



SHEFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SHEFFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

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Newsletter

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January Meeting

Our January meeting will be held on January 10, this Friday, at 7:30 at Dewey Memorial Hall. The program is entitled "Reminiscing". Mrs. Gladys Roraback and Mr. Oliver Willcox will share with us their own remembrances of people, places, and things in Sheffield. This will be an opportunity to learn some historical facts never written down plus some amusing anecdotes from the past. Let's begin this new year with a large attendance at this meeting.

Colonel Ashley House

We've learned from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Carpenter of the Ashley House that an application was made this past summer to have the Colonel Ashley House declared a National Historic Landmark. The application was filed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The Department of the Interior next receives the application and from there it goes to the National Parks Service. They look at the house and determine if it qualifies as a historical landmark. After it is approved, there will be a dedication, awarding of a certificate and a bronze plaque designating the house as a National Historic Landmark.

Notes From Previous Meetings

The November meeting with Mrs. Margaret Philbrick as guest was an especially interesting one. She told of the history of stencilling and pointed out one particularly interesting point of history.

Jarred Johnson, a 19th century farmer and cabinet-maker, who lived on Brush Hill in Sheffield produced many Hitchcock type stencils before his death in 1873. According to the author of Early American Stencils, Janet Waring, his original stencil bears as close a relationship as those on Hitchcock chairs as any that have been found. It is not known, however, what connection, if any, Mr. Johnson may have had with Lambert Hitchcock founder of the Hitchcock Chair Factory.

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Our Christmas meeting was festive and gave everyone the Christmas spirit. We were entertained by the Cobbletones, a local barbershop group. Their versions of carols and some of their own favorite songs was heartwarming. The candlelight and table decorations added up to Christmas beauty and the goodies brought by all were the perfect final touch to a festive meeting.

Did You Know?

January 30th 1733-4, money was raised to build the first meeting house, 35 x 45 feet, which was erected about three quarters of a mile north of the present church and was occupied until 1760. It was evidently not erected until the following year, 1735, as the following votes passed May 22nd, 1735, in regard to its location and raising indicate:

"Voted to Set the meeting House on a Certain Nole of Land Easterly of Mr. William Goodriches Dwelling House which is In the Street or Highway.

"Voted to allow twenty Gallons of Rhumb towards or for the Raising of the meeting house or for the towns use.

"Voted to allow three Barrels of Good Beare towards or for or for the Raising of the meeting house.

"Voted to allow twenty pounds of Sugar to go with the Rhumb and Obadiah Noble and Ensign Ashley were made choice to Dool out Drinks to strangers or towns people and also to receive the money likewise Ensign Ashley to serve as pinman.

"Voted to allow no Drink to the Laborers after they are Dis-mist from labour etc.

Taken from History of Berkshire County Massachusetts, Volume I published in 1885 by Press of J. Henry Probst, N.Y. N.Y.

BENEFIT AUCTION

Marion Barnum has served most capably for two years as auction chairman and has asked us to find another chairman for this year's benefit sale. Please let Lillian Preiss or any other officer know if you are willing to serve in this capacity. You may call on the entire membership for your committee!