



DAN RAYMOND HOUSE

SHEFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
SHEFFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

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TEST YOUR ANTIQUITY QUOTIENT - January 11

This mid-winter newsletter brings you, first of all, a reminder that the Society's January meeting is not to be missed. It features the annual "What's It?" program, when we try to identify all manner of odd antique artifacts, from household, shop, farmyard, and attic. Those with the highest AQ may aspire to rank alongside such long-time wizards as Loring Boardman or Arthur Chase. Bring your favorite What's It and see if you can stump the experts. The meeting opens in Dewey Hall at 7:30, Friday, January 11.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIETY'S PRESIDENT

Welcome to 1985! Your Historical Society is looking forward to an exciting new year with a number of projects getting off the ground. The great success of the Turkey Dinner enables us to sponsor more school outings such as the Fifth Grade trip to the American Indian Institute in Washington, Conn., which we helped finance last fall.

Our biggest fund-raiser, of course, is the Antiques Show. This year we will be making some major changes. The Show will be indoors at the Berkshire School hockey arena, on June 28, 29, and 30. With that change of date and location, and the help of show manager Jacqueline Sideli, we hope to attract a large number of high-quality antique dealers and to put on an affair that we will be proud to call our own.

The Sheffield Historical Society will still be in charge of all the food and refreshments. This includes the Preview Benefit on Friday night -- a gala party which is sure to attract a large following. We are excited about the new format of the show and hope all our members will lend a hand to make it the success it deserves to be.

The Accessions Committee is hard at work searching for those items still needed to furnish the Dan Raymond House. We have asked the noted antique authority Robert Herron to assist us in this

task. He will make suggestions and help verify the appropriateness and authenticity of any piece that goes into the House.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped me in my first year as President. There are capable people running the various committees, and this has made my job much easier. Always remember that you, the members of the Sheffield Historical Society, are the Society. The Dan Raymond House and other projects simply reflect our commitment to the Town and its history. Keep up the good work!

Chris Coenen

DAN RAYMOND HOUSE NOTES

(The focus of SHS life and activity is the Dan Raymond House, our headquarters on Main Street, open every Friday afternoon from 1:30 to 4, as well as for the kind of special programs described below.)

Holiday Open House: The excitement of transforming the House was contagious, as members helped decorate the mantels with fruit and greens, light fires in the three fireplaces, set candles at every window, and serve mulled cider and Christmas goodies in the Keeping Room. If you weren't able to stop in for the warmth and welcome within, you surely felt the glow from the windows as you passed by, going from one seasonal function to another on that beautiful December afternoon. The House is at its best when full of interested members and townspeople, as it was that day.

Workshops: We had a steady schedule of craft classes during the fall: an herb wreath workshop in November which attracted its full quota of enthusiasts, a series of quilting classes, and two basketry workshops. Basketry seems to be addictive, especially as taught by Rita LePrevost whose two all-day workshops were immensely popular -- so much so that a new basket-making class is being planned for later in January. For information about date, time, and fee, call Muriel Rokos (528-4767). Another quilting series, taught by Betty Gagne, is tentatively planned for the spring, most likely on Tuesday evenings. Spread the word about these always-popular classes!

Accessions: A generous \$500 gift from the Quilting Group has been used to purchase three early pewter plates, now proudly displayed on the mantel in the Keeping Room. The Group, which has been a benefactor of our Society from the outset, has recently provided two thermos coffee servers for use at SHS functions.

FOUR MEMORABLE EVENTS OF 1984

(It behooves an historical society to record its own doings before time covers them up. Hence, we are putting a brief spotlight on four noteworthy events of the past year.)

MARCHING THROUGH DALTON. Seventeen SHS members went by bus to Dalton on

June 23 to take part in that town's 200th Anniversary parade. The Sheffield Historical Commission funded our bus, but the SHS provided the impetus and the bodies! Our presence, serving as a friendly gesture between old Berkshire towns and particularly as a thank-you for Dalton's participation in our 250th Anniversary parade in 1983, was warmly appreciated by Dalton people. They applauded our period costumes and chuckled at the jogging shoes visible beneath one ankle-length skirt. Many in our contingent had lived through more than a third of the 200 years being celebrated -- but we were all glad to have gone!

