

The letters in this lot are particularly informative, insightful, and interesting regarding historical matters of interest. Some of the letters have been transcribed. All of the letters were written, prior to 1860, by family members or friends of the Dana family, prior to 1860. The following listing gives some of the main topics which may be of specific interest.

1. April 7, 1787 written from Charleston, S.C. (includes transcription)

writer (Oliver Hunt) sailing as a ship's carpenter on the ship "Union" captained by Wilson Jacobs, loaded with rice and tobacco bound for France, small pox is prevalent.

2. Nov. 1, 1838 written from Southport, Wisconsin Territory

This letter was written by Oscar Dana to his future wife Susan McLean, in Cabot, Vermont. It is a report of his findings regarding his fact finding trip to Wisconsin Territory to investigate the potential there for farming.

It is a very lengthy letter that is filled with a wonderful, detailed description of Southport (now called Kenosha) and its' situation, bounded by Lake Michigan and the prairie. The letter includes a detailed hand drawn map of the settlement at Southport showing a layout of the existing houses identified to the particular families. This map is drawn on the back of an 1838 invitation to the New Year's Ball at the Racine House in Racine, Wisconsin Territory. The letter gives a colorful eye witness account of what the fringe of the western frontier was like in 1838.

3. Dec. 28, 1840 written from Savannah, Ga. (includes transcription)

Refers to the south as the "land of hams, hominy, cotton bags, and negroes, 5,000 blacks in a city of 12,000 people, provides a lengthy description of Savannah and its' composition, writes a lengthy and insightful discussion of the inherent dangers and weaknesses of slavery to the well being of the south, mentions Judge Berrien (1st Atty. Gen. under Jackson admin.), "States Rights" opposition to a national bank.

4. Feb. 27, 1841 written from Savannah, Ga. (includes transcription)

provides his eye witness account of a public sale of 60 negroes and includes the prices realized (sale was to satisfy the insolvency of a recently deceased plantation owner), describes the city and the surrounding areas including plantations and negro huts, the plantation of Gen'l. Hamilton includes about 300 working slaves, tells of widespread shooting of robins for food and the shooting and the accidental killing of an 11 yr. old boy by another 11 yr. old boy, local political climate as it applies to slavery, critical comments about southern lawyers and their theatrical court presentations

5. April 22, 1841 written from Charleston, S.C. (includes transcription)

writes about local effort to establish Charleston as an import location to end dependence on New York for imports, one-half of the 40,000 people are black, talks of the "Union" and "States Rights" parties

6. May 1, 1842 written from Nassau, Bahamas (difficult to read with crossing text) mentions Capt. Williams of the steam barque "Reunion?", describes life on the island, including the business climate, writes about a Creole trial and offers assessment of the Negro troops on the island, who have been organized from slaves and brought by British Cruisers, breakdown of churches and their denominations at Nassau.

7. Jan. 27, 1845 written from Washington, D.C.

writes of resolutions in the House (Representatives) for the annexation of Texas allowing slavery in the territory, "ultra slavery" supporters, using the name of Mr. Polk, oppose the writers anti slavery stand, mentions General Dodge, gives a bit of Dana family genealogical information and family history, letter is signed by Amasa Dana of the House Post Office committee.

8. Dec. 13, 1850 written from San Francisco, Ca. (difficult to read)

This letter contains an interesting story told to the letter writer by a man caring for a 7 mo. Old infant. The man had been hired to care for the critically ill parents of the child. The father died first. The mother, on her death bed, solicited the care giver to ensure the safe transfer of the infant to friends in Oregon Territory. A shipboard offer of \$1,000 for the infant was refused by the caregiver, faithful to his mission. He was now traveling to Oregon to deliver the infant to two of her uncles.

9. Nov. 5, 1854 written from Kenosha, Wisconsin John Dana as a boy

As a young boy, John W. Dana wrote this letter to his mother and mentions that “Frederick Douglas the negro made a great speech at the Baptist Church”, tells of his father’s repair of a picture of “a dead child laying in the waters’ and placed the picture on a black velvet background, also tells a humorous story about helping his father to drive a stray pig out of the yard.