

From the Editor –

In this issue we have an account of Abijah Alley, a Shaker apostate. Authored by Nancy Gray Schoonmaker and Christian Goodwillie, the article traces Alley's journey into and out of the Shaker community. Schoonmaker is an independent scholar in Durham, North Carolina. She holds a Ph.D. in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and studies religion in the nineteenth-century United States with an emphasis on Christians who believed the ability to converse with the dead was a new dispensation from their loving God. Goodwillie is the director of special collections and archives at Hamilton College, and a prolific author on the Shakers and American history in general. His most recent book is *History of the Shakers at New Lebanon by Isaac Newton Youngs, 1780-1861*, which he and Glendyne Wergland edited. This work is a critical edition and transcription of Youngs's "A Concise View Of the Church of God and of Christ, On Earth," which is printed here for the first time in unabridged form. It includes an introductory essay comparing Shaker-authored histories of Shaker communities, appendices related to the members of New Lebanon's Church Family, and numerous illustrations. See the enclosed flyer for more information about it.

I'd also like to remind you of *Seeking Robert White: Quaker, Shaker, Husband, Father*, by Sandra A. Soule, published by Couper Press last year. Soule describes her work as an exploration of Robert White's spiritual journey which eventually led him to the Shakers. Much to his dismay, however, his wife did not share his views and remained committed to Quakerism. As a married, celibate Believer, Robert White had to balance the often-conflicting dual roles he played in his natural and Shaker families. How he functioned as a Shaker convert living "in the world" is a story of faith and challenges—an exceptional Shaker experience in the mid-nineteenth century.

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—Randall L. Ericson