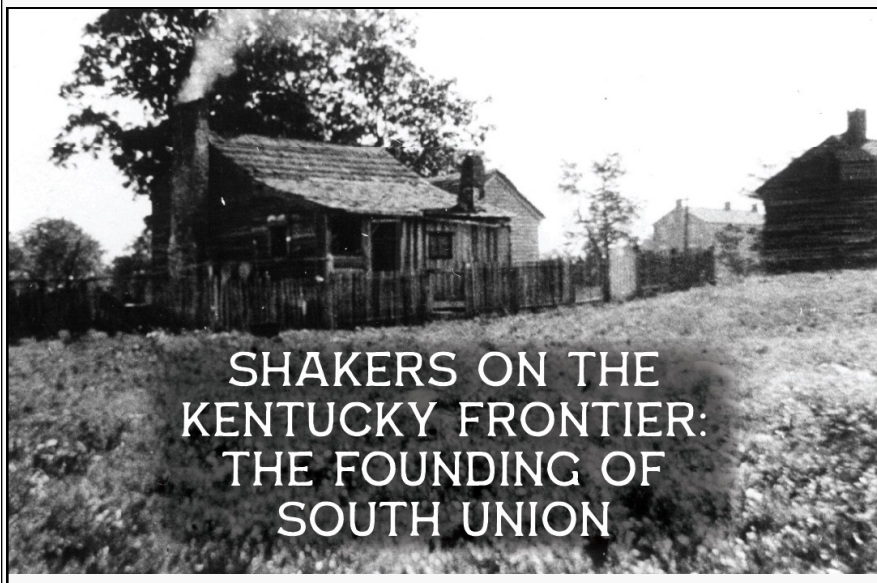




# SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Vol. LIVI, No. 1, 2026  
South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

## SOUTH UNION CELEBRATES AMERICA'S 250!



Join us on Saturday, May 16, for a day of insightful presentations and good Kentucky food, in celebration of America's 250th birthday. We will explore the roots of settlement of the Shakers' most southern community with noted scholars in the field of western Shaker studies. Presenters include Dr. Carol Medlicott, associate professor in the Department of History and Geography at Northern Kentucky University, and Dr. Doug Winiarski, professor of Religion and American Studies, University of Richmond, Virginia. The day will begin with a light breakfast, will include lunch, and a behind-the-scenes tour of some of

SUSV's most recent restoration projects. The event is sponsored by Lewisburg Banking Company, Chris & Jobi Givens, Reed Law Group, Bouldin Roofing, and LTC Connect. Tickets can be purchased online: [SouthUnionShakerVillage.com](http://SouthUnionShakerVillage.com) Or by calling: 270-542-4167

## NEW VIDEO SERIES COMING FROM SOUTH UNION

For 2026, South Union Shaker Village is producing a series of sixteen videos focusing on the museum's attempts at re-thinking restoration and re-imagining interior period spaces. Entitled "Curating Authenticity," the series is sponsored by Case Auctions ([www.caseantiques.com](http://www.caseantiques.com)), with locations in Nashville and Knoxville. We began in January with a segment on our most recent paint analysis by Susan Buck, a project that transformed the façade of the 1824 Centre House to its 1865 appearance. The Shakers' post-war attempts to "spruce up" the village included painting the shutters on the building a brilliant Prussian blue, the same color they had used nearly fifty years earlier on the interior of the Meeting House. More segments have followed, so make sure and check them out on Facebook, Instagram, and our website, where all of our videos are archived.

# RESTORATION WORK AT THE SOUTH UNION HOTEL

In 1980, South Union Shaker Village purchased the 1869 Shaker Tavern, a building constructed by the Shakers after the Civil War to capitalize on increased railroad travel. When the village sold in 1922, the hotel was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Young for use as a private residence. In later years it became the home of Delbert and Elizabeth Reeves, then finally William and Shelby Traugott. Since the building has been a part of the museum, it has been used as a restaurant and as a bed and breakfast, most recently operated by Jo Ann Moody, who retired in 2015.

