

Dole Family
Papers, 1834-1996 (bulk: ca. 1890-1980)
Doc 552-553, Folio XMSC 121, & MS Size B

Introduction

This collection consists of letters, postcards, journals, genealogical materials, and family memorabilia of several generations of the Dole family of Taftsville, a village of Woodstock, Vermont; Proctorsville, a village of Cavendish, Vermont; and later of Peterborough, New Hampshire. The collection was given to the Vermont Historical Society by Dr. Dorothy Katherine Dole Johnson in 2005 (ms. acc. no. 2005.13); additional materials were donated in August 2011 and have been integrated into the original gift. The collection is housed in two archival document storage boxes which occupy 2 linear feet of shelf space, plus one oversized folder in MS Size B.

Biographical Sketches

The Dole family was of early Norman stock, originating in the area of Bristol, England, with a Richard Dole (ca. 1621-1705). He emigrated to Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1637 as a young apprentice merchant and was one of that town's earliest settlers. He grew to be a prosperous businessman, trader and landholder, and is alleged to be the sire of every American Dole, including the "pineapple king" of Hawaii, James D. Dole. Richard and his first wife (of three), Hannah Rolfe, had ten children. Their son, Abner (1672-1740) had a son, Nathaniel (1701-1790) who removed to Salisbury, Massachusetts. Nathaniel's son, Cutting (1736-?), had a son Samuel (1760-?), who removed from Salisbury to New Hampshire. At the time Samuel Dole enlisted in the Revolutionary War in Colonel Jackson's regiment of the Massachusetts line, he was living in Grafton, N.H. Samuel Dole settled in Grafton with his wife, Hannah (Merrill), where all their children were born.

The earliest person represented in this collection is Samuel Dole's son, Daniel (1792-1881). Depending on the record, Daniel Dole was born either in New Hampshire or in Vermont. He appears to have spent much of his early life in New Hampshire. Daniel and his wife, Betsey Gove (1789-18??), also of Grafton, had six children: Horace, Clarissa, Merrill Winthrop, Nancy, Enos and Coleman Tyler Dole. After Betsey's death, we find Daniel living with his son, Enos, in 1860 in Taftsville, Vermont. Daniel Dole traveled out west to visit and stay with his two married daughters, one in Illinois and one in Nebraska, until hardship forced him to come back east to live with his son, Enos. At the time of his death in 1881, Daniel was living with Enos and his family in Taftsville.

Enos Dole was born in Grafton, N.H., in 1829. In 1850, Enos married Sarah Elizabeth ("Lizzie") Paddock (1832-1907), daughter of Solomon Paddock of Pomfret, Vermont, and Hannah Freeman of Royalton, Vermont. Enos Dole is said to have left his father's home around age 10 due to severe treatment. At 20-year-old, Enos shows up in the 1850 Hartford (Vt.) census living with his young wife, Sarah Elizabeth ("Lizzie") and his in-laws, the Paddocks. By 1860, Enos and Lizzie Dole owned the Paddocks' farm

and had three children, Kate, Merrill Paddock, and Lizzie, as well as both Enos' father, Daniel, and Lizzie's mother, Hannah, living with them.

As of 2005, the Dole farmhouse was still standing "just beyond the covered bridge" in Taftsville, Vermont, where Enos' initials, *ED*, are carved in a barn beam there. Despite his early introduction to adult life, Enos managed to become a successful farmer in Taftsville, a small village located between Woodstock and Quechee, Vermont, where the Dole family remained for two more generations. Enos died in Taftsville in 1906.

