

“Rather Than Ever Milk Again”: Shaker Sisters’ Refusal to Milk at Mount Lebanon and Watervliet — 1873-1877

By Lauren A. Stiles

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“The great broad-backed, soft-eyed cows, themselves partaking of the quiet, gentle ways of their keepers, — the rich, pure milk drawn from their udders by the pretty young Shakeresses.”¹

March 30, 1876

“Sisters refuse milking any more so it is now to be done by the male order.”²

Twentieth-century agriculture was largely a male occupation. Outdoor routines like plowing, planting, and harvesting as well as barn-related activities such as milking and caring for newborn animals were jobs for “farmers,” i.e., men and boys. Farm wives had responsibilities that centered in and around the farm house. Caring for poultry in a building near the barn or working in a vegetable garden were exceptions. For much of the working day the activities of men and women were clearly defined and separate. This division of labor effectively kept women out of the fields and the barn. However, during the first three quarters of the nineteenth century this separation did not exist on most farms in New England and New York State. It was common practice for farm wives to milk and to feed calves, which required them to enter the barn. Butter and cheese making—two related operations tied to nineteenth-century dairy farming—also brought men and women into contact. It was only in the last quarter of the century that the increased mechanization of farming and the rise of commercial cheese making combined to establish a clear division and separation of labor between the sexes.³

Shaker farming practice changed during the course of the nineteenth century and women’s degree of involvement with milking and feeding young livestock likewise paralleled developments in the secular world as these jobs became increasingly a male responsibility. There was no fixed rule on what the sisters’ farm responsibilities were to be among the different

Shaker villages during the first part of the century; however, numerous entries about women milking are found in many surviving official *Journals* and *Records* kept by various families in Shaker villages in the Northeast. A pattern of shared responsibility emerges with sisters generally assigned morning milking during the late spring and summer months and the brethren and boys taking the responsibility in the evenings, during bad weather, and in winter.⁴ Decision making related to milk production and use may have been, in some cases at least, consultative with sisters' input.⁵ Given that it was well established practice that Shaker sisters had milking responsibilities, it makes the Mount Lebanon and Watervliet, New York Church Family sisters' refusal in the 1870s to continue milking all the more problematic. Giles B. Avery (1815-1890), who had been appointed second in the Ministry in 1859, responded testily to the situation. His reaction, recorded in the official *Records* kept for the Mount Lebanon Church Family, that "this indicates rapid decline," is likely to have been the response of an overworked administrator faced with what was viewed as a difficult situation that would lead to future complications in other villages.⁶ If the Shakers, not unlike traditional monastic groups, considered work to have a religious character similar to formal prayer, the refusal was perplexing. Avery, however, was probably less concerned about the religious character of work that was being rejected than by very practical considerations about subordination.

Curiously the confrontation over sisters' milking responsibilities seems to have been confined to Mount Lebanon and nearby Watervliet in the Mount Lebanon bishopric. The eighteen villages that comprised the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing for most of the nineteenth century were divided into bishoprics. The "first" of the bishoprics was centered at Mount Lebanon where the Ministry was officially located. This challenge to authority occurred, therefore, at the very heart of the Society and would seemingly have had the potential to spread to the other villages. The timing of the confrontation coincided with dramatic changes that were taking place in the outside farm world. During the 1870s and 1880s the agricultural press published articles calling for men to do the milking in place of women. Dairy farming was also becoming increasingly specialized with milk being sold to local cheese factories rather than being made by women into butter and cheese on the farm site. Although these secular developments coincided with the Shaker sisters' refusal, the sisters may well have been unaware of them. Although no other Shaker villages

were faced with a similar refusal, the severe widespread loss of male membership probably accounts for the gradual changes in responsibility for milking in other Shaker villages. Shaker farming would ultimately be “farmed out,” as it were, to hired men.

