

Booth House Restoration Project Update---September 2010

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS

We sincerely appreciate your support for this important project. Your contributions (more than \$3000 so far) have enabled us to quickly move forward with our restoration efforts. This status report will bring you up-to-date with our progress. Watch for continued updates in the *Newsletter* and on our website (www.yaphankhistorical.org).

The Society is working closely with the Suffolk County Parks Department on this restoration project. We believe the community and all visitors to the Yaphank Historical District will benefit from this addition to the area.

The Booth House Museum

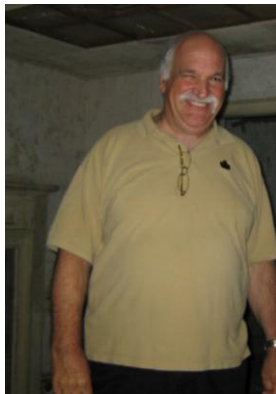
The Booth House Museum will provide a perspective on living in a rural hamlet such as Yaphank in the early 1800s. The museum will have an exhibit space and the house will be furnished with period appropriate items to demonstrate the life and daily living routines of the time. The Booth House Museum will be maintained by the Yaphank Historical Society and will be open for visitors on a regular summer schedule and by appointment for groups and educational tours throughout the year.

Exhibition Space will feature a pictorial timeline of Mary Louise Booth's life and times. The exhibit will cover her ancestry, her education, her family and friends, her successful professional career, and her involvement and impact on the world at that time. It is planned to display memorabilia, documents, letters, books, magazines, etc. It is important to remember that Mary Louise Booth received a letter from President Abraham Lincoln in 1862 and also one from Secretary of State, William H. Seward in 1866.

Furnished rooms will include a front parlor, entry hall, kitchen/dining area, library/reading room, master bedroom, children's bedroom, attic, and second floor landing.

Visit by the Commissioner of Suffolk County Parks

We were recently visited by the new Commissioner of Suffolk County Parks, Joseph Montouri. Commissioner Montouri was accompanied by Richard Martin (Director of Historic Services) and Eric Crater (Assistant Director of Historic Services). They toured the Hawkins House, the Booth House, and the Homan House. Mr. Montouri was very impressed with the Hawkins House and stated that our close collaborative working relationship with the County had certainly been successful. He believed that our Booth House efforts would be just as successful and looked forward to a future visit to see our progress.



Commissioner Montouri
at the Booth House



Group on tour

Booth House Restoration Status

In early July several Society members did an initial scraping of the walls and ceilings, cleaned out the fire closet in preparation for the fire alarm and security systems, swept out the house, and did a careful inventory of major repairs. We also collected and catalogued paint chips from each room. Our current plans are to try and paint each room in a color that closely matches the original paint color. Most rooms had plaster walls with several coats of paint.



Clean up crew at work

Your Donation Dollars at Work

Your donations are being put to good use. Because we have the funds to start plastering, and because the rooms on the second floor are in fairly good shape, we will be able to complete plastering and some carpentry work this year to those rooms. More extensive construction work will be in progress on the first floor at the same time. Without your donations we would not have been able to address this plastering until next spring. Working on both floors at the same time gives us a big jump on the restoration efforts.

The Society has also sent a request to the Yaphank Taxpayers and Civic Association asking for a donation to the Booth House Restoration Fund. Those funds would come from the Caithness Community Host Benefit Package. If the Civic Association honors our request, their donation would be used for continued restoration efforts as needed to help return the interior of the Booth House to its original design (special carpentry for windows, doors, frames, etc.). Some of the funds would also be used to purchase furniture for the parlor and kitchen.

Construction Progress – More Dollars at Work

Moving the house to its current location was just the beginning of the major construction work required to restore the house. Stabilization work was completed over the past few years and members are now concentrating on the interior restoration. Exterior work continues to be addressed by the County. Listed below is the status of current work:

Fences—material ordered, some delivered, and some installed. New fencing surrounds the Buckingham Cemetery. Old-fashioned picket fencing will be installed in front of the Booth House and Grey Cottage, paddock fencing will surround the corner field area. You should start to see work on this later this fall.

Utilities—water, electric, heating systems are all in and working. Modifications to plumbing will be scheduled when the kitchen area is outfitted.

Alarms—security system are scheduled for completion before the end of the year; the fire alarm is being worked on and should be completed before the end of the year.

Plastering—most rooms require plastering and plastering will begin on the second floor shortly; final wall and ceiling scraping, and repairing, etc. are underway. If we can finish the plastering of the upstairs rooms before winter, we will paint the rooms, matching our paint chip colors.

Lawn and exterior landscaping—initial topsoil has been delivered and spread; additional loads of topsoil have been ordered and grading will be done this fall. Options for an appropriate front entrance are being evaluated.



Front lawn initial grading; more topsoil on order



New Cemetery Fence

Booth Committee (Suffolk County Historic Services Staff and several Yaphank Historical Society Board Members)

The Booth Committee meets monthly with emphasis on the historical aspects of Mary Louise Booth’s life. A result of their efforts will be the *Mary Louise Booth Timeline* and an archive of related documentation for the Museum. Their work includes “field trips” to libraries, cemeteries, records archives, and other similar museums to collect data and ideas for the final museum configuration. A recent trip to New York City to visit the Cypress Hills Cemetery resulted in obtaining pictures of the grave sites for Mary Louise Booth and her family members. More importantly, they met with the Cypress Hills Cemetery Director and, based on their discussions regarding Mary Louise Booth’s place in history, the area surrounding her grave site will remain undisturbed and will be exempt from any future construction and/or expansion. The group is currently analyzing the wills of Booth family members to determine the location of any original manuscripts and/or documentation passed on by Mary Louise Booth and her family. The Committee will also be involved in furniture collection and ensuring that period-appropriate requirements are met throughout the house.



Mary Louise Booth’s Grave



Booth Committee on Duty