

Records of the Henry Guest House Renovations and Restoration

Dates Ranging from: January 4, 1809 to September 13, 2013*

Created by: The New Brunswick Free Public Library

*The end date September 13, 2013 may be incorrect. If it is, the correct end date would be February 20, 2013.



Quantity: 5 boxes; 4 linear feet

Language: English

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Aug 22, 2024

Supervising Archivist: E. Kim Adams

Biographical note on the guest family

Historians believe that the Guest family was originally from Birmingham, England (Cassera 1980, 1). Henry Guest himself was born on June 9, 1727 in either Philadelphia, Pennsylvania or Countess Slip, New York. Most accounts say Philadelphia, but a descendant of Henry Guest said in 1926 that he was born in New York (Cassera 1980, 2). Henry Guest first married Ruth Binney (sometimes Bong), who died too soon after to have children. Henry did however have children in a second marriage with Ann For(e)man. With her, Henry Guest had at least four children: William Guest (December 17, 1753-February 20, 1826), Moses Guest (November 7, 1755-March 22, 1828), Henry Guest Jr. (April 18, 1760-July 9, 1820), and an unnamed daughter who probably died in infancy. Moses mentions William, Captain John and somebody named Lewis in his journal as brothers (Wall 1940, 3-4). The latter two have conflicting accounts, however, as a descendant of Henry Guest Sr. 's brother, John Guest, reports that Captain John was the cousin of Moses Guest, not his brother. She also asserts that Lewis is not his brother, and the only siblings he had were the ones originally listed. The descendant claims that Captain John Guest (Captain Jack) was the son of John Guest and Sarah Van Emburgh, whom he married on January 6, 1740.

Henry Guest Sr. was a tanner, and he proposed the idea of using leather roofing to the New York Society of Arts. He thought it would be cheaper and similarly protective as the copper that the society was going to use (Cassera 1980, 2). During his lifetime, he was acquainted with John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine, and corresponded with all of them on friendly terms. Thomas Paine being sheltered at the Henry Guest House is one of many stories surrounding the Henry Guest House (Cassera 1980, 2). Another story is about the British troops mistaking hides hanging from a line for American soldiers and firing on the Guest house. That story in particular is substantiated by reports that Henry and his Brother incurred damages by theft or otherwise to their possessions and homes by the British during the Revolutionary War (McPike 1898, 21-23). These damages may also be evidence for the story that a cannon ball glanced off of the side of the Guest House. British soldiers may have occupied the Guest House and made it their headquarters during their occupation of New Brunswick from December 2, 1776 to June 22, 1777, however there is also the conflicting story that Captain Moses Guest led a raid to recapture the house before it could be used by the British. Henry Guest was an alderman for the city of New Brunswick and a member of the First Presbyterian Church. He was one of a group of men who applied for the second charter of New Brunswick on February 12, 1763. Henry Guest died in 1815.

Moses Guest was born on November 7, 1755 in New Brunswick. He married Lydia Dumont on June 28, 1792 and died in Cincinnati, Ohio on March 22, 1828. Moses Guest was captain during the Revolutionary War and is most well known for the capture of Colonel Simcoe, the commander of a loyalist horse regiment called The Queen's Rangers. Colonel Simcoe and his regiment were attempting to capture either Colonel Moyland or Governor Livingston—the governor of New Jersey—when he was captured by Moses Guest (Cassera 1980, 5). He was elected a common councilman on May 10, 1801 at the first town meeting of New Brunswick

under their new charter. Moses moved to Cincinnati in 1817 and published his journals and a book of poems from there.

