

Fall 2012

South Union Messenger (Fall 2012)

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SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Vol. XLI, No.3, 2012

South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

SHAKERTOWN HOLIDAY MARKET

The South Union Shaker Village's most popular annual event, our Holiday Market, is again scheduled for the first weekend in December. On Saturday, December 1, the first and second floors of the Centre House will be filled with antiques and fine hand-made crafts, just in time for your Christmas shopping. The historic environment provides a perfect setting for this event, guaranteed to put you in the Christmas spirit. The Saturday open house is free to the public, but a canned food item or donation is suggested for admission. The food and money are distributed before Christmas to those needful in our outlying community.

On Friday night, November 30, we host a **Preview Party** for those who want a "first chance" option to make purchases. Reservations are suggested for this event and can be made by calling the SUSV at 270-542-4167. Tickets are \$10 per person. Coffee, cider and desserts will be served to guests.

RECENTLY DISCOVERED



These images, discovered this past spring when the SUSV photograph collection was scanned by student intern Samantha Bruer, provide a rare glimpse of South Union in ca. 1916 when a group of Canterbury, NH Shakers came for a visit. The photos were part of the Ray Pearson collection that was donated to South Union in 1995. Can anyone identify the subjects? Email us at: shakmus@logantele.com

CAST REUNION A ROUSING SUCCESS

On Saturday, September 15, the SUSV hosted a reunion for cast members and fans of "Shakertown Revisited," an historical pageant that was performed from 1962 until 1990. The 50-year anniversary celebration drew nearly 70 people, many who had been in the cast, others who had helped behind the scenes, and some who had been fans of the production. A box lunch was served, but most of the time was spent reminiscing about the past, singing songs from the play, and renewing old friendships.

Special thanks to the event underwriter, **Auburn Leather**, one of the original sponsors from 1962.



Above, John and Linda Tanner, fans who attended the play every season from 1968 to 1990, and Grover Corum (right), co-chair of the first Shaker Festival in 1962.



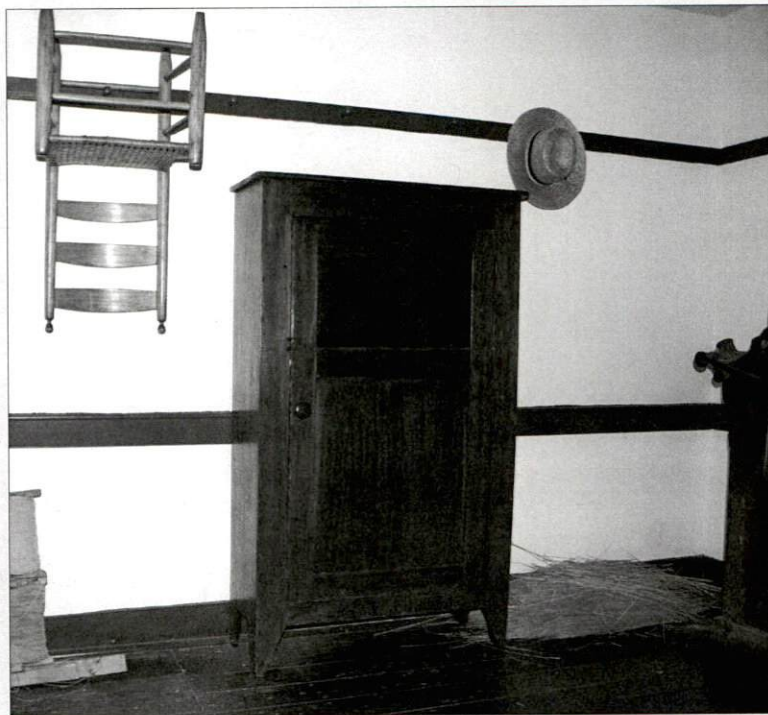
Above, former cast member Skip Rue is flanked by long-time pageant volunteers, Bill and Nancy Gaines. At left, former cast members and volunteers Ray Clark and Dr. Sally Ann Strickler. Sally Ann was one of four in attendance who had played the role of Mother Ann Lee.



RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Cupboard, ca. 1830, poplar, refinished, discovered in Logan County and attributed to South Union Shakers. Two similar cupboards from South Union exist as examples from this early period of furniture-making
Purchased with Acquisition Endowment Funds

Watercolors, ca. 1962, of South Union's Ministry Shop, Meeting House and Trustee's Office, painted by Hilda Mitchell, art professor at Florence State College, Florence, Alabama. Two similar paintings make up this donation, one originally owned by Julia Neal and the other by Kenneth Hatcher
Donated by Kenneth Hatcher



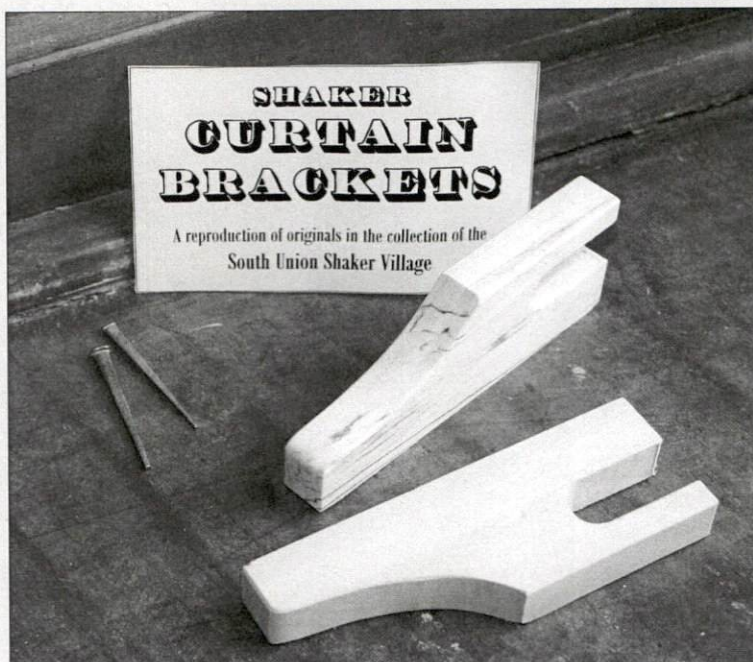
SUSV RECEIVES AWARD

The South Union Shaker Village recently received Communal Studies Association's *Gina Walker Outstanding Project Award* for the restoration of the 1875 barn and the Shaker cemetery. Peter Hoehnle, who nominated South Union wrote, ". . . what South Union has done transcends simple physical restoration. The work that went into restoring the grain barn and the cemetery, to me, rights a terrible wrong to the Shakers who once lived at this site. It is difficult for me, personally, to conceive of how their memory could have been more ill treated than at the hands of Oscar Bond. What South Union has done is to restore the barn (as well as other structures) as model examples of the physical legacy of the Shakers while, at the same time, providing them with a final resting place that is dignified, respectful and, indeed, spiritual to those of us who have been privileged to visit it."

NEW IN THE GIFT SHOP

During last year's restoration of the Centre House Infirmary, Shaker-period curtain brackets were discovered on one of the windows. Removal of modern paint revealed original yellow ochre finish on the poplar brackets, each attached to the window with a single square nail. While the two brackets found are the only examples at South Union, there is physical evidence of their use on other windows.

The curtain brackets have now been reproduced by local craftsman Roger Ryan and are on sale in our gift shop for \$7.50 a pair. We are even including two square nails! Call the gift shop if you would like to order your own Shaker curtain brackets!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

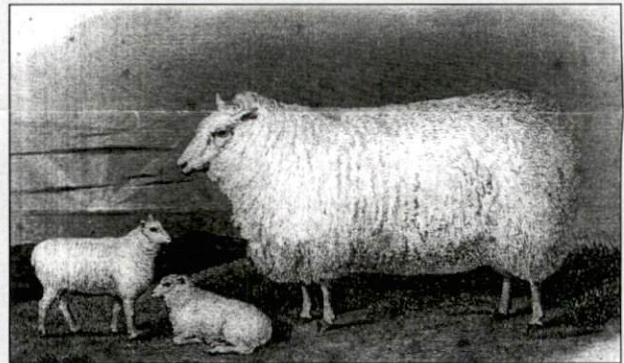
Col. and Mrs. Robert E. Spiller - \$2,500.00 Underwriting "Music in the Barn"
BB&T - \$2,500.00 Underwriting "Music in the Barn"
WRECC - \$500.00 Underwriting "Music in the Barn"
Logan Telephone Cooperative - \$500.00 Underwriting "Music in the Barn"
Auburn Leather - \$500.00 Underwriting "Shakertown Revisited Cast Reunion"
Ernie and Elaine Ezell - \$1,000.00 toward restoration of the Smoke and Milk House

