

7-2003

## South Union Messenger (July 2003)

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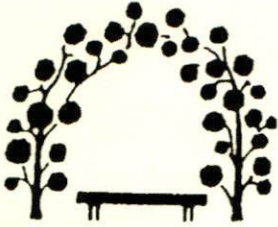
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# SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

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*Newsletter for the Friends of the Shaker Museum at South Union, Kentucky*

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## *A Word from the Director...*

We are in the middle of a very exciting summer at South Union. Not only do we have more things for people to see at the museum, we are also having more people! The state of Kentucky installed directional signs on Interstate 65 in the spring and our numbers have steadily increased ever since. The Shaker Tavern is also experiencing an increase in overnight guests. As a result, sales in the museum shop are on the rise, so we have nothing to complain about in the summer of 2003.

The opening of the 1846 Ministry Shop was a wonderful success, and reaction from our visitors has also been quite favorable. The chrome yellow floors are definitely a shock to 21<sup>st</sup> century sensibilities, but the Shaker's cherry furniture has never looked better. Details on the building's exterior were restored by local craftsman, Eugene Hall. The beautiful yellow poplar cornice was stripped of its many layers of paint to reveal original cove moldings and heavy beadings that were almost in a perfect state of preservation. Mr. Hall also restored the original front door and the trim surrounding it. White porcelain restoration knobs were ordered for each of the buildings' four interior doors and both exterior doors, matching those that were in place when the building was constructed.

Just as a reminder, South Union now has four buildings open for daily tours: the 1824 Centre House, 1835 Smoke and Milk House, 1846 Ministry Shop, and the 1847 Steam House. The 1869 Shaker Tavern is open for bed and breakfast guests and group meals by reservation, and the 1875 Grain Barn is in the planning stages of restoration. Make a visit to the Shaker Museum at South Union this season.

Tommy Hines



## Recent Acquisitions ...

Manuscript transcription of "Singular Dream," copied from *The American Presbyterian*, August 11, 1837 issue, by South Union Shaker, Robinson Eads, to Elder Freegift Wells, December 18, 1837

..... purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Collection of infirmary textiles from Shaker Village of Mt. Lebanon, New York, including a cotton shirt, cotton mask, cotton pillow case, linen sheet, flannel underwear, and rag rug, late 19th century

..... donated by Nancy Hillenburg, Morrow Bay, CA

Collection of secondary material relating to western Shaker material culture, including books, periodicals, manuscripts, photographs, and slides, from the Tim Bookout Collection

..... donated by Jeff Ashworth, Atlanta, Georgia

Silk scarf, white with white border, probably made at South Union, Kentucky, ca 1850, with 20th century manuscript description of silk-making process at South Union

..... purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Spectacles and case, South Union, Kentucky, ca. 1850, case attributed to South Union craftsmanship, maple and tin, red and white label affixed to case reads, "Shaker-made, South Union, Kentucky \$2.00"

..... purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Chair, weaver's, maple and ash, found in Warren County, Kentucky, attributed to South Union Shakers, ca. 1850

..... purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Chair, rocking, ash, with traces of ochre and red-orange paint, room numbers "6" and "17" impressed into chair, South Union Shakers, ca. 1870

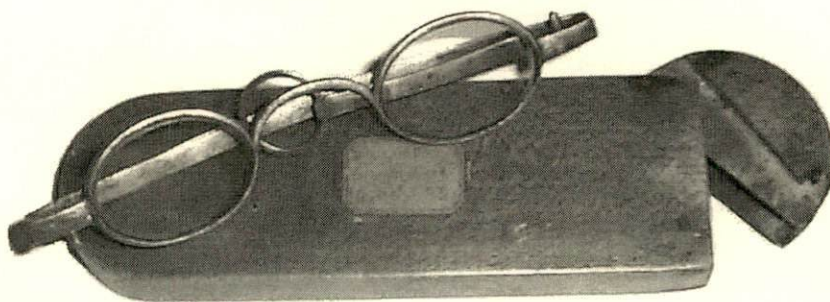
..... purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Chair, maple and ash, classic South Union example, with traces of red-orange paint, ca. 1840, from the Tim Bookout Collection, Atlanta, Georgia

..... purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Chair, child's, maple and ash, classic South Union example, room number "8" impressed into chair, ca. 1840, from the Tim Bookout Collection, Atlanta, Georgia

..... purchased with acquisition endowment funds



## *A Message From Our President . . .*

This year continues to be very exciting at the Shaker Museum at South Union. The restoration of the 1846 Ministry Shop is complete and it is now open to the public. This is a wonderful addition to our beautiful historic site.

The number of visitors to the Shaker Museum is on the increase thanks to the highway signs installed by the state. We are continuing to add more items to our unique Gift Shop. Our staff continues to work very hard to make this an enjoyable and exciting place to visit and shop.

Please be sure to mark your calendars for our Civil War Encampment, scheduled for August 23 and 24, as well as Farm Day on October 4. These are both wonderful family events.

The Shaker Museum is continuing in its efforts to oppose the waste transfer station proposed by Apex Environmental. One visit to our Museum and the area surrounding it is a testimony to the devastating effect this would have. The Museum is doing everything in its power to combat this threat and we need your continued support.

