

916.1

P.C.

Collection: SIAMSE TWINS PAPERS
Mt. Airy, North Carolina

1829-1833; 1929; 1962

Physical Description: Letters, agreement, import and export lists, newspaper and magazine clippings. Photoduplication. 34 items.

Acquisition: Purchased from Microreproduction Laboratory, Cambridge 39, Massachusetts. (Dr. Thomas E. Andrews, Archivist, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 141 Cambridge Street, Boston 14, Massachusetts)

1962, August 23

Description: These letters and miscellaneous items are copies from the Coffin Collection in the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

The letters (1829-1832) from Captain Abel Coffin to his wife Susan, children Abel and Susan from his ship *Sachem at Sea* tell of his acquisition of two Chinese boys, seventeen years old, grown together but extraordinarily healthy, who he hopes "will prove profitable as a curiosity." Captain Coffin's and his wife's letters from London report the twins, Eng-Cheng, as well, that they are good boys, have learned English easily, and are popular; from Liverpool, Mrs. Coffin mentions their tour of Scotland and Ireland; and from London again describes their house in the West End and the Exhibition Hall on Regent Street where Eng-Cheng were on display from eleven in the morning until four in the afternoon. Captain Coffin's letters from board ship en route to Batavia, to his family in Newburyport, urge her to be kind to the twins but to discipline them, and suggests she employ Mr. Hale's help. From Sourabaya, Coffin writes that he hopes the twins are well received in America and again suggests Hale as the best man to look out for their welfare. He wrote from Bath, in 1832, of locating Eng-Chang, who seemed glad to see him and agreed to make a settlement; a post-script added that the twins were going to Ohio.

Division of Archives and Manuscripts
State Department of Archives and History
Raleigh, North Carolina

SIAMESE TWINS PAPERS
Mt. Airy, North Carolina

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(2)

1829-1833; 1929; 1962

Further correspondence includes letters to Mrs. Coffin from E. Everett in London. A letter from Messrs. Baring Brothers & Company, London, 1830 to Captain Coffin gives detailed and explicit instructions relative to purchasing and shipping coffee. James W. Hale, apparently the twins' manager in Coffin's absence, wrote his troubles to Captain William Davis, Jr., Newburyport, Massachusetts. He complains of Mrs. Coffin's interference and threatens to resign if she continues. From Reading, Pennsylvania, he gives an account of difficulties travelling in the snow and the unfortunate effect of the weather on attendance.

Arthur W. Towne, Syracuse, New York, February 6, 1929, in a letter to Dr. John L. Coffin, Boston, inquires about his grandfather Captain Abel Coffin and gives information he has on him and other individuals connected with the twins.

Two miscellaneous items are a list of imports and exports, prices from Batavia, October, 1833, and an agreement (undated) between Abel Coffin and Charles Harris for the latter to take charge of the "Siamese Youths" until Captain Coffin arrives in the United States.

A magazine clipping from the New Yorker, September 2, 1933, entitled "That Was New York: The Amazing Siamese Twins," by Homer Groy, and a newspaper clipping, "Never Alone at Last: The Strange Double-Life of the Siamese Tar Heels," by Jonathan Daniels in the News and Observer, October 28, 1962, as the titles indicate, give accounts of the twins.

Collection: SIAMESE TWINS PAPERS [Addition]

P.C. 916.1

On Tour (Connecticut-Virginia)
Wilkes and Surry Counties

1829-1874; 1952-1969

Physical Description: Letters, receipt, declaration, obituary, broadsides, census records, newspaper and magazine clippings.

Acquisition: Purchased 16 items in April, 1969, and 7 items in June, 1969, from Miss Thelma Stone, ██████████, North Abington, Massachusetts, 02351. Miss Stone acquired the papers from Horace Champion. Xerox copies of a number of published items were procured from the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill. Transferred, August 3, 1971, from the Little-Mordecai Collection, illustrated report of the autopsy of Chang and Eng published in 1875.

Description: Chang and Eng Bunker, natives of Siam, arrived in Boston, Massachusetts in August, 1829. In October the same year they sailed with Captain and Mrs. Abel Coffin to be exhibited in England, returning in March, 1831. They made two other trips abroad--one in the fall of 1835 for c. 12 months and the other for a more extended period in 1869-1871. In June, 1839, they moved to North Carolina, where they married sisters named Yates in April, 1843. North Carolina was their home until they died in 1874.

This addition to the Siamese Twins collection contains 20 letters (March, 1831 to July, 1832) written by their tour managers, James W. Hale who was followed by Charles Harris, to Mrs. Susan Coffin and a Captain William Davis, Jr. in Newburyport, Massachusetts. The datelines indicate the twins were touring in New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia. The subject of the letters concerns the health of the twins and the multitude of problems connected with the tour (poor crowds, transportation and clothing vexations, need for money, etc.).

