

## **Necrology for the Shaker Society at Tyringham, Massachusetts**

***Compiled and Annotated by Stephen J. Paterwic***

The Gospel of Christ's Second Appearing opened in May 1780, at Niskayuna, New York. To this "wilderness tract" the much longed-for "doves" had come from the spent New Light Stir at New Lebanon, New York. Mother Ann and her English companions offered the Testimony and many received it with joy. These new converts lost no time returning to their homes. They were baptized into the work of Shakerism and were eager to share their good news. Places like New Lebanon (then a section of Canaan), New York, and the Hancock-Pittsfield, Massachusetts, area quickly became centers of Shaker activity. These early Believers passed the light of the Testimony to others. As these, in turn, returned to their homes, a fine network of Shakers formed throughout New England.

Among these converts were the Rathbuns, the Clarkes, and the Herricks of Tyringham. In 1782, brothers Joshua, Abel, and William Allen and Elijah Fay moved with their families to Tyringham from Belchertown, Massachusetts. Two years later, Thomas Patten, James Pratt, and Abisha Stanley arrived in Tyringham from Belchertown with their families. This Belchertown contingent had attended the New Light Stir and converted to Shakerism. They had a link with Father Joseph Meacham, Mother Ann's first-born convert in America, and the man who would be the first American leader of the Shakers. Meacham's grand-uncle, also called Joseph Meacham, was the founding minister of the Congregational Church at Coventry, Connecticut. This is the place where the Allens of Belchertown had been born.<sup>1</sup> No doubt the Allens had been active in the New Lebanon revival of 1779 because of their familiarity with Joseph Meacham. In spite of being offered land in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, they moved to Tyringham.<sup>2</sup> Mother Ann never visited Tyringham, but she

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1. Coventry, Connecticut, also has a Hop Brook, reminiscent of Tyringham's Hop Brook.

2. "More About the Shakers," *Berkshire Gleaner*, July 11, 1906.

did visit Belchertown during her missionary tour of 1782.<sup>3</sup> The Hulett family of Belchertown also eventually joined the Tyringham society, but not until the second decade of the nineteenth century.

This brief account of the earliest converts at Tyringham may seem out of place in a necrology, but it is essential for interpretive purposes because *more than half* of all those buried as Shakers at Tyringham were from these first families. This is a significant point that must be noted if the subsequent history of Tyringham is to be understood in the correct perspective.

### **Those Who Died before the Gathering of the Church, 1782-1792**

1. Oliver Robinson—September 1790—age 55<sup>4</sup>
2. Mary Blanchard—December 1790—age 55
3. Experience Herrick—December 1791—age 40

### **Those Who Died from the Gathering of the Church to the Dissolution of the Society, 1793-1875**

In 1792, under the guidance of the Ministry from the Second Bishopric (based at Hancock, Massachusetts), the Shaker society at Tyringham began to be gathered into full gospel order. Farms were consolidated and verbal agreements made. In 1793 most of the Church was formally gathered. Elders, trustees, and deacons were appointed, and the community began its eighty-two-year history. Please note that the alternative names in brackets have been supplied by the author from his familiarity with Tyringham Shaker records. The bracketed names either appear in covenants or census enumerations. They are provided to help the reader make an easy identification of members who may have used different names, something that is common among the Shakers.

4. Ruth Clark—May 22, 1793—age 17
5. Jonas Thayer—June 19, 1793—age 43
6. Rhoda Allen—May 18, 1802—age 51

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3. When Mother Ann visited the town, it was known as Belcher's Town, a name it received in honor of a royal governor of Massachusetts, Jonathan Belcher. In time the name Belchertown was adopted.

4. Unless otherwise noted, the names on this list are taken from the *Register of Births, Marriages, and Deaths in the Town of Tyringham* [1844-1899]. This register is in the town clerk's office, Tyringham, Massachusetts.

