

INVENTORY OF THE  
RODMAN COLLECTION  
IN THE OLD DARTMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
WHALING MUSEUM LIBRARY

Content: Business records and personal papers of a New Bedford,  
Mass., family, 1781-1933.

Volume: 5 linear feet.

Provenance: Gift of Dr. Thomas R. Goethals, 10 Dec. 1938 and  
23 Oct. 1946.

Restrictions: None.

Processed By: Judith Downey.

Funds for processing this collection were provided by the  
National Endowment for the Humanities.

## INTRODUCTION

The major portion of this collection was donated to the Old Dartmouth Historical Society by Dr. Thomas R. Goethals, grandson of Thomas Rotch Rodman, in 1938 and 1946. The financial records of Benjamin Rodman were donated by Miss Elsie West in 1936 and 1937. Other materials were donated to the Society between ca. 1937-1977.

## HISTORICAL NOTE

Members of the Rodman family of New Bedford, Mass., were chiefly involved with local whaling and textile industries between 1798-1900. Most notable among these individuals were Samuel Rodman, Sr. (1753-1835), his sons, Samuel, Jr. (1792-1876), and Benjamin (1798-1876), and young Samuel's son, Thomas Rotch Rodman (1825-1905). Samuel Rodman, Sr., came to New Bedford from Nantucket in 1798 and established himself as a merchant, banker, and financial supporter of several early textile mills. Like their father, Samuel Rodman, Jr., and Benjamin Rodman became merchants, bankers, and merchants involved with outfitting and financing whaling voyages and funding activities of local cotton-making firms, particularly Wamsutta Mill. Thomas Rotch Rodman, after participating in the Civil War and traveling extensively in the Middle West from 1866-1872, returned to New Bedford and entered the employment of Wamsutta Mill.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Papers in this collection reflect the activities of members of the Rodman family of New Bedford, Mass., between 1781 and 1933. The material concentrates on Samuel Rodman, Jr., and his son, Thomas Rotch Rodman. Samuel's papers consist of diaries, 1821-1859, concerning his business activities, family life, and economic conditions prevailing in New Bedford during that era; personal correspondence; a marriage certificate; and a receipt. Thomas Rotch Rodman's papers include diaries, 1902-1905, chiefly relating to his European travels and social activities; weather observations, 1881-1885; and personal letters to family members written while at Harvard, in the Civil War, and from a period spent traveling in the Middle West.

Also represented by materials in this collection are other Rodman family members and relatives by marriage. Benjamin Rodman's papers include financial records and a letter book, 1829-1832, relating to his activities as a merchant involved in the whaling industry. Papers for Eliza Rodman (1782-1846) and Sarah Rodman Morgan (1793-1888) principally comprise diaries reflecting their social activities and interests between 1805-1826. The collection also contains personal correspondence of Charles W. Morgan (1796-1861), 1819-1851, and letters to Morgan from his brother-in-law, Francis Rotch (1788-1874), 1819-1845, relating to business affairs, family matters, and activities of Rotch family members living in Europe.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE (cont.)

Materials in the Rodman Collection have been organized into sub-groups representing letters and papers of Rodmans, Rotches, Morgans and other individuals related by marriage. The sub-groups have been listed in the inventory in alphabetical order by surname. Correspondence, whenever possible, is arranged within each year by the name of the writer. Other papers, organized into series by type of document, are arranged in chronological order except for ships' papers, which are grouped alphabetically by name of vessel. Published works which may serve as a guide to the persons represented in this collection include THE ROTCHES, by John Morgan Bullard (1947), and THE HISTORY OF NEW BEDFORD AND ITS' VICINITY, 1602-1892, by Leonard Bolles Ellis (1892).

- Sub-group 1. Eliza Rotch Farrar Papers, 1819-1837.  
Personal correspondence. 2 items.
- Sub-group 2. Elizabeth Rodman Fisher Papers, 1840-1853.  
Family correspondence. 2 items.
- Sub-group 3. William Logan Fisher Papers, 1836-1846.  
Family correspondence. 2 items.
- Sub-group 4. Maria Rotch Langston Papers, 1819.  
Letter to sister-in-law, Anne Waln Morgan Rotch.  
1 item.
- Sub-group 5. Charles Waln Morgan Papers, 1819-1851.  
Personal correspondence, legal document. 5 items.
- Sub-group 6. Sarah Rodman Morgan Papers, 1808-1822.  
Personal correspondence. 8 items.
- Sub-group 7. Edmund H. Prior, Jr., Papers, 1863-1880.  
Family correspondence. 2 items.
- Sub-group 8. Benjamin Rodman Papers, 1816-1863.  
Business and family correspondence, financial records,  
deed. 1½ feet.
- Sub-group 9. Eliza Rodman Papers, 1805-1845.  
Personal correspondence, diaries. 6 inches.
- Sub-group 10. Elizabeth Rotch Rodman Papers, 1793-1856.  
Personal correspondence, inventory of estate. 7 items.
- Sub-group 11. Hannah Haydock Prior Rodman Papers, 1818-1871  
Family correspondence. 12 items.
- Sub-group 12. Julia Wager Rodman Papers, 1861-1933.  
Personal correspondence. 3 items.
- Sub-group 13. Samuel Rodman, Sr., Papers, 1781-1822.  
Personal correspondence. 3 items.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE (cont.)

