



*Sheldon Historical Society  
200 Bridge Street  
Sheldon, Vermont*

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

February 2026 Newsletter

*“July 4, 1776 – July 4, 2025”  
“250 Years of Freedom”*



Without a doubt the most significant happening of this year will be the Nation's Semiquincentennial celebration, marking the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. That remarkable event was as monumental in its impact as the signing of the Magna Carta 560 years earlier, which –above King John's very reluctant signature - laid the foundation of individual rights and the liberties of “free men”. The commitment to “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” claimed in Thomas Jefferson's bold words remains our guiding principle and our greatest test. Our celebration this summer doesn't commemorate an ancient victory, but marks our renewed commitment to the critical values expressed so thoughtfully in the Declaration, and later in our Constitution. This great experiment “of the people, by the people, and for the people” will succeed -in spite of turmoil, tension, corruption and conflicts- when “for support of this Declaration... we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor”

Check celebratory events throughout Vermont including our own Sheldon Old Home Days on Saturday July 25, 2026 and plan to attend at least one event out of respect for your country.

## 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

Saturday, June 13th beginning at 1:00 p.m., award winning quilter Hope Johnson from Shelburne, VT will present “Quilting in Community”, fabric quilts that focus on Vermont community connections.



“Let Freedom Ring” is the title for Sheldon Old Home Day’s Parade and BBQ - Saturday, July 25. Register your participation in the parade by using our registration form at the end of this newsletter. We look forward to celebrating our heritage with you on July 25.



Mark your calendar for our next Calcutta and Silent Auction on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at The Abbey Restaurant.

## Artifact of the MONTH



Following the fire of April 1932 that devastated the commercial and industrial section of Bridge Street, Harlow Mower rebuilt his business on the foundation of the older Gallup store. Included within his design and construction were both the US Post Office and the Town Clerk Office.

The postal boxes to the left are the actual boxes first located in the H. H. Mower Store in 1932 when Mrs. Mamie M. Marsh served as Postmaster of the Sheldon Post office until 1952.

Following her term of service Mrs. Helen A. Mercure assumed responsibility as Postmaster until 1977.

In 1958 Helen Mercure moved the post office including all of the current artifacts to the location known as School 5 on Main Street where it remained until all postal services moved to the Springs.

The US Postal Department took the boxes out of Sheldon and stored them in Saint Albans. Upon finding the boxes up for auction, your historical society board authorized bidding on the boxes and many members contributed funds to the purchase. Upon succeeding in the bidding process a member of the society picked up the complete display and your display committee arranged for it to be placed back in its original location.

Our right side door clearly indicates "Post Office" as it has for many years. Enter into memories of your visits here or on Main Street. Perhaps you wish to reclaim your "own old" box as many residents have. Let us know via email to [sheldonhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:sheldonhistorical@gmail.com).

A robust history of the postal system in Sheldon can be found on our web site at <https://sheldonvthistorical.org/our-town-history/postal-history-of-sheldon/>. Feel free to visit there for additional Information.

**Persons of the month.**  
**Two Recent Postmasters**

Josiah Hildeth served as Postmaster in 1803. Since then and up to the closing of the Main Street location many other distinguished members of our community have provided professional services to us. You can find a full list on our web site. With some trepidation about neglecting to focus our attention on your favorite person, we wish to recognize two former Postmasters.

Mrs. Helen A. Mercure began her postal service under the tutelage of Mrs. Mamie M. Marsh and began as full postmaster in 1952. She and her husband Clarence purchased the H H Mower store containing the post office. They operated the store and provided mail service at the Bridge Street location. In 1958 when they sold the store they purchased the “old school” on Main Street and moved the contents of the post office to that location where the facility served Sheldon residents until its consolidation with the Sheldon Springs post office.

Many town residents continue to fondly remember Helen. Her son Jim Mercure and his wife Fern Mercure continue to reside in Sheldon and are active members of the Sheldon Historical Society. We wish to remember her and her service.



Mrs. Marie Brouillette (7/01/1986 to 8/31/1992) Although not the last postmaster of Sheldon, Marie distinguished herself through many years of dedicated service both in the postal service as well as a member of the local and state Grange where she and her husband Richard served our farm community as state officers. Additionally we know Marie as a member of the Sheldon Historical Society for many years and a contributor of both written and recorded postal history. She and John Wriston collaborated on the “History of the Sheldon Post Offices” for The Vermont Philatelist in May 2004. In addition she created several written pieces for the Sheldon Historical Society and spoke at the restored post office in the museum. You may view that recording on our website.