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

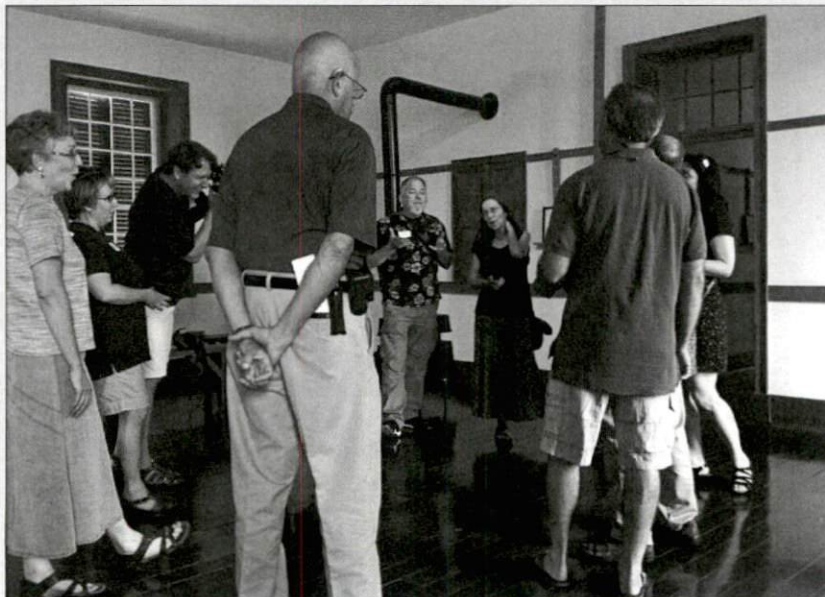
Scott Greene, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Laura Haury, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Carroll Van West, Murfreesboro, Tennessee
Mr. & Mrs. Michael L. Steen, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Tagg, Nashville, Tennessee
Rob Thurman, Sonora, Kentucky
Sally Ferguson, Smith's Grove, Kentucky

SHEEP COMING BACK TO SOUTH UNION

Leicester Longwool sheep were developed by Robert Bakewell of Leicestershire, England in the 18th century. The breed became well-known for its large frame and long wool staple, and for being sturdy and adaptive. Both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson brought the breed to the United States to improve their flocks. In the late 19th and early 20th century the Leicester Longwools fell out of favor and were replaced by newer breeds, until the pure breed vanished from the United States. Reintroduced at Colonial Williamsburg in 1990, the Leicester Longwools are currently extant but endangered.



The South Union Shaker Village is now home to six of the Leicester Longwools, recently purchased from Phil and Jane Whitney of Bowling Green. The ram, *Nugget*, is the son of famous *Winston Churchill*, Supreme Champion, Best in Show Fleece, and Champion Ram! SUSV is proud to continue to preserve such a heritage.



Former cast members from the "Shakertown Revisited" pageant perform impromptu Shaker songs in the Centre House meeting room. From left to right Susan Taylor, Jennifer Cantrell, photographer Ronaldus Van Uden, Bill Collins, Randy Johnson, Sepha Skean, Barry Crutcher, Joe Williams and Sherri Phelps.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SHAKER TAVERN

One of the South Union Shakers' most ambitious attempts to recoup financial losses from the Civil War was the construction of the Shaker Tavern. Completed in 1869, the Tavern was the Shakers' attempt to capitalize on the growing number of people traveling on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, built through South Union just a year before the war began. The architect of the building is unknown, but the structure's Italianate design was a marked departure from standard Kentucky Shaker architecture.

The Shaker Tavern was actually the centerpiece of a complex of buildings constructed around the intersection of the railroad and Morgantown Road. By the 1870s there was a brick general store and post office, blacksmith shop, livery stable, carriage repair shop, freight depot, and several small houses constructed for those who leased the businesses. Income for the Shakers came in the form of rent, otherwise they had little to do with this "commercial district."

On October 19, 1869, the Shakers turned over the keys of the Tavern to its first proprietor, a Mr. Wethered. In return the Shakers received \$100.00 per month. Elder Harvey Eads expressed skepticism by writing, "I fear he will not be able to make the money over expenses." The Shaker Tavern continued to operate throughout the 19th century with a variety of innkeepers at the helm. On at least one occasion Elder Harvey felt it necessary to advertise as far away as in the Cincinnati a "large, commodious hotel for rent at the South Union Station." (Many thanks to Jim Innis for sharing this reference from the Cincinnati Enquirer, November 16, 1878.)

