

THE BUNNELL/BONNELL NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, No. 3.

1 July 1987

Published by
William R. Austin
P. O. Box 62
Laceyville, PA 18623
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CURRENT NEWS

Again, I'm happy to report a newly published book which will be of interest to many of you. Paul J. Bunnell, A. G., U. L., sent me a glossy brochure of his new book THUNDER OVER NEW ENGLAND, subtitled "Benjamin Bonnell, the Loyalist." The highlights of the book as listed in the brochure are:

- *Genealogical report of the Bonnell/Bunnell family
- *Packed with information of Loyalist ancestors, lists of names
- *Brings to life day-to-day occurrences in the Colonies
- *Presents a "new" look at Benedict Arnold's role in history
- *Tells of the hardships endured by the loyalists in Canada
- *Detailed account of the battle of New London and Fort Griswold
- *Recounts author's contact with ancestor's spirit
- *Psychic researcher declares spirit's appearance authentic.

Paul says the book will be available in stores in July, but in the meantime it can be ordered in hardcover for \$12.95 plus \$2.50 postage and handling per copy from The Christopher Publishing House, 106 Long-water Drive, Norwell, MA 02061.

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Both THE GENEALOGICAL HELPER, published by the Everton Publishers, Inc., and NEXUS, published by the New England Historic Genealogical Society, printed notices of the advent of the BUNNELL/BONNELL NEWSLETTER in their most recent issues. Almost immediately I began to receive letters from some of their subscribers who are interested in the genealogy of this family and who had not previously known of our efforts.

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Since Newsletter #2 was issued readers have sent in contributions totalling \$155.00. This just about pays the cost of printing and mailing Newsletter #3, so I can postpone for a while longer the need to think about putting the Newsletter on a subscription basis. Many thanks to all of you for your help.

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HOW MANY WILLIAM BUNNELLS?

In the last Newsletter I promised to discuss the identity of the several William Bunnells which appear in the early records. First, a correction: I spoke of William Bunnell, "who appears in the records of Watertown, MA from 1630 to 1646," when I should have said "who appears in the records of Massachusetts Bay from 1630 to 1646."

As you read this you will probably wish to refer to the copy of the original records in Newsletter #2. After they were typed into my computer, I found considerable variance between my copy and those of several other researchers who have quoted the same volumes. To insure the accuracy of the Newsletter, I went to Syracuse, NY, (the nearest library to me with these reference works) and compared my printout, letter by letter, with the volumes I was quoting. The Newsletter was not sent to the printer until all necessary corrections had been made. I am reasonably sure that the result is as accurate as I can make it.

Rather than trying to lead up to a conclusion, I will give you my conclusion right at the outset: I believe that all the records quoted from Massachusetts Bay and New Haven clearly refer to a single person who lived part of his life in each place and that no other records have been found which cast a reasonable doubt of that identity.

1. There are no contemporary references to a William Bunnell in New Haven before 1650, although "Goodwife Bunill" testified at New Haven in 1649. This statement conflicts with what some researchers have said. E.g., Carolyn Syron Valentine in her 1925 manuscript wrote, "it is of clear record that a William Bonnel came to New Haven after 1635, married there Anne Wilmot,..."; and Ruth Duncan in WILLIAM BUNNELL AND HIS DESCENDANTS, 1986, STATED, "The New Haven Town Records show that a William Bunnell was in New Haven about 1638." However, Buell B. Bassette, in ONE BASSETT FAMILY IN AMERICA, 1926, wrote, "New Haven writers have said that William Bunnell was there about as early as 1639, but the claim is not supported by any record either land, town, or court." Now, sixty years later, no one has yet produced any contemporary record to show that the Bunnells were in New Haven before 1649. I cannot accept the assertion when no evidence is offered.

