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**VICTORIAN VIEWS:
STEREOGRAPHS OF THE MT. LEBANON SHAKER
COMMUNITY, 1865-1895**

by
Judith Ann Livingston

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master
of Arts with a major in Early American Culture

Summer 1999

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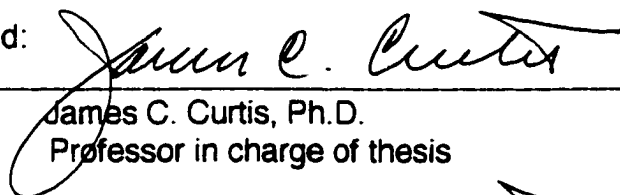
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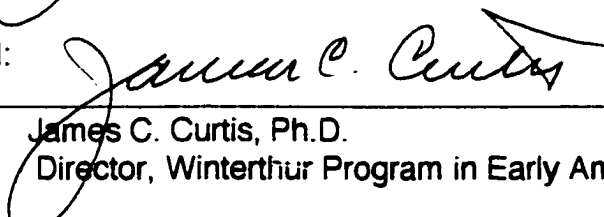
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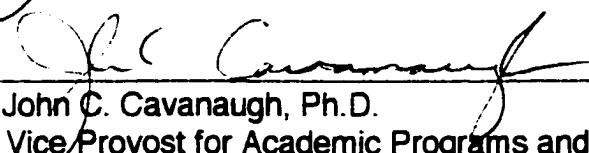
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This manuscript is dedicated to my family, fiancé, and friends. Thank you all!

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ABSTRACT

Hundreds of stereographic views exist showing almost all of the known Shaker villages of the late nineteenth century. One hundred thirty-one of these images feature the Mt. Lebanon, New York, Shaker community. Even though the subject matter of these objects was engineered and designed by the Shakers, and then sold to the visiting public, very little research has been done to explore why they exist. Unlike the more lucrative and well-known Shaker chairs, dusters, herbs, and fancy work, stereographic views were not made by Shaker hands and yet they did equally as much to advertise the religious society to the rest of the nation.

By focusing on the stereographs of the lead community of Mt. Lebanon and exploring the subject matter of these objects, it was possible to see what the Shakers were willing to show of themselves to the outside world. Growing issues within the society, like the sharp decline in membership occurring throughout the later nineteenth century, may have prompted their production. Evidence suggests that the most probable and

significant purpose of the stereographic views of the Mt. Lebanon Shaker village was for them to serve as propaganda. Using the popular stereographs as tools meant that the Shakers would be able to access and present themselves to parts of American society that they never would have been able to reach otherwise. The sale of these items to visitors, at the same time that personal possession of these objects by the individual Shakers was denied, appears to have only been condoned because of the hope they offered of attracting new members.

The United Society of Believers, more commonly known as Shakers, has been the subject of considerable interest in both the world of historians and material culture enthusiasts ever since Edward Deming Andrews and his wife Faith published the first modern scholarly treatises on the subject.¹ Although the Andrews' works remain important sources of information in Shaker studies sixty years later, their sympathetic approach to the material, and apparent refusal to consider the period of Shakerism after 1850, set the precedent for later publications on everything from Shaker cooking to Shaker furniture. Included among these varied published topics is the photography of the Shakers and their villages. Because modern public interest has dictated subject matter, portraiture and specific art photographic collections showing the 'inner' side of the Shaker communities have received the most attention. The less spectacular images of buildings, scenery, and groups of Shakers—like those found in stereographic views—have been ignored or relegated to the role of mere carriers of evidence,

¹ The Andrews were prolific writers. Some of their pioneering works include Edward D. Andrews, The Community Industries of the Shakers, (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1933); Edward Deming Andrews, The People Called Shakers: A Search for the Perfect Society, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); Edward Deming and Faith Andrews, Religion in Wood: A Book of Shaker Furniture, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1966); Edward Deming and Faith Andrews, Shaker Furniture: The Craftsmanship of an American Communal Sect, (New York: Dover Publications, 1950); Edward D. Andrews, The Gift to Be Simple: Songs, Dances and Rituals of the American Shakers, (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1940); Edward Deming and Faith Andrews, Visions of the Heavenly Sphere: A Study in Shaker Religious Art, (Charlottesville: Published for The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum by the University Press of Virginia, 1969); Edward Deming and Faith Andrews, Fruits of the Shaker Tree of Life: Memoirs of Fifty Years of Collecting and Research, (Stockbridge, MA: The Berkshire Traveler Press, 1975).

thereby making the lost historical value of the image more meaningful than the purpose of the object itself. By using the popular stereographic views of the Mount Lebanon Shaker village produced between 1865 and 1895 as individual mediums of presentation marketable to the public, the Shakers tried to reach a potentially receptive national and international Victorian audience. Although there are a number of possibilities as to why these views exist, this author would argue that the most significant purpose of the Shaker stereographs was to stem the tide of apostates leaving the religious society and increase the dangerously lagging membership that was threatening the ability of the Shakers to live communally within the tenets set by their founder Ann Lee.

The foremost publications on the specific topic of photography and the Shakers, including The Shaker Image by Elmer Pearson and Julia Neal, and, more recently, A Shaker Family Album: Photographs from the Collection of Canterbury Shaker Village by Scott Swank and David Starbuck, have generally received the same simplistic and sympathetic treatments as the earlier Andrews' works. The Shaker Image, which was first published in 1974, was originally attempted as an effort to collect, preserve, and present to the public photographs of all of the Shaker villages, many of which were deteriorating at a dangerous rate.² The articles and captions pertaining to these photos offered general historical information on the subject matter of each, confirming that in this case, the

² Elmer R. Pearson and Julia Neal, The Shaker Image, (Boston:New York Graphic Society in collaboration with Shaker Community, Inc., 1974).

photographs were existing merely as pictorial representations of documentary evidence. When this same book was reprinted in 1995, the captions were updated and a biographical index was added, but the point and overall scope of the book remained the same. Only the preface to this second edition, written by Dr. Magda Gabor-Hotchkiss, suggested that the professionally taken photography shown in the book had an actual purpose. She writes that photos:

...Provide vivid proof that the Shakers, far from being only reluctant or passive subjects of the photographs, actively embraced this new medium (as they did other technologies throughout their history). They used it to their own advantage: 'internally' to document events, appointments, and different aspects of their villages, and 'externally' to present their way of life to the outside world."³

The Shaker Image covers almost all of the villages, and all of the known photographic mediums that were used to record the Believers, including ambrotypes, tintypes, stereographic views, and images made with wet collodion glass plates, dry glass plates, and eventually, strip film.

The second of the two books on photography and the Shakers, A Shaker Family Album: Photographs from the Collection of Canterbury Shaker Village, focuses on a single village in Canterbury, New Hampshire. Although the essays are general, the organization of the book is significant. Two chapters focus on stereographic views and postcards as individual

³ Elmer R. Pearson and Julia Neal, The Shaker Image, Second edition (Pittsfield, MA: Hancock Shaker Village, Inc. 1994-95), p. v.

mediums of presentation marketable to the public, while the remaining chapters look at the subject matter of the photography. Most of the photographs date from the early twentieth century, when the total number of members and villages had decreased dramatically from its high in the early nineteenth century.

While all of the villages participated in stereograph consumption at some level, the lead ministry at Mt. Lebanon Shaker village in Mt. Lebanon, New York appears to have been one of the most active participants. Because of their position as the leading religious authority for the other Shaker villages throughout New England and the mid-West, effectively dictating to all others what was acceptable behavior, Mt. Lebanon serves as an excellent case study to consider how, why, and if the Shakers used photography, and particularly stereographic views, to their benefit.

At their most basic, stereographs are cards 3.5 or 4 inches tall, 7 inches wide, and approximately one eighth of an inch thick. Two photographic images are mounted on the cards, each just slightly different from the other. This stereographic view (Figure 1) shows Brethren and Sisters, separated by sex, sitting next to each other on a set of steps. Although it is a little difficult to see, note how the bottom of the dress of the Shaker sister at the very far left of these images is completely visible in the right-hand photograph, and just slightly cut off in the left-hand photograph. When you inserted a card like this into a viewer, or stereoscope, one version of which is shown here (Figure 2), and looked through the viewing hood, the two images were combined and a three dimensional effect was

created.

Many of the stereographs have printing on the front of the colored mounts identifying the photographer and the subject matter. Often, the views were taken as part of a larger series encompassing a single theme. Lists of the views contained in these series can be found on the back sides of the cards. Owners, both Shaker and non-Shaker wrote names, dates, and notations there as a method of preserving the information contained therein. Of the two examples shown here, the one (Figure 3) lists Shaker views as part of a larger selection of local landmarks, including Catholic and Congregational religious structures. The series by photographer A. J. Alden (Figure 4) lists only views of Shaker subjects. Lists like these offer a number of insights into what exactly the Victorian public wanted to see.

Dating stereographic views, like those taken of the Shakers, has traditionally been the most difficult aspect of studying these objects. Sometimes the buildings or people pictured in the images help to locate them within a specific time frame. Occasionally, the colors of the cards can also help to distinguish the dates of manufacture which are today sometimes difficult to determine thanks to the common Victorian photographer's practice of continually reprinting and reviving older negatives. The card stocks range in background color from dark grey or black to orange, red, pink, or green. Pastel colored lightweight mounts generally indicate an earlier production date, while buff-cream, greyish black and the bright colors on heavier mounts suggest a date of post-1885. By the late 1890s, the higher quality heavy card stock with its mounted

stereographs was slowly replaced by less expensive lithograph cards.⁴

The shape of the mounted photography also helps indicate dates of production with squared views tending to be earlier than curved examples. However, these factors are fallible as many photographers also used old, leftover card stock and square mounts throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. All of these identifying aspects offer insight into the existence and content of these views. A disclaimer does need to be made that the analysis of this group of 131 Shaker stereographs, which will be discussed in depth later on in this paper, does not take into account their dates. According to notations made in Shaker journals and records, and the public trends in photography of the period, it is reasonable to assume that all of the stereographic images were made between the years 1868 and the late 1890s.

In order to understand why the Shakers may have chosen this medium through which to present themselves to the Victorian public, it is necessary to appreciate the importance these objects had to their owners. Ever since the 1851 Great Exhibition in England, where the stereoscope and stereographic views had attracted the notice of Queen Victoria, her obvious enjoyment of the instrument and pictures had given it the official sanction. Overnight, the scope and views became a sensation. As a result, the stereograph as an entity reached a popularity in America that was unparalleled by any other fad in the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1862, millions of views were available showing thousands of subjects.

⁴ Jenkins, p.19.

So why exactly were these stereographic views of the Mt. Lebanon Shaker community produced? Why did the Shakers use this particular method of presenting themselves to the public? Did the Shakers have much say in how they were viewed through this medium? Considering the society's extensive hold on all other daily aspects of village life, it seems likely that the answer would be yes.⁵

In the years following the Civil War, from 1865-1900, the United Society of Believers was not immune to the changes sweeping the country as the nation struggled to heal the wounds caused by the divisive war between the North and the South. The war brought a rational awakening to Americans, and while there were some manifestations of a religious revival, the overwhelming influences on society stemmed from tangible ideas and scientific discoveries. The spiritual fervor that had guided the nation in the 1830s and 1840s had given way to the enlightened and the sublime: the Victorian way of life. With this way of life came increased industrialization and technology, and significant stylistic changes in the production and presentation of material culture, much of which directly affected the

⁵ For the purposes of this paper, a general history of the Shakers will not be given. There have been many excellent works published on the subject of history and doctrine. For the most comprehensive overview of the religious group see Stephen J. Stein, The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). See also Priscilla J. Brewer, Shaker Communities, Shaker Lives, (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1986) and Marguerite Fellows Melcher, The Shaker Adventure, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941) for two successively earlier perspectives on Shaker history which effectively illustrate the evolution of scholarship on this subject.

everyday lives of those living in both urban and rural areas. This included the small, religious communities of Shakers.⁶

Since the gathering of the United Society of Believers in the 1780s in America, the Shakers had earned a living by absorbing the property of converts, and manufacturing items for both internal use and sale to the outside world. Early on, Shaker produced items became recognized for their clean lines, excellent craftsmanship, and simple interpretation of current fashion. Modern collectors of Shaker material culture praise the "Shaker" style, even though Mary Lynn Ray, in her article "A Reappraisal of Shaker Furniture and Society" noted of early production that, "The furniture that the believers turned out [between 1800–1815] was simple but not dissimilar in form to manufactures of the world." She does qualify this point by noting that fine craftsmanship, like that practiced by the Shakers, was in contemporary society reserved for high style items only.⁷

Most of the literature published on Shaker-produced material culture, particularly furniture, has dealt with the "classical" period prior to the Civil War. After that, Shaker design changed:

The period of classical Shaker design came to a close in the 1860s, as a younger generation of Shaker craftsmen began incorporating decorative elements associated with the worldly

⁶ Kenneth Ames, Death in the Dining Room & Other Tales of Victorian Culture, in the series American Civilization, Allen F. Davis, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992) , pp. 1-6.

