# VIBRANT
## CANTERBURY
## Shaker Village

The Campaign for a National Treasure

"There is this village there that to me is as important as the Grand Canyon, is as important as Monticello, is as important as the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, because it speaks so much to the heart of who we are and, most important, what we would like to be as Americans."

**KEN BURNS**

*Documentary Filmmaker* — The Shakers: Hands to Work, Hearts to God

*Honorary Trustee, Canterbury Shaker Village*

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**CANTERBURY SHAKER VILLAGE** was founded by the followers of Mother Ann Lee in 1792. During its 200-year history, over 2,000 Shakers called this place home. At its height in the 1850s, 300 people lived, worked, and worshiped among more than 100 buildings laid out in a practical, functional grid.

Today the Village is an internationally known historic site. Designated as a National Historic Landmark for its architectural significance, it is one of the oldest, most representative, and best preserved of all the Shaker villages. It includes 26 original Shaker buildings, four reconstructed Shaker buildings, a collection of more than 100,000 artifacts, and 694 acres of forests, fields, gardens, nature trails, and mill ponds.

The last Canterbury Shaker passed away three decades ago, but the desire to understand the sect's creativity, spirituality, and enterprise has only grown, bringing visitors from all over the world to the Village the Shakers left in trust for all.

**"The ethos — and aesthetic — of the utopian Shaker sect has found eternal life. ... People are starting to look at Shakers beyond just the aesthetics and think more about the history and the philosophy. As we live with a pandemic and rising seas ... it makes sense that people are looking to the alternative systems of self-sufficient communities for insight into how we may live better. The Shakers happen to have done this with great affect and incredible style."**

**ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST**
(March 21, 2022)

## A NATIONAL TREASURE

For more than 200 years, Canterbury Shaker Village has stood on a crested ridge line in New Hampshire. As stewards, we believe it has an important and outsized power — a capacity to shape, visitor by visitor, the perceptions of what is possible in our individual lives and in the communities in which we live.

Canterbury Shaker Village is a uniquely American example of a self-sufficient community built on a foundation of shared values and devoted individual effort, in service to the common good.

## AN INFLUENTIAL HISTORY

When the Village was founded in 1792, George Washington was President, and most Americans still lived a subsistence agrarian lifestyle. The Canterbury Shakers faced the challenges of 19th-century life by creating a self-sufficient community. They lived, worked, and worshiped in structures they built; used furniture, tools, and cabinetry they crafted; nourished the community using pioneering agricultural practices; and created a complex mill pond system to power their industries.

They embraced the values of gender and racial equity, pacifism, simplicity, innovation, resourcefulness, and enterprise. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and other prominent Americans visited the Canterbury Shakers to learn from them.

With equal contributions by men and women, their enterprising culture took many forms: they created some of the earliest mass-produced pharmaceutical products, secured patents for inventions, embraced the latest technology, and created an aesthetic that continues to influence artists and manufacturers today.

# "Hands to Work, Hearts to God."

*Seeing the light through the faces of the faithful*

**The Canterbury Shakers continue to teach and mentor. Their stories reveal distinctive values — values that prompt us to consider our own place in the world.**

## VISIONARY LEADER: SCHOLAR, BEEKEEPER, DENTIST, AND PRINTER

**Elder Henry Clay Blinn** (1824-1905), the son of a wealthy merchant ship captain, came to live with the Canterbury Shakers at age 14, following his father's death. Among other skills, he learned to operate a press and helped make Canterbury a printing center. He became a leader in the Village's religious life and as a chronicler of its history. As an Elder, finding that hungry neighbors were pilfering vegetables from the Village's gardens, Henry asked that more be planted. "After all," he said, "crows and thieves have to eat too."

## CREATIVE AND PRACTICAL INVENTOR: ESSAYIST AND MAPLE SYRUP "TAPPER"

At 10, **Nicholas Briggs** (1841-1937) came with his mother and siblings to live with the Canterbury Shakers. Later he sold products and managed the accounts for the Village's broom and medicinal herb businesses. In 1876, he introduced the patented Shaker Washing Machine at the nation's Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. In 1920, the *Granite Monthly* published "Forty Years a Shaker," his account of his life with the Shakers.

