REGISTER
Quissett
1700s – 2012 to date

5 boxes
QUISSETT COLLECTION - HISTORY

The area known as Quissett is halfway (2 miles each way) from Woods Hole and Falmouth. Historically it was a distinct village, with its own post office and general store located near the four-corner crossroads from the County Road (Woods Hole Road or Route 28) to Quissett Harbor. The Harbor has been a central focus of the area. It is a well-protected harbor which leads to Buzzards Bay.

The village did not have its own church or town organization but did have its own Hall for social purposes. The area had a very strong identity as a distinct location, separate from Falmouth and Woods Hole.

Quissett was settled in the early 1700s by the Weeks family and the Rowley, Jenkins and Gifford families. By the first (1790) census there were 10 heads of family at Quissett for the Eldridge (Eldred), Nye, two Rowley families, Hammond, Chadwick and three Davis families.

The Eldred homestead overlooked the harbor from the north. The Hammond, Jenkins, Gifford and Rowley properties were on the Bay side of the harbor. The Fish family property was on the east side of the harbor.

In 1802 a stone dock was constructed on the eastern side of the inner harbor below the home of Barney Marchant who owned the land south of Thomas Fish. A small shipyard began at this dock with Thomas Fish as shipwright and his neighbors as partners and shareholders in the trade that resulted from the Quissett-built vessels: the brig Victory, the brig Enterprise, the bark Union and the sloop Susannah. Partners Isaiah Hammond, Zephaniah Robinson and Barney Marchant engaged in coastal and West Indian trade.

Thomas Fish became a prominent citizen in Quissett. He was a deacon in the Falmouth Congregational Church (and always honored with the title of “deacon”), a justice of the peace and a representative in the state legislature.

During the War of 1812 great care was taken to hide the presence of a harbor and its vessels from the British warships coming into Buzzards Bay. In Quissett Harbor ships were camouflaged with foliage and some boats had treetops lashed to their masts to disguise the very existence of a body of water.

After the Civil War, men who had served as officers in the war returned to Quissett and brought their friends as well. Col. James M. Lewis, a physician and grandson of Deacon Thomas Fish, returned from the mid-west where he had served in the 28th Regiment of Wisconsin. James Milton Lewis was born in Falmouth. He was the son of David Lewis, Jr. and Cynthia Fish Lewis (daughter of Deacon Thomas Fish). He married Jane W. Andrew in Falmouth in 1849.

By the early 1870s, he was a business associate of Col. Abraham H. Ryan in Little Rock, Arkansas. Ryan began to invest in Quissett land in the 1870s. In 1871 it was recorded that Mrs. Jane W. Lewis of Little Rock, Arkansas purchased the Jenkins house and forty-seven acres on the west side of Quissett Harbor from Susannah Fish Jenkins for $2100. In other words, Mrs. Lewis purchased the land and house from her husband's aunt, as Susannah Fish Jenkins was also the daughter of Deacon Thomas Fish. In 1872, Mrs. Lewis also purchased the adjacent Hammond-Chadwick house (then owned by Braddock Gifford and Samuel H. Chadwick). The purchase of the Chadwick house also included rights to a well on the property and "cranberry land" of Gifford’s.

The Lewises appear to have been the builders of the Victorian Gothic cottage which was originally positioned to the north of the Jenkins and Chadwick houses (and which was later moved to the south end of the hotel complex by Stephen W. Carey). They also made up a plan for land development in Quissett with forty lots on it. At some point in the 1870's, Col. Lewis had the two
houses (Hammond-Chadwick and Jenkins houses) run for him as a hotel. We have a letter to Thomas Dunham Fish from a Mr. Whitbeck in 1877 with "Quissette Harbor House" on the letterhead and Whitbeck listed as "proprietor". The connector between the houses was built at an unknown date.

Stephen W. Carey bought the Quissett Harbor House from Jane Lewis in 1881 for $9,675.

By the 1880s the Harbor House was managed by George W. Fish, another grandson of Deacon Thomas Fish. He too listed himself for his entire tenure as “proprietor” and ran the hotel until 1917.

