

## GUIDE TO THE DICKINSON FAMILY PAPERS

### Scope and Content Note

The Dickinson Family Papers have been received by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association from many sources over many years. The collection numbers just under 800 items, and dates from 1746 to 1892. Certain materials that relate to the family are of considerably later date.

The major portion of the collection consists of papers of descendants of Nathaniel Dickinson (1644-1710), originally from Wethersfield, Connecticut, who became one of the first settlers of Hadley, Massachusetts, and who continued to live there most of the remainder of his life. Associated with these are papers of several persons connected to the descendants by marriage; papers of certain Dickinsons whose relationship to the above has not been established, and genealogical notes and correspondence relating to the Dickinson family.

The numbers that accompany the notes below refer to the number assigned to that individual by George Sheldon in genealogical notes on the Dickinson family that are included in the second volume of his *History of Deerfield* (1895). Many of the following biographical notes were taken from the same source.

### Biographical Notes and Description of Series

**Samuel Dickinson**<sup>7</sup>, grandson of Nathaniel<sup>1</sup>, founder of the family in the Deerfield area, was born in 1687. He was captured by Indians at Hatfield, Mass., in 1698, and again at Northfield in 1723. In 1730, he settled in Deerfield and received 200 acres of land at "Road Town" (Shutesbury, Mass.) from the General Court in consideration of his sufferings during captivity. He married Hannah, daughter of John Field of Hatfield, in 1729; they had four children. Samuel died in 1761. His wife died by drowning, in 1740.

His papers consist of a relinquishment of claims against the heirs and executors of Thomas Wells; a promissory note from John Hooker; and a memorandum re. distribution of part of Samuel's real estate holdings by his heirs.

**Nathaniel Dickinson**<sup>9</sup>, son of Samuel and Hannah, was born in 1734. An active Tory, his estate was confiscated when his correspondence with General Gage was deemed treasonable. He was living in St. Johns, New Brunswick, in 1786.

He is represented by four items: a bill for sawing wood, a receipt signed by Ebenezer Newall, and a receipt and promissory note signed by Dickinson.

**John Dickinson**<sup>6</sup>, older brother of Samuel, was born in Hatfield in 1667 and died there in 1765. His second wife, the mother of the two children whose papers are described below, was Hepzibah, daughter of Lt. Thomas Wells of Deerfield.

He is represented by one deed, to land in Sunderland, Mass. (1746).

**Salmon Dickinson**, son of John<sup>6</sup> and Hepzibah, settled in Hatfield. He is represented by a deed to land in the Longhill Division of Deerfield in 1750.

**Thomas Dickinson**<sup>8</sup>, another son of John<sup>6</sup> and Hepzibah, was born in 1718. He moved from Hatfield to Deerfield in 1752, lived on Lot 7, and became prominent in town affairs. He was commissary in the French & Indian War, and led a company of militia in 1779. He and his wife, Prudence, daughter of Francis Smith of Bolton, Connecticut, had nine children, several of whom are mentioned below. Thomas died in 1814, his wife in 1808.

His papers consist of deeds to land in Hatfield, Deerfield, Greenfield, and Sunderland, Mass., and in New Hampshire and Vermont; a deed to one-eighth part of a sloop, *Dolphin* (before 1750); and a copy of his will (1782), and a revised will dated July 25, 1792.

**David Dickinson**<sup>11</sup>, a son of Thomas<sup>8</sup> and Prudence, was born in 1747 in Hatfield, but moved to Deerfield with his family when he was five years old. He was a storekeeper before the Revolutionary War. During that conflict he served as clerk of the Committee of Safety, Major of the 5<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts regiment and, later, Lieutenant Colonel of Col. Porter's regiment. After the war he was commissioned justice of the peace. In 1783, he married Elizabeth, daughter of the Reverend Jonathan Ashley. She died in 1808, David in 1822.

His papers consist of legal documents: several judgments in Dickinson's favor, an order signed by David Arms, and a deed to land in Deerfield.

