

JOHN DUNHAM SR. (1589-1669)
 SUSANNAH KENNY (-1622)

Deacon John Dunham was the son of Sir Thomas Dunham who lived in Kirklington, Nottinghamshire, England. He was born in 1589 and after going to Holland as a young man returned with a wife and family to Lancashire from where he and his family sailed to America in the ship "Hope" arriving in Plymouth in 1630.¹ We might say that John was actually a part of the group of Pilgrims who found refuge in Holland but who, for reasons we do not know, remained in Holland to arrive at Plymouth ten years after the Mayflower.

The Pilgrim's story is a familiar one but the circumstances leading up to their escape from England to Holland is not always told. King James I proved to be sternly apposed to the hopes the Puritans had held in regard to their beliefs of freedom to worship outside the established Church of England.

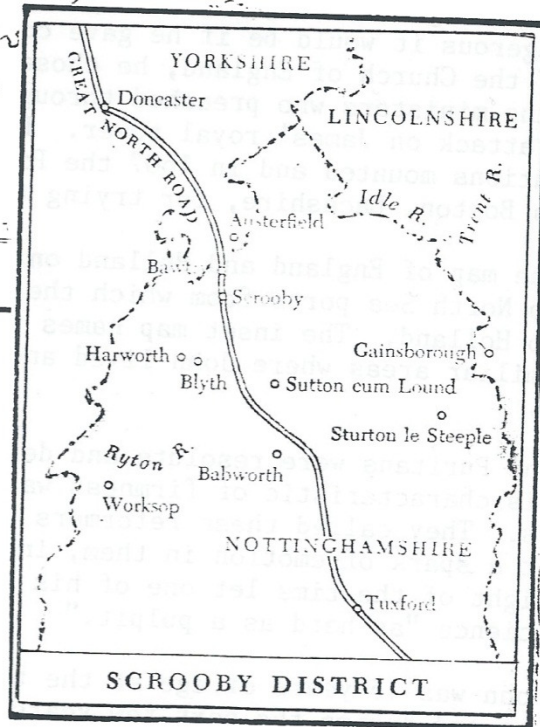
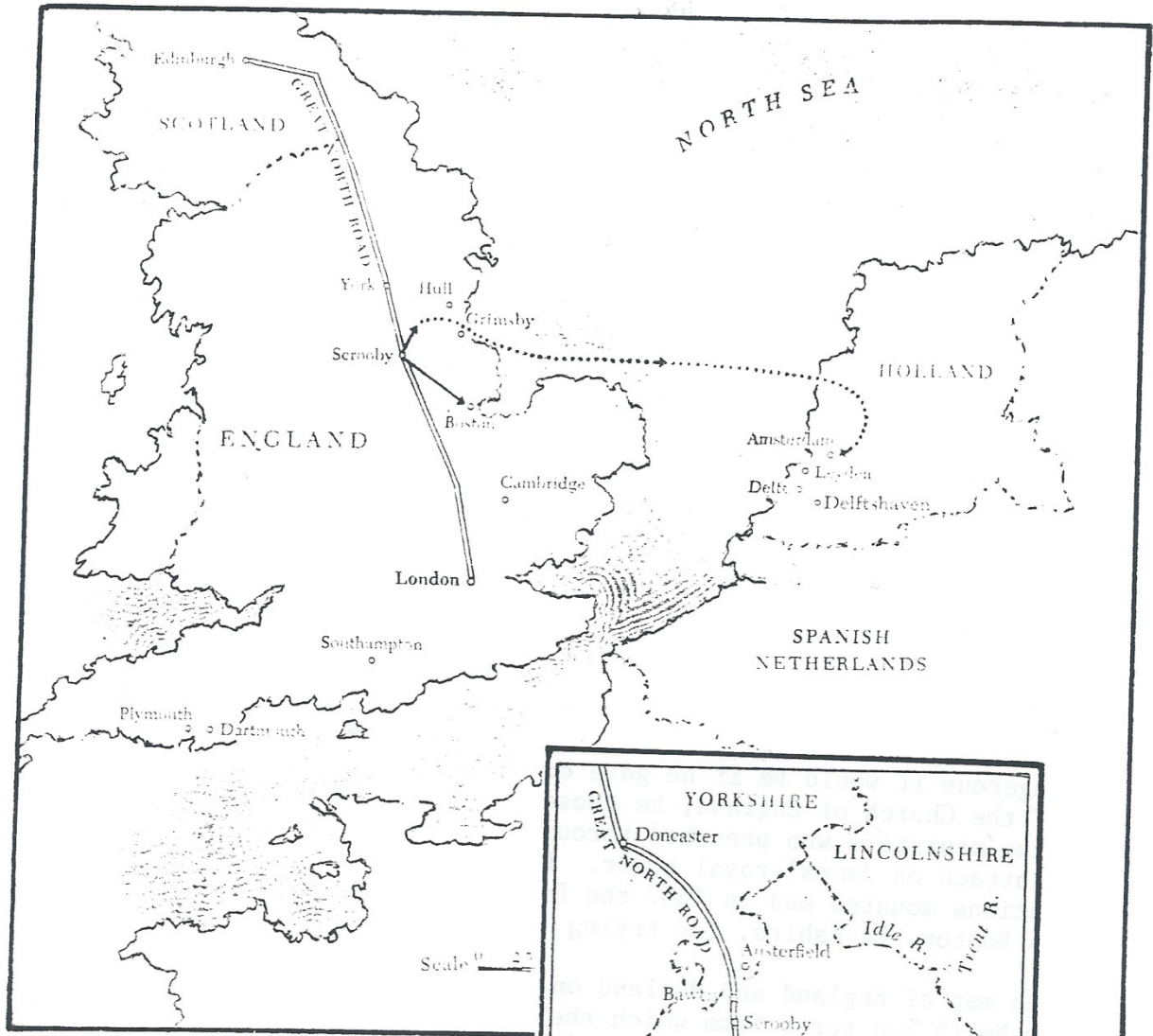
In 1604, in answer to the petition of 800 Puritan ministers, James called a conference at Hampton Court Palace on the Thames River southwest of London. Many Church of England ministers were present but only four Puritans had been allowed to attend. The Puritans asked the king to grant them what they called liberty of conscience. By this they meant they wanted the right to worship as they pleased. King James knew that these reformers also wanted the right to elect their ministers from among their own congregation.

