

Here's One for UNSOLVED MYSTERIES 114 Year Old Murder

This 1880 unsolved mystery with a Dunham connection has long intrigued P. C. Alger, Derry, NH. While she hasn't solved the crime, she HAS done a lot of detective work to get as complete a story as possible. Along with the story, she has thoughtfully provided a family chart which helps greatly in explaining the cast of characters. Leonard Case, Jr. was the wealthy murder victim, & he was a first cousin of the grandmoter of Mrs. Thomas (Sally Carskadden) Dunham of Huron Co., Ohio. Thomas & Sally may have been the parents of Rev. M. J. Dunham, in whose barn the family Bible was found, that Bible having provided much of the data for the relationships. THE STORY, by P. C. Alger Murder, mystery, big money, missing heirs... What do Rockefeller, Dunham & Case family histories have to do with that? A 4-generations old oral history, now basically verified, will tell you of the connection: In 1899, Dr. Wm B. Franklin came across a notice in an old Shakopee, MN newspaper looking for lost heirs. Among the names of people whose descendants were being sought was Charlotte Case.

Franklin knew immediately that was his grandmother's maiden name. He wrote his sister, Martha Franklin Whelpley in Cal., who had the family Bible. She had the records photographed & sent them back to her brother. With the records & an attorney's help, a claim was made for the inheritance. Dr. Franklin included his sisters, Martha & Frances Franklin Carr, in the claim. Unfortunately, the case dragged on til just prior to his death in 1904. At that (cont'd p 2)

Henry Case Margery Wiley
Carskadden 1st marriage
2nd m. July 12, 1756

Absolum Case b. 1737
m. Sarah E. Dunn

Leonard Case
d. 1864
m. ?

Stephan Case
lived in NY
m. ?

Sarah (Sally) Case
m. Anson Carskadden
(nephew of Margery C.)
d. 1850

Leonard Case Jr.
d. 1880
Murder victim

John Case
m. ?

Male Carskadden
m. ?

Charlotte Case
m. Otis Franklin

Sally Carskadden
m. Thomas Dunham
Huron Co. Ohio

Samuel Franklin
m. Mary W. Halsey

Bible found -1902
Rev. M.J. Dunham

d. 1904
Dr. Wm. Franklin
m. Susan Sheeran
(or Sharon)

