



THOMAS J. DONHAM

NOTE: We have two suggestions to Gladys & to others who may be searching for ancestors who spelled the the name DONHAM & whose families settled primarily in the south. Suggestion # 1 would be to pursue the possibility of descent from ROBERT DUNHAM. Robert, b. 1605, was a younger brother of Deacon John Dunham, and, like him, was a dissenter. In 1635 Robert was "transported to Virginia because of his religious activities." Suggestion # 2 relates to THOMAS DUNHAM (b. 1626), 2nd son of Deacon John. Isaac W. Dunham states (p. 40) that "many of his (Thomas') descendants adopted the name DONHAM."

QUARREL CASTS LONG SHADOW

From Gladys Donham, Houston, Texas, we have received a fascinating package of materials pertaining to her own line, which goes back a long ways in America but is not presently tied to the relatives of Deacon John Dunham (1589-1669). Among the papers which she sent is a copy of a 15-page booklet written in 1913 by Thomas J. Donham of Santa Ana, California. Its title is GENEALOGY OF THE DONHAMS IN AMERICA: DATING FROM A.D. 1760 TO 1913. As best we can judge, this Thomas J. Donham was born in 1855 in Lafayette County, Miss., & he had a large family, for whom this genealogy was created. Thomas J. acknowledges that his work is "very incomplete." This is tantalizingly true from the outset: Thomas speaks of two brothers who were the first known of the line, and their given names are missing! He tells that the two brothers went from Ireland to England and then from England to America, dating these events at 1760. He goes on to say that for some unknown reason "a strong alienation" developed between the brothers -- one of such gravity that they disclaimed their relationship & even decided to spell their names differently, one using DUNHAM and the other DONHAM. Then they separated themselves geographically as well, one going north and the other going south. As far as we can tell, there is no particular documentation for the date of arrival of the brothers, but it is certain that it pre-dates the American Revolution, because one of them (evidently the one who settled in the South?) fought in the Revolution. (It seems as if his name, or at least a list of possible names, should be available upon some further research.) Hazy as the beginnings of this story are, that antique quarrel still seems vibrantly real. Was it over some fine point of religion? Or was it of a more personal nature? Whatever the origin of this monumental disagreement, it had far-reaching results that still reverberate somewhat today, in that groups of relatives don't know that they ARE relatives -- & family genealogists are still frustrated when, instead of answers to their questions, they get nothing but the dust from that 17th century (cont'd p. 4)

TRAVELERS' 2ND PRESIDENT

Sylvester C. Dunham
1846-1915

Photo courtesy of Travelers Ins.

Cutter's GENEALOGICAL HISTORY OF CONNECTICUT provides the following material on Sylvester C. Dunham (1846-1915) (19) (Deacon John 11, John 12, John 13, Ebenezer 14, Ebenezer 15, Jonathan 16, Ralph 17 Jonathan L. 18): "Sylvester C Dunham, son of Jonathan L. Dunham, was born at Mansfield CT, Apr. 24, 1846. When he was 11 years old his father & the family moved to Portage County, Ohio to settle. He attended the district schools & academy there & entered Mt. Union College, but at the end of his freshman year left to go to work. He returned to CT in 1865 & taught school 2 years. Then he studied law in the office of Hon. Charles E. Mitchell of New Britain & was admitted to the bar in 1871. He began the practice of law the year following & was associated with Hon. Henry C. Robinson of Hartford until 1883, when he was elected city attorney of Hartford. He held this office for 2 yrs & then accepted the position of secretary of the Corbin Companies of New Britain. 12 years later he resigned to become general counsel of the Travelers Ins. Co. of Hartford, & he has been a director of that company since Jan. of 1897. In Jan. 1899 he was

elected Vice President & Oct. 14, 1901 President. He has directed the affairs of this great corporation with fine discrimination, tact & sound judgment, as the growth & prosperity of the company show. He is director of the CT Fire Ins. Co; of the Natl Exchange (cont'd p. 5)

T. J. DONHAM (cont'd from p. 3) altercation in their eyes. Many historical dates were clearly unavailable to Thomas J. Donham, & he compounded the problem by leaving out a lot of dates that he himself would have known. (He was good about recording places, however.) In 1913 he styled himself as "Thomas J. Donham, son of John, who was the son of Jonathan, who was the son of --- Donham, who came from Ireland about 1760." T. J. D. was extremely fortunate in one respect: He had another Donham to pick up his work 59 years later & bring it up to date as of 1972 for one branch of the family. That is the kind of cooperation that is nearest to any genealogist's heart -- a younger relative to carry on such a labor of love.

SYLVESTER C. DUNHAM (cont'd from page 4) Bank, of which he is also Vice President; of the State Savings Bank; of the Metropolitan Bank & the American Surety Co. of New York City; of the Society for Savings; the Colts Patent Fire Arms Co.; & of the American Hardware Co. He is a member of the Connecticut Society of Mayflower Descendants, the Sons of the American Revolution; & the Order of Founders & Patriots. In politics, he is a Republican about 4 times out of 5. Sylvester C. Dunham married Oct. 18, 1877 Mary Austin of Bristol, Ct. Children: Donald Austin Dunham, born Mar. 22, 1881, a graduate of Yale, Class of 1903, member of Phi Gamma Delta, Assistant Secretary of the Travelers Insurance Co. of Hartford."

BOOK HAS ARRIVED!

At very long last, we have received Isaac W. Dunham's 1907 DUNHAM GENEALOGY: DEACON JOHN DUNHAM (1589-1669) & HIS DESCENDANTS, plus the extra volume that deals with Deacon John's ancestry. We'll be happy to check names for anyone who is searching, but we've noticed one big shortcoming of the Index: Only heads of families are indexed! Thus an individual who wasn't contacted or didn't send in information about his children didn't get into the index, making his name next to impossible to find. Other surnames of those marrying into the family are indexed, but only if data was provided about the children of that couple. Presently we are in the process of rearranging the material on computer. It is (and will be) a long, confusing job -- a real producer of Excedrin headaches. Still, it seems a worthwhile prelude to bringing I. W. Dunham's work up to date. When (and if) we get it done, there will follow a complete, every-name index.

QUERY

LUCILE WADE, 1540 Chipman Road, Owosso, MI 48867, is searching for the parents of SARAH DUNHAM (b. Jan. 28, 1774/d. June 29, 1841). Sarah married Joseph SUTHERLAND (b. 1770) in October, 1790 in the Baptist Church in Bangall, Dutchess Co., NY. Later they lived in Canada and in Niagara County, NY.



To emphasize that DD is not just interested in OLD photos (& to brag a bit, any grandmother's unquestioned right) we are presenting this new photo of the 2 oldest grandsons of Ed. Phyllis Kitson (22) (Deacon John 11, John 12, John 13, Ebenezer 14, Ebenezer 15, Jonathan 16, Ralph 17, Francis 18, Samuel E. 19, Miriam Dunham Ferriss 20, Lillyn Ferriss Barclay 21). Nick Taylor (left) just completed his soph. year in college, & Greg Taylor just received his Master's degree from the U. of Louisville. He will be starting law school this fall.