



Booth House Restoration Update

by Peggy Judd

As was noted in the September/ October issue of the *Newsletter*, restoration work is well underway on the Mary Louise Booth House. Richard Martin, the Director of Suffolk County Historic Services, has set forth our overall restoration strategy for the house. We are restoring the house back to circa 1844. Our construction efforts will be focused on saving and restoring as much of the original construction and construction details as possible. Only where it is absolutely necessary will we replicate and/or reproduce any of these details.

This date was chosen based on the fact that Mary Louise Booth lived in the house at the time. She was born in Millville (now Yaphank) in 1831 and she spent the first 14 years of her life in the house. It is thought that in restoring the house to 1844, the resulting museum would present a very accurate picture of where and how the young Mary Louise Booth lived. We have completed several work sessions in the house and will be trying to do weekly work sessions through the end of the year.

Current work:

- ✓ Wood trim is being scraped in preparation for painting. Walls and ceilings that will be plastered are also being scraped and cleaned.
- ✓ Sheetrock is being removed to reveal plank wood walls of the original structure. Many of these original walls were painted a beautiful teal blue and much of the color remains. These walls will not be painted but may have a light coat of wax applied as a preservative.
- ✓ Wallpaper is being removed and samples saved. Plastering of the walls and ceilings in certain rooms is scheduled to begin in early November.
- ✓ Estimates are being obtained for custom carpentry for the fireplace mantels and missing construction details such as interior doors, window frames, and some moldings. Most of the original baseboard moldings are still intact and where portions are missing, we will replicate.

Any artifacts that are found during our restoration will be retained. To date, we have found remnants of an old coal stove, fireplace grate, broken furniture, and most interesting to some of us---a hoop skirt frame. I wonder if it belonged to someone in her family or was left there by later occupants of the house. As is the case in old houses, many times interesting articles are found between walls and below floors when renovation work is underway.