

Dustin/Dana Family Letters

MS – 207

Wright State University
Special Collections and Archives

Processed by:
Dawne Dewey
Oct.-Nov. 1990

Introduction

This collection consists of the correspondence of Mighill Dustin, Methodist minister in southern Ohio during the early nineteenth century, and the related families of Dana, Bent, Howard, and Van Doren. The collection was accessioned into the Department of Archives and Special Collections in October 1990, from the Montgomery County Historical Society. The letters date from 1811 to 1870. The collection contains sixty four letters, five related documents, and two autograph books.

The collection is arranged into the following record series:

- Series I: Dustin Family Letters
- Series II: Dana/Bent Family Letters
- Series III: Howard Family Letters
- Series IV: Van Doren Family Letters

There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

Please note that a related collection, MS-018, Forrer-Peirce-Wood Collection, at the Dayton Metro Library, Dayton, OH, contains information about the Howard family.

Biographical Sketch

Dustin Family

Rev. Mighill Dustin was a distinguished minister and official of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was born in Boonville, N.Y. on August 18, 1810. He moved with his parents to Washington County, Ohio, in his early childhood. In 1831 he entered the Collegiate Institute which later became Marietta College. He entered the ministry in 1836. He was a delegate to the general conferences in 1856 and 1864 and was appointed as a fraternal delegate to the M.E. church of Canada. He also obtained the degree of Doctor of Divinity. His work in the ministry took him to such places as Cincinnati, Hamilton, Hillsboro, Xenia, Springfield, and Oxford. He was a candidate for Congress on the Prohibition ticket in the Warren County District.

Mighill Dustin was first married to Mary B. Dana. They had five children. His son, Charles W. Dustin, served on the bench of Montgomery County. A son, William Thomas, died at a young age. Two other sons and a daughter, Mary Ellen, died before Rev. Dustin's death. After Mary B. Dustin's death, he married Mary J. Warren. He retired from the ministry in 1890 and was a resident of Dayton from 1893 until his death. He died in Dayton, Ohio on March 10, 1896. His obituary in The Evening News, Dayton, Ohio, March 11, 1896, describes him in this way:

“An apt and ready public speaker, a clear and forcible writer, and a man of clear convictions and strong courage, his influence both in and out of the church was effective for the highest good. In his early manhood, Dr. Dustin was a strong anti-slavery advocate and was identified with the Abolitionists, in days when such a position brought unpopularity and abuse...When compelled by the infirmities of old age to relax his energies and activity as a minister, he contributed freely to the religious press, and through his entire life he wielded a valued influence upon all whom he came in contact.”

Dana Family

Mary B. Dana, Rev. Dustin's first wife, was the daughter of William Dana. She was a native of Washington County, Ohio. Her grandfather was Captain William Dana, one of the pioneer residents of the Ohio and friend of the Blennerhassetts, whose home was on Blennerhassett Island, opposite of which lived the Danas. Mary B. Dana's mother was Dorcas Dana, originally a Bent. Little is known about the Dana and Bent families at the time of processing of this collection. One of Dorcas Bent's brothers went to St. Louis, Louisiana Territory, very early in the nineteenth century. There are letters in the collection written by nieces in St. Louis to their aunt Dorcas in Newport, Ohio.

Howard Family

The Howard family does not appear to be related by family tied to the Dustin or Dana families, but may be related through the Methodist Church. The Howard letters and papers indicate that the family originally came from Onslow County, North Carolina. The letters in the collection are between Mary Howard Little and her brothers, and are sent between Columbus, Marion, Dayton, and Delaware, Ohio. Nothing more is known about them at this writing.

Van Doren Family

The Van Doren letters were written by Abram C. Van Doren in Dayton to his wife, H. Mary Van Doren or "Mauzy" in Eaton, Preble County, Ohio. The Van Dorens were originally from Preble County. Abram van Doren left his wife and small child in Eaton and came to Dayton about 1844 to set up a dry goods store with William Parrott. Mrs. Van Doren and their child joined Mr. Van Doren in Dayton later. Abram Van Doren died in Dayton on June 19, 1872. His wife, H. Mary Van Doren died December 19, 1897. There is no complete history of the Van Doren family available at this time.

Note: Supporting documents, such as wills and excerpts from county histories were copied from various sources in the Archives. These copies are kept in a folder at the beginning of the collection and are to be used by researchers if they wish.

Scope and Content

Series I: Dustin family Letters

There are thirty-five letters in this record series dating from 1833 to 1879. The majority of these are letters between Rev. Mighill and Mary Dustin and her family in Newport and Marietta, Ohio. There are a few letters from other Methodist ministers. Two of the letters discuss family life and religious affairs. There are also references to abolition and the Civil War.

Also included in this series are two autograph books, one belonging to Mary B. Dana and dating to 1833, the other belonging to Mary Ellen Dustin and dating to 1857. These autograph books help to identify family members and their relationships as well as friends.

Series II: Dana and Bent Family Letters

There are eleven letters in this record series. These letters date 1811 to 1837. They consist of correspondence between Dorcas Bent Dana in Newport, Ohio, and her nieces in Louisiana Territory. There are also a few letters between the nieces and their friends. They discuss life in St. Louis and family matters.