Today the South Union Hotel, the historic name of the building, is used as an event venue. Plans are to convert the second level to Airbnb with three rooms, each with a private bath, and a two-room suite with bath. The downstairs will continue to be used for museum events and rental space for private gatherings.

Thanks to a grant from the E. Rhodes & Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and significant contributions from Dottie and Wayne Metcalf and Ernie and Elaine Ezell, the South Union

Hotel now has a new standing seam metal roof and will soon receive exterior paint. The 1980s kitchen has been completely gutted and is being re-designed as a caterer's kitchen and for use by Airbnb guests. During the restoration, the original fireplace was discovered. The ghost line of the mantel will assist us in determining what was there in 1869. Unfortunately, all but a few feet of the original poplar floor had been replaced prior to 1980.

Eventually, new HVAC will be installed throughout the building, wiring upgraded, and new restrooms constructed in the side porch area. Preservation projects will include the reconstruction of the original innkeepers' stairs as a second egress for overnight guests, the re-introduction of the wooden floor on the front porch, and a replication of the 19th century double-door entrance to the building. Stay tuned!



## REMEMBERING JIM THOMAS

Jim Thomas, a renowned authority on historic preservation, came to Pleasant Hill in 1964 to work with James Cogar on the restoration of the village. Jim rose from curator to CEO during his 41 years at Pleasant Hill, making an impact far beyond the confines of the village's 3,000 acre farm. He was a constant advocate for preservation in Kentucky, serving on the boards of the Kentucky Heritage Council, the Kentucky Nature Conservancy, the Lincoln Heritage Foundation and many more. Jim passed away in November of 2025, but has left a legacy of exemplary work in the field. In the photo at left, Jim is greeted at South Union by Deedy Hall in 1974.

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Each year the museum staff chooses to honor a volunteer who has exemplified the volunteer spirit of our founder, Deedy Hall. The recipient for 2025 was Nancy McAvoy, a stalwart staff member who is with us every Friday, greeting guests and providing orientation. She also helps out with other events as well and never fails to devote boundless energy or to bring a smile to those with whom she comes in contact. We are thankful for Nancy's presence each week and always look forward to Fridays.

Nancy McAvoy (left) receives the Deedy Hall Volunteer of the Year award from Sally Rogers, SUSV Curator of Collections and Development.



Left and below are examples of reclaimed brick and stone once part of South Union's 19th century built vast environment



## DECONSTRUCTING THE PAST

South Union Shaker Village was recently given an extraordinary opportunity just prior to the demolition of a house near the village. Built by Charlie Sears, the ca. 1923 bungalow style home was constructed almost entirely with materials from 19th century Shaker buildings that were being torn down at the time. While the interior boasted classic 1920s details, the exterior was made up of Shaker-made brick, intricately cut limestone window sills, foundation stones, lintels, steps, and even what appears to have been a Shaker building's date stone. Upon close inspection, it is clear that Mr. Sears used material claimed from more than one Shaker structure.

Plans are to eventually find a onsite exhibit space to highlight the artistry of the masons and stone-cutters at South Union. We are most grateful to Western Crane Service, Inc. for allowing us the time it took to remove these important elements before demolition.



## SO YOU'D LIKE TO HELP WITH A RESTORATION PROJECT?

- Purchase a copper lantern and chamfered post to help us supply more light to the village at night. Five of the ten we plan to install have been paid for. **Cost: \$650.00 each**
- Restore an 1854 Wash House window. Of the 77 windows in the building, 47 have been restored, leaving 30 that still need work. **Cost: \$600.00 each**



- Paint the interior of the walnut cupboards in the Centre House kitchen, using a color that has been microscopically analyzed by Susan Buck. Most of these surfaces retain pink paint from the building's 1950s occupation. **Cost: \$1500.00**
- Replicate the missing mantel in the kitchen of the 1869 South Union Hotel, using extant mantels in the building as a template and expanding to the size of the existing ghost lines. **Cost: \$1500.00**
- Restore a room in the 1824 Centre House, including in-depth research, plaster and paint restoration, replication of missing wooden elements, removal of post-1922 additions. **Cost: \$2500.00**



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AT SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE

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## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

### **South Union Basket, ca. 1860**

Fine example of the Kentucky Shakers' unique white oak basket-making tradition, this basket is the first discovered that is not rectangular in shape. Constructed on wooden molds like the ash baskets made by the Shakers in the northeast, this basket was formed in the "cathead" shape.

