

## SHARON



STAFF PHOTO BY DAVID ALLEN

Sharon's Brick Schoolhouse is being restored 193 years after construction.

## An old-fashioned restoration

Brick Schoolhouse work relying on materials that reflect building's past

By DAVID ALLEN

Monadnock Ledger-Transcript

"Meticulous authenticity" is one way to describe the restoration project underway at Sharon's Brick Schoolhouse.

The structure dates from before the Civil War, and the stone mason tasked with the work is endeavoring to restore the building using building materials that reflect the structure's origins.

After Sharon considered various bids, it selected Temple resident David Berquist for the project. In March, the town voted to spend \$21,000 from the Wilson II Fund, a trust set up for discretionary purposes to benefit the town, on the work. Berquist has found antique bricks for the



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**Stonemason David Berquist found antique bricks to replace decaying ones on the building's exterior.**

project and even had the mortar of the schoolhouse chemically analyzed, allowing him to use a mixture that matches the original.

"We were lucky to find someone right next door," said Town Archivist Ken

Callahan about Berquist.

The building was the third schoolhouse built in town and dates from 1832. The first two structures both burned, so the town decided to build the third one of brick. It was used as a school until 1920,

after which Sharon students began attending school in Peterborough. The building was used for Town Meeting, elections and record storage until 2007. Five years earlier, the building earned a spot on the National Register of Historic Places, and the application for this status noted the following about the building's interior at the time: "For seating, five rows of six pine and wrought-iron desks (with attached seats) face west. The seats and desks in the first row are sized for smaller children, while the seats and desks in the last row are sized for larger children."

Berquist has already removed some of the decaying mortar from the walls, and is using plastic sheeting to protect work in progress.

"He's moving right along," said Callahan of Berquist's progress. "It should be done this summer."