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Shakers - South Union, Kentucky (MSS 597)

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Organizational History

Ann Lee (1736-1784), mother of Shakerism, claimed a few years before her death to have experienced a vision in which she saw the next great opening for the gospel occurring in 1801 or 1802 in the southwestern part of the United States. John Meacham, Benjamin S. Youngs, and Issachar Bates embarked on a missionary journey to that area on January 1, 1805. This trek proved to be one of more than one thousand miles. Because of the great religious revival taking place in Logan County, Kentucky, the Shakers proceeded to that region. They gained converts and in 1807 established a communal society, which practiced celibacy and pacifism, at South Union in Logan County. Membership peaked at 349 in 1827. Disbanded in 1922, South Union was the last of the six western societies to close.

Collection Note

This collection consists of Shaker Record A, a journal documenting the history and activities of the Shaker colony at South Union, Kentucky, from 1804 to 1836. The original is stored separately in a secure vault; for the convenience of researchers, this collection consists of a photocopy. A bound two-volume typescript is also available.

Transcribed by Elder Harvey L. Eads, Record A includes information on the weather; agriculture, trade and manufactures at the colony; accidents, illnesses and deaths; arrivals and departures of members; ministerial travel; meetings; building construction; and outside news, including news of other Shaker colonies. Also included is an autobiography of John Rankin, Sr. (typescript p. 1), a Logan County Presbyterian minister who received the Shaker missionaries, converted in 1807 and became one of their leaders; instructions to the Shaker missionaries traveling to Kentucky from the east (typescript p. 21); the travel diary of missionaries Meacham, Youngs and Bates (typescript, p. 26); an 1804 ecumenical letter from the Shakers at New Lebanon, New York, to the people in Kentucky and adjacent states (typescript p. 23); an 1827 census of the members of the colony at South Union (typescript p. 286); and the 1830 constitution of the Shaker church at South Union, with the names and ages of 180 signatories (typescript p. 448). An index of names appearing in the typescript is included.
**SHELF LIST**

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<th>BOX 1</th>
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<td>1805-1811</td>
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<td>Folder 3</td>
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**BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD**

MSS 597 SHAKERS – South Union, Kentucky 1804-1836

Shaker Record A, a journal of the activities of the Shaker colony at South Union, Kentucky. Includes a record of the missionary trip to Kentucky from the east, and the 1830 constitution and covenant of the South Union colony. Also includes an index of names.

1 box. 6 folders. 6 items. Original, photocopy, typescript.

SC2017.2.2

**SUBJECT ANALYTICS**

Bates, Issachar, 1758-1837 – Relating to
Eads, Harvey Lauderdale, 1807-1892 – Relating to
Meacham, John, 1770-1854 – Relating to
Rankin, John, 1757-1850
Shakers – South Union, Kentucky – Vital statistics
Youngs, Benjamin Seth, 1736-1818 – Relating to

Niedermeier/Jeffrey 01/08/2017