

THE DEMING-PUTNAM-HALE COLLECTION

Special Collections
Benjamin F. Feinberg Library
Plattsburgh State University College
Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901

Arrangement of Collection by
Carol A. Christiansen
Ida Jacques
John Lanigan

Introduction by
John Lanigan

with materials donated by
Buelah Link.

Edited by
Joseph G. Swinyer
April 1983

Introduction

The Hale Deming Putnam collection, as its title signifies, is composed of the papers of John Deming, Cora Putnam Hale, and Helen Cordelia Putnam.

Her. Deming was born in 1909, the son of an Elizabethtown farmer. He attended college at the University of Rochester and attained a degree in law from Harvard University, in 1933. He first practiced law in Ticonderoga with Judge Wicks. He then moved to Amsterdam, New York to continue his practice. In 1939 he moved back to Elizabethtown where he continued his law practice. While at the University of Rochester he met Beulah Woods, a Lake Placid native. They were married in 1938. The couple gave birth to four children, these being Robert, Russell, Martha, and John.

While in Elizabethtown, Mr. Deming was respected as a lawyer and a citizen, and no more so than by Cora Putnam Hale, whose legal matters Mr. Deming conducted. It is around this professional relationship that the material in this series centers. After a lifetime of service to his clientele and community, John Deming died in 1979.

Dr. Putnam was born on September 14, 1857, in Stockton, Minnesota. She, and her sister, Cora, were the daughters of Herbert Putnam and Cylinthia Gates Putnam who both moved to Minnesota from Essex County, New York. Mr. Putnam ran a general store while in Stockton, while Mrs. Putnam organized a Sunday School. The family returned to Elizabethtown in 1863, where Herbert Putnam was in the iron manufacturing business with his brother Elbert.

Helen Cordelia Putnam left Elizabethtown, and attended Vassar College, graduating in 1878. She then received a degree from Harvard University's Sargent School of Physical Training. In 1889 she received an M.D. from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

Between 1883-1890 Dr. Putnam was Director of Physical Education at Vassar. Her talents were further used in her position from 1885-1890 as Vice President of the American Association for the Advancement of Physical Education. From 1890-1891 she worked at the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Boston. Her medical practice began in 1892, specializing in gynecology and pediatrics. She lived and practiced medicine in Providence, Rhode Island. Her main interests concerned the health of women and children (prenatal care, etc.) and how public facilities, such as schools, could be maintained to insure higher quality health.

Her chief publication, *School Janitors, Mothers, and Health* (1913) backed her view that health standards in schools should at least be up to those of the home. To achieve her goals for proper public hygienic standards and physical education, she placed the responsibility on mothers themselves, urging them to voice their opinion through mothers' clubs aimed at the authorities in charge.

Outside the medical profession, Dr. Putnam showed her concern for social justice by serving on the National Education Association's Committee on Racial WellBeing and on the board of managers of the Rhode Island Women's Suffrage Association.

She retired from practice in 1935. In 1938 she inherited \$300,000 and interest on a trust of \$2 million, on the death of her cousin, Mr. Henry Putnam. Her sister Cora, and her California cousins, Anne and Amy Putnam, received the same amount. Henry Putnam made his fortune through his father's invention of the lightening fruit jar, among other interests. This inheritance did little to change the lifestyle of this independent woman. Instead she donated her funds to worthwhile causes, such as a Helen Putnam Fellowship for Advanced Research, or her donation to the Western Reserve University, in memory of a great pioneer woman physician, like herself, Marie Zakrzewski.

She died in 1951, in Providence. In her will she left part of her estate for use by mental health patients, as a garden and bird sanctuary. The largest amount of material in the collection concerns Cora Putnam Hale. Like her sister, Cora was born in Stockton, Minnesota on August 12, 1861, and relocated in Elizabethtown in 1863.

Cora found interest in art, and, along with her sister Helen, acquired a great love for nature. Her interest in art brought her to Vassar where she studied for a time. She later studied in New York City, and in France. She used this medium to express her love of nature and animal life. In 1896 Cora married Harry Hale (10/3/1852-7/2/1920) of Elizabethtown. Mr. Hale was the son of Robert Safford Hale and Louisa Hale. Harry Hale attended Yale University where he received a law degree. He returned to Elizabethtown where he practiced as an attorney. Unfortunately, Mr. Hale suffered from a head injury he received while tobogganing early in life. As he grew older, the situation worsened until he died in 1920. Cora remained and spent the rest of her life in the house she and her husband built, with its small farm. They named the house Yononte.

