



HANDLED WITH CARE

Shaker Master Crafts and The Art of Barbara Prey

M. STEPHEN MILLER • BARBARA ERNST PREY



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NEW BRITAIN MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Archibald Meacham in the Shaker West

Archibald Meacham, born in 1777 (or 1779), was the second member of the Meacham family to travel west of the Appalachians to further advance the Shaker enterprise. Archibald had been a Shaker since early childhood and likely recalled some contact with Mother Ann Lee and the other English Shakers. He was twenty-eight years old when he arrived at the newly established settlement of Turtle Creek (later, Union Village) in southwestern Ohio in August 1807. This is where his first cousin John Meacham had been sent in 1805.

One of his first tasks was to prepare and annotate a map of the adjoining properties owned by the Shaker converts and the Eastern newcomers. This map would be carried back to New Lebanon, New York, by Nathan Kendall for David Meacham, Sr., the Society's principal Deacon and Trustee, as well as Archibald's biological father, through whom all land acquisitions were coordinated. So began an eventful 35-year tenure in the Shaker West.

After a few years helping consolidate groups of converts in Ohio, Archibald was named First Elder of the Shakers' only settlement in Indiana: West Union, along the Wabash River near Vincennes. There he experienced the trauma of the New Madrid earthquakes and the War of 1812. Archibald presided over the difficult dismantling of West Union in 1827, and the following year he was placed as First Elder of White Water, Ohio, the final community to be established in the Shaker West.

For White Water believers, Archibald represented a tangible link to Shakerism's eastern origins, given the Meacham family's prominence in the Shakers' historical narrative. He undertook the challenge of guiding White Water into the dazzling visionary events of Mother's Work, an intense period of revivalism among the Believers which had its first western manifestations at White Water. He returned to Watervliet, New York, in 1842, having served the longest of any of the eastern "Old Believers" sent to the West. He died there in 1845.

Carol Medlicott

Detail of Pipe Box.



Dedication

This catalog is dedicated to the “Shaker West” and to two special friends, scholars who have striven to keep the memories of these Shakers alive, Carol Medlicott and Christian Goodwillie. Those of us living in the Northeastern United States tend to think of the United Society of Believers as an eastern phenomenon. This unfairly excludes from history the fact that the Shakers had four long-lasting villages in Ohio, two in Kentucky, and one short-lived one in Indiana, between 1805 (the founding of Union Village, Ohio) and 1922 (the closing of South Union, Kentucky).

Carol Medlicott is Emeritus Professor of geography and history at Northern Kentucky University. She was introduced to the Shakers at Enfield Shaker Village, New Hampshire during her post-doctoral studies at nearby Dartmouth College. Her magnum opus, to date, is *Issachar Bates: A Shaker Journey* (University Press of New England). It follows an eastern convert and his powerful influence in the western communities.

Christian Goodwillie is Director and Curator of Special Collections and Archives at Hamilton College and was formerly Curator of Collections at Hancock Shaker Village, Massachusetts. He also serves as Associate Editor of the *American Communal Societies Quarterly*. His most recent major publication is *Richard McNemar: Frontier Heretic and Shaker Apostle* (Indiana University Press), an important study of the Shaker West through the experiences of this western convert and vital force. (Indiana University Press).

Together, Carol and Christian have written: *Richard McNemar, Music, and the Western Shaker Communities: Branches of One Living Tree* (The Kent State University Press) and more recently, *This Chosen Pleasant Hill: Shakers of the Kentucky Bluegrass* (Stragglings Trembler Press), an historical perspective on the singular Shaker site where visitors are welcomed to dine and to lodge. All of us who are devoted to recording the history and culture of the Shakers, accurately and fairly, are deeply indebted to them.

M. Stephen Miller

Pipe Box, Probably New Lebanon, NY *5

Pine with leather and iron fasteners.

3¾" x 21" x 3½"

Private Collection

Note: All dimensions are indicated Height by Width by Depth or Diameter. Titles with * and a numeral correspond to an entry in End Notes.





Barbara Prey working on site
at Hancock Shaker Village

Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the newest exhibition in the New Britain Museum of American Art's ongoing series *Masterworks of Shaker Design*, installed in the M. Stephen and Miriam R. Miller Shaker Gallery.

For this rotation, entitled *HANDLED WITH CARE: Shaker Master Crafts and the Art of Barbara Prey*, our Museum is delighted to collaborate with two primary partners: Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, Massachusetts and Barbara Ernst Prey. Hancock Shaker Village has lent from their extensive collections some forty objects, each with a handle and each in exemplary condition. This generous loan is balanced by an equal number of handled objects, likewise in a fine state of preservation, from a private collection.

Barbara Prey is a highly regarded artist whose specialty is watercolor and dry brush works on paper, typically of large dimensions. Barbara spent some months at Hancock Shaker Village in 2018 and 2019 executing a series of paintings that formed a group she called "Borrowed Light." In that series' title, she refers to a dual phenomenon. First, that the Shakers were known for placing windows in stairwells, closets, and other dark spaces (where an open flame would pose a grave danger) in order to "borrow" natural daylight to illuminate them. And second, to the notion of heavenly light shining down upon this extraordinary Christian American sect for two-hundred fifty years, as of 2024!

The New Britain Museum of American Art wishes to extend its gratitude to Trustee Emeritus M. Stephen Miller for serving as guest curator for this exhibition at the Museum. His knowledge of the subject and extensive network of sources continues to engage and delight our visitors.

Brett Abbott, Director and CEO

Introduction

HANDLED WITH CARE: Shaker Master Crafts and the Art of Barbara Prey
A collaboration between Hancock Shaker Village and the New Britain Museum of American Art.

This year, we celebrate the 250th anniversary of The United Society of Believers, more commonly called Shakers. This current exhibition continues the series of *Masterworks of Shaker Design* by recognizing a special dimension of the Shakers' work: their finely crafted, and now beautifully preserved, small crafts. Once despised and persecuted for their beliefs of **C**ommunal ownership of all goods and property, **C**onfession of sins in private, and **C**elibacy—the “three C’s”—most people now adore so much about the Shakers. This love certainly extends to their long handcraft tradition.

We also celebrate the achievements of the world-renowned contemporary artist, Barbara Ernst Prey. Barbara accepted a commission from Hancock Shaker Village in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 2018-2019, to execute a series of large-scale paintings in watercolor and dry brush of any subject that engaged her attention and admiration. Her subject turned out to be both as simple and as complex as the interplay of natural light and Hancock's built environment. The results were ten astonishing works, six of which she generously lent to this exhibition. The title of her series is “Borrowed Light.” This references both the presence of natural light within Hancock Shaker Village and, by extension, the Godly illumination with which Shaker life has been imbued for all of those 250 years.

From the start, the Shakers brethren and sisters made most of what was required to live independently: tools, baskets, tubs and pails, sewing boxes and others for storage, cleaning and measuring devices, and a wide variety of goods—both grown and fabricated—for sale to the outside World. This exhibition features nearly 100 varieties of these works, all of which have two attributes in common: all have handles and all have survived in a fine state of preservation. All of the objects on view here were made more than 100 years ago and some twice that long.

In order for Believers to obtain goods from the World that could be neither gathered nor crafted within their communities, they had to develop an economic base. They accomplished this by growing and crafting goods specifically designated for sale. These efforts led to lucrative endeavors in such areas as garden seeds, dried herbs, compounded medicines, fresh produce, chairs, storage boxes, sweaters and cloaks, and much, much more. It is important to know that the Shakers were very entrepreneurial and that there is and was nothing in their belief system that ran counter to making a profit—as long as that profit was honestly come by. Accurate weights, freshness of food stuffs, meticulous craftsmanship of fabricated objects—all of these principles were paramount.

This catalog, devoted to a variety of crafted objects, will be divided by related “types”: baskets, cooperage, boxes, carriers, textile related crafts, household items, cleaning devices, and woodworking tools.

A related version of this exhibition was mounted at Hancock Shaker Village in 2007, with Christian Goodwillie and M. Stephen Miller co-curators. That site remounted *Handled With Care* for their 2023 season, with first Linda Johnson, PhD, and later Kathleen Lynch, Ed. D, Curators and Directors of Collections. We are extremely grateful to Hancock Shaker Village, Inc. for serving as our partner for this current exhibition. It has been a genuine joy for me to work with both women in every phase of that presentation. Approximately half the objects in the current showing are from Hancock Shaker Village, and half are from a private collection.

I am grateful for the support of the senior staff at the NBMAA, beginning with Brett Abbott, Director and CEO, Lisa Williams, Curator and Head of Exhibitions, and Lisa Lappe, Director of Communications and Visitor Experience. The Collections staff once again gave this project their complete, professional attention: Keith Gervaise, Collections Manager, Mike Mindera, Associate Preparator, Erica Sans Souci, Registrar, and Daisy Gesualda, art framer. They are an amazing team!

