

Winter 2015

South Union Messenger (Winter 2015)

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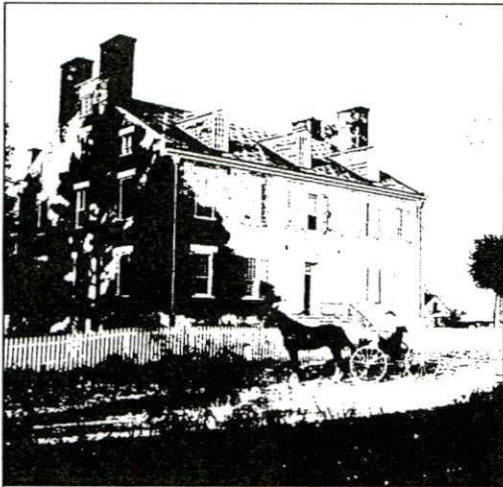


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SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Vol. XLIV, No.1, 2015
South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

The South Union Shaker Village presents the 28th annual

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR

*“Our Home in the Gospel:
A Closer Look at South Union Interiors”*

Friday, April 17, and Saturday, April 18

This year's seminar focuses on architectural interiors at South Union, how structures were designed by the Shakers, and how they were used. Author Hugh Howard will present research from his most recent book *Houses of the Civil War*, which includes the two dwellings where Eldress Nancy Moore lived during the war years. South Union's extravagant use of color on interior paint surfaces will also be examined. The reconstruction of a Centre Family dining room corner cupboard by craftsman Roger Ryan will be revealed in its early 19th century brilliance, thanks to historic paint specialist Erika Sanchez Goodwillie, who will present with her husband, Christian Goodwillie, on early 19th century paint colors used in the village. Other research and “unsolved mysteries” regarding South Union interiors will be presented.

Registration also includes Friday evening dinner and Saturday lunch at the Shaker Tavern, continental breakfast at the Centre House on Saturday morning.

Register to attend by using the enclosed form or by calling
1-800-811-8379 or 1-270-542-4167.

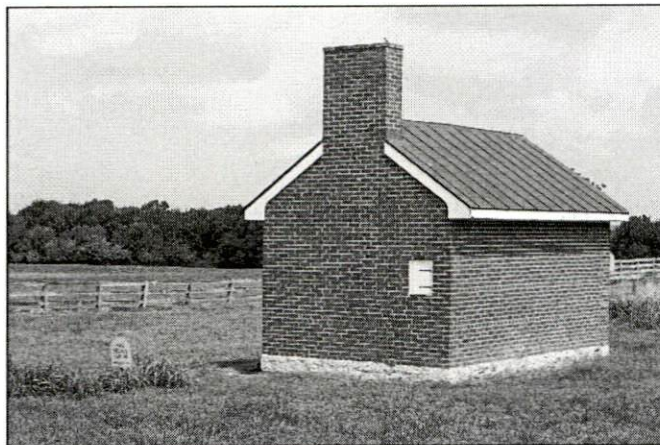
The South Union Seminar is underwritten by **Hilliard Lyons, Shannon & Michael Vitale,**
and **John and Linda Tanner**

SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGES RECEIVES GRANTS

Work will soon begin on several restoration projects at the South Union Shaker Village, thanks to a \$30,000.00 grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and a \$15,000.00 grant from an anonymous Kentucky foundation. The grants provide funding for much-needed work on five of our village buildings, with most significant work to be accomplished on the 1847 Steam House, the 1835 Smoke & Milk House, and the 1827 Well Shed.

Slated for completion is a replacement of the 1976 concrete floor beneath the Well Shed with a period appropriate layer of brick. Other work includes the replication of missing shutters on the Smoke and Milk House and the restoration of three of the dormers on the Centre House and windows on the Shaker Tavern.

A more involved project is the restoration of most of the exterior wooden elements of the 1847 Steam House (right). Although initial restoration of that building was completed in 1999, carpenters used yellow poplar, which we have since learned does not hold over time. The Shakers also used yellow poplar for exterior trim on most of their buildings, however, the old growth variety has definitely stood the test of time. The poplar window frames on the Centre House, installed in 1827, are still in an excellent state of repair after nearly 190 years.



