

PLYMOUTH COUNTY REGISTRY OF DEEDS

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EIGHT NEW ADDITIONS TO THE PLYMOUTH COUNTY NOTABLE LAND RECORD COLLECTION

How well do you know your Plymouth County history? Try this one on for starters: The first trans-Atlantic radio broadcast took place in 1906 between Scotland and what location?

The answer? Brant Rock. Canadian born engineer Reginald Aubrey Fessenden conducted the broadcast from what is now known as Fessenden Tower, the base of which remains in its Brant Rock, Marshfield location today. You can learn more about Fessenden Tower and scores of other little gems in your own back yard by visiting the Notable Land Record Collection in the Registry's front lobby at 50 Obery Street in Plymouth or online at www.plymouthdeeds.org.

Throughout its museum quality exhibit, the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds' Notable Land Record Collection Committee has highlighted some thirty-six deeds and other land records with a synopsis of the history and significance of each. In addition to the Fessenden Tower record, outlined and submitted by Registry employee Robin McGonagle, the exhibit has benefited from the addition of seven other recent submissions.

Where was America's first canal built – and how? Once again, those who have had the good fortune to visit the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds in recent weeks would likely know that the canal ran from Duxbury Harbor to Green Harbor as a result of a 1636 court order requiring that the passage be created, that everyone in the Colony share equally in the cost of its construction and that the Colonial Governor appoint men to work in shifts of ten at a time to dig the canal. Perhaps our nation's first public works project, the Cut River Canal was submitted by Brockton Attorney John E. McCluskey.

What significance did Hingham resident Samuel Lincoln have to our nation? Had he not emigrated to Hingham, Massachusetts from Hingham, England in 1637, there's really no way to know. But those who have visited the Notable Land Record Collection can take pride in the knowledge that across the street from Samuel's home at 170 North Street in Hingham stands a rather impressive statute of Samuel's most famous direct descendant, President Abraham Lincoln.

The various land records making up the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds' Notable Land Records Collection are brought to the attention of the Notable Land Records Committee by title examiners, registry employees, local real estate professionals and family members of those whose Plymouth County properties are of particular notoriety. Elizabeth Bates, Chair of the Friends Meetinghouse Trustees submitted a land record and synopsis for Pembroke's Quaker Meetinghouse, the oldest surviving Quaker meetinghouse in Massachusetts and the third oldest in the United States. Registry of Deeds' employee John Zigouras submitted a deed and synopsis for the Old Oaken Bucket Homestead in Scituate, the childhood home to early nineteenth century poet Samuel Woodworth best known for his poem, "The Old Oaken Bucket."

The inspiring story of Billy "Gunner" McGunnigle was submitted by his great grandson John McGunnigle. An Irish immigrant who worked his way out of a Brockton shoe factory and onto the diamond as a professional baseball player, McGunnigle was best known for wearing bricklayer's gloves while playing catcher in a minor league game and thus becoming one of the early innovators of the catcher's mitt. His career as a player was cut short when his skull was fractured by a pitch in 1885. Undeterred, McGunnigle went on to manage the Brooklyn Bridegrooms to the American Association Pennant in 1889 and the National League Pennant in 1890. McGunnigle is therefore the only baseball manager to win back to back pennants in two different major leagues.

Many of the land records within the collection are of interest because of the accomplishments of an individual who occupied the property. Others are noteworthy because of the nature of the property or the activities conducted there. The Crane Brook Restaurant and Tea Room, submitted to the Committee by Joan Shurtleff of Options 1-5-3 Real Estate, is a fine dining establishment in South Carver with a truly multidimensional history. In 1760, a foundry was built on the site using Sampson's Pond bog iron to produce a host of different products. Its furnace later created cannonballs used during the War of 1812, reportedly fired from the USS Constitution. In later years, the site was used to produce pots and kettles. When the foundry went out of business, the buildings were converted into a cranberry screening facility, In the 1970's, the site served as an antique shop serving soup, sandwiches and tea, eventually leading to its present use.

As the world's largest rope maker, the Plymouth Cordage Company's history is the subject of a recent submission to the Notable Land Record Collection by Committee member Marilyn Dupuis. Founded in 1824, the Cordage Company launched Plymouth into the Industrial Revolution, shipping its ropes and cords for rigging by way of the Old Colony railroad to Boston and beyond. In the 20's the Cordage Company employed roughly 1800 people, many of whom were European immigrants. In addition to being recognized for its excellence in maritime production by the armed services during World War II, the Cordage Company was at the forefront in providing valuable benefits such as housing and education to its employees.

Whether you are a fan of history, a real estate professional or a trivia buff, you will be well served by visiting the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds. Enjoy each of the historic exhibits and be sure to check in on the Notable Land Record display to catch the latest submissions.