

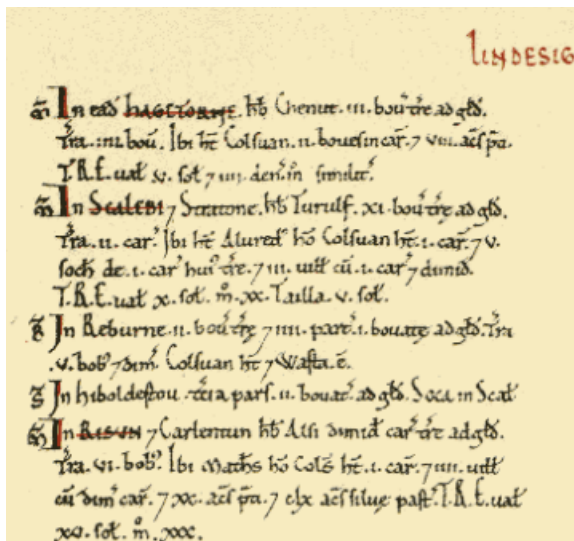


Lyme Town Hall in Connecticut

Lyme Town Hall

A Town that has captured all that is desirable in New England with a charm that stretches back to 1665.

A View of the first Domesday Book written in Latin as required by William the Conqueror



<http://www.domesdaymap.co.uk/book/lincolnshire/43/>

A history of Lyme really begins with Saybrook which was established by the Earl of Warwick in 1631 and named in 1636 and the region draws its original name from the coastal town of Lyme Regis in England located in the Lyme Bay along the English Channel. Lyme is described in the Domesday Book of 1086.

The Town of Lyme was set apart in a document referred to as "The Loving Parting" issued by the Connecticut General Court. Lyme is unique among the many historical towns in the Northeast in that their collection contains Grant Books which are descendant of the Domesday Book; first compiled by

King William (William the Conqueror) and in which an inventory or census of each landholder to determine the amount of land and livestock and its value so that taxes could be calculated. It originally drew its name from the fact that these tax judgements did not allow appeal of valuation and as such were comparable to The Last Judgement.

Grant Books



This is often referred to as the “oldest public record” in England; and Lyme, Connecticut carried on this tradition of recording the land, livestock and census of the area. This wealth of data can reveal a great deal about our early American Heritage.



Connecticut was a Colonial leader and their “Code of 1650” required children be taught English, catechism, and a knowledge of the law.

Lyme was uniquely positioned along the Boston Road to see travelers such as Nathan Hale, John Adams, Paul Revere and John Hancock travel through this area. Local homes became hot beds for talk of independence and on occasion provided lodging for these travelers.

Given this rich history it is easy to understand why the Selectman and Town Clerk in Lyme would chose to protect their priceless collection of records and artifacts with the most cutting edge of vaults.

The earliest deed books are viewed only with photographic copies



From the very beginning the Planning Committee honored their commitment to their unique community and its historic Town Hall by selecting an architect with the credentials to satisfy the needs of this project. Tuthill and Wells are famous for their Historic Library restorations. Citizens of Connecticut are familiar with such landmarks as the Bill Memorial Library in Groton and the Bill Library in Ledyard as well as the Mystic Noank Library and the Gunn Memorial Library. Considered some of the most beautiful of structures in Connecticut, they represent the history and culture of the Nutmeg State.

Bruce Tuthill and Ralph Eno began the process of planning for this unique construction project, blending

the most cutting edge technology with the most historical of structures. The end goal to provide a unique home for Lyme's unique treasures and ensure their survival for future generations.

The new addition to the Town Hall would be equipped with a FIRELOCK Vault that would protect these historical documents in a fire proof vault that would ensure the vault's interior



The Vault Door is unique in that it provides an outer security fire door and an inner door to increase the fire rating to protect fragile media.

temperature would not rise about 125° F. while at the same time providing environmental control to stabilize temperature and humidity in order to slow the deterioration of velum, parchment and early American paper which is known for a decaying process known as "Slow Burn". The vault chamber is also designed such that microfilm and computer media and audio records will also be safe within the vault chamber.

Ralph Eno, the Town Selectman who began the planning for a new vault for the Lyme Vital Records Collection and managed every step of the process commented: "***I was very pleased with the final project. Lyme's FIRELOCK***

Vault represents a huge upgrade in our protection of historical paper documents while providing the ultimate in protection for our electronic documents and media moving forward. The technology is amazing and the cost savings versus typical masonry construction certainly makes this a very palatable option for towns with space limitations and security deficiencies in their current vaults."

Linda Winzer, the Town Clerk who is charged under Connecticut State Law with overseeing the vital records collections of the Lyme Community, recognizes the priceless nature of the records that make up this Lyme Archival Collection. The collection would be priceless based on the early land recordings and history but added to this is something seldom seen in America, the Grant Books that draw their significance directly from the Domesday Book of King William, also known as William the Conqueror.