Also represented in this collection is Enos' son, Merrill Paddock Dole (1853-1902). Born in Taftsville, Vermont, Merrill Dole graduated from the Eastman Business School in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., but pursued a career as an accountant for only a few years before taking over the Dole family farm in 1883. Child's *Gazetteer* for that year listed Merrill Dole as owner of a farm newly acquired from his father, Enos, and as a breeder of fine grade Merino sheep (200 head) and Chester White swine with a sugar orchard of 400 trees on 160 acres. In 1890, Merrill Dole married Edna Franc Gillett (1860-1892), daughter of Alfred B. Gillett and Mary Barrows of Bridgewater, Vermont. Edna was a school teacher and an artist. Merrill Dole also served as postmaster of Taftsville during in period of 1894-1900. These postal duties were perhaps in conjunction with his role as owner of M.P. Dole Groceries during those years. Around 1898, Merrill Dole and his family left the farm and moved into the village, to a large brick house called the Pillars. By 1901, Merrill was working at the Central Vermont Railroad depot, after poor health forced him out of his grocery business.

Merrill Dole had consumption, which eventually took his life. His wife, Edna, had died of the disease ten years earlier, when their two sons were less than 3 years old. Fletcher Enos Dole was born in 1890 and Rockwell Merrill Dole in 1892, the latter just a few months before Edna's death. As Merrill's health deteriorated, the boys were sent to stay with their grandparents, Lizzie and Enos Dole. Merrill Dole died in 1902 when his sons were 10 and 12, leaving them orphaned. Merrill's letters and diaries reveal him as an affectionate husband to Edna and an extremely attentive father to Fletcher.

The focus of this collection is Fletcher Enos Dole (1890-1980). Fletcher Dole was born in the brick house in Taftsville, Vermont, known later as the Taylor Farm, which his grandfather Enos had bought from the Paddocks forty years earlier. Fletcher lost his mother when he was 2, and his father when he was 12. At age 15, he was staying with his grandparents when he lost both of them also, as his grandfather, Enos, died in 1906, and his grandmother, Lizzie, in 1907. After Fletcher Dole graduated from Woodstock High School in 1908, he and his brother Rockwell went to live with their aunt Kate (née Dole) and her husband Frank Wheeler in Proctorsville (Cavendish), Vt. During that time, Fletcher applied to various agricultural colleges. In addition, he worked for his Uncle Frank who operated a hotel in West Hartford, Vt., and was an insurance agent. (Wheeler also served as a Vermont state Representative.) Fletcher also worked for the Central Vermont Railroad in this period. He was accepted at the Mt. Hermon School in Massachusetts where he studied agriculture from 1909 to 1910. Although his brother, Rockwell, tried to persuade Fletcher to join him at the University of New

Hampshire in Durham to further his studies, Fletcher Dole took a job at the Vermont Marble Company where he worked for part of 1911. During this time, Fletcher met Laura Rogena Harrington of Randolph Center, Vt., who was teaching school in Proctorsville in the Twenty-Mile Stream district where the Wheelers lived. Fletcher Dole and Laura Harrington married in April 1912 and acquired a hilltop farm straddling the Proctorsville-Chester border which they named Laurington Heights. They raised their four daughters, Elizabeth, Edna, Gertrude and Dorothy, there for ten years. During that time, their diaries reveal a typically busy and entrepreneurial farm life.

In November 1922, Fletcher “sold his cows” and moved his family to Peterborough, New Hampshire, where he found a job as a herdsman. Fletcher took as much of his Vermont homestead as he could with him to New Hampshire – furniture, pictures, letters, journals, diaries. Beginning in 1929, Fletcher also worked as janitor for the Peterborough Elementary School and at the church. In 1932, the family moved to 34 High Street where Fletcher fixed up the barn and rented a pasture for his livestock. Fletcher operated a dairy from at least 1940 to 1973. He is said to have inspired the character of the milkman, Howie Newsome, “a man of about 30 who spends much of his time caring for a wife who is often confined to home,” in Thornton Wilder’s play *Our Town*. Wilder wrote the play in 1937 while in residence at the MacDowell Colony, located near Petersborough. Fletcher’s daughter, Gertrude, a noted anthropologist (see Doc 552:0.2), was able to tape an oral history of her father in the 1970s for a study, “Life and Death of High Hill Farming in Vermont” (unpublished). The tapes and transcriptions were given to the Vermont Folklife Center in Middlebury, Vermont. Laura Harrington Dole died in 1965 of cancer and Fletcher, of cardiac arrest in 1980, at the age of 90, both in Peterborough, N.H.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of genealogical materials, family history, letters, post-cards, journals, notebooks, some photographs, business papers, and memorabilia of several generations of the Dole family of Taftsville, a village of Woodstock, Vermont; Proctorsville, a village of Cavendish, Vermont; and later of Peterborough, New Hampshire. The bulk of the collection concerns the life of Fletcher Enos Dole, a dairy farmer for most of his life in Vermont and New Hampshire. The collection is arranged by generation and subdivided by material type.