Historical note on the Guest/Vail house

Henry Guest bought two and a half acres from Henry Crow in 1755. In 1760 he built his house on the corner of what is now New Street and Livingston Ave. The house was built in the Gregorian style that was very popular at the time, but changes over the years have moderately altered the building's style to have some federal aspects. The house was mortgaged twice by the Guests in 1799 and 1807 to Jane Cornell and Robert Morris respectively. It was then put up for sale in 1815 by Henry Guest Jr., being advertised as having six rooms. The house was not sold, however, until 1817 when it was bought by Charles Gilmour. Gilmour sold the house to Samuel Taylor who, within the same year of 1819, sold it to Abigail Youngs Nicholl. The Nicholls kept the house for 13 years until they sold it to Adam Anderson in 1832. He mortgaged the house to Margaret Campbell, and in 1842 it was seized by the Sheriff James Bruester as Margaret Campbell could not pay the amount due. William Banks bought the house at a public sale in June of that year and kept it for 1 more. Reverend John Proudfit bought the property in 1843 from William Banks. Proudfit was a professor at Rutgers University and made several additions to the house. In 1846 John Proudfit sold the house to Mott Bedell, who then mortgaged it to Mary J. Richmond in the same year. Mott Bedell left the house to his daughter Kate Vail in his will in 1878, who subsequently bequeathed the house to her and Edward Vail's son Mott Bedell Vail in 1915. A diagram of the street layout of the house during Kate and Edward's ownership included an addition to the back that would become the basis for the renovation in 2008. In 1923, the house was purchased by Daniel Ferry and his wife Katherine with hopes to gain on the investment. They attempted to start a tea room in the house but ultimately failed and sold the property to the Elks corporation on November 12, 1924.

The Elks corporation planned to demolish the Guest/Vail house and create a clubhouse and new home on the property. Harold Brigham, the director of the New Brunswick Library, proposed that the house be moved to the intersection where the library is located—on what is now Morris Street and Livingston Ave. The city agreed to have the building given to them, stipulating that if the Library could raise the funds to move the house, the city would allocate 1500 dollars a year for its maintenance. After numerous fundraisers and many donations from historical societies like the local rotary club and the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.), the money was made and the house was later secured in its new place on September 25, 1925. The house would operate as a public museum from 1925 until 1929, when the library trustees had to close the building except to private requests due to costs and the city reneging on their annual maintenance agreement of 1500 dollars in 1927. The House was then used as a meeting space for various local historical societies. In 1938 the Guest House was renovated as part of the WPA New Deal program. The house was given over to the New Brunswick Art Center for exhibits and classes that they would hold from 1940 to 1965. The New Brunswick

Free Public Library finally re-obtained jurisdiction of the house in 1979, from which point on they continued to utilize the space for meetings of local societies as well as occasional exhibits.

The house had a major exterior restoration from June 3, 1992 to April 14, 1993 to improve the appearance of the building, and it had a large renovation from 2006 to 2012. The renovation was completed in order to make the building compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. There was an addition made to the back (southeast side) of the building. This was approved by the New Jersey Historical Society, who finally agreed that because the front visage was unchanged and there is evidence of there historically being an addition, the renovation would maintain the historicity of the building. The house is still used for meetings, and the second floor rooms hold exhibits. However, the building is not open to the general public.

Scope and Content of the Collection

This collection consists of mostly materials created by the New Brunswick Free Public Library's jurisdiction over the Henry Guest House after 1925, with the addition of some materials about the Henry Guest House that were created before. The collection has minutes, memorandums, correspondence between various library personnel and other entities, construction documents, and public information about the Henry Guest House's history and use. The records track the upkeep of the house and the constant question of how to use it. There has been continual desire to make the house a public museum again ever since it was closed to the public in 1929. Between those two goals of upkeep and public use the library has also collected records of various publications, talks, and pamphlets intended to raise public awareness of the Henry Guest House and its history. Some of the important names of entities within the records are the Architecture firm Design Ideas Group, (otherwise known as Design Ideas Group Architecture and Planning, DIGroup Architecture and Planning, or just DIG), The architecture firm Venezia and Associates, the construction company Helios Construction, The Elks Corporation, the Guest Family, the Vail family, John Proudfit, the City of New Brunswick, and the New Brunswick Free Public Library. Many of the records are missing sections that were lost or not kept. Essential events that the records track are the moving of the house next to the library in 1925, the restoration in 1992-1993, and the renovation in 2006-2012.

Note on Design Ideas Group

Design Ideas Group was originally affiliated with the New Brunswick Free Public Library as Venezia & Associates, with which there was a plan for a connector between the library and the Henry Guest House. In 2006, very soon after Venezia & Associates began deliberations with the library, there was a merger between multiple architecture firms including Venezia & Associates. This merger created the architecture firm Design Ideas Group.

