

## Abraham Kilham Papers 1787 - 1847

**MSS:** #028  
**Volume:** 1 Box

**Processed by:** Amanda Ferrante, 2016

### **Abstract:**

The collection consists of records created and collected by Abraham Kilham, a ship's captain who resided on Central Street in Beverly, Massachusetts. Over the course of his career, Kilham sailed on numerous voyages and on just as many vessels. His travels were typically commercial in nature and spanned the globe. He was an apt navigator, as evidenced by the detailed directions and descriptions of shipping routes that appear in his papers. Kilham also worked as a barrister later in life and was appointed as a Justice of the Peace for Essex County in 1825 and again in 1831. The contents of the collection pertain mainly to his activities as a seaman, though some correspondence is personal in nature and a number of items pertain to his activities local to Essex County later in life. Items date from 1787 to 1847, though the large majority were created during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Kilham's shipping career was at its peak.

### **Collection Creator:**

Various creators, though collected by Abraham Kilham (1765-1834), Beverly, Mass.

### **Provenance:**

Received from the Kilham family in the 1930s.

### **Conservation/Processor's Note:**

The collection is paper-based and the large majority of items consist of acidic, hand-made laid paper. Folded items were stored unfolded, except in several circumstances where maintaining the fold was more beneficial to the item's structural integrity. Items were organized by their type or purpose into 4 series. The materials are stored in 4 acid-free folders and housed in 1 box.

### **Copyright:**

Request for permission to publish material from the collection must be submitted in writing to the Curator of Collections at Historic Beverly.

### **Preferred Citation:**

Title of Document, Abraham Kilham Papers, Beverly Historical Society and Museum, 117 Cabot Street, Beverly, MA 01915.

### **Biographical/Historical Note**

Abraham Kilham was born in Beverly, Massachusetts on February 19, 1765. For much of his life he made a living as a ship's captain, though he typically sailed on vessels owned by other men. His business involved shipping, trade, and commerce, during which he travelled extensively around the globe and kept meticulous notes on various aspects of his journeys. As evidenced by the collection's contents, Kilham was especially active as a captain during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, visiting locales from the West Indies to South Africa to the Middle East, Mediterranean, Caribbean, and Europe. His personal writings reflect that he was an avid navigator and businessman, frequently offering critiques and commentaries on the state of practices and solutions for common problems. As a rule he was watchful of various markets on his voyages and occasionally lingered in areas where he felt there was money to be made—in his ships' logs, for instance, he offers insight on the wine trade amongst the islands of the West Indies.

Kilham was married to Betsy Lovett (b. 1778, d. 1803) in 1798. Betsy gave birth to daughter Elizabeth (b. 1799, d. 1803) and two sons (b. 1801 and 1802, both stillborn) prior to her death in 1803. Kilham remarried to Louisa Bridge (b. 1779, d. 1857) in 1807, followed by the births of their children Edward (b. 1807, d. 1854), Elizabeth Lovett (b. 1810, d. 1828), Charles Abraham (b. 1812, d. 1865), Daniel (b. 1813, d. 1826), and Austin Daniel (b. 1817, d. 1887). According to census records, Kilham's family resided in Beverly, Massachusetts.

As evidenced by several notable items in the collection (Series IV. Miscellaneous Documents), Kilham worked as a barrister later in life and was subsequently appointed as a Justice of the Peace for Massachusetts' Essex County in 1825 and again in 1831. His service was commissioned for seven years each time, though his second commission terminated with his passing in 1834.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The entirely paper-based collection consists of items pertaining to, created by, and collected by Abraham Kilham. The items were created between 1787 and 1847, though the large majority dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Kilham's career as a commercial ship's captain was at its peak. The materials are organized into 4 series based on their subject matter and type of document.

Series I. Correspondence consists mainly of business correspondence, though some letters are personal in nature. The 74 items in this series date from 1794 to 1816.

