

Shaker Church Family Washhouse and Machine Shop
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-730

HABS
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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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SHAKER CHURCH FAMILY WASHHOUSE AND MACHINE SHOP HABS No. MASS-730

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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: The first and second floors on the west end are in the process of restoration to their original use as a laundry. The east end, which was a machine shop and saw mill, is not restored.

Statement of Significance: This building shows the importance the Shakers attached to cleanliness, their use of improved laundry methods, and the early use of water-power in industry.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1790, according to tradition.
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 was not recorded, but in 1790 the Shaker brethren in charge of temporal concerns, therefore probably involved with the building, were Daniel Goodrich, Sr., Daniel Goodrich, Jr., and David Goodrich. William Deming, a member in 1790, may have also assisted in the building. Local supplies were used.
5. Original plans, construction, etc.: As early as 1832 the building was called the machine shop; its partial use as a washhouse may have been later. For a considerable period the first floor of the machine shop (the east end of the building) was used as a saw mill. An artificially made hill, the remains of which may still be seen, facilitated the unloading of logs from the lumber wagons to the saw mill floor below. Much of the machinery on all three floors has been removed. This building was originally painted a reddish-yellow, the remains of which may be seen under the white paint.

According to the Millennial Laws only the Meetinghouse was to be painted white. The original plan was rectangular, seven bays by three bays, with three-and-a-half stories. There was an open end bay on the east side with two steps to the first floor level.

6. Alterations and additions: There are two additions; the framing members are not aligned with the original structure. A shed wing, enclosed with vertical planks and no sheathing, was also added. There have been extensive alterations to the first floor on the east side.
- B. Historical Events and Persons Connected to the Structure:
None.
- C. Sources of Information:
1. Old views: Photographs possessed by Shaker Community, Inc.
 2. Bibliography: Shaker oral tradition.
 3. Sources not yet investigated: Official Hancock records - when located.

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

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. Description of Exterior:
1. Foundations: There is a stone foundation with a crawl space. The substructure for the waterworks is deeply excavated and lined with stone retaining walls.
 2. Structural system, framing: Heavy timber construction was used. There are stone supporting columns on the east side. Random framing is employed to support certain machinery. The two chimneys are supported on floor joists with no substructure. There is a small ridge member.
- B. Description of Interior:
1. Flooring: There are marble floors in the laundry room with recently mortared joints.
 2. Wall and ceiling finish: The framing is exposed in

most areas. The finished areas are sheathed with wood or finished with plaster. The structural members in finished areas are chamfered or encased in 1/2 or 3/8 inch boards.

3. Heating: There is a large remaining fireplace with side walls of marble. A fireplace in the ironing room was removed and replaced with a stove for heating irons.

Prepared by Terry Hallock
Architect
Shaker Community, Inc.
1962

PART III. 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 authors. Edward Deming Andrews, a notable author on Shaker history, religion, and arts, compiled the historical data. The restoration architect of the Hancock Shaker community, Terry Hallock, supplied the architectural data. June, 1975.