

## GUIDE TO THE BROWN FAMILY PAPERS

### Scope and Content Note

The Brown Family Papers, which number somewhat more than 1,000 items, were received by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association as a gift of Mr. Henry Mason Brown of Deerfield in 1966. They are largely the papers of two women who married brothers: Ada Mason, who married Augustus Brown in 1882, and Emma Phillips, who married Cyrus Brown of Deerfield in 1872. Accompanying these are papers of Ada's mother, Fidelia (Piper) Mason Porter, her stepfather, Dr. Ransom N. Porter, a half-sister, Nellie Porter, her husband Augustus Brown, and her sons, Leland and Henry (donor of the collection). Also included are papers of Emma's parents (Alonzo Daniel and Mary Robinson Phillips), her brother, Henry Moses Phillips (and his wife Julia), her husband, Cyrus Brown, and their three daughters – Julia, Mabel, and Gladys. With these are a few papers of Dr. Atherton Mason, a nephew of Fidelia Porter; and of Henry Kirke Brown, well-known sculptor who was apparently not related to the Deerfield family.

### Biographical Notes and Description of Papers

**Ransom N. Porter** was born in Wendell, Mass., in 1823, one of seven sons of Noah Porter. At the age of eleven he moved with his family to New Salem, Mass., and attended the academy there. He studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania (M.D. 1848) and practiced in Keene and Dublin, New Hampshire. In 1856, he moved to Deerfield. In addition to his medical practice he was involved in a milling business, served as justice of the peace (1862-1880) and was elected seven times as moderator of town meeting between 1870 and 1881. As a member of the school committee, and a financial adviser to Esther Dickinson, he was influential in getting Mrs. Dickinson to leave a generous bequest to the town for educational purposes. Dr. Porter died in 1883.

He is represented in the collection by two notebooks on medical subjects, both probably kept while a medical student in Philadelphia, and by two plates for calling cards.

**Fidelia (Piper) Mason Porter** was born in Dublin, New Hampshire, in 1823, daughter of John Piper. Her first husband was Thaddeus Perry Mason, a Dublin school teacher. They had two children, Ada and Charles Henry. In 1853, she married Dr. Ransom N. Porter and the couple moved to Deerfield the following year. They had four children - Ellery, Susan, Gertrude, and Nellie. Most of Mrs. Porter's papers are cards and letters she received on birthday anniversaries, many on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in November 1923. She died the following February.

**Atherton Mason**, a nephew of Fidelia Porter, was a physician in Fitchburg, Mass. His papers in the collection are letters he received from his aunt Fidelia and her three daughters - Nellie, Gertrude and Susan – in the years 1880 to 1896. With these is one letter addressed to Dr. Mason's daughter, Alice, in 1918.

**Nellie B. Porter**, a daughter of Ransom and Fidelia Porter, married William D. Harris of Greenfield, Mass., in 1887. She is represented by a wedding invitation she received in 1885, and by two undated cards.

**Ada Mason Brown**, daughter of Fidelia and Thaddeus Perry Mason, was born in Dublin, New Hampshire, but moved to Deerfield with her mother and stepfather in 1856. She attended Deerfield Academy in the 1860s. In 1882, she married Augustus Brown; the couple had five children, two of whom are mentioned below. She died sometime after 1926.

Her papers include a folder of school compositions by students at Deerfield Academy, letters from a number of friends, with lengthy files from Edgar Belding, Lydia Fuller, Mary Eals, Channing Whitman, and Charles Day Billings.

**Augustus Brown**, son of Lewis and Abigail (Crosier) Brown, was born in Deerfield in 1846, and died there in 1913. His papers consist of two letters received in 1913, two membership cards, and papers related to the settlement of his estate in 1913-14.

**Leland Brown**, a son of Augustus and Ada Brown, was born in Deerfield. He is represented by only two cards, both received in 1908.

**Henry (“Harry”) Mason Brown**, a younger son of Augustus and Ada Brown, was born in Deerfield and has continued to live in the town. His papers consist for the most part of postcards he received from friends in the period from 1907 to 1919, but there is also material relating to his membership in the Masonic Lodge and his service in World War I.

