

## Old Hingham Photograph Album, c. 1885-1926

**Repository:** Hingham Public Library  
**Manuscript Number:** MSC # 33  
**Creator:** Unknown  
**Quantity:** 1 Nonstandard Box (1 Photograph Album)  
**Processed By:** Stephanie McBain and Jennifer Williams. Finding aid completed in May of 2015.  
**Access:** Open for research. Some materials have been placed in protective enclosures and should not be removed from them.

### Provenance

This album was created by an unidentified individual between approximately 1885 and 1926. It was gifted to the Hingham Public Library by an anonymous donor.

### Historical Note

During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hingham's economy depended upon the maritime, manufacturing, and farming industries. Commercial fishing vessels numbered in the dozens, spurring the development of several coopering, cordage, and salt mining businesses. There were also numerous cargo and passenger shipping businesses in Hingham which were closely tied with Boston. Indeed, both people and goods would often land in Hingham before moving on to or from Boston.

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed the town also saw the opening of several manufacturing businesses, including foundries, shoe factories, carriage makers, woolen mills, and carpentry halls. Many of these businesses took advantage of technological innovations developed during the industrial revolution, allowing them to produce more goods than was possible in the past. Although these businesses thrived for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, farming was still widespread in the town. Many families owned acres of land which they used exclusively for raising livestock and growing crops. While some of these products were sold in and around Hingham, farmers also made use of the shipping businesses to send items to Boston.

Until the early 1870s, Crow Point was mainly pasture and farmland connected to the rest of Hingham by a cart path. In the 1850s Dorchester-born Samuel Downer (1807-1881) purchased 43 acres of this land, which would become known as Downer Landing. He planned to establish a kerosene factory there as part of his Downer Oil Company, but after the Civil War decided to construct a resort instead. He built wharves, cottages, and the Rose Standish House resort hotel. His biggest venture, however, was Melville Garden, an amusement park that included a merry-go-round, bowling alley, shooting gallery, dining saloon, music hall, and clambake pavilion. As the decade progressed, a cafe and pavilion were built on Ragged Island and a monkey house, duck pond, ice cream parlor, bear house, and picnic grounds were constructed along Downer Avenue. The resort and park soon became the most popular in the area, visited by 80,000 people a year at its peak.

After Downer died in 1881, his son-in-law James Scudder continued to run the resort for another fifteen years. While the resort flourished, wealthy Bostonians were creating an upscale community

of summer cottages nearby to serve as a respite from the city. They hosted parties and attended regattas at the Crow Point Yacht Club. After Melville Gardens closed, these residents formed the Crow Point Improvement Association hoping to create a more residential neighborhood.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century many of the industries and businesses mentioned above were declining, either by moving to other part of Massachusetts or becoming defunct. The early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw many meadows and forests, including those at Crow Point, developed into residential districts. New roads were created to connect Hingham to Boston and other important cities in New England. The population of Hingham grew and new families took up residence in the old and stately houses. These new arrivals were mostly prosperous individuals who made their living in and around Boston. Many changes took place, but familiar buildings and structures of earlier times remained as a reminder of times past.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection consists of one album containing photographs and postcards of Hingham between approximately 1885 and 1926. The images depict scenic views of important structures and locations, boats and ships near/on the harbor, as well as individuals/groups working and enjoying recreational activities.

### **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into the following series:

- Series I. Old Hingham Photograph Album, c. 1885-1926

#### **Series I. Old Hingham Photograph Album, c. 1885-1926**

The album in this series contains photographs and postcards depicting Hingham scenes between approximately 1885 and 1926. Some of the photographs focus on buildings and other structures in Hingham, including Old Ship Church, Bradley Hall, John D. Long's house, the Standish Rose House, homes along the shoreline, the Melville Garden Bridge, and stores on Main Street. There are also images depicting scenic views of such places as Crow Point, Pine Grove, World's End, Hingham Harbor and the shoreline, Main Street, cow pastures, and forests. Other photographs focus on the ships and boats that were often seen in the harbor, including wind-powered fishing boats, large commercial ships, the Rose Standish Passenger Boat, and beached vessels on the sand.

Finally, there are many photographs depicting people at both play and work. Photographs of the former include images of large families picnicking on the shore, young children playing in the streets and at the beach, adults canoeing in the harbor, and an elderly man playing the tuba for a young boy. Images of the latter include a blacksmith standing outside his smithy, men working in the field with a horse-drawn plow, and fishermen at the harbor.

Some images have come loose from the pages and have been placed in protective enclosures.