2. There are no references to a William Bunnell in Massachusetts Bay after 1646. This also requires explanation. The Valentine manuscript confused me for some time, with its insistence that "There were two William Bonnells, or Bunnells, as the records persisted in making them, in New England." She cited the Massachusetts Bay records of 1630 to 1646, then went on to say, "other records show this William marrying two wives, and several children are named. The dates in connection with these cover the same period as that in which Ann Wilmot's children were being born, and the records are for Massachusetts. Hence it could not have been the Connecticut William." She did not indicate what the "other records" were, and I had never seen any records which could have been the basis for this statement until Ruth Duncan brought to my attention THE PIONEERS OF MASSACHUSETTS, by Charles Henry Pope, published in 1900. On page 80 of that book is an article about William

Burnell of Boston and Pulling Point. Clearly, here are the " other records." To insure complete accuracy for the purposes of this discussion I am inserting

a photocopy of the article in question. All of the original records Pope cites in the article refer to William Burnell except one: the 1630 item about the jury impaneled to inquire concerning the death of Austen Bratcher. Pope apparently did not find the later references to William Bunnell and must have assumed this was a variation in the spelling of William Burnell's name. In any case, he listed the name as BURNELL, and followed it with the variant BUNNELL. When William Burnell died in 1669 he left his house and lot in Boston to his son John, and his house and farm at Pulling Point to his son Samuel, plus the sum of forty pounds to his daughter Sarah.

Aside from the fact that the records seem to say clearly "Bunnell" when they mean Bunnell and clearly "Burnell" when they mean Burnell, it is not conceivable to me that William Burnell could have achieved this kind of prosperity if he were the "Goodman Bunnell" whose children the Court had to provide for in 1645, only fifteen years before.

3. Next, I suggest that the character of William Bunnell is consistent as it is revealed in the records of the two colonies. In Massachusetts Bay, for at least the six years from 1640 to 1646, he appears as a charge to the community. From 1650 to 1654 New Haven had to provide community funds to support him and his family. In 1646 Massachusetts Bay furnished 30 shillings worth of clothing for him on his return to England; in 1654 New Haven had to provide his passage to England. At no time in either colony was he able to support himself and his family.

4. The clinching evidence, however, appears in the testimony of his father-in-law, Benjamin Wilmot, at the Court held at New Haven on 7 October 1851, when William Bunnell was trying to cancel the apprenticeship of two of his children. Wilmot said, "his sonn Bunill was in the Bay, and was a charge to the country there, after went to England,". All three clauses in that statement coincide with the records we have found in Massachusetts Bay. William Bunnell was "in the Bay"; he lived there apparently from 1630 to 1646. He was "a charge to the country there"; the Court records of 1640, 1645, and 1646 prove it. And "after went to England", as the record of 6 May 1646 demonstrates.

5. Benjamin Wilmot went on to say that Bunnell "left his wife and children but no meanes to maintayne them: after hee was gone shee & her children came vp heither to him,". Notice that on 1 October 1845 the General Court of Massachusetts Bay appointed a committee to dispose of the Bunnell children, "if their grandfathr will not take care of ym." A short time later we find them living with their grandfather in

	(8)	BURMAN, see Boardman.
	chh. 14	
1661.		BURNELL, BUNNELL,
Lydia 31 (11)		William, Pulling Point, Boston jury-
		man, 1630. Hired one third of the weir at
		Menotomy in 1641. Wife Mary adm. chh.
638; made will		11 (4) 1643; ch. Elizabeth bapt. 18 (4) 1643,
1; beq. to sons		John b. (8) 1644. The wife Mary d. 16 (9)
el and Jacob;		1645; he m. 2 Sarah _____.
Son Thomas		His will dated 16 (2) 1660, prob. May 17,
e death of his		1661, beq. to wife Sarah, ch. John, Samuel
Mary.		and Sarah. [Reg. IX, 230, and X, 270.]
	1643	BURNAP, BURONP, BURNOPP, BURNETT,
		Robert, Roxbury, propr. about 1640.
	in 1648. De-	Rem. to Reading: propr. 1652. Mortg. farm
	ears. Good-	
	45 years.	

New Haven.

