

# ***SHEFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY***

## ***SUMMER, 1999 NEWSLETTER***

### **NOTES FROM JOANNE HURLBUT**

Thanks and hello are the two most pressing thoughts I have to share with you after completing my first month at the Sheffield Historical Society. Thanks to all those who have made my days so enjoyable and productive. People have stopped in to say hello, share their insights and help out with various projects. I agree with the comments that I have heard from local community members about the enthusiasm and positive efforts of the Society's membership. Hello to those who I have yet to meet; I am sure I will see many of you at the Festival on August 21. I am at the Dan Raymond House Tuesday through Saturday so please feel free to stop in and share with me your hopes and dreams for the Society's future.

Attending the final session of "A Place in Time" school program, the receptions at the Bidwell House and Dan Raymond House for the "18th Century Experience" and the Annual Meeting of the Society provided me with some insights into the Society's programs and activities. I am working now on getting the word about us out to a wider audience. A press release about the opening of the Dan Raymond House for the season has received attention, and the Society is now in several calendar listings.

If you would like to share history with others, the opportunity is at hand. The Dan Raymond House, Carriage House and Law Office are open Thursday, Friday and Saturday for guided tours through the end of October. A training session for interpreters was held on July 7, but I would gladly provide training for anyone who is interested and was not able to attend at that time. Interpretive materials have been updated to include more information about the history of the house and its inhabitants. Research on the house and the collection will be an ongoing project; are there any researchers out there?

The Program Committee has been working diligently and will have an interesting array of Friday evening programs, the first of which will be September 10 at 7:30, with Bernie Drew, whose talk is titled "Local History Can Be Fun".

The holiday exhibit, "Toys Over Time", in December will showcase the differences in toys of the 18th, 19th and early 20th century. We will hope to find Society members who have toys that they would be willing to lend for that exhibit.

I look forward to meeting each of you in person; at the moment I have begun to learn names as I am installing the new membership program. It will be great to match names and faces.

## FESTIVAL OF COUNTRY ARTS & ARTISANS

The Society's grounds will be the scene of the fifth annual Festival Saturday, August 21 when 24 craft persons from throughout New England will be on hand to demonstrate their 18th or 19th century trade. A country store, overseen again, by Dorothy Marosy will feature objects made by the crafters as well as other items pertaining to the period. Rene Wood and company will man the food tent where a variety of sumptuous items will be available for every taste. *Homemade pies are a hallmark of the Society, so if you are able to make one, please let Rene (229-2875) know.* There will be activities for children, again appropriate to the 18th and 19th centuries. Tours of the Dan Raymond House will be conducted throughout the day under the auspice of Kathy Orlando and the evening meal for artisans and their families will be orchestrated by Virginia Drury and her committee. The logistics for the entire event are being handled by Ann Riou. See you on August 21st! Six dollars admission.

## The SPIRITS OF SHEFFIELD WILL WALK AGAIN

The Sheffield Plain Cemetery will be the site of the annual "Spirits of Sheffield" program at 7:00 p.m., Saturday, October 23. Dennis Picard, our former director and life member of the Society, has begun the planning for this program. Those who attended a similar event in the Barnard Cemetery last autumn will recall what an interesting and fun experience it was. More details will follow in the next newsletter, but do mark your calendars now, so as to be able to attend. Free to members, \$5.00 for others.

## THE TURKEY DINNER

Harry Conklin and others are thinking about turkey, mashed potato, squash, gravy, dressing, cole slaw and pies, pies, pies. Sunday, October 24 is the date, with seatings at 12:00 noon and 1:30 p.m. As always, assistance will be needed for set up, clean up, turkey roasting, squash and potato peeling and of course pie baking. This will mark the 25th time the Society has sponsored the dinner. All proceeds go toward educational programs and scholarships.

*In 1787, Abigail Fosket was apprenticed to John Fellows and his wife Mary. According to the agreement, Abigail must faithfully "serve in all lawfull (sic) household business" until aged 18. John and Mary, for their part, must provide Abigail "suitable convenient & sufficient meat, drink, washing, lodging & apparral (sic) also will instruct said apprentice in read well & will also give to said apprentice a good, new Bible... two good suites of apparrel, the one shall be proper, suitable & convenient for the Holy Day the other fit & convenient for every day."*

## TRUSTEES ESTABLISH ADDITIONAL MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Enclosed with this newsletter is a Society membership envelope and a blank membership card. The Trustees, after hearing a report on membership dues of other historical societies, decided to broaden the number of categories and to increase the fees. The fee structure, in place for nearly twenty years, did not cover the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter, much less support any other activity.

The categories and amounts are detailed on the membership envelope. When payment is received, it will be recorded in the office and the mailing label for each member will be coded with the month a membership expires. For example, dues paid in July, 1999 will mean membership until July, 2000. Therefore, the code on the mailing label will be (7/00). Membership will run for a full year from the date the payment is received. If you have any questions about this change in procedure, please call the Society's office at 229-2694.

