Family location was briefly utilized as a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients hence the porches added to many of the historic buildings.

By the 1970's the Watervliet Shaker site became recognized on the National Register of Historic Places as an entire district. The Shaker Heritage Society formed soon after and has since taken the lead in upkeeping the site and providing a vision for the future. This is best demonstrated by their award winning Meeting House restoration along with their site master plan. The plan recognizes the site as being underutilized and prescribes a solution focused on turning location into a mixed-use facility rather than just
a historic village recreation (D'Angelo, personal communication). It was in this context that the survey work was done to give a more adequate understanding of the archaeological resources at Watervliet.

The Watervliet Shaker village today lies within the boundaries of the town of Colonie in Albany County. The project area lies within an extensive environmental zone called the Albany Pine Bush, a forest ecosystem that consists of pines and other species specifically adapted for such a zone (Hartgen 2004). In terms of geological context the site lies on top of bedrock that consists largely of Normanskill shale. Soils around the east bank of the Shaker creek consist of a poorly drained series that includes black topsoil and gray loamy fine sand subsoil (USDA 1983:51). Most of the Church Family site is characterized as an Udipsamments-Urban land complex. This soil is the result of man-made alterations. The topsoil is generally fine brown loamy sand with brown to yellowish brown loamy sand or fine sand. Bedrock is typically over six feet in depth (USDA 1983:93).

The Second Dwelling House

By the late 1700's it became increasingly obvious that another dwelling house would be needed to accommodate the growing sect. But it was not until 1816 that preparations began for the second Church Family dwelling house. The original Shaker office was moved from its location and replaced by second dwelling house. In the spring of 1816 the foundation for the original structure was laid. Work proceeded at a rapid pace and the entire structure was completed, minus the windows, by November of the same year. Work during 1817 was limited to the interior of the house including stairs, chimneys, and installing the large cooking stove. By September of 1818 the dwelling was
in use (Filley 1975:27, Citiscape Report).

The 1830's and 1840's were a time of expansion for the dwelling house. A porch was added along with a balcony during this period. But the most significant addition was a large wing added to the rear of the original structure that contained a meeting room and more living space. The first meeting held in the new room occurred in 1847. Another common feature of Shaker dwellings was a bell placed on the roof. These bells were used to call the family to meals and meetings along with warning the community of fires and other dangers. A bell was placed onto the second church family dwelling in the 1840's. Habitation continued with only minor repairs for the remainder of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Albany County purchased the property in 1926 and the structure was razed by 1929 (Citiscape Report).

The 1816 dwelling house site is not as well known as others at Watervliet. It is

Figure 2: A 1920's photograph of the second Church Family dwelling house.
noted on a number of historic maps and is visible on a handful of black and white photographs. The best view of the dwelling comes from a photo aimed directly at the front of the house (figure 2). During the 1920's architectural drawings were made of many Shaker buildings, including the dwelling house in question, and this resource was consulted numerous times during surveying. Based off the pictures and drawings a number of features have been compiled for the dwelling house and many have been confirmed by archaeological finds. The original structure had a high gabled roof made of slate while the rear extension's roof was tin (Filley 1975:33). The high frequency of roofing slate finds confirms that the survey area was likely the original structure.
The Traditional View of the Shakers

Traditional Interpretations

The traditional view of the Shakers is one that focuses on a number of recurring themes which include craftsmanship, cleanliness, simplicity, isolation, and perfection. Many of these interpretations are based off the very strict but short-lived 1845 Millennial Laws which are discussed below. All of these themes show up in popular writings about the Shakers. The traditional view continued on mostly unchallenged until David Starbuck's competing perspective in the early 2000's. In many ways the interesting and complex reality has been drowned out by oversimplified and sanitized portrayals through the years. The Shaker wielded extensive control over internal descriptions of themselves. They have since received help from contemporary enthusiasts in keeping these myths alive. One should be reminded though that the purpose of alternative views is not to denigrate Shakerism but to place the humanity back into Shaker history. I will now examine popular Shaker themes in closer detail and provide examples of how they show up in Shaker literature.

David Starbuck's archaeological investigation culminated in a book titled “Neither Plain Nor Simple”. This is a fitting title as a rebuttal to two themes that have dominated portrayals for decades. Much focus has been placed on Shaker crafts, particularly architecture and furniture (Kahney 1950; Meader 1972; Kassay 1980; Andrews and Andrews 1999; Schreiner 2001; Rieman 2003). Indeed, one cannot deny that many Shaker crafts were plain and simple in...
comparison to their worldly counterparts. Archaeology too demonstrates this through a number of pipe finds that show Shaker pipes were rarely, if ever, decorated. But one should not take the “plain and simple” theme too far. One example of this is within the book *Shaker: Life, Work, and Art*. Sprigg and Larkin (1987) have filled their entire book with lifeless historic room recreations with perfectly plain material culture. The authors state that Believers used wooden and pewter vessels in the early years and “later purchased plain white china, such as ironstone, from the outside world” (Sprigg and Larkin 1987:82). Whenever ceramics are depicted in the pictorial recreations they are always plain (figure 3). This is one of the easiest portrayals to examine archaeologically and it is how I will frame the discussion on ceramics later.

One famous Shaker saying states “good spirits will not live where there is dirt”. Many outside observers were quick to describe how impressed they were with the neatness of the Shakers. Artemus Ward, a nineteenth century humorist, complimented the Believers for their neatness and industry (Stein 1992:219). Shaker aspirations for cleanliness likely caused them to become disappointed with makeshift round brooms which were commonly used in the 1700's and 1800's. As early as the 1770's the Shakers began to cultivate corn with more resilient bristles called “broom corn.” They later added a clamp to the broom to create the first flat brooms like the ones still used today (Shea 1971:18, Miller 2007:132).

Shaker cleanliness has been potentially discovered through archaeological surveying. An article appearing in the *Berkshire Eagle* newspaper in 2010 describing a survey done at the Hancock Shaker village claims that “even their dirt was clean” (Jones 2010). Shovel tests were done around the Trustees' Office as the first step of a
refurbishment project. Over a dozen three foot test units were placed around the building. The results? The site seemed completely clean other than occasional building debris. Archaeologists and site staff attributed the lack of finds to being “another testament to the waste-wary lifestyle of the Shakers” (Jones 2010). Ross Harper, senior archaeologist for Archaeological and Historical Services, correctly stated that excavations around buildings from the same period usually turn up garbage. Surveying a dwelling house site at Watervliet provided another opportunity to examine whether or not the Shakers disposed of trash around their buildings like their contemporaries. Beyond cleanliness and simplicity many portrayals of the Shakers are inspired by their written laws.

**Shaker Millennial Laws**

Of all the material left by the Shakers the most influential has been their collection of laws and regulations. In fact, many perceptions of the Shakers are based off a single version of these laws crafted in 1845. Initial rules were formulated by Ann Lee, James Whittaker, and Joseph Meacham. Originally the sect’s leaders did not wish to write the laws down as that process would be too restrictive on the dynamic church. Father Meacham wanted the rules to be easy enough to memorize and did not want them written as they would be taken to the outside world (Paterwic 2008:143). The Shakers have a long history of hostility from the outside which contributed to this decision (ex. Stein 1992:167). Lucy Wright in particular did not want the laws written down. Only six months following her death in 1821 the laws were finally written (Becksvoort 2000:39).

The 1821 Millennial Laws delineated guidelines for proper everyday living. Shakerism was remarkably flexible, demonstrated by continuous revisions of these laws in 1845, 1860, and the final version in 1887 which are still in effect to this day.
By the late 1830’s there was a revival of spiritual intensity at all Shaker communities. This time period is often referred to as the “Era of Manifestations” or “Mother Ann’s Work” (Beckvoort 2000:40, Paterwic 2008:143). It was this period of increased zealotry that yielded the extreme laws of 1845. The “Era of Manifestations” was likely a result of Mother Ann's Reburial in the 1830's along with growing demographic stress on the sect. In 1840 the “Holy Laws of Zion” were supposedly received from the spirit of Father Meacham and other early leaders (Paterwic 2008). Such claims were not uncommon as the “Era of Manifestations” was named after the supposed visions of dead individuals at funerals and during worship (Shaver 1992:4). These laws were longer and stricter than their predecessors. Among the statutes were prohibitions on ornamentation, pets, and unnecessary contact between the sexes (Becksvoort 2000:40). Starbuck also concludes that the 1845 laws were “especially significant” because the consumption of coffee, tea, alcohol, cider, tobacco, and pork were banned (Starbuck 2004:45). Examples of some key laws are listed in Table I (from Andrews 1943).

For a sect that was demographically maintained by voluntary converts they quickly realized that pointless rigidity would not help matters. Seth Youngs, an early Shaker, stated that “no order of God can be binding on Believers for a longer time than it can be profitable to their travel in the Gospel” (Becksvoort 2000:40). This highlights a fundamental problem in Shaker interpretation. The 1845 laws never found much favor outside of the New Lebanon Ministry, and even there they were almost immediately modified. Regardless, the Millennial Laws of 1845 continue to remain a major source of public interpretation of the sect (Paterwic 2008:143, Miller 2007:10). Historian Edward Andrews published only the 1845 version of the laws in his work *The People Called*
*Shakers* (Andrews 1963). Even most Shaker sites carry only the 1845 version, with the easiest access to others coming via old microfilm. Secondary sources continue to quote these tenets as normative behavior even though this was not true outside of “The Era of Manifestations” and perhaps not even during it (Miller 2007:10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Law</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alcohol Consumption</strong></td>
<td>“All Believers are required to abstain from the use of cider, and other spirituous or fermented liquors on Saturday and the Sabbath, and it would be much better not to use such liquors at all.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pets</strong></td>
<td>“No dogs may be kept in any family gathered into order.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Firearms</strong></td>
<td>“Boys under fifteen years of age may not go hunting with guns, and the longer they let guns alone the better.”</td>
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| **Cleanliness Around Buildings** | 1. “No kind of filthy rubbish may be kept to remain around the dwelling houses, or shops, nor in the dooryards, or streets in front of the dwelling houses and shops.”  
2. “Ye shall throw no dirty rubbish into the dooryards, or highway, as apple cores or pairing, broken glass, or earthenware, etc etc.” |
| **Architectural Simplicity** | “Odd or fanciful styles of architecture, may not be used among Believers, neither should any deviate widely from common styles of building among Believers, without the union of the Ministry.” |

