



Southern view of Sheffield, (central part).

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NEWSLETTER

SHEFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As the Winter doldrums give way to thoughts of Spring and flowers, it is time once again for an update by your Historical Society.

From The Desk Of The Curator

Gregory Farmer of Springfield, president of New England Historical Services, Inc. and vice-president of the Bay State Historical League, has completed a comprehensive report on the history and occupants of the Dan Raymond House.

Using both primary and secondary sources, Mr. Farmer investigated the families and occupations of the owners from the mid-1770s to 1945, when Jenny Little Minard bought the house from Clara Little for "less than \$100." He found that Dan Raymond moved to Sheffield in 1763 at the age of 27 and married nineteen-year-old Anne Noble, granddaughter of Matthew Noble, Sheffield's first permanent settler. Mr. Farmer appended to his report inventories of the estates of Captain Ezra Fellows, who owned the house from 1793-1800, and Robert J. Rogers, the occupant from 1828-1866. The appraisal of Capt. Fellows' estate included such items as two pairs of breeches for 50 cents, one old trunk for 12 cents and one dung fork for 67 cents. His most valuable possession was "one span of Gray Horses" valued at \$140.

A detailed inventory of Rogers' assets at his death listed not only a "lot of fishlines" at 31 cents and nine papers of tacks at 18 cents but, more importantly, the appraisal of his "homestead containing about 1/2 acre with the buildings appraised at twenty-one hundred dollars." Such probate records afford valuable insights into the lives of the previous occupants of the house and the development of the town.

Raymond, a merchant, and Fellows, a "farmer and gentleman," were two of the wealthiest men in the community. Succeeding owners included a tailor, a lawyer, two hatters, a manufacturer, an innkeeper, a doctor and a merchant.

Mr. Farmer suggests that the Society continue to document the history of the community into the 20th century and to extend the interpretation of the house to at least 1860. His specific recommendations are being studied by the Dan Raymond House Committee and the Executive Committee and will be used as a guide to further acquisitions and interpretation.

The report concludes, "The Sheffield Historical Society is a healthy and active organization with a solid building, an admirable collection and an important role in the community. The commitment and planning that have brought the Society to this point should continue to guide the Society in the future."

News Of The Dan Raymond House

The members of the Dan Raymond House Committee have been replanning our storage areas. As the Society acquires new items, the need for extra storage areas is acute. Now that we have the use of the recent addition to the barn, certain bulky and less frequently used items will be moved there giving us more space in the house. Also to be stored in the addition will be the tools used for the upkeep of the grounds as well as many of the large signs used by the society for our yearly events.

A special thank you to Grace Arzt, Ruth Dutcher, Virginia Drury, and Fran Warren who contributed special articles for display during the exhibit of weaving by Hazel Warren which ran through Dec. and Jan. at the D.R.H.. Penny Browne would welcome any collections that could be displayed at the house this Spring or Summer.

On permanent loan from Charlotte and Holger Oleen are a set of 6 old tin spice boxes and a charming lace and silk parasol with ivory handle. Thank you to the Oleens !

Breakfast anyone? On March 13th some of the Mount Everett Regional School 8th graders will be served a "Colonial" breakfast cooked over the open fire in the keeping room of the D.R.H.. As in the past, the students attending this annual event will be chosen by their teachers after writing an essay on "Colonial Living". Exposing the local youngsters to their rich historical past is one of the functions of the Society and it is hoped that one day these same children will be the stalwarts of the Society.

News From Gramps Carriage House

The new storage shed on the West side of the carriage house is nearly completed and will be as soon as the weather permits. As the first flakes of winter snow arrived in the Berkshires, workers attached the very last roof shingle. Ten minutes later the roof was a carpet of white. The grading is being taken care of by Loring Boardman, Dirk Willcox and Carl Schuman. The building was erected by Ed Warren, Chris Coenen, Bill Browne and Milt Barnum. We are very anxious to put it to use as we need the room in our barn for our newly acquired one horse cutter and doctor's buggy. The cutter needs a little attention but the carriage is in fine shape

On The Wind

Another item of interest to the Society is the disposition of the old High School. The building is in need of repair and would have to be moved if it was purchased by the Historical Society. Currently, we are short of display space as well as a climate-controlled area for the storage of fragile items that would deteriorate otherwise. The old High School could meet those needs but at a substantial cost to the Society. If you have any words of wisdom or strong opinions, feel free to communicate them to the members of the Executive Committee.

Calendar Of Events

The annual "What's-It" program was a great success with Art Chase once again taking top honors. This years prize was a book on identifying more "what's-it" items. Surprize item was Susan Young's spectacular needlepoint depicting Sheffield. The work is almost 3'x5' and illustrates various aspects of life in Sheffield. Numerous local "characters" are seen going about their daily tasks in the picture.

February 14 - Matters Of The Heart-The Valentines day program will feature old and new ways to express love. Members are urged to bring all sorts of Valentines, hearts, songs, old love letters, etc. for this unique show and tell program. Don't miss this one!!

March 14 - Bells Around The World Through The Years- Lillian Preiss will discuss the history of bells using her fine bell collection to illustrate her lecture.

April 11 - Old Glass- Mason Dutcher will talk about old glass-free blown, molded, pressed, cut, pattern, lacy cut and Art Nouveau glass and the differences between them.

May 9 - Old Tools/Old Furniture- A lecture presented by Robert Sutter on old tools and their use in furniture making.

June 13 - Annual Meeting- This is a covered dish affair and will include the annual elections.

June 27,28,29 - Sheffield Historical Society Antiques Show- Our second year will be even better and bigger than last year.