



The Scituate Historical Society

BULLETIN

Cudworth House file

VOLUME XVIII

SCITUATE, MASSACHUSETTS., JUNE 1967

NUMBER 1

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ARTICLES OF INTEREST OR HISTORIC VALUE ALWAYS WELCOME; ADDRESS THE EDITOR.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual meeting of the Historical Society will be held Saturday, June 17 at 2 p.m. The Cudworth House will be open at 1 p.m. for all visitors. Pictures of the antiques described in "Three With A History" will be on exhibit and the framed documents turning the Old Scituate Light over to the Town in 1916 will also be shown.

The meeting will be held in the Old Sloop Room of the First Parish Church. After the business meeting and the election of officers, we will have two brief speakers. Mrs John Proctor, Chairman of the town Beautification Committee will speak on "The future plans for Beautifying Scituate Harbor", and Mr. William H. Muller will speak on "Early Shipbuilding in Scituate". We will then return to the Cudworth House for refreshments served by Mrs Ellsworth Kent and her Committee.

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The Historical Society wishes to extend our deepest sympathy to the Gates family on the passing of our Selectman and Member, Mr. Lester J. Gates. Our town has lost a dedicated and devoted servant and as one man put it, "we will never be able to replace him". Mr. Gates was also a past Representative to the General Court.

Three Charter members have passed away during the past year:

Mr Theodore S. Bittenbender was reported in the December Bulletin, but not as a Charter Member.

Mrs Edith (Webb) Bonney of Vermont in her 97th year.

Miss Marjorie Curtis of Scituate

Mrs Mary Stenbeck, Mr. Woodworth Murray and Mrs Charles H. Wilson were mentioned in the December Bulletin.

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The Norwell and Scituate Historical Societies are working together on research on old mills in both towns. Mr. Ellsworth Kent is Chairman from Scituate and Mr. Allen Lester is the Chairman from Norwell. Mr Lester is also a member of our Society.

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A number of appointments have been made;

House Committee

Mrs Robert H. Tilden, Chairman
Mrs Philip Wood
Mrs James F. Hands
Mrs Lester R. Gammon

Mr William H. Muller has been appointed liaison between the Scituate Beatification Committee and the Society,

Mr. Ralph Clapp is in charge of keeping our properties in repair.

Mrs Ellsworth Kent is Chairman of Hospitality.

Mrs Dorothy Shoemaker has again been appointed Hostess of the Cudworth House during the season. The House will be open for the summer months on June 21. Days open are Wednesday thru Saturday, 2-5 p.m.

For the first time in a number of years, the old millacross from Old Oaken Bucket Pond in Greenbush will be open. Volunteers will staff it on four Saturdays in July and August and the dates are; July 8th and 29th, August 12th and 26th. The hours are from 2-5 p.m.

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Mrs Albert Holcomb of the Scituate Garden Club will be chairman of a committee who will supply flower arrangements for the Cudworth House this summer.

Mrs George Michaud of the Garden Club will plant and maintain the garden at the House and in front of the Pond. Mrs Harold Crosbie will care for the herb garden.

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During the last year the Society has gained 42 new members. Quite a few of them appeared in the December Bulletin and here is the remainder of the list.

A correction first, Mrs Woodworth Murray was incorrectly listed as an Annual Member, She is a Life member.

Annual Members:

Mr and Mrs Howard H. Cudworth

Mrs Charles Gregg

Mr and Mrs Henry Maurer

Mrs Arthur (Lois W.) Palmer

Mr and Mrs John C. Proctor

Mr Harry L. Rice

Mr and Mrs George C. Richardson

Mr and Mrs Thomas E. Sears, Jr.

