HANDS TO WORK AND HEARTS TO GOD

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THE SHAKER TRADITION IN MAINE



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essay and notes by theodore e. Johnson photographs by John Mckee bowdoin college museum of art 1969

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Foreword

The Shaker tradition in Maine is an unbroken one, extending from the founding of the first Shaker settlements here in the 1790's. The collection of objects at the Sabbathday Lake, New Gloucester, community—one of the two surviving active Shaker centers—reflects this tradition and constitutes a precious artistic heritage which deserves to be better known. Bowdoin College Museum of Art is therefore pleased to publish this catalogue on the occasion of an exhibition of Shaker art, furniture, and objects, mostly of Maine manufacture, now at Sabbathday Lake.

It is probably no coincidence that Shakerism flourished in the early years of the Industrial Revolution in America, although eventually the Shaker movement seems to have succumbed to its pressures. Unlike many other communal groups attempting to recapture the spirit of the primitive Church, the Shakers did not turn their backs on invention and innovation when it served their ultimate purpose. Shaker hand industry filled a real need both practically and theologically. It is certainly no coincidence that today we find in the Shaker vision so much of ours. In an era devoted to form as an expression of function, the Shaker solution for a piece of furniture or a tool seems inevitable. The original communal experience provided the means by which a form could be worked over, refined, and then widely disseminated. It may be that it required artistic communal experience in the twentieth century, such as the Bauhaus, to open our eyes to the beauty and integrity of Shaker objects, the incidental offshoots of a desire to imbue daily life with a spiritual meaning.

We are indebted to Eldress Gertrude Soule and the entire Shaker community at Sabbathday Lake for their warm hospitality, unfailing assistance, and generosity in allowing objects, many still in daily use, to be photographed and borrowed for the period of this exhibition. The kind counsel of Sister R. Mildred Barker and of Theodore E. Johnson, Director, The Shaker Museum, during all stages of planning and selection made the preparation of the catalogue a rewarding task. Besides all of his help in the initial stages, Mr. Johnson has contributed extensive annotations and a major essay on the relationship of Shaker thought and craftsmanship. Finally, we wish to thank John McKee for his initial suggestion, for his painstaking work on catalogue preparation, and particularly for the perceptive photographs that recapture something of the spirit in which the objects were originally made.

Richard V. West, Curator Bowdoin College Museum of Art



Hands to Work and Hearts to God

Once, many years ago, at Niskeyuna, where the first Believers were called by God to serve Him in the wilderness, Mother Ann Lee admonished her followers: "... put your hands to work and give your hearts to God." In these words she gave us an insight not only into the essence of Shakerism itself, but also into those things, both spiritual and material, which would in succeeding generations grow from the movement.

From its very beginnings Shakerism has represented an attempt, on the whole successful, to reconcile meaningfully the human and the divine, the temporal and the eternal. All that the Shaker did was, in fact, done under the shadow of eternity. Every human action was looked upon as related to that great drama of salvation in which the God of History had given each man a part. The Shaker way must be looked upon as more than just an attempt on the part of individuals to establish a right relationship between themselves and God. It was, on a much deeper level of meaning, a wholly dedicated, or perhaps better, an inspired attempt to restore the primitive church. This renewal of apostolic Christianity as lived and taught by Shakers for over two hundred years grew from the life and ministry of Ann Lee, a remarkable English woman whose words have provided the title for this catalogue.

She was born in 1736 on Toad Lane, in the oldest quarter of the Lancashire borough of Manchester, an area which was just beginning to feel the painful birthpangs of the industrial revolution. The daughter of a humble blacksmith, Ann received little, if any, formal education and early began to work with her hands to help to support her parents' not inconsiderable family. Possessed of a deep craving for spiritual perfection, she found that the formality, rationalism, and seeming coldness which in the eighteenth century tended to mark the Church of England, into which she had been born, could not satisfy her inner needs. In her twenty-third year she came under the influence of James and Jane Wardley, religious seekers who had at one time been associated with the Religious Society of Friends. It is this tenuous association which has perhaps more than any other factor perpetuated the long-lasting confusion of the terms Quaker and Shaker. The Wardleys' teachings seem to have been derived at least in part from those of George Fox, but more importantly from the French Prophets, the spiritual descendants of the Camisards whose ecstatic inspiration had led Louis xIV to suppress their religion in 1702. From Fox the little society evolved its belief in the necessity of waiting upon the Lord for the moving of His spirit; from the Prophets

came the all-pervasive expectation of the imminent second coming of Christ. From this concern with the nearness of the *parousia* was to grow the one peculiarly Shaker contribution to Christian life and thought.

It is to Ann Lee that we owe the spiritual insight which was to lead that little group of Manchester seekers away from the narrowness of traditional beliefs in regard to the Second Coming to a fuller, richer interpretation, the broad implications of which are perhaps just now being fully grasped. To Ann, whom her associates in the Wardleys' little company had come to recognize as their spiritual "Mother," came the inner realization that Christ's Second Coming was not to be a dramatic one amid clouds of righteousness, nor one in glory on the Mount of Olives, but a quiet, unobtrusive one within the hearts and minds of individual men, women, and children. Mother Ann and her earliest followers realized, as Benjamin Seth Youngs, one of the earliest and most important Shaker theologians, was later to write, that "Christ in His Second Appearance had come in them." It is this central concept of the indwelling presence of Christ in an active ever-present way that lies at the heart not only of all Shaker teaching, but of the Shaker way of life as well.

Fulfillment of the life attitudes proceeding from the recognition of Christ's indwelling presence proved impossible to attain in England. It was as the result of a dream vision that Mother Ann decided, in 1774, to move with eight of her followers to the New World. The little band worked at a variety of occupations in New York until the spring of 1776, when they moved up the Hudson to establish themselves some eight miles northwest of Albany, at Niskeyuna. For four years the first Believers strengthened their own inner resources of spirit prior to the opening of their public testimony in 1780. That testimony was a startling one indeed for most of those still in the thrall of the Great Awakening and the millennial anticipation that had grown from it. When Mother Ann proclaimed to her hearers that "the second appearing of Christ is in His church," there were evidently very few who realized the full meaning of her words. All too many were ready to denounce her as "a female Christ" and her followers as deluded fanatics. Her detractors failed to grasp the deeply spiritual significance she intended. For the early Believers, Christ as an indwelling presence had come within them. He was operative in them as individuals and as a community which gathered together within the oneness of His mystical body.

