



## SHEFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### FALL NEWSLETTER 2000

#### MARK DEWEY RESEARCH CENTER 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

During the past 10 years, individuals seeking to learn of their own past, to research the history of their homes, or to explore life in Sheffield have made the journey to the Mark Dewey Research Center. **In celebration of the remarkable success of this local history repository, the Sheffield Historical Society is holding an Open House at the Mark Dewey Research Center on Sunday, September 10, from 2 to 4 pm.**

Over the years, the MDRC has mounted a number of exhibits including the recent presentation on maps shown at the Festival. **For the anniversary celebration, *Sheffield's Lost Buildings* will be on display**, an exhibit highlighting buildings no longer standing, including homes and industrial and agricultural structures. The public is encouraged to attend, and refreshments will be served.

When the doors first opened ten years ago, the goal was to provide family history materials to the community. Since that modest beginning, the Mark Dewey Research Center (aka: the Family History Center) has expanded on all levels and now regularly serves local, national, and international researchers. The collection has grown to include information from the 1730s to the 1950s. The all-volunteer staff responds to questions on genealogy, house histories, and special topics ranging from ethnic history to the lives of

from ethnic history to the lives of rattlesnakes in the Southern Berkshires. In addition to the archival materials, an impressive photographic collection has been acquired by the Center. These materials made possible the Carrie Smith Lorraine exhibition and are a major component in an upcoming collaborative exhibit on Sheffield's natural world.



(Left to right: MDRC volunteers Betty Chapin, Eleanor Griffiths, Pauline Schumann, James Miller.)

The MDRC materials also provide the historical data that occurs throughout the newsletter, such as the following from the 1950 Sheffield Town Report:

*In the summer of 1896, water from springs on the John C. Smith Farm had been piped to the Village and into a few houses in the center of Town. Hydrants, limited in number, were installed which presented to the young men of the community a desire to form a real Fire Company. A few meetings were held and by-laws were formulated by which the organization, known as Hose Company No. 1, was governed.*

*The Charter members were: James Wallace, Harry S. Stone, Edward Brewer, William D. O'Connell, Philip King, John Williams, Charles Andrus, Edward Cahill, John Cook, Peter Cassidy, Michael Cosgriff, Fred Crippen, John Ferry, F.B. French, William Graham, Harry Hiland, Malcolm Little, Martin O'Connell, Charles Williams, and Roland M. Smith.*

## **SUMMER AT THE SHEFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### ***George Washington and Carrie Smith Lorraine programming***

Two new ventures were undertaken this summer. In July the *World of George Washington* brought many visitors to the Dan Raymond House. The well-attended 2 pm concert by David and Ginger Hildebrand, at the Old Parish Church, enthralled an audience while sharing the musical history of our nation. In addition to their superb quality as musicians, they brought an awareness of our present culture through song.

This summer, the Society also offered its first youth workshop. The project focused on photographic images of Sheffield yesterday and today. The membership is a critical component of the Society's efforts to expand its programming for young people. Please call the Office if you have an interest in helping with such programming.

### **Mystification at the Festival of County Arts and Artisans**

A highlight of this year's Festival was the magic shows performed by Robert A. Olson, seen here with a young member of the audience. Olson's portrayal of 18<sup>th</sup>-century magician Mr. Bayly kept the audience guessing and proved that the magic of 200 years ago can bewitch an audience as easily as today's special-effects performances.

This year's Festival occurred on a picture perfect day and the craftors, food, and children's activities, including sheep from



Moon on the Pond Organic Farm, met with everyone's approval.

### ***Dan Raymond House Shop***

The Country Store created for the Festival has been moved to the Dan Raymond House and is open to the public. The Society encourages members to patronize the shop; that special item you have been looking for may be located here!

