

1843 Letter Recalls Vanished Custom

Response Influenced History

Among many Dunham letters in our Flint archive is this 150-year-old one, the likes of which would be hard to replicate today. Francis S. Dunham (1812-1856) (8 John 1, John 2, John 3, Ebenezer 4, Ebenezer 5, Jonathan 6, Ralph 7) was writing a formal letter to his prospective father-in-law, Samuel Handy, a hatter of Washington, DC, requesting permission to court & marry his daughter. "Wilmington, Del., Jan. 5, 1843. Samuel W. Handy, Esq. Sir: Requests are usually prefaced with the motives which in-



FRANCIS S. DUNHAM

duced, or an apology for, making them. As regards the one I am about to make, I trust the motive will be sufficiently apparent in the request itself, & my apology for presuming to make it is "that I cannot well help it." Thus much premised, I would respectfully solicit permission to address your daughter, Miss Leah Ann, with a view to a matrimonial alliance. I have obtained her assent in making the above request, & I trust that it will not be considered a breach of hospitality or construed into any want of delicacy on my part that I did it while a guest in your house; inasmuch as I could not assure myself of another opportunity. Should you deem proper to communicate with me on this subject, you will confer an obligation by writing to my address at Berlin. Very respectfully, FRANCIS S. DUNHAM."

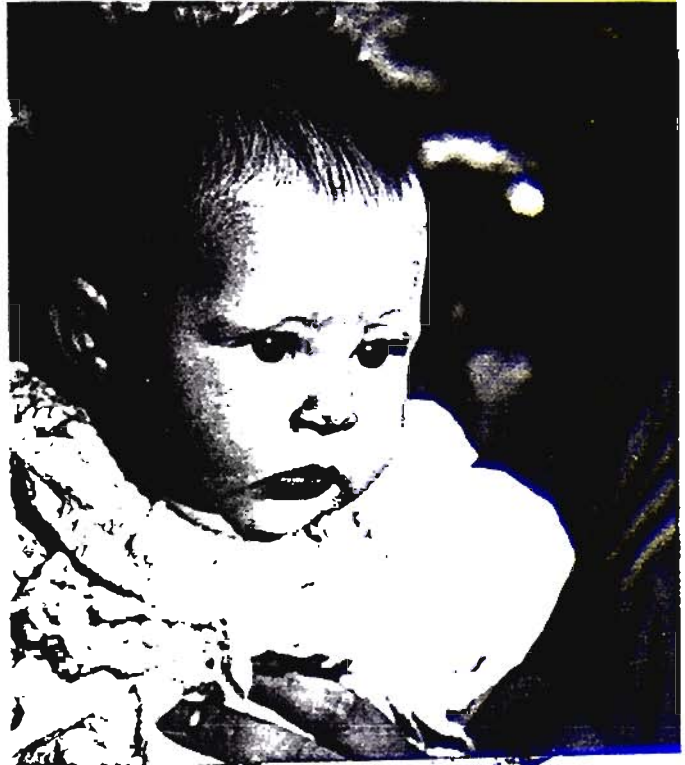
It is interesting to note that Francis had already cleared the matter with his intended. It sounds as if he were admitting to somewhat of a breach of etiquette in having done this, & that it might have seemed deplorably "modern" to Mr. Handy. However, the hatter was not mad, & the courtship did proceed, followed by their marriage that August &, eventually, 4 children, one of whom became Editor Kitson's great grandfather. She hesitates to imagine the resulting historical changes, had Mr. Handy said NO..... No DD, that's certain.

