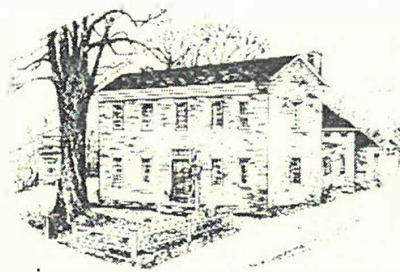


# *The Sheffield Historical Society*



Spring 2011

## *Mark Dewey Research Center: Genealogies & More*

The Society received a huge trove of books from the estate of the late Ursula Gamble Kilner of Salisbury, CT, a member in the formative years of our group. Ursula was an accomplished genealogist and she and her husband were avid readers and bibliophiles throughout their lifetimes.

The collection will be put to different uses, but most important to our mission are the hundreds of historical and genealogical tomes on states, counties and towns of the tri-state area of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York and general and specialized volumes on United States history. These have already become part of the permanent collection of our research library which is maintained on the Society's campus next door to our headquarters, the Dan Raymond House. The unique aspects of the library's collection, however, continue to



*One small corner of the available books at the book sale.*

be our manuscript, photograph and subject files on Sheffield history which do not exist anywhere else.

The published genealogies we now possess are listed below and you are invited to use them and our other resources during regular operating hours, 1:30 to 4:00 on Mondays and Fridays.

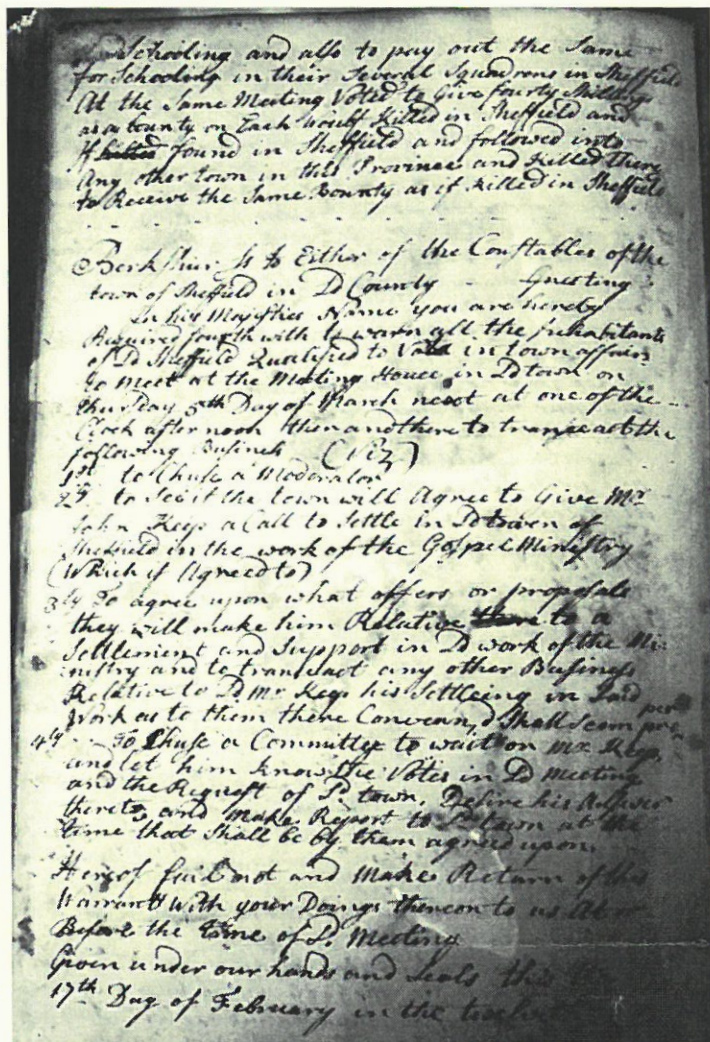
Adams Austin Barber Bartholomew  
Batchelder **Benjamin** Brigham  
**Boardman Brodhead** Bunnell/Bonnell  
Burrell/Burrill Burt Callender Campbell



*Eager customers lining up for the opening of the book sale at the Old Stone Store.*

*continued on page 3*





## Old Sheffield News – February 17<sup>th</sup> 1772

What you are looking at is a Notice sent out by the Sheffield Select Men calling for a Town Meeting on Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1772 to vote on calling a new Pastor for Old Parish Church - at that time the official state church. This page is from the Town Records and Vital Records restoration project being managed by the Sheffield Town Clerk, Felecie Joyce. The first two volumes of these have been recently returned and are available for study at the Town Clerk's office. Felecie is a great support to the Society and redirects to us the many interested people who wander into her office looking to find out more about the history of Sheffield. Her hours, in case you'd like to see what happened on other days in Sheffield's past are Monday through Friday from 9am to 4pm.

