

American Folk Art

Heirlooms in Paint and Pencil:
Everyday Life in 19th Century America
The Peter & Walter Bazar Collection



Ammi Phillips (1788-1863) Mr. and Mrs. Sheffield, Oil on canvas, 30"x 24", Provenance: Edith Halpert, New York



Peter, my brother, and I welcome you to a special exhibition of our long-held, private collection of American Folk Art. Many of the paintings and drawings featured were acquired during a dynamic collecting era, the 1970s and 1980s. The works have remained in our collection since those early years, alongside more recent acquisitions, reflecting our decades-long focus on 19th century American fine art.

When we first started collecting, America's Bicentennial was about to be celebrated. It heightened Americans' enthusiasm for national and artistic history and shone a scholarly and commercial light on 19th century American Folk Art. We witnessed interest in a previously niche field of art grow among collectors, institutions and dealers during this transformative time. Early pioneers like Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, who in the 1920s and 1930s recognized Folk Art as the aesthetic ancestor of American Modernism, had leveraged her immense institutional influence to force the art world to take folk artists seriously. As the Folk Art market emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, the definition of "folk art" expanded. Colonel Edgar William Garbisch and his wife, Bernice Chrysler Garbisch (the daughter of auto magnate Walter P. Chrysler), were omnivorous and passionate collectors of Americana and Folk Art. Their collection sold when Sotheby Parke Bernet held a series of landmark sales, collectively known as "The Greatest Sale of the Century", from 1974 through 1980, energizing a new generation of collectors. We purchased several paintings in those sales. At the same time, major institutions codified the genre, and a robust ecosystem of dealers and auction houses emerged to serve a new generation of avid collectors. They were business owners, doctors, lawyers, retirees, other professionals, and two college students, my brother and I, all bitten by the Folk Art bug.

The increased popularity of American Folk Art exhibitions, museum shows and galleries exposed new collectors to the unique vision and modern sensibility innate in the artworks. Peter and I were always gripped by the artists' command of color, bold compositional choices, and deep empathetic connection to the subjects and objects in the paintings. The piercing gaze captured in a perfectly rendered portrait or the meticulous architectural details of a rural homestead displayed a unique, vibrant, American energy. The paintings were far from being merely quaint or naive.

Renowned scholars and dealers—trailblazers like Mary Black, Jean Lipman, Herbert Hemphill, Alice Winchester, and Nina Fletcher Little, alongside the visionary efforts of Edith Halpert and the Downtown Gallery—were instrumental in elevating American Folk Art painting from historical curiosities to recognized, indigenous, fine art discoveries. Rigorous scholarship and passion ignited a market that surged in the years leading up to our nation's Bicentennial. Record-breaking prices were realized with gallery sales, and big city and country auctions unearthed new discoveries. Artists were discovered and renamed, as was the case of Ammi Phillips who was previously known as two artists, the Kent Limner and the Border Limner. Other artists were identified or reattributed.

In our hunt for unique pieces, we found great fun and wonderful learning opportunities in talking with scholars, department heads, museum curators, runners, and other collectors who had been bitten by the same bug. We found new artists and fell for the charm of portraits, landscapes, homesteads, and scenes uniquely American. Many works were available and often affordable, even for college students.

Today, we see that excitement reemerging. Discerning collectors looking for unique and high-quality pieces will discover the striking modernity, graphic intensity, and crystalline narratives of paintings in our collection.

Beyond its immense cultural and aesthetic significance, American Folk Art of this caliber reflects a heady aesthetic adventure into American history. Discerning collectors recognize that premier examples by masters of the genre — whether the penetrating, sharply defined portraiture of Ammi Phillips, the meticulous architectural draftsmanship of Fritz Vogt, or the captivating works of children — they preserve unique piece of America and represent a significant store of value and personal enjoyment.

Walter Bazar

Ammi Phillips' Velvet & Lace: The Kent Period



Figure 1. Ammi Phillips (1788-1863)

Mr. and Mrs. Sheffield, Oil on canvas, each 30"x 24" Provenance: Edith Halpert, New York

This pair of portraits of the Sheffield dates from Ammi Phillips' Kent Period (1820s-1830s). The style is marked by strong contrasts and vibrant hues, as exemplified in many of the best paintings by Phillips. The Kent Period also features Phillips' unique approach to composition. Favoring stylized shapes, bold lines and an almost formal sculptural quality, Phillips brought his subjects to life.