The Stephen W. Carey family had come to Quissett through marriage relationships. Stephen Carey had married Sarah Smith Boardman Yale. Her sister Albinia Yale married Thomas Dunham Fish of Quissett (grandson of Deacon Thomas Fish). When Albinia died after giving birth to a daughter, the child, Maria, was brought up by Sarah Yale in Montclair, New Jersey. Both Stephen W. Carey and Thomas D. Fish were commission merchants, freight brokers and ship owners in New York and lived in New Jersey. Eventually the Careys came to spend summers at the Fish “Homestead” and later built their own home on the opposite side of the harbor.

Since George W. Fish did not open the Harbor House for 1917, a Carey descendent, Lewis W. Francis of New York, came to open the hotel that year as a “family boarding house in a small way”. His manager was Walter Scott. Later Francis persuaded Stephen W. Carey Jr. to take over the hotel. Stephen W. Carey Jr.’s daughter Cornelia Lee Carey ran it until her death in 1973. The Harbor House was a center of summer activity at Quissett Harbor for about 100 years. Very old-fashioned, some of it without running water, it was a much beloved establishment. The hotel consisted of the Hammond house, joined to the Jenkins house by a connector, with a large dining hall behind the Jenkins house. A long single-story extension to the south of the bigger buildings was known as the “Bowling Alley”. At the very south end of the complex was “The Cottage”, the original Lewis Gothic-style cottage.

The Jenkins house and the dining hall for the hotel still exist; the Hammond house was flaked and moved to the northwestern U.S. to be re-erected. The hotel complex was acquired in 1977 by the newly formed Quissett Harbor House Land Trust, Inc. and most of the owners of property around the harbor and area joined the Trust. The Trust and Salt Pond run the two adjacent areas for the benefit of the members and the public.

In the 1990s the Bowling Alley and The Cottage were burned. A low extension and a small building replicating the shape of the originals are used by the Quissett Yacht Club sailing school and as a caretaker’s cottage.

Quissett harbor has become an crowded sailing center and the focus of an active yacht club, founded in 1912. It has one of the largest fleets of Herreshoff 12 ½ sail boats in the area. However the Quissett Yacht Club does not have a clubhouse.

The Quissett Harbor boatyard, begun by Charles L. Eldred and Joseph Fish, Jr. around 1890, passed on to Charles L. Eldred, Jr. and then to Bruce Barnard in 1958. At this time it is owned and operated by Bruce’s daughter Weatherly (Barnard) Dorris and her husband Rick Dorris.

Conservation land known as “The Knob”, which was given by Cornelia Carey to the Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries, Inc., is a popular walking place as well as a beach area that faces Buzzards Bay.

With the erection of a house by Col. Ryan at the more southern part of the east side of Quissett Harbor in 1885, a group of large summer “cottages” were built by related families and others towards Woods Hole along the Harbor which prompted the construction of Quissett Avenue in the 1880s. These included the Marshall estate (now the National Academy of Science), “Red Oaks” and the famous Webster estate with its magnificent rose garden (demolished in 1970). Other large summer homes were built on the ridge north of the Quissett cross-roads along County Road (Route 28) from the 1870s to the early 1900s. All of these areas have become known as part of Quissett.
Quissett no longer has its own post office or store. A traffic light on Route 28 gives an indication of this formerly important cross-roads. Quissett, it has been said, is a state of mind.

**QUISSETT COLLECTION - SCOPE**

The Quissett Collection includes photographs, deeds, ledger-books from the Quissett Harbor House; records, ledgers and material on Quissett Hall and the Quissett Social Club; ephemera and letters, personal reminiscences of the area, genealogy, property and house histories. An adjunct collection is the large Fish-Morse Collection which contains considerable material on the Fish family and Morse family, as well as the Carey and Yale families.

**BOX 1**

Quissett Miscellaneous History and Information

Quissett Histories by Wyman, Willett and Jones families

Quissett Harbor House

**Quissett Miscellaneous History and Information:**

1-1 Quissett Miscellaneous History and Information:

1-1a. Map. Town of Falmouth (includes all villages to North Falmouth), before 1897. Xerox copy.

