



# Sheffield Historical Society

## Winter 2005 Newsletter

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**The Festival of Trees runs now through November 27. See page 3 for further details.**



**Don't forget!**

The **CHORD SHARKS**, an award-winning male quartet from the Southern Berkshires, will present the program for the Sheffield Historical Society's **November meeting on Veterans Day, Friday, November 11 at Dewey Memorial Hall** in Sheffield.

Members of the quartet include Maurice Brazie, Ray Johnson, Jack Mann, and Dan Burkhardt. For the second year in a row the group placed second in the Northeast District Contest. This year's event was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The **7:30 p.m. program** will include some of the music from the Northeast contest as well as spirituals and patriotic American music.

**From Saturday, December 3, through Sunday, December 18, the exhibition *Heirloom Stories* will be on view at the Old Stone Store. Hours are Saturdays from 10 to 2, Sundays from 11 to 3, and by appointment.**

There is still time to join us in putting this exhibition together! We are looking for any item that has been handed down from generation to generation, and which is very special to you. We welcome all types of items and stories. Please contact the Society at (413) 229-2694 by November 19th, if you have an item or items to share.

**Monthly Meeting**  
**Friday, December 9, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Dewey Memorial Hall**  
**Robert Law** will present a program on *Fifty Years of The Southern Berkshire Regional School District*.

### 2006

**Monthly Meeting**  
**Friday, January 13, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Dewey Memorial Hall**  
*What's It Night:* the perennial favorite of members and friends.

**Special Event**  
**Monday, January 16, 1 p.m.**  
**Bushnell-Sage Library**  
For several years the Society has worked with the Library to present a special program honoring *Martin Luther King, Jr. and local heroes*. We have enjoyed songs, readings, presentations, and more. Join us for an event that always lifts the spirit.

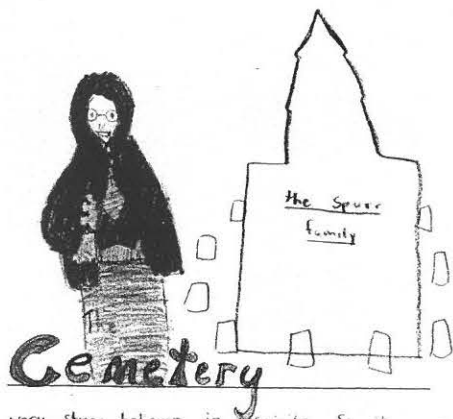
**Monthly Meeting**  
**Friday, February 10, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Dewey Memorial Hall**  
**Ivan Newton** will speak about *Rev. Harrison*, an early civil rights leader, Civil War chaplain, and prominent Pittsfield figure. A drive is underway to turn his Pittsfield home into a museum.

**A February School Vacation Workshop** is in the planning stages. Call the office in January if you are interested in enrolling a youngster. These workshops fill up fast, so make a reservation early!

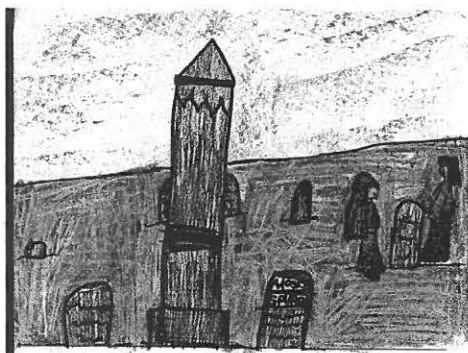


**Monthly Meeting**  
**Friday, March 10, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Location to be announced**  
**Dr. Brian Burke**, of Fairview Hospital, will tell the story of *Dr. Whiting, Berkshire's forgotten leader of the Revolutionary Era*. The talk will focus on early medicine in this area. Dr. Burke is President of the Great Barrington Historical Society, and advisory member of the African American Heritage Trail Committee.

## Recent Happenings at the Society



Once again this October, the spirits of Sheffield have been afoot. Pictured above is Mrs. Moses Spurr; drawn by Zoe, one of our 5th-grade students. Below is Kelsey's version of the Spurr pie. Each year the students visit with SHS staff and volunteers at Center Cemetery, where they learn about grave sites and their architecture. They also hear the stories of life long ago as told by local residents.



Our other traditional family cemetery program, scheduled for October 22, was postponed due to inclement weather. It was rescheduled for Sunday, November 6, 4-6 p.m. If weather is problematic, the event will be held in the Society buildings. We are never ones to let a good story go without being told!

