



**West Falmouth Library Archives
Guide to the West Falmouth history
collection, 1803-2010**

**Manuscript Collection MC-02
17 boxes, plus oversize materials (13.5
lin. ft.)**

Table of Contents

Historical Information

Scope and Content Note

Administrative Information

Arrangement

Index Terms

Collection Inventory

Historical Information

The West Falmouth area was originally settled in 1673 when William Gifford purchased forty acres of land from Job Attukkoo, an American Indian (see the original deed in the Bowerman-Gifford family papers). The village's industries have included shipbuilding, agriculture, tag manufacturing, and tourism. West Falmouth is known for its deeply rooted history of Quakerism and its coveted pink granite. What was once a railway, which stopped at the railroad station on Old Dock Road, is now the Shining Sea Bikeway. Much of the village, including the West Falmouth Library and the Quaker Meeting House, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

Scope and Content Note

The West Falmouth history collection, with material dating from 1803 to approximately 2010, contains documents, notes, photographs, illustrations, postcards, books, scrapbooks, newspapers, maps, and artifacts pertaining to the history of the village of West Falmouth. This collection documents the historic buildings, industries, organizations, and families of West Falmouth.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

The custodial history of the collection is undocumented.

Acquisitions Information

Materials were collected by residents of West Falmouth and donated to the Library at various times (acc. 2016-02). It is not documented how or when the materials arrived at the Library. As materials accrued, they were organized by subject rather than provenance.

Processing Information

Processed by Katy Sternberger from January to November 2016. The papers were placed in new, acid-free folders. Delicate documents and photographs were placed in Mylar sleeves. Newspaper clippings were photocopied onto acid-free paper. Fragile books and scrapbooks were placed spine down in document cases lined with buffered tissue. Duplicate materials were removed from the collection.

The 8mm film, which was suffering from vinegar syndrome, was digitized by Mass Productions of Tewksbury, Massachusetts, between June and August 2016.

Oversize maps were unrolled and placed in the flat file. The ship's passport had been improperly encapsulated, so it was reencapsulated and placed in a folder in the flat file.

Preferred Citation

West Falmouth history collection, 1803-2010. MC-02, "Folder Name." West Falmouth Library Archives.

Access Restrictions

Open: materials are available for research.

Use

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

Related Material

See MC-01 specifically for the history of the West Falmouth Library.

See MC-10, the West Falmouth oral history collection, for recollections of the village by members of the community.

Newspapers have been digitized and are available online from the Falmouth Public Library.

Arrangement

Arranged in six series, based on format.

List of Series:

[Subject Files](#)
[Photographs, Postcards, and Moving Images](#)

Index Terms

Bates, Katharine Lee, 1859-1929
Boyce, Bertha Hamblin, 1867-1968
Chapoquoit Beach
Chapoquoit Island (Hog Island)
Dennison Tag Factory
Falmouth (Mass.)
Historic buildings
Hurricane of 1938
Mendenhall, Abby Swift
Quakers -- Massachusetts -- West Falmouth
Schools
Shipbuilding
Sprenger Piano Camp
Swift family
West Falmouth (Mass.)
West Falmouth (Mass.) -- History
West Falmouth Harbor
West Falmouth Library
West Falmouth Market
West Falmouth pink granite
West Falmouth Railroad Station
West Falmouth United Methodist Church
Whaling
Windmill (1787)
Yacht racing

Collection Inventory

Subject Files, 1850-1998, 4 boxes (1.25 lin. ft.)

Scope and Content Note

Series contains papers, correspondence, and notes related to the history of West Falmouth, including the historic buildings, industries, organizations, and families of the village.

Arrangement

Folders are arranged topically.

Box	Folder	
1	Subject files	1850-1998
2	Subject files	1850-1998
3	Subject files	1850-1998
4	Subject files	1850-1998

Photographs, Postcards, and Moving Images, c. 1890-2010, 4 boxes and 1 flat file drawer (5.25 lin. ft.)

Scope and Content Note

Series contains photographs and sketches of West Falmouth and Falmouth, dating between about 1890 and 2010. Some photographs are reprints. Oversize, mounted photographs show scenes of West Falmouth, such as historic houses, residents of the village, West Falmouth Market, the post office, the blacksmith shop, and the beach.

This series also contains postcards depicting historic sites in West Falmouth and Falmouth, including postcards from the collection of Katharine Lee Bates.

In addition, there is a collection of slides prepared by Harriet Quimby, who gave a talk on the history of West Falmouth in 1995. The slides show historic places, many of which have been identified, from around the village. Notes pertaining to this talk are located in the subject files from series one.

An 8mm film from 1948 shows scenes from Concord and Lexington, Massachusetts, as well as scenes from the beach in West Falmouth and a house called Honeysuckle.

Arrangement

Items arranged by format and then chronologically.