Arrangement Note

The collection of 11 series is arranged in alphabetical order, disregarding the miscellaneous series which is kept at the end. Each individual series is arranged in chronological or original order, with original order taking precedence if it exists. All of the Subseries are similarly arranged in original order if there was one, and chronologically if an original order was missing. The layout of the arrangement is like so:

- Series 1: Americans with Disabilities Act Renovation 2006.12.13 - 2013.09.13*
 - Subseries 1: Close-out Documents 2012.04.02
 - Subseries 2: Change Orders 2011.06.09 - 2013.09.13*
 - Subseries 3: Meeting Minutes for Improvements to Henry Guest House 2011.05.03 - 2011.10.27
 - Subseries 4: Pre-Construction Legal documents 2010.11.22 - 2012.03.29
 - Subseries 5: Payment of Design Ideas Group 2010.04.07 - 2012.06.12
 - Subseries 6: Bidding for Architecture and Construction Company 2007.05.23 - 2010.12.08
 - Subseries 7: Plan and Scope for Renovation 2007.05.03 - 2011.06.21
 - Subseries 8: Permission and Funding for Renovation 2006.12.13 - 2008.08.29
- Series 2: Appliances in the House 2005 - 2012.01.17
- Series 3: Correspondence 1797.10.31 - 2013.02.20
- Series 4: Created Histoires of the Henry Guest House and Family 1912 - 2008.01.31
- Series 5: Dangerous Substances Found in the Henry Guest House 1950.10.01 - 2004.06.28
- Series 6: Making and Keeping the Henry Guest House a Historical Site 1973.05.16 - 2012.07.25
 - Subseries 1: Annual Reports 1999.12.15 - 2011.11.16
 - Subseries 2: Restoration Guides and Procedures 2001.07.12 - 2005.03.17
 - Subseries 3: Exterior Restoration 1991.05.09 - 1993.04.14
 - Subseries 4: Uses for the Henry Guest House 1989.07 - 2012.07.25
 - Subseries 5: The Henry Guest House as a Historical Site and Museum 1986.10.24 - 2005.06.23
 - Subseries 6: Inspections of the Henry Guest House 1973.05.16 - 2011.08.04
- Series 7: The McDonough Collection 1809.01.04 - 1946.02.28
- Series 8: Newspaper Clippings 1923.01.21 - 1924.01.16
- Series 9: Referencing the Henry Guest House's Southeast Border 2012.04 - 2013.05.24
- Series 10: Pictures of the Henry Guest House 2004; 2012
- Series 11: Miscellaneous 1813.11.25 - 2010.12.22

Series 1: Americans with Disabilities Act Renovation 2006.12.13 - 2013.09.13*

This series consists of meeting minutes, memorandums, and correspondence between library staff, city employees of New Brunswick, and employees of Design Ideas Group and construction companies namely Helios Construction. All of the documents track the process of the renovation to the Henry Guest House. This includes papers relating to the funding, bidding, constructing, and finishing of the project. Important names in this series are: RobertBelvin (New Brunswick Free Public Library), Tom Besold (Design Ideas Group), Jeff Venezia (Venezia and Associates/Design Ideas Group), and Joanne Vitanza (Purchasing Agent).

Notes:

- *The date 2013.09.13 seems to be misdated by the original creator as the time period of the subject of the document is far removed from the date that is given. There is no logical reason found anywhere else to suggest that this subject was reintroduced at a later date. If this is indeed a misdate then the last date of the series comes from a different document dated 2012.05.08. This potential misdate is also the last date of the collection, so if it is a misdate the end date of the collection also changes to a document from a different series dated 2013.09.13.
- Subseries 1 entitled “Close-out Documents” is located in two separate boxes: 3 and 4.
- There are historic and current pictures of the Henry Guest House including pictures taken during the 1925 move in the Permission and Funding for Renovation sub-series in box 1, folder 9.
- Blueprints for the project that are part of the Plan and Scope for Renovation sub-series are kept separately in box 5.
- A project manual for the renovation by Design Ideas Group that is part of the Plan and Scope for Renovation sub-series is kept separately in box 6.