Over the years the Shaker Tavern's name changed at the whim of the current innkeeper. As early as 1871 it was being called the *South Union Hotel*. A surviving printed invitation to a Grand Social & Cotillion Party from that year serves as evidence. An undated Victorian broadside advertises it as the *Shaker Hotel at South Union*.

In August of 1891 a Logan County news correspondent visited South Union and made the following comments: "South Union has a magnificent hotel built by the Shakers, and is located close to the depot. The hotel is finely kept by Mr. Henry R. Johnson. This place is fast becoming one of the noted summer resorts of Kentucky on account of its fine sulphur water. The hotel now has 36 visitors. Under the management of Mr. Johnson and his elegant lady, this place will become a great health resort."

That prediction never came true but the Tavern did remain a viable hotel until the village closed in 1922.



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Tommy Hines

Our summer season at South Union has not been as “flashy” from a developmental standpoint, as we have experienced over the past couple of years, but as projects are completed new grants have to be written so that restoration can continue. Most of this year has been spent raising awareness about the SUSV, writing grants, and (thanks to our incredible Board of Directors) planning and implementing new fundraising events. You might note that we are hosting our first Turkey Shoot on November 3 and plans are in the works for a gala cocktail party in Bowling Green prior to the Mannheim Steamroller concert at SKyPAC on December 14. You will soon be hearing more about this exciting event.

Our “Shakertown Revisited” cast reunion was very well received, so much so that we plan to host another one in 2014. The excitement and energy amongst the group was contagious! Many of the former cast members brought old photos, programs and music from past performances, some of which were donated to our library. We compiled four albums of old photos for the attendees to enjoy and mounted an exhibit of memorabilia in the Visitor Center. The exhibit included a costume from the 1960s, a plywood “Shaker sister” used to promote the play, a large collection of programs, photos and newspaper articles, and a series of watercolors by Courier-Journal artist George Joseph, created for a 1965 feature article.

The SUSV is fortunate to have another intern from Western Kentucky University, working this semester and next. Rebecca Smith, who is pursuing her graduate degree in Folk Studies, will be creating programming for school children using the many resources available here. Ironically, Rebecca attended one of South Union’s day camps as a child back in the 1990s. Rebecca credits Sharon Koomler, South Union’s Director of Education at the time, for planting the seeds of interest in historic preservation and education. While researching some of Sharon’s files Rebecca recently found artwork she had done at that day camp.

The South Union Shaker Village is privileged to work closely with an Advisory Committee, created in 1989 at the urging of Edie Bingham. Mrs. Bingham still serves as Chair of that very vital, gifted group of volunteers, which includes Carol Rochford, Margy Thomas, Barbara English, Doris Thomas, Martin Brown, Bill Coke, Hank Brockman, and Ridley Wills III. Much of what happens here is as the result of this group.

I hope you will pay us a visit this fall and make an effort to attend our events. We appreciate your continued membership support and encourage you to invite your friends to be a part of the preservation efforts at the South Union Shaker Village.



The SUSV’s Advisory Committee meets annually in the spring for a time of review, and to share expertise and offer assistance. Pictured above, from left to right, seated, are Advisory Committee members Edie Bingham and Margy Thomas, and standing are Operations Manager Kaelin Vernon, Advisory Committee member Ridley Wills III, Executive Director Tommy Hines, and Board President Skip Cleavinger.

