

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shaker Museum

SHAKER MUSEUM TO OPEN LIBRARY, ARCHIVES AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES ON JONES AVENUE IN CHATHAM, NY

Newly Renovated Building Donated By Jack Shear To Open June 2024

Facility Rounds Out the Shaker Museum Campus in Chatham

CHATHAM, NEW YORK, February 29, 2024 – Shaker Museum, which stewards the most comprehensive collection of Shaker material culture and archives, announced today that it will open a new library, archives and administrative facility at 29 Jones Avenue in Chatham, New York. The property and the costs to completely renovate the building were donated by longtime Shaker Museum supporter Jack Shear and represent a \$1.6 million investment in the future of the museum. The announcement was made today to commemorate Shaker founding leader Mother Ann Lee who was born on February 29, 1736. The new facility is slated to open June 2024 and will round out the Shaker Museum campus in Chatham, NY which also includes the forthcoming museum designed by Selldorf Architects at 5 Austerlitz Street in downtown.

Longtime Shaker Museum supporter Jack Shear said, “The new Shaker library and archive will be an important place for community and scholarship. Significant pieces required for deep research and inquiry and not currently on display deserve a home that is secure and as protective as possible. This facility will ensure the legacy of the Shakers is properly preserved and I am thrilled to continue to support the work of Shaker Museum with this contribution.”

Shaker Museum Executive Director Lacy Schutz commented, “We are so grateful to Jack Shear for his generosity and commitment to Shaker Museum. His support has been pivotal to our growth and development and with the Jones Avenue facility we are taking a major step forward in our future vision for this important cultural institution.”

The approximately 5,000 square-foot building at 29 Jones Avenue will house the entire administrative staff of the museum. It will include a lecture and workshop space for public events, a public reading room, as well as a library and temperature controlled archival facility for more fragile texts and textiles. It will also include storage space for pieces of the collection not currently on display at the museum (when open).

The library and archive will house some of the most significant and important materials related to Shaker culture and life. Among the treasures historians, academics and the public can find at the new library and archives are the entire Shaker Ministry Collection of books written and published by the Shakers. This includes approximately 300 texts, books, pamphlets and catalogues. Also housed here will be the entire Emma B. King library that was gifted to the museum from an elder Shaker upon the museum's establishment. A vast number of manuscripts, business records, diaries and travel journals from the Mt. Lebanon community are also archived here, along with more than 3,000 original historic photographs of the Shakers depicting everything from daily life to their innovation and entrepreneurship.

Public events will be programmed in the lecture/workshop space and the administrative offices will be open for daily business. The library texts and archival material are accessible via appointment. For more information on how to access the library and archives inquire at: research@shakermuseum.us.

The new library and archives will serve as an important part of the Shaker campus in Chatham. Shaker Museum also purchased a 19th-century building in Chatham and is in the process of renovating and building an expansive addition to the facility designed by Selldorf Architects. The physical building will embody Shaker values of inclusion, innovation and equality to create a museum that both tells the Shaker story and is responsive to the needs of the community in Chatham, Columbia County and the surrounding Hudson Valley. The new facility located at 5 Austerlitz Street will provide ample space for exhibitions and respond to the need for inclusive community gathering spaces through its exhibitions and robust programming. The museum will also retain and maintain the historic Shaker site in Mount Lebanon.

About Shaker Museum

With more than 18,000 objects, Shaker Museum stewards the most comprehensive collection of Shaker material culture and archives. It is the leader nationwide among organizations devoted to Shaker history. Its permanent new facility in Chatham, NY, which is in development, was designed by Selldorf Architects. The museum also stewards the historic site in New Lebanon, NY and has a campus in Old Chatham, NY,

which is open year-round by appointment, where the administrative offices, collections, library, and archives are housed. The museum's collection can be viewed online at <http://shakermuseum.us>.

Photos Link: [Here](#).

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