



Township of Sheldon Historical Society & Schoolhouse Museum Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

Charter Issue

Nov. 2011

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/ 2011 - 10/2012

Pres.-Michael Szucs

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Board Members: PJ Almeter; Chairman, John McCartney, Jeanne Mest, Elaine Almeter, Janet Kirsch, Marilyn Smithley

Classroom Curator -Marilyn Smithley

Archival Curator - Jeanne Mest

Museum Curator - Board presides until position is filled

Email - Sheldonhistoricalsociety@hotmail.com

Museum Telephone - 1-585-457-7033

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Alternate telephone -716-474-3156

Meetings are held the third Thurs. of the month Feb.through Oct. Non members are also welcome to attend.

Volunteers are needed on all committees, please join us.

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Newsletter - Compiled by Mary Ann Metzger and Jeanne Mest with the help of various members of the Town & Society.

(For submissions, corrections, and additions please email us or leave a message.)

WELCOME to the latest from The Sheldon Historical Society. The ideas for an informative newsletter have been discussed for some time. Here now, thanks to the determination and dedication of some creative and forward thinking members is the first edition of our newsletter. I hope you will enjoy it as much as those who have launched it.
Historically yours,
Michael Szucs, Pres.

Welcome new members for 2011:
Trish Nicola, Seattle, Washington
Renee Darling, Strykersville, NY
Pat Brickley, Hutto, Texas
Marge Ingersol, Attica, NY
Wayne Abbott, Strykersville, NY
Our list continues to increase, please pass the word that all are welcome.

An update on School House Museum Renovations

We are very proud of our newly renovated museum, compliments of Invenergy, the Wind Power Generation Co. We now have a new septic system, new architectural storm windows, redone mortar in foundation, new lighting, handicap toilet, insulation in basement walls, new furnace with air to keep archival material preserved and an outside drainage system. It is a most rewarding place to donate your time to preserve Sheldon's rich history.

Our Society:

Our archives and data collection continues to expand. We have a very large obituary file, many historical books, and a growing number of scrapbooks in various categories, consisting of old photos & newspaper clippings. These pictures & stories help to remember what our town was like, and also what life was like for our ancestors. With so many pictures & archives to look through, our museum has become an exciting place to be!

There is a complete set of Historical Wyomings, and some new Civil War information, about what happened to the soldiers who enlisted from Sheldon. Also there are many records & listings from the area cemeteries, churches, businesses, and historical events throughout the History of the Town of Sheldon.

We continue to look for aerial views from our town to add to our collection. Most of them were taken from 1930 to the present, and are a great asset in telling a story of the changes that have occurred, especially on our farms.

Along with our visitors that come in to see our schoolhouse museum & new exhibits, we are getting more people all the time who come in to research their family history. We do our best to help them, and having the internet available is a real plus.

We are in the process of indexing our records, so that if you come in to research your ancestor, we can check our index & tell you which scrapbooks, family files, obits, & books would have some kind of historical information on that person. That is a big project & will take some time, but we are working on it. One of our goals is to get our historical records copied & saved on the computer and backed up, so that nothing is lost, as well as making them easier to find.

Please come & see us, or let us know if you have any old photos, newspaper clippings, stories, or historical articles that we could add to our collection.

We have a scanner to copy your pictures & articles if you bring them in; you could keep all your originals - we would just like copies of them! If you are physically unable to come in, one of us could even visit you and bring along a portable scanner to copy your pictures, if you have any you are willing to share. Though we will not be open as much as we were in the summer, we will still be open at various times, and we are glad to come down & open up for you if you would like to visit, or perhaps you want to bring in guests. Just let one of us know & we will try to make that possible.

Thank you! We can't do it without you. All of you, and your ancestors, are our history.

Jeanne Mest,

Archival Curator

Our Museum displays for 2011:

School class room in the 1918 era.

Vintage clothing display from around 1900.

Depression glassware.

Civil War display in commemoration of 150 Anniversary

Local Farm related displays & History

Sheldon band display.

