

SHEFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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HISTORICAL SHOW AND TELL

Did you know that there is a letter from Abraham Lincoln in a Sheffield home? A collection of steel traps? A monk's bell? Some unusual quilts? A dinosaur toe? Alaskan artifacts? An Ammi Phillips portrait? Unusual china? Minutes of the first Congress?

All these and many more, we hope, will be on display at the next meeting of the S.H.S. Friday evening, March 8, at 7:30 at Dewey Memorial Hall. Muriel Rokos, program chairman, will be glad to hear from you with regard to what you would like to show and tell about. Call her at 229-7772 and let her know what family treasures you will show. If you want to just see and hear, rather than show and tell, come anyway. We need you too!

APRIL MEETING

The April meeting would normally fall on Good Friday this year. In order to avoid conflict with Good Friday observances, we voted last month to hold our April meeting on the third Friday, which will be April 19th. At that time Wes Warren will enlighten us about the postal history of the area, and there will be some early envelopes and letters on display.

SHEFFIELD CEMETERIES

The Stephen Greene Press of Brattleboro is planning a guide book to New England cemeteries. The compiler is collecting suggestions as to the cemeteries of particular interest--graves of famous people, unusual epitaphs, or remarkable examples of stone cutting or monuments. We have already submitted one suggestion to Mr. Kull, the compiler, and he has replied that he liked it very much and will be happy to include it. The epitaph suggested to Mr. Kull is that on the tombstone of Simon Willard, who was killed by a lightning bolt:

Stop here, ye gay
& ponder whay ye doeth
Blue lightning flew and
swiftly seiz'd my breath
A more tremendous
flash will fill the skies
When I and all that sleep in death shall rise.

If you know of others worthy of inclusion in this guide, please let us know. We are planning a tour of Sheffield cemeteries some fine day this spring. More on that later.

BETSY ROSS FLAG

As the national Bicentennial approaches, interest in the First Stars and Stripes, popularly called the Betsy Ross flag, is kindling. Milton Barnum has ordered a supply of these flags to be sold for the benefit of the historical society. The flags are 3' x 5' and will sell for \$10 each. Milton is taking orders now.

The Betsy Ross flag adopted by the Congress on June 14, 1777, has a circle of thirteen stars on a blue field. Legend has it that the symbolism of this flag was described by George Washington as follows: "We take the stars from heaven, the red from our mother country, separating it by white stripes, thus showing that we have separated from her, and the white stripes shall go down to posterity representing liberty."

ROBERT WELCH FUND

The fund started last summer in memory of Robert Welch has now reached the impressive sum of \$92.71. Donations to this fund have been kept separate in hopes of using it for something which will be a memorial forever to Mr. Welch, perhaps a nice old piece of furniture for the restored law office, or a set of books, or some other article on which an engraved plaque could be placed. The Board of Trustees is very grateful to all those who made contributions in Mr. Welch's memory.

LAW OFFICE RESTORATION

The application for a grant from the Massachusetts Bicentennial Commission for the restoration of the law office has finally been completed and submitted to the MBC in Boston. Chris Reavey, aide to Senator Alan Sisitsky, has commended the committee for the thorough documentation accompanying the application. Fifteen letters from individuals and organizations pledging money, materials, labor, equipment, and moral support were attached to the application, along with newspaper clippings and a copy of the Weston Historical Society Bulletin, which showed a picture of our dilapidated structure juxtaposed with pictures of beautifully restored law offices, such as that of Isaac Fiske in Weston. We are most appreciative of the splendid community support for this project.

CANAAN - FALLS VILLAGE MEETING

The Canaan - Falls Village Historical Society has invited all members of the Sheffield Historical Society to a meeting on April 3 at the Housatonic Valley Regional High School. Brian Dow, public information supervisor for the Bicentennial for the state of Connecticut, will speak on Bicentennial planning and projects. It should be an interesting and worthwhile meeting. All are warmly invited to attend. The meeting will start at 7:45 p.m.