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

Weatherwise

“As the days lengthen, the cold strengthens”  
“For every fog in August, there’ll be a snowfall in Winter”  
“A year of Snow, A year of Plenty”

## **Just so you Know**

by Andy Crane

There's long been some dispute about the meaning of "Missisquoi", which name was a phonetic attempt by early French settlers to spell the native name of the river. It's variously spelled Missisikoi, Missisikoo, and Missisquoi, and its possible none of them do justice to the original pronunciation. Even more confusion enters when considering what the name meant to the original speakers: the US Natural Resources Conservation Service declares the name should be spelled Masipskoik and meant "place of flint", referring to an important chert quarry along the lower river. More often noted, and however pronounced, the name is supposed to have referred to "much waterfowl". Visitors to the wildlife refuge in Swanton will certainly appreciate that appropriate name. Whatever the "M" word meant, a wonderfully mellifluous Abenaki variant is Wazowategok meaning the "river that loops around".

The Missisquoi River falls 715 feet along its nearly 88 mile course, beginning in Lowell. It drains a watershed of 855 square miles, covering parts of Franklin and Orleans counties in Vermont, and the Province of Quebec. Sheldon's wandering stretch of the river is the longest of any town along its course. The entire river is designated part of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail, tracing the ancient trade and communication route of the native Woodlands people. Forty six miles are included in the National Wild and Scenic River System.

### **File this fact away for a quiz night:**

The highest point in Sheldon is 1100' feet above sea level, in the southeast corner of town off Duffy Hill Road. Sheldon Hill, at 910' off the Kittell Road, is second highest.

### **What's in a name?**

Sheldon was Hungerford in 1763, when Royal Governor Benning Wentworth sold off chunks of the New Hampshire lands he governed. Samuel Hungerford and 64 Subscribers bought these 39 square miles of forest and stream for "an undisclosed sum" (it involved some ceremonial corn. That's another tale.) What became of Sam? He, as well as most of his partners, sold their shares to one of their group, Uriah Field, who in turn found that willing buyer in Elijah Sheldon and his Patriot sons. Sam Hungerford, for his part, liked Fairfield better. And there he settled! Interestingly, Samuel Hungerford's oldest son was partial to the English argument, and settled in Ontario with his family.

This month in history  
By Harold Smith

The first railroad fatality in Sheldon occurred on the evening of Feb. 5, 1901 when an employee died while attempting to pull a train out of a snow drift. The Missisquoi Railroad, later called the Missisquoi Valley Railroad and eventually the Central Vermont Railroad, was completed with the first train running out of Sheldon on July 4, 1871. The Sheldon Jct. depot was constructed in 1889 and was considered a passenger and freight depot.

In response to our Facebook question about presidents connected to Sheldon, it was from this depot that Missisquoi Springs mineral water was shipped to President Ulysses S Grant. Suffering greatly from cancer of the throat, Grant was hoping for a miraculous cure from the water: which promised what it could not deliver.

How about That!!  
By Andy Crane

Some years, there's not much winter to complain about. This winter we've had a pretty good dose, and February may not be ready to give up yet. This time in 1902 the ice was breaking up, and young boys were cautioned to stay off the river. Sadly, "Hoyt Marvin, 13 year-old son of the Sheldon station agent was drowned in Black Creek Wednesday afternoon. He was standing on the ice, and with a long pole was playing with the cakes of ice floating down when he lost his balance and fell in. The body has not been recovered" The following week, the paper reported his body was found after 5 days searching.

In a happier ice-out, perhaps 60 years later, a young Betty Chadwick (later Betty Domingue) surveyed –from a safer vantage- the ice that swamped the road near the McEnany farm, on the road from Sheldon Junction toward the Village. It's a marvelous sight, if you're not the farmer trying to get milk to the creamery!



## 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.sheldonthistorical.org/society/membership-form/](http://www.sheldonthistorical.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!

**Sheldon Old Home Day Parade and BBQ**

2026 Parade Registration

July 25, 2026

***“Let Freedom Ring”***

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM TO:

**Roger Bennett 1526 Main Street Sheldon, VT 05483 (802) 355-5340**

NAME/ ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_

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

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Entry:  Float,  Antique truck/ car,  Walker(s),  Horse(s),  antique tractor   
ATV pulling float,  Decorated Golf Cart

Brief Description of Entry: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

PARADE DATE/TIME: July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 11:00 AM. Please arrive prior to 10:00 a.m. at intersection of Pleasant and Center Streets. You will be directed to your line-up location from there.

Absolutely no candy is to be thrown from vehicles; must be handed out by persons walking route.