Converts were slow to come, yet the number of followers grew gradually as Mother Ann and those who had come with her from England extended their missionary activity not only over upper New York state but over rural Massachusetts and Connecticut as well. During the four years of her active public ministry, Ann Lee called into being the embryonic Shaker communities at Niskeyuna

(Watervliet) and New (or Mount) Lebanon, New York; Hancock, Harvard, and Shirley, Massachusetts; and Enfield, Connecticut. It was through the zealous activity of her earliest converts in eastern New York and western Massachusetts that Shaker belief was carried first into New Hampshire and later into Maine.

It is of course with Shakerism's beginnings in Maine that we are in the present instant particularly concerned. The first native of Maine to accept the Shaker way was John Cotton, after whose family Cotton Street in Portland was named. Born in that town in 1760, he moved in 1781 to Alfred, where he married Eleanor Coffin, the daughter of Simeon Coffin, the town's first settler. The farm home which the young Cottons built for themselves was not far from Massabesic Pond, where later the Alfred Shakers' Church Family was to be located. John's arrival was coincident with a great religious awakening in and about Alfred occasioned by the missionary zeal of the followers of Benjamin Randall of New Durham, New Hampshire, founder of the Free Will Baptist church. Both John and Eleanor became prominent in the work of these New Light Baptists in Alfred and in nearby Sanford and Gorham.

It was only natural, therefore, that when John Cotton finally decided, in May of 1783, to strike out for Vermont in an attempt to build a new life for himself and his family, he so arranged his itinerary that he might visit his New Light brethren on the course of his journey. It was while he was visiting among the New Lights at Canterbury, New Hampshire, that he probably first heard of Ann Lee and her teachings, which had reached Canterbury only a few months before. Although curious about the new doctrines, he was evidently not at first attracted to them. It was his arrival in the midst of the Free Will adherents at Enfield, New Hampshire, which completely changed his life and added a most interesting chapter to the religious and social history of Maine. While at Enfield, John was entertained at the home of James Jewett, already an ardent convert to the Shaker faith. In a short while the young man from Maine, too, was led to accept Shaker teaching.

John Cotton lost no time in returning to Alfred to communicate to his family and friends the immediacy of his new faith. Around him and those drawn into his circle came into being the cells from which grew the Shaker communal organizations in Alfred and Gorham. Proselytizing activity by Maine converts as well as by missionaries from New York spread Shakerism as far north as New Gloucester (Sabbathday Lake) and Poland, Maine, by the late fall of 1783. Shaker churches were subsequently organized in the towns of Alfred, Gorham, and New Gloucester, while branches, or "families," of the parent churches arose in Lyman and Poland.

At the death of Mother Ann in 1784 the Shaker church was still a very loosely

organized body. Through the universal acceptance of the principle of mutual sharing, the scattered cells already foreshadowed a theocratic communitarianism. It was under Father James Whittaker, the last of the English leaders and Mother Ann's successor, that the first formally organized community was, in the Shaker phrase, "gathered into gospel order" at New Lebanon, New York, in 1785. Not until his successor, Joseph Meacham of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the first American leader of the church, was the Order given the essential outward form which has distinguished it ever since. It was during his administration that the societies at Alfred and New Gloucester were fully "gathered," in 1793. Despite the early Shaker activity at Gorham, it was not until 1804, under Lucy Wright, Father Joseph's successor as head of the church, that the first covenant was adopted there.

The relatively remote locations of the first Shaker villages was happenstance, arising simply from the rural isolation of those who first consecrated their lands to the society's use. In time, however, the isolation became more one of attitude than of place, as the Shakers' neighbors, through misunderstanding, tended to cut themselves off from the now growing communities. However it was not only geographical and social apartness which created the need for self-sufficiency among Shakers, but the realization of their special calling to build God's kingdom. Truly they felt that they were in the wilderness preparing a highway for the ever-coming Lord. The Maine communities, as the others in New York and New England, attained to a high degree the art of being sufficient unto themselves. The early account books at both Alfred and New Gloucester show very little being purchased of "the world" other than salt, sugar, molasses, and metal to be worked.

It was the attempt at self-sufficiency during these early years which gave birth to the almost incredible diversification of industrial and agricultural activity that characterized nineteenth-century Shakerism. At New Gloucester, for example, we see at an early date the construction of lumber, flour, carding, and spinning mills, an extensive tannery, and cooper's shops. Both the herb and garden seed and seedling industries became major agricultural pursuits. In Shaker villages everywhere all of the necessities of daily life poured from the shops in such abundance that the surplus soon began to be sold to "the world." Feeling that their primary reason for being was a religious one, Shakers were always ready to seek and adopt devices which would save time or energy and allow them to devote themselves more fully to the things of the spirit. As elsewhere, necessity proved to be the mother of invention. The list of Shaker inventions is impressive, indeed. It includes the clothes pin, the circular saw, the flat broom, the washing machine, the metal pen, water-repellent cloth, Babbit metal, and a host of other devices

which during the nineteenth century made life in home or shop easier.

Craft activity within the several communities at first met only communal needs, as we have said. This early period, which we may call primitive, is marked by a desire to shun worldliness and ostentation in all material productions. Yet Shaker work from this period is often difficult to distinguish from that produced at the same time by the Shakers' neighbors. Thus, while Believers did seek to separate themselves from the taint of the world, economic necessity must have been an equally important incentive for simplicity and directness in design.

