

BECKET LAND TRUST NEWS AND EVENTS 2007

BECKET LAND TRUST HOLDS FOURTH ANNUAL QUARRY CELEBRATION DAY 2006

Dorothy Napp Schindel, Museum Director

Friends of the Becket Land Trust gathered near the Kiosk on Saturday August 26, 2006 for the fourth annual Quarry Celebration Day. Despite many hours of rain prior to the event, the skies cleared just in time for the afternoon's program. Despite muddy trails and dripping trees, many hardy souls came to hear the speaker and take part in this annual event.

This year, besides being able to hike the Self-Guided Historic Walk in the outdoor museum and the trails in the nature preserve, visitors heard speaker Laura Marx, forest ecologist, speak on the topic of Wildlife and Forest Management. The talk provided visitors with information and afforded participants the opportunity to ask questions related to the Land Trust's own proposed Wildlife and Forest Management project due to begin in the near future.

Following the talk and hikes, as in years past, a reception was held in the woods. Good cheer filled the air as another year of accomplishing goals was celebrated. Seasoned quarry and nature preserve hikers along with lots of new friends (including some who just happened upon the festivities), mingled together on the trails, stopping at artifacts and narrative signs along the way while sharing stories of 'quarrypast.'

In recent years Quarry Celebration Days have focused on the opening of the first phase of the Self-Guided Historic Quarry Walk, and on the dedication of two monuments designed and created by Allen Williams, owner of the Chester

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Speaker Laura Marx, Forest Ecologist speaks to group



Opening reception for "Familiar Views" at Mullen House August 18th.
L to R: Dan Woiski, Jeanette Liemer, Gil Falcone, David Giannini.

SPECIAL EXHIBIT INAUGURATES OPENING OF MULLEN HOUSE EDUCATION CENTER

Dorothy Napp Schindel, Museum Director

The Mullen House Education Center, which houses the office and off-site exhibit/programming spaces of the Becket Land Trust, celebrated its official opening with an exhibition, and accompanying gala reception which took place on August 18th. The special exhibit, entitled: "Familiar Views" attracted many people from the community and beyond, and served as a fitting event to introduce the Mullen House to the public.

Featuring images inspired by the Historic Quarry, stone/granite, and North Becket Village, the exhibition showcased photography by H. David Stein, a poetry display by David Giannini, and work by Hilltown artists: Karin Cook, Jane Phelan Falcone, Dorothy Napp Schindel, Natalie Birrell, Nancy

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER STATE OF THE TRUST 2007

Ken Smith, President



At our annual events day in August 2006, we inaugurated our Wildlife and Forest Management Plan. As stewards of this property our goal is to improve the wildlife habitats on the property and to preserve and increase diversity among the plants and animals.

Our self-led Historic Quarry Walk continues to be a highlight for visitors. We have 14 granite posts that mark significant sites at the Quarry. We are seeking funding for the completion of Phase 2 of the Quarry Walk, which will take people to an additional 14 sites.

2006 saw the completion of Phase One of the Mullen House Education Center renovation project, where the Becket Land Trust maintains seasonal exhibits and office space. There is a new slate roof and the foundation and basement of the building have been stabilized. The Center is ready for three season use and will see a number of summer events that will be open to the public and staffed by docents to answer questions and help visitors learn about the Historic Quarry through our exhibit and video footage.

BECKET LAND TRUST SEEKS VOLUNTEERS FOR VARIED PROJECTS

Neil Toomey, Vice President

The Becket Land Trust Historic Quarry and Forest, a 325 acre forest preserve has been a source of education and enjoyment for many of us in the hill towns for six years now. Many people enjoy the miles of hiking trails, and the interpretive historic trails describing our shared link to the local granite industry. We have also designed, and are beginning to implement both a Wildlife Management Plan, and a Forest Management Plan. Now we need your help in maintaining this property. All are welcome. People with expertise in forestry, wildlife management, historical interpretation, or historical stabilization of the sites at the quarry are needed. We have a crew currently working on stabilization of the last remaining standing derrick at the quarry, and I know that there are many in the hilltowns who would enjoy working on projects such as this. Anyone interested in working as a volunteer or volunteer leader, please call the Becket Land Trust office at 413 623-2100 or e-mail historicquarry@becketlandtrust.org to let us know how you would like to get involved. We welcome your participation.

