



West Falmouth Library Archives
Guide to the West Falmouth oral history
collection, 1958-2016

Manuscript Collection MC-10
3 boxes (1.5 lin. ft.)

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Historical Information

The West Falmouth Library first completed an oral history program between 1974 and 1976, initiated by West Falmouth resident Barbara Bunker. In honor of the United States Bicentennial, the purpose of the project was to “create a permanent record for the future of as much knowledge of the past as can be retrieved in this summer [1974-75].” The project was made possible by a grant of \$182.94 from Massachusetts Bicentennial Commission and an equal amount from the Memorial Fund of the Library. About twenty interviews were conducted by an oral history committee consisting of Mrs. Arthur F. Hennessey, Mrs. Frederick C. Fuglister, Mrs. Frank A. Strom, and Mrs. Milton E. Williamson.

Inspired by the 1974-1976 project and the desire to document the stories of present-day community members, the oral history program was reestablished when the Library received a grant from the Falmouth Fund of the Cape Cod Foundation in March 2014. The purpose of the project was to record experiences of growing up and living in West Falmouth in order to complement the 1975 project and to preserve these memories for future generations. Ten interviews were conducted by Sarah Murphy and Katy Sternberger between April 2014 and September 2015. A DVD was prepared in November 2016 in order to share excerpts from the interviews with the public.

In addition, an oral history interview was conducted with renowned West Falmouth native Bertha Boyce in 1958. The tape recording was publicized in the local newspaper, the *Falmouth Enterprise*. According to the article, the recording was taken by Boyce’s nephew, Ernest J. Thompson. Bertha Boyce is best known for going to sea on a whaleship with her family in 1871 and for serving as board president at the West Falmouth Library for many years, and the recording recounts her memories about her life and the history of the West Falmouth Library.

The West Falmouth Library also hosted two community events that served as an opportunity for both year-round and summer residents to share their memories of West Falmouth. These events were called “Summers Past in West Falmouth” (1989) and “Tales of Old West Falmouth” (2007). A DVD was produced after the 2007 event and shared with the public.

Scope and Content Note

The West Falmouth oral history collection, dating from 1958 to 2016, contains the oral histories of prominent West Falmouth residents, including centenarians Bertha Boyce and Adelaide Cummings. Interviewees relate their experiences about growing up in West Falmouth, listing activities such as sailing, getting ice cream, sledding, and going to school; describe West Falmouth landmarks such as the West Falmouth United Methodist Church, Chapoquoit Beach, and West Falmouth Harbor; remark on their families, Quaker heritage, and business activities; recall the impact of major events such as hurricanes, World War II, and the Vietnam War; and explain the role of the West Falmouth Library in the community.

The two-part interview with Bertha Boyce from 1958 is in the form of two reel-to-reel tapes, which were transferred to two audiocassettes during the 1974-1976 oral history project. The interviews from the 1974-1976 oral history project are in the form of audiocassettes, and the interviews from the 2014-2015 oral history program are available as digital voice recordings. Transcripts and photographs accompany some of the interviews. In 2016, a DVD was created using excerpts from the 2014-2015 oral history program interviews.

The collection also includes an audiocassette containing “Summers in West Falmouth,” recorded in 1989, and a video of “Tales of Old West Falmouth,” filmed in 2007 and made available as a DVD. The audiotapes were digitized in 2016 and access copies are available in MP3 format.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Most of the materials in the collection were created by the West Falmouth Library in the course of its business operations. The custodial history of Bertha Boyce’s oral history is undocumented.

Acquisitions Information

The circumstances regarding the acquisition of the audiotapes containing Bertha Boyce’s oral history are unknown. All other materials were created by the West Falmouth Library (see acc. 2016-10, which contains multimedia release forms for the 2014-2015 oral history program).

Processing Information

Processed by Katy Sternberger, August 2016. The papers were placed in new, acid-free folders and organized alphabetically by interviewee. The reel-to-reel tapes were removed from their original cardboard boxes, which were replaced with polypropylene audiotape containers.

