

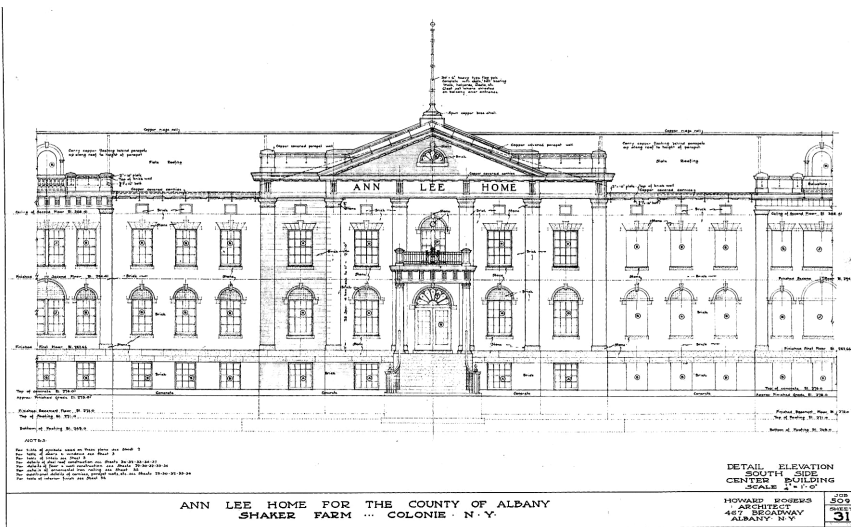
THE WATERLIET SHAKER JOURNAL

SHAKER HERITAGE SOCIETY

AMERICA'S FIRST SHAKER SETTLEMENT

SUMMER 2022

VOL 42 NO 1



Architect Howard Rogers' elevation drawing for the planned Ann Lee Home. Albany County Hall of Records Collection

Rehabilitation Work Begins

In 2015 Albany County partnered with Shaker Heritage Society on a successful application for NYS Regional Economic Development Funds to preserve the structures of the Church Family Site. It has taken many years to come to fruition, but work is finally slated to begin this spring with lead and asbestos abatement on the Trustees Office, Brethren's Workshop, Washhouse, and Shaker Garage. Later this year, we eagerly anticipate the removal of non-Shaker porches and dormers, and installation of new standing seam metal roofs on the Trustees and Brethren's buildings, a new asphalt shingle roof on the garage, and repairs to the historic slate roof on the Washhouse. We look forward to sharing updates and photos of the work in-progress later this season!

Additionally, Albany County and Siemens are collaborating on a new solar farm project in the Historic District. As a mitigation measure for the loss of open land, they have agreed to work with SHS to replace the 25+ year old Meeting House roof.

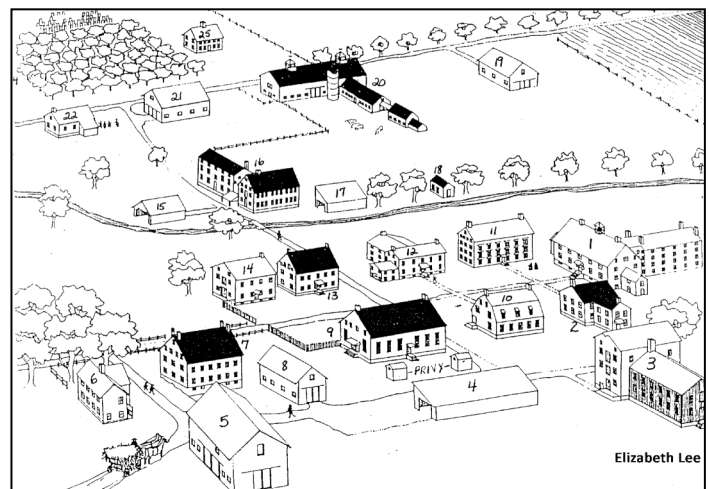
Artist Libby Lee created a birds-eye-view of the Church Family site to show which buildings remained after Albany County purchased the property and demolished 20 buildings. Identified by black roofs, these include the Trustees' Office, Meeting House, Shaker Garage, Ministry, Brethren's Workshop, Wash House, and Barn complex.. Part of the Shaker apple orchard also remains.

