

Winter 2018

South Union Messenger (Winter 2018)

Kentucky Library Research Collections
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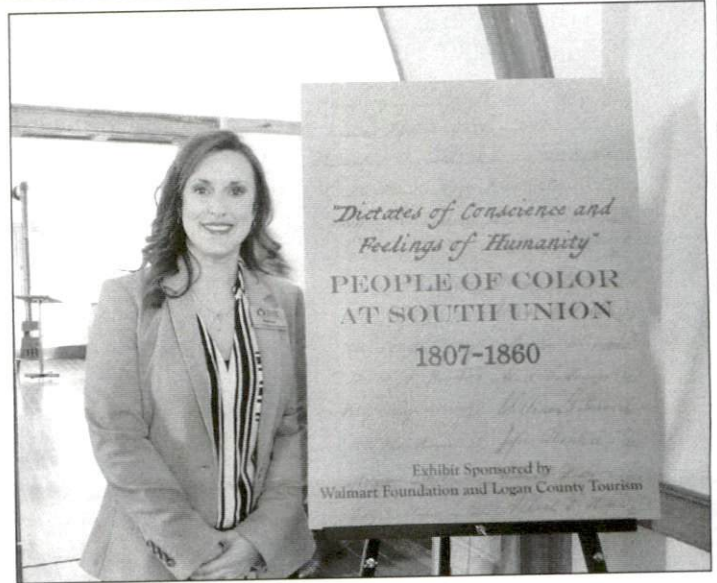
SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Vol. XLVII, No.1, 2018

South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

EXHIBIT OPENS

A warm Sunday afternoon made the perfect setting for the opening of our newest exhibit, "Dictates of Conscience and Feelings of Humanity: People of Color at South Union, 1807-1860." The exhibit details the history of many African American Shakers and other people of color living and working at South Union prior to the Civil War. Opening day was a success, drawing a large number of attendees that included exhibit sponsors Matt Buchanan, Store Manager, Walmart #736, and representatives from Logan County Tourism and Convention Commission.



The exhibit is the culmination of over two years of research by SUSV Curator of Community Engagement, Rebekah Brummett. Drawing from manuscripts and printed material from the collections of the Kentucky Library, Logan County Archives, University North Carolina Southern Historical

Collection, Racine History Museum, Western Reserve Historical Society and the Julia Neal Library at SUSV, the narrative explores the lives of enslaved individuals and free people of color who lived and worked at South Union during the first half of the nineteenth century. The exhibit takes a revealing and never-before-seen look at the men and women of color who dedicated their lives to the Society as well as those who chose to pursue life apart from the village. Rare artifacts include an oval box belonging to Sister Hannah Freehart, a formerly enslaved woman and Society member, and the original 1830 Church Covenant featuring the signatures of many members of color.



As the research process unfolded, the staff was thrilled to discover so much documentary evidence relating to the men, women, and children of color who were a part of South Union. The stories are compelling and we are pleased to bring them to the forefront in this exhibit. One of those stories, focusing on the contributions of Brother David Barnett as a much revered South Union mason, will be featured in a student program this season.

For more information about our educational programs check out our website: SouthUnionShakerVillage.com or contact Rebekah Brummett at outreach@SouthUnionShakerVillage.com.

SOUTH UNION PROFILE: SISTER ANNIE FARMER

Annie Farmer (1874-1942) came to South Union with her mother and younger brother in 1882. She was initially assigned to the North Family until 1886 when she moved to the Centre House. There is no personal information about Sister Annie recorded in South Union's journals, only her name listed in census records. There are, however, existing manuscript documents that give insight into the life of Annie Farmer.

When the leadership at Mt. Lebanon was negotiating the process of closing South Union in early 1922, Annie Farmer kept records of the proceedings. She and her mother were two of the seven Shakers who received \$10,000.00 (nearly \$145,000.00 in today's market) at the dissolution of the community. Annie and her mother, Alice packed their bags and moved to Louisville in March 1922 where they remained the rest of their lives.

