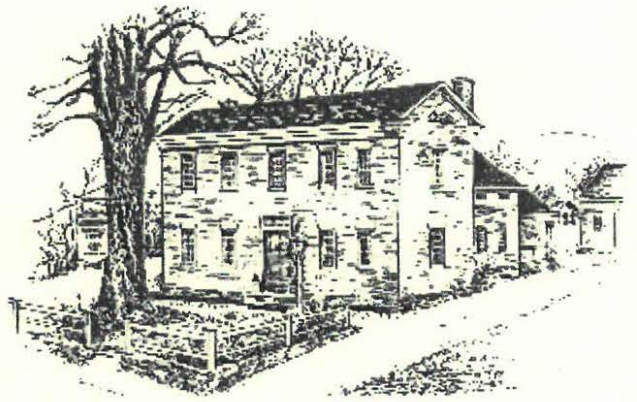


The Sheffield Historical Society



Summer 2012

HISTORIC BARNARD BROTHERS of SHEFFIELD

On September 14, The Sheffield Historical Society will present Gerald (Rory) O'Connor, who will speak about his two illustrious ancestors, Sheffield natives, Civil war Brigadier-General John Gross Barnard and his brother, Frederick A.P. Barnard, onetime president of Columbia University.

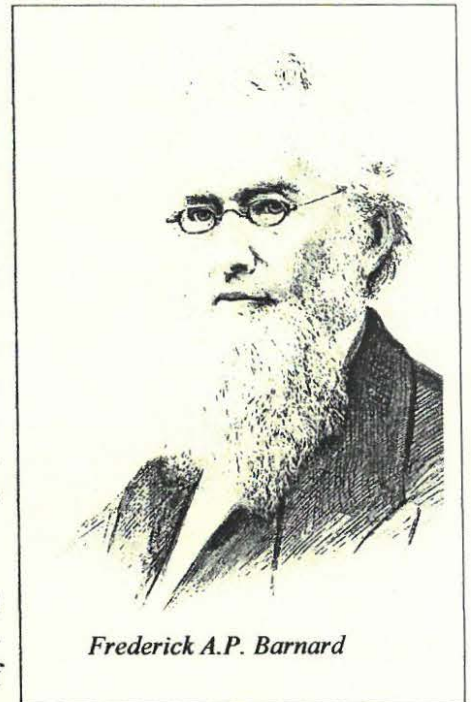
General Barnard and his brother Frederick were the sons of Colonel Robert Foster Barnard and Augusta Porter Barnard. Frederick Barnard was the elder son, born in Sheffield in 1809. He graduated from Yale College and became a professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at the University of Alabama, and eventually chancellor of the University of Mississippi. He served there until the outbreak of the Civil War, when, his sympathies being with the North, he resigned. He took over as president of Columbia College in 1864 and served there for twenty-five years. Although unsuccessful in his attempts to allow the admittance of women to the college, after his death an affiliated college for women was established and named Barnard in his honor. In 1893 Columbia University erected a memorial chapel in Sheffield's Center Cemetery in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Barnard, which can be visited to this day.

The younger son John was born in 1815 on the Barnard homestead, built in 1780 by his grandfather, Aaron Root and called Netherby Hall. It is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Mott and site of the recent Historical Society Garden Party. At the age of 14 he entered the United States Military Academy at West Point, graduating at second rank in one of the

strongest classes the Academy had ever produced. Barnard was then assigned to the Army Corps of engineers, engaged in the construction of Fort Schuyler, the fortifications of Pensacola and Mobile Harbors and defenses around battlefields during the Mexican War.

During the Civil War, as chief engineer of the army of the Potomac, Gen-

eral Barnard was put in charge of defense construction around the capital at Washington, D.C. He was cited five times for "gallant and meritorious services" in both the Mexican and the Civil War.* After General Barnard's death in 1882, the Army and Navy Journal gave him this tribute: "If a marble monument should be erected, ... of the life and work of General John G. Barnard, enough could be read, not only to satisfy the pride of all his kindred who shall come after him, but to convey a lesson as to how much may be accomplished in the life of one man". * No Sheffield soldier of any time has risen to a higher rank than he. In 1937 the town park just north of the village green in Sheffield was dedicated to General Barnard and his brother, Frederick A.P. Barnard.



