

ROBERT DUDLEY FULLONTON

AND HIS MOTHER

MRS. EVELYN FULLONTON

ARTISTS OF

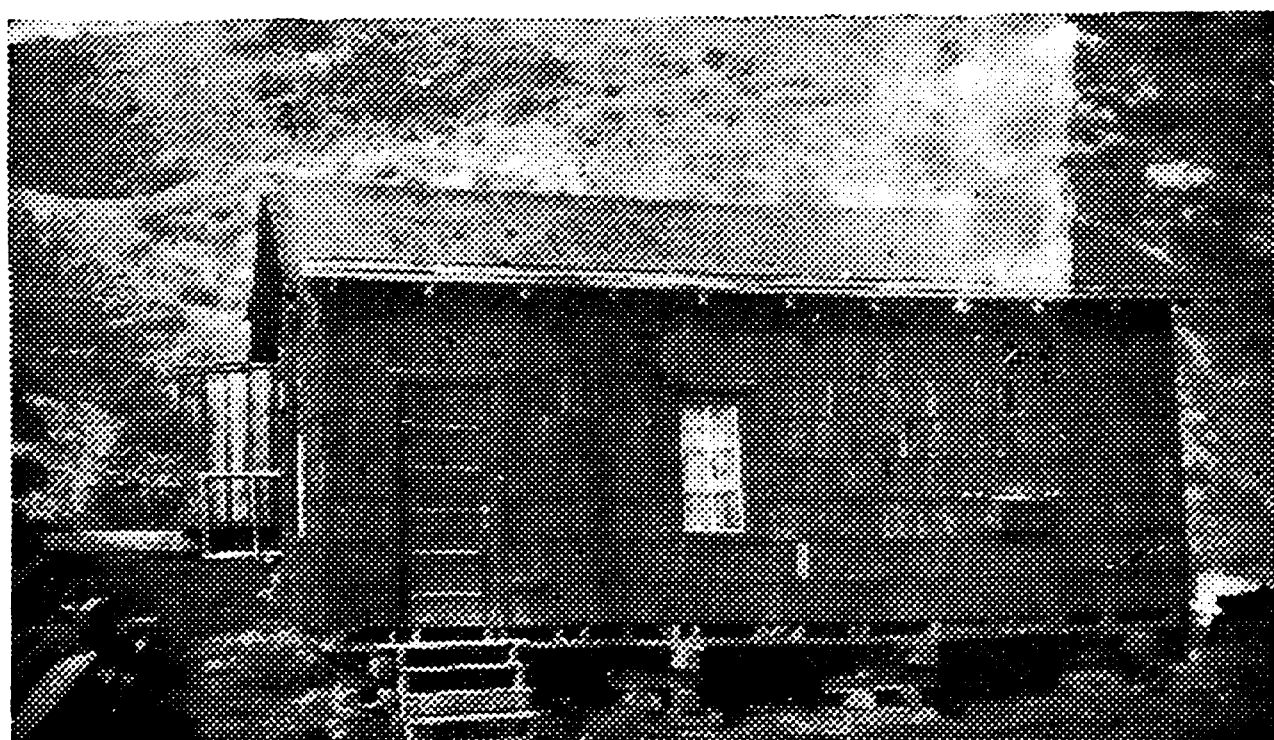
Paris, France and Laguna Beach, California

**A GENEALOGY AND BRIEF
LIFE STORY OF TWO ARTISTS
OF DISTINCTION, FOR WHOM
THE PRACTICAL WORK-A-DAY
WORLD WAS TOO MUCH. BOTH
LIVED THE ART LIFE FAITH-
FULLY AND DIED DESTITUTE.**

**By DR. SPENCER MILLER
Laguna Beach,
California.**



The late
ROBERT D. FULLONTON
[1876-1933]
and his
STUDIO HOME
in Laguna Beach, California



*Inserted in US 11856.5.5 at the
request of the author.*

ROBERT D. FULLONTON, Artist and Scholar

A GENEALOGY

The recent sale of paintings supplied a late chapter in the life story of Robert Dudley Fullonton, who died destitute in Orange County Hospital, October 15, 1933. He left no will; told no one of his relatives and quietly passed away, a unique character of extraordinary abilities, magnificently educated, but with all the attributes of the stern New Englander ready to sacrifice comforts to satisfy conscience. He rebelled at the conventions and hypocracies of life—"would rather starve and lead the art-life than prosper and be bound by hours and conventions."

