



Newsletter

incorporated in 2004 as Dunham/Singletary Family Connections

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From the President:

I hope that all of you are enjoying the summer with your Dunham family and friends. The heat has been surprisingly offensive this year. It reminded me of seeing that our ancestors in the 1700s and early 1800s had a summer that saw snow in the northeast. And the challenges that this caused them in their lives.

During the 1700s, the Northeast United States experienced a fascinating and sometimes challenging range of summer weather, often marked by unexpected swings and anomalies. Summer temperatures in the Northeast during the 1700s were generally hotter than in England, which surprised many colonists who expected a similar climate. However, the weather could be quite unpredictable, with variations from year to year. For example, one summer might bring intense heat waves, like the one in 1770 when the temperature reportedly reached 100 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade in Sharon, Connecticut.

The most striking example of odd summer weather in this era was undoubtedly the "Year Without a Summer" in 1816, though it technically falls just outside the 1700s. This event, caused by the eruption of Mount Tambora in Indonesia, saw unseasonably cold temperatures, frost, and even snow in June across the Northeast.

The period was also characterized by a general cooling trend, part of a larger phenomenon known as the Little Ice Age. This meant that while some summers could be exceptionally hot, others might experience delayed springs, shortened growing seasons, and even early frosts that devastated crops. Droughts were also not uncommon, further adding to the challenges faced by farmers in the region.

In summary, summers in the Northeast during the 1700s were often a mix of expected heat, unexpected cold spells, droughts, and occasional extreme events like early frosts, making for a challenging and unpredictable environment.

I experienced one major volcanic eruption in my life. Being in total darkness at noon in Pullman, Washington, – a few hundred miles to the east of Mount Saint Helens on May 18, 1980. We could see the cloud approaching us. Then the sun appeared to set in the east as it

passed by and blocked out the sun. The ash cloud. That summer saw a very cloudy and rainy summer in the Seattle Area.

With this hot weather, I sit hoping for a nice volcanic eruption somewhere to cool this place down!

Again, best wishes to all of you and your families.

With Best Regards,

Jeffrey M. Dunham
President
Dunham Genealogy Research Assn.

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Editor's Corner:

A welcomed thank you to Gratia for her article that continued the line in the April issue of this Newsletter. We have an article from a new source who has a number of new articles on a monthly basis and will be included when space is available and that would be of interest to the DGRA membership.

I have started a Genealogy Hits column that should be of help to all.

DGRA is still looking for a new Editor for the Newsletter and we can always use articles by any of the members.

DGRA Newsletter Staff, James A. Streeter.

Children of Edmund and Dinah (Fitz Randolph) Dunham, Part II

By Gratia Dunham Mahony

This article will continue two of the children of Edmund ⁴ and Dinah (Fitz Randolph) who are not fully covered in the DGRA Newsletter article which appeared in the last issue, Volume 22, Issue 2, 15 April 2025 p. 12-22. The full Dunham line is Deacon John ¹ and Abigail (Ballou) Dunham; Benajah ² and Elizabeth (Tilson) Dunham; Edmund ³ and Mary (Bonham) Dunham; Edmund ⁴ and Dinah (Fitz Randolph) Dunham [Ref. Mayflower Families Edward Fuller, pub. 1990, pp 34 and 108]

The two children covered in this article are: (child numbers continue from previous issue)

302.6 Daniel ⁵ Dunham b. 5 Feb. 1727/8

302.9 Stephen ⁵ Dunham b. 1 Oct. 1737

302.6 Daniel ⁵ Dunham b. 5 Feb. 1727/8

302.6 Daniel ⁵ Dunham (Edmund ^{4,3} Benajah ² John ¹) born in Piscataway New Jersey 5 February 1727/8, died in Washington, Morris County New Jersey between 3 September and 29 September 1804. He married in Piscataway New Jersey in December 1749 **Elizabeth Martin**. She was daughter of Jonathan Martin and his third wife Dinah Pyatt. They were married by Rev. Jonathan Dunham.

From "The Dunhams of Calloway", by Ray F. Dawson, pub. 1981, p. 39;

"In 1797, Daniel ⁵ Dunham made a second trip to western Virginia. He purchased a tract of land in Harrison County described in his will as follows. ' . . .that tract of land lying in the State of Virginia which I had purchased of Robert Plummer...' In his 1804 will, Daniel noted that it was ' . . .the tract of land on which he (my beloved Archelaus) now lives. . . ' Daniel paid 100 pounds Virginia currency for 286 acres located on Booth's Creek, a righthand tributary of the West Fork River at the corner of what is now Harrison, Marion and Taylor Counties, West Virginia. The deed to the tract lists the Grantee as Daniel Dunham (also Denham) of Hunterdon County, New Jersey. This deed is important, for it identifies the family connection, and it suggests that Daniel Dunham was not buying the tract for his own use; he considered himself still to be a resident of New Jersey. In one further sense, the document is important, for it set the trend in western Virginia for use of the surname Denham (for this family) in place of Dunham, a trend which persisted until Archelaus' son Daniel moved to Missouri.

