



*Sheldon Historical Society
200 Bridge Street
Sheldon, Vermont*

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

SUMMER 2026
JULY AUGUST 2026 NEWSLETTER

Our Museum – Then and Now



WOW!



STOP BY FOR A VISIT YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED

OPEN THURSDAY AND SATURDAY 10 AM TO 2 PM

At the Museum Now



Revolution to Settlement is the feature exhibit this summer at the museum. Colonel Sheldon's 1789 purchase of the Hungerford Grant accelerated the pace of the town's development. The exhibit traces Sheldon's Revolutionary War experiences, as a leader in the Connecticut Militia, through his long service as George Washington's friend and confidant.



Included in the exhibit, visitors will find a "Brown Bess" musket, on loan from the Vermont Historical Society. This smooth bore musket, made by the thousands at the Dublin Castle armory, was provided to the British regulars who accompanied General Burgoyne's 24th regiment at his defeat at Saratoga.



Sharing the exhibit is a smooth bore Springfield musket representing the American arms of the same period. The Springfield was patterned on the muskets France sent in response to Ben Franklin's artful negotiations. This artifact is generously loaned us by John Crane.

Be sure to spend time with the video presentation, which traces Colonel Sheldon's exploits with his 2nd Continental Light Dragoons; "Sheldon's Horse".

SHELDON OLD HOME DAY - 2026

The Old Home Day celebration July 25th drew a large and appreciative crowd, estimated at over 600. Parade highlights included nine floats created by Sheldon families, organizations and individuals celebrating our community, and reflecting the values of freedom and unity implicit in our nation's Semiquincentennial. A particularly poignant tableau featured Thomas Jefferson, at work drafting the Declaration of Independence. Joe Dunlavey was the perfect Jefferson, on a float imagined by Sally Severy. Floats featuring the Liberty Bell, Betsy Ross, and Clara Barton were also Sally's inspirations, and underlined the parade's theme of community service and dedication to our common cause.

The barbecue was a sell-out, with generous portions of chicken, pulled pork, salads, and drinks satisfying a hungry crowd. The Sheldon Food Shelf offered ice cream, donated by Stewart's. Lemonade was served by the Episcopal Church, baked goods were shared by the Sheldon Elementary School, and the Franklin County Dairy Promotion Committee gave away gallons of chocolate milk. No one left the day hungry.



Franklin County senator Bob Norris spoke of his lifelong ties to Sheldon, reminding the crowd the values we celebrate nationally are rooted in our home towns. Freedom and Unity are interdependent, and the happiness of every individual is only realized in the thoughtful, intentional cooperation of neighbors.

The Historical Society appreciates all those who marched, rode, and sang to make the parade a successful, fun, and moving expression of Sheldon's strong community fabric.

(Additional SOHD Photos) Courtesy of Melissa Hall-Archambault





You can find additional photos on our web site under "Events" along with a link to the full set of photos submitted to us by Melissa Hall-Archambault

BARN QUILT THERAPY



An expression of patriotism was celebrated at the museum on Saturday (July 11) in Kimberly Hess's well attended activity. Participants went home with ready-to-hang barn quilts. Each one was a unique take on the Red, White, and Blue!

SAMPLER STORIES



Saturday, July 18th Vermont textile conservator and Sampler expert Michele Pagan presented her deeply researched program on Samplers created by girls growing up in the aftermath of the Revolutionary War. Ms. Pagan focused on six Vermont pieces from the collection of over 900 American samplers collected by the Vermont Sampler Initiative. She noted that her study is the only research on early Vermont work: a book detailing her research is under development.

Samplers were the work of young girls in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Even though public education was a value expressed in the first Vermont Constitution, schools weren't widely established until the 1830's. Girls' education was often home-based, and limited to the "domestic arts". Needlework was the measure of a young girl's suitability for her future role. The "Sampler" was her diploma: demonstrating her creativity and mastery of that essential skill.

HONORS

The Sheldon Historical Society's work on the 200 Bridge Street property is being featured in the annual report of the Preservation Trust of Vermont. We're honored to be selected.

NEW DIRECTORS

The four directors elected at the annual meeting of the Sheldon Historical Society were:

Abbey Miller, Phyllis Archambault, Lori Derry, and Bryan Derry.

