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Sheldon Historical Society Schoolhouse Museum Newsletter

Greetings and Merry Christmas! Thank you for your support throughout the year. We hope you enjoy this newsletter. In it you may learn some surprising history about Frinks Corners. Some of its early residents were soldiers from the Revolutionary War from Rhode Island and Connecticut, a famous judge who appears often in the history of Sheldon, and a man born in Sheldon whose adventures took him across the country to become a prosperous entrepreneur, who published a famous diary written by his wife which is still well-known today.



MRS. MARGARET A. FRINK



LEDYARD FRINK

"Future. Look not sorrowfully into the past; it comes not back again. Wisely improve the present; it is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear, and with a manly heart. "

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

ST. BONIFACE, EIGHTH CENTURY BISHOP

An interesting tradition, part history, part legend and very popular in Germany, claims that the Christmas tree dates back to the eighth century. This legend is based on a historical figure, St Boniface, and even a historical event, the destruction of Odin's oak. St Boniface (675-754) was the English Bishop Winfrid who went to Germany in the eighth century, to preach the Christian faith as a missionary from the Church of Rome.

After a period of apparently successful Gospel preaching, Boniface went to Rome to confer with Pope Gregory II (715-731). After a long absence, he returned to Germany, for Christmas 723, and felt personally offended on discovering that the Germans had reverted to their former idolatry of pagan divinities and were preparing to celebrate the winter solstice by sacrificing a young man under Odin's sacred oak tree.

Fired by holy anger, as was Moses by the golden calf, Bishop Boniface took up an axe and dared to cut down the oak.



This courageous act meant the triumph of Christianity in Germany over the pagans.

All this is historically documented. The rest belongs to the legend which tells how, at the first blow of the axe, a strong gust of wind instantly brought down the tree. The astounded Germans fearfully recognized the hand of God in this event and humbly asked Boniface how they should celebrate Christmas.

The Bishop, the legend continues, pointed to a small fir tree that had miraculously remained upright and intact beside the debris and broken branches of the fallen oak. Boniface was familiar with the popular custom of taking an evergreen plant into the house in winter and asked everyone to take home a fir tree.

This tree signifies peace, and as an evergreen it also symbolizes immortality; with its top pointing upwards, it additionally indicates heaven, the dwelling place of God.

<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/christmas-tree-legends-traditions-history-1763>

We can't help but get excited thinking about Christmas and making plans with family and friends. As the song says, "We need a little Christmas, right this very minute, candles in the window, carols at the spinet ... Yes, we need a little Christmas now!"

FRINK'S CORNERS, TOWN OF SHELDON, WYOMING COUNTY, NY

BY JEANNE MEST

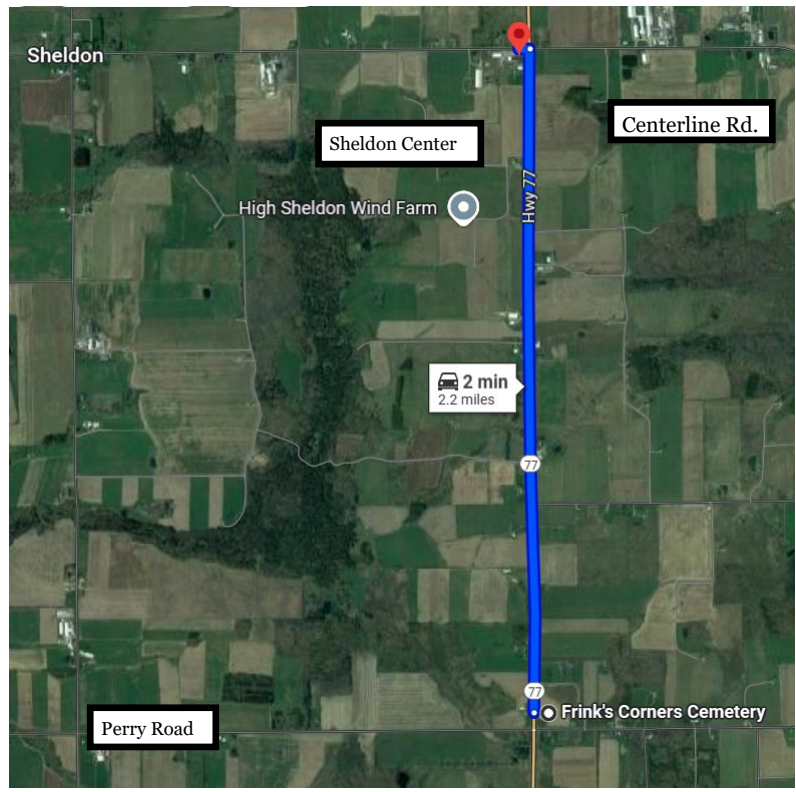
Frink's Corners is located around the intersection of Perry Road and State Route 77. Some of the first settlers of Sheldon came to this small hamlet after the town was formed.

The map on the left is an insert of the Sheldon Map of 1853. This would be the closest map we have to the earliest years of Sheldon, and even then, many of the first pioneers had already passed on. Still you can see some of the names we will mention, such as James Case at Frinks Corners and F. Chipman at Sheldon Center. The 1853 map shows the location of a store, a school, a tavern and some homes at Frink's Corners. It does not show a church. The closest church may have been north, at Sheldon Center, where there was an Episcopal Church that Judge Chipman attended. Two miles, two minutes to drive, but 53 minutes to walk.

We don't know too much about the history here, but there is much to be discovered by researching the names in the cemetery. There are stories here about these families that are long forgotten. Still, I was able to learn quite a bit about these early pioneers and much of it was surprising. It appears that most of the families moved on, heading west to various states. Some made it all the way to California and made their fortunes there.



