

4-2004

South Union Messenger (April 2004)

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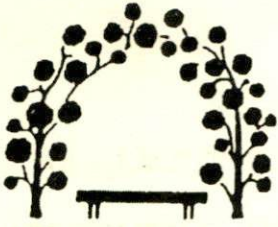


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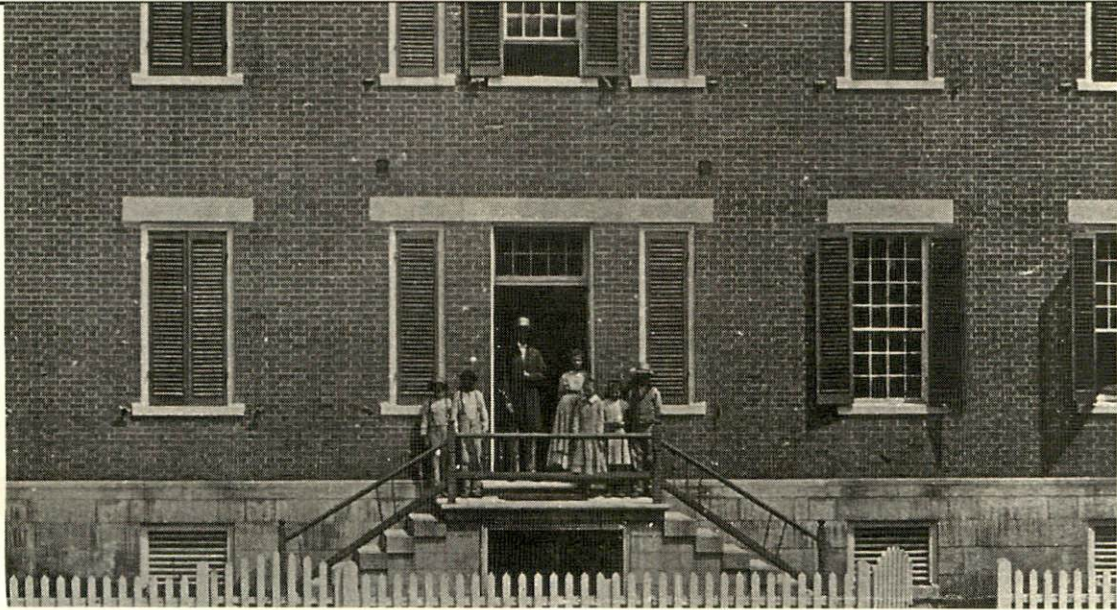
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SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

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



A group of Shaker children with a South Union brother on the steps of the Centre House, ca. 1885.

A Word from the Director...

Spring is here early at South Union. What a great time to come and visit and to see for yourself the changes that have been made over the winter. There is always something new to see as our site continues to develop.

I hope that many of you will attend this year's South Union Seminar, April 16-17. We will be exploring 19th century regional architecture and its relationship to the built environment at South Union. Over the years, the museum has focused a great amount of research time to South Union furniture style and form, and its roots in the southern vernacular. We have not yet explored the architectural relationship possibilities and hope this year's seminar will produce some new insight into the southern Shaker craftsmanship. Speakers include Christian Goodwillie, Curator of Collections at Hancock Shaker Village, and local scholars, Dr. Michael Ann Williams and C. Tracey Parks. Don't miss this year's event, hope to see you there.

Thanks for all you do and for your continued support.

Tommy Hines

Recent Acquisitions ...

Chair, ash with maple back slats, classic South Union example. Ca. 1840

..... purchases with acquisition endowment funds

Photograph of "world's people" on a hay wagon at South Union, labeled "picnicking at Shakertown, 1915," 3x5 inch sepia original

..... donated anonymously



Collection of Shaker chairs from northeastern villages, including side chair with tilters from Enfield, New Hampshire, rocking chair from Canterbury, New Hampshire, and rocking chair from Mt. Lebanon, New York, acquired as study pieces for comparison to South Union examples

..... donated by Millard L. and Elisabeth Johnson

Dorothy Cloak, labeled "Hart and Shepherd, E. Canterbury, N.H.," black wool with silk ties, and pair of leather shoes attributed to eastern Shaker community

..... donated by Millard L. and Elisabeth Johnson

A Message from Our President...

Another exciting year has begun for the Shaker Museum at South Union. Our staff has had a very productive winter. As always, the Museum is in top notch condition and the 1846 Ministry Shop is a wonderful addition to our Museum. If you have not had the opportunity to tour this building, it is certainly a must see. Our calendar of events and new exhibits should hold something for everyone and I hope a trip to the site is on everyone's list.

The museum website has also undergone a major restoration. Launching in mid April, www.shakermuseum.com will offer extensive information about our museum and will also host on-line shopping. From our website, visitors can receive information about becoming a member, view photographs, and shop in our gift shop. The Shaker Museum at South Union will only be a click away.