While the issue of Shaker cross-gender work assignments such as milking is interesting in itself, a traceable record of conflict resolution where a group of members refused a work assignment is highly unusual. The issue of women milking is one of the few cases that I have found that combines both aspects. The resolution of the refusal illustrates also how the Shakers worked out at least some of their social problems. By the 1860s group consultation and decision making by consensus seem to have been used to resolve successfully a number of family issues; however, this does not guarantee that the process was free of either stress or conflict.⁷ At Mount Lebanon tempers may have been short about the time Avery recorded that “some of them [sisters] would go without milk, butter and cheese, rather than ever milk again.”⁸ Typically, official *Journal* and *Record* entries are laconic, giving few details about how conflicts were worked out. In this case, however, it is possible to establish the content of the meetings and to piece together how the Ministry dealt with the situation and eventually accommodated the wishes of the sisters. If Avery feared that the “refusal” would spread to other villages, that was not the case. The conflict was limited to the two villages in the Mount Lebanon bishopric. That the sisters in the Church families at Mount Lebanon and Watervliet were the two groups that initially refused the assignment is probably not surprising. Those families were made up of covenanted or the most dedicated members. Since they were not probationary members they may have been more confident in making their opinions heard.

A brief description of nineteenth century Shaker agriculture and, more specifically, what was entailed in the act of milking will provide a background for the sisters’ objection to the work assignment. Despite their extensive land holdings, Shaker farms were not able to produce all the foodstuffs needed by the Society. While gardens and orchards supplied ample harvests of vegetables and fruit and the slaughter of beeves and poultry met most meat requirements, other staples had to be purchased from the outside. Particularly significant was the large amount of wheat that was needed by each family.⁹ The problem was compounded for a number of villages that had poor soil.¹⁰ The land at Canterbury is an example of persistently poor soil even when carefully worked. Contemporary writers

pointed out the paradox the Shakers must themselves have realized. While the Shakers made a point of saying that farming and agriculture were the foundation of their communal life, the reality was that their numerous commercial activities were the source of their prosperity. Like many New England and New York State farmers of the period faced with grain-growing competition from western farms, the Shakers turned to dairy farming after the first quarter of the century.¹¹ Their extensive barn-building projects—such as the Church Family’s Round Barn at Hancock begun in 1826 and the enormous barns built at Canterbury and Enfield, New Hampshire and at Mount Lebanon in the 1850s—are a testimony to the importance given to milk production.

Holstein cows, with their familiar black and white markings, only became the common dairying breed in the Northeast during the early twentieth century. This breed has been especially prized for its high milk-production capabilities. Dairies that sold milk and were paid by volume naturally appreciated the increased production; however, Holstein milk, with its low butter-fat content, was not well suited for making butter and cheese. Since the Shakers themselves used large quantities of both butter and cheese in their diet, milk from other breeds was better adapted to their needs.¹² It was only by the end of the century that a number of Shaker herds were made up largely of Holsteins. Unlike modern dairies which pride themselves on their pedigreed single-breed herds, most nineteenth-century dairy herds were made up of cows of highly mixed parentage. “Neat” or “native” cattle—cows that were descended from stock brought from England by early English settlers—were the norm for herds. Some farmers—the Shakers included—attempted to improve their herds of “neat” cattle by purchasing superior breeding stock from England. The Shaker villages at South Union and Pleasant Hill, Kentucky made major purchases of Durham short horns during the first half of the nineteenth century. Not surprisingly, animals resulting from these purchases were made available to Shaker villages in the Northeast.¹³ The resulting herds were a mix of strains which, by modern standards, would have had a motley appearance. Nevertheless, given good care, regular feeding, and attention to mating productive stock, Shaker milk production equaled or surpassed that of their neighbors for much of the century.¹⁴ Typically most families in a village maintained a herd of around thirty milk cows.

Much as is the practice today, nineteenth-century milking was done twice a day. The first milking was completed early in the morning and

the second in the late afternoon. Articles in the contemporary agricultural press gave practical information on how proper milking was to be done.¹⁵ Since cows are creatures of habit, a routine with established hours was recommended to put the animal at ease. It was likewise advised that the same person be assigned to milk a given cow. Kindness was stressed for best results and a gentle touch recommended. It was at this point that articles frequently argued that women, for this specific reason, made the best milkers and were appropriate for the task. Cleanliness was also stressed and women again were seen as more likely to be concerned about hygiene than men. Conscientious hand milking involved reassuring the cow, usually with a pat on the right flank and a kind word. The milker then positioned a low stool and the milk pail within easy reach of the udder. The udder was to be gently cleaned with a wet cloth. This comfortable contact also encouraged easier flow of milk. A well trained cow would have automatically moved her hind leg back giving freer access to her udder. Two of the four teats were gently squeezed and pulled aiming the milk into the pail. An experienced milker could complete the milking process with one cow in between ten to fifteen minutes. A moody cow who kicked could upset the milk pail or injure the milker requiring additional time to complete the milking.