⁷ Mary Lynn Ray, "A Reappraisal of Shaker Furniture and Society," Winterthur Portfolio, 8 (1973) , 113.

furniture style of the Victorian period. The embellishments of the Victorian Era infiltrated not only elements of Shaker furniture, but also architecture, clothing styles and interior furnishings.⁹

The objects produced in the years between 1860 and 1900 are inexplicable to many scholars, and have until recently been ignored or dismissed as products of a corrupted Shaker aesthetic. Even histories of the Victorian period tend to be more explanation and less analysis, although additional works are beginning to appear.⁹ Although some of the stylistic embellishments of the Victorian period became integral to the Victorian Shaker manufactures, just as with the earlier "classical" style, "... the believer basically reduced the Victorian to its essential idea."¹⁰ While some claim that even a minimal adoption of this style indicated a decrease in orthodoxy, others have seen it as merely an adaptation of current fashion in the acceptable line of Shaker tradition."

The material culture of the Victorian period that was intended to

⁹ Erin M. Budis, Making His Mark: The Work of Shaker Craftsman Orren Haskins, (Old Chatham, NY: Shaker Museum and Library, 1997) , pp.12-13.

⁹ See John T. Kirk, The Shaker World: Art, Life, Belief, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997) , Ch. 9; and Stein, the end of Part 3 and beginning of Part 4, who does note in his preface that, "Those who pay little or no attention to Shakerism after the Civil War or during the twentieth century miss the obvious continuities within the experience,"(xiv).

¹⁰ Ray, p.124.

¹¹ Ray, pp.130-132; Beverly Gordon, " Victorian Fancy Goods: Another Reappraisal of Shaker Material Culture," Winterthur Portfolio, 25 (1990) , 129.

represent the communities in some way, especially those things either made or purchased and meant for sale to visitors, has been difficult to fit into the sympathetic and unwaveringly simplistic image that was created by early scholars and which developed out of the spiritual renaissance of the antebellum years. Stereographic views, in particular, are difficult to analyze within the "classic" framework because they were not made specifically by Shaker hands. Yet, they were offered for sale to tourists along with furniture and fancy goods as acceptable manifestations and representations of Shakerism at communities like that at Mt. Lebanon, New York. The question remains: why was this so?

The Mt. Lebanon Shaker village, organized originally as New Lebanon Shaker village in 1787, was at its largest point comprised of eight families and approximately five to six hundred persons. Located east of Albany, New York, it was one of nineteen villages and at least two exploratory settlements scattered from Maine to Florida, and west to Indiana.

Of the eight families at Mt. Lebanon, the largest was the Church Family, First and Second orders, which was comprised only of covenanted members. The Second order was also referred to as the Center family. Next was the "Order of Families" or "Junior" order, which was made up of the Second, the East, and the South Families, and then the "Novitiate" or "Gathering Order" which had the North Family, and the Families at Upper and Lower Canaan. Each of these Families had its own government of Elders, Eldresses and Trustees who formed the Ministry and answered to

the higher Ministry of the Mt. Lebanon Bishopric, which included the villages at Watervliet, New York, Hancock, Massachusetts, and at one point Groveland, New York. The higher Ministry at Mt. Lebanon also had the unique privilege of being the Lead Ministry of the entire Society, making it an excellent case study of the official directives being sent to all of the other villages in the society regarding everything from the use of suspenders to the possession of photographs. Each of these Families had their own buildings, their own economic support systems, and their own stores and catalogues from which to sell their goods.

The possible use of stereographic views by the Mt. Lebanon Shakers as a tool to market their faith to the American public would not have been surprising considering their long standing tradition of embracing new technology for the use and improvement of the Society. However, if this was indeed the case, contradictions in this policy appear almost immediately when it becomes apparent that while the sale of certain items—like stereographic views—to tourists was acceptable, the personal possession or use of photographs by individual Shakers was discouraged almost as soon as they became available to the American public. New ideas and scientific advancements were only adopted if it was felt that they did not threaten the basic tenets of Shakerism as set by Mother Ann Lee, the founder of the Shaker religion. These included the separation of the sexes, celibacy, and the policy of community property. When the leadership felt that the Shakers were becoming too worldly, the membership was notified to that effect. Such was the case with photography and

stereographs.

Stereographic views, created in England in 1838, had been perfected in France by the 1850s. As early as 1860 the Shaker Millennial Laws, which contained the guiding governing principals of the time, specifically mentioned that, "No pictures, paintings or likenesses, as Deguerotypes etc. set in frames, with glass before them shall ever be among you."¹² The specific mention of daguerreotypes, which was the first type of photographic image ever produced, indicates that these photographs, either individually or in stereo, must have become an issue within the village as they became more readily available to the general American population.

By 1873, thirteen years later, the internal desire for and use of photography at Mt. Lebanon Shaker village had become a tide that could not be stemmed. The argument was put forth via circular letter to all Shakers that the individual ownership of photographs was dangerous because they raised some people above others in importance, fostered "worldly affection, vanity, pride," and even "worldly lusts," and the purchase of them, along with the necessary fashionable album to keep them in, like the elaborate Shaker-owned versions in Figure 5, could eventually cost an individual village somewhere between 250-6000 dollars in the course of

¹² Pearson and Neal, Second edition, p.16 as quoted from "Rules and Orders for the Church of Christ's 2nd Appearing Established by the Ministry & Elders of the Chh. Revised & Reestablished by the Same. New Lebanon, N. Y. May 1860."

ten years (Appendix 1)¹³ .

The circular, apparently sent around to the other Families and communities shortly after it was written, had enough of an impact on members that at least two references to it appear in contemporary diaries and journals:

1873 Dec 7 Then came up the subject of pictures taken by way of Photographs, Daguerreotypes & Ferroptypes. It had been carried too far, and must be checked. None but those taken in scenery are approved of, all personal & individual, or groups of individuals not attached to scenery, must be given up to the Elders or destroyed.

(Watervliet, New York, Shaker village)¹⁴

1874 Jan 11 A Circular letter read, prohibiting the use of pictures of persons amongst Believers.

(Mt. Lebanon, New York, Shaker village)¹⁵

Even though the photography circular had been presented, and the former regulations of 1860 still stood, the Ministry's concerns on the subject appear to have been well founded. The Circular had specifically mentioned

¹³ "Circular Concerning Photographs, Daguerrreotypes, Ferrotypes, &c." November 1, 1873, Church Family, Mt. Lebanon. Acc. 9599. Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York.

¹⁴ Jerry Grant, "Notes Concerning the Shakers and Photography," unpublished manuscript. Reference from Watervliet Shaker village, "Records of the Church Containing the Principal Events Which Have Occured. Vol.III," V:B-338, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

¹⁵ Grant, "Notes...", Reference from Mt. Lebanon Shaker village, Joseph Bennet et al, "A Domestic Journal of Domestic Occurrences," V: B-71 Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio. Microfilm.

the troubles that could occur by allowing the Ministry of Elders and Eldresses leniency in the matter of either owning or sitting for photographs, by coveting some views of persons over others, and by individual members spending money on photographs to the detriment of the finances of the society as a whole. Perhaps the admonitions did have some short term effect on the membership. No references to personal expenditures on photography occurring close to the dates of the circular have been found at this point. Yet, within a few years, all that the Ministry had warned of came to pass. For example, members of the Ministry alone were receiving gifts of views from Ministry elsewhere, an issue which could have caused jealousy among other members:

Mar 6, 1880 No school, Boys dig around currant bushes
Cool N. W. wind, about frost or freeze. Views of Alfred [Maine],
came to El[dress] Matilda from El[dress] Harriet Goodwin,
2 for each lot of Elders in Society. It shows to good advantage.¹⁶

Individuals were spending what was supposed to be community money on photographs and picture frames:

Aug 1883 Nancy Dow & Sarah Cutler to N.Y. and
3 dollars worth of Photographs 37.00¹⁷

¹⁶ Daniel Crossman. Diary, Church Family, Mt. Lebanon, 1880. Acc. 19211, Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York, p.33.

¹⁷ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes Kept by the Sisters. Commencing January 1872," Church Family, Mt. Lebanon. Acc. 10453, Vol.105, Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York, p.84.

Jan 9 [1883] Pictures 1.10 [pd]¹⁸

Jan [1884] Picture Frames 1.30 [pd]¹⁹

May [1884] Photographs 3.00 [pd]²⁰

Sept [1884] Photos 9.25 Trinkets 1.75 [pd]²¹

Nov. 7 [1884] 2 Lanterns \$2.00 Picture Frame .50 2.50 [pd]²²

And, photographs were given to some individuals with the probable intention of remembering certain special people and places:

Oct 1883 Gave Laura Hutchings a large trunk full of close and Photographs. Express 30¢. 36.80²³

The American society surrounding the Shakers was difficult to keep at bay, especially when some things were accepted wholeheartedly while others were vehemently denied. The fine line between suitable and

¹⁸ "Canaan South Family Account Book 1864-1885," Upper and Lower Canaan Families, Mt. Lebanon. Acc. 7207, Vol.279, Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York, p. 166.

¹⁹ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes...", Acc. 10453, p.90.

²⁰ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes...", Acc. 10453, p.94.

²¹ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes...", Acc. 10453, p.98.

²² "Daybook, including references to the North, South, and Church Families, 1872-1895," Mt. Lebanon, New York. II: B-42 Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio. Microfilm.

²³ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes...", Acc. 10453, p.86.

unsuitable could, however, be occasionally repositioned, as with the subject of clothing. Brother H. L. Eads of South Union, Kentucky Shaker village wrote to Benjamin Gates of Mt. Lebanon in February of 1879 that:

I have regretted much to find that the Min.[istry] in their unbounded goodness & charity have yielded to the croaking demands upon them for this & that & the other indulgence, all of which seem to be bending to, or towards 'the fashions of the world which passeth away.'...As to the fashionable coats---I have one made now but am ashamed to wear it---All the unshakerish want them at once in order to be so much in the fashion...²⁴

As with clothing, the feelings regarding the internal use of photography had been made patently obvious. The answer was no...with some exceptions. In fact, at the same time that the Shakers were attempting to convince their membership that personal photography of any sort was undesirable, all of the Families at Mt. Lebanon were actively participating in the creation of stereographic views for external consumption.

The stereograph as an entity reached unparalleled popularity in America between about 1850 and 1860. For a time, from approximately 1860 to 1867, cartes de visite eclipsed stereographic views. By 1870

²⁴ H. L. Eads, Letter from H. L. Eads to Benjamin Gates, February 6, 1879. Benjamin Gates Correspondence, Box 24, Folder 10, Collection of New York State Library, Albany, New York.

however, the sales of stereographic views had once again increased.²⁵ It would be during this second wave of popularity that the Shakers as a whole would become involved.

From the 1860s until 1900, the production of stereographic views skyrocketed. Well-known stereograph scholar William Culp Darrah writes that:

...by 1862, within a single decade of stereo photography, there were photographers, manufacturers, stereographic emporiums, salesmen, promoters, and collectors....From this date onward the number of views produced is unbelievable—running into many, many millions. Estimates of the number of different views produced in the United States alone range from two million to five million, with the probable number somewhere between.²⁶

The three dimensional images produced by these views allowed the Victorian public, both rich and poor, to visit the world, participate in the Civil

²⁵ Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1839-1889, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964, reprinted from MacMillan Co., 1938) , pp. 184-185. For additional works on the history and impact of photography on world society during the nineteenth century see Gary Edwards, International Guide to Nineteenth-Century Photographers and Their Works: Based on Catalogues of Auction Houses and Dealers, (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1988); Heinz K. Henisch and Bridget A. Henisch, The Photographic Experience 1839–1914: Images and Attitudes, (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); William Welling, Photography in America: The Formative Years 1839–1900, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1978).

²⁶ William Culp Darrah, Stereo Views: A History of Stereographs in America and Their Collection, (Gettysburg: Times and News Publishing, Co., 1964) , p.8.