James hated anyone and anything that weakened his power. He believed in the Divine right of Kings. In many ways James was a clever ruler. He knew how dangerous it would be if he gave consent to their petition. As king and head of the Church of England, he chose the bishops and the bishops, in turn, chose the ministers who preached throughout the land. Any attack on the bishops was an attack on James' royal power. He rejected the petition of the Puritans. Persecutions mounted and in 1607 the Pilgrim Fathers were jailed in the Guildhall in Boston, Lacashire, for trying to flee England.

The map of England and Holland on the next page shows Hull and Boston the two North Sea ports from which the Pilgrims made several attempts to escape to Holland. The inset map names the small, peaceful towns around Scrooby, the familiar areas where John lived and where Elder Brewster had Puritan followers.

The Puritans were resolute and determined in their declarations of faith but this characteristic of firmness was not regarded as meritorious by their enemies. They called these reformers "sour, bloodless, and stony-hearted bigots without a spark of emotion in them, incapable of any warm human feeling." One playwright of the time let one of his characters speak of a Puritan as having a conscience "as hard as a pulpit."

John was 15 years of age at the time that the Puritan clergy made their petition and during the next few years he saw the cruelties of despotism in his country and William Brewster had no doubt been a religious influence during an impressionable time of his life in Nottinghamshire, England (map 1 #9). A short sketch of John's life is written by Leon Clark Hills in "History and Gene-



alogy of the Mayflower Planters" portrays our John Dunham's life in these words:

"John Dunham was born 1588/9 at Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, England. He was the same age as Bradford and perhaps attended the same primary school around Scrooby, possibly under the tutoring of William Brewster. However, both he and Bradley were too young to have had any leadership in the movement to Holland, although they may have attended the meetings at the Manor between 1604-7 while they were teenagers. They may have gone over to Holland more for 'trade' purposes than any other reason, for boys of that age were seeking the most likely opportunities for "apprenticeships" and Holland was prosperous. Just when John Dunham went into Holland is not known . . ." 2

It became necessary to consider the research of other genealogists in matters of John's marriage and his family because of the variances found in the writings of Mr. Hills and so the writer refrained from giving his references in favor of that which was recorded by the research of the DAR taken from "Hamlin Genealogy and American Genealogist, vol. 30 'England and Holland of the Pilgrims' by Rev. H. M. Dexter:

"John Dunham, widower of Susannah, betrothed Abigail Barlow (Bailliou), Oct. 7, 1622. Witnesses, father Thomas, and sister Anna Barlow (Bailliou), married Oct. 22, 1622, Leyden, Holland.

"He was living in Zevenhuysen in 1622; Leyden, 1624. The first record in America was the tax list, Jan. 2, 1633. He was chosen Deacon of the church 1633 under Elder Brewster. He was a weaver by trade and an extensive cattle raiser.

"12 children:

1. John Dunham, Jr. bp. 1615-6, Leyden Holland; md. Mary _____; died abt. 1692 (7-40)
2. Humility Dunham, b. 1616-7; nothing further
3. Thomas Dunham, b. 1619; d. before 1677
4. Samuel Dunham, b. abt 1624, Leyden; d. 20 Jan. 1711-2, Plymouth; md. (1) 29 June 1649, Mrs. Sarah Watson
5. Abigail Dunham, b. abt 1626, md. 6 Nov. 1644, Plymouth; Stephen Wood
6. Persis Dunham, b. 1628-9; d. 1672, md. (1) Benajah Pratt (2) Johathan Shaw
7. Gen. Jonathan Dunham, b. 1632; d. 18 Dec. 1717, Martha's Vineyard, md. (1) Mary Delano (2) Mary Cobb
8. Hannah Dunham, b. 1633-4; d. 1 Apr. 1708; md. Giles Richard, Jr.
9. Joseph Dunham, b. 1636; d. 1703; md. (1) Mercy Morton (2) Hester Wornwell
10. Benajah Dunham, b. 1638; d. 24 Dec. 168__, Picsataway, N.J.; md. Mary Tilson
11. Daniel Dunham, b. 1640; d. before 1677; md. Hannah _____.
12. Benjamin Dunham. " 3

