

## David Dinsmore, Ulster-Scots Loyalist in South Carolina and Nova Scotia Exile: Every Life Worth a Novel

Psychologist Erving Polster thinks every person's life is worth a novel.<sup>1</sup> For those of us curious to learn about our family history, Polster's insight accounts at least in part for what compels us to keep learning. Beyond the bare facts we accumulate in the pursuit of information about our ancestors lie stories that can in some cases be downright fascinating, with their alternate hues of joy and tragedy, ill fate and astonishing good fortune. It's often the stories themselves, in fact, that keep us going when the trails of facts begin to taper off.

The stories are what remain. In what follows, I want to take a close look at one story I've uncovered as I've worked on my own family history. It's a story full of themes dominant in classic literature from Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* to the present: journey into the unknown and separation from loved ones. War and anguishing decisions about loyalties and sides to take as war arrives. Exile and tragic loss, familial separation added to familial separation, with a final tragic severing of ties between a husband and wife, a father and his children.

What follows is the story of David Dinsmore, an Ulster Scot immigrant to South Carolina who served as a British soldier during the Revolutionary War and was exiled to Nova Scotia as a result. When Dinsmore went to Canada, his wife and their children remained in South Carolina and then moved to Kentucky. Two of Dinsmore's children, a son John and a daughter Mary Jane, spent the final years of their lives in Lawrence Co., Alabama. All the facts available to historians of this family suggest that, from the time of his exile to Nova Scotia to the end of his life, David Dinsmore never reunited with his wife Margaret and their children. War and exile sundered this immigrant family decisively . . . .

### I. *The David Dinsmore Family: Ulster Origins*

If the one document we have providing a precise age for David Dinsmore is accurate, he would have been born in or close to 1750. The document in question is the list of passengers aboard the ship the *Earl of Donegal* when it arrived in Charleston from Belfast on 10 December 1767.<sup>2</sup> On 22 December, the South Carolina Council Journal recorded a tally of the ship's passengers, noting their ages. This document lists Dinsmore's age as 17 in December 1767, his wife Margaret's as 20.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Erving Polster, *Every Person's Life Is Worth a Novel* (NY: W. W. Norton, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> On 14 December, the *South Carolina Gazette* (33,1681) carried a notice of the arrival of the *Earl of Donegal* in Charleston on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> South Carolina Council Journal 8 (1767), pp. 311-325; the listing for David and Margaret Dunsmar is on p. 318.

In the Council Chamber.  
 Tuesday the 22<sup>d</sup> December 1767  
 Present  
 His Excellency Governor  
 Samuel Beale John Drayton Esqrs  
 Henry Middleton Daniel Blake Esqrs  
 The Clerk reported to the Board that in pursuance  
 of His Excellency the Governor's directions he had been on  
 board the ship Earl of Donegal Quinn Longuefon  
Master and had seen the Irish passengers landed  
 in her to their being Protestants and having come over  
 on the encouragement and bounty given by the Act of the  
 General Assembly passed the 25<sup>th</sup> day of July 1761—  
 agreeable to a List he had delivered on at the Board—  
 Petitions praying to be allowed the said bounty from  
 the undermentioned persons were then presented and

David Carrol 34  
 Jane Carrol 23  
 Mary Carrol 5  
 David Dunsmar 17  
 Margaret ~~Dunsmar~~ 20

Figure 2: Ibid., p. 318

Figure 1: South Carolina Council Journal 8 (1767), p. 311

The listing for the couple in the South Carolina Council Journal spells their surname as Dunsmar, though Janie Revill transcribes the record as Dunaman.<sup>4</sup> Dinsmore has long been the preferred spelling in Scotland and Ulster, and in this particular family, was the dominant spelling from the point of the family's immigration to South Carolina—though variants including Dunsmore, Densmore, or Dinsmoor also appear in some records. Even when spelled Dunsmore, the name was pronounced by Ulster Scots in a way that would have sounded much like Dinsmore/Densmore to American ears.

