Finding to the Martha’s Vineyard Museum
Record Unit 329
Joseph Thaxter Pease Papers, 1814-1897
By Nancy Young

Descriptive Summary
Repository: Martha’s Vineyard Museum
Call No.
Title: Joseph Thaxter Pease Papers, 1814-1897
Quantity:
Abstract: The Joseph Thaxter Pease Collection comprises personal and business papers from 1842-1884 of Joseph Thaxter Pease of Edgartown, attorney, notary public, Collector of Customs, and Judge of Probate.

Administrative Information
Acquisition Information: The Joseph Thaxter Pease Papers were acquired by the Martha’s Vineyard Museum in _________ by _________.
Processing Information: Nancy Young
Access Restrictions: none
Use Restrictions: none
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Index Terms
Pease, William Cooke
Pease, Frederick K.
Pease, Cyrus W.
Monterey, schooner
Pease, Jeremiah

Series and Subseries Arrangement
Series I: Personal Correspondence
Series II: Business Correspondence
Series III: Bills
Series IV: Business Papers
   Subseries A: Legal
   Subseries B: Insurance Business
   Subseries C: Schooner Monterey
**Historical Note:**

Joseph Thaxter Pease, 1814-1897, was born into Edgartown’s first family. His father Jeremiah, son of Capt. Noah Pease, served as deputy Collector of Customs, Justice of Peace, Lighthouse Keeper, bone-setter, and surveyor. His uncle Isaiah, the Vineyard’s most influential politician, was County Sheriff for 40 years. Both brothers were active in the newly important Methodist movement. Indeed, Jeremiah was a lay preacher and founder of the Methodist Camp meeting in Ocean Grove.

Joseph’s brother, William Cooke Pease, of the Revenue Cutter Service, is known as the father of the U.S. Coast Guard. Cyrus, William’s twin, served in the Revenue service and was a well regarded as a portrait painter on and off-Island. First cousin Richard Luce Pease, friend of Alexander Graham Bell, teacher, and genealogist held many public offices including Register of Probate.

Joseph Thaxter Pease, a Democrat, held the federal patronage appointment of Collector of Customs for the Port of Edgartown for two terms. During his times as Collector he continued his work as attorney, notary public, insurance agent and ship agent. While his brother William was on Revenue Cutter duty, Joseph handled his financial affairs paying bills and remitting money to William’s family. He was later appointed Judge of Probate Court and served until his death. For Joseph Thaxter Pease, as Collector of Customs, see Record Unit 139, for William Cooke Pease, Record Unit 330 and Record Unit 331 for Richard Luce Pease. Jeremiah’s Pease’ serialized diary can be found in the Museum’s quarterly, the Intelligencer.

**Scope and Content Note:**

Many of the personal and business papers of Joseph Thaxter Pease were found among the records of the Custom House at Edgartown where during his terms as Collector he continued his other business pursuits. He practiced general law. He was involved in the Oak Bluffs Land and Wharf Company as attorney and stock holder and made a speech at the banquet for the opening of the Sea View House built by the company.

As agent for The Quincy Mutual Fire Insurance Company, he sold policies to his friends and townspeople. He paid bills and lays and hired masters as agent for the owners of the coastal fishing schooner Monterey.

His brothers, William and Cyrus, relied on him to handle their finances while off island and the collection has their letters describing life and politics in the Revenue Marine Service and Washington, D.C. as well as William’s bank drafts and bills. In his personal life, he and his wife Sophronia Norton had 6 children so he paid bills for children’s shoes and beds and ordered himself new trousers and braces. Like all his family he was important in Democratic politics and sent and received letters on appointments and elections as well as lobbying for a job in the Boston Customs House.
Series Description
Series I: Personal Correspondence
Box 1 of 2
Folder 1: Letters of recommendation 1843
Folder 2: 1842-1843 (includes letter from brother Jeremiah Pease, Jr.)
Folder 3: Democrat party politics 1843-1846
Folder 4: William Cooke Pease letters to JTP 1843-1856
Folder 5: 1845, 1846 and no date
Folder 6: Cyrus W. Pease letters to JTP 1846
Folder 7: 1849, 1850 (includes letter from brother Frederick K.)

Series II: Business Correspondence
Box 1 of 2
Folder 8: 1843
Folder 9: 1845
Folder 10: 1846
Folder 11: 1847
Folder 12: 1856

Series III: Bills
Box 1 of 2
Folder 13: 1849
Folder 14: 1851
Folder 15: 1852
Folder 16: 1854
Folder 17: Bills and bank drafts for William Cooke Pease 1844, 1861, 1862

Series IV: Business Papers
Subseries A: Notary and Legal
Box 1 of 2
Folder 18: 1842
Folder 19: 1845
Folder 20: 1846
Folder 21: 1847
Folder 22: 1848
Folder 23: 1857
Folder 24: 1866
Folder 25: 1869
Folder 26: 1870
Folder 27: 1872
Folder 28: 1872–Speech by JTP at opening of the Sea View, 1872
Folder 29: 1876
Folder 30: 1884
Subseries B: Insurance
Box 2 of 2
Folder 1: 1859
Folder 2: 1860
Folder 3: 1861

Subseries C: Schooner Monterey
Box 2 of 2
Folder 4: 1848, 1849
Folder 5: 1850
Folder 6: 1851
Folder 7: 1852