



NOW & THEN

at the
LOCAL HISTORY MUSEUM & ARCHIVES
(Downstairs at the STOCKBRIDGE LIBRARY)

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"NOW & THEN"

e-newsletter

contact

simanl@roadrunner.com

Maria L. Carr, Editor

Past issues may be accessed

at the Library website

stockbridgelibrary.org

March 16, Bement Room at 2pm, Gabfest

The topic of discussion will be MUSIC (organized or impromptu) – whether dance classes, square dances, kitchen dances, local rock groups, bands, proms, piano lessons, Music Inn, Michaels, etc. As a child, teenager, as an adult -- How was music part of your life in Stockbridge? Mark your calendars & join us or e-mail you memories.

TOWN HALL GABFEST

A group gathered at the Library on January 26th to discuss the many uses of the old Town Hall building. Before it was used for the town offices, the downstairs was a large meeting room with a stage. The upstairs consisted of only a small room with a balcony overlooking the lower level meeting room. Those present remembered attending minstrel shows, square dances and movies there. A photograph in the Archives shows Stockbridge residents voting on the stage. Stockbridge Grange held meetings there as well as their Grange Agricultural Fairs for a number of years before they built their own grange hall. One person e-mailed that she remembered going with her mother and other ladies (namely Grange members) who would gather in the upstairs section of the Town Hall on town meeting day (*this was prior to the renovations*). They spent the morning preparing a delicious meal; and then at noon it was served to anyone who had a dollar to spend. Long tables were set up covered with white paper. The whole town would join in the feast whether they attended the town meeting or not. At the back of the upstairs section, there was a bank of windows where the people could look down on the proceedings at the meeting. There was also a booth in this upstairs bank of windows that was used by the man who put on the movies. The building was renovated in 1963-64 to accommodate the town offices, at which time the upstairs meeting room was added. This meeting room was used for town meetings but was also used for town functions. The Interlaken Congregational Church held Penny Socials in it for 3-4 years in the 1970's. Part of the renovations included a single room and 2 cells at the rear of the building for the police department. Transient people passing through the town knew by a sign marked on the curb (*by previous transients passing through*) that they could find a bed and meal if they stopped at the police station.



DOES ANYONE KNOW?

Robert E. Galpin wrote a poem in January 1839 entitled, "On Building a Town Hall in Stockbridge"

This was during a time when everyone was voicing their opinions as to where the town hall should be located and many suggestions were put forward. One stanza of his poem reads:

There's weeping in Poverty Lane.

There's wailing and tearing of hair.

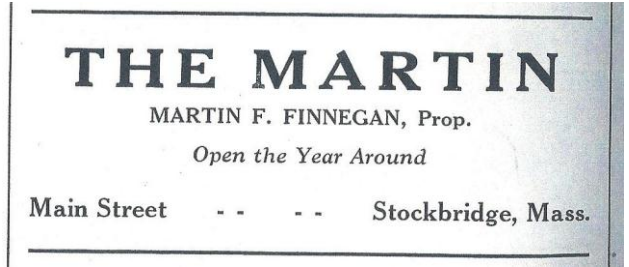
While the "Ledge" sends her groans
back again

With howling and utter despair.

The poem references different locations in the town. At one point it refers to the Furnace District. In this stanza it's Poverty Lane and the Ledge. We know that Poverty Lane was the Church St. area; but does anyone have any idea of what area or part of the town he would be referring to as the "Ledge"?

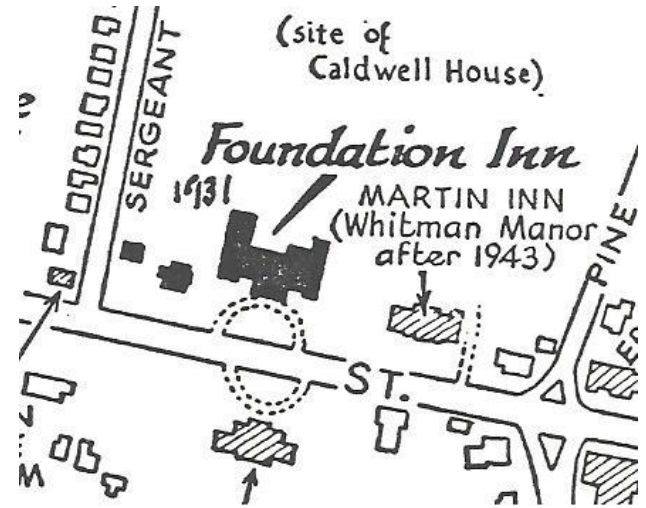
THE MARTIN

THE MARTIN, STOCKBRIDGE, MASS. 3



An Inn and boarding house run by Martin F. Finnegan called "The Martin" was located on Main Street c. 1925-1929. (see map segment at right from 1960 book) The ad (above right) appeared in the 1935-37 Central Berkshire Directory.