In summary, the specific testimony of Benjamin Wilmot, coupled with the supporting evidence from Massachusetts Bay records, the consistency of character displayed by the records from both places, and the fact that no contemporary records have been found which conflict with this interpretation convince me that William Bunnell of Massachusetts Bay and William Bunnell of New Haven are the same person.

If any of my readers believe I am mistaken in this conclusion and wish to present arguments to the contrary, I will be happy to print their letters in future issues of the Newsletter. Only through rigorous examination of all the evidence can we be assured of being correct in the final analysis.

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MORE ABOUT PRONUNCIATION

Merton Bunnell of Springville, PA, tells me that when he is at home in Pennsylvania he is a BUNnell, but when he goes to Florida for the winter he becomes a BunNELL. "That's the way they say it down there"

Judson W. Bunnell of Clarks Summit, PA, says the same thing about Arizona. During the years he lived in that state his name was transformed to BunNELL.

John Paul Grady of Spring, TX, writes: In response to pronunciation. In South-central Kentucky older members of the family pronounced the name BUNNEL (rhyming with tunnel, funnel). The wags of the community have said, "just give 'em a little money and they get to be BunNELL. My father-in-law always called himself Carlos BUN'NEL while his wife always referred to herself as Mrs. Carlos BunNELL'.

Anyone else?

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LONG-STANDING ERROR CORRECTED

John C. Bonnell was married to Jemima Van Sycle by Mr. Hunt on 31 January 1807 in Hunterdon co, NJ. This is attested by the marriage records of Hunterdon co. For years researchers have identified this John Bonnell as the son of Lt. Col. Abraham Bonnell, Jr., and his wife Elizabeth Foster. Their son John was born 16 May 1762.

Now, in an outstanding example of genealogical research combining deductive reasoning, plain old hard digging, and good luck, MRS PAUL A SACCO, of Pittsburgh, PA has not only proved that that identification was wrong, but has also identified the correct John C. Bonnell.

Mrs. Sacco found John Bonnel, age 72, his wife Jemima, age 62, and their daughter Hannah, age 30, in the 1850 census of the township of Alexandria, Hunterdon co, NJ. First of all, John's age didn't match; he should have been 88 instead of 72 if the old identification was correct. Also, while it was possible, it seemed unlikely to Mrs. Sacco that John would have been 58 when his daughter was born. Deciding that there had to be a better answer, she embarked on an intensive study of the New Jersey records. She found the burial record of John and Jemima at the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in Alexandria twp, giving John's birthdate as 4 April 1778, confirming the census record and making it virtually certain that this John was not the son of Col. Abraham.

Then after some months of searching, she found a deed that cleared the matter up completely. Dated 6 July 1811, in it John Bonnel and Jemima his wife, and Andrew Fleming and Rachel his wife conveyed 100 acres of land to George West: "All that certain tract of land formerly surveyed to Abraham Bonnel on or about the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred thirty seven 1737. Situate lying and being at or near Great Eggharbour River in the county of Gloucester in the State of New Jersey aforesaid duly recorded in the Surveyor General's office at Burlington in Lib. M. folio 333. . . . which tract of Land was left by will of said Abraham Bonnel dated the eighth day of January 1768 to his son John Bonnel who also died without disposing thereof leaving Issue – Mercy, John and Rachel, and the said Mercy having since married Obed Coalman, together with her said Husband, conveyed their share in said land to said John & Rachel by Indenture dated 20th April A. D. 1799, the whole being now the property of the parties of the first part. . . ."

The Abraham Bonnel mentioned in the deed was Abraham Bonnell, Sr., 1700 – 1768, father of Lt. Col. Abraham and three other sons, Jacob, Isaac and John. Abraham, Jr., has been well documented, but the history of his brothers has been very obscure, with next to nothing known about John (at least to your editor). The will of Abraham, Sr., referred to in the deed above, has long been a part of the record. In it he gave 5 pounds to each of his four sons and 100 acres of land at Great Egg Harbor, Gloucester co, NJ, to his youngest son John, with the remainder to his wife Mary. The deed now discovered by Mrs. Sacco tells us that son John married and had three children who survived him, Thus, Jemima's husband was not the son of Lt. Col. Abraham Bonnell, but rather his nephew, son of his brother John.