**Honor (Dickinson) Herbert**, a daughter of Thomas<sup>8</sup> and Prudence, was born in 1755 and was married to George Herbert about 1776. They had one son, George, who was born in 1778, the year of George's death. He died intestate and Honor and her brother, Eliphalet, were the administrators of his estate.

She is represented by papers relating to the settlement of the estate, mainly bills paid and judgments.

**Eliphalet Dickinson**<sup>11</sup>, another son of Thomas<sup>8</sup> and Prudence, was born in 1749. He was a farmer who lived on the old homestead. He was usually spoken of as "Uncle Liff." His first wife, and the mother of his four sons, was Mary Jackson of Cambridge. She died in 1814, Eliphalet in 1827.

His papers consist of letters from his brother-in-law, George Herbert, his sons, Jackson and William, his nephew, Rodolphus Dickinson, and from Aldes Davis; a venture upon a voyage to China of the ship *Essex* of Salem, Mass.; a copy of his will; and papers relating to the settlement of his estate.

**William Dickinson**<sup>14</sup>, eldest son of Eliphalet<sup>11</sup> and Mary, was born in 1783. His wife, Elizabeth (Hastings) Balch, and he had five children, two of whom are named below.

He is represented by one paper, a plan of land in Deerfield set off to his children.

**William J. Dickinson**, eldest child of William<sup>14</sup> and Elizabeth, was a resident of Conway, Mass., in 1839. He went to Illinois in 1845, the year of his death. He is represented by a deed to land in Deerfield which he bought from his sisters.

**Elizabeth H. Dickinson**, a daughter of William<sup>14</sup> and Elizabeth, is represented by two items: a power of attorney to dispose of land belonging to her sister, Mary J. Dickinson, and a deed to property on which she and her sister Caroline lived.

**Jackson Dickinson**<sup>15</sup>, son of Eliphalet<sup>11</sup> and Mary, was born in 1790. In 1814, he married Harriet, daughter of Oliver Cooley. They had one daughter, Mary, who died in infancy. Jackson died in 1816.

His papers include letters from his wife, and from his cousin Charlotte Herbert; and a military passport which permitted him to go through British lines.

**Harriet (Cooley) Dickinson**, a daughter of Oliver and Jemima (Wells) Cooley, was born about 1795. In 1814 she married Jackson Dickinson. Thirteen years after his death in 1816, she married Frederick H. Allen, named below.

Her papers consist of letters from her second husband and a letter from her nephew Elisha.

**Frederick H. Allen**, a son of Samuel Clesson and Mary (Hunt) Allen, was born in 1806. A graduate of the University of Vermont, he studied law and became an eminent lawyer in Maine and served as a judge of the Supreme Court of and member of Congress from the state. He later moved to Boston and was a lecturer on political economy at Harvard. In 1829 he married Harriet (Cooley) Dickinson, widow of Jackson Dickinson<sup>15</sup>. They had three children, two of whom are named below. Frederick died in Boston in 1868.

The early items among his papers are letters of sympathy received after the death of his daughter Harriet in 1855. Later letters include two from his son, Samuel, engaged in business in Hawaii.

**Harriet Allen**, daughter of Frederick and Harriet, is represented by letters from her cousin, Mary Hunt Allen, and from her friend, Julia C. Kelly, when the latter was a student at Troy (NY) Female Seminary.

**Mary Allen**, the second daughter of Frederick and Harriet, is represented by letters of sympathy received after the death of her sister Harriet from Julia and Carrie Kelly and from her cousins Elisha Allen, Jr., and Charlotte Herbert.

**George Dickinson**<sup>16</sup>, another son of Eliphalet<sup>11</sup> and Mary (Jackson) Dickinson, was born in 1800. He was a farmer who inherited the paternal estate. About 1845 he moved to Boston where he had a position in the custom house. In 1825, he married Lucinda, a daughter of Oliver Cooley and a younger sister of Harriet (Cooley) Dickinson Allen, mentioned above. They had eight children, several of whom are named below. His wife died in 1843; George died, at Norwood, Mass., in 1878.

