

Harry B. Hartman

An American Master

By Laura Beach

MARIETTA, PENN. — For many years we pursued Harry B. Hartman, who died suddenly on January 3 at 84, for an interview. For years he demurred. His refusal seemed reasonable, mostly. Though never short of words, the Marietta antiques dealer was a man of deeds, his legacy a distinctive approach to collecting Americana and an equally colorful way of putting it all together in livable interiors.

Writing about the collections of two of Hartman's best clients, Leslie A. Miller and Richard Worley, in *The Magazine Antiques*

I took this photograph of Harry in September 2010 in the garden gazebo of Richard Worley and Leslie Miller's home for the book *Start with a House, Finish with a Collection*. —Gavin Ashworth





Harry Hartman in 2005 with a few of his favorite things: redware, fraktur and country furniture. —Antiques and The Arts Weekly photo

in January 2010, Philadelphia Museum of Art curator Alexandra Alevizatos Kirtley dubbed Hartman’s approach the “Pennsylvania Style.” Antiques dealer John C. Newcomer called it “the Marietta Look.”

As Kirtley explained, “For nearly 50 years, the Hartman name has been synonymous with purveying fine antiques from southeastern Pennsylvania.” The Miller-Worley house and collection, she noted, also showed off “Hartman’s other talent — well-designed spaces in which to live comfortably with antiques.”

Harry B. Hartman was born in Cape May, N.J., on July 1, 1930. His parents, John and Grace, reared him in Pennsylvania’s Oley Valley. He later served in the US Navy. Interested in antiques since boyhood, he ran a shop in Lumberville, Penn., as a young man. In 1964, he moved to Marietta, where he was joined by business partner Oliver Overlander II.



Religious text for Catharina Gochnauer by Adam Siegel (d 1809), Lancaster County, Penn., circa 1800. Watercolor and ink on laid paper, 5 by 7½ inches. Acquired by Joan and Victor Johnson from Harry B. Hartman. Promised gift of Joan and Victor Johnson, from "Drawn With Spirit: Pennsylvania German Fraktur from the Joan and Victor Johnson Collection" opening at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Photo courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art.

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arietta was Hartman's home for the last half century. He helped found the Marietta Restoration Associates and through it contributed to the

refurbishment of the town's Borough Hall, Union Meeting House and Bank Building. He helped establish the annual Marietta Candlelight Tour.

(Right) Bookplate for William Babel, Pennsylvania, May 16, 1837. Watercolor and ink on wove paper, 10½ by 8 inches. Acquired by Joan and Victor Johnson from Harry B. Hartman. Promised gift of Joan and Victor Johnson, from "Drawn With Spirit: Pennsylvania German Fraktur from the Joan and Victor Johnson Collection" opening February 1 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Photo courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Hartman was blessed to live long enough to see *Start with a House, Finish with a Collection*, the sumptuous 2014 book that Lesley Miller wrote with Kirtley. Miller told us, "Harry was one of a kind. He had a great eye, be it for antiques, fabrics or arranging furniture. It went hand-in-hand with his wonderful sense of style."

Hartman is certain to be remembered at New York's Winter Antiques Show, where Miller will speak and sign books on Friday, January 23, at 2:30 pm, and at the Original Semi-Annual York Antiques Show and Sale, January 30–February 1, where Harry B. Hartman had been scheduled to exhibit.