According to the dates of births the first three children were born to Susannah Kenney, including our ancestor, (1) above. The other nine children were born after John's second marriage to Abigail. Mr. Peck's record and that of the DAR agree upon the fact that the first wife, the mother of our progenitor John, was Susannah Kenny. 4

The founding of the Plymouth Colony was one of the great events in the early history of the American colonies and though John's arrival was a few years later than the Mayflower people he was none-the-less a Pilgrim who helped in establish-

ing a successful settlement in this land.

The first group crossed from Delft Haven, in Holland, and sailed to Southampton, Hampshire, England (map 1#38) and were joined by others to embark in the Mayflower and a consort of other vessels. They landed in America, wrote up a famous Compact and settled at what they called Plymouth.

The contributions of the Pilgrims and Puritans were many. They were the first to develop a church government in which elections were held yearly by the whole congregation. This democratic system was immediately put to use in the New England town meetings - and influenced the men who later formed the government of the United States. Connecticut championed civil liberties, Rhode Island religious freedom, and public education for all was made compulsory in Massachusetts as early as 1647.

Both Puritans and Pilgrims considered it each man's duty to learn to read in order to be able to study the word of God in the Bible, and to perfect himself in all ways, in order to glorify their Maker. In 1636, Harvard College was founded at Cambridge. It was the first institution of higher learning in the English colonies and was to become one of the world's great universities. Our early American Puritan and Pilgrim people gave to America the idea that education is not the privilege of a few but the right of all.

And although the Plymouth settlers had journeyed as religious pilgrims to the New World in their search for freedom of conscience, true freedom for all men would not come until after the American Revolution. By present day standards, the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony were almost as intolerant as the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay. But in the age in which they lived, tolerance was a new idea, believed by almost nobody, and to be found almost nowhere on earth. But those early settlers possessed a strength that is still admired.

Bradford said of them, "He did the best he could . . . walking according to the light he saw, till the Lord would reveal further unto him." He continued to say, "he was a man who had done and suffered much for the Lord . . . in this wilderness, and done . . . faithful service in his place and calling." It is because of the strength, the ideals, and the courage of men like William Bradford, William Brewster, Clement Briggs (7-8) and John Dunham that the Pilgrims are so well remembered by Americans today.

John Dunham must have had a great yearning to join friends who had so recently become settled in Plymouth. This impelling desire moved upon him and his wife Abigail and their family of five or six young children and they left Holland going first to John's homeland - in Nottinghamshire. They then traveled across land northwest to Lancashire, (map 1 #5), probably Liverpool, where they boarded the ship "Hope" in 1630 and made the adventurous and risky ocean voyage to Plymouth.

Our minds eye can fairly see the welcome and greetings they must have received upon arriving safely in that busy settlement. Many newcomers followed but stayed at Plymouth only long enough to plan a move to other settlements such as Scituate, Wareham and Barnstable.

John and Abigail, however, stayed in Plymouth where their other children were born and where they remained for the duration of their lives.

"In 1638, John Dunham was chosen deputy of Plymouth Colony, serving 17 years. The colony records say of him, 'He was a man of strict honesty and sterling character, quite prominent in the growth and prosperity of the colony.

"In 1642 he represented Plymouth at a court to consider war against the Indians. He was a member of the committee that revised the general laws of the colony in 1650. In 1654 he represented Plymouth at a convention of the colonies relative to a confederation of the colonies." ⁵

He was one of the first purchasers of Dartmouth. He left us a Pilgrim heritage as one who walked, lived and worked with those early Mayflower people. He received his ministerial title as "Deacon John Dunham through a choice made under Elder Brewster in 1633 and rendered theological and civic service throughout his life in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

The poem, "The Pilgrim Fathers" was written for and read at the dedication of the Pilgrim Monument at Plymouth by John Boyle O'Reilly, August 1, 1889.

Here, on this rock, and on this sterile soil,
Began the Kingdom not of Kings, but men;
Began the making of the world again.

Here struck the seed—the Pilgrim's roofless town,
Where equal rights and equal bonds were set,
Where all the people equal franchised met;
Where doom was writ of privilege and crown;
Where human breath blew all the idols down;
Where crests were nought, where vulture flags were furled,
And common man began to own the world. ⁶

The Dunhams were important people. They were from a yeomanry of stable qualities and like others of Pilgrim convictions, stood firm in their religious beliefs in the face of opposing forces and the risks of persecution. John lived to be eighty years old.

In following the events that surrounded the next generation as some of the family left Plymouth to pioneer other areas, we are made aware of their aggressiveness and bravery as they encountered new places and established themselves in wilderness homes.

1. #72 p. 20
2. #73 p. 130
3. #71 pp. 62, 63
4. #2 Vol. 2 p. (17-348) also #71 p. 62
5. #71. p. 65
6. #135 p. 16