Restoration of the Milk House chimney is also on the list of improvements to be paid for using grant funds. The original chimney on the east end of the building was removed in the 1930s and replaced with a small flue for modern coal stoves. Not only did the dismantling of the old chimney cause the exterior wall to collapse, but workmen left the upper section of the chimney in the attic intact, supported only by a few pieces of lumber. Plans are to reconstruct the chimney from the ground up, from the first floor through the second, and to join the new work with the old chimney in the attic.

Even though it is the smallest brick structure remaining at South Union, the 1847 Steam House is one of the most significant. The Steam House provided Shaker stock with the high calorie cooked feed, a diet that helped create fat and shiny cattle for the market. The building is not only the last vestige of the Shakers' vast Shorthorn cattle industry, but according to former University of Kentucky anthropologist, R. Berle Clay, the Steam House "may be the only surviving structure of its type."

We are most grateful to these foundations for allowing us to continue to restore and interpret South Union's important architectural heritage.

A FRESH COAT OF PAINT

When the 1846 Ministry Shop was restored in 2003, one of the last projects was historic paint analysis. Small surface samples were taken from the floor and the upper wood trim and sent to paint conservator Susan Buck for investigation. We were delighted to find a rich red color on the baseboards and a mustard yellow on the window frames, peg rail and banisters. The real shock was to discover that the floors had originally been painted chrome yellow, a color likened to what you currently find on John Deere tractors. The combination of the three colors next to the whitewashed walls and ceilings was no less than stunning.

After twelve years of wear and tear it is time to re-paint. Our staff person in charge of restoration, James Grinter, recently began the process of covering all the wood surfaces with new coats of red, mustard and chrome yellow. The result is, once again, a sight to behold. The second floor rooms and hallway are nearly complete and the first level work will begin toward the end of February. The building is beginning to shine like a jewel.

South Union's legacy of rich and varied paint colors will be discussed at the upcoming South Union Seminar. Don't miss this weekend of discovery.

WHITFIELD STEVENSON, ARE THESE YOUR PANTS?

Every day is an adventure at South Union. You never know what new piece of information might surface or who may appear with an object related to the village's past. Recently while searching the Centre House attic with a flashlight, docent Barrett Rogers discovered what looked like a piece of cloth in a deep hole about five feet below the attic floor. (The Shakers installed low ceilings over their closets, thereby creating "dead air space" between them and the floor above.)

Thanks to his extensive knowledge of clothing history, operations manager Kaelin Vernon determined that Barrett had discovered the upper portion of a pair of "small fall" trousers, so called because of the narrow, buttoned flap at the front of the pants. Dating from as early as the 1830s, photographic evidence from our archive indicates that men were wearing this style of trousers at South Union as late as the 1880s. Shaker fashion was usually quite a bit behind "worldly" trends.

To whom did they belong? The 14-inch waist measurement indicates that the pants had been worn by a youth. Cross-stitched initials "W. S." discovered inside the waistband provided another clue and prompted an investigation into South Union's name index. Thanks to research by docent Cheryl Odenthal, we discovered that although there were over thirty men in the village with those initials, only one was a boy.

Twelve-year-old Whitfield Stevenson came to South Union with his parents and siblings in late 1865. Once he reached the age of 16, his life in the community was characterized by a consistent pattern of leaving the Shakers and being re-admitted. He still, however, managed to be assigned to the care of the boys in the Centre Family, to reach the level of assistant to the East Family elder, and was even trusted to go on seed-peddling trips. Finally, in October of 1881, Whitfield Stevenson left Shakers for good. One other interesting note . . . he worked in the Centre Family tailor's shop. Thanks to Barrett, Kaelin and Cheryl for this group effort!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION

Atticus Trust / Martin Brown—\$15,000.00
Edie Bingham—\$10,000.00
Ray & Judy McCaskey—\$1,000.00
Ernest & Elaine Ezell—\$1,000.00
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Michael & Nancy Zoretic—\$75.00
Mark & Jean Reynolds—\$25.00
Dorothy Darby & David Paschall—\$100.00

Jeff Ashworth—in memory of Tim Bookout

Rich & Suzy Spence, Elaine Disch,
and George & Darlene Kohrman—purchase of a
refrigerator for the Shaker Tavern
guest area

SOUTH UNION PROFILE: SISTER IDA LADD

In May of 1890 the South Union Shaker Village made national news, but not in a way the community would have desired. A story that was originally published in a Franklin, Kentucky, newspaper was picked up in several publications across the United States, including the *Rocky Mountain News* in Denver, Colorado (pictured below) and newspapers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, Indiana, Illinois, and North Carolina. After researching South Union's manuscript records and gathering information from ancestry.com, a more precise record of Ida Ladd's story can be told.

