THEME: Social and Humanitarian Movements

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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SEEI	NSTRUCTIONS IN HOW T TYPE ALL ENTRIES	O COMPLETE NATION COMPLETE APPLICAB		)
1 NAME				
HISTORIC	Mount Lebanon Shak	er Society		
AND/OR COMMON	New Lebanon Shaker	Society		
2 LOCATION				
STREET & NUMBER	U.S. Route 20		NOT FOR BURLINGS	
CITY, TOWN			NOT FOR PUBLICATION CONGRESSIONAL DISTR	ICT
	New Lebanon	VICINITY OF	29th	
STATE	New York	CODE 36	COUNTY Columbia	CODE 21
3 CLASSIFIC	ATION			
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENT USE
X_DISTRICT	PUBLIC	XOCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
BUILDING(S)	X_PRIVATE	_UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	ВОТН	_WORK IN PROGRESS	X_EDUCATIONAL	XPRIVATE RESIDENC
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	<b>X</b> RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED NO	INDUSTRIAL MILITARY	TRANSPORTATIONOTHER:
4 OWNER OF	FPROPERTY(See	Continuation Sheet	t)	<del></del>
NAME	Darrow School		,	
STREET & NUMBER	U.S. Route 20			
CITY, TOWN	New Lebanon	VICINITY OF	STATE New Yorl	
5 LOCATION	OF LEGAL DESCR		1011	
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, I	Columbia County Co	ourthouse		
STREET & NUMBER				
CITY, TOWN			STATE	
	Hudson	- <u>************************************</u>	New Yor	<u>k</u>
6 REPRESEN	TATION IN EXIST	ING SURVEYS		
TITLE	Historic American	Buildings Survey		
DATE	1933, 1939,	1962 <u>X_FEDERAL X</u>	STATECOUNTYLOCAL	······
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS		ss Annex/Division		tographs
CITY, TOWN	Washington		STATE D. C.	
	Washington		D.C.	

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

**CHECK ONE** 

X\_EXCELLENT
X\_GOOD
\_\_FAIR

X\_DETERIORATED
X\_RUINS
\_\_UNEXPOSED

\_\_UNALTERED
X\_ALTERED

X\_ORIGINAL SITE
\_\_MOVED DATE\_\_\_

#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mount Lebanon Shaker village is located on the west side of Mount Lebanon at New Lebanon, New York. Begun in 1785, the village proper grew to consist of five families arranged linearly along a stretch of road approximately 1.3 miles long. There were two peripheral families as well, the East Family located to the northeast of the village, and the West Family, located 1.75 miles southwest of the village. The Shaker family unit, which was first employed at Mount Lebanon, was established by Father Joseph Meacham to contain roughly 60 adults, divided as equally as possible between the sexes. Each family had its own supervising elders, its own fields and workshops, and its own residence. The Shaker precept of celibacy dictated that the dwelling houses be divided into brothers' wings and sisters' wings, and that separate workshops be built to sustain this segregation. Eventually separate quarters for children were adopted as well. Thus, each of the five families: the North, Church, Center, Second, and South Families, had its own dwelling house (or houses as the community expanded) and workshops and outbuildings. The Shakers attempted to assign each family specific crafts and duties, which were also regulated by sex, and so each family had workshops for its own particular pursuits.

The construction dates of the Mount Lebanon structures range from 1785 to a general cutoff date of 1876. Following a disastrous fire in 1875 which destroyed several frame buildings, brick replacements were erected. Following this period, exceedingly little significant building was done. The West Family buildings date from more modern times and cannot be considered sufficiently integral to be included in the landmark.

The Shaker style of architecture is characterized by functionalism and a clean simplicity of form. Materials range from frame through brick and stone masonry. There were no standard blueprints, the individual builders and carpenters fitted a building's form to its function and followed their basic tenets of sturdiness and simplicity.