The opposition to Apex Environmental's proposed waste transfer station at South Union continues. In December, the Franklin Circuit Court ruled in our favor regarding the validity of the permit issue. As expected, Apex has appealed the ruling. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed financially and otherwise to this opposition. We will continue to keep everyone up-to-date regarding this situation.

Thanks again for your continued support as we look forward to a great year.

John Taylor Barrow
President

APRIL 16 - 17

South Union Seminar

Our annual two-day seminar combines presentations by scholars in the field of Shaker studies, special behind the scenes tours, and meals served at the historic Shaker Tavern.

Reservations required.

Fee: \$45 for members, \$55 for non-members

Time: 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Saturday

DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED

Civil War Encampment

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

OCTOBER 2

Shaker Farm Day

Step into South Union during harvest time in the 1870's. Living history demonstrators include: laundry boiling, butter making, broom making, apple cider making, basket weaving, and much more. Enjoy lunch under the shade trees and tour the historic Shaker buildings.

Fee; \$6 adults \$2 Children 6 - 12

Children under 6 free

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

NOVEMBER 6 AND NOVEMBER 13

A Shaker Breakfast

Experience a morning meal like no other when you sit down to an 1863 South Union breakfast. This Civil War era menu includes: eggs, sausage, fried chicken, sweet potatoes, buttermilk biscuits, peach pie, and much more. This year's breakfast will be served in our 1869 Shaker Tavern.

Reservations required.

Fee: \$20 for members, \$22 for non-members

Time: 8:30 and 10:30 each day

DECEMBER 4

Christmas at Shakertown

One of Kentucky's finest antique and handmade craft shows, just in time for Christmas. A preview party on Friday evening, December 3, benefits the museum.

Reservations required for the Preview Party

Fee: Canned food item for needy families

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

New Website



SHAKER
MUSEUM
AT SOUTH UNION

SHOPPING CART

Historic site of the South Union Shaker Village

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Welcome

South Union today is more than just a memory. It is a place to visit and learn firsthand about the Shaker way of life. Several of the original buildings have been restored and now house a fine museum of Shaker folklife and material culture, a unique museum shop, and overnight lodgings.

This Shaker community was established by the Shakers in 1807 and closed in 1922. We invite you to explore our web site and then [plan your visit](#) to this western-most of the Shaker communities. To find the best times to visit, take a look at the [special events](#) we have throughout the year.

If you have any questions, please feel free to [contact us](#).

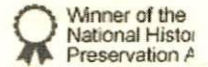
The Museum's Mission

The Shaker Museum was established as an independent, non-profit, educational institution, its purpose being:

- To preserve and maintain the site of the Shaker Society which once existed at South Union.
- To protect its buildings, its landscape, and its folklife and material culture.
- To use the buildings and grounds to further the interest of the public in historic preservation and Shaker history.
- To sponsor continuing programs of an educational and cultural nature.



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- [Shaker Links](#)



Winner of the
National Historical
Preservation Award

Above is a reproduction of the home page of our new website. By the time you read this we should have it up and running. This is a much improved website where you can even shop on-line. Check us out at www.shakermuseum.com.



April, 2004

Always Something to Learn ...

I am constantly amazed at the never-ending amount of historical data relating to South Union. Besides Shaker villages, in what other American towns and cities do we have such a record of daily life? The extant journals, account books, letters, and other primary material can grasp the researcher's attention and retain it for nearly a lifetime. There are, however, always unanswered questions.

Matthew Cook, an undergraduate intern from Western Kentucky University, has been compiling architectural data in the 1824 Centre House this winter. His task was to measure the doors, mantles, built-in cupboards, window trim, chair rail, peg rail, and baseboard in each room of the forty-two room structure. He also recorded molding profiles, the presence of other decorative details, and any information regarding door hinges, locks, and thumb latches.

The purpose of the project was to compare the data from room to room and from floor to floor, hoping to find patterns of consistency. While the project is not complete, it has already become apparent that the trim throughout the building is fairly consistent, that the original carpenters incorporated a great variety of decorative moldings in the Centre House, and that the built-in cupboards fall into categories that seem to reflect either the number of people who slept in a room or the importance of the people who used the space.

Two mysteries remain. Late 19th and early 20th century rim locks and door knobs are present on most of the sixty-six interior doors throughout the Centre House. Twelve doors retain original thumb latches. Did the Shakers install the rim locks as the old latches began to fail prior to the community's closing in 1922 or were the locks installed by the new owner of the building after 1922? There is no mention of door locks in the Shaker records and no historic photographs of interior doors exist. The rim locks and knobs that remain in the Centre House represent a wide variety of sizes, styles, and makers. For now, the locks remain, but if evidence of a post-Shaker installation surfaces, they should be removed and reproduction latches installed.

