

**Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum  
Record Unit 303**

**Revolutionary War Era Papers, c.1756-1799**

By Julia Novakovic

**Descriptive Summary**

**Repository:** Martha's Vineyard Museum

**Call No.**

**Title:** Revolutionary War Era Papers

**Creator:** various

**Quantity:** 0.5 cubic feet

**Abstract:** This collection of Revolutionary War Era material contains original documents (1756-1791), photocopies of these papers, newspaper articles, and additional notes on Martha's Vineyard men who served during the American Revolution.

**Administrative Information**

**Acquisition Information:** The Revolutionary War Era Papers were acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum in \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Processing Information:** Julia Novakovic

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Use Restrictions:** none

**Preferred citation for publication:** Martha's Vineyard Museum, Revolutionary War Era Papers, c.1700-1799, Record Unit 303.

**Index Terms**

- Revolutionary War
- Martha's Vineyard
- Revolutionary War, letters
- Enlistment Contracts
- Norton, Peter
- Smith, Benjamin
- Smith, Nathan

**Series and Subseries Arrangement**

Series I: Revolutionary War Era Documents, Originals, 1700-1799

Series II: Revolutionary War Era Documents, Copies, 1700-1799

Series III: Newspaper Clippings

Series IV: Biographies and Stories

Subseries A: Notes on Vineyard Men, 1691-1779

Subseries B: Revolutionary War-Related Accounts

Series V: Miscellaneous Notes

## **Historical Note:**

This collection of Revolutionary War material ranges from original documents [1756-1791] to newspaper clippings to copies of Martha's Vineyard town records. The materials were obtained by the Dukes County Historical Society [later the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society] throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Scope and Content Note:**

The .5 cubic feet of documents are arranged chronologically within their series. The original documents cover a range of topics, including enlistment contracts, correspondence between military leaders from the Vineyard, and bounty notes issued by the State of Massachusetts. Of special interest is a letter addressed to George Washington in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by a British merchant in March of 1776.

This record unit also houses several folders of 19<sup>th</sup> century newspaper articles pertaining to the men from Martha's Vineyard during the American Revolution. Other documents include land transactions, notes on Revolutionary War generals, and stories from the Revolution.

## **Series Descriptions:**

### **Series I: Revolutionary War Era Documents, Originals, 1700-1799**

This series contains original documents from the Revolutionary period [c. 1756-1784], including lists of soldiers, enlistment contracts, and military leaders' correspondence.  
Box 1 of 1

Folder 1: Notice to appear for duty to Mr. Joseph \_enson, original, 1756.

Folder 2: Peter Norton Documents: letter from Peter Norton to Thomas Butler, original, 1762 and "A list of all the traning soldiers in the Second Military Company of Foot in Edgartown Under the Command of Maj. Peter Norton," original, 1761.

Folder 3: Transcript of journal of H.M. Sloop *Falcon* in Vineyard waters, 21 Oct 1774- 31 Oct 1776.

Folder 4: Embargo of Goods from Great Britain "Until... Rites are Restored," original, 8 Nov 1774.

Folder 5: "List of militia in Edgartown," original, undated [c. 1775?]

Folder 6: General notice to appear summary, original?, June 1775. Letter Discussing Rebel Activities at Bunker Hill, nd.

Folder 7: "A Pay Roll for Capt Benjamin Smith Company," original; Dec 1775, Feb 1776, June-Sept 1776.

Folder 8: Enlistment contracts, original, 1776.

Folder 9: Enlistment of Islanders for Sea Coast Defence of Massachusetts, original, 1776.

Folder 10: Correspondence to/from Captain Benjamin Smith, originals, Feb- Nov 1776.