With the decline in Shakerism, the Mount Lebanon community began to atrophy. In 1929-30, the Lebanon (now the Darrow) School purchased 300 acres and forty buildings centered around the Church Family. The few remaining Shakers moved to the Second Family. In 1947, following the death of the last Mount Lebanon Shaker, the whole village was sold, the Darrow School acquiring most of the North, Center and Second Families. The South Family was acquired by a summer camp. The East Family had since been completely dismantled.

At the present time, the Darrow School owns the North, Church and Center Families, except for one of the northernmost buildings of the North Family. The Second Family is now a private residence and the South Family is owned and inhabited by a religious community. There are at least thirty-four of the original Shaker buildings left in these five families in addition to scattered sheds and outbuildings which origins are undetermined. The

#### PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	X RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	XSOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
X_1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
<b>X</b> _1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
<u>X</u> _1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1786-1947

**BUILDER/ARCHITECT** 

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Twelve years after Mother Ann Lee and her eight followers migrated to America to establish an American branch of the Shaker religion, the first Shaker building to be used for religious worship exclusively was erected on Mt. Lebanon, at New Lebanon, New York. Although the first Shaker settlement was established in 1776 near Watervliet, New York, the second settlement at New Lebanon served for approximately 150 years as the principal Shaker community. Here the central ministry resided, and in the peak years of Shakerism, there were 600 members and 100 buildings on 6,000 acres. Following the steep decline in the Shaker congregation, the Mt. Lebanon community was sold, in part to the Darrow School. Located just south of U.S. Route 20 at New Lebanon, the oldest portion of the Shaker village is still used by the Darrow School, while the South Family is occupied by a religious sect.

#### HISTORY

The origins of Shakerism are to be found in late 17th-century France, where a group of peasants claimed inspiration of the Holy Ghost and preached the necessity of a return to primitive Christianity. They believed that physical manifestations were outward signs of religious fervor, so tremblings, faintings, and visions were regarded as vehicles to attain salvation. These religious ideas were carried to England, where converts became millennialists, preaching the doctrine of Christ's imminent second coming, and the violence of the former physical manifestations was sublimated into a ritualistic dance. Adherents were won primarily from the working class, among whom was Ann Lee, the daughter of a Manchester blacksmith who had experienced an unhappy marriage and the early death of her four children. So intense were her beliefs and so impressive her sincerity, she soon became known as Mother Ann. Four years after her acceptance of Shakerism, she declared that she had had a revelation that directed her to migrate to America, where the true Christian Church could be established. Obeying that revelation, she and eight followers emigrated to New York, finally settling at Niskayuna, now Watervliet, New York. Although the recent English emigres became suspect during the Revolution, and Mother Ann was imprisoned for five months as a suspected spy, the wave of religious revivals which spread over New England and New York indirectly caused many to consider the Shaker version of pietism. Stimulated by newly-found success, Mother Ann began travelling through New England to win converts. Before her death in 1784 she established the foundations for Shaker communities in most of the New England states.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGR S. Sydney Bradford, "I Historic Site Doris Faber, The Perf William Hinds, America Marguerite Melcher, Ti	Mt. Lebanon Shaker S s and Buildings for ect Life (New York, an Communities (Chic	Society," n 10-317, 1974). cago, 1902	3/17/65.	vey of
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LIST ALL STATES AND	COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES	OVERLAPPIN	IG STATE OR COUP	ITY BOUNDARIES
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY		CODE
11 FORM PREPARED  NAME / TITLE Richard Greenwood, His		eview Task	Force	
ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey	National Park Sem	ri co	DATE 12/10	)/75
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CITY OR TOWN			STATE	20240
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As the designated State Historic P hereby nominate this property for criteria and procedures set forth by	inclusion in the National Reg		i endergraphie	evaluated according to the
FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNAT	(URE		Sec	of Timeny
TITLE			DATE	date
FOR NPS USE ONLY I HEREBY CERTIFY HAT THIS  ATTEST:	PROPERTY IS MOLUDED IN	THE NATIONA	L REGISTER DATE DATE	11/3/83
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL RE	GISTER	<del>                                     </del>		