7. Mehitable Allen, Sr.—April 30, 1804—age 60
8. Abigail Allen—January 4, 1807—age 97
9. Rhoda Bigelow—April 22, 1807—age 63
10. Lydia Rogers—April 10, 1812—age 22
11. Ebenezer Beers—March 6, 1813—age 23
12. Abigail Stanley—November 14, 1814—age 76
13. John Beers—June 30, 1815—age 2
14. Roswell Stanley—June 30, 1815—age 43
15. Hannah Weaver—June 24, 1816—age 42
16. Mary Guilford—July 1, 1816—age 75
17. Darius Herrick—December 7, 1816—age 37
18. Jane Beers—May 16, 1818—age 21
19. Sally Beers—July 26, 1818—age 24
20. Timothy Bigelow—September 12, 1818—age 79
21. Mehitable Allen, Jr. —December 26, 1819—age 53
22. Patience Culver—April 26, 1820—age 63
23. Mary Clark—May 14, 1821—age 85
24. Elijah Fay—February 15, 1822—age 79
25. Margaret Pease—February 15, 1824—age 82
26. Rachel Hall—March 19, 1825—age 58
27. Samuel Van Deusen—March, 1825—age 8
28. Samuel I. Bell—May 4, 1825—age 8<sup>5</sup>
29. Seth Goodrich—January 8, 1826—age 69
30. James Pratt—March 23, 1826—age 74
31. Eliza Beers—March 28, 1826—age 19
32. Phebe Beers—June 25, 1826—age 56
33. Joshua Allen—September 3, 1826—age 88
34. William Clark—January 21, 1827—age 91
35. Abel Allen—February 21, 1827—age 77
36. Henry Herrick—May 6, 1827—age 74
37. William Allen—August 2, 1828—age 77
38. Sarah Sears—August 22, 1829—age 34
39. Prescilla Allen—December 10, 1829—age 76
40. Abisha Stanley—July 6, 1831—age 94
41. Joseph Markham—January 10, 1832—age 68
42. Ezra Beers—June 23, 1832—age 69

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5. Western Reserve Historical Society, Shaker Membership Card File. This name is not in the town records.

43. Susanna Dart—February 20, 1833—age 70
44. Amasa Bigelow—March 26, 1833—age 54
45. Susan Stanley—September 5, 1833—age 64
46. Ladwick Gardner—March 15, 1834—age 62
47. Lucy Fay—October 11, 1835—age 81
48. Nathan Culver—March 8, 1836—age 80
49. Thomas Patten—March 13, 1838—age 81
50. Rebecca Johnson—October 1, 1838—age 63
51. Anna Stanley—March 30, 1840—age 75
52. Asa Hulett—April 7, 1840—age 54
53. Mary Patten—June 10, 1841—age 82
54. Melinda Hulett, Jr.—August 25, 1841—age 27
55. Asa Patten—December 28, 1841—age 78
56. Joseph Allen—April 12, 1842—age 69
57. Christiana Herrick—December 18, 1843—age 66
58. Abel Bigelow—April 29, 1844—age 64
59. Daniel Fay—May 14, 1844—age 63
60. Almira Louise Johnson—August 17, 1844—age 11
61. Lydia Hall—April 28, 1845—age 90
62. Leonard Allen—November 4, 1846—age 72
63. Elizabeth Pratt—March 3, 1847—age 87
64. Elvira Bradburn—November 6, 1847—age 12
65. Maria Louisa Hill—October 6, 1849—age 68
66. John [Charles] Showers—April 9, 1850—age 9
67. Lucinda Stanley—December 20, 1851—age 84
68. Martha Collins—April 17, 1852—age 2
69. Eleazer Stanley—November 6, 1852—age 75
70. Huldah Bigelow—December 3, 1852—age 77
71. Chloe Fay—October 17, 1853—age 75
72. Fanny Johnson—April 14, 1854—age 47
73. Maria E. Mallory—October 21, 1854—age 7
74. Francis Hodget—December 19, 1854—age 11
75. John Stanley—December 26, 1854—age 85
76. Zeruah Pratt—January 20, 1855—age 73
77. Stephen Johnson—April 19, 1856—age 83
78. John Patten—January 16, 1857—age 75
79. Phebe Wilcox—May 9, 1857—age 48
80. Ruth [Phebe] Allen—July 30, 1858—age 78

