

**Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum  
Record Unit 330**

**William Cooke Pease Collection, 1838-1906**

By Nancy Young

**Descriptive Summary**

**Repository:** Martha's Vineyard Museum

**Call No.**

**Title:** William Cooke Pease Collection

**Quantity:** 1.5 cubic feet

**Abstract:** The William Cooke Pease Collection, 1838-11906, includes the professional and personal papers of Capt. William Cooke Pease, of Edgartown, who spent his adult life as an Officer in the U.S. Revenue Marine Service, the forerunner of the Coast Guard.

**Administrative Information**

**Acquisition Information:** The Pease Collection was acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum in \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_. They were assembled by Florence Kern, Capt. Pease's biographer, in the 1980's.

**Processing Information:** Nancy Young

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Use Restrictions:** none

**Preferred Citation for Publication:** Martha's Vineyard Museum, William Cooke Pease Collection 1840-1906, Record Unit 330.

**Index Terms**

- Coast Guard, History of the
- Custom Collectors
- Edgartown
- Kern, Florence
- Martha's Vineyard
- Pease Family
- Pease, Serena
- Pease, William Cooke
- U.S. Revenue Marine Service

**Series and Subseries Arrangement**

Series I: Personal Papers, 1838-1893

Series II: Personal Correspondence, 1840-1906

Subseries A: Incoming and Outgoing Letters of William Cooke Pease, 1840-1906

Subseries B: Incoming and Outgoing Letters of Serena Pease, 1866-1893

Series III: Professional Correspondence, 1842-1864

## William Cooke Pease Collection ( 1838- 1893)

### Series IV: Professional Papers

Subseries A: Ship Logbooks

Subseries B: Ship Accounts

Subseries C: U.S.Revenue Marine Cutter Service Material

Subseries D: Miscellaneous Material

### Series V: Newspapers and Clippings, 1854-1986

### Series VI . Florence Kern

Subseries A: Publications, 1982-1984

Subseries B: Correspondence, 1981-1983

### **Historical Note:**

Capt. William Cooke Pease ( 1819-1865 ) was a son of Jeremiah Pease of the influential Pease family of Edgartown.,who named his son after his employer and friend Thomas Cooke, Jr. Among his brothers were Joseph Thaxter Pease,Collector of Customs, Sheriff Isaiah Pease, and his twin Cyrus, the painter. He and Serena, his wife, daughter of Capt. Valentine Pease, conducted their troubled marriage at long distance in his absences.

In 1839 he joined the U.S. Revenue Marine Service and quickly rose in rank, spanning the transition from sail to steam. Stationed in San Francisco, the California coast and the Northwest Territory of Washington, his Revenue Marine Cutters were important representatives of the U.S. Government's authority. Capt. Pease designed and built new Cutters for the Great Lakes and refitted many aging vessels on the West Coast . He and his crew were commended for a dramatic ship rescue in 1854 off the Carolina coast. He died of typhoid in December,1865, age 46, aboard his Cutter in Charleston, S.C. His body was brought back to Edgartown by Cutter He is regarded as a founder of the modern Coast Guard, and the Coast Guard Academy has more of his papers.

### **Scope and Content Note:**

The William Cooke Pease Collection consists of logs and inventories of U.S. Revenue Marine Cutters on which Capt. Pease served, letters to the Collector of Customs in Washington and to the U.S. Treasury, bills and receipts for work done on various Cutters. Other papers include his correspondence with ship builders and his official appointments as Officer in the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service as well as other papers relating to his service, including a petition to the U.S. Congress in 1855 for reimbursement of Treasury funds lost in a bank failure that he made good. There are also letters of support for him after his dismissal as Commanding Officer of the Cutter *Shubrick* at San Francisco in 1863. Personal papers include correspondence with his wife, Serena, his brother, Joseph Thaxter Pease, and letters from Serena written after his death. In addition, the collection contains letters and notes from Pease's biographer (Florence Kern).

### **Series Description**

#### **Series I. Personal Papers 1838-1893**

## William Cooke Pease Collection ( 1838- 1893)

Box 1 of 3

Folder 1: Album of autographs etc. kept by Serena Pease, 1838

Folder 2: Deed for purchase of house on Road to the Slough, ( S. Water St.), Edgartown, 1848,

Folder 3: Expenses for house 1848-1850

Folder 4: Oregon's dispute with the Hudson Bay Co., 1848-1851.

Folder 5: Certificate of appointment of William Cooke Pease as Notary Public for the County of Solano, Ca, June 8,1843.

Folder 6: "Early American Hurricanes" by David Ludlum of WCP's account of the Key West hurricane of October 11/12.1846 aboard the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Morris*.

Folder 7: Scrapbook of clippings and sailing directions kept by William Cooke Pease, 1844.

Folder 8: Official appointment of William Cooke Pease as delegate from California to "The World's Industrial Exhibition" in New York (World's Fair) June ,1853.