Barbara Prey, my active partner in this exhibition, has provided a truly insightful essay that addresses such questions as: how did she first encounter Shaker culture, what is it about the sect that has engaged her, and what is her working process like? Her Q and A approach is a very refreshing one! Stephen J. Paterwic, a leading authority on Shaker history, puts all of the objects illustrated here in the context of Shaker life by addressing the question: "Who Are the Shakers?" I am deeply grateful to both of them.

The professionally designed catalog is the work of James Brisson, with whom I have previously worked. His design for *Inspired Innovations* was based on my 2010 exhibition at the NBMAA. Jim graciously

agreed to "unretire" for this project. The finely executed photographs are the work of Liena Kucherova. DS Graphics published the catalog to my exacting standards.

Finally, this publication owes its existence entirely to the generous support of Magda Gabor-Hotchkiss and Harlow N. and Cheryl L. Murray. Thank you for your commitment.

M. Stephen Miller, Guest Curator



Storage Box, Canterbury, NH
Butternut with brass.
8" x 28" x 9⁷/₈"
Private Collection

Who Are the Shakers?

On August 6, 1774, a small and leaky boat named *Mariah* landed in New York City. Among the passengers were nine English emigrees led by Mother Ann Lee. Derisively known as Shakers, this small band was part of a movement that had endured severe persecution. Though dissent from the Church of England was not uncommon, they had attracted a great deal of negative attention. Their “ecstatic” worship services included shaking, dancing, foot stomping, jumping, and even rolling on the floor. These movements were also accompanied by stentorian vocalizations and speaking in tongues. British authorities accused them of profaning the Sabbath and disturbing the peace. Moreover, they were pacifists in a country that was frequently at war with other European powers. When it was revealed that their mission in England was over, Mother Ann and a few intrepid souls decided to go to the New World, which had long been a haven for religious and political dissenters.

The Believers, as they call themselves, envision God as dual. Though pure spirit, they believe that God has male and female aspects. Moreover, Jesus, a man, became imbued with the fullness of the Christ Spirit at his Baptism. Centuries later, a completeness was achieved when Mother Ann, a woman, became similarly blessed through her revelations. The core belief is that the Original Sin was sexual relations. Therefore, if humans want to truly live a full spiritual life, they must become celibate and travel the path to regeneration rather than generation. For them, the Second Coming is not a cataclysmic event in some indeterminate future, but rather the “still, small voice,” of accepting the full in-dwelling of the Christ spirit as Mother Ann did. She was not divine and never claimed to be. She preached the realization of the Second Coming is in the Church, eventually called the United Society of Believers or Shakers.

In addition to their frenzied worship and pacificism, the celibate Shakers were held in derision due to their perceived threat to family life. Ann Lee and her followers were relentlessly persecuted and physically attacked. Apostasy had thinned their ranks in England and guided by a vision of a place in America, they left Liverpool in May of 1774. Their arrival in the colony of New York could not have come at a

worst time, the eve of a revolutionary war. Their English background and their religious beliefs made them suspect once again. At first, however, they were able to go unnoticed and by 1776 had established themselves on a plot of swampy land northwest of Albany called Niskeyuna (now Watervliet). This was their first permanent home. From this base, they opened the Gospel in America on May 19, 1780. Mother Ann had predicted that converts would come like doves. The “doves” were mostly New Light Baptists, originally from New England. Mother and her companions made a long missionary tour to the region and visited any place that held an interest. As in England, they were savagely driven out of towns and beaten. In this manner, Shakerism was planted in New England, where it remains rooted to this day.

Starting in 1787, the Believers gathered into largely self-sufficient communities organized from the merging of adjacent farms of committed converts. The “Center of Union” was New Lebanon, New York. Soon, nearby Watervliet was gathered into Gospel Order and societies were organized in Connecticut (Enfield), Massachusetts (Hancock, Tyringham, Harvard, and Shirley), New Hampshire (Canterbury and Enfield) and Maine (Alfred and New Gloucester). In addition to accepting all creeds, races, and pacificism, along with the equal status of men and women, members agreed by covenant to observe the “three Cs”: communal ownership of all goods and property, private confession of sins to an elder or eldress, and celibacy.

Taking advantage of the Second Great Awakening on the frontier, in the early years of the nineteenth century, Shaker missionaries were successful in establishing four Shaker villages in Ohio and two in Kentucky. Several other short-lived villages existed in western New York, Indiana, Georgia, and Florida as well as an urban community in Philadelphia. At their numerical peak, there were about 4,800 Believers by the 1840s.

From the late 1830s to the early 1850s, the Shakers went through an intense religious revival known variously as the New Age, the Era of Manifestations, or Era of Mother’s Work. As they focused inwardly, however, the country was changing. The expansion westward, the rise of the railroad, urbanization, and industrialization soon left the rural, agriculturally based Shakers behind. The gap deepened every year



**Poplarware Bifold Sewing Box,
Sabbathday Lake, ME *6**

Poplar cloth, silk, kid leather, paper, wax, emery, and elastic.

8½" x 10¾" x 7¼"

Private Collection

and this was manifest in their failure to attract competent adults or to retain young members. The crisis was clear by the mid-1850s, and the disruptions caused by the Civil War made the situation worse.

By the 1870s, the movement was in retreat and communities began closing. Nothing they did was sufficient to stop the decline and by 1960, only the societies at Canterbury, New Hampshire and Sabbathday Lake (New Gloucester), Maine were open. In 1992,

Canterbury closed and Sabbathday Lake became the only living Shaker society. Though only a handful of Believers remain, they trust in Providence. When the full history of the Shaker Church is taken into consideration, the survival of this sect in America for 250 years may seem a near miracle and a vindication of their belief that their mission is now "is in the hands of God."

Stephen J. Paterwic

Barbara Ernst Prey (b. 1957, New York, NY) specializes in creating large-scale watercolor paintings. With an academic background in art history and religion, she incorporates into her visual practice diverse references to the rich traditions of American and European art. Her layered, luminous, and nuanced work speaks to issues of gender, climate and ecology, and spiritual wonder. Prey's practice evokes the seemingly "everyday" to push the boundaries of what her chosen medium can do. At the end of 2023, Prey discussed her practice in relation to this exhibition with art historian and curator Meredith A. Brown.

Meredith Brown.

How did you become an artist?

Barbara Prey. My mother was a great influence. She was head of the design department at Pratt Art Institute in Brooklyn and had her own design firm, Peggy Joubert Designs in the 1940s/50s in New York City. She had a large studio in our home where I also had an easel set out to paint with her. Growing up, she would take me out to paint with her on painting trips. She introduced me to the museums in New York whose collections served as my early teachers. She was of great importance and role model—an incredibly gifted and creative artist who thought outside the box. She was unusual in what she did because at that time the art world was very male dominated.

I attended Williams College where I am currently adjunct faculty. Williams had some of the finest art history faculty in the world and I was fortunate to work and develop a life-long friendship with Lane Faison, dean of the Williams "Art Mafia." (I'm the last and only female member in the group). I wrote my honors thesis on Southern German Baroque architecture with Lane as my advisor. I did a lot of looking at floor plans and interior spaces. I've always been interested in church history. I love how this history allows me to combine my academic interests in architecture and art history with my painterly love of color, light, form, and design. It was sometime during my years at Williams College in the 1970s that I was introduced to the Shakers and began to visit Shaker sites.

After graduating from Williams, and following an internship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I received a Fulbright scholarship to continue studying architecture in Europe, where I was able to paint and exhibit. Subsequently, I worked as the personal assistant to a Prince in Europe and continued to paint and exhibit there. Following this, I went to Harvard Divinity School where I studied the ecclesiastical history that inspired the design and execution of religious art and architecture. After Harvard, I received a one-year grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to travel to Taiwan, where I taught Art History at Tainan College and Seminary. I artistically explored the architecture of the local folk religions and their temples. The Luce Scholars Program provides an in-depth experience in Asia for future leaders. It was in Taiwan that I began my large on-site paintings. My art has progressed from monastic interiors to baroque structures to Asian folk temples to New England early meeting houses and, finally, to the Shakers.

In 2008, I was appointed by the President of the United States to The National Council on the Arts, the advisory board to the National Endowment for the Arts. My time serving on the Council as an arts advocate gave me broad exposure to all of the arts in America. What I particularly appreciate about this current exhibition, and what is unique about it, is the pairing of the many exquisite Shaker objects with my paintings. This creates a wonderful synergy of object and place.

You have a background in both religious studies and art history. How do you bring those interests, those backgrounds to your work? Why is Shaker culture interesting to you?

Historically, art history and religious history/studies have gone hand in hand. I think this is one reason the Shakers were interesting to me. I've always been drawn to the simplicity of Shaker design. Perhaps it was being immersed in Baroque for so long that I found myself drawn to a spiritual architecture stripped of all the ornamentation. In this age when everything is so technologically driven, hand-crafted objects speak to my soul and to my spirit. These many Shaker objects on view are both



Barbara Prey in front of Wood Work

beautiful and utilitarian; they dovetail perfectly with the unique history of the Shakers. And ultimately, they resonate with my art.

