

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine
COUNTY: Cumberland & Androscoggin
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: Shaker Village
AND/OR HISTORIC: United Society of Believers

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Sabbathday Lake vicinity		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:	
STATE Maine	CODE	COUNTY: Cumberland	CODE

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: United Society of Believers, c/o Theodore E. Johnson, Director	STATE: Maine
STREET AND NUMBER: Sabbathday Lake	
CITY OR TOWN: Poland Spring	
STATE: Maine	
CODE	04274

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Courthouses, Cumberland and Androscoggin Counties	COUNTY:
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN: Portland (Cumberland County) Auburn (Androscoggin County)	
STATE: Maine	
CODE	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey (Shaker Community Meeting House)	FOR NPS USE ONLY
DATE OF SURVEY: 1962 & 1969 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	
STATE: District of Columbia	
CODE	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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COUNTY:
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DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

1700 The Shaker Village at Sabbathday Lake, Maine is located approximately 23 miles north of Portland. It is the last operating Shaker settlement, a non-commercial community dependent on farming and small industries for subsistence. The United Society of Believers owns a tract of over 1900 acres, representing a well blended cross section of forest, field and lake shore. Considerable acreage is given over to an orchard containing apple, pear, plum, peach and cherry trees, and potatoes, squash and hay continue to be major crops.

Theodore E. Johnson, Director of the Shaker Museum and Library at Sabbathday Lake, speaks of the 17 extant buildings there as "a remarkable living record of the Shaker tradition. They have probably undergone less internal change than any other Shaker site in the nation. In almost every instance the problems are those of preservation rather than restoration for the community itself has long been acutely aware of the heritage of which it has been given stewardship."¹ The 17 extant buildings at Sabbathday Lake are as follows:

The community's Meeting House was erected in 1794. Moses Johnson is believed to have designed this two-and-one-half story wooden frame structure. There is a two-story ell and a gambrel roof covered with asphalt shingles. An H.A.B.S. study of the Meeting House praised it as "[a]n excellent example . . . of fine framing and carpentry, representing a vernacular survival of exposed framing and simple trim. Unusually effective in its design and detail, the Meetinghouse illustrates, at an early date, that spare neatness and precision which was to become typical of the Shaker tradition."² The Meeting House now contains the Shaker Museum.

The nine remaining Shaker sisters reside in the Central Dwelling House, built in 1884. It is a large three and one-half story brick building with a full basement, and contains sleeping rooms, the chapel, a music room, and kitchen and dining facilities.

The Shaker Library contains an extensive archive of Shakeriana, and is utilized by some 250 scholars each year.

The Laundry, built in 1824, was designed for convenience; it contains rooms for sewing, weaving and tailoring.

The Brethren's Shop is still filled with a complete wood-turning and smith's shop.

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1. Letter to James Mundy, Maine Historical Preservation Commission, December 14, 1973.
 2. HABS No. ME-107, prepared by F. Blair Reeves, Architect, August 1962.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

4. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The United Society of Believers at Sabbathday Lake, Maine is the world's only remaining active Shaker community. Eight Shaker Sisters operate a relatively self-sustaining farm, and support themselves further through light industries and the proceeds of a small gift shop. They are aided by Theodore E. Johnson, who directs the Shaker Museum and Library there, and oversees the operation of the village.

The Society owns a tract of over ¹⁷⁰⁰1900 acres, representing forest, field and lake shore areas whose integrity and natural beauty have not been altered since the community's inception in 1793. The 17 extant buildings at the village are in an excellent state of preservation, the community's Meeting House and Central Dwelling House being especially noteworthy.

Though numerous Shaker villages have been preserved as commercial restorations, the community at Sabbathday Lake continues to represent and to interpret the best of Shakerism as a meaningful, on-going lifestyle with something to say to the 20th century.

History

The history of the Shakers at Sabbathday Lake, Maine is intimately tied to the history of the group as a whole. Theirs was the most successful of all communal experiments in the New World and at its peak, just before the Civil War, there were some 6,000 Shakers in 18 communities. The United Society of Believers, or Shakers as they are more familiarly known, originated in England around the middle of the 18th century when a group of spiritualists and Quakers formed a society called the New Lights. Mother Ann Lee, a leader of the movement, emigrated to America in 1774 after suffering much persecution in England and, with a few believers, established a colony near Albany, New York. In 1793, colonies were organized both at Sabbathday Lake and Alfred, Maine.