Will of Daniel ⁵ Dunham in Morris Co. NJ Probate record Vol. A:23. Will dated 3 September 1804 states:

“I Daniel Dunham of Washington in the County of Morris and State of New Jersey”. He leaves bequests to wife Elizabeth; three sons Archilaus, Daniel and Jacob; and grand daughter Elizabeth Lanning who is to have certain items “as a compensation for her services with us”. The will leaves to son Archilaus “all that tract of land on which he now lives, lying in the State of Virginia which I purchased of Robert Plummer”. He leaves to son Daniel “fifty acres off the east end of the Plantation on which I now live being my first purchase of Jacob Trimmer. . .” and he leaves to son Jacob “one hundred acres off the west end of the Plantation I now live on. . .”. He also “order the tract of land I purchased of Joseph Friend lying in Tyger Vallie (or on Elk River) in the State of Virginia be equally divided among my three sons”.

Children given in “The Dunhams of Calloway”: [From “The Dunhams of Calloway”, by Ray F. Dawson, seen at Library of Congress, Washington D.C.]

Children of Daniel⁵ and Elizabeth (Martin) Dunham:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 302.6.1 | i. Archelaus ⁶ Dunham b. 1751 in Piscataway, NJ |
| 302.6.2 | ii. Daniel ⁶ Dunham b. 1753 |
| 302.6.3 | iii. Elizabeth ⁶ Dunham b. 1755
m. Mr. Mosher in West Virginia |
| 302.6.4 | iv. Priscilla ⁶ Dunham
m. Levi Lanning |
| 302.6.5 | v. Catherine ⁶ Dunham
m. Edward McShane |
| 302.6.6 | vi. Mary Elizabeth ⁶ Dunham b. 1 Jan. 1760
m. 1 Charles Carhart
m. 2 James Dunham, son of Nehemiah ⁵ Dunham her uncle |
| 302.6.7 | vii. Dinah ⁶ Dunham
m. Alexander Dunn |
| 302.6.8 | viii. Sarah ⁶ Dunham
m. Cornelius Carhart in 1783 |
| 302.6.9 | ix. Isabella ⁶ Dunham
m. Abraham Wyckoff |
| 302.6.10 | x. Jacob ⁶ Dunham b. 25 August 1771
m. Mary Foster |

Three - Sixth Generation Sons Carried Forward, Archelaus ⁶, Daniel ⁶, and Jacob ⁶

302.6.1 Archelaus ⁶ Dunham (Daniel ⁵ Edmund ^{4,3} Benajah ² John ¹) born in Piscataway New Jersey in 1751, died 1825+?. He married **Theodocia Parks**, of Hackettstown, New Jersey. The marriage must have occurred before 1785 as Edward Dunham, b. 11 June 1785, is called the oldest son. (This Edward had a daughter named Theodocia.) [ref. p. 41, Under Marriage and Family of Dawson's book, "The Dunhams of Calloway"]

Archelaus lived on the land in Tygart's Valley until 1797 when the family moved to Harrison Co. VA.

In 1808, on behalf of his father's estate and of his own inheritance, Archelaus sold the 286 acres to Enoch Furr and William Newlin for \$1200. The deed noted that this was '...the same tract of land that was conveyed from Robert Plummer to Daniel Denham and by the said Denham given in his last will and testament to his son Archelaus Denham the above Grantor. . .'

On 8 August 1808, Archelaus bought 89 acres on Booth's Creek from Daniel Stout, and on 2 September of the same year he purchased 8 acres on Booth's Creek from Joel Plummer. On 20 May 1810, he purchased 37.5 acres also on Booth's Creek from Elijah Newlin. . . . On 28 September 1819, Archelaus and his wife Theodocia deeded a 'tract of land' on Hustead's Creek to their son Daniel for the sum of \$1. On 3 August 1821, 139 acres on Hustead's Creek were again deeded to Daniel for \$1. Theodocia disposed of the last holding without Archelaus' signature five years later. There is no record of land transfer to any other children of this family than the son, Daniel ⁶. Nor is there any record of disposal of Archelaus' residual estate."

Children of Archelaus ⁶ and Theodosia (Parks) Dunham:

302.6.1.1 Edward ⁷ (Archelaus ⁶ Daniel ⁵ Edmund ^{4,3} Benajah ² John ¹) b. 11 June 1785

302.6.1.2 Daniel ⁷ (Archelaus ⁶ Daniel ⁵ Edmund ^{4,3} Benajah ² John ¹) b. Harrison Co. VA 12 July 1791. He married Nancy Wilkinson, daughter of Joseph and Jane (unknown) Wilkinson, Jr. The date of their marriage from the IGI and from Dawson p. 44 was 17 November 1817. Nancy Wilkinson was born in Harrison Co. VA 13 Dec. 1796.

