

Van Fleet Family Papers, 1862-1982



Van Fleet family farm in Readington, NJ, ca. 1883

Overview of the Collection

- Title:** Van Fleet Family Papers, 1862-1982
- Creator:** Van Fleet family members
- Accession:** PPL-MSS-2011-006
- Size:** 3 linear feet of records, comprised of:
One (1) legal-size document box
Two (2) flat boxes
- Repository:** Plainfield Public Library, Local History Department, 800 Park Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060
- Abstract:** The Van Fleet Family Papers document the history of the family from 1862 to 1982, with bulk dates of 1923 to 1969. Most of the collection consists of black and white and color photographs, and also includes correspondence, personal writings, family histories, a Bible, and other papers. The majority of the photographs are loose, but were once contained in scrapbooks or photo albums. There is a family tree, as well as several newspaper clippings of family member obituaries and marriage announcements, which were used to verify the biographical information in this finding aid.
- Language:** The records are in English.

Biographical Information



Clarence E. Van Fleet (January 31, 1878 to November 3, 1964)

Clarence Van Fleet was a native of Readington, and born to John E. (d. October 22, 1933) and Sarah Van Fleet, who were farmers in that town. Clarence later moved to and lived in Plainfield with his family for about 45 years. He resided at 906 West Eighth Street. He was a carpenter and builder, who had worked at Mack Motors, Inc. during WWII, retiring from there in 1948. He was a member of First Park Baptist Church and Senior Citizens Club. He joined the Old Guard of

Plainfield in 1951 and was chairman of its club room committee for many years. He died in Muhlenberg Hospital, where he had been a patient for a week or so prior to his death; he had

been ill for two months. He was buried at Readington Reformed Church Cemetery in Readington, NJ, next to his wife.

The Van Fleet family resided in Elizabeth, NJ on Sayer Street when the girls were little (2 and 3 years old). The family later moved to Plainfield, and resided at 117 Elmwood Place prior to (and including) 1926, and then moved to 906 West Eighth Street from 1927 until their deaths. They visited his parents' farm in Readington, which is documented in many photographs.

Clarence Van Fleet with daughters, Ethel and Evelyn, 1918



Alice Pearl Mallery Van Fleet (September 3, 1881 to June 4, 1959)

Alice was born in Hancock, NY, and lived in Plainfield, NJ for 32 years. She was a member of First Park Baptist Church, where she was a former deaconess. She married Clarence E. Van Fleet on June 27, 1907 in Elizabeth, NJ. Alice graduated from Hancock, NY Teacher Training Academy, and was a grammar school teacher in Fanwood, NJ. She and Clarence had two daughters: Ethel and Gladys. The family resided in Elizabeth for several years. Upon her passing, Alice was survived by her husband, daughters, and granddaughter. She had two nephews, Frank and George Scully. She died in Muhlenberg Hospital following a short illness, and was buried at Readington Reformed Church Cemetery in Readington, NJ.

Alice Pearl with prize sunflowers, 1924



Ethel Van Fleet Banghart (April 21, 1908 to November 1986)

Ethel grew up in Plainfield, NJ and graduated from Plainfield High School in 1926, where she was a member of the Glee Club for one year. She went on to attend the Montclair Normal School in 1927. She married Claude Banghart (b. June 08, 1909, d. June 1971) of South Plainfield. Ethel resided at the family home on West 8th street for most of her pre-married life, with the exception of one year in 1926, during which the Plainfield city directory lists her home residence at the YWCA. Ethel worked at several jobs, according to the Plainfield city directories: a stenographer in 1949, as a secretary for NJ Bell Telephone in 1962, as a patent secretary for Bell Labs in 1972, and was retired by 1982. She still resided at the family home on West 8th at the time of her death.

She and Claude had one daughter, Barbara Ann, born on January 28, 1938 and died on July 11, 1998. Barbara worked as a security guard at Bell Labs, and resided at the family home on West 8th.

Ethel on porch of Elmwood Place house in Plainfield, 1925

Gladys Evelyn Van Fleet Doolittle (November 17, 1909 to August 28, 1988)



Gladys Evelyn was born in Elizabeth, NJ and went by the name of Evelyn. She graduated with the Plainfield High School class of 1927. While at PHS, she was a member of the Student Patrol (part of the Student Council), Musical Comedy Club, Gym Pageant, Christmas Decorations Committee, and Girls Graduation Chorus. Scoring quite well in her entrance exams, she went on to attend the Montclair State Normal School in 1928, and graduated in May 1930.

