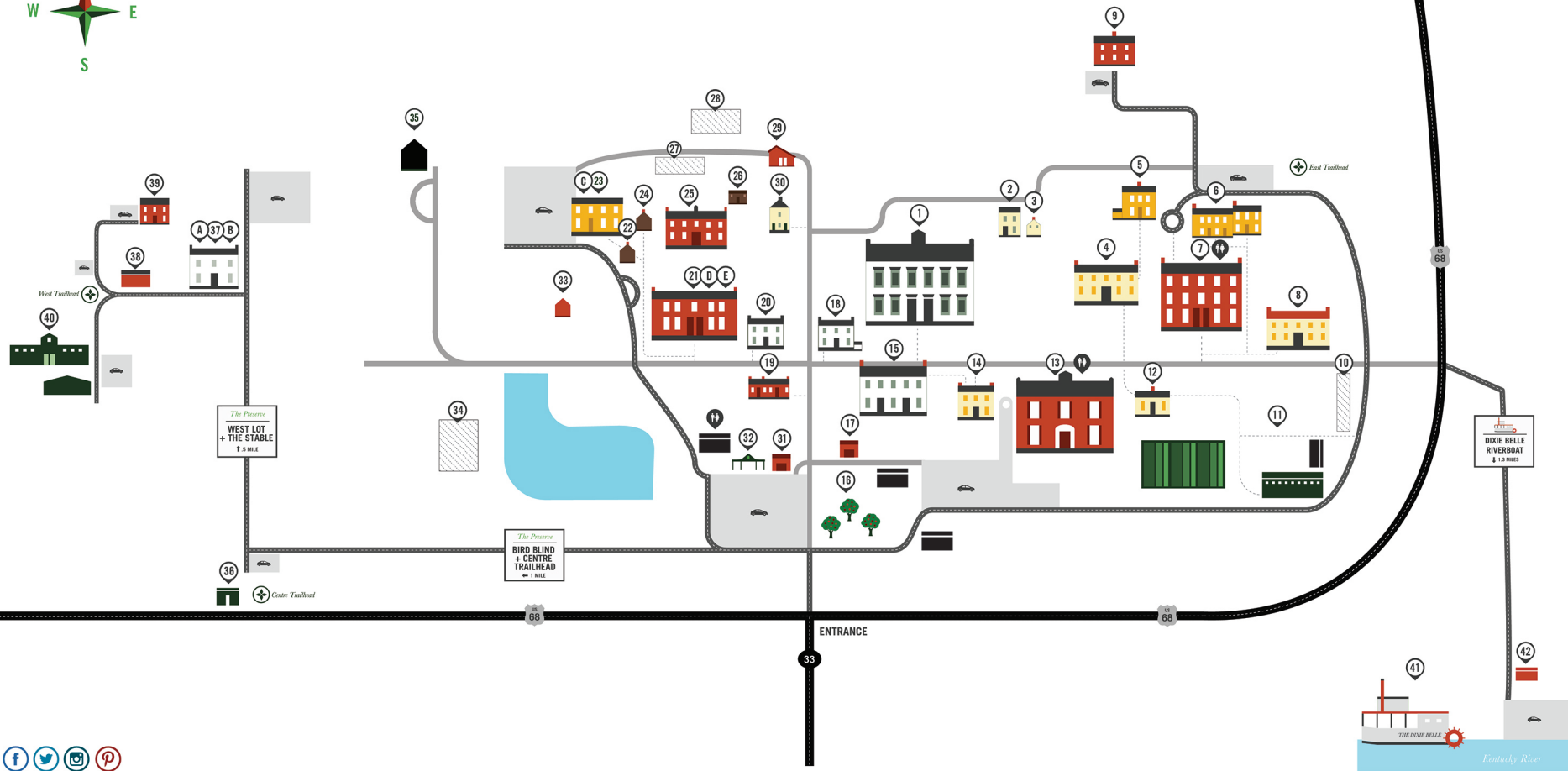


# SHAKER VILLAGE OF PLEASANT HILL

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## A Guide to the Historic Structures

In 1805, a group of Shakers came to central Kentucky and established a village they named Pleasant Hill. Although the population peaked at almost 500 in the 1820s, the community thrived well past the mid-19th century, acquiring more than 4,000 acres of farmland. However, after the 1860s, changing social attitudes and the Industrial Revolution signaled the community's decline. Kentucky Shakers no longer exist, yet their lasting influence is a legacy to all who visit this site.

**1 Centre Family Dwelling 1824-1834**  
The main dwelling buildings were named by their location—these Shakers making up the Centre “family.” Up to 100 members lived as brothers and sisters on opposite sides of this building, which contained 14 bedrooms, kitchens, a dining room, a cellar with food storage rooms, an infirmary and a large meeting room.

**2 Water House 1833**  
Pleasant Hill was the first western Shaker village to have a public water system. Water was pumped by horse-power from a spring at the Tanyard to the 19,000-gallon staved reservoir on the second floor of the water house. The water then was gravity-fed to the kitchens and wash houses in the Village.

**3 Brethren's Bath House 1860**  
The only remaining example of many bath houses constructed for each gender.

**4 East Family Brethren's Shop 1845**  
Used by the East Family brothers as a woodworking shop, here they made furniture and other wooden objects, such as pegs, that were needed throughout the Village.

**5 Cooper's Shop 1847**  
Moved to its present location and remodeled in 1847, here the Shaker craftsmen made as many as 2,000 coopered articles, such as fine cedar pails, buckets and churns, each year.

