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## Guide to the Samuel Adams Journal and Papers, 1849-1901

### Collection number: MS 1 (Vault)

California Historical Society

North Baker Research Library  
San Francisco, California

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** Samuel Adams Journal and Papers,

**Date (inclusive):** 1849-1901

**Collection number:** MS 1 (Vault)

**Creator:** Adams, Samuel, 1810-1888

**Extent:** 1 box (6 folders)  
ca 40 items (.42 linear ft.)

**Repository:** California Historical Society, North Baker Research Library  
678 Mission Street San Francisco, California 94105-4014

**Abstract:** Two original journals cover the voyage to California and Adam's first months in San Francisco (4/1/1849 - 3/18/1850). The bulk of the Adams papers comprises letters from Adams to his wife, business correspondence, and Mrs. Adams' letters to her son Samuel G.

**Physical location:** Consult repository

**Language:** English

#### Access

Collection is open for research.

#### Publication Rights

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#### Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Samuel Adams Journal and Papers. MS 1 (Vault), California Historical Society, Manuscript Collections.

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## Acquisition Information

Gift of A.T. Shine, 3/14/1949

## Biographical Statement

Samuel Adams arrived in California aboard the Barque Mazeppa on December 3, 1849 after a ten-month voyage at sea. He had left New York on January 27, 1849 with a cargo of merchandise which he had been commissioned to sell for the firm of Rowland and Whitehouse of Brooklyn, N.Y. Adams had previously managed a drugstore in Brooklyn for Rowland, but when it and the house he had been preparing for his family burned, he agreed to act as a commercial factor in order to support his family. The voyage of the Mazeppa was plagued by storms, lengthy repairs to the ship after it was forced to return to Rio de Janeiro, and long delays in navigating around Cape Horn. Adams helped to pass the time by writing a journal for his wife and children living in Winthrop, Me. Some sections are addressed to the children and in them he describes details of life at sea--what the sailors ate, where they slept, and how they were disciplined; how to reckon the speed of the ship in knots, and the awesome responsibilities of the captain.

Adams' arrival in San Francisco, at the height of the gold rush, began with a concentrated period of bargaining and selling the merchandise in his cargo. By March 15 he had disposed of the bulk of the goods, had purchased some small parcels of land, and had set up his own drug store. (From other sources it has been determined that the store was located on Washington St. below Kearny; that he was burned out every year until he started his fourth store in 1853.) Adams returned to Winthrop, Me. in 1853 (probably after having been awarded free passage to New York as an agent of the Postoffice Dept.) and returned to San Francisco later that year with his family.

Adams was married to Philemela Johnson. They had three children--Eve, Samuel, and George Russell Adams, who became the youngest member of the Exploring Expedition in Russian America, 1865-1867, as described in an article by Harold F. Taggart, CHS Quarterly, 35, 291

## Scope and Content

The Adams collection includes five bound journals. Two volumes the original journal; the remaining three volumes contain typewritten or longhand copies of the original volumes. The first volume of the original journal covers the period 4/1/49 to 6/8/49 and is entirely devoted to the voyage. It is prefaced by a compass rose and a sketch of the Barque Mazeppa by George E. Young, a shipmate and later a California state senator. Volume 2 covers the period 7/14/49 to 3/18/50 and describes the end of the voyage and Adams' first months in San Francisco. The names of the officers, crew, and passengers of the ship appear in the back of Volume 2. Tables of latitude and longitude of the Mazeppa from May 1, 1849 to Nov. 4, 1849 are recorded in the back of Volume 2.

The bulk of the Adams papers comprises letters from Adams to his wife and Mrs. Adams' letters to her son Samuel; documents relating to Adams' agreement to work for Whitehouse and Rowland and to his attempt to become a government mail agent; and various notes and clippings relating to family matters. Two copies of addresses by George E. Young are included.

## Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Girdler, John Captain

Adams, Samuel G.

Voyages to the Pacific coast

San Francisco (Calif.)--History

Diaries

Letters

Adams, Philemela

## Related Material

California Historical Society Photograph Collection contains a photograph of his nephew George Adams and his aunt, Sarah Adams.

Box-folder 1:1 **Documents**

Box-folder 1:1 **A copy of the agreement drawn up between John O. Whitehouse, Charles Rowland, and Samuel Adams whereby said partners have formed themselves together for the purpose of shipping goods to California. Describes the terms of contract. 1/23/49**

Box-folder 1:1 **Designates Samuel Adams a government mail agent. 4/30/1853**

Box-folder 1:1 **Postmaster General awards Adams free passage to New York as agent of the department.5/26/1853**

Box-folder 1:1 **Letters**

Box-folder 1:1 **Samuel Adams to Philemela Adams; New York City, 1/20/1849**

**Scope and Content Note**

Describes his visit to the Mazeppa preparatory to setting sail for California and his feelings on the eve of departure--a moving and loving letter to his wife of 10 years.

Box-folder 1:1 **Samuel Adams to Philemela Adams; Rio de Janeiro, 3/20/1849**

**Scope and Content Note**

Describes letters and journals forwarded to her, moneys sent, and advises her on childrens' affairs; describes Rio de Janeiro; his feelings that trip could change his attitudes.

Box-folder 1:1 **Samuel Adams to Philemela Adams; San Francisco, with note appended dated May 15am 5/14/1850**

**Scope and Content Note**

Describes his business as prospering; she is to address his letters c/o druggist, corner Kearny and Jackson.

Box-folder 1:1 **J. Wm. (?) Campbell to Dr. Samuel Adams, 7/14/1853**

**Scope and Content Note**

Denies Adams the appointment to take charge of mail destined for San Francisco.

Box-folder 1:1 **Misc. Papers**

Box-folder 1:1 **Contents of the May, 1853 mail from San Francisco to New York for steamers Golden Gate and Georgia; transfer of some mail to steamers Crescent City and Falcon.**

Box-folder 1:2 **Letters**

Box-folder 1:2 **Mrs. Adams to son Samuel; Winthrop, Me., 1/14/1852**

**Scope and Content Note**

Concerns his illness while away from home.

Box-folder 1:2 **Mrs. Adams to son Samuel; Winthrop, Me., 2/4/1852**

**Scope and Content Note**

Describes presents his father has sent; contains separate letter to his teacher.

Box-folder 1:2 **Miss Jennie Brown to pupil Samuel Adams; Salem, Mass., 5/13/1852**

**Scope and Content Note**

Small-town news to Adams' son Samuel who has been ill.

Box-folder 1:2-6 **Misc. Papers**

Box-folder 1:2 **Receipts for payment of school tuition for the Adams children; report card for his son George from the City College of San Francisco. Religious awards of merit to Samuel Adams and his son Samuel G., 1/2/1852 - 4/1/1861**

Box-folder 1:3 **Various letters and covers from Susie G. Job of Walpole, Mass. to Mrs. Adams, 8/14/1899 - 10/6/1901**

Box-folder 1:4 **Includes various family records and newspaper clippings, including one of Adams' death in 1888 and of the death of his Son Samuel G. in 1891; a fragment of a land-company letterhead; handwritten copies of 2 addresses by Geo. E. Young**

- Box-folder 1:5      **Contains a single newspaper clipping of an 1899 graduating class in which a relative of Mrs. Adams played a part.**
- Box-folder 1:6      **Comprises the two volumes of Adams' journal and typewritten and longhand copies of the journal.**