302.6.2 Daniel ⁶ Dunham (Daniel ⁵ Edmund ^{4,3} Benajah ² John ¹) born 1753, died before 25 August 1807 the date of a petition for administration of his estate. His wife's given name was probably Jane, and she married second as Jane Dunham in Hunterdon Co. NJ 23 Dec. 1810 Henry Polhemus of Auburn, New York.

Daniel ⁶ Dunham was a “hatter” (hat maker) in New Brunswick, NJ. He could possibly have been father of the David Dunham who m. Elenor Nevius 28 May 1798 in New Brunswick, Reformed (Dutch) Church Marriage Record, p. 626; and also possibly father of Zeruah Dunham who m. Guff Carpenter 21 April 1798, in New Brunswick. From “The Carpenter Family in America”, p. 180; “Guff Carpenter, son of Wright, was born at Marlborough, Ulster County, about 1770. His wife was Zeruah Dunham of New Brunswick, NJ. He was a shipbuilder in New York City.

By will of his father Daniel ⁵ Dunham, dated 3 September 1804, Daniel ⁶ Dunham was left “fifty acres off the east end of the Plantation on which I now lived. . .” This was land in Washington, Morris County New Jersey. Then from Morris County New Jersey Deed S:237 dated 1 May 1809 “between James Anderson of the County of Hunterdon and state of New Jersey Administrator of. . . Daniel Dunham Junior late of the County of Morris deceased of the one part and David Larison of the township of Roxbury in the said County of Morris . . . for the sum on four hundred and ninety five dollars and fifty cents to him paid by the said David Larison. . . land situated in the said townships of Washington and Roxbury. . . beginning at a stone set in the road that leads from Flanders to the valley . . . bounding on lands of John Foss, John Flock Jacob Dunham and the said David Larison and containing fifty acres of land. . .”

From Morris Co. Probate Vol. A:71 dated 25 August 1807:

In a petition for administration of the goods and chattels of Daniel Dunham, late of Morris Co., decd. dated 25 August 1807 by Jacob Dunham and Leonard Neighbor suitors, the administration was granted to James Anderson of the County of Hunterdon New Jersey to administer.

302.6.10 Jacob ⁶ Dunham (Daniel ⁵ Edmund ^{4,3} Benajah ² John ¹) born in Hunterdon Co. NJ 26 Aug. 1771 [from Ray F. Dawson:43), Hunterdon Co. NY] d. in Taylor County, W 13 January 1851. He married in Hunterdon Co., NJ 30 December 1798 Mary Foster. She was b. 16 June 1777; died in Taylor Co. WV 24 August 1863. Both are buried in Middleville Baptist Cemetery, Taylor County, West Virginia.

Jacob inherited from his father a portion of the family farm in Morris Co. NJ, and also a portion of the Tygart’s Valley tract in Virginia. He witnessed his father’s will 3 September 1804. Evidently, he disposed of his interest in the family farm in NJ and moved to western Virginia about 1815. On 12 Oct. 1815 he bought 100 acres of land on Booth’s Creek, Harrison Co. (now Taylor Co.), from Jesse Martin. He farmed all his life. Jacob was listed in the 1820 census of Harrison Co. and in the 1850 census of Taylor Co. which had been formed from parts of Harrison and adjacent counties in the meantime.

From Morris County New Jersey deed Vol. R:300, dated 9 May 1809

“between Jacob Dunham and Mary his wife of the township of Washington. . .of the one part and William Neighbour of the township . . .aforesaid of the second part. . .for sixteen hundred dollars. . .land upon which the said Jacob Dunham now lives in township of Washington. . .being the same which Daniel Dunham the said father of the said Jacob Dunham by his last will and testament . . .devised to the said Jacob Dunham. . .containing one hundred and two acres one rod and thirty two perches of land. . .”

Children of Jacob ⁶ and Mary (Foster) Dunham:

- 302.6.10.1 i. Elizabeth ⁷ Dunham b. say 1795
- 302.6.10.2 ii. Catherine ⁷ Dunham b. say 1799, d. about 1865 in Webster, Taylor Co. WV. She m. 28 June 1821 in Clarksburg, Harrison Co. A (now WV) Bailey Latham
- 302.6.10.3 iii. Daniel ⁷ Dunham b. say 1804
- 302.6.10.4 iv. Mary ⁷ Dunham b. say 1806
m. in 1825 Alex Henderson
- 302.6.10.5 v. Nancy ⁷ Dunham b. say 1808
- 302.6.10.6 vi. Betsey ⁷ Dunham b. say 1811
- 302.6.10.7 vii. Enoch ⁷ Dunham b. 23 August 1814; d. 2 January 1848, Middleville, Taylor County West Virginia
- 302.6.10.8 viii. Robert F. ⁷ Dunham b. say 1816 Clarksburg, Harrison Co. VA (now WV), He became a Baptist preacher in western Virginia.
- 302.6.10.9 ix. William L. ⁷ Dunham b. say 1818 Clarksburg, Harrison Co. VA, (now WV)