- Sub-group 14. Samuel Rodman, Jr., Papers, 1819-1875.  
Family correspondence, diaries, marriage certificate,  
receipt. 1 foot.
- Sub-group 15. Susan Emlen Rodman Papers, ca.1840-1860.  
Personal correspondence. 2 items.
- Sub-group 16. Thomas Rodman Papers, 1795-1809.  
Family correspondence, financial records. 2 items.
- Sub-group 17. Thomas Rotch Rodman Papers, 1822-1905.  
Family correspondence, diaries, weather observations,  
certificates. 8 inches.
- Sub-group 18. William Logan Rodman Papers, ca.1840-1850.  
Family correspondence. 4 items.
- Sub-group 19. William Rotch Rodman Papers, 1813-1862.  
Personal correspondence, financial records,  
ships' papers, marriage certificate. 21 items.
- Sub-group 20. Francis Rotch Papers, 1819-1845.  
Family correspondence. 23 items.
- Sub-group 21. Francis Morgan Rotch Papers, 1844.  
Family correspondence. 2 items.
- Sub-group 22. Micah Ruggles Papers, 1848.  
Letter to mother on birth of granddaughter, Alice  
Worcester. 1 item.
- Sub-group 23. Jones Wister Papers, 1847.  
Letter to Mary Rodman, his cousin. 1 item.
- Sub-group 24. Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1857-1876.  
Personal correspondence. 6 items.

DESCRIPTION

Box 1

Sub-group 1. Eliza Rotch Farrar Papers, 1819-1837

Series A. Correspondence, 1819-1837

Folder 1. 1819, 1837

Sub-group 2. Elizabeth Rodman Fisher Papers, 1840-1853

Series A. Correspondence, 1840-1853

Folder 1. 1840, 1853

Sub-group 3. William Logan Fisher Papers, 1836-1846

Series A. Correspondence, 1836-1846

Folder 1. 1836, 1846

Sub-group 4. Maria Rotch Langston Papers, 1819

Series A. Correspondence, 1819

Folder 1. 1819

Sub-group 5. Charles Waln Morgan Papers, 1819-1851

Series A. Correspondence, 1819-1851

Folder 1. 1819, 1850, 1851

Series B. Legal Documents, 1837

Folder 1. Writ of execution against Alden Davis of  
New Bedford

Sub-group 6. Sarah Rodman Morgan Papers, 1801-1822

Series A. Correspondence, 1822

Folder 1. 1822

Series B. Diaries, 1808-1822

Volume 1. 1808

" 2. 1819

" 3. 1822

Folder 1. Items removed from Volume 3

Box 1 (cont.)

Sub-group 7. Edmund Prior, Jr., Papers, 1863-1880

Series A. Correspondence, 1863-1880

Folder 1. 1863, 1880

Box 2

Sub-group 8. Benjamin Rodman Papers, 1816-1863

Series A. Correspondence, 1827-1863

Folder 1. 1827, 1863

Volume 1. 1829-1832

Series B. Financial Records, 1816-1859

Sub-series 1. Journals, 1827-1841

Volume 1. 1827-1833

" 2. 1831-1841

Sub-series 2. Ledgers, 1827-1844

Volume 1. 1827-1831

" 2. 1831-1844

Sub-series 3. Cash Books, 1816-1859

Volume 1. 1816-1825

" 2. 1833-1845

Box 3

Volume 3. 1844-1859

Series C. Legal Documents, 1848

Folder 1. Deed to John Waldron of Fall River, Mass., 1848

Sub-group 9. Eliza Rodman Papers, 1805-1845

Series A. Correspondence, 1808-1845

Folder 1. 1808, 1811, 1813

" 2. 1814, 1815, 1819, 1833, 1845

Series B. Diaries, 1805-1826

Volume 1. 1805

" 2. 1806

Folder 1. Items removed from Volume 2

Box 4

Series B. (cont)

Volume 3. 1808  
Folder 2. Items removed from Volume 3  
Volume 4. 1810  
Folder 3. Items removed from Volume 4  
Volume 5. 1818  
" 6. 1818  
Folder 4. Items removed from Volume 6  
Volume 7. 1821  
" 8. 1823  
Folder 5. Items removed from Volume 8  
Volume 9. 1826

