Sturgis Library Archives

MS. 200
Amy Littlefield Handy Collection

Extent: 5 boxes

Scope and Content Note: The collection consists of letters, photographs, documents, and artifacts relating to the life and family of Amy Louise Littlefield Handy (1860-1941). Other family members who feature prominently in the collection are Amy's father John Littlefield (1824-1905), her mother Louise Gannett Littlefield (1827-1885), her husband Edward Adino Handy (1855-1907), and their children and grandchildren, including Edward Otis "Ned" Handy, Jr. (1929-2018).

Biographical and historical information:

HANDY LITTLEFIELD

Job Washington Handy m Rebecca Otis John Littlefield m Louisa Joy Gannett
|
Edward Adino Handy [EAH] (1855-1907) m Amy Louisa Littlefield [ALH] (1860-1941)
|
Edward Otis Handy Sr. (1894-1956) m Alice Consuelo Saalfield (1897-1980)
|
Edward Otis "Ned" Handy Jr. (1929-2018) m Susan Eastabrooks
|
Susan "Susie" Sutton Handy m John Littlefield (no relation)

The following text is excerpted from an article on Amy Littlefield Handy in Edible Cape Cod by Susan Littlefield and Edward Otis Handy, Jr., December 16, 2014:

Amy Littlefield Handy (1860-1941) was born a year before the Civil War, married at 30, widowed at 47 and left with two teenage boys and her husband's family's rambling house and farm on Cape Cod. In addition to being a single mother, she was a farmer, keeper of bees and turkeys, author, artist and patriot.

She was born in Milton, Massachusetts, where she learned to love the woods and flowers, inspired by her 90-year-old grandfather Samuel Littlefield, a farmer, and her Aunt Lydia, a gardener. Writing later in life, on the Cape, she remembered it all vividly:

> *I can bring back all the odors of that garden right here and now on a cold autumn day by just closing my eyes and feeling grandpa's hand holding mine…odors of the little ladies delights under our feet and the grape blossoms overhead on the arbor. I think that right then and there I learned to love a garden.*

After finishing high school, Amy took art classes at the Museum School in Boston, and in 1890, she married Edward Adino Handy, a Barnstable native who had graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His education was financed by his schoolteacher sisters.

By the early 1900s Mr. Handy was General Manager of the Lakeshore and Michigan Southern Railroad. His family, which now included sons Jack and Ned, spent winters in Ohio and summers in Barnstable where Mrs. Handy tended cows, chickens, and a very productive vegetable garden.

In 1907, Edward died, and Amy moved to the family farm in Barnstable, becoming a full-time Cape Codder. Cooking went hand-in-hand with all of the farm's produce, and in 1911 the sales table at the Fair featured a small cookbook that she had compiled and illustrated, called *What We Cook on Cape Cod*. She also wrote three books on wartime cookery during World War I and was instrumental in encouraging people to grow their own food.

Meanwhile, Amy designed and supervised construction of a smaller house on the family land, insisting that it "…be a Cape Cod house and when it is finished it must look as if it had been here a hundred years!" It was her own adaptation, with spacious light-flooded rooms. She painted a harbor scene on a bathroom wall that is still a family favorite. With minimal changes, the house has served four generations well.

November of 1918 brought the Armistice. Amy was almost 60 years old, and no doubt her vigor for gardening was waning. She remained an active member of the Barnstable community, collecting produce, jams and jellies for a Christmas basket for a local church and hosting parties for the Civics Committee. She also found time to reminisce about her childhood, recording pages of memories of Massachusetts life in the period just after the Civil War

Amy died in 1941, but her legacy remains. Copies of her cookbooks are included in the collection at Harvard's Schlesinger Library, her drawings and watercolors treasured by her progeny. And today, her turkey house is the base of operations for our vegetable garden.

Access: Unrestricted. Credit Sturgis Library Archives for publication purposes.