The Notice in its entirety says the following:

"Berkshires. To Either of the Constables of the Town of Sheffield in said County. Greetings.

In his Majesties Name you are hereby required forthwith to warn all the Inhabitants of the Town of Sheffield Qualified to Vote in town affairs to meet at the Meeting House in said Town on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> Day of March next at one of the Clock after noon then and there to transact the following Business (Viz)

1<sup>st</sup> to Chuse a Moderator

2<sup>dy</sup> to See if the town will Agree to Give Mr. John Keep a Call to Settle in the Town of Sheffield in the work of the Gospel Ministry (Which if Agreed to)

3<sup>dy</sup> to agree upon what offers or proposals they will make him Relative there to a Settlement and Support in said work of the Ministry and to transact any other Business Relative to said Mr. Keep his Settling in said Work as to them there Convened Shall seem proper.

4<sup>th</sup> to Chuse a Committy to wait on Mr. Keep and let him know the Votes in said Meeting and the Request of The town. Define his Answer thereto and make Report the town at the time that shall be by them agreed upon.

Here of fail not and make Return of this Warrant With hour Doings there on to us At or Before the Time of the Meeting.

Given under our hands and Seals this the 17<sup>th</sup> Day of February in the twelveth Year of his Majesties Reign anno 1772.

Lemuel Barnard Stephen Dewey Silas Kellogg  
John Ashley Aaron Root Select men of Sheffield"

Interesting to note is the last part of the top of the page:

".....At the Same Meeting Voted to give fourty Shillings as a bounty on Each Wolf Killed in Sheffield and If found in Sheffield and followed into any other town in this Province and killed there to Receive the Same Bounty as if killed in Sheffield."

Looks like in 1772 Sheffield was looking for both material and spiritual help to keep the wolves from the door!



## *William L. Maxson & the Berkshire Trout Farm*

A bit of innovative post-World War II technology found its way to Sheffield in the form of an aquaculture venture designed to provide fish for meals to be served by Pan American World Airways on their new trans-Atlantic clipper planes scheduled to begin early in 1949.

Maxson Food System, which developed much of the technology, had early experience in providing frozen meals for troops flying overseas with the Naval Air Transport Service during the war. Maxson called them Strato-Plates and they evolved into what came to be known as the popular TV Dinner of the 1950's.

William L. Maxson started the trout farm on present-day South Undermountain Road in the spring of 1946. It consisted of a series of hatching troughs, 25 rearing ponds, an artificial lake and a freezer plant capable of holding one-half million pounds of fish at 40° below zero, said to be enough to fill 12 railroad cars. In addition to providing trout for its precooked dinners, the company also sold fry, fresh fish and rented locker plant space.

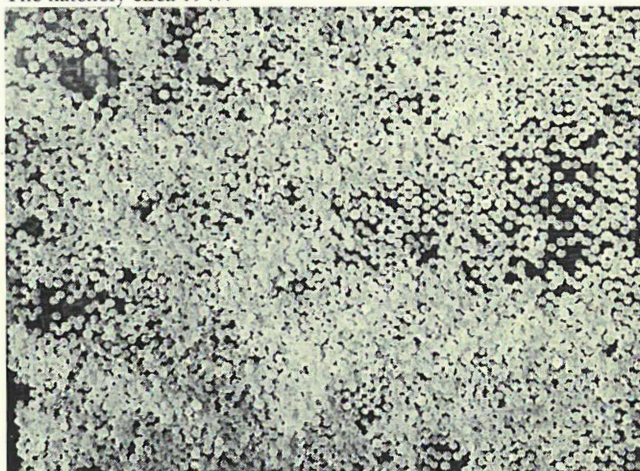
Maxson was a 1921 graduate of the Naval Academy, resigning his commission in 1935. Credited personally with nine inventions, his companies held another 72 patents. One, the "robot navigator" was used by Howard Hughes in his flight around the world in 1938. Unfortunately, Tuba, as Maxson was known, died at age 58 in 1947 and the \$300,000 facility, including four dwellings and a barn on 537 acres was put on the market by his heirs. It brought only \$67,500.

The new owner, shifting gears, ran it as a sportsman's fishing paradise under the name Berkshire Trout Farm. They offered accommodations in a "new luxury Motel" and charged \$5.50 per day for fishing, five trout, maximum weight five pounds. The acreage was later divided into minute "water front" lots too small to build on, that caused a ruckus in a town without any planning in place. For those of you who are familiar with it, Sherwood Forest in Becket was a similar debacle perpetrated by the same man.

- James R. Miller



The hatchery circa 1947.



Hundreds of eggs float in the trough waiting to hatch.



Checking on the hatching troughs.



Rearing ponds.