No records have yet been found that pinpoint precisely David and Margaret's place of origin in Northern Ireland, but as Richard K. MacMaster notes, a number of extant records suggest that they and the other immigrants arriving in Charleston aboard the *Earl of Donegal* in December 1767 came predominantly from the vicinity of Ballymoney and Ballymena (as well as Belfast) in Co. Antrim.<sup>5</sup> On 14 August and again on 4 September, the *Belfast Newsletter* carried an announcement of the sailing of the *Earl of Donegal* to Charlestown on 20 September (the ship actually set sail on 7 October).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Janie Revill, *A Compilation of Original Lists of Protestant Immigrants to South Carolina, 1763-1775* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publ. Co., 1968), p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Richard K. MacMaster, "Ulster Roots: They Came through Charleston," *Family Tree* (Aug.-Sept., 2002), online at the Electric Scotland website at [www.electricscotland.com/familytree/magazine/augsep2002/ulster\\_roots.htm](http://www.electricscotland.com/familytree/magazine/augsep2002/ulster_roots.htm); accessed June 2012. See also MacMaster, "From Ulster to the Carolinas: John Torrans, John Greg, and John Poaug, and Bounty Emigration 1761-1768" in David Gleeson, ed., *The Irish in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2010), pp. 251-274.

<sup>6</sup> *Belfast Newsletter*, 14 August 1767 (#3129), p. 1, col. 1; *ibid.*, 4 September 1767 (#3135), p. 3, col. 2.

Friday August 14, 1767.

THE

H. and R. 701

## BELFAST NEWS-LETTER,

NUMB.---

AND

---3129.

## GENERAL ADVERTISER.

For CHARLESTOWN, SOUTH-CAROLINA,  

 THE Ship EARL of DONEGALL, Duncan Ferguson, Master, Burthen full 350 Tons, will be clear to sail against the 20th September next: Those that incline to embrace this Opportunity, are requested immediately to apply to Campbell and Donaldson, John Gregg, and John Ewing, either of whom will agree with them on reasonable Terms. As this Ship is well calculated for the Accommodation of Passengers, and remarkably well found, a prime Sailer, and the Owners being determined to take every Method in their Power to render the Passage comfortable, those that go on her may promise themselves an agreeable Passage.  
 Belfast, 14th August, 1767.

For CHARLESTOWN in SOUTH-CAROLINA,

Hamburgh, July 24. His Danish Majesty is continuing his route to Copenhagen.  
 Baron Dieden is here, and is hastening his preparations as much as possible for his arrival a London.

From the EVENING-POSTS.

Ratisbon, July 21. On the 10th instant a terrible storm happened at Geitenfeld accompanied with hail, which in a short time destroyed all the fruits of the earth, unrooted several houses, and blew down upwards of 1000 trees. A storm of the same kind happened in the same village three years ago. It is feared that the harvest is every where in a manner destroyed, and the effects of this storm were felt above ten leagues round.

Bois-le-duc, July 27. The advices received of the da-

ry from the court of Portugal, had a long conference with the Earl of Shelburne, at his Lordship's house in Hill-street, Berkeley-square.

We hear that during a late conference between a great personage, just arrived from abroad, and another greater at home, the latter had the condescension to stand the whole time, out of pure complaisance to his visitant, who according to the rules of ceremony, could not fit in his presence.

During the late negotiation for a change in the ministry, a Worcestershire gentleman, eminent for his skill in finance, was sent for by a noble Marquis to town; and his administration made, it is said, one of the indispensable articles towards forming a new administration.

Figure 2: Belfast Newsletter, 14 August 1767

Both announcements of the impending sailing tell those interested in emigrating to apply to Campbell and Donaldson, John Gregg, or John Ewing for information.<sup>7</sup> According to MacMaster, Gregg was a member of a Charleston firm—John Torrans, John Greg(g), and John Poaug—encouraging the migration of Ulster Scots to South Carolina under the 1761 bounty act. MacMaster indicates that the firm had a network of business associates in Belfast and Londonderry, whom they used to recruit South Carolina immigrants.<sup>8</sup> All of the ships bringing immigrants from Ulster in the years of the bounty act from 1763 to 1768 were under the consignment of this Charleston firm.

As MacMaster also notes, the majority of Scotch Irish coming to South Carolina under the 1761 bounty act sailed from Belfast due to the link between the Charleston firm and another with Belfast roots—(Thomas) Greg and (Waddell) Cunningham.<sup>9</sup> Both firms, in collaboration with the owners of the ships bringing immigrants to South Carolina, sent agents to places, usually near Belfast, where they expected to find prospective settlers interested in taking advantage of the South Carolina bounty act. Since the recruitment for each ship coming to Charleston was largely limited to discrete areas, a high proportion of settlers aboard a particular ship usually came from the locale(s) for which the recruitment was done as a ship prepared to voyage. Ballymena, it should be noted, is some 30 miles northwest of

<sup>7</sup> MacMaster, "From Ulster to the Carolinas," notes that John Campbell and Hugh Donaldson were Belfast merchants (p. 265). On John Gregg, see also MacMaster, *Scotch-Irish Merchants in Colonial America*, pp. 42-3. MacMaster notes that Thomas Greg of the firm of Greg and Cunningham in Charleston was a brother of John. On the Greg-Cunningham firm, see pp. 82-3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252f.; and "Ulster Roots." As MacMaster indicates in *Scotch-Irish Merchants in Colonial America*, Torrans, Poag, and Greg lobbied for the bounty act, petitioned for land grants for immigrants, and worked with business associates in Ulster to arrange shipping of settlers to Charleston (p. 138). See also pp. 141f.

