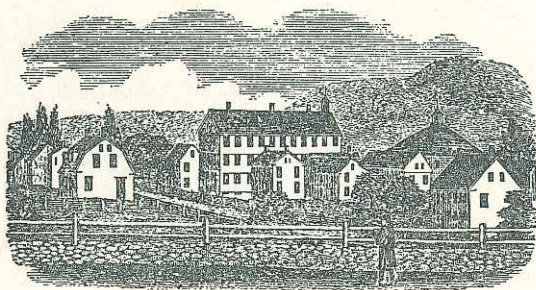


Shaker Community
Index

A
Proposal to Save
The Shaker Community
at Hancock, Massachusetts

Its Importance
as part of the
American Heritage



We believed we were debtors to God in relation to
Each other, and all men, to improve our time and Talents
in this Life, in that manner in which we might be most
useful.

Shaker covenant, 1795

The wood-engraving of Hancock Shaker village is from
John Warner Barber's *Historical Collections of*
Every Town in Massachusetts, Worcester, 1839.

The Shaker Community

Hancock, Massachusetts

IN America today there is an increasing interest in the elements from which the fabric of our national culture has been woven. One of the "conspicuous strains" in our history, as Constance Rourke, in *Roots of American Culture*, has pointed out, has been "the impulse towards communal organization"—in the settlements of the Pilgrims and the frontier hamlets, in the Mennonite and Amish communities, in the idealistic experiments at Brook Farm, Fruitlands, Amana, Economy, Oneida and the many Fourieristic phalanxes, and in one of the most productive of such associations, the United Society of Shakers. These folk have done so much to give beauty, strength and distinction to the national character that to preserve and vitalize their contributions, both material and spiritual, is a work of the highest importance.

A Unique Project

At Hancock, Massachusetts, there existed, until a year ago, one of the three remaining branches of the society of Shakers. There were once eighteen Shaker communities, scattered through New England, New York, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. One by one, as the movement declined, they have gone, or been sold for various institutional purposes. Though the Hancock society, organized in 1790-1, was one of the earliest orders, its property—the dwellings, shops and barns which formed, originally,

a closely-knit socio-economic unit—is still well preserved. The acquisition of these buildings, with some 900 acres of land, represents the first successful attempt to save, for the future, a Shaker settlement. It is the first step in a unique program of conserving the artifacts and values of an unusually significant way of life and work.

Restoration of the Community

In the conviction that the projected educational activities should be carried on in a setting which bears the aspect and breathes the spirit of the original culture, the property will be restored to give the village its traditionally neat and orderly appearance. The purity and quiet dignity of Shaker architecture—represented at Hancock by the brick dwelling, the round stone barn, the trustees' office, the brethren's and sisters' shops and other structures—are among the Community's greatest assets. After restoration these buildings will house, in increasing degree the furnishings of a typical Shaker "family"; an unexcelled library documenting this and other communitarian experiments; the tools of Shaker industry, with the products of such tools; and materials illustrative of the agricultural economy of the order. (Much of the above will be drawn from the well-known Andrews Collection, with careful selections from other private collections.) Certain industries, such as weaving and craftsmanship in wood, will be revived in the shops, and among the outdoor enterprises, an herb garden patterned after the famous "physics" gardens of the society. The office and store will function again for the reception of visitors and as an outlet for whatever products are manufactured. Another Shaker custom will be revived by serving to visitors on week-ends a bounteous "family dinner."

The plan is to make the Community, in its physical appearance and historic functioning, a *living* organization. The property is located in a beautiful countryside where

visitors will be inspired by the creation of a simple, communal way of life which has always attracted travelers from far and wide.

