Finding Aid to the Martha’s Vineyard Museum
Record Unit 155
James Chadwick Collection
By Marian Halperin

Descriptive Summary
Repository: Martha’s Vineyard Museum
Call No.
Title: James Chadwick Collection
Creator:
Quantity: 2 cubic feet
Abstract:

Administrative Information
Acquisition Information: 
Processing Information: Marian Halperin
Access Restrictions: none
Use Restrictions: none
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Series and Subseries Arrangement
Series I: Legal Papers
   Subseries A: Deeds, 1688-1862
   Subseries B: Other Legal Papers, 1753-1885
Series II: Letters and Notes, 1704-1935
Series III: Autographs, 1793-1831
Series IV: Maritime Material, 1810-1865
Series V: Religious Material, 1773-1867
Series VI: Miscellaneous, 1791-1901
Series VII: Missing
Historical Note:

James E. Chadwick (JEC) was a prominent Vineyard businessman and civic leader on the island of Martha’s Vineyard. While largely known for his involvement in a number of tourist businesses in and around the town of Edgartown, Chadwick also spent forty years collecting manuscripts and material objects relating to Vineyard history. Indeed, JEC created his own small exhibition space in his home to display his collection. Born in Edgartown on October 30, 1849, JEC lived throughout his live in his family home except for attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from which he was graduated in 1888. Trained as an engineer, Chadwick opted to pursue business opportunities on the Island.

His business interests revolved around the Edgartown waterfront such as his purchase of the Fisher and Ripley Coal Company which he operated at his wharf for over thirty years. The Chappaquiddick Bathing Beach was one of his most ambitious and successful developments. With his father and brother he began building changing houses in 1883 and continued to increase their number and supervise the facility for many years. The Martha’s Vineyard Railroad, the island’s first and only railroad, began service in 1874. JEC served on the board and was the surviving officer when its service ended in 1895. He purchased and disposed of the remains, including the equipment, rolling stock, and engine. He was elected Selectman for several terms. He also served as Collector of Taxes and as a member of the financial committee. He was a lifelong member of the Methodist Church, serving as an officer and also of the Martha’s Vineyard Campground Association. The DCHS, the Martha’s Vineyard Hospital, and the Sons of the American Revolution were among his many memberships.

Mr. Chadwick’s mother was Adelaide Cushing Thayer of Braintree who had been a summer visitor to the island. This relationship helps to explain the presence of Thayer documents in the collection. Through his paternal grandmother, he was directly related to Thomas Mayhew as well as other important early Americans. Beyond a life-long collector of historical artifacts, JEC was also involved in local historical associations like the Sons of the American Revolution and the Dukes County Historical Society. At the age of seventy, JEC died in his hometown of Edgartown on June 26, 1938. But, his connection the Martha’s Vineyard Historical Society did not end. Indeed, in 1986, JEC’s important collection of manuscripts and material objects was donated to the Historical Society.
Scope and Content

The JEC document collection was assembled, in his words, over the course of forty years as a hobby. It is comprised of legal documents, letters, maritime material, religious material, autographs, and a small number of miscellaneous items.

The collection as a whole illustrates JEC’s interest in the history of Martha’s Vineyard and his desire to preserve whatever documents he could collect related to it, along with American history in general. It seems likely that he acquired much of the Samuel Smith material from a surviving Smith family member. Samuel Smith (#70) served as Dukes County Registrar of Deeds in the late 18th and into the 19th century. In their diaries in the Society’s collection Samuel’s (#70) daughters Hannah and Rebecca both comment on the constant parade of people arriving at their house with notes and other requests for information related to deeds. Some of the deeds survived to become part of the collection, along with deeds related to several generations of the Smith family’s accumulation of property in the Job’s Neck/Pohogonot area along the south shore. Other documents are of a more personal nature, such as Samuel’s note asking Thomas Mayhew to shop for him in Boston for specific household items and subsequently including the purchases in a list of gifts he gave to Rebecca when she was married. Very few documents seem directly related to the Chadwick family.

The thirty-four Deeds date from 1688 to 1862. Most of them concern the sale of property in Edgartown.

Legal Papers include wills, administration of estates, probate appointments, and indentures. Several concern arrangements and charges for care of island poor and Indians as well as for use of English hospitals by sailors. In addition to material related to his office as Registrar of Deeds, the Samuel Smith papers include some personal material such as a receipt for purchase of a chaise from Thomas Cooke and subsequent taxes for it. Among items related to schools is an 1817 voucher for teachers’ salaries. The sixty-five legal papers date from between 1753 and 1885.

