

11-1997

## South Union Messenger (November 1997)

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# The South Union Messenger

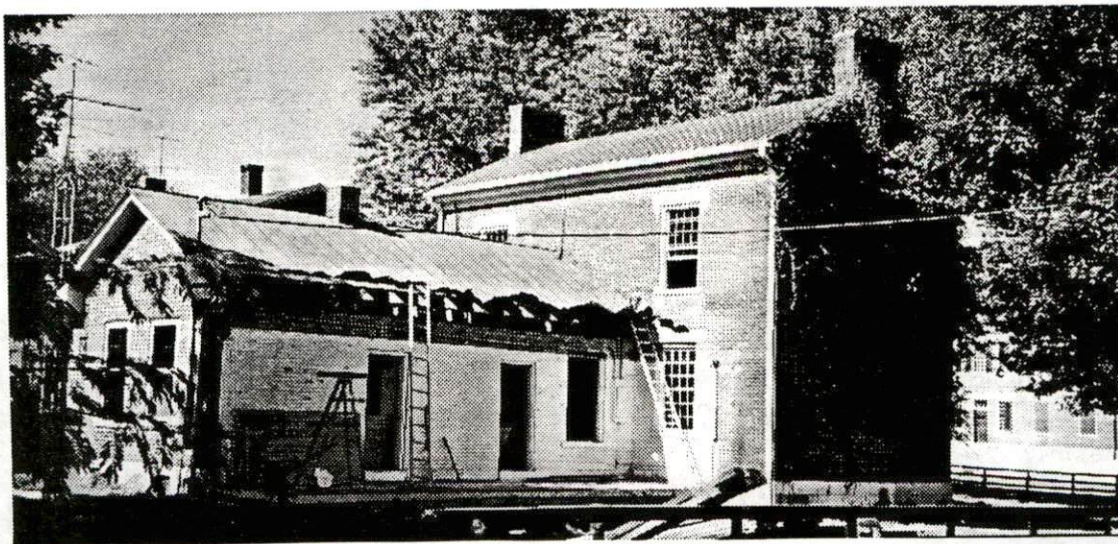
NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE SHAKER MUSEUM AT SOUTH UNION, KENTUCKY  
NOVEMBER 1997

## *Restoration Begins With Small Steps*

The 1847 Ministry Shop officially became the property of the Shaker Museum on September 30. This central hallway, four-room building served as both work and dwelling space for the South Union ministry from the time it was constructed until the turn of the century. The Ministry Shop is in a remarkable state of preservation. The structure has been damaged, however, as the result of a two-room brick ell added in the early 1930s and two bathrooms installed in the original portion of the building in the 1970s. Grants are being written for the complete restoration of the structure, but, a generous contribution from Kit Cress of Mansfield, Ohio, has allowed the museum to make initial strides toward restoration.

Changes in the Ministry Shop over the past month include the removal of all electrical fixtures, conduit and wiring as well as plumbing fixtures, water pipes, storm doors and windows. Maintenance staff repainted original exterior doors and windows white, covering light blue paint applied approximately eight years ago. Ten original shutters found nailed to the masonry are being re-hung on iron hinges that were donated to the museum when removed almost a decade ago. The 1930s ell, which incorporates architectural elements taken from 19th century Shaker buildings razed in the 1920s, is being carefully dismantled. Limestone window sills, Shaker-made brick, and numbered poplar window frames will all be salvaged.

The Shaker Museum plans to interpret the building as it was originally used, featuring the personal effects of Elder Harvey Eads (1807-1892) and other South Union leaders who occupied it. The Ministry Shop is scheduled to open in summer 1998.



## A Word from the Director - Tommy Hines

As 1997 draws to a close, we can definitely take pleasure in reflecting on all of the blessings of the year. A wonderful visit by Sister Frances and Brother Arnold of Sabbathday Lake, Maine, in April set a perfect tone for the '97 season. Here for our annual South Union Seminar, Sister Frances and Brother Arnold delighted an audience of friends and admirers. We also enjoyed hosting the Berkshire Shaker Seminar and the staff and interpreters of Pleasant Hill earlier in the year. We welcomed new Director of Education Mary Inkrot in May, appeared in national magazines and journals, and received hundreds of volunteer hours. The 1847 Ministry Shop was purchased by the Shaker Museum, we experienced our most successful gala fund-raiser to date, and acquired a record number of important objects from South Union's past.

