

TRAGEDY IN MEXICO: 1843

Soldier Writes Home for Last Time

A heart-rending letter (not dated, but evidently written on March 25, 1843) by R. H. Dunham, of Fayette County, Texas, comes to DD from John S. Dunham, Cortland, NY, who says that he may have received it from Mary Dunham Hester, a cousin who lives in San Antonio, TX. Here is a typescript of the letter: "Mexico. Dear Mother, I write to you under the most awful feelings that a son ever addressed a mother, for in half an 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 ----- of Santa Anna that every tenth man should be shot. We drew lots. I was one of the unfortunate. I cannot say anything 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. Headenberg will, should he be the all to inform you. Farewell. Your affectionate son, R. H. DUNHAM." ADDED NOTE OF EXPLANATION: "300 Texans under Capt. Wm. S. Fisher unsuccessfully attacked Mier in northern Mexico, were repulsed, & 170 of them were taken prisoners by the Mexicans. They were taken to Salado & imprisoned. The Mexican military authority ordered that every tenth should be shot. To select these men to be shot, 170 beans were placed in a pot, of which 17 beans were black beans & the others white. Each Texan drew a bean, those drawing a black bean being immediately shot. March 25, 1843. The soldier who wrote this letter, R. H. Dunham, from Fayette County, drew one of the black ones. Capt. William Mosby Eastland also drew a black bean: "Thank God, Death has no terrors for me." Big Foot Wallace, the famous scout, was one of the soldiers who drew a white bean. These martyrs are now entomberd in a new cemetery at LaGrange, TX." So little is known of this man or of the tragic circumstances that ended his life. We don't have his Dunham ancestry; we don't even know what the R. H. stood for. And a look at the clues from the larger picture is not much more enlightening. This battle did not occur during the Mexican War; that war didn't begin until 1848. Santa Anna (1795-1876) shows up in THE WORLD BOOK, all right. The article from which the above picture was taken states that "from 1841 to 1844 he was president again," referring to his stormy career in Mexican politics, one of alternating successes & failures. No mention is made of the particular battle that caused R. H. Dunham's death, though. Was it such a routine kind of event that it didn't warrant a special name, a special write-up? We didn't find MIER (where the attack occurred) in northern Mexico on modern maps. Neither did we find Salado, where the unlucky 17 prisoners were shot. Perhaps the provenance of the letter, as recorded by John S. Dunham, can provide a bit more information. John says that the family genealogist of the Elsbree clan was the one who sent it to him. We find a couple of Elsbree entries in our Dunham Index: Ira Elsbree, who married Sarah Ann Dunham, daughter (to p. 2)



Ayer Coll., Newberry Library; Bettmann Archive

Santa Anna, above, led the Mexican army against Texas in the war for Texan independence.

TRAGEDY IN MEXICO (from p. 1) of Hezekiah Dunham (1791-1863)(6)(Deacon John 1, Jonathan 2, Daniel 3, Samuel 4, Samuel 5). Hezekiah moved from Chenango Co., NY to Wisconsin. Ira Elsbree is said to have been of Milan, PA. Ira & Sarah Ann (Dunham) Elsbree had a son Thomas. We don't have any further information on this line. It is certainly fitting that the 17 martyred Texans were re-buried in a tomb in La Grange, TX (county seat of Fayette County), undoubtedly with appropriate ceremonies. Still, we'd like to accord R. H. Dunham his rightful place in the family records as well. Who can tell us more about him -- please?

CHOPPY PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Please excuse the uncertainty of the current publication schedule. Monthly? Every-other-monthly? Whatever! At this particular point we can only say that we'll publish DD each month that we have the stories to include & the money to print & mail it out. (Photos are especially needed. Remember, they don't have to be old ones.)

MICHIGAN DEATH BENEFITS

Selma Blackmon, Stone Mountain, GA, is the person to thank for this listing of Michigan Dunhams for whom Social Security death benefits have been paid. Perhaps 2 things should be noted about this listing. Firstly, the Government in its wisdom decided to omit the specific dates of death. Thus the "00's" between the month & the year, which makes it a bit more difficult for anyone wishing to order a copy of an obituary, but shouldn't hinder greatly those wanting to order a death certificate. Michigan death certificates cost \$10.00 if you send directly to Lansing for them. Sometimes the individual counties charge less. Secondly, compilers of this data neglected to include the city or county where the deaths occurred, & only give the zip code. There are ways to get the place from the zip code, but it can be a bit tricky. Zips that begin with 481 are in the Detroit area. 48 pertains to the eastern side of the state, 49 to the western. Check with Michigan residents, your post office, or your library for more specific help.