His papers, which are more extensive than those of any other member of the family, contain letters from his wife and his children (but mainly from his daughter Susan), and from a number of friends and relatives including, as principal correspondents, Frederick H. Allen, Samuel C. Allen, Oliver Cooley, George W. Cooley, Rodney Cooley, and Rodolphus Dickinson. His business correspondence begins in 1824 (while he was employed in Hamburg, South Carolina) with a number of letters received from the Charleston firm of J. Leland and Brothers.

After his return to Deerfield the papers include receipts, judgments, promissory notes and other legal documents of the local area as well as deeds to land in the Territory of Wisconsin. Late correspondence is mainly with Charles Williams in regard to land in Wilmington, Vermont. The papers also include his discharge from the Massachusetts militia (1829), his appointment as temporary inspector for the district of Boston and Cambridge (1844), drafts relating to a soldering instrument he hoped to patent, and reproductions of an exchange of letters with George Bancroft in 1835, from originals in the Massachusetts Historical Society.

**Lucinda (Cooley) Dickinson**, daughter of Oliver and Jemima (Wells) Cooley, and wife of George Dickinson<sup>16</sup>, was born in 1799. She died at the age of 44 after a long illness.

The majority of her papers are letters from George, before and after their marriage. There are also letters from her daughter Susan, her brother-in-law Frederick H. Allen, sister Harriet, brother George W. Cooley, and her father. Included in the folder are two letters their father wrote to her sister Mary during the latter's visit to the Dickinsons.

**George J. Dickinson**, son of George<sup>16</sup> and Lucinda, was born in 1826. His papers include letters from his father and from his sister, Eliza. Also included are a wedding invitation and a life insurance policy. His business correspondence consists of letters relating mainly to the processing of metals, particularly copper. Writers are the Revere Copper Company of Boston, Ora Knob Copper Company of Baltimore, Galena Silver Mining Company of Salt Lake City, and J.B. Meader, an assayer of that city, and William Taylor of Trapper City in Beaverhead County, Montana.

**Harriet Dickinson**, a daughter of George<sup>16</sup> and Lucinda, was born in 1827 and died at West Newton, Mass., in 1850. Her papers include letters from her cousins, Elizabeth and Mary Dickinson, from her sister Susan and from her father.

**Susan Dickinson**, daughter of George<sup>16</sup> and Lucinda, was born in 1828 and died in 1847. Her papers consist of letters from her father and from her sister Harriet.

**Eliza Dickinson**, a daughter of George<sup>16</sup> and Lucinda, was born in 1831. Her papers include letters from her mother, her brothers George, Herbert and Frederick, and her cousin, Samuel C. Allen.

**Annie Dickinson**, youngest daughter of George<sup>16</sup> and Lucinda, was born in 1836. Only one of her papers is in the collection, a letter from Julia Stebbins.

**Herbert Dickinson**, son of George<sup>16</sup> and Lucinda, was born in 1834. He is represented by two letters, both from his older brother George.

**Thomas Wells Dickinson**<sup>12</sup>, a son of Thomas<sup>8</sup> and Prudence Dickinson, and younger brother of David<sup>10</sup> and Eliphalet<sup>11</sup>, was born in 1751. He was a farmer who lived on Lot 1. A Whig during the Revolutionary War, he was appointed assistant commissary under Col. Benedict Arnold in 1775, and did valuable work in this connection. He served as lieutenant under Capt. Isaac Newton in Col. Murray's regiment in 1780, and was at West Point when the treason of his old commander was discovered. He and Thankful, daughter of Col. David Field, were married in

1775 and they had nine children, several of whom are named below. Thomas died in 1835, his widow the following year.

His few papers consist of a letter to Thomas and Thankful from the latter's brother, Oliver Field, and three legal documents relating to property in Thomas' estate.

**Thomas Wells Dickinson**<sup>18</sup>, son of Thomas<sup>12</sup> and Thankful, was born in 1784. He was a farmer who, in 1823, married Lucy, daughter of Ebenezer Hoyt. They had seven children. Thomas died in 1849, his widow in 1854.

His early papers (c. 1825) relate to a case of trespass brought by Dickinson against Ebenezer and Sylvester Newcomb of Deerfield. Later papers include a number of promissory notes and items related to the settlement of his estate.

