

American Home

SEPTEMBER 35¢

BEST HOUSES OF 1969

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a great new design
that sleeps 8, costs \$14,000



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American Treasury: Shaker food, Shaker furniture



At left in the main hallway of the Center Family House at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, are reproductions of Shaker crafts. Hanging from the pegboards are chairs, a scone and a clothes hanger. A slat-back chair stands on a rag rug, a nest of boxes on a table. From a towel rack hangs checked fabric. The double cupboard was used for tinware. The "spirit drawing" is "Tree of Life." The clock is antique. Shopping information is on page 115.

The Shakers, a curious and gifted religious group who thought work was prayer, were 19th-century America's most inspired craftsmen. Today, more than ever before, the work they created with devoted hands looks completely new—especially to newcomers to the American scene and the searching young. The Shakers were our first functionalists, designing everything to be perfectly useful. Their furniture and buildings have a breathtaking simplicity. Mystics, who worshipped through ritual shakings to cast off sin and whirling dances, heaven inspired, they were clever and ingenious in worldly matters, starting the first chair business in the United States, inventing among many other things the flat broom, and making the first patent medicines. The Shakers practiced celibacy and sought to create the kingdom of God on earth. To the right is the famous double staircase found at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. The masterpiece of Brother Micajah Burnett, its simple curves are much more sensuous than that of most Shaker architecture. An essay on the Shakers appears on page 88.

A RICH SHAKER LEGACY

AN AMERICAN TREASURY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD MEEK

contin



All Shaker houses had two doors and two staircases—one for men, one for women. Only Kentucky Shakers used a watchtower to spy on field workers.





Dr. and Mrs. Upton are seated in their study at a ten-foot cherry harvest table made at Hancock, Massachusetts. On the walls are Shaker clothes hangers. The close-up view of the dining table shows how the legs curve in typical Hancock style. The floorboards and the yellow door were from the Hancock Sisters' Shop.



The cherry dining table at left is 11 feet long. It once belonged to a painter and was covered with paint when the Uptons bought it. The 9-foot counter has one hinged door and two sliding ones. The 6½-foot chest in its original deep red paint stands flat on the floor. Although Canton ware and English pewter are not Shaker, they lend a proud warmth. Photograph at right shows a corner of the dining room. The chest of drawers belonged to friends who "wanted it to have a good home." The smaller chest has tirettes that slide both ways to support the extra leaf.



A Shaker treasure house

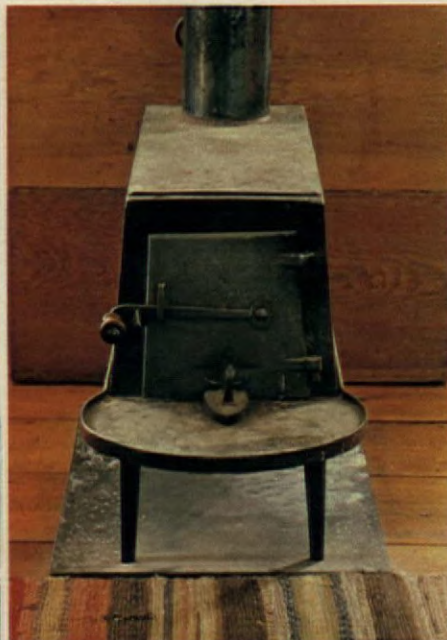
One of the best private Shaker collections belongs to Dr. and Mrs. Charles Upton. Both professors of American History at a New York state college, the Uptons were drawn to Shaker because "this is an original American style." The Uptons began their collecting in 1950. Although some of their finds came from antiques dealers and private owners, they acquired many of their finest pieces by buying directly from Shaker communities, especially those being demolished. According to the local dog census taker, their farmhouse was built originally by or for the Shakers. The remaining Shaker sisters sometimes come to visit, bring gifts of their own making, and enjoy the Shaker-like atmosphere. One, 93-year-old Sister Lillian, said she slept in a real Shaker bed for the first time at the Uptons.

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Shelves for holding ironing (right) were used in a communal laundry room.

A cast-iron stove has a damper held in place by a "sadiron." Below at left is a three-legged Shaker candlestand of perfect simplicity. The staircase was brought from Hancock where it was used by the sisters for 125 years.

A similar set of stairs was used only by the brothers. Note the graceful handrails and spindles—the cloak on the landing.



The table and the chest in the master bedroom (opposite) are Shaker, but the spreads come from the Uptons.

The jugs were used in making medicines. The nine-foot tailoring counter in the living room (below) is on rollers. With a drop leaf, it takes a 54-inch cloth. On top are nests of boxes, carriers and measures. The 1809 clock is by Benjamin Youngs, one of the few Shaker clock-makers. "Spirit drawing" is "A Bower of Mulberry Trees."

Though the furniture in the Uptons' collection is of museum quality, the house does not have a museum atmosphere—probably because everything in the rooms is in constant daily use. This comes easily, say the Uptons, because of "the function, the usability and the good design of Shaker furnishings." A double wash bench has served to store phonograph records and as a side table. Bed sheets with their woven tape headings easily became cafe curtains. The house is even built of Shaker parts—most of the floorboards and the woodwork as well as the staircase come from the Sisters' Shop in Hancock—but the Uptons do not hesitate to use their non-Shaker collection of accessories. The rooms are both warm and personal and everyone feels at home.

continued



SHAKER
continued

Plain Good Food Celibate and self-denying, the Shakers were anything but austere when it



Arranged on a cheerful table in the dining room at Shaker Village in Hancock, Massachusetts, is a feast of everyday Shaker foods. The kitchen sisters used a vast collection of recipes and well-designed

equipment, including round pie ovens, to prepare savory meals for their large "families." In the center of the table sits a spicy cider-baked ham, a dish of pumpkin pickles and a pitcher of rose water—used

came to eating, as this harvest table shows. The recipes for these easy-to-make foods are found on page 96.



to flavor the floating island as well as ice cream and other sweets. Found clockwise from lower left are corn "oysters," corn relish and India relish. The Shakers made blueberry muffins from wild huckleberries.

Shaker "daily loaves" and cider were staples. Boiled apples (similar to baked apples), Shaker lemon pie and pound cake are classic desserts. Oyster pie and herb fried chicken were flavored with Shaker-grown herbs.