The earliest of the thirty-four letters which date from 1704 to 1935 was sent by a daughter living off-island to her mother, Hannah Smith, concerning her poor health. Most have a connection to Martha’s Vineyard such as West Tisbury’s poet, Nancy Luce, who wrote to Jeremiah Pease in 1879 to complain about being annoyed by visitors to her home. Others, an 1862 letter from a Civil War soldier for example, was to a Thayer relative in Braintree.
The autograph collection consists of more than a hundred signatures removed from their original text and three signed Treasury circulars dating from 1793, 1812, and 1831. Maritime material dates from 1810 to 1865, and is related to customs and navy certificates as well as a poem by Hannah Smith, daughter of Samuel (#70). The Religious Material contains a 1773 handwritten sermon by Joseph Thaxter, and later printed sermons, minutes of annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and an annual license for a house lot at the Camp Meeting. The Miscellaneous section begins with a 1791-92 English map and includes stock certificates, a copy of the Declaration of Independence, and other materials that do not fit the major categories.

Series Description

Series I: Legal Papers

Subseries A. Deeds

Box 1 of 3

Folder 1: 1688 Jacob Washaman and wife Betty, sachems, to John Gardner of Nantucket, property on Job’s Neck (also 1709 copy)

Folder 2: 1689 Daniel Stuart to Samuel Smith (#23), land at Jobs Neck

Folder 3: 1694 Moses Cleavland to Samuel Smith (#23), land at Job’s Neck

Folder 4: 1695 Daniel Stuart to Thomas Harlock, Job’s Neck property

Folder 5: 1700 Joseph Paul (Indian) to Samuel Smith (Banks #23) of Edgartown, about five acres near a pond. 1700 Copy of above

Folder 6: 1703 Simon Newcomb to Samuel Smith (#23), land in Pohogganit

Folder 7: 1703/4 Josiah Daggett to Samuel Smith (#23), Katama property

Folder 8: 1703-4 Joseph Norton to Samuel Smith (#23) Job’s Neck property

Folder 9: 1709 Thomas Peas to Samuel Smith (#23), land in Katama

Folder 10: 1710 Benjamin and Hanah Norton to Samuel Smith (#23), property on Job’s Neck
Folder 11: 1711/12  Joseph Tackenash (Indian) to Samuel Smith (#23), two acres on the easterly side of a neck of land commonly called paqua in Edgartown (entered 1737/8)

Folder 12: 1711/12  Simon Newcomb to Samuel Smith (#23), Pohogonot property

Folder 13: 1715  George Chatfield, Killingworth, Ct., to Robert Ubell (?), Killingworth, salt marsh in Killingworth.

Folder 14: 1718  Part of a deed regarding land belonging to Capt. Samuel Smith (#23) called Pohogganat

Folder 15: 1721  Samuel Smith (#23) to Brice Blair, property on Job’s Neck


Folder 17: 1739  Thomas Mayhew to Capt. Samuel Smith (Banks #23), Land in Pohogonot.  [Problem: his dates are 1661-1737/8]

Folder 18: 1739  Amos and Sarah Amepall, Indians, to Samuel Smith (#23), land in Edgartown.

Folder 19: 1752  Samuel Smith, father (#52) to son Samuel Smith, several tracts of land in a neck of land called Pahagonutt  [problem, SS #52’s dates are 1728-1796. His son SS #70 was not born until 1760].

Folder 20: 1758  William Wimpenny to Silas Hillman, land in Chilmark.

Folder 21: 1758  Hannah Finley to Samuel Smith (#52), Edgartown property.

Folder 22: 1770  Samuel Kingsbury to Samuel Smith (which one?), Edgartown land.

Folder 23: 1804  Eliphas Thayer of Braintree and Sarah Vinton of Quincy to Richard Thayer of Braintree, property in Braintree.

Folder 24: 1814  John Smith and Daniel Coffin to divide property owned together in Edgartown.
Folder 25: 1836 Allen Coffin to William P. Chadwick, land in Edgartown abutting the jail.

Folder 26: 1862 Joseph Mayhew and Joseph V. Kelley to Edward W. Chadwick, Edgartown.

**Subseries B. Other Legal Papers**

Box 1 of 3

Folder 27: 1675/6 Court action (copy) regarding William Cogswell and John Coggswell, Ipswich.

