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SAMUEL SAWYER PAPERS

Creator:	Samuel Sawyer; various
Dates:	1844-1977
Quantity:	5 linear feet (10 document boxes, 1 photograph, 1 miniature tintype)
Acquisition:	Accession #: 2622 ; Donated by: Trustees of Ravenswood Park and E. Hyde Cox
Identification:	A63 ; Archive Collection #63
Citation:	[Document Title]. The Samuel Sawyer Papers, [Box #, Folder #, Item #], Cape Ann Museum Library & Archives, Gloucester, MA.
Copyright:	Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Librarian/Archivist.
Language:	English
Finding Aid:	Processed by Howard Thomas, July and August 2010; supervised by Stephanie Buck, Librarian/Archivist. Updated by Karla Kaneb, June 2020.

Biographical Note

Samuel Elwell Sawyer was born in Gloucester on November 25, 1815 and died at the ancestral homestead in Gloucester on December 15, 1899. He was the fifth generation of Sawyers to occupy "Brookbank," an early eighteenth-century gambrel-roofed house located at Freshwater Cove. The Sawyer family history goes back to William Sawyer, who came to New England about 1640.

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His wife was Abigail (Abbie) Ingersoll Meads. They had no children but lived an idyllic life, spending November through March in Boston and April through October at the family homestead in Gloucester. They spent many years enjoying an accumulated wealth which was generously shared with others. However, life wasn't always easy for Samuel Sawyer, as he started at the bottom and suffered several financial reversals along the way before becoming financially secure.

Sawyer started his business career as a clerk in the dry goods store run by Samuel Stevens on Main Street in Gloucester but soon went to Boston where he secured a job as a salesman with the firm Kimball and Jewett. He soon entered the field of shipping and commerce and became a partner in the firm of Houghton, Sawyer and Adams. This position took him to all parts of the world and from it he amassed a fortune as a merchant.

Although a good deal of his earlier life was spent in Boston and in travel, nothing could entice him away from the scenes of his childhood. At their Freshwater Cove home, he and Mrs. Sawyer enjoyed their middle age and later life. It was during this period of his life that Samuel Sawyer became one of Gloucester's leading philanthropists. His many gifts and bequests ranged from schoolhouse fences to the present clock in the City Hall tower and substantial contributions to the Female Charitable Association to a fund that made it possible to introduce music into the public schools. His most memorable gifts were funds for medals to be given annually to students for scholastic excellence, providing the building and endowment fund for the Sawyer Free Library and the land now known as Ravenswood Park.

Mr. Sawyer died at the homestead in Gloucester on December 15, 1889 from pneumonia at the age of 74. Mrs. Sawyer also died from pneumonia the preceding year.

Acquisition Note

Gift from Trustees of Ravenswood Park per Deborah Pearce, Trust Offices, Bank of New England, and from E. Hyde Cox, Trustee.

Scope and Content of the Collection

Brief description: Business correspondence 1840s-1880s; diaries 1861-1889; expense accounts 1851-1860; notebooks of travels in United States and abroad 1868-1879; deeds and papers relating to "Brookbank" and "Ravenswood Park"; and activities as one of Gloucester's leading philanthropists.

The Samuel Sawyer Papers contain a series of handwritten, personal diaries kept by Mr. Sawyer from 1861 until shortly before his death in 1889. The diary for the year 1862 is missing and a

transcript of the other diaries has been compiled and included with the diaries. There are expense accounts covering the period 1844-62 (4 books) and notebooks of his travels in the United States and abroad from 1868-79 (8 books).

There is a large collection of correspondence between Mr. Sawyer and his business associates including his brother Charles and the captain of his barque "Jewess," George Johnson. The business documents pertain to maritime and shipping, real estate, legal matters and other business and charitable matters in which he was involved.

The personal papers, in addition to the diaries, include information on the Sawyer family genealogy and real estate holdings such as the family homestead "Brookbank" and plans for "Ravenswood Park," both in Gloucester, and "Franklin Park" in Boston. The "Brookbank" information includes documents and inventories of Mr. and Mrs. Sawyer's furnishings, art collection, personal possessions, including silver and jewelry, and their library. The "Ravenswood Park" information includes many deeds and legal documents relating to land purchases and bequests for the establishment of the park. The "Franklin Park" material primarily relates to a lawsuit contesting the taking of Mr. Sawyer's land in Boston by eminent domain.

Of particular interest are the papers relating to the barque "Jewess" which was owned by Mr. Sawyer and involved in the maritime trade with India, Europe and South America during the 1860's and 1870's. The material is extensive and includes numerous maritime documents such as marine insurance policies, bills of lading, clearance certificates, consular certification, crew lists, portage bills, receipts for port fees, custom house services, hospital taxes, bonds for duties, mooring charges and receipts for food supplies including exotic fresh foods, meats, and fruits and vegetables taken on in foreign ports.

There is much correspondence from Captain George Johnson of the "Jewess" to Mr. Sawyer reporting the news of the ship during its many voyages. In addition to the documents on the "Jewess" there is a lesser amount on the barque "Annie M. Kelly" and the barque "Prima Donna," both owned by Mr. Sawyer.

