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**First Class Graduates from UMass Amherst-Hancock Shaker Village
Historic Preservation Graduate Degree Program**

Pittsfield, Mass.— UMass Amherst and Hancock Shaker Village announced today that the inaugural class of six students has graduated from the University of Massachusetts Master of Science in Design in Historic Preservation that is jointly run with Hancock Shaker Village.

“We are thrilled that our first group of students have graduated and are ready to advance the work of historic preservation in New England and beyond,” said Max Page, Professor of Architecture and History and Director of Historic Preservation Initiatives at UMass Amherst.

The graduates are pursuing diverse careers in historic preservation, as hoped by the program’s founders. Ward Hamilton, founder of Olde Mohawk Masonry & Historic Restoration, Inc., returned to get his Master of Science in Historic Preservation from the program in order to advance his company’s work on historic roofs in New England. “The use of traditional materials is at the core of sustainable design in historic preservation. Similarly, an education based at a site steeped in history, such as Hancock Shaker Village, offers a unique learning opportunity,” said Ward. ““Unlike traditional programs where learning takes place in a classroom, the program at the Village provided us with unique opportunities to learn in a living laboratory of 18th and 19th century structures.”

Graduate David Gaby will use his degree to advance his activist preservation work in Springfield, where he has challenged the city’s willingness to neglect historic properties and then demolish them. During the course of his studies, he wrote and filed a bill with the Massachusetts legislature to help low-income communities preserve their historic resources. Other students will be working museums, for historic societies, and working hands-on to restore and protect historic buildings and sites.

The program was launched in 2009 as a nationally unique collaboration of a major research university – UMass Amherst – and a national historic landmark – Hancock Shaker Village. Designed for working people, the program’s historical and theoretical courses meet Friday afternoons at UMass Amherst while hands-on preservation courses meet all day Saturday at the Village. Courses include the History and Theory of Historic Preservation, Building Conservation, Architectural Materials Testing, Cultural Resource Management, and Green Building and Historic Preservation.

The program begins again on September 7, 2012. Applications for the program are still open for this fall. Please visit www.umass.edu/preservation and contact Max Page for more information: mpage@art.umass.edu, or 413.219.7633. Those interested in individual classes may register beginning on July 18 at www.umassulearn.net.

ABOUT HANCOCK SHAKER VILLAGE

Situated on a picturesque expanse of farm, field, and woodland in Pittsfield, Mass., Hancock Shaker Village is an outdoor living history museum and center for the study of principled living in the 21st century. The fully restored Village includes 18 historic buildings, heirloom medicinal and vegetable gardens, 22,000 examples of Shaker furniture, crafts, tools, and clothes that depict daily life at the Shakers’ City of Peace through its 220 years, as well as heritage breed farm animals and spectacular hiking trails. Visited by nearly 70,000 people annually, the Village brings the Shaker story to life, and preserves it for future generations. For more information, call 800.817.1137 or see www.hancockshakervillage.org.

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