SOUTH UNION MESSENGER

Vol. LIVI, No. 2, 2026
South Union Shaker Village, Kentucky

AMERICA250 SYMPOSIUM

On May 16th, SUSV hosted its America250 event, a symposium focusing on the founding of South Union. Participants from across the US were in attendance for a day of excellent presentations and a tour of the 1854 Wash House restoration. The program explored early Shaker missionaries, religious practices that drew the Shakers to Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana, music practices during the formative years of South Union, and the natural landscape the founders encountered when they arrived in southern Kentucky. The day ended with a reveal of the intense paint colors on the interior and exterior of the Wash House. Thanks to research by Susan Buck, the vivid hues in the building will delight visitors for many years to come. We are indebted to our sponsors: Lewisburg Bank, LTC Connect, Reed Law Group, Bouldin Roofing, Chris and Jobi Givens, Logan County Tourist & Convention Commission.

Presenters for the event were (left to right) Christian Goodwillie, Director and Curator of Burke Library, Hamilton College; Dr. Carol Medlicott, Associate Professor Emeritus, Northern Kentucky University; Tommy Hines, Executive Director, SUSV; Dr. Doug Winiarski, Professor of Religion and American Studies, University of Richmond.

SUSV'S 2026 ANNUAL APPEAL A SUCCESS!

Since 2021, South Union Shaker Village has launched an annual appeal each spring, asking members of our Friends organization and other regular contributors to donate something extra. The appeal has been a success since its inception and has enabled us to operate SUSV much more successfully. We are very appreciative of those who have donated this year. Our goal was $40,000.00 and we have raised $47,000.00 to date. For a list of all who have donated so far, take a look at page 2!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION TO THE 2026 ANNUAL APPEAL!

To $99.00
Patty Clendennen
Leah Craig and Tim Thornberry
Carolyn Holden
Patrick Lee Lucas
David and Doris Oaks
Sandra and David Kinser
Wayne Yates
Robert Campbell
Richard Schachtsiek
Dennis Newberry
Margaret and Shawn Futrell
Diane Heise
Mark and Jean Reynolds
David and Peggy Watzek
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Pamela Bratcher

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Travis Wilson
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Jean Balance
Joseph and Julie Bradley
Susan Buck

$100.00 - $249.00 (continued)
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$250.00 - $499.00
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Chris and Jobi Givens
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Fay Jones
Cathy and Denis Kolb
Donald and Lillian Riley
Eileen Starr and Tim Evans
Alan and Adrienne Dieball

$500.00 - $999.00
Glenn Rogers
Lyssa Styers
George and Darlene Kohrman
Robin and Stephen Taylor
Marilyn Anderson
Vicki Fitch
Tracey Johnson
Rex and Suzi Payne
Mike Robbins
Bob and Pam Spiller
Richard and Carol Switzer
Phyllis and Dent Morriss
Leah and Tim Eckley
David and Laura Harper Lee

$1,000.00 - $2,499.00
Joseph Stephen Hays
Bill and Tammy Prather
John C. Perkins, Jr.
Terry Taylor
Dottie and Wayne Metcalf
John Ridley
Judy and Currie Milliken
Jeff Clark and Marion Jackson
Tom and Emily Sharp

$5,000.00
Brian Lankford

$15,400.00
Ridley Wills III

RESTORATION AT SUSV

2026 has been a busy year with major restoration projects taking place at the 1854 Wash House and the 1869 South Union Hotel. Thanks for funding from Brian Lankford, the main level of the Wash House boasts restoration of the original plaster walls, woodwork and doors replicated to match existing elements, repairs to the floor, restoration of four brick hearths, and installation of iron rim locks to match the ghost lines of the originals. The project also included masonry and structural work and paint analysis to help determine the original colors chosen by the Shakers on both the interior and the exterior of the building.

One of three recently restored original front doors on the façade of the Wash House.

Other progress in the Wash House included additional window restoration, funded by several private individuals, and the introduction of new electrical service to the building, funded by Bill and Julie Kratts. There are a few small projects to be completed before grant funds are depleted later this summer.

We want to recognize the fine craftspeople who have contributed to this restoration to date: Vintage Millworks, Jack Perry, Bryan Grant, Johnny Miller, Joseph Miller, Bill Kratts, Scott Ray, Colby Woodward, David Woodward, Blake McQueen, Trey Rogers, Susan Buck.