Also included in this collection are numerous letters and other papers and newspaper articles concerning Mr. Sawyer's community and charitable interests such as Sawyer Free Library and Ravenswood Park. Clearly Mr. Sawyer qualifies as one of Gloucester's most famous residents and leading philanthropists.

Included as historical data is a copy of Mr. Sawyer's will and papers relating to the administration of his estate.

Series Description

- I. Series I: Misc. Genealogy, Business Papers and Notes.
 - II. Series II: Diaries, 1861-1889 (vol. 1862 missing).
 - III. Series III: Expense Accounts, Travel Notes, Misc. Documents.
 - IV. Series IV: Correspondence and Documentation for vessels: *Jewess, Prima Donna, Annie M. Kelly*
 - V. Series V: Personal Documents
 - VI. Series VI: Ravenswood Park and Brookbank
 - VII. Series VII: Sawyer Medals
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Container List

Box 1

Series I Indexes and Transcript

- Folder 1. 3 ring binder containing the Original Index
 - a. Genealogy
 - b. Business Papers - Folders 1-24
 - c. Notebooks and Diaries - Items 1-40
 - d. Church Papers
- Folder 2. Portfolio containing a Partial Index
 - a. Business Papers - Folders -1-27
 - b. Notebooks and Diaries - Items 1-51
- Folder 3. Extracts from Indexes and Related Papers
 - a. Notebooks and Diaries - Boxes 2-3
 - b. Accession Sheet #2622 - Box 3
 - c. List of Folder Titles - Boxes 4-7
 - d. Inventory of Ravenswood Park and Brookbank Data - Boxes 8-9

Series II

- Folder 4. Transcript of Sawyer Diaries, 1861-89 (vol. 1862 missing), by Mary Rhineland McCarl. [removed to 3 ring binder library shelf G929.2 Sa9]

Box 2

Series II Diaries and Expense Accounts

- Folder 1. Diaries 1861-89 (29 diaries - vol. 1862 missing)

Series III

- Folder 2. Expense Accounts 1851-60 (1 book)

Box 3

Series III Notebooks and Expense Accounts

- Folder 1. Notebooks of travels in United States and abroad 1868-79 (8 books)
- Folder 2. Expense Accounts 1844-50 and 1860-62 (3 books)
- Folder 3. Miscellaneous
 - a. Inventory of Brookbank
 - b. Sawyer Family Genealogy
 - c. Diaries of William Sweeney 1865-66
 - d. Leather Document Case 4 1/4" x 9"
 - e. Poems by William Winter

Box 4

Series V Personal

- Folder 1. Business Papers and Letters 1858-69
- Folder 2. Letters 1853-64
- Folder 3. Letters from A. Gilbert, J.J. Babson, etc. 1867-80
- Folder 4. Letters between Charles and Samuel Sawyer, etc. 1854-89
- Folder 5. Business Papers 1858-63

Series IV Correspondence and Documentation for vessels

- Folder 6. Barque "Annie M. Kelly" 1863

Series V Personal

- Folder 7. Sawyer Family History 1851-1888

Series IV Correspondence and Documentation for vessels

- Folder 8. Barque "Jewess" - Year unknown

Box 5

Series IV Correspondence and Documentation for vessels

- Folder 9. Barque "Prima Donna" 1861-66
- Folder 10. Barque "Jewess" 1868-71
- Folder 11. Barque "Jewess" 1866
- Folder 12. Barque "Jewess" 1867
- Folder 13. Barque "Jewess" 1864-65

Box 6

Series IV Correspondence and Documentation for vessels

- Folder 14. Barque "Jewess" 1870-71

Series V Personal

- Folder 15. Misc. Papers - Copy of Samuel Sawyer Will
- Folder 16. Biography of Samuel Sawyer by Wm. Hendrickson 1969
- Folder 17. Advertisements
- Folder 18. Art and Artists
- Folder 19. Slander Controversy
- Folder 20. Copy of Will - Will Trial - Misc. Papers
- Folder 21. Passport and Visa of Samuel Sawyer
- Folder 22. Poetry

Box 7

Series V Personal

- Folder 23. Newspapers and Letters
- Folder 24. Brookbank - Litigation with George O. Hovey
- Folder 25. Auction of Paintings June 25, 1977
- Folder 26. Miscellaneous Booklets
- Folder 27. Miscellaneous Papers

Box 8

Series VI Ravenswood Park and Brookbank

- Folder 1. File I and II - Deeds to Ravenswood Park
- Folder 2. Plan of Ravenswood Park - Shurtleff 1915
- Folder 3. Plan of Ravenswood Park - City Engineer - Hautala 1968

Box 9

Series VI Ravenswood Park and Brookbank

- Folder 4. Envelope III - Legal Documents - Trustees
- Folder 5. Envelope IV - Old Salem Road Deeds
- Folder 6. Envelope V - Deeds to Trustees
- Folder 7. Envelope VI - Deeds to Trustees
- Folder 8. Envelope VII - Background Information
- Folder 9. Envelope VIII - Deeds relating to Brookbank

Box 10

Series VII Sawyer Medals and Historical Data

- Folder 1. Sawyer Medals
- Folder 2. History of Medals
- Folder 3. Gifts and Contributions
- Folder 4. Stereoptics (primarily of Brookbank)
- Folder 5. Historical Data - Misc.