



# Township of Sheldon Historical Society & Schoolhouse Museum Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 3

May 2013

"An update on our progress as a Society and a Chartered Museum & "A new look at old news from our town."

## Sheldon Historical Society Officers Board Members & Curators

10/ 2012 - 10/2013

**Pres.**-Michael Szucs  
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**Archival Curator** - Jeanne Mest  
**Museum Curator** - Mariiyn Smithley  
**Email** - [Sheldonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com](mailto:Sheldonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com)  
**Museum Telephone** - 1-585-457-7033  
**Alternate Email** - [mametzger@rochester.rr.com](mailto:mametzger@rochester.rr.com)  
**Alternate telephone** -716-474-3156  
*Meetings are held the third Thurs. Feb.-Nov. Nonmembers are also welcome to attend. We are open from June through Sept., and anytime by appointment, or by chance when we are working at the museum. Watch for the **OPEN** sign on the porch railing.*

**Town of Sheldon Historian-** Barb Durfee  
Phone 585-535-7322 or email [SheldonHistorian@aol.com](mailto:SheldonHistorian@aol.com)

### **Welcome new members:**

Caroline Stifter, Jim Stewart, and Jeff Mason.

### **From our President:**

*Enjoy this issue of our Newsletter. History is a part of us all, what we did 30 minutes ago is now history. The stories featured in our newsletters are of the families in our community and things that they did. Like you and me, while we are doing something, we do not think of it as history, but as a member of your community, it is a part of the communities' history. Reading about it can be of interest and educational to all of us.*

*Remember the Town wide Yard Sale this June 1&2, you may purchase an item and it will become a part of the history of your family.*  
*Michael Szucs,*

If you have something you would like to lend or donate, or perhaps an exhibition you would like to do yourself, however big or small, please contact:

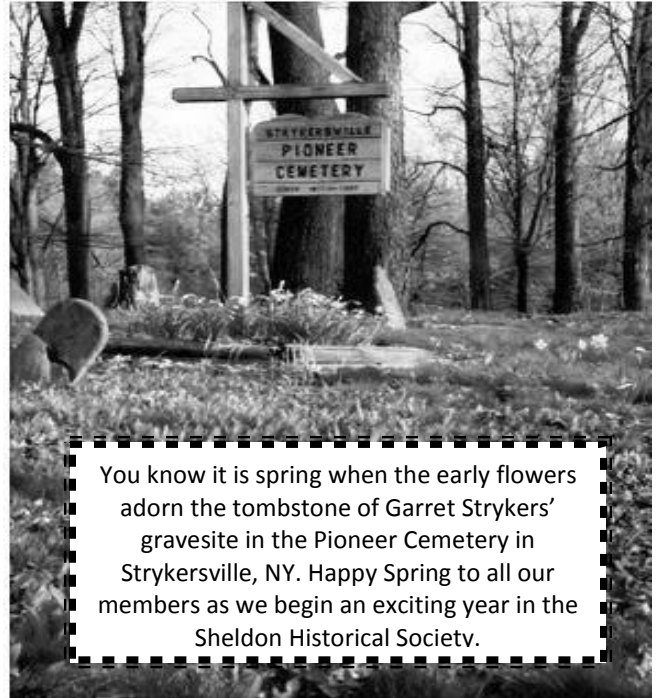
Marilyn Smithley, Museum Curator  
585 457 9484.

Newsletter compiled by Mary Ann Metzger and Jeanne Mest, with the help of several volunteers.  
*(Corrections and additions please email us or leave a message.)*

Mark your Calendar:

Historical Society upcoming meetings:  
**May 16, June 20, and July 18, 2013.**

Please feel welcome to come, bring a friend if you like.



You know it is spring when the early flowers adorn the tombstone of Garret Strykers' gravesite in the Pioneer Cemetery in Strykersville, NY. Happy Spring to all our members as we begin an exciting year in the Sheldon Historical Societv.

### **Pasch—Fugle.**

The marriage of George N. Pasch and Miss Mary H. Fugle was solemnized at 10 o'clock Tuesday morning at St. Cecelia's church, Sheldon, by Father Fisher, rector of the church. Immediately after the ceremony there was a reception with a breakfast, at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Fugle.

April 20, 1909

### **Fire Hall Dedication – Sheldon Volunteer Fire Dept.**

The Sheldon Volunteer Fire Dept. held a Fire Hall Dedication at their new fire hall on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 3pm. The new hall is located on Centerline Rd. just west of North Sheldon Rd. and on the north side of Centerline Rd. Refreshments were served. It was very well attended. Thanks to the Sheldon firemen for all they do.



