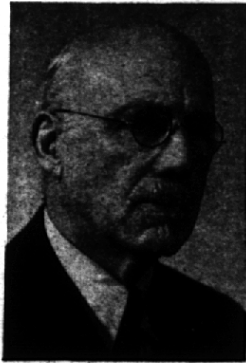


Cranbrook: World of Learning

By MARGARET RUSSELL
Special Writer

During the exciting years when George and Ellen Booth were developing Cranbrook, their beautiful country estate in Bloomfield Hills, there was never any doubt in their minds that the rolling acres would



G. G. BOOTH
(1864 - 1949)

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eventually be put to some public use.

The answer to their soul-searching of how best to do this is today's six Cranbrook institutions which met the needs and desires they hoped the community held and discharged their debt to the state in which they had prospered.

When the Booths purchased Samuel Alexander's "hard-scrabble" farm in 1904, Birmingham's population was 1,252—Cranbrook's, the small Alexander family and a few hired hands. Today Cranbrook's population is 1,452 including students, faculties and staffs.

Once Cranbrook's objective was determined, the Founders dedicated the last two-thirds of their lives to the vast enterprise.

Because the Founders were aware they might not live to see all of their undertakings accomplished, the Foundation was formed to insure the completion of projects already begun and the harmonious development of those still in the embryo stage. Actually Mr. and Mrs. Booth each lived to be 84, and did see their completion.

CRANBROOK'S COMMUNITY spirit sprang into being in 1904 when Henry Wood Booth, George's

father, conducted Sunday school in a tent on a hill-top just north of Cranbrook Church.

In 1918 construction of "The Meeting House," on the millsite at Lone Pine and Cranbrook roads, nourished the need for a place to worship, with the structure serving also for civic meetings, weekday classes and even Saturday night movies.

The Meeting House became, and still is, part of Brookside School. It housed Christ Church during its mission days and during construction of the present house of worship. Little wonder then at the deep devotion to The Meeting House as "the cradle of the institutions."

Actually Brookside was born in 1922 and by 1929 extensive additions had to be made to "The Meeting House," followed 10 years later by substantial reconstruction and further enlargement. A gymnasium was added in 1959. Today the school, serving the Birmingham-Bloomfield Hills area, enrolls 220 children, all day students, in junior and senior kindergartens and the first six grades.

Christ Church Cranbrook (Protestant-Episcopal) came into being in 1925 but not until Sept. 29, 1928, when the edifice was consecrated, did it vacate The Meeting House. To the original church a porch was added, and in 1939, a large wing. The church is noted for its 62-bell carillon and its ecclesiastical art representing every century beginning with the 12th.

"THE REASON for Cranbrook School was first because there seemed to be a need for a small boys' school and then we also thought that a boys' choir might be required for the church and such a school might solve that problem also," George Booth wrote in his reminiscences on the school's founding.

However, the school developed independently, instead of being attached to the church, before construction of its imposing building was begun. Founded in 1926, it opened in 1927. Today the college preparatory school can accommodate 200 resident and 180 day students in grades seven through 12.

Kingwood School Cranbrook, whose program for girls parallels that of Cranbrook School, was the first institution established by the Foundation.

CRANBROOK ACADEMY of Art, expressing the Booths intense interest in architecture and all the arts, is the only degree-granting institution at Cranbrook. Informal-



OFF FOR A RIDE AROUND CRANBROOK
Booth and his eldest son, James, now both deceased.

ly its instructional program began in the mid-1920's. In 1942 it was chartered and in 1960 accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Artists have come from all parts of this country and from 40 foreign lands for advance training in weaving, metalsmithing, ceramics, sculpture, design, graphics, painting and architecture, the latter exclusively on a post-graduate level. Its Galleries, popular with the public, are the scene of traveling and student exhibitions. A new sculpture foundry completed this spring, is the Academy's only addition in over 20 years.

Youngest of the six institutions, Cranbrook Institute of Science was established in 1930 to promote instruction and research in the

sciences. It has a membership but not a student body.

ITS MUSEUM exhibits are renowned for their excellence and interest and attract over 150,000 visitors annually. Its publication, study groups, planetarium and observatory demonstrations, lectures, motion pictures and field trips are extremely popular. In 1962 the Skillman physics wing, like the Wenger gym at Kingswood made possible by much needed and encouraged outside grants, was dedicated.

