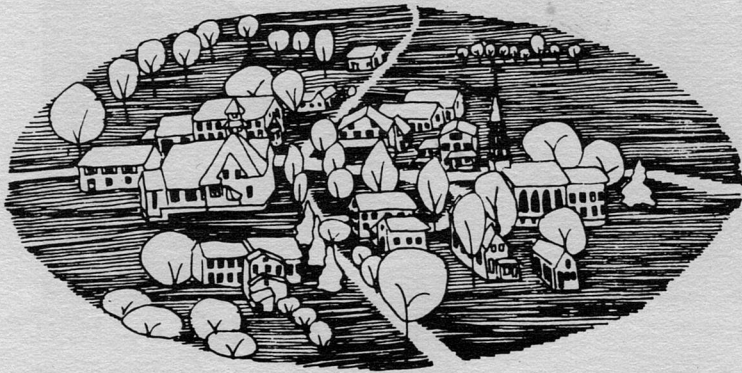


# THE SUTTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUTTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## — BULLETIN —

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## MANCHAUG MILLS... "Fruit-Of-the-Loom Mills"

1826-1978

By- (the late) William B. Brierly and Donald A. King

Sutton geographically and economically, is an enigma. The economic basis of Sutton when the town was founded, was agriculture, practiced in all parts of the town. This condition had a unifying influence on the town as a political entity. Industry, on the other hand, grew up along the small streams which were peripheral and flowed away from the town, therefore having a deunifying effect on the town. The mills were established wherever a stream could be dammed with a sufficient head of water for power. Villages and settlements followed the mills and as a result a series of satillitic villages grew up which looked toward the outside for finances, workers, and markets. Villages in the 1700's and early 1800's in this category were West Millbury on Ramshorn Brook, Bramanville on Singletary Brook, Bucks Village, Marble Village, Woodbury Village and Wilkinsonville on the Cold Spring Brook, Wilkinsonville on the Blackstone, and Manchaug Village on the Mumford River.

The Manchaug Mills are an excellent example of mills that were dominated from a neighboring state. Architecturally, logistically and financially the village was strongly influenced by Rhode Island mill owners from 1826 when they were founded until bankruptcy in 1926. Despite the fact that there were many owners and operators of the mills over the years, there were surprisingly long stretches of outstanding operation under one management and consequently long stable financial periods, particularly in the mid-1800's. The mills were very important to Sutton in that they contributed about one-third of the total taxes of the town in addition to the revenue provided to the workers.

Charles H. Chase writing about the Manchaug Mills has summed up local opinion of the day in the following summary. "The business has been managed with a thrift and exactness seldom attained; and with the fact steadily in view that 'this is a progressive world', those who have had the management of affairs have been desirous to profit by all improvements in machinery and processes of manufacture, and to keep fully up with demand of educated labor." "They have also done their utmost to promote the interest of their employees in the matter of wages, hours of labor, mental and physical culture, never forgetting that the interests of employer and employed are identical."

The mills have had their ups and downs but they were surprisingly successful over the years despite the fact that they were far from canal



MANCHAUG MILLS- c. 1891

or railroad and were forced to use horse and wagon and later motor transport. Additional buildings were added from time to time to the Manchaug complex and the quantity of cloth produced steadily increased from about 640,650 yards in 1835 to 6,080,480 yards of cambrics and prints in 1872 and from 5,328,790 yards of Fruit-of-the-Loom products in 1873 to 6,328,050 yards in 1876. When the mills were surveyed by Barlow's Insurance Survey on 1 April 1880, the mills had a capacity of 47,000 spindles and were powered by both water and steam. The 300 odd workers worked 10 hours a day for 6 days a week and were paid 12¢ per hour. The mills reached their peak production in 1916 and then like many New England mills declined until 1926 when they became bankrupt.

The Manchaug Mills are located on the north branch of the Mumford River - a tributary of the Blackstone - in the village of Manchaug. The sources of water are derived from a series of springs and ponds (Stevens, Tucker, Manchaug and Whitins) within a radius of about four miles of the mills. Within a quarter of a mile of the mills there is a fall of 83 feet. This means that for every cubic foot of water that falls one foot there is a potential of 1.44 horse power every second. With the construction of dams at the outlet of each of the ponds and a number of head races, sufficient power was generated to run three large mills in the Manchaug complex.

