

The American Shakers

A Celibate, Religious Community.

Founded by Ann Lee of Manchester, England (1736-1784). Established in America, 1774. Societies founded in seven states.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Purity of Life, Confession of Sin, Consecration of Strength, Time and Talent.

BELIEFS

Duality of the Deity, Father and Mother God. The Mighty Dual Spirit, Creator of Life, Light, Truth and Love. Duality of the Christ Spirit, as manifested by Jesus, and Ann Lee. Immortal Life, Progress of the Soul, Faithfulness, Lawfulness, Equality of the Sexes, Equality in Labor, Equality in Property, Temperance in all things, Justice, and Kindness to all.

GOVERNMENT

The head of the Shaker Order, is Christ. Represented in a Dual Order of Leaders, Ministry, Elders, and Trustees.

COMMUNITY

Perpetuated by admission of serious minded persons, and adoption of children.

SHAKER MOTTO

“Hands to work, and Hearts to God.”

ANN LEE.

This list of basic Shaker beliefs was printed in the 1930s as a postcard for the Shaker community at Sabbathday Lake, Maine. Collection of Hancock Shaker Village.

Hancock Shaker Village was gathered during the 1780s on land consecrated by local farmers who had converted to a new religious movement – The United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, or Shakers.

Outsiders called these enthusiasts Shakers because of the trembling, whirling, and shaking manifested during ecstatic worship services. The celibate Hancock community, called The City of Peace by its inhabitants, steadily grew in population as new converts joined. During the peak years of the 1830s nearly 350 Brethren and Sisters lived at Hancock. Also at this time, the Shaker population in America grew to an estimated 4,500 in nineteen major communities in New England, New York, Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana.

The Hancock Shakers enjoyed a simple, peaceful, and hard-working lifestyle, separated from the surrounding inhabitants who they called “the World’s people.” They dedicated their lives to creating a Heaven on Earth.

By the early 1900s, the Hancock community had declined to approximately 50 Believers, primarily due to a lack of converts over the previous decades. In 1959, the last 3 Shakers living at Hancock could no longer maintain their City of Peace, and the Shaker Central Ministry sold the property to a local group committed to preserving the Shaker heritage. Today, although the Shakers no longer live here, this utopian village continues in a new era as a living history museum. A Shaker family still resides today at Sabbathday Lake, Maine.

For your safety and comfort:



The Visitor Center is handicapped accessible. Many buildings located within the historic area have limited handicapped accessibility. Please consult a Hancock Shaker Village staff member if you have questions about access.



Pets are not allowed on the grounds of Hancock Shaker Village.



Smoking is prohibited on Village grounds, with the exception of the Picnic Area.



Food and beverages are prohibited in exhibit buildings. The Village Café is open daily during the Spring, Summer and Fall seasons, with limited hours during the Winter season.



The Picnic Area is located near the Village Café.



Restrooms are located in the Visitor Center and the Office Privy (open seasonally) - please see map.



Water fountains are available in the Visitor Center.



Please use caution on the grounds and in historic buildings, as some walking surfaces are uneven. Please use the marked pedestrian crosswalk when crossing US Route 20.



Flash photography and tripods are not permitted in exhibit buildings. Visitors may photograph and/or videotape for personal use only. Commercial photography requires advance permission. Inquire at the Visitor Center.



Our Museum Store in the Visitor Center is open daily, year-round, and carries a wide selection of reproduction Shaker furniture and crafts, books, prints and toys, gift items and souvenirs.

A not-for-profit corporation, Hancock Shaker Village depends upon admissions from visitors and the generous donations of its friends and members. Become a member and receive free admission throughout the year! Join today and your admission fee is applied to your membership. Please inquire at the Visitor Center ticket desk or the Museum Store.

Founded in 1960, Hancock Shaker Village is a National Historic Landmark. Our mission is to bring the Shaker story to life and preserve it for future generations. We invite you to explore the historic Village buildings and the farm, woodlands and gardens. A complete tour of the Village requires considerable walking and stair climbing. Because of the historic nature of our site, some surfaces are uneven. Watch your step! Please consult with any staff member for directions or suggestions to make your stay more enjoyable.

Graphic design, Adriana De La Cuadra - 2007 - Hancock Shaker Village®

Today at Hancock Shaker Village:



Shaker Village in Hancock, J.W. Barber from *Historical Collections*, 1839. Collection of Hancock Shaker Village

HANCOCK SHAKER VILLAGE



1 Visitor Center, 2000

Ticketing and information desk, orientation theatre, exhibition galleries, Museum Store, Village Café, picnic area, restrooms, water fountain, ATM machine, research library, administrative offices.



