

Winter 2016

South Union Messenger (Winter 2016)

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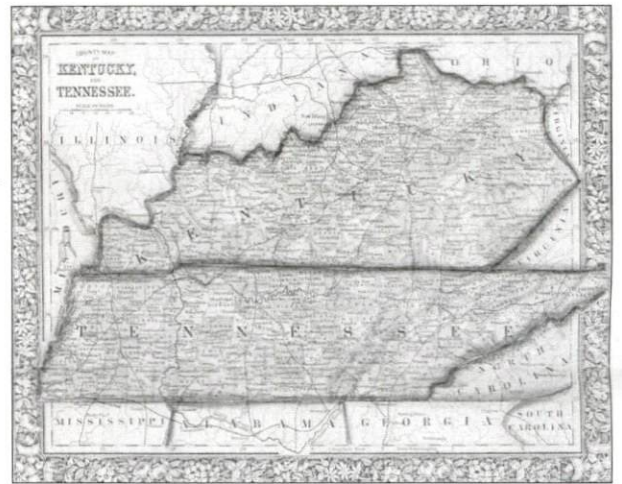


SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Vol. XLV, No.1, 2016
South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR COMING UP!

Make your reservations for the 29th annual South Union Seminar, this year presenting a look at the region outside the Shaker village of South Union. Our theme, "The Southern Shakers in Context: Regional Influences That Created South Union," will explore the world that the Shakers found when they settled in Kentucky and will examine the traditions and customs that converts brought to South Union throughout the 19th century. We will not only learn about life on the frontier but will focus on specific topics such as Kentucky basket-making traditions and the Middle Tennessee furniture makers. Our speakers include Southern material culture authority C. Tracey Parks, white oak basket maker/tradition bearer Scott Gilbert, folklorist/basket maker Beth Hester, and renowned Kentucky artist and historian Frank House.



SUSV WELCOMES REBEKAH BRUMMETT

The SUSV is pleased to announce the hiring of Rebekah Brummett as Curator of Community Engagement. Rebekah worked at SUSV as a graduate intern from Middle Tennessee State University in 2015, focusing on research and an exhibit on the African American covenant signers at South Union. Rebekah has also interned at The Hermitage, worked as Assistant Curator at Traveller's Rest Plantation and Museum and, most recently, served as Regional Program Manager for the American Red Cross. During her tenure with the Red Cross she developed and implemented program strategic goals and objectives, authorized outreach and support activities, and identified and developed a volunteer workforce. Rebekah lives with her husband Eric and two sons in White House, TN.



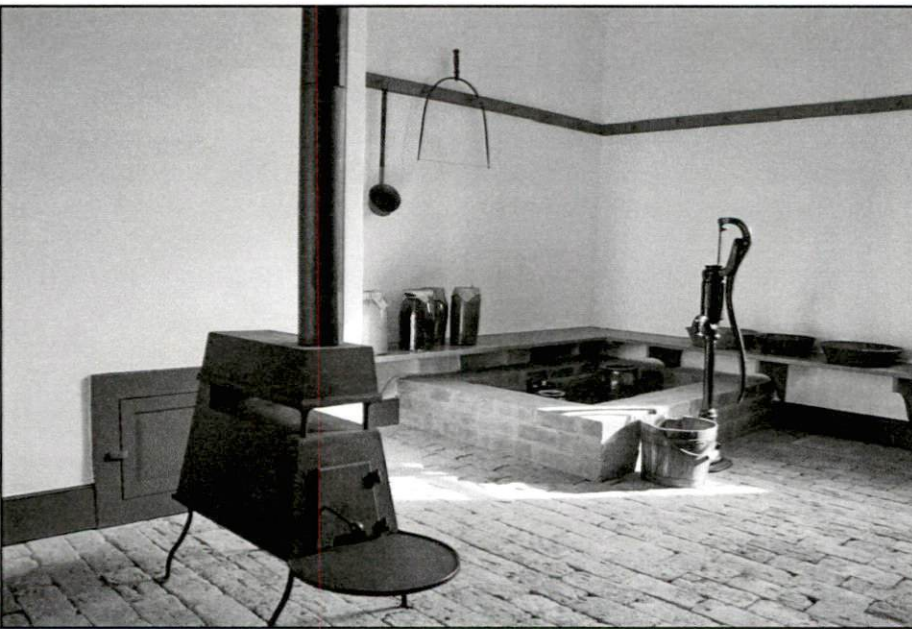
"It is such a pleasure to join the dedicated staff and volunteers at South Union, and I look forward to building on the good work begun and supported by so many of you! We have amazing things planned for this year, including a dynamic new outlook that activates our mission to impact the lives of our friends and neighbors near and far. Our outreach efforts will center on serving the community through cultural heritage education. As we dive into this effort, we invite you to join us by contributing your time, talent, and treasure. In the coming weeks a new "Volunteer" section will be available for exploration on our website, offering you the opportunity to check our needs against your time and talents. In addition, the Executive Board will soon be inviting you to participate in a funding campaign that will back our exciting new outreach initiatives. Please consider making an additional gift through this campaign. Thank you for the warm welcome and for continuing to support one of Kentucky's most amazing historic treasures!"