As the 19th century wore on Shakerism continued to struggle. Demographic evidence suggests the sect peaked between 1830 and 1860 (Filley 1975:49). A sharp decline is visible from 1840 into the 1850's (Brewer 1984:32). One could conclude that the extreme measures were driving away members. It was in this context that the 1860 laws were adopted over more extreme versions. Elders had to spend more time focusing on maintaining Shakerism as a whole rather than regulating its member's minor behaviors (Paterwic 2003:1). Therefore it makes little sense to draw so many conclusions from laws that were of limited success both temporally and geographically. The survey work at
Watervliet and subsequent interpretation to follow is meant to be a continuation of a growing trend towards placing the complexity and humanity back into Shaker portrayals.
Previous Archaeological Work at Shaker Sites

Watervliet

Rural Shaker communities are now being increasingly encroached upon by modern development. As a result most of the archaeological work at these sites has involved survey and excavation in advance of construction projects. Watervliet is no different in this regard. Survey work at this site has occurred for over thirty years but has been limited in scale. Most of these projects are practical in nature and do not address academic questions about Shaker life. The most recent work at Watervliet prior to 2009 was a survey and subsequent mitigation by Hartgen Archaeological Associates (Hartgen 2004) for a pipeline extending to the Albany International Airport across the street from the Church Family location. Watervliet has unanswered questions, many of them basic, and unexplored locations. My work with the Shaker Heritage Society provided a chance to try and answer questions about Shaker life. In this section I will summarize previous archaeological work in and around Watervliet and for Shaker sites in general.

The first survey ever conducted within the grounds occurred in 1979 and was headed by Lisa Fagan. She conducted a literature review and field reconnaissance for a proposed dredging of the Ann Lee Pond and proposed spoil locations. This survey covered a three acre area near the pond. Like most surveys at the site this one did not yield any significant cultural material either Shaker or prehistoric. No further archaeological work was recommended (Fagan 1979).

In 1981, David Barnet, acting director of the Shaker Heritage Society, conducted a survey prior to water line improvements for the Ann Lee Nursing Home which is just east of the current Meeting House. The purpose was to assess the impact to cultural
resources within the project area. Barnet posed a number of solid questions during his work but the limited scope of the survey did not allow for adequate answers. Illustrating the scholarly neglect of the site, these questions are still not fully understood for this particular Shaker locale thirty years after the fact. One may also observe the influence of popular Shaker portrayals within his questions:

How did the Shakers dispose of their trash? Around many contemporaneous farmhouses one can find all sorts of broken utilitarian objects and other trash. Were the Shakers cleaner than other farmers? Would an examination of the front versus the rear of buildings reveal this?

Did the Shakers throw trash into privies like other farmers?

What types of ceramics were the Shakers using? Can we detect differences or similarities in ceramic usage between the Shakers and other local farmers? Did their ceramic taste change over time? [Barnet 1981:7]

Areas that were used as open land or pasture had two feet by two feet test units spaced one hundred feet apart for a total of six test units. Locations closer to structures were spaced fifty feet apart totaling five test units sized two feet by three feet. All test pits were lettered from A to K (Barnet 1981). Test Pits F and G were located between the office and the 1848 Meeting House. Building materials and toys were found in these pits which means that the material could relate either to the Shakers or to the period when Albany County utilized the property. The Shakers adopted and cared for children while Albany County ran a tuberculosis preventorium for all ages after purchasing the land. The clay marble may date to the nineteenth century but it is difficult to tell. Barnet found small ceramic pieces in pit G and identified them as ironstone and whiteware (Barnet 1981:11).

In front of the 1848 Meeting House pit H yielded building material, a sheet of mica, and common trash such as ceramic and shell. Barnet believed the mica was a
window of a nineteenth-century commercially produced stove. He concluded that the presence of this mica probably means that the Shakers were supplementing their “Shaker stoves” with commercially produced ones (Barnet 1981:12). Test pit I was also in front of the Meeting House and yielded what Barnet believes to be a piece of white salt glazed stoneware (1720-1770), which would be early even for the first Shaker settlement. Though it was a small fragment and seemed to bear more resemblance to the nineteenth century earthenwares. The scarcity of bone, shell, and ceramic by the Meeting House lead Barnet to conclude that the Shakers may have had a refuse pattern that differed from their neighbors. Of the pearlware, whiteware, and ironstone, Barnet said those artifacts “show that the Shakers were probably using some ceramic wares similar to their contemporaries” (Barnet 1981:14). He concluded that the water line would have little impact on archaeological resources of the site.

The New York State Museum Cultural Resource Survey Program conducted a literature review and field reconnaissance survey for the New York State Department of Transportation in 1985. The survey covered the project area where the department proposed to reconstruct a segment of Albany-Shaker Road, an area of about 4,400 feet. No cultural deposits of significance were recovered from the survey area. Extensive disturbance on both sides of the road had removed all traces of several structures known from historic maps including a mill near Ann Lee Pond. No further work was recommended afterwards (New York State Museum 1985).

A proposed parking facility for the Albany Airport allowed for another survey in 1992, this time for a site near the North Family location. The survey area covered approximately 53 acres. A well, springhouse, and drainage ditches were found. Louis
Berger & Associates conducted the survey and concluded the features were probably of Shaker origin. The archaeologists also found one prehistoric site dating between 2000 and 100 B.C. Neither the structures nor the prehistoric site would be impacted by the construction project so no further work was recommended (Louis Berger & Associates 1992).

Hartgen Archaeological Associates conducted multiple surveys within the historic district. In 2004 they conducted a field reconnaissance for the Albany County Nursing Home located west of the Church Family site. Goals were to investigate the extent of disturbance created when Heritage Park was built, to determine the northern boundary of the Shaker cemetery, and to investigate the possible presence of 19th- and 20th-century structures documented on historic maps. The survey found that most of the area had been disturbed by topsoil grading. The proper cemetery boundary was also found along with remains associated with map-documented structures. Avoidance was recommended for these deposits (Hartgen 2004).

The most extensive work came from a separate project in 2004 when Hartgen was contracted by Dufresne-Henry Inc to do a literature review and archaeological sensitivity assessment for the proposed installation of a sewer line leading to the Albany Airport. The project involved installation of about 1,345 feet of sewer line through the Church Family location heading toward the southern terminal of the airport. The literature suggests a high potential for archaeological deposits in this area. The proposed line would also cut through the ground of the old dwelling house while running close to a number of other map documented structures (Hartgen 2004).

Archaeological field reconnaissance consisted of 36 shovel test pits, soil probes,
and a single excavated trench. Significant cultural remains were not noted for much of the project area. But the survey did uncover structural remains of the original dwelling house including a concrete floor and a brick wall to the rear of the house. Avoidance was recommended and an alternate route was tested and approved. Shovel test pits were placed at 7.5 meter intervals through the project area. Pits were approximately 40 centimeters in diameter and were excavated until sterile subsoil or immovable rock was reached. The project area was broken down into six segments letted A-E, with B1 as the alternate route for the original segment B (Hartgen 2004). Most segments revealed nothing but modern dumping and disturbance with the exception of segment B where the intact house remains were discovered. Shaker era artifacts included bottle glass, window glass, brick, nails, roofing slate, whiteware, creamware, pearlware, redware, and stoneware (Hartgen 2004).

Table II: Finds During Hartgen Survey (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Glass</th>
<th>Ceramic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Window</td>
<td>Porcelain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Stoneware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glassware</td>
<td>Whiteware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jar</td>
<td>Redware</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamp Chimney</td>
<td>Pearlware</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creamware</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>Sewer Pipe</td>
<td>Fauna Bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roofing Slate</td>
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<td>Brick</td>
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<td>Nails</td>
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<td>Mortar</td>
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<td>Arch. Stone</td>
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<td>Floor Tile</td>
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<td>Pipes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hardware</td>
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<td>Lightbulb</td>
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<td>Safety Pin</td>
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<td>Utensils</td>
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On April 15, 2005, construction crews excavating for the sewer line encountered
the remains of another building northeast of the current Meeting House. Originally a small silk factory inhabited the location but was replaced by 1852 by the Seed House. The structure was documented before it was razed but a sketch of a Church Family map misallocated it to the north. Archaeologists monitoring the excavation observed a number of walls and features, and they used a 1929 floor plan sketch to guide the excavation. The original walls, a wood floor, a tile drain, and stone footings were all noted. The archaeological remains were deemed significant to the Watervliet Shaker Historic District, so a Phase III data recovery was done the following day. Ten units were excavated, five of which were one meter by one meter in size, while the others had irregular dimensions (Hartgen 2004). These materials were unavailable for examination.

Figure 4: Building remains uncovered by a construction crew and later investigated by Hartgen Archaeological Associates.
Neither Plain Nor Simple

Cultural resource management projects have dominated Shaker archaeology for many years. One of the first mainstream archaeological publications that took an academic approach was David Starbuck's work during the 1990's culminating in his 2004 book *Neither Plain Nor Simple: New Perspectives on the Canterbury Shakers*. Research driven approaches have also been conducted at Pleasant Hill in Kentucky since the late 1970's (Starbuck 2004:5). Most projects are descriptive in nature and do not deal with the rigid characterizations of Shakerism that are popularly held to be true. Starbuck states that no one can dig “at a Shaker village and ever again accept the myth of a static, idealized way of life that was immune to worldly pressures” (Starbuck 2004:5).

Starbuck worked with his students over a number of years doing exhaustive work at the Canterbury site that included demographic research, examining historic documents, above ground survey, and limited excavation, as well as talking with the final living Shakers of that site until 1992 (Starbuck 2004:7). Enthusiasts and promoters were very keen on limiting the research so that it did not portray the Shakers in a negative way. Starbuck was further pressured by the fact that actual Shakers still inhabited the site into the 1990's. Despite these hurdles historical archaeology was well positioned to shed light on Shaker life. The Shakers as a sect had extensive control over internal descriptions of themselves. Many of these misconceptions continue to this day due to the biased historical record and the extensive use of the strict 1845 laws in Shaker interpretations.

