



*Sheldon Historical Society
200 Bridge Street
Sheldon, Vermont*

*mailing address:
P.O. Box 65 Sheldon Springs, VT 05485*

Fall 2025 Newsletter

Our Museum is closed for the winter (November through April) but is available by appointment for special events or research. Call 802 933-2479 for information.

Calcutta 2025 Huge Success

"Oh, What a Night" sums up our Sept 19th event at The Abbey Restaurant! A full house packed the dining room for our 4th annual Calcutta and Silent Auction. Thank you to Sherry and staff for serving up a scrumptious prime rib buffet and to our many sponsors, silent auction donors, guests and volunteers who made this event possible.



Our Home – The Sheldon Historical Society Museum & Community Room

Comments from a recent visitor at the museum clarifies some history:

“While volunteering at the museum I’ve had visitors tell me they remember a Mr. Corey as a shopkeeper. Town records do not list Corey as an owner of the former H.H. Mower Store on Bridge Street.

The mystery was solved for me when Jeannine Corey Rondeau from Richford visited the museum last week with her daughter-in-law Heather Rondeau. Jeannine and her family moved to Sheldon from Connecticut in 1971. Her parents Floyd and Arlene Corey rented the grocery store from then owner Arthur Murray.

Jeannine fondly recalled her father standing at the counter in the rear of the store cutting and wrapping meat for his customers, and how her father cut a hole in the upstairs floor so he could look down and watch her work at the cash register!

A visit to the second floor brought back a flood of memories as she recalled the division of rooms and the front corner bedroom where she spent her late teenage years.

In 1973 her family moved to Swanton where her father was employed by Pike Industries.

In 1975 Arthur Murray sold the Bridge Street property to Harold and Anne Howrigan.

Are you looking for a way to support the Society and give gifts for Christmas?.

<https://sheldonvthistorical.org/society/donate/>

Visit us at www.sheldonvthistorical.org Email to sheldonhistorical@gmail.com or
<https://www.facebook.com/sheldonhistoricalsociety>

Community Events



In June the Historical Society hosted a Barn Quilt Therapy session. Participants designed and painted elegant original and traditional quilt patterns with the patient guidance and advice of artist Kimberly Hess. Barn quilts? The Franklin County Barn Quilt Trail began in 2010 by the Sheldon Raiders Home Dem Club. At that time the Sheldon Barn Quilt Trail consisted of only 12 quilts. Soon there was an explosion of barn quilts that covered neighboring towns. Fifteen years later you will find barn quilts dotting the landscape throughout Vermont. Visit barnquiltsfornorthernvermont.org to view over 630 painted quilt blocks in Franklin County alone!!!

Regularly Scheduled Card Parties



The Historical Society sponsored monthly 500 card parties at the museum's refurbished Community Memorial Center on the second floor. The games will pause for the winter and resume in the spring.

Note: This photo clearly shows the second-floor rehabilitation efforts in progress: a restored tin ceiling, custom built 4 over 1 windows and refurbished wainscoting. And even more recently, new window trim, and a heating and air conditioning system have been completed. We're indebted to the Cultural Facilities Grant program, administered by the Vermont Arts

Council, which made the heat exchanger project possible!

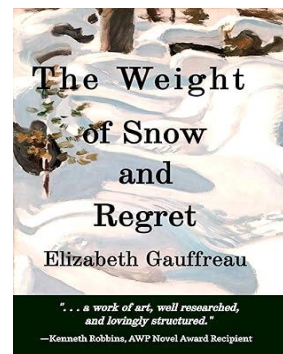
A Brief Look at the Life and Times of Jeffrey Brace: Revolutionary Soldier and Slave with Joanne Polanshek

Saturday, October 11 at 1:00 p.m. provided many the opportunity to learn about Jeffrey Brace: likely the first Black property owner in Sheldon. He purchased property along the Missisquoi River from the Sheldon family near Tyler Branch. Jeffrey served with Jed Clark Sr. in the Revolutionary War, emerging from that experience a free man. The property in question was adjacent to that of the Clark family.

"The Weight of Snow and Regret" book signing by author Elizabeth Gauffreau

Liz Gauffreau presented to a full house in the second floor Community Center Saturday, October 25. Like many others, growing up in Franklin County during the last years of the Poor Farm, she was oblivious to its existence. Closed in 1968, the Sheldon Poor Farm was the last "asylum" for the poor, "simple-minded", or homeless in Vermont. Other social safety nets had begun to reduce

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dependence on the Poor Farm, and the “inmate” population had shrunk to a mere remnant in the 95 bed facility. Gauffreau’s interest was ignited a few years ago, and she’s done a fine job capturing, through five fictitious characters, the flavor of rural Vermont at a political, social and economic turning point.

