

Sister Rhoda Carter, Enfield, NH.
From her memoir "Journey of Life"

"One of our brothers went to Lebanon, NH to learn the harness trade. He frequently met some of the Shakers, as their settlement was near there. He often attended their public services. They used to sing beautiful hymns and anthems of their own composing, and short songs to which they marched. Many of them were very impressive.

Our brother became converted to their religion and joined them without his parents' knowledge. One day he came home very unexpectedly with one of their leaders, Elder John Lion. He was dressed in Shaker costume, drab coat and a low "poled" broad-brimmed hat, their style then, and a very peculiar one, too. He was all alive with Shakerism. People at that time had never heard anything of the Shakers excepting prejudicial reports. 'Mother felt terribly! Walked the floor and said she would rather have followed him to the grave. They stopped but a short time, but soon came back, and brought two of the sisters with them. They looked queer to us, with their straight dresses, white caps, etc.

They noticed us children, and Elder John Lion would take us into his lap, one on each knee, - we girls, too, whom we thought a Shaker man would never dare touch, - and would pet us, so we could not help liking him, of course. One day our little brother Harry, five years old, said to him: ' Your name is Elder John Lion, so I guess I'll have mine Elder John Elephant.' That suited them, and they thought him bright and cunning. Our two oldest sisters were away at work in a factory in Lowell, Mass.

The shakers would sing to us, and we were quick to catch a tune, so one morning after they had gone, and the rest of the children were up and down stairs, I lay there singing one of their marching tunes at the top of my voice. The words were as follows:

"I've found the way to Zion, I never will look back
I ever will be faithful and keep the solid track.
There's love and union flowing among the chosen few
So I'll not be slothful, but still the way pursue."

I raised the whole house, and up came father, laughing, and said: 'That's right, keep the solid track.'

Our brother, after much 'teasing' finally prevailed on our parents to let some of us children go with him to the Shakers. I was nine and the youngest one five. The Shakers were exceedingly kind to us, made of us, and would tell how well brought up we were.