



DAN RAYMOND HOUSE

Sheffield Historical Society

Sheffield, MA 01257

NEWSLETTER

Volume 14, Number 4

December 28, 1987

Dan Raymond House News

On December 5 twelve members of the Sheffield Historical Society took a delightful candlelight tour of "Massacoh Plantation" in Simsbury, Connecticut. This is a complex of nine buildings that are maintained by the Simsbury Historical Society. 'Twas a lovely moonlight night and we walked by candle and lantern light from house to house. As we opened the door of each one a "scene" was in progress with live costumed characters. The scenes included: a town meeting in the 17th century meeting house; in the old schoolhouse a class of children being instructed by the school "marm"; at the Phelps Inn a lively tavern scene with a saucy bar-maid; a chamber scene with two maids making up a four-poster and wishing they could attend the ball that evening; through another door we entered the ballroom-- masked couples were dancing the new and daring "waltz"; a keeping room scene where a grandfather sitting in front of the fire told a story to his grandchildren; a Victorian family scene with father reading "A Visit from St. Nicholas", and in came the Saint himself. Regretfully we stepped out of the past and into the present. We hope you will all try to attend this event next year. We do plan another trip to the Plantation when it opens in May, 1988. Keep it in mind.

The Dan Raymond House "Open House" took place December 13. All was in readiness for the holiday visitors. Those who came enjoyed a candlelight old Sheffield Christmas. This year we added 5 young carolers and a "Night before Christmas" scene in the Victorian Room. We regret the turnout was less than last year, and that so many of our members failed to come. The DRH committee works hard on this event and we hope you will support us next year. In the winter months ahead we will work on some new interesting changes at the DRH. So, peek in once in a while to see what goes on.

FROM THE CURATOR'S DESK

The library on the second floor of the Dan Raymond House has been named the "The Sally Scanlan Library" as a memorial to our great benefactress, many of whose books on history, literature, and art are available for research or for loan.

The Education Committee has voted to use \$400. to purchase additional books for the Sally Scanlan Library and \$400. for books of a historical nature for our town library, the funds to come from the

education budget. Suggestions from members concerning books to be purchased may be addressed to the president or to any member of the education committee: Marion Whitman, Bill Browne, Lillian Preiss, or Martha Williamson. John Campbell, town librarian, will also welcome suggestions.

Although we are eager to expand our collection, especially in the area of Berkshire County history, we should not belittle our present stock of books. How many of our members are aware of the wealth of information available on the library shelves? Here you can find books on antiques, furniture, pottery, pewter, china, quilts, dolls, herbs, baskets, architecture, churches, and Sheffield cemeteries. Biographies, cookbooks, old copies of American Heritage, and Antiques as well as town reports, school reports, and old scrapbooks may be consulted here, or, in most cases, may be borrowed. As the library evolves in usefulness, we urge members and friends to become familiar with its resources. The Dan Raymond House is open Friday afternoon from 1:30 to 4:00 year round. Do stop in.

The Education Committee met recently and now make the following announcements:

- A) the scholarship to a Mt. Everett graduate has been increased from \$500. to \$1000.
- B) \$500. is allotted for school field trips each year.
- C) \$100 is allotted to send a girl to Girls State each year from Mt. Everett High School
- D) The Education Committee will pay for a bus trip to historic sites for our membership.
- E) \$400. has been allotted for this year to the Bushnell Sage town library for books.
- F) \$400 has been allotted for this year to the Sally Scanlan Library in the Dan Raymond House.
- G) All this is accomplished through the combined efforts of the membership in fund-raising. Your continued good works are appreciated.

Education Committee
Bill Brown, Lillian Preiss, Martha
Williamson, and Marion Whitman, Chr.

Many thanks to all who helped in any way to make our Turkey Dinner a big success. We came through with a net profit of \$1616.13, which is the most yet. There are so many who did so much and in so many ways that I'm not going to attempt to name them for fear of missing someone. There is one thing I would like to ask you to do, and that is if you or someone you know has a suggestion how we can make the Dinner better, please let us know. Now I ask you, when is the last time someone wanted to have you complain? Thanks again, and we hope you and your family have a healthy and happy holiday season and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Oh yes, in case you think that the season has got ahead of you, cheer up. In a few days you'll have a whole year to catch up!

FROM THE PRESIDENT

A pile of old Sheffield Historical Society newsletters dating back to 1979 provided some early winter reading this December. There is nothing like a review of dated original documents to appreciate how far we have come as a group and to see how very much we have to be proud of. My purpose in perusing the newsletters, however, was not to see where we have been but to see where we might go, because a major emphasis of the Society for this late winter and spring will be long range planning to cover the next ten years

In reviewing some of our great past accomplishments I have no doubt about our ability to define and implement the next steps in our development toward a more productive and successful society. Beginning in early February a committee made up of some past presidents and officers will be setting up procedures to tap the member-ship for their thoughts. With no preconceived notions the committee's task is to translate members' ideas into goals and objectives that will guide our group toward the year 2000. Just some of the important questions to be addressed will be : building acquisition and use; accessions and preservation; investment philosophy and goals; education function for both membership and the public; volunteer training; the social responsibility of our group, and the question of full-time staff. Roger Drury has agreed to chair this very important committee which will include Lillian Preiss, Christopher Coenen, Catherine Miller and Marion Whitman. Please be prepared to convey your hopes and aspirations for the Society to these people both informally as you may have the opportunity to do so or formally as they seek guidance from the membership as a whole.

If we can use the resources and the vigorous energy and talents of our people on well defined and focussed objectives and goals, our Sheffield Historical Society will be able to enrich the life of our community even more. That, after all, is our purpose. Let's look forward to the work of the committee.

1988 SPRING PROGRAM

- January 8 The annual stumper time called Whats It?, wherein we bring artifacts we think are good objects to puzzle our resident experts as to their use or origin. The evening also includes a Show and Tell and for this you bring interesting objects you think will intrigue your fellow members
- February 12 Susan Young, who made the well-known needlepoint tapestry of Sheffield town will talk about its making and the story of pictures in needlework. This is your chance to see it again and marvel at its detail.
- March 11 "Sheffield by Lamplight" A talk by Roger Drury about what it was like to live in a country town 200 years ago.
- April 8 Carolyn Banfield, Executive Director of the Berkshire Historical Society, will speak to us.
- May 13 Herbs and potpourri. Dorothy Marosy will lend some spice to our lives by presenting a program on the subject.
- June 10 Dinner and Annual Meeting
- June 24,25,26 A notable event in the Berkshires, our own prestigious antique show at Berkshire School, managed by Sideli and Sideli.
- More information later in the Spring about our summer picnic, and tag sale, and antique show and other wondrous events