Phillips was part of a broader movement of itinerant portrait painters in 19th century America, but his distinct artistic vision set him apart. While many folk artists relied on repetitive formulaic approaches, Phillips continually refined his techniques and introduced personal touches, making each portrait unique. For example, he infused his portraits with individual details like varied lace patterns and costume elements that reflected the distinct identities of his sitters. Unlike some of his contemporaries, who might have focused solely on replicating faces, Phillips masterfully used color and form to create a sense of presence and life in his portraits, making his subjects "emerge as jewels on black velvet" in his Kent Period works.

A sculptural, nearly hyper-real quality is the defining hallmark of this period, and the primary reason that these two portraits possess such a commanding, almost hypnotic presence, one uniquely embedded in the American Folk Art aesthetic. Phillips stripped away visual clutter during his years working around Kent, Connecticut. He relied on pure, geometric compositions and crisp silhouettes to effectively carve his subjects out of the canvas. This removal of distraction is exactly what gives the sitters their unique permanence. The visual magnetism of Ammi Phillips' Kent Period lies in its startling modernity.

Provenance: Edith Halpert via Sotheby Parke-Bernet, November 1973

Heirlooms in Oil: The American Family



Figure 2. Attributed to an artist working in the Milton Hopkins and Deacon Robert Peckham Circle, Albany New York Family, Oil on canvas, 36 ½" x 36 ½"

American Folk Art, by its very nature, is a unique fusion of conventional artistic principles with individuality and verve. In the best examples, such as the family group presented here, the personalities leap off the canvas. The artist responsible for this unusual trio worked in a variation of the American Folk style that features crisp, hard lines, strongly delineated shading, and uncompromising likenesses. Painters best known for this technique include Milton W. Hopkins and Deacon Robert Peckham – two renowned portrait painters and noted abolitionists, whose works strongly resemble this artwork.

The painter has captured a great deal of personality in the faces. The mother seems pleased and satisfied, yet calm and detached, holding her child's hand in a charming variation on the typical group pose. The father seems more skeptical: one can imagine him trying to sit still after a long day, wishing the artist would hurry up and paint! In fact, to maximize the efficiency of the portrait session, the painter might have taken the likenesses of the faces and upper bodies, and filled in the rest later, when the family was otherwise occupied. This may have contributed to the unique, naive interpretation of perspective, with the skewed couch and tilted picture frame, which brings to mind some later experiments in modernism.

There were few painters who used this demanding, technically precise style. Consequently, such paintings are highly sought after by American Folk Art collectors and institutions. A similar family trio by Peckham, Doty Family, still hangs proudly on display in his Massachusetts hometown. Today, although not exactly located, the painting has a provenance linking it to Albany, New York. While the sitters have travelled far from home today, thanks to the decision to paint them all on one canvas, the family is still together.

William Kennedy: A Proud Abolitionist



Figure 3. William Kennedy (1817-1871)

Mr. and Mrs. Elisha Stetson, Oil on canvas, each 20"x 24"

Gentleman holds the abolitionist newspaper, *Herald of Freedom*. The Masthead reads: "Herald of Freedom (partially obscured) no.39, Concord, NH"

These portraits of the Stetsons were painted by William W. Kennedy. Born in 1817 in New Hampshire, he worked as a portrait painter in New Bedford, Massachusetts; Ledyard, Connecticut; and Berwick, Maine from 1845 through 1847. He moved to Maryland in 1849 or 1850, lived at various locations in Baltimore with his wife and three children until 1869, and died in 1871.

Kennedy is part of a stylistically associated group of American Folk artists known as the Prior-Hamblin School. The Prior-Hamblin School consisted of five main artists: William Matthew Prior (1806–1873), his brother-in-law Sturtevant J. Hamblin (1817–1884), William W. Kennedy (1817–1871), George G. Hartwell (1815–1901), and E.W. Blake (active circa 1840–1850s). The group's size increases if other family members who were artisan painters are included. The term "Prior-Hamblin School" was not used in these artists' lifetimes: It emerged among art scholars, collectors, and dealers in the 1950s, following the foundational research of renowned American Folk Art scholar Nina Fletcher Little, to describe the stylistic similarities – remarkably close at times – between the works of Prior, Hamblin, and other artists. The Stetson portraits have been attributed to William Kennedy by Emily Esser, the leading expert on the Prior-Hamblin School, who dates them to 1847.

