

CLOTHING THE SAINTS AND FURNISHING HEAVEN
: A PURITAN LEGACY IN THE NEW WORLD

Charlotte Dawber

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A Puritan Legacy in the New World



Charlotte Dawber

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'Man looketh on the outward appearance
but the Lord looketh on the heart.'

1 Samuel 16 : 7



I, Charlotte Elizabeth Jane Dawber, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 100,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Dated: 1 October 1995 Signed:

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No.12 in October 1989 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in Art History in October 1989; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1989 and 1993.

Dated: 1 October 1995 Signed:

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ABSTRACT

The thesis deals with the concepts of Millenarianism and the witnessing of Faith through costume, textiles and related arts. The responses of five religious sects, Amish, Shaker, Puritan, Quakers and Mennonites, are examined.

This text falls into two discrete sections. Chapter One details the historic background of the sects. Subsequent chapters outline the Millennial impulse of the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries and resulting emigration to the New World. These chapters detail Utopian social models and a discussion of textiles and clothing as indicators of history and human experience. Chapter Three is an overview of religious iconography in this area of American art, touching on themes and the role in society of both the art and the artist. It discusses allegory and symbolism in the visual arts.

The second half of the thesis focuses on the costume and textiles of each group. Particular consideration is given to the use of iconography, symbolism and allegory in their visual creations. Internal doctrinal differences are examined such as interpretations of the Biblical injunction to be 'plain', and the central role that the concept of being 'not conformed to the World' plays in the social/aesthetic/religious development of the sects. Apparent theological contradictions are highlighted and addressed. Pressures on each sect to adapt to the cultural norm that have resulted in change and disintegration are detailed.

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Map of the United States of America



Key:

-  Pennsylvania
-  Massachusetts
-  New Jersey
-  Indiana
-  Kentucky
-  Ohio
-  New York State
-  Michigan

INTRODUCTION

But they shall maintain the fabric of the world; and in the handiwork of their craft is their prayer.

Ecclesiasticus 38:39

This thesis is the result of questions raised during research for my Masters' thesis *The Impact of Social and Economic Developments in the Seventeenth Century on British Amateur Embroideries*.¹ This explored the concept that the religious beliefs of seventeenth century England pressurised or restricted thematic choice in domestic embroidery. The main thrust of the argument was that thematic regulation was carried out in seventeenth century Britain as a consequence of, and a tool for, the promulgation of Christian morality and womanly virtue. The extension of this concept, explored here, is that religious doctrine, where it is an integral part of a society, can not only influence, but ultimately govern, the visual life of that group.

The idea is essentially simple: if the religious beliefs of a group are markedly different from that of the main culture, and if that group are marked by particular dress and artefacts, it is reasonable to search for a link between these factors. It is thus possible to view the 'aesthetics' of a sect as the material manifestation of spiritual imperatives.

The logical extension of the argument is that sects with similar or related doctrines will exhibit similar stylistic choices. But life is rarely so neatly compartmentalised, and if such distinctions are but true in part, then the relative weighting of the disparate variables that play a role in determining both doctrine and visual design need to be assessed in relation to each sect.

When I commenced this research it seemed important to apply the

formal ideas of 'aesthetics' to the work under consideration and that it was important that this work could be recognised as 'art' in a classical sense. During the course of writing it has become evident that this is an irrelevancy. The traditional western conceptions of art are not what the creators, or the work itself is concerned with, despite the European antecedents of the sects. Yet lacking any better language one is often forced to resort to the terms of that discipline.

To determine the variables of faith and history that resulted in the work of the sects, it was necessary to carry out a comparative study. With so large a body of material this clearly meant inherent organisational problems. Because of this, together with finite capacity, attention is focused on just five of the many Utopian sects that have existed since the sixteenth century.

The major parameter that governed the choices of the sects was that the groups had to have flourished for a period long enough to enable them to fully realise their sectarian ambitions and evolve a true sub-culture in accordance with their doctrine. The sects share, as much as possible, the same backgrounds, since it is not possible to compare wholly disparate groups. The sects chosen were all rooted in the Anabaptist movement of the central medieval period. Regardless of their foundation date, the roots of each sect lie there and certain essential tenets of their faith may be attributed to this movement. Ultimately, the choice of sects fell on those which presented the clearest separate strands of belief and development from the mainstream culture of the relevant periods. Each sect is different enough in its organisation, history and doctrinal emphasis to demonstrate some of the variables that may shape a visual oeuvre. Each group is notable for a strong visual 'aesthetic' - a term that will be discussed later. For these reasons included in this study are the Puritans, the Religious Society of Friends [Quakers], the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing [Shakers], the Amish and the Mennonites.

The sects themselves fall into two related sub-groups with the Puritans, Quakers and Shakers on one hand, and the Amish/Mennonites on the other. This division has determined the order in which they are considered throughout the study. In an effort to achieve coherency each sect is considered separately. This does tend to make the drawing of comparisons more difficult, but by maintaining a common order of subject within each chapter, it is hoped that cross-referencing and the observation of common cultural parallels will be facilitated.

This thesis seeks also to demonstrate the human need to express collective spiritual experience. Between them the sects detail some of the alternative paths towards an expression of A fundamental faith. Iconoclasm and iconaltry, both of which figure heavily in their collective histories, are but extremes of a basic human need.

The ethnographic material in this study is based on evidence drawn from communities both in Great Britain and America. Although each group was active on the site of its inception, it was only in the adoptive country that each was able to model their society according to their beliefs. The evidence is therefore drawn primarily from the New World. There each sect may be studied at one remove from the traditional influences of the mainstream culture: to evaluate the stylistic evolution of Old and New World members of a sect would itself be fascinating, but is sadly outside the scope of this study.

For reasons of representativeness and quantitative evidence the study concentrates on the largest population groups of the sects which are largely based on the eastern seaboard. Exceptions to this are the Amish strongholds in Iowa, Indiana and Ohio, and the Shaker community at New Harmony.

The temporal disjunction between certain of the sects may at first seem at odds within a comparative study, but is actually of little importance, since it is not physical members of a group that is being studied, but attitudes.

The Puritans are the earliest group for the purposes of this study,

spanning, in Britain and America, the seventeenth century. The Quakers follow and are of concern until the late nineteenth century, running parallel for a period with the Shakers and the Amish/Mennonites. The Shakers however cease to be a major concern from the start of the American Civil War, except in that their subsequent history is indicative of the impact that living within the 'World' may have on a religious sect; a position that will be discussed in detail later. The Amish/Mennonites occupy a slightly different position in that while the sect was established on the east coast of America from the beginning of the eighteenth century, little remains of their work prior to the last quarter of that period, the bulk of the material available for study dating from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. However, I do not feel that this in any way invalidates the study since the aim is not to compare one sect with another, but to observe the different responses of different groups to a common problem: that of expressing their faith.

The evidence examined is primarily, though not solely of fabric. Textiles whether embroidered, woven, decorative, worn as costume or purely utilitarian, are a central expressive medium utilised by these sects. As a body of work, the textiles and clothing of a society at any period in its development form a very personal expression, whether of an individual or a group, and may be seen as the physical, the 'material', synthesis of the culture that the artist/maker represents. The term 'fabric of society' carries the validation of empirical evidence.

This role for textiles as socio-historical evidence is only recently gaining any widespread recognition. Textiles afford a more direct response to social/religious issues [often the only one open to women] than many of the plastic arts. Consequently there is a wealth of literature in related disciplines of history and social anthropology but a paucity of work directly supporting this research.

It will be obvious that there are quantitative differences in the material

studied between the five sects: this is primarily due not so much to problems of access, but to the numbers of pieces still extant. For example, very few pieces of proven Puritan workmanship have survived the passage of the years; but since that is all there is, then, with the usual caveats, that is the evidence, however fragmentary, upon which any and all conclusions must be based. Existing examples can of course be compared to the larger body of material produced during the same period, and supported by secondary material.

Perhaps the most valuable primary sources were the collections of Plimoth Colony, Massachusetts, The Winterthur Foundation, Delaware, Hancock Shaker Village, Massachusetts, The Peoples' Place, Pennsylvania, Salem Historical Society, New Jersey, The Chester County Historical Society, New Jersey, and The American Museum in Britain. However, to have confined the data solely to pieces that could be examined first-hand would in itself be to introduce a possible distortion in the evidence. There have been fashions in museum collecting as in everything, and individual collections tend to reflect a single taste. The same weighting of data may occur in using the several large 'commercial' Amish quilt collections. By their very nature, the pieces collected are notable for their state of preservation and what is increasingly known as 'sex appeal'. That is not to deny that this material is an important part of the oeuvre of the societies that it represents, and as such is extremely valuable. There is an additional argument in favour of the many immaculate items from this type of source. A quilt reserved for the guest room and therefore subject to little wear must surely have been regarded as having some significant feature by its makers over and above the quilt, that used almost to destruction, did duty as a pad for the mattress in the children's room. Should they not then demand the same sort of attention from the historian?

Individual items may also vary in their significance depending on the

context in which they are viewed. An Atworth Quaker School sampler is clearly important in that it embodies the most 'hard-line' tenets of the Quakers of the period. But it has little value on its own, and must be placed in its proper context alongside examples from other Quaker communities of the period. Then it may be seen to demonstrate the way a range of beliefs was expressed through a variety of textile images. By the same token, when Quaker samplers incorporate aspects of those produced by the 'World's' children they become a tool illustrative of fluctuations in matters of ornament and decoration linked with changes in doctrine. 'Gay', 'worldly' pieces are thus as of much value to this study as any hard-line 'plain' example might be: each is one side of what has turned out to be a polygonal 'coin'. Similarly, the disappearance of an item of costume from the wardrobe of a sectarian community is as significant to a study of this nature, which charts changes in faith and form, as is its continued existence in another group.

To those pieces available for study in museums and galleries, one must then add those illustrated in works of varying academic quality over the last century. Up until some twenty years ago textiles were little regarded and many were destroyed. Many items illustrated at the beginning of this century are today untraceable. Some would argue that without provenance a piece has little value, but when dealing with material as perishable as textiles I would argue that if it is illustrated, and is evidently not mis-attributed, then it is worth including in the body of evidence as long as such pieces do not outweigh the more tangible items. That such examples cannot readily be studied with regard to fabric or constructional technique is of less importance in terms of this study, than being able to include a pattern in the repertoire of a society.

The data base on which this thesis is based is therefore drawn from a number of physical and printed sources, on the basis that if there is a large enough quantity of pieces, any 'contracted' bias will be minimalised. Early

woodcuts, travellers 'histories' and diaries have provided information regarding European costume development, and sociological texts and documentaries have proved a source of incidental information about costume variables amongst the Amish and Mennonites across the American continent. Not to have drawn on these secondary sources would have severely limited the data that it would have been possible to collect at first hand in the constraints that ruled this study.

When quoting from original sources throughout this text, I have largely preserved the spelling and punctuation and have not disrupted the original voice through the use of *Sic*.

The Quakers whom I contacted proved to be an inexhaustible source of both accurate and unexpected information, both on their history and their faith. It is possible to compare this willingness to support research into what can only be described as one of the most personal areas of the human psyche, with the general attitude of their faith to the World as a whole. The parallel is most marked, and accurately modelled, if one contrasts the Quakers' attitude with that of the Mennonite and Amish communities. The value of personal contact lies also in the degree to which the interviewee analyses his or her reactions to their faith. A fundamentalist, of whatever persuasion, while a valid standpoint, can contribute little to a discussion of philosophy or social models since there is a tendency in such cases for life and belief to be viewed in terms of absolutes.

It is uncommon, except perhaps amongst anthropologists, for the oeuvre of a people in its entirety to be studied within the context of the host society. Each of the five sects in this study, with the possible exception of the Mennonites, has been the subject of considerable attention for a number of years, yet the fields studied have been increasingly narrow; if the classical approach has resulted in not being able 'to see the wood for the trees', this study, I hope, will make an attempt at some coppicing. Numerous specialised

studies of doctrine and sectarian history are available, and a list of publications consulted may be found in the bibliography.

Both Puritan doctrine and literature have attracted attention of historians, clerics and critics. Scholars in this field have concentrated most especially on the uneasy relationship between the undoubtedly graphic, and often somewhat earthy, imagery portrayed in Puritan sermons and treatise to illustrate Man's relationship to his God, with the message of the Bible and the rewards yet to come for enduring present trials. The relationship between Biblical theory and vernacular practice has an indirect but important bearing on this thesis. In the former field the work of such authorities as Perry Miller is notable.² The aspects of the Puritan mind revealed in religious writings has valuable resonance's with other, more domestic, concerns. Articles on puritan dress and textiles are generally discursive and badly substantiated, though in the works of Alice Morse Earl one may find quotations from diarists that are as illuminating as they are frustrating since their author is rarely cited.³ There survive, however, a number of diaries that *are* traceable and which either provide reliable detail or sources in that they often give not only what was being worn but contemporary attitudes towards it. Further useful detail, and a source that gives an alternative insight into official attitudes towards dress, textiles and aesthetics in general, is found in a number of contemporary pamphlets and broadsides either defending or refuting Puritan doctrine. Examples of this genre are William Bradshaw's *Englishe Puritanisme*,⁴ dated 1605 or the anonymous *A Plaine and Familiar Exposition of the Ten Commandments*, of 1622.

Documentation for The Society of Friends is in a similar state to that of the Puritans. Contemporary statements of doctrine are available, and minute in their concerns. The *Christian Advices Issued by the Yearly Meeting of Friends Held in Philadelphia, 1859*⁵ is as typical of its period as John Crook's *Epistle to Young People Professing the Truth, 1686*.⁶ The 'epistolary' style of

argument seems to have been popular among the Friends from the outset. The Friends seem to have attracted little literary attention from the World, nor, barring its early years, does the Society appear to have created the same sense of suspicion and outrage among the general public as was aroused by such sects as the Shakers. Although there are voyeuristic accounts of their worship, the general note is of puzzlement rather than disapprobation. The majority of attitudes cited in the text are drawn from the minutes of the Meetings held by local groups, both in Britain and America, such as the *Rules of Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Men and Women Friends, Held in Philadelphia*⁷ (1877) just one of an annual series published by the various local and regional Meetings. These have proved to be invaluable.

Friends both here and in America have been most helpful in locating primary materials. Frederick J. Nicolson's history, *Quakerism, the Arts: a Survey of Attitudes of British Friends to the Creative Arts from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*,⁸ (1968) is one of the few works dealing with the reconciliation of Quakers and the decorative arts. This is a field that, though the subject of much comment in private letters, until recently has received little attention in the Friends' press.

Shaker documentation is greater in both quantity and quality. Primary sources such as the *Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing, Exemplified by the Principles and Practice of the True Church of Christ. History of the Progressive Work of God, Extending From the Creation of Man to the Harvest, Comprising the Four Great Dispensations now Consumating in the Millennial Church* by Benjamin S. Young and Calvin Green⁹ are freely available in original and facsimile editions. Manuscript collections are generally accessible. The Shaker communities attracted attention from the World throughout the nineteenth century and numerous descriptions, both friendly and hostile to the cause, are cited within the text. Barnabas Bates' *Peculiarities of the Shakers, Described in a Series of Letters From Lebanon Springs, in the Year 1832*,

*Containing an Account of the Origin, Worship, and Doctrines of the Shakers Society*¹⁰ and Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation. Vol.II*¹¹ (1842), are obvious examples of this early 'National Geographic' style. This century has seen the pioneering work of Edward Deming-Andrews and his wife in the field of Shaker aesthetics with such publications as *The Community Industries of the Shakers*.¹² It is probably due to the dedication of this couple to the cause of preserving and documenting Shaker workmanship, that we are seeing the current renaissance of interest in Shaker work. The Andrews singly and jointly documented and collected furniture, textiles and drawings when American 'folk' or 'native' arts were largely discounted, and much original material might otherwise have been dispersed or destroyed. They too were responsible for conserving some two hundred pen and wash/ink 'spirit' drawings, preserving a collection of works that had themselves been hoarded by a Sister, herself unsure whether they should be destroyed in line with the Ministry dictates of a previous era or preserved for posterity.

Critical studies of the last thirty years are really very few, notable examples being that by Andrews himself - *Visions of a Heavenly Sphere: A Study in Shaker Religious Art*¹³ (1969), and Robert P. Emlen's *Shaker Village Views: Illustrated Maps and Landscape Drawings by Shaker Artists of the Nineteenth Century*,¹⁴ (1987). That little research can be done except present these drawings in a coherent context is hardly surprising when one considers that the Ministry itself was often unsure how to respond to the phenomenon, at one time supporting, and then later decrying, the practice.

The Amish and Mennonites are at once separate and united peoples, and this often hazy relationship is reflected in much of the literature. As will be discussed in Chapter One religious divisions are to the 'English' sometimes borderline and what is true for one group may on occasion be applicable to the other and vice versa. However one must also recognise, if making such

assumptions, that due consideration for the historical date must be given, since the distance between the far 'right' and 'left' of the two sects increases markedly as the centuries progress. As a matter of principle it should be considered as generally unwise to make such assumptions on any point of detail. The cornerstones of Amish and Mennonite literature are the writings of Joseph Amman and Menno Simons, being the *Dordrecht Confession of Faith*, 1682,¹⁵ and the *Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, 1552.¹⁶ Further matters of doctrine are outlined in such works as the *Discipline of the Franconia Conference*,¹⁷ the *Statement of Christian Doctrine and Rules and Discipline*,¹⁸ the *Ordnung* and the *Ausbund*; *Das Ist: Etliche schone christliche Ausbund. Lieder, Wie sie im dem Getangniss zu Passau in dem Schloss von den Schweizer-Brudern und von andern rechtgläubigen Christen hin und her gedichtet wurden*¹⁹ and subsequently T. J. Braght's, *The Martyr's Mirror*.²⁰

The Amish do not write about themselves, and, until the middle of this century, have attracted little attention from others. Since the 1960's however, the position has been reversed and a substantial body of sociological works have appeared along with a host of largely repetitive magazine articles, and at least one film, *Witness*, made against the express wishes of Amish community leaders. The foremost writer among the academics is John A. Hostetler, originally a member of an Old Order Amish community, with such works as 'The Amish Use of Symbols and Their Function in Bounding the Community'.²¹ As we near the Millennium, Amish textiles, and in particular quilts, are the subject of a deluge of publications. To anyone viewing these for the first, second, or thousandth time, the growing popularity of anything 'Amish' is easily understood; but whether they will contribute to a greater understanding of these people and the pressures they face in today's society, is debatable.

In contrast, the Mennonites have provided little of interest for general study by other than a few anthropologists of the 1950's and '60's. Mennonite

quilts display similar restrictions to those of the Amish, and, as the Amish are undoubtedly the more 'picturesque' of the two sects, have either been subsumed within Amish collections, or ignored. Publications along the lines of S. F. Coffman's 'Mennonite Dress Customs in Ontario', *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, Vol. 16, No. 1, January 1955²² are part of a small but scholarly bibliography. That the Mennonites, when working within the conservative elements of their conventions, have produced quilts that are arguably as stunning in their use of colour and subtle in form as the finest Amish Centre Diamond, has been largely overlooked.

Previously historians have concentrated on solitary aspects of expressions of faith, teasing out meaning from single threads; what this thesis tries to do, which is in part a small contribution to a wider contemporary movement that is long overdue, is to pull these threads together, to weave knowledge into a form that might give an impression of the underlying, pattern. The text attempts to evaluate human values and the way in which they found expression in a number of specific communities, to look at the way in which groups bear witness to their faith. To attempt this, much of the text has necessarily to be an overview. The scope of this thesis is wide, and the discussion of some aspects of the subject has often to be briefer than desirable. The material is therefore necessarily comprehensive rather than concise, integrative rather than specific, though the argument is focused wherever possible on the sects' textiles. The text aims primarily not to add to the depth of *knowledge*, [to the well of historical fact] but to the breadth of *understanding* of the subject. Minutiae of fabric composition, stitch size and construction techniques are not in general our concern. The aim is to widen knowledge of the diversity of responses of human cultures to certain stimuli, to show the way in which textiles serve as a media through which to make those responses, and to convey the depth of that experience to the reader. This thesis sets out to attempt the role of the historian as defined by Miller

and Johnson.²³ The first function of the historian is, they say, to relate everything that has happened, to exclude nothing, to erect no standards or criteria on a purely human basis, and at the same time to interpret it, demonstrating "wherein events have fulfilled God's purposes wherever the purposes can be ascertained." For a study of doctrine, the definition seems apposite.

The following text therefore falls into two discrete sections. The first part of the thesis deals with the conceptual basis of the sects in this study - that is with the concepts of Utopia and the Millennium - and with the ways in which particular 'art' forms and cloth may be viewed as historical documents. The concepts necessary to an understanding of the total pattern of aesthetic choice are governed by belief. To facilitate comprehension of the variables involved, hopefully without impairing the cohesion of the argument, the chapters in the first section each deal with a specific area of concern. Chapter One is sub-divided into five parts, each detailing the historical background of the sects considered in this study. This includes the religious impetus for the creation of the sects and the fundamental tenets of their faith. It is on this historical base that the motives, choices, and impulses detailed in the preceding chapters depend. The common Anabaptist base of the fifteenth century is explored here, and the points of divergence of the sects is delineated. Chapters Two and Four outline some of the behavioural and belief systems that humans have devised as a basis for society.

The Millennial impulse was common in European sects in a period spanning the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries and continues into our own late twentieth century. This and the Utopian vision was the impulse behind the optimistic migration of these peoples to the New World in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The discussion details the differing lines upon which Utopian societies of the sects under consideration modelled themselves. Following this, attention then turns to a discussion of the way in which textiles

and clothing may be read as both indicators of history and human experience on a more personal level. The role of textiles and clothing are discussed as a medium for important personal and spiritual expression, a field that is attracting increasing interest among historians in several fields.

Symbolism is the subject of Chapter Three, which text is primarily an overview of religious iconography. The discussion in this chapter touches on the thematic choice available to the artist, and the role played in society by both the art itself and its creator. There is a discussion within this section of the use of allegory and symbolism, implicit and overt, in the visual arts of particular societies.

The second section of the thesis deals with the practical applications of the concepts previously outlined, within each of the sects. In these chapters particular stress is placed on the dress, embroidery and other domestic textiles of the groups. An example of the specific foci highlighted in these chapters is the Biblical injunction to be 'plain'. In the society of Friends, for example, this is illustrated through the issue of 'plain' versus 'gay' versus 'wet' Quakers and the internal controversy aroused by the injunction.

Though they do not form the main concern of the thesis, related decorative arts are touched upon throughout the text: Shaker Spirit drawings and their controversial part in Shaker theology are one such instance. Another thematic area to receive attention is the subject of Amish/Mennonite pattern. The juxtaposition and apparent contradictions of figurative pattern with professed theology, along with the origins of these patterns are addressed. This field of study is linked with the discussion of the concept of quilts as a devotional impulse and such themes as the study of colour/pattern usage and the extent to which it is tied to doctrinal beliefs.

Pressures on each sect to adapt to the cultural norm of mainstream society are considered. These pressures, worthy of study in their own right, have resulted in change and disintegration within each of the sects, each

reacting differently due to aspects of their culture determined through the choices made over matters of faith.

What this work tries to do with these sources, primary, secondary and hearsay, is use them as voices from the past, to take the scattered fragments and attempt to listen to the resonance, the under-voice, to hear what the people and the work that they have left behind, their mortal remains, has to tell us. To stand back in wonder at the brilliance of the vision, and to understand; as well as anyone who does not share those beliefs can approach an understanding. Undoubtedly a representative of an alien culture, I am seeking in some measure to aid the recognition of Plain Peoples' singular vision; that such would not necessarily be welcomed by these people, either then or now, is perhaps ironic.

¹Mayhew, 1988.

²Miller & Johnson, 1963.

³Earle, 1974.

⁴Bradshaw, 1605.

⁵Christian Advices 1859.

⁶Crook, 1686.

⁷Rules 1877.

⁸Nicolson, 1968

⁹Young and Green, 1856.

¹⁰Bates, 1832.

¹¹Dickens, 1842.

¹²Andrews, 1972.

¹³Andrews, 1969.

¹⁴Emlen, 1987.

¹⁵Dordrecht Confession of Faith, Holland, 1682.

¹⁶Simons, 1552.

¹⁷Discipline of the Franconia Conference, July 1933.

¹⁸Statement, 1968.

¹⁹Ausbund, etc.

²⁰Braght, 1944.

²¹Hostetler, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 1963, pp.11-22.

²²Coffman, Mennonite Historical Bulletin January 1955, p.1.

²³Miller and Johnson, Op. Cit. p.86.

1 EUROPEAN ANTECEDENTS OF THE RELIGIOUS SECTS

The faith of every individual is in accordance with his nature. Man is of the nature of his faith; what his faith is, that is he.

Bhagavad-Gita XVII, 3.

The foundations of each sect within this study stem from the Anabaptist churches of medieval Europe. The fundamental difference between the Anabaptist and the dominant Catholic churches of the period lay in the divisive duality of Catholic theology where the laity is strictly separate from the clergy and has only limited access to God. This was diametrically opposed by the Anabaptist 'Brotherhood of all Believers'. With the return to the principles of the early Christian church, the Anabaptists transmuted and developed the concept of the cloister in a laical form, supporting associations of believers in a disciplined brotherhood. The communities that grew out of the movement expressed this anti-materialistic base in the simple, communal life.

Within the bounds of this study the divisive issues between the churches, and between Anabaptists in particular, becomes of paramount concern. Fractional nuances of biblical interpretation here gave rise to aesthetic and cultural differences in almost inverse proportion. Nevertheless the synonymy of religion and politics within these fundamentalist groups remains a constant. Looking at work produced into the nineteenth century it becomes evident that for certain sects the pattern of belief and social convention evolved relatively little in nearly three centuries.

A number of related churches found that, for a variety of reasons detailed later, their native homelands became politically too restrictive to accommodate both their adherents and the State authorities. The New World

was an opportunity to found a series of communities of a religious intensity that have proved peculiarly pervasive. The socio-economic and political factors behind their establishment, and the time-frame in which they were founded, are important considerations in determining their differing attitudes towards art, religion and society. Each may be seen as a mirror of their own history. Those sects that have endured to the twentieth century in social isolation, such as the Amish, are in some part visual echoes of Europe's past, while their cultural impact may be felt throughout the North American sub-continent.

THE PURITANS

To understand a peoples history, we must first understand their beginnings and a brief outline of the forces that shaped the sects would, I feel, be useful. However to embark on any consideration of the Puritans, it is necessary to first define our terms of reference, for it is evident that there was some confusion over the doctrinal parameters of the term 'Puritan' even amongst their contemporaries. Moreover, in attempting an analysis of belief in terms of art and manufactures, it is with these subtle differences of doctrine that we are most concerned. Alan Simpson expressed one definition neatly, maintaining that the term "began as a sneer, was taken up in self defence, and established itself as a convenient label." ¹ Thus 'Puritan', has, over the centuries, acquired as many connotations as there were shades of belief to which it was applied.

The term appears as early as 1564, and in connection with the idea of religious purity, in 1577. The first printed reference to the term 'Puritan' in an ethical sense is cited by the Oxford English Dictionary as 1592 and a few years later is seen as synonymous with 'spoil-sport' or 'kill-joy'. The dismantlers of a Stratford maypole in 1619² were termed the "old biting and young sucking Puritans."³ Similarly in 1641 Parker classified the word fairly carefully,

explaining that: "Those whom we ordinarily call Puritans, are men of strict life and precise opinions...the most ordinary badge of puritans is their more religious and considerable conversation."⁴ William Bradshaw undertook the task of definition in *English Puritanism*. He wrote in Chapter One, 'Concerning Religion or the Worship of God in general', "PRIMIS, *They hold and maintain that the word of God contained in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles, is of absolute perfection, given by Christ the head of the Church...*" Thus the Puritans' relationship with the Bible was a direct contact with the thoughts and wishes of God. Puritan was thus a moral judgement as much as any other, and it is important to remember the range of sympathies encompassed by the term. Only then is it possible to make sense of the varied expressions of faith evinced in 'Puritan' textiles. Others that earned, or welcomed the name 'Puritan', might have been more, or less, politically motivated.

Puritanism was also a term of ridicule, the moral and law-abiding elements of society ever the butt of common jest. Jasper Mayne used the term in a subjective fashion in *City Match*

Sir, she's a Puritan at her needle too.....she works religious petticoats, for flowers she'll make church histories. Her needle doth so sanctify my cushionets, besides my smock sleeves have such holy embroideries and are so learned, that I fear in time all my apparel will be quoted by some pure instructor...⁵

There were of course the zealot Puritans such as Cotton and Increase Mather. Numerically, however, this group was subordinate to the 'ethical' Puritans and the 'political' Puritan group.

English Puritanism was not solely the grafting of a European Calvinist tradition onto an English stock, as has sometimes been argued: were that so they would have been Mennonites or Hutterites, Dunkards or Lollards. In Puritanism's constant questioning of the spirit, of self examination, one may also trace the legacy of medieval Catholicism, and this seems to have been a

prime factor in the subsequent history of the sect. Together the doctrines created sensations of guilt and fear: which is essentially a negative philosophy.

In demographic terms the original 'Puritan' pilgrims have exercised a disproportionate influence on the North American consciousness. The 'Mayflower' colony who are often seen as the archetypal American 'Puritans', numbered only 549 by 1637,⁶ More prolific was the Massachusetts Bay colony, Puritan dominated but *commercially* centred. It is the history of this colony that questions the popular view of Puritan austerity. The assorted political, religious, and economic motivations behind the 'great migration' therefore require some examination. To do this one must first look at the cultural, aesthetic and economic bases of immigrants to the New World.

From the latter part of the sixteenth century, pressure from both Church and State on the non-conformist elements within Britain increased. An ecclesiastical argument dating from 1565 over the use of vestments, was the cause of the rift between Thomas Cranmer and John Hooper, and in the context of this study that outward forms were considered so fundamentally important is clearly significant. In accordance with continental Protestant groups - and in this an attempt to return to the simplicity of the early church is evident - English Puritans held that the use of vestments set the minister apart from his congregation. Dress, even at this early date, was identified as a matter of religious expression and the object of Biblical injunction. Separation, social and spiritual of the clergy from the congregation was, moreover, symbolic of the Catholic concept of priesthood. Such a division was foreign to the Puritan idea of a church of 'all believers'. It became evident in 1565 that not all clergy *did* wear the prescribed vestments and Elizabeth I instructed Matthew Parker to enforce the current regulations. Under Bancroft, William Ames went into exile rather than submit to wear vestments. A total of 14 bishops, 13 bishops-elect, 1 abbot, 4 priors, 1 abbess, 12

deacons, 14 archdeacons, 60 canons or prebendaries, 15 heads of colleges in Oxford and Cambridge and roughly 20 doctors of divinity all resigned their positions. These problems were made worse at the turn of the century, with James I's marriage to the catholic Anne of Denmark and that of his sons to Catholics, which together with pretensions to a Divine Right altogether made for an uneasy situation in England. Unease was heightened by his subsequent relaxation of many anti-catholic laws which heightened the fears of non-conformist groups for their future safety and freedom to worship in England.

The all-pervasive nature of religion in the seventeenth century, intertwined as it was with economics and politics, even social organisation, is today difficult to comprehend. But James' refusal to champion the part of Protestantism in the Thirty Years War of 1618 was deemed significant as the war was regarded as pivotal to the religious future of Europe. Much of his reluctance may be attributed to the growing commercial expansion of Dutch activities in Europe and the East Indies, in direct opposition to the interests of England. In 1620 James' fear of the political implications of Puritanism resulted in his keeping of anti-puritan clergy in Episcopal Sees. To the enquiry concerning what it was that the Arminians held, a contemporary wit replied, "All the best bishoprics and deaneries in England".⁷ Winthrop, a Puritan leader, saw in the prevailing political climate but small possibility of reforming the Church, or restoring its spiritual purity, from within. The Puritan elders traced parallels between their own position and that of the ancient Israelites. By extension they argued that they had inherited the mantle of that people to execute God's plans for the redemption of the world. Persecution by the established church was no longer seen as a possible punishment for having strayed from the path of righteousness, but rather the hand of God directing them away from the Old World to the New. A new beginning abroad offered seemed to many to offer a greater chance of salvation through a life lived in the 'true faith', than to stay and face an uncertain and increasingly 'ungodly'

future. The reliance of the Puritans on the Bible may then be read as both a seeking for reassurance in stories of past trials safely undergone, and a source of divine, and personally relevant, commandment.

Migration offered freedom to worship, and a chance to reorganise society. It should be recognised that many were not seeking religious toleration for all, but the chance to build a country of their own adherents. Future events, such as the eviction of Quakers, banishment, flogging of Baptists, the infamous 'witch trials' etc. are witness to a religious bigotry as deep as any levelled against Catholicism. These exclusionist ideals were not unique to the Puritans, but they explain the domination of certain colonies by particular groups. Massachusetts Bay was that held by the Puritans, Maryland by the Catholics, and shortly after Pennsylvania by the Quakers and other quietist groups.

It might be suggested that Charles I was as happy to see the Puritans go, as they were to obtain charters and leave. Puritan radicalism was seen by conservative elements in the Government as a serious threat to the vested interests of the Episcopal hierarchy, who enjoyed great wealth and privilege. The Puritans posed a risk to State security; men who put their duty to God before that to their King were unpredictable. When a man has been elected to Heaven, the quarrels of the earthly plain tended to lose their significance.

Although not all may be called Puritans, almost one thousand men, women and children left England during the middle years of the seventeenth century. It is interesting to note the social makeup of those emigrants. As a doctrine of salvation Puritanism embraced all classes of English society. In this it was unusual as a political force since in England such affiliations were traditionally influenced by social class. Most thinly represented were the old aristocracy - traditionally high church - and the poorest of the poor. Puritanism was based on a personal understanding of, and interaction with, the Bible. The doctrine flourished in debate - the artisan communities were

ideal territories for meetings; squalid hovels or scattered cottages were not. Of the premier citizens of the Massachusetts Bay Company, several were members of the minor aristocracy, such as Sir Richard Saltonstall. The first Governor, Winthrop, was of that amorphous class of 'landed gentry' and had a substantial capital interest in the venture, the profit from which was placed in the general fund. More lowly individuals invested smaller sums in the venture for, for every £50 invested in the Company there was a land grant of 200 acres, with an increased share if the shareholder emigrated and fifty acres for non-shareholders. All paid their own passage. A proportion were drawn from the newly emergent middle classes; the great majority were of the artisan class of farmers. These were people who came of a section of society that took its religion seriously. It is interesting to note that on more than one occasion virtually the whole of a single congregation relocated itself in the New World; notably groups from East Anglia and Sussex.

As a general historical principle one may predict that the fiercest conflicts are those between groups who agree on the broad planes of their policy, but are irreconcilable over minutiae. Each seems to the other so obviously misguided. The Catholic's prediction that once the absolute doctrinal authority of the Universal Church was abandoned, the Protestant Church would fragment, proved correct: the Amish-Mennonite church is vivid testament to this principle. To the Puritans the Bible was their mandate from God, but the mandate proved difficult to implement as their ranks were split by doctrinal dissent. Rational argument or concession to established practice was not often entertained. Discretion, reason, were casuistic tools of the heretic. Hooker asked,

Let them with whom we have hitherto disputed consider well, how it can stand with reason to make the bare mandate of sacred Scripture the only rule of all good and evil in the actions of mortal men. The testimonies of God are true, the testimonies of God are perfect, the testimonies of God are all sufficient unto that end for which they were given. Therefore accordingly we do receive them, we do not think that in them God hath omitted anything

*needful unto his purpose, and left his intent to be accomplished by our devisings.*⁸

The Puritan contention was that it was possible so to do; to do anything else was for the sophist to pervert God's law. Thus inherently divisive and segregationist, dissent was inevitable: splinter congregations followed dissenting ministers and established new communities that recognised only particular minutiae of theological interpretation.

Puritanism was based upon a theology that recognised three separate covenants: The Covenant of Grace, or the invisible church of saints, God's body of the elect; the Church Covenant, the visible church comprising all those who experienced conversion and thus saw themselves as elected to salvation, and the Civil Covenant, the ruling body of civil authority - which in practice meant members of the first and second Covenants. Church and State, as in England, but with significant and radical changes in particular beliefs, were again one and indivisible.

The Puritan mind has been described by Miller⁹ as "one of the toughest the world has ever had to deal with", and that it "is inconceivable to imagine one of that faith as disillusioned". Given the rigours that the colonists were to face in the New World it was as well that their faith had fostered such an outlook. They faced virgin woodland, the thin sandy soils of Massachusetts Bay, periodic Indian attack and harsh winters. To expect no better than he received, to see every setback or massacre as the workings of Divine Providence, endurance as the maturation of his soul, was the philosophy of a survivor. Milton described Cromwell in terms that may be taken as characterising the typical Puritan 'saint',

*He had either extinguished, or by habit had learned to subdue, the whole host of vain hopes, fears and passions, which infest the soul. He first acquired the government of himself, and over himself acquired the most signal victories; so that on the first day he took the field against the external enemy, he was a veteran in arms...*¹⁰

The dispirited outlook of those that choose to remain in England was

not that of the army of Saints. Their victory was predestined, defeat was not a possibility. Faith in a prescribed set of values must override weaker, innate impulses. Right would prevail. The attitude is best expressed by John Cotton:

There is...[a]... combination of vertues strangely mixed in every lively holy Christian, And that is, Diligence in worldly business, and yet deadnesse to the world; such a mystery as none can read, but they that know it. ¹¹

From a cultural perspective one may therefore view the Puritan movement as the logical culmination of historical developments within the western Church. The established church was a cauldron that had been coming to the boil, spitting out globules of dissent, until schismatic pressure blew off the lid of the religious cauldron, leaving the core churches both reduced and fundamentally changed.

The catalyst behind sectarian theology of the seventeenth century was largely a negation of contemporary practice. The doctrines expounded were based on a re-evaluation of biblical teachings in a period of great pressure and uncertainty. The adoption of often radical doctrines tended to isolate the new sects from mainstream society. It is both a generalisation and an historical truism, that those excluded from the core of society will adopt increasingly extreme positions. The creation of a counter-culture is a common response to the loss of position within the established hierarchy. This is often coupled with the adoption of policies perhaps more extreme than would have been followed had the sect not met with widespread challenge. Historical events, one might suggest, conspired against the reformers, subjecting them to greater pressure than they would have faced had the economic climate of the period been different. Any challenge to the existing social order in a period of surplus population, hunger and unemployment will be viewed with great suspicion by those at the top of the social hierarchy. It is increasingly realistic to view the entire Puritan-based movement in terms of a class struggle whatever the original ideological principles of the movement.

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

The Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, are the second sect in this study. Contemporary with the later Puritan movement, the Quakers may be considered as having handled the conflict with the establishment rather more successfully. Many of their beliefs are held in common with the Puritans, yet their history is very different. As much as anything it is a matter of temperament that drew the Quakers from the Puritan path. Pacifists rather than warriors, the Quakers are the Friends of God rather than his soldiers.

Their foundations also lie in the Anabaptist movement which had gained a firm, if discrete, foothold in England as early as the third decade of the sixteenth century. Apart from the practice of adult baptism, their most distinguishing characteristic was a belief in the possibility of universal salvation. In this they depart markedly from the Puritan hierarchy of salvation through membership of the different Covenants, but accord with the Amish and Mennonite churches.

The monarchies of James I and Charles I had managed more-or-less to contain the various religious factions, but the Civil War in England threw these doctrines and their advocates into historical relief. The Commonwealth, having declared itself for freedom of the individual was the catalyst for the resurgence of any number of Baptist-based sects, Calvinist and non-Calvinist alike. The Quakers are but one, and an enduring example, of the radical politics that swept the country during the Interregnum. It is interesting to consider whether without this loosening of theological and sociological ties, whether the movement would have flourished in the face of continuing attempts at suppression by the Anglican Church.

The Quaker movement has been described as one of the 'attempts of various groups of the common people to impose their own solutions on the problems of their time'.¹² The Quakers expressed the changing aspirations and growing discontent of the seventeenth century common man, and yet the

sect attracted hostility of the same sections of society from which they drew their support.

The movement is unusually well documented for the period in terms of State and private papers, diaries and anti-Quaker literature. It is thus possible to attain a picture of the growth of a movement spawned by revolution. The movement developed in roughly four stages which chart early Quaker ideology and activity, the emergence of Quakerism during the Interregnum with the reactions of the common people and the establishment of the movement in America.

The founder of Quakerism is generally acknowledged to be George Fox, though it is perhaps more accurate to say that he was one of a number of men moving along the same lines, but that Fox was the initiator of a philosophical coalescence. In 1647, at the age of twenty-three, Fox experienced the realisation that the Church 'was noe more holy than another piece of Grounde'.¹³ God revealed to Fox that,

...every man was enlightened by the divine light of Christ...and that they that believed in it came out of condemnation and came to the light of life and became the children of it (and)...such as were faithful to him in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell...¹⁴

One authority on early Quakerism and George Fox, W. C. Braithwaite, believed that Fox can have had little personal knowledge of the formative literature of mystical religion:¹⁵ yet Quakerism in its early years embraced several mystic elements. For Fox, in diametric opposition to many Calvinist sects, the Bible and its Scriptures was the 'verifier' of the teaching of his inner 'light'. Fox held that it was not the written word of Scripture that embodied truth, but rather the direct word of the 'Holy Spirit, by which the holy men of God gave forth the Scriptures, whereby opinion, religions and judgements were to be tried.'¹⁶ The relative lack of any systematic theology meant that their faith relied on, and was sustained by an experience of God. In contrast

to the Puritan foundation on the Letter to the Hebrews, with the additions of a Calvinistic belief in predestination and apocalyptic beliefs, the Quakers based their faith on the gospel according to St. John.

Fox, Barclay and Penn, all largely discounted the doctrinal intricacies of salvation and intercession between Man and God that obsessed the Puritans, and were thence alienated from the Puritan movement. The division was one of Old versus New Testament teaching. At the same time the Scriptures sanctioned both Quaker religious practice and matters of doctrine:

"There is sufficient testimony left to all the essentials of the Christian faith [in the Scriptures]; we do look upon them as the only fit outward judge of controversies among Christians; and that whatsoever doctrine is contrary unto their testimony, may therefore justly be rejected as false. And, for our parts, we are very willing that all doctrines and practices be tried by them; which we have never refused, nor ever shall, in all controversies with our adversaries, as the judge and the test." 17

It would be unusual, if not unique, however, had not the theologians amongst the Friends chosen the key elements of their faith from the Bible with some care. With faith in the possibility of spiritual perfection through 'spiritual' living the Friends faith was self-authenticating.

This combination of beliefs meant that the Quaker's life was one of constant spiritual pilgrimage. Each moment of every waking day, their thoughts, wishes and desires must necessarily be dedicated to following the path to the Light of God. Quakers spirituality was unconcerned with the complex wrappings of the old religions: simplicity was the hallmark of early Quakerism. In common with the other sects in this study, the Friends believed that the way in which they lived their lives was a witness to their faith. Every act should be carried out in accordance with the dictates of God, and every aspect of their lives an act of worship. The extent to which this was achieved varied.

Such life entailed inevitable sacrifice. There would be rewards in this life, but one should not expect them to be of the senses but of the spirit. Sensual

pleasures must be discarded and self-denial instituted. Benjamin Bealing advised:

...that Friends take care to keep to Truth and plainness, in language, habit, deportment and behaviour; that the simplicity of Truth in these things may not wear out nor be lost in our days, nor in our posterity's; and be exemplary to their children in each, and train them up therein; that modesty and sobriety may be countenanced, and the fear of the Lord take place and increase among them; and to avoid pride and immodesty in apparel, and extravagant wigs, and all other vain and superfluous fashions of the world; and in God's holy fear watch against and keep out the spirit and corrupt friendship of the world; and that no fellowship may be held or had with the unfruitful works of darkness, nor therein with the works thereof.¹⁸

Small groups of friends 'met in silent meetings with fasting and prayer, waiting upon the Lord'.¹⁹ Despite periods spent in prison on charges of blasphemy, Fox was able to establish links between Quaker groups and the beginnings of a distinct movement were discernible by the 1650's. Following a number of leaders amongst whom were Richard Farnworth, Thomas Aldam, Margaret Killam and James Naylor, they are more akin to the Puritans than to the Amish or Mennonites, who followed a single leader. The Quakers of this period have been described as linked 'advanced Protestant separatists'.²⁰ They termed *themselves* 'the People of God' or 'Children of Light'.

For a 'plain' sect, the Quakers were unusually militant. Insurgent actions of the period saw the burning of silks and ribbons at Malton in Yorkshire and the public testimonies against pride and extravagance. These early actions should be borne in mind when considering attitudes, detailed in Chapter Six, among Quakers in America. Incidents such as that reported at Wakefield where Farnworth preached to such effect that a woman in the crowd tore off the silver lace from her gown, allegedly crying 'This is the power of the Lord', were not uncommon.

The ideology and pragmatism of Puritanism that had failed to appeal to the radicalism of the 'lower' classes was an intrinsic part of Quakerism. The early Quakers were mostly drawn from the artisan and labouring classes; the wealthy industrialist classes who were to become a feature of the society

had not yet come into being, and the intellectual overtones of the movement were not yet evident. The efforts of the sect towards the 'levelling' of society is concomitant with the basic communistic interpretation of the Bible by all the quietist groups in this study. In the seeming initial isolation of individuals (single members of a family unit would convert, and thus effectively leave that family), the movement is unlike any other in our study. Other groups were notable for the family based organisation of the church.

The fractional nature of post-Reformation Protestantism has been mentioned, and it was amongst the minor sects that the Quakers made most of their converts. Whitehall was worried enough by their activity to send spies to Quaker meetings.²¹ For the government it must have seemed that the prediction of Jeremiah 1:14 had 'come to pass': 'out of the North an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.'

Quakerism spread rapidly across the country, then into Europe, and thus finally to America. By the end of the seventeenth century Friends groups existed in France, the Palatinate, Holland, Denmark, Venice, Rome, Constantinople, Jerusalem, New England, Barbados, Jamaica and Surinam. It is estimated that by 1660 there were some 35-40,000 Quakers.²² These figures roughly equal the number of English Catholics.

Organisation in the early years was informal with no hierarchy of government and with the Friends served by itinerant ministers. However, by 1660 Fox centralised control of the Quakers, instituting programs of regular and regulated church meetings on local, regional and national scales. The cohesive function of travelling ministers was taken over by the Business Meetings that were instituted in the 1660's and 1670's. The Friends, having abolished religious hierarchies would not act on any matter unless the majority opinion of the meeting was in accord. Matters that were not agreed upon were simply shelved. Unity was their aim, and to achieve this measures considered were necessarily broad in scope.

There are no sacraments within the Society of Friends since such would resemble too closely the practice of the established church. As God spoke directly to the individual, the ministry of a priest of any nature was superfluous. Overt symbols were unacceptable either in religion or secular life, yet spiritual, mystic revelations were commonplace. Quakerism owes a debt to the Puritan movement in its ideology. Each has the same conception of sin, the same view of salvation, although following the demands of God and avoiding spiritual pitfalls did not necessarily involve abstinence from pleasure, but the just deliberation of whether any indulgence was commensurate with treading 'the path'. The demands of God were of primary importance. William Penn wrote in *Primitive Christianity Revived*;

"that which the people called Quakers lay down, as a main fundamental in religion, is this, that God, through Christ, hath placed a principle in every man, to inform him of his duty, and to enable him to do it; and that those that live up to this principle, are the people of God; and those that live in disobedience to it, are not God's people, whatever name they bear, or profession they may make of religion...by this principle they understand something that is divine, and though in man, not of man, but of God; it came from Him and leads to Him all those that will be led by it... It is the Spirit given to every man to profit withal." 23

If Quaker faith was largely a matter of internal struggle against external attractions, the Friend did have at least one text to turn to for guidance and fortitude. Robert Barclays *Apology For the True Christian Divinity*, first translated from Latin in 1678, guided Quakers for over one and a half centuries. Widely circulated amongst Friends, it contained a coherent, biblically based, and solidly argued statement of Quaker doctrine. The sense of 'God before all else' is conveyed in statements such as the following admonishment; *What, thy Wife, dearer to thee than thy Saviour! And thy land and Oxen preferred before thy Soul's Salvation! O beware, that thy comforts prove no snares first... 24*

The Quakers recognised a possibility of division between the two spheres of man's existence. Quakers did not eschew political activity, even organising

support for parliamentary candidates sympathetic to the cause. In the second half of the seventeenth century they filled a variety of political roles including that of Governor, deputy Governor and Assemblymen in Maryland, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, West New Jersey and the Carolinas',²⁵ and even served as naval men and soldiers of the New Model Army.²⁶ This duality enabled the Quaker to operate in business areas, to interact with other people, in a way that is not, for example, possible for an Amish man, whose religion *is* his life. Quakerism became identified with those aims and hopes of justice, equality and community that had seemingly died with the fall of Parliamentary forces. Through the Friends the spiritual regeneration of the Millennium would continue; "Wilstanley sayes he beleeves we are sent to perfect that work which fell in their handes hee hath bene with us".²⁷ A new phase of Quakerism had begun.

The 1670's saw the evolution of a systematic religious doctrine. The idea of predestination was rejected: rather they preached that salvation was possible for all. The Quakers urged 'all men to look to the light within their own consciences, by the leadings of that light, if they will, they may come to God, and work out their salvation'.²⁸ In embracing a complex and stated doctrine the Quakers were moving away from the 'plain' peoples general reluctance to substitute a wall between Man and his God, which they had been at some pains to dismantle, with another. In spite of the desire to create their own theology the Quakers believed God to be close to them, and that He would speak directly to them through the light within themselves. The Scriptures were more-or-less unnecessary. Such a teaching is the hall-mark of a sect grounded amongst the plebeian population: illiteracy must necessarily bypass formalised religion.

The Quakers' regarding the priesthood of the Anglican church as the last vestige of the centralised and corrupt authority that had governed Britain since the close of the sixteenth century, campaigned against clerical tithes.

They argued that the system supported a 'fat' clergy who, as they saw it, kept the people in ignorance, and therefore dependent on their services, for a chance of redemption;

The poor it seems must be preached unto patience and contented more without dainties and Ornaments: but the Priests and the proud Ones, who live in pomp and plenty, may purchase Lands and possessions without check. ²⁹

In their place, the Friends sought to create a movement that did away with university-trained clergy and functioned under the leadership of ordinary men and women who had received the word of God. They sought the religious toleration that had begun to seem ideologically possible under the Interregnum. They campaigned against the social class system maintaining that it was founded upon 'fraud, deceit, and oppression'.³⁰

Quaker theology stressed not preparation for the final judgement day but the *present* resurrection of the spirit of each Quaker. Hell was a state of being in this life. The ecstatic nature of the movement was viewed as the outward manifestation of God working from within, and was a notable feature of the movement at least from the mid-1650's.

The 'Plain' aspect of the movement extended into the Church structure. They viewed the interiors of church buildings as 'lined Stalls for the rich, with a lock and key to keep the poor out.'³¹ This type of rhetoric often attracted censure from the State who saw the Quakers as dangerous in that they preached equality in society.

Quaker merchants traded in New England throughout the middle decades of the seventeenth century, with such severe under-cutting of prices that legislation had been enacted against them.³² The plans for the colonisation of Pennsylvania are a nice mix between commercialism and religious desire; as Penn said 'Though I desire to extend religious freedom, yet I want some recompense for my trouble'.³³ In the fall of 1681 ten ships left England bound for America, although the contingent's leader, William Penn, did not arrive until September or October of the following year. The land, owned

outright by Penn and taken by him in lieu of Crown debts, had been granted on March 4th of that year. Penn noted the date, exulting, "*This day my country was confirmed to me under the Great Seal of England...My God that has given it to me...will, I believe, bless and make it the seed of a nation.*"³⁴

The Colony was not without its problems. The first years were marked by a confusion and 'chronic friction' between sections, groups and individuals, for the Quakers lacked the ideological unity of the more fundamental quietist groups. On August 19, 1685 Penn wrote to the Council, 'For the love of God, me and the poor country, be not so governmentish, so noisy and open in your dissatisfactions', and the following year to Thomas Lloyd, that he was tempted to return Pennsylvania to the Crown and so have done with the squabbles.

Penn had somewhat naively believed that given the chance to build a new society, the Quakers would order it along the same lines that they had reordered their spiritual lives. He was to find however that the transfer of such values was not as complete for his people as it was, for example, with the Amish, or even, though more sententiously, the Puritans. Quakerism was but one of multitudinous responses to the socio-religious and economic phenomena of seventeenth century England. It was also one of the most serious of the attempts to finish that which the Reformation had initiated: the restoration of a primitive Christianity and the acknowledgement that it is the inner spirit of man that should govern his actions in this world, not external caveats, whether they stem from Church or State.

Both Philadelphia and Quakerism eventually prospered so that by 1766 Benjamin Franklin was able to estimate that Quakers constituted one third of the total population of Pennsylvania, roughly 53,000 people.³⁵ Increasing wealth prompted a change in Quaker attitudes with the gradual abandonment of many 'plain' aspects of their faith Quaker. These will be discussed in Chapter Six. | The rapid rise in the acquisition of 'civilised'

comforts in the colony was unparalleled amongst other settlements in the New World.

THE UNITED SOCIETY OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST

The Shakers, more properly known as 'The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing' (or sometimes 'Coming'), are the most recent foundation in this study. With their roots in the English Quaker movement of the eighteenth century, in one sense, the Shakers are the community that the Quakers might have been. They share the Quaker rejection of the "motley spectacle of superstition that belonged to worldly Christians."³⁶ Their central desire for social unity meant that once in the New World they formed small, closed communities in which they were able, for the space of two centuries, to maintain their ideological principles. They have proved as aesthetically, if not physically, enduring as the Amish.

The sect dates from 1747 and the teachings of the visionary James Wardley, a man whose religious convictions had previously embraced Quakerism. The Society, led by Wardley adopted no creeds, rules of faith or worship. Modelling themselves on the Prophets, they allowed their souls to be guided entirely by the prompting of the Spirit of God. However, Wardley's ministry was notable neither for endurance or impact, and the movement was subsequently based on the evangelism of Ann Lee, and it is she who is generally considered to be the progenitor of Shakerism. Predictably, considering the antecedents of the movement within Quakerism, Shaker roots were amongst the artisan classes of the English midlands.

Ann Lee, or Mrs Standley - since she had been married but reverted to her maiden name - was a mystic spending the nine years following her conversion becoming an adept in the Shaker rituals of fasting and trances. It was not until around 1770 that she began to preach seriously, often against marriage and advocating the spiritual purity of the celibate life. The name

'Shaking Quakers', as they were at first known,³⁷ was an attribution derived from a habit of entering convulsive trances during worship;

Sometimes, after sitting a while in silent meditation, they were seized with a mighty trembling, under which they would often express the indignation of God against all sin. At other times they were exercised with singing, shouting and leaping for joy at the near prospect of salvation. They were often exercised with great agitations of body and limbs, running and walking the floor, with a variety of signs and operations, and swiftly passing and repassing each other, like clouds agitated with a mighty wind. ³⁸

The Society suffered popular persecution in England. There is one account of Ann Lee being attacked by a mob when she preached against marriage, and of her subsequent imprisonment. Ann Lee experienced a series of visions which led her to the conclusion that she was the female Messiah (hence the Shaker belief in the present realisation of the Millennium), and it is in this that Shakerism diverges from conventional Christianity. Visions were an integral part of their experience. It was one such that led Ann Lee to emigrate to America,

I had a vision of America. I saw a large tree, every leaf of which shone with such brightness as made it appear like a burning torch...I knew that God had a chosen people in America; I saw some of them in a vision and when I met with them in America I knew them... ³⁹

Thereafter known as 'Mother Ann', it was in 1774 that she led between eight and twelve disciples to found a Shaker colony in America. In the event the Shakers were not firmly to establish a settlement for some two years, the movement in the meantime relying on group meetings throughout the mid-1780's at Cheshire, Richmond and Ashfield in Massachusetts. The membership of these meetings was subsequently absorbed into the organised communities, the first being at Niskayuna, New York.

A letter from William S. Byrd to Dr. Williamson, dated October 27th, 1827, written from Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, deals with the main attitude of the Shakers to the Scriptures, in the form of answers to questions, previously posed, by the Doctor. Two are significant for this study:

Question. *Do you believe the scriptures of the old and new Testaments to be the inspired word of God!...*

To answer this question...*inspiration of God is the receiving of the breath or spirit of God, men are capable of receiving the divine breath or spirit, they are the proper subjects of inspiration; things inanimate are not. Moses was an inspired man,...The Apostles were also inspired...What was spoken by these inspired persons was called the word of God part of which was recorded. This we call a record of the work of God in past ages, and according to the above cited scripture is profitable to furnish the man of God with suitable matter for his work, but it is still the man of God that possess the spirit and not the book...*

Question. *Do you believe that God has given to man any other revelation of himself and the way of salvation besides what is contained in the book commonly called the Bible?...*

Answer. *This question must be impertinent, if the self evident truth is admitted that man and not inanimate matter is the proper subject of inspired knowledge. What knowledge of God ...is contained in the most gifted book more than any other idol framed by human art? To imagine that knowledge, faith or any other intellectual gift is communicable to or from the letters of a book is a gross perversion of the scriptures. It is an idolatry not less derogatory to the divine majesty and dangerous to the souls of men than the worship of Juggernaut: we use the scriptures not abuse them, but to put anything in the place of God and pay divine honours to that thing is an abuse of it.*

The Shakers are not only one of the most unlikely survivors of the Post-Reformation sects, but also one of the most enduring. Unlike other groups in this study they base their communities not upon the concept of family, but of celibacy and the strict segregation of the sexes. The basis of the practice being derived from the Book of Revelations, 14:4: "These are those that did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure."

Shakers operate as individuals working within the harmony of communitarianism. The Shakers are not as rooted in the past as the Amish and Mennonites, despite their closed communities. While their fundamental tenets have remained the same, other aspects have remained far from static, reflecting the major tides of concern within the surrounding culture: intellectual, emotional, social and political.

As a group they express their ideology in the creation of artefacts that mirror their inner convictions. Creators of pieces of a uniformly high standard of execution, their personal lives are subjected to tests of 'quality' just as

rigorous.

Shaker belief and development is unusually well documented. In accord with other groups under discussion, their emphasis is on the personal communication with, and experience of, God. Shakers have historically been given to producing, and moreover preserving, personal testimonies of belief, along with written accounts of every facet of community life.

Cosmology and symbolism each play a major part in the Shaker religion, and the image of Ann Lee's tree is linked to the Tree of Life. That, and such images of the Revelation, are common;

Then the Angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The Throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

Revelations 22: 1-3.

As outwardly non-conformist as the Quakers in both plainness of dress and style of worship, they met the same hostility and persecution in the New England States, but were able to attract enough converts between 1757 and 1792 to found some twelve communities. Initially these were at New Lebanon, Waterlivet and Graveland in New York State, Hancock, Tynningham and Enfield in New Hampshire, Alfred and Gloucester in Maine. After a period of consolidation in these areas, the society began to extend its range into Kentucky and Ohio – States that already attracted other quietist groups.

The ideal of community amongst the Shakers is founded on a sense of strength through unity - similar to that of the Amish and Mennonites. One of the early Shaker hymns expresses the sentiment that,

*Tis the union of each other,
That doth make believers strong. 40*

The tenet of stability and adherence to established tradition that the Shakers share with the Amish and Mennonites is enshrined in the same hymn,

*Be not anxious to go forward,
And leave your brother dear;
You may happen to fall backward,
And your brother forward steer.*

Communal experience was not only stronger but more intrinsically valuable, more probably closer to the truth and less likely to deviate from the proper path of God's teaching, than that of the lone individual. Once a member of a Shaker community an individual became part of the collective consciousness. In the religious and spiritual turmoil that even as late as the end of the eighteenth century preoccupied Europe, it is easy to see how such an idea was attractive to the ordinary man seeking solace in the thought of a better world. The first covenant, drawn up in 1795 expressed the purpose of the society as '*One joint Interest and Union, that all might have an equal right and privilege, according to their calling and needs, in things both Spiritual and Temporal*'.

Anti-Calvinist, the Society was clear in what it rejected. They repudiated not only the Trinity but Christ and God as one being, the authority of the Scriptures and did not believe in the resurrection of the body. Shaker ceremonies were inspirational rather than reliant on the expression of faith through formalised sacraments. They did not accept the Calvinist belief in predestination, of 'eternal and unconditional decrees'. A rare courage for the period led them to assert that though the Evangelists undoubtedly wrote the truth as they saw it, their experience was limited and not necessarily the whole truth. The Book of Revelations was, they deemed, the least inaccurate or adulterated book of the New Testament. Regarded by them as half-demoniac and half-pagan, its images permeated their thought.

The thought of 'travel', often synonymous with 'travail', is an undercurrent in Shaker thought. The beliefs of the Amish have remained stationary and focused. In direct contrast, the Shakers constantly strove, in the spiritual sense, to seek perfection. The preface to *Millennial Praises*,⁴¹ is

valuable in understanding Shaker attitudes since it expresses the flexibility of the sect towards doctrine and the willingness of the movement to re-evaluate practice in accord with changing circumstances. The authors write that,

It is not to be expected that the people of God will ever be confined in their mode of worship to any particular set of hymns or any other regular system of words - for words are but signs of our ideas, and of course must vary with the increasing work of God. Therefore these compositions, though they may evince to future believers the work of God at this day, yet there can be no rule to direct them in that work of God which may hereafter be required of his people...The work of regeneration is an increasing work...a continual travel from grace to grace....Therefore these hymns, whenever they may be sung by Believers, must be limited to the period of their usefulness; for no gift or order of God can be binding on believers for a longer time than can be profitable to their travel in the gospel.

Utility governs even their doctrine: since their use for doctrine is liable to change, they have no written creed. Early Shakers held to a linear view of life, probation, salvation; later believers developed a more cyclic view of existence. The belief in the one God and the importance of humility remain constant.

That Shakers reject the concept of a written creed does not prohibit them from expressing belief in a literary form. One of the first of these publications *The Millennial Laws, or Gospel Statutes and Ordinances adopted to the Day of Christ's Second Appearing* ⁴² is an example of this. Especially interesting is that the anonymous authors of the preface indicate that they liken themselves to the writers of the Gospels, suggesting that the edicts enshrined in this work carry the same sort of authority as do those of the Bible. This work enshrined Shaker Government. Although, in accordance with the views expressed by William Byrd concerning the Bible, the Shakers did not believe that the written word held any 'power', and they say this of the Covenant, "*This form of the Covenant, is not the Covenant itself. The internal spirit and substance of the Covenant is more than ever was, or ever will be written with paper and ink.*"⁴³

However, The Millennial Laws were subject to revision and were published again at New Lebanon in 1845. That these Laws were not officially recorded

until some decades had elapsed from the point after the gospel order was established is another illustration of this feeling about outward forms and inner Truth. Before this publication the Shakers relied on the "way-marks for conduct" drawn up by Joseph Meacham around 1793 and learnt by rote in the "union meetings" of each family.

After the death of Ann and her brother William, the movement was led first by James Whitaker, then on his death by Joseph Meacham, both original disciples of the Lees. On Meacham's demise in 1796, the position as leader was taken by the American-born Lucy Wright. Lucy had been recruited by Ann Lee who described her as 'worth a whole nation' to the Shaker cause. To Lucy must go the credit of establishing the movement as a viable concern. It was under her guidance that the Shakers began to form the western colonies of the nineteenth century. By the time of her death in 1821, the Shakers were a prosperous and settled facet of American life, with widespread communities throughout the eastern sea-board and the mid-west.⁴⁴

There is no evidence to suggest that the Shakers wished to withdraw from outside contacts with the World in the manner of the Amish. On a purely pragmatic level they needed to have some degree of contact in order to gain more recruits since they were a celibate society. Their numbers were not such that they could exist as a closed order, therefore they had to trade with the mainstream culture. They turned to a number of trades to support their economies, including harness making, weaving, caning, chair-making, and garment construction, each pursued with the homily of 'mother' Ann's, 'work as if you had a thousand years to live and as if you were going to die tomorrow'.

Shaker society worked politically, not theologically. With a hierarchy of centralised control, New Lebanon was the focus of the church. From there power extended outwards through strata of geographic bishoprics. Community size ranged from some 250 - 800 people, with family sub-divisions

into groups of up to 100. The 'Church family' in each community was home to the most senior and devout of that group - trustees and deacons.

The Society's membership peaked in the 1840's with numbers close to six thousand. Shakerism, with its peculiar view of the millennium spoke strongly to the emerging American people who carried within their constitution the dream of a better land. They sought freedom and transformed it into a religion: freedom from the bondage of sin, freedom from the injustices of the world, freedom to seek higher levels of spiritual awareness, to attain a state of 'simplicity', of clear, direct and unencumbered contact with God. Shakers were yet another sect of the period that sought to recreate the primitive apostolic church - they sought simplicity and in so doing thought to find a system of belief that had shed the outdated and hampering layers of ritual and the casuistic quibbling of the established churches. This incidentally created a church that, whilst sharing many of the sectarian characteristics of the other groups in our study, was unusual in its lack of stasis of belief and activity.

THE AMISH

Any historical movement will attract adherents that, by the rank and file are deemed extremists - whether conservative or radical. England's Puritan revolution had produced its 'Copperheads' and 'Abolitionists'. The Anabaptists, doctrinal ancestors of the Amish⁴⁵ advocated the abolition of any religious hierarchy and desired to be free of State control. They may thus be regarded as a radical wing of the Reformation in late medieval Europe. To understand the Amish it is necessary to understand the social climate of the Reformation, since these were the forces that shaped the sect.

The Anabaptist movement, beginning around 1525 consisted of three main groups: in Holland the 'Anabaptists', in Switzerland the 'Brethren' and in Austria the 'Hutterites'. Mennonites were just one of many splinter groups.

'Mennonites' were named for their leader Menno Simons, and it is from a faction again of this group that the Amish stem. Today's Amish were originally known as 'Amish Mennonite' or 'Plain Amish'. Their doctrinal foundations are thus one with the Mennonites: each seeking solutions to everyday life through the teachings of the Bible. They each abhorred tithes and obtrusive liturgy, and, most significantly for our study, the use of pictures and images as foci for worship.

The movement, though it could never be termed populist, spread rapidly across Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century⁴⁶ and is notable for its factional nature. Humanists were beginning to reassess their position vis-a-vis God and individual minds sought individual solutions.⁴⁷ This was due in part to the emphasis placed by the movement on direct interpretation of the Testaments by the individual. This does not mean that a wide range of beliefs were tolerated within the Church, but that many felt the message should be transmitted directly to the individual.

The Church was soon based upon a series of congregations and conferences which acknowledged an ascribed policy. Those that could not agree were free to leave the Church without coercion. The trait was shared with the English Puritan movement, though the outcome of dissent was not. To an extent this desire for a personal rediscovery of God's word was a matter of expediency, even necessity. Anabaptist/Mennonite leaders in the early days of the movement were often lapsed catholic Priests or academics. With the martyrdom of many of its leaders, the Church had to fall back on the ordinary people. An evangelical, personal movement, the adherents of Anabaptism sought to recreate the primitive apostolic church, and to put the onus of spiritual responsibility back with the individual. The Sermon on the Mount they regarded as a clear guide to a suitable social and religious ordinance.

The group that we today know as the 'Old Order' Amish dates from

around 1693. The individuals who were to found the movement were then members of the Anabaptist division of the Swiss Brethren. Constantly subject to death, imprisonment and dispossession as a result of their religious beliefs, theirs is a history of forced migrations within Europe. The majority of Swiss Brethren had quit Switzerland in the latter half of the seventeenth century, due to a combination of State persecution and exile ordered by the Zurich Council. Several hundreds emigrated to Alsace and the German Palatinate while others moved to the general area of the upper Rhine. The political composition of Europe being unstable, they shortly found their erstwhile protectors replaced by those less tolerant to their beliefs. Once more subject to persecution another move was inevitable. At the same time dissension over religious conformity amongst the Anabaptists was evident, resulting in the increasing sectarian division of the movement. The followers of the Swiss Brethren minister, Jacob Amman, were one of many splinter groups of the period.

As with the Puritan sects, certain verses of the Testaments, Old and New, form key elements of Amish society. Shunning, the fear of which is a powerful factor in advocating adherence to the social norm, was, and is, practised according to the teaching of I Corinthians, 5:11, Romans 16:17 and II Thessalonians 3:14.⁴⁸ For the purposes of this study the first of these is especially significant for it has shaped both their society and their entire visual 'aesthetic'.

But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

The Amish believe only in adult baptism and in a Church solely of those so baptised. They see infant baptism as opposed by Acts 8:37 and Acts 2:38. This faith deeply divided the Brethren from the Catholics, Lutherans and Reformed Churches, each of which held implicitly to the doctrine of infant baptism. Since these Churches were largely instruments of the various

European States, the Brethren found little toleration across much of Europe.

The Old Order Amish have assiduously preserved their cultural patterns to an extent greater than any other group of this study. It is Church policy to maintain traditions; a policy which is particularly, but not exclusively, applied to social and religious customs. To be "not conformed to this world" is a primary concern of the Amish. This policy is of importance in shaping their aesthetic tradition. Two of the most fundamental tenets of their lives are therefore Titus 2:11-14 and Romans 12:2 Most significant are the lines in the former of these verses,

..to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives...to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Romans 12:2

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will.

As others before them, the Amish sought America as a place wherein they might freely practice their religion: unusually it was *their* freedom they sought, not the establishment of a new universal society.

Amman urged uniformity in Brethren's dress and grooming. These factors alone would not, in all probability, have precipitated the rift from the main Anabaptist movement, but they contributed to the schism. The initial rift became a gulf across which the Amish would not move to rejoin the Brethren. These events resulted in the more conservative faction of the Brethren leaving the main Church in 1693.

The historical place that *The Bloody Theatre, or Martyrs' Mirror of the Defenceless Christians Who Suffered and Were Put to Death for the Testimony of Jesus, Their Saviour, from the Time of Christ until the Year A.D. 1660*, occupies in every Amish home, abets the socio-religious image the Amish have of themselves as separate and special people, marked out by long suffering. The Amish were determined to recreate the social order of the early Christian church as detailed in the New Testament. In common with Puritan peoples,

they sought the creation of a society founded on the direct teachings of the Bible. They desired a one-to-one relationship between the word of God and the believer, with no State or Clerical distorting interface. The hymnbook, the *Ausbund* common to all Amish congregations, is virtually unchanged from its sixteenth century form. A section at the back of the *Ausbund* also details the persecution of martyrs. This history of persecution was largely instrumental in producing their rigid social structure. If they were to survive as a faith-linked group then a fossilisation of morés ensured the survival of their cultural identity. The Amish bind to themselves the heritage of sentiments shared by the whole of their society, past and present. Their Biblical reverence is one with their respect for slowness of pace, for patterns of living governed by the seasons and by common expectations of each other: parameters that while subject to a degree of adjustment have remained essentially constant for some three centuries. Such a survival, as evinced by other groups, is not possible if congregations subject to dispersal continue to evolve individually. Fragmentation quickly becomes diffusion and diffusion becomes assimilation into the outside, and larger, culture.

The New World migration in preference to further translations around Europe, had its roots in the economic and physical disintegration of large stretches of Europe during the Thirty Years War, which in one form and another it had waged, with but brief and uneasy respites, over most of the century. The Rhineland, which had supported prosperous burghers and farming communities, was, by 1700, a wasteland. Famine was common, livestock starving or dead, fields ravaged. The peasant population had been reduced to eating roots, leaves and grass; incidents of cannibalism were reported.

The Amish had little to lose in the New World and everything to gain. In total some five hundred men, women and children emigrated during the first part of the eighteenth century. It is interesting to compare this figure with

that of the Puritan migration, and conclusions may be drawn concerning the efficacy of separatism as a means of cultural survival.

The Amish were later to congregate in the area of Lancaster County, but at first their settlements were necessarily on the sparser northern lands to the north of the Pequea Mennonite colony near the Blue Mountains in modern-day Berks County, known as Northkill. The southern more fertile districts were already occupied by English Quakers, Scotch Irish Reformed, English and Welsh Episcopalians, German Lutherans, German Reformed and other marginal groups. However, the expansion of the Amish community finally ousted these settlers, with Amish settlements in Pennsylvania dating from around 1727. It is possible that earlier communities may have existed but are undocumented. Eventually the Amish occupied the eastern half of Lancaster County. The latter half of the century saw the formation of colonies in the Kishacoquillas Valley, Mifflin County. These settlements are important to our study in terms of their location and the proximity of other cultural groups. The same period saw the establishment of settlements near the source of the Ohio River, around 1767. The separate Amish communities in Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Ontario⁴⁹ strictly disassociated their adherents from mainstream American culture, with Elders writing in 1718 to William Penn: "We do not attend elections, we enter not your Courts of Justice, we hold no office either civil or military."⁵⁰ By 1736 the New World settlers were numerous enough to form a clear cultural group with viable congregations. The following quarter century witnessed a strengthening of the situation, by the arrival of the majority of the ancestors of the present day Amish, in America.

The majority of settlers in the area, and indeed Pennsylvania as a whole, were of course not Amish, but the people who were to become known as the Pennsylvania Dutch (a corruption of *Deutch*), or Germans. Amongst these the Lutheran and German Reformed Churches are in the majority.

New World colony numbers had gradually increased until European congregations were too few in number to constitute a viable, distinct population group and were long ago assimilated into the main Mennonite Church. Each ethnic group carried with it to the New World a legacy of European religious practice, visual traditions and social customs. Yet for the most part these were a highly conservative people; in essence, cultural survivors of the seventeenth century. But still between the groups there existed nuances of interpretation and experience which were unacceptable to ultra-conservative church members. These nuances of belief are expressed in grades of 'conservatism', of which, for example, the Amish of Mifflin County recognise eight. The lowest degree, that is the most liberal, is not really Amish at all, but rather Mennonite.⁵¹ Splits in the Mennonite and Amish churches have been frequent over the past two centuries. In Lancaster County two schismatic groups left the Old Order in 1880. Of these one now worships in specific Church buildings rather than members' homes, and has consequently become known as 'Church Amish'. In the Kishacoquillas Valley, Pennsylvania, there are at least five different conservative, and numerous more liberal, church groups. These religious differences are clearly expressed in costume and textile design, and will be discussed later.

Rural areas are culturally preferred by the Amish who contend that the Christian way of life may be best expressed away from cities. Genesis 1:28 declares that God created Adam and Eve 'to replenish the Earth, and subdue it; and to have dominion over the fish in the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth'. The Amish feel that they would be subject to cultural diffusion in cities, which is not acceptable, nor, as directed in the Bible, is agriculture possible in such a place. Living on the fringes of society, the Amish had had in Europe, perforce, to become an agrarian people. They had eked out a living on the sparse pastures of the mountain valleys, and more 'acceptable' people did not bother to wrest from

them, and were thus in both cultural and religious terms comfortable with the way of life.

Over the centuries religious belief may on occasion be seen to have been tempered with sectarian experience, though the old way is generally preferred. Again aesthetic distinctions may be seen as an indicator of this policy. Changes in things such as outward symbols, however, are resisted by the injunctions of the Church against the sin of pride; clothing fashion, for example, being regarded as indicative of personal pride. Such changes are therefore generally opposed, the justification being found in Luke 9:23, Phil. 2:5-11 and I Pet. 5:5-6.

The Old Order Amish, in common with the Puritans have a congregational church organisation. Each family unit belongs to a Church district, each district covers a specific geographical area. Districts are served by a hierarchy of bishops, preachers and a deacon. Each is chosen by lot and normally serves for life.

Continuity and conservatism are the watchwords of Amish society. The ability not only to attain but to maintain, such a conservative lifestyle is facilitated by the adoption of customs that assure that the needs of the individual can be met from within the community. These customs, conveyed from generation to generation through a largely oral tradition, enable the group to continue to function as a cohesive society. To the Amish 'custom' and 'religion' are indivisible. Each combines to create an unusually stable culture.

An Amish individual may leave the church, but the numbers of outsiders that join the Amish community is so small as to be statistically irrelevant. The ban ordained in II Corinthians 6:14 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?' has played a great part in this matter, and therefore, one may argue, in the continuance of the aesthetic

traditions of the Amish. In order to maintain the 'purity' of the church, the Amish are prohibited from marrying outside their cultural group, or even entering into business with such a person. This and similar devices has kept the Amish culturally 'pure'. This does not mean to say, however, that the Amish are totally ethno-centric in their personal relations with non-Amish.

The first Mennonite historian, C. Henry Smith (1875-1948) was born into an Amish family. In *Mennonite Country Boy*⁵² he describes the Mennonite Amish Church as a race. He likens the Amish people to the Jewish race, who have developed not only 'spiritual homogeneity but through a closed society, a physical similarity'. The Amish are a race who have survived through their faith, whose religion is inseparable from their daily existence, and who, in living that life, give physical expression to those beliefs.

THE MENNONITES

The Mennonites in all their forms may, as a group, be studied, in common with the Amish, as an example of 'cultural lag'. They form, particularly in Pennsylvania, a distinct sub-culture within the wider ethnic group. The Mennonites, both in Europe and America, operate not just as a religious sect but, to a certain degree, also as a closed economic and social group. Operating on broadly similar lines to the Amish communities, they are generally perceived as more liberal in their views and socio-religious structure.

Culturally, the Mennonites have a rather less diverse heritage than that of the Amish. In the main the present day members of the church may trace their origins to groups in Switzerland and the Netherlands. Thus all share a common Swiss-German or Dutch-German heritage. As the Amish found their inspiration in the teachings of one man, and took his name as their appellation, so too did the Mennonites in the person of Menno Simons.

Born at the close of the fifteenth century, in 1496, at Witmarsum, Friesland, Simons was originally a catholic Priest. He was unusual in coming

from the peasant classes, and this may have had some bearing on his later radical views on the wealth of the Church. While still a fairly young man he came into contact with the Lutheran views which at the time were circulating freely, if heretically, throughout the Low Countries and northern Europe. Simons' belief in the Sacraments was questioned, and it is held that he sought elucidation and justification of the Catholic Church in the teachings of the Bible. In this we see the familiar pattern of the time. First the raising of questions and then the seeking of answers and counter arguments. Simons and Amman were just two who felt that the established Churches had, over the course of the centuries, drifted, in their view, far from the course prescribed for Man in the Scriptures. Uncertainty in one area of doctrine led to the closer scrutiny of other tenets of the Churches, whether Catholic or Lutheran/Calvinist. Many established practices were either refuted entirely by an analysis of the text or held to have no grounds in the Testaments since they were not mentioned. Infant baptism is an example of one such practice, and was to prove a point of irreconcilable conflict for many individuals, Simons among them. Following the death of his brother for Anabaptist practices, Simons wrote,

My soul was so grieved...If I continue in this way and live not agreeable to the word of the Lord, according to the knowledge of the truth which I have obtained: if I do not rebuke to the best of my ability the hypocrisy, the impenitent, carnal life, the perverted baptism, the Lord's Supper; and the false worship of God which the learned teach; if I...do not show them the true foundation of the truth, neither use all my powers to direct the wandering flesh, who would gladly do their duty if they knew it, to the true pastures of Christ - O how shall their blood, though in error, rise against me in the judgment of thee Almighty, and pronounce sentence against my poor miserable soul.⁵³

Simons could not therefore continue to hold papal office, whatever the possible danger to his life. Having renounced his office in 1536, as he predicted, he was to spend the remainder of his life under threat of death by Church and State authorities.

Simons moved to East Friesland where for a time he came under the protection of 'Countess Anna'. It was at this period that he began to

seriously formulate the doctrine that was to mark out the Mennonite Church, though it should be noted that the Mennonites only really formed a separate group as such on their establishment in America. The Anabaptist church in Europe at this stage was diffuse enough in its organisation (since in many areas it was under a ban it had no option to be anything else) to accept many shades of opinion under this blanket term. Whilst certain congregations were 'Mennist', they were still part of the Anabaptist movement. They seem to have been able to operate within the system in a way that was not acceptable to the Amish. There is the possibility that this is affected by the fact the formulation of the Amish sect occurred later in the evolution of the Anabaptist movement. With the establishment of tighter boundaries and more settled dogma, parameters for belief become narrower and less accommodating.

Simons advocated many practices that accord with those of the Amish. The election of a ministry from the members of the congregation is one. He felt strongly about the wealth of the Church and its ministers, particularly in the case of the Catholic church. Preaching not simply the poverty of clerics, but of the Church organisation itself was, however, not a popular move, and brought further unwelcome attention. The position of Minister is usually occupied for life, and chosen from a number of nominees by lot. The support for this practice is drawn from Acts 1:15-26, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, and Titus 1:6-9.

The practice of the *Meidung* (banning and avoidance), also prevalent within Amish groups, was one cause of heated and long running controversy, and perhaps the reason for the existence, above any other, of the Mennonites as a separate sect. Menno originally justified the practice on the grounds of faith not being merely a 'cerebral state', but an expression of the way in which individuals conduct their lives. The primary disciplining of offenders is based on the text of Matthew 18:15-18;

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the

two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses'. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven.

The practice of avoidance on that of I Corinthians 5-11.

For in Him you have been enriched in every way - in all your speaking and in all your knowledge - because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree one with the another so that there may be no divisions amongst you, and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

The emphasis placed on both these passages in Mennonite theology is important in terms of the defensive structuring of their society. In the same way that in the wild a herd will exclude members exhibiting faulty genes, viewing their survival as a threat, so the acceptance of 'faulty' or different thought is perceived as a threat to the survival and continuation of the sect. Through social penalties such behaviour is limited and contamination of others controlled. Marriage with individuals from outside the Church also came under this general ban. Such a practice was inevitable on pragmatic grounds, since to do so would weaken the purity and cohesion of the Mennonite church. On questions such as business and partnership with outsiders, known colloquially as 'English', Mennonites of the sixteenth century were extremely strict. A breach between the Mennonites and the Anabaptists occurred between 1555 and 1557. The cause was a disagreement over an act of Banning, and the polarisation of the two camps over this issue led to the exile of the Wismar congregation. Simons died in exile in Wustefeld, Holstein, in 1561.

Both Mennonites in particular, and Anabaptists in general, continued to be subject to persecution until well into the seventeenth century. Those whose residence was in Switzerland rather than the Netherlands, were especially

badly treated. Between 1550 and 1600 many were to seek shelter in Moravia. Following the Thirty Years War, the position of the communities in Zurich and Bern became increasingly difficult. All measures, short of death, were revived from previous periods of persecution, until by 1657 there were an estimated one hundred and seventy Mennonites imprisoned in Zurich alone. Their sufferings are vividly recounted in *The Martyrs Mirror* and later additions of the *Ausbund*, tracts that the Mennonites share with the Amish.

Unlike the Amish, the first Mennonites in America were not complete congregations, but single Dutch traders and colonists. They came at a time of large emigrations from the Netherlands. The terms 'Anabaptists' and 'Mennonites' in records at this juncture are largely synonymous so it is difficult to be exact over particular numbers of one sect or another, but the term as a separate entity is first found as such in 1643. In a letter by one Father Jogne, a French Jesuit, he writes of settlers and mentions 'Calvinists, Catholics, English Puritans and Lutherans...Anabaptists here called Menists'. In 1657 they are mentioned as living at Gravesend, Long Island. A colony of Mennonites is known to have existed for a time in Delaware, before being totally destroyed by an English expedition in 1663, during the period of the Dutch Wars.

The primary Mennonite settlement of any significance in the New World was at Germantown, Pennsylvania. Established in 1683, its founders were all from a small area surrounding Crefeld on the Lower Rhine near the Dutch border. The place of settlement was advocated by the presence of numbers of Mennonite-Quakers in the area around Crefeld. These were Mennonites who had undergone conversion to Quakerism by English Quaker missionaries in 1650 and 1680. It was to them that William Penn looked for German immigrants to the colony. Eighteen thousand acres were purchased by Jacob Telner, a Mennonite from Amsterdam, along with five other Mennonites and Quakers. The original colony consisted of thirteen family groups, all but one of

them not of the 'pure' Mennonite persuasion, but better described as Mennonite/Quakers. Penn considered the Mennonites to be 'very near the truth', according to a letter from William Penn to James Logan. These people were not all farmers, but also embraced such trades as 'wrights' and linen weavers. In this again there is a slight but significant bias in the economic basis of the colony that is different to that of the Amish, and more akin to the Puritan settlers. As with the Puritans the Mennonites, were unable or unwilling to exist entirely on produce that they were capable of creating within the colony. Assimilation within the larger dominant culture was therefore almost unavoidable.

