

ABSTRACT

A minister, published poet, and doctor from New Salem, Massachusetts, Perry Marshall carried on a correspondence with Dorothy Bullard, also from New Salem, from 1927 until 1929. The letters, although personal, are not romantic, and are likely written from the perspective of an older gentleman who late in life has come to admire, and perhaps to adore, a young woman of his acquaintance. Bullard, as a lively and thoughtful young woman, clearly returns the admiration, if not the affection. Also included are several of Marshall's published works.

ACCESS:

The collection is open for research.

LANGUAGE:

English

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PERRY MARSHALL PAPERS, 1902-1929

1 box (0.25 linear ft.)

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BACKGROUND ON PERRY MARSHALL

Dr. Perry Marshall (1850?-1929) was a resident of New Salem, Massachusetts. A minister, published poet, and doctor specializing in "surgical disease of women," Marshall attended the University of Vermont and graduated in 1871. He bought his home in New Salem in 1891, which burned after his death in 1929. In Marshall's 45th year he married 38-year-old Ella Maria Ormsby on Dec. 4, 1895, and the two had three daughters. Ella Maria Ormsby was born in Hampden, Massachusetts on March 9, 1857. She was a bird enthusiast who advocated bird protection and safe feeding practices. A member of the American Ornithologists' Union, she was elected an Associate of the Union in 1912.

As a poet, many of Marshall's writings appeared in the *Athol Transcript*, while others were self-published. *Vinland*, a collection of historical poetry documenting the Norse discovery of America was published by Charles Kerr and Company of Chicago, and the *Athol Transcript* published the collections *Light and Shadow*, *Irene*, and *Austria*.

Perry Marshall served a church appointment between the years of 1911-1915 in New Salem, later becoming Justice of the Peace for the town. Throughout his life, he continued to write poetry, and in the last two and a half years of his life he corresponded with a student attending Fitchburg Normal School, Dorothy Bullard, also a resident of New Salem.

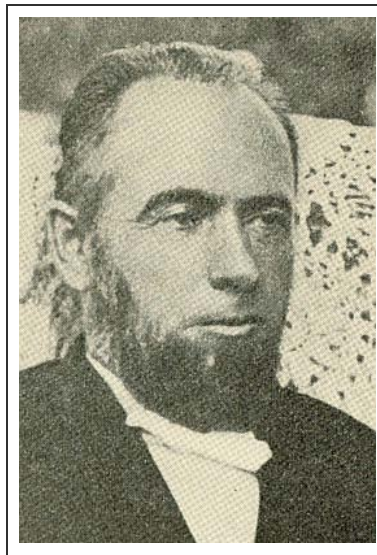


Image of Perry Marshall,
from the *Vermont Alumni Weekly*.

Bullard was the second of four daughters of William and Harriett (Paige) Bullard, born in North New Salem, at the Bullard Farm on July 31, 1910, and graduated from New Salem Academy in about 1928. Dorothy's father, William Bullard worked in lumber with his brother Robert under the business name Bullard Brothers. Bullard's family had strong ties to the Swift River Valley, and her family had lived in New Salem for generations. Her sister, Marion, attended nearby Massachusetts State College, graduating as valedictorian in 1934.

Dorothy's interests included playing piano, studying American history, and literature. She was especially interested in poetry, and could recite long passages of Whitman and Longfellow. After attending two years at Fitchburg Normal School she taught for a few years in a one-room schoolhouse in New Salem before marrying. Bullard's daughter, Janet Hankins, suggested that Dorothy was "a little frustrated that she had not been able to complete more college."

She married Paul H. Fitz of Natick, Massachusetts in September of 1933, a graduate of Worcester Polytechnic Institute who she met through her cousin Warren Doubleday. Paul and Dorothy had two daughters, Janet in 1934 and Jean the following year. The family lived in Natick and in Dover until Fitz's Naval reserve unit was called up in 1940, just before the United States' entry into World War II. Dorothy moved back to North New Salem with the girls and lived with her parents until the end of World War II, when the family was reunited in Dover.

After the Second World War, Fitz was employed as an engineer at the Sears-Roebuck plant in Boston. In 1955, he transferred to the Sears plant in Philadelphia, and the family lived in Langhorne, until Paul took retirement in 1965, when the couple moved back to New Salem to live at Bullard Farm.

Marriage did not stop Dorothy from being engaged in her community with Girl Scouts, women's club, button clubs, round dancing, and the Friends of the New Salem Library, of which she was the founding member. Paul H. Fitz died in 1981, and Dorothy died in 1990, at a nursing home in Greenfield, a year after suffering a stroke.

CONTENTS OF COLLECTION

The collection consists of a series of letters between Dr. Perry Marshall and Dorothy Bullard, both residents of New Salem, Massachusetts, dating from 1927-1929.

Although the nature of the relationship between the two correspondents is difficult to discern from the letters themselves, an understanding can be achieved by considering both Marshall's life and the time period in which the letters were written. Along with the letters, Marshall often enclosed poems that he wrote for Bullard, as well as some of his sermons and religious texts. Two letters of recommendation, perhaps sent to a publisher, are also included, as are several of Marshall's publications.



Dorothy Bullard.

