

6-1999

## South Union Messenger (June 1999)

Kentucky Library Research Collections  
Western Kentucky University, [spcol@wku.edu](mailto:spcol@wku.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/su\\_messenger](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/su_messenger)

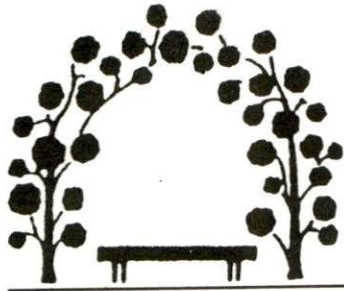
Part of the [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kentucky Library Research Collections, "South Union Messenger (June 1999)" (1999). *South Union Messenger*. Paper 96.  
[https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/su\\_messenger/96](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/su_messenger/96)

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in South Union Messenger by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact [topscholar@wku.edu](mailto:topscholar@wku.edu).



# South Union Messenger

---

Newsletter for the Friends of the Shaker Museum at South Union, Kentucky  
June 1999

---

## ***Shaker Village Mardi Gras?***

It has to be a first, but this year's gala fund-raiser, "An Evening in Shakertown," will recreate the atmosphere of Mardi Gras in old New Orleans. The planning committee, under the direction of event chair, Mrs. Randal Epley, has chosen to make the 10th annual gala a truly festive occasion. From colorful decorations and lively music to Cajun food served in an environment of sheer celebration, this year's gala will once again be a highlight of the summer season.

"An Evening in Shakertown," scheduled for June 12, begins at 7:00pm. A Cajun-inspired buffet dinner will be followed by the annual "Simple Gifts" auction, one of the most popular aspects of the black-tie event. Dancing the night away to the music of the Sam Levine Orchestra, City Lights, rounds out an evening of fun and fund-raising!

Tickets are \$75 per person, \$1,000.00 for a corporate table with preferred seating for ten. If you did not receive an invitation in the mail and would like to attend, please call the museum for assistance. "An Evening in Shakertown" has been the Shaker Museum's principle fund-raising event for the past ten years. Thousands of dollars have been raised to help insure the preservation of the South Union Shaker Village historic site. The Shaker Museum wishes to thank Tina Epley and the scores of volunteers who have given their time and talents to make this evening a success.

## ***Thank You for Your Contributions***

Tommy & Gingie Hines, Newberry, FL for beeswax used in children's program

Richard & Merle Troutman, Bowling Green, KY for general support

Cracker Barrel Corporation, Lebanon, TN for general support

Nancy Ferguson, Ventura, CA for general support

James & Dorothy Brown, Union, MI for general support

Hilliard Lyons, Bowling Green, KY for South Union Seminar underwriting

Gingie Hines, Newberry, FL for subscription to Country Inns magazine

Mr. John Ridley, Bowling Green, KY for documentary film support

Mrs. Edie Bingham, Glenview, KY for documentary film support

\*\*\*\*\*

### Recent Acquisitions

**Shaker Sermons: Scripto-Rational**, 1879. First edition of South Union Elder Harvey Eads' seminal work on Shaker theology. Bound in green cloth-covered boards.

.....purchased with acquisition endowment funds

**"A Peculiar People"**. Newspaper article featured in the Saturday, August 2, 1873 issue of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. Addresses Shaker community of Pleasant Hill, KY.

.....purchased with acquisition endowment funds

**Louisville Courier-Journal**, 1859. Newspaper with handwritten note still affixed to front page: "Post Master, South Union, KY." Contains small advertisement for Shaker brooms.

.....recently discovered in attic of 1846 Ministry Shop

**Secondary Library Materials**. Relate to general Shaker history and material culture.

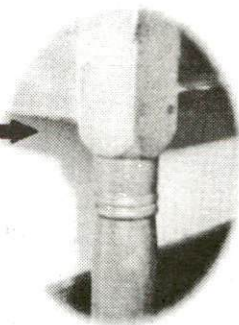
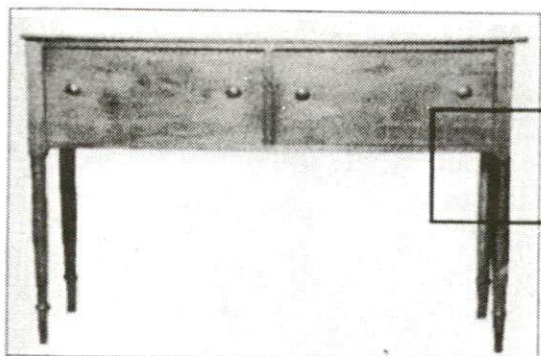
.....contributed by anonymous donor

**Photograph**, 1998. Infrared image of the 1869 Shaker Tavern facade.

.....donated by the photographer, Linda Leslie

**Linen Press**, ca. 1830; **Cupboard**, ca. 1840; **"Lye Soap" Table**, ca. 1870, **Hunt Board**, ca. 1830; **Child's School Desk**, ca. 1850. All pieces attributed to South Union, display common South Union design features.

