

Booth House Restoration Update



One of our highest priorities has been the restoration of the Booth House. As you may already know, Mary Louise Booth, the first Editor of *Harper's Bazaar*, was born in Yaphank. Her birthplace is being restored as a joint effort between Suffolk County Historical Services and the Yaphank Historical Society. When completed, the house will be a museum open to the public. The Booth House, c. 1829, will be restored with period furnishings and displays to reflect Ms. Booth's early life until she moved to Brooklyn with her family in 1845. The museum will also display artifacts from her long and accomplished career as an editor and author. At one point in her career she received a letter from President Abraham Lincoln.

Yaphank Historical Society members have been busy working on the Booth House in anticipation of having the House ready for viewing on August 20th when we plan to host an open house celebration. Although our restoration is still a "work in progress" we want the public to get a chance to see how much has been completed and to share our vision of how the future museum will look. Our visitors will enjoy seeing how the Booth family lived in 1844 and they will also be surprised at how really spacious and comfortable the house must have been for those early occupants.

Members of the Suffolk County Sheriff Department's Vocational Training Program have also helped us in these restoration efforts. Sincere thanks go to them and to the Society members who have donated their time and muscles to the restoration project. Substantial work has been completed both to the exterior of the house, the surrounding property, and to the interior of the house. Important milestones reached in the past few months are listed below.

Exterior:

- Topsoil has been delivered; front and side yards graded and seeded.
- A Nature Trail extension has been created starting from behind the Booth House and connecting with the Carmans River Nature Trail behind the Homan-Girard House. Signs will be added for hikers.
- A new historic sign has been ordered and will be placed near the front entrance of the house. The sign will match other historical signs in the area.
- Large stones, historically appropriate to the era, will serve as the front and rear entrance.
- Historically appropriate picket fencing has been installed.
- Storm doors have been installed at both front and back entrances.
- Paddock fencing has been installed west of the house identifying the adjacent historic district property.

Interior:

- Prep work (sanding, scraping, etc.) has been completed in many rooms and is near completion prior to painting.
- Paint colors have been chosen for all rooms in the house and painting has been completed in the main rooms of the house; painting in the kitchen and exhibit room areas will be addressed after custom carpentry work is completed.
- Restoration work has begun on the windows; windows will be restored and installed one at a time.
- "Old wood" (wide board planks) was obtained and used to re-build the original pantry (walls and floor). Special custom carpentry and wide plank lumber planing had to be done in order to match board-width requirements.
- Some furniture has been collected; this effort will be ongoing.
- Documentation and artifacts for the exhibit area are being collected.