

Bits of Oronoque History

Clippings from the internet, etc. - feel free to paste in anything you like! Right now it's a hodge-podge, in historical order.

Ed Goldstein's "Cottage to Condo" document is [here](#).

History

Page 2 of this: <https://stockbridgelibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/Issue-35-PDF.pdf>



In 1886, architect Birdseye Blakeman (1824-1894) purchased 11.857 acres of land on Prospect Hill Road for \$5000 where he built a summer home in 1892. The house, constructed of cut stone with the upper portions wood framed and shingled, was named Oronoque for the district in Stratford, CT that was Blakeman's home. The "cottage" consisted of 24 rooms and had 7 fireplaces. Later a caretaker's residence and a six-car garage were added. Blakeman was partners with Henry Ivison (4 Prospect Hill Road) in a NY school textbook publishing firm called Blakeman, Ivison and Taylor. It later became known as the American Book Company with Blakeman as president. In 1912 the property was sold to banker Norman Davis. He was ambassador-at-large for the United States and served as Chairman of the American Red Cross under three presidents. He was responsible for establishing the blood banks and expanded the

Red Cross by thousands of volunteers. When Davis died in 1942 he left a maintenance endowment for the property in his will. Wenzel Krebs was superintendent of the property for over 29 years.



Little did Blakeman or Davis know that Oronoque would someday become known as Indian Hill Music Workshop and be used for the “musical and cultural needs of talented teenage boys and girls.” Established in 1952, Mordecai (1912 – 2007) and Irma Bauman (who passed away in Sept. 2014) ran Indian Hill. Mordy was described as an artist, teacher and program director. He was baritone soloist with many orchestras including the New York Philharmonic. He taught voice and was program director for Green Mansions Summer Theatre for seven years. He appeared on national radio, TV networks, Broadway and off Broadway shows. Irma, mother of four children, was trained in voice and piano. She held important positions in the fields of theatre, music and literature. When the Mercury Theatre Company, directed by Orson Welles, was organized Irma was its secretary treasurer. She was the force behind the running of Indian Hill while Mordy furnished the artistic quality.

One brochure described Indian Hill as offering “the stimulation of work in the arts, combined with summer sports and a combined social program.” Indian Hill included clay tennis courts and athletic fields for softball, basketball, volleyball, and badminton. Horseback riding was available as well as swimming at nearby Stockbridge Bowl. The girls and women faculty were housed in the mansion, the junior boys and girls were housed with their counselors in cabins and the

senior boys and male faculty members were in the converted carriage house. They had weekly visits to Tanglewood, cookouts, trips to Pittsfield to the movies, party nights with neighboring camps, and square and folk dances. A "Trip Day" visiting places like Bartholomew's Cobble, Mt. Everett, Bash-Bish Falls and Mt. Greylock was scheduled every Wednesday. All this along with the opportunity to explore the arts by learning to dance, paint, act, or study a musical instrument, was available at Indian Hill. Classes and rehearsals were held in the mornings and the afternoons were mainly spent in sports. Many accomplished people attended Indian Hill including Arlo Guthrie, Julie Taymor (director, playwright, and puppeteer), and Frank Rich (author and columnist) .

In 2006 Mordy and Irma wrote their memoir and named it From Our Angle of Repose.

Indian Hill, which closed in the mid-1970s, goes by the name of Oronoque once again and is currently being used for condominiums.

Thanks to the Baumans, the Museum & Archives has two extensive collections on Indian Hill. One collection contains the records of the Indian Hill Music Workshop including yearbooks, financial records, letters from teachers and students, artwork, recordings as well as numerous photographs. The Bauman Collection includes correspondence between students and the Baumans after 1976.





[Little tale](#) (though the link is now dead): apparently Arlo Guthrie's famous garbage dump area was near Oronoque! There's also a yearly walk: <http://www.garbagetrailwalk.org/>

Garbage site in Alice's Restaurant

Stockbridge (MA) local Norman Rockwell in 1959 sketched the officer who arrested Arlo Guthrie in November, 1965.

Thanksgiving Day (Nov 25) in 1965, as chronicled by the song Alice's Restaurant (1967), Arlo Guthrie, 18, and Richard J Robbins, 19, dumped garbage from Ray Brock's church (4 Van Deusenville Rd Great Barrington, MA), now Guthrie Center, down a 15-foot cliff here after discovering the local dump was closed.

Guthrie had gone to Indian Hill Music School (circled) on Prospect Hill Rd in Stockbridge (MA) and knew of a site by the school where garbage was dumped.

That turned out to be on the property neighbor Nelson Foote Jr. A witness called police.

"Officer Obie" aka William Obanhein (1924-1994) spent 2 hours digging through the trash and found Ray Brock's name. He then arrested the two youths Nov 26 and they spent a night in jail.

