



Want to be Part of Living History? Volunteer!

The Grainger Home and Studio is truly a time capsule. A bit of living history from the late 1800's, it was built in a gracious neighbor of large home and with expansive, manicured lawns. Percy and his mother Rose moved here May, 1921 at the suggestion of Percy's manager, Antonia Sawyer, herself a resident of neighboring Hartsdale. While Rose was gone by the next summer, Percy lived in the home for the rest of his life (1961).

Percy and Ella married in 1928. An artist, she arrived, with her books, tiles, and brushes and canvases and left an indelible imprint of her taste and presence. During the 1960's visitors arrived in force. Ella entertained the Victorian Society and was a member of the Swedish Lutheran Church just blocks away, where Percy helped pay for (and occasionally played) the pipe organ. Room by room the collection grew (the Grainger's kept nearly every memento), each stack telling a story like Christmas cards received or prized souvenirs collected during the Grainger's last trip. And who refines, refreshes, and re-tells that story? Our volunteers!

We cherish our house volunteers! Many have served over they years, with various small and important tasks alike. We have one volunteer who is quite handy, we call on him to fix windows, doors, and the kitchen clock found in the basement. White Plains Beatification Foundation has taken us under their wing providing (even more than the initial) 500 daffodils to keep the gardens blooming—planted by volunteers. Local concert pianist Sandro Russo cares for the Steinway. A Steinway artist himself, he plays it regularly and sends his technician if refinements are in order.



Volunteer Stewart Lee adjusts her work after sewing curtains for the dining room and music room. Her work in costume design helped.

What do Grainger Home Volunteers Do?

Stewart Lee joined us as a volunteer in July, 2021. Covid was basically over—as far as museums went—and Stewart was looking for a local organization to develop her professional skills. As she began her MA in Museum Studies at the City University of New York she decided that she would really like to explore one individual museum—our historic house—to see how a historic house runs. “The Percy Granger House is really a laboratory of all the things that go into a historic house museum. I can see - and appreciate -the behind the scenes all the areas that my coursework involves: curatorial theory and interpretation; museum educations and program design; fundraising, development and grant writing; as well as visitor services.”

Stewart dug in immediately. She took on project after project.

One of her first projects was designing and sewing curtains for the dining room and the music room. She went on to count, sort and organize the many Grainger music CDs that had accumulated over the years in the home, completing the inventory into a workable list. After President Paul Jackson's June, 2022 visit, she helped organize the choral music and placed it in archival boxes.

“I look forward to coming in on Wednesday, it's never the same, and the projects are always so interesting.”

—Stewart Lee



Stewart Lee finishes cataloguing and storing Grainger's choral scores, now finally assembled in one place.

Earlier, Percy Grainger Society board member and long-time volunteer Matt McGarrell scanned and inventoried Percy's photo negatives. Stewart made sure the information was entered into the Grainger Society's PastPerfect system.

Most recently, Stewart helped design the brochure about Percy Grainger and free music and oversaw it into production. The recently conserved free music machine is now on display together with educational materials.

"Sorting, organizing, and classifying the tiles was my favorite project, noted Stewart, "I volunteered just as the *Ella Ström-Grainger at the Ferragil Gallery* exhibit was closing. I loved seeing the exhibit itself, then seeing it carefully disassembled and placed into archival boxes. Boxing it away was really the end part of the exhibition process itself."

"Volunteer are so important to the Grainger Home and Studio's mission," adds Anne Ocone, Museum Coordinator. "It takes the efforts of many to care for the home and provide programs and tours for the public."

The Grainger Society is planning on adding more tour guides to its ranks in 2023, an expansion of its Volunteer Program. The annual April open house, the *Bloom Out*, is an opportunity for volunteer involvement. "We welcome volunteer involvement, we really couldn't do it without them" Anne notes.

"As a graduate student, I appreciate the wonderful experiences I've had at the Grainger Home. It was a little bit of everything, and the Grainger Society was careful to balance my interests with their needs."

—Stewart Lee



Volunteer Matt McGarrell photographs one of Ella Grainger's tiles. Matt often creates videos of the objects he photographs.



Eagle Scout Sam Hoch is assisted by his troupe as he places the historic sign in front of the Grainger Home. Sam wrote a grant to acquire the historic sign.