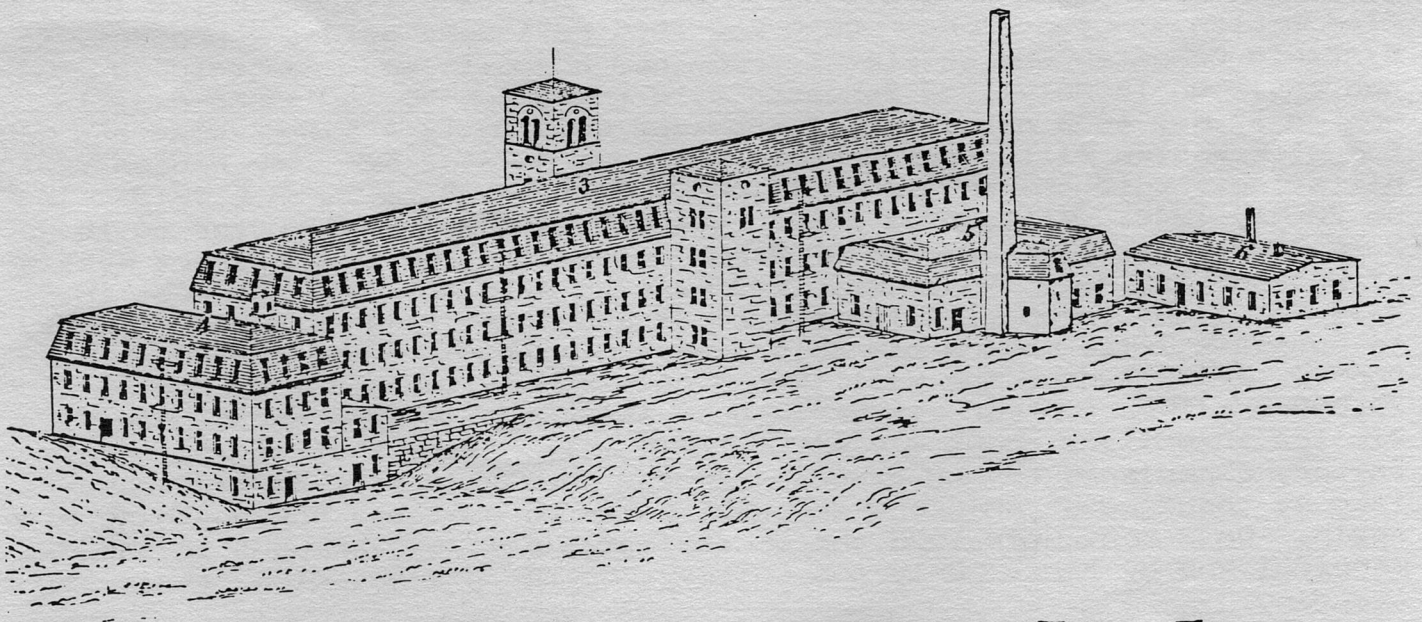
The Manchaug Mills were started by Jonathan and Samuel Congdon and Randall H. Green of Providence, R.I. who on viewing the site while en-route to Worcester, decided that the terrain was ideally suited for the manufacture of cotton textiles. In January 1826 they purchased 48½ acres of Arron & Susan Elliot's land adjoining the Mumford River. Buildings were erected and additional purchases of land were made. At this time Welcome and Arnold Congdon joined the firm. On 29 July 1829 the business was sold to Peter Pratt and William H. Staples and in turn on 1 May 1830 sold the mill property to Samuel Shore at which time the property consisted of 3 cotton mills, 11 dwellings and 200 acres of land. On 1 February 1834 the property was acquired by John Whipple and Dexter Thurber who then sold the property to Olney Whipple of North Providence on 28 May 1835. Whipple on 21 August 1835 sold it to Benoni Cook, Issac Brown, Dexter Thurber, Earl Douglas Pierce and Lewis Baxter. Charles Thurber was appointed Resident Manager but died on 13 September 1839. Dexter Thurber took over the management until 1 October 1841 when Messrs Asabel Wall and Co., with Stephen Randall as Resident Manager, leased the mills, agreeing to furnish eighty-seven and a half pounds of print cloth for every one hundred pounds of cotton and to receive .0275 cents per yard for manufacturing the cloth.