Primitive Shaker furniture may be characterized as substantial, perhaps even heavy, yet vigorous and eminently practical. It bears all the marks of the earth to which its creators' lives were so firmly attached. Maine pieces of the period are, as we might expect, most commonly made of pine and maple. Furniture is stained far more commonly than painted. An indigo-based blue, mustard yellow, and a variety of shades of red are the predominant colors. The recessing of drawers and cabinets into walls became even in the 1790's a mark of Shaker interiors. The pegboard, that eminently practical device for hanging all things from bonnets and broad-brimmed hats to chairs, also dates from this period. It is, of course, not a solely functional contrivance, but an architectural one as well, in that it helps to break the monotony of whitewashed walls. From this era, too, we may date the beginning of the mushroom-cap pull which was to remain a distinguishing feature of Shaker cabinet work long after it had become uncommon in the world. Within one generation it was to evolve from a disproportionately longstemmed button cap to the more familiar low, broad cap of well-turned proportions.

Sometime in its third decade in Maine, Shakerism here as elsewhere began in its material expressions to manifest certain almost indefinable changes. One begins to feel in the work of the 1820's a newness, a freshness, a vibrancy not present before. The change arises from no conscious effort on the part of the craftsman to intellectualize his work. It comes, rather, from his full acceptance and understanding of the way of life to which he had been called—a way of life which showed that man may develop his greatest potential only when he is able to stand filled with both humility and love before his Creator. It is in this era, which may be called classic, that we see coming into prominence the two Shaker theological doctrines which more than any other were to have a profound effect upon the material expression of the movement. The central teaching of the indwelling spirit of Christ which embodied itself in the Shaker way of life had pressed toward a conceptual expression, a theological explanation. From this need of expression grew the two concepts which are the major Shaker theological emphases—unity and simplicity. It is surely no accident that the two Shaker accomplish-

ments in the arts from this era which are best known to the world serve in a very real sense as types or examples of these principles. Sister Hannah Cahoon's inspirational drawing of the Tree of Life is as meaningful a guide to the doctrine of unity as Maine Elder Joseph Brackett's song "Simple Gifts" is to that of simplicity.

As a Shaker symbol we first encounter the tree in Father James Whittaker's splendid vision in England of the church in America. A generation later it is for Benjamin Seth Youngs, in *The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing*, a preeminent symbol for the church. He writes, "the church is compared to a tree which hath many branches, united at the root; as every part of the tree is first formed underground, so the church is first formed out of sight by the invisible operations of the word...." The tree became in Shaker thought an excellent image for what we might call the vertical unity of the church, for to the Shaker the church was not of one time or place, but eternally omnipresent. It is not only the trunk representing the living church operative here on earth, but the deep hidden roots, representative of the church to come, as well as the heaven-reaching branches, representative of the church triumphant united for all eternity with the godhead. The tree provided, too, a fitting example of the organic unity of the church and the organic unity of its members. The church like the tree was alive, ever-changing, ever-growing, ever-adjusting to new life demands.

Simplicity, the second of the fundamental theological concepts, was summed up for Shakers in Elder Joseph's injunction that we must "come down where we ought to be." It is through simplicity, which can only come from a proper understanding of self, that the Shaker attained the sense of being part of that holy fellowship which is the church united in Christ's body. It was through the achieving of this divine gift of simplicity that one might realize the basic Christian right and responsibility of self-fulfillment. Shakerism has ever valued human fulfillment and believed that man fulfilled himself by being nothing more nor less than himself.

The Shaker crafts of the classic era were the output of those who had come to terms with themselves, who had triumphed in that greatest of all confrontations—the confrontation with self. The Shaker craftsman had no need to seek an effect. In every facet of his daily life the idea of the attainment of effect for effect's sake was strongly rejected. To the Shaker each craft experience was an open and honest encounter between himself and the Creator of the materials with which he worked. To that confrontation he had to bring the same spirit of integrity which was the Creator's due in all of life's work. We feel immediately in the best Shaker work the harmony between the craftsman and the materials of his craft. The resultant grace and proportion eloquently bespeak the degree to which the artist attained the sacred oneness which was his unconscious goal.

In Maine, as in all parts of a Shakerdom now extended to western New York, Ohio, and Kentucky, the craftsmanship of the period from the 1820's until the era of Reconstruction represented a golden age in design. There is both lightness and delicacy, yet vigor, too. There is unwitting adherence to the ancient dictum, "Nothing too much." Practically speaking, we find the cabinetmaker increasingly interested in bringing out the natural beauty of wood. We find many fewer stained or painted pieces than in the primitive period. There are attempts, particularly in Maine, to enhance the attractiveness of the natural wood by contrasting it with brightly painted surfaces. Although pine and maple remain the chief woods, chestnut, birch, and a great variety of fruit woods come into common use.

Not only was the classic era the richest in production of beautiful objects in wood and metal; it was also then that the Shakers made their most important contributions in the graphic arts. During the period of "Mother's Work," an era rich in mystical experience from the late 1830's through the 1850's, a peculiarly Shaker art form evolved—the spirit or inspirational drawing. Spirit drawings were an attempt on the part of a medium, or in the Shaker phrase, an "instrument," to put into graphic form a visionary or psychic experience in which someone in the "spirit land" had appeared with a "gift," or spiritual communication, most often for a third person living in a Shaker community. All of these drawings are in the tradition of American primitive art. Many examples are not unlike Pennsylvania German Fraktur, yet the two folk art forms are very different, indeed, in inspiration. Although the spirit drawings abound in a richness of color and symbolism somewhat at odds with Shaker tenets discouraging the purely decorative, their ornamental quality could be overlooked, for to the Shakers they were not art, but heavenly inspired "gifts" of very special significance.