Martha Francis
Franklin Franklin
m. ? m. ?
Whelpley Carr

Mary Adaline Franklin
m. Henry Groetken

Edna Groetken
Sioux, City, Iowa

Richard Roberts
California

114-YEAR OLD MYSTERY (from p. 1) time the attorney told him he had lost by default. A Cleveland paper had originally run the ad, but when the Shakopee paper picked it up, they failed to put in the information that all responses had to be in by a certain date. Thus his claim was disqualified. On its own, the story isn't much, but Dr. Franklin's daughter, Mary Adoline, 14 at the time, never forgot the incident. Correspondence her father had received showed that the Cleveland estate required immediate handling due to the fact that a 99 year lease of land to the railroad had expired. That land is today part of downtown Cleveland, but it was originally owned by 2 brothers, Absolum & Leonard Case. Absolum Case (b. ca. 1737) lived in Newburg (then Ulster), NY. He was part of the Am. Rev. in the Ulster Loyal Guard as blacksmith from 1776/79. It's not known specifically when he & his brother acquired the land in Ohio, but it is known that Leonard had lived in Sussex Co., NJ until 1847. At that time he moved out to the Cleveland area. Absolum seems to have moved, leaving Leonard with the land. Leonard continued working a cattle business, but with the money, he invested in more real estate. He soon amassed a fortune. He died in 1864. He'd married, although to whom is still not known. He had one son, Leonard, Jr., who inherited the entire estate. Jr. continued in his father's footsteps & added to the already large fortune. By 1880, with the country growing so quickly & the land on Lake Erie becoming so valuable, it's not much wonder Jr. was found dead in his bachelor apartments. It appears there was evidence that he had been chloroformed. He died intestate, but until 19 years later when the railroad needed the lease renewed, nothing much seems to have been done about the money or the land. With the word out in the newspapers relatives & would-be relatives came to make their claims. (Writer's note: I should like to state that the court records on the proceedings have never been found -- lost, misplaced, you name it. We've had every excuse given as to why these files can't be found. Think of what a genealogical treasure trove those records would be!) It appears that soon after the claim date an attorney & client went into court & acquired a Quit Claim deed to the land. How & who signed it is still an unsolved mystery, but the new owner IS known: John D. Rockefeller. B. P. America (then Standard Oil) remains the owner of this land today. Repeated contacts with their legal department have failed to locate any trace of the mystery deed. So, on the mysterious basis of a missing Quit Claim by an unknown party, John D. acquired a sizeable chunk of downtown Cleveland & permanent ownership of his railroad bed. In 1902 new evidence was supposedly found in the form of a family Bible that becomes the key to the family connections. The Bible is found in the loft of a barn in Huron Co., Ohio in the possession of a family by the name of Dunham. Soon it's discovered to be a Rev. M. J. Dunham. Little is known about this minister, except that he was related to Absolum Case, via Absolum's daughter, Sally, she marrying a Carskadden & then a Dunham. The Rev. Dunham had a power of attorney in the matter & traveled quietly throughout 14 states, seeking & acquiring signatures of descendants. Each heir was asked to sign an assignment of a contingent fee of 15% of all monies received to Wiggins & Wiggins, Attorneys, of Cleveland. As you probably have figured out, this is where a great deal of fraud, deception & ripping off happens. One John McCormick of Danville, IN took fees to represent a number of families in their legal procedures. It was many years later he turned up in Missouri under another name. Another man from Indiana with a Dunham connection "took sick" & died on his way to prove his claim. Isn't it strange how his family Bible & records disappeared? Another good one deals with family members that decided to (to p. 3)

pool their monies together to send 2 of their own to Cleveland. Strangely, upon their return, the 2 people stated that "there was nothing to be done." Then, by year's end, they both had new houses & were living rather a little too well. I will state some family relations DID receive inheritance money, some as much as \$25,000.00 -- unfortunately none to Mary A. Franklin or her daughter, Edna Groetken, whose oral story this was. Edna told me this story 5 or 6 years ago. I must tell you that this was not the original story. This is what curiosity & constant research has proven. We have proven that a 4-generations-old oral story can have great merit & tie many families together. Edna would be pleased to share any information she has with others. She'd also like to hear from anyone who might know more information about Leonard Case, his wife or family, while living in the Sussex, NJ area (prior to 1847), Thomas Dunham, or the elusive M. J. Dunham. (E. Groetken, 1525 Court St., Sioux City, IA 51105). When collecting, verifying, & writing this story, it occurred to me how many stories each one of us has. Since this one wouldn't be known to you except by the DUNHAM DISPATCH, why don't you write up your stories & send them to P. S. Kitson? Perhaps, once we know your story, it won't take you 5 or 6 years to verify it! Keep searching! -- P. C. Alger, 14 Lesley Circle, Derry, NH 03038. ED. NOTE: A second mystery is the identity of Rev. M. J. Dunham, alive in 1902 & living in Huron Co., Ohio. With only his initials provided, we have no way of finding him in our huge & cumbersome Dunham Index.

DD INDEX CREATED

DD is much indebted to Karen Hill, Half Moon Bay, CA, for the valuable work she has done in creating an index of persons mentioned in the 1992 & 1993 DISPATCH issues. We are very well aware of how tedious a job indexing is, & Karen even went to the trouble of purchasing a new computer program to help with the job. So now, if readers should have questions about any given individual, we can tell you quickly if that person was mentioned in any article during those 2 years.

