

From the Editor –

I'd like to call your attention to three books recently published by the Richard W. Couper Press. One is *The Shakers of White Water, Ohio, 1823-1916*, edited by James R. Innis, Jr., and Thomas Sakmyster. It is a comprehensive examination of the history and life of White Water Village by leading experts on the community. As an offshoot of Union Village, the “mother” of Ohio Shaker communities, White Water received scant attention in the past. This work rectifies the situation and serves as an example of what might be done for other Shaker communities. It includes a thorough history of White Water as well as chapters on spiritualism, children, women, agriculture and industry, music, land, and buildings and topography.

The other two books both relate to the House of David and Mary's City of David in Benton Harbor, Michigan. *The Worthy Virgins: Mary Purnell and her City of David*, by Julieanna Frost, is a biography of Mary Purnell, in which Frost recounts the history of one of the most misunderstood religious leaders of the twentieth century. Mary Purnell, along with her husband Benjamin, founded the House of David in Benton Harbor, Michigan. After his death and a schism within the community, she created her own colony, Mary's City of David, overcoming a series of obstacles. Some of the tenets of her faith included celibacy, vegetarianism, and pacifism.

A Descriptive Bibliography of Imprints from the Israelite House of David and Mary's City of David, 1902-2010, by Henry M. Yaple, is the third book. Le Roy Barnett, former head of reference, Archives of Michigan, describes the book as “both a rarity and a unique creation. It identifies all literature issued by the Israelite House of David and the City of David, both communities headquartered in Benton Harbor, Michigan. In this respect, the book is possibly one-of-a-kind in fully accounting for all sectarian publications issued by two related faiths. This compilation is rich with annotations offering context, analysis, and explanations for the publications. Furthermore, it is a revealing study of how important printed communications can be in disseminating information to the faithful or recruiting new believers to the cause.... More than anything else, this book is a role model. It is a pioneering effort to fully record the publications of related religious entities, and this catalog will undoubtedly do much to promote further scholarship into these two faiths and their founders. American religious studies will be well served if other authors or institutions follow the example set by this book and prepare similar inventories for other sects.”