The props that appear in American Folk Art portraiture are rarely accidental. A book might signify literacy, a rose virtue. As seen in the painting on the left, Mr. Elisha Stetson holds a very specific historical document in his right hand: the *Herald of Freedom* newspaper, Volume 10, No. 39, dated Friday, December 20, 1844, published in Concord, New Hampshire.

This particular prop transforms the portrait from a simple likeness into declarations of moral conviction by both the sitter and the artist because the *Herald of Freedom* was a radical abolitionist newspaper edited by Nathaniel Peabody Rogers, a tireless advocate for enslaved peoples' immediate emancipation, women's rights, animal rights, and temperance.

Beyond marking a victory for American Folk Art scholarship, Emily Esser's discovery makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the importance of the abolitionist movement in the artist's and his sitters' eyes. Kennedy painted the striking, minimalist portraits in New England, which was then a vibrant hub for Free Will Baptists and other northern abolitionist efforts. Esser located an electronic copy of the paper online and the individuals mentioned in the issue were dedicated abolitionists. The issue's masthead declares the paper's aggressive stance: "I enter into no compromise with slavery. I am for Justice, in the name of Humanity, and according to the Law of the Living God". The presence of a radical newspaper, one edited by fierce emancipation advocate, thus transforms the Elisha Stetson painting from a simple portrait into a powerful visual symbol of the man's moral conviction and the artist's kindred spirit.

William Kennedy: A Proud Abolitionist



Figure 4. (left) Detail of the masthead of the *Herald of Freedom*, held in Elisha Stetson's right hand.

Figure 4. (right) Comparison between Elisha Stetson's portrait and a later half-tone print of Elisha Stetson. The masthead reads: "I enter into no compromise with slavery. I am for Justice in the name of Humanity, and according to the Law of the Living God." The half-tone print caption reads "An oldtime Shipbuilder Elisha Stetson".

The *Herald of Freedom* ceased publication in 1846 following its publisher's death. Kennedy's decision to feature that newspaper and that issue implies more than a passing reference; it may signify the sitter's own involvement with abolitionist efforts or serve as a tribute to the late publisher and those who worked on the paper.

The Stetson family was practically synonymous with the North River shipbuilding industry in Massachusetts, an economic powerhouse from the 17th through 19th centuries. Our sitter, Elisha Stetson, was born in 1799. Based on Stetson's birth year and the painting's execution year, Elisha Stetson was in his forties when he sat for the portrait. A Stetson Kindred of America, Inc. publication displays a half-tone image of Elisha Stetson that portrays him as an older man than the one in our painting (Figure 3 right). Notably, in the painting, Stetson is wearing a small gold earring in his right ear, which signified that he was a seaman. Indeed, the half-tone image notes that Stetson was "an old time shipbuilder", one that constructed numerous vessels from 1825 well into the mid-19th century in Medford, Massachusetts.

During the mid-19th century, Medford, Arlington (then West Cambridge), and the surrounding Middlesex County towns were absolute hotbeds of the abolitionist movement and the Underground Railroad. Elisha was also a member of the Hiram Lodge whose membership consisted of the civic, business, and military leaders of these communities. Many of its members were heavily involved in the anti-slavery cause and the Union war effort.

George Luther Stearns (1809–1867), a wealthy businessman, played a key role in the industry because the maritime networks of New England naturally provided physical escape routes for enslaved people who stowed away on coastal vessels: Medford's booming maritime economy was led by Stearns, who funded radical abolitionist action. One can project Elisha's sympathy with the cause as part of the anonymous efforts of many in the Underground Railroad.

Provenance: Sotheby Parke-Bernet, January 24-26, 1974, as William Matthew Prior. Reattributed in 2025 to William Kennedy by Emily Esser.

William Matthew Prior: Geometric Simplicity



Figure 5. William Matthew Prior (1806 - 1873)
Pair of Portraits, Oil on board, each 10 x 14"

William Matthew Prior is recognized as one of the most prolific and influential American Folk artists of the 19th century, best known for his significant impact on American portraiture. Prior's unique approach to artmaking included innovative marketing strategies and stylistic techniques. His influence extended to a group of artists collectively known as the Prior-Hamblin School, which was comprised of Sturtevant J. Hamblin (Prior's brother-in-law), and followers like George G. Hartwell, William W. Kennedy, and E.W. Blake.