Returning to your question about Shaker culture: I was fortunate to have been commissioned four times by NASA to document space history. This included *The International Space Station*, *The Columbia Tribute*, the *Discovery Shuttle Return to Flight*, and the *x-43*, the fastest aircraft in the world. These projects provided a different lens to view our world, a universal perspective. At Harvard, and as a NASA-commissioned artist, I thought deeply about what is beyond our world. That's what theologians and astronauts share, an intense desire to explore and understand our universe. Light intersects both of these planes—the physical and spiritual—and offers a critical tool for building our lives. So much of my experience as an artist has expanded my horizons. I've always been interested in the greater existential questions: Who are we? Where are we going? Why are we here? And what's important—what *really* matters?

Let's talk about your medium of choice. What appeals to you about large-scale watercolor? What does it do that other media don't?

Watercolor is considered the most difficult medium, and to paint a large painting in watercolor is challenging on many levels. All six paintings in this exhibition are large watercolors, extreme for the watercolor medium in their size; most are 40 x 60 inches. I also paint in oils, but I chose watercolor for the Shaker work as oil painting would have been too heavy—it wouldn't have worked. Watercolor lends a transparency that, in the context of this series, is akin to a kind of *spiritual transparency*. Watercolor speaks to the luminosity and light of the Shakers.

I was recently commissioned by MASS MoCA to paint the largest watercolor in the world for their new space. At 8 x 15 feet, it is currently on long-term exhibition there. The paintings in this exhibit at the New Britain Museum of American Art continue the trajectory of large-scale watercolors. In the case of *Shaker Barn*, I held my breath while creating those big washes of sky. I wanted to achieve a really strong blue sky over an expanse of white, so I couldn't make a mistake—no water drips! It took layers and layers to build that texture.

Watercolor is a very tactile medium. When you're painting with it, you're really feeling the paper, and you need to maintain a balance between control and allowing for the unexpected to happen and to improvise. The process is quite free-spirited in that way.

Like the Shakers, I love color. They worked with vibrant pigments in their paints and dyes, and I was able to achieve a similar brilliancy of color after the water evaporated. Thinking about those stacks of bright Shaker oval boxes and that blue bucket, I really tried to push the color as strong as possible.

You depict many different kinds of spaces, both interior scenes and landscapes; yet there seems to be something about Shaker spaces, in particular, that really bring together your many interests and practices. The Boston Globe noted in 2019: "It's a painter's job to notice and to draw out the nuance and light in what the rest of us ignore. Prey has that eye and that hand, and like the Shakers, what she makes touches the divine and has staying power.»

Can you talk about how the works in this exhibition function both within the context of this show and within your oeuvre more broadly?

I approached this project in the way I approached my commissions for NASA, the White House (I was commissioned by the President and First Lady to paint the official White House Christmas Card,) and for MASS MoCA: with a lot of research. With the Shakers, I started by looking. I visited Hancock and other sites like Sabbathday Lake in Maine at various times throughout the year so I could see all of them in all four seasons. I was drawn to the incorporation of light into Shaker architecture. Looking at the light streaming in windows, I knew it would allow me to create incredible paintings. I did some sketching, but I was really looking at the light—what I consider on-site homework. Very early in my career, I worked as an illustrator for publications like *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Good Housekeeping*, where I would read poems or articles and create illustrations. This was a similar process of "reading" the architecture and thinking deeply about it. I didn't try to put myself into the experience of being a Shaker; instead, I was looking at it from the outside as an observer.

Initially, I was also drawn to the spaces and the concept of women's work as a female artist painting the Shakers—the Laundry and Sister's Workshop in particular—as seen in *Channeled Light. Wood Work*, displaying the inside structure of the Shaker Round Barn, continued my interest in interiors and in the use of penetrating light. The exterior *Shaker Barn*, painted in the snow, resonates with my long-time interest in landscape painting. I recall driving by this Shaker barn in winter, snow on the ground, the moon out, and the shadows eerie. I explored the area on foot, hoping not to slip on the ice, and recorded the scene in my mind. I had known that this was one of the paintings I wanted to paint but I just hadn't figured out until that moment *how* to paint the Round Shaker Barn.

Meredith A. Brown is a feminist art historian and curator of modern and contemporary art. She earned a Ph.D. and master's degree from The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, and has worked in a variety of art institutions both large and small, including The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University. She currently serves as the Consulting Curator of Contemporary Art at The Heckscher Museum of Art in Huntington, NY.





Wood Work, 2019
Watercolor and drybrush on paper
40" x 60"
Collection of the artist



Basket, Sabbathday Lake, ME *1
Black Ash.
H- 9½" x Diam. 18½"
Private Collection

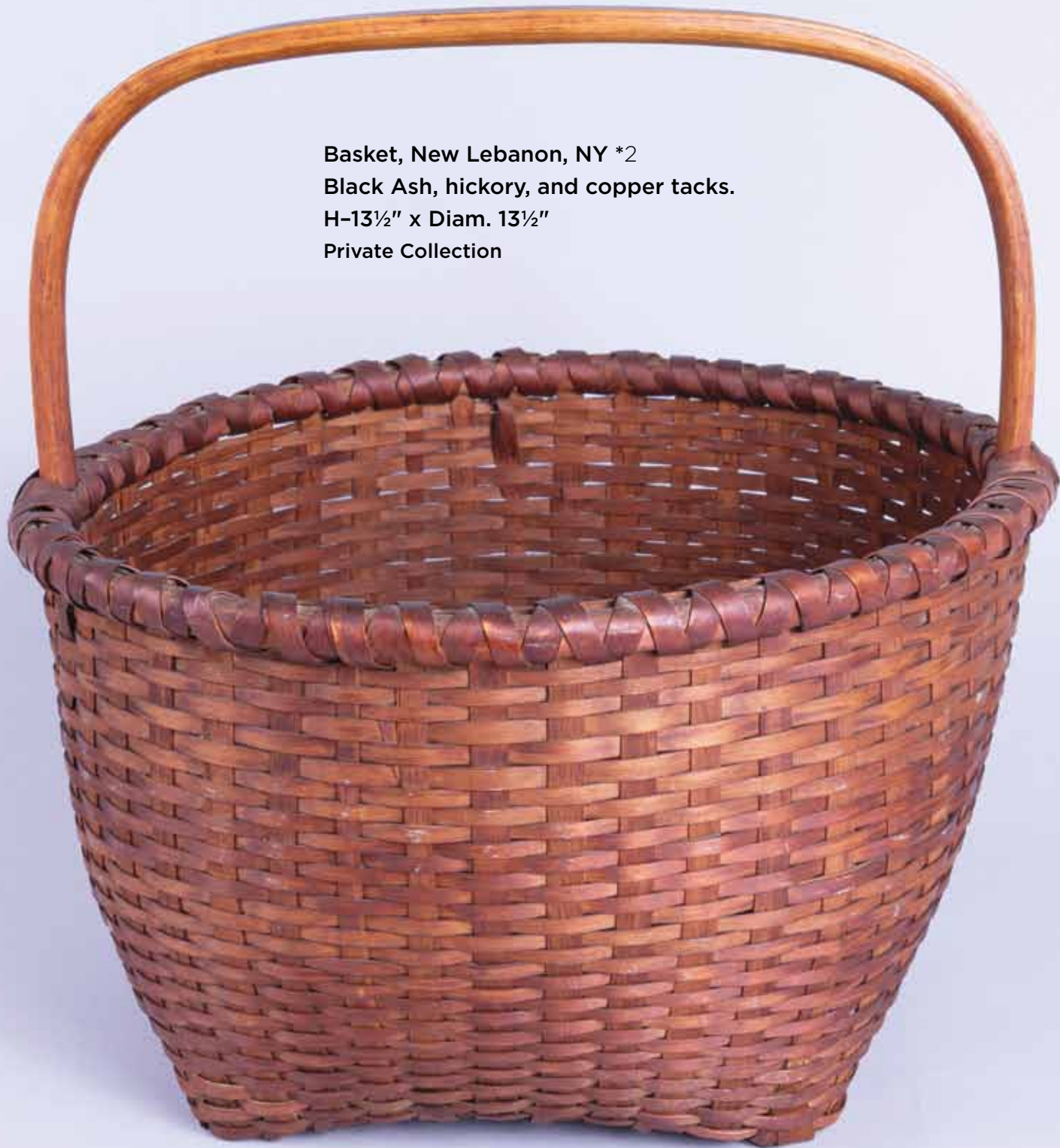
Basket Splint Shaver, New Lebanon, NY
Maple, cherry, pine, and iron.
11⅛" x 5" x 9"
Hancock Shaker Village





Detail of Sabbathday Lake basket.





Basket, New Lebanon, NY *2
Black Ash, hickory, and copper tacks.
H-13½" x Diam. 13½"
Private Collection



Detail of New Lebanon basket.



Detail of New Lebanon basket.

Shop Basket, Enfield, NH *3
Black ash and cane.
9½" x 16¾" x 12"
Private Collection





Detail of Enfield, NH basket

Three Knife Baskets, New Lebanon, NY* 4

(left) Black Ash, copper wire and cotton thread.

