

Spring 2016

South Union Messenger (Spring 2016)

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Kentucky Library Research Collections, "South Union Messenger (Spring 2016)" (2016). *South Union Messenger*. Paper 58.
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SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Vol. XLV, No.2, 2016

South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME!

The South Union Shaker Village is pleased and excited to announce that our friends and neighbors, the Fathers of Mercy, have extended to us an invitation to purchase the 1854 Wash House, an important Centre Family building that we have hoped to acquire for many years. Incorporating the Wash House into our village setting will enable us to further advance the SUSV mission of serving the public through historic preservation and cultural heritage education. For the first time, we will have the opportunity to create dedicated areas for school programs, meeting rooms for adult education, additional gallery and exhibit space, and research areas for students and interns. The acquisition of this significant building will also enable us to highlight women's history in a structure that was wholly dedicated to their efforts throughout the 19th century.

Phase 1 of the *Wash House Campaign* is to acquire the building and approximately two acres of land. A very equitable purchase price of \$300,000.00 must be raised to accomplish our goal; over \$53,000.00 has been committed to date. Phase 2 will eventually involve the processes of restoration and adaptive re-use. The Wash House is in an excellent state of preservation and has been stewarded well by the Fathers of Mercy.

The 1854 Wash House or Sisters Shop was constructed at a time of great prosperity and optimism for the South Union Shakers. As the result, this pre-Civil War building was one of the most ambitious construction projects in the Shaker world at the time. Providing over 10,000 square feet of work space for the women of the Centre Family, the building's four floors were principally used for the purposes of washing, drying, and ironing of textiles. It also housed a music room and retiring rooms for those Sisters assigned to work there.

Construction began on May 2, 1853 and after three years of labor the Wash House was ready for occupancy in the fall of 1856. Thousands of pounds of limestone, countless lengths of timber, and over a half million hand-made bricks were used in building this most auspicious of Shaker workshops. When complete, a journal keeper noted that "better brick or better walls are not to be found in the Green River Territory."

Of the ten historic buildings that remain at South Union, the Wash House will be the ninth to be owned, preserved, and interpreted by the SUSV. Please join us in bringing this significant building back into the South Union Shaker Village by contributing to the *Wash House Campaign*. Our campaign ends February 2017.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

CROWDRISE FUNDRAISER

\$500.00 - David Bell
\$500.00 - US Bank
\$500.00 - Sam and Sheila Flener
 in memory of Edith Sullivan
\$500.00 - Saddler Taylor
\$400.00 - Mike Harper
\$350.00 - Susan Gardner
\$300.00 - Brian Lankford
\$250.00 - Skip Cleavinger
\$250.00 - J. Gran Clark
\$200.00 - Tommy Hines
\$150.00 - Lee Young
\$100.00 - Rex and Suzy Payne
 in memory of Deedy Hall and Julia Neal
\$100.00 - Heather Brooks
\$100.00 - Michael and Nicole Talley
 "Happy Birthday Mom"
\$100.00 - Christine Sowders
\$100.00 - Scott Greene
\$100.00 - Rebekah Brummett
\$100.00 - Bill and Fletch Coke
\$100.00 - Kenneth Hatcher
\$100.00 - Edith Bingham
\$100.00 - Sandra Oberhausen
 in memory of Oberhausen & Thomason grandparents
\$100.00 - Cheryl Lee Coleman
\$100.00 - Kathy Krewer and Tom Flaig
\$100.00 - Mr. and Mrs. John Carr
\$100.00 - Bart and Carol White
\$50.00 - Marcus and Tamara Nauman
\$50.00 - Ryan and Genevieve Gardner

CROWDRISE FUNDRAISER (CONTINUED)

\$50.00 - Daniel and Deborah Modlin
\$50.00 - Laura Haury
\$25.00 - Rho Landsen
\$25.00 - Rosalyn Green
\$25.00 - Samantha Bruer
Erika Brady
John McDonald

1854 WASH HOUSE CAMPAIGN

\$25,000.00 - Martin Brown (pledge)
\$20,000.00 - Raymond and Judy McCaskey (pledge)
\$5,000.00 - Col. Robert and Cora Jane Spiller (pledge)
\$1,000.00 - Hanlin and Jane Bavley
\$1,000.00 - George and Darlene Kohrman
\$1,000.00 - John and Linda Tanner
\$250.00 - Mary M. Black
\$100.00 - Mark Brown
\$100.00 - Elaine Disch