1-1b. *History of Barnstable County* by Deyo, page 677 (description of Quissett). Published in 1890. Poor xerox copy and new copy.

1-1c. Typewritten ms. Quissett Notes from The Falmouth Local (predecessor to the Falmouth Enterprise), 1886-1919.


1-3 Quissett Parades:


1-4 Walsh Ramblers in Racing Beach by Susan F. Witzell, 1995.


**Quissett Histories by Wyman, Jones and Willett families:**

1-6 Typed manuscript. Quissett by Louise “Peggy” Wyman Jones, c. 1955-1962.

5 xerox copies.
1-7 Typed manuscript. Quissett by Dewitt C. Jones, Jr., 1967. 5 xerox copies.
1-8 Typed manuscript. Quissett by Dewitt C. Jones, Jr., 1967. 4 xerox copies.
   Number 4 in yellow binder, Accession Number 95-10.

1-9 Herb Willett material on The Knob.
   1-6a. Typed manuscript. “The Knob”, History of the Site, by Herbert L. Willett,
   3 pages, n.d.
   1-6b. Pamphlet. The Knob, printed in green, produced by The Quissett Harbor Land
   Trust, Inc. and Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.

1-10 Molly Willett material on The Knob.
   1-7b. Map. The Knob and Quissett Harbor, marked to show areas of historic,
   interest 1977.
   1-7c. Typed manuscript. “The Knob” by Molly Willett. 2 xerox copies.

**Quissett Harbor House:**

1-11 Quissett Harbor House, miscellaneous information
   1-11a. Postcards.
      1-11a-1. Color photo postcard, aerial view advertising the Harbor House
      1-11a-2. Color photo postcard, view from east side of Quisset Harbor
      House (multiple copies)
      1-11a-3. Black and white photo postcard, Quisset (sic) Harbor looking east.
      Photo by Edwin Gray.
      See also Fish-Morse Collection for numerous postcards and
      photos
      Copy donated by Dr. Charles E. McGowan
      Xerox copy.
      and Prestigious Clientele” by Millard C. Faught. Falmouth Enterprise, May 27,
      1988. 2 xerox copies.
      copies.

1-12 Quisset Harbor House, Ephemera
   1-12a. Brochure. Quisset Harbor House, Quissett, Mass. Annual Opening June 20th,
      n.d., xerox copy of cover.
   1-12b. Brochure. 14th Annual Announcement 1881-1894. To My Patrons.... George W.
      Fish, Quissett, Mass”. Xerox copy.
   1-12c. Brochure. Quisset Harbor House, Quissett, Massachusetts, Season of 1916.
   1-12d. Brochure. The Quisset Harbor House, Quisset Harbor, Falmouth,
      Massachusetts, n.d.
1-12e. Rate sheet. Prices for rooms, 1972.
 sees also Fish-Morse Collection for other Harbor House brochures and pamphlets
1-12g. Sign. “Notice. The Management will not be responsible for any personal property of whatever nature left in bathhouses or on grounds. Quissett Harbor House.” Xerox copy.


1-14 Typewritten manuscripts. Various recollections about Quissett Harbor House

1-15 Letters requesting room reservations at Quissett Harbor House
1-15a Letters, 1942-1945
1-15b Letters, 1945-1950

 See also separate box(Box 4) with Register of the Quissett Harbor House, 1879-1912.

BOX 1A
Quissett Ephemera and Miscellaneous
Includes material loaned for an exhibit on Quissett Harbor House upstairs at Bradley House (1983)

BOX 2
FAMILY Histories, Genealogies, HOUSE AND PROPERTY information

2-1 Typed manuscripts. Quissett Residents, 1900.
2-1a. Typed manuscript. From Falmouth Directory 1900 (Quissett residents)
2-1b. Typed manuscript. Quissett Residents From Falmouth Directory 1900 (Falmouth Historical Society), Annotated 2004.