The owners were responsible for maintaining all dams, flumes, permanent shafting, wheels, etc., and furnishing all supplies for the maintenance. This agreement continued until 1 April 1843 when the old management took over with Mr. Randall as Manager until 1846. Thomas and Colt leased the mills from 21 July 1846 until 29 March 1847 to manufacture print cloths. Mr. Colt then took the lease and continued until 8 May to manufacture by the yard at .0275 cents per yard. Yarn was manufactured at the No. 2 Mill and woven into print cloths at the other mills. In 1848 James M. Cunliff of Providence was appointed Resident Manager and on 1 September 1853 admitted as a partner, along with Scott W. Mowry. Dexter Thurber before retiring continued as Resident Manager until 1 April 1870. During this time a granite addition in rough ashlar style two stories high 118 x 50 feet was built by Lafayette Reynolds of Pascoag, R.I. This was added to in 1862 by a granite addition 4 stories high 143 x 70 feet.

In 1868 the No. 3 Mill was built in rough ashlar style by Nathan Staples & Sons of Lowell out of granite obtained from a local quarry. The mill was 310 x 52 feet, 4 stories tall, with two towers 20 foot square to connect the several stories. James M. Cunliff, after 22 years of successful management, was succeeded by his son Lemuel H. Cunliff.

Messrs B. B. and R. Knight of Providence purchased an interest in the Manchaug Mills and Lewis Dexter remained on with the company which was known as Lewis Dexter and B. B. and R. Knight. In the fall of 1873 Robert McArthur of Millville, N.J. was hired to manage the mills and George H. Clark became Superintendent. On 1 October 1918, B. B. & R. Knight, Inc., a Rhode Island Corporation bought the Manchaug Mills and on 1 October 1920 sold them to a Massachusetts Corporation of the same name.

On 26 April 1926, B. B. and R. Knight Inc., which owned the 3 Manchaug Mills and most of the Village, became bankrupt. The Knight Finance Corporation was organized on 12 October 1926 and on this date the Trustees in bankruptcy conveyed to the new corporation, all the real estate owned by the bankrupt company in Manchaug.



*MANCHAUG MILL NO. 3,*



MILL NO. 1

The No. 1 and 2 Mills with 78 houses were sold at auction by the Knight Finance Corporation. The No. 1 Mill was sold to the Consolidated Textile Mills which operated for a brief time and then was sold at auction to Litchman and Bricchell of Providence. The Town of Sutton, on a tax title, took possession of Mill No. 1 and then sold it to Hayward-Schuster Woolen Co. They later sold the main mill to Whitin Machine Works in 1948. The storehouse was retained by Haywood-Schuster Woolen Co. Mill No. 2 was sold at auction in 1927 to the Uxbridge Realty Co. who in 1929 sold it to B. Cohen and Son of Chicago. Cohen carried on a rag sorting business utilizing cloth clippings from suit manufacturers. The clippings arrived in bales weighing from 600 to 1000 lbs.

On 18 March 1936 part of Mill No. 2 was washed away when the Tucker Dam was breached by flood waters and bales of clippings were strewn along the river for considerable distances downstream. On 21 September the remainder of the mill was razed by a hurricane. George Plante bought the remains of the mill and the office buildings for delinquent taxes which were assessed to Julius Isadore and Phillip Cohen. The office building is currently used as the Manchaug Post Office.

Mill No. 3 was sold on 17 October 1927 by the Knight Finance Corporation to Waucantuck Mills, woolen manufacturers, who sold it in turn on 25 September 1929 to Louis Hvizdos who sold to Salisbury Mills Inc., fine woolen manufacturers. On 8 May 1935 Salisbury sold the property to Winfield Schuster who completely repaired the mill and manufactured woollens. On 15 July 1935 Schuster sold the property to Manchaug Mills who on 17 May 1939 sold to H. T. Haywood Co. In 1944 the Haywood and Schuster Woolen Mills were consolidated and Haywood-Schuster Woolen Mills Inc., sold the wooden addition of Mill No. 3 to Sarah L. Goldstein on 20 May 1948. Mill No. 3 proper was sold by Haywood-Schuster on 15 June 1948 to Aveline Cavedon of North Smithfield, R.I. and Albert Messier of Woonsocket, R.I. On 31 May 1949 Messier sold his half interest in Mill No. 3 and Sarah L. Goldstein on 22 September 1949 sold her property to Cossette Grise making him sole owner of Mill No. 3 and the wooden annex. Grise turned the mill into a chicken broiler plant producing 75,000 broilers for market every 10 or 12 weeks. Martha and Murray Zimiles in writing about a visit to this mill stated that it was an olfactory experience beyond description and that this mill is now inhabited by thousand of chickens and will never be suitable for anything else again. On 3 September 1975 the contaminated mill was brought to its merciful end by fire. Only the chimney and the gas building remain standing.