Our greatest challenge for the new year lies in the fund-raising effort before us. The purchase of a 145-acre farm to the east of the Centre House requires \$585,000.00 before December 1999. As the result of a kick-off held on the 75th anniversary of the great South Union auction, September 26, we raised nearly \$37,000.00. Added to prior commitments, we now have \$255,000.00 toward the purchase. Letters will be mailed to Shaker Museum members, contributors, and other supporting organizations before the end of this year. I hope that each of you will want to be a part of this very crucial acquisition.

Many thanks for all the hours of work by the museum staff, Board of Directors, Advisory Committee, Friends of the Shaker Museum and volunteers. It has been a great year because of your time and talents.



## Upcoming Event - Christmas at Shakertown

Our final event for the 1997 season will be Christmas at Shakertown, now in its eleventh year. This popular event features the Centre House beautifully decorated for the holidays and filled with booths of fine antique and handmade treasures for sale. An open house at the Shaker Tavern will also be offered this year.

Following in the giving spirit of the Shakers, the museum waives the normal admission charge to anyone bringing a canned food item. All canned goods are donated to those in need in Logan County. Everyone is encouraged to be generous.

Christmas at Shakertown will be Saturday, December 6 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm and Sunday, December 7 from 1:00-4:00 pm. The event is sponsored in part by Auburn Banking Company.

## WELCOME HOME! A Phenomenal Collection Returns to South Union

A collection of exemplary South Union artifacts was recently purchased with the assistance of the museum's acquisition endowment. The museum acquired three significant pieces of South Union furniture and a set of four oval boxes directly from the family who purchased the objects from the Shakers in 1922. The furniture includes a cherry and walnut bureau with six divided drawers. Called a "sewing chest" by the family, the massive case piece is on cut feet, has solid board sides and a molded edge top, typical of South Union cabinet-making prior to 1850. Also included in the purchase was a classic South Union linen press in cherry and poplar. This unique community form, a large cupboard resting on a short one-drawer table, is the most imposing example that has yet been discovered. Standing nearly six feet in height, the linen press also represents some of the earlier cabinet-making at South Union. A one-drawer cherry work table with typical village features was also included in the purchase. Sister Josie Thrall, one of the last nine Shakers at South Union, once owned this table.

In addition to the furniture, the museum obtained a set of oval boxes. These are the first examples in the Shaker Museum collection with a South Union history. Purchased from the village in 1922, the boxes had probably been gifts from other Shaker villages since there is no record of them being made at South Union. All four are in original paint, ranging from red to yellow ochre. The most significant of the set is a 13 1/2 inch grain-painted box with the name of Betsy Smith skillfully painted on the top in large red and black letters. A red oval encircles the name and a vase of lilies is painted in the center. The box was probably a gift to South Union's Eldress Betsy (1807-1897) from a member of one of the eastern Shaker villages. A similar box in blue paint with the name of Nancy E. Moore (1807-1889), another South Union Eldress, is in the collection of the Kentucky Museum on the campus of Western Kentucky University.

We welcome these treasures back to South Union after an absence of seventy-five years.



## Thank You for Your Contribution

*Dr. Dale Clark, Russellville, Kentucky for a Printing Donation*  
*Girls Scouts, Area 17, Kentucky for General Support*  
*Mr. Glenn Rogers, Nashville, Tennessee for Land Acquisition*  
*Mr. Paul Rothert, Hot Springs, Arkansas for Land Acquisition*  
*Mr. Jim Sanders, Evansville, Indiana for Land Acquisition*  
*Mrs. Peter Spalding, Louisville, Kentucky for Land Acquisition*

## When Holiday Baking, Please Remember the Museum

As part of Christmas at Shakertown, we will be having an open house at the Shaker Tavern. Visitors will be able to see the tavern with its Victorian era decorations while partaking of spiced tea and homemade cookies. We are looking for generous bakers who might be willing to spare a dozen or two of their delicious goodies for this event. If you are able to help, please let us know. We will need the cookies by Friday, December 5. Thank you in advance.

## Welcome New Members

*Michael and Stacey Clark, Russellville, Kentucky*  
*Charles Ehler, Annapolis, Maryland*  
*Meredith Flautt, Franklin, Tennessee*  
*Jonathan Kesler, Bowling Green, Kentucky*  
*Robert Martin, Clarksville, Tennessee*  
*Celeste Casey Reed, Nashville, Tennessee*  
*Charles and Marseille Wilson, Ridgetop, Tennessee*

### *Some 1998 Events*

*South Union Seminar*  
*with a focus on music*  
*April 17-18*

*An Evening in Shakertown*  
*June 13*

*Shaker Farm Day*  
*September 12*

*Southern Furniture Symposium*  
*with a focus on*  
*the Antebellum Dining Room*  
*October 3*



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

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