SSN	SNDX	NAME	BIRTH	IS	DEATH	R-ZIP	P-ZIP	RC
375-38-2469	D550	DUNHAM, ADELINE	01-30-1891	MI	01-00-1965			MI
374-26-8137	D550	DUNHAM, ALBERTA	09-26-1903	MI	01-00-1985	48912		MI
380-24-6984	D550	DUNHAM, ALBINE	08-29-1895	MI	11-00-1975	48126		MI
381-16-8996	D550	DUNHAM, ALETEA	10-11-1898	MI	09-00-1986	48861		MI
370-68-3383	D550	DUNHAM, ALICE	01-21-1885	MI	03-02-1988	48020		
368-48-4647	D550	DUNHAM, ANNA	03-15-1900	MI	10-00-1979	48602		MI
377-38-4474	D550	DUNHAM, ARTHUR	12-11-1891	MI	09-00-1972	23226		TX
381-26-1760	D550	DUNHAM, ARTHUR	06-23-1892	MI	10-00-1963			MI
386-09-2215	D550	DUNHAM, ARTHUR SR	01-21-1901	MI	05-00-1970	48602		MI
379-32-8841	D550	DUNHAM, BEATRICE	02-04-1914	MI	11-18-1988	48519		
374-38-8382	D550	DUNHAM, BERNICE	01-17-1894	MI	05-00-1972	48017		MI
385-26-0924	D550	DUNHAM, BERNICE	07-18-1900	MI	08-00-1979		49230	
370-18-8531	D550	DUNHAM, BERT	07-15-1923	MI	10-00-1982		49601	
380-20-2235	D550	DUNHAM, BERTHA	08-03-1887	MI	09-00-1974	48801		MI
382-03-6498	D550	DUNHAM, BION	01-17-1899	MI	03-00-1983	33905		FL
379-22-2641	D550	DUNHAM, BRAYTON	02-10-1908	MI	05-00-1967			
363-16-1492	D550	DUNHAM, CARL	03-16-1899	MI	06-00-1955			
372-09-8373	D550	DUNHAM, CARL	01-01-1891	MI	07-00-1981	49509	49418	MI
2-09-3626	D550	DUNHAM, CAROLYN	08-13-1919	MI	08-09-1989	48017		
383-52-0487	D550	DUNHAM, CARRIE	06-29-1879	MI	10-00-1966	49015		MI
377-10-1578	D550	DUNHAM, CARTER	12-05-1901	MI	12-00-1966	48184		MI
366-18-1521	D550	DUNHAM, CASEY	01-21-1894	MI	01-00-1980	48458		MI
374-32-2198	D550	DUNHAM, CATHERINE	12-05-1935	MI	03-00-1984	48055	48055	MI
366-10-5043	D550	DUNHAM, CHARLES	09-29-1903	MI	02-00-1982	49007	49007	MI
369-20-9815	D550	DUNHAM, CHARLES	03-31-1924	MI	04-00-1988	48089		

MICHIGAN DEATH BENEFITS (cont'd from page 2)