Over the years Starbuck and his students excavated inside of the foundations of a barn and a hog house, along with various dumps spread around the site. As field work continued it became increasingly clear that the Shakers were always part of the world
economy. The garbage found at Canterbury was not much different from garbage found at other sites. Researchers at the site were surprised by the broad types of material culture that were allowed into Canterbury (Starbuck 2004:11).

In 1994 Starbuck began field projects at a barn and bee house at Canterbury. The objective was to locate and expose the complete outlines of each foundation while excavating just enough test units to determine the depth of artifact deposits. More focus was placed on the barn as the assumption was it would eventually be reconstructed (Starbuck 2004:50). Large portions of the barn foundation were visible from the surface. A grid of 1x1 meter units were laid out over the surface of the foundation and excavation was taken down to sterile soil or until stone was encountered. The bee house was more thoroughly buried. Backhoe trenches were used to quickly locate the southwest corner. After finding all the corners measurements were taken and the documented dimensions were confirmed. Dominant artifact types included tin cans, butchered animal bones, nails, pottery sherds, and canning jars. More intriguing finds included a glass whiskey flask, flowerpot pieces, and a perfume bottle (Starbuck 2004:50).

During the spring of 1996 a construction crew discovered a cellar filled in with dirt and garbage. The backhoe had ripped a hole into the center of a foundation wall leaving hundreds of artifacts in backdirt piles with more still in the ground. A well-built brick floor was clearly visible at the bottom. Starbuck and his crew from Plymouth State were called in to investigate. After sorting through historic records it became increasingly apparent that the foundation was likely from an early hog house (Starbuck 2004:53). The most common artifacts included sherds of whiteware and yellowware along with medicine bottles, all common nineteenth-century items. With an increasingly robust
ceramic sample it became apparent that the expectation of plain, white Shaker ceramics was not the case. Most of the sherds were decorated with hand painting, Rockingham styles, and colored transfer-prints (Starbuck 2004:57).

The unexpected nature of many of the material finds at Canterbury caused a stir within the press. Discover magazine, for example, ran an article called “Shakers Behaving Badly” (Powell 2000). Numerous rationalizations were given by Shaker enthusiasts as to why this material was recovered from a Shaker site. Among them included explanations such as the items being gifts which were promptly thrown away or items used by hired men who were not held to Shaker standards (Starbuck 2004:66). Starbuck's work at Canterbury and subsequent publications has put forth a competing perspective of Shaker life that contradicts the “otherworldly” portrayals so common in popular literature. Although my surveying at Watervliet was limited in scope it provided a chance to confirm or contradict Starbuck's alternate perspective at yet another Shaker site. Since the particular site at Watervliet was a dwelling house it provided an opportunity to analyze artifacts from a domestic context as opposed to the areas investigated by Starbuck. A dwelling house location also suggests a more intimate relationship between the Shakers and the material thrown away around it. Hired men lived in separate housing on the opposite end of the site and therefore superficial rebuttals regarding the trash of non-Shakers are inadequate in explaining away “unexpected” finds.
Methods

The goal of the dwelling house survey was to get the best understanding of the site while doing as little harm as possible to the subsurface deposits. Since the site is away from contemporary roads and pipelines the probability of future destruction via construction is low. Therefore subsurface preservation was stressed during the survey. It was understood prior to undertaking the project that all recovered material would be transferred to the Shaker Heritage Society. Initial inspection began in August of 2009. Unfortunately this was the peak of vegetation growth at the site. Due to these circumstances an initial system of convenience sampling was done near the edge of the woods. A small, cleared path was present leading to the southwestern corner of the site while the remainder was inundated with thick vegetation.

It was in this southwestern section where the first test units were placed in order to assess the presence or absence of historic material in the ground. Four units were placed in a row going north to south while the last was offset immediately to the east. Each unit was one meter by one meter in dimension. Arbitrary ten centimeter contexts were used. Just prior to the initial subsurface investigation an area of exposed stone was encountered. Probing led to a northwestern corner and this was considered the anchor point for the surveying.

The initial test units revealed historic material dating from the nineteenth century and possibly as early as the late eighteenth century. Small ceramic fragments were recovered and included painted pearlware (1780-1840), salt glazed stoneware with Albany slip (1805-1920), plain and painted whiteware (1820-1900+), annular yellowware (1840-1900), and porcelain. Other material included a stem from a drawn stem wine glass
(1780-1800), two pieces of separate red clay pipes, a pig metapodial bone, and assorted coal and building material. Although there were some noticeable finds the overall frequency of cultural material was low. After attaining a better understanding of the site it seems likely this area represents the yard in front of the small western extension added in the 1840’s.

During the fall of 2009 the vegetation receded and eventually revealed an area of considerable surface scatter at the opposite end of the site (northeast). This area was farther back in the woods and artifact fragments could be seen visibly from a distance. Bushes and younger trees were scattered through this area as well. After an initial inspection this section of the site was designated as a sheet midden, likely a yard space to the rear of the original dwelling house. A decision was made to do a complete collection of this surface material. This action was taken because the Watervliet Shaker site has had a number of incidents of building vandalism in recent years (ex. Fitzgerald 2011). The site’s master plan also calls for increased public usage in the coming years, leaving the security of the surface deposits in question. Under these circumstances the surface material was collected and given to the Shaker Heritage Society for potential future use.

One specific goal of the surveying was to give the heritage society a more specific understanding of where the dwelling house foundation was in real space. The vague location was well known via historic maps. More specifically, there was interest in the original dwelling house structure without necessarily all the extensions added on over its history. Therefore all terms such as “back yard” refer to where material was found in relation to the original structure. As mentioned above, a piece of foundation stone was found protruding from the ground on the western side of the site. The northwestern corner
was found soon after soil probing. A brush was used to wipe off loose topsoil and expose more of this area of stone. A line of granite rock could be observed along with a small section of intact brick wall with bonding material (figure 5). Soil probing extended the wall out from these points. A pile of fallen tree logs and branches existed to the east which hindered probing but the few chances to feel for stone along this section revealed the back wall continued underneath it. This area of stone exposed at the surface actually consisted of part of the rear wall and a perpendicular section of an interior wall.

Judgment sampling was chosen for the limited remainder of subsurface investigation. This included a single unit in the sheet midden and multiple shovel tests to verify the presence of foundation stone in particular locations. Shovel tests were approximately fifty centimeters in diameter and continued down until the foundation was encountered. A single unit was placed in the back yard to verify that the high frequency of artifacts continued into the subsurface contexts. This was verified but the unit was closed early due to lack of time and increasing complications from large tree roots.

Figure 5: Foundation stone with interior brick wall visible, facing west.
While sorting and analyzing material from previous surveys at the site multiple boxes of unlabeled artifacts were discovered by the site director. This material was mostly ceramic, with occasional glass, and the ceramics were separated superficially into vague decoration categories. These items had no provenience and no report mentioned finding such a significant amount of artifacts. Despite these shortcomings I decided to place the entirety of this material into my sample of artifacts from the dwelling house survey. This was justified after finding multiple mends between fragments found during the dwelling house survey and fragments found within these boxes, which suggests a relationship between the two groups. The first mend involved an olive colored bead closure for a flask found in the meeting house attic and olive colored neck and shoulder fragments found in the front yard area of the dwelling house during surface collection. A perfect mend was noted (figure 6). The second mend was between multiple pieces of a small edged flatware vessel. This blue edged plate had a cord and herringbone embossed design that matched a single fragment of the same decoration type found during surface collection at the dwelling house site.

The final line of inquiry involved investigating historic documents within the
Shaker collection housed at the New York State Archives. These documents included records of purchases and census information. I searched Shaker purchasing records to see if any further information on ceramics or other items could be found. These records contained only one ceramic related entry. Dating to December 1910, the item states: “new dishes for the table 11.50”. This merely reinforces the idea that historical archaeology deals mostly with aspects of life too mundane to be mentioned in detail in actual records. The expenditure records were unhelpful because they mentioned neither the kind of ceramics purchased nor their quantity.
Results

The following sections describe the results of the dwelling house survey and subsequent analysis of artifacts. David Starbuck's work was used as a basic framework. The main interpretive question was to determine whether or not Starbuck's findings were an isolated phenomenon or if they appear at Watervliet also. The methods and scale of our work differed greatly. Despite the smaller scale of my surveying I was able to attempt to deal with a few different areas. Below I list these areas along with ideas and hypotheses that would come from both the traditional Shaker interpretations and from an alternative.

Table III: Two Sets of Concepts to be Tested

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Alternative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disposal Pattern</td>
<td>Areas around the dwelling house will be generally void of artifacts, similar to the Hancock trustees' office survey.</td>
<td>The disposal pattern around the second Church Family dwelling house will not be radically different from what one would expect from any other nineteenth-century domestic site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceramics</td>
<td>The ceramic assemblage should consist almost exclusively of plain white ceramics with the limited decorated vessels being attributed to items brought into the community and subsequently thrown away.</td>
<td>Ceramics will consist of a wide variety of both plain and decorated vessels that were used by the Shakers. Tastes in ceramics will change over time just as they did in mainstream American society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and Tobacco Consumption</td>
<td>An absence of clay pipes and alcohol bottles.</td>
<td>A noted presence of alcohol-related artifacts, clay pipes, and traditional medicines that were high in alcohol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Unexpected” Artifacts</td>
<td>Absence of items that the Shakers should not have been using. Any such finds can be attributed to “working men” who were hired to do work at the community but weren't held to Shaker standards.</td>
<td>High probability of finding items that are “unexpected” at a Shaker community. At Canterbury these included perfume bottles and false teeth, among other things.</td>
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</table>
Dwelling House Survey and Disposal Patterns

Despite the numerous surveys done in previous years at Watervliet there are many areas of the district that are poorly understood. Most surveying has followed the roads which go through the maintained part of the site (figure 7). This is the area around the Meeting House in each direction. The Watervliet citiscape report divided the site into a large grid. One particular area north of the Meeting House had a number of structures that were removed either by Albany County or the Shakers themselves. This area mostly falls within the grid area of N0E1. In modern times there is almost nothing visible to suggest that structures ever existed there. After Albany County removed the structures wilderness reclaimed the land over time. A large dwelling house, multiple privies, an office, a wood house, and a hen house all existed in this area at some point during the Shaker occupation. Today these sites are in the woods between the maintained historic site and Delesandro Boulevard across from the Albany International Airport. Every summer the site gets inundated by a thick wall of tall weeds. The site is also home to red deer ticks.