Map of Frink's Corners, 1853



CAPT. JOHN BROWNING FRINK



Frink's Corners, located at the intersection of Perry Road and State Route 77, or Allegheny Road, was one of the first areas settled by Sheldon pioneers. It was named after **Capt. John Browning Frink**, a soldier in the **Revolutionary War**, who was born in West Greenwich, Rhode Island in 1767. He served as a bombardier in Crarys Regiment, Rhode Island, and after moving to Wilkes-Barre, PA, he was a Lieutenant in the PA Militia. His title was Captain when he mustered out and he kept that title. He was county sheriff for a term. In 1807 he moved to the Holland Purchase in Western NY, settling in Sheldon with his wife, Rebecca Sisson Frink and children. Fanny, Lydia Ann, Betsey, John Browning, Jr. and Maria were born in

Pennsylvania. George, Harry and Ledyard were born in Sheldon. Capt. John Frink and his wife, Rebecca Sisson Frink, are buried in **Frink's Corners Cemetery**, along with **Sally Stoddard Frink**, who died in 1827. She was the first wife of their son, John Browning Frink, and her burial is the oldest known date in the cemetery. There must have been many before her whose gravestones and names have been lost, as the cemetery was opened in 1809.

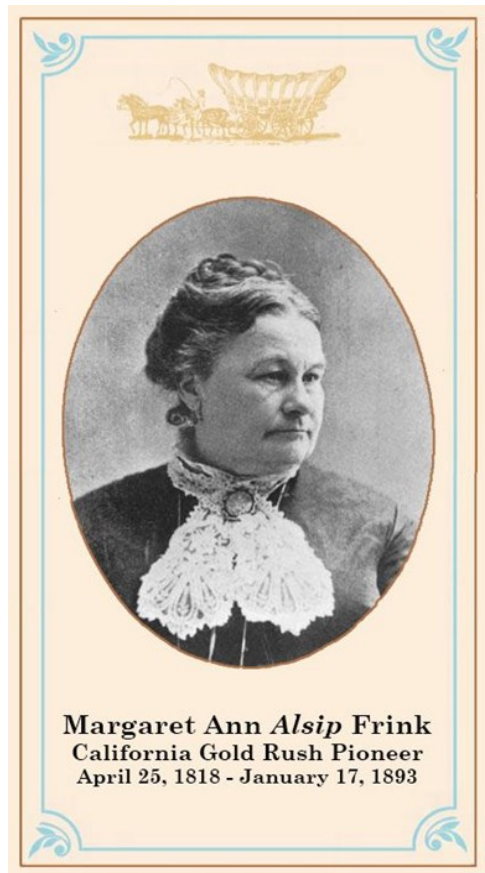
Their daughter Maria married **Theophilis Humphrey**, son of **Deacon Theophilis and Cynthia Humphrey**, of Humphrey Hollow. They relocated to Illinois, where he became one of the early benefactors of **Indiana Wesleyan University**.



Frinks Corners today

Another son, **Ledyard Frink**, was born in 1811 at Frink's Corners, Sheldon, and died in 1900 in Oakland, California. Ledyard married **Margaret Ann Alsip** and they moved first to Indiana, where Ledyard was successful in business. When gold was discovered in California in January 1848, thousands of Americans began to travel west in hopes of striking it rich. **The Frinks caught "Gold Fever" and on March 30, 1850, Margaret and Ledyard Frink left Indiana and traveled by wagon 2,418 miles to arrive in Sacramento, California on September 7, 1850.**

Once in California, the Frinks found it was more profitable to cater to the residents of Sacramento than to search for gold themselves. They settled in California and prospered. They opened a hotel on K Street, Sacramento, in 1850 with a distinctive offering - **Free, Fresh Milk**. "This was a great attraction to men," she wrote, "many of whom had not tasted milk for one or two years." Later, Ledyard bought a thousand-acre ranch on the Sacramento River which became a noted wheat & dairy farm. In 1874 they moved to Oakland, where they built a large home at 1220 Grove St. The San Francisco Call wrote at his death: "Ledyard Frink, the well-known capitalist and a pioneer of Alameda County, died today at his home. He was a native of New York, aged over 80 years, and was well-known throughout the county."



<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/margaret-frink.htm>

JOURNAL

Of the Adventures of a Party of

California Gold-seekers

Under the Guidance of

MR. LEDYARD FRINK

During a journey across the plains from Martinsville,
Indiana, to Sacramento, California, from March 30, 1850
To September 7, 1850.

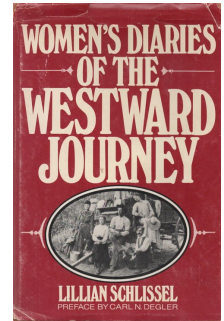
From the Original Diary of the trip

Kept by

MRS. MARGARET A. FRINK

Margaret Alsip Frink kept a remarkable diary of their 1850 trip from Indiana to California. After her death, he published the book and it was well-received.

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Baker City, Oregon, displays quotes from her book on the museum's walls. The diary is reprinted in full in a 1992 book, **"Women's Diaries of the Westward Journey"**, by Schlissel. Imagine my surprise when I found it in our museum library! It is also part of **"Covered Wagon Women: Diaries and Letters from the Western Trails, 1850."**



Margaret Frink is well recognized and admired. She is still written about today and has been featured on the National Park Service website for the City of Rocks National Reserve. She appears in an article in their Columbia Pacific Northwest collection, "Women's History in the Pacific West" and also on **Facebook**:

Scotts Bluff National Monument's Post

Scotts Bluff National Monument August 16, 2023

Mrs. Margaret Frink: "For many weeks we had been accustomed to see property abandoned and animals dead or dying. But those scenes were here doubled and trebled. Horses, mules, and oxen, suffering from heat, thirst, and starvation, staggered along until they fell and died on every rod of the way. Both sides of the road for miles were lined with dead animals and abandoned wagons. Around them were strewed yokes, chains, harnesses, guns, bedding, clothing, cooking-utensils, and many other articles, in utter confusion. The owners left everything, except what provisions they could carry on their backs, and hurried on to save themselves. ... The dead animals seemed to become at every step of the way more numerous. They lay so thick on the ground that the carcasses, if placed together, would have reached across many miles of that desert. ... The fault lay, in many cases, with the emigrants themselves. ... Their fears caused them to drive too fast.... Their animals were too weak to be urged in this way."