Mill No. 2 or Upper Mill was composed of four stone buildings numbered as follows: No. 2 Main Building, No. 12, No. 13 and No. 14.

These buildings are located adjacent to and below the dam on the Mumford River from which Mill No. 2 and Mill No. 1 received their source of power, from the 23½ foot fall.

No. 2 Main Building was two stories high with a basement and attic. Its size was given by Barlow as 110 x 40 feet. The building built in 1826 was of granite construction. The shingled roof had a clerestory monitor along its length. A boxed wooden cornice capped the tower which had a scuttle to the roof and could be reached by stairs in the frame tower that also had an elevator hoistway with trap doors. The ceilings were open joist, except the attic which was box ceiled, the floors in the building were of double board. A machine shop and engine room were located in the basement. Originally spooling and warping was done on the first floor, carding on the second and spinning on the third. In 1880 spinning was carried out on the first and second floors, and mule spinners underlain by zinc sheeting were located in the attic. Wood doors on each floor led to building No. 13.

Building No. 12, the Weaving shed was built by James Woodward of Norwich, Connecticut in 1871, 300 x 50 feet. The one story frame building had box-plastered walls and a gravel roof and ran close to and parallel to the Mumford River. The building contained 300 - 40 inch looms.

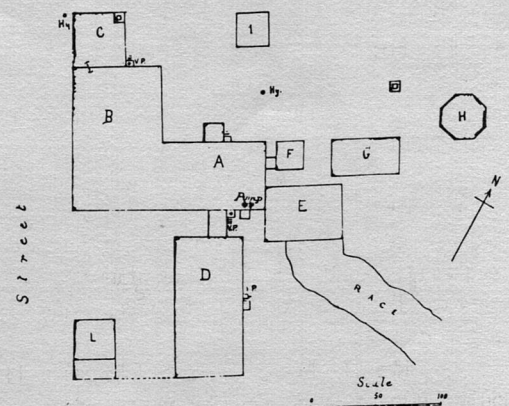
Building No. 13, the Boiler House was a stone building three stories high with a gravel roof. An upright boiler extended through three floors enclosed in brick. The cloth rooms were located on the first and second floor. The third floor contained spoolers and warps and the top of the boiler was visible through the third story. The boiler used both wood and coal to maintain steam pressure at 70 lbs. per square inch.

Mill No. 3 had four buildings on Manchaug Road (then Stevens St.) utilizing water from Stevens Pond. The Main Building was built in the Rhode Island tradition in 1868 by Nathan Staples and Sons of Lowell, Massachusetts. The buildings show a curious blending of styles: a Mansard roof provided unlimited light to the attic with a flaring decorated top; a tall round chimney, a tower with crenelations, a rose window and Romanesque arches are unusual features. Mill No. 3 had 22,309 spindles.

The Main Building was three stories in height with a basement and an attic. The size of the building was 310 x 52 feet and of local granite construction in "Rough Ashler" style. Two towers 20 feet square connect the several stories. The roof was shingled and covered with gravel. The cornice was wood boxed. The tower contains stairs and an elevator with self-closing hatches. The ceiling is of open timber and floors of plank and board. The basement contained a forty-two inch turbine manufactured by the Swain Turbine Manufacturing Company of Lowell,



REAR VIEW OF MILL NO. 1 AND FLOOR PLAN



Mass. In 1880, spinning frames occupied the first floor with wooden doors connecting to the Picker House and the Boiler and Engine House. Cards and speeders were located on the second floor with a tin-covered door leading to a passage to the picker room. Weaving was carried out on the third floor. Mule spinners were located in the Mansard-roofed attic where zinc sheeting underlay the active machines.