7¼" x 8½" x 5½"

(center and right) Black Ash

5¼" x 6¾" x 4½", 5" x 6½" x 3½"

Private Collection



Detail of largest Knife Basket.



Early Pail, New Lebanon, NY *7
Pine and unknown wood.
15" x 10¼"
Hancock Shaker Village



Keeler (tub), Harvard or Shirley, MA
Pine and iron hoops.
9½" x 11¾"
Hancock Shaker Village



Two Pails, Canterbury, NH *8
Yellow Pail: Pine, birch, and iron.
9" x 6¾"
Hancock Shaker Village

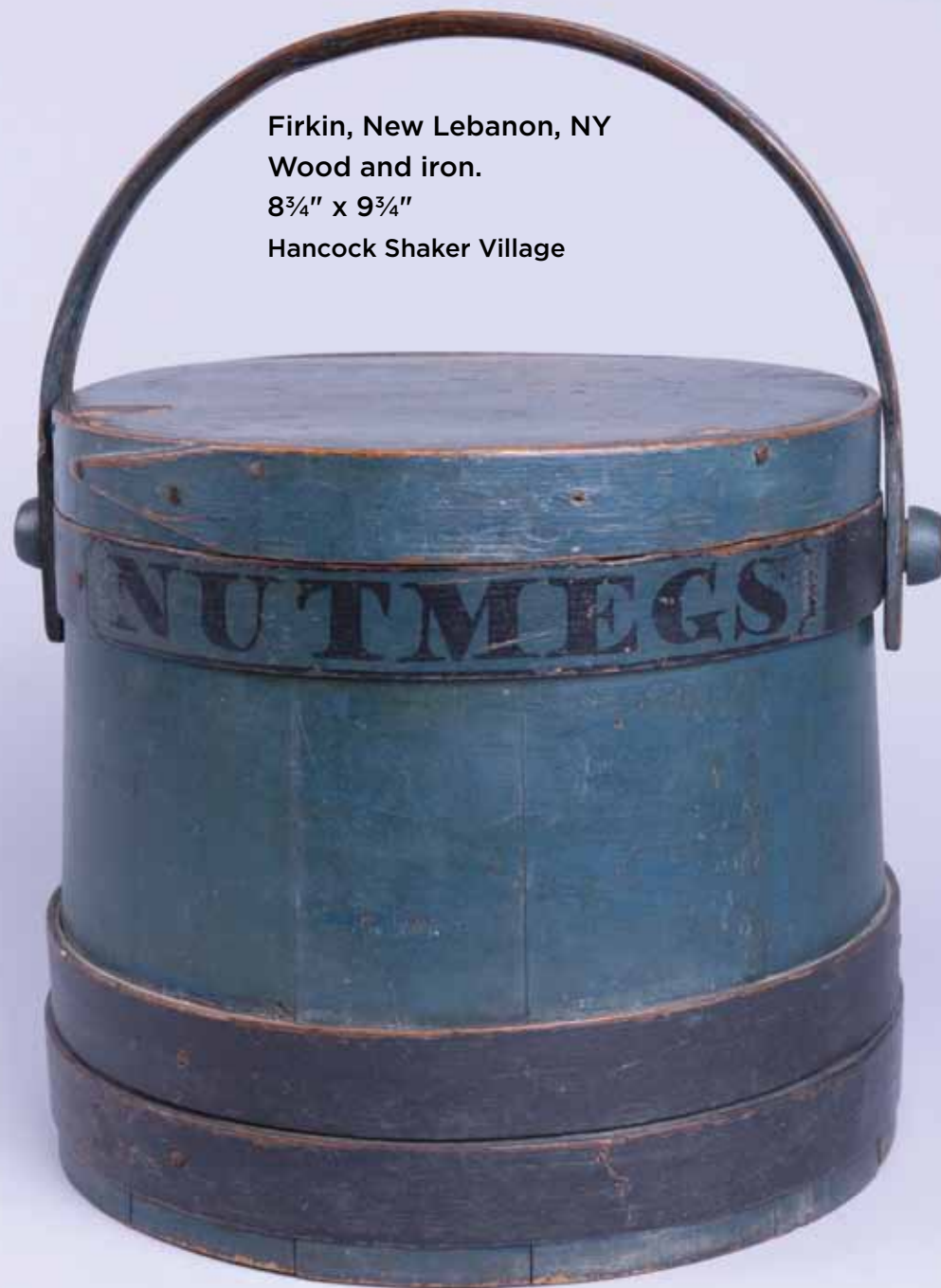


Red Pail: Pine, birch, and iron.
10" x 8¼"
Private Collection





Detail of
Red Pail.



Firkin, New Lebanon, NY
Wood and iron.
8³/₄" x 9³/₄"
Hancock Shaker Village



Four Fancy Pails, New Lebanon, NY *10
Cherry, maple, ash, walnut, cedar with iron.
3 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 5" x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Private Collection



Detail of one handle.



Two Pails, Canterbury, NH *9
Yellow Pail: Pine, birch, and iron.
13½" x 12¾"
Private Collection
Blue Pail: Pine, birch, and iron.
13¼" x 10¼"
Private Collection



**Bucket, Probably
New Lebanon, NY
Pine, unknown hard
wood, and iron.
9¼" x 10½"
Hancock Shaker Village**

**Red Cloak Blue Bucket, 2019
Watercolor and drybrush on paper
29¾" x 41"
Collection of the artist**





Keeler (tub), Probably New Lebanon, NY
Pine and iron.
6½" x 10"
Private Collection



Storage Box, Canterbury, NH
Butternut with brass.
8" x 28" x 9⁷/₈"
Private Collectiontt



Sewing Box, Enfield, CT *11

Walnut, brass, mother-of-pearl.

8 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 13 $\frac{1}{8}$ "

New Britain Museum of American Art



Storage Box, New Lebanon, NY and Canterbury, NH *12
Butternut, elm, brass, and mother-of-pearl.
8½" x 13½" x 7½"
Private Collection



Round Carrier, New Lebanon, NY
Pine and iron tacks.
9½" x 14½"
Hancock Shaker Village



Wood Box, New Lebanon, NY
or Hancock, MA
Pine and copper tacks.
15" x 10¼" x 20"
Hancock Shaker Village





Detail of Rectangular Sewing Carrier.

Rectangular Sewing Carrier, Watervliet, NY *13
Pine, ash, and copper tacks with silk, woven
poplar, poplar cloth, and wax.
9" x 12 1/2" x 7"
Private Collection





Detail of Rectangular Sewing Carrier.

Oval Double-Lidder Carrier, New Lebanon, NY
Figured maple, pine, and hickory.
12¼" x 15" x 11"
Private Collection





Oval Lidded Carrier, Canaan Family,
New Lebanon, NY *14
Poplar, pine, and cherry with
copper hardware.
9" x 11½" x 8½"
Private Collection

Oval Lidded Carrier, New Lebanon, NY
Maple, pine, and hickory with copper hardware.
7½" x 10½" x 7"
Private Collection



Fixed Handle Carrier, Canterbury, NH
Maple, pine, and hickory with copper tacks.
7½" x 11" x 8¼"
Private Collection



Round Sewing Carrier, Sabbathday Lake, ME *15
Cherry, pine, copper tacks with silk, wax, emery powder.
7" x 7½"
Private Collection



Detail of Round Sewing Carrier.



Three Oval Sewing Carriers, Alfred and Sabbathday Lake, ME *16
Mixed woods with copper hardware, silk, felt, wax, and emery powder.
8" x 10½" x 8"; 7¼" x 9¼" x 6¾"; 5½" x 7" x 5¼"
Private Collection





Detail of Three Oval Sewing Carriers,
Alfred and Sabbathday Lake, ME.

Fixed Handle Carrier, Canterbury, NH
Maple, pine, and hickory with copper tacks.

7½" x 11" x 8¼"

Private Collection



Collar Box, New Lebanon, NY *17
Ash and pine with copper tacks.