2 Gardens

Medicinal herbs, heirloom vegetables, seeds, flowers, and field crops grown by the Shakers. Daily demonstrations.



3 Garden Tool Shed, 1922

Originally a screened summer house near the Brick Dwelling. Moved and rebuilt in 1962, now serves as support structure for adjacent gardens. Daily demonstrations.



4 Laundry & Machine Shop, ca. 1780

Likely a pre-Shaker farmhouse, enlarged over time. Water turbine system added in 1858 to power laundry equipment and wood and metal working machinery. Daily demonstrations.



5 Garage, 1869

Originally part of a firewood storage shed, adapted circa 1914 to house Shakers' automobiles. Video.



6 Brick Dwelling, 1830

Housed nearly 100 Shaker Brethren and Sisters of the Church Family (senior order of Hancock Shakers). Sleeping quarters, kitchen, dining room, other communal dormitory-style room settings. Video. Daily demonstrations.



7 Brethren's Shop, ca. 1810

Example of the many Brethren's crafts and trades buildings once on the site. Small stone and iron structure at front of building is a horse block, to ease entry into carriages and wagons. Daily demonstrations.



8 Sisters' Dairy & Weave Shop, ca. 1795

Example of the many Sisters' crafts and trades buildings once on the site. Daily demonstrations.



9 Ministry Wash House, ca. 1830

Used for bathing by the Shaker Ministry Elders and Eldresses (spiritual leadership) of the Hancock Bishopric.



10 Privy, ca. 1840

Built by the Shakers in Harvard, MA. Moved in 1990 and placed on the site of an original Hancock outhouse.



11 Brick Poultry House, 1878

Housed chickens and calves. Video.