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

\$21,400.00—Martin Brown (general support and landscape restoration)
\$11,000.00—Edie Bingham (general support)
\$10,000.00—Mary K. Price Estate (endowment fund)
\$3,000.00—Col. Robert E. and Cora Jane Spiller (underwriting)
\$2,000.00—Pat and Mary Allen (collections and general support)
\$2,000.00—Ray and Judy McCaskey (general support)
\$1,500.00—US Bank (underwriting and matching funds)
\$1,000.00—Ernest and Elaine Ezell (restoration)
\$1,000.00—Logan Aluminum (underwriting)
\$1,000.00—Preston and Margy Thomas (general support)
\$1,000.00—Mr. and Mrs. Ridley Wills III (general support)
\$1,000.00—Hank and Mary Brockman (general support)
\$1,000.00—Martha Boice (general support)
\$500.00—George and Darlene Kohrman (collections)
\$500.00—Jeff and Marion Jackson Clark (general support)
\$500.00—Grover and Mary Corum (general support)
\$500.00—Bill and Linda Oldham (general support)
\$500.00—Susan K. Taylor and Andrew Loving (general support)
\$500.00—Rex and Suzi Payne (general support)
\$400.00—Anonymous (collections)
\$303.00—Don Hansen (collections)
\$240.00—John Campbell (general support)
\$200.00—Chicago Area Shaker Study Group (general support)

MILK HOUSE RESTORATION COMPLETE

Thanks to generous funding from an anonymous foundation and from private contributors Ernest and Elaine Ezell, the interior of the 1835 Milk House is finally complete. The lengthy process included a large scale masonry project in order to re-construct the chimney (reduced to a small flue in the 1920s), the re-introduction of a dry-laid brick floor, the restoration of a large brick sink (the water pipes for which remain extant), and the re-building of a low shelving around the perimeter of the room that was originally used for milk pans.



One of the most striking features of the room is the brilliant color on the wood trim. Paint analysis, completed by conservator Susan Buck, revealed a deep red on the baseboards, complimented by a brilliant teal blue on the upper trim. These 1835 pigment matches indicate the South Union Shakers' affinity for color, the use of which was not reserved just for the dwellings or the Meeting House.

Make it a priority to see the newly restored interiors on your next visit to South Union. The colors need to be experienced in person to be appreciated.

SOUTH UNION PROFILE: LORENZO PEARCFIELD

South Union records indicate that Lorenzo Pearcfield was born in Kentucky on March 16, 1832. There is no evidence in regard to how he came to join the Shakers at South Union, but he was first mentioned in 1850 when assigned the task of caring for the young boys at the East Family. The 18-year-old's assignment in leadership lasted four years, after which he was listed among the Brethren designated to go on peddling trips. Men allowed to leave the community for the purpose of selling Shaker products were highly regarded by the those in leadership. Not only were they subject to the temptations of "the world," but Shaker peddlers were also entrusted with a great deal of money. Lorenzo Pearcfield wore many hats as a Shaker but throughout his life he would continually return to the marketing and selling of Shaker goods.

Brother Lorenzo's leadership skills were tested time again during his early life. He was assigned the position of Centre Family Elder in 1861, but his relegation to second in command at the Centre House the following year began a lifelong pattern of assignments and demotions in Shaker leadership. Where he excelled was business and his leadership struggles were always overshadowed by commercial successes.

