

Woods Hole Historical Collection
P.O. Box 185
Woods Hole, MA 02543

REGISTER
Candle House (Factory)
1828 -1985

1 box

CANDLE HOUSE (FACTORY)

BRIEF HISTORY

The papers in this collection cover one facet of the early days of Woods Hole when whaling was the main industry. The only remaining landmark from those days is the Candle House.

Whaling was carried out from the village of Woods Hole from 1828 to 1864. The Candle House was constructed in Woods Hole in 1836 at the height of the whaling industry and was the site at which whale oil was made into spermaceti candles. The building was also use for a store and a supply house. With the discovery of oil in Pennsylvania in 1858, the whaling industry declined and this activity ceased. In 1903, the land and the Candle House were bought by the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) for \$7000 and is currently (2009) used for the administrative offices of MBL.

SCOPE NOTE

The records in this collection touch lightly on the history of the Candle House.

The chapter (written in 1856) on the manufacture of the spermaceti candles describes the method used to convert the whale oil into these highly valued candles.

One paper, by Ms. Fawsett, features a description and history of this Candle House.

The two pamphlets/brochures give brief descriptions of the buildings in Woods Hole and mention the candle house. The brochure on historical Falmouth devotes about one page to a description of Woods Hole and mentions also the drawbridge, the lighthouse, and St. Joseph Bell Tower (Woods Hole is a village within the Town of Falmouth).

The document by Ms. Josephine Fish, a local life-long resident of Woods Hole, describes the history of various houses and buildings in Woods Hole in 1918. Ms. Fish mentions many homes and their past and present owners. It does not include addresses or a map of the location of the buildings (there are a number of errors, as well, because of the continuation of inaccurate local lore).

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BOX LIST

1. Candle House – Spermaceti Candles – 1856 – a reprint of Chapter XXX from “A Treatise on Chemistry Applied to the Manufacture of Soap and Candlemaking” by Campbell Morfit, pages 504 - 511
2. Candle House – “Landmarks of Woods Hole” by Josephine W. Fish, typewritten original document, dated 1918, 4 pages
3. Candle House – “The Old Spermaceti Candle House and Whaling in Woods Hole, Marise Fawsett, 1985, 15 pages
4. Candle House and local history, including:
 - “A Brief Guide to Historical Falmouth” by Lennie Conley, undated.
 - “A History of Woods Hole” by Norman T. Allen, Woods Hole Historical Collection, Vol. 1., No.1, June 1976, 3 pages