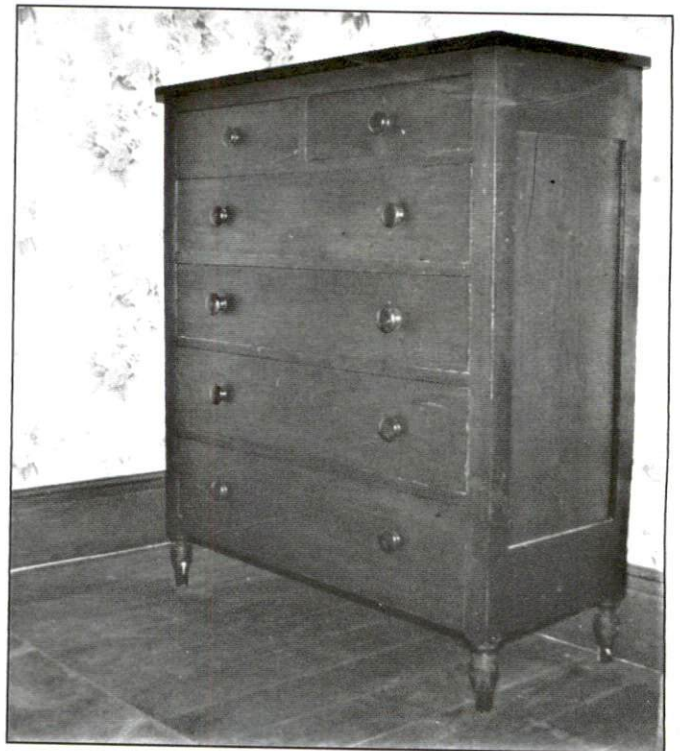
A June 1930 letter, written by Annie Farmer to a friend by the name of Mrs. A. Schultz, Clermont, Kentucky, exists in photocopy format in South Union's library, although the whereabouts of the original document remains a mystery. The body of the letter contains a detailed description of her mother's illness and little else of historic value. However, Annie wrote her correspondence on old letterhead from South Union's former Trustees Office. Under the printed heading, "United Society of Shakers, A. L. Johns, Trustee," Annie wrote the date of Johns' death, December 6, 1924. She added, "Shakertown died March 1922." She explains the use of the outdated letterhead to Mrs. Schultz, writing, "I didn't know my tablet was gone until I looked for something to write on, so I thought, well, if poor old Logan could look over my shoulder and see me writing on this paper he gave me—guess he would be pleased."

On July 3, 1939 Annie Farmer, her sister, and two friends traveled from Louisville to the former Shaker village at Pleasant Hill to have dinner at the Shakertown Inn. Operated by Mr. and Mrs. Logan Fenley in the East Family Dwelling, the inn was a popular destination for several years. The Fenley's kept a journal and noted the following:

"Yesterday . . . was a highlight of our Shaker experience. Sister Annie Farmer, formerly of the South Union Colony . . . Visited us and had luncheon. Miss Annie left nothing expected from our ideal of a true Shaker, a gentler, or more sterling character is rarely ever seen. We were able to confirm, verify, and learn many things about the Shakers that we were not entirely certain about from our deductions or readings of historical accounts of the Shakers. I had been under the impression that the brothers and sisters of the family group had little or no social contacts. But we found from her that this was not the case, they were perfectly free to visit informally in each others rooms provided there was always a third party present. Aside from this regulation the relationship was of brother and sister . . . Her explanation of how the work was handled interested us greatly. Very little was said about the activity of the men but for the women she was thoroughly acquainted and told how the girls were assigned to specific tasks such as cooking the meat or making the coffee & tea for a period of two to four weeks. No one was forced to work if they were feeling ill otherwise all true Shakers loved to work and worked for love."

In later life, Annie Farmer joined Victor Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville and remained a member there until her death on January 5, 1942. She carries the distinction of being the last living Kentucky Shaker. Both she and her mother Alice are buried at Evergreen Cemetery in Louisville.

Forty-five years after Annie's death, a South Union bureau (right) that had once belonged to her appeared in a Louisville antique mall. It was purchased by a private collector who also received authentication of its origin by a family member. The bureau is a prime example of South Union's cabinet-making style in the 1850s. For Annie, the bureau had no doubt been a constant reminder of her days as a Shaker at South Union.



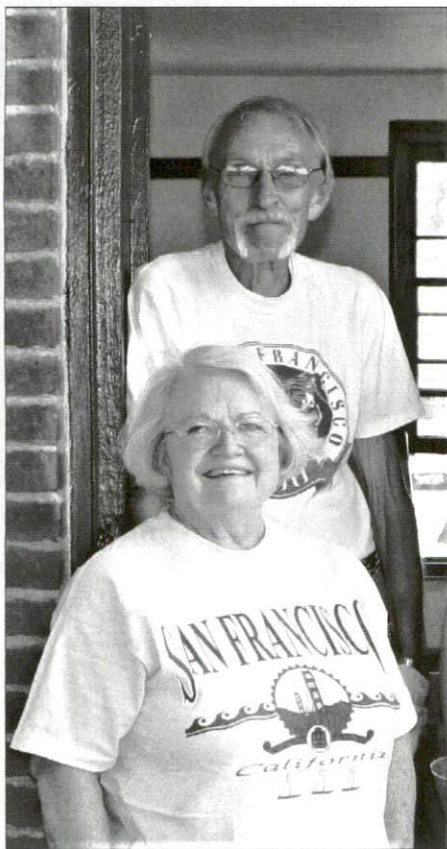
WHAT'S IN A PHOTOGRAPH?

