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Henry Luce Foundation Awards Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon \$25,000 Grant to Support Collections Review

(New Lebanon, NY) July 18, 2019 –

Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon has received a \$25,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to support a comprehensive review of its collections. This grant follows on the tail of a \$750,000 grant the Museum received from the Luce Foundation in 2016 to support a two and a half year project to catalog and digitize its collections and put the results online. That project was completed on time and on budget at the end of 2018 and its results can be seen at the Museum's website: shakerml.org.

The Shaker Museum is also participating in a Luce-funded project in partnership with Fordham University in New York City to bring together a group of eight Fellows to explore the experiential and communal aspects of Shakerism and the relationship between art and religion in museum spaces. That group, which consists of scholars, museum professionals, and working artists, has completed two of its three convenings and anticipates sharing outcomes with the public later this year.

This latest grant supports work to review a collection of over 16,000 objects. The review is being conducted in keeping with accepted museum standards and under the close guidance of the Shaker Museum's Collections Committee, which consists of scholars, retired museum professionals, a conservator, and someone who served for many years on the Collections Committee at the Museum of the City of New York during the time that organization was formally reviewing and refining its vast holdings. The Shaker Museum's current director, Lacy Schutz, was formerly Director of Collections at the Museum of the City of New York and oversaw that process, working closely with the City Museum's Collections Committee and Board of Trustees to ensure thoughtful, ethical, and transparent procedures for evaluation and deaccession.

Paul Cassidy, Chair of the Board of Trustees said, "The Shaker Museum holds the world's preeminent collection of Shaker material culture and as we plan for the future of the institution, we must be attentive to deploying our resources in the most effective ways possible."

Executive Director Lacy Schutz added, "Healthy museums periodically evaluate their collections to make sure objects support the evolving mission of the organization and to make collections stronger." She went on to explain that this review will likely lead to limited deaccessions based on condition, redundancy, and / or a non-Shaker origin. "We're grateful to the Luce Foundation for recognizing the vital importance of this type of work and supporting the Shaker Museum's efforts to guarantee the Museum can have a far-reaching impact well into the future."

Any deaccessioned items will be offered to other museums as appropriate or offered at public auction. In keeping with museum ethical standards and best practices, all auction proceeds will

go toward the care and preservation of accessioned objects and the future acquisition of items that strengthen the collection.

Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon stewards the historic site in New Lebanon, New York, which is open year-round for hiking and self-guided tours, and offers tours, exhibitions, and public programs seasonally. The museum also has a campus in Old Chatham, New York, open year-round by appointment, where the administrative offices, collections, library, and archives are housed. Please visit shakerml.org for more information, to explore the collection online, and to find out about programming.