Our thanks to all those who donated time and artifacts to make the year a success.

Charter Issue of Newsletter

The Town of Sheldon Historical Society is proud to present the first issue of our Quarterly Newsletter. We are looking forward to your continued membership, or to join if you do not belong. If you are interested in preserving the History of this town, feel a certain indebtedness to the area, or perhaps have ancestors who settled here, then this is the organization for you. Members are encouraged to attend meetings, help on various committees, but for those are unable to participate or perhaps are too busy, or live too far away, you are still welcome to be a part of our endeavors. Our goal is to maintain the School House Museum as a historic architectural building for the area, display local museum artifacts and to preserve the history of The Town of Sheldon. It is a grand town and a great Society and we are most fortunate to have a **Museum, which is state chartered.**

We would like to persuade you and your friends to unite with us in a common goal. We have a growing list of out of town members who belong just because they are dedicated and enjoy getting a newsletter. The more people we have, the more likely this society will remain productive; thus we can continue in the treasure hunt for artifacts and undocumented historical data to preserve in the School House Museum.

The Town of Sheldon Historical Society
Officers, Board and Members

Question Box

Query: Does anyone know of the school on Centerline and Maxon Rds?
We welcome your queries of Town History.

School News

The society is looking for information, pictures and stories on the rural one room school houses in Sheldon. At one time there were 15 in the town. Please, if you have attended, send us a memory or story, help in our quest to preserve this bit of history.

Picture below of the Johnsonburg School.



This two room school house was built in 1886 and sat across from the Methodist Church in Johnsonburg. It was connected to the road by a long cement sidewalk. A flag pole stood alongside the sidewalk.

Courtesy of Roger Baetzold who has written more information on this school. It can be found in the school house museum.

Wyoming Co. Federation hosts annual Dinner

Wyoming Co. Federation, represented by various Historical societies in the County, had their annual fall dinner and a historical presentation on October 12, 2011. It was well attended. Greg Kinal gave a talk on the Civil War. The Federation has a Spring workshop and fall dinner. It is an organization that communicates between the societies and is responsible for the Wyoming Co. Fair exhibits of the societies. The Federation is also responsible for the front room display of the Eli Griffith House.

A backward glance of farming



Nick Almeter & Leo Becker

Much hay was originally cut by use of a scythe by teams of workers, dried in the field and gathered loose on wagons. Later, haying would be done by horse-drawn implements such as mowers. After hay was cut and had dried, the hay was raked or rowed up by raking it into a linear heap by hand or with a horse-drawn implement as a side delivery rake to make it into a wind row. Turning hay, when needed, originally was done by hand with a fork or rake. Once the dried hay was rowed up, pitchforks were used to pile it loose, originally onto a horse-drawn cart or wagon. Loose hay was taken to an area designated for storage. In later years a rope hay loader was hooked behind the wagon. it was then taken to the barn and a grapple fork was used, which pulled it up on a track to the peak of the barn. With the invention of agricultural machinery such as the tractor and the baler, most hay production became mechanized by the late 1940's.

Farmers enjoyed competing to see who could stack the biggest load, like maybe Leo and Nick in the picture were doing. Farmers never cut hay until the 4th of July and most often they would only get one cutting. Cutting fields of grass to make hay was one of the busiest times of the farming year. Men would work as long as the daylight lasted in order to make sure there would be enough hay to use as animal fodder for the frigid winter months. Women catered to them with food and drink

Farmer John's son, Sam, went to New York city to make his fortune. Unfortunately, he became a stockbroker, and on black Monday, he lost it all and found himself reduced to shining shoes for a living. At the same time, a run of unusually good weather resulted in an abundance of late season hay down back the farm. Thus, the farmer makes hay, while the son shines.



Needle in a Haystack

An old alternative for "haystack", which was current in this expression from the 16th to the 18th centuries, was 'bottle of hay'. Bottle was an old word for a bundle of hay or straw, from the Old French botel, a diminutive form of bottle, meaning bundle. This is very evocative of the total impossibility of a search - the thin needle is amongst the long slim stalks of the haystack or bundle.