The Germantown settlement grew steadily. The fifty families who by 1700 inhabited the colony, became a nucleus for settlement in the surrounding area. This pattern of an initial religious nucleus which attracts like-minded latecomers is one common to the groups in our study. They also welcomed (unlike the more exclusive Puritans) non-Mennonite/Quaker groups, providing homes for numbers of Dunkards, German Reformed, German Lutheran, and German Moravians. Growing pressure on land meant that the settlement needed to expand into fresh areas, resulting in the foundation of a daughter colony along the Skippack Creek, some thirty miles distant. To this new centre came a number of Mennonites emigrants from the Palatinate.

At the inception of the Germantown colony, the Mennonites and the Quakers had met in common worship, but as numbers increased in the late 1680's and early 1690's, the Mennonites began to develop a creed that was to mark them as distinct from other Anabaptist/Quietist groups. Independent worship was thus instituted. It is estimated that by 1712 the number of colonists had only reached perhaps two hundred in both settlements; many of the later arrivals from Europe preferred to head further west.

Mennonite emigration to America increased around the turn of the seventeenth century as a result of the war in the Palatinate (1688-1697). In

1709, partly as a result of Queen Anne's invitation to prospective colonists, somewhere in the region of nine thousand people are believed to have left the Continent and arrived in England seeking trans-shipment to the New World. England found herself unable to deal with this number of emigrants/refugees, and many were actually persuaded to return to Europe. Of the remainder, a number went to Ireland, some six hundred to the Carolinas: a very few to Pennsylvania.

Eventually, the largest colony was in Lancaster County, an area heavily settled by the Amish. These Mennonites were a largely homogeneous group from the Swiss Palatine, holding land grants from William Penn.

So great were the numbers of settlers of German descent in Pennsylvania, that the British authorities in 1727 became alarmed over the possibility of their culture dominating the colony. An immigration tax was levied in an effort to combat, or at least stem, the flow of families of Germanic ethnic origins, many of whom were assisted in their passage by wealthy Dutch Mennonite philanthropists who had set up a 'Commission for Foreign Needs'. By 1732 over three thousand requests for assistance had been heard.

Estimates for this period are difficult to achieve with any certainty, but it is generally felt that the number of Mennonites in Pennsylvania in the first half of the eighteenth century is close to 2,500. The number of settlers of a wider German background is nearer 100,000. Mennonites were therefore a significant, but nonetheless, small, group.

The Skippack and Pequea Mennonites were mostly farmers, unlike those at Germantown. Their congregational social system also shared much in common with the Amish, with each church district operating independently of its neighbours. Unlike the Amish however, the Mennonites seem to have constantly experienced the problem of losing church members to other rival sects. Mennonites particularly seem to have been attracted by the Methodist

Church, and, as mentioned earlier, by the Quakers. Rarely do they appear to have gained converts. As a general principal, the further west the Mennonite colony, the more liberal its structure. This is perhaps primarily attributable to a problem of size: the more distant, newer, smaller colonies were simply not large enough demographically to maintain an effectively closed lifestyle. Contact with outsiders allowed for a greater variety of belief and practice, and indeed the impact of evangelism by other sects. Lancaster County was larger, more firmly established, more conservative, and proportionately it lost greater numbers of young adults. Yet because of this element of conservatism more than anything else, the Pennsylvania Mennonites were able to establish working relations with other Amish groups. In 1773 Mennonites reported that: As to the Amish, they are many in number "...they hold very fast to the outward and ancient beliefs."⁵⁴

The eighteenth century continued to be a period of expansion for the Mennonite Church. Heading where the land was relatively cheaper, mostly along the frontier, settlements grew up in Maryland, the Shenandoah, western Pennsylvania, and Ontario, Ohio, New York State, Indiana, Illinois and across the Mississippi. Large numbers left Switzerland during the Napoleonic Wars, particularly from the Jura and Emmental areas. Late in the nineteenth century contingents from Hesse, Darmstadt and Bavaria were to join their brethren in America. Altogether between 1817 and 1860 some sixteen hundred Mennonites from throughout Europe settled in Mennonite areas.

Just as the Amish Church has fragmented into a hierarchy based on degrees of conservatism, so too has that of the Mennonites. The 'Old Mennonites' are the strictest group remaining, upholding the traditions and practices of their forefathers, though these too have undeniably been subject to some development over the centuries.

The Mennonites assert the 'plenary and verbal inspiration of the Bible as the Word of God'. Important to our study is the assertion that it is

'unscriptural' for a Christian to be of 'the World' and to follow its fashions. It should be noted that while the Old Order Amish do not recognise the need to worship in designated churches, the Mennonites, as a sect, wherever possible, have always done so.

Innovations in religious practice are generally avoided by the Mennonite Church, but they do occur with greater frequency than would be acceptable in an Amish community. In all things the life of a Mennonite must be plain and retiring - yet the strictest Mennonite is not as extreme as the most liberal Amish. They have for instance, a more open attitude towards education and see a college education as acceptable, providing that the institution at which it is undertaken is sufficiently religious in its outlook. Church services are more often than not in English rather than German, or may be a mixture of both languages.

Culturally contiguous to the Amish, culturally viable, the Mennonites have chosen a slightly different path to that of the Amish. As such they are especially valuable as a foil to the latter group, a transitional stage between the Amish and the larger mass of Pennsylvanian Germans and other quietist groups.

¹Simpson, 1955, p.1.

²Sisson, 1936.

³Ingram, M. J. *Ecclesiastical Justice in Wiltshire 1600-1646* Oxford, D.Phil. thesis, 1976, pp.104-7.

⁴Parker, 1641, pp.11, 58.

⁵Mayne, Act II, Scene II.

⁶The colony was founded in 1621.

⁷Quoted in Edward, 1857. Vol.1, p.47.

⁸Hooker, Book II, Chapter VIII, par.5.

⁹Miller, & Johnson, 1938, p.43.

¹⁰Milton, 1910, I. p.286.

¹¹Cotton, pp.119-120.

¹²Hill, 1972. p.11.

¹³Fox, 1952. pp.11, 127.

¹⁴Ibid. pp.33 and 27.

¹⁵Braithwaite, 1955.

¹⁶Fox, Op. Cit., p.40.

- 17 Barclay, 1896, prop. 3, pg. vi. p. 47.
- 18 Bealing, 1691, fwd.
- 19 McGregor and Reay, 1984, p.128.
- 20 Reay, 1985, p.9.
- 21 'Letters of John Audland' ed. Horle, (typescript F.H.L. 1975), no.18.
- 22 Reay, (D.Phil. thesis, 1979) p.55.
- 23 Penn, 1696, Collected works, vol. 2, p.855.
- 24 Penn, *Primitive Christianity Received*, 1696, in 'Published Writings' 1986. vol. 1 pp.281, 286-7.
- 25 Jordan, William and Mary *Quarterly XXXIX* (1982).
- 26 See General George Monck, *To The Generals, and Captains, Officers, and Souldiers of this present Army*, 1657, p.2. for the instruction to purge some forty Quakers from the army in Scotland.
- 27 'William Canton' MS. Op. Cit. iii, p.47.
- 28 Fisher, 1660, sig. B3.
- 29 Manson, 1655, p.40.
- 30 Parnell, 1655, p.1.
- 31 W.S[mith] and [E. Burrough] 1659, p.17.
- 32 Besse, 1753, Vol. II, p.195.
- 33 Penn, July 1681, quoted in Nash, 1968, p10.
- 34 Penn to Robert Turner, March 5, 1681, *Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, I, Pt.I Philadelphia, 1826, pp.208-209.
- 35 Quoted by Graeff, A.D. 'Pennsylvania, the Colonial melting Pot', in *The Pennsylvania Germans*, Ralph Wood (ed.), Princeton University Press, 1942, p.3.
- 36 Darrow, Meacham and Young, *Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing*, p.379.
- 37 Youngs and Green, 1856, p.621.
- 38 Green and Wells, 1823, pp.4-5.
- 39 Quoted in Rourke, 1942. p. 203.
- 40 Quoted in Andrews, 1940. p.56.
- 41 *Millennial Praises*, Hancock, 1813.
- 42 Meacham, New Lebanon, Ohio, 1808.
- 43 Youngs and Green, 1856 p.449.
- 44 Pleasant Hill, Ky. 1806 - 1910. South Union, Ky. 1807 - 1922 .Gorham, Maine.1808 - 1819. West Union, Ind. 1810 - 1827. Canaan, N.Y. 1813 - 1897. Savoy, Mass. 1817 - 1825. North Union, Oh. 1822 - 1899. Whitewater, Oh. 1824 - 1907. Sodus Bay, N.Y. 1826 - 1836. Groveland, N.Y. 1836 - 1895. Waterlivet (Niskeyuna), N.Y. 1787 - 1938. New (Mount) Lebanon, N.Y. 1787 - 1947. Hancock, Mass.1790 - 1960. Enfield. Conn. 1790 - 1917. Canterbury, N.H. 1792 - date.. Tyringham, Ma. 1792 - 1875. Alfred, Maine. 1793 - 1932. Enfield, N.H. 1793 - 1923. Harvard, Ma. 1793 - 1918. Shirley, Ma. 1793 - 1908. Waterlivet, Oh. 1806 - 1910. Other communities existed for short periods of time at Straight Creek and Darby, Ohio, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Narcoossee, Florida, and White Oak, Georgia.
- 45 In Europe, the followers of Jacob Amman were known as 'Amish Mennonite or 'Plain Amish'. The term 'Old Order Amish' that will often occur in this study is a later American convention necessary to differentiate between groups of Amish with different degrees of assimilation into the main American cultural pattern.
- 46 See Dewind, *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, January 1955, p.44 et seq.
- 47 See Smith, 1929, Chapters I and II.
- 48 Romans 16:17, 'I urge you brothers, to watch out for those that cause diversions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching of the learned. Keep away from them.' and II Thess. 3:14, 'If anyone does not obey our instruction...take special note of him.'

Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.'

⁴⁹Smaller communities exist in Maryland, Kansas, New York State, Tennessee, Missouri, Iowa and Wisconsin. There is now a small community in South America.

⁵⁰Quoted in Weaver, 1931, pp.17-18.

⁵¹In descending order of conservatism, these are known as 1- Old School (Yoder), 2-Old School (Zook), 3-Byler Amish, 4-Peachy Amish (Reno), 5-Zook Amish (Speicher), 6-Conservative Mennonite, 7-Allensville Mennonite, 8-Bakersville Mennonite. Thereafter an individual is considered to have left the church entirely.

⁵²Smith, 1962.

⁵³Simons, 1871, p.43.

⁵⁴Smith, Op. Cit. p.108.

2 THE MILLENNIAL DREAM

There is a voice that cries: Prepare a road for the LORD through the wilderness, clear a highway across the desert for our God.

Isiah 40: 3.

Whatever the individual's faith, whether they lived in the seventeenth or the twentieth century, in Pennsylvania or Ohio, each sect member had one thing in common: a dream of realising a society that achieved a spiritual union with God. The journey's end was with God, the same God, but whether each sect would recognise the One in each other's vision is doubtful. It is as if each were saying the same thing but in different languages; a theological Tower of Babel, each basically in agreement with the other but not realising it.

In order to follow these journeys, to understand why the essential decisions were taken that created such cultural divergence, we need to understand the most basic social structures that humanity employs to order and regulate society. These principles can then be applied to an understanding of the basic Utopian model of the Millenarian sects.

BEHAVIOUR SYSTEMS

With few exceptions human beings require a structured community, or at least a cohesive society, to survive. A basic tenet is that the identity of a society is developed through the socialisation of its membership. Therefore it may be taken that humans do not function independently of the society in which they live, but both react on, and to its components. Thus individuals are at once both passively and actively changing and reinforcing this structure. To maintain the value structure of a society, behaviours that are deemed

acceptable are generated and promoted, less desirable actions penalised and ideally extinguished. Since humans exhibit both learned and innate behaviours, that which is customary behaviour may differ radically from one culture to another. One of the most obvious examples of such learned behaviour in the sects under discussion is the celibate nature of the Shakers and the elaborate devices that they have adopted in order to contain even social intercourse between the sexes to the minimum. Such learned behaviour both serves to aid the individual in the acquisition of a concept of 'self' within the context of the society, and at the same time ensures the continuity and homogeneity of that society. New individuals, whether born into the group or adult converts, are, through controlled socialisation, prevented from being a potential threat to the status quo.

The fundamental need of the society to achieve cultural unity becomes proportionately stronger in relation to the size and complexity of the group. The pressures upon individuals within large groups necessitates a need on both the part of the individual and the society as a whole for more precise behavioural directives. Sins, whether of omission or commission, must be clearly defined as such. As relationships within a society become more complex, through sheer numbers, there is a requirement for greater control over personal actions in order to lessen the impact of one person upon another, or to impose limitations upon actions which may impinge on their liberty. In smaller groups, such as the sects in our study, it is relatively easy for the society to limit behavioural alternatives and thus the creation of distinct cultures is more likely. Language, law, and religious belief are at once the fundamental concerns of a society, and the controls over its constituent members. Thus society commissions and controls certain behaviours. The next question then must surely be one of determining the mechanisms that decide which behaviours shall be deemed acceptable: in this case this is by means of belief systems.

BELIEF SYSTEMS

It is generally accepted that unless one understands the beliefs or subjective meanings ascribed to certain actions, it is not possible to accurately assess the motivations behind the behaviour and, by extension, the way in which a subject's society functions. One must also study the belief systems of a society in order to understand its structure. Belief systems are the 'moral', intellectual, structures that individuals create in order to interpret and understand past, present and future experiences, on both a physical and spiritual level. Such constructs influence, regulate and validate learned behaviours in individuals, enabling them to reinforce and further the aims of their society. This may be on a conscious or unconscious level; both of which may be seen to operate within the structure of the sects in this study. Belief systems encompass not only religious faith, but also economic theory, political creeds, and policies of social stratification. They serve the individual by relating the theoretical teaching of his culture to his present reality.

More than one social analyst has attempted to model the relationship between religion and behaviour. Perhaps the earliest of these is that of Fustel de Coulanges¹ who advocated a functionalist approach. In essence, he maintained that developments in society were directly attributable to changes in religious dogma. However, A similar functionalist approach, of more recent origin, taken by Durkheim² suggests that religion is a tool for the maintenance of social stability. Both these views may be accurate at different stages in the development of a community, but also I personally believe that in at least the present context contain more than a little of the 'chicken and egg' scenario. Sectarian societies which openly set out to be 'models' are clearly directed and shaped by a small number of individuals towards pre-determined ends. The fundamental of the belief itself is not in doubt.

The social-psychological approach of Malinowski³ concentrated on the role religion played in an individual's behaviour and attempted to demonstrate

that the function of ritual behaviours was to reduce stress in the individual. The argument is that by carrying out socially prescribed actions, it obviates the need to think, to question, to solve moral and spiritual dilemmas. The theory is as applicable to sectarian societies as it is to mainstream religions, even if looked at from, so to speak, 'the wrong end of the telescope'. The credentials of miracles and mysticism, which if not totally sufficient proof of God being self-substantiating [*pace* Aquinas], are at least not 'dis-provable'. This is a situation that always admits of the possibility of there being a God, which is in itself generally preferred. Despite interpretative differences, it will be seen that there is a common element in these models; each is assuming that a central function of belief systems in a society is to explain the World to Man.

These 'explanations' also operate on a number of conscious and subconscious levels within the individual and society as a whole. Ritual behaviours may be explained on three levels; primarily there are the observable characteristics of the action; secondly there are the conscious beliefs of the people as exemplified in the explanations of a ritual given to an inquirer, and thirdly the interpretative construction placed on the ritual by the anthropologist. This last may be at variance with that given by the subject; that is the anthropologist may ascribe motivations to an action based on beliefs that are held on an unconscious level by the subject. An awareness of these differences is important when attempting to understand the actions of the sects.

It is assumed in all these hypotheses that there is always a degree of interaction between a belief system and a behaviour system. The precise nature of the association may vary both qualitatively and quantitatively. The way in which belief and behaviour systems interact is clearly both complex and discrete, and may often appear contradictory. Examples of such apparent conflicts between behaviour and belief systems abound in the Amish

communities. To the anthropologist/sociologist, the Amish farmer who has a telephone in his barn, but would not allow it to be sited in the house, or the Amish housewife who rents freezer space in town, but would not be allowed to own a freezer or install the electricity to run it, are anomalies. However such behaviour offers no such intellectual challenge to the individuals concerned. It is merely the way such things are done: a human rationale of real-life over a philosophical belief system. If one accepts their rationale, the inherent problems experienced in relating the anomalies of belief systems to behaviour systems ceases to be a problem for the anthropologist and becomes evidence for the humanist! It is clear though that the precarious life of a small-scale sect within a larger, dominant, society does in general lead to a growth in ritualised behaviour.⁴

To a theist an understanding of the universe is necessary as a way to understand God, to draw closer to Him. The use of symbols is essential both in order to determine the coded message of the universe and then to communicate that meaning to others. The particular symbols adopted by each faith therefore represent and become structural components of the society. Different faiths necessarily develop different symbols as expressions of their alternative doctrines.

SECTARIAN SOCIETIES

Humans being constructed along broadly similar principles, tend to structure their behavioural systems and therefore the symbolic structures that support them, along a number of fairly predictable lines. The differing models can be seen as a result of the behavioural pattern adopted tempered by variables such as basic accidents of history. Each model, due to nuances of interpretation results in turn in variants on that model; in the case of the sects under consideration, Utopian and Millennial. Crudely put, if one is a humanist/atheist/anthropologist the societies in this study may then be seen as the result of a series of 'either/or' choices on some

genetic/culturally/cosmically conditioned flow diagram: if a theist, then it is the hand of God. Either way, within these sects we shall constantly see the intermingling of the sacred and the profane: Utopia being the profane, earth-bound reality of the spiritual, Millennial, vision.

Certain individuals profess to have found the answer in living a physical life whilst being one with God, others see their lives as flawed recognising the elements of personal desire and social manipulation that can exist in organised religion. These people seek Utopia. As a concept Utopia embodies a place of tranquillity, harmony and justice. Few ever attempt to turn ideals into reality. Most share with Sir Thomas More the pragmatic, or perhaps cynical view, that Utopia is, as in the direct translation from its Greek roots, 'no place'. More coined the word in 1516 but the concept of Utopia is ageless. From Shangri-la to the Garden of Eden, from Heaven to Nirvana, the vision is a philosophical constant, debated wherever man has died of hunger, cold or aggression. Whether a physical locality or a state of grace, man comforts himself with the thought of a haven for body and soul.

Communities that professed the Millennium either believed that the period of Christ's Second Coming, the stage prior to the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth and Judgement Day, had dawned and acted in response to this by behaving in the prescribed manner, or that the Millennium would be 'triggered' by forming religious communities and professing the Truth. Societies based on a communal system were expressions both of Gods 'harmony' and of this teaching as expressed in the practice of the primitive Christian church. The foundation for the model is contained in Acts 4:32: 'The whole body of believers was united in heart and soul. Not a man of them claimed any of his possessions as his own, but everything was held in common.'

It is this vision that drew the seemingly disparate but essentially related groups of Puritans, Shakers, Quakers, Amish and Mennonites. These people

are of course not the sum total of the Milleniarists. Millenial societies differed from other Utopian experiments in that the Kingdom of God was seen as an actual temporal reality, not a far-off historical or spiritual residence. Biblical teaching holds that the coming of the Kingdom of God is an inevitable event. It is important to note that the Kingdom in biblical understanding is a social concept. It is neither a geographical place nor a one-to-one relationship between a believer and his Saviour, but a community of people and God, in which God's sovereignty is acknowledged. It is in effect a religious Utopia.

In the 'present' of the Believers, the Millennium needed only their co-operation, their lifelong dedication to materialise. It was a telescoping of the Christian concept of a better life to come with life now: Heaven on Earth. As such it is possibly the most difficult of all concepts for a follower to embrace, since the success or failure of the venture is in some degree tangible. It is an idea that seems to have materialised independently and severally throughout late medieval Europe.

Few of the prophets of this Utopia were so optimistic concerning the flexibility of the established church to think that their dream might be realised in the Old World; those that tried may be sought amongst the pages of the Amish Book of Martyrs. The discovery and settlement of the New World was to many an omen. The wilderness tracts were seen as a latter day Promised Land, beckoning to the oppressed as an older world had to the Israelites. New patriarchs arose and led their flocks to safer pastures

For the sects in our study, having left one world and reached the next, new patterns of society must be formed to replace the old social order. For the Millenarians biblical precedent was to provide their models. Biblical example provided the basis for the communistic society that was the format adopted by the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming, more succinctly known as the 'Shakers'. The experiment had had its proponents before in a pious and casuistic sect of Jews whose history is recorded in the

Dead Sea Scrolls. In the first century this sect withdrew to Qumran in the Judean desert to form a commune where they determined to live according to the dictates of the prophets. Isaiah 40:3 instructs 'There is a voice that cries: Prepare a road for the LORD through the wilderness, clear a highway across the desert for our God.' This was taken as the basis for their society and tasks were assigned to members according to the needs of the community. Proselytes were admitted only by stages, as they proved their faithfulness and endurance, a pattern replicated in both the Shaker and Amish/Mennonite Churches.

Extraordinarily charismatic leaders taught the doctrine of perfectionism: the belief that men and women can be morally perfected in this life rather than rely on an accumulated merit thereafter. They sought to regulate out of society many of its fundamental ills - greed, power, lust, poverty, weakness and hunger. Celibacy was advocated by a number of sects as an antidote to this catalogue of social evils, and as an ideal appears to have worked remarkably well, though as a foundation for a social structure it has inherent problems. To the cynic their interpretation of the Bible is a romantic one, but it must also be remembered that it was literal. As a social blue-print, the Old Testament is vast in its scope and was to influence the reshaping of a whole continent. It is to the shame of mankind that its influence was not further reaching.

Most clearly in the societies within this study one can observe the dichotomy of belief and behaviour, the 'clash of sacred and secular ethics'. Many might suggest that the communistic model merely replaced a State controlled by the Church, with a society in which there was no discernible difference between the two bodies. Communistic societies do not attempt to function without some sort of leadership however. It is the type that they chose that is the differentiating factor.

The physical ramifications of these considerations are addressed in the

later chapters of this study. There fuller consideration will be given to the submission that the systems outlined here, their internal and external tensions, were to find physical expression in those items closest to the psyche of the human - items that, however technologically primitive the society, receive the greatest attention after the necessities of basic existence: the costume, textiles and decorative arts of the sects.

¹de Coulanges, (1864).

²Durkheim, 1975.

³Malinowski, 1948.

⁴Beattie, pp. 202-206.

3IMAGINING THE FACE OF GOD

Because a work does not aim at reproducing natural appearance it is not, therefore, an escape from life but it may be a penetration into reality, not a sedative or a drug, not the exercise of good taste, the provision of pleasant shapes and colours in a pleasing combination, not a decoration to life, but an expression of the significance of life, a stimulation to greater effort of living.'

Henry Moore ¹

The aim of this chapter is threefold: to look at the determining criteria of applied 'art', at what makes a quilt or a rug culturally significant rather than just decoration, and the way in which art and religion interact. It is important to understand these if we are to attempt a valid consideration of the work of the sects in terms of their witnessing of faith through form. As Wittgenstein put it, "If a person is to admire English poetry he must know English."² He went on to write that:

"The words we call expressions of aesthetic judgement play a very complicated role, but a very definite role, in what we call the culture of a period. To describe their use or to describe what you mean by a cultured taste, you have to describe a culture [To describe a set of aesthetic rules fully means really to describe the culture of a period.]Suppose...he...has what is called cultured taste in painting. This is something entirely different to what was called a cultured taste in the fifteenth century. An entirely different game was played. He does something entirely different with it to what a man did then.....You appreciate it in an entirely different way; your attitude to it is entirely different to that of a person living at the time it was designed..."³

So if the previous chapter gave us an understanding of the roots of the words, it is now necessary to acquire a knowledge of the languages' construction. While this study will also focus on sectarian costume, the Witness of such items is for the moment a separate issue; it is, one might say the 'grammar'.

In the analysis of art so much of what we understand by certain terms is subjective rather than objective. On many occasions, it is with the nature of the idea that we deal, not specifics: which is in a way appropriate for a medium that deals with matters as physically insubstantial as faith. What is certain is that to embark on a definition of the role of 'Art' in society is to enter into something that has all the appearance of an intellectual Mobius Loop, a discourse of which both the beginning and end are uncertain, but which is unavoidable if one is to define 'art', 'artist' and 'aesthetic' within the context of this thesis.

The word 'Art' has of course been appended to every creative activity from rhetoric to cooking, covering a vast number of visual and physical processes. It has also been the subject of much discussion and definition. No one definition seems entirely apt, but a number approach somewhere near the truth.

The classical definition is that the primary function of art was to evoke aesthetic experiences in the viewer. Art, as defined by painting etc. was designed to enhance personal commerce with the aesthetic values of art. However, since with few exceptions the work that we shall address does not fall within the classical definitions of western 'fine arts' at all, these can only be incomplete and temporally limited explanations in the context of this study. This matters little since the creators did not recognise these classical standards, and indeed fashioned their lives very often as a direct negative response to the establishment. Yet the products of their experience have constantly been discussed in terms of aesthetics: a discipline that, as Raymond Firth describes it, seeks to comprehend 'the philosophy of taste' or the 'conditions of sensuous perception'. Here we encounter a shortfall in the English language, for 'aesthetic' in the context of this study is manifestly not the correct word but unfortunately it is also the only vaguely appropriate term. 'Aesthetic' suggests an autonomous faculty of the human mind - which

would have been denied by the sects. Yet a personal aesthetic did result from the sects expression of their faith though it was never an end in itself. 'Aesthetic' must therefore be used, but not, I hope, abused.

Other historians and philosophers have reached rather more useful conclusions. Gregory Bateson, suggested that 'art was essentially part of Man's search for grace, a fundamental integration of the self' with Existence.⁴ He saw art, in whatever form, as an exercise in communicating to the World the concerns of the artist. To this I would add the definition favoured by Raymond Firth⁵ that art is part of the result of attributing 'meaningful pattern to experience or imagined experience.' A similar idea is expressed by Ralph Esmerian, President of the Museum of American Folk Art who believes that "A work of art is born when an individual is able to see, to feel, and to convert specific emotions into language that will inspire and spark the daily lives of his fellow beings".⁶ Definitions of this type would be supported by philosophers such as Wittgenstein.⁷

Art of course does not have to be either pleasurable or beautiful, but it does have to answer the demands of the value structure of the artist. It is not a matter of media, but of an intellectual and emotional response to something; I do not say 'subject' since this interaction is just as valid when applied to a quilt as to an easel painting. This implies 'significance'. Significance for the individual is dependent not only on that person's nature but on acquired associations with the object. Bacon made two statements that are particularly apposite to this thesis. He said first that 'Art unlocks the values of intuition and perception about the human situation at a deeper level' and secondly that 'art is a method of opening up areas of feeling rather than merely an illustration of an object'.⁸ Surely, more than anything else, the art created by those who profess a deep religious faith is about just that. Clearly then, in order to overcome the problematic aspects of using the word 'art' or 'works of art' in this study, we must always bear in mind the context in which

they were created. 'Art' in Puritan and Shaker contexts will not mean the same thing. Whilst the word must serve us also as a convenient collective, it is crucial that we do not impute our own current standards to its meaning.

While the crucial characteristics that together make something 'significant' are not constants of either time or circumstance, this is not to suggest that the determining criteria of 'art' are arbitrary. The reasons why one feature becomes a criterion character and another does not may be part psychological, part sociological, part meta-physical, religious or ethical. Morals, politics and religion, the structures of our society, enter into our critical judgements. Thus the different demands, ideas and taboos of the host culture will affect the aesthetic criteria brought to bear on a work of art. The significant properties of an object for the Shaker would be determined by faith. To an extent these properties would be understood by the Amish, but not wholly accepted, since only certain elements of their faith are held in common.

'Art' in the context of this thesis is therefore any fashioned object that shows evidence in its form of spiritual, social or intellectual design parameters. The working definition of an aesthetic must simply be the visual expression of a specific set of spiritual and intellectual values.

FOLK ART

'Art' is itself commonly subject to a set of hierarchical sub-divisions, and much of the work considered in this study may be termed 'folk' art. To use this term may seem to be plunging once more into the confusion surrounding 'art' in the broader sense, and it is perhaps un-necessary to consider the division at all. However, the definition of Holger Cahill's that folk art is a "function not so much of the...individual giving his vision to the community as it was of the community or congregation itself"⁹ seems pertinent to our argument.

Historians may seem to be in something of a quandary when they term folk art as both "second rate" and "the oldest, most pervasive art expression we know about" in the same discussion.¹⁰ Perhaps the clearest criteria offered are those of James Thomas Flexner in 1942.¹¹ Though he was dealing with easel paintings, the criteria he uses for his judgements are equally applicable to other media. He divided works of folk art into three groups: Artisan work [professional but little trained], amateur work [in the studio tradition undertaken for pleasure] and *true* folk art which encompasses works rooted in tradition and passed down from generation to generation [such as Pennsylvania German Fraktur]. Though Cahill was to later revise this definition I believe that the last of these categories it is still one of the most acceptable.

The variety of subjects and themes treated by 'true' American folk artist from the seventeenth to the twentieth century can themselves be grouped into three major categories: (A) Scriptural or traditional, (B) documentary, (C) visionary or symbolic. The first of these categories, the scriptural or traditional, covers all material based on religious texts and traditions; stories and figures drawn from the Old and New testaments of the Bible. The second category, the documentary, comprises all religious life, such as prayer meetings, baptism, weddings, funeral rites, and depictions of churches and clergy. The final category, the visionary or symbolic, includes these works of art that were inspired by the artist's private visions or personal concepts or spiritual truth - as well as those works based on traditional symbolic imagery. That these all have a basis in the faith of the artist is perhaps significant as a pattern of folk-life, and particularly apt in the context of this study.

By grouping the works of art under these separate headings, it is possible to discern patterns of continuity or change from one period to another through the persistence of some themes and the modification,

disappearance, or appearance of others. An iconographical analysis of this material may disclose relationships between certain subjects and the cultural or personal contexts in which they appear. Additionally there are possible correlation's of continuity or change in subject matter between religious or social developments. Most importantly such persisting or changing patterns of iconography may reflect stable or shifting values within society itself for religious folk art reflects not only the presence of faith but also, like all art, the cultural climate within which it is created. Christine Mather¹² an authority on Folk Art of the South West describes how;

...folk art transcends the functional or utilitarian to present us with an often stunning and profound insight... What often makes this most astounding is that the art...does this even though the artist may have been restrained by a number of factors such as the demands of a tradition bound society, religious constraints, poverty of materials, lack of technique....Folk art is no different from that of the "fine" artists; only a few are able to move us even though this may never have been a goal of the artist.

Historically the relationship between art and society is commonly thought of in passive terms; 'reflection', 'echoes', 'mirror' are all descriptions that suggest that the relationship is almost accidental. Yet this would present a distortion of the truth. In a discussion dealing with the role of art in modern society Tilghman noted that there were historical periods where art played not only a fundamental role in the community, but that the connection was recognised by the societies in question. There were, he goes on to suggest, periods when art 'was the handmaiden of theology and the Bible of the illiterate'. ¹³

Art has played a central role in, and been inspired by, all religions. 'Art' with a religious intent, as the Puritans recognised, is the outward form, and thus the visible reality, the physical manifestation of that faith. This is especially the case in terms of religions whose following was largely made up of uneducated people. The artist and his religion have thus a symbiotic relationship. Many times this symbiosis has been disturbed by friction: religious

art deemed irreligious. Yet when the artist has a genuine religious, mystic, experience, art serves religion - without its art the faith would find it hard to convey its message and teachings to the people.

RELIGIOUS ART IN CONFLICT AND CO-OPERATION

To look at art in this way both opens up avenues of discussion and contains many possible pitfalls. Mix art and religion as active proponents and you have two of the most potent forces that can work upon Man. Art and religion as forces in tandem may be viewed in a number of ways, but one must ever consider the two concepts as linked; with the artist as worshipper and the worshipper as viewer.

The role played by religion in art is symbiotic. Historically art has both served religion and been inspired by it. Each needs the other. In the sects in this study, the relationship has progressed to such a point that there is no perceivable division between them. Even where, as in some Puritan and Quaker individuals, there was an attempt to break free of this partnership, the attempt is never entirely successful. Firth reinforces our original definitions of art when he argued that religious art is a 'reinforcing in other media of conceptual patterning of a mystical order'.¹⁴ To this complex of variables we must then add those of politics and economics which are often major influencing variables. It is important to once more reiterate the point that without an understanding of the history and society of the artist the viewer may misconstrue the artist's intent. It is within the artists terms of reference that judgements must be made, not within those of the historian, and not from a single point of view. Humans are not one dimensional creatures but the products of a multi-faceted environment; their appreciation should be similar.

To the previous divisions of artistic product three further specialist categories may be cited: the religious work of art with a secular subject -

such, as we shall see, much of the work of the Amish; the predominantly secular work of art dealing with religious subject matter, as in the embroideries of the seventeenth century, used to reinforce certain social patterns and convey moral tenets to the young,¹⁵ and finally the religious work of art with religious subject matter. Thus a secular object may be a religious object when made by a religious artist - for example Shaker boxes. This a key concept for the understanding of the works detailed in this study and will be expanded on within the sections dedicated to the work of particular sects.

Many products of sectarian societies may thus be seen as a votive act. Some sacramental works are agencies of religion, instruments for the exposition of belief within the context of a religious setting: icons are but one example, figures of the saints another. It is possible that art may be created firstly as a secular object, for example a quilt, but through the importance of religious cultural factors that govern the form, it becomes of religious significance. Other art, such as the spirit pictures of the Shakers, is from the outset directly linked with God.

Art as Religion is symbolic of the belief of the artist and at the same time *is* his faith. In our study we shall thus consider the symbols, the choices that the groups made, the way in which they were subsequently utilised, and the way in which they became an integral part of their religion and thus their lives.

When mystic experience is physically symbolised by the artist and embedded in a religious 'aesthetic', it creates a symbol that is not easily divested of the meaning. Religion in general requires a means of expressing its experience in concrete terms. From the point of view of classical, conservative religion, the most important function of art is its ability to promote religion and its doctrines. The danger evinced by 'Art' is that the appreciation of the work by the devotee might go so far as to preclude the ultimate goal of the

religion, to obscure the theological or doctrinal message in the experience of the aesthetic pleasure. Only where the work of art is effective in promoting a religious aesthetic or mystic experience on a higher level, are the artist's endeavours appreciated. The Church, in the broadest sense of the word, may thus use 'art' both as a tool and for her own adornment. To work to the glorification of both Man and God both Art and artist must be brought together without diffusion, without conflict of aim.

The humanist view of art may on occasion concur with the religious. Wittgenstein maintains, very simply, that the main purpose of humanity is to alter itself to fit more neatly to the pattern determined by the world beyond, the present world having already been fully determined.¹⁶ Clearly this view accords with that of many of the groups in our study, whose present lives are lived in anticipation of the next, whose actions on this earth are important only in that they make possible travel to, and fulfilment in, God. To an extent the philosophies of the Utopian societies in our study unconsciously embrace certain Eastern elements in their lives not common to other western religions. One may, for example, cite their attempts to come into closer harmony with their spiritual selves and creation by separating themselves from the World. It is the Taoist contention that by living in harmony with the Earth, one will be in harmony with whatever concept of a deity you hold. Similar ideas can be seen in the artistic products of the Shakers, an idea that will be explored at greater length later in the text.

THE REJECTION OF FIGURATIVE IMAGERY

Any language, not least that of art, requires an alphabet and both religions and artists have at times become fastidious about the physical symbols used to embody the idealised aesthetic experience that is the focus of devotion. Such symbols, with frequent utilisation form a matrix through

which the religious experience may be initiated for those less experienced on the mystic path.

Painting and its related crafts are perhaps the most commonly utilised of all the plastic arts in relation to religion. Certain figures and stories have so often been the object of attention that a form of visual and intellectual shorthand has evolved in the form of symbols - lamb, bird, ring, tree.

If union with God is the aim of all religious experience, aesthetic experience may be seen as the means to that end. Yet every medium has its limitations. Whilst orthodox religion has often found it possible to employ symbols as direct lines of communication with God - Icons being one example - such would be an anathema to certain of the groups in our study. They have therefore found that in order not to inhibit aesthetic experience by using an inadequate symbol as a focus, they must abandon the use of overt symbols altogether.

If a certain faith forbids the use of imagery man usually falls back upon non-figurative, intellectual, abstract forms and foci such as dance and ritual. Shakerism is one such example, synagogues and mosques are others that utilise purely non-figurative imagery for both decoration and devotion. Formalised expression seems to be a fundamental need of human beings. Abstract visual forms, if we liken them to the embodiment of the malleable spiritual 'light', should therefore be particularly appropriate as a style of religious art, as most easily expressing the inexpressible without using images that may carry unwanted connotations.

It could be argued that such creations are but substitutes for the original image and not an advance at all. Geddes MacGregor argues that even to use an analogy of God as the 'light', is in itself a trap. This he says, is not the true renunciation of imagery... *"When the mystic makes this renunciation of images, he projects himself into a darkness that is beyond the images, and to which, in the renunciation of them, the images point."*¹⁷ This achieved, the

mystic no longer has to reject imagery in general - aestheta such as trees, flowers, swans etc.- as his experience is now focused on certain specific images, symbols of God. He has therefore travelled in a circle, the end having been reached when he reaches the point at which he first started - the use of symbols - but now they are tools for his faith, not props or aids to understanding. They are his point of departure. But the sectarian societies in this study present something of a contradiction for while all sought an inner 'light' and in that sense were mystics yet they employed both figurative and non-figurative imagery to different degrees. It is this dichotomy, these inconsistencies and apparent paradoxes which make them such a fascinating study. In a period of spiritual, personal control, the development of their faith is a study in the strength of the mind, the inventiveness and resilience of the human heart and psyche.

¹'Henry Moore on Sculpture', Macdonald, 1966. From the article *Unit One*, p.72.

²Wittgenstein, 1966 pp.6, 7.

³Wittgenstein, Op.Cit. pp.8-10.

⁴Bateson, 1973. pp.235, 242-3.

⁵Firth, 1992. [15-40] p.16.

⁶Lipman, et al. 1990 Letter symposium, 'Five Star Folk Art', p.16.

⁷Wittgenstein, Op.Cit. p.13.

⁸Quoted in Russell, 1964, Introduction.

⁹Holger (March 1951): p.210

¹⁰Lipman, Jean et.al. Op.Cit. p.20

¹¹Flexner, (April 1942): pp.246-249.

¹²Holger. Op.Cit. p. 210.

¹³Tilghman, 1991, p.1.

¹⁴Firth, Op Cit, p.17.

¹⁵Mayhew, 1988.

¹⁶Wittgenstein, Op.Cit, p.8.

¹⁷McGregor, 1947, *ibid*, p.184.

4 CLOTH & HUMAN EXPERIENCE

The religion stands not simply in Clothes, yet true Religion stands in that which sets a bound and limit to the Mind, with Respect to Clothes, as well as other things...where there is a running into Excess...the Mind is got loose, hath cast off the Yoke and is not Subject to the Divine Power, in which the true Religion stands...¹.

WITNESSING

In Chapter Two the discussion focused on the creation of belief and behaviour systems in human society: this section of the discussion turns its attention to the function of textiles in human society as symbols of those systems, and by inference, of the society that created them. The way in which Faith is expressed symbolically, especially in situations of change, is one of the issues that this thesis seeks to address.

Modern society is becoming increasingly symbol oriented, but this is no recent phenomenon but an innate human trait; a trait testified to by the highly developed use of body paint applied in symbolic designs by tribesmen world-wide. As humanity spread across the globe body paint gave way to clothing and it is now widely recognised that clothing serves functions over and above that of protection from the environment. Society has become increasingly complex as Man has evolved, and the messages our bodies alone are able to convey are too simplistic. Man fashioned textiles and to these he has given communicative functions which are not intrinsic, but extrinsic, components, whether consciously or unconsciously assigned to the item by its creator.

The concept of 'meaning' being inherent within a fashioned textile is a central component of the symbolic-interactionist perspective formulated by

sociologists such as Mead. Basically Mead said that we have to study the symbols people use in their interactions in order to understand human behaviour. If one accepts this as a working hypothesis, we need to focus on the meanings people assign to symbols, because these are the basis for and the substance of that interaction.

Dress has therefore become a means of communication; it has acquired symbolic value. In contemporary western society one might believe that this has almost become the *paramount* function of clothing. It is but a short step to the idea that clothing can reveal the attitude of the soul, and the concept may first be seen in texts such as Erasmus' *De Cillitate Morum Puerilium* and to Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* of 1530 and 1528 respectively. This utilisation of symbols in dress to communicate personal beliefs is known as 'witnessing'.

Communication of this type is carried on through signs. A *sign* in this context is anything that stands for something else. Ferdinand Saussure² defined, simply, a sign as the *signifier* plus the *signified*. For example, the alphabetic letters 'C' 'A' 'T' in one's head, through empirical and learned experience evoke the sound and furry form of feline reality.

Signs are very closely, sometimes even indistinguishably, related to *symbols*. Symbols primarily function to announce membership of a particular social group or the 'political' sympathy of the wearer with a certain concept. Kaiser³ gives the simplest definition of a *symbol*, when she states that a symbol is basically an object that has meaning for someone; in more detail it is also a more complex and abstract sign that conveys information about values, beliefs, and emotions. Vestments, wedding dresses and afghan coats are, or were, symbols. Wearing a 'Mod' duffel coat or Bikers jacket presupposes certain patterns of behaviour, peer allegiance, age, even social class.

Symbols interpret and make connections, i.e.: they associate the signifier with the signified. Symbols grow and develop from natural icons. C.G.Jung⁴

wrote that

A symbol is a term, name, or even a picture that may be familiar in everyday life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional meaning...It has a wider 'unconscious' aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason...We constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts that we cannot define or fully comprehend.

It will be useful to return to this latter statement when attempting to interpret the way in which the Amish use dress as a symbol of their faith in Chapter Eight.

According to the historian Gombrich almost anything can represent something else, a symbol is independent of resemblance and therefore an abstract concept. Such an abstract symbolic system of language in relation to textiles is particularly appropriate with regard to the work of the sects in our study.

Symbolic clothing is therefore essentially a visual system performing a similar function to language but within a physical dimension. From 'power dressing' via 'Punk', to the act of 'taking the Cowl', in wearing clothes we are making a statement. Whether it be about sex, age, marital status, class or political affiliation, the signal is highly visible. As a system of communication it is both flexible and widely adaptable. Manufactured textiles, layered over skin and hair, can provide a focus for the expression of conflict, as seen in the clothing of 'skin-heads', or reflect commentary on current affairs. The work of designers such as Sonia Delaunay or Arabella Pollen and Green Peacocks' "Stop the Bloody Whaling" T-Shirts are contemporary examples of the latter, the 'Mutze' of the Amish man is a sectarian one. Each of these examples is conveying information detailing both belief and behaviour systems. By displaying these symbols we are engaging in symbolic social interaction.

Sartorial witnessing is also employed to promote group cohesion: each of the sects in this study employing this device for at least one part of their

history. Such behaviour is particularly prevalent in the early years of the formation of a group since the members of the infant sect are more easily identified to each other and made to feel part of a community. The Rotarians' tie-pin, Sloanes' scarf or Hunters' 'wellies' are fulfilling the same function as the Puritan's black gown or the Shaker's cape. Each sartorial peculiarity serves to identify the members of a group to each other. This type of visual prominence is not without its opponents. Many Quakers declared that such practices militated against individual freedom [see Chapter Six].

Once these symbols have been assumed the individual commits themselves to 'signing' or proclaiming a message that can then only be altered by removing or concealing the clothing. The plain clothes policeman is, if you like, committing a sartorial falsehood that his uniformed colleague is unable to mimic. Similarly the gaudy patterned stocking tops of the Amish woman, neatly concealed beneath her skirt and visible only as she climbs into a buggy, murmur a rather different message than that of the overt biblical allegiance that her outer garments proclaim or in terms of faith, 'witness'.

Symbols obviously do not acquire meaning of their own accord. Rather, a symbol not only serves a function within the society, but is tied to the specific social context that gave rise to it and wherein it is able to function. The cosmetic markings peculiar to the Indian caste system are an enduring and sophisticated example. Similarly clothing forms are created and abandoned by the structure and institutions of the society in which they appear: the Toga is not worn in modern Rome since the political and social structure that it represented has disappeared, the Quaker bonnet is no longer worn by Friends since it is deemed an eccentricity whose outward form is irrelevant to inward spirituality or physical action. The import of symbols is clearly not fixed and may be transmuted by culture or time. The swastika is a good example of the complete revolution of the significance of a symbol and if we apply the concept to colour symbolism we can see that the colour red

does not intrinsically mean "stop" nor green "go", while white has completely opposite meanings in different cultures.

Time and circumstances may alter so that the earlier meaning of a symbol has been degraded: the 'Green Man' head is an object lesson here, going from god to good-luck symbol in the space of a few centuries. Circumstances may arise in a culture that allows a symbol to take on another meaning entirely or be discarded by that society as no longer appropriate. An apron is illustrative of this. Imbued with connotations of domestic virtue and constructed in silk and lace to adorn formal dresses of the eighteenth century, it stood for something rather different when coloured green and worn by Philadelphia's Quakeresses. We can see then that meanings function only within the symbolic system of the culture which has decreed that this system is to be used, and then only at particular points in the history of that culture.

Certain symbols that were once seemingly inviolate parts of the cultural identity of a group may be discarded. The obvious example within the sects in this study is the wearing of the Prayer Veiling: Biblically decreed and once acknowledged by all as a necessity, it has been recently been widely discarded.

For the system to work at its optimum level, participants in the exchange must also participate in the same belief system. Both parties must be aware that symbols are displayed and the explicitness of information given us by dress can vary with the society and institution. The type of braces worn among the Amish or the pocket comb of 'gay' men are both recognition codes; their function within their respective communities is the same, though the currency of the symbol among the Amish is arguably wider. It is apparent then that symbols, to a greater or lesser extent, are culturally dependant. This process of symbolic interaction therefore involves the existence of shared meanings, which result in what Mead⁵ referred to as significant symbols.

One of the most important points to make about the sectarian use of symbols is that the employment of symbolic structures is *intentional*. The individuals that laid the foundations of these sects, that gave them shape and substance, manipulated their physical appearances and surroundings to create a particular structuralist 'aesthetic'. Perhaps the depth and vitality of this process with the Amish stems from the fact that, unlike the English derived sects, the Amish have no written texts beyond the *Confession of Faith*. I would argue that therefore they had necessarily to evolve a visual representation of their faith.

The historical process was a long one. In Leviticus 26, verse 1, we read: "ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it; for I am the Lord your God". Even though the early Christians followed these laws, crude paintings appeared in the catacombs. They were not objects of devotion, but rather representational art. Sometimes they were symbols. An example would be the frequent use of the fish as a symbol for Christ. This symbol came about because the five Greek letters forming the word 'fish' are the initial letters of the five words; Jesus/Christ/God/Son/Saviour. The meaning can go even further into the idea of Christ as the Fisher of Men. Similarly early Christians, on meeting, would quickly draw the sign of the cross and then erase it again. Thus Christians were drawn into symbolic art. By the time of the Reformation reformers such as Luther recognised the deep seated need for symbols and symbolic terms to represent concepts that man cannot define or fully comprehend. But the main Anabaptist movement was not of the same mind, often calling such concepts superstitious. The Anabaptists attempted to go with the "word" alone, and ignore its symbols. This, in the truest sense of the word, they were not able to do, because the word itself can become a symbol.

THE FORMATION OF SIGNS BY METAPHOR

There is, as with any language, a sub-text that can be understood by fluent speakers. Sartorial 'metaphor' allows the individual a degree of ambiguity, the projected image being capable of denoting various degrees of identification with the suggested concept. It is not uncommon that when dissension arises within a faction, the splinter group will adopt one aspect of the dress of the parent group and place extra emphasis on adherence to its form, over and above that ever attached to it by the main society, in order to express their position. Examples of this behaviour are seen in the many factions of the Amish, and the important but subtle changes in dress details are a subject discussed later in the text.

Cloth itself is a metaphor for a complex of economic relationships connecting individuals, groups, and societies. In some cultures textiles, mythical or otherwise, may feature supernatural properties; for example, the Shroud of Turin, Saints relics, cloaks of invisibility, Dancing slippers and Seven League Boots. In folk tales the individual often subsumes his own identity within that of the other by assuming their clothing.

THE FORMATION OF SIGNS BY METONYMY

Metonymy is a similar rhetorical device used to model the development of sartorial signs. In this instance, rather than using contrasts to make the point, metonymy relies upon dynamic links between individual elements of a composition; in this case the items of dress comprising the total costume.

The effect of metonymy is that one symbol epitomises or summarises a set, most of the rest of which may be assumed by the perceiver. We see one thing and take most of the other attire for granted. The Mennonite cap or Hutterite checked scarf symbolises a set of behaviours and living patterns even when the individual wears ordinary clothes otherwise- the behavioural expectations as exemplified in the dress of the very Plain Mennonites carries

over to those others who are less strict. The head covering is the salient symbol.

PATTERN

Textiles within a sectarian society are also controlled by the forces acting on costume, and by the same token are equally capable of expressing the doctrines and social concerns of the society which created them. The most obvious visual mechanism for the transmission of religious or other experience through textiles is by the use of pattern.

The creation of pattern may be seen as the innate human desire to give a stable framework to experience, to order and name things. Through the naming of a pattern, it becomes a referent to a synthesis of experience in the mind of the viewer and artist alike. To view pattern as merely a collection of pleasingly juxtaposed shapes and colours is to deny the very being of the artist.

Pattern may also be seen as part of the communication system of society since it may serve as a *sign*. The pattern 'Drunkard's Path', [fig.1] stands in the viewer's mind for the weaving gait of the drunkard on his way home. However, if one did not know the name given to the pattern, the signified element of the sign would be lost. The importance of shared belief and behaviour systems to the effectiveness of communication by symbols is reinforced by a study of pattern, for when a pattern is adopted by another society to that in which it originated, as in the Barn-Raising pattern of the Amish [fig.80] it is often re-named to accord more fully with the prevailing ethos.

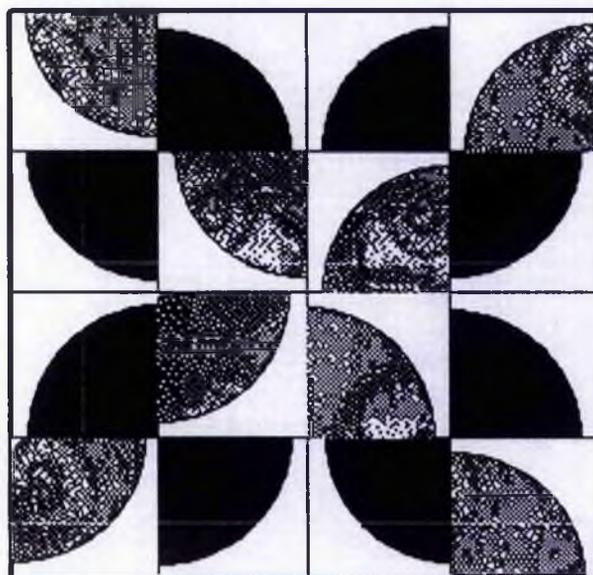


Fig. 1. 'Drunkard's Path' Quilt Block Pattern.

COLOUR

There is an additional element to clothing and textiles whose role is equally important; that of colour. Colour gives expression to the form, and may help to locate the textile geographically, temporally and within a belief system. To the human being colour is more than the expression of the physical nature of light in a given situation; colour is a concept in the mind of the society that names it. Certain societies such as the Inuit do not name all colours since they do not consider them important enough in their lives, while other societies consider colour to be means of expressing and understanding their relationship to their surroundings and their beliefs. Significantly the ancient Egyptians had a word for colour which also meant the character of a living being.⁶

Colour has symbolic meaning for most cultures, and is brought into play in the various rights of passage of a religion or everyday living. Certain cultures wear blue amulets for safety, red to counteract infection, or wear white for the expiation of sin: it is not the material of the amulet that is of

primary importance, but the colour. Kouwer⁷ states that in general world culture, colour is considered to be divinely inspired; this hypothesis clearly has importance when considering the use of colour by religious sects.

As with other areas of visual communication in the development of colour symbolism there is an historical formalisation of meaning. In use, the original nuances of symbolic meaning of a colour are lost and its use becomes generalised. Increasingly narrow functions are attributed to each colour and outside that ritual setting the colour tends to loose meaning. Despite this a society may strenuously resist any attempt to move away from the traditional employment of the particular colour in question. Specific meanings of colours become entombed in works of antiquarian interest only: white weddings and black at funerals are contemporary examples

Colour symbolism was particularly active in Medieval Europe, which may suggest that we might attribute greater meaning to the use of colour in sects such as the Amish and Mennonites with their origins in this area than perhaps the Shakers. The original meanings, emotional and subjective, have been largely lost in Europe. It is possible however, that, given the importance that colour plays in the lives of the Amish, Mennonites and other Pennsylvania-German groups, some remnant of this medieval colour symbolism does survive.

The medieval legacy of heraldic colouring may give us an insight into the basic reactions to certain colours of the period, though it is possible that they once held deeper meanings. The system was strictly formalised:⁸

Gold-	excellence, intelligence, esteem, distinction
Silver-	purity, wisdom, innocence, joy
Red-	victory, triumph, dominance
Blue-	fidelity, constancy, humility
Green-	beauty, joy, friendship, health, hope
Black-	sadness, humility, serviceability
Purple-	dignity, dominance, frugality

A parallel system of colour symbolism is found in the liturgies of the Roman

Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Churches of the medieval period:

Gold	innocence, purity, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, etc.
Red	martyred saints, love, hate, Pentecost
Blue	Heavenly love, truth, The Blessed Virgin
Green	Triumph of life over death, charity, hope
Black	Negation, sickness, death
Purple	God the Father
Brown	spiritual death
Yellow	Infernal light, degradation, deceit

Such supports the case for there being strong survival of belief in, and employment of, colour symbolism by devout sects whose roots are in the Europe of this period. One would, however, expect to see divergence of meaning from the original. This, after all, is observable in the mainstream churches. By the thirteenth century white, red, green, black and purple were used freely and interchangeably for clerical garb within the Catholic church, though there were preferences in the colours worn to perform particular rites. The gradual transmuted meaning can be seen between even the conservative foundation of the church and the fossilised language of heraldry, with black symbolising sorrow, red charity and sacrifice and purple affliction and melancholy.

Many cultures have similar systems of colour symbolism, and western society currently operates a loose association of colour symbolism, both in everyday speech (e.g.. 'being yellow', 'feeling blue') and in general attribution of meaning to colour:

green	hope, envy
blue	loyalty
red	love
yellow	cowardice, hatred
white	purity
black	mourning

In general use the symbolic meaning of these colours is ignored, their use in language is more an automatic than a conscious choice. A subconscious return to colour use as a symbolic communication device may occasionally be witnessed among particularly youth sub-cultures that, for example, dress

aggressively in black, or the desire to shock by the culturally inappropriate creation of the red or black 'wedding gown' at the close of 'designer' shows, but for modern western society, the real value of colour symbolism has been lost.

¹ *Christian Advices*, 1859, pp. 55.56

² *Sassure*, Ferdinand. 1895-1912

³ *Kaiser*, 1985, p.185.

⁴ *Jung*, 1964, Part 1; pp.20-1.

⁵ *Mead*, 1934.

⁶ *Kees*, 1943, nb.11. p.414.

⁷ *Kouwer*, 1949, p.49.

⁸ *Sicille*, 1450.

5 PURITANISM: FAITH & FORM

The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saying and understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word...

Westminster Confession¹

The Puritans are perhaps the most enigmatic of the sects in this study. Their history highlights many of the failings, the hopes, the dynamic power of sectarian societies. Individually and together they must have been a difficult, admirable and frightening people and their study is at once a fascinating and depressing insight into humanity.

This chapter will attempt to assess the validity of our pre-conceptions of the Puritans and try to evaluate the role faith played in their 'aesthetic' lives. The main obstacle to this is the fluid nature of the sect discussed in Chapter One. We have to deal with two or three distinct forms of Puritanism, more than a hundred years of development on two different continents. What will become evident is that the dark, ascetic, archetype must be discarded - but the truth is less simply expressed. That, despite the problems they pose and the apparent contradictions they present, they demand inclusion in this study is because of the analogies they present to other sects. The Puritans are in some senses a key to sectarian 'witness': lapses from sectarian thought and action are prompted by key points of tradition, culture and belief. How these forces act upon the sects will, it is hoped, become clear in the course of the discussion. This chapter introduces two of the key issues in

the formation of the sectarian aesthetic: that of modesty and the interpretation of the Second Commandment - the question of imagery and idolatry.

IMAGERY, IDOLATRY AND ICONOCLASM

The essential debate that absorbed the Puritan mind, whether radical or moderate, was at least two thousand years old. Christ himself had recognised the need for symbols in his teaching and visual constants became part of the Christian church. But now in the sixteenth century, Calvin reassessed the symbiotic relationship between art and religion and, though he condoned art in theory, in practice he saw it as un-necessary. Calvin argued that since only God had the ability to create life, the creation of a religious image became an offence against Him.

The Protestant position as epitomised by Tyndale was that the Jews had made sacrifices and offerings not as payment for sin but "only (as) a sign and token, that at the repentance of the heart, through an offering to come, and for their seed's sake that was promised Abraham, their sins were forgiven them."² He believed that the Jews had placed no great significance on these external objects, using them as tokens of their feelings in their hearts. But time had distorted the symbolic meanings until the role of the sacrifices was reversed "...saying that they were holy works commanded by God, and the offenders were thereby justified, and obtained forgiveness of sins and thereby became good."³ Tyndale argued that the church should learn from the example of early Judaic Christianity and ceremonies and images should be discarded because they were inherently liable to become misused. Accordingly the 1582, 1601, and 1616 editions of the *Geneva Bible* commanded that:

Thou shalt make thee no graven image, neither any similitude of things that are in heaven above, neither that are in the earth beneath, nor that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, neither serve

them.

This form became the doctrinal position of a number of contemporary sects and over the course of the century theological positions stemming from debates concerning morality became confused with, and finally addressed through, aesthetic principles. The growing division in the minds of many between physical life, nature and the spirit was a leading cause of the iconoclasm that took place between 1535 and 1660.

The voice of moderation as epitomised by More, was sympathetic to the argument that images might be corrupt but believed that the worshipper would not misuse the image if properly taught. The educated layman would then:

*"not (fix) his final intent in the image, but referring it further to the honour of the person that the image representeth, since that in such reverence done unto the image there is none honour withdrawn neither from God nor good man, but both the saint honoured in his image and God in his saint."*⁴

This view became an intrinsic part of the Anglican church, and even among the Puritans had its advocates. The range of possible positions within the church was thus extensive. Both sides of the argument were supported with scriptural reference. More argued that if the worship of images is idolatry then the church, in using such symbols as the Cross, would be erring against God in its very being and that was an idea not worthy of consideration. His *Dialogue...* states that:

*"Christ's church cannot err in any such article as God upon pain of loss of heaven will(s) that we believe. (it) necessarily followeth that there is no text of scripture well understanden, by which Christian people are commanded to do the thing which the Church believeth that they may lawfully leave undone, nor any text whereby we be forbidden anything which the church believeth that they may lawfully do."*⁵

Tyndale's *Answer to More's Dialogue* contends that "Sacraments signs, ceremonies and bodily things can be no service to God in his person."⁶

Tyndale was also wary of images becoming imbued with special powers and so making their owners special.⁷ In that there was a danger of the

magnification of man rather than God. This last is a fundamental point to make in understanding the motivations underlying the attitudes not only of the Puritans but of all the sects in our study and relates directly to a Quaker position in witnessing discussed in the next chapter. That this fear was widespread is evident in that 1536 saw the Convocation of the Clergy concluding "That images as well as the crucifix as of other saints, are to be put out of the church, and the reliques of saints in no wise to be revered; and that it is against God's commandments that Christian men should make courtesy or reverence to the image of Our Saviour."⁸ However, the sixth of ten Articles under Henry VIII, the work of Cranmer and Cromwell, while prohibiting the idolatrous worship of images, yet advocated their use "as laymen's books to remind us of heavenly things". Fundamental to the clerics' position on this question seems to have^{been} a conception of the moral strength, or lack of it, on the part of the layman. The Puritan grades of the 'Elect' echo this concept. Humanist philosophy held that the spirit was strong, fully capable of perceiving snares set for weak souls.⁹

However, historically art has always played a key role in the explanation of intellectually difficult concepts in all major religions, and the use of images was inextricably woven into the philosophical fabric of late medieval political and social structures. Rejection of the spiritual values of Catholicism became synonymous with the rejection of its forms of expression.

Throckmorton's(?) *A Dialogue* of 1598 is representative of the arguments adopted against images based on both Biblical precept and the taint of Catholicism. Part of it ran thus:

- Puritan** *'... but by the way, I pray you, if you come from Orleans, there they have the mass, for they are of the league: and then I suppose you have been partaker of their Idolatry?*
- Jack** *No I assure you, I detest all Idolatry, even from my heart.*
- Puritan** *If you do so, I am very glad of it, but I pray you let me hear if you can give me some proof out of the word of God, for the confirmation of this your protestation against Idolatry?*
- Jack.** *I am well content to give you a taste thereof, whereby it shall*

appear that I am far from it: For so dearly as I tender the salvation of mine own soul, so careful am I to shun and fly from all Idolatry. For it is written Deut. 6:13. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve": And the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians I. Epist. cap.10. verse 14. commandeth us to "Fly from Idolatry," for Idolatry is sin, and "the wages of sin is death," etc.

Puritan *It is well applied, and somewhat to the purpose. I am very glad if it be done with singleness of heart: For me thinks you could not possibly be in that place but you must be forced to be present at their Idolatrous Mass.*

The coupling of popery with idolatry and, by extension, sin is explicit. The quoting chapter and verse of scriptural texts is symptomatic of the level on which the battle was being fought and the moral high ground that each side believed it occupied.

The case for symbols as 'real time' representations of intellectual concepts was never better proved than in the iconoclasm of this period. Whether icons and symbols were sinful or not did not really matter while people believed them so. The removal of a symbolic object was seen to destroy everything that that object stood for. The rood screen is an example: to the Catholics it was an effective liturgical device: to the Puritans it was a symbol of the separation of the priesthood from the congregation and struck deep at the roots of their doctrine.¹⁰

The Elizabethan Puritan, Henry Barrow, recognised the importance of visual 'aids' when he argued that the physical experiences of worship determine the intellectual premises of faith. He presaged the House Amish, over a century later, when he called for the destruction and abolition of church buildings.¹¹ In choosing the church fabric for his attention he was in accord with the future doctrines of both Shakers and Quakers, who each felt a need to redefine the traditional place for worship. Barrow argued that ridding the congregation of the buildings would rid them of the idea of God actually being present in the church. The church fabric was for him the ultimate idol.

The image debate is thus complex and multi-layered. In one sense the

philosophical questions concerning the properties of images was only really a peripheral matter in the larger moves to reform church and State institutions. Iconoclasm can be seen as a by-product of the massive social changes experienced throughout Medieval Europe.¹² To introduce new ways of thinking meant first breaking the previous habits, but an attempt to unravel one part, unravelled the whole. The Catholic church had so thoroughly employed imagery that the new religions were forced to implement radical policies to exorcise the creed.

The situation in Britain at the end of the sixteenth century was not then, as popularly accepted, that the reformers either despised art or primarily regarded it as frivolity: rather they sought to 'wipe the slate clean', to shed the burden of the sterile images of contemporary religion. This accomplished, an aesthetic whose foundation was built on 'Plain' biblical principles would bear witness to the Puritan faith.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAIN AESTHETIC

The Puritan manipulation of the Plain form in this country can only be assessed once the real players have been disentangled from the general mass of reformers. The nature of the movement, its political influence as well as its factional form should be remembered. Henry VIII and his ministers superintended massive destruction within the Church; but this did not make them Puritans. While St. Lawrence's Church, Ipswich, was reglazing its windows in 1547: "Item. We have in our churche and chancell ix glas wyndows of fayned storyse contrary to the king's majesties injunctions whiche we have bargayned for to be glazed wt. whyght glas for said glas ...xij.li" - other records suggest that not only were some Ministers loathe to carry out the dissolution, but that many of the works that disappeared from the churches were taken into secular use. Large numbers of artistic commissions were also carried out on the Kings behalf.¹³

Under Elizabeth officials reacted to the constant catholic threat. This tension resulted in a preoccupation with outward forms. Elizabeth's edict that: "Images were to be destroyed, painting to be effaced and replaced by texts" is a reflection of this.¹⁴ Elizabeth, in this and similar measures, demonstrated her appreciation of the strength of images in shaping spiritual consciousness. The power of the Crown was strengthened by the issue in 1559 of fifty-three Articles. These were directed against the display of images and Popish possessions. The most significant of these decreed:

*...they shall take away, utterly extinguish and destroy, all shrines, coverings of shrines, all tables, candlesticks, trindals and rolls of wax, pictures, paintings and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry and superstition; so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass windows or elsewhere within their churches and houses; preserving nevertheless, or repairing both the walls and glass windows; and they shall exhort all their parishioners to do the like in their several houses.*¹⁵

The measures might accord with Puritan doctrine but Elizabeth's concerns are with outward forms as political expedients, not as a mark of inner faith: that was the lot of the true sectarians. Representative, rather, of the *spiritual* Puritan voice is the publication that announced:

*...the Church is to be purged, purified and cleansed by this persecution, which at this day it suffers; That by this means it may be little and little prepared for that great Reformation, which the **Epocha** or **Account** of those **thousand years** shall bring.*¹⁶

Political expediency rather than religious fervour thus changed the face of the church but did little to alter her fundamental nature for the zealot. Harrison¹⁷ writing between 1577 and 1587 describes services as being much as they were with the exception that:

...all images, shrines, tabernacles, rood-lofts, and monuments of idolatry, are removed, taken down and defaced, only the stories in glass windows excepted, which, for want of sufficient store of new stuff, and by reason of extreme charge...are not altogether abolished in most places at once, but by little and little are suffered to decay, that white glass may be provided and set up in their rooms...

Outwardly Crown and Puritan were in agreement but the intellectual

debate continued unabated. Laudian moves to introduce uniformity in the reformed Church of England were met with opposition from an unlikely alliance of Parliament and Puritans. Prynne accused Laud of popish leanings and not going far enough in his efforts to rid the church of imagery. Laud, he suggested, did not appreciate the extent of the theological sophistication of the English people. It was Prynne's contention that England had progressed beyond the point where it needed elaborate ritual and decoration: certain vestments may have been consecrated by habitual usage, but were redundant as aids to piety.¹⁸ God could not be replicated by physical means, such as paintings or statues, since He has no similitude.¹⁹ The fear that "Popery may creep in at a glasse window, as well as at a door" is typical of the tenor of Prynne's writing.²⁰

Prynne makes an important point for our understanding of the Puritan attitude to art which is often overlooked. Indeed Laud made the same mistake. Mainstream Puritans followed Calvin's teachings regarding images. Calvin says *it is lawful to make images of men or beasts for civil use*. Laud had interpreted this as allowing the creation of pictures of religious subjects so long as they were clothed in human or natural forms. Thus, by this reasoning, to portray God the Father as an old man, or the Holy Ghost as a dove was lawful. A royal proclamation issued in September 1592 supported this view. This was intended as a defence against the defacing of memorials to famous people, and the breaking of glass Church windows without the consent of the Ordinary. It reiterated that the previous injunctions applied to *superstitious, papish or idolatrous* images only. An example of this theological dispute in action came to trial in February 1633. Sherfield, Recorder and Member of Parliament for Salisbury, was called before the Court of Star Chamber for destroying a painted window in the Church of St. Edmund, Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire. He was charged with:

That being evil affected to the discipline of the Church, he, with certain

confederates, without consent of the Bishop, had defaced and pulled down a fair and costly window in the Church containing the history of the Creation, which had stood there some hundred years, and was a great ornament to it, which profane act might give encouragement to other schismatical persons to create like outrages.

Sherfield's defence numbered amongst its points that the window did not contain a true account, but was false and in error, with God being represented as an Old Man in a blue coat with a pair of compasses, and that the events of the creation were portrayed in the wrong order. He argued that it was impious to make such an image of God, and undertook to prove the same from textual references from the Scriptures, the canons and councils of the Church, the mandates and decrees of sundry emperors, the opinions of certain doctors of the Church and 'our most judicious divines since the reformation'. Laud had supported Sherfield, arguing that God was called the 'Ancient of Days' in the Scriptures. Prynne declared this and similar pieces of reasoning to be mere casuistry.²¹ When Laud was finally executed the issue of imagery was central to his trial. Iconoclasm had become ratified by God. The winning argument was simple: the Word is perfect, nothing may be added or taken away without changing or committing an offence against that Word, and therefore against God. John Milton wrote:

He that will clothe the gospel now, intimates plainly that the gospel is naked, uncomely, that I may not say reproachful. Do not, ye Church maskers, while Christ is clothing upon our barrenness with his righteous garment to make us acceptable in his Father's sight; do not, as ye do, cover and hide his righteous verity with the polluted clothing of your ceremonies, to make it seem more decent in your own eye.²²

The difference in the positions of the two parties is thus clear, with the Puritans believing religion to be more than the performance of certain forms, in prescribed places, at prescribed times.

The arguments did not however die with Laud and were to continue as a source of friction throughout the period. In 1617 James VI had sent a number of carved figures of apostles and patriarchs to be displayed at the Chapel in the Palace of Holyrood. The people of Edinburgh resented this

innovation arguing that Popish images would be the thin end of the wedge and open the floodgates to Popish masses. The Bishops requested that the King remove the statues. The King replied that the 'graven work' was:

'not of an idolatrous kind, like to painted images and painted pictures adored and worshipped by Papists, but merely intended for ornament and decoration of the place where we would sit, and might have been wrought as well with figures of lions, dragons and devils, as with those of patriarches and apostles'. 'But as we must wonder at your ignorance and do teach you thus to distinguish between one and the other, so we are persuaded that none of you would have been so scandalised or offended if the said figures of lions, dragons, or devils had been carved and put up in lieu of those patriarches and apostles'.²³

Religious imagery in this context is deemed by James as 'ornament', secular, not 'sacred'. The distinction is of fundamental importance: to Laud it was a matter of life and death, and the particular position of the sects in this study in regard to this doctrinal detail is critical in determining their individual and collective 'aesthetics'. The particular way in which these Old Testament passages are interpreted is one of a handful of factors that may be termed catalysts to sectarianism: the particular nature of the others will be considered in due course.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The change of century saw increasing divisions within the Puritan movement. The intellectual arm continued to grow in strength. Their proselytising utilised everyday experience of man and nature. Increase Mather wrote of his father's preaching, "His way was Plain, aiming to shoot his Arrows not over people's heads, but into their hearts and Consciences...The Lord gave him an excellent faculty in making abstruse things Plain..."²⁴ Lacking physical images to assist the understanding of intellectual, spiritual, concepts, the Puritan orator employed vivid imagery in his language and although Calvin had declared it idolatrous to represent the deity in corporeal form, some twenty of Edward Taylor's *Preparatory Meditations* explore and linger about the face and body of Christ.²⁵ Writing such as Taylors' *Gods*

Determinations ²⁶ is rich in imagery yet ever mindful of the Puritans doctrine of modesty. William Perkins declared in the preface to his *Arte of Propheying* that:

Humane wisdom must be concealed, whether it be in the matter of the sermon, or in the setting forth of the words...because the hearers ought not to ascribe their faith to the gift of men, but to the power of God's word...the minister may, yea and must privately use at his liberties the arts, philosophy, and a variety of reading, whilst he is framing his sermon: but he ought in public conceal these from the people...²⁷

It is evident then that the Puritans only too well understood the use of images and exhibited all due respect for their power. Indeed the Puritan minister Thomas Taylor argued that: "we should illustrate supernatural things by natural...if it were not thus we could arrive at no knowledge of supernatural things, for we are not able to see above naturals...the Apostle argues invisible things from the visible".²⁸ This is evidence of the direct use of imagery by the Puritan for the furtherance of his faith. It is but a short step from the recognition of the power of the image to the use of it for the shaping of society and as a Witness to that faith.

The concerns over moral laxity and the dangers of Catholicism enjoyed a renaissance in the first decades of the seventeenth century. The Puritan party took on the mantle of the watchdog of the people and after the regicide of Charles I and the installation of the Protectorate, the second period of destruction, now initiated under the Long Parliament, was prescribed by an Ordinance of 1643:

...all altars and tables of stone shall be utterly taken away and demolished, and all communion tables removed from the east end of every church, chapel, or place of public worship, and be set in some other convenient place or places of the body of the church or chapel; and all rails whatsoever that have been erected near to...any altar or communion table...shall...be taken away, and the chancel ground of every such church, or chapel...which has been within these twenty years raised for any altar or communion table to stand upon, shall...be laid down and levelled as it was before; and all tapers, candlesticks, and basins shall...be removed...from the communion table...and not be used again afterwards.
And all crucifixes, crosses, images, and pictures, of any one or more persons

of the Trinity, or of the Virgin Mary, and all other images, and pictures of saints, or superstitious inscriptions...shall...be taken away and defaced by the proper officers...And it is further ordained, that the walls, windows, grounds, and other places that shall be broken...shall be repaired...Providing that this Ordinance shall not extend to any image, picture, or coat of arms in stone, or otherwise in any church, or chapel of church-noblemen, or other dead person, which has not commonly been reputed or taken for a saint.

This was a Puritanism that created the legend of the brutal, ranting Roundhead, but it is a distorted one. The Ordinance does not decree the destruction of all images - it specifically excludes '*any image, picture, or coat of arms in stone, or otherwise in any church, or chapel of church-noblemen, or other dead person* .' The Puritans were concerned purely with images that were open to abuse as icons. Similarly the moving of communion tables from the east end of the church to '*some other convenient place or places of the body of the church of chapel* ', is directly aimed ^{at} the symbolism, not the object itself. It is true that much of what had escaped Elizabeth now fell foul of Cromwell, but it should be noted that at Kenilworth in 1643-44 Charles I was charged 'For mending ye pews after ye armie, 1s 6d.2'. Again in 1649, 'For making cleane the church and chancell when the Scots lay there, 5s.' Evidently the Cavalier soldier could be as much the despoiler as any New Model soldier.

Not had these political Puritans any grudge against 'art' per se. Had they been against the production of any and all images, Inigo Jones, though fined in excess of £1000 for his royalist sympathies, would not have been allowed to continue to work unmolested until his death just prior to the Restoration. Wilton House provides an example of his projects at this time. Exigencies of State, not hatred of art, were responsible for much of the dispersal of collections under the Protectorate. The dismantling - note dismantling, not destruction - of the King's picture gallery was necessary to raise funds to pay off the debts incurred during the Civil War; not least those of the Crown.²⁹ Colonels of the Parliamentary army, Hutchinson, Harrison and Webb, and the puritan Earl of Sussex and Lord Peterborough, were all purchasers at the dispersal sales. Similarly, the works of art chosen by

Cromwell for the furnishing of Hampton Court, his personal residence, were extensive. The list of paintings and drawings included Mantegna's 'Triumph of Julius Caesar', Raphael's Cartoons, two paintings by Titian and a family group ascribed to Pordenone, together with Mantegna's portraits and historical pictures associated with Henry VIII and the palace. There was also a set of tapestries depicting the destruction of the Spanish Armada. Cromwell's private garden at Hampton Court was adorned with a bronze fountain by Fanelli, statues of Venus and Cleopatra, and marbles of Adonis and Apollo.

We are thus presented with the paradox of Puritanism. Cromwell's statues illustrate the faceted nature of the sect for they were criticised on two counts: on the one hand by devoutly doctrinal Puritans who objected to these statues 'because they were images of pagan deities' and on the other the "moral" because they were 'standing naked in the open air'.³⁰ And then there is Cromwell and his ilk who simply liked them. There is no doubt about the interpretation placed by Mary Netherway on these images when she wrote "this one thing I desire of you, to demolish those monsters which are set up as ornaments in Privy Garden, for whilst they stand, though you see no evil in them, yet there is much evil in it, for whilst the groves and altars of the idols remained untaken away in Jerusalem, the wrath of God continued against Israel."³¹ Mary Netherway was drawing direct lessons for modern behaviour from the Old Testament. For her and others like her, her faith was a primary determinant of her visual surroundings.

Official Puritanism as a philosophy affected contemporary patronage of the arts if not in an overtly positive manner, certainly not in the negative way that is popularly portrayed. Commissioned works under the Protectorate include ten panels based on cartoons by Mantegna woven at the Royal tapestry works of Mortlake. The Commonwealth saw both new domestic building and much reconstruction work and it must be said that there is little by which to distinguish the homes of either faction. The private chapel of

Burford Priory in Oxfordshire is a prime example. Purchased in 1636 by the Speaker for the Long Parliament, Lenthall, a chapel was soon added and liberally adorned with carved angels and the Ten Commandments cut in tables of stone. General Ireton's home in Highgate is noteworthy also in as much as the newels of the carved staircase support models of Parliamentary soldiers while the panelling and door-cases are richly embellished. These are not lone examples, but merely indicative. These particular individuals were prominent Puritans and are as representative of the sect as any that chose a more austere path.

THE PLAIN STYLE IN THE NEW WORLD

No longer able to endure the political regime in England, to the New World went the zealot, the visionary and the 'Elect' of the Puritan movement. There the Puritan ideal would be realised in a way which was not possible in the blurred boundaries, cultural overlay and socio-political structures of the old.

The very nature of their faith excused the Puritans from any *need* to create a sectarian aesthetic theory, yet this is not to say that one did not evolve. The distinctive American style that developed was one of simplicity, morality, restraint. Functionality is stressed in tandem with moral precept. Design served a higher purpose than pleasing the eye. This was the philosophy inherent in the Puritan, and indeed the aesthetic of all other 'Plain' peoples. The Plain aesthetic is thus intellectual rather than emotional. The analogy that springs irresistibly to mind is of a 'born again Bauhaus'.

The visual tradition of the Puritans was that of vernacular and Protestant England: the legacy of emblem books, allegories and commentaries on the "poetic" books of the Bible:³² the latter a treasury of worldly imagery, divinely sanctioned. Angels, birds, souls effigies and even the breasts of Christ, occur with great frequency in the writings of Cotton Mather. Although the sensual aids used by the Catholics - music, incense,

flowers and palm branches, painted images, statues and stained-glass images of Christ and the virgin - were denounced as idolatrous, the Puritans found their equivalents in the rhetoric of sermons, poetry and the histories of New England 'saints'.³³ The Puritan preacher thus had no need to fall back on iconographic representations. That in many aspects of their lives the plainness of their surroundings differed little from that of their non-Puritan contemporaries is inconsequential. The difference between the two groups is that when the Puritans made a Plain choice it was out of faith rather than necessity. Theirs is an aesthetic of *intentionality*, not poverty.

There were a variety of interpretations of the Puritan creed even amongst the zealots. John Cotton, an 'orthodox' Puritan, arrived in America in 1633 interpreted the Commandments literally, believing that they forbade "not only bodily Images (graven or molten) but all spiritual Images also; which are the imaginations and inventions of men...".³⁴ Recognising the power of the visual image in shaping and sustaining religious faith, Cotton described the oeuvre of the established churches as an art that "tempted men away from truth to fable".³⁵ Isaac Pennington was also concerned with the short step from imagery to idolatry. He wrote:

'The ways of fornication';

2. By making of those things which were commanded to others.

This way of fornication the strictest among the Protestants have generally been ensnared in, who have run on further and further to search out the purest way of worship, the nearest pattern to the primitive times, and so have applied themselves diligently thereto, not knowing what they were to wait for to be their guide, and gave them the entrance. And here now, thinking themselves to be in the right, they have contracted a lofty spirit (and held forth their conceptions as the only way) and so have lost the meekness and simplicity, which were fresh and lively in some of them before.

3. By continuing in practices, to which they were once led by the spirit, without the immediate presence and life of the spirit.³⁶

Gross or more refined idolatries. "Little Children;" said John " keep yourselves from idols" 1 John V.21... Without a very strict watch, without a mighty preservation by the anointing, he saw idolatry would even creep in upon them, who had tasted of the true power and virtue of life...

Luxury, excess and pleasure. She is rich with her merchandise, and enjoys it to the full, she takes the pleasure of it. She builds costly homes, wears rich

*apparel, fares deliciously... Look on the Papists; how rich are they in outward buildings, in gorgeous ceremonies, in times of worship,... Look at the several sorts of Protestants; they have their riches in their kind too; their churches, their arts, their sciences, their languages... they can open the whole body of religion, resolve all doubts, expound all scriptures, etc., "Their great city was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stores, and pearls. " Rev. XVIII. 16...They have so long lived richly, and formed deliciously in Babylon, that they know not how to eat the bread of affliction.*³⁷

Pennington is concerned with visual appearance, with contravention's of the laws of modesty - whether of the person or the spirit. He warns against intellectual immodesty - *'the...Protestants have generally been ensnared ...who have run on ...to search out the purest way of worship, the nearest pattern to the primitive times...now, thinking themselves to be in the right, they have contracted a lofty spirit (and held forth their conceptions as the only way) and so have lost the meekness and simplicity...'* and icons *'keep yourselves from idols" 1 John V.21..'* and sees both as expressed in terms of clothing, colour and fabric - *'They have so long lived richly, and formed deliciously in Babylon, that they know not how to eat the bread of affliction'.*

FAITH AND FORM

The strength of official hard-line Puritan doctrine in the New World is evident in the manipulation of incidents such as Anne Hutchinson's trial in 1637 for hearing voices. Through her banishment, the Puritans reaffirmed their belief in revelation through Scripture rather than through direct communion with God. There was to be no mysticism or icons. With the home as the centre of Puritan creative activity the primacy of the family as 'the little church' was stressed. Whatever was created there was subject to the theological strictures of faith yet in looking at the material evidence we are faced with the apparent paradoxes caused by the factional nature of Puritanism. The evidence itself may be divided into three areas - the fine arts which in this case are almost solely confined to portraiture, the applied arts and craft traditions and dress.

Of the first of these there were two main schools of thought which in their simplest form may be expressed as 'for' and 'against' - there seems to have been no middle ground in the New World. The arguments for the opposing factions were as we have seen based on scriptural testimony; Calvin's statement that it was lawful to make images of men or beasts for civil use set against the injunctions of the Second Commandment. While there are a few examples of Puritan paintings dealing with exemplary themes such as Moses and Aaron, the Commandments or Time and Death, it is perhaps significant that the overwhelming majority of the work produced within the Colony was simply portraits: functional records of significant individuals, modest in style and execution.

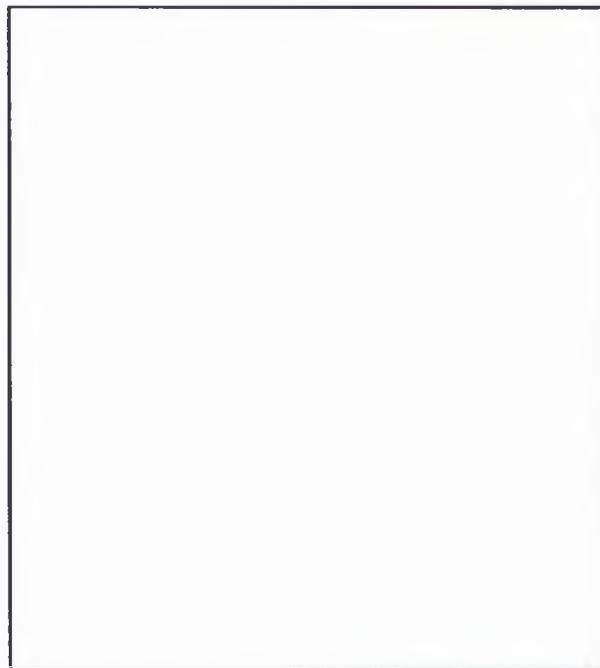


Fig.2. Portrait of Governor Winthrop. Collection Plimoth Colony Historical Museum, Ma.

The record-keeping nature of the portraits is further emphasised by the apparent primacy of securing a likeness rather than a flattering image; subjects regard the onlooker with an air of stolid determination and few, if any, props. The core determination to pursue the spiritual 'truth' is evident, reminding one of Oliver Cromwell's direction to Peter Lely that he should

'remark all these ruffness, pimples, warts and paint everything as you see me'. The portrait of Governor Winthrop [fig.2] believed to have been painted in Boston, is similarly uncompromising. It is thus possible to see these works as an extension of the philosophy that coloured their rhetoric: certainly a study of Richard Mather,³⁸ dating from the first part of the seventeenth century is the work of John Foster, a Harvard graduate, and member of the Elect.