UNDERWRITING SUPPORT

\$500.00 - Shannon and Michael Vitale for SU Seminar
\$500.00 - Hilliard Lyons for SU Seminar
\$500.00 - Logan Aluminum for Shake, Ride & Roll
\$500.00 - JB Distributors for Shake, Ride & Roll
\$500.00 - Logan Telephone Cooperative for Christmas event
\$250.00 - Logan Memorial Hospital for Shake, Ride & Roll
Fruit of the Loom
BG League of Bicyclists

GENERAL SUPPORT

\$1,000.00 - John and Linda Tanner
\$1,000.00 - Jim and Dianne Stuart

REMEMBERING SALLY ANN STRICKLER

Everyone at South Union was saddened to learn of the passing of our dear friend Dr. Sally Ann Strickler on April 6. Sally Ann worked as a university librarian at WKU for more than 30 years, serving as head of circulation and later in the reference department. She was also very involved with the South Union Shaker Village, serving on our board for eight years, volunteering countless hours at events, taking on the role of Mother Ann in the outdoor drama "Shakertown Revisited" and with the Western Shaker Singers. Sally Ann was also an avid researcher, delving into the community's manuscripts and producing articles and presentations primarily about the role of Shaker women. In fact, she presented at our annual South Union Seminar five times over its 29-year history, more than any other speaker. We will miss her greatly at South Union but will remember so many good things.



SOUTH UNION PROFILE: DAVID BARNETT by Rebekah Brummett

Brother David Barnett was born into slavery in Kentucky on March 10, 1796. His status as an enslaved person remained unchanged when he arrived at South Union approximately fourteen years later. Throughout his years at the village, Brother David set himself apart as a talented craftsman who excelled in carpentry as well as brick and stone masonry. His skills contributed significantly to the Society's ambitious building plan and he participated in a number of projects including constructing the Centre and East Houses, digging wells, laying foundations, making bricks, and repairing chimneys. Though he did not occupy an official leadership position, Brother David served as a project foreman interacting with diverse crews made up of fellow Brethren, hired white men, free men of color, and enslaved workers via labor contracts with local slave-owning families.

Brother David lived as a free man at the village for twenty years before the Trustees recorded his official emancipation papers with the Logan County Court in October 1830, along with papers of three others. The day's journal entry notes that these were the final emancipations yet to be recorded for the men and women of color living as members of the Society. This act was likely prompted by planned revisions to the Church Covenant, which were finalized and signed by church members just weeks after the emancipations were registered. Updates to the 1830 Church Covenant included narrowing the pool of potential members by classifying certain individuals as ineligible for membership. A new clause explicitly excluded enslaved individuals, slave owners, and insane persons, among others, from seeking admission to the Church.

Though free and now able to operate as such outside the village, Brother David chose life as a Shaker. His work in construction, farming, and village industries continued in earnest until 1850, when his legs were injured while operating a threshing machine. The next year he faced another injury after falling out of a barn. On the decline, Brother David moved to the "little brick house," located between the Centre House and the Well Shed, where aged and infirmed members were often placed. Brother David Barnett passed away in the early morning hours on May, 29, 1853. His Shaker family remembered him with a funeral the following day. His body was interred in the Shaker cemetery at South Union.



