

Dunham Singletary

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Issue 4

October 15, 2005

Volume 2

President's Message

Dear Cousins,

So many people have been displaced and affected by the two recent hurricanes. I pray that all of you are safe.

Gary and I were in some of that traffic that was televised but we were lucky. We made it to Dallas from Houston (normally a four hour trip) in nine and a half hours and did not run out of gas. We made the trip with my mother (89 years old) whom we convinced to leave her retirement home and go with us. Today we are safe and back home.

Now it's back to business, and we are so happy to be able to say that. Let us hear from you about items that you would like to see in the newsletters.

It's time for each of you to find another Dunham or Singletary out there and ask them to become a part of our growing **Dunham/Singletary Family Connections**. No organization can survive without members. Please help your organization by helping it grow.

Jan Dunham, President

Editor's Corner

Welcome to our fifth Newsletter, especially to all of you who are new members. Normally we should have set an October 1st publication date, but your Editor required the grace of an extra two weeks to return from a memorable trip to Greece, the Greek Isles, Turkey (Istanbul) and France. I'll not elaborate on our trip, except to say how inspiring and pleasurable it was to visit in Greece those sites and places where most of the essential foundation stones of western civilization were laid, by a handful of geniuses, most of whom knew and talked with one another during a period of about 150 years some 2,500 years ago. To them all of us in the west have an enormous debt of cultural gratitude. We are who we are and what we are today because of what they did, thought, and felt so long ago and what they left us in recorded words. A sizeable fragment of that heritage survives and serves as a continual wellspring for us. Obviously we enjoyed our trip. I am indebted to Gratia Mahony, our Associate Editor, for pulling together much of this Newsletter in my absence. That has made it much easier to make our October 15th deadline.

In this second year of our renewed existence, building membership remains our foremost

task. I should like to emphasize how fortunate we are to be trying to compile our Dunham-Singletary genealogies today. The internet gives us enormous advantage. With it we can communicate easily, quickly, and cheaply; we can be an *active* community pursuing a common purpose. Because we can be in touch with one another *as a community*, sharing in near real time information and records that in the past simply could not have been conveyed like this, we can accomplish what few of us in the past ever might have. I cite my own case. As the eldest of three sons, I was the inheritor of my Dad's genealogical records. It was going through those records that kindled my interest in trying to advance, perhaps even complete, the work he had started. What impressed me was *how much effort* he had put in this task, and how hard it had been for him to come by solid, verified information. There were reams of letters and correspondence, records of phone calls, inquiries to courthouses far away whose clerks were not always responsive to his requests for copies of old records that might be in them. There were blind alleys he had explored, only finally to abandon. It took him until three years before his death in fall 1983 to verify the identity and full name of his great grandfather. Whereas today, I think I have traced the roots of our line of the family back to a distant progenitor in England born well before 1600. Dad would have been amazed.

It is useful to reflect upon *what is* our common purpose. It is first to find out all the generic Dunham families (of all spellings) from which any of us bearing that name today descend. Second, in the discovery of them we wish to sort out and develop as fully as possible all the various family trees that originate with the *earliest* progenitors of each of these families. This is of course a huge task, because there are now tens,

perhaps hundreds, of thousands of descendants, living and dead, who make up the related corpus of each of these families. Still, it is a finite task. However numerous, the class of all Dunhams is a limited number of people and it is possible, at least theoretically, to discover and list each one. That is an ideal of knowledge that we can set as a grand goal, even though we may not, and probably will not, ever achieve it. Third, when we say "the earliest" progenitors, to whom do we refer? We certainly do not mean the postulated African "Eve" from whom the anthropologists believe all humankind descends. The individuals to whom we refer are the earliest Dunhams with respect to whom any kind of records or references can be found. Mankind has not been leaving records all that long, so there are, in each Dunham family line, individuals with whom, or at whom, all trace of records cease. Beyond them is simply the dim, unilluminated past. If we find these individuals, we have come practically to "the earliest individuals." This boundary adds further finiteness to our task.

These considerations, then, define the practical boundaries of our common purpose. It is still a very large one, no doubt sufficient to keep our association occupied for a great many more years. In defining these boundaries, however, we are recognizing and projecting an ambition that is a practical, even though large, goal for a whole community of people, working together as a related, in touch community. Such an ambition would have been virtually impossible for a single individual in the past—say, my Dad—to contemplate. The more we enlarge our community of Dunhams engaged in this task, the greater and more timely will be our achievement. For practical purposes, we shall have come very close to success when any per-

son whose name is Dunham can give us a slight bit of personal history and we can readily place him or her in the correct generic Dunham family and tell him or her who his or her forbearers were with confidence.

This Issue

This issue features two articles plus a short account of an earlier newsletter, *Dunham Dispatch*, that was compiled and published by Phyllis S. Kitson until 1999. Coincidentally, Sam Dunham relied on past articles from *Dunham Dispatch* to identify the parentage of Robert Holmes Dunham and his siblings in his article for this issue, described below.

Gratia Dunham Mahony has written an article which expands our knowledge of one line of the descendants of Jonathan ² Dunham. The outline of all the descendants of Jonathan ² Dunham appeared in the Supplement to the July 15, 2005 Newsletter which was Issue 3, Volume 2 Supplement. In this issue Gratia offers her theory about the eight sons of Daniel ⁵ Dunham. This is new material which has never before been published, and is the result of many hours of research on her part.

The second article features the intriguing story of Robert Holmes Dunham, a young man who came to frontier Texas in 1835 with his family from Tennessee and volunteered a few years later for service in a Texas militia that ended up launching the most disastrous military adventures in Texas history. Young Dunham drew a black bean in the famous Mexican death lottery. Just a few years before that incident, his older brother, Daniel T. Dunham, served in Sam Houston's army that won Texas Independence at the Battle of San Jacinto. Thus it is seen that a Dunham family was involved in key roles in founding both the states of Tennessee and Texas.

The Dunhams of Washington County, New York

by Gratia Dunham Mahony

Researchers studying the Dunham families in Washington County, New York during the period 1760 to about 1860 have discovered several separate Dunham lines living there. I have worked on these lines for a number of years, and I finally feel that I can provide enough evidence to identify these separate families.

The article below will detail a line from John ¹ Jonathan ^{2,3,4} Daniel ⁵ Dunham whose probable children have been a quandary for many people. A second Dunham family who lived in the very same area of Argyle and Kingsbury, Washington County New York has been shown to belong to the line of John ¹ Joseph ² Daniel ³ Joseph ⁴ Daniel ⁵. This second Dunham family came from Rhode Island, through Plainfield Connecticut, to Washington County New York about 1793. To add to the confusion, both of these families included men named Daniel and Samuel.

A third Dunham family who lived in Salem and Hartford, Washington County New York has not been identified with certainty. However one man, Richardson Dunham, came from the area of Brookfield, Hampshire County Massachusetts. The Dunham family who lived in Brimfield and Brookfield descends from the line of John ¹ Joseph ² Micajah ³ and I believe that Richardson Dunham is a son of David ⁴ of this line.

A fourth Dunham family came to Cambridge, (that portion which later became

Jackson) Washington County New York about 1793. This family descended from John ¹ Benajah ² Edmund ³ Jonathan ^{4,5} and Jonathan ⁶ who came from New Jersey. The line descending from Benajah ² Dunham has not been addressed in this newsletter yet, but will be covered in a future issue.

And there was a fifth Dunham family who lived mainly in Saratoga County, but some of this family lived in Easton, Washington County New York for a short time. This line descends from John ¹ Jonathan ^{2,3} Hezekiah ⁴ Samuel ⁵ and sons Holtham ⁶, Hezekiah ⁶, Samuel ⁶ and probably Silvanus ⁶ Dunham.

Daniel ⁵ Dunham

For years I have known about Edward Dunham b. 24 July 1753 (date & place from his pension application) in Great Nine Partners, Dutchess County New York. I have felt that Edward must have been a son of Daniel ⁵ Dunham who lived in Amenia, (part of Great Nine Partners), Dutchess Co. NY. The children of Daniel ⁵ Dunham are not listed in any source that I have found, however, I have believed that Daniel ⁵ Dunham did marry and have children.

Recently I have done a good deal of research on the Dunham family who lived in Argyle, Washington County New York; and then in Moreau, Saratoga County New York which is just across the Hudson River. As early as 1765 there were a Daniel and a Samuel Dunham in Fort Edward New York (then part of Argyle). During the course of that research I have found a migration pattern of a number of families who lived in the Sharon, Litchfield County Connecticut and Amenia, Dutchess County New York area who moved to Argyle, Washington County New York and

Moreau, Saratoga County New York. This established a very probable connection between these families and the Dunham family of Amenia, and a likely migration pattern for Daniel ⁵ Dunham.