Shaker principles included the practice of both religious and economic communism, purification of sin by confession, the practice of complete celibacy, and the Quaker opposition to war and violence. To Shakers, God was a dual deity, both masculine and feminine. They believed that the masculine element was manifested in Jesus and that the feminine

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration. Maine: A Guide 'Down East East.' Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937.

Johnson, Theodore E. Hands to Work and Hearts to God: The Shaker Tradition in Maine. Brunswick, Maine: Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1969.

Martin, David. "The Shakers." Life, March 17, 1967, pp. 58-70.

Nordhoff, Charles. The Communistic Societies of the United States. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	44 ° 00 ' 47 "	70 ° 24 ' 14 "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	44 ° 00 ' 47 "	70 ° 19 ' 43 "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	43 ° 57 ' 57 "	70 ° 19 ' 43 "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	43 ° 57 ' 57 "	70 ° 24 ' 14 "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1900 1722

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
<u>Maine</u>		<u>Cumberland</u>	
<u>Maine</u>		<u>Androscoggin</u>	
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Carol Ann Poh and Robert C. Post, Survey Historians

ORGANIZATION: Division of Historic and Architectural Surveys, National Park Service. DATE: 1/7/74

STREET AND NUMBER:
1100 L Street NW

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: _____

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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(Number all entries)

7. Description: (1) Shaker Village (United Society of Believers)

In addition to those listed above, the following buildings and structures are still extant: The Girls' Shop, Brooder House, Herb House, Wood House, Garage, Stable, Ox Barn, Cart and Carriage Shed, and the Summer House. There is also a water tank and tower, the Spring House and the Ash House. All but the Central Dwelling House are of wooden construction, and all are filled with Shaker furniture, arts, crafts, textiles, tools and farm implements.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys:

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places
11/28/69
State, Federal
Maine Historical Preservation Commission
31 Western Avenue
Augusta, Maine



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8. Significance: (1) Shaker Village (United Society of Believers)

element appeared 18 centuries later, in the person of Ann Lee. Thus men and women shared equally in the work, offices, possessions, and religious practices of the community.

The Shakers developed self-sufficiency from the start, due both to their geographical and social isolation and to the realization of their special calling to build God's kingdom. "Truly they felt that they were in the wilderness preparing a highway for the ever-coming Lord," remarked one historian.¹ Shaker self-sufficiency allowed for an incredible diversification of industrial and agricultural activities.

At New Gloucester [Sabbathday Lake], for example, we see at an early date the construction of lumber, flour, carding, and spinning mills, an extensive tannery, and cooper's shops. Both the herb and garden seed and seedling industries became major agricultural pursuits. . .²

Though mystical in their religion, Shakers were shrewdly practical when it came to figuring out ways to do their work faster and better. Their many innovations include the flat broom, the clothespin, and the circular saw.

In Maine, as in other Shaker communities reaching as far as Indiana and Kentucky, the craftsmanship of the period from the 1820's until the era of Reconstruction represented a kind of "golden age" of Shaker design. Furniture and other functional objects--even graphics--were characterized simultaneously by delicacy and vigor. Evident is an unwitting adherence to the ancient dictum "Nothing too much." These years are now known as the classic era of Shaker design, and there is currently a nationwide revival of interest in the objects of this period.

The Shaker Society at Sabbathday Lake had, in 1823, some 150 members.³ A decline in the membership of all Shaker communities became obvious in the last quarter of the 19th century, but the two Maine settlements remained relatively populous. In fact, the community at Sabbathday Lake has, since 1900, been the largest and most active Shaker society.

1. Theodore E. Johnson, Hands to Work and Hearts to God: The Shaker Tradition in Maine (Brunswick, Maine: Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1969), unpagd.

2. Ibid.

3. Charles Nordhoff, The Communistic Societies of the United States (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1875), p. 181.

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8. Significance: (2) Shaker Village (United Society of Believers)

One observer has speculated that "wresting a living from the grudging hills continued to contribute to the robustness of the Shaker tradition in Maine." Though the community at Alfred closed in 1931, that at Sabbathday Lake remains actively loyal to the Shaker way of life.

Today, eight women live on the shore of picturesque Sabbathday Lake in what is the last functioning Shaker community.⁴ The oldest is 89, the youngest 42. Theodore E. Johnson, 41, is the only man in residence at the village. He directs the Shaker Museum and Library, oversees the operation of the village, and handles correspondence. Though Shakerism was closed to new recruits in 1957, it is expected that the decision will soon be reversed and thus alleviate the threat of extinction of one of America's most distinctive and creative religious movements.

4. The former community at Canterbury, New Hampshire, where four Shaker Sisters survive, turned itself into a non-profit corporation in January 1969.