

## **PLYMOUTH COUNTY REGISTRY OF DEEDS' NOTABLE LAND RECORDS GROWING IN SIZE AND POPULARITY**

What do history buffs, sports fans, real estate practitioners and employees of the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds have in common? They are all contributors to the Registry's Notable Land Records Collection on display in the front entrance to the Registry's new facility at 50 Obery Street in Plymouth.

Walking through the corridor to the main records room of the Plymouth Registry of Deeds is like walking back in time, where visitors are greeted with displays showcasing a town and a region as rich in history as anywhere in the country. In addition to creating displays depicting such historic treasures as New England before Plymouth County, Wampanoag Country of the 1600's, and the establishment of New Plymouth, Register John R. Buckley, Jr. and a dedicated team of volunteers initiated the Notable Land Records Collection, featuring a revolving display of Plymouth County land records and a description of their significance. The enthusiastic response to the display is due in no small part to the fact that the records are plucked from the pages of the Registry's record books by its own employees, title examiners and other Registry users who have an interest in the particular individual or issue being highlighted.

Among those showcased as calling Plymouth County their home, or perhaps their seaside summer residence, are Daniel Webster, John Hancock, Grover Cleveland, John F. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, James Michael Curley and Tom Thumb. The influence of the sports fans contributing to the collection is apparent in contributions highlighting Brockton's own Rocky Marciano, the world's only undefeated heavyweight champion, and Bridgewater resident Mickey Cochran, the only Plymouth County resident to have been inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. On the forty-year anniversary of "The Impossible Dream," Registry employees celebrated the career of Plymouth resident Ken Coleman, best remembered locally for his announcing the Red Sox' 1967 American League pennant win against 100-1 odds.

Register Buckley recently announced four additions to the land record collection, each notable in their own right. The compelling story of Plympton resident Deborah Sampson and her family's land record were provided by title examiner and Historic Display Committee member Anthony M. Markella. In 1782, at the age of 21, Sampson enlisted in the 4th Massachusetts Regiment as a man named "Robert Shurtleff," fought in battles at West Point and Tarrytown, New York and was injured on three separate occasions before being honorably discharged by General George Washington on October 25, 1783.

Registry visitors are now able to link North Plymouth's Giuseppe Garibaldi Club with the Italian patriot and military leader for whom it was named, thanks to title examiner and Historic Display Committee member Marilyn Rossi Dupuis, who recently contributed the land record and biographic background relating to Garibaldi and the Club.

Brian Morse, an employee of the Plymouth County Registry, contributed the land record and timely story of James Edgar, proprietor of Edgar's Department Store on Main Street in Brockton. In 1890, having dressed up as George Washington, a sea captain, and a clown to entertain local children, Edgar dressed up as Santa Claus based on a popular 1863 illustration by cartoonist Thomas Nast. Drawing crowds of children from as far away as Boston and Providence, Edgar became the first "department store Santa" and began a tradition practiced throughout the nation today.

Dyer Memorial Library Director Joice Himawan and Trustee John R. Buckley, Sr. recognized Marietta W. Dyer as the benefactor of the Dyer Memorial Library, having bequeathed land and money to be used "in the erection and equipment of a memorial library building" on Centre Avenue (Rte. 123) in Abington Center. Celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary this year, the landmark red brick library is home to exhibits, early maps and records relating to Old Abington (now Abington, Rockland and Whitman); Civil War photographs, pre-1850 vital records, many Massachusetts town histories and other important resources that continue to attract local historians and genealogists from throughout Plymouth County.

On November 14, Register Buckley hosted approximately 35 employees from municipal assessors' offices throughout the County. In touring the Registry and its historic displays, Buckley invited the assessors and their staff to share their communities' historic treasures by bringing the land records of note in their own back yards to his attention for submission into the Notable Land Records Collection. It is an invitation Buckley extends to his own employees, other County employees, Registry users and visitors. With increasing frequency, it is an invitation that is being enthusiastically accepted. The Registry of Deeds is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Lorna Green at (508) 830-9290.