Ida Ladd's mother, Susan, joined the Shakers at South Union sometime in 1888, bringing along her four youngest children: Mattie and Maggie (ages 17), Silas (age 8) and Willie (age 6). Ida, Susan's eldest child, followed suit in October of 1889. Little is known about the family's brief stay at South Union until Ida Ladd's choice to leave the Shakers was recorded by Harvey Eads in the community journal on May 13, 1890:

MARRIED—Ida Ladd, aged about 20 years, went from the West Family & was married at the tavern at our Depot on Sabbath . . . The first time in the history of South Union that such a thing has occurred. It was brot (sic) about by advertising & secret letter writing & exchanging photos.

Apparently, unbeknownst to the leadership at South Union, Ida had formed a relationship through the mail with a man from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The connection between the two was made as the result of a matrimonial advertisement in a Cincinnati newspaper. On Sunday, May 11, she married Mr. William D. Fairtrace at the Shaker Tavern, the railroad hotel built by the Shakers in 1869. (The writer of the article below incorrectly recorded the groom's name as M. A. Fairtrice.)

Most of the newspaper articles about the marriage used similar verbiage in regard to the event, each attempting to portray a beautiful young girl finding love with a successful young man. The fact that she had been a Shaker while searching for a husband obviously attracted most of the attention. Each paper took liberties with a headline for the article, some of which included "A Romantic Shakeress," "A Pretty Shakeress Deserts Celibacy," and "Romance of a Shaker Maid." As in most stories of this type, the reality is not quite as romantic.

William, age 34, and Ida, age 20, departed from South Union by rail on May 11, 1890, traveling to William's home in Pittsburg after a brief stop at Mammoth Cave. Ida's mother and younger siblings left South Union in 1892 and moved to Pittsburg to join the newlyweds.

According to the 1900 census, William and Ida Fairtrace and their three children were living in a rented house and William is listed not as a civil engineer but a "day laborer." The census records also state that he had only worked ten out of twelve months during the previous year. Their family eventually included six children, one of whom died in infancy. In later years, William and Ida moved in with the family of one of their children and remained in the Pittsburg area for the rest of their lives. William died sometime between 1930 and 1934 and Ida passed away in January of 1936. She was 65 years old.

William and Ida Fairtrace may have lived a happy and fulfilling life together, even if it didn't live up to the promising scenario in the 1890 article. The wedding took place at one of the lowest points in South Union's history, when members were not only leaving the community in great numbers but at a time of spiritual apathy as well. While "the world" probably read of William and Ida's marriage with lightheartedness, it was yet another indication of the lack of commitment in some Shaker communities by the late 19th century.

Shook the Shakers.

Special to The News.