381-22-8771	D550	DUNHAM, CHARLES	11-08-1927	MI	10-00-1978	48215		MI
370-16-2295	D550	DUNHAM, CHESTER	05-28-1918	MI	08-02-1990	48016		
369-12-1163	D550	DUNHAM, CLAIR	01-19-1890	MI	07-00-1981	48079	48079	MI
73-05-3912	D550	DUNHAM, CLARENCE	05-13-1903	MI	04-00-1970	33936		FL
75-30-8710	D550	DUNHAM, CLIFFORD	10-17-1897	MI	07-00-1984	48831		MI
377-18-1518	D550	DUNHAM, CLYDE	07-02-1896	MI	05-00-1969	49001		MI
380-10-0809	D550	DUNHAM, CLYDE	04-27-1912	MI	08-00-1967			
366-68-5910	D550	DUNHAM, CORDELIA	04-12-1888	MI	06-00-1983	48005		MI
364-68-4805	D550	DUNHAM, DAISY	04-22-1902	MI	08-00-1975	48509		MI
370-03-7425	D550	DUNHAM, DARRELL	07-29-1891	MI	01-00-1973	48892		MI
364-50-9329	D550	DUNHAM, DAVID	04-21-1948	MI	10-00-1973			
367-01-5523	D550	DUNHAM, DAVID	06-06-1918	MI	04-00-1968			
383-30-8949	D550	DUNHAM, DAVID	06-02-1932	MI	04-06-1991	48912		
385-01-3497	D550	DUNHAM, DEE	04-03-1891	MI	09-00-1963			MI
375-26-8775	D550	DUNHAM, DELBERT	08-14-1925	MI	03-00-1984	48743		MI
369-16-4956	D550	DUNHAM, DEWITT	02-04-1901	MI	12-00-1980	48831		MI
363-20-2613	D550	DUNHAM, DIO	01-21-1892	MI	07-00-1974	48185		MI
366-46-8728	D550	DUNHAM, DONALD	04-13-1946	MI	02-00-1977		49345	
367-12-6922	D550	DUNHAM, DONALD	06-16-1917	MI	02-00-1984	92024	92054	CA
371-28-0253	D550	DUNHAM, DONALD	07-02-1924	MI	02-00-1978		48875	
372-05-5523	D550	DUNHAM, DONALD	07-20-1906	MI	07-00-1980	48240	48240	MI
379-48-6203	D550	DUNHAM, DONALD	02-15-1946	MI	06-00-1980		37055	
374-30-4843	D550	DUNHAM, DORRANCE	02-18-1890	MI	12-00-1970	48005		MI
376-22-4164	D550	DUNHAM, DOUGLAS	11-16-1927	MI	07-00-1986	85602	85602	AZ
368-16-8769	D550	DUNHAM, EARL	06-20-1921	MI	02-00-1983	82930		WY
371-05-2066	D550	DUNHAM, EARL	08-10-1901	MI	03-00-1976	48640		MI
374-18-2421	D550	DUNHAM, EARL	12-11-1895	MI	01-00-1966			MI
381-05-3505	D550	DUNHAM, EARL	11-06-1911	MI	12-00-1979	48043	48043	MI
372-14-1385	D550	DUNHAM, EDGAR	02-26-1886	MI	04-00-1966	49783		MI
73-38-9242	D550	DUNHAM, EDMOND	05-05-1906	MI	07-00-1982	48625	48625	MI
365-68-9816	D550	DUNHAM, EDNA	12-13-1886	MI	05-00-1983	48020		MI
368-70-7047	D550	DUNHAM, EDWIN	06-27-1920	MI	06-00-1976	49065		MI
383-05-2288	D550	DUNHAM, EDWIN	12-13-1897	MI	07-30-1988	34641		
380-05-9174	D550	DUNHAM, ELDON	08-02-1895	MI	08-00-1974	48849		MI
369-68-8407	D550	DUNHAM, ELEANORE	09-04-1899	MI	12-00-1973	48214		MI
385-16-6023	D550	DUNHAM, ELFRIEDA	06-24-1904	MI	07-00-1983	49009		MI
368-36-6940	D550	DUNHAM, ELIZABETH	05-04-1903	MI	11-00-1975	48446		MI
379-46-6633	D550	DUNHAM, ELIZABETH	01-15-1878	MI	12-00-1973	48104		MI
366-07-4847	D550	DUNHAM, ELMER	01-30-1895	MI	10-00-1977	49017		MI
369-20-2910	D550	DUNHAM, EMIL	07-09-1898	MI	04-00-1972	48157		MI
368-48-6499	D550	DUNHAM, EMMA	01-12-1877	MI	05-00-1968	45042		OH
368-14-3125	D550	DUNHAM, EMORY	11-30-1919	MI	09-00-1980	60607	60455	IL
373-38-0398	D550	DUNHAM, ESTELLA	04-09-1886	MI	11-00-1979	54143	49858	WI
363-01-4414	D550	DUNHAM, ESTELLE	05-08-1912	MI	06-00-1978	48122	48122	MI
364-68-7962	D550	DUNHAM, ESTHER	08-19-1893	MI	04-00-1989	48104		HC
379-30-5711	D550	DUNHAM, ESTHER	02-20-1908	MI	02-00-1987	49201		MI
364-20-9972	D550	DUNHAM, ETHEL	07-30-1901	MI	11-00-1977	48505		MI
365-01-4340	D550	DUNHAM, ETHEL	08-05-1900	MI	01-00-1974	48239		MI
377-09-9017	D550	DUNHAM, ETHEL	10-04-1914	MI	04-00-1986	33548		FL
365-10-8393	D550	DUNHAM, EVA	04-01-1894	MI	01-00-1970	49030		MI
385-20-3610	D550	DUNHAM, EVA	06-07-1894	MI	07-00-1987	48880		MI
372-54-2398	D550	DUNHAM, FANNIE	06-25-1900	MI	10-00-1979	48228		MI
366-44-5817	D550	DUNHAM, FERN	02-17-1944	MI	10-00-1976		48866	
365-68-3555	D550	DUNHAM, FLORENCE	09-19-1884	MI	03-00-1974	48503		MI
76-16-4030	D550	DUNHAM, FLOYD	02-09-1907	MI	01-00-1978	33515	33515	FL
73-38-3820	D550	DUNHAM, FLOYD	09-19-1882	MI	06-00-1974	49241		MI
379-24-7515	D550	DUNHAM, FORREST	03-10-1893	MI	04-00-1975	49446		MI
364-07-3887	D550	DUNHAM, FRANCIS	02-11-1882	MI	05-00-1967	49646		MI
368-09-0166	D550	DUNHAM, FRANK	02-27-1902	MI	03-00-1984	49505	49505	MI
385-09-6094	D550	DUNHAM, FRANK	04-03-1891	MI	06-00-1966	49509		MI

