



Inventory of the Captain James Fairfield Collection (Miscellaneous Collection #2)

The Brick Store Museum
Kennebunk, Maine

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Physical Description:

The Captain James Fairfield Collection consists of letters written by Captain Fairfield (1784-1820) to his wife Lois of Arundel (Kennebunkport): one ship's document; documents relative to the estate of Fairfield's brother-in-law, Joseph Lord; and miscellaneous papers relating to the Lord, Larrabee, Trafton, Chandler, Hart families, ancestors and descendents of Captain Fairfield. The collection is divided into five folders as follows.

Box and Folder Breakdown

- Folder 1: Five letters from Captain Fairfield to his wife Lois of Arundel (Kennebunkport), 1811-1815; and one letter from M. Burbank to Captain Fairfield, 1815. Most important of these is a letter written April 25, 1815, by Captain Fairfield to his wife from Dartmoor Prison in England which describes the recent shooting there of American Prisoners by their British guards. These letters were acquisition #2385.
- Folder 2: Four letters from Captain Fairfield to his wife, three dated 1811, one dated 1816. Also one ship's document dated 1817. These papers were given to the Brick Store Museum along with acquisition #75.13.
- Folder 3: Administrative account and inventory of the estate of Joseph Lord, 1819. Lord was Captain Fairfield's brother-in-law. These papers were given to the Brick Store Museum along with acquisition #75.13.

- Folder 4: Various documents relating to the Lord, Larrabee, Trafton families, ancestors and descendents of Captain Fairfield, including genealogical lists and an extensive written genealogy of the Larrabee family compiled by George B. Carll of Kennebunkport. These papers were given to the Brick Store Museum along with the acquisition #75.13.
- Folder 5: Papers, obituary notices, etc. relating to the Larrabee, Chandler, Hart families. These were kept in the Bible of Mary E. Larrabee, which is acquisition #75.14.

Biographical Sketch:

Captain James Fairfield was born in 1784 in Arundel (Kennebunkport). He became a shipmaster, sailing ships for Tobias Lord Jr. of Kennebunk. Fairfield was master of the brig Somers. In 1806 he married Lois Walker of Arundel. His favorite sister, Mary, married Joseph Lord, and the brothers-in-law bought real estate together in Arundel.

When President Jefferson imposed his embargo and the War of 1812 began, Fairfield and Lord became privateers. Their brig Macdonough was captured by the British, and Fairfield and Lord were imprisoned in Dartmoor Prison along with about 250 other American seamen. They were there when the famous Bloody Massacre of Dartmoor took place.

Fairfield and Lord were released at the end of the war in 1815. At home they became again ship masters. Lord was lost at sea in 1817. Fairfield died in 1820

For further information, see:

“Art Loan in Aid of Congregational Manse in Myrtle hall,” *The Wave*, August 26, 1897

“Kennebunkport man Writes from Dartmoor Prison,” by Peg Hendrick, *York County Coast Star, Coast Pilot*, June 25, 1875

“Sea-damaged Portrait Mystery Is Solved by Two Local Researchers,” *York County Coast Star*, October 1, 1975

“Saga of a Shipmaster’s Portrait,” by Martha Gandy Fales, *Down East Magazine*, April 1981

Subject Tracings:

Dartmoor Prison
Larrabee family
Lord, Joseph
Lord, Tobias Jr.
War of 1812

Ships:

Somers

Macdonough

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