Preparations carried out by the Frinks helped them avoid the loss of any draft animal through the 40-Mile Desert but not all emigrants were so cautious or prepared. J. Goldsborough Bruff sketched descriptively of the loss of life. Now having reached the Carson River, one of the hardest, if not the hardest, obstacle of the California Trail had been completed, but the Sierra Nevada now loomed before them.

#CaliforniaTrail #FindYourPark #MidwestNPS

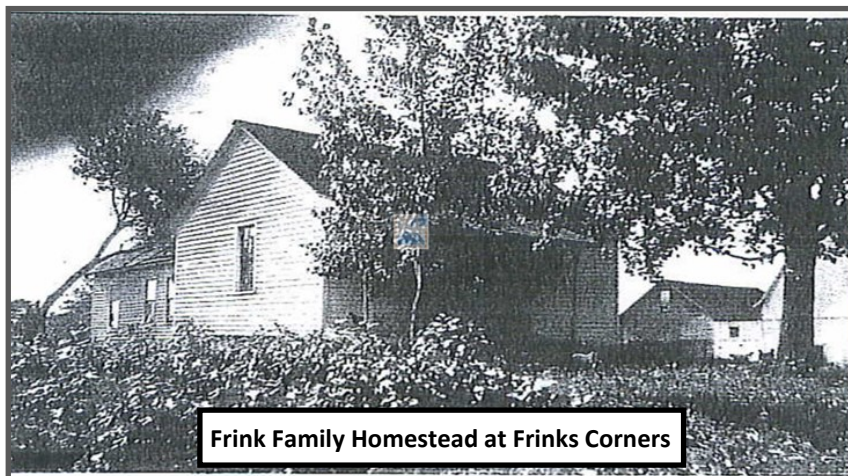
Sketch of wrecked by Alfred R. Waud (between 1860-'65). Courtesy the Library of Congress. EG2

Death of Ledyard Frink.
OAKLAND, March 6.—Ledyard Frink, the well-known capitalist and a pioneer of Alameda County, died to-day at his home, 1220 Grove street. He was a native of New York, aged over 60 years, and was well known throughout the county.

Y, MARCH 15, 1900.

THIRTY-NINE HEIRS IN THE FRINK ESTATE

OAKLAND, March 14.—There are thirty-nine heirs interested in the \$41,000 estate left by Ledyard Frink, whose will was filed for probate this afternoon by John Frink Richardson, a nephew, residing at Sacramento. The estate includes 400 acres of realty in Solano County, besides land in Alameda and Sacramento counties. The will is dated May 3, 1893, and after providing for various bequests of furniture and jewelry leaves four twenty-fourths of the residue to the heirs of a sister, Fannie Frink Richardson; the same fraction to heirs of Lydia A. Frink Kelsey, another sister; five twenty-fourths to heirs of Betsy Frink Barber, the same to heirs of John B. Frink and six twenty-fourths to Harry Frink, brother of testator.



DR. LEMUEL CHIPMAN, SR.

An excerpt from **Among Sheldon Pioneers**, by Harry S. Douglass, Historical Wyoming, Vol. VII No. 4, July 1954: “One of the purchasers of Sheldon, **Judge Chipman**, settled here in 1823. Dr. Chipman was born in Connecticut in 1754 and moved with his family to Tinmouth, Vermont, where he and his brothers, Nathaniel and Daniel, began notable careers. He became a physician and was assistant surgeon to Dr. Dickinson in the Continental Line at the Battle of Bennington in 1777.”

“**A Revolutionary Heritage**” in **Historical Wyoming**, stated: “The most distinguished of all the known veterans who came to Wyoming Co. was Judge and Dr. Lemuel Chipman, who with Oliver Phelps in 1803, purchased the entire township of Sheldon.

Eventually Dr. Chipman and his family moved to Richmond, Ontario Co., NY, where he served as county judge and was elected to the Senate and the Assembly, then moved to Sheldon and rounded out his days as one of the community’s most honored men. His wife **Asenath** had died in Ontario County, and he came here to live in Sheldon, first with his son **Fitch**, who died at Sheldon Center in 1829, and then with **Lemuel Jr.**, a veteran of the War of 1812, who resided on lot 25, east of Frink's Corners.

“**In 1803, Elijah Warner, Roswell Turner, Joseph Sears and Tabor Earl were surveying the township into lots. Their food supply failed for five days, except for fish, wild berries and roots, they were without food. Attempting to make their way out of the woods, when nearly exhausted, some of them unable to proceed any farther, they were met by Judge Chipman with a plentiful supply of provisions.**”

When historian Harry Douglas wrote *Among Sheldon Pioneers*, the location of Dr. Lemuel Chipman’s grave was unknown, but it has since been found in Canandaigua, where he was buried alongside his wife, **Asenath Fitch Chipman**, and other family members.



Dr. Lemuel Chipman’s grave in Canandaigua, NY

Died, at his seat in Sheldon, Genesee co. Y. N. on the 28th ult. the Hon. Lemuel Chipman, aged 75 years. He was born at Salisbury, in the state of Connecticut, and removed with the family at the age of 19, to Tinmouth in Vermont. Nathaniel and Daniel Chipman, eminent Lawyers and Jurists of Vermont, are his brothers. He studied the profession of Physic and Surgery, and settled in Pawlet, Vermont, where he practised with success and reputation, until he removed to Ontario county in this state, in 1795. He acted as assistant Surgeon to Doct. Dickinson, at the battle of Bennington, in 1777. Was a member of the Legislature of that state for many years, a Judge of the county of Rutland for eight years, and a member of the State Convention of Vermont, for adopting the Federal Constitution. After settling in this state he was elected to the Senate, and several times to the Assembly, was repeatedly appointed an elector of President and Vice President of the United States, and was many years a Judge of the county of Ontario.

