

DUNHAM DISPATCH

Vol. X No. 6

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COUPLE'S SEPARATION PROVIDES POSTERITY WITH MANY LETTERS

When couples are separated for reasons of health or financial circumstances (the evidence is that this happened not infrequently in the 19th century), it can be very difficult for them. However, history can benefit from those separations--if they result in a flurry of letters which, fortunately, get saved for posterity.

Such was the case with Francis Sylvester Dunham (1812-1856)(8)(John 1, John 2, John 3, Ebenezer 4, Ebenezer 5, Jonathan 6, Ralph 7) & his wife, Leah Anna Handy Dunham. Francis was a native of Connecticut, a schoolmaster, who migrated to the eastern shore of Maryland for his ever-delicate health. There he met & married Leah Anna in Washington, DC. By the 1850's it had become evident that this change in climate was not going to be the answer to his problems, so he set off in quest of a more efficacious one, & in a place where he could also find an appropriate school. At the time of this letter his wife & children appear to have been staying with his family in Connecticut.

The letters flew back & forth, & over the generations the collection remained intact & eventually became the property of the late Sue S. Andersen, Los Angeles. Some years ago Sue lent the whole group to her 2nd cousin once removed, Phyllis Kitson--& in this manner they become available to DD.

"Cantrell's Bridge, Delaware. Nov. 13, 1850. My dear wife: I received your letter on Sat. morning last. I enquired every night from Tuesday, when I thought it possible I might receive it. I am glad to be at work once more, as it is the only relief from the one idea, calculating the distance between this & Coventry, estimating the number of days in the months, etc. It is not very generous, perhaps, to encourage your propensity to make the same useless calculations, but I hope you will be enabled to reduce them into a brief space by endeavoring to pass the time as contentedly & pleasantly as possible.

"I shall not miss one of your queries. 1st, my health is much better than when I left; have been using Cherrybark; cough much improved. 2nd, have secured a very good boarding house within 10 rods of the schoolhouse; pay \$2.50 for board, washing, etc. The family consists of a captain, his wife, 1 little girl & 1 servant. They are plain, substantial & kind-hearted people of the first respectability, members of Mr. Handy's church. So far as I see now, I could not have made a better selection in this town.

"The trustees of the school are very pleasant men, seem inclined to leave everything to my discretion. The school itself is quite as pleasant as I anticipated. The village is truly one of the pleasantest in the state. It bears some resemblance to Princess Anne. The inhabitants are very plain people, mostly Methodists. There is little or nothing it lacks.

"I do not expect to find much ----- suitable to my -----, but when my wife & children are with me, I shall need no more. There is one church in this place (Methodist), St. Anne's, to which we shall belong. about 4 miles distant. Mr. Harold, the rector, resides in this place. I have not yet made his acquaintance. I intend to make myself known to him at the earliest opportunity. A house sufficient for us may probably be rented for about \$50.00 per annum. I am of the opinion that with rigid economy we may contrive to live on \$350.00. There seems to be (cont'd page 2)

FSD TO LEAH ANNA (from p. 1) no prospect of getting more at present. If we all retain our health, with the blessing of Providence, I have little fear of the result.

"Pray be very careful. I feel anxious to caution you about 10 different things, but especially do not overexert yourself. Do not expose yourself to sudden cold.

"My box has arrived at Port Penn. I am waiting on opportunity of getting it down here (7 miles).

"My dear, I believe I have answered all your questions. God bless & keep you. I have faith that he will. It is about 9 o'clock, a time when in spirit I am most with you. Imagine me there every night until you shall awake some bright morning & find it true.