Mrs Dorothy Shoemaker

Mrs Phyllis W. Welch

Mrs Walter Jordan

Mrs Karen Petterson

Mrs Ernest W. Schultz

Mrs Robert E. Spear

Our President, Mrs Laidlaw wishes to report that she has been very busy this winter. After she became aware of the run down condition of the Old Scituate Lighthouse, she reminded the Board of Selectmen of the responsibility of the town to maintain the lighthouse as an historic landmark. Due to no funds for this purpose, it became necessary to put a motion on the floor of town meeting to raise the public building budget by \$6,500.00 to repair the lighthouse and after Mrs Laidlaw and Mr Nathaniel Tilden spoke for this motion, it passed with very little opposition. We hope it will not be too long before the repairs are made. A committee from the Society consisting of Mrs E.C. Laidlaw, Mrs Robert Tilden, and Mrs Philip Wood have made recommendations to the Selectmen at their request, for repairing and restoring the lighthouse.

Mrs Laidlaw also wrote a letter to the Selectmen asking them to improve, maintain and protect the Men of Kent Cemetery. A favorable decision was made by the Selectmen.

Mrs Laidlaw hopes that after reading the fascinating story of "Three With a History" that a donor or donors will appear to help return this Stockbridge Collection to Scituate and the Cudworth House. A letter accompanying the story immediately follows.

The Anchorage

April 7, 1967

Dear Mrs Laidlaw:

I was Much interested in the December Bulletin's account of the Stockbridge Mill and thought you would like to have and keep the enclosed THREE WITH A HISTORY. as, all three, plus many more, were at one time (before 1830) in the Stockbridge Mansion, Mr Charles Stockbridge being my great-great grandfather. Samuel Woodworth was also part of our family. The Harpsichord, on which he tried out a tune for the Old Oaken Bucket, is still here, also the Revere porringer, a portrait of Washington given, Mr Justice Cushing, together with the Stockbridge roundabout and various letters and the bill-of-sale for the Harpsichord signed by Uncle Cushing's brother Robert.

My grandmother, Mary Stetson Bowers of Scituate, who married Josiah Moody Bartlett who had a parish at Marshfield, always claimed the Stockbridge family was related to Washington through Richard Warren, (whose name was originally DeWarren before he left England and came to America on the Mayflower.

I feel that all these things should go back to Scituate and the Cudworth House and hope to find a donor who will present them. I have refused many offers for the Stockbridge Collection, feeling it should go back to Scituate. Perhaps, some day, a donor (or donors) will appear out of the blue. But, as I am approaching eighty, I hope the donor or donors will soon come in sight before it is too late. I also think these antiques should be in a safer place because of the danger of fire or theft.

The last time I was in Scituate was June 16, 1956, for the meeting at Cudworth House when I spoke on the Stockbridge and Bowers families in the midst of a terrific thunder storm.

Very best wishes to all of you.

S/ Winifred Stockbridge Bartlett Clark

THREE WITH A HISTORY

An ancient harpsichord, a Revere porringer and a portrait of Washington owned by descendants of the Stockbridge family of Scituate have, also their connection with the first President.

Mr. Justice Cushing, who administrated the oath to Washington at his second inauguration, was also a part of this family, being a nephew of Dr. Benjamin Stockbridge.

In 1787 Mr. Justice Cushing's brother, Robert, was commissioned by Dr. Charles Stockbridge, son of Dr. Benjamin Stockbridge, to buy a harpsichord in London. Later he also carried out Washington's request for a similar instrument which is still to be seen in Mount Vernon. Both harpsichords are Longman and Broderips, the one in Mount Vernon having two banks of keys. The receipt for the Stockbridge harpsichord in pounds, shillings and pence, still remains. It was found among Dr. Stockbridge's papers by his grand-daughter, Mary Stetson Bowers (who marries Josiah Moody Bartlett). She had it carefully framed between two pieces of glass so that both sides of it could be read. It is dated June 2, 1797.