Paintings attributed to the Prior-Hamblin School are characterized by plain, simple forms with minimal detail. This often translates into a naive style, sometimes referred to as "American Primitive," featuring flattened figures that lack the intricate details of light, space, and texture found in more technically sophisticated art.

Prior's portraits often feature solemn, pie-faced children and adults depicted in stiff poses. However, their simplicity was often offset by vibrant colors and playful patterns, particularly in his portraits of children. A specific hallmark of the Prior-Hamblin School style is particularly noticeable in the way eyes appear flattened with heavy outlining.

The quality of this pair of portraits is exceptional, an outstanding example of Prior's work. The painted surface exhibits a very pleasing, natural craquelure that authenticates their age without distracting from the crispness of the sitters' visages. The period-appropriate gilt frames beautifully complement the sitters' dark formal attire. Portraits of this caliber, which so clearly showcase Prior's ability to inject individual personality into established stylistic templates, serve as foundational pieces that anchor serious private collections and command attention in premier American Folk Art exhibitions.

Provenance: Sotheby Parke-Bernet, New York, early 1970s

Heirlooms in Oil: American Children



Figure 6. Joseph Goodhue Chandler (1813-1884)
Double Portrait of Two Girls, Oil on canvas, 35 ½"x 42 1/2"

Joseph Goodhue Chandler (1813-1884), to whom this engaging double portrait is attributed, was a prolific itinerant painter who worked extensively throughout northwestern Massachusetts and the broader New England region. Born in South Hadley, Massachusetts, Chandler received some early training but largely developed his own distinctive, somewhat naive, yet highly expressive style on his own. He is particularly celebrated for his portraits of children, which often feature large luminous eyes, distinctively patterned clothing, and the inclusion of symbolic props such as books, toys, or floral arrangements. Chandler navigated the competitive 19th-century portrait market by capturing the specific likenesses and familial bonds of his patrons with a sincere, straightforward charm that has made his work highly sought after by modern collectors of historic American art.

This Chandler painting is a quintessential example of 19th century American Folk portraiture, depicting two young sisters standing hand-in-hand against a sweeping, idyllic landscape. The girls are dressed in matching, fashionably off-the-shoulder white dresses that are accented with wide pink bands on the skirts and delicate pink trim on the sleeves. The dresses are worn over traditional white pantaloons and dark slippers. Their pose is both formal and endearing, with each child clutching a small, vibrant bouquet of freshly gathered flowers — red roses on the left and yellow and blue blooms on the right—symbolizing youth and fleeting innocence. The background features a winding path that leads toward distant, softly rendered mountains under a warm, stylized sky, adding a sense of depth and romanticism typical of the era's ideals.

In 1840, Chandler married Lucretia Ann Waite (1820-1868). Lucretia was an established painter in Massachusetts. Relatives have suggested that Lucretia worked with her husband on his paintings, and that the two artists probably teamed up, or that Lucretia finished details of her husband's work. Elements in this double portrait do suggest the hand of Lucretia Waite with Chandler's.

Heirlooms in Oil: American Children



Figure 7. Attributed to the Tweedy-Bird Limner (19th century)
The Palmer Family, Oil on canvas, 36" x 58"

It was only by a quirk of fate that the "Tweedy-Bird Limner" gained this name over the "Palmer Limner". The defining discoveries, for the former, were the portraits of Miss [Eliza Bird] Tweedy of Brooklyn (1835-1901) and of Mary Louisa Bird (1832-1850), two brilliantly meticulous full-length renderings of New York sisters. If the double portrait presented here had surfaced just a bit earlier, the artist may have been named for the children in this magnificent double portrait, the Palmer Family. Illustrative of the painter's style and skill this artwork is extraordinarily detailed and artfully composed, but infused with a sparse, folky charm that characterizes every work. The similarities between this and other Tweedy-Bird Limner paintings are so markedly noticeable that they must be by the same hand.