LEAH ANN HANDY

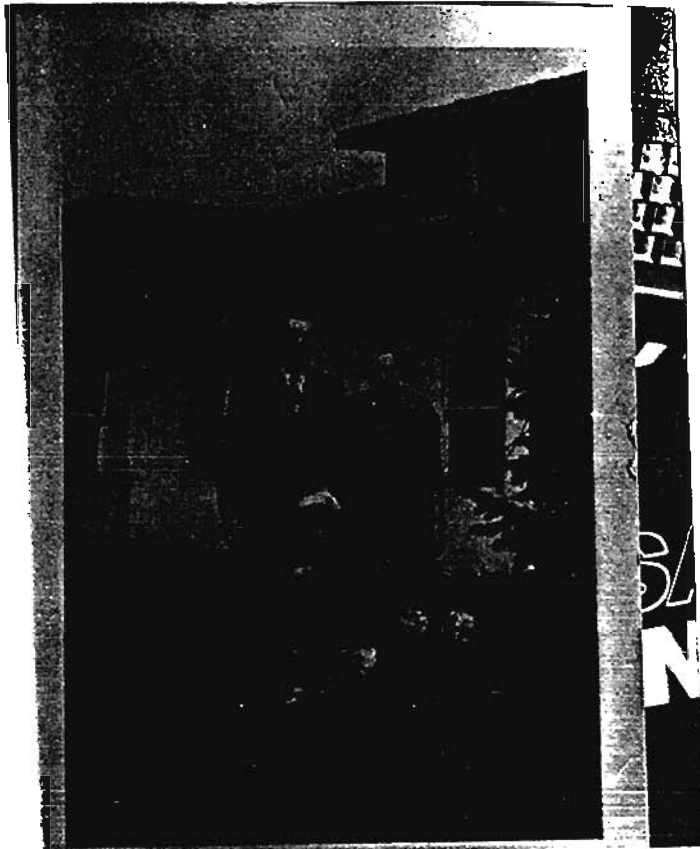
HELEN HOYT, W. Monroe, NY, lent her negatives of the 1993 Dunham Reunion of descendants of Alpheus Dunham (6)(John 1, Joseph 2, Nathaniel 3, Isaac 4, Calvin 5) which is held there each year. Now we have a lot of great new pictures & don't know who any of the people portrayed are. If readers should spot anyone they can identify, they're urged to let us know. It appears that this reunion featured a display of older photographs, & Helen got some shots of those as well. Here's a sampling of both OLD & NEW:



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Daniel's Peter



Henry Dunham



DUNHAM DISPATCH
711 KENSINGTON AVENUE
FLINT, MICHIGAN 48503

HAD MANY FRIENDS.

Removes Woman Office Employee of a Rome Firm.

Rome, March 28.—Miss Alice Margaret Dunham died Wednesday at her home in Stanwix, town of Rome. She had been afflicted with a tumor for a long time, but she did not give up her position as cashier in the store of the Bradt Mercantile Company till about Christmas time. She had held that position, also serving as bookkeeper,



MISS ALICE MARGARET DUNHAM.

(Photo by the Brainerd Co.)

since 1894, and during those years she made a great many friends who deeply regretted to learn of her death. She had been confined to the house only about a week.

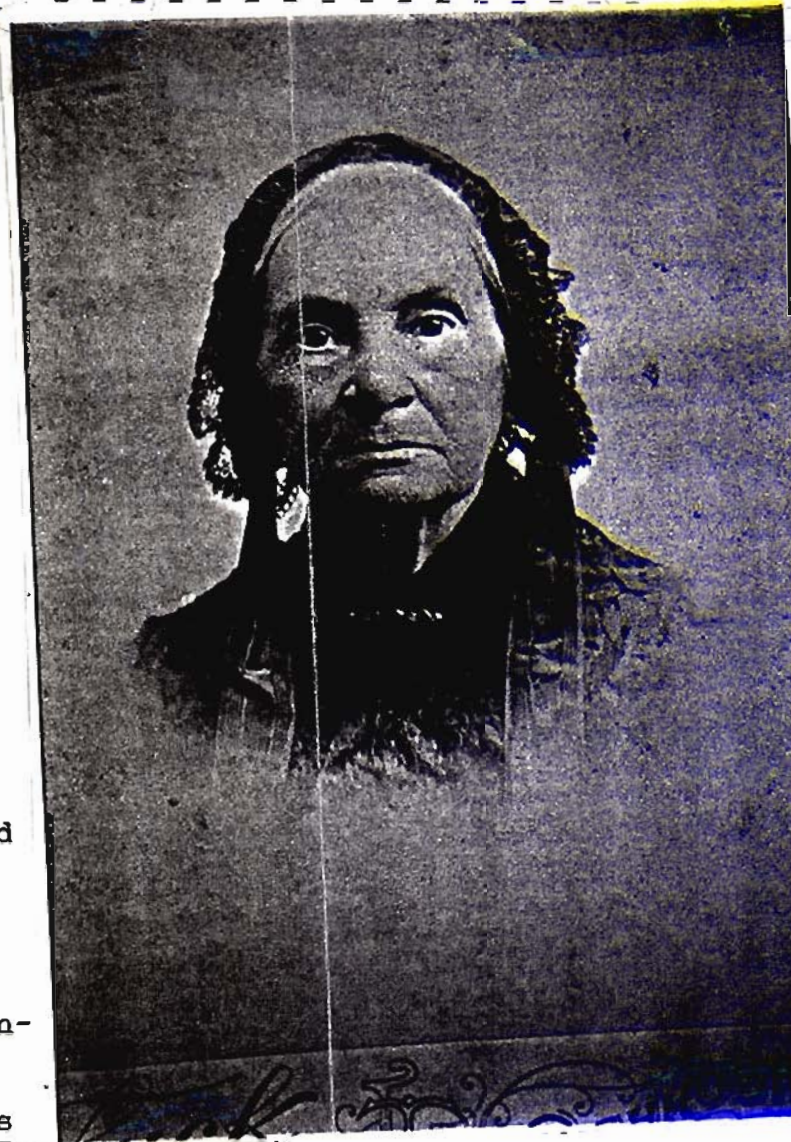
Miss Dunham was a daughter of the late Ezekiel L. and Mary Dunham and was born in the town of Rome, where she had always lived. Before she entered the store she taught school for some time. She was an earnest member of St. Peter's Church, where the funeral will be held at 9:30 Saturday morning.