Series II. Shipping Papers contains documents pertaining to Kilham's maritime activities, including bills of lading, ledgers, bills, and receipts. The 48 items in this series date from 1792 to 1826.

Series III. Ship's Log contains a single item—a ship's log that Kilham kept on various in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The log's entries date from August 20, 1787 to April 8, 1801. Accession numbers inserted into Kilham's narrative indicate the many distinctive voyages that

he embarked on, after which he typically returned to port in Newburyport, Beverly, or Boston. The log was as much a diary for recording Kilham's thoughts, feelings, and everyday minutiae as it was a ledger for his movements and profits; much of the writings are poems and passages regarding emotions, relationships, love, loss, the trials of maritime life, and perseverance. He also offers extremely detailed instructions for reaching particular ports or locations on islands, explaining the current, water depth, and obstacles to navigate. Nonetheless, a handful of the entries detail his various shipwrecks and subsequent need to find an alternate passage home. His travels during this time were global and the log bears comprehensive accounts of vessels he captained, including vessels' names, owners, and dates sailed, and locales visited. Of note is the fact that entries from January 10, 1797 to July 17, 1800 were written in a handwriting that is extremely different than the majority of Kilham's entries; it is possible that these entries were written by someone else.

Series IV. Miscellaneous Documents consists of items pertaining to peripheral parts of Kilham's life and activities, such as his commissions as Essex County Justice of the Peace, monetary claims, and his position as a stockholder of Cochecho Manufacturing Company, of New Hampshire. The 15 items in this series date from 1795 to 1847.

### **Series List**

This collection is arranged into 4 series:

**Series I:** Correspondence

**Series II:** Shipping Papers

**Series III:** Ship's Log

**Series IV:** Miscellaneous Documents

**Content List****Series I: Correspondence  
(1794-1816)****Series/Arrangement Note:** Sorted chronologically and stored in a single folder.

<b>Subseries</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Unit-Shelf</b>	<b>Accession #</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,982	03/02/1794
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	18,803	11/22/1794
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,985	04/25/1795
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,345	03/21/1796
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,996	05/01/1797
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,997	05/05/1797
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,000	05/1797
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	22,951	03/12/1799
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i>	10,701	06/21/1799

		Filing Cabinet		
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,504	10/09/1799
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,705	08/30/1800
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,026	11/15/1800
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.075	04/1801
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.077	04/1801
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.080	04/03/1801
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.081	04/07/1801
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.082	04/15/1801
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.085	05/08/1801
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.084	05/09/1801
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i>	24,359	07/17/1801

		Filing Cabinet		
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,029	08/10/1801
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,703	03/10/1802
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,288	05/15/1802
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,034	10/06/1802
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,036	03/18/1803
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,037	04/09/1803
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,708	04/13/1803
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,038	05/14/1803
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.078	08/20/1803
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,346	05/07/1805
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i>	26,041	06/24/1803

		Filing Cabinet		
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,348	06/26/1805
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,044	07/24/1805
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,349	09/20/1805
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,043	10/04/1805
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.083	10/09/1805
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,039	11/13/1805
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,045	11/13/1805
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,046	01/21/1806
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,354	01/17/1807
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,356	03/11/1807
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i>	24,357	04/27/1807

		Filing Cabinet		
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,702	08/30/1808
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,051	10/27/1809
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,051	10/27/1809
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,325	11/10/1809
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,053	01/20/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,055	05/28/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	27,057	06/15/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.086	07/05/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,330	08/30/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,058	09/08/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i>	24,331	09/11/1810



		Filing Cabinet		
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,333	10/12/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,062	10/19/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,063	11/04/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,337	11/16/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,061	11/25/1810
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,065	02/19/1811
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,072	08/10/1811
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,074	11/06/1811
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,075	11/07/1811
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,076	12/10/1811
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i>	26,077	12/11/1811