Some years ago I had traced the descendants of Edward ⁶ Dunham, and of his brother Elisha ⁶ Dunham, both early settlers of Moreau, (but then called Clark's Corners and Northumberland, and later part of Moreau). They migrated to Madison County New York in the early 1800s, and then moved on to Monroe County New York. Descendants of part of this group moved west into Michigan. The son of another brother, Joseph W. ⁶ Dunham, also followed this westward movement.

According to descendant Elizabeth E. Brown, there is a tradition that there were eight sons in one generation of her Dunham family, and that four of these sons fought for the patriots in the Revolutionary War, and four were either Loyalists, or did not fight. Trying to identify these eight Dunham sons had long been a challenge. Recently, research on a Daniel Dunham who was a United Empire Loyalist and moved to Leeds County Ontario, Canada (and a recent TV program about this Daniel) renewed my search. These folks were better known as "Tories" in this country, but as United Empire Loyalists in Great Britain and Canada.

Below I have put together some evidence (some circumstantial, some from deed and census records, and some from clues derived from family files found on the Ancestry.com web site) which identify at least seven, and probably eight of these sons. I believe that these are all sons of Daniel ⁵ Dunham (Jonathan ⁴ [the first son of Jonathan ³ named Jonathan], Jonathan ³,

Jonathan² John¹ Dunham). [See my article in the previous newsletter supplement to Issue 3, Volume 2 for this line from John Dunham.]

Let me begin by saying that the line of Samuel⁵ Dunham (Jonathan^{4,3,2} John¹) who also lived in Amenia, Dutchess Co. NY has been proven. Samuel⁵ named his children in his will [Will Book A, p. 350 Poughkeepsie, New York Court House]. These children were sons Samuel, Jonathan, Seth, John, William, and daughters Waitstill, Silva, Mary, Salomi, and Sarah.

Another part of the family tradition mentioned above is that the great-grandfather of Albert Seneca⁸ Dunham (Seneca⁷, Edward⁶ who is discussed as a son of Daniel⁵ later in this article) went to Quebec during the French and Indian War. A quote from a biographical sketch of Albert Seneca Dunham states “Among the officers who accompanied General Wolfe in his expedition against Quebec [SEPT 13, 1759] was the great-grandfather of our subject. . .” From the book Early Settlements in Dutchess County, New York, by Margaret E. Herrick, pub. by Kinship Press, Rhinebeck, NY 1994, p. 1-2, under discussion of the Town of Amenia: Dr. Nicholas De La Vergne, who was a justice of the peace and a probate judge as well as a medical doctor, certified that a company of 88 men had been mustered into service to fight in the French and Indian wars. A poem, now lost, by another Amenia doctor, Dr. Thomas Young, told of the provincial troops sent from several local towns to aid in the capture of Quebec in 1759. So, while we have no proof that Daniel⁵ Dunham was one of these men who marched to Quebec, it is a distinct possibility.

There are no Dutchess County probate

records for Daniel⁵ Dunham. There are few deeds for him although he appears on the tax lists of Great Nine Partners through the year 1763. Neither Daniel⁵ nor anyone called his wife appears in the burial records in Amenia. A Daniel Dunham does appear at Fort Edward in 1765 who I believe is this Daniel⁵ Dunham. There are records of several Dunhams who are not otherwise identified and who I believe are the children of Daniel⁵ Dunham. This line will continue below based on circumstantial evidence, but without complete proof of this line (except where proof is cited).

Records which do document Daniel⁵ Dunham in Nine Partners, Dutchess County New York follow: Daniel was administrator of the estate of his father (Jonathan⁴) as shown in Sharon Connecticut Probate Record #1907, and also shown in Sharon, Litchfield County Connecticut Deed 2:506 dated 17 Apr. 1750, when he was listed with his mother (Mary Spencer) “of Nine Partners.” Other references for Daniel Dunham of Crum Elbow Precinct (in Nine Partners) show him in a list dated 4 Apr. 1749 and in a list dated 22 May, 1761 as “Overseer for highways of Nine Partners.”

Only two deed records exist for Daniel⁵ Dunham in Dutchess County New York. While it was not mandatory to record deeds at this time, there are a number of existing deed records for his brother Samuel⁵ Dunham, and it seems strange that Daniel⁵ would not have any deed records other than the ones which follow. From a deed at Poughkeepsie Court House, #3817 dated May 1756: “Daniel Dunham of Crum Elbow precinct in Dutchess County New York . . . 28 pounds to Martin Hoffman. . .” Dutchess County deed at Poughkeepsie Court House, #3623 dated 13 May 1756: “a

note to George Jacob Jornborgor for 35 pounds. . .”

From Early Settlers of NY State by Foley Vol. 2:776; Re: Amenia Church of Christ in the Nine Partners, Dutchess Co. NY: Col. Roswell Hopkins, born in CT. 8 May 1733 went to the Nine Partners with his father, Stephen Hopkins. In 1784 he went to Bennington VT.

Stephen Hopkins gave the land for the “Red Meeting House”, and 6 Feb. 1758 the following subscribed to the building of the meeting house in Nine Partners on the east side of the mountain:

among the subscribers was: DANIEL DUNHAM

Daniel ⁵ Dunham is listed on Dutchess County New York Tax Lists 1718-1787, by C. M. Buck in Nine Partners/Crum Elbow, as follows: “Daniel Dunham February 1747/48 - February 1762, tax credited to Amenia,” and from the Amenia Tax List, “Daniel Dunham, June 1762-June 1763.” Daniel is not on the Tax List in 1765, and I believe he may have sold out after that and moved up to Fort Edward, Washington County New York.

The “History of Washington Co. NY” states “Daniel Dunham was a carpenter when settlement began in Fort Edward in 1765.” I have seen a quote that “Dunham’s Basin” which is located right along the Champlain Canal in Fort Edward (and directly east of Hudson Falls), was named for Daniel Dunham. In 1768 Seth Sherwood, in Fort Edward, mentioned as character witnesses Samuel and Daniel Dunham. The Sherwood family had earlier resided in Amenia, New York as did Daniel Dunham.

From: Old Fort Edward before 1800, by William Henry Hill, Ft. Edward, NY, 1929,

p. 243:

“George Mc Intosh, at Fort Edward, sent to Colonel Bradstreet under date of June 14, 1765. . . . During July certificates for various services were given concerning Martin Van Alstyn, John Feather, Solomon Pitcher & Daniel Dunham.” On p. 280 of the same source there is mention of Samuel and Daniel Dunham again regarding a land claim by Seth Sherwood.

Daniel ⁵ Dunham was born probably in Edgartown say 1713, before his father moved to Colchester Connecticut. The name of his wife is unproven. It is probable that Daniel ⁵ was married prior to moving to Sharon Connecticut, and later Great Nine Partners New York, as a child named Jonathan, b. about 1739 was probably his son. The move to Sharon Connecticut took place about 1740.

The Eight Sons of Daniel ⁵ Dunham

First Son: Jonathan ⁶ Dunham born about 1739 in Colchester before the family moved to Sharon, Connecticut, died 5 April 1813 in Etna/Dryden, Tompkins County New York.

Children of Jonathan ⁶ Dunham and first wife, name unknown:

- i. Rachel ⁷ Dunham b. 19 July 1767
- ii. Esther ⁷ Dunham b. 29 May 1769
- iii. Sarah ⁷ Dunham b. 23 Jan. 1772
- iv. Tryphena ⁷ Dunham b. 3 May 1774

Children of Jonathan ⁶ and second wife, Mary Reno:

- v. Hannah ⁷ Dunham b. 30 May 1776
- vi. Henry ⁷ Dunham b. 31 Dec. 1777
- vii. Lucy ⁷ Dunham b. 5 Apr. 1781
- viii. Lewis ⁷ Dunham b. 17 Feb. 1783
- ix. Nathan ⁷ Dunham b. 2 Aug. 1785
- x. Catherine ⁷ Dunham b. 1

Aug.1787

Second Son: Samuel ⁶ Dunham born in Nine Partners/Amenia, Dutchess County New York about 1741. This is probably the Samuel Dunham who was given as a character witness in the land claim of Seth Sherwood in Fort Edward New York in 1768.

A brother of Samuel, who was Edward ⁶ Dunham, states in his pension application that they resided at Kingsbury, Washington County at the time of the Revolutionary War; moved to Lanesborough Massachusetts during war, and then later moved back to Fort Edward New York. Sharon Connecticut Vital Records contain a marriage record of Samuel Dunham of Lanesborough to Dorothy Hamlen of Sharon, 3 October 1780.

Third Son: Daniel ⁶ Dunham born about 1744. I believe that this was the Daniel Dunham who was a Loyalist, and moved to Leeds County, Ontario Canada in 1784. See discussion below.