Although Cora differed much from her sister in personality (Cora being the "proper, gracious" lady, and Helen the brusque, independent woman), they both had a common interest in public health, and both believed in social responsibility. After receiving the inheritance mentioned previously, Cora expressed her concern for health standards by establishing a mobile Red Cross Nursing Service for Elizabethtown in 1939. This was only one of many charitable services provided by Cora Putnam Hale. Her funds stretched from contributions to national and international relief services (such as the Grenfell Association) to providing college scholarships to deserving local residents. Her most substantial contribution, however, came in 1939, by fulfilling her dream of establishing a Social Center for Elizabethtown to give the townspeople a stronger sense of community, and to provide a place for relaxation and constructive activities, especially for the young. Simply called the Elizabethtown Social Center, it is still being run through funds endowed in Cora Putnam Hale's will.

Cora Putnam Hale served actively on the Board of Directors for the Center whenever her health permitted, until her death on May 11, 1946 at her home Yononte.

Although the Deming Putnam Hale Collection has value as an insight into the lifestyles of the time period it concerns, its real value lies in showing us the unselfish determination of the sisters Helen and Cora at a time when women were given less credit or opportunity than today. These two women serve as examples of the strength and generosity of womanhood. Their lives should point today towards the obvious equality of women and men despite old prejudices.

CONTENTS OF THE DEMING PUTNAM HALE COLLECTION

The collection is housed in 51 Hollinger boxes of varying sizes, each subdivided by consecutively numbered folders. Since type of material (e.g. correspondence, diaries) is not mixed within boxes, individual folders are not listed in this register.

Box 1 C. P. Hale Correspondence, 1907-1938 380 Items
Box 2 C. P. Hale Correspondence, 1939 410 Items
Box 3 C. P. Hale Correspondence, 1940 594 Items
Box 4 C. P. Hale Correspondence, 1941 394 Items
Box 5 C. P. Hale Correspondence, 1942-1946 and undated 398 Items
Boxes 6-8 C. P. Hale. Business Papers 1,531 Items
Box 9 C. P. Hale Estate 72 Items
Box 10 H. W. Putnam Estate 200 Items
Box 11 Elizabethtown Social Center 11 Items
Box 12 C. P. Hale. Income Taxes 37 Items
Box 13 C. P. Hale. Insurances 36 Items
Box 14 C. P. Hale. Bills and Receipts, 1870-1930 1,062 Items
Box 15 C. P. Hale. Bills and Receipts, 1931-1940 1,064 Items
Box 16 C. P. Hale. Bills and Receipts, 1941-1946 867 Items
Box 17 H. A. Putnam. Bank Statements and Checks 89 Items
Box 18 C. P. Hale's Bank Statements and Checks, 1909-1932 47 Items
Box 19 C. P. Hale's Bank Statements and Checks, 1933-1934 55 Items
Box 20 C. P. Hale's Bank Statements and Checks, 1935-1937 65 Items
Box 21 C. P. Hale's Bank Statements and Checks, 1938-1939 33 Items
Box 22 C. P. Hale's Bank Statements and Checks, 1940 28 Items
Box 23 C. P. Hale's Bank Statements and Checks, 1941 49 Items
Box 24 C. P. Hale's Bank Statements and Checks, 1942 50 Items
Box 25 C. P. Hale's Bank Statements and Checks, 1943-1944 39 Items
Box 26 C. P. Hale's Bank Statements and Checks, 1945-1946 19 Items
Box 27 C. P. Hale's Greeting Cards/Ephemera 128 Items
Box 28 John Deming Files 423 Items
Boxes 29-30 C. P. Hale. Deeds and other Legal Papers 324 Items
Box 31 C. P. Hale. Miscellaneous 98 Items
Boxes 32-33 C. P. Hale. Photographs 340 Items
Box 34 C. P. Hale. Diaries 18 Items
Box 35 C. P. Hale. Poems, stories, etc. 36 Items
Boxes 36-37 C. P. Hale. Account Books 15 Items
Boxes 38-48 C. P. Hale. Checkbook stubs 66 Items

Box 49 C. P. Hale. Miscellaneous Objects 17 Items

Boxes 50-51 C. P. Hale. Books 38 Items

Total # of Items 9033