3" x 6" x 5"

Private Collection

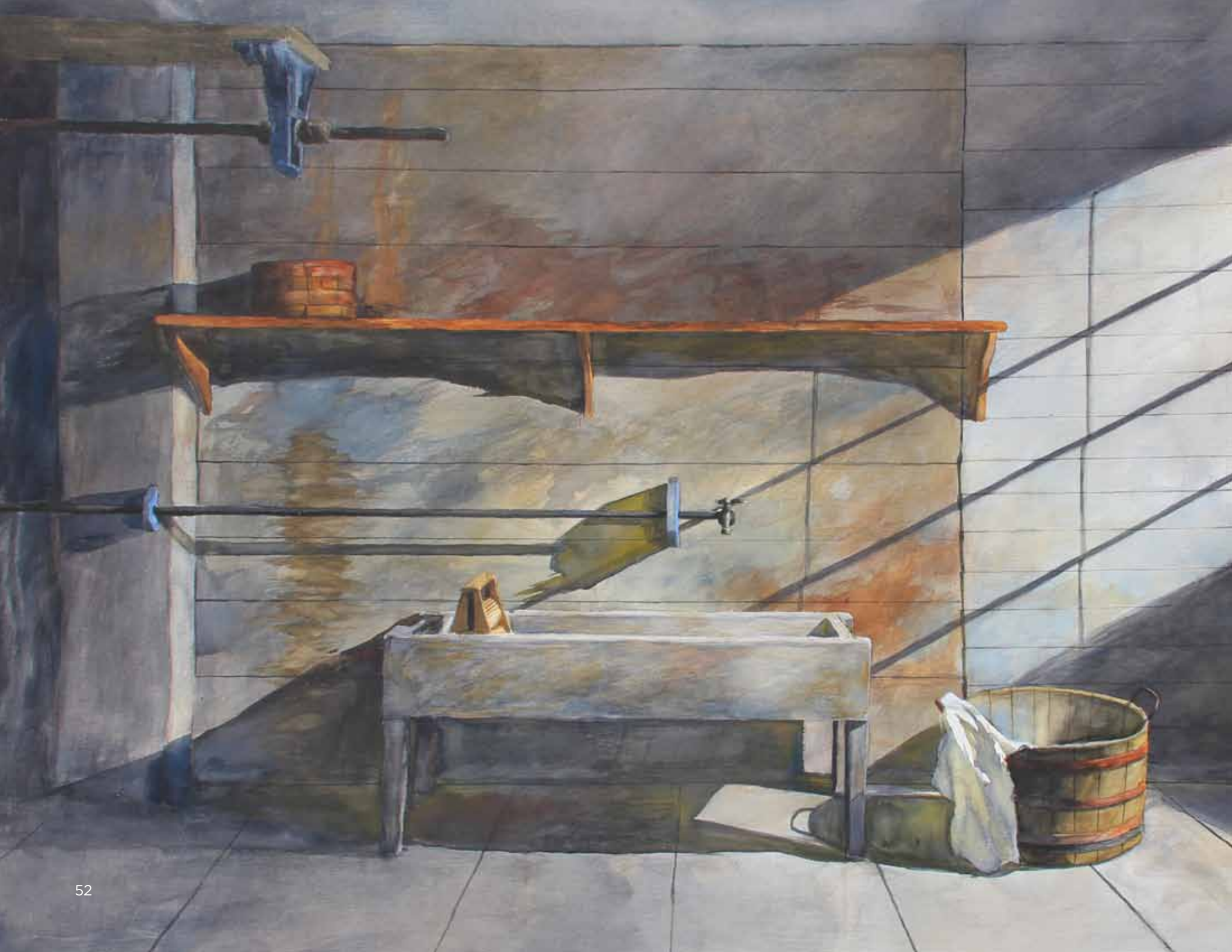
Tool Carrier, Probably New Lebanon, NY
Cherry and pine with iron nails and brass knob.
8¾" x 18" x 11½"
Private Collection







**Barbara Prey in front of
Channeled Light**





Detail of Channeled Light.

Channeled Light, 2019
Watercolor and drybrush on paper
38½" x 58½"
Collection of the artist

Poplarware Bifold Sewing Box, Sabbathday Lake, ME *6
Poplar cloth, silk, kid leather, paper, wax, emery, and elastic.
8½" x 10¾" x 7¼"
Private Collection



Detail of Bifold Sewing Box.



Four Sewing Tools. New Lebanon, NY *22
Hardwoods and metals.
4½" to 6¼"
Hancock Shaker Village



Glove Mender, New Lebanon, NY
Unknown wood.
9¼"
Hancock Shaker Village



Two Weaving Needles, New Lebanon, NY *24
Upper: Maple; Lower: Beechwood
Upper: 14½ " Lower: 13¾"
Hancock Shaker Village



Hat Blocker, New Lebanon, NY *23
Maple.
5½" x 6¾"
Hancock Shaker Village





Detail of Hat Blocker.

Cobbler's Last, New Lebanon, NY
Beechwood and Oak.
7³/₄" x 7³/₄" x 1"
Hancock Shaker Village



Three Pincushion Clamps, Canterbury, NH and Hancock, MA *26
Maple and fabric.
Heights, from left: 10¼"; 6"; 8¼"
Private Collection



Wool Cards, Hancock, MA *29
Beechwood, leather, and iron.
8³/₄" x 9⁷/₈"
Hancock Shaker Village



Two Rug Whips, New Lebanon, NY *30
Top: Soft wood, rattan, and iron.
Bottom: Hard wood, iron wire, and brass.
Length top: 24" Length bottom: 31"
Private Collection





Child's Red Cloak, Canterbury, NH *32
Wool and silk.
28½" x 15½"
Private Collection



Detail of Red Cloak Label.

School Room Red Coat,
2019 Watercolor and dry
brush on paper
29¾" x 41"
Collection of the artist







Fan, Harvard, MA
Turkey feathers, silk,
leather, and cotton
thread.
14½" x 10¾" x ¼"
Private Collection



Fan, Harvard, MA
Heavy paper and pine.
13½" x 13¼"
Private Collection



Three Wet Dippers, New Lebanon, NY *19
Carved maple or poplar.
Each from 3" to 4½" long by 4¾" to 5" in diameter
Hancock Shaker Village



Two Dry Dippers, New Lebanon, NY *18
Maple and pine with iron and copper tacks.
13" x 5⅞"; 12⅛" x 4⅝"
Private Collection

Two-Step Stool, New Lebanon, NY *20
Pine with iron nails.
32" x 15" x 11"
Hancock Shaker Village



Walking Stick, Canterbury, NH *21
Hickory.
37" x 1"
Private Collection



Detail of Walking Stick.

Chalk Line Safes, New Lebanon, NY
Unknown hardwoods and string.
3" x 3"
Hancock Shaker Village





Scoop, Community Unknown
Figured Maple.
11½" x 4¾" x 2"
Private Collection



Detail of Scoop.





Detail of Day's Work.

Day's Work, 2019
Watercolor and drybrush on paper
40" x 60"
Collection of the artist

Two Dusters, Probably New Labanon, NY
Maple and wool.
Length: 13½" and 16¾"
Hancock Shaker Village





Scrub Brush and Clothes Brush, Probably New Lebanon, NY *25

Upper: Beechwood, steel hardware, leather, and animal bristle

Lower: Oak, Copper wire, and horsehair

Upper: 1½ x 9¼" x 1¾" Lower: 2" x 8¼" x 3½"

Hancock Shaker Village



Dustpan Brush, Probably New Lebanon, NY
Birch and horsehair.
8½" x 5" x ½"
Hancock Shaker Village



Dustpan, Canterbury, NH *27
Birch and tin-plated iron.
14½" x 7½"
Private Collection



Detail of Dustpan.

Long-handled Fancy Brush, Probably Sabbathday Lake, ME
Maple, velvet, silk, and horsehair.
Length: 34"
Hancock Shaker Village



Seven Fancy Brushes, Canterbury, NH and Sabbathday Lake, ME *28
Maple and cherry handles, horsehair, velvet, and silk.
Lengths: 7¾" to 10"
Private Collection



Fancy Brush, Probably Canterbury, NH
Cherry, horsehair, and linen cloth.
Length: 8"
Private Collection



