

## From the Editor—

This issue features articles about three different communal groups: Shakers, House of David, and Oneida Community.

We start off with Galen Beale's study of Peter Ayers, a Revolutionary War veteran who met with Mother Ann a number of times before becoming a Shaker. Ayers spent most of his life as a member of the Canterbury, New Hampshire, Shaker community, and signed its original covenant. With Mary Boswell, Beale co-authored *The Earth Shall Blossom: Shaker Herbs and Gardening* (1991), and with Gerrie Kennedy and Jim Johnson, *Shaker Baskets & Poplarware: A Field Guide* (1992). Beale continues to work in the Canterbury herb garden and to demonstrate poplarware. She is chair of the Collections and Exhibits Committee at Enfield, New Hampshire, Shaker Village.

The second item in this issue includes an 1894 pamphlet written by Benjamin Purnell as he was about to claim the mantle of the seventh messenger. This pamphlet provides insight into the transition from the sixth to the seventh messenger in the Christian Israelite movement. We provide a facsimile reproduction of the pamphlet followed by a short commentary by R. James Taylor, trustee of Mary's City of David, one of the last remaining followers of Mary and Benjamin Purnell, and the preeminent present-day interpreter of the Christian Israelite message.

The third article is by Anthony Wonderley, who examines John Humphrey Noyes' publication, *Bible Argument: Defining the Relations of the Sexes in the Kingdom of Heaven*, and the framework it provides for the relations between men and women in the Oneida Community. Wonderley is currently curator of collections at the Oneida Community Mansion House. He has published articles on the Oneida Community in *Communal Societies* and *American Communal Societies Quarterly*. In addition, he has written on Iroquois archaeology, folklore, and history for *American Antiquity*, *Bulletin of the New York Archaeological Association*, *New York History*, *Northeastern Anthropology*, and *Ontario Archaeology*. He has also authored two books, both published by Syracuse University Press: *Oneida Iroquois Folklore, Myth, and History* (2005), and *At the Font of the Marvelous: Exploring Oral Narrative and Mythic Imagery of the Iroquois and Their Neighbors* (2009).

Finally in the "Home Notes" section, I highlight the three most recent publications of the Richard W. Couper Press. I hope you will find them of interest and send in your orders.