

The Shakers

Introduction

1 The Protestant Reformation



The Protestant Reformation was the 16th-century religious, political, intellectual and cultural upheaval that splintered Catholic Europe, setting in place the structures and beliefs that would define the continent in the modern era. In northern and central Europe, reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and Henry VIII challenged papal authority and questioned the Catholic Church's ability to define Christian practice.

<https://www.history.com/topics/reformation/reformation> and technological advances led to new Christian sects outside of the Catholic Church and mainstream Protestant denominations into the 17th and 18th centuries. The

United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, commonly known as the Shakers, was a Protestant sect founded in England in 1747. The French Camisards and the Quakers, two Protestant denominations, both contributed to the formation of Shaker beliefs.

The French Camisards originated in southern France during the 17th century. They regarded some of their leaders as Prophets, believing that they heard the word of God. Heavily persecuted by French authorities, they fought the armies of King Louis XIV from 1702 to 1706. After losing, some Camisards fled to England to continue their religious practices. While in England, their preachers heavily influenced a group of Quakers in Manchester.



Shaker founder Anne Lee

The Quakers, or Society of Friends, were founded in England in 1652 by George Fox



George Fox (July 1624 - 13 January 1691) was an English Dissenter, who was a founder of the Religious Society of Friends, commonly known as the Quakers or Friends. The son of a Leicestershire weaver, he lived in times of social upheaval and war. He rebelled against the religious and political authorities by proposing an unusual, uncompromising approach to the Christian faith. He traveled throughout Britain as a dissenting preacher, often being persecuted by the disapproving authorities.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Fox. Early Quakers taught that direct knowledge of Christ was possible to the individual - without need from a Church, priest or book. No official creed exists. Their belief that God exists in all people caused many to be sensitive to injustice and practice pacifism.

The name "Quaker" was derived from their process of worship, where their violent tremblings and quakings predominated. This form of worship changed in the 1740s, though it was retained by one group in Manchester, England. The "Shaking Quakers," or Shakers, split from mainstream Quakerism in 1747 after being heavily influenced by Camisard preaching. The Shakers developed along their own lines, forming into a society with Jane and James Wardley as their leaders. Ann Lee, the founder and later leader of the American Shakers, and her parents were members of this society.

Ann Lee was born the daughter of a blacksmith in Manchester in 1736. She worked in a cotton factory, and in 1762 she married blacksmith Abraham Standerin. They had four children, all of whom died in childhood. Ann joined the Shakers in 1758, and 12 years later had "a special manifestation of Divine light." After this experience she became the leader of the Shakers. In 1774 she received a revelation directing her to establish a Shaker Church in America. Ann Lee, her husband, and seven members set sail for America on May 10, 1774. By late 1776 she and some followers were located northwest of Albany, New York, by which point she and her husband had separated. She gathered followers in New York until her death in 1784.

Beliefs

¹ The Shakers practiced communal living, where all property was shared. They didn't believe in procreation, and therefore had to adopt children and recruit converts into their community. For those that were adopted, they were given a choice to either stay within the community or leave when they turned 21.

Like the Quakers, the Shakers were pacifists who had advanced notions of gender and racial equality. The Shakers believed in opportunities for intellectual and artistic development within the Society. Simplicity in dress, speech, and manner were encouraged, as was living in rural colonies away from the corrupting influences of the cities. Like other Utopian societies founded in the 18th and 19th centuries, the Shakers believed it was possible to form a more perfect society upon earth.

Eventually there were 19 Shaker communities in the Northeast, Ohio, and Kentucky. They referred to those who lived outside their communities as people from "the World." They allowed contact with outsiders. Many outsiders, including Nathaniel Hawthorne, observed their religious practices. Communities were agriculturally based, and men and women lived, and mostly worked, apart.



The community meeting-house was the center of Shaker worship services on Sunday. Spontaneous dancing was part of Shaker worship until the early 1800s, when it was replaced by choreographed dancing. Spontaneous dancing returned around the 1840s, but by the end of the 19th century dancing ceased during worship. Services consisted of singing hymns, testimonials, a short homily, and silence.

Shaker Communities


Image	Site	Spiritual name	Bishopric	City	State	Dates	Geolocation
	Alfred Shaker Village	Holy Land	Alfred	Alfred	Maine	1793-1931	













Image	Site	Spiritual name	Bishopric	City	State	Dates	Geolocation
	Canterbury Shaker Village	Holy Ground	Canterbury	Canterbury	New Hampshire	1792-1992	
	New Enfield Shaker Village	Chosen Vale	Canterbury	Enfield	New Hampshire	1793-1923	
	Old Enfield Shaker Village	City of Union	Hancock	Enfield	Connecticut	1792-1917	
	Gorham Shaker Village	Union Branch	Alfred	Gorham	Maine	1808-1819	
	Groveland Shaker Village	Union Branch	Groveland	Groveland	New York	1836-1892	
	Hancock Shaker Village	City of Peace	Hancock	Hancock and Pittsfield	Massachusetts	1790-1960	
	Harvard Shaker Village	Lovely Vinyard	Harvard	Harvard	Massachusetts	1792-1918	
	Mount Lebanon Shaker Society	Holy Mount	New Lebanon	New Lebanon	New York	1785-1917	
	Narcoosee Shaker Village	Olive Branch	Union Village	Narcoosee	Florida	1895-1924	
	New Canaan Shaker Village	None	New Lebanon	New Canaan	Connecticut	1810-1812	
	North Union Shaker Village	Holy Grove	North Union	Cleveland	Ohio	1822-1899	
	Philidelphia Shakers	None	Watervliet/New Lebanon	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	1858-1910	
	Sabbathday Lake Shaker Village	Chosen Land	Alfred	New Gloucester	Maine	1794-present	

Image	Site	Spiritual name	Bishopric	City	State	Dates	Geolocation
	Savoy Shaker Village	None	New Lebanon	Savoy	Massachusetts	1817-1821	
	Shakertown at Pleasant Hill	None	Pleasant Hill	Harrodsburg	Kentucky	1806-1910	
	Shirley Shaker Village	Pleasant Garden	Harvard	Shirley	Massachusetts	1793-1908	
	Sodus Bay Shaker Village	New Lebanon	Sodus and Huron	New York	New York	1826-1836	
	South Union Shaker Village	Jasper Valley	South Union	South Union	Kentucky	1807-1922	
	Tyringham Shaker Settlement	City of Love	Hancock	Tyringham	Massachusetts	1792-1875	
	Union Village Shaker settlement	Wisdom's Paradise	Union Village	Turtlecreek Township	Ohio	1805-1912	
	Watervliet Shaker Village	Wisdom's Valley	New Lebanon	Albany	New York	1774-1926	
	Watervliet (Ohio) Shaker Village	Vale of Peace	Union Village	Kettering	Ohio	1806-1900	
	West Union Shaker Village	None	Union Village	West Union (Busro)	Indiana	1807-1827	
	White Oak Shaker Colony	None	Union Village	White Oak	Georgia	1898-1902	
	Whitewater Shaker Settlement	Lonely Plain of Tribulation	Whitewater	New Haven	Ohio	1822-1916	

Links

List of Shaker Sites : <https://www.shakerworkshops.com/shaker-museums.html>

References

1 [●] History of the Shakers (U.S. National Park Service). <https://www.nps.gov/articles/history-of-the-shakers.htm>. Accessed 11 Feb. 2019.

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