.....donated by William A. Dixon, Margaret Dixon Moorman, and Lynn R. Dixon in memory of Lucille Dixon Sheffield.



Hunt Board. South Union, ca. 1830. Leg detail

**"Barstow 317" Cylinder Stove**, 1900. Restored antique coal/wood burning stove to be used in the back dining room of the 1869 Shaker Tavern.

.....purchased with acquisition endowment funds

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***Welcome New Members***

Cynthia Welch & Allen Oliver, Brandenburg, KY

Annie Duncan Ponvert, Central City, KY

Jeane Robertson, Bowling Green, KY

Donald Johnson, Minneapolis, MN

Cathie Winans, Novelty, OH

Gary Petway, Gilbertsville, KY

Mike & Sam Hossum, Russellville, KY

Ann Frogge, Germantown, TN

Debbie Britt, Auburn, KY

Lionel A. Whiston, Glen Ellyn, IL

George & Martha Roberts, Bowling Green, KY

## ***Save South Union's Landscape***

South Union is still one of three sites being considered for a 2,500 acre airpark, a facility designed to transport freight. An increase in air traffic, coupled with expanded ground freight transportation in and around South Union and the destruction of pristine farmland, poses a major threat to the goals and objectives of the Shaker Museum. The massive development would be located directly across the railroad tracks from the Shaker Tavern and just south of South Union's holy ground. Needless to say, this is the worst case scenario for a historic site trying to preserve an agricultural landscape. Please write in protest of this potential detriment to the historic site of the South Union Shaker Village.

Dan Cherry, Executive Director  
Airpark Board, c/o Chamber of Commerce  
812 State Street  
Bowling Green, KY 42101

## ***Shaker Museum Receives \$29,500.00 Grant from the Carpenter Foundation***

The museum was recently awarded \$29,500.00 from the E. Rhodes & Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. The grant was earmarked for the completion of the interior restoration of the Shaker Tavern, a project that is making dramatic changes to the dining rooms, bedrooms, and hallways of the 1869 structure. The Tavern was built by the Shakers as a post-war commercial endeavor. It served the railroad travelers for 53 years, offering public waiting areas, restaurant service, and hotel rooms. The building became a private residence in 1922 and was purchased by Shakertown Revisited, Inc. in 1980 (over page...).

### *Carpenter....continued*

Work began on the second floor by painting walls and woodwork in all six overnight rooms and hallways in period colors. For many years, the woodwork has been painted white, as were the walls of most of the bedrooms. Research into commonly used Victorian colors and samples of original woodwork paint led to the decision to coat the ornate trim in rich hues of brown and mustard. The atmosphere was transformed immediately into a more accurate interpretation of the time period chosen for interpretation, that of the year 1900.

The downstairs rooms were also restored with exciting results. What is currently referred to as the front dining room was probably a waiting area for railroad passengers during the Tavern's heyday. After removing several layers of wallpaper, evidence of wood trim resembling Shaker pegrail was discovered. Pieces of this original pegrail had previously been found in the basement, cut in segments many years ago to be used as mounting for electrical fixtures. On these short pieces of beaded railing it was clearly visible that the Shakers had used ornamental iron hooks instead of standard wooden pegs. The poplar rails were reproduced, installed in their original position, and outfitted with matching Victorian iron hooks.

The mantle in the front dining room was taken down for study and found to have been constructed of salvage from other Shaker buildings, much of it coated with Shaker yellow ochre paint dating from the early 19th century. This was probably done around 1923 when the new owners of the Tavern had access to woodwork from South Union buildings that were being torn down. When the mantle was removed, ghost lines of an original, smaller mantle were evident. After measuring the only full-size existing mantle in the building, finding it comparable in size, a reproduction was made. Masons rebuilt the brick hearth and coal grate, removing 1950s tan-colored tile. The mantle and woodwork were crafted in the shop of Jerry Martin of Woodbury, Kentucky.

The small back dining room, the Tavern's original restaurant space, saw the greatest transformation. In the 1950s, a wall was constructed to divide the room in order to accommodate for a smaller dining area and a modern kitchen. As part of this restoration process, it was decided that the dining room should occupy its original space and the partition wall removed. Although during restoration the room took on the appearance of a small gymnasium, the finished product is an accurate representation of the restaurant railroad travelers enjoyed over 100 years ago.

