STROLL BACK IN TIME

The clocks rewound to the 1860's along Stockbridge's Main Street on August 1st. In celebration of the Stockbridge Library's renovation project, everyone was able to sample what it was like during the period when life was much simpler. The Library opened its doors in 1864 and is celebrating 150 years of serving the community. Coordinated by the Museum and Archives Curator, Barbara Allen, along with help from library volunteers who led activities in costumes appropriate to the time, the day reflected and celebrated the Library's place in the history of Stockbridge. The festivities culminated with an ice cream social on the lawn of the train station where the Library has relocated during the renovation period.
MERWIN HOUSE

The Merwin House at 14 Main Street has become the temporary offices of Barbara Allen, M&A Curator, and Katie O’Neil, Library Director. *Historic New England* has graciously allowed the M&A use of the dining room for exhibit space for key collection pieces while the renovations are going on at the Library building.

The house was called “Tranquility” by the family. It is situated on a 2.3 acre piece of property, which was originally part of a larger piece of property that Konkapot, chief of the Stockbridge Mahican Indians, gave to his interpreter, Dutch trader Johannes Van Valkenburgh. After changing ownership a few times prior to 1825, it was acquired by Frances Dresser. He built a house for his bride, Clarissa Dowd, on the property. She was the niece of Rev. David Dudley Field. The house was constructed of brick which was most likely produced from the factory on Butler Road as were all the brick structures in Stockbridge that were erected during the same time frame.

When the railroad came to this area it brought an influx of wealthy people who came and built summer homes here or purchased existing homes for summer use. Mr. & Mrs. William E. Doane of New York bought the house in 1875. This was after Mrs. Doane, who was born in Paris and was the daughter of the British ambassador to France, visited actress, Fanny Kemble, in Lenox. Mr. Doane was from a Cape Cod family that made its fortune in ship building and the merchant and fishing trades. His family cofounded the towns of Eastham and Provincetown.

*The Berkshire Record* reported in 1991 that “the eleven-room house originally had end chimneys with a central stair hall and may have had a kitchen wing in the back”. In 1900 the Doanes extensively renovated the house adding a wood frame wing and porch. The renovations were reported as follows – “added a kitchen, butler’s pantry and sitting room; the old kitchen became the dining room with the addition of French doors connecting to a new porch. The second floor was expanded to include five bedrooms, three baths and a large hall. Interior trim was changed at this time, but the living room mantel is original.”

The Doane’s daughter, Marie, was born in the house in 1878 and spent summers at the house when she was growing up and after she married. Marie married first Ensign Newman K. Perry in 1903. He died in 1905 while he was serving in the navy. Her second marriage was to Mr. Edwin Webb, a Canadian, in 1909. This marriage was kept secret and was dissolved because, according to a newspaper article, “she refused to live in Canada”. Marie’s last marriage was to Edward Merwin, a graduate of Harvard, who was a member of the New York Stock Exchange. When her husband died in 1930, she became a year-round resident at the Merwin House. One newspaper article states that she became known as Vipont dropping the name Marie. Her full name was Marie Vipont de Rivera Doane Perry Webb Merwin.

In later years she became a recluse. She willed her home to the town of Stockbridge with a permanent endowment for its support wishing that it would become a house museum. Marie died in October of 1965 at her home. Shortly after her death, the town turned it over to SPNEA (*The Society for Preservation of New England Antiquities*) which is now *Historic New England*. Mrs. Merwin had given her housekeeper, Mrs. Catherine Martinengo, life tenancy rights at the Merwin House in her will and she became the first hostess when it opened as a museum.

What makes the Merwin house unique is that the furnishings and heirlooms on display are those of the family that lived there dating from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. One article refers to it as “an eclectic collection of family memorabilia. The furnishings reflect a wealthy family’s travels and interests.” Some of the furnishings are English and others are French from Mrs. Merwin’s mother. There are several Indian pieces of furniture which were presents from her sister, whose husband was stationed in India with the British Army.

While the Library M&A is temporarily located at the Merwin House, it will be open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Take advantage of this opportunity and stop and see the Merwin House along with the highlights of the M&A in the “Stockbridge Room” (*formerly the dining room*).

### ACCESSING ITEMS IN THE MUSEUM & ARCHIVES COLLECTION

Since the M&A closed to the public, everything in the collection has been packed up (or wrapped up in many cases) and put into storage either at the Library (away from where construction will take place) or off site. Because we are unable to bring the archival collection to our temporary site at the Merwin House, we will be handling requests and research in an entirely different way during the next year. Please call or email the office stating your interests (298-4703 or ballen@cwmars.org). An appointment will be set up since it will generally take a week or two to access the material you need. Visits can be made to the office during the public hours on Fridays and Saturdays; but collections other than those in the Stockbridge Room are not available. Donations to the collection can be made during those hours or by appointment.

Your patience and understanding over the next months while construction is taking place is greatly appreciated.
**CEMETERY TOURS**

The M&A Cemetery Tours continue to be a big success. Karen Marshall explores the history of the people who lived in Stockbridge, assisted by those attending doing short readings. See the schedule below for the final two presentations of this very popular program.

**CEMETERY TOURS:**

**Saturdays 4pm at Cemetery Gates on Main Street**
- Sept. 6 – The Library: From Idea to Building/From House to Community Center
- Oct. 11 – The Cemetery’s Story: From Past to Present  
(Parking across the road at Proctor Hall)

**LEGENDARY LOCALS**

Gary Leveille - Speaker

Thursday, September 11, 2014 at 6:30 P.M. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church (29 Main Street) Gary Leveille will present a talk with slides about the intriguing characters and accomplished citizens in his new book, *Legendary Locals of the Southern Berkshires*, with particular emphasis on Stockbridge “legends”. He will share stories of unique individuals, past and present, who have had a lasting impact on the community, the nation and the world. Gary will have some of his books available for sale which will benefit the Library.

**STOCKBRIDGE TRAIN STATION -- SUNDAY SPEAKER SERIES**

The Stockbridge Library Sunday Speaker Series will feature a talk on the Stockbridge Station at 4 p.m. on September 14th at the train station, 2 Depot Street. Mark your calendars.

**GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY**

On August 15th a Groundbreaking Ceremony to launch the long-anticipated renovation project for the 150 year-old Stockbridge Library was held. State and local dignitaries joined Library officials and Capital Campaign chairs under a tent on the front lawn of the Library for this momentous occasion.

**WALKING TOUR OF MAIN STREET STOCKBRIDGE**

On Sept. 21 at 11 a.m there will be a walking tour presented by the Library as part of the Housatonic Heritage Trail weekend. This is a free event and will start at the Library.

**MUSEUM & ARCHIVES TEMPORARY HOURS**

The M&A office and display area has been relocated to 14 Main Street in the Merwin House. The display area of selected items will be open to the public on Fridays and Saturdays from 10-1.

For research or donations please contact Curator Barbara Allen, at 298-4703 to make an appointment.  
*(If you need to contact the Library, call 298-5501)*