Only daughter identified at this time: Sarah ⁶ Dunham born about 1744. She is not the Sarah ⁶ who is daughter of Samuel ⁵ Dunham as that Sarah married Philip Spaulding. I believe that this Sarah ⁶ Dunham is a daughter of Daniel ⁵ Dunham. I believe that this is the Sarah Dunham who married Philip Bessey (of Robert ³, Nehemiah ², Anthony ¹ Bessey). He was born about 1742, and died about 1814 in Fabius, Onondaga County New York. Philip Bessey married Sarah Dunham 2 January 1764 in Amenia New York. Sarah was born about 1744, lived in Amenia at the time of her marriage, and died in Marcellus, Onondaga County New York. In 1780 there was a major exodus of the Bessey family from

Dutchess County. Philip Bessey went to Kingsbury, Washington County. Philip Bessey appears in the 1790 federal census there with four sons under 16 and three daughters, plus one female who would have been his wife (Sarah). The 1800 federal census shows Philip living still in Kingsbury. In 1806 Sarah (Dunham) Bessey became a member of the Baptist Church in Fabius, Onondaga County. Philip joined the church Feb 28, 1807.

Fourth Son: Joseph W. ⁶ Dunham born about 1745-6, died near the end of April 1800. He married 13 February 1772 Mary Parks. The marriage (Sharon Connecticut Vital Records) record states "he of Amenia, she of Sharon." They resided in Argyle, Washington County New York. This is the Joseph Dunham listed in the 1790 Census in Argyle, Washington County New York with a family of 1-5-3. From Early Settlers of New York by Foley 1:184, Early Church Records of Elder Nathan Tanner's Church at Battenkill (now Greenwich): "Joseph Dunham" (no date given), "Mary Dunham 1790".

Mary Dunham, widow of Joseph W. Dunham, appears on the 1800 census in Argyle, Washington County New York, p. 471: 20100-01001. As will be seen in the probate record of Joseph W. Dunham, the oldest son was Smith Dunham. Smith ⁷ Dunham appears on 1800 census of Northumberland, Saratoga County New York on page 52: 00100-10010, so he is probably recently married with a young daughter. Smith ⁷ Dunham later went to Madison County New York.

The will of Joseph W. Dunham, of Argyle New York names his sons, and a daughter. From Wills & Letters of Testimony 1788-1806, Vol. I p. 23 (microfilm #447), Washington County New York,

dated 25 April 1800, probated 1 May 1800
I quote:

“I Joseph W. Dunham of the town of Argyle in the county of Washington and State of New York. . .empower my executrix and executor. . .to sell dispose of and convey the leased farm on which I now live and the farm I own in Scipio. . .and should the monies arising from such sales not be sufficient to discharge my debts, then I further authorize. . .to sell. . .so much of my lands in Sempronius. . .secondly one equal fourth part of all my estate. . .together with all my house hold furniture, I give. . .unto my beloved wife Mary. . .Thirdly it is my will and desire that three fifty acre lots of land be surveyed out of lot number eighty four situate in the town of Sempronius in the County of Cayuga (which I purchased of Job Whipple Esqr.) in manner following, the first lot to begin at the south east corner of the said lot number eighty four and run one third of the way to the south east corner of David Wickums lot. . .which fifty acres of land I give devise and bequeath to my son Joseph. . .but he is not to have the actual possession of the same until he arrives at the age of twenty one years, the second of the said lots to begin at the south west corner of the lot above bequeathed to my son Joseph. . .to contain fifty acres of land which I give devise and bequeath unto my son Smith. . .the third of the said lots I give devise and bequeath to my son Ezra. . .My son Smith may have one equal half of a certain small piece of land lying joining my lot eighty four. . .I give devise and bequeath unto my son Nehemiah when he arrives to the age of twenty one years fifty acres of unimproved lands or in lieu of the said fifty acres of land, one hundred and fifty dollars Also unto my son Reuben when he arrives at the age of twenty one years. . .fifty acres of unimproved land or in lieu thereof one hundred and fifty dollars. . .and in addition thereto I give & bequeath to my

said sons Nehemiah & Reuben and also to my said son Joseph when they respectively shall arrive at the age of twenty one years severally the sum of fifty seven dollars and fifty cents. . .I also give and bequeath unto my daughter Lucy one hundred and fifty dollars to be paid to her when she arrives at the age of eighteen years. . .”

Executors, wife and son Smith

Witnesses: Solon Stebbins

Hester McInters

(McIntire)

Matths Ogden, Atty.

The will of Joseph W. Dunham names wife Mary and the following children:

- i. Smith ⁷ Dunham (b. bef. 1779 if over 21 in 1800 as he would be as executor, but after 1774 (1790 census))
- ii. Joseph ⁷ Dunham
- iii. Ezra ⁷ Dunham
- iv. Nehemiah ⁷ Dunham
- v. Ruben ⁷ Dunham
- vi. Lucy ⁷ Dunham

Fifth Son: Thomas ⁶ Dunham is probably also a son of Daniel ⁵ Dunham. I place him here on the basis of the following data from Vermont History Magazine, by Abby Hemmenway Vol. 3, p. 577, in reference to Danby Vermont: “The proprietors of the township of Danby, held their first meeting at the Great Nine Partners, Crumelbow Precinct, Dutchess Co., Sept. 22, 1761. Daniel Dunham was the “6th Comm”, and the committee set out from home the third Monday in October next, in order to make division of the land.” This committee member was surely Daniel ⁵ Dunham.

Thomas Dunham, who witnessed a deed in Danby Vermont, was perhaps a son of Daniel ⁵ Dunham. The deed was a deed of sale of David Alger of “Spencertown, in

the County of Great Barrington, Massachusetts” to Jeremiah (Franck?) of Batman’s Patent New York, for one whole share in the Township of Danby, “*being the original right of my honored father Joseph Alger... dated 29 May 1764.*

*Witness: Daniel Griswald
signed David Alger,
Thomas Dunham”*

In addition to the above evidence, there was a Thomas DuNNUM on the Amenia Tax List, June 1762-June 1763. And finally, Elijah⁶ Dunham named a son, “Thomas”.

Sixth Son: Edward⁶ Dunham born 24 July 1753. From Abstracts of Rev. War Pension Application Files re: Edward Dunham: “Edward, Mary, W1158, Ma. & NY Line, sol. was b. 24 July 1753 at Great Nine Partners in Dutchess Co., NY. Sol. Lived at Kingsbury in Washington Co., NY at enl. and later moved to Lanesborough Ma., & also enl. there, then moved to Fort Edward NY and also enl. there. Sol appl 23 Aug. 1832 Orleans Co., NY, a res. of Barre, NY, and Sol m. Mary, wid. of Jacob Dannak (Dannals) on 17 Nov. 1802 at Smithfield in Madison Co., NY. She was b. 1 Mar. 1766. Sol. d. 25 Jan. 1844 at Henrietta in Monroe Co., NY. Wid. appl 28 Apr. 1853 at Barre NY. . .”

It should be noted that Edward⁶ Dunham was almost fifty years old when he married his second wife (Mary Dannals). He had seven children by his first wife.

Children of Edward and first (unknown) wife:

- i. David⁷ Dunham b. about 1774
m. ¹ (unknown); m. ² Sarah Pierson 27
October 1808
- ii. Daniel⁷ Dunham b. about 1776
- iii. Silas⁷ Dunham b. 27 June 1781 in

Northumberland, Saratoga County New York, d. 13 Feb. 1839 age 57 years in Cooper, Kalamazoo County Michigan m. ¹ Dolly (--) before 1807; m. ² Tirzah Noble, daughter of Caleb Noble, marriage about 1814 in Henrietta, Monroe County New York

- iv. Elijah⁷ Dunham b. say 1782 m. Ann (--) before 1810 in Madison County New York
- v. Lydia⁷ Dunham b. 2 November 1784 (calculated from grave stone) m. Ira Clark in Cazenovia, Madison County New York in 1808
- vi. Rachel⁷ Dunham b. 1788 Washington County New York; m. Joseph Pierson, Jr. in 1808 in Cazenovia
- vii. Lois⁷ Dunham b. about 1791 (she was age 59 on 1850 census of Gun Plain, Allegan County, Michigan); m. Sheldon Pierson

The children listed in the pension application were those of Edward’s second wife Mary (Dannals) and these were:

- viii. Edward⁷ Dunham, Jr. b. 5 April 1803; m. 23 February 1823 Zeruah Corbin
- ix. Sophia⁷ Dunham b. 13 April 1805; d. 3 March 1825; m. 3 March 1822 Joseph Monroe
- x. Seneca⁷ Dunham b. 20 Feb. 1807 m. Tirza Dannals

Seventh Son: Silas⁶ Dunham born say 1755-1760, may be the one recorded as giving a mortgage for 105 acres in Penfield on 23 January 1802, in which he is listed, “of Claverack, Columbia County, NY.”