((NATIONAL HISTORIG LANDMARKS),

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CONTI	NUATION	SHEET	

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Donald McDonald, Shaker Road, New Lebanon, New York (Second Family)

Abode of the Message Inc., Shaker Road, New Lebanon, New York (South Family)

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conditions of these buildings range from excellent to ruined, with the majority being very good. Most alterations have been internal and consist of partitioning, plumbing and wiring. The second meetinghouse, now the school library is a notable example of a sensitive adaptation of the Shaker building to alternate use, where a new interior was added without altering or covering the historic fabric.

New buildings within the old village are relatively few (approximately four) and do not constitute severe intrusions.

The Shaker buildings are discussed individually below, proceeding from the North through to the South Family. Each building is identified by a number which is keyed to the enclosed sketch map.

#### NORTH FAMILY

- 1. The great stone North Family barn was built in 1859-60. Originally possessing three parallel wings on its south facade, the three-and-a-half structure burned in 1972, leaving only the stone shell. This property is not owned by the school.
- 2. The Sisters' Shop, now a girls' dormitory, is a two-and-a-half story white frame building. Like most of the Shaker buildings, the Sisters' Shop has a central doorway, sheltered by a simple hood, and the building rests on stone ashlar foundations. It has a gable roof, also in the Shaker style.
- 3. The Wash House, now the art studio, is a two-and-a-half story white frame building. Its eastern facade is pierced by one central doorway.
- 4. The Granary, presently unoccupied, is a two story and loft, unpainted frame building with an enclosed overhang from the roof to the second floor.
- 5. The Brothers' Residence, now a girls' dormitory, is a three story frame structure, with an entrance in the east end.
- 6. The Brothers' Residence and Workshops is not presently in use although it is being preserved by the school. A two story white frame building, the southern half was used as quarters, and the northern for workshops.
- 7. This Workshop built in 1825 is three-and-a-half story rectangular brick structure. Presently unoccupied, the large building is in a deteriorated conditions.

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8. A Blacksmith Shop, this large two story frame building was powered by water as was the neighboring workshop. It is not in use and in poor condition as well.

#### CHURCH FAMILY

- 9. The Tannery, built in 1838, has been converted into the school chapel. Very little of the long two story frame structure has been altered.
- 10. The First Meetinghouse, built in 1785, was the first structure at Mount Lebanon, and the first Shaker meetinghouse in America. Originally located where the second meetinghouse is now, the house had a third story added by the Shakers and was used as the Seed House after the second meetinghouse was built. It is now the Headmaster's House.
- 11. The Trustees Office and Store, now a dormitory, built in 1827, is a rectangular three-and-a-half story brick structure which is encased with weather boarding on two sides.
- 12. The Second Meetinghouse, now the school library, was built in 1824. The building is now painted red, but was formerly painted white, the standard color of Shaker meetinghouses. The foundations of the structure are exceedingly strong, in order to support the dancing and marching basic to the Shaker worship. Squared tree trunks form the floor joists, and the stone foundation piers are supplemented by heavy wooden post on the northwest corner. The meeting room's dimensions are 78' 4" in length by 63" in width. The ceiling is 25' above the floor, and stretches across the room in one span. Seven two-ply laminated beams form lintels spanning the distance between the posts to which are affixed the side walls of the building. The segmental ceiling is hung from, and the roof is supported by these massive beams. The roof itself is of a semicircular, barrel design.

The meetinghouse was entered through a lower and narrower wing on the south. There are three doors in this entrance, the one on the left for the brothers, the one in the middle for the elders and the one on the left for the sisters. Non-Shakers entered through the two doorways on the east side.

13. The Infirmary, built 1857-58, is now a dormitory. A three story frame building with four dormers on a side, the Infirmary was badly scorched during the 1875 fire, but was preserved.

