

american studies

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ON THE COVER: The Shakers have been one of our longest lived, and most widely studied, new religious movements. In their heyday they had a strong sense of otherworldly reality, or "spiritual gifts," including communication with the dead and dreams and visions which imparted important information and insight. The content of the spiritual gifts was interpreted in such a way as to confirm the basic tenets of Shakerism. Often the gifts were manifested in prose, as in spiritual diaries. Sometimes, however, they led to graphic representations, such as the one on our cover. This drawing is millennial in content, testifying to the wonderful gifts which had come into the world with Ann Lee, who represented Christ in the second coming. (Illustration courtesy of The Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.)

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