

## From the Editor –

Dear *ACSQ* subscribers,

I write you from my makeshift desk, a plastic Lifetime® folding table set up in my bedroom. *Straaaaaange* times, huh? In any case, we're glad to be able to bring you this new edition of the *Quarterly* in the midst of our global crisis.

Our issue opens with Walter A. Brumm's examination of the Christian German Agricultural and Benevolent Society of Ora et Labora. In 2019 Hamilton College acquired a manuscript copybook of correspondence by community founder Emil Gottlieb Baur. This manuscript also contained a brief history of the colony written by Baur, who also offered reasons for its demise. Dr. Brumm has long been intrigued by Ora et Labora and this new source prompted him to explore the history of this obscure sect. Brumm's article precedes a transcription of Baur's brief recounting of his failed experiment. Special thanks to Michael Hardy of Thumbwind.com for permission to use his photographs of the remaining cabins at Ora et Labora and to reprint his account of the present condition of the buildings. We also wish to thank the following people and institutions for permission to use historic images from their collections: Sarah Buffington, curator, Old Economy Village; staff at Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan; and Annakathryn Parker Welch, assistant archivist, Archives of Michigan, Michigan History Center.

Next we have another previously untranslated German-language visitor's account of a Shaker community—Hancock, Massachusetts, in this instance. It was brought to my attention by the late Hermine Weigel Williams, author of *Therese Von Jakob Robinson: a Biographical Portrait*. In the course of her research Williams discovered Robinson's visitor's account in an obscure German compendium. It has been translated here by Ariel Godwin, with assistance from his father, Joscelyn Godwin. Robinson's account is prefaced by unique insights about Shakers and similar sects from her vantage point as a German intellectual. It makes an excellent addition to the growing body of visitor's accounts the Richard W. Couper Press and American Communal Societies *Quarterly* have published in English and translated from French, German, Spanish, and even shorthand!

Stay safe and healthy!

— Christian Goodwillie