Miss Dunham is survived by two brothers, J. Dunham, of Eau Claire, Wis., and George H. Dunham, of McCracken, Kansas; also by four sisters, Mrs. O. Walker and Mrs. A. L. James, of Rockford, Ill.; Mrs. Joseph DeVau, of Hudson Falls, N. Y., and Miss Anne, who lives at home.

IN THE SEPTEMBER issue, DD published a photo of an unidentified Dunham couple of Rome, NY who were the parents of Mrs. Elisha (Jane Dunham) Couch, ancestors of Selma Blackmon of Stone Mountain, GA. Selma noted that there was also an Aunt Sara Dunham in this family, & here she is, photographed in Oshkosh, WI. It is not known whether this aunt was Miss Sarah Dunham or Mrs. Sara Dunham. It is difficult to assign a date to this picture, but it seems doubtful that it would pre-date the 1870's because of the prominent (though cut off) display of the photographer's name & address. (Earlier ones added their studio names in a more unobtrusive way, if at all.)

A MYSTERY WHERE THERE SHOULD BE NONE

It ought to be "duck soup" to attach the ancestral line of this lady, Alice Margaret Dunham of Rome, NY, who died March 26, 1913, according to this obituary which comes to DD from Ann Eldred. After all, it lists her parents, Ezekiel & Mary, & a large group of siblings -- so what's the problem? # 1: The article doesn't mention her age. # 2: There are just too many Ezekiels in this branch of the family: at least 4 of them. We'd assume her line would be: John 1, Joseph 2, Nathaniel 3, Isaac 4, Calvin 5, Ezekiel 6, Ezekiel 7. However, his family group sheet shows no daughter Alice M., & Alice's siblings don't match up with the names of that Ezekiel's children.



WHAT HAPPENED?

Among the negatives lent by Helen Hoyt of the 1993 Dunham reunion is this intriguing aerial view of a farm (had to be a Dunham farm!). The scene may be depicting either the flight of an erratic kite or the explosion of the world's largest plastic bag, its contents strewn across the yard. What's the real story? Is it a disaster photo? Or was the camera playing tricks?

GUY B. DUNHAM

From Mrs. Arthur A. Dunham, Gainesville, FL, we have this 1906 obituary for Guy B. Dunham, who was the son of John E. & Eliza (Clark) Dunham, a grandson of Edwin Dunham, & a brother of Wm G. H. Dunham. The clipping is from the MANCHESTER (N.H.) UNION & is dated Saturday, Jan. 27, 1906. "GUY B. DUNHAM, an old resident of Manchester, died late yesterday afternoon at 123 Canal St.** He was over 71 years old. Mr. Dunham was born in Waterbury, VT & had been in Manchester since 1868. He was employed by the Amoskeag Corp. as overseer of the weaving in No. 3 mill. At the time of the Civil War he enlisted in the 2nd Vermont heavy artillery. He afterwards served in the infantry. After the war he returned to his old position in the mill. He was a faithful & industrious man. Mr. Dunham was a member of Uncanoonuc Lodge of the Odd Fellows, Sunset Council, Order of United American Mechanics, & Louis Bell Post of the Grand Army of the Republic. He is survived by a widow; one son, George E. Dunham of Boston; & a brother, Edward Duunham of Morrisville, VT." ** Mrs. Dunham notes that the 1905, '06 & '07 Manchester city directories show him at 123 Carroll Street rather than Canal Street. Does anyone know how these individuals fit into the total Dunham family? If so, your input would be much appreciated.

This tiny little picture is of Mary Cornelia (Neelie) Dunham (1854-1932), daughter of Francis S. & Leah Ann (whose photos appear on page 1). The photo was taken in 1922, & in it she looks about the same as the way her great grand niece remembers her. Aunt Neelie was one of those selfless spinsters who looked after generations of her brothers' descendants & always seemed to enjoy doing it. (Not many of her ilk populate the earth today.) Her only personal enthusiasm appeared to be a passion for the color RED, which she never wore because it clashed with her red hair. Anyway, it would hardly have been considered suitable for a retiring maiden lady. Aunt Nee was a child-size woman, well under 5 foot.