Q U E R Y

WILSON, DOROTHY PRAY, 11504 Nairn Road, Wheaton, MD 20902, is seeking information on the parents of Gideon Dunham, b. 1757, New Jersey. He died 25 May 1820 in Brown County, Ohio. Gideon had 2 wives, first unknown, 2nd Nary Bowen, who died 1836 Brown Co., OH. Gideon was possibly in Kentucky prior to coming to Ohio. Sons' names: Asa, Charles, Bowen, Gideon, Jr., Samuel, David, & Wilson.

It appears that this issue will have to go out, sans photographs! Before you lament that you have none to send us, look at it this way: You would not receive DD if one or the other of your parents were not a Dunham descendant. You do have pictures of your parents, don't you? We'd be happy to have a picture of that parent, so, please, send in a Xerox copy. It would make these pages look less dull.

DUNHAM DISPATCH
Mrs. P. S. Kitson, Ed.
711 Kensington Avenue
Flint, Michigan 48503

AMOS DUNHAM'S 1855 SPEECH (Continued from April DD)

As for myself, I never cared much about dress, my pride did not run in that channel. I was generally happy and contented in my linsey runabout and trowsers as I would have been in more costly apparel. But I was once ashamed of my dress: I had been promoted, I had been appointed fourth Corporal in Capt. Howes' company of militia; training day came, I went out to Belpre to training and was ordered by the Captain to step out in front of the company to act as fugelman. This was rather too bad, a man of my consequence in this exalted situation, I thought could not show off his dignity to good advantage, could not produce that awe and veneration to which his merit justly entitled him, in leather pantaloons.

The price of everything the farmer could raise in those days was extremely low, and whatever he had to buy, exorbitantly high. A bushel of wheat was nominally twenty five cents, although it could seldom be obtained in cash. I once took some good potatoes to Marietta for sale; some I sold for twelve and a half cents a bushel, and some I could not sell at any price. In 1803 I went out to the old Scioto salt works, now Jackson, and worked several weeks for the salt, packed it home on horses through the wilderness, and sold it for four dollars a bushel. Think of that, farmers; 16 bushels of wheat for 50 pounds of wet, black, dirty salt. A yard of calico that can now be bought for eight or ten cents, would then have cost seventy-five, butter could be bought for six cents a pound, and eggs for four cents a dozen.

No doubt you will wonder and exclaim, "How could people live in such times?" We can now readily get two dollars a bushel for our wheat or potatoes, twenty-five cents for our butter, fifteen cents a dozen for our eggs, and all other production of our farms equally high, and yet we are barely enabled to make the two ends of the year meet!"

I will tell you, friends: the people were plain, simple, and economical. Such things as one hundred and fifty dollar gold watches, five hundred dollar carriages, and one hundred dollar silk dresses, fifty dollar pocket handkerchiefs, &c., &c., were not thought of. The men raised flax and wool, and the women worked those articles into clothing for themselves and families. The women were so vulgar they thought it no disgrace to be useful. Even the young damsel had so little regard for decency and propriety, that she would not drop her broom, or quit her washtub, if she happened to be surprised by her favorite beau in so disgraceful a position.

And were they esteemed any the less because they were clad in plain homespun, and used their utmost exertions to make a beloved family happy? Would not any sensible man prefer such a one for a partner for life to a modern belle, decked out in all her gaudy apparel, her silk dresses dragging in the dust like a peacocks tail, her fingers covered with gold (or brass ?) rings, two large globules dangling from her ears resembling wattles on a hog, and a bonnet about the size of a clam shell, decorated with a profusion of ribbons, stuck on the back part of her head; when she is so refined in her conversation that you can hardly understand what she says; she is so exquisite that the sight of a bug would make her faint; and her abhorrence of anything she considers vulgar is so great, that she would almost as willingly have people believe she was not handsome as to believe that she would ever degrade herself so much as to do any kind of work? I think he would: I think that a plain, good, common-sense, industrious woman is the greatest blessing bestowed on man, and also the most attractive object in nature. I positively know, that when I have seen Laura Gutherie dressed in copperas-colored, home-made petticoat and short gown, dancing a French four, I thought her the most beautiful object in this beautiful world, notwithstanding I knew she worked every day.