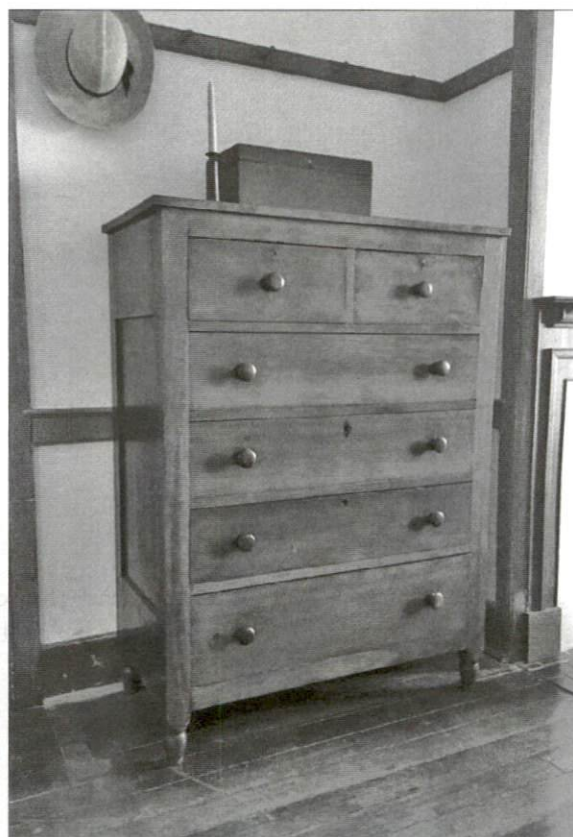
Brother David Barnett became foreman of South Union's masonry workforce as early as 1827. The last major building project he worked on was the 1846 Ministry Shop.

David Barnett's signature in South Union's 1830 Covenant clearly indicates his ability to write. Other members, both Black and White, who did not possess that skill signed the document with an "X."

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Bureau, cherry with poplar secondary, purchased at the South Union auction in 1922, identical in construction technique and foot turnings to another South Union bureau in a private collection but less tall and less deep by 1.5 inches. This example has a "secret" document drawer above the left upper drawer. (right)

.....Purchased with Acquisition Endowment Funds



Sugar Chest, walnut with poplar secondary, from the estate of Sam Houston Watkins, Logan County, Kentucky, without strong provenance but with long regional history and leg turnings identical to three well-document South Union Shaker bureaus. (below)

.....Purchased with Acquisition Endowment Funds



Pen Nibs, three discovered during the restoration of Centre House mantels. "Nibs" were used on the ends of fountain or dipped writing pens and were sold in tips or points. The nibs must have fallen between the mantel and the plaster wall many years ago. Each was clearly incised with the names of 19th century manufacturers or stationary stores.

.....Discovered in the 1824 Centre House

Shaker Sermons, by South Union Elder Harvey Eads, first edition, 1879, including inscription "To S. C. Erwin, Compliments of the author, November 14, 1881"

.....Purchased With Acquisition Endowment Funds

Collection of Kentucky Pottery, eleven crocks and jars for use in period exhibits. (right)

.....Donated by Roger and Margaret Futrell

Oval Box, maple and pine, attributed to the Shakers at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, given to Roger Futrell by South Union museum founder Deedy Hall in the 1970s.

.....Donated by Roger and Margaret Futrell



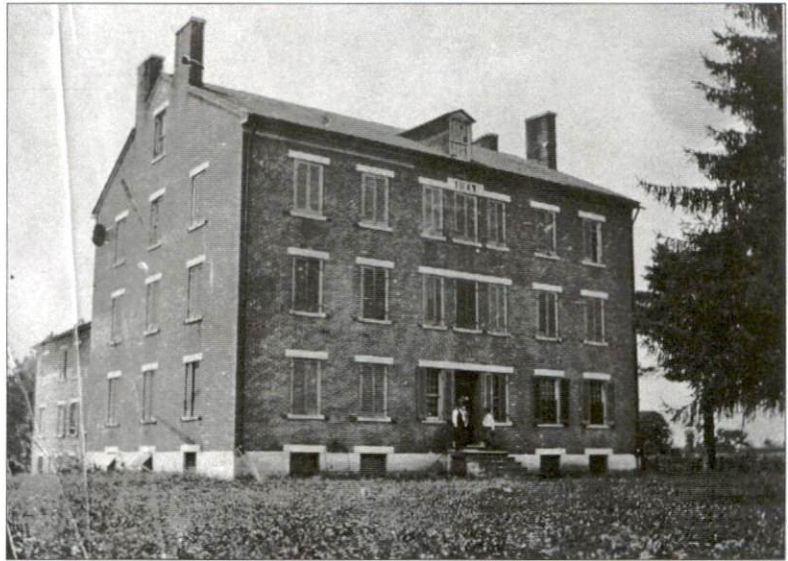
HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS DISCOVERED

Thanks to the generosity of Cathy Mathias, SUSV now has two more historic images in the library collection. Taken ca. 1910 by Corinne McCreary Barr, the great aunt of the donor, these South Union photographs were discovered in an album primarily made up of Bowling Green, Kentucky images. When Ms. Mathias began posting examples from the album on Facebook last spring, it was immediately apparent that these photos were made at South Union.

