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South Union Messenger (September 1997)

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The South Union Messenger

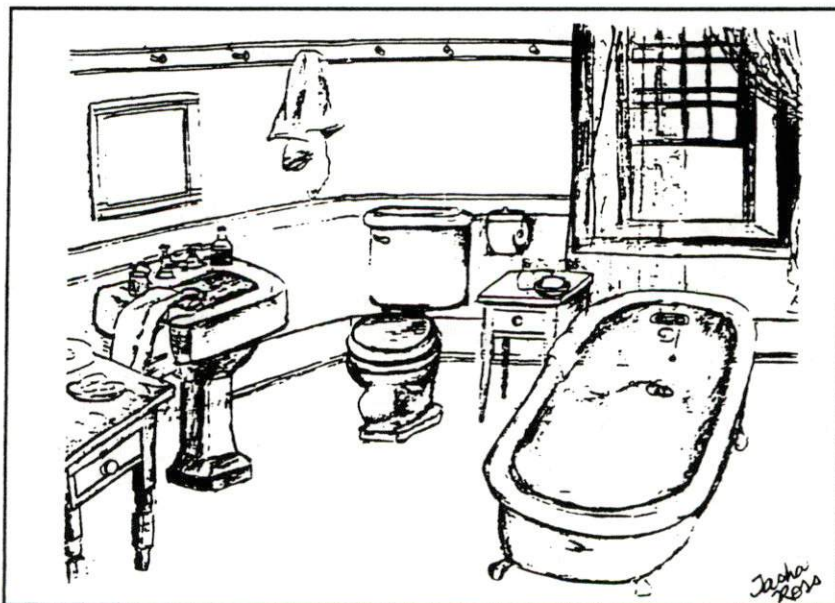
NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE SHAKER MUSEUM AT SOUTH UNION, KENTUCKY
SEPTEMBER 1997

What! Bathrooms in These Hallowed Halls?

Often interpretation at the Shaker Museum focuses on the Shakers and their lives during the 19th century. However, a project now underway examines how the Shakers at South Union adopted 20th century technology.

A new permanent exhibit opened in early September which recreates the Centre Family sisters' bathroom which was installed in 1916. South Union journal entries note preparations for putting in two bathrooms and water closets. Various accounts describe installing a new pump, laying pipes, and receiving the fixtures. Physical evidence in the first floor front room also provides some indication of how the bathroom looked. Museum staff continues their research into the early 20th century bathroom.

The recent donation of an early 20th century sink, tub, and toilet from Historic Russellville has made the exhibit possible. These fixtures are contemporaneous with ones that the Shakers would have installed. Additional artifacts such as soap, towels, hair combs, and drinking glasses add realistic details. There are even cologne bottles which we know the Sisters used based upon archaeological evidence.



Buying Back the Shaker Farm

A tremendous opportunity has arisen for the Shaker Museum at South Union. The 145 acre farm to the east of the Centre House was recently offered for sale. The tract, once the home of South Union's North Family and portions of the East and Centre Families, is vital to the preservation of the village site. This eastern vista is currently the only unprotected acreage from the vantage point of the museum buildings.

The asking price, which includes a house and barn built by Oscar Bond shortly after he bought the farm from the Shakers in 1922, is \$585,000.00. The Shaker Museum plans to kick-off a fund-raising project in late September, setting a one-year goal for contributions and a two-year time frame for pledges. To date, the museum has received \$211,200.00 in donations toward the purchase price but we still must raise \$373,800.00 before the end of September 1999.

For the next two years, the Shaker Museum staff, Board of Directors, and Advisory Committee will dedicate time and effort to acquire this 145 acre farm east of the Centre Family. The archaeological possibilities are great as the remains of nearly fifty buildings lie beneath the surface. The preservation of the farmscape for interpretive reasons and visual significance is also of grave importance to the future of the South Union site. This tract is directly across the north/south lane from the Centre Family buildings. If industrial, commercial, or residential development were to encroach upon South Union, especially in such close proximity, the prospects of future growth and development as a viable historic site would be lost.

Letters will be mailed to each member of the Friends of the Shaker Museum before the end of 1997, explaining the details of the project. We hope that each of you will want to be a part of this major development in the preservation of the South Union. This challenge truly represents an opportunity for the Shaker Museum, one upon which we have waited for many years.

South Union North Family



Restoration Update - Efforts at the Morton House

Most of the restoration work during July and August has been taking place at the Morton House. This 1820 brick structure, donated to the Shaker Museum in 1994, is supported by Morton family contributions and will eventually be open to the public as a single-family comparison to communal living. The vast photographic and written family records have been an invaluable resource in the restoration.

This summer three 20th century dormers were removed from the house and a wood shingle roof was installed to replicate the 19th century original. Windows have also been repaired, reglazed, and painted. Wallpaper is now being removed from the downstairs hallway, revealing evidence of chair rails, the profile of which matches that in other rooms on the first level. A great deal of grainpainting has been discovered on the woodwork.