"Give my love to Mother & sisters & brothers. They will excuse me for not mentioning them by name, as I am rather full of my own dear wife just now. Affectionately yours, F S.DUNHAM"

NEWSLETTER NEWS: A June '97 issue of DD may come as something of a surprise, since the last word (in the May issue) from DD "headquarters" was that the newsletter was to become a bi-monthly publication. However, a schedule of publishing on even-numbered months suits Editor Kitson's plans best, & it is for this reason that a June issue exists. There will be no July issue of DD as we jog into the new every-other-month production plan. Quite possibly, due to the severe ructions which have plagued DD in the last 6 months or so (news of which has spilled over into its pages), our supply of "Dunham stories" has grown considerably slimmer than usual. Please send whatever you have on hand **now**. You are undoubtedly familiar with the types of things DD needs, but we'll reiterate: 1/ newspaper clippings pertaining to Dunhams or Dunham descendants. 2/ old letters written by Dunhams & Dunham descendants 3/ photographs of same (These can be from **any** period of photographic history, up to & including last week.) 4/ poems & art work by family members 5/ queries. See you in August! PSK

A DIFFERENT TAKE ON THE ANCESTRY

Could Poor Spelling Habits Mess Up "Blood Tests" ?

Anyone who has ever perused census records in search of relatives is probably familiar with the problem of the inexact spelling of many 18th & early 19th century individuals. (Of course, we're never guilty of that now, are we?) They would give a surname an extra L, R or S, or, equally, rob it of one of its consonants. And vowels could be interpreted any old which way. Thus it is that we have to look closely at very similar names & cannot dismiss someone with a similarly spelled name as being "no kin of ours."

The man discussed in the article on Page 3 (shared by Marilyn Roth, Mitchell, SD) might be a case in point. Of course his Spanish ancestry, recorded on this article, might mitigate against his being related, back in any century, to the Dunhams (& he does have a rather exotic look to him), but -- whatever the explanation -- does DONHAM sound Spanish to you? Let's consider him as possibly "one of the fold."

DUNHAM DISPATCH

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Nathaniel
John
Jonathan
Jonathan
Larkin

EVERTS, Louis H.,
History of Clermont Co.,
OH, 1880 (J.B. LIPPINCOTT,
Philadelphia) Urbana Free Library

JONATHAN S. DONHAM.

The family of Donham is of Spanish descent, the original name being "Don Singleton." Some time towards the close of the sixteenth century one of the ancestors of this Don Singleton family had become noted as an active member of the Liberal party, or, as it might have been then termed, the Rebel party. He was arrested, tried, and banished, but after his sentence escaped and fled to Scotland, where he assumed the name of Don Ham, which finally became corrupted into the single name "Donham."

A son or grandson of this expatriated ancestor emigrated to America, and settled in what is now New Jersey, where he was twice married, and by his first wife had one son, John; and by his second, three sons, William, Jonathan, and Nathaniel, and a daughter, name unknown. John and Jonathan remained in New Jersey, William removed to Northern Alabama, and Nathaniel married and settled in Pennsylvania, where, his wife dying, he was again married, this time to Miss Jennings. In his emigration from New Jersey he moved westward, passing over the Allegheny Mountains, following the military road cut out by the English pioneers for the march of Gen. Braddock's army, on his advance from the sea-board to Fort Duquesne, and settled temporarily on the Monongahela River, sixty miles above Pittsburgh, near Ten-Mile Creek, at the present village of Mapletown, in Greene Co., Pa. Here, his first wife dying, he married his second, and here the younger members of his family were born. He came to Pennsylvania about the year of the Declaration of Independence (1776), and was engaged for years in the transportation across the mountains of groceries and store goods by pack-horses to supply the pioneers in the frontier settlements, purchasing his stock in Philadelphia or Baltimore. In 1794, with most of his family, he again emigrated, and coming down the Ohio River landed at the mouth of the Little Miami, and established his home on what was then known as the "Round Bottom" of that historic stream. In a few years, about 1800, he moved into Clermont County, and settled on Ten-Mile Creek, in what is now Pierce township, where he spent the balance of his days in clearing his lands, raising crops, and caring for his family.