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- 14. The Main Dwelling House, built in 1875-76, is the main classroom and administration building for the Darrow School. The four-and-a-half story brick structure with flanking wings on the north and south and a west wing attached to the rear contained brick partitions from the basement to the fourth floor, as fire prevention. The brothers occupied the north end of the building, and the sisters, the south. The west wing housed a work-shop, tailor shop and dressmaking shop. The deacons and deaconesses occupied each end of the first floor. On top of the central section of the building is a belfry containing 508 pound bell, purchased by the Shakers in 1875. It is inscribed with the phrase; "We Praise Thee, O God."
- 15. The Ministry House, also built in 1875-76, and now used as the school infirmary, housed the elders and elderesses who formed the Central Ministry of the entire Shaker religion. The 1841 datestone of the first Ministry House, destroyed in the fire, was built into the later structure. Both this building and the Main Dwelling House next to it reflect deviation from the traditional Shaker style, and the influence of Victorianism.
- 16. The Brothers' Workshop, now a dormitory, is a three story brick building, with stone lintels. This workshop is notable for the intact central stairway and interior panelling.
- 17. The Dairy, now a faculty residence, is an L-shaped, two story white frame structure.
- 18. The Shaker Schoolhouse, built in 1839, serves now as a faculty residence. A stone ground story is topped by one frame story and a gable roof.

#### CENTER FAMILY

- 19. The Ann Lee Cottage, a boys' dormitory was originally used as the Center Family residence. A three-and-a-half story frame structure, its gable roof is pierced by three dormers on its west facade.
- 20. The Medicine Shop and workshop is a three story frame structure now used as a dormitory as well.
- 21. This Center Family Residence is now a faculty house. It is two stories high and of frame construction.
- 22. This small two story frame cottage was used as a residence by the Shakers, and now by the school as well.

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23. The large frame barn is two stories high, with a loft, and has a gable roof. It appears unchanged.

#### SECOND FAMILY

- 24. This two story stone forge with granite quoining is dated by the iron numbers, 1846, on its north gable. Presently in a deteriorated condition, the building is being renovated inside, for use as a residence.
- 25. This red frame cattle barn is topped with a cupola and weather vane, and is relatively unchanged.
- 26. The stone Chair Workshop built in 1814 has been converted into a private residence. Built into a hillside, the structures measures two-and-a-half stories on the eastern facade, and three-and-a-half on the western. The mortar on the eastern facade is red and on the western facade is cream. A square, wrought-iron balcony has been added to the western facade.
- 27. This storage shed is now used as a garage and workshop. Two-and-a-half stories tall, with twin dormers piercing the eastern slope of the gable roof, the large frame structure has an unusual number of windows.
- 28. Directly east of the chair workshop are the ruined foundations of the Second Family Residence, built circa 1790 and demolished in the 1930's.

#### SOUTH FAMILY

- 29. This South Family residence and workshop is a two-story, unpainted frame structure which is now used as an office by the religious community which inhabits the South Family.
- 30. The main South Family residence is a three story, white frame building, with a slate-tiled gable roof, which is pierced with a central ventilator. Although the raised basement of this building is made of stone, the first floor above it is made of brick. This building is presently used as the refectory and offices.
- 31. This three-and-a-half story L-shaped frame building with a stuccoed masonry foundation served as the South Family laundry and a residence. It is presently used as a bakery and a dwelling house. It is connected by an iron walkway at the second story with the former large workshop and chair factory.

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- 32. The former chair factory and large workshop is a two-and-a-half story long rectangular frame building, with a one story frame addition on its northeast corner. It is presently used as storage space.
- 33. This two story white frame L-shaped building served originally as well as now, as a dwelling house.
- 34. A one-and-a-half story frame building with a gable roof, is a former store which is now used as a residence.
- 35. This former cattle barn is built of three frame stories on a stone half story. The datestone, reading 1869, is set in the foundations on the north end. The building is presently used as a garage and workshop.

