

Fall 2016

## South Union Messenger (Fall 2016)

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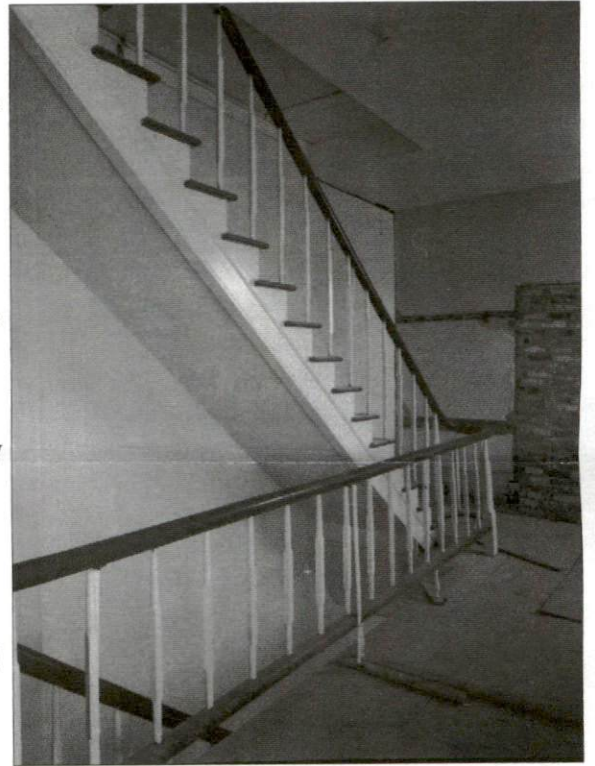
# SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Vol. XLV, No.3, 2016  
South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!!!

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of South Union Shaker Village and to a \$150,000.00 grant from the James Graham Brown Foundation, we have met our \$300,000.00 goal! We received notification in late October that the Brown Foundation had awarded SUSV a grant that would cover half the project cost, challenging us to raise the remainder. Within weeks, we had both met and exceeded the matching grant, allowing us to complete our Phase I fundraising effort before the end of 2016.

When we were offered the Wash House by our neighbors the Fathers of Mercy in April, SUSV leadership was overjoyed, but also daunted by the task of raising \$300,000.00. The announcement was officially made during the South Union Seminar in April and the response was immediate. John and Linda Tanner pledged \$1000.00 and challenged others in attendance to donate. Before the end of the day we had contributions from Hanlin and Jane Bavley, George and Darlene Kohrman, Mark Brown and Mary Black, and we were off and running! Within a few weeks, Judy and Ray McCaskey had become the first major donors of our campaign with a pledge of \$21,000.00. As you will see on the list on the next page, other generous gifts followed.



The 1854 Wash House interior (above) was in the process of being altered and adapted when this photograph was taken, ca. 1972. Architectural drawings rendered in the early 1970s prior to the work, and early 20th century exterior views like the one at left, will significantly benefit the upcoming restoration process.

Since the letters were mailed to our membership in September, hardly a day has gone by when a contribution did not come in the mail. The response has been incredible and we are all very grateful for your generosity. At this time, contributions and pledges total \$366,165.00. The money received over the purchase price will be committed toward the restoration of the building.

*Thank You for Your Contribution to the*  
**WASH HOUSE CAMPAIGN**

James Graham Brown Foundation—\$150,000.00

Edith Bingham—\$50,000.00

The Atticus Trust—\$50,000.00

Ray and Judy McCaskey—\$21,000.00

Susannah Scott-Barnes—\$19,000.00

SUSV Board of Directors—\$6,000.00

Col. Robert and Cora Jane Spiller—\$5,000.00

Ridley and Betsy Wills III—\$5,000.00

Preston and Margy Thomas—\$5,000.00

Henry and Mary Brockman—\$5,000.00

Brian Lankford—\$5,000.00

Martin Brown, Jr.—\$5,000.00

Phyllis and Dent Morriss—\$3,000.00

Martha Boice—\$3,000.00

**\$1,000.00—\$2,500.00 Contributions**

Wayne and Dottie Metcalf  
Bill and Robin King  
Jerry and Cheryl Jackson  
Hanlin and Jane Bavley  
George and Darlene Kohrman  
John and Linda Tanner  
Lewis and Jo Havener  
Alan and Adrienne Dieball  
Anonymous  
J. Wilson and Winifred Ferguson  
Jeff Clark and Marion Jackson  
Dorothy Jones  
Anonymous  
Glenn B. and Marianne Rogers  
John E. Cain III  
Carol C. Rochford  
Ernest and Elaine Ezell