War, and explore the west.²⁷ Americans used the pictures to anticipate and plan a trip, they collected them during a trip as souvenirs and proof of their visit, and after the trip the views reminded the traveler of what they had seen.²⁸ They could visit the disasters, observe the comedic, and be amazed. Evidence suggests that the Mt. Lebanon Shakers wanted to take advantage of that awe and amazement, and use it for their benefit.

As railroads increased their coverage, and travel became an American pastime, many stereographs also featured and even created popular tourist destinations. Bill Jay, a professor at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, noted that:

The Victorians were on the move and 19th century landscape photography both reflected this spirit and fueled its desire. Tourism had begun, with all its benefits and banalities. Travel was no longer the preserve of peripatetic aristocrats and eccentrics, tourism...was now a major industry, with photography its faithful proselytizer.²⁹

This was certainly the case with the state of New York as it became a major tourist destination throughout the Victorian era. Thanks mainly to stereographic views, places like Niagara Falls, Saratoga Springs, and the grand hotels—formerly reserved for those with enough money to travel privately to those locations—suddenly became a part of public domain. Any

²⁷ Darrah, pp. 62-194.

²⁸ David Turner, Touring the World: 19th Century Travel Photographs: An Exhibition Organized By the Amarillo Art Center, (Amarillo, TX: By the Museum, 1981), pp. 5-7.

²⁹ Turner, p. 8.

person, from the most distant state, or from the poorest slum in New York city, could see the grandeur of the playgrounds of the wealthy, and visit the awe inspiring falls through their scopes. The back of one view of Niagara Falls even specifically noted that stereographs brought people, "Around the World without leaving your home—just like being there."³⁰ A regular picture merely showed a place. A stereographic view transported the viewer to that place and made them a part of the scenery where they too could lean breathlessly towards the rushing water or stand in the shadow of grand Victorian architecture.

Views of New York state became increasingly more popular with the improvement in transportation brought about by the increased railroad access to locations around the state. Travel became cheaper and faster, and tourists from all economic levels of society flocked to see the places that they had already experienced in their parlors with their stereoscopes. The Mt. Lebanon Shakers were aware of the new rail lines and noted their existence in journals:

12, Fri [February, 1869] The Albany Express reports the New Lebanon R. R. Finished, & leased to Bennington & Rutland R. R. Company.³¹

8th Ths. [December, 1870] A Company of eight men are engaged surveying Rail Road tunnel thro the mountain by

³⁰ New York State Stereoviews. Collection QM16512, Box 2. Envelope 19. New York State Library, Albany, New York.

³¹ "Records Kept By Order of the Church at New Lebanon, NY. Vol. III. 1856," Church Family, Mt. Lebanon. Acc. 10342, Vol.80, Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York, pp. NA.

Lebanon Springs. The object is to shorten the route between Pittsfield [Massachusetts] & Albany [New York] and the Boston & Albany Rail Road."³²

Even as technology and scientific discovery brought railroads and a culture of realism to the forefront of society, the Victorian curiosity about religion and spirituality as a contrast to science increased.³³ Books and articles of the late nineteenth century reflect this interest in the charismatic and communistic groups of the period, and often they included information on the Shakers, the Oneida of New York state (with whom the Shakers conducted business), the Amana, Rappites, and Harmonists. Men like Charles Nordhoff, author of The Communistic Societies of the United States: From Personal Observations written in 1875, toured these different communities and wrote of their experiences as guests, offering "insider" views both written and sketched, to a public that probably would not have been granted that privilege.³⁴ Other publications on the Mt. Lebanon Shakers include William Dean Howells's Three Villages³⁵ of 1884, where he looks at the Shirley, Massachusetts, and Mt. Lebanon, New York, Shaker

³² "Records...", Acc. 10342, Vol.80, pp. 515.

³³ Harold F. Jenkins, Two Points of View: The History of the Parlor Stereoscope, (Uniontown, PA: E. G. Warman Publishing, Inc., 1973) , p.14.

³⁴ Charles Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States: From Personal Observations, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875, Reprinted by New York: Dover Publications, 1966) , pp.117-255. For information solely on the Mt. Lebanon community see pp. 117-179.

³⁵ William Dean Howells, Three Villages, (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1884) , pp. 69-113.

communities; William Alfred Hinds's American Communities³⁶ of 1878; Benson John Lossing's Harper's New Monthly Magazine³⁷ article "Shakers" of 1857; "The Shakers in Niskayuna" article in Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly³⁸, and sundry articles in The Atlantic Monthly by the same Oliver Wendell Holmes who designed the "Holmes" model stereoscope pictured in Figure 2, and published some of the first American writings on stereographic views.

Shaker diary and business journal entries, written between 1865 and 1895, record and confirm this journalistic interest:

24 [May 1867] Tribune man here. Not give satisfaction.³⁹

18 [August 1868] Prince, Editor of N. Y. Observer here.⁴⁰

[December 13, 1869] Rich, Tribune Correspondent, here with Houghton, London Editor.⁴¹

³⁶ William Alfred Hinds, American Communities, (Oneida, NY: Office of the American Socialist, 1878).

³⁷ Benson John Lossing, "The Shakers," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, 15 (June to November 1857) , pp. 164-177.

³⁸ "The Shakers in Niskayuna," Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly, 20 (December 1885), pp. 663-665.

³⁹ Frederick Evans, North Family Journal, Mt. Lebanon, New York, 1848-1877. 10-DJ-010. Shaker Library, The United Society of Shakers, Sabbathday Lake, Maine, p. NA.

⁴⁰ Evans, 10-DJ-010, p. NA.

⁴¹ Evans, 10-DJ-010, p. NA.

[December 16, 1869] Take Daily Tribune to day.⁴²

5 Sat. [March 1870] One of the Editors and one of the Artists of "Leslie's Pictorial" of New York, comes here to make observations, take notes, make drawings, &c, &c to publish, concerning the Shakers.⁴³

[April 21, 1871] Receive an invitation to write an article for the County Gazette from Hamilton Childs.⁴⁴

Elder Frederick Evans of the North Family at Mt. Lebanon even goes so far as to note on September 25, 1871, "Excited time in the Newspaper world about the Shakers."⁴⁵

The combination of religious curiosity literature published about the Mt. Lebanon Shaker community by authors like Howells and Nordhoff; the increased access to New York state on the railroads by a new, wealthier middle class; and the location of the Mt. Lebanon Shaker village right near the popular Lebanon Springs and Columbia Hotel meant that the number of tourists visiting the village increased throughout the nineteenth century. Guide books, many published by railroad companies, flourished and became popular how-to's for visiting virtually anywhere in the state.⁴⁶

⁴² Evans, 10-DJ-010, p. NA.

⁴³ "Records Kept by Order of the Church....," Acc.10342, p.495.

⁴⁴ Evans, 10-DJ-010, p. NA.

⁴⁵ Evans, 10-DJ-010, p. NA.

⁴⁶ One example of this kind of book is by the Erie Railway Company, The Tourist. Containing by Authority a Complete and Official List of Combination Excursions, Routes and Rates of Fare via the Erie Railway for the Season 1872, (Philadelphia: S. A. George & Co., 1872.

Advertisements for the Springs and the Columbia Hotel were easy to find, and as early as 1836, authors were recommending a side trip to the Mt.

Lebanon Shakers:

NEW-LEBANON, situated in Columbia County, New York, about 25 miles from Hudson, is a place of great resort; numerous visitors are attracted thither during the summer months, some to visit the Lebanon Springs for the benefit of their health, others for pleasure and to see the Shaker settlement, about a mile from the Springs.⁴⁷

In 1875, a small guide pamphlet was published specifically on the famed Columbia Hall hotel and Lebanon Springs. The twenty-four page publication included sections on springs and baths, drives through the countryside, a brief historical sketch of the town of New Lebanon, and a whole article on the Mount Lebanon Shakers.⁴⁸ As late as 1895, these guide books were still touting the Shaker village as “worth visiting.”⁴⁹ Travel narratives by visitors who had done the tour through New York state,⁵⁰

⁴⁷ J. Disturnell, The Travelers Guide through the State of New-York, Canada, &c. Embracing a General Description of the City of New-York; the Hudson River Guide, and the Fashionable Tour to the Springs and Niagara Falls; with Steam-Boat, Rail-Road, and Stage Routes. Accompanied by Correct Maps. (New York: J. Disturnell, 1836) , p. 32.

⁴⁸ Gale Brothers, Columbia Hall, Lebanon Springs, Columbia County, N. Y., (Pittsfield, MA: Chickering & Axtell, 1875), pp. 5-24.

⁴⁹ New York Central & Hudson River Railroad, Health and Pleasure On “America's Greatest Railroad” 1895., (New York: George H. Daniels, 1895) , pp. 196-197.

⁵⁰ Daniel Wise, Summer Days on the Hudson: The Story of a Pleasure Tour from Sandy hook to the Saranac Lakes., (Cincinnati: Nelson & Phillips, 1876) , pp. 200-203.

combined with stereographic views, created and catered to a formidable, growing and bustling tourist economy. It is probable that this body of curious visitors was the impetus for the 131 different known stereographic views that exist of the Mt. Lebanon Shaker village.

The form and assortment of Mt. Lebanon Shaker village stereographic views is significant, although at first glance, many of the images seem similar.⁵¹ Of the 131 known views of the Mt. Lebanon community, twenty-one show general images taken from a distance. Rolling hills and mountains can be seen in the backgrounds, along with vistas of the extensive vegetable gardens and fields owned by the Shakers. Clusters of buildings situated on the flat, cultivated valley stand out against the mountainous background, and wide dirt roads lined with zig-zag fences draw the viewer down straightaways and around curves from the wild forest to the welcoming village beyond. Images taken from atop one of the surrounding mountains show the clusters of buildings belonging to the different Families nestled along the main thoroughfare. Very little of the noisy outside Victorian commercial world interrupts these twenty-one scenes.

Figure 6 is representative of this group. The viewer sees the Church

⁵¹ All of these views have been taken from collections at the Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York; the Shaker Library, United Society of Shakers, Sabbathday Lake, Maine; the Sherman Stereograph Collection at Canterbury Shaker Village, Canterbury, New Hampshire; the New York State Library at Albany, New York; the New York State Museum, Albany, New York; the Edward Deming Andrew Shaker Collection, the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum and Library, Winterthur, Delaware; and the library at Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

Family at the Mt. Lebanon Shaker village from behind a stone wall, and across a cultivated field. The scene is a prosperous one and the Shakers obvious control over their surroundings is made evident by the sharp-edged boundaries of the varied crops. The field and gardens are level and smooth, and each item has its own designated place. At the far side of the image buildings rise up from the level plain. They are large, well-maintained and numerous. Even rows of young trees line the road that cuts through this Family's settlement. The quiet of this three dimensional image and the perspective used by the photographer evoke a peaceful feeling potentially reminiscent of the heaven on earth the Shakers were purported to have built. At the same time, there is an intentional sense of mystery in all of the views in this group that possibly could have made people want to discover the secrets hidden within the village for themselves.

Other stereographic views take the observer closer to the village, and to the fringes of the outdoor spaces of the eight Mt. Lebanon Shaker Families. The twenty-five images in this category show streetscapes on a much more personal level and closer inspection reveals that the same wide, dirt roads that could be seen in the distance views are indeed carefully lined with young trees, picket fences, sidewalks, and solidly framed buildings. In these pictures the perspective of the photographer, and as a result the viewer, allows observation of but not access to the work that is being conducted therein. In one image, Brethren from the Second Family can be seen toiling with horses and wagons to move heavy objects while a group of Shaker Sisters looks on. Another shows a wagon carrying

members of the Church Family. Three large buildings stand in the background. One of them has what appears to be an industrial smokestack, identifying it as the community laundry. Other pictures show a large gathering of wagons in front of the arched-roofed Meeting house—one of a row of buildings shown facing the street—identifying it as a building of some importance. In an additional image a large canopied tree and street sign serve as the focal point of a crossroads.

One of these images, taken from a field area, looks toward the North Family buildings which stand no more than a few hundred feet away through the brush and trees (Figure 7). Once again the Shaker buildings are pictured as large and well kept. The hint of an organized garden can be seen in the brush. Hills rise up in the hazy distance, and a fence cuts diagonally across the entire view, effectively separating the viewer from the village. The implication almost seems to be that in order to get “inside” the physical village, one would have to cross that physical barrier. Note that anything of interest and value, any of the bounty of the Shaker village from the fruitful gardens to the secure, warm buildings is found beyond the fence. From the side where the viewer is “standing”, witnessing the scene, and in fact participating with the help of the stereoscope, there is nothing but grass. In this image, perhaps the fence represents a spiritual barrier too. The Victorian viewer is an outsider, a member of the as yet unenlightened non-Shaker public.