## SOCIETY TO UNVEIL WEB PAGE SOON

Greg Siter, a Sheffield resident who came to us through his use of the resources of the Mark Dewey Research Center has graciously volunteered to develop a web page for the Society. Greg has done a good deal of work and now the Society must address some of the other details. We expect to be able to announce its completion very soon. This leap into the 21st century will enable us to share our programs and activities with a much larger audience.

*The Bow Wow Reading Society meeting of February 17, 1859 was called to order at the home of Frederick Brown by vice president Webster Crippen on account of the absence of the president, Miss Emily Roys.*

## SOCIETY SEEKING VIDEO TAPING ASSISTANCE

We would like to air a brief segment about the Society and/or the Festival on the local cable television station. If there is a member or friend of the Society who has professional expertise in this area and would be willing to be of assistance, please call Joanne Hurlbut at 229-2694. Any help would be gratefully appreciated.

*The Berkshire Courier announced on May 17, 1876 that Grove Curtiss has returned to his old occupation of mending pins and clocks, cleaning watches and extracting teeth. (I wonder if this was received as good news.)*

Does the mother do her full duty to her daughter when she pays for piano lessons and neglects to teach her to cook? This was the weighty program topic of the Sheffield Grange on January 19, 1915. Leading the discussion were Mrs. Mary Thomson and Mrs. Gertrude Cande.

## THE 27TH ANNUAL MEETING

A small group of members and guests gathered at Dewey Hall on June 11th to receive reports from officers and committee chairs regarding the activity of the past year, and to elect a trustee for the ensuing year. Our new director, Joanne Hurlbut was present and introduced to the group and the following reports were given.

### *Mark Dewey Research Center*

The center has been staffed by Betty Chapin, Claire Height, Kathy Hutchison, Betty Dunk, Eleanor Griffith and Pauline Schumann and is open Monday and Friday afternoons and by appointment. Based on this schedule, a minimum of 875 working hours has been donated by the volunteers who usually meet on the first Monday of each month to plan activities, review new material and discuss problems related to research questions submitted from the public. We are interested in having more volunteers.

Questions on every topic from simple "points of information" to architecture, genealogy and photography have been answered. They arrive by walk-in, E-mail, U.S. mail and frequent referrals from the Sheffield public library and town clerk. In addition, we have worked with students from two area schools and contributed to an exhibition on black history at Simon's Rock College. We received a computer as a gift and are now buying books and vital records on cd roms to get the best value for our money.

The collection has continued to expand this past year. Some of the more important acquisitions have been:

#### Primary source material

- a. Several vital records of neighboring towns on microfiche
- b. Sheffield militia lists, 1828-1918
- c. Sheffield jury lists 1825-1860
- d. Constable and tax collector warrants 1784-1790
- e. Fence viewers records 1821-1845
- f. Assessors' certifications 1786-1849
- h. Highway surveyors' assessment lists 1849-1853
- I. Papers of overseers of the poor 1816-1871
- j. Papers related to highway and bridge maintenance 1841- 1887
- k. Sheffield selectmen financial transactions 1832-1870
- l. Papers relating to the 13 one room schools and high school 1822-1871
- m. Lists of students in Sheffield schools, 1889-1894

Secondary source material

- a. Austin genealogy
- b. Kellogg genealogy

Gifts

- a. Maps of Tyringham from Lynn Wood, 1794 and 1831
- b. Map of Mt. Washington, early 19th century, Virginia Drury
- c. Book used in Sheffield and signed by Titus Thorpe, 1799
- d. Diploma of Mary Conway, Sheffield high school, 1885
- e. Collection of genealogy books from Olive Gaylord
- f. Collection of books used in Sheffield by George Cowles from Betty Chapin
- g. Several important collections of family histories from researchers we worked with

Conservatively speaking, about 1300 items have been catalogued this past year and added to our collection. We have received about \$800 in contributions from people we have helped. And to raise additional money we are sending letters to people in town who live in houses more than 100 years old, offering to do a house history for \$20. The response has been very good.

In spite of our good fortune, we are always looking for donations related to the families of Sheffield so let me know if you have something. We will copy the original, whether it be a photograph or written material and return it to you. This is an excellent way to preserve your heritage for future generations.

Respectfully, submitted,  
James R. Miller, Director/Archivist

*Program Committee*

Committee members Doreen Atwood, Robert Ledlie, Pauline Schumann and Dennis Picard organized an interesting array of programs for the monthly program series. The season opened on September 11 with an historical perspective on Shay's Rebellion, presented by Dorothy Rowe of Pittsfield. This was followed a week later by a recreation of the march of General Ashley's troops to repulse the insurgents under the command of Captain Daniel Shays. Marchers, under the direction of "Captain Dennis Picard" retraced the three mile route leading to the last armed engagement between the volunteers loyal to the Commonwealth and the insurgents.

