

For Immediate Release: 3/18/19

Sharon Historical Society & Museum

(860) 364-5688

18 Main Street, Sharon, CT 06069

Media contact: Curator Marge Smith curator@sharonhist.org

Guided Tour of Early Graves in Hillside Cemetery

Sharon, CT: On Saturday, March 30 at 2 PM, the Sharon Historical Society & Museum will host a free public guided tour of the oldest part of Hillside Cemetery. The tour will include visits to the unusual graves of small pox victims as well as those of significant people in the history of medicine in Sharon. Tour guides will be Marge Smith and Susan Shepard, Co-Curators of the Historical Society's current exhibit entitled "**Sharon Cures: Centuries of Medicine in One Small Town.**"

Visitors will receive a handout with a map of the original cemetery, and two lists of the graves involved in the tour, with original inscriptions, bios of the people and photos of their houses if known. The story of the 18th century battle against small pox is heartbreaking, and resonates today as we struggle with the debate over vaccinations. Most of the graves on the tour are of the actual victims, including young children, and reveal the tragedy of the epidemics that repeatedly took a toll on Sharon. We will also visit the grave of the Rev. Cotton Mather Smith, Sharon's beloved early minister who tended to small pox victims himself, and several other early doctors and midwives. Two important modern Sharon physicians featured in the exhibit are buried here: Dr. William Bradley Coley considered today to be the Father of Immunotherapy, and Dr. Jerome S. Chaffee, founder of Sharon Hospital.

Visitors should gather at the Civil War Monument at the top of the Green by the intersection of Main Street and Cemetery Road. Parking is available along Main Street, behind the Town Hall (63 Main Street, ¼ mile walk) and at the shopping center (10 Gay Street, ½ mile walk), for those who can walk from there distance to Cemetery Road. **PLEASE RSVP SO THAT WE KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE TO PREPARE FOR**, and so that we can let you know if there will be a rain date. (860) 364-5688 or director@sharonhist.org

Smith and Shepard, award-winning curators and area historians, developed the exhibit from the Sharon Historical Society collections, extensive research in original town documents and with advice from Connecticut medical specialists.

The Sharon Historical Society & Museum is located at 18 Main Street, Sharon, CT. For directions call (860) 364-5688, visit www.sharonhist.org or *The Sharon Historical Society* on Facebook. Regular museum hours are Wednesday through Friday Noon to 4 pm and Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm.

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