In 1857 Pearcfield was made Farm Deacon for the Centre Family. Here he found his giftedness. When he registered for the draft in 1863, his occupation was listed as a horticulturalist. His peddling trips during the Civil War, although few, were successful. Those journeys were, however, not without incident. A trip by rail to sell dried fruit and flour in Nashville in January of 1863 was circumvented when high waters had washed out a bridge near Gallatin. In January of 1865 the journal writer noted that Lorenzo Pearcfield "returned from his perilous seed trip—having sold seeds in the amount of \$500. When near Franklin, Tenn., he saw fresh graves occupying about 2 acres of ground.

Lorenzo Pearcfield also exhibited bravery and zeal on a number of occasions. In his youth, Lorenzo chased horse thieves, arranged a search to find robbers who had stolen cloth from the Fulling Mill, and traveled to Bowling Green to complain to the Union Army about Rebel threats to South Union. His troubles were rewarded by a squadron of Union soldiers sent to patrol the village.

In February of 1880 Lorenzo Pearcfield became gravely ill, "carried from the Office to the Centre on a cot—not being able to walk, grave doubts are now entertained of his recovery." He did improve for several years, but was allowed to travel to Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1886 for "Rheumatic inflammation of this limbs." Pearcfield was well enough to travel to Mississippi several times in the late 1880s in order to visit a farm he had inherited. In May and June of 1891 he took the train to visit Pleasant Hill and the Shaker villages in Ohio.

An ca. 1899 article published in Louisville, Kentucky's *Courier-Journal*, chronicled Lorenzo Pearcfield's well-known horsemanship skills. It also, however, focused on his weight. Entitled "Heavy Old Shaker's Specialty," the article noted, "There is not another man in Logan or any other county, so far as we know, who is 70 years old and weighs 300 pounds . . . yet this is true of the colossal Shaker." In describing his expertise as a horse breaker the writer continues, "He has a system of his own, which consists in first demonstrating to the perfect satisfaction of the horse that he is master of the situation. To do this it is sometimes necessary to throw the horse down and sit upon his head, which Mr. Pearcfield [sic] does in the most approved style. After 300 pounds has sat upon his horseship's head for a little while he is satisfied.

Lorenzo made one last trip to Mississippi on February 27, 1900 to receive a portion of the estate left him by his late brother, Americus. There are no additional references to Lorenzo Pearcfield in the South Union records until he died on July 8, 1900, at the age of 68. He was buried in the South Union cemetery.



Brother Lorenzo Pearcfield and unidentified Sisters at South Union, west of Meeting House, ca. 1887.

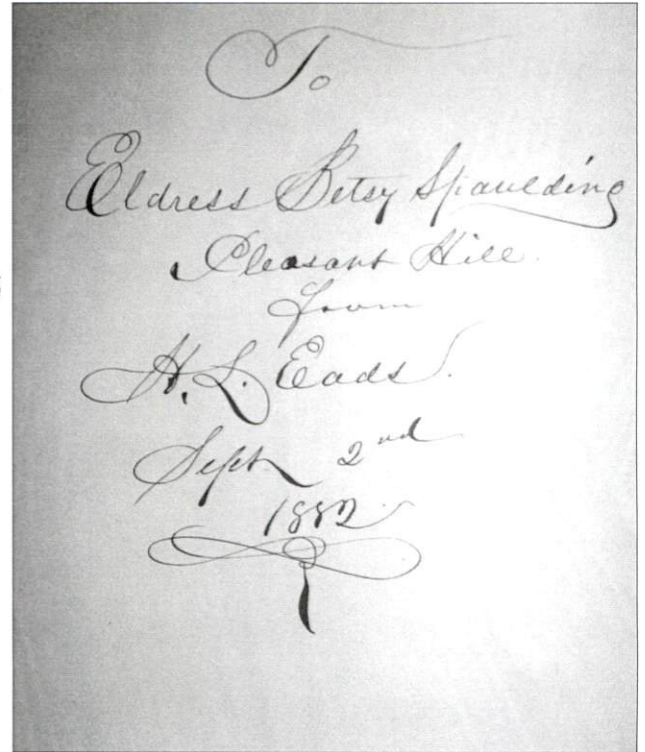
RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Side Chairs, a matched pair, South Union Type C, traces of early green paint, with replaced seats.