### Building and Grounds Updates

The Society held two Work Bees in September. Each day saw a solid turnout of workers and successful strides in upkeep activities. Basic chores, such as cleaning gutters and trimming tree limbs away from buildings were completed, as was some interior cleaning.

In addition, two significant work projects were finished. The exterior project was the Barn: Work was done on the large front door, which included replacing deteriorated wood, scraping, and painting. Painting of the back addition on the Barn was also completed.

The interior work took place in the Dan Raymond House, on the second floor: The room used for changing exhibits had suffered water damage to the ceiling as a result of the leaking roof. With the new roof in place, local high school students and their instructor came in the spring and worked on repairing the ceiling. During the last Work Bee, volunteers painted both the ceiling and the walls. The space will house a new exhibition in the Spring of 2006.

As I sit here at my keyboard, I feel something creeping about the room. It is in fact a wonderful thing—heat! The Dan Raymond House (where my office is located) was in need of a new furnace system. For the last four days, the heat has been off as the old system was dismantled and the

new system installed.

The two old boilers and the two old tanks were replaced by one boiler and one tank. The new system is far more efficient and will give great service. In addition, the technician working on the project notes that the smaller system makes the basement much more spacious!

The installation of the furnace system was made possible through a number of volunteer efforts. In particular, Kim Kimball was able to reduce an \$8,103.56 cost to an actual \$2,175 fee for the Society. This was done through the generosity of Burnham (the makers of the boiler), S & A Supply, and Kimball Fuel. In addition, \$500 from the recent Massachusetts Cultural Council GOS grant (see back cover for details) will be applied to the cost, leaving only \$1,675 out-of-pocket expenses for the Society. That is a remarkable effort by the community to work with the Society to preserve the history of the area; keep in mind that a large percentage of the Society's collection is housed in the Dan Raymond House.

Have you noticed the front windows of the Old Stone Store seem different somehow? An ultraviolet film was added to protect objects on display from damage caused by sunlight.

THANK YOU to all those involved in working to maintain the Society's holdings!

7th Annual  
**Festival of  
Trees  
2005**

**Fudge  
&  
Cookies**

**November weekends**

**Saturday, 10-3  
Nov. 5, 12, 19, 26**

**Sunday, 11-3  
Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27**

**Stone Store**  
New holiday gifts  
Upstairs Tag Sale

**Ornaments**  
Origami light strings  
Fresh wreaths  
Hand-painted ball— Center School

**Raffles:** lap quilt created by Doreen Atwood,  
Old Mill gift certificate, decorated wreath

**Miniature Trees** decorated by members &  
friends of the Sheffield Historical Society

Miniature trees make  
great gifts for shut-ins!

Call SHS at 229-2694

Lots of perfect stocking  
stuffers in the Shop!



159 Main Street  
PO Box 747  
Sheffield, MA 01257

Phone: 413-229-2694  
Email: shs@sheffieldhistory.org

Tours of the 1774 Dan Raymond House are available  
by appointment during the winter months.

Mark Dewey Research Center open Monday and  
Friday afternoons, 1:30 to 4 p.m., and by  
appointment.  
Email: mdr@sheffieldhistory.org

Old Stone Store hours are Saturday, 10 a.m. to  
2 p.m. and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m..  
Closed December 24, 2005 through March 31, 2006.

WE'RE ON THE WEB  
SHEFFIELDHISTORY.ORG

#### ***Board of Directors 2005-2006***

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## **Sheffield Historical Society Receives a Massachusetts Cultural Council GOS Grant**

For the first time, the Society is the recipient of a General Operating Support Grant from the MCC. The award is for \$2,000 per year, for a total of three consecutive years.

These state grants are awarded through a competitive process. Receiving a MCC GOS grant signifies that the Sheffield Historical Society provides a high level of quality in its programs, community service and administrative capacity.

The mission of the MCC is to promote excellence, education, access, and diversity in the arts, humanities, and interpretive sci-

ences in order to improve the quality of life for all Massachusetts residents and to contribute to the economic vitality of our communities.

The Society will use a portion of the funding for the new furnace and will apply the remaining funds towards its varied programming.



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

Festival of Trees—  
Every weekend in November  
Saturdays 10-3  
Sundays 11-3