

From the Editor –

Stephen Miller recently acquired a collection of Tate family letters from which he uses selections to “display the human and emotional interplay primarily between birth sisters: Caroline, a lifelong Believer who was left with the Shakers at the age of two and never left communal life, and Martha, a thoroughly secular and worldly woman who was only known to have visited Enfield twice after the age of five.” Miller has contributed previously to *ACSQ* and is the author of *From Shaker Lands and Shaker Hands* (University Press of New England, 2007) and *Inspired Innovation: A Celebration of Shaker Ingenuity* (University Press of New England, 2010).

Julieanna Frost presents an essay on the rise and fall of Michael Mills, who claimed the mantle of the seventh messenger. He was convicted of having carnal knowledge of a girl between fourteen and sixteen. Two followers of Mills were Benjamin and Mary Purnell. They soon laid claim to being the seventh messenger themselves, and established the House of David in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Frost is associate professor of U.S. history at Siena Heights University. She has contributed to *ACSQ* in the past and has a biography of Mary Purnell forthcoming from Couper Press.

The third offering in this issue is the first part of a reprint of a fourteen-part anonymous article, “Three Months with the Shakers,” from *Bizarre*. The author was apparently residing at the Gathering Order (North Family), Watervliet, New York, during the 1840s or early 1850s. We know that the author was a male (having confessed his sins to a male elder), and he cites one of several reasons for “casting his lot” with them as his former involvement with “spiritual rappings.” The account furnishes detail about the life of a novice—looking at Shaker life from “the bottom up.” The rest of the article will be published in future issues of *ACSQ*.