TO BE CONTINUED

JAMES R. DUNHAM

Betty J. Dunham, Kalkaska, MI, sent in this excerpt from THE PORTRAIT & BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD OF BERRIEN & CASS COUNTIES (MI) (1893). It hasn't been possible to identify this line (Matthew-James-Timothy W.-James R.) from our present Dunham Index. Might anyone be able to shed further light on the antecedents of this branch of the family?

JAMES R. DUNHAM. The cultivation of small fruits has proven to be one of the most important and successful industries of Berrien County, and among the men who are prosperously engaged in this business may be mentioned the name of our subject, who owns a fine fruit farm located on section 34, St. Joseph Township. Here he has thirty-six acres, upon which he raises peaches, grapes and berries, making his shipments to the markets at Chicago and Milwaukee. In addition to this valuable property, he is the owner of six hundred and sixty-one acres of land in Lincoln Township, of which seventy-five have been cleared and placed under excellent cultivation. Upon that place he raises small fruits and berries, and finds this business a remunerative one. His wife is the owner of thirty-four acres in Lincoln Township, which is partly cleared and devoted to fruit-raising.

A native of Michigan, our subject was born in Portage Township, Kalamazoo County, on the 21st of April, 1835. He traces his ancestry to patriotic and valiant forefathers. His paternal great-grandfather, Matthew Dunham, enlisted at the commencement of the Revolutionary War and served until its close, and tradition says that he was present at the famous "tea party" in Boston Harbor. He settled on Johnson Creek, in New York State, where he constructed and managed a raft in the American service during the War of 1812, but the raft, having been discovered by the British fleet, was destroyed.

The paternal grandfather of our subject was James Dunham, who was reared in New Jersey and married a Miss Ward, of New York City, whence they moved to western New York and from there up Sackett's Harbor, and later to Canada. The father of our subject, Timothy Ward Dunham, was born in Canada, January 12, 1808, and was reared on a farm in Orleans County, N. Y. His father died when he was a child of two years, and eight years later his mother was again married. He was about seventeen when he started out in the world to earn his own livelihood, and, proceeding to Rochester, N. Y., he found employment for a time on a farm.

Coming to Michigan in 1834, the senior Mr. Dunham spent one summer in Jackson County and in the spring of the following year settled in Kalamazoo County, where he purchased land and embarked in the nursery business. In 1854 he disposed of his property in Kalamazoo County, and, coming to Berrien County, located in St. Joseph Township, where he purchased land and engaged in fruit-raising. Having been reared along the lake shore in New York State, in the midst of a fine fruit country, he was naturally familiar with, and interested in, the cultivation of fruit, and when he settled in Kalamazoo County he endeavored, but in vain, to make a success of that business.