It is not easy to establish the number of women who might make up a Shaker milking team, for it probably varied. However, one female milking crew described in a Shaker record consisted of five women.¹⁶ If each sister milked five cows from a hypothetical herd of thirty it would conservatively require an hour and a quarter for the team to complete the assignment. In most families, milking by the sisters was done in the morning. It is likely that the sisters' milking was completed by six o'clock.¹⁷ The sisters would have to have been up, therefore, some time shortly after four in the morning.

Where the sisters milked changed during the nineteenth century. Early records indicate that milking was done outdoors in the barnyard.¹⁸ Shaker barns generally had an east-west orientation with entries for cattle on the south side of the barn. This south side was fenced off to form a large area where cows and calves could be fed, watered, and—in the first part of the century—probably milked in the open. In theory the south side was the most protected area favored by the afternoon sun. However, later entries in the same records, as well as the reports in the agricultural press, indicate that as Shaker barn design evolved during the 1850s, provision was being made to move the milking to the interior of the new super-sized barns built at such sites as Enfield and Canterbury in New Hampshire and

Mount Lebanon. Numerous references were made to stanchions in the descriptions of the new barns.¹⁹ This device that ran much of the length of the feeding floor of a barn facilitated milking and indicated the practice of in-barn milking. Cows were creatures of habit who knew their place in the barn. Without much coaxing they entered the barn, found their stall, and reached forward to start eating fodder. When the cows were positioned with their necks extended, the wooden staves of the stanchions were automatically closed on the right and left of their necks confining them for milking. By mid-century, it appears that Shaker sisters had to enter the barn in order to do the milking, crossing into an area that was traditionally thought of as a strictly male preserve. Their additional responsibility for feeding calves likewise required them to work in the barn.²⁰ It is hard to imagine that some work-related interaction did not take place between the sexes during the sisters' time in the barn.

Because milking assignments were the norm for Shaker women, finding a record of the sisters' reluctance and finally outright refusal to milk was unexpected. Given subsequent events concerning milking within Church Families at both Mount Lebanon and Watervliet, the entries in official journals for both villages indicate 1873 as the probable date for the first indication of the coming confrontation. Towards the end of February it was recorded that the Mount Lebanon sisters "... have agreed to do the milking ..." for a fixed number of times and between specific dates:

The Sisters have agreed to do the milking from April 21, until Nov. 2, 28 weeks 12 times each week — 336 times. The whole year Sisters milk about 460. February 20, 1873²¹

The same arrangement, with some modification as to number of times and dates, was agreed to in early April of 1874.²² At Watervliet in November of 1873, elders met with the brothers and sisters of the Church Family at Watervliet who had milking responsibilities. At that meeting milking was discussed and an understanding was worked out.

Had a meeting of Elders, deacons, brethren & sisters of both sides of the house, that had been in the practice of milking (except minors) to talk over and establish some regular mode of milking It [*sic*] was agreed that ... if any variation from this rule occurs, it must be by the agreement of the parties on both sides of the house [i.e. by the brethren and sisters, ed.]. November 26, 1873²³

The legalistic tone of these entries is in marked contrast to all earlier references to sisters milking that I have found. Those earlier entries invariably state simply that the sisters' milking season had begun. In all probability during the following months there was an unplanned escalation of tension around the issue, from the sisters' calling for a reconsideration of their milking responsibility to a growing determination to stop milking. The situation came to a head in late 1875 at Mount Lebanon, followed in early 1876 at Watervliet, when the sisters clearly came to a decision to stop milking. Typically the entries are brief.

Brethren commence milking mornings, on the 8th Sisters begin to think milking too hard for them. Mount Lebanon, Church Family ... Items for November [1875]

Sisters refuse milking any more ... in fact, the sisters have not milked since last Fall. Watervliet, New York, Church Family ... March 30, 1876²⁴

The timing of both refusals suggests that the sisters of the Mount Lebanon and Watervliet Church Families acted in concert. Certainly the closeness of the two villages and the frequent exchange of visits by members would support the possibility of shared ideas. There is, however, no documentation to confirm this supposition.