Fine paintings of Robert Fullonton have been sold and are scattered over the country. A few of his finest pictures remain which must be sold to provide funds for satisfying claims against the estate.

The ancestry of so talented a gentleman can not fail to be of interest. His own uncle, the Rev. Joseph Fullonton of Raymond, N. H., was not only the historian of his town but also the genealogist of the Fullonton family.

ANCESTRY OF

ROBERT DUDLEY FULLONTON

Born August 11, 1876.

Died October 15, 1933.

The Fullonton family history in America begins with John Fullonton from England, and wife Deliverance. They raised a large family in Epping then a part of Exeter, N. H. (Fullonton's History of Raymond, N. H.)

SECOND GENERATION

Capt. John Fullonton, son of John and Deliverance, born 1730 in Epping, settled in Raymond soon after 1760, and died June 14, 1817; a Revolutionary soldier in 1776. Married (3d wife) Rachel French of Hampton, N. H., about 1772. Noted for excellent penmanship, which had "neatness and mechanical finish."

THIRD GENERATION

Dea. Jeremiah Fullonton, son of Capt. John and Rachel, born December 27, 1775, married Hannah

Dudley, daughter of Joseph Dudley, 1804, and direct descendant of Governor Thomas Dudley of Mass. Bay Colony. Inherited the homestead in Raymond N. H. Weighed 300 lbs. Deacon in Free Baptist Church. Died July 12, 1848.

ROBERT FULLONTON'S GRANDFATHER

Rev. John Fullonton, son of Jeremiah and Hannah, born in Raymond, N. H., Aug. 3, 1812. Married Elizabeth Moody Elliott, da. of Ephriam and Mehitabel Haselton in the Peaslee Garrison House at East Haverhill, Mass., June 1, 1841. She was born 1811. He graduated from Dartmouth College A. B. 1840, A. M. 1843, D. D. 1862; Prof. Pastoral Theology, Baptist Theological Seminary, Whitestone, N. Y., 1850-'54; Prof. Biblical Institute, New Hampton, N. H., 1854-'71; Prof. Eccl. History and Pastoral Theology, Bates College, Lewiston, Me., 1871-'94. Died April 17, 1896, Lewiston, Me. His only children were John Elliott (b. 1844) and Ida Haselton, born Jan. 14, 1847, Whitestone, N. Y., a music teacher and authoress at Lewiston, Me. She died May 21, 1926, leaving \$500 to her nephew Robert and the balance of her estate, inherited from Rev. John Fullonton, her father, to Bates College. The Rev. John was the brother of the Rev. Joseph Fullonton, historian of Raymond, N. H.

ROBERT FULLONTON'S SOLDIER-FATHER

Lt. John Elliott Fullonton, only son of Rev. John and Elizabeth, born 1844 in Clinton, N. Y. Enlisted at the age of 18 in 1862 in Federal Army, serving to close of Civil War; a commissioned officer on staff of Gen'l. Marston. He died 1886. About 1875 he married Etta, daughter of Joseph and Annie Whitloe Moonan. Etta was born in St. Georges, Beauce Co., P. Q., Canada, August 11, 1853, seven months after her father was frozen to death Jan. 1, 1853. Her father was born in Ireland 1824; her mother was born in England

about 1828, daughter of Joseph Whitloe, a ship builder of Quebec and who was drowned in the River St. Lawrence.

ROBERT DUDLEY FULLONTON

Born in Washington, D. C.

August 11, 1876

Died October 15, 1933

Resident of Laguna Beach

Robert Dudley Fullonton had full right to claim a royal pedigree from King David I of Scotland (reigning from 1124 to 1153) through his son, Henry, prince of Scotland and earl of Huntingdon; down 18 generations to

Gov. Thomas Dudley of Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1630, m. Dorothy Yorke and had

19 Rev. Samuel Dudley of Exeter, N. Y., m. Mary da. of Gov. John Winthrop and had

20 Stephen Dudley, who had a son

21 Lieut. James Dudley, who had a son

22 Joseph Dudley of Raymond, N. H., whose daughter

23 Hannah Dudley married Deacon Jeremiah Fullonton. Their son was

24 Rev. John Fullonton of Lewiston, Me., m. Elizabeth Elliott and had

25 Lieut. John Elliott Fullonton, who married Etta (Evelyn) Moonan (Mooney) whose only son was

26 Robert Dudley Fullonton.

(Page 193 David Starr Jordan's "Your Family Tree" innumerate the first 18 generations.)