Box	Folder		
5	1	Photographs of West Falmouth	c. 1922
5	2	Photos of Ben Gifford's home, Mary Peck's home being constructed, and other pictures	c. 1922-1924
5	3	"Falmouth Woods and Shores"	1897
5	4	Photographs and illustrations of West Falmouth	c. 1890-1934
5	5	School pictures - Lawrence High, class of 1909 and 1911; grammar school West Falmouth [missing?]	1901, 1911
5	6	Miscellaneous photographs of Falmouth	undated
5	7	Reprinted photographs of West Falmouth	undated
5	8	Contemporary photographs of West Falmouth	1989-c. 2010
5	9	Postcards - West Falmouth	undated
5	10	Postcards - Falmouth	undated
5	11	Postcards - Katharine Lee Bates	undated
15		Oversize photographs of West Falmouth	undated
Drawer			
FF02		Eight mounted photographs	undated
Box			
FR02	3	Harriet Quimby slide talk on West Falmouth history	1995-1998
AV01		8mm film, "Concord, Lexington, Beach W. Falmouth, Honeysuckle"	1948

Sprenger Piano Camp papers, c. 1944-1952, 1 box (0.5 lin. ft.)

Scope and Content Note

Series contains documents and photographs, dating from about 1944 to 1952, related to the Sprenger Piano Camp held in West Falmouth. There are also handwritten copies of the "Impromptu" newsletter, created by the students who attended the camp.

Arrangement

Arranged topically.

Box	Folder		
6	1	Sprenger Piano Camp papers - program information	c. 1944-1952
6	2	Sprenger Piano Camp papers - "Impromptu" newsletter	c. 1944-1952
6	3	Sprenger Piano Camp papers - photographs	c. 1944-1952
6	4	Sprenger Piano Camp papers - photographs	c. 1944-1952
6	5	Sprenger Piano Camp papers - photographs	c. 1944-1952

Artifact, undated, 1 box (0.25 lin. ft.)

Scope and Content Note

Series contains one object, a carved rock supposed to have been an Indian artifact.

Box	Folder		
7		Indian artifact	undated
		<i>Acquisitions Information:</i> Gift of Mrs. Peck in September 1980, found by Arthur Fiske in West Falmouth.	

Books and Scrapbooks, 1875-2008, 7 boxes (6.5 lin. ft.)

Scope and Content Note

Series contains scrapbooks related to Cape Cod, the Hurricane of 1938 in relation to the Falmouth area, and the Self Starters club of West Falmouth. This series also contains a collection of old books, including three lesson books (at least one of which belonged to Maltiah Gifford) and rare books gifted to the West Falmouth Library. In addition, there are books and booklets concerning the history of Falmouth, Cape Cod, and Massachusetts.

Notable items include the diary of Abby Swift Mendenhall, who donated the land for the West Falmouth Library; "Cookies, Whales, and Turtle Tales," a small book published by Ellen Lawson about her memories of Bertha Boyce (see acc. 2016-11); a hardcover copy of *Between the Forest and the Bay*; and back issues of *Spritsail* journal published by the Woods Hole Historical Museum.

Arrangement

Arranged topically.

Box	Folder		
8		Scrapbook, Cape Cod	1925-1940
		<i>Acquisitions Information:</i> Donated by C. A. Fiske.	
8		Scrapbook, Cape Cod	1942-1943
		<i>Acquisitions Information:</i> Donated by C. A. Fiske.	
9		Scrapbook, Cape Cod	1940-1943
		<i>Acquisitions Information:</i> Donated by C. A. Fiske.	
9		Scrapbook, "Hurricane Havoc"	1938
		<i>Acquisitions Information:</i> Donated by C. A. Fiske.	
9		Scrapbook, Self Starters club of West Falmouth	c. 1948
10		Three lesson books	1874, undated
11		Books and booklets - Falmouth history	c. 1900-1993
12		Books and booklets - Cape Cod history	c. 1900-1993

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|----|--|-----------|
| 13 | Book, "Turner Gallery: A Series of One Hundred and Twenty Engravings..." vol. 1, iss. 1-20 | 1879 |
| 14 | Books - Abby Swift Mendenhall diary; "Cookies, Whales, and Turtle Tales;" Between the Forest and the Bay; back issues of Sprintsail journal pertaining to West Falmouth history; Falmouth history; Massachusetts history; and other rare books | 1875-2008 |

Oversize, 1803-1985, 1 flat file drawer (3 lin. ft.)

Scope and Content Note

Series contains complete copies of early newspapers related to Falmouth, historical maps of West Falmouth, a document written by a member of the Swift family on Pompeii, and a ship's passport for the brig *Swift*. The ship's passport was signed by President Thomas Jefferson and Secretary of State James Madison on April 25, 1803.

Arrangement

Items arranged by format and then chronologically.

Box	Folder	
FF02	Newspaper - Sandwich Observer	December 29, 1849
FF02	Newspaper - Falmouth Enterprise	October 28, 1899
FF02	Newspaper - Falmouth Enterprise	October 31, 1947
FF02	Newspaper - Falmouth Enterprise	November 14, 1947
FF02	Newspaper - Cape Cod Standard-Times	January 29, 1964
FF02	Maps of West Falmouth	1858-1985
FF02	Maps of West Falmouth	undated
	<i>Acquisitions Information:</i> Donated by Kay Katzenbach on July 27, 2001.	
FF02	Swift document on Pompeii	undated
FF02	Ship's passport	1803
	<i>Acquisitions Information:</i> On indefinite loan from W. Everett Swift family.	