According to Linda: "One of the Town Clerk's primary responsibilities in any town is to protect its priceless records collection, which includes its land and vital records. Since Lyme has such an extensive and ancient collection, dating back to the mid-1600s, selecting the vault chamber to protect those records was an extraordinarily important decision as we embarked on our town hall renovation project. After comparing the options available, we selected a FIRELOCK Modular Vault. After watching the precision of the installation crew on our FIRELOCK Vault, and the

quality of the materials used for all of the vault features including the Class 125 Vault Door with an automatic closing device, I am confident our records are safe.”

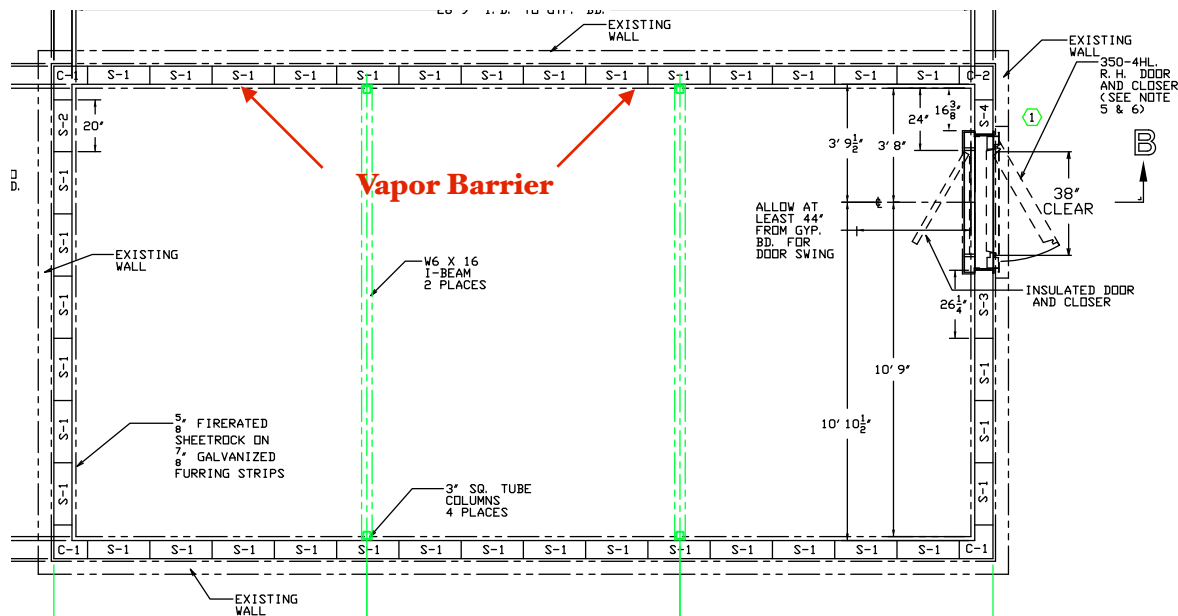


Only recently are historians recognizing the significance of the **Grant Books** in viewing a personal glimpse of the Early American household and farm. These may also play a role in genealogy research as they provide a very personal view of the homestead.

Too often, Town Selectman fail to realize the gifts that reside in their archival collection until a catastrophe robs them of the collection forever.

Or a Town Clerk may read of the absolute chaos that results in another community when their Land and Deed Records are lost to a fire. But in Lyme, CT you will find another story! A success story!

The Vault Chamber also includes a complete vapor barrier to protect the contents from smoke, steam and contaminants that might develop in a fire.



Class 125 Media Rated Vault Chamber

Lyme Town Hall is a project where the Selectman, the Town Clerk and the Citizens all came together to honor their culture and their treasured history with a remodeled Town Hall,

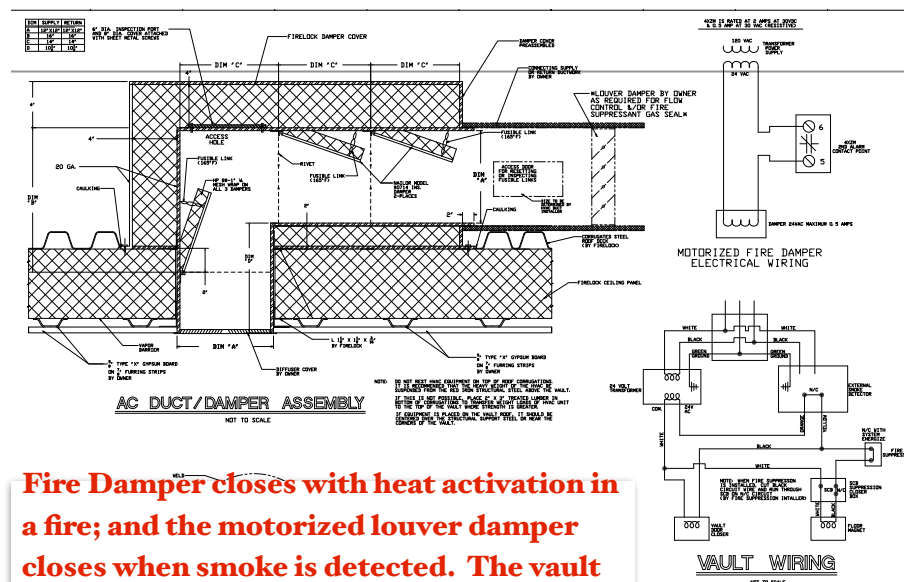
Community room and FIRELOCK Fireproof Vault Chamber to ensure their children and grandchildren would be given the opportunity to continue the stewardship of this wonderful archive.