Subseries 1: Close-out Documents 2012.04.02

Documents given to The New Brunswick Free Public Library by Helios Construction detailing the materials, plans, waivers, and general files for the Americans with Disabilities Act renovation to the Henry Guest House.

Notes:

- This Subseries is found separate from the rest of Series 1 in boxes 3 and 4.

Subseries 2: Change Orders 2011.06.09 - 2013.09.13*

Documents orders and relating to the 12 change orders that occurred during the 2010-2012 renovation. Original order is in sequential order of the 12 change orders.

Notes:

- *The end date 2013.09.13 may be a misdate by the original creator (please see above asterisk). If it is, the new end date for the subseries is 2012.05.08
- Spans two folders: 1.1 and 1.2.

Subseries 3: Meeting Minutes for improvements to Henry Guest House 2011.05.03 - 2011.10.27

Minutes for meetings discussing the statues of the ongoing Americans with Disabilities Renovation. Attendees include Tom Besold (Design Ideas Group), RobertBelvin (New Brunswick Free Public Library), Tom Guldin (City Engineer), Larry Schmieder (Helios Construction), and Joanne Vitanza (Purchasing Agent).

Subseries 4: Pre-Construction Legal Documents 2010.11.22-2012.03.29

Required legal documents by the construction company that had to be completed before the company could start work. This also includes checklists and reminders for these documents given to the company.

Subseries 5: Payment of Design Ideas Group 2010.04.07 - 2012.06.12

Documents include correspondence outlining and discussing payment of Design Ideas Group as well as the invoices for those payments.

Subseries 6: Bidding for Architecture and Construction Company 2007.05.23 - 2010.12.08

Legal documents, correspondence, and bid proposals relating to the bidding for Architecture firms and Construction companies. The Architecture firm Design Ideas Group won in June of 2007. The Construction Company Helios Construction finally won on November 17, 2010 after 4 rebids spanning from 2008 to 2010.

Notes

- Spans three folders: 1.6, 1.7, and 1.8.

Subseries 7: Plan and Scope for Renovation 2007.05.03 - 2011.06.21

Emails between Design Ideas Group and Robert Belivn that discuss the plan and scope of the project. Also includes a proposal for a connector between the Henry Guest House and the New Brunswick Free Public Library proposed by Venezia & Associates, a project manual from Design Ideas Group, and blueprints for the renovation from Design Ideas Group.

Notes:

- The blueprints for the project that are part of the Plan and Scope for Renovation sub-series are kept separately in box 5.
- The project manual for the renovation by Design Ideas Group that is part of the Plan and Scope for Renovation sub-series is kept separately in box 6.

Subseries 8: Permission and Funding for the Renovation to Henry Guest House 2006.12.13 - 2008.08.29

Correspondence and applications to obtain a grant from the City of New Brunswick and permission from the New Jersey Register of Historic Places for the renovation to the Henry Guest House.

Series 2: Appliances in the House 2005-2012.01.17

Warranties, manuals, and documents for appliances found in the Henry Guest House.

Notes:

- The vertical platform lift from Mobility Elevator & Lift Company was installed as a part of the renovation described in Series 1.

Series 3: Correspondence 1797.10.31 - 2013.02.20

Correspondence relating to the Henry Guest House and family include people such as John Adams, Roger McDonough, Henry Guest, Descendants of Henry Guest, John Wall, and RobertBelvin.

Notes:

- Other historic and library business correspondence are kept in other series when they are relevant to specific subjects.

Series 4: Created Histories of the Henry Guest House and Family 1912 - 2008.01.31

This series contains documents compiling information about the location, architecture, and history of the Henry Guest House. The documents also relate the family history and civic involvement of Henry Guest and his son Moses Guest. The documents include lectures brochures, and articles.

Notes:

- Spans two folders 2.3 and 2.4

Series 5: Dangerous Substances Found within the Henry Guest House 1950.10.01 - 2004.06.21

This series contains a right to know survey detailing substances that could be harmful found in large enough quantities within the Henry Guest House.

