South Union Messenger (May 2001)

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Collections Update: New Museum Acquisitions

It has been nearly eighty years since the last of the South Union auctions and, amazingly, Shaker furniture still manages to surface. Each year the museum adds to its collection numerous artifacts that were made or used by the Shakers during their occupation of South Union between 1807 and 1822. From furniture to photographs, from manuscripts to textiles, the community's history is pieced together to form a more complete picture as the collection grows.

Beds crafted by the South Union Shakers are one of the rarest forms of furniture in the collection. We know that there were nearly one hundred retiring rooms in the village. Depending on the population, each room housed from one to five persons, all requiring beds. Research also tells us that new beds were made for the twenty-four bedrooms in the Centre House when it was first occupied in 1833. The 1922 auction broadside lists bedsteads for sale. What happened to all those beds? Before this year, only eight beds attributed to South Union were known to exist, and only four of those were probably made by the Shakers. All eight beds are part of the permanent South Union collection.

In February we discovered that a South Union cherry bed, ca. 1850, was to be sold at auction, along with other fine regional furniture belonging to a local collector. Because of the museum's acquisition endowment, we were able to purchase the bed. A rare, exciting find, the bed is the most complete and untouched example in our collection. According to the characteristic turnings on the posts, coupled with documented decorative details and construction techniques common to South Union craftsmanship, the bed is part of a significant group of ornamental furniture the Shakers produced prior to the Civil War. During this period the Shakers chose to abandon stark simplicity for a "pared-down" version of the popular Empire style of the time.

When the 1846 Ministry Shop restoration is complete, we plan to use the bed as part of a period setting, depicting the retiring room of Elder Harvey Eads. Also acquired was an original South Union stove. This stove, which probably dates about 1830, would have been used in any number of rooms at the South Union Village. These items are rare and the museum was fortunate to make this find.
Welcome to the spring issue of the South Union Messenger. As I write this, the view out of my office window in the Centre House tells me that spring has certainly arrived. Visitors are walking up the path, birds are chirping, down the hall I can hear the echo from one of our tour groups, and very faintly, the sounds of "Simple Gifts" can be heard coming up from the museum gift shop. The place is jumping!

So far this year we have had two very successful exhibit openings, a highly attended herb workshop, and an outstanding fourteenth annual Shaker Seminar. All of this and spring is just beginning. On May 12th, our first ever "Shaker Methods Day" will be held inside the 1824 Centre House. Living history "Shakers" will be costumed and set up at various locations within the Centre House demonstrating some of the many trades which helped the Shakers boost their economy and provide a comfortable living at South Union. We invite all members to come show your support for this neat and unusual first time spring event.

This year the Shaker Museum has already taken broad steps toward the completion of our Master Plan which is, of course, to maintain our focus as one of Kentucky's best historic sites. This year the Shaker Museum has already taken broad steps toward the completion of our Master Plan which is, of course, to maintain our focus as one of Kentucky's best historic sites. To do this, there are many challenges we are faced with which include landscape restoration, acquisition of additional Shaker buildings, expansion of educational programming, staff and membership development, identification of over 150 archeological sites, and the list goes on. I am sure you will already notice some of these major improvements on your next return to the Museum.

Of course, the key to any non-profit organization, like the Shaker Museum, is funding. So far this year, the museum has applied for two significant grants totaling over $1.5 million dollars. Should these grants be awarded, the museum will apply the funds toward specific projects that will help bring our Master Plan nearer to completion. As a friend of the museum, I encourage you to please lend your support for these applications. You can do this by calling the museum where we will be glad to forward helpful information about how you can "make a difference."

In closing, Kentucky's greatest statesman Henry Clay once said, "I rejoice to know that in the end we can enjoy the fruits upon the solid ground which we stand." When I read this, I can think of nothing more than the legacy the South Union Shakers left for our generation through their gifts of education, agriculture, and technology. As Director, it brings me enjoyment looking into the past for mottos that create energy and give meaning to our preservation efforts at the Shaker Museum.

I hope you will drop by the museum soon, view the progress, participate in our many events, and enjoy a wonderful South Union spring.

Sincerely,
Jerry T. Wooten
Executive Director
**Updates**

**1917 Shaker Store - Restoration Update**

The 1917 Shaker Store, owned and operated by the Shaker Museum at South Union, has been used as an active Post Office since its origin. The building was constructed by the South Union Shakers and was sold to the "world's people" who opened it as a general store in 1918. Presently, the building is undergoing a detailed restoration to return the building to its original appearance. Through photographic documentation, contractors with Restoration Group, Inc., from Lexington, Kentucky, have already restored the roof and limestone steps, and are presently finishing final details on the facade and windows.

Once completed, the building will remain being used as South Union's post office. This fall, the museum plans to renovate the interior by installing a new HVAC system, modern restroom facilities, and restore the original floor. The museum intends to use the building in the future for hosting meetings, seminars, and social events.

Funding for the restoration of the 1917 Shaker Store is provided through a ISTEA grant. ISTEA monies are appropriated by the Kentucky Department of Transportation which are used for transportation enhancement projects across the state.