The first series is a genealogy section that includes information about many of the people represented in the collection (see also an unproven genealogy descendency chart in Doc 552:0). This section was originally researched and compiled by Colonel Merrill Dole Wheeler, son of Kate Dole and Frank Wheeler. In addition to the Dole family, this collection mentions the following related families: Backup, Barrows, Carneiro, Flanders, Freeman, Gillett[e], Gove, Harrington, Johnson, Joslin, Paddock, Stevens, Wheeler and others.

The second series concerns early Dole generations and includes glimpses into some important isolated events in the family’s early history, while the third and fourth

series contains materials from the life of Merrill Paddock Dole, father of Fletcher Dole. Diaries and letters in this section reveal a loving, caring, and close-knit extended family, much of whose attention was especially focused on young Fletcher around the time he and his younger brother, Rockwell, would lose both parents to tuberculosis. The collection provides information on Merrill Dole's business life as a grocery merchant, and on his wife, Edna's, interests and personality, as well as their gradually failing health.

Fletcher Dole's papers are divided into three series. Series five covers the period from birth to Fletcher's marriage to Laura Harrington in Taftsville, Vermont (1890-1912). The papers from this period consist mainly of letters between family and friends, as well as Fletcher's school papers, providing an account of Fletcher's youthful years. Series six contains materials from Fletcher Dole's married years as a dairy farmer in Proctorsville, Vermont (1912-1922). The papers of these years consist mainly of journals recording daily activities at Laurington Heights farm, real estate documents, and financial papers. Series seven and eight cover Fletcher Dole's married years as a dairy farmer in New Hampshire until his death (1922-1980). The papers of these years consist of farm journals, real estate papers, time sheet books, account books, and address book which record Fletcher's work and home life. Especially touching are the sketchy autobiographical notes Fletcher made in the final pages of his 1979 notebook, the year before his death.

The last group in the collection includes miscellaneous items including photocopies of title pages of school books owned by Merrill and Fletcher Dole.

Related Collections

The three-dimensional items listed below are found in the VHS museum's collection as acc. no. 2005.56:

1. A dress belonging to Laura (Mrs. Fletcher) Dole;
2. A pair of spectacles belonging to Sarah Elizabeth Paddock Dole, Fletcher's grand-mother;
3. A snuff box belonging to Hannah Freeman Paddock, Fletcher's great-grand-mother;
4. Locks of hair belonging to Fletcher and his mother, Edna Gillett Dole, taken from between the leaves of a family bible;
5. Fletcher's blue wool plaid dress and blue-green velvet jacket made by his mother and worn by him in an 1892 photograph, at age 18 months (see Doc 552:10 and :23);
6. A cotton print dress of one of Fletcher's Wheeler male cousins.

Printed books received with this collection have been separated from the collection and are listed in Folder 0. Photocopies of the title pages of school books used by the Doles are included in Doc 553, Folders 28 and 29.

