

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

REGISTER  
Saint Joseph Church (Roman Catholic)  
Bell Tower  
Mary Garden  
1929 - 2007

1 box

## **ST. JOSEPH CHURCH, BELL TOWER, MARY GARDEN**

### **HISTORY ST. JOSEPH CHURCH**

St. Joseph Church, a small wooden shingled building with a Victorian hooded porch was constructed in 1881-1882 and dedicated on June 26, 1882. It was the fourth Roman Catholic Church on Cape Cod. The land had been given by Joseph Story Fay, Woods Hole's first summer resident, an Episcopalian, who owned much of the land in the village and was charitable to many. The walls and ceilings had elaborate decorative patterns painted by an Italian painter. Originally the congregation sat on spindle-backed chairs but in 1905 these were replaced by wooden pews. The decorative paintings have been covered by plain painted surfaces.

The population of Woods Hole had been greatly added to by the arrival of Irish and other immigrants who came to work in the Pacific Guano Factory, the big estates and the Old Colony Railroad. Prior to the construction of St. Joseph, the Catholic immigrants were served by priests from New Bedford and Sandwich. Priests from Sandwich said mass in a house at 17 Millfield Street, a few hundred feet from the future site of the church. The parish was eventually established in the Diocese of Providence which included the Cape and Nantucket but later southeastern Massachusetts became the Diocese of Fall River. The Reverend Cornelius MacSwiney was the first priest and was responsible for the construction of the adjacent shingle-style rectory in 1888.

In 2007, it was announced that, due to the shortage of priests, the church would be closed or converted to a chapel upon the retirement of the current priest, expected to occur ca. 2010.

### **HISTORY BELL TOWER AND MARY GARDEN**

In 1891, Mr. Fay also donated land on Gifford Street, Falmouth, for a burial ground for Catholics, and in 1913 and 1918, donated two parcels across Millfield Street from the church.

The 48 foot stone bell tower was built in 1929 on these parcels and designed by Charles Coolidge (of Coolidge, Shepley, Bullfinch & Abbott), the architect of M.B. L.'s Lillie Building. Frances Crane Lillie, wife of F.R. Lillie, (director of the M.B.L.) and a convert to Catholicism, funded the project. Its two bells were first rung on Christmas morning 1929 by neighbor Geoffrey Lehy. The tower was dedicated and blessed by Auxiliary Bishop James E. Cassidy of Fall River on July 31, 1930. The stone is West Falmouth pink granite taken from abandoned house foundations. A small chamber in the base of the tower is entered through a bronze door designed and cast in bronze by Alfeo Faggi of New York state which shows six scenes from the life of St. Joseph. The bells in the tower were named for Gregor Mendel and Louis Pasteur, two major Catholic life scientists. Mrs. Lillie hoped that the ringing of the bells would remind Woods Hole scientists of the existence of God and the need for religion and science to work together to understand the mysteries of the universe. The first timer for the angelus was donated by Dan Clark in May, 1993.

The tower is on grounds that include a cross-shaped Garden of Our Lady with flowers and plants symbolic of or associated with the Virgin Mary. Research into the plants was done by Winifred Jelliffe Emerson of Chicago and the garden designed by Dorothea K. Harrison of

Boston. Local horticulturalist Wilfrid Wheeler did the planting in 1932. The land had been given to the church in 1913 and 1918 by the Fay family in appreciation of their Catholic employees.

### **SCOPE**

The contents of the collection cover the period from 1929 – 2007. Beside the folders of clippings and articles on the Bell Tower and Mary's flowers, there is Mrs. Lillie's personal scrapbook, ca. 1930-1933, documenting the conception and development of the Bell Tower and Mary Garden with original photographs and hand-drawn plans for the flower borders. There are two tape recordings (one is a duplicate) and 50 slides of a show on Mary's flowers. There are multiple copies of John. S. Stokes Jr.'s publications and talks ca. 1960 (the tape recordings, transcription, and slides). There are hand-written instructions for ringing the Angelus at noon.

Some recent clippings pertain to the church itself and its closing in 2007. Otherwise there is little material on the church and its building.

**NOTE: The church is often incorrectly titled "St. Joseph's. Its correct name is "St. Joseph Church".**

## BOX LIST

*Last updated April 23, 2020*

### CHURCH:

1. Clippings.
  - a. Newsclipping. "Bishop Coleman Announces St. Joseph's (sic) Will Close". Falmouth *Enterprise*, March 30, 2007.
2. St. Joseph Church and Bell Tower: Miscellaneous.
  - a. information on Alfeo Faggi, sculptor
  - b. information on mason who helped build tower
  - c. article on opening of Pope John Paul II center, which has photos from WHHC archives of Mary Garden, August 2000.
  - d. Photograph. Copy of postcard photo of interior of St. Joseph Church.
3. Postcard. St. Joseph's (sic) Rectory and Church (Cath.), Woods Hole, Mass. b/w photo taken from Bell Tower Lane.

