

SHAKER MUSEUM

MOUNT LEBANON

PO Box 630, New Lebanon, NY 12125 518 794-9100 www.shakerml.org

STRATEGIC PLAN

2018 - 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon stewards the most comprehensive collection of Shaker material culture and archives, and the founding site of Shakerism. It is positioned to be the leader nationwide among organizations devoted to Shaker history and a driving force for positive change and growth in Columbia County.

There has never been a better time to illuminate and perpetuate the legacy of the Shakers in America. The Shakers offer models for inclusion, conviction, sustainability, innovation, entrepreneurship, equality, and community. In a time of increasing divisions along racial, economic, and political lines, the Shaker legacy offers a roadmap for how to create sustainable, meaningful lives within strong communities.

HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Shaker Museum was founded in 1950 by John S. Williams, Sr. on his farm in Old Chatham, New York. Beginning in the 1930s, Williams traveled extensively to then-active Shaker communities and purchased and was given fine examples of their arts, industries, and domestic life, as well as spiritual artifacts. His approach was that of a cultural anthropologist, documenting Shaker life as he found it while attempting to preserve their history.

The Shaker Museum acquired materials in the early 1960s from the Shakers' Central Ministry, which included books, photographs, manuscripts, and correspondence—documents critical to telling the story of the Shakers and that support the Museum's object holdings. In 1990 the Museum's name was amended to Shaker Museum & Library.

In 2004 the Museum acquired the historic Shaker Village at Mount Lebanon and later changed its name to Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon. Currently the Museum maintains two campuses. The original Old Chatham site houses the administrative staff, and storage for collections, library materials, and archives, and is open year-round by appointment. The Mount Lebanon site is open to the public seasonally and offers during this time guided tours of the site, access to exhibitions, and a shop.

VISION

The Shakers were guided by core values of conviction, integrity, inclusion, and innovation. They were early advocates of gender equality, welcomed African Americans, practiced pacifism, and put community needs above individual ones. They were successful entrepreneurs known for their various manufacturing enterprises.

The Shakers' core values are the foundation of Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon's cultural and ethical vision, and inspire decisions about programming, resource allocation, and community outreach. The museum seeks to tell the complete story of the Shakers, including their material culture as seen through furniture, costume, archives, photographs, etc.; their social legacy of communalism, inclusion, and peace; and their technological innovations in manufacturing, architecture, land management, farming, and engineering.

As the Shakers did, Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon seeks to open its doors to all, and to explore the full spectrum of the Shakers' legacy, including design, aesthetics, religion, social justice, history, architecture, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and community building.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 - 2020 CONTINUED

INITIATIVES

Strategic Initiative #1: Enhance access to the Mount Lebanon site

Make Mount Lebanon a place where visitors can have a meaningful experience no matter what time of day, day of the month, or time of the year they visit.

Strategic Initiative #2: Activate the collection

Provide public access to collections to a variety of audiences in a variety of formats in order to foster an appreciation of the exceptional qualities of the museum's holdings.

Strategic Initiative #3: Reposition the museum as a regional resource and destination

Plan for creating a home for the collection that is easily accessible to the public and establish the Shaker Museum as an arts anchor of Columbia County.

Strategic Initiative #4: Invigorate income sources

Develop the resources for long-term organizational survival, increasing both earned and contributed income.

Strategic Initiative #5: Strengthen commitment to the community

Demonstrate Shaker values at the town and county levels by participating institutionally in social justice initiatives and convening conversations on social justice issues.
