



# **We Sit Together: Utopian Benches from the Shakers to the Separatists of Zoar**

*Francis Cape*

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Whether for protest, religious congress, companionship, eating, or comfort, sitting communally remains one of the most powerful and prevalent of human social activities. This simple act held special significance in numerous utopian communities that emerged in nineteenth-century America, and was given physical presence in the form of a variety of styles of wooden benches. Fascinated by these expressions of harmony and equality, renowned British artist Francis Cape sought out and made measured drawings of remaining examples. *We Sit Together* presents twenty-five of Cape's beautifully reconstructed benches drawn from twenty utopian sects—active from 1732 to the present—ranging from well-known communities like the Shakers to more obscure groups like the Separatists of Zoar. Featuring crisp photographs and lovingly handmade drawings, this rarely seen slice of Americana will appeal to the collector, woodworker, student of American history, or anyone who just likes to take a seat.

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