Mount Lebanon Sister Adaline Cantrell (1835-1907) in her diary for March 1877 recorded that the leadership had held multiple meetings seeking a way to resolve the problem. She likewise noted that at least some male members were unsympathetic with the sisters' refusal.

There has been much talk about the milking. how [*sic*] it is to be done in the future, as the Sisters are so few in number who are able to milk, and conditioned so that they can. Meeting after meeting held by the Officials to decide what can be done, some of the beloved Brethren think it all foolishness that the Sisters cannot continue to carry it on as they have done; it is finally agreed that the boys may milk until the first of April, the time draws near, the poor Sisters meanwhile in awful suspense [await] the decision of their Lords, which is to seal their fate for weal or woe; where lo! the joyful tidings break on the ears of the weaker vessels, that a hire [*sic*] man will be on the ground April 1 to commence doing the milking & help care for the stock.²⁵

The significant aspect of the refusal and its resolution is that it originated from rank and file members directly affected by the milking duty. The sisters were sufficiently uncomfortable with the assignment and at the same time confident enough in their right to object to it that they confronted the Society's leaders. Over a series of years the sisters persisted in their complaint. In turn, the leadership responded with a deliberative process that ultimately accommodated the sisters' request. Significantly, the female counterparts of the male leadership also participated in the deliberations.²⁶ An entry in the Mount Lebanon Ministry's official *Journal*, written by Giles B. Avery and probably reflecting his perception of the tenor of the discussions, noted: "Thus winds up sister's [*sic*] milking, and some of them would go without milk, butter and cheese, rather than ever milk again ..."²⁷ Feeling on both sides, it would seem, ran high on the subject. If the leadership made the ultimate decision, the Mount Lebanon Church sisters had given them little choice as to the outcome.

Nothing in the records indicates that the sisters argued that milking was an inappropriate activity for women. Rather, the justification for being relieved of the duty was more likely based on Sister Cantrell's observation that "the Sisters are so few in number." Not only was membership falling, but the remaining members were advancing in age. Many of the young members—females as well as males—who ought to have made up the most productive membership, left after a relatively short period.²⁸ Other conditions that could have motivated the sisters were not cited by Sister Cantrell. Working around cattle could be hazardous.²⁹ Cows, while generally docile animals, could make sudden dangerous moves. Tails were long enough to strike a milker in the face and a kick with a sharp-hooved foot could upset a milk pail as well as wound the worker. Bulky female clothing was particularly vulnerable to collecting filth when walking through manure-rich or muddy barnyards. Likewise skirts brushed wooden barn floors which—although regularly cleaned—were saturated with urine and liquid manure. Even during the day the interiors of nineteenth-century barns were dark, making them dangerous. In the early morning they were especially ill-lit. With fire a constant threat, the use of lanterns in barns was severely restricted.³⁰

Male society members regularly assisted in traditionally female work areas. An example was the laundry where brothers were responsible for heavy jobs. Cheese and butter making were likewise occupations which were essentially performed by female members. They, too, were aided by

a few of the brethren who assisted with some of the tasks.³¹ Butter and cheese making were specialized activities. They were housed in a building separate from the barn. Such work-related interaction among dedicated members did not contradict Shaker practice; however, in order to maintain barn and field operations at customary levels, Shaker leaders increasingly relied on a growing number of hired men with no religious commitment to the Society to work alongside members. It is these men who would likely have had duties in areas where the sisters were required to milk and feed calves. While many of these men may not have been a disruptive presence, frequent complaints about them suggest that their presence was sometimes problematic.³² Could this also have been an unvoiced factor in the sisters' refusal to milk?