**Alonzo Daniel Phillips** was born on a farm near Greenfield, Mass., in 1812. For many years he conducted a hotel business in various places, the last of which was as proprietor of Pocumtuck House in Deerfield, a well-known resort in the mid-19th century. He died in Deerfield in 1863. **Mary Ann (Robinson) Phillips**, daughter of Joel and Anna Bartlett Robinson, was born in West Springfield, Mass. She and Alonzo were married in 1836, and had six children, two of whom are mentioned below. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Phillips and their son, Charles, continued to run the Pocumtuck House until the hotel burned in 1877. She continued to live in Deerfield and died there in 1899.

Mr. and Mrs. Phillips are represented by papers dating from 1857 to 1894. The earliest letter is to Mr. Phillips from John Wilson, thanking him for a generous portion of roast ox. Most of the letters are addressed to Mrs. Phillips from her children and grandchildren.

**Henry Moses Phillips**, eldest son of Alonzo Daniel and Mary Robinson Phillips, was born in 1845 and lived most of his life in Springfield, Mass., where he served as postmaster and later as mayor (1883-85). He also served as a representative to the General Court of Massachusetts and as Treasurer of the Commonwealth. In 1874, he married **Julie Alexander**, daughter of Henry and Amelia Bowles Alexander of Springfield, a family prominent in the social life of the city. They had one son, Henry.

Papers of the couple include a passport (1881), a printed address by Henry Phillips to the City Council while he was Mayor, papers by Mrs. Phillips relating to “Linden Hall,” their home in the city, and a certificate signed by members of a social club of which she was a member and longtime secretary.

**Emma (Phillips) Brown**, daughter and youngest child of Alonzo Daniel and Mary Robinson Phillips, was born in 1854. She married Cyrus Brown in 1872, and the couple had three daughters, all of whom are named below. Mrs. Brown died in 1932.

Her papers consist of extensive files of letters from her daughters and a small number of letters from various friends.

**Cyrus Brown**, son of Lewis and Abigail Crosier Brown, and younger brother of Augustus Brown, was born in 1848. He served from 1871 to 1919 as railroad stationmaster, first in Deerfield, later in South Deerfield. For a time he was also town assessor. He died in 1930.

He is represented in the collection by a few business papers. Also included is a printed obituary.

**Julia Brown**, eldest daughter of Cyrus and Emma Phillips Brown, was born in 1881. She was secretary for many years at Miss Porter's School in Farmington, Connecticut.

Her papers consist of a few calling cards dating from when she was a child, and letters from her aunt, Julia Alexander Phillips, in 1923.

**Mable Brown**, next younger daughter of Cyrus and Emma Phillips Brown, was born in 1883. She graduated from Smith College in 1904, and was secretary of the State Normal School in Keene, New Hampshire.

Her papers include some items relating to her years at Smith College (Northampton, Mass.) as well as letters she received from various friends during the years 1898 to 1925.

**Gladys Brown**, youngest daughter of Cyru and Emma Phillips Brown, was born in 1890. She taught school for a number of years in Flushing, Long Island. In later years she lived in Deerfield with her sister, Mabel, and served as town reporter for the Greenfield newspaper. Her nickname among townspeople was "Scoop."

Her papers include several exercise books dating from the years she taught school; genealogical notes; and letters she received between 1900 and 1950. Among the letters are two from Henry Flynt, founder of Historic Deerfield.

**Henry Kirke Brown**, sculptor, was the son of Elijah and Rhoda (Childs) Brown. He was born in 1814 and was brought up on a farm in Leyden, Mass. From 1861 until his death in 1886, he lived and worked in Newburgh, New York. During that time he executed four figures for Statuary Hall in the Capitol in Washington, DC, and three equestrian statues, the most admired of which is the equestrian statue of George Washington in Union Square, New York City.

His papers consist of letters he received from his mother, who continued to live in the family homestead in Leyden.