At right is the 1847 East House, the largest of the village's dwelling houses. Visible on the front steps is a group that includes people in the photographer's party and Bro. John Perryman (1840-1916), who lived in South Union's East House. The East House was home to seventy Shakers when it was completed in 1850, but by the turn of the century less than a dozen members lived there.

The second photograph made at South Union by Mrs. Barr is even more rare. Taken from the Community's mill dam and looking east toward the 1812 Bridge, Mrs. Barr not only captured her guests but an unknown village building in the background. The two story frame structure could possibly be the 1867 Miller's House, built to house a hired miller and his family. This is the first known photograph that includes structures at South Union's mill site other than the dam itself.

We are most appreciative of the donation of both historic photographs by Cathy Mathias.



SHAKER TAVERN HAS A NEW PURPOSE



Last year Jo Ann Moody, our innkeeper at the Shaker Tavern, retired after 17 years of dedicated service. We were forced to seriously assess the future of the Tavern, considering the cost of operating it as a bed and breakfast as opposed to other options. Because of the current reality of tighter budgets and smaller staffs, we decided that the Tavern will be used as an event space for weddings, catered meals, photography sessions, meetings and other gatherings. Recent interior restoration has increased the public space on the ground floor by one third. The upstairs bedrooms will be used as a "guest house" for student interns, researchers, volunteers and other guests of SUSV. We look forward to continuing the long tradition of hospitality at the Shaker Tavern.

RECENT RESTORATION AT SOUTH UNION



During 2015 and most of 2016 there have been a series of restoration projects at South Union, made possible by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and an anonymous Kentucky foundation. The total funding of \$40,000.00 has made a lasting impact of five of the historic buildings, two of which will be featured in this article.

The 1827 Well Shed

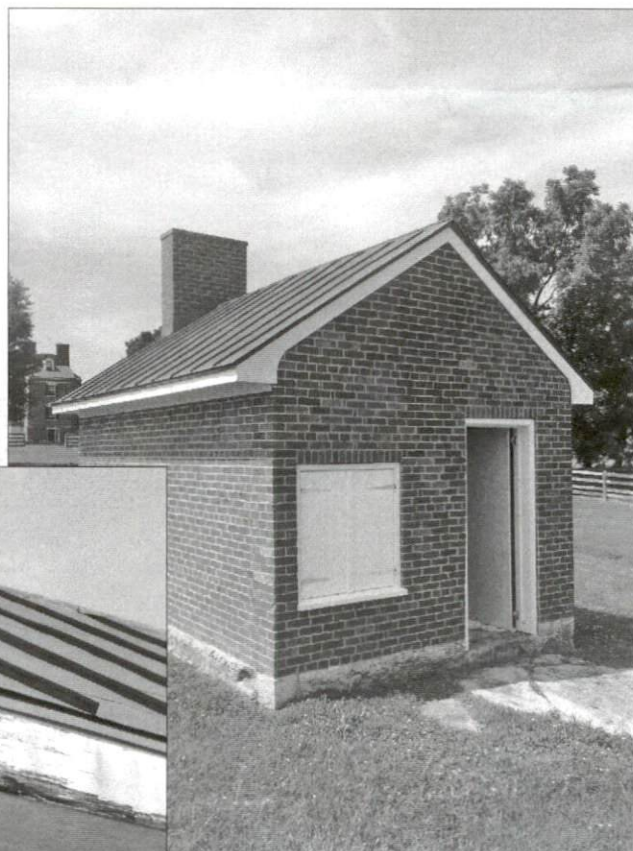
In 1976 the Well Shed (left) was restored, but instead of installing a replica of the limestone floor like the Shakers had originally used, the museum organization chose to pour concrete instead. The Well Shed now has a stone floor again.