Another question relates to the retiring room mantles. Of the original twenty-four mantles, twenty-two are still in place. The Centre House was under construction, with some periods of inactivity, from 1822 until 1833. While wood-burning fireplaces were to have heated each of the retiring rooms, the Shakers "retrofitted" the building with iron stoves in November of 1833, just eight months after moving in. The mantles were, however, left intact.

Upon examination today, the mantles on the main level of the building, with the exception of one, are extremely plain. The mantles on the floor above, however, are decorated with applied molding and plinths, which appear to be original. Decorative detail was certainly no stranger to South Union craftsmen, even during the first half of the 19th century, but why the inconsistency? Hopefully other sources of information may surface, but for now, the Centre House mantle discrepancy remains a mystery.

Thanks to Matthew Cook for many meticulous hours spent with a measuring tape.

Tommy Hines

Very, Very Special Friends ...

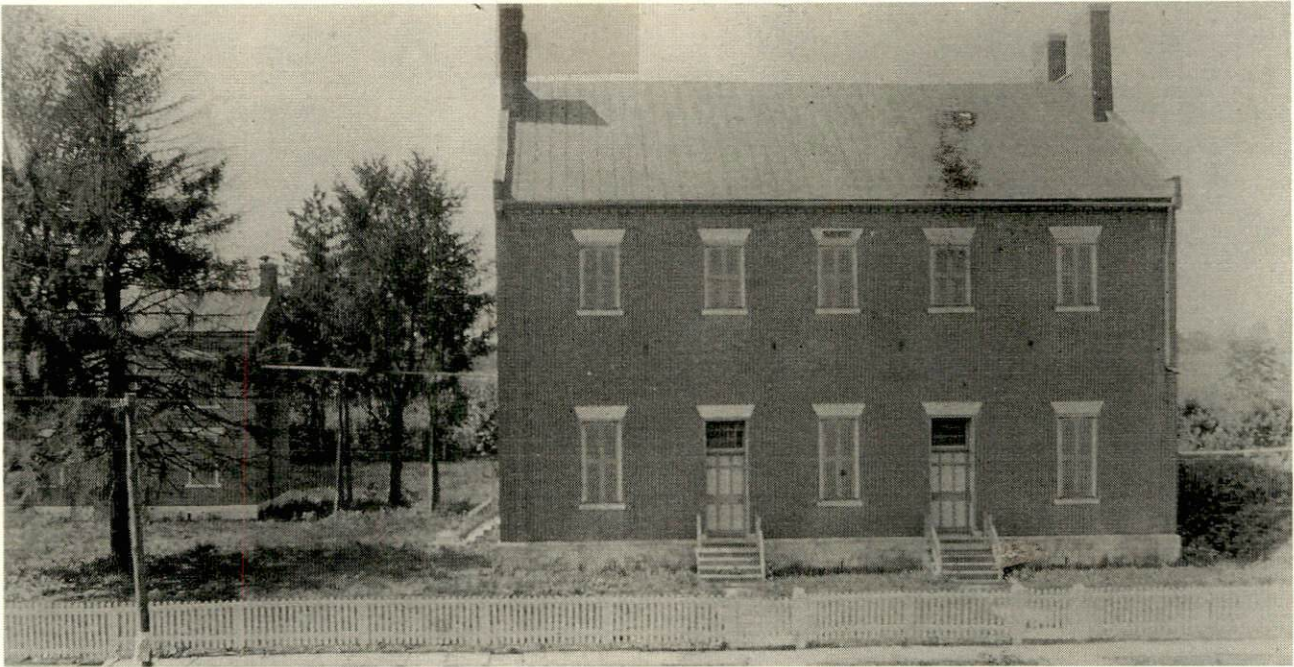
The Shaker Museum at South Union is such a special place. We strive continually to maintain and preserve the site and to protect its buildings, landscape, and grounds. This is not an easy task and could never be done without the support of the *Very, Very Special Friends* of the Shaker Museum. At this time we want to acknowledge and thank the many friends who have contributed over the years with membership dues, donations towards special projects and events, and contributions towards the legal expenses in our fight against the proposed solid waste transfer station. This wonderful place would not exist without you. **THANK YOU.**

Thank You for Your Contributions ...

Western Shaker Study Group
Cincinnati, OH

For their donation in memory of Larry Owrey. This memorial contribution will help preserve the Shaker heritage at South Union

W.L. Lyons Brown Foundation
Martin Brown & Atticus Trust
Edie Bingham
Ridley Wills III



This photograph was made at South Union around 1915, when a group of Canterbury Shakers visited Kentucky. Probably taken from the front steps of the Centre House, the image includes the 1818 Meeting House and the 1846 Ministry Shop. Notice the Ministry Shop downspouts being supported high above the ground in order to channel rain water into the large cistern to the right of the meeting house. The Meeting House was destroyed in 1926, but both sets of stone steps have survived. Recently the steps were returned to the spot where they stood, side by side, for over a hundred years.

From the Collection of Canterbury Shaker Village



SHAKER MUSEUM AT SOUTH UNION

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

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