Building No. 4 was the Picker House which was 84 x 40 feet, two stories high with a basement and attic. The building is constructed of granite with a shingle and gravel roof. An elevator inclosed by brick with tinned doors led to each floor. There was an open passage to the basement of the mill. The first floor contained slashers and warps, the second story lappers and Mansard-roofed attic contained boms for weaving.

Building No. 14, the Wheel and Pump House was a two storied stone building with a gravel roof. A frame bridge extended to the tower of B Building No. 1. A paint shop was located on the second floor. A breast wheel was removed from the basement and replaced by a new wheel built by Veranus C. Hooker and located in a new brick house completed on 1 July 1857. In 1866 a new granite building was built and an iron turbine installed.

Mill No. 2 was heated by steam pipes and lighting depended on gas obtained from coal oil. Employees worked 10 hours per day six days per week. Cotton sheeting was produced.

As a precaution against fire, waste was removed from the mill daily and a watchman was on duty day and night. He carried a Buerk watch and sperm oil lantern. A Fales and Jenks pump was located in the wheel house and heavily geared to the main shaft and connected to the pump in Mill No. 1 by a three-inch pipe. A vertical pipe was alongside one of the ladders outside. Two fixed iron ladders with platforms were located on the outside of the main building. One hydrant was located near the wheel house. fifteen hundred feet of tire hose was available. Lightening rods were installed on the main building.

A good supply of hand buckets provided quick response. No extinguishers or sprinklers were to be found when inspected in 1880 by a Barlow Insurance Inspector. This inspector remarked that the Main Building was old but in good repair.

Mill No. 2 was partially destroyed by flood waters on 18 March 1936 when Tucker Dam was breached, and the remainder of the mill demolished during the hurricane of 21 September 1938.

Building No. 5 was the Boiler and Engine House and was 48 x 36 feet in size, one story high, constructed of brick and stone with a shingle and gravel roof. The building housed a twenty-three inch Corliss engine with a sixty-inch stroke and two upright Corliss Boilers of 140 horse power each, well set in brick. Coal was used as a fuel and steam was carried at 80 pounds pressure.

Building No. 6, the Gas House was a one story stone building with a gravel roof. Part of the building was used to store starch used in the sizing process. Gas was generated here from crude oil and used to light the mill.

As a precaution against fire, waste material was removed from the mill twice daily and a watchman with a Buerk watch and a sperm oil lantern was on duty at night. A Fales and Jenks fire pump was located in the basement of No. 3 heavily geared to the wheel shaft. A large Knowles steam pump was located in the boiler room and both pumps were connected with the pumps in Mills No. 1 and 2. Vertical pipes were located in the tower with hoses attached at each floor and five vertical pipes where outside along ladders which were fixed and platformed. A large water tank

was located in the top of the tower which was filled by a pump thus providing static pressure to the automatic sprinklers in the basement and second story of Building No. 4. Steam jets were located in the lapper and dust rooms [Flue] and valves were located in the passage to the mill. One extinguisher was located in the card room. A small supply of casks and buckets were available [one of each in the opener room] and there were two hydrants in the yard. There were no lightning rods on the buildings. In 1880 Barlow inspectors characterized the buildings as being of good construction with rooms neat and orderly but should have more filled water buckets in the picker rooms.

After the No. 3 Mill began operation, the employees worked 60 hours a week producing cotton print cloth until 1873 when production changed completely to Fruit-of-the-Loom products [see Sutton Historical Society Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 1, Dec. 1977]



This 1917 Manchaug Grammar School pin belonged to Wilfred Provost, now deceased. Mr. Provost was a barber in Manchaug for many years. Later, his wife, Martha and he lived on Martin Street in East Douglas where they were both active in the Eastern Star and Masons. Wilfred was an uncle to Martha Savage who has donated the pin to the Society.

BEATITUDES for Friends of the Aged  
\*\*\*\*\*

1. Blessed are they who understand, my faltering steps, and shaking hand.
2. Blessed are they who know my ears today, must strain to catch the words they say.
3. Blessed are they who seem to know, that my eyes are dim, and my wits are slow.
4. Blessed are they who look away, when my coffee spilled today.
5. Blessed are they who never say, "You'd told that story twice today".
6. Blessed are they with a cheery smile who stop to chat for awhile.
7. Blessed are they who know the ways to bring back lovely yesterdays.
8. Blessed are they who make it known that I am loved, not left alone.
9. Blessed are they who know the loss of strength to bear the cross.
10. Blessed are they who ease the days of life in so many ways.