The harpsichord has a number of keys autographed, some of them reading as follows:

May 2, 1816, thoroughly cleaned by C. Stockbridge,
uncle Charles, M.S.B. March 21st, 1818, cleaned by
Eleanor S. Stockbridge, aunt Nellie, M.S.B. March 13,
1872, cleaned, repaired and tuned by J.M. Bartlett
and M.S. Bartlett, grand-daughter of Eleanor Stockbridge
and original owner of this instrument. It was purchased
in England 1787.

It was on this harpsichord that the first conception of the music for "The Old Oaken Bucket" was tried out. Samuel Woodworth of Scituate, who went to New York and founded the New York Mirror in 1823, was a cousin of the Stockbridges. For Sarah Stockbridge, daughter of John, great-grand grandfather of Benjamin Stockbridge, married Joseph Woodworth, great-great grandfather of Samuel, in 1648. The grand-daughter of Dr. Charles Stockbridge related that Samuel, on one of his visits in Scituate, read her the poem he had composed and which seems likely to retain its popularity forever. The Mill and the pond in Scituate, so long in the Stockbridge family is still known as "Old Oaken Bucket Pond."

The Stockbridge home called the "Mansion", where the harpsichord stood, was one of the oldest houses in Scituate and served as a garrison house during the Indian Wars. On more than one occasion it was the center of bloody encounters. A piece of wall-paper still exists which was taken from one of the rooms. On the back it is written, "John Stockbridge. Built before 1660." It was in 1638, three years after his arrival from England, that John took the oath of fidelity and in 1656 purchased a half share in the Mill which included the pond. Later he bought all of it and shortly after built his house there. Although he had seven children, he left to his oldest son, Charles, "My water mill at Scituate, house and grounds and orchard."

The Stockbridges and the Cushing's married into each other's families. David Stockbridge, the great-great grandson of John who came to America in the Blessing, 1635, married Deborah Cushing, daughter of Judge John Cushing.

But the relationship was also as follows: Mary Stetson Bowers, a granddaughter of Dr. Charles Stockbridge, and niece of Mr. Justice Cushing wrote:

We are triply related, since Uncle Cushing's mother-in-law was also his first cousin, through her maternal grandfather being a brother of Uncle Cushing's mother.

A FRIGHTFULLY COMPLICATED ALLIANCE:

These two families got themselves thoroughly identified with the Revolution. Mr. Justice Cushing being the only member of the Superior Court under the Crown, 1772, who adhered to the American cause. He was also instrumental in having slavery abolished in Massachusetts in 1783. He began his dramatic speech as follows:

As to the doctrine of slavery and the right of Christians to hold Africans in perpetual servitude... whatever sentiments formerly prevailed in this particular... a different idea has taken place with the people of America, more favorable to the natural right of mankind... without regard to color, complexion or shape of nose or other features... This being the case, I think the idea of slavery is inconsistent with our own conduct and constitution and that there can be no such thing as perpetual servitude of a rational creature unless his liberty is forfeited by criminal conduct.

When the Court was reorganized, 1777, Mr. Justice Cushing was appointed Chief Justice. In one of his letters he writes:

Scituate, June 22, 1790

About the 20th of July I am obliged to set out for New York again, but in what mode I am not as yet determined: whether in the packet from Providence; or in the stage from Boston; or in the Sulky. I expect to return in the course of three or four weeks.

And in another letter:

Dear Sister Bowers: (who was then in Scituate) The general purport of this letter is that you should send Maisea with the curriple for us Monday the 30th of this instant March, which is nineteen days from hence, as the business of the Court will not be over till that time and we are determined to make thorough work, that the laws delay shall never be complained of.

Again on September 30th, 1802, he wrote:

I begin to be in motion for the Fall Circuit and for an excursion to the City of Washington.

It was on one of the many visits to Mount Vernon that the Justice was given a portrait of our First President, probably after he had administered the oath of office at Washington's second inauguration. This portrait was in addition to the one Washington had given Mrs. Cushing some time earlier and which is mentioned in her will. Both are Sharples. But the portrait given to the Justice is one of Sharples' rare oils. For he painted almost entirely in pastel. This is mentioned in the book entitled THE SHARPLES and says:

He painted in oil but his usual practice was in pastels which he manufactured for himself. The canvas of Dr. Darwin and his family was brought to America to serve as an example of what the artist could accomplish in the medium of oils.

