Rogers Room (Art and Music Room)

Part of the 1968 addition, this room houses our arts, crafts, and music books and many of our paintings and artifacts. It also provides space for changing exhibits.

Many of the items here deal with the story of Manjiro Nakahama, a.k.a. John Mung, a 14 year-old fisherman from Tosashimizu, Japan, who was shipwrecked in 1841. He and his fellows were rescued by William Whitfield of Fairhaven who captained the whaler “John Howland.” While his friends stayed behind in Hawaii, Manjiro opted to accompany Whitfield for the rest of the voyage, arriving in Fairhaven in 1843. Here he learned the English language, American ways, whaling crafts, and navigation. In 1849 he began making his way back to Japan via the gold fields of California and the Hawaiian Islands. He became a university professor and is well-known as something of a folk hero in Japan.

The Samurai Sword was presented to us by Dr. Tadashi Kikuoka of Seton Hall University. It replaces the sword given to Fairhaven by Toichiro Nakahama, Manjiro’s son, in 1918. The original sword, on display even during the second World War, was stolen in 1977.

At the far end of the room are portraits of Henry H. Rogers and of his mother, grandmother and grandfather.

Flanking these are portraits of Walter and Alexander Winsor related to the captain of the Flying Cloud. Near them is a pastel of Henry Huttleston a progenitor of H. H. Rogers.

Arthur Moniz painted the map showing the center of Fairhaven before the construction of the Rogers buildings.

On the north wall is a painting of a seacoast fort in Brittany by the Acushnet artist Clement Nye Swift.

The tapestries opposite were given to the library at different times and by different people despite their similarity.

Revised January 14, 2014
**History**

“The germ of the Millicent Library had its origin in the darkness of a great grief.” It was named after Millicent Gifford Rogers, Henry Huttleston Rogers’ daughter, who died of a heart condition when she was 17. Designed by Charles Brigham, the library was given to the Town of Fairhaven as a memorial to her by her brother and three sisters. A tablet in the front hallway confirms this gift and another plaque near the entrance to the Young Adults Room reflects the appreciative acceptance by the Town. The Library opened on January 30, 1893 — the 20th anniversary of Millicent's birth.

In 1968, the Library’s 75th year, an addition was made possible by the generosity of members of the Rogers Family, the Town of Fairhaven, and a federal grant. In 1976, a renovation of the building was accomplished through donations from the Benjamin and Coe families. Another major restoration project financed by the Town of Fairhaven and supplemented by a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission was undertaken in 1986. This included repair work on interior stained glass and walls and exterior chimneys and terra cotta. One of the damaged pieces, a grotesque, now lives in the fireplace in the Director’s Office. An elevator was added in 1997 by the Town of Fairhaven providing access for all to the main floor of the building.

**Lobby & Circulation Area**

Dominating this area is a stained glass window, executed by the London firm of Clayton and Bell, featuring Shakespeare at the top and a portrait of young Millicent as the winged Muse of Poetry. A photograph of “Millie” in a heart-shaped frame near the circulation area may be compared to reveal the likeness. A marble bust of the poet and writer Park Benjamin, donated by Henry Rogers Benjamin, is near the window. A metal head taken from an old fountain that stood at the entrance to the Fairhaven-New Bedford Bridge stands on a pedestal under the stained glass window. This area is lighted by a pair of bronze chandeliers donated by the National Bank of New Bedford.

**Charles J. Lewin Room (reference room)**

Straight across from the entrance is the Charles J. Lewin Reference Room. Mr. Lewin was a lifelong friend of the town and the library and was editor of the New Bedford Standard Times. Many of the furnishings of the Room were purchased in his memory.

The chandelier was made in 1833 by the Mount Washington Glass Works in New Bedford. Over the door is Malderelli’s “At the Bath,” donated by Mrs. Franklin Delano. Another painting of Praxiteles’ statue “Psyche.” Two pastels depicting Fort Phoenix — by W. M. Drew and N. R. Gifford — flank a pastel of Butlers Flats lighthouse, also by Drew, donated by Benjamin Burrell. To the right and left of the fireplace are paintings by Arthur Small, the lighthouse keeper during the Hurricane of 1938. The owl on the fireplace is by Johan Kirchmayer and serves as the logo for the Friends of the Millicent Library.

**Rita E. Steele Reading Room**

Rita Steele was loved and respected not only in Fairhaven, but also everywhere her influence and interest spread.

A large photograph of Millicent Rogers hangs over the fireplace.

Mrs. Franklin Delano also donated the statue, “The Messenger of Love,” by Caroni. (The love message is tied around the dove’s neck.)

A small dark portrait of Martha Simon a Wampanoag Indian (despite the erroneous title of “Last of the Narragansetts”) also decorates the room. It is a rare portrait by Albert Bierstadt and was given by the artist to Henry Rogers in the hope that Rogers (who owned a railroad) might help with a patent for a railroad device invented by Bierstadt. As the painter used coal-tar based paint, it has become very dark. There is a print showing its true colors nearby. Henry Thoreau visited Martha and noted her vast knowledge of herbal medicine as well as her loneliness, alleviated only by her cats, one of which is seen in the picture.

A lively painting of William Tallman as a young boy with a red hat, painted by Elizabeth Delano, was given in by Kathleen and Albert Benac.

A beautiful hand-painted piano stands beneath the paintings. This instrument was made for Rogers and donated to us by Mrs. Robert Barry, daughter of Henry R. Benjamin.

The roll-top desk, donated by two grandsons of Rogers, is the one he used in his Standard Oil office at 26 Broadway in New York. Note the buttons used to summon various office workers.

A close friend of Mr. Rogers, Mark Twain, delivered the dedication speech at the opening of the Town Hall in 1894. Next to the manuscript is a letter to the library's trustees giving Twain's impression of the new Library. A bronze plaque commemorating the friendship was given by Lady Fairhaven, Rogers’ daughter.

Near the windows shared with the lobby is a small bronze and very Victorian statue which was the gift of Henry Randel of New York, “in affectionate memory of Millie, 1893.” Mr. Randel was the father of Mr. Rogers’ second wife.

Over the fireplace in this room is a painting of the “Flying Cloud” clipper ship, one of whose world records for speed have only recently been broken. This painting was loaned to us by the Moseley family who also donated the photograph of the Cloud’s skipper, Alexander Winsor.

The original building ended with a picture window where the archway from the Young Adults Room now stands. In 1968 an addition provided a Children’s Room as well as a staff workroom. The settee was purchased in memory of Seth Daigle. The elevator entrance is also here—a compromise, since the construction could not involve the old historic part of the building. The elevator comes to rest in a new lobby, formerly the old bookmobile garage and outside this entrance is a plaza dedicated to Library Trustee George Bunnell, who worked to make the building accessible.