The 1869 South Union Hotel is also undergoing major restoration. Major improvements include a new standing seam metal roof and significant improvements in the electrical system of the 157-year-old structure. Close investigation work in both the attic and the cellar revealed that much of the wiring was probably from the 1920s. To date, the entire first level of the building has now been re-wired, thanks to volunteer Bill Kratts, and failed HVAC units in the attic and the cellar have been permanently removed. In the crawlspace under the front section of the building, workers have added structural support where needed.

The crawlspace under the front portion of the South Union Hotel revealed 1920s wiring, heretofore inaccessible because of the presence of 1980s ductwork. Also discovered was a dirt floor covered in broken brick, making it very difficult for workers to access the space. Apparently, the brick was scattered there when the original hearths were removed in the 1950s. The debris has now been removed.

A project more visible is the rehabilitation / restoration of the building's kitchen. Because the kitchen will eventually be used by both caterers and guests of the hotel, a pure restoration was not possible. However, certain elements, hidden for many years, were restored. One of the windows had been covered for decades when it became a vent for the gas range. We were delighted to find both of the original sashes hidden beneath the plywood. The window has now been restored. A second window, partially hidden behind the kitchen sink, is now been made entirely visible because of the new arrangement of the built-in cabinets (left). We also discovered the kitchen fireplace and will soon have a mantle fabricated to match the ghost line of the original. The decision was made to paint the new cabinets and the trim to match the 1920s color, which was dark green.

We are indebted to the E. Rhodes & Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Dottie and Wayne Metcalf, and Ernie and Elaine Ezell for making Phase 1 as possibility. Stay tuned for more!

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

- Restore a Wash House window. Of the 78 windows in the building, 19 still need work. **Cost: $600.00 ea.**
- Paint the exterior of the corner cupboards in the Centre House dining room, using the red-orange color that has been microscopically analyzed by Susan Buck. **Cost: $1,500.00**
- Replicate the missing mantel in the kitchen of the South Union Hotel, using extant mantels in the building as a template and expanding to the size of the existing ghost lines. **Cost: $1,500.00**
- Fund the planting of two Magnolia Grandiflora trees in the yard of the 1846 Ministry Shop, both of which are documented in South Union manuscript records. **Cost: $1,500.00**
- Paint the Ministry Shop shutters, using the original green color discovered by Susan Buck. **Cost: $2,000.00**

THANKS FOR LIGHTING UP THE VILLAGE

South Union Shaker Village is now "lit up" at night, with the addition of ten new copper lanterns on chamfered posts. The lanterns were crafted by Jerry Wallin of Vevay, Indiana, and the chamfered posts by Joseph Miller, Auburn. The village looks especially beautiful after dark around the Wash House, Grain Barn, and Ministry Shop, and near the sites of the former Meeting House and Trustees Office. Many thanks to those who donated to make it possible:

Adrienne and Alan Dieball
Dent and Phyllis Morriss
Don Hansen
Rex and Suzi Payne
Lois Madden
John and Linda Tanner
Mike and Edna Hughes
Tim and Robyn Minor (2)
In Honor of
Bill and Nancy Gaines

TOMMY HINES RECOGNIZED

Congratulations to our Executive Director Tommy Hines, for receiving the Ida Lee Willis Memorial Award for 2026. The award is granted each year by the Ida Lee Willis Memorial Foundation and the Kentucky Heritage Council to someone who has made a longstanding impact in the field of historic preservation. The citation reads, "For his exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to the preservation, interpretation, and operation of South Union Shaker Village, and for his dedication to promoting cultural and architectural heritage through civic and volunteer involvement, and for inspiring a deeper public appreciation of historic places through visionary stewardship."

Besides his work at South Union Shaker Village, Tommy serves on the boards of Landmark Trust, Green River Academy Historic Site, the Kentucky Historical Society, Communal Studies Association, Green River Museum, and is on the advisory board of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts. He has presented on Kentucky history and Southern decorative arts for Colonial Williamsburg, The Decorative Arts Trust, Speed Art Museum, Frist Art Museum, and MESDA.

