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South Union Messenger (February 1989)

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Shakertown South Union

The South Union Messenger

FEBRUARY 1989

PROGRESS REPORT FOR 1988

Shakertown at South Union has just completed a successful year with much progress made in the areas of restoration, education and site development. A recent rise in interest in the "Shaker way" boosted our museum's attendance in 1988 to well over the 11,000 mark. The museum experienced an overwhelming response to each of its activities and special events and more than doubled the membership of its "Friends" organization.

Restoration work was continued on the ca. 1834 Smoke and Milk House or "Preservatory" with a grant from the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation and private donations. The exterior of the building is well underway to being finished with a new standing seam metal roof, restored original windows, restored exterior woodwork, and a fresh coat of paint (the original verdigris green). The structure is in need of interior work which will begin as funds become available.

Shakertown's education program was expanded in 1988, a project that began last April with living history tours for over 1200 local school children. Opportunities for adults to learn more about the South Union Shakers took the form of workshops teaching 19th century Shaker craft. Chair-caning, oval box-making, weaving and basket-making workshops were offered during the year as well as unique learning events like candlelight tours of the historic buildings, music performances, walking tours, and Shaker meals served in the Centre House dining room.

One of the nicest improvements to the Shakertown site was the planting of a Shaker herb garden. The Garden Club of Kentucky took this project and the outcome was not only an additional educational resource for our site but a focal point enjoyed by all of our visitors. Shakertown is very grateful to all of the volunteers who worked so diligently to make the garden a reality.

SHAKERTOWN AT SOUTH UNION WANTS YOU!

The museum is in great need of volunteers for the 1989 season. We have a job for everyone no matter what experience you have had before and no matter how much or how little you know about the Shakers. Your talents can be used in the gift shop, in the museum office, or as a tour guide, a researcher, a painter or a host of other positions that could help the museum immeasurably. Think about it and give us a call at: 502-542 4167.

RECENT DONATIONS:

19th century bed linens and towels, foot warmers, ironstone and goblets like originals used at South Union, and a copy of "The Shaker Image" for the library.....Jeanne Weaver

Riding Lawn Mower.....Amanda Gordon and Deedy Hall

Electric Can Opener for new kitchen.....John and Linda Tanner

Electrified Copper Lantern on post and floodlights for Centre House yard, in memory of Eleanor Hall Bird.....Mary Bird Camp, Margaret Bird McQueen, and Virginia Bird Price

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

James W. Bealle, Atlanta, Georgia

Bob and Kit Cress, Mansfield, Ohio

Alan and Adrienne Dieball, Bowling Green, Kentucky

Mr. and Mrs. James McGuirk, Smiths Grove, Kentucky

Candie Myers, Ft. Campbell, Kentucky

Alan Schoen, Old Chatham, New York

Dale and Mary Spencer, Franklin, Kentucky

Darlene Stark, Ft. Campbell, Kentucky

Dorothy S. Wallace, Russellville, Kentucky

THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our fall events last year were made possible by the many hours of volunteer help that we received. The candlelight tour, Shaker breakfast, "walk to the mill site" and luncheon, and Christmas celebration were all successes due to the following invaluable volunteers:

Todd Ashby	Deedy Hall
Debbie Britt	Dee Hall
Addie Brooks	Dawn Hall
Donnalyne Brooks	Kitty Hall
Greg Britt	Lillie Mae Hayes
Steve Burks	Hilda Hines
Laura Nealy Burks	Virginia Hurst
Leslie Corder	Sherri Phelps
Glenn Givens	Chandler Jefferson
Linda Reynolds	Gailan Roberson

Thanks to each of you!

"ADOPT-A-ROOM"

The 1824 Centre Family Dwelling House has several rooms that have not been completely restored. Because of the size of the building we have not been able to work on all of the rooms and need some help. One of our members recently suggested that we start a program called "Adopt-a-Room" where a family or a group of people take on a room restoration project. Shakertown could supply the paint and supplies, along with technical assistance and supervision, and your group could supply the elbow grease and talent.

Now this may not sound like much fun to some of you but there are people who would enjoy having a part in the restoration of this most historic building. If you are one of those people or know of one of those people let us know. Most of the work is only cosmetic in nature and would not take much time. Rooms range in size from very small storage spaces to large hallways so we have something for everyone.

If interested give the museum office a call: 502-542-4167.

PRESERVATORY RESTORATION CONTINUES

The preservatory building, also known as the Smoke and Milk House, has revealed many secrets during some recent restoration work. As mentioned on the first page of the newsletter the Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation funded the exterior project that has just been completed on the building. Additional funding has been applied for that would finish the outside work. Because of a generous donation from Bob and Kit Cress of Mansfield, Ohio, we have been able to begin work on the preservatory's interior earlier than we had planned. Here is where we have found several clues to the building's original use.