302.9 Stephen ⁵ Dunham b. 1 Oct. 1737

302.9 Stephen ⁵ Dunham (Edmund ^{4,3} Benajah ² John ¹) born in Piscataway New Jersey 1 October 1737, died probably about 1800-1803 in Monongalia Co. VA and buried at Woodbridgetown, Fayette Co. PA. He m. Elizabeth (prob. Topliff) in Piscataway NJ. She was b. in Piscataway and d. aft. Oct. 28, 1824. Just north of the present Monongalia County, West Virginia line are Greene and Fayette counties PA. (separated by the Monongahela River). Stephen Dunham is in Woodbridgetown, Fayette Co. PA, and Georges Twp. is one township to the north.

We don't know all the details about Stephen ⁵ Dunham but he seems to be the man referred to in the following deed and in the notices published in the New-Jersey Gazette newspaper (shown below).

From: Hunterdon County, New Jersey Deeds p. 230, all dated 4 July 1763;
“Then Jonathan Robeson to Daniel, Nehemiah and Stephen Dunham: . . .to
Stephen Dunham “innholder” of Kingwood for 400 pounds - the tavern lott
whereon Stephen now dwelleth in the Twp. of Bethlehem and part of Twp
Kingwood, 100 acres. . .”

From America’s Historical Newspapers, New-Jersey Gazette, 02-27-1782; Vol. V:
Issue:218, p. 2.

“TO BE SOLD

All that tract of land or farm formerly belonging to Benjamin Jones, now in the
possession of **Stephen Dunham**, adjoining the stone meeting-house, in the
township of Kingwood, and county of Hunterdon, containing two hundred and
eighty-three acres, of which there is a sufficiency of wood-land, and some good
meadow, and a conveniency of making more, with a good dwelling-house, barn
and orchard; the fences in tolerable good order. For further particulars and
terms of sale apply to Anthony White, at the Union Farm, or Nehemiah Dunham,
of said township.”

From America’s Historical Newspapers, New Jersey Gazette; 03-07-1785; Vol. VIII; Issue
356; p. 3.

“TO BE LET BY THE SUBSCRIBER

A large commodious stone house, 3 stories high, with 4 rooms on the lower floor
and 3 on the second, a kitchen, and fireplace in it, a large cellar, and a well of
good water at the door; also two good stables and a horse shed, a large garden,
with ten apple-trees, and 12 acres of upland and meadow-ground, 3 acres of
meadow may be watered with a little labour; situate in the township of
Bethlehem, lying on the road leading from Pitts-Town to Morris-Town, and roads
leading from East-Town to New-Brunswick, convenient to meeting and mills, and
in a healthy part of the country: It would be an extraordinary seat for carrying
on of trades of many kinds, and may be entered on the 16th of April next. Said
house has been occupied as a tavern for several years past, viz. by Cornelius
Tunison and others, and at present by **Stephen Dunham**. None need apply but
such as will keep a publick house. For terms apply to the subscriber near the
premises.

John Crawford

Bethlehem, February 23, 1785”

From America's Historical Newspapers, New-Jersey Gazette 02-13-1786, Vol. IX, Issue 405, p. 3; Hunterdon goal, Feb. 10, 1786.

"NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN,

To the creditors of Stephen Dunham, an insolvent debtor, now confined in the common goal of the county of Hunterdon, to appear before two of the judges of the inferior courts of common pleas for said county, at the courthouse in Trenton, on Wednesday the fifteenth of March next ensuing, at ten o'clock in the forenoon of the same day, and show cause, if any they have, why assignment of said Stephen Dunham's estate should not be made, and he be discharged agreeably to the act of the legislature in such case made and provided.

STEPHEN DUNHAM"

From "A History of Seventh Day Baptists of Pennsylvania and West Virginia", by Corliss

FitzRandolph, he (Stephen Dunham) left NJ with his family about 1790 to establish churches in Virginia. He was a church clerk for several years in what is now Monongalia Co. WV. A descendant of this line, JoAnn Gwinn, says he died in Monongalia Co. VA. and is buried at Woodbridgetown, Fayette Co. PA.

Descendant JoAnn Gwinn has found a Monongalia Conty (Virginia, now in West Virginia) Court Case dated 1803 from Monongalia Co. VA involving Ruth Dunham, (wife of Stephen Dunham, deceased) and their children Gideon, Jeremiah, Mordecai and Rebecca. In this case "Rhody Bacorn (sic. Rhoda Bacon) administratrix and heir of Job Bacorn, deceased, attempts to retrieve money pledged by Stephen Dunham. However, both Stephen Dunham and Job Bacon are deceased and the heirs of Stephen have moved out of the county.