By - Orda Cook of Manchaug, February 26, 1968  
(age: eighty-eight years old)

MONTHLY MEETINGS-  
1985

AUGUST - This supper meeting was at the former Manchaug Baptist Church location [now owned by the Society.] Vice-President Carilyn Philbrook presided at the business meeting. Plans were made at the business meeting for a Labor Day fleamarket at the Blacksmith Shop. A suitable site for a museum to permit the public to appreciate a collection of historical artifacts donated to the Society and other pending ones held privately was reviewed with no immediate solution in the near future. Ray Hutchinson played the piano for a sing-a-long session.

SEPTEMBER - The meeting was held at the former Manchaug Baptist Church. After a brief business interlude the speaker, Donna Flowers, of the Douglas Historical Society presented an illustrated lecture on "The Social History of Fashion" which was very interesting. The Labor Day fleamarket netted \$338.20 despite the inclement weather.

OCTOBER - The annual business meeting and election of officers was held at the Manchaug location. Elected to office were; President, Carilyn Philbrook, Vice President, Daniel Griffith, Treasurer, William Holst, Recording Secretary, [open], Corresponding Secretary, Donald King, Historian, Mary King and Curator, Rae Johnson. The program was presented by Kay Sheldon who spoke on the method genealogy research.

NOVEMBER - The new President, Carilyn Philbrook, presided at the Manchaug location and reviewed several pending projects. The 1978 election procedure amended By-Law was discussed and a Committee was appointed to study certain aspects of this amended By-Law and report at the December meeting.

DECEMBER - The annual Christmas auction meeting was held at the West Sutton Community Hall. The By-Law Review Committee report recommended a motion to reinstate the original By-Law officer election procedure which was voted and accepted. The Blacksmith Shop was cleared of surplus fleamarket items on November 9 and plans to revitalize the Blacksmith and Carriage areas for a more practical exhibit appearance was discussed. President Carilyn Philbrook reported on her meeting with the Bay State Historical Society in Grafton, November 16. A lively auction hour ended with an additional \$137.50 raised for the Society treasury.

1986

JANUARY - The meeting was held at the West Sutton Baptist Church Hall. The Whitinsville Library has donated six glass negatives of Sutton scenes to the Society. The Blackstone Valley Heritage Homecoming Committee has asked the Society to participate in plans for the Homecoming Weekend, October 3, 4, and 5. Albert Glenn, former Army man, speaker for the program, related his first hand account of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941.

FEBRUARY- The meeting was held at the West Sutton Baptist Church Hall. Vice President Daniel Griffith presided. A pewter teapot, antique picture frames, and books were donated to the Society in memory of Hattie Putnam Wallace by Luella Scott and her niece, Marion Huntington. Ralph Gurney narrated the Wagon Trek trip to North Sutton, NH, while being shown on a monitor via video tape- a first presentation of video by the Society

MARCH - The meeting was held at the West Sutton Baptist Church Hall. A letter was forwarded to the Board of Selectmen inquiring about the use of the former Rufus Putnam School as a museum site. In May, a mystery ride is scheduled and Society members are requested to meet at the Manchaug Baptist Church for a prompt 7:30 pm departure to somewhere? Marieta Howard, speaker from the Douglas Historical Society identified and explained the usage of various primitive kitchen utensils brought in by Society members.

Joyce Sampson has donated to the Society the Horace Batcheller (1840) family bible. Also, scrapbook and photos of the McDonald family.

JANUARY TO MARCH- WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

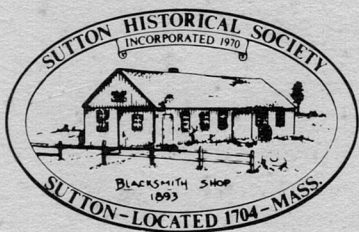
Pennie Linder

Stephen and Susan Robsky

IN MEMORIAM

\*William Taft \* John B. Berg \* Allen P. Cook \*John Johnson  
\*Edith Johnson \* William Stockwell \*Henry Plante (grounds  
keeper at the Manchaug Baptist Church)

**From**



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