Frederick A.P. Barnard

Gerald O'Conner is one of General Barnard's four

Continued on p. 8

From the President

Thank you

I would like to take this opportunity to say "THANK YOU" to all of our friends who continue to support the Sheffield Historical Society ! I am so pleased to see the many, many volunteers who come out and give their time to the Society. Just in the past few months, volunteers have staffed the Old Stone Store and exhibits, stood behind the Easter bake sale table, helped out at our Golf Tournament, and created a fabulous garden party ! Our annual appeal is going very well, our membership of over three hundred people have been very generous in helping the Society continue with the good work we are known for. It is because of all of you that we are able to maintain our historic properties and programs.

This year, because of the generosity of our members, we were able to award a five hundred dollar scholarship to Brittany Siter. Ms Siter is a 2012 graduate of Mount Everett Regional School and will be attending the University of Rhode Island, majoring in Political Science.

News on our buildings

You may have noticed a new roof on the Education Building, directly behind the Dan Raymond House. The old roof was beyond repair, we now have a new thirty year roof protecting the building. The Mark Dewey Research Center roof is also in need of repair. The cedar roof has acquired a disturbing layer of moss. In some

cases moss on an old roof is quaint, not so in this situation. The layer of moss has deteriorated the roofing material to the point where it needs to be replaced before the winter sets in.

Upcoming events

We have some exciting events coming this fall beginning with Sheffield in Celebration and continuing with the Sheffield Spiritfest (watch your email and the website for the details) in October.

Back to school education initiatives

Our Administrator , Barbara Dowling and I will be working with the students and staff of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District to re-introduce the Sheffield Historical Society to the children of the district (if you are interested in working with us on this please drop us a line).

A thank you to our outgoing board members and welcome to our incoming board members

A big thank you to Marcia Brolli, Kathy Tetro, Dennis Sears and Greig Siedor for their years of dedicated service. Dennis Sears will be stepping down as President, but will remain as a board member as well as our Funds Manager. We have three new board members, Lisa Reynold, Kent "KC" Clow and Jeff Browne , welcome and thank you all !

*Paul O'Brien
President*



Harry Conklin and Ted Pitman tend bar at the Summer Garden party.



Ross Hawkins, Bob Brigham, Dennis Sears and Iona Brigham sit and enjoy a glass of wine in the gardens.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Old Stone Store - open for the season - Saturdays & Sundays 11:00 to 3:00

SHS programs at Dewey Memorial Hall:

Friday, September 14th 7:30 p.m.

The Barnards - Gerald O'Connor will talk about Sheffield natives General John Barnard, Chief Engineer of the Union Army, and Professor Frederick Barnard, President of Columbia University and namesake of Barnard College.

Friday, October 12th 7:30 p.m.

Post and beam Architecture - Learn about timber framing with Jack Sobon.

Friday, November 9th 7:30 p.m.

Opening Reception - Festival of Holidays —Enjoy a drink and some early-bird holiday shopping at the Old Stone Store.

December

Sheffield Historical Society Holiday Party - at the Dan Raymond House

Friday, January 11th 7:30 p.m.

The Knox Trail - Bernie Drew will present a program on his newest book, Henry Knox & the Revolutionary War Trail in Western Massachusetts, and the history of the Knox Trail.

Exhibits:

July 21st through September 2nd

Drawing the Line: Political Cartoons in America - Paul Banevicius shares his collection of political cartoons in this election year - some humorous, some poignant, and some downright nasty! At the Old Stone Store. Don't miss this one!!!

Place your message here. For maximum impact, use two or three sentences.

The Sheffield Historical Society invites the support of you and your friends through membership.

Name(s) _____ E-Mail _____

Address _____

Please check: ☐ New ☐ Renew Membership for year July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013

☐ Individual (\$5 - \$49) ☐ Family(\$50 - \$99) ☐ Patron (\$100 - \$499) ☐ Sponsor (\$500 - \$999)

Please make checks payable to: The Sheffield Historical Society, P.O. Box 747, Sheffield, MA 01257

Sheffield Historical Society presents

DRAWING THE LINE:

Political Cartoons in America

**Featuring Original
Art & Sketches
from the Collection
of Paul Banevicius**



July 21- September 3, 2012
Reception: Sat., July 28, 4-6pm

at the Old Stone Store Gallery
on the Green in Sheffield, Massachusetts



Gallery Hours: Open Saturdays & Sundays 11-3
or by appointment. Call 413-829-1129 for more info.