Box 5

Sub-group 10. Elizabeth Rotch Rodman Papers, 1793-1856

Series A. Correspondence, 1793-1851

Folder 1. 1793, 1798, 1813, 1816, 1820, 1849, 1851

Series B. Legal Documents, 1856

Folder 1. Inventory of estate, 1856

Sub-group 11. Hannah Haydock Prior Rodman Papers, 1818-1871

Series A. Correspondence, 1818-1871

Folder 1. 1818, 1825, 1831, 1845  
Folder 2. 1850, 1858, ca. 1860, 1869, 1871

Sub-group 12. Julia Wager Rodman Papers, 1861-1933

Series A. Correspondence, 1861-1933

Folder 1. 1861, 1933

Sub-group 13. Samuel Rodman, Sr., Papers, 1781-1822

Series A. Correspondence, 1781-1810

Folder 1. 1781, 1788, 1789, 1810

Series B. Ships' Papers, 1811-1822

Folder 1. Narration of loss of AMAZON (Schooner), 1811;  
bill for MASSACHUSETTS (Ship), 1822.

Box 6

Sub-group 14. Samuel Rodman, Jr., Papers, 1819-1875

Series A. Correspondence, 1872-1875

Folder 1. 1872, 1875

Series B. Diaries, 1821-1859

Volume 1. Dec. 1821-Jan. 1823  
" 2. Jan. 1823-April 1825  
" 3. April 1825-April 1827  
" 4. April 1827-July 1828  
" 5. July 1828-Dec. 1830  
" 6. Jan. 1831-Jan. 1833  
" 7. Jan. 1833-Sept. 1834  
" 8. Sept. 1834-May 1836  
" 9. May 1836-Jan. 1838  
" 10. Jan. 1838-Jan. 1839  
" 11. Jan. 1839-March 1840  
" 12. March 1840- Oct. 1840  
" 13. Oct. 1840-Aug. 1841

Box 7

" 14. Aug. 1841-April 1843  
" 15. April 1843-July 1845  
" 16. July 1845-June 1847  
" 17. June 1847-April 1848  
" 18. April 1848-March 1849  
" 19. March 1849-Nov. 1850  
" 20. Nov. 1850-March 1853  
" 21. March 1853-Aug. 1858  
" 22. Aug. 1858- April 1859

Box 8

Series C. Abstracts of Diaries, 1821-1827

Volume 1. Dec. 1821-Dec. 1824  
" 2. Dec. 1824-May 1827  
" 3. May 1827-June 1827

Series D. Marriage Certificate, 1819

Folder 1. Of Samuel Rodman, Jr., and Hannah Haydock Prior, 1819

Series E. Receipts, 1856

Folder 1. 1856

Box 8 (cont.)

Sub-group 15. Susan Emlen Rodman Papers, ca. 1840-1860

Series A. Correspondence, ca. 1840-1860

Folder 1. 1840, ca. 1860

Sub-group 16. Thomas Rodman Papers, 1795-1809

Series A. Correspondence, 1795

Folder 1. 1795

Series B. Financial Records, 1801-1809

Folder 1. Cash Book, 1801-1809

Box 9

Sub-group 17. Thomas Rotch Rodman Papers, 1822-1905

Series A. Correspondence, 1822-1877, 1891

- Folder 1. <sup>Thomas Rodman</sup> 1822, 1844, 1846
- " 2. 1862
- " 3. 1863
- " 4. 1864
- " 5. 1865
- " 6.-7. 1866
- " 8. 1867
- " 9. 1868
- " 10. 1869
- " 11. 1870
- " 12. 1871, 1872, 1873
- " 13. 1875, 1876
- " 14. 1877, 1891

Box 10

Series B. Diaries, 1902-1905

- Volume 1. July 1902-July 1902
- " 2. July 1902- Sept. 1902
- " 3. Sept. 1902-Oct. 1902
- " 4. March 1903-May 1903
- " 5. May 1903-Feb. 1904
- " 6. Feb. 1904-Oct. 1904
- " 7. Oct. 1904-July 1905
- " 8. July 1905-Dec. 1905

Box 11

Sub-group 17. (cont.)

Series C. Weather Observations, 1881-1912

- Folder 1. 1881-1883
- " 2. 1884-1885
- " 3. Charts, 1881-1885
- " 4. Transcript of paper read to Common Council  
for meteorological equipment, 1893
- " 5. Newspaper article, New Bedford STANDARD, 1912

Series D. Certificates, 1870-1889

- Folder 1. Testimonial from Commonwealth of Massachusetts,  
April 19, 1870
- " 2. Commendation from Military Order of the Loyal  
Legion of the United States, March 6, 1889

Box 12

Sub-group 18. William Logan Rodman Papers, ca. 1840-1862

Series A. Correspondence, ca. 1840-1850

- Folder 1. ca. 1840, 1849, 1850

Sub-group 19. William Rotch Rodman Papers, 1813-1836

Series A. Correspondence, 1836

- Folder 1. 1836

Series B. Financial Records, 1838-1846

- Volume 1. Sales Book, 1838-1846

Series C. Ships' papers, 1850-186

Sub-series 1. AUDUBON (Ship) records, 1850-1862

- Folder 1. Bill of sale, 1850
- " 2. Protest of damage to vessel, 1859
- " 3. Bills and receipts, 1860
- " 4. Letter and report on death of captain and results  
of investigation, 1861-1862

Series D. Marriage Certificate, 1813

- Folder 1. Of William Rotch Rodman and Rebecca Waln Morgan, 1813

Box 12 (cont.)