“Silas Dunham, one of the grantors of 1806, left a record of the mortgage he gave to Daniel Penfield for the property on 23 January 1802. At that time, Silas Dunham was from Claverack, Columbia

County, New York, as was Daniel Penfield. His down-payment for the 105 acres was ten shillings. The total mortgage was for \$421.20, which was to be paid in three years. On the day that Silas, Gershom and the Prentices made the sale, the discharge of the above mortgage was recorded.”

Children of Silas and (unknown) Dunham:

- i. (unknown) but possibly Morgan Dunham
- ii. Gershom⁷ Dunham b. 19 Nov. 1781, m.¹ 3 Nov. 1804 Cynthia Nicholds in Penfield, Monroe County New York; m.² 14 Aug. 1844 Jerusha Austin in Penfield, New York
- iii. Deborah Matilda⁷ Dunham b. 29 Aug. 1784; she d. 24 Aug. 1813; m. 3 Oct. 1804 Christopher Prentice
- iv. Silas⁷ Dunham b. ca. 1786; d. 14 June 1860 in Webster, Monroe County New York; m. Lucy Miranda Peet

Eighth Son: Elijah⁶ Dunham born about 1757.

The “History of Washington Co. NY” states that Edward and Elijah were the first settlers at Clark’s Corners, Town of Moreau. (This is located close to the Hudson River in what is now part of the town of Moreau, Saratoga County New York.)

From my research in Saratoga County New York, I find the following deeds that relate to Edward⁶ and Elijah⁶ Dunham: Saratoga County Deed Vol. B:303, Re: Edward⁶ Dunham, On 13 June 1791, he is in possession of, and buys the north part of Lot 1 & 2 in B subdivision of Kayadorosores Patent (from James and Theophilis Beekman). In another Saratoga County deed from Vol. B:306, Edward⁶ Dunham buys land from Ebenezer Newell.

Saratoga County Deed Vol. C:54, Re: Elijah⁶ Dunham, On 2 August 1796 buys

land from Ebenezer Newell and wife Judith that they purchased from Beekmans. “Beginning at corner of Edward Dunham. . .” A deed recorded in Saratoga County New York Vol. C:57, also dated the same date as the deeds of Edward⁶ Dunham (13 June 1791), Elijah⁶ Dunham buys land from Beekmans.

In the 1790 census these three men, Edward⁶ and Elijah⁶ Dunham and Ebenezer Newell were all in Argyle, Washington County New York. In the 1800 census all three were listed close together in Northumberland, (later Moreau) Saratoga County New York.

Children of Elijah⁶ and Sarah (--) Dunham: (probably she was Sarah Crocker)

- i. Betsey⁷ Dunham b. 1783; m. John Albro
- ii. Elijah⁷ Dunham, Jr. b. 1785; m. Sally Billings
- iii. Thomas⁷ Dunham b. after 1784
- iv. Sally Maria⁷ Dunham
- v. Daniel⁷ Dunham b. 1793; m. Harriet Sturtevant
- vi. Solomon⁷ Dunham b. about 1794; m. Lydia Ballard
- vii. Freeloove⁷ Dunham
- viii. Caroline⁷ Dunham

The Four Patriot Brothers

From the Revolutionary War pension application files we know that Edward⁶ served in the war. From the Revolutionary War enlistment rolls we know that Elijah⁶ served in the 13th NY Regiment. We can also deduce that Joseph⁶ Dunham served in the war. There is a Joseph Dunham who served in the 16th Regiment of Albany County Militia who is probably this man. Also, the fact that Joseph Dunham left instructions in his will to sell

his land in Scipio, and the fact that he also bought land in Sempronius, Cayuga County New York from Job Whipple indicate that he got his land as bounty for war service. Job Whipple appears on the 1790 census in Argyle, Washington County New York, and was probably a friend or neighbor, whose warrant was purchased by Joseph Dunham. The townships of Scipio and Sempronius, Cayuga County New York were in the Military Tract. This was land set aside for soldiers who had served during the Revolution who drew lots upon the military tract. According to the tradition mentioned above there were four sons who fought on the patriot side. I cannot say with certainty that Silas ⁶ Dunham was the fourth patriot brother, but that is likely.

Daniel ⁶ Dunham United Empire Loyalist

The Dunhams living in Washington County New York just prior to the Revolutionary War were living among neighbors; some of whom were supporters of the crown. Some of the men in these families had taken part in the French and Indian War (1759). We will probably never know exactly what motivated people toward supporting the British troops, but at least one member of the Dunham family of Washington County did this.

Daniel ⁶ Dunham, born about 1744, was a young man in his early 30s at the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Daniel “walked seven days” in order to join General Burgoyne’s army. We don’t know whether he actually fought his patriot brothers during the Battle of Saratoga or not, more likely he was a scout for the British army, or he was sent out to locate food for the British army. A statement given by Daniel Dunham dated 13 October, 1797 says that

he was a Sergeant in Major Jessup’s Corps.

Two quotations provide some insight to explain what Major Jessup’s Corps actually was. From Saratoga, Turning Point of America’s Revolutionary War, by Richard M. Ketchum, pub. NY 1997, p. 110-111: “Ebenezer Jessup was a New Yorker who had joined Gen. Guy Carleton’s army at Crown Point in 1776, determined to conquer our enemies and re-establish civil government for the honor of the Crown... The general regarded this as something of a mixed blessing, since he wasn’t sure where and how these fellows fit into his army, not to mention how they were to be paid and outfitted.” From The Battles of Saratoga, by John R. Elting, pub. Monmouth Beach NJ, 1977, p. 21: “Burgoyne and Germain had placed great hopes in raising large numbers of Loyalists to strengthen the British forces, but these were...a great disappointment...To start with, Burgoyne had two embryo ‘Provincial’ regiments--John Peters’ Queen’s Loyal Rangers, and Ebenezer Jessup’s King’s Loyal Americans, but the two together numbered only 83 men when the offensive began.”

We don’t know just when Daniel was married, but we do know the name of Daniel’s wife. She was Isabelle Gilles (or Gillis), daughter of James and Ann/Nancy (Campbell) Gillis. Isabelle was of Scottish ancestry, and her father was one of the original patentees of Argyle (now in Washington County New York). James Gillis was born in Scotland and came to this country with his parents. He lived in Orange County New York until April of 1765 when he drew lot #108 (500 acres) located on the road between Argyle and North Argyle. His daughter Isabelle was the sixth of eight children, and she was

born about 1763 just prior to the families move. The Dunhams came to Canada in 1784, in the first brigade of boats, landing at Dunham's Bay, in Augusta, near Brockville, Ontario Canada. Daniel must have received 400 acres of land for his services to the British army prior to filing a Memorial on 4 November 1797 at which time he received an additional 150 acres "to close all claims." In the memorial he states that he had a child born previous to (probably 1784, document is illegible.) This child was probably Jonathan Dunham. Another son, James Dunham, was born in Canada and was the father of seven children.

Lloyd Dunham, of Gananoque, Ontario, Canada (and a member of the Board of Directors of Dunham-Singleton Family Connections) visited the library in Brockville and spoke with Myrtle Johnston there. She found information in the archives assembled by a descendant of James Dunham, which contains a genealogy of the descendants of James Dunham (son of Daniel⁶ Dunham). The History of Leeds and Grenville, Ontario (Canada) from 1749-1879, by Thad. W. H. Leavitt, pub. 1879, p. 106 states that "Mr Dunham raised a large family, from which sprang the numerous Dunhams in the United Counties." It is possible that more children in this family besides Jonathan and James Dunham will be identified.

The Unhappy Fate of Robert Holmes Dunham

by Sam E. Dunnam

Texas won its independence from Mexico at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836 in a brilliant, decisive charge led by General Sam Houston. But that battle did not bring peace between Texas and Mexico. Although General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who was also then President

of Mexico, was captured at San Jacinto and agreed in captivity to order the evacuation of all additional Mexican forces from Texas (which he did) and to recognize the Rio Grande River as the boundary between Texas and Mexico, those agreements were not recognized by Mexico, nor later by Santa Anna himself, perhaps with justification, on the basis of having been made under coercion when Santa Anna was a prisoner-of-war. Prior to the Texas Revolution, the Nueces River, farther north, had been the accepted boundary between Texas and Mexico proper when Texas was still a Mexican territory. Thus, following the Texans' victory at San Jacinto, not only was the new Texas Republic not officially acknowledged by Mexico but a large chunk of territory, lying roughly in a lateral direction west of Corpus Christi, encompassing much of the southern-most "point" of Texas, was in dispute and subject to rival claims for nine years. The young Republic of Texas did not have the population, resources, or arms to occupy and defend this "trans-Nueces" territory, and it proceeded to become a violent, lawless area subject to forays by forces from both sides as well as by bandits and other lawless elements.

