



Sheldon Historical Society

200 Bridge Street

Sheldon, Vermont

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January 2026 Newsletter

BANNER YEAR FOR SHELDON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By Don McFeeeters, President

“We are pleased to share with you the events of the Sheldon Historical Society, the developments occurring this year in our attempt to tell the historical story of Sheldon, and the hopes and dreams for the Historical Society. The Sheldon Historical Society’s focus is located at 200 Bridge Street in Sheldon Village, which houses the Museum. Our vision is to tell the story beyond the four walls of the Museum; within the schools, on the trails, and the byways that are a part of the community of Sheldon.



The Museum, formally the HH Mower General Store building, built in the early 1930s was accepted in 2025 on the National Register of Historic Places.

During 2025, the Sheldon History Society conducted many events to better help and appreciate Sheldon’s unique attributes. With these increased efforts, the Sheldon Historical Society has become more than just a location where one can view exhibits. Respected teacher and author Jason Barney led off the year with a presentation of the story of northern Vermont in the Revolutionary War. Additional free, public events included:

- “Historical Migration”, a presentation by Nationally recognized migrant health specialist Naomi Wolcott-MacCausland
- Open House with Lt Governor John Rogers recognizing the HH Mower store as an historic place and community asset; featuring music, food, and exhibits by local organizations.
- Barn Quilt Therapy with gifted folk artist Kimberly Hess
- Book release, with author Elizabeth Gauffreau presenting her newest novel “The Weight of Snow and Regret”. The book is based on the Sheldon Poor Farm experience
- Visits to the Museum by the Enosburg Falls Historical Society, Sheldon Elementary and MVU High School history classes.
- Book signing by Sheldon author Terry Lovelette, presenting his fourth book.
- “A brief look at the Life and Times of Jeffrey Brace: Revolutionary War Solider and Slave” by St Albans historian and genealogist Joanne Polanshek.

It is time to celebrate the efforts of the many members and volunteers of the Sheldon Historical Society. Much has been accomplished; Much more to come. We thank all who have made a contribution of labor, artifacts, stories of Sheldon, or in financial support.

See all of Don’s report online, at our website www.sheldonyhistorical.org

Coming Events:

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.



We look forward to starting up the popular, regularly scheduled 500 Card Parties
Beginning Friday, May 29.



Join us in the spring for another popular "Barn Quilt Therapy Workshop" by Kimberly Hess –

Date To Be Announced

Later in the spring we'll host award winning quilter and artist Hope Johnson. She will present a trunk show of her handmade quilts featuring unusual one-of-a-kind pieces that make up a program called "Quilts, Bees and Community".

Date To Be Announced



Sheldon Old Home Day Parade and BBQ - **Saturday, July 25.** Need ideas for a float? Contact us via email, on Facebook or any of our board members.



Mark your calendar for our next Calcutta and Silent Auction –
Friday, September 25.

Artifact of the MONTH

"We intend to feature one of our artifacts on display at the museum each month. If you wish for a specific artifact you are familiar with to be featured please let us know. Further, if you'd like to write an article about one of the artifacts familiar to you please submit it and we will attempt to feature it in a future issue."

The Kettle Mold



This Kettle mold given to the society by Mrs. Evelyn Cross

When her son Peter gave this artifact to the museum collection in 2018 he commented: "My mother, Evelyn Cross, is almost 89 years old and has possession of a wooden kettle mold that was found in Black Creek in Sheldon. It is in extremely good condition and was given to her by Grant Gorton, a former Sheldon Creek resident."

On the bottom of the mold a hand written note reads "This is an original pattern mold for making iron kettles in Sheldon VT. It was recovered from the foundry site near Black Creek in Sheldon by the Gorton's who lived in that town for many years. The first foundry was abandoned in 1822 or 1823 and rebuilt on the west side of Black Creek".

You may be asking "What is a bowl mold?" "Why is it an artifact of Sheldon?" Visit the Museum at 200 Bridge Street to see this artifact and to learn more about Israel, Unite, and Alfred Keith. They mined iron ore, built a blast furnace on the bank of the Black Creek, and poured great iron potash kettles and hollowware sometimes referred to as "Sheldon Currency".

Each issue of the Newsletter promises to sketch a brief story of a Sheldon figure of the past who by thought, word, or deed shaped Sheldon's present.