This interpretation is further supported by a stereographic view of Shaker Elder Daniel Crossman who is shown leaning against a tree,

surveying the numerous Church Family buildings before him with an air of casual possession (Figure 8). Although his gaze is on the village and away from the viewer so that his face is not entirely visible, his relaxed pose belies the worldly journalistic accounts occasionally circulated that the Shakers as a group were rigid and grim. The clothing he wears looks comfortable and clean, and the basket he carries indicates that not all of the work necessary to maintaining a communal society was onerous. In direct contrast to Figure 7, here, there are no fences separating this Brother from the buildings beyond. It is as if the viewer can only be allowed access to the world ahead with the help and companionship of a spiritually confident Shaker like the one shown here.

Twenty-nine stereographic views of the Mt. Lebanon Shaker village also focus specifically on single buildings, and often those which would have had some corresponding product or reputation in the world outside the Shaker villages. They include two views of the Center Family Herb House, and one each of the Center Family Dwelling house, the South Family Office Store, and the Second Family Office Store. One stereographic view of the pre-Shaker Bishop house at the Church Family, where the society's founder Mother Ann supposedly spoke, can also be found here. Two images of the North Family stone barn, two looking at the North Family granary from the roof of the stone barn, and one of the North Family Dwelling house round out this group. There are also three stereographs of unidentified buildings.

Figure 9 shows one of four views of the post-1875 Church Family

Dwelling house which was built after a massive fire burned down the previous one. The building recalls what modern viewers might think of as institutional architecture; the sort that might be found on a nineteenth- or twentieth-century college campus. Instead of the more traditional wood framed and straight-fronted Dwelling Houses of an earlier era, this newer interpretation of a Shaker architectural aesthetic takes into account the prevailing Victorian influences of the period. Shaped like a cross, with a protruding front entrance facade, this Dwelling House exhibits the numerous, large windows that Victorian reformers felt were necessary to maintain the proper amount of ventilation and light imperative to live a healthy and fruitful life. Three different styles of fences can be seen around the building, and new, young shade trees dot the scene. These massive Shaker dwelling houses were fascinating to a Victorian public in the midst of developing their own ideas of privacy and the home, and as a result, would have been appealing.

In another image, a group stands proudly under the arch of what must have been a recently built or renovated building (Figure 10). A datestone indicates a completion date of 1881. All of the Shakers shown here are dressed in traditionally conservative clothing very different from the prevailing decorative and elaborate Victorian clothing of the time. Unlike the casual Elder Daniel Crossman in Figure 8, these Shakers are more formally posed. Yet, they still evoke a casual sense of place and belonging.

Images of herb shops, dwelling houses, office stores, and the great stone barn would have been recognizable to outsiders because those were

the spaces that would have been most frequented by guests, and most illustrated in magazines and newspapers. It therefore makes sense that these were the chosen subjects of views intended for public consumption. In fact, the Trustees office/store was a building specifically designed with visitors in mind. Guests could sleep and eat there, and purchase evidences of their visit, including stereographic views. The stereograph in Figure 11 shows an 1890s view of the Church Family store. Shaker products such as chairs, pails, fancy work, dusters, medicines and dried herbs were also sold there. In 1898, the Sisters of the North Family at Mt. Lebanon made \$115.70 from "Books, Magazines, and Photographs [stereographic views]; \$71.98 from dusters; and \$79.02 from "Sauce, Jelly, Meats" by selling them to visitors. They made even more money by charging for "Girls' Board," with profits of \$154.00; "Board for Transient Visitors" earned \$41.20; and meals, \$123.60.⁵² In 1873, the Church Family store had earned the members of that Family the impressive sum of \$3813.80 for the year in revenue.⁵³ A rare view of an interior space shows the display room of the South Family's chair factory (Figure 12). A Victorian woman, distinct in her dress, can be seen surveying the products while a Shaker Sister looks on. Shaker-woven rag rugs line the walls while Shaker-manufactured chairs and footstools of all shapes and sizes, covered and uncovered, fill the floor. Supplying guests with their basic needs of food and a place to sleep was a

⁵² "North Family Day Book Sisters' Accounts 1895-1902," North Family, Mt. Lebanon. Acc. LIB88.1.6, Vol.256, Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York, p. 60.

⁵³ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes...", Acc. 10453, Vol. 105, pp.6-7.

lucrative business. Supplying them with goods was even more so.

Images of certain structures appealed to visitors for a variety of reasons. The buildings were notably large perhaps, or new, or of a different design. Through Shaker eyes, all visitors were potential converts, so it made sense to focus on the most interesting aspects of the village—at least those that they were willing to show. For instance, images of the exterior of the North Family's great stone barn attracted notice because it was the largest in the state for many years (Figure 13). By far the most popular views, however, of the Mt. Lebanon Shaker village in this group of twenty-nine images are those showing the exterior of the Meeting House. Eight stereographs were of this one structure. One of these, shown in Figure 14, gives an idea of the scale of the building. A group of men, dwarfed by the large door, can be seen standing at the entryway of the Meeting House. Visitor wagons and carriages crowd the streets. One observer wrote of the attraction of the Shaker worship services:

As you approach the Shaker settlement, every intersecting road pours in a stream of curious pleasure-seekers from other cities and the adjoining towns...It becomes a race as the cortège nears the goal, for the meeting-house will not hold one-half of those who have come. Early arrivals are at a premium...Going to Shaker meeting is a holiday excursion and picnic to the great mass. As you drive through the splendid avenue of approach, cut through a quarter mile of beautiful forest, horses are seen picketed, omni-buses drawn in a line, hampers brought forth, kegs of liquid rolled in place and on tap.⁵⁴

A more notable event occurred on Sunday, September 13 , 1874 "Sb. 13

⁵⁴ "The Shakers in Niskayuna," pp. 663-665.

Meeting without visitors!!!”⁵⁵ To the Shakers, the Mt. Lebanon Church Family Meeting House was the spiritual hub for the society; to the visitors, it was often merely the place where the Shakers’ curious form of dancing and singing worship occurred.

The last group of stereographic images of exterior spaces includes only five views. In the years following the Civil War, when the famous Shaker Elder Frederick Evans of the North Family predicted that, “...a religious awakening will commence gradually, that will spread finally far and near and that through its agency there will be a drawing towards Believers—a gathering will begin,”⁵⁶ the Mt. Lebanon Shakers developed a kind of outdoor meeting space. Comparable to those used by the religious camp meetings sprouting up around the country, outdoor gathering sites made the spiritual experience more organic. Many religions found it easier to gather converts when there was no intimidating church building.

“The Grove”, a space of quiet, natural, communal Shaker worship, was the site of four of these views. Because pictures of the religious services in the Meeting House were not allowed, these views of an outdoor religious service with men and women in Shaker dress soberly and quietly sitting on opposite sides of the grove from each other served to further whet the public’s appetite for Shakerism, offering them a permanent taste of the

⁵⁵ Anna Dodgson, “A Domestic Journal kept by Order of Deaconesses in the Family Church Mt. Lebanon Columbia Co. N.Y.” 1873 - 1879. Acc. 10462, Vol.126, Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York, p. 23.

⁵⁶ Evans, 10-DJ-010, p. NA.

fleeting memory of Shaker worship, and one that they could take home. The remaining image of the five is of a group of Shakers at an actual Methodist camp meeting at Lake Pleasant, New York. Other than indicating to the viewing public that Shakerism was openly accepting of those from all religious denominations, there are few conclusions that can be drawn at this point in the research about the purpose of this view as anything other than documentary.

All of the images that have been discussed so far have focused on the carefully crafted Shaker built landscape: the exteriors of their overall property, Shaker Family spaces, and individual buildings. The remainder of the stereographic views use buildings as a backdrop for the men and women who made up the Mt. Lebanon Shaker community.

In the next twenty-seven views, groups of three or more Shakers sit and stand together in front of buildings or groves of trees. All different combinations of members exist, with individual pictures containing only Sisters or Brethren, or mixes of young and old, and great and small.

Women, predominant at Mt. Lebanon, made up the majority of the groups being photographed. During the second half of the nineteenth century, when a decline in membership was becoming a critical issue to many Shaker leaders, women far outnumbered the men. In the early years of Shakerism, whole families had joined the ranks at a time. Mothers and fathers had signed the Shaker covenant along with aunts, uncles, cousins, sons and daughters. In doing so, they relinquished their natural family ties and adopted the titles of communal Brethren and Sisters.

Later changes in the public sphere meant that fewer whole families joined at once. Women and men, abandoned by their husbands, wives, or families, brought their children where they knew they would be taken care of. After all, children raised in the Shaker way were not actually able to become true members until their twenty-first birthdays, when they were given the option of signing the Shaker covenant. In the years before that event, uncovenanted potential members—like children—were fed three meals a day, taught a trade, and provided with housing, clothes, health care, and an education. Any child that had not been formally apprenticed could leave when they wished. Some parents even sent their children to the Shaker villages for the sole purpose of relieving their own personal burden of feeding and educating them. The Shakers took these young people in in the hopes that perhaps they would stay. More often than not, they left.

Shaker leaders bemoaned the loss of so many of the previously faithful, and the falling numbers affected the way that Shaker villages like Mt. Lebanon functioned as communal societies. In January of 1871, a member of the Church Family acknowledged these difficulties:

27 Fri. For the first time in the history of the Chh at Mt. Lebanon, since it has been gathered into gospel Order, We have to hire a Shoemaker to come & take measurements & make shoes for the family. This [paucity] of numbers, & want of help is owing to so many of the young people falling away & going back to the world.⁵⁷

Other quotes from similar accounts, both earlier and later than this example,

⁵⁷ "Records...", Acc. 10342, Vol.80, pp. 524.

illustrate the lengths to which the Mt. Lebanon community was willing to go to improve the numbers:

May 22 [1868, Church Family] Benjamin Harris, a youth of about 16 y. ran away to day, he is the last one, of a company of boys taken from the Reform School in Rhode Island. This is a failing experiment, may it never be repeated, under any circumstances.⁵⁸

Dec 31 [1869] The North Family have spent within the year \$1208.86 in Missionary Labors and \$1000 in time and \$1000 on the visitors coming and going. \$3208.86⁵⁹

The final blow to the Mt. Lebanon Shakers came in the form of sweeping legislative reforms in New York state and the implementation of Victorian social systems. Since the formal organization of the United Society in America, the main source of young people and potential converts to the village had always been through the acceptance of orphans. In 1871, a member of the Church Family noted in the journal:

30 M. There is a Bill introduced into our State Legislature, which so far as we have been made acquainted with its provisions we understand is to prevent charitable and religious societies from indoctrinating the children whom they adopt into the principle of any religion contrary to that of their parents.— May we not expect, next, the Spanish Inquisition?⁶⁰

This Bill, specifically aimed at the Shakers, would have effectively eliminated all hope of introducing young people to the tenets of Shakerism. Because the society believed in celibacy, it would have been a rare event to

⁵⁸ "Records....," Acc. 10342, Vol.80, pp. 404.

⁵⁹ Evans, 10-DJ-010, p. NA.

⁶⁰ "Records....," Acc. 10342, Vol.80, pp. 524.

find a child with biological parents who were Shakers.

Perhaps in direct response to these issues, children figure prominently in many of these group stereographs. Images show girls and boys sitting inside, or standing in front of the Shaker school. In Figure 15, thirty girls of varying age pose at the front steps of the school. Some wear traditional Shaker dress. Most wear simple, serviceable, Shaker-made clothes. In order to take this picture, the photographer or a Shaker would have organized the youngsters carefully. Some stand stiffly with hands folded in front of them, while others carry books representative of their ongoing education. Victorians thought that smiling in a portrait or photograph indicated silliness. Only one little girl smiled for this stereographic view.

Occasionally, children can also be seen in the larger group stereographic views. Most of the images in this assemblage show men standing, usually with their distinctive wide-brimmed hats off, and women standing or sitting with their hands folded demurely in front of them on handkerchiefs in their laps, as if in Sunday worship. In more than one image Shaker Sisters act as the immediate subject of the picture, while one or two Brethren stand in the background visually confirming the demographic inequality. Pictures featuring Elders and Eldresses show them sitting in small groups, identified officially on the stereocards only as "Group Of Shakers" if at all.