Each year dedicated members of the **Six Star American Legion Post** Honor Guard follow a long tradition of honoring fallen comrades. They salute their fallen servicemen, from all wars, in the local cemeteries with ceremony, including Taps. This legion post was named for the Six Men in the area who gave their lives in World War 1.

### Memorial Day

**Pvt. Lawrence Kensinger,**  
**US Army**  
**(Strykersville, N.Y.**  
**Co.A 147<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 37<sup>th</sup> division**  
 Killed in active duty Oct. 8, 1918  
 in France  
 Buried Strykersville,  
 St. Mary's Cemetery



**Corp. John N. Musty**  
 Battery C 12<sup>th</sup> field artillery  
**Killed in active duty**  
 Buried St. Mary's Cem.,  
 Strykersville, NY

The bugle echoes shrill and sweet,  
 But not of war it sings to-day.  
 The road is rhythmic with the feet  
 Of men-at-arms who come to pray.  
 The roses blossom white and red  
 On tombs where weary soldiers lie;  
 Flags wave above the honored dead  
 And martial music cleaves the sky.

**Pvt. John Thomas Roche** Army  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Prvt. Battery, A.E.F.  
**Killed in active duty July 20, 1918**  
 Buried St. Patrick's, Java Center, NY

**Pvt. Andrew A Dickes,**  
**(Bugler) U.S.Army**  
**Co.D, 307 Field artillery, A.E.F.**  
**Died March 30, 1918**  
 Buried Burial:  
Brookwood American Cemetery and Memorial  
 Brookwood  
 Surrey, England  
 Plot: Plot B Row 5 Grave 18

Above their wreath-strewn graves we kneel,  
 They kept the faith and fought the fight.  
 Through flying lead and crimson steel  
 They plunged for Freedom and the Right.  
 May we, their grateful children, learn  
 Their strength, who lie beneath this sod,  
 Who went through fire and death to earn  
 At last the accolade of God.  
 In shining rank on rank arrayed  
 They march, the legions of the Lord;  
 He is their Captain unafraid,  
 The Prince of Peace...Who brought a sword.  
 - Joyce Kilmer

**Corp. William Hendershott,**  
**US Army Arcade N.Y.**  
**Co.D, 303d.engineers**  
**Died Oct 29, 1918 pneumonia,**  
**Base Hospital, Loul, France** burial is  
 at Saint Mihiel American Cemetery and  
 Memorial #56340286 with in memory  
 at Arcade.

**Pvt. Floyd Francis Dorscheid**  
**US Army**  
**Co. M, reg. 307**  
**Killed in active duty Sept.14,**  
**1918in France**  
 Buried St. Cecilia's RC Cem.

***\*"In Defense of Liberty"***  
*This insert is a Tombstone Symbol.*  
*Next issue we will have more*  
*information on emblems.*

## A TRIP TO THE CEMETERY HELPS UNRAVEL FAMILY HISTORY

*It is surprising the information you find.*

To many people, spring means getting outside to work in your garden or planting your fields. But it has another meaning to the family historian. Finally we can get out and do more research, especially when it comes to visiting cemeteries. Although I have trudged through deep snow to find an ancestor's grave, it is a lot easier in nice weather!

It is interesting to walk around in any cemetery and read the headstones, but even more so when you locate the graves of your own ancestors. Headstones not only reveal names and dates; they can also tell you a great deal about someone's life. Designs or quotes on the stones show if your ancestor was religious, or what their interests were. When you see who they are buried next to, you may learn who was close to them in life. It can help identify other relatives or in-laws you were not aware of. Take a picture of the group of stones where your ancestor is buried, in case there are names you might find meaningful later on, and it will also help you or someone else to find the location another time. The type of cemetery itself may lead you to where to find more information. Whether it is a Protestant or Catholic cemetery may help you figure out what church they attended & lead you to some church records.

Before you actually visit the cemetery, try to find out as much as you can about where your ancestor is buried. There are many cemeteries listed online, and the website [www.FindaGrave.com](http://www.FindaGrave.com) has a wealth of info. You can browse this site by location, date, or name. Call the cemetery before you go, to ask the locations of the graves, or stop at the office & pick up a map of the cemetery.