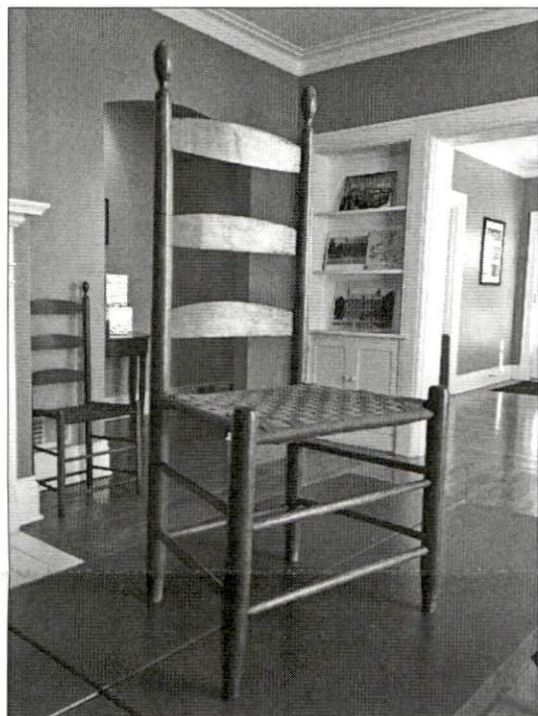
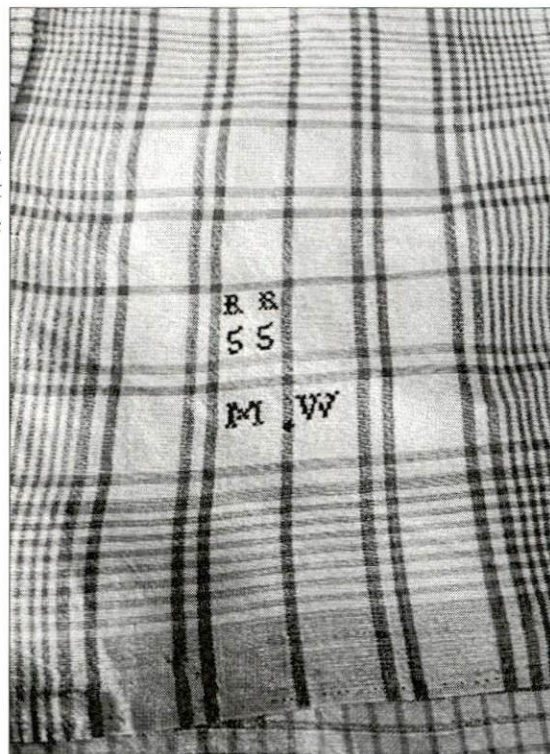
FRANKLIN, Ky., May 14.—Miss Ida Ladd was until last Saturday a member of the Shaker society. She is a beautiful girl of 20 years, a blonde, with blue eyes and hair like burnished gold. She seemed to be entirely content with her lot until last week, when she informed the members of the Shaker community that she had made up her mind to leave, and that she would be married before she left. Sunday night, at the hotel in South Union, Miss Ladd was married to M. A. Fairtrice, a civil engineer from Pittsburg, by the Rev. Mr. Howard of Auburn. The young man had never seen her until the day previous to the marriage. Some time ago Miss Ladd grew tired of her lonely life, and sent an advertisement to a Cincinnati paper, giving a description of herself, and offering to correspond with a gentleman matrimonially inclined. This was seen by Mr. Fairtrice, a young business man of Pittsburg, and a correspondence and the marriage resulted. The happy young man and his bride will make their home in Pittsburg.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Silk Kerchief, ca. 1855

Silk kerchief with the initials "M.W." stitched into the corner, and the probable date "55" stitched above it. Silk is cream colored with light brown and pale blue stripes. The initials "R.R." are also present. The kerchief was probably made in one of the Kentucky villages in the 19th century and sent to the northeast as a gift.

Purchased with Acquisition Endowment funds



South Union Side Chair, ca. 1840

"Type A" side chair produced at South Union, with room number "12" stamped into the post. Chair has been refinished and three stretchers and seat have been replaced, but the form is a fine example of this chair type.

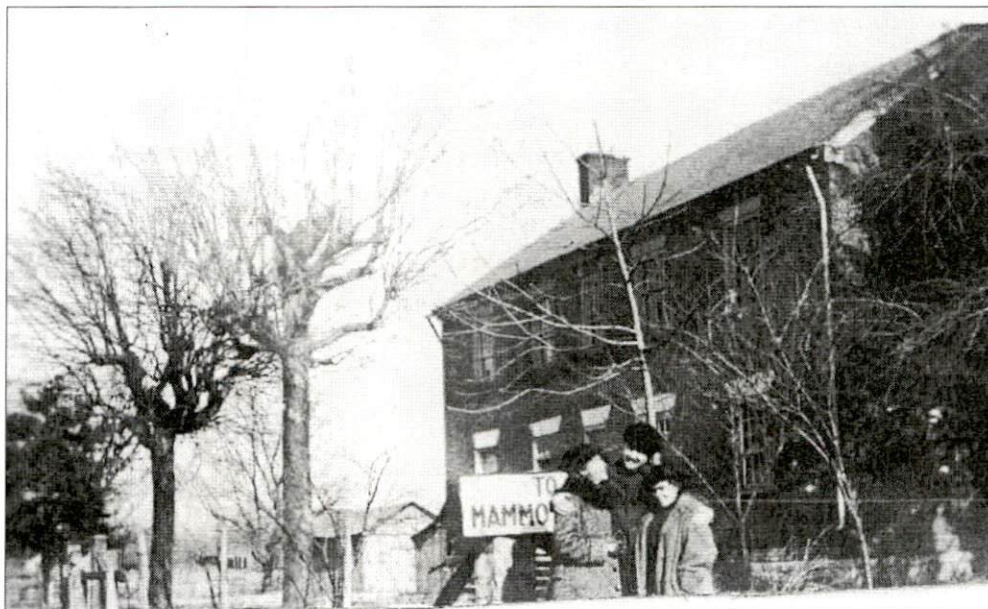
Purchased with Acquisition Endowment funds

