

Summer 2011

South Union Messenger (Summer 2011)

Kentucky Library Research Collections
Western Kentucky University, spcol@wku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/su_messenger



Part of the [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kentucky Library Research Collections, "South Union Messenger (Summer 2011)" (2011). *South Union Messenger*. Paper 37.
https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/su_messenger/37

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in South Union Messenger by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.



SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Summer 2011 Edition
South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

SOUTH UNION CEMETERY STONE DEDICATED

On April 16, 2011, the 425 Shakers laid to rest in the South Union cemetery were finally given a fitting memorial. When the original markers were removed and destroyed in the 1920s the grave yard was cultivated, making it indescribable from the acreage that surrounded it. Eventually barns were built over the east end of the site, and cattle allowed to graze. Many years later people only speculated as to the location of the cemetery, but thanks to meticulous records kept by the Shakers, modern archaeology, and generous contributors the mystery has been solved and the site restored.

Once archaeologists from the University of Kentucky, led by Dr. Kim McBride, determined the perimeters of the original cemetery, a plank fence was constructed to surround the 6 acre tract. With guidance from the Shakers at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, a new stone was designed, inscribed with the word "SHAKERS" and the dates of the first and last burials at South Union. April 16 was a cold, rainy, windy day, but over 50 people braved the quarter mile walk from the Centre House to the graveyard to see stone unveiled.



Project co-chair Elaine Disch removes the veil from the new memorial stone, with the assistance of staff member Baker Watkins and operations manager Kaelin Vernon. Curt DeBaun (not pictured) also co-chaired efforts to raise funds for the marker.

The ceremony was simple and brief, but surprisingly moving for those in attendance. Director Tommy Hines thanked those who had contributed to the effort, then read a partial list of Shakers buried in the cemetery, followed by their most prominent role within the community. The South Union Shaker Quartet then sang "Funeral Song for Eldress Molly," written at South Union in 1835.

Within the crowd of those attending was a gentleman whose father worked for Oscar Bond in the 1920s and had taken part in the destruction of the grave yard. Also in attendance were two individuals who had relatives buried there. Heartfelt thanks to the Central Trust and to the others who made this important restoration possible.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Mitchell's Map of Kentucky and Tennessee, 1834, folding pocket edition engraved by J. H. Young, Philadelphia, full hand coloring, covers bordered in gilt, with the inscription "B. S. Youngs, South Union, 1834." Benjamin Seth Youngs was South Union's first elder, serving from 1811 until 1836.

.....Acquired through an exchange of materials with
Hamilton College Library, Clinton, New York

Windsor Chairs (4), plank-bottom, arrow-back, maple and ash, purchased at the 1922 Shaker auction by the Coke family, then purchased by the Clark family at the 1972 Coke auction

.....Donated by Ray Clark and Beth Switzer from
the estate of Mr. and Mrs. John W. Clark

Work Table, ca. 1830, walnut and poplar, one board top, drawers at both ends of table, attributed to South Union Shakers

.....Donated by Roger and Margaret Futrell

Work Table, ca. 1830, cherry and poplar, two drawers on front with falling leaf on back, attributed to South Union Shakers

.....Donated by Roger and Margaret Futrell

Collection of Furniture, Silver, and Decorative Arts, antebellum and Victorian furniture and decorative arts for use at the Shaker Tavern Bed and Breakfast, and silver serving pieces for use at the Tavern and for special events. Elizabeth Atwood Ryan was a true "daughter of the Old South," who enjoyed the finer things in life, as evidenced in the collection she left behind.

.....Donated by Linda Tanner, from the estate of
Elizabeth Atwood Ryan



South Union tables recently acquired by the village, thanks to the generosity of Roger and Margaret Futrell. These tables were discovered in Logan and Simpson Counties in the early 1970s by John C. Thomas of Hopkinsville, KY.