Sheldon Women of Considerable Note

Abby Keith Brown

Abby Keith began to keep a diary when her father, Oliver Keith, gave her a small journal in 1836 for her 16th birthday. She kept a diary faithfully until her sight failed in 1908. She died in 1912. The Historical Society has transcribed almost 15 of the 72 years spanned by Abby's diaries. It's a wonderful record: some dreadfully mundane, some moments of great joy, accomplishments, and dreams, regularly punctuated with pitiable loss, often reported with a matter-of-fact acceptance of the inevitable. Her diaries are a valued, personal record of life in this new frontier. Read them at our museum.

Married to Dr. Amasa Brown, town clerk, Abby transcribed deeds into the town land records, raised and educated her growing family, and nursed the Doctor's patients.

Abby Keith's grandfather Oliver Allen was a privateer during the Revolution. Captain of a coastal schooner before the war, Allen's business was ended by the British blockade. He turned out to be a successful pirate, however, and captured several British supply ships. The booty provided much needed supplies for the Continental army. Privateers received a third of the value of any British ships they seized. After the war he moved inland, never going to sea again.

THE 2026 CALCUTTA

SEPTEMBER 25: (6PM) until done hosted by the ABBEY.

This Limited Seating event sells-out quickly. Fine food, fast-paced fun, cash bar. An outstanding evening with a silent auction of classy gifts, a rich raffle, and the exciting count-down to that Pot of Gold. Every one leaves happy...and a few leave rich!

Tickets for the September Calcutta are going FAST: contact a board member for your ticket!

Did you know that?

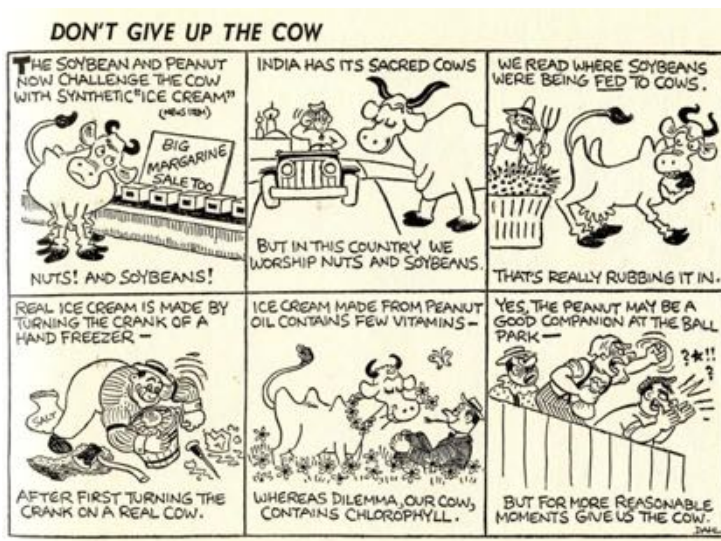
Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, Roger Sherman and Robert Livingston were appointed to write what became known as the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson was tasked with creating the first draft. That original was refined with 86 edits to Jefferson's work.

The phrase "we hold these truths to be self-evident" was Franklin's choice. Jefferson had written "we hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable"..

The Declaration, as Jefferson wrote it, was 25% longer than its final form. Jefferson's language, concerning the abuses of slavery, was deleted to appease the slaveholders who represented the southern colonies at the convention, and northerners who profited from trafficking in slaves.

Joe Pye weed

You know it's Midsummer when the Joe Pye Weed is in flower. You recognize this tall roadside flower in wet or moist places, by its large clusters of fuzzy pinkish flowers similar to milkweed, standing in large clumps. It's a great pollinator plant! So who is Joe Pye? In the 18th century, Shauquethqueat –"Joe Pye" to the colonials who couldn't pronounce his name- was a Mohican sachem, or medicine man, who saved hundreds of European settlers, with his skill and knowledge of plants. This plant was used reliably to relieve fevers.



Last month's newsletter shared a cartoon drawn by Francis Dahl in 1954. Dahl used news items as his source of inspiration, and any time a cow was in the news, "Dilemma" showed up. She was a favorite of

the Boston based artist, and he saw in her that common sense, often lacking in the news of the day. She seems like a perfect fit for our time