

Hamilton College Library

“Home Notes”

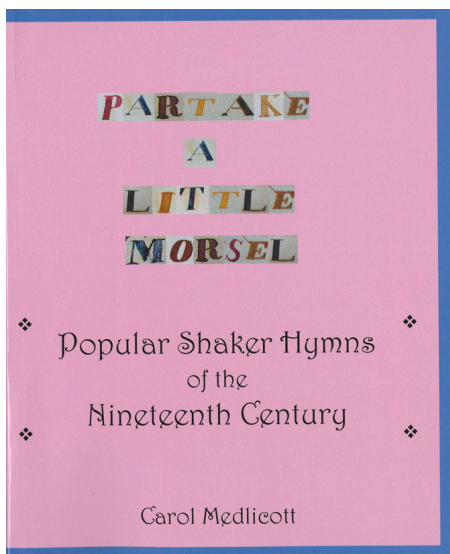
New Publications from Richard W. Couper Press

The Richard W. Couper Press recently released two new monographs and a third will be available shortly.

Carol Medlicott, “Partake a Little Morsel”: Popular Shaker Hymns of the Nineteenth Century. (Shaker Studies no. 3). 89 pp.

Among the various forms of Shaker song, hymns have sustained the worship of the Shakers for over two hundred years. Distinguished from other song types by their lengthy text of metrical rhymed poetry, hymns can accommodate an endless range of theological and spiritual ideas. During the nineteenth century, Shakers produced hundreds of individual hymns, which were recorded by countless individual Shakers in myriad manuscript hymn books. Yet from this enormous body of hymnody, a core group of hymns

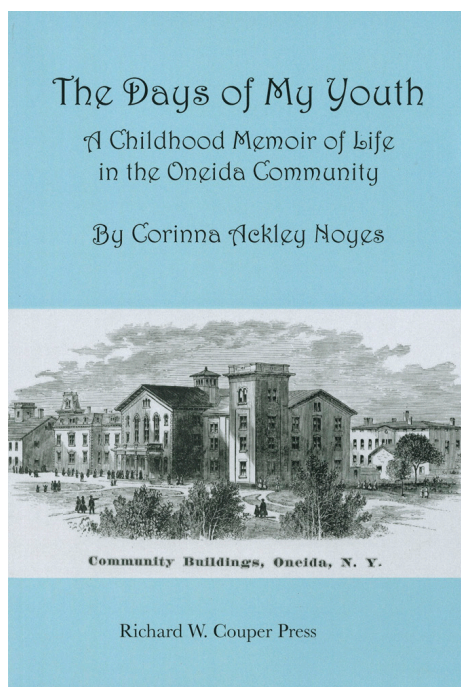
readily emerges—hymns that were used and beloved for decades across the Shaker world, from Maine to Kentucky. Remarkably, the hymns in this core group are virtually unknown today. This study helps today’s reader to “partake a little morsel” of a relatively untapped vein of American folk hymnody, revealing a fresh understanding of the Shakers’ amazing complexity and vitality.



Corinna Ackley Noyes, *The Days of My Youth: A Childhood Memoir of Life in the Oneida Community*, edited with a new introduction by Anthony Wonderley. (American Communal Societies Series no. 5). 164 pp.

“It was to my mind, a brave and noble experiment, not only in religion but in the art of human association; a school of unselfishness, sacrifice and dedication whose equal I could not name.” Thus begins this engaging account of the Oneida Community, the famous religious and socialist commune in upstate New York (1848-1880) dedicated to sharing all

property, labor, and love. This work is filled with sketches based on close observation of many Community members and of their employees, the “world’s people” working among them. It conveys the look and feel of the communal home, the Mansion House, and the surrounding world. The account bears witness to an increase in individualistic attitudes, then carries the reader beyond the Community’s breakup to explain what happened to various groups of Oneida Perfectionists. The fond memories Corinna Ackley Noyes put to paper are an important source of information about the Oneida Community’s later years.



***The Shakers through French Eyes: Essays on the Shaker Religious Sect, 1799-1912*, translated and with introductions by E. Richard McKinstry. 212 pp. (American Communal Societies Series no. 6). Available in October.**

This work contains fourteen essays by thirteen authors originally written in French about the Shaker religious sect. Translated into English and presented in chronological order, the essays cover a wide range of topics, each author writing within the context of his or her own background and interests. For example, Henri-Baptiste Grégoire wrote as a learned theologian, while Marie Thérèse de Solms Blanc, who was known

under the gender-neutral pen name of Th. Bentzon, wrote as a woman of letters and a critic. Some authors simply recorded facts about the Shakers as they understood them, and others penned thoughtful observations and analyses. One essay is more than 15,000 words long; some are less than 1,000 words. The essays add to the ever-growing bibliography on Shakerism, which began centuries ago with reports in the Manchester, England, press about how Shaker leader Ann Lee and her followers challenged the culture and conventional religious practice of their time. Each essay, important in its own right, should be of interest to those already acquainted with or new to the Shakers.