		Filing Cabinet		
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,078	12/17/1811
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,079	12/18/1811
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,084	12/19/1811
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,049a	02/18/1813
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	24,049	02/18/1813
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,089	05/03/1813
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,715	05/17/1815
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,717	04/23/1816
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,713	11/02/1816
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,716	11/11/1816

**Series II: Shipping Papers  
(1792-1826)**

**Series/Arrangement Note:** Sorted chronologically and stored in a single folder.

<b>Subseries</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Unit-Shelf</b>	<b>Accession #</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,948	Undated
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,704	Undated
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.107	Undated
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,988	Undated
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,981	09/1792
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	18,651	1795
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,990	1795
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,978	1795
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	25,984	1795

N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	25,975 25,976 25,977	1795
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	25,987	10/29/1795
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	25,979	11/02/1795
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	25,989	11/03/1795
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	25,993	02/18/1796
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	25,992	02/26/1796
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	25,991	03/14/1796
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	25,993	02/18/1796
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,021	1798
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,015	05/19/1798
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	25,974	11/01/1798

N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,020	1798
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,016	1798
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,018	1798
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,022	07/02/1799
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,023	1799
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	N/A	1799
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,025	07/10/1800
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	N/A	1799
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,830	09/1801
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	N/A	1802
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,031	1802

N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,032	1803
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	FIC 008.108	1803
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	10,712	07/26/1804
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	10,711	07/26/1804
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	10,709	1804
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	10,710	1804
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,040	1805
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,048	07/23/1808
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,052	10/10/1810
N/A	Ledger	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,067	1810
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	FIC 008.076	11/04/18110

N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	N/A	04/10/1812
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	22,953	04/1812
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	FIC 008.109	06/26/1815
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	N/A	04/08/1818
N/A	Receipt	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	N/A	06/21/1824
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,102	07/09/1824
N/A	Invoice	<i>People/Families Filing Cabinet</i>	26,100	01/08/1826

**Series III: Ship's Log  
(1787-1801)**

**Series/Arrangement Note:** Stored in a single folder.

<b>Subseries</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Unit-Shelf</b>	<b>Accession #</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
N/A	Ship's log	CHV, 4-B	28,982 – 29,004	1787-1801

**Series IV: Miscellaneous Documents  
(1794-1847)**

**Series/Arrangement Note:** Sorted chronologically and stored in a single folder.

<b>Subseries</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Unit-Shelf</b>	<b>Accession #</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>
N/A	Scrap paper	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	N/A	Undated
N/A	Newspaper clipping	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,707	Undated
N/A	Court summons	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	12,369	05/18/1795
N/A	Court summons	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	12,370	07/29/1795
N/A	Bill of health	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	FIC 008.079	1795
N/A	Insurance invoice	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	10,706	05/08/1802
N/A	Loan document	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,116	12/25/1817
N/A	Letter	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,099	07/01/1824
N/A	Meeting summons	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,121	05/15/1829
N/A	Meeting	<i>People/Families</i>	26,122	06/05/1829



	summons	Filing Cabinet		
N/A	Appointment documents	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	22,951	01/07/1825
N/A	Appointment documents	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	22,952	12/20/1831
N/A	Note	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	29,007	01/12/1825
N/A	Meeting summons	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	26,123	09/14/1829
N/A	Note	<i>People/Families</i> Filing Cabinet	N/A	07/03/1847

### **Bibliography**

*Ancestry.com*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2016. <[http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gl=allgs&gss=sfs28\\_ms\\_f-2\\_s&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=abraham&gsfn\\_x=0&gsln=kilham&gsln\\_x=0&msypn\\_\\_ftp=beverly%2C%20ma&MSAV=0&cp=0&catbucket=rstp&uidh=000](http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gl=allgs&gss=sfs28_ms_f-2_s&new=1&rank=1&msT=1&gsfn=abraham&gsfn_x=0&gsln=kilham&gsln_x=0&msypn__ftp=beverly%2C%20ma&MSAV=0&cp=0&catbucket=rstp&uidh=000)>.