Some of the letters were dictated and signed by Chang-Eng, who at times refer to themselves as "I" and at other times, "We." These letters give vent to their wrath at being called slaves in Virginia, where there was a controversy in the legislature regarding the exhibition tax. Their anger is even stronger against the Coffins whom they accuse of exploitation, citing in some detail how the twins were berthed in the servants' quarters on the ship to England and how the Coffins lived extravagantly in London (12 servants), etc.

On Tour (Connecticut-Virginia)
Wilkes and Surry Counties

1829-1874; 1952-1969

Also included is an insurance receipt indicating the twins were insured for \$10,000 on the 1829 passage; an expense account of J. W. Hale for March-September, 1831; a xerox copy of the naturalization declaration of Chang-Eng in 1839, Wilkes County; and a contemporary newspaper account of their death in Surry County, 1874.

*Settlement
of the
accounts
from 1831-1839
(see also 916.1)*

The photocopies of printed materials in the North Carolina Collection are the autopsy report; 5 broadsides from exhibitions in England; an article on the Bunker family in Life, August 11, 1952; and the script of a farce, "The Siamese Twins" by Gilbert Abbott a Beckett, London, n.d., the latter describes the antics of a bogus pair of twins called Ching and Wang.

Miscellaneous items are 12 pages of negative photocopies of the 1860 and 1870 census records (population, slave, agriculture) and a mimeographed [radio] script, December, 1969: "Der Rechts and Der Links; Leben und Sterben der Siamesischen Zwillinge" by von Gerhard Aberle for broadcast over the Bavarian Radio Network.

Finding Aids:

Autograph Cards
Bunker, Chang-Eng
Hale, James W.
Harris, Charles
Subject Cards
Siamese Twins

See Also:

P.C. 1139.1 Thurmond Chatham Papers (17 letters, 1832-1843)
374.1 Bunker Collection (lithograph & broadside, n.d.)
Wilkes County Marriage Bonds--Bunker
Treasurer's and Comptroller's Papers, Misc. Group, Box 7
(Licenses, 1834-1838)
P.C. 266.1 African Twin Collection (Mille-Christine, Columbus County)

(letters from the Bunker marriage)

State Library: James W. Hale, "An Historical Account of the Siamese Twin Brothers," (New York: Elliott & Palmer, 1831).

Hon. J. N. Moreheid [sic], "Lives, Adventures, Anecdotes, Amusements, & Domestic Habits of the Siamese Twins," (Raleigh: E. E. Barclay, 1850).

On Tour (Connecticut-Virginia)
Wilkes and Surry Counties

1829-1874; 1952-1969

See Also:

State Library: Kay Hunter, The Story of the Original
Siamese Twins, (New York, Coward-McCann,
Inc., 1963).

Finding Aid completed by Ellen Z. McGrew, 3 August 1971.

NOTE: Two negative photostats from minutes of Wilkes County Superior Court added to collection 24 September 1973: Petition of Chang and Eng to take oath of allegiance, 1839; petition to assume name of "Bunker," 1844. [CR 104.311.3]

P.C. 916.1 has eight letters which have the signature of Chang Eng.

(in the notes from the ... papers)

NOTE: Name pronounced Chunn and Inn.

Collection: SIAMESE TWINS COLLECTION
Wilkes and Surry counties

P.C. 916.1
[addition]

ca. 1874-1892, n.d.

Physical Description: 7 items; typescript biography, photographs, genealogy.

Acquisition: Gift of Mrs. Grace Hill, N. Main St., Mt. Airy, Surry County, granddaughter of Chang Bunker--via Miss Ruth Minick, [REDACTED] Mt. Airy 276031, April 24, 1974

Description: Xerox copy of a typescript biography of the Siamese twins, as told to Judge Jesse Franklin Graves (1829-1894) of Surry County, grandson of Governor Jesse Franklin (1820-1821), councilor of state, 1860, and judge on the Superior Court, 1830-1892. According to Miss Minick, Judge Graves, a friend of the twins, was authorized by them to write their biography; however, the Bunkers refused to accept the biography when it was finished.

This 39 page manuscript is written in two styles; probably after the death of the twins in 1874 and before the death of Sally Bunker in 1892. Of the eight chapters, the first five are straight forward and factual, as if dictated by the twins. The remaining three chapters devote significant space to opinions and analysis with the biographical data.