The Vault installed into the project was 30' 4" x 16' 0" x 8' 0" High and was designed to fit within the newly constructed space such that the current volume of records could be protected but also allow for growth in the future. The vault door was located so that it opened into the Town Clerk's office, so Linda Winzer the Clerk, could oversee all entries into the vault so that the rare documents would be protected during the Town Hall's normal business hours when the vault is open for records access.

The structural steel in the FIRELOCK Vault is designed such that the vault can withstand 185 mph winds, earthquakes and even in the most catastrophic fire maintain the temperature in the vault below 125° F which is the temperature at which all types of media remain safe.

In vaults built during the last century; the only concern was protecting parchment and paper documents but in the current time, Towns must protect computer media, microfilm, audio recordings of Town Hall meetings as well as fragile historical documents.

The vault in the Lyme Town Hall facility will protect all of these fragile documents as well as media; and, more importantly provide environmental control so the degradation from mold and mildew will not destroy the documents. Historical documents printed after 1850 often contained high levels of acid which over time cause the documents to crumble and fall apart. Poor storage conditions accelerate this deterioration. Fortunately, Lyme is away from much of the environmental pollution that destroys documents in large cities and the new vault provides for temperature and humidity control through a ducted fire damper system.



Building a vault to protect fragile historical documents; as well as computer media requires a sophisticated design. That can seal the vault even in a panic situation where staff are not able to close the vault door.

This is also true for the fire dampers that

duct air into the vault.

New technology vault doors offer hydraulic closers that are heat and smoke activated to close the vault automatically in the event of a fire. This is critical as the occurrence of an actual fire in a facility often sends staff rushing for the fire exits and only after evacuation from the building do the staff begin to consider the status of the vault. The FIRELOCK Vault automatically closes the vault door; ensuring the survival of the vital Town documents and Deed Books.



Upon completing the installation of the FIRELOCK Vault, oftentimes the Town Clerk and Selectman will remark on the underlying sophistication of the vault features. The correct manner in which to install a vault door; to comply with the NFPA 232 - Protection of Records Standard, requires that the vault door have a hydraulic closer to close the vault door automatically in a fire exposure or detection of smoke.

Not only should the vault door close but the Inner Class 125 Vault Door must also close and seal the vault from smoke or steam generated when the fire fighters begin to fight the fire or sprinklers are activated. Environmental control of the vault requires the use of special Fire Dampers and these must also close when exposed to heat or smoke. This requires a special design in which the heat activated fire dampers close when the fusible link melts at 165° F exposure and the outer motorized louver damper closes fail safe on loss of power or upon activation of its smoke detector.

Seldom would a Town Clerk or even the architect on the project consider the appropriate design of the Cable Tray; these devices permit electrical conduit to enter the vault without affecting the integrity of the vault. These sophisticated devices prevent heat from migrating down the conduit and into the vault chamber. The type used by FIRELOCK are similar in design to those used on nuclear reactors where heat and radiation must be stopped within the reactor itself.

Bruce Tuthill, Principal in Tuthill and Wells stated: “Firelock was a vital member of our team in designing a vault chamber that addressed the State of Connecticut's design criteria for retention of public records. Their modular system not only provides the required 4 hour fire protection, but also controls temperature and humidity levels for protection of electronic media. Once we determined the required size for the vault, Firelock designed their system to fit within the allocated space without additional footings or structural framing beyond that required for the building. They also provided us with detailed technical support in responding to issues raised by the State during the review and approval process. We would highly recommend Firelock to anyone pursuing construction of a new vault.”

It is always exciting to work on a Town Hall Project where the entire history of the the Town is protected within the vault. Few recognize the responsibility that is required when the records in the collection are classified as “Permanent Records” and must be maintained for all time. Many Towns realize mold, mildew and deterioration result from improperly designed vaults and restoration costs are much higher than installing a properly designed vault. FIRELOCK has taken on this responsibility and for 32 years not one record has been lost in fires, floods, hurricanes, or earthquakes.