Mrs. Gladys Thatcher when informed of Robert Fullonton's death wrote "he was a life-long friend of mine * * * He frequently visited us in our home here in La Crescenta valley * * * I feel that you friends in Laguna knew the Fullontons only as they appeared when they went there to live. Even then Mrs. Fullonton was a nervous and physical wreck and a very embittered, unbalanced woman.

"When I first met them some twenty-five years ago at Matilija Hot Springs in Ojai Valley she was a beautiful woman (about 55 years old) one of the most cultured interesting personalities I have ever known. Robert (then 32) was a charming young man,

versatile to an almost uncanny degree. I remember that when my sister was unable to play a certain Chopin etude from memory, he, then and there wrote a perfect manuscript of it on wrapping paper—and he did not play! One of his favorite pastimes was the perusal of an encyclopedia playing with words for hours at a time. * * * His mother exhibited in the great salons of London and Paris * * * Two fortunes have passed through their hands. It is such a great pity that so great a mind as his was often intellectual at the expense of being intelligent. So many opportunities came his way only to be put off until the inspiration seized him and the last moment found unfinished work. But he was so kind, so truly a gentleman always.

"We have four of his lovely pictures, three I bought, one was his wedding gift to us. I often arranged for a little exhibition in our home for our friends, so I know several who have his pictures. * * * There were seven trips abroad. He had some work in Oxford—postgraduate, I suppose. He always said "he would rather starve and lead the 'art-life' than prosper and be bound by hours and conventions" * * * so for years their lives were a cycle of poverty which a picture slowly matured, finally a sale at a nice price, then every luxury while the money lasted—and over again.

"These are only little impressions, the great impression was this—

"It was a privilege to know them and from the friendly association as a young girl onward through my life, I received from him a far broader outlook and a taste for the finer essentials of life. And although we will miss seeing him from time to time, it seems selfish to regret his passing from a rather lonely, harrassed life to a new beginning to which I believe he goes beautifully gifted and prepared."

The photo-engraving on next page was made from a photograph of a full-length portrait of Mrs. Evelyn Fullonton, painted in Paris in 1887 by L. Raven-Hill. In 1887



MRS. EVELYN FULLONTON (At age of 34)
Portrait 1887

she was 34, a widow, and Robert was 11 years old. She had studied art in Paris for three years.

The ancestry of this extraordinarily talented woman reveals, and perhaps explains much of her character and characteristics. Her grandfather was Joseph Whitloe, who, with a daughter, Annie, came from England and settled in Quebec, Canada, about 1830. Joseph Whitloe was a ship builder and he was drowned in the St. Lawrence river below Quebec, after which his daughter, Annie Whitloe, was adopted by a Mrs. Harbatt in St. Georges, 60 miles southeast of the city of Quebec. Annie was educated in an Ursuline convent and could speak French better than English; her mother was said to have been French. Annie Whitloe married Joseph Moonan in 1849, a farmer of St. Georges, who had come over from Ireland as a young boy the son of Mathieu and Mary (McRonna) Moonan both from Ireland. This union resulted in the birth of Matthew, born May 10, 1850. The transcript from the register of baptisms reads thus:

"The 10th of May, 1850, I, the priest and pastor, baptized Mathieu, born the same day, from the legitimate marriage of Joseph Moonan, farmer, and Ann Whitloe of this parish. . . . The father absent. (Signed) Marie Paquet and Antoine Campeaus, Priest."

The name Moonan has been changed to Mooney and Matthew Mooney, brother of Mrs. Fullonton, is now 85 years old and lives in St. Georges, P. Q.

The next transcription records the tragic death of Mrs. Evelyn Fullonton's father, and reads as follows:

"The fourth of January, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-three, I, the undersigned priest and pastor, buried in the cemetery of this parish the body of Joseph Moonan, husband of Ann Whitloe, formerly farmer, aged twenty-nine years old and four months, died of cold in woods, the first of January. (Signed) Ant. Campeau, Priest."

