

9-1995

South Union Messenger (September 1995)

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Recommended Citation

Kentucky Library Research Collections, "South Union Messenger (September 1995)" (1995). *South Union Messenger*. Paper 5.
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Shakertown  South Union

The South Union Messenger

The Newsletter of the Friends of the Shaker Museum at South Union
SEPTEMBER 1995

"An Evening in Shakertown" Once Again a Crowning Success

Thanks to the talented efforts of chairperson Susan Minton of Bowling Green and co-chairperson Belinda Ray of Russellville, June 10th's "An Evening in Shakertown" fund-raiser gala was a major success. In the days leading up to the event a large committee of energetic volunteers converged upon Shakertown transforming the 1840's landscape into an elegant vista of flowers and lights. Over three hundred guests enjoyed a night of fine music, southern cuisine, and a live auction highlighted with original artwork by noted Kentucky artists Ivan Schieferdecker and Laurin Notheisen.

The proceeds, amounting to over \$23,000 dollars, will be instrumental in the further development of educational programming at the museum. Special thanks to Susan Minton, Belinda Ray, underwriters Trans Financial Bank and Commonwealth Health Corporation, and to the many volunteers who helped make "An Evening in Shakertown" a success.

Ray Pearson Collection

An extensive collection of photographs and slides of the western Shaker villages was recently donated to the museum by Per Pearson, son of the late Ray Pearson. Ray Pearson, a noted photographer and Shaker scholar, was an instructor at the Illinois Institute of Design. He volunteered many hours at South Union during the 1970s, co-authored The Shaker Image in 1974, and dedicated much of his life to the study of Shaker material culture. Among the scores of photos in the collection were several historic photographs, including a signed Cabinet Card of Elder Harvey Eades (1807-1892). This collection will provide invaluable research tool for future projects and exhibits. The Shaker Museum at South Union thanks Per Pearson for his important contribution.

Archeological Report

As reported in the last newsletter, archeologist Kurt Fiegel discovered a brick foundation near the well in the west yard of the Centre House. This brick foundation turned out to be the base of a large chimney believed part of the original log Centre Family laundry. Built before 1820, this log structure catered to the laundry needs of the 1810 Centre Frame Dwelling, the 1815 Centre Brick Dwelling, and, finally, the 1824 Centre House. This building was replaced by the large 1854 Wash House, currently owned by the Fathers of Mercy Catholic Order. After 1854 the laundry building was either moved elsewhere in the village or razed by the Shakers.

Recent Acquisitions

In late July the museum received as a donation a South Union manuscript letter dated February 18, 1877. Addressed to Sister Mary Witcher of Canterbury, New Hampshire, the three page letter describes the cold winter of 1876-1877 and the damage inflicted upon South Union's fruit orchards. The author writes, "Fruit generally killed, and we fear the trees are killed.....which will be a great pecuniary loss to us, will hardly know how to do without fruit, but will have to abide the decrees of the Almighty." The author remains optimistic concerning spring crops mentioning "the lookout is encouraging and nothing to hinder us from being happy but sin." The letter gives an interesting account of the burning of the North Family Cow Barn, lamenting the fact that the Shakers "have lost more in the last 15 years by thieves and fire, than we are worth now." The letter was never finished or mailed and the identity of the author remains a mystery.

In early September the museum purchased an interesting and significant artifact. A signed and dated South Union measuring stick, fifty-four inches in length, was sold to the museum by a gentleman who lived in the 1854 Wash House during the 1930's. The cove-shaped measuring stick, which appears to be a tailor's measure, is cherry and is stamped with numerals and brass tacks at nine inch intervals. Stamped on the underside is "S. Smith. 3.26.1835." Samuel Smith (1807-1890) joined the Shakers with his family in 1823 at the age of 16. He spent the remainder of his life at South Union attaining positions in the Elder's lot of the East and Centre Families. The Centre Family journals, unfortunately, do not give a clear description of Smith's activities other than that of farming. Hopefully additional information will present itself in the future.