Like most other works in the Tweedy-Bird Limner group, the Palmer Family marries together numerous genre elements, artfully combining them in one large-scale picture. Portraiture of humans and animals features prominently in the foreground. The lower left hand corner includes a still life with a slightly European sensibility. Behind the children, an elegant landscape backdrop suggests the Hudson River. We do not know the origin of the "Palmer Family" title, written on the label from the Kennedy Galleries, New York City, NY. The picture appeared in the Kennedy Quarterly, v. 9, No. 3, 1969, and subsequently sold at Hindman Auctions in 2004 for \$36,000 before resurfacing last year.

Known Tweedy-Bird Limner portraits number in the dozens so far, but horizontal double portraits are among the artist's rarest and most monumental. Every inch of the canvas is filled with detail, suggesting a commitment to artistic craft that went above and beyond expectations. Attention to detail is one of the key characteristics that makes the Tweedy-Bird Limner's portraits of children especially superb, on par with iconic folk painters such as Joseph Whiting Stock and Joseph Goodhue Chandler.

The value and significance of Palmer Family is not solely tied to the exact name and identity of this limner. The value of an American Folk Art portrait has far more to do with its intrinsic quality than its artist's name. While this artist was previously unrecognized – having been mistaken for no less than six other portrait painters—we now restore credit where it is due, nearly two centuries after the Tweedy-Bird Limner painted the Palmer Family on a pleasant day in New York.

Heirlooms in Oil: American Children



Figure 8. Anonymous Double Portrait (Mid -19th century)
Two Children in Red, Oil on canvas, 44" x 34"

This painting features a full-length double portrait of two young children. They are wearing matching, brilliantly pigmented red dresses with off-the-shoulder necklines, cinched waists, and full, gathered skirts.

The visual impact and sheer vibrancy of the red dresses contrasts beautifully against the cooler blues and greens of the landscape background. Red pigments from this era can sometimes be muddy or faded, but in this case they are remarkably saturated and command the canvas.

The taller child's right arm is draped protectively around the smaller child's shoulder, indicating a familial bond. The child holds the black leather reins of a well-detailed wooden hobby horse that is mounted on a red rocking base. The inclusion of toys is a classic convention of the era used to denote youth, gender, and status.

The figures are framed by a theatrical arching trellis of green ivy or grapevines, which draws the viewer's eye directly to the subjects. The background opens onto an idealized, romantic landscape that features a winding river, distant hills, and a soft blue sky.

J.H. Keeley: The Keeper of the Garden



Figure 9. Attributed to J. H. Keeley (1817-1891)
Woman in Red, Oil on canvas, 44" x 34"

"An artist of no ordinary ability... a harmony of coloring, a freshness of tone, and a smoothness and finish in execution..." "...as nearly perfect as such work can well be." So wrote the newspapers about John H. Keeley (1817-1866), an Anglo-American portrait painter who moved to New England and met with resounding success. But in recent years, John H. Keeley's name has been all but forgotten. How could this be? An error in the definitive 1953 "Grove and Wallace" artist dictionary inadvertently inflicted a kind of *damnatio memoriae*, reassigning his flourishing "J.H. Keeley" signature as "Isaac" Keeley. Fortunately, a recent resurgence of interest in Keeley's work has also restored his name.

Keeley's lavish portraits are still in high demand, regardless of attribution. In his finest works, vibrant jewel tones pop off the canvas. This is best showcased in his portraits of young people from throughout New England and the Upper Atlantic region. The young lady in the present work is from the Dyckman family of Upstate New York. Around 1860, Keeley spent some time in the Fort Edward, NY, area, completing numerous portraits. This, too, may be the date of Miss Dyckman's portrait, an elaborate endeavor in Keeley's preferred large-scale format.

Even for a Keeley painting, which tends to age well and keep its colors, this work is particularly immaculate. It is likely that Keeley learned his paint-mixing techniques during a professional apprenticeship in England. A newspaper describes him as "an English portrait painter whose work is well known." Though his art has the forthright and honest quality that distinguishes American Folk portraiture, several decorative flourishes, such as the arch with climbing vines, also hint at a British influence. Interestingly, the astonishingly vivid salmon-colored paint used in Miss Dyckman's dress also appears in the works of other well-known American Folk portraitists of the era.