**6 East Family Wash House 1825**  
Used by the East Family sisters to wash,

dry and press the family's clothes, here they used horse-power to agitate their washing tubs to assist in the washing process. It also was noted by a visitor that they ironed with weights and rollers “without the application of heat.” The east wing was added in 1849.

**7 East Family Dwelling 1817**  
The society was divided into five communal families, numbering from 50 to 100 members. Every family had its own dwelling house, shops, barns, gardens and orchards.

**8 East Family Sisters' Shop 1855**  
Sisters' work, including sewing, spinning and weaving with wool, cotton, silk and flax fibers, took place here. A loom house used to stand in front—the sidewalk is still evident today. The mulberry trees outside are remnants from the silk worms that were housed on the second floor. The sisters tended to hundreds of silk worms and cocoons from which they harvested fine quality silk thread.

**9 Tanyard 1824**  
The original use of the present brick structure is unknown, but by 1826, it became the headquarters for the leather tanning operation at Pleasant Hill.

**12 Post Office 1848**  
The second building used as a post office, here both Shakers and local area residents mailed and received letters and packages.

**13 Trustees' Office 1839**  
The Trustees were the legal and financial leaders of the community, and this building served as their office. It also provided overnight lodging to visiting Shakers and people from the “world.” Here, Micajah Burnett's magnificent twin spiral staircases rise three floors.

**14 Ministry's Workshop 1821**  
Here the Ministry, the two men and two women who were the spiritual and administrative leaders of the village, did most of their work.

**15 Meeting House 1820**  
As the spiritual center of the community, this building housed worship services, which included the shaking, whirling dances giving the Shakers their name. Apartments for the Ministry were on the second floor.

**17 Carriage House 1835**  
One of the primary modes of transportation used by the Shakers was horse-drawn wagons, carts and carriages. This building was used to store these for the Centre Family and was originally larger.

**18 Farm Deacon's Shop 1809**  
The first permanent structure in the Village, this building was constructed to house the ministry and Centre Family. Then, it was used as a tavern for the “accommodation of wayfarers,” and later as a shop and residence for the farm deacon.

**19 Carpenters' Shop 1815**  
First occupied as a smith and wagon makers' shop, this building became a carpenters' shop in 1843. The roof burned in 1855, and the south end was rebuilt and completed in 1870. It was still in use as a carpenters' shop in 1882, but by 1885, it had become a broom workshop.

**20 Old Stone Shop 1811**  
Although this building served a variety of functions over the years, one of its most notable uses was that of Dr. William Pennebaker's medical office in his later years.

**21 West Family Dwelling 1821**  
The main dwelling house for the West Family, this building was used primarily for eating and sleeping. Most of the day-to-day activities were performed in other buildings scattered around the dwelling.

**22 Dry House 1862**  
Each family had its own fruit kiln or dry house, and fire was a recurrent problem—this structure replaced one irreparably damaged by fire. It is known that steam boilers were reused as flues, but journal

entries and archaeological evidence provide only hints of methods of heating the dry house. From acres of orchards and gardens, the Shakers gathered, cut and dried fruit, such as apples, peaches and squash, in shallow baskets, then stored it in barrels.

**23 West Family Wash House 1842**  
Here the sisters of West Family washed, dried and ironed laundry.

**24 Preserve Shop 1859**  
Used for preserve and sweetmeat production at West Family. There is reference to an East Family Preserve Shop as well, and the Centre Family used the cellar for their preserve production.

**25 West Family Sisters' Shop 1845**  
A workspace for West Family Sisters to perform daily work such as spinning, weaving, quilting and sewing. The dormer (skylight) on roof is not centered in order to provide lighting for the stairway.

**26 West Family Privy 1858**  
The only remaining outhouse or “necessary” among the dozens that would have been used by the Shakers. Instead of a trench, the privy contains a clean-out vent on the back wall.

**29 Scale House 1875**  
The scales, set in a stone pit foundation, were used for weighing livestock in the pen or for wagons loaded with goods for market. Worldly people, mostly local farmers, paid the Shakers to use their scales and mills as well. The Shakers were quite reputable in all facets of trade. There is an attached wagon shed on the east side of the scale house.

**30 Old Ministry's Shop 1813**  
The original building where the Ministry did most of their work. It was built next to the original stone Meeting House (1810), but was turned into workshop space after the newer Meeting House and Ministry's Workshop were built in the center of the Village.

**33 Corn Crib 1854**  
Corn cribs were designed to store and dry corn. They typically have slats in the walls to allow air to circulate through the corn, and this Shaker example adheres to this common American design. This structure was built in a year that saw a drought and low corn supply—insuring the vital preservation and storage of the little corn that was available that year.

**34 Cemetery 1811**  
Grave markers typically exhibited the same basic and unpretentious nature that characterized many other aspects of Shaker life. A small stone with the individual's initials was all that was necessary to memorialize their life. Yet in later years, larger and more elaborate stones were used in the cemetery.

**37 West Lot Dwelling 1828**  
Built as a gathering house for the novitiate members of the community—those who were choosing to join the Shakers, but had not yet signed the covenant. There was also another gathering order on the north side of the Village.

**38 West Lot Timber Frame Stable 1830**  
The only surviving Shaker-built barn, this structure had uncommon post-in-the-ground construction and was used for agricultural purposes.

**39 West Lot Wash House 1850**  
Located near the top of a small spring, which provided the house with water. The spring flows and meets up with Shawnee Run just after the site of the Fulling Mill.

**42 Timber Frame Stable 1866**  
The last remaining structure at the once busy Shaker Landing on the Kentucky River. Foundations for warehouses and a dwelling remain. The stable was built to provide a change of horses for the stage coaches running regular schedules on the turnpike through Pleasant Hill.

