

including singing, dancing (shuffling or shaking), and preaching. Otherwise, their complete rejection of “every band and tie of the flesh,” resulted in men and women living apart. And, while their numbers at first grew by proselytizing, their marital abstinence finally meant their demise.

The Shakers have been considered an American institution although the sect began in England in 1747. In that year, Ann Lee was expelled from the Quakers of Manchester for “entertaining views which were not in accordance with the tenets of the Friends.” One such view entailed celibacy, considered by Ann to be “a perfect state in a well-ordered and orthodox life.” Another called for the community possession of property. Such views proved to be compelling and in 1774, Ann and some of her followers sailed for America.

Ann had considerable success in America, securing many converts through preaching and healing. By 1787, a Shaker colony was established near Albany, New York. From there her views were carried west and south to establish new colonies. In 1805, “the spirit of unrest or gospel zeal” induced some members to leave for Kentucky and to establish the Shaker settlement at Pleasant Hill. Although the Shakers no longer exist, Pleasant Hill is now preserved as a living museum.

The houses at Pleasant Hill are arranged to divide the sexes. From the outside they appear symmetrical, balanced on the left and right. Two entry doors appear side by side, one on the right for women, and one on the left for men. Inside, the division continues. The doors directed members to separate stairs and thence to divided dormitories. And, while there were some shared spaces in the house, like the dining room, even here the tenets of their religion dictated that men and women sat separately. The two doors at the front of the house distinguished the building as a Shaker dwelling and made physical a core belief of their sect.



### THE SUDANESE HOUSE

During the 1980s, a Sudanese architecture student presented a housing thesis, a required project for graduate work. During his final appearance before a faculty committee, he was questioned about why he had provided each house with two front doors. The student explained that it was to accommodate the common practice in his country of dividing houses according to sex. The faculty member persisted that in our day and age, this didn't seem like an appropriate attitude for architects to take. The student responded, with some pride: "Traditionally the women's door is smaller, but I made both doors the same size."

### THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE

While the first two examples of double doors are driven by religious and cultural beliefs, a third case is more the result of private invention. Built in the 1800s by a doctor in Jefferson, Ohio, this house breaks the rules of classical design. Where the Greeks and all derivative designs have used an even number of columns separated by an odd number of spaces, the doctor used three columns and two spaces. While appearing strange to the architectural eye, it is said locally that the doctor had his reasons. He was interested



Shaker Houses at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky: (Left) East Family House (from *Old Shakertown and the Shakers* by J. B. Hutton 1987, 74); (Right) Interior of Center Family Dwelling.



The Two-Door Sudanese Houses.