FITCH CHIPMAN

Fitch Chipman, son of Lemuel Sr., graduated from Middlebury College and married his cousin Sarah Spafford. They had 8 children. Fitch Chipman was a leading Sheldon citizen and was Sheldon's first postmaster. He served in the Assembly, 1820-21, and in 1825.

They later moved to Unadilla, Michigan. He died in 1864 and is buried in Plainfield Cemetery, Livingston Co., Michigan.



Hon. Fitch Chipman

*This certifies that on the 15 July 1820 Cyrenus Abbott and Susan [unclear] Married to Susan S. Chipman aged 18 years at the house of her father the Hon. Fitch Chipman -
Witness Charles Chipman & Patsy Abbott, all of Unadilla Livingston Co.
By S.P. Livern Minister of the Gospel
A true copy of the Original - Recorded on the 26 day of Oct 1844
S.M. [unclear] dep. Clerk*

This certificate indicates that Cyrenus Abbott and Susan S. Chipman were married at the home of her father, the Hon. Fitch Chipman.

War of 1812, Prisoner of War Records, 1812-1815

Lemuel Chipman
U. S. Militia
(Confederate)
War of 1812
P.O.

REFERENCE CARD.

See Manuscript No. 32 page 1

GENERAL INDEX CARD.
This card must not be taken from the file.

LEMUEL CHIPMAN, JR.

A weathered stone in **Frink's Corners cemetery** marks the burial spot of **Lemuel Jr.**, who died April 28, 1844, age 62, and nearby are markers to three children of the Chipman clan.

Lemuel Chipman Jr. was captured by the British during the War of 1812.

Lemuel Jr. married Laura Mead and they had nine children.

Lafayette Chipman, a son of **Lemuel Jr. and Laura Chipman**, was born in 1824 at Frinks Corners. In 1852 he moved to Iowa, married Esther Papson and then moved on to California. One of their sons, Lemuel J., became the County Superintendent of Schools.

Marshall Mead Chipman, another son of **Lemuel Jr.**, became a physician like his grandfather, Dr. Lemuel Chipman.

Dr. Marshall M. Chipman was born at Frink's Corners in 1822. In 1850 the census shows him at age 28, living in Alexander and going to what may have been the beginning of medical school. In 1852, he moved to Oregon. In 1873 he was listed as a student at the University of the Pacific, Santa Clara, so he graduated from medical school quite late in life.

But in 1880 he is listed in the San Francisco Directory as Chipman, Marshall M., Physician, 810 Mission.

This appeared in The Record, Thurs. Oct. 19, 1898:

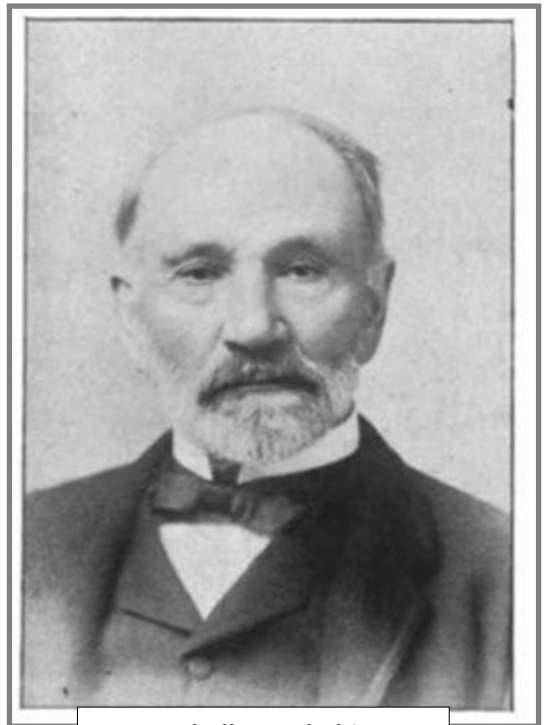
Dr. Marshall M. Chipman, died at his home in this city last Monday, aged 97 years. He leaves an estate valued at \$75,000.

His age was a typo; it should have been 77. If the amount of his estate is correct, \$75,000 in 1900, it would be the equivalent of \$23,436,013.17 today. Dr. Marshall Chipman may have been married but I found no records of a marriage or children. In his will, he leaves his estate to be divided equally between 28 people.

His obituary reads:

“Entering the Profession after having passed the meridian of life, Dr. Chipman expresses himself as being aware that his medical record will not compare favorably with that of many others who have entered the ranks well equipped at an earlier age; but he is well satisfied to have attained association with the more vigorous workers, and, as of most importance, if he may have been able to contribute something toward the amelioration, progress, and advancement of his fellow men.”

Death of Lafayette Chipman.
Lafayette Chipman, father of County Superintendent of Schools, L. J. Chipman and W. F. Chipman of this city, and Mrs. Eben Gay of Berryessa, died last evening about 9 o'clock at his residence 259 South Seventh street, after a brief illness. The deceased was a native of New York, 70 years of age. In 1850 he moved to Iowa where he married Miss Esther Papson, and in 1852 came to California, locating in Plumas county where he remained until 1864 when he came to San Jose.
He was a very prominent member of the Masonic order, being Past Master at the time of his death of Friendship Lodge, No. 210, F. and A. M.