[S/w note: Mr. Dunham's next two paragraphs are devoted to urging his listeners to examine their attitudes toward wealth and extravagance. He concludes his address:]

When I entered this assembly today it was very natural for me to look around for the early settlers of this township, my old friends and early associates. I look, but I see them not. Where are they? Where are the Taylors, the Rathbuns, the Robinsons, the Johnsons, the Delanos, the Tiltens, the Clarks, the Coopers, the Bickfords, the Bellows, the Straights, the Hinmans, the Dilleyes, the Ellenwoods, the Bridges, the Terrels, the Frenches, the Graves, the Finches, the Greens, the Harrises, the Nortons, the Smiths, the Coles, the Cutlers, the Newtons, the Chappells, the Hollisters, the Needhams and the Gormans? Gone! Gone! Gone! With but here and there a solitary individual to show that such a person ever existed. They are gone, scattered, and dispersed in every direction; but the far greater proportion of them are "gone to that bourne from which no traveler returns;" they have finished their course, and now rest in their labors. True, I do see in this respectable assembly many who were then children, and others who have since been born, still left to preserve the names and perpetuate the memory of the Pioneers of Dunham.

PLYMPTON, MA VITAL RECORDS (cont'd from April DD)
 PLYMPTON MARRIAGES, cont'd.

Simeon and Lydia Shaw, Feb. 27, 1772.* [Silvanus Donham, P.C.R.]
 Solame and Abijah Bryant, Dec. 28, 1786.* [Elijah, P.C.R.]
 Susanna and Joseph Cobb, Dec. 30, 1787.*
 Suseanah [dup. (Susanna, first w., d. Israel and Joanna (d. Dea. John Rickard and Mary of P.))] and Daniel Crocker [dup. (s. Dea. Abel of Carver, then P., and Mary (Isham) of Barnstable)], Dec. 31, 1741.*

PLYMPTON DEATHS

DUNHAM, Israel [dup. (h. Joanna (d. Dea. John Rickard of P.))], Aug. 18, 1726 [dup. (in 36th y., bur. in P.)].
 Isrell, ch. Salvenus and Rebeckah [(Israel, ch. Dea. Silvanus (s. Israel) and Rebeckah (d. Dea. Abel Crocker))], (May 29, 1828).
 Joanna, ch. Ebenezer and Lydia (Perry) (second w., wid. Nathaniel Fuller Jr.), Oct. 8, 1831, a. 80 y. 10 m. 3 d. "New Style," in P.
 Mary, w. Nath[anie]ll, —, 1714, in P.
 (Rebekah, w. Dea. Silvanus (s. Israel), d. Dea. Abel Crocker, Dec. 1, 1798, a. 79 y. 4 m. 5 d. New Style).
 (Silvanus, Dea., h. Rebekah (d. Dea. Abel Crocker), s. Israel, May 8, 1796, a. 81 y. 11 m. 1 d. New Style, in Carver).
 Silvenes, ch. Salvenus and Rebeckah [(Dea. Silvanus (s. Israel) and Rebekah (d. Abel Crocker))], May 7, 1744.

BELOW: DONALD AUSTIN DUNHAM (1881-1967) (10) (Deacon John 1, John 2, John 3, Ebenezer 4, Ebenezer 5, Jonathan 6, Ralph 7, Jonathan L. 8, Sylvester C. 9) accumulated a lot of nicknames while he was at Yale -- perhaps a measure of popularity. The photo & accompanying paragraph are from the 1903 Yale yearbook.

DONALD AUSTIN DUNHAM.

"Ducky," "Don," "Slobbergost," "Psyche," "Web-foot."

Began life March 22d, 1881, in Hartford, Conn., where his father, Sylvester Clark Dunham, is president of the Travelers Insurance Company. He prepared at the Hartford High School and came to Yale to contribute his mite toward Jack Freeman's happiness and to elevate generally the morals of the class. Ducky considers Yale the best place ever for two reasons, its proximity to a certain street out Whitney Avenue way, and to the southeast corner of Elm and York.

