

Annual Reports

The Mark Dewey Research Center

Board of Directors 2011-2012

| Position | Individual | Term |
|----------------|--------------------|------|
| President | H. Dennis Sears | 2012 |
| Vice President | Paul O'Brien | 2013 |
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| Trustee | Wray Gunn | 2012 |
| Trustee | Greig Siedor | 2012 |
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| Trustee | Joyce Hawkins | 2014 |
| Funds Manager | Connie Cooper | 2012 |
| MDRC Director | James R. Miller | 2012 |
| Administrator | Barbara L. Dowling | |

The research and reference aspect of the Society, represented by our Mark Dewey Research Center, has completed another successful year in assisting people with historic questions that commonly serves authors, both historical and fictional, usually seeking hard facts as well as perspicacity; house and family history researchers; name origins (Bow Wow Road is a common one); demographics; local slavery (Yes, it existed here.) trees (If you can imagine.) and Black history, among many others. The inquiries number in the hundreds annually and come by walk in, telephone, USPS and e-mail. Although there are slow periods, at times we are overwhelmed. During the lulls the all-volunteer staff does housekeeping activities related to preservation of the permanent collection which grows apace, primarily through donations by patrons who are grateful for the use of our resources.

Aside from our day-to-day program, we reached two milestones this past year, namely the acquisition of a local historical collection from the estate of Ursula Kilner and the services of Taylor Neil, a young, enthusiastic and energetic volunteer archivist.

An occasion we may not see again was the splendid acquisition of Ursula's library from her estate. She was an early member of the Society, and a certified genealogist, which explains the vastness of her collection. It covered, among many other subjects, town histories of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York, county histories of the same areas and a number of published genealogies related to families of the tri-state area. The volumes added to our collection number in the hundreds. Her research manuscripts, now in Ohio being organized, will follow.

This acquisition, indeed, puts the Society in the position of being a significant research facility for the tri-state area. It is doubtful that anybody doing historical work on South County can safely ignore our collection.

Taylor, our most recent volunteer, will be a junior at Mount Everett this fall. His summer time contribution is a perfect fit for the Society since one of our regular volunteers takes that season off. We hope to have Taylor's talents for at least two more years but hope for even more. His ultimate goal is to become a lawyer.

Drop in sometime to see the new acquisitions and to meet the volunteers. We are open to the public on Mondays and Fridays, 1:30 to 4:00 or by appointment if a volunteer is available. We also post home phone numbers at the Center in the event of a casual out of town drop in.

President's Letter continued from page 2:

Appeal goes toward the operating expenses of the Society (programs, exhibits, staff, buildings, utilities, etc.). You may want to consider the use of an "IRA Charitable Rollover" for your annual appeal donation this year or perhaps for a larger gift to the Society's endowment fund. This year is the last year individuals may roll over up to \$100,000 from an individual retirement account (IRA) directly to a qualifying non-for-profit institution without recognizing the assets transferred as income. If you are 70½ or older and are required to take a "Minimum Required Distribution" (MRD) from an IRA this year, you might want to consider making such a donation this year. For more information, contact your tax or financial advisor.

Thank you all for your support of the Sheffield Historical Society in both time and treasure and I look forward to seeing you this year at one of our events.

H. Dennis Sears

President, Sheffield Historical Society

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Betty Chapin, James Miller, Taylor Neil, David Prouty,