Figure 7: The maintained section of the Watervliet Church Family site. Blue circles represent Hartgen (2004) shovel tests. The second dwelling house was north of the workshop shown at the top.
and numerous mosquitoes from the Shaker Creek from May until early fall. Thick vegetation and other issues make navigating the site difficult through most of the year. Surveying was limited mostly to the spring and fall for these reasons. The practical purpose of this project was to find remnants of the 1816 Dwelling House for the Shaker Heritage Society. At the same time the findings will hopefully give the Shaker Heritage Society a better understanding of its archaeological resources.

The original Church Family dwelling house, the one encountered during the Hartgen survey, was too small to accommodate the growing membership of the sect as early as 1790. But not until 1816 was a second dwelling house under construction. The Old Office originally stood on the location of the second dwelling house. The community agreed to move the structure to an area south of the 1791 Meeting House around where the 1848 Meeting House is today. What makes the dwelling house site particularly interesting is that the land has remained relatively isolated since it turned back into wilderness. Most of the ground remains free of overgrowth so surface scatter was visible in a number of locations. I decided to collect the surface scatter because the site has decent levels of visitation and future plans for the area are unknown. I also conducted soil probing and surface collection in addition to minimal subsurface testing in 50cm shovel tests.

David Barnet's question regarding Shaker trash habits from his 1981 report reflects the prevalence of cleanliness in Shaker identity. Deposits behind houses and around the other yard spaces would be considered fairly standard by experienced historical archaeologists. Only in Shaker archaeology where “cleanliness” interpretations are dominant is such a topic even in question. One of the best descriptions of a common
disposal pattern is what Stanley South has termed the “Brunswick pattern” (South 1977).

As a processual archaeologist South sought to create law-like statements about human behavior. With the Brunswick pattern South posited the following generality:

On British-American sites of the eighteenth century a concentrated refuse deposit will be found at the points of entrance and exit in dwellings, shops, and military fortifications. [South 1977:48]

This pattern was described after work in the town of Brunswick, North Carolina. At a number of sites there was a correlation between midden concentration and the entrances and exits of a structure. Overall, refuse was concentrated more in the back of structures than the front (South 1977). South mentions the eighteenth century but as with his mean ceramic date formula it seems safe to apply the principle into the nineteenth century as well. Although South was discussing an eighteenth-century site with this pattern, garbage was still thrown into yards throughout the nineteenth century. A number of articles have been published in regards to urban disposal during this century including one by Crane (2000:35) where he states “working class households continued to use yards as areas for garbage disposal throughout the 19th century.” And this is in an urban context where there was growing pressures towards not disposing garbage in this way, particularly with the sanitation movement, municipal rubbish collection, and nuisance laws (Crane 2000:35).

As a rural sect the Shakers would've been under less pressure to stop the disposing of trash adjacent to their dwelling houses. The Brunswick Pattern represents the earlier roots of American society while it is quite apparent that trash disposal in yard spaces continued on afterward. The presence or absence of artifacts at the Watervliet survey can speak to whether or not the Shakers cared as much about cleanliness outside their buildings as within and also whether or not they heeded the stricter laws regarding disposal around
dwelling houses (Table I).

As noted earlier the majority of work involved surface inspection and soil probing. No significant surface scatter was initially apparent at the site. The most common material visible was pieces of greenish roofing slate found over an extended area. But when surface inspection moved northward I found a large sheet midden. Mixed in with occasional modern refuse like Pepsi bottles and golf balls was a clear scatter of ceramic, glass, and shell. Unlike the rest of the site, this particular location was relatively rich in artifacts. Material within the sheet midden was very fragmented with an occasional larger piece of whiteware or bottle glass. White shell pieces were also clearly visible. With time, I found more areas of surface scatter but none were as extensive as the northeastern sheet midden. I divided the surface collection into arbitrary “areas” that I labeled alphabetically (figure 8). Because of the high visitation at the site and multiple cases of vandalism at other locales in the historic district, I collected and deposited the surface material at the Shaker Heritage Society where it will be stored.

A total of 891 fragments were recovered from surface collection at the sheet midden. These finds spanned all major categories including food remains, ceramics, glass bottles, glass jars, and architectural debris. Dates of these artifacts spanned quite a lengthy period of time. Some artifacts, such as a particular set of wine bottle glass, may date as early as the late eighteenth century, while machine-made glass was also present, suggesting the early twentieth century. The sheet midden, or “Area A,” corresponds well with a yard space to the northeast of the original structure (figure 9). A measured drawing completed in the 1920's also suggests that a door led to this particular yard space. An equally rich midden did not occur on the opposite side of the back yard to the northwest.
Figure 8: A simple diagram of the dwelling house surface observations.

The remaining clusters of surface material all contained considerably fewer artifacts than the sheet midden. Of all the remaining surface areas, the most fruitful was “Area D” at the front of the site. A total of 82 fragments was recovered from that particular location. Many thin fragments of plain whiteware occurred among larger fragments of yellowware. The most interesting finds included a metal thimble and a single fragment of a “Duffy's Malt Whiskey” bottle with the word “malt” embossed along it. Three of the 118 fragments found toward the front of the structure were smoking pipes. This distribution contrasts to the sheet midden where no pipe fragments were found on
the surface among almost 900 artifacts. This finding may indicate that the front yard was a preferred location for smoking, or at least disposal of pipes.

All current observations seem to suggest that these remains are indeed the original dwelling house structure as opposed to its extensions. As measured from the presumed northwest corner to where the visible foundation turned southward, the size of 21 feet 5 inches nearly matches the measurement given on the 1920's measured drawing (21 feet 4 inches for the width of the northwestern room). In addition, large amounts of roofing slate found strewn across the site support the records indicating that the original structure had a slate roof as opposed to tin for the rear extension.

The unique conditions of the Watervliet Church Family 1816 dwelling house site provided a window to observe disposal behavior without necessarily needing extensive subsurface excavation. Like their contemporaries, it appears that the Shakers living in this structure tossed garbage into the yards around their home. A surface scatter of over 1,000 artifacts appeared at various locations around the foundation and outside of it. Subsurface contexts are likely to yield many more. Finds were most common in a sheet midden to the northeast. The remains seem to follow general disposal trends and their mere presence refutes overly sanitary interpretations of Shaker garbage disposal. It appears that the Shakers did not strictly follow their own rules about keeping rubbish from around their dwellings. These findings further weaken the oversimplified portrayals originally critiqued by Starbuck (2004).

Having illustrated that key point, there was at least one other finding of interest with the results of the surface survey. The sheet midden present in the northeastern part of the site poses an observation that should be explained. Despite the rich artifact frequency
to the northeast, the northwest is nearly void of such deposits. Although the main focus of this paper is to highlight a few areas where archaeological evidence deviates from traditional interpretations I believe we can look to an area of Shaker behavior that saw greater adherence for an explanation. Celibacy and strict segregation of the sexes was a famous attribute of Shakerism. Given their rapid demographic decline it is clear that they adhered to these principles throughout the sect's existence. The Watervliet site director noted that certain features in standing buildings showed this segregation, one example being railings for stairs (D'Angelo, personal communication). The railings of one side were well worn while those on the other side were not, showing that the Sisters likely used one side of the stairs and the Brothers the other. If such a phenomenon can be seen in subtle ways then why not archaeologically too? Brothers' and Sisters' rooms were often in different areas of a dwelling house. An architectural drawing of a dwelling from New Lebanon shows that the Brothers' rooms were to the west while the Sisters' rooms were in the center, with the meeting room to the east (Lassiter 1966:37). The second Church Family dwelling house at Watervliet did not have the exact same layout. Instead it was more symmetrical with rooms to the east and west and a main hallway running through the middle. It's hard to imagine that the Shakers would not have utilized this symmetry to have the Brothers' on one side and the Sisters' on the other. If that is the case then the women were likely utilizing the eastern part of the site more heavily, hence the sheet midden to the northeast with numerous domestic artifacts (figure 9). Unfortunately the architectural drawings provide little beyond the basic dimensional measurements. If this interpretation is correct then it supports the intriguing possibility of being able to fill in details about Shaker buildings where documentary evidence may be lacking.
Figure 9: A probable correlation between the surface finds and a yard space.
Shaker Consumption

Religious sects often get stereotyped as being isolated from the rest of society. Reality is usually much more complicated. The Shakers sought to create their heaven on Earth with some degree of separation from the outside world. But the sect still needed regular contact with American society at large to recruit new members and sell their crops, herbs, and crafts to help support the community's prosperity. Although the Shakers kept some degree of separation, they still had constant contact with new people, different ideas, and material culture from the outside world. The Shakers also gave back to American society as well. This process is perhaps best demonstrated by selling and consumption of tobacco, wine, and commercialized patent medicines. Not only did the Shakers consume all of these, they also engaged actively with the outside world because of these behaviors. Miller (2007:49) states that the Shakers had a “habitual genius” for recognizing and developing economic opportunities. As the Shakers already had successful herb and pipe businesses it was inevitable that they would understand the growing demand for things like home-made remedies. Evidence has now made clear that the Shakers engaged in the patent medicine era not only as successful producers but also as consumers of numerous commercial remedies produced by outsiders. The evidence also shows that despite idealized portrayals the Shakers consumed tobacco and alcohol.

What constituted proper behavior amongst the Shakers fluctuated over time. As noted above our best understanding of Shaker rules comes from the strict 1845 version. These Millennial Laws contained very strong language discouraging the consumption of alcohol (Table I). Archaeology provides a methodology to determine if the Shakers ever deviated from their written laws. The findings at Canterbury, and now Watervliet, seem to
suggest that they did in certain ways. The consumption of alcohol became increasingly controversial within Shaker communities. Concepts of temperance changed much as they did in American society at large. In 1828 the Canterbury *Historical Record* stated “a temperance wave seems to have passed over the Society this year which must have made a deep impression on the minds of all who were accustomed to the use of alcoholic drink or of cider” (Starbuck 2004:45).