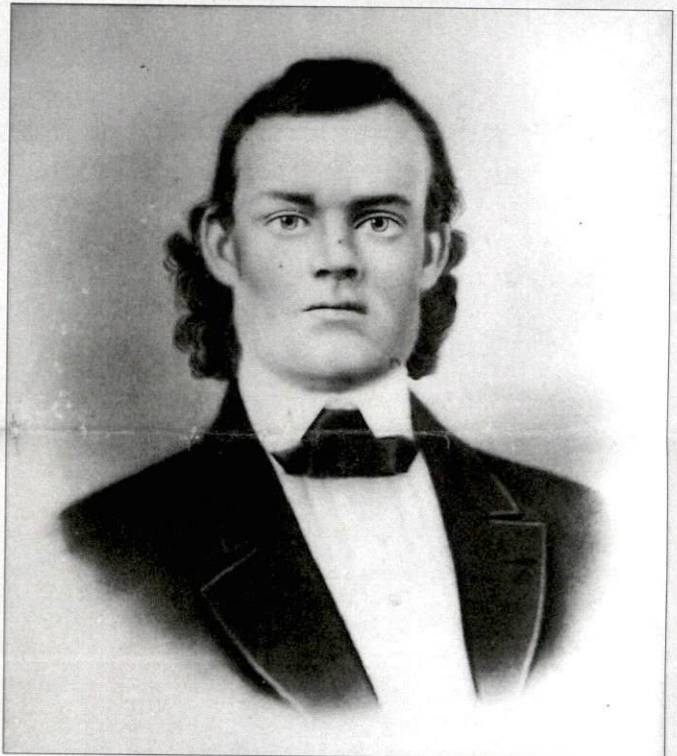
SOUTH UNION PROFILE: ELDER LOGAN JOHNS

In a letter to Deedy Hall dated July 5, 1963, Mrs. T. L. Johns of Franklin, Kentucky, documented the early history of the Johns family at South Union. Mrs. Johns related that Revolutionary War veteran Dr. William Johns and his wife Pollie freed their slaves and joined the Shakers at South Union around 1810, bringing with them six sons. Three of the brothers eventually left the community, but three remained. One of those who chose to leave, John Johns, found a wife and moved to Fannin County, Texas. In 1842 their son Logan Johns was born.

In February 1852 Logan Johns' parents died and he and his two sisters were brought an uncle to live at South Union. Logan's name first appeared in an 1854 census as one of the boys living in the West House. According to community records, he gained a reputation for hard work, being referred to as "the well digger" in his youth. His penchant for manual labor continued into early adulthood as he was given credit for digging the brick cattle cistern north of the Centre House as late as 1871.

In November of 1876 Johns left the community, stating that he had "no faith in Shakerism." Elder Harvey Eades commented in Church Record C that Johns was "a long time finding it out." Two years later, however, Logan Johns was restored to the community after a public confession of his sin. Within weeks he was given a leadership position in the East Family and eventually appointed Trustee in 1891.

By the turn of the 20th century Logan Johns was serving as Elder in South Union's lead Ministry, the last to serve in that role. When the village closed in 1922, Johns was the only one of the nine remaining Shakers who chose to continue his life in the faith at Mt. Lebanon, New York.



Logan Johns in a studio portrait, possibly taken between November 1876 and September 1878 during the period when he left South Union. If that date is correct, Johns would have been in his mid-30s when this likeness was made.



Elder Logan Johns (left), ca. 1910, at the Centre Family well shed, with members of the Hines family from Bowling Green.

Sister Josie Bridges, too ill to make a decision for herself, accompanied him.

Logan Johns died in 1924, at the age of 82, and is buried in the cemetery at Mt. Lebanon.

As for the rest of South Union's Johns family, Dr. and Mrs. William Johns died and were buried in the cemetery in 1827 and 1842, respectively. The three sons who remained in the community became valuable members of the Society. Patterson Johns, a trusted peddler in the Shaker seed business, died in December 1863. Robert Johns, the community's most prominent carpenter and cabinet-maker, and noted singer, died in March 1863. Urban Johns, South Union's principle Trustee for more than 25 years, died in July 1878.

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P.O. Box 177, Auburn, KY 42206

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Jonathan Jeffrey
110 Riverwood
Bowling Green, KY 42103

UPCOMING EVENTS

A SHAKER BREAKFAST

Saturday, November 3

Seatings at 8:30 am and 10:30

A Civil War-era S

to please

scrambled

apple pie,

historical Shaker Tavern. Reservations are

required: \$22 members, \$25 non-members.

sold out

fast that promises
fried chicken,

pork sausage, asparagus,

biscuits and more! Served at the

SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE TURKEY SHOOT

Saturday, November 3

10:00 am until 2:00 pm

The southern heritage of the South Union Shakers is exemplified in our first-ever Turkey Shoot, taking place at the Village near the 1875 Grain Barn. Prizes will be awarded each round. This event is in cooperation with Rockcastle Shooting Center.

SHAKERTOWN HOLIDAY MARKET

Saturday, December 1, 9:00 am until 4:00 pm

One of Kentucky's finest antique and craft markets, just in time for Christmas! Featuring a unique variety of regional dealers and craftspeople, all nestled in the historic atmosphere of the South Union Shaker Village. Admission granted with a canned food item or donation for those needful.

For a "first chance" opportunity to shop, make reservations for the Preview Party, Friday evening, November 30. Enjoy coffee, cider, and desserts in the most festive of holiday atmospheres. Admission is \$10 per person and the event takes place from 7:00 pm until 9:00 pm. Reservations are suggested.

For information or reservations for events call:

1-800-811-8379 or 270-542-4167

shakmus@logantele.com

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, Kentucky.

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