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Images available upon request.

Hancock Shaker Village Unveils Major Website Initiative

Two years in the making, the project was underwritten by a \$150,000 grant from the
Institute of Museum and Library Services

Pittsfield, Mass.—Hancock Shaker Village is launching extensive enhancements to its website funded by a \$150,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Two years in the making, the living history museum's expanded virtual presence is designed to serve as a national Shaker history portal, providing access to the institution's 22,000-object collection, curriculum resources, and events from afar, as well as enhancing the visitor experience through on-site iPad kiosks and iPad mini tablets that provide rich interpretive material and make some of the museum's less accessible historic areas available to those with physical disabilities.

“The mission of Hancock Shaker Village is to bring the Shaker story to life and preserve it for future generations. Our dedicated staff has digitized collection records, object photographs, historic and contemporary photographs, maps, and other ephemera, and created digital versions of oral histories and videos, manuscripts and proceedings, and we are so pleased to finally be able to make these important resources available 24/7 to the general public and to scholars,” said Hancock Shaker Village President Linda Steigleder.

The museum's website, hancockshakervillage.org, was re-imagined from top to bottom. Hancock Shaker Village Curator Lesley Herzberg evaluated the site's academic content with a team of Shaker scholars that included Mario DePillis, Susan Eisenhandler, Rob

Emlen, Tim Rieman, and Glendyne Wergland. “The scholars assisted in general revisions for the website, as they were looking at it with fresh, yet knowledgeable eyes. In particular, they brainstormed about exciting interactive offerings for the online Discovery Room area for children, and helped us to think of new ways to apply current technology to enhance our website,” said Herzberg. Director of Operations and Marketing Laura Wolf led the technical development of the site with a Berkshire-based team that included Studio Two of Lenox, The Magazine Works in Williamstown, and Mad Macs in Pittsfield.

The site will now include searchable databases of the museum’s collections and of Shakers who lived at Hancock, as well as new videos and online exhibitions to give greater access to the wealth of knowledge held in the institution’s collections and archives. There are ‘micro-sites’ for exhibitions, events, and many initiatives, such as the CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) and Master of Science in Design and Historic Preservation programs. An interactive map shows building details, sample artifacts, audio clips, and links to pages with additional information about each building. For formal presentations or guided tours at the museum, flat screen televisions are now stationed in the classroom spaces and a large projection screen in the conference center allows the display of virtual content that a group leader navigate on a nearby iPad or iPad mini. As a final phase of the project, a website specifically formatted for use on tablets and smart phones presents narrated video segments, interactive games, and searchable databases of the museum’s artifact collection: www.experience.hancockshakervillage.org.

“All web visitors interested in Shaker values and heritage will be well served by our enhanced family of websites,” said Steigleder. “We are grateful to Institute of Museum and Library Services for the generous grant that made it possible.”

ABOUT HANCOCK SHAKER VILLAGE

An outdoor history museum and educational resource situated on a picturesque expanse of farm, field, and woodland in Pittsfield, Mass., Hancock Shaker Village affords visitors authentic experiences in 20 historic buildings, heirloom medicinal and vegetable gardens,

and with 22,000 examples of Shaker furniture, crafts, tools, and more. This National Historic Landmark depicts daily life at the Shakers' City of Peace through its 220 years. Partake of guided tours, craft and cooking demonstrations, lectures, workshops, hikes on interpreted trails, and a Discovery Room with hand-on activities for children. Stop by for lunch at the Village Harvest Café. Find gifts and souvenirs in the Village Store. An interactive Village audio tour is available in English, French, Italian, and German. Additionally HSV offers an executive every-other weekend Master of Science in Design & Historic Preservation program in collaboration with UMASS Amherst; see umass.edu/preservation for more information about degree and elective coursework and opportunities.

For more information and to register for Hancock Shaker Village programs and tours, see hancockshakervillage.org or call 800.817.1137.