

20—The Berkshire Eagle, Monday, Feb. 23, 1970

## Experimental School Is Being Planned For Shaker Village in New Lebanon

By GERALD B. O'CONNOR

NEW LEBANON, N.Y. — The historic Shaker community on Darrow School Road will become the fourth in a national system of private, experimental schools, its prospective new owner says.

William F. Pepper of Ossining, N.Y., said in a telephone interview with The Eagle that the object of the system is to integrate education fully into "the living situation," with emphasis on tutorial instruction.

Instruction will be blended into a program of work and recreation, he said.

### Nonprofit Corporation

The school, to open next September, will be operated by Glenrock Community, Inc., a nonprofit corporation founded two years ago by Pepper and now operating similar schools in New York and Aspen, Colo. The third school is being organized at Jeffersonville, Vt., he said.

Pepper himself will spend most of his time at the Shaker Village and Jeffersonville communities for the next several months, he said.

Pepper's corporation last week signed an agreement to purchase the community here from the estate of the late Je-

rome Count, who in 1947 founded the Shaker Village Work Group, a summer camp for boys and girls who worked at numerous building and craft projects. The Shaker Village property comprises some 800 acres on the western slopes of Lebanon Mountain.

Donald Beckerman of New York, at present a member of the faculty at Brooklyn College, will be the resident director of the new school, Pepper said.

### Camp to Continue

He added, however, that the summer camp will be continued, guided by the same staff and philosophy established by Count Donald and Ellen Parker and William and Cornelia Coffin who continue to direct the camp, he said.

In explaining the objectives of Glenrock Community, Inc., Pepper said the students in Glenrock's existing schools and those who will attend the school here can be classified "as classic underachievers, that is, young people who have the ability but who don't meet their potential."

He said the enrollment will be no more than 24, encompassing boys and girls from 8 through 18: "They will represent all levels of accomplishment, some needing remedial instruction and others, perhaps, having reached the third-year college level."

At the New York school, he

said, one 18-year-old boy who school recently attained scores of 798 on two College Board examinations and 800 on a third. A perfect score is 800.

Revenue for the schools, said Pepper, will come from private contributions, tuition payments where possible and public funds under educational programs where public funds may be used. He said there will be a "heavy scholarship program" and that students will be sought from throughout the United States and foreign nations. Students at the existing schools come from countries including Peru, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam and Canada and represent "all cultures and nearly all geographic areas," he said.

### Hope To Set Models

"This is an unprecedented system," said Pepper. "We're not just theorizing. We hope to develop a system of private, experimental education, tutorial in orientation, that will serve as a model for others."

At Shaker Village, he said, there will be an average of seven full-time teachers for the 24 students. He foresaw as many as 16 part-time "subject specialists," or teachers, who will make possible instruction at a ratio of one instructor to one pupil.

The "expanded" school days will operate from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., Pepper said, with a mixture of studies, work, recreation and leisure time. He suggested an average day might consist of "one or two tutorials in the morning and one in the evening with recreation, study and work in between." There will be no 8:30-to-3:30, Monday-through-Friday school weeks.

"The Communities will be run," Pepper said, "by the kids and the faculty through community meetings."

The instructional program will continue through the year, he added, and the summer camp program will complement it.

The actual sale of the property is to be completed by June 2. The approximate purchase price is \$350,000. Pepper said there are no plans at present to develop the property or portions of it. Existing Shaker Village buildings will be ample for housing, he said.

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### 10 Men Running For Directors Of C. of C.

GREAT BARRINGTON—Ten local businessmen are candidates for the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce board of Directors. The election is scheduled for March 1. The six three-year terms expire in 1973.

Candidates are John T. Ryan of radio station WSBS, Bernard Green of Harper's Rexall Pharmacy, Milton Stevens of the Stevens Funeral Home, Melvin

# William F Pepper school for kids

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