The minimal identification of the Shakers featured in the stereographic views could suggest two things. If the choice to identify the

stereo cards was the photographer's, then perhaps he was acting in direct response to Victorian demand. If the consumers did not care who was who in the images then there would be no need to print anything more elaborate than "Group of Shakers." The series list found in Figure 3 illustrates this idea well. All three images of the society are identified merely as "Shaker Building," "Shaker Barn," and "Shaker School." Even the series by A. J. Alden in Figure 4 that focuses on the Mt. Lebanon community did not go into great detail. Here, the Believers are "Group in the Grove," "South Family Group," and "Stone Barn, North Family." However, considering the Victorian habit of writing in the names of the specific Shakers on the backs of their stereographic views, it seems reasonable to conclude that the consuming public would have liked more, and not less, identification. Figure 4 shows some of this owner notation. For the interior of the Church Family store, the owner wrote in script "Mary Hazard at left." Although it is possible that these notes occurred at a later date, the fact remains that at some point, someone felt it was necessary and desirable to write in additional information on these objects.

If the choice was the Shakers', and not the photographer's, then it makes sense that the descriptive phrases were kept at a minimum. As part of a community, the Believers were supposed to meld together as one united body. The singling out of specific Shakers was contrary to the tenets of the communal society. Although it was inevitable that some persons would be identified and known for a particular skill, the Ministry tried to prevent that by rotating Believers in their chores. Group photographs, like

those discussed previously, eliminated the individual by placing all of the subjects of the image in the same plane and under the same heading. Any singling out of a particular person for personal attention or favor was bound to be an issue at some point. The possession of special objects like books, clothes, or photography could also inspire jealousy. The Photography Circular of 1873 specifically noted the problems that the personal ownership of pictures caused:

2. The tendency of their use, in multitudes of cases, is to foster a worldly affection, vanity, pride, and even worldly lusts, by persons of both sexes, who have a fondness for each other, attaining each other's pictures, and carrying them about their persons, fondling them and kissing them as they would wish to do the person of whom the picture is taken, until their spirits are quite corrupted by worldly affections & lusts.⁶¹

In order to eliminate the individual and prevent these concerns from happening, instructions were sent out by the Ministry that all photographs [also known as stereographic views], Daguerreotypes, and Ferrotypes of either groups or individuals unconnected to the general village scenery, and owned by Believers, were to be destroyed.⁶² A later piece of writing in 1879 reiterated this point, emphasizing that "Our motto should be personalities absorbed by principles."⁶³

Instead of destroying the views, the Shakers starting acquiring more of them. They were perhaps able to justify this because the large numbers

⁶¹ "Circular Concerning Photographs," Acc. 9599.

⁶² "Circular Concerning Photographs,," Acc. 9599.

⁶³ Grant, "Notes....," Reference from The Manifesto 9 (1879) , 165.

of purchased stereographic views were intended for sale in the Shaker store and not for personal Believer use. Examples of these large scale purchases occurred soon after the Photography Circular of 1873 came out:

Augt 29 [1874] Paid for 11 Doz Photographs & 2 Scopes 19.50⁶⁴

Expenses of 1874. Bought Photograph Views for Store \$40.50⁶⁵

April 1st [1875] Pd for 16 1/2 Doz Photographs of J. Irvin 24.00⁶⁶

Expenses of 1876. Photographs for the Store \$22.30⁶⁷

Photographs 18.50⁶⁸

Oct [1882] 17 doz Photographs at 1.00 McDonall, Albany 17.00

14 doz Photographs 1.28 James Irving Troy 18.00

Express on both .55⁶⁹

Some of the group Shaker stereographic views targeted specific Victorian fascinations like health. Visitors, interested in the long life spans of the Shakers, read authors like Charles Nordhoff, who in his Communitistic

⁶⁴ "Second Family Sisters' Account Book, 1863-1885." Acc. 10352, Vol. 210, Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York, p. 45.

⁶⁵ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes...", Acc. 10453, Vol. 105, pp.8-11.

⁶⁶ "Second Family Sisters'...", Acc. 10352, Vol.210, p. 49.

⁶⁷ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes...", Acc. 10453, Vol. 105, pp. 15-17.

⁶⁸ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes...", Acc. 10453, Vol. 105, p. 25.

⁶⁹ "A Journal of Expenses and Incomes...", Acc. 10453, Vol. 105, p. 68.

Societies of the United States of 1875, specifically noted the average age and health of the members in his descriptions of each Shaker Village. He even goes so far as to list the extreme ages of the people who had died:

The health of this society [Harvard, Massachusetts] has always been good; the *average* age at death, I was assured, ranged for a great number of years between sixty to sixty-eight. One sister died at ninety-three, and other members died at from eighty to eighty-six.⁷⁰

Perhaps this explains the overwhelming public interest in Sister Dolly Sexton who appears in multiple group stereographic views. At the age of 106, she was often photographed with the oldest Shaker Brother, and the youngest girls and boys at the village. Printed writing on the back of one of the three different examples of the same stereographic view offers a rare explanation to the viewer:

This View Embraces the Two Oldest, and the Four Youngest members, in the Chh. Sister Dolly Sexton Born May 6th, 1776. Her Parents embraced Shaker principles in the spring of 1780. She has continued a Shaker ever since, which is nearly 100 years. Brother Rufus Crossman Born August 15th, 1798. The four youngest are from 6-8 years. This Photograph was taken Oct. 16th 1879. By A. J. Alden, Pittsfield, Mass.⁷¹

In 1882, mention was made of one of the popular local camp meetings, "M. 4 [September 1882] A camp meeting is being held at the grove Lebanon Springs. Last week Pic Nic excursions were held in town every day.

⁷⁰ Nordhoff, p.192.

⁷¹ Stereographic View SA 1523.3. The Edward Deming Andrews Shaker Collection. The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Library, Winterthur, Delaware.

Hundreds visited our settlement, and saw Dolly Sexton now 107 years old."⁷²

The photographers of the group views did not use perspective and height as much to their advantage as with the distance views. The group images of the Mt. Lebanon Shakers tend to be straight-on shots or side views. This seems logical considering that the majority of the photographers taking the stereographic images were trained in studio portrait photography, and not outdoor imaging. James Irving, by far the most prolific of the stereo photographers who took pictures of the Shakers, started off as a portrait daguerreotype photographer before he ventured into stereographs.⁷³

Of all of the stereographic views discussed so far, none have strayed from the directed rules in regards to subject matter. Out of the nine known views of Shaker pairs or individuals, the majority continued to follow the policies set by the Ministry at Mt. Lebanon that all images of people must be attached to building and scenery. There must have been some question as to who was spiritually capable of posing for these most dangerous photographs of individuals, because out of the eleven is included a view of Eldresses Hannah Wilson and Margaret [Larner?] of Canaan, four of the well-known Elder Frederick Evans of the North Family, Elder Alonzo

⁷² David Gill, "1878 A Domestic Journal Daily Occurances and Events kept by David Gill Beginning January 1st," 1878-1890. Acc. 8859, Vol.125, Emma B. King Library, Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, New York, p. 100.

⁷³ "Short Sketch of the Life of James Irving." From the folders pertaining to Collection 3358, Irving Papers. Collection of New York State Museum, Albany, New York.

Hollister of the Church, Elder Daniel Sizer of Canaan who hold in his hands a Shaker hat and a copy of The Shaker, one of an unidentified Shaker woman doing work, and one of the two young Shaker Sisters Emma and Sadie Neale, who were considered stellar examples of youthful, modern Shakers.

The stereographic view of Elder Daniel Sizer, seen here in Figure 16, is a stark and yet dignified stereographic view. In his left hand he holds the symbol of all Shaker men, the wide brimmed hat. In his right, he holds a copy of the society's missionary paper The Shaker, with the title prominently displayed. His clothes are simple, plain, and elegant. He sits in a Windsor chair painted in the Victorian style. Behind him, through an open door, is the inside of a room. This peek inside is one of the only ones allowed the viewing public. Just like Elder Daniel Crossman in Figure 8, this Elder seems to be saying that as a Shaker, you would be welcome to the inside. And, not just the inside of the buildings, but of heaven.

All of these photographs of pairs or individuals were taken outside Shaker buildings and within Shaker scenery. They are also—with only one known and one possible exception—all of Shaker Elders and Eldresses. These men and women had been confirmed into the highest levels of Shaker leadership. Their spirituality and devotion to the Society was undeniable. While other, less-avowed Shakers might have grown corrupted, covetous and vain as a result of being the sole subject of a stereographic view, members of the Ministry would have and should have seen it as their duty to pose for such items in order to fulfill their obligations

to provide visual confirmation of the highest spirituality possible, personified in themselves.

Out of the 131 views of the Mt. Lebanon Shaker community studied in this collection, 116 have been photographed outside of the Shaker buildings. The exteriors of these structures are what most visitors to the village saw. Yet, what the Victorian tourists wanted to see was not the carefully structured outsides, but the mysterious unknown interiors. Only fifteen stereographic views of Shaker interiors are known and they include three views of a Shaker dining room with the tables set, four interior photographs of the Shaker school where the students, mostly girls, sit reading at their desks, one image of Brother Robert Wagan who ran the extremely lucrative Shaker chair factory at the South Family, Elder Richard Bushnell sitting in a chair next to a table on which rests a large book, with Eldress Antoinette Doolittle in the background, and Eldress Antionette Doolittle by herself sitting in the same chair next to the same book. Three additional interiors show Brother Robert Wagan's showroom for the chairs from his South Family chair factory (Figure 12), the interior of the great stone barn at the North Family, the exterior of which has already been shown, and a view of the inside of the Church Family store, where shelves of fancy work, baskets and dusters can be seen for sale (Figure 11).

There is no doubt that during the second half of the nineteenth century, visitors flooded the village. Shaker journals and popular news magazines and papers recorded the same events. An occurrence like a funeral could draw very large crowds:

Sb 26 [October 1873] We have a public funeral at the Meeting House. A very large body of spectators, 420 in number.⁷⁴

In the end, the most interesting aspects of the Shakers to the majority of the visiting public were their quaint clothing, their communal living, and especially, their curious form of worship. A local Berkshire County, New York newspaper confirmed this when it wrote in August of 1879:

The Shakers are being photographed by Alden. He has made 25 or more negatives of groups, buildings and scenery in Lebanon, and the Shakers are to sell stereoscopic views to the hundreds who visit their settlements.⁷⁵

and in September of 1879:

Alden's Shaker views which are for sale at Nugent's newsroom, show groups of brethren and sisters in their quaint costumes and they will be interesting additions to stereoscopic collections. One group has Elder Evans in the center with leading members of the fraternity around him.⁷⁶

All of the stereographic views of the Mt. Lebanon Shaker village show the community in its best light. The "quaint" clothing and community living are evident in the views, but there is more to them than that. They show men and women who felt that they were spiritually superior to others, but they made that spirituality available to the viewer through the peaceful images of the community and prosperity. These people were skilled,

⁷⁴ Dodgson, "A Domestic Journal..." Acc. 10462, p. 59.

⁷⁵ Grant, "Notes...", Reference from "Town and Country," Berkshire County Eagle, 51 (1879) , 2.

⁷⁶ Grant, "Notes...", Reference from "Town and Country," Berkshire County Eagle, 51 (1879) , 2.

educated, healthy, and celibate. They lived on a higher plane. The decrease in membership, especially through the departure of apostates, was particularly troubling, and it shook the very foundation of the community. Why would people want to leave something that was supposed to be better? It made sense to the Shakers then to appeal to the outside world, to get their message out to others through images of themselves. A letter from a Shaker Eldress Asenath Stickney of the Canterbury Shaker community to Alonzo Hollister of Mt. Lebanon explains why she included photographs of the Shakers in her letter to Tolstoi along with the more traditional religious tracts:

My object in sending photographs was to illustrate more clearly what kind of characters could be evolved from Christian Communism after a long experience in practical purity. So I selected two brethren & two sisters as typical representatives.⁷⁷

Contemporary accounts of the Shakers by such well-known personalities as Charles Nordhoff, William Dean Howells, John Humphrey Noyes, and J. M. Peebles , combined with the available stereographic images, increasingly fueled public interest in the group as articles and books written about 'insider'"experiences at the Shaker villages appeared in literary publications and on bookstore shelves. If the popularity of these works was at all indicative of public interest, then what the tourists wanted to

⁷⁷ Grant, "Notes....," Letter from Asenath Stickney at Canterbury Shaker Village in New Hampshire to Alonzo Hollister at Mt. Lebanon Shaker Village, New York. IV: A-7. Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio. Microfilm.

see was not the small Shaker groups and building exteriors available in the views. Any visitor could see those. Instead, what the Victorians wanted to see were the insiders' views. They wanted to be able to see over and over again the Shaker dances and dwelling house interiors. Recall this previously discussed quote:

As you approach the Shaker settlement, every intersecting road pours in a stream of curious pleasure-seekers from other cities and the adjoining towns...It becomes a race as the cortége nears the goal, for the meeting-house will not hold one-half of those who have come. Early arrivals are at a premium...Going to Shaker meeting is a holiday excursion and picnic to the great mass.⁷⁸

For those who could not experience the event in person, a stereograph would have to do. In the privacy of their own homes, where they could let their imaginations roam, images of the Shaker dwelling house were the closest they could get to the actual meeting.

