

**Sturgis Library Archives  
Town and Local History Collection**

**Cape Cod Canal Collection  
MS. 101**

**Extent:** 5 boxes

**Scope and Content Note:** The collection consists of photographs, postcards, publications, documents, artifacts, collectibles, and ephemera related to the planning, construction, history, and operation of the Cape Cod Canal.

**Historical information from the website of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2011:** The idea of linking two tidal rivers to create an all-water route across the seven mile isthmus of Cape Cod was first proposed by Captain Miles Standish of the Plimoth Colony. But Standish's dream for a waterway through the isthmus was far too large a task for a small band of pilgrims. During the American Revolution, a canal at Cape Cod took on an importance as a way to circumvent British harbor blockades. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many plans were made, but none succeeded. It would take a wealthy New York financier named August Belmont and modern engineering to finally make the pilgrim's dream a reality.

The grand opening of the Cape Cod Canal was July 29, 1914. Belmont's canal was expensive for mariners. As much as \$16.00 for a trip by schooner, a considerable amount in those days. This, along with the narrow 100 foot width and shallow depth of the canal made many mariners continue to use the routes around the cape. Tolls did not live up to expectations and the Cape Cod Canal became a losing proposition.

As a result, the Cape Cod Canal was purchased by the U.S. Government on March 30, 1928. The waterway was widened and deepened to nearly 500 feet wide and 32 feet deep, removing 30 million cubic yards of earth. All this work employed a total of 1400 men during the Great Depression. New bridges were built in 1935, and by 1940 the completed Cape Cod Canal represented the widest sea-level canal in the world. Ship traffic could safely transit the waterway and now over 20,000 vessels of all types use the Canal annually.

**Access:** Unrestricted. Credit Sturgis Library archives for publication.

**Acquisition:** Acquired from Dave Crocker, 2010.

**Processed by:** Lucy Loomis, September, 2011

*See page 2 for collection contents.*

Box #	Folder #	Contents
1	1	Advertisements (5)
	2	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary First Day Cover envelope
	3	Collectible postcard booklets & novelty cards (7)
	4	45 rpm record "Cape Cod Welcomes You" (1)
	5	Commemorative Reed & Barton coin (1)
	6	Commemorative button & coin (2)
	7	Commemorative coins (3)
	8	Canal guard badge (1)
	9	50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary stamps (1 sheet)
	10	Cape Cod Canal sequence photos 1935-1937 (17 + 2 copies of descriptive text)
	11	Original photographs [1 of 2 folders] (12)
	12	Original photographs [2 of 2 folders] (24)
	13	Photos – Reproductions [1 of 2 folders] (27)
	14	Photos – Reproductions [2 of 2 folders] (38)
	15	Photos of ships in Canal – Reproductions (21)
2	1	History of the Cape Cod Canal (1 page)
	2	Army Corps of Engineers publications (4)
	3	Official Program of the opening of the Bourne and Sagamore bridges 1935 (1 booklet + envelope)
	4	Newspaper articles [1 of 2 folders] (14)
	5	Newspaper articles [2 of 2 folders] (25)
	6	Miscellaneous publications [1 of 3 folders] (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charter of the Boston, Cape Cod &amp; New York Canal Company, 1900 (2 copies)</li> <li>• Cape Cod Canal illustrated, 1909</li> <li>• The Cape Cod Canal, 1627-1909</li> <li>• Cape Cod Canal – an address before the Boston Chamber of Commerce, May 25, 1910</li> <li>• A Little Visit to the Cape Cod Canal, 1913</li> </ul>
	7	Miscellaneous publications [2 of 3 folders] (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cape Cod and Its Canal 1914</li> <li>• The Pageant of Cape Cod, 1914</li> <li>• Cape Cod Canal, Interesting Facts for Navigators, 1915</li> <li>• Purchase of the Cape Cod Canal Hearing Before the Committee on Commerce, U.S. Senate 1919</li> <li>• Cape Cod Canal, circa 1925</li> <li>• Cape Cod[ photo booklet] 1926</li> </ul>

Box #	Folder#	Contents:
2	8	Miscellaneous Publications [3 of 3 folders] (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome to Bourne – the Gateway of Cape Cod (circa 1930)</li><li>• Cape Cod Canal, War Department, circa 1942</li><li>• Souvenir Program 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Cape Cod Canal 1914-1964</li><li>• Cape Cod Canal – Gateway to America’s Intracoastal Waterway, August 2000</li></ul>
	9	Miscellaneous documents [1 of 2 folders] (7)
	10	Miscellaneous documents [2 of 2 folders] (12)
	11	Book: Report of a Ship Canal 1864
	12	Book: The Building of the Cape Cod Canal 1961
3		Cape Cod Canal postcards <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aerial view (30)</li><li>• Bourne, Sagamore, &amp; Buzzard’s Bay (21)</li><li>• Bridges – Bourne, Sagamore, &amp; Railroad (82)</li><li>• Bridges – Old (23)</li><li>• Buildings (26)</li><li>• Campgrounds and cabins (4)</li><li>• Dredging and building Canal (58)</li><li>• Keith Car Manufacturing Co. (8)</li><li>• Map postcards (9)</li><li>• Natural disasters (tidal wave, fire, flood) (4)</li><li>• Novelty and specialty cards (3)</li><li>• Opening day (33)</li><li>• Scenic highway and roads (24)</li><li>• Ships and other traffic through Canal (79)</li><li>• State pier (2)</li><li>• Steamboats (3)</li><li>• Trains and railroads (6)</li></ul>
Box 4 Oversized		Cape Cod Canal banner
Box 5 Oversized		Poster-sized photo (reproduction) of construction around the new Bourne Bridge , circa 1935