By his first marriage were born three sons and one daughter. The latter never came West. The sons were David, John, and Lewis. By his second marriage there were one daughter, Mary, and six sons, Henry, Abel, William, Amos, Robert, and Jonathan Singleton, of whom all but one, Henry, served bravely in the war of 1812. Of the three sons by his first wife, two, David and Lewis, remained in Pennsylvania, and raised large families, while John located on Ten-Mile Creek, in this county; of those by his second wife, Abel settled in this county, on Ten-Mile Creek; Henry removed to Clay Co., Ind.; William located on Ten-Mile Creek; Amos removed to Brown Co., Ohio; Robert settled on Ten-Mile Creek, and was many years a county commissioner; and Jonathan Singleton Donham settled on Twelve-Mile Creek, in Ohio township. He was the youngest of this pioneer family, which, in men and women of force of character, mental ability, and first-class business qualifications, has contributed greatly to the development of the county materially, politically,

morally, and in all that adds to its progress and growth. He was a child when his father came West in 1794, and when a good-sized boy went to live with his half-brother, John, who had then already acquired a good farm. His inclination was more for trading, particularly in live stock, which business he followed until he succeeded in purchasing himself a fine farm on the eastern hills of Twelve-Mile Creek, in Ohio township. This he enlarged by additional purchases, until his possessions were several hundred acres of land. Throughout his life he made stock-raising his main avocation, and gained a marked reputation for his importation into Southern Clermont of blooded horses, cattle, and hogs. He was twice married, the first time to Hiley Ross, by whom he had no children, and his second marriage was on April 19, 1818, by Timothy Rardin, justice of the peace, to Elizabeth Ayers, of New Jersey, by whom there were reared eleven children, —four sons and seven daughters.

The eldest son is Hon. Perry J. Donham, of Cincinnati, one of the most distinguished lawyers of Ohio, who studied at Jefferson College, Pennsylvania, read law under Gen. Thomas L. Hamer, was admitted to the bar in 1848, and has gained a reputation in the State for his eminent success as an attorney. His wife was the daughter of Captain William McClain, the famous Ohio River steamboat captain; she died in 1862, leaving two beautiful and accomplished daughters, Carrie and Belle. The second son is Dr. Harrison L. Donham, of Mount Washington, a physician of celebrity. The third son is Erasmus J. Donham, the present efficient county treasurer of Clermont, elected in 1879, over his cousin, David Donham. The fourth and youngest son is Robert W. Donham, residing four miles from New Richmond. Of the daughters, there were Hiley Ann, married to Thomas Kennedy, of Campbell Co., Ky.; Evaline, married to Thomas L. Nichols, and who is the mother of Judge Perry J. Nichols; Mary Eliza, married to Benjamin Ely; Florella J., married to J. H. Simmons; Harriet L., married to Rev. H. M. Keck; Cordelia E., married to James Augustus Hitch; and Caroline E.

Col. Jonathan S. Donham served as an officer in the war of 1812, and was present at the siege of Fort Meigs, and in after-years was a general in the militia. He was one of the best farmers and largest stock-raisers in Clermont, and a man of fine personal and social habits; few men of his day stood so high in the estimation of the community. He died in 1856, leaving a very large estate and a family of nine children, with their aged mother, and grandchildren by the score. His widow, Mrs. Elizabeth (Ayers) Donham, is still living, and for her advanced age (eighty-five) is remarkably active and healthy. She draws a pension from the government for the services of her late husband, Col. Jonathan S. Donham, whose memory will ever be cherished in Clermont County as that of a worthy pioneer, whose family was not only closely identified with the early settlements in the county, and its subsequent advance in civilization, but is also noted for its services generally in the Revolutionary war, and in the settlements on the Monongahela, in Pennsylvania, which preceded those in Ohio and Kentucky.

(Cont'd page 4)

burgh, near Ten-Mile Creek, about where the old village of Mapleton is located, in Greene Co., Pa. Here his first wife died, and here he married his second wife, and here the younger members of his family were born. He came to that State about the time of the Declaration of Independence. At that early period but few if any of the necessities or comforts of life could be found in this wilderness, and the settlers were compelled to procure in limited quantities such indispensable things as could be brought over the mountains "from the East." This of necessity led to the establishment of a transportation line of pack-horses.