The oil portrait, in the usual profile, was given by Mrs. Cushing after her husband's death, to her niece, Mary Stetson Bowers, who married Josiah Moody Bartlett.

A letter from Mr. Justice Cushing describing one of the Mount Vernon visits says, in part:

It was a happy sojourn to sit with our good President and to hear him expound on the affairs of State.

Paul Revere was a close friend of Dr. Charles Stockbridge and gave his bride, Eleanor Stockbridge, one of his silver porringers as a wedding present. The porringer together with a spanish guitar, was stolen from the Stockbridge "Mansion" by a pedler while Mrs Stockbridge left the room to get her purse to pay for a bolt of calico. Dr. Stockbridge, coming home sometime later, was confronted with his wife in a "State of the vapours--- quite unlike her usual calm self," When he learned that a pedler had been there he returned to the barn, resaddled his horse, and after not too long a search came on the thief as he emerged from another Scituate house. The guitar was prominently perched on the pedler's cart and the Doctor concluded the porringer must not be too far away. So he demanded the pack be opened and there was Revere's silver gift snugly hidden under several yards of cloth.

Dr. Stockbridge was considered the "great physican of his day". His account books exhibit sufficient evidence that he was the consulting physican in difficult cases in a circle, including the whole county from Falmouth to Worcester and to Ipswich. His granddaughter related it was when he returned from a case in Ipswich during the Revolution that he was detained in Boston by General Gage to take care of one of his seriously ill officers. When this came to the attention of Scituate authorities they were in wrath that the doctor should have given comfort to the enemy and on his return to Scituate were determined to imprison him. "But the intercession of the people in all the country round about softened the indignation and the doctor was not confined."

The harpsichord, porringer and portrait of Washington have as companions Dr. Stockbridge's roundabout (which he used at his desk), the grandfather clock and Queen Anne mirror, all of which were rescued from a fire that destroyed the "Mansion" in 1832. The clock has never struck since the granddaughter of the doctor, Mary Stetson Bowers Bartlett, died in 1904. She passed away just before midnight and when the clock finished striking twelve it did not stop but continued on and on until it ran down. No one, expert or otherwise, has ever been able to bring it back to working order. The clock stands mutely, its face turned toward the harpsichord, its hands motionless,

But the harpsichord still responds to the strains of "The Old Oaken Bucket", as in that year when Samuel Woodworth's fingers ran lightly over its keys when he worked on a composition to fit his poem, while his cousin Mary Stetson Bowers listened with the delight she remembered to the end of her days.

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We thanl Mrs Clark for the contribution of her most interesting story and the original that she sent the editor will be placed in the Society's files. WHE

In the December Bulletin the editor promised you readers the second half of the poem "THE GENEALOGIST" as space ran out. Well, now there is too much space, so for the benefit of our newist members who did not get the last issue, the whole is printed.

GENEALOGIST

A truly clever mental twist
Imbues the genealogist;
The perservering sleuth and sagō
who finds your roots in any age.
Who splinters in his learned dome
A Carthaginian chromosome
and isolates a mite or two
'Way down deep inside of you!
He roams the prehistoric scene
To spot you in the Pleistocene
Or links, thru some forgotten clan
Your grandma and the Piltdown man.
He finds while on his little tours
A Pharaoh wed an aunt of yours
And offurs you a bargain rate
To trace you back to Henry VIII.
An added fee and your request
And he will mail your Family Crest
Which shows exactly where you got
Your corpuscle from Lancelot-
So proving by your forebears caught
You're even nobler Than You Thought!
Our foremost genii seems to be
The chaps who grew the Family Tree.