

# DUNHAM DISPATCH

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## 135 YR OLD LETTER UNUSUAL

### OLDS

### Request to Girl's Father

### NEWS



An album that belonged to Edna Dunham Willard (daughter of Samuel E. Dunham & granddaughter of Francis S. Dunham), covering the early years of the century is the source of this small picture of Edna's cousin, Anna Dunham later Mrs. Maxwell Spaulding) taken in 1903. The picture looks a bit like the type that is [taken] in a machine, that come in strips of four. Actually, there are some other poses of Anna, of the same size & in the same costume, but it seems hardly likely that they would have been taken in the kind of photograph booth that we are familiar with now.

Among the old Dunham family letters belonging to Sue Andersen, Los Angeles, Cal., is one written by her great grandfather, a letter of a type that we are certain would be without a modern counterpart--a formal request for the permission of a young lady's father to marry the young lady.

Francis Sylvester Dunham (1812—1856) (whose picture appeared in the Nov. '77 DD), eldest son of Ralph & Melinda Hyde Dunham, had become acquainted with Leah Anna Handy, daughter of a Washington, D.C. merchant, in 1841. His letter is as follows:

“Wilmington, Del.  
January 5, 1843, Samuel W. Handy, Esq.

Sir: Requests are usually prefaced with the motives which induced, or an apology for, making them. As regards the one I am about to make, I trust the motive



### RECENT WEDDING IN FAMILY

Saturday, January 28th was the date selected by Desta D. Jones, of San Antonio, Texas, for the date of her marriage to Mark Alvin Quick. Desta is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ronald T. Jones, San Antonio & granddaughter of Donald Austin Dunham, jr., which makes her a great great great granddaughter of Ralph & Melinda Hyde Dunham. Our congratulations to the newlyweds, & our appreciation for the opportunity to use this photo of Desta.

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Miriam Leah Dunham, sister of Edna & grandmother of DD's edior, married Luther Ferriss, who was a great maker & keeper of miscellaneous records. From one such book of records (only recently perused) comes the following item of interest, which was sandwiched in among a list of trips & activities for the year 1923:

“May 11th: We went to Rosa's ((sister of Miriam and mother of Ed Sims)) to dinner to meet Bishop Hulse of Cuba.”

The dinner would have been at the Sims home in River Forest, Il. Miriam & Rosa were 2nd cousins of Frances Seymour Hulse (granddaughter of Olive Dunham Barrows), who was the bishop's wife.

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

Very respectfully,  
Francis S.  
Dunham.”

Mr. Handy gave his approval, and the marriage took place in Washington, D.C. on August 29, 1843.

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Ed Sims, Lake Bluff, Illinois, a great great great grandson of Ralph & Melinda Dunham (our reference point), reports that he spent 3 weeks in England last September, the first week of which period he was engaged in a singing tour with his church choir. Back home, he is still busy with his music. In addition to the church choir, Ed has a seven concert season with the Lake Forest Symphony.

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