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South Union Messenger (October 1980)

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The South Union Messenger

Vol. 5, No. 2

October, 1980

YOU ARE INVITED

On Sunday, October 19, at 3:30 P.M. there will be an open house for all members of the South Union Organization. A musical program will be presented by the South Union Singers and a social hour will follow when you can visit with other friends of South Union who help preserve the Shaker heritage.

This will also be a time for you to meet John Campbell, who will become South Union's first salaried staff member, beginning January 1.

Mr. Campbell is no newcomer to South Union for he has served five years as technical director for the outdoor drama, "Shakertown Revisited". The past season he was director of the drama. During these years, Mr. Campbell has proved himself a real student of Shakerism, as well as a dependable, hard-working individual. He has done considerable volunteer work for the museum.

A native of Greenwood, Indiana, John Campbell is a senior at Western Kentucky University, where he has been employed as technical director of Van Meter Auditorium, the university's concert and lecture hall.

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

The 1869 Shaker Tavern or Hotel is being purchased by the South Union Organization. A purchase grant of \$37,500 from the Kentucky Heritage Commission has made it possible to negotiate for the historic building. It is expected that further funding will be forthcoming and that the Tavern will be turned over to the Organization by the last of the year. Plans for furnishing and using the building will be published in the next Messenger.

The Tavern, an interesting combination of Shaker and Southern architecture, was built in 1868-69 as a business venture to help the society recoup some of its heavy Civil War losses. Leased to an outsider for \$1,200 per year, it served as a resort stopover for riders on the new railroad and for other society visitors.

Several years ago the Organization purchased the Shaker store building located across the road from the Tavern. The store, which will soon be debt-free, houses the 1826 Shaker post office, which was moved in 1860 from the center of the village to the new railroad center.

This building is open daily all year, making it possible for you to purchase or order museum gift shop items when the museum itself is closed. To help defray costs, some store space has been rented to antique dealers, who offer a variety of stock.

SHAKER ROOTS

From time to time individuals come or write seeking information about their Shaker ancestors. Among recent seekers have been Mrs. Jane McComb Cooper, Somerset, Ky. and Mrs. Mabel McComb Robertson of Jellico, Te., descendents of Jesse McComb, the first convert in the Gasper society. The sisters are now members, helping to preserve the South Union heritage.

Another with South Union roots is Mrs. Eula Lee Harris of Ocatello, Ca., whose grandparents, James Buchanan and Eliza Ann Broadbent, left the society to be married but her great aunt, Lucetta Buchanan, remained and became an eldress. Inquires relating to Eliza Ann have also come from the Broadbent family in Cadiz, Ky.

While visiting South Union, a descendent of John Rankin, Sr., bought enough peg strips to place around the dining room walls of her Russellville, Arkansas home.

Another interesting relationship came to light recently when Mary Reed of Birmingham, Mich., called concerning the burial at South Union of her gt.,gt., gt. grandfather, Wm. Duff Duncan, a Pittsburgh merchant. In Nov., 1826, while traveling from Cincinnati to Nashville in company with his negro waiter, Duncan stayed overnight at the South Union office. The next morning the servant discovered Duncan had died during the night, causing the servant to remark sadly, "Man may 'pint, but God will disappoint".

A REQUEST

When you come to the open house, will you please show your 1980 membership card at the desk and pick up a ticket. If you have lost your card, you can be identified from the membership roster at the desk. Our volunteer hosts do not know all of you personally, so to save embarrassment and to help the desk keep the attendance, please stop by the desk for your tickets and for tickets for your visitors.