The Land Trust Board of Directors has determined, through comments left by visitors at the Kiosk, that there is a prevalent sense on the part of hikers, that the Quarry is a lot like a State Park. We have been asked to provide trash receptacles and toilet facilities. It is essential to the ongoing success of the Quarry that everyone realize that this is a recreational and educational resource that belongs to everyone who uses it and it is up to all of us to take care of it and participate in the maintenance and upkeep of the property. Please carry out everything you bring in.

We have four scheduled workdays, each with its own focus. Please see the calendar for more information. I encourage everyone to join us in our hands-on effort to keep the Quarry clean, safe and fun.

The BLT continues to be involved in other land preservation efforts. We work with The Nature Conservancy and Berkshire Natural Resources Council to identify and pursue sensitive properties for preservation and protection.

Thank you for your continued support.



Reconstructing the Wooden Derrick and the Bullwheel

MULLEN HOUSE EDUCATION CENTER

Volunteers are needed for docent duties at the Center and, possibly at the Quarry also. Please help us explain our mission and exhibits at either or both locations to interested members of the public. Call Sid Cholmar at 623-6040 for more information.

MUSEUM EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS, CATALOGUE #1

Excerpts from the Oral History Project

By Eve Cholmar, Oral History Project Director
and Dorothy Napp Schindel, Museum Director

INTERVIEWS WITH IVA BARSTOW AND ESTHER MOULTHROP ON DECEMBER 1, 2001

Iva Turner Barstow and Esther Edith Turner Moulthrop were the daughters of Edna and James Burwell Turner. He was the foreman at the Chester - Hudson Granite Company from 1895 to 1945. In the year 2001, both Iva and Esther were kind enough to give us details about quarry and Becket related life in the late 19th through the early 20th century.

Iva Turner Barstow was born on August 11, 1914. She attended Westfield Normal School where she received her teacher's certificate. She then taught school in Colraine, Massachusetts for one year. On June 27, 1936 she married Roger Barstow. They had two children, Ruth and Kenneth, and lived in Hadley, Mass. where her husband had a trucking company. She is now a resident of Evergreen Health Care Center in Stafford Springs, Connecticut.

Esther Edith Turner Moulthrop was born on March 30, 1910 and died April 10, 2004. She taught in Tyringham for a while where she met her husband, Wendell Moulthrop. They married on July 22, 1939. She followed him to various posts during the war, except for those years when she lived in Becket at the Old Homestead, which her parents built. Esther and Wendell had three daughters, Judy, Nancy and Holly. Esther, who had a master's degree in teaching, taught for twenty-eight years, mostly in Otis. Later in life, she drove Barbara Davis, a dedicated volunteer at the Becket Athenaeum, who also had a master's degree, to the Westfield State College where they both received Library Science Masters degrees.

IMPORTANT: During the interviews there were many starts and repeats. Therefore, the following notations are only direct quotes when shown in quotation marks.

FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH IVA:

Uncle George was down in the quarry. Mr. Burley sat in a hut overlooking the hole and mimicked directions from people at the bottom to people at the derricks.

"All came with their dinner pails...wonderful workmen...talented...Finnish and Italian...lived in Chester.

Lunchtime was a happy time. "Father sometimes gave them a good treat."

At home he would make an oyster stew or beef stew for them. The Turners lived on Benton Hill Road, two miles from quarry. (Esther tells how they bought the property.) He drove their horse hitched to a wagon to work.

There was a path around to get into the hole but "derrick lifted

uncle up on platform put up on the derrick" and that is how he came up for lunch, etc.

A lot of steam was made by the machinery and father would make lunch with that heat.

There were so many Turners in the area that it was called Turnerville. Father would hire "wayward" boys. He would have to go see Judge Hibbard to report on their behavior. Also, had to go to Westfield for the same reason. (Esther said they were not really bad. They would be water or derrick boys.)