What is more difficult to equate with known doctrine however is that Foster is also known to have operated a print shop in Boston. The exact dates are unknown but, as his death is recorded in 1681, the business was possibly only operating during the period of decline of the influence of the Puritan theocracy in that city. On the 'sectarian' side however is that amongst the likenesses that Foster printed figured those of John Davenport and Richard Mather, Puritan notables.³⁹ The portrait of the Reverend William Ames, believed to be by a Captain or Major Thomas Smith, dating from 1680, is also significant in that it was commissioned by Harvard University, previously the citadel at the heart of Puritan theology. The artist is believed to have been a veteran of the New Model Army who left England around 1650. By inclination a sailor and by necessity a soldier, Smith's amateurism bears testimony to the non-professional nature of Puritan painters, a status that would support the concept of the enduring functional role of portraiture within Puritanism.

APPLIED ARTS

Given the rhetoric and iconoclasm of the preceding centuries, the same criteria of functionalism and utility that seem to have governed fine art may be looked for in the applied arts of the New World. Of these it is perhaps the Meetinghouse that epitomises the architecture of the Elect.

Recent studies have revealed that New England Meetinghouses, while

Plain, were far from austere. Evidence for the furnishing of the first Meetinghouses is not available, but we do know that by the end of the seventeenth century in New England the use of a pulpit cushion was widespread. This rested on the desk that held the Bible or the text of the minister's sermon. One example was that of the Meetinghouse at Hartford, Connecticut, in 1699 which ordered a "plush cushion, a green Cloth, and Silke for the fringes and Tasseles of sd Cushion", for which they paid \$10.14.6. The exact significance of this and similar instances is difficult to assess. Given that Puritan domination was by then declining, the introduction of such items might be read as evidence of movement away from the 'oath of righteousness'. On the other hand, given the injunction by God to the Israelites 'And yee shall have the fringes, that when ye looke upon them, ye may remember all the comaundments of God, and doe them" an entirely different construction can be placed on events. That these cushions are the only textiles clearly recorded in connection with the churches is also important.

If we look at this evidence as part of the wider picture of ornament within the Meetinghouse overall we note that while the pulpit was often of the simplest construction, on occasion a carved archangel Gabriel might hang above it as can be seen in the Royalston Meetinghouse, Massachusetts. An alternative decoration was the painting of an angel or cherub hanging above the pulpit.⁴⁰ This is clearly an important departure from the hard-line verdicts against the employment of imagery but does accord with some of the theological arguments previously cited. It should also be remembered that while the iconoclasm that had robbed the churches of the old world of their ornament was largely Puritan led, by the mid to late seventeenth century many churches in England were gradually reintroducing images, memorials and decoration, albeit of a humanist nature. We have also seen Puritan theological arguments that acknowledge the proper and controlled use of images in focusing spiritual meditation. It is interesting to compare the decorative

licence of these Meetinghouses with the prohibitions of other sects in this study considered in the following chapters.

Outside the Meetinghouse, the carved gravestones are further evidence of a Puritan Plain style in New England. Only in the carved gravestones, with their symbolic figures of mortality and their allegorical victories of life over death, would the visual treatment of religious themes, the graphic reiteration of man's mortality and God's supremacy, be explicitly addressed. Much has been written on the subject as a 'folk' expression of religious convictions, and it is illuminating to compare these stones with those austere and often anonymous markers sanctioned by other Plain sects.

Changes in doctrine, or at least in the power of the theocrats, is charted through these memorials. The earliest stones date from a period some forty years after the Puritan migration and carried little or no ornament. Subsequently the dominant images are those of Adam and Eve, Ships - perhaps a reference to the sea voyage that brought the pilgrim to God's promised land, and curiously an image that appears with great frequency in Shaker spiritual accounts - and everywhere grim reminders of Man's mortality with Death's heads and skeletons.

The late seventeenth century - the same period when we find records of textiles appearing - sees burgeoning numbers of increasingly graphic stones particularly around Newport, Rhode Island where Puritanism was dominant and the death's head the universal form of decoration. The innate need to visualise the unknown, to make literal and palpable the abstractions of Covenant theology, is evident in this work, an example of which can be seen on a marker of 1691 [fig.3] Peter Benes has noted that "this...activity ...assumed a folk identity from its role as a counter-culture nourished by Puritan separatism and sustained by the region's physical isolation.⁴¹ Thus the imagery expressed the 'aesthetic' of particular towns or settlements determined by the orthodoxy and religious composition of the community. The

period of decline of death's heads coincides with the decline of orthodox Puritanism. We have here evidence again of the close links between the orthodoxy of the sect and the 'purity' of the images that are used to express that faith.

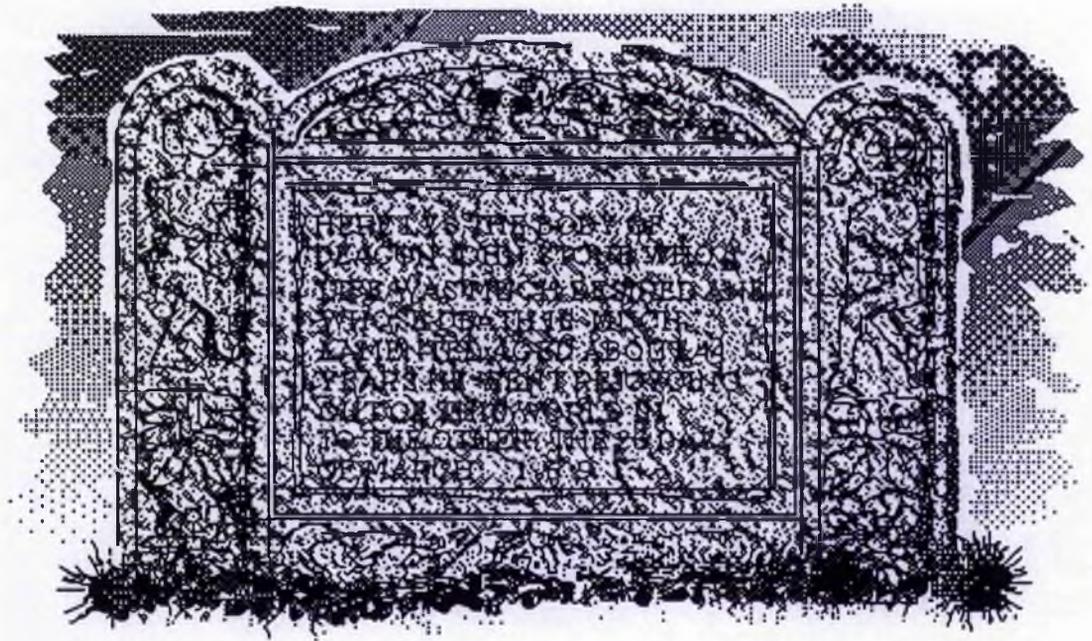


Fig. 3. Sketch of gravemarker of John Stone, Massachusetts, 1691.

The use of the death's head, rather than the more optimistic cherub commonly seen on contemporary trees and embroidery, is attributed by some to the idea that to portray a cherub would be to introduce the image of a heavenly being, which could lead to idolatry. Allan Ludwig interprets the symbols of Puritan gravestones by drawing heavily on Paul Tillich's five characteristics of religious symbols: their figurative qualities, their perceptibility, their power, their acceptability and their unconditional transcendence.⁴² Ludwig's work is based on the contention that "in order to be symbolic a form must be socially rooted and socially supported." He concludes his study with the pronouncement on Puritan gravestone iconography; "it was an art which substituted emblems of death, symbols of resurrection, and iconic soul representations for the normative and allegorical

cycles we normally associate with high religious art."⁴³ The death's head was an earthly symbol, carefully chosen to reinforce doctrinal beliefs, and as a graphic reminder of death and reconstruction, all the more powerful for its visual isolation.

SECULAR FORM

The quantity of material on which we must base an assessment of a Puritan secular aesthetic is necessarily limited. This in turn raises questions of the degree to which examples are representative, for the data is drawn from specimens that may be numbered in tens rather than hundreds. The question has to remain rhetorical, however, since once diaries, inventories, specimens and paintings have been examined, further choices are limited. Conclusions must necessarily carry caveats.

It would be nice to be able to show that through textiles the Puritan aesthetic was expressed without reservation but such neat categorisation is not possible. Puritan homes displayed the sliding scale of dogma present in other aspects of their lives. Although Cotton Mather's *Ornaments*⁴⁴ stresses above all else a religious education for women, he also advocated that the "virtuous maid" "learned housewifery and needlework". While Plain sewing was undoubtedly the core of such teaching, finer work is attributable to Puritan women and there is no reason to suppose that a number of fine embroidered pictures and caskets [fig.4] were not the work of Puritan women.

If one accepts that the mainstream Puritan mind moved on the path of restraint rather than austerity, the possible linkage between religious affiliation and subject matter is of interest.⁴⁵ That the subject matter of works of amateur domestic embroidery in the seventeenth century were predominantly religious has been statistically recounted,⁴⁶ and the way in which those themes were treated marked them as significantly different from similar thematic material in any other century.⁴⁷



Fig.4. Embroidered Panel, Susannah and the Elders. Victoria and Albert Museum, c.1670. T.50-1954.

This is explicable by the imposition of a sociological model that defines thematic choice as agents of social control, the evidence for which lies in a logical extension of the social situation in seventeenth century Britain.⁴⁸ The subjects that were acceptable to, and actively encouraged by, society were those that would most emphasise those patterns of behaviour, those moral tenets, that were considered as of importance in the socialisation of the child. With the increase in hard-line Protestantism of all degrees there was a corresponding reaction against the idolatry of Marian imagery in the New Testament. The majority of embroideries that display Old Testament themes were worked during the Interregnum: the period of the Puritan parliaments.⁴⁹ If one takes these subject biases in conjunction with the mythological and floral themes that were chosen by the Court for tapestry commissions etc.,⁵⁰ then it would not be entirely inappropriate to suggest that many of

those working the religious embroideries may have held Puritan sympathies. It is an attractive hypothesis but impossible to prove since existing provenance's do not cite the faith of the embroiderer: yet the conjunctions of place, time, and subject matter of some of these embroideries is suggestive.

With embroidered samplers in the New World it is possible to be more assertive. A number of pieces have Puritan provenance. One such is the sampler by Loara [or Laura] Standish [fig.5] now displayed at Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth, Massachusetts. Dated 1643, Loara, born in 1623, and dead before 1656, was the daughter of the Puritan Captain Myles Standish. The Standish sampler is thought to have been made as a gift and is the earliest sampler with an American provenance. It is also the earliest known sampler with a verse. Otherwise it is typical of its period, both in shape and form with horizontal bands of borders. The motifs, worked in polychrome silks, include the rose, carnation, oak leaf and an intertwined 'S'. A typically pious sentiment is the central feature:

*Lord Guide My Heart that I may do thy will
And find my hands such convenient skill
As will conduce to virtue void of shame
And I will give Glory to Thy name.*

The verse admirably conveys the interrelated nature of the practical arts and religious expression. Creativity for ornaments sake is not desired, but where skill can be linked with both a practical and spiritual purpose then visual appeal is acceptable. While such sentiments are not untypical of work attributed to non-Puritan pieces this does not belittle their role as evidence of Puritan faith, rather such pieces illustrate the domination of the sect over the visual arts of a large section of the population and indeed contemporary society in general.⁵¹

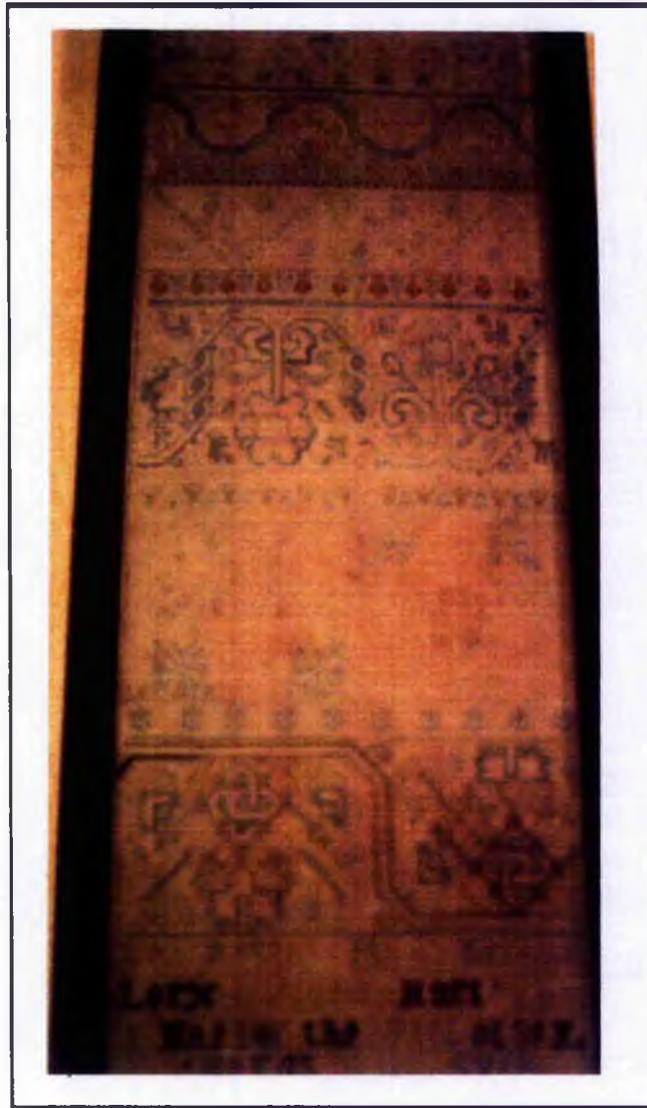


Fig.5. Standish Sampler 1653. Linen with Silk Embroideries. Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth, Massachusetts.

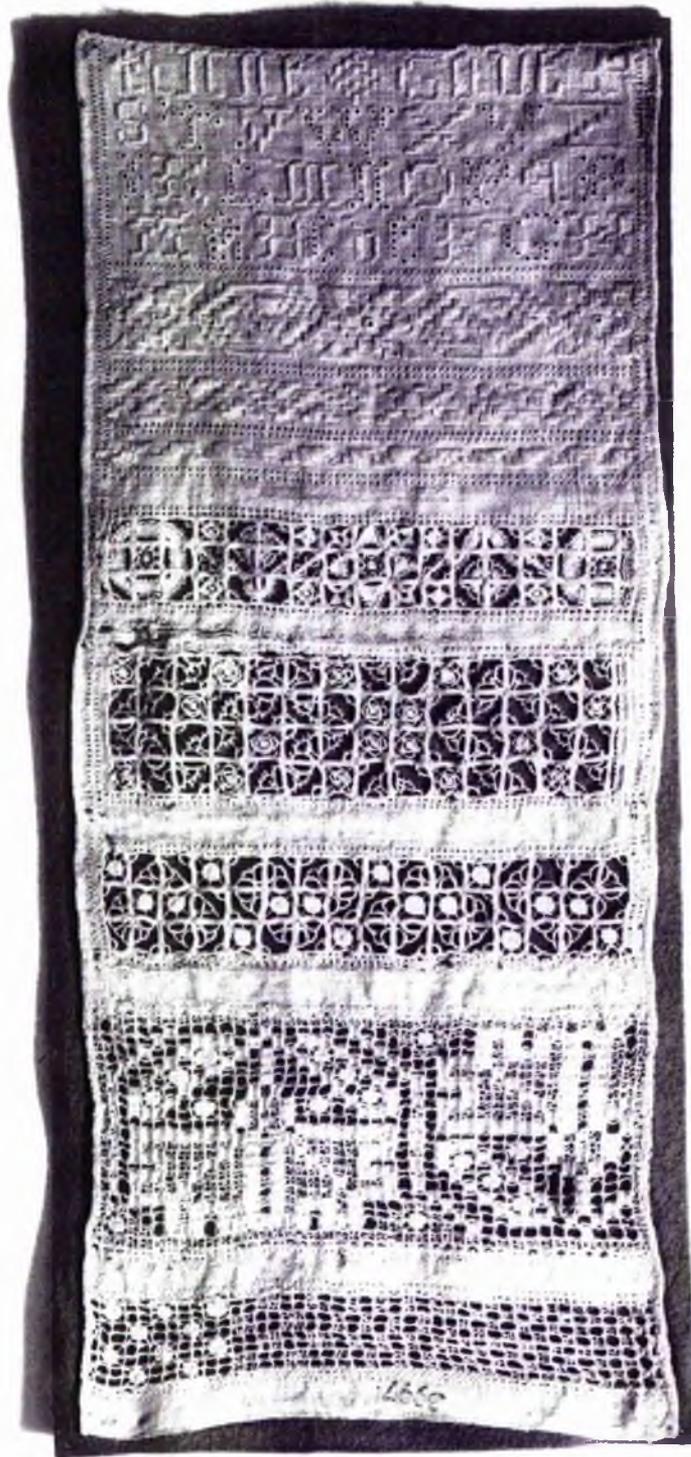
The Essex Institute at Salem, Massachusetts also owns a fine example of Puritan work, the sampler of Anne Gower [or Gover] the first wife of Governor Endicott [fig.6]. The embroidery may be seen as further evidence that quite elaborate work was carried out by Puritan households: work deemed suitable, in contemporary terms, for gentlewomen of any religious affiliation. Traditional ties and standards within a society are strong and Puritanism was not a fringe sect attracting a scant handful of half-mad zealots only to burn out after a few years. Rather it had shaped the history and ethics of a nation and the allegiance of a substantial part of the English

population. Class standards were as important to the new society as they were to the old.

An example that dates from the second half of the century is that attributed to Mary Hollingsworth of Salem [fig.7]. Born in 1650, the dated sampler was completed when she was fifteen, ten years before her marriage to Philip English, a prosperous local merchant. Mary's sampler is typical of its period and displays the trend towards the incorporation of alphabets and the worker's name. This is indicative that by this date Puritan samplers were beginning to echo mainstream trends in becoming a show piece for needlework skills, with their utilitarian nature increasingly incidental. During the last years of the century when the Puritan theocracy was loosing hold on the New England colonies, Mary became a victim of the witch-hunts and was forced to flee to New York to escape persecution.⁵²

Further clues to the appearance of the Puritan home may be gleaned from surviving New England inventories. The inventory of the household goods of Mrs Martha Coytmore,⁵³ subsequently to become the fourth wife of Governor Winthrop records:

*Diaper tablecloths and napkins,
Silk red and green quilt,
Striped curtains...\$15.*



*Fig.6. Gower Sampler. Courtesy Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.
106.342*



Fig.7. Mary Hollingsworth Sampler. Courtesy Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts. 4134.39

Such items are almost certainly European imports and thus expressive not so much of the 'Plain' aesthetic as of the range of doctrinal opinion that Puritanism encompassed. It is useful to refer to these and similar examples when studying inventories originating in Quaker households detailed in chapter six. The parallels between the two sects, despite areas of doctrinal disparity, are striking. Other textiles in Puritan ownership are described in the inventory of the goods of Governor Theophilus Eaton who died in New Haven in 1656. Among those itemised are: "6 cushions of Turkey-work, 2 cushions of needlework, a great needle work chair, cruells and canvis"⁵⁴ Such items are not uncommon among inventories of this period and probably represent furnishings brought from Europe on immigrating.

Evidently some sections of Puritan society maintained households that in physical terms differed little from those of mainstream society: yet over and over again the Puritans are marked by society as appearing to be different from the norm. Given this those differences that did exist must be considered as significant in contemporary terms if minimal in ours.

PURITAN DRESS

The absence of a doctrinally governed Plain aesthetic in the applied arts may be attributable to the lack of any direct guidance from the Bible. Interior decoration was given but scant attention by early Christians which meant that in the realm of 'home furnishings' the Puritans were very much on their own. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that within an overall framework of restraint to a greater or lesser extent tradition and social pressures prevailed. However, in their search for a return to the way of life directed by God in the early apostolic church, when it came to matters of personal appearance, the Puritans were on a firmer footing And were able to turn to explicit sanctions and precedent.

It is also worth considering at this point that in very few instances does the Bible actually advocate poverty.⁵⁵ Primarily the warnings in connection with the accumulation of goods are that they may become a barrier to humility, modesty and generosity of spirit. Goods and chattels, even good food and wine are not evil in themselves, only as symbols of worldliness. It will be useful later to re-evaluate the Puritans in the light of Quaker arguments outlined in chapter six. Both groups can then be compared to the Shakers and Amish in chapters seven and eight respectively, as each represent a slightly different way of approaching the same moral problem.

In making an assessment of the Plain style in this area it is necessary to return to British concerns before addressing American practice. Distinctions in dress are well documented from the early medieval period onwards. With the rise of Puritanism religious persuasion became another variable. Dress, and its excess in relation to Biblical edicts, became a major topic of public concern. By extension, attacks on immodest and ostentatious dress were attacks on 'Popery' which had come to be symbolised through elaborate and luxurious costume. Reforming dress was thus a step towards reforming society and contemporary commentators and advocates of the Plain form employed many methods to make their point ranging from academic discourse to broadsheets.

The following extract from a popular satirical play of the early seventeenth century⁵⁶ is one of the wittier pieces, all the more valuable since the author was not of the Puritan party. In it Miles Monopodios, 'Soldier, lame of one foot' represents the voice of the ordinary man, the middle road, who is wary of any moves towards 'popery'. Sir Bernard Blinkard, a former priest and a Lords Chaplain, is the short-sighted clergyman representing the reformed church. The third view represented is that of the Anabaptist 'Genevans'; in renouncing all images and ceremony their position, Bernard considers, is too extreme:

MILES. *What, Bernard, mine old companion? ...I scarce knew thee, thou art so disguised and changed. Thou didst jet up and down so solemnly in the church...But Bernard, I pray thee, tell me of thine honesty, what was the cause that thou hast been in so many changes of apparel this forenoon, now black, now white, now in silk and gold, and now at the length in this swooping black gown, and this sarcnet flaunting tippet, wearing more horns also upon thy head than ever did thy father...tell me how thou art come to this change...I would ...fain enter into this thy glorious change, wherein thou art so well trimmed and appareled, if I might do it safely. Belike thou wantest none other thing, for one quarter of thy gown would make me a coat, and a sleeve of thy surplice would make me a shirt...*

BERN. *...I am in the holy orders of priesthood.*

MILES. *Of what order, I pray you...*

BERN. *Of...my lord of Canterbury's good grace...and I have gotten a good benefice or twain, and am called "master Parson", and may spend with the best man in our town, and do keep company with gentlemen of the country in hawking, hunting, dicing, carding, and take my pleasure all the day long;...I tell thee thy fighting will not serve thee so much as the want of the comely wearing of thy gown, thy cope, and thy surplice will hinder thee...the lords the bishops will have all things comely...*

[Miles jeers at the soft living and 'popish' accoutrements of his friend.]

...This thou must have, or else canst thou neither have benefice thyself nor be welcome... No thou canst come to no company to be quiet, for there are very few that can agree to the Genevan's fashion, to have nothing in the Church but naked walls and a poor fellow in a bare gown telling a long tale and brawling and chiding with all his auditory. ...I have heard good preachers teach openly in the pulpit that all popish priest's apparel are superstitious; and such church ware as they did wear is infected with the idolatry. Wherefore as the idols themselves were detestable, and the Pope to all Christian men and to all true English hearts execrable, so all the monuments of idolatry and all the usual liveries and garments of the idolatrous priests and Popes chaplains ought to be rejected of the servants of Christ as abominable.

BERN. *I know that you have learned this lesson of the London ministers.*

Aimed at a mainstream audience, this passage demonstrates how closely clothing and politics [state and church being indivisible] were bound in contemporary minds. That Bernard quotes the Anabaptists (Genevans) in connection with the Plain style suggests that such references would be immediately recognisable. This would argue that witnessing as a concept, by both the 'Genevans' and, by extension, the reformed church, was an accepted part of contemporary society.

The witnessing role of Puritan clothing was also the target of satire in Jasper Mayne's *City Match*. Here the term 'Puritan' is used to describe a doctrine, its evangelistic nature and a set of moral values:

*Sir, she's a Puritan at her needle too...
 ..she works religious petticoats, for flowers
 She'll make church histories. Her needle doth
 So sanctify my cushionets, besides
 My smock sleeves have such holy embroideries
 And are so learned, that I fear in time
 All my apparel will be quoted by
 Some pure instructor...⁵⁷*

Constant references to the need for reform of the established church also appear in the works of private citizens. This suggests that dress was more than purely a 'civic' concern but was of importance to the orthodox individual. We can see how closely dress was linked to doctrine in an entry by the Puritan diarist, Samuel Ward. He noted that Wednesday, January 18th, 1604:

'was the day when the surplice was first urged by the Archbishop to be brought into Emmanuel College. God grant that other worse things do not follow the so strict urging of this indifferent ceremony. Alas, we little expected that King James would have been the first permitter of it to be brought into our college, to make us a derision to so many that bear us no good will.⁵⁸

Ward links changes in church doctrine directly to the introduction of vestments. He is patently unhappy about this and further changes that this development augers. In the last sentence there are also echoes of the political ramifications, the ties between Church and State, of this time. The union in the minds of both civil and religious authority between the importance of outward form and inner faith is unequivocally portrayed.

While the Puritans addressed dress and personal appearance primarily in terms of the Commandments, certain peripheral sources also provided basic tenets of doctrine. An example is given by the Puritan advocate William Bradshaw. ⁵⁹ He wrote;

"...And further, by conferring the use of Fringes, whiche the children of Israel

were to make upon the border of their garments set down in these words: 'And yee shall have the fringes, that when ye looke upon them, ye may remember all the commandments of God, and doe them....'. Then tender consciences, which thinke them selves forbidden to be conformable to idolaters, ... in upholding altars, have probable cause to feare, how they allow by act or ceremonies retheyned. ⁶⁰

This is clearly an important passage. Bradshawe not only identifies biblical witnessing but defines contemporary visual forms in terms of a mark of faith ordained by God and further refers to the conscience of the individual being tried against those bench marks. Within the one argument Bradshawe outlines the tradition, rationale and practice of Plain dress, as well as allowing the possibility of there being a variance in conformity amongst Believers dependant on the point of their spiritual journey that they have reached.

Other essayists were just as vociferous. William Prynne, following in the tradition of Philip Stubbes' *Anatomie of Abuses* of 1583, published a tract euphoniously entitled *The Unlovelinesse of Love-Lockes* in 1628. His was not a lone voice. Samuel, younger son of Sir Nathaniel Hawthorne, wore his hair close cropped. The apocryphal story is that it was Queen Henrietta Maria's remarks about his hair which gave birth to the nickname of 'Roundhead'.⁶¹ The cut became a political statement, a challenge to the 'effete' royalist, and catholic affiliated, party who for the most part affected long hair.

The Unloveliness of Love-locks was the catalyst to a number of similar works amongst which that of Thomas Hall, a Puritan clergyman, most clearly makes the link between doctrine, personal appearance and moral stance. In *The Loathsomenesse of Long Haire* in 1653 Hall berates certain clergymen for wearing long hair and 'appearing like ruffians in the Pulpit'. He accuses some 'low' individuals of going so far as to wear wigs: an abuse in both theological and moral senses. Hall points out that 'These Periwigs of false-coloured haire which begin to be rife...are condemned by Christ himselve...'⁶² That the practice is condemned in terms that make direct reference to Gods dictates is important. Bradshaw also made direct reference to the length of a ma's

hair as an indicator of spiritual purity when he wrote "Then tender consciences, which thinke them selves forbidden to be conformable to idolaters, as well in cutting the haire... have probable cause to feare, how they allow by act or ceremonies reteyned".⁶³ Many views put forward by the Puritans were not unique of course. Archbishop Laud, whilst at odds with fellow churchmen on almost every other issue, sought, while Chancellor of Oxford University, to prohibit both long hair and extravagant dress.⁶⁴

This consideration of fashions in male hair leads us to the question of reality as opposed to theory. The variable adherence to doctrine in practice has been seen in other areas. In the main it was the zealots who regarded long hair in men as symptomatic of a lack of inner faith and it is interesting that rather than try and impose inner belief through outward conformity - a state difficult to police - some Puritans at least were confident enough in their faith to accept doctrinal nonconformity. One such, Thomas Pierson, the Puritan rector of Brampton Bryan in Herefordshire, demonstrates the tolerance within his faith for individuals at different stages on the path to spiritual Redemption. This position was marked when he was asked to remonstrate with a young man who had given offence by wearing his hair exceptionally long. Pierson's recorded remark demonstrates belief in the regeneracy of the individual - that the state of the soul was reflected in the degree to which a person conformed to doctrine. He observed 'let him alone till God Renew his Heart and then he will Reforme his Haire himself.' That there was direct communication between the heart and spirit of the believer and God was a fundamental Puritan tenet and a shared doctrine of many Utopian societies. Pierson's patron, Sir Robert Harley was of the same mind.⁶⁵

Other wealthy Puritans such as Sir Francis Barrington, a 'pattern of Piety and Good Conscience', and Sir John Cutts, also wore their hair short,⁶⁶ but to set against this we have John Hutchinson's wife telling us that her husband had a very fine thickset head of hair which he kept '...clean and handsome, so

that it was a good ornament to him...' Was Hutchinson just a little vain perhaps? But the real significance of the account is that she goes on to say 'although the godly of those dayes, when he embrac'd their party, would not allow him to be religious because his hayre was not in their cutt nor his words in their phraze'.⁶⁷ *'Would not allow him to be religious because his hair was not in their cutt'*. It is clear from this that though many Puritans supported witnessing through dress and although generally accounted a fanatical Puritan, John Hutchinson's faith that did not demand *of him* that he cut his hair in accordance with doctrinal edict. Other leading Puritans such as Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston, Sir Arthur Hesilrige and Sir William Armyne are also recorded as having preferred long hair. One sect thus had many factions and personal appearance was a matter between a man and his God.

More usual are the terms used by the Puritan, Henry Rolle. Parents of many persuasions draw on scriptural precedent when giving advice to their children, and it would have been strange had the Puritans not availed themselves of this authority. We have an account of Rolle urging his son; 'Let not the bounty of God towards you in the things of this life be abused to serve either the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life'.⁶⁸ Important here are the terms 'abuse' and 'lusts of the eye'. Puritan dress for Rolle is part of the moral pattern of the conscience. Similarly Sir Nicholas Martyn was presented with a book of moral precepts of which his father was the author. William Martyn made it clear to his son at the very beginning of the work that God had not placed him in the theatre of the world in order to 'fulfil the lusts thereof nor to embrace these earthly vanities, as chains of pearle and of gold do men's necks'. Rather he advised 'In your apparel to be neither garish nor vile but to be in the meane'.⁶⁹ The terms used to illustrate this argument are important. The efficacy of a metaphor lies in the relevance to the individual of the referent. The advice to be 'in the meane' is of use not only in assessing the reality of Puritan practice but in understanding its aims.

It is noticeable that most of the people cited as adopting Plain dress are from the yeomen and landed gentry classes. Sir John Northcote wore clothes in the Puritan style, as did Lady John Drake, the mother of Sir Francis Drake, the Parliamentarian and her daughter Mary. Sir Francis himself had hair which was so short that there could have been no doubt his political and religious sympathies. Contemporary portraits show Puritan squires in Plain dress⁷⁰ though it is debatable whether, in essentials, that the majority of this class appeared that distinct to their non-Puritan neighbours. For the poor of course, Plain dress was a matter of necessity, regardless of political or social loyalties. Plain members of the upper echelons, such as Lady Brilliana Harley and Lady Lucy Jervoise are fewer in number. The latter was said to have 'despised the ornaments of Vanity which other Ladies and Gentlewomen too much delight in and dote upon. Her outward Habit did shew the inward Modesty, Lowliness and Humility of the mind.'⁷¹ Lady Anne Waller was another gentlewoman who 'lookes not so much cloaths as what vertues are convenient for weare; she studies not fashions but graces'⁷² though whether this loses something in the translation to modern idiom or else is in the nature of a backhanded compliment is unclear.

Ornate, expensive clothing was not solely indicative of a certain outlook on life, but also of social position. It might be thought unacceptably demeaning to affect clothes at odds with their owner's status. To dress 'beneath ones station' was in some sense a betrayal of a class system that was intrinsic to the maintenance of the rule of law and order.⁷³ The diarist Sir John Oglander was not himself a Puritan but his wife shared the Puritan inclination of her father, Sir George More, and in writing of her he makes the revealing comment that she was 'a most carefull, thriving wyfe who was no Spendor, never woore a silke gowne but her Credite when she went abroade in Compayne and never to please her selve.'⁷⁴ Dressing was obviously a difficult balance between conscience and self-interest. Similar concerns

troubled the Harley household for we hear echoes of a family argument in a letter dated December 1638 which Lady Brilliana Harley wrote to her son at Oxford. She reiterates that it was important that he:

'sublimate to your fathers desire in your clothes; and that in a happy temper, both to be contented with plaine clothes and in the wearing of better clothes not to thinke one self the better for them, nor to be trubelled if you be in plane clothes and see others of your ranke in better.'

This advice contains not only the outward form of Puritan witnessing, but the inner substance too; for here we see allusions at a private family level to the doctrines of modesty and humility that dominate Puritan thinking. In a class which commanded great wealth it was probably inevitable that there would be varying opinions as to what constituted sober apparel.



Fig.8a Oliver Cromwell. c.1649. Oil on canvas. Robert Walker, National Portrait Gallery.

Many held that it was sufficient to wear clothes which were not unduly elaborate in comparison with contemporary fashions. For some 'Plain' clothes were only worn on the Sabbath and on special fast days; a form of witnessing common in many religions. When, in December 1650, the Spanish ambassador was granted a public audience before the House of Commons, John Hutchinson attended dressed in a black suit as 'he would not appear offensive in the eyes of religious



Fig.8b. Charles I with Sir Edward Walker. Oil on Canvas. Artist Unknown. National Portrait Gallery.

persons'.⁷⁵ Another notable Puritan, Lucy Hutchinson, writes that her husband:

'left off very early the wearing of anything that was costly, yett in his plainest negligent habitt appear'd very much a gentleman...he would rather weare clothes absolutely plaine than pretending to gallantry'.⁷⁶

John Hutchinson does not appear, however, to have been unbending in his views since his wife later records him as putting on 'a scarlett cloake, very

richly laced, such as he usually wore'.⁷⁷

The Protector himself conformed to the Plain archetype. How much was a matter of conviction and how much political expediency is a matter for conjecture. That 'working Puritan' garb in the middle of the century differed little in cut from that of the High Church adherent, but was distinctive in that it was devoid of fashionable embellishment, is evident if one compares portraits of the Protector and Charles I. [figs.8a and 8b.] Where the Monarch wears lace, embroidery, bright colours and curled hair, the Protector's costume is embellished only by a sword scarf: his collar is devoid of lace, his hair in its natural state. While 'plain' this description is certainly not the 'crow-black' of Puritan convention; a dissent that is all the more significant since it is adopted by the leading figure in the movement. It is unfortunate that no portraits of Cromwell exist prior to his ascending to a position of prominence in the movement: it might have been illuminating to attempt to trace the development of his political affiliations through his costume as a young man and into his maturity.

FEMALE DRESS

The dress of women predictably attracted greater attention than that of men. No item was considered too insignificant to receive the considered opinion of the new theocracy: dress was a matter of public concern, private censure and legal ruling.

References to the suitability or otherwise of feminine attire are plentiful. The minister at the funeral of Lady Mary Strode, in 1619, the wife of Sir William, a proponent of the Plain cause in Parliament, characterising Plain dress, said that 'for her apparell, it was so modest, not with gold put about or broidered haire, that a curious eye could not justly picke a quarrell at it.'⁷⁸ In this eulogy one can hear the echo of the words the first Epistle to Timothy [St. Paul] 2: 9, which states that Women should 'adorn themselves in

modest apparel', with 'shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.' This doctrine formed the foundation stone of not just an outward style but for many a way of thinking. This is the scripturally modest form recorded by Wenceslas Hollar in his *Ornatus Muliebris Anglicanus* of 1640 [fig.9].



Fig.9. Female costume 1640, From Wenceslas Hollar, *Ornatus Muliebris Anglicanus*.

One account is of particular interest in that it concerns itself not so much with what was appropriate for a woman per se, but with what was appropriate dress for a women in a certain position within the church. Tomasine was the wife of Francis Johnson, Pastor of the Separatist Church of London and Amsterdam and was condemned for contravening the dictats of Plain dress in:

The wearing of a long busk after the fashion of the world...2. Wearing of the long white brest after the fashion of young dames, and so low she wore it, as the world call them kodpeece brests...3. Whalebones in the bodies of peticotes...against nature, being as the Philisians affirme hinderers of conceiving or procreating children...4. Great sleeves sett out with whalebones... 5. excesse of lace upon them after the fashion of young

Merchants wives Contrary to the rules of modesty 6. Foure or five gould Rings on at once...7. A cople crowned hatt with a twined band, as young Merchants wives, and young Dames use. Immodest...in a Pastors wife...8. Tucked aprons, like round hose...9. Excesse in rufs, lawne colves, muske, and such like things...10. The painted Hipocritical brest, shewing as if there were some special workes, and in the truth nothing but a shadow. Contrary to modesty, and sobriety. 11. Bodies tied to the peticote with points, as men do their dublets to their hose...12. Some also reporte that she laid forth her hearte also...⁷⁹

Notice that her dress is criticised for immodesty, '*...Contrary to the rules of modesty ..*' and '*Immodest...in a Pastors wife...*', for being unsuitable to her station '*...after the fashion of young Merchants wives* ', un-Biblical in that her function on this earth was hindered '*...being as the Philisians affirme hinderers of conceiving or procreating children...*', and last but not least, it seems, of dissembling reality: '*...The painted Hipocritical brest, shewing as if there were some special workes, and in the truth nothing but a shadow...*'. The feeling that it is this latter point that is the real outrage is strengthened in that when her husband defended his wife against the charges, the Elders ruled that her accuser, George Barr, had acted with "overcarriage." Such quasi-legalistic altercations are further evidence that sartorial concerns were linked to faith, and it is valuable to consider the similarities between the wide collar [fig.9] and the modest coverings of 'capas' and shawls worn by later Plain sects. While the Puritans do not see specific items of dress in scriptural terms, clearly the antecedents of later 'Plain' items had their roots in the philosophy and behaviours of this sect. The wider question of women's role in these sectarian societies is an implicit part of their biblical portrayal but it is not within the scope of this thesis to do more than acknowledge such issues.

It will become clear that for each sect, Plain dress, since it is an expression of faith, is very much a matter of personal conscience. Thus though there were clearly many that conformed, it is not difficult to discover striking examples of seemingly 'gay' dress among women who were prominent in the Puritan hierarchy. The immediate family of Oliver Cromwell fall

into this category. Elizabeth, his mother, is known to have worn a handkerchief with an ornate edging of wide point lace and a green velvet cloak and Mrs Ireton, his daughter, appears in her portrait of 1658, gowned very much in fashions of the 'World'.⁸⁰ A low décolletage is supported by jewelled shoulder bands and her hair is elaborately curled and ribboned. Not the sombre puritanical figure that history paints, but one that accords with descriptions of the taste that Cromwell exhibited in furnishing his official residence.

Further evidence of dress on the part of known Puritans is given by a servant of Sir Samuel Luke who was pilloried as an archetypal Puritan by Samuel Butler in *Hudibras*. In February 1645 his man wrote that he had visited Mr Blackburne a London tailor, who had shown him the best French scarlet in the shop on behalf of his master. The cloak and trimming, he added, would cost £30.2s.6d.⁸¹ Similarly, Lady Brilliana Harley in a letter of May 1639 indicated that contrary to her earlier opinions concerning her son's clothes, she had relented and it was her wish that he should wear handsome clothes. She wrote:

*I like the stufe for your cloths well; but the cullor of those for the every day I do not like so well; but the silke camlet I like very well, both cullor and stuf. Let your stokens be allways of the same cullor of your cloths, and I hope you now weare Spanish leather shouwes. If your tutor does not intend to bye you silke sokens to weare with your silke shute send me word and I will, if please God, bestow a peare on you.*⁸²

Plain reservations may perhaps be detected in the phrases '*...the cullor of those for the every day I do not like so well...*' and the demand that '*...Let your stokens be allways of the same cullor of your cloths ...*' also strikes a Plain note though the final injunctions are decidedly worldly.

THE NEW WORLD

Because of the numbers of zealots among the colonists their standards and regard for Biblical teaching may be assumed as being more exacting.

by the Apostles. Endicott disagreed.

Increasing breaches of Plain dress are evident in that in 1636 lace was forbidden with only the binding of a small edging on the linen thereafter allowed. Displaying the same concerns that allowed settlers to wear out clothing that they had brought from the Old World, the new law made provision for people "to wear out such apparel as they are now provided of, except the immoderate great sleeves, slashed apparel, immoderate great rails, long wings, &c." ⁸⁵ However, this law was to prove inadequate in curbing immodest dress. In 1634 the Massachusetts Court, composed of Puritans, forbade 'all cutt works, imbroid'd or needle work'd capps," a move that saved both time and money that might be put to more useful purpose, and also complied with the Biblical teachings on curbing vanity. A Plain cap kept the hair modestly covered and tidy just as well as the embroidered version that drew attention to the 'woman's glory'. A secondary effect of this law was to depower the social signing effect of expensive and ornate clothing. Further opportunities for display were circumvented in the law that supplied four Plain bands and three falling ones to each male settler of Massachusetts Bay.⁸⁶ The law forbade these to be embroidered.

The "new and immodest fashions" creeping into the colony so perturbed the authorities that the Massachusetts General Court ordered "that no person, either man or woman, shall hereafter make or buy any apparel, either woollen, silke, or lynnem, with any lace on it, silver, golde, silk, or thread." They shall not make or buy slashed clothes, other than one slashe in each sleeve and another in the backe"; there shall be no "bands & Rayles; no gold or silver girdles, hatt bands, belts, ruffs, beaver hatts."⁸⁷ An alternative policy of moral coercion was attempted. In this the workings of doctrine can be seen as primary concerns. The importance of the individual conscience in their theology and the power that it was seen to have in altering people's behaviour is evident. The Puritans themselves had no doubts about the

importance of the degree of their faith in determining their personal appearance for the lay authorities turn to the theocrats for assistance. Witnessing was not an 'add-on' but an integral part of their lives. Governor Winthrop recorded that in 1638;

"The court, taking into consideration the great disorder general through the country in costliness of apparel, and following new fashions, sent for the elders of the churches, and conferred with them about it, and laid upon them, as belonging to them, to redress it, by urging it upon the consciences of their people, which they promised to do. But little was done about it; for divers of the leaders' wives, etc., were in some measure partners in the general disorder."

In the same year an order was passed by the General court that:

"...no garment shall be made with short sleeves, and such as have garments already made with short sleeves shall not wear the same unless they cover the arm to the wrist: and hereafter no person what-ever shall make any garment for women with sleeves more than half an ell wide."

The failure of these laws to suppress human vanity is evident in it was necessary to pass another law in 1639. This time it was against "Immoderate great breeches". At the same time shoulder bands, double ruffles, "immoderate great" silk rosettes for shoes and capes were prohibited. Again only one slash in either sleeve was allowed, and the wearing of Beaver hats was prohibited. The situation continued to deteriorate. 1645 saw the Puritans of 'Plimoth', Massachusetts, forbidding women to wear the 'vizzard' or riding mask.⁸⁸ This was as deemed to be too close to the mask worn for revels at the Carolean court, and the hiding of the identity of the wearer would give rise to unlicensed behaviour.

A picture of increasing worldliness is evident in this catalogue. Regulations continued to be flouted and in 1651 a statute stated:

"that no person within this jurisdiction, or any of their relations depending upon them, whose visible estates, real and personal, shall not exceed the true and indifferent value of two hundred pounds, shall wear any gold or silver, lace or gold or silver buttons or any bone lace above two shillings per yard or silk hoods or scarfs, upon the penalty of ten shillings for every such offence; and every delinquent to be presented by the Grand Jury."

However, New World dress exhibited many characteristics of the Old despite the greater freedom of the theocrats to model society as they wished.⁸³ That this was due largely to the intrinsic fluidity of the sect's doctrine rather than any lack of fervour on their part may be assumed since similar problems were encountered by other sects, notably the Quakers, who share the same basic premise.

The chance to benefit from hindsight is granted to very few,⁸⁴ but for the Puritans their fresh start with old problems quickly resulted in the same tensions and discords that they had experienced in England. This is not to say that measures were not taken to impose doctrinal order on the colony. While the garments that travelled with the colonists were condoned on the grounds of necessity, replacements were required to accord with the laws of the Colony. These were numerous and re-enacted every few years.

It is clear that neither the concerns nor the tendency to flout them on the part of certain colonists, changed over the course of the seventeenth century. With Puritanism as much a social system as a religious ethos, it is not surprising that the question of Plain clothing in the colony was as much economic and social as ethical. Lawmakers were concerned about the proportion of income spent on clothing, and that the lower classes were becoming less distinguishable from their betters. Statutes were passed to enforce both doctrine and maintain the social status quo. Laws were shaped by a process of theological debate; and predominantly dealt with the regulation of women's dress.

Opinions were divided as to the correct dress for the head. Scriptural precedent decreed that women kept their heads veiled during worship but whether this should extend to all public occasions was debated between Cotton Mather and John Endicott, at the "Thursday Lecture", Boston, 7th. March, 1633. Cotton argued that, as veils in New England were regarded as signs of the subjection of women, they were not in this instance commanded

The law was later extended to cover gold and silver girdles.⁸⁹ This is obviously aimed at reinforcing class divisions. Such concerns were as important in the new World as the Old but were also tempered by Puritan doctrine. In one of their collaborative works John Dod and Robert Cleaver wrote:

*Wantonnesse in things belonging to the bodice is shelved in costly apparell. Not but there is a diverseite of degree to be regarded, and everyone may be apparelled as it meete and seemingly for their estate; but in no estate or degree may one be excessive as to forget holinesse and Christian sobrietie.*⁹⁰

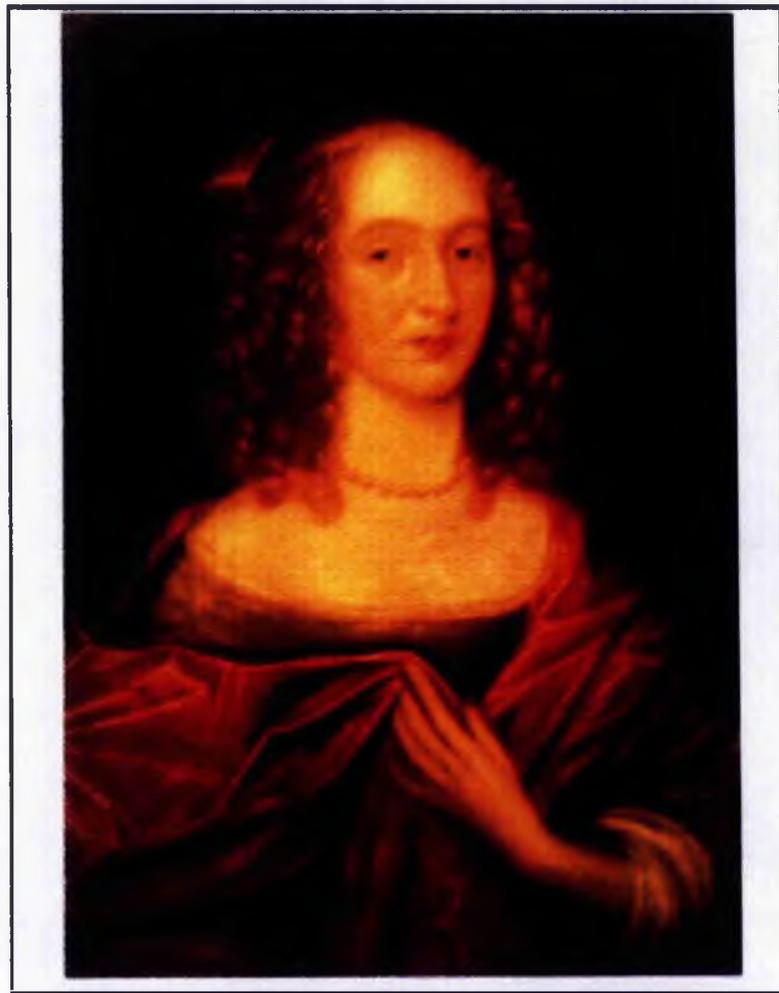


Fig.10. Susannah White Winslow, painted on her marriage in 1651. Coll. Pilgrim Hall. MA

The items specified - bone lace, silver buttons - and similar luxury goods were imported by the colony and were popular enough to be perceived as a

religious and an economic threat to the Puritan oligarchy and thus the basic viability of the colony. That same year Puritan doctrine is again evident in regulations against shoes which were condemned as invoking the sin of pride in the wearer. 1651 also saw men urged to desist from wearing fancy 'points' at the knee.



Fig.11. Joshua Winslow, son of the Governor of Massachusetts 1651. Painted on marriage to Susannah White.

The portrait of Susannah White Winslow on her marriage in 1651 [fig.10] is perhaps typical of the Puritan of this period. Indicative of the 'median' Puritan who, while, whilst giving due regard to her rank and the dictates of fashion, managed to conform reasonably closely to the dictates of the Elect. Susannah was related to both the Puritan leaders Winthrop and Saltonshall, and so may be counted as one of the central social figures of the colony at

this date. The curled and dressed hair, pearl necklace, bare shoulders and rich draperies are far from 'plain'. Massachusetts sumptuary laws often comment on the depraved nature of women who cut and curled their hair and was as much a bone of contention as it had been in the Old World. For women hair worn high supported on a framework had become fashionable in England towards the end of the seventeenth century, and Jonathan Edwards, a New England Puritan deplored its arrival in that country in 1698.⁹¹ American Puritans proclaimed a law against the wearing of long hair in the Massachusetts colony as a direct attack on Charles I. They termed it an "impious custom and a shameful practice for any man who has the least care of his soul to wear long hair."⁹² Ben Johnson wrote of "Brother Zeal-of-the-Land Busy" in *Bartholomew Fair*: 'Long hair attracted as much attention in the new World as it had in the Old. For long hair, it is an ensign of Pride, a banner; and the world is full of these banners, very full of banners.'⁹³

Against these injunctures we have to set evidence of customary practice. Two portraits attest to the fact that long hair *was* worn in the colony. Figs.11 and 12, dated 1651, show Joshua Winslow, son of the then Governor and Susannah's bridegroom, and John Winslow, one of the august Founding Fathers and Mayflower passenger. Plain dress for these Puritans is perhaps best expressed not as differing from the mainstream in particulars, but rather in degree. In contrast the Winthrop inventory quoted earlier contains a reference to the Governor owning a scarf of cloth of gold.

Action was taken when these so-called 'blue' laws were flouted. In Salem 1652 a man appeared before the courts for "excess of bootes, ribands, Gould and silver laces, and Ester Jynks for wearing silver lace"; while in Newbury in 1653 "two women were called upon to pay taxes for wearing silken hoods and scarves, but were discharged on proof that their husbands were worth two hundred pounds each."



Fig.12. Governor John Winslow, an original passenger on the Mayflower. Coll. Pilgrim Hall.

The dilemma posed by such items is echoed in the plaintive cry "was it such a heinous sin to sell 2 or 3 dozen of great gold buttons for 2s 10d the dozen that cost 2s 2d. ready money in London..."⁹⁴ The primary concern in each of these examples is to do with money, whether as regards economic stability or maintenance of established social order. A large number of descriptions of Puritan clothing drawn from inventories, records and commentaries are interesting for the colours they record, creating another challenge to the archetype.

The Plain style for men approved under legislation of 1653 consisted of a suit of black cloth; stockings of homespun dark grey or green wool fastened to the breeches with black ribbon; cuffs of white Holland linen, hat of black felt and a cloak of black cloth lined with fustian or drugget. Against this description we must set that of an anonymous source which credits the Pilgrims with buff breeches, red waistcoats, and green or sad coloured

'mandillions'⁹⁵ The Records list a man who appeared in the streets of Plimoth in long red-silk stockings and in the inventory of the estate of Plain Elder Brewster we find, "one blue cloth coat, one violet color cloth coat, one green waistcoat." Another writer describes:

Their coates and jerkins, as they be divers colours so be they divers in fashions; for some be made with collors, some without, some close to the body, some loose, which they call mandillions, covering the whole body down to the thigh, like bags or sacks, that are drawne over them, hiding the dimensions and lineaments of the body...'

New England clothing lists of 1670 for women show an even wider selection of colours than worn by men; puce, grain colour, Kendall green, Lincoln green, Bristol red, Wachuset blue, Stammel red. An earlier list includes butternuts, khaki, russet, tan, brown, tawny leather, grain red, scarlet. Physical evidence has survived in a scarlet cloak of a Puritan member of the Plimoth colony in the early seventeenth century [fig.13]. Similarly the Will of Jane Humphrey, of Dorchester, Massachusetts who died in 1668 lists:

"My best red kersey petticoate, Sad Grey Kersey Wascote. My flemmish Serge Petticoate & my best hatt. my white fustian wascote. A black silk neck cloath. ...A blew Apron. A Plain black Quoife without any lace. A white Holland Apron with a small lace at the bottom. red serge peticoat and a blackish serge petticoat. Greene Serge wascote...my Green linsey Woolsey petticoats. My best Quoife with a lace. A black Stufe neck Cloath. Six yards of Radd cloth. A greene Under Coate. My murry Wascote...My greene Apron."

Several of these items are ornamented with lace and embroidery at that period prescribed throughout New England. Reconstruction of the Pilgrims dress at Plimoth Colony has shown the popularity of the scarlet cloth mentioned here, and has done much to aid the reassessment of Plain dress in the Puritan context.



Fig.13. Scarlet cloak, believed to belong to colonist, mid seventeenth century, coll. Pilgrim Hall.

Finding the goods the colony could supply inadequate to their needs, some of the Puritans continued to buy garments and 'stuff' in England. Margaret Winthrop wrote from Massachusetts in a letter to England:

"I must of a necessity make me a gown to wear everyday and would have one bought me of good strong black stuff and Mr. Smith to make it of the civilest fashion now in among us. If my sister Downing would please to give him some directions about it, he would make it the better."⁹⁶

Margaret was evidently a 'Plain' Puritan and similarly conformist was Elizabeth Roberts whose embroidered samplers are in the collections of the Essex Institute. By 1672 she was the 'relict' of a Mr Breedon. She is recorded thereafter as entering into a marriage with a Colonel Samuel Shrimpton, a wealthy merchant [possibly a former Parliamentary officer] and owner of

Noddle's Island in Boston harbour. Widowed once more, Elizabeth then married another Boston merchant, Simon Stoddard, before dying herself in 1713. Her portrait hangs today in the Massachusetts Historical Society. She is dressed in black relieved with white accessories, dress which would accord with Puritan dictates even though appropriate for a widow by the standards of many groups. The portrait can thus tell us what was worn by at least one Puritan at the end of her life and a mark of her faith.

Such accounts raise the question of the origins of the black clad archetype when for every portrait that shows this ultra-Plain garb there is one, or an account, inventory or list, that shows the opposite. If we turn to Scriptural precedent there is ample evidence that neither the Jewish religion nor the early apostolic church showed any particular aversion to colourful garments. Madder is recorded as the source for the colourings of priests garments and hangings in the tabernacle and the Temple, [Genesis 46:11; Judges 10:1 and Chronicles 7:1], and the thread that differentiated between Tamar's twins, [Genesis 38:28-30] and the cord that the harlot Rahab hung in her window in Jericho, [Joshua 2:8], were both red. Priests also wore robes dyed with saffron. The adoption of black had no scriptural precedent and there can have been no *doctrinal necessity* to do so if conscience did not demand it as long as the clothing was 'modest'. The monochromatic dress of the zealot was not then a matter of faith but of conscience: a reaction to the gauds and excess of the established church and most especially that of Rome.

More closely allied to scriptural precedent as we have seen were wigs which were also in disfavour in Massachusetts. In 1674 John Eliot said that the wars and disturbances in the Puritan Meeting House were a judgement on the people for wearing wigs, and he said that the lust for wigs was becoming "Insuperable".⁹⁷ Both John Wilson and Cotton Mather are known to have worn them, though there were still those condemning them in 1722, when the

Puritans at Hampton declared that "ye wearing of extravagant, superfluous wigges is altogether contrary to the Truth."⁹⁸ Instead of wigs, some Puritans adopted the fashion of small black skull caps as shown in the portraits of worthies such as Governor Endicott, Judge Sewell etc. This was a fashion that had originated in England. The public revelation of cropped hair (which was ordinarily worn under the wig) and Plain dress became not only associated with a 'killjoy' way of life, but with the preaching of social change and rebellion.

CONFORMITY AND PECULIARITY

Given such views one might wonder that the Puritans did not advocate the adoption of items of dress - such as fringes- that are mentioned in relation to witnessing within the books of the Bible. This is a decision that was sometimes a cause of contention among the sects but that the Puritans did not positively adopt biblical dress was most probably for the same reasons as stated by the other sects in this study. The other sects address the question at some length and rather than pre-empt the discussion, it is perhaps best to state simply that non-conformity does not necessarily equal peculiarity. Peculiarity distances the sect from mainstream society and the Puritans while, in their move to the New World, were attempting to make a new land, never set out to live in isolation from the rest of society. Theirs was a evangelical sect, not a cloistered one.

SUMMARY

The evidence cited so far testifies to public and religious opinion; opinions for which men and women died, which gave rise to Civil war, divided families, and caused entire congregations to undertake the hazardous venture of a new continent. It is easy to lose sight of this fact in the welter of contradictory fragments, reports and opinions with which we have to deal.

If we may digress from the consideration of direct evidence for a

moment, I would suggest that once we accept this view of Puritanism as a group of people at various stages of a journey, and discard the idea of the sect as something resembling a cross between the Spanish Inquisition and a hermit, then apparent inconsistencies in dress, furnishings etc. cease to be. It is when we try to force the 'round peg' of Puritanism' into the 'square hole' of our preconceptions, that we encounter difficulties. The weight of evidence for doctrine having had a hand in shaping Puritan lives is strong.

The 'plain style' of the Utopian sects may then be viewed as an art that was both founded on a negation of another tradition, as well as a conscious shaping of form to answer specific rationale; but to an extent all art is this, nothing is created in a vacuum but must react against and within already existing philosophies and styles. The apparent contradictions seen in so much Puritan thought and action, has led in the past to many facts being ignored as not fitting the hypothesis, and a single stance being advocated on behalf of all 'Puritans' of both centuries and two continents. The evidence that we have this far looked at suggests that the emphasis that such as Tyler places on the Puritan reaction to art is distorted. It is not a case of caring too little, but too much.

While this has necessarily been a very brief survey of Puritan activity in, and attitudes towards, the arts in general yet it is reasonable to say that even from so small a body of evidence, that it is inaccurate to describe the Puritan movement as a body as iconoclastic, anti-art, ascetic in appearance and outlook. Factional by nature, the Puritans echo some but differ from other Utopian societies who formed groups of greater homogeneity. The multi-layered nature and long development period of Puritanism provides an interesting comparison to the events, tensions, strengths and development of the next sect in our study, the Quakers. Essentially a less complex group their history provides a counterpoint to that of their spiritual forebears, the Puritans.

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- 1 Westminster Confession, London: Chapter 1, pg. v. and vi.
- 2 Tyndale, pp.65-66, & 1850, p.214.
- 3 Ibid pp.66-67
- 4 More, Henry, *Dialogue* p20, 1927.
- 5 Ibid.,pp.79. 113.
- 6 Tyndale, Op. Cit., pp.56-7.
- 7 Ibid, p.60.
- 8 Wilkins, (ed.) 1737, p.805.
- 9 Floyd, 1856, pp.13-14.
- 10 Few now survive: that at Ranworth Church in Norfolk is one example, though even this has lost its upper portion and the image of Christ.
- 11 Carlson, (ed.) p.478.
- 12(a) see Mayhew, Chapter One.
- 13 See Knowles, p.176, and Phillips, 1973.
- 14 FSee the medieval Rood screen at St.Mary's Priory, Bingham, Norfolk. Severe mutilation of figures can also be seen in the reredos of St.Cuthberts Church, Wells, Somerset.
- 15 Caiger-Smith, 1963, p.113.
- 16 Alstead. 1627. p.7.
- 17 Harrison, 'Elizabethan England,' from a "Description of England" in *Holinsheds' Chronicles*, Ed. Lothrop Withington, quoted in Crouch, 1910. p.77.
- 18 Prynne, 1646., pp.472-74
- 19 Prynne,1633, pp.894-904.
- 20 Ibid., pp.464-66.
- 21 Ibid., pp.463-4.
- 22 Milton, 1641, Book II, Chapter II.
- 23 Botfield, p.496
- 24 Mather, p.494.
- 25 See *Meditations* II, 118-26, 137-40; 149-52 in Taylor,1628.
- 26 Taylor,1630.
- 27 Perkins, 1612.
- 28 Taylor, Op.Cit. pp.2-3
- 29 [It is said that by 1638/9 Van Dycks' annual salary was five years in arrears (he began work for the Crown in 1632) and that there was further payment outstanding on no fewer than nineteen portraits.]
- 30 Firth, *Cornhill Magazine*, September, 1897.
- 31 Firth, Ibid, pp.363-4.
- 32 *Proverbs and Song of Solomon*.
- 33 Perhaps the greatest exponents of the poetic oeuvre were Benjamin Tompson and Anne Bradstreet.
- 34 Ibid p.17.
- 35 Cotton, 1642, p.667.
- 36 Pennington, 1828, p.206.
- 37 Ibid, p.215.
- 38 The first colonial portrait executed in a graphic medium [a woodcut].
- 39 Flexner, 1947, pp.14-16.
- 40 Benes and Zimmerman, p.17
- 41 Benes, 1977. p.11.
- 42 Ludwig, 1966, p.15.
- 43 Ludwig, Ibid, p.423.

- 44 Mather, Cotton. *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion*, Boston, 1692.
- 45 Mayhew, Op. Cit.
- 46 Ibid, Table one. p.17.
- 47 Ibid, Table One, p.17.
- 48 Ibid, Chapter One.
- 49 Ibid, Table Three, Chapter Two.
- 50 Ibid, p.33.
- 51 Ibid, p.34.
- 52 Mary Hollingsworth charged 1692.
- 53 *Massachusetts Colonial Records*, Vol ii, pp. 234-236.
- 54 Little, 1931, p.22f.
- 55 See Luke.
- 56 Emerson, *Of Popish Traditions*, London. n.d.
- 57 Mayne, Act II, Sc.II.
- 58 Ward, *Diary*, 1604/5 fols. 137 and 189.
- 59 Bradshaw, William. British Library Document no. BX9333.B8
- 60 Ibid. p.9.
- 61 See National Portrait gallery: portraits of Sir Samuel Barnardiston, Sir Hesilrige and Sir Aryne. DNB Sir Nathaniel is depicted in Clark, *Lives*, pt.ii, p.105.
- 62 Hall, 1653, p.15.
- 63 Bradshaw Op cit. p.9.
- 64 Trevor-Roper, 1962, p.118.
- 65 Lansdowne MSS 721, f.110. Millar, p.113.
- 66 National Portrait Gallery: photographs of portraits of Barrington (c. 1605) and Cutts (1607).
- 67 Hutchinson Memoirs, Op.Cit. p.63.
- 68 Trevethick, *Sermon*
- 69 Martyn, 1, pp.64,65,68,69.
- 70 National Portrait gallery: Brampton Gurdon painted 1649.
- 71 Wilford, p.625.
- 72 *The Spie*.No.14., p. 100.
- 73 *Letters of Lady Brillana Harley*. p.56.
- 74 Bamford, 1936, p. xxv.
- 75 Hutchinson Memoirs, Op. Cit.. p.197.
- 76 Ibid, 12, p.203.
- 77 Ibid, 12, p.203.
- 78 Barlow, pp.49-50.
- 79 Johnson, pp.135-6.
- 80 The National Portrait Gallery
- 81 Butler, 1715, p.438,
- 82 Hutchinson, L. Op. Cit. May, 1637.
- 83 The Boston shopkeeper Henry Landis listed in his inventory for 1651 black Turkey tamet, linsie woolsey, broadcloth, tamy cheny. adretto, heico Italiano, sad hair coloured Italiano, say, red satinesco tufted Holland, broad dowlas and white calico'.
- 84 See Conclusion in reference to recent Shaker developments.
- 85 Townsend, (1945), p.5.
- 86 Quoted in Gummere, Alice, 1901, p.119
- 87 Quoted in *Embroidery- Traditional Designs*, 1977.
- 88 Quoted in Gummere, Op.Cit., p.156.

⁸⁹Colonial Records, vol.i, 273; vol.v.59.

⁹⁰Dod, and Cleaver, 1622, p.287.

⁹¹Quoted in Gummere, Op.Cit., p.144.

⁹²See also *Dialogue* Vol. XXVII., p.170.

⁹³Jonson, Act III., Sc.I

⁹⁴'Keayne, 'Apologia', (1952-1956), pp. 294, 296, 300, 308.

⁹⁵Mandillion is a type of doublet, fastened with hooks and eyes, and lined with cotton. See Earle, 1970, p.218.

⁹⁶Earle, Op.Cit. p.78

⁹⁷Bliss, W.R., *Side Glimpses from the Colonial Meeting House*, p.97, quoted in Gummere, Op.Cit. p.106.

⁹⁸Ibid p.106.

6 THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

*By the Needle Thou Shalt Draw The Thread And By That Which Is Past See
How That Which Is To Come Will Be Drawne On.*

George Herbert. 1640. Outlandish Proverbs No.329.

The Society of Friends are in many ways the logical 'developmental alternative' to Puritan sectarian developments and it is the intention of this chapter to show the theological and aesthetic development and inter-relatedness of Quaker experience. It will become evident that the sect was, and is, the physical expression of religious doctrines in conjunction with physical and temporal locations. This will highlight the importance of the New World in the development of the sects and reinforce the significance of biblical edicts on sectarian responses to cultural pressures.

The documents that provide the bulk of the evidence on which our conclusions are based are the Minutes of Yearly and Monthly Meetings. These represent the official voice of each group, the committees, but record the behaviour of ordinary members whose activities have been brought to their notice. Thus, perhaps uniquely, both theory and practice are represented in the one document. Each Meeting also issued *Advices*, - the collective advice of that Meeting on the questions under debate by the community. Diaries and Wills, by and large, give the personal voice to historical fact and serve on occasion as indicators of class variables.

It is evident from the subjects covered in the *Advices* that the Friends saw all aspects of their doctrine as impinging on their visual persona and therefore a matter of spiritual concern. As the subjects under debate tended to be matters of primary, and therefore recurring concern, notably Plain

dress, these publications were often repetitive but this gives weight to both the 'rule' and the behaviour. The *Advices* for 1682, 1694, 1695 and 1711 each warn against the dangers of the 'World' concept of language, manners and fashions, in apparel and architecture, deeming them to be indecent and unbecoming, calculated to please a vain and wanton mind.

A SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THE PLAIN FORM

As we have seen, initially the Friends enjoyed a clear vision of the means to approach God. Seeking, as had the Puritans, the simplicity and truth of the early apostolic church, the first Quakers attempted to realise this goal through the cause of 'plainness'. Biblically sanctioned, the concept rapidly became a fundamental part of their faith, making itself present in all aspects of their lives. Since this Scriptural precedent [Gen. 25:27; Ps. 27:11; Jer. 48:21; Hab. 2:2; Mk. 7:35] served both Quakers and Puritans in determining the right and proper course of life, many of the same moral concerns and spiritual issues are common to both parties. Where these sects diverge is over the Quaker assertion that Man's logic was subject to a reason corrupted in the Fall: consequently the Word of God, the focus of all religion, could not be interpreted by Man. The Friends allowed only divine intervention, the 'inner light', to give guidance in spiritual matters.¹ Where the Puritans practised scriptural exegesis, the Quakers preached Christ, the word of God within them, alive, speaking through them.² They took the injunction of Acts 22:14 literally: *The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, ...and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou has seen and heard.* [My emphasis]

George Fox built on this, declaring that men must "wait on God, in His light to receive His counsel; [for] how else do Friends differ from the World."³ This reinforces the Quaker assent to nonconformity and in practical terms meant that where the Puritans fragmented into interpretative groups,

Quakers, in theory, were capable of an infinite number of personal spiritual revelations. These might then be expressed in physical terms but, however much they varied from the mainstream of sectarian practice, *they were nevertheless governed by doctrinal belief*. This is a fundamental concept in evaluating sectarian creation that cannot be stressed too highly: these were religions whose members were totally immersed in their teachings but which were also mystic, evolutionary in scope.

The Friends shared Puritan awareness of the spiritual 'dangers' of religious symbolism and professed an abhorrence of idolatry based on the biblical edicts cited in chapter five. However, because of their literal interpretation of the Bible, most took the problem even more seriously. Robert Barclay explained the Friends position on this issue in a discursive manuscript, which, while it deals specifically with the symbolic problems of 'steeple houses' is representative of the Friends position on symbolism per se:

Why we cannot contribute towards the repairing of the steeple houses, or pay clerks wages.

Reas. Because they are places which were erected for popish and idolatrous worship;...and the root from whence all this idolatry grew, is not so much discovered, much less purged out of these dominions, by them who formerly declared against it in words. Now as we will answer to God, we are to give no countenance or furthermore to idolatry...Was it not solemnly covenanted with the Lord against superstition, for the plucking up of Episcopacy, root and branch?

We have always believed that the Holy Scriptures were written by Divine inspiration; that they are able to make use unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; for, as holy man of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, they are therefore profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works... As a true understanding of the Divine will, and meaning of Holy Scripture, cannot be discerned by the natural, but only by the spiritual man, it is therefore by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, that they are read with great instruction and comfort. ⁴

This fundamentalist position is akin to that of the Amish, and more directly related to Anabaptism than that of the Puritan. The adoption of 'plain' speech was to avoid courting this spiritual disaster through the elaborate oratory of the Puritan preacher. The 'plain' tongue was thus a

symbolic clarifier of both their faith and their links with the Israelites as told by the prophet Zephaniah.⁵ Matthew 12:36 also ordered "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement."⁶ Consequently, exhortations, such as this dating from the last years of the seventeenth century were common in Friends' writing and indicative of the way in which symbols were perceived by the sect:

*"Let none despise these lines for their plainness for we were a plain people at the beginning. I know some of the younger sort are apt to be taken with fine words and fashionable language, as with other things in fashion,...this epistle is sent abroad in so plain a dress on purpose...."*⁷

It is no accident that the term 'plain dress' is used here, but marks concerns with fashion and appearance as both a distraction of the spirit and a direct offence against biblical edict. Other 'arts' were similarly considered. 'I was minded' said Fox, 'to cry out against all sorts of music, and against the mountebanks playing tricks on their stages; for they burthened the pure life, and stirred up peoples vanity'.⁸ 'Art', if not damned through symbolism, was either a distraction or inessential.

RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY IN QUAKER ART

Given the Quaker position vis à vis imagery and the plain form, the stated and actual relationship of Quakerism to material culture is as complex as that of the Puritans. In the main Quakerism evolved as a relatively image-free society determined by such injunctions as that of George Fox in *Doctrinals*;

And therefore all Friends and people pluck down your images, your likenesses, your pictures, and your representations of all things in Heaven. I say, pluck them out of your houses, walls and signs, or other places, that none of you be found imitators of his Creator, whom you should serve and worship; anything I say that is in Heaven etc. for while man was in the image of God and his likeness, and the woman, they did not make any likenesses, but when man lost the image of God, then they did begin to make such things as the Stock of Nimrod in Ninus's time; then they began to make images of their children, and indulge them that would worship them. At last they worshipped four-footed beasts, as in Romans 1:23, so in the restoration of Jesus Christ

there is no image or likeness etc.

The links Fox makes between biblical teaching and personal practice is unequivocal. Yet with personal faith guided by the 'inner voice' individuals' actions might be sharply divergent and Quakers both practised and denounced almost every branch of the fine arts though conservative Friends were clearly excluded by their beliefs from occupations that were either directly engaged or supported creative activities. However, in a sect that allows personal revelation there would inevitably be compromise and a few portraits do exist. The earliest extant is of William Sewell of Amsterdam, born in 1654, and the author of the first history of Quakerism. While portraiture became more common throughout the first half of the nineteenth century it never approached the levels of mainstream society.

Quaker painters include some eminent names amongst whom are Benjamin West, Edward Hicks and Samuel Lucas. It is not certain whether West (1738-1820) was born a Quaker though by the time he reached adulthood he was a member of the sect. Originally working as a portrait painter in Philadelphia, doctrinal criticism probably caused his moves to New York and later London, where he was to become President of the Royal Academy.

Hicks is perhaps better known for his Quietist faith. Born in 1780 and raised by Quakers, he received the 'inner light' as an adult and lived as an itinerant preacher for almost thirty years. The conflict between the dictates of his faith and his need to paint troubled him throughout his life. He wrote:

If the Christian World was in the real spirit of Christ, I do not believe there would be such a thing as a fine painter in Christendom. It appears clearly to me to be one of those trifling, insignificant arts, which has never been any substantial advantage to mankind. But as the inseparable companion of voluptuousness and pride, it has presaged the downfall of empires and kingdoms; and in my view stands now enrolled among the premonitory symptoms of the rapid decline of the American Republic. But there is something of importance in the example of the primitive Christians and primitive Quakers to mind their callings of business, and work with their hands at such business as they are capable of, avoiding idleness and fanaticism.⁹

Hicks recognised the power of the image. He also knew the need for man to find gainful occupation and this eventually outweighed his reservations, for for Hicks the visual medium was the one way in which he felt able to express his faith. The resulting paintings are a direct visual expression of the quietist faith. His personal conflict meant that for a number of years he quit painting entirely and farmed in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, but commercial pressures were too insistent. Hicks' experience is evidence that the demands of faith were not insignificant or easily broken. Rather the art of the Plain peoples is evidence of a innate human need, a powerful tool, and the strength of instinct over intellect.

A major theme of Hicks' work was the illustration of the Old Testament text Isaiah, 11:6.: "The Wolf shall lie down with the Lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." Between around 1820 and his death he painted more than eighty versions of this theme, two of which are shown [figs.14-15].¹⁰ Displaying the importance of his faith in his life and work, the image is a metaphor for the tranquillity and harmony that will reign in the approaching Messianic kingdom. The juxtaposition of the Lion and the Lamb is symbolic of the Quaker belief that all men can find God in the religious life.



Fig.14 Edward Hicks [American, 1780-1849] Peaceable Kingdom, 1826. Oil on Canvas, 32.5" x 41.5" Philadelphia Museum of Art N198427

Further figurative expression of faith is the version of the Peaceable Kingdom known as the 'Kingdom of Conflict', emblematic of the discord of the so-called Hicksite-Orthodox schism of 1827. The rift was between two factions, one rural, conservative, led by Elias Hicks, the other urban, orthodox, influenced by revivalism, a previously felt - but largely suppressed - dichotomy between the mystic "Light Within" and the divine Word. Centred around Philadelphia, Orthodox Friends supported a Quakerism based on faith rather than behaviour.¹¹



Fig.15. Edward Hicks [American, 1780-1849]. *Peaceable Kingdom*, c.1848. Oil on Canvas 17.12cm x 23.5cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art N198428.

It was the Hicksites, led by Elias Hicks, who sought to remain true to the original 'Plain' tenets of Quakerism. In 'Kingdom of Conflict', properly known as 'The Peaceable Kingdom with Quakers Bearing Banners', Penn signing the Indian treaty is replaced with a pyramid of Quakers holding a banner inscribed with the words "Behold, I Bring You Glad Tidings of Great Joy, Peace on Earth, and Good Will to Men." The group contains several recognisable portraits, including Elias Hicks and George Washington, George Barclay, William Penn and George Fox. The banner, representing Christian liberty and supported by Protestant reformers, extends through the distance to Christ and the Twelve apostles, just visible on a mountain top.¹² Another important

theme in Quaker art was the Old Testament story of Noah and the Ark, seen as a parable of deliverance if one heeds and trusts in God. Hicks composition of 1846 was based on a lithograph by Nathaniel Currier, a Quaker preacher/artist, published a few years earlier. Samuel Lucas (1805-1870) also experienced a conflict between belief and inclination. When in later life he reconciled doctrine and need and began to paint, he concentrated on landscapes as a concession to Quaker doctrine.¹³

Thomas Clarkson, a 'Worldly' commentator recorded the impact on Quaker lives, in the nineteenth century, of this dislike of images. In *A Portraiture of Quakerism*,¹⁴ he records how

...the Quakers are not in the practice of hanging up prints in frames, yet there are amateurs among them who have a number and variety of prints...chiefly in collections, bound together in books, or preserved in portfolios, and not in frames as ornamental. These amateurs, however, are but few in number. The Quakers have in general only a plain and useful education. They are not brought up to admire such things; and they have therefore in general but little taste for the fine and masterly productions of the painters art... There may be here and there an individual who has had a portrait of some of his family taken, but such instances may be considered as rare exceptions from the general rule.

Clarkson describes 'The Interior of a Slave Ship', a 'Plan of Ackworth School', and 'Penn's Treaty with the Indians', as being the major exceptions to the rule. His observations are borne out in contemporary Quaker journals, one of which, the biography of William and Mary Howitt, records;

Self denial was Samuel Bothams rigid rule of life for himself and for others. No picture was to be seen in the house; he feared pictures might be made objects of delight and idolatry. [He]...actually burnt a brilliant painting of flowers.¹⁵

However, as the nineteenth century progressed there was a general softening of Quaker attitudes, with Friends commissioning portraits and the spread of the pastime of fashioning portrait silhouettes. A number of these may be seen in the collections of the Salem Historical Institute in New Jersey, [fig.16.]¹⁶



Fig.16. Portrait Silhouettes, c.1840-45 Salem Historical Society.

This change was viewed by the more orthodox as symptomatic of a waning faith. In 1847 a Yearly Meeting deplored "...the increasing desire there seemed to be for the possession of portraits and pictures; things utterly at variance with the well-known principals of (our) body."

Though British Quakers were not to experience the schism of the American Friends concern on this matter was felt on both sides of the Atlantic. In March of the following year the *British Friend* printed a long extract from the *Philadelphia Friend*, on 'Biographies and Portraits'.

Sorrowful it is, that even some of conspicuous and influential station, have actually 'sat' for their portraits; and this, not for the hasty moment of the Daguerreo-typist (questionable as even this prevalent indulgence is), but patiently awaiting the slow business of the limner. Shallow indeed must be the religion of him who knows not that in himself, as a man, dwelleth no good thing...We cannot suppose that our primitive Friends would for a moment have sanctioned so vain and weak an indulgence.

It is a significant reaffirmation of doctrinal principals that he likens

present practice to the early apostolic church. Even as part of the sect moved away from strict doctrinal adherence, others held those tenets as strongly as their forebears. A controversy raged for some time over the inclusion in Barclays' *Apology* of 1849 of a picture of Ury Mansion, the family home, with 'hard-line' Quakers perceiving a danger of 'exalting the creature'.¹⁷ Similarly the reviewer of a 'Memoir of Richard E. Tatham',¹⁸ 1862, reprimands the editor in doctrinal terms for the inclusion of a portrait of the subject. He argues that,

Indeed we have no unity with the application of photography in this direction, because of its inevitable tendency to foster personal vanity;...the extent to which it is now carried among Friends..(is)..proof of the inroad of a Worldly spirit.

A counter in the next issue from a James Backhouse of York, argued that a 'photograph cannot foster vanity in the dead'. The argument was very much one of personal conscience with the November issue of the *British Friend* recording the soul-searching undergone by one Rachel C. Bartram of Philadelphia in having indulged her vanity by having her portrait painted; finally she burnt both painting and frame. Yet conscience could change and Elizabeth Fry, at one time even refusing to look upon the portrait of her father, a 'gay' Quaker, in later life relented and had her portrait painted by C. R. Leslie, R.A.

Drawing, conversely, was encouraged. George Fox had urged the study of 'whatsoever was civil and useful in creation' and pencil studies were seen to fall within this category of a 'useful skill' since they might be used as an aid to the study of nature. Hannah Gurney wrote from Ambleside in 1802 to her married sister, Elizabeth Fry:

Today we could not get out till rather late on account of the weather, which none of us minded, as we were all busily employed in drawing...Chenda, Cilla and Mr Crome¹⁹...comfortably seated in a... summer-house, painting a beautiful waterfall...We generally get up early and draw for the first two or three hours in the morning...

Samuel Botham, of whom we have already heard, also found drawing acceptable. The same memoir relates that 'He himself was a good

draughtsman, yet he discouraged Anna's talent for painting; only allowed pencil sketches...'.²⁰ Self expression in general was neither encouraged or expected, with imagination and emotion regarded as 'falsehood' as they were not rooted in fact.

This is not to suggest that the Quakers impact on their surroundings was a negative one. The quietist nature of the Friends produced a quiet aesthetic of their own. Once the Friends sanctioned the adoption of a number of manufacturing trades, craftsmen were able to produce pieces that expressed their faith. Though never as sophisticated as the Shakers, the policy of functionality and simplicity shaped the work of furniture makers, glass blowers and silversmiths. Their aesthetic is perhaps most evident in the Meeting Houses of the Atlantic states. Exhibiting a clarity of line, proportion, and architectonic beauty of the juxtaposition of wood, stone and whitewash, they are set apart from 'worldly' churches of the period. Their form was not without controversy however, with heated argument taking place around 1840 over the use of pillars. This inspired an Irish Friend to write the following verses ably expressing mainstream attitudes:

To Pillar Advocates and Pleadors for the decorations of Meeting Houses.

*A Meeting House for Friends should be
Devoid of Ostentation:
We neither think, nor hope to see
Attempts at decoration.
Columns, magnificent and high,
Have no intrinsic merit
With Him whose pure and searching eye
Looks only to the spirit.
A house superb, of brick and stone,
With richly furnished portal,
May entrance give to pride alone
But not the seed immortal.*

COLOUR AND FAITH

Colour applies to all aspects of the visual world and for the Friends, in common with other sects, its use and possible misuse was a matter of

general concern. With Scriptural references to colour legion, the symbolic, political and economic ramifications of its use were complex: the outcomes of which can be seen both in theoretical and practical aspects of their lives. In practice the 'colour' question operated on two fronts: one major, one minor. Both are included in Joshua Evans²¹ views on multi-coloured cloth, which should be "forborne for it fed the vanity of the wicked, hid dirt rather [than] cleaned it, and perhaps drove forward the slaves on the indigo plantations to the southward." and "fed the lusts and pride of life"²²

The political/moral stand on the use of, or abstinence from, indigo-dyed cloth in the latter part of the eighteenth century was an issue directly determined by Quaker doctrine. To use it was taken as tacit support of the slave system that produced both dye and fabric. Quakers are known to have re-dyed existing indigo bedspreads, or used walnut leaves as a substitute dye rather than break the boycott. One Quaker guest is even reported to have slept on the floor rather than under a dyed quilt.²³ John Woolman, born in 1720, and member of Burlington Monthly Meeting in New Jersey refused to wear clothes from material dyed by slave labour. To make the point he dressed in undyed homespun and there can be few more direct examples of a visual aesthetic being determined by personal faith. Sadly when he travelled to England dressed in these garments he was considered 'peculiar' even by Friends and few were prepared to listen to his views.

But the major consideration governing the use of colour was that of vanity and pride; both of which are roundly condemned across all books of the Old and New Testaments. In fact vanity is identified with the concept of worthlessness some fifty-four times. Such prohibitions would clearly have a profound effect on any visual form and while the criticism of certain painters as anti-colourists²⁴ has been refuted²⁵ the historical Quaker preference for monochromatic forms remains. To this we may add incidents such as that recorded in the biography of William and Mary Howitt, where Samuel Botham

is described as burning a painting of larkspur, red anemone and wall flowers on the grounds that it was 'better not to indulge in colours'.²⁶ Earlham Hall, home of the Gurneys in Norfolk was stuccoed white by the Quaker second wife of Joseph John Gurney, since she reputedly objected to coloured buildings²⁷ and even in the last thirty years or so, concerns have been voiced concerning the propriety over introducing positive colours into Meeting Houses.