While Miss Dyckman's exact name and whereabouts are no longer known, the portrait speaks for itself. The elaborate wrought ironwork on the balcony, juxtaposed with the mountainous background, suggests a stately Hudson River mansion. The carefully plucked flower from the perfectly pruned rosebush invokes a coming-of-age motif, the young woman flourishing on the cusp of adulthood. For a special occasion such as this, with her perfectly styled ringlets, the sitter would have been trying very hard to look her best with a wonderfully fancy dress. All these years later, she still does.

Anonymous: American Children



Figure 10. Anonymous (Mid-19th century)
The Belknap Children, Oil on canvas mounted on rigid board, 34 ½" x 39 ½"

On the back of this charming double portrait of two girls is a letter written by Gwendolyn Sales that accompanies this artwork:

"This is a portrait of the Belknap children, Charles and Evalina, who were born at 268 Liberty Street, Newburgh in the house I now reside in. It was commissioned in 1840 by their father Isaac Cook Belknap. The portrait was done by an unknown itinerant Hudson Valley portrait painter."

Interestingly, there is a direct genealogical relationship between Zedekiah Belknap, the American Folk Artist, and the Belknap family of Newburgh, New York. They were distant cousins who shared a common ancestor from the earliest days of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

This painting excels in its meticulous attention to decorative costuming with the artist's careful detailing of the girls' rich plum and lavender dresses, lace-edged pantalettes, and one sitter's coral necklace. Such details sometime appear in Zedekiah Belknap paintings. Set against a softly generalized, romanticized woodland backdrop, the vibrant floral bouquets add a layer of conventional period symbolism, resulting in a highly decorative and visually striking piece of regional portraiture.

Anonymous: American Children



Figure 11. Anonymous (Mid-19th century)
Double Portrait of Children, Oil on canvas, 24" x 27 1/2"

This stylized double portrait is characterized by the simple forms and minimal detail reminiscent the Prior-Hamblin School aesthetic, but cannot positively be identified as the work of a specific artist. This naive style is sometimes referred to as "American Primitive" for its simplified, flattened forms that lack the intricate details of light, space, decorative detail, and texture found in more technically sophisticated art.

The painting depicts two young children—an older boy and a younger girl—rendered in an unadorned style that emphasizes shape and bold color blocking over realistic depth.

The boy, positioned on the left, is dressed in a dark suit or tunic that is sharply punctuated by a broad white collar and a neatly tied black bow. His right hand rests rigidly at his side, clutching an apple. The other hand holds onto the girl, who may be his sister.

The girl provides a vibrant visual contrast in a coral-pink dress that has short, puffed sleeves, and is softened by a white pinafore. In her hand, she holds a delicately rendered yellow woven basket which was a traditional prop in 19th-century portraiture, often used to symbolize youth, innocence, or domesticity.

Fritz Vogt: Drawn Home to Rural America



Figure 12. Fritz Vogt (1842–1900, Active 1890-1900)
Residence of Mr. D.G. Hackney, Colored and Graphite Pencil, 39" x 27"
Signed and dated: Fort Plain, NY April 13, 1896

Fritz Vogt was a captivating figure in late 19th century American Folk Art. An architectural draftsman who drew charming portraits of homesteads across upstate New York, he worked mainly between 1890 and 1900. Vogt traveled the dirt roads and canal towns of five counties in New York State, rendering farmhouses, barns, churches, and shops in graphite and vibrant colored pencil and crayon.

During the summer of 1974, my brother Peter and I started traversing the hills and valleys of Montgomery, Schoharie, Otsego, Fulton and Herkimer counties where Fritz Vogt had travelled, worked and found commissions, often employed as a hops picker. In college, I spent weekends in search of Vogt's drawings continuing through the 1980s with my dad. We found dozens of works. Surprisingly, few collectors, auction houses or scholars were aware of Vogt or the extent of his work. We began documenting and speculating about Vogt's history in the five county area. Our efforts and the work of others culminated in a 2004 exhibition called *Drawn Home: Fritz Vogt's Rural America*. The show travelled from the Fenimore Art Museum in Cooperstown, New York, to the American Folk Art Museum in New York City. Many of our earliest finds were exhibited in this groundbreaking show.

Hundreds of Vogt's drawings chronicle the architecture and agriculture of late-19th century rural New York. The quirky distortions, bright crayon highlights, and lovingly drawn pets reflect to a man bringing warmth to forms. Vogt was truly "on the road", sleeping in barns, hotels or the very homes he sketched, living the life of an artist-laborer paid in room and board or modest sums: some drawings cost just \$2, as indicated on their back.