The general topics of the chapters are as follows: Chapter I--Parentage, 1-4p; Chapter II--Siam and Early Life, 5-7p.; Chapter III--Departure, Boston, England, U. S. Tours, Bunker name, 8-12 p.; Chapter IV--Wilkes County, Love and Courtship, Mr. and Mrs. David Yates, Marriage, 13-16 p.; Chapter V--Housekeeping Arrangements, Birth, Travel, Division of Time and Property, 19-24 p.; Chapter VI--Politics, Civil War, Religion, Character of the Twins, 25-28 p.; Chapter VII--Attitudes, Education, Children, County Fairs, Deaths, Business, Trip to Europe, 29-33 p.; Chapter VIII--Europe (England, Scotland, Ireland), Agricultural Fairs, Europe (Germany, Russia, Italy, Spain, France), Chang's stroke, 34-38 p.

Nothing in this biographical account appears to contradict official records of Wilkes and Surry counties (The statement that the twins assumed the name of Bunker in 1840 probably does not contradict the fact that they petitioned Wilkes Superior Court for permission to legally adopt the name in 1844.) Nor does the content of the biography contradict information in the letters of Captain Abel Coffin or agents Charles Harris and James Hall in the Archives.

Division of Archives and Manuscripts
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Raleigh, North Carolina

Collection: SIAMESE TWINS COLLECTION
 Wilkes and Surry counties

ca. 1874-1892, n.d.

However, a good deal is explicated; for example, the fact that they went off on exhibition tours to earn money to educate their many children during the ante bellum period and appeared at many county fairs in addition to their successful European tours. Nowhere is the name P. T. Barnum mentioned although the names of several agents are included. Other interesting clarifications of fact are that Chang's hearing was impaired only after an illness while they were on tour ca. 1865 (Chang had two deaf children) and that the name Bunker was derived from a friendship with three brothers: Fred, William and Barthuel (?) Bunker of 41 Warren Street, New York City, and Chang named his first child for Miss Catherine M. Bunker.

Judge Graves' story tells of the houses the twins lived in, their overriding interest in the education of their children--especially the girls, the births and deaths of their children, circumstances of their settling in Trap Hill, Wilkes County, the role of their agent Charles Harris who also settled there.

Other items include photographs of Albert Bunker and his family, the Chang Bunker House, and the single tomb stone for Chang over the twins' grave in Chang's front yard (Later Chang and Eng were reinterred in a family cemetery with a double stone marking the grave).

Finding Aids:

Subject Card
 SIAMESE TWINS
 HARRIS, CHARLES

See Also:

Frederick Drimmer, Very Special People
 (New York: Amjon Publishers, Inc., 1973),
 Part I, Chained for Life, "Chang and Eng:
 the Original Siamese Twins."

Finding Aid Completed 31 July 1974 by Ellen Z. McGrew

WORK SHEET

NUMBER: P.C. 916.1 (ADDITION)

NAME OF COLLECTION: SIAMESE TWINS COLLECTION

DATES: _____

ACQUISITION INFORMATION: Purchased from N. Flayderman & Co., Inc., R. F. D. 2,
Swash Hollow, New Milford, Conn. 96776. July 17, 1972

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Broadside, 8" X 13"

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION: Catalog description ". . . huge very fancy lettering on this rare early American theatrical broadside for probably the world's most famous set of such twins & one who had a most remarkable history in America. The famed THE UNITED BROTHERS, CHANG-ENG. Circa 1840's or even earlier. 8X13 with fancy large woodcut of the 2 standing joined. Bold print advertising their visit to Boston with admission, times & price as well as availability of photographs of themselves for sale & bold 'No-Re-Admission to the room' at the bottom. New York printer's signature [J. M. Elliott, Printer, 33 Liberty street, New York] Just the slightest of aging but very fine. A most quaint & fancy broadside as well as extremely rare. . . ."

Encapsulated, January, 1979.

NUMBER: P.C. 916.1 (Addition)

NAME OF COLLECTION: SIAMESE TWINS COLLECTION

DATES: _____

ACQUISITION INFORMATION: Received as gift from Miss Ruth Minick, [REDACTED]
Mount Airy, NC, September 22, 1975; January 22 and February 11, 1976.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

(1) post card (2)2 newspaper clippings (3) typescript of diary

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION:

- (1) Post card of Chang-Eng.
- (2) Newspaper articles re Siamese twins and grandson Brig. Gen. Caleb V. Haynes
- (3) Carbon copy of typescript of original diary of Nannie Bunker, daughter of Chang Bunker. Also a second typescript which is more legible.