The Year Without a Summer

Material for this article came from a collection of letters, recently gifted to The Society, written by Sarah Townsend Hale to her nephews Hosea and Hiram Townsend in Ohio. Liberties have been taken with spelling and punctuation.

Everybody, as you know, is talking about the weather. One hot summer! But take yourself back almost 200 years, 1816 to be exact, and you would have experienced the opposite, *the year without a summer*, when there was a killing frost in every summer month. In that year local farm fields were cemeteries of cornstalks. A severe drought had left them brown, withered and dead, with starvation lurking about.

There were suggestions early in the spring of a cool summer. Mid May had unusually low temperatures accompanied by frosts as far south as Virginia. In the Berkshires "the ground froze hard and high wind May first. Scarce a green thing to be seen, very cold need a good fire," reported Sarah Townsend Hale to her nephews in Ohio.

After a warmer start to June it quickly turned colder with a mix of rain and snow in Quebec and light snow in the Adirondacks. On June 7th, 12 inches of snow blanketed portions of New England sparking the talk of famine for the first time. Sarah further reported, "there is much said about the scarcity of fodder [for the animals] which tis very dear."

June was bad enough but July started out no better. A killing frost crossed New England destroying corn, bean, cucumber and squash crops. Fortunately, hardier wheat, rye and potatoes did much better. On June 20th, Sarah wrote "We have a most extraordinary season as yet such never known here before. Grass very thin & late, corn small & much curled . . . where there is any, looking as if it would never come to anything. It appears unaccountable that there is anything, ground froze hard middle of May & the 7th of June hard snow . . . 6th of June & everything cut down with frost. 1st of July frost. "Milder weather contin-

ued well into August when another frost hit, damaging crops further. On August 20th a powerful cold front crossed the Northeast bringing violent thunderstorms and reports of temperatures falling as much as 30 degrees within minutes. The summer growing season came to an end on August 28, aborted by yet another frost which brought ice to local lakes.

The impact of the season was severe, with too little food for animals taken in for the winter season. Fortunately there were enough grains and potatoes harvested to prevent a full blown famine but hardship did occur with Sarah writing, "the season is so cold & backward winter grain was not harvested till 8 and 10 August . . . and the spring wheat & rye till the last week . . . in September. The corn does not ripen." The result was grain tripled in value and the shortage forced farmers to sell their cows and pigs, driving the price of meat down. Beef fell over 50 per cent and pork 75 per cent. The following year, 1817, marked a major migration of locals westward to New York and beyond.

What was the cause of this weather? Religious fundamentalist blamed sinners and some even blamed the scientific experiments Benjamin Franklin had done with lightning rods. But the likely cause was the eruption of Tambora volcano on the island of Soembawa in Indonesia on April 15th, 1815, a year previous. The eruption was a super colossal event which killed nearly 10,000 people immediately and another estimate 80,000 from starvation and illness. According to estimates 1.7 million tons of dust were put into the atmosphere, reaching North America about 12 months later.

A year of poverty, 1816, *the year without a summer*, came to an end.

James R. Miller

Join us at the Sheffield Historical Society Salad Bar
during Sheffield in Celebration, September 8th.

Fairground food has never been this good or this

good for you! Plus free internet

genealogy! Bring your family infor-

mation to get started on an educational, lifelong hobby.



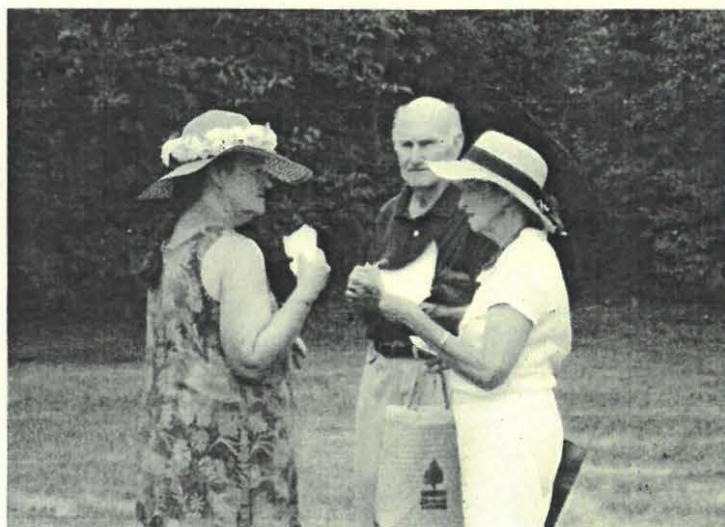
Summer Garden Party 2012



Lisa Reynolds, Rusty Mott, Herb Abelow and Carolyn Fulton discuss the silent auction items.