Folder 28: 1723 Summons (Boston) to Tobias Tobuke (?) in case of John Pitts.

Folder 29: 1728 Summons (Boston) to John Larkin of Groton in case of Thomas Armstrong.

Folder 30: 1751 Attachment order for goods of Eli Moser (?) of Edgartown in case of Joseph Mebiqueth of Mashpee.

Folder 31: 1752 Power of Attorney, William Trapp to Daniel Coffin.

Folder 32: 1753 Receipt to Brother Williams of Roxbury for rent from Capt. Naman from South Danforth.

Folder 33: 1753 Will for Samuel Smith.

Folder 34: 1759 Will, probate for Samuel Smith II [paper states in hands of third of that name from Edgartown -- does not match our genealogical information, but probably #52 for #23]. 1796 Probate appointment for estate of Samuel Smith. 1807 Receipt for settling claims against estate of Samuel Smith.

Folder 35: 1782 Receipt for wages, Quartermaster Robert Crooke. 1774 Power of Attorney, John Staples Craft, physician of Bridgewater and wife Elizabeth to Edward Durant of Holliston

Folder 37: 1784 Change of administration of estate of Thomas Daggett of Edgartown from his widow Live (Love) Daggett to Daniel Coffin and Benjamin Daggett, Jr.

Folder 38: 1785-99 Account, John Pease, Jr. to Samuel Smith (#70). 1791 Account, Samuel Smith (#70) to Francis Butler

Folder 39: 1803 Samuel Smith (#70) to Jethro Athearn for excise. 1807 Receipt, Samuel Smith (#70) for bill from Cornelius Huxford (in both dollars and pounds)

Folder 40: 1807 Indenture, apprenticeship of Martin Knox to Elisha Dunham “as a mariner able to read and write”

Folder 41: 1807 Accounting, Ezra Cleveland, Edgartown, for supplying his wife.

Folder 42: 1808 Arrangement by Overseers of the Poor for Live Nickerson, widow of James, and children, Providence and Edgartown.

Folder 43: 1808 Inventory, estate of John Vincent. 1809 Court Summons in case of poor in Conway, Ma. chargeable to Edgartown.

Folder 44: 1810 Property rates, Edgartown. 1810 Property rates, Edgartown notification from state.

Folder 45: 1811 Indenture for Mary W. Covel, Tisbury (parents Jethro of Edgartown and Amy Newcomb) as servant of Thomas Smith of Edgartown.

Folder 46: 1811 Charter granting Samuel Smith (#70), Elijah Stuart and Isaiah Johnson guardianship of Indians on Chappaquiddick. 1812 Settling of accounts between Jethro Worth and Chappaquiddick Indians. 1813 Release from liability for Samuel Smith and Elijah Stewart from suit against Charlotte Madison by H. Whitman. 1814 Receipt from Samuel Smith as a guardian to Hezakiah Joel. 1815 Account, Samuel Smith for groceries for Hezakiah Joel

Folder 47: 1812-16 Account of credit by Samuel Smith (#70) for Hezekiah Joel paid back from his earnings on Privateer Yankee. 1819 Receipt for a set of spoons from Beriah N. Mayhew to Joseph Mayhew

Folder 49: 1817 Voucher for teachers’ salaries, Sally Thaxter, Betsy Worth, Clarissa Allen. 1818 Voucher to pay Samuel Butler, teacher in Holmes Hole district

Folder 50: 1819 Receipt, Samuel Smith (#70) for William Tilton, Jr. 1819-1829 Bill and receipt, Samuel Smith from Henry Ripley. 1819-1821 Bill and receipt, Samuel Smith from Heman Arey. 1819 Bill and receipt, Samuel Smith from David Look (wool). 1823 Bill and receipt, Samuel Smith from David Look (wool). 1825 Bill and receipt, Samuel Smith from David Look (wool)

Folder 51: 1819 Receipt for looking glass from John Daggett to Joseph Mayhew. 1825 Receipt, Samuel Smith (#70) for binding two Bibles. 1827 Receipt, Samuel Smith (#70) for $.50 for searching records. 1831 Receipt for deed fees paid to Samuel Smith (#70)

Folder 52: (n.d.) Samuel Smith, list of articles to be purchased in Boston. 1819 Samuel Smith, receipt for articles purchased for him by Joseph Mayhew. 1819 Samuel Smith, “original inventory” of what I gave to my daughter Rebecca

Folder 53: 1831 Summons to Josiah Smith to attend school meeting, Edgartown. 1848-49 Edgartown School Committee report

Folder 54: 1833 Request re: Estate of Valentine Pease and John Osborn to Samuel Smith as Registrar. (n.d.) Property agreement (incomplete) with Silvester Norton, signed by Silas Hillman, Chilmark.