Folder 11: Letter to George Washington from Wemyss Orrock, scan of original, March 1776. [For original, see Record Unit 103, Box 2]

Folder 12: Petition to “Counciell of the Collony of the Massachusetts Bay” by Peter Pease and Gamaliel Merchants, original, 5 Apr 1776.  
 Folder 13: Resolution Read and Concurred, handwritten copy, 23 April 1776.  
 Folder 14: Request of payment by John Rogers, original, 21 May 1776.  
 Folder 15: “Coppoy of orders to Lieut Davis,” from Captain Benjamin Smith, originals, 13 Sept and 22 Nov 1776.  
 Folder 16: “A Roll of Lieut Jeremiah Mather Company,” original, 20 Nov- 31 Dec 1776.  
 Folder 17: Letter to Capt. John Russell from Ebenezer Smith, original, 14 Dec 1776.  
 Folder 18: Account of Articles Taken During Grey’s Raid, true copy, Oct 1778.  
 Folder 19: Resolve of Massachusetts House of Representatives, original, 1779, for supplies and pay to officers who served in Revolutionary War.  
 Folder 20: Bounty Notes issued by State of Massachusetts Bay, 1 Jan 1780.  
 Folder 21: Patriotic Loan Certificate issued by State of Massachusetts Bay, 1 Jan 1782.  
 Folder 22: “P. Gardner’s Deposition,” original, 1784.  
 Folder 23: “Rowland Gilston’s Deposition,” original and copies, 1791.

## **Series II: Revolutionary War Era Documents, Copies, 1700-1799**

This series contains photocopies of original documents for reference use from the Revolutionary period [c. 1756-1784], including lists of soldiers, enlistment contracts, and military leaders’ correspondence.

Box 1 of 1

Folder 24: Revolutionary War Documents, Copies, April 1756- June 1775.  
 Folder 25: Revolutionary War Documents, Copies, Dec 1775 – Nov 1776.  
 Folder 26: Revolutionary War Documents, Copies, Nov 1776 – Aug 1791.

## **Series III: Newspaper Clippings on Martha’s Vineyard and the Revolutionary War**

This series contains a list of Vineyard soldiers and newspaper clippings reprinting letters or documents from the war.

Box 1 of 1

Folder 27: “Soldiers of 1776: Vineyard Men who Served in the Revolution,” series from *Vineyard Gazette*, August 1896.  
 Folder 28: Newspaper clippings regarding Martha’s Vineyard during the Revolutionary War; 20 Oct 1848 *Vineyard Gazette*, 4 May 1882 *Republican Standard*, 31 Oct 1893 *Herald*, editorial to 16 May 1895 *Vineyard Gazette*, 29 Sept 1906 *Evening Standard*, Aug 1925 *Vineyard Magazine*.  
 Folder 29: Newspaper clippings regarding Capt. Nathan Smith during the Revolutionary War; 17 Oct 1845 *New Bedford Mercury*, 28 Aug 1992 *Vineyard Gazette*.

## **Series IV: Biographies and Stories**

### **Subseries A: Notes and Events of Vineyard Men, 1691- 1779**

This Subseries contains information on the lives of several Vineyard men, including Thomas Bayes, Thomas Cooke, Enoch Coffin, Zaccheus Mayhew, Peter Norton, Andrew Newcomb, Peter Pease, and Ebenezer Smith.

Box 1 of 1

Folder 30: Notes on enlistments, events of several Vineyard men, 1691- 1779.

### **Subseries B: Revolutionary War-Related Accounts**

This Subseries contains a transcribed story, as told to Richard Pease by Samuel Butler [c. 1850?] and an anonymous manuscript on Revolutionary War sea battles.

Box 1 of 1

Folder 31: "Battle of the Hedgestakes:" September 1777, Revolutionary War story told by Samuel Butler to Richard Pease, as told to him by his father William Butler.

Folder 32: "Revolutionary War Sea Battles," anonymous, typed manuscript and typed research notes from primary source documents.

### **Series V: Miscellaneous Notes**

This series contains a variety of notes on the Revolutionary War, including a copied letter from Thomas Paine to George Washington, c. 1796, and a group of note cards on Revolutionary War captains and generals.

Box 1 of 1

Folder 33: Notes on Revolutionary War; handwritten copies from various sources by several authors.