For several years an uneasy peace prevailed due to Mexico's preoccupation with its war with France (1838-40) and its own Federalist revolution in northern Mexico (in which some Texans even participated on the Federalist side, though without official standing). But when those conflicts ended, armed struggle over the trans-Nueces territory resumed, albeit on a low, sporadic basis. A final peace and the status of this territory was not settled until the outcome of the Mexican-American War on February 2, 1848 in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in which Mexico finally agreed to recognize the Rio Grande

as the boundary between it and the United States, to which Texas had by then become annexed as the 28th state (on December 29, 1845).

Additionally, the war between the Texas revolutionaries and Mexico had itself been one marked by cruelty and brutality. Santa Anna regarded the Texas insurgents as “traitors” and he pursued a harsh, “no quarter” policy toward them. His orders were essentially to “take no prisoners” and to crush the revolution by terror with an iron fist. On March 6, 1836 every Texas defender of the Alamo perished, most during the final battle after a two-week siege led by Santa Anna. But the reported final four who were captured, including perhaps David Crockett, were executed. Three weeks later at Goliad, where Col. James Fannin had been slow to follow Houston’s orders to retreat and not attempt to aid the Alamo defenders, he and a force of nearly 400 Texans were captured by a larger Mexican force under General Urrea. Under strict orders from Santa Anna (which, to his credit, General Urrea, was reluctant to carry out), all were shot and their bodies burned in several great pyres.

Some three weeks later at San Jacinto, when Houston’s Texans in their daring charge routed Santa Anna’s larger force (who were at siesta), the battle itself was decided and over in eighteen minutes. But the revenge-hungry Texans then went on a killing spree, which Houston and their officers were unable to stop or contain. With the surprised Mexicans in total disarray, fleeing, and when overrun, begging for mercy and attempting to surrender, the undisciplined Texan ranks stabbed and shot over 600 defeated Mexicans. These brutal events set the tone for what happened to Robert Holmes Dunham.

Robert H. Dunham was the fourth child of Daniel A. Dunham of Tipton County, Tennessee, whose own father, Daniel Dunham, had been a pioneer from North Carolina and a Revolutionary War soldier. Daniel Dunham, the father, and his family were members of the famous John Donalson voyage down the Tennessee River that founded the town of Nashville in 1770. There the elder Dunham established “Dunham’s Station,” on the site of what is today Belle Meade Plantation. Tennessee was then still very much frontier country, subject to Indian raids, and in 1788 Daniel Dunham, the elder, was killed by Indians at his home.

Daniel A. Dunham, his son, married Lourania Adkins of Williamson County, Tennessee in 1805. A short time later he moved with his family to Tipton County, Tennessee where all of his ten children were born.

In 1835 Daniel A. Dunham made a trip to Texas, however, and, impressed by what he saw and heard there, bought the Retreat Plantation in Montgomery County, Texas, situated just north of current Houston. He returned to Tennessee to get his family and prepare for the move to Texas. But before he could move them, he died in Tennessee. His wife, Lourania, nevertheless went ahead with the move and settled with her family in Montgomery County.

At the time of their move in 1835, the events that would spark the Texas Revolution were well underway just a short distance to the west. The Anglo Protestant settlers who had come into Texas predominantly from Tennessee and Kentucky were drawn there in the main by the attraction of cheap land in vast quantities. Many were speculators and adventurers. For the most part they regarded it as a

mere legal formality that in order to qualify for a land grant or receive a deed to land previously granted, they had to sign an oath of fealty to the King of Spain (later to the sovereign state of Mexico) and become Catholics, at least on paper. Their cultural backgrounds were vastly different from Spanish Catholic Mexico and, at a deeper level, this was a root source of the growing tensions with Mexico. It was indeed mounting alarm on the part of the Mexican government, of which Santa Anna was now head, that this rapidly expanding body of Anglo settlers coming over the Appalachians into Texas were part of an alien culture that bore no genuine loyalty to Mexico and were now openly talking of rebellion. This Mexican unease was in turn probably the source of some of the mild repressive measures that the Mexican government led by Santa Anna began to impose on the settlers, doubtless made more onerous by Santa Anna's harsh, autocratic nature. Before the Revolution began, many of those who would later become leaders and heroes of the Revolution were regarded by their fellow citizens as inflammatory radicals bent on stirring up a war with the Mexican sovereign, which many, if not most, did not want.

Nonetheless, the Texas Revolution got underway in October of 1835 when a Texas militia repulsed a detachment of Mexican cavalry at the battle of Gonzales. And it ended the next spring, on April 21, 1836, at San Jacinto—at least so far as major engagements were concerned. As an aside, but more significant for Texas history, Daniel Thomas Dunham, Robert Holmes' older brother, fought with Sam Houston at San Jacinto as a private in the Regular Artillery Corps. After the war he became postmaster at Retreat Plantation in Montgomery County, although, like all San Jacinto veterans, he received a Bounty War-

rant for 640 acres in Navarro County. He never married and had no children.

The secondary sources which I've drawn on so far contain no account of when or how Robert Holmes Dunham joined the Texas militia that became ultimately part of the ill-fated Mier Expedition. But it would have not been unusual during these first years of the Republic's life for a young, unmarried man to become periodically a member of a specially summoned citizens' militia. As threats arose, repeated calls for militia did go out. Once its war with France was settled and the Federalist revolution quashed, Mexican military raids and incursions into Texas became a more frequent occurrence. In February 1842 Mexican troops led by Captain Ramon Valera and General Rafael Vasquez entered Texas to attack Refugio and Goliad, and to occupy San Antonio. This they did, though not until San Antonio's citizens, forewarned, had evacuated to the north. A small Texan force of about 100 men under Captain Jack Hays decided not to engage the Mexican troops because of the latter's advantage in numbers. The Mexicans did not remain long. After looting the town, the Mexican troops withdrew. Hays followed their retreat, but again due to insufficient strength did not engage them. After the Mexicans crossed the Rio Grande, Hays returned to San Antonio.

This raid prompted a public outcry from the newly free Texans for retaliatory action against Mexico. On March 10th, President Houston ordered General Alexander Somervell to take command of troops being assembled in San Antonio for defense against future Mexican raids. But the assembled volunteers, following their fiercely independent custom, refused to recognize Somervell as their commander

and chose instead Vice-President Edward Burlson. Houston in response refused to give official status to the force unless they agreed to organize under Somervell. They ignored this stipulation; however, lacking support, Burlson disbanded the companies under his command. Somervell returned to his home in Houston.

Nevertheless, by late May a band of volunteers numbering about 380 men did assemble near Corpus Christi. Meanwhile, in Mexico, in anticipation of a Texas invasion, Gen. Arista had gathered a force of about 5,000 soldiers. In June, General Arista was replaced by General Isidro Reyes. Santa Anna commanded Reyes to order General Adrian Woll, a Frenchman in service of Mexico, to attack San Antonio to prevent the Texans from uniting their forces for an attack on Mexico and to do it in June.

Meanwhile, morale had sunk very low in the Texas camp. Living conditions were poor and there was idleness and lack of organization. By the time that General James Davis took command of the force, its size had dwindled to 190 men. Aware of the disarray in the Texan ranks, Mexican forces under Colonels Antonio Canales and Cayetano Montero, which numbered over 450 men, crossed the Rio Grande on June 23 and began to advance on the Texans. Alerted by Texan spies of the Mexican advance, and situated on an open, insecure position without cannon, General Davis withdrew to a more defensible position about 200 yards away. But he left up tents and kept campfires burning in hopes of diverting the Mexicans into an attack on his abandoned position. The ruse worked, though the Mexicans quickly realized their error and attacked Davis' new position. Fortunately for the outnumbered Texans, who were low on ammunition, the Mexicans made only one charge that was re-

pulsed, then withdrew.

Frightened by the Mexican raid, many settlers abandoned their homesteads for safer ground north of the Colorado River. Victoria was left as the southern most organized settlement, guarded by an encampment of militia numbering 70 to 80 men under Captain Ewen Cameron. Although the proposed summer's campaign to invade Mexico and punish the Mexicans had come to nought, there still remained in Texas a fair amount of enthusiasm for a punitive invasion of Mexico in the fall.