Notes:

- Information about the finding and removal of asbestos from the Henry Guest House is found in the Change Orders sub-series of the Americans with Disabilities Act Renovation series.

Series 6: Making and Keeping The Henry Guest House a Historical Site 1973.05.16 - 2012.07.025

This series contains the ongoing process of making the Henry Guest House useful and accessible to the public. This includes work to make it a museum or public space, work to maintain the house's place in the historic register, and inspections and restorations to keep the house in its historic shape.

Notes:

- More documents relating to keeping the Henry Guest House as a museum are found in the McDonough Collection series.

Subseries 1: Annual Reports 1999.12.15 - 2011.11.16

Annual reports on the maintenance, preservation, and status of the Henry Guest House given to the New Jersey Historic Trust.

Subseries 2: Restoration Guides and Procedures 2001.07.12 - 2005.03.17

Articles accessed by the New Brunswick Free Public Library that give advice and counsel on the preservation of historic buildings and their accessibility.

Subseries 3: Exterior Restoration 1991.05.09 - 1993.04.14

Documents describing and relating to the 1992 restoration of the Henry Guest House. The architect for this project was Raymond Gatarz.

Subseries 4: Uses for the Henry Guest House 1989.07 - 2012.07.25

Documents detailing the ways in which the Henry Guest House could be, is being, or has been used. Includes information on exhibits that were part of the Henry Guest House.

Subseries 5: The Henry Guest House as a Historical Site and Museum 1986.10.24 - 2005.06.23

Documents relating to the Preservation and establishment of the Henry Guest House as a Historical Site and museum of New Brunswick, New Jersey, and the United States.

Subseries 6: Inspections of the Henry Guest House 1973.05.15 - 2011.08.04

Correspondence detailing the results of various inspections of the Henry Guest House over the years.

Series 7: The McDonough Collection 1809.01.04 - 1946.02.28

This series contains a collection of correspondence, newspaper clippings, written notes, board of trustees minutes, and memorandums relating to the Henry Guest House collected by Roger McDonough, the Director of the New Brunswick Free Public Library at the time.

Notes:

- Spans two folders: 2.12 and 2.13

Series 8: Newspaper Clippings 1923.01.27 - 1925.01.16

Newspaper Clippings about the Henry Guest House from around the time of the move to library grounds.

Notes:

- There are other Newspaper Clippings that are held elsewhere because of their content similarity to other series. This includes Series 7 and Series 5

Series 9: Referencing the Henry Guest House's Southeast Border 1813.11.25 - 2010.12.22

Details of a project to replace the fence in between the Henry Guest House and the Willow Grove Cemetery

Series 10: Pictures of the Henry Guest House 2004; 2012

Pictures of the Henry Guest House taken in 2004 and 2012. These pictures depict the state of the house after the 1991-1992 restoration and the 2006-2012 renovation respectively.

Series 11: Miscellaneous 1813.11.25 - 2010.12.22

This series includes a mail receipt, practice energy survey, lists of expenditures, the front cover of 1939 annual report, a receipt for Moses Guest, an operating manual for a honeywell thermostat and a vertical platform lift, and documents given by Mobility: Elevator and Lift Company. The lists of expenditures are known to include expenditures of other library business not relating to the Guest House and are not altogether trustworthy.

Container List

Contents/Series and Subseries	Box	Folder	box and folder number/ Call Number
Series 1 - Subseries 2	1	1	200-1.1
		2	200-1.2
Series 1 - Subseries 3		3	200-1.3
Series 1 - Subseries 4		4	200-1.4
Series 1 - Subseries 5		5	200-1.5
Series 1 - Subseries 6		6	200-1.6
		7	200-1.7
		8	200-1.8
Series 1 - Subseries 7		9	200-1.9
Series 1 - Subseries 8		10	200-2.10
Series 2	2	1	200-2.1
Series 3		2	200-2.2
Series 4		3	200-2.3
		4	200-2.4
Series 5		5	200-2.5
Series 6 - Subseries 1		6	200-2.6
Series 6 - Subseries 2		7	200-2.7
Series 6 - Subseries 3		8	200-2.8
Series 6 - Subseries 4		9	200-2.9
Series 6 - Subseries 5		10	200-2.10
Series 6 - Subseries 6		11	200-2.11
Series 7		12	200-2.12