**Rodolphus Dickinson**<sup>19</sup>, another son of Thomas<sup>12</sup> and Thankful, was born in 1786 and was graduated from Yale in 1805. He studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1808. On the organization of Franklin County Mass. he became clerk of the courts (1811-1819). He was later ordained as an Episcopal minister, first serving two parishes in South Carolina, and later in Montague, Massachusetts. A "Jeffersonian Democrat," he was a scholar of many attainments and the author of a number of published works on diverse subjects. In 1809, he married Nancy, daughter of David Hoyt. They had three children. Rodolphus died in 1862, his widow in 1870.

His few papers include his appointment as clerk of the courts of Franklin County, receipts, copy of a subscription list for ministerial service of St. Paul's church of Pendleton, S.C., his transcript of a letter he received from Thomas Jefferson (followed by a folder of recent correspondence relating to the Dickinson-Jefferson exchange).

**John M. Campbell**, son-in-law of Rodolphus Dickinson . He married Rodolphus' daughter, Nancy Hoyt Dickinson, on Sept. 2, 1836.

He is represented by three letters.

**Clarissa Dickinson**, a daughter of Thomas<sup>12</sup> and Thankful, was born in 1794 and died, unmarried, in 1862. Her papers include a letter she and Lucy Dickinson received from a niece, Frances Pamela Bardwell (granddaughter of Thomas<sup>12</sup>). The remainder of items is deeds and other legal documents.

**Richard Dickinson**, a son of Thomas<sup>12</sup> and Thankful, was born in 1798 and died without issue in 1871. He is represented by two deeds and a copy of his will.

**Consider Dickinson**<sup>13</sup>, a son of Thomas<sup>8</sup> and Prudence, was born in 1761. During the American Revolution he served in the Continental forces. After the war he hunted and traded in furs in Canada for a time before returning to Deerfield, where he became a prominent citizen. In 1789 he purchased from the last descendent of the Reverend John Williams the house lot which the "Proprietors" presented to Williams in 1686. About 1785, he married Filana, daughter of David Field; some years after her death he married Esther Harding of Whately, Mass. Dickinson, known locally as "Uncle Sid," accumulated large property holdings which he left to his wife with the understanding that it was to be left for some public purpose. He died in 1854; his widow in 1875.

His papers include letters from his nephew, George Herbert, his brother-in-law David Field, from Calvin Merrill (regarding a debt Merrill owed him), and from Simon Larned (regarding rent for a house); an agreement with Gilbert Hoyt relating to stables to be built on Dickinson's land; and a number of deeds and other legal documents. Accompanying these is a manuscript of "Uncle Sid's Adventures with Indians (1785) – as taken down by R.B. Field of Guilford" (formerly P.V.M.A. Papers 5038).

**Filana (Field) Dickinson**, daughter of David and Thankful Field, married Consider Dickinson about 1785. They had no children. She died in 1831 at the age of 70.

Her papers include letters from her brothers Samuel and Oliver; her nieces Matilda King Field, Charlotte Herbert, and Dorothy Ashley; her nephews Jonathan Field and George Herbert; and from friends, among them Sally Hall of Seneca, N.Y., Cynthia Hawks of Charlemont, Mass., Lucy Hyde of Guilford, Vt., and Anna Howard of Conway, Mass.

**Esther (Harding) Dickinson**, a daughter of Abijah Harding of Whately, was born in 1790. In 1840 she became the second wife of Consider Dickinson. After some unfortunate investments of the considerable property her husband left her, she was able, by careful economy, to leave an increased amount to a board of trustees for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a Free Academy and Public Library in Deerfield. Her death occurred in 1875.

Her few papers consist of legal documents, including a manuscript and a printed copy of her will and a booklet containing a list of assets in her estate.

**Samuel Clesson Allen**, the father of Frederick M. Allen (named above) was born in 1772. A clergyman, lawyer, and statesman, he served in both houses of the Massachusetts legislature, as a member of the council, and member of Congress from the state. He resided in New Salem, in Greenfield, and in Northfield, Mass., where he died in 1842. His first wife was Sarah, daughter of Hezekiah Newcomb of Bernardston, Mass. After her death, in 1797, he married Mary, daughter of Elisha Hunt. Although he married a third time, Sarah and Mary were the mothers of his fifteen children.