Stephen Dunham was a farmer, member of Seventh Day Baptist Church at Woodbridgetown. He served as a 1st LT in the Rev. War from NJ. Capt. Peter Dickerson's 2nd Company, Colonel Alias Dayton's 3rd Regiment, Hunterdon Co. Militia Feb. 7, 1776-1779

Children of Stephen ⁵ and Elizabeth (prob. Topliff) Dunham: (from descendant JoAnn Gwinn)

302.9.1 Gideon ⁶ Dunham b. 5 October 1757

302.9.2 Jeremiah ⁶ Dunham b. say 1758

302.9.3 Mordecai ⁶ Dunham b. say 1760-1762

302.9.4 Rebecca ⁶ Dunham b. say 1765, m. Amos Spencer by 1803

Three Sixth Generation Sons Carried Forward, Gideon ⁶, Jeremiah ⁶ and Mordecai ⁶

302.9.1 **Gideon ⁶ Dunham** (Stephen ⁵ Edmund ^{4,3} Benajah ² John ¹) probably born Hunterdon County New Jersey 5 October 1757, died in Brown County Ohio 25 May 1820. He married first an (unknown) wife. He married second 20 December 1792 **Mary Bowen**.

From Dictionary on New Jersey by Charles Carroll Gardner, Notebooks:

Gideon Dunham m. Mary Bowen, dau. of David Bowen of MD and came to Southern Ohio.

Gideon's half brother Asa came with him and died there in 1817.

Gideon's children were: Gideon, Bowen, David, Wilson, Betsey & Rebecca

Gideon ⁶ Kingwood, Hunterdon Co. is listed in "Revolutionary Census of NJ, An Index, based on Rateables, Inhabitants of NJ During the Period of the American Revolution" (1778-1780), by Kenn Stryker-Rodda, Hunterdon House, 1986.

Children of Gideon ⁶ and (unknown) first wife:

- 302.9.1.1 Asa ⁷ Dunham b.; d. 25 August 1817
- 302.9.1.2 Samuel ⁷ Dunham b. about 1786; d. in Brown Co. OH 29 June 1839
He married in Mason Co. KY 7 July 1808 Elizabeth Pickerill.
She was b. Maysville, Mason Co. (then) VA 4 Nov. 1790;
She d. LaSalle Co., IL 17 Jan. 1861
- 302.9.1.3 Malinda ⁷ Dunham
- 302.9.1.4 Charles ⁷ Dunham

Children of Gideon ⁶ and Mary (Bowen) Dunham:

- 302.9.1.5 Bowen ⁷ Dunham b. 14 Jan. 1793; d. 3 March 1833
He is buried in Brisslan Cemetery, Perry Twp., Brown Co. OH
He m. ¹ 5 Feb. 1820 Elizabeth Heasley.
- 302.9.1.6 Ruth ⁷ Dunham b. say 1795
- 302.9.1.7 Sarah ⁷ Dunham b. say 1796
- 302.9.1.8 Gideon W. ⁷ Dunham b. 11 Nov. 1801; d. in KY 6 Sept. 1864
- 302.9.1.9 Rebecca ⁷ Dunham b. ca. 1804; d. 8 Feb. 1875
- 302.9.1.10 David E. ⁷ Dunham b. ca. 1807
- 302.9.1.11 Wilson ⁷ Dunham b. 8 Nov. 1811 Eagle Twp. Brown Co. OH;
d. 19 Nov. 1886
- 302.9.1.12 Elizabeth ⁷ Dunham b. 12 Jan. 1814 Brown Co. OH; d. 8 Feb. 1876

302.9.2 **Jeremiah⁶ Dunham** (Stephen⁵ Edmund^{4,3} Benajah² John¹) probably born in Hunterdon County New Jersey say 1758. He married Anna Mills who was b. about 1770; d. 1822.

Children of Jeremiah and Anna (Mills) Dunham: (all b. Fayette Co. PA except the last one)

- 302.9.2.1 Stephen⁷ Dunham b. abt. 1790 Fayette Co. PA, m. Sarah Weatherspoon in Clermont Co. OH in 1812, The part of Clermont Co. they lived in became Brown Co. OH
- 302.9.2.2 Sophia⁷ Dunham b. abt. 1792, m. Joab Woodruff
- 302.9.2.3 Jeremiah⁷ Dunham, Jr. b. 1795
- 302.9.2.4 Aaron⁷ Dunham b. 1798, m. Elizabeth Wheaton
- 302.9.2.5 Elizabeth⁷ Dunham b. 1799, m. Peter Lane
- 302.9.2.6 David⁷ Dunham b. 8 Feb. 1801; d. 1 Oct. 1867 Nineveh, Johnson Co., Indiana.
- 302.9.2.6 Cynthia Ann⁷ Dunham b. 1809 in Ohio

302.9.3 **Mordecai⁶ Dunham** (Stephen⁵ Edmund^{4,3} Benajah² John¹) probably born in Hunterdon County New Jersey say 1761, died in Jackson County Ohio in April 1849. He married about 1792 **Peggy (Margaret) Van Garden/Gorden.**¹ She was born in 1767, died after 1840.