**\$500.00—\$999.00 Contributions**

Nancy Hillenburg  
Pamela Napier  
Mary Lucy Franklin  
Sherrill and John Carr  
Holly H. Gaithright  
Susan Taylor and Andy Loving  
Margaret McGee  
Christopher and Sandra Pruitt Miller  
Harriette and Meredith Johnson  
Mr. and Mrs. James Stuart  
Donnie and Lillian Riley  
Kay Bender  
Beth and Kurt Hansen

*Thank You for Your Contribution to the*  
**WASH HOUSE CAMPAIGN**

\$200.00—\$499.00 Contributions

Lois Madden and James Howland  
Mary M. Black  
Col. John E. Horn  
Rex and Suzanne Payne  
Elizabeth McKinney  
Wayne and Nancy Dinsmore  
Dorothy Marshall  
Donna Hill  
Mark and Laura Hardison  
Robert W. Martin  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Cook  
John Campbell

Contributions to \$100.00

Michael Ann Knotts  
Kim McBride  
Mr. and Mrs. John David Cole  
John and Brenda Barnard  
Jesse and Donna Riley  
Mark E. Brown  
Elaine Disch  
Nancy Baird *in memory of Sally Ann Strickler*  
Ronald Lankford  
Chicago Area Shaker Interest Group  
Brenda Longhofer  
Bob and Linda Pulsinelli  
Dale W. Covington  
James Beattie Jr. and Marie Michelson  
Cheryl Kline  
David and Laura Harper Lee  
Tom N. Moody  
Rich and Susy Spence  
Kathy Wise-Leonard  
Jeanne Weaver  
Billy Ray and Jane Smith  
Dennis Newberry *in memory of Thelma Newberry*  
Michael McClellan

Contributions to \$100.00 (continued)

Phyllis Wyatt Roark  
Barbara English  
Tommy Hines, Jr.  
Charles Hungate  
Esther Coke  
Lyn and Debbie Whiston  
Tommy and Gingie Hines  
Shaker Realty  
Samantha Bruer  
Sharon Crawford  
Kevin Lindsey  
Donna F. Wilson  
Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Newell  
Steve Cooper and Michael Reed  
Dickie McKinney  
Bob and Patty Clendennen  
Scott and Elaine Hoover  
Maggie Selvidge *in memory of Roger Selvidge*  
Jonathan Jeffrey  
David and Nancy Stewart  
Paul E. Minton  
Richard Schachtsiek  
Ward and Jane Coleman  
Henry and Ann Boyd  
Robert and Hilda Berryman  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Sutherland  
Mary Julia Pace and David S. Furkin  
Raymond L. Cravens  
Elizabeth M. Woodworth  
Mike and Jennifer Hines Steen  
Kathy Moriarty  
Sam and Mike Hossom  
Carolyn Garrett  
Diane and Byron Bean  
Sandra and David Kinser  
Romanza Johnson  
Sherry Wittry

## SOUTH UNION PROFILE: ELDRRESS SEREPTA RUPE

Serepta Simpson Rupe and her 14-year-old daughter Mollie arrived at South Union on August 9, 1877, “conditionally admitted—the proviso is if the Saints at the Hill consent thereto—as their former home connection was there.” Serepta and her husband Barnett Rupe had joined the Shakers at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky a decade earlier, but within a year he absconded from the community, leaving his former wife and daughter behind. Although Serepta was deemed a “good Shaker” in Pleasant Hill’s records, she eventually returned to her home in Alabama in 1872 and remained there for two years. She arrived at Pleasant Hill once more in December of 1874, but left again fourteen months later, eventually seeking membership at South Union.