2-2 Quissett Houses, miscellaneous information

2-3 Cothran/Cockran house, 1750s

2-4 Article. “The Story of Quissett Ridge and the Development of Racing Beach,”
by Susan Fletcher Witzell

2-5 Photograph and explanatory text.
2-5a. Typed email. Email text and photograph of County Road (Route 28), Quissett, 1892. From a photographic survey done in 1892-1893 of the roads of Massachusetts, to accompany the “Report of the Commission to Improve the Highways of the Commonwealth”, published February 1893.
2-5b. Photograph of main road (Route 28), near present SEA, Miller House and WHRC, 1892. Inkjet print.

2-6 Information on “Hilltop” (present Woods Hole Research Center).
2-6c. Photographs. 5 color prints of reconstruction of house to Woods Hole Research Center, 2002. Photos by Susan F. Witzell
2-6d. Typed email. Email from Allison B. White to Susan F. Witzell with historical information and questions about “Hilltop” ownership, March 7, 2003.

2-7 Information on history of “Hilltop” (present Woods Hole Research Center).

2-8 Map. 1845 Coast and Geodetic map of Quissett area with modern road layout superimposed, produced and drafted by Greg Fiske, Woods Hole Research Center, 2003.


2-10 Information on former Bleakie-Whittemore stables, 1889 and 1915.
2-10a. Information and sketch of stable area

2-11 Plan. Layout for lots and roads, Racing Beach development, 1926. Xerox copy.

2-12 Information on Forrest Johnson Memorial Rock and adjacent conservation land, Widgeon Road, Racing Beach.
2-12b. Handwritten letter. Letter from George F. Kelly to Susan F. Witzell, November 15, 2003, about the history of the conservation land on Widgeon Road, Racing
Beach. Xerox copy.

2-12c. Typewritten letter. Letter from George F. Kelly to Bernard Strehler about land on Widgeon Road, July 1, 1999. Xerox copy.

2-13 Information on “Treetops”, also known as “The Uplands”.

2-14 Information on the Town of Falmouth Water Tower (Standpipe), Quissett

2-15 Information on the Weeks-Peterson Farm and Weeks Family Genealogy

2-16 Genealogy of Davis, Hitch, Eldridge, Delano and Marshall families

2-17 Typewritten letter. From Samuel G. King to Susan F. Witzell, March 12, 2000 about Marshall family history and background.

2-18 Information on Webster house and garden and Mr. & Mrs. Edwin S. Webster
See also archival material and information in exhibit archives for “Gardeners and Caretakers of Woods Hole.” Some material has been copied for this folder.
2-18e. Newsclippings. Xerox copies.
Xerox copy. *Stained glass by La Farge is mentioned.*

2-18g. Newsclipping. Photo with caption: “Harbors...Quissett’s Stately Anchorage, From the E.S. Webster Estate (photo of Captain Jack at the edge of the garden and harbor). N.d. (1970?). Original and xerox copy.

2-18h. Magazine clipping. “The Indians Had A Name For It,” with photos of Captain Jack. Cape Cod Compass, 1982, pp. 34-38. NOTE: Photo of Captain Jack is reversed; the Knob is shown at left.


2-18l. Spritsail, Volume 19, Number 2, Summer 2005. For Webster entry see pp. 34-38. Other Quissett houses and gardens are also mentioned.

2-19 Information on Quissett Harbor stone wall.
   2-19a. Handwritten notes, information from Cornelia Carey about Levi Fish and the building of the retaining wall around the north and west sides of Quissett Harbor.
   2-19b. Typewritten notes. Excerpts from Molly Willett interviews with Cornelia Carey about Levi Fish and the Building of the retaining wall around the north and west sides of Quissett Harbor.
   2-19c. Handwritten notes. List of Molly Willett tapes with Cornelia Carey about wall.

2-20 Genealogy of Fish family of Quissett (descendents of Edward Fish and Deacon Thomas Fish)

2-21 Information on Levi and Milton Fish of Quissett.
   2-21b. Typewritten manuscript. Information on Milton C. Fish, from Falmouth Enterprise archives.

2-22 Carey Family and images of Quissett Harbor area. Xerox copies donated by Molly Willett before 1982.


2-3a. Deed to Cynthia and Frank Price from Sarah B. Carey for land near Quissett Harbor, 1884.