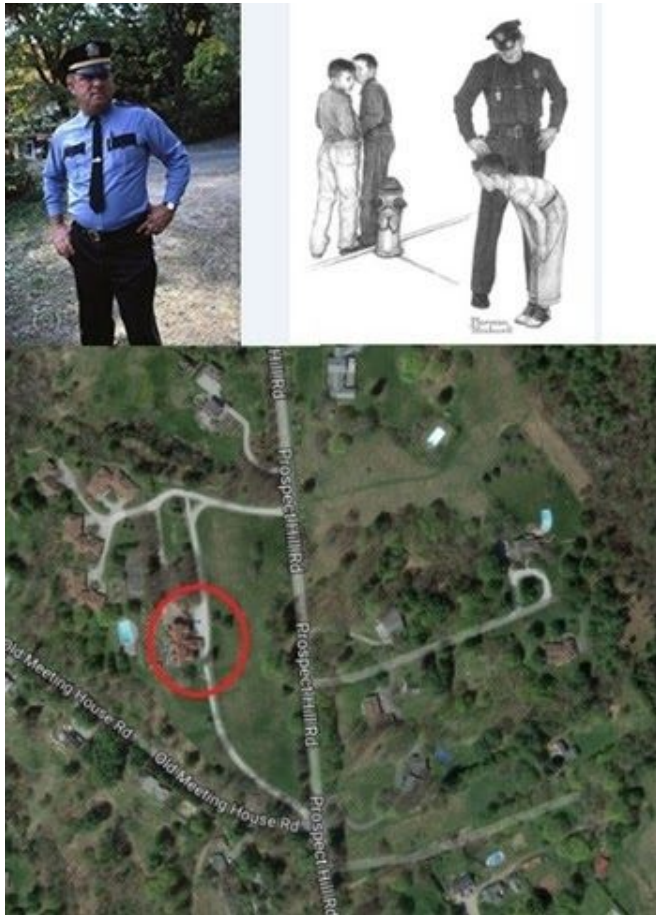
In court, on Nov 27, 1965, they pleaded guilty and paid a \$25 fine.

They were ordered to clean up the trash, filling up their VW van.

At what is now Norman Rockwell Museum, local Norman Rockwell's sketch Policeman With Boys (1959) featuring Officer Obie became an ad for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance. He stayed on the force for 35 years, 1951 to 1985. Rockwell illustrated several local cops.

Guthrie could not be drafted to the Vietnam War as a result of his crime.

Based on the description, the "estates" where Foote lived should be across the street, north of the pool and the cliff is to the left.



And the separate newspaper clipping:

Youths Ordered To Clean Up Rubbish Mess

LEE — Because they couldn't find a dump open in Great Barrington, two youths threw a load of refuse down a Stockbridge hillside on Thanksgiving Day.

Saturday, Richard J. Robbins, 19, of Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and Arlo Guthrie, 18, of Howard Beach, N.Y., each paid a fine of \$25 in Lee District Court after pleading guilty of illegally disposing of rubbish. Special Justice James E. Hannon ordered the youths to remove all the rubbish. They did so Saturday afternoon, following a heavy rain.

Police Chief William J. Obanhein of Stockbridge said later the youths found dragging the junk up the hillside much harder than throwing it down. He said he hoped their case would be an example to others who are careless about disposal of rubbish.

The junk included a divan, plus nearly enough bottles, garbage, papers and boxes to fill their Volkswagen bus.

"The stuff would take up at least half of a goodsized pickup truck," Chief Obanhein said.

The rubbish was thrown into the Nelson Foote Sr. property on Prospect Street, a residential section of Stockbridge consisting largely of estates on the hill across from Indian Hill School.

Chief Obanhein told the court he spent "a very disagreeable two hours" looking through the rubbish before finding a clue to who had thrown it there. He finally found a scrap of paper bearing the name of a Great Barrington man. Subsequent investigation indicated Robbins and Guthrie had been visiting the Great Barrington man and had agreed to cart away the rubbish for him. They told the court that, when they found the Barrington dump closed, they drove around and then disposed of the junk by tossing it over the Stockbridge hillside.

From [this book](#):



ORONOQUE, 1887, Stockbridge.
Residence of Birdseye and Anna Blakeman.
Architect unknown; builder Powers & Sons, Rochester. Landscape
by Nathan Barrett.
Extant as Oronoque Condominium Association.

From [this page](#): Built in 1886 to resemble a royal hunting lodge, Oronoque is now a condominium complex.

From [this page](#):

Two Berkshire cottages stand across the street from one another in Stockbridge. Bonnie Brae was built by Henry Ivison and Oronoque was built by his business partner Birdseye Blakeman.

[This story](#), about Indian Hill camp, which was at Oronoque!