Sally Rogers, SUSV Curator of Collections & Development, and Tommy Hines (right) at the awards ceremony in Frankfort in May.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Oval Box, ca. 1840 (right)
Cherry and pine, probably made in New Lebanon, New York, ca. 1840, given to James Wardell Moore (1797-1861) by his sister, Eldress Nancy Ely Moore (1807-1889), a leader in the South Union community. Nancy and James were brought to South Union by their parents in 1811. James left two years later, at the age of 15. Nancy and both of her parents were struck by the Cold Plague in 1814. Nancy survived, but her mother died that year and her father a year later. Journal records note that James returned to South Union in 1847 to visit his sister, Nancy, who was ill. The box may have been given to him at the time. The oval box descended through the family of James Wardell Moore. *Purchased with acquisition endowment funds*

Padlock, ca. 1890
Brass padlock found at the South Union depot in the 1960s, probably used in the operation of the L&N railroad. The lock was manufactured or distributed by J. A. Zimmerman, Louisville, Kentucky. *Donated by Ernie Ezell*

Coverlets, ca. 1850
Two overshot coverlets with northern Kentucky history, with patterns similar to those found on coverlets made by the South Union Shakers. The coverlets, although they have no history with the Shakers, will be used in period room exhibits. *Donated by Carol Medlicott*

Sugar Bucket or "Firkin", ca. 1870
Cooper-made bucket with original bright blue paint, attributed to Eastern Shakers, for use in period room exhibits. *Donated by Ashley and Mary Catherine McAnulty*

Trunk, ca. 1830
Poplar wood traveling trunk, covered in leather and decorated with brass tacks. On the front of the trunk are the letters "SU" spelled in tacks. On the top are remnants of a shipping label that include the words "Auburn, Ky." An early 19th century form, trunks of this type were manufactured and marketed by the South Union Shakers. Two other well-documented examples are known to exist. *A gift Shaker Museum, Old Chatham, NY, the succession from its collection*

Collection of Inscribed Books, 1960-1980s
Thirteen books on Shaker history and culture, inscribed to the donor by various Shakers in the late 20th century, including Mildred Barker, Ruth Perkins Nutter, Ted Johnson, Arnold Hadd, Frances Carr, Minnie Green, Marie Burgess, Elsie McCool, and Wayne Smith. *Donated by Kenneth Hatcher*

Bedstead, ca. 1850 (right)
Youth-size cherry bed made by the Shakers at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. Typical Pleasant Hill construction and style, with slats running the length of the frame instead of across. *Donated by Judy and Ray McCaskey*

COLLECTIONS WORK

Thanks to the skills of two craftsmen, the museum now has a restored South Union table and a reproduction South Union bed. Early in the year, Bryan Caviness toured the village and asked if we needed a replica of any piece of furniture in the collection. Beds made in the community have always been in short supply, so we asked if Bryan might reproduce one for the collection.

Bryan returned weeks later with a beautiful cherry bed, an exact replica (right) of the ones that were being made here in the middle of the 19th century. At least three beds are necessary to create an 1850s retiring room. Now we are more accurate in our interpretation because of Bryan's amazing skill and generosity.

Another project involved only partial reproduction work. Since the 1960s, the museum has owned the frame of a table, donated to the museum by Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Bond. Mr. Bond found it in the Centre Family smoke house in the 1920s. Since the table had no top, the museum made the decision to have a showcase mounted to the frame instead. That showcase was used by the museum for more than fifty years.

Earlier this year, we decided to remove the showcase and install a new top. Our local craftsman, Roger Ryan, closely examined the frame, discovering that it originally had a top made of short vertical boards, just like most of the large South Union tables in the collection. Roger recreated a top for the ca. 1840 table (top left) and it now has a permanent home in the Centre Family smokehouse. Thank you, Roger Ryan and Bryan Caviness, for sharing exemplary craftsmanship with South Union.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Two significant volunteer projects were initiated this season. Dave Coleman crafted a reproduction Shaker tall clock (left) to help raise funds for the museum through a raffle. Tickets are $10 each or three for $25. The winning ticket will be drawn at the close of our Holiday Market in December.

For many years, the kitchen herb garden at the north end of the Centre House has been tended by John and Linda Tanner. We are very grateful to the Tanners for always tending this important educational component. This year, volunteer Nancy McAvoy stepped in to plant the garden and it continues to be a stopping point for so many of our visitors.

