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**Abram Healy Papers,
1874-1878
(MSS-036)**

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Abram Healy Papers Biographical Sketch

Abram Healy was born in Fall River, MA (or possibly Maine) on October 3, 1836 to Abraham and Nancy (Coombs) Healy. He died June 18, 1889 in Fall River, MA of apoplexy (stroke) at age 52. He married Sarah Thompson (born in Maine, June 26, 1837, died 1919 of old age at 80 years old), October 23, 1862 and they had three children, Caroline "Carrie", born in 1863, Carl, born in 1871 and Hattie, born 1873 (died 1878 in Nagasaki, Japan). The family moved between Maine and Massachusetts.

It is reported in *The Story of Anthony Coombs and His Descendants*, by William Carey Coombs, that Abram had the desire to spend life on the sea from a young age. He did take to the sea at age nineteen (about 1855) and had a long, successful mariner career. He earned a First Mate certificate in 1862 and was listed as a seaman out of Lisbon, ME in June 1863 in Civil War draft records. By the 1870 census, he was listed as a sea captain.

He sailed aboard the American schooner "William Phillips" in and around China and Australia. The "William Phillips" was built at New Bedford, MA in 1874. Its home ports were New Bedford, MA and San Francisco, CA. The schooner would likely have been built by William Phillips (1801-1866), initially a clerk in New Bedford, hired by John Avery Parker in 1825 and served as his bookkeeper and secretary from 1836 to 1853. The firm of William Phillips & Son continued Parker's business after his death in 1853.

The majority of letters are addressed to Joseph Healy, Abram's uncle in Fall River. Joseph Healy was born in Fall River, Mass., January 27, 1828, a son of David and Meribah (Hathaway) Healy, and grandson of Joseph and Thankful (Stafford) Healy. For several years he was bookkeeper for the Fall River Iron Works Company. He began his successful career as a cotton manufacturer in 1871, when he became treasurer of the Osborn Mills. Early in life he began to take an active part in politics and was on the board of city assessors in 1860 and 1864. He was alderman in 1894 and 1895 and was chosen a police commissioner in 1894 and reappointed in 1896 for a three year term. His ability as a financier was acknowledged by his election to the presidency of the Pocasset Savings Bank in 1894. He was also director in the Manufacturers' Mutual Insurance

Company and the Arkwright Insurance Company of Boston. In 1863 he married Harriet, daughter of Cornelius and Abigail Parker.

Scope and Content Note

The letters in the collection are nearly all written by Abram Healy while either at sea or at ports in Asia and Australia between the years 1874 and 1878 while aboard the William Phillips schooner. The letters describe in detail his business transactions and issues he encounters, including ship damage, lawsuits, and issues with natives. Two of his letters include hand-drawn maps.

Box and Folder List

Box 1

Folder

1. Abram Healy (AH) to Joseph Healy, Esq. (JH), written at sea, November 8, 1874
2. AH to JH, at sea, February 6, 1875
3. To "Uncle Joseph (JH), unsigned, at sea, includes hand-drawn nautical chart, May 13, 1875
4. To JH, envelope only, May 22, 1875
5. AH to JH, at Seabeck, Washington picking up lumber, July 25, 1875
6. AH to JH, at San Francisco, CA, August 13, 1875
7. AH to JH, at Melbourne, Australia, includes hand-drawn nautical chart, November 11, 1875
8. AH to JH, at Newcastle, Australia, January 16, 1876
9. AH to JH, at sea, February 28, 1876
10. AH to JH, at Hong Kong, March 21, 1876
11. AH to JH, at Bangkok, May 23, 1876
12. Sarah Healy (Abram's wife) to her sister, at Touron [Tourane], Vietnam (now Da Nang), describes the natives, July 17, 1876
13. AH to JH, at Touron [Tourane], Vietnam (now Da Nang), July 18, 1876
14. To "uncle," probably JH, unsigned, at sea, November 26, 1876
15. Incomplete letter, undated, unsigned, matches information from letter in folder 14, c. 1876
16. Lawsuit between "Wm Phillips" [AH's schooner] and "Chinese Junk" [a boat], includes news clippings, December 8, 1876
17. AH to Wm Phillips and son, at Hong Kong, December 13, 1876
18. AH to JH, at sea, February 15, 1877
19. AH to JH, at Singapore Straits, April 11, 1877
20. AH to JH, at Hong Kong, September 4, 1877
21. AH to JH, at sea, December 6, 1877
22. AH to JH, at sea, February 8, 1878
23. AH to unknown recipient, possibly at San Francisco, CA, May 20, 1878
24. AH to JH, at Hong Kong, August 4, 1878
25. AH to unknown recipient, at Bangkok, November 19, 1878
26. AH to unknown recipient, at Hong Kong, March 13, no year
27. AH to unknown recipient, partial letter, no location, undated
28. AH to unknown recipient, partial letter, no location, undated