Five Planes, Unknown Sources *31
Hancock Shaker Village



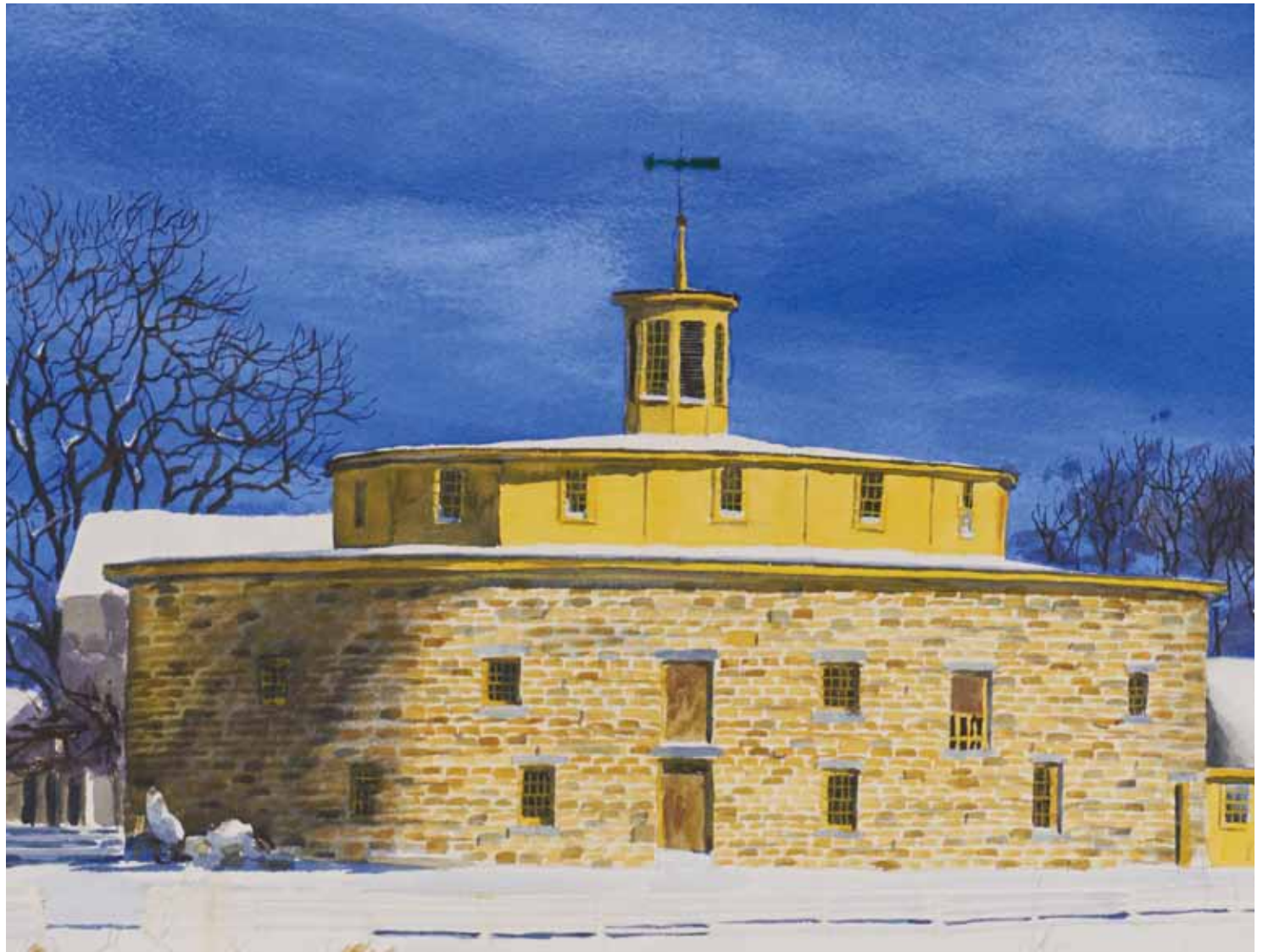
Two Planes, Unknown Sources *31
Hancock Shaker Village



Two Planes, Unknown Sources *31
Hancock Shaker Village







Detail of Shaker Barn.

Shaker Barn, 2019
Watercolor and drybrush on paper
40" x 60"
Collection of the artist



Barbara Prey working on site at
Hancock Shaker Village barn, 2019.



End Notes

1. Basket, Sabbathday Lake, ME (p. 14)

This two-handled utility basket was used and probably made at the Maine Community in the last half of the nineteenth century. Several features on its underside set it apart from other examples from Sabbathday Lake. The weaving pattern is an unusual twill; a ring was woven into the base allowing air to circulate under it; and the initials "P A S" are inscribed in pencil script. Eldress Prudence Asenath Stickney (1860-1950) was a mainstay at Sabbathday Lake in the first half of the Twentieth Century.

2. Basket, New Lebanon, NY (p. 17)

This form is generally referred to as an apple basket, although orchard basket would be a more apt descriptor. The Shakers at New Lebanon had a great deal of acreage devoted to apples, peaches, pears, and plums. This type of basket was designed to gather all of these fruits. The handle was finely smoothed with a convex-shaped underside for carrying comfort and the bottom was fitted with raised reinforcements for strength and air circulation. The initials stenciled on the handle likely represent Sister Eliza Davis (1822-1895), of the Second Family and, significantly, herself a basket maker.

3. Shop Basket, Enfield, NH (p. 20)

This rather delicate basket is one of the very few documented baskets from this community. It was gathered by George V. L. Leavitt, sheriff of Mascoma County, from Elder Abram Perkins in the early 20th Century as Enfield was closing. It descended to his grandson, Robert Leavitt, historian of Lebanon, NH. In pencil script on the bottom, it reads: "Shoe Makers Shop"; "1852"; "Enfield N.H."; and "Shoe Shop." A unique feature is the use of cane, rather than black ash for the basket's rim.

4. Three Small Baskets, New Lebanon, NY (pp. 22 & 23)

Often, when the Shakers developed a pleasing and useful form for an object, they reproduced it in many sizes. So it was with carriers, yarn swifts, oval boxes, and more. These three baskets that the Shakers called “knife baskets” are another example of this tendency. The largest of the three has very intricately woven lids that are attached to the central crosspiece with thin copper wires. The ultimate purpose for all three baskets is unknown, but it certainly was not to hold knives.

5. Pipe Box, Probably New Lebanon, NY (p. 2 & 3)

This box does not have a handle, thus is not itself part of the exhibition. It is illustrated here to highlight the dedicatees of this catalog: Carol Medlicott and Christian Goodwillie, and their devotion to the history of the Western Shakers. “A M” was Elder Archibald Meacham (1779-1845), an important leader at New Lebanon before being sent west to organize the fledgling West Union (Busro), Indiana Community. It was later gifted to Faith Andrews by Sister Sadie Neale of Mount Lebanon, NY, c. 1930.

6. Poplarware Bifold Sewing Box, Sabbathday Lake, ME (pp. 8 & 54)

Soon after the American Civil War, the Shakers, possibly beginning at Sabbathday Lake, ME developed an industry that addressed two needs: the desire of women in the World for more useful leisure-time objects and the community’s need for more income with fewer Brethren available. A fancy goods enterprise emerged that took full advantage of a wood that had few other uses—poplar. A wide variety of sewing boxes were designed and fabricated using men’s labor to provide the wood and women’s labor to weave it into a cloth to wrap these boxes. This example is the most elaborate result.

7. Early Pail, New Lebanon, NY (p. 24)

Within ten years of this Shaker Village being “Gathered into Order,” in 1787, several industries developed that allowed the community to purchase goods from the World that they could not provide from their own lands. A cooperage industry is among the earliest of these. This staved pail, with button-lap hoops is a very

rare, intact survivor of this endeavor. Thick yellow paint on the exterior and white paint on the interior probably helped it survive in this condition for more than two-hundred years.

8. Two Pails, Canterbury, NH (p. 26)

The yellow painted pail never had a lid, as evidenced by the full diamond shape of its bail plates. Quite a few examples of this size and style pail have survived to the present day, a tribute to the Shaker’s use of clear yellow pine for staves and bottoms and their meticulous craftsmanship. The stave edges meet one another in a V-shape, providing more area of contact when liquids are added and the wood swells.

The red pail does have a lid and its bail plates are cut to accommodate it. There is no evidence that any liquids ever were contained within it. It was more likely a gift item for the much beloved New Hampshire Ministry Elder, “B H S,” Benjamin Harrison Smith (1829-1899).

9. Two Pails, Canterbury, NH (p. 29)

The large yellow pail, like most examples from this community, has a birch handle painted in a contrasting color (red). To make the lid more secure and prevent warpage, a second, round wood disc is secured to its underside. The hardwood knob is exquisitely turned and scribed.

This blue pail appears to be almost black in this illustration, as well as in person. The color is actually an exact match to the blue paint used for the two upper floors of the Canterbury Meetinghouse. Over time, possibly some two hundred years, the paint has oxidized to its near-black color.

10. Four Fancy Pails, New Lebanon, NY (pp. 28 & 29)

In 1875, the Church Family at New Lebanon suffered a night of devastating fires at the hands of an arsonist. Sometime soon after, a small group of these pails appeared. Who was responsible for making them, even the reason for their manufacture, is lost to us now. Several Brethren and even a few Sisters have been named as their makers but none of this has been confirmed. In any event,

relatively few have survived. Various woods were used in repeated laminations: maple, cherry, walnut, and cedar. The handles are all identically turned, scribed, and painted and all the iron bands are painted black.

11. Sewing Box, Enfield, CT (p. 34)

There were (and still are) groves of walnut and butternut trees in the area of Enfield and thus it was a favored wood for use in large and small crafts at the community. Here, the presence of a Worldly brass handle and a mother-of-pearl escutcheon indicate a later 19th-Century time for its construction. Inside, a full-sized, divided tray (to hold small sewing items) still fits the box so snugly that it is air-tight!

12. Storage Box, New Lebanon, NY and Canterbury, NH (p. 35)

The reason for two communities being listed in the provenance is that the box was made at the first but gifted to the second. It was a gift from Ministry Eldresses Harriet Bullard and Eliza Ann Taylor, of New Lebanon to Eldress Mary Witcher, at Canterbury, NH. Eldress Mary in turn gifted it to Sister Dorothy Durgin in 1891, who then gave it to her young charge, Sister Blanche Gardner. Ultimately, the box was gifted to Mrs. George Monnell in 1942; her husband was the accountant for Canterbury.

13. Rectangular Sewing Carrier, Watervliet, NY (pp. 38 & 39)

This object has a curious history. On the bottom of the box is written in ink script "Made 1798," but clearly the handle and all of the contents are of a much later time. The significance of the date remains unknown. Impressed into the handle are the initials "J A", Sister Janette Angus (1810-1894). Perhaps the most significant aspects of the carrier are the two extremely finely woven baskets attached to its sides with silk ribbons. There is also a pincushion, needle case, wax, and strawberry emery bag present.