Series III: Howard Family Letters

There are ten letters in this record series. They date from 1824 to 1842. They consist of correspondence between Mary Howard Little and her relatives and friends. They discuss family matters and religion. This collection includes a handwritten record of marriages, births, and deaths of the Howard family. It dates to very early in the nineteenth century. There is also a typed transcript of the will of John Howard which dates to 1752.

Series IV: Van Doren Family Letters

This record series contains eight letters. Five of these letters are from Abram Van Doren in Dayton and his wife, "Mauzy", in Eaton, Preble County, Ohio. Two of the letters are to Abram Van Doren from an acquaintance and one from a brother. These letters discuss Abram Van Doren's dry goods and grocery store in Dayton and family matters. Additional documents in this record series include the will of Ann Marie Bell, the mother of "Mauzy" (H. Mary Van Doren) and lists of balances, collection notes and accounts for the Van Doren/William Parrott store in Dayton. The letters and documents in this series date from 1844 to 1865.

Dustin Family Letters

Bro. [Gordon, Gooden]	to	Mr. Mighill Dustin	Sept. 22, 1833
Levi Barber Harmar	to	Mollie	Feb. 27, 1834
L. Temple	to	Mighill Dustin Augusta, KY	Feb. 12, 1835
[] Calder Zaroo Co, Miss.	to	Mighill Dustin Marietta	Aug. 18, 1835
Mary B. Dustin Nelsonville	to	Mrs. Dorcas Dana Newport, Ohio	Mar. 6, 1938
Mighill & Mary Dustin Nelsonville	to	William Dana Esqr. Newport, Ohio	Apr. 19, 1838
L. [Newson] Elizabethtown, VA	to	Rev. M. Dustin Nelsonville Athens County, Ohio	May 8, 1838
Geo. Potter Lee	to	Rev. M. Dustin Nelsonville, Ohio	June 16, 1838
Bro. [Goodin] Meadville	to	Rev. M. Dustin Bro & Sis Dustin Nelsonville Athens County	Jun. 23, 1838
Isreal & F. Archbold Summerfield Monroe County, Ohio	to	Rev. Mighill Dustin Nelsonville Athens County	Aug. 6, 1838
P. Dustin [Mary] Chester Meigs County	to	Dorcas Dana Newport, Ohio	Dec. 3, 1838
Thomas & Grace Ewarts Marietta	to	Mrs. M. Dustin Chester Meigs County	Dec. 6, 1838
L.D. Athens	to	Rev. M. Dustin Chester Meigs County, Ohio	Jan. 2, 1839

Calvary Morris Washington City, D.C.	to	Rev. M. Dustin Chester Meigs County, Ohio	Jan. 4, 1839
Polly Dustin [Mary] Chester Meigs County	to	Mrs. Dorcas Dana Newport Washington County	Jan. 11, 1839
Lorenz Dow [McCabe] Ohio University	to	Rev. Mighill Dustin Chester	Apr. 12, 1839
Mary B. Dustin Oxford	to	Thomas W. Ewarts, Esqr. Marietta, Ohio	Apr. 11, 1843
Rev. M. & Mary Dustin Oxford	to	Thomas W. Ewarts, Esqr. Marietta, Ohio	Aug. 24, 1843
[] Bell Paris	to	Brother Dustin	Jun. 30, 1846
Mary Dustin Lancaster	to	Thomas W. Ewarts, Esqr. Marietta, Ohio	Oct. 11, 1846
Fannie Barber Harmar	to	Mollie Dustin	Jan. 1858
Fannie Barber Harmar, Ohio	to	Mollie Dustin	Jan. 20, 1858
Fannie Barber Harmar	to	Mollie Dustin	Feb. 8, 1858
Fannie Barber Harmar, Ohio	to	Mary Dustin	Mar. 21, 18[58]
Fannie A. Barber Harmar	to	Mollie Dustin	Nov. 20, 18[58]
Levi Barber Fannie Harmar	to	Mollie Dustin	Sept. 9, 18[58]
Mary Newport	to	Mary	June 20, 1861

Rev. & Mary Dustin Hillsboro	to	Thomas W. Ewarts, Esqr. Marietta	Apr. 25, []
Mary Dustin, cousin Claremont	to	Rev. Mighill Dustin Chester	Apr. 18, []
L.C.	to	Rev. M. Dustin Nelsonville, Athens County	Aug. 15, []
L.L. [Noudin]	to	Bro. Dustin Bro. White	May 11, []
Mary B. Dustin Springfield, Ohio	to	Mrs. Grace Ewarts Marietta Washington County, Ohio	April []
Fannie	to	Mollie E. Dustin Urbana	n.d.
P. St. Clair Glenwood Iowa	to	Charles W. Dustin	Sept. 15, 1868
John A. Rea U.S. District Court	to	C.W. Dustin Brookville College Brookville, Indiana	March 2, 1870

Autograph Books

Autograph Book One – Green

Dates to 1833 to 1836. Most entries are 1833. Autographs of relatives and friends of Mary B. Dana.

