

# SHAKER MUSEUM | MOUNT LEBANON

PO Box 630

New Lebanon, NY 12125

518-794-9100

Contact: Wyatt Erchak, ext 220, [werchak@shakermml.org](mailto:werchak@shakermml.org)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon receives grant to celebrate and explore the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's suffrage in New York State**

(December 13, 2016) Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon was awarded \$41,500 from the New York State Council on the Arts to celebrate and explore the Shakers' ideas and engagement around suffrage and women's rights, and the lives of the Shaker sisters who lived at Mount Lebanon. The museum is planning an exhibition, walking tour, public programs, and an academic symposium co-



*Eldress Anna White and Sister Martha Burger at the North Family, circa 1900. Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon.*

presented with Bard College at Simon's Rock in 2017 on these topics. The grant was announced by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo last week as a part of funding from the state's Regional Economic Development Councils intended to jumpstart the economy and create jobs.

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in New York State. New York was three years ahead of the nation in granting women the right to vote. The Shakers were even further ahead of their time: in 1888, an elder publicly advocated an all-female Senate to balance the all-male House of Representatives.

The museum's executive director Lacy Schutz said, "This award acknowledges the critical roles Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon and cultural heritage tourism have to play in the economic development of Columbia County and the Capital Region, and allows us to highlight the Shakers' remarkable progressivism and commitment to gender equality."

Mount Lebanon Shaker Village, founded in 1787, was the first Shaker community fully organized and governed by a set of guiding theological, economic, and social principles. It served as the administrative and spiritual center of the Shaker world for 150 years. Founded in the 1770s by Mother Ann Lee, the illiterate daughter of a blacksmith from Manchester, England, the Shakers were unique in having a dual gender organizational structure that paired men and women leaders at each level of administration within the church and the communities. The Shakers, especially those who lived and worked at Mount Lebanon's North Family, were deeply involved in progressive social movements in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including women's rights and the suffrage movement; pacifism; and dietary, labor, and land reform. Shaker women, such as Eldresses Anna White and Catherine Allen, were influential both inside Shaker society and outside it in pushing for greater roles for women in the social, economic, and political realms. Through their writings and actions, Shaker women strove to make the Shaker ideal of gender equality a reality in the world.

"Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon is experiencing tremendous growth and renewal, grounding its mission and programming in core Shaker values of conviction, innovation, integrity, and tolerance. I'm thrilled to help lead the museum forward in this period of evolution and development," said Paul Cassidy, the museum's board chair.

Shaker Museum | Mount Lebanon stewards the historic site in New Lebanon, New York, which is open from June to October and offers tours, exhibitions, and public programs. 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. The museum's collection of over 56,000 Shaker items is the most comprehensive collection of its kind in the world. Please visit [www.shakerml.org](http://www.shakerml.org) for more information and to find out about programming in 2017.