81. Mary [Sarah] Allen—May 30, 1859—age 81
82. Mary [Nancy] Gardner—November 21, 1859—age 78
83. Luther Allen—March 25, 1860—age 90
84. Marilla Davis—January 2, 1861—age 35<sup>6</sup>
85. Freeman Stanley—August 11, 1862—age 88
86. Mary [Milly] Thayer—August 16, 1862—age 82
87. Mary Herrick—February 10, 1863—age 82
88. John Allen—February 15, 1863—age 81
89. Robert Wilcox—February 9, 1864—age 80<sup>7</sup>
90. Wealthy Storer—April 14, 1864—age 43
91. Mary Jane Fair—August 29, 1865—age 27
92. Charles E.E. Kendall—October 9, 1865—age 7
93. Lydia Hall Partridge—September 8, 1867—age 87
94. Lucretia Markham—July 24, 1869—age 95
95. Daniel Hulet—June 20, 1870—age 74
96. Betsey Gardner—December 17, 1870—age 64
97. Susannah Dart, Jr.—September 11, 1872—age 67
98. Michael McCue—August 1, 1873—age 48
99. Hasting Storer—May 5, 1874—age 51

### **Those Who Died after the Society Was Dissolved, 1875-1920**

In April 1875, the Tyringham Shaker Society was formally dissolved. Thirteen of the fourteen remaining Shakers opted to stay in the faith and move to one of the other two communities in the bishopric—Enfield, Connecticut, or Hancock, Massachusetts. The five brethren remained faithful and moved to Enfield, Connecticut. Six of the sisters also went to Enfield, two went to Hancock, and one left the community. All of these died in their respective new homes except for Albert Battle who went into the Ministry from Enfield in 1880 and died at Hancock in 1895. The ten Tyringham Shakers buried in the Shaker cemetery at Enfield are not in a

6. Marilla Davis is listed as a Shaker in the U.S. Federal Census of [July 18] 1860.

Less than six months later, she died from consumption on January 2, 1861, at the age of thirty-five. Her place of death was in the nearby town of Egremont, Massachusetts. It is highly unlikely that she left the Shakers while in an advanced state of consumption. Why she died in Egremont is not known, but as a result her death is not recorded in the town records for Tyringham. Her death is listed in the Massachusetts Death Records, vol. 147, p. 35.

7. Western Reserve Historical Society, Shaker Membership File. Town records state that he died between 1860 and 1865.

separate section, but are placed in chronological order as they died along with the other Shakers who lived there. This is also true for the three Tyringham Shakers buried at Hancock.

100. Calvin J. Parker—June 11, 1875—age 76—Enfield<sup>8</sup>
101. Eunice Storer—February 7, 1876—age 92—Enfield
102. Eliza Chapin—December 16, 1876—age 54—Hancock
103. Addison Storer—October 12, 1878—age 62—Enfield
104. Anna Seaton—March 5, 1879—age 78—Enfield
105. Emily Fair—September 24, 1879—age 39—Enfield
106. Electa Parker—December 13, 1879—age 78—Enfield
107. Aaron Manchester—November 6, 1887—age 80—Enfield
108. Rebecca Harris—September 1, 1888—age 78—Enfield
109. Harriet Storer—June 6, 1890—age 73—Enfield
110. Edwin Davis—December 16, 1892—age 70—Enfield
111. Albert J. Battle—October 2, 1895—age 84—Hancock
112. Elizabeth Thornber—May 12, 1920—age 82—Hancock

## **Ninety-nine Shaker Deaths at Tyringham and Two Shaker Cemeteries**

The earliest reference to the fact that ninety-nine Shakers are buried at Tyringham comes from an article that appeared in the *New York Times* in February 1875.<sup>9</sup> Eleven years later an account of the community appeared in a book called *The Book of Berkshire*. By that time, the cemetery stones had been placed flat on the ground “after the Moravian fashion.”<sup>10</sup> The author also notes that the earliest burial was in 1793.<sup>11</sup> This means that the cemetery actually has

8. The record of the deaths of the last thirteen Tyringham Shakers may be found in many sources. Among these are: the plot plan of the Enfield graveyard (many copies are in circulation, but the original is in the library of the Sabbathday Lake Shakers), the *Shaker Manifesto*, list of “Members of the United Society at Hancock, Massachusetts” (Hancock Shaker Village Library), and “The Enfield, Conn. Shaker Cemetery List” compiled by Wendell Hess for private circulation. (Hess owned the original plot plan of the graveyard before donating it to the Shakers at Sabbathday Lake.)