Before passing away, one of the last Shakers at Canterbury acknowledged having wine with their meals when they were younger (Starbuck 2004:45). Furthermore, Eldress Bertha Lindsay stated in her Shaker cookbook:

> The Shakers made a good deal of wine and many varieties. Some of the best wines are homemade, I think. These were kept under the care of the Eldresses, who stored them in a three-cornered cupboard in the Sister's Shop cellar. They were given to individuals as needed, especially if the Brothers or Sisters had been out in the cold and needed something to warm them up … I think one of the best was the dandelion wine … We also made elderberry wine. Raspberry wine was sometimes made … [Starbuck 2004:46, Lindsay 1987]

Evidence of wine consumption at Watervliet comes from multiple sources and multiple types of material culture. The first evidence was found in a subsurface test in the area by the western addition to the Dwelling House. In test unit #2 a piece of glass was found that was later identified as part of a stem of a wine glass that may date to as early as the late 1700's. The collection of fragments stored in the attic of the Meeting House had little glass in comparison to ceramics. Most of the glass was wine related (36 fragments of dark green glass). Eight of the fragments were base pieces of what are known as Rickett's bottles (figure 10), made with a three-piece mold. One of the basal fragments exhibits the embossed word “Bristol.” Henry Rickett's patented the three piece mold in 1821 and operated in Bristol, England (Jones 1971:67). The other basal pieces do
Figure 10: A wine bottle with "Bristol" embossed around the base.

not exhibit this embossed lettering but they are in the same style including the sand pontil. Two dark green colored closures were present in the sample of glass; both were double ring finishes and likely were also part of the Rickett's bottles. Twenty six Rickett's bottle body fragments were also present. These bottles were commonly used for wine and have a general date range of 1821 into the 1850's (Jones 1983).

Surface collection yielded a small number of wine-related artifacts. In the more extensive midden in the “back yard” of the original Dwelling House, two pieces of dark olive glass were found. Archaeologists often refer to this kind of glass as “black glass”. Alcohol related bottles often were black or dark green in color to protect the contents from light. The fragments were also relatively thick and somewhat rounded. It was later determined that these fragments likely represented fairly early wine bottle glass, having a possible date range of 1750-1790. If this assessment is correct, then these fragments provide evidence for early wine consumption and represent one of the earliest
manufactured artifacts currently known from the sheet midden. In the same area, two
dark green, almost black, bottle closures were found. One was a double ring finish
reminiscent of the Rickett's closures found in the Meeting House collection. The other
was of the same color but with a single ring finish. Both could have been closures for
wine bottles. Three fragments of a champagne bottle body were also recovered.
Interpreting Shaker material remains is difficult as one always has to question whether
the items were bought by the Shakers themselves or brought into the community by
others. Interpretations are further muddled by the prospect of bottle reuse. Busch (1987)
details all the intricacies of the history of bottle reuse. She states “when reuse is taken
into account, as it must be, site interpretation based on bottles is more difficult” (Busch
1987:77). Based on the bottle glass and stemware, along with documentary sources, it is
certain that the Shakers consumed wine. And the early dates of some of the glass suggest
that this was a long practice in Shaker history.

Little dietary data has been found among the collections of material found in both
recent and prior archaeological investigations. Archaeologists found pieces of cow and
pig bones during the most recent Hartgen survey in the Church Family location. A total of
three animal bones was recovered around the foundation of the dwelling house. Two were
found in the sheet midden area in the back yard while one was found during a subsurface
test near where the western extension would have been. Two of these represent turkey
long bones (femur and humerus) with one being heavily gnawed. The subsurface bones
were actually two pieces of a single pig metapodial. Their unfused nature suggests a full
sized sub-adult, a common find on sites with animal domestication. Starbuck notes that
hogs were being raised at Canterbury later in the nineteenth-century in defiance of the
earlier 1845 Millennial Laws (Starbuck 2004:55). The presence of this pig bone and similar bones in earlier surveys suggests something similar for Watervliet. Having a low bone count around a structure is not uncommon. As South (1977:47) noted:

Two types of secondary refuse are defined elsewhere in this book on the basis of the ratio of bone to the total artifact count. A low bone-artifact ratio is seen in refuse deposits adjacent to occupied structures, whereas a high bone-artifact ratio is seen in those secondary midden deposits peripheral to occupied structures, allowing us to recognize adjacent secondary refuse and peripheral secondary refuse. The adjacent secondary refuse is the basis for the Brunswick pattern, peripheral secondary refuse not being found in large quantities at the Brunswick town.

Expense records from 1914 indicate that the Watervliet North Family purchased groceries from the outside world, including coffee and wine. The North Family records show that coffee was being purchased every few months. On January 2, 1913, 50 pounds was purchased for $11.50. The same purchase was made again on August 15. Starbuck (2004:45) mentioned that the consumption of coffee was discouraged but this may have been alleviated over time.

The most substantial dietary related findings involved clam and oyster shells. The site director mentioned personal journals that described traveling to Ann Lee Pond to gather such resources (D'Angelo, personal communication). Although these shell remains were found at nearly every location on the site they were most common in the backyard sheet midden. During surface collection in that area 101 shell pieces were recovered. Another 43 pieces were found in a subsurface test at the same location. It is not uncommon to find shells of this type around the yards of domestic sites. Furthermore, five more shells were found in the Meeting House collection.

Just as with alcohol consumption, Shaker opinions about tobacco smoking fluctuated over time, turning negative toward the middle of the 19th century. Stein
(1992:105-6) noted that smoking was a common habit among the Believers in the early days and that there was no moral reason as to why the manufacture of pipes should not have been allowed. Natural deposits of clay were identified, most particularly red clay near the New Lebanon community, for use in clay pipe production. Shakers produced pipe bowls of white and red clay with stems of wood at either ten or fifteen inches. The earliest records of pipe production seem to be from the first decade of the nineteenth century (Andrews 1974:100). David Starbuck also discusses tobacco smoking. He cites written records from South Union, Kentucky, mentioning sisters smoking and drinking wine while taking a break from work in 1818. By around 1830 opinions regarding the Shaker use of pipes turned negative although between 1809 and 1853 the Shakers at Watervliet and New Lebanon manufactured thousands of pipes (Andrews 1974:100).

During the early years the Shakers would sometimes engage in what was called “smoking meetings” where all would gather to smoke. Stephen Stein, author of *The Shaker Experience in America* (1992) writes:

> The “smoking meeting,” observed by the Believers in 1826 … celebrated in several villages in honor of Ann Lee's arrival in America, united brethren, sisters, and children in billowing smoke as all puffed on their pipes … The clouds of smoke rose quickly, but the hour passed slowly. When adjournment came 'we rushed for the doors, glad to breathe again in the pure air.'” [Stein 1992:106]

Opinions regarding tobacco changed by mid-century. In 1848 the Canterbury Shaker's *Church Herald* stated “its use has been reduced extremely low. We occasionally find a person who uses a pipe but the cases are rare. The fumes of tobacco are not to be found in any of our buildings” (Starbuck 2004:46). Chronologically it seems that the pipe production era can be broken down into two periods. The first period was the time when smoking was acceptable among Believers, or 1800-1830. Later the Shakers continued to
produce pipes for outsiders which lasted further into the nineteenth century. In *The Community Industries of the Shakers* Edward Andrews states:

> It is probable, however, that the Watervliet colony was the chief source of supply at this later period. By 1835 pipe bowls were being purchased in large orders from Frederick Wicker, the Watervlier trustee, and although the stems may have been and probably were still made at New Lebanon, the center of the industry shifted to the other settlement. Wicker received $8 thousand for both red and white bowls. [Andrews 1932:76]

To date six pipe fragments have been found during surveying at the dwelling house location. Four of these fragments consisted of the portion of the pipe where the stem would be inserted, though the bowls were largely missing. Of these four, two were found during subsurface testing in the area around the western addition of the Dwelling House. The other two were surface finds in the area that would have been considered the front yard. One fragment was a nearly complete tobacco pipe with only small parts of the bowl edge missing. This red pipe remains the most complete currently at Watervliet. This pipe was also found in what would be considered the “front yard” of the Dwelling House. The final fragment was extremely small and barely noticeable during screening. It was recovered during a single subsurface test in the sheet midden behind the original structure.

Three different observations about the pipes are pertinent. First, despite the larger frequency of artifact fragments in the back midden there were no pipe fragments in the surface collection while there were three found in the front yard area. In fact, the back yard generally lacks pipe finds. This current evidence suggests that pipes were more frequently used and discarded in the front as opposed to the back. Second, the Shaker pipes represent an area of material culture where the famous Shaker simplicity is obvious. Unlike pipes manufactured in the outside world, Shaker pipes do not seem to have
molding, carved initials, or any other embellishment. The most complex seem to be marbleized pipes. At Canterbury, David Starbuck found 573 white clay pipe fragments, over 2,000 red earthenware pipe fragments, and 421 marbelized pipe fragments (Starbuck 2004:73). This leads to the third observation, that the only pipe fragments found around the Dwelling House were red pipes. As Andrews (1932) noted, the Watervliet trustee sold both red and white clay pipes. The monopoly of red pipes may either represent some sort of preference for the red pipes or a bias in sampling.

The Shakers made a wide variety of medicines for both internal (pills, liquids, etc) and external use (creams, drops, etc). Mount Lebanon, New York was the major center of remedies for external use such as cosmetics. Benjamin Gates began production of Imperial Rose Balsam at Mount Lebanon in the mid-nineteenth century. This lotion was made of soap, alcohol, and unspecified chemical oils. Advertising for Shaker remedies was very similar to those of all other remedies (Marz 1977). One advertisement for the “Imperial Rose Balm” claimed that its chief ingredient was “the balm of ten thousand flowers” and promised to cure pimples, terrors, ringworms, rheumatism, sores, chapped hands, and sore gums (Miller 2007:66). This demonstrates one major component of the patent medicine era: exaggerated advertising. Benjamin Gates was also involved in producing the “Shaker Hair Restorer” which promised to restore gray hair to its natural color. Miller notes that this “was a curious choice for the Shakers to be involved with, but toward the end of the century they were driven to replace the income previously generated by their seed and herb industries” (Miller 2007:68). Very few externally applied remedies were produced at Watervliet. “Laurus Eye Water” seems to be one of the few. It was advertised as a lubricant that restored healthy action and stopped painful
movement of the eye (Filley 1975:61, Miller 2007:70).