The Educational Program

In such a setting an educational program will be conducted which is a major justification of Shaker Community. This program is an extensive one. As the name of the organization implies, the culture out of which the present undertaking arose is a part of the American heritage to be cherished, not only in and for itself, but also in its manifold relations to American history as a whole. For, in the words of Professor David Potter, Coe Professor of American history at Yale and former chairman of the university's American Studies program, "the Shakers . . . developed a fully articulated and homogeneous culture, with a value-system and a way of life which was expressed not only in their religion, but was reflected in their unique social organization, their economic system, and their educational pattern. Their writings, their music, their pictorial art, their crafts, their household furnishings, and their architecture all display facets of a closely integrated culture. I am convinced that the Shakers offer unusual opportunities for study because of this fact, that they do present in manageable compass—in microcosm—all the elements of a full-blown culture. This culture represented a deliberate alternative to the prevailing American culture, and therefore it offers a perspective upon American culture at large."

Through seminars, lectures, exhibitions, guided tours, publications and other means the Community will encourage, and provide facilities, for a broad program in the humanities. It is envisaged not only as a center for study and scholarly research in American community history and ideas, cooperating with schools, colleges, libraries, museums and historical societies, but also—be-

cause of its concern with music, the dance, drama, architecture, etc.—with creative work in the arts. As the program expands it should be able to render service to an ever-widening public.

Shakers Approve Project

The Community has the approval of the Shakers themselves. Eldress Emma B. King of Canterbury, N.H., the head of the society, has recently stated, in reference to the properties of discontinued Shaker societies:

“The Parent Ministry has always been especially anxious that these lands and buildings be devoted to some use which is charitable or educational and of benefit to the community It is therefore a satisfaction and a joy to us that the group which will now assume these properties [at Hancock] will use them for the preservation of the Shaker traditions”

Put your hands to work
and your hearts to God.

Ann Lee

The Location

The accessibility of this particular Shaker community has much to recommend it as a point of interest for visitors. It is located in the Southeast corner of the small township of Hancock in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The Shaker community buildings and acreage lie on both sides of U.S. Route 20, five miles westerly of Pittsfield, the county seat. It is approximately 150 miles from both Boston and New York, being reached easily from both the Massachusetts Turnpike and the "Berkshire Spur" of the New York State throughway. The Berkshire Hills region, moreover, is highly compatible to the establishment of such a museum. Besides its considerable natural endowment of scenic beauty, the area supports a vigorous cultural life consisting of art museums, libraries, musical festivals, summer theaters, art schools, dance centers and liberal arts educational institutions.

Planned by Carl Purington Rollins
and printed by
Connecticut Printers, Inc.

August, 1960



by FLORENCE T. HOWE



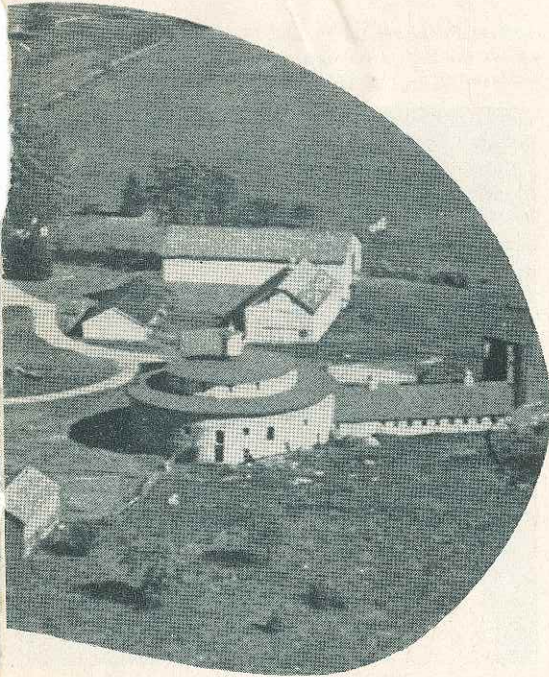
Hancock's "NEW" Shaker Village

WHEN HUSBAND AND WIFE MERGE talents and effort in pursuit of a joint interest, remarkable things can happen.