Coincidental with the sisters' refusal was a growing objection in the agricultural press to the expectation that women should be responsible for milking. Typically articles and letters stressed women's health and work load. Arguments staked out spheres of responsibility that would increasingly separate male and female tasks. Men were to work in barns and fields, women in the house. One writer in 1873 made an emotional—and to a modern reader convincing—argument for the change:

Should our cook and our butter maker go into the yard or stable to milk? I must confess I am not so delicately constituted as to be very much disturbed by the "smell of the barn" when it comes no nearer than the boots, but I do not like to smell it about my cooking, and if I am obliged to milk, I certainly should dislike to put my hands in the bread.³³

Other external changes were also taking place which were transforming farm life in New York State and would influence New England agriculture as well. The Shakers at the Mount Lebanon Church Family in 1866 experimented with a milking machine.³⁴ Even if it was not a successful attempt, the novelty and mechanical aspects of the machine doubtless interested male members. More important was the mid-century development of the cheese factory system which originated in Oneida County in central New York State.³⁵ Milk produced on individual farms was collected and processed into cheese in a nearby commercial factory. The work in the factories was increasingly carried out by males, reversing the tradition of female cheese making. In the same year that the Mount Lebanon Church Family sisters were relieved of their milking responsibilities it was decided to discontinue

cheese making.³⁶ Presumably cheese in the future would be purchased.

It is not clear that the refusal by the sisters at Mount Lebanon and Watervliet played a significant role in the ultimate end to milking assignments for women in other villages. Visiting Oneida Community members noted with approval in 1875 that the North Family sisters at Watervliet did not milk.³⁷ Likewise a brief entry in the Watervliet West Family *Records* for April 1876 indicates that sisters in that family “would not milk any more” and that their decision was accepted.³⁸ How those changes came about and whether or not they were confrontational was not explained. Nevertheless, it indicates that ideas about milking were undergoing change. It was not, however, until the end of the century that a number of the villages finally ended the use of female members as milkers. An unambiguous entry written in 1889 by Harriet Bullard (1824-1916), second lead in the Mount Lebanon Ministry, while on a ministerial tour of western villages noted with obvious disapproval that the sisters still milked at South Union, Kentucky.³⁹ In at least one of the northern Shaker villages the sisters likewise continued to milk through the same year.⁴⁰ It is likely that Sister Aurelia Mace, writing her memoirs towards the end of her life, captured the feelings of many of her fellow sisters concerning milking:

The barn was situated some distance from the Dwelling-house, and in The morning The Sisters would sometimes go through Snow-drifts to milk the cows when the men would be in their rooms sitting round hot stoves. Look out for This condition of things in future days, you who would build up communities.⁴¹

Ultimately neither the sisters nor the brothers did the milking. For the rest of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, hired men worked the remaining farms.

Notes

Abbreviations used in notes:

CSV: Canterbury Shaker Village

Fruitlands: Fruitlands Museum ... Harvard, MA.

MeSl: Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village

NN: New York Public Library

NOC: Shaker Museum and Library, Old Chatham, N.Y.

OCIWHI: Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio

1. Mary Frances Carr, "Visit to the Shaker Settlement," *The Shaker* 1, no. 1 (January 1871): 6. Carr is listed in the *National Union Catalog, Pre-1956 Imprints* as author of two published monographs related to Shakers. One of these, *The Peaceful Life of the Shakers*, with its bucolic title may give a clue to the sentimental thrust of her particular experience and view of the Society.
2. "Sisters refuse milking." Journal D. or *Family Record* of Passing Events by D. A. Buckingham Church, Watervliet 1870, OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-282, Mar. 30.5, 1876.
3. One of the best treatments of the changing role of women in nineteenth-century dairy farming in New York State is Sally McMurray *Transforming Rural Life: Dairying Families and Agricultural Change, 1820-1885* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).
4. "The Brethren commenced milking, and the sisters released during the Winter." Records of the Church at Watervliet, N.Y., 1854-1870, OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-28, Dec. 7.2, 1868, p. 437.
5. "Ministry, Elders, Trustees and Deaconess meet at Office to discuss the best mode of disposing of the milk also how many cows should be kept for milk this summer." Olive Chandler Journal. Daily Entries, Work, Weather, and Observations, 1863-1873, Fruitlands, 32.7, Mar. 11, 1867.
6. "A meeting of Ministry and all other officials to consult relative to the inability of Sisters to do the milking... Well, this indicates rapid decline!!" Records Kept by Order of the Church, vol. 4, 1871-1905, kept by Giles B. Avery and Joseph Holden, and others. NOC, mss. no. 10343, Feb. 13, 1877.
7. During the protracted planning and construction of the Center Family's new dwelling house at Mount Lebanon the sisters held at least one meeting to give their input. The process is cited in Lauren A. Stiles, "The Mythical Structure is Created," *American Communal Societies Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (January 2008): 7.
8. "Thus winds up sister's [*sic*] milking, and some of them would go without milk, butter and cheese, rather than ever milk again." Records Kept by Order of the Church, vol. 4, 1871-1905, kept by Giles B. Avery and Joseph Holden, and others. NOC, acc. no. 10343, Apr. 2, 1877.
9. Numerous entries in official documents and Shaker *Journals* record the need to seek outside sources of wheat. Examples are noted in New York Senate, *Documents* No. 89 (March 19, 1850): 5 and OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-70, Feb. 25, 1854.
10. The economic importance of Shaker commercial enterprises over agriculture was noted by Charles Nordhoff (1830-1901) in *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (1875; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1966): 186, and Oneida Community member George E. Cragin (1840-1915) in "The Shakers of Watervliet," *Circular* 6, no. 25 (Sept. 6, 1869): 197.
11. Although now fifty years old or older, highly authoritative generalized agricultural histories that remain valuable sources of information on period farming are Paul W. Gates, *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture 1815-1860* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960) and Ulysses Prentiss Hedrick, *A History of Agriculture in the State of New York*, (Albany, New York: J. B. Lyon Company, 1933).
12. The national popularity of Holsteins began in the 1870s. Mount Lebanon's Church Family made an early purchase in 1873. "The Holstein horned stock introduced: said to be extraordinary [*sic*] good." OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-71, Sept. 2, 1873.