The Church Family Complex Transformed

The death of Church Family Elder and Trustee Josiah Barker in 1921 set deliberations in motion that would lead to the eventual sale of the Church Family property in 1925. Albany County purchased the 770-plus-acre "Shaker Farm." as it was called, with plans to build a new state-of-the-art alms house and municipal jail. Charities Commissioner Leo Doody was in charge of the development of a new facility to replace the outmoded and crowded alms house on New Scotland Avenue. He determined that naming the site after Mother Ann Lee was "...appropriate because the Shakers anticipated our modern welfare practices by taking in unfortunates and orphans at a time when their fate was otherwise dismal." An *Albany Times Union* editorial on February 1926, endorsed his idea:

It is most desirable to eliminate from public institutions such terms as almshouse and to give them names that will proclaim them a home. That is what an institution of this character—a home where the aged and the infirm who need assistance may be cared for and made comfortable and happy in their declining years—should be named.

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Published by the

SHAKER HERITAGE SOCIETY

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From the Director

“The only constant in life is change.” This old adage succinctly describes the Shakers. While the key tenets of their faith and values have held fast for centuries, the Shakers themselves have constantly adapted, remodeled, and revised to rise and meet contemporary challenges.

In this spirit, we acknowledge the melancholy news that after 92 years, we will say goodbye to the Ann Lee Nursing Home. Since the Home closed almost two decades ago, efforts by Albany County to secure new tenants and adaptively reuse the facility have been unsuccessful. The structure is now slated to be razed.

In the era of Shaker prosperity, the Church Family Site was a society renowned for equality and compassion, not to mention cleanliness and order. It thus seems a fitting tribute to this history that generations of Albany residents served their neighbors as nurses, doctors, therapists, orderlies, janitors, cooks, and caretakers within the walls of the Ann Lee Home.

While not a Shaker building, the Ann Lee Home was an important part of the story of the Watervliet Church Family Site in the 20th century. Change comes in many forms, and we are also excited to share some new developments, including new roofs planned for the Trustees’ Office, Brethren’s Workshop, Shaker Garages, and Meeting House; much-needed repairs to the Washhouse; and the launch of a capital campaign to install seasonal restrooms in the Shaker Heritage Barn. Read on through this issue to learn more about how the Church Family Site has been transformed again and again through the centuries, and the exciting developments on the horizon.

Johanna Batman

Shaker Heritage Receives NYSCA Funding We are grateful and excited to report that Shaker Heritage Society is the recipient of an \$80,000 Capital Project Grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. These funds will support installation of a new HVAC system in the 1848 Meeting House. This will improve our energy efficiency, help to stabilize temperature and humidity in the historic structure, and allow us to add modern filtration systems to our facility to improve the health and safety of the building for all.

Bequest From Lucille Ann Bish It is an honor to announce that this spring, SHS received a bequest of \$100,000 from the estate of the late Lucille Ann Bish. Ms. Bish was a longtime member, supporter, and former volunteer of SHS. Her generosity will allow SHS to launch a capital campaign later this year to install seasonal restroom facilities in the Shaker Heritage Barn. When complete, this project will support exciting growth in our facility rental program and strengthen our capacity to steward the Church Family Site.

Spring Appeal Thanks to you, this year’s spring match appeal hit a new record! Together, we raised over **\$24,450** for education and preservation at the Church Family Site. Thank you so much for your contributions. We truly could not do this work without the steadfast help and support of our community.



Events

More details on workshops and programs are on the SHS website: www.shakerheritage.org. SHS is following all protocols to maintain a safe environment for visitors. Sessions are planned for safe, social distancing, and masks may be required for all indoor workshops and programs, regardless of vaccination status. To register offline, contact educator@shakerheritage.org; 518.456.7890, x3.

Workshops



Hearth Basket Weaving
Saturday, July 16, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, with Sandy Salada

Traditionally, used to carry fire wood or kindling, this basket also makes an ideal carrier for a casserole or even two pies.

No experience needed, suitable for the adult beginner. Bring a lunch for the 30-minute break. **\$50 SHS Members (\$55 non-member) plus \$50 Materials.** [Register here.](#)



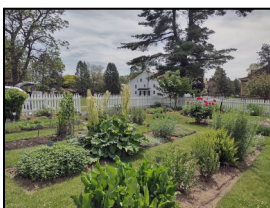
Cyanotype Workshop
with Julia Whitney Barnes, Saturday, July 23, 10:00 am - 3:30 pm

Learn the basics of making a cyanotype print on paper and

fabric, how to print using fresh and pressed plants, printing with three-dimensional objects (string, glass jars, jewelry, etc.), printing with paper cutouts and how to create and print with photographic negatives. No previous experience required; session will be outside. Raindate is July 30th. **\$45 SHS Members (\$50 non members) plus \$25 Materials** [Register here.](#)

