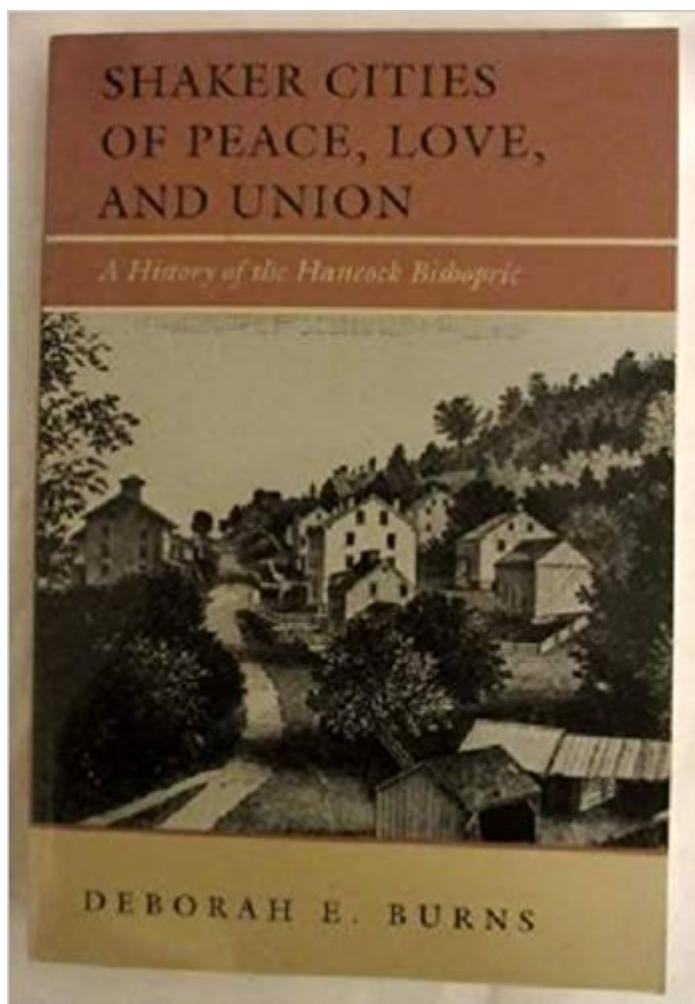


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Shaker Cities Of Peace, Love, And Union: A History Of The Hancock Bishopric



Synopsis

Book by Burns, Deborah E.

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Customer Reviews

Burns (co-author of *Most Excellent Majesty: A History of Mount Greylock*) provides a sensitive and absorbing account of one of the most enigmatic Christian sects in American history: the Shakers, dedicated to personal piety, communal living and equality between the sexes. The author focuses on three communities in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Founded in the late 18th century, these followed the trajectory of Shakerism in general, according to Burns. The communities met with early success in both spiritual and material terms, though within the scheme of the sect itself could be seen the seeds of its own failure. The demand of celibacy and strict rules concerning conversion to the faith led to a decline in membership. Communities began closing in the late 1800s. The village of Hancock, Mass., struggled along until 1960 when it became a Williamsburg-like living museum. Burns's affectionate history is tinged with hope that the vision of the Shakers will live on. Drawing on letters and diaries of the time, this volume helps put flesh on these people who tend to live only in the memory. It will be appreciated by all interested in both religion and the history of the country.

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