The period of "Mother's Work" has provided us not only with many of the most lovely examples of Shaker cabinetry and the unique spirit drawings, but with splendid music as well. Of the many Shaker contributions to American culture, none perhaps is greater than that in music. Early Shaker song may be said to have had its roots in the American earth and its branches in heaven, for although basically in the folk idiom, it possesses a strongly supernatural quality of separation from the things of the world. The writers of these early, inspired songs looked quite humbly upon themselves, as did the recipients of the spirit drawings, as mere instruments used by God in providing for His people the gifts of the spirit.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century a decline in membership had become obvious in all of the Shaker communities. In some societies the pattern was apparent as early as the 1840's; in others it did not become evident until the years following the Civil War. By 1875, however, even those Shakers who had

hoped for a reversal of the trend were forced to admit the seriousness of the problem when the Tyringham, Massachusetts, community, the membership of which had fallen to seventeen, was closed. In a sense material prosperity had caught up with the Shakers. Their Yankee shrewdness in business and their great success with the home industries had brought them a certain degree of ease and comfort. The emphasis of the movement in the years immediately after the Civil War had become perhaps more sociologically than theologically oriented. As the history of communal movements, both religious and secular, has shown, prosperity is far more detrimental to success than is adversity. The continuing decline in membership in the last years of the nineteenth century made many hard decisions necessary. All too often the decisions were those which seem in retrospect to have been the wrong ones. The Shaker testimony became more and more withdrawn from the world as manpower was expended in the futile attempt to have the village craft industries compete with the world's mass production.

The Shaker craft tradition during these years became somewhat affected by worldly taste. We may well call this the era of Shaker Victorianism. Some of the productions of Shaker workshops are not, to be sure, without a certain distinction, for the extremes of Victorian taste were almost always tempered by the older Shaker ideals of simplicity. The two Maine communities remained relatively populous, and here too Victorian preferences in design seem somewhat less marked. The older traditions retained their vitality longer, not only in artistic expression, but in all other aspects of life as well. Quite obviously wresting a living from the grudging hills continued to contribute to the robustness of the Shaker tradition in Maine.

Walnut and oak appear for the first time as commonly used woods. Dark stains and natural finishes replace the sometimes bright primary colors of the earlier periods. Bought hardware tends to replace the older mushroom cap pulls. Despite the fact that these productions of the late nineteenth century are to most of us less pleasing than are those of the classic era, they are still a valid part of the Shaker story. They are in their way as meaningful a reflection of the evolution of a processual community as are the earlier pieces which accord so much more with contemporary taste.

The Shaker craft tradition continued into our own century. Eldress Sarah Collins was making chairs at Mount Lebanon in the 1940's that were very little different from those made in that community nearly a century before. At Sabbathday Lake in Maine, Elder Delmer Wilson was producing, as late as the 1950's, oval boxes and carriers superior in lightness and delicacy to anything made during even the golden age of Shaker craftsmanship. Yet with the passing of

Elder Delmer in 1961 the craft tradition, too, seems to have passed, although the community itself remains actively loyal to the Shaker way.

In a day in which there is much interest in the material productions of Shaker hands, it is vitally important to remember that one cannot properly understand the objects themselves without first understanding the spirit that produced them. Those things which attract both our interest and admiration are but byproducts of a particular way of looking at the world. We must acknowledge that in the arts, as in all things, the Shakers were not more than they seemed, nor did they seek to be more than they truly were.

Theodore E. Johnson, Director The Shaker Museum

Sabbathday Lake, Maine January, 1969

The Shaker Tradition in Maine



View of the Sabbathday Lake community in 1850



1. The Museum, Sabbathday Lake





























2. Shaker Objects at Sabbathday Lake











































3. The Sabbathday Lake Community Today





















Notes to the Plates

The photographs were taken during October and November, 1968, at Sabbathday Lake, Maine. A room in the 1821 Laundry served as a studio for Plates 17-37. The notes below give dimensions of the pieces in inches, and unless otherwise stated they follow the sequence *height* x *width* x *depth*.

FRONTISPIECE

Third floor, Meeting House (1794). North room from south room. Original paint, white with blue woodwork. STOVE from Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1840.

The three rooms on the Meeting House's third floor served until 1839 as accommodations for Ministries from other Societies visiting Sabbathday Lake. The central room was fitted as a dining room. (On Shaker stoves, see the note to Plate 12.)

PLATE 2

Isometric drawing of Sabbathday Lake community in 1850 (22 x 35). "A Plan of New Gloucester, State of Maine. Delineated by Joshua H. Bussell, Alfred, Me. January 1st, 1850." Ink and watercolor. Alfred, 1850.

Long an elder of the Alfred community, Joshua Bussell (1816-1900) was a skilled cobbler. It was the practice for those in the Shaker eldership to work at a hand trade in addition to fulfilling their spiritual calling. Elder Joshua also made drawings of the Shaker communities at Poland Hill, Maine, and Alfred, Maine.

PLATE 3

Meeting House (1794). Moses Johnson (b. 1752), master builder. Ell added to north side, 1839; first-story sash replaced, 1875. Left door for the use of the brethren, right door for the sisters.

A native of Enfield, N. H., Moses Johnson was responsible for the framing of ten Shaker meeting houses between 1785 and 1794. All of gambrel roof construction, they were located in the communities at Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., Hancock,

Mass., Watervliet, N. Y., Enfield, Conn., Harvard, Mass., Canterbury, N. H., Enfield, N. H., Shirley, Mass., and at Alfred and Sabbathday Lake in Maine.

PLATE 4

Meeting Room, Meeting House (1794), from within ell. Original paint, white with blue woodwork. Sash replaced, 1875. BENCHES, ca. 1870.

PLATE 5

Meeting Room, Meeting House (1794). CHAIR from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1835. STOVE from Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1840.

PLATE 6

Meeting Room, Meeting House (1794). STOVE from Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1840; upper box for increased radiation. The three rows of benches built into the corner were for the use of those of "the world's people" who attended Shaker meeting.

The fact that the pegboards typical of Shaker interior design sometimes extend, as here, over doorways suggests that they were not exclusively functional in purpose, but were also an architectural device serving to break the monotony of whitewashed walls.

PLATE 7

Second floor, Meeting House (1794). Divided stairway, one side for the sisters, the other for the brethren. Storage closets under stairs. CHEST with till (18 x 61.5 x 22). Pine with red stain. Alfred, ca. 1845.

