

# MARBLEHEAD



# M · U · S · E · U · M

## **BOWEN FAMILY PAPERS**

**1731-1810, 1860, 1883**

**MSS 7**

**Processed by:** Lee Jacoby  
November 2019

**Accession #s:** 0000.777–779  
1900.183  
1928.359  
1928.667.1–2  
1928.668–673  
1928.681  
1928.698  
1928.707  
1928.710  
1928.746  
1928.833  
1931.59  
1938.442  
1948.89  
1967.7  
1979.3.3  
1979.3.7  
2003.200

**Volume:** 3 boxes (1 oversize)  
2.5 linear feet

**Provenance:** This material was donated by the estate of Samuel Roads, Jr., Russell W. Knight, William A. Laskey, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Pope, Carol Reagan, Chadwick Smith, and the YMCA. The provenance of the remaining material is unknown.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

**Nathan Bowen (1698-1776)** was born in Rehoboth, Massachusetts, on April 4, 1698, the son of Obadiah and Abigail (Bullock) Bowen. He settled in Marblehead, Massachusetts, in 1718, and established himself as a trader, gentleman, notary public, justice of the peace, and writer of almanacs. He had eight surviving children with his first wife Sarah Ashley. After her death in 1740, he married Hannah Harris in 1741, and they had one child. Following her death, he married Mary Boden in 1764. Nathan Bowen died on December 23, 1776, in Marblehead.

**Edward Bowen** was born in Marblehead, Massachusetts, on December 30, 1720, the eldest son of Nathan and Sarah Bowen. He was a mariner and later a scrivener. Edward Bowen married five times and had a total of eleven children. He married Elizabeth Boden in 1750, Mary Burnham in 1762, Lydia Main in 1768, Deborah Kimball in 1774, and Mercy Cross in 1795. Edward Bowen died on October 5, 1796, in New Jersey.

**Nathan Bowen (1726-1761)** was born in Marblehead on December 17, 1726, the second son of Nathan and Sarah Bowen. He was a mariner and sea captain. In 1753 he married Martha Trevett, and they had one child. In 1760, while captain of the schooner *Prince of Orange*, he was captured and imprisoned in Bayonne Castle in France. Nathan Bowen died in 1761.

**Ashley Bowen** was born in Marblehead on January 8, 1728, the third son of Nathan and Sarah Bowen. He went to sea at age 11 and retired from it at age 35, when he entered a second career as a ship rigger. During his later years he wrote his autobiography, the first American sailor to do so. He was a staunch loyalist during the American Revolution. Ashley Bowen married Dorothy Chadwick in 1758 and had six children. Later he married Mary Shaw in 1771, with whom he had two children, and Hannah Graves in 1782, with whom he had six children. Ashley Bowen died on February 2, 1813, in Marblehead.

**Nathan Bowen (1752-1837)** was born on October 5, 1752, in Marblehead, the second son of Edward and Elizabeth Bowen. He served in the Continental Army from 1776 to 1778 and later was a cabinet maker and notary public in Marblehead. He married Elizabeth Martin, his first cousin, in 1781, and they had five children. After her death he married Hannah Stiles in 1797, Polly Abraham in 1798, and Mary Melzard in 1801. Nathan Bowen died on August 11, 1837, in Marblehead.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains the papers of three generations of the Bowen family of Marblehead, Massachusetts. Included are legal documents, diaries, almanacs, journals and booklets, a letter book and day books, drawings and watercolor paintings, an autobiography, a letter, a navigation manual, and extensive Bowen family genealogy. The collection has been divided into six series.

**SERIES I. Nathan Bowen (1698-1776) Papers** contains legal documents, a letter to his son Ashley, and two books belonging to Nathan Bowen. The legal papers include powers of attorney, a summons, a bond, a deed, an account, and papers regarding lease of a windmill. There are also two bound books, one *Declarations* and the other a *Letter Book*. The *Letter Book* contains detailed descriptions of court cases and actions taken by Nathan Bowen as justice of the peace. Also in Series I are extracts from Nathan's and his son Edward's journals compiled by Samuel Roads.

**SERIES II. Edward Bowen Papers** contains an almanac for 1784, a discharge of Ashley Bowen's mortgage and bonds, and a copy of the last will and testament of Edward Bowen. Extracts from Edward Bowen's journals are included in Series I.

**SERIES III. Nathan Bowen (1726-1761) Papers** contains a small booklet listing some of the seamen on board the schooner *Prince of Orange* together with their signatures. There is also a

memorandum written by the Captain Nathan Bowen describing his capture in 1761 by the French brig *Gentil* while on his way to Oporto followed by his imprisonment in Bayonne Castle in France.

**SERIES IV. Ashley Bowen Papers** contains writings and artwork of Ashley Bowen. In **Subseries A. Journals and Booklets** there are four journals written while he was at sea and three journals written in later years, including his autobiography. The autobiography is remarkable for the number of sketches and watercolors it includes of vessels, harbors, and ships flags. The autobiography also contains a navigation manual written by Bowen. In this subseries there are also photocopies of three of Bowen's journals and a typewritten extract from one journal. Also present are two booklets not written by Ashley Bowen. The first is a partial diary describing a voyage to England where the author is ordained as an Anglican priest, most likely written by Joshua Wingate Weeks, who assumed the rectorship of St. Michael's Church in Marblehead in 1763. An accompanying journal records the voyage of the ship *Hannah* from London to Boston in 1763, very likely Week's return passage. **Subseries B. Paintings** contains three watercolor paintings by Ashley Bowen of vessels, most from Marblehead, and house flags of Marblehead merchants.