## A SHAKER SISTER: EQUITY EXEMPLIFIED

A sincere belief in universal human dignity permitted neither racial nor ethnic discrimination among the Shakers. At age 16, **Sister Edith Green** (1879-1951) joined the Shaker community as its only Black member. She made Shaker knit sweaters, hat brushes, and crocheted goods and sold them on sales trips to resort hotels in the White Mountains and in Maine. Sister Edith also worked in the Creamery, making cheese from milk purchased from a local farmer. She served as the community's Sunday School teacher, answering questions about the Bible with a gentle and patient spirit.

## THE LAST CANTERBURY ELDRESS: FINDING AND SPREADING JOY

At a time when child welfare and foster systems were lacking, the Shakers filled this role. Orphaned at eight, **Eldress Bertha Lindsay** (1897-1990) was brought to Canterbury. "It was apple-blossom time, and we marched down through the orchards," she recalled. "That was the first impression I got: the beauty of this place and the love I felt from the sisters. The experience of being a Shaker is a wonderful sense of having everything to make life joyous."

"I want people to know we did have fun and plenty of it," she said. "Anyone anywhere can live a Shaker life. It is very simple. Meet everyone in a brotherly spirit with a lot of love."

## CANTERBURY'S LAST FOSTER CHILD: A YOUNG LIFE, SAVED

**Alberta MacMillan Kirkpatrick** (1918-2016) was the last child raised by the Shakers. She came to the Village at 11, following her mother's death. Sister Marguerite Frost (1892-1971) welcomed her with a hug — the first she had received since her mother died. "Birdie," as she became known, moved away when she was 18 and raised a family. She stayed connected to the Village and visited often. At her request, she was buried next to Sister Marguerite in the Canterbury Shaker Cemetery. She said, "Whatever goodness there is in my character came from living with the Canterbury sisters."

## "COULD *I* HAVE LIVED AS A SHAKER?"

The question occurs to many who enter the Village.

Walking among the buildings, preserved as the Shakers left them, the question presses closer with each new discovery …

As a Shaker in the 1800s, you would have been set apart by your uncommon beliefs. *Radical* beliefs like … Gender and Racial Equity. Pacifism. Simplicity. Sustainability. Celibacy. Adoptive families. Innovation. Enterprise. Community bonds. Belief in hard work as the path to spiritual growth.

Standing amid structures and artifacts that express these beliefs, you realize that many of the values that set the Shakers apart are the very things that, today, make us *Americans*.

You find yourself wondering: might a touch more Shaker influence make your own future better? Or our *society* better?

As you leave the Village, these questions linger. At peace, you ponder … and soon arrive at a new realization: no, most could not have lived as a Shaker, but everyone *can* learn something from them.

That's when you realize this visit has changed you. In the space of a few hours, you have immersed yourself in a different world.

Looked deeply into another life and imagined yourself within it.

And are the richer for it.

## A MAGICAL AMERICAN PLACE

### OUR VILLAGE'S INDISPENSABLE ROLE

Canterbury Shaker Village is one of only a few places where people can experience the Shakers' lives, work, art, and architecture through 200 years of American history.

Experiencing layers of time in subtle ways, visitors feel as if they are walking through buildings the Shakers left only yesterday. The original blue paint still enlivens parts of the 1792 Meeting House. The 1793 Dwelling House contains 56 rooms of magnificent built-ins, peg rail, and furnishings. A rare Revere bell still peals out on special occasions. Everywhere, sights draw the visitor to an earlier age: the Ministry privy … a 1920s telephone … the extraordinary intact laundry building … the infirmary equipped with dentist chair and instruments … 100-year-old instructions written in cursive on walls. At every turn there is a new discovery from a different era in our American history.

Inventive and enterprising, the Canterbury Shakers worked to serve God and their fellow man. Today, as stewards of their legacy, we also exist for service — service to the memory of these remarkable people, service to the preservation of their craftsmanship, and service to the people who come here to learn, to reflect, and to renew the human spirit.