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THE WIFE OF NATHANIEL BONNELL, JR.

Nathaniel Bonnell, Jr., son of Nathaniel and Susannah (Whitehead) Bonnell, and grandson of William and Ann (Wilmot) Bonnell, died at Elizabethtown, NJ, on 4 September 1736 in the 67th year of his age. In his will dated 19 June 1736 and proved 13 September 1736 he referred to his wife "Mary." No contemporary record has come down to us to give us her maiden name. One researcher suggested "Miller", but I believe that

was simply confusion with Joanna Miller, the wife of Nathaniel's son Nathaniel III. Several have suggested that she might have been a "Searing" without offering any evidence for the suggestion.

Now, MISS GLADYS INGRAM, of Stillwater, OK, has sent me the results of her exhaustive research in the records of Hempstead, Long Island. Although her chain of evidence is circumstantial, it goes a long way toward proving that Nathaniel Bonnell's wife was MARY SEARING, daughter of John and Susanna (Pine) Searing of Hempstead, L. I., NY. The National Society of Colonial Dames XVII Century found it persuasive enough to grant Miss Ingram a supplementary membership. I also find it persuasive, and unless and until some conflicting data turns up I will consider Miss Ingram's identification of Mary Searing as correct.

Miss Ingram was unable to locate the will of John Searing. It was either not recorded or it was lost. However, in the division of some of his lands by his sons in 1713, as recorded in Town Records of North and South Hempstead, Vol. II, pp. 334-5, it is plainly stated that there was a will. This entry names John, "Jeams" (James), Simon and Jonathan Searing as sons of John Searing. A later entry, Vol. II page 27, adds to these the name of "Samuel Serring of Elisabeth Town in ye County of Essex in east Jarsey." No daughters are mentioned in these documents.

In the 1920's a librarian in the Queens Borough Public Library in Jamaica, Long Island, began a collection of records of some of the early families of Long Island. This collection lists the sons of John Searing as named in the town records and adds the names of his three daughters, Mary, Hannah, and Sarah.

Mary Searing is believed to have married Nathaniel Bonnell, Jr., and the names of her children lend strong support to that belief. The children named in Nathaniel's 1736 will are Nathaniel and Mary, named for their parents; Isaac, the name of Nathaniel's grandfather Isaac Whitehead, and also of his brother Isaac Bonnell; Sarah, Hannah and James, names found on the list of John Searing's children; and Abigail, the name of Mary Searing's aunt, a sister of her mother. The names of all the children are thus accounted for, the last four having no previous occurrence in the Bonnell family.

That the name "Mary" was a favorite among the five brothers of Mary Searing is shown by the records of their wills: three of the five each named a daughter Mary; one, Jonathan, named his only daughter Mary. Samuel Searing, who died in Elizabethtown, NJ, honored all three of his sisters by naming daughters for them.

Miss Ingram adds, "another major item of circumstantial evidence is the involvement of the family of Nathaniel Bonnell in the execution of the wills of Simon and Samuel Searing in Elizabethtown, New Jersey. In 1735, Benjamin Bonnell, brother of Nathaniel, was called to witness the will of Simon Searing, as was his first cousin, Timothy Whitehead. In 1738 Timothy Whitehead served with Simon Searing, Jr. as executor of the will of Samuel Searing, with Nathaniel Bonnell, Jr. as witness. Both Benjamin and Joseph Bonnell, another brother of Nathaniel, appear

with Samuel Searing earlier in witnessing the will of Jeremiah Post."

Another fine research accomplishment. There are still enough family mysteries to be solved (and corrections to be made) to keep us all busy for a long time. Whenever I receive information from any of my readers regarding similar research efforts, I will be happy to publicize them.

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Mrs. Lily M. Lee of Sun City, CA, writes: "Do you know where I might obtain a picture of Nathaniel Bonnell's home, built before 1682 in Elizabeth, NJ? I am sure there are many Bonnells that would be interested in getting that picture."