Paul Banevicius and Paul O'Brien share a tall tale while in the background (left to right) Susan Pitman, Ted Pitman, Jim Miller and Sharon Casdin enjoy the party.



Susan Pitman, Dr. Peter Elsbach and Patricia Elsbach in the garden.



Kathy Tetro passes hors d'oeuvres to Barbara Burns, Marilyn Wightman and Patrick Burns.

Summer Garden Party

On July 15th, the Sheffield Historical Society, along with friends and supporters, were out in force celebrating the season with a not-to-be-missed Summer Party in the wonderful gardens of Netherby Hall, home of Veta and Rusty Mott. The weather threatened rain and a few drops fell, but even that wasn't enough to dampen the spirits of all who attended. And when the sun eventually made its appearance, the glory of the gardens drew many to wander and admire.

Many thanks to all who made our Summer Garden Fundraiser so much fun and such a success! Foremost thanks go to Veta and Rusty Mott, who shared their beautiful gardens with us and provided such a wonderful site for our afternoon event. Susan Pitman and Kathy Tetro worked hard as co-chairs for the party and it would never have happened without them. Thanks also to the summer party committee - Veta Mott, Lois Levinsohn, Carolyn Fulton, Sharon Palma, Phyllis Webb, and Catherine Miller. And our hearts thank - but our waistlines not necessarily - all those who brought hors d'oeuvres, sweets and other goodies for everyone to enjoy.

Thank you to our Corporate Sponsors Berkshire Region Legacy Bank and Salisbury Bank as well as for the support of the Sheffield Cultural Council. Our appreciation also to the donors of our silent auction items: Kathy and Tom Tetro, Paul Banevicius, The Magic Fluke, The Hungry Hen, Ward's Nursery, The MarketPlace, Body & Soul, Tom Ingersoll, the Garden Goddesses and Barrington Stage Company. The Beautiful flower arrangements were created by MaryEllen O'Brien.

And, of course, our appreciation to all of you who came and supported the event.

We hope everyone had a good time and we look forward to you joining us for other Historical Society events!



A small part of the beautiful gardens of Netherby



Trudy Weaver-Miller, Dr. Peter Elsbach and Patricia Elsbach enjoy the sun and the gardens.



Veta Mott draws the winning ticket for the door prize while Kathy Tetro and Susan Pitman look on.



Dan Raymond House Museum * Mark Dewey Research Center * Old Stone Store

The Sheffield Historical Society's mission is to promote a wider understanding of the people and events that preceded us in this area, and to transmit that heritage to current and future generations.

WWW.SHEFFIELDHISTORY.ORG

137-161 Main Street
P.O. Box 747
Sheffield, MA 01257
Phone: 413-229-2694
Email: shs@sheffieldhistory.org

The Mark Dewey Research Center is open Monday & Friday,
1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., or by appointment.
Phone: 413-229-3682
Email: mdrc@sheffieldhistory.org

The Old Stone Store
On the Green in Sheffield
Phone: 413-229-2287

The Barnards - continued from p. 1

great grandsons. Gerald, called Rory, grew up on a dairy farm on Hulett Road in Sheffield near the New Marlborough town line. He graduated from Berkshire School and Trinity College in Hartford, Conn. He left Sheffield at age 26 to work as a newspaper reporter in Connecticut but eventually migrated back to the Berkshires to work for the Berkshire Eagle, remaining there until his retirement in 1994. He is married to the former Claire Warner of Sheffield. They have three sons, a daughter and five grandchildren, and now live in Central Vermont.

Mr. O'Connor's program, "Historic Barnard Brothers of Sheffield" will be held at Dewey Hall in Sheffield on Friday, September 14, at 7:30 p.m. The program is free and open to the Public.

Joyce Hawkins

**quotations and other source material from: Lillian E. Preiss, Sheffield, Frontier Town, pub. 1976 —on sale in the Old Stone Store*



Brigadier-General John G. Barnard