Witness the projected Shaker restoration at Hancock, Massachusetts, now in process, and the opening of the Shaker Room at the first American Museum in Europe announced for June of this year in Claverton Manor, near Bath, England.

Edward Deming Andrews Ph.D., now recognized authority on that mid-nineteenth century cultural experiment in American communal living known as the United Society of Shakers . . . and his

On July 2nd the restored buildings of Shaker Community, Inc. open to the public for the first time.



Aerial view of Hancock Shaker Village showing part of the 17 buildings and 932 acres now owned by Shaker Community, Inc. who have started a gigantic restoration project. Open July 2-Oct. 15, from 9:30-5 p.m. daily.

wife, Faith Andrews, are the people involved. They exemplify the achievement possible when dual talents are harnessed in companionable enthusiasm.

It all began some thirty-five years ago when as young marrieds the Andrews spent their summers in the family home in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. As an aid to graduate work at Yale they were collecting and selling old furniture, china, glass and pewter.

"One cool September afternoon in the 1920's," Mrs. Andrews says, "we were driving home in our Model T. along the route which lends from the eastern base of Lebanon Mountain to our own base of operations in Pittsfield, passing by the old Hancock Shaker village."

"Someone had told us," Mrs. Andrews goes on to say, "that the Shakers still made, and sometimes would sell, their delicious bread. We fancied we smelled

it before the basement door in the neat brick dwelling opened to us. Our welcome was most hospitable. We bought two loaves of bread. In the spotlessly clean kitchen we saw much more than bread. We saw long trestle tables, benches, chairs, cupboards, cooking arches; strangely beautiful in their simplicity and order. Later, eating that bread, we knew we had to learn more of this unique celibate world almost in our dooryard."

With the acquisition of their first Shaker chair and, subsequently, other examples of the arts and crafts of this peculiar, reticent sect, the Andrews began to realize that here was a distinct school of craftsmanship; a strange separatist religion, a sequestered economy which had endured for a century and a half, with practically nothing documented. "But we did not know then," Mrs. Andrews will tell you, "that when we bought two loaves of bread and a simple slat back chair, we were taking the first steps in a work which would open up vast avenues of research. We didn't know that as time went on we would become deeply involved in the attempt to preserve in words, as well as artifacts, a rich facet of American culture."

Homer Eaton Keyes, founder and then (1928) *(Continued on page 114)*

Examples of Shaker craftsmanship are this sewing stand and rocker. The last Hancock Shaker left the village only last year.





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**Hancock's New Shaker
Village**

(Continued from page 71)

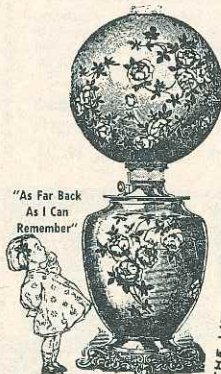
editor of *Antiques* magazine, recognized the chaste beauty and honest workmanship of the furniture and craft examples which the Andrews had already succeeded in collecting. He became friend and sponsor of their interest, publishing in his magazine Ted Andrews' first article on the work of the Shakers.

During the depression the young collectors bought rather heavily. "We were tempted at times to sell one piece in the interest of a more varied bill of fare for the table," Faith admits. "But we found a simple way to overcome letting anything go. One of us always refused to let his/her half go!"

Berkshire Museum was the first notable museum to stage a show of the Andrews' Shaker collection, to be followed by many others, including in 1935 a special exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

"In all our collecting and research," Mrs. Andrews says, "we have worked closely with the Shakers themselves, hearing by word of mouth from old and sometimes bed-ridden sisters the stories of the early movement."

The Andrews collection, covering the full 200-year span of Shakerism in America, includes furniture, tools, textiles, household articles, water color "inspirationals," books, pamphlets, documents, glass, pottery, tinware, music, hymnals, photographs, paintings, costumes and other items. It is particularly rich in materials from the



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of Shaker industry, with the products of such tools; and materials illustrative of the agricultural economy of the order."