WORK SHEET

NUMBER: P.C. 916.1

NAME OF COLLECTION: SIAMESE TWINS COLLECTION (ADDITION)

DATES: August 6, 1977

ACQUISITION INFORMATION: Gift from Mrs. Alice H. Eidson, [REDACTED],
[REDACTED], Winston-Salem, N.C. 27103; accessioned November 14, 1977.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 1 item

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION: Newspaper clipping regarding contract for Chang and Eng Bunker when they entered show business. Contract was recently acquired by the Surry County Historical Society.

FURTHER ADDITION

ACQUISITION INFORMATION: Gift from Betty Camin, Raleigh, May 26, 1988

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2 xerox pages and title page

DESCRIPTION: Xerox of article "A New Document on our Most Famous Citizens" by Marion Venable, taken from The Surry County Book, and copy of the contract executed at Bangkok on April 1, 1829, between Chang and Eng and Capt. Abel Coffin.

See Thurmond Chatham Papers, P.C. 1139.1

1 folder--"Letters to and Notes of Siamese Twins and Dr. Charles Harris, 1831-1844 [1845], 25 items."

(Cross-index)
from PC 1139

This folder contains 12 letters written by James H. Hale to Charles Harris, September, 1831, - June, 1834. Both men were travel agents for the Siamese twins. The first letter originates in Portland, Maine, where Hale is with Chang and Eng; the balance is from Boston and addressed or forwarded to Harris on tour with the twins in Frederick Town, Md.; Washington, D. C.; Richmond and Petersburg, Va.; Greensburg and Pittsburg, Pa.; Wheeling, [W.] Va.; Zanesville and Cleveland Ohio; Tuscaloosa, Ala.; Charleston, S. C.; Raleigh, N. C.; and Winchester, Va. The subject matter of the letters refers to payment of a loan through "friend Bunker", 1831; arrangements for rooms and exhibition halls; poor patronage in Washington, etc.; plans for foreign tours (France, Canada, Havana); avoidance of exhibition tax; preparation of a new pamphlet to let public know twins are "no longer slaves", 1833; and details of conflict with Captain and Mrs. Abel Coffin, especially over Coffin's attempts to confiscate the personal property owned by the twins during their minority. A number of letters contain portions addressing Chang and Eng, who are affectionately called "Qui Hi" and "Cherokee rascals."

In addition, two letters to Harris from A. Lawrence Foot, M.C. from Pennsylvania, refer to a law suit, 1832, and a pension for Jamison (?) Yeates, 1842; both letters contain messages for Chang and Eng.

Three letters of 1843 from James Hale are addressed to Dr. Charles Harris, postmaster, Trap Hill, Wilkes County. The March letter notes the twins have ceased to correspond with their former friends; the July letter notes the marriage of Chang and Eng, calling it a "stupid scrape" and expressing fear it will lead to a "desire to attempt a surgical operation upon themselves;" in August, [1843] there is reference to a "difficulty" between Harris and the twins.

Eight miscellaneous items include an expense account at Bridgeport, Conn., 1831; a receipt for 500 "segars" from Bunker and Company, 1831; receipt for 4240 pounds hauled from Raleigh to Trap Hill, July, 1840. A receipt to Dr. Charles Harris in 1844 lists Buck's Theological Dictionary and Abbot's Young Christian. A court order of 1845 directs Charles Harris to take a district tax list.

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS WORK SHEET

NUMBER: P.C. 916 (ADDITION)

NAME OF COLLECTION: Siamese Twins Papers.

DATES: 1984

ACQUISITION INFORMATION: Gift of George Stevenson, Reference Unit Supervisor, Raleigh; accessioned December 12, 1985.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 3 items

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION: Playbill for a play, "The Double Boys," presented in 1984 as part of the Edinburg Festival Fringe; and accompanying publicity.

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS WORK SHEET

NUMBER: PC.916 (ADDITION)

NAME OF COLLECTION: Siamese Twins Papers

DATES: 1990

ACQUISITION INFORMATION:

Gift of Nicholas Dugdale, Final Forces Ltd., London, Dec. 17, 1990

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 2 items (ie, different sizes of same poster), one of them measuring 15 x 11 1/4 in., the other 8 1/4 x 5 3/4 in.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION: Promotional poster in two sizes for the Green Light Production film, "Brothers of Siam", color printed, 1990.

WORK SHEET

NUMBER: PC.916.1 (Addition)

NAME OF COLLECTION: Siamese Twins Collection

DATES: 1829-1874

ACQUISITION INFORMATION: In house

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

27 prints from North Carolina newspapers concerning the Siamese Twins

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION:

A list of the prints of newspaper items is filed with the prints.
21 of the prints relate to the death and subsequent autopsy of the twins.