Nonhistoric buildings within the Shaker community are relatively few. They include two new school buildings, located to the west of the Church Family. They are indicated by the letters A and B on the enclosed sketch map. The buildings are of frame construction and although modern, do not intrude drastically. Similarly, there is a frame, barn-like structure at the South Family, labeled C, which is modern but visually harmonious. These are the only modern insertions of any great size. There are, however, tennis courts at the Church Family and two man-made ponds at the Second Family which are also within the landmark.

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After Mother Ann's death, the mantle of leadership was passed on to James Whittaker who decided that a new Shaker center should be established at New Lebanon, New York, on the fertile farm of David Darrow, who donated his property. The first building was dedicated in 1786, and by 1787, the central ministry had installed itself in this more propitious location. For the short three years of his leadership Father James spent most of his time traveling and urging his adherents to consolidate and form similar Shaker villages.

Following his death in 1787, he was replaced by Joseph Meacham, Mother Ann's first American convert. Meacham set about developing the New Lebanon (later called the Mount Lebanon) community and in effect standardized plans for subsequent communities. During the first few years of his administration he built eleven whole villages—at Watervliet and New Lebanon, New York; Harvard, Hancock, Tryingham and Shirley, Massachusetts; Enfield, Connecticut; Canterbury and Enfield, New Hampshire; and Alfred and Sabbathday Lake, Maine.

By establishing these many communities, Meacham and his followers created the opportunity to practice their religion without fear of persecution. Moreover, believing as they did in purity and unity in the fullest sense of the words, separation from the rest of the world was considered necessary. In the community, they lived in communal fashion, none owning any personal property. Celibacy was practiced, in part, because the Shakers believed that complete Christian communism was not compatible with marriage, which had its selfish aspects. The government of the Mt. Lebanon community was dominated by the Head of the Millenial Church, who appointed his or her successor. Moreover, with the consent of the associate ministers, the chief minister could make any appointment necessary for the community. The governing body of Mt. Lebanon was acknowledged as the paramount executive in Shakerism, and was known to other Shaker groups as the Head of Influence. There was equality of the sexes in all Shaker communities, and women could aspire to any position of authority.

In applying their beliefs, the Shakers of the New Lebanon colony followed a rigorous daily schedule. All arose when a bell was rung at 4;30 a.m. in the summer and at 5:00 a.m. in the winter; they breakfasted an hour and a half later; ate dinner at 12:00 and supper at 6:00. Those able to work had to labor a certain number of hours each day, subordinating individual interests to the needs of the community. All meetings had to be attended, and the Elders and Elderesses supervised those diversions allowed. They even controlled the reading and correspondence of their fellow members.

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The Shakers at Mt. Lebanon supported themselves by carrying on a number of activities. They grew their own food, made their own clothes, tools and equipment, and erected their own buildings. The excellence of Shaker products became well known, and the Shakers at Mt. Lebanon had little trouble in selling seeds for gardens, clocks, and their famous chairs.

The Mt. Lebanon settlement remained active throughout the nineteenth century, but suffered from a dwindling membership. No turn in fortune came in the twentieth century, and Mt. Lebanon's decline continued, only a handful living in the community. Finally in 1929-30, the New Lebanon School, now the Darrow School, purchased forty buildings and 300 acres of ground. Thus, ended Shakerism at Mt. Lebanon, aside from a few elderly Shakers who lived out their lives there.

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Beginning at the intersection of the western curb of U.S. Route 20 and the western curb of the Darrow School entrance road, east of New Lebanon Center, proceed south along said curb of Route 20 for approximately .8 miles to its intersection with the New York State line, thence south along the state line 2350 feet, thence west 1500', thence north 2550' to the north curb of Cherry Lane, thence west along said curb to its intersection with the 850' contour, thence north along said contour to its point of intersection with the eastern curb of Shaker Road, thence in a straight line northeast to the point of origin.

These boundaries enclose the remaining buildings of the five families of the Mount Lebanon Shaker community, as well as all of the original Shaker farmland, which is still under cultivation, to the west of the Church Family.