13. "Durham Short Horn Cattle," *Farmer's Monthly Visitor* 2, no. 2 (Feb. 28, 1840): 23.
For a discussion of Kentucky livestock purchases and marketing see F. Gerald Ham, "Shakerism in the Old West" (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 1962): 229-231.
14. A detailed quantitative study of Shaker milk production at Mount Lebanon is found in John E. Murray and Metin M. Cosgel, "Between God and Market: Influences of Economy and Spirit on Shaker Communal Dairying, 1830-1875," *Social Science History* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 41-65.
15. A typical article giving practical advice was published at mid-century: "Milking Cows," *Southern Cultivator* 12, no. 9 (Sept. 1854): 280. The Shakers themselves published a similar article: "How to Milk," *Shaker Manifesto* 12, no. 8 (Aug. 1882): 192.
16. "Sister milkers, S. A. Spencer, D. Wright," OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-71, Mar. 4, 1868.
17. Isaac Hill (1789-1851), "Five Days Ramble Among the Farmers of Merrimack," *Farmer's Monthly Visitor* 4, no. 10 (Oct. 31, 1842): 151. A much later citation gives the remembered time for milking: "At half past four came the milking, at which the sisters always assisted." Sister Marcia, "Thanksgiving in a Shaker Village," *Christian Advocate* 80, no. 47 (Nov. 23, 1905): 1861.
18. An agricultural press account of a visit to Canterbury—probably by Henry Coleman (1785-1849—mentions what seems to have been a milking yard. See: H. C., "The Shakers—Pattern Farming," *New York Farmer* 8, no. 11 (Nov. 1835): 327.
19. An account of the use of a stanchion is found in the description of the Mount Lebanon North Family's stone barn (1858-1860) recorded by Solon Robinson (1803-1880), "The Great Shaker Barn," *Circular* 11, no. 34 (Oct. 2, 1862): 136.
20. An entry in the journal of their trip to the eastern villages kept by the Pleasant Hill and South Union Ministry recorded a visit to the Enfield, New Hampshire dairy barn. "Their Barn is a splendid affair.... The sisters feed the calves mostly with milk have a nice room for them to stick their heads in to [*sic*] from each side to eat." OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-228, July 8, 1869, p. 35.
21. "The Sisters have agreed to do the milking," OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-71, Feb. 20, 1873.
22. "Sisters commence milking ... 30 weeks, 12 times each week." OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-71, Apr. 6, 1874.
23. "Had a meeting of Elders, deacons, brethren & sisters," OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-338, Nov. 26, 1873, p. 250.
24. "Items for November [1875] ... Brethren commence milking mornings, on the 8th Sisters begin to think milking too hard for them." OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-71. "Sisters refuse milking any more so it is now to be done by the male order," OCIWHI, Shaker Collection: V: B-282, Mar. 30.5, 1876.
25. "There has been much talk...." Diary Sister Adaline Cantrell Mt. Lebanon Church Family [1873-1897], vol. 137, NOC, mss. no. 8855, Mar. 1877, p. 66.
26. "A meeting of Ministry, Elders, Deacons, and Sisters of each Order ... relative to the inability of sister doing the milking." NN, Shaker Collection, mss. no. 5, Feb. 13, 1877, p. 139.
27. NOC, acc. no. 10343, Apr. 2, 1877
28. An 1868 listing of a Mount Lebanon Church Family team of "Sister milkers" with their ages gives an indication of the growing membership problem with its heavy attrition rate. All but one of the youngest sisters on the 1868 milking team quit the Society within the next few years.