PLATE 8

Third floor, Meeting House (1794). Visiting Elder Sisters' room. Pegboard and small built-in closet with original blue paint. SEWING STAND (28.5 x 27 x 18). Pine with reddish orange stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1815. OVAL BOX, maple with reddish stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840. BONNET, straw covered with blue padding for winter use. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1890.

PLATE 9

Third floor, Meeting House (1794). Visiting Elder Brothers' room. Small built-in closet and woodwork with original blue paint. CANDLE-STAND (27 x 20 x 14.5). Pine with red stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820. (See note to Plate 19.) OVAL BOX, maple with red stain. Alfred, ca. 1845. ROCKER (36.5 x 17 x 18). Maple with natural stain. Leather seat. Alfred, ca. 1830. CHEST with till (17 x 48.5 x 18). Pine with red stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1830. STOVE from Shirley, Mass., ca. 1840.

Once in the Trustees' Office of the Church Family at Alfred, this stove was used by Kate Douglas Wiggin during her lengthy stay while completing the manuscript of her Shaker novel, Susanna and Sue.

PLATE IO

Elder Sisters' bedroom, Ministry's Shop (1839). BED (33 x 47 x 73). Red paint. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820. QUILT, blue wool in honeycomb pattern. Alfred, ca. 1800. CANDLE-STAND (25 x 17 dia.). Alfred, ca. 1860. CIR-CULAR BOX, Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1850. CHEST with till (11 x 24 x 12). Grained pine with yellow stain. Watervliet, N. Y., ca. 1865. ROCKER (34.5 x 18.5 x 13.5). No. 3 Sale Chair. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1890. FOOT STOOL (6 x 11.5). Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1890. STOVE from Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1840. BAG (on pegboard). Linen, initialed L M (Lydia Marriner, 1813-1896). Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1845.

A great variety of straight chairs and rockers in eight basic sizes (numbered o to 7) were manufactured for sale at Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., from 1863 until 1947. The South Family there was long the center of this production.

PLATE II

Elder Sisters' sewing room, Ministry's Shop (1839). CHEST OF DRAWERS (60 x 44.5 x 22). Pine with red paint. Harvard, Mass., ca. 1865. SEWING DESKS (36 x 26 x 20.5). Pine and birch. Red paint and natural stain. Made by Elder Henry Green (1844-1931). Alfred, ca. 1890. BOBBIN BOX, pine with natural stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1855. SPOOL RACK from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1860. YARN SWIFT from Hancock, Mass., ca. 1865. SIDE CHAIRS: Left (42 x 17.5 x 13.5) from Alfred, ca. 1840. Right (38 x 18 x 13) from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840.

Somewhat smaller than most Shaker sewing desks, this matched pair was made for Eldress Fannie Casey and Sister (later Eldress) Mary Walker. The great diversity in design in Shaker cabinet work comes from the fact that each piece was made to fill a particular need.

PLATE I2

Elder Brothers' bedroom, Ministry's Shop (1839). STOVE (17 x 12 x 22). Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1840. SAND BOX (2 x 11 x 8). Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1890. CHEST, pine with red paint. Alfred, ca. 1850.

There was a great variety in the design of Shaker stoves over the many years of their manufacture. The Maine communities seem never to have founded their own stoves, but to have used those made at Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., Shirley, Mass., and Canterbury, N. H.

PLATE 13

Office and tailoring room, Ministry's Shop (1839). STOVE (23 x 22 x 12). Upper box for increased radiation. Sliding tray beneath. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1840. TONGS AND POKER from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1850.

PLATE 14

Elder Brothers' bedroom, Ministry's Shop (1839). DRY SINK (40 x 37.5 x 17.5). Pine with yellow stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1810. MIRROR HANGER (24 x 16). Pine with red stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840. TOWEL RACK (33 x 34 x 7). Pine with yellow stain. Hancock, Mass., ca. 1850. LINENS from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1825-1840. BRUSH from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1850. SHAVING MUG from Watervliet, N. Y., ca. 1840.

PLATE 15

Third floor, Ministry's Shop (1839). Built-in storage, 1875. Built-in drawers, cabinets, and cupboards were a distinguishing characteristic of Shaker interior design from the eighteenth century onward.

PLATE 16

Boys' Shop (1850, on left) and Office Wood Shed (ca. 1820). The Boys' Shop was partially destroyed by fire in 1965, but the facade is original. Boys through their mid-teens were housed in this "shop" with the brethren in whose charge they had been placed. In later years the rooms on the ground floor were converted to shops in which the boys learned wood-and metalworking. The cellar was long the place of manufacture of the Shaker pickles sold widely throughout northern New England.

Although termed a "wood shed," the other building for many years housed a variety of village industries on its two upper floors.

PLATE 17

Side chair (40.5 x 18 x 13). Maple with red stain. Original tape, red and blue. Ball and socket on rear legs for tipping. Alfred, ca. 1850.

In 1852 the Shakers obtained a patent on a metal ball and socket device which had evolved from the wooden type in use for nearly a generation.

The robust Maine Shaker chairs differ greatly

in feeling from the more commonly known productions of Mt. Lebanon. And since these chairs were never in a formal sense produced for the market, each is unique.

PLATE 18

Woodbox (30.5 x 26.5 x 20.5). Pine with yellow stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1830. As is the case with many of the pieces illustrated, this woodbox is still in use within the Society.

PLATE 19

Candlestand (27 x 20 x 14.5). Maple and pine with red stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820. OVAL BOX (3 x 7.5 x 5.5). Blue paint. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1850. CANDLE HOLDER (6.5 x 3 dia.). Steel. Adjusts to various candle lengths. Probably from Mt. Lebanon.

This early candlestand differs from the later ones in its stick or peg legs and in its unusual rectangular top.

The making of oval boxes and carriers was a specialty of the Sabbathday Lake community from the very early nineteenth century. The last boxes were produced in the late 1950's by Elder Delmer Wilson, perhaps the finest of the many craftsmen to work at the trade. The boxes were made in a great variety of sizes and sometimes formed a nesting set. Carriers were provided with handles.