Marshall's letters to Bullard appear at first glance to be romantic, but there is little reason to believe that their relationship was anything other than a friendship. According to Bullard's daughter, Jean Hankins, her mother mentioned Dr. Marshall frequently in conversation, even much later in her life, and her admiration for him was likely reserved for his literary accomplishments and writing ability. It is possible, too, that Dorothy considered Marshall to be a mentor. Marshall's regard for Dorothy is harder to define. He is clearly very taken with Dorothy, who is at least 40 years his junior at the time of their correspondence. As an attractive, lively, and thoughtful young woman, it is not difficult to see why Marshall was such an ardent admirer. His correspondence with Dorothy, and likely his feelings for her, was not kept secret from his wife, Ella Maria Ormsby. Indeed, it is she who writes the final letter to Dorothy, in which she explains that the doctor is too frail and confused to respond.

Marshall was an accomplished man, trained both as a doctor of the body and the spirit. As a local minister, some of his sermons and philosophical or religious writings appear in the collection. A glimpse into his work as a practicing physician is also present. A business card with Marshall's medical specialty, "Surgical Diseases of Women," is included, along with a 1920s medical pamphlet advertising prescription drugs.

As a published poet, some of Marshall's writings appear in the collection, too. Included are works of pastoral and historical poetry, such as *Light and Shadow*, "Vinland: A History of the Norse Discovery of America," "Irene," and "Austria: The World War in Miniature."

Lastly, this collection contains a letter to Perry Marshall from Helena Doubleday, which possibly came into Dorothy Bullard's possession through her cousin Warren Doubleday. While the exact relation of Helena and Warren is unknown, it is clear from the postmark that letter was sent from North Dana in 1924. The town of Dana, which was one of the towns razed in the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir, contained three villages: North Dana, Dana Common, and Doubleday Village, and it is likely that the latter village was named for Helena's family.



INVENTORY OF COLLECTION

Bullard, Dorothy, Poems: "My Friend" and "Prayer for a Little Home"	ca. 1928	Box 1:1
Bullard, Dorothy, Photograph	ca. 1928	Box 1:2
Doubleday, Helena, Letter to Marshall, Perry	1924 Dec 30	Box 1:3
Marshall, Perry, Letters to Bullard, Dorothy	1927 May 30- 1928 Mar 26	Box 1:4
Includes following publications: "Who Fell on Fields Afar," "Man," "Impersonal Superpersonals" and a Valentine's card.		
Marshall, Perry, Letters to Bullard, Dorothy	1928 May 3- 1928 Nov 5	Box 1:5
Includes publication: "The Birth of Song" and "My Friends."		
Marshall, Perry, Letters to Bullard, Dorothy	1929 Jan 10- 1929 Dec 2	Box 1:6
Includes publication: "My Boy is Gone."		
Marshall, Perry, Letters to Bullard, Dorothy	ca. 1929	Box 1:7
With poem: "Dorothy."		
Marshall, Perry, Letters to Bullard, Dorothy	ca. 1929	Box 1:8
Includes published poem, "Prayer," and manuscript poem, "Her Picture."		
Marshall, Perry, Letters to Bullard, Dorothy	ca. 1929	Box 1:9
Fragments, with Marshall's handwritten resume.		

Marshall, Perry, Envelopes	ca. 1927-1929	Box 1:10
Marshall, Perry, Poems	ca. 1920	Box 1:11
Typescripts of "Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder (?)," "Which Alters Not," "New Salem Hill," and "Boarding the Barque."		
Marshall, Perry, Published poems from <i>Athol Transcript</i>	undated	Box 1:12
Marshall, Perry, Publication: <i>Vermont Alumni Weekly</i>	1929 Feb 6	Box 1:13
Marshall, Perry, Publication: "Spring and Autumn"	ca. 1920	Box 1:14
Marshall, Perry, Publication: "Two Poems"	ca. 1920	Box 1:15
Marshall, Perry, Publication: "Irene"	ca. 1920	Box 1:16
Marshall, Perry, Publication: "Austria (The World War in Miniature)," from: <i>Our Earth</i> .	ca. 1920	Box 1:17
Marshall, Perry, Publication: "Vinland, or the Norse Discovery of America"	ca. 1920	Box 1:18
Marshall, Perry, Publication: <i>Light and Shadow</i>	1904	Box 1:19
Marshall, Perry, Religious writings	ca. 1920	Box 1:20
Medical advertisement and Perry Marshall's business card	ca. 1920	Box 1:21
Poems by Bartlett, Ruth Fetch and Hoagland, N.S.	undated	Box 1:22
Recommendation letter	1921 Aug 8	Box 1:23



PROVENANCE

Acquired from Jean F. Hankins, daughter of Dorothy Bullard, in 2002 with an addition in 2007.

PROCESSING INFORMATION

Processed by Maradith A. Wilson, 2007

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cox, Florence Cogswell. *History of New Salem 1753-1953*. Hamilton L. Newell, Inc. Amherst, Mass.1953.

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NAMES AND SUBJECT TERMS

Subjects	Genre terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubleday, Helena • Fitz, Dorothy Bullard • Marshall, Perry • New England--Poetry • New Salem, (Mass.)--History • Poets, American • Quabbin Reservoir (Mass.)--History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters (Correspondence) • Love letters • Sermons