### **Be sure to take along:**

**Camera** - Digital cameras are great for taking photos of tombstones. Take high-resolution photographs so you have good-quality images. When you look at them later on the computer, it is surprising how much more detail you can read than when you were there in person, and you may be able to enhance them further with photo editing software. Bring extra **batteries and a spare memory card.**

**Bug spray** - Maybe even a **hat & sunscreen.** Cemeteries can be home to biting insects, ticks or even snakes. So wear sensible shoes and long pants, and bring a first aid kit just in case. It makes me laugh when I remember the time we went to an old country cemetery in North Carolina. In his soft southern drawl, my cousin told me to "watch out for the 'faar' ants, they will put you in the hospital". What kind of aunts? He had me guessing for a minute. Well, that cemetery not only had fire ants, it had cactus plants, pine needles & the grave of my great, great grandmother Parthenia, mother of six, who lost her husband Asa in the Civil War. Later I learned that I lost two GG grandfathers and several great uncles & cousins to the War. Then there was the grave of my 4<sup>th</sup> great grandfather, Etheldred, who fought in the War of 1812. Talk about history! His grave was covered by a little wooden house. They used to build the little houses over the graves there, to keep the pigs out!

Always have a fully charged **Cellphone and a GPS or map.** Many websites give the GPS coordinates now for cemeteries. You might want grass clippers, to trim away grass that has grown over the gravestone; and a soft brush, to remove loose dirt, and a small spray bottle of water. Never use harsh cleaners or chemicals that could harm fragile stones.

**Be Safe:** While cemeteries are usually a peaceful refuge, they can also be dangerous. Try to take a friend or contact the local historical society to see if someone can go with you. While it would be random, at times criminals do target cars in cemetery parking lots, so don't leave purses or valuables in an unlocked car, and never wander a seemingly empty cemetery alone. One time I was up in St. Lawrence County looking for my mom's ancestors, snapping some awesome pictures, when I realized it was starting to get dark, and that I was very alone. There was no one around anywhere for miles; just me & my rental car. No one would even know where to look for me! So it is also good to keep track of the time and tell someone where you are going.

***Spending time in old cemeteries can be a fascinating adventure. Non-family historians may shake their heads a bit and wonder about our fascination with cemeteries or think it is a bit morbid. What they don't realize is that visiting cemeteries is our way of celebrating the lives of our ancestors and that through our research they too find new life, making it a perfect fit with spring.***

### **Dear Ancestor**

**Your tombstone stands among the rest;  
Neglected and alone.  
The name and date are chiseled out  
On polished, marbled stone.  
It reaches out to all who care  
It is too late to mourn.  
You died and I was born.  
Yet each of us are cells of you  
In flesh, in blood, in bone  
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse  
Entirely not our own.**

**Dear Ancestor, the place you filled  
One hundred years ago  
Spreads out among the ones you left  
Who would have loved you so.  
I wonder if you lived and loved,  
I wonder if you knew  
That someday I would find this spot,  
And come to visit you.**

*Submitted by Jeanne Mest, Archival Curator*

## Strykersville Fire Co Celebrates 100 year Anniversary

**The Strykersville Volunteer Fire Co. held their Annual Installation Banquet  
& 100 Years Celebration on February 23, 1913.**

### **Brief History of the Strykersville Fire Co.**

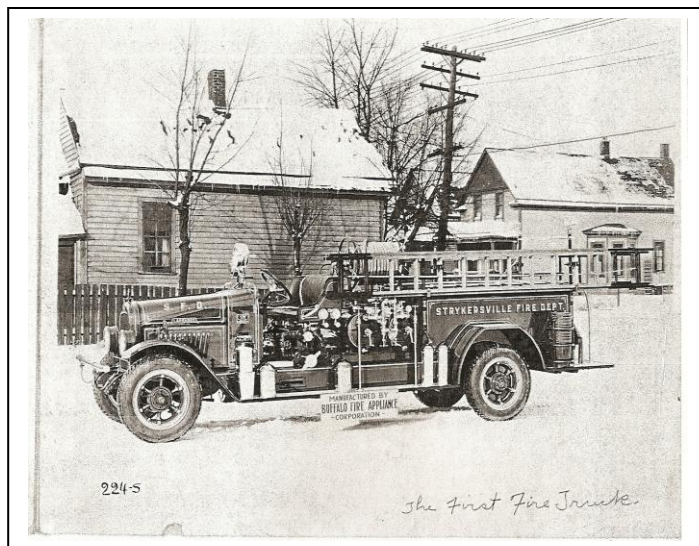
#### **Organized 1913-June**

At a meeting held in St. Mary's Hall **June 11, 1913**, the present Fire Department was organized as a volunteer company to replace an earlier unofficial fire brigade appointed at meetings of the community. The first officers elected were James Barber, President; Charles Kihm, Vice President; L.A. Phillips, Secretary; and Howard B. Bennion, Treasurer.