Much of the above will be drawn from the Andrews collection which will be housed in the Hancock Restoration, and augmented from other private collections.

Weaving and craftsmanship in wood will be revived in the shops, and among the outdoor enterprises, an herb garden patterned after the famous "physics" gardens of the society. The office and store will function again for the reception of visitors and as an outlet for whatever products are manufactured.

Another Shaker custom will be revived by serving to visitors on week-ends a bounteous "family dinner."

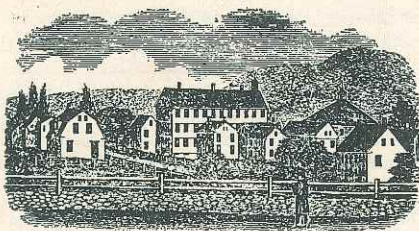
"Through seminars, lectures, exhibitions, guided tours, publications and other means the Community," its creators announce, "will encourage and provide facilities for a broad program in the humanities."

Hancock Restoration is envisaged not only as a center for study and scholarly research in American community history and ideas, cooperating with schools, colleges, libraries, museums and historical societies, but also—because of its concern with music, the dance, drama, architecture, etc.—with creative work in the arts.

The location in the Berkshire Hills region is about one hundred fifty miles from both Boston and New York, on U.S. 20, five miles westerly of Pittsfield.

Dr. and Mrs. Andrews went to England last year to supervise the installation of (and make plans for educational expansion) the Shaker Room in the American Museum of Claverton Manor, being established in Britain by the Halcyon Foundation of New York. The nucleus of the museum, the first American museum in Europe, will be a series of rooms showing the development of architecture and the decorative arts in the United States from the Colonial days of the 17th century to the gilded age of the 19th. Ian McCallum, executive of the British magazine *Architectural Review*, and an expert on American architecture, has been appointed Director. The Halcyon Foundation was established to further education in the U. S. and abroad. Its chairman is Dr. Dallas Pratt (N. Y.).

Dr. and Mrs. Andrews will go to Claverton Manor in June to attend the opening of the Museum. ●



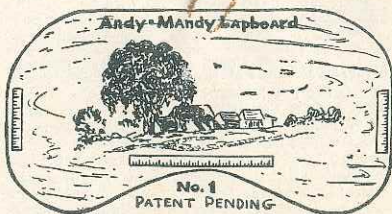
The old Shaker Community at Hancock, Mass.

"classic" period of Shaker creativity, from 1800 to 1870. Every item is fully documented.

With the recent passing of Eldress Emma B. King, the United Society becomes history. There were once eighteen Shaker communities scattered through New England, New York, Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. One by one as the movement declined, they have gone. However, the property of the Hancock Society (organized 1790-91) includes dwellings, shops and barns, still well preserved. The acquisition of these buildings with some 900 acres of land represents the first successful attempt to save, for the future, a Shaker settlement.

"The purity and quiet dignity of Shaker architecture—represented at Hancock by the brick dwelling, the round stone barn, the trustees' office, the brethren's and sisters' shops and other structures—are among the Community's greatest assets," Dr. Andrews writes. "After restoration these buildings will house, in increasing degree, the furnishings of a typical Shaker 'family,' an unexcelled library documenting this and other communitarian experiments; the tools

(Continued on next page)