Acquisitions

Shaker Sermons: Scripto Rational. Containing the Substance of Shaker Theology, Hervey L. Eads, Fifth edition, Revised and enlarged. South Union, KY: 1889. Leather edition.

.....purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Manuscript, South Union, Feb. 18, 1877, letter to Sister Mary Witcher, Canterbury, NH, from an unknown Sister at South Union

....donation from the Mary Hope Henry Estate, Russellville, Kentucky, Greene and Joines Attorneys at Law

Discourses on Religion, Science, and Education, Harvey L. Eads, Published by Request. South Union, KY: 1884.

.....purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Silk Kerchief, Pleasant Hill, 19th century, white with initials RW in center

.....purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Measuring Stick, South Union, cherry, stamped "S. Smith 3.26.1835"

.....purchased with acquisition endowment funds

Cabinet Card of Hervey Eades, several historic photographs of South Union, and a large collection of photographs and slides of western Shaker villages

....donation of Per Pearson, Chicago, Illinois

Collection of secondary library materials
.....donation of John Helm, Upper Montclair, New Jersey

Photographs of Shaker Tavern and Store, ca. 1920-1940
.....donation of Mrs. Elizabeth Reeves, Bowling Green, Kentucky

Photograph, ca. 1925, Centre House
.....donation of Edna Bowlds, Louisville, Kentucky

Two photographs of Ms. Julia Neal, ca. 1920's
.....donation of Mrs. T.B. Wilson, Auburn, Kentucky

Welcome New Members

Laverne Menees, Clarksville, Tennessee
Amanda Batey & Vernard Margolis, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Shutt, Russellville, Kentucky
Norma T. Rich, Nashville, Tennessee
Frances A. Tipton, Nashville, Tennessee
Mike & Sharon Laster, South Union, Kentucky
Mr. & Mrs. Russell Oldfield, Jr., Nashville, Tennessee
Leslie A. Vandiver, Checotah, Oklahoma
Don & Katie Hazelip, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Vilas & Dennis Hinkle, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Mr. & Mrs. Ernie Owen, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Susan Walemar, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Dr. & Mrs. Gene Wilson, Russellville, Kentucky
Lee & Betsy Johnson, Washington, D.C.
Janice Redfearn, Jackson, Tennessee

Donations in Memory of Julia Neal

Rena Milliken, Russellville, Kentucky
Mr. & Mrs. Edgar McCormick, Kent, Ohio
Bob & Betty Pace Clark, Glasgow, Kentucky
Lee & Hazelien Pace Brewster, Cincinnati, Ohio
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Clark, Russellville, Kentucky
Lillie May Hayes, Auburn, Kentucky
Elaine B. Dodson, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Butler, Florence, Alabama
Mrs. Rebecca Chickey, Evanston, Illinois
Herman Lindsey Stricklin, Florence, Alabama
Nancy Johnston & Children, Florence, Alabama
Sophia Sullivan, Clinton, South Carolina
Rose Mary Lawson, Sevierville, Tennessee
Jean C. Dones, Columbus, Ohio
Blanche Davis, Murray, Utah
Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Harrodsburg, Kentucky

Thank You For Your Donation

Dale Clark	Donation of Extension Cords
Dory Hudspeth	Donation of Flax, Herbs, Beeswax, and Wallpaper for Children's Activities
John & Linda Tanner	Donation of Wallpaper for Children's Activities
Sue Brooks	Donation of Electric Knife
Addie Bennett	Donation of Electric Knife
Hilda Hines	Donation of Cassette Tape Player
Curt and Debbie DeBaun	Donation of Wireless Microphone
Anonymous	Donation of Dehumidifier for Julia Neal Library
Mr. & Mrs. John Zeitler	Monetary Donation
Ruth & Larry Owrey	Monetary Donation
Apollo Fund	Donation for General Support
Dr. & Mrs. Alan H. Wheeler	Donation for General Support
Southern Deposit Bank	Donation of Day Camp Scholarships
Conros Corporation	Donation of Materials for Children's Tours and Activities

Wish List

Four Drawer Filing Cabinet
Kitchen Towels
Thermal Coffee Carafe
Large Projector Screen
Fire Proof Safe

Thank You...

