

NOW & THEN

at the
LOCAL HISTORY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
(Downstairs at the STOCKBRIDGE LIBRARY)

ISSUE #12

JANUARY 2011



TO SUBSCRIBE TO
"NOW & THEN"
e-newsletter
contact

simanl@roadrunner.com

Maria L. Carr, Editor

Past issues may be accessed
at the Library website
stockbridgelibrary.org

WINTER EXHIBIT

The exhibit on display in the downstairs lobby depicts winter time and the activities that went with the cold crispy weather. Stop by and check it out. The plow (pictured below) was handmade.



COASTING MEMORIES OF STOCKBRIDGE

In a recent conversation with Betty Angelini, she recalled coming home after school and grabbing her sled and heading up Meeting House Road to Prospect Hill along with other local children. They didn't scrape the roads bare in those days; and there was a coating of snow still on them. They started at the top of Meeting House Road and could make it almost all the way to Church Street on their sleds. When Betty's mother was a child, the town would close off Main Street and they could slide from the top of the hill by Heaton Hall all the way down to the railroad station. (1920 David Milton Jones picture at right—3 women on a horse drawn sled in front of the Lavender Door)



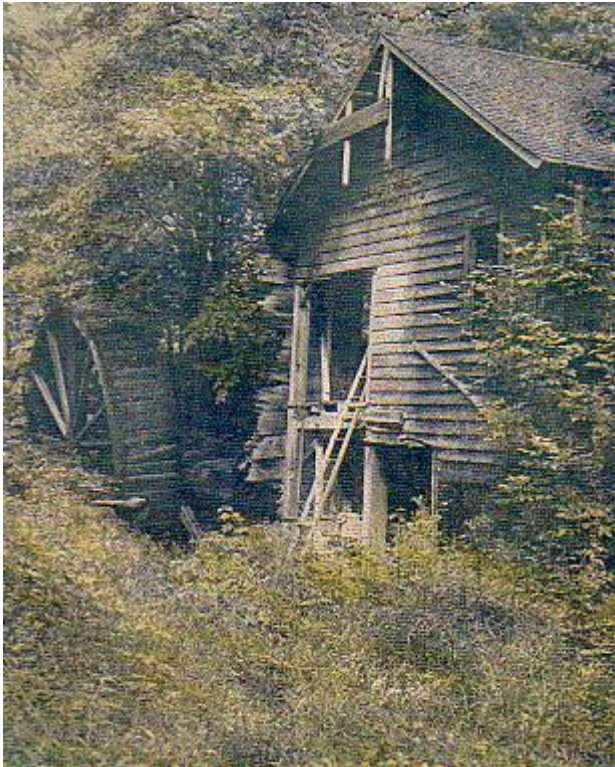
In a document in the Archives' Curtisville Collection, Frieda Bell relates that in the winter they coasted on Willard Hill Road. This hill is quite steep and has a sharp curve at the bottom. The boys would pour water on the snow and drag their bobsleds up to make a track. When that froze, they slid down "like the wind" with 8 on the bobs each holding up the feet of the one behind. It was nearly impossible, at the speed they were going, to make the corner at the foot of the hill. If the boy steering tried it, they usually turned over in the snow. She remembered one night when the storekeeper started up the hill with his horse and sleigh as they started down on their bobs. They shouted as loudly as they could and he was able to get out of their path in time. (pictures left & lower right from Anne Oppermann)



STEPHEN CURTIS' MILLS

Curtis Mills (*later named Curtisville and then finally Interlaken*) was settled by Elnathan Curtis and his family who came to the area from Woodbury, Connecticut about 1756.