**SERIES V. Nathan Bowen (1752-1837) Papers** contains a copy of Nathan Bowen's Book of General Orders 1778, a deed, a guardianship, a testimony, and an appointment as a Justice of the Peace in Essex County. There is also a printed book of laws passed by the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1810.

**SERIES VI. Genealogy** contains extensive genealogical research on the Bowen family.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RELATED COLLECTIONS**

*Journals of Ashley Bowen (1728-1813) of Marblehead*, ed. Philip Chadwick Foster Smith. Colonial Society of Massachusetts. Vols. 44 & 45. Boston: 1973

*The Autobiography of Ashley Bowen (1728-1813)*, ed. Daniel Vickers. Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press, 2006

Framed paintings by Ashley Bowen:

*Ashley Bowen, the Brave Companion of the Immortal Cook*. Acc. #1947.46

*H.M.S. Pembroke at Quebec, 1759*. Acc. #1947.45

*The Marbleheaders Leaving for the Quebec Expedition, 1759*. Acc. #1922.102

*Drowning in Marblehead Harbor and Funeral Procession Around the Old Town House, 1808*. Acc. #1966.5

### **SERIES LIST**

**SERIES I. Nathan Bowen (1698-1776) Papers**

**SERIES II. Edward Bowen Papers**

**SERIES III. Nathan Bowen (1726-1761) Papers**

**SERIES IV. Ashley Bowen Papers**

**A. Journals and Booklets**

**B. Paintings**

**SERIES V. Nathan Bowen (1752-1837) Papers**

**SERIES VI. Genealogy**

CONTENTS LIST**SERIES I. Nathan Bowen (1698-1776) Papers**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	1	<i>Declarations</i> , bound book	1731-1770
	2	Legal documents	1737-1770
	3	Letter from Nathan Bowen to son Ashley	1757
	4	<i>Letter Book</i> , bound book	1768-1775
	5	<i>Extracts from Journal kept by Nathan Bowen and Edward Bowen, from 1757 to 1808</i> , in <i>Marblehead Manual</i> , compiled by Samuel Roads, Jr.	1883

**SERIES II. Edward Bowen Papers**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Date</u>
1	6	<i>Almanack for 1784</i>	1784
	7	Legal documents	1792-1796

**SERIES III. Nathan Bowen (1726-1761) Papers**

1	8	Seamen aboard the <i>Prince of Orange</i> (schooner) and capture of Capt. Nathan Bowen, booklet	1760-1761
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**SERIES IV. Ashley Bowen Papers****A. Journals and Booklets**

1	9	<i>Sea Log and Whaling Journal</i>	1753-1755
	10	<i>The Courtship of Dorothy Chadwick</i>	1757-1761
	11	<i>Journal of the Siege of Quebec</i>	1759-1761
	12	<i>Journal</i>	1760-1762
	13	Voyage to England and return to Boston, diary	undated
	14	<i>Journal of a Voyage from England to Boston in America kept on board the Hannah</i>	1763
2	1	<i>Day Book</i>	1766-1775
	2	<i>Memorandum of Small Pox at Cat Island</i>	1773-1774
	3	<i>Autobiographical Volume, 1728-1780</i>	undated
	4	Extracts from Journals of Ashley Bowen, 1779-1780, typescript	undated
3(OS)	1	Journals of Ashley Bowen, photocopies	undated

**SERIES IV. Ashley Bowen Papers (contd.)****B. Paintings**

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Contents</u>	<u>Date</u>
2	5	<i>Watercolors of 8 Vessels, 1739-1747</i>	undated
3(OS)	2	<i>Account of the Square Rigg Vessels belonging to the Port of Marblehead in Year 1768</i>	undated
		<i>House Flags of the Marblehead Merchants</i>	undated

**SERIES V. Nathan Bowen (1752-1837) Papers**

2	6	<i>Nathan Bowen's Book of General Orders 1778, copy</i>	1778
	7	Legal documents	1798-1807
3(OS)	3	Appointment of Nathan Bowen as a Justice of the Peace in Essex County	1804
2	8	<i>Laws Passed at the Session, Commenced on the Twenty-Fourth of January, 1810</i>	1810

**SERIES VI. Genealogy**

2	9	Genealogy of the Bowen family	1860, undated
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**Subject headings**

Autobiography  
 Bowen, Ashley (1728-1813)  
 Bowen, Edward (1720-1796)  
 Bowen, Nathan (1698-1776)  
 Bowen, Nathan (1726-1761)  
 Bowen, Nathan (1752-1837)  
 French and Indian War—Battle of Quebec  
 Marblehead—Massachusetts  
 Navigation  
 Paintings  
 Ships—*Prince of Orange* (Schooner)  
     *Hannah* (Ship)  
 United States—American Revolution  
 Weeks, Joshua Wingate (1738-1804)