### BELL TOWER:

4. Newsclipping. "Bishop Dedicates Bell Tower at Woods Hole". The *Enterprise*, Falmouth, Mass. N.D. (July 31, 1930). Thermofax copy.
5. Typewritten manuscript. St. Joseph's (sic) Bell Tower. N.D. Two copies.
6. Hand-written directions for Timing Angelus at Noon. N.D.
7. Typewritten manuscripts.
  - a. Books in the Tower Library, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, Summer 1938.
  - b. Books in the Tower Library, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, September 1940.
8. Pamphlets.
  - a. Pamphlet. *Perpetual Help*, August 1946. "Lillie Tower" by J.J. Galvin. Original copy.
  - b. Reprints from *Perpetual Help*. August 1946. Two original copies and two xerox copies.
9. Newsclipping. "A Woods Hole Retreat". Boston Sunday *Globe*, September 9, 1956. Accession Number 92-27. Original and two xerox copies.
10. Newsclipping. "Not To be Missed" (Woods Hole Bell Tower). Falmouth *Enterprise*, N.D.
11. Newsclipping: "Fundraising Begins to Restore Woods Hole Bell Tower". Falmouth *Enterprise*, August 6, 2010.

### MARY GARDEN:

11. Newsclipping. "Mary's Garden, Flowers Named In Honor of Virgin Mary Grow at Shrine". Falmouth *Enterprise*, May 25, 1962.
12. Various lists of Mary's Flowers.
  - a. Pamphlet. "Our Lady In her Garden", Rosa Mystica Ora Pro Nobis, St. Joseph's (sic) Church, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, 1932. Two xerox copies. Original in scrapbook (see item ). *Includes a list of Her Flowers, Flowers of the Saints and Other Religious Flowers.*
  - b. Plan. Garden of Our Lady: Plan. St Joseph's (sic) Bells, Woods Hole, Mass. Dorothea K. Harrison, Architect, Boston, July 1937. Two xerox copies.

- Original in scrapbook (see item ).
- c. Diagram of Mary Garden with flower lists, Our Mother of Consolation School, 19 E. Chestnut Hill Avenue, Philadelphia, PA. 19118. N/D. Two copies on green paper.
  - d. List of flowers. *Includes a list of Her Flowers, Flowers of the Saints and Other Religious Flowers.* Xerox copy.
13. Typed manuscript. "Flowers of Our Lady and Mary Gardens. Narration Text for Color Slide Lecture No. 1". Mary's Gardens, 124 W. Chestnut Hill Avenue, Philadelphia 18, Pa. U.S.A. Copyright, 1960. *Slides in separate container.*
  14. Reprints of articles by John S. Stokes, Jr.
    - a. Reprint. "St. Joseph, Patron of Mary's Gardeners" by John Stokes, Jr. Reprint from *St. Joseph Magazine*, St. Benedict, Oregon, May 1960. 5 copies.
    - b. Reprint. "Mary's Gardens" by John S. Stokes, Jr. pp. 49-64. Two complete copies and one partial copy (pp. 51, 52, 61, 62).
  15. Clippings and Reprints.
    - a. Clipping. "Bell Tower Has Garden Dedicated to Virgin Mary." Falmouth *Enterprise*, May 16, 1952, Section C, p.7. Xerox copy.
    - b. Reprint. "Cape Cod Shrine, Mary Garden" by John S. Stokes, Jr. *QM*, May 1955. Two copies.
    - c. Clipping. "Mary Garden Jubilee." By John S. Stokes, Jr. *Queen*, May-June 1982.
  16. Photo. Frances Crane Lillie, Chicago, Easter 1937. On reverse: "That I may be comforted together in you; by that which is common to use both, your faith and mine". Signed "Frances Crane Lillie".
  17. Scrapbook. Photographs and diagrams by Dorothea K. Harrison, Boston, Summer, 1938. *Scrapbook is very fragile and has been wrapped in acid-free paper.*
  18. Copy (xerox or thermofax) of Scrapbook and items inserted into it.
  19. Booklet. *Sprintsail*, Volume 6, Number 2, Summer 1992. "The Angelus Bell Tower and Mary Garden in Woods Hole" by Jane A. McLaughlin.

**See also in Artworks & Posters box (with Map boxes)**

BELL TOWER, Sketch, Plan, and Elevations by Coolidge, Shepley, Bullfinch & Abbott, ca. 1928-1929. Donated by Catherine Cramer, 2006.

**See also in Artifacts**

ART 141: Wooden box containing first timer for the angelus with copy of timing instructions.