**Series II: Letters and Notes**

Box 2 of 3

Folder 1: 1704 Ruth Bacon of Barnstable, daughter, to mother Hannah Smith, concerning her poor health

Folder 2: 1787 Note from Henry Osborne to Silas Hillman requesting six shillings for Jeremiah Stuart. 1789 Note from William Steward to brother Hillman, request for molasses

Folder 3: 1794 Mrs. Gray, Edgartown, from James Morgan, South Amboy, N.J., on death of her husband Luke
Folder 4: 1807 Boston Overseers of the Poor to Edgartown Overseers of the Poor concerning Amelia Dunham. 1807 New Bedford Selectmen to Edgartown Selectmen, re: paying for and receiving back Uriah Dunham

Folder 5: 1808 (?) Envelope franked to Thomas Cooke, Esq. from Comptroller’s Office, Washington

Folder 6: 1812 Hezakiah Joel to Samuel Smith (#70) requesting he pay Samuel Osborn for his account. 1813 Benjamin Smith to Samuel Smith (#70) requesting copy of deed from Sarah Daggett to Timothy and Isaac Daggett. 1817 Benjamin Smith, Edgartown to Samuel Smith (#70) concerning court costs in New Bedford re: estate of Ephraim Pease

Folder 7: 1820 Lucinda Crane, Williamstown, from cousin Sally Crane.

Folder 8: 1823 Samuel Bigelow of Nantucket to Samuel Smith (#70) regarding land on the north shore.

Folder 9: 1823 Lydia Coffin, Hudson, Ma. To Daniel Coffin, Edgartown, re: claim for Nantucket property.

Folder 10: 1825 from Elijah Hillman, Holmes Hole to Samuel Smith (#70) regarding correction of work for Oliver Crosby and the Colemans.

Folder 11: 1826 James Lloyd, Washington, to James J. Austin, Boston re: work on Tremont Street and political comments from Washington.

Folder 12: 1830 J.T. Norton to Samuel Smith (#70) re: Joseph Mayhew-Joseph Kelley property. 1831 Kilborn Whitman to Samuel Smith (#70) requesting copy of deed for land in Edgartown Harbor that he acquired from Peter Coffin. 1833 Joseph Mayhew to Samuel Smith (#70) requesting “ancient” deed for land occupied by Grafton Norton. 1835? S. Daggett, Peter Pease and John Thaxter to Samuel Smith (#70) requesting a change in lot respecting the Indian line

Folder 13: 1840 Lizzie Acton, to Dr. David Thayer of Boston, personal (also envelope). 1840 David Thayer from Cincinnati to his mother Deliverance Thayer of Braintree. 1848 N.W. Wildes to Sylvanus Thayer, Newburyport. 1862 Alfred E. Parker from Yorktown, Vs., nephew and a Civil War soldier to Dr. David Thayer

Folder 14: 1843 Robert Rantoul, Beverly, to Benjamin Newhall, Boston, member of House of Representatives, re: views on settlement of paupers. 1863 P.S. Chadwick from Camp Jourdane to his mother.
Folder 15: 1878 James H. Marr, for Postmaster General, Washington, to Charles Fuld, Boston agent, changing name of Vineyard Grove Post Office to Oak Bluffs and moving office to Arcade Building.

Folder 16: 1879 Nancy Luce to Jeremiah Pease complaining about annoying visitors (also envelope with stamp cut off)

Folder 17: 1880 (?) David Coffin, Nantucket, to Daniel Coffin, father’s cousin, Edgartown, re: herring run


**Series III: Autographs**

Box 2 of 3

Folder 20: 1793 Circular, Treasury Dept., signed by Alexander Hamilton. 1812 Circular, signed by Richard Rush. 1831 Circular, signed by Louis M. Lane


Folder 22: 1824 W.I. Worth, West Point, to James Dollison (?) re: 300 bayonet scabbards. 1827 H. Clay to Mr. Fendall. 1849 Wm. Lloyd Garrison to Oliver Dennett re: anti-slavery lecture. 1850 Abbott Lawrence to Mr. Davis re: forwarding mail