Children of Mordecai⁶ and Margaret (Van Garden) Dunham were:

- 302.9.3.1 Rebecca,⁷ Dunham b. 23 January 1796, in Fayette Co. PA, she d. 29 November 1846 Bloomfield, Jackson Co. OH she m. Thomas Vaughn
- 302.9.3.2 Margaret,⁷ Dunham b. say 1799, d. 13 July 1828 (mother of Mordecai who may have been raised with the family of his Uncle Mordecai)
- 302.9.3.3 Mordecai⁷ Dunham, Jr., b. 16 Nov. 1800 in Fayette Co. PA d. 10 January 1878 in Pike Co. OH
- 302.9.3.4 Stephen,⁷ Dunham b. 1802-3 in Fayette Co. PA m. Jane Masters
- 302.9.3.5 Anna,⁷ Dunham b. prob. 1790-95, prob. 1793 m. Stephen Pollock
- 302.9.3.6 James,⁷ Dunham b. prob. 1790-95 prob. b. ab.t 1797 Fayette Co. PA, m. Ruhama (Reed)
- 302.9.3.7 Sarah,⁷ Dunham b. prob. 1790-95, prob. b. 1798 in Fayette Co. PA she m. Joseph Coleman

Plymouth County Rises up against Nathaniel Ray Thomas

Historicaldigression.com

By Patrick Browne - 14 February, 2025



An interpretation (generated using AI) of the great assembly of Plymouth County at Nathaniel Ray Thomas's Marshfield estate, September 7, 1774.

I continue my series on the events that led to the British occupation of Marshfield, Massachusetts, the first entry of which can be found above. Today we come to the dramatic tipping point...

The evening air likely still held the humidity of summer that day, September 6, 1774 when the town bells began to ring in Plymouth. Their peals were joined by roll of drums, sounding an alarm. From the narrow, cobbled side streets to the wharves, men and women moved towards Town Square, drawn by an unspoken urgency.[1]

As they gathered before the Court House, word spread swiftly—the time had come to confront Nathaniel Ray Thomas. To add to his litany of obnoxious acts, the most notorious Loyalist on the South Shore had crossed a line from which there was no return. He had dared to accept a seat on the so-called “Mandamus Council.” Few Loyalists were more reviled than those who

accepted this dishonorable post. And now, the people of Plymouth and beyond meant to see Nat Thomas answer for it.

In the summer of 1774, tensions in Massachusetts had reached a breaking point. In response to the Boston Tea Party, Parliament passed the Coercive Acts—what the colonists bitterly called the Intolerable Acts—to bring the rebellious province to heel. Among these, the Massachusetts Government Act was perhaps the most infuriating of all. It dismantled the cherished Massachusetts Charter of 1691, a document that had granted the colony a considerable degree of self-governance. The act replaced elected provincial officials with appointees of the Crown and severely restricted town meetings. For a people who had governed themselves for generations, this was a direct attack on the political traditions they considered a sacred covenant.

Among the changes was the creation of the Mandamus Council, a new body of advisers to the governor, appointed directly by the King. These handpicked men replaced the Council previously elected by General Court, making it clear that local representation was no longer relevant to the Crown. In the eyes of the Patriots, those who accepted positions on the Mandamus Council were nothing short of traitors. It was time for Nathaniel Ray Thomas to face the wrath of an outraged people.

Yet, before marching to Marshfield, prudence dictated that the people of Plymouth first ensure their own house was in order. Colonel George Watson had accepted a Mandamus post but had almost immediately promised his fellow Plymoutheans that he would resign. A committee was hastily formed and sent to Colonel Watson's home on North Street, demanding clarity. He did not hesitate. With quill in hand, he scrawled his resignation, signed his name, and passed it to the waiting men. Satisfied for now, the crowd agreed to reassemble in the morning and march for Marshfield. The morrow would bring a reckoning.[2]

Dawn had barely broken when the people set out—a force united in purpose. As they passed through Kingston, their numbers swelled. Further along, they were joined by groups from Pembroke, Scituate, Hanover, and other towns along the way. A witness to these events later published an account in *The Massachusetts Spy*, describing the assembly as moving “in battalia.” Whether he meant this figuratively—citizens marching en masse—or was referring to actual militia formations is uncertain. However, his choice of words strongly suggests the presence of organized militia. Many towns had recently ordered their militias to reorganize and intensify their training, and the Powder Alarm—which had sent thousands of militiamen rushing toward Cambridge—had occurred just six days earlier. Given the heightened tensions that September, it seems likely that many men joined the march to Marshfield under arms, perhaps even moving in disciplined military order.