Dr. Marshall Mead Chipman

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MEDICAL TOPOGRAPHY, METEOROLOGY, ENDEMIC, ETC. : MADE TO THE MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AT THE ANNUAL SESSION, HELD AT SAN FRANCISCO, IN APRIL, 1883 : FOREST PRESERVATION AND TIMBER CULTIVATION

M. M. (MARSHALL MEAD) CHIPMAN

Marshall Chipman wrote this book in 1883, which is still sold today on Amazon.com

Revolutionary War soldiers buried at Frinks Corners Cemetery

Mann, William

William Mann was born in Massachusetts in 1764.

During the Revolutionary War, he served as a private in his home state. He enlisted for 3 years in Capt. Ely Smith's Company, Col. Tupper's Regiment. He was honorably discharged in 1783. The DAR shows him as their Ancestor #A073472. After the war he moved with his family to Frinks Corners in Sheldon.

William died March 20, 1841, at age 77, and is buried at the Frinks Corners Cemetery, along with his wife, Rebecca Larcom Mann, who died later that year, on July 10, 1841, and their granddaughter Fanny, who died at age 3 in 1844. (dau. Of William Jr. & Catherine) Their surviving children were William Mann, Jr., Sally Mann Waters (mar. Robert), James (mar. Lucy Sherman), Electa Mann Sherman (mar. Stephen Sherman), Alva (mar. Esther Sherman) Ira and Almira Mann.

The inscription on his headstone at Frinks Corners reads:

“William was a Soldier of the American Revolution. Age 77 yrs.”



Mann Family Graves at Frinks Corners

JAMES R. CASE

James Case was born in 1744 in Connecticut.

He was married twice, to Phoebe Tuller and Lydia Case, who is buried at Frink's Corners.

According to the records of the Daughters of the American Revolution, he served as a LT. in Capt. Nathaniel Wood's Co., Col. John Ashley's regt.- entered service in October 15, 1781 and was discharged on October 26, 1781. Again he served for 11 days - marched from London (now, Otis, MA) to Stillwater on an alarm.

By 1810, he had moved to Sheldon, as he is shown on Sheldon's first census list. It appears he came to live near his son, James R. Case Jr., and nephews Fithen Case and Jasper Case. They settled in the area of Humphrey Hollow, Town of Sheldon. James Case died Jan. 7, 1822 and is buried at Frinks Corners along with several members of his family.

Imagine it is about 1804 and settlers are beginning to venture from Persons or Turners Corners, cutting and burning trees, (to make potash) working their way down what would become Rte. 77 to the place that became Frinks Corners. From the beginning, this area was filled by hardworking pioneers; the people who stayed and the ones who moved on; judges, doctors, businessmen, teachers, farmers and Revolutionary War soldiers - what a legacy.

Sources:

Among Sheldon Pioneers and A Revolutionary Heritage, Historical Wyoming
Ancestry.com, Findagrave, Newspapers.com and fultonhistory.com

FRINKS CORNERS CEMETERY

Approximately 75 yards from either road, a small cemetery about 150' by 150' square, situated on a low knoll completely surrounded by tilled fields and enclosed by cut stone posts with iron rails. When gravestone records were copied Aug 23, 1951, the site was overgrown with bushes and trees; it was fenced in with iron pipes fitted into stone posts. Included are inscriptions taken in 1938 by the late Miss Harriett Calkins, a town of Sheldon historian, along with a few added from find-a-grave.com.

CASE William Case, d. March 20, 1841, 77 years (HC)
Sabra, wife of Truman Case, d. Nov. 30, 1840, 40 y
Charles P., son of Truman and Sabra Case, d. Nov. 28, 1838, 11y
William, son James & Jennett Case, d. Feb. 1, 1851, 30y
Arabella Case, 1833 – Sept. 1, 1856, dau. James & Anna Case, 23y
Mattie Case, Aug. 26, 1866-July 26, 1877, wife of Arthur Case, 20y 11mos.

CHIPMAN Lemuel Chipman, Jr. d. April 28, 1844, 62 y. (Taken prisoner during the War of 1812)
William E., son of William H. and Mary L. Chipman, d. January 8, 1842, 3m 3ds
Julia A., dau. Wm. & Mary L. Chipman, d. April 20, 1849, 10 months.
Julius C., son of Wm & Mary L. Chipman, d. August 20, 1847, 1 yr. 6 mos.

FRINK John Frink, d. December 28, 1839, 72 yr.
Rebecca Sisson Frink, wife of John Frink, d. Nov. 5, 1837, 66y
Sally Stoddard Frink, wife of John B. Frink, d. June 1, 1827, 29y



Frink's Corners Cemetery

Frinks Corners Cemetery, Continued

HUMPHREY Orpha A., dau. Nelson & Ellen Humphrey, d. Jan. 8, 1864, 21 y. "We loved her"
(She was an adopted daughter of Hon. W.J. Humphrey.)
Ellen N., wife Nelson Humphrey, d. April 22, 1849, 29y 1m 5d.

IVES Letitia Ives, dau. Russell & Lucretia, d. April 9, 1845, 1y 6m

JOHNSON Dorcus, wife Truman Johnson, b. 1776 d. Oct. 13, 1840, 73y
Asa, son Truman & Dorcus Johnson d. Sept 9, 1844, 23 y
James Johnson, d. May 9, 1844, 44y 6m
Truman Johnson (stone broken)
Mary, wife Truman Johnson, Jr., d. Oct. 4, 1834, 25y

JOSLEN Benjamin Joslen, d. Nov 1 1836, 54y
Betsey, wife Isaac Pierce, formerly wife of Benjamin Joslen, d. Aug. 7, 1878, 90 y, mother of Joseph, stepmother of Isaac Pierce, Supervisor, Bennington
Cordelia L. Knox Joslen, wife Daniel Joslen, d. Aug. 21, 1851, 23y

KELLOGG Nathan N. Kellogg, d. May 16, 1847

KILBORN Almira Tryon Kilborn, former wife Freeman Kilborn of Connecticut, d. July 21, 1873, 81y 10 m
(On this lot are two large stones, weathered and a footstone marked "F.K." and "Husband")