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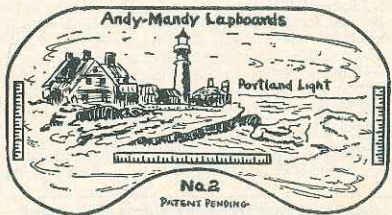
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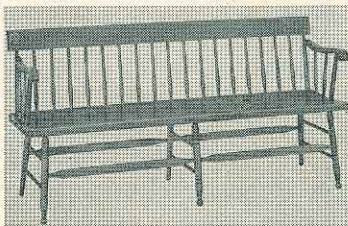
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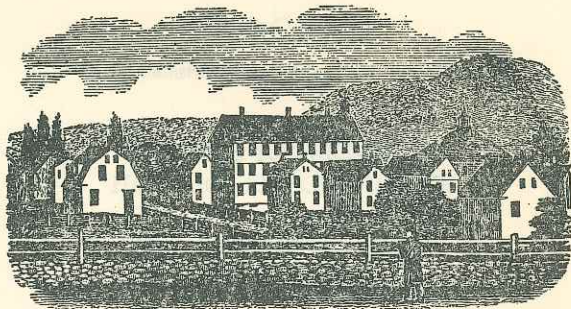
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Mr. Henry A. Flynt
President of Heritage Foundation

Mr. Walter M. Whitehill
Director and Librarian of the Boston Athenaeum

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

The Reverend Malcolm W. Eckel

In accord with Shaker custom, any who so desire are invited to speak.

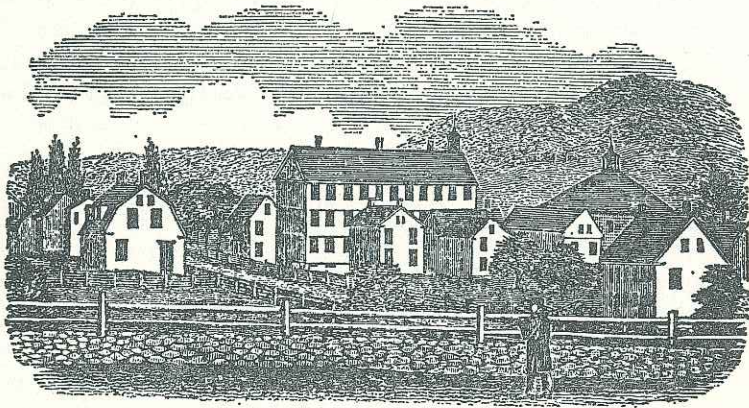
A WALK THROUGH THE VILLAGE

REFRESHMENTS

1964

*The
Realities of Restoring
The Shaker Community
at Hancock, Massachusetts*

The Importance of Its Preservation
as part of the
American Heritage



Shaker Village in Hancock.

SHAKERISM presents a system of faith and a mode of life, which, during the past century, has solved social and religious problems and successfully established practical brotherhoods of industry, besides freeing woman from inequality and injustice. To this there must be added that it has banished from its precincts monopoly, immorality, intemperance and crime, by creating a life of purity, social freedom and altruistic industry. A system that has rendered such a service to mankind merits attention from all thoughtful people, whatever may be their position in life.

That the Shakers, through the teachings of their faith, have wrought out a practical solution to many social enigmas of the time, is admitted. It now remains to fit the principles embodied in this faith to the needs of the great world.

For a better understanding of their work and its meaning, this message, embodying the thought and word of many Shakers, is sent forth.

Mount Lebanon, N.Y., June 28, 1904.

From the preface to
"SHAKERISM, Its Meaning and Message,"
by Anna White and Leila S. Taylor

Hancock Shaker Village

Saving Isn't Enough

SHAKER Community, Inc., formally issued its "Proposal To Save the Shaker Community at Hancock, Massachusetts" in September of 1960. The immediate response and the sustaining interest since then from a growing body of supporters have secured fulfillment of the trustees' plans to acquire the Hancock Shaker Village land and buildings and establish them as an historical museum. The trustees' initial goal was to receive the Village intact directly from its Shaker owners, saving it from despoliation or commercial exploitation. With it thus reserved for public use, a beginning could be made at restoring the settlement functionally and architecturally. In this and the philosophy which governs it lie the whole purpose and justification for the enterprise.

