

Kingston Public Library: Local History Room
Manuscript Collection Finding Aid
March 11, 2004

Lothrop Holmes Collection
(1824-1899)
Manuscript Collection, MC-15

1 Box (3 linear inches)

Biographical sketch: Lothrop Turner Holmes was born in Plympton, MA on March 29, 1824, son of Martin and Mary Turner Holmes. He married Elizabeth Howland Washburn of Kingston on June 4, 1848, and died on October 3, 1899.

According to an obituary notice published in the October 14, 1899 issue of the *Old Colony Memorial*: "Mr. [Lothrop T.] Holmes was born [*sic*] and spent most of his life in Kingston, except when following his trade, a molder, [in an iron foundry] at Providence, R.I. He also worked at factories here [Kingston?]. Mr. Holmes was for many years superintendent of Evergreen Cemetery, resigning a few years ago. He lived a quiet life, and was respected by the community at large. He was passionately fond of instrumental music, the banjo being his favorite. Mr. Holmes was a widower, his wife having died several years ago. He was a mason."

No mention was made in his obituary of his talent as a carver of hunting decoys for which he became a celebrated figure among antique collectors in the 20th-century. Adele Earnest in the *Art of the Decoy* wrote: "The most sophisticated carver of the nineteenth century was undoubtedly Lothrop T. Holmes of Kingston. Holmes' merganser decoys are a legacy any man would be proud to leave. The sensitive modeling and brushwork of these birds resemble the exquisite rendering of waterfowl on Chinese scrolls . . ."

Scope and Content Note: The collection consists mainly of newspaper and auction catalogue clippings containing information about Lothrop Holmes' decoys, photocopies of town documents pertaining to Lothrop Holmes' vital dates and photographs (possibly taken by Ted Avery) depicting Lothrop Holmes' decoys and gravestones of Holmes' family members.

Box and Folder List:

Box	Folder	Item
1	1	Copy of: birth record of Lothrop Turner Holmes, October 29, 1824; marriage record, June 4, 1848; death record, October 3, 1899; estate appraisal, November 13, 1899; final account of Holmes estate by Soloman Davie (executor), November 13, 1899
	2	Biographical history of Lothrop T. Holmes; gravestones of Holmes family (Lothrop, Elizabeth, Edgar, Emma, Mary); obituary of Holmes
	3	Excerpt from <i>The Art of the Decoy</i> and <i>American Bird Decoys</i>

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(Box and folder list continued...)

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| 4 | Newspaper articles regarding decoys and sales of decoys |
| 5 | Book review: <i>Call to the Sky: The Decoy Collection of James M. McCleary, M.D.</i> , Jackson Parker, Maine Antique Digest, November 1992 |
| 6 | Magazine article: <i>The Decoy as Folk Sculpture</i> , Jackson Parker, Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum |
| 7 | Book review: <i>America's Canvas Wildfowl Decoys and Their Makers</i> , Jackson Parker, April 1995 |
| 8 | Lothrop T. Holmes decoys: images of Lothrop T. Holmes decoys, with information on auctions and sale prices. |
| 9 | Local decoys: images and information on other local decoys |

Acquisition: Donated by Ted Avery.

Access: Unrestricted.

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Processor: Volunteer Ruth Ryan processed this Collection and Archivist Carrie Elliott created the finding aid for this Collection in 2004.