Evans, Fanny	1841—left 1870	... age in 1868 = 27
Fuller, Jennett	1851—left 1872	... age in 1868 = 17
Hart, Ellen	1848—left 1871	... age in 1868 = 20
Spencer, Sarah Ann	1817—1897	... age in 1868 = 51
Wright, Dorothy (ia?)	1843—1905	... age in 1868 = 25

OCIWHi, Shaker Collection: V: B-71, Mar. 4, 1868.

29. "Betty [Elizabeth Gibbs (1749-1818)] had but one eye — A cow threw her head back when she was tying her up and put her eye out." Aurelia Gay Mace, *Journal of Sr. Aurelia Mace* [typed copy] MeSl: 14-DJ-120, May 7, 1896, p. 32.
30. "We feel a constant fear of kerosene lamps, especially in lanterns ... never to open lanterns in barns." OCIWHi, Shaker Collection: IV: A-43, May 4, 1868, p. 5-6.
31. "Here is the dairy-house,... the cheese room, where some of the sisters are rubbing the cheeses with butter, the ... trimming done by a meek-looking brother." "A Group of Shakers At Prayer," *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion* 14, no. 14, (Apr. 3, 1858): 213.
32. Although much later in date, an early twentieth century description of an encounter by Walter S. Shepherd (1852-1933) — at the time living at the Church Family in Enfield, Connecticut — with a hired milker is a graphic example of farm-related problems. "I had a fracas with a drunken milker yesterday.... He was too drunk to stand & kept falling down back of the cows. What with one thing and another I have [*sic*] a pretty hard row." OCIWHi, Shaker Collection: IV: A-9, Feb. 16, 1908.
33. "The Dairy Department. Women Doing the Milking," *Ohio Farmer* 22, no. 2 (Jan. 11, 1873): 21.
34. "A new milking machine has been tryed [*sic*] lately — it don't work" OCIWHi, Shaker Collection: V: B-71, May 19, 1866.
35. The Oneida Community of Perfectionists noted the recent development of cheese factories in their county. "The originator of this system, is a Mr. Williams, a resident of Oneida Co., who, some twelve or fourteen years ago, started the idea among his neighbor farmers." [G.C.] [probably George E. Cragin], *The Circular*, n.s., 1, no. 11 (May 30, 1864): 85-86.
36. "In the evening a meeting of officials holds a consultation relative to abandoning cheese making." NOC, acc. no. 10343, Apr. 28, 1877.
37. "At the North family our folks were especially pleased with the cheerful, kindly, liberal feelings of the people over whom Elder Price (George Price 1817-1890) presides. The women are exempted from milking the cows, and from some other similar chores which are usually performed by the women in other Shaker families." *Oneida Circular* 12, no. 5 (Feb. 1, 1875): 37.
38. "Our Sisters let us know that they would not milk any more & so it is." OCIWHi, Shaker Collection: V: B-326, p. 83.
39. "The sisters do the milking in all the families and we may judge by this of the brethren." OCIWHi, Shaker Collection: V: B-172, Apr. 9, 1889.
40. At Sabbathday Lake the change in milking responsibility was likewise recorded late in the century. "Retrospective 1890 ... The boys did the milking through the past summer. The first SUMMER in which the Sisters have not bourn that burden." MeSl: 14-DJ-040, vol. 4: 73.
41. "The barn was situated...." Aurelia Gay Mace *Journal of Sr. Aurelia Mace* [typed copy] MeSl: 14-DJ-120, July 4, 1896, p. 48-49.