

Basic Detail Report



Title Man's Uniform Shako

Date 1815-1820

Primary Maker Sheldon & Colton

Medium Hand-stitched blackened (and possibly japanned) leather, with cardboard lining, a leather sweatband, a japanned leather visor, a silvered-brass plate, iron wire, and ball buttons

Description Militia uniform "bell-crowned" shako, completely hand-stitched of blackened leather with an applied shiny finish, possibly japanning. Inside the lower edge of the hat, a thin, black, leather edging rolls to the inside to become a sweatband. The inside of the crown is lined with a piece of gray cardboard, to

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which is pasted a rectangular maker's label (see Marks). Affixed to the back of the shako is a thin, black, embossed leather back flap. This flap is attached to the lower edge of the hat, then folded up towards the crown, then folded in the middle back down toward the base of the hat. The forward folded edge of the back flap on each side has a small slit which attaches to a 3/8-inch-diameter ball button. This button holds the back flap in place. The side body of the hat is cylindrical in shape, flaring outward at the top, where it joins a slightly rounded, circular crown, which is now somewhat collapsed and flat. The hat has a black leather visor affixed to the front; the visor's upper surface is heavily japanned and cracked. The underside of the visor is black, not painted green, as other examples in the collection are. Affixed to center front of the hat, just below the crown, is a rectangular, embossed, silvered brass plate, bearing an eagle and shield over a panoply of arms, over which is a scroll with the words "E PLURIBUS UNUM", surmounted by thirteen stars. The plate is fixed to the hat by two wire loops held in place by strips of leather run through the loops. Just below the front plate, about one half inch above the brass strap, are two small holes, half an inch apart, on either side of the center front seam of the hat, suggesting that this hat had a braided cord attached up by the crown and draped across the front of the hat. On the inside of the hat on the proper right side near the crown, about midway from front to back, a piece of twisted iron wire forms a loop that is threaded through two small holes on the outside of the hat, and then the two ends are twisted together on the inside. On the proper left, in approximately the same position, there are also two small holes just below the crown, but no wire.

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This was probably the attachment point for some braided cord and tassels, based on other similar examples in the collection. At the center front inside, just below the crown, a thin piece of russet leather, 1 x 2 inches, is folded double upon itself and stitched to the center front of the hat. It corresponds with a small hole at the center front of the crown, and was probably a point of attachment for a feather plume. Also found loose inside the crown of the hat is a 1 1/4 inch wide x twelve inch long strip of sheet brass; shadow lines at the front of the hat and stitch holes just behind the front edges of the back flap indicate that this brass strip was attached across the center front of the hat, almost coming down onto the visor.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (crown height x diameter of top of crown): 7 x 8 7/8in. (17.8 x 22.5cm)