Light colours, because of the extra maintenance, attracted the greatest censure: a reaction shared by factions of many 'plain' sects. While this may seem contradictory to the complaints against bright colours, we must remember that right, or even truth, is not immutable but dependent on time and place. This was recognised at the time with an eighteenth century observer writing:

..the same notions of what is plain, or otherwise, do not exist at all times...I have in Ireland seen, a plain friend, dressed in a three-cornered looped hat, a blue coat, & waistcoat, black breeches, light speckled stockings, and with large silver buckles, which glistened on the feet, and at the knees...²⁸

Therefore, particularly though by no means solely during the eighteenth century, we see constant complaints against such extravagances as "Cloath shoves of Light Coulers bound with a differing Couler & heeles White or Red with white Ranns & fine Couler'd Cloggs & strings; alsoe Scarlett or Purple stockings..." in the Minutes of Monthly and Yearly Meetings.

A Testimony issued by Aberdeen Quarterly meeting in 1698 concentrates on advising Friends on colours which *were* deemed suitable: "...Let no Stomenger be of any other collour but the same with their Gow(ns); Let no coloured plaids be used anymore."²⁹ The latter injunction met with the greatest resistance. Though possibly apocryphal it is said that the objection was not to the colour but the fact that with the plaid drawn over the head, women could sleep unnoticed during a Meeting!

Colour was to remain a contentious issue. George Fox bought scarlet

cloth for a cloak for Margaret Fell Fox when they married in 1678³⁰ but in 1700 she wrote of the "...poor silly gospel!" that urged her to "... look at no colours, nor make anything that is changeable colours as the hills are, nor sell them nor wear them; but we must be all in one dress and one colour...It is more fit for us to be covered with God's Eternal Sprit, and clothed with his Eternal Light."³¹ She believed that women should dress 'in pleasing fashion' and in bright colours, that outward conformity was the enemy of inward righteousness which was based in the freedom of the individual and that one could not determine a person's spirituality by their dress. Evidently others shared this dissatisfaction with the literal interpretation of Scriptural text by the Elders, for references to Friends wearing colours such as Margaret's scarlet are minuted and Thomas Ellwood is described as sitting in prison sewing "night-waistcoats of red and yellow flannel for women and children".³² The popularity of scarlet may in fact have had a religious foundation for the colour is mentioned in the Book of Proverbs where a housewife 'clothed her household in scarlet'. By the same token the colour is said to have met with resistance in Philadelphia after a possibly apocryphal scandal in which a woman felon was hung while wearing a scarlet cloak.

Wills provide information concerning the reality of both colour and fabrics favoured by Friends. Rebecca Watson willed "to my son Nathan's daughter Sarah I do give my Grozet Suit and my Paragon Suit...to my two granddaughters Mary & Margaret Watson I do give my crepe suit to be divided between them..." Grozet is believed to have been a rich gooseberry colour, and as such would conform with other descriptions of favoured colours. Occasional references to blue are seen but for the most part inventories most commonly record subdued tones: a dominance not totally accounted for by the use of natural dyestuffs as anyone versed in the art will affirm.³³

Friends were also adverse to using such 'Worldly' colour symbolism such

as adopting black on bereavement. As early as 1698, the Southwark Monthly Meeting commented, '...and Upon ye Deceace of neare relations its observed some Women of late goe into black, two much Imitateing the Worlds customs in that they Call mor[n]inge to bee Wholly Avoided...'³⁴ The official desire 'not to be of the 'World' is evidently strong at this date, but just as evidently ignored by some. It is perhaps worth reiterating that at this date the sect was trusting to the individual's consciences to lead them in the right path. That the path many followed strayed far from the 'official' one in no way made the individual less of a Quaker, just a 'gay' one. Meetings might appoint members to reason with aberrant behaviours, but the fault had to be grievous before an individual was deemed to have left the Society. Thus a Friend in striped shoes was expressing his or her religious standpoint just as much as those who wore clothes of undyed wool or those that took the middle path and confined their choice to green, tan, brown or black.

It was not until the end of the eighteenth century and the early part of the next, that Quaker standards of uniformity in dress and colour were to evolve in a reactionary effort to regain the piety of the early Friends. So that by the beginning of the nineteenth century, on both sides of the Atlantic, the colours of Plain Quaker clothing had become limited to tones of brown and grey. An observer wrote in 1800;

*All gay colours, such as red, blue, green, and yellow are exploded. Dressing in this manner a Quaker is known by his apparel through the whole kingdom. This is not the case with any other individuals of the island, except the clergy.*³⁵

That "...a Quaker is known by his apparel through the whole kingdom..." was despite the numbers of 'gay' Friends and the reports of Monthly Meetings. Though clearly concerned about inappropriate colours, they seem to have been in actuality more the exception than the rule, with grey, particularly Dove grey, the colour which by the end of the nineteenth century was dominant enough to form a stereotype.

Having said which, green is also closely associated with the Friends but its symbolic use is tied to the apron. The scriptural significance is suggested by the exposition in *'A Collection of Several Sermons & testimonies spoke or deliver'd by G. Fox, the Quaker's Great Apostle;...and that learned Cobler Philip Hermon;..*³⁶ dated 1701:

Friends...how comely did it look in the beginning when Friends generally come to Meetings in green Aprons? Green Aprons are of long standing, our Mother Eve wore a Green Apron, but it is a most out of Fashion; Friends can come now to Meetings without green Aprons..

Though there is no hard evidence to support this view, it is also thought by modern Friends to represent the loss of innocence by Mankind in the Garden of Eden where it was supposedly Eve that first succumbed to the Serpent's blandishments. Evidently such items were adopted early on in the sects history but whether Fox is drawing on past practice or attempting to convert a 'fait accompli' to a religious symbol is not clear. The consensus of a 1698 Aberdeen Meeting that aprons were ostentatious and unnecessary but if were worn should be: "...either green or blue, or other grave colors, and not white upon the street or in public at all, nor any spangled or speckled silk or cloth or any silk aprons at all..."³⁷ tends to suggest the green apron was not then particularly significant, yet such a garment *is* used as the mark of a Quaker in a play performed in 1699 called *Love without Interest*.³⁸ That this is seen by the World as symbolic raised questions over its continued appropriateness for wear by Friends, for many while many were concerned to heed the direction to be 'not of the World' yet at the same time they did not wish to appear singular, a concern we shall return to. Whatever the true origins, the Women's Quarterly Meeting of Lincolnshire, 21st of Fourth Month, 1721, brooked no argument when they testified that "We think green aprons are very decent and becoming us as a people." This may perhaps have been attributable in part to the prevailing World fashion for white aprons. On a domestic note Jonathan Swift wrote to his wife Stella, on October 30th.

1711; "Who'll pay me for this green apron I will have the money, it cost ten shillings and six pence. I think it plaguey dear for a cheap thing, but they said that British silk would cockle, and I know not what." The popularity, all other concerns notwithstanding, of this garment continued for over a century. A green apron was bequeathed to Mary Watson by her mother-in-law, Rebecca Watson in 1741 and the Will of Mary Thirnbeck of Dowbiggin in North Yorkshire dated I.II.1755 includes "...to my nephew John's wife...a Black hood & a green Gresset apron.³⁹ and significantly remarks that the "plainest females" have adopted the green apron "...in the cross..."⁴⁰ as a mark of personal piety. But by the end of the eighteenth century,^{it} was in decline with a Quaker historian noting that 'by 1806 the green apron was nearly if not wholly laid aside' ⁴¹

Setting aside those Friends who determined to be 'gay', modern Quakers accept that 'colour' as a positive expression was rejected by their society for almost three hundred years.

PATTERN

The numerous references to flowered, striped and otherwise patterned silks and calicoes that appear in both the *Advices* and countless Yearly and Monthly Meeting minutes suggest that less than 'plain' tastes were not uncommon and indeed some evidence of this can be seen in quilts of the nineteenth century, although even at that date plain fabrics are predominant. References to "Gaudy, flow'd or strip'd Stuffs"⁴² appear several times, in the Minutes with the 1695 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting advising its members to be careful: "...about making, buying or wearing (as much as they can) strip'd or flower'd Stuffs." ⁴³ Similarly the Women Friends at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting held at Burlington, The 21st. of the 7th. month, 1726 advised that Friends do "as much as may be to refrain Using Gawdy floured or Stript Callicos and Stuffs...." In general tickings and plain colours were more

acceptable and thus the preferred choice. An apron in the collection of the Germantown Historical Society Costume Museum bears witness that blue and white checks found favour in seventeenth century Bucks County.

SMALL TEXTILES

Through such concerns, together with historical precedent, we might suspect that Quaker textiles would chart the same patterns of doctrinal development, tension and schism as apply to the broader picture. To a large extent this is borne out by the material witness to these events which may itself be divided into three groups; small embroideries, domestic textiles, and finally costume and accessories.

Quaker samplers may themselves be subdivided into three groups. Most significantly for our argument, these divisions may be linked with major shifts in doctrine. The first group includes pieces worked until the last years of the eighteenth century in both British and American Quaker homes [fig.17]. Of varying size, most of this type consist of one or more verses, sometimes with an alphabet, and a simple wreath border that was to develop into a hallmark of Quaker work, remaining much plainer than was the norm for 'worldly' pieces of a similar date.

Convinced of the power of education to shape the mind of the young, Quakers established their own schools. The first of these at ^KA_Xworth, Yorkshire was to become a model for Quaker schools such as West Town in the United States. Probably the majority of those samplers known to have a Quaker provenance originate in these institutions, and these form the second major group of works. Worked throughout the nineteenth century, the 'school samplers' are valuable in that they are a mirror of *establishment* Quakerism, reflecting the visible manifestation of contemporary doctrine amongst the Friends. Many are darning samplers, part of the plain sewing curriculum. and take a standard form of six examples of pattern darning around a central

square made to simulate a knitted fabric. Other pieces show sets of upper and lower case alphabets suitable for marking linen; such items fulfil the demands of a 'plain' people, being both utilitarian and useful devices for inducting children into society, while at the same time teaching industry, patience and perseverance.

A Minute of the Quaker's London Yearly Meeting of 1778 stated that "It is proposed that the principles we profess be diligently inculcated, and due care taken to preserve the children from bad habits and immoral conduct...That the girls also be instructed in housewifery and useful needlework."

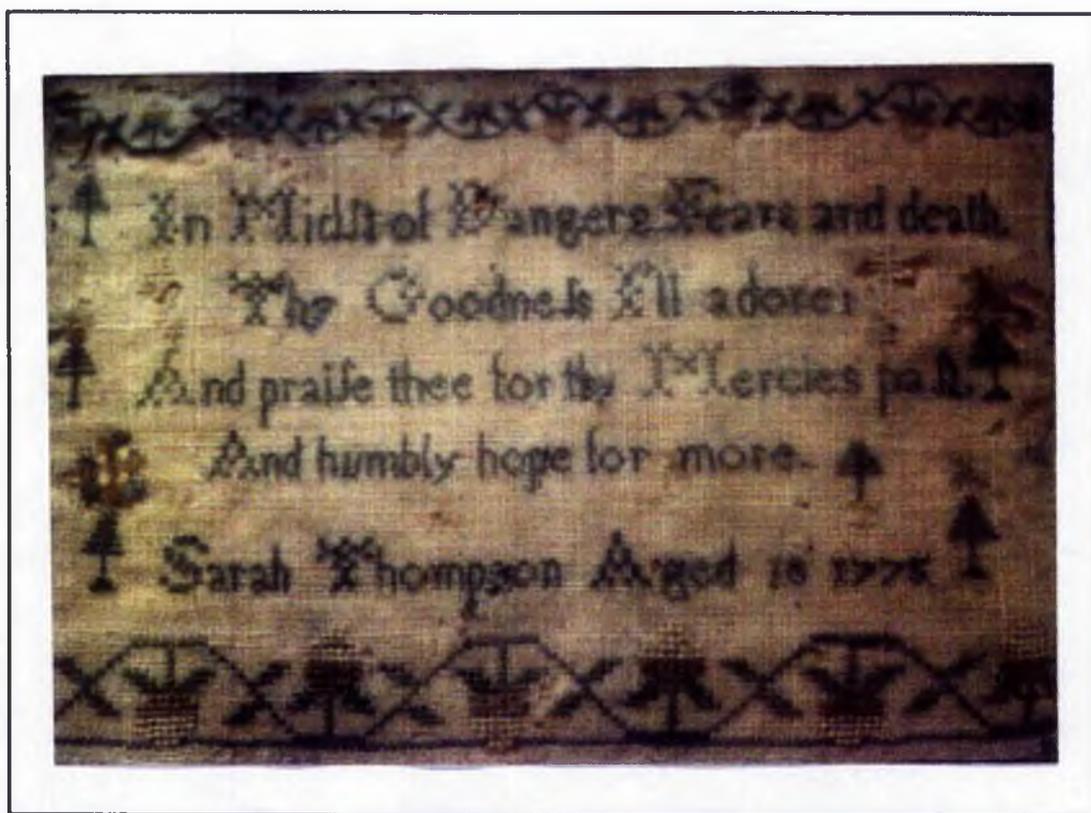


Fig.17. Sampler, Sarah Thompson, 1775. Salem Historical Society.

The working of the more elaborate samplers undoubtedly included an element of recreational activity. Pieces of this type occur generally later in the

sect's history and stylistically-similar pieces were produced well into the first quarter of the nineteenth century [fig.18]. Many, as is the example illustrated here, were the work of pupils at the most famous of the Quaker Schools; West-Town, Philadelphia.

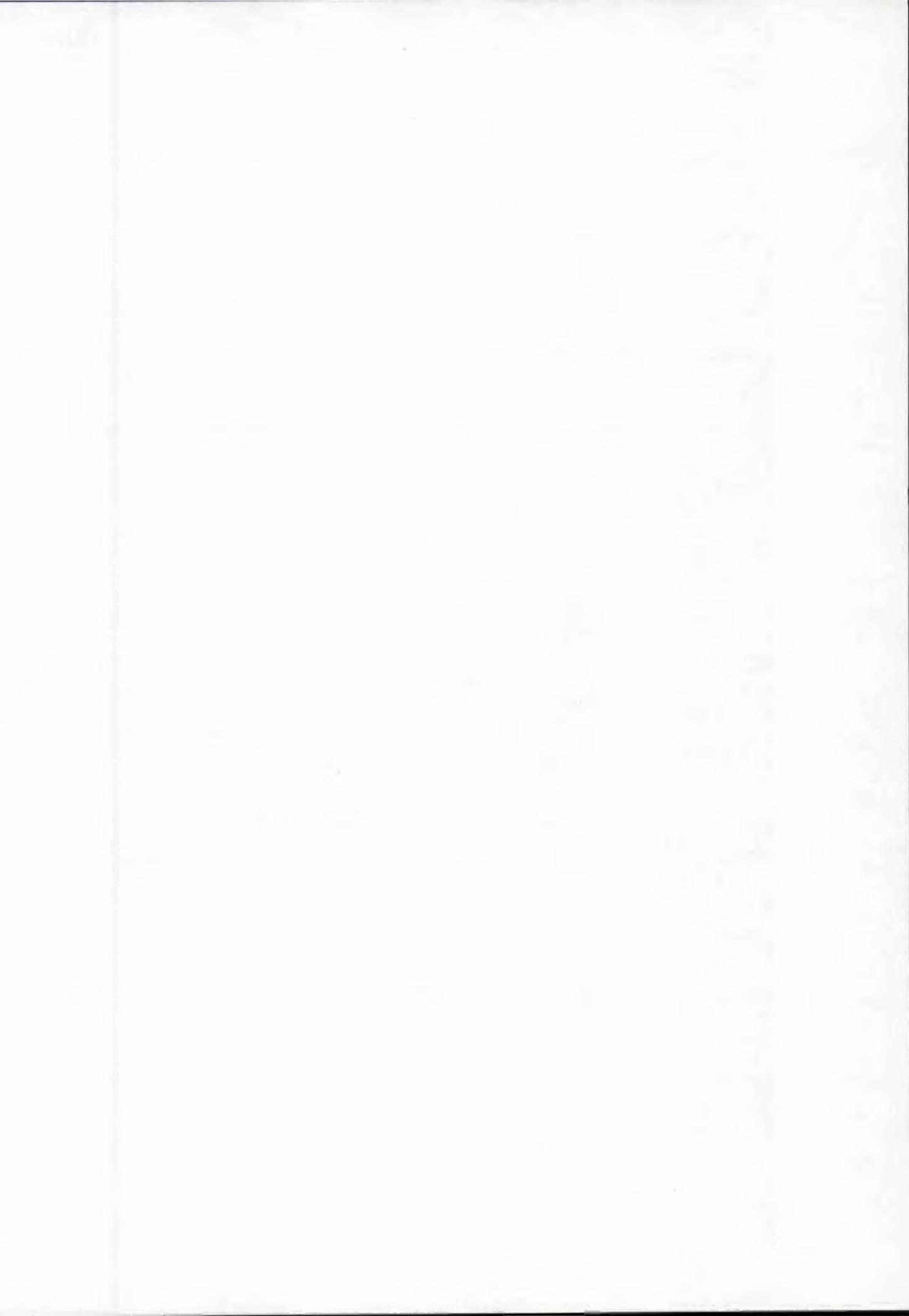
West Town school opened in 1799, staffed by Quakers and under the direct supervision of representatives from the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. As such the output of the school may be seen as a barometer of Quakerism over the best part of a century. Though each of the examples seen in this group are evidently intended to be framed, they also contain an educational element in that the verses chosen were morally instructive.

In the example in fig.18 the verse reads:

An Address

*Thou Power Supreme,
Renew my faith - restore my wounded rest,
And teach me what thy will decree is best,
On this firm rock, Oh, let my feet be staid,
Until they tread the lone vale dark with shade,
Til my faint heart shall feel its latest pain,
And throb no more in this cold brest again,
Til Dying life to life eternal tend,
Hope spring to joy, and faith in vision end.*

The typical vine motif is seen below the verses. Though it is impossible to be adamant, one may speculate that the vine is a debased memory of the Christian ivy symbol representative of fidelity and life eternal.



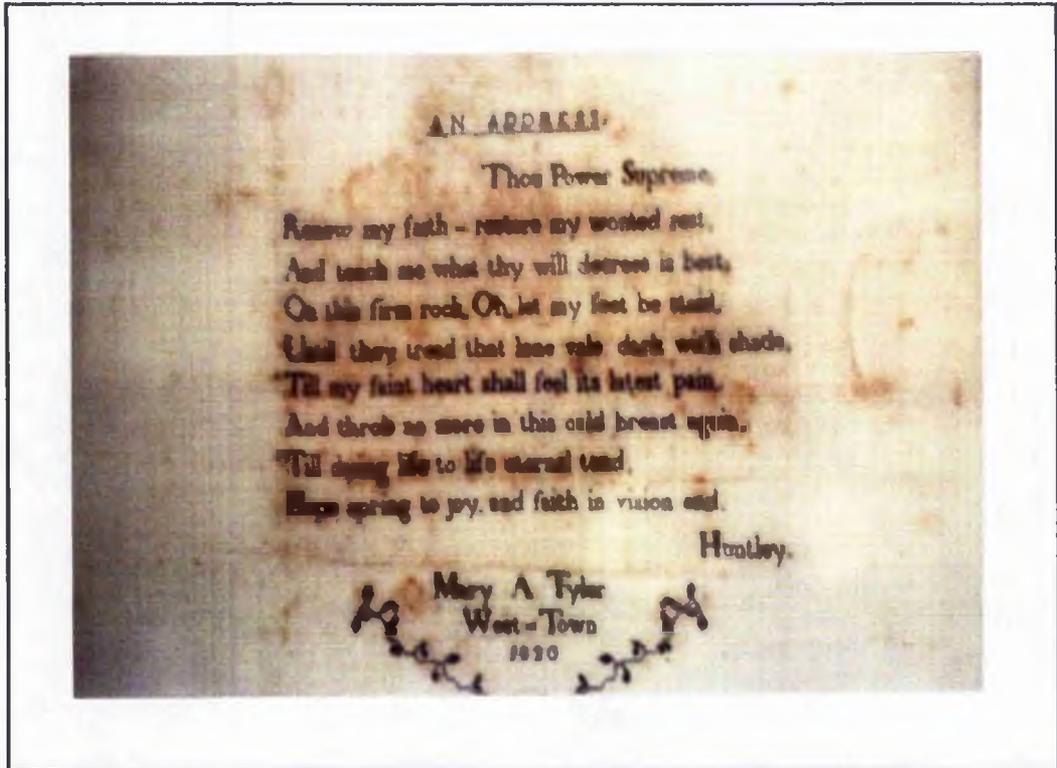


Fig.18. Sampler, Mary A.Tyler, West Town School, 1820. Salem Historical Society.

A West Town sampler in the collections of The Chester County Historical Society [fig.19] is representative of the second type of sampler worked in the Schools. These School samplers date from between about 1800 and 1815. More ornate than the earlier examples, this period marks a doctrinally-led stylistic shift; the mark of a growing accommodation with the World that was later to result in the Orthodox/Hicksite schism.



Fig. 19. Elizabeth Rowland, West Town School, 1803.

Signed Elizabeth Rowland 1803, in comparison with earlier pieces, though still less flamboyant than many contemporary 'Worldly' examples., it is nevertheless 'gay'. There is a very similar piece in the same collection, which uses the same central cartouche and wreath, with the addition of doves, symbolic of peace and forgiveness, and is edged with the trailing band seen to the right of centre in the Rowland piece. Though signed it is not dated nor attributed to the School, but does incorporate the more usual verses of a school piece.⁴⁴ By 1818 the norm was for samplers to be almost severe in their plainness.⁴⁵ This may be seen as a reaction against increasing worldliness and renewed moves within the Society to establish some form of consensus in creed and behaviour.



Fig.20. Sampler, Ann H Vodges, Willistown, Chester Pa. 23.5cm x 25.5cm. Chester County Historical Society. Ma.

The third group of samplers follow the 'school' type chronologically. The change in style is dramatic and follows the Orthodox-Hicksite divide of 1827. Orthodox samplers, such as that by Ann Vodges, follow mainstream stylistic trends and reflect increasing contacts with the 'World'. In fig. 21 the impact of the surrounding Pennsylvania German community can be observed and in the colouring and motifs that surround the central cartouche, the cultural overlay is evidently stronger than the injunction to be 'plain'. That the ethnic 'weighting' of the surrounding community is able to make itself felt is directly attributable to the stance taken on the injunction to live removed from the World, avoiding cultural 'contamination'. Pennsylvania German influences can also be seen in other samplers in the collections of the Chester County Historical Society, notably those of Emma Jane Baker and Zillah Monks, both dated 1829.

There are a handful of motifs particularly associated with Friends' work.

It is uncertain whether these are drawn from traditional sources or whether they once held symbolic meaning.



Fig.21. Sampler, Sarah A Lorabough. 1847. Salem County Historical Society.

One such is the Swan beneath a tree, which may be seen in the centre of the bottom row of motifs in the Rowland sampler. The small bird and vine/vase elements, seen bottom centre [fig. 20] are possibly references to the Dove of Peace. If we compare the bird and vase elements in the Rowland sampler, with that of Ann H. Vodge, dated 1823, we can see both similarities and stylistic variants. Each of these images occurs repeatedly in work originating in and around Philadelphia and New Jersey - an occurrence ascribable to either limited numbers of teachers or accepted printed sources. With some twenty years separating the two pieces this was clearly a motif long associated with the Friends, despite the repudiation of overt symbolism, and suggesting that they had a continued cultural relevance beyond that fleeting popularity enjoyed by designs in mainstream society.

Literary references are useful sources of information concerning the way in which the Friends viewed embroideries. That needlework was considered an

'improving' and suitably industrious way of spending the time is suggested by an entry in the diary of Sally Wistar who recorded that a visitor "observed my sampler, which was in full view. Wish'd I would teach the Virginians some of my needle wisdom; they were the laziest girls in the World."⁴⁶ - this at a time when 'Worldly' samplers were becoming merely a means to display female refinement.

The Quaker home of the eighteenth century also included woven bed-hangings and jacquard-woven coverlets to keep out the harsh winters of the Atlantic sea-board. With the World these were a prime vehicle for ornamentation and the degree to which this applies to those that may be attributed to Quaker households is indicative of the position of the family in the doctrinal hierarchy of Friends. One example with a Quaker provenance is in light and dark indigo, terracotta and cream and shows a rich and elaborate pattern of trees, flowers and birds.⁴⁷ Stylistically and technically it shows influences from both the Welsh and German weavers of Pennsylvania and is anything but 'Plain'. Such cultural/sectarian 'contamination/accommodation' is in part due to ^{the fact} that the Quakers lived much more as part of the 'World' than many other sects - a state doctrinally determined - and their patterns of female education and social mores to a great extent mirror those of mainstream society.

Much information concerning attitudes towards faith and textiles can be gleaned from the diaries of eighteenth century Friends - diaries such as that of Elizabeth Sandwich, née Drinker, born in Philadelphia in 1735 into a wealthy family. Her diary dates from 1758 when at the age of eighteen she records the start of work on "a large worsted Bible cover". Such articles were both morally and doctrinally suitable work for a young woman, conforming to strictures against purely decorative work, yet serving to occupy time not spent involved in socially useful enterprises. This piece is still in the possession of her family.

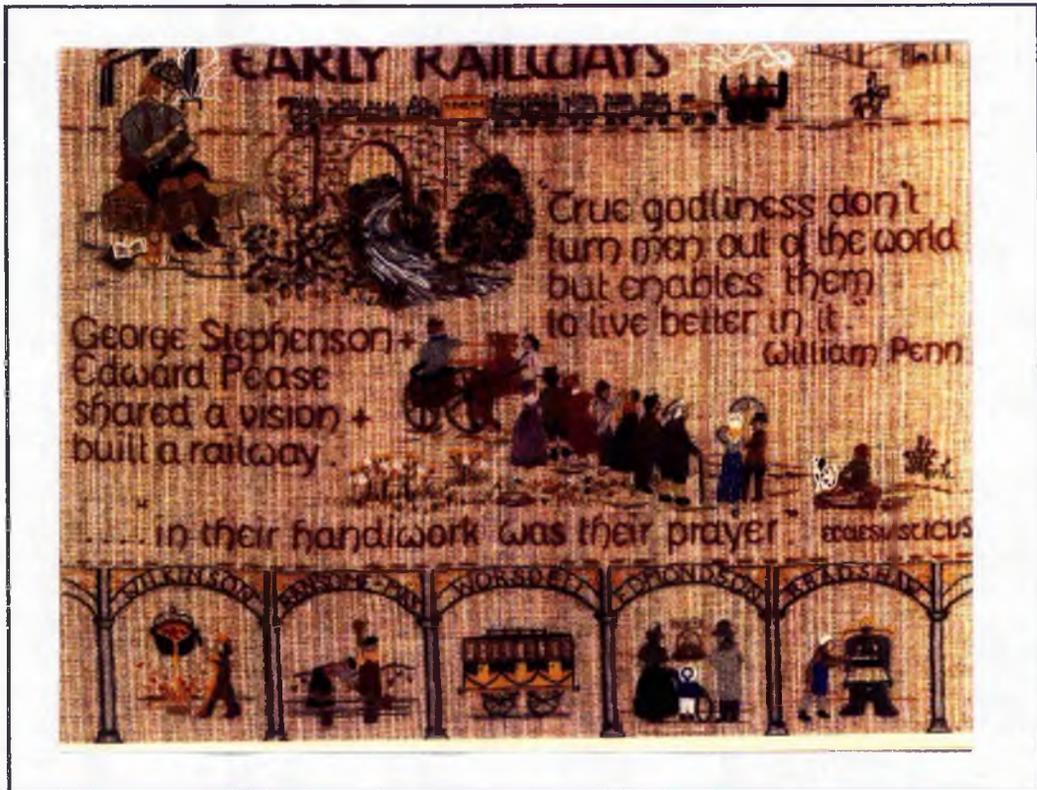


Fig.22. Panel D7 of the Quaker Tapestry ©

The embroidery repertoire included spectacle cases, silk globes and more rarely pictures of their school: it is just possible to envisage each as complying with the doctrinal parameters of practical and educational utility. As might be expected, more overt compliance is seen in the catalogue of sewn items that each girl was expected to learn to make at a Quaker school. The list for the New York African Free-School, in 1824, includes shirts, pillowcases, sheets, cravats, towels, handkerchiefs, ribands and collars, dress for scholars, bench covers, pocket books, pin cushions and knitted socks and suspenders.⁴⁸ These are all utilitarian items and would have given little scope for any ornamentation beyond marking with the owners initials. The 'fancy' part of the curriculum pales into insignificance in comparison.

Contemporary Quakers have reaffirmed the importance of textiles as a tool of their faith by creating the 'Quaker Tapestry'. The Tapestry is a series of seventy five separate crewel embroidered panels, each measuring 25" wide

by 21" deep. [fig.22]: note the inclusion of the significant verse from Ecclesiasticus "...in their handiwork was their prayer." The work is not a history as such but to quote Anne Wynn Wilson, "a celebration of insights" that have motivated the Religious Society of Friends since 1652.⁴⁹ The embroiderers are members of a cooperative society striving to encourage communication between children and adults in meeting, to forge a sense of community by connecting members in scattered meetings and to extend friendship to groups around the world. The tapestry was planned to help the spiritual needs of expression.⁵⁰ Before the cartoon could be drawn the artists had to be clear about their true motivation and insight. One Quaker involved in this process wrote of the spiritual involvement that she experienced: "For a moment (for these things only come in moments) all came into focus: former Friends and we ourselves, faith and the work of our hands, death as a part of life, all one." ⁵¹

The original concept behind the embroidery was an exploration of Quaker history. However, as discussions for the project progressed those Friends involved discovered that they were finding a way back into the basic grounding of their Faith. They began to think of the Tapestry as a celebration of Quaker insights, an exploration of the mystery that led early Quakers to call themselves the 'Children of the Light'. Modern Quakers involved in this work were thus recreating the experiences of their forefathers in voicing their faith through a textile.

QUILTS

The form that quilts took in Quaker households may also be read as indicators of individual conscience. The earliest quilt attributed to Quaker ownership is that of Elizabeth Coates Paschall [1702-1767], now in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Elizabeth's whole-cloth quilt is finely worked with a central floral medallion, an inner clamshell border and an outer row of plumes, each tipped with a flower. In that this pattern is known

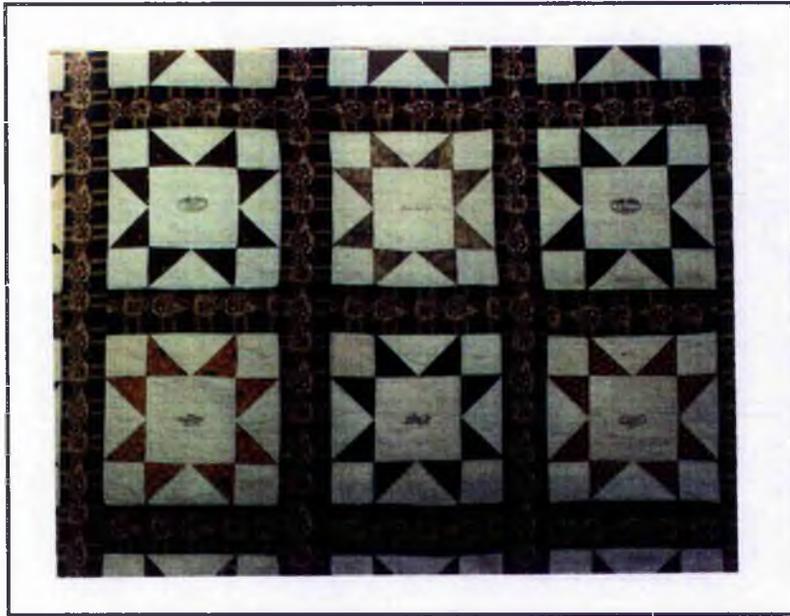
in the United Kingdom as 'Prince of Wales Feathers' is evidence that even quilting patterns were thought of in symbolic terms by Plain sects. The background is filled with a diamond pattern and the whole is backed with a printed Indian cotton. Though Elizabeth was American born, the quilt is stylistically similar to those worked in England at this time. Such whole-cloth quilts, perhaps because of their relative plainness, remained popular with the Friends well into the nineteenth century when the complex pieced patterns had virtually superseded such plain quilts in the 'World'.

This is not to suggest that pieced quilts did not form part of the Friends tradition. Rather the marked popularity of Signature or Friendship quilts closely reflects the sectarian nature, the unity, of the Friends. The stencilled signatures can be seen quite clearly on the Evening Star Friendship quilt made for Sarah Brock [fig.23]. Friends throughout the Delaware Valley pieced large numbers of these quilts during the middle years of the nineteenth century. Of the twenty Quaker quilts in the Winterthur collection, all but two are of the Friendship type and those are Album quilts.⁵² As a body of work Friendship quilts show stylistic imperatives that are governed by the Friends' religious beliefs. Intended to commemorate an event or individual, they not only present a picture of the society, but provide a pattern-book of the textiles favoured or permitted by the local Meeting. Regional variations in these quilts exist, and significantly it is not, on the whole, the patterns that vary, but the colours in which they are worked.

The quilts of the early to mid nineteenth century show colours that are soft and subtle, mostly greens and browns, representing the palette adopted by the Friends at that period, but also displaying a wider variety of fabric types than are seen in earlier pieces. Fig. 23 is typical of this muted palette.

The quilts that are associated with weddings, either as a bridal gift or to commemorate the event by using scrap fabrics from the gowns, tend to incorporate the richest fabrics. They also serve to reinforce the dominance of

Quaker doctrine in that while new gowns might be acquired for the Meeting, no symbolic colour or forms pertained.



23. *Evening Star Friendship Quilt* made for Sarah Brock. Doylestown, Pennsylvania. c.1824-50. Cotton; 107" x 124" Mercer Museum. No.82.10.1.

Mid and late nineteenth century quilts are physically and stylistically a separate group. These quilts are most often of calico, in many instances patterned. Though the earlier colour range persisted in many examples, an equal number of quilts, of which the Pennock Album quilt is representative [fig.24] displayed a wider spectrum of colours, while still retaining the overall impression of being a 'plain' quilt.



Fig.24. Pennock Album Quilt. Probably made by Isabelle Pennock Lukens for Sarah Wistar Pennock in Philadelphia and Chester County, Pa. c.1842-3. Cotton, silk; 66" x 66". Chester County Historical Society. No.133

Block patterns can exhibit the simplicity that one might expect of a Plain sect or the exuberance of the World depending on date and the religious stance of the maker. The most popular patterns were the Album patch and simple stars. The pieced Friendship quilt of Martha Lee⁵³ [fig.25] dated 1850-51, from Stonersville, Berks. County, Pennsylvania is representative of the quilts of plain Friends of the period. Interestingly its basic form shows cross-cultural influences, with the wide border common to Amish quilts of this area. Predominantly of cotton with a few satin inclusions, the colours are largely muted, but the inclusion of printed fabrics and the once-bright yellow of two blocks would be enough to mark it as non-Pennsylvania Amish; quite apart from the signatures in the centre of each block, which, unusually for Quaker work, are stencilled. The pattern is the Ohio Star, set on edge.

Rachel Taylors' Centre Square Variation quilt [fig.26] also shows Amish/Pennsylvania-German influences. The Centre-Square variation and wool and linen mix is common with these people but unusual for Friends whose quilts are predominantly silk or cotton. Rachel was a resident of Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1811, and a member of the conservative, rural, Bradford Monthly Meeting. A scrap quilt, the glazed blue centre and inner corner blocks were apparently cut from a petticoat. The quilt is signed and dated.

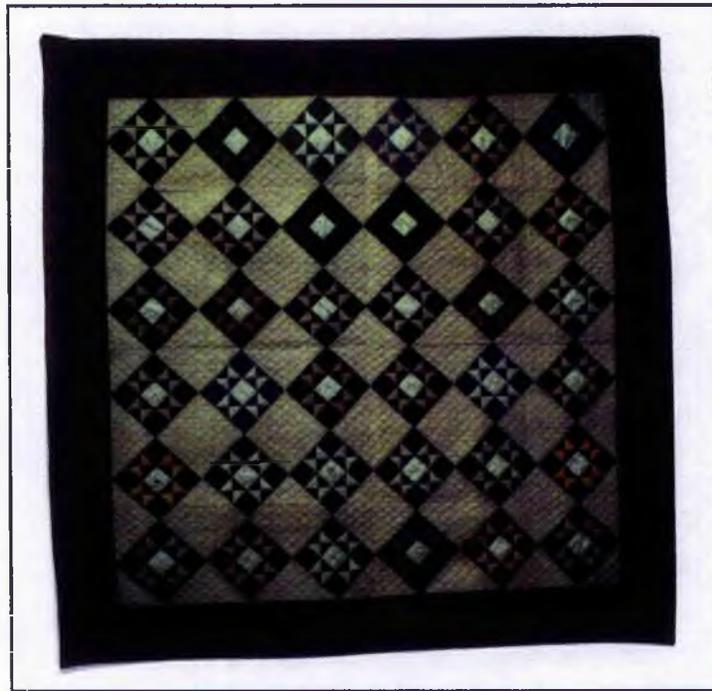


Fig.25. Ohio Star Friendship Quilt. Probably pieced by Martha Lee for Elizabeth Lee, from Stonersville, Berks. County, Pennsylvania c.1850-1. Cotton, Silk, Linen,; 96" x 96". National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution Museum. No.384.11.

Although geographically close to the Baltimore area where appliqué quilts were a tradition, such 'fancy' quilts were uncommon among the 'Plain' Friends of the Delaware Valley. The appliquéd quilt from Chester County Pennsylvania c.1846-48 [fig.27] is therefore unusual. It was made, probably as a wedding

present, by Mary Preston.⁵⁴ Showing influences of the Pennsylvania-German technique of *scherenschnitte*,⁵⁵ a popular handicraft amongst all groups at this period, in technique and style it is an unusual quilt. The blocks are of both printed and plain cottons, and enclose signatures of residents from Plum Grove, Philadelphia, and Wilmington, Delaware. Most Quaker appliquéed quilts use only two colours rather than the more usual three of the Baltimore quilt.

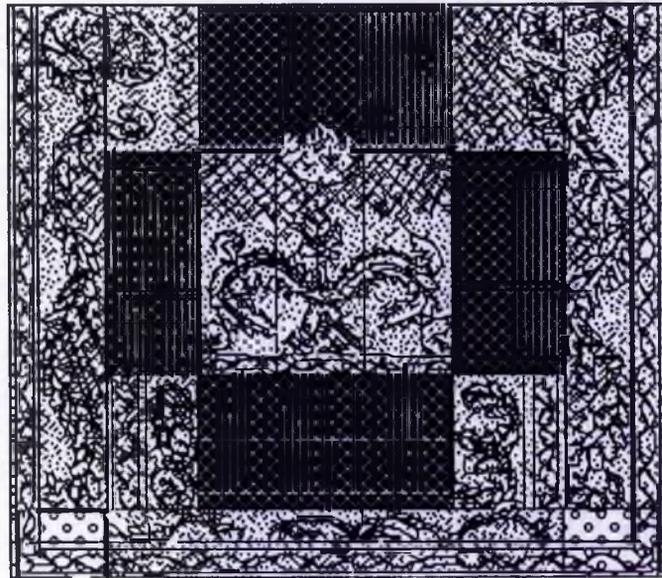


Fig. 26. Centre Square Variation quilt. [impression] Rachel Taylor, Bradford Township, Chester County, Pa. c.1811. Collection Eleanor Marshall Reynolds.

The overall Quaker tendency to choose a uniform pattern for their tops gives their work a cohesion that may be likened to both their sense of community and their faith. Whilst individuals are commemorated through 'Friendship quilt signatures', their contribution is subservient to the whole concept. The values of equality and community are thus present in these textiles. The importance of the family is also expressed through, or rather on, these quilts. Nancy Tomes⁵⁶ studied the patterns of kinship within Quaker families in late eighteenth century Philadelphia. She observed that at this period large numbers of family members were resident in quite small geographic areas. These kinship groups are represented by these signatures.

The Pennock Quilt [fig.24] includes a



Fig. 27. Appliqué quilt, c. 1850 Cotton. Chester County Historical Museum.

genealogy while the Samuel Hancock quilt [fig.28] features seventy-five signatures, sixty-two of which belong to relatives, largely in southern New Jersey.

Signature quilts cemented crumbling family networks during the Orthodox-Hicksite Separation of 1827. The Hicksites remained the dominant group and their quilts can be seen to be continuing the tradition in which they

had been raised, reflecting the dominant values of their community.⁵⁷ The Eliza Naubin Quilt refers to this separation with the text:

*The sects divide and subdivide again
Like rivers seeking still the main
The nice distinction lies but in the name
For virtue truth and goodness are the same.*⁵⁸



Fig.28. Hancock Album Quilt, possibly made by Charlotte Gillingham for Samuel Padgett Hancock, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. c.1843-3. Cotton chintz, satin, brocade and chiffon silk; 97" x 127". Philadelphia Museum of Art. No. 45.35.1.

Album quilts were mainly the product of the Orthodox towns, and through their richer fabrics represent the growing urban prosperity that Orthodox families sought. The Hancock quilt is an example.⁵⁹ Appliquéd and pieced, this quilt features bright pink, yellow, red and green cotton chintz, brocade, fine silk and satin, with embroidery embellishment and written verses. This quilt is also a visual illustration of the breakdown in Quaker

doctrinal uniformity - the same unity that formed the aesthetic represented in the Friendship quilts. The difference in social status and the urban/country [Orthodox/Hicksite] divide is evident if one compares this quilt to that made for Samuel Hancock's cousin, Mary Jane Pancoast, in 1841⁶⁰ [fig.29]. Though this top features sixteen of the same names as the Hancock quilt including that of Samuel Hancock, it is a simple Friendship quilt of subdued colour and cotton fabrics, representative of her rural background.

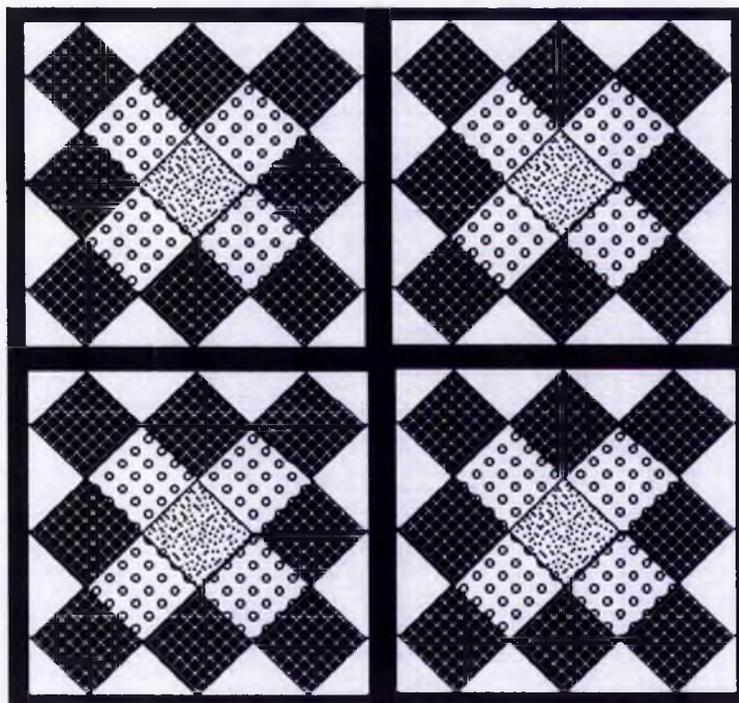


Fig.29. Detail: Pancoast Album Patch Quilt. c. 1841-52. Made by Mary Jane Pancoast,

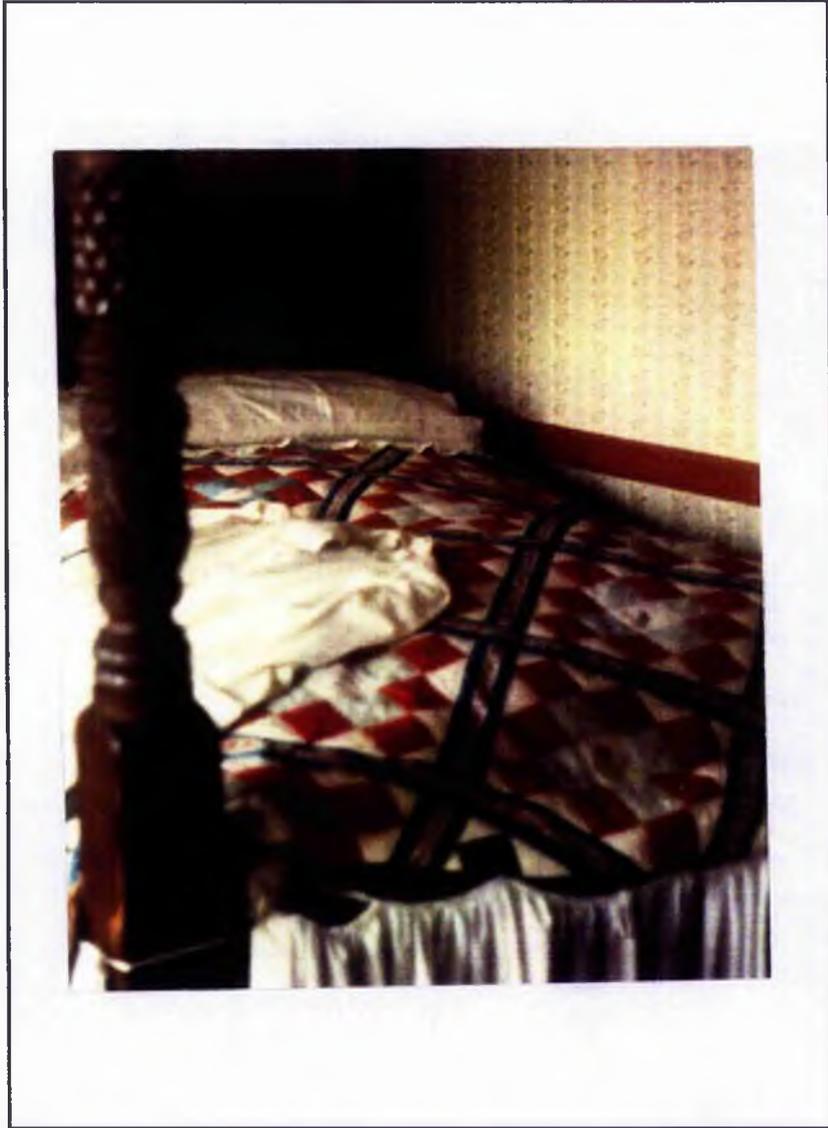


Fig.30. Quilt c.1850. Cotton and Wool. Salem Historical Society.

A similar Friendship quilt from Salem, New Jersey, c.1840-50, [fig.30] may be considered as representing the middle ground.

As was discussed in relation to the Puritans, the language that any sect uses to describe its environment - language being a universal and primary tool of communication - is of particular importance to the historian. An analysis can afford an insight into priorities, attitudes and sensitivities. In this respect the knowledge that the Quakers were responsible for re-naming the block known as "Drunkards Path" [fig.31] is important. That the sect saw it as a necessary step is significant, and the



Fig.31. "Drunkards Path' or 'Robbing Peter to Pay Paul'. Indiana Amish. c.1890.

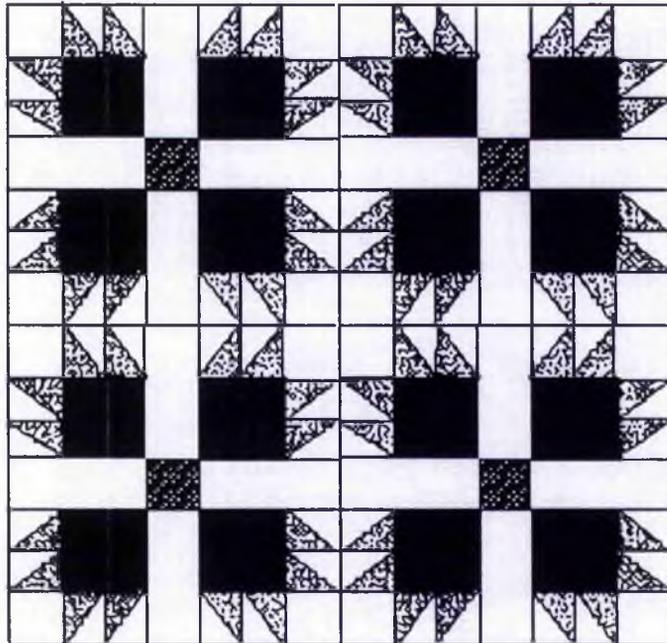


Fig. 32: 'Bears Paw' or 'Hand of Friendship'

underlying morality of the new title "Robbing Peter to Pay Paul" is appropriate to both the constructional technique and the ethos of a Plain people. In a similar vein, the Philadelphia Quakers knew the pattern 'Bears Paw' as 'Hand of Friendship' [fig. 32] and there are a number of Quaker quilts that use the pattern known as 'Cross and Crown', which it may not be too fanciful to associate with William Penn's famous work *No Cross, No Crown*.

DRESS AND SPIRITUAL DANGER

Plain dress was by far the most important visual issue amongst the Friends for over two hundred years but as the Plain form was a matter of conscience the sect never sought to impose any form on a unilateral basis. The postscript to an epistle to 'the brethren of the north' issued by a meeting of Elders at Balby in 1656 expresses the sect's position [my italics];

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. ⁶¹

Yet in general members accepted the right of Meetings to legislate on fashions. In 1654 Fox wrote, "My spirit was greatly burthened to see the pride that was got up in the nation, even among professors; in the sense whereof I was moved to give forth a paper directed:

'TO SUCH AS FOLLOW THE WORLD'S FASHIONS: What a World is this! how doth the devil garnish himself! how obedient are people to do his will and mind! They are altogether carried away with fooleries and vanities, both men and women. They have lost the hidden man of the heart, the meek and quiet spirit; which with the Lord is of great price. They have lost the adorning of Sarah; they are putting on gold and gay apparel; women plaiting the hair, men and women powdering it; making their backs look like bags of meal....they are so lifted up in pride. Pride is flown up into their head;...They are out of the fear of God; men and women. ...They must be in the fashion of the World, else they are not in esteem; may they shall not be respected, if they have not gold or silver upon their backs....But if one have store of ribands hanging about his waist, at his knees and in his hat, of divers colours, red, white, black, or yellow, and his hair powdered; then he is a brave man,

then he is accepted, then he is no Quaker. he hath ribands on his back, belly, and knees, and his hair powdered. This is the array of the World...this is not the adorning of attire of Sarah, whose adorning was in the hidden man of the heart, of a quiet and meek spirit. This is the adorning of the heathen; not of the apostle, nor of the saints, whose adorning was, not wearing of gold...This was Paul's exhortation and preaching. But we see, the talkers of Paul's words live out of Paul's command, and out of the example of Sarah, and are found in the steps of the great heathen, who comes to examine the apostles in his gorgeous apparel....Christ saith "The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment". Luke xii, 23.

The Lord will destroy the house of the proud," Prov. xv.25. For the day of the Lord shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, &c. and he shall be brought low," Isiah.ii.12. ...You may read in the revelations (Chap. xvii.4. and xviii.16.) of the false church, how she was outwardly decked, but full of abomination, and came to a downfall at last.⁶²

It is important to our argument that this condemnation is argued in biblical terms by one of the leading figures in the Quaker movement. The same year he wrote an epistle 'to such as followed after ye fashion of ye World' in which he reprimands those who feel

..they shall not be respected else, if they have not Gold & Silver upon their backs, or his heire bee not powdered, or if he have a Company of ribions hunge about his wast red, or whit, or blacke, or yellow, & about his knees, & greets a Company in his hatt...then he is A brave man...then he is noe Quaker...Likewise ye women haveinge...their spots on their faces...haveinge their rings on their fingers...haveinge their cuffes dubell under and about, like unto a butcher with whit sleeves...haveinge their ribons tyed about their hands, and three or fower gold laces about their Clothes, this is noe Quaker saith they...⁶³

That the Worldly fashions he describes are among the more extreme of the period is not really important. What is is that Fox and his fellows saw the adoption of fashionable dress as being contrary to God's Will and the spiritual path. He saw ostentatious dress as a *symbol* of a set of beliefs and values and Plain dress was used to state a different set of values. In 1677, he preached;

Keep out of the vain fashions of the World; let not your eyes, and minds, and spirits run after every fashion [in apparel]...And Friends that see the World so often alter their fashions, if you follow them, and run into them, in that ye cannot judge the World, but the World will rather judge you. Therefore, keep all in modesty and plainness. ⁶⁴

Modesty and humility were the spiritual watchwords of the movement. William Penn saw luxury and sumptuous apparel as a spiritual danger. He wrote:

..luxury, which is an excessive indulgence of self in ease and pleasure. This is the last great impiety...[it is] a disease as epidemical as killing. It creeps into all stations and ranks of men...as regardless of the severe discipline of Jesus, whom they call Saviour, as if luxury, and not the Cross, were the ordained way to heaven...once the care of luxurious heathens [it] is now the practice and...the study of pretended Christians. But let such be ashamed and repent, remembering that Jesus did not reproach the Gentiles for those things to indulge his followers in them. Sumptuous apparel, rich unguents, delicate washes, stately furniture, costly cookery...belong not to the holy path that Jesus and His true disciples and followers trod to glory...

For the Friends, the path to salvation was not to be cluttered by those things 'for which Jesus reproached the Gentiles'.

VANITY

The Quakers concurred with Puritan zealots in believing that such fashions encouraged the sin of vanity, and feared that this would divert attention from the path of spiritual fulfilment. William Penn argued the case with biblical reference and vigour;

But there is another part of luxury which has great place with vain man and woman, and that is gorgeousness of apparel, one of the foolishest..excess[es] people can well be guilty of. We are taught by the Scriptures of Truth to believe that sin brought the first coat;...if sin brought the first coat, poor Adam's offspring have little reason to be proud or curious in their clothes, for it seems their original was base, and the finery of them will neither make them noble nor man innocent again....And shall people that call themselves Christians show so much love for clothes as to neglect innocence, the first clothing?...If a thief were to wear chains all his life, would their being of gold and well made abate his infamy?...O miserable state...to be curious and expensive about that which should be their humiliation. And...its notorious how many fashions have been and are invented on purpose to excite to lust, which still puts them at greater distance from that harmless state and enslaves their minds to shameful concupiscence...That which further manifests the unlawfulness of these numerous fashions and recreations is that they are either the inventions of vain, idle, and wanton minds to gratify their own sensualities and raise the like wicked curiosity in others to imitate the same...or the contrivances of indigent and impoverished wits who make it the next way for their maintenance...How many pieces of ribbon, feathers,

lacebands, and the like had Adam and Eve...? What rich embroideries, silks, points, etc. had Abel, Enoch, Noah, and good old Abraham? Did Eve, Sarah, Susanna, Elizabeth, and the Virgin Mary use to curl, powder, patch, paint, wear false locks of strange colours, rich points, trimmings, laced gowns, embroidered petticoats, shoes and slip-slap laced with silk or silver lace and ruffled like pigeons feet, with several yards if not pieces of ribbons?...⁶⁵

The phrase "sin bought the first coat" seems a particularly persuasive point in the argument for plain dress.

Such beliefs extended throughout the movement: Isaac Pennington, a relatively prosperous Buckinghamshire squire, also declaring that fashion was the vanity of the flesh, inappropriate to the Christian spirit.⁶⁶ A more closely argued theological work is Robert Barclays' An Apology for the True Christian Divinity.⁶⁷ Proposition XV deals with, amongst other vanities, gaudy dress, using scriptural references to heap condemnation on those guilty of that indulgence.

Headcoverings, whether hoods, hats, caps or bonnets attracted a disproportionate amount of attention. This is possibly because the Bible makes direct reference to the covering of a woman's head with a 'prayer veiling'. The Aberdeen Quarterly Meeting for 1698 was one of many to address the problem, advising that the '...Queff' be '...tyed strait and Low, and not waving Loose about their faces; And..no Long Lapps, nor maserind...'⁶⁸ When wigs were introduced in the mid to late 1660's these became a doctrinal issue. Many Friends opposed the cutting of hair so that one could wear a wig⁶⁹ not on scriptural grounds per se, but in that false hair was encouraging vanity and pride. A widely published tract, *A Testimony Against Periwigs And Periwig Making And Playing On Instruments Of Music Among Christians, Or Any Other On The Days Of The Gospel. Being Several Reasons Against These Things. By One Who For Good Conscience Sake Hath Denied And Forsaken Them.* by John Mulliner [1677] dealt with the question as a matter of self-denial:

Friends thought I did not do well in making of them....much might be said for

the making of them by some, yet much questioning and reasoning have I had within myself for some time.....let none make a pretense that they wear Borders or Wigs for their Health, when in Reality, another thing is the Cause....And let all those who have hair growing on their heads, sufficient to serve them, I mean what is really needful or useful, be content therewith...⁷⁰

From this testimony it can be seen that group pressure is being brought to bear on Mulliner's thinking. His actions are thought not a matter of 'law' but one for his own conscience. The Quaker brotherhood would not expel a Friend that did not think in accordance with general practice, but sent a party of Friends to reason with the errant individual, repeatedly if necessary, only finally resorting to a form of avoidance, such as is in use in the Amish church. Mulliner was not alone in publishing on this issue. Richard Richardson wrote *A Declaration Against Wigs and Periwigs*, basing his arguments on Jeremiah 13: 25 and 22: 24. and also Philippians 3.3. This tract is slightly different in that it deals primarily with the practice of women wearing false hair and bases its argument on ~~Ne~~ Jeremiah 13:25:

'tis considerable whether Women being reflected on, may not reasonable reflect on Men, their artificial frizzles of Hair;...And a Neremiah is desirable, that might pluck off this strange Hair of strange Women lusted after....The Apostles Peter and Paul forbad ornament of Plaited Hair and the Ancients write, that they both had Bald-Heads.'

The first official notice in a Quaker record is in 1691 when the London Six Weeks Meeting published a 'testimony' against those who adopted too many of the vanities of the World, amongst those listed being the wearing of 'extravagant' periwigs. It seems that the *style* of a wig was the most important factor in determining its acceptability. The Minutes of the Men's Meeting of Cork for 20.1.1703 read: 'Several in ye mtg whose Wiggs seemed too large or curled were advised to have ym more plaine &c wch they have consented to...' And:

The Precisions [Quakers] for the most part, though they are plain in their dress, wear the best of commodities, and though a smart toupie is an abomination, yet a bob or a natural of six or seven guineas' price, is a modest covering allowed of by the saints..."⁷¹

Despite appeals for consensus none was reached and a paper appeared in 1717 on *Pride, Plainness of Dress etc.* issued by the London Quarterly meeting. This argued against "men's extravagant Wigs and Wearing the Hair in a Beauish manner" but allowed that decent 'necessary' wigs were allowable. Opinion continued divided on both sides of the Atlantic. The Friends Meeting in Massachusetts 1719, the Monthly Meeting at Dartmouth, Massachusetts, First Month 21, 1719 and the Sandwich Quarterly meeting First Month 19, 1722 each expressed their concern on this issue in respect to vanity.

The full Bush wig at the end of the eighteenth century became a mark of the medical profession: a visual, symbolic, witness not to faith, but calling. Whether a Quaker physician should adopt what was both an alien symbol and a vain fashion was a matter of individual faith. That at least one Friend chose not to do so is recorded by Ann Warder, a British Quakeress who wrote in 1786 of her surprise at seeing a doctor at a Philadelphia Quaker dinner party in ordinary dress; "We dined at Nicholas Wain's in company. One, I understood a country physician, but how would he look by the side of ours, instead of a great Bush Wig, and everything answerable, his Dress was as humble as possible....."⁷²

PLAIN DRESS

'Plain' dress originally sought not to create a 'peculiar' dress, an alternative to contemporary modes, but to eliminate unnecessary elements from it. Simplicity had been the key-note of the early apostolic church; it was this simplicity, a perception of truth and righteousness, that the Friends sought to regain. The adoption of plain dress was thus an expression of doctrine [accepting that in the seventeenth century they professed officially to have none]. Penn argued that clothing was originally designed to "cover their Shame, therefore [should be] *Plain and Modest*; next, *To fence out Cold*, therefore *Substantial*; Lastly, *To declare Sexes*; therefore *Distinguishing*."⁷³

'Plain and Modest', the watch words of Quaker 'aesthetics' were thus practical matters of faith.

Moderation and plain detailing were the watchwords of the Quaker tailor, a testament to his faith. There are several published testimonies to simplicity written by tailors, with those of Gilbert Latey, a Cornishman and Thomas Wilde of Yorkshire, relating their refusal in the 1650s to make the elaborate clothes worn by the 'World's People'.⁷⁴ In deference to appeals against extravagance Plain Quaker coats were cut without outer pockets; "...20th. of 9 mo. 1688. It is concluded that the Friends appointed in every particular Meeting shall give notice publicly in the Meeting that cross-pockets before men's coats, side slops, broad hems on cravats, and over-full skirted coats are not allowed by Friends...⁷⁵ Hooks were considered to be the 'plainest' form of fastening for waistcoats, though plain silver buttons were not uncommon.

That some listened more to their internal voice than that of the Meeting is evident in that in 1695 the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting urged:

That all that profess the Truth and their children, whether young or grown up, keep to Plainness in Apparel as becomes the Truth and that none wear long-lapped Sleeves, or coats gathered at the sides, or Superfluous buttons, or broad Ribbons about their Hats, or long curled Periwigs, and that no women, their children or Servants dress their heads immodestly or wear their Garments indecently as is too common; nor wear long Scarves...; and that all be careful about making or buying or wearing (as much as they can) strip'd or flower'd Stuffs, or other useless Superfluous Things, and in order Thereunto, that all Taylors professing Truth be dealt with and advised Accordingly....⁷⁶

The numbers of items that the plain Friend must avoid steadily increased as the living standards of the Colonies grew. The Aberdeen Quarterly Meeting of 1698 advised women "...that they wear on their heads, a plain Queff, without any ruffling or needles lyps in the Front of it; And their hood above it without any weirs or pas-boord to keep it high, ...And...no Long Lapps, nor maserind..⁷⁷ while the 1707 Meeting advised:

If any men wear longlapp'd sleeves, or Coats folded at the sides, Superfluous buttons, Broad ribbons about the hat,.....or any sort of perriwigs unless necessitated, and if any are necessitated, that then it be as near in Colour as may be to their own and in other respects resembling as much as may be, a sufficient natural head of hair without the vain customs being long behind or mounting on the forehead. Also, if any women that profess the Truth wear or suffer their children to wear their Gowns not plain or open at the breast with gaudy Stomachers, needless rolls at the Sleeves or with their mantuas or Bonnets with gaudy colours, or cut their hair and leave it out on the brow, or dress their heads high, or to wear hoods with long lapps, or long Scarfs open before, or their Capps or pinders plaited or gathered on the brow or double hemm'd or pinch'd...It being not agreeable to that Shamefac'dness, plainness and modesty which people professing Godliness with good works ought to be found in. 78

The Women Friends of the Yearly Meeting, Burlington. N.J., were concerned to advise on the 21st of 7th, mo 1726:

Dear and Well-beloved sisters; a Weighty concern coming upon many faithful ffriends at this Meeting, in Relation to divers undue Liberties that are too frequently taken by some yt. walck among us & are Accounted of us. We are Willing, in the pure Love of Truth who. hath Mercifully Visited our Souls, tenderly to Caution and Advise ffriends against those things which we think Inconsistent with our Christian Testimony of Plainness of Apparel &c., Some of which we think it proper to Particularize.

As first, that Immodest ffashion of hooped Pettycoats, or ye imitation of them, Either by Something put into their Pettycoats to make ym sett full, or Wearing more than is Necessary, or any other Imitation Whatsoever Which we take to be but a Branch Springing from ye same Corrupt root of Pride.

And also That None of Sd. ffriends Accustom themselves to wear their Gowns with Superfluous ffolds behind, but plain and Decent, Nor to go without Aprons, Nor to Wear Superfluous Gathers of Pleats in the Capps or Pinders, nor to wear their heads drest high behind, Neither to cut or Lay their hair on ye fforehead of Temples.

And that ffriends are careful to avoid Wearing the Stript Shoos, or Red or White heel'd Shoos, or Clogs, or Shoos trimmed wh. Gawdy Colours.

Likewise that all ffriends be Careful to Avoid Superfluity of Furniture in their Houses, And as much as may be to refrain Using Gawdy floured or stript Calicoes and Stuffs....

As always the link is made between outward sign and inward goodness.

There is an anecdote of a meeting between William Penn and Charles II, perhaps apocryphal, where Charles asked Penn wherein their beliefs differed; Penn is said to have replied that "The difference is the same as between thy hat and mine; mine has no ornaments"⁷⁹ Fox wore plain linen bands instead of lace and his breeches had no points; his stockings were homespun rather

than silk and his shoes were also plain. In cut, colour and fabric their dress was otherwise similar. The concept of most Plain dress as ordinary dress less its fashionable superfluities is borne out by contemporary authors. Thomas Ellwood wrote in his *Journal*,

..those Fruits and Effects of Pride, that discover themselves in the Vanity and Superfluity of Apparell which I, so far as my ability would extend to, took alas! too much delight in. This evil of my doings I was required to put away and cease from; and Judgement lay upon me till I did so. Wherefore,...I took off from my apparel those unnecessary Trimmings of Lace and Ribbands and useless Buttons which had no real service, but were set only for that which was by Mistake called Ornament, and I ceased to wear Rings. ⁸⁰

Similarly Thomas Story recorded his repudiation of needless ornament although it was some two years before he actually became a Quaker:

I put off my usual Airs, my jovial Actions and Adresses, and laid aside my sword, which I wore,...but as a modish and manly Ornament. I...divested myself of the superfluous Parts of my Apparell, retaining only that which was necessary or deem'd decent. The lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye and the Pride of Life, had their Objects and Subjects presented... ⁸¹

A morally-led aesthetic was thus a possible path to a Plain faith.

WITNESSING

Quaker thought in the seventeenth century perceived a profound structural relationship between signs and meanings and as the initial persecution decreased, Friends had leisure to contemplate outward modes. At the inception of the movement, Plain dress also served a psychological, bonding function. 'Witnessing' through dress promoted group cohesion, allowing Friends to identify each other and draw comfort in that they were not alone.

While the *Christian Advices* acknowledged the danger of becoming overly concerned with peripherals, its writers also realised the symbolic importance of witnessing faith through dress:

The religion stands not Simply in Clothes, yet the true Religion stands in that which sets a bound and limit to the Mind, with Respect to Clothes, as well as

other things...where there is a running into Excess... the Mind is got loose, hath cast off the Yoke and is not Subject to that Divine Power, in which the true Religion stands. ⁸²

This may be seen to be at odds with the texts that taught 'Christ Jesus saith that we must take no thought what...we shall put on: but bids us consider the lilies, how they grow in more royalty than Solomon'⁸³ and the individual had to reconcile the Word with possible errors in translation. If the Bible was accepted as containing the intentions of God the idea of Plain dress as a testimony of faith had a sound theological basis. Isaac Pennington drew on the teachings of Revelations XVIII. 12.13. when he referred to 'Babylon the Whore':

*She hath her cinnamon, odors, ointments, and frankincense for the nice scents; she hath her fine flour and wheat, &c., for the fine palate; and gold, precious stones, pearls, and vessels of ivory, and all manner of vessels of the most precious wood, for the more stately worshipper...She can paint both herself and her wave, so as to make them more taking to the eye of all flesh...For herself like the Lamb's wife, and so to withdraw from the true church, and set up a false church.*⁸⁴

Penn wrote at length concerning the link between Plain clothing and faith. Chapter Three of *No Cross, No Crown* carries the notation:

*Several sober reasons urg'd against the vain Apparel and usual recreations of the Age (as gold, Silver, Embroyderies, Pearls, precious Stones, Locketts, Rings, Pendants, beaded and curl'd Locks. Painting, Patching, laces, Points, Ribands, unnecessary change of Cloaths)...by which they are proved inconsistent with a Christian life, and very destructive of all civil Society.*⁸⁵

Again we see the link being made between faith and form. That a work of such proportions as *No Cross No crown or Several Sober reasons Against Hat-Honour, Titular- Respects, You to a Single Person, with the Apparel and Recreations of the Times:..*⁸⁶ by such a pivotal figure as Penn, bears such a title, is indicative of the importance that the Quakers attached to the matter of conveyed meanings in dress.

Quakers commonly called on their fellows to follow 'plain' habits, the following extracts being typical of the language in which these appeals were

couched:

We tenderly exhort all, seriously to consider the plainness and simplicity which the gospel enjoins, and to manifest it in their speech, apparel, furniture, salutations and considerations; into which our forefathers were led by the Spirit of Christ, in conformity with his precepts and example. 1746.

Oh! that our young women would cease from all unseemly and immodest appearance in their apparel! Certainly both males and females who take such undue liberties, flee from the cross of Christ; and if they do not reopen and turn, they will thereby suffer great loss.⁸⁷

And:

Shrink not from the cross of Christ in your garb, language or manners but through a subjection of your wills to the Divine will, in these and all other respects, walk answerably to the purity of our profession, and the simplicity and spirituality of our worship...It is advised, that where...any of the youth in membership...run into and copy after the vain and extravagant fashions of the World, in their dress and address, exposing themselves to the corrupting influence of evil company and excesses...that such be timely and tenderly treated with, and shown the dangerous tendency of their conduct.⁸⁸

With such phrases as 'the Cross of Christ in your garb' there can be little doubt of the depth of faith the Friends felt in honouring the Plain principal.

That those turning to Quakerism consciously adopted plain dress as a mark and an expression of their new ideals was observed and recorded by their contemporaries, as in the following note that in May 1664 Thomas Bamfield of Devon:

...trusty & well-beloved Counsellor at Lawe to ye Presbyterian party, is turned Quaker, & hath assumed a habitt whereof,...viz a shirt of flaning, & upon it a course gowne wth a kind of hoode, & a cappe of ye same, leather stockings & pumps sewed wth a thong...⁸⁹

Central to the Quaker doctrine of equality and plainness was the matter of hat-honour. To 'do hat honour' was considered a diminution of the respect paid to God. The doctrine had biblical precedent: 'But Christ saith, "How can ye believe, who receive honour from one another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? 'John 5:44. By following this the Friends met with substantial opposition: "Oh the rage and scorn, the heat and fury that arose! Oh, the blows, punchings, beatings, and imprisonments that we underwent for not putting off our hats to men! ...a wonderful confusion it

brought among all professors and priests"⁹⁰ Removing the hat to greet social superiors was firmly enshrined in the hierarchy of rank and the respect due to it. Robert Barclay outlined the Quaker position:

*Kneeling, bowing and uncovering of the head is the alone out-ward signification of our adoration towards God, and therefore it is not lawful to give it unto man.. He that kneeleth or prostrateth himself to man, what doeth he more to God? He that boweth and uncovereth his head to the Creature, what hath he reserved to the Creator?*⁹¹

There are numerous other documents relating to hat-honour. The following, taken from *The Humble Address of the People called Quakers, by appointment of their Quarterly Meeting, held in Philadelphia, for the city and county, 2nd. of second month, 1725.* is a statement by Friends of their doctrine and an affirmation of their continued loyalty to the Crown. The document recognises that it was not only the Quakers who saw dress as a potent social symbol but the World also:

May it please the Governor: ...we are apprehensive, [that] all those of our community may be laid under who shall be obliged or required to attend the respective courts of judicature in this province, if they may not be admitted without first having their hats taken off their heads by an officer, as we understand was the case of our friend John Kinsey...which...has a tendency to the subversion of our religious liberties....it seems not unreasonable to conceive an indulgence intended by the crown and more particularly by law of the province, passed in the thirteenth year of king William, Chapter xcii, now in force....And such privilege, hereby ordered and granted to the people called Quakers, shall at no time hereafter be understood or interpreted as any contempt or neglect of said Court; and shall be taken only as an act of conscientious liberty, of right appertaining to the religious persuasions of said people, and agreeable to their practice in all civil affairs of life.

*BY SIR WILLIAM KEITH, Chancellor.*⁹²

If past precedent was any indicator they were right to be concerned. At the Launceston assizes in 1656, Fox had been brought to court and appeared wearing his hat. In his Journal he relates the events that followed:

We stood a pretty while with our hats on...Judge Glyn..said.. "Why do you not put off your hats?"...we said nothing. Then said the Judge, "The Court commands you to put off your hats." Then I queried, "Where did ever any magistrate, king or judge, from Moses to Daniel, command any to put off their hats, when they came before them in their courts, either among the

Jews (the people of God), or the heathen? and if the law of England doth command any such thing, shew yw that law, either written or printed." The Judge grew very angry, and said, "I do not carry my law-books on my back"....So they took us away...[Presently they were recalled]..."where had they hats, from Moses to Daniel? Come, answer me, I have you now". I replied, "Thou mayest read in the third of Daniel, that the three children were cast into the fiery furnace by Nebuchadnezzar's command, with their coat's, their hose and their hats on." This plain instance stopped him; so that not having anything else to the point, he cried again, "Take him away gaoler."⁹³

Fox goes on to explain the importance of this issue to himself and other Quakers:

This I can say boldly in the sight of God, from my own experience & that of many thousands more, that however small or foolish this may seem, yet we behooved to suffer death rather than do it [remove the hat] and that for conscience sake; and that, in its being so contrary to our natural spirits, there are many of us to whom the foresaking of these bowings and ceremonies was as death itself; which we could never have left if we could have enjoyed our peace with God in the use of them.

Headcoverings also stood witness through colour and cut. "By the years of the American Revolution" wrote Watson of Philadelphia, "all the Quaker women of that Quaker city wore large, white beaver hats with scarcely a sign of crown, which was confined to the head by silk cords tied under the chin". During the middle of the nineteenth century many conservative Friends, in a prime example of witnessing, dyed white beavers 'on account of the Radicals wearing white hats'.⁹⁴

A contemporary observer recorded how in 1762:

Hats are now worn upon an average, six inches and three-fifths broad in the brim, and cocked between Quaker and Knevenhuller....we can distinguish by the taste of the hat the mode of the wearers mind....With Quakers it is a point of their faith not to wear a button or a loop tight up; their hats spread over their heads like a pent-house, and darken the outward man, to signify that they have the inward light...⁹⁵

As with the Amish, to the initiated, the Quaker bonnet spoke volumes. Throughout the nineteenth century one could differentiate the Beaconite, Wilburite, Hicksite or Gurneyite from the shape or details of the bonnet.



Fig.33. Quaker bonnets 1800-83. Chester County Historical Museum.

Fig.33 [together with fig.105] illustrates a selection of American bonnets dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century, representative of the sect. Gurneyites, followers of John Gurney the brother of Elizabeth Fry, wore a bonnet, of the type seen bottom right. These had a gathered crown and brim, narrower than that of the common sugar scoop. John Wilbur of New England was a more mystical leader than Gurney and his followers adopted bonnets of grey-green silk with a ruff of stiff pleating, similar to that of the bonnet centre, bottom.

SOCIAL STATUS

That some of the items listed in inventories are described as silk is indicative of the Quaker acceptance of luxury as long as it was also plain. With the Puritans we saw concern for the differentiation of one's social station and the idea that it was important even when wearing plain dress to maintain distinctions of class through fabric. The possible justification for the

use of frankly luxurious fabrics is never stated in these terms by the Friends, though luxury per se is constantly condemned by Meetings. Robert Barclay believed:

And if a man be clothed soberly and without superfluity, though finer than that which his servant is clothed with, we shall not blame him for it: the abstaining from superfluities, which his condition and education have accustomed him to, may be in him a greater act of mortification than the abstaining from finer clothes in the servant, who never was accustomed to them.⁹⁶

Thus the phrase of John Reynall's in an order for furniture from England is often used to describe the general form of Quaker attitudes: "of the best Sort, but Plain."⁹⁷ Contemporary observers noted that the materials favoured by wealthy Quakers was often costly or 'even velvet'⁹⁸ and that while they might "pretend not to have their clothes made after the latest fashion, or to wear cuffs and be dressed as gaily as others, they strangely enough have their garments made of the finest and costliest materials that can be procured."⁹⁹ Form was, for many, the primary consideration.

SINGULARITY

The point at which Plain dress became peculiar dress and its appropriateness or otherwise, was a matter of contention by both ministry and lay Friends alike from the early part of the eighteenth century. The early apostolic church had not felt the need to create a singular appearance but there was clearly an injunction laid upon the Friends through their faith not to conform to the World.

It is worthy of general remembrance, that no affectation of singularity was the cause of a demeanour both civil and religious in our forefathers, or in the faithful of his day. Different in many respects from the conduct of those among whom we shall dwell; but they, beholding the vanity, unprofitableness and insincerity of the salutations, customs and fashions of the World, and regarding the examples of our blessed Saviour and his followers, with the frequent testimonies recorded in Holy Writ to the necessity of a self-denying life and conversation, together with the law and testimony revealed in their hearts, retained in view the injunction of the apostle 'Not to be conformed to this World', but to be transformed by the reviewing of the mind, that we

*may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. May an uprightness of heart, as in the sight of God, ever attend this simplicity of appearance....*¹⁰⁰

Simplicity, for the reasons already outlined, was the true tenet of the Quaker brotherhood, but the exegesis of the injunction not to be 'conformed to the World' was a determinant, as for many other sects, of their visual history. In this respect it is particularly relevant to compare the Quakers to the Shakers in the nineteenth century, a subject we shall return to in Chapter Seven, for each share this preoccupation with singularity, a concern that arises directly out of their evangelistic theology. Since the Amish and Mennonites have no interest in this field, singularity as a direct consequence of non-conformity is not an issue. It is the visual, 'aesthetic' consequences of such doctrines between and within the sects, that is so very fascinating.

The adoption of a singular costume engendered other concerns also. The following is an extract from a popular ballad, which, though it dates from the nineteenth century, conveys the duality of feeling that many Friends expressed from the early eighteenth century onwards. It also raises the issue of placing too much store on visual forms:

*Perhaps she'll wear a plainer dress when she's as old as I,-
Would thee believe it, Hannah? once I felt temptation nigh!
My wedding gown was ashen silk, too simple for my taste:
I wanted lace around the neck, and a ribbon at the waist.
But Ruth is still a Friend at heart; she keeps the simple tongue,
The cheerful, kindly nature we loved when she was young;
And it was brought upon my mind, remembering her, of late,
That we on dress and outward things perhaps lay too much weight.
I once heard Jesse Kersey say, a spirit clothed with grace,
And pure, almost, as angels are, may have a homely face.
And dress may be of less account the Lord will look within;
the soul it is that testifies of righteousness or sin.*¹⁰¹

There were concerns that not only might individuals become too concerned with the marks of sanctity but that some "...may conceive the Appearance of Plainness to be a temporal advantage to them do put it on with unsanctified Hearts and Minds filled with deceit...Such as they are an

Abomination to God and to good Men.¹⁰² The same idea is expressed in the play *A Bold Stroke For a Wife* which also mentions the Witness debate:

Mistress Anne Lovely; - "Isn't it monstrously ridiculous that they should desire to impose their quaking dress upon me at these years? When I was a child, no matter what they made me wear; but now -"

Betty.- "I would resolve against it, madam; I'd see 'em hanged before I'd put on the pinch'd cap again."...

Mistress Lovely.-"Are the pinch'd cap and formal hood the emblems of sanctity? Does your virtue consist in your dress, Mrs. Prim?" 103

Such warnings bore repetition. The danger of symbols masking the individual was highlighted by incidents such as that of a Jesuit priest, a Father Greaton. He arrived in Baltimore in 1732 with the intention of building a catholic church in the city, and donned the clothing of a Quaker in order to gain initial acceptance, only later reverting to his normal habit.

Their concern with outward details subsuming inward spirituality was shared by the World. An anti-Quaker writing dating from 1671 declares: "...you may know him by his diminutive *Band* that looks like the forlorn hope of his shirt crawling out of his collar, for his purity consists only in his dress, and his religion is not to speak like his neighbours'.¹⁰⁴ Another of 1679 declared "The Quakers cry out against all external ornaments, whilst themselves at the same time doat most wickedly upon a Quirp Cravat, copied from a chitterling original".¹⁰⁵

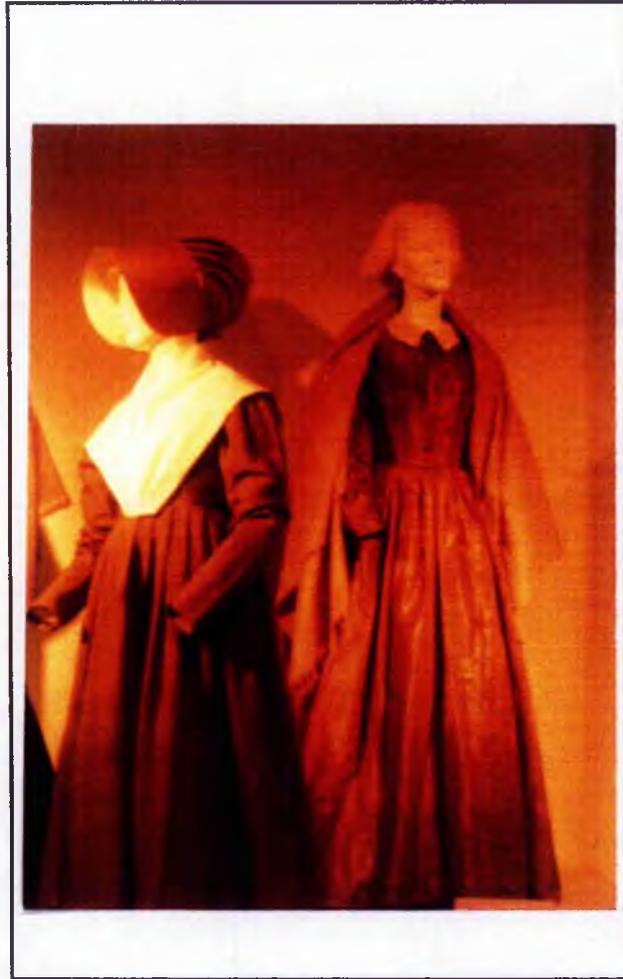


Fig.34. Quaker gowns: [L] c.1850-70. Silk, cotton. Wedding dress of Mary S. Pusey. London Grove Meeting, NJ. Chester County Historical Museum No. 1989.577. [R] c.1850-70. Wool.. CLF 45.

In the nineteenth century Friends became concerned that the emphasis placed by their religion on outward form was obscuring the fundamental issues of faith. Louisa Hoare wrote to her relatives Sara and Elizabeth Gurney in 1832 concerning children wearing Quaker caps:

I know it is only a trifle, but a trifle which, I suspect is linked to a mistaken system...With many minds, it may be found to help to this inward, spiritual work of religion, to adopt an external barrier, a peculiar mode of dress etc. and whenever adopted from personal conviction and individual conscientiousness, it will bear its own weight...but strict Friends..go a step further; they are not satisfied with imputing the general principles of spiritual friendliness or enforcing general simplicity and plainness of dress etc. but they would also impose upon others, as a law, the peculiar costume which they

thought right to adopt for themselves...What is expedient and right as an individual assistance, if imposed upon others, becomes a bondage...and diverts the attention...from the internal essential work of religion.¹⁰⁶



Fig.35. Quaker gown. English. c.1837-1842. Silk. Hannah Butler Trusted. Collection Friends House Library 1982.5.6.

The Meetings debated this line between singularity and conformity, issuing a number of *Rules of Discipline* to provide a universal consensus, promote cohesion and help personal decision making. Those for 1844, Point Number 3 states:

It is...important to maintain more than the form of godliness, and whilst we avoid a conformity to this World, it is necessary we should be careful to seek after the divine power, by which we may be transformed, by the renewing of our minds, and prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of

God.

This is a concern shared by all the sects at some point in their history, and is reflected in all religions where a form of dress is deemed inappropriate either on religious or, which are essentially the same, moral grounds.

It is significant that many of the tracts that are concerned with dress codes are issued under the title 'Advices'. Having left the established church and its panoply of edicts, the Quakers were intent on using persuasion to promote cohesion, not legislation: in this instance it is an attitude born of a theological principle, rather than a point of doctrine, that is the visual catalyst.

CHOOSING THE PATH OF PECULIARITY

A substantial number of Friends felt that, despite any problems of singularity, to conform to the World was to avoid their duty as set out by God, and give witness to their faith in Him. To this end ultra-conservative Quakers allowed their clothing styles to undergo a process of atrophy. This process is not uncommon among sects that withdraw from the World, and may be seen in many religious orders and sects such as the Hutterites, Hasidic Jews, and, within this study, the Amish. However, since the Quakers very firmly remained part of commercial and social activities throughout their later history the occurrence is particularly interesting as an example of the strength of the witnessing concept within a group. The Plain Friends became associated with the broad brimmed hat and lappet-less 'shadbelly' coat for men, and the coal-scuttle bonnet and cap, shawl and dove grey gown for women, as seen in the gowns¹⁰⁷ in figs. 34-35.