Internal medicines, or those digested such as pills or fluids, were made at multiple Shaker communities including Watervliet, Mount Lebanon, and Canterbury. One of the more famous of these was “Corbett's Shakers' Compound Concentrated Syrup of Sarsaparilla”. Corbett was trained as a physician and his remedy won awards and praise from others. In 1882 the Shakers published a recipe book by Mary Whitcher. This thirty-two page book seems to have had another purpose because it contained advertisements for Shaker and non-Shaker medicines. Creating literature to send to others was a popular method for medicine producers and sellers (Miller 2007:74). Included in this book was an advertisement for “Corbett's Sarsaparilla.”

Despite changing attitudes toward alcohol and the Shakers’ various degrees of separation from the outside world, a wide variety of commercial patent medicines were found dispersed throughout the Church Family dwelling house site. When one considers that the site was only sampled, and specific remedies were only identified from the rare cases a fragment had embossed lettering, it is likely that many more were used at the dwelling besides those that will be discussed below. Furthermore, almost all the identified remedies recovered from the site were fraudulent, which was common for the times, and most contained high levels of alcohol. According to the Shaker Millennial Laws it was “contrary to order” to “employ a world's doctor” (Andrews 1963:245). Without documentary corroboration it is difficult to tell the context by which these items were entering the community. Were new recruits bringing them? Were they being purchased by the Shakers? Regardless, the relative commonality of these artifacts added with the fact that they were recovered at a Shaker domestic structure suggests that they were
employing them along with remedies they themselves produced.

To no surprise the most common location for embossed medicine bottle fragments was the sheet midden behind the original dwelling house. A number of fragments were found that were made of thick, dark green glass. Two embossed fragments of this bottle were recovered. One had the letters “N.YOR” while the other had an interlocking chain design. Research indicates these specimens are from a bottle of “Dr Clark's Syrup.” In its entirety this bottle is almost ten inches tall and has a large iron pontil scar on the bottom. The full embossing reads DR/CLARK/N.YORK with a chain-link design underneath. Clark's syrup was produced by Joseph Clark locally in Albany, New York, just prior to the Civil War. One advertisement from 1859 reads: “cures sexual incapacities, tastes like wine” (Putnam 1968:52). Since the Shakers were supposed to practice celibacy this had the potential to be quite scandalous! But, perhaps demonstrating the questionable nature of medicines of the time, another advertisement dating to 1860 describes another use. The text of this advertisement reads: “will cure all blood complaints if lungs & bones are sound” (Baldwin 1973:116). Although much of this paper has described the complexity of Shaker life and perhaps some cases where they did not follow their own rules, I believe it is safe to say this is not one of those cases. The Shakers as a sect are nearly extinct because they have successfully adhered to the practice of celibacy.

One of the most well preserved bottle pieces found during surface collection was an amber bottle with the entire closure, neck, and shoulder present. Although no embossed lettering is associated the most common amber bottles of the time seem to be “Hostetters Stomach Bitters” and various schnapps bottles. The best current guess is that it is a Hostetters bottle because the neck is shorter than many of the other varieties, such
as “Wolfe’s Aromatic Schnapps”. If this assessment is correct then the Shakers used a medicine with one of the highest alcohol contents known from this period. This remedy was invented by Jacob Hostetter but was put into production by his son, David, in the 1850's. These bitters were mild in their herbal content. One Department of Agriculture chemist found that herbal oils and extracts accounted for some 4% of the bitters with the rest being alcohol and water (Young 1965:126-131, Adams 1905:15). By claiming medicinal status those who sold Hostetters bitters did not have to pay for a license to sell it, unlike alcoholic beverages. By the early 1900's many medicines were being attacked as frauds by muckraking journalists such as Samuel Hopkins Adams (1905:15) who constructed a diagram to show the alcohol content of various beverages compared to their medicinal counterparts (Table IV).

Of all the embossed medicine bottle fragments only one was found in the “front yard” of the dwelling house, a “Duffy's Malt Whiskey” bottle produced in Rochester after 1885. The fragment is of a dark amber color and reads “malt” with a line running above it (figure 11). A visual match was made with pictures of complete Duffy's bottles. The Duffy's medicinal fraud is actually one that was created by the United States government. The producers did not originally claim any special medicinal benefit for the beverage. A special tax on nostrums was collected to help fund the Spanish-American War and the government placed Duffy's into this category to collect extra revenue. The Duffy's producers claimed that their product was the only whiskey recognized as medicine by the government (Adams 1905:21). Over time it was even
advertised as the world's greatest heart tonic.

Other medicinal products were found around the dwelling house site. Many of these could not be tied to specific products because of the lack of lettering or other characteristics. One fragment found in a subsurface context was an aqua colored bottle fragment from a “Lydia Pinkham's Blood Purifier” bottle. Lydia Pinkham produced many remedies for “female complaints” including her more popular “Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.” A Laxative was also recovered, a clear fragment of a “Dr Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin” bottle. These were produced after 1889. The remaining medicinal artifacts have not been identified. These artifacts include a couple “prescription” style bottle finishes and a flat, colorless fragment with “ery com” visible, for “celery compound,” but the specific brand is unknown. Celery compounds were often advertised to cure a wide variety of ills and Paine’s was one of the most popular brands.

Starbuck (2004:61) mentions a variety of outside medicines found at Canterbury. Of the many remedies he lists, none overlap with the identified products found to date at the Watervliet site. Some of the Canterbury finds include “Red Star Cough Cure,” “Atwood's Jaundice Bitters,” “Ayer's Cherry Pectoral Syrup,” “Pisco's Cure for Consumption,” and “Kickapoo Indian Cure,” among many others. “Shaker Cherry Pectoral Syrup” was the most common Shaker-produced medicine he found (9 bottles) (Starbuck 2004:61). Unfortunately, most of the remains at the Watervliet Church Family dwelling house were so fragmentary that product identifications were impossible.

**TABLE IV: Alcohol Content in Various Products (Adams 1905)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Alcohol Content (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hostetter's Stomach Bitters</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydia Pinkham's Blood Purifier</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The topic that must be addressed next is that of the contradictions that have been demonstrated between the archaeological record and how the Shakers viewed themselves.

Internal descriptions were tightly controlled and diaries were discouraged entirely.

Therefore historic documents may not tell the full, accurate story of Shaker behavior.

Even the testimony of living Shakers has been put into doubt:

Ironically, the last three Shakers who lived in Canterbury were not always a very accurate source of information. They remembered drinking a little wine at the dinner table when they were young, but there was sometimes a tendency to repeat the stories they had learned from Shaker enthusiasts – that the Shakers didn't drink, the Shakers didn't smoke, and so forth. They no doubt remembered the customs of their youth, but it may have been increasingly hard for them to separate their own memories from the warm and wonderful stories that had been created about them. [Starbuck 2004:86-87]

It would appear based on the material evidence that the Shakers put forth their ideal but deviated from it over time whether it was in the form of smoking tobacco or drinking wine. One also has to consider how these various products were perceived by the Shakers. For example, Adams (1905:19) notes that Duffy's whiskey was a favorite of the temperance movement because it was prescribed in low doses. There was even a newspaper advertisement with three popular clergymen endorsing the product. Although the consumption of this product may have gone against some of their previous ideals it may have still been compatible with their own perceptions of themselves. In a similar vein, Starbuck (2004:59) has documented the recovery of a temperance plate at Canterbury with a design depicting Father Matthew administering the total abstinence pledge.
It is also possible that alcohol was being brought into the community in the form of medicines and used as alcohol unknowingly. Adams (1905:17) recalls a story from the Journal of the American Medical Association:

A respected clergymen fell ill and the family physician was called. After examining the patient carefully the doctor asked for a private interview with the patient's adult son.

“I am sorry to tell you that your father undoubtedly is suffering from chronic alcoholism,” said the physician.

“Chronic alcoholism! Why, that's ridiculous! Father never drank a drop of liquor in his life, and we know all there is to know about his habits.”

“Well, my boy, it's chronic alcoholism, nevertheless, and at this present moment your father is drunk. How has his health been recently? Has he been taking any medicine?”

“Why, for some time, six months, I should say, father has often complained of feeling unusually tired. A few months ago a friend of his recommended Peruna to him, assuring him that it would build him up. Since then he has taken many bottles of it, and I am quite sure that he has taken nothing else.”

The irony of the story, of course, is that Peruna was just another of the many fraudulent medicines heavy in alcohol (28%), and one which Adams had a particular distaste for. All of these factors make it difficult to make an absolute assessment of who brought the items and how they were perceived and consumed at Watervliet. But what is an absolute is that they were indeed consumed at the dwelling house and the frequency of medicines, wine, and other related artifacts suggests alcohol was consumed relatively often.
The Not-So-Plain Ceramics at Watervliet

The final topic of analysis is the ceramic assemblage. The ceramic remains can help us better understand the complexities of life at Watervliet. Most writers about Shaker life say that they lived a very simple lifestyle in terms of material culture. As noted above, Sprigg and Larkin (1987:82) claimed that “believers used wooden or pewter dishes in the earliest years and later purchased plain white china, such as ironstone, from the outside world.” These lifeless interpretations are almost surely oversimplified. Both the Shaker Museum and assemblages from Shaker archaeology contain a variety of decorated vessels. The issue of ceramics leads to a number of questions: what, if anything, can be learned from ceramic assemblages from Shaker sites? Do decorated vessels appear and at what frequency? Are the assemblages vastly different from non-Shaker sites? Did ceramic tastes change over time? Can one ever separate the Shaker bought ceramics from those brought in by new converts? My hope is to try and approach at least some of these questions and provide feasible answers.

Dealing with late eighteenth and nineteenth century ceramics can be a tricky and subjective task (e.g., Majewski and O'Brien 1987; Miller 1980). Two main identification levels exist for ceramics, the first being ware classification and the second being classification by decoration. The concentration on ware uses various physical properties to identify certain types of ceramics such as earthenware (further...
broken down into other categories like creamware, whiteware, pearlware, yellowware, redware, etc.), stoneware, and porcelain. Many of these differing characteristics result from the temperature by which each ceramic type is fired. Earthenware types for the period of interest evolved from one to another. Creamware was produced in England and was popular during the mid-1700's. Over time the market became saturated and the demand declined. By the late 1700's and early 1800's these wares became very cheap and lost their strong cream color. They were still lightly tinted and people of the time used the term “cream-colored ware” (Miller 1991:5).

