

**Finding Aid to the Martha's Vineyard Museum  
Record Unit 371  
William Jernegan Papers 1728 - 1817**  
By Sarah Hutcheson

**Descriptive Summary**

**Repository:** Martha's Vineyard Museum

**Call No.**

**Title:** William Jernegan Papers, 1728 - 1817

**Creator:**

**Quantity:** .75 cubic feet (1 box)

**Abstract:** Primary and some secondary sources related to William Jernegan, 1728-1817.

**Acquisition Information:** \_\_\_\_\_ acquired by the Martha's Vineyard Museum in \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

**Processing Information:**

**Access Restrictions:** none

**Use Restrictions:** none

**Preferred citation for publication:** Martha's Vineyard Museum, Record Unit 371.

**Index Terms**

Edgartown

Colonial Era

American Revolution

Mrs. Love Daggett

Lemuel Weeks

Joseph Thaxter

Jonathan Mayhew

Thomas Nevin Jernegan Dexter  
scrapbook

**Series and Subseries Arrangement**

Series I: Personal letters, deeds, receipts.

Series II: Autobiography and court records (c. 1785-1810)

Series III: Photocopies of newspaper clippings on William Jernegan.

Series IV: "The Life of the Hon. William Jernegan" typewritten manuscript.

**Biography/Historical Note:**

William Jernegan was born in Edgartown on August 1, 1728 to Thomas and Abigail (Ripley) Jernegan. At twelve he was apprenticed to Samuel Osborne, a house-wright, and in 1747 he served in the French and Indian Wars for a year. He married Mary Osborne in 1750, went to sea for several years, then became a trader of goods and lands and a respected citizen. He was town treasurer during the Revolution, became an attorney in 1779, and held various other offices, including that of state senator in 1793. He had five children with his first wife and one with his second (Eunice Coffin), whom he outlived. He died July 26, 1817.

**Scope and Content Note:**

The collection is .75 cubic feet and contains various business documents including deeds, agreements, receipts, and contracts, as well as a few personal letters. There is also the book in which William Jernegan wrote his memoirs and kept his court records. Additionally there are some secondary sources – copies of newspaper clippings relating to William Jernegan and a five page type-written biography of him. See RU 303 (Revolutionary War Era Papers 1756-1791) for his signature on a document upholding the embargo of British goods, 1774.

**Series Descriptions:****Series I:**

Box 1 of 1

Folder 1: Letters, receipts, and deeds, 1780-1810; agreement to build two schooners, 1785; bill for boarding the widow Mrs. Love Daggett, 1787; indenture agreement for Lemuel Weeks to W. Jernegan, 1770 (plus two photocopies); Evaluation of his estate, 1820.

**Series II:**

Folder 1: Autobiography and court records. This document has court records (possibly as early as 1726?) going from one end, and William Jernegan's autobiography starting at the other end, if you flip it over and upside-down. The autobiography was written sometime around 1795; the

court records go up until December 22, 1809. Also one complete photocopy and one partial photocopy.

**Series III:**

Envelope 1: Photocopies of newspaper clippings from the scrapbook of Thomas Nevin Jernegan Dexter. One is from 1862 and is mostly autobiographical, one from 1924 contains his anecdotes of the Revolution, and a third from around 1915 that deals with Joseph Thaxter, Jonathan Mayhew, and William Jernegan.

**Series IV:**

Folder 1: A five-page typewritten biography of William Jernegan with some history of the Jernegan family, plus one photocopy. Unknown author.