**Fundraising & Membership Update**

So far this year, the Shaker Museum has applied for funding through various grants and foundations. In case you didn't know, as a non-profit organization, the Shaker Museum depends on these kind of resources to fund approximately 75% of our total operations. We encourage everyone to please join as a friend of the museum.

Your membership dues make an ultimate difference in the many events and special workshops and exhibit openings we host throughout the year.

Since the last newsletter, we are pleased to announce that over 40 new memberships came in as a result of the February membership drive. (You can view some of our newest members in this newsletter).

As a friend, please encourage your neighbors and friends to join the museum. Please clip the following Potential Membership form, mail it to us, and we will send your potential "Friend" our membership information.

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**Shaker Museum at South Union**

**Potential Membership Form**

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The 1869 Shaker Tavern ~ Bed and Breakfast

The Shaker Tavern, built in 1869 as a business venture for the South Union Shakers, housed a hotel for the "people of the world". The Shakers leased the building to an outside interest for one hundred dollars a month, leaving its management to the "world".

The Shaker Tavern maintained a thriving business for more than forty years, catering to the Victorian railroad travelers who stopped at South Union. The building's architectural features were clearly incorporated to attract the world's people, whose tastes differed dramatically from that of the Shakers. The stark simplicity of the buildings used by the Shakers contrasts greatly with the grand columned facade, intricate brickwork, and the ornate staircase of the Shaker Tavern.

The Shaker Tavern is a Bed and Breakfast. The two main dining rooms downstairs have been recently papered with beautiful period reproduction papers and the wood trim has been painted in coordinating colors. Furnishings have been updated, upstairs and down, more to the period. JoAnn Moddy, the innkeeper, serves a terrific full breakfast for her overnight guests. She has also been known to serve up a great dinner to those staying.

Besides being a quiet B&B, the Shaker Tavern is available for weddings, receptions, and meetings. With its "small town" charm and shady lawn it is the perfect place for either an all-day meeting (with restful breaks on the front porch) or a wedding (held in front of the mantle in the front dining room) with the reception outside on the side lawn. No matter what your occasion, the Shaker Tavern is the perfect place!

For more information on the Shaker Tavern, please write: P.O. Box 30 South Union, Kentucky, 42283 or call 1-800-929-8701.
Welcome

New Members!

Sandra F. Kinser
Russellville, Kentucky
Shaker Realty & Company
Russellville, Kentucky

Ferris Van Meter
Bowling Green, Kentucky
McGhee Engineering
Guthrie, Kentucky

Gene & Diane Hargis
Russellville, Kentucky
Kathy Wise-Leonard
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Barbara P. Hulette
Lexington, Kentucky
Gary & Laura McIntosh
Russellville, Kentucky

Ken & Marilyn Dillingham
Russellville, Kentucky
Gary & Dianne Howerton
Bowling Green, Kentucky

J. Richard Coltharp
Paducah, Kentucky
Stanley & Edwina Strickler
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Clark L. Carthrae, M.D.
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Western Crane Service
J. David Fields
Bowling Green, Kentucky

Kenneth Tackett
Bowling Green, Kentucky
John Carmon
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Marshall Kemp
Russellville, Kentucky
DDI Engineering
Russellville, Kentucky

Herb Workshop A Great Success!
by South Union Volunteer Dorothy L. Hudspeth

The first workshop of the 2001 year got off to a great start thanks to the enthusiastic herb gardeners attending the "Planning Your Herb Garden" Workshop on April 7th. The day turned out to be a beautiful, if somewhat windy one, for 25 participants in the Herb Workshop on the porch of the Centre House. (I had trouble keeping my hat on in the wind gusts.) A lively discussion covered very diverse interests in herb gardening. Beginning with a short history of herb usage and marketing at South Union we quickly moved to practical information for the present day herb gardener. Information on culinary, medicinal and textile herbs were all included in the program, as well as plans for a new herb garden at the museum. The rains of the previous month had delayed getting the garden site prepared, so we were unable to plant that day.

During the afternoon, we enjoyed herbal snacks of: Mint Pound Cake, Rosewater Cookies, Sausage Balls, Thyme-Pepper Cream Cheese Spread, Dill Butter-Cucumber Sandwiches, Basil-Ricotta Stuffed Tomatoes, Candied Violets, and Herb Tea. Virginia Price graciously kept things running smoothly, serving the food and distributing handouts. Virginia will be helping me coordinate garden volunteers when the new herb garden is planted at South Union.

Hillview and Otte Garden Centers sponsored the event. They provided a selection of herb plants for show-n-tell allowing the participants to have a realistic idea of size and appearance of specific herbs.

Mark Your Calendars . . .

June 16th
An Evening at South Union

July 14th
Shaker Summer Nights

August 18th ~ 19th
South Union Civil War Days
This year's 14th annual South Union Shaker Seminar proved to be one of the best. The theme, "Preserving the Shaker Legend" focused on preservation of the South Union Shaker Village. Mr. Jim Thomas, Executive Director and CEO of the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, was the keynote speaker. Participants enjoyed Thomas's presentation about Pleasant Hill's more than 30 year development and preservation as one of Kentucky's best attractions.