14. Oval Lidded Carrier, Canaan Family, New Lebanon, NY (p. 41)

This very unusual form for a Shaker-made carrier is positively identified as the product of New Lebanon's Upper Canaan Society. Made in the 1890s, it was initially part of the John S. Roberts Collection there. It was subsequently acquired by one Esther

L. Boughton, who then gifted it to her granddaughter, Carolyn Boughton in 1992. Two poplar half-length sides are joined in the center by two poplar discs. Copper flat-headed and dome-headed tacks secure the parts, signs of late manufacture.

15. Round Sewing Carrier, Sabbathday Lake, ME (pp. 44 & 45)

Brother Delmer Wilson (1873-1961) wrote about the making of this carrier (and 29 others) some years after the fact. He said that in July 1896, he "made some round carriers, the first carriers I ever made." After this, he went on to establish an entire industry of outfitted sewing carriers, both here and at the Alfred, Maine Shaker Village. All subsequent examples, however, were oval-shaped. Still, each had a pincushion, wax, needle case, and emery bag. This one was relined at Sabbathday Lake in the 1990s.

16. Three Oval Sewing Carriers, Alfred and Sabbathday Lake, ME (pp. 46 & 47)

The left-most carrier is from Alfred and has its "fingers" pointed to the left, a feature commonly found on carriers made there. The other two were made at Sabbathday Lake, ME. It is not possible to date any of these precisely although the closure of Alfred in 1931 helps. When advertised in the SDL Fancy Goods Catalog of 1910, the central and right-most carriers sold for \$2.25 and \$1.50 respectively. Br. Delmer designed the black ink stamps that were applied to bottoms of those from both communities.

17. Collar Box, New Lebanon, NY (p. 48)

The New Lebanon Shakers developed a small cottage industry making a group of wood containers, in non-standardized sizes, that were designed to hold both men's and women's dress collars. These articles of clothing were fashionable and commonly worn in the World in the second half of the 19th-Century. By that time, Shaker dress strictures had also relaxed enough to allow these to be worn for special occasions. Pictured here is a silk Sister's collar that fits snugly into this sized box.

18. Two Dry Dippers, New Lebanon, NY (p. 67)

Along with cooperage (see Early Pail above), the Shakers at New Lebanon manufactured many long-handled dippers for sale or

barter by the later years of the 18th-Century. These were available in two sizes. The sides were steam-bent maple, fastened with a virtual ribbon of tacks, intended to prevent warping. The bottoms were pine. A long, turned maple handle attaches to the cylinder with a sturdy iron rivet. Designed for scooping dry materials, like grain, they likely were made for some fifty years.

19. Three Wet Dippers, New Lebanon, NY (p. 67)

Each of these was carved from a single block of wood, maple (from the pattern of the grain) or poplar (from its light weight). In contrast to the dippers cited above, these were designed to scoop liquid from a source. If that source happened to be a pail or bucket, terms used interchangeably by the Shakers, the handles were cleverly designed to hang from its rim between uses. Most of the surviving examples of wet dippers were finished with a thick coat of paint, rendering them relatively waterproof.

20. Two-Step Stepstool, New Lebanon, NY (p. 68)

Most Shaker retiring rooms or bedrooms had drawer and cupboard units built into their plaster walls in a wide variety of configurations. A consistent feature of them was their height. In order to reach these places, Brethren built stepstools like this. Called a “two-stepper,” it was once in the renowned Andrews Collection that formed much of the collections now at Hancock Shaker Village, Inc. Since the extended post is an integral part of the left side of these steps, it was clearly part of the original design.

21. Walking Stick, Canterbury, NH (p. 69)

A very similar hickory stick was once identified (in Shaker Woodenware, Volume II, Sprigg and Johnson) as a Pointer. Both that one and this are actually walking sticks. The one referred to above has a brass tip. This example does not. Instead, there is obvious wear of the wood at the tip. The more interesting aspect of the example illustrated here is the extremely fine turning of its top. Because it was fabricated on a lathe, developing the kinds of details seen here required the greatest of skills.

22. Four Sewing Tools, New Lebanon, NY (p. 56)

These four tools were used in the making of Shaker garments. All but the pattern marker were Shaker-made. At either end is a buttonhole chisel. These made the vertical slits in the fabric. The awl would have been used to facilitate the sewing of a button on the fabric. The long-handled tool in the center is the pattern marker. A paper pattern would be placed over a piece of fabric and this tool would be rolled over the pattern’s outline, its tiny teeth leaving a series of tiny holes for a pair of scissors to cut.

23. Hat Blocker, New Lebanon, NY (p. 58)

This unusual device is made up of three elements. The central spindle has a round tenon at either end with threads. These screw into threaded round mortises. This arrangement allows the piece to be made longer or shorter, as needed. Stamped into one end is “CALVIN REED 1837.” Elder Reed (1821-1900) became a Shaker at the age of 8 and spent most of his career as a teacher. Except for three years at the Groveland, NY Shaker Village, his whole life was spent at New/Mount Lebanon.

24. Two Weaving Needles, Probably, New Lebanon, NY (p. 57)

Their titles may suggest that these were used for threading the weft fibers on a loom, but more than likely these particular implements were employed weaving fully formed woolen tapes (or listings) for the seats on Shaker-made chairs. The Shakers started applying tapes for chair bottoms around 1830, using small tape looms to make them. With the development of a full-fledged chair industry at New Lebanon around 1865, they were “bottoming” chairs by the hundreds for almost the next 70 years.

25. Scrub Brush and Clothes Brush, Probably, New Lebanon, NY (p. 75)

It should not come as a surprise that so many of the products that the fastidious Shakers produced in the 19th-Century were used for cleaning. It is not known, however, whether or not these two brushes were made for home use or for sale. The example with the long handle is stamped on one end: “D H.” Brother Daniel Hawkins (1781-1859) was a trustee (or business manager) for New Lebanon

Community in the first half of the 19th-Century; his initials suggest that this was, indeed, a sales item.

26. Three Pincushion Clamp, Canterbury, NH and Hancock, MA (p. 61)

The author, M. Stephen Miller, has previously gone on record claiming that all three of these objects were manufactured at Hancock. Further investigations have led him to conclude that only the one in the center originated there. The other two were the products of a modest cottage industry located at Canterbury. There is also documentation showing that the rick rack braiding surrounding the top of the righthand pincushion, was bought by Canterbury from a Penobscot Indian source in Maine.

27. Dustpan, Canterbury, NH (p. 77)

Another object designed for cleaning is this dustpan that was probably made around 1875. The pan itself was made from sheets of tin-plated iron by a Shaker whitesmith and the birch handle turned by a Shaker woodworker. Visible on the handle are two sets of scribe lines, located at the height and depth of contour. They are certainly non-functional but are they purely decorative? The author believes that they are there to subtly disrupt the flow of a sensuous line, one suggestive of some human body parts.

28. Seven Fancy Brushes, Canterbury, NH and Sabbathday Lake, ME (p. 79)

In the later years of the 19th-Century, into the 20th, men's hats were de rigueur. One reason was that their brims supposedly shielded men's eyes from soot and ash that were the byproducts of the burning of coal and wood for industry. The Shakers at these two communities responded with these fancy brushes that could clean the hat's brims. The velvet skirts on those made at Canterbury were cut straight while those from Sabbathday Lake were pinked. The bristles for all were made from horsehair.

29. Wool Cards, Hancock, MA (p. 62)

Both Shakers and non-Shakers in the north depended upon locally sourced linen and wool for making their own clothing. Carding sheep wool after shearing was an essential part of the process,

combing the fibers into rolls that could be spun into yarn. There is no way to determine the date that these were manufactured, although it is known that the Shakers were making and selling wool cards at New Lebanon as early 1793. Carding machines, however, could also do this within the next decade.

30. Two Rug Whips, New Lebanon, NY (p. 63)

The manufacture and sale of rug whips took place at the end of the 19th-Century and into the first few years of the 20th. This business was the brainchild of Brother and Trustee Levi Shaw (1819-1908). Initially, Brother Shaw developed and produced the smaller one made from steam-bent willow attached to a softwood handle. Then, a non-Shaker named Charles Comstock assigned the grant of his patent to the Shakers for the type with a wire whip, secured to a hardwood handle with a brass ferrule.

31. Wood Planes, Unknown Sources. (pp. 81, 82 & 83)

The Shakers were, by all contemporary accounts and by all the physical evidence that remains, superb woodworkers. Unlike Old Order Amish, with whom they are often compared, Shakers took advantage of both hand and power tools. Although it is unclear where most of these wood planes were made, many were certainly modified for specific purposes by Shaker craftsmen. And rather than attempt to sort them by specific source or use, all are presented here as handled objects in excellent condition.