Folder 9: Certificate of William Cooke Pease' admission to practice law in the Territory of Washington, Jan. 2,1855.

Folder 10: Receipts for money loaned by William Cooke Pease.1858.

Folder 11: Envelope of signatures collected by William Cooke Pease

Folder 12: Official valuation of William Cooke Pease estate,1865, listing commemorative silver pitcher. Letter from Serena Pease to her son Willie giving him his father's commemorative silver pitcher and her desire that he keep it in the family. 1893.

### **Series II: Personal Correspondence 1840-1906**

#### **Subseries A: Incoming/Outgoing Letters of William Cooke Pease 1840-1906**

Box 1 of 3

Folder 13: Letter to William Cooke Pease from John Reid, U.S. Treasury re William Cooke Pease' support of petition for relief of widows of officers in the U.S.Revenue Marine Service. January 23,1840.

Folder 14: Two letters from William Cooke Pease to his brother, Joseph Thaxter Pease, re: his ambitions for advancement, loans, life aboard. From Cutter *Ewing*, 1842, and Cutter *Jackson*, 1843.

Folder 15: Letters to Serena Pease Pease, (Mrs. William Cooke), 1849-1865. Letters from William Cooke Pease to Serena Pease, 1852, and 1865.

Folder 16: Letter to William Cooke Pease from J.A. Slamm re visiting him in Edgartown,1866. Letter from J.A. Slamm re: affidavit concerning William Cooke Pease written in 1906.

#### **Subseries B: Incoming and Outgoing Letters of Serena Pease, 1866-1893**

Box 1 of 1

Folder 17: Letter from Serena Pease to crew of U.S.Revenue Cutter *Kewanee* in reply to their letter of condolence. Feb. 3 1866. Letter (to Serena Pease ?) re mourning gloves.

Folder 18: Letter from Serena Pease to her son Willie giving him his father's commemorative silver pitcher and her desire that he keep it in the family. 1893.

### **Series III: Professional Correspondence, 1842-1864**

## William Cooke Pease Collection ( 1838- 1893)

Box 2 of 3

Folder 1: Drafts of letters from William Cooke Pease requesting reimbursement for travel expenses, Sept. 27.1842. Letters of various dates re: the U.S.Marine Cutter Service. 1842-1860.

Folder 2: Copy of letter from U.S. Revenue Cutter *Morris* ,to the US Consul in Havana inc. list of needed supplies and armament July 11,1846. Letter from Capt. Waldron of the *Morris* re: newspaper article.

Folder 3: Letters of support for William Cooke Pease 's petition in Congress re reimbursement for Government funds lost in a bank failure that he made good. 1855.

Folder 4: Letter from William Cooke Pease to San Francisco Harbormaster re: anchorage of U.S.Revenue Cutter *William L. Marcy* in ship channel, Sept. 19.1860.

Folder 5: William Cooke Pease requesting charter of a steamer to serve as Cutter in San Francisco, July 18,1861 (in a letter from Florence Kern Oct 13,1983).

Folder 6: Collector of Customs to William Cooke Pease suspending him from command of the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Shubrick*, December 3.1862.

Folder 7: Pamphlet of letters recommending William Cooke Pease's appointment as Master of a Revenue Cutter to be stationed in San Francisco Harbor. March 1863.

Transcripts of letters of recommendation and support for William Cooke Pease signed by San Francisco merchants, March 1863., after his dismissal from the *Shubrick*.

Folder 8: Letter to the Collector of Customs, Wash. D.C. from William Cooke Pease re his medical condition and rumors of drunken behavior, Jan. 11,1864.

### **Series IV: Professional Papers**

#### **Subseries A: Ship Logs**

Box 2 of 3

Folder 9: Log: U.S. Revenue Cutter *Argus* 1849.

Folder 10: Log of U.S.Revenue Cutter *Argus*, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. W.C.Pease, commanding, from Sept.24-Oct.12, 1851 with list of ships boarded and seized.

Folder 11: Transcript of log of U.S. Revenue Schooner *Argus*, Lt. William C. Pease, commanding. Jan. 1,1859

Folder 12: Transcript of log U.S. Revenue Cutter *Shubrick*, Oct. 1862 (photocopy)

Folder 13: Log of U. S. Revenue Cutter *Kewanee* with entry of the death of the ships Commander, WCP. Dec. 30.1865, Charleston, (photocopy)

#### **Subseries B: Ship Accounts**

Box 2 of 3

Folder 14: Inventory for unnamed U. S. Revenue Cutter.(n.d.)

Folder 15: Inventory of U.S. Revenue Cutter *Howell Cobb* Oct.1,1847

Folder 16: Bill for supplies for the U.S.Revenue Cutter *Jefferson*, San Francisco, 1854.

