

**Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum  
Record Unit 131  
Martha's Vineyard Steamship and Motor Vessel Collection  
By Rosemary Milewski**

**Descriptive Summary**

**Repository:** Martha's Vineyard Museum

**Call No.**

**Title:** Martha's Vineyard Steamship and Motor Vessel Collection

**Creator:** various

**Quantity:** 1.0 cubic feet

**Abstract:** This collection of Martha's Vineyard ferry materials contains original documents, photocopies, and newspaper articles regarding the Steamship companies and boats serving the island of Martha's Vineyard.

**Administrative Information**

**Acquisition Information:** The Martha's Vineyard Steamship and Motor Vessel Collection was acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum from many donors.

**Processing Information:** Rosemary Milewski

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Use Restrictions:** none

**Preferred citation for publication:** Martha's Vineyard Museum, Martha's Vineyard Steamship and Motor Vessel Collection, Record Unit 131

**Index Terms**

Steamboats

*SS Eagle, 1818-1818*

*SS Eagle's Wing, 1854-1861*

*SS Island Home, 1855-1896*

*SS Monohansett, 1861-1903*

*SS Helen Augusta, 1865-1895*

*SS Uncatena, 1902-1930*

*SS Sankaty, 1911-1924*

*SS Islander, 1922-1928*

*SS Martha's Vineyard, 1928-1957*

*SS Nobska, 1925-1928*

*SS Nantucket, 1928-1956*

*SS Nobska, 1956-1973*

*SS New Bedford, 1927-1942*

*SS Naushon, 1929-1942*

*MV Islander, 1952-2007*  
*MV Nantucket, 1957-1974*  
*MV Uncatena, 1965-1993*  
*MV Nantucket, 1974-*  
*MV Martha's Vineyard, 1993-*  
*MV Island Home, 2007-*  
Freight Boats  
*MV Katama*  
Nantucket Steamboat Co., 1833-1854  
Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamboat Co., 1854-1960  
Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority, 1960-  
Old Colony Railroad  
Stutz, Robert  
Collins, E.B.  
Daggett, Captain Grafton L  
Smith, Captain Charles C

### **Series and Subseries Arrangement**

**Series I: Log Books and Journals**

**Series II: Business Papers of the Steamship Companies**

**Series III: Individual Boats**

**Series IV: Publications**

**Series V: Reference**

### **Historical Note:**

The first scheduled motorized passenger and freight service to Martha's Vineyard began in the mid 1800's. In the era before steamers, Vineyarders depended on packet boats (sailing vessels that carried freight) for transportation to the mainland and back. In 1833 The Nantucket Steamboat Co. established regular service between New Bedford and Nantucket with stops by request at Martha's Vineyard. As a desire for regular mail service grew and summer tourism gained momentum, regular passenger/freight service was initiated about 1846 with the steamboat stopping in Edgartown en-route to and from New Bedford. In 1854 the *SS Eagles Wing* became the first scheduled Vineyard ferry of the newly formed New Bedford, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamboat Co., later to become the Woods Hole Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority.

The materials in this collection range from original documents to newspaper clippings 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 1 cubic foot of documents is arranged from original documents to publications to newspaper clippings. The original documents include log books; business correspondence; tickets, flyers, brochures, and schedules; receipts and bills; stock certificates and shares; and construction plans for the *MV Islander*. This record unit also includes several folders of newspaper articles pertaining to the history of the Steamboats and related subjects.

The archive also has additional materials on Island Steamers including publications (Steamboats, Island Steamers, and by boat name) and photographs of Island Steamers (photo archive folder #805)

### **Series Descriptions:**

#### **Series I: Journals and Log Books**

This series contains original journals and log books (1874-1889) of Captain Charles C. Smith, longtime steamer captain of the *SS Monohansett*, *SS Martha's Vineyard*, *SS Island Home*, *SS River Queen*, and *SS Nantucket*.

Box 1 of 2

Folder 1: January 1874-June 1874; 1877

Folder 2: December 1879-February 1880; April 1880-June 1880

Folder 3: February 1880-August 1880; March 1883-June 1883

Folder 4: September 1881-January 1882; August 1882-December 1882

Folder 5: September 1883-April 1884; September 1884-December 1884

Folder 6: June 1885-August 1885; September 1885-November 1885

Folder 7: November 1885-December 1885; July 1886-September 1887

Folder 8: March 1887-May 1887; June 1888-June 1889

Folder 9: April 1889-September 1889

#### **Series II: Business Papers of the Steamship Companies**

This series contains original documents pertaining to the Steamship companies, their business transactions and advertising.

Box 2 of 2

Folder 1: Passenger and freight receipts

Folder 2: Letter from Tisbury citizens complaining of noise from early morning boat bells & horns (1892)

Folder 3: Advertising brochures and flyers and schedules (additional flyer in map drawer)

Folder 4: Certificate for 20 shares in the Nantucket Steam Boat Co.; Share no. 629 of New Bedford Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamboat Co.

Folder 5: House Bill No. 1213 establishing the Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority, 1960.

### **Series III: Individual Vessels**

This series assigns a folder to each vessel in chronological order and includes original materials and newspaper articles. Vessels are designated by SS (Steam Ship) or MV (Motor Vessel)

Box 2 of 2

Folder 6: *SS Eagle*, 1818-1818, newspaper articles

Folder 7: *SS Eagle's Wing*, 1854-1861, newspaper article

Folder 8: *SS Island Home*, 1855-1896, newspaper article

Folder 9: *SS Monohansett*, 1861-1903, newspaper articles and drawing

Folder 10: *SS Helen Agusta*, 1865-1895, correspondence

Folder 11: *SS Uncatena*, 1902-1930, newspaper articles

Folder 12: *SS Sankaty*, 1911-1924, newspaper articles

Folder 13: *SS Islander*, 1922-1928. 1928 re-named *SS Martha's Vineyard*, 1928-1957, newspaper photos

Folder 14: *SS Nobska*, 1925-1928. 1928 re-named *SS Nantucket*, 1928-1956. 1956 re-named *SS Nobska*, 1956-1973, *Nobska News* publications and newspaper articles mostly pertaining to restoration efforts

Folder 15: *SS New Bedford*, 1928-1942, newspaper articles in reference to WW II service

Folder 16: *SS Naushon*, 1929-1942, newspaper articles in reference to WW II service

Folder 17: *MV Islander*, 1952-2007, builders blueprints located in map case

Folder 18: *MV Nantucket*, 1957- , newspaper article

Folder 19: *MV Uncatena*, 1965-1993, newspaper article

Folder 20: *MV Nantucket*, 1974- , newspaper article

Folder 21: *MV Martha's Vineyard*, 1993-

Folder 22: *MV Island Home*, 2007-

Folder 23: Freight Boats, newspaper article

### **Series IV: Publications**

Box 2 of 2

Folder 24: Issues of *Steamboat Bill* with Island steamer references

Folder 25: *A Study of the Nantucket Vineyard Lines 1800-1948* by Edward Law Thomas

**Series V: References, clippings and copies**

Box 2 of 2

Folder 26: Captain Grafton L. Daggett, obituary

Folder 27: Steamship Authority newspaper articles including 1960 strike, establishment of SSA, Vineyard SSA governors Robert Stutz and E.B. Collins, the West Falmouth land purchase.

Folder 28: Ferry history: paddle wheelers also known as side wheelers and steamers; the Civil War; collisions.

Folder 29: Miscellaneous and associated Steamship Lines, publications and newspaper articles regarding the Colonial Line, and The Fall River Line; Colonial Line invoice for goods and services.