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# CRAFT IN AMERICA

CELEBRATING TWO CENTURIES OF ARTISTS AND OBJECTS



JO LAURIA AND STEVE FENTON PROLOGUE BY PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER



## Craft in America: Celebrating Two Centuries of Artists and Objects

By Jo Lauria and Steve Fenton  
Prologue by President Jimmy Carter

The only work of its kind and the companion book to the PBS documentary of the same name, *Craft in America* features the art of America's most original and esteemed craftspeople past and present. Illustrated with 200 stunning photographs and encompassing objects from furniture, wood, and ceramics to glass, fiber, jewelry, metal, and basketry, this definitive work showcases some of the greatest pieces of the last two centuries and explores what makes these crafts uniquely American. *Craft in America* chronicles how handmade objects in our culture both unite and define us as Americans.

Art—Collection, Catalogs, Exhibitions  
200 full-color photographs  
9 x 11; 304 pages  
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### CHAPTER 1

## Religious Communities and the Honoring of the Handmade

### THE SHAKER SETTLEMENTS IN AMERICA

**S**WIFTLY HANDCRAFTED HANDMADE objects from spinning, transported across. This is connected with the exemplary homelike and household goods made by skilled hands of Shakers. Although they were a religious community and used with one craft activity or guild, the Shakers, believing in the value of utility and spiritual transcendence of objects made by hand, were a community of people who designed and created items.

Originally named the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Advent, the Shakers were a religious sect founded in the eighteenth century by Ann Lee, a female mystic and leader from Manchester, England. The Quakers' were persecuted for their pacifist and dissenting worship. Shaker Believers expressed their faith in weekly working, dancing, singing, and ecstatic dancing—agreed fasting, weeding, and practices that were regarded as acts of piety by the leaders of

The Shaker's alliance with industry was also apparent from the very beginning. C. B. Farnsworth, head of the Shaker's Committee of Management reported that the Shaker's goal was to "make their manufactures and household goods their own industry in [spiritual] matters." Thus the actual aim reported to give the manufacturing sector a competitive edge by providing well-trained individuals with design and technical expertise.

The "culture of the arts of design" was the Shaker's primary goal according to the articles of incorporation (1787), and as their objective was to create designers, or as originally written, to become "artisans in drawing, painting, modeling, and designing, that they may reasonably apply the principles of art to the requirements of trade and manufactures."

Such goals eventually led to the development of such specific classes in textile arts and weaving, hand block printing, furniture making, and glass work. The Shaker's was also committed to the education of women and men in the fine arts, a goal that was largely realized over through classes in painting (1818) and sculpture (1821). In time, these classes evolved into various departments with a dedicated faculty along with many other departments, including education, graphic arts, floriculture, and photography.

### TEXTILES

Textiles was the first of the craft-based courses, perhaps due to the prominence of New England's textile mills. A focus on technology and chemistry in the textile department during the mid-nineteenth century gave great rise to a women's handloom department in the late 1800s and 1890s, with a double approach to the design process, separate materials, and techniques of the weavers. Courses chosen first offered to girls are now part of the department of apparel design. Like all SHAKER programs, teaching and apparel design have increasingly moved technical and design education, and they emphasize an holistic approach to making clothes.

SHAKER textiles are reported to have had eight sections, (1) SHAKER fabrics, but all these fabrics are now in the collection of national centers. The historic and extensive writings of Hannah Thayer an instance of the Shaker's unique perspective to the textile and color composition, which has extensive technical programs by John L. Kim. Kim's design has included many and notably possible pattern alternatives.



SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s. SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s. SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s. SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s. SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s. SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s. SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s. SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s. SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s. SHAKER FABRICS, 1800s.