As the eighteenth century progressed the demand for Asian porcelain and wares resembling them continued to increase. By the mid-1770's Wedgwood had developed what is now considered “pearlware.” This new ware type was whiter than the previous creamware and had a slight blue tint to the glaze (Miller and Hunter 2001:135-161). A good method of identifying pearlware is to look at the bottom of a vessel for blue puddling at the base. Chinese style transfer-printed earthenware was common as an answer to the demand for porcelain (figure 12). The general date range for pearlware is from 1775 to 1840 (Miller 2000:12). The development of whiteware was complete by the early 1800's. Given the time lag between the type being developed in England and its being common in America, the generally accepted beginning of whiteware in America is around 1820. As opposed to pearlware, whiteware contained less, if any, blue tinting.

The transition between pearlware and whiteware is one issue that has been discussed at length by many authors. Miller (1980:2) states: If an assemblage of ceramics from the first half of the 19th century is placed before six archaeologists and they are asked for counts of creamware, pearlware, whiteware, and stone china wares, the results
will probably be six different enumerations. The question of how much blueing the glaze has to have before it is pearlware or which sherds have the density to be classified as stone china all hinge on personal opinions. After attempting to organize a huge pile of undecorated earthenwares into pearlware, whiteware, and cream-colored wares I fully agree with the difficulty and subjectivity that accompanies the practice of separation. Miller (1980) takes the dim view that the ware system of classification does not provide much practical use. The only real purpose is one of chronology. And if the site's date range is already known, as is this case with the Shaker dwelling house, then the ware system provides little useful information. With Samford's (1997) excellent synthesis on dating transfer-printed decorations and Miller's (2000:3) guide to dating edgeware rim decorations, the ware system may not even be the best chronological system. I attempted to classify the ceramic assemblage at the Watervliet site based on the ware system, as it may be useful for comparison to other sites, but the bulk of my effort was devoted to classification by decoration. By looking at decoration types one can try to approach issues of chronology as well as social class and changing tastes over time.

To relate ceramics to economic status, Miller (1980, 1991) investigated price fixing lists and account books. Based on his research, he developed the “CC Index.” In simple terms, Miller outlined a four-tiered system of increasing expenditure. The lowest level includes all forms of undecorated wares often referred to as cream-colored wares in the historic documents. The second level includes low-skill decorations such as edged, sponged, and annular decorations. The third level includes many kinds of hand-painted vessels. The final category is restricted to transfer-print, which remained one of the most expensive decorations throughout the entire century. It should also be noted that white
ironstones were also expensive. These wares were slightly over, slightly below, or on par with printed wares depending on the vessel type (Miller 1980:13-14). Although they were “plain,” if the Shakers were purchasing a lot of ironstone it would be quite an expensive taste in ceramics. More specific index values result from creating ratios. Cream-colored ware costs remained fairly stable through the century so these costs were used as a benchmark. If a ten-inch diameter edgeware plate has a CC index value of 1.3 that means it was 1.3 times more expensive than a CC vessel of the same type. If one has strong chronological control they can get an estimation of expenditure on ceramics using the more specific index values.

Ceramics lacking provenience became an issue during my work with the Shaker Heritage Society. While looking through some previous finds the site director and I found large bags of ceramic fragments in the Meeting House attic. The fragments appeared to be sorted in a superficial way based on decoration. No labeling was visible on the bags, or the boxes that housed them, and there is no mention of finding a significant number of fragments in any previous report. The average fragment size was larger in this collection of fragments than the fragments recovered outside at the dwelling house location. Also in the collection was a small amount of glass items. Within these was a bead finish for an early (1790-1820) globular olive-colored flask. It was later discovered that this closure mended with an olive-colored glass neck recovered during surface collection at the Dwelling House site in what would have been the front yard area (figure 6). This is the best clue as to the origin of this material. Unfortunately, this could mean that some material may have been removed from the dwelling house site before the area was inspected in 2009. Regardless, an intimate relationship appears to exist between the
materials in the 1848 Meeting House attic and the dwelling house site.

In sum, the ceramic assemblage from Watervliet seems to represent every type of ceramic one would expect from a site dating to this time period. Many of the decorated ceramics were shell-edged. These wares were most popular around the first third of the nineteenth century. That is also the period when the Shaker population was expanding rapidly. There seemed to be sets of certain styles of embossed edges as well. Included in these patterns were floral designs, a wheat design, impressed lines (figure 13), and what is considered the “cord and herringbone” design. Also represented in the sample are transfer-print, mostly in blue, hand-painted, sponged, and annular wares. Salt-glazed stoneware also appears in the sample, and many pieces exhibit an Albany slip. One mended salt-glazed vessel was an ovoid jug with a blue painted flower but no maker's mark. These types of gray salt-glazed stoneware were common in the nineteenth century.

The wide variety of ceramics suggests that Shaker taste in them changed over time to mirror that of the rest of society. New converts may also have been bringing in new ceramics they already owned. At least one set of transfer-printed vessels can be

Figure 13: A partially mended green edgeware plate with impressed lines.
identified: two blue-printed fragments that have the same portion of an “exotic view” preserved on them. Other transfer-printed design categories present in the sample include willow ware, pastoral views, floral, Chinoiserie, and possibly classical (Samford 1997). Blue was the most common transfer-print color followed by black and purple. As ceramic prices declined throughout the century, so did the quality of hand-painted vessels (Majewski and O’Brien 1987:157-164). Earlier painted types had designs that covered much of the vessel. The cheaply made hand-painted ceramics are sometimes called “sprig design.” These decorations involve a minimal covering of the vessel and usually have stems, berries, or small flowers (Majewski and O'brien 1987:159). Both painted types occur in the Watervliet sample.

One surprise was the relative rarity of maker's marks despite the significant number of base fragments. Marks were rarely placed onto shell-edged plates, common in the Watervliet sample, so this partially explains the lack of marks (Majewski and O'Brien 1987:150-151). The small fragment size may also contribute. Maker's marks were also frequently placed on the shoulder of salt glazed jugs, like the one mentioned earlier, but none is present on the mended jug, as noted above. To date only six marks have been observed (Table V). One exists on a thick, oval shaped ceramic base. All that is present is the letter “N” which was not enough to make a confident identification. The only mark found during surface collection at the dwelling house site was from a purple transfer-printed vessel from the back yard sheet midden. This mark contains the word “ware” with two simple flowers. I have not been able to match this mark with any known examples. The final three marks appear on plate bases found in the Meeting House attic. A Davenport & Company anchor mark is present on one plate. This mark was commonly
used by the company from 1800 to 1860. The blue puddling in the mark itself and the creases of the plate seem indicative of pearlware, whose use terminates around 1840. This company operated in Longport, Staffordshire, England (Lang 1995:226). One mark was impressed and very difficult to read. It seems to read “WOOD” with a cross-like shape above it. The best identification found for this mark so far is Wood & Sons who produced whiteware in England in the late 1800's (Lang 1995:216). The final mark consisted of part of a bird's foot along with some lettering. A visual match was made to conclude that it was an Enoch Wood & Sons mark (no relation to the other Wood & Sons). Enoch Wood apprenticed under Josiah Wedgwood before starting his own pottery in Burslem, England (Lang 1995:248).

The major question to address, and perhaps the easiest, is whether ceramics on a Shaker site differ much from other sites of around the same time period. It was difficult to find sites that were occupied over such a long range of time as the dwelling house (1818-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Date &amp; Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“N” impressed on an oval ceramic base.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two simple flowers with the letters “ware” preserved.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchor logo with “Davenport” visible.</td>
<td>John Davenport</td>
<td>1800-1860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burslem, Staffordshire, England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird's foot with lettering visible.</td>
<td>Enoch Wood &amp; Sons</td>
<td>1818-1846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burslem, Staffordshire, England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross with “Wood” visible.</td>
<td>Wood &amp; Sons</td>
<td>Late 19th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word “porcelain” printed in black, nothing else preserved.</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table V: Maker's Marks
1926) so I attempted to find previously published ceramic decoration data from nineteenth-century sites in popular journals or other easily accessible sources. Bower (2009) provides decoration data for whiteware fragments recovered from a mid-nineteenth century occupation at the Ames Plantation in Tennessee. A little over three-fourths of the fragments were plain followed by transfer-print (14.8%), hand painted (2.3%) and edged (1.1%). The whiteware subgroup was taken from the greater Shaker sample and analyzed for decoration frequencies. The Shaker sample was actually less plain (61%) but also had slightly less transfer-print (9.3%). Edged ware was significantly higher in the Shaker sample (17%). This brief comparison seems to suggest that ceramic remains on Shaker sites were no plainer than their non-Shaker contemporaries. I also wished to find ceramic data for another site and make more in-depth comparisons.

Cabak and Groover (2006) use Miller's four tiered system in their categorization of ceramic fragments from the Bush Hill Plantation, owned from 1807-1920. Their sample numbered over 4,700 total fragments. The authors provide counts for both all refined earthenware fragments and then just for the rim fragments. Cabak and Groover state that there may be a bias towards transfer-print in regular fragment counts. This bias occurs because “some ceramic decoration techniques, such as transfer printing, completely cover the vessel and consequently produce an inflated sherd count in comparison to edge-decorated vessels, such as molded and shell-edged flatware” (Cabak and Groover 2006:74). The Shaker sample was compared to the total fragment count from Bush Hill (Table VI). This can be seen as a good comparison for a number of reasons. First, the occupation periods are nearly indistinguishable. Second, the owners of the Bush Hill site lived comfortably. Over time the Shaker industries became increasingly
successful and they lived comfortable lives as well. Lastly, both sites represent agrarian-based rural lifestyles.

The Bush Hill sample included 4,743 refined earthenware fragments while the Watervliet sample contained 1,698 fragments. Once the two samples are compared it is apparent that they do not diverge in any significant way. In both cases, undecorated fragments make up the majority of the samples (66% for the Bush Hill sample; 60% for the Watervliet Shaker sample). Cabak and Groover (2006:74) have noted that undecorated fragments are actually overrepresented in samples because many decoration types do not cover the entire vessel. So it is possible that at least some in the undecorated category may just be undecorated portions of decorated vessels. When Cabak and Groover limited their sample to only rim sherds their undecorated percentage plummeted from 66% to 41%.

