

**WEST BRIDGEWATER, 1951**

**BOOK 2182, PAGE 220**

**HASTINGS KEITH**

**United States Congressman 1958-1972**

**Leader in the Establishment of the Cape Cod National Seashore**

**Known as the “Cranberry Congressman”**

Former U.S. Representative Hastings Keith and his wife, Louise, purchased this West Bridgewater property in 1951. He donated the riverside portion of the property to the town in 1973 to increase the size of the War Memorial Park.

Mr. Keith began his political career in the Massachusetts Senate in 1952. He was elected in 1958 to the U.S. congress representing Plymouth County (except Brockton), Cape Cod and The Islands, and a portion of Bristol County. He was the last Congressman from Plymouth County to be elected to represent that area.

His proudest achievement as a seven-term Congressman was House sponsorship of the bill creating the Cape Cod National Seashore. He was honored at a ceremony in 2002 at the Visitor Center to the Seashore Park by the National Park Service for his creative and persistent leadership in establishing the park.

In 1959, a national rumor spread that cranberries were causing cancer due to the industry’s use of pesticides. The rumor was devastating to one of Plymouth County’s major industries. Through perseverance he tracked the source of this rumor, dispelled it, and the industry once again prospered. Mr. Keith earned his moniker when he filled his Washington, D. C. office water cooler with cranberry juice!

He had strong interests in historic preservation, public pension reform, sailing and the New England fishing industry. The Hastings Keith Federal Building located in downtown New Bedford is a tribute to his efforts on behalf of the city. It was rededicated to him in 2004, shortly before his death on July 19, 2005.

**Compliments of Register of Deeds John R. Buckley, Jr.**

**and Carolyn Keith Silvia and Helen Keith**

**Daughters of Hastings Keith**

**From the “Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Notable Land Records Collection”**