The 1974-1976 oral history files and audiotapes were originally located within MC-01, the West Falmouth Library collection, but were grouped with the 2014-2015 oral history materials during processing to form a new collection, MC-10.

The reel-to-reel tapes and audiocassettes were digitized by Mass Productions of Tewksbury, Massachusetts, between June and August 2016. The reel-to-reel tapes were slack on the reels and had become wavy. Media preservation expert Paul B. Adams spliced leader tape onto the start and end of each tape and rewound them tightly on the reels to flatten them before digitizing them.

Preferred Citation

West Falmouth oral history collection, 1958-2016. MC-10, "Folder Name." West Falmouth Library Archives.

Access Restrictions

Open: materials are available for research.

Use

Restrictions: Use of some of the materials is restricted; contact the Library Director for further information.

Copyright: Permission to publish material from the collection must be authorized by the Library Director.

Related Material

See also the biographical files on Bertha Boyce and Adelaide Cummings.

Arrangement

Arranged in three series.

List of Series:

- [West Falmouth Library Oral History Program, 1974-1976](#)
 - [West Falmouth Library Oral History Program, 2014-2015](#)
 - [Other Oral Histories](#)
-

Index Terms

Atwood, June Swift
Baker, Dick
Boyce, Bertha Hamblin, 1867-1968
Bunker, Barbara
Chapoquoit Beach
Chapoquoit Island (Hog Island)
Collins, Christine
Cummings, Adelaide
Davis, Ada Underwood
Delaney, Doris Bowman
Douthart, Marshall
Fuglister, Cecelia
Gilbert, Clara

Harlow, Larry
 Hendel, Bill
 Hibbs, Helen
 Hodgson, Sloat
 Hurricane of 1938
 Jennings, George
 Jones, Paul
 Katzenbach, Kay
 King, Gig
 Landers, Virginia Bowman
 McSherry, Mike
 Oral history
 Quakers -- Massachusetts -- West Falmouth
 Ratzan, Susan
 Roderick, Frank
 Ross, John
 Swift family
 Swift, Marion
 Swift, Matilda O.
 Trowbridge, Clara
 West Falmouth (Mass.)
 West Falmouth (Mass.) -- History -- Personal narratives
 West Falmouth Harbor
 West Falmouth Library
 West Falmouth pink granite
 West Falmouth United Methodist Church
 Williamson, Milton E., Jr.
 Williamson, Sarah Kelley

Collection Inventory

West Falmouth Library Oral History Program, 1974-1976, 3 boxes (0.5 lin. ft.)

Scope and Content Note

Series contains audiocassettes and transcripts from oral history interviews conducted from 1974 to 1976 as well as documentation, including budgets and notes, regarding the project. The series also contains Bertha Boyce's interview, rerecorded on audiocassette from the original reel-to-reel tapes during the bicentennial project.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically by interviewee.

| Box | Folder | | |
|------|--------|---|-----------|
| 1 | 1 | West Falmouth oral history project, 1974-1976 - program information | 1974-1976 |
| 1 | 2 | Doris (Bowerman) Delaney | 1975 |
| 1 | 3 | Frank Roderick | 1974-1975 |
| 1 | 4 | Marion Swift | 1974-1975 |
| 1 | 5 | Clara Trowbridge | c. 1975 |
| AV01 | | "Aunt Bert's Memories..." tape 1 | c. 1975 |

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

AV01 “Aunt Bert’s Memories...,” tape 2 c. 1975

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

AV01 Ada Underwood Davis, tape 1 c. 1975

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

AV01 Ada Underwood Davis, tape 2 c. 1975

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

AV01 Paul Jones - Hog Island c. 1975

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

AV01 Matilda O. Swift - beloved teacher talk / Silas Swift c. 1975

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

AV01 Friends Cemetery by Mrs. Paul Swift / burial of M. O. Swift c. 1975

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

AV01 Sarah (Kelley) Williamson January 19, 1976

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

West Falmouth Library Oral History Program, 2014-2016, 2 boxes (0.5 lin. ft.)