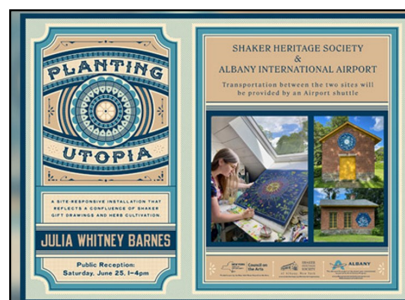
Programs and Tours

Celebrate National Pollinators' Week, 2022. Shaker Heritage is collaborating with five other organizations to offer a *long week* -- 10 days -- of free programs and activities, beginning June 18th. [More details on programs at SHS and other sites here.](#)



Inventors and Gardeners Tour
Wednesday, June 22, 10:30 am and 1:00 pm; and Thursday, June 23, 5:30 pm (Event indoors if raining) The Shakers developed the first

seed packing industry and the first herbal medicine industry in the US. Explore 150 herbs in the garden -- *including some plants you may only think of as weeds!!* Bring a picnic for after the tour. Registration appreciated, but walk-ins welcome: 518.456.7890, x 3 or educator@shakerheritage.org.



Planting Utopia
Opening Reception
at Shaker Heritage and the Albany Airport. Saturday, June 25, 1-4:00 pm, with shuttles between sites.

Beginning in the spring of 2021, Poughkeepsie-based artist Julia Whitney Barnes photographed and collected specimens from over 150 plants growing in the Shaker Heritage herb garden. The garden (which reflects the Shakers' important herbal medicine industry) and historic Shaker 'gift' or 'spirit' drawings are the inspiration and source imagery for a series of prints on view at the Airport, and the companion, site-specific installation at the 1856 Drying House at SHS.

The public reception will introduce guests to both installations, provide an opportunity to meet the artist, and learn more about her research and creative process. [Please register here.](#)

The exhibit at Shaker Heritage Society was funded by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts and will be on display through Summer, 2023.

Whitney Barnes often works with the cyanotype process, which is an early cameraless photographic process that was invented in 1842, the same era as when the gift drawings were being created. Objects or transparencies are placed on



paper or fabric coated with cyanotype chemistry and then exposed to light to create various hues of white to light blue silhouettes on rich, blue backgrounds. Through the use of this cyanotype medium, Whitney Barnes manipulates pressed and dried plants from the herb garden along with intricately cut photographic negatives. For her works on paper, the unique blue and white prints are just the beginning and then she paints in many layers of watercolor, gouache and ink.

Continued

EVENTS, *Continued*

Hands to Work Day - Saturday, July 9th from 10 am to Noon We would greatly appreciate your assistance with outdoor and indoor tasks to spruce up our site. [Please RSVP here.](#)



Walking in the Wicks' Footsteps - Saturday, July 9 at 4:00 pm - Saturday, July 23 at 10:30 am
Fee: \$5

In the fall of 1824, Job and Polly Wicks and their 10 children arrived at the Watervliet Shaker community and began a 70-year association with the Shakers. Tour guide Ann Sayers is the author

of *Their Name is Wicks*. Bring a picnic to enjoy after the tour! Register for [July 9th](#) at 4 pm or for [July 23rd](#) at 10:30 am. Contact educator@shakerheritage.org or 518-456-7890, x 3 with questions or to register offline.



Confetti Players' A Midsummer Night's Dream will be

staged on the Shaker Heritage lawn. **August 5, 6, 11, 12, 13 at 7:30 pm; 7 and 14 at 2 pm.** [Tickets here.](#)

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, August 14th: *As I Progress*, an art installation by Mara Baldwin and new musical composition by Sarah Hennies, funded by the NYS Council on the Arts.

New Collaboration with Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Lured by the signs for Shaker Heritage on his way between home and work, Dr. Haiyan (Andy) Zheng discovered the SHS herb garden, as he described it, a "local secret, open and well preserved." An Associate Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences, he began visiting frequently and invited SHS to collaborate on plans at the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (ACPHS) for a revived course on Botanical Medicine and a new medicinal garden on campus. The garden was a gift from the ACPHS Class of 1969, the last class to study Pharmacognosy -- the study of the potential medicinal uses of plants and other natural sources. In his remarks at the College garden's dedication, he noted that the project "reminded us that [ACPHS] was the hub of leaders, experts, and students of pharmacognosy and botanical medicines not that long ago."