Historic Photograph, ca. 1915

Image of three unidentified people visiting South Union. The photo was made from old US 68-80, looking north. The SUSV Visitor Center stands on this site today.

The brick structure was the first Centre House, completed in 1815 and eventually used as a Brethren's Shop for most of the village history.

After 1922 it was used to house employees of Oscar Bond, the farm's new owner. Often referred to as the "1815 Brick" or "Brick House," the building was razed in the mid-1930s. Interesting to note is the directional sign advertising one of Kentucky's best-known tourist attractions, Mammoth Cave.



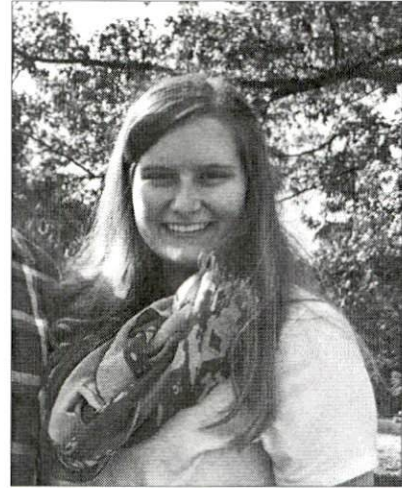
A Donation to the Library Collection

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

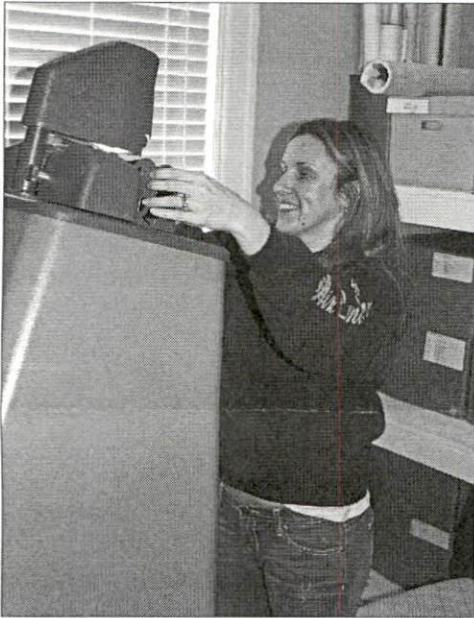
Tommy Hines

After a decade of declining visitor numbers we finally experienced growth in 2014! Our annual attendance was greater than what we recorded in 2013 or 2012, and came within less than twenty people of beating our attendance in 2011. Gift Shop sales also ended the year with success, bringing in 16 percent more gross sales than in 2013. All bills are paid and we ended 2014 in the black. Even though we are still well below the numbers we experienced during the halcyon days of the 1990s, any growth is something to celebrate.

I want to thank WKU intern Katheryn Young, who volunteered more than 60 hours during the month of January to process the Dorothy Jones Collection. In late 2014 long-time supporter and Friends member Dorothy Jones contributed the largest collection of primary and secondary Shaker material that our library has ever been offered. We are most grateful to Dorothy for her generosity and to Katheryn for contributing her time and expertise to this project.



