



SHEFFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

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LECTURE SERIES

A major fund-raising project for the acquisition of the Dan Raymond-Will Little House will offer entertainment, edification, and excellence when a lecture series by Blaine Cota of Litchfield begins on September 19 in the parish hall of Our Lady of the Valley Church.

Mr. Cota is president of Heritage House, Inc., a private non-profit educational historical studies project, director of the Deacon Peter Buell Dwelling House Restoration, a member of the four-man active restoration committee for the Tapping Reeve Law School, and a lecturer on 17th and 18th century New England social history. His lecture series will include:

I. September 19 - The Deacon Peter Buell House Restoration. A discussion about the authentic restoration of the 1728 dwelling house of Deacon Peter Buell in Litchfield, in terms of documented social aspects of the family unit spanning 50 years from 1734 to 1784. Profusely illustrated.

II. September 26 - Colonial Gardens. A program in color on gardens of colonial America, their adaptation from European and English origins, their development through the 18th century and illustrations of regional differences with specific emphasis on a ten-year restoration of a New England garden.

III. October 3 - Lighting the Wilderness. A comprehensive view of the development of early lighting devices and their proper usage in New England during the period before whale oil lamps. Slides and artifacts.

IV. October 10 - The Bake Oven and Down-Hearth Cookery. A discussion of colonial foods, methods of cookery, specific usage of down-hearth equipment and firing the brick oven, as well as cookery books of the period and their peculiar function in the home.

The development committee hopes that all S.H.S. members will buy a series ticket and encourage friends and acquaintances to attend any or all of the talks. Prices are: series of four lectures, \$12.00; single lecture, \$3.50; student ticket, \$2.00; student series ticket, \$7.00. At the conclusion of each lecture there will be a question and answer period. Refreshments will be served.

The regular open meeting of the society will be omitted in October because of Mr. Cota's program. All members are urged to attend the lecture on our regular meeting night. Admission for all will be by ticket only.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Mr. Edward J. Fales, Jr., of Falls Village will be the speaker at the opening meeting of the 1975-76 season. The meeting will be held September 12 at Dewey Memorial Hall starting at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Fales, past president of the Falls Village-Canaan Historical Society, is a graduate of the College of William and Mary. Describing himself as a "history-journalist," Mr. Fales has been an editor, a writer, and the publisher, with his wife, of a paper called "The Country Letter." Four years ago he wrote the story of the "Iron Country," the northeastern corner of Connecticut, an intriguing subject for a future program.

On the 12th Mr. Fales will describe the trip of the Baroness von Riedesel, who, with her children, accompanied her husband during the campaign down from Canada, his capture at Saratoga, and his years as a prisoner of the American forces. On their way to Cambridge the entourage passed through Great Barrington and the following year went by way of Norfolk and Canaan to the prison camp in Virginia. Mr. Fales will use the remarkable diary kept by the Baroness to depict the New England people and towns of that era as she and her aides saw them. Her experiences, Mr. Fales reports, were "vivid, dangerous, troublesome—and sometimes very amusing."

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

It has been a busy summer for the historical society and the Bicentennial committee. Because so many people did so much to help, a list of "credits" would read like the telephone directory. The exquisite and esthetic accomplishments of the quilters and pillow makers was matched by the Herculean labors of the auction committee led by Milton Barnum and Arthur Chase. Bill Bradford donated his services as auctioneer and put on a non-stop performance in near-100-degree weather.

People who attended the collectors exhibit are still talking about the hospitality of host Richard Combes. John Campbell was most cooperative about opening and closing the library for the exhibit. Dwight Ford and John Bagnaschi made wishing-wells for contributions to the development fund. Together they brought in \$90. Margaret Philbrick donated to the society one of her new serigraphs, "The Sheffield Declaration," which had its first showing at the collectors exhibit. Henry Massini donated his bus and his time for the historical tour on August 16. Narrators were Art Chase, Dwight Ford, and Lillian Preiss. Our heartfelt thanks to those named and to the many unnamed who participated in this historic pre-Bicentennial summer.