Dr. Zheng and Dr. Insong (James) Lee, Associate Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences worked with other faculty members to develop a new course, "Introduction to Botanical Medicine." Presented this spring, the class included several sessions on the traditions and history of botanical medicine around the world. SHS Education Coordinator Lorraine Weiss developed and presented a lecture to introduce the Shaker herb industry and medicinal practices, placing the Shakers in the context of Native American practices and the early 19th century growth in the medical profession's promotion of herbal remedies.



Albany College of Pharmacy Class of 1969 alumni joined students and faculty for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the new Medicinal Garden on campus in October, 2021

Students organized a club focused on botanical medicine, a student group toured the SHS site and herb garden in November, and alumni visited the garden this April. Professor Zheng hopes to involve students in a range of studies and special projects that will expand research in the use of medicinal herbs.

While they have certainly been used for millennia, there are plenty of myths and a lot of contradictory information about the use of herbal remedies. Dr. Zheng believes "botanical medicine is an area for new development, new curriculum, new research, new practice based on new sciences, with new opportunities for community service, outreach and collaboration."

The new project dovetails nicely with SHS goals and activities. SHS staff and volunteers are working with botanists and ACPHS on a database of herbs and transcribing Watervliet Shakers' recipes for herbal remedies, one of which is included in this newsletter.

Church Family Site Transformed, *continued*

Three years later, on April 14, 1929, Doody was photographed with a group watching Governor Franklin Roosevelt sign a new public welfare law. The *Times Union* reported:

The State of New York has scratched from its statute books the ancient poor laws and with it has gone all words which tend to humiliate those forced by circumstances to seek public aid. Governor Roosevelt's approval last week of the new public welfare law has removed, as far as New York State is concerned, the terms "paupers," "poorhouse," "almshouse" and "superintendent of the poor."

"One of Finest Institutions in the Country Planned in Ann Lee Home on Shaker Farm" declared a headline over a rendering of the new facility in December, 1926. Doody promised that the new site would be open in a year; however, the home would not be ready for occupation until early 1930.

Children were, in fact, the first to be served on the former Shaker site. The County tuberculosis sanitarium also needed to be replaced. The Trustees Office was rehabilitated to serve as a "pavilion" for ill children who were relocated there beginning in January, 1929. The County expanded services and developed a Preventorium (nicknamed the "Pre") where children could be housed if they had been exposed to or were in danger of contracting TB, but were not ill. The former Meeting House was used as a community center and school for the children, and gardening was among their activities. In July, 1929, South Family Sister Freida Sipple noted "Promise my four garden tools to the children at Pre..." and that she and Sister Lucy Bowers had been invited to tour the gardens. The Sisters' diaries also mention being invited to movies at the Pre



Colonial Revival style dormer windows and other details were added to the Brethren's Workshop and Trustees Office along with enclosed sleeping porches as part of the new development in the late 1920s.

and selling candy and other items to the children.

To accommodate the fresh air approach to the treatment of TB, both the Trustees' and Brethren's buildings were rehabilitated with "[g]reat open porches, 10 feet deep and full width of the building front and rear [which] provide ideal cure spots for these children while their rooms, bright and cheerful and open to sun and air from all sides, give them a splendid opportunity to build up to health and adolescence." Dormer windows added to each structure also mirrored the style of the new Ann Lee home. Porches were also added to the Ministry. The Shakers' Wash House continued to serve as the Laundry for the campus, but the three-story cannery was demolished and replaced with the long row of garages that remain today.

The County continued to operate a farm on the property, in part with labor from the nearby County Jail which was also a component of the new development on the former Shaker site. The 1915 barn complex remained in use and the Shaker's Drying House was rehabilitated to serve as a creamery.

The 1848 Meeting House was altered early in the development phase with rooms reconfigured on the second floor for employees. The most dramatic change to the site, aside from demolition of 20 structures, was the complete remodeling of the exterior to complement the Colonial Revival style of the Ann Lee Home. Not only was the building sheathed in red brick, but windows were altered and added to create a more pronounced symmetrical appearance, and new porches sprang from both the Shakers and World entries.



The Knickerbocker Press edition for January 28, 1929 profiled the new Preventorium which opened with 18 children and soon served more than 50.