9. “The Shakers,” *New York Times*, February 28, 1875, 10. In *Visiting the Shakers 1850-1899*, edited by Glendyne R. Wergland (Clinton, N.Y.: Richard W. Couper Press, 2010), 125.

10. It is highly unlikely that the Shakers placed the stones this way.

11. Bryan, Clark W. *The Book of Berkshire* (Great Barrington, Mass.: Clark W. Bryan and Co., 1886).

ninety-six Shaker burials and does not include the three that occurred before the community was gathered in 1792. The whereabouts of these first three burials was revealed in 1906 when the *Berkshire Gleaner* did a series of articles on the Tyringham Shakers. In the July 18, 1906, installment, the two surviving Tyringham Shaker sisters, Elizabeth Thornber and Julia Johnson (then living at the East Family of the Hancock Shakers) say that the first burials were on the mountain. This place was called East Mountain by the Shakers. Since all ninety-nine Tyringham deaths have been accounted for, this would seem to preclude that any non-Shakers were buried at Tyringham.<sup>12</sup> Later writers have not been careful to make the distinction that the Tyringham Shakers are buried in these two places. As early as 1905 in *Tyringham: Old and New*, it is said that the cemetery has ninety-nine burials.<sup>13</sup> This was accepted uncritically by Eloise Myers in *A Hinterland Settlement: Tyringham, Massachusetts and Bordering Lands*, published in 1963, who writes, "Today, ninety-nine of their members lie buried in the brush-covered cemetery below the road at Fernside."<sup>14</sup> That Tyringham had two cemeteries would not have surprised the Shakers since the Hancock society, seat of their bishopric, also had two cemeteries.

### **Shakers with a Tyringham Origin Who Lived and Died at Other Shaker Societies**

The above list of 112 Shakers should not be thought of as the definitive list of Tyringham Shakers. Indeed, all told there were more than 350, possibly over 400, people who lived at Tyringham at one time or the other. Most of these left the society, but some who became Shakers at Tyringham were transferred to the other communities and died and were buried in those places. Some of these include: Elder Grove Wright (Bishopric Ministry at Hancock, but buried at Enfield), Eldress Rebecca Clark (Hancock), Elder Willard Johnson (Hancock), Eldress Betsey Johnson (Bishopric Ministry at Hancock), Mary Clark (Hancock), Elder John Patten (Hancock), Joanna Patten (Hancock), and Richard Van Deusen (Enfield).

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12. It is common for non-Shakers to be included in Shaker cemeteries. These people include relatives of Shakers, those who died while visiting, former Shakers, and tramps. Most Shaker cemeteries include souls from at least one of these categories. Furthermore, at Canterbury "Dewey Greenwood," beloved dog of Brother Irving Greenwood is interred with the Shakers.

13. John A. Scott. *Tyringham Old and New* ([Pittsfield: Sun Print. Co., 1905?]), 89.

14. Myers, Eloise, *A Hinterland Settlement: Tyringham, Massachusetts and Bordering Lands* (Pittsfield, Mass.: Eagle Printing and Binding Company, 1963), 89.

**Alphabetical List of Deaths at the Tyringham, Massachusetts, Shaker Society, 1790-1874, and after the Society Was Dissolved, 1875-1920.**