Jake and Herb George are proud of the haystack as young'uns climb a top.

**A Tribute to our military
Soldiers prepare for Civil War**

Sheldon men were eager to fight for their country, many were immigrants themselves who had left their homeland because of unrest. They were not about to let America falter. *Many enlisted from Sheldon and many were injured or never returned.*

The Daily Advocate
Batavia NY April 24-1861
Organized!

Capt Root's Company of Volunteers have been inspected, and this morning organized by the choice of A.I. Root, Captain; Wm. B. Town, First Lieutenant; Lucius Smith, 2d Lieutenant.

The Company will leave here for their Regiment at Syracuse, Friday morning, at 9:10.

Counsel to Volunteers- *How to Prepare for the Campaign.*

The following hints to our volunteers communicated by "an old soldier" thro' the columns of the N.Y. 'Evening Post,' are timely and should be heeded: -

1. Remember that in a campaign more men die from sickness than by the bullet.
2. Line your blanket with one thickness of brown drilling. This adds but four ounces in weight and double the warmth.
3. Buy a small India rubber blanket (only \$1. 50) to lay on the ground or to throw over your shoulders when on guard duty during a rain storm. Most of the eastern troops are provided with these.-Straw to lie on is not always to be had.
4. The best military hat in use is the light colored soft felt; the crown being sufficiently high to allow space for ___ over the brain. You can fasten it up as a continental in fair weather, or turn it down when it is wet or very sunny.
5. Let your beard grown, so as to protect the throat and lungs.
6. Keep your entire person clean: this prevents fevers and bowel complaints in warm climates. Wash your body each day if possible. avoid strong coffee and oily meat. General Scott said that the too frequent use of these (together with neglect in keeping the skin clean) cost many a soldier his life in Mexico.
7. A sudden check of perspiration by chills or night air often causes fever and death. When thus exposed do not forget your blanket.

Attention: Did someone in your family serve in the military or are currently in active duty? Please submit their story, picture and where and when they served, our military history will not be complete without it. Any information however small is welcome. Below picture of Civil War exhibit in Schoolhouse Museum.



Obituary corner:

We are working on an extensive collection of obituaries from the mid 1800's to the present. They are a link to our past. If you have any to share, please contact us.

This issue's Obit: Orange Lester Tozier

ORANGE LESTER TOZIER died at Sheldon, N.Y., yesterday. He was born at Watertown, N.Y., in 1826, but had lived in Sheldon since 1841. He represented Wyoming County in the State Assembly from 1879 to 1880 and had filled the offices of Justice of the Peace, Supervisor, School Director, and Assistant Provost Marshal. In 1860 he raised Company G, Ninth New York Cavalry, of which he was made Captain. Mr. Tozier was one of the delegates to the first Wyoming Republican County Convention, and had missed attending few since. He was a Freemason and comrade of the Grand Army of the Republic. In 1847 he married a sister of State Senator L.N. Humphrey. [The New York Times. Tuesday, April 10, 1900 New York, New York.]

Clippings from the Wyoming Co. Times abt. 1927:

Among those who attended the play "Poor Father" given in the firemen's hall at Strykersville on Tuesday evening by the young people of the Dutch Hollow Evangelical Church under the direction of Mrs. Herman Weber were Mrs. Eugene Harmon, William and Lillian Almeter, Rosella and William Metzger. A supper and dance followed the play. The proceeds being for the benefit of the Church.

The Sheldon highway gang is operating from the Wm. Leonard pit, graveling the Frank Corners', Java Center section.

Miss Pauline Martin of Buffalo visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Martin over Sunday.

Mrs. Eli George, Mrs. Elizabeth George, Mrs. John W. George and Mrs. Constantine J. Daniels attended the funeral of Mrs. Matthias Paulus which was held in Buffalo on Saturday morning.

