

# Hamilton College Library

## “Home Notes”

### Communal Societies Collection: New Aquisitions

**[Manuscript].** *Whereas we the Subscribers, of the Town of Enfield, in the County of Hartford, and State of Connecticut having received the grace of God in this day of Christ's Second Appearing...* **[Covenant of the North Family, Enfield, Connecticut Shaker Society]** dated January 23, 1812. 7 p. filled. 25 cm.

The first Shaker covenants were oral, but by 1795, as conflicts arose when members left the society and made claims for property and services rendered, written covenants were used to articulate and codify the principle of “joint interest.” These covenants, signed by the members, declared that all “have an equal right and privilege, according to their Calling and needs, in things both Spiritual and temporal.”

The Enfield, Connecticut North Family was gathered into “gospel order” in 1793 or 1794 and executed its first written covenant in 1796. This, the 1812 covenant, has affixed to it the signatures of twenty-nine brethren and forty-one sisters. Heading the list of signatories are elders Elisha Allen and Amaziah Clark Junior, and eldresses Ruth Farrington and Rozina Allen. All but six of the seventy Shakers signed the covenant in January of 1812. The latest signature is dated 1831. Ten of the signers were illiterate, signing with an ‘X’, and of these, all but one were sisters. Laid in are several documents including a note dated April 17, 1904 signed by J. W. Copley, identifying the manuscript as the North Family covenant. Signed manuscript covenants rarely appear on the market, and the Hamilton College Library is pleased to announce the acquisition of this exceptional Shaker document.