Aprons were retained by the Friends when they were dropped from normal use by mainstream society. Viewed as a badge of domesticity and industry in a woman - both virtues to be encouraged - that they were then no longer fashionable was a point in their favour.

Singularity was increasingly unavoidable. One Richard Talbot was visited by members of the Ohio Yearly Meeting concerning the matter of his hat. In his testimony we can see the dichotomy he faced as he attempted to reconcile his personal Witness with possible charges of vanity or singularity:

I thought of getting a hat the natural colour of the fur, but the apprehension of being looked upon as one affecting singularity felt uneasy to me. Here I had occasion to consider that things, though small in themselves, being clearly enjoined by Divine Authority, become great things to us; and I trusted that the Lord would support me in the trials that might attend singularity, so long as singularity was only for His sake. On this account I was under close exercise of mind in the time of our General Spring meeting, 1762, greatly desiring to be rightly directed; when, being deeply bowed in spirit before the Lord, I was made willing to submit to what I apprehended was required of me, and when I returned home got a hat the natural colour of the fur. 108

Talbot records his reasoning in theological terms, his appearance was dictated by his faith and members of his community viewed his appearance as symptomatic of the depth of that faith. The undyed beaver hat that Talbot eventually resigned himself to wearing was still in evidence in Philadelphia in the mid nineteenth century, only superseded by the dark silk hat in about 1876.

WET QUAKERS

There were inevitably those who, while wishing to avoid any excess, felt the need at least to avoid any singularity of dress and they were termed 'Wet'. "Wet Quakers" were those like Anne Bellamy (1731-88) who dressed,

'with the studied formality of a rigid Quaker, but only so plain and neat as to entitle [her] to the denomination of a "wet Quaker", a distinction that arises chiefly from the latters wearing ribbons, gauzes and laces'. 109

Their guide was the *Rules of Discipline*. The *Rules* of 1844 declared:

I Let decency, simplicity and utility be our principal motives, and not to conform to the vain and changeable fashions of the World; though we may occasionally adopt alterations which appear convenient or useful. Tis a principle, the propriety of which, we apprehend, no serious Christian will deny, and whilst in ages of pride and extravagance in dress, the adoption of this rule may make us appear singular, yet in relation to us, this singularity is not without its use. It is in some respects like a hedge about us, which though it

does not make the ground it encloses, rich and fruitful, yet it frequently prevents those intrusions by which the labor of the husbandman is injurd or destroyed.

2 The conduct which our society has adopted in this respect, is supported by many passages in holy writ. "Be not conformed to the World: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds," was the advice of the apostle to the Christians who dwelt at the seat of Roman grandeur and luxury. And again in relation to the female sex. "I will," says he "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness,) with good works." The apostle Peter also, is very full in his exhortations upon this subject, "Whose adorning," saith he, "let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not incorruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price; for after this manner in old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves."¹¹⁰

The gown and bonnet worn by Deborah Dickenson of the Salisbury Meeting, NJ, [fig.36] is representative of the dress of a wealthy Quaker of this type.

Knee breeches are an example of the dilemma faced by those that chose the middle ground. In 1798 Mrs. Lloyd wrote to her son Robert, who was visiting Charles Lamb in London,

I was grieved to hear of thy appearing in those fantastical trousers [pantaloons?] in London. I am clear such eccentricities of dress would only make thee laughed at by the World, whilst thy sincere friends would be deeply hurt...Neither thy mind nor person are formed for eccentricities of dress or conduct. ¹¹¹

American Quakers continued to wear breeches long after society on both sides of the Atlantic had discarded them. Conversely, a letter preserved in the Mott Family papers details how one Friend, Richard Mott, decided that he was becoming singular through wearing breeches in 1828, and bought cloth in New York for the purpose of having a pair of pantaloons made for him by his wife¹¹² - which garment would have become 'unfashionable' by this date having been superseded by trousers.



Fig.36. Wedding gown of Deborah Dickinson of Salisbury Meeting. Chester County Historical Society.

The inventory of the household goods and clothing of such Friends as Benjamin Law of Pennsylvania, gives a clear account of the overall appearance of a prosperous Quaker of the period. The Laws were originally from England and Sarah, his wife, was a Minister. They came to America in 1731 and the inventory is dated 2 mo. 3rd. 1759. The following is a curtailed list of clothing, representative of the whole.

	\$	l.	d.
Plush coat		9	7
Pare of Leather Britches	3	1	
Skin Coat		0	3
Bag and pare of Cloth boots		25	2

flanell petty cote.		3	3	
Crap gound [crepe gown]			3	3
Callemenco gound		4	6	
Quilted petecoat		10	1	
Black silk scarf		18	0	
Ditto	1	18	0	
Ditto		17	1	
Black hood		1	10	
pare of silk gloves	5	0		
3 white aprons		5	11	
A checkard apron		2	3	
a green apron		2	0	

Note that among the aprons listed, white and check there is a symbolic green apron.

From roughly the same period we have an account of Jonathan Kirkbride, born in 1739, who as a young man in his late twenties travelled throughout Pennsylvania preaching from horseback. As his clothing would have been regulated by the tenets he professed they mark his position on the 'Plain scale':

During his preaching expeditions, he went mounted...Short corduroy overalls, with rows of buttons down the outside to close them on, protected the breeches and stockings. A light walking stick did double duty, as a cane when on foot, and a riding whip when mounted...

He wore a black beaver hat, with a broad brim turned up at the sides so as to form a point in front and rolled up behind; a drab coat, with broad skirts reaching to the knee, with a low standing collar; a collarless waistcoat, bound at the neck, reaching beyond the hips, with broad pockets, and pocket flaps over them; a white cravat served for a collar; breeches with an opening a few inches above and below the knee, closed with a row of buttons and a silver buckle at the bottom; ...silver buckles to fasten the shoes with; fine yarn stockings...¹¹³

The low 'standing collar' and 'collarless waistcoat' are associated with plain peoples after their period in 'fashion' had passed but at this date such clothing would have been commensurate with that of a country gentleman. That the standing collar itself can be traced to changes in military uniforms makes it all the more surprising to find imitations worn by pacifist Friends. The pocket flaps are also against the plainest injunctions.

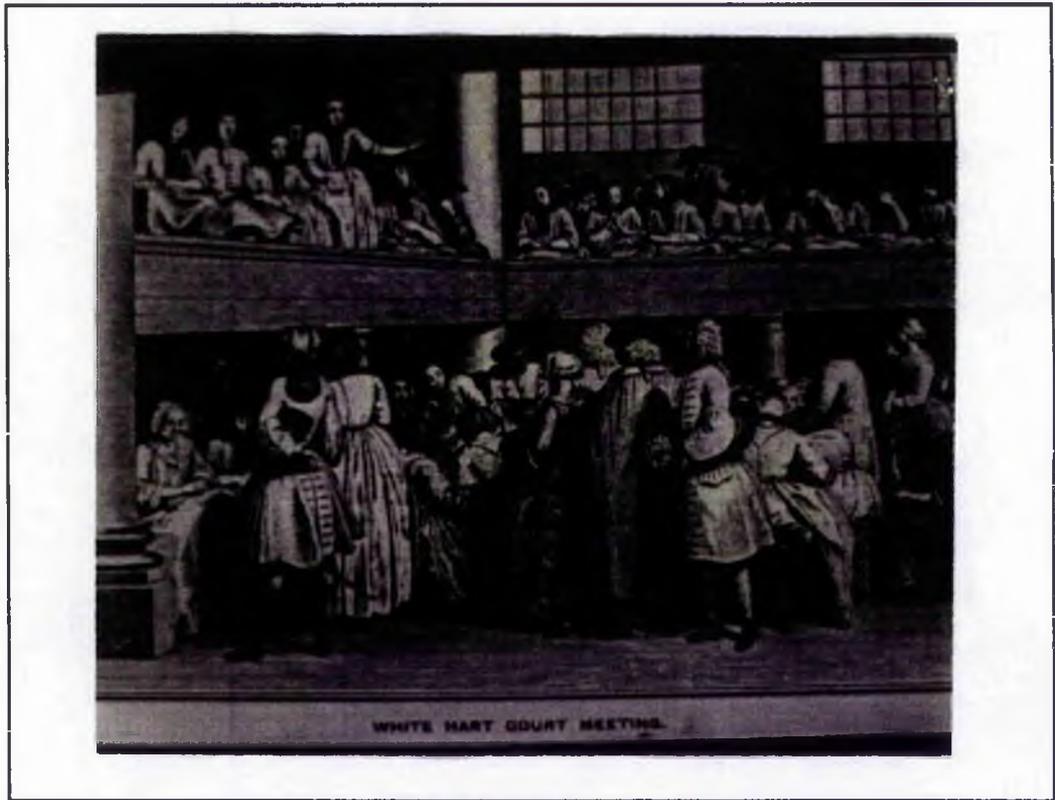


Fig.37. Engraving. by L.F. Dubourg, White Hart Court Meeting. 1723.

By the second half of the eighteenth century the wearing of wigs had become acceptable even amongst generally conservative Quakers. Philadelphia Quakers became known for wearing wigs almost always surmounted by a turned-up broad-brimmed hat with a modified high crown, and this 'Worldliness' is in keeping with similar attitudes towards doctrine, colour and form in quilt making, discussed earlier.

The popularity of items such as black hoods amongst Quakers is evident in an engraving of the White Hart Court Meeting of 1723 [fig.37]. Authorities are unsure of the reasons for the adoption of this hood: some hold that states that it was adopted by the Quakers due to the influence of Madame de Maintenon, wife of Louis XIV of France, a severe ascetic, while others attribute the bonnet to German fashions. The influence of Worldly fashion and custom is also evident in two black silk wedding-hoods in the Period Costume

Museum of the Germantown Historical Society. These were worn over the white cap of the bride and removed when the bride and groom became the focus of the Meeting.

The process could be two-way. The testimony of Elizabeth Gurney, a middle-class 'gay' Friend, originally had no qualms about Worldly fashions for in 1798 she attended meeting for Worship wearing 'new purple boots laced with scarlet'. But in her journal she describes how she gradually changed to a 'Plain' Friend, altering or adapting items of her dress so that they more closely conformed with the dictates of humility and modesty: "Today I put my handkerchief over instead of under my gown' and later; I took up a little cross in dress which was leaving off the band to my cap'.¹¹⁴ It can be seen from this just how fundamentally the Quakers linked dress details with personal faith. That there were Wet Quakers, even Gay Friends is just as important a piece of evidence as that there were Plain Friends. Dress was used by all to reflect belief; that their beliefs vary meant their dress varied, and when those beliefs altered, so too did their dress.

GAY FRIENDS

Friends whose attitudes towards Plain dress were liberal were known as 'Gay' Friends. Largely urban, they were likely to have closer ties with the World than conservative brethren. Gay Friends were not necessarily less strong in their convictions, but differed in their interpretation and the extent to which Biblical injunctions should be followed to the letter.

The following are extracts from a possibly imaginary, but published, diary supposed to date from just after the War of Independence. It may be that it was intended to act as a moral guide, setting out the possible paths for the young Quaker to follow. Whatever its antecedents, the concerns

voiced are typical of those of the 'plain' Friend faced with a 'gay' Friend, exemplifying the two positions:

Ninth Month, 27th. "Not that Aunt Elise...does not try to do her duty..but that her education has given her false standards. She was surprised to see me at breakfast, and asked why I had not called "the maid" to help me dress. I replied that I needed no one...that it was best to wait upon ourselves; then she held up a finger glistening with jewels, and said: "Tut, tut! I fear we have a rebel to deal with...the maid must assist you. She is from Paris, and knows the art of dressing, which country girls know nothing about, and I want to send you home with a lover and a trousseau, and that could never be if you comb your curls out, and wear a gray frock"....

Eleventh mo., 3d.

Mother Dear: Aunt W. and I have just returned from what was in any respects a most interesting excursion, and yet it had its dark side. Almost immediately after I had written to thee last week, aunt carried me to town and insisted upon my choosing several nice garments. It was wholly unnecessary, for my wardrobe, thee know, was very comfortable...so I chose, very reluctantly, a white merino that she said I must have to wear in the evening, and aunt herself selected a very pretty pale blue silk. It seems gay to me, but she has promised it shall be made in a plain way. I am afraid however that her ideas and mine concerning these things do not agree. There is a muff too....I am not certain I can trust my pride, which gets the better of poor mortals so soon, but thee told me to do as nearly as possible without troubling my conscience, as aunt desires,...Uncle Joseph says the colour of the fur is the only thing that reconciles me to the purchase....when the cloak came home there was also a round hat, with a long soft feather in it! Of course, I could not be comfortable in that, and as it is quite a new thing for me to wear naught but a bonnet, aunt was persuaded by dear Uncle Joseph to substitute a bit of ribbon and a band of the fur for the feather...

11 month, 24th.

Dear mother, I have kept this letter until after the party in order to tell thee about it, but I am afraid neither of us will enjoy my relation of it. In the first place aunt insisted upon dressing my hair and arranging some flowers about my blue silk frock....Forgive me, if I say I could admire the creature...constructed. And yet it made me cry, I looked like a stranger!...People looked at me on every hand, and I thought it must be because it was as if I was trying to be something else than a Friend. 115

Quietly the congregation gathered...But few wore the garb of the past generation. There was, among the middle aged, a disposition to grow a little plainer with increasing years, but the soft felt hat was conspicuous in the room and the stiff bonnets were relieved by silk shirts of brown or grey.

Cassy...had assumed a gown of white stuff. the very essence of simplicity; a straw bonnet of half modern date, destitute of embellishment, unless the satin ties, reaching halfway to the crown, and the blond pleating surrounding her face, could be called trimming. The dress was closed at the throat by a small gold clasp, which confined also the edges of the linen collar; drab, open-work mitts covered her well-shaped hands - hands that were never weary

*with good work...*¹¹⁶

This is both a description of the gay Quaker of the period, as well as the relation of the attitudes of the 'Plain' Friend towards perceived excess. It was not so much that luxury in itself that was undesirable, but that it had no place in a World where there were poor and starving people, and that its maintenance took time that might be better employed in useful industry. Dress was thus both a biblical and a moral issue.

The Gay Friend was marked by their dress. In 1741 Rebecca Watson bequeathed her "best Quilted Petticoat" to one of her granddaughters, and her 'Double gown' [doublet] to her surviving daughter, Mary Paxton. A surviving example is in the collections of the Chester County Historical Association. Of pale blue silk, dated 1797 it is believed to be the work of a Quaker teacher, Ann Marsh. Lined with mid-blue wool, interlined with unspun wool, the silk quilting is detailed.¹¹⁷ A similar petticoat in the same collection was worn by Phoebe Ann Sharples in 1827, though the garment dates from about 1750. This type of petticoat was one of the concerns expressed at the Aberdeen and York Meetings in England:

At our Quarterly meeting held at York, ye 22 & 23 4th, Mon. 1720 The Monthly meets. wee called & there was that answered for all...there are severall things remains amongst us wch are very Burthensome to the honest-hearted...the imitating the Fashions of the World in their Headclothes some haveing four pinner ends hanging Down and handkerchiefs being too thin...also...Quilted petticoats sett out in imitation of hoops some wearing two together also cloth Shoes of light Colors bound wth Differing colours and heels White or Red wth White Bands and fine Coloured Clogs & strings also Scarlet or Purple Stockings & petticoats made Short to Expose ym. Friends also desired to keep out of the fashion of wearing black hats or shaving [chip] or straw ones with crowns too little or two large wth wch else the Judgement of Truth is gone out against.

Signed in behalf of the meeting by

MARY WHITE

SARAH ELAM

HANNAH ARMITSTEAD

TAMER FIELDING

MARY SLATER¹¹⁸

William Forster visited the Hitchin Meeting on 18th of the 2nd month

1778 and noted that 'Ruth Wheeler's second daughter showed by her manner that she had seen the Metropolis...She wears a dark bonnet and cloak which in their plain meeting looked, if not gay, singular'.¹¹⁹ The difference between British and American fashions is clear in that Ann Warder, a young Quakeress from England, was reprov'd in 1786 for wearing a fancy whalebone bonnet instead of one of pasteboard.

The varied and Worldly appearance of Gay Friends is revealed in diary entries such as that of a young Quaker matron who wrote to her sister from Washington, Duches County, New York, Seventh Month 13th, 1828:

Yesterday was a Preparative Meeting. The clerk was a young girl, I think not twenty years of age dressed in a painted muslin, with a very large figure, almost white, a cape with a small transparent handkerchief round the neck, and a bonnet of white silk in the real British fashion, gathered very full, and altogether the most showy looking clerk I ever saw...I went over to the store yesterday and bought a real calico gown, a dress one, - light, to put on afternoons, when it is to cold for gingham, as it is mostly in this elevated region.

There was little relationship between the prominence of a Quaker family within the movement and the degree to which they were 'plain' and there are marked differences in practice even between family members. Swarthmore Hall was the home of the Fell family, perhaps only second in prominence to the Foxes. The Swarthmore accounts for the 1670's lists three plain black allamode whiskies bought for Rachel and Susanna Fell costing 2s. each, along with blue aprons and strings bought for Sarah. There are records of the purchase of red, white, sea-green and sky-coloured worsted thread for stockings and two blue calico aprons were purchased along with a green apron costing 2s. 9d. Black, sky-coloured and green ribbons and green gallowne were bought as well as garters, gloves and shoes of undetermined colour.¹²⁰ Margaret Fell was later to become Margaret Fell Fox. John Rous, the son-in-law of Margaret Fell Fox wrote from London in 1670: "Yesterday...I sent...a white mantle, and a white sarsanet hood for thee..."¹²¹ A little later in the accounts one finds:

By money pd. Thos. Benson for dying 2pr. stockings sky colour, of mine, and a petticoat red of mine (defaced)

Paid for a vizard mask for myself and a hat 2 0 9

By money pd. for 1 yd. and nail of black paragon for apron for self 0 2 0

By money paid for a blue apron and strings for myself 0 1 3

By money pd. for a black hood for sister Susan 0 4 0

By money pd. for a black alamode whiske [scarf] for sister Rachel 0 2 0

Do. for a little black whiske for myself 0 1 10

Again in the same style Sarah Fell Meade wrote to her sister, Rachel Abraham, from London, on the 19th, 10th.Mo. [December] 1683;

I have endeavoured to fit my dear Mother with black cloth for a gown, which is very good and fine, and as much as Jno. Richards saith is enough to the full, 5 yards and a half, and what materials as he thought was needful to send down, vizt. silk, both sewing and stitching, gallowne ribbon, and laces, and I was very glad to know what she wanted, for it has been in my mind a pretty while to send her and you something, and I could not tell what she might need or might be the most serviceable to her was the reason of my thus long forbearance,....

There is...for sister Lower, which she sent to sister Susanna to buy, a colored stuff mantel...and 11 yards and half of black worsted stuff...Black stuff was worse to get than colored, which is now mostly worn; but she has done as well as she can, and hopes it will please her; it is strong serviceable stuff (P.S.) We advise you to make my mothers cloth gown without a skirt, which is very civil, and usually so worn, both by young and old, in stiffened suits.¹²²

The final entry is interesting in that it mentions that black was a difficult colour to obtain. Perhaps even twenty three years after the Restoration the colour was yet associated with the Interregnum. Black was certainly an American fashion, since Ann Warder wrote to England in 1788 that "Black are more worn here [*in America*] than with us..."¹²³



Fig.38. 1853 Wedding dress, Pennsylvania, Silk and Cotton. Salem Historical Society.



Fig.39. Hancock Bridal Gown. Also worn to George Washington's inaugural Ball. Silk and cotton. Coll. Salem Historical Society.

As the eighteenth century progresses there are increased references to Gay Quakers, with descriptions such as that of a Quaker wedding in 1771 representative. The marriage was between Isaac Collins, of Burlington, N.J. and Rachel Budd, of Philadelphia.¹²⁴ The groom is described as wearing a coat of Peach blossom cloth, the skirts of which had outside pockets, which as we have seen were denounced as early as 1688. His coat was lined throughout with quilted white silk with a waistcoat of the same material. The 'small clothes' were ornamented with knee buckles, and he wore silk stockings

and pumps together with a cocked hat. The bride's gown was of a light blue brocade with matching shoes, with high heels, sharply pointed at the toes. The outer robe was cut long in the back with a large hoop. Over this was worn a short blue bodice with a white satin stomacher embroidered in colours, laced with blue cord. On her head a black hood lined with white silk, with the cape extending across the shoulders. On her return from the meeting she is reported as donning a white apron tied with a large blue bow at the back. This wedding took place in what was traditionally one of the most conservative Quaker cities.

Typical of the mid-nineteenth century is a blue checked silk wedding dress in the collections of Salem Historical Society [fig.38]. The silk, fringing, pattern and pale colours are those of the World, only the black bonnet, even with the long laps, would mark it as something distinct. A green silk bridal gown [fig.39] was also worn to George Washington's inaugural Ball and displays no Plain references. Similarly there are testimonies of such as Sally Wistar to further our appreciation of just how 'gay' a 'gay' Friend could be. Her diary of the Revolutionary War records:

" I was dressd in my chintz, and look'd smarter than the night before." "I left my chamber between eight and nine, breakfasted, went up to dress, put on a new purple and white striped Persian, white petticoat, muslin apron, gauze cap, and handkerchief. Thus array'd, Miss Norris, I ask your opinion." 125

How dominant the Gay Friends were is difficult to judge. Against such descriptions of silks, satins, and glowing colours, we have to place Jacques Brissot de Warville's note that at the Philadelphia Yearly meeting in 1788, 90 percent of the 1,500 people present wore homespun.¹²⁶ Though this proportion of plainly dressed people might not have been unusual in any other gathering, the Quaker population of Philadelphia was unusually wealthy in comparison to the general population.

SUMMARY

The Quakers may seem as ambivalent a sect as the Puritans where matters of iconography and 'plain' living were concerned, but that there was a rationale is indisputable. Both sects were attempting to live out Scriptural injunction but to do so required the assimilation of often contradictory edicts. Both sects stated an allegiance to the conceptual simplicity of the early apostolic church, the observance of injunctions to follow the 'plain' path, and, though to varying degrees, the observance of individual conscience. The way in which both the church and the individual came to terms with these had a significant bearing on both the sect's aesthetic and the individual's appearance.

To these was added the variables of time, place, economic and social position. Each had its own ramifications for the sect - ramifications which they acknowledged:

The same notions of what is plain, or otherwise, do not exist at all times...I have in Ireland seen, a plain friend, dressed in a three-cornered looped hat, a blue coat, & waistcoat, black breeches, light speckled stockings, and with large silver buckles, which glistened on the feet, and at the knees;...the dress of the plainest females was a drab coloured beaver hat, black silk-hoods with lappets which came down nearly to the waist on each side, and were laced over the stomacher with white silk lace, causing the intermixture of black, and white to form a pleasing contrast.¹²⁷

Perhaps the most significant of their concessions was the decision to live in the 'World'. Quaker movement, as had the Puritans, made a choice that largely determined their history. To reconcile aspects of their faith one with the other, they were forced to make such compromises. By later prohibiting Friends from engaging in the tailoring trades - even if their clientele would have been solely other Friends, Quakers necessarily engaged in trade with those outside the Sect. The rationale was that by disassociating from such endeavours the temptation to create superfluous items would be removed. But by not taking the path of avoidance and "not being conformed to the World", they had perforce to remain in it, and exposed their faith to its pressures.

- ¹Barclay, 1869. prop.2, pg. iv.8, and prop. 5-6, pg. xvi, 85; and Pennington, 1831, Part 1, pp. 210-12, 445, 446.
- ²See 1 Cor. 13:3.
- ³Fox and Lawrence, 1663, p9, 12.
- ⁴Pennington, 1828, pp. 125 and 348.
- ⁵Fox 1657: pp.6-7; Payne 1655: p.17; Zephaniah 3. 9-13.
- ⁶Bauman, 1983, p.7.
- ⁷John Carol [Crook], 1686, *Epistle to Young People Professing the Truth* reprinted in Barbour and Roberts, 1973, pp.545-549 postscript.
- ⁸Quoted in Nicholson, 1968, p.2.
- ⁹Edward Hicks, *Memoir*.
- ¹⁰Loosely patterning his composition after an engraved illustration of a painting by Richard Westall of *William Penn's Treay* that showed the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania paying Indians for the land in 1682. This additional scene was based on a popular 1775 engraving of Benjamin West's earlier painting, *Penn's Treaty With the Indians*.
- ¹¹Doherty, 1967, pp.30-31.
- ¹²The Peaceable Kingdom was not a theme exclusive to Hicks. Another version dated 1865 exists, the work of Dr William Hallowell Hallowell was also a Quaker, a preacher, a physician and a dentist based at Norristown, Pennsylvania.
- ¹³See Hine, 1932.
- ¹⁴Clarkson, 1806.
- ¹⁵Lee, 1955, pp. 39-40.
- ¹⁶Salem was originally heavily settled by Quaker families, the descendants of which are still a force in the community today.
- ¹⁷For Quaker opposition to portraits see *British Friend*, London. 1847, pp.81,128; 1848,p.78; 1862, p.16.
- ¹⁸*British Friend*, London.January, 1862.
- ¹⁹John Crome of Norwich.
- ²⁰Lee, Op. Cit. pp. 39-40.
- ²¹*Quaker History*, Vol 75, Fall 1986, No.2., Kelley, 1986, p.77.
- ²²Evans p.22-24.
- ²³See Anne Emlen [Mufflin].
- ²⁴See Hine, Op.cit. 1932.
- ²⁵See Kemp, 1990.
- ²⁶Lee, Op.cit., 1955, pp. 39-40.
- ²⁷Hare, 1895.
- ²⁸Jenkins (1948), pp.18.19,20,132.
- ²⁹Aberdeen Yearly Meeting, (1911), pp.79.
- ³⁰Webb, p.259.
- ³¹Fox, M, Ms Letter. M.F. to Friends 2nd April 1700, 'Portfolio 25/66. Library of the Religious Society of Friends'.
- ³²Crump, 1900.p.56.
- ³³See Appendix One.
- ³⁴Southwark Monthly Meeting 1698/99.
- ³⁵Clarkson, Op.cit. 1806.p.42.
- ³⁶Anon. pp.5 and 6. Pamphlet in the Library of the Religious Society of Friends.
- ³⁷Aberdeen Yearly Meeting, *Testimony*, 1698.
- ³⁸Penkethman, quoted in Maxfield, p.142. Act III, Sc.I.
- ³⁹Family Will in private hands cited in Kendall, J. 1985.
- ⁴⁰Jenkins (1948), Op.Cit. pp.18.19,20,132.

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- 41 Brayshaw, letter in *The British Friend*, 1851, p.227.
- 42 Manuscript Brotherton Library, University of Leeds, Clifford Street Collection, III, 2.1, p.139.
- 43 Quoted in Gummere, p.33.
- 44 These are just two of many similar examples such as a piece by Hannah Searle, dated 1808, from the Ackworth School, which comprises a series of large and flamboyant motifs. The design is bold, decidedly decorative and closely worked. Similar pieces from other schools exist, such as that by Hannah Billings of South Brent School, (Somerset or Devon, England) dated 1811. The latter may be seen in Bristol Museum N3923
- 45 Religious Society of Friends, LSF Pic/F 030.
- 46 Myers, 1902, p.158f.
- 47 Claverton Manor 74.113.
- 48 List of items taught by Eliza J. Cox in School No. 1 from May 1823 to April 20, 1824.
- 49 Greenwood, 1990. *Forward*.
- 50 *Ibid*, p.8.
- 51 *Ibid*. Betty Harris, writing at Jordans in Buckinghamshire, 26-29 April 1985.
- 52 See glossary.
- 53 Daughters of the American Revolution Museum, Washington, D.C. 84.11.
- 54 Chester County Historical Museum, West Chester, Pa. Cat. 34.
- 55 See glossary.
- 56 Tomes, 1982.p.184.
- 57 They comprised some seventy per cent of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1828
- 58 Dated 1842-44. Cantwells Bridge, Delaware. Historic Houses of Odessa, Delaware, 71.1317.
- 59 Philadelphia Museum of Art, 45.35.1.
- 60 Cotton, Harrison Township Historical Society.
- 61 Braithwaite, 1912, p.311.
- 62 Penny, 1911, p.174.
- 63 *Ibid*, pp.175,176,177.
- 64 Fox, *Works*,7, p.300.
- 65 Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, 1669, 1682,1694.
- 66 See Snell, 1966. and Davis, 1951.
- 67 Barclay, *Apology*, Op.Cit. (English Edition, 1678)
- 68 28/V/1698. Records of the Aberdeen Yearly Meeting, ref. CH 10/3/4. Scottish Record Office. Reprinted Journal of the Friends Historical Society, VIII (1911) p.78.
- 69 Mulliner, 1699.
- 70 Mulliner,Op. Cit.
- 71 Gummere, p.46.
- 72 Storey, p.573, (Folio).
- 73 Penn, *Works*, in 'Published Writings' 1986. 1; p350.
- 74 Brayshaw, 1938 p.123.
- 75 MS. of Henry Hull, quoted in Gummere, Op.Cit. p.32.
- 76 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1695
- 77 From the Duchesse of Mazarin- to decorate with lace in some particular manner, 1694 ec.
- 78 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *Discipline*, 1707.
- 79 Quoted in Gummere, Op.Cit.1980. p 7.
- 80 Op cit, p 12.
- 81 Storey, 1689, p.15.
- 82 *Christian Advices*, pp.55-56.

- 83 Margaret Fell Fox, 1700.
- 84 Pennington, 1828, p.201,
- 85 Penn, 1669.
- 86 *ibid.*
- 87 *Rules of Discipline* p.90.
- 88 *Rules of Discipline* p.107 1834
- 89 Extracts from State Papers, SPD XCIX 7 Cal. 1663-64, pp.193, 603.
- 90 Fox, 1952, p.37.
- 91 Barclay, 1869 Proposition XV.
- 92 Quoted in Mitchener, p.368.
- 93 Fox, 1952 pp.38-39.
- 94 Ref. Richard Smith at Stockport 1 mo.3. 1821, *Journal of the F H S.* 1917, p.59.
- 95 *Chronicle*, London, Vol. XI., p. 167, 1762.
- 96 Barclay, *Apology*, prop.15, pp.vii, 11, 326, 337.
- 97 Order to David Flennig in, London, 1738. "2 raised Japan'd Black Corner Cubbards, with 2 Doors to each, no Red in 'em, of the best Sort, but Plain." Quoted in Tolles, 1963, p.128.
- 98 *ibid.*, p.127.
- 99 Kalm, Peter. *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America: The America of 1750*, trans. Adolf Benson New York, 1937, Vol. II, p.651.
- 100 *Christian Advices* p22/3
- 101 Taylor, 1892, pp.161 ff.
- 102 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 1726.
- 103 Mrs Centlivre: "A Bold Stroke For A Wife" Quoted in Gummere, 1901 p.121.
- 104 *Character of a Quaker in His True and Proper Colors; or, The Clownish Hypocrite Anatomized*, London, 1671.
- 105 Jones, 1679.
- 106 Hoare, L. 1832.
- 107 Tolles, 1960. p.77.
- 108 J Woolman, *Journal*, c.1760. Quoted at length in Gummere, 1901 p.51-52.
- 109 *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, XVII, (1920), p.47.
- 110 *Rules of Discipline*, etc., 1844. p.70.
- 111 Lucas, p.97.
- 112 Hannah B. Mott to her mother, Hannah Smith, from Mamaroneck, N.Y., 8 mo. 23, 1828. Quoted in Gummere, 1901, p.42.
- 113 Kirkbride, Mahlon S., *Domestic Portraiture of our Ancestors Kirkbride; 1650-1824*. pp.22-3.
- 114 *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*, XVI, (1919) p.15.
- 115 *Quaker Idyls*, Some Ante-Bellum Letters, p.92-93, 114-117, 126-127.
- 116 *ibid.*, Twelfth Street Meeting, pp.4-7.
- 117 A silk pincushion and needlework case, pair of crewel embroidered pockets, a sampler, several needlework pictures and a seat cover are also attributed to this Friend.
- 118 Aberdeen Meeting, York, 22-23, April, 1720.
- 119 Hine, 1929, p.72.
- 120 Swarthmore Account Book, 1673. quoted in Webb, p. 230.
- 121 *ibid.*, p. 231.
- 122 *ibid.*, p.92.
- 123 Earle, 1905., cited in Brey, p.216.
- 124 Source unknown, told by the great-granddaughter, Quoted Gummere, pp.161-2.
- 125 Sally Wistar's Journal, A.C.Myers ed., (Philadelphia, 1902), 10/20/1777, p.87 and

6/7/1778, p.179.

¹²⁶Deborah Hill : pp. 30-31; Brissot de Warville, *New Travels*, pp. 300-01.

¹²⁷Jenkins, 1948, p.18.

7 THE UNITED SOCIETY OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST

Whatever may be called the worship of God, it is certain that no external exercise can be anything more than an outward expression of an inward spiritual sensation of love and obedience to God, arising from a knowledge and understanding of his will.

Darrow, Meacham and Youngs¹,

The Shaker visual form operates in a way that has parallels, but no direct comparison, with other groups in this study. Their aesthetic, as that of the other sects, was, and continues to be, based on a number of Scriptural references and injunctions. It is the intention of this chapter to not only show how the Shakers gave visual reality to their faith, but to emphasise that is how those edicts are interpreted and inter-related that produces their particular sectarian image.

More than any other sect, Shaker communal experiments attempted to create a facsimile of a heavenly existence in the lives led on earth. They believed that 'God has created man an active, intelligent Being, possessing important powers and faculties, ...and he is required to devote these powers and faculties to the service of God.'² In working for God at the height of the movement the strength of their faith meant that architecture and craftsmanship reflected the doctrines of utilitarianism, honesty [of materials], humility and simplicity [in the absence of ornament and purity of form]. As Sister Jennie explained in the 1940's "...we are always being told how beautiful our things be..All our furniture was ever meant to be was strong, light, and, above all, practical..³ To the outside world this meant an 'instrumentalist'

conception of 'aesthetics'.⁴

PLAIN DESIGN AND GOSPEL SIMPLICITY

The Shaker concern that whatever they made should be acceptable to God in both design and object, meant that doctrinal absolutes operated throughout every aspect of Shaker life. Accordingly their visual concept was based on a general principle that pervaded the whole of the Shaker movement: "True gospel simplicity". In contrast to 'worldly' discussions of Shaker design and philosophy, the Brethren themselves were reticent concerning the thinking that lay behind attitudes towards particular aspects of design.

Prior to 1821 Shaker practices were agreed on an ad hoc basis within the Family but after this date the *Millennial Laws* legislate against doctrinal ambivalence. These were to be adhered to a much greater extent than the Puritan 'Blue' Laws or the Quaker 'Advices' - primarily I would argue because of their honouring of the injunction 'to be not conformed to the World'. This separation was itself enforced by the Millennial Laws, "no members except those in the Deacon's or Trustee's order could go from home, even off the farm, without liberty from the Elders"⁵ and was a measure designed to facilitate Shaker uniformity - a measure adopted to assist their survival, both in physical and mental terms, as a self-sufficient community.

The *Laws* spell out religious doctrine in terms of domestic action; within those terms lies the fabric of the Shaker aesthetic. For the Shakers the word 'plain' had a special meaning - it did not just mean simplicity, but rather 'sincerity'.⁶ Sincerity of faith meant there was no difference between life and religion: as Eldress Bertha Lindsay, of Canterbury New Hampshire, explained

Although we kneel down to pray or go separately into a quiet room, we also put that devotion into our daily work and our daily living. In order to have everything as perfect as God made it, we must have perfect devotion to whatever we do. If we live one year, or one day, or a thousand, we want to put the same love into our work as we would if we knew we were going to live

forever...People love our furniture, they love the simplicity of it, but they also realise that it is the result of a life given to loving people and loving God. ⁷

The debate that presaged the *Laws* has not survived. One of the few clear rationalisations was recorded by Green and Wells, contemporary biographers of the Society. They expressed the tenets of 'gospel simplicity' as:

...the operation of holiness and goodness, and produces in the soul a perfect oneness of character in all things; its thoughts, words and works are plain and simple, and wholly directed to the honour and glory of God...It is without ostentation, parade or any vain show, and naturally leads to plainness in all things. In all the objects of its pursuit, in all the exercise of its powers, in all its communications of good to others, it is governed solely by the will of God, and shows forth its peculiar singleness of heart and mind in all things. ⁸

Shakerism was about living a life style that brought one less into contact with the perceived superfluities of contemporary life. Through a lack of encumbrances it would then be possible to come more directly into contact with God. Functionalism belonged to their concepts of church government as intrinsically as design. Elements superfluous to the function of an item were discarded

PRIDE

Shaker practice embraced the doctrine of the early apostolic church. Commonly expressed through a fear of 'pride'⁹, avoidance of that sin was to determine both their early 'aesthetic' and their oeuvre. Elder Giles Avery's dictum that "The most important uses must necessarily engage [the] attention, time and strength"¹⁰ is indicative of the underlying precepts of the sect. For the early followers of Mother Ann the first priority was protection against "hunger, cold, and nakedness" so "the cultivation of flowers" or "the merely ornamental in dress or architecture" was seen as wasteful and needless activity.¹¹ These became moral tenets. As Elder Frederick Evans told the historian Nordhoff: the "divine man has no right to waste money upon what you would call beauty, in his house or daily life, while there are people

living in misery".¹²

Superfluities were sinful and impeded the spirit, and the danger grew as the communities became more settled and prosperous for superfluity of material objects encouraged the sin of pride, which would turn thoughts from worship to Worldly possessions. It is possible to argue that it was symptomatic of the period and contemporary standards of living, but I feel that is significant that for the Shakers such possessions were usually thought of in terms of clothing. Eldress Rebecca Perrot wrote in her Journal for March 18th, 1849: I dreamed that [we] went to Philadelphia in a large ship. I saw that I was dressed in working clothes and felt ashamed and I turned back to change them. Then I thought that was pride so I turned again after Mary Ann and Rebecca..."¹³ Note that a distinction is made between working and 'formal' clothes - evidence that personal appearance was of importance to the Shakers. As we shall see, Shaker clothing was constructed in order to express a changing and complex religious doctrine, for the movement was not to remain constant in its philosophy throughout its history.

Shaker products sought to visually articulate the belief that although "no external exercise" could be anything more than "an outward expression of an inward spiritual sensation" of "love and obedience to God", that product went as far as it physically could. Father Joseph Meacham stated the fundamental Shaker position when he declared in the 1790's that:

*"All work done, or things made in the Church for their use ought to be faithfully and well done, but plain and without superfluity. We are not called to...be like the world; but to excel them in order, union and peace, and in good works - works that are truly virtuous and useful to man in this life."*¹⁴

Relinquishing pride and avarice therefore meant not only must they relinquish personal ownership but 'prideful' ornament. What this meant to the reality of Shaker life was spelled out in the pages and ordinances of the *Laws*.

A primary directive states that:

Believers may not in any circumstances, manufacture for sale, any article or

articles, which are superfluously wrought, and which would have a tendency to feed pride and vanity of man, or such as would not be admissible to use among themselves, on account of their superfluity.

Shakerism should therefore be seen as the development of the community spirit over the cult of the individual. The united energy of the whole community was spent directing the mind to essentials, and away from irrelevancies so that each individual life would then be an emblem of their faith. Such items as picture frames gathered dust, the pictures they framed were anyway considered to be useless and encouraged the importance of the individual over that of the community.

Throughout every aspect of Shaker creativity, the founding principles were those enshrined in their faith; those of utility and modesty. Since pride was a sin, so virtuosity, personal pride, was discouraged and the creation of pieces in harmony with the total output of a workshop encouraged. Single craftsmen were enjoined by the *Laws* to temper their creativity with a due sense of reserve and humility, While many pieces are signed, many items were the work of a number of craftsmen and workshop routines were organised to facilitate collaboration. At certain times when the *Laws* made pride in personal creation undesirable, it was simply made impossible.

What on the surface may seem a very simple mode of living was in fact subtly controlled by the *Laws*. In this way Meacham's concept of Union as a fundamental part of the Shaker faith was given tangible form. This unity of action is perhaps one of the major differences between the related Puritan and Quaker sects. Dissension over matters of aesthetics divided these groups, and created factions who bore little visual relation to the main body. By contrast, when Shaker aesthetic policy directed, all Shakers conformed, and when that policy changed, Believers changed.



Fig.40. New Lebanon.

COLOUR AND MODESTY

Darker pigments, whether used for buildings or clothing, required less maintenance and were therefore less 'prideful'. Pedestrian and 'work-a-day' dark colours were used on farm buildings, sheds and barns, in accordance with ordinances laid down in the *Millenial Laws* of 1845:

*7. Barns and back buildings, as wood houses, etc. if painted at all, should be of a dark hue, either red, or brown, lead colour, or something of the kind, unless they front the road, or command a slight aspect, and they should not be of a very light colour.*¹⁵

Fig.40. shows a view of New Lebanon. The working buildings in the foreground, off the main thoroughfare are easily distinguishable.

Dwelling rooms were strictly furnished according to the *Laws*.: Interior furnishings were stipulated under Section X:

*The following is the order in which retiring rooms should be furnished...
 ..comfortables [for beds] should be of a modest color, nor checked, striped or flowerd. Blankets or Comfortables for outside spreads, should be blue and white, but not checked or stript; other kinds now in use may be worn out.....
 Window curtains should be white, or of a blue or green shade, or some very modest colour, and not red, checked, stript or flowerd...*

Concern over patterned fabrics echoes Quaker thinking on 'modesty' but differs in that checked fabrics are not permitted - though the prevalence of blue and white Quaker textiles has Shaker parallels. The recreated mid-nineteenth century retiring rooms at Pleasant Hill [fig.41] clearly contravene the 1845 *Laws*. but nonetheless represent the increasingly Worldly style of the Society in the nineteenth century.



Fig.41. Family Dwelling, Pleasant Hill, Kentucky.

SYMBOLISM

The Shakers believed the Bible not to be a record of the intention of God but that it was: "...a record of the *most Divine* Angelic ministrations to man, and more or less an imperfect record of the spiritual and religious experience and history of the most highly progressed portion or branch of the human family."¹⁶ Clause 67 of the *Laws* held that:

'..the book of the Revelation has suffered less from interpolations and

mistranslations than any other;...because the Spirit has clothed it with such a complexity of tropes, symbols, and figures, that it is utterly unintelligible to the generative man, and could not be comprehended until the central event - the second appearing of Christ - had transpired; ...during which process, all the events described in that book would be accomplished in them as individuals..."



Fig.42 Meeting House at Hancock Shaker Village.

With this belief, the Shakers made it possible for their sect to accept even the contradictory Scriptural regulations which fragmented other sects. This passage also makes it possible to appreciate the importance placed by the sect on visual symbols for they were the language of the Bible itself. Material objects were perceived as symbols of spiritual concepts. Simplicity was the most pervasive of Shaker doctrines. Simplicity itself became symbolic.

Shakers were well aware of the symbolic aspects of such adjuncts to religion as 'steeple houses' which 'with their costly cushioned pews, stained windows, and elaborate ornaments...attract the worldly minded' especially

'when the means for doing so were wrung out of the hard earnings of the poor labouring man and woman.'¹⁷ Though they built Meeting-houses, Divine services were not controlled by a clergy schooled in theological debate but participant-centred. They thus had no need for the abstract, intellectual, foci of altar and vestments or the distancing devices of chancel, choir and nave and accordingly repudiated the costly furnishings and ornamental stained-glass of mainstream religion. The Meeting house of Hancock Shaker Village [fig.42] is, apart from the use of the symbolic white and heavenly blue, devoid of imagery. The physical manifestation of such beliefs led to worldly observers such as Charles Dickens to condemn the Shakers in 1842 as creating buildings on a par with English factories or barns.¹⁸

1837 saw the beginning of a new 'era' of symbolic mysticism among the Brotherhood; an era that was given physical form through the oeuvre that came to be known as 'Spirit Drawings'. These works are an example of the intrinsic role played by symbolism in Shaker thinking. Specifically the 'New Era' took place at a time when the movement was in danger of losing touch with its roots. Homer Eaton Keyes wrote: 'Super-terrestrial voices spoke messages to ears attuned to ethereal vibrations, and holy symbols were disclosed to eyes aware of the unseen.'¹⁹ The only other allusion to these drawings in contemporary Shaker literature is in a manuscript history by Isaac Youngs: 'There have been many notices to individuals this year past [1843] ...with many drawings, signs, and figures of objects in the spirit world, with mysterious writings etc. which will, it is said, at some future time be revealed and explained...'²⁰

In coming to terms with the phenomenon the Shakers faced the dilemma that each of the other sects had experienced; the answer that each found was both symptomatic of, and determined by, the fundamental nature of the sect, their spiritual antecedents and their basic approach to the Bible. Perhaps it can be said of any human society that the past determines the

future: if so it is most clearly demonstrated within these sects. In actuality, since the drawings were apparently a form of communication with such as Mother Ann herself, Father Joseph Meacham, Christ and secular leaders, who spoke to their spiritual descendants, either directly or through an intermediary such as 'The Angel of Love' or the 'Angel Gabriel,' and were in the first instance at least, automatic, there was little that could be done to discourage the practice. As Keyes wrote: '...the urge to capture such symbols and record their forms and meanings for the benefit of the faithful became so strong as to overcome the prevailing injunctions against pictorial representations of any kind'.²¹

Through the drawings 'Mother Ann' spoke of her disapproval and urged that her followers seek to return to the original concepts of the faith, working harder, dressing more plainly, living more austerely, becoming generally more spiritually aware. Never can there have been a more clear-cut case of art serving and being shaped by personal faith. As a result, as well as the creation of the Holy Laws of Zion in 1840, the *Millennial Laws* were revised in 1845, detailing the rules of Shaker life even more strictly.

The first examples of the Spirit messages were merely texts or symbols pricked out with a pin, often in the margins of a Shaker hymn book, but as time passed they grew increasingly elaborate. Towards the end of the decade the messages from Heaven more commonly took the form of drawings and paintings. Always symmetrical in composition they record basic Shaker beliefs. These pictures were an afflatus, designs determined by the Spirit that sent the vision and not the creation of the recipient they cannot then be viewed as 'art', but as true messages and images from the next world. There is no evidence to suggest that they were used as aids to teaching 'Shakerism' and were thus not as significant Witnesses to faith as 'heavenly blue' paint or mantles.²² Rather they picture the Millennial world where Plain clothes are discarded and the Brethren are bedecked with jewels and instead of simple

food there are exotic fruits

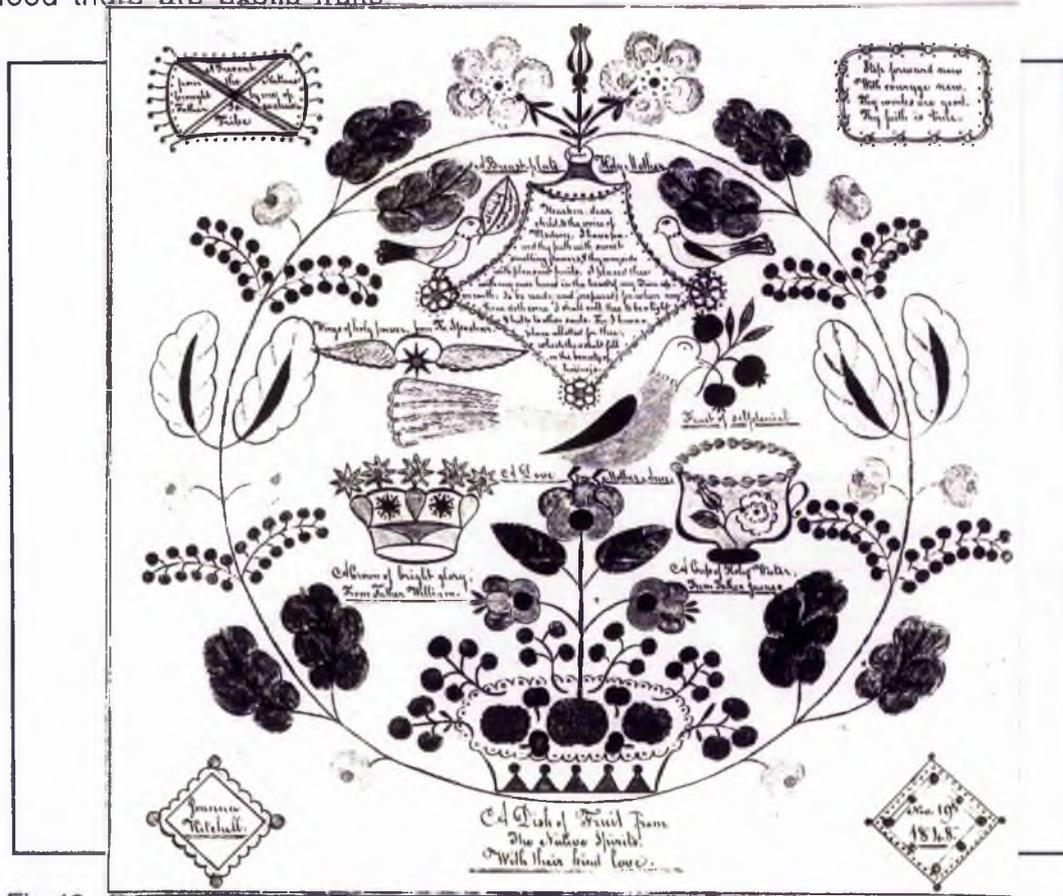


Fig.43. Shaker Spirit Drawing.

The majority of the drawings were executed in pen and ink, and a score or so survive in the form of small hearts cut from pale-blue, pink or yellow paper, subsequently worked in pen and ink. Thirteen items created around 1844 are leaf shaped and worked on green paper - perhaps symbolic of the Tree of Life, so central to Shaker symbolism [fig.43].

There are a number of specific symbols used in Spirit drawings, though the symbolism is not always consistent. The following list has been put together from a number of sources, including a key from a manuscript entitled *Presents From The Spiritual World*, by A. Buckingham of the Waterlivet society:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Apples | Love |
| Balls of 'light': | The spiritual 'gifts' exchanged in meeting. |
| Birds: | Sexual sin |
| Buds: | Gospel Freedom and Simplicity |
| Carnation: | Love |

Chains:	Love and union
Cherries	Hope
Daisy:	Faith
Diamonds:	Peace and comfort
Figs:	Heavenly Joy
Fruit Trees:	'Spiritual' fertility
Grapes:	Strength
Grapes:	'Good fruits' 'spiritual Christ'.
Lilies:	Belong to the church
Oranges:	Encouragement
Palms:	'Spiritual' Triumph
Peaches	Charity
Pearls:	Meekness
Pears:	Faith
Pineapple:	Spiritual Sensations
Plums:	Union
Precious objects:	In the worldly sense: - golden chains, crowns, ornaments, exotic food were used by the mystics to represent the rewards of the supernatural world
Rivers and streams:	Symbolic of the cleansing spirit
Roses:	Belong to the church, love or chastity, patience, perseverance or faith.
Squirrels:	Sexual sin
Tree of Life:	Church of Christ, the gospel union, or a tree of light, comfort, order, virtue or protection.

The Tree motif entered the Shaker repertoire when James Whittaker, adopted son and eventual successor to Mother Ann, experienced a vision showing such a tree, similar to that of Ann herself, shortly before the sect left England. He saw the new country, and in the middle of it the tree; "Every leaf thereof shone with such brightness as made it appear like a burning torch, representing the Church of Christ which will be established in this land."²³ The Tree of Life may also represent the cherry tree brought from England by Mother Ann. Other interpretations remind us that the Tree of Life was offered after the Fall to the obedient and the repentant [gen. 2:9]. The Tree is also seen by many as the emblem of all that God created. Additionally there is the biblical pronouncement that "The Tree is known by his fruit" [Matthew 12:33]. This idea accords with the Shaker practice of living a life as witness to one's faith. Moreover, Benjamin Keach, an English writer of metaphysical scripture

believed with Isiah that all godly people were "trees of righteousness" planted by the Lord to glorify Him. Keach's works were reprinted in America between 1647 to 1858 and this interpretation may have also been familiar to the Brethren.

Other allegorical symbols include objects from the natural world and domestic items such as tables, lamps, beehives, pocket watches and cakes. Spirit drawings were often crowded with symbols and elaborated with explanatory calligraphy. One example 'from Holy Mother Wisdom to Eldress Dana or Mother' includes

'The Saviour's Ship of Safety', 'Mother Ann's Angel of Comfort', 'A golden watch', 'Holy Wisdom's Angel of Love', A 'grape vine', 'Wisdom's Holy Seal', A 'golden Harp', 'Chest of treasures', A 'dish of fruit', A 'chair', 'Roses of Holy Wisdom's Approbation', 'Fruit Trees', A 'golden chariot to take Mother Dana home' and 'lambs'.

The sources for celestial images are largely Biblical. The all-seeing eye that frequently appears in the drawings is the "single eye" mentioned in Matthew. Naturalistic items may be drawn from Genesis, Exodus, and the Book of Revelations. Emblems directly derived from these sources, such as the Well of Samaria, the Ark, "The cup from which the saviour drank at the well", Abram's altar, the Red Sea, and "Sarah of Old" are common. That the Shakers thought in these terms is not surprising. The entire language of the Bible is steeped in symbolism, its teachings transmitted through parables. That Shakers should draw upon images such as the fountain to symbolise life-giving power and celestial happiness, as the Hebrews had before them, is to be expected: that they also draw on everyday objects to stand as emblems of the Divine Will, is a manifestation of living witness.

In only one area is the unity of the spirit drawings compromised: in that there were two schools of design. The New Lebanon drawings were complex compositions crowded with naively drawn doves, crowns, trumpets, and other symbolic motifs interspersed with inscriptions, whereas those from Hancock are simpler in design, larger in scale, and more dramatic. With very

few exceptions each group conforms to a stylistic unity in keeping with the collectivist tenets of their faith. A rare exception is the work of Polly Ann [Jane] Reed (1818 - 1881) whose drawings are distinctive for the circle that encloses and dominates her designs, and another atypical artist is Hannah Cahoon (1788 -1864). In this case it is not form that is distinctive but the impasto technique in which the images were recorded. Most probably as a result of this technique, the drawings make a stronger statement with a single image. She was also one of the very few to sign their work.

COLOUR SYMBOLISM

While both Puritans and Quakers had operated some system of colour symbolism, the Shakers took the concept further. At the movement's inception there had been no regulations controlling the use of colour beyond the injunction that they should be self-sufficient in dye-stuffs. This meant that up until the middle of the nineteenth century the Society operated large and efficient dye-houses. The quantities produced were large, for the rules concerning uniformity operated at all levels of their existence. A typical dyers record entry is that of May of 1840. We learn that they "...coloured about 60 yards of cotton cloth in hot butternut dye for frocks and trowsers, and 60 yards for linings." The range of colours is seen in log-books of which the following extract is typical:

•1845.

May. 25. We finish 75 runs of yarn in the blue dye that is partly coloured in hemlock dye.

Aug. 21. Elizabeth Munson from the 2nd family came to assist us in colouring with camwood.

•1847

April 19. go to washing and put down our first yarn to buck in the red rinsing tub.

June. 1. Iron the rest of the cloth and color some copperas yarn to finish a piece of kitchen gowns.

June 8. Was the wool to color blue and drab. Comense at 5 oc. A.M. & Finish 7 oc. P.M.

Aug. 23. Prepare for coloring, Logwood green.

Sept. 1. Coloured red for horse blankets with Nicwood and red wood, putting

the yarn and chips in the kettle together, but long before we got cleaned up we promised ourselves never to do so again.

•1848.

Aug.10. Color red and green, and filling for Ironing Blankets compound blue.

28. We madder our red yarn.²⁴

These entries date from a period when, with the development of a more systematic theology, specific regulations regarding colour of clothing, textiles and surroundings, were instituted.

The revised *Millenial Laws* of 1845 were specific in its requirements. The workshops and dwelling houses which fronted the main streets of the community were painted yellow in line with directive No.5. which stated that "It is inadvisable for wooden buildings, fronting the street, to be painted red, brown or black....they should be of a lightish hue." Exactly why this was decided is unknown but that there must have been some scriptural reason is certain. That the floors of the Meeting House at Sabbathday Lake, dating from 1794, are yellow-white or yellow ochre in colour lends credence to the idea. It is possible that these 'lightish hues' were intended as references to the 'ivory palaces' of the Bible 1 Ki. 22:39, Ps 45:8 or perhaps make reference to the spiritual state of the residents within.

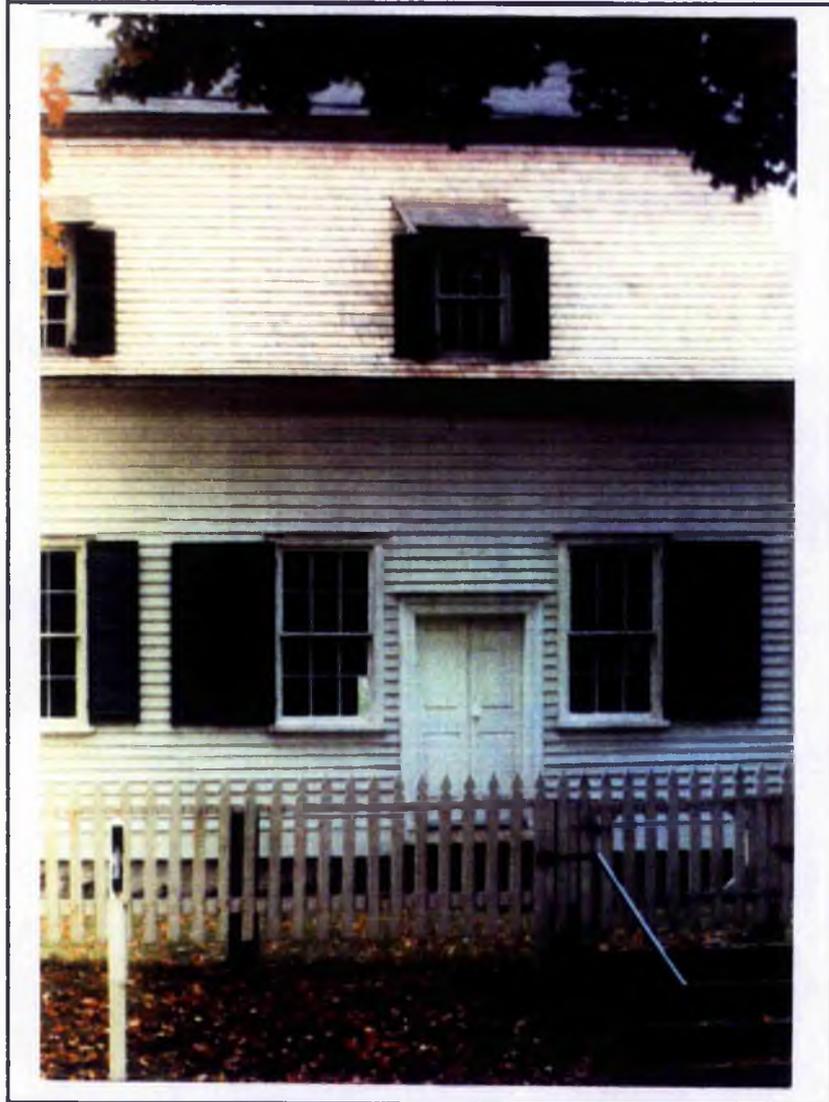


Fig.44. Meeting House, Sabbathday Lake, Maine.

Other buildings were similarly colour-coded, and their decoration laid down:

4. Floors in dwelling houses, if stained at all, should be of a reddish yellow, and shop floors should be of a yellowish red.

6. Houses and shops, should be as near uniform in colour, as consistent; but it is advisable to have shops a little darker shade than dwelling houses.

White was spiritually important. References to white as a significant colour began to appear in accounts of mystic experiences. According to a written account of a vision by Sarah Pool, ²⁵ she travelled to a remote city having walls "which seemed to be composed of no earthly material: its appearance was that of pure white." While a Spirit Letter from William S. Byrd

to Martin Runyon,²⁶ relates how there "were four thousand holy angels, who accompanied me to the white plains...Mother said to me, "My child, you look pure and white, and as unfettered as a little Dove".



Fig.45. [L] Waterhouse c.1883. [R] Bathhouse for use of Brethren. c.1860. Pleasant Hill, Kentucky.

The practice of painting Meeting Houses white was initiated at Mount Lebanon and quickly become enshrined in the *Laws*. A directive, No.6, declared that "No buildings may be painted white, save meeting houses" and No.3. that "The meeting house should be painted white without, and of a blueish shade within."

The Shakers generally interpreted this 'blueish shade' as a light Prussian blue, the faded echo of which became known as 'heavenly blue': this can be seen in the Meeting House at Sabbathday Lake [fig.44]. The "Sky Blue for New Meetinghouse"²⁷ according to a Shaker paint formula book dated 1849 took "10lbs White lead, 1lb. Prussian Blue, mixed in linseed Oils and Drying Materials."²⁸

The significant relationship between colour and doctrine is made more evident in that as Shaker society began to break down at the end of the nineteenth century this was reflected in a liberalisation of colour symbolism. The physical effects of this can be seen at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky [fig.45] where both the Waterhouse c.1883, [left] and the Bath house [right] c.1860, are white. Shakers at Harvard, Massachusetts and at Alfred, Maine also painted several of their secular buildings white, while Canterbury, New Hampshire painted their Meeting House yellow.

Shakers saw spiritual values and religious revelations very much in terms of colour and costume. A Shaker diary records the revelation that the residents of the City of Peace were to be dressed in:

..beautiful fine trowsers, as white as snow; these resemble the garment of purity, with many shining stars thereon. The buttons of a sky blue color, and the appearance of them like glass. A Jacket of sky blue color also, with gold Buttons thereon, and on these buttons are wrought in fine needlework, many elegant and pretty flowers, of different colors. A fine white silk handkerchief, bordered with gold, to tie about the neck...A coat of heavenly brightness, of twelve different colors, which cannot be compared to any natural beauties...A pair of heavenly shoes, perfectly white...A fine fur hat, of a silver color."

Similarly the sisters garments were to consist of a gown: "...of heavenly brightness" and of "12 very beautiful colors." Plus "A pair of silver colored shoes...A fine muslin cap, with a beautiful trimming, also a pretty color and handkerchief for the neck...A bonnet of silver color, trimmed with white ribbon, also a pair of blue silk gloves." ²⁹ The many references to 'sky-blue' and pure white in these contexts may be linked with the symbolic spirituality of the 'heavenly-blue' and white colouring of Meeting Houses. The adoption of these and other vivid colours appears to be the conscious construction of a vision of the heavenly life as the opposite to the humble existence of the brethren on Earth. No other sect seems to have created such a ubiquitous and detailed vision for its members; certainly nothing that approached the mystic-reality of it in their lives, for these visions occur repeatedly and throughout the settlements. It is possible to speculate that this colour-specific visionary

kingdom may actually be a function of the high degree of unity of appearance throughout the sect [at least prior to the Civil War]. Alternatively one may interpret the phenomenon as a result of that rigidly enforced unity - that is, a psychic necessity.

The mystic element of Shakerism expressed through this colour symbolism is evident in numerous other contemporary writings. Calvin Green described a dream in which the door of his bedroom opened to reveal: "a well looking middle sized woman clad in a handsome green gown...having to appearance a little boy about a year old in her arms also clad in a green gown..."³⁰ Green interpreted this vision as a visitation from Mother Ann, who came to inform him that the Society was on the verge of entering a period of renewed vigour and increase. These are the qualities he associates with the colour green. The message is strengthened by the association of the colour with his own surname, and sees it as an indication that he will be instrumental in fulfilling the prophecy. The experience was repeated subsequently, and on the second visit Green reported that the child wore a "beautiful white cap on in its head...."

The following extract from a description of a vision by Lydia Lyon shows evil in terms of green and red. Here the overtly beneficial nature of 'green' is obscured by the specific context and its associations:

*The Saints were assembled within a beautiful enclosure clothed in garments of beauty and loveliness,...Outside of this enclosure a huge monster like a serpent appeared crawling around...in order to get in and harm the Saints...Its colour was variegated with bright spots of green & red, & it seemed deadly poisonous in its whole mass."*³¹

With green now literally meaning 'increase' and red representing suffering, the use of colour in this description could be interpreted as symbolic characterisation of a fear of the sexual nature the world outside their community, with all the attendant ills. The bi-colour serpent therefore stood for procreation and suffering; emotional, economic and physical.

There has been some debate as to whether yellow was as a restricted

colour with the Shakers as it was with certain other sects, but neither my own research nor that of other scholars³² finds any documentation relating to any prohibition. The *Millennial Laws* make no mention of the colour and mustard yellow was widely used for buildings. Despite this however, the colour is generally absent from surviving Shaker textiles until the twentieth century when the society was in decline. Yellow might have been dropped from general use because it was not light-fast as early dyers experienced problems due to poor mordanting.³³ However this was remedied in the nineteenth century, and Fustic and Quercitron were produced in large quantities in America.³⁴ Numerous other dye-plants will give a range of good yellows, but in general it has to be said that the colour has never been popular, even in the World. Possibly the combination of these caveats added to the conceptual 'sinfulness' of light colours simply conspired against its common usage.

White, despite its maintenance requirements was also used symbolically in the early nineteenth century. Sisters adopted an all-white costume for Sabbath days as early as 1827, and were variously described by observers as 'like a crowd of saints' or 'a gaggle of geese'.³⁵ That this was not a reflection of Worldly values is evident in that sisters up to the age of about fifty would wear this dress;³⁶ in the 'world' at this date white was considered suitable only for young girls.

There was evidently some degree of symbolic, hierarchical, differentiation within the Family expressed through dress. Both cotton and wool were produced in red and blue for deacons' frocks and in 1838 cotton check aprons and light, striped, gowns for the ministry were manufactured. Perhaps those deemed morally fit to lead the Society were also considered strong enough to withstand the pitfalls of pride and ostentation.

There does not appear to have been any philosophical debate among the Shakers, such as that ^{which} enlivened Quaker circles, as to the advisability of colouring clothes at all. This may be in part attributable to the more cohesive

nature of the sect, or to the type of person that the Shakers attracted.

APPLIED DESIGN

Mother Ann had instructed her followers: "Beauty rests on utility. That which has in itself the highest use possesses the greatest beauty." This forerunner of the twentieth century design hymn 'form must follow function' meant that by the end of the eighteenth century the rejection of all things extraneous to the tectonics of an item had resulted in what was to become an enduring aesthetic. Such statements as "We want a good plain substantial Shaker article, yea, one that tells us what we are"³⁷ substantiates the idea that the Shakers expressed their faith through their physical, visual, creations. Without the realisation of *why* the piece was created with such care, the viewer is missing the 'reality' of the work. Shaker products are not purely useful items in themselves, but spiritual exercises.

The Shakers as a closed community looked to the Elders at New Lebanon, the spiritual and administrative centre of the movement, for prototypes of designs. The Shakers had a conviction that "nothing short of union in all things...[could] constitute a true church."³⁸ This is unusual within a 'Protestant' milieu, and particularly within these sects, for post-Reformation churches are noted for a distrust of centralised authority based on the repudiation of the spiritual hierarchy inherent within the Catholic church. This unusual, even unique, uniformity was furthered in the rotation of work. With a centralised design source pieces from one community were as uniform with those from another.

Uniformity was the primary concern governing floor coverings whose colouring was unspecified. The twisted-weft technique for rag carpeting that was produced at several of the villages appears to be uniquely Shaker. The weft was of narrow strips, either single or plied fulled woollen cloth and/or plied yarns. Alternating S and Z plies produced a distinctive pattern, with the

cotton warp finished with either a plain knotted edge or with a four strand braid. Predominantly red, green or blue with "pussly" [purslane] dye, these rugs often utilise loom ends from clothing lengths.

While the insistence on uniformity undeniably created an aesthetic unique to the Shakers, it is nevertheless possible to trace, in their carpentry and case furniture, the vernacular traditions of the major ethnic groups represented within the sect. These design traditions were then refined to bring them as near as possible to 'gospel simplicity'. Two groups in particular, the Germans and Swedes, were influential and represent the ethnic diversity of the surrounding population. The Swedish element was strongly represented in both the New Lebanon and Waterlivet societies from their inception. The community at Waterlivet, which produced chairs commercially as early as 1776, was, however, in a predominantly Dutch area. In addition the Pleasant Hill Society in Kentucky, paid the passage money of several Swedish immigrants to America, in the belief that they would be an asset to the community. Their aesthetic influence, in the built-in furniture [fig.46] and painted furnishings is evident. Single pieces cannot of course be ascribed to individuals since work was the product of community effort.



Fig. 46. Painted workbench. Pine/Maple/Oak/Chestnut.

New converts to the Brethren also brought with them what worldly goods and chattels they could for the use of all in the community. This would have been another source of stylistic influence. One such in-comer, Melinda, is recorded as bringing: "five comforters, two feather beds, six home-spun sheets beside table furnishings" while Prudence contributed "Three quilted coverlets, woodenware, sundry candlesticks and her brindle cow" to the North Union Community³⁹ Widows would have brought more substantial items to the Family, as would male converts.

The Shakers believed that what they saw in their world was a reflection of the inner spirit. Perfection in their work was therefore equated with spiritual perfection. As every activity was deemed to be consecrated, everything a Shaker did was to the greater glory of God. A Sister who took care to pattern a chair seat to perfection would extend the same care to her spiritual life. "Trifles make perfection, but perfection itself is no trifle" was an

adage attributed to Mother Ann. Creation was itself a religious observance. Mother Ann instructed her followers to 'put your hands to work and your hearts to God'⁴⁰ but to approach their work 'as if you had a thousand years to live and as if you were to die tomorrow'.⁴¹ As a result furniture produced during the Shakers heyday is founded on a harmony of purpose allied with proportion and commonly recognised as having an inner 'serenity' not often seen in the products of contemporary mainstream culture.

Every part of a Shakers world reflected the simplicity of His spirit, everything they did had the purpose of reminding them that their goal was humility. The *Millenial Laws* stated that his surroundings should be Plain. "Odd or fanciful styles of architecture may not be used among the believers....beadings, mouldings, and cornices, which are merely for fancy may not be made by Believers." At least until the late nineteenth century the Shakers could say of their houses:

*Our Zion home is not adorned
With pictured walls, or gold
Nor in a glittering chain or pearls
Is all her glory told.*⁴²

Spirituality thus drove the quest for perfection in design and workmanship, for, in the case of a chair, 'angels may come and sit on it'.⁴³ Detailing is functional: it may result in beauty, but it stems from religious doctrine. A visitor wrote in 1867 ;

*Every building, whatever may be its use, has something of the air of a chapel. The paint is all fresh; the planks are all bright; the windows are all clean... Even in what is seen of the eye and heard of the ear, [it] strikes you as a place where it is always Sunday...The people are like their village...seeming to be at peace, not only with themselves, but with nature and with heaven.*⁴⁴

APPLIED ART

Shakers shared many of the Plain sect's prohibitions concerning 'graven images' and 'idols'. Section X, No. 7 of the *Millenial Laws* decreed: "No maps, Charts, and no pictures or paintings, shall ever be hung up in your dwelling-

rooms, shops or Office. And no pictures or paintings set in frames, with glass before them shall ever be among you."⁴⁵

The statement has all the hall-marks of a Plain directive, but goes on to qualify the injunction with the caveat that '...modest advertisements may be put up in the Trustees office when necessary.'⁴⁶ This was usually interpreted as advertising materials for seed merchants and calendars produced by these firms. Why these were deemed acceptable is not adequately explained, and curiously it is a licence extended throughout the Amish church.

Shaker law demanded that records were kept of the temporal development of each family, and village maps, the earliest dating from 1790, detailing the property at Shirley, Massachusetts, were produced in some numbers. These drawings are *records*, not *interpretations*, and thus there is little problem in reconciling faith and practice. The purpose behind even the original Biblical laws was primarily to prevent the worship of false gods, and secondly to limit the sin of 'pridefulness'. A map, not of individually owned lands, but of property held in community contravenes neither of these injunctions. Nor were either ever intended or used as foci for worship.

Developed over the years from simple sketches to elaborate scrolls that were designed to be viewed spread across a table, these maps measure anywhere from 8 inches to more than seven feet, they form a distinct genre that has no equivalent in mainstream American art. In their stylistic tectonic it is possible to see their antecedents in surveyors' plans and architects' drawings and in keeping with their stated purpose as documents, the maps are inscribed with explanatory comments and reflect the way the Shakers organised their environment - which was itself a reflection of their faith. The maps may thus be seen as articles of faith, conceived, comments the historian Robert Emlen⁴⁷ 'experientially rather than diagrammatically'.

For many years their form remained static, simultaneously representing two and three dimensional features with no overall orientation - each building

viewed from the road on to which it faces. This may have been a purely naive feature, but it also answers the purpose, since the maps may^{bc} viewed equally well from all sides, as if, for example, around a table. Then, as Shaker communities experienced change in the middle of the nineteenth century, their maps reflected this, yet continued to serve their primary religious purpose of a communal memory. By the middle of the nineteenth century they had moved more closely into line with the outside 'World', designed to hang vertically and making use of perspective devices. These later works should be seen within a different context to the earlier maps, since regulations, despite the revision of the *Millennial Laws* in 1845, had relaxed by this time to allow pictures in frames. This change of doctrine was quite sudden for in 1860 an English tourist had commented on the absence of flowers and pictures, whereas by 1873 Elder Henry Blinn is recorded as admiring pictures on walls.⁴⁸ This shift in Shaker opinion can be seen as symptomatic of the decline of the movement, and the lessening of Shaker adherence to biblical injunctions.

WITNESS

The physical form of garments was just as important as their colour for clothing was used as a witness of faith. According to the *Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing*, even the first Shakers in America adapted contemporary fashions to meet the demands of their faith.⁴⁹ At this juncture there were no universal rules and Family uniformity was not a priority. Plain form and utility or function was the yardstick: 'Beulah Cooper...knit a pair of long stockings for Father [James]; he told her he was not particular, all he wanted was that they should exactly fit him'.⁵⁰ Seemingly a practice was tried out at one community, and if observers from other Families did not decry it, officially adopted. The instigation of one such change is recorded:

We could hear his voice and the words distinctly at the South House from the Square House. I heard Father William speak of the Kendalls as being examples of modesty and plainness in dress. It was the fashion to wear very short

gowns when the Believers came here, and we continued to wear ours so, but the Kendall girls made theirs longer which pleased Mother and the Elders, and they told us we might take example by them...⁵¹

This quandary as to appropriate behaviour seems to have been not uncommon among the Shakers to judge from the following extract:

"When Mother first came here she had twisted strings in her cap, yet she looked very neat. Some one got some tape for her which she liked, but frequently, when anyone offered her anything, she would seem to be in a labor to know if it was right for her to have it."⁵²

But as the Society prospered it began to see itself as a separate and distinct entity and sought to express this concept. The growing number of Brethren meant that to maintain a strong psychic identity, to bind the community, uniformity in dress, as in architecture, became important. Dress served the same dual function as buildings or colour schemes, becoming a unifying factor within a socially and geographically disparate community.

Singularity and non-conformity of dress were of fundamental spiritual importance, for they bore witness to both Shaker and World of their faith and its collective, 'enclosed' doctrine. Both Quakers and Puritans had faced the problem of singularity, and in a sense it had broken them. For the Shakers singularity was not a problem or even an option, but a *sine qua non* of their doctrine. Uniformity of dress went even deeper than simple witnessing. The Quaker's *Book of Advices* explains the fundamental nature of the preoccupation with clothing is the key to understanding the role played by dress in the faith of each of these sects, but most significantly in regard to the Brethren. Their dress psychologically paralleled that of enclosed, contemplative, Christian orders but the Shakers carefully avoided mimicking existing Habits. To have adopted the significant forms of another faith would ^{have been} to have borne witness to those tenets in the eyes of the World.

A lengthy account relating to dress was published by an ex-Shaker. It is important in terms of this study in that in it he describes the Shakers as wearing, in addition to their ordinary prescribed clothing, a 'spiritual dress'

symbolic to them of their state of 'grace':

THE HEAVENLY DRESS FOR THE OCCASION The day for meeting upon this mountain, is with the Shakers, a glorious day,...On this day, the brethren, and sisters wear their usual Sunday clothes, and in addition a most splendid Spiritual dress. This dress cannot be seen by the natural eye, but as described by the Seers who can see Spiritual things. The dress consisted of a little coat, or tunic, with buttons of gold, and enriched in the most beautiful manner, with gold trimmings; and all other parts of a full dress to match it. This is an idea I got of the dress from a description of it by one of the sisters. It was received before I went among the people, yet I had the honor of wearing it when attending the mountain meetings. On the evening before, or early on the morning of the day of the meeting, each family in the society assembles itself in its meeting room to receive these garments. It is said that there is a suit for everyone who is worthy to attend the meeting. Every society has its chest of this spiritual clothing...Some of the inspired ones at Enfield, saw the angels bring this box, or chest, into the room, where it was to be received, set it down, and retire...Being assembled in the meeting-room, the Elders standing near the one end of the hall, and the Eldresses near the other end, two brethren at a time approach, and kneel down before the Elders, and while remaining in this position, the elders continue to motion with their hands as though tossing something towards them. And it is said, two little angels standing by receive the dresses, and cloathe the subjects. ...After the meeting is over, the next day we again assemble and return these dresses to the Elders in the same form as we received them, viz., by kneeling before the Elders, who extend their hands to receive, while the two little angels take off the clothes, and return them into the Elders hands...It is said that in one instance, one of the Seers, in folding, and laying this clothing into the chest, counted the garments, and one suit was missing. The fact was, one of the sisters failed to return hers with the rest, being engaged at the time about some domestic affairs. Now does not this prove the thing to be a reality? All this formality is gone through with in seriousness and solemnity....These mountain meetings are kept secret...though we see nothing upon them except their usual Sunday dress.⁵³

The association of the special clothing with the angels reinforces the concept that visual forms for the Shakers were regulated, not by man, but by God. It was God that had the final sanction as to what was, or was not, worn within the Society. While utility was always a consideration, the forms were directly derived from faith and they were worn with, and as an expression of, faith.

The Rule was also designed to bear witness to the Society's belief in social equality. If all Shakers were dressed alike then originating class distinctions would not be apparent. This is clearly very different to the

philosophy of both Puritans and Quakers who experienced some difficulty in reconciling faith with ranking symbols. Both the Law and the allowance circumvented any possibility that there would be class distinctions between Sisters in matters of dress. Whatever their material status before entering the Society, each was equal in the eyes of the world thereafter.

Workday clothing was subject to the same degree of thought as was clothing associated with religious services for *all* activity among the Shakers was an act of faith. Check collars, silk shoe or bag strings, silk bonnet strings for 'every day' use, frills or ruffles on bonnets, pearl collar buttons, green aprons, bombazet aprons, clasp garters and "brought striped gowns with wider stripes than the good Church Order stripes"⁵⁴were all forbidden. The reasoning behind the injunction against green aprons is not known and is curious given Quaker practice, unless it was *because* of the Quaker's predilection for this garment.

John Noyes, a contemporary observer noted that: "The pattern of their coats and pants, and the cut of their hair, is all regulated according to communications received from Heaven by Mother Ann."⁵⁵ Lamson, who spent according to his account, two years among the Shakers, described the Brethren's dress in 1848 as, '....according to the divine order' and being:

*The fashion...worn by dandies about sixty years ago. A broad-brimmed drab hat; a strait drab coat; drab vest, very deep, or long waisted, ornamented behind with flaps, or frills, and without a collar; butternut-colored pantaloons; their hair, and beards, all combed and trimmed precisely alike, ...*⁵⁶

Singularity was not, at this date, a consideration. While clothing was yet serviceable it did duty for as many Shakers as required it. Even as late in the Society's history as 1891 an anonymous Sister wrote: 'I attempted to repair my worsted gown...The cloth cannot be less than 70 years old...having been made for Mother Lucy...'. The cloth had evidently not been laid aside and newly made up for she goes on to indicate that she had the gown from a Molly Bennet.⁵⁷

This is not to suggest that the Plain life was in any way an ascetic one. Part IV of the *Millennial Rule*, 'Miscellaneous Rules and Counsels' directed that: "26. No one should wear very ragged clothes, even about their work, if it can consistently be avoided." To this end and in order to promote uniformity, and therefore witnessing, among the Brotherhood, the Sisters were given an extensive clothing allowance.⁵⁸ The Mount Lebanon Ministry allowed a degree of licence with regard to the width of hat brims, set at "four to five inches in width according to the wearer's breadth of shoulders", but strictly laid out the crown height at four and a half inches.⁵⁹ Though it is not stated, this variation may have been instituted in an effort to increase the uniformity of appearance among its members. An order dated May 10, 1840, gave to "Females under 26", at New Lebanon: Gowns: 2 outside, 2 worsted, 2 cotton and worsted, 2 light colored gowns, 3 for common summer wear and 1 white. 8 underjackets. Petticoats, 2 for summer and 3 for winter and 1 white petticoat. 2 cloaks. Aprons, 2 for winter use, 2 "good checkt" and 6 for the kitchen. Together with sundries such as 12 collars, 9 shifts, 3 palm bonnets, 1 pr. "nice" leather shoes, 1 pair of "wash" shoes, 6 pairs cloth shoes, 2 pairs of socks, 16 pairs of stockings, 10 common neck-handkerchiefs, 3 pairs of undersleeves, 16 caps, 8 white neck-handkerchiefs, 2 white handkerchiefs, 2 fine checked handkerchiefs and common handkerchiefs, "as many as needful."

Even the Shakers thought that the amount of clothing they owned was unusually large: "It is believed that few people on earth, in proportion to their numbers, spend so much on dress, as do the Shakers; few who have so many suits, and such a variety of clothing on hand at once, belonging to the individual!"⁶⁰ This lavish expenditure may be taken as indicative of the importance placed by the Shakers on forms in relation to their faith. That the type of fabric or construction was still specified is significant, for the late nineteenth century was a time of increasing worldly pressure. Elder Isaac Young recognised this when he observed:

[dress]...is a subject that absorbs a great part of our attention, time, and earnings. Our dress is a great expense to us, and much more than real necessity demands, owing to the taste and fancy of the people, about their dress.

It is impossible to please the fancy, and conform to all the different opinions of color, form, etc. and yet maintain a due regard to uniformity and economy.⁶¹

Though the Society evidently reflected pressures, largely economic, to make concessions to the World, the doctrine of 'uniformity' was still of importance to them.

Witnessing remained strong even when the desire to be 'Plain' faltered. That the Shakers' aesthetics moved closer to those of contemporary society in the late nineteenth century has been taken as a sign of the total breakdown of faith among the Brethren. I would argue that this interpretation is inaccurate since it ignores the fact that while Shaker costume may have moved more into line with World fashions they continued to regulate their dress for the primary purpose of bearing witness to their faith.

There are numerous accounts of the forms adopted by the Society at any particular point of the nineteenth century, and each underlines the psychic unity of the Society, even as it moved more closely into line with the World. One relates how in 1805:

"The society was now resting on a more permanent foundation, and had been blessed with an experience of eighteen years....At this date, the breeches and long stockings were laid aside on the Sabbath and the plain trowsers were substituted in their place. For several years, however, after this proposed change, individuals might occasionally be seen, who were on a journey, dressed as formerly, with long stockings and highly polished knee and shoe buckles. In 1806 blue coats and vests began to give place to the steel-mixed, and this latter was adopted as the uniform color. Among the reasons for discontinuing the 'blue' was partly on account of the expense of indigo, and the labor of making the garments. Trowsers for winter use were made of woollen cloth or of serge. For summer, Sabbath uniform, the trowsers were of linen or checked cotton, blue and white. Garments for manual labor were generally of tow cloth."⁶²

There were seemingly no rifts such as those suffered by the Quakers or Amish in deciding on this integration.

An account by one of the New Lebanon tailors⁶³ substantiates this description. Concerning the early appearance of male Brethren on the Sabbath, he records that it consisted of a dark blue coat, with six inch deep cuffs. Horizontal pockets were ornamented with flaps. The front edge of the coat was fairly straight, with six or eight buttons of about an inch diameter, half of which were purely ornamental. A large double pleat about three inches deep at the centre back allowed movement, the pleats ornamented with a button at the head. There was a further ornamental button at the lower edge of the skirt which reached a few inches below the knee. The vest was cut long, with points and double vents. The fabric was the same as the coat, and similarly ornamented with twelve buttons and flapped pockets. These garments were worn with back-laced breeches and black stockings. Again, these were ornamented with buttons and buckles at the knee. A white silk stock was worn at the neck.