<b>Name and Age</b>	<b>Date of Death</b>
1. Allen, Abel 77	February 21, 1827
2. Allen, Abigail 97	January 4, 1807
3. Allen, John 81	February 15, 1863
4. Allen, Joseph 69	April 12, 1842
5. Allen, Joshua 88	September 3, 1826
6. Allen, Leonard 72	November 4, 1846
7. Allen, Luther 90	March 25, 1860
8. Allen, Mary [Sarah] 81	May 30, 1859
9. Allen, Mehitable 60	April 30, 1804
10. Allen, Mehitable, Jr. 53	December 26, 1819
11. Allen, Prescilla 76	December 10, 1829
12. Allen, Rhoda 51	May 18, 1802
13. Allen, Ruth [Phebe] 78	July 30, 1858
14. Allen, William 77	August 2, 1828
15. Battle, Albert J. 84	October 2, 1895
16. Beers, Ebenezer 23	March 6, 1813
17. Beers, Eliza 19	March 28, 1826
18. Beers, Ezra 69	June 23, 1832
19. Beers, Jane 21	May 16, 1818
20. Beers, John 2	June 30, 1815
21. Beers, Phebe 56	June 25, 1826
22. Beers, Sally 24	July 26, 1818
23. Bell, Samuel I. 8	May 4, 1825
24. Bigelow, Abel 64	April 29, 1844
25. Bigelow, Amasa 54	March 26, 1833
26. Bigelow, Huldah 77	December 3, 1852
27. Bigelow, Rhoda 63	April 22, 1807
28. Bigelow, Timothy 79	September 12, 1818
29. Blanchard, Mary 55	December, 1790
30. Bradburn, Elvira 12	November 6, 1847
31. Chapin, Eliza 54	December 16, 1876
32. Clark, Mary 85	May 14, 1821
33. Clark, Ruth 17	May 22, 1793

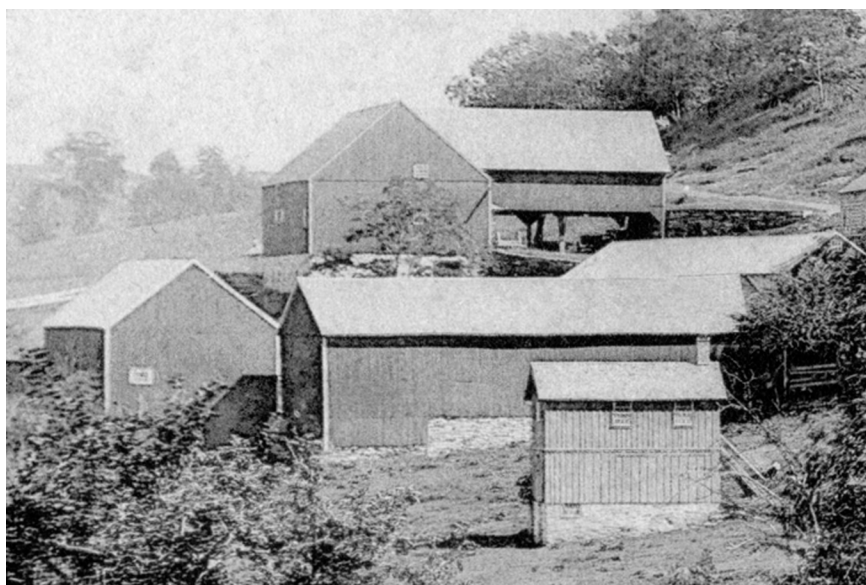


34. Clark, William	91	January 21, 1827
35. Collins, Martha	2	April 17, 1852
36. Culver, Nathan	80	March 8, 1836
37. Culver, Patience	63	April 26, 1820
38. Dart, Susannah	70	February 20, 1833
39. Dart, Susannah, Jr.	67	September 11, 1872
40. Davis, Edwin	70	December 16, 1892
41. Davis, Marilla	35	January 2, 1861
42. Fair, Emily	39	September 24, 1879
43. Fair, Mary Jane	27	August 29, 1865
44. Fay, Chloe	74	October 17, 1853
45. Fay, Daniel	63	May 14, 1844
46. Fay, Elijah	79	February 15, 1822.
47. Fay, Lucy	81	October 11, 1835
48. Gardner, Betsey	64	December 17, 1870
49. Gardner, Ladwick	62	March 15, 1834
50. Gardner, Mary [Nancy]	78	November 21, 1859
51. Goodrich, Seth	69	January 8, 1826
52. Guilford, Marey	75	July 1, 1816
53. Hall, Lydia	90	April 28, 1845
54. Hall, Rachel	58	March 19, 1825
55. Harris, Rebecca	78	September 1, 1888
56. Herrick, Christina	66	December 18, 1843
57. Herrick, Darius	37	December 7, 1816
58. Herrick, Experience	40	December, 1791
59. Herrick, Henry	74	May 6, 1827
60. Herrick, Mary	82	February 10, 1863
61. Hill, Maria	68	October 6, 1849
62. Hodget, Francis	11	December 19, 1854
63. Hulet, Asa	54	April 7, 1840
64. Hulet, Daniel	74	June 20, 1870
65. Hulet, Melinda, Jr.	27	August 25, 1841
66. Johnson, Almira	11	August 17, 1844
67. Johnson, Fanny	47	April 14, 1854
68. Johnson, Rebecca	63	October 1, 1838
69. Johnson, Stephen	83	April 19, 1856
70. Kendall, Charles E.	7	October 9, 1865
71. Mallory, Maria E.	7	October 21, 1854

