HAROLD BELL COLLECTION
RECORDS AND ARTICLES OF THE CAPE ANN MUSEUM

Creator: Harold Bell
Dates: 1956-2003
Quantity: 4.0 linear feet (8 manuscript containers)
Acquisition: Accession #: 2008.22; Donated by: Harold Bell, 2008
Identification: A52; Archive Collection #52
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Biographical Note
Harold Bell was born in Gloucester on August 17, 1914, to Molly Broder Bell and Morris Bell. He graduated from Gloucester High School at the age of 16 in 1931. He went to the University of Maine at Orono, for a year to study Forestry. He transferred to Yale University in New Haven Conn, and received a degree in economics in 1936.

During the middle of the Depression Mr. Bell and his older brother bought the controlling shares of Cape Ann Manufacturing, a local company that made oilskins for fishermen. The company later became Mighty Mac.
In 1939 he married Elizabeth “Betty” Dexter daughter of Marion Smith Dexter and Bayard Putnam Dexter of Orange, Mass. They had six children Peter Dexter, John (former Mayor of Gloucester), Diana, David Christopher Smith (J.J.), Holly, and Timothy Foster. Mrs. Bell died at the Oakwood Nursing Home in Manchester By the Sea September 1, 2001 and Harold passed away at his home January 1, 2007 of a heart attack.

Harold Bell played an integral part in the story of 20th century Gloucester. Part owner with his brother of Mighty Mac, Co-founder of the Cape Ann Symphony, trustee of the Cape Ann Savings Bank, active in the restoration of the West End, past president of Addison Gilbert Hospital, Harold was the worthy recipient of many awards for community service.

It was his tenure as President of the Cape Ann Museum from 1979 - 2003 that capped his contribution to the cultural life of Gloucester. Bell was a worthy successor to Alfred Mansfield Brooks (1940 - 1950) and E. Hyde Cox (1956 -1978). His personality, vision, political and fund-raising skills all produced a dramatic physical expansion of the museum.

The acquisition of the former New England Telephone and Telegraph building in 1989 allowed for additional space for a maritime exhibition hall that included Howard Blackburn’s sloop Great Republic. On a lower level it gave room for a library and archival repository. In 2001, another gallery, the 20th century gallery, was built. In that same year, work began on the Sculpture Garden and the Moose Hall was purchased for further expansion. Harold Bell’s vision of an expanded museum was funded by an intensive membership drive (from 821 members in 1979 to over 2000 by 2004) as well as success in attracting grants and financial gifts.

During his tenure years, the museum continued to acquire paintings and sculptures including a personal donation by Harold of a Fitz Henry Lane painting, Brace’s Cove. It was also his friendship with Barbara Errkila that resulted in the permanent exhibit of the granite industry.

Scope and Content of the Collection

The records and articles cover the tenure of Harold Bell’s presidency of the Cape Ann Museum, 1979 -2003. It was his specific wish that they be given to the museum. Some of the information comes from the years of his predecessor E. Hyde Cox (1956 - 1978)

Container List

Box #1
Folders
   Book: Gloucester Joe by Alan Crane 1943
   Catalog: Paintings by Fitz Hugh Lane, National Gallery of Art Washington 1988
   Catalog: Stuart Davis, Salander, O’Reilly Galleries 1990

Box #2
Folders
1. Correspondence re: Brace’s Rock, purchase by H. Bell, loans to museums for exhibitions
2. Green Folder: Correspondence Folly Cove Design
   Green Folder: Correspondence of E. Hyde Cox re: Fundraising, exhibits, Davis House
   Correspondence: re: Charles Hopkinson
3. Green Folder: Correspondence with exhibit of Milton Avery
   Green Folder: Fund raising
   Green Folder: Judith McCulloch resume
   Green Folder: A. Piatt Andrew
   Green Folder: Martha Oaks Curator of CAHA 1980’s

Box #3
Folders
Box #4
Folders
1. Institute of Museum Services

Box #5
Folders
2. Correspondence with Chris Rhodes re: sale of property (Federal and Elm) 1998, Lists of Cape Ann Artists (1) in museum (2) not in Museum, folder re: teacher material for CAHA, folder re: Long range planning for CAHA 1980’s, Folder re: Fitz H. Lane Symposium 1988

Box #6
Folders
2. Folder re: Building plans and expenses 1990/01
   Video tapes: Shores of Light, Gloucester’s Adventure, Poet and the City: Charles Olson, Breakthrough: A Portrait of Aristides Demetrios

Box #7
Folders
2. Folder: membership drive and party, article Paul Kenyon on CAHA 1979, instructions: cleaning silver, Invitation to CAHA membership for H. Bell, Stories of hardships of Gloucester fishermen, Deed of gift Walker Hancock 1987, misc. correspondence, art galleries, guide lines for user fees 1982
3. Misc. correspondence, letter Hyde Cox to Joe Garland (no date), correspondence: Elizabeth Bryden re: 7000 gift for Al Duca statue, proposal: Howard Blackburn exhibit,


Box #8
Folders


3. CAHA publications for exhibits
1981: On the Beach
1983/84: The Artist as Historian by Augustus W. Buhler
1998: Bernard Chaet: Cape Ann Landscapes
1986: 2 copies Stephen Parrish
1980: The Portraits and Landscapes of Alfred J. Wiggin
1985: 2 copies Annual Report
1989: Gloucester at Mid Century: The World of Fitz H. Lane
1983 Photographs by Eben Parsons
1989: The Sculpture of Walker Hancock
1986: William Meyrowitz and Theresa Bernstein
1994: Stepping Out Of The Frame
1994: Training The Eye and The Hand, Fitz H. Lane (2copies)
1998: Fish Stories

4. Pamphlets: Brookgreen Gardens, design for sculpture garden, Environmental site assessment Moose Lodge, Blue folder: Collection and evaluation of Hyde Cox by Landry Appraisers, inventory of furniture evaluation by Skinner