The Sisters' Sabbath dress for the same period consisted of long or short gowns, often of a light colour or striped, with the stripes horizontal and vertical on the sleeves and bodice respectively. This was worn over a skirt and apron, with a square neckerchief over the shoulders. A hat braided of 'chip' straw was adopted in 1787. It was lined and covered with black silk, the low crown and six inch brim were secured by means of ribbons attached to the crown and tied at the back of the neck. These hats were discarded in favour of bonnets in 1805, initially lacking any form of neck cape. A checked apron, the upper edge finished with a narrow binding and tied at the front completed the costume.⁶⁴ The bow being tied in front was common to many Plain sects, being considered less ostentatious than the rear-fastened version. The costume then developed as Young relates:

In the year 1810 the sisters began to wear white cotton or linen collars, buttoned on the neck in front, with a cape attached, and spreading out of the shoulders, and over this the common shoulder handkerchief. Before this, the neck was bare, so far as the handkerchief did not cover it. ⁶⁵



Fig.47. Leoline[?] c.1880.

The first quarter of the nineteenth century saw the metamorphoses of the apron that continued into the twentieth century. Similar in many ways to the 'tails' of Amish dresses which serve a precise symbolic function, the latter form was not detachable from the dress, and utilitarian aprons were worn over it. Again, there is no documentation to support the development of this form, but given the Shaker preoccupation with utility, its retention must surely denote some symbolic consideration.

By 1827 the Shakers had perfected the manufacture of bonnets from

Cuban palm leaves. These bonnets had a small silk cape and ribbons to fasten under the chin. While caps were not as symbolically important to the Shakers as they are to the Amish and Mennonites, they were of some significance. Within the Shaker community, as their lives were dedicated to God, head coverings were worn at all times by adult women, to comply with the biblical directive concerning 'prayer veilings'. Marianne Finch described the Shakers caps in 1833 as: "certainly the most ingenious device that was ever contrived for concealing all personal advantages. A bulbous, one-shaped muslin cap, that holds all the hair and covers half the face"⁶⁶

Fredericka Bremer observed the caps were "very much blued, which still more increased the deathlike hue of the countenance." The cap worn by Leoline[?] [fig.47] is probably of the type to which they refer.

At the same time the cut of the Sisters' dresses was changing to give a longer, narrower line, echoing but never reaching the true proportions of the Empire line popular throughout Europe and America. In a contemporary account Elder Henry Blinn describes the waistline as 'about two or three inches below the armscye [armhole]'.⁶⁷ Marianne Finch, an observer from the World in 1833, considered the dress unbecoming: but beauty was not its function:

...a long narrow dress with the waist at the arm-pits, so fashioned that the shoulders all look equally high; the neck covered with a little square white handkerchief folded in a small square, and pinned near the region of the heart or thrown waiterwise over the arm, constitute a costume that would disfigure the very Goddess of Beauty. ⁶⁸

In 1838, an observer noted that the sisters wore wine coloured alpaca in the winter, or drugget or worsted, but that the summer dress of a pale, striped muslin.⁶⁹ For a while the Sisters wore a black silk handkerchief about the shoulders, but these were later replaced with white lawn scarves [fig.48]. Weekday wear was essentially similar but the white scarf was replaced with a sturdier "Blue check neck Hkffs for Sisters each \$ 0 87.5 cts." ⁷⁰ [fig.47].



Fig.48. Anonymous group of Sisters. Canterbury.

Silk scarves in persimmon red and white checks, and silk handkerchiefs, [fig.49] ⁷¹ were produced from 1832 onwards. On New Year's Day, 1832 the sisters of South Union community wore these neckerchiefs produced from their own silk. The Union records describe the event in some detail:

*Jan 1, 1832. **Silk Domestic.** The sisters all appeared dressed in their home-made silk kerchiefs for the first time at South Union.*

*Jan 1, 1833. **Sisters' New Year's Present to the Brethren.** As soon as we rose from our supper we repaired to the meeting room to receive a New Year's gift from the good sisters, consisting of a beautiful silk neckerchief made from the cocoon by their own hands. Whoever reads this Journal will be bound to own that the Brethren were blest with as good and industrious and kind sisters as can be found.*

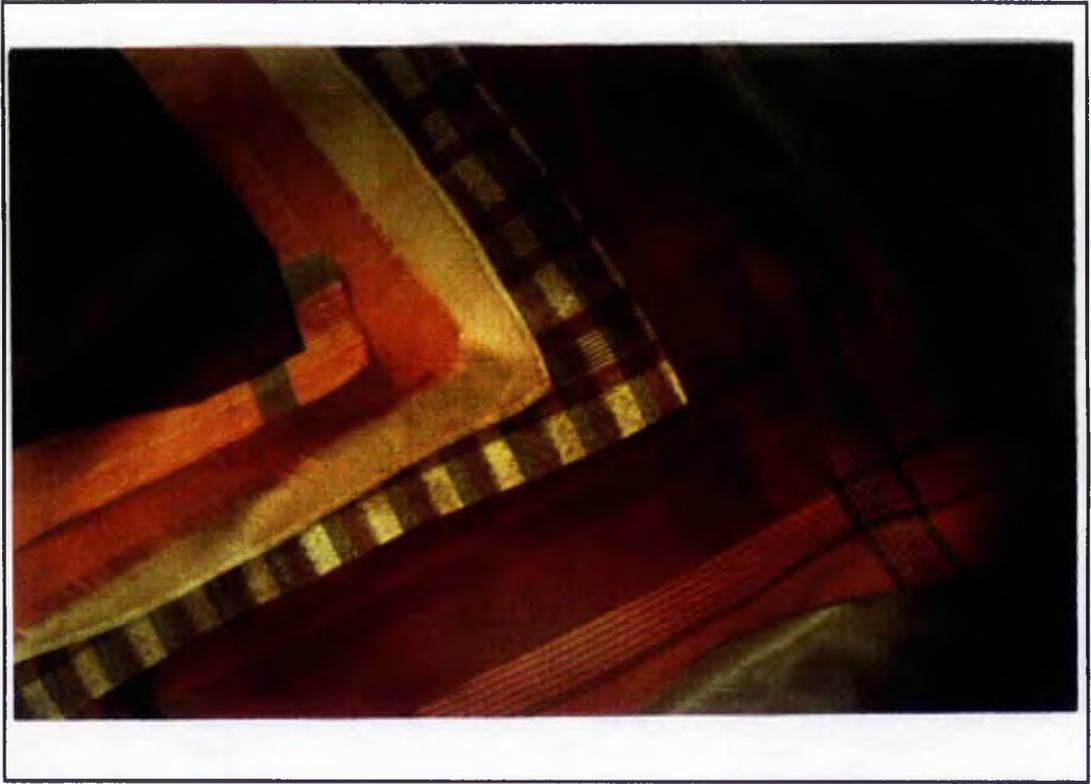


Fig.49. Silk neckerchiefs, South Union, Kentucky.

Some of these scarves were 'shot', others featured a contrasting border or diaper edge. New Year 1833 saw the brethren dressed similarly, with neckerchiefs of collar width, with a small bow at the front. A *Weavers Memorandum; or An Account of Weaving, etc.* kept by Hannah Treadway between 1833 and 1884 ⁷² and a yearly account kept by Sister Joanna Kitchell⁷³ records weaving from 1835-1865 with red and blue cotton and worsted cloth appearing 1837.

Brethren's coats changed from drab between 1813 and 1840, to a steel-mix post 1847, echoing changes in mainstream tailoring. Major modifications were made to the form over the same period with the discarding of double pleats and the adoption of single vents. At this date the front edge of the coat was also cut with more of a curve, and pocket flaps sported a curve on the lower edge. For the first time a narrow standing collar was added to the coat, which now featured a small cape. The Shakers

adopted a variety of hats of fur or wool, usually black. These were made with simple, low crowns, about four inches high and brims five or more inches wide.⁷⁴ Again, Shaker hatters made a uniform product, devoid of the factional symbolism associated with hats of the Quakers or Amish. The Society always experienced a far greater sense of internal and aesthetic unity, a state directly attributable to their doctrine, than did other sects.

However, while some clothing forms became more liberal, buttons, a device which was usually a matter of contention among Plain peoples, were abandoned by the Shakers, and coats were fastened edge-to-edge, Amish fashion, with hooks and eyes. Whether this was to limit ostentation, as to conform with other Plain sects, or because of anti-military beliefs, it is impossible to state since the Shakers themselves make no mention of their rationale. Significantly, at the same time shoe buckles were replaced with laces, and men adopted braces; again practices in line with ^{those of} other Plain sects. These changes considered as a piece point to, not the wholesale secularisation of the sect, but the conscious adoption of Plain answers to possible moral dilemmas. Shaker doctrine had never ruled out the possibility of change where it was rational or desirable, only self-indulgence, pride and avarice. In 1820 summer trousers, which had up until then been coloured with nutgall, were replaced with blue and white stripes. Blue vests were also adopted for summer wear. Canterbury produced woollen scarves in a blue and white check,⁷⁵ and Elder Frederick Evans records the production of blue and white trousers, blue and white gown sleeves and blue lasting for shoes in 1841. But these changes, since they were adopted wholesale by the Families, were still a witness to faith: this could not detract from the intent of the Society as a whole to be recognised for who they were.

To a certain extent the changes witnessed during the second half of the nineteenth century were largely the result of economic pressures, not the decline of faith. The price of indigo had risen due to the collapse of the slave

system and was by then too expensive to use on anything but a limited scale. This meant that they were forced to buy in a light blue cloth after 1854, and many other fabrics were imported into the Society as industrialisation at the end of the century meant that home-produced lengths could not compete economically.

CONFORMITY

By the third quarter of the nineteenth century the demands on the Society to communicate with the outside world, depleted resources during the Civil War, forced increases in trade and the constant need for new recruits had led the Society to listen more to the demands of the individual, than for the individual to take heed of the needs of the community foremost. Outward forms, while they still expressed the nature of the Shaker faith, did not so accurately express its depth. Waistlines dropped and skirts became fuller once more dating from an order of 1855 and the bertha was introduced gradually from about 1875, replacing the neckerchief by the 1890's. The reason attributed to these changes is that of utility. Fitted cloaks were popular among the Shakers and these had a tendency to crush the lawn scarf. Berthas were edged with narrow ruffles, rick-rack braid, fringing or even lace, and may be read as an indication of the increasing worldliness of the Society. Crinolines were even worn by some sisters to give shape to very full skirts. The closest that it can be dated is somewhere between 1890 and 1898, and shows Sisters of Canterbury and Sabbathday Lake. A contemporary account regarding the Brethren's dress noted that "there is some variety now; some of the brethren wear loose frocks."⁷⁶

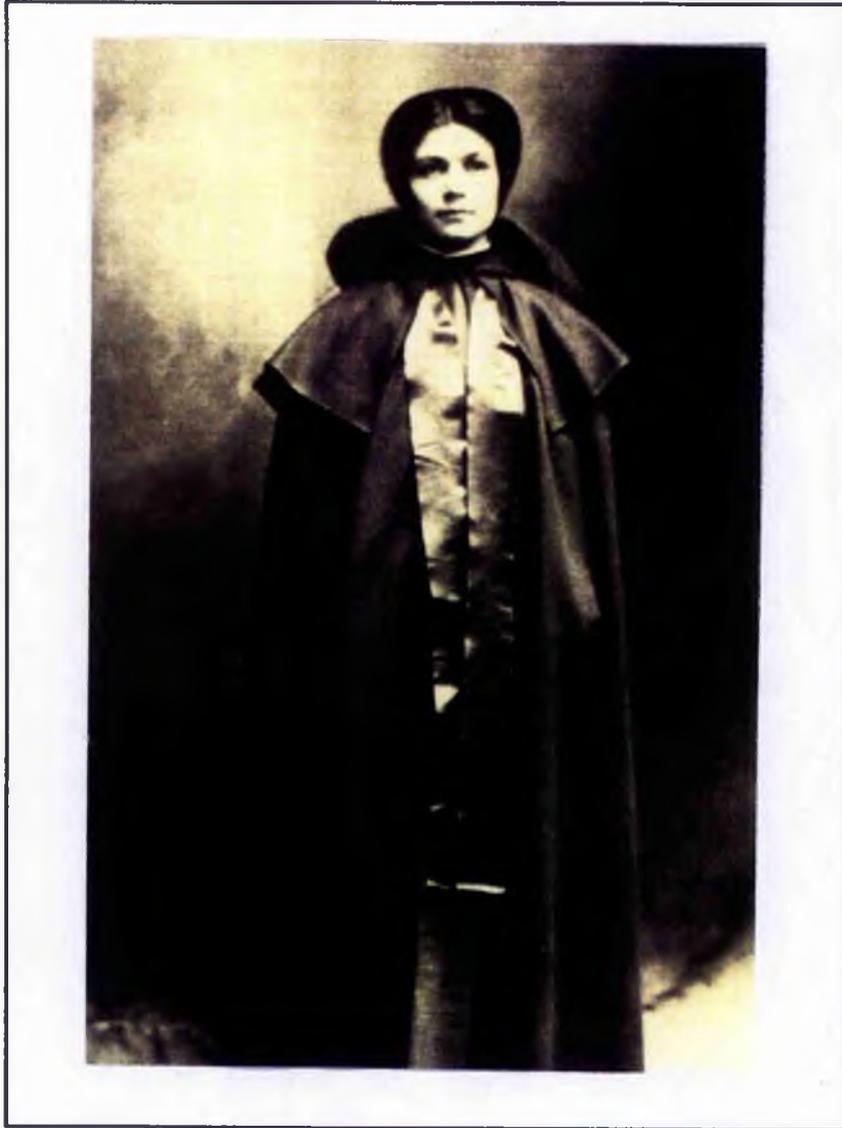


Fig.50. Anna Delchett, Hancock.

Changes in Shaker colouring which reflect those occurring in the outside world show time-lag. Natural vegetable dyes continued to be widely used even after the introduction of synthetic aniline dyes, dyes which were welcomed by the Shakers. The colours most often mentioned such as "hemlock" for the little girls' gowns and drab worsted linings dominated the best part of two centuries. In the 1890's while grey capes were made at Canterbury for use by the Society members, red ones were reserved for sale, these being thought too 'gay' for the use by the Sisters [fig.50]. Spent madder baths were used

to produce cloth for the little girls dresses, but not for adult wear. It is significant that Amish children are also allowed more liberal use of colour than the adults who are full members of the church.



Fig.51. Plaited Rug. Wool, cotton. Approx. 5' x 3'.

That the Shakers produced items for sale, that were not doctrinally acceptable to the Believers is an interesting sidelight on the nature of their faith. Parallels may also be drawn between this commerce at a period when the Society was undergoing increasing liberalisation, with modern "Amish" quilts today produced for roadside sale. Many of these are acknowledged by their makers as unsuitable for use at home.



Fig.52. Proddy Rug. Pleasant Hill Kentucky.

A plaited rug dating from the late nineteenth century, [fig.51] with the floral centre and vividly coloured bands symptomatic of a the Society at this date, reflects the collapse of 'pure' faith. A figurative 'proddy' rug [fig. 52] made around 1880 at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, also represents Shakerism in collapse. The horse motif is a rare example of figurative imagery in the Society, and, given its regional provenance, may be seen as evidence of the power of physical surroundings in determining imagery.

Through such developments it is possible to chart the way in which Shaker dress was expressing the conflict and tensions within the Society, the fragmenting nature of faith among its members and the increasing worldliness of many of the sect's members. In its way, dress of this period is just as strong a witness to the state and nuances of the Shaker's faith as it ever was.

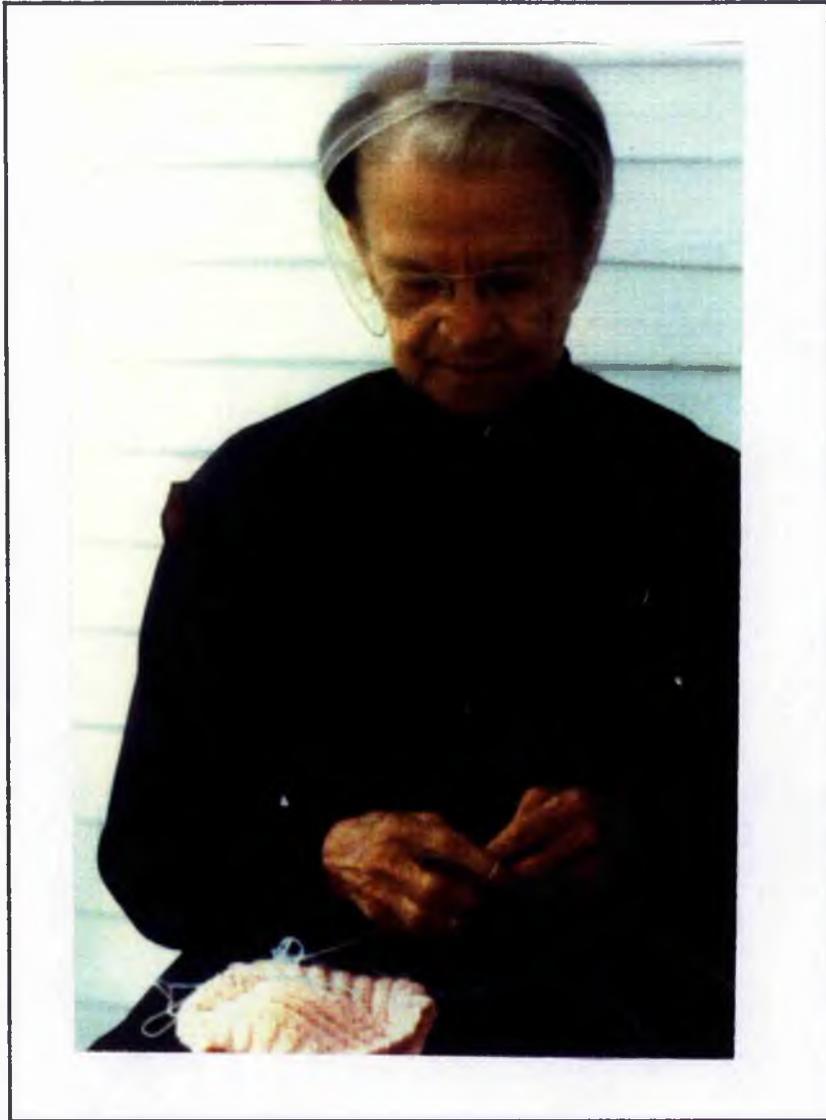


Fig. 53. Eldress Gertrude Soule, Canterbury, New Hampshire.

SUMMARY

The Shakers were, and are, a living faith. While younger Shakers are content to dress plainly, Eldress Gertrude Soule [fig.53] who joined the Brethren as a young girl, is a living illustration of the way in which older Shakers continue witnessing. Thankful Barce recognised that through the way in which they lived out their lives the Shakers were worshipping God. He wrote in the spring of 1780: "I heard of a strange people living above Albany, who said they served God night and day..."⁷⁷

Their society was perhaps not as intellectually concerned with symbolic

details as those of the Puritans and Quakers as their patterns of living and social intercourse tending to limit the amount of time given to spiritual argument. The society relied for the most part on the legacy of the founding members and obeyed their dictates. But while they lived 'not conformed to the world' the Shaker communities were not wholly divorced from it either, which allowed a certain element of worldly values to enter into Shaker practice. That this was largely unavoidable must be acknowledged, given the celibate nature of the Society and the economics of supporting such large numbers of individuals. In later years the inevitable dissatisfaction with the large numbers of restrictions imposed by their faith was to appear. Some members felt the same doubts that we have seen voiced among the Quakers, believing that the original Laws went too far. In 1853, one disaffected member wrote that

*An arbitrary inhibition rests upon statuary, paintings, watches, jewellery of all kinds, knives with more than two blades, sofas, divans, musical instruments, and whatever gorgeous appendage would serve to feed vanity and pride, more than serve the practical utility of civilised life.'*⁷⁸

By 1900, the Shakers presented a very worldly picture. However, the last word on the links between the Shaker faith and visual form, must go to Sister Sadie Neale, one of the last of the Shakers who knew the movement in its prime. She commented "The warp of life is long and the filling fine, and the whole fabric appears not at one time".⁷⁹

¹Darrow, Meacham and Young, 1808, p.581.

²Wells, 1823, Part II, Chapter V, pp, 83-84.

³In an interview with Berton Rouche.

⁴Andrews, 1963, p.126.

⁵*Millenial Laws*, p.82.

⁶Brinton, p.48.

⁷Sprigg, 1986.p.10/11.

⁸Green and Wells, 1823, pp.248-49.

⁹ It is interesting to consider the possible ramifications for a sect in the choice of words: the Quakers predominantly use 'vanity' where the Shakers chose 'pride'.

¹⁰*The Shaker*, August'76, p.58.

- 11 *Ibid.*, p.58.
- 12 Nordhoff, 1875, p.164-5
- 13 Evans, Frederick. 1896. p 91.
- 14 Scherer, John L. p.102,
- 15 *Millenial Laws*: of 1845 Section IX: Concerning building, Painting, Varnishing and the manufacture of Articles for Sale, &c. &c.
- 16 Evans, Frederick W., 1859, pp.118-119.
- 17 White, *The Manifesto*, August 1890, pp.177-178.
- 18 Dickens, 1842, Vol. II.
- 19 *Antiques*, Nov.1935.p.15.
- 20 Youngs, 1856.
- 21 *Antiques*, Nov., 1935
- 22 Andrews, 1969, p.57.
- 23 Quoted in Ford, p.62.
- 24 *Journal of Sister Elizabeth*, 1848.
- 25 September 17, 1838, Pleasant Hill, Kentucky.
- 26 Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, Wednesday, July 29th.1840.
- 27 *Watervliet* 1849.
- 28 Sprigg, 1975. p.76.
- 29 Andrews MS.No.63.
- 30 Calvin Green: "*Biographic memoir*"p312.
- 31 Lyon, p.346.
- 32 Gordon, 1980.
- 33 Cream of Tartar and Alum would not produce as good results as Potassium bichromate, used since the end of the nineteenth century.
- 34 Fustic is listed in 1661 by an English navigation statute as one of the product of the colonies that could only be traded within English territories [Bishop, 1866, vol. 1, p.87]. 230 pounds of Fustic are also included in an inventory of a Boston dyer in 1695 [Suffolk County Probate Records, XIII, p.743 and Haynes, 1954, Vol. 1, p.46]. Quercitron was being imported into England prior to the Revolution from Wilmington, Delaware [Bishop, 1866, Vol. 1, p.461].
- 35 Young, Op. Cit., p.331.
- 36 Young, Op. Cit. p.328.
- 37 Quoted but unattributed in La Trobe-Bateman, 1986. p.38.
- 38 Green and Wells, 1823, p.51.
- 39 See Record Book, Hancock Shaker Village, 1789/1801. King Library MSS, 9758/10.804, Hancock record Book, pp.3, 20, 51. Andrews MSS. "*A Memorandum of Things Carried to the North-House by Samuel and Elisabeth Johnson in the Year 1793 for the Use of the Family*", New Lebanon, 1803.
- 40 Wells & Youngs,(ed.) 1888, p.208.
- 41 Bishop, 1816 p.309.
- 42 Verse inscribed on Spirit Drawing.
- 43 Quoted in Andrews, *Religion in Wood: A Book of Shaker Furniture*, Bloomington, Indiana., Indiana University Press, 1966. p.xiii.
- 44 William Hepworth Dixon, *New America*, Philadelphia: J.B.Lippincott & Co., 1867, p.305.
- 45 *Millenial Laws* 1821.
- 46 *Millenial Laws* 1821.
- 47 Emlen, Robert. 'Shaker Village Views', *Natural History*, No.9, 1987. p.52.
- 48 Cited in Emlen, Robert, 'Shaker Village Views', Op.Cit., p.54.

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- 49 *The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing*, Lebanon Ohio, 1808. p.200.
- 50 *Recollections of Sister Jemima Blanchard concerning Mother Ann and the Elders*. Unpublished Harvard Shaker Records.
- 51 *Recollections of Sister Jemima Blanchard concerning Mother Ann and the Elders*. Unpublished Harvard Shaker Records.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 Lamson, *Two Years Experience Among the Shakers* p.60
- 54 *General Order*, May 10th, 1840. New Lebanon.
- 55 A.J.Macdonald, notes published by John Noyes, *History of American Socialisms*, pp.602-603.
- 56 Lamson, *Two Years' Experience among the Shakers: Being a Description of the Manners and Customs of that people, the Nature and Policy of Their Government, Their Marvellous Intercourse with the Spiritual World, the Object and Uses of Confession, Their Inquisition; In Short, a Condensed View of Shakerism as It Is*. West Boyleston: The Author, 1848. p.60
- 57 *Diary*, anon. Mount Lebanon 1891.
- 58 *The Manifesto*, July 1890. p.146-7; August '90, p.169
- 59 *By Shaker Hands*, p.101.
- 60 *Circular Concerning the Dress of Believers*, New Lebanon Ministry, 1866.
- 61 Young, Elder Isaac N. *A concise View of the Church of God and Christ on Earth Having its Formation In the Faith of Christ's First and Second Appearing*, New Lebanon: 1856. p.334.
- 62 *The Manifesto*, July 1890, pp.145-46.
- 63 *The Manifesto*, June 1890, p.121-23.
- 64 Young, Isaac. *A Concise View of the Church of God...* New Lebanon, 1856. Du Pont Winterthur Museum, Delaware.
- 65 Young, Elder Isaac, *A Concise View of the Church of God and Christ...* New Lebanon: 1856. Winterthur Museum. pp.326-7.
- 66 Marianne Finch, *An Englishwoman's Experience in America*,
- 67 Blinn, Elder Henry C. "Historical Notes About the Change of Dress Among Believers" copied from Blinn's journal at Shaker Village, Inc. Canterbury, New Hampshire, by Eldress Bertha Lindsey, *The World of Shaker*. Winter 1974.
- 68 Marianne Finch, *An Englishwoman's Experience in America* (London: R. Bentley, 1833), quoted in Pearson et al. *The Shaker Image*, p.41.
- 69 Elkins, *Fifteen Years Among the Shakers...*, p.59.
- 70 New York State Museum papers
- 71 Shaker Museum, Old Chatham. Kentucky, c.1845.
- 72 MS. No.31
- 73 MS. No. 32.
- 74 Andrews, *The Community Industries of the Shakers*. .175-8.
- 75 Shaker Museum, Old Chatham.
- 76 Lamson, *Two Years Experience Among the Shakers* p.60
- 77 *Thankful Barce*, 1824.
- 78 *Sprig*, *By Shaker Hands*, p.100.
- 79 Sister Sadie Neale, b.1849-1947. P.87, Andrews, *Fruits of the Shaker Tree of Life*.

8 THE AMISH

Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth.

Colossians 3:2.

In the introduction to this study I used the simile of a Mobius Loop: it is no where more appropriately applied than to a consideration of the Amish, the fourth sect in this study. The interaction between their faith and the material culture of their society is at first sight so tight as to be almost seamless. Where other sects were communities of individuals 'within' the World, or relied on the passage of individuals from outside, the Amish are a self-sufficient, self-regenerating group, independent of mainstream culture. Such isolation, physical and psychic, and the homogeneity of culture are related and the Amish term, 'gmei' or fellowship, reflects this. It means that the Church is community and vice-versa, their religious symbolism is a 'total life' symbolism of a peculiarly enduring and striking form.

This chapter has two main objectives: to demonstrate the totality of Witnessing in the sect, and secondly to demonstrate the uses and inter-relatedness of specific points of doctrine and textiles within the communities.

1

NON CONFORMITY

Since this 'aesthetic' activity, whatever its physical form, is rooted in biblical teaching, it is imperative that the 'key-stones' of the Amish aesthetic, non-conformity and modesty, are understood. The injunction from 1 John 2:15-17;

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the

Father but of the World. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the word of God abideth forever.

The active criteria on which the acceptability of any form must be assessed are defined here: that is 'to be not conformed to the World', with the corollary of avoiding 'lusts of the eye' and personal pride. While the Plain form may, and does, change, it always remains symbolic of tenets that are immutable, fundamental. This is enforced by I Corinthians 6: 17: 'Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord.' and Pet. 1:14. To this is added the injunction "be not conformed to this world but ye be transformed by the renewing of your mind' of Romans 12:1- 2. Since the World is considered to be largely under the control of Satan, the early Christians wished to distance themselves from the patterns of the surrounding culture as much as possible.

A distinctive form of dress for God's chosen people is also decreed in the Old Testament, Numbers 15:38-39:

'Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generation, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue: And it shall be unto you a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them...'

The importance of these injunctions to the first followers of Jacob Amman, over and above the Anabaptists as a whole, is evident in the references to early Anabaptist clothing which, though fragmentary, are yet sufficient to give some indication of form and philosophy.² It is apparent that while the main 'orthodox' body of Anabaptists did not wear distinctive clothing,³ by contrast, radical elements quickly adopted 'sectarian' dress. Some of these elements are recorded simply as 'Anabaptists', while others are accorded sectarian status. References in the *Martyrs Mirror*⁴ to a Moravian "clothed as a brother", Kessler's *Sabbata*⁵ which says of the Swiss Brethren of 1525 that "They shun costly clothing...[and] clothe themselves with coarse cloth, [and] cover their heads with broad felt hats..." and that of

Sebastian Frank in his *Chronica* of 1531 who writes that some Anabaptists had dress laws, which included specifying the numbers of pleats in an apron, attest to this. Heinrich Bullinger also mentions a group of Anabaptists in 1561 that "make rules about clothing, whereof, of what form and shape, and how long, wide, or big they shall be...[who] reject all costly clothing and ornamentation."⁶ No images of the Amish survive from this period but the engraving of a Hutterite⁷ family in C. Erhard's *Historia*⁸ of 1588, [fig.54] may give an indication of their appearance. Dr. Gustav Bossert⁹



Fig. 54. Hutterite Family in C. Erhard's *Historia* of 1588.

has also traced references to distinctive forms of Anabaptist dress: he notes that in 1598 Conrad Wertz was described as wearing Anabaptist clothing and Matthew Kappel was judged to be an Anabaptist because of the clothing that he wore. Dr. Bossert quotes a further reference to a Christopher Reichlin who returned to his home wearing 'Anabaptist clothes' as a mark of his new-

found faith, but gives no specific details.

So we can be reasonably sure that by the third quarter of the sixteenth century at least some Anabaptists/sects were using clothing as a sign of faith, and further that the World recognised this 'Witness'. That the practice was not endemic to Anabaptism but sect-specific [and thus tied to specific doctrinal argument] is evident in that the *Concept of Cologne*¹⁰ found it impossible to institute pan-European dress regulations. This idea of a distinctive dress supports the interpretation of *The Strasbourg Discipline* of 1568,¹¹ Article 20, which states, "Tailors and seamstresses shall hold to the plain and simple style and shall stay by the present form of our regulation concerning apparel and make nothing for pride's sake."

At what point sectarian witness became universal among Amish is unknown. Swiss Anabaptist immigrants to Pennsylvania in 1709 were recorded by a Dutch Mennonite Minister, Laurens Hendricks as wearing the beard and clean-shaven upper lip of the Plain people. This had been adopted at the end of the sixteenth century by many Plain groups as a symbolic counter to European militaristic fashions. That Plain dress was not universal even in the late eighteenth century is shown by research carried out in the nineteenth century by Redmond Coynyngham.¹² This suggested that some recent Amish immigrants wore 'long red caps' and the women were dressed in skirts that just covered the knee and went bare-headed.¹³ This description contains elements of European folk costume.

Elements of the old style clothing do survive in certain of the churches. The Nebraska Amish still wear a garment similar to the 'short gown' and flat straw hat of eighteenth century Europe. The 'Old Schoolers' of Mifflin County Pennsylvania, also retain older forms, allowing neither the white cap nor the bonnet. Instead their women wear a black kerchief on the head, similar to that of the Hutterites, and believed to be an eighteenth century Palatine custom. The doctrine of those particular groups in strictly observing the

injunction to be plain and not conformed to the World is thus working, in retaining the scoop hat [fig.55] twice over.



Fig.55. Womans bonnet and scoop hat, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. c.1890. Peoples Place Museum.

Coyningham's work suggests also that the primary influence on Amish dress over and above the Bible was that of the Quakers: more especially in abandoning of the flat hat and the adoption of the bonnet [fig.55] The exact role played by other Plain sects is now however impossible to quantify - especially since some Quaker historians attribute Plain dress in that sect to Mennonite influence.

The adoption of Plain dress, even if not the same dress, may thus be viewed at least in part as a phenomenon of cultural stress - a means to promote group solidarity in the New World, as well as marking the consolidation of the sect's doctrines.¹⁴ There are obvious parallels here to be drawn with the Shakers, though the factionalism inherent in Amish theology makes itself evident in the variants to be seen between the various Amish Conferences.

The premise that Godly knowledge derives from obedience to God and that pride derives from 'knowing better than God', is dispersed throughout the Amish culture via *The Ordnung*. The doctrine detailed within in its pages determines every facet of their lives, serving a not dissimilar function to the *Millenial Rules* of the Shakers. The *Ordnung* consists of two parts and has been subject to some minor adaptation; an ability to redefine yet retain the essential elements of faith which has been instrumental in securing the Sect's survival.

The first part of the *Ordnung*, standard throughout the Conferences, is written, and contains the articles of faith formulated at the *Dordrecht Confession of Faith* of 1660. Nineteenth century revisions added more restrictive and specific statements as they^{were} forced to clarify what was acceptable or risk merging with mainstream culture. The Amish Church of Pike County, Ohio, 1950,¹⁵ revised the *Ordnung* once more in 1950:

Since it is the duty of the church, especially in this day and age, to decide what is fitting and proper...for a Christian to do, (in points that are not clearly stated in the Bible) we have considered it needful to publish this booklet listing some rules and ordinances of a Christian Church...

Their *Ordnung of a Christian Church* reclarified both the principles behind the work, and the letter of their faith; the restrictions it outlined were a direct reaffirmation of the principles laid down in the teachings of Menno Simons and Jacob Amman.¹⁶ Based on Biblical precedent and custom, ritualised by time, it supports, and is supported by, traditional respect for *Das Alt Gebrach* (the old way).¹⁷

The second part of the *Ordnung* is mostly conveyed through oral tradition. It records the contemporary attitudes of the church districts, detailing the items and practices that are considered Worldly and much of this section is implied rather than overtly stated. Since the sect accepts many degrees of conservatism, this part of the *Ordnung* is not consistent for all Amish. The second section is also illustrative of the adaptive nature of the

Amish church. It is also, significantly, the section that governs dress and textiles.

The Ordnung is reinforced and when necessary reinterpreted in regard to clothing styles through the medium of Dress Codes issued periodically by the different conferences. The primary symbols in force at any time for a particular area are outlined in Dress Codes. The following example is typical of regulations in force among east coast communities in the middle years of this century:

No ornamental bright, showy form-fitting, immodest or silk-like clothing of any kind. Colours such as bright red, orange, yellow and pink not allowed. Amish form of clothing to be followed as a general rule. Costly Sunday clothing to be discouraged. Dresses not shorter than half-way between knees and floor and not over eight inches from floor. Longer advisable. Clothing in every way modest, serviceable and as simple as scripturally possible. Only outside pockets allowed are on work eberhem or vomas and pockets on large over coats. Dress shoes, if any, to be plain and black only. No high heels and pump slippers. Dress socks if any, to be black except white for foot hygiene for both sexes. A plain, unshowy suspender without buckles. Hat to be black with no less than three-inch rim and not extremely high in the crown. No stylish impression in any hat. No pressed trousers. No sweaters. Prayer covering to be simple, and made to fit head. Should cover all hair as nearly as possible and is to be worn whenever possible. No silk ribbons. Young children to dress according to the word as well as parents. No pink or fancy baby blankets and capes in public. Aprons to be worn at all times. No adorning of hair among either sex such as parting of hair among men and curling or waving among women. A full beard should be worn among men and boys after baptism if possible. No shingled hair. Length at least halfway below tops of ears.¹⁸

Even though this is a relatively modern code, it can be seen that the plain ethos is enforced wherever possible in both terms of both primary and secondary symbols. All regulations are geared towards avoiding ostentation and pride, in line with scriptural injunction.

Amish leaders recognised that uniformity of purpose and harmony of aim are more readily achieved, and more effectively implemented, when the imposition of rules is determined by the community, rather than by a distant council. Again, the rationale of having small Church districts is clear: a group known to each other, friends and relations, is more likely to be able to agree,

and more effectively police itself, than a large community where an individual is relatively anonymous. There is also a greater place for symbols as a social mechanism within such a community; it is more likely to be cohesive in its aims and attitudes, oral teaching is possible, doctrinal lapses are more noticeable.

ETHNIC TRADITION

The *Ordnung* is therefore the major internal influence on Amish material culture. Their self-concept of the Amish as God's people, living withdrawn from the World, is in accordance with the teachings of John, 15:19: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of this world and therefore the World hateth you". Yet originally they were of the World, and live surrounded by it: they would be unique if there were no legacy of this in their work. While Amish aesthetics reflect their religious development, they must necessarily also respond to their surroundings and their history.

The degree to which traditional and neighbouring cultures has influenced the Amish people varied and means that the development of Old Order Society in 'aesthetic' terms can be divided into three periods; early: 1720-1850, middle: 1850-1940 and late: post-1940. The middle period is the most purely 'Amish'. Prior to 1850 the Amish community was too small to have the self reliance and independence necessary for the establishment of a unique cultural identity for it was not until 1843 that the first congregation grew large enough to divide. By 1860 the population was such that it could effectively resist outside influence: an isolation furthered by the withdrawal of the Amish from the conflicts of the Civil War.

Ethnic tradition makes itself felt in two major areas. The first is the use of colour. While within each community the stylistic conformity decreed by Old Order life is evident, the degree to which an ethnic legacy operates is largely dependant on the religious conservatism of the particular church. The grosser

divisions are evident even to the outsider and are most obvious in differences in the exterior and architectural treatments. In Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, houses and barns belonging to the strict 'Nebraska' Amish are usually unpainted while the more liberal 'Reno' Amish typically paint their barns red and their houses white: a traditional European practice. 'Plain' doctrine, however, decrees that no coloured trimming is allowed on the houses.

The second area where an ethnic or cultural influence is evident is that of pattern. The prohibitions against graven images, Exodus 20:4, effectively counters much possible influence and outlets for embroidery were largely restricted to a few marking samplers and linen towels for guest rooms. Embroidered pictures, so common in other cultures, among the Amish probably does not exceed a dozen in collections across the United States: a testimony to the strength of the Amish culture. Though it would be wrong to ignore the existence of such pictures and the cultural influence they reflect - they *are* evidence of cultural attrition particularly linked to a liberalisation of Amish doctrine in the 1870's - their significance should not be overstated. An early example [fig.56] of 1838 is the work of Maria Stolfus, significantly the daughter of "Tennessee" John Stolfus, a liberal leader. The image itself owes much to Pennsylvania-German influence.

More significant is the influence on quilt patterns by both Germanic and Welsh overshot weaving: each group present in significant numbers in Pennsylvania in the nineteenth century. If one compares fig.56 with fig.56[a] and other Amish quilts [figs.77/78] in terms of both colouring and pattern there are strong compositional resemblance.

Though given a treatment that makes it uniquely Amish, an important and dominant Lancaster Amish quilt pattern, Stramma [strip] or Floating Bars, is a design possibly also learnt from Welsh immigrants to Pennsylvania. The common nineteenth century Welsh 'strippy' quilt usually shows the bars covering the entire surface, whereas Amish quilts almost always confine the

pattern within a single or double border with or without the inclusion of corner blocks, a distinctive Amish device [fig.57].

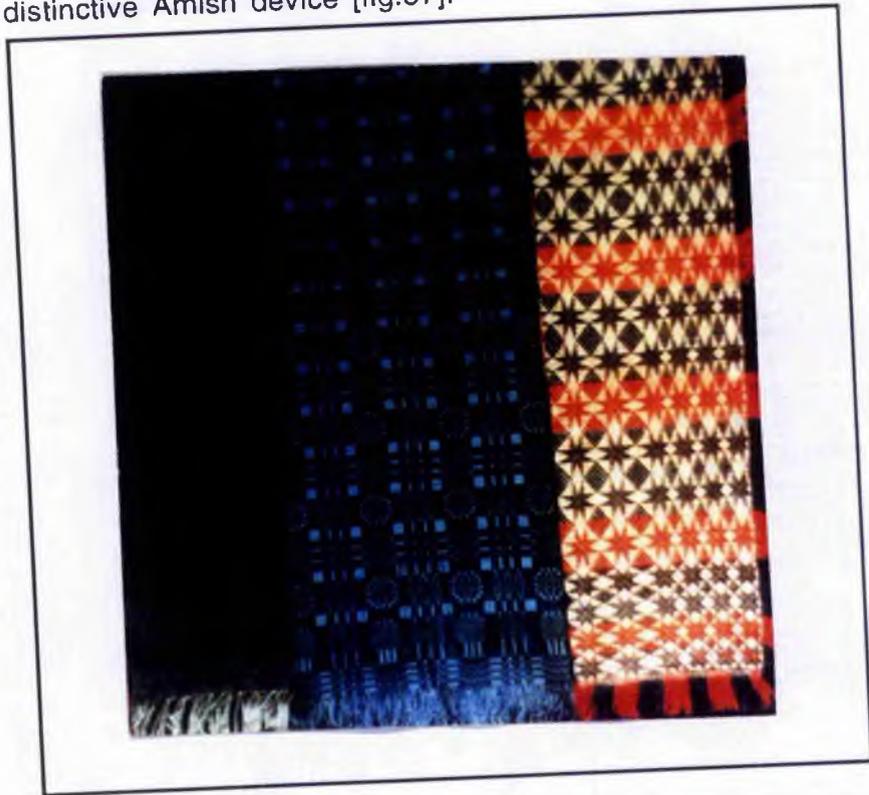


Fig. 56 [l-r] Overshot blanket: Indiana Col. Michael Oruch. Overshot Coverlet: Ohio, Peoples Place Quilt Museum, Overshot coverlet: , Lancaster County, Pa. Col. Dr & Mrs D M Herr.



Fig.56[a] Quilt detail, Pennsylvania c.1900. Wool, Collection Mr & Mrs P Findlay.



Fig.57. 'Bars' c.1920. 87" x 86" Lancaster County, Pa. Peoples Place Quilt Museum..

It is a less simple matter to quantify the importance of inherited elements of symbolic patterns. These largely derive from shared ancestors rather than recent cultural overlays and have become embedded deep within the system of Amish symbolic language.

SYMBOLISM

This symbolic system is a complex interweaving of many social, psychic and material strands. The Ordnung, Plain dress, even the images of Fraktur [fig.58] each use or teach symbolism as a means of reinforcing Amish culture. Such symbolism assures present group identity with a sense of continuity of vision, and Amish communities provide visual support and spiritual security from cradle to grave. Their physical isolation and homogeneity of culture are linked: any lessening of its independence - as experienced by other sects in this study - invariably results in a breakdown in the cultural homogeneity of the

sect. This means the subsequent weakening of symbols and the increased likelihood of the secularisation of the culture. The strength and the depth of symbolism in the Amish culture is attributable therefore to their doctrine of 'living removed from the World'. They have become particularly adept in maintaining psychological boundaries and use symbolic forms as a means to achieve this. In carrying out this defensive structuring, the Amish are similar to other Utopian groups in our study: where they differ is the degree to which these systems operate within the community.

Through visual symbols the Amish are able to socialise and communicate the beliefs of the sect to the growing child more simply than through theological debate. Amish symbolism, as with all Utopian societies, involves the People as a community of faith. Their symbols are the product of specific need, association and tradition,¹⁹ and are thus *peculiar* to that society, a specialised language which results in a particular aesthetic.



Fig.58 Fraktur drawing. Barbara Ebersol 1864. 11" x 14.5". Woven paper. Peoples Place Museum.

Very few Amish churches repudiate imagery in its entirety. For the majority of Amish their preference for the 'old' way, resulted in the creation of a system of non-figurative symbolic devices. Perhaps this was the only path possible given that imagery appears to be a fundamental need of our species. Yet the Amish view their position as inferior to God and would not seek to challenge His creation through its likeness. This makes unlikely Weissman and Lavitts' suggestion that the exclusively animal and floral themes of the small late nineteenth century embroideries demonstrates that Amish practice had parallels with Islamic art in that prohibitions related only to human representation.²⁰ That these prohibitions were, and continue to be, strong is evident in that while Amish children are allowed rag-dolls or teddy-bears to play with [fig. 59] they are uniformly faceless. This would tend to support the idea that it is not imagery or symbolism that is the primary taboo, but iconography.



Fig.59. Amish rag-doll. Unattributed. c.1908-1910. 18" high. Cotton stuffed with rags. Coll. K & D McCauley.

Since there is but a scarce legacy of overtly representational themes in Amish work, it seems probable that if such iconographic taboos were not strongly enforced in the nineteenth century, they had been so earlier. If comparisons are to be made with Islam it would be more appropriate to highlight the [possibly inverted] humility of Man shown in the 'deliberate mistake' or 'humility' squares²¹ with which many Amish pieces are created [fig.60]. Beliefs of this nature clearly affect the formal choices made by the artist, which in turn was reflected in his work.

An important consideration in assessing the 'intentionality' of quilt patterns as religious 'mirrors' or reflections of ethnic traditions is that while the ancestors of the abstract designs may have been the symbolic, traditional, art of the Palatine and Pennsylvania-German communities, pieced work was not an existing tradition, but rather a technique that was developing as the Amish arrived in the New World. Old World influence on forms not being directly possible, this immediately places quilts in a different cultural league to the ornamented, traditional, door-towel, or Fraktur record.

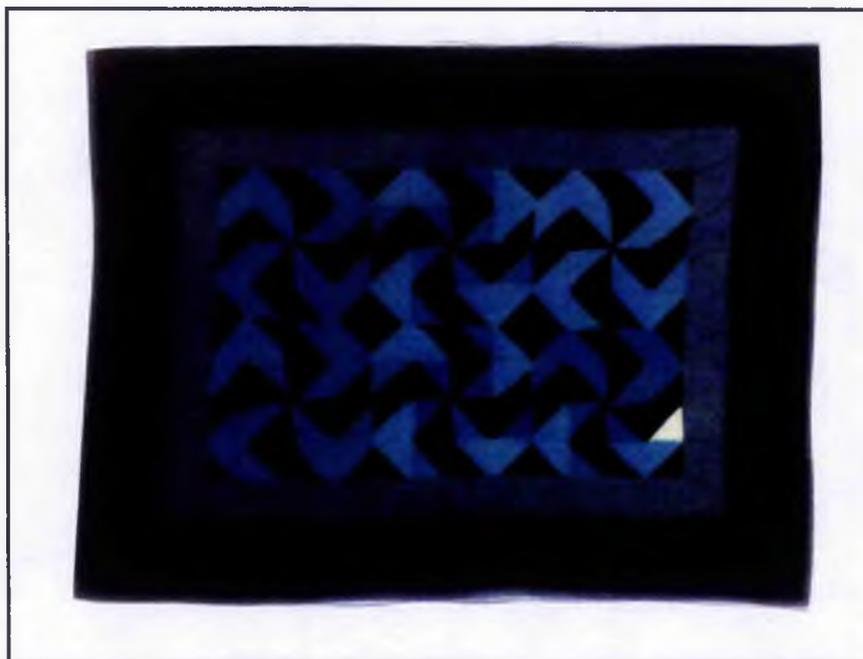


Fig.60. *Flying Geese. Unknown maker. Indiana.*

Amish pattern is thus both a symbolic representation of their culture and an allegory of it and Amish culture, like allegory, is semantic in that it communicates by means of signs: signs that are determined by faith. In the Barn-Raising design, the maker alludes to the whole Amish way of communal life and spirit of community aid. The Trip Around the World pattern possibly refers to the collecting of scraps from friends and neighbours whilst on the traditional gift collecting 'jaunt' of a newly married pair. Another pattern, Jacob's coat, is a visual allegory of the Christian principles by which they live, while the Eight Pointed Star is the Christian "Star out of Jacob", the Star in the East: "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall arise out of Israel" Numbers 24:17. These favoured quilting patterns are also common Fraktur motifs [fig.59]. Both in the naming of patterns and the creation of the quilts there is intentionality; pattern appeal on a purely emotional level might figure in the choice but was not the motivating spirit behind the original creation, or the dominance of a pattern over the best part of two centuries. The other set of symbolic quilt designs, what might be termed 'significant' patterns, are unique to the Amish, but more difficult to interpret. The earliest known Amish quilt, dating from around 1785, [fig.61] shows the early form of this group. Worked shortly after the arrival of the first colonists in Pennsylvania it is of pieced Linsey Woolsey, the top deep red and nut-gall brown. The design clearly presages the Centre Square and Centre Diamond patterns of some eighty years later. It is possible that this and the full-blown versions of the design are based on the metal bound cover of the *Ausbund*, the Amish hymnal, a copy of which would be found in every home.



Fig.61. Pieced Linsey Woolsey quilt. c.1785. Pennsylvania [?] 86" x 76.5" Private Collection.

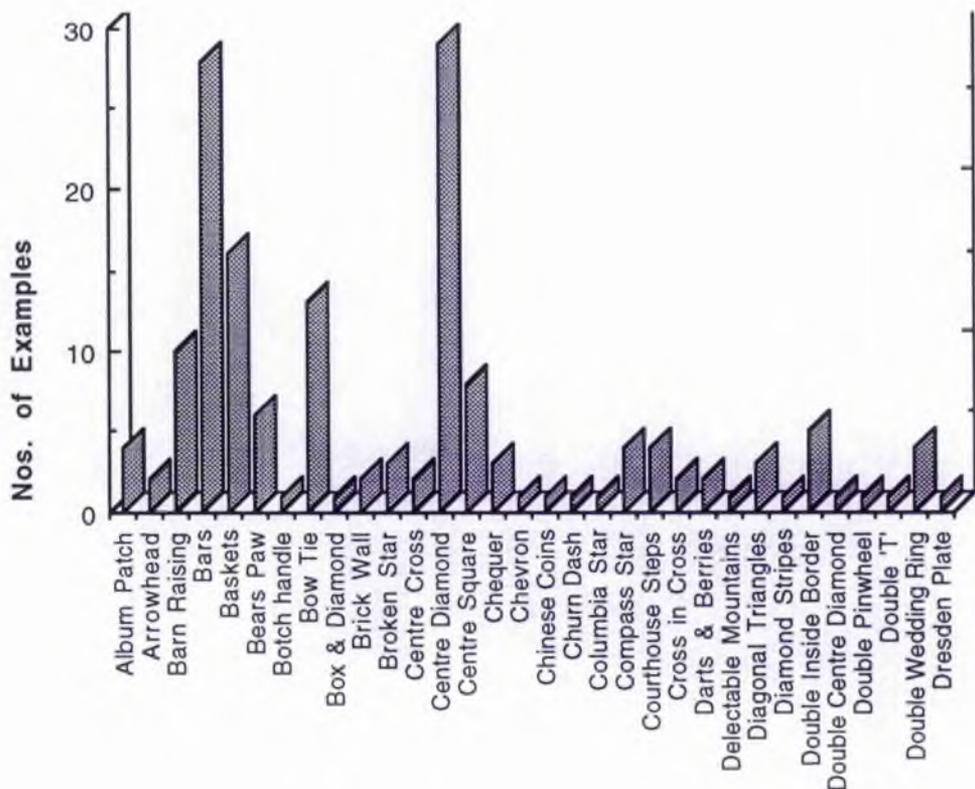


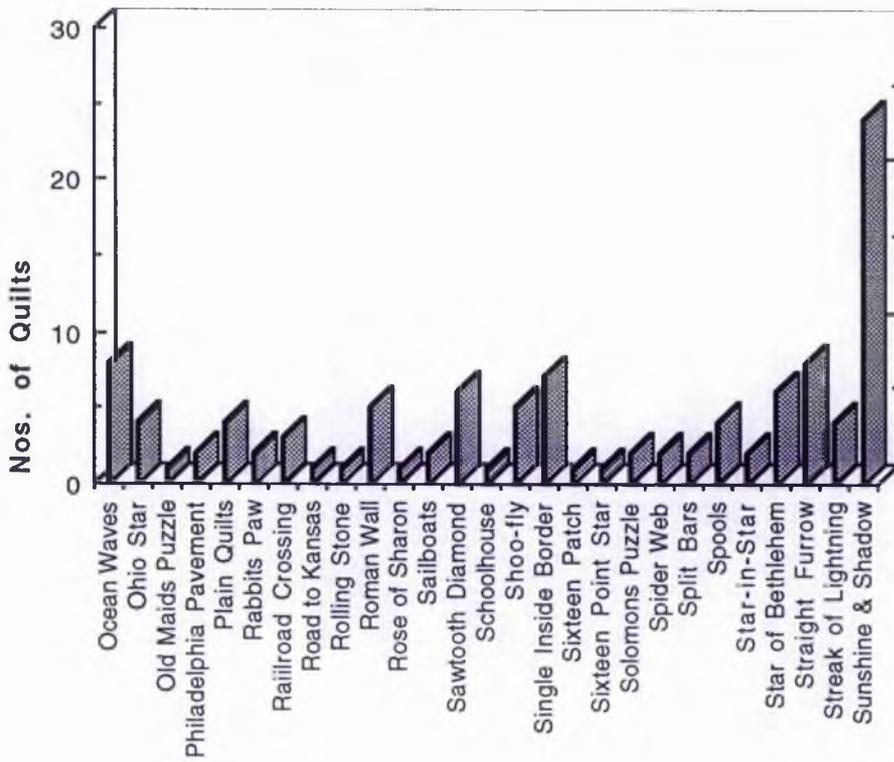
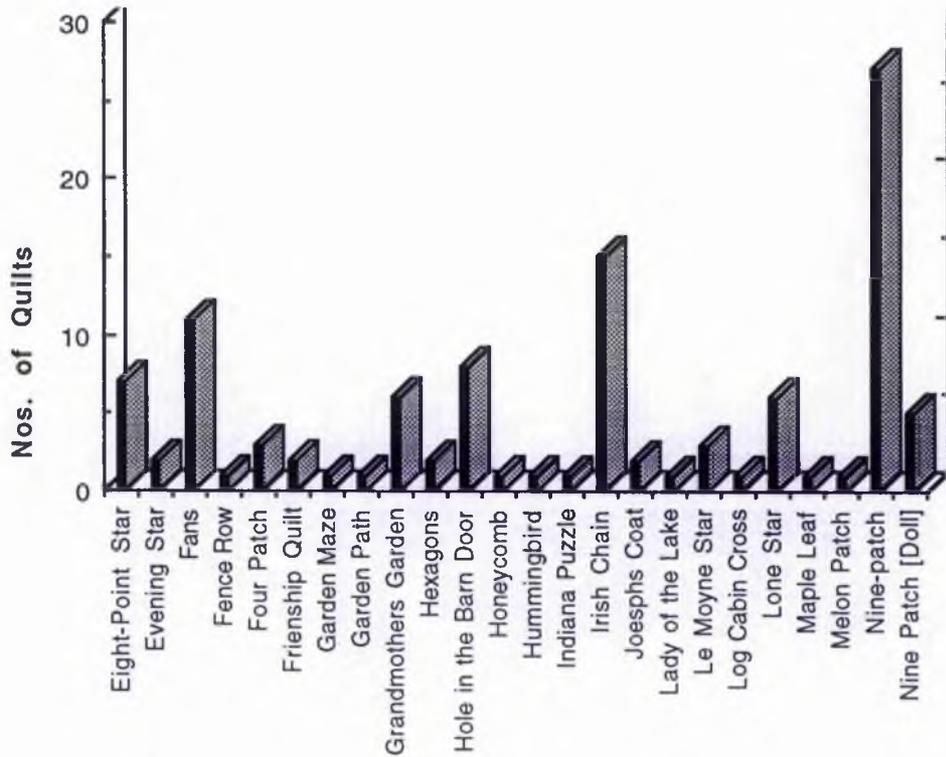
Fig.62. Centre Diamond quilt, c.1930. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Peoples Place Quilt Museum.

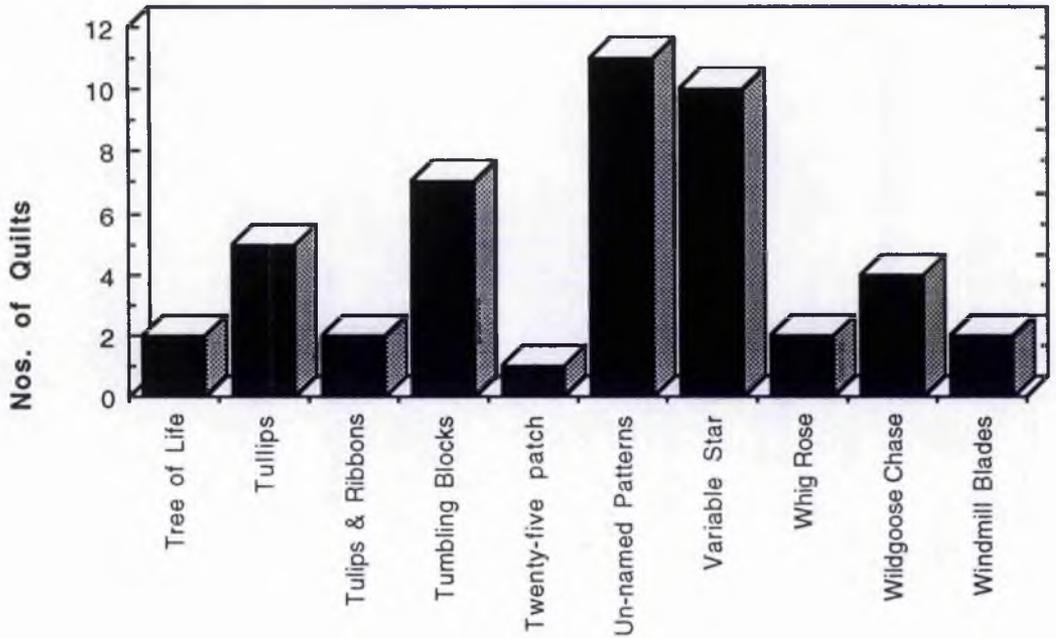
The Amish know the Centre Diamond pattern as the 'Cape Quilt', as the capes

of Amish dresses receive little wear in comparison to the body, so providing quantities of fabric the right size and shape to make the corner triangles in this pattern. There are a number of standard forms, in one of which the central diamond is pieced. The Centre Diamond quilt, c.1930 from Lancaster County, [fig.62] continues the theme of the corner triangles and features four quilted roses: the debt to the quilt tradition of pieced Linsey Woolsey quilt, c.1785 from Pennsylvania [fig.61] is evident.

My research has noted almost one hundred pattern types appearing on quilts with an Amish attribution, but a handful of patterns - notably Bars, Centre Diamond and Trip Around the World - dominate the 1870's-90's, periods of Amish consolidation and prosperity, a time of doctrinal power.²² The dominance of these patterns is evident if displayed in a graphical format:







Patterns popular with Pennsylvania-German neighbours - the Star variants, Baskets - and other patterns specifically modified by the Amish, are statistically minor in comparison to the 'great' Amish quilts. Nevertheless, the way in which the Amish faith and culture moulded certain other patterns is important in terms of this study. Examples of patterns renamed or developed by the Amish include 'Botch Handle' [fig.63]: a name which reflects the sect's agricultural way of life as opposed to its 'prideful' Worldly name of 'Bow Tie'. As such an item of dress would not be allowed one would not expect the Church to countenance such nomenclature. A version of the Worldly 'Baskets' is known by the Amish as 'Kavli' [fig.64] While this pattern is a twentieth century innovation the Amish device represents not a basket but a hand with six fingers; a mutation common amongst Amish with Swiss ancestry. While these are not doctrinally influenced patterns, they are representative of the way in which the sect uses symbolic forms as an expression of its unique culture.

I believe it is important to note that, while quilting designs have not remained entirely static over the last two centuries, there is relatively little in

the way of debasement of patterns. This is also true of pieced patterns.

There are very few pattern anomalies to be seen in Amish work. A Centre Diamond quilt with a chequerboard of dark purple squares alternating with nine-patch blocks. [fig.65] is one of only two examples of this pattern variant documented, and both are thought to have been made by the same maker.²³ This would argue that the significance of a pattern has always been recognised. Regional preferences may be attributable to ^{the fact} that in some communities, for example the Indiana Amish, the choice of quilting pattern is almost exclusively dependent on the templates already existing. Conservatism in the Amish has hardened into tradition. Experiment and variation cannot add to an already completed system, only dilute and diffuse it, nor does an individual experiment with something that has a relevant meaning. This would be the similar to a Buddhist monk dying his robes chartreuse or a Christian adding flourishes to the Cross: such changes would destroy the symbol and the meaning inherent within in it.

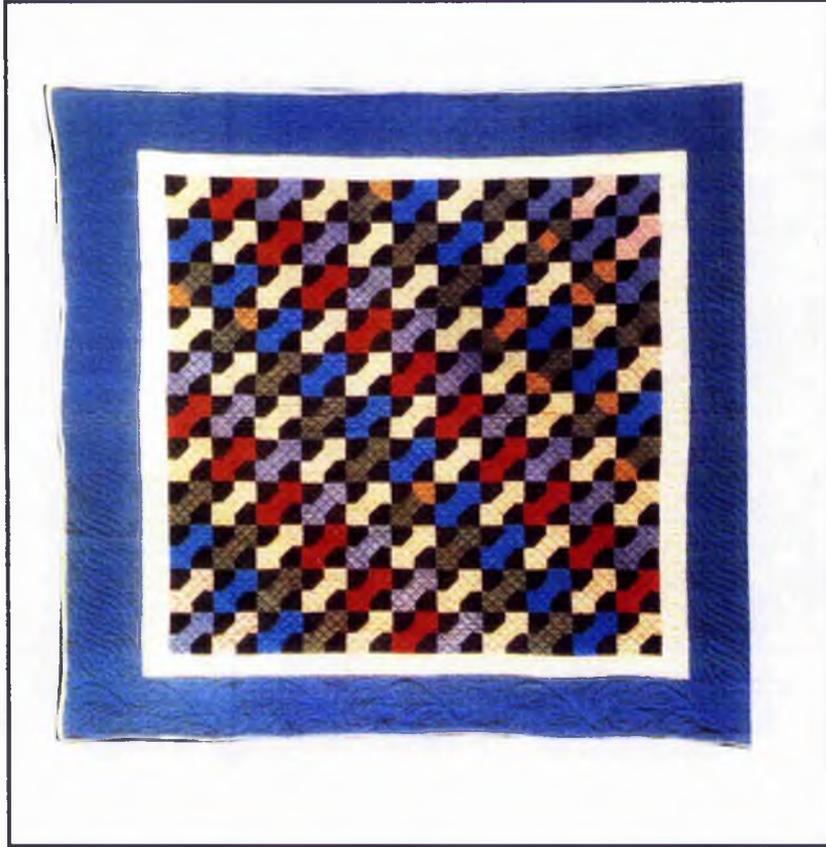


Fig.63. Botch Handle. c.1930. Cotton 73" x 77" Arthur Illinois. Peoples Place Quilt Museum.

Overt doctrinal influence can be seen in some notable differences between Amish versions of 'Worldly' patterns and those of other sects. An instance is the Album Patch which, while it may have been learnt from Friends, does not fulfil the same bonding function for the Amish as for Quaker communities. It is neither as popular with the Amish nor do the few examples lack the signatures or mottoes normally found on the central panel. The archival signatures of the Album quilt was perhaps too iconographic for Amish conscience.



Fig.64. Kavli. c.1910. Indiana. 68" x78". Cotton. Collection Phyllis Haders.

The Amish Wedding Ring block is also something of a mystery. Whilst the pattern name exists in the America I have been unable to discover any Amish examples, and, as the Amish do not use a ring in their wedding service, it being a Worldly symbol as well as 'prideful ornament', the attribution is possibly mistaken.

Quilting patterns such as Penn's feathers or Quaker feathers [fig.66] are clearly an outside influence, and filling patterns such as 'Waffle' and 'Pumpkin Seed' [fig.76] are culturally conditioned, but there are also several symbolic themes. The three-lobed Tulip [fig.66] represents the Trinity, while the Lily [fig.62] refers to the Virgin Mary. Other symbols shared with the Pennsylvania-Germans, such as the wreath of hearts, symbolic of blessing and protection of the home, is almost unknown in Amish work, most probably because of its pagan 'hex' associations.²⁴ The rose spray motif, especially common in the triangular sections of Centre Diamond quilts, dominates Amish quilting. Centre Square quilts are traditionally embellished with a central star

[fig.62] together with rose spray motifs.



Fig.65. Nine-Patch Centre Diamond quilt. Wool, 60" x 62". c.1900. Lancaster Co. PA. Coll. Bettie Mintz.

Very occasionally a quilt will show oak leaves or a grape vine border [fig.62]. That these motifs are unusual would argue in their favour as discrete Christian symbols of faith and endurance and the Entry into Canaan respectively. Traditional or 'fashionable' motifs might be expected to have attracted wider usage.

It is perhaps possible to draw parallels between these floral motifs and the suggested symbolic portrayal by Dutch painters of the seventeenth century of religious subjects through floral forms. Sadly, given Amish reticence on all sectarian matters it must remain a matter for supposition.

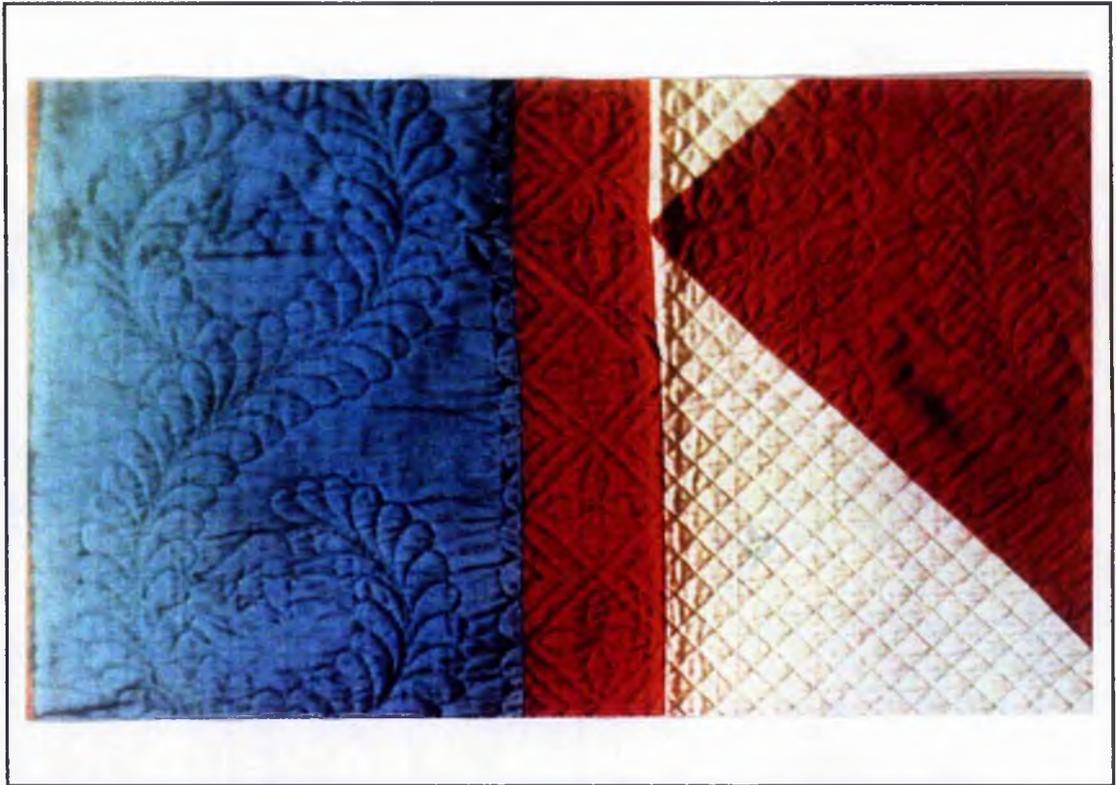
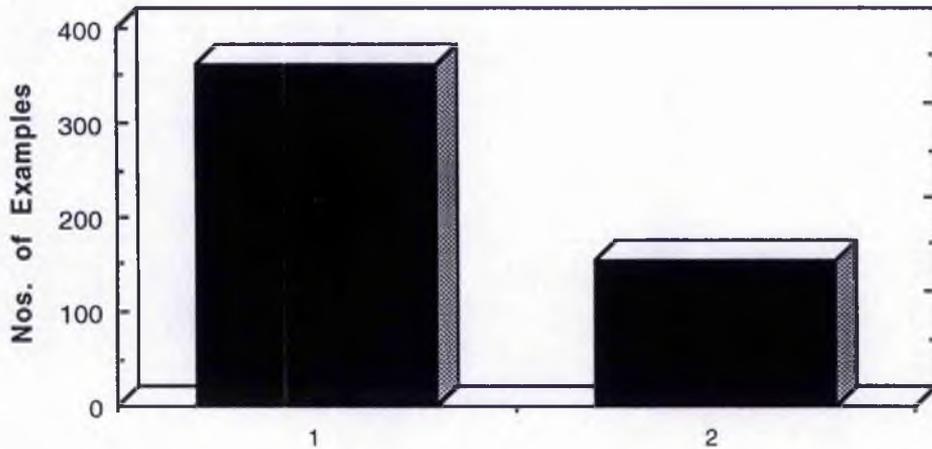


Fig.66. Amish Centre Diamond [detail] Annie [Stoltzfus] Fisher. c.1910-15. 72" x 74". Wool, Private Collection.

Given the apparent paradox of long standing iconographic prohibition within a society to whom symbols are important, it seemed valuable to statistically represent the seeming inconsistency of symbolic/representational quilting patterns. After all, a non-figurative answer to the problem of keeping a quilt's layers together exists: one might either use ties or quilt purely geometric forms. Ties are all but unknown in Amish quilts [other than in Log-cabin variations], so in the following graph, Column 1 represents quilts that feature predominantly geometric quilting patterns, while Column 2 represents those predominantly floral. The data is taken from quilts from 1850 - 1950. It is at once evident that as one might have expected, geometric devices do predominate, even given the twentieth century decline in strict doctrinal allegiance. It is difficult to make a comparison of these figures with mainstream quilts because of the rapid decline of elaborate quilting in favour

of 'ditch' quilting in the World : a matter of speed rather than doctrine. Floral quilt motifs are not however insignificant and reasons beyond that of ethnic inheritance may be sought.



It is possible to partially reconcile Amish floral patterns with doctrine in that flower images did not perhaps strictly fall under the restrictions on graven images, - as not being life of the same Order - but this would have to be supposition. since Amish Elders remain reticent It has been suggested²⁵ that floral motifs- as opposed to fauna - are a cultural preference. This we have seen, but in relation to their ethnic background in the broader sense, the numbers of bird and animal motifs in Pennsylvania German art must preclude so simplistic an explanation. Reality probably lies - as ever - somewhere in the mid ground.

SYMBOLIC VALUES OF DRESS

As we have seen in Amish society the symbolic channels of communication which maintain separatism and continuity are fixed upon the people and their dress as being distinct from the World. That items of Amish dress are similar to those of other Plain sects in no way weakens their importance to the Amish or any other. Amish dress reflects sectarian values

at the same time that it reveals efforts to adjust to their cultural environment: just as it does for other Plain sects. The wide-brimmed hat - also worn by Puritan, Quaker, Shaker, Hassidic Jews and Catholic and Protestant clerics - serves the same purpose, has similar roots, for each sect. Similarities in dress between disparate sects are the result of similar doctrinal constraints: if one operates within biblical parameters, then similar behaviours and aesthetics will inevitably result.



Fig.67. Old Order Amish, Intercourse, Pa.

Given this, what is more interesting are the *differences* which result from scriptural interpretation in conjunction with political and economic pressure. For this reason, though the woman's cap [fig.67] is little different in basic form to that commonly worn in the eighteenth century, for the Amish it has acquired a symbolic meaning. Sioux Baldwin²⁶ contends that caps are a remnant from Palatinate German peasant costume of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and thus its origins are secular, not sacred. It would

perhaps be more apposite to recall that the symbolic origins of the cap *per se* lie in the Catholic church: a primarily religious function being to denote a woman's marital status, and reflect biblical injunctions concerning a married woman revealing her hair. It was thus a sacred item, if somewhat secularised, even in Europe that Ms Baldwin cites. Whilst amongst the Amish the cap is not overtly identified with the 'prayer veiling' rule, it is nevertheless a 'requirement' for prayer among the Amish. As this is an activity not only occurring formally several times a day within the household, but most significantly an on-going process of their daily lives, the cap is therefore a constant requirement. The scriptural importance of the covering is evident in that a cap is worn even by small children on overtly religious occasions, though it may be omitted for general purposes since a child is not an official member of the Church. After baptism a woman would never appear in public without a cap. Plain styles may be the product of convention and institutionalised behaviour patterns, but they have become identified and integrated with a total way of life. There are many other group symbols, but the manner of dressing has become one of the most important tools of group consciousness.

The clothing for each Amish group can be quantified into a symbolic hierarchy. Primary symbols are those adopted by the most conservative of each group [often the elderly]. Secondary symbols are the details that are not absolutely insisted on, such as the length of a skirt, but are nevertheless important indicators of faith, the marks of personal witness.

Symbolic clothing extends to both sexes. With its loose and antiquated cut directly related to the doctrinal constraints of utility rather than fashion, humility rather than pride, the male Amish coat also reflects the articles of faith formulated at the *Dordrecht Confession of Faith* - most notably the fundamental precepts of non-resistance and non-violence. The coat without lapels is as much a negative response to military fashion of the eighteenth

century as a statement about the useless ornament that featured on military uniforms towards the end of the eighteenth century.

Clothing also serves the community as a behavioural identifier. Male hats are used to denote the transition from babyhood to childhood for the young Amish boy, for both male and female children are dressed alike until the age of two. At this point a boy is given trousers and a hat. The bridegroom in Pennsylvania gets a 'telescopic' hat which he wears in the early years. This is differentiated from ordinary examples by the permanent crease around the top of the rounded crown, and a wide seam around the brim. Amish fathers wear hats with a flat crown and a brim width commensurate with that set by their church district.

The 'Halsduch', the 'cape' of the Cape quilts, is also an important social signifier. Though it was originally square, and folded, similar in form to that worn by the Shakers during the eighteenth century, since the mid-nineteenth century it has taken the form of a triangular cloth about thirty inches long. The apex is fastened at the back and the two long ends go over the shoulder crossed at the front, finally being pinned around the waist [fig.68]. In Old Order society young girls wear white capes on Sunday, while married women wear capes and aprons which match their dresses. The Halsduch's symbolic value is also important as a reminder of the past in which many died for their faith: a clue as to the original form of Amish dress. As such it has both a theological and emotional importance to the sect.



Fig. 68. Halsduch and Lapple.

Even the most minor of details is symbolic of social status within the sect. The hems of a cap belonging to an adult woman, for example, would generally be deeper than those of child, while in Lancaster County the white cap is set aside at puberty and resumed again on marriage. Such practices are symbols which communicate whether people are fulfilling the expectations of the society.

SECTARIAN WITNESS

In contrast to other sects in this study, the Amish do not necessarily undergo a personal, inner manifestation of God on their baptism into the Amish church. Willingness to live a life of active and total faith, one whose parameters have been ritualised for over two centuries, is considered as a sufficient test. The acceptance of the physical symbols of the sect is part of the accord which offers a high level of support in exchange for this 'sacrifice' of individual freedom.

While the sect bears Witness to this faith as a whole, and operates a universal set of symbols, a complete sub-set of symbols also exists whereby

the various doctrinal nuances of each church are voiced. The fact that a group is operating in harmony, that a consensus view of action has been achieved is almost more important to the survival of the Amish sect than the substance of the agreement.

Apparently trivial in themselves each is important in that they are signifiers of an individual's conformity to the greater will of the group. Such symbols may be as broad as that Amish groups in Iowa wear their brims narrower than those of Pennsylvania and that Nebraska Amish wear grey hats rather than the normal black - or more subtle in that the width of the hat brim in Old Order Amish districts would vary between three and a quarter inches and four inches, the wider brim being the most conservative. Each, though something that might go unnoticed by an outsider, is important to both the community as a whole and to the individual in particular: by conforming or dissenting to the symbols of the 'mother' society, the individual or group is expressing their degree of harmony with the community and its doctrines. The range of opinion and status that it is possible to express through such a system is evident in that the main supplier to the Amish community in Pennsylvania alone stocks a dozen different styles of 'plain' hat.

Anthropological studies have shown a tendency for the more progressive a sect becomes in economic and technological matters, the stricter its scriptural and spiritual concerns, and thus the stronger its use of symbols.²⁷ This can be seen in the Old Order Amish, where the tenet of non-conformity is expressed rather differently, for while the church is generally considered to be one of the most conservative of the Amish conferences in terms of doctrine, they are conversely among the most mechanised.

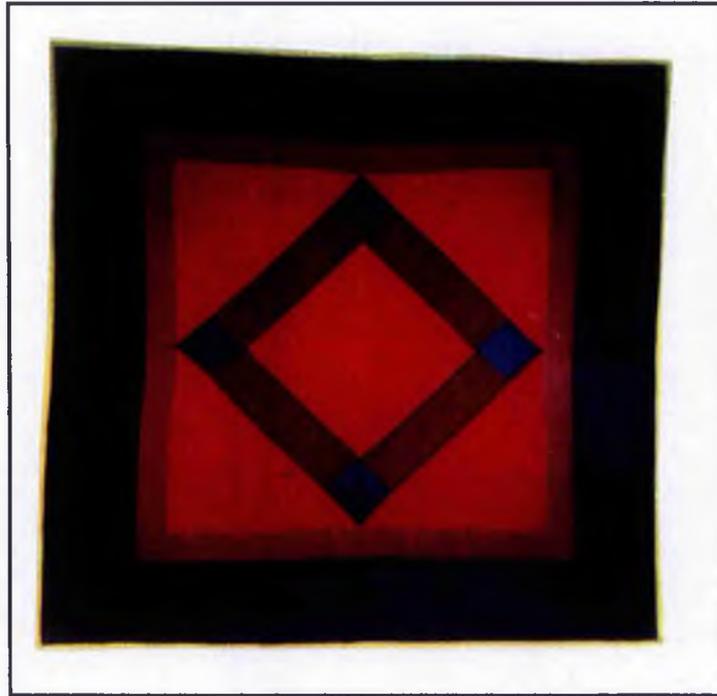


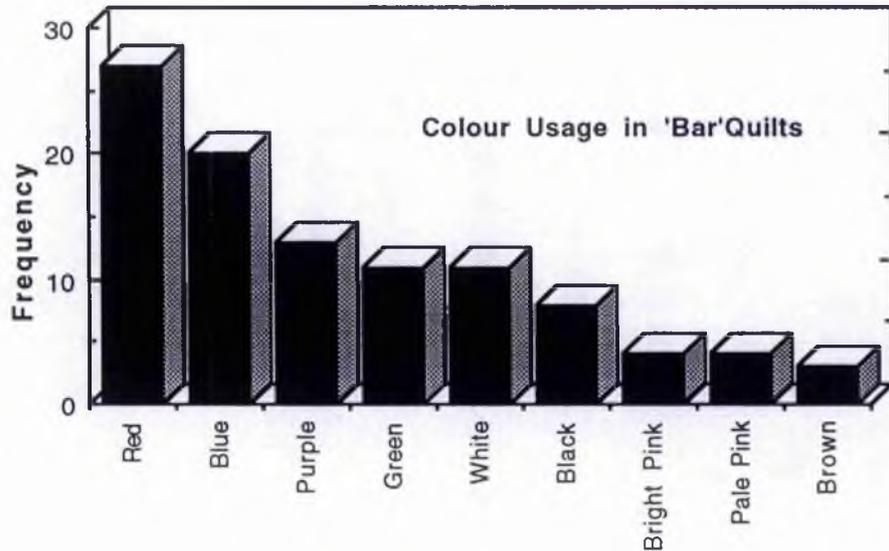
Fig.69. Centre Diamond quilt, Lancaster Co. Pa. Quilted with hearts and initialed 'K'. c.1895. Wool. Private Collection.

COLOUR, QUILTS AND COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Though they cannot be described as true 'Witnesses' and are subject to less stringent rules than clothing colours, Amish quilts are as tied to particular beliefs as clothing and employ some of the same symbolic processes. They stand as a testimony to the orthodoxy, or otherwise, of those that made them, the area from which they originate, its conservatism or liberalism and the period in which it was made.

As with clothing, the colours considered suitable for use on quilts have changed as particular points of doctrine have developed. Broadly speaking the palette acceptable for clothing within a particular church at any time is that used for quilts - with one or two significant additions. The dark tones favoured by Old Order groups are an example. Quilts from these churches around the Lancaster area of Pennsylvania are particularly noted for the use of very bright reds against dark grounds: a typical Centre Diamond quilt is illustrated in fig 69. This palette coalesced around the period of the Civil War,

and remained current until the first part of the twentieth century when increasing pressure on the sect from the World began to be reflected in Amish forms. Rachel Pellman quotes the explanation of an Amish woman for the introduction of brighter colours into Lancaster quilts during the early years of this century; "There were peddlers who visited our area and, after learning to know their clientele, would make fabric bundles for us" ²⁸ She goes on to say that these bright fabrics were in the bundles, and since they could not be used for clothing were pressed into service in quilt tops. The source is not named, and one might think that the peddler would have received short shrift next visit if he supplied bundles [which must originally have been bought sight unseen] containing significant quantities of fabric useless by virtue of their colour. However, if the story is true, then the explanation is more probably that the Amish have an ethnocentric delight in bright colours, and were all too willing to reach a compromise! It seems more probable that one quilt was made with a few brighter tones, managed to avoid censure, was admired by other women, and copied. The new fashion would gradually spread in this way, condoned by Elders, until it was generally accepted by all church districts. This is the path followed by many technical and agricultural innovations within the Amish communities. But while quilts may extend the range of shades they are nevertheless bound by controls both sectarian in scope and church specific. As an illustration of the predominance of certain colours in different churches, despite changes in doctrine and outside influence the graph below shows the proportionate occurrence of colours in Bar Quilts from Pennsylvania, for quilts dating between 1750 and 1950. It will be seen that the Old Order colours predominate.



Advances in dye techniques in the late nineteenth century were reflected in the 'aesthetic' of the more liberal, notably western, churches. There the bright, later colourfast, aniline dyes were much favoured. White, and pale colours in general are subject to similar geographic, and therefore concomitant doctrinal boundaries, as pale colours are considered too 'fancy' by East coast conference standards. The light pink seen in some nineteenth century quilts should not be judged as a 'pale' colour for it is in all probability actuality a faded dark pink.

With quilts it is not however as simple as saying that light colours denote liberal churches and vice versa, for there are exceptions. Black is one example. Uncommon in quilts produced in Lancaster County, an area of conservative doctrine, its use in midwestern communities is standard, as seen in the 'Broken Star' quilt [fig.70] from Holmes County, Ohio. Within Mifflin County there is a greater variety of colour use than in neighbouring Lancaster. With less uniformity among the church districts, clear differences of doctrine are recorded in the quilts of this area. The Nebraska Amish, indicated previously as being particularly conservative, used a palette that consisted primarily of blues, browns and purples.

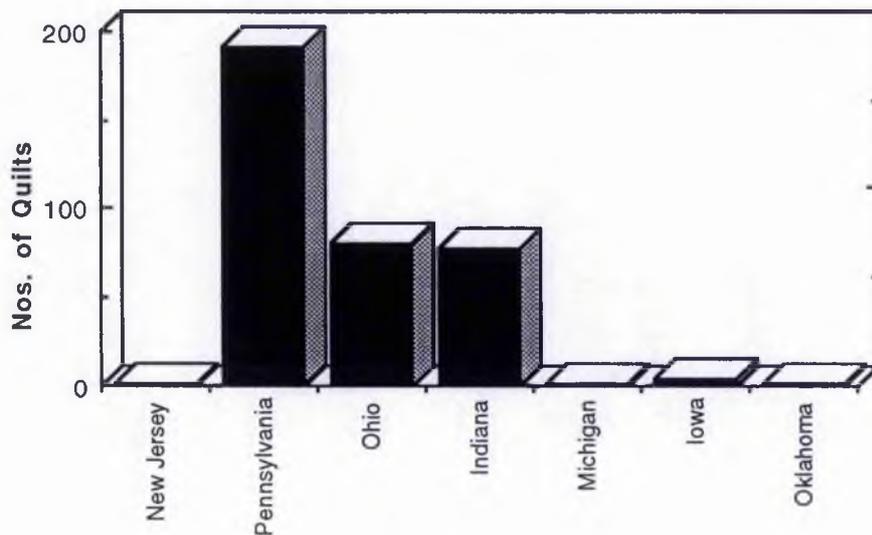


Fig.70. Broken Star, Holmes Co. Ohio. c.1930 - 40. Plain weave cottons. 81" x 81". Coll. Judi Benson.