Folder 26: 1934 George H. Lorimer (Sat. Ev. Post) to Leona Johnson. 1937 H.G. Wells. 1938 Pearl S. Buck to Mr. Chadwick. 1945 Emily Post to Miss Chadwick. 1945 Harry S. Truman. 1945 Eddie Rickenbacker to Mrs. Chadwick. 1948 Eddie Rickenbacker to Dear Friend


Folder 30: (n.d.) Massachusetts Governors
   a. Alexander H. Bullock 1866-1869
   b. William Claflin 1869-1872
   c. George D. Robinson 1874-1877
   d. Thomas Talbot 1879-1880
   e. Oliver Ames 1887-1890
   f. John Q.A. Brackett 1880-1891

Folder 31: (n.d.) Massachusetts Governors
   a. Roger Wolcot 1897-1900
   b. David I. Walsh 1914-1916
   c. Channing H. Cox 1921-1925
   d. Frank G. Allen 1929-1931

Folder 32: (n.d.) Massachusetts Governors
a. William B. Washburn 1872-1874 and Alexander H. Rice 1876-1879
b. George S. Boutwell 1851-1853
c. Nathaniel Banks 1858-1861
d. John D. Long 1880-1883
e. Benjamin F. Butler 1883-1884


Folder 34: 1878 Autograph book belonging to C.R. Woods.

Series IV: Maritime Material

Box 2 of 3

Folder 35: 1766 Sale of 1/3 part of the Sloop Phenix, James Athearn to Samuel Smith.

Folder 36: 1775 Receipt from Greenwich Hospital for use by six sailors from Brig Sea Horse. 1782 Clearance document from British officer to Sloop Betsey, Peter Pease, master, Samuel Smith, owner. 1819 Coasters Manifest for Sloop Boston.


Folder 38: 1865 US Navy Honorable Discharge to C.M. Marchant, Edgartown.

Series V: Religious Material

Box 3 of 3

Folder 1: 1773 Sermon preached by Joseph Thaxter (later hand copy). 1789 Sermon, manuscript, preached by Rev. Oakes Shaw of Barnstable

Folder 2: 1802 Sermon at interment of Daniel Shute, Hingham, by Henry Ware

Folder 3: 1832 Minutes, printed, of New England Conference of Methodist Episcopal Church, Boston. 1835 Minutes, printed, of New England Conference of Methodist Episcopal Church, Boston (Hebron Vincent elected elder)

Folder 4: 1865 Funeral obsequies of President Lincoln by on Rev. S. Reed of Edgartown. 1867 License, Camp Meeting Assoc., summer lot to Josiah H. Vincent. (n.d.) Doctrinal tract, “Mankind Depraved …”

Series VI: Miscellaneous

Box 3 of 3

Folder 5: 1779 Dr. Samuel Gelstron’s bill for S. Smith family’s smallpox inoculations

Folder 6: 1791-92 Map of Southern England, Trigonometrical Survey. 1751 Poem celebrating Life and Death of Sarah Thayer, wife of Ephraim Thayer of Braintree

Folder 7: 1807 Massachusetts Tax Act, pages 21-23. 1811 Tax assessments, Massachusetts counties. 1812 Resolutions (printed) opposing war with Great Britain, drawn up at meeting in Faneuil Hall. 1814 Life of Capt. James Lawrence, re: Frigate Chesapeake


Folder 9: 1855 Postal Order to Albert Ellis, West Wareham. 1861 Issue of Randolph Transcript. 1863 Stock certificate, American Coal Co. 1864 Stock Certificate, 100 shares of American Coal Co.
Folder 10: 1868 Check from William T. Chadwick to William Presbsey. 1888, 1889 Stock certificates, Martha’s Vineyard Railroad, to James E. Chadwick. 1901 Booklet, last speech of President McKinley. 1918 WWI Family sugar ration cards (5), Edgartown. 1951 Shellfish permit, Edgartown


**Series VII: Missing Items**

155B/14 1858 Calligraphy by R. Kennedy. A note states that it was removed on 3/4/92 by Ann Bacon (ask Jill about this)

155B/15a 1832 and 1851 Assessment ledgers for the New Methodist Meeting House

155B/20 No envelope found

155B/22 No envelope found

156B/34 Calligraphy (is this a duplicate?)

156B/37 {May be a log in the safe}