KNOX Pemelia R., dau. M___ & Letice, d. Aug. 16, 1853, 25y

MANN William Mann, d. March 20, 1841, 77y. A SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION
Rebecca Larcomb Mann, wife William., d. July 10, 1841, 73y
Fanny J. Mann, dau. Wm Jr. & Catherine Mann, d. July 19, 1844, 3y
Esther Sherman Mann, dau. Stephen & Anna (Ase) Sherman, wife of Alva Mann, 1792-1833
Sally Mann Waters (wife of Robert Waters)

MILLER Francis E. Miller, d. Aug. 19, 1851, 9m
Helen E. Miller, d. Aug. 11, 1851, 4y 1 m

MOORE Eldad Barber Moore, Jr., d. May 30, 1849, 41y

PIERCE Betsy Wyman Pierce, 1789-1878

SHERMAN Anna Congdon (Ase) Sherman, wife Stephen Sherman, d. Sept. 9, 1833, 65y (On this lot is a footstone marked "S.S.") Stephen 1768-1832. Ch: Samuel, Esther Mann, Stephen, Lucy Mann, Sira (his son is Arthur C. Sherman)
Hattie Case, wife Arthur C. Sherman, d. July 26, 1857, 20 y 11 mos.

SISSON Mary Parke Sisson, 1737-1823

TILLSON Ezra Tillson, d. Nov. 4, 1864, 64 y

WATERS Robert Waters, d. Jan. 8, 1868, 83y
Sally Waters, wife Robert Waters, d. June 19, 1824, 33y (Father, I give my spirit up, And trust it in thy hand. My dying flesh shall rest in hope and rise at thy command.)

WEST Thankful Snow Davis West, wife Marcus West, d. Nov. 1, 1853, 36 y
Jemima Torrey West, wife Horace West, d. Nov. 12, 1846, 66 y (formerly of Massachusetts)

WOODRUFF Mary Woodruff, dau. A. & C. Woodruff, d. ___ (1851?), 20y (Stone broken)

FROM THE SHELDON SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM AND HISTORIAN, JEANNE MEST

Welcome to our new members: Mary Ann Eck, Julie Smith and Lifetime Members Michael Pfohl and Michael Moran. We are delighted to have you join with us as we attempt to preserve and share the history of our town.

Special thanks to **Joyce Thompson Hovey**, who gave us such an interesting presentation at our September meeting, about her Revolutionary War Era ancestor, Moses Dunbar, who was hung as a traitor. If anyone would like to read the book about Moses Dunbar and Nathan Hale, "Martyr and Traitor" it is available at our museum. We have a large selection of historical books to borrow, with several new ones about the Revolutionary War.

Cleanup at Persons Pioneer Cemetery



Persons Pioneer Cemetery after the cleanup. We will get a better photo of our new sign in the Spring, since the cemetery is already covered with its winter blanket of snow.



PERSONS CEMETERY

BURIALS CA. 1819 TO CA. 1863.

REVOLUTIONARY WAR VETERAN

URIAH PERSON AND WAR OF 1812

VETERANS INCLUDING SURGEON

ZIBA HAMILTON INTERRED HERE

WILLIAM G. POMEROY FOUNDATION 2024

Thank you so much to the men who pitched in to help with the cleanup of brush that was needed at the Person's Pioneer Cemetery. P.J. and Mike Almeter, Paul Rambino and especially Lucas Metz, for getting the cemetery ready and the historic roadside marker erected. I also want to thank the W.G. Pomeroy Foundation again for helping us increase awareness in our town of all the history we are surrounded with. There are a few old Pioneer Cemeteries like this scattered through our town, and they all seem forgotten until we take a closer look and realize they tell the story of the lives of our first settlers, with Patriot Soldiers from the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and the Civil War. At Persons Cemetery we found Uriah Persons, from the Rev. War and Ziba Hamilton, surgeon in the war of 1812 and many veterans of that war, including Uriah Persons, Jr., Uriah Persons III, Henry Persons, Elkanah Brown, Job Mathews, John Persons and Daniel Warren. Thanks to the Pomeroy Foundation, we now have a historic roadside marker on the first pioneer cemetery in the Town of Sheldon.

Summer at the Schoolhouse Museum

This summer we continued to open the Schoolhouse Museum on Tuesday afternoons. We try to have at least two volunteers from 1:00 to 4:00 pm on those days. We were a little short of help this year but everyone who came had a great time. **Thank you to Barbara Logel, Laury Lakas, Donna Kirsch, Marian Lefort, Carol Felski, Mary Ann Metzger, Betty Reisdorf, and anyone else who filled in.**

We had some interesting visitors. **Brian Majerus** came here from South Dakota, along with his brother and friends, **Ken, Keith and Tony**. Thanks to **PJ Almeter**, they were able to visit St. Cecilia's Church and Cemetery and find the graves of their Majerus ancestors. Thank you for coming, and for your donation, we appreciate it.

William and Ellen Bathhurst came from Olean. Their ancestors were **Sillaways, namely Hazel and her brother Floyd**. They brought a thick scrapbook full of obituaries and newspaper articles that had been kept by their great grandmother **Susan Hale**, who was born in Java in 1861. What made this scrapbook different was that it was made from an old law book. Each page had been covered with the obits and articles glued onto the pages. As I looked, this was so familiar and then I made the connection. I had seen another album like this! **Diane Hennessy**, a long distance member in Florida, had donated some family memorabilia to both the Sheldon and the Java Historical Museums. She gave us her mother's wedding outfit and a scrapbook to Java, which looked just like the one from Susan Hale. It had been made by Nora Hale, Diane's great grand mother! Susan Hale and Nora Hale were sisters and created scrapbooks the same manner, by using old books. I think it is so amazing that one family member from Florida and one from Olean, NY, would each share with us their scrapbooks made by two sisters in the 1800's! This also opened the door to more history, of the Hale family. Susan and Nora were children of Charles Hale, who had served in the Civil War as a Captain in the 5th Regiment, New Hampshire Infantry.