In the summer of 1998 a cardboard tube arrived at the museum via the US mail. To our surprise, a yet undiscovered photograph (right) was carefully rolled inside. Measuring approximately 10 by 48 inches, the image is an impressive view of the remnants of the village, just a few years after the Shakers had disbanded.

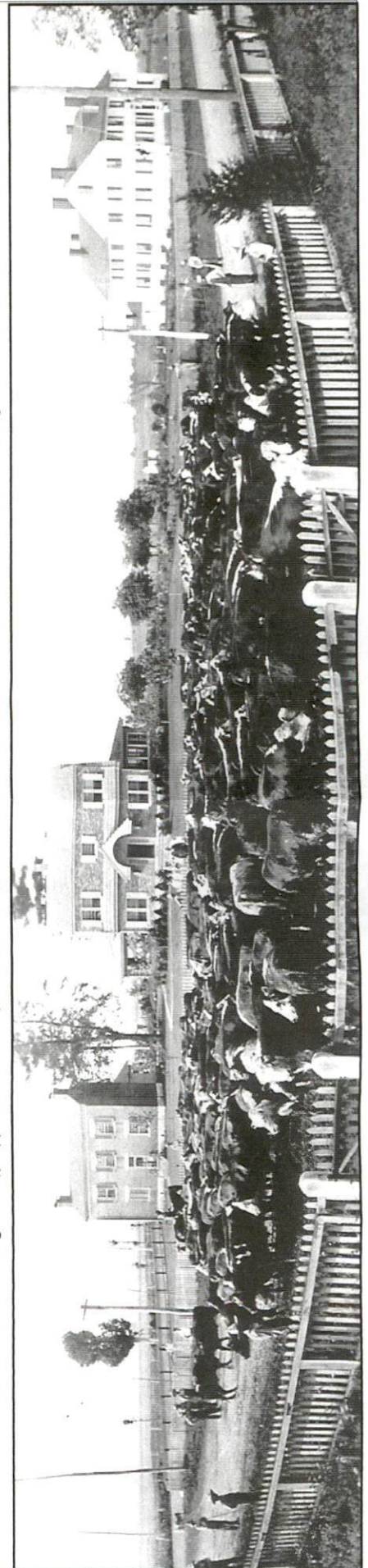
With just a bit of documentation the photograph begins to tell an interesting story. The man in the center of the image is Oscar Bond, who was the new owner of a major portion of the Shaker farm as of September 1922. Bond is surrounded by symbols of wealth, including his new Dutch Colonial vacation home, a large herd of cattle, and an impressive array of farm hands. The photo dates from between 1926, when Bond's house was completed, and 1930, when the 1841 Trustees Office (far right) burned.

Other interesting details to note are the Bond-era addition on the back of the 1846 Ministry Shop (far left), the Shaker fence and stone gateposts in foreground, and the Office Privy, a small frame building located a considerable distance from the main building. The one-story addition on the rear of the Trustees Office was a small dining room, constructed five years after the main building had been completed. Reacting to the dictates of those who dined at the Office, the Shakers added a dining room for people of color who were not welcome to eat with their white owners or employers.

2017 VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR



There is no way to properly thank individuals who have supported, volunteered, nurtured, and contributed for over 40 years. John and Linda Tanner have been involved in South Union on so many levels that it is difficult to list all the ways that they have impacted our site. We chose to honor them in 2017, not really for what they did in that calendar year, but more as a "life achievement" award. There has never been a fund drive to which they have not contributed (they were the first to donate to the Wash House acquisition). There is rarely a museum event at which they are not present. There has not been one Christmas in over thirty years that they have not provided gifts for the staff. The Tanners are the ultimate museum supporters, but more importantly they are the ultimate friends. They are family. Thank you, John and Linda, for showing us love and support in so many ways.



You are Cordially Invited to the 31st Annual

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR

THE BIG REVEAL: NEW RESEARCH ON THE SOUTH UNION SHAKERS

Friday, April 20, from 6:00pm – 8:00pm and Saturday, April 21, from 8:00am – 3:00pm

This year's event will feature research projects by SUSV current and former staff members, with topics to include African American Shakers, the 1854 Wash House restoration, silk production at South Union, artistry in the village's chair seat weaving techniques, and South Union's agricultural legacy. The seminar begins on Friday night with dinner at the historic South Union Hotel and resumes at the Centre House for presentations and special tours on Saturday. Breakfast and lunch are provided on Saturday with the cost of registration.