### **Container List**

<b>Box 1</b> Folder 1: Papers of Porter and Brown Families: wedding invitations and calling cards, 1882-1921 and undated	(32 items)
Folder 2: Papers of Dr. Ransom N. Porter	(5 items)
Folder 3: Papers of Fidelia (Piper) Mason Porter, 1911-1922 and undated	(62 items)
Folder 4: Same, November 1923	(39 items)
Folder 5: Papers of Atherton Mason, 1880-1896	(7 items)
letter sent to his daughter, 1918	(1 item)
Folder 6: Papers of Nellie B. Porter, 1885 and undated	(3 items)

**Box 2** Folder 1: Papers of Ada (Mason) Brown: School compositions by students at Deerfield Academy, 1865-1866 (39 items)  
 Folder 2: Papers of Ada (Mason) Brown: Letters from Edgar Belding, 1865-1875 (35 items)  
 Folder 3: Same: Letters from Lydia Fuller, 1867-1872 (38 items)  
 Folder 4: Same: Letters from Lydia Fuller, 1873-1880 and undated (27 items)  
 Folder 5: Same: Letters from Mary Eals, 1866-1871 (29 items)  
 Folder 6: Same: Letters from Channing Whitman, 1870-1876 (16 items)  
 Folder 7: Same: collection of envelopes w/ postmarks

**Box 3** Folder 1: Papers of Ada (Mason) Brown: Letters from Charles Day Billings, 1868 (22 items)  
 Folder 2: Same, 1869 (32 items)  
 Folder 3: Same, 1870 (32 items)  
 Folder 4: Same, 1877 (9 items)  
 Folder 5: Same, Jan. 1878-May 1878 (21 items)  
 Folder 6: Same, June 1878-Feb. 1879 (19 items)  
 Folder 7: Same, Letters from various correspondents (mainly invitations, birthday and Christmas greetings), 1864-1926 and undated (49 items)  
 Folder 8: Papers of Augustus Brown, 1913-1914 (18 items)  
 Folder 9: Papers of Leland Brown, 1908 (2 items)  
 Folder 10: Papers of Henry ("Harry") Brown, 1907-1919 (68 items)

**Box 4** Folder 1: Robinson Family Papers: photograph of George C. Robinson; snapshot of George and his two brothers; copy of *A Progressive Statesman* (John Adams) by Edgar E. Robinson (1908); and manuscript poem "on the death of her son" signed by Abigail Robinson (4 items)  
 Folder 2: Papers of Alonzo Daniel Philips and his wife, Mary Ann (Robinson) Phillips, 1857-1894 and undated (51 items)  
 Folder 3: Papers of Henry Moses Phillips and his wife, Julia (Alexander) Phillips, 1881-1885, 1923; 2 mss stories by Mrs. Phillips (13 items)

**Box 5** Folder 1: Papers of Emma (Phillips) Brown: Letters from her daughter Gladys, 1910-1913. (28 items)  
 Folder 2: Same, 1916-Mar. 1917 (25 items)  
 Folder 3: Same, Apr. 1917-1919 (24 items)  
 Folder 4: Same, 1920-June 1921 (37 items)

**Box 6** Folder 1: Same, July 1921, Aug.-1924 (35 items)  
 Folder 2: Same, undated (27 items)  
 Folder 3: Papers of Emma (Phillips) Brown: Letters from her daughter Mabel, 1917-1923 (24 items)  
 Folder 4: Papers of Emma (Phillips) Brown: Letters from her daughter, Julia, 1908-1922 (44 items)  
 Folder 5: Papers of Emma (Phillips) Brown: Letters from various correspondents, 1862-1817 and undated; printed obituary, 1932 (37 items)  
 Folder 6: Papers of Cyrus L. Brown, 1882-1921; printed obituary, 1930 (11 items)

- Box 7** Folder 1: Papers of Julia Brown, 1923 and undated (6 items)  
Folder 2: Papers of Mabel Brown, 1898-1909 (24 items)  
Folder 3: Papers of Mabel Brown, 1910-1925 and undated (35 items)  
Folder 4: Papers of Gladys Brown, 1900-1920 (16 items)  
Folder 5: Papers of Gladys Brown, 1924-1960 and undated (28 items)  
Folder 6: Papers of Gladys Brown, school exercise books  
Folder 7: Papers of Gladys Brown, genealogical notes  
Folder 8: Deeds to land of several members of the Brown family, and miscellaneous  
Folder 9: Phillips and Brown genealogical charts and records  
Folder 10: Correspondence relating to the Brown family, 1878-1966 (4 items)  
Folder 11: Papers of Henry Kirke Brown, 1836-1846 (8 items)