<sup>9</sup> See also R. J. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718-1775* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 115, n. 1.

Belfast, and Ballymoney about 17 miles north of Ballymena.<sup>10</sup>

After the 1761 bounty act ceased on 1 January 1768, the *Belfast Newsletter* published a noteworthy announcement on 28 June 1768 of another intended sailing of the *Earl of Donegal* for Charleston (“Charlestown” in the original) in August 1768. As with the 1767 announcements, this one instructs those interested in emigrating to contact Campbell, Ewing, or Gregg, noting also that the bounty act has ceased.<sup>11</sup> And then it appends the following notice to the announcement: it states that Ewing would be at Ballymoney on 14 July and Ballymena on the 16<sup>th</sup>, to explain the terms for emigration currently offered by South Carolina, since the 1761 act was no longer in effect. This announcement strongly suggests that the specific locus of the 1767 and 1768 recruitment for the *Earl of Donegal’s* passengers was Ballymoney and Ballymena.

As these Belfast newspaper announcements clearly indicate, the primary enticement for settlers coming from Northern Ireland to South Carolina in the period from 1761 to 1768 was the bounty act that the state had enacted in July 1761. Under the terms of this act, South Carolina offered to pay the passage of Protestant immigrants (£4 for each immigrant over 12 years paid to the masters of a ship, or, if the immigrant was able to pay for his/her passage, paid directly to the immigrant; £2 for those under 12). The 1761 act also provided 100 acres for the head of each family, and 50 acres for every other member of the family, with 20 shillings allotted to each person over 20 years of age to buy tools. It also exempted the settlers from taxes for 10 years.<sup>12</sup>

In offering these incentives, the state’s primary concern was to people the upcountry and thereby provide a buffer between the lowcountry populace and the native peoples to the west following the 1760 Cherokee War that had resulted in such highly publicized depredations on colonists as the Long Cane massacre on 1 February 1760. To raise funds for the bounty offerings, South Carolina levied a duty on the importation of African slaves.<sup>13</sup>

In his classic work *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718-1775*, R. J. Dickson notes that emigration from Ulster to South Carolina in the decade 1760-1770 peaked in 1766 and 1767 as rents were rising for small landholders, and when

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 107, has a map showing the location of agents for emigrant shipping from various Northern Irish ports. This shows Ballymoney and Ballymena having agents gathering emigrants to leave from Belfast. Dickson provides a thorough account of how the system worked in this period to recruit and channel emigrants through the various ports of Northern Ireland: see pp. 98-124.

<sup>11</sup> *Belfast Newsletter*, 28 June 1768 (#3220), p. 1, col. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, p. 56; and Jean Stephenson, *Scotch-Irish Migration to South Carolina, 1772* (Washington, D.C., 1971), pp. 7, 40. MacMaster, “From Ulster to the Carolinas,” notes that a number of 18<sup>th</sup>-century commentators including Alexander Hewatt and Charles Woodmason reported the influence of the bounty act in bringing a flood of Ulster Scots to South Carolina: p. 251.

<sup>13</sup> Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, p. 56. Dickson notes (p. 57) that the white population of South Carolina doubled between 1763 and 1775, largely due to the influx of Scotch-Irish and German settlers.

widespread hunger ensued in the winter of 1765-1766 following the failure of grain crops in Northern Ireland in the fall of 1765.<sup>14</sup> And so the announcements appearing in newspapers in this period, such as ones the *Belfast Newsletter* ran on 2 January, 3 and 24 February, and 13 March 1767 as the *Nancy* and the *Britannia* prepared to sail to Charleston, would have definitely interested many prospective settlers. These note that South Carolina was offering immigrants free passage money, fertile land, freedom from taxes, etc.—though, by 4 September, the *Belfast Newsletter* was notifying those considering South Carolina for immigration that Gregg and Cunningham had had notice from Charleston that the bounty act would end on 1 January the following year.<sup>15</sup>