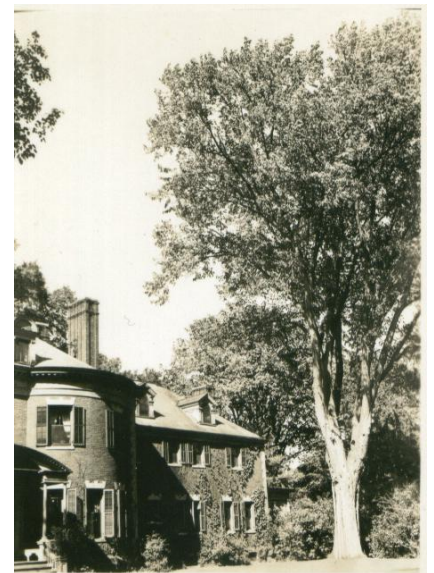
Finnegan started as a bell hop at the Red Lion Inn and in various capacities worked at the local hotel for 26 years. He and his wife ran "The Martin" for many years. He was the Manager and Treasurer of the Stockbridge Water Company for 21 years retiring as Manager in 1964 at the age of 82. He was also a tax collector for the town in the 1950's. A clipping in the Archives files states that from 1910 to 1913 Martin Finnegan was a star third baseman for the old Stockbridge Town Team.



The building was run as a hotel, "Whitman Manor, Inc.", from 1945-1955. It was then purchased and remodeled by Austen Riggs in 1957-1958 for use as a library, cafeteria, doctors' offices, records files and research rooms. The building, shown in the postcard above as "The Martin" is also pictured at the bottom left as it looks today considerably expanded as part of the Austen Riggs Center.



(The 2 pictures to the left and right are part of the Archives Photo Collection. They are by David Milton Jones showing the building during the time it was "The Martin")



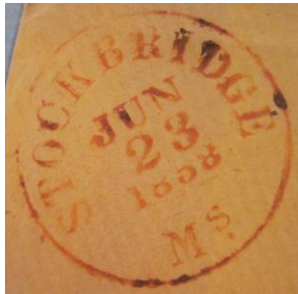
PRESERVATION PROJECT COMPLETED

Thanks to a grant received from the **Stockbridge Community Preservation Act Committee** the preservation of the “**Brown Book of Deeds**” has been completed. The deeds (pictured left before any preservation work was done), were compiled in a binder by the Brown family. Many of them were torn, taped and crumpled. They deal with the westward expansion (land speculation and development) by Stockbridge residents. The preservation project consisted of taking them out of their binder, making necessary repairs and cleaning, encapsulating them in archival sleeves and then placing them in folders and boxes while at the same time keeping them in their original order.



POST OFFICE EXHIBIT SCHEDULED FOR EARLY MARCH

Fifty years ago the Stockbridge Post Office as we know it today opened on Elm Street; however, the history of the Post Office in Stockbridge is the oldest in Berkshire County. The first Post Office in town opened July 12, 1792 on Main Street. We have had Post Offices on both sides of Main Street and on Elm Street



as well as in Glendale (c 1830's-present) and Curtisville (currently Interlaken) (1832-1958). The upcoming exhibit in the downstairs lobby will display items and pictures that depict the Post Office's history. (Pictured are some items that will be part of the exhibit.) A

collection of early Stockbridge postmarks on loan from Ruth and Robert Markovits will also be included.

If anyone has items they wish to loan for the exhibit, please contact Barbara at 298-5501.

DID YOU KNOW?

On July 11, 1888 the Lee Gleaner printed the following figures from the board of assessors:
 Valuation of personal estate, \$ 995,124.08
 Valuation of real estate \$1,705,685.00

	In 1887	In 1888
Number of horses	464	487
Number of cows	740	750
Number of sheep	309	408
Number of dwelling houses	578	480
Amount of tax to be raised in 1888	\$27,853.02	

It is interesting that there are more animals in 1888 than in 1887 but less houses.

MUSEUM & ARCHIVES HOURS

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9-5, Thursdays 9-1 and Saturdays 9-2

If you plan to spend time researching, it is always a good idea to call (298-5501) to check for availability.

DID YOU KNOW?

Town of Stockbridge population in 1850 was: 102 Farms
 (From an undated document in the Archives 363 families
 Compiled by David Milton Jones which doesn't 334 dwelling
 reference any source)

HITTY CONFERENCE

The committee in charge of the June 2011 Hitty Conference is working hard on the event. Anyone who wishes to participate in the conference, be a volunteer or would just like more information, please contact Barbara Allen at the Museum & Archives (298-5501)