Seven months later Mrs. Fullonton's baptism appears on the reg-

ister as follows:

"The thirteenth of August, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-three, I, the undersigned priest and pastor, baptized Brigitte (Etta) born the eve, from the legitimate marriage of Joseph Moonan, farmer and of Ann Whitloe of this parish. Godfather; Mathieu Moonan."

Imagine the mental agony of the mother whose father had drowned and whose husband was frozen to death seven months before Etta was born!

Mrs. Fullonton was baptized as "Brigitte," which was shortened to Etta, which latter name was retained until 1902, a year after her second husband, Mr. Watts, died.

After the tragic death of her husband, Joseph Moonan, Ann Whitloe removed to Lewiston, Maine, where Etta Mooney was brought up and educated. Mrs. Sally, widow of the Baptist pastor of Lewiston, wrote recently as follows:

"I knew (Etta Mooney) Robert's mother when she was a girl in school, a pretty, bright, attractive girl to me."

At the age of 21 or 22, Etta Mooney married Lieut. John Elliott Fullonton, U. S. A., the only son of the Rev. John Fullonton of Lewiston, Maine. The lieutenant was then only 31 years old. He entered the Civil war at the age of 18 in 1862 and served until the close of the war as a commissioned officer on the staff of General Marston. He was honorably discharged and died in 1886, when Robert was 10 years old. Lieutenant John had only one sister, Miss Ida Hazelton Fullonton, born in 1847, who inherited the Fullonton estate when the Rev. John Fullonton died in 1896.

The Lieutenant Fullonton and his wife, Etta, were living in Washington, D. C., where he was a clerk in the war department, all of which is proven by the register of the birth of Robert Dudley Fullonton in Washington, August 11, 1876.

It was in Washington that Mrs. Fullonton made an excellent picture of her negro nurse that aroused a tremendous interest in

her native talent. We know that Etta was in Paris in 1884, two years before her husband died. No record of any divorce has been found and it is confidently believed that friends and relatives financed the schooling of Mrs. Fullonton in the art schools of Paris and her son, Robert, in the French schools, where he became most proficient in the French language. Mrs. Fullonton's most intimate friend declares that the Fullontons remained in Paris for seven consecutive years beginning in 1884, her husband dying during her absence.

That Mrs. Fullonton was successful in her studies in the art studios of Paris is evidenced by the fact that at least one of her pictures was hung in the Paris salon. Innumerable letters were found in the Laguna studio, where she and her son had lived before they were claimed by death, prove her to have been very popular among the distinguished artists of her day.

In 1891 she returned from Paris to Lewiston, Maine, because of the death of her mother, after which she went back to Canada and hired a studio in the town of Coaticook, where she organized a painting class, and among her pupils was Miss Louise Draper of Coaticook, who is the writer's informant.

Later on Mrs. Fullonton moved to Sherbrooke, not far distant, and there in her studio she painted a portrait of Martin H. Watts, who fell in love with her and later on they were married in the Isle of Jersey, England. They both returned and occupied a home in Grosevenor avenue, Montreal, Quebec. Mr. Watts was the secretary of the Montreal street railway system until he died in the Royal Victoria hospital May 1, 1901, leaving an estate valued at about \$15,000. When the estate was settled, she and Robert made their third trip to Europe, intending to spend the winter in Rome, but they found the weather so cold that they returned to America and settled in Boston.

Robert Dudley Fullonton's early education was in Paris schools, notably the Lycee St. Louis, and

it is not at all surprising that Robert should have thoroughly mastered the French language.

In 1905 he entered the class of 1909 at Harvard university, majoring in languages and philosophy. A letter from his Aunt Ida, May 29, 1905, reads in part as follows:

"I was so glad to see you and to find that you had grown to such a fine looking and sensible young man as you seem to be. I can but hope that you will continue to grow in grace and wisdom."

The records of Harvard college show that he was obliged to withdraw from college in December, 1906, because of incipient tuberculosis, which fact in a large measure accounts for both mother and son moving to California in 1908, after spending a year in Italy. He gave up civil engineering and devoted himself to landscape painting. We know he lived for a time in San Francisco; also Carmel and Los Angeles, and in 1919 they both came to Laguna Beach.