While buildings bear the names of men who made significant contributions to the history of Cranbrook, no institution, no building has been named for either of the donors. This was their wish.

G. G. Booth Had A Dream...

Indelibly imprinted upon local history is the famed hill-and-dale educational and cultural center called Cranbrook.

Cranbrook (a name out of Old England where it was "capital of the weald of Kent" in Queen Elizabeth I's day) had its place of prominence long before it was "discovered" by the late George G. and Ellen Scripps Booth, in 1902 and acquired two years later for development as a country estate.

In 1819 William Morris and others came here from the East to "take up land" which could be obtained from the government for \$2 an acre—on time.

He sowed the first wheat in what is now Bloomfield Hills on land just to the north and in the early 1820's he and Amasa Bagley, who pioneered at Bloomfield Center (then Bagley's Corners), acquired the first-settled portion of Cranbrook. In 1828 Morris established a grist mill exactly where Brookside School now stands.

A BLACKSMITH shop, a small

cooperage, a quite extensive "pot and pearl ash plant" and a general store also developed at the "mill corners."

Morris, who lived in a house on a wooded slope just north of the mill race and valley, was sheriff of the first court in Oakland County, presided over by his father-in-law, Judge Bagley.

Mr. and Mrs. Booth bought the property from Samuel Alexander and his wife, Kexia, who had occupied the old Morris dwelling until it burned on July 4, 1886, its roof ignited by firecrackers thrown by ebullient berry pickers.

IT WAS A SADLY run-down property that the Booths bought in 1904.

Yet Mr. Booth saw in the property what he sought—an opportunity to create a country home with something of the loveliness of the environs of his ancestral village, Cranbrook—the birthplace of his father, Henry Wood Booth, and his grandfather, Henry Gough Booth.



A LAST LANDMARK REMAINS OF THE PIONEERING SPIRIT IN BLOOMFIELD
Caretaker Thurs Rosen lives in the farmhouse to oversee property.

THE BENEDICT FARM

A Hills' Heritage

BY JANE D. MANN
Special Writer

A brick-and-frame farmhouse built in 1819 by one of the original settlers of this area still stands on N. Woodward Avenue, just north of Lone Pine Road in Bloomfield Hills.

Known for many years as the "Benedict Farm," the structure is the oldest house in Bloomfield Hills and is believed also to be the oldest in Oakland County.

Half brick and half frame, the house was built by Elijah S. Fish, who along with Amasa Bagley and William Morris was among the first settlers of Bloomfield Hills. The 80-acre plot on which the farmhouse is located was purchased from the U. S. Government by Fish for \$2 an acre under the "Two Dollar Act" in 1819.

His property included land on both sides of what is now Woodward Avenue, although at that time there was no road, but merely the old "Indian Trail."

THE WOODEN part of the structure was originally built just east of its present location on the east side of Woodward, then later moved, and the brick portion, which faces Woodward, added. Inside the house wide oak planks form the flooring and the walls of the brick addition are six inches thick.

The house and its adjoining barn became the meeting place in 1834 for a group which organized a Presbyterian Church in Bloomfield; Fish was appointed an elder and deacon and was one of the prime movers in founding the church in the area.

THE FISH HOMESTEAD was

sold by Deacon Fish in 1857 to Eri Benedict, and the house has remained in the Benedict family now for more than a century. Eri Benedict deeded the property to his son John, who in turn left it to his wife and three children.

Clara Ellen Benedict is the present owner of the farmhouse and the property immediately surrounding it.

Miss Benedict was born in the farmhouse in March of 1881, and lived there until she moved to her present home in Birmingham.

CURRENTLY, the Benedict Farm is cared for by Thure Rosene, a Swede by birth, who lives in the farmhouse and oversees the property.

Miss Benedict counts among her souvenirs of the Farm's history an arrow which was found when the land near the house was plowed—according to her account, Chief Pontiac made his last stand just east of the present farmhouse location.

Of the structures originally built on the old land grant acreage obtained by the first settlers, only the Fish-Benedict Farm remains. Farther north and west, William Morris and Amasa Bagley bought extensive acreage in the vicinity of Woodward and Long Lake Road, known then as Bagley's corner and later as Bloomfield Center, but none of their buildings remain.

Many years later the residential potential of Bloomfield Hills was recognized, and families such as those of Charles Stinchfield, Milton Conklin, George A. Booth, William T. Barbour and John T. Shaw built estates in the scenic rolling area.