The log dining room and kitchen have been temporarily detached and will soon be stabilized for the coming winter.

A Word from the Director - Tommy Hines, Executive Director

After a slow spring, visitor attendance this summer has been quite encouraging. Our summer season was inaugurated by the Berkshire Shaker Seminar's presence here July 6-8. The group's sincere enthusiasm, support of, and interest in South Union were quite a boost to the Shaker Museum and its staff. We certainly appreciate everything that was done for us during the visit and want to thank Gus Nelson, Kathy Moriarty, Dale Spencer, and all the others who helped organize the event.

I want to welcome two new staff member to the Shaker Museum. Melanie Smith began working in the museum shop in mid-July and Natasha Ross has recently come on board to assist with office work relating to the upcoming fund-raiser. Karen Heege, graduate assistant from Western Kentucky University, finished her work at South Union upon completion of the spring semester after nearly two years of service to the museum. We appreciate the fine work that Karen accomplished and wish her the best in the museum field.

Everyone is looking forward to the fall with all its prospects for new development. We will be able to take possession of the 1846 Ministry Shop on September 30. As soon as grant monies are secured, restoration can begin. Other changes that will be made during the winter season include relocating the museum shop to the ground level of the Centre House, a new exhibit on South Union during the Civil War, and a revamped calendar of events for 1998. Our drive to raise the funds necessary to purchase the acreage east of the Centre House will probably occupy most of our time and effort. I hope each of you will want to help us acquire this important tract of the Shaker farm. Not only are the archaeological prospects great but protection of the rural landscape is imperative.

Thank you for you continued support.

Julia Neal Library Update - Saddler Taylor, Assistant to the Director

The library is growing! We will soon run out of space in the three rooms the collection now occupies. This, however, is a situation we consider quite positive. Primary and secondary source materials are an integral part of the continuing research efforts involving the South Union site and surrounding region.

Increased growth requires constant management for many purposes, including the need to ensure researcher accessibility. A researcher might not always find it an easy task to locate everything we have on a particular topic. To remedy this, we are creating a series of databases that will allow quick, efficient retrieval of source material on a selected topic(s). Albeit a time-consuming task, the eventual completion of such a program will provide a much needed foundation to build upon as the collection continues to grow.

We have also developed a new library policy that specifically outlines procedures for making copies of manuscripts and ephemera. Regular in-house photocopies are still available to members at no cost. Non-members will be charged a rate of .05 cents a copy. Custom processing, such as laser copies, enlargements, and color printing must be made off-site and will adhere to the following rate schedule :

Members -- cost of processing Non-Members -- cost of processing + \$10 service fee

Due to the sensitive nature of the material, the museum collections staff will be responsible for removing material from the museum and monitoring all off-site processing. Requests may be made by phone, fax, e-mail or in person. We ask that you include a phone number on all fax and e-mail correspondence for verification purposes. Photographers are welcome to photograph artifacts in the collection for publication purposes. Please feel free to contact the museum for specific information regarding our publication policy.

We encourage interested parties to utilize the diverse collection of both western and eastern Shaker materials housed at South Union. We are working continually to provide the most efficient access to the material for both the scholar and the curious first-time visitor. The challenges that lay ahead are truly exciting.

Welcome to our New Members

Max and Sue Brail II, Jackson, Michigan
Alexandra Germano, Harvard, Massachusetts
Reverend R. Hand, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Lelane K. Hoose, Fair Haven, New York
Mr. and Mrs. John R. Knepler, Alvaton, Kentucky
Gus Nelson, Cheshire, Massachusetts
Naomi Northrop, Worcester, Massachusetts
Beverly P. Reynolds, Fairport, New York
Cathie Winans, Shaker Heights, Ohio
Michael and Susan Zak, Canandaigua, New York

Education Notes - Mary Inkrot, Director of Education

School is back in session and it is time to look forward to having lots of area students at the museum. New this season are two new student tours: *Shaker Things* and *Home Crafts*. *Shaker Things* emphasizes how everyday things are primary sources of information about life in the past. A tour of the museum focuses on what artifacts tell us about life at South Union. Later, students "select" a favorite artifact for further examination, asking and answering questions about physical features, design, value, and more. The *Home Crafts* tour examines activities that took place often in the Shaker community such as washing clothes, cooking, wood-working, etc. Special emphasis is on dairy crafts. Students will learn about the process of butter-making and be able to "churn" and sample their own pat of butter.

Thematic tours are not just available for school groups. Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, youth groups, daycare facilities, etc. are also welcome. Tours can be scheduled even on weekends. If you need more information on the fall student tours or want a flyer to send to your child's or grandchild's teacher, just let me know.

If anybody has any empty baby food jars, please consider donating them to the museum for use in butter-making activities. I have a few right now but will need more to accommodate large school groups, plus some extras for inevitable breakages. My thanks goes to Granny's Childcare and Learning Center in Bowling Green who have already saved some for me.