Emily – Cousin
Maria D. [Howe, Stove] – Cousin
Amanda Dana – Cousin
Hannah Robbins – Friend
Alfred Dana – Cousin
Anna Dana – Cousin
Charlotte C. Barber – Cousin
Grace – Sister
P.G. Browning – Sister
Frances T. Dana – Sister

Autograph Book Two – Black

Dates to 1857. Book given to Mary Ellen Dustin by her mother, Mary B. Dustin and father M. Dustin, on her birthday, July 25, 1857. At the time, the family lived at the Wesley Chapel Parsonage. Messages from her mother and father are at the beginning of the book. Other messages from teachers, relatives, and friends follow.

Alice D. Ewart – Cousin
Mary D. Ewart – Cousin
Libbie Emerson – Cousin
Watson Dana – Cousin
Jerusha Ewart – Cousin
Thomas Ewart – Uncle
Melvin Clark – Uncle

Dana and Bent Family Letters

Frances Dana Belpre Ohio	to	Miss Dorcas Bent St. Louis Louisiana Territory	Apr. 8, 1811
Frances Shipman Gallipolis Ohio	to	Miss Dorcas Bent St. Louis Louisiana Territory	March 8, 1812
Mary L. Easton St. Louis Louisiana Territory	to	Dorcas Bent Belpre Ohio	March 4, 1814
Lucy Bent St. Louis Louisiana Territory	to	Miss Dorcas Bent Bellprie Ohio	Oct. 7, 1815
Susan Oaks	to	Miss Dorcas Dana Newport	March 9, 1819
Clarissa Putnam	to	Mrs. Dorcas Dana Newport	May 27, 1820
Betsy Oaks Belpre	to	Mrs. Dorcas Dana Newport	June 20, 1821
Abner Bent Marion	to	Mrs. Dorcas Dana Newport	Dec. 16, 1821
Dorcas Bent St. Louis Louisiana Territory	to	Mrs. Dorcas Dana Newport Ohio	Nov. 11, 1823
H. Bent Belpre	to	Mrs. Dorcas Dana Newport Washington Co., Ohio	March 4, 1837
Frances Dana Belpre	to	Miss Dorcas Bent St. Louis Upper Louisiana Territory	Dec. 11, []

Howard Family Letters

Richard Murray Delaware, Ohio	to	Harvey D. Little Columbus, Ohio	Dec. 21, 1824
Joseph Howard Delaware	to	Mary Howard Cardington, Ohio	Feb. 4, 1826
Harvey D. Little Columbus, Ohio marked copy	to	Richard Murray, Esqr. Urbana Ohio	Oct. 20, 1827
Joan Murray Delaware	to	Mrs. Mary Little Columbus, Ohio	Jan. 30, 1830
Ann Howard Carrollton	to	Hannah Howard Marion, Marion County, Ohio	June 30, 1830
John Howard Gambier	to	Mary Little Columbus, Ohio	May 2, 1834
Samuel Forrer Sarah Cincinnati	to	Mary Little Columbus Ohio	May 3, 1834
Joseph Howard Columbus, Ohio	to	Mary Little Dayton, Ohio	Dec. 15, 1835
Joan Murray Delaware	to	Mary Affleck Somerton/Bridgeport	Oct. 10, 1842
Horton Howard	to	Mary Little Marion, Ohio	n.d.

Additional papers in the Howard Family Letters Collection:

Family Record of Marriage and Birth of Children – Document handwritten copy. Some deaths recorded also. Date – possibly 1820s.

Last will and testament of John Howard, dated 1752. Typed transcript.

Van Doren Family Letters

A.C. Van Doren (Abram) Dayton	to	“Mauzy” H. Mary Van Doren Eaton, Preble County	Dec. 29, 1844
A.C. Van Doren (Abram) Dayton	to	“Mauzy” H. Mary Van Doren Eaton, Preble County	Jan. 12, 1845
A.C. Van Doren (Abram) Dayton	to	“Mauzy” H. Mary Van Doren Eaton, Preble County	Jan. 19, 1845
A.C. Van Doren (Abram) Dayton original copy	to	“Mauzy” H. Mary Van Doren Eaton	Jan. 26, 1845
A.C. Van Doren (Abram) Dayton	to	“Mauzy” H. Mary Van Doren Eaton	May 28, 1845
[R.W.] Harman Nashville, Tenn.	to	Van	Aug. 26, 1845
[R.W.] Harman Nashville, Tenn.	to	Van	July 20, 1864
Isaac Van Doren Farmington	to	Abram Van Doren	July 4, 1865

Additional papers in Van Doren Collection of letters:

Will – Ann Marie Bell, Dayton. Will is recorded in Montgomery County Probate Court for October 13, 1864. Ann Marie Bell is mother of Hannah Mary Van Doren, wife of Abram Van Doren.

List of Balances – Parrott and Van Doren Dry Goods and Grocery, Dayton, names, each one numbered, amounts, grocery, dry goods, or queens-ware. Dated July 10, 1849.

List of Collection Notes and Accounts – Parrott and Van Doren Wm. Parrott. Names, each one numbered, amount, date. Dated July 10, 1850 to July 10 1851.