Department officials elected included David Carter, Foreman; Albert Glaser, William Kirsch, Frank Smith, and Ivan Richardson, Foreman; Mr. Bennion, Ernest Holmes, and Elvan Richardson, trustees; Herman Fromholzer, Fire Alarmer; and Rev. Fred Chubbs, Second Fire Alarmer. Other charter members included Roy Watson, Edward Fontaine, Harry Hersch, Floyd Musty, Jacob Kensinger, Albert Brass, Millard Holmes, Paul Marzolf, Henry Keyser, Roy Richardson, Roy Carr, Charles Keem, and August Metzger. Early members included Father Dehlinger as Fire Alarmer, Jacob Herrmann, Charles Stryker, Frank Unger, John Kensinger, Peter Kihm, Dr. Frank Paul, Herbert Merlau, Earnest Barber, and Maurice Brass. Dues were \$1.00 a year.

Committees were appointed to produce a hook and ladder wagon, to buy ladders, pails, ropes, axe pike and other tools necessarily connected with the fire wagon. The total cost of these accessories was not to exceed \$60.00. Meetings were set for the first Monday of each month and this practice has continued for 100 years. The salary of the secretary has continued little more than \$2.50 each year since 1913. An alarm system was devised, consisting of a series of rings on the church bells, the number of strokes indicating the part of the village where the fire was located. Fire ladies absent without excuse were fined 10 cents for each offense; drills and marching practices were scheduled; and George Marzolf and Mr. Phillips were instructed to build something in the shape of a sled to haul the pump in case of snow. The first alarm answered was to a fire at the home of Charles Hyman, and so states the records. "The company gave a good account of themselves".

Beginning in **September 1914**, it was decided to construct upwards of three reservoirs about the village as fire protection. Funds were solicited for a downtown reservoir. Meanwhile, a whistle on the Strykersville Creamery was readied as an alarm, and **February 9, 1917**, the Company purchased for \$300 and American LaFrance engine No. 10. The **Fire Co. was incorporated in 1917.**



Talk had begun that a fire hall should be erected and early in December, 1918, it was voted to purchase a lot from Frank Brass for \$100.00. Six days later the Strykersville Evaporator works burned to the ground after the company had been summoned at 3:00 A.M. The surrounding buildings were held safe, but the evaporator was beyond help. Throughout 1919, the department resolved to construct a hall, but the issue was not resolved.

**On August 11, 1920**, the Wyoming County Volunteer Firemen's Association held its annual convention in the village.

The ladies auxiliary, known as the "Helping Hand Society", raised funds to purchase land for the fire hall. Finally, in **1921**, a purchase was negotiated from Mr. Brass, and work began with volunteer labor July 9<sup>th</sup>. Later these donors were compensated up to 50% of the usual wage scale, and during 1924-1925, the upstairs meeting room was completed. On December 8, 1925, the department purchased for \$5,100 a pumper and chassis, and the hall was wired for electricity the following year.

#### **Some Historical tidbits—Strykersville Fire Co. Inc.**

- June 1935 - Signal siren purchased for hall
- August 1940 - Mrs. Andrew Winch donated banner
- August 1945 - Bingo started for a few years
- March 1946—2 ½" hose purchased @ 1.10/ft.
- November 1947 – **brown uniforms** purchased (41 @ 26.34)
- March 1948 – question first arose concerning tax monies