The raw counts for Miller’s tier 2 were slightly higher in percentage in the Watervliet sample. This is mostly due to the high frequency of edged wares. The main difference between the tier 2 samples is that Bush Hill has more molded fragments (8.2%) and less edged wares (4.3%) while Watervliet has few molded (0.9%) and many more edged wares (14.5%). Overall there is about a 7% difference in total tier 2 percentages between the two sites. A possible reason for the bloated edgeware count at Watervliet is explained later.

Higher-level decoration frequencies placed into tier 3 were nearly indistinguishable between the samples. In sum the total percentage for tier three was between 5-6% for both sites, mostly representing hand painted decorations. No decal decorations are noted for Watervliet while a small but noted amount (1.4%) is present for
Bush Hill. Lastly, tier 4 represents mostly transfer-printed wares. Small amounts of luster and flow blue are also within this category. A total of about 13% of refined earthenware sherds at Bush Hill belong to tier 4 as opposed to 11.3% at Watervliet. Although there are slight differences between the two sites the total tier percentages are reasonably close in comparison. It seems that ceramics at Shaker sites are not radically different from contemporary sites, which is what one would expect if they were using plain whitewares and ironstones exclusively.

The next level of analysis was to compare the rim counts from both sites (Table VI). As noted above, plain fragments are generally overrepresented in raw sherd counts. This is visible in Cabak and Groover's (2008:74) rim count. The plain ceramic percentage plummets from 66% to 41%. Molded and edged wares are greatly increased in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table VI: Ceramic Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bush Hill</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Raw Count</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undecorated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIER 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dipped/Annular</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gilded</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Molded</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Edged</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sponged</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIER 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decal</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Painted</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TIER 3</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flow Blue</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Luster</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer-Print</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TIER 4</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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rim counts while all other decorations seem to stay about the same. The same trends occur in the Watervliet sample but at an accelerated level. Here the plain fragments drop from over 60% to just 15.6%. If edged wares are taken out of the mix then plain rim fragments outnumber any other single category by a decent margin. The major skew occurs with the massive edged rim count, which increases to 57.4%. Given these trends it appears that not only were plain ceramics not exclusively used, they may not even have been the majority of wares utilized at Watervliet, even if the more conservative trend in the Bush Hill sample is used as an estimation.

The levels of edged fragments is so large that they deserve an attempt at explanation. I believe demographics is the best source to rely on to perhaps clarify this data. Shaker numbers exploded in the early 1800's. As early as 1816 Mother Lucy Wright reminded everyone that “numbers are not the thing for us to glory in, but purity and holiness. I do not feel any lack in numbers; the great lack I feel is in Purity” (Brewer 1984:44). Such demographic stress resulted in increasingly lax standards. The codification of laws in 1821 and subsequent zealotry in the 1840's were likely a backlash to this trend. People were coming and going from Watervliet and other Shaker communities at an astounding rate. This led Brother Isaac Young to write in 1837:

> What in the name of reason does it mean that so many are going off nowadays????!!! Is there none of the younger part that will abide & be good for something—are we indeed unable to raise any children of youth among us ... It is truly sickening and heart rending to see what a failure and destruction there is late among us. [Brewer 1984:45]

The most convenient demographic graph was found in Brewer's (1984:32) article on the Shaker demographic decline. Although her graph is for another Shaker site the same trends occurred at every Shaker community over that period. Peak production date ranges
(Miller 2000:3) were mapped onto Brewer's demographic graph to demonstrate the likely reason why there were so many edged wares in the sample (figure 14). After the early members got frustrated and left the sect the Shakers saw a new period of high, sustained growth culminating in a climax just before the middle of the century. All three edgeware types mapped on the graph are common in the Watervliet sample and they correlate well with this period of growth. Individuals would have been bringing in these wares to hand over to the sect after they joined due to the communal sharing of property. Perhaps the Shakers themselves were purchasing edgeware at this time to supplement their tablewares. Edgeware was not only cheap but it came mostly in flat tablewares which would have been very useful in feeding larger groups of people.

![New Lebanon Church Family Population Graph](image)

Figure 14: Shaker population at New Lebanon compared to ceramic date ranges.
Another area of potential interest is the presence of porcelain at the site. Many authors have made the connection between the presence of porcelain and the presence of women living at a site, higher economic status, or more likely both. Diana Wall's (1999) article regarding class, gender, and ethnicity at various sites in New York City is one of many that demonstrate this trend. The working class household at 8th Street had no porcelain plates at all. Meanwhile, porcelain plates were present at all three middle class sites described in the article. The highest class site at Washington Square also had the highest number of gilt painted porcelain plates (Wall 1999:109). David Starbuck notes porcelain fragments in his raw count from Canterbury dumps but does not go into much more detail regarding them. In total, porcelain makes up about 3.5% of the ceramic fragments from Canterbury village dumps (Starbuck 2004, table 3-2). Subsurface tests at Watervliet had a porcelain frequency of 3.5% and surface collection had a frequency of 4.8%. Porcelain at the Ames Plantation also occurred at a rate of about 4.8% (Bower 2009). Of the porcelain at Watervliet the decorations were quite varied. About two-thirds was undecorated while others had gold painted lines, molding, pink painting, painted landscape scenes, painted floral designs, and a couple had pink painting with gold markings. Even these expensive porcelains made it into Watervliet.

An attempt was also made to try and supplement the archaeological finds with historic material. The State Archives contained a number of expenditure records from the Watervliet site, particularly for the North Family, but only one account of ceramics could be found. This account, dating to December 1910, states: “new dishes for the table 11.50.” This merely reinforces the idea that historical archaeology mostly deals with
aspects of life too mundane to be mentioned in detail in actual records. The expenditure records were unhelpful because they mentioned neither the kind of ceramics purchased nor their quantity. Regardless, the archaeological findings suggest that the ceramics used at Watervliet were not by any means “plain.” A decent quantity of plain white earthenware was utilized just like any other site of the period; more importantly, the frequencies of decorated ceramics were on par with other non-Shaker sites and in some cases were actually less “plain.”

Some have suggested that the Shaker’s early days were pious followed increasingly by more materialism and an abandonment of their spirituality (e.g., Ray 1973; Gordon 1990). In terms of ceramics it seems as though decorated wares were at the site even during the early period. Earlier decorated remains such as painted and printed pearlware fragments have been recovered from the site. It remains difficult to try and separate out what was purchased by the Shakers and what was brought in by new recruits. In the end it does not appear to be that large of an issue as either way the ceramics were being utilized and then tossed into the yard areas like the rest of the utilitarian material recovered.
Conclusion: Neither Plain Nor Simple Revisited

My work with the Shaker Heritage Society provided a good opportunity to assist with their practical goals, such as organizing and identifying material already in storage, but it also provided an opportunity to explore current Shaker archaeology. David Starbuck left his work open ended and called for further investigation into Shaker life. He posed a number of areas that may be of interest, including consumption differences based on gender, continued discovery of “unexpected” artifacts, and investigating the degree to which the Shakers adhered to the Millennial Laws (Starbuck 2004). I have contributed to a couple of these matters with the archaeological resources and collection of material currently at Watervliet.

The prevalence of idealized interpretations for the Shakers put even simple archaeological matters, such as the presence of garbage around domestic structures, into doubt. At least one survey at another Shaker site yielded an instance where few remains were found around a trustee's office. The 1816 dwelling house at Watervliet provided an excellent opportunity to test adherence to the laws regarding garbage disposal around dwellings and shops. I sought to extrapolate as much from the site as possible while impacting it as minimally as possible. Surface observation revealed a site whose disposal pattern seemed very much like a non-Shaker domestic structure. An extended sheet midden exists in the northeastern (back) yard of the original structure. Smaller deposits also around the structure included a fairly rich section in the front yard, perhaps near the front entrance. Over 1,000 fragments were recovered on the surface alone with many more doubtlessly lying just below the surface. Oversimplified interpretations of the Shakers' “waste wary” lifestyle should be discarded for more complex and realistic ones.
The presence of many patent medicines produced by the outside world was noted at Canterbury and has been verified for Watervliet as well. Unfortunately, only a small amount of the medicine related fragments could be identified down to a specific product. Of those one even included a “remedy” advertised in some papers to cure sexual incapacities! Many of these cures contained large amounts of alcohol, such as “Lydia Pinkham's Blood Purifier” (20%). “Duffy's Malt Whiskey,” a thinly veiled alcoholic beverage, was also present at the site. Other alcohol-related artifacts such as wine bottles, wine glass stems, flasks, and champagne bottle fragments were found. Consumption of alcohol was highly discouraged in Shaker law (Table I).

Those attempting to portray Shaker life as “plain and simple” will almost always suggest that plain white ceramics were in the majority, if not entirely exclusive in Shaker homes. Utilizing both the remains from the dwelling house site and a large collection of ceramics stored at the Meeting House I sought to observe the decorations and compare them to at least a couple contemporary sites. These comparisons suggest that ceramics at Shaker sites were not significantly “plainer” than contemporary ones. Higher expense decorations such as transfer-print, flow blue, and hand painting were all present at noticeable frequencies. A number of porcelain fragments were recovered that represented a wide array of decorations.

David Starbuck also highlighted some of the more fanciful and “unexpected” items found during his work. Among these were a heart shaped pin, a set of falseteeth, and pieces of perfume bottles. The sample of items at Canterbury was far greater than at Watervliet, but regardless, were any such items
found at the latter? Some of the personal items included a machine-made thimble and what appeared to be the base of a perfume or cologne container. Also included in the assemblage was evidence of Victorian era pleasures such as numerous flower pot fragments and bathroom tiles.

![Figure 15: Base of a perfume or cologne bottle.](image)

It increasingly appears as if Starbuck's original observations at Canterbury provide a solid predictive model for other Shaker locations. Shaker material culture was not as plain as some would like to believe. In fact, archaeology of the Shakers does not seem to be that radically different from the archaeology of nineteenth-century American sites in general. Just like people of the outside world the Shakers consumed large amounts of patent medicines, ate from decorated ceramics, and discarded their refuse in the yards around their dwellings. It is my hope that my work with the Shaker Heritage Society provides them with a better understanding of their archaeological resources and provides others with a better understanding of Shaker life. Perhaps as time goes on there will be an increased interest in the Shakers and archaeologists may begin to investigate deeper and more complex issues at the wide range of Shaker communities across the eastern United States.
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