



NOW & THEN

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

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Shawn Stevens with JoAnne Spies performing at the program put on in May by SLA of Mohican Music for children.

Shawn will be here again on Wed. July 20th at 12:30



ALL ABOARD WITH HITTY

The Hitty Conference was a big success. Barbara would like to thank all those who helped by volunteering their time and talents to make it such a success. She couldn't have done it without you.



Katherine O'Neil is the new Director of the Library Staff

Katie, a native of Lee, has joined the library taking the helm from Rosie Schneyer who retired June 3rd after 38 years of service to the library. The Board of Trustees plans to hold an open house this summer to give the community a chance to meet Katie.

OLD BOOTH PLACE



A shroud of mystery hangs over the occupants of the old Booth place which was located on the west side of Route 183 on the corner of Dugway Road). Alice Booth owned the property until 1928 when she deeded it to the town with the restriction that she could stay there for the rest of her life. The Booth place consisted of a small clapboard house (pictured left, *Eagle* 1982 with town Selectmen) and 15 acres including a pond, brook and a driveway with a plank bridge which led to the house. Booth's brook which ran through the property and eventually emptied into the Housatonic River was full of trout though it was never stocked.

Alice died in 1938 at the age of 68. Not much is known of her. She was the daughter of Henry Booth and Alice (Hawkins) Booth. Records show a Henry Booth, whose wife was Alice Booth of Stockbridge. Henry died at the Gardener State Colony for the Insane in 1928 at the age of 84. It's interesting that 1928 is the date he died and also the date Alice deeded the property to the town. Alice was considered "a witch" or the "hermit woman" perhaps because she wore long black dresses and an old black hat. She never hurt anyone but would chase children away who tried to fish in her trout pond.

A newspaper article from 1982 stated that many considered the property haunted by Alice Booth's ghost long after her death. This was probably because a relative (daughter or niece, no one really knew) named Charlotte Booth was living on the property even though she had no legal right to be there. She was referred to as "Crazy Mary" even though her name was Charlotte. She was very like Alice in her later years, being an old woman who kept to herself and seemed quite odd. A clipping (1982 by Ted Giddings) stated that "rumors were rampant in kids' circles that one of the two [women] who owned the property and lived in the house near the pond owned a shotgun and used it to fire rock salt at poachers." The writer of the article goes on to state that he never had been fired upon; but could testify to the fact of the shotgun.

Periodically groceries were delivered from Elm Street Market based on an order from Miss Booth's conservator, Clara Burghardt, the visiting nurse. The same thing was always sent – cabbage, a loaf of bread etc. until Jo Salvadore, who worked the register, took it upon herself to send a little variety. There weren't any running water or bathroom facilities in the hovel where Charlotte lived; but there was a spring across the Dugway Road where she would get water. A recliner was her chair and her bed. The living conditions must have been desolate and hard.

Charlotte Booth was taken to Fairview Hospital in 1982 and then to Willowood Nursing Home. Charlotte, who was born in 1889, died in 1983 at the age of 94. Charlotte Booth's death certificate states that her mother was Alice and her father "cannot be learned". Despite the fact that the death certificates of Charlotte, Alice and Henry all state that they were buried in the Stockbridge Cemetery, the town records show no Booth graves.

Even though the town was the owner of the property from 1928 and could have sold it after Alice's death in 1938, it more or less became forgotten until 1982 when Charlotte died. The town then went ahead with planning to put it up for sale with the stipulation on the deed that the buyer must maintain a 75-foot-deep screen of trees and brush from Route 183 west so that whatever construction is undertaken will not be visible from the road.

If anyone has any information about the Booths that they would like to share, please let us know.

*The Museum & Archives has a new summer intern – **Kristina Doyle**. She will be working on Wednesdays & Fridays for the summer. Kristina is a history major at the University of Pittsburgh and plans to continue her education after graduation. Her parents are natives of the Berkshires and she is excited to learn and share in the rich local history Stockbridge has to offer.*

FARMS IN STOCKBRIDGE

The following list (undated) is an excerpt from a document compiled by Mary Johnston who was an active member of the Berkshire Antique Bottle Association and collected many types of bottles including a wide range of milk bottles. The list shows local farms that **bottled their own milk**.

M. A. Backus, Edgewood Farm, Stockbridge, Mass.
Council Grove, Ramsey Hoguet, Stockbridge, Mass.
Glenburnie Farm, Dr. C. McBurney, Stockbridge, Mass.
Lakeview Farm, Hugh L. Barnes, Interlaken Mass.
Southmayd Farm, Mrs. James, Stockbridge, Mass.
Wookey, Wm. Wookey, Stockbridge, Mass.
Manatock (*sp.*) Farm, Stockbridge, Mass.
Redford Farm, Dominick Cardillo, Stockbridge, Mass.
George Wallace
Linwood Farm

She states that many large estates in Lenox and Stockbridge had their own farms and bottled their milk which accounts for the number of farms listed. There were other farms in the Stockbridge area; but, similar to the Johnston Farm on Hill Road who sold its milk directly to Crescent Creamery, among other places, they did not bottle their own milk. *If anyone knows of any additional farms in the town that bottled their own milk, please let us know.*

RANGEMORE HALL FOLLOWUP

Our last issue had a brief article about Rangemore Hall. Although we haven't been able to ascertain where this proposed hotel complex was planned to be built on Glendale Road (Route 183) "just over the Stockbridge town line by the Mowatt Construction Company of New York city", some information has been found in old Springfield Republican newspaper articles regarding Mowatt. The August 30, 1932 stated that "Henry Mowatt of the Rangemore hotel is in Boston on a business trip". Another article of Dec. 6, 1932 states that "Henry Mowatt, of the Mowatt Construction Company, has returned to his residence on Glendale Road, after spending several weeks in Boston and New York City." This explains the connection of a NY City Const. Co. with this area. Nothing else is found until an article dated May 1934 which references James W. Mowatt of the Mowatt Construction Company being in "Washington DC with former mayor James M. Curley of Boston in the interest of the recreation center planned for this town." It does not state which town. Articles from 1934 and 1935 refer to a race track center which Mowatt Construction Company was planning for Lenox. The articles mention being in Washington DC trying to gain a loan for \$10,000,000 for the center on the site of the New Berkshires Hunt and Country Club. Putting all this together, it seems that the Rangemore Hall project fell through for some reason and never happened and that the Mowatt Construction Company moved on to the project in Lenox. It would be interesting to know if the Mowatt Construction Co. ever did complete any projects in this area. It would also be interesting to know where on Glendale Road Henry Mowatt had his residence.

BETTY ANGELINI

Margaret Angelini, (Betty), who passed away recently was a kind and generous donor to the Stockbridge Library Museum and Archives with not only Stockbridge memorabilia and knowledge; but her time as a Volunteer. She also was very helpful with some of the articles printed in this newsletter. She related a story about when she was in first grade and walking home from school with Wallace Crandall who was a couple of years older than her. Hearing the sleigh bells on the Norton Bakery vehicle, Wallace convinced Betty to hop on the back when it turned the corner onto Church Street. When they got to her house they jumped off and rolled down the bank. Limping home she never said a word to her mother; but in the morning when her mother wanted to know where her lunch box was, she had to 'fess up as she had left it on the back of the sleigh. Her mother simply called Nortons, which was in Lee, and they brought it back. Things were much simpler in those days.

MUSEUM & ARCHIVES HOURS

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