*Purchased with acquisition endowment funds.*

### **Tables, ca. 1900**

Two small tables, one walnut and the other fruitwood, used by the South Union Shakers, given to donor's husband by his aunt and museum founder, Deedy Hall. *Donated by Sharon Price.*



### **Collection of Kitchen Objects and Farm Tools**

For use in exhibits, including stoneware churn, cast iron pots, skillets, kettles and utensils, stoneware jar and lid, early wrought iron trivet, farm tools related to the Milliken family, Auburn, Kentucky, some of which were possibly used by the Shakers. *Donated by Currie and Judy Milliken.*

### **"Poetical Works of Mrs. Felicia Hemans," 1836**

Book of poetry that belonged to South Union Shaker Lucilla Booker (1836-1918). Inscribed in ink on the flyleaf is "Shakertown, South Union, Logan Co. Ky. Lucilla Booker-Shaker." Booker was brought to South Union as a child and remained in the community until her death. *Purchased with acquisition endowment funds.*

### **Envelope, 1867**

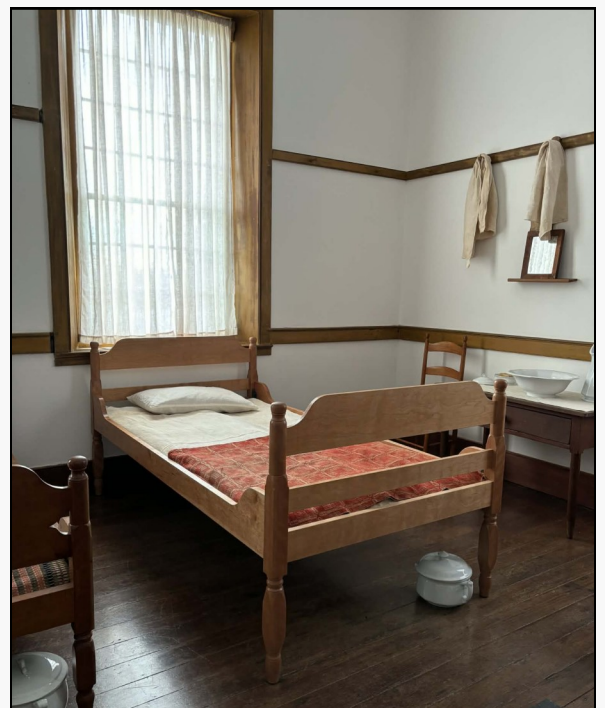
Envelope only, mailed from Morton, Mississippi, July 25, 1867 to U. E. Johns, South Union's trustee. Besides name and address, the sender also wrote on the envelope, "at the Shaker garden." *Donated by Ken Hatcher*

## THANK YOU, BRYAN CAVINESS

SUSV has been the grateful recipient of a new friend, a talented woodworker named Bryan Caviness. Bryan visited South Union in 2025 and expressed interest in helping with a project. After taking a look at some of his incredible furniture-making skills, we asked if he might want to produce a reproduction South Union bed for the collection. Of all the furniture forms, beds from our village are the most rare.

After a long session of close examination and measuring, Bryan purchased the cherry wood he needed and went to work. He returned to the museum several weeks later with the beautiful example you see at right. It is at that point that Bryan said that the bed was a gift to the museum.

We could not be more pleased with his work and there is already another project in the works. Thank you, Bryan!



