

## NARRATOR NOTES: VISION QUEST - The Shakers

### Scenes 1-2:

THE UNITED SOCIETY OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST'S SECOND COMING, commonly known as SHAKERS, was among the most successful groups to establish Communities dedicated specifically to practice of non-mainstream religious orientations in North America. Between 1774 and the present from their first settlement in New York State they established Communities throughout New England, as far west as Kentucky and Indiana and south to Georgia and Florida.

The core group of BELIEVERS were nine people who with leadership from MOTHER ANN LEE left England in 1774 following years of Persecution. According to Legend they booked passage aboard a leaky vessel which would have sunk ere reaching its destination except for a miracle which MOTHER ANN interpreted as confirmation that they were indeed among God's chosen people.

Another Legend has it that when they arrived at New York City MOTHER ANN led them to a door where upon knocking they were taken in by complete strangers who had in some mysterious way known that they were coming so were prepared to offer hospitality such as had not been anticipated by these SHAKERS.

Sometime later they purchased land near Albany, New York, at a place called NISKAYUNA by the Natives and later known as WATERVLIET. After draining swamps thus causing this Land to be habitable they settled in to begin accepting Converts while earning the enmity of their neighbors due

to their ceremonies plus the fact that they would not participate in The American Revolution.

In time MOTHER ANN passed away leaving Leadership of THE NISKAYUNA COMMUNITY to a succession of fellow-believers including James Meacham and Lucy Wright. They were the Spiritual Leaders as well as the Decision-makers for a Community which continued growing in numbers despite their acceptance of CELIBACY as a life-style. CONVERSIONS and ADOPTIONS accounted for their longevity as a RELIGIOUS BODY.

The name "Shaker" was derivative of their identification with some of the cardinal tenets of QUAKERS. While THE BELIEVERS were guided to Salvation by an INNER LIGHT they were, unlike followers of GEORGE FOX, inclined to becoming more demonstrative when experiencing "The Holy Spirit". By virtue of this animation observers often referred to them as "SHAKING-QUAKERS" or just plain "SHAKERS".

JAMES WHITTAKER was one of the original SHAKERS to settle at NISKAYUNA. He, along with ANN LEE and WILLIAM LEE, ANNE'S younger brother, became guiding-lights for the COMMUNITY. Following the deaths of the two Lees in 1784, Whittaker served as chief spokesperson and interpreter of The Gospel according to SHAKERS.

#### Scenes 3 - 4:

Though the SHAKERS espoused Pacifism, due to their English backgrounds they were accused of being British Spies with the result that several members were arrested and imprisoned. Once again MOTHER ANN found herself behind bars.