PLATE 20

Side chair (38 x 18 x 13). Maple with reddish stain. The blue and white taping, though Shaker, is not original. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1825. SIDE TABLE (28.5 x 24 x 19.5). Pine, originally painted red, now natural. Breadboard ends. Alfred, ca. 1840.

PLATE 2I

Chest with drawer (23.5 x 39.5 x 14.5). Pine with brown stain. Alfred, ca. 1840. CHILD'S CHEST with till (14 x 30 x 14). Pine with green stain. Cotterpin hinges. Alfred, ca. 1800.

PLATE 22

Small cabinet (55.5 x 29 x 12.5). Pine with blue stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820.

PLATE 23

Side table (28.5 x 19 x 18.5). Pine and maple with red and natural stains. Porcelain pulls. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1875. SMALL CABINET (34 x 20 x 13). Pine with light blue paint. Alfred, ca. 1835. BONNET BOX from Alfred, ca. 1850. OVAL BOX from Alfred, ca. 1850.

PLATE 24

Cabinet (76 x 32 x 14.5). Pine with red stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820. KEROSENE CAN (9 x 5 dia.). Tin. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1845. PAIL (7.5 x 12 dia.). Maple with red stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1850.

PLATE 25

Work table (32 x 52 x 26). Pine and maple. Red stain with natural front. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1850. BASKET AND CLOTH from Alfred, ca. 1860. TAILOR'S RULES from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1860.

Larger examples of this type of work table were commonly used in tailoring. The use of contrasting red and natural stains is a distinguishing characteristic of much Maine Shaker cabinetry.

PLATE 26

Drop-leaf table (27 x 32 x 26). Maple with red stain; top natural. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1835. TOWEL RACK (33 x 34 x 7). Pine with yellow stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1860. LINENS, early nineteenth century.

PLATE 27

Dining room chairs: Left (24 x 15 x 15) from the Second Family, Alfred, ca. 1830. Right (26 x 14 x 14) from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840. Dining room chairs had low backs so they could be kept under the tables between meals.

PLATE 28

Desk (36 x 21 x 21.5). Pine with red stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820. ROD-BACK SWIV-EL CHAIR (27.5 high). Maple with dark brown stain. Steel rods. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1865. SAND SHAKER, tin, from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840. SPECTACLES CASE, tin, from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840.

PLATE 29

Tilt-top candlestand (28 x 20.5 dia.). Maple with red stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1875. BON-NET BOXES: Hinged top (8.5 x 13 x 8.5), red stain. Sliding top (7 x 12 x 7.5), brown stain. Round top (9.5 x 14 x 8), red paint. All from Alfred, ca. 1850-1860.

Boxes for spare straw bonnets became an early necessity for sisters as intercommunication between the several Societies flourished during the early and middle nineteenth century.

PLATE 30

Table (29 x 25.5 x 19.5). Maple and pine with reddish varnish stain. Alfred, ca. 1880. CHILD'S ARMCHAIR (27 x 15 x 12). No. 1 Sale Chair. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1890. ROCKER (34.5 x 18.5 x 13.5). No. 3 Sale Chair. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1890. BASKET from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1845.

(On the Sale Chairs, see the note to Plate 10.)

PLATE 31

Candlestand (27 x 14 dia.). Maple with brown stain. Harvard, Mass., ca. 1850. SIDE CHAIR with shawl rail (33 x 18 x 13.5). No. 3 Sale Chair. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1890. CHILD'S ROCKER (29 x 15 x 11). No. 1 Sale Chair. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1890. SPOOL RACK from Alfred, ca. 1845. BASKET from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1860. Shaker woven fabrics, early nineteenth century.

PLATE 32

Candlestand (24.5 x 18 dia.). Maple with red stain. Alfred, ca. 1840. ROCKER (40 x 19 x

12.5). Maple with natural stain. Alfred, ca. 1850. CHILD'S ROCKER (26 x 13.5 x 10.5). Maple with reddish brown stain. Made by Elder William Dumont (1851-1930). Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1885.

PLATE 33

Bed (41 x 71 x 30). Chestnut. Groveland, N. Y., ca. 1880. CHEST OF DRAWERS (35.5 x 48.5 x 22). Oak. Enfield, Conn., ca. 1890. BOX (3.5 x 12 x 8). Pine with maple and walnut inlay. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1890. (Photographed in the 1794 Meeting House.)

PLATE 34

Shaker tinware. Dustpan (8.5 x 13), whale oil can (6.5 x 6.5 dia.), and kerosene can (9 x 5 dia.) from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1830-1845. Pitcher (2½ x 2½ dia.) and covered pitcher (3 x 2¾ dia.) from Hancock, Mass., ca. 1840.

PLATE 35

Firkin with cover (9 x 12 dia.). Exterior painted yellow, interior painted red. Alfred, ca. 1865. METRIC MEASURES from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1885.

The Sabbathday Lake Shakers were the first in the United States to undertake the regular manufacture of metric measures, under license from the Metric Bureau in Boston. Such a move was wholly in keeping with their progressive philosophy of agricultural and industrial activity.

PLATE 36

Shovel (38.5 long). Maple, carved of one piece. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840. KEELER (7 x 12 dia.). Red stain. Alfred, ca. 1870.

PLATE 37

Baskets: Back (6.5 x 20 dia.). Right (13 x 15 dia.). Front (4 x 9.5), initialled on bottom P S (Prudence Stickney, 1860-1950). Sabbathday Lake, mid-nineteenth century.

PLATE 38

View of present community at Sabbathday Lake, from porch of the 1821 Laundry. From left: brick Dwelling House (1883-1884), Meeting House (1794), part of Ministry's Shop (1839), and Girls' Shop (1901). The Meeting House and Ministry's Shop are entirely of Shaker construction. Granite for the walks and foundations was quarried on the farm by the Shaker brethren.