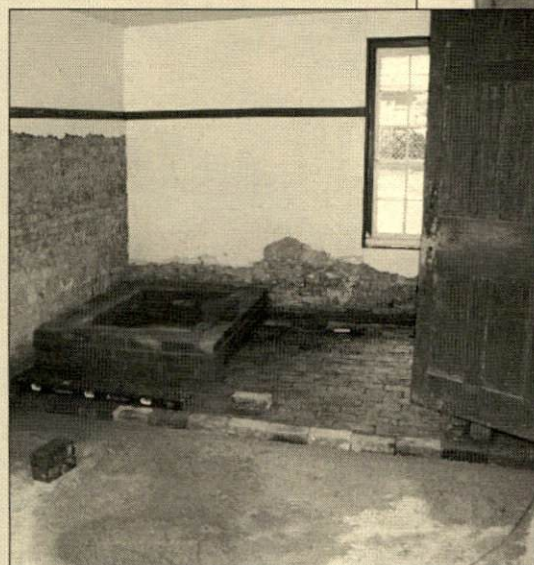
DAIRY ROOM RESTORATION PROJECT

Thanks to a generous contribution by Ernest and Elaine Ezell, assisted with funds from the Carpenter Foundation, the milk room in the ca. 1834 Smoke and Milk House now has a new dry-laid brick floor. The original floor was removed in the 1920s when the structure was being remodeled and modernized as a residence for Slim and Zula Trogden, who worked for Oscar Bond. Bond bought the community when South Union closed in 1922. A cement floor was poured and the old milk room became a kitchen for the Trogden family. When the building's initial restoration began in the mid-1980s, Zula Trogden and her daughter Edna Bowlds responded to inquiries from the museum in search for information about the work done by Mr. Trogden. Those letters have become an invaluable resource for the restoration of this structure.

Mr. Trogden's concrete floors were taken out in 2008 so that archaeology work could take place within the building. Most of the artifacts recovered were shards of ironstone china (both decorated and undecorated), stoneware, glass, and nails. One of the most significant finds was a system of 19th century lead pipes that brought water into the room, probably as early as the 1830s. A below grade valve was still in tact, as was the lead drain line that took water from the building. There was also evidence of a large brick trough or sink near the water source for cooling containers of milk. In an article from the *Bowling Green Telegraph*, February 7, 1871, the writer recounts a recent visit to South Union dairy, describing it as "the very perfection of a place for keeping milk cool, and butter fresh. We saw about one hundred vessels of rich milk and a large supply of golden-hued butter—enough to make an appetite for the dullest plate."

After the archaeological investigation was completed, another layer of concrete was poured over a vapor barrier, on the top of which a dry-laid brick floor was installed. One significant change in the construction of this floor was the below grade level at which it was installed. During the building's use by the Shakers, sisters working in the dairy would literally step down into this room when bringing in milk and butter to be stored. The deeper floor level keep the temperature cooler.

Many thanks to Ernest and Elaine Ezell and to the Carpenter Foundation for making this project possible. Future restoration projects on this building await funding.



Contractor Johnny Miller supervises the restoration of the new brick floor in the dairy room. At left is the brick trough or sink used to help keep milk and butter cool. For more information about the restoration of the Smoke and Milk House, check out www.shakermuseum.com.

ANTIQUE AND GARDEN MARKET

Our Spring Antique and Garden Market, held Saturday May 21, was once again a success. Antique vendors filled the 1875 Grain Barn and garden vendors flanked the entrance on either side of the old stone ramp. The weather was beautiful and our visitors not only enjoyed the opportunities to shop, but lunch provided by the Brickyard Café and presentations on creative flower arranging by Larry Kramer, who teaches



and designs at WKU. Special thanks to our underwriters Logan Telephone Cooperative and Auburn Banking Company. If you like antiques, don't miss our *Christmas at Shakertown Holiday Market* on Saturday, December 3, with a preview party scheduled for the night before, by reservation.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Debbie Vernon, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Suzanne Payne, Flower Mound, Texas
Otto and Edith Frank, Edmond, Oklahoma
Kirk, Anna, Jonah, Jack, and Waylon Meyers, Clarkston, Michigan
Baker and Ruthie Watkins, Auburn, Kentucky
Don Hanson, Scottsdale, Arizona
Carolyn Seward, Nashville, Tennessee
Joe Grittani, Dayton, Ohio
John Horn, Hermitage, Tennessee
Evelyn Pewitt, Naperville, Illinois
Ann Metzger, Lake Oswego, Oregon
Dr. James D. Skaggs, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Mr. and Mrs. Martin McNamara III, Nashville, Tennessee

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Susan Gardner, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Gene Harris, Franklin, Kentucky
Lisa Rice, Morgantown, Kentucky
Tom Stewart, Bowling Green, Kentucky

GOING, GOING GONE!

