

## Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum

Record Unit 387

# The Want to Know Club of Vineyard Haven

by Kathryn Harcourt

### Descriptive Summary

**Repository:** Martha's Vineyard Museum

**Call No.**

**Title:** Want to Know Club of Vineyard Haven

**Creator:** MVM

**Quantity:** .5 cubic foot

**Abstract:** The Finding Aid for The Want to Know Club of Vineyard Haven is an artificial compilation which contains a brief history of founding members, various annual membership lists, yearbooks from 1912, 1959-1984, papers presented by members at meetings, and copies of newspaper clippings about The Want to Know Club.

### Administrative Information

**Acquisition Information:** The material for Want to Know Club of Vineyard Haven was acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum by various donors during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Processing Information:** Kathryn Harcourt

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Use Restrictions:** none

**Preferred citation for publication:** Martha's Vineyard Museum, The Want to Know Club of Vineyard Haven, Record Unit 387.

### Index Terms

Castello, Caroline

Coye, Carla

Daggett, Elizabeth

Literary Organizations

Martha's Vineyard – Women's Club

*Twenty Voices*

Want to Know Club

Women's Clubs

### Series and Subseries Arrangement

Series I. Yearbooks (organization papers of) for 1912, 1921, 1922, 1959-1985

Series II. Papers Presented by Members

Series III. *Twenty Voices, II* (a WTKC publication)

Series IV. Clippings

### Historical Notes

The Want to Know Club (WTKC) was founded in 1893 in Vineyard Haven by three women, Elizabeth Daggett, Carla Coye, and Caroline Castello, as a literary organization

to answer an intellectual and recreational need of women on Martha's Vineyard. The Club was to promote the social pleasure, intellectual growth, and moral development of its members. It was structured around a theme for a given year, with members tackling a subject and submitting a report to the group. Many took this assignment seriously, researching both obscure and popular material, and often approaching the subjects with academic zeal.

Originally founded with just nine members, by 1894 it was voted to expand the membership limit to 20. Members were to "provide a place of meeting once during the season." Traditionally, only the hostess was permitted to bring one or two guests to a meeting. Initially the members met weekly, October through March or April, but later bi-monthly, to discuss readings and various subjects previously decided upon and assigned to individual members. Generally the meetings followed a strict format of three parts: Roll Call, Paper, Reading.

Some of the club's year books (which list the club's officers, members, honorary members, waiting list, founding date, program committee, program schedule and subjects for the year) in this collection are decorated with wall paper samples or block prints. An inspiring quote is sometimes found on the inside:

"To read is well; to think well upon what one reads is better; to work one's best thoughts into the web and woff of life is best." (1912).

"By knowledge we do learn ourselves to know." (1913).

"The desire of knowledge, like the thirst of riches, increases ever with the acquisition of it." (1960).

Most WTKC background information, and some biographical data on members, can be found in the WTKC's publication, *Twenty Voices, II* (1995), a centennial tribute to the original *Twenty Voices* (1895) which is a short history of the WTKC and brief synopsis of local and world events at that time.

## **Scope and Content**

The Yearbooks in this collection are arranged chronologically. Papers are organized chronologically and then alphabetically by title.

## **Series Description**

### **Series I. Yearbooks**

Box 1 of 1

Folder 1: Yearbooks and copy of Bylaws: 1912, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1959-1965

Folder 2: Yearbooks: 1965-1971

Folder 3: Yearbooks: 1971-1976

Folder 4: Yearbooks: 1976-1982, 1984

## **Series II. Papers Presented by WTKC Members**

Box 1 of 1

Folder 5: 1930-1932

“Birds and Waterfowl of Martha’s Vineyard,” by Helen C. Howland, 1930.

“Whaling,” by Mrs. Willis R. (Bertha Hagen) Hancock, Oct. 30, 1931.

“Early American Metalwork,” by Mrs. Donald S. (Janet) Swift, 1932.

“Life on the Island of Martha’s Vineyard,” Sydna Eldridge, Oct. 1932. (2 copies)

“The Vanishing Frontier,” by Helen C. Howland, 1932

Folder 6: 1933-1935

“Old Glass,” by Bertha E. West, 1933.

“Old Island Churches,” Berta Hancock, Mar. 1934.

“Society of Friends,” by Mrs. Joseph A. Merry, 1935.

Folder 7: 1951, 1962, 1988, 1996

“Biography of a Store,” Nina Eldridge, 1951.

“The Elizabeth Islands,” Edith Foote, Oct. 1962.

“The Mystery of the Pease Family,” Margaret Barnes, Feb. 1988.

“The Village,” Dionis Coffin Riggs, Oct. 1996

Folder 8: n.d.

“Early Days of the Want to Know Club, from 1893 On,” Gratia Harrington, n.d.

“History of Thomas Mayhew,” by Mrs. Frank Norton, n.d.

“Voyage with the ‘Ealing,’” ?, n.d.

## **Series III. *Twenty Voices* (1895, Vol. 1, No. 1), *Twenty Voices, II*(1995), WTKC Song**

Each volume is a brief history of the WTKC, writings of current members, the WTKC song, biographical sketches of some members; *Twenty Voices II* shows photos of WTKC members from 1995.

Box 1 of 1

Folder 9: copy of *Twenty Voices I*, 1895.

Folder 10: *Twenty Voices II*, 1995

Folder 11: copies of WTKC song

## **Series IV. Clippings and Photographs**

Box 1 of 1

Folder 12: copies of newspaper and magazine articles.

Folder 13: Photographs of 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pageant, 1943.