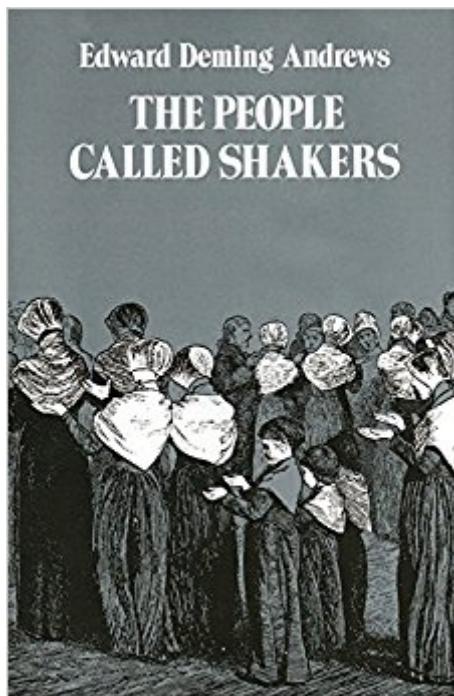


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The People Called Shakers



Synopsis

For 35 years, the author of this book has been a devoted student of the history, beliefs, and ways of The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, better known as the Shakers. Out of his extensive research into manuscripts and primary sources and his conversations with friends in present-day Shaker communities has come a warm, illuminating history, the most thorough ever written on these pious, humble people and the distinct impression they made on American life. The book opens with an introductory assessment of the Shaker contribution to the history of American social experimentation, as seen from the modern point of view. There follows the often amazing story of Ann Lee and the origins of the movement in eighteenth-century England, its emigration to New England, the early Shaker experiments in communism, and the expansion to the American West. The author then pauses to examine in detail the ideology behind the Shaker dedication to physical labor; Shaker industry and design, including a discussion of the spare, utilitarian folk art so popular today; the highly formalized mode of worship, with its lively songs and dances and its often violent emotionalism; strange manifestations during the revival periods of the 1830s and 40s; the rigid internal organization of the Shaker community and its original economic and sociological theories; Shaker relations with the outside world; and the decline of the sect after the Civil War. This edition is the first to include the author's valuable notes, as well as the original appendixes containing the complete text of the Millennial Laws, a statistical breakdown of all the Shaker communities, and a bibliography. This material is especially useful to students of American social and religious movements, but the author's reliance upon original manuscript material and contemporary illustrations lend this book an exciting immediacy that makes it a pleasure for all readers interested in fascinating people and unique ways of life. "An excellent history of one of the most interesting of American religious cults." • Saturday Nation. "Satisfies the exacting standards of historical scholarship and promises at the same time to enlighten and hold the interest of the general reader." • The New York Times.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Not read yet but looks like it may be good.

Terrible writing cld not read

Full on very interesting information, but a lot to have to read.

great...

good book to read about these strange people. I did get a lot from it and it was indepth enough, while being short enough to feel I know more about the Shakers than I did before. No problems with this book

The Shakers were a religious group founded in England and transplanted to America in Colonial Times. Their aim was to live a "simple" life. They founded numerous villages throughout New England, where they shared a communal existence based on farming, carpentry, and furniture-making. Today the Shakers are virtually extinct but they are best-remembered for their distinctive furniture. Edward D. Andrews was an authority on the Shakers and he wrote several books on these fascinating people. This one is a good place to start your study. Then move into his "Work & Worship Among the Shakers," before getting into books by other authors on the subject. Deming tells the interesting story of the Shakers, and makes you wish there were still some Shaker villages to visit. But alas, they're all gone, victims of the Modern World! Deming's books are the next best thing!

Some of the information here has been reinterpreted over time. But readers seeking to understand the spirituality of the Shakers would do well to begin here, and experience the Andrews' genuine enthusiasm for their subject, and then follow with other readings by contemporary authors.

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