Donated by William and Mary Ann Cole

Shaker Sermons, by South Union Elder Harvey Eads, First Edition, 1879, inscribed by Eads to Eldress Betsy Spaulding (1825-1905), Pleasant Hill, on September 2nd, 1882. (right)

Purchase made possible because of a generous contribution by Don Hansen



Corner Cupboard, originally a built-in cupboard, similar to the extant examples in the Centre House dining room, but with evidence of earlier construction methods and more intricate moldings. Cupboard was purchased by Sally Blewett from the Shakers in 1919, then by an Auburn, Kentucky family in 1960. Original back is missing, hinges replaced, and height reduced.

Purchased with Acquisition Endowment Funds

Bureau, attributed to South Union, walnut with poplar secondary wood, early red paint, two small drawers over four large drawers, typical of community's early 19th century work. (left)

Purchased with Acquisition Endowment Funds

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Tommy Hines

The winter months offer us the opportunity to plan for the coming season, and I am happy to say that our planning this year includes a new staff member. Rebekah Brummett's contributions as our new Curator of Community Engagement have already been extremely beneficial to the staff and Board of Directors. We anticipate exciting new developmental ideas and outreach projects under her guidance.

We also welcome a new member to the SUSV Board of Directors. Heather Brooks, an attorney with English, Lucas, Priest and Owsley in Bowling Green, joined our esteemed group of Directors in November. Heather, who is originally from Morgantown, Kentucky, brings both knowledge and energy to our organization.

Finally, don't miss this year's South Union Seminar, April 22-23. The program is one of the best that we have offered in many years. We look forward to seeing you soon! As always, thanks for your support of our efforts at South Union.

WHAT'S IN A PHOTOGRAPH?

As an historic site, we are always searching for new information about the history of the people who lived here and about the built environment they created. For many years the period following the Shakers' departure from South Union in 1922 was on the "back burner" of research priorities. We now see the importance of this time of transition. With the recent acquisition of two important photograph collections, both dating from 1922 to the mid-1940s, fresh insights into the Shakers' final days at South Union have been discovered.

The photographer who shot this image in the mid-1920s (at right in its original



form and above in detail) probably didn't realize the importance of the background in this picture. Although the couple is unidentified, research into manuscript records and maps have enabled us to identify buildings because of their documented location and proximity to one another. This photo, taken from the lot of the 1823 Blacksmith Shop, right side of US 68-80, looking east, reveals several important structures visible behind the subjects. From left to right are the 1810 Frame Dwelling, the 1824 Centre House, and the 1841 Trustee's Office. The one-story structure in the foreground of the Trustees Office is the 1856 Post Office. All three of the frame buildings pictured were gone by 1931.

Additional documentary information includes the presence of mature pine trees, planted in great numbers by the Shakers in the mid-19th century. The Shakers' 1830s plank fences have obviously been replaced by rolled wire fences. Also, the ground on which the subjects are seated appears hard and barren of vegetation, indicating a great amount of use. That's just what you would expect in a lot surrounding a blacksmith shop.

Many thanks to Brenda Barnard for donating the Wyatt Collection of historic photographs and to Jo Havener for donating the Thorton-Havener Collection, of which this photograph is part.

FOR YOU PAYERS OF KENTUCKY TAX...

Make your mark for history! When you check the box designating a portion of your state income tax refund to Kentucky's Local History Fund, you will make a permanent mark on history. Your donation can be any amount you choose, even \$1, and will go a long way toward helping local history organizations. Encourage your friends and neighbors to make their mark for history and check the box for the **Local History Fund** on their tax returns this year. For more information contact the Kentucky Historical Society (www.history.ky.gov).

LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

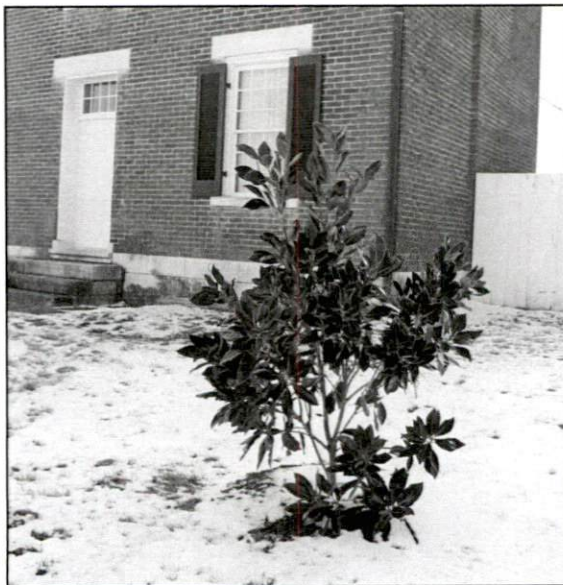
In the late 1990s the South Union Shaker Village began an initiative to restore the landscape within the village, using 19th century manuscript journals and maps, and information garnered from archaeological investigations. As a result, fence rows were re-built and species-specific trees were planted back in their original locations. Much of the horticultural information was gleaned from the notes left by Elder Harvey Eads (1807-1892), who had an interest in nature and often transplanted trees from the woods into the yards surrounding the buildings.