# SUSV CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF TOMMY HINES' LEADERSHIP

Sally Rogers, Curator of Collections and Development

In May of 1986, an article in the Logan Leader announced the “Shaker Museum hours expanding with hiring of full-time director.” Tommy Hines, the first paid director in the museum’s history, had just completed his master’s degree in Folk Studies with an emphasis on historic preservation from Western Kentucky University. When the author of the article asked Hines what his main goals were, he answered that he’d like to expand membership, increase interest locally, and eventually throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, he said he would focus his efforts on continuing the restoration of the 1824 Centre House and the 1835 Smoke and Milk House. At the time he became director, the museum owned two buildings and less than three acres of land.

When you walk through the buildings and grounds today, it is easy to take for granted the tremendous work that has been accomplished over the years. It has required years of writing grants, working with preservation experts, research, and manpower to create present day South Union Shaker Village. Beyond the restoration of the site, Tommy has always kept education as one of the foremost goals of the museum.

SUSV would not be the nationally recognized historic site that it is without the stewardship of Tommy Hines. From museum exhibits to building restoration, every decision is made with meticulous care and respect for the story of the Kentucky Shakers.



Tommy Hines with Chris and Jobi Givens at the June 2022 Farm to Table Dinner in the Grain Barn.



Tommy Hines after receiving the Ida Lee Willis Memorial Foundation Award, Frankfort, 2001, with SUSV staff and board members (from bottom left) JoAnn Moody, Sally Ann Strickler, Donnalyn Spencer, Carolyn Zimmerman, and Ray Clark.

Besides his work at South Union, Tommy also serves on the boards of the Kentucky Historical Society, Old Salem Museum & Gardens, Green River Academy Preservation Society, Landmark Trust, Communal Studies Association, and Green River Museum.

Today, the museum owns nine out of ten original structures and five hundred acres of land. We have visitors and members from throughout the United States and, thanks to social media, we reach people across the globe with our educational video series. After four decades with Tommy Hines at the helm, it is safe to say he far exceeded accomplishing the goals his 27-year-old self set out to achieve. We are grateful to him for his leadership and vision over the duration of his career here and look forward to the great things in the future!

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION

### General Fund

Anonymous Donor—\$8,000.00  
Edie Bingham—\$7,000.00  
Susannah Scott-Barnes—\$6,000.00  
Anonymous Foundation—\$5,000.00  
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John Campbell—\$240.00  
Donna Hill—\$200.00  
Diane Heise—\$150.00  
Ray Clark—\$100.00  
Dennis L. Newberry—\$50.00  
Erik Geiman—\$50.00

### Restricted Funds

Ernie and Elaine Ezell—\$10,000.00 (restoration project)  
Dottie and Wayne Metcalf—\$10,000.00 (SU Hotel restoration)  
Kay Bender—\$2,412.58 (restoration project)  
John and Linda Tanner—\$1,000.00 (collections)  
Alan and Adrienne Dieball—\$650.00 (copper lantern and post)  
Dent and Phyliss Morriss—\$650.00 (copper lantern and post)  
Don Hansen—\$650.00 (copper lantern and post)  
Rex and Suzi Payne—\$650.00 (copper lantern and post)  
Lois Madden—\$650.00 (copper lantern and post)  
Sharon Koomler and Jerry Grant—\$300.00 (window restoration)  
Stephen and Robin Taylor—\$200.00 (window restoration)

### Sponsorships

Atmos Energy—\$1000.00 for Holiday Market  
US Bank—\$1000.00 for Holiday Market  
Lewisburg Banking Company—\$2500.00 for Symposium  
LTC Connect—\$500.00 for Symposium  
Reed Law Group—\$500.00 for Symposium  
Bouldin Roofing—\$500.00 for Symposium  
Chris and Jobi Givens—\$100.00 for Symposium

### Special Contributions

Eileen Starr in honor of Tommy Hines' 40th Anniversary  
Jeff Clark and Marion Jackson in honor of Tommy Hines' 40th Anniversary  
Bob and Pam Spiller in memory of Col. Robert and Cora Jane Spiller  
George and Darlene Kohrman in memory of Richard Dabrowski