Thank you for your generous donations:

Roger & Debbie Almeter, Breezy Hill, memory of Jake Mest

Julie Smith in memory of her parents, David & Marie Smith

Esther Kopp, for a donation to the Cemetery Fund, in memory of her great, great grandparents, Welcome & Susannah Moore

Memorials, Memberships and other Donations to the Sheldon Historical Society can be sent to: PO Box 122, Strykersville, NY 14145



Wrapping up the Year

Our October meeting was the last for this year. We had some elections and Mike Almeter brought in a cash register that belonged to Sylvester Metzger when he had the store. It was sold to Clarence Almeter when Harmon & Almeter was purchased. It uses tiny wooden balls and we aren't sure how it worked. Hopefully we can get Mary Jane Almeter to visit our museum and tell us more about it.

Speaking of Mary Jane, what a delight it was to get so many positive reactions to our story on Mary Jane Almeter and Sheldonville! She had so many friends who loved reading about her and they all wanted copies of the newsletter. I neglected to thank the person who made our interview happen. Thank you to **Donna Kirsch**, for coming up with the idea and taking me to meet Mary Jane.

We had many compliments on this article, like this one received from **Mary Ann Reisdorf**:

“What a joy to read about Mary Jane and her recollections. When I was going to St. Cecilia’s School of course we had Mass every morning before classes started. We used to get appointed to help “Grandma Bartz” who lived directly across the road from the rectory. She was very elderly (probably younger than I am now) and especially in winter we made sure she didn’t fall. That means whoever helped her got to be late for class, woohoo. Her little house is gone now but I am sure Mary Jane could fill in some details about her. She never missed Mass the whole time I went to school.”

Thank you to Jackie Fauls of Tallahassee, FL, for her generous donation, in honor of her 3rd great grandmother, **Lucy Torrey Morgan**. This young mother of three died in Sheldon in 1834 and was buried in the Humphrey Hollow Cemetery, with a beautiful tombstone that which can still be read clearly, after almost 200 years. After her death, her husband, **Rev. John C. Morgan**, moved on with the children and remarried. It wasn't until Jackie came to Sheldon to research that she was able to connect this part of her family history and thereby discovered links to her Patriot ancestors. Lucy Morgan's grandfather, **Dr. Samuel Holden Torrey**, was a sergeant in the **Revolutionary War**, and Rev. John Morgan was the son of **Erastus Morgan**, who served in the same war at age 16.

We are pleased that Jackie continues to honor the memory of her great grandmother by making contributions to our historical society, and that she appreciates the help she received here. Each time we are able to help someone piece together their family history, it is so rewarding. It gives meaning to the work we do here and it adds one more story of someone's life or family that would otherwise be forgotten.

Coming Next Year:

“Sue and Al’s History Excursion, Washington, DC, April 7-10, 2025” (through First Choice Travel). **Greg Kinal**, a well known history teacher and popular speaker, has taken groups from school and adults for many years on trips to Washington, DC. Information is available on our Facebook page and many of us are planning to attend.

Judy Carlson has two exciting trips planned:

“NOAH” at the Sight and Sound Theatre, Lancaster, PA, May 6–8, 2025

“Fairy Tales of Ireland”, August 1-10, 2025. Details are on Judy’s Facebook page.

Strykersville Pioneer Cemetery

Thank you again to everyone who bought tickets for our quilt raffle, or gave donations to raise funds for our **Pioneer Cemetery Restoration Project**. We are so grateful to **Janet Hobin** for making the quilt and donating it, along with the quilt rack.

Here is our delighted winner, **Marian Lefort**. Marion works behind the scenes at the Schoolhouse Museum, creating and tending to the beautiful flower bed, along with **Donna Kirsch**. Both ladies also donate one day each month to provide coverage for the museum when we are open to the public on Tuesday afternoons, from June through October. They usually come early and water and trim the flowers too. This fall they used the beautiful flowers to decorate the tables at the Byrncliff for our Federation Luncheon Meeting.



Speaking of the **Wyo. Co. Federation of Historical Societies**, we had a wonderful time at the Luncheon. We had 48 guests from almost all the historical societies in Wyoming County attend. After lunch we had a brief meeting and it was determined that none of the other societies felt they could take charge of the Federation next year. Sheldon is willing to keep planning events and collecting dues. Penny N-Logel said Java could host another Spring Workshop and Mark Herman was willing to help plan the meeting for next fall. We will still need help for the Pike Fair, as we aren't sure we can take care of all the duties there. We will discuss it further at the Spring Workshop.

Then we were entertained by Don Dwyer, with his program of music from the Civil War. Don plays the guitar and sings, along with telling the story of each old song and its history.





Strykersville Pioneer Cemetery

Thank you to everyone who has donated their time and/or money to our Strykersville Pioneer Cemetery renovation project. The workers came many times and spent hours scrubbing headstones with D2. They look amazing. More stones have been uncovered and after being cleaned up, it is so much easier to read the names and dates. We received assistance from a historic stone mason, and the grass has been mowed carefully by volunteers.



Welcome Moore, Patriot Ancestor

Esther Kopp gave a generous donation to the **Strykersville Pioneer Cemetery Fund**, in Memory of **Welcome and Susannah Moore**, who are interred there, so we are sharing a little of their story.