To Carroll Browning for removal of hot water heater and water filtration tanks from the basement of the 1824 Centre House.

To John Campbell for transcribing South Union manuscript letters for research files.

To all volunteers who helped make The Shaker Festival and Autumn Days at Shakertown a success.

South Union February 18, 1877
Mary Whitehead
Beloved Sister

We dislike being in debt, and have concluded
~~to make an effort to liquidate with that view~~ ~~competent, always~~
felt a diffidence in addressing superiors, will therefore request
You to extend charity,

Education Notes

The fall school tours are underway! There are two new programs available for groups to participate in this year, "Shaker Song and Dance," and "Building a Community Landscape." These are individual units that will become part of a larger resource guide that is being designed for educators. The Shaker Museum at South Union is committed to assisting teachers meet/exceed the requirements of Kentucky's education reform. To that end, every school group that visits the museum participates in activities that reinforce what they have learned. We are also providing information for the teachers to use in the classroom.

We have been joined this fall by Karen Heege, a graduate assistant from Western Kentucky University. Karen comes to us from The Archeological Assistance Division, National Park Service in Washington, D.C., where she worked as an education and out-reach specialist. She is pursuing her Master's degree in Historic Preservation at Western. Karen will be at the museum throughout the school year, assisting in a variety of tasks.

We have already scheduled hundreds of children for Christmas programs later this fall, beginning right after Thanksgiving and continuing through December 15th. We will be using pine cones, red and green ribbon, white doilies, and recycled Christmas cards. Donations of any of these items is much appreciated. I would also appreciate additional help to supervise children while they make their ornaments. Could you donate a morning, from 9-12 or so, to help area school children learn about and enjoy a Shaker Victorian Christmas? Please call Sharon at the museum.

The Shaker Museum will be hosting "The Shaker Order of Christmas" workshops for children, Sunday November 26, 1:30-4:00 pm, and Saturday December 9 and 16, 9:30-12:00 noon. Children will spend time at the museum learning about how the Shakers celebrated the Christmas holidays. Then they will make a small craft suitable for a gift, and a Victorian-style ornament. The workshop is targeted for children ages 6-16, boys and girls. Class size will be limited, so early registration is suggested. Light seasonal refreshments will be served. Fee: \$5 per child.

A Tribute to Julia Neal

Julia Neal was gathering and preserving the history of the South Union Shakers long before anyone else in Kentucky. Her first book, *By Their Fruits: The Story of Shakerism at South Union*, was published in 1947, a time when very little was being written about the Shakers. She was a true trailblazer in the academic field of Shaker study and, besides having vision, she gained respect from scholars nationwide.

Born in Auburn, Kentucky on August 15, 1905, Julia Neal grew up with the Shakers as neighbors. Neal later admitted that she had taken them for granted, not realizing in her youth the uniqueness of the sect nor the impact they had made on the region and on the nation. It was not until 1925 when she was assigned the task of writing an article on South Union for the "College Heights Herald" that her interest was piqued. So began a journey into Shaker research that would continue for the next seventy years.

After completing *By Their Fruits* for which she won the prestigious Hopwood Award, Julia Neal began writing articles on the Shakers and was eventually published in the Magazine Antiques, The

Filson Club Quarterly, The Kentucky Folklore Record, Communities Journal, the Shaker Quarterly and many others. She edited and published *The Journal of Eldress Nancy* in 1963 and wrote text for *The Shaker Image* in 1974. By the time Miss Neal completed *The Kentucky Shakers* in 1976, she had become nationally recognized as a respected leader in the field of Shaker scholarship.

Julia Neal received her AA degree from Bethel Women's College in Hopkinsville, and B.S. and M.A. degrees from Western Kentucky University. She participated in additional advanced study at the University of Michigan, Denver University, Syracuse University. From 1933 to 1941 Neal taught English at Western before becoming dean of residence at Kingswood School for Girls in Michigan. At Florence State University, she held the position of English instructor until 1964 when she returned to Kentucky.