The *Earl of Donegal* settlers are not the only group arriving in South Carolina in this period thought to have had roots in the vicinity of Ballymoney in Co. Antrim. Jean Stephenson's 1971 book studying the several shiploads of immigrants who came to South Carolina in 1772 with their Presbyterian pastor, Rev. William Martin, notes the Ballymoney roots of the settlers Martin brought to South Carolina.<sup>16</sup> Stephenson notes that Martin encouraged the emigration of his congregation after the Earl of Donegal canceled leases on his estates in Co. Antrim in 1770, resulting in widespread eviction and disturbances as he sought to raise rents.<sup>17</sup>

As she also suggests, there was considerable resentment among many Ulster Presbyterians in this period that they had to pay taxes to the established church, and this resentment also encouraged emigration. According to Stephenson, the agents sent out to villages in Antrim by firms and ship owners promoting emigration in the 1760s and 1770s capitalized on the anger many smallholders in the county felt as rents rose, and also due to the tithes levied on them by the Church of Ireland.<sup>18</sup>

Though the 1761 bounty act had expired by the time the Martin settlers arrived in South Carolina, they were still extended bounty land on their arrival,<sup>19</sup> and one of the settlers arriving with the Martin congregation, James Sloan, who came aboard the *Lord Dunluce*, which arrived in Charleston on 20 December 1772, settled on land adjoining David Dinsmore's tract on Jamey's Creek of the Tyger River in what became Spartanburg County.<sup>20</sup> Others arriving with Martin settled, as did Martin himself, in Chester County in the vicinity of some of the immigrants who had arrived in December 1767 aboard the *Earl of Donegal*.

---

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>15</sup> *Belfast Newsletter*, 2 January 1767 (#3065), p. 3, col. 1; *ibid.*, 2 February 1767 (#3074), p. 3, col. 4; *ibid.*, 24 February 1767 (#3080), p. 4, col. 2; *ibid.*, 13 March 1767 (#3085), p. 2, col. 3; and *ibid.*, 4 September 1767 (#3135), p. 4, col. 1.

<sup>16</sup> See *Scotch-Irish Migration to South Carolina*, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5, citing Dickson, *Ulster Emigration*, pp. 74-5. See also Billy Kennedy, *The Scots-Irish in the Carolinas* (1997), pp. 58-60.

<sup>18</sup> *Scotch-Irish Migration to South Carolina*, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

These details have led some researchers of the *Earl of Donegal* immigrants to wonder about a Rev. William Knox who appears in the South Carolina Council Journal's list of that ship's immigrants in December 1767. It has been conjectured that, like Rev. Martin several years later, Rev. Knox perhaps brought an entire congregation of Presbyterian settlers to South Carolina aboard the *Earl of Donegal*. If that is the case, I have not yet seen documentation to prove this supposition.

One final point about David Dinsmore's probable vicinity of origin in Ireland: a classic source recounting the history of one of the Dinsmore families who immigrated to America in the 1700s—in this case, a Dinsmore (or Dinsmoor: the family used both spellings) family of Londonderry and Windham, New Hampshire—places the roots of that family in Ballywattick townland of the parish of Ballymoney, Co. Antrim. According to Leonard Allison Morrison's *Among the Scotch-Irish*, all the Dinsmores of Northern Ireland stem from a John Dinsmore who left Scotland in 1667 at the age of 17 when his father, a Laird Dinsmore, forced this younger son to act as a servant to his older brother.<sup>21</sup>

Morrison cites as one source of this story a 12 August 1794 letter of a Robert Dinsmore of Ballywattick, Ireland, to John Dinsmoor of Windham, New Hampshire. Robert was born in Ballywattick in 1720, and in his letter, he identifies himself as a grandson of the John Dinsmore who came from Scotland to Ireland in 1667:

My grandfather was born on the mean land of Scotland, near the River Tweed—the son of a wealthy farmer, as I supposed from his style, being called the Laird of Achenmead, as he had tenants under him. He had two sons, of which my grandfather was the second, whose name was John. He left his father's house in the seventeenth year of his age. I suppose he must have eloped, as he brought no property with him, as I have often heard, save a gray bonnet of great extent, with striped woolen hose, and a small cane in his hand. This is your original in Ireland, and mine; and all by the name of Dinsmore, here or elsewhere, belong to that stock.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Leonard Allison Morrison, *Among the Scotch-Irish* (Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1891), pp. 4-17. The term "Scotch-Irish" to designate the Ulster Scots is now a sticking point with many people of Ulster Scots and Scottish descent, who bridle at use or the word "Scotch." But this is an historically accurate designation. As Richard K. MacMaster notes, in his 1757 *Account of the European Settlements in North America*, Edmund Burke stats that the term was in general use in the colonies to refer to Ulster immigrants of Scottish descent: see *Scotch-Irish Merchants in Colonial America* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2009), p. 178. The term was in use in the British Isles as early as 1573, when it appears in a letter of Queen Elizabeth: see James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 329, citing Calendar of Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery.

