

## Dr. Barker's House

The Greek Revival house at 20 Summer Street, owned by John J. Gallivan, President of the South Adams Savings Bank, and Mrs. Gallivan, has quite a history. Built in 1825 by Dr. John Barker, a prominent Adams physician, it originally stood on Park Street on the site of the Mausert Block, present location of Woolworth's and the Schwartz store. Here Dr. Barker conducted his practice and raised three sons and three daughters. In 1897 the house was occupied by his son John L. and daughter Anna only, in that two of the girls had married and moved away, and sons Henry and Charles were dead. Henry, who had attended Williams College died in 1873. The other son, Charles H., had served an enlistment in the 83rd New York Infantry as a Sergeant and had just reenlisted and been promoted to lieutenant when he was killed in action during the Battle of the Wilderness in the Civil War. While there is a stone erected to his memory on the family lot in Maple Street Cemetery, his remains are not there. He was buried on the battlefield along with thousands of others who fell. His silver regimental badge, pierced by a minnie ball, eventually came into possession of his mother through a rather involved chain of circumstances.

The Barkers also owned the property at 22 Summer St. now owned by the Misses Mary and Alice McGrath, and there was sufficient room on the lot for a second house in John L.'s opinion, thereby freeing a most valuable piece of land in the center of town for commercial development. So the tedious journey began, under oxen power and adverse conditions. The trolley service had to be cut off at Hammond's bakery and the selectmen insisted that the Center Street bridge be shored up and reenforced before the house was permitted to cross. The railroad tracks were crossed after the last train north went through after 11:00 P.M. Miss Anna, (considered an eccentric at the time but actually born 100 years too soon) refused to leave the house. She claimed that her father had intended her to live in that house for as long as she wanted, and she wasn't about to give it up. The journey took approximately 10 days, and the stout old plank house never developed a crack. Neighbors brought food to Anna on her journey (as no fire was allowed), and she thoroughly enjoyed the trip. The big decision came when the house arrived opposite the foundation that had been prepared for it. In order to swing the house onto the site, a tree had to be cut down. John L. could not bring himself to cut the beautiful maple in front of his own property, so he magnanimously instructed the workmen to take down the tree on the opposite side of the street in front of banker George Sayles' home. The Transcript news item the following week was headed "John L. in Trouble!!" but was not slanted at the then Boxing Champion of the World, John L. Sullivan but referred to John L. Barker in that he was promptly sued by Mr. Sayles.

An interesting outcome of the trip was the rent-free lease given by John L. to Anna for use of the two upstairs front rooms for life, together with the use of the bathroom and the right to draw water from same for her personal use and to hang her laundry in the attic. All this is duly recorded in the Northern Berkshire Registry of Deeds in Adams.

Anna died in the house that her father had built, and John L. died in 1904, a public benefactor, particularly to the local Baptist and other churches.

The house was subsequently purchased by the Berkshire Fine Spinning Co. and served as home for Mr. Silas Rooney, the Superintendent, and thereafter by his successors, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Stoddard and his son, Mr. Earl Rooney, the last Superintendent. The mills closed in 1958 and the property was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Gallivan from the Corporation the same year, moving in with their sons Jack, now principal of the Jr. High School and Dan, now of Cape Cod, and daughter Louise, former teacher here and now food service director for Wah-conah Regional School system.