SAUNTERING THROUGH STURBRIDGE. An even hotter and more humid day (September 25) saw twenty-five members taking a deep swim in history at Sturbridge Village. It was an all-day excursion, leaving the Legion Hall at 8 a.m. and returning after dinner at Valle's in West Springfield at 8:45 p.m. We had seven hours at Sturbridge, time to take the exhibits at a leisurely pace, to have picnic lunch in the pine grove, to observe the ticking of ancient clocks, the bundling of straw brooms, the come-and-go of the water-powered sawmill, and much more, and at last to sink gratefully into our seats in the cool bus as we drove back into the Twentieth Century. These all-day excursions are as much fun for the fellowship with other SHS members as for the places seen. Where shall we go next?

TURKEY DINNER NO "TURKEY." No indeed! Some 322 ravenous diners declared the turkey dinner on October 28 a sensational success, a tribute to the organizing and the plain old-fashioned hard work of chairman Milton Barnum and twenty-seven helpers -- including a student-teacher-parent delegation from the Mt. Everett 8th Grade. The proceeds of \$1126 exceeded all recent years. As President Chris Coenen's message notes, this gives us increasing flexibility for encouraging historical outreach by students -- the purpose of our Education Fund and of the annual turkey dinner which supports it.

CHRISTMAS MIRACLE REPEATED. The annual Christmas dinner brought a full house to Dewey Hall on December 14. It would be easy to sell tickets beyond the limit of 100 persons, but the tiny kitchen would explode at the very thought. The committee repeated the annual miracle, serving a ten-dollar dinner for three dollars, while making ends meet! The evening ended with lovely carol singing by Linda and Chris Best (and finally by the whole group) accompanied by Mary Anne Carter.

FIFTH GRADE HISTORICAL FIELD TRIP

The entire Fifth Grade from Mt. Everett, seventy-five strong, accompanied by four chaperons, three teachers, and an aide, were bused to Washington, Connecticut, on December 5, to visit the American Indian Archaeological Institute -- a trip made possible in part by a contribution from the Society's Education Fund.

The class was guided through a mock-up of an archaeological dig and a reconstructed Indian village and garden, learning about the types of dwellings used by Indians of this region over a period of 5000 years, and the

techniques of excavation.

In the lecture hall, an American Indian, Mr. David Richmond (of the Snipe clan, Mohawk tribe, and Iroquois nation) described the customs, traditions, and skills of his people and showed a film of life on a reservation. Traditional Indian life style and culture, he said, are enjoying a renaissance today. After lunch on the bus, there was time to view more exhibits and to buy Christmas presents in the gift shop.

Mr. Leo Alvares, who organized the trip, feels it was "a first class success for the students and staff. Thoughtful students may well spend some years sorting out why what they heard from an authentic American Indian contradicted 95% of that which they heard from their teacher and read in their texts. Geronimo!"

COMING PROGRAMS

- February 8 -- Dallas Cline, speaking on dulcimers. Refreshments by Sally and Carl Proper, Catherine and James Miller, Mandy and Chris Coenen.
- March 8 -- Susan Edwards, Director of the Berkshire County Historical Society. Refreshments by Marion and Milton Barnum, and ??? (volunteers needed).
- April 12 -- The Shakers. Refreshments by Rachel Willcox, Louise Stevens, Muriel Rokos.
- May 10 -- Mrs. John Batty, speaking about the Normal Rockwell Museum. Refreshments by Vera Conklin, Olive Gaylord, Gertrude LeGeyt.

WANTED: A GOOD HOME FOR THESE WOODEN WAIFS

Fifteen or twenty old wooden-seated folding chairs -- the kind that used to cling together in sets of five or so and make a real bedlam when the seats were flipped -- are being disposed of by the SHS free of charge, to the first comers. They have been cut apart, will stand alone, and can be had -- one, or a few, or all -- for nothing. Call Milton Barnum (229-2569).

JUNE 28, 29, 30

Don't let those dates be stolen by any competing activity! Circle them now on your calendar and plan to respond with a hearty "OF COURSE!" when you are asked to give a few hours of your time, helping to make the "new" SHS Antique Show a resounding success!