Stephen Carpenter Curtis (1811-1907) was the great grandson of Elnathan Curtis. His childhood home was



just west of the Garden Center on West Stockbridge Road. He was apprenticed to his uncle in Lenox as a wagon maker and later returned to Curtisville. He had a carpenter shop where he made wagons, ox yokes, sleds, farm supplies and arms and doors for the church pews in The Curtisville Congregational Church. He built a mill complex (c. 1840) on the outlet of Echo Lake (*formerly Curtis Pond*). It was a combination grist mill, saw mill and cider mill (and had been a flour mill at one time). It was located on the small brook that comes from Echo Lake on the west side of Averic Road (*formerly Echo Lake Road*). The mill extended from the road over the brook and had a door for receiving apples which was flush with the road. The log and saw mill was located to the northwest beyond the brook. The mill was driven by a large overshot water wheel. A document in the Museum & Archives collection by Frieda Bell states "In the fall people stayed all night to watch the slow cooking of huge kettles of apple butter".

A small dirt access road and the stone foundation in the brook still exist today (*foundation pictured below*). Stephen Curtis built his homestead just south of the mill (*3 Averic Rd. - directly across from Train Hill Road*) which included a large barn that has since been converted into a residence. The road at that time went over Train Hill Rd., up Cherry Bounce Lane and out to the West Stockbridge Road. The

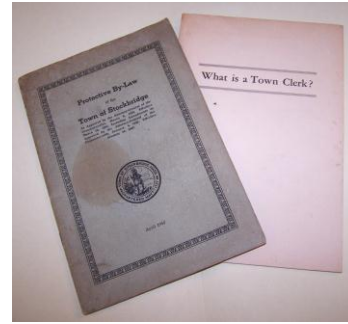
section that went from the junction of Train Hill Rd. and Cherry Bounce Lane to the lake did not exist until 1883. A copy of the 1855 map of that area shows a dotted line representing an access road or drive that goes behind the brook and in front of Curtis' house to the mill.

Curtis sold the mill/property to the Stockbridge Water Company in 1892 for \$6,000 as they wanted the lake for a town water system. A document in the Museum & Archives collection states that the mill was running as late as 1900 (*that date conflicts with the sale date of 1892*). It is shown on the 1855 map of the area. The Berkshire County Directory for 1869 lists Stephen C. Curtis under Grist Mills and the one for 1875-76 lists him under Grist Mills as well as Saw Mills for the Curtisville area. This would have been the last operating mill in the Curtisville area.

Stephen Curtis was the last of the male line of Elnathan Curtis' family to live in the village. He married Mary Dewey and had 6 children. His daughter, Sylvina Curtis (1839-1909), married Dewitt C. Davis and had 3 children. They lived on the east side of Interlaken Road and were farmers. Another daughter, Abbie Curtis (1841 - ?), married John H. Burghardt. Their daughter, Matilda Burghardt married John W. Cooney.



RECENT DONATIONS



- 2 Booklets have been donated by Jean White (*pictured right*):
What is a Town Clerk?
Protective By-Law of the Town of Stockbridge, April 1942
- A 20th century plow share was donated by Maria Carr (a plow share is the part of a plow that cuts the ground at the bottom of the furrow)
- A collection of J. D. Hatch's papers pertaining to Old Curtisville and the community have been donated by Jim Hatch.
- 2 Vintage Dresses have been donated by Carole McCauley:
c. 1900 dress (*pictured right*) This dress is constructed entirely of lace and silk ribbons

c. 1930 dress (*pictured far right*)

(the c 1900 one at the right is on display
In the Museum – stop by and take a look)
- An 1885 one cent coin which was unearthed by workmen setting the steps at the Indian Burial Ground has been donated by the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe. This work was part of the renovation project for the Indian Burial Ground this past year.



WHAT WENT ON AT THE TOWN HALL

Most everyone can remember attending meetings or voting at the town hall; but does anyone remember when the Town Hall was used for square dances? Or how about basketball games or a movie theatre? There were also Penny Socials and Card Parties. Come listen to or join in the discussion on what went on at the Town Hall on January 26, 2011 at 2 PM in the Reading Room.

MUSEUM & ARCHIVES HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9-5, Thursdays 9-1 and Saturdays 9-2

If you plan to spend time researching, it is always a good idea to call (298-5501) to check for availability.