In contrast to these quilts, those of the Byler or Peachey Amish are much brighter and feature a range of pinks, bright blues, yellows, greens, purples and small amounts of orange. The colours favoured by the Nebraska Amish are used as a counterpoint to the brighter tones. These church districts are also more scattered than those of Pennsylvania, and the Amish there are forced to associate more with the 'English' than is the case with the older-established groups who have been able to purchase large areas of land in certain counties. That there would be some 'Worldly' influence and pattern 'trading' is not therefore surprising; that despite this quilts of these communities are still identifiably 'Amish' is a testament to the strength of the Amish faith and doctrine.

It is interesting to consider the relative numbers of quilts produced in the differing states in which there are principle Amish communities. From the

following graph it is possible to see that the major area of production is Pennsylvania. While this may be explained in part by the large Amish population, quilting was perhaps more important as a means of expression to the conservative communities in this State.



This numerical relationship also relates to the east/west distribution of the communities across the northern United States. It can be seen that the younger communities of the Mid West are less productive in quilting terms than the longer established communities. In explanation one might argue that the quilt is less important as a means of expression in a more liberal environment for quilts from the western states which are also generally subject to less stringent design caveats.

As with other aspects of Amish art, there are distinct community-based differences observable in these items.²⁹ The way in which the quilts are finished is one example. For the most part Amish quilts have three borders; the inner, surrounding the main design element, the wide band that frames the central motif, and an outer binding that secures the layers of backing, batting and pieced top together. For the most part inner borders are plain, but there are doctrinally-determined exceptions.



Fig.71. Sunshine and Shadow. Wool. 66" x 67.5". c.1920-30 Lancaster Co. Pa. Amy Finkel.

The use of diamond blocks is sometimes encountered on Double Nine-Patch and Bar patterned quilts, but this is rare amongst those made by the conservative Old Order Amish. Such devices and a 'piano key' effect are more likely do denote a quilt from Ohio. Quilts from Lancaster County generally have a plain strip ten to fifteen inches in width, which is about double the width of those of neighbouring Mifflin county.

Outer borders also display quite marked regional differences. The use of corner blocks in the central border is more often seen in Lancaster County quilts than those of Mifflin County, and is rare in quilts produced outside Pennsylvania. Mifflin County quilts also display narrower central borders than those of Lancaster: in this respect there is a greater unity with midwestern communities. Lancaster Amish are also remarkable for producing square rather than rectangular quilts. Figs. 69, 71 & 72, represent three quilts from

Lancaster County, Pa. Dating from 1870-1895, and ranging in size from 44" sq. to 83" sq., the consistent proportions of these classic quilts is evident.

The exception to these community/conformity traits are quilts made in the Amish community at Arthur, Illinois [fig.73]. With a variety of patterns, sizes and binding techniques in evidence, the aesthetic is more reminiscent of Mennonite work, and may be linked to a more liberal doctrinal ethos. Patterns favoured by this community are notably less organised than those of the other Amish communities.

District conformity is also seen in the final edge binding of the quilts. The two inch wide outer was commonly seen on quilts originating in Lancaster County with the further west the Amish community, in general, the narrower the edging. In the early twentieth century liberal communities in Indiana and Ohio produced quilts with scalloped edges, though these are rare.

Quilts from Mifflin County are usually pieced from scraps, though they exhibit a rigorous thematic colour control. The predominant use of scraps by midwestern communities is attributable to the less settled and profitable nature of these groups which meant that there was less money for the purchase of new materials. To a great extent this exigency will also predetermine the choice of pattern open to quilters in these areas, since blocks pieced from a number of shapes will offer more scope for the use of oddments. Though the increased variety of patterns in midwestern quilts is usually explained in terms of greater doctrinal liberality on the part of these communities, the economic factor in pioneer communities - a factor that after all gave rise to the technique itself - is a strong one.

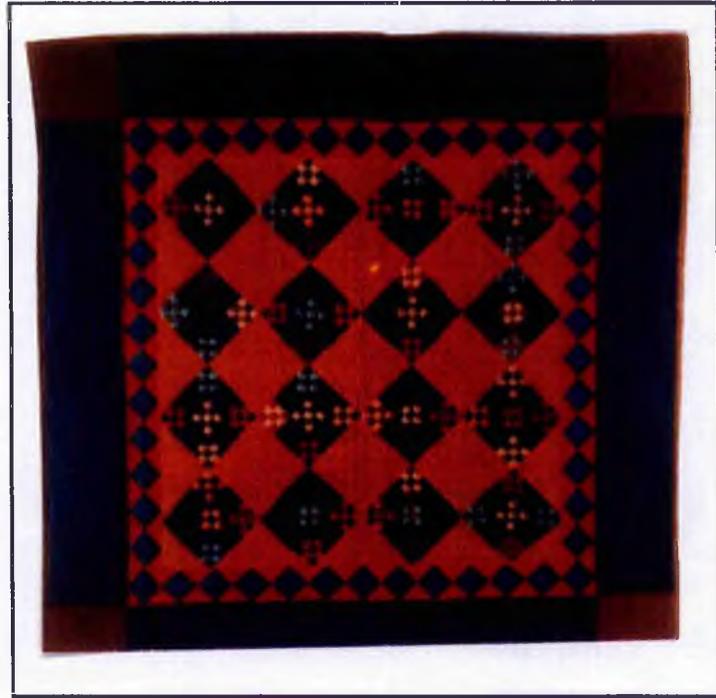


Fig.72. Nine Patch. Wool. Lancaster Co. Pa.

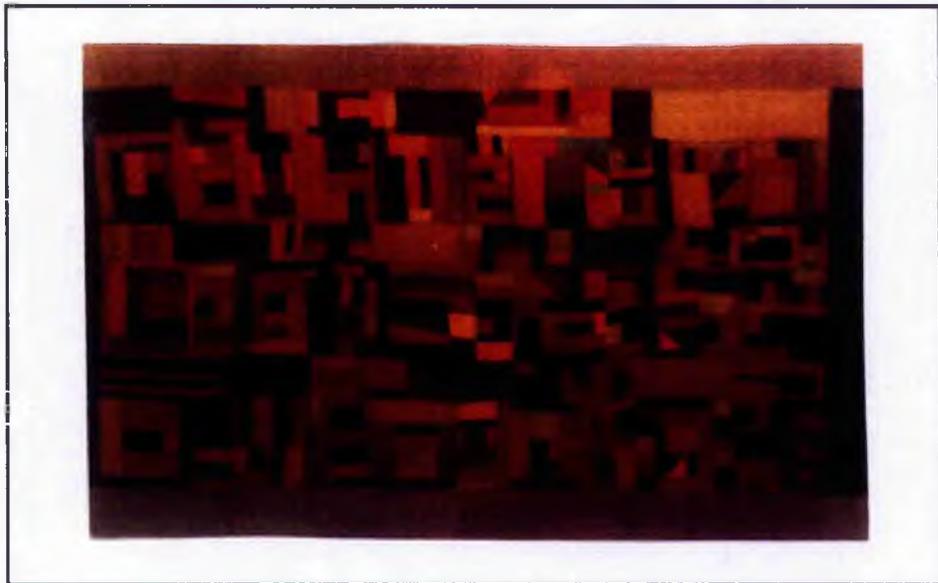


Fig.73. Crazy Quilt, Arthur, Illinois. c.1900-10. Plain and twill weave wools. Coll. Harvey and Rosalyn Pratt.

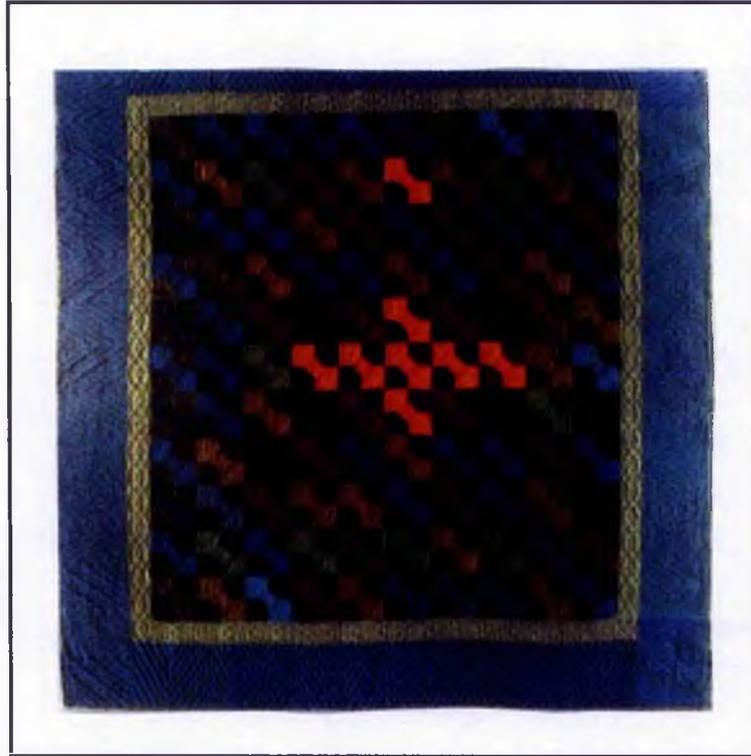


Fig.74. Botch Handle, LaGrange Co. Indiana. Mrs Levi E. Miller, c.1920-30. Plain twill weave wools, plain weave cotton, cotton sateen, 75" x 81". Coll. David Pottinger.

Patterned or checked fabrics are often used on the back of a quilt; curiously this use is particularly evident among the stricter societies of Lancaster County with stores in the Lancaster area advertising sprigged and checked fabric especially for this purpose. By contrast, the backings of midwestern and Mifflin County quilts are usually plain. This midwestern difference may again be due to economic factors rather than doctrine. It is feasible that plain calicoes were home dyed and thus cheaper than purchasing prints for the purpose.

Quilts from the Midwest differ from those of Lancaster County in two other respects. Where east coast quilts designs are largely, but not solely, conceived as a single entity, quilts from the midwestern States are more usually constructed of conjoined blocks. It is often said that Indiana quilters commonly set pieced blocks against each, thereby creating secondary patterns, while those of Ohio favour the use of alternating plain blocks.

Compare the Botch Handle quilt from Indiana [fig.74] with that from Ohio [fig.75].

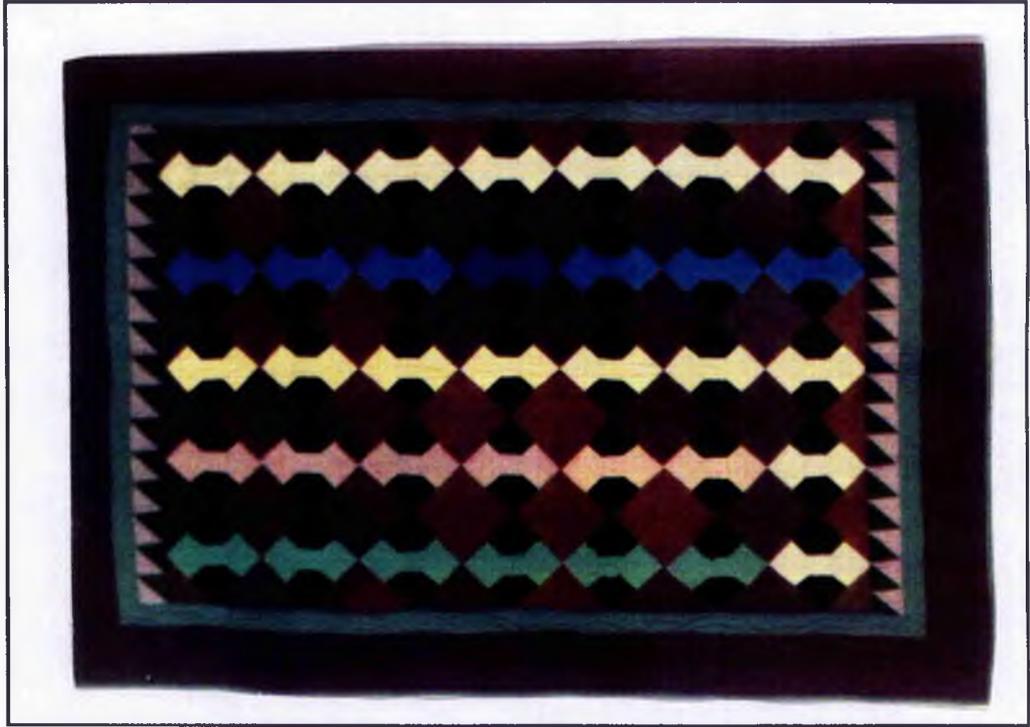


Fig.75. Botch Handle, Ohio. Cotton. c.1910-25.

Each demonstrate these differing approaches. However, on investigation, it is easy to find examples that show exactly the opposite tendency. A 'straw poll' of quilts from the two areas showed equal occurrences of the two techniques in the Indiana quilts [12 examples of each], and of the quilts from Ohio the survey returned 10 repeated blocks compared to 18 alternating ones. Given these figures, perhaps the assertion should be treated with some caution. Another regional variation often suggested is the dominance of sashing in quilts from Mifflin County, over those from other areas. Unfortunately I have been unable to collect enough data to attest to, or refute, this. A few of the quilts from this area do have sashing, but many more do not. Since the technique appears uncommon in other areas of Pennsylvania, perhaps it would be better to say that it is more prevalent in the mid-west than in the eastern churches. The overriding impression one gains is that the quilters of the mid-

west are moreover generally more inclined to produce quilts from outside the main pattern 'oeuvre'. This may be a function of the greater liberality of mid-western doctrine.

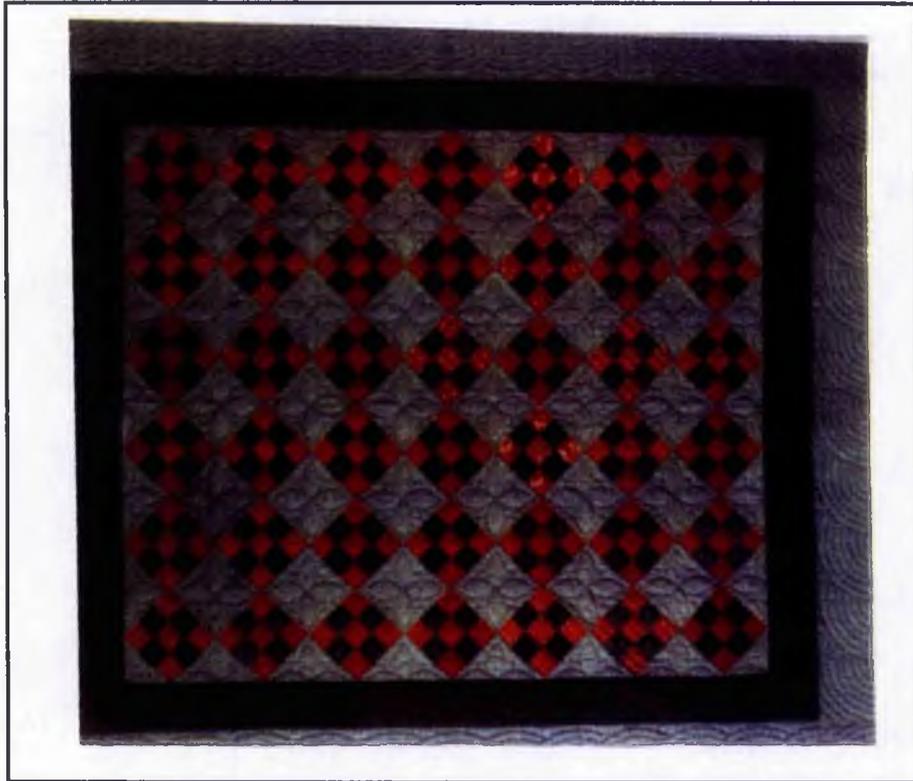


Fig.76. Nine-Patch quilt. Lancaster Co. Pa. c. 1900.

In general terms one may say that there are greater number of Centre Diamond, Sunshine and Shadow or Trip Around the World [fig.71] and Basket patterns produced on the east coast: almost all attributed to Lancaster County. Crazy Patch and Double Nine Patch are predominantly from Lancaster County though there are mid-Western examples. A comparison of a quilt from Pennsylvania [fig.76] and one from Ohio [fig.77] will show the differing approaches of the two communities. The Pennsylvania quilt is very much within the mainstream aesthetic parameters of the more conservative churches, while the Oklahoma quilt is set firmly within the more liberal traditions of the mid-west.

While certain blocks may be ascribed to particular counties - the majority of Jacob's Ladder quilts were worked in Mifflin County - Centre

Square patterns are found throughout Pennsylvania. The Eight Pointed Star, Compass Star, Evening Star, and Le Moyne Star blocks, are usually the work of midwestern communities. The Broken Star [fig.70] is a speciality of Ohio. An alternative star pattern, the Lone Star or Star of Bethlehem., is named according to the community in which it is worked: the more religious appellation is used in stricter, generally east coast areas, while the Lone Star is a legacy of the Frontier years of the midwest.



Fig.77. Nine-Patch Variation. Hutchinson Amish, Kansas. c.1910-20. 72" x 90". Cotton. Made by Barbara Chupp. Coll. America Hurrah, NYC.

The Lone Star can be attributed to Pennsylvania German origin where it is a symbol of prosperity and fertility. This design is almost always found enclosed by a 'fence', the *Zaun*..

Patterns which were also popular with the World - Fans, Indiana Puzzle, Ocean Waves, Railroad Crossing and Roman Stripe - are more commonly the

product of midwestern, rather than conservative east-coast, Amish churches. Such 'naturalistic figurative' patterns as Wild Goose Chase, Birds in Flight or Flying Geese [fig.78] are also largely mid-western.

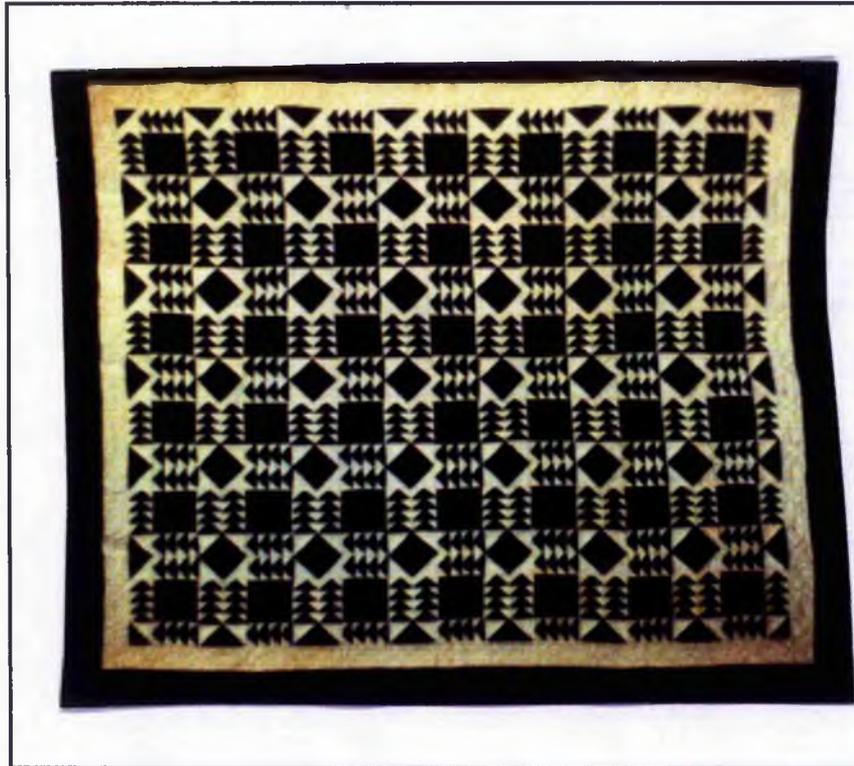


Fig.78. Flying Geese, Clara Coon. Indiana. Cotton.

A unique quilt pattern from Holmes Co. Ohio [fig.79] illustrates the way in which a normally 'liberal', 'Worldly' pattern was sometimes adapted to conform to the dominant aesthetic. Often such 'displacements' are the result of an individual relocating in another church district -through marriage or shifts in doctrinal allegiance - and importing household goods and traditions: items which are subsequently utilised or assimilated as appropriate.

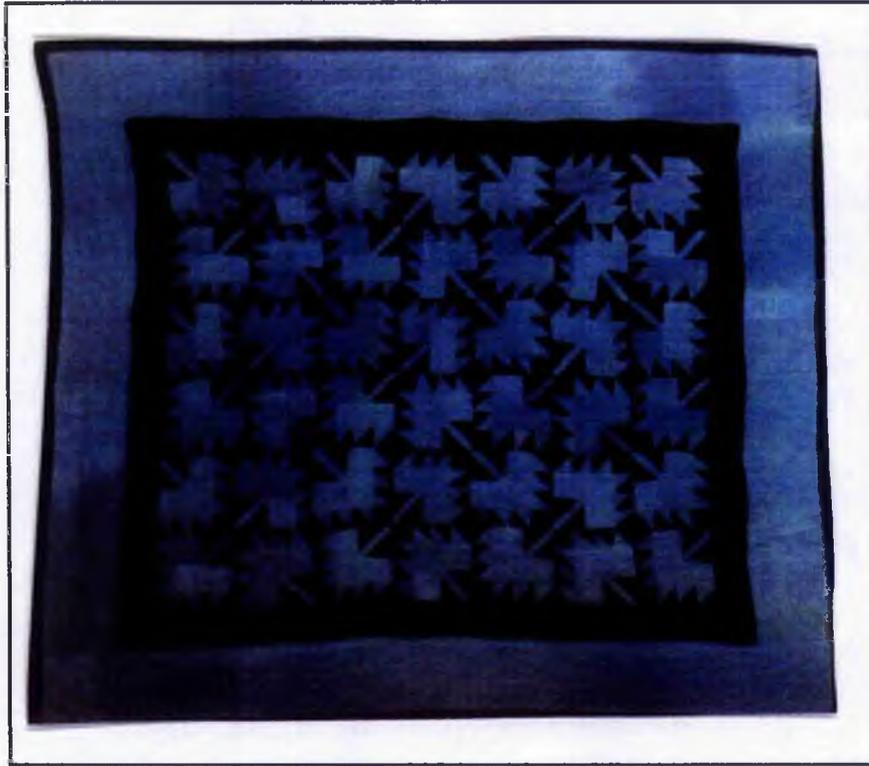


Fig.79. Maple leaf, crib quilt c.1920. Cotton and cotton sateens, 33" x 37", Holmes County, Ohio. Coll. E & D Whaetcroft, Lewisburg, PA.

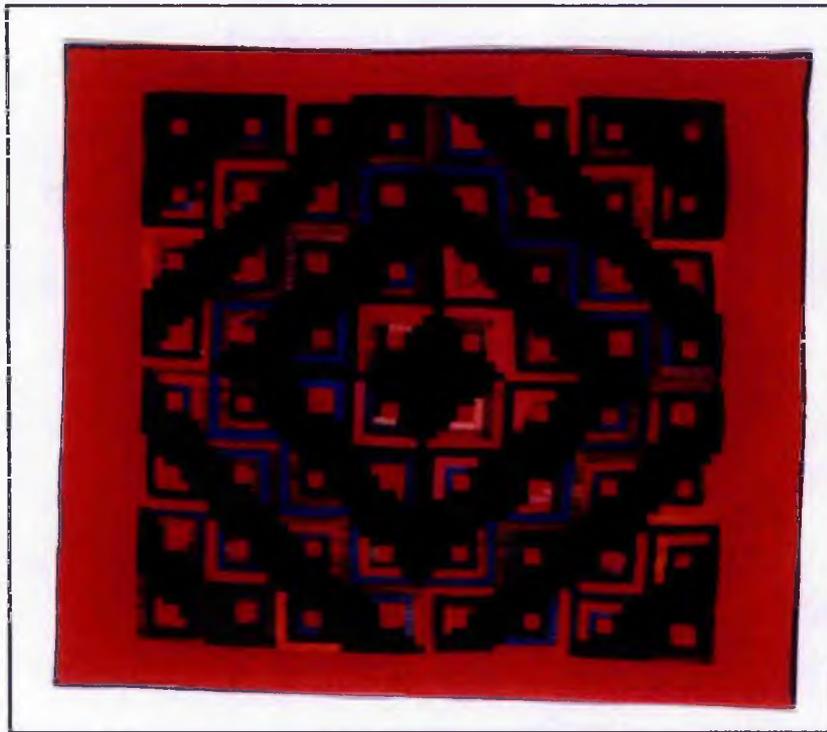


Fig.80. Log Cabin [Barn Raising]. c.1890. Centre County, Pa.76" x 74". Coll. America Hurrah Antiques, NYC.

The Log Cabin pattern was popular across all communities, though doctrinal variants within the genre do exist. In Indiana a small variant of this pattern developed where two small squares replace the usual central single square of the block. Indiana also tended to produce quilts featuring patches of a variety of shapes and sizes creating abstract and markedly different quilts from any other community. The standard Barn Raising variation [fig.80] is the Amish name for the design, [now universally accepted] and the only version of this pattern allowed by conservative Lancaster County communities.

PRIDE

The avoidance of Pride is central to Amish doctrine, and is realised through social prohibitions placed upon the sect as a whole, but is also interpreted differently by the various churches and these variants are expressed through material forms. Pride is controlled by New Testament principles such as I John. 2:15.-17:

'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever'.

and the Old Testament prophet Isiah 3: 16-24 who warned :

"Moreover the Lord saith, because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts.

I

n that day the Lord will take the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods and the veils.

And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink:

and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

Luke 9:23, Phil. 2:5-11 and I Pet. 5:5-6 also warn against the sin of pride.

DECORATIVE FORMS

As each Conference debates what is, and is not, doctrinally permissible for its members, there are distinct regional variations in the appearance and life-style of the various Amish settlements. The *Disciplines* of each conference highlight areas of transgression and define acceptability. A typical passage from the *Discipline* of 1837, Somerset County, Pennsylvania reads,

(it is)...decided that there shall be no display in houses, namely when the houses are built or painted, with various colours or filled with showy furniture, namely with wood, porcelain or glass dishes and having cupboards and mirrors hung on the wall and such things...the cabinet makers are not to make such proud kinds of furniture and not to decorate them with such loud or gay colours.

A Discipline that belonged to an Amish Bishop in Iowa of roughly the same period reads:

Here is a list of the things which are detrimental to us as God's people. Namely...the pompous and costly buildings, the magnificent vehicles, especially in buggies and horse harnesses; photographs, house ornaments and fineries which are noticed for their colours, the pictures on the walls, the fineries on the windows; - a home made window curtain will be allowed, - trends towards pomp and extravagance is not becoming to us...the unnecessary decoration of the cupboard shelves with notched paper...the costly tablecloths, the fancy lights, the striped and prim carpets, besides all show and everything that ends towards feasting the eye and making a slave of man.³⁰

While each is essentially the same - in that they both respect the demands of the Amish church - as grass-roots differences of doctrinal interpretation emerge, so the surroundings of the brethren reflect those beliefs. This means that while the homes of the Peachey Church are filled with useful but undeniably decorative items, Zook or Speicher Amish, who themselves splintered from the Peachey Amish in 1911, are even more liberal, enjoying carpets, linoleum, modern kitchen appliances, and wall mottoes. The stricter Byler Church Amish permit only small rag carpets and hanging pincushions

beneath the clock shelf. Around New Holland in Lancaster County, window blinds are allowed - if green or white - but curtains are generally not permitted, since they are 'fancy'.

Small loomed rag carpets have been permitted by most churches since about 1860 as long as they were plain - the principle being that they were unlike the striped rugs fashionable in other Pennsylvania-German communities. Most Amish rugs are recycled garments, and so echo the colour schemes acceptable to each community when they were constructed. In the last years of the nineteenth century hooked or plaited rugs with a simple pattern, a darker border or a regular arrangement of stripes, were allowed by some of the more liberal churches. The earliest examples of these patterned rugs, dating around 1890, display black scalloped borders outlined with a contrasting light tone. Black is also popular as a ground colour, and interestingly these rugs are believed to originate from churches which would not have accepted the use of black in a quilt. This may be attributable to the frugal nature of the makers, who used scraps of women's clothing overcoming demands of conscience, to mis-attributions, or the existence of 'spiritual' hierarchy in personal possessions.

Rugs often mimic quilt patterns both in terms of design and palette. In the example below [fig.81] there are clear allusions to the 'Trip Around the World' pattern [fig.71] and rose spray quilting motifs.

Concerns about 'gay' colours and 'pridefulness' are common to all Plain sects, and the Amish response was the same as the Shakers in this area: uniformity was the means to avoid competition and pride. Uniformity and symbolism are so integral a part of Amish life, that dissent over particular forms can cause deep rifts in the fabric of a district.



Fig.81. Hooked rug. Wool. c.1930 Origin unknown. Private Collection

Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, experienced this and it has resulted in the church districts of the Kishacoquillas valley altering symbolic elements of dress and accessories as testimony to particular positions of certain points of doctrine. Dissension in this community arose over the acceptability of the fancy end-gables of a house bought from an "English" farmer. The community divided over whether the house conformed with the *Ordnung* and its dictates concerning modesty and Plainness. The argument split the church into some eight different factions, each representing slight variants of theological opinion.

Such divergences are most often expressed in physical terms and act as a 'safety valve' for theological dissent and should not be regarded as the result of a 'weakening' of the power of the links between faith and form in the community, but rather testimony to the total integration of the symbolic tool within their culture.

The Amish also recognise the possible phenomenon of the inversion of prideful display, though this never seems to have reached the levels of concern that it did among the Quakers. This teaching has scriptural precedent in I Peter 5:5: 'Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed in humility: for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble'. George Thormann certainly recognised the temptation³¹ when he wrote in 1693 that;

"In their distinguishing themselves in outward clothing from all other honest people, do they not thereby make it understood that they are not adverse to being recognised among the people, so that one can immediately say 'This is an Anabaptist?' Never imagine that the true fear of God consists in this or that manner of dressing (such as wearing nothing around the neck, no pleated trousers, etc.)."

But however wealthy the family, and many Amish families are, there is no chance for the exhibition of pride within a particular church district, when materialistic adjuncts are controlled. If present levels of materialism are unacceptable, the Amish family always has the option of selling up and joining another district, thus maintaining the harmony and integrity of the sect. The few individuals who might be tempted from the proper path are discouraged by the Elders, but generally in a church that has no spiritual hierarchy it is not a great temptation. Amish doctrine is almost wholly concerned with straightforward display.

DRESS

Doctrinal witnessing and debate within the sect are nowhere so obviously represented than in clothing forms.

To avoid ostentation almost all Amish reject buttons: only the most liberal, 'border-line Mennonite' groups use them, and then solely on children's clothing - a practice possible only because children are not full members of the church. This doctrinally inspired distinction between the two sects has resulted in the Amish becoming known in Pennsylvania as 'Häftler' ['hooks and eyes'] as opposed to the Mennonite 'Knöpfler' ['button people']. An Old Order dress code of the late nineteenth century,³² ruled against 'handkerchiefs around the neck, buttons on the overcoat and outside pockets, as well as hip pockets on the trousers and the wearing of coats with turn-down collars.' Buttons are also disliked on other grounds: they were originally fashioned from animal bones and superfluous ones, such as those that ornament the sleeves of men's jackets, are regarded as places for the 'devil to hang something on.' In the eighteenth century buttons also featured prominently on

military uniforms and the pacifist Amish wish to avoid association with aggression.

The Stuckey Amish of north-western Iowa having left the Old Order joined the Amish Mennonite Church in 1897, but did not participate in communion services because of the dress regulations. Some of the 'Stuckey' men were not willing to shave off their moustaches, and their women were not willing to wear bonnets instead of the flat hat that was then traditional for their church. This was a case where the symbol had become more important as a means of self-identification than a mark of faith, even when the meaning behind those symbols was repudiated.

Prior to the 1700's breeches were secured by laces at the back waistband and versions of these in brown denim are still worn by the 'Nebraska' Amish in order to differentiate their community³³ but since then the use of braces as a means of supporting trousers has become an indicator of the church to which the Amish man belongs. Their adoption was slow among the Old Order churches, being deemed a Worldly affectation, and braces are still resisted entirely by the Nebraska Amish. A compromise has been achieved by the Reno and Byler Amish who wear a single strap over the right shoulder. The Swartzentruber and Troyer Amish wear braces that form a 'Y' at the back rather than an 'X'. Other groups that have adopted the commonest 'X' form have resisted the inclusion of elastic or buckles as a mark of non-conformity with the Worlds fashion. The Beachy Amish wear belts with broadfall pants; a practice generally denounced on the grounds that belts have too 'sporty' an image, dating from their popularisation in the late nineteenth century.

COLOUR AND WITNESS

Colour is also used by the different conferences as a symbol of their identity. Notable differences between communities can be observed in the

choice of colour for houses or the roof of buggies. The Reno Amish of Mifflin County are, for example, identifiable by their black topped buggies,³⁴ [fig.82] but also allow a greater number of accessories on the vehicles than other groups yet conversely carry out 'hard-line' biblical/social practices such as the '*streng Meidung*' (complete shunning). The Byler Church Amish are notable for their yellow topped buggies while Nebraska Amish use white topped buggies. Beachy Mennonites, or 'Black Bumpers', allow the use of automobiles as long as they are painted black - including the parts that are normally chrome - from which practice they derive their nick-name.



Fig.82. 'Black Bumper buggy. Intercourse, Pa.

Generally there seem to be far stricter rules governing dress colours than those for quilts; possibly because the Bible deals specifically with clothing as a subject for control. Red for instance, long considered a pagan colour and in Revelations 17 symbolic of heinous sin, would not be worn but might be used for quilts.

Between 1850 and 1870 a review of contemporary practice of the East coast churches was instituted through the means of the Ordnung. Paler colours, generally considered to be 'proud' colours, were ruled against. Perhaps not co-incidentally these were mainly the product of advances in dye technology; newer, fashionable, the shades less serviceable. Such concerns were not new amongst Anabaptists however, as these doggerel verses by a devout Swiss Anabaptist, Hans Latcher, written in 1662 show. They parallel Quaker concerns over dyed and costly fabrics, but the suggested rationale for Plain dress as a matter of thrift is unusual:

*Of clothes there is no lacking with much unneedful pride,
And manifold silk ribbons and trims of every kind.
As our own age has now disclosed, to which the Lord God is opposed.
Those who such things are leaving, much money can be saving.
There would be goodly colours that, by themselves do grow:
Such ones are for the wearing, we find it written so.
Sheep wool itself has varied hue which is quite inexpensive too:
One could, to this submitting,
Still dress in manner fitting.³⁵*

It is notable that the more liberal western conferences of Ohio and Nevada make much greater use of these shades. East coast conservatives generally find no place for 'fancy' colours such as white, pink and lavender in their theology.

Some colours are not specifically proscribed for certain churches but are nevertheless rarely used since they are not traditional. In an interview with an Old Order Amish family in Lancaster County,³⁶ the mother explained that red was not forbidden but simply not popular. The same family recalled that one year the boys had had bright yellow shirts but were teased, not because of the colour, but because they stood out. They were then dyed with indigo. Homogeneity of community is important in all sects.

Black is currently favoured by the men of the Old Order churches. This is actually a relatively recent phenomenon and illustrates the way that plain clothing has evolved. In the nineteenth century black was favoured for male clothing in the World, and thus not suitable for Plain brethren; the Old Order

churches wore grey in the nineteenth century and brown before that. However, once grey, tweeds and other mixtures became the norm in the World, black gained in popularity. The twin edicts of 'being not conformed to the world' and avoiding fashionable worldly clothing are thus illustrated in action.

Differences of faith are expressed through such colour choices. The Amish of Ohio have only adopted black in the last twenty to thirty years, prior to this date they were distinguishable by their dark blue suits. In contrast, the churches of La Grange County, Indiana and New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, have retained the grey suit, while those of the Nebraska Amish, also in Pennsylvania have remained loyal to brown. In the latter group there are a few incidences of brethren wearing blue and grey, and these may be seen as indicative of slightly more liberal views and greater contact with other church districts. In a way the retention of brown and grey suiting is indicative of greater conservatism than that displayed by the Old Order sects who are in many other ways less liberal than their neighbours. Brown was the most readily available colour to a people removed from the general stream of commerce. Butternut, nut gall and similar dyes were manufactured domestically.

A dark indigo blue or black are the predominant choices for adult women in Lancaster County: perhaps because of their withdrawal from Worldly affairs, the use of indigo has never been the moral and ethical problem that it was to the Quakers. By contrast, blue denim work clothes have been adopted by almost all Amish groups except those of Lancaster. Such apparent anomalies are common and accepted among the Amish churches and yet inexplicable to observers since they are founded on misty tradition rather than written doctrine. Purple became a popular alternative in the early twentieth century and remains so today. Within even the Old Order Amish examples of lavender striped 'house aprons' may be seen, a colour and

gesture toward pattern which, now condoned for private domestic use, would never be acceptable wear for a church meeting.

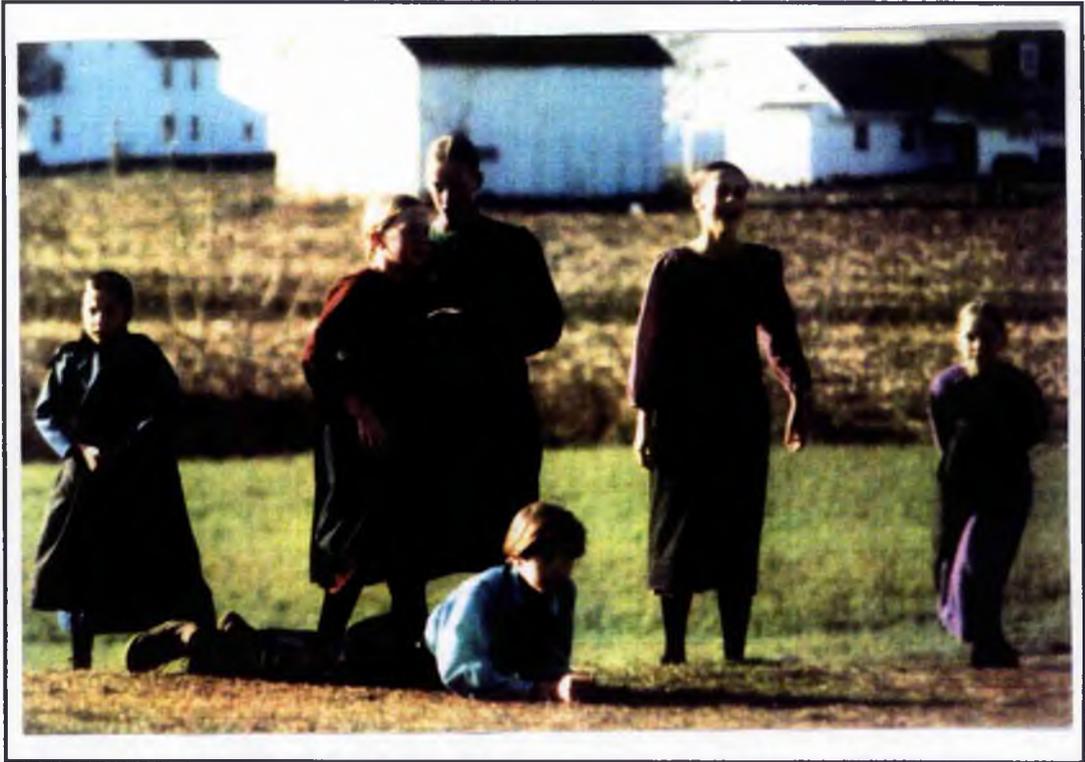


Fig.83. Amish children, Indiana.

Shades of pink, orange and yellow are rarely seen among Old Order Amish and were specifically proscribed by the Church of Pike County, Ohio, when revising their Ordnung in 1950.³⁷ They stated that: '...Colours such as bright red, orange, yellow and pink not allowed...' since they were considered 'fancy' and 'prideful' and that '...Curtains [should be] either dark green rollers or black cloth'. Through such a device community cohesion is enforced both positively, in that their homes appear similar both to the World and within, and negatively, in that where the colour of articles are not strictly prescribed, the possible choices are limited to those that conform to the demands of 'Plain' doctrine.

Since children are not full members of the Church, they may be dressed in a greater variety of colours than their parents, whether they are members

of a conservative or liberal church [fig.83]. Coloured bonnets are sometimes bought for younger children, although this practice is frowned upon by the more conservative groups. It is evident though that colour even for children is considered in terms of doctrine for while bonnets for small children might be pale blue, such a colour would be considered too fancy for a child of ten or twelve.



Fig.84. Double Wedding Ring quilt. Holmes Co. Ohio. Made by her mother for Mrs Homer Miller. Plain weave cotton percale, muslin, chambray, broadcloth, cotton sateen. 83" x 85". Coll. E. Granick and D..Wheatcroft.

Though many less conservative groups do allow the restrained use of small prints in their clothing, and they are sometimes seen as quilt backings, this would not be acceptable to Old Order groups. Strict interpretations of the colour rules are even seen where the use of pattern is more liberal. The Double Wedding Ring quilt, [fig.84] a pattern that only appeared in the 1930's, is an example. While the pattern marks a liberalisation of doctrine, this quilt, made for use in an Amish household, yet shows the influence of doctrine in the colour choice. Modern examples made for sale to the World are generally of much paler, commercially acceptable, shades.

MODESTY

Modesty of personal achievement, ownership and personal deportment are another aspect of sanctions against Pride. Modesty follows basic statutes laid down in the Sumptuary legislation of ancient Israel. I Timothy 2:2-10 teaches "In like manner also that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works'. I Peter 3:3-4, reinforces the command saying "...let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.'

In the field of textile production the inter-relatedness of orthodoxy and liberalism with church divisions is evident in that the working into the quilting design of the maker's initials are frequent inclusions in midwestern examples but are rare in Lancaster County quilts. Quilts from the latter area are generally marked with modest cross-stitch initials on the reverse, denoting not pride of work - indeed many quilts are the work of groups of women rather than individuals - but the practicalities of identification of ownership rather than workmanship at large gatherings.

Examples of the injunction operating on clothing design and form for both sexes are legion. The "Hals duch" [neck cloth] or cape, identified previously as fulfilling a symbolic role within the sect, is also designed to conform to these rules. A garment similar to the sixteenth century Bruschtuch or Breast cloth of the Palatine,³⁸ it is an ideal device for concealing a woman's shape. The traditional triangular form of the Halsduch³⁹ has been transmuted in some Amish groups such as the Troyer Amish of Norwich, Holmes County, Ontario, who have adopted additional

tailored features that enable it to fit the body more accurately. Such developments, and indeed the varied forms of Amish dress alone refute the idea that plain dress is nothing other than an atrophied 'costume': rather modifications, such as that of the Troyer and those that have occurred in Ohio with the rounding of the points at the front, are sensitive indicators of doctrinal and therefore sectarian allegiances and deviations. The most modern adaptations cut the points off square and attach them to a belt or even to the dress. The cape may also be cut in one with the dress, sharing the same centre back opening, or even fasten on the shoulder. In these modifications utility is joined in harmony with religious correctness. The changes, however subtle, in this garment are indicative of a weakening of the Amish ability to resist outside influence. As was witnessed with Shaker dress, the absolute plainness of the garment, the 'humility' and sexlessness of its form, are gradually being eroded.

The mantle is also designed as an aid to modesty. Though young girls still wear these in all groups, it has latterly been replaced by a black shawl for adults of all but the strictest groups. Enveloping the female form to calf length, it fastens in front with buttons, hooks or snaps depending on the rules of the community. Though the specific form of the mantle may have been lost, its symbolic importance as a covering has been retained for in winter when a short coat covers the dress, usually a shawl is put over the top of everything.

These tenets are so deeply embedded within the Amish culture that many of the practices that can be traced to them are now deep rooted traditions, particular to certain conferences or even church districts. Amish women of Berne, Indiana observe a very old custom of tying the apron strings in front: a habit which echoes Shaker practice. In other groups the dress apron may be pinned, snapped, hooked or buttoned at the side, depending on the regulation of the group, but the work apron still has strings that are tied at the back. Among the stricter sects married women must

wear aprons and caps of a contrasting colour to the dress so that they are visible. These must be fastened with straight pins, buttons only being allowed on children's clothing.

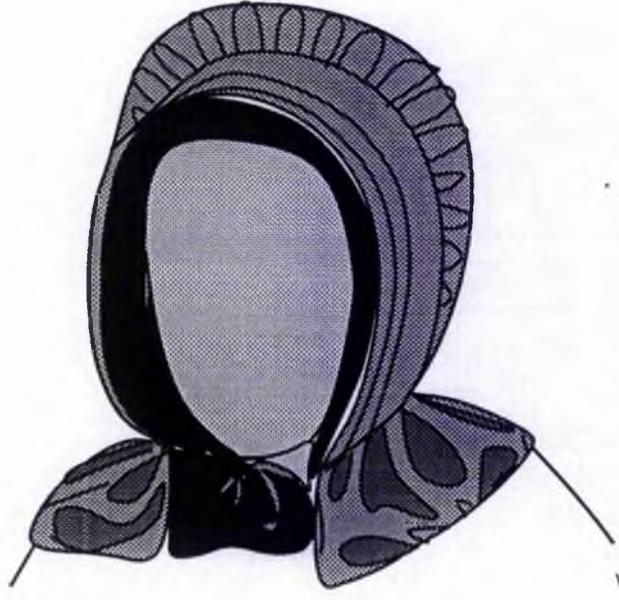


Fig.85. Bonnet, Lancaster County, Pa. c.1860 - present day.

Skirts, too, among the Amish follow the dictates of modesty and utility. They are always full, and either have pleats or gathers at the waist to provide ample material to disguise the wearers hips and legs. Conservative groups exhibit a single tuck at the hem the origin or significance of which is obscure. The length of the hem has been a constant matter for debate, but the longer the skirt is, the more 'demutig' or modest, it is considered, and, by inference, the more pious the wearer. Redmond Conyngham has suggested that although brethren may have worn shorter skirts in their native country, being easier in mountainous territory, they quickly adopted the longer form in the gentle hills of Pennsylvania.⁴⁰ An alternative scenario is that the longer length may have been a response to the visual/religious dictates of surrounding Plain sects who considered this more acceptable. Certainly the long skirt was normal in the nineteenth century when dress rules largely stabilised and the form fulfilled all the requirements of modesty.

Modesty is also the primary reason behind the adoption of the large

black bonnet by Amish women. Though it has shrunk in size in recent decades, the more traditional forms, complete with curtain or bavolet, are still worn by groups such as the Swartzentruber Amish of Ohio. All groups wear caps and bonnets fastened for church services and usually in public also.

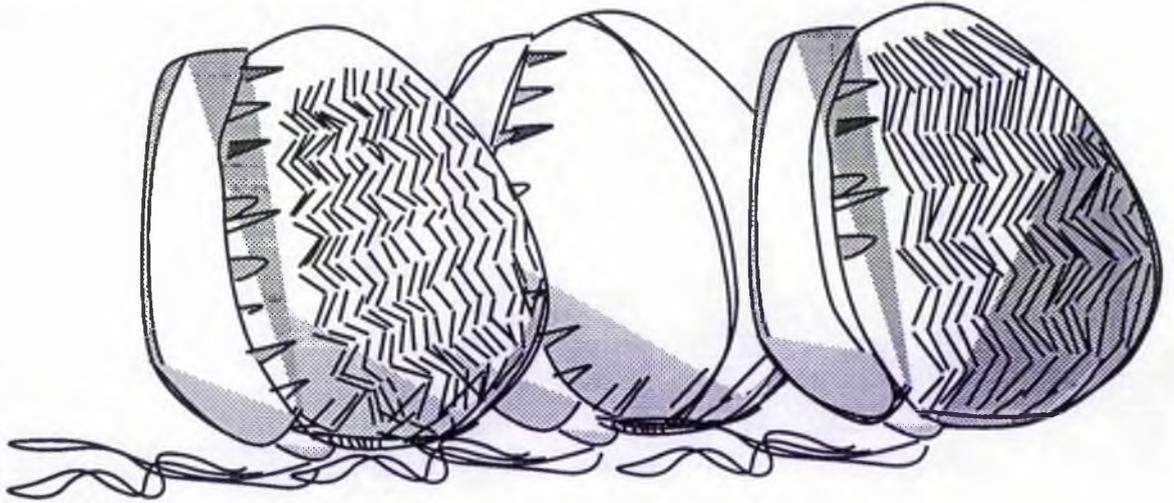


Fig. 86. Caps, L-R, from Indiana, Iowa and Ohio church groups.

The ubiquitous cap is made either of opaque muslin or sheer net. Caps with tie strings, either black or white depending on church district, are the mark of conservative groups. Whether or not the strings on a cap are tied in the home is a distinguishing mark of a highly devout group. The theory is that if the cap has strings then there will be less temptation for the cap to shrink over the years, as has occurred in some Mennonite groups. In Ontario the Amish wear a black kerchief over the white cap, a combination of old and new forms.

The maintenance of these caps is in itself part of the religious ritual of Amish life, for they must be washed and starched, and have the intricate system of pleats - that denotes different church districts and hence doctrinal differences - ironed into them [fig.86]. Caps from Pennsylvania are generally cut slightly longer in the head than those from the mid-west while those from Indiana and Ohio lack the central seam of Pennsylvania and Iowa.

The Lapple [fig. 68] a small flap at the back-waist of the bodice has no apparent function other than fulfilling tradition, yet has acquired symbolic

status within the sect. It is no longer an extension of the bodice, as on traditional European gowns, but a rounded piece of cloth fastened to the skirt. There are regional variations in the width and shape of the lapple. The illustration shows the form common in Ohio. The width of the lapple varies in direct proportion to the conservatism of the Amish group. A woman wearing a wide Lapple is supposed to be more 'demutig' (lower or conservative). This form is also favoured by Lancaster County Amish. Deviation from the group dress is synonymous with a lack of faith: acceptance means acceptance of behavioural and religious standards recognised not only within the group but by outsiders as well.

The dress without a lapple is known as a 'yahk' dress [from the German 'jacke', or jacket], and is sleeveless. This is worn by the Swartzentruber and Troyer Amish of the Midwest. A matching jacket is worn over this. Other more liberal Amish churches have adopted the one piece dress.

Male clothing is just as subject to the demands of biblical doctrine as that of women. The Amish wear basically two types of coat, precise details of which may vary according to the conference of the wearer. The Sunday dress coat is the Mutze [fig.87] which is worn to church after baptism, and the Wamus or ordinary coat for work or dress use before baptism. As such these garments may be said to have special significance in that there is a proper time and place to wear them.

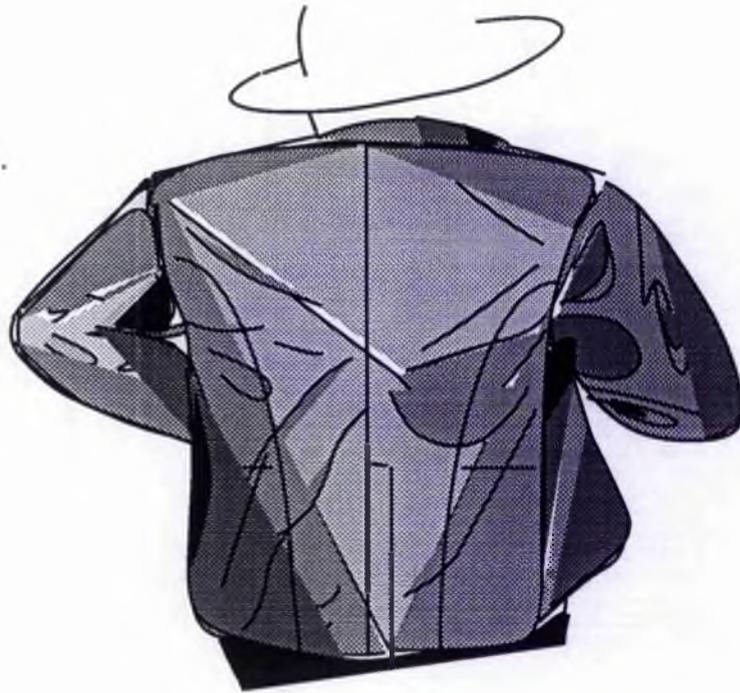


Fig.87.. Mutze.

A vest is worn under the Sunday dress coat. The Mutze is longer than the ordinary coat and has a split tail, similar in shape to the 'shadbelly' coat of the Quakers.⁴¹ All these garments resemble both Palatinate and eighteenth century plain dress; the degree to which their present form owes its ancestry to one heritage or another is almost impossible to determine. In either case, the doctrine of avoiding pride, appearing 'plain' and being 'not conformed' is exemplified.⁴² Since the shirt is still considered tantamount to an item of underwear, the wearing of a waistcoat or vest over it is considered very important to Old Order groups. Even in the summer this would be kept on in church meetings. The Nebraska Amish have retained the standing collar that dates from the eighteenth century. The Swartzentruber and Troyer Amish wear vests with three vents at the back, a relic of the same period.

Trousers rather than breeches were adopted because they are more practical. They were the garb of the ordinary people many years prior to the period when they would have been acceptable in polite society. Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* of 1754 defined "galligaskins" as "loose fitting

Anabaptist trousers." Creases down the legs, hip pockets and cuffs at the ankles are prohibited by the Amish.

The most conservative groups still retain rear opening trousers while broadfall trousers have been retained by most Amish since they not only answer the demands of non-conformity but also because they are considered more modest than the fly front openings first seen in the 1820's.

SUMMARY

Amish symbolism has arisen out of faith, it embodies a way of life, teaching how to live and what to believe. The Amish world is different from the 'English' world: it is not merely the same world with different labels attached. The retention of items of 'ethnic' dress and the careful adoption of others over the last two and a half centuries has been both a protection against change and absorption and a religious statement of their non-conformity, enabling them to perpetuate closed sectarian communities. This is illustrated in a whole complex of rules where pattern, colour and form have been brought together to constitute a significant group. Separately they have little significance; together they act as a referent to the Amish world.

The Amish incorporate value structures in their work, the extent to which they personally hold to those value structures and the influence of their surrounding society affects the designs. They take on an identity of their own, the summation of the two concepts being infinitely greater than the separate elements. In Amish society the symbolism centres not upon human achievements but upon the people themselves and upon their dress. Such systems do not appear overnight, but are the product of association: that the Amish have been able to develop their symbolic language is possible only because of doctrinally conditioned physical isolation. Such symbols are not immutable. If the vitality, the faith of the culture weakens, then they cannot support the sect in themselves for they are only a buttress to society, not its

foundation.

- 1 There are Amish communities in twenty States, but the main population centres are in eastern Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio.
- 2 Frank, 1531. Van Braght, *Thieleman Martyrs Mirror*, 1944, p.466. Bender, 1927, pp.57-66. McGrath, 1966, p.15. "Concept of Cologne", *The Mennonite Encyclopaedia*, 1955, pp.663-4.
- 3 A variety of plain but standard clothing forms are shown in the engravings of Anabaptists by Rembrandt in 1641, Abraham Dirksz (1591?-1647), Aldert Volkerts (1596-1645), Hans Alenson (?-1644), Pieter Andriesz Hesselings (1588-1644), Jeme Jacobsz de Ring (1574-1627), Anthoni Jacobi Rosciris (1594-1624), and Renier Wybrands Wybma (1573-1645).
- 4 Van Braght, *Martyrs Mirror* (1544), 1944, p.466.
- 5 Kessler, Johannes. *Sabbata*, 1525, quoted in Wenger, 1944, p.2.
- 6 Des Widertäufferen Ursprung, Zurich, 1561.
- 7 A sect with similar views and origins to the Amish.
- 8 Erhard, Conrad, *Historia*, Munich 1588.
- 9 Bossert, 1930, pp.691,741,806.
- 10 *The Mennonite Encyclopaedia* Vol. I, : 1955.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 Coynygham, 1830.
- 13 Quoted in "The Pennsylvania Dutchman" Feb. 15, 1952, pp.1. 4.
- 14 Krayhill, 1975, p.17.
- 15 Since moved to Elgin County, Ontario.
- 16 Simons, 1st.pt. p.9:-98, and 383 -385
- 17 See Hostetler, *Amish Society*, 3rd.ed. 1980. p.85
- 18 From a tract "Ordnung of a Christian Church" Amish Church of Pike County, Ohio, 1950.
- 19 See Hostetler, *Journal of American Sociology*, pp.11-21.
- 20 Weissman and Lavitt, 1987, p.151.
- 21 Among Pennsylvania-Germans these odd squares are usually worked as the reverse of the pattern and are then known as the 'devil's eye,' a device to ward off evil.
- 22 See Appendix
- 23 McCauley, 1988, p.46.
- 24 The period from 1920-40 saw the development of the basket and grapevine pattern as a motif for central borders to such proportions that it was used on perhaps the majority of quilts between these dates, superseding the Tulip stem pattern. The PG hex signs are also not used by the Amish.
- 25 McCauley, OP.Cit. p.36.
- 26 *Penn Folklife*, Summer 1970, Vol. XI no.9. pp10-17.
- 27 Nagata, 1989, p.1990.
- 28 Pellman, 1990, p.8.
- 29 Based on research carried out for this study, and findings quoted in Pelman, 1990..
- 30 *Herold der Wahrheit*
- 31 Thormann, George, *Probiar-Stein*, Bern: 1693, in [trans] Ruth, p.389.
- 32 Material belonging to the late William K. Miller, Bishop of the Upper Deer Creek Church, then an Old Order Amish Mennonite congregation. The date of this discipline is not given, but Miller was ordained bishop in 1883. Printed in the Mennonite Quarterly Review, see April 1937 for Amish discipline of 1779 see April 1930 for 1781, April 1934 for 1809, 1837, 1865.
- 33 Gingerich, 1970, p.56.
- 34 See glossary.
- 35 Ruth, *The Earth is the Lord's.*, Unpublished manuscript.

³⁶Baldwin. January 11, 1919, p.10.

³⁷Since moved to Elgin County, Ontario.

³⁸Oakes, 1970, p.80.

³⁹Sometimes called 'halstuch'.

⁴⁰Coynygham, Op. Cit. Chapter Three. note 3.

⁴¹Hostetler, 1974.p.135.

⁴²Brecker, 1952.

9 THE MENNONITES

"If you paint a picture to hang on the wall, it is like you are asking for a pat on the back. We make what is useful, worthwhile."

Gospel (Holdeman) c.1957

The final sect in this study illustrates the evolution of a society whose doctrine has enabled them to coexist with the World while their faith has been sustained by a discrete symbolic system. Given their close antecedents and undoubted links with the Amish church, the Mennonites are sometimes seen as merely a liberal extension of the Amish, but this would be wrong. While Mennonite principles are broadly similar to the Amish and each recognise the same governing edicts as other sects in this study, Mennonite society is not a pale copy of the Amish but the result of a different doctrinal ethos. This chapter will seek to show how the different emphasis placed by Mennonite doctrine on Scriptural injunction is reflected in their visual culture, and the way that their symbolic system adapts to support fundamental tenets of faith while meeting the changing needs of the sect.

The most important operational principal of Scriptural faith was reiterated in a letter of 1773 by three Franconia Conference Bishops to their brethren in Holland. It stated;

...with regard to our Confession of Faith, our fore-fathers have taken the articles adopted on the 21st of April, 1632, at Dordrecht in Holland, and outside of those we have held to no human regulations, but have taught simply those of the Holy Scriptures and what may further God's honor and man's happiness." 1

As we have seen, while each sect has patterned their society on their interpretation of these Biblical injunctions, the standpoint from which those interpretations are made colours the resultant doctrine. That the Mennonites acknowledge the Articles of Faith but have also built human happiness into the

equation is significant in determining both their society and their 'aesthetic'. Their doctrine, whilst grounded in the Bible and Anabaptist traditions, did not in practice interpret the theology of the Bible in such a way as to require the creation of a separate society: in many ways their concept of faith is similar to that of the Quakers. This non-separationist principle was reiterated in their modern 'constitution' in 1860 at a meeting of the General Conference of Mennonites at West Point in Iowa. In decreeing that local congregations should be free to follow any rules adopted by them as long as they did not conflict with the fundamental doctrines of the denomination, the Conference was validating historical precedent.

FINE ART, ICONOGRAPHY AND SIN

Mennonites view of art in its various forms is coloured by considerations based both on the dangers of iconography and the sin of pride. Lacking the focus of a unified dogma - such as was practised by the Shakers - the degree to which either prohibition applies varies with time, church and place. That there are such variables does not however negate the general concept of there being doctrinally motivated prohibitions in operation.

The first Anabaptist-Mennonites, in sympathy with the Zwinglian-Calvinist phase of the Reformation, objected strenuously to the use of art in religious worship. It is thought that their objection to painting was rooted in the injunction of the second Commandment 'Take not unto thee any graven image'. However, the degree to which this injunction is the paramount factor in Mennonite visual tradition is debatable, and may be truer for one period than another. Given the factional nature of the church and the number of early Mennonites active in the arts, the use, rather than the 'fact' of Art, which in its contemporary religious manifestation did not accord with their philosophy of simplicity, sincerity and humility, is probably just as significant a factor as iconographical concerns.



*Fig.88. The Mennonite Jacob Bierens family of Amsterdam [1663]. Painting by Hendrick Sorgh [1611-70]. From C.N. Wybrand: *Het Menniste Zusie*.*

The sect was developing and ratifying its doctrine in the late seventeenth century and this period witnesses several doctrinal arguments. The case of the Danzig portrait-painter Enoch Seeman Sr. (b.1661), is an example of this. In 1697 Seeman was placed under the ban by the Flemish Mennonite Elder, Georg Hansen, the charge being that he violated the Second Commandment by painting portraits. He was released from this only after he had promised to limit his oeuvre to that of landscape and decoration. That such work contravenes the Plain ethic of 'usefulness in all things' was less important² to the Mennonites than assuaging the possible threat of iconography.

The degree to which art in any form was accepted by the Mennonite Church varied from country to country. Prohibitions against painting were less stringent amongst the Mennonites of Holland, Northern Germany, and the Palatinate: Swiss churches and those of the further fringes of Europe were

more fundamentalist. The most notable of the liberal groups were the Waterlanders in Holland during the late sixteenth century and seventeenth centuries. The appearance of a typical family group is represented in a portrait by Hendrick Sorgh [fig.88]. Patrons and painters, collectors and critics, they were however not representative of the majority of emigrants to the New World. These people were largely drawn from 'hard-line' Swiss groups that found it less possible to reconcile their faith with that of contemporary society.

However, the liberal beliefs of Low Country Mennonites should be duly acknowledged: that the Mennonites were able to accommodate a range of views is a significant indicator of the nature of sect. The work of most of these painters was typical of both time and place but a direct expression of a religious attitude can be seen, in the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries, in the biblical subjects of David Joris, Lambert Jacobsz, Govert Flink, Carel van Mander, and Rembrandt van Rijn who is credited with, at least, sympathy with the Waterlander cause even if not an acknowledged Mennonite.³ Jan Luiken's work as the illustrator of the *Martyrs' Mirror* of Tieleman van Braght [Dutch edition of 1685 and the Pirmasens German edition of 1780] is clearly dependant on faith.⁴ The work contains 105 etchings, later published as a collection in the *Théâtre des Martyrs*⁵ [fig.89].

Mennonites were, from the inception of the movement, heavily involved in charitable works, particularly in the Low Countries⁶ and it was common seventeenth and eighteenth century practice to commission portraits of the Regents of an Orphanage or Almshouse. The foremost example of this genre is Rembrandt's portrait of the Mennonite preacher Cornelius Claesz Anslor [fig.90] a leader of the Waterlanders, c.1648.⁷ Other portraits of Waterlander Mennonites by Rembrandt include that of Trijn Jans, the wife of H.J.Rooleeuw, 1657,⁸ and Nicholas Bruyningh, 1652.⁹



Fig.90 Mennonite Preacher C.C. Anslo and his wife , by Rembrandt [1641]. Coll. Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Staatliche Museen Berlin-Dahlem, Geräldegalerie.

Carel van Mander, a Mennonite, mourned in about 1600, that,

It is our present want and misfortune that so few figurative subjects can be painted in our Netherlands, whereby an opportunity would be given to our young people and to painters to achieve distinction in the presentation of allegory or in the treatment of the nude. For what there is to paint is mostly pictures according to nature"

This is most probably a reference to the caveats that prohibited primarily figurative religious painting but gave rise to the stunning, and often symbolic, flower studies, earlier referred to in the context of floral forms in Amish art. This is a clear instance of faith governing form. Only portraiture, still-life and landscape were at all acceptable as subjects. With conservative Mennonite creed forbidding portraits, the possibilities shrunk even further until art with a capital 'A' was, for many, moribund as a form of expression of religious belief and experience. Until 1850, Mennonites in western Prussia were prohibited by

their Church from practising as professional artists, although amateur work was permissible. Conservative Mennonite groups such as the Church of God in Christ, or Holdemans, and groups of Russian extraction, allowed either pictures or, later, photographs, whether portraits, still-life or landscape, as such could lead to pride and vanity in either sitter or artist.

ICONOGRAPHY

During the periods of persecution in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe the practice had necessarily been to hold religious meetings in secret or in forest glades. No meeting houses were thus built by Mennonites in Switzerland, Alsace and France before the middle of the nineteenth century due to sanctions against their faith, but while the Amish continued the custom in the New World the Mennonites are not so conservative as to retain a practice that has no *scriptural* basis.¹⁰ However, Mennonites are a Plain people and uphold the commandments against the creation and worshipping of icons. Their early church buildings are thus very plain, devoid of colour and extremely restricted in the use of symbols.¹¹

The authors of the Mennonite Encyclopaedia¹² are of the opinion that the meeting houses of the Pennsylvania German Mennonite communities are patterned on those of other Plain groups - notably the Quakers. Such cross-cultural influences are not usually single, and we have noted such instances in earlier chapters. Such a comparison would strengthen suppositions of influence in the field of textiles and costume.

In general the eastern conferences are the more conservative and while western Mennonites have allowed some visual aids to enter their churches, they have remained resolute in rejecting all aids to worship such as symbolism, art work or stained glass windows. Headstones, in common with those of the Amish and Shakers, are small, uniformly plain and contain the minimum of necessary information to mark the grave.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SYMBOLIC SYSTEM

The foundations of Mennonite visual symbolic systems are, as with the Amish, a mixture of history, tradition and faith. In the seventeenth century the Mennonite rebellion against the imposed formalism of the established Catholic church influenced both their subsequent theology and social structures. Their Plain tradition allowed little visual or physical differentiation between the ministers and the brethren.¹³ This is evident in a report that in 1565 a Mennonite minister found it necessary to step forward and identify himself to the authorities when his congregation was arrested.¹⁴ From this repugnance of Roman Catholic influence comes much present-day Mennonite opposition to ritual and liturgy.

As with the Amish, the variety of doctrinal opinion, the nuances of Scriptural interpretation, that the Mennonites encompass as a sect, does not mean that they are just a loose affiliation of disparate churches, but rather represent a body of theology that uses a shared symbolism to bond independent communities around a core of fundamental tenets.

But Mennonite aesthetics are also influenced by strong ties of tradition, with their ethnic origins. They are sometimes known as the 'Gay Dutch', reflecting their cultural heritage, and this creates a very different society to that of the Amish who, though closely linked to the Mennonites, are a more ethnically homogeneous group than the followers of Menno Simons. Mennonite aesthetics are thus a balancing act between doctrine on one hand and traditional values on the other.

This has meant that Mennonite society in the new World has developed along very different lines to that taken by those that remained in Europe. Though we speak of New World 'liberals', it must be remembered that in European terms these are 'hard-line', 'fundamentalist', Mennonites. Accordingly the artists that the 'liberal' groups of the New World produced - the General

Mennonite Conference, the Mennonite Brethren and the Mennonite Church - have largely confined their skills to areas which are more akin to manuscript illumination than decorative art: that of Fraktur.

Their common origins with the Amish are seen here, and the same symbolic forms are chosen to accord with Plain doctrine. Parallels may be drawn between the Shaker spirit drawings and Fraktur: both communities condemned decoration for decorations sake, but allowed the creation of symbolic paintings when they express the beliefs of the community, although the mystic antecedents of the Shaker sect is evident in the work of that particular group. Fraktur was not as widely spread within the Mennonite church as in the Amish as the form was rooted in the folk traditions of the Swiss and German Palatinate and so limited to immigrants from these areas. Most examples derive from Bucks and Lehigh Counties in Pennsylvania. John D. Souder, of Telford, Bucks County, is reputed to have produced in excess of a thousand examples, largely mottoes and anniversary certificates. A number of specimens have been found in Vineland, Lincoln Co., Ontario, where Mennonites from Bucks Co. settled. Work by Christopher Dock (d.1771) is now in the care of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and Goshen College Library has a collection of early examples. The work of at least 107 artists is recorded,¹⁵ which would indicate the importance of the traditional symbolic system to these groups. That traditional sign systems were so firmly entrenched within, at least, certain groups of Mennonites, may go some way - but only some way - to explain why the Mennonites did not develop a discretely sectarian symbolic system to the same extent as the Amish. The full answer however must lie with differences in doctrine.



Fig.91 Unattributed Fraktur drawing d.1802 and signed 'Umble'. Laid paper. Coll. Free Library of Pennsylvania.

The same symbols that are used in Fraktur, typical Pennsylvanian-German traditional forms, are employed by the more liberal of the Eastern Mennonite churches to decorate furniture, ceramics and quilts.

QUILTS

The original bedding of Mennonite households would have been the European 'fedderbett'; a large linen case filled with goosedown. Over this was a removable, often patterned linen cover. The Mennonite migration to the north America coincided with a change in traditional practice wherein woven coverlets were placed directly over the fedderbett. Initially the case lost its pattern as it lost its position in the decorative hierarchy until finally it was discarded altogether. The impetus for this change is unclear, yet resulted in the adoption by the Mennonites of wool stuffed 'comforters'. The earliest

surviving examples produced in Waterloo County, Upper Canada, from the early years of the nineteenth century, were primarily scrap quilts with little pretension to fashion, constructed from linen/wool mixes or pure woollen fabrics. In Pennsylvania these quilts are known as 'haps', a name that was used by neighbouring English settlers to define a coarsely woven covering. The batting was tied through rather than quilted.

In contrast to Amish work, appliqué quilts were popular with Mennonite quilters, a factor attributable to their greater ethnic ties. Naturalistic appliqué patterns such as birds, peacocks, hearts and flowers, that are the vernacular language of Pennsylvania German decoration, are all seen in Mennonite work

ARCHITECTURE

Mennonite architectural practice is largely a carry over from their various ethnic traditions combined with efforts to adapt them to a new environment, while still giving direct expression of their Christian beliefs and practices. The Mennonites who settled in Pennsylvania were largely of Swiss of south-German origin, and they quickly became an integral part of the general Mennonite culture. Their architectural patterns are thus reflective also of the wider ethnic groups around the area,¹⁶ whereas Mennonite women in Santa Fe paint designs around ceilings, doors and windows, decorating their houses in the wider eastern European tradition.

The whole question of Art in any of its manifestations led to extensive schism within the Mennonite Conferences during the nineteenth century. With every congregation defining its own doctrinal stance, individual churches became representative of widely differing views. Divergence has led to marked doctrinal differences on a geographic east-west basis, with the older eastern settlements generally more conservative in their views than the western states. Resolutions to reconcile these divisions resulting from the 'Diener Versammlung' or Ministers Conference Meeting in 1862, were abandoned after a period of sixteen years.

PRIDE

The factional nature of the Mennonites should not obscure the basic 'psychic' unity of the sect based on shared tenets of their faith. Fundamental to Mennonites of all Conferences is the teaching that they should not be 'puffed up with pride'. Scriptural texts are the foundation for this, including Proverbs 16:5,18. "Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord" and "Pride goeth before a fall". This attitude is embodied in many, if not all, official Mennonite publications and sect members grow "...up with the feeling that we should not be too proud. We should not brag."¹⁷ Simplicity and humility are as strong a design factor for the Mennonites as for any other of the 'plain' peoples.

COLOUR

Doctrinally dictated prohibitions concerning colour are in many respects similar in concept to those of the Amish church. Mennonite colour usage may be likened to that of the most liberal of the Amish churches. All Mennonite churches of the nineteenth century exhibited certain Plain conventions and it is the interpretation of what constitutes a breach of those tenets that differentiates the various Mennonite churches. An example of the strength of aesthetic-related faith is the schism within the Church of Johnson County Iowa in 1863. There assistant Elders Joseph Keim and John Mishler, representing a conservative element which insisted that coloured or decorated dishes should not be tolerated as these were signs of pride, led a dissent which divided the congregation permanently.¹⁸

The acceptability of specific colours is very context dependant. Old Order Mennonites, one of the most conservative of the Mennonite churches stipulate that wedding dresses should be grey. White in this context is considered Worldly, and was in fact the cause of the split in the Sommerfelder Church which resulted in the withdrawal of the Rheinland Mennonites of

Manitoba. White dresses were, however, compulsory wear for baptism as late as the 1890's amongst Franconia Conference Mennonites. In the former case, though the mainstream society is using the colour symbolically, Mennonite reluctance to adopt the same symbol seems largely attributable to the Plain peoples desire 'not to be conformed' with Worldly traditions, traditions which may be more concerned with Salic rather than God's law.

Mennonites use certain colours symbolically as social signifiers. Though there are parallels in the particular choices, the practice is very much more limited than in the Amish church and may be seen as representing the altogether reduced role played by symbolism in the sect. Though the burden is lighter, that is not to say that where controls do exist they are the regarded less highly.

While there are numerous community-linked colour preferences, only two colours really attract specific attention. The use of yellow in quilts is as rare with Mennonites as it with the Amish [fig.92] though there are odd examples of its use in fairly late, and therefore possibly liberal, quilts.

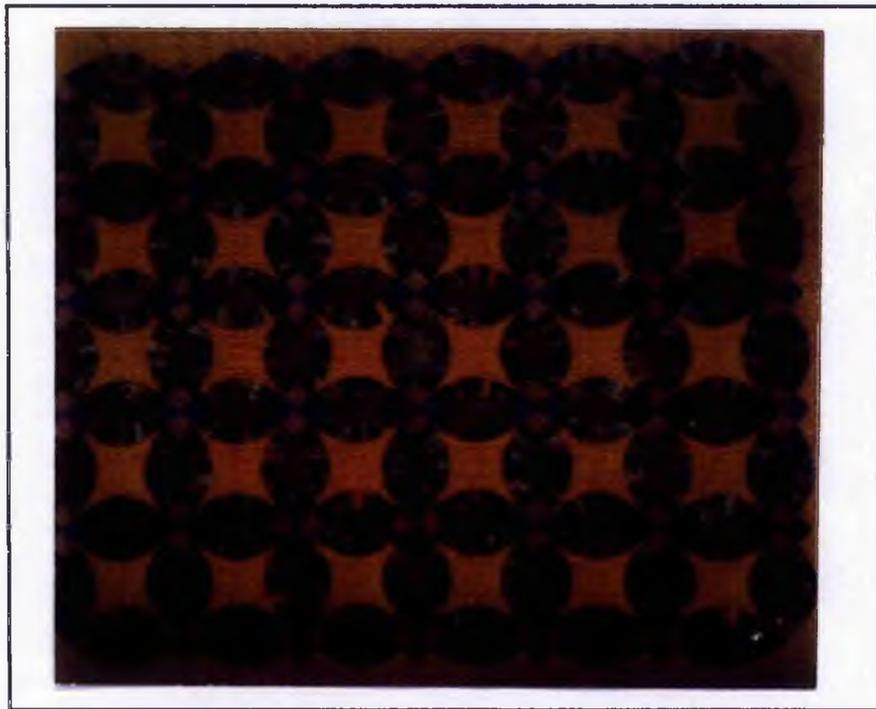


Fig.92 Double Wedding Ring quilt. Unattributed. c.1930.-5 Cotton and rayon. Private

collection.

While restricted early use of this dye might be attributed to its fugitive nature - though there are plenty of dye plants to draw on - a symbolic significance now lost is suggested in that only younger women in certain Mennonite communities could wear yellow, for example in the curiously named Hutchinson Amish as it would be considered an unsuitable choice for a married woman. Green is also subject to certain caveats. While subject to no overt taboo in either Mennonite or Amish culture, it is infrequently used in clothing, although both larger communities consider it as the *only* 'Plain' choice for curtains and shades. Neither of these practices have written or even oral explanations to support them - they are simply the way it is, and always has, been done.

As with Amish quilts, Mennonite pieces display the predominant use of the same fabrics that were chosen for their clothing. Thus, being Plain people, the Mennonite quilts of the nineteenth century include large quantities of black, brown and navy [fig.93] but as the century progresses increasing use of pale background colours is apparent: a consequence of doctrinal liberalisation. Despite liberal schism within the Amish church, this predominantly lighter palette remains as a primary difference between Amish and Mennonite quilts. Doctrinal differences are thus clearly expressed in the work of these related sects. Other Mennonite quilts show the use of white fabrics [fig.93] almost unseen in Amish work.

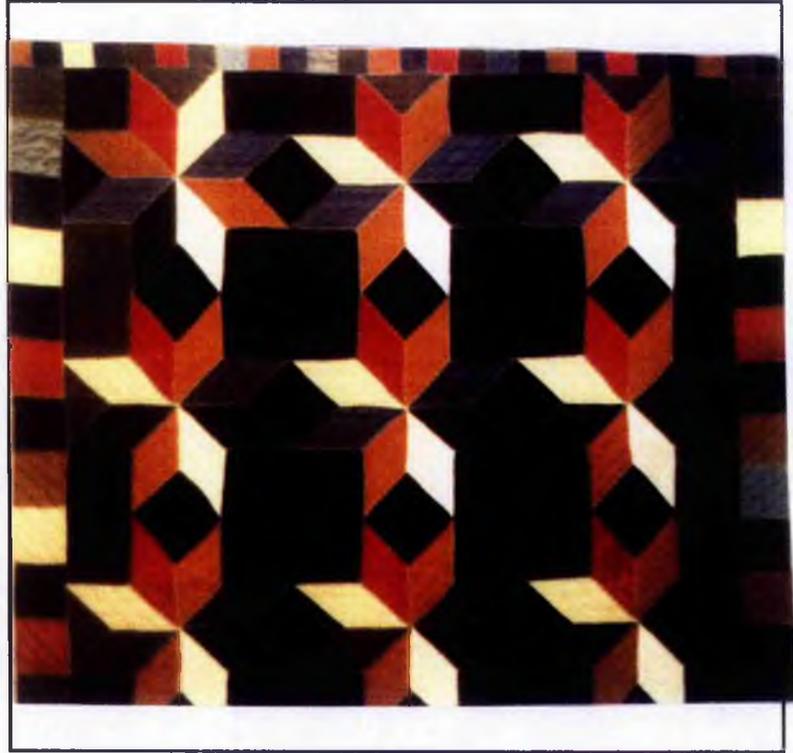


Fig.93. Old Maids Patience. c.1926. Wool and rayon. 69" x 74". Made by Mary Knoph Hershberger, Hesston Whitestone Mennonite Church. Coll. Pearl Hershberger Rodgers.

PATTERN

Printed fabrics are popular with many Mennonites, a practice sometimes defended on the grounds of their not showing the dirt so easily as a plain fabric. Since most Christian groups would espouse 'cleanliness as being next to godliness' this rationale is not accepted by some conservative church elements. Most Mennonite churches specify that in order to avoid being 'prideful' printed patterns must be small figures and preferably on a dark background [fig.92]. However, the most liberal groups allow plaids and large flowered patterns. This is clearly not in accord with Plain dictates concerning Pride and Humility and it possible that the taste for bright floral patterns is a cultural legacy against which there are no controlling biblical edicts. That pattern has never been developed among the Mennonites as a device for witnessing in the way that the Hutterites or Amish use it, may also be a significant factor in the acceptance of this type of pattern. If a device is not

developed as a religious tool then it does not have an acquired significance.

Though the statistical analysis has not been undertaken, empirical evidence would suggest that there are many more quilts pieced from scrap fabrics than new, answering the demands of utility and humility. Mary Knoph Hershberger's quilt [fig.93] is an example of the skill of many Mennonite quilters to make a scrap quilt that exhibits a strong sense of design and unity. The using of scrap fabrics is advocated since wasting God's bounty is frowned upon by the Mennonite church, and the destruction of new fabric in order to piece it again, with the subsequent loss of yardage is thought by most churches to be unsuitable. Mary's granddaughter recalls that this doctrinal rationale was still current in the 1920s when the quilt was pieced. This attitude contrasts with that of all but the most conservative Amish quilters who happily purchase new fabric for the purpose. This suggests that quilts perhaps occupy a different place in Mennonite society to that of the Amish. There, while not overemphasising the case, quilting may be seen as an act of faith: within the Mennonite church it is seen as an act of humility, a mark that even in one's 'free time' the maker had not been sitting idle. This is taught in Proverbs 6:6. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise".

Scriptural humility dictated that quilting thread in the nineteenth century, for both Amish and Mennonites, would have always been black. This was to avoid the stitches showing too clearly on the predominantly dark cloth and thus avoid the possible sin of pride in their small size and neat execution. Proverbs 16:5, 18 says "Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord". With the inclusion of pale colours in the quilt tops, this practise has necessarily had to vary to conform with the spirit of the doctrine.

NON-CONFORMITY

Mennonite furnishings amongst the more conservative sects follow a

standard pattern, though concessions are made to the wider community.¹⁹ In so doing they exhibit greater trans-cultural influence than is evident in dispersed Amish communities, yet care is constantly taken to ensure that they are not 'conformed'.²⁰ An example of Mennonite distinctiveness can be seen in the Altkolonier, a Mennonite group in Mexico. Among the local Mexican population curtains or venetian blinds are common. Among the Altkolonier, visual symbols of a doctrinally suitable nature are used to differentiate Mennonite homes from those of the main population. Windows that face the road show green or white cloths. The most common variety of this style has green cloth covering the upper half of the window and a white cloth in the lower half. Other varieties of this style are an all-green trim or where white cloth is replaced with a white print material. Both colour choice and form echo the general pattern of window treatment by Amish churches.

Some ultra-conservative Mennonites that emigrated to the New World in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century also retained ethnic items of dress peculiar to their church. An example of this is the *matz* headpiece of the Old Colony Mennonites²¹ and in this the strong ethnic traditions of the sect are in evidence.

WITNESSING

The degree to which the Mennonite church Witnesses its faith through the 'aesthetic' medium is dependant on both time and Conference. While the doctrines of Pride and humility are central to all Mennonite churches, the degree to which they should practise non-conformity over 'peculiarity' is a matter of debate. Even a very small sampling of groups is sufficient to indicate the divergent range of doctrinal positions possible within the greater scope of the Mennonite church. The Reformed Mennonites, for example, became part of the Lancaster Conference in 1812. They emphasise the practice of strict non-conformity with regard to dress, but are free to enter

into business with the 'World'. They may be contrasted with The Evangelical Mennonite Church. This group represents the historical interface of the Mennonite and Amish churches, for they were originally part of the Egly Amish and by most standards would be judged very conservative. The First General Conference of Egly Amish convened in 1883 to define their beliefs which, interestingly held stricter positions on beards, the woman's prayer covering, and non-conformity than those of the Old Order Amish from whom they had separated. By 1895 however, a significantly more liberal attitude had developed, and in a recent 'Statement of Identification' the groups executive officer wrote, "The rigid conservatism of the denominations early years gradually moderated as the group accommodated itself to the customary standards of dress..."²² They, in turn, may be contrasted with the Old Order Mennonites of Ontario, Pennsylvania, who withdrew from the main Conference because of opposition to introduction of liberal ideas. Though they do not require the wearing of beards, they remain very plain in their dress and adhere to the old way of doing things. The other end of the doctrinal spectrum is represented by the Mennonite Brethren in Christ, formed in 1883. They occupy one of the most liberal positions, perhaps only surpassed by the Oberhaltzer Group of 1847, for, whilst supporting essentially the same tenets of faith as the older branches of the church and opposing the wearing of very stylish clothes they do not actually demand distinctive costumes. This is not to suggest that Witnessing is any less important to the Mennonites than to the other sects, rather it is more diverse and perhaps even more a matter of individual conscience - a matter between the individual and his God.