Serepta must have proven herself worthy of leadership at South Union, as she was given the task of Eldress of the North Family in January of 1879. Later that year the community journal keeper wrote that Eldress Serepta was “mostly occupied with her sick daughter who is lingering with consumption.” Sadly, Mollie died on October 13th at the age of 16 and was buried in the South Union cemetery. There are only hints of the difficulty experienced by Serepta as the result of her daughter’s death. Relieved of duty as North Family Eldress in January of 1880, Serepta traveled to Alabama to “settle some business and to regain her shattered health.” According to the U. S. census, she was still in Alabama in June of that year, living with her sister and brother-in-law. The journals do not indicate when she returned to South Union, but Serepta is listed as a member of the Centre Family in the January 1, 1882 village census.

Another journey to Alabama took place in the fall of 1882, this time resulting in Serepta bringing her sister and her five children back to South Union. “Truly, numbers increase,” noted the journal writer. Serepta was soon assigned to work at the Trustees Office but, as the journal notes, only “when her health will admit.” At some point in the mid-1880s Serepta moved back to Pleasant Hill for a short time, but in November of 1886 she traveled back to South Union to “make this her permanent home.”

During the last decade of the 19th century, South Union’s records became scant, due in great part to the death of the principle journal keeper Elder Harvey Eads in 1892. Serepta’s name appears in the last recorded community census, taken January 1, 1889, but her name is not mentioned again and it is apparent that she eventually left the Shakers.

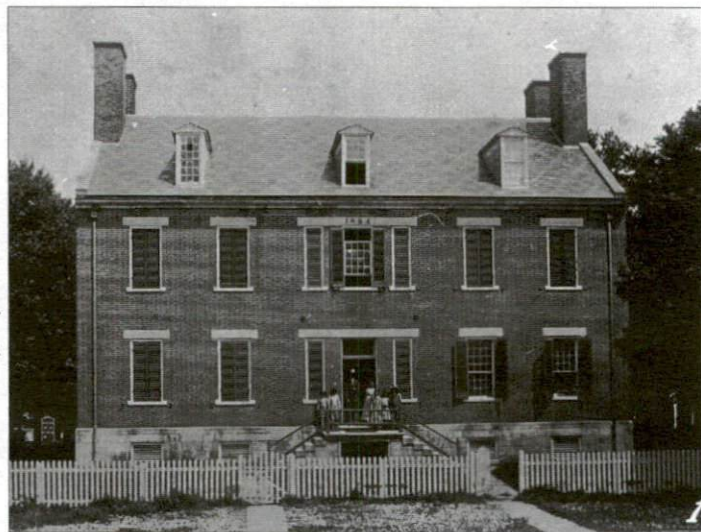
On August 4, 1903, the South Union Shakers received a letter from Serepta’s sister-in-law Nancy L. Rupe of Pleasant Hill, informing them of Serepta’s death. South Union’s journal keeper wrote, “She said that a niece of Serepta Rupe’s was visiting [Pleasant Hill]. She told them that Serepta was on her way to Arizona from Texas and was caught in a wreck and burned to ashes. Horrible! Horrible! to contemplate.” A tragic end to a life that had experienced great loss, to a Shaker who had never quite found contentment in community.

### Manuscript references are from:

Record C (1865-1878) / Kentucky Library, WKU  
Shaker Record D (1879-1892) / South Union Shaker Village Library  
A Diary Kept by the Church (1889, 1900-1922) / Old Chatham Library



Serepta Rupe (1833-1903) in a photograph taken at South Union between 1883 when she was assigned to the Trustees Office and 1885 when she lived at Pleasant Hill.



The 1824 Centre House photographed around 1884, when Serepta Rupe lived there.

## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

**Oval Box**, ca. 1850, poplar and cherry, in original red paint, with long Warren County history, most probably acquired at the 1922 South Union auction

.....acquired with acquisition endowment funds

**Wood Box**, ca. 1850, poplar with single plank sides and half-moon cut-outs for feet, probably made by South Union Shakers, purchased at the 1922 South Union auction by an Auburn, Kentucky family

.....acquired with acquisition endowment funds

**Chairs**, ca. 1900, four matching plank bottom, round-back and spindle Windsors, not made by the South Union Shakers, purchased at the 1922 South Union auction by an Auburn, Kentucky family

.....acquired with acquisition endowment funds

**Exhibit Cases (2)**, made for use at the Kentucky Museum, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky

.....donated by the Kentucky Museum

**Oval Boxes (2)**, ca. 1850, in chrome yellow paint, both attributed to South Union by manuscript on the underside of each lid, probably dating to the time of the 1922 auction when histories were added to many of the objects for sale. **Brush**, ca. 1870, horse or hog hair with maple handle, number "17" stamped into handle, attributed to South Union by original donor, **Basket**, ca. 1860, large, round white oak basket with two handles, attributed to South Union by original owner, **Writing Box**, ca. 1850, maple with brass hinges, six compartments, with inscription "Near Louisville made in 1850 at South Union, Ky., Logan Co. by a Shaker—Given to Netty Adair in 1883 by Sabrina Whitmore—Shaker." A second manuscript attribution, glued into the lid of the box, negates the other by claiming "Manufactured by Phillinda Minor of Shaker Village, N.H. Church and presented by her to Eldress Naomi Sigeer, June 11(?), 1864, With love and gospel affection, I am you sister pray for me."

.....donated by the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Harrodsburg, Kentucky



The writing box (left) has manuscript references to its production at South Union, but also Canterbury, New Hampshire. It most likely originated at Canterbury, but made its way to South Union and was given a "second history" there. Regardless, the box was given by Sister Sabrina Whitmore, a member at South Union from 1865 until 1921, to 13-year-old Sister Netty Adair in 1883. Netty lived at South Union from the early 1880s through 1887.



The oval boxes (right) represent the largest and some of the smallest sizes made by the Shakers. The original colors are brilliant, the large box in red and the others in chrome yellow.

## RECENT RESTORATION AT SUSV



Our year ended with two more restoration projects, made possible by a grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. Both efforts were accomplished by local craftsman Jack Perry, pictured at left re-glazing one of the Centre House window sashes. We were able to repair, re-glaze and paint 13 of the building's 107 windows before cold weather set in and will resume work in the spring.

Another project was the opening of the Centre House fifth floor attic. This part of the building has never been accessible to the public, hidden by a large trap door at the top of the "garret stairs." Now, visitors can walk to the top of the stairs to view the upper attic, thanks to a plexiglass



structure built by Jack Perry and his crew.

The Shakers called the fourth floor of the Centre House the "garret," which usually refers to the upper level or attic of a building. The garret stairs that led from the fourth floor living space to the fifth floor attic (pictured right) were constructed by Brother Robert Johns on June 2, 1831.

## JAMES GRINTER RETIRES FROM SUSV

A very familiar face at South Union has retired after devoting nearly 30 years to the restoration and maintenance of our historic site. James Grinter began working at SUSV in November 1987 on a part-time basis, hired to begin the laborious process of repairing the plaster and painting every room in the Centre House. He was eventually given a full-time position and has taken excellent care of the SUSV buildings and grounds ever since.

James has also contributed a great deal to our site's public relations. He interacted with visitors daily, most assuredly enhancing their impressions of South Union. He is also an extremely gifted craftsman who made a tremendous impact on the village. We will miss him coming in each day but look forward to some already scheduled plaster jobs in 2017.

Thank you, James Grinter, for your dedication and commitment to SUSV.