Acquisition: Gift the Handy and Littlefield families, 2025.

Processed by: Lucy Loomis, July 2026.

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	Fldr 1.3	Information on the Handy Line
	Fldr 2	Family genealogy records books (2)
	Fldr 3	ALH genealogy research and correspondence
	Fldr 4	*Record of My Ancestry: The Handy & Littlefield Families* by Amy Littlefield Handy

BOX 1 Fldr 5 ALH miscellaneous documents

- Application to the DAR
- Samples of family members' hair
- Correspondence
- King family lineage
- Insurance policy information 1930
- A note from artist Hubert Von Herkimer, asking why she didn't come to sit for a portrait as they had planned. Note on envelope indicates "He invited me to his studio the sketch me but my father could not go with me, so I had to stay at home." Also, information on the artist.
- Recipe for pepper relish
- Pass to admit ALH and sons to Fort Monroe VA 1903
- Cast of *One Summer* play, Milton MA
- Notes of the Committee on Transportation, War Emergency Relief Board

Fldr 6 ALH watercolor paintings

Fldr 7 ALH Scribble-In book (sketchbook)

Fldr 8 ALH writings (1 of 2)

Fldr 9 ALH writings (2 of 2)

Fldr 10 Book by ALH *What We Cook on Cape Cod*

BOX 2 Fldr 1 ALH engagement letters

Fldr 2 ALH and EAH marriage licenses and wedding invitation

Fldr 3 ALH and EAH wedding gift book

Fldr 4 Book belonging to ALH & EAH *Thaddeus & Warsaw v.1 1837*

Fldr 5 Edward Adino Handy 1855-1907 (EAH), ALH's husband and railroad engineer.

- Includes railroad tickets, schedules, and passes to travel on numerous lines.

Fldr 6 Edward Otis Handy Sr. 1894-1956 (ALH's son)

- School reports, report cards, letter to and from family, etc. 1903-1932

BOX 2	Fldr 7	John Littlefield Handy Sr. 1892-1980 (ALH's son) • Report cards 1902-1908
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BOX 3	Fldr 1	Letters from Louisa Joy Gannett Littlefield to her husband John, March 1862 (ALH's parents)
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	Fldr 3	John Littlefield • Newspaper address delivered before Post 68 G.A.R. at their memorial service February 5th, 1875. Published in the Foxboro Gazette February 13th, 1875.
	Fldr 4	John Littlefield • Civil War epaulettes and other uniform pieces • Listing of his service in *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the Civil War*

BOX 3	Fldr 5	John Littlefield • Letters written to ALH and her sister [Sarah] Eva 1890-1904, some while overseas on a steamship cruise on the SS Alameda. (The USS Alameda (ID-1432) was a steamship used for runs from the West Coast of the United States to Hawaii.)
	Fldr 6	John Littlefield • Correspondence from and to his grandsons Ned (Edward Otis Handy Sr.) and Jack (John Littlefield Handy)
	Fldr 7	Samuel Littlefield 1779-1874 (ALH's grandfather, John Littlefield's father) • Deeds, insurance documents, etc.
	Fldr 8	Job Handy 1823-1874 (EAH's father, ALH's father-in-law) • Masonic papers
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	Loose in box	Books • *Barnstable Village, West Barnstable, and Sandy Neck* by Edward O. Handy Jr. • *Little House on Sandy Neck* by Edward O. Handy Jr. • *Christmas Farm: Life on a Vermont Farm* by Ned Handy Magazine • *Edible Cape Cod* Winter 2014 with article on ALH
Box 5		Photographs and Images Envelope 1: ALH, EAH, and sons Jack and Ned Envelope 2: Littlefield photos, silhouettes, and a glass plate negative

Box 5	Envelope 3: Uncle Solomon daguerreotype (young) and cabinet card (older) Envelope 4: Mercy Freeman silhouette Envelope 5: Unidentified family and friends