2-3b. Deed to George Washburn Fish from Stephen W. Carey for land near Quissett Harbor House, formerly Prince Jenkins land, 1891.


2-3e. Deed to Stephen W. Carey, Jr. from John and Anne Witherton for land on Main Road, Quissett, 1926.

2-25 Carey-Dimon-Morse material donated by Lewis Witherbee Francis, Jr., 1994 (Accession Number 94-11). Ephemera:


2-4d. Telegram. Telegram from S.W. Carey to Mrs. C. Dimon announcing birth of S.W. Carey III, November 14, 1895. Original and xerox copy.

2-4e Brochure. One-page brochure “Graphology or Character reading from the Handwriting”. Original and xerox copy.

2-4f. Original catalog list of 1994 accession.

2-26 Carey-Dimon-Morse material donated by Lewis Witherbee Francis, Jr., 1994 (Accession Number 94-11). Letters Mrs. Charles Dimon, Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Chapman, and from Sallie Chapman (Mrs. Lewis W. Francis, Sr.), 1880s to early 1900s.

2-27 Carey-Dimon-Morse material donated by Lewis Witherbee Francis, Jr., 1994 (Accession Number 94-11). Photographs and additional material.


2-6b. Photograph album page. 2 images of Lewis W. Francis, Jr. Xerox copy from Julia M. Yale’s album (owned by Charles E. McGowan).


2-6d. Handwritten notes. Notes made by Susan F. Witzell from a conversation with Meg German, owner of former Francis estate, Quissett (491 Sippewissett Road), September 1994.

2-6f. Photograph. Color print with view of Francis boxwood garden. Two color copies.

2-28 Photograph. Photograph of Carey graves in Vineyard Haven, Martha’s Vineyard. Color laser print from a color slide taken by Dr. Charles E. McGowan.


2-31. Journal. Spritsail, Volume 26, Number 1 (printed as Volume 25, Number 1) with article on Florence (Eldred) Johnson of Quissett (pp.3-9).

**Box 3**

**Quissett Hall**

3-1 Ledger sheets. Names with contributions paid for the purpose of building a hall in Quissett, 1881.

3-2 Account sheets. Account sheets for construction materials purchased from B.B. King of Falmouth for the building of Quissett Hall, 1881.

   3-3a Record book (brown spine binding), 1881.
   3-3b Record book (black spine binding), 1882.

3-4 Record books. Annual meetings, membership lists and accounts for Quissett Social Circle.
   3-4a Blue-brown ledger book. Minutes of annual meetings, membership lists and expense accounts, 1887-1925.
   3-4b Green notebook. Minutes of annual meetings, membership lists and expense accounts, 1926-1950.

3-5 Material from Centennial celebration of the founding of the Quissett Social Circle, 1880-1980.
   3-5a Handwritten description of founding of Quissett Social Circle, written by Florence Eldred Johnson for centennial celebration, 1980.
   3-5b Notebook with ephemera and copies of record books 3-3a and 3-3b.

**BOX 4**

**Quissett Ephemera and Miscellaneous**

Includes material loaned for an exhibit on Quissett Harbor House,


4-2 Material about the Quissett Volunteer Fire Department.
   4-2a Photograph. Photograph of Quissett Volunteer Fire Department personnel by Edwin Gray, n.d. Color laser copy.
   4-2b Handwritten notes. Identification of people in above photograph.
   4-2c Iron plate. Quissett Volunteer Fire Department plate for vehicle. Donated by Mary Jean Howard.
   4-2d Xerox copy of vehicle plate.

4-3 Ledger book. “Day Book” with accounts in pencil. Charges for telegraphs, telephone calls, drinks and other items (for Harbor House guests?).
4-4 Miscellaneous ephemera about Quissett, Quissett Harbor House. Mostly xerox copies. Includes maps, photographs, letters from a guest and house rules from S.W. Carey.
4-5 Miscellaneous ephemera about Quissett Hall and Social Circle and newsclippings about Quissett (all original).

BOX 5
Register Quissett Harbor House
1879-1912