Welcome Moore was born May 4, 1786, in Spencer, Worcester, Massachusetts. (or Connecticut?) and settled in Wales, Erie County, NY, in 1810. He married Susanna Robinson, the daughter of a Quaker, and they had 13 children. He served in the War of 1812 as a musician, and played the fife at the execution of the 3 Thayers at Buffalo in 1825. A soldier at Fort Erie, he was at Buffalo when it burned. The name, Welcome Moore, appeared often in Sheldon's history. They lived near Sheldon School #11, where he was active on the school board. Welcome died in 1831 at age 45 and Susannah in 1858. They are buried in the Strykersville Pioneer Cemetery.

Their son Reuben, born in Wales in 1818, was a farmer, a lumberman and a drover, buying cattle and sheep. He was married twice, to Ellen, daughter of Andrew McBride, from Scotland and Hannah E. Brown, whose father was a revolutionary soldier and was held a prisoner by the Indians for two years.

Some of Welcome and Susannah Moore's descendants still live here today, including Esther Moore Kopp. Don't you just love these descriptive old names? I picture him as being a jolly, maybe chubby, man surrounded with children. Playing the fife, of course, with them following him around. Some of my other favorite names buried there are Hezekiah, Prudence, Erie, Parthena, Omri and Milo. We will look into their stories and share more about them in the future.

St. Mary's Closes

For several months now, parishioners have been trying to adjust to the upcoming closure of their beloved church, St. Mary's of the Rosary, in Strykersville. Many people have attended this church their whole lives, from Baptism to Marriage, raising their families there, expecting that some day their funeral will also be there, with burial at St. Mary's Cemetery. Many of them attended school there, as well. It has been the hub of the community for many years. Located almost directly across from the Schoolhouse Museum, I have enjoyed hearing their bells ring on the hour, helping me keep track of the time. From a historical viewpoint, St. Mary's was founded from their mother church, St. Cecilia's, and now the people will return there to the church of their ancestors. These closures are happening all across Western New York, and in each small town, it hits hard. It is feared that older people may be hesitant to drive to another town, especially in the winter, and they may decide to stay home and watch church on TV, as they did during the Covid epidemic.

"I Heard the Bells"

Recently, the combined churches sponsored a special event! They booked the Aurora Theater for a private showing of the movie, "I Heard the Bells". The church & community were invited, at no cost. Before the movie, the audience were led in an opening prayer, before seeing the true story of the famous poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and how he came to write this Christmas hymn during the Civil War, despite the trials and tragedies that had befallen his family and the rest of the country. This hymn was a great encouragement to everyone.



Farmcraft Brewery Opens

A new brewery and event center on Route 20A opened this summer with a farmer's market every Sunday, and in November they had a grand opening and ribbon cutting. The owners are Darryl and Ashley Meyer Howe, shown here with their children. They are planning many community events, beginning with the Sip and Shop Holiday Market on the first three Sundays of December.



What's the deal with the Christmas Pickle?



At some point in American history, some people began to hide pickles in their Christmas trees. The idea is that whoever finds that hidden green pickle, camouflaged against the green needles of a Christmas tree, deserves a little something extra. To you, the pickle-finder: you might be blessed with a year of fortune, or an extra present Christmas morning. There is no agreement as to why there is such a practice of pickle pursuit, though most stories claim it to be a tradition of German origin.

One version of the story revolves around a German immigrant serving as a union soldier during the Civil War. This man found himself imprisoned by the Confederates in the notorious Andersonville Prison Camp. Now, the Andersonville Prison camp was awful. Prisoners were woefully lacking in supplies and food; conditions were atrocious, so it's not a stretch to believe that if this man is real, he was starving. Many of the prisoners starved. But this particular man begged his guard for something, anything to eat, even just a pickle. Being as that it was Christmas Eve, the guard took pity on the hungry Union Soldier and answered his wishes: one delicious Christmas pickle.

Now, for all this hungry German knew, this could've been his last meal. So he savored each salty bite. But soon he discovered that he found the strength to survive in that green gherkin. At war's end, when he finally made it back to his family in Pennsylvania, he began the tradition of hiding a pickle in the Christmas tree for his children to discover. It was a way to remember that fateful time in his life, and I guess that guard's kindness, if you want to call it that.

Still, this alternate story is perhaps a bit more plausible, though still highly doubtful.

In the 1890's, Woolworth's stores began importing hand-blown glass ornaments from Germany. Woolworth's was once one of the most common stores in the USA. Now these glass ornaments they sold to American consumers were shaped as fruits and vegetables; they were very well made and desirable at the time. Well, according to legend *most* of them were desirable. It seems no one wanted the pickle shaped ornaments. That makes sense, right? Who would decorate a Christmas tree with a pickle ornament?

So the brass at Woolworth's found themselves looking at the tremendous amount of unsold glass pickles ornaments, and they realized what they had to do – convince Americans that they *did* want pickles hanging from their trees. Someone with a marketing mind and... an indifference towards the truth... made up a story to go along with the pickles: it was an age-old German custom to hide a pickle in the tree for one lucky family member to find. Perhaps it was the power of old-world charm, or our simple and ever-present desire to want the chance at **just one more** present. The pickles sold, and when next Christmas rolled around they ordered more.

Was this true? Probably not. There is no clear origin of the Christmas pickle practice. In any case, most sources agree that this is not a tradition ever practiced in Germany. It exists only in America, yet we call it a German tradition. Was it a German immigrant in the Civil War? Was it a Woolworth's marketing campaign? Was it something else entirely? We don't know, but we still like it.

Pickles are funny.

*Sheldon Historical Society
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Sheldon Historical Society Membership

Being a member of the Sheldon Historical Society means being part of preserving history. Dues and donations support the maintenance of our museum and historical artifacts. As a member you have voting privileges, and newsletters are sent to you at no cost. The membership year is from July 1 through the following June 30. Current membership status is shown on your mailing label. Please remember to renew yearly, and let us know of any address changes. If you are currently a member, thank you for your support!

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Please send a check payable to the Sheldon Historical Society to
PO Box 122, Strykersville, NY 14145

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