

SOAP

OVERVIEW OF THE OBJECTS

Repository:	Crandall Public Library. Folklife Center Glens Falls, NY.
Creator:	Joanne Steele Shushan Soap & Glass Works, Steele Ridge Farm Shushan, Washington County, New York
Title:	Soap
Dates:	1997
Quantity:	1 cf
Identification:	Folk Art

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Joanne Steele began Shushan Soap & Glass Works in 1995, inspired by a homeschool project with her son, Ian. Her soaps are vegetable oil-based, and contain only natural dyes and preservatives. Her local line of soaps have names like Battenkill Breeze, Camden Valley Rain, and Shushan Sunrise. She also makes bath salts and gels, bug spray and foaming body wash. Joanne sells to friends and neighbors, and at local events. She buys some ingredients and also swaps ideas with a soap-group on the Internet. Her favorite way to sell her soap is to take it to people. "I love to see people pick it up, sniff it, rub it if they want – I encourage them to use all their senses. It's a joy!" Soap making fits into the long hours on a family farm. "I can make it a midnight if I want to." Joanne makes about 5 pounds of soap a week in her kitchen. She's thinking about moving operations out to the summer kitchen of the Steele family farm - its original 88 acres bought from the king of England over 200 years ago. Joanne grew up in Cambridge, NY where her family encouraged her to make things. "We always made homemade ice cream. I've also done my own spinning, cheese and butter." Soap making is an outlet for her creativity. "It's a bit like cooking, starting with a recipe but developing one's own style." Joanne is also a certified nurse-midwife, who with Dr. Welling, developed midwifery services at the hospital in Cambridge, NY. She is encouraged in all of her projects by husband, Tom, and her 3 sons.

In 1997, Joanne presented Soap for the Folklife program, Growing Up in the North Country, a family workshop series begun in 1989, where people share their own traditions –from Abenaki stories and Finnish sauna, to Moosewood whistles and tied fishing flies –celebrating folk arts as the essence of daily life.

INDEX TERMS

Topics: Soap
Natural ingredients
Handicraft
Cosmetics
Beauty, personal

Places: Shushan, Washington, New York

Important People: Steele, Joanne

Form/Genre: realia

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation: Soap
Folklife Center
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

Accession Information: Acquired for the Folklife Program, *Growing Up in the North Country* in 1997

Processing Information: Arranged and described by Erica Gonyea, 2019

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECTS

1. Rosewood bath salts
2. White ginger shower gel
3. Buzz Off – natural bug repellent
4. Foaming body wash
5. Rose petals body powder
6. Mulberry bush soap
7. Sea Glass soap
8. Greenbrier soap
9. Venetias Vanilla soap
10. Battenkill Breeze soap
11. Whit Chocolate Mousse soap
12. Grandpa Needs a Bath soap
13. Brown Windsor soap
14. Doc's Applejack soap
15. Farmer's Fare soap