

Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum Record Unit 280

The Jeremiah Pease Collection, 1817-1857

By Jean R. Ross and Jean Cargill

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Martha's Vineyard Museum

Title: Jeremiah Pease Collection

Creator:

Quantity: 1.0 cubic feet

Abstract: The Jeremiah Pease materials provide detailed accounts of daily life on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts during the early 19th century. The collection includes Jeremiah's personal diaries (November 16, 1817 to June 5, 1857), a journal of surveying activities (April 22, 1822 to September 9, 1856), records of Indian lands on Chappaquiddick (1828; 1849), a log of vessels calling at Edgartown Harbor (January 12, 1827 to December 1, 1834), and a history of the first Methodists on Martha's Vineyard (1847).

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information: The Jeremiah Pease materials were acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum from various sources. Five volumes of the diaries are the gift of Julien Vose Weston to the Museum in 1975.

Processing Information: Jean R. Ross and Jean Cargill

Access Restrictions: none

Use Restrictions: none

Preferred citation: Martha's Vineyard Museum, Jeremiah Pease Collection, 1817-1857, Record Unit 280.

Index Terms

Wesleyan Grove Camp Meeting

Revivals

"Reformation John" Adams

Methodist Church

Edgartown Lighthouse Keepers

Surveying on Martha's Vineyard

Edgartown Customs House

Globe

John Jay

Walter Scott

Captain William Pease

Joseph Pease

Morris

Jackson

Gold Rush

Frederick Pease

John Pease

Daniel C. Pease

Constant Norton

Eliza Pease

Naushon
Sarah

Great Republic
Chappaquiddick Indian Lands

Series Arrangement

Series I: Diaries, 1817-1857

Series II: Land Surveys

Series III: Business Records

Series IV: Methodist Church

Historical Note

Jeremiah Pease was born April 8, 1792 and died June 5, 1857. His parents were Noah and Hannah Dunham Pease. He married Eliza Worth on September 30, 1813 and they had 10 children. He lived in Edgartown all his life. He was a "jack of all trades": surveyor, Collector of Customs in Edgartown, lighthouse keeper, Methodist layman and chorister, bonesetter, cordwainer, bedsitter for dying persons, politician, manager of Thomas Cooke's salt works, commission salesman for molasses and whale oil, Justice of the Peace. He owned shares in whaling vessels.

His diaries report on daily activities and weather that occurred on the Vineyard during the period of great whaling prosperity. As a surveyor and fundamentalist Methodist he laid out the Wesleyan Grove Camp Meeting in what is now Oak Bluffs and founded the religious revivals that were held there and elsewhere around the island.

He was an early convert to Methodism and became so fanatically involved in the revivals that he may have suffered some sort of breakdown. There is a gap in the diaries from 1823 to 1829, the years immediately following his conversion. The entries from 1829 to 1832 were written by his son, Joseph, "owing to my peculiar circumstances." The diaries contain little information about his feelings and seldom mention his wife and children. His handwriting remained clear and legible on the day of his death when he made his final entry, a weather report.

Scope and Contents Note

The Jeremiah Pease collection preserves his diligent note taking over four decades. The bulk of the material is Jeremiah's personal diary (1817-1857) described by Arthur Railton as "the most complete diary of any Islander that we know who lived during the 1800s ..." And accordingly, Railton published excerpts of the diaries in over fifty issues of *The Dukes County Intelligencer* during 1974 to 1992. Pease's Surveyor's Journals (1822-1856) are equally detailed accounts. Further noteworthy items are the surveys of the Island's Indian Lands, especially Chappaquiddick (1828; 1849), the record of Vessel's calling at

Edgartown (1827-1834) and a lecture written by Jeremiah Pease concerning the first Methodist's on Martha's Vineyard (1847). Furthermore, the Museum's Map Collection holds many maps prepared by Jeremiah Pease during his tenure as surveyor.

Series Description

Series I. Diaries, 1817-1857

Box 1 of 2

Folder 1: Bibliographic listing of Jeremiah Pease Diaries prepared by Arthur R. Railton, 1988.

Folder 2: Diary: November 16, 1817 to December 28, 1822

Folder 3: Diary: January 1, 1823 to September 18, 1829

N.B. From 1823 to 1829 "owing to my peculiar circumstances" Jeremiah's son Joseph wrote the entries as if Jeremiah had written.

Folder 4: Diary: September 19, 1829 to July 6, 1833 and October 13, 1837 to June 16, 1840

Folder 5: Diary: January 1, 1832 to October 12, 1837

Folder 6: Diary: June 18, 1840 to December 21, 1845

Folder 7: Diary: January 1, 1846 to December 31, 1855

Box 2 of 2

Folder 1: Diary: January 1, 1856 to June 5, 1857

Three items found tucked in diary: letter to "Brother Smith," March 13, 1857; two sermons.

Series II. Land Surveys

Box 2 of 2

Folder 2: Surveyor's journal (loose pages) April 22, 1822-April 29, 1824.

Folder 3: Surveyor's journal, August 19, 1825-September 9, 1856.

Folder 4: "Minutes of the Indian Lands of Chabaquiddic, April 1828."

"Chappequiddic Land Records. Book 23. Page 292. 1828."

Folder 5: "Copy of the Record of Indian Lands on the Island of Chappaquiddic and Christiantown in Dukes County belonging to ... Edgartown, February 23, 1849. Also at Deep Bottom in said County, October 1846."

Folder 6: Surveys (n.d.; 1824-1847)

Series III. Business Records

Box 2 of 2

Folder 7: Vessels calling at Edgartown (1827-1834).

Folder 8: Business papers (1807-1835).

Series IV. Methodist Church

Box 2 of 2

Folder 9 : First Methodists on Martha's Vineyard. (Published in part in *The Dukes County Intelligencier* 22(2): 58-70. 1980.)