For more than a century, the idea of historical preservation has been spreading. It has traveled around the world, and today the American tourist has joined with the historian to make an irresistible team which demands that key aspects of our past everywhere be not only preserved but portrayed interestingly. At some points the historian and the tourist part company, but the irreplaceable landmarks of the American heritage give them common cause.

In the countryside, as in town and city, historic buildings and sites along with forests, farms, gardens and streams, are menaced today as never before. Apathy

augments destruction; abusive use and neglect lead to decay, says the National Trust for Historic Preservation, going on to warn: "Direct agencies of destruction are poorly planned highway programs, exploding suburbs, urban blight, fire and the voracious demand for parking spaces."

As one leading worker for preservation, Lewis Mumford, puts it, "Our national flower may yet be the cement cloverleaf."

A unique farm-and-craft settlement like Hancock Shaker Village, with its roots in the 18th and 19th centuries, is increasingly rare in the age of automation and the expressway. Insulated by its thousand acres of woods and meadows, this Shaker community in being saved from destruction is preserving both cultural history and a pastoral haven of quietude. However, simply conserving the complete settlement with its original buildings and opening the property to the public would fall short of the highest ideals of the preservation of history and would miss the opportunity of making history come to life. Saving the Village isn't enough.

Preservation Plus

Many of the 17 original buildings at Hancock—barns, dwellings, shops—were well preserved when the non-profit community corporation acquired them from the Shakers. Some were quickly opened as the first step in creating the public museum envisaged by the trustees. Repairing began on others; protective measures are being used on a few until restoration can be started. One major lack, a Meetinghouse, was remedied by a donor who financed the moving from eastern Massachusetts to Hancock of a Shaker structure identical to the one razed here in 1939, and it is hoped that the original Schoolhouse may one day be moved back to its former position at the Village.

Antiquarians have a rule of thumb: "Better to preserve than to repair; better to repair than to restore; better to restore than to reconstruct." This maxim, clearly separating preservation, repairing and reconstruction, assigns proper values to the different techniques while justifying the judicious employment of all of them in retaining or replacing structures of the past for modern use, education and enjoyment.

At Hancock the architectural approach starts with preservation, and goes hand in hand with the basic philosophy of Shaker Community, Inc., whose trustees permit no plans or programs to take priority over the conservation of the Village's architectural heritage. Chief among the distinctive structures is the Round Stone Barn. Built in 1826 it was from the first an object of "grand architectural curiosity." Considerable rebuilding will be required to assure its permanence, and as deterioration is persistent the restoration of a treasure such as this cannot be deferred much longer.

Now awaiting completion is work on the Tan House, the former Tannery, projected as an exhibition area, and restoration of the Boys Shop and the Trustees Office, the oldest part of the latter predating the organization of the Hancock Shaker society in 1790-91. Already open to the public, in whole or in part, are the 1830 Brick Dwelling, the Sisters Shop, Brethren Shop, Meetinghouse, Ministry Shop, Laundry and Machine Shop, and Reception Center. Expansion of the Village collection of fine Shaker-made furniture and craft items is a continuous project.

With the opening of each additional shop and building, the Village becomes more of a living museum, particularly through the introduction of such activities as cabinet-making, basketry, broom-making, chair-taping and weaving demonstrations. Coupled with guided tours, lectures to groups and a continuing publications program, the craft activities carry the idea of historic con-