Add to these changes period wallpapers and lighting fixtures, and even a 1900 cylinder stove to fit the original pipe opening in the dining room, and you have a pleasant, graceful, authentic setting for bed & breakfast customers and for groups who enjoy the dining experience created by innkeeper Jo Ann Moody. Special thanks to Mrs. Elizabeth Reeves, who with her family called the Shaker Tavern home for nearly a quarter of a century. Mrs. Reeves' vivid memory and collection of photographs assisted tremendously in the restoration process. We are indebted to the Carpenter Foundation for its generous support of the preservation of South Union.

## ***Thank You Recent Contributors to "Buying Back the Shaker Farm"***

Fundraising Drive Goal: \$585,000

Balance Yet to Raise as of 5/21/99: \$164,000

Eliza Brown, San Francisco, CA

Joseph A. Anthony, Sacramento, KY

Robert Martin, Clarksville, TN

Eddie Belle Denison, Cave City, KY

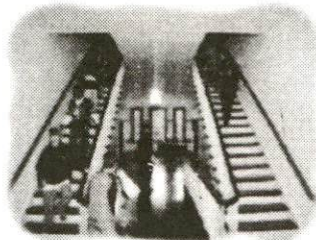
Richard & Susy Spence, Cincinnati, OH

Larry & Ruth Owrey, Franklin, OH

Ann Metzger, Carpinteria, CA

### ***Education Notes - Saddler Taylor***

The halls of the museum are now quite peaceful, but during the past four weeks they were filled with levels of excitement only elementary school students are capable of creating. **"From Wick to Switch"** proved to be a resounding success with well over 500 students in attendance. The program was booked much sooner than expected and even after extending the tour dates, many classes had to be turned away. We have enjoyed an unbelievable level of interest from teachers in the surrounding region, some of whom have already scheduled tours for our **"Christmas in the Kitchen"** program in December. The



Students learn more about lighting than they ever wanted to know!

museum would like to thank Tommy & Gingie Hines for donating all of the beeswax for **"From Wick to Switch."** Using melted animal fat would have been a far less pleasant experience! Planning is already underway for new fall programming, as well as the Christmas program in December. The summer months are certainly going to be an important time to prepare for an exciting fall season. We anticipate hosting more students in 1999 than ever before and thank all of you for your valuable, ongoing support.

### ***Memorial Contributions***

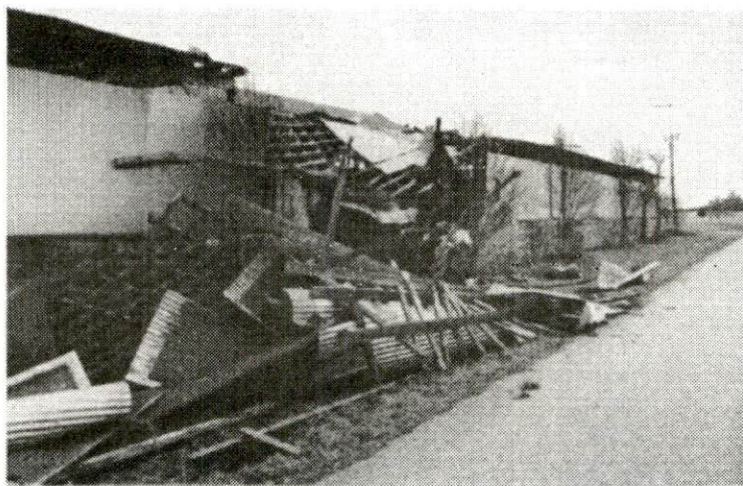
Lillie Mae Hayes, Auburn, KY, in memory of Rex Bennett

Alan Schoen, Old Chatham, NY, in memory of O.E. Freeman

## ***"Country Barn" Slated for Demolition***



South facade of barn. A third of the roof structure was blown off, as well as extensive damage to both sheds.



Detail of damage to shed on west side of barn

After many months of deliberating, a decision has finally been made to tear down what was known locally as "The Country Barn." Heavily damaged in a recent storm, the circa 1930s barn rests upon the invaluable archeological remains of many of the North Family buildings, gardens, and orchards. The North Family Dwelling House, two Sisters' Shops, cider mill, wash house, well house, a Brethrens' Shop, and a garden house were among the buildings constructed on the site. In addition, the brick home of one the first converts and early community leaders, Jesse Rankin, was located on this tract of land. It remains to be seen if anything is left of the ca. 1800 Rankin House. An untold amount of information could be only a few feet underground.