32. Child's Red Cloak, Canterbury, NH (p. 64)

Colloquially known as a "Little Red Riding Hood" cloak, this garment was manufactured sometime between 1900 and 1942, when the business closed. "The Dorothy" was named for their inventor, Eldress Dorothy Durgin (1825-1898) and who, in 1903, was granted trademark protection. Made from imported French wool broadcloth and silk, this style was available in women's and children's sizes.

Although red dyes are considered to be "fugitive," prone to fading when subjected to UV light, this example retains its original intensity.

Barbara Ernst Prey

Born 1957, New York City, NY

Lives and works in Oyster Bay, NY, Williamstown, MA, and Tenants Harbor, ME

Affiliations, Awards & Fellowships

2008–2022 Presidential Appointed Member, National Council on the Arts

2013–present Adjunct Faculty, Williams College, Williamstown, MA

2011 Honoree, Heckscher Museum Gala

2010 Honoree, Raynham Hall Museum Gala

2004 New York State Senate Women of Distinction Award

1986 Henry Luce Foundation Grant, Asia

1979 Fulbright Scholarship, Germany

1974 Grant Recipient, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA

Selected Exhibitions

- 2024 *Handled with Care: Shaker Master Crafts and the Art of Barbara Prey*, New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, CT
MASS MoCA, Building 6, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA (2017–present)
The White House, Washington, D.C. (2003–present)
Kennedy Space Center, NASA Commission, Titusville, FL (2003–present)
Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX (2013–present)
Bush Presidential Library, Office of the First Lady, College Station, TX (2013–present)
National Endowment for the Arts, Office of the Chairman, Washington, D.C. (2011–present)
U.S. Mission to the United Nations, New York, NY (2017–present)
United States Art in Embassies Program, Kolonia, Micronesia (2023 – present)
- 2023 *Celebration of Water*, Quogue Gallery, Quogue, NY
Handled with Care: The Function of Form in Shaker Craft, Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, MA

United States Art in Embassies Program, Bridgetown, Barbados, WI (2016–2023)

- 2022 *Impressionism: A World View*, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, NY
- 2021 *Vanishing Point*, Quogue Gallery, Quogue, NY
- 2020 *Blue*, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, NY
- 2019 *Energy: The Power of Art*, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, NY
Borrowed Light: Barbara Ernst Prey, Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, MA
- 2018 *NASA 60th Art Exhibit*, Space Center, Houston, TX
True Colors, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, NY
Earth, Sea, Sky, Wendell Gilley Museum, Southwest Harbor, ME
United States Art in Embassies Program, Baku, Azerbaijan (2015–2018)
- 2017 United Nations, New York, NY (2015–2017)
Out Painting, Old Westbury Gardens, Old Westbury, NY
- 2016 *OUT OF THIS WORLD. The Art and Artists of NASA*, Vero Beach Museum, Vero Beach, FL
ON SITE: Barbara Ernst Prey's Travelogues, Barbara Prey Projects, Port Clyde, ME
In Search of America, Barbara Prey Projects, Port Clyde, ME
United States Art in Embassies Program, Hong Kong (2014–2016)
- 2015 *Re/Viewing the American Landscape*, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 2014 *Barbara Prey: American Contemporary*, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 2013 *East Meets West*, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
United States Art in Embassies Program, Bamako, Mali (2010–2013)
- 2012 *NASA|Art: 50 Years of Exploration*, Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition (travels to twelve museums) (2008–2012)
Nocturne IV, Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY
America's Artist: Forty Years of Painting, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 2011 *Open Spaces*, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 2010 *Soliloquy: Meditations on the Environment*, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME

- 2009 United States Art in Embassies Program, U.S. Embassy Paris, France (2005–2009)
United States Art in Embassies Program, U.S. Embassy Madrid, Spain (2005–2009)
25 Years Exhibiting in Maine, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 2008 *An American View: Barbara Ernst Prey*, Mona Bismarck Foundation, Paris, France
Meditations on the Environment, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 2007 *Picturing Long Island*, The Heckscher Museum, Huntington, NY
Works on Water, Water Street Gallery, Seamen's Church Institute, New York, NY (2006–2007)
From Port Clyde to Paris, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
United States Art in Embassies Program, U.S. Embassy Vilnius, Lithuania (2007–2009)
- 2006 *From Seacoast to Outer Space*, The Williams Club, New York, NY
United States Art in Embassies Program, U.S. Embassy, Monrovia, Liberia (2003–2006)
United States Art in Embassies Program, U.S. Embassy, Minsk, Belarus (2003–2006)
United States Art in Embassies Program, U.S. Embassy Oslo, Norway (2002–2006)
Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton, NY (1999–2006)
30 Years of Painting Maine, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
National Arts Club, New York, NY (2003–2006)
- 2005 *Works on Water*, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 2004 *Observations*, Harrison Gallery, Williamstown, MA
Conversations, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 2003 *An American Portrait*, Arts Club of Washington D.C.
United States Art in Embassy Program, U.S. Embassy Prague (2002–2003)
The Valley Viewed: 150 Years of Artists Exploring Williamstown, Harrison Gallery, Williamstown, MA
Painting Reviewed, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 2002 *Obsession*, Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY
American Art in Miniature, Gilcrease Museum, OK (1998 –2002)
Patriot, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
A Trace in the Mind: An Artists Response to 9/11, Hutchins Gallery, C.W. Post College, Brookville, NY
- 2001 *Lightscaapes*, Jensen Fine Arts, New York, NY
Recent Watercolors, Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde, ME
- 1999 *Recent Watercolors*, Jensen Fine Arts, New York, NY
Heckscher Museum, Huntington, NY
- 1998 *Express Yourself*, Portland Museum of Art, ME
- 1997 Museum of the Southwest, Midland, TX
Recent Acquisitions, Farnsworth Museum of Art, Rockland, ME
- 1996 *Best in Show*, The Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, PA
- 1995 The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA
- 1993 Blair Art Museum, Hollidaysburg, PA
Johnstown Art Museum, Johnstown, PA
- 1989 *Women's Art*, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA
- 1988 Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, NY
- 1986 Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Selected Public Collections

National Gallery of Art
The White House
The Brooklyn Museum
The Smithsonian American Art Museum
The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA)
The Hall Art Foundation
Mellon Hall, Harvard Business School
The Henry Luce Foundation
The Hood Museum, Dartmouth College
The Farnsworth Art Museum
Kennedy Space Center
NASA Headquarters
The National Endowment for the Arts
The Taiwan Museum of Art

Additional Biographical Notes

Brett Abbott serves as the Director and CEO of the New Britain Museum of American Art. A specialist in American photography of the 20th and 21st centuries, he has organized more than 30 exhibitions and contributed to more than a dozen publications in the field. Prior to his appointment in New Britain, Abbott was Director of Collections and Exhibitions at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, Texas. Before the Amon Carter Museum, he served in curatorial roles at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. His honors include the 2012 Ansel Adams Fellowship from the Center for Creative Photography for his research on Wynn Bullock, the 2010 Lucie Award for Curator of the Year for the exhibition *Engaged Observers: Documentary Photography since the Sixties*, and the 2007 Lucie Award for Curator of the Year for his work on photographer Edward Weston. Abbott is a graduate of the Getty Leadership Institute's Executive Education Program for Museum Leaders. Brett earned his Master of Arts from Williams College and his Bachelor of Arts from Stanford University.

Stephen J. Paterwic is a widely respected Shaker historian who has written extensively on the Shakers. He is a retired public school mathematics teacher and close confidant of the Sabbathday Lake, Maine Shakers. His most recent publications include *The Historical Dictionary of the Shakers, Second Edition* (2018) and *The Shakers of Enfield, Connecticut, 1780–1968* (2020), the most comprehensive study of this community to date. Steve is a frequent speaker at Shaker conferences and forums around the northeastern United States and a frequent contributor to the "American Communal Studies Quarterly." He has also contributed thoughtful essays to most of the Shaker exhibition catalogs published by the New Britain Museum of American Art.

M. Stephen Miller was a dental specialist for forty years. His first Shaker exhibition at the New Britain Museum of American Art was *Inspired Innovations: A Celebration of Shaker Ingenuity* in 2010. Following the success of that he and his wife Miriam endowed the Shaker Gallery in the newly expanded museum. Thus, the New Britain Museum of American Art became only the third art museum in the country to have a dedicated Shaker exhibition space. Steve has served as Guest Curator of the gallery for the past nine years, organizing a series of six-month exhibitions including, most recently, *Chairway to Heaven: Shaker Seating Furniture, Masterworks of Shaker Design: A Tale of Two Enfields*, and *Masterworks of Shaker Design: Mount Lebanon, NY*.

The New Britain Museum of American Art is the first institution dedicated solely to acquiring American art. Spanning four centuries of American history, the Museum's permanent collection is renowned for its strengths in colonial portraiture, the Hudson River School, American Impressionism, the Ash Can School, as well as the important mural series *The Arts of Life in America* by Thomas Hart Benton. The singular focus on American art and its panoramic view of American artistic achievement, realized through the Museum's extensive permanent collection, exhibitions, and educational programming, make the New Britain Museum of American Art a significant resource for a broad and diverse public.