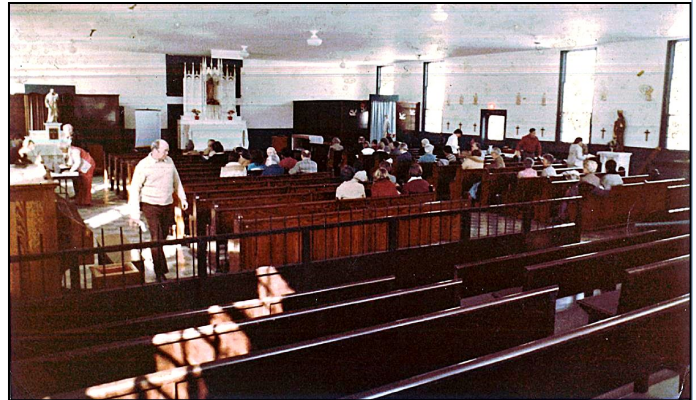
Source for all newspaper articles:
[fultonhistory.com/
Fulton.html](http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html)

On the interior, the Meeting Room was remodeled as the Catholic Chapel of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. An altar and pews were inserted and linoleum covered the wood floor. Two rooms at the north end were partitioned off. Fortunately, with the exception of a few sections of the built-in benches used by the Shakers which were removed to make room for radiators, the rest of the historic fabric was largely untouched. In the 1980s, when the chapel closed after the Ann Lee home was relocated, SHS volunteers labored to remove the chapel's fixtures and the linoleum, which had damaged the historic floor. A new floor was installed in the 1980s. The exterior of the Meeting House was not restored until 2006.

Leo Doody's original plan for Ann Lee Home was a 190-bed facility with recreation, solarium, and smoking rooms in addition to a general dining room. Men and women were to be housed in separate wings, and there were also six larger rooms planned for couples. Accommodations for staff included their own recreation, smoking, and reception rooms in addition to residential spaces. The full plan included an adult TB hospital and a permanent Preventorium on a hill located at the western boundary of the Church Family. These plans did not materialize, but a large building was constructed. Labeled Supervisor's House or Administration Building on some maps, and located on Hill House Road, the site served for a time as the Ann Lee Orphanage in the mid-20th century.

On October 20, 1929, Mr. Doody was quoted as saying "...we will be occupying the new Ann Lee Home on the Shaker Farms and will have a county hospital sufficient to meet the demands of the new county system of hospitalization." Just days later, the stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression would have an impact on the new institution.

When the new Ann Lee Home was dedicated on March 1, 1930 (ironically, the day Shaker communities were celebrating Mother Ann Lee's birthday), there were 340 patients moved to the site. Five years later there were 540 patients, and 640 in 1940. Despite



The Meeting House exterior was remodeled to match the style of the Ann Lee Home and the interior altered for a Catholic chapel.

serious overcrowding, plans for expansion were still under discussion in 1947. Expanded in the mid-20th century, the building was finally replaced by the new Albany County Nursing Home in 1973, today called Shaker Place. Operations at the Ann Lee Home campus were phased out and finally closed by the early 2000s.

In the 1970s, as plans were underway for the new nursing home, Town of Colonie Historian Jean Olton led a group advocating for the preservation of the site and establishment of a new non-profit that would take on its stewardship. Shaker Heritage Society was officially incorporated in 1977, beginning the third chapter of the Watervliet Shaker Church Family site.





Summer Craft Fair a Success!

Thank you to all who helped us set up, run, and take down the Summer

Craft fair. In addition to over 75 vendors selling a great variety of handmade items, events included activities for the younger set, including pony rides and a wonderful story telling and craft activity with Stephanie McElron.

SAVE THE DATE: Harvest Craft Fair - September 10 & 11



Shop at SHS Online Support SHS via our online store. Find the catalogue on our Facebook page or via the link on our website. Museum Shop manager Jackie Davis has eco-friendly, reusable, and regionally-sourced goods, in addition to traditional Shaker items. We offer pickup, delivery and mailing options.

Shaker Heritage Society is grateful for the General Operating Support we receive from the Architecture + Design Program



Council on the Arts

of the New York State Council on the Arts. Thank you to the New



York State Council on the Arts, Humanities New York, and the Bender Family Foundation for their support as we navigate the pandemic, develop new digital programs and website content, and expand our online presence.



Beekeeper Ian Munger introduced visitors to the wonders and delights of bees and beekeeping. It was a family affair, with wife Beth Munger and sons Chris and Ethan

providing a great program on the residents at the Shaker Orchard during **Pollinator Week**. Owners of the Blue Line Apiary, the Mungers sell their honey and beeswax candles at the SHS Holiday market.