His papers consist of letters received from his son Elisha, his sons-in-law David Gregg and John Appleton, and from Thomas Hart Benton (relative to a bill he prepared to reestablish the constitutional currency of the United States), Levi Woodbury (relating to finance, encouraging payments in specie), and Benjamin Hallett (on freemasonry). There are also copies of Allen's letter to Andrew Jackson and to Ames Kendall in support of the appointment of Abel Cushing as collector at the Boston Custom House.

**Samuel C. Allen, Jr.**, son of Samuel Clesson and Sarah Allen, was born in 1793. A farmer, he served as representative from Northfield in the Massachusetts legislature. Later he moved to East Boston, where he was postmaster until his death in 1860.

He is represented by a letter he received in 1840 from William Parmenter, member of Congress from Massachusetts, in regard to a memorial contesting the right of (Osmyn?) Baker of Massachusetts to a seat in Congress.

**Oliver Cooley**, a trader and innkeeper came to Deerfield from Bernardston, Mass., in 1806, and purchased the old tavern on Lot 29. About 1794 he married Jemima, daughter of Eleazer Wells; among the children of this first marriage was a daughter Lucinda (mentioned

above), wife of George Dickinson<sup>16</sup>. Jemima died in 1820, and in 1823 he married Hannah, daughter of Eliakim Field.

He is represented by two letters, from Henry W. Dwight and from Mary Cooley, a granddaughter.

**Gideon Dickinson** of Whately (for a short time a resident of Deerfield) is not known to have been related to the Dickinsons named above. His papers include promissory notes, accounts, and a copy of his will (1811), accompanied by an inventory and other papers relating to the settlement of his estate.

**Calvin Dickinson** of Hatfield, Mass., is represented by a complaint brought against him for assault (he was acquitted), and by several receipts and judgments.

**Philo Dickinson** and family of Springfield, Mass., are the subject of family correspondence. Included are letters to Philo from his wife Delia, to the couple from their sons Everard and William (who later settled in the Midwest), from Delia's brother, John Benjamin, and letters from Philo and Delia to their son Henry.

Other Dickinsons, unrelated to the descendants of Nathaniel Dickinson as far as is known, are Asa, Elias of Conway, Wells of Whately, and Obadiah of Syracuse, N.Y. There are a few papers to or relating to these men.

## CONTAINER LIST

<b><u>Box 1</u></b> Folder 1: Papers of John Dickinson <sup>6</sup> of Hatfield and paper of his son Salmon. 1746; 1750.	(2 items)
Folder 2: Papers of Samuel Dickinson <sup>7</sup> , 1750-ca. 1761	(3 items)
Folder 3: Papers of Nathaniel Dickinson <sup>9</sup> , 1763-1773	(4 items)
Folder 4: Papers of Thomas Dickinson <sup>8</sup> , 1743-1803	(35 items)
Folder 5: Papers of David Dickinson <sup>10</sup> , 1774-1800	(9 items)
Folder 6: Papers re. David Dickinson <sup>10</sup> , 1775	(1 item)
Folder 7: Papers of Honor Dickinson Herbert, 1775-1790	(41 items)
Folder 8: Papers of Eliphalet Dickinson <sup>11</sup> , 1777-1830	(59 items)
Folder 9: Papers of William Dickinson <sup>14</sup> , 1830	(1 item)
Folder 10: Papers of William J. Dickinson, 1842	(1 item)
Folder 11: Papers of Elizabeth M. Dickinson, 1844-1851	(2 items)
Folder 12: Papers of Jackson Dickinson <sup>15</sup> , 1813-1815	(5 items)
Folder 13: Papers of Harriet Dickinson Allen, 1835-1860	(7 items)
Folder 14: Papers of Frederick H. Allen, 1855-1856	(8 items)
Folder 15: Papers of Harriet Allen, before 1846-1855	(11 items)
Folder 16: Papers of Mary Allen, 1855-1856	(4 items)
Folder 17: Papers of George Dickinson <sup>16</sup> , 1824-1842 (letters from his wife)	(14 items)
Folder 18: Papers of George Dickinson <sup>16</sup> , (letters from his children, 1842-1877)	(46 items)