Person of the Month

Harlow Henry Mower

August 17, 1873 to March 4, 1960

Builder and Proprietor of the H H Mower Store

Currently the Sheldon Historical Society Museum



Harlow Mower

Harlow Henry Mower, son of Henry E. and Martha Smith Mower, resided in Sheldon, VT for all but two brief periods of his life while he was learning the "store" business in Orange, MA, and when he moved his family to Brattleboro in the early 1900s. While he is more recently fondly remembered as the grocer on Bridge St. where children like Edith Fiske could purchase penny candy, his legacy grows out of the family background established by Henry Elmer Mower during Harlow's growing years.

On June 25, 1896 Harlow married Abbie E Fairbanks of Sheldon. "The wedding took place in the home of B H Fairbanks a little before 3 O'clock with some 35 friends in attendance."

Grace Aura Mower, the couple's first child, was born on January 2, 1899. Quick, determined, and ambitious, she became actively involved in her father's business, and later in Sheldon Town politics: in 1936 becoming Town Clerk with her office originally in the H H Mower Store.

As a grocer Harlow is fondly remembered as a friend of the children, and served them penny candy with a smile. He maintained a membership in the Sheldon United Methodist Church. He joined the Haskell Lodge 39 of the F & AM in 1905. He rose steadily through the organization achieving the 32nd degree of Masonry in 1947. He is said never to have missed a district meeting, and attended 40 of the 42 Grand Lodges in Burlington. He served as master of the Haswell Lodge F&AM as well as high priest of Royal Arch Masons and was deputy master of the Columbia Council at St. Albans.



After over 30 years of business deals following in the footsteps of his father's business and land enterprises, Harlow suffered a loss far greater than the flood of 1927, when the entire Bridge Street block on both sides of the bridge along with the bridge shown burned.

To the left is a photo before the 1932 fire, of the "Post Office Square" with the bridge. Mower's original store, selling paint and hardware, was immediately left of the bridge.



In spite of his substantial loss totaling of over \$11,000 in 1932 dollars, Harlow Mower gathered together his life savings and returned to business after constructing a new store. The building, in addition to his general store, contained the post office on the first floor, an open hall on the second floor, and the Sheldon Town Clerk office at the basement level.

To the left is a photo of the smoldering ruins of Sheldon's commercial district, two days after the fire. A temporary rope suspension bridge was built soon after, suitable for pedestrians and one impetuous teenage girl and her horse). The present cement bridge was dedicated the following spring.

On March 4, 1960 Harlow Henry Mower died at the age of 87. Along with his wife and two daughters, he is buried in the Sheldon Cemetery. There are no known living relatives thus ending the Mower era in Sheldon. For a more complete biography of H Mower see our website.

Squibs of the Month from the old New England weather traditions
: "If Candlemas is bright and clear, we'll have two winters in the year".
"If cold temperatures you would know, listen for the squeak of snow".

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.

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

Material gifts to the society are received through our Collections committee. Your thoughtful monetary donations may be made on our web site, in person, through the PayPal Giving Fund, or via mail to P O. Box 65 Sheldon Springs, VT 05485. Your gift to our 501 (c)3 nonprofit organization is tax exempt. Thank you!

I Didn't Know That!!

By Andrew Crane
Was this Sheldon's Plymouth Rock?

Sheldon's early settlers spread across the township from the first rough log home (near Tyler Branch) to clusters of small dwellings across the thirty-nine square miles of what had been called the Hungerford grant. The first "circuit rider" ministers in this settlement began religious services by 1807, but it would be more than a dozen years before a church could be built, in 1824. By 1829, a Union church was proposed, serving several denominations, and the Town's leading citizens were ordered to meet "at the rock, midway between East Sheldon and Sheldon village".

This rock was giant glacial erratic, deposited millennia ago by the great ice sheet that scraped and bulldozed across most of North America. It was left along the East Sheldon road, near the present Kane Road, on today's Richard and Doris Archambault farm. In our time, the rock -of uncertain depth- appeared about 7 feet high, and perhaps 15 feet across. The road and rock existed comfortably, side by side. For generations, neighboring children: the Soule, Draper, and Riley kids hiked to the "picnic rock" to discover adventures, share stories, swap secrets and tell lies. Early in the 1980s however, town officers decided this rock offended the highway right-of-way, and on a summer afternoon they blew the rock to smithereens.

A small fragment of the meeting rock remains, at the edge of the Town right of way, roughly across the road from the Archambault's equipment shed. Invisible among the dense vegetation in the summer, you can see it in spring and fall. Take a look, and listen for those early settlers deciding "who will lead" "what do we need" and "where do we go from here?"



The Union Church, at "the Rock", circa 1830.
A great congregation by anybody's count!

Are you interested in being a Newsletter contributor? Send your offering to our email for review