

**Porter Family
Papers, 1823-1905**

MSA 253

Introduction

This collection is composed of letters written to John Porter of Quechee Village, Hartford, Vermont, from family members in Illinois, 1824-1859. The collection also includes correspondence and papers of the Denison family, of Quechee and New Bedford, Massachusetts. Lois Jackson gave the collection to the Vermont Historical Society in two groups; the first group came in November 2000 and the second group came in April 2001 (ms. acc. no 2001.3). The donor purchased these groups on two separate occasions from dealers. The papers are housed in one archival flip top box and consume .25 linear inches of shelf space.

Biographical Note

Joseph, John and Lyman Porter were the children of Mary (Hodges) and William Porter. Joseph Porter (1796-1829) read law in Haverhill, New Hampshire and set up his practice in Jericho, Vermont. He married Laura Bliss. John Porter (1798-1886) stayed on the family farm in Quechee, Vermont, became a probate judge, and served in the Vermont legislature 1838-41, 1844, and 1847-48. He married Jane Frances Foster in 1831. Lyman Porter (1804-1859) moved to Mackinaw, Illinois, where he ran a store.

John Porter's son, Charles W. Porter (1849-1891), became a lawyer in Montpelier, Vermont and was Secretary of State from 1884 to 1890. He married Florence Bailey of Montpelier, Vermont in 1886. His daughter, Louise A. Porter, married John H. Denison of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Their daughter, May Louise Denison, married Dr. Charles Augustus Pratt, April 12, 1899, in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Scope & Content

The collection is divided into two series; letters of the Porter family and letters of the Dennison family. The letters sent between the Porter family members were written between 1823 and 1859. Joseph Lyman writes about setting up his law office in Jericho, Vermont. The bulk of the letters are from Lyman Porter, writing from Mackinaw, Illinois, detailing information about the economy of this newly settled area of the country, including the prices of corn, wheat, flour, and horses. He also discusses land speculation and the effect of a drought on commodity prices.

The collection includes a document signed by John F. Porter, Charles G. Smith, Jennie F. Smith, and Louise A. Porter promising to continue funding the education of their brother, Charles W. Porter, if their father, John Porter, should pass away before Charles's education was complete (MSA 256:6)

The portion of the collection relating to the Denison family contains correspondence from a loving young daughter, May, to her father, John H. Denison of Quechee, Vermont, 1883-1884, and a large group of wedding and other invitations that record events in the lives of family and friends.

The donor has provided transcripts of many of the letters, including transcripts of letters in a third lot, the originals of which are not in this collection.

Inventory

I. Correspondence between members of the Porter Family (1824-1859)

MSA 253:1 First lot from donor

1. To John Porter, Hartford, Vermont, from his brother Joseph, n.d., with response written on original letter.
2. _____, _____, _____, from Joseph Porter in Jericho, Vermont, June 19, 1824.
3. _____, _____, _____, from Lyman Porter, Dayton, Ohio, December, 1828.
4. _____, Quechee Village, Hartford, Vermont, from Lyman Porter in Mackinaw, Tazewell City, Illinois, August 22, 1830.
5. _____, _____, _____, _____, from Lyman Porter, Mackinaw, Illinois, April 9, 1831.
6. _____, from Lyman Porter, Mackinaw, Illinois, December 8, 1833.
7. _____, Quechee Village, Hartford, Vermont, from Lyman Porter, Mackinaw, Ill., August 13, 1836.
8. _____, Quechee Village, Hartford, Vermont, from John Porter, Mackinaw, Ill., April 11, 1859.

MSA 253:2 Second lot from donor

1. To John Porter, Quechee Village, Hartford, Vermont, from Joseph Porter, Milton, Vermont, November 11, 1823.
2. _____, _____, _____, _____, from Lyman Porter, Mackinaw, Illinois, December 16, 1830.
3. _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, October 29, 1831.
4. _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, June 30, 1838.
5. _____, _____, _____, _____, from Walden Porter, Mackinaw, Illinois, October 12, 1838.

MSA 253:3 Third lot (transcriptions only)

1. To John Porter, Hartford, Vermont, from Joseph Porter, November 5, 1822.
2. _____, _____, _____, from Lyman Porter, Clinton, South Carolina, January 21, 1827.

3. _____, Windsor, Vermont, from Lyman Porter, Union, Ohio, May 2, 1829.
4. _____, Quechee Village, Hartford, Vermont, from Lyman Porter, Mackinaw, Michigan, November 4, 1832.
5. _____, _____, _____, _____, from Walden Porter, New York, New York, February 22, 1836.
6. _____, _____, _____, _____, from Lyman Porter, Holden, ?, April 7, 1835.
7. _____, Boston, Massachusetts, from Joseph Porter, December 19, 1821.
8. [To Joseph Porter], from John Porter, no date.
9. To John Porter, Hartford, Vermont, from Joseph Porter, Jericho, Vermont, June 18, 1824.
10. _____, _____, _____, from Lyman Porter, Dayton, Ohio, December 1828.
11. _____, Quechee Village, Hartford, Vermont, from Lyman Porter, Mackinaw, Tazwell County, Illinois, August 22, 1830.
12. _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, April 9, 1831.
13. [To John Porter], from Lyman Porter, Mackinaw, December 8, 1833.
14. _____, Quechee Village, Hartford, Vermont, from Lyman Porter, Mackinaw, Tazwell County, Illinois, August 13, 1836.
15. [To John Porter], from Jno. H. Porter, Mackinaw, April 11, 1859.

MSA 253:4 Miscellaneous; includes a financial arrangement between some Porter family members regarding financial support for the education of Charles W. Porter.

II. Denison family papers

MSA 253:5 Correspondence between May Denison and her father, 1883-1884

MSA 253:6 Wedding and other social invitations of the Denison family of New Bedford, Ma., 18801-1190, some undated.

MSA 253:7 Materials pertaining to the Pratt Family

Barbara Ellingson
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