An early 20th century white frame house that has been an "eyesore" behind the 1917 Shaker Store building for many years is finally gone. The South Union Shaker Village purchased the property in the 1970s and it was used as rental property until it was rented to Pat Minish who operated an antique business there called "The Sisters Shop" from 1989 to 1991. The building has not been used for the past twenty years.

The decision was made to demolish the non-Shaker structure and, with grant funding from the Carpenter Foundation, work began in July. A variety of early materials were discovered as the house was being torn down, including 19th century tongue and groove bead board walls. These elements were saved and stored for later study.



The house was probably built in the mid-1920s when Oscar Bond was dismantling the Shaker buildings in the village. Besides the old materials used in the house, 1920s doors, mantles and trim were also present. The end product is far superior to the view visitors to South Union have had for many years. "Thank you" Carpenter Foundation.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION ...

Ivor and Joan Carter, Napierville, Illinois, for six reproduction Shaker chairs for use in the Visitor Center

Ernest and Elaine Ezell, Auburn, Kentucky, for restoration of the Smoke and Milk House

Joseph and Dorothy Jones, Indianapolis, Indiana, for general support

Doug and Sondra Cruickshanks, Nashville, Tennessee, for general support in memory of Betty Brown

Mr. and Mrs. Ridley Wills III, Nashville, Tennessee, for general support in memory of Mrs. W. L Lyons Brown

Mr. and Mrs. William Coke, Nashville, Tennessee, for general support in memory of Mrs. W. L Lyons Brown

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

We were very saddened to hear of the death of Mrs. W. L. Lyons Brown, a friend and supporter of South Union for many years. Mrs. Brown made a tremendous impact nationally and in the fields of historic preservation, education, and environmental issues. Her last project at South Union was the funding and oversight of the re-planting of 35 maples trees in 2007, trees that the Shakers had planted in the 19th century to shade their walk from the Centre to East Families. The originals were destroyed by a tornado in 1923. Mrs. Brown was the mother of Advisory Committee member Martin Brown. Mr. Brown also lost his wife Betty recently and we wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the Brown family.

The Frist Center for the Visual Arts in Nashville is currently exhibiting "Gather Up the Fragments," a collection of exemplary Shaker objects collected by Edward and Faith Andrews. As part of the educational program I was asked to speak in July about southern influences in Shaker furniture. Our Advisory Committee members from Nashville hosted a gathering of friends in conjunction with the presentation in order to help promote awareness about South Union. Very special thanks to Bill and Fletch Coke for hosting the event in their home, and to our Nashville Advisory members Carol Rochford, Hank Brockman, Martin Brown, Ridley Wills, and Will Martin for making it possible.

And now for some business. The South Union Shaker Village depends entirely on admissions, gift shop sales, contributions, farm income, fund-raising events, and memberships to support its operations. We also have a small endowment that contributes to our efforts each month. In these tough economic times, we like many other historic sites are suffering major downturns in the number of visitors who purchase tickets on a daily basis. Thankfully our farm income is a major source of funding for our site, and is not dependent on the visitor numbers. The other sources are more volatile, sometime creating a difficult situation for the site.

With much thought, we have decided to increase the amount of our membership levels in accordance with other historic sites our size. Our membership categories have remained the same for over fifteen years and I am hoping that these changes will not discourage anyone from continuing to support South Union. Honestly, if the base level is more than you can afford, we will not cancel your membership if you need to stay at your current level of giving. We thank you for your support and hope you will continue to partner with the South Union Shaker Village and its work in the fields of preservation and education. We need you and we thank you.

Tommy Hines, Executive Director

NEW MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

BASIC MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Student	\$20
Individual	\$40
Family	\$50

UPPER LEVEL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

North Family	\$100
East Family	\$300
Centre Family	\$500
Jasper Springs Society	\$1000

Members to the Friends of the South Union Shaker Village receive:

Free admission to the village for one year, a discount of 10% in the gift shop, free or reduced admission to events, and *The South Union Messenger*, our quarterly newsletter. Student and Individual categories are limited to one person. Family memberships include admission for immediate family.