Archaeological evidence of the original flooring material was discovered after the removal of the concrete, prompting the restoration initiative. Limestone slabs, salvaged from 19th century Shaker-crafted sidewalks that had been removed after the village closed in 1922, were used to construct the new floor, creating an even greater air of authenticity to the finished product. The 1827 Well Shed, a popular stopping place at South Union for travelers for over 100 years, now looks much more like it did during the 19th century.

The 1847 Steam House

The Steam House (right and below) is the smallest building remaining at South Union and one of the village's most significant. Designed for the preparation of cooked cow feed, an innovative mid-19th century process, it is not only the last vestige of the Shakers' vast Shorthorn cattle industry but, according to University of Kentucky anthropologist, R. Berle Clay, "may be the only surviving structure of its type." The steaming oven was restored to working order in the 1990s, as were the structure's brick walls. The exterior woodwork installed during that project, however, were failing by the early 2010s and needed to be repaired or replaced.

The 1990s work was completely removed and discarded and replicas were made to exacting specifications. Instead of newly milled poplar, which was the culprit that caused the initial deterioration, the restoration contractor chose to implement reclaimed poplar, planed to suit new cornices and each opening of the structure. This most unique of agricultural buildings is once again open to the public, thanks to our generous donors.



A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

What a summer we've had at South Union! We have seen some excellent examples of 19th century Shaker craftsmanship come back to the collection, have completed some very significant restoration projects, and have established educational and tourism partnerships with various organizations, thanks to our Rebekah Brummett's efforts. Our staff has worked diligently to make guests feel welcome and leave here with a better knowledge of the Shakers and their experience in Kentucky.

Obviously, we are most excited about the prospect of bringing the 1854 Wash House back into the fold of the South Union Shaker Village. The offer from our neighbors, the Fathers of Mercy, was a very welcome surprise and we are in hopes that the \$300,000.00 needed to buy the building will be secured by February 2017. The opportunity for expansion of educational programming, the addition of gallery space and much needed meeting areas, is very significant for our historic site. The prospect of restoring and preserving another South Union building, and one of such consequence, is also a very joyful prospect. I hope that each of you will support this worthwhile endeavor.

South Union and Pleasant Hill were fortunate to host the Hancock Shaker Seminar in July. The experience was both enlightening and encouraging for our staff. Spending time with a group that possesses this level of knowledge and interest in the Shakers is always a pleasure. Sessions were held in our newly restored space at the Shaker Tavern and meals were served there, in the Centre House dining room, and in the 1875 Grain Barn. Many thanks to Lesley Herzberg, Curator at Hancock Shaker Village, for coordinating this event. The Seminar group is pictured below.



*Your bright example we adore
We love to even speak your name
May Heaven bless you ever more
We thank the Lord that here you came
Farewell, farewell, you've been a parent in the West
Farewell, farewell, and may you ever more*

Farewell hymn to Issachar Bates by Sally Eads,
South Union, Kentucky, July 20, 1833

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SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE

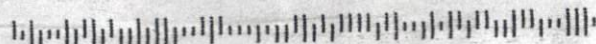
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UPCOMING EVENTS

SHAKER FARM DAY

Saturday, September 24

The common farm chores of yesterday are practically lost arts today, but not at the South Union Shaker Village! Enjoy a day of interactive demonstrations where butter is made, hams are smoked, laundry is boiled, apples are pressed into cider and much more. Lunch, catered by the Brickyard, will be available. Music provided by Leipers Fork bluegrass band and others.

Tickets: \$10 per person, \$5 children ages 6-12

Time: 10:00am - 4:00pm

Sponsored by Col. Robert and Cora Jane Spiller

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

"CHRISTMAS AT SHAKERTOWN" HOLIDAY MARKET

Saturday, December 3

One of Kentucky's finest antique and craft markets, just in time for Christmas! Features over 30 regional antique vendors and artists, all nestled in the historic atmosphere of the South Union Shaker Village.

Admission: A canned food item or donation for those needful

Time: 9:00am - 4:00pm

For a "first chance" opportunity to shop, make reservations for the Preview Party, Friday evening, December 2. Enjoy coffee, cider and desserts in the most festive of holiday atmospheres.

Reservations required: \$10 per person / Time: 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Sponsored by US Bank

Logan Aluminum and Logan Telephone Cooperative

Broom-making demonstrations on
Saturday, September 3, and Saturday, October 1

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