**News Flash! Visitation at the Dan Raymond House is up in 2000. Projected revenues for 2000-2001 have already been met!**

### ***Scholarship Corner:***

August 2000

*Dear Sheffield Historical Society,*

*I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all deeply for your very very generous scholarship. It means a lot to have your support. This fall I will major in History at the University of Vermont in Burlington. I appreciate your support in making my dreams an adventure that is soon to be.*

*Sincerely,  
D. Douglas Campbell*

## FALL CALENDAR

**September 8: The Iron Industry in the 14<sup>th</sup> Colony, with Ronald Jones.** Learn about the iron industry and the iron-making process in the tri-state area. Dewey Memorial Hall, Sheffield, 7:30 pm, refreshments provided.

**September 10: Mark Dewey Research Center 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary-- an exhibit *Sheffield's Lost Buildings* will be on display.** View items from 1770 to 1950. Refreshments.

**September 23: Field trip to Beckley Furnace with Edward Kirby.** Meet at the furnace for a tour of the site, 9:00 am. (See box at right)

**September 28: "May I Help You?" -- *Managing Patrons in Archives.*** A workshop sponsored by the Bay State Historical League through the Documentary Heritage Grant Program of the Massachusetts Records Advisory Board. (Registration required, fee)

**October 13: Berkshire Cottages and the Guided Age with Carole Owens--Special focus on Ventforth Hall.** Dewey Memorial Hall, Sheffield, 7:30 pm, refreshments provided. A special follow-up trip will occur in the Spring of 2001--watch for details.

**October 28: Spirits of Sheffield Cemetery Walk.** Make contact with the voices from Sheffield's past in this evening of spiritual communications in the Center Cemetery at 7 pm. Refreshments provided. (non-members fee of \$3)

**November 10: The 1830s Stone Store.** Hear about the progress on the restoration of the building and the plans for future developments. Dewey Memorial Hall,



Sheffield, 7:30 pm, refreshments provided.

**November 18: Holiday tree/wreath workshops** (youth and adult, fee).

**December 8: Yuletide Stroll, including Dan Raymond Open House.**

View the lights and decorations, listen to musical selections by local students, and enjoy holiday refreshments. (fee)

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

***Due to the demanding physical effort required of members and the diminishing revenues received, the Annual Turkey Dinner has been discontinued. We thank everyone for their support in the past, and we look forward to new ways to socialize and raise funds for the student scholarship.***

### Where's Beckley Furnace?

Take Route 7 south to Canaan. At the light in the center of Canaan, turn left (east) onto Route 44 and drive 2.5 miles. When you see a stone monument and the lovely North Canaan Congregational Church on your right, turn right; this is Lower Road. Follow the road for 0.6 miles. You'll see the tall stone furnace on your left. Turn sharp left into the road that leads down to the furnace.

Driving time from the center of Sheffield: 15 minutes. Carpooling is recommended as parking is limited. Call the SHS office if you would like to carpool, 229-2694.

Have you noticed the two new additions to the Society grounds?

**CAST STEEL BELL**

**Sheffield, England, 1860**

**Made by the Naylor Vickers & Co. foundry using E. Riepe's patent. This bell hung in the steeple of the Methodist Church on Main Street, Sheffield (now a private home). Donated by Tom and Cynthia Dixon to the Town of Sheffield.**

**IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM R. PRESTON, a past Society President, a mahogany bench has been placed on the grounds.**

**Membership renewal reminder:**

Many SHS memberships expire in September. Look at your newsletter mailing label. If there's a (9/00) after your name, it is renewal time.

Sheffield Historical Society  
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*Wish List*

If you have any of the following objects in good condition, but you no longer need the item, consider donating to SHS. Monetary contributions to be used in purchasing the items are also welcome.

Floor lights, screw gun, glue & staple guns, folding chairs, WWI & WWII info, Old scrapbooks

*1861. According to the freight ledger of the Housatonic Railroad, in September, 1861, T.B. Strong received shipment of a barrel of crackers for his general store in Ashley Falls. The weight was 60 pounds, freight charges 30 cents.*

**Don't Miss These!**

**IRON INDUSTRY IN THE 14<sup>TH</sup> COLONY--9/8**

**MARK DEWEY RESEARCH CENTER 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY--9/10**