

Early American Art & Artists

Part 2

What can we say about Americans from the things they made?

- What was important to each group at that time?
 - SURVIVAL ?
 - Freedom ?
 - Identity ?
 - MONEY ?
 - Expression?

Art in the New World

- Art is a barometer for culture
- Art helps new ideas travel
- Artistic expression is more understated in America than in Europe

Themes

- Utilitarian Objects
- Architecture
- Landscapes
- Biblical themes
- Portraiture

Colonial Artistry

- UTILITATARIAN OBJECTS:
 - Useful
 - Functional
 - Serves a purpose
 - Craftsmanship
 - Plenty of materials!!



John Elderkin
The Great Chair
1650-80

Oldest known piece of American
furniture!

4 Groups occupying the North after 1620

- Puritans
- Quakers
- Amish
- Shaker

Puritans

- Searching for religious freedom
- Prove their religion was a “true” religion
- Banned paintings, music, poetry
- LIMNERS: self-taught craftsman/artist
 - Low status
 - Painted Coat of arms
 - Carved gravestones
 - Painted portraits



Old Ship Meetinghouse
Hingham, Massachusetts
1681



Quakers

- Sought religious freedom
- Persecuted by the Puritans
- Moved Northeast to Rhode Island and west to Pennsylvania
- ART was a “WORLDLY INDULGENCE”
- Believed in the plainness in all aspects of life

Edward Hicks (1780-1849)

- Quaker Artist
- Minister
- Used art to “spread his hope for humanity”
- Central interest was a quest for a redeemed soul
- Illustrated bible texts



Edward Hicks
The Peaceable Kingdom
Oil on Canvas
1834



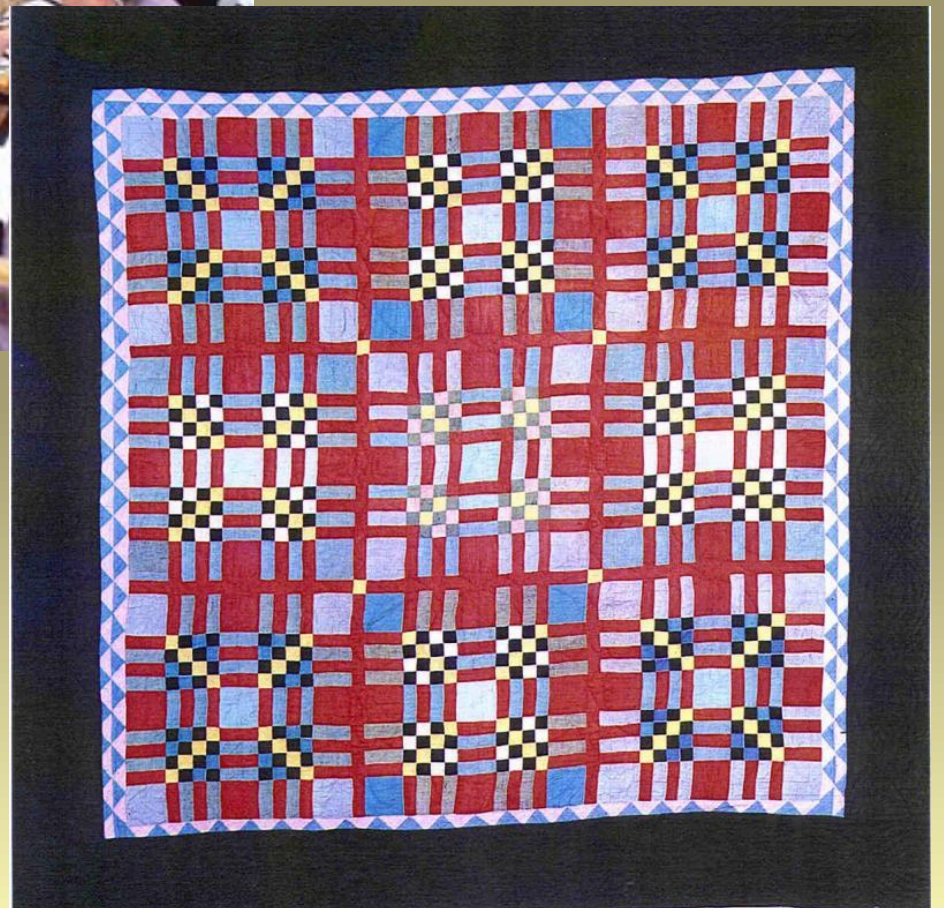
Edward Hicks
Noah's Ark
Oil on Canvas
1846

Amish Quilts

- Art for arts sake is looked down upon
- A quilt serves a purpose
- Unique, simple patterns are acceptable
- Bright colors are also OK
- Would sometimes make deliberate mistakes in their patterns because “only God is perfect”



MINIMALISTIC



Shaker

- Offshoot of the Quakers
- Animated singing, dancing & shaking during religious ceremonies
- Plain and simple aesthetic
- “Visions” encourage them to make “spirit drawings”