Interior work started in the "smoke house" section of the building, located on the second floor. Beneath post-Shaker plaster we found solid brick walls blackened by many years of use as a smoke house. A series of openings in two of the walls were discovered to have been vents for the smoke. Large square nails lining blackened rafters were found after a false ceiling was removed. (There were enough nails to hang around one hundred hams.) Other discoveries included original oak flooring preserved under a 1930s pine floor, a large opening in the chimney that allowed smoke to come into the room when a fire was built in the room below, and a small wooden mechanism attached to the window frame that held up the window sash without the use of a prop.

Many thanks to Bob and Kit Cress for supplying the funding that enabled us to make these discoveries. There are two rooms downstairs, a center hallway, and an upstairs retiring room with original peg and chair rails in tact that need restoration. Anyone interested in the "Smoke and Milk House" restoration project please write or call for more information. When the ca.1834 building is completely restored we hope to use it as an extension of the museum and as additional museum shop space.

SOUTH UNION SHAKER QUARTET FORMED

Recently organized at Shakertown, the South Union Shaker Quartet performs at the museum to act as an interpretive tool and as entertainment for the visitors. The quartet was formed in August of 1988 after positive response from visitors during the Shaker Festival. Since then the group has performed at Shaker Week in Hendersonville, Tennessee; Travelers Rest Historic House in Nashville, Tennessee; Winter Weekends at Pleasant Hill Shaker Village; and at the Kentucky Museum Docent Conference in Bowling Green. The quartet has also performed at South Union throughout the fall.

Members of the South Union Shaker Quartet are Chandler Fowler Jefferson, soprano; Laura Nealy Burks, alto; Steve Burks, tenor; Tommy Hines, bass.

SOUTH UNION ON EXHIBIT

Pieces from the South Union collection were the subject of two exhibits loaned from the museum this past year. In June we sent forty items to THE FORUM art museum in St. Louis for an exhibit entitled: "The Shakers: Spirit and Industry." The exhibit was accompanied by Ann Chwatsky's photographic study of the Shaker community at Sabbathday Lake, Maine.

In October South Union co-sponsored "Shaker Week" with the Hendersonville Arts Council in Hendersonville, Tennessee. The week's activities included a series of lectures and music performances with an emphasis on the South Union community and an exhibit of twenty-five pieces from the South Union collection. Both exhibits were very successful in making the public more aware of the South Union project and its history.

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

1988 was a busy year for everyone at South Union and the winter months are a welcome "quiet time" for planning and reflecting. We are counting on a successful 1989 and dependent upon your continued support. There are many changes being made and I hope each of you will come and see the progress being made.

Last fall I was lucky enough to visit several of the New England Shaker sites. It was a wonderful experience seeing Hancock, Mt. Lebanon, Watervliet, Enfield, N.H., Sabbathday Lake, and the Shaker Museum at Old Chatham. The only disappointment was not being able to meet the Shakers in Maine, but everyone made us "kindly welcome."

Two members of our "Friends" organization have passed away since the last newsletter. Sue Barrow Britt and Kathleen Procter were both long-time supporters of the South Union project and will be missed. Two others close to South Union have passed away: Eldon McCormick, brother of member Ruth Pottinger, and Monroe Porter, cousin of member Amanda Gordon. We extend our deepest sympathy to the families of each of those mentioned.

I hope that each of you will want to take part in the spring calendar of events listed on the last page of the newsletter and will consider "adopting a room" in the Centre House. Take note that the Shaker Festival is in June this year instead of July. We are trying to beat the heat.

Thank you for your continued support.

Tommy Hines

SHAKERTOWN AT SOUTH UNION
SPRING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 1 SOUTH UNION SEMINAR
A one-day seminar with guest speakers, Shaker music, tours of the South Union site and Shaker foods. 9:00-5:00. Fee.
- April 3-7 CHILDREN'S TOURS
10-14 Tours of the 1824 Centre Family Dwelling House and
17-21 a living history demonstration for grades K-4.
24-28 Invitations sent to all area schools. Fee.
- May 5-6 OVAL BOX-MAKING WORKSHOP
Learn to make a nest of Shaker oval boxes in this two-day workshop. Session runs Friday evening from 6:00-9:00, Saturday 9:00-4:00. A Shaker luncheon is included in Saturday's activities. Fee.
- May 20 CHAIR-CANING WORKSHOP
Learn to cane the bottom of a slt-back chair or rocker using Shaker tape. 9:00-4:00. Fee.
- June 16-18 SHAKER FESTIVAL
23-25 The 28th annual Shaker Festival will include Shaker
30- reproduction crafts, Shaker foods and music, tours
July 2 of the South Union site and museum exhibits and the production of "Shakertown Revisited," a musical drama depicting the history of the South Union Shaker community, 1807-1922. Festival begins at 10:00 each morning, drama begins at 8:15 each evening.

For more information about the workshops and events write: Shakertown at South Union, South Union, KY 42283. All events are held on the grounds of the South Union historic site at the 1824 Centre Family Dwelling House. RESERVATIONS are required for all events except the Shaker Festival. Only large groups should call ahead for the festival. For reservations: 502-542-4167.

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South Union, KY
42283

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