Sub-group 20. Francis Rotch Papers, 1819-1845

Series A. Correspondence, 1819-1845

- Folder 1. 1819, 1832
- " 2. 1834, 1836, 1842, 1843
- " 3. 1844, 1845

Sub-group 21. Francis Morgan Rotch Papers, 1844

Series A. Correspondence, 1844

- Folder 1. 1844

Sub-group 22. Micah Ruggles Papers, 1848

Series A. Correspondence, 1848

- Folder 1. 1848

Sub-group 23. Jones Wister Papers, 1847

Series A. Correspondence, 1847

- Folder 1. 1847

Sub-group 24. Miscellaneous Letters, 1857-1876

Series A. Correspondence, 1857-1876

- Folder 1. 1857, 1862, 1896, n.d.

ADDED ENTRIES

Account books--New Bedford, Mass.--1801-1858  
 American Civil War See United States--History--Civil War,  
 1861-1865  
 Business records--Mass.--New Bedford  
 Businessmen--Mass.--New Bedford  
 Civil War--United States SEE United States--History--Civil  
 War, 1861-1865  
 Decedents' estates--Mass.--New Bedford  
 Domestic relations--Mass.--New Bedford  
 Diaries--New Bedford, Mass.--1805-1905  
 Europe--Description and travel--1800-1918  
 Family--Mass.--New Bedford  
 Farrar, Eliza Rotch, 1791-1870  
 Fisher, Elizabeth Rodman, 1810-1875  
 Fisher, William Logan, 1781-1862  
 Great Plains--Description and travel  
 Langston, Maria Rotch, 1797-1874  
 Mercachants--Mass.--New Bedford  
 Meteorological observations SEE Meteorology--Observations  
 Meteorology--Observations  
 Middle West--Description and travel  
 Midwest SEE Middle West  
 Midwestern states SEE Middle West  
 Morgan, Charles Waln, 1796-1861  
 Morgan, Sarah Rodman, 1793-1888  
 New Bedford, Mass.--Commerce  
 New Bedford, Mass.--Economic conditions  
 North Central states SEE Middle West  
 Observations, Meteorological SEE Meteorology--Observations  
 Plains, The Great SEE Great Plains  
 Poetry  
 Prior, Edmund, Jr., fl. 1822-1882  
 Rodman, Benjamin, 1794-1876  
 Rodman, Eliza, 1782-1864  
 Rodman, Elizabeth Rotch, 1757-1856  
 Rodman, Hannah Haydock Prior, 1794-1876  
 Rodman, Julia Wager, 1855-1937  
 Rodman, Samuel, Sr., 1753-1835  
 Rodman, Samuel, Jr., 1792-1876  
 Rodman, Susan Emlen, 1829-1880  
 Rodman, Thomas, 1784-1809  
 Rodman, Thomas Rotch, 1825-1905  
 Rodman, William Logan, 1822-1863  
 Rodman, William Rotch, 1786-1855  
 Rotch, Anne Waln Morgan, 1800-1884  
 Rotch, Francis, 1788-1874  
 Rotch, Francis Morgan, 1822-1863  
 Ruggles, Micah, 1791-1857  
 Ships' papers

ADDED ENTRIES (cont.)

Southern states--History--Civil War, 1861-1865      SEE United States--  
History---Civil War, 1861-8165  
United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Correspondents  
War of Seccession (United States)      SEE United States--History--  
Civil War, 1861-1865  
The West--Description and travel--1860-1880  
Whaling--Mass.--New Bedford  
Wister, Jones, 1839-1917  
Women--Mass.--Social conditions  
Amazon (Schooner)  
Audubon (Ship)  
Massachusetts (Ship)

SEPARATIONS LIST

Removed to photograph collection:

Two photographs of Samuel Rodman, Jr., mansion - 1 interior  
and 1 exterior

Removed to maps and broadside collection:

*Pam* Broadside for "Haddock's Mechanical Exhibition of Androids",  
ca. 1826.

*Pam* Broadside of hymns for New Bedford Dorcas Society.

Removed to objects collection:

Swatches of fabric and pencils from ladies' diaries.  
Business card of William H. Fabio of New Bedford.