

Lewis W. Sears Collection of Charlemont Images PVMA Library

Lewis W. Sears compiled this collection of reproduction portraits, coats of arms, landscapes, depictions of historical events, and maps over the course of many years. Sears was born in Charlemont, MA, on Aug. 7, 1859 to Daniel and Susan Amelia Sears. After his marriage to Jennie Z. Mantor of Charlemont, Sears ventured into the American West but returned to Charlemont to open a meat market. He also ran the Charlemont Inn where his collection of reproduction paintings, prints, and maps hung for 25 years. Before his death on Nov. 4, 1931, Sears made a bequest of 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 funds nor the interest to do so, the collection came to Memorial Hall Museum of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association. For many years the collection was displayed on the 3rd floor of the museum, and is now in the library.

In 1934, Jennie Maria Arms Sheldon compiled a catalog of the materials, *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 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 with catalogs, information on Sears, etc.; a manuscript catalog (bound volume) created by Sheldon with detailed explanations of the items; and reproductions of the prints, maps, etc. in the collection. Original Sears Collection photographs have been transferred to the Photo Archives of Memorial Hall Museum, with copies retained in the library.