Nathaniel, as we are told, became an enterprising conductor of one of these then fast lines of transit, engaged in carrying in pack-saddles, lashed to horses, those necessary commodities through this long wilderness to his good people at their home in the woods. After a few years in this service, and having accumulated a little means, he emigrated still farther into the West, came down the Ohio River with most of his family, and landed at the mouth of the Little Miami, A.D. 1794, twelve miles above Cincinnati. In a short time he made his way about twelve miles up that little stream, and established a home on what was then, and is still, known as the "Round Bottom" of the Little Miami River.

The annual decay of vegetation grown on this luxuriant valley tended to produce malarial fevers, especially in the fall season. This fact induced him to make one more move, into his final home on the waters of Ten-Mile Creek, now Pierce township. Here he spent the remainder of his days in clearing his lands and raising crops and caring for his family. He lived a quiet, unpretentious life, and his remains lie in the country church-yard at the foot of the hill, marked only by a single rude stone monument.

As before stated, Nathaniel Donham, of New Jersey, was twice married. He had born to him by the first marriage three sons and one daughter. The daughter never came West. The sons were David, John, and Lewis. By the second marriage there were six sons and one daughter. Mary, Henry, Abel, William, Amos, Robert, and Jonathan Singleton. Of these, five of the brothers served in the war against Great Britain A.D. 1812, to wit: Abel, Amos, Robert, and Jonathan S. All of the family are at this time dead, Jonathan S., the youngest and last, having died A.D. 1856.

Of the eldest brothers, David and Lewis remained in Greene County, Pa., and died many years since. They each left a small family, who, as far as we are advised, never removed from that county.

Of the children who settled with their father, Nathaniel, in Clermont Co., Ohio, John, the eldest, began early in life to acquire a landed estate. His home, through his long life, was on the waters of Ten-Mile Creek, Ohio township, near the last residence of his father. He was a very industrious and frugal man. By his industry and economy he acquired several large and valuable farms; in fact, became one of the most extensive land-holders in the county. He was twice married. The maiden name of his first wife was Sallie Jennings; that of the second was Elizabeth Brown. By the former wife he

had sons Isaac, David, and Jonathan, and daughter Mary. By the second wife he had sons Nathaniel and John, daughters Margaret, Sarah, Jenetta, and Elizabeth. He was at one time a member of the Ohio State Senate.

Henry married and removed to Clay Co., Ind., early in life. He never had any children. He was also a farmer, and acquired a fair estate.

Abel married Elizabeth Ferguson, and early began his life as a farmer on the headwaters of Ten-Mile Creek, Ohio township. He also acquired a good, valuable farm, upon which he spent his long and industrious life. Reared three sons, John, Lewis, and Abel, and eight daughters, Mary, Keziah, Hiley, Elvira, Cynthia, Julia, Sarah, and Nancy.

William married Sarah Arthur, and founded a home for himself on the western hills of Ten-Mile Creek, near Pleasant Hill. By the time he arrived at middle age he had also acquired a good farm of rich, well-improved land. Reared seven sons and three daughters. Sons were George, Abijah, Joseph, Ira, Darius, William, and Abel; daughters were Rachel, Keziah, and Melissa. He and all of his family removed to Clay Co., Ind.

Amos, while a young man, removed into Brown Co., Ohio, and there married. Had three sons, Dennis, Ewell, and Robert. He went South about the year A.D. 1832, and it is supposed died soon after.

Robert married Ruth Ferguson, and purchased in a few years a good farm adjoining the home of his brother John, and for many years continued to add to his acres by purchase until he had by the time he arrived at middle age a large farm, well improved. He, also, was an industrious and enterprising farmer, and did much to encourage and support good common schools in the country; served for several years as county commissioner of Clermont County, and was a man much respected throughout the county. Reared a family of seven sons, John, Isaiah, Nathaniel, Isaac, Robert, Zachariah, and Thomas. Two of these—Isaac and Zachariah—died unmarried. Four daughters, Nancy, Eliza, Mary, and Ruth.