For our visitors, removing the barn will provide a gorgeous, unimpeded view of the eastern portion of the property. This beautiful vista will appear much like it did 160 years ago, with rolling meadows and fertile cropland. While it is not our policy to reconstruct buildings, we believe that replacing fence rows, gardens, livestock lots and orchards will give visitors a strong impression of the 19th century South Union landscape. Studying historic maps provides detailed information and allows us to replace many of these features with relative accuracy. Although work has begun, it is expected to take several months to complete the demolition.

The *South Union Messenger* is published by the Shaker Museum at South Union.

For more information contact the museum at:

P.O. Box 30

South Union, Kentucky 42283

Phone: 502-542-4167 Fax: 502-542-7558

E-mail: [shakmus@logantele.com](mailto:shakmus@logantele.com) Web Page: <http://www.logantele.com/~shakmus/>

## ***A Word from the Director - Tommy Hines***

We are experiencing one of the most beautiful spring seasons that I can remember. Warm sunny days and cold nights do not always characterize southern Kentucky, but so far we have really been blessed with pleasant weather. If you are coming our way in the next several weeks, I think you will be surprised at how green and lush everything looks at South Union.

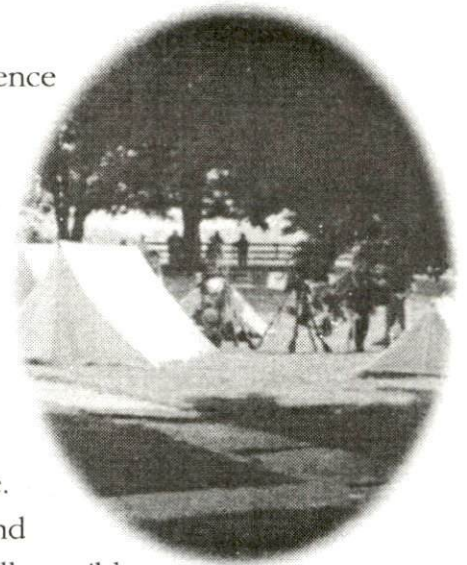
By the time our September newsletter reaches you, the "Buying Back the Shaker Farm" fund-raising campaign should be winding up. At this writing we still have \$164,000.00 to raise. The good news is that we have already received \$421,000.00 in contributions and pledges. We appreciate the tremendous impact that our Friends organization has made on this important effort. Any additional last minute assistance would be a great help. There will be a full report of all contributions in the next newsletter.

Change continues at South Union! You have probably already read about the restoration work at the Shaker Tavern and the demolition of the "Country Barn." More subtle changes are taking place on the farm to the south of the Centre House, the 180 acres of land that includes the 1846 Ministry Shop and 1875 Grain Barn. Most of the post-Shaker wire fence rows have been torn away and a number of power lines and telephone poles have been removed. Eventually some of the non-Shaker barns and buildings will be dismantled while others will be adapted for use by the museum. We will present a more detailed report in the fall.

Come see us in 1999. Our gala on June 12 would be a great time to see South Union in all its finery, while helping raise funds for preservation and education. If you can't make it to gala, drop by anytime and see the changes that you help make possible. Thanks for your support.

### ***"Are These Not Perilous Times?"***

The museum staff and some fortunate visitors had a hauntingly real experience on the weekend of May 22nd. Peridot Pictures, Inc., the producer of the A&E series *America's Castles* was on site to film a 10 minute documentary on the history of the South Union Shaker community. Things became rather eery when 30 Civil War reenactors arrived and set up camp. Confederate officers and enlisted soldiers engaged in bivouac activities, rifles were at stack arms, and the campfire smouldered. We could all imagine what Eldress Nancy was thinking as she penned her wartime journal. The film crew spent two days on site, shooting a wide variety of vignette scenes and then several additional days filming archival footage. Although a hectic and tiresome process, we look forward to the final cut and would like to thank Mrs. Edie Bingham and Mr. John Ridley for making it all possible.







SHAKER MUSEUM AT SOUTH UNION  
South Union, Kentucky 42283



Serials Unit  
Helm Cravens Library  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, KY 42101

### *Upcoming at the Shaker Museum*

**June 12**

**An Evening in Shakertown**

Our annual gala fund-raising event to support preservation of the South Union historic site. This event funded in part by Commonwealth Health Corporation.

**September 11**

**Shaker Farm Day**

In its second year, Shaker Farm Day will recreate the atmosphere of a 19th century farm community with a wide variety of living history demonstrations. Fee: members free, non-members \$5.00 per adult, \$1.00 per child (6-12 years). Time: 9:00am - 5:00pm.

**October 2**

**Southern Furniture Symposium**