Johnsonburg members of the Varysburg Chapter O.E.S. who attended the Thorpe Chapter O.E.S. banquet on Tuesday evening of last week were Dora Lewis, Hazel Bauer, Mildred Batzold and Mrs. George Bauer.

Eil George attended a supervisors' meeting at Warsaw on Monday.

Ernest Murphy of Johnsonburg is driving a new Oldsmobile.

Mrs. John Dominsey is not improving, her sister Mrs. Wm. Smithe of Attica is caring for her.

Miss Lucille Felton of Buffalo was a week end guest of her parents Mr. and Mrs. Frank Felton.

Mrs. Frank Conroy and small son of Java Center are visiting Mrs. Conroy's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Eli George.

After organizing a base ball team, the "Varysburg roughnecks" then went to Strykersville to play the St. Mary's Academy team. A good game was played but the Roughnecks were beaten by a score of 9-8.

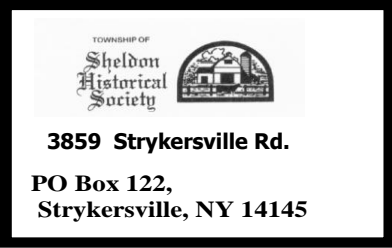
N.J. Almeter made a business trip to East Aurora.

Unidentified family picture supposedly from Sheldon



This is first in a series of unidentified pictures that we will post. Can you help? We have a scrapbook of unidentified pictures, feel free to add any Sheldon pictures you would like to have identified.

Conclusion: It takes a town of people to make the history; it also takes a community effort to preserve it. The end result can be compared with a tapestry of many threads weaved together creating a magnificent master piece. Please continue to share your historical gems to add to this finished product; the finished product is a work in progress and each addition fills in a gap and adds to the whole picture.



Until the next newsletter in February, the Sheldon Historical Society sincerely wishes you a "Happy Thanksgiving" and a warm and safe "Holiday Season."

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: _____

Highlights inside this issue include :
 A Genealogy Chart and some tips on starting your family tree.
 Goal of our society.
 Wy. Co Times 1927 clippings.
 Military History and more from our scrapbook collection

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

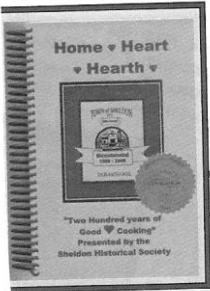
Make check payable to The Town of Sheldon Historical Society.

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.



We still have award winning Bicentennial Cookbooks for sale. \$16.00 They make an excellent Christmas Gift

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

GENEALOGY & FAMILY HISTORY

Why is Genealogy so popular? Genealogy has been important throughout history, but today it is easier to learn and record your family history than it has ever been. It seems like many people have this interest, and I wonder if it may be partly due to the way our lifestyles have changed. Gone are the days when grandparents lived with the family and were there to pass on stories. Jobs have caused families to relocate, and children grow up far from their ancestral homes. Knowing your family history brings a sense of stability; who you are, where you came from.

Since the beginning of time, people have told their family stories from one generation to the next, but most wasn't written down. Then in the 1500's, churches began keeping extensive records, and as more people became literate, they would write their family genealogy in their Bibles. In 1894, members of the Mormon Church began microfilming records from towns & different churches all over the world, as it is an important part of their religion to learn about their ancestors. They keep those records in an enormous library in Salt Lake City, the Family History Library. It is the largest genealogical library in the world; five floors, 142,000 square feet, with copies of millions of original records, including the names of more than two billion deceased people. People come from everywhere to research their family history. At first this was just for members, but soon it became available to the public & branches were opened in various churches, where they keep some books & films, and order others as requested by their patrons. Their website, <https://www.familysearch.org>, is free & has great records. You can go to their Family History Library & do research, and if you like, they will request that microfilms be sent there from Salt Lake City. There is no charge to use their library or resources, except for a small fee to cover the shipment of the films. When you view the films, you can print or save the info on your USB drive.