By the time they reached Marshfield, the crowd had swelled to an immense size. According to our aforementioned correspondent (and an earlier, briefer account in *The Boston Evening Post*), nearly two thousand citizens descended upon Nathaniel Ray Thomas's house. Was this an exaggeration? Perhaps. But given the widespread frustration and sense of urgency gripping the

province, I find it plausible that, on September 7, 1774, the Thomas estate witnessed the largest protest assembly in Plymouth County during this era. And every single one of them was focused on one man.[3]

After converging on the Thomas house, the leaders of the assembly conferred and chose thirty-five men (why that number is unclear) as a committee to confront Thomas directly. They approached the house and knocked. With a crowd numbering, perhaps, in the thousands behind them.

Sarah Deering Thomas, the Squire's wife, answered the door. At her side stood her oldest son, Nathaniel Ray Thomas, Jr., 19 years old. When the committee asked the inevitable question, Mrs. Thomas's answer was swift and unsatisfactory. "He is not here." He had gone to Boston, she told them. Last night.

The committee did not believe her. No doubt there were some who insisted that the house should be searched—a search that could have easily escalated into a ransacking. But cooler heads prevailed. With Mrs. Thomas and her son standing firm at the threshold, someone called for a justice of the peace to settle the matter. Given the number present from across the South Shore, it was little surprise that a justice was quickly found.

According to one account, he was from Pembroke—one of the eldest and most respected justices in the county. With solemn authority, he administered an oath, demanding that mother and son swear, before God and man, that they had spoken the truth. Both placed their palms upon a Bible and affirmed their words. Nathaniel Ray Thomas was gone—beyond their reach, at least for today.[4]

The committee agreed on a letter which was quickly written up and given to young Nathaniel Ray Thomas, Jr. They made him swear to deliver it to his father. It read, that whereas Thomas had unconstitutionally accepted a position as Mandamus Councilor, "a great and respectable number of the people of Plymouth County demand your resignation. You have ten days to comply and publish your resignation in the Boston papers. Should you refuse, you may compel us to take measures disagreeable to ourselves and far worse for you." They signed it "The County of Plymouth." [5]

With their message delivered, the assembled men and women did not resort to violence. No torches were lit, no destruction left in their wake. Instead, they gave three thunderous cheers. Then, just as swiftly and orderly as they had come, they dispersed, each man and woman returning to their homes, their fields, and their shops.

Nathaniel Ray Thomas had indeed fled the night before, likely the moment he learned of the assembly gathering in Plymouth at Colonel George Watson's doorstep. Once in Boston, he almost certainly wasted no time in petitioning the royal governor, General Gage, for protection. Troops must be sent to Marshfield, he must have argued, to defend the King's loyal subjects. His appeals would soon be followed by a petition from Marshfield Loyalists. The sight of

hundreds, perhaps thousands of Patriots marching across their town must have made a deep impression. And so the Loyalists of Marshfield, fearing for their lives, formally requested a detachment of Regulars to be stationed in the town.[6]

As we have seen, Gage granted their request. But the conflict was far from over...

References:

- [1] September 6 was a day of upheaval across the Province of Massachusetts Bay. In Worcester, nearly 4,000 armed militiamen converged on the county courthouse, shutting it down in a bold act of defiance against Crown-appointed officials. Meanwhile, in Milton, the Suffolk County Convention convened, and Joseph Warren presented the first draft of the now-famous Suffolk Resolves. Across the colony, tensions had reached a breaking point—Massachusetts was, in many ways, already in a state of rebellion.
- [2] The gathering in Plymouth Town Square and the visit paid to Col. Watson was described by a correspondent to *The Massachusetts Spy*, September 22, 1774, 2.
- [3] The number 2,000 was given in the previously cited account in the *Massachusetts Spy* as well as in an earlier article in the *Boston Evening Post*, September 12, 1774, 3.
- [4] *The Massachusetts Spy*, September 22, 1774, 2.
- [5] *The Massachusetts Spy*, September 22, 1774, 2.
- [6] Winsor, 138.

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A Genealogy Research Tip

By James A Streeter

When researching families before 1900 I have found that I want to make sure of the name of the location where they lived and that it has not changed over time. I have found that names of the town, county and state may have changed while the family is still on the same homestead or in the same town for several generations.

I use Wiki to check for the names and history of locations and the dates of the changes. An example for Descendants of Deacon John Dunham is the names that the Pilgrim Colony has gone thru.

Plymouth, Plymouth Colony 1620 – 1686

Plymouth, Plymouth County, Plymouth Colony (see note below) 1620 - 1686

Plymouth, Plymouth County, Dominion of New England 1685/86 - 1691

Plymouth, Plymouth County, Providence of Massachusetts Bay 1691 – 1776
Plymouth, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, United States of America 1776 – present.