Also, Mr. Richard Spence of Cincinatti, Ohio, presented a wonderful media program about his latest research into Shaker barns. Following the tour, the seminar participants enjoyed a tour of South Union's own 1875 Grain Barn, the only frame structure which still exists at South Union.

For those who were present Friday evening, many enjoyed a very moving musical performance by Pleasant Hill's own, Ms. Donna Phillips, in the Centre House meeting room. Ms. Phillips provided a look into rare Shaker music as she sang South Union hymns and even some of the more popular songs, like "Simple Gifts".

Overall, another successful seminar was the result. We appreciate the participation from all of those who attended.

Welcome
New Members!

Cornelius Martin
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Joe & Nancy Coursey
Russellville, Kentucky
Jon & Darla Barrow
Auburn, Kentucky
Kevin Westray
Russellville, Kentucky
Dick & Debi Bogle
Auburn, Kentucky
David Gottfried
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Dr. David & Mrs. Gail Beck
West Lafayette, Indiana
Karol Kirby
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Jean A Wagner
Glendale, Ohio
Greenwood Mall
General South Management, Inc.
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Drs. Dobson & Hatcher, PSC
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Richard B. Peete
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Dr. & Mrs. James C. O'Neill
Nashville, Tennessee
Susan K. Taylor
Louisville, Kentucky
Will & Jeanie Martin
Nashville, Tennessee
Charles E. & Lori English
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Charles A. Roberts
Bowling Green, Kentucky
Leslie Wade Davenport
Bowling Green, Kentucky
2001 South Union Gala - June 16th

Mark your calendar now to attend this year’s South Union Gala, an unforgettable evening of fine dining and musical celebration under the stars! The annual black tie Gala is a formal occasion and all proceeds go toward the continuation and restoration of the Shaker Museum at South Union. This year, back by popular demand, the South Union favorite, The David Humphrey’s Orchestra from Nashville, Tennessee, will provide the musical entertainment for the evening.

As a friend, you should have already received the "mark your calendar" notice in the mail. Invitations should go out the third week of May. Ticket prices for this year’s Gala are $100 each and $1,500 for a table of 10. However, don’t wait until the last week, this year we are anticipating our biggest Gala ever and table settings will go fast once invitations are mailed. Last year, over 400 people attended and we expect an even larger turnout for this year. The Gala begins at 7:00 p.m. and valet parking will be available.

If you have not received an invitation by June 1st and would like to attend, please call Donnalyn at the museum office at (270) 542-4167 and she will help with your reservation.

SPECIAL EVENTS

May 12  SHAKER METHODS - "TRADE WITH THE WORLD’S PEOPLE"
Come and learn how the Shakers supported their massive economy at South Union. Living history “Shakers” will be available to answer questions and demonstrate "how" the Shakers packaged seeds, food and cloth for sale to "the world’s people."
Fee: $6.00, members $4.00. Time: 10 to 5 p.m. Saturday.

June 16  AN EVENING AT SOUTH UNION
A gala celebration and annual fundraising event to support preservation of the historic site at South Union. Invitations sent. Reservations are required.

July 14  SHAKER SUMMER NIGHTS
Join us for a celebration of Shaker music with the South Union Shaker Quartet and other musical groups. Enjoy cold watermelon on this Shaker evening as we gaze across South Union’s spectacular nightscape around the farm. Fee: $10.00, $8.00 members. Time: 7 to 10 p.m.

August 5  MOTHER ANN DAY
Music and refreshments in the Centre House. The South Union Shaker Quartet will be featured. Fee: Free with paid museum admission. Time: 2 to 3 p.m.

August 18-19  SOUTH UNION CIVIL WAR DAYS
The South Union Civil War Journals are among some of the best. Join us as Civil War living history takes place around the Centre House site. Military drill demonstrations and living history will be going on all day at the museum. Also join us at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday for the new exhibit opening War At Our Front Door: The Civil War at South Union. Fee: $6.00 adults, $2.00 children (6-12) Time: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday

EXHIBIT OPENINGS

June 2  "THE VICTORIAN SHAKERS": 1869 - 1917
A new exhibit featuring research on the little known "Victorian" Shakers. This exhibit will be displayed in the 1869 Shaker Tavern. A smaller exhibit will also be on display at the 1917 Shaker Store, today’s South Union Shaker Post Office. Fee: Free with paid museum admission. Time: 1 - 3 p.m.

August 18  "WAR AT OUR FRONT DOOR" - THE CIVIL WAR AT SOUTH UNION
New exhibit featuring original journal entries related to the Shakers feeding the soldiers during the Civil War. Original lithographs, photographs, and manuscripts will be on display. Highlighted will be original textiles and weapons. Fee: Free with paid museum admission. Time: 1 - 3 p.m.

WORKSHOPS

June 23  BROOK MAKING
Come spend a day with our broom-maker and make your own Shaker flat broom. Class size limited to 8. Instructor: Dean Watkins. Fee: $20.00. Time: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
From the Past...

South Union's 1846 Ministry Shop (left) and 1818 Meeting House (razed around 1925).
The Ministry Shop is presently undergoing a complete restoration and scheduled to open sometime in 2002.