



SHEFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
SHEFFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS  
01257

Newsletter

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November 1974

Society To Present Exhibit

It was voted at the September meeting to present an exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. The exhibit entitled "Manuscripts of the American Revolution", consists of 30 documents and letters selected by the Manuscript Society to provide a panorama of this important era in our country's history. It begins with the Stamp Act of 1765 and ends with the election of George Washington as president. It is highlighted by silk-screened-on-parchment copies of letters by Washington, Nathaniel Greene, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Benedict Arnold and others. The society will try to reserve the exhibit for the period of June 21- July 20 for a rental fee of \$100.00.

Development Fund

Pledges for the development fund thus far total the amount of \$14,228.71. The amount in the bank is \$4,529.48. A good portion of the money pledged has been donated by non-members of the society. Let's all strive to raise the percentage of members donating much higher than the present 42%. The amount of the donation makes no difference.

Mrs. Lewis Leffingwell raffled off a lovely handmade tablecloth, realizing for her efforts the sum of \$134.50. This sum she asked to have donated to the development fund. The winning ticket for the tablecloth was held by Betty Barnum from Newington, Conn.

November Meeting

Our November meeting will be held November 8 at 7:30 at Dewey Memorial Hall. We are pleased to have as our guest that evening Mrs. Margaret Philbrick, owner of Westenhook Gallery in Sheffield. She will give a demonstration of silk screen painting and will tell some of the history of stencilling.

Mrs. Philbrick has several gallery affiliations among them being the Ainsworth Gallery in Boston and the Westwood Gallery in her home of Westwood, Mass.

She has work in many museums and private collections, to mention just a few the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C., the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Brooklyn Museum in New York City.

Mrs. Philbrick has won innumerable awards and special honors, a recent one being the John Taylor Arms Prize, National Academy, N.Y. in 1972.

This will be a very interesting program. We hope to see you all there.

#### Some Facts About Sheffield

Can you place the following?

"The principal streams that empty into the Housatonic in Sheffield are the Running Brook, which drains the northeastern part of the town and has its mouth a short distance below Sheffield village; Williams Creek, which comes from the northwestern part; and Bishop Creek, through which are discharged the waters of the southwestern part. These streams unite in the village of Sheffield and empty into the river through a common trunk."

#### Education in Sheffield

Considerable attention was given by early inhabitants to education. In 1750 a grammar school was commenced and continued for a number of years. In 1827 there were thirteen school districts, instructing 769 children, the sum annually appropriated and raised by taxation was \$750.00 and in 1837 the sum was raised by taxation and \$1,275 in addition by private subscription. At this time there were two academies or private schools to which \$300.00 tuition was paid. In 1839 a private school was started by a Mr. Stone from Litchfield, Conn. and was incorporated as the Sheffield Academy, with a capital of \$10,000.00 on March 12, 1840. The coporators were Edward F. Ensign, Moses Forbes, and Joseph Willcox. A building was erected in the center of the square on the plain, the school was later given up.

For 18 years after this school closed there was no high school taught in Sheffield. In 1870 by a vote of the town, a high school was established with Miss Ann Fitch (later to become Mrs. Dresser) as principal.

The first term of this school was kept at Ashley Falls but it was then removed to Sheffield, where it was continued for many years. The school did well and was well sustained. By a bequest of George B. Cook, in 1873 the town received a fund, the income of which was applied to the support of this school.

This was taken from History of Berkshire County Massachusetts, Volume I published in 1885 by Press of J. Henry Probst New York, N. Y.

I would welcome anyone's suggestions about the Newsletter. If you have something of interest that you would like to share please let me know. I would be interested in any comments you might have about possible additions to the Newsletter. You may call me at 229-2667 or drop me a note Mrs. Edgar Boardman County Rd. Sheffield, Mass.