

Collection #
SC 2562

**EVELINA M. LEONARD
LETTERS, 1815–1818**

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Processed by
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 items

COLLECTION DATES: 1815, 1818

PROVENANCE: Tom Butler, Fort Wayne, IN, 6 May 1996

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: SC 2639 Samuel Mudford

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1996.0420

NOTE: Although technically this collection should be named for Louisa Bourne as the theoretical source of provenance, she has no connection with Indiana, and the collection has been named instead for the writer, Evelina M. Leonard.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Evelina M. Leonard (d. 1833) was born in Middleboro, Massachusetts, the daughter of David Augustus and Mary (Pierce) Leonard. She and her sister Helen attended a seminary, and were both noted for their ability to read Latin. By 1818 the family had moved to Indiana, to Northampton in Harrison County, a town founded in 1815 and "noted in fifteen years of existence for its drinking, gambling, horse racing and fighting." The family soon moved to Corydon, and there Evelina met, and married in 1821, John Hay Farnham (1791-1833).

Farnham, born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, graduated from Harvard in 1811 and moved, first to Frankfort, Kentucky, in 1818, and then by 1819 to Jeffersonville, Indiana, where he practiced law. During sessions of the General Assembly he lived in Corydon, and served as clerk of the Senate from 1822 to 1833.

The Farnhams moved to Salem in 1824, and became part of a coterie of political leaders of whom the best known was Benjamin Parke. In 1826 Farnham made a quinquagenary (fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence) speech urging that Indiana fulfill its constitutional obligation to set up a public school system. For a time he was ostracized for having advocated such a waste of taxpayers' money. He was a principal founder of the Indiana Historical Society. Calvin Fletcher found an address of Farnham's before a "moote legislature" to be "worthy of imitation." In 1833 Farnham and his wife and two of their four children died in a cholera epidemic. His eulogy was read by Samuel Merrill, who spent most of his address apologizing for his subject's lack of tact.

Sources: Materials in collection

Indiana's Birthplace--A History of Harrison County, p. 70

The Diary of Calvin Fletcher, I 192; II 55, 56n

Ruegamer, *A History of Indiana Historical Society 1830-1990*, p. 13-20, 40-42

Indiana Magazine of History, XX (1924) 154-159, 397; LIII (1953) 260

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains two items, letters written in 1815 and 1818 by Evelina M. Leonard to her cousin Louisa Bourne in Massachusetts.

The 1815 letter, written from Bristol [Rhode Island?], refers to a recent visit by Louisa and describes the "delightful prospects, refreshing sails, beautiful gardens &c" of the town in summer.

The 1818 letter, written from Northampton, Harrison County, Indiana, describes the "wild state" of the country, but also the fertility of the land and the easy transport of goods to market. Evelina's father is looking for a "plantation." She deplores being surrounded by "indolent, intemperate, uncouth people...satisfied to dwell in a habitation inferior to most of the N. England barns." However, "genteel people from all parts of the United States are constantly removing" thither. "Every lady must be provided with a good pacer and saddle, if destitute even of necessaries," and a good pacing horse is an essential part of a girl's dowry.