PLATE 39

Sister Mildred's study, Dwelling House (1883-1884). DESK (43 x 16 x 29). Pine and maple with varnish stain, 1896. Made by Elder Delmer Wilson (1873-1961). CHAIR (38 x 18.5 x 14). No. 4 Sale Chair. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1890. STEPSTOOL (16 x 22.5). Pine with yellow paint. Alfred, ca. 1870. PORTRAIT (18 x 12) of Elder Abraham Perkins (1807-1900). Painted from a tintype by Elder Delmer Wilson (1873-1961). Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1903.

PLATE 40

Library, Dwelling House (1883-1884). TABLE (28 x 36 x 25). Maple with natural stain. Enfield, N. H., ca. 1840. CHEST (13.5 x 29 x 13). Pine with pink stain. Alfred, ca. 1845. SIDE CHAIR (38 x 18.5 x 14). No. 4 Sale Chair. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1875. ROCKER with shawl rail (41.5 x 23 x 19). No. 7 Sale Chair. Mt. Lebanon, N. Y., ca. 1890. INSPIRATIONAL DRAWING (23.5 x 18). Ink and watercolor. Harvard, Mass., 1859. (See Plate 41.)

PLATE 41

Inspirational drawing (23.5 x 18). Ink and watercolor. Harvard, Mass., 1859. "To Eldress Eunice [Bathrick (1794-1883)], with the Heavenly F[athe]r & holy Mother's Blessing. A gift from Mother Ann. August, 1859."

Shaker inspirational drawings are graphic representations of a mystical or visionary expe-

rience. Almost all truly Shaker examples of the art were produced in the period from the very late 1830's through the 1850's. Inspirational drawings were the work of inspired mediums, or "instruments" in the Shaker phrase, who received them as "gifts" from the "spirit land." The present drawing is one of the many examples depicting the richly symbolic Tree of Life.

PLATE 42

Sister Elsie's sewing room, Laundry (1821). SEWING DESK (38.5 x 31 x 23.5). Pine and birch with red and natural stain. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1880. OVAL BOX (3 x 14 x 10). A large example from Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1900.

PLATE 43

Sister Minnie's sewing room, Laundry (1821). IRONING TABLE (30 x 72 x 33). Pine with brown stain. Breadboard ends. Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840.

PLATE 44

Ox barn (before 1850). Barn timbers with rungs.

PLATE 45

North attic, Laundry (1821). Storage space with Shaker baskets.

PLATE 46

Sisters' waiting room (formerly Ministry's dining room), Dwelling House (1883-1884). BENCHES from Alfred, ca. 1870. STOVE from Canterbury, N. H., ca. 1890.

The sisters gather in this room before meals. The framed *Rules for Doing Good* have long been associated with the Shaker movement. Text: "Do all the good you can | In all the ways you can | To all the People you can | In every place you can | At all the times you can | As long as ever you can."

This Canterbury stove was the last of the Shaker stove types and shows the influence of Victorian neo-gothic taste. Its hinged top, however, was an extremely practical feature, allowing large pieces of wood to be easily placed within the firebox.

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THE SHAKER TRADITION IN MAINE

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

DRAWING, "A Plan of New Gloucester ..." SMALL CABINET ink and watercolor on paper pine, blue painted H. 34" x W. 20" x D. 13" H. 211/2" x 343/4" by Elder Joshua H. Bussell (1816-1900) Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1835 Alfred, 1850 PLATE 23 PLATE 2 CABINET WITH GLAZED DOOR pine, red stain DRAWING, "A Plan of Poland Hill ..." H. 83" x W. 34" x D. 14" ink and watercolor on paper Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1850 H. 24" x 34" τo by Elder Joshua H. Bussell (1816-1900) CHEST OF DRAWERS Alfred, 1850 pine, painted red H. 60" x W. 441/2" x D. 22" Harvard (Mass.), ca. 1865 DRAWING, "View of the Church Family, PLATE II pencil and watercolor on paper тт H. 211/2" x 41" CHILD'S CHEST WITH TILL by Elder Joshua H. Bussell (1816-1900) pine, green stain Alfred, ca. 1850 H. 14" x W. 30" x D. 14" Alfred, ca. 1800 PLATE 21 SPIRIT (INSPIRATIONAL) DRAWING, 12 "Mother's Promise to Her Instruments" CHEST WITH DRAWER ink and watercolor on paper pine, brown stain (drawer pulls replaced) H. 21" x 16" H. 23½" x W. 39½" x D. 14½" Canterbury (N. H.), 1845 or 1851 Alfred, ca. 1820 PLATE 21 SPIRIT (INSPIRATIONAL) DRAWING, 13 WOODBOX "The Precious Fruits of Heaven" pine body, yellow stain, maple legs ink and colored pencil on paper H. 231/2" x 18" H. 30½" x W. 26½" x D. 20½" Hancock (Mass.), 1859 Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820 PLATE 18 6 14 CABINET WORK TABLE pine, red stain pine and maple; red stain fronts H. 76" x W. 32" x 141/2" H. 32" x W. 52" x D. 26" Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820 Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1850 PLATE 24 PLATE 25 15 SMALL CABINET DRY SINK pine, blue stain pine, yellow stain H. 55½" x W. 29" x D. 12½" H. 40" x W. 37¹/₂" x D. 17¹/₂" Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820 Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1810 PLATE 22 PLATE 14