Folder 17: U.S.Revenue Cutter *William L. Marcy* , Capt. William Cooke Pease Papers re: refitting the *William L. Marcy*, 1858

Folder 18: U.S.Revenue Cutter *William L. Marcy* , Bills of requisition for refitting: 1859-1861.

## William Cooke Pease Collection ( 1838- 1893)

### **Subseries C: U.S. Revenue Marine Cutter Service Material**

Box 3 of 3

Folder 1: *Book of Gunnery*, 1840, inscribed. U.S. Revenue Cutter *Wolcott*. Notebook of navigation stamped " Lieut. William Cooke Pease, U.S. Revenue Marine Service"

Folder 2: Charges of Neglect of duty by Capt. Fatio of Cutter *Jackson*. Jan. 1843.

Folder 3: Testimony at Court of Inquiry in Newport (n.d.)

Folder 4: Receipt for salary pd to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt William Cooke Pease at Newport, March 7, 1849

Folder 5: "Charts and Sailing Directions for California". Wash. 1851, Inscribed:

"U.S. Revenue Cutter *Argus*, W.C. Pease, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. commanding"

Folder 6: Papers and letters incoming and outgoing among William Cooke Pease, Sec. of the Treasury, and builders Merryman & Gay re: designing/building of 6 new Revenue Cutters on Lake Erie.

Folder 7: Officer lists for the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service, 1844 and 1853.

Folder 8: Diary-Journal 1853 ( incomplete )clippings, accounts

Folder 9: Appointment of William Cooke Pease as Captain, signed by Pres, Franklin Pierce, 1853. Appointment of William Cooke Pease as Captain, signed by Pres Abraham Lincoln, 1864 (photocopy) with letter from Florence Kern.

Folder 10: Letters of various dates

Folder 11: Plans of U.S. Revenue Marine Cutter *Shubrick*.

Folder 12: *Internal Regulations of U.S. Revenue Marine Service*

### **Subseries D: Miscellaneous Material**

Box 3 of 3

Folder 13: Letter, June 15, 1838, from General Wolfe, to Collector of Customs in Delaware re: small arms sold from Cutter *General Green*.

Folder 14: Letter from Leavitt Thaxter, of Edgartown, Collector of Customs, to Collector in Washington, Feb. 6, 1850, re: importance of presence of a U.S. Revenue Cutter in Vineyard Sound especially at Holmes Hole. (photocopy)

Folder 15: Log of the U.S. Revenue Cutter *J.C. Dobbin*, Capt. T.D. Walker, commanding, on Edgartown station, April 1865, mention of 21 gun salute, April 5 to celebrate Union victories by order of the President and on April 18, colors at half-mast for funeral of Pres. Lincoln.

### **Series V: Newspapers and Clippings 1854-1986**

Box 3 of 3

Folder 16: *Puget Sound Courier*, Dec. 14, 1855 signed by William Cooke Pease

Folder 17: New Orleans newspapers for Oct. 1846 that printed William Cooke Pease' account of the Key West hurricane.

Folder 18: Article about William Cooke Pease, ship rescue and awarding of the silver pitcher *Vineyard Gazette*, 1854.

Folder 19: *The Boston Daily Globe*, November 27, 1875.

Folder 20: *Journal of Commerce* supporting the U.S. Revenue Marine Service Signed: "Commerce". (n.d.)

## William Cooke Pease Collection ( 1838- 1893)

Folder 21: "Captain's Letters Tell a Story from Edgartown in the 1800's." by Florence Kern, *Vineyard Gazette*, Sept. 5, 1986.

### **Series VI: Florence Kern**

**Historical Note:** Florence Kern, formed the William Cooke Collection in the 1980's from the archives of the MVM, and material she gathered from other sources as she researched the Revenue Marine Service and the early years of the Coast Guard. She wrote about him not only in the *Intelligencer* but a book length biography.

### **Subseries A: Publications, 1982-1984.**

Box 3 of 3

Folder 22: "Captain Pease's Cocked Hat and Gold Buttons", *Intelligencer*, pp 43, Nov. 1982. "Gallant Officer Sails Home for the Last Time", *Intelligencer*, pp 147, May, 1984. Review of *Captain William Cooke Pease: U. S. Coast Guard Pioneer*, by Florence Kern, pp 122., Feb. 1983. by Arthur Railton. Letters from Florence Kern to Dukes County Historical Society (Martha's Vineyard Museum)

### **Subseries B: Correspondence**

Box 3 of 3

Folder 23: Letter from Florence Kern, Oct 13, 1983 with copy of letter from William Cooke Pease requesting charter of a steamer to serve as Cutter in San Francisco, July 18, 1861.

Folder 24: Letter from Florence Kern, 1981, re: letter from Collector of Customs to William Cooke Pease suspending him from command of the U.S. Revenue Cutter *Shubrick*, Dec. 3, 1862 (photocopy)

Folder 25: Letter from Florence Kern with photocopy of Appointment of William Cooke Pease as Captain, signed by Pres. Abraham Lincoln, 1864