- March 1950 – 1<sup>st</sup> portable pump purchased (\$409.00)
- November 1950 – hall was locked and overhead doors hooked to siren
- September 1951 – contracts and tax money would be levied
- July 1954 – truck to be purchased-17 Ford, 12 GMC at cost of \$11,730.00 to be delivered February 1955
- 1956—the rescue squad was formed and purchased an ambulance
- In years to come and engine, tanker and ambulance were housed @ the Main Street station
- March 1957 – gavel purchased
- December 1957 – phone/alarm system was put in place
- July 1959 – parade banner donated by Mrs. Bernice Polanski
- August 1960 – annual fund drive was started
- December 1963 – last secretary's raise (\$10.00/year)
- November 1965 – building and planning committee (Francis Simons, Don Simons, Lyman Henry, Laurence Lefort, Ken Lefort and Bernard George)—station #1 would be built at current location on Minkel Road
- February 1967 – additional sirens and monitor
- Late 1967-early 1968 moved into new hall on Minkel Road
- November 1968 – color code set by county (ours-orange)
- January 1969 – radio and phone messages taped at county control center
- May 1970 – smoke ejector purchased @ \$235.00
- September 1970 – 2 monitors purchased
- August 1972 – (no more fire phone system)
- 1974—Curriers substation was completed
- July 1974 – 350' of 2 ½" hose purchased @ 1.97/ft.
- December 1975 – dues raised to \$10.00/year
- October 1976 – portable radio for chief (\$776.00)
- August 1977 – annual tractor pull ran \$600.00 in red
- April 1978 – Dodge TEC ambulance purchased \$ 18,300.00
- July 1978 – first chiefs light bar purchased
- 1979—new tanker was purchased w/quick dump on it—2250 gal of water
- 1981-refurbish truck #1---1956 Ford to a 1981 Ford –FHA loan
- November 1985-4 chiefs badges donated in memory of deceased member during the year (Pete Schiltz, Bill Booker and Don Galligan)
- Jan. 1986—discussions on the memorial playground, and monument in front of hall were initiated
- March 1986-installed chain link fence around pond
- September 1986 – starting of installation dinner
- January 1987—discussions on forming a junior fire department(later as explorer post)
- April 1987-voted to purchase our first modular ambulance
  - May 1987-purchased portable radios & chargers for chief and assistants
- In the late 1980's the ambulance was upgraded to an intermediate level ambulance from a basic EMT level unit and became the first NYS certified ambulance in the Wyoming County
- November 1988-ems coats to be purchased
- 1989-construction of new food building
- January 1990-motion to keep 2 day carnival
- February 1990-truck committee to replace tanker #2
- November 1990-approval to purchase 1991 int. 4X4 midi pumper (truck #3) \$108910.77
- Purchased LDH for truck #3—1/2 new and ½ used (1200' total)
- 1993 installation of some dry hydrants in district
- 1993-1994 several committee meetings on design and plans for hall expansion
- January 1995 –purchase used rescue truck from Elma
- 1995 also saw an expansion to station #1 by adding another truck bay, while enlarging the dining hall
- At this point we operated 3 Engines, 2 Tankers, 1 Heavy Rescue and an Ambulance
- March 1996-Folsom Trailblazers Snowmobile Club donated rescue sled
- Late summer 1997-truck committee formed to replace an engine
- December 1997-took delivery of a 1995 demo form modular ambulance
- April 1998-took delivery of our 1<sup>st</sup> 5man cab engine (ST #1)1500 gpm pump, 1000 gal water---fleet was consolidated by selling 2 trucks for this acquisition
- March 1999-used tractor purchased to mow grounds
- June 2002-hosted Wyoming Co. Dairy Fest
- September 2003-truck committee looking for rescue truck
- March 2004-put a lawyer on retainer for company use
- October 2004-authorized to purchase used rescue truck out of Arlington VA. For \$170,000.00
- May 2005-upgraded outdoor bathrooms
- 2009 we received a FEMA grant to purchase a new SCBA air compressor for Station #1 and a fill station for on the Heavy Rescue, along with new light-weight turn out gear for firefighters
- 2010 purchased a new tanker to replace an older unit (\$152,900.00)
- 2012 purchased a new ambulance to replace the older one (\$121,500.00)
- May 2012 we commissioned our solar panels to help save on energy costs for the main station
- The Co. currently (Spring 2013) operate 3 Engines, 1 Tanker, 1 Heavy Rescue, 1 Ambulance and 1 off road rescue unit

*Thanks to Russ Reisdorf for forwarding this information.  
Some information taken from "Strykersville Sketches"  
by Harry S. Douglass*

**But sound aloud the praises, and give the victor-crown  
To our noble-hearted Firemen, who fear not danger's frown.  
~Frederic G.W. Fenn, "Ode to our Firemen," 1878**

**The Town of Sheldon Historical Society Copies Old Newspapers**  
**Your Society at Work to Preserve your History**

The Sheldon Historical Society was generously donated several copies of the Sheldon Democrat, about which we discussed in a previous newsletter. We had them digitalized at the expense to the society to preserve this segment of history, mostly 1939-1942. They can now be seen on [www.Fultonhistory.com/](http://www.Fultonhistory.com/). The following excerpts are from "Sheldon Democrat" April 6, 1923.