Guest Speakers Include:

Dr. Carrie Cox, Associate Professor, Applied Human Sciences, WKU

Rebekah Brummett, Curator of Community Engagement, SUSV

Sally Givens, Curator of Collections and Development, SUSV

Susanna Pyatt, SUSV Intern, Candidate for Graduate Degree in Folk Studies, WKU

Tommy Hines, Executive Director, SUSV

This year's event is presented in honor of our long-time friend and supporter, Elaine Disch

Name _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Address _____

Special Needs (vegetarian meals, etc.) _____

_____ \$90 per member, Friday and Saturday _____ \$65 per member, Saturday only

_____ \$110 per non-member, Friday and Saturday _____ \$75 per non-member, Saturday only

_____ \$35 student, Friday and Saturday _____ \$25 student, Saturday only

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

Special thanks to our sponsors: Shannon & Michael Vitale and HILLIARD LYONS

A detailed schedule of events and confirmation will be mailed to you when you register. Registration deadline is Friday, April 13.
Please mail to: South Union Shaker Village, PO Box 177, Auburn, KY 42206 For more information call: 270-542-4167

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

In many ways, the South Union Seminar always kicks off our season. The event takes place in April when the weather is finally starting to feel like spring and the tourists are beginning to travel to our part of the state. The seminar also draws a group of faithful friends and supporters, many of whom return year after year. This year we are very proud to have the opportunity to highlight new research on topics related to South Union material culture, architecture, and folklife, all presented by former and current staff members of SUSV. We will also take a tour of the 1854 Wash House so that those in attendance can see what has been accomplished since last year.

For the first time, we are recognizing an individual in conjunction with the South Union Seminar. Elaine Disch has been a member of SUSV friends organization for decades and a loyal participant at the seminar each year. Elaine represents the kind of person that museums and historic sites dream to have involved. She is no longer able to travel to South Union but will always be associated with this event and with so many other significant projects here. The 2018 South Union Seminar is lovingly dedicated to Elaine Disch.

Thanks so much for all you do to make sure that our education goals and restoration standards are met. I hope you will visit this year and see what an impact YOU have made.

Tommy Hines

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

For Special Projects:

Linda Tanner \$1900.00

for the construction of the Wash House fence,
in memory of her mother, Sallie Morris

To the General Fund:

Eddie Bingham \$10,000.00

John Campbell \$300.00

Colleen M. Kresovich \$250.00

Judge Bill and Marcia Fuqua \$250.00

Donna Wilson \$50.00

Toward the Wash House Restoration:

Ken Hatcher \$500.00

Ray and Paula Clark \$200.00

To Fund Collections Acquisitions:

John and Linda Tanner \$1,000.00

To Fund Exhibits and Educational Programming:

Logan County Tourism \$412.50

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SAVE THE DATES!

SOUTH UNION SEMINAR

Friday and Saturday, April 20-21

The Big Reveal: New Research on the South Union Shakers
This year's event will feature research projects by SUSV current and former staff members, with topics to include African American Shakers, the 1854 Wash House restoration, silk production at South Union, artistry in the village's chair seat weaving techniques, and South Union's agricultural legacy. Presenters will include Rebekah Brummett, Susanna Pyatt, Sally Givens, Carrie Cox, and Tommy Hines.

Reservations: \$90 members, \$110 non-members, \$35 students

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

Sponsored by Hilliard Lyons, Shannon & Michael Vitale

FARM TO TABLE: SPRING DINNER IN THE 1875 GRAIN BARN

Saturday, May 26

A springtime offering created from local sources, served in the rustic atmosphere of the 1875 Grain Barn. Catered by River Cottage Farms.

Reservations: price TBA

Time: 6:30pm

"SHAKE, RIDE & ROLL" BIKE EVENT

Saturday, June 2

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

Sponsored by Logan Aluminum, JB Distributors, Fruit of the Loom, and BGLOB

CIVIL WAR AND THE SHAKERS

Friday Saturday and Sunday, September 22-23

An interactive encampment of Union soldiers, recreating actual events that took place at South Union during the months of September and October 1862. Civil War-related educational opportunities for children on Friday, September 21.

Regular admission charges apply.

Time: TBA

SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE

PO Box 177, Auburn, Kentucky 42206

270-542-4167

SouthUnionShakerVillage.com