Collection overview

Title: Fulton/Howe Family Collection

Date range: 1840-1977, (bulk 1877-1965)


Extent: 100 box(es)

Abstract: The Fulton/Howe Collection documents the history of Ferrycliffe Farm in Bristol, Rhode Island, its owners and their families.

Language of materials: English

Repository: Roger Williams University

Collection number: UA 2017.001

Scope & content

In the early 1960s Mary Howe and her husband Marshall N. Fulton, owners of Ferrycliffe Farm in Bristol, learned that Roger Williams College, then housed in the basement of the YMCA in Providence, was looking to build a new campus. The College acquired 63 acres of farmland from the Fultons, and in 1967 construction began. The remaining 50 acres of land were sold to the University in the early 1990s. Ferrycliffe Farm dates back to 1877, when the 130-acre property was purchased by Dr. Herbert Marshall Howe with the intent of raising Jersey cows and sheep. At the time, Ferrycliffe lands extended across Metacom Avenue to the west shore of Bristol Point. Herbert grew up knowing Bristol Point well, having summered there with his father, Bishop Mark Antony DeWolf Howe. Dr. Howe took great pride in his Jerseys. The prize of the herd was a magnificent bull named Gilderoy, born in 1876 and noted for a number of statewide and New England prizes. After Herbert and his wife Edith’s deaths, the farm was taken over by their daughter Edith and her husband Dr. Halsey DeWolf. Ferrycliffe's cows continued to win acclaim, as did its turkeys. Farming continued on a smaller scale through the 1950s under the ownership of Dr. Howe’s granddaughter Mary Howe DeWolf and her husband Marshall N Fulton.

The finding aid will be updated as we continue to process the collection.
Arrangement

Collection is comprised of six (6) series.

- 1. Ferrycliffe Farm
- 2. Correspondence
- 3. Photograph Albums
- 4. Scrapbooks
- 5. Writings
- 6. Financial and Legal Records

Biographical note

Mark Antony DeWolf Howe, 1808-1895, was born in Bristol to John Howe and Louisa Smith. After graduating from Brown University in 1828, he briefly studied law with his father and then served as master at Boston’s Hawes School and a tutor at Brown, before entering the ministry. He was the pastor at the newly established St. James Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, from 1832 to 1846, when he was appointed to St. Luke’s Church in Philadelphia. Herbert M. Howe was born while the family was living in Roxbury. The elder Howe received his doctor of divinity from Brown in 1848. After being elected the first Bishop of the diocese of Central Pennsylvania in 1871, he moved to Reading, Pennsylvania, where he remained until his retirement. He spent the last year of his life on Weetamoe Farm in Bristol. Bishop Howe married 3 times, first in 1833 to Julia Bowen Armory (d. 1841), then in 1843 to Elizabeth Smith Marshall (d. 1855), and thirdly in 1857 to Eliza Whitney (d. 1909) and had 18 children. The Archives holds a replica of the Bishop’s autobiography Mark Anthony DeWolf Howe, 1808-1895: A Brief Record of a Long Life, published posthumously by his wife Eliza Whitney Howe.

Herbert Marshall Howe, 1844-1916, was the son of Mark Antony DeWolf Howe and Elizabeth Marshall. Having completed medical school at the University of Pennsylvania in 1865, he worked for several years as a resident physician in at the Episcopal Hospital in Philadelphia before turning his interests to the world of business. He married Mary W. Fell (1848-1924) in 1871 and they had six children – Mary, John, Edith, Grace, Rhoda, and Amy. The family lived in Philadelphia, but summered in Bristol at Ferrycliffe Farm, founded by Dr. Howe around 1875. He was actively involved in many railroad ventures and coal manufacturing firms, including his wife’s family business, A. Pardee and Company. In addition, he was an artist – his self-portrait hangs in the University Library. The University Archives holds letters from the farm manager and albums filled with photographs of the farm and family.
Edith (Howe) DeWolf, 1877-1958, was born in Philadelphia to Herbert Howe and Mary W. Fell. She was educated at Miss Irwin’s School before going to Miss Porter’s School in Farmington, Connecticut in 1894. She married Halsey DeWolf in 1916 and the couple settled in Providence. They had one daughter – Mary Howe. Edith and Halsey managed Ferrycliffe Farm after her parents died, and the family continued to spend the summer in Bristol. She was also active in Providence’s Lying-In Hospital and District Nursing Association and the Garden Clubs of both Providence and Bristol. The University Archives holds some of Edith’s schoolwork and hundreds of letters from friends and suitors.

Halsey DeWolf, 1870-1964, was the son of Winthrop DeWolf, banker, and Eugenia Tams of Providence. He attended public school there and in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He graduated from Harvard magna cum laude in 1892 and went on to study medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. After interning at Rhode Island Hospital he began general practice in Providence. Dr. DeWolf was one of the founders Providence’s District Nursing Association (1900) and he was the first to be appointed Physician-in-Chief at Rhode Island Hospital (1929). The University Archives holds letters from his father, his sister Agnes, and Edith, as well as some of his travel writing and unpublished literary pieces.

Mary Howe (DeWolf) Fulton, 1917-2006, daughter of Halsey DeWolf and Edith Howe, was born in Providence and attended the Mary C. Wheeler School. She graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 1937, where she studied history of art. She spent her junior year abroad, and the University Archives holds her correspondence with her parents while in Germany and letters from friends at home and abroad. Mary Howe married Marshall Fulton in 1940 and they took over Ferrycliffe Farm after her mother’s death. Mary Howe and Marshall spent their summers in Bristol with their eight children (Keila, Harriet, Frank, Mara, DeWolf, Holly, Nancy, and Kate), and moved there in 1975. Many of their children still reside in Bristol. Around 1965, upon hearing that Roger Williams College was looking for a home in Bristol, they offered to sell most of the farm property to the College. Mary Howe and Marshall received the Roger Williams College Award in 1972 for their continued service to the school.

Marshall Nairne Fulton, 1899-1977, was born and raised in Keokuk, Iowa. He was the second son of William Jewett Fulton, Sr. and Jessie M. Fisher. Marshall came to Rhode Island in 1916 to attend Brown University and gave the valedictory address upon his graduation in 1920. While at Brown, he spent a lot of time with his Uncle Frank Fulton and like his uncle, Marshall attended medical school at Johns Hopkins University, receiving his degree in 1925. He then worked at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston for five years before going into private practice in Providence. Dr. Fulton served in the Army Medical Corps from 1942-1946 and was awarded the Legion of Merit. He was Physician-in-Chief at
Rhode Island Hospital from 1948-1963. The University Archives holds scrapbooks from his years at Brown and Oxford, where he was a Rhodes Scholar from 1920-1923, and some of his professional publications.

Access & use

Access to the collection: There are no restrictions on access, except that the collection can only be seen by prior appointment.

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Administrative information

About the collection

Aquisition: The collection was gifted to the University in 2 accessions (2011 and 2016).

About the finding aid

Author: Finding aid prepared by Heidi Benedict.
Encoding: Finding aid encoded by Victoria Ramos 2016 November 29

Descriptive rules: Finding aid based on Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)

Search terms

Names:

Subjects:
Inventory

Series 1: Ferrycliffe Farm, 1877-1965

Series 2: Correspondence,

Series 3: Photograph Albums, 1880-1965

Series 4: Scrapbooks, 1895-1965

Series 5: Writings,

Series 6: Financial and Legal Records,