Katheryn Young, WKU graduate intern and volunteer



Rebekah Brummett, MTSU intern, tackles the archaic, yet still functioning microfilm machine in the library. Thank you, Jean Burk, for this donation many years ago.

We also welcome Rebekah Brummett, a graduate intern from Middle Tennessee State University, who will be working here throughout the spring. Her project is to research and execute an exhibit on the African American experience at South Union. The story is a fascinating, yet complicated one, dealing with the issue of Shaker tolerance in a region fraught with racism. New research into the last days of South Union has also revealed a thriving African American community living within the Shaker village in exchange for work on the farm. We are most excited about making this information available to the public.

Thank you, members of the Friends of the South Union Shaker Village, for helping to make our 2014 a success. Your continued support means so much to our day to day operations. I hope that you will visit us in 2015 and take advantage of one or more of our events. The upcoming South Union Seminar promises to be one of our most interesting ever. So many of you helped fund the construction of the corner cupboard replica for the Centre House dining room. Roger Ryan is working diligently to complete the cupboard for its April un-veiling. Please plan to be a part of it!

UNINTENTIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The 250-plus acres that are cultivated on the South Union Shaker Village farm have been tilled this winter for the first time in several years. Artifacts, not usually visible, began to surface in locations where buildings once stood. Thanks to volunteer Charlie Ray and others we have retrieved iron, pottery and glass fragments from the area near the East House, North House, and West House (pictured at right). Locations were noted for future archaeological investigations.



REGISTRATION

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR

*"Our Home in the Gospel:
A Closer Look at South Union Interiors"*

Friday, April 17, and Saturday, April 18

Name _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Address _____

Special Needs (vegetarian meals, etc.) _____

_____ \$80 per member _____ \$90 per non-member _____ \$25 student
_____ \$50 per member, Saturday only _____ \$60 per member, Saturday only
_____ Check Enclosed _____ Credit Card # _____ Exp. _____ CVV

Presenters include:

Hugh Howard, author of *Houses of the Founding Fathers*, *Houses of the Presidents*,
and *Houses of the Civil War*

Erika Sanchez Goodwillie, historic paint specialist who has worked on paint restoration projects at
Mt. Vernon, Monticello, Colonial Williamsburg and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts

Christian Goodwillie, Director of Special Collections, Hamilton College

The event begins on Friday evening at 6:00 pm and concludes Saturday at 3:00 pm. A detailed schedule of
events and confirmation will be mailed to you when you register. Registration deadline is Friday, April 10.

Please mail to: South Union Shaker Village, P. O. Box 177, Auburn, Kentucky 42206
For more information call: 1-800-811-8379 or 1-270-542-4167

The South Union Seminar is underwritten by
Hilliard Lyons, Shannon & Michael Vitale, and John and Linda Tanner

SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE

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UPCOMING EVENTS

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR

Friday and Saturday, April 17-18

This year's seminar, "Our Home in the Gospel: A Closer Look at South Union Interiors," focuses on architecture at South Union and how building interiors were used.

Reservations required: \$80 members, \$90 non-members, \$25 students. Prices also available for "Saturday only" attendees

Time: Friday 6:00pm - 9:00pm, Saturday 8:00am - 3:00pm

SUSV LECTURE SERIES:

"NEW DISCOVERIES IN SOUTH UNION
ARCHITECTURE RESEARCH"

Saturday, May 9

A behind the scenes to tour of some of the "off limits" spaces at South Union will highlight a presentation about the village's innovative building design and unique use of color, led by Executive Director Tommy Hines. Box lunch will be served.

Reservations required: \$25.00 members, \$30.00 non-members, \$15.00 students

Time: 10:00am - 1:00pm

"SHAKE, RIDE & ROLL" BIKE EVENT

Saturday, June 6

In cooperation with the Bowling Green League of Bicyclists (BGLOB), the South Union Shaker Village will host a bike ride through the beautiful countryside, much of what was originally the Shaker's 6,000 acre farm. Special premiums and options for the day's event will be offered upon registration.

To register contact: www.meetup.com

MUSIC ON THE FARM

Saturday, September 12

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

Tickets: \$15 per person, \$25 per couple,
\$5 children ages 6-12

Time: 2:00pm - 5:00pm

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

For more information: 270-542-4167
www.southunionshakervillage.com