As discussed, the majority of the known views of Mt. Lebanon show only the building exteriors. In fact, there is not a single known marketed stereographic view of the Shaker worship and dances, even though visitors were allowed to watch the events in person. By showing something so personal of themselves, and not letting anyone photograph it, the Shakers were essentially controlling the way the public could think about and interpret the scenes in front of them. Research indicates that the Shakers were indeed controlling the content of their stereographic images. In fact, every time a photographer was in the village, it was noted in the society's

⁷⁸ "The Shakers in Niskayuna," pp. 663-665.

journals:

10, 11 [1869] Tue & Wed. An Artist by the name of James Irving is here taking various Photographs of Shaker Village Mt. Lebanon, he takes several from various points.⁷⁹

jul 10 [1879] Giles [Avery] goes with the Photographer "Hibbard" most of the day. We have taken in all, 27, pictures.⁸⁰

It would not be surprising then to find that the Shakers were trying to control the interpretation of the content of the stereographs too. Perhaps the Victorian tourists were fixated on seeing interior Shaker spaces in order to see how their own homes and lives measured up. If the Shakers had indeed found the way to a heaven on earth, then perhaps the public could create the same for themselves....if they could just see it.

That the Shakers were exerting control over the photographers and the subjects of the photographs there is no doubt. The fact that there are no interior views of private dwelling, working, and worship spaces further confirm this. The stereographs of the Shakers themselves, however, exhibit an amazing amount of cooperation on the community's part. After all, each of those views would have required the lengthy preparation of a photographic plate on the spot, and then ten to thirty seconds of open shutter developing time. This would have meant that every single view containing people would have had to have been posed, and allowed by the Shakers involved.

It is also no mistake that the stereographic views exhibit only the

⁷⁹ "Records....," Acc. 10342, Vol.80, pp. 436.

⁸⁰ Grant, "Notes....," Reference from Mt. Lebanon Shaker village. V: B-124. Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio. Microfilm.

publicly perfect side of the Shaker village, like the new buildings, the popular products and the wealthy, fertile lands. After all, they were trying to advertise themselves to a society of Victorian perfection and excess.

The question remains of why the Shakers not only condoned, but distributed these views in the face of so much fear and Ministerial disapproval over personal ownership by the Shakers themselves and the spending of community funds. The Mt. Lebanon Shakers were, in fact, buying many dozen views at a time to sell in their stores, and yet making little money from them. By putting their best face forward, even if it meant using a worldly method like stereographic views, the Shakers must have felt that if they could get their message and their ideals out there, if they could inspire even a few, then they could succeed. As radical Shaker Elder Frederick Evans wrote:

The world moves, and it moves in a certain direction, and if we would be Saviours unto it, we must go with it, understand & comprehend it. If by any means we can induce human beings to rise out of the animal order of generation, and to live the Angel life, let us do it.⁸¹

Although stereographic views were not made by the Shakers, it seems logical to conclude that their content was composed and created by them. The lack of images of personal interior spaces meant that the mystery of the society was maintained. Regardless, what the public wanted to see, the interior insider views, and what the Shakers were willing and desirous

⁸¹ "Letter from F. W. Evans in London to George Lomas, July 15, 1871," Mt. Lebanon, New York. IV: A-44. Collection of the Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio. Microfilm.

to show were two different things. The majority of the Victorians saw a novelty, a circus show of sorts. What the Shakers wanted them to see was earthly perfection, and this resulted in a tension between the two which meant that these views would never be able to serve fully their intended purpose.

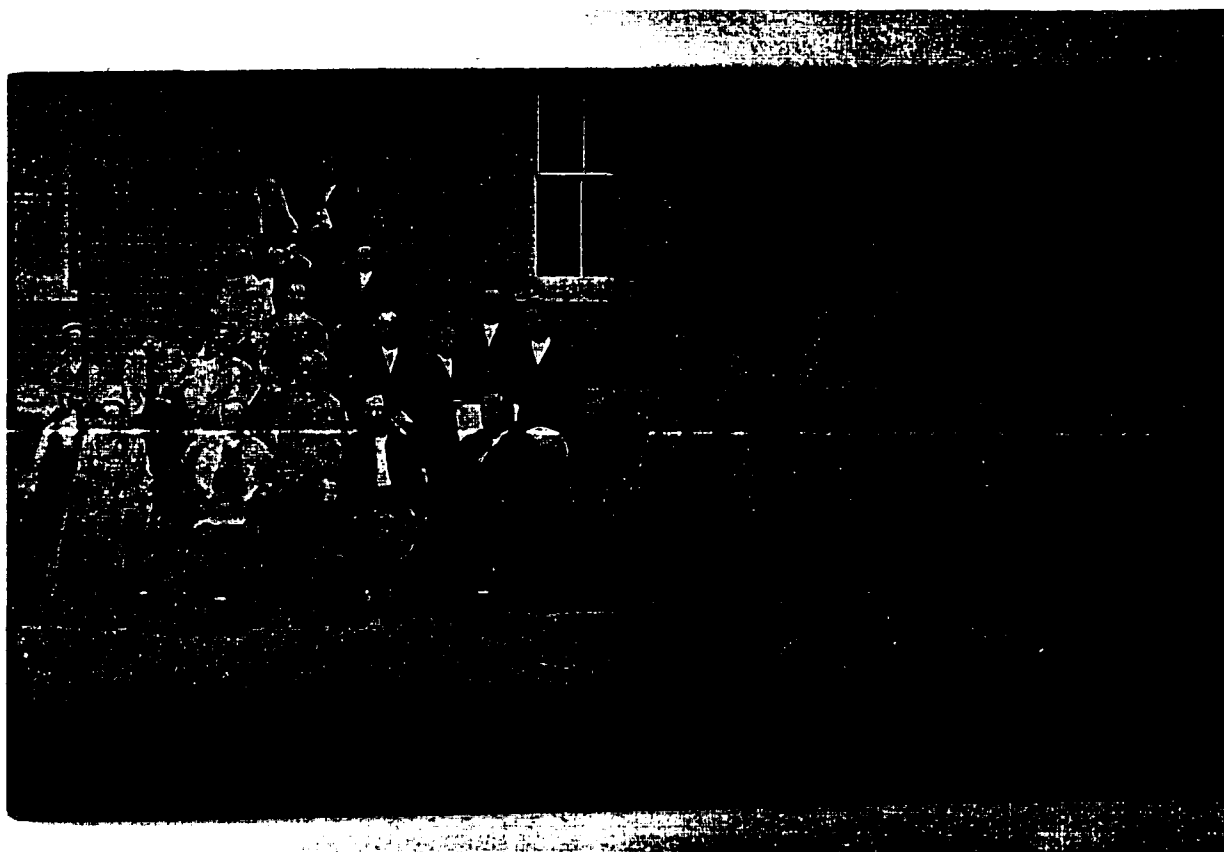


Figure 1. Group of Church Family Shakers by photographer A. J. Alden of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Note how the women and the men are separated by sex in this image. NOC 13954 (Courtesy of Shaker Museum and Library, Old Chatham, New York.)

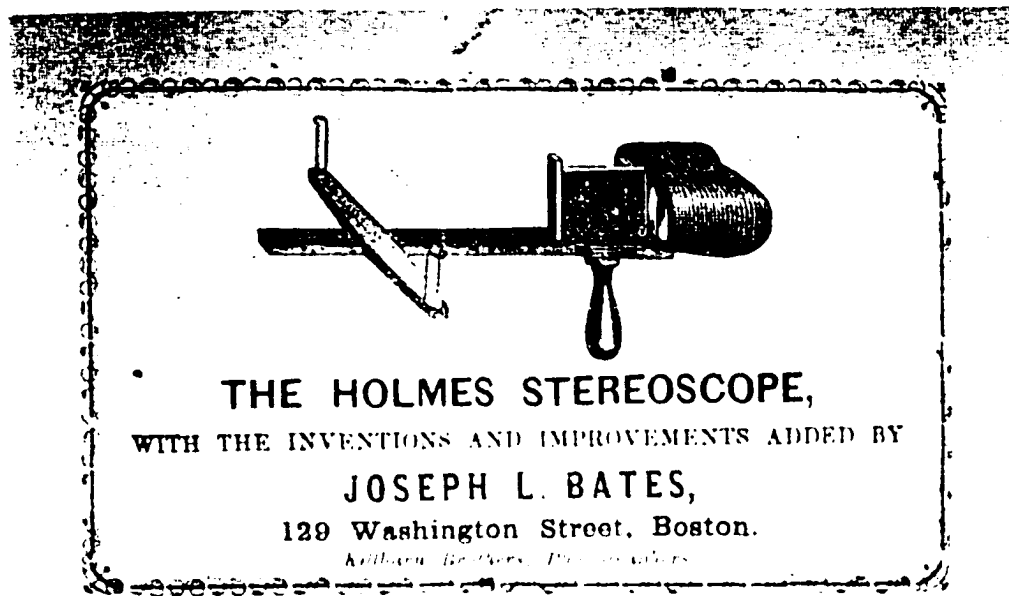


Figure 2. This advertisement is for the Bates model of the Holmes Stereoscope developed by Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1862. Holmes was an avid collector and early proponent of stereographs. By using this tool with a stereographic view, the user was able to experience a three dimensional effect (Courtesy of the Author)

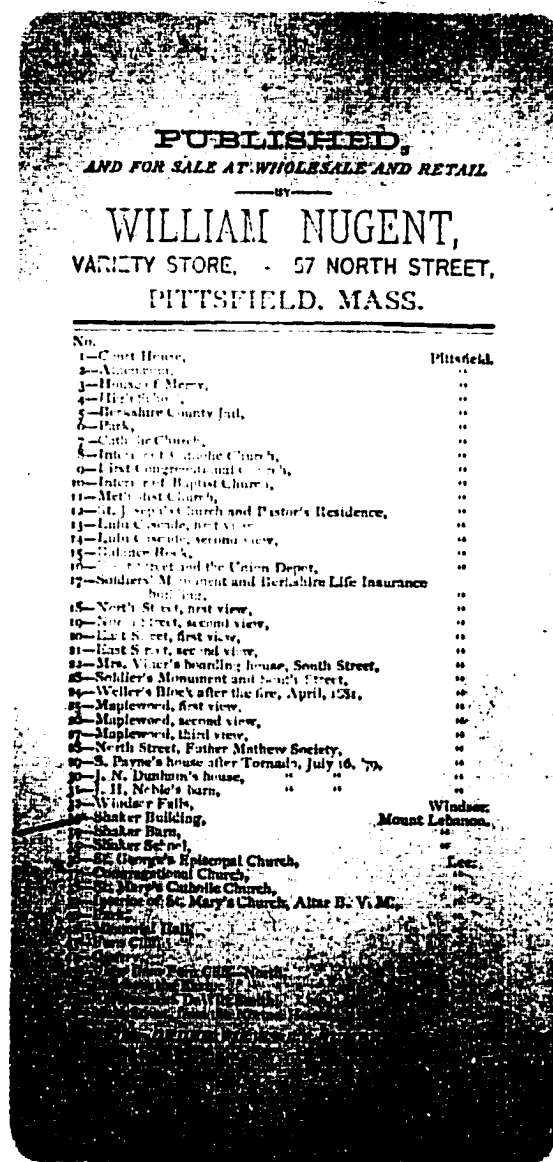


Figure 3. Found on the backs of stereocards, series like this one listed the companion views of any given stereograph. In this example, only three Shaker images from Mt. Lebanon, New York are included as part of a larger look at local architectural landmarks and curiosities. NHC 1030 (Courtesy of Canterbury Shaker Village, Canterbury, New Hampshire.)