Though self-taught, Vogt's trained eye emerges in the precision of windows, barns and rooflines. He cleverly distorts scale and perspective to amplify emotional content rather than strict realism. Fritz Vogt's *Drawn Home* was more than a Folk Art show—it was a testament to an era, a region, and an itinerant man who translated rural pride into artworks. Vogt stood at the intersection of architecture and emotion, technique and folk impulse. In his colorful crayon and pencil homesteads, the flame of American rural identity—its labor, warmth, and quiet optimism—burns brightly.

Sources: W. Parker Hayes, Jr (2002), "Drawn Home: Fritz Vogt's Rural America"; *Antiques and The Arts Weekly*, May 28, 2002

Exhibited: *Drawn Home: Fritz Vogt's Rural America*. Exhibition held at Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, NY, Apr. 2-Dec. 29, 2002; American Folk Art Museum, New York, N.Y., Oct. 4, 2003-Jan. 4, 2004. Illustrated in exhibition catalog on page 86.

Fritz Vogt: Drawn Home to Rural America



Figure 13. Fritz Vogt (1842–1900, Active 1890–1900)
 (Detail) Residence of J.B. Close, Our Native Summer Home
 Colored and Graphite Pencil, 39"x 27". Signed and dated: Village of Glen Montgomery Co, NY, September 23, 1896



Figure 13. Fritz Vogt (1842–1900, Active 1890–1900)
 (Full view) Residence of J.B. Close, Our Native Summer Home



Figure 13. Fritz Vogt (1842–1900, Active 1890–1900)
 (Detail) Residence of J.B. Close, Our Native Summer Home

Fritz Vogt: Drawn Home to Rural America



Figure 14. Fritz Vogt (1842–1900, Active 1890-1900)
Residence of Mr. and Mrs. John Blumenstock, Colored and Graphite Pencil, 22"x18". Signed and dated: Buel, NY, December 27, 1894



Figure 15. Fritz Vogt (1842–1900, Active 1890-1900) Residence of Wesley H. Kilts, Graphite Pencil, 19½"x16". Signed and dated: Sharon, Schoharie County, October 28, 1890



Figure 16. Fritz Vogt (1842–1900, Active 1890-1900)
Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Philip A Rickard, Colored and Graphite Pencil, 22" x 18"
Signed and dated June 4, 1894

Heirloom in Wood: Shaker Sewing Desk



Figure 17. Shaker Sewing Desk (circa 1880)
Mount Lebanon, New York



Figure 17. Shaker Sewing Desk (circa 1880)(Side View)
Mount Lebanon, New York

This exceptional piece exemplifies the profound elegance and utilitarian brilliance of late-19th-century Shaker craftsmanship. Crafted around 1880 in the prominent Shaker community of New Lebanon, New York, this sewing desk is a representation of a form specifically developed by the Shakers to maximize efficiency in their communal textile work.

The desk features a classic two-tiered design finished in a rich, warm reddish-brown tone that highlights the natural grain of the wood. The upper gallery consists of six diminutive drawers arranged in two rows of three. It provides a meticulously organized storage for spools, needles, and threads that hovers above a recessed open workspace. The lower section offers a broad, flat work surface above an apron containing three additional drawers—two smaller side-by-side drawers over a single, full-width drawer that features a central keyhole escutcheon. All drawers are fitted with unadorned, beautifully turned wooden knobs, a hallmark of Shaker austerity. The entire case is elevated on four exquisitely turned legs that gently taper toward the floor, featuring subtle ring turnings near the apron that lend the piece a quiet grace.

Literature: Timothy D. Rieman and Jean M. Burks, *The Encyclopedia of Shaker Furniture* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2003), Illustrated Figure 231.

Provenance: Suzanne Courcier and Robert W. Wilkens

Since 1977, Saratoga Fine Art has specialized in American and European fine art, with a deep passion for 19th and 20th century American Art, particularly American Folk Art and Hudson River School landscapes.

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Figure 6. Joseph Goodhue Chandler (1813-1884)
Double Portrait of Two Girls, Oil on canvas, 35 1/2 x 42 1/2"

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