

Shaker Church Family Tannery
S. side of U. S. Rt. 20 near intersection
with State Rt. 41, 5 mi. W. of Pittsfield
Hancock
Berkshire County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-727

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2-HANC
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

SHAKER CHURCH FAMILY TANNERY

HABS
MASS
2-HANC
12-

Location: South side of U.S. Rt. 20 near intersection with State Rt. 41, 5 miles west of Pittsfield, Hancock, Berkshire County, Massachusetts

Present Owner and Occupant: Shaker Community, Inc., Hancock, Massachusetts

Present Use: Unused

Statement of Significance: This building illustrates the importance of tanning as a Hancock Shaker industry.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1835.
2. Architect: None.
3. Original and subsequent owners: United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing; Shaker Community, Inc.
4. Builder, suppliers, etc.: The builder is not definitely known. An assumption, although not documented, was that it was Elder William Deming who supervised the construction as he did five years earlier with the brick dwelling.
5. Original plans, construction, etc.: No record.
6. Alterations and additions: None. According to a watercolor chart of the Church Family at Hancock in 1833, now owned by Mrs. Morris Austin of Clinton, Conn., formerly a member of the Hancock Church Family, there was a tannery in approximately the same location as the 1835 tannery. Perhaps a larger building was needed and erected near the same site, or the earlier one enlarged. The latter supposition, however, does not account for the date stone (1835) in the foundation of the present building. Traces of color under the outside paint indicate that white was not the original color. A broom shop stood originally between the early tannery and the dairy.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

None.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: Photographs possessed by Shaker Community, Inc. Watercolor chart of the Church Family area, dated 1833, now owned by Mrs. Morris Austin of Clinton, Conn., formerly a member of the Hancock Church Family.
2. Sources not yet investigated: Official Hancock Church records - when located.

Prepared by Edward Deming Andrews
Curator
Shaker Community, Inc.
March 22, 1962

PROJECT INFORMATION

The information in this report is incomplete, but has been included in the Historic American Buildings Survey's collection because of the special knowledge of the author. Edward Deming Andrews, a notable author on Shaker history, religion, and arts, compiled the historical data. June, 1975.