On September 10th, General Adrian Woll again entered Texas and with a force of 960 men approached San Antonio. After a brief skirmish, Woll's army captured the town. The 52 Texans who had mounted armed resistance were taken prisoner and marched to Mexico. Woll did not plan to remain in San Antonio and a week later was preparing to withdraw. Not knowing this, two groups of Texans organized for the purpose of engaging Woll's army: a larger one of some 225 Texans under Mathew Caldwell and another smaller group of 54 men under Nicholas Mosby Dawson. Dawson's group, on bad intelligence, fell victim to the larger Mexican force: 36 were killed, including Dawson, and 15 taken prisoner; three escaped. On September 20th, Woll's army retreated from San Antonio, taking the 15 Dawson prisoners with them. The Mexican force was pursued by Caldwell's group, which had grown then to about 325 men, but Caldwell never succeeded in maneuvering his force into position for a successful attack on the Mexicans. Woll recrossed the Rio Grande on October 1st with the Texas prisoners.

Learning of Woll's invasion and capture of San Antonio, President Sam Houston

once again called for an assembly of militias to join forces in San Antonio and repel the invaders decisively. By November 7th, Texan forces in San Antonio had swelled to about 1,200 men. Houston authorized this force to pursue the enemy “into any point in the Republic, or in Mexico, and chastise the marauders for their audacity,” provided that sufficient provisions could be supplied and that proper discipline was maintained. Again he called on General Alexander Somervell to command this assembly of militias. Houston warned Somervell that poor discipline and insubordination were likely the “two evils” that would lead to failure. Adequate supplies were not forthcoming at once and by November 18th Somervell’s force had shrunk to 760 men.

Finally, on November 25th, Somervell’s force of just over 750 men left San Antonio with the capture of Laredo as their immediate goal. Along the way desertions continued. Nonetheless, on December 8th when they arrived at Laredo the Mexican garrison there of about 100 soldiers and the townspeople who had not fled (many did) put up no resistance. Somervell’s force established a camp outside the town and gave the town’s officials a list of provisions they required. When no provisions had been delivered on December 9th, about a third of Somervell’s men entered the town on their own and took what they wished. When Somervell learned of this undisciplined foray, he stopped it at once and ordered all the plunder not necessary for the support of the army returned.

Later that same afternoon, Somervell ordered a resumption of the march down the north bank of the River (the Texas side). Many of the men began to grumble that he lacked the fortitude to cross the border and intended to steer the force home. This dis-

sension presented Somervell with a difficult dilemma. He was loath to cross the border and pursue a campaign in Mexico short of provisions and with such an undisciplined force. But if he returned home without having engaged the Mexican army, there would surely be public disgrace. So, on December 10th, Somervell gave his men a choice: either follow him or another officer of their choosing across the border and attack the Mexican town of Guerrero, or return home. By the next day, 187 out of the 683 still in the force decided to return home. The remainder stayed and proceeded across the River to Guerrero, which they reached on December 15th. No resistance was met. The Texans demanded horses and other provisions from the local officials. When told that the horses could not be gathered, they demanded \$5,000. But by December 18th only \$381 had been delivered. Short of provisions and with little hope that adequate ones could be procured, Somervell ordered the Texan troops to head for home. This order met with considerable dissatisfaction among the men. They had neither fought the enemy nor taken any spoils of war. A total of 308 men, including five captains, refused to obey the order. It was decided that Captain William S. Fisher would take a contingent of men far enough down the River to obtain supplies and horses and return in one or two days. Though he is not explicitly mentioned in any of these accounts, it is certain that Robert Holmes Dunham was in the group of men who accompanied Fisher.

Meanwhile General Somervell and 189 men left the border for the trip home. Low on supplies and horses, they made only slow progress and frequently lost their way. On December 26th they heard cannon fire coming from the south, which

they took as evidence that Fisher's men were engaging the Mexicans in battle; but also it was a sign that they had made very little progress toward home. Some discussion ensued of returning south to aid Fisher, but the group eventually decided to continue toward home. Houston's warning had proved accurate. Lack of discipline and cohesion had doomed the mission to failure. The first of Somervell's ragged group reached San Antonio on January 4th. By January 8th, all had made it.

The Mier Expedition

Meanwhile, the larger group that had remained with Fisher organized into six companies, and he assumed the role of colonel. They decided to attack the Mexican town of Mier on December 20th. When they reached it on the morning of the 23rd, Colonel Fisher was informed that General Antonio Canales was in the vicinity with 700 troops. The Texan scouts, however, had encountered no evidence of them. Fisher set up camp outside the town and demanded from the local officials provisions for 120 men sufficient for five days, taking with him the local alcalde as a hostage. On the 24th Fisher sent out two Texans as spies, who were captured. On the 25th, the Texans camped at the point for the delivery of supplies, which had not been handed over yet; they captured a Mexican who told them that General Pedro de Ampudia had stopped the delivery of the supplies and that he was at Mier with 350 men and two artillery pieces. On hearing this, Fisher decided to attack Mier and take the supplies his troops needed. What he did not know is that the actual number of Mexican troops in Mier at this time was about 3,000.

Fisher dispatched at sunset a scouting party of ten to twelve men. After a brief skirmish, two of this group were captured. On

learning this, Fisher ordered his troops to move forward. By 7:00 pm the Texans halted just outside Mier on the opposite side of the Rio Alamo. That evening the Texans left a force of 42 men to guard the rear and the rest crossed the River. Four men got separated and returned to the Texan camp. Those who crossed the River came under immediate but unsuccessful attack. One man, crossing the River, fell and broke his thigh. Dr. John Sinnickson and seven others were left to guard the disabled man in an abandoned hut. The rest of the Texans entered the town where they came under immediate fire by Ampudia's forces. Nevertheless, advancing house by house, they were able to gain an advantage. Mexican fire, including artillery, continued through the night. The Texans conserved their ammunition and did not start firing until morning on the 26th. The battle raged for three hours and at one point became nearly hand to hand, with the Texans driving off their assailants with paving stones as they reloaded.

The seven Texans who, with Dr. Sinnickson, were left to guard the man with a broken thigh came under attack by about 300 Mexicans. The disabled man urged his comrades to flee. When they tried to do so, four were killed, including the man with the broken leg. Dr. Sinnickson and two others were captured, and two managed to escape into town.

About 1:00 pm the Mexicans ceased firing and raised a flag of truce. Fisher expected to hear terms of surrender from them. Instead he was surprised to be told that there were 1,700 Mexican troops in Mier with another 800 nearby, and that if the Texans did not surrender all would be put to the sword. They were given an hour to decide. During this time Fisher met with Ampudia and the surrender terms were reiterated.

Fisher then conferred with his troops and told them that if they tried to fight their way out of town, probably at least two thirds of them would be killed. Some of the men still wanted to fight, but finally the group decided to surrender. Two Texans during the hour's truce escaped and got out of Mier. Fisher finally agreed to the surrender under the terms that the prisoners would be "treated with consideration which is in accordance with the magnanimous Mexican Nation." The surrender terms further stipulated that the prisoners would be held on the frontier and not marched into the interior of Mexico. The next day Fisher learned to his shock that due to the large number of Mexican casualties sustained, Ampudia would have retreated if the Texans had not surrendered. The official Mexican report of casualties listed 650 dead and 200 wounded. Of the 261 Texans who attacked Mier, 243 were captured, 16 killed (or soon died of wounds), and two escaped. After the battle Ampudia sent about 300 cavalry to capture the Texans who had been left to guard the rear, but with one exception those Texans successfully escaped and made it home. The next day the captured Texans were subjected to a mock court-martial for their lives by the Mexican officers, but were spared by one vote.

On December 31st, all the prisoners who could travel were started on a march to Matamoros. They were poorly clothed and were not given blankets at night to protect them from the cold. They arrived in Matamoros on January 9th, 1843. There, a local merchant who was Anglo gave them money so they could purchase needed supplies.

Despite the surrender terms, the Mexicans made plans to march them to the interior. On January 14th, the main group was started toward Mexico City under the com-

mand of General Canales. Of those who had been left at Mier, eight managed to escape. Three very young Texans, indeed just youths, were left in the city. One of these, John Hill, was adopted by General Ampudia and eventually by Santa Anna himself—an almost unheard of curiosity in the annals of war.

The main body of prisoners on the forced march to Mexico City soon began to make escape plans. A signal was agreed on by the men to be given by Captain Ewen Cameron, whereupon they would rush their guards and make their escape. But each time they anticipated doing so, the guards seemed to be vigilant and so the signal was not given. They arrived in Monterey on January 29th, whereupon General Canales turned over the command to Colonel Baragan. The prisoners were not treated well; supplies, food, and essentials were often withheld and they suffered considerably. On February 5th they arrived in Saltillo, where they were joined by several of the Dawson and San Antonio prisoners who had been captured by Adrian Woll in September 1842. On February 7th the Texans left Saltillo and arrived at "El Rancho Salado" (the Salt Ranch or Salt Farm) on February 10th, about 80 mile distant from Saltillo,. There the main body of men rejoined Colonel Fisher and five others who had left Matamoros in advance of them. That night another escape was planned, but when the prisoners awoke on February 11th they found the guard had been doubled. Fisher and his five companions had again been separated from them and marched out in advance of the main group (where they arrived eventually on March 15th at Tacubaya, near Mexico City). In spite of the heavier guard, at breakfast Ewen Cameron gave his prearranged signal and the Texans rushed the guards and succeeded quickly in securing

their muskets. But other Mexican soldiers outside heard the commotion and were ready for the Texans as they came rushing through the portal. Five Texans were killed by a volley of musket fire and several more wounded. Five or six Mexicans were killed. Though there were about 200 Texan prisoners at Rancho Salado, only about a third of them took an active part in the escape against 400 armed Mexicans. Some of the Texans refused to participate in the escape due to illness or injury, and these were joined later with Colonel Fisher and others in the advance party.