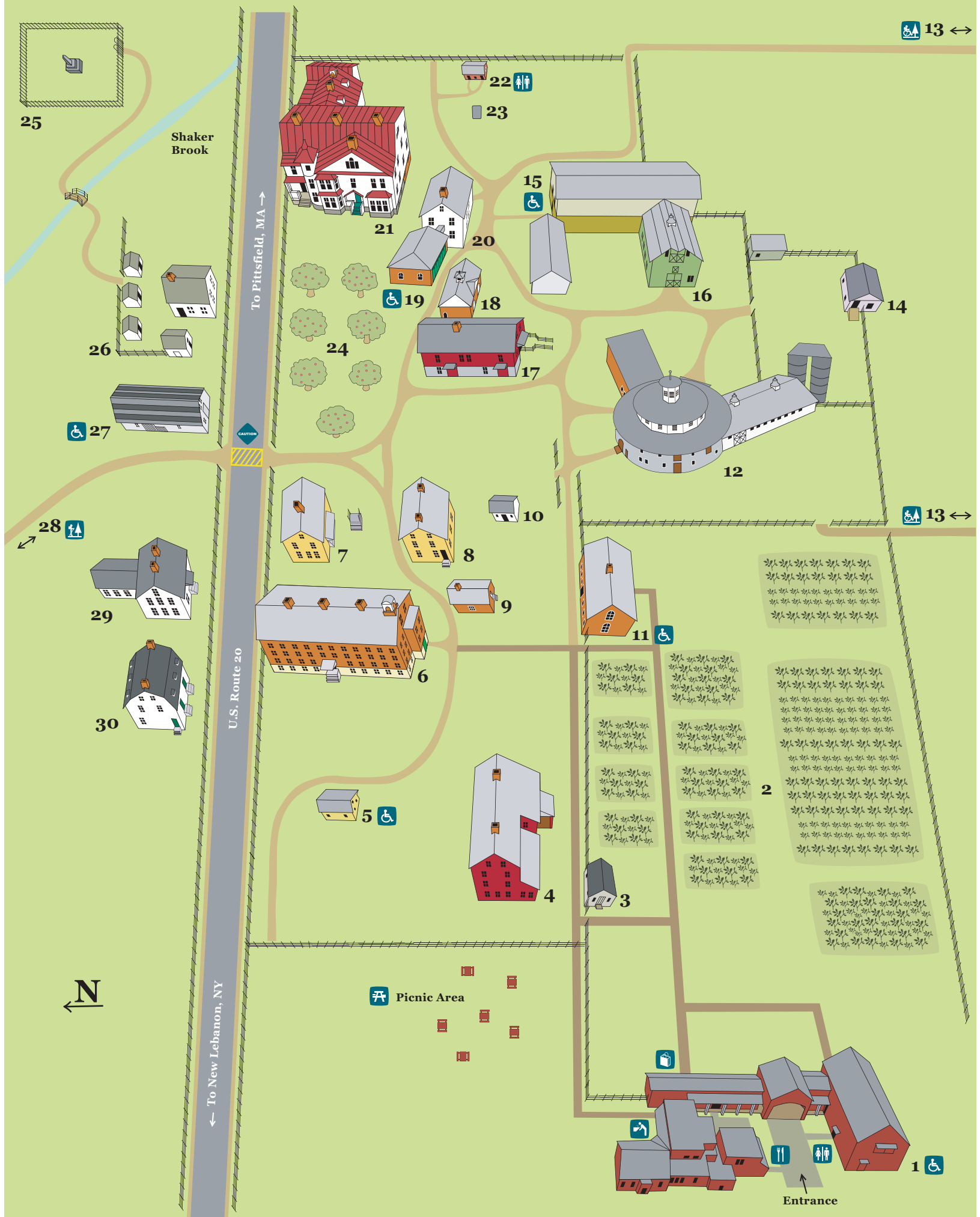
12 Round Stone Barn, 1826

Unique dairy barn stabled "a span of horses and 52 horned cattle." Brick Ell added in mid-19th century housed grain and farm equipment. Dairy Ell added in 1930s stabled milk cows. Daily demonstrations.



13 Hancock Shaker Village Farm & Forest Trail, 2007

One-mile accessible trail, winds through farmland, fields and forest. Signage interprets natural and cultural history, including quarries, maple sugar bush, and wetlands. Easy ability level hiking trail.



14 Wood Poultry House & Farmyard
Small livestock sheds in farmyard constructed in 1990s-2000s using authentic timber framing tools and techniques.

15 Barn Complex, 1880-1910-1939
Concrete and stucco-covered barn constructed in 1910 on 1880 foundation, stabled calves and horses. Dairy Ell added in 1939 stabled milk cows. Video.

16 Discovery Room
Hands on activities for children and families.

17 Tannery, ca. 1810
Housed leather tannery, enlarged in 1838. Housed cider press, woodworking and blacksmith shops. Daily demonstrations.

18 Ice House, 1894
Ice harvested from Shaker Reservoir provided cold storage for dairy products, meats, vegetables, fruits, other farm produce.

19 Brick Garage, ca. 1915
Housed Shakers' automobiles. Steam heat piped in from adjacent Hired Men's Shop.

20 Hired Men's Shop, ca. 1820
Originally a garden seed shop located between the Horse Barn and Ministry Shop. Moved and adapted in 1905 to house hired farm workers.

21 Trustees' Office & Store, ca. 1813
Housed office, sales store, and living quarters for Shaker Trustees (business leadership). Originally simple and symmetrical in design, enlarged in 1852, modernized in 1895 to Victorian style. Small structure at front of building is a well house (1970s replica).

22 Office Privy, ca. 1860
Example of Hancock outhouses. Now contains modern restrooms (seasonal).

23 Pet Cemetery, early 20th century
Small stone set flat in lawn approximately 30 feet from Office Privy, marks burial spot of Shakers' pets.

24 Orchard
Heirloom apple trees grown by the Shakers.

25 Cemetery
Over 300 Shakers interred here. Individual headstones removed in 1943, replaced by single communal monument. Path to cemetery behind Schoolhouse and footbridge over Shaker Brook.

26 Schoolhouse & outbuildings, 1976 replicas
Original Schoolhouse built ca. 1820. Current structure, adjacent privies, and woodshed reconstructed using authentic timber framing tools and techniques. Daily demonstrations.

27 Horse Barn, 1850
Housed horses and carriages. Adjacent shed replica constructed in 1980s on original stone foundation using authentic timber framing tools and techniques.

28 Trail to Shaker Reservoir, North Family site, and Mt. Sinai
Archaeological remains of mill, dwelling, and dams. Path to mountain "Feast Ground." Inquire at Visitor Center for more information on this 6 mile, moderate-to-difficult ability level hiking trail.

29 Ministry Shop, 1874
Housed offices, workshops, and living quarters for the Ministry Elders and Eldresses (spiritual leadership) of the Hancock Bishopric. Video.

30 Meetinghouse, 1793
Built by the Shakers in Shirley, MA. Moved in 1962 to the site of the original, nearly identical, 1786 Hancock Shaker Meetinghouse (demolished in 1938).