

**Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum  
Record Unit 311  
The Sarah and Lucy Adams Collection, 1891-2010**

By  
Anna Littlefield

**Descriptive Summary**

**Repository:** Martha's Vineyard Museum

**Call No.**

**Title:** The Sarah and Lucy Adams Collection, 1891-2010

**Creator:** various

**Quantity:** .75 cubic feet

**Abstract:** The Sarah and Lucy Adams Collection was compiled from two different donors. The first was Gwendolyn S. McCarthy, who donated materials in 1983. The second donor was the nephew of the Adams sisters, Peter E. Benjamin, who sent materials in 2010. The collection contains correspondence from the sisters, and their personal materials including scrapbooks and poetry. The collection also contains several photographs of the Adams sisters. There are several references from newspapers and books about the lives of the Adams sisters. This collection also has genealogical materials about the Adams family.

**Acquisition Information:** The Sarah and Lucy Adams Collection was originally acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum in 1983 from Gwendolyn S. McCarthy. Subsequent materials were donated in 2010 by Peter E. Benjamin.

**Processing Information:** Anna Littlefield, 2011

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Use Restrictions:** none

**Preferred citation for publication:** Martha's Vineyard Museum, Record Unit 311

**Index Terms**

Sarah Adams

Lucy Adams

Tom Thumb

Peter E. Benjamin

**Series and Subseries Arrangement**

Series I: Correspondences

Series II: Personal Papers

Series II: The Careers of the Adams Sisters

Series IV: References

### **Biography/Historical Note:**

The Adams Sisters were members of the Adams family from Chilmark. The sisters, Lucy and Sarah were both midgets. Lucy was born in 1861 and Susan was born 2 years later, in 1863. They lived on their parents, Captain Moses and Susan Adams' farm on State Road. The family were brought up as strict Methodists. The Adams sisters traveled with the Barnum Circus. They became very close to the famous, General Tom Thumb, and were even in the bridal party at his wedding. When the sisters retired they lived in their family's old farmhouse and served afternoon tea and put on spinning demonstrations and some musical numbers. The sisters moved to the Oak Bluffs Camp Ground in 1933. They became vital members of the Oak Bluffs community. Sarah died in 1938 and Lucy passed away in 1954.

### **Scope and Content Note:**

The Sarah and Lucy Adams Collection, 1891-2010 includes tier personal papers; correspondence, wills and poetry. It also contains programs and flyers from their performances and several photographs of Sarah and Lucy. There are references to Tom Thumb and newspaper copies and clippings about the Adams sisters, a scrapbook and New Testament Bible. Genealogical and reference information, as well as correspondence with reminiscence from Sarah and Lucy's nephew, Mr. Peter E. Benjamin.

See also: MVM Photo Archive number: 711

### **Series Descriptions:**

#### **Series I: Correspondence**

Box 1 of 1

Folder 1: Incoming Correspondence, 1908-1921

Folder 2: Incoming Correspondence, undated

Folder 3: Outgoing Correspondence from Lucy Adams, 1939-1952

#### **Series II: Personal Papers**

Box 1 of 1

Folder 4: Wills of Sarah and Lucy Adams

Folder 5: Family Genealogy

Folder 6: Poetry of Lucy Palmer Adams

Folder 7: Ephemera

#### **Series III: The Careers of the Adams Sisters**

Folder 8: Programs 1891-1921  
Folder 9: Flyers and Programs, undated

**Series IV: Photographs**

Folder 10: Photographs, 1952  
Folder 11: Photographs, undated

**Series V: References**

Folder 12: Tom Thumb  
Folder 13: Newspaper Copies and Clippings  
Folder 14: Scrapbook and New Testament

**Series VI: Clippings and Genealogy collected by Peter E. Benjamin  
(nephew)**

Folder 15: Correspondences with Peter E. Benjamin  
Folder 16: Genealogy chart  
Folder 17: References from books and newspapers