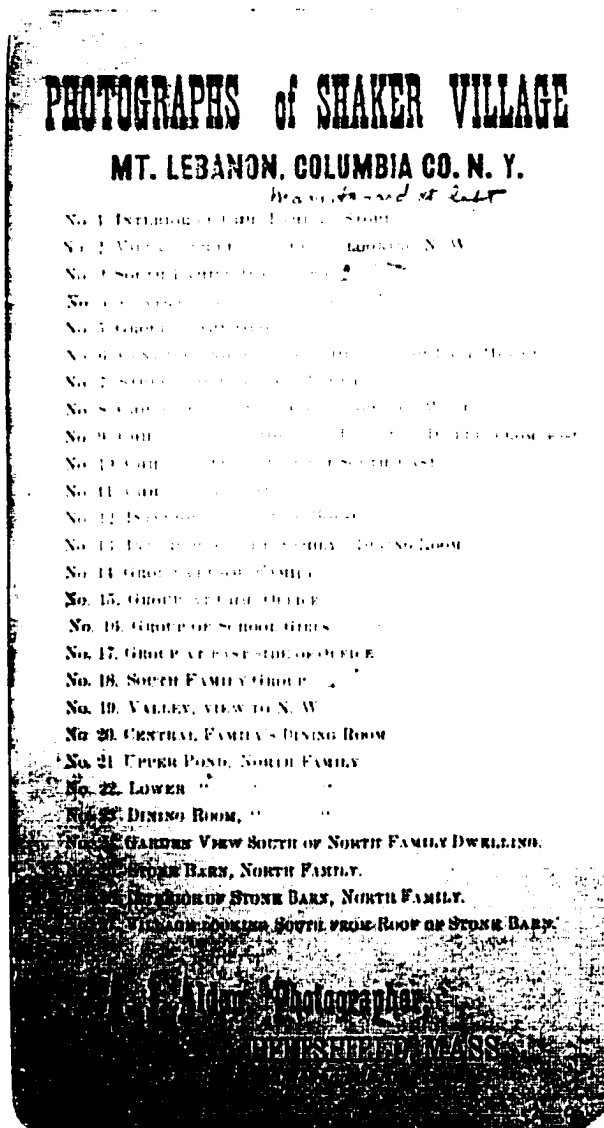


Figure 4. Another example of a stereographic view series, this card lists only photographs of the Mt. Lebanon Shaker Village. Photographers would also use this space to advertise their businesses. DEWINT SA9(Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: The Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection.)

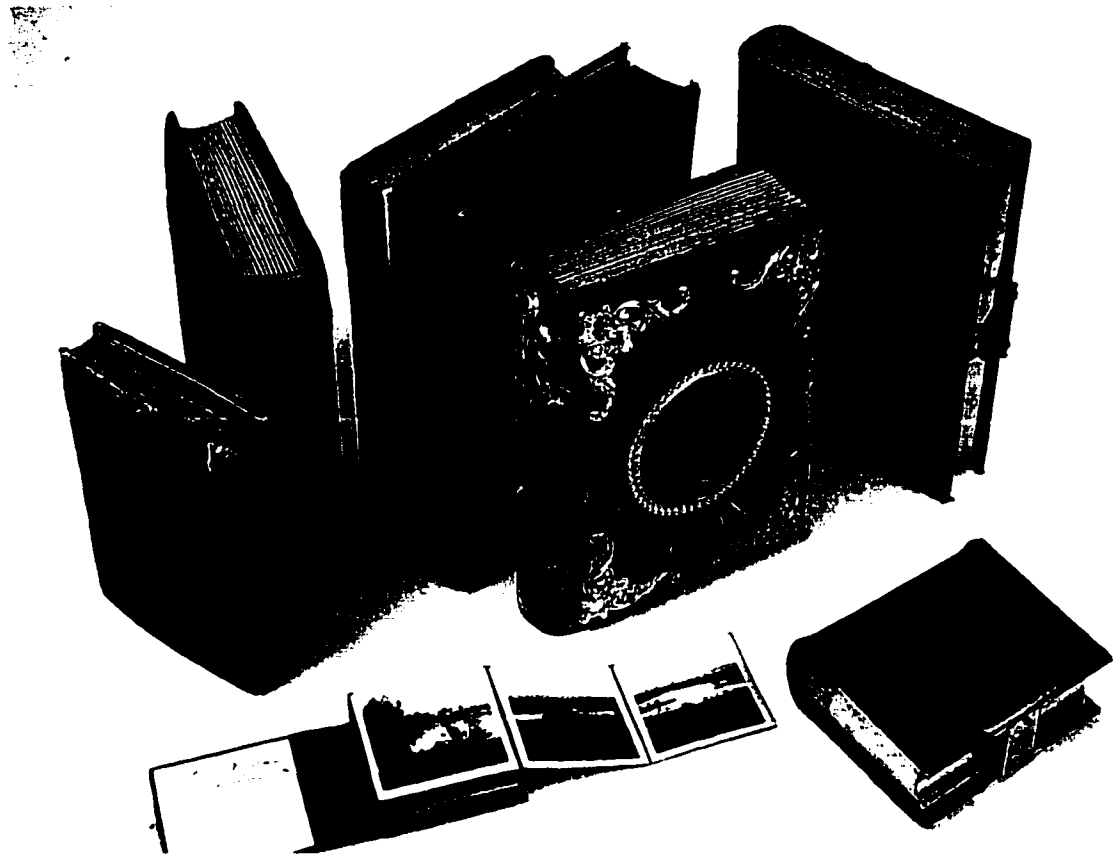


Figure 5. Albums such as these were used to store and display collections of photographs and stereographic views. These elaborate Shaker-owned versions are unusual in that ownership of such blatantly Victorian objects by Shakers was usually frowned upon. (Courtesy of Canterbury Shaker Village, Canterbury, New Hampshire.)



Figure 6. "Shaker Village."

This image by photographer James Irving is looking from the east at the Second Family buildings at Mt. Lebanon Shaker Village. Cultivated gardens and large buildings lend the settlement an air of prosperity. NHC 1011 (Courtesy of Canterbury Shaker Village, Canterbury, New Hampshire.)

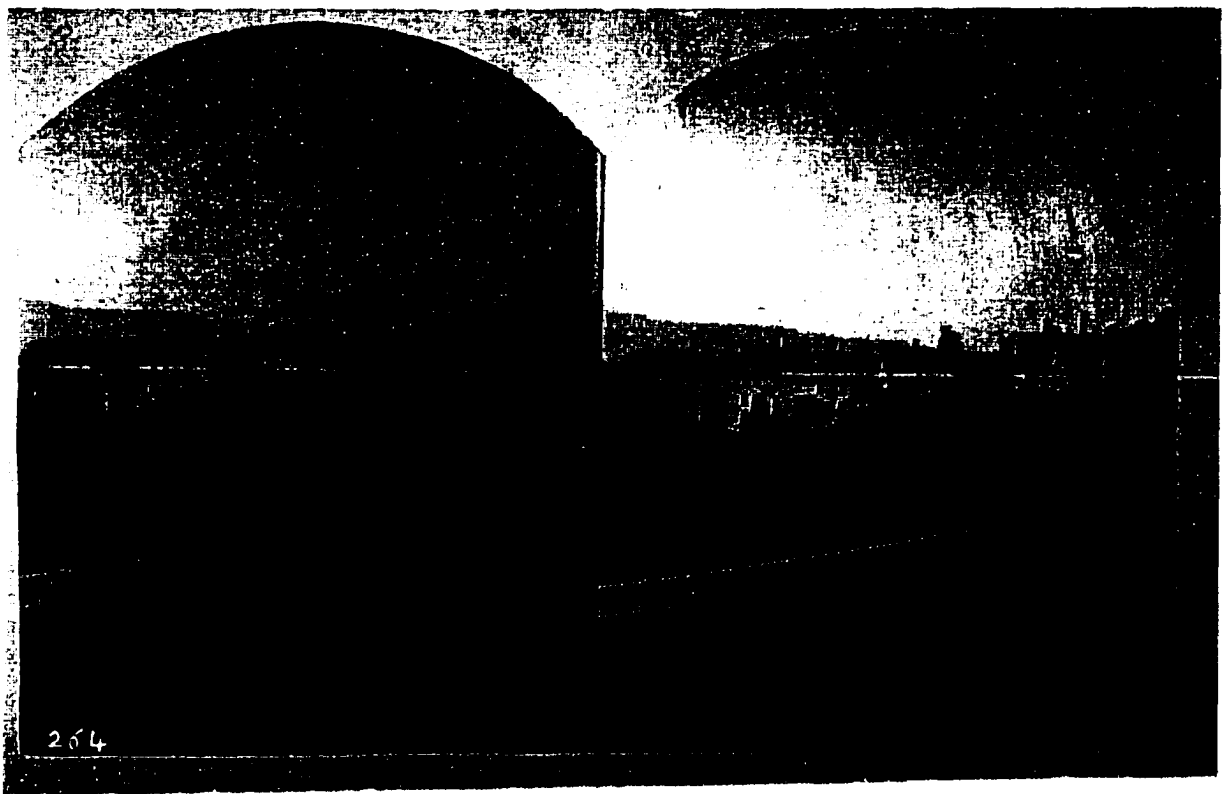


Figure 7. This view looks towards the North Family at Mt. Lebanon. The fence cutting across the image gives the viewer the impression that the village beyond is inaccessible. NOC 4383 (Courtesy of Shaker Museum and Library, Old Chatham, New York.)

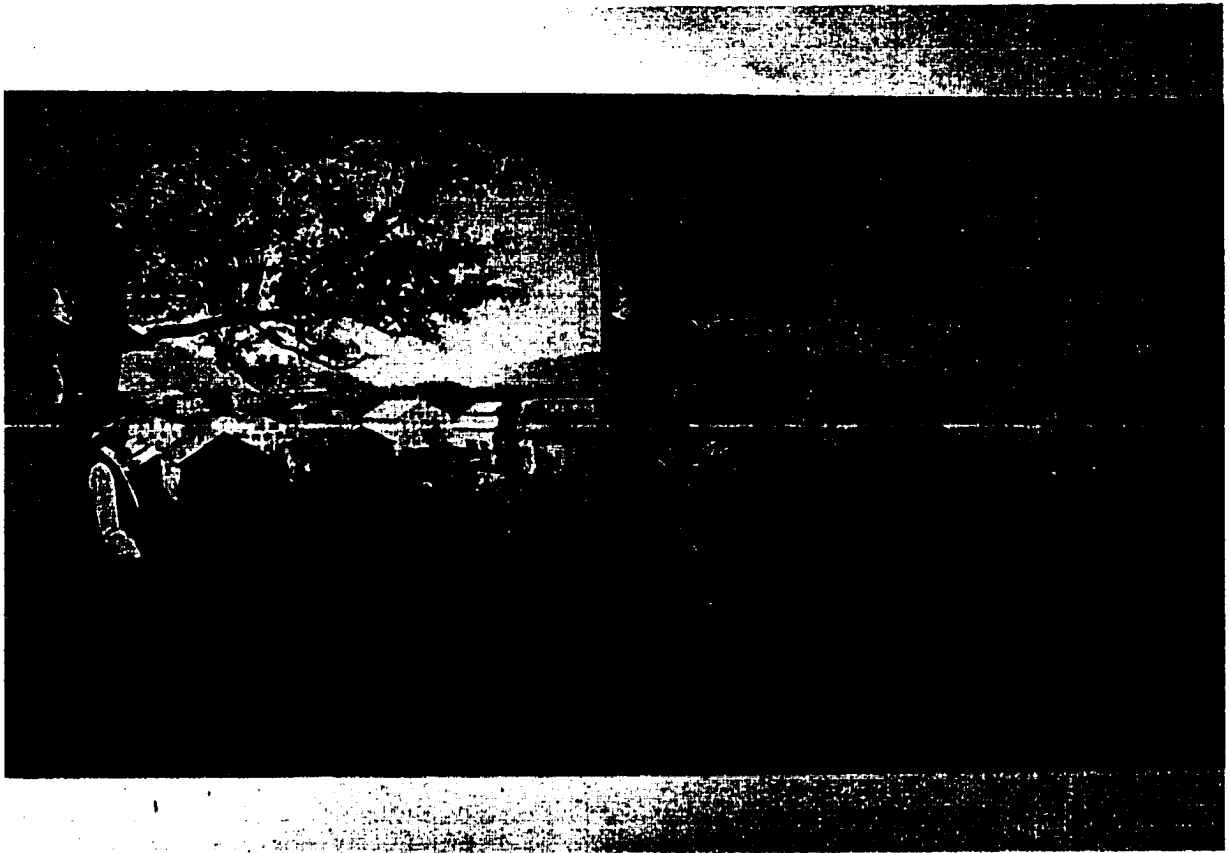


Figure 8. Elder Daniel Crossman leans against a tree in an orchard overlooking the Church Family. The barrel-roofed meeting house can be seen in the distance. (Courtesy Grant Collection, Chatham, New York)



Figure 9. This building is the post-1875 Church Family Dwelling House. Built after a fire burned down the old wooden one, this example of new Shaker architecture exhibits some characteristics of Victorian influence. NHC 1030 (Courtesy of Canterbury Shaker Village, Canterbury, New Hampshire.)