Using Wiki will help to locate the county a town is in and also the State which can also change over time and this can help you located where the records maybe located.

What I do is enter on a new screen in the Search the web location – Wiki followed by the name of the town first – Wiki Plymouth

Note: Plymouth Colony was founded in 1620 but by 1650 there were a number of additional settlements, some in what became Plymouth, Bristol and Barnstable Counties. I use the county names for events that took place between 1650 and 1685/86 as it helps keep track of the 3 growing counties.

The History of Labor Day: A Tribute to American Workers

By Aimee Rose-Haynes - www.aimeerosehaynes.com

Before It Was a Federal Holiday

Long before Labor Day became a national holiday, it was recognized by labor unions and state governments. In the 1880s, American workers faced grueling hours, low wages, and poor working conditions. To honor their contributions and push for better treatment, labor leaders began calling for a day to celebrate the working class.

Municipal ordinances acknowledging Labor Day began appearing in 1885 and 1886. As support grew, individual states moved to pass legislation. New York was the first state to introduce a Labor Day bill, but Oregon became the first to officially adopt it into law on February 21, 1887. That same year, Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York all followed with their own laws.

By the end of the decade, Connecticut, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania had joined in. By 1894, twenty-three more states had established Labor Day as a holiday, setting the stage for federal recognition.

Labor Day Becomes a National Holiday

On June 28, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed legislation designating the first Monday in September as Labor Day, a national holiday. The move followed the Pullman Strike, a nationwide railroad boycott that highlighted tensions between labor and government.

Declaring a holiday to honor workers helped ease those tensions and marked a significant moment in American labor history.

Who First Proposed Labor Day?

The origin of Labor Day's proposal is still debated. Two men are often credited with the idea.

Peter J. McGuire, the general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a co-founder of the American Federation of Labor, is said to have suggested a day to honor workers in 1882. He envisioned a "general holiday for the laboring classes" to recognize those "who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold."

However, many argue that the true founder was Matthew Maguire, a machinist and the secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York. According to research and records from the New Jersey Historical Society, Maguire proposed the idea in 1882 while serving in his role with the union. After Labor Day was signed into federal law, the *Paterson Morning Call* published a piece crediting Maguire as the rightful author of the holiday. Both McGuire and Maguire were present at the first Labor Day parade held that year.

The First Labor Day Celebration

The very first Labor Day was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City. It was organized by the Central Labor Union and featured a parade through the streets of Manhattan. Thousands of workers marched together, proud to display their unity and collective strength.

The following year, the Central Labor Union held another celebration on September 5, 1883. The event gained momentum, inspiring cities and states across the country to host their own parades and gatherings.

By 1894, with growing state support and the labor movement's increasing influence, Congress passed the bill to establish the holiday nationwide.

How Labor Day Was Originally Celebrated

Early Labor Day celebrations reflected the values and goals of the labor movement. The first proposal for the holiday outlined two key elements: a parade to show "the strength and esprit de corps of the trade and labor organizations" and a festival for workers and their families to relax and enjoy the day. This format became a model for future celebrations.

Public speeches by union leaders, politicians, and advocates were added over time, shifting some of the focus toward the economic and civic significance of the labor movement. In 1909, the American Federation of Labor passed a resolution establishing the Sunday before Labor Day as Labor Sunday, a time to reflect on the spiritual and educational values of labor.

The Modern Meaning of Labor Day

Although Labor Day has become associated with backyard cookouts and holiday sales, its purpose remains deeply rooted in honoring the contributions of American workers. The holiday stands as a reminder of the efforts of unions and activists who fought for fair wages, safe working conditions, and reasonable hours.

Even today, many of the rights workers enjoy, like the 40-hour workweek, minimum wage, and workplace safety regulations can be traced back to the hard work and sacrifices of the labor movement.

Labor Day is a chance to reflect on how far we have come and how much work remains. It is a moment to recognize the value of labor, the dignity of work, and the role of the American worker in shaping the nation's success.

As the *Department of Labor* once stated, "It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pays tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership -the American worker." (source: www.dol.gov/general/laborday/history)

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What is new on the Dunham Website

by James A. Streeter

I have made a number of needed updates to the Dunham Website but am still in the process of making the need corrections and additions to the Newsletter Indexes. Jeff is still in the process of moving the DGRA to the new server location when he can but has been dealing with Work related obligations and some medical issues and hope that the move to the new server happens soon. If you find something that needs to be updated please let me know.

The Newsletter is in need of any and all suggestions for new Articles and will we will also review any ideas for new sections in the Dunham Families in America Collections.

HELP NEEDED - We are looking for some help to review Dunham lines found in the DSFC Newsletters and prepare them to be added into the Dunham Families in America collection. If you have questions about what is involved or are able to help, please contact James A. Streeter - james8313@sti.net