Shaker Ghost Stories from Pleasant Hill, Kentucky

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Thomas Freese

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Shaker Ghost Stories is a collection of true experiences from the visitors to and employees at Shakertown, Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. Pleasant Hill has been 200 years in existence, and is one of the restored Shaker villages in the Eastern United States. The Shakers, or United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, worked diligently to creaté a Zion, or heaven on earth. Their founder, Mother Ann, encouraged them to put their "hands to work and hearts to God." While the Pleasant Hill Shakers have passed on, their legacy of spiritual devotion and material prosperity remains. The Shaker village is a peaceful place to visit and learn about Shaker life, to enjoy singing and overnight stays. Those who come find a spiritual touchstone in walking the land, hearing Shaker music, and marveling at their craftsmanship. Some of those who work or visit there have discovered that some Shaker spirits have perhaps returned to Pleasant Hill. The collection of odd occurrences reported in Shaker Ghost Stories include mysterious singing, phantom footsteps, appearances and disappearances of Shaker-looking people, invisible helping hands, and the sights and sounds of work and worship continuing at odd hours. The Shaker spirits seem to act much in character with their original dispositions-demonstrating faith, fervor, and a guardianship of their homes and land. Traveling East in 1990, Thomas Freese visited friends, looking to relocate from New Mexico. Thomas was intrigued by Shakertown and the lives and accomplishments of the Shakers. He moved to Lexington the following year, and in 1996 became one of the Pleasant Hill Singers. While learning and performing Shaker music, he heard his new friends oftenspeak of their "Shaker experiences," occasional and unusual happenings. Boosted buy their encouragement, he spent the summer of 1998 taking notes and collecting accounts of the Shaker Ghost Stories.

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目录:
Shaker Ghost Stories from Pleasant Hill, Kentucky_下载链接1_
标签
评论

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