Our unique historic site continues to grow and become more beautiful each year. We encourage you to take the time to visit and see the many changes. There are many plans for the future and I would encourage all our members to remain involved.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Jon Taylor Barrow  
President  
Board of Directors  
The Shaker Museum at South Union

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**August 23-24 CIVIL WAR ENCAMPMENT**

The difficult days of the Civil War are relived as re-enactors portray the Shakers' encounter with Confederate and Federal troops.

Fee: Free with museum admission

**October 4 SHAKER FARM DAY**

Step into South Union during harvest time in the 1870s. Living history demonstrations include everything from lard rendering to laundry boiling. Enjoy a Kentucky barbeque lunch under the shade trees and tour the historic Shaker building.

Fee: \$6.00 Adults  
\$2.00 Children (6-12)

Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**November 8 A SHAKER BREAKFAST**

**November 15** Experience a morning meal like no other when you sit down to an 1863 South Union breakfast. This Civil War era menu includes eggs and sausage, fried chicken, sweet potatoes, buttermilk biscuits, peach pie, and much more. Reservations required.

Fee: \$20.00 for members, \$22.00 for non-members

Time: Seatings at 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.

**December 6 CHRISTMAS AT SHAKERTOWN**

One of Kentucky's finest antique and handmade craft shows - just in time for Christmas.

Fee: Canned food item to be given to needy families

Time: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

A preview party on Friday evening, December 5, benefits the museum. Reservations required.

Special thanks to:

Mrs. W. L. Lyons Brown and the W. L. Lyons Brown Foundation

Mr. Will Martin in recognition of Ms. Bess Martin

Mr. Martin Brown

for supporting educational programming at the Shaker Museum.

## *The South Union Post Office 1826-2003 ...*

After more than 170 years in operation, South Union's post office has been closed by the United States Postal Service. Established May 22, 1826, the original post office was located in a log building just west of the Centre House, which was still under construction at the time. Brother David Smith was appointed the first postmaster.

The post office would be relocated within the village a number of times until the Shakers decided to move it closer to their commercial operation. In 1860 the South Union Shakers signed a contract with the Louisville & Nashville Railroad agreeing that a portion of the Memphis branch could be constructed through the village. When the work had been completed, the railroad company built a frame depot on the south side of the track.

Soon after, the Shakers moved an existing frame structure from the village to stand beside the depot as a general merchandise store. The post office was moved to the back of the new store sometime during the early 1860s.

One of the disastrous results of the Civil War occurred on June 7, 1865, when Confederate guerrillas burned the depot and the Shaker store. Within two months, the depot was rebuilt and a new frame store was constructed on the north side of the tracks. The frame store was replaced with a new one-story brick building in 1872. When it burned in 1896, the Shakers replaced it with a two-story brick store. Another fire, in 1917, again destroyed the building, but it was replaced later that year with the current structure.

When David Smith retired as postmaster in 1855, other Shaker postmasters followed, including John Robinson Eads (1855-1865) and Elder Harvey L. Eads (1865-1889). With the exception of Elder John Perryman, who held the position from 1897-1901, people outside the Shaker village were appointed postmaster after 1889. The reason for taking the post office from the Shakers is explained in a March 9, 1889 journal entry:

“The Post Office is taken away from Society's custody today ... The neighbors got up a petition in favor of John McCutcheon who has been renting our store building at the Depot, sent it to Washington, received his commission.”

The Shakers tried to gain control of the situation by establishing a new post office within the village called “Shakerville.” The venture lasted only five months. South Union's post office would remain near the L & N Railroad as a community hub and an important piece of history for 140 of its 170 years. It will always hold the distinction of the last of the Shaker post offices.



1896 Shaker Store & Post Office (Under Construction)



1917 Shaker Store & Post Office

## *New Members Since January, 2003 ...*

*Jim Riley  
Russellville, KY*

*Thomas A Noe, III  
Russellville, KY*

*E. Hanlin and Jane Bavely  
Cincinnati, OH*

*W. Conn Clark  
Adairville, KY*

*Elizabeth Hester  
Scottsville, KY*

*Martha Sedberry  
Hopkinsville, KY*

*Sherry A. Wittry  
Louisville, KY*

*David and Mary Jo Coleman  
Kettering, OH*

*Fay W. Jones  
Manchester, TN*

*Tom Mayberry, Jr.  
Nashville, TN*

*Mr. and Mrs. Marcus Muth  
Rockfield, KY*

And, a very special thanks to all our members. Without all of this support, The Shaker Museum at South Union would not exist.

## *Donations Received Since January, 2003 ...*

Auburn Banking Company  
Elaine Disch  
Raymond and Judy McCaskey  
John and Linda Tanner  
Dale and Mary Spencer  
Carpenter Foundation

Mary Frances Russell Estate

The Shaker Museum recently received a bequest from the estate of Logan County native, Mary Frances Russell. The reason for the bequest can be traced to her grandfather and his brother, both of whom were left at South Union when their parents died in the 1850s. They remained in the community for several years but decided to leave and join the army at the onset of the Civil War. Many years later, both men recounted many hours of hard work at Shakertown, but they felt like the Shakers had literally saved their lives by taking them in. Ms. Russell's contribution came from a desire to show her gratitude for what the Shakers had done for her family.





The 1917 Shaker Store & Post Office Today



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**SHAKER MUSEUM AT SOUTH UNION**

850 Shaker Museum Road  
P.O. Box 177  
Auburn, Kentucky 42206

Nonprofit Organization  
**US POSTAGE  
PAID**  
Shakertown  
Auburn, KY 42206  
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