She married Lewis Jefferson Doolittle of Port Chester, NY, in December 1929. Lew was born March 31, 1904 and died in 1971. He was employed as a trainman, according to the 1931 and 1933 Plainfield city directories, and there is a photograph of him in uniform. The couple moved out of Plainfield around 1934. They had one son, Richard Lewis Doolittle, on February 28, 1935, but whose date of

death is unknown; it appears he may have died during his birth. Evelyn received a certificate for her service to the country from President Truman for her volunteer work with the Office of Price Administration. She was a public school teacher in Bound Brook from 1929 to 1935, while the couple resided at the family home on West 8th. They did occupy a home on 28 Sandford Avenue for a short time (ca 1931). She passed away in 1988 in Norwich, NY.

Evelyn on porch of Elmwood Place house in Plainfield, 1925



Sisters Ethel and Evelyn, 1913

Other related surnames noted in the collection:

Rice
Scully
Laubach
Van Nest
Conover
Mallery

Scope and Contents

The Van Fleet Family Papers include a variety of record types and span from 1862 to 1982, with bulk dates of 1923 to 1969. The collection is composed mostly of photographs – in and out of albums, and one scrapbook. There are also correspondence, personal notes, newspaper clippings, family births and deaths notes, a family tree, a yearbook, and a family Bible.

Arrangement

The Van Fleet Family Papers are arranged into four series:

Series 1: Photographs

Series 2: John Van Fleet's Personal Papers

Series 3: Gladys Evelyn Van Fleet Doolittle's Personal Papers

Series 4: Plainfield Public Library Vertical File

Index Terms

People:

Banghart family

Conover family

Doolittle family

Laubach family

Mallery family

Rice family

Scully family

Van Fleet family

Van Nest family

Organizations:

The Normal School (Montclair, NJ)--History

Places:

Elizabeth (N.J.)

Plainfield (N.J.)

Readington (N.J.)

The Pine Barrens (N.J.)

Whitehouse (N.J.)

Subjects:

Plainfield (N.J.)--Local History

Related Items

[G638](#) - Photograph of residence on West 8th Street

[Plainfield High School Yearbook, 1926](#) PR 373 PLA 1926

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

This collection consists of paper documents that do not require any additional technology for access.

Series Description

Series 1: Photographs [1917-1969, undated]



Series Description

Series 1 contains Van Fleet family photographs. Most are black and white, but there are several color prints taken in later years. This is by far the largest series in the collection. Many of the images were identified and dated, in hand-written notes, by Evelyn or other family members. No photos were removed from the albums; those that appear to be missing or torn from album pages came to the library in that manner. Postcards, many created by Clarence Van Fleet from his photographs and sent to his wife, Pearl, are also housed with this series.

There are four photo groups:

Small photo album, 1913, 1917--1925 [bulk dates 1923-1925]

Large photo album, 1912, 1926-1945

Loose photos, 1877, 1905-1906, 1935--1982 [bulk dates 1935-1969]

Anniversary scrapbook, 1911--1957 [bulk dates 1952-1927]

Arrangement

Series 1 is arranged according to original provenance. Photo scrapbooks and albums were left intact whenever possible. Loose photos were re-housed into archival sleeves. This series fills two boxes.

Series 2: Clarence Van Fleet's Personal Papers [1866-1902, undated]



Series Description

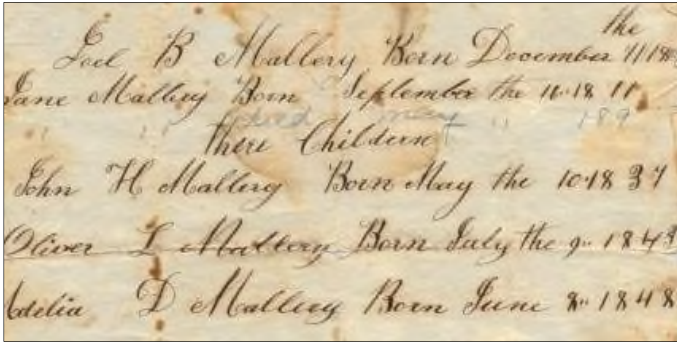
Series 2 contains the personal papers belonging originally to Clarence Van Fleet (Evelyn's father). This small series includes correspondence, poems and writings, annual grocer lists and financials, a record of births and deaths of the Steven's family, and a bank note. Some of the papers are likely to have been created by John Van Fleet, Clarence's father and Evelyn's grandfather, including Civil War letters. The postcards created from his photographs are housed with Series 1. All papers are handwritten, except the bank form.