In October, William Wigham of Westfield discussed and demonstrated the techniques a hatter used to form felted fur hats used in the 17th and 18th centuries. That same month, Barnard Cemetery was the site of a tour where visitors could meet and hear from the spirits of some of Sheffield earliest residents. Guides with lanterns led the way, and each spirit spoke briefly of life in Sheffield during the 18th or 19th century.

On November 13, the Reverend Doctor Richard Floyd presented a program on "The Legacy of Puritanism: The Contribution of New England Congregationalism to the Making of the American Mind from 1620 - 1833".

The holiday season began on December 11, with a Yuletide Stroll which included several private homes in the center of town, plus the Dan Raymond House and the Parker Hall Law Office. All were beautifully decorated and lighted for the public. Following the stroll, participants were invited for desserts and beverages in Dewey Hall and enjoyed musical accompaniment.

Regrettably, the Annual What's It Night scheduled for January 8 was canceled due to inclement weather. Deborah Taite, a retired art teacher, presented a slide/lecture on February 8 on Itinerant Painters. This was accompanied by a small exhibit of folk art paintings.

March, was Women's History Month and the second Saturday was National Quilt Day. In recognition of these two dates, Connie Logan, quilter and teacher from Great Barrington presented a lecture and slide demonstration on the influence of women and their quilts on the social, economic and political development of their times. Several beautiful quilts were on display.

Janet Taylor of Taylor Memorials, Pittsfield, discussed the care and maintenance of cemetery memorials at the April meeting. Information about the historical origins of memorials, their construction, composition, methods of care, cleaning and preservation were among the topics covered. A lively question and answer period followed the presentation.

The May meeting witnessed a return of Chris Bailey, author, genealogist and horologist, who this time spoke about the genealogy collection and family history library of the Mormon Church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dorothy Marosy, Chairman

### *Education Committee*

The principal effort of the Committee, Grace Arzt, Milton Barnum and Twiggs Myers, was recruiting assistants and gathering equipment and supplies for the implementation of "A Place in Time", the educational program for 182 first and second graders from Undermountain Elementary School. This program introduced children to life in the late 1700's through participation in chores, school and leisure activity.

Those who trained and assisted Dennis Picard were Doreen Atwood, Grace Arzt, Milton Barnum, Dorothy Marosy, Catherine Miller and Marion Whitman. The children and their teachers were very positive about the experience. The Society looks forward to continuing this next spring and adding the third and fourth grade curriculum to the series.

Milton Barnum cooked breakfast over the open hearth at the Dan Raymond House for a few of the eighth grade students. Those assisting in the twentieth century kitchen were Marion Barnum, Cathy Hutchison, Catherine Miller and Marion Whitman. James Miller conducted a "What's It" program with items from the Dan Raymond House. In June, another group of eighth graders returned for tours of the Carriage House, Law Office and Dan Raymond House.

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A field trip to the Wethersfield Farm and Carriage Museum in Amenia, NY, along with lunch at the Island Green Country Club was sponsored by the Society. The group of eleven had a guided tour of the mansion, carriage house and gardens. The next field trip will be to Storowton Village in December.

The annual \$1,500 scholarship to a Mt. Everett graduate was awarded to Brian Ketchen of Alford who will begin his studies in architecture at SUNY at Delhi.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marion Whitman, Chairman

#### *Dan Raymond House Museum*

Dennis Picard, the Society's first director, developed a training program which included written materials about the house and collection. Doreen Atwood, Dorothy Marosy, Catherine Miller, Kathy Orlando and Marion Whitman were trained as interpreters for the house and assisted with guided tours during the fall of 1998. The house was closed for the season, except for special functions, on November 1. It reopened at the beginning of June and Joanne Hurlbut, the new director, has provided a refresher course to the returning interpreters and trained new ones.

#### *Search Committee*

The Search Committee (Morton Levin, James Miller, Marion Whitman) reconvened in September, 1999 at the request of Catherine Miller, President of the Board of Trustees, as soon as she received word that Dennis Picard would be leaving at the end of December. The new search was officially opened in December with advertisements placed in the journals of the "American Association for State and Local History" and the "New England Museum Association". Several runners-up from the first search were invited to re-apply, and Dennis Picard was asked for recommendations, as well.

The Committee reviewed seventeen applications for the position. Of those, five were selected for telephone interviews, conducted by the committee as a group, using a speaker phone. Subsequently, all five were invited for on-site interviews. This was after each had received a detailed job description and other materials about the Society and the Berkshire area in general. The interviews were also attended by the president.

Two applicants withdrew before the in-person interview, one because the salary did not meet her needs and the other because of an inability to relocate within an acceptable period of time.