Upper Level membership categories receive:

North Family (\$100) - basic benefits plus free admission for two guests

East Family (\$300) - basic benefits, free admission for two guests, plus two tickets to the annual Shaker Breakfast

Centre Family (\$500) - basic benefits, free admission for four guests, plus one night's stay at the Shaker Tavern B&B

Jasper Springs Society (\$1000) - basic benefits, free admission for ten guests, plus two nights at the Shaker Tavern B&B

MANUSCRIPT DISCOVERY



In 1903, when J. P. McLean, an early book collector, began acquiring material published by the Shakers, Eldress Jane Cowan was a willing contact from South Union. Being in a position of leadership, she made the decision to send him all that could be found of the community's historic book collection. In one of many letters to McLean, Eldress Jane wrote:

"I was an orphan, was brought here in the year 1833 . . . I lived in the Centre Family, where I had been assistance deaconess for a number of years until the year 1867 when I was moved to the North Family to take charge there . . . when the Ministry broke the family up . . . I moved to the Centre House as a common member and in the year 1898 went back to the Eldress room, where I now live. Dear Friend, fearing that you will deem me egotistical in saying so much about myself I will close . . . aware that it is of little interest to any person."

Two months later, Eldress Jane enclosed the photograph at left in another letter to McLean, accompanied by the following explanation: "I have had my photo taken, concluded to send one to you, as you have suggested, not without some mortification, as you will see that I am hard favored, but let that be as it is . . . it cannot be remedied."

Eldress Jane Cowan was apparently quite humble, as there is little written about her accomplishments or her personal life. Recently a manuscript surfaced, supplying information about Jane Cowan's impact as a leader in the Shaker community. It is significant because the words were written by a non-Shaker, someone who had observed Cowan's actions from the outside, looking in. The small leather-bound book is filled with handwritten notes pertaining to preachers and ministers in and around Logan County, Kentucky, at the turn of the century. It is also interesting that Jane Cowan, a woman, was even included among the men in the book, especially for the time during which it was written. The following paragraph, penned at the time of her death, sums up a life well-lived:

*Born October 29, 1829
Came to Shakertown in 1833
Died December 13, 1909
Aged 80 years - 1 month - 14 days*

Has been a member of the society all these years and many places of trust, with great honor to herself and to her people. She will be missed greatly. She was a tenderhearted, generous sister and a mother to all. Always informing herself in scripture and history and all vital questions of interest, so that she might teach, and help others to a higher plain of living.

Like Christ she was a peacemaker.

SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE

shakmus@logantele.com • 800-811-8379
P.O. Box 177, Auburn, KY 42206

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SHAKERTOWN AT
AUBURN, KENTUCKY 42206
PERMIT NO. 3

Jonathan Jeffrey
110 Riverwood
Bowling Green, KY 42103

UPCOMING EVENTS

MUSIC IN THE BARN

Saturday, September 24

Imagine how nice it will be to feel the cool fall breezes wafting through the 1875 Grain Barn while listening to live music and enjoying afternoon dessert. Kick back in a relaxed family atmosphere and partake in some traditional southern delicacies, including fried peach pies, fresh apple cake, apple cider slushes, and Sweet Potato Pie ice cream from Chaney's Dairy Barn.

Reservations: \$15 per person, \$25 per couple, \$5 children ages 6-12. / Time: 2:00pm-5:00pm.

"PERILOUS TIMES" LIVING HISTORY

Friday-Sunday, October 21-23

Travel back in time to the fall of 1861 when the Shakers at South Union were faced with perilous times as the Confederate Army moved out of Kentucky. Enjoy a family-friendly living history event with guided tours throughout each day.

Admission: \$8 adults, \$4 children / Tours at 10:00am, 11:00am, 1:00pm, 2:00pm

A SHAKER BREAKFAST

Saturday, November 5

A Civil War-era breakfast that promises to please and to astonish . . . Featuring fried chicken, scrambled eggs, sweet potatoes, pork sausage, asparagus, apple pie, butter-milk biscuits, and more! Served at the historic Shaker Tavern.

Reservations required: ~~\$22~~ members, \$25 non-members
Time: Seatings at 8:30am and 10:30am

Following the Shaker Breakfast there will be presentations at the Centre House by authors Tom Arkiskas & Terry Arliskas on clothing of the Confederate Army and Victorian jewelry. Admission is free for our breakfast guests.

For information or reservations for events call:
1-800-811-8379 or 270-542-4167

Or visit:
shakermuseum.com

The South Union Shaker Village is located 10 miles west of Bowling Green or 3 miles east of Auburn, just off US 68-80, in historic Logan County