		13	200-2.13
Series 8		14	200-2.14
Series 9		15	200-2.15
Series 10		16	200-2.16
Series 11		17	200-2.17
Close-out Documents Binder-part of Series 1 - Subseries 1	3		200-3
Close-out Documents Binder-part of Series 1 - Subseries 1	4		200-4
Blueprint Plan for Americans with Disabilities Act Renovation-part of Series 1 - Subseries 7	5		200-5
Project Manual for Americans with Disabilities Act Renovation-part of Series 1 - Subseries 7	OS (On Shelf)		Awaiting Call Number
<i>Specifications for the Exterior Restoration of the Henry Guest house</i> Prepared by Short and Ford and Partners, Architects-part of Series 6 - Subseries 3	OS (On Shelf)		R-NB 917.49 SHO
Detailed Drawing of Custom Cabinets from A.N. Russel and Sons CO., Illon, NY-part of Series 11	Map Case- Bottom Drawer		

Related Material

The book *Poems on Several Occasions: To which are Annexed, Extracts from a Journal, Kept by the Author While He Followed the Sea, and During a Journey from New-Brunswick, in New-Jersey, to Montreal and Quebec* by Moses Guest may be of interest. The Library has a pdf copy but It can also be bought from amazon.

Unprocessed Material

There is a folder of 1,075 documents which are unprocessed and currently housed digitally in the New Brunswick Free Public Library Archive. The majority of the documents are additional or redundant information about the Americans with Disabilities Act renovation to the Henry Guest House. There are also documents about the uses of the Henry Guest House as a space for the homeless, architectural drawings of the house, written histories about Henry Guest's family and house, documents related to the preservation of the historicity of the house, and documents of payment for the various groups that the Library has hired to complete work on the house.

Access Points

Personal Names:

Robert Belvin - Series 1, 3, 6
Tom Besold - Series 1
Thomas Guldin - Series 1
Daniel Torrisi - Series 1
Kevin Dunn - Series 1
Joanne Vitanza - Series 1
Jeff Venezia - Series 1
Ray Gatarz - Series 6
Thomas Weingartner - Series 6
Roger McDonough - Series 7
John P. Wall - Series 4
Henry Guest - Series 3, 4, 7
Moses Guest - Series 4, 7, 9
Kate Vail - Series 3, 4
Edward Vail - Series 4
Mott Bedel Vail - Series 4
John Proudfit - Series 4
John Adams - Series 3, 4
Thomas Paine - Series 4
Thomas Jefferson - Series 4

Company/Entity Names:

City of New Brunswick
New Brunswick Free Public Library
Short and Ford and Partners Architects - Series 6
Design Ideas Group (Previously Venezia and Associates) - Series 1
Helios Construction - Series 1
Mobility: Elevator and Lift Company - Series 1, 2
Elks Corporation - Series 4, 7

Places:

New Brunswick, New Jersey

Subjects:

- Henry Guest House
- Historic Families
- Historic register
- Museums
- Restoration - Series 4, 6, 7
- Americans with Disabilities Act - Series 1
- New Brunswick Architecture
- Local History

Types of Records:

- Correspondence
- Memorandums
- Meeting Minutes
- Publications
- Written Notes
- Pictures

Bibliography

- Cassera, Vincent. 1980. *History of Buccleuch Mansion and Henry Guest House*. Edited by Louise Miller and Eloise Dunn. New Brunswick: City of New Brunswick
New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation. 1980. *Architectural Resources Survey of the City of New Brunswick*. Volumes 1-3. Princeton: Heritage Studies.
- McPike, Eugene F, ed. 1898. *Tales of our Forefathers and Biographical Annals of Families Allied to those of McPike, Guest and Dumont*. Albany: Joel Munsell's Sons.
- Wall, John P. 1940. *History of the Guest House*. New Brunswick: Thatcher Anderson Company