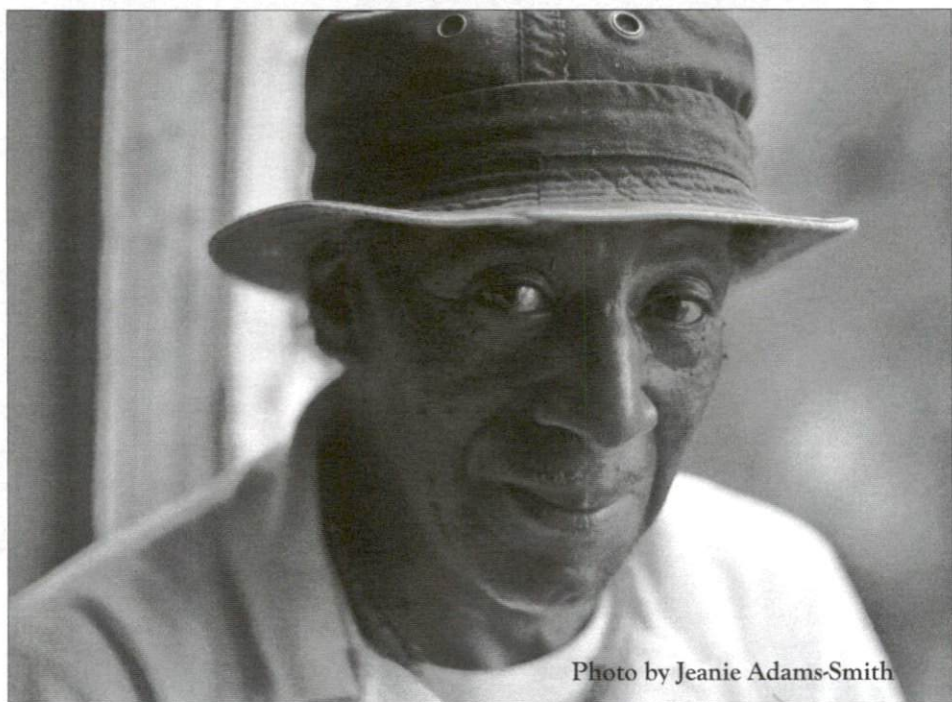


Photo by Jeanie Adams-Smith

## A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we come to the close of 2016 we can certainly be thankful for many things. This has been a year of significant development in SUSV outreach, a year when important restoration projects were made possible because of generous foundations, and a year when we have brought home some incredible pieces of South Union's history for the collection. What will probably be most remembered about 2016 is that it was the year when we were given the opportunity to purchase the 1854 Wash House. We are incredibly grateful to each of you for your kind and generous contributions. John and Linda Tanner, your donation was the first. It always takes someone to set the wheels in motion. Thank you for stepping forward.

I want to welcome three new members to SUSV Board of Directors! Rick DuBose, John Perkins, and Charlie Ray joined our organization in November. The Board honored our SUSV staff with dinner at the Shaker Tavern in November as well and recognized my 30 years at South Union with a resolution. Thanks to Board member Mike Harper for coordinating that kind gesture and to the entire Board for the many ways they make SUSV a better place.

We send our sincere condolences to James Grinter and his family at the loss of James' wife, Mary. Mary was kind and humble, hard-working and compassionate, and she also possessed a keen sense of humor. She worked at South Union many times over the years and I feel privileged to have known her.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Advisory Committee, and staff of SUSV I want to wish each of you the very best of holiday seasons! I hope you will visit us in 2017. As always, thank you for your dedication to South Union Shaker Village.

Tommy Hines



## THANK YOU

Jerri Tarpley has once again made SUSV look beautiful. Each year she creates arrangements on the mantels and tables of the Shaker Tavern for November's Shaker Breakfast and also for our "Christmas at Shakertown" Holiday Market. Jerri volunteers her time and talent and provides materials gathered from the Tarpley farm, property that was once owned by the Shakers. We are most appreciative of Jerri's kind contribution. She makes us look good!

The mantel in the Tavern's newly restored dining room, decorated for the Shaker Breakfast (left).

## SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Laura Haury, Vice-President  
Sheila Flener, Secretary  
Skip Cleavinger, Treasurer  
Heather Brooks  
Rick DuBose  
Scott Greene  
Mike Harper  
Renee Kilgore  
John Perkins  
Charlie Ray  
Roiann Ridley  
Christine Sowders  
Lee Young



## SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Eddie Bingham, Chairman  
Mary Barris  
Martin Brown, Sr.  
Bill Coke  
Margy Thomas  
Ridley Wills III



## SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE STAFF

Tommy Hines, Exec. Director  
Rebekah Brummett, Curator of  
Community Engagement  
Mary Odenthal, Admin. Asst.  
Bonnie Eilers, Shop Manager  
James Grinter, Maintenance  
Mike Hossum, Docent  
Cheryl Odenthal, Docent



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SHAKER VILLAGE**

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