The escapees headed for the Rio Grande, now about 200 miles away. They had gotten away with a Mexican cash box containing about \$1,400. About a half mile from the Rancho they were intercepted by Colonel Baragan and a small group of soldiers, from whom they had just escaped. He requested, and was granted, permission to approach and talk to them, and tried to convince them of the madness of the escape attempt. He offered clemency to those who would surrender again, but all refused and rode on. Baragan followed them for several days, lighting fires occasionally to signal his presence.

As they trudged on, they happened upon an Englishman (or American) who told them that the countryside had been alerted to their escape and advised that their best chance was to stay on the road until they were beyond the Pass of Venado. Later that night, after some debate and against the admonitions of Ewen Cameron, the group left the road and headed off through the mountains. They ran dreadfully short of water and two days later killed their horses for meat. They found only animal trails that crossed and recrossed, and soon became lost and disoriented, dividing into ever smaller groups. Some became too weak to

travel and had to be left behind. On February 18th, Cameron and 40 of his men saw a campfire, which they believed was a signal from their companions that they had found water. In fact, it was a troop of Mexican cavalry. The Texans approached and, on discovering their error but being desperate for water, they decided to surrender. The Mexicans combed the area and when they reached the Pass of Venado, they had recaptured 150 of the Texans. In all, 176 were finally recaptured. Seven died lost in the mountains. Five successfully found their way back to Texas.

On March 2nd, the recaptured Texans arrived in Saltillo, where they learned that President Santa Anna had ordered General Francisco Mejia to execute every one of them. Mejia refused to obey the order. He was removed and arrested, and was replaced by Colonel Domingo Huerta. The prisoners were marched back to El Rancho Salado on the 25th, where they were met with a modified order from Santa Anna: now only a tenth of them were to be shot.

To carry out the order, Colonel Huerta had 176 beans put in a pot, of which 159 were white and 17 were black. The Texans were chained together in pairs, blindfolded, and ordered to draw beans. One of the unfortunates who drew a black bean was Robert Holmes Dunham. These men were immediately separated from their fellow prisoners and given a chance to write a final letter home. Thereafter, at about 6:30 on the evening of March 25th, 1843, nine of the condemned were bound together, set on a log, and, within hearing distance of their companions, shot. The remaining eight were then executed in the same manner. Reports say that the firing continued for a spell after the main vol-

leys, probably delivering *coups de grace*. Supposedly Henry Whalen did not die at once and continued to curse his executioners until he was shot in the head point blank. Quite miraculously, when the Mexicans came to bury the bodies the next morning, one body was missing. It was that of James L. Shepherd (a youth of about 17). He had only been wounded and, faking death, escaped during the night. Later, however, after making his way to Saltillo, he was recognized and shot in the street.

On March 26th, the remaining Texans left El Rancho Salado and were marched to San Luis Potosi, arriving on April 5th. From there they were marched on towards Mexico City, arriving at Huehuetaco on the 24th. There another cruelty awaited them. As a result of a special petition from General Canales to Santa Anna, Ewen Cameron, leader of the escape, was taken from his companions at midnight and shot on the morning on April 25th. Ewen Cameron had had two past encounters with Canales in which the latter had been embarrassed and angered. Canales venom was satisfied by his execution.

Two of the farewell letters of the condemned Texans who drew black beans have been preserved. One is that of Robert Holmes Dunham.

Mexico

Dear Mother

I write to you under the most awful feelings that a son[e] ever addressed a mother, for in half hour my doom will be finished on earth. For I am doomed to die by the hands of the Mexicans for our late attempt to escape the...[missing words]...by Santa Anna that every tenth man should be shot.

[W]e drew lots...I was one of the unfortunates...I cannot say any thing more...I die I hope with firmness...farewell...may god bless you and may he in this my last hour forgive and pardon all my sins...A D Headenberge will...should he be at all to informe you...farewell your affectionate sone

R.H. Dunham

It is not known what became of the other fifteen farewell letters of the Mier Expedition prisoners who drew black beans. The original of Robert Holmes Dunham's letter is currently on display at the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas.

Homecoming of the Mier Survivors

By the end of June 1843, Santa Anna had agreed to an armistice between Mexico and Texas, which was the first official cessation of hostilities since San Jacinto.

The remainder of the Mier prisoners were later moved to Perote prison. A small group of fifteen of them (not all Mier prisoners) had been secretly working on an escape tunnel, when word reached them that General Waddy Thompson, the United States Minister to Mexico, had negotiated their release. On hearing that news, they stopped working on the tunnel. In mid-June, however, Santa Anna canceled plans for releasing the Texans, and they went back to work on the tunnel. On July 2nd, they escaped from Perote prison through the tunnel, though the Mexicans succeeded in recapturing eight. The remaining seven escapees managed to get to Vera Cruz, where they were smuggled aboard a steamer bound for New Orleans,

arriving there in September. From New Orleans they sailed for Texas, landing off the Brazos in October. Three of the Mier men, who had been separated from the main group with Col. Fisher, were among them. In addition to these men, eight other Mier prisoners managed to escape between June and September from the Tacubaya area, where they had been doing road work, and managed to reach home safely. They were fortunate. Near the end of September a fatal disease, similar to typhus, struck Perote. Twenty-one of the prisoners died from the disease, according to a diary kept by Israel Canfield, one of the Mier men.

On March 24th, 1844, the remaining 35 San Antonio prisoners (those captured by Woll) and six remaining Dawson prisoners were released due to the continuing efforts of General Waddy Thompson, who also managed to secure the release of many more of the Mier prisoners on a one by one basis. (Bear in mind that Texas did not become part of the United States until December 1845.) On March 25th, sixteen more of the Mier prisoners made their escape from Perote prison; nine of them reached Texas safely, while seven were recaptured. General Thompson had been working on the release of all the remaining Texas prisoners. But Santa Anna, on hearing of the escape attempt, broke off the talks, saying that these men were unworthy of his magnanimity. Then, when he heard of the United States' plans to annex Texas, he abrogated the Mexico-Texas armistice and terminated all further talks (for the time being) with the United States.

Yet later, on September 12, 1844, Santa Anna approved the release of all Texans, among whom were 121 of the remaining Mier prisoners. They had been in prison for one year, eight months, and 21 days. Of the 261 men who attacked Mier, 84 had died,

35 escaped and 21 had been released prior to September 1844. An American merchant and Vice-Consul at Vera Cruz, Louis S. Hargous, made arrangements for the schooner *Creole* to take the 108 released prisoners to New Orleans. The *Creole* reached New Orleans on November 7th, and arrived in Galveston on November 10, 1844. The ordeal of the Mier Expedition men was over. One of men, Joseph McCutchan, in a diary kept while a Mier prisoner, expressed sorrow and disappointment that there was no delegation waiting to meet the returning veterans of this disastrous venture, but consoled himself that "...we would soon be on the soil of the country for which we suffered, many bled, and many died."

In a final irony, just three months after the last of the Mier men were released from Perote prison, Santa Anna himself was imprisoned there when he was removed from power in the Mexican Revolution of December 1844.

Conclusion

This has been more an account of the simmering hostilities between Texas and Mexico after the Battle of San Jacinto in spring 1836 had effectively secured Texas Independence. In these currents of history, unknown to most Americans and even to most Texans, we do not see much of the history and personal life experience of Robert Holmes Dunham other than as reflected in these events themselves. There are reasons for this. He was a young man and had not had yet the opportunity to make his mark in the world. He was unmarried and left no heirs of his own. In this respect he was typical of many of the young unmarried men who had come to Texas during these tumultuous years when the political geography of North America

was still in process over being fought over and hacked out. He was not one of the ambitious adventurers like William B. Travis and James Bowie, who had crossed the Sabine River from Louisiana into the lawless territory of Texas, in search of fortune and excitement, or perhaps to escape the grasp of creditors. Rather, he had come with his widowed mother and nine siblings to settle on a new plantation recently purchased by his dead father. The experience of venturing into new territories was not new to him, or at least to his family. His grandfather, Daniel Dunham, had been one of the founders of Nashville, Tennessee, and had himself met a violent death at the hands of Indians. But probably he was not quite prepared for the upheaval and violence of the Texas Revolution—just getting underway when widow Dunham and her ten children arrived from Tennessee in Montgomery County. But he was drawn into it, as was his older brother, Daniel Thomas, who joined Sam Houston's ragtag band of revolutionary fighters and shared in the glory and spoils of victory at San Jacinto.