At Canterbury Shaker Village, we celebrate and keep alive the enduring stories that define what it means to live a peaceful, creative, and productive life. But stories fade when people stop telling them. Without dedicated and thoughtful preservation, this magical place and two centuries of American and Shaker history could quickly and irrevocably disappear.

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A5
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## PROTECTING A NATIONAL TREASURE

### THE VISION FOR CANTERBURY SHAKER VILLAGE

Canterbury Shaker Village is a place like no other. Elegant in its simplicity and practicality. Authentic in its singular beauty. Unsurpassed in its preservation.

*Yet we must act now to step up our efforts to preserve and enhance this treasured asset that the Shakers left behind.*

Time and deferred maintenance have taken a toll, despite the efforts of our small but dedicated staff. Many of the Village's interior spaces are not currently open to the public, representing lost opportunities for learning, sharing stories, and reflection. Records documenting 200 years of Shaker history and an immense and unrivaled collection of Shaker furniture and objects are at stake. ***If they are lost, they are gone forever.***

A completely preserved Village, and the ability to attract and retain the leadership to guide the Village now and into the future, are central to our mission and our long-term sustainability. Preservation efforts and investment in our people will ensure our ability to offer exhibits, programming, and events that will inspire more first-time and return visits.

A revitalized Canterbury Shaker Village will attract even more visitors, scholars, and researchers from throughout the region, across the country, and around the world. We will tell the incredible stories of the Shakers in greater depth, in more ways, and to countless more people — *with your generous help*.

To reach Canterbury Shaker Village's fullest potential, we are excited to introduce ***A Vibrant Canterbury Shaker Village — The Campaign for a National Treasure*** — a bold campaign to preserve and enhance this jewel of American history.

"With thoughtful investments, we can grow responsibly, serve more visitors, and more widely share the fascinating stories of the Canterbury Shakers. We have the creativity, passion, and vision to enhance this magical, spiritual place."

**LOUIS KAUCIC**
Member of the Board of Trustees,
Canterbury Shaker Village

# A Vibrant Canterbury Shaker Village — The Campaign for a National Treasure

*Preserving an irreplaceable piece of America*

**TODAY, AS OUR NATION** approaches its 250th anniversary, there is no better time to learn from the stories of our past.

And there may be no better stories to learn than those of the remarkable, enterprising, inventive, loving, and joyous Shakers.

There is surely no better place to learn those stories than the 694 glorious acres of Canterbury Shaker Village.

Here, visitors learn that works of wood and stone and cloth can also be works of will and love and faith.

Our campaign will preserve and enhance this priceless experience for generations to come.

"Canterbury Shaker Village was at one time the most technologically advanced community in New Hampshire, and thanks to good stewardship, it is still here for all to see and explore. Its continued presence couples the past with the present and serves as a lasting reminder of what we as Granite Staters are capable of through community."

**HON. CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU**
82nd Governor of New Hampshire

"Canterbury Shaker Village is among the oldest and most completely preserved of the Shaker Villages, and I am pleased to introduce a bill that takes the first steps towards designating it as a National Heritage Area. The Shakers are a part of New Hampshire and America's history — and Canterbury Shaker Village continues to help share their stories for future generations."

**HON. MAGGIE HASSAN**
U.S. Senator from New Hampshire

## CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES: HOW WE WILL ENHANCE OUR TREASURED HERITAGE

**Our vision for *A Vibrant Canterbury Shaker Village* requires meaningful investment in urgent and longer-term priorities including:**

### PRESERVING BUILDINGS

We must protect and maintain our most treasured assets: the 26 original buildings entrusted to us and the 694 acres on which they stand. Throughout seven generations of American history, Shakers lived, worked, and learned in these historic structures. It is our responsibility to ensure that all visitors have access to the authentic Shaker legacy, as they planned and built it, and to protect the irreplaceable collections.

### PRESERVING AND DIGITIZING COLLECTIONS

We are the stewards of one of the world's largest single repositories of Shaker materials. Preserving these documents and artifacts for future generations and making them accessible to the widest range of audiences are a priority. With over 100,000 artifacts spanning 200 years — photographs, correspondence, maps, and recorded interviews as well as all the furniture, tools, textiles, and clothing — there is infinite potential to share these works and stories on site and online.

### EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

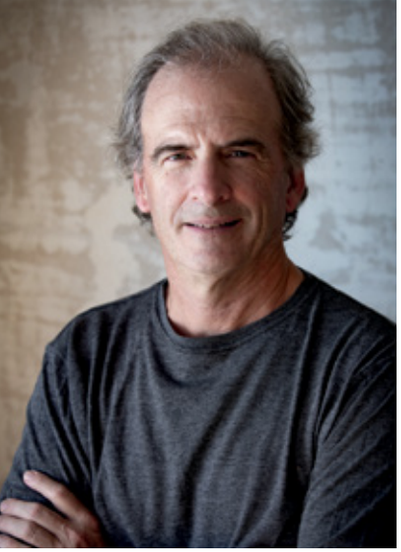
Educational outreach keeps the stories of the Canterbury Shakers alive and brings them to new audiences. We will endow a named Director of Education. We will develop more programs and content and make the Village more widely available to students and others — of all ages and abilities. We will communicate compelling Shaker stories beyond the fields of Canterbury. We will showcase the innovative and enterprising nature of the Shakers' work and their "early adopter" embrace of technology.

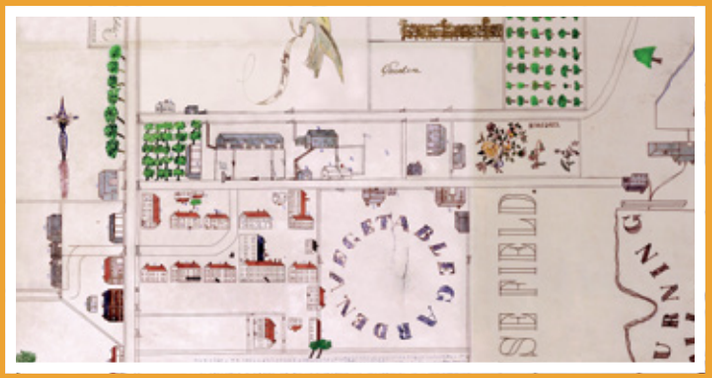
### INVESTING IN PEOPLE

To sustain excellence and growth, we must recruit and retain the most talented leaders and staff, which will require more competitive and comprehensive compensation and benefits packages. To secure the most capable leadership, we will follow the best practices of other institutions in endowing named positions for the Executive Director and Curator/Director of Collections.

### ANNUAL FUND

We will provide our leaders with nimble and reliable unrestricted funding to ensure organizational stability and respond to the day-to-day operations, visitor experience, and visibility of the Village. We will increase loyal, sustainable, broad-based support by growing the Annual Fund.






"Do all your work as though you had a thousand years to live and as you would if you knew you must die tomorrow."

**MOTHER ANN LEE**

*(1736-1784)*

## ENDURING SPIRIT

### HONORING THE CANTERBURY SHAKER LEGACY

The lives of the Shakers were transitory. The beautiful work and inspiring messages they leave behind, timeless in their relevance, needn't be. Through our efforts their spirit can endure — if *we* act boldly and collectively.

Imagine every one of our original Shaker buildings fully preserved and opened to visitors … our entire collection preserved and made accessible, on site and online … more robust educational programming for people of all ages … and a more secure and sustainable financial footing to support our talented staff. All these worthy endeavors are within our reach, if we act together.

Today, we are deeply honored to be stewarding Canterbury Shaker Village. Tomorrow, through this campaign, we will ensure the vitality of our Village for our children and grandchildren, and for *their* children and grandchildren. Through them, the Shakers' legacy will continue to shape our world.

By the things they left behind, the Canterbury Shakers reveal themselves. By honoring their legacy, we reveal *ourselves*.

Kindly consider joining us.

**Jon Old**
*Trustee and Campaign Co-Chair*

**Susan Strickler**
*Trustee and Campaign Co-Chair*

*Photography*
Ellen Friedlander on pages 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 13, 14, 16
Bill Finney on pages 13, Inside Back Cover, Back Cover
John Hession on page 16
Peter Bloch on Front Cover

CANTERBURY
Shaker Village

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A designated National Historic Landmark, Canterbury Shaker Village, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational institution.