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Sylvi Alexander  
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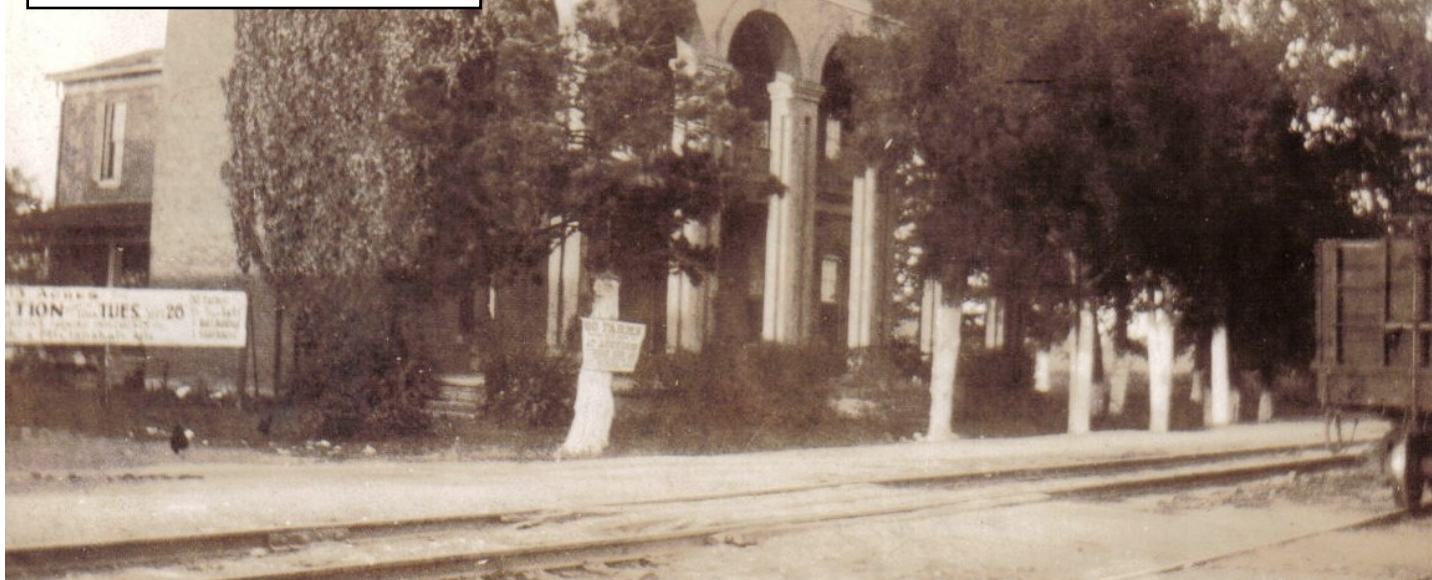
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# SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### “Line as Evidence: The Spirit Drawing Reconsidered”

WKU Art Department Student Exhibit

February 26-April 16

### Spring Open House

Join us in welcoming warmer weather, as the SU gift shop will feature new merchandise, along with several local craft vendors, including our own Shakertown Spirits bourbon!

Saturday, April 18, 10am–4pm

### Spring Farm to Table

An evening meal at the historic South Union Hotel offers a sumptuous menu catered by River Cottage Farms

\$90, by reservation

Saturday, April 25, 6:30pm

### “Shakers on the Kentucky Frontier: The Founding of South Union”

A day-long symposium celebrating America250, including presentations from leaders in the field of western Shaker scholarship, two meals, and special tours. Sponsored by Lewisburg Bank, Chris & Jobi Givens, Reed Law Group, Bouldin Roofing and LTC Connect.

\$50, by reservation

Saturday, May 16, 8am-4pm

### Shake, Ride & Roll

In cooperation with the Bowling Green League of Bicyclists, SUSV will host a bike ride through the beautiful countryside, much of what was originally the Shakers’ 6,000 acre farm.

Sponsored by BGLOB and Logan Aluminum.

Saturday, June 13, registration begins at 7am

## SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE

PO Box 177, Auburn, Kentucky 42206

**Website:** [SouthUnionShakerVillage.com](http://SouthUnionShakerVillage.com) **Phone:** 270-542-4167 **Facebook:** South Union Shaker Village  
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