<b>Box 2</b>	Folder 1: Papers of George Dickinson <sup>16</sup> , other personal Correspondence, 1821-1835	(37 items)
	Folder 2: Same, 1823-1837	(48 items)
	Folder 3: Same. Business correspondence, 1823-1837	(35 items)
	Folder 4: Same. Business correspondence, 1838-1854	(43 items)
	Folder 5: Same. Miscellaneous writings, undated	(22 items)
	Folder 6: Same. Reproductions of two letters, 1835	(2 items)
	Folder 7: Papers of Lucinda (Cooley) Dickinson, 1823-1843	(32 items)
	Folder 8: Papers of George J. Dickinson, Jr., 1842-1875	(13 items)
	Folder 9: Papers of George J. Dickinson, Jr., 1869-1876	(43 items)
	Folder 10: Papers of Harriet Dickinson, 1843-1849	(14 items)
	Folder 11: Papers of Susan Dickinson, 1844-1847	(12 items)
	Folder 12: Papers of Eliza Dickinson, 1842-1892	(21 items)
	Folder 13: Papers of Annie Dickinson, 1849	(1 item)
	Folder 14: Papers of Herbert Dickinson, 1876-1877	(2 items)
<b>Box 3</b>	Folder 1: Papers of Thomas Wells Dickinson <sup>12</sup> , 1789-1835	(4 items)
	Folder 2: Papers of Thomas Wells Dickinson <sup>18</sup> , 1825-1849	(16 items)
	Folder 3: Papers of Rodolphus Dickinson <sup>19</sup> , 1811-1835	(8 items)
	Folder 4: Papers of Rodolphus Dickinson <sup>19</sup> , photocopies and recent correspondence	(24 Items)
	Folder 4a: Descriptions of Mass. towns gathered for an unpublished gazetteer, 1817	(28 items)
	Folder 4b: Papers of John Campbell, son-in-law of Rodolphus Dickinson	(3 items)
	Folder 5: Papers of Clarissa Dickinson, 1824-1860	(8 items)
	Folder 6: Papers of Richard Dickinson, 1867-1871	(3 items)
	Folder 7: Papers of Consider Dickinson <sup>13</sup> , 1788-1820	(34 items)
	Folder 8: Papers of Consider Dickinson <sup>13</sup> , 1824-1851	(37 items)
	Folder 9: Papers of Consider Dickinson <sup>13</sup> , "adventure with the Indians" in 1785.	(1 item)
	Folder 10: Papers of Filana (Field) Dickinson, 1794-1815	(25 items)
	Folder 11: Papers of Esther (Harding) Dickinson, 1856-1875	(6 items)
	Folder 12: Papers of Samuel Cresson Allen, 1834-1840	(23 items)
	Folder 13: Papers of Samuel C. Allen, Jr., 1840	(1 item)
	Folder 14: Papers of Oliver Cooley, 1855 and undated	(2 items)
	Folder 15: Papers of Gideon Dickinson of Whately, 1786-1815	(26 items)
	Folder 16: Papers of Calvin Dickinson of Hatfield, 1797-1803	(7 items)
	Folder 17: Papers of Philo Dickinson and family of Springfield, 1820-1852	(13 items)
	Folder 18: Papers of Asa, Elias, Wells and Obadiah Dickinson	(13 items)

- Box 4** Folder 19: Miscellaneous manuscripts and fragments found in the Dickinson collection. Undated (13 items)
- Folder 20: Letters to George Sheldon and others in regard to the Dickinson family; and genealogical notes relating to the family, 1874-1972 and undated.
- Folder 21: Miscellaneous papers of the Dickinson Family of Amherst, Mass. (17 items)
- Folder 22: Newspaper clippings and printed items relating to Emily Dickinson (14 items)