On the basis of the interviews and excellent references, the Search Committee recommended to the Board of Trustees that Joanne Hurlbut be offered the position as Director of the Society. The Board approved the recommendation and the offer was made and accepted. Ms. Hurlbut began work on June 7.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katherine G. Ness, Chairman

The Sheffield Woman's Club was founded in 1904. The program for October 17, 1906 was on Ancient Mexico and Aztec Monarchy, sculpture and ruins. Emma G. Bliss was hostess.

### *Nominating Committee*

The Nominating Committee of Harry Conklin and Sandra Preston placed the name of Bruce Howden in nomination for the position of trustee for three years, to succeed Harry Conklin whose term expired. The membership voted unanimously for this. The Board of Trustees for 1999 - 2000 is as follows:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Term Expires</u>
President	Catherine B. Miller	June, 2000
Vice President	Sandra Preston	June, 2000
Clerk	Eleanor Griffiths	June, 2000
Treasurer	Carl Proper	June, 2000
Trustee	Grace Arzt	June, 2001
Trustee	Nancy Elliott	June, 2001
Trustee	Bruce Howden	June, 2002
Trustee	Dorothy Marosy	June, 2000
Trustee	Katherine Ness	June, 2000

### *Endowment Fund (development fund)*

The Development Fund continues to do well. While providing \$49,000 to the Society's operating fund, the Development Fund appreciated from July 1, 1998 to June 30, 1999 at a rate of 12% before reduction by transfers to the operating account.

The Fund consists of two elements: fixed income funds from which income is derived for Society operating needs and equity funds with the accumulation of dividends and interest for future Society needs. At fiscal year end the split of funds was 70% equity and 30% fixed and money market.

During the year, changes in Fund investments, made to keep them in line with changing market conditions, produced excellent results. This is due to the stewardship of the Society's President, Catherine Miller, and the fine work of the other members of the Committee, Carl Proper, Morton Levin, Wesley McCain and Fred Gordon.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dennis Sears, Investment Mgr.

*In local business news, 1866. the Sheffield China Clay company of East Sheffield sold about 500 tons of clay at \$25.00 to \$30.00 per ton.*



Treasurer's Report

Income: July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999

OPERATING FUND	
Membership	1,810
Donations	868
Miscellaneous	204
Transfers from Development	54,000
EDUCATION FUND	
Turkey Dinner	1,701
Workshops	442
CRAFT FESTIVAL	
Admissions/Food/Sales	5,359
MARK DEWEY RESEARCH CTR.	
Donations/Sales, etc.	810
ACCESSIONS	
Deaccession of Items	<u>1,150</u>
TOTAL:	66,344

*A post office was established in 1794 and Elisha Lee, Esquire was appointed the first post master, followed by Dr. William Buel, Dr. Nathaniel Prester and Edward F. Ensign, Esquire. In 1829 a mail stage line passed back and forth through town on the road from Hartford to Albany every day, Sabbath excepted, for about half the year. During the other half, it passed every other day. Weekly mails were also received and sent out from the Sheffield post office by additional routes. Few towns in the county have more travel.*

Expenses July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999

OPERATING FUND	
Grounds Care	3,819
Building Upkeep	321
Capital Expense (bldg)	6,222
Utilities	4,633
Housekeeping/Supplies	229
Printed Materials/Photo	723
Office Supplies	1,569
Newsletter	423
Postage	617
Publicity	336
Meeting Expense	1,199
Insurance	2,459
Security	444
Accounting/Legal	2,810
Membership Dues	485

Subscriptions/Books	102
Special Events	145
Bank Charges (checks)	50
Search Committee	523
Special Donations	275
Salary	12,180
Fed/State Taxes	4,402
EDUCATION FUND	
Turkey Dinner	731
Scholarships	2,250
Children' Program/Field Trips	587
CRAFT FESTIVAL	
Promotion	3,892
Food	706
Entertainment	1,150
Logistics	1,960
Store	402
MARK DEWEY RESEARCH CTR.	
Printed Materials	129
Office Supplies	595
Reference Materials	954
Conservation	327
Other	1,449
ACCESSIONS FUND	
Accession of Items	<u>748</u>
TOTAL:	59,846

Respectfully submitted,  
 Carl L. Proper, Treasurer

*Sheffield owners of stock in the Mahaiwe Bank in 1851 were Orrin Bills, John Bush, Herman Callender, David Clark, Orren Curtiss, Elijah Deming, John L. Dodge, Asel Moss, Gilbert Smith and Joseph Wilcox.*

*Officers of the Ashley Falls Village Improvement Society in 1948-49 were Mrs. Olive Gaylord, president; Mrs. Esther Kradel, vice president; E. Wesley Newton, treasurer; and Mrs. Alice Hurlburt, secretary.*