

Jasper Rand Art Museum

While the funds from the Whitney Estate were accumulating, other benefactors began to step forward with further ideas about what the library should contain. Incorporated into the new library building was the Jasper Rand Art Museum. In 1923, Mrs. Florence Rand Lang contributed \$50,000, and later another \$10,000, for the establishment of the Jasper Rand Art Museum in memory of her grandfather and father, Jasper Rand Sr. (1801-1869) and Jr. (1837-1900). Jasper Rand Sr. was a postmaster at Westfield during the administration of Abraham Lincoln. Jasper Rand Sr. and Jr. were both Westfield whip manufacturers. The Rand Whip Company was located on Elm Street where the Mobil Gas station now sits. Jasper Rand Jr. joined his father in the whip industry but later he and his brother formed the Rand Drill Company in New York. His son, Jasper Rand III was president of this company when it merged with Ingersoll Sargent to become the Ingersoll Rand Company in 1905.

Currently, the Jasper Rand Art Museum has art gallery exhibitions populated by local artists that are free to be viewed by the public.

Edwin Smith Historical Museum



Edwin Smith

William T. Smith donated \$15,000 for a Historical Museum in honor of his father, Edwin Smith. Edwin Smith (co-owner of H.B. Smith Company) and his brother, H.B., donated the steam boiler for the Westfield's original Athenaeum in 1866. The company continued the tradition by donating new boilers to the renovated Athenaeum in 1927. In 1850, H.B. Smith had his own circulating library in his office on Main Street. He later sold his collection to Simeon Shurtleff and eventually the collection came to the Athenaeum from Shurtleff's estate. Edwin Smith was elected as an associate member of the Athenaeum in December of 1866. The museum in his honor was opened on October 9, 1926. Renovated in October 2023, the Edwin Smith Museum is open to the public on Saturdays from 10am to 2pm.

Lang Auditorium

Florence Osgood Rand was born in Westfield in 1861. In 1906, she married Henry Lang, an importer who became vice president of Ingersoll Rand in 1909. Florence Rand Lang became increasingly well known as a patron of art and artists. She herself was an artist and was awarded with the first prize at the American Artists Professional League for her painting entitled *California Spring*. Florence Rand Lang was fondly remembered for her generosity to the Westfield Athenaeum when they named the auditorium after her. The Lang Auditorium was also called the Lang Audience Room.



Room by Room: A History of the Westfield Athenaeum

The Athenaeum was incorporated in 1864. It opened its doors on January 1st, 1868.

“An Athenaeum is an institution designed to promote knowledge and appreciation of literature, art and science.”

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Fowler Gillett Home

As the library grew over the years, it became obvious that more room was needed. Many people had their eye on a large house at the corner of Elm and Court Streets. James Fowler, educated at Yale, was the first president of the Hampden National Bank. He gave land for the State Normal School and was the principal speaker at the town's bicentennial in 1869. He and his wife Lucy, a former teacher at the Westfield Academy, had three children. Their son, Samuel, became chairman of the subscription committee to solicit books and, in due time, became vice-president of the Westfield Athenaeum. Their daughter, Lucy Douglas Fowler, married Edward Bates Gillett, who became the second president of the Athenaeum along with his other prominent posts. Their children Frederick and Lucy Gillett jointly contributed \$15,000 for the remodeling of their Grandfather's house which would become the Children's Library. In 1898, the Fowler homestead was conveyed as a gift to the Athenaeum by the trustees of Westfield Academy.



Elizabeth Reed Room

Elizabeth Reed was a poet, essayist, author, and a Board Member of the Athenaeum for 20 years. Her 1964 novel, *Young Men of the Year*, caused a bit of a scandal. Residents of Westfield saw themselves in the characters and thought that Elizabeth had written about them! Elizabeth also contributed a chapter on the History of the Westfield Athenaeum for the book, *Westfield Massachusetts 1669-1969*, that was published in 1968. She published under the name Elizabeth Grey Stewart. Elizabeth married John Earnest Reed, the founder of Sterling Radiator Company in Westfield, now known as Mestek.

The Reed Room currently hosts a permanent display on the History of Westfield as well as alternating seasonal historical displays.

Whitney Study

Milton Burrall Whitney, a lawyer and an outstanding public servant, held many prominent positions and devoted much of his time and energy to the enrichment of the Westfield Athenaeum. He served on the committee for the first library and then as the library's third president for 23 years. Later in life, he married Florence Fuller. She presented many of her husband's favorite volumes to enhance the study which is maintained by funds she designated for this purpose. His most significant bequest after he died was \$80,000 with specific instructions for construction of a free public library bearing his name. Whitney instructed that almost all of the funds and buildings he bequeathed were to bear his name. The Milton Burrall Whitney Library is the name of our library.

