

PENOBSCOT MARINE MUSEUM

Inventory for
Manuscript Collection

PMM 81

George F. Smith Family Papers

1850-1951

$\frac{3}{4}$ box
.375 linear feet
Accession No. LB1991.199

Stephen Phillips Memorial Library

Penobscot Marine Museum
11 Church St., Searsport, Maine 04974
penobscotmarinemuseum.org
207-548- 2529 ext. 212 | libraryresearcher@pmm-maine.org

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PMM 81

George F. Smith Family Papers

Smith, George F., 1833-1909

Smith, Henry D., 1795-1878

Smith, Fred B., 1863-1940

Papers, 1850-1951

¾ box (.375 linear feet)

Merchants and record keepers in Searsport, Maine

Diaries, census drafts, and other documents related to the history and residents of Searsport, Maine, as kept by the Smith family of Searsport. The diaries, written by George F. and Fred B. Smith, records the activities and deaths of Searsport residents, ship sailings, weather patterns, and other town news from 1874 to 1939. There are also draft versions of U.S. Census lists from 1850 to 1890. Searsport news and vital statistics make up the bulk of the collection; there is relatively little about the Smith family.

In English

Christine Austin; Gift; 1991; LB1991.199

Finding aid available; folder level control

Subject Headings:

Smith, Fred B., 1863-1940

Smith, George F., 1833-

Smith, Henry D., approximately 1796-1890?

Prospect Mechanical Association (Prospect, Me.)

Searsport (Me.)

Census

Diaries

Genealogy

Weather

Acquisition:

This collection was given to the Penobscot Marine Museum by Christine Austin in memory of her mother, Nannie E. Smith Williams. Williams was the daughter of Earle P. Smith and granddaughter of Fred B. Smith.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Photocopies have been made of most of the collection; due to the fragile condition of the originals, these are the preferred means of access. There are no special copyright restrictions.

Condition:

The collection is in fair to poor condition. Most sheets have edges that are fragile and easily broken, as they are already battered or deeply torn. The bindings on the census books are likewise fragile; the binding on book containing the 1850s census has disintegrated, and is held together by the leather spine and a few stitched signatures. The diaries are now loose pages, though sheets appear to have been bound in the past. Many sheets show surface dirt from frequent handling.

Related Materials:

The entire collection has been photocopied. These are meant as working copies to protect the originals from further disintegration.

Historical Note:

The Smith family were long-time residents of Searsport, Maine. They were a family of shoemakers, merchants, pharmacists, and unofficial town record-keepers.

Henry D. Smith was born in what would become the town of Searsport in 1795. He had several occupations, listing himself as a shoemaker in the 1850 census, a merchant in 1860, and a druggist in 1870; he also contracted with the federal government to take the census of Searsport and Prospect in 1850. Smith married Clarissa Laughton Soule (b. 1800), also of Searsport, and had five children. He died in 1878.

George F. Smith (1833-1909) was the second son of Henry D. and Clarissa Smith. He went to sea as a young man, but did not pursue it. Instead, he settled in Searsport and became a druggist. George also took an active interest in the population of Searsport, studying and re-organizing census data and keeping a diary that, among other things, listed the comings, goings, and dyings of the town's residents. He married Mary Elvira Palmer and had two children: Fannie (b. 1859) and Fred B.

Fred B. Smith (1863-1940) was a merchant and tobacconist by trade, and, like his father, maintained a diary with that included notes on the movements and vital records of Searsport residents. He married Mary E. Gilkey (b. 1863) and had four children. The youngest, Earl P. Smith (1898-1975) became a machinist in Boston and, later, a sailmaker in New Bedford. Earl also apparently inherited his father's and grandfather's diaries, which he used to answer questions from Searsport families about local history.

Scope and Content:

This collection contains census lists, diaries, and a few miscellaneous documents kept by members of the Smith family of Searsport. The oldest item is Henry D. Smith's manuscript draft of the 1850 census, which lists names, ages, birthplaces, and occupations of every resident of Searsport and Prospect, Maine. This also includes notes on farms, farm equipment, mills, and other census bureau questions that are not included in the final population registers, as well as Smith's bill to the government for his services.

George F. Smith was likely responsible for the bulk of the material. Though apparently not a census taker himself, he collated information from the 1870, 1880, and 1890 censuses of Searsport, organizing the information by surname. About 1874, he started keeping a diary that listed local weather events, ship sailings, the arrivals and departures of Searsport residents in town and beyond, new buildings, and deaths. He appears to have kept this diary continuously until his own death in 1909. The diary continues, with similar entries, until 1939, likely maintained by Fred B. Smith. Taken together, the diaries are a detailed record of Searsport genealogy and social life for over 60 years, though they have relatively little information on the Smith family.

The remainder of the collection contains a small minute book from the Prospect Mechanical Association, of which Henry D. Smith was a member; a page from the *Belfast Republican Journal* in 1886 listing ships built in Stockton; and miscellaneous notes on Searsport happenings. There are also a few letters to members of the Smith family requesting information from the family journals.

Box and Folder List:

Box	Folder	
1	1	Volume containing: draft of the US Census for Searsport and Prospect, taken by Henry D. Smith, 1850 Summary of 1870 census for Searsport Diary kept by George F. Smith, 1874-1896
	2	Diary, George F. Smith and Fred B. Smith, 1898-1920
	3	Diary, Fred B. Smith, 1921-1928
	4	Diary, Fred B. Smith, 1928-1939
	5	Volume containing: list of Searsport residents by surname, from the 1880 Census List of vessels built in Searsport
	6	List of Searsport residents by surname, from the 1890 Census, G – Y
	7	List of vessels built in Stockton, from the <i>Republican Journal</i> , 7 October 1886
	8	Smith family correspondence, notes and ephemera, c. 1900 - 1951
	9	Minute book, Prospect Mechanical Association, 1841