Since arriving in May, I have met some wonderful museum volunteers. Their dedication and interest has left a strong and positive impression with me. It has been wonderful getting to know all of them. I am hoping to meet more people interested in joining this group of Shaker Museum volunteers. There are a variety of ways to get involved such as leading tours, helping with special events, preparing education materials, and working in the museum shop. Or perhaps you have a special skill that you would like to share with the museum. Volunteers of all ages, sizes, and talents are needed. If this appeals to you, please let me know.

Hope to see you in the museum soon.

Thank You for Your Contribution

Berkshire Shaker Seminar in Honor of Kathy Moriarty
Dorcas Catron, Monticello, Kentucky for General Support
Kit Cress, Mansfield, Ohio for Special Projects
Winifred G. Feguson, Laporte, Pennsylvania in Honor of Dale and Mary Spencer
Belva S. Mohle, Belmont, New Hampshire for Land Acquisition
Sara Shallenburger Brown, Harrods Creek, Kentucky for Land Acquisition
Claire Viverito, Cincinnati, Ohio for Land Acquisition

A Candlelit Evening in the Centre House

The end of September will feature a special event at the Shaker Museum, a candlelight dinner and tour.

The evening begins with a delicious and generous dinner based on an actual 19th century South Union meal. The 1997 meal begins with fresh strawberries and lettuce salad with radishes and carrots. The entree will be a lightly fried chicken breast, new potatoes, asparagus, sweet potatoes, English peas, corn pudding, herb yeast biscuits, and Toad in the Hole, a dessert similar to an apple dumpling. After the meal, guests will feel truly transported back into the 19th century as they tour the Centre House lit only by candles and filled with Shaker sisters and brothers involved in evening activities. A Shaker guide will tell visitors about what they see and provide personal details and insights into the lives of the Shakers. The tour concludes with a Shaker music performance in the Meeting Room.

As in past years, the event promises to be a memorable and enjoyable evening. It will begin at 7:00 pm on both Friday, September 26 and Saturday, September 27. Cost is \$25 per person with members receiving a \$5 discount. Reservations are required and may be obtained by calling the museum during operating hours

Memorial Contributions

George and Darlene Kohrman, Portage, Michigan in Memory of Julia Neal
Anonymous, In Memory of Brother Thomas Whitaker

*When we see good Mother's children,
And behold their lovely faces,
While we feel their love so precious
How it does delight us.*

*O these children of our Mother
How these children love each other,
With the precious love of Mother,
How it does unite us.*

*Eleanor Meigs,
South Union*

A limited edition plaque featuring this hymn is available from the Museum Shop. For ordering information call 1-800-811-8379.

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

For more information contact the museum at:

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You may visit our Web Page at:

<http://>

www.logantele.com/~shakmus/

Upcoming at the Shaker Museum

September 26-27

Fall Candlelight Dinners

A memorable evening of living history, featuring a historic SU menu. Fee: \$20 member, \$25 non-members. Time: 7:00 pm. This event is funded by Emerson Electric.

November 8

A Shaker Breakfast

A historic SU Civil War era menu served in the dining room of the Centre House, followed by a performance of the South Union Shaker Quartet. Fee: \$17 members, \$20 non-members. Time: 10:00 am. This event is funded by Emerson Electric.

December 6-7

Christmas at Shakertown

Our annual open house celebration features 19th century decorations, music performances, holiday foods, and booths of fine antiques and handmade treasures for sale. Fee: canned food item. Time: 9:00 to 4:00 on Saturday, 1:00 to 4:00 on Sunday. This event is funded by Auburn Banking Company.

Shaker-Inspired Art on Display

In July, the Shaker Museum at South Union opened the exhibit *Inside the Mulberry Bower: Contemporary Gift Drawings, The Traditional Works of Sister Karlyn Cauley*. Sister Karlyn is an acclaimed folk artist whose work reflects the inspirational and simple qualities of Shaker art. As a member of the Sisters of the Divine Savior, the artist was drawn to the celibate, religious, and communal similarities between her world as a Catholic sister and that of the Shakers.

Many of Sister Karlyn's drawings reflect qualities of Shaker art. It was during the 1830s and 1840s that members of Shaker communities felt compelled to record visions in drawings and paintings that they considered divinely inspired. Like Gift Drawings, Sister Karlyn's designs reflect images of flowers, berries, vines, trees, hearts, and doves. Delicate, simple forms are often combined with script messages. The exhibition included both original ink and water color designs as well as prints.

Inside the Mulberry Bower is unusual for the museum in that all of the artwork was for sale. The art proved to be popular with visitors, with well over half already sold. A few remaining pieces of original art as well as other items featuring Sister Karlyn's work are available in the museum shop.



Season for Time among Friends



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South Union, Kentucky 42283

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