How would I start my family history? Every website or book I have seen tells you that the **first thing you need to do is start in your home**. There are free genealogy forms online that you can print & use. Start with yourself and write down the names & birthdates of your family; whatever you know; what they did, where they lived. **No detail is too small**. Look around your house for old records, letters, journals, deeds & family Bibles, which often have families listed, along with articles & obits that have been tucked in there. Ask any older relatives if they have any records or pictures, and would want to help you. Usually at some point someone will say, "Oh, so & so was into that, they have all the family history" so you definitely want to find that person & ask them for help. Sometimes it's disappointing to learn that someone used to be interested, but didn't record anything. But it all helps. It is important to actually do the research yourself, and write it down, and once you do, you find there is more to the story than anyone could have imagined.

The best place to begin is with Census records, which are available online or at your local historical society, for the years from 1840 to 1930. They reveal your ancestor's name, spouse, names of children, occupation & neighbors.

There are several free websites such as <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com>, or if you sign up for a program like Ancestry.com, they give you a couple weeks free and if you want to continue, you can subscribe. Like anything, you get what you pay for, and the websites you pay for have unbelievable records, and their programs can do so much.

Public libraries have many records & films; most have subscriptions to Heritage Quest and Ancestry.com. They are library editions & may not be as complete as if you had your own subscription, but still, very helpful.

Search online for immigration records & ship's passenger lists. There are old newspaper websites like <http://fultonhistory.com>, where you type in your ancestor's name & search for articles. It is surprising how often people made the papers. You learn who they spent time with & what was important to them. Cemeteries are great; so much info on headstones. County records, like wills & deeds, are open to the public.

Sometimes you can't find a specific record from your own ancestor, but you find something similar from a neighbor or someone who lived during that time, and you know they had many of the same experiences, so that helps you put together your story.

There is software available to help you put your family tree on your computer, without need for the internet. The program will organize your family records & put the people in the right spot. Previously, people hand wrote or typed their family genealogy sheets, which was a lot harder, so only the most dedicated people did this.

What can you do with this? As little or as much as you want. Make some lists, or a family history book. Meet or grow closer to relatives; have a family reunion, start a family newsletter. **At the very least, you can leave some info behind for someone else to continue with your work.**

By looking into our past, we learn so much more than just names & dates from the lives of our ancestors. Your ancestors have become real people to you, and you feel like you actually know them. Or you wish you could have.

Can you imagine if they walked into our homes today? What would they tell us about their lives? What kind of advice would they give us? What they would say was the most important thing they would want us to know. It would be nice if every ancestor left a letter or a record behind, but most didn't. People worked hard to survive. I doubt it occurred to them that anyone would be interested in their lives, especially hundreds of years later.

When we learn whatever we can about their lives, it gives us an idea of what they might tell us; what mysteries they would solve; what wisdom they would share, and what they would say to encourage us, if only they could. Thinking of them may help you and your family to be strong when going through hard times. After we see how our ancestors endured, we realize there is hope for us. We can follow their good examples & learn from their mistakes.

Studying your family history is enlightening & encouraging, but sometimes you find out things that aren't so great. That reminds you that all people are human & make mistakes. But they kept on going and survived & so can we.

Sharing what you learn about your family history can bring a lot of happiness to yourself and to others. When you visit & get to know distant relatives, you learn so much about them, and find that you have much in common. You develop relationships you might not have had. Even on the internet, you can get acquainted with distant relatives; most are glad to share their stories and memories. You can copy pictures that you never knew existed. Be sure to take a camera or hand held scanner when you visit someone. This summer we had a family reunion, the first one in many years. Some people came that we had never met; they saw our ad in the paper & were brave enough to come to a reunion where they knew no one, but they knew they were descendants of the same people and wanted to meet. What a great time we all had!

WHAT REALLY IMPORTANT THING CAN YOU DO? Write down some details of your life. Record the names of all of the relatives you can remember. Make a little notebook or journal, or just a few pages in a folder. Tuck little special mementos in the pockets; photos, a card, a wedding invitation, a postcard. Write down a brief (or long) story of your life; growing up, having a family, what it was like then; what it is like today.

