

Woods Hole Historical Museum Archives
P.O. Box 185
Woods Hole, MA 02543

REGISTER
Franklin Lewis Gifford Collection
1854 – 2010

1 box

FRANKLIN LEWIS GIFFORD COLLECTION

SCOPE AND BIOGRAPHY

This collection, devoted to the painter Franklin Lewis Gifford (1854 -1936), has traditionally been kept separate from the rest of the Gifford-Griffin Collection for ease of access to information on the very popular painter of historical Woods Hole scenes.

Some of the collection, particularly the painting catalogs, is duplicated with multiple copies in the larger Gifford-Griffin Collection Box 1.

Franklin Lewis Gifford was born in Woods Hole in 1854, son of Barzillai Gifford and grandson of Braddock Gifford, the blacksmith both in Quissett and Woods Hole. They were all descended from one of the original settlers of Woods Hole, William Gifford.

He spent all but 3 years of his life in Woods Hole, leaving to go to New Bedford to learn his trade as a carriage painter and then on to Attleboro to gain some business experience. His career in Woods Hole was spent as a carriage painter, house painter and decorator.

Upon his retirement in 1930 he devoted his time to creating paintings of his life and the life of the village during its history. Some of these historic images were made from photographs.

He wrote extensive background notes for each historical painting, sometimes providing the only record existing of various structures, persons and events in Woods Hole.

With the reluctant participation of Gifford, seven of his paintings were exhibited at the Whitney Museum in New York in 1926. They were not for sale and he insisted on having the Whitney insure them for \$10,000. He himself refused to go there.

In 1932 a catalog of 142 paintings (which was not a complete listing of all the paintings) was written under F.L.'s supervision by Thomas Sargent Perry Griffin (brother of F.L.'s son-in-law George Griffin who had married Ellen Gifford).

Gifford died in 1936.

In 1953 an exhibit of the Gifford paintings was held at the Woods Hole Community Hall. The catalog listed paintings numbered up to 198 but there were skips in the sequence of numbered paintings listed.

In 1962 the Woods Hole Public Library issued a slim volume entitled *Historic Paintings of Woods Hole* by William Von Arx. Later it was reissued in a paper covered version. It includes

only 17 paintings, which was the number owned by the library at that time. Unfortunately Von Arx made a number of errors in the introduction to the book.

Both catalogs include a Gifford-drawn map depicting Woods Hole in 1845 showing the location of many buildings, some of which no longer exist.

FRANKLIN LEWIS GIFFORD COLLECTION

Folder 1: Register

Folder 2: Genealogy and family information

Folder 3: Correspondence about Franklin Lewis Gifford

Folder 4: Catalogs

- a. 1932 catalog. Historic Woods Hole. 1 original and one xerox copy
- b. 1935 catalog. Catalog of Historic Woods Hole Paintings. 4 originals.
- c. Typed manuscript. Historic Woods Hole, a Continuation of the Paintings of Franklin Lewis Gifford, beginning with number 141.
- d. Booklet. Historical Paintings of Woods Hole by Franklin Lewis Gifford. Woods Hole Public Library, Woods Hole, Massachusetts. 962.

Folder 5: *Yankee* Magazine, July 1966. Article on Franklin Lewis Gifford, "The 'Grandpa Moses' of Woods Hole." Two complete copies and one tear sheet copy. One xerox copy of article.

Folder 6: Typed manuscript. Franklin Lewis Gifford manuscripts of E. Frances Cahoon (Typed up copies of his catalogs and the Yankee article).

Folder 7: Recent Exhibits of Franklin Lewis Gifford paintings

- a. Newsclipping. "Historic And Pastoral, Local Artists At Highfield, Falmouth *Enterprise*, April 9, 2010.

Folder 8. Booklet-Publication. *Spritsail*, Volume 25, Number 2, Summer 2011.

"Portraits of Woods Hole, The Legacy of Franklin Lewis Gifford" by Deborah Griffin Scanlon and Robert Wendell Griffin.

Folder 9. Typed manuscript.. Email about Gifford paintings on the WHHM website (Online Exhibits)