From 1964 to 1972 Julia Neal served as Director of the Kentucky Museum and Library on Western's campus. During this time she also began volunteering at the Shaker Museum in Auburn, particularly during the summer pageant, "Shakertown Revisited." When the museum collection moved from Auburn to South Union in 1972, Miss Neal became co-director of the site with museum founder, Deedy Hall, also of Auburn.

For the next decade Miss Neal and Miss Hall guided the Shaker Museum at South Union on a volunteer basis, a labor of love for two childhood friends who shared a fervent interest in preserving the history of South Union. The team worked well together, Neal providing the scholarship and the historical background and Hall contributing her natural public relations talent and a knowledge of Shaker furniture.

Although Miss Neal retired in 1980, her interest in research never waned. She received the Distinguished Scholar award from the Communal Studies Association in 1986 at age 81 but did not find it necessary to resign from her Shaker studies until illness in late 1994 forced her to do so. Julia Neal died on July 22, 1995 leaving a tremendous void in the field of Shaker scholarship and taking with her a vital, motivating, driven presence that so many will miss. Her love for Kentucky, for Logan County, and for the Shakers will leave a lasting impact on those who knew her and on generations to come. All of those associated with Kentucky history owe a great debt to Julia Neal. Her immeasurable contributions to the field will not be forgotten.

The Memorial Service for Julia Neal reflected the simplicity of her own life and the characteristics of the Shaker point of view that captivated both her mind and spirit. Prior to her death, she directed Richard W. Bridges, Pastor of First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, to read brief selections from the Bible, pray, and read the following guidelines to true Shakerism:

Industry-Do all your work as if you had a thousand years to live and as if you were to die tomorrow.

Honesty-Be what we seem to be, and seem to be what we really are; don't carry two faces.

Thrift and Charity-Be prudent and saving...so you may have wherewith to give to them that stand in need.

Cleanliness-Clean your room well, for good spirits will not live where there is dirt.

Order-A place for everything and everything in its place.

Health-Let none abstain from food which they need; eat hearty and do the will of God.

Functionalism-That which has in itself the highest use possesses the greatest beauty.

Calendar of Events

October 27

Fall Candlelight Tour

A living history tour of the 1824 Centre Dwelling by candlelight with Shaker music performances and a reception to follow. Fee \$2 per person. Free to members. Time 7:00 p.m.

October 28

Fall Candlelight Dinner

An evening of Shaker recipes served in the dining room of the 1824 Centre Dwelling. Reservations required. Fee TBA. Time 7:00 p.m.

November 4

Logan County Day

Free museum admission to all citizens of Logan County in appreciation for their support. Valid driver's license needed for admission. Museum hours 9:00 - 5:00.

November 11

A Shaker Breakfast

A historic South Union Civil War era menu served in the dining room of the Centre Dwelling. Shaker music performances. Reservations required. Fee TBA. Time 10:00 a.m.

December 2-3

Christmas at Shakertown

An annual open house celebration that features 19th century decorations, music performances, holiday foods, and booths of fine antiques and handmade treasures for sale. Admission is free with a canned food item. Time Saturday 9:00 - 4:00. Sunday 1:00 - 4:00. This event funded in part by Auburn Banking Company.

A Word From the Director

I hope each of you will visit South Union this fall and enjoy one of Kentucky's prettiest seasons. We have a busy calendar planned with events that ought to appeal to every age group. If you have not attended our Candlelight Tour or Shaker Breakfast in a while, I think you will enjoy the changes that are being made this year.

The Shaker Museum is privileged to announce the appointment of three new members to the Board of Directors. Carolyn Moreland, Auburn; Mark Reynolds, Russellville; and Alicia Stivers, Bowling Green; have all recently joined the organization, bringing skills and talents that will benefit the museum in many ways. We appreciate their willingness to volunteer and look forward to working with them in the coming year. Thanks to everyone who volunteers time and effort at the museum. We could not function without you.

Tommy Hines



Shakertown



South Union

Shakertown at South Union, Kentucky 42283

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