A Lawyer Friend Upbraids and Praises Mrs. Fullonton

A New York councillor at law wrote Mrs. E. Fullonton-Watts, West Ossippe, N. H., July 16, 1902. (Age 49 in 1902, a widow). The letter follows:

"Dearest Etta:

"Your long, delightful letter of yesterday is received. You are not to think, dear, that I was complaining over your silence. . . . You are beyond question the most brilliantly intellectual and accomplished woman - have ever known. Your personal charms and sweetness need not be told. You know too well my estimate and appreciation of them. But intellectual as you are, you are still a woman and consequently your feminine organization dominates your intellect whenever your woman's nature is involved. No one knows better than you what folly astrology is and that horoscopes, planetary conjunctions, etc., are howling absurdities not to impose on a gaping rustic much less an intellect like yours. The statements of your mind, character, impulses, passions, dispositions, etc., etc., are all based on your features, appearances, manners, speech, etc., not on

any story told of you by the stars! No one having the least observation or power of discernment can see, watch and converse for five minutes with you without perceiving in you the qualities and characteristics so copiously read as from a horoscope by your fortune teller. I cannot imagine your giving credit to anything considering the future that you are told by such people. . . . Do not credit the astrologers.

"I am glad you are about to settle into quietness and rest. You need a great deal. It may be ungallant and all that, but I must say you looked far fresher, younger and better in every way when I saw you before sailing (for Rome) than you appeared on your return. You overdid the whole business, to be plain about it, and honestly, it was a crazy act in one in your state of mind and body to go off four thousand miles away to find health and repose. But it is ended now and through the long winter you can hibernate (so far as one of your ardent nature, physically and active restless mind can do so). You are still young and have a long life yet before you; you are still and always will be a most attractive woman and men are drawn to you by the combination in you (so uncommon in women) of physical charms and mental powers.

Crushing Disappointment

The Fullontons had set great store upon an anticipated inheritance of his grandfather's estate in Lewiston, Maine, thought to be held in trust by his Aunt Ida Fullonton for her lifetime. She died in May, 1926, leaving only \$500 to Robert. The bulk of the estate was left to Bates college to complete an endowment in memory of the late Rev. John Fullonton, called the "Fullonton Professorship Fund for the Teaching of Biblical Literature and Religion."

July 26, 1926, Robert wrote to the president of this college in part as follows: "I have just received notice of the death of my aunt, Ida H. Fullonton, and a copy of her last will and testament. The reading of the will has caused my mother and myself a surprise so

painful that it is difficult to convey an adequate idea of our feelings, as the provisions of the will are so utterly at variance with the earnest assurance repeatedly given in good faith to both my mother and myself by my late aunt and my late grandfather (who died in 1896), Rev. Dr. Fullonton, that I should be named as chief beneficiary in the last will and testament of my late aunt.

"I am the only heir-at-law of my aunt and the last of the Fullontons, and my financial condition, as well as my mother's physical condition, are such that the property and money which I expected from my late aunt's estate, according to her promises, meant everything to me."

Sept. 23, 1926, the president of Bates college wrote: "I have gone into the matter of the validity of the will, . . . and I am convinced that it is entirely valid, and that it represents exactly the long-considered purpose of Miss Fullonton to complete a memorial to her father."

On Oct. 15, 1926, the executor sent a check for \$500. "In full for bequest in your favor."

The correspondence, continued to June 18, 1927, yielded nothing but despair.

In July, 1927, after selling a parcel of real estate, mother and son sailed for Paris, where Mrs. Fullonton, although then 74 years old, thought they could earn a living with their art and live in the atmosphere of Paris, where she had spent so many of the earlier years of her life, long before the World war had utterly changed all of France, especially Paris. It required but a few months to learn that they had made a false move, and they hurried back to Laguna before their dwindling resources had left them stranded abroad.

From that time until her death in Orange county hospital, Feb. 13, 1931, she remained a heavy responsibility and a frightful drag upon Robert's resources, both physical and financial.

Both mother and son are buried in Fairhaven cemetery, Santa Ana, Calif.

FINIS