When you are together with family, especially at holidays, ask if anyone there has ever thought of researching your family history. You may be surprised to learn someone is very interested; it is probably the last person you would think of. But if no one cares about it right now, tell them that's ok, but that you know someday someone is going to want to know the family history, and you want to help them by leaving them whatever you can.

There is a quote that says a person is not truly gone forever, until their name is spoken for the last time. But that doesn't have to happen, not to us or to our ancestors. So tell the family you have a folder, or a box of stuff, or things written in the Bible. Tell them where it is, and that when you are gone they should keep it & take care of it until the day someone comes looking for it. Because in every family there is at least one person who will develop this interest, and you want to be able to help them, even if you are no longer there. **They will thank you for it!**

Contributed by Jeanne Mest, Archival Curator

Below is a **Genealogy chart** to assist you.

There is no better time than now to get started.

When you have the Energy and the Time -- You haven't got the Money!"
"When you have the Energy and the Money -- You haven't got the Time!"
"When you have the Money and the Time -- You haven't got the Energy

To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root.".. Chinese Proverb

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
COMMON ANCESTOR	SON / DAU.	GRAND-SON	GREAT GRAND-SON	G-G GRAND-SON	G-G-G GRAND-SON	4G GRAND-SON	5G GRAND-SON	6G GRAND-SON	7G GRAND-SON	
1	SON / DAU.	BRO / SIS.	NEPHEW / NIECE	GRAND NEPHEW	GREAT GRAND-NEPHEW	G-G GRAND-NEPHEW	G-G-G GRAND-NEPHEW	4G GRAND-NEPHEW	5G GRAND-NEPHEW	6G GRAND-NEPHEW
2	GRAND-SON	NEPHEW / NIECE	1ST COUSIN	1 COU 1 R	1 COU 2 R	1 COU 3 R	1 COU 4 R	1 COU 5 R	1 COU 6 R	1 COU 7 R
3	GREAT GRAND-SON	GRAND NEPHEW	1 COU 1 R	2ND COUSIN	2 COU 1 R	2 COU 2 R	2 COU 3 R	2 COU 4 R	2 COU 5 R	2 COU 6 R
4	G-G GRAND-SON	GREAT GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 2 R	2 COU 1 R	3RD COUSIN	3 COU 1 R	3 COU 2 R	3 COU 3 R	3 COU 4 R	3 COU 5 R
5	G-G-G GRAND-SON	G-G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 3 R	2 COU 2 R	3 COU 1 R	4TH COUSIN	4 COU 1 R	4 COU 2 R	4 COU 3 R	4 COU 4 R
6	4G GRAND-SON	3G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 4 R	2 COU 3 R	3 COU 2 R	4 COU 1 R	5TH COUSIN	5 COU 1 R	5 COU 2 R	5 COU 3 R
7	5G GRAND-SON	4G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 5 R	2 COU 4 R	3 COU 3 R	4 COU 2 R	5 COU 1 R	6TH COUSIN	6 COU 1 R	6 COU 2 R
8	6G GRAND-SON	5G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 6 R	2 COU 5 R	3 COU 4 R	4 COU 3 R	5 COU 2 R	6 COU 1 R	7TH COUSIN	7 COU 1 R
9	7G GRAND-SON	6G GRAND-NEPHEW	1 COU 7 R	2 COU 6 R	3 COU 5 R	4 COU 4 R	5 COU 3 R	6 COU 2 R	7 COU 1 R	8TH COUSIN

RELATIONSHIP CHART ABBREVIATIONS

BRO = brother

SIS = sister

DAU = daughter

COU = cousin

R = removed (generations removed)

G-G = great-great

GRANDSON = grandson or granddaughter

SON = son or daughter

NEPHEW = nephew or niece

The chart may be extended in either direction for identifying more distant relationships.

"The kind of ancestors we have had is not as important as the kind of descendants our ancestors have."

Author unknown