Scope and Content Note

Series contains digital voice recordings and transcripts from oral history interviews conducted from 2014 to 2015 as well as documentation, including interview questions and procedures, regarding the project. In addition, there is a video, called “West Falmouth Library: Respecting the Past, Building a Future,” containing excerpts from the interviews and photographs taken during the oral history program. The video highlights interviewees’ memories of growing up in West Falmouth and the role of the West Falmouth Library in the community.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically by interviewee.

| Box | Folder | | |
|-----|--------|---|-----------|
| 1 | 6 | West Falmouth Library oral history program, 2014-2015 - program information | 2014-2016 |
| 1 | 7 | June Atwood | 2014 |
| 1 | 8 | Kay Katzenbach | 2014 |
| 1 | 9 | Virginia Landers | 2014 |
| 1 | 10 | Milt Williamson | 2014 |

| | | |
|------|--|--------------------|
| DM01 | June (Swift) Atwood | April 29, 2014 |
| DM01 | Barbara Bunker | September 9, 2015 |
| | <i>Use Restriction:</i> Per Bunker's multimedia release form, this voice recording may not be reproduced without her approval. | |
| DM01 | Adelaide Cummings | May 9, 2014 |
| DM01 | Clara Gilbert | November 18, 2014 |
| DM01 | Larry Harlow | July 17, 2014 |
| DM01 | Bill Hendel | September 12, 2014 |
| DM01 | Kay Katzenbach | May 29, 2014 |
| DM01 | Virginia (Bowman) Landers | July 18, 2014 |
| DM01 | John Ross | February 5, 2015 |
| DM01 | Milt Williamson | August 7, 2014 |
| DM01 | "West Falmouth Library: Respecting the Past, Building a Future" | November 2016 |

Other Oral Histories, 1958-2007, 2 boxes (0.5 lin. ft.)

Scope and Content Note

Series contains other miscellaneous audio recordings: the original reel-to-reel tapes from Bertha Boyce's interview in March 1958; an audio recording of "Summers Past in West Falmouth," an event held at the Library in 1989 where West Falmouth residents shared their memories of the village; and a video available on DVD, called "Tales of Old West Falmouth," which was filmed at the Library in 2007 when West Falmouth residents again had the opportunity to share memories of growing up in West Falmouth. There is also an unidentified, undated audiocassette, which sounds like it might be an audio recording from a meeting of the Falmouth Genealogical Society.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

| Box | Folder | |
|------|---|------------|
| AV01 | "Aunt Bert's Memories of Her Past" | March 1958 |
| | <i>Format:</i> Reel-to-reel tape | |
| | <i>Alternative Form Available:</i> The reel-to-reel tape was reformatted to audiocassette. The audiocassette is also located in box AV01. The reel-to-reel tape was digitized in 2016, but the audiocassette was of poorer sound quality than the tape and therefore was not digitized. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop. | |
| AV01 | "Aunt Bert's Memoirs about the Early Days of the West Falmouth Library" | March 1958 |
| | <i>Format:</i> Reel-to-reel tape | |

Alternative Form Available: The reel-to-reel tape was reformatted to audiocassette. The audiocassette is also located in box AV01. The reel-to-reel tape was digitized in 2016, but the audiocassette was of poorer sound quality than the tape and therefore was not digitized. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

AV01 “Summers Past in West Falmouth” August 17, 1989

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

AV01 Falmouth Genealogical Society meeting? undated

Format: Audiocassette

Alternative Form Available: The audiocassette was digitized in 2016. Access copies of the digital files (in MP3 format) are available on a DVD located in box DM01. Preservation copies of the digital files are located on an external hard drive in box DM01 while backup copies are located on the archives laptop.

DM01 “Tales of Old West Falmouth” September 20, 2007