Her listeners lingered after Gauffreau’s talk, sharing personal recollections as the author signed copies of the new book

Artifacts From The Civil War



Every Vermont town fed many of its young men to the Civil War’s bloody furnace. But as one of only two Vermont towns which saw Civil War action on their Main Streets, Sheldon experienced firsthand the dread its soldiers lived with throughout the war. Don was pleased to meet with Randy & Kathy Colomb at the museum and to accept a collection of Colomb family artifacts from the Civil War era. Below are excerpts from the email sent by the Colombbs:

"Today Kathy and I traveled to the Sheldon Vermont Historical Society and did a reuniting of images of two of Sheldon's Civil War Veterans: My 2nd Great Grandfather Michael Sowers Pvt. 10th VT. Vols. Inf. Co. I. and my 2nd Great Uncle Peter Sowers Cpl. 10th VT. Vols. Inf Co. I.it was a great pleasure to meet and share with you the heritage of my ancestry and of their selfless service to this Country. Thank you for the tour and your availability to receive us on a closed day.....Everyone should be very proud of the accomplishments made in the preservation of your local history."

Sheldon Post Office Display by Fern Mercure

The H.H. Mower Building was constructed after the devastating fire of 1932 that destroyed numerous commercial buildings in Post Office Square, along with a two-lane covered bridge over Black Creek. The first floor of the new Mower Building housed a country store and a post office. The post office furnishings consisted of early 20th Century oak trim assembled with screws, matched to a number carved in the unit. The iron post office boxes had Franklin Keyless Locks with a two letter brass combination. Cards with the original combinations were dated 1929. The service window was original and dated back to the early 1900’s.



My husband’s parents, Clarence and Helen Mercure, purchased the property from Harlow Mower in 1950. Clarence ran the country store for a few years; Helen worked as a clerk in the Post Office and later became postmaster, replacing Mamie Marsh upon her retirement.

In 1958 Arthur Murray decided to expand the General Store. The Mercure’s relocated the post office to their home on Main Street where

it remained until closing in 2020.

On the day following the closing of the Sheldon Post Office, all postal furnishings were removed to an undisclosed location. With persuasion from Senator Leahy’s office, the post office fixtures were located and put up for auction (per USPS protocol). At that time, the SHS was few in members and

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dirt poor but members were determined to win the bid, and collected the \$888.27 needed to return the post office back to its original home. The Society is very pleased to have acquired the post office boxes, which will remain an integral part of the museum's post office exhibit. Inquire at sheldonhistorical@gmail about "owning " one of the boxes

I Didn't Know that!

Three railroads converged at Sheldon Junction in the 1880s. Many residents remember the Central Vermont (the CV) and the St J & LC intersecting behind the Bordeau Brothers site. In 1882 a third railroad, the Montreal & Boston, also joined that knot of steel rails. The line ran from the Junction to Montreal, but never saw any commercial traffic: it was bought by the CV before the first trains ran. The track was pulled in 1883, leaving a ghost of the right-of-way still visible where it crosses Sheldon Heights road, and across fields and farms toward the border at Frelighsbugh.



The first automobile registered in Sheldon was a 1905 Winton owned, unsurprisingly, by Delwin Shepley. The Shepleys established the Pulp Mill at Sheldon Springs in 1895, and later sported about in these elegant roadsters. It was a while before anyone else had such a stylish ride on Sheldon's dusty trails!

Membership

Editor's Note: FUN! Is how you spell "Sheldon Historical Society". Your Society plans and carries out activities year 'round to engage the community- Why not join us through membership? Enjoy our postings on Facebook at Sheldon Historical Society. Visit our website for fun and historical insights, and most of all, join us for many upcoming events in 2026:

- Reopening of the museum in May
- 500 card parties, programs, activities Monthly
- Sheldon Old Home Days (July)
- Calcutta '26 (September)
- Special Members reception and program

As a non-profit public benefit corporation, our Society depends on members for direction, inspiration, guidance and support. You've recently received our annual Membership Appeal, and we hope you've already renewed. If you haven't yet, please take a few minutes to reply; perhaps even consider giving a gift of membership to family members or friends who've moved away. Find a convenient on-line form at

www.sheldonvthistorical.org/society/membership-form/ Or call for assistance 802 933-2479