At Shaker Heritage Society, our work has always been about keeping the spirit of the Shakers alive and preserving our history. History shows us where we've been, how we've progressed, how we can help to shape the future. Your contribution to Shaker Heritage today will make sure we're here tomorrow to keep the Shaker culture and site an integral part of the Capital Region's history. SHS Members enjoy free or reduced admission to SHS programs and events; a 10% discount on regular gift shop merchandise and a 5% discount on facility rentals. Visit www.shakerheritage.org and click "Donate" at the bottom of the homepage, or send this form to: Shaker Heritage Society, 25 Meeting House Rd, Albany NY 12211.

Membership (Individual, \$35 | Household, \$50 | Supporting, \$100 | Sustaining, \$250 + Donation

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

Enclosed is my check for \$35 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 or \$ _____

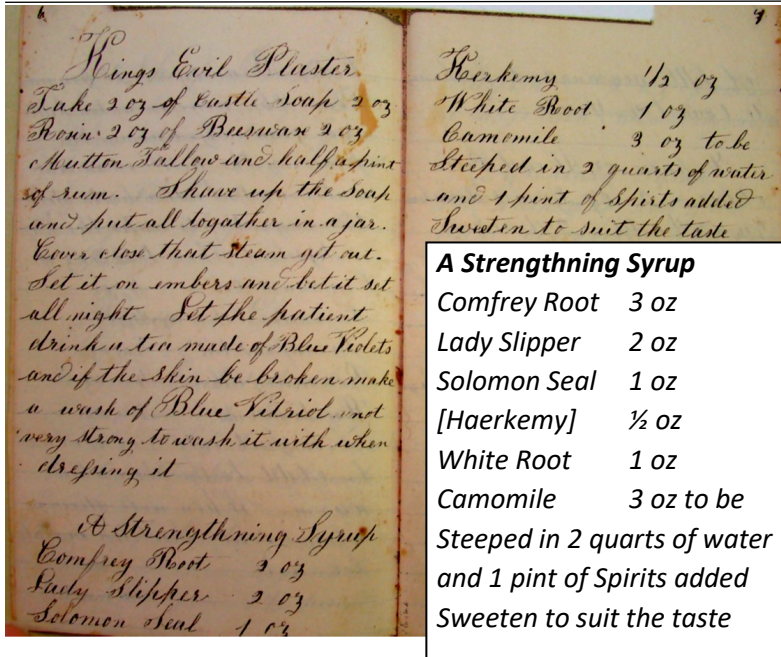
Please charge \$ _____ on my Mastercard /Visa Card Number _____

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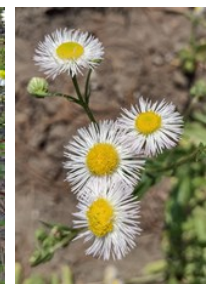
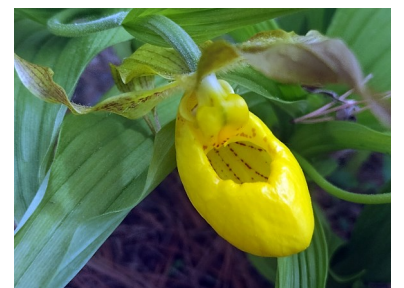
Signature _____



**25 Meeting House Road
Albany, NY 12211**



A Strengthening Syrup
 Comfrey Root 3 oz
 Lady Slipper 2 oz
 Solomon Seal 1 oz
 [Haerkemy] ½ oz
 White Root 1 oz
 Camomile 3 oz to be
 Steeped in 2 quarts of water
 and 1 pint of Spirits added
 Sweeten to suit the taste



Ingredients and properties (counterclockwise from upper left)
Comfrey: pectoral, demulcent [*helping with inflammation or irritation*], balsamic [*resinous substance*]
Lady Slipper: sedative, nervine [*reduce anxiety and tension or stimulate and strengthen*], aromatic
Solomon's Seal: astringent, demulcent, balsamic
White Root (Fleabane): astringent, diuretic
Camomile / Chamomile: tonic, stomachic [*helping digestion or stimulating appetite*]

We often use this space to include an historic or seasonal recipe -- this one is historic, but one that we DO NOT want you to actually try. It is found in *Medicinal remedies for dyspepsia, dysentery, poison, etc.*, a c. 1840 handwritten "receipt" book (as recipes were called) from the Watervliet Shaker community.
Special Collections of New York State Library, Shaker Collection, SC20330.
(See related article on Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.)