Everyone went to Becket Center Church. There was a big group of young people. They would say "let's go up to Iva's house...let's go up to Turners." The Turners had two cows, hens and an ice house. The kids all had cars. The boys would get ice from Horn Pond and salt, the girls would get the ice cream freezer ready and mix eggs, cream, sugar, vanilla and Postum (dissolved). They loved Postum ice cream. Everyone cranked until it was ready.

Father worked in Chester in the winter. Quarry would open when roads were passable. All the finishing work, including lettering, was done in Chester. It was all done by hand.

On Route 2, Mohawk Trail at the Summit House there is an elk mounted on granite that came from the quarry. It was so heavy they had to back truck up that hill.

FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH ESTHER:

Parents lived in a shack near the grandparents. Then the land on Benton Hill Road became available. Father bought it for \$1,000. He went to Chester and borrowed the money.



Esther Turner Moulthrop as bride

*Before the railroad, six teams of horses on big strong wagons would transport the granite. The Holyoke Dam was made with Chester Hudson Quarry granite. Esther has the order books (*SEE ILLUSTRATION of some copies of the pages from our collection). Shows where stones were sent.*

The monument across from Center Church was made by her father. It was a big slab, he cut it out to size and made room for the bronze inscription. It listed all the community members.

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“There was at one time a boarding house in Turnerville”. The men would cut wood in the winter to make some money.

She and her older brother would go to the quarry sometimes in the summer and stay all day. “Mr. Burley lived at edge of rim, made motions to the men in the hole and to the engineers by the derrick.” Timber was big income even before granite. They made charcoal, sold lumber, all the hills were bare. “You could go upstairs in our home and see the quarry”. “From the quarry could see very far away.”

To build the railroad from Chester to Becket was a big operation. Chester and Becket each raised money to do it. It was done with oxen and hard labor. Building the trestles was hard, no mechanized equipment.

Esther’s grandfather petitioned town to connect Quarry Road to Bonnie Hill Road. Toward the end the owners would have grout dumped into the quarry. They just didn’t follow advice of local people.

On the corner of Wade Inn Road there is a demonstration house with granite used as building material. The first quarry was Snowflake Quarry in North Becket, down Pleasant Street.

They had a rich childhood. Parents never refused anything they asked for. They wore boys’ shoes and sweaters because they were sturdier. Father would go out and get “subscriptions” for people who were doing poorly. There was no social hall at church. In winter would sometimes hold services at their house.

“Sammy Springs would call for the square dances after church suppers”. “Everybody loved to produce music in those days. They all played an instrument.” Iva played the organ. Esther played the musical saw. We “made our own fun.” Charlie Mitchell, Paul’s father, played the fiddle. Father gave the stones from their stone walls to town to build roads so that they would be less muddy.

QUARRY DAY cont’d.

Granite Company in East Otis. The first of these monuments, an inscribed stone bench overlooking an extraordinary vista, is dedicated to the memory of Ron Mandler, a revered guiding force in the acquisition of the historic quarry property. The second, a stone monument placed at the entrance to the site, honors the memory of Jon Guachione, a special friend of the Land Trust who created the parking lot and gathering area known as the Gateway.

Annual Quarry Celebration Day has proved to be a wonderful occasion to say hello to those who are new to the work of the Becket Land Trust as well as to celebrate with old friends.

MULLEN HOUSE cont’d.

Freedman, Carolyn Avery, Caroline Summit, Alma LaFrance, Carol Chandler, and Judith Koppel. Also on view were memorabilia, photographs, oral history videos and artifacts from the Historic Quarry’s permanent collection.

Located in the North Becket Village Historic District, the 1845 Mullen House, presently under restoration and renovation, was originally donated to the town by the family of Eleanor Mullen, a longtime teacher at the former Becket Elementary School. The Center’s mission is to house environmental and educational non-profit organizations and present programs and exhibits for surrounding communities.

LOCAL ARTIST DONATES WORK

The Becket Land Trust and the Mullen House Education Center gratefully acknowledge the kind donation of “Quarry Grout”, a graphite drawing by noted local artist Jane Phelan Falcone. This lovely work of art is a welcome addition to the organization’s joint collection, and will remain on display for all to see.