

## MOTHER ANN LEE STANLEY

Mother Ann Lee was the charismatic founder of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, commonly known as the Shakers. After a difficult early life, she joined a group of Christians in Manchester, England, who had split from George Fox's Quaker movement. Their unorthodox views and impassioned convulsions in worship drew ridicule and persecution, along with the nickname of the Shakers. Imprisoned, Ann received a revelation that she was the embodiment of the second coming of Christ, in feminine form. Later visions called her and a few followers to America, where in 1774 they settled near Albany, at present-day Watervliet, New York. They sought with some success to attract converts to a gospel of pacifism, celibacy, racial and gender equality, and industrious communal living. Mother Ann herself endured persecution and even physical attacks when traveling to evangelize. The movement expanded after her death, peaking in the 1830's with some 6,000 Shakers living in 19 communities under the leadership of male and female elders and deacons. Mother Ann Lee was illiterate, but accounts of her prophecies and teachings appear in Shaker "testimonies" published as early as 1816.