Thank you Nancy and Dave for sharing your time and talent with us!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION

General Fund

Marshall Kemp—$2,500.00
Dick Clay—$1,000.00
Mary Lucy Franklin—$1,000.00
Cindy Adrien—$250.00
John Campbell—$90.00
Diane Heise—$40.00

Restricted Funds

Bill and Julie Kratts—Undisclosed contribution for electrical project
Robyn and Tim Minor—$2,700.00 for Wash House window restoration
John Ridley—3,700.00 for Centre House room restoration and Wash House window restoration
Reggie and Debbie Widick—$2,500.00 for Centre House room restoration
Ray and Paula Clark—$2,500.00 for Centre House room restoration

Special Contributions

John and Linda Tanner in memory of James Grinter
Barbara Hulette in honor of Tommy Hines receiving the Ida Lee Willis Memorial Award

2026 Membership Renewals

Individual Members
Sue Brail
Martina Brindley
Sue Brooks
Aubrey Derryberry
Don Hansen
Diane Heise
Jean Hudson
Margaret McGee
Mary Julia Pace
Dr. Judy Pierce
Robert Sanborn
Maggie Selvidge
Trent Spurlock
Sandy Staebell
Anne Wesley
Lucas Wetton
Sherry Wittry

Family Members
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Thomas Bouldin
Jennifer Butt and Jeanne Close
Dick and Betty Crabtree
Roger and Judy Dunn
Leah Eckley
Bonnie and Scott Eilers
David Elbon
Dennis and Lori Gentz
Dr Richard and Sharon Gruber
Dawn Hall
Kurt and Beth Hansen
Kenneth Hatcher
Marguerite Kirkpatrick
Michael McClellan
David and Doris Oaks
Karla and Bill Roberts
Nancy Spears
Rich and Susy Spence
John and Linda Tanner

Family Members (continued)
Jason and Shari Tanner
Kimberly Tanner-Mahncke

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Henry Boyd
Samantha Bruer
Jennifer Cantrell
Sally and Gran Clark
Rick DuBose
Mark and Laura Hardison
Mike and Leigh Harper
Beth Hester and Scott Gilbert
Ted Hitchel
Tommy Hines, Sr.
Mary Catherine and Ashley McAnulty
Martin and Ann McNamara
Robert Martin
Drs. Marie Michelson and James Beattie, Jr.
Currie and Judy Milliken
Sherry Murphy
Phyllis and Dent Morriss
Shawn Norris
Kathy Parker
Glenn and Marianne Rogers
Tom and Emily Sharp
Michael Taylor
Blake and Jerri Tarpley

East Family
Lois Madden
Tim and Robyn Minor
Rex and Suzi Payne
Richard and Carol Switzer

Centre Family
Diana Harris
Susan K. Taylor and Andy Loving
John and Carol Rochford

Jasper Springs
Jan and Jim Bohannon

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Executive Director

Sally Givens Rogers
Curator Collections & Development

Daisy Dillard
Gift Shop Manager

Johnny Miller
Maintenance & Restoration

Ashley Brown
Christina Colovos
Jobi Givens
Ron Hartley
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Julie Kratts
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SOUTH UNION
SHAKER VILLAGE
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

"Harvest Moon" Farm to Table Dinner
Join us for a beautiful dinner in the rustic atmosphere of the 1875 Grain Barn, catered by River Cottage Farms.
$90 by reservation
Saturday, September 26, 6:30 p.m.

A Shaker Breakfast
Our annual Civil War-era breakfast, served at the historic South Union Hotel
$35 for members, $45 for non-members by reservation
Saturday, November 7, seatings at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Holiday Market Preview Party
Enjoy a "first chance" opportunity to shop at the museum's annual Holiday Market, including dessert and hot apple cider.
$10 by reservation or at the door
Friday, December 4, 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.

Holiday Market
One of Kentucky's finest antique and craft markets, just in time for Christmas! Features regional antique vendors and artists, all nestled in the historic atmosphere of the Centre House.
Admission by a canned food item or donation
Saturday, December 5, 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Christmas Farm to Table by Candlelight
One of our most memorable annual events, created by River Cottage Farms and served by candlelight in the historic South Union Hotel.
$90 by reservation
Saturday, December 12, 6:30 p.m.

Thank you to our sponsors!

Atmos Energy, Logan Aluminum, and Sheila Flener for the Holiday Market, Reed Law Group for the Harvest Moon Farm to Table, and Brent Stinnett, Atty. for Shaker Breakfast

SOUTH UNION SHAKER VILLAGE
PO Box 177, Auburn, Kentucky 42206

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Instagram: southunionsv