Here is a copy of a picture of the house. It was sent to me by Homer E. Baldwin of Greensburg, PA, in December 1959. The original is in color, and was recently taken at that time. The house is now owned and operated by the Eliza-

bethtown Historical Foundation as "The Nathaniel Bunnell Homestead." It stands at 1045 East Jersey Street, Elizabeth, NJ, and is the oldest surviving house in Elizabeth. Nathaniel Bunnell was the younger son of William and Ann (Wilmot) Bunnell. He was born probably between 1640 and 1642 at Massachusetts Bay and moved with his mother to New Haven, CT, about 1646. In 1665 he married Susannah Whitehead. They moved almost immediately to the new settlement at Elizabethtown, NJ. Nathaniel was one of a company of 80 men called the Elizabethtown Associates. Sometime between 1665 and 1682, when it was mentioned in a deed, he built this house on a lot "of six acres, 15 by 4 chains, bounded, E., by Thomas Price; W., and N., by Isaac Whitehead, Sen.; and S., by a highway." In the records of Elizabethtown the spelling of Nathaniel's surname gradually changed from Bunnell to Bonnell and most of his descendants spell it with an "o". I haven't learned how many generations of the Bonnell family lived in the house before it was sold. Until recently it served as the New Jersey State Headquarters of the Sons of the American Revolution.

From the Cleveland Plain Dealer, 18 July 1986:

"'Play me or fly me' is Bonnell's demand
Little-used veteran BARRY BONNELL of the Seattle Mariners has presented a unique proposal to club owner George Argyros.

Bonnell said he would like to pilot Argyros' corporate Lear jet for the remainder of the year to earn his Mariners salary now that he has been released. Bonnell has been a private pilot for 11 years."

A 1978 baseball card tells me BARRY BONNELL was born 27 October 1953 at Milford, OH. Can anyone tell me more about him and how he fits into the family?

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QUERIES

The name and address of the inquirer is included with each query. However, if you are able to provide the inquirer with the information requested, I would appreciate your sending me a copy of your reply.

1. Who were the parents of EDWIN FAIRBANKS BUNNELL, b. 25 Sept. 1807 at Hartford, CT, d. 11 Dec. 1891 at Oakland, Alameda co, CA." On 3 May 1833, at Francestown, Hillsborough co, NH, he married ADELINE D. WOODBURY, dau. of PETER and MARY (WOODBURY) WOODBURY. Alice D. Gedge, 2201 West 13400 South, Riverton, UT 84065.

2 Need information on the wife and descendants of CHARLES BUNNELL, son of REUBEN (1786-1889) and PHILOMA (HULL) (1793-) BUNNELL of Canandaiqua, Ontario co, NY. I believe one of his descendants was a HENRY BUNNELL. I suspect that CHARLES moved to Ohio in the mid-1850's. Elvin W., Burnell, 1220 Sheir Rd., Mansfield, OH 44903.

3, Need parents and ancestry of SAMUEL BONNELL, b. 1755 NJ; d. 1816 Hamilton co, OH; m. ELIZABETH CRANE, b. NJ. Their dau. LYDIA J. BONNELL, b. 1791 NJ; d. 1879 Butler co, OH; m. SAMUEL MAXWELL FRAZEE, b. 1790 NJ; d. 1855 Butler co, OH. John E. Wolverton, 2815 North Maplewood Ave., Chicago, IL 60618.

Response to Query #3: SAMUEL BONNELL'S descent from the immigrant ancestor is as follows:

William Bunnell and Ann Wilmot
Nathaniel Bonnell and Susannah Whitehead
Nathaniel Bonnell and Mary Searing
Nathaniel Bonnell and Joanna Miller
Benjamin Bonnell and Rachel Van Winkle, parents of SAMUEL.
- WRA.

4. MARY BONNELL, b. 1787 in NJ, m. JACOB SHIPMAN, b. 1769 in NJ. He died about 1860 in Guernsey co, OH. Who were the parents of MARY?
Ralph George, 474 Vallejo Street, San Francisco, CA 94133.