One of our most ambitious projects was the re-planting of thirty-eight Sugar Maple trees on the south side of the lane between the Centre Family and the East Family sites. Thanks to a generous gift from Mrs. W. L. Lyons Brown, the project was completed in 2007. By 2015 ten of the trees had experienced damage of some kind, so now they have been replaced, thanks to Martin Brown, Sr., son of the late Mrs. Brown. We are most grateful for the generosity and vision of the Brown family.



Also replanted in the early winter were cedar trees around the entrances of the Centre Family Sisters' Privy and the Meeting House Privy. Archaeological evidence in the form of roots revealed the location of these trees which were probably planted by the Shakers in an attempt to provide privacy.

Another notable tree recently reintroduced was Elder Harvey Eads' Magnolia, originally planted in the mid-19th century just outside the window of his workshop.



There are several references to the tree in manuscript letters and diaries, and also in Elder Henry Blinn's travel journal from 1873: "... we call to see the Magnolia tree in front of the Ministry Shop. Several beautiful large, white fragrant blossoms are now ornamenting the tree."

This tree also has an additional significance. It is planted in memory of Lillie Mae Hayes, who worked at South Union as a docent from 1982 until 2010. Many thanks to those who helped fund this living memorial.

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Katheryn Keith, Library Asst.
Mike Hossum, Docent
Cheryl Odenthal, Docent

You Are Cordially Invited to the 29th Annual

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR

"The Southern Shakers in Context:

Regional Influences That Created South Union"

Friday, April 22, from 6:00pm - 8:00pm and Saturday, April 23, from 8:00am - 3:00pm

Guest Speakers Include:

Frank House, renowned Kentucky artist and historian

C. Tracey Parks, noted Southern material culture authority

Scott Gilbert, white oak basket maker and tradition bearer

Beth Hester, basket maker and folklorist

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 non-member, Saturday only

_____ Check Enclosed _____ Credit Card # _____ Exp. _____ CVV

A detailed schedule of events and confirmation will be mailed to you when you register. Registration deadline is Friday, April 15.
Please mail to: South Union Shaker Village, PO Box 177, Auburn, KY 42206
For more information call: 1-800-811-8379 or 1-270-542-4167

SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE

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UPCOMING EVENTS

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR

Friday and Saturday, April 22-23

This year's theme, "The Southern Shakers in Context: Regional Influences That Created South Union," will explore the world that the Shakers found when they settled in Kentucky and will examine the traditions and customs that converts brought from that world to South Union throughout the 19th century.

Reservations required: \$80 members
 \$90 non-members
 \$25 students

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

"SHAKE, RIDE & ROLL" BIKE EVENT

Saturday, June 4

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

A SHAKER BREAKFAST

Saturday, November 5

A Civil War-era Shaker breakfast that promises to please and to astonish . . . featuring fried chicken, scrambles eggs, sweet potatoes, pork sausage, asparagus, apple pie, buttermilk biscuits and more! Served at South Union's famous railroad hotel, the Shaker Tavern.

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

Time: Seatings at 8:30am and 10:30am

SUSV APPRAISAL DAY

Saturday, August 27

Accredited appraisers from Case Antiques Inc., Auctions & Appraisals of Knoxville and Nashville, Tennessee, including Sarah Campbell Drury, will provide verbal auction estimates. Drury is a member of the International Society of Appraisers. Items which may be considered for evaluation include paintings, sculpture, silver, pottery and porcelain, documents, maps and books, Asian antiques, Civil War items, and other decorative and historic items. Furniture items and other large items may be evaluated using photographs if their size prohibits them from being brought in. For more information, contact Case's Nashville office at (615) 812-6096 or email info@caseantiques.com.

Cost: \$10.00 per item appraised, benefiting the SUSV

Time: 10:00am - 4:00pm

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