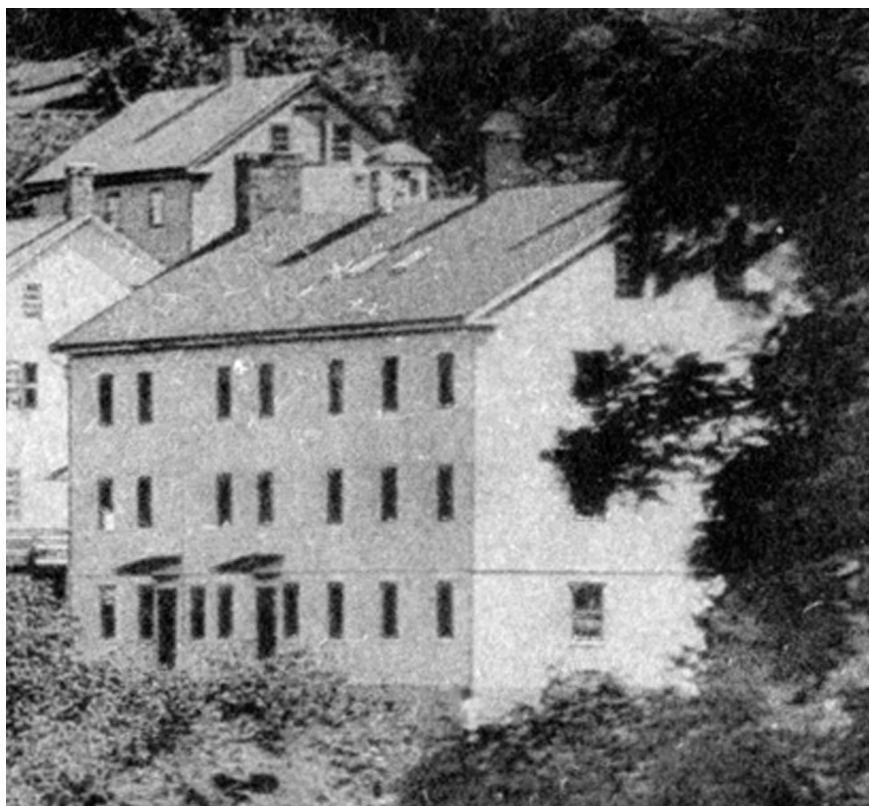
72. Manchester, Aaron 80	November 6, 1887
73. Markham, Joseph 68	January 10, 1832
74. Markham, Lucretia 95	July 24, 1869
75. McCue, Michael 48	August 1, 1873
76. Parker, Calvin J. 76	June 11, 1875
77. Parker, Electa 78	December 13, 1879
78. Partridge, Lydia H. 87	September 8, 1867
79. Patten, Asa 78	December 28, 1841
80. Patten, John 75	January 16, 1857
81. Patten, Mary 82	June 10, 1841
82. Patten, Thomas 81	March 13, 1838
83. Pease, Margaret 82	February 15, 1824
84. Pratt, Elizabeth 87	March 3, 1847
85. Pratt, James 74	March 23, 1826
86. Pratt, Zeruah 73	January 20, 1855
87. Robinson, Oliver 55	September, 1790
88. Rogers, Lydia 22	April 10, 1812
89. Sears, Sarah 34	August 22, 1829
90. Seaton, Anna 78	March 5, 1879
91. Showers, John Charles 9	April 30, 1850
92. Stanley, Abigail 76	November 14, 1814
93. Stanley, Abisha 94	July 6, 1831
94. Stanley, Anna 75	March 30, 1840
95. Stanley, Eleazar 75	November 6, 1852
96. Stanley, Freeman 88	August 11, 1862
97. Stanley, John 85	December 26, 1854
98. Stanley, Lucinda 84	December 20, 1851
99. Stanley, Roswell 43	June 30, 1815
100. Stanley, Susan 64	September 5, 1833
101. Storer, Addison, 62	October 12, 1878
102. Storer, Eunice 92	February 7, 1876
103. Storer, Harriet 73	June 6, 1890
104. Storer, Hasting 51	May 8, 1874
105. Storer, Wealthy 43	April 14, 1864
106. Thayer, Jonas 43	June 19, 1793
107. Thayer, Mary [Milly] 82	August 16, 1862
108. Thornber, Elizabeth 82	May 20, 1920
109. Van Deusen, Samuel 8	March, 1825