An element of colour usage that is shared with the Amish is the tradition of dressing children in brighter clothing than would be doctrinally acceptable for adult wear, since children are not full members of the Church and are not therefore expected to conform with its full tenets. This is in itself an indication that while Mennonite clothing may not appear as Plain or 'non-conformed' as

that of other Plain sects - most notably the Amish - to the adult members of the sect there is a discernible difference in what are appropriately Plain colours for full church members. As with the Puritan and Quaker sects, for some Plain churches it is not the final form that is the most significant factor, but the rationale behind the choice.

The variety of form seen within a dispersed sect that uses clothing as a Witness can also be attributed to a necessity of sometimes making a 'doctrinally-guided' rather than a 'doctrinally-correct' choice. In some areas such as Shipshewana, Indiana, where the Amish and Mennonites live in close proximity it is probable that the same fabric peddlers served the two sects and quilts from sects in this area exhibit certain similarities of colour and fabric. If the two groups are Plain to a similar degree, this poses no problem to either, but if, as is even the case today in remote States such as Wyoming, the dressmaker or quilter is dependant on what she is offered, rather than able to purchase exactly what she wants, the availability of fabrics may determine personal appearance whatever the dictates of doctrine. It is then a matter of making the best of circumstances. Certainly the Hutterite community, an Anabaptist-descended Plain sect, at Bakersville, Ontario, are supplied seasonally by itinerant salesmen, and orders must be made from a limited stock by the whole community. However, it should also be remembered that the rules of these sects are well known to the trades people in the area and that many, if the community is large enough as in Pennsylvania, specifically cater for Plain preferences.²³

QUILTS

Quilts, while sometimes used as a means of expression of faith by some Mennonite churches were for others an anathema. For these groups, particularly Mennonites of Russian extraction, Plain Quilts, perhaps because of their entire lack of any association with pictorial devices, were considered the

most suitable. They were not however entirely devoid of ornament - just overt pattern. These Plain quilts, finely quilted, were generally kept as the best 'Sunday' quilt, with 'everyday' examples simply tied.

There are discernible, doctrinally determined, differences in the pattern choices made between the Mennonites and the World, a practice that not only expresses the nature of the sect, but is a measure of their non-conformity and a part of their community identity. Family ties are also strong among Mennonites and certain quilting patterns may be identified with individual families: something which strengthens the doctrinal concept of the family within the Mennonite community.

In line with general developments of the piecing technique, Mennonite quilt tops initially consisted of square patches, but by the mid-nineteenth century they had developed the form as a means of expression.

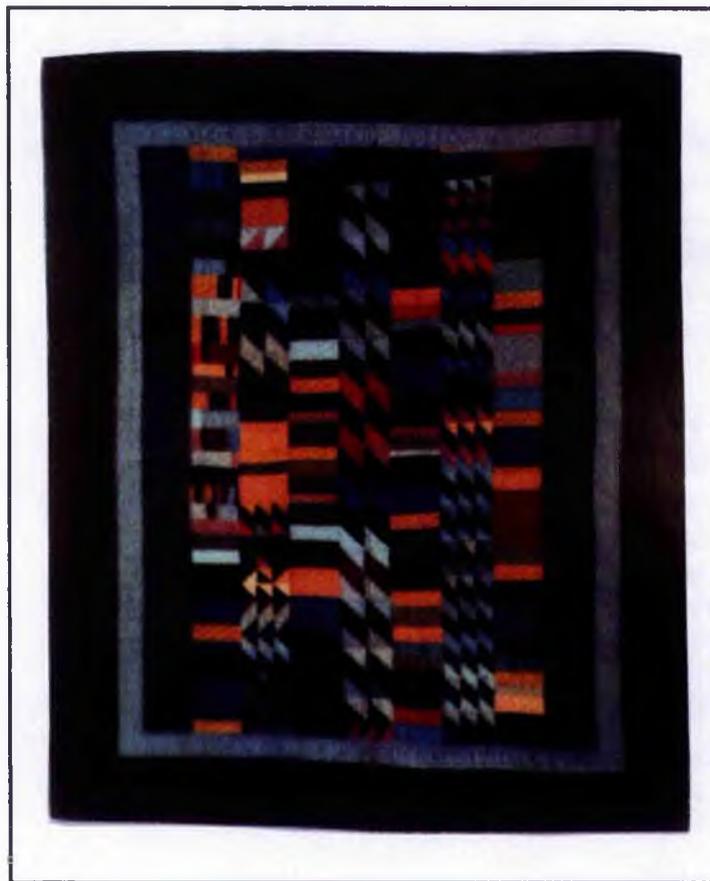


Fig.94 Bars Variation. Wayne Co. Ohio. c.1930-40. made by Mrs Valentine Shetler. Plain weave cotton, cotton sateen. Coll. Judi Boisson.

Bars quilts are less frequently seen among Mennonites than their Amish counterparts, but versions of the pattern do exist. There is an interesting difference in geographic occurrence between Amish and Mennonite examples as most Mennonite pieces come from Ohio. However, given the proximity of this State to Pennsylvania, where the majority of Amish Bars quilts originate, this cross-cultural patterning is understandable. The pattern is most often given a typically Mennonite twist [fig.94] where the pattern is amalgamated with a 'crazy' Chinese Coins variation. Quilts of this type may usefully be compared to Amish quilts from Arthur, Illinois [fig.73]. While still clearly within the Plain ethos, their vibrant polychrome treatment must also be a reference to Pennsylvania-German uses of colour.



Fig.95. Missouri Roadside. 76" x 87". Cotton. Holdeman Mennonite Church, c.1940-50.

Such 'twists' to otherwise standard blocks are a feature of twentieth century Mennonite quilters and usually they name the resulting pattern. An example of this is 'Missouri Roadside',²⁴ [fig.9] a crazy pieced version of 'Streak of Lightning'. This quilt is particularly interesting in this respect as it was made by a member of the conservative Holdeman church, who have strong caveats against figurative art. While the naming of a pattern is undoubtedly entering into a system of visual representation which might be thought at odds with the tenets of that particular church, that the pattern is pieced from what are probably scraps perhaps offsets this in that it conforms with the demand for humility, utility and non-conformity. Other patterns which are suitable for construction using scraps and which found some favour with Mennonite quilters are Birds in the Air, Dutchman's Windmill or Pinwheel and 'Crazy' patterns. While the latter was also popular with the World during the nineteenth century, Mennonite examples are rarely as sombre as Worldly pieces which reflected the current fashionable palette.



Fig.96 Baskets. Holmes Co. Ohio. 1950. Plain weave cotton percale, cotton/rayon sateen, cotton/rayon blends, 36" x 46" Coll. Michael Oruch.

The Amish 'Kavli'/Baskets pattern, was less important to the Mennonites as it lacked their cultural connotations, but a few extant examples do show the 'Kavli' variation. It must remain a matter of conjecture whether this was a symbol of solidarity or an act of non-conformity. More common are 'straight' workings of the baskets pattern, but within the prevailing Mennonite colour palette [fig.96].



Fig.97 Carpenters Star quilt. Holdeman Mennonite, Cotton, 82" sq. 1983.

Star patterns are as strong a motif with the Mennonites as with the Amish - it would be strange if it were otherwise given the religious connotations of the motif and the strength of the image in Fraktur. The earliest Star pattern quilt extant is a Variable Star, circa 1850. These patterns may successfully be constructed from scrap fabrics - which may be significant given their popularity and injunctions concerning pride. More

intricate patterns using small pieces with sharp pattern points needed both finer fabrics, which arrived with the advent of cheap cottons, and increased 'leisure' hours in 'mechanised' churches in which to piece them. The 'Carpenters Star' quilt [fig.97] is a modern example of this trend. Though firmly rooted in the Mennonite colour ethos, in using purpose bought fabrics it contravenes traditional Mennonite frugality



Fig.98 Jacob's Ladder. Mornington Township, Perth County, Ontario, Canada. c.1936-7. made by Lydia [Natziger] Jantz for her son who married in 1937. Cotton sateen, twill and plain weave wools. Back is printed cotton turned over to form binding. 72" x 84". Private Collection.

Friendship Quilts and Friendship Knots are relatively common among Mennonites. This is perhaps indicative of their greater associations with the 'World' and in particular other plain groups such as the Quakers, amongst whom the form was especially popular. These quilts would commemorate special occasions such as baptisms. This is an occasion that in the Amish community would be marked by a change of dress, but in a community that lacks such exact indicators of status there is a need to find another form of expression to mark a rite of passage.

Jacob's Ladder [fig.98] is a pattern particularly favoured by the Mennonites. Compare this quilt with Amish examples. The name originated in New England and is pre-revolutionary. It has many other names across the United States, most of which refer to travel in some form or another. The Mennonite name is the only Biblical version of the name. Another biblically named pattern is Joseph's Coat [fig.99]. This is a rare pattern among the Amish but is favoured by Mennonites for its Biblical connotations.

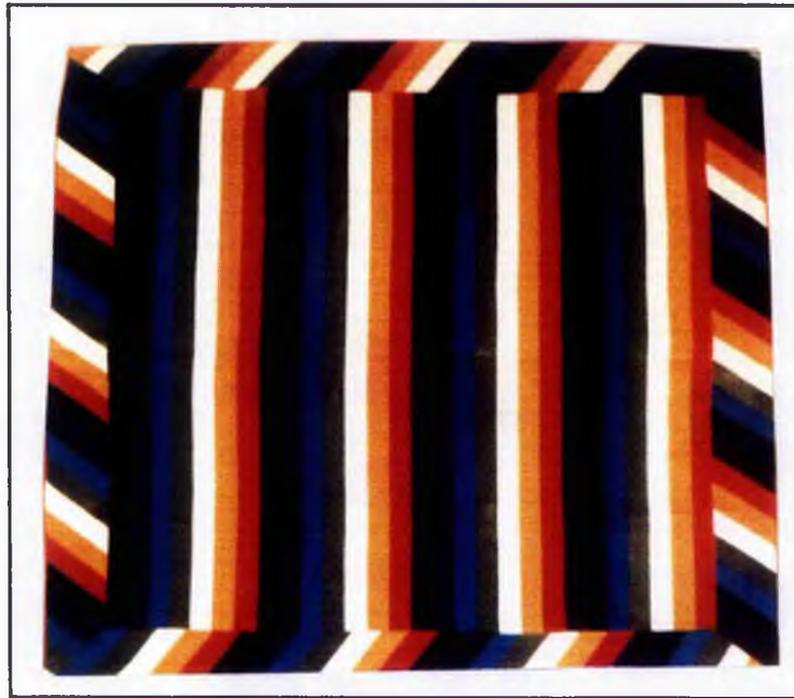


Fig.99. Joseph's Coat quilt. Made for a boy named Joseph by his mother. Lititz, Lancaster Co. PA.. 1890. 76" x 80" Coll. M.Finkel & Daughters.

Not surprisingly, given both their frugality and the rural lifestyle of the early emigrants, Log Cabin quilts and the patterns variants are well represented in the Mennonite oeuvre. The General Conference standard Barn Raising quilt [fig.100] is particularly 'Liberal Mennonite' in comparison to the Pennsylvania version [fig.101] which shows more sympathy with Old Order uses of colour and pattern. All these may be compared to Amish examples in Chapter Eight.

Nine-Patch quilts are favoured by Mennonites since the pattern answers the demands of humility and utility. Certain variations of the pattern are

closely linked to particular communities: evidence not only of the close-knit nature of Mennonite communities notwithstanding their links with mainstream culture, but that quilts are seen as a traditional bond between community members. In this it is possible to see echoes of traditional European peasant practices of identifying particular villages and regions with certain costume forms or colours.²⁵ A particularly interesting quilt from one of the more conservative Mennonite churches of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania [fig.102] is given a Mennonite 'twist' in that the patches are made up from Log Cabin blocks.



Fig.100. Log Cabin, Barn Raising variation. c.1913. Cotton, 72" x 82". Made by Sara Duerksen and Marie Dirksen Nickel, General Conference Mennonite.

This use of the quilt as a 'bonding tool' is also seen in the prevalence with which Presentation Quilts were made for Pastors moving from one congregation to another. They are also used to celebrate anniversaries and similar occasions, a practice that has parallels among other sectarian communities such as the Quakers. While the Mennonites have evolved a written culture, the strength of their traditional practices are such that these textiles

are yet used as an historical document.

Further evidence of the lingering importance of ethnic symbolic traditions among Mennonite groups is the prevalence of Rose and Waterlily appliqué patterns on Russian Mennonite wedding quilts. These patterns are linked quite specifically to quilts of this type and show, if not a symbolism in the Anabaptist tradition, most certainly the importance of a visual symbolism tradition *per se*.

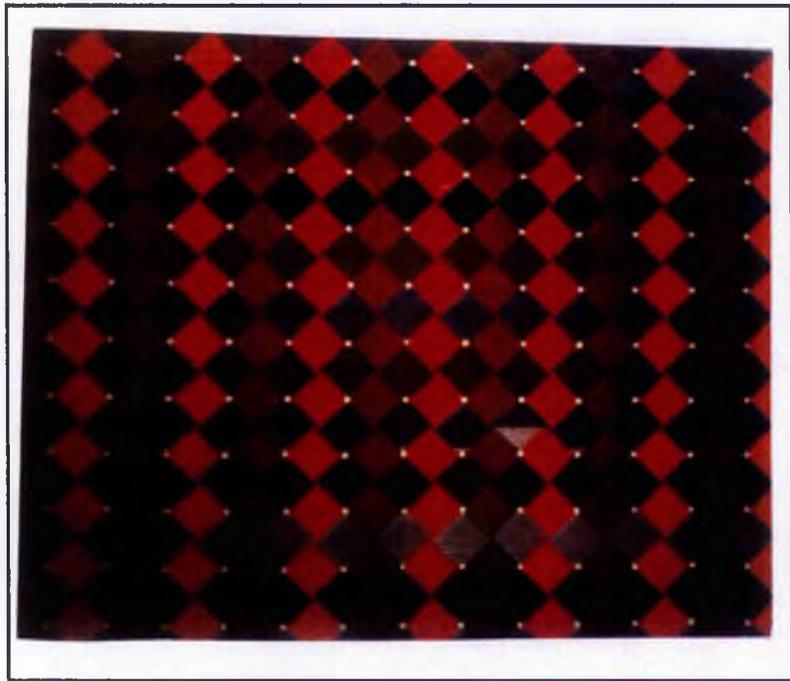


Fig.101. Log Cabin, Spools variation. c.1880. Pennsylvania, 87" x 72". Coll. George E. Schoelkopf Gallery.

Patterns such as Trip Around the World have a cultural significance to the Amish are also used by Mennonite quilters. In this case the pattern is more probably chosen for its place within the Plain tradition, rather than because of its associations since marriage practices are different between the two sects.

The Mennonite belief that agricultural work was instituted by God, and consequently that all things natural are close to Him, makes the predominant choice of naturalistic motifs for quilting motifs especially appropriate. This is in contrast to Amish practice, where, with their greater emphasis on the

avoidance of icons, geometric patterns are the norm. The sunflower, [fig.102] the State Flower of Kansas, where many settled, is common as a quilted motif in that area. It is an important inclusion in that it shows that Mennonites are more ready to adopt 'Worldly' symbols so long as they meet with their main doctrinal requirements. More recent examples of Mennonite work are beginning to favour a wheatsheaf surrounded by a border of wheatears: again a motif appropriate to the area.



Fig. 102. Log Cabin /Nine patch quilt Lancaster Co. PA. Unattributed. Private Collection.

DRESS

The same diverse group of factors that shaped Mennonite textile production, may be observed in their costume.

Factual evidence for the costume of late seventeenth century Franconia Mennonites in America is scant. However, the few references to the costume of their forebears in Europe are most significant in terms of this study, for Menno Simons himself identified the wearing of plain dress as a form of

witnessing. He deemed Plain dress appropriate for men of his persuasion. He wrote of religious hypocrites in the *True Christian Faith* of 1541 as men who:

"...say that they believe, and yet alas, there are no limits or bonds to their accursed haughtiness, foolish pride or pomp; they parade in silks, velvet, costly clothes, gold rings, chains, silver belts, pins and buttons, curiously adorned shirts, shawls, collars, veils, aprons, velvet shoes, slippers and such like foolish finery." 26

Simons clearly and unequivocally makes the link between sectarian religious belief, its moral and doctrinal precepts, and outward form. The Rembrandt portraits of Cornelius Claesz Anslo, and his wife, dated 1641, [fig.90] depict the Minister and his wife wearing conservative forms of prevailing costume. Small ruffs about their necks, which while not confined to Mennonites alone at this period, were nevertheless the hallmark of the middle-rank conservative.

By 1683, Plain dress had evidently become the norm for a Swiss Reformed minister described Mennonite dress as: "...simple clothes, [they] do not wear a collar about the neck, nor adorn themselves with lace and ruffles or anything that might savour of pride or extravagance..."²⁷ Though collarless, some Mennonite men, in common with the Amish, wore the neck cloth known as the Halsduch. This served to cover the neck. As a counter to any decorative effect the ends were usually tucked inside the shirt. As a mark of the longevity of many items of plain dress, the Halsduch lingered in the Mennonite wardrobe until after the American Civil War. The modern bow tie is a lineal descendant of the Halsduch and is occasionally seen in some Mennonite churches though by the twentieth century ties of any sort were generally considered an unnecessary affectation. If worn in youth, items of this type are discarded on baptism when the individual makes full acknowledgement of the Rule and Truth of Mennonite doctrine. The Diary of Preacher Jacob Bower Mensch of the Skippack Congregation records the concern of the Conference of May 6, 1880:

It was also presented that when members through baptism are received the

*resolutions of Conference are to be clearly explained that they shall lay away [those things] that identify them with the World so that they may be a light to the World.*²⁸

Through such statements witnessing through dress can be seen to have been an important part of faith from the very inception of the movement.

Many of the first settlers of Germantown, Pennsylvania, were Mennonites and *Watsons Annals*, written around 1683 tell us that at that time the women went to church in short gowns and petticoats, and with check or white linen aprons. The young men were clean shaven and wore white caps. In summer they went without coats and wore striped homespun trousers. Unusually, for a Plain sect, the older men wore wigs.²⁹

That the Lancaster Mennonite pioneers dressed differently from the average Pennsylvania-German settler is confirmed by Daniel Rupp.³⁰ Rupp recorded that in 1727 Governor Gordon received complaint "that a large number of Germans, peculiar in their dress, religion, and notions of political Governments, had settled on Pequea..." It is of course possible to make too much of the charge that these Germans were "peculiar in their dress," but it reinforces the belief that the Palatine and Swiss Mennonites did have clothing regulations of whatever sort when they came to Pennsylvania.

In the early part of the Colonial period the men wore dark frock coats and knee breeches, and broad brimmed black hats. In 1772 the Franconia Congregation alms book records the purchase of two yards of material to make long trousers for one Isaac Gross.³¹ This indicates that if, as seems most probable, Isaac Gross were a Mennonite, then the sect had adopted long trousers by that date. In line with other Plain sects, the Mennonites consider long trousers to be more modest than breeches that display a mans legs. Almost certainly they were of the broadfall type, a traditional European pattern that has remained in favour with the most conservative Plain groups to the present day.

Mennonites being generally one of the more liberal Plain churches, we

might expect to see some variation in practice in this regard between churches and periods. Wenger Mennonites demonstrate this, only wearing broadtail trousers if they are married, and then only at church, whereas Ministers wear them all the time, having a 'purer,' Plainer, position to uphold. As such this most pedestrian of garments can be seen as a cultural and social symbol, a visual form integral to the structure of that society. Details of cut vary as one might expect: by the end of the nineteenth century designs, by and large, were in step with those current in the World, though superfluous details such as cuffs were frowned upon.

Examples of Mennonite clothing show that there was no enforced uniformity between different Mennonite communities. This diversity has remained a hall-mark of the sect, and in many ways parallels Quaker practice. Witnessing was, and is, fundamental to the sect, but to the Mennonites what is particularly important is that like minded people used similar forms to express their cohesiveness and bear witness to the World of their shared faith.

Mennonite doctrine is not as overtly concerned with modesty in women's dress as is the Amish *Ordnung*, but the basic premise is as strongly enforced. During the Directoire period shawls as fashionable as those of the World were worn, but around 1870 when the World started to discard the shawl as the usual form of outside wear the Mennonites recognised its usefulness as a modest covering and retained it. The shawl was allowed a considerable degree of decorative licence, and photographs and examples show shawls of white embroidered muslin, paisley cashmere, white silk and blue and yellow patterned stripes. In 1900 a form of the shawl which was the fashion in 1800 became standardised Mennonite wear.

Though always conforming to the tenets of humility and modesty, women's dresses broadly followed mainstream fashions, with colour and cut varying according to the conservative or liberal position of the particular

church. Women's dress amongst the conservative Altkolonier Mennonites, is not dissimilar to that of the more liberal Amish [fig.103] being collarless, long sleeved, full skirted and hemmed just below the calf. In accordance with Plain doctrine it has no buttons or zippers, but is cut in one piece with overlapping front panels which are closed with hooks or ties.



Fig.103. Sketch of a typical Altkolonier Mennonite woman, c.1950 - present day.

With a more liberal tradition than many Plain sects, the Mennonites experienced difficulty during the nineteenth century in keeping within the Plain tradition, and found it necessary to redefine the limits of doctrinally sound behaviour. Increased spirituality and the stated desire to conform to church standards became a Franconia Conference Mennonite tradition. The results of this movement are recalled in Wenger's *History of the Franconia Conference, 1830-1930*. Over fifty rulings of the Bishops are noted, of which the following

appertain to dress:

1. Conference reaffirms an earlier resolution that the sisters shall wear caps (devotional headcoverings based on Corinthians II) in the meeting.
2. The brethren shall be warned against the wearing of beards...as the World has them...
4. It is not appropriate for the sisters to wear gold, etc.
5. The church members shall not dress their children so 'stylishly'.

The Resolution adopted for May 7, 1908 contained the regulation that:

The Brethren and Sisters be required to submit themselves to the teachings of God's Word according to I Timothy 2: 8,9 and Peter 3: 3,4 and further that none will be received into the church wearing fashionable clothing or gold for adornment, or women wearing hats.

In October that year the wearing of a hat became a test of membership, with the Resolution that:

Sisters wearing hats are requested to dispense with them before Spring Communion and instead wear a plain protective covering. All complying with the foregoing resolution will be recognised as members of the Church.

Bonnets were thereafter accepted as something worn to Church to protect the prayer veiling [fig.104] and removed on arrival. Whether or not they were then placed in a hat-box was a matter for the individual church meeting.

The injunction against jewellery has always been one of the most easily enforced amongst Plain sects, offending as it does on several levels. However, it is symptomatic of the symbolic power of visual forms that the Evangelical Mennonite and Defenceless Mennonite Church of North America do condone the use of wedding rings. They believe that the rings symbolic value outweighs any possible disadvantages of pride or ostentation.

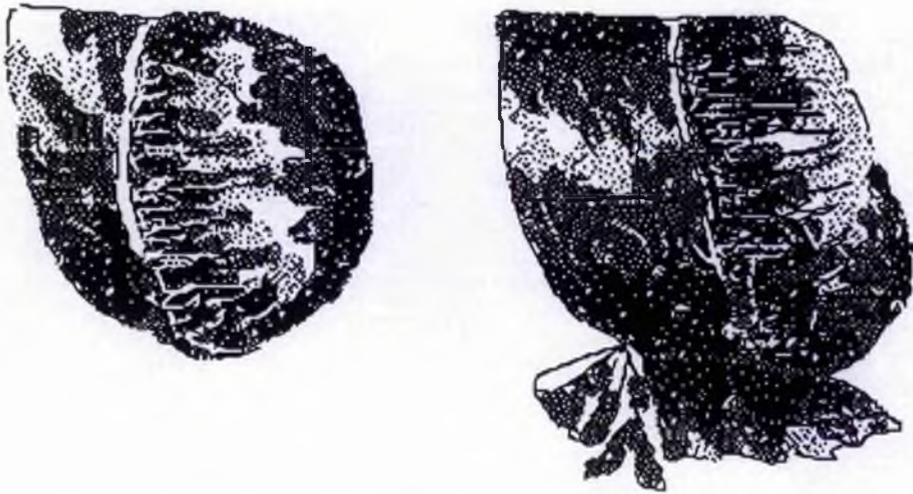


Fig.104. Sketch of eastern Pennsylvania Conservative Mennonite Bonnets, of type illustrated in 1954 catalogue of the Hager Co. of Lancaster PA.

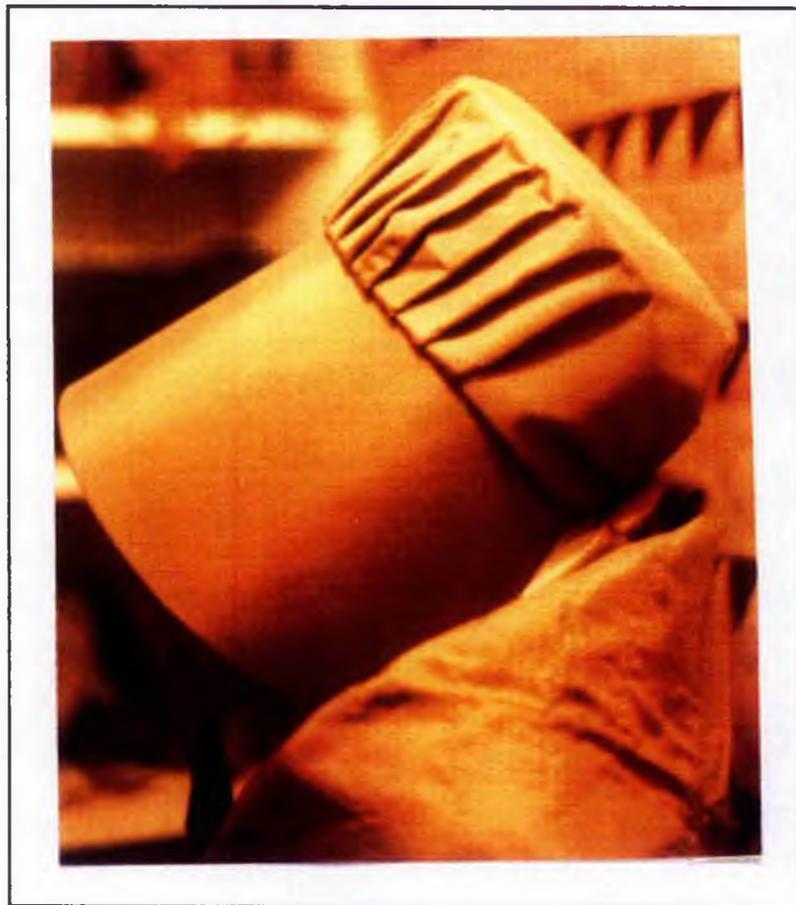


Fig.105. Quaker bonnet of the type favoured by Mennonites c.1800. Coll. Chester County Historical Society. NJ.

The second part of the ordinance specifically singles out hats as an item for censure. Hats, as opposed to the prayer veiling or cap, have seemingly

always retained a high profile in the Plain dress debate. The bonnet initially favoured by Mennonites was introduced into Pennsylvania about 1798 when Martha Routh, an English Quaker preacher, visited the Goshen Quaker meeting in Chester County. Her bonnet attracted widespread attention and was subsequently copied by other Quakers and Plain sects such as the Brethren in Christ [fig.105]. At this period Philadelphia Quakers and Franconia Conference Mennonites were closely associated, and congregational records show that Quakers preached in Mennonite churches: a cultural tie that strengthens evidence for their shared positions on witnessing. The bonnet, having no scriptural precedent, was never regarded as an essential part of Mennonites women's clothing and some women continued to wear plain versions of hats and hoods similar to those worn by other rural women. That the Plainer Mennonites disapproved is evidenced in that Mrs Samuel Lapp, wife of Deacon Samuel W. Lapp (1833-1926) of the Lexington congregation, is supposed never to have worn a bonnet.

Several elderly people remember the prevalence of 'Worldly' hats worn by Mennonite women at the end of the nineteenth century. John L. Stauffer (born 1888) a former member of the Vincent Congregation in Chester County wrote;

...Remembering as a child..the great majority of the sisters were conformed to the World in wearing hats with ribbons and feathers. The covering was removed at the church house by many and worn by some at all times of worship and by others only at communion time.³²

Similarly, Mrs J Mininger, née Hettie Kulp, born 1874, said that she recalls when she was a girl half the women of the Doylestown congregation (Bucks County) wore hats while the other half wore some fancy type of bonnet.

Mennonites had never previously sought to impose unity of dress as a Witness, but faced with this increasing conformity to Worldly practices and pressures in terms of population expansion, the more conservative Mennonites began to reassess the doctrines of the sect. Cultural forms were

coming under attack and the High German dialect that had previously separated them from the World was gradually falling into disuse as Mennonites mixed more and more with the World. It became more important to retain the tradition of simplicity in dress. Additional pressure in this area was caused by increasing numbers of non-Mennonite immigrants to areas that had previously been dominated by people of German extraction necessitating either further withdrawal or accommodation of mainstream customs. This led to a general hardening of their views concerning dress and this re-evaluation can be seen in unofficial Franconia Mennonite Conference Minutes from 1884 onwards which contain evidence of an increased wish to use dress as a Witness of faith.

Another factor operating on the revival of plain dress may be that faster communications allowed for the spread of fashionable styles on a scale that had previously been impossible. Prior to the last years of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, rural areas of America were subject to a relatively static culture. Mass production made these fashions available to the general public, and Mennonites felt that their principles were under threat. Even the Quakers, who had set the example of simplicity in garb, were gradually leaving the 'plain' fold, and it is possible that this factor may also have influenced the Mennonites to maintain the plain tradition more rigorously.

The increasing ease of travel and communications also led at this time to more regular contact between the eastern conservative groups and the west. The Lancaster Conference Mennonites are closely allied to the Amish of that county who are themselves a conservative sect. Mennonite leaders from other communities visited the Franconia conference. Sunday schools were organised and Mennonites were studying the Bible and becoming more overtly conscious of Biblical teaching regarding modesty and simplicity in dress.

The whole issue of non-conformity threatened the very heart of Mennonite culture, and problems of this nature were deemed important

enough to threaten the status of the individual within the Church. Accordingly the official Franconia Conference Minutes for 1896 stated that:

"Sisters who are accustomed to wear hats are required to dispense with them before spring communion and instead to wear the plain protective covering. All complying with the foregoing resolution will be recognised as Brethren and Sisters in the Church.

The term 'plain protective covering' meant the Plain bonnet [fig.104]: those that did not wear it would be deemed to have left the Church, such was the new symbolic significance of outward witnessing to the sect. This was the first time that the church made the wearing of an item of dress other than the prayer veiling a requirement for communion and its importance in terms of faith and form within the Mennonite church cannot be stressed too highly.

This edict became the basis for a Plain revival movement in the Franconia conference between 1900 and 1920. The movement sought to maintain extreme simplicity in dress. In his efforts to promote Plain dress Bishop Daniel Kauffman appealed to the Mennonite sense of tradition, calling on the examples of their Anabaptist forefathers and of the Bible. "If we as a church wish to remain a plain church, the only course open to us is that of adhering strictly to the teachings of God's Word and discipline the Church accordingly. Compromise now" he argued "means surrender later on." ³³ The evangelistic nature of this appeal promoted the idea of uniformity of dress and renewed the connection in the minds of many that an individual's degree of spirituality was directly connected to the degree to which they adopted Plain dress forms. The case for Witnessing could not be more clearly defined.

As a result of these pressures between 1900-1940 bonnets in most Mennonite churches were plain and large. The size of the bonnet was as significant for the Mennonites as it had been for other Plain sects. The larger the bonnet, the more it conformed with the demands of doctrine that clothing promote, humility and modesty, covering a womans hair and hiding her face. The large bonnet was also more obviously useful as cultural identifier. Strict

uniformity was never achieved and variations in the size of the brim, crown and neck cape differentiated between Conferences.

The *Rules and Discipline* of the Franconia Conference, July 1933, reiterated the basic importance of the biblical teachings concerning pride and humility, and related these articles of faith to contemporary practice;

1X Apparel:

1. *The members are admonished to wear the plain clothing.*
2. *Members are required to submit themselves to the teachings of Gods Word according to 1 Tim , 2: 8,9. and 1 Peter 3; 3,4. and further that sisters shall not wear hats, fashionable clothing, or gold for adornment. They shall wear the plain devotional covering and use the strings for tying and not for ornament. Parents are to dress their children as becometh their faith, not follow the World in the cutting of their hair, wearing of jewellery, etc.*
3. *Conference agreed that members should be admonished relative to the dress question in public and privately (Acts 20;20) and after sufficient teaching and admonition if they would not comply, would have to be rejected, Titus 8;10 (Oct.4, 1928).*

The last article is especially important as the non-observance of the strict Meidung, or shunning, was the catalyst to the original split between the Amish and Mennonite churches. Following this division the Mennonite church has split over twenty-five times within its main body, the causes of a number of which were Plain dress. Each group resulting from the schism has its own slightly divergent views on plainness and non-conformity.³⁴



Fig.106. Jacob Zeigler Kolb family [1832-1919]. Waterloo County, Ontario. Probably taken in 1887. J.Z.Kolb [bottom centre] was a deacon in the Mennonite Church. Note the beard and collarless, single-breasted coat, the absence of prayer veilings of the women, the cape worn by Mrs Kolb [seated second right] and the white neck band: an item required y some conservative churches at that period. Coll. Pheobe Ann Kolb, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

As with most religious revivals, once the threat that had caused the initial fervour had been combated, life settled back into its normal pattern and once more bonnets became subject to the demands of prevailing mainstream fashion. Smaller hats in the World were echoed by smaller bonnets, buckram was replaced with wire, and gradually softer forms crept into use until some Mennonites were wearing 'Worldly' toques between 1935-45. Concern was once again expressed and in 1946 the Franconia Conference sat in session to determine guidelines concerning all matters of dress and personal appearance. They declared that the 'stiff bonnet' was the only form acceptable, prohibiting "bandannas, soft-turban type head-gear, hats or other fashionable head-gear, except plain warm head-gear for extreme cold weather."³⁵

Eighthy Mennonites also wear these scarves which have clear parallels among the Shakers and the Amish. Either rectangular or three-cornered, they were generally adopted on baptism, and certainly after marriage. Altkolonier girls wear white versions and married women, black. The scarves' function is therefore twofold - both a matter of religious doctrinal observance and a social symbol, signifying both church and social status.

The role of traditional clothing forms were reassessed and the Conference recommended the reintroduction for women of the three cornered scarf, or cape [fig.106]. Jacob Brubacher, a Mennonite bishop, stated that women should wear "The cape to cover the bosom [and] the apron to cover the abdomen."³⁶ This decision could not be made unilaterally, but other conservative Mennonite churches who were in sympathy with their views also adopted it.

In 1942 the Conference issued a leaflet that urged members to adopt the dress with a cape attached, in form very similar to that of the Shakers and Amish. However, since 1947 the Conference has abandoned hopes of achieving an uniformity across all churches and now simply seeks to promote dress based on scriptural principals. Many Mennonite churches, including those affiliated to the Franconia conference, see the symbolic importance of clothing items as a more important Witness than adherence to any particular form with concomitant peculiarity. Accordingly, calico scarves, often of the same material as the dress, are accepted wear.

Though late nineteenth century Mennonite male coats and shirts differed little in essentials from mainstream forms, they avoided the more 'dashing' details such as turn-ups on trousers, two colour lapels and superfluous buttons. The reformist moves of the first years of the twentieth century revived the lapel-less 'sack' coat jacket of colonial cut. For a period non-conformity became the watchword of all but the most liberal churches, before once more succumbing to concerns over 'peculiarity'. Regional differences are

still seen to operate on the dress of the various Conferences and western Mennonites were generally stricter, wearing neither cuffs nor ties. The latter part of the twentieth century has seen specifically Plain dress for men confined solely to the Minister. He alone still wears the single breasted 'plain' coat with a small upstanding collar that does not meet in front [fig.107].

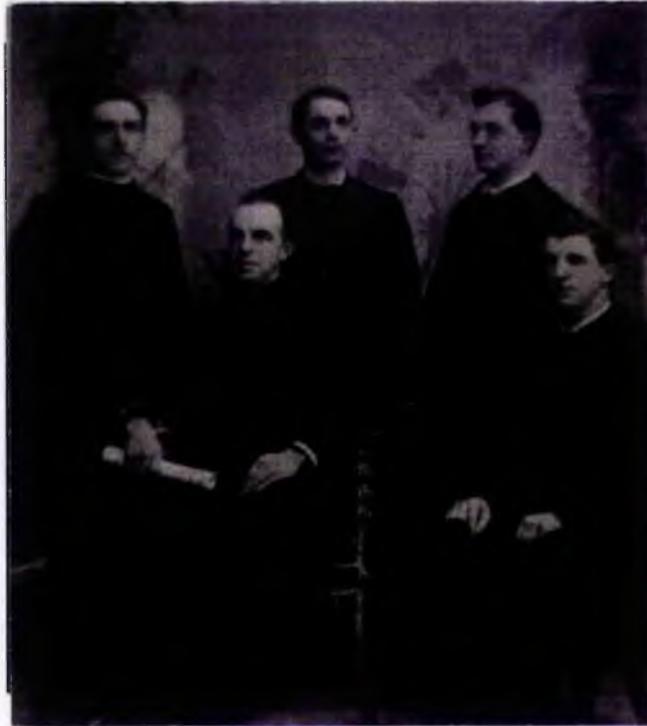


Fig107. Mennonite group, Elkhart Indiana. c.1895. Coll. Church Archives.

PRAYER VEILING

The symbolic function of the Prayer Veiling, [fig.108] is something on which all Mennonites are in doctrinal agreement, and so may be seen as a core part of their Witness. The practice is based on I Corinthians 11: 4-16, *And for a woman to pray or prophesy with her head uncovered shows disrespect for the head; it is exactly the same as if she had her hair shaved off. Indeed, if a woman goes without a veil, she should have her hair cut off too; but if it is a shameful thing for a woman to have her hair cut of or shaved off, then she should wear a veil....woman came from man..[so]...it is right for a woman to wear on her head a sign of authority over her...does not nature itself teach that ...when a woman has long hair it is her glory?*³⁷

Mary Evans³⁸ has researched the dress regulations of the Swiss Reformed church of Basle, Bern and Zurich in the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries. These order that women were to wear a Tuechli,

described as a white head-dress, to services. About 1755 the white version of the Tuechli, was gradually displaced by black gauze or taffeta in response to contemporary mainstream fashion: evidence that to the Mennonites *principle* is more important than *form* - to remain non-conformed was more important than to retain the form of an item for the sake of tradition.

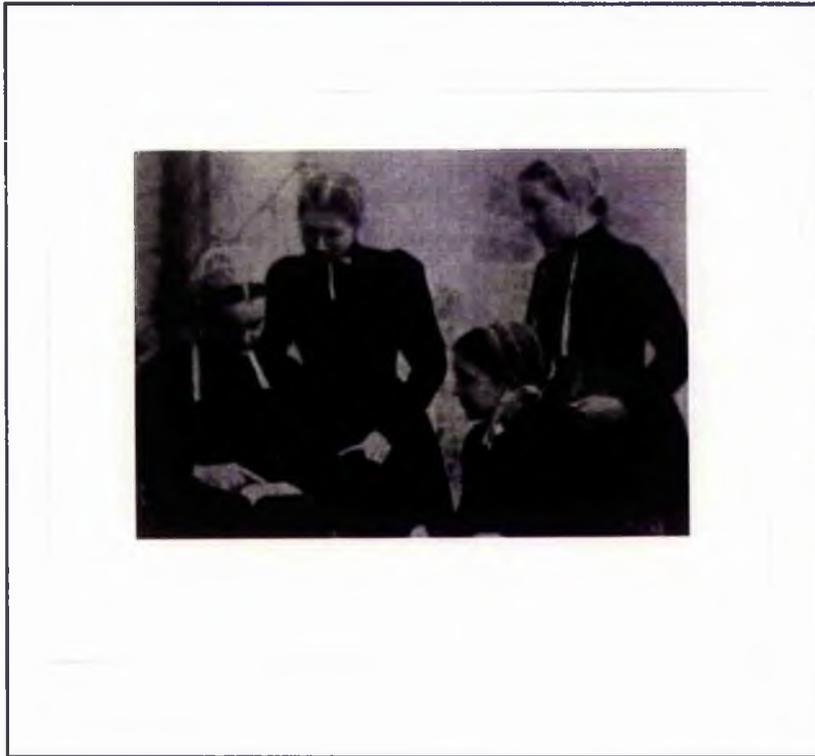


Fig.108 Group wearing the Prayer Veiling, Elkhart, Indiana, c.1895. Coll. Church archives.

The Teuchli or 'prayer veiling', did not become an 'issue' among Mennonites until women of liberal conferences began to adopt prevailing styles of head-dress in America in the late nineteenth century. This included the laying aside of the cap for normal wear. It was then, around 1896, that the Mennonite leaders, among whom John S. Coffman was prominent, remained the sect of the doctrinal significance of women keeping their heads covered. Wearing a cap is sanctioned in Paul's teaching to the church at Corinth in I Corinthians 11:5; "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head". Thus, in the early Christian church that the Mennonites sought to emulate, every baptised woman would have worn a

'prayer veiling'. The prayer veiling is thus symbolic, and regarded as exhibiting and symbolising the Truth. In consciously reaffirming the symbolic principles of their faith through the adoption of the 'veiling', the Mennonites were in accord with the Lutheran, Reformed, and Quaker women of the era.

As a result, from about 1870-1890 certain groups developed special devotional caps, trimmed with ribbon and lace and wired into shape, and kept in a box at the church. An ordinary, Plain, cap was worn to the church and replaced by these elegant confections for the duration of the service. The hat boxes that contained these caps were often highly decorative and kept on special shelves in the vestibule of the church. Not surprisingly Conference minutes objected to this practice as early as October 1892, on the grounds of its encouraging Pride. From then until 1910 the practice declined, if slowly. Jacob Bower Mensch's diary of the Conference for 1882, records for the 4th May how:

It was lamented...that everything is beginning to get so high in pride and in following the example of the World occupies so much place at this time, not only in the putting on of clothing...and the seriousness of it all being covered and it leading to condemnation on the broad road that leads to destruction, so it is required or demanded of each minister to present to his congregation rightly that the members take their responsibility seriously for their children, and the ministers shall themselves refrain from being like the World and the brethren and sisters shall not raise their children in pride and fashion and in conformity with the World...



Fig. 109. Illustration of typical form of modern Teuchli or Prayer Veiling.

In this as in many other things among the Mennonites, scriptural intent rather than *form* is of primary importance, and while most modern Mennonites wear a small white net cap, its basic shape, size and material is not inalienable. Around the turn of the nineteenth century the majority of churches sanctioned caps with square corners and black ribbons. These were subsequently replaced with white ribbons which tied at the back. Slowly it became smaller and acquired rounded corners, which feature increased until the modern period when it is generally oval in shape and ribbonless [fig.109]. However, Mennonite practice is never uniform and Altkolonier headcoverings, when worn, are small head scarves, in the manner of the Hutterites, but almost always of a solid colour. Colour is less strongly associated with marital status in this group than in Old Order sects. Practice in Argentina differs again in that the cap is absent and replaced with a black veil. The same passage from Corinthians, verses 2-16 also reinforces the veil as a symbol of the headship of man.

SUMMARY

As a sect the Mennonites are probably all the stronger for their disperateness. Differences in doctrinal interpretation do not lead to heresy and diffusion as in the modern Catholic or Protestant churches, for the unifying doctrines are strong enough to ensure cohesion. Yet such schism demonstrates the considerable tensions within the Mennonite church. As a 'restorationist' group they sought to recreate the early apostolic church. As 'biblicists' they attempted to draw on the bible as a source of sanction. However, since they did not wholly embrace the concept of non-conformity and withdrawal from the World, they have found it difficult to maintain the outward forms of their faith. Churches that recognise a doctrinal affinity with each other now maintain their position by frequent visiting between ministers who are thus able to monitor, and stop, potentially schismatic practices.

The injunction in Hebrews 13:17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with pride; for that is unprofitable for you" is observed. The exchange of 'Church Disciplines' is another tool to limit diffusion. Generally these moves have proved successful in 'damage limitation' and while liberal churches have instituted several changes, the conservative Amish-allied groups have retained their customs and discipline with very few changes since 1878.

These points of divergence, such as belief in non-conformity, since they neither practice shunning or have such a strong sense of *gmei* as their Amish neighbours, has resulted in comparatively little pressure on any Mennonite to adhere to uniform rules on dress. Whilst older members of the Mennonite churches adhere to the stricter traditions of their childhood, the young have moved rapidly away from plain dress. Many churches such as the Mennonite Brethren in Christ see it as necessary only to follow a policy of simplicity rather than non-conformity.³⁹ Rationalisations of Mennonite traditions and dress have resulted in the reduction of their costume from the status of symbol to costume history. For many status as a Mennonite, as a member of a religious community has become less important than their status within the wider community. Thus without the support of total-witnessing by a 'withdrawn' society, as is seen among the Amish, those Mennonites that do make Witness through Plain dress are making what is perhaps an even stronger act of faith. It is the relative strength of that faith, the strength of their traditions, rather than the support of the community, of its symbols, that will determine whether the sect will survive.

¹Wenger, *History of the Mennonites*, p.399.

²For an original account of the reasoning see Seeman, *Offenbahrung und Bestrafung* 1697.

³See Venturi, 1948.

⁴See Klassen, *Mennonite Ideals in Art*, Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Conference on Mennonite Cultural problems, North Newton, 1945, pp.135-45. Also *Mennonite Encyclopedia* for fuller listing of Mennonite artists in Prussia, Germany and Russia.

- ⁶ Reprinted in *Schouwtooneel der Martelaren* in Amsterdam, 1738.
- ⁶ See *Mennonite Encyclopaedia* for fuller discussion of Mennonite portraits. p 166.
- ⁷ Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin and etchings in the Art Institute of Chicago and the Fogg Museum of Art at Harvard University.
- ⁸ Lord Penrhyn Collection
- ⁹ Gemalde-Galerie, Cassel, West Germany.
- ¹⁰ Heimsath, pp.88-89.
- ¹¹ Krahn, Op cit., p.34.
- ¹² *Mennonite Encyclopaedia*. Op.Cit.p147.
- ¹³ Smucker, p.18.
- ¹⁴ *Mennonite Encyclopaedia*, Vol.11, Op. cit. pp.220-21.
- ¹⁵ See Borneman, 1937 and Mercer, pp.423-32.
- ¹⁶ Krahn, Cornelius, "Mennonite Church Architecture", *Mennonite Life*, XII Jan, 1957, p.22.
- ¹⁷ Lehigh (General Mennonite Conference.) Schroeder Tomlonson, Op. Cit., quoted p17.
- ¹⁸ From a letter written by Jacob Swartzentruber to Jonas and Joel Bitsche on Dec. 22, 1863. Copy also in the possession of Elmer G.S. Wellman, Iowa. Also from church Minutes kept by Jacob S. from 1862-1868, Gingerich. 1939, p.124.
- ¹⁹ See Ludwig, 1947. Bachman, 1942. Smith, C. Henry, 1929. Stoudt, 1948. Schowalter, Jan. 1952.
- ²⁰ It is possible that the cross-cultural influences of their neighbours on Mennonites may have worked in reverse, for initial observations of nineteenth century quilts from mainstream communities in Indiana exhibit a marked Germanic influence in pattern choice, borders, and colour. See Tulip Appliqué quilt by Mrs Sarah Elma Seachrist Charles, Marion, Indiana, 1859, Plate LXIV et al. Hall and Kresinger, *Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America*.
- ²¹ See Wenger, *Historical and Biblical Position of the Mennonite Church on Attire*, pp. 19-24
- ²² Driver, p.13.
- ²³ Hagers Store, Plain Clothing Dept. Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
- ²⁴ C.1926. Cotton, 84" x 87". Helna Koehn Holdeman, Galvin United Centre, Holdeman Church.
- ²⁵ Snowden, pp.108-9.
- ²⁶ Simons, 1956, p.377.
- ²⁷ Smith, 1941, p.135.
- ²⁸ Trans. from Penn. German by Mrs. Mary Mensch Lederach.
- ²⁹ Cassel, p.432.
- ³⁰ Wenger, *Historical and Biblical Positions*, p.25.
- ³¹ Wenger, *Ibid*, p.26
- ³² Anonymous manuscript in Mennonite Historical Library, Goshen, Indiana.
- ³³ Daniel Kauffman, p.64.
- ³⁴ Coynygham, 1830.
- ³⁵ Official Franconia Conference Minutes, 1946.
- ³⁶ Eli Wenger, p.88.
- ³⁷ *New Jerusalem Bible*.
- ³⁸ Evans, Mary, p.178
- ³⁹ Gingerich, p.169.

CONCLUSION

'What no eye has seen and no ear has heard, what the mind of man cannot visualise; all that God has prepared for those who love him.'

Corinthians 2, 9-10.

This thesis set out to explore the concept that sectarian textiles are not just the result of whim, or the clothing of America's religious sects anachronistic coverings that merely keep out the cold. Rather it postulated the idea that sectarian costume and textiles are a visual embodiment of the doctrine that created them, a witness to faith. By extension, it should be possible to predict appearance by knowing the theology of the sect.

While the predicated relationship has, I trust, been proved in essence, it also clear that, like most things, the issue is not black or white. Instead of a single mechanism of cause and effect, there *was* a complex net of inter-related doctrines, politics and economics. Where doctrinal unity was assumed, the reality was schism and mysticism, where logic was expected, human nature intervened.

This research also made the assumption that many of these textiles, quilts in particular, could be recognised as 'art' in a classical sense: a concept which was subsequently revealed as an irrelevancy. Despite the European antecedents of the sects, traditional western conceptions of art are not concerns that the creators recognise; consequently such alien parameters are inappropriate measures.

It is has also become evident that while each sect has ~~its~~ historical base in the Reformed tradition of the Continent, each was subsequently significantly affected by other factors later in their history. The radicalism of Wycliffe and the Lollard tradition of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was, for

example, a significant factor in Puritanism. They and their lineal descendants, the Quakers, are thus subject to slightly different forces than the Amish/Mennonite sects. This tradition of strict Christian morality and separation from the dynamics of the World has, in the past, been seen as creating an emotional vacuum, which, allied with a distrust of sensual pleasures, inhibited the mental and spiritual freedom required for creative art. With this burden and the legacy of Calvinism, the impact on art of Puritanism was considered to be mainly negative. Were we to accept this evaluation then art and faith would appear mutually exclusive and one would have to extend the argument to deny the talent of visionary painters such as William Blake, Samuel Palmer, John Linell or Henri Fuseli: quite apart from the more orthodox faith and work of such as Giovanni Bellini, Raphael or Michaelangelo. Such a summation is clearly inconsistent with reality, so it has become necessary to re-evaluate the creativity of a faith on its own terms, rather than those of later cultures.

The assertion that textiles such as the 'classical' Amish quilt can be a powerful explanation of the mystic, religious, experience of the creator may then be proved valid. The symbolic language may be different to that of the Sistine Chapel, but each is an expression of their particular faiths. What makes either work worthy of recognition, technical considerations apart, is that the concepts expressed were, and continue to be, of importance, not just to certain individuals, but to mankind.

While it is true that the Protestant-aligned churches of the seventeenth century lacked the focus for patronage enjoyed by the Catholic church, I would suggest that the reason for this is less a fear of iconography *per se* than a fear of a weakness of faith. After all, one is less likely to succumb to temptation if you do not have to face it. Symbolic expression, whether abstract or figurative, responds to, and fulfils, an innate human need to represent their place within the scheme of existence. When the faith is strong,

from the smallest child to the most venerable church member, each believer is not just touched by, but subsumed within, the 'creative output' of their belief.

It has also become evident that Plain dress is not the result of costume being disregarded by an unworldly people: quite the converse. Clothing is demonstrably a primary form of communication both within the sect and with the outside World: for the Amish it is the only communication that they might wish to have, and symbolises a sectarian bastion against besieging secular forces.

The evidence has shown that the major doctrinal issues which determine the innate nature of the sects are fourfold.

- Iconography
- Non-Conformity
- Pride and the converse
- Bearing Witness

These 'umbrellas' cover a number of inter-related doctrinal subdivisions. Pride, for example, includes issues such as head coverings for women, humility, modesty, prayer veiling, shunning, peculiarity, vice, impurity, greed etc. Pride, is also a sin which according to Colossians 3 is the same as worshipping a false God, and thus linked to iconography.

These spiritual values have proved subject to external forces and particular combinations of these affected the way in which groups Witnessed their faith and shaped their destinies. Replicated values, patterns and costume elements can thus be seen as the result of shared doctrines: dissimilarities as the result of differences of doctrinal interpretation and ethnic heritage.

No one doctrine or external factor has shown itself to be the quintessential determinant of faith, yet the response to the doctrine of non-conformity, in its interaction with other doctrines, does appear to be 'super-

significant' in both the formation and the survival of the 'aesthetic' of each sect.

Puritan non-conformity, or rather its increasing non-observance, has been revealed as a causal factor in the demise of the sect in the New World. Their efforts to emulate the Apostolic church never involved true 'psychic' separation from the World in the manner of the Amish, and nor did it involve any degree of significant physical separation. In England, Anne Hutchinson, devoted Parliamentarian though she was, recognised that for many non-conformist Witness had been politically motivated:

When Puritanism grew into a faction the zealots distinguished themselves, both men and women, by several affections of hat...embracing ...sobriety in all those things had been most commendable in them; but their quick forsaking of those things [later]...showed that they either never took them up for conscience sake or were corrupted by their prosperity to take up those vain things they durst not practice under persecution.¹

In America the sect was more 'doctrinally' motivated, but their creed demanded that they take personal responsibility for their salvation, which meant that community cohesiveness was less important, weakening their position when the sect was under pressure. Moreover their fear of iconoclasm precluded a significant *symbolic* system of support beyond the bonding available through Witnessing. These factors, added to their economic basis demanded that they live within the World. These combined factors determined both the form and subsequent fate of the sect.

Though the dominant political force, by the middle of the seventeenth century the Massachusetts Puritans were physically in the minority. Membership of the Second Covenant was not universal even within the ranks of the first settlers and strict doctrinal teachings were gradually tempered by works such as William Perkin's *A Cloud of Faithful Witnesses Lauding the Way to the Heavenly Kingdom*,² which used Biblical precedent to illustrate that faith did not exclude the possibility of worldly success. The Puritan oligarchy found it impossible to legislate for a dominant faith.³ This increasingly

conformist society gave rise to the so-called Half-way Covenant of 1662 which gave limited membership to the non-elect and changed the underlying structure of the sect. But the nature of the Puritan code must also have been self-defeating. In a cloistered community the everlasting strain of self-analysis, the constant searching of conscience, may perhaps be maintained, but not in the bustling streets of Plimoth or Boston .

The Massachusetts Bay Charter of 1684 heralded the decline of Congregational dominance, and the new Charter of 1691, making Massachusetts a Royal Colony, further undermined Puritan church power in that voting privileges, once the prerogative of church membership, were now determined through land ownership. The State, for the first time, enjoyed an existence separate to that of the Church. This was the most important difference between the Puritans and the other sects in our study. People's lives were compartmentalised and personal faith was open to change in a way not possible in, for example, the Amish church, where everyday life is also worship. Rationality and evangelism jointly sought the disestablishment of religion. The Great Awakening of 1740-41 was the final overwhelming challenge to Puritan theology in America.

Religious sects in the New World of the eighteenth century thus faced one of two choices: either to move within the mainstream Protestant/Anglican society and, whilst keeping their faith, operate as full members of that society, or form a closed order. While the Puritans had espoused non-conformity, iconoclasm, humility, they had been strong enough to change the course of history and found a new country; by rejecting those same tenets their chance to create 'God's Country' had been lost.

Quaker history was subject to very much the same tensions, but a difference in doctrinal emphasis allowed the sect to assimilate changes in society in a more positive way. They had not travelled to the New World as an integrated and closed society and neither had their persecution been hard

enough to bind them in the way that the Amish are bound. Non-conformity remained an intellectual decision rather than an emotional commitment or survival technique.

The 'Elysium fields' of the New World in the late eighteenth century were fast becoming crowded, but the Friends were increasingly unwilling to wholly embrace the path of non-conformity. If, as we have argued, one may see the physical form of objects in terms of the visual expression of faith, then the decline of that faith would also be expressed in the physical attributes of that community. This is borne out in that increased contact with the World and its ways meant departure from the testimony of simplicity. In 1786 Job Scott (1751-1793) found this "especially in Philadelphia, and from thence too much spread in parts around them."⁴

The Friends did not demand conversion⁵ of their neighbours and Yinger's hypothesis⁶ that emotional commitment declines when members are born into a religious group is born out by the testimony of Quaker ministers themselves.⁷ The World also recognised this change within the sect for the American Envoy in London wrote to Friends:

*I admire your Society; the principle contains all of Christianity I have any idea of; but I am sorry to see that some of you are losing your badge, and I do not see how you can retain your principles and forego your little peculiarities, your marks of self denial and difference from the spirit of the world. You are lights; the world should come to you, and not you go to the world. You may gather them, but they will scatter you...*⁸

Witnessing as evidence of inner spirituality became first a matter of debate then a cause of schism. Job Scott thought the non-conformist zeal of Plain Friends misguided:

But Oh, unhappy and deluded people whoever they are, that in their zeal for externals, lose charity. They depart from the life and lay hold of formality: for all outward things in religion dwindle unavoidably into formality, in proportion as charity is departed from, and zeal takes the place in things pertaining to the outside of the cup and platter, without a living sense of the inward spring of life which can never be experienced without living fervent charity...That we may be ever preserved from a narrow, rash censorious spirit; and from over-

*rating any outward regularity or exact living; lest, as we grow in the form we dwindle as to the life.*⁹

Plain Friends such as Isaac Martin, a hatter, suffered in business because he refused to compromise his principles by making fashionable hats for the Ministry and Elders. Martin considered that they should set an example and hoped that: "those in the foremost ranks might keep their garments unspotted from the world - so those who look them for examples, may not be stumbled."¹⁰ Rift within Quaker ranks was irrevocable: the logical and inevitable outcome of shifts in doctrine.

Shakerism, as much because of its monastic element as its doctrine of non-conformity, has been unable to retain its numerical strength, but despite this has lost little of its importance historically or aesthetically.¹¹ Shakerism has been indicted on the score that its severely regulated organisation was not favourable to individual development and that its culture was so limited as to place restrictions upon individual growth and variation. But this is to make unfounded assumptions of the sects' intent: within communistic societies the individual relinquishes autonomy and becomes part of a body whose sole aim is to worship God through their existence.

As a general rule, laws are only framed when there is a perceived need to control existing behaviours. Therefore an increase in laws within a given society may be taken as symptomatic of the growth of undesirable practices. At the beginning of the Shaker movement behavioural legislation was not deemed necessary. Cohesive practice was reached through discussion with other communities. However, the latter years of the eighteenth century saw increased tensions within the Society, with the *Gospel Order* regulations established in 1800 in an effort to combat a period of spiritual disillusionment.

When Barnabas Bates visited New Lebanon in 1832, he found the Shakers "intelligent and well informed, well acquainted [with] passing events in the political and religious world,"¹² a far cry from the people who "knew

nothing of New York, of the United States"¹³ educated only in the "simplicity of the Gospel."¹⁴ The changing economic base of the Shakers required daily contact with the World and a new *Covenant* allowed novice Brethren to live in the World and associate with full members.¹⁵ The pressure of outside competition was increasingly felt and the growing lack of adherence to the *Millennial Laws* of 1845, which were an attempt to enforce the spirituality of the revival of 1837-45, can be taken as a measure of the faith within the Society. The Civil War placed a great strain on the Society as outsiders sought refuge in the Order. Leadership became divided. The *Millennial Laws* were described by many as "stringent", and those that resented their restrictions claimed that, far from being the commands of such as Mother Ann, they were really the work of Joseph Meacham "in many of which he fairly copied the blue laws of Connecticut."¹⁶

The dwindling size of each Family forced the amalgamation of communities and non-conformity became increasingly rhetorical. About 1866, Elder Giles Avery of the Central Ministry wrote in a *Circular Concerning the Dress of Believers*, that the manufacture of cloth had seldom been a source of profit, and advised that the factory at Shakers Society, New Lebanon, "be not rebuilt."¹⁷ Blakeman, justifying this observed that other customs of the sect had been abandoned earlier in the century,

*The work of God is an increasing work...but if we hang on to all the old customs, habits and ways of our Fore-Fathers, how is it to increase? tight breeches, long stockings, shoe and knee buckles, seven inch brim beavers, short gowns &c. have all been done away with, and things more economical and convenient have been adopted in their stead.*¹⁸

The Shaker concept of non-conformity had meant that when necessary they had gone out to the World, leaving their centre 'inviolable' by its concerns. Now it came to them. Though the *Millennial Laws* ruled against the "vain pomps and vanities of the world" and forbade the introduction of anything that had "not been formerly and generally used"¹⁹ the walls of the

'Holy Citadel' had been breached. Meacham felt that they were justified in relying more upon the World but tried to limit the resulting damage to their lives in that: "We have a right to improve the inventions of man, so far as is useful and necessary, but not to vain glory, or anything superfluous."²⁰ Despite such protestations Witnessing continued even further into decline as the nature of the sect changed: as a reflection of faith it could do little else. Isaac Youngs wrote in 1860 how: "The sense is continually aspiring after more, becoming more and more tasty, about clothing, and articles of fancy, the use of colors, of paints, varnish etc. perhaps more than is virtuous or proper."²¹ The problem was noted by others:

*If sacred places are abandoned to secular uses, cumbered with the truck of trade, papers, books, literature of a worldly character, or needless furniture inappropriate to a place of retirement and worship, there is unavoidably added much labor in obtaining, in these retreats, a heavenly, devotional, worshipful spirit; because of the sensitiveness of the human soul to surroundings.*²²

Charles Nordhoff²³ found that membership had fallen by 50% since 1850, that men were outnumbered 2:1, that few of the children taken in by the Shakers stayed into adulthood. Separateness from the world was no longer possible. Orthodoxy in the Society disappeared.²⁴ Of necessity the women had to compete in external markets, producing 'fancy articles' that were sold in community stores and resort hotels.²⁵ 'People [poplar] fancy baskets, furnished baskets, people bail'd boxes, baskets with silk tops, velvet cushions, poppler chests, ribboned cushions, peacock feather hat plumes' were all made at New Lebanon between 1860 and 1871.²⁶



Fig.110. Sewing Room of Church Family, Shaker village of Mount Lebanon, c.1900.

Among the expenses for 1862 are listed quantities of "silk, velvet and sale trimmings" at \$172.20; "velvets and sale trimmings" in 1864 at \$588.60. In 1862 there is a listing of \$119.45 for "Alpacca of all sorts and Marino for gowns". \$588.60 was spent on trimmings.²⁷ Although the Shakers were under instructions not "to supply the whole world with the things of this life"²⁸ their trade with the World increased, and they advertised widely. This was in contravention of the advice to "be not anxious to have your name sounded abroad in the world."²⁹ They even exhibited at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876.³⁰ Their furniture also bore a decorative gilt trademark.³¹ One need only turn to the many photographs of the Shaker Families and individuals taken during this period as witness to the decline in orthodoxy in the movement. [fig.110]

An increasingly elderly population could not find the fervour of their apostolic youth. Charles Robinson wrote of a visit to Canterbury in 1893,

There are about one hundred and fifty members comprising the community in Canterbury. The women outnumber the men considerably, and quite a few of both sexes, being advanced in life, it is not expected that they should take the brunt of the hard work. During the summer months they employ quite a number of hired men to plant the seed and gather the harvest.... There is not a doubt that they stand gravely in want of new and younger converts.³²

This necessitated the hiring of labourers from the outside world due to the shortage of young men, and meant that the idea of "one body, one bread" was no longer possible.³³ Such stylistic awareness of outside forms show that the Society was experiencing doctrinal change.

It is significant that while in hindsight the disintegration of the Society and its adherence to its doctrines at this period is evident, Shakers yet saw their work as expression of their faith. Pre-war furniture had been the visual expression of the belief that "no external exercise can be anything more than an outward expression of an inward spiritual sensation of love and obedience to God,"³⁴ and Shaker goods were still prized and increasingly imitated by other manufacturers. Albert Lomas, complained: "What are goods worth, unless they are full of genuine religion?"³⁵ Modern Shakers though few, are still more numerous than the original followers of Mother Ann and are optimistic for the future, for, they believe, what has been achieved once, can surely be achieved again. The traditions, history and economic climate of these people may be different to those of the first pioneers but their beliefs are just as strong, their faith as certain.

The fragmentation attendant on the lapsing of non-conformist principles is clearly problematic for a sectarian society; the split has introduced a new variable into the overall pattern of belief. There will inevitably come a time when the extremes no longer share any particular belief and new churches, new faiths, will form. Size limitations of individual church districts among the Amish and Shaker communities helped to combat this. Dispersed or large

congregations would necessarily give rise to less harmony, less cohesion and a changing symbolic system.

While very much more successful at defending their society, the consequences of those changes may even be seen in the Amish church. The conservative, 'Old Order' groups have renounced any need for a focus for their worship. 'New Order' adherents have stopped meeting for worship in each others' homes and built churches. This reduces the tight structure of symbolism and aesthetic consciousness formerly expressed through strict Plain dress and the central role of the home, creating a split between worship and daily life. The doctrine of non-conformity, which has been their mainstay, is now challenged.

Such changes are blamed on increasing prosperity, but in truth change has been a constant motif of Amish life. David Beiler wrote in 1864,

I will also tell of the great changes during these sixty years...Whoever has not experienced it himself can scarcely believe it...There was no talk of fine shoes and boots nor did one know anything of light pleasure vehicles in our congregation...At that time there were not such splendid homes and barns, according to the customs of the world, as at present. One was satisfied with dwellings providing for pressing needs.

At that time there was not so much time consumed in sweeping and decorating houses and much simpler home furnishings were sufficient. Spotted dishes were scarce. The spotted and flowered dishes were in the more pretentious homes and were not to be found with those that kept themselves among the more lowly. Sofas and writing desks and bureaus there were none, or rag carpets...I verily believe that, sixty years and more ago, if anyone who wished to be a member of the church and would have dressed and conducted himself in such a fashion as is too much the case today...he would have had to be put out of the church as a disobedient person. ³⁶

But cultural diffusion and a concomitant blurring of aesthetic ideals is clearly taking place. Moves towards conformity are evident in that the Amish now produce quilts to meet public and tourist demands, and in so doing their pattern and colour choices are determined, not by religion, but by market forces. Time for producing quilts for home use is now more limited and while the classic symbolic patterns are still seen, increasing numbers of wholecloth quilts are being made, often quilted in a contrasting thread: a

practice that would formerly have been condemned as encouraging pride. Even the repertoire of pieced patterns is more Worldly and Album quilts and printed fabrics are increasingly acceptable, particularly in areas where there are Mennonite communities. Amish colour schemes are also changing. Brown and tans are not uncommon - previously they would have been reserved for work clothes - and large quantities of white are evident.

However, that the younger generation mainly make quilts for newly-weds and their own dower chests, while the older women work on quilts for sale, suggests that the quilt yet retains its place in Amish culture. The Amish are still the most non-conformist of the sects and, almost by definition, enjoy the strongest symbolic system. Contact with the World is largely controlled through a 'heritage' centre and a few farm visits, with the huge tourist influx to Pennsylvania ignored and endured. The Brethren's attitudes towards the World and its ways have changed relatively little in the last hundred years and this is reflected in the static nature of their Witness.

In many ways Mennonite cultural development is repeating that of the Quakers. Twentieth century revivalist doctrine found many adherents on the eastern side of the United States, but was largely ignored in the liberal mid and western States where Plain dress for men had long been in abeyance. Though moves towards conformity in women's dress were resisted for longer, for many groups the prayer veiling remains the only sign of their Mennonite faith - often only evident in church.

The reasons for the decline of witnessing among Mennonites, as with the other sects, are several. The separation from the World that helps to maintain the community 'gestalt' becomes increasingly difficult with pressure on land and growing physical proximity of outsiders. Judy Schroeder Tomlinson recorded a conversation with a Mennonite girl of the Hesston College group³⁷ who recalled a sermon preached by a Mennonite minister who denounced the 'pride' shown by women in their quilts. The speaker

commented "But what would have been the incentive if you couldn't be proud of them? It's an accomplishment." Three words that mark a change not in official church doctrine, which still espouses humility and modesty, but in grass-roots belief and the increasing autonomy of the individual within the church.

But the pendulum of history is showing signs that it has reached its apogee and mounting environmental fears have sent it on its way back. The doctrines embodied in the traditions of the Plain peoples, of our 'simpler' ancestors, are, like old quilts, being unpacked and given an airing. Many non-sectarian individuals are recognising that fabric, a universal experience, is a powerful tool in bonding a community. Some distrust non-conformity and the same arguments that gave rise to increasing conformity among the sects had caused many of the 'new Christian' groups to consciously refrain from using symbolic media to promote group cohesion. The destructive power of 'born again' charismatic Christian evangelists is increasingly felt in the surviving Plain sects and several communities are today facing dissolution. Ironically many radical/conservative Christian groups are considered to be immediately recognisable by the World through their over-conformity of dress. More fundamentalist sects embrace the Plain concept with enthusiasm for it is a mark of the power of the medium that whether consciously or unconsciously used, visual appearance cannot help but reflect personal values. Other textile media are largely redundant as symbolic carriers but quilts and large embroideries are increasingly used in modern society to bind at least the female part of a community together, either to mark an event or as a communal charitable project: The Topsham Hangings, The Chichester Embroidery, The St.Andrews Quilt, The Names Project Quilt [an AIDS Memorial] and The Overlord Embroidery are all recent examples of this impetus. Quilts and hangings have become symbols of traditional values, present concepts and future aspirations.

As has, I hope, become evident, when fabric is used as a tool and honed by faith, it is powerful means of both social cohesion and division. For five sects it has been their support and their voice. Despite numerical insignificance in an increasingly secular society,³⁸ through 'turning their hands to work and their hearts to God', of the five groups in this study, all but one will witness the Millennium. Whether that time will also herald the physical realisation of Utopia in this World will largely depend on the power of *our* faith over form.

¹Lucy Hutchinson, *Hutchinson Memoirs*, Op. Cit.

²William Perkins, *A Cloud of Faithful Witnesses*, London: 1631.

³The colonies continued to grow. In 1640 Virginia held a population of nearly 8,000, mostly English, Maryland, in excess of 1500, and the ultra-tolerant West Indies, over 40,000 people.

⁴Scott, *Job A Journal* : London: 1797 p.169.

⁵See Evans, Op. Cit. pp. 64-66.

⁶note 68?

⁷See Evans Op. Cit., p.46, Griffith, p.190.

⁸See John Nickalls, 'Some Quaker Portraits: certain and uncertain', Supplement 29, *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*: London. Friends Historical Society, 1958.

⁹Evans Op. Cit. p.70.

¹⁰Evans Ibid, p.70.

¹¹A Jamieson, 'Religions on the Christian Perimeter' in Smith and Jamieson (eds.), *The Shaping of American Religion*, Princeton, 1961, 211.

¹²Barnabas Bates, *Peculiarities of the Shakers, Described in a Series of Letters from Lebanon Springs in the Year 1832, Containing an Account of the Origin, Worship, and Doctrines of the Shakers' Society*, New York: J.K.Porter, 1832, pp. 7-8.

¹³William Hepworth Dixon, *New America*, 3rd. ed. Philadelphia: J.B.Lippincott and Co., 1867. p.320.

¹⁴Thomas Brown, *An Account of the People Called Shakers: Their Faith, Doctrines and Practice, Exemplified in the Life, Conversations, and Experience of the Author during the Time He Belonged to the Society; To Which is Affixed a History of Their Rise and Progress to the Present Day*. Troy: Printed by Parker and Bliss, 1812. p.236.

¹⁵Ibid., p.20

¹⁶Hinds, *American Communities*, (rev. ed.) p.42.

¹⁷ Andrews, *The Community Industries of the Shakers* p.178-9.

¹⁸Avery, *Book of Records*.

¹⁹"An Extract From the Holy Orders of the Church: Written by Father Joseph, to the Elders of the Church at New Lebanon, and Copied Agreeable to Father Joseph's Word.", New Lebanon, 1841. p.5.

²⁰Andrews, *Religion in Wood: A Book of Shaker Furniture*, Bloomington: Indian University press, 1966. p.7.

²¹Isaac Youngs. "A Concise View of the Church of God and of Christ, on Earth. Having its Foundation in the Faith of Christ's First and Second Appearing", New Lebanon, 1856-60. p.506.

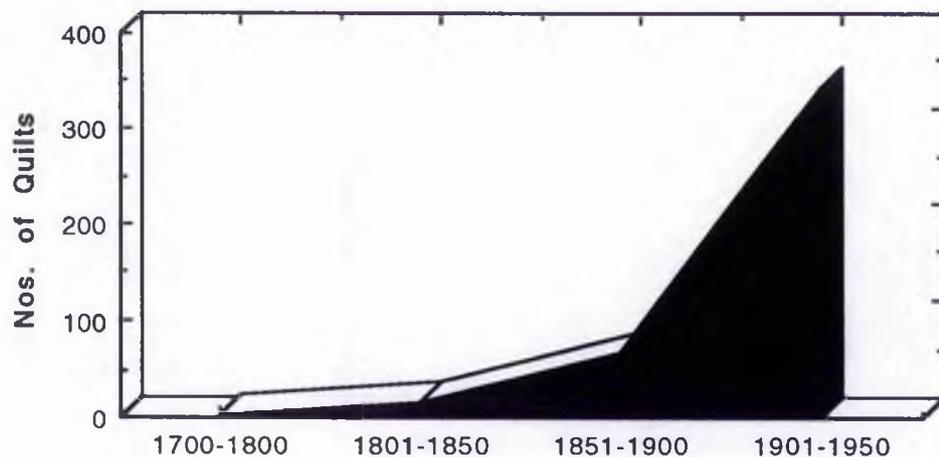
²²Giles Avery, "Sacred Places, Sacred seasons", *The Shaker Manifesto*, IX, April, 1879, p.74.

²³ Nordhoff, Charles. *Communitic Societies of the United States*. 1875. Op. Cit.

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- 24Hinds, Op. Cit. pp. 100, 99.
- 25"Millenial Laws or Gospel Statutes and Ordinances Adapted to the Day of Christ's Second Appearing" Recorded at New Lebanon, August 7th 1821. Revised and Re-established by the Ministry and Elders, Oct. 1845. pp. 104-105.
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- 28[Stewart, Philemon] "A General Statement of The Holy Laws of Zion", New Lebanon, 1856-60. p.127.
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- 32Charles Edson Robinson, *A Concise History of the United society of Believers Called Shakers*, East Canterbury: Shaker Village, 1893, p.123.
- 33Green, Calvin, and Wells, Seth Y., *A Summary of the Millenial Church, or United Society of believers (commonly called Shakers) Comprising the Rise, Progress and Practical Order of the Society: Together With the General Principles of Their Faith and Testimony*. Albany: Printed by Packard and Van Benthuysen, 1823. p.51.
- 34Darrow, David, Meacham, John and Youngs, Benjamin S., *Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing, Containing a General Statement of All Things Pertaining to the Faith and Practice of the Church of God in This Latter-Day.*, Lebanon: Ohio: Office of the Western Star. 1808. p.581.
- 35*The Shaker*, II, November, 1872. p.83.
- 36Umble, John. trans & ed. 'Memoirs of an Amish Bishop', *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 22 (April) 1948. pp. 101-2.
- 37Tomlonson, Op Cit. p.12.
- 38There are approx. 100,000 Amish, a handful of Shakers and an unknown but thriving number of Quakers.

APPENDIX

[The graph below shows the increased activity by Amish quilt-makers in the second half of the nineteenth century. The data for the years 1700-1847 for which there are no known examples extant is of necessity from recorded sources.]The majority of the 'classic' Amish patterns appeared between 1850 and 1900. Prior to 1850 the Germanic 'fedder bett' was the usual form of bedding which would not require the use of a quilt.



GLOSSARY

Aesthetics. The principles by which the beauty of an object is assessed. Theology requires aesthetic criteria derived from artistic, cultural and contemplative experience in order to use and understand the material images through which spiritual and divine reality is communicated to Man. See the *Inter Mirifica* [Decree on the Means of Social Communication] and the *Gaudium et Spes* [Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World].

Afflatus. Refers to the exercise of an overpowering impulse based in millennial conviction, an internalisation of the premises of orthodoxy. Afflatus comprehends the fusion of the temporal and the spiritual as a precipitate psychic phenomenon.

Album Quilt. A quilt composed of a number of *different* blocks donated by friends of the owner, usually signed. See also 'Friendship Quilt'.

Amish. In Europe, the followers of Jacob Amman were known as 'Amish Mennonite' or 'Plain Amish'. The term 'Old Order Amish' is a later convention necessary to differentiate between groups of Amish with different degrees of assimilation into the main American cultural pattern.

Ausburg Confession of Faith. The first confessional statement of the Lutheran church. Largely written by Philip Melancthon and presented to Charles V at the Diet of Ausburg in 1530. The *Confession* consists of 21 Articles which summarise the essential Lutheran Doctrines and seven articles which highlight abuses within the Church of Rome.

Batting or Wadding. The centre layer of the quilt 'sandwich' that provides the warmth in a quilt. In antique quilts this is normally either carded wool or occasionally cotton. Less thickly padded examples may be lined with an old woollen blanket or similar fabric which produces a lighter weight quilt with a distinctive appearance.

Believers. Participants in the Shaker experience.

Community of goods. The usual sources given for the practice of the community of goods among Christians are the chapters in the Book of Acts (second, fourth, fifth), where the economic practices of the primitive church in Jerusalem are described.

Conservatism. In descending order of conservatism, the Amish/Mennonite groups are known as 1- Old School or Order (Yoder), 2-Old School or Order (Zook), 3-Byler Amish, 4-Peachy Amish (Reno), 5-Zook Amish (Speicher), 6-Conservative Mennonite, 7-Allensville Mennonite, 8-Bakersville Mennonite. Thereafter an individual is considered to have left the church entirely. Within these delineation's there are many sub-groupings.

Deism. This is an umbrella term for beliefs held in the 17th and 18th centuries. It holds that there is one God but that we are not entirely dependant upon the holy scriptures to discover intent. This means that we can find proof of God's existence by reason as well as by revelation.

Doctrine. Church teaching of orthodox beliefs.

Fraktur. Practised by Pennsylvania Amish and Mennonites, and Pennsylvania-German groups. The art of Fraktur or illuminative writing, as it was practised by the Penn-Germans or 'Dutch' in pre-colonial periods and subsequently. A possible descendant of the medieval manuscript illumination, but also directly from Central and Southern Germany. It was a form of religious art, usually including either scripture verses or expressions of piety. The block letters were ornamented, and the entire drawing was often ornamented with illuminative borders, overhanging tulips or lotus flowers, birds, angels blowing trumpets, etc. Practice centred around Bucks county.

Friendship Quilt. A quilt composed of blocks *all of the same design* and (usually) signed by the maker.

Iconoclasm. The first occurrence of the movement is seen in the Byzantine empire from c. 725 to 843. Icons were destroyed as pagan idols. St. John Damascene [c. 675 - c. 749] at the monastery of St. Sabas, near Jerusalem, argued that these images were a necessary consequence of the incarnation. Iconoclasm was accepted at the heretical synod of Hiera [753] but rejected once more by the ecumenical council of Nicacea II [787] In 814-43 icons were held necessary for teaching purposes but considered unsuitable for public worship. The debate has continued intermittently ever since.

Idolatry. The worshipping of 'false' gods. Both the Old and New Testament condemn the practice [Exod. 20:4, 23 - 4; Deut 5:7 - 9; Ps 115:4-8; 1 Cor 5:10; Rev 21:8; 22:15].

Linsey-woolsey. A mixture of wool and linen fibres, presenting a smooth, slightly shiny surface, popular in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Martyrs' Mirror. In 1660 a volume of 1290 pages appeared, entitled Het Bloedig Toonel Der Doops-gesinde. En Weercloose Christenen. Die/om het

getuygenisse Jesu hares Salighmaeckers/geleden hobben/en gedoodt zijn/van Christi tijdt as/tot dese onse laetste tijden toe. Mitsgaders. Een beschrijtinge der H. Doops, ende andere stucken van den Godsdienst, door alle de selve geoeffent. Begrepen in Twee Boecken. Zijnde een vergrootinge van den voorgaenden Martelaers-Spiegel, uyt vele geloofweerdige Chrronijcken/Memorien /Getuygenissen/etc. Door T.J.V.B. Gedrukt tot Dordrecht, by Jacob Braat, Voor Jacobus Savry, woonende in't Kasteel van Gendt. In't Jaer 1660 The author was Tieleman Jansz van Braght, the elder of the Flemish Mennonite congregation at Dordrecht. It contains among others the three major confessions of the Dutch Mennonites. Van Braght's martyr book, the Martelaerspiegel, deals with Christian martyrdom from the time of Christ to 1500.

The Ephrata edition was published by the Franconia Conference Mennonites with the definite purpose of strengthening the non-resistant faith of the church in the rising threat of war., 1748-49. The 1780 reprint was used widely by the Amish in the Palatinate. It served in many instances as ad devotional book. this was also true of the Mennonites in Switzerland and Alsace Lorraine. In the German language it came out in America, Lancaster 1814, and other sites at later dates. English editions in 1886. Illustrated with 105 etchings by Jan Luiken for the 1685 edition.

Millennium. Refers to the prophesied thousand years of peace on earth described in Revelation 20: 1-7. Christ will reign throughout the thousand years with his saints when the final defeat of Satan will mark the entry of the World into a state of Glory. The belief has not been widely accepted by the Christian church post St Augustine of Hippo [354 -430]. Accordingly, to "see millennially" signifies the way in which the Shaker's conceptualisation of experience was conditioned by his belief that in fact he lived in the Millennium.

Mysticism. Personal union with Divine reality. This may be in the form of ecstasy, visions or other similar phenomena..

Ordnung. Pronounced 'Ott-ning' the document consists of two separate sections. The first part comprised the written articles of faith decreed by conferences dating from the early sixteenth century. This includes the Dordrecht Confession of Faith of 1660. The Ordnung has been revised on several occasions. In the nineteenth century the specific and restrictive aspects of the Amish faith were included; covering such things as the colours of walls, dress, transport etc. Increasing pressures from a burgeoning materialistic World, has meant that further guidance was needed in 1950. Increasing pressure and stress on the Amish way of life has meant that each revision has needed to be increasingly detailed and therefore restrictive.

The second part of the document is conveyed through the Amish culture. This part will vary for each church district and at different times will vary in accordance with current church thinking. Where the written Ordnung will say "Women to wear shawls, bonnets and caps in public" the unwritten local Ordnung will specify the number and form of pleats in that cap, the shape of the bonnet, the way in which the shawl is to be fastened.

Sectarianism. A sectarian movement is a religious movement dissenting from the main Church. Generally it preaches perfectionism and exclusiveness of it's followers from those less 'pure' in their beliefs. Patterns of continued conflict with the dominant framework of society are common hallmarks of such an historical movement. The literal interpretation of the Bible by the Amish is also a feature of sectarian groups, as is the carry over of those teachings/morals into personal ethics and the general behaviour of the believing individual.

Signature Quilt. This term refers to quilts composed of pieced or appliqué blocks signed by the makers. They may have been intended to honour an individual or commemorate an anniversary. See also Album and Friendship quilts.

Society. With a capital 'S', this abbreviates the official title of the Shaker Church (The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing) and refers to the corporate organisation.

Thirty-nine Articles. Doctrinal propositions adopted by the Church of England in 1571, clearly setting out it's position as separate to both continental Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

Treuerzigen. These were Anabaptist sympathisers who sheltered members of the church in the periods of persecution, but did not openly join the church.

Universalism. This concept became current after the Babylonian exile that God was offering his salvation to all nations through Israel [Isa 42:6; 52:10; Jonah; Lk 2:30 -32; Jn 8:12]. ALSO All men whatever their faith can be saved if they follow the Light as they perceive it.

Victorian. Describes manufactures dating after 1860.

Witness. A witness (Gk *martyr*) in the New Testament sense bears personal witness to the Truth. Jesus witnesses the truth (Jn 3: 11; Tm 2:6; Rv 1:5), and the scriptures and the Spirit bear witness to Jesus (Jn 14:26; 1 Jn 5:8).

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Abbreviations: FHL: Friend's House Library.
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 BL: British Library
 WHRL: Western historical Reserve Library.
 OUP: Oxford University Press.
 MS: Manuscript.

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