

Lewis W. Sears Collection PVMA Library

Lewis W. Sears, son of Daniel and Susan Amelia Sears, was born in Charlemont, MA, on Aug. 7, 1859. He married Jennie Z. Mantor of Charlemont. Sears ventured out west for a few years and returned home to open a meat market business. For 25 year he ran the Charlemont Inn where his collection of reproduction paintings, prints, and maps hung. Before his death on Nov. 4, 1931, he willed his collection to the town of Charlemont, with the stipulation that the town build a fire-proof building to house it. Since the town had neither the interest nor the funds to do so, the collection came to Memorial Hall Museum of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association. For years the collection was displayed on the 3rd floor of the museum, and now is in the library.

Jennie Maria Arms Sheldon compiled a catalog of the collection in 1934, *The Lewis W. Sears Collection*. She listed and briefly described 78 items, each of which in some way relates to the town of Charlemont, although national and regional images are also present. The reproductions include depictions of historical events, portraits, coats of arms, landscapes, and maps. The collection is arranged according to Sheldon's catalog; an inventory taken after it was transferred to the library in 2000, indicates that some items are missing.

The box in which the collection is housed contains a miscellaneous folder (includes catalogs, information on Sears, etc.); a manuscript catalog (bound volume) created by Sheldon with detailed explanations of the items; and reproductions of the prints, map, etc. in the collection. Original photographs have been transferred to the Photo Archives of Memorial Hall Museum, with copies in the library. Two framed, over-sized maps hang on the wall in the PVMA library's manuscript room, and in the 1st floor corridor of the Memorial Libraries.