**Bennet**

Agnes Bennet formerly of Buffalo, N. Y., died at the home of her niece Mrs. Robert Embt, of Varysburg, N. Y., on March 31st, at the age of 62 years. The funeral was held from the home of Mrs. Embt, on Friday, April 3rd. and the burial was in the Varysburg cemetery. Rev. Mathews officiated.

Although Mrs. Bennet had only lived here a little over three years, she had endeared herself in the hearts of her friends and neighbors, and especially the children of her niece, Mrs. Embt, who always called her Aunt Agnes. She was a very kind old lady, and will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

The out of town friends and relatives, who attended the funeral were Mrs. William Merkle of 31 Eden St., Buffalo, her niece, Mrs. Henry Auer of 75 Orange St., Buffalo, and her life long friend, Mrs. Koch of 273 Locust street, Buffalo.

**ALLEGAN YROAD**

Nicholas Calmes had business in Varysburg and Attica one day recently.

Miss Pauline Martin entertained the Misses Jeanette Hewson, Mildred Calmes and Arthur Hewson, Edward Calmes and Joseph Shannon on Sunday evening.

Miss Marie Trauscht spent over Sunday with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. Trauscht.

Mr. and Mrs. N. Martin and family spent Sunday afternoon with Mrs. Emma Fontaine and son.

Miss Mildred Calmes spent Thursday afternoon with Miss Marie Trauscht.

Mrs. Wm. Zeigler of Sheldonville was in Buffalo last week to be with her father, Peter Barvian, who underwent an operation at the Homeopathic hospital on Monday.

**What to Do With Old Clothes-Tree or Corset Stays.**

Did it ever occur to you—

That a picture frame and a piece of plate glass will make an effective fire screen. Flowers painted on the glass in brilliant colors, show up gaily with the firelight behind it. This screen will keep off the heat raps, but allow the light to pass through it.

That an old clothes-tree may be salvaged by making it hold a bird cage? The pegs may be utilized as perches.

That a handy container for clothes-pins is a market basket suspended from the line with an S hook? The hook slides along with the line when one is hanging out or taking in the laundry.

That the wide stays from the back of discarded corsets will make shoe-tree. A little ribbon and a tiny bow will transform them into useful and most pleasing articles.

That your old tennis racquets come in handy for beating rugs and carpets.

That an excellent place for a dressing-table is before a window? The mirror can be hung on the sash, and draperies for the window made alike. At night the draperies make an effective background for the mirror.

That a handy arrangement beneath a dumb waiter is a shelf which can be let down when not in use. Things sent up on the lift can be taken off and left until a convenient time arrives to put them away. —Designer.

Unless some of the Tonawanda milk dealers are able to settle the price with farmers there will be a scarcity of milk after this month. The dealers, it is reported, want to cut down the price which they are paying the farmers on April first, and the farmers have organized.





3859 Strykersville Rd.

PO Box 122,  
Strykersville, NY 14145

*"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty."*  
**-John F. Kennedy**

The Historical Society welcomes new members! If you find local History interesting, we hope that you make a membership contribution and join us. It is open to anyone with an interest in the history of Sheldon, or a desire to volunteer services without restriction to age or place of residence. We maintain a School House Museum that is state chartered. There is always work to do to maintain this structure and to continue our research of data and archives and preserve treasured artifacts.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to The Town of Sheldon Historical Society.

Mail To:

Donna Kirsch, financial secretary.  
4458 Richardson Rd.,  
Arcade, NY 14009



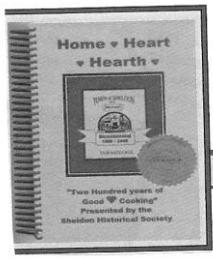
*A nostalgic tabloid; you won't want to miss it.*

**Attention:**

The date on the address label signifies the due date of your membership. Don't let your subscription lapse. Dues are \$5.00 a year and \$50.00 per person for lifetime membership. This helps us continue Historical research of the Town of Sheldon.

Highlights inside this issue include:  
**Strykersville Fire Co. celebrates 100 years**  
**Next meeting: May16, 2013 Please mark your calendar**  
**Join the town for the annual yard sale June 1 & 2, 2013.**  
**It is a gala event for all to enjoy.**

Queries are welcome. We are here to help you with your genealogy or facts of past history in Sheldon.  
Email us at [Sheldohistoricalociety@hotmail.com](mailto:Sheldohistoricalociety@hotmail.com)



*We still have some award winning **Bicentennial Cookbooks** for sale. \$16.00*  
*Do you have one for members of your family, they are very nostalgic.*

The contribution of your time, sharing your artifacts and archival material along with monetary donations are deeply appreciated.