Clarence Van Fleet, postcard to Pearl, 1906

Arrangement

Series 2 is arranged chronologically by subject, and is contained in one box.

Series 3: Gladys Evelyn Van Fleet Doolittle's Personal Papers [1927-1977, undated]



Series Description

Series 3 contains the papers belonging to Gladys Evelyn Van Fleet. This series includes correspondence, papers relating to her attendance at Montclair's Normal School, a 1927 PHS yearbook (a photocopy of her sister Ethel's 1926 year book page included here), newspaper clippings of family obituaries and marriage announcements, prayer cards, her

Bible with nested papers, which have been removed but their placement marked within the Bible. There is also an oversized, hand-written family tree (undated). Most of the papers are hand-written.

Arrangement

Series 3 is predominantly arranged chronologically by subject or author, and is contained in two boxes.

Mallery family record of births and deaths, from back of Evelyn's Bible, undated

Series 4: Vertical File [2009]

Series Description

Series 4 contains the Plainfield Public Library vertical file from 2009 (created and used in writing the family biographies). A photocopy of the family tree is included with this folder for easier handling.

Arrangement

Series 4 is contained in one folder.

Administrative Information

Access & Restrictions

The Van Fleet Family Papers are available for research.

Access is restricted to materials prepared by the Local History department staff. All materials must be viewed in the Plainfield Room and may not be removed to another area of the library without permission of the Library Director or designee. Materials must be handled carefully and kept in order. Materials must not be leaned upon, altered, folded, ripped, or traced upon. Marks may not be added or erased from materials. Materials must be returned directly to Local History department staff and inspected before the researcher leaves the Plainfield Room.

One photocopy may be made (by Plainfield Public Library staff) of each document for the purpose of research; official Local History departmental reproduction fees may apply. Permission to publish must be obtained by the Plainfield Public Library Board of Trustees as delegated to the Library Director. Permission to publish does not constitute a copyright clearance. The researcher is

responsible for further copyright restrictions. The Plainfield Public Library is not responsible for the misuse of copyrighted material.

Preferred Citation

Identification of item; Date (if noted); "Van Fleet Family Papers", Box and Folder Number, Local History Department, Plainfield Public Library, Plainfield, New Jersey.

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in February 2007 by Mr. Dennis Sands, on behalf of his Aunt Evelyn (Gladys Evelyn Van Fleet Doolittle).

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Sarah Hull in February 2009. The finding aid was written by Sarah Hull in February 2009 and updated by Sally Weiner in September 2024. Finding aid content follows the guidelines suggested by *Describing Archives: A Content Standard*.

The processing of this collection was made possible through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission.

Collection Inventory

Box	Folder	Title/Description	Date(s)
1	1	Evelyn's yearbook	1927
	2	Evelyn's bible - papers	undated
	3	Evelyn's bible - book cover	undated
	4	Evelyn's bible - Mallery family deaths	undated
	5	Evelyn's bible	undated
	6	Evelyn's papers - Normal School	1927, 1977, undated
	7	John Van Fleet papers	1866, 1876
	8	John Van Fleet papers	1871-1902, undated
	9	Unidentified papers	undated
	10	Postcards	1908, 1913, 1955, undated
	11	Obituaries, memorials, and ephemera	1959-1964
	12	Family tree (copy)*	undated
	13	Vertical file and clippings	1902-2009
	14	Empty photo mats and loose notes	undated
	15	John Van Fleet papers, Civil War letters	1862-1865
	16	Evelyn's papers, vital records	1909-1942
	17	Invitation and greeting cards	1894, 1954, undated
	18	Creative work (drawings, songs)	undated
	19	Ephemera	1927-1983 (with gaps)
	20	Clippings	1952, undated
2	1	Anniversary scrapbook pages	1911-1915, 1952-1957
	2	Small photo album	1919-1925
	3	Large photo album	1912, 1926-1945

	4	Loose photos	1877, 1905-1906, 1935-1982
3	1	Loose photos	1918-1967
	2	Loose photos	1909-1929
	3	Loose photos	1925, undated
	4	Loose photos	1927, undated
	5	Small photo booklet	undated
		Matted photo, Middlesex Boro Teachers	1932-1933
		Evelyn's wedding invitation	June 23, 1930
		Evelyn's wedding photo	June 23, 1930
		Empty gold frame	

**Original family tree housed in Plainfield Families Collection Box 3*