Figure 10. This South Family group from Mt. Lebanon poses for the photographer A. J. Alden under the arch of a Dwelling House entry. Groups posing in front of new buildings emphasized to the viewing public that the Shakers were keeping up with the times. DEWINT SA154(Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: The Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection.)

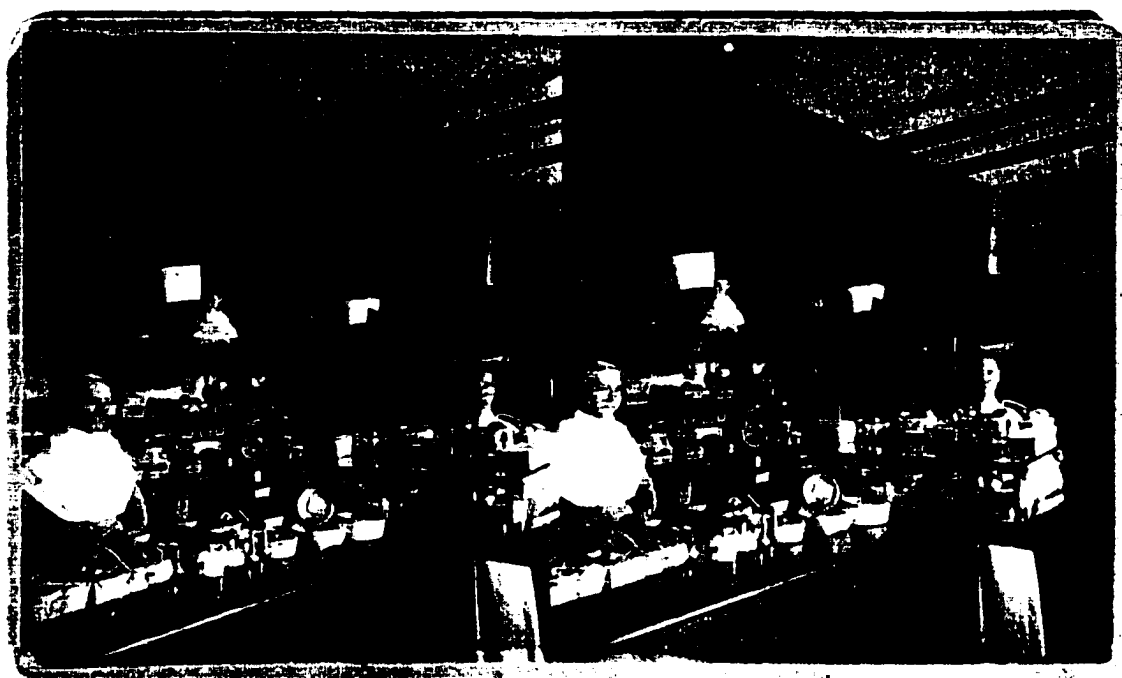


Figure 11. This stereographic view from the 1890s shows the interior of the Church Family store. Fancy work, baskets, dusters, and dolls are displayed and for sale on the shelves and in the cases. DEWINT SA9 (Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: The Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection.)



Figure 12. This image shows the display room of Brother Robert Wagan's South Family chair factory. Chairs of all different shapes and sizes are set around the room, and Shaker-woven rag rugs line the walls. A Shaker Sister can be seen helping a Victorian customer. HSV S-129 (Courtesy Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, Massachusetts.)

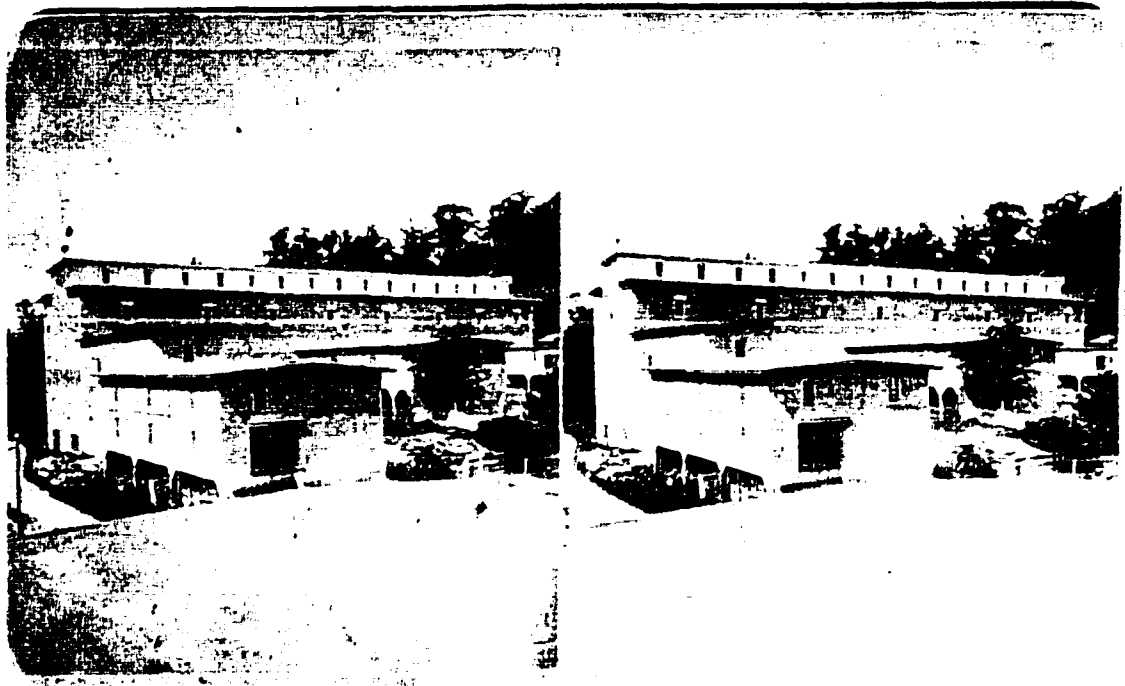


Figure 13. The North Family Great Stone Barn, pictured here, was at one time the largest in New York state. This building contained many of the latest farming innovations, some of which were Shaker designed. DEWINT SA 1701 (Courtesy, The Winterthur Library: The Edward Deming Andrews Memorial Shaker Collection.)



Figure 14. This image of the famous Shaker Church Family Meeting House illustrates the popularity of the meetings held there. On Sundays, carriages and wagons would flood the roads as visitors tried to get to the village to see the famous religious services. The immense scale of the building is emphasized by the men standing in the doorway. NHC 1026 (Courtesy of Canterbury Shaker Village, Canterbury, New Hampshire.)



Figure 15. In this stereographic view a group of carefully posed schoolgirls stands in front of the school house. Most are wearing simple, clean worldly clothes. Some of the older girls in the back, however, have adopted Shaker dress. NOC 4151 (Courtesy of Shaker Museum and Library, Old Chatham, New York.)



Figure 16. In this photograph, Elder Daniel Sizer sits in a Windsor chair. His pose is dignified, and in his hands he holds a characteristics Shaker wide-brimmed hat and a copy of the society's newspaper The Shaker. NOC 19204 (Courtesy of Shaker Museum and Library, Old Chatham, New York.)

APPENDIX

Circular Concerning Photographs, Dauguerreotypes, Ferrotypes &c

Circular

Concerning Photographs, Dauguerreotypes, Ferrotypes &c
Beloved Gospel Friends,

Ever concerned and careful for the protection of society from the corruptions of a wordly sinful life and condition, among other things, we are burdened with the desires of many, and the measurable satisfaction of desire with some, concerning photographs, and othersum pictures.

We have an order, which, we believe, wisely prohibits among Believers, the use of these things. except the photographs of landscapes, villages, &c. The pictures of individuals, as the persons of our Brethren and Sisters, or our Friends or relatives in outside society, are inadmissable to be kept by Believers, and the Leading Authorities of New Lebanon, never have given their union and approbation to have any such pictures taken.

As some persons in our societies appear not to appreciate the propriety or necessity of this prohibition, consequently, have been measurably indifferent, relative to the observance of the order, we feel it to be duty to present to our Gospel Friends the substantial reasons for the rejection of personal pictures, among Believers, as follows,

1st, As pictures are ordinarily used, it is an eminent species of idolatry, a kind of civilized (so called,) Fetichisin, belonging to a low state of human development in the spiritual scale of progress, even far below that attained unto by some people whom so called Christians, sometimes denominate as heathen, who sacrifice all that tends to install the love of, and devotion to self, as the arbiter of human destiny instead of God.

2. The tendency of their use, in multitudes of cases, is to foster a worldly affection, vanity, pride, and even wordly lusts, by persons of both sexes, who have a fondness for each other, attaining each other's pictures, and carrying them about their persons, fondling them and kissing them as they would wish to do the person of whom the picture is taken, until their spirits are quite corrupted by wordly affections & lusts.

3. Again, We would consider this subject with refference to the misapplication of consecrated treasure dedicated to higher and holier purposes. If pictures of persons are freely allowed, then each individual might wish a picture of, not only one or two persons, but of all whom they deem special friends, whether at home, abroad in other societies, or in outside society. Many would desire to procure the pictures of the (so called,) great men and women of our day.

Then, having many pictures, an Album would be wanted to keep them in. To purchase these pictures @ from 15 to 25 cts each, and Albums @ from \$1.00 to \$3.00 each, would cost from \$1.00, to \$4.00, to the individual pr year. In the course of ten years, (accordingly as they might multiply to themselves pictures, say from ten to forty pictures each,) in this way, a family of 50 persons, supposing only half of them to supply themselves with pictures, would easily accumulate, in ten years, an expence of from \$250.00 to \$1,000. for pictures alone. This sum seems heavy, and yet it would only give to each individual a few pictures pr anum, and a book to keep them in.

To use property professed to be consecrated wholly to God, and to Gods people, and to religious and charitable purposes, in this manner, would be to desecrate, instead of consecrate, both treasure and life!

If these personal pictures were only limitedly allowed that w', to some persons, and not to all, there would be an injustice, that would breed most serious trials, and loss of confidence in Leaders, for, if they may have them to keep, and others be denied, much harm would ensue. If pictures of Leaders, or some preferred persons may be taken, and not those of common numbers a worldly ambition would be encouraged, and aristocratic influences engendered, productive of much evil.

To those who might not reflect upon its probable consequences, it doubtless may seem a very simple and harmless affair to have a few pictures of their friends; but, the foregoing illustration of probable consequences, is by no means overdrawn, and might chance to fall far

below actual experiences; for, if once freely introduced, and no spiritual testimony to consume its unhallowed desires, in a few years, instead of only a small part of a family wanting pictures, the majority might desire them; for, the life they minister to is natural & worldly, thus, perchance, swelling the expense for pictures in a family of 50 people, to \$50, or \$200.00 pr anum or from \$500 to \$2,000.00, and, in a family of 150 persons, like the church order at New Lebanon, (comprising two orders in one family) to \$6,000.00 in ten years.

But, notwithstanding this, the financial loss to society would be by far the most insignificant effect. The Spiritual corruption, pride, worldly vanity, envy, jealousy, and disunion, in consequence of individual preferments or rejections and neglects, would be appalling!

Therefore, Beloved Gospel Friends, let not this subtil evil be foisted upon Believers Society as a curse to make her oblivious to the ministrations of heavenly messengers, and sink her from the blessing of God.

We therefore hereby request, that all Photographs, Dauguerrotypes, Ferrotypes, or sum pictures of any name or description, of persons, in an individual capacity, or in groups, unconnected with general landscape or village scenery at large, possessed by Believers, should be destroyed, at once, that, as individuals, and as a people, we may be freed from their pernicious influences, and that the present and future generations may know and feel, we have a living and practical testimony against this worldly evil.

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Ministry

New Lebanon

Nov. 1st 1873 N.Y.

"Circular Concerning Photographs, Dauguerreotypes, Ferrotypes, &c."
November 1, 1873, Church Family, Mt. Lebanon. Acc. 9599. Emma
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