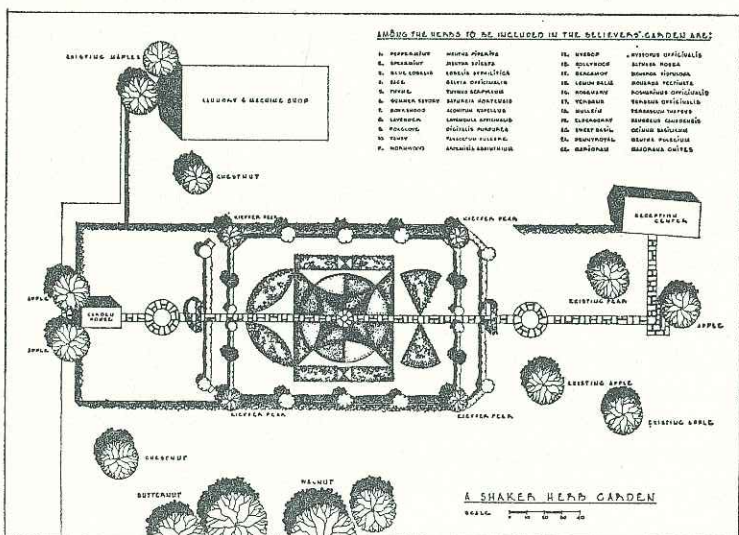
servation to a new dimension, one which brought the original sanction of the Shaker Parent Ministry for the restoration at Hancock; namely, the preservation of the Shaker traditions.

Educational Potentialities

From the beginning great emphasis has been placed on the educational potentialities of Hancock Shaker Village. It is a teaching device unrivalled by any for a combination of range and reality. It fully occupies the attention of our student visitors from the middle grades to graduate school in its facilities since it offers concrete evidence not only in spiritual and ethical matters, but in the practical realm of social organization and economic production.

A Garden is an Index of the Owner's Mind

So wrote an anonymous Shaker seedsman in an early manual. A major current project is completion of a Garden House and the Herb Garden, which is planned as



an index of the Shaker mind. The plants are those which the Believers found through experience were the most utilitarian, ones tested for purity and in most demand by the pharmaceutical market.

The Garden is to be planted in a pattern deriving from an 1844 Shaker inspirational drawing or "sacred sheet," and will symbolize the unity of the practical and the spiritual in Shaker life.

What Was Hancock?

Hancock Shaker Village was one of the longest-lived of the 18 settlements organized in this country by followers of Ann Lee, who came in 1774 from Manchester, England. Practicing celibacy and strict religious discipline, the Shakers prospered as farmers and then branched into manufacture and trade. They became the most successful communal society ever developed in America.

The colony, of more than 300 brethren and sisters, at its peak before the Civil War was about 6,000 acres in size. It existed for 170 years altogether before being closed in 1960 when there were but three surviving members. In craftsmanship the Hancock Shakers became known for their finely made furniture, their skill in joinery and in making delicately molded iron objects. Their leaders insisted on plain and simple design, and perpetuated a tradition of excellence in every product offered for the market.

Two important industries developed from the cultivation of the soil: an extensive gardenseed business and the preparation for sale of dried sweet corn.

A group of "new Believers" inspired by the Shaker heritage have resolved to make the Village at Hancock a permanent memorial to the movement. An awakened public has joined them in saving and preserving the

natural beauty of its environs and in making great headway in restoring the buildings. The religious arts of the Shakers, their perfected craftsmanship, the products of their industry—these are being saved along with the records which document their thought, their worship and their daily labor. Theirs was a doctrine of good works. And if “by their works ye shall know them,” then the Hancock Village will be made to serve as a living testament to the people themselves and to the contribution they made to the culture of America.

Put your hands to work
and your hearts to God.

Ann Lee

The Location

The accessibility of this particular Shaker community has much to recommend it as a point of interest for visitors. It is located in the southeast corner of the small township of Hancock in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. The Shaker community buildings and acreage lie on both sides of U.S. Route 20, five miles westerly of Pittsfield, the county seat. It is approximately 150 miles from both Boston and New York, being reached easily from both the Massachusetts Turnpike and the “Berkshire Spur” of the New York State Thruway. The Berkshire Hills region, moreover, is highly compatible to the development of such a museum. Besides its considerable natural endowment of scenic beauty, the area supports a vigorous cultural life consisting of art museums, libraries, musical festivals, summer theaters, art schools, dance centers and liberal arts educational institutions.