InventoryI. Genealogy, bible records, and family history

- Doc 552:1 Family Bible pages. 1741-1908. From Bible of Hannah Freeman Paddock, mother of Sarah Elizabeth Paddock Dole, published in 1834.
- MS Size B
:2 Manuscript Paddock genealogy.
Genealogy. Fletcher E. Dole line. Genealogical charts, reports, data sheets, obituaries, correspondence, etc. These materials were apparently collected by Fletcher's daughters, Dorothy Dole Johnson (donor of this collection) and Gertrude E. Dole.
- MS Size B
_____. Ancestor chart for Kate Dole (1852-1928, sister to Merrill Paddock Dole) and her husband, Frank H. Wheeler (1852-1934). This is also Fletcher Dole's line, going back to a William Dole, born before 1600 in England.
- :3 Genealogy. Early Doles. Includes copy of Richard Dole's will (1705).
- :4 _____. Other Dole lines, including the "Pineapple Doles". Charts and correspondence.
- :5 _____. Misc. correspondence. Queries by Gertrude E. Dole.
- :6 Contents of family photo album, ca 1900. Photographs in 5" x 7" and *carte de visite* sizes, mostly unidentified, plus photocopies of album pages from which photos were removed prior to receipt of collection.

II. Early Dole Generations - Daniel Dole (1792-1881) and Enos Dole (1829-1906)

- :7 Letters. 1848-1885. Of particular interest:
- 1848. To Solomon Paddock, brother of Sarah Elizabeth Paddock (later, Mrs. Enos Dole), from his nephew, William Paddock, describing frontier life in Wisconsin. .
 - 1852. From Merrill Winthrop Dole, brother of Enos, en route to California's gold rush. He is said to have died in Tampico, Mexico before reaching his destination.
- :8 Diaries. 1903; 1905. Sarah Elizabeth Paddock Dole. Includes recipes for remedies, address book, dressmaking notes, and diary entries of her daughter, Lizzie Dole (Flanders).

III. Merrill Paddock Dole (1853-1902)

- :9 Textbook. *Introduction to the National Arithmetic on the Inductive System...*, published in 1871. With copious handwritten "annotations" by the young Merrill Dole and others.
- :10 Diaries. 1890; 1891; 1892; 1893. Include entries on Fletcher's and Rockwell's births, and Edna's illness and death. Include farm and cash accounts, notes on planting, livestock lists, activities, and personal entries including notes on Fletcher.
- :11 _____. 1894; 1890-1905. The latter is Fletcher's baby journal, kept by father Merrill Dole, and continued by grandmother,

- Elizabeth, after Merrill's death in 1902.
- :12 Letters. 1878, 1890-1892, 1901. Merrill and Edna Dole, with various correspondents.
- :13 Notebooks. Edna Franc Gillett (Dole).
- *The Constitutions of the United States and Vermont....* 1880, annotated by Edna F. Gillett.
 - Copybook. Bef. June 12, 1892, containing Lizzie Dole Flanders' accounting of M. P. Dole's estate settlement, 1897-1905.
- Folio XMSC 121 Scrapbook of Edna F. Gillett (Dole)

IV. Merrill Paddock Dole - Business papers

- :14 Journal of accounts re: expenses. 1877-1893. Enos and Merrill.
- :15 Items removed from above.
- :16 Journal of accounts re: expenses. 1889-1905.
- :17 Items removed from above.
- :18 Ledger #1 of M. P. Dole's grocery store. 1897-1899.
- :19 Items removed from above.
- :20 Ledger #2 of M. P. Dole's grocery store. 1899-1901.
- :21 Items removed from above.

V. Fletcher Enos Dole (1890-1980) – Early years, prior to his marriage in 1912

- :22 Vital records. 1890; 1912. Birth and marriage certificates, wedding guest book.
- :23 Photo. June 4, 1892. Fletcher at 18 months old, in dress and jacket now in museum's collection, accession no. 2005-56. An entry in Merrill Dole's 1892 diary (in Doc 552:10) documents this photo.
- :24 Letters. 1901. Between Merrill and Fletcher.
- :25 _____. Prior to 1902-1906. From grandmother Elizabeth Paddock Dole to Fletcher following Merrill's death.
- :26 _____. Postcards, 1906-1912; letters, 1909-1911. From brother Rockwell Dole.
- :27 _____. 1906-1912. From Aunt Kate Dole Wheeler.
- :28 _____. 1911. Of Aunt Lizzie Dole Flanders.
- :29 _____. 1906-1908. From Aunt Hattie (?Harriet Gillett, Edna's sister) in Idaho. Includes lengthy description of homesteader life in the west.
- :30 _____. 1900-1908 and undated. From Aunt Ria (aka Maria Gillett Taft).
- :31 _____. 1908-1913. From "your maiden aunt" or "your m.a.", thought to be Ellen G. Hunt. Includes original poem, no date.
- :32 _____. 1907-1911. From other family members. Cousin Marion Flanders, cousin Merrill Wheeler, cousin Katie Jones.
- Doc 553:1 _____. 1908-1911. From friend and schoolmate, Nora Gobie.
- :2 _____. 1908-1913; ca 1953. From friend Maurice E. Seaver, aka

