



# NOW & THEN

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

**ISSUE #9**

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Maria L. Carr, Editor

## FIREWORKS FOR SALE

Harold P. French, Sr. sold fireworks in the town of Stockbridge during the 1920's – 1940's. He had a portable shed that he moved around town and sold fireworks that he got from the National Fire Works Company. A couple of the locations where he set it up were at the park on Park Street and across the road from the Plain School (*currently the town offices*). He had a cabinet in his house where he stored the fireworks when he wasn't selling them. He would also put on firework displays in the town. (*photo at the left shows Harold French, Sr. on the right*)



The side of the shed had hinges on it so that he could lift it up when he was ready to sell. The picture on the right shows the shed in Harold French, Jr.'s back yard where he uses it as a storage shed. The opening is currently nailed shut but you can still see the hinges on one side. (*A collection of pictures including the one on the left are now a part of the Archives collection thanks to Harold French, Jr.'s donation*)

## SHADY PORCHES

The *SHADY PORCHES* of Stockbridge

**Saturday**  
**July 31, 2010**  
**1 – 4 pm**

**Visit and chat with the spirit residents of days gone by ("Shades") on the porches in six old Stockbridge neighborhoods. Discover how the town and its neighborhoods have changed over time.**



Purchase tickets at the Stockbridge Library on Main Street.  
Suggested donation: \$18 in Advance; \$20 Day of Event.  
Information: 413-298-5501

Sponsored by the Stockbridge Library Assoc. to benefit its Museum and Archives



(*Spirit of Catharine Sedgwick at the Library last year*)

Although the "Shades" have appeared in Stockbridge for five years now, this is the first time that they have visited homes that they would have visited in real life. Stop by and chat with them and learn about what life was like in our Stockbridge neighborhoods.

The Shades committee is still looking for volunteers for the day of the event (take tickets, man the library, park cars etc). Please contact Mary Hoeltzel 298-3361.

## THE CHURCH IN STOCKBRIDGE – PART 4 (the Church Splits)

In 1823 the church membership once again decided to build a new church. The decision to build the church close to the spot where the first meeting house had stood (*near where the Children Chimes currently stands*) was a point of contention with the members who lived to the north in the Curtisville (*currently Interlaken*) section of the town. They felt it was too difficult a distance to travel especially during the winter. In 1824 the majority of the congregation proceeded with their plans to build the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting house which was dedicated January 1825. It was made of brick and, on the outside, it looked exactly as it does today. The building was restructured in 1865 to accommodate the famous Johnson Organ. The Education Building was added in 1956 and the pulpit/lectern area redesigned in 1998. (*post card dated 1941 at right shows church*) In the book, Stockbridge 1739-1939; A Chronicle, it is stated that the Second Meeting House on Meeting House Road “was torn down and carted away, so that nothing remains today”.



Returning to 1824 and the disagreement between the two factions, one document in the collection states “.....differences between the Curtisville mill-hands and the Stockbridge aristocrats”. There were many meetings and letters over the course of the year regarding the desire of the northern faction to break away and create their own Church. During this period Reverend Field was the minister and tried working out the differences. On December 7, 1824 a Church Council of 6 ministers was selected to determine whether to allow the creation of the North Congregational Society. (*Those appointed by the church were from Lee, Lenox and Great Barrington. Those appointed by the associated members were from Shelburne, Dalton and Hudson, New York.*) After much deliberation, it was finally agreed to let the new Society be created and in 1825 at a meeting of the 62 northern members, it was voted to accept the decision of the council; thereby, creating the North Congregational Society.

At first the North Congregational Society met in the Red School House on Larrywaug Crossroads (*pictured right*) until the church was built, which was dedicated January 10, 1827. It was made of bricks, which came from a kiln at the brick-yard located near the Butler Bridge that was active from about 1824 - 1835. (Another source states “made in the brick-yard near the Harkema property”). It was situated nearly opposite the Perry Place on Larrywaug Crossroad. Before a regular pastor was established, Dr. Field sometimes went to preach. On January 9, 1827 Reverend Nathan Shaw was installed as their pastor and the building was dedicated on the following day.



This church was used for a very short time and was then taken down and rebuilt in 1834 at its present site on Willard Hill Road on land given to the society by Samuel G. Wheeler. Exactly why the Society decided to rebuild at a new location so soon isn't apparent.

We have pictures of both the churches that exist today; but unfortunately there are no sketches or depictions of the first or second meeting houses or the first meeting house built by the North Congregational Society.

With the change of the Interlaken area to a residential area (no mills, stores, post office, or farms) the Congregational Church of

Interlaken (formerly the North Congregational Society) experienced a decline in membership over the years until the ‘aging flock’ were forced to sell the building in 2002 (*it is currently used as a 2<sup>nd</sup> home by a Manhattan architect*). Once again we are back to a single meeting house in Stockbridge.

### RESOURCES

All the records and some of the furnishings from the Interlaken Church are part of the Museum & Archives collection along with some of the old records from the Stockbridge Church and St. Paul's. The donation from the Interlaken Church was the impetus for the Museum and Archives renovation project. The Interlaken Church also made a sizeable monetary donation which acted as seed money to spearhead the project.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Located on the north side of the Stockbridge Cemetery (around the corner and to the east of the "Sedgwick Pie") you'll find a group of early graves. These graves were removed from a small grave yard that was created in 1834 behind the North Congregational Society (Interlaken Congregational Church). As all of the older families already had one or more lots in the Stockbridge Cemetery, this small cemetery was used very little. In the 1870's, the graves and stones were moved to the Stockbridge Cemetery and the grave yard in Interlaken abandoned. Sometimes your "final resting place" isn't actually so final!



## FOLLOW UP ON WILLIAMS HOUSE (currently Henderson)



In our last issue we featured an article on the house at 39 Main Street which was built for the Williams family (*Daniel R. & his wife, Fannie, pictured at left*). The Lenox Historical Society is hosting a lecture by Pat Schley on the life of Sarah (Walker) Davis (Fannie's sister) on July 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Lenox Library.

An interesting fact that Pat pointed out is that Fannie (Walker) Williams' sister, Sarah (Walker) Davis, married David Davis who was a close friend and associate of Abraham Lincoln in Illinois. Together they rode the 8<sup>th</sup> judicial circuit in IL for 11 years with Davis as judge and Lincoln one of the lawyers. In 1860 David Davis acted as Lincoln's campaign manager and is widely credited for orchestrating Lincoln's unexpected nomination. In return, President Lincoln appointed David Davis to the US Supreme Court in 1862.

### **EXHIBIT**

The downstairs lobby will continue to feature the exhibit for the 100th Anniversary of Stockbridge Grange #295 through the month of July.

The Library is planning to host a Seminar  
on Rachel Field's Hitty in June 2011

If you would like to be on the committee contact

Barbara Dowling, - bldowling@verizon.net

or Barbara Allen - ballen@cwmar.org

or call 298-5501



## MYSTERY PICTURE

The mystery picture in our last issue (*pictured left*) has been identified by both Rick Wilcox and Gary Leveille as 17 Prospect Hill.

## PLAQUE IN MEMORY OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

There is a small plaque on the ground along the sidewalk in front of the Plain School (*west end*) that reads "This Tree was planted and dedicated to the Memory of George Washington 1932".

Does anyone know anything about the plaque or why or by whom the tree was planted?



## 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.*