Jonathan S. was the youngest of the family; was a child when his father came West. When a good-sized boy he went to live with his brother John, who had then already acquired a good farm. His inclination was more for trading, particularly in live-stock, which business he followed until he succeeded in purchasing himself a good farm on the eastern hills of Twelve-Mile Creek, in Ohio township. This he enlarged by additional purchases until he had acquired several hundred acres. Throughout life he made stock-raising his principal business; did much by way of importing into Southern Clermont its best stock of horses and cattle. He was twice married,—the first wife, Hiley Ross; the second, Elizabeth Ayres. There were no children by the former. By the latter there were raised four sons and seven daughters. The sons were Perry J., Harrison L., Erasmus J., Robert W. The daughters were Hiley Ann, Evaline, Eliza M., Florella J., Caroline E., Harriet L., Cordelia E. His widow is the only surviving mother of any of the eleven families, is now eighty-three years of age, and is drawing a pension from the government on account of services of her departed husband in the war of 1812, and is, for one of her age, quite healthy and active.

Post Scripts to April Article

The article that appeared on Page 4 of the April 1997 DD, entitled "Dunhams with Missing Ancestry," has generated some further information. These "sketches" of Rufus Dunham, Jr. & Jacob Dunham were found in the ONONDAGA (NY) CENTENNIAL. Now it appears that William G. Burke, Watertown, NY, is a great great grandson of Henry J. Dunham (1829-1902): The Joseph Dunham (1842-1910) who is profiled in the ONONDAGA CENTENNIAL excerpt was the younger brother of Henry J. (1829-1902).

Olive Richardson, Solana Beach, CA, also wrote to say that the Joseph (1842-1910) "may be a descendant of Jeremiah Dunham, Revolutionary War veteran" -- which idea is verified by Bill Burke's records.

Olive included a chart of Onondaga, NY records that she has compiled. Highlighted were these entries:

- Dunham, Jeremiah, of Fabius, appears in the 1810 census.
- Dunham, Jeremiah, of Camillus, appears in the 1820 census.
- Dunham, James, of Camillus, appears in the 1820 census.
- Dunham, Jeremiah, of Camillus, sold land to J. Dunham in 1820.
- Dunham, Jeremiah & Sally, of Camillus, sold land to A. Kasson in 1820.
- Dunham, Jeremiah, of Camillus, appears in the 1830 census.
- Dunham, Sally, Right of Dower, of Camillus, sold land to J. Dunham in 1830.
- Dunham, Jeremiah & Sally, of Camillus, sold land to W. Catton in 1831.
- Dunham, Jeremiah, of Eldridge, died in 1833 at the age of 75.
- Dunham, Hannah & Jeremiah, of Camillus, sold land to J. Dunham in 1835.
- Dunham, Sally et al, of Camillus, sold land to J. Dunham in 1835.
- Dunham, Jeremiah, of Camillus, sold land to J. Dunham & another in 1843.

Another interesting note from Bill Burke: Jeremiah Dunham, Sr. (1759-1833), who was the grandfather of Henry J. (1829-1902) (Thus Jeremiah was Bill's 4 greats grandfather) served in the Revolutionary War & was a cook for Gen. George Washington & Gen. Lafayette at Valley Forge. If duty at Valley Forge was as grim as history portrays it, Jeremiah Dunham, Sr. must have been lucky to have anything TO cook!

The new FAMILY HISTORY CATALOGUE (# 15) from Higginson Books shows 2 paperback pamphlets that might be of interest to readers. One is on the family of Jonathan Dunham of Martha's Vineyard, MA. It contains 13 pages & is available for \$4.50. The 2nd concerns the family of Benajah Dunham, also of Martha's Vineyard. It contains 3 pages & costs \$4.00. Send orders to Higginson Books, 148 Washington St., P.O. Box 778, Salem, MA 01970. Cost of postage would be \$2.00 in either case.