When Mr. Dunham came to St. Joseph Township, he purchased two hundred acres along the lake shore, and judging that this land would be especially adapted for fruit-raising, he embarked in that business, and proved, to the great astonishment and delight of other people in the county, that the soil here is peculiarly fitted for the raising of fruits. His name is worthy of perpetuation, for he was the pioneer of the nursery business in Kalamazoo County and one of the pioneers of the fruit business here, as well as one of the most extensive fruit-growers in this section of the State.

Removing to Lincoln Township, Mr. Dunham embarked in the sawmill business and was thus engaged for a number of years. He also planted a peach and a grape orchard on his place, where he resided until the fall of 1892, and since that time has made his home with our subject. He was married June 28, 1856, to Miss Catherine, a daughter of Enos Newman. This estimable lady was born in Vermont, whence in an early day she accompanied her parents to Covington, N. Y., and there grew to womanhood. At the age of twenty-four she came to Kalamazoo, Mich., where she was married. Her death occurred July 12, 1892, at the age of eighty-two years and eleven months. She was a woman of many noble attributes of character and was devotedly attached to her husband and children. Two of her children were Mary, who married Bryce Quint, and died on a farm near Niles; and Martha, who died when six months old.

IN A COPY of a snapshot from Bill Wood, Stephens City, VA, we see Henry Alpheus Dunham (1872-1946) (9) (Deacon John 1, Joseph 2, Nathaniel 3, Isaac 4, Calvin 5, Alpheus 6, Alpheus 7, George W. 8); Henry's daughter, Alice Marion Dunham Wood (1899-1990); & (sort of) Henry's wife, Mabel L. Cogswell Dunham; & Gail Conrad. They are Bill's grandparents, his mother, & his godmother (whose smile is not quite extinguished by the damage to the original picture.



Cont'd from page 4:

In early days Timothy Dunham was a Whig, and later became a strong Abolitionist. He is now identified with the Republican party, to which he gives his unwavering support. He was converted in 1828, uniting with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and is now a member of the Methodist Protestant Church. He is one of the oldest surviving settlers of St. Joseph Township, and at the present time (1893) is eighty-five years of age. A man of affable manners, intelligence of a very high order, and shrewd business qualities, he has attracted a host of friends and attained a position among the most successful of Berrien's pioneers.

The subject of this sketch was reared in Kalamazoo County, Mich., until 1851, when he accompanied his father to Berrien County, this State. At the age of eighteen he came to Berrien County, and about six months after he attained his majority he settled on his present farm. Prior to his settlement here, the timber had been cut down, but had been replaced by a dense growth of brush, which forced Mr. Dunham to do considerable "grubbing." As the result of energy and industry, he succeeded in clearing the land, planting trees and improving the place. At the time he came here, the entire country was in a very wild state. Wild animals were here in abundance, and our subject frequently engaged in the sport of hunting deer, which often fell the victims of his unerring shot.

In Kalamazoo County, June 25, 1859, Mr. Dunham married Miss Rebecca Ann, daughter of Charles Ackley, and they are the parents of six children, namely: Enoch W., a prominent fruit-grower of Lincoln Township; Sarah Ella, a school teacher residing at home; Ernest J., who resides at Stevensville, Berrien County, and operates a saw-mill which he and his father own; Catherine E., Charles W. and Mary A., who are at home.

ORISKANY, ^{Feb 12} 1923

Edward G. Dunham, Civil War Veteran, Succumbs to Long Illness.

Oriskany, Feb. 13.—At the home of his daughter, Mrs. Rees A. Jones, Sunday, occurred the death of Edward G. Dunham. His death was due to complications.

Mr. Dunham was born in Bridgeport, N. Y., February 10, 1839, and there his early life was spent. In the same town on August 1, 1861, he married Miss Phoebe Ann Traver. On the breaking out of the Civil War, Mr. Dunham enlisted in the 157th Regiment, New York Volunteers, and served until the close of the war. He participated in every battle fought by his regiment.

He is survived by his wife, one sister, Mrs. Alice Gearhart of Rochester, two daughters, Mrs. Rees Jones of Oriskany and Mrs. Charles Meyers, III, five grandchildren and three grandchildren.

BETTER LUCK attended our research regarding this Oriskany, NY obituary, sent in by Ann Eldred, Verona, NY. It was the name of Edward's sister, Alice Dunham Gearhart, that enabled us to identify Edward. Edward G. Dunham belonged to the 8th generation in America, with this ancestry: Deacon John 1, Joseph 2, Eleazer 3, Israel 4, Ebenezer 5, Nathaniel 6, David 7.