16 CENTING CTAND	SIDE CHAIR
SEWING STAND	SIDE CHAIR
pine, red-orange stain	maple, red stain
H. 28½" x W. 27" x D. 16"	H. 38" x W. 18" x D. 13"
Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1815	Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1825
Plate 8	Plate 20
17	25
SEWING DESK	SIDE CHAIR
pine and walnut, natural and red paint	maple, red stain; original tapes
H. 38½" x W. 33½" x D. 23½"	tipping sockets on rear legs
Alfred, ca. 1890	H. 40½" x W. 18" x D. 13"
18	Alfred, ca. 1850
WRITING DESK	PLATE 17
pine, red stain	26
H. 36" x W. 21" x D. 21½"	DINING CHAIR
Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820	maple, natural stain H. 24" x W. 15" x D. 15"
Plate 28	Second Family, Alfred, ca. 1830
19	Plate 27
DROP-LEAF TABLE	
maple, red stain; top natural	²⁷ DINING CHAIR
H. 27" x W. 32" x D. 26"	maple, natural stain
Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1835	H. 26" x W. 14" x D. 14"
PLATE 26	Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840
-	PLATE 27
CANDLE STAND	28
pine, red stain	ROCKER
H. 27" x W. 20" x D. 14½"	maple, natural stain
Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1820	leather seat
Plates 9 and 19	H. 36½" x W. 17" x 18"
1 ENTES 9 and 19	Alfred, ca. 1830
2I	Plate 9
TILT-TOP CANDLE STAND	29
maple, red stain	ROCKER
H. 28", Dia. 20½"	maple, natural stain
Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1875	H. 40" x W. 19" x D. 12½"
PLATE 29	Alfred, ca. 1850
22	Plate 32
SIDE TABLE	30
pine, originally red painted	CHILD'S ROCKER
breadboard ends	maple, red-brown stain
H. 28½" x W. 24" x D. 19½"	H. 26" x W. 13½" x D. 10½"
Alfred, ca. 1840	by Elder William Dumont (1851-1930)
PLATE 20	Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1885
23	Plate 32
SIDE TABLE	31
pine and maple; natural and red stain	ROD-BACK SWIVEL CHAIR
porcelain pulls	maple, brown stain; steel rods
H. 28½" x W. 19" x D. 18½"	H. 27½"
Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1875	Mt. Lebanon (N. Y.), ca. 1865

Plate 28

PLATE 23

32 OVAL BOXES	40 PAF
pine and maple, stained or painted	woo
copper riveted	H. 5
various sizes and colors	Sabl
Alfred and Sabbathday Lake, 1840-1850	41
PLATES 8, 9, 10, 19, 23 and 42	KEI
33	WOO
OVAL COVERED CARRIER	Dia
pine and maple, varnished	Alfr
L. 15"	PLA
attributed to Elder Delmer Wilson (1873-1961)	
Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1900	42
34	PAI
BONNET BOX	woo
wood, orange varnish stain	iron
H. 8½" x W. 13" x D. 8½"	insc
Alfred, ca. 1850	Dia: Alfr
PLATE 23	AIII
35	43
BONNET BOX	FIR
wood, red stain	woo
H. 9" x W. 13" x D. 10"	iron
Alfred, 1850-1860	sten
PLATE 29	Dia
36	Alfı
J-	

36 BONNET BOX, ROUND TOP wood, originally red painted; paper lining hook hinges (handle and lock plate recent) H. 9½" x W. 14" x D. 8" Alfred, 1850-1860 PLATE 29

PEN AND PENCIL BOX
wood, varnished red stain; paper lining
H. 2" x W. 3" x L. 10"
Alfred, ca. 1840
38
SLIDE-TOP BOX
wood, brown varnish stain
H. 7" x W. 7½" x D. 12"
Alfred, 1850-1860
PLATE 29
39

39
SLIDE-TOP BOX
painted wood grain with inlay; varnished
H. 5½" x W. 6" x D. 10"
attributed to Elder Grove Blanchard (17981880)
Harvard (Mass.), ca. 1870

40
PARTS BOX, "Shaker Maine Mower" wood, red painted and stenciled
H. 5" x W. 12½" x D. 5"
Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1860

41 KEELER wood, red stained; iron bands Diameter: 12" Alfred, mid-19th century PLATE 36

PAIL wood, blue and white painted iron bands and fittings inscribed on bottom: "May 3, 1853" Diameter: 12" Alfred, 1853

43
FIRKIN WITH LID
wood, yellow and red painted
iron bands and fittings
stenciled on bottom: "1/Berry"
Diameter: 12"
Alfred, ca. 1865

44 METRIC MEASURES bent and turned wood various sizes: 1/10 liter through 10 liters Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1885 PLATE 35

45 STOVE cast iron H. 28" x W. 12" x D. 22" Mt. Lebanon (N. Y.), ca. 1840 PLATE 13

WHALE OIL CAN tin, screw lid H. 6½" x Dia. 6½" Sabbathday Lake, 1830-1845 PLATE 34

47 KEROSENE CAN tin; brass lid and stopper H. 9" x Dia. 5" Sabbathday Lake, 1830-1845 48 OILING CAN OPEN-WEAVE BASKET tin, made to be stopped with a cork split ash H. 6½" x Dia. 3" Diameter: 10" Sabbathday Lake, 1830-1845 Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1845 56 49 GATHERING BASKET **STEAMER** split ash; bent and carved handles tin Diameter: 19" H. 7" x Dia. 4" Sabbathday Lake, mid-19th century Sabbathday Lake, 1830-1845 Double boiler intended for melting wax or GATHERING BASKET shellac split ash; bent and carved handles 50 Diameter: 20" STRAINER Sabbathday Lake, mid-19th century tin 58 L. 6½" LAUNDRY BASKET Sabbathday Lake, 1830-1845 split ash; bent oak handle 51 Sabbathday Lake, mid-19th century DUST PAN 59 Sabbathday Lake, 1830-1845 SMALL BASKET PLATE 34 split ash Diameter: 4" 52 Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1890 CANDLE HOLDER 60 steel FLAT BROOM H. 61/2" wood and "broom corn" Probably Mt. Lebanon (N. Y.), mid-19th H. 52" century Sabbathday Lake, mid-19th century PLATES 19, 10 61 53 **SHOVEL** HATCHEL (FLAX CARDER) one piece, carved wood, steel and bone L. 38½" L. 14" Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840 Sabbathday Lake, 19th century PLATE 36 62 54 OPEN-WEAVE BASKET WITH LID YARN SWIFT straw and split palm leaf maple Diameter: 43/4" Hancock (Mass.), ca. 1865 Sabbathday Lake, ca. 1840 PLATE II