One of the most interesting aspects of genealogy is that as we find out more about the lives and fortunes of our forebears, we see running through them the currents of American history in which they were active participants, adding their lives to the great stream of people and events that has brought us to where we are today. In Robert Holmes Dunham's case, almost the reverse is true. We find his name carved into a monument at LaGrange, Texas, honoring the men who lost their lives in the Dawson and Mier Expeditions, and his poignant farewell letter survives posted in the Alamo. These are almost the only public residues he left. To find out more about the man and his experiences, we have had to dig into these events themselves, as we have done here.

Sources

When I heard about Robert H. Dunham's name on a memorial monument at La Grange, conveniently located between Austin and Houston, I stopped and saw it. I then asked about news of this man over the Dunham List, and was sent material by several people, Gratia among them. Much of it was from the *Dunham Dispatch*, a forerunner family newsletter published in Flint, Michigan, by Phyllis Kitson, which told me about his family's roots in Tennessee. (See more about Phyllis Kitson and *Dunham Dispatch* in this issue.) I have depended on that information for R.H. Dunham's origins and forebears.

Information on the Dawson and Mier Expeditions, which previously I knew little about, I have taken largely from a booklet sold at the La Grange State Park, locally-called Monument Hill State Historic Site . It is entitled *The Dawson and Mier Expeditions and Their Place in Texas History*, by Mark Abolafia-Rosenzweig, first published in September 1986. Mr. Abolafia-Rosenzweig credits Texas author Houston Wade with meticulously researching and clearing up in 1936 many conflicting accounts of the Mier and Dawson expeditions, on which, he says, he has based much of his account of these events in his booklet. I have used much of Mr. Abolafia-Rosenzweig's text almost verbatim in the accounts given here of the Dawson and Mier exploits. I have not used quotation marks in many places where they are ordinarily called for because they would be so frequent, as I condensed this text, that they would muddy somewhat the flow of the story. But I want to acknowledge here my debt to Mr. Abolafia-Rosenzweig's account in his booklet.

What I did not know, before working on this article is that a Dunham took part in the battle of San Jacinto: Daniel Thomas Dunham, older brother of Robert Holmes, as aforementioned. I do not know yet if I am related to that Dunham family of Tennessee from which these two brothers came. But whether I am so or not, that Dunham family from which two men did come enjoys now a secure place in the aristocracy of Texas History. Credentials in Texas don't get much better than the Alamo and San Jacinto. Sam Houston's citizen army at San Jacinto numbered about 700 who actually fought in the battle, and the valor and daring of those 700 won and established what is today modern Texas, a state of very nearly 20 million people. This is surely a connection I shall spend more time researching. Does any one know the parentage and line of Daniel Dunham, the elder, who came to Tennessee from North Carolina? I should like to know whether he descends from the Deacon John or Singletary-originated Dunham family.

A Short History of *Dunham Dispatch*

by Phyllis S. Kitson

My Dunham ancestors (from my maternal grandmother) left me an unusual amount of old photographs, and from a second cousin once removed I was able to get copies of a huge number of old letters, dating back to 1791. With these materials as a basis, plus some anecdotes that I had enjoyed since childhood, I began a family newsletter: *Dunham Dispatch*.

I edited and published this newsletter from May 1977 until November 1999. It was a monthly free publication, addressed initially to my third cousins (and closer relations), and, eventually, to any descendant of Dea-

con John Dunham who wished to receive it, provided they were willing to share materials of an historical nature, with me. Publication was a bit sporadic during the early years, but it really got going once I got in contact with the incomparable Bill Wood, who shared his vast address book of Dunham cousins with me, along with tips as to which ones he thought would be most interested, and most active, in *DD*.

At one point the *Dispatch* almost died of its own success. People shared all right, fascinating stories about their ancestors and themselves. Then somebody put a notice about *Dunham Dispatch* on the Internet, without my knowledge or approval. Requests for my publication poured—literally poured—in. I couldn't keep up. With a free newsletter, it is easy to get in over your depth, which I did. I couldn't afford to print up so many issues each month. (They all went our via regular U.S. mail, of course, and the cost of postage kept climbing.)

DD wasn't a BUSINESS, and I didn't want it to become one. I didn't want to go through the hassles and hoops of making it a business. I swore I would never charge for any of my newsletters, and I didn't.

The coup de Gras came about when it seemed there would be TWO Dunham family newsletters, with the advent of NDFA (National Dunham Family Association). I mentioned their coming publication in *DD* quite a bit, ran pictures from their organizational meeting, and generally advertised it. People started sending their materials to NDFA, and when I stopped receiving materials, I concluded that it was time to stop my publication. Although it was a bit more complicated than this, I had thought for some while the TWO newsletters dedicated to ONE fam-

ily history was one too many. So that was the end of *Dunham Dispatch*.

You are probably familiar with the next phase of Dunham newsletters, the “what happened next.”

Suffice it to say that I’ve missed doing *DD*. It was loads of fun, very rewarding, and great while it lasted. People really responded to it. We are all proud of our Dunham heritage, and rightfully so.

Latest Bulletin

Jonathan Dunham’s Mill Site -- Found

by Gratia D. Mahony

Jonathan Dunham went from Haverhill Massachusetts to Woodbridge New Jersey at the behest of his father-in-law Colonel Thomas Bloomfield. In 1670/1 Jonathan Dunham received a grant of land upon which to build the first gristmill in Woodbridge. The grist mill was built on Papiack Creek which must have been a stronger stream than it is today. Papiack Creek ran downhill behind the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches (located on Rahway Avenue) and into the Arthur Kill which enters into Raritan Bay. Today Port Reading Avenue crosses the creek, now called Woodbridge Creek, and the mill site is south of the Port Reading bridge and west of the creek.

The site of this mill has been known generally, but until very recently remains of the actual site had not been found. Field research by Rich Crowley, Lenny Vaccarella, Bob McEwen and Jackie Dougherty has allowed them to pinpoint the actual site. Their findings have been con-

firmed by an archaeologist from the Hunter Research Inc., Historical Resource Consultants, of Trenton New Jersey.

This important part of the history of Woodbridge New Jersey merits preservation and acknowledgement by the town. The US Army Corps of Engineers has plans underway to restore the existing but degraded wetland. The proposed plan will also include a small parking area to allow public access to the wetlands and the mill site. Appropriate signage documenting the fact of the grist mill at this location will also be built. There will be a small canoe dock built here to allow access from the water.

Lynn Rakos, Planning Division Archeologist for the US Army Corps of Engineers, will give a presentation in Woodbridge Township in late fall of 2005. She will describe the pieces of evidence, such as portions of the mill dam, that have been found. The area has been excavated in the past in order to lay cables, so the soil has been greatly disrupted. A copy of the Corps report on the project will be available. Please contact Ms. Rakos for additional information.

Jonathan Dunham/alias Singletary was the oldest son of Richard Singletary. Just why he took the surname of Dunham is still unclear, however it may have been due to an inheritance. This was not an uncommon thing to do at the time. The sons of Jonathan Dunham/alias Singletary continued to use the Dunham surname while the other sons of Richard Singletary used the Singletary surname. There are numerous descendants of Jonathan Dunham living today.

Persons interested in supporting proper acknowledgement of this early grist mill,

and the preservation of the site by appropriate means may write to any of the addresses listed below.

Lynn Rakos,
Planning Division Archaeologist
US Army Corps of Engineers
CENAN-PL-EA
26 Federal Plaza
New York, NY 10278-0090
lynn.rakos@usace.army.mil

Councilwoman Caroline Ehrlich
Municipal Building
1 Main Street
Woodbridge, NJ 07095

Historical Association of Woodbridge
Township
PO Box 83
Woodbridge, NJ 07095

Organizational Business

Membership renewals (\$25) are payable on or before January 1, 2006 for the year January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006. Paul C. Dunham will send membership renewal notices prior to December 1, 2005. An on-line renewal form will be placed on the web site soon with payment possible either by check or PayPal. The renewal may, however be paid any time. If US mail is used, the address is **Dunham/ Singletary Family Connections**, PO Box 7178, Helena, MT 59604-7178. While tax deductible non-profit status through IRS has not yet been attained, donations are always welcome. Both membership dues and donations help fund the operation of the organization and support the DNA testing project.