

Shaker Blanket Chest

A new book of measured drawings

by John Kassay

EDITOR'S NOTE: The best examples of Shaker furniture "were not the studied approach to design or a conscious effort to create masterpieces, but were rather expressions of utility, simplicity and perfection attributable to spiritual inspiration, moral responsiveness, dedication to a craft, and skill." This is how John Kassay, professor of industrial design at San Francisco State College, views the genius of Shaker designs. The following article is excerpted from Kassay's *Book of Shaker Furniture* (University of Massachusetts Press, Box 429, Amherst, Mass. 01004, 1980; \$33). There are several other available books about Shaker furniture, most notably John Shea's *The Amer-*

ican Shakers and Their Furniture, Thomas Moser's *How to Build Shaker Furniture*, Robert Meader's *Illustrated Guide to Shaker Furniture* and Ejner Handberg's three-volume work, *Shop Drawings of Shaker Furniture and Woodenware*. With its concise introduction, its uncluttered format, superb illustrations and summary descriptions, Kassay's book is not intended for the scholar who's interested in social and religious history. Rather, the book is aimed squarely at the serious woodworker, who can scale his own shop plans directly from Kassay's drawings and purchase and dimension his stock from the accompanying bills of materials.



Inscribed in burnt letters on the back of this one-drawer blanket chest of pine in original red paint is "April, 1837 Canaan." The chest is attributed to Brother Gilbert Avery (1775-1853), a member of the Upper Canaan family, which was a part of the New Lebanon [N.Y.] community. A plinth with dove-tailed corners and convex cutouts raises the chest off the floor. Four corner blocks fastened to the inside corners lend added support. The sides and ends of the chest are held together with dovetails. A lidded till with a drawer beneath is at the inside left end. As an afterthought, a hole had to be cut in the chest bottom to allow air trapped behind the drawer to escape into the chest proper. The applied tongue-and-groove molding at the ends of the hinged top is typical of Shaker work. The key escutcheons are of bone. Collection of Mrs. Edward Deming Andrews. □

No.	Name	Material	T	W	L	No.	Name	Material	T	W	L		
A	1	front	pine	1	13 $\frac{3}{8}$	40	<i>Till Drawer</i>						
B	2	sides	pine	1	23 $\frac{3}{8}$	18	S	1	front	cherry	1 $\frac{1}{16}$	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	15 $\frac{1}{16}$
C	1	back	pine	$\frac{3}{4}$	23 $\frac{3}{8}$	40	T	2	sides	pine	$\frac{3}{16}$	3 $\frac{7}{16}$	51 $\frac{3}{16}$
D	1	chest bottom	pine	$\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	38 $\frac{3}{8}$	U	1	back	pine	$\frac{3}{16}$	21 $\frac{1}{16}$	15 $\frac{3}{8}$
E	1	bottom	pine	$\frac{7}{8}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	38 $\frac{3}{8}$	V	1	bottom	pine	$\frac{3}{16}$	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	15 $\frac{1}{4}$
F	1	drawer shelf	pine	$\frac{7}{16}$	6 $\frac{1}{16}$	16 $\frac{1}{8}$	W	2	fillers	pine	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{3}{8}$	3 $\frac{1}{16}$
G	1	till bottom	pine	$\frac{7}{16}$	5 $\frac{1}{8}$	16 $\frac{1}{8}$	X	2	guides	pine	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{3}{8}$	51 $\frac{1}{16}$
H	1	till front	pine	$\frac{7}{16}$	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	16 $\frac{1}{8}$	<i>Drawer</i>						
I	2	till lid supports	pine	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{3}{8}$	5 $\frac{1}{8}$	Y	1	front	pine	$\frac{7}{8}$	8 $\frac{3}{8}$	38 $\frac{3}{8}$
J	1	till lid	pine	$\frac{7}{16}$	6 $\frac{1}{4}$	16 $\frac{3}{16}$	Z	2	sides	pine	$\frac{3}{16}$	8 $\frac{1}{16}$	17 $\frac{1}{8}$
K	2	front filler pieces	pine	$\frac{7}{16}$	1	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	A-A	1	back	pine	$\frac{3}{16}$	7 $\frac{3}{8}$	37 $\frac{3}{8}$
L	2	front and back plinths	pine	$\frac{3}{8}$	4 $\frac{1}{8}$	41 $\frac{1}{4}$	B-B	1	bottom	pine	$\frac{1}{2}$	16 $\frac{3}{8}$	37
M	2	end plinths	pine	$\frac{3}{8}$	4 $\frac{1}{8}$	19 $\frac{1}{4}$	C-C	2	pulls	maple	1 $\frac{3}{16}$ dia.		1 $\frac{3}{4}$
N	4	corner support blocks	pine	2	2	3 $\frac{1}{8}$	<i>Hardware</i>						
O	4	glue blocks	pine	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	drawer ring pull	brass	$\frac{3}{8}$ dia. ring			
P	2	drawer runners	pine	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{7}{8}$	16 $\frac{1}{4}$	2	butt hinges	brass	—	$\frac{3}{8}$	1 $\frac{3}{4}$	
Q	1	top	pine	1 $\frac{1}{16}$	18 $\frac{3}{8}$	40 $\frac{3}{8}$	2	butt hinges	steel	—	$\frac{3}{4}$	2	
R	2	end cleats	pine	1	1 $\frac{1}{16}$	18 $\frac{3}{8}$	1	chest lock	—	—	—	—	
							2	key escutcheon	ivory	$\frac{1}{8}$	$\frac{7}{8}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	

PINE
PAINTED RED

BLANKET CHEST

COLLECTION OF MRS. EDWARD DEMING ANDREWS

ATTRIBUTED TO,
BRO. GILBERT AVERY
INSCRIBED, (ON BACK)
"MADE APRIL, 1837. CANAAN." (N.Y.)

