Guide to the Samuel Adams Papers

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by Chelsea Bucklin
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Creator: Adams, Samuel
Title: Samuel Adams Papers
Dates: 1862-1933
Bulk Dates: 1862-1865
Quantity: 0.15 cubic feet, 1 box
Abstract: The Samuel Adams Papers document a surgeon's perspective on several major battles and events occurring during the United States Civil War.
Language: Collection is in English.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Collection donated by Robert K. Hollingsworth on September 26, 2013.

Available Formats
Series 1: Supplemental Documentation, contains a compact disc with transcriptions for all of the handwritten letters, medical papers, notes, and genealogical information.

Processing Information
Processed by Chelsea M. Bucklin, intern, 2015; supervised by Alison Oswald, archivist.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions on Access
Collection is open for research.

Ownership & Literary Rights
Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.
Biographical Note

Samuel Adams was born in Maine around 1839, and was a surgeon for the Union Army during the United States Civil War. Adams enlisted on April 16, 1862 as an assistant surgeon, and was commissioned into the U.S. Army Medical Staff as part of the regular Army. Adams received two promotions by brevet during the war to Captain and then to Major. He was present during the battles of Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg, and died of yellow fever on September 9, 1867 in Galveston, Texas.

Scope and Content Note

This collection is divided into four series and includes letters and other papers of the Civil War surgeon Samuel Adams, as well as two CDs containing scans of the letters and transcriptions, and other documentation. The letters were sent to Adams's family and were written from the sites of major battles of the Civil War, including Antietam, Fredericksburg and Gettysburg. One letter mentions Lincoln's assassination. The collection contains medical papers written by Adams, a military pass, and a list of "maxims" written by Adams's body servant, William. Additionally, genealogical information connecting the collection donor to Samuel Adams, transcriptions of all handwritten documentation, and a copy of Grandfather to Grandson, which is a collection of letters written by the donor's great-grandfather during the Great Depression, are included.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into four series.

Series 1: Supplemental Documentation, 1862-1933, undated
Series 2: Civil War Letters, 1862-1865 (bulk 1862-1863)
Series 3: Medical Papers, undated
Series 4: Miscellaneous Documents, 1861 July 16, undated

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Antietam, Battle of, Md., 1862
Assassinations
Civil War--United States
Fredericksburg, Battle of, Fredericksburg, Va., 1862
Gettysburg, Battle of, Gettysburg, Pa., 1863
Medical sciences
Surgeons--United States
Types of Materials:
  Compact discs
  Letters (correspondence)--1860-1870
  Medical notes

Names:
  Hollingsworth, Robert K.
  Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865

Geographic Names:
  Antietam (Md.)
  Fredericksburg (Va.)
  Gettysburg (Pa.)

Bibliography


Container Listing

Series 1: Supplemental Documentation, 1862-1933, undated

This series contains supplemental documentation provided by the donor, Robert K. Hollingsworth. The transcriptions are for all of the handwritten letters, medical papers, notes, genealogical information connecting the donor to Samuel Adams, and a copy of nine letters written by the donor's great-grandfather during the Great Depression. The documentation was created in 2012 and stored on compact discs. Access copies were printed in 2015.

Box 1, Folder 1  
*Grandfather to Grandson*, 1932-1933  
1 disc

Box 1, Folder 2  
Genealogical Information, undated  
1 disc

Box 1, Folder 3  
Transcriptions (Access Copies), 1862-1865
Series 2: Civil War Letters, 1862-1865 (bulk 1862-1863)

English

This series contains 12 handwritten letters from Samuel Adams to his family members. Letters are dated between September of 1862 and March of 1865, and contain descriptions or information relating to Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln's assassination, and the battles of Gettysburg, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and others.

Box 1, Folder 4       Letter, 1862 September 28
Box 1, Folder 5       Letter, 1862 September 29
Box 1, Folder 6       Letter, 1862 October 13
Box 1, Folder 7       Letter, 1862 November 21
Box 1, Folder 8       Letter, 1862 December 11
Box 1, Folder 9       Letter, 1862 December 21
Box 1, Folder 10      Letter, 1863 January 21
Box 1, Folder 11      Letter, 1863 April 10
Box 1, Folder 12      Letter, 1863 July 5
Box 1, Folder 13      Letter, 1863 September 7
Box 1, Folder 14      Letter, 1864 November 29
Box 1, Folder 15      Letter, 1865 April 15 [letter was mistakenly dated March 15 by author]
                       Letter misdated March 15, 1865. Should read April 15, 1865. First line of letter reads "We are all utterly horrified and shocked at the murder of our noble President [Abraham Lincoln]."
Series 3: Medical Papers, undated

This series contains two handwritten papers by Samuel Adams and a set of handwritten medical notes. It is unclear if the notes were written by Samuel Adams or another party. The two papers, which may or may not have been presented formally, are on the topics of acute alcoholism and the uses of chloroform, and typho-malarial fever.

Box 1, Folder 16  Treatise on Acute Alcoholism and the Uses of Chloroform, undated
Box 1, Folder 17  Paper, Typho-Malarial Fever, undated
Box 1, Folder 18  Miscellaneous Notes, medical, undated
Series 4: Miscellaneous Documents, 1861 July 16, undated

This series contains an official military pass dated July 16, 1861, a list of maxims written by Adams’s body servant, William, and 11 envelopes. The pass is signed by both Charles Adams (Samuel's father) and aide-de-camp Drake De Kay. The envelopes are primarily addressed to Charles Adams, and many include their original stamp.

Box 1, Folder 19 List of Maxims, undated
Box 1, Folder 20 Military Pass, 1861 July 16
Box 1, Folder 21 Envelopes, undated