110. Weaver, Hannah 42  
111. Wilcox, Phebe 48  
112. Wilcox, Robert 80

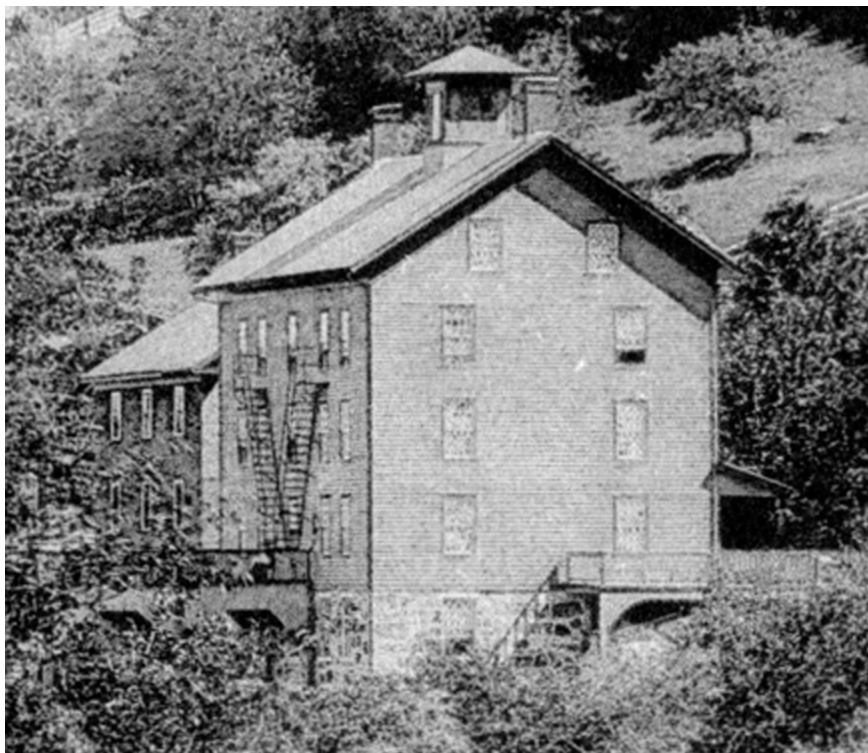
June 24, 1816  
May 9, 1857  
February 9, 1864



Detail of front-cover photo of the Tyringham Church Family showing the ox barn in the center back and agricultural out-buildings in the foreground.



Detail of front-cover photo of the Tyringham Church Family showing their dwelling house.



Detail of front-cover photo of the Tyningham Church Family showing the trustees' office (left, back) and the seed house (center, front). The fire escapes on the seed house are probably a post-Shaker addition.



Detail of front-cover photo of the Tyngham Church Family showing (left to right), the cobbler's shop, meeting house, and dwelling house. The porch on the meeting house was probably a post-Shaker addition.