- “Doc”.
- :3 _____. 1907-1912. From various friends.
 - :4 Papers. 1907-1908. Relating to high school - homework, report cards, correspondence, etc.; 1954-1960, class reunion correspondence.
- Ms Size B
- Fletcher E. Dole’s diploma from Woodstock High School, June 5, 1908.
 - :5 Letters. 1908-1910. College inquiries.
 - :6 Papers. 1909-1910. At Mt. Hermon School. Grades, class notes, alumni association letters.
 - :7 Misc. correspondence and papers. 1907-1920. Includes a personal letter dated 1912 from Fraser Metzger, candidate for Governor of Vermont on the Bull Moose ticket (defeated).
 - :8 Pay envelopes. 1911. Vermont Marble Company.
 - :9 Postcards. 1907-1913. Laura Harrington.

VI. Fletcher Enos Dole – After marriage to Laura Harrington

- :10 Real estate. 1911-1915. Joseph W. Mattison to F. E. Dole, purchase of farm on border of Chester and Cavendish, Vt. (to be known as “Laurington Heights”) – deed, mortgage, etc.; Kelsey P. Bailey to P. E. Whelden, deed (relates to the “Bailey place” which Fletcher used for haying and other purposes).
- :11 Financial papers. 1914-1923, includes promissory note, receipts, itemized livestock purchase, statement, C. F. Henry vs Dole & Todd order for payment.
- :12 Journal. 1916-1919. Of Laurington Heights, written by Laura Dole. (Those following were written by Fletcher unless otherwise noted.)
- :13 Farm journal. 1918. Interleaved with chore reminders.

VII. Fletcher Enos Dole – In Peterborough, New Hampshire, after November, 1922

- :14 Farm journals. 1924; 1921-1930; 1924-1962; 1932 (Fletcher and Laura). Includes list of 1924 household purchases and prices; Laura’s household and home decorating notes, fabric swatches, church activities, records of Laura’s pansy business.
- :15 _____. 1933-1937; 1938-1939; 1940-1944; 1941-1953 (includes livestock records and labor accounts).
- :16 Items removed from farm journal, 1941-1953.
- :17 Real estate. 1946-1951. Sale of Laurington Heights, Fletcher E. Dole to G. H. Mills. Deed, correspondence, etc.
- :18 Farm journals. 1953; 1954; 1955; 1962.
- :19 Real estate. 1965. Fletcher E. Dole to Antoinette S. Kelley. Sale of the “Bailey place” in Chester, Vt., aka “Propagation Lot” (“Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts”).
- :20 Account book and diaries. ca 1969, account book of dairy sales. 1975; 1976; 1977 diaries.

- :21 Diaries, 1978; 1980; Notebook, 1979 (contains list of visitors, letter written, aphorisms, some autobiographical notes).
- :22 Address book, no date.
- :23 Items removed from address book.

VIII. Fletcher Enos Dole – Business papers

- :24 Time Sheet Books. F. E. Dole's dairy business. 1940-1962. In New Hampshire.
- :25 Time Sheet Books. F. E. Dole's dairy business. 1962-1973. In New Hampshire.
- :26 Items removed from time sheet books.

IX. Other

- :27 Items of general interest. 190?-1911.
- :28 Merrill P. Dole's schoolbooks, separated from this collection. Published 1848-1851. Title page photocopies for reference.
- :29 Fletcher E. Dole's schoolbooks, separated from this collection. Published 1860-1909. Title page photocopies for reference.

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