<sup>22</sup> Transcribed in Morrison, *Among the Scotch-Irish*, pp. 10-11. See also by J. Dinsmore, *A Golden Wedding and the Dinsmore Genealogy, from about 1620 to 1865* (Augusta: Maine Farmer Office, 1867). To the extent that these stories have truth in them (and they appear to have passed down among almost every American branch of the family), they may account for some misinformation that one descendant of David Dinsmore, his great-grandson William Lewis Dinsmore (1851-1939), provided

A son who leaves his Scottish home at the age of 17 to begin a new life in a new land, bringing with him only a bonnet, some woolen hose, and a small cane, and who settles in the valley of the Bann River in the parish of Ballymoney in Co. Antrim, Ireland. And about a century later a descendant of that son who leaves his homeland, in all likelihood in the same area of Ireland in which his progenitor had settled in 1667, with similar dreams of starting a new life in an unknown place: the confluence of themes here is fascinating. And it's made all the more fascinating by the fact that, when David Dinsmore came to South Carolina, he appears to have been of the same age that his ancestor John Dinsmore was when he came from Scotland to Ireland.

Themes of definitive familial breaches, separation and exile, fathers losing contact with sons and sons with fathers: it's almost as if, encoded in the DNA of some families, these histories are fated to pass down father to son, generation after generation . . . .

## II. *From Immigration to the Revolution*

David Dinsmore and his wife Margaret left Ireland from Belfast on 7 October 1767.<sup>23</sup> After their arrival in Charleston on 10 December 1767, they received their bounty land grant on the same day (22 December) on which, as noted previously, the South Carolina Council Journal documented the names and ages of the settlers arriving aboard the *Earl of Donegal*. The grant of 150 acres—100 for David and 50 for Margaret—is recorded in the Council Journal immediately after the list of new settlers was entered into the Journal.<sup>24</sup>

The Council Journal's listing of land grants for the *Earl of Donegal* settlers states in each case that the immigrants received land grants in either Long Cane or Craven County, without providing more specific information about the location of the land grants. All Ulster immigrants arriving together on a single ship under the terms of

---

in notes for his biography in 1921. The biography is in *Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, ed. Thomas B. Owen (Chicago: S. J. Clarke, 1921), vol. 3, p. 498. In handwritten notes that William L. Dinsmore compiled for the autobiography and which are now held in a Dinsmore surname file at the Alabama archives, he states that his great-grandfather came to the U.S. from Scotland. Since William's mother Eleanor Kyle Dinsmore also had Scottish ancestry, it's somewhat unclear whether this statement refers to William's Dinsmore or Kyle great-grandfather. But since the biography focuses primarily on his Dinsmore ancestry, this statement appears to refer to David Dinsmore, from whom William L. descends through his father David Lewis Dinsmore (1803-1888) and his grandfather John Dinsmore (1774-1858). And given the Scottish roots of this family before John Dinsmore came to Ireland, it's easy to see how a tradition of Scottish origins for David Dinsmore might have passed down among some of his descendants.

<sup>23</sup> The sailing date, which is several weeks later than the date for departure advertised in the *Belfast Newsletter* on 14 August and 4 September, appears in an announcement the *Newsletter* (#3178) printed on 2 February 1768 (p. 1, col. 1). This states that the *Earl of Donegal*, which had sailed from Belfast on 7 October, had arrived in Charleston after a passage of eight weeks.

<sup>24</sup> South Carolina Council Journal 8 (1767), p. 323.

the 1761 bounty act were not usually given grants in the same location, probably because the colony's government feared what might happen if new citizens with close ties and a strong history of pulling together to resist oppressive government were congregated in the same locations.

The precise location of Dinsmore's 150-acre land grant does appear in the South Carolina colonial plat records' recording of the grant, which shows that per a precept dated 22 December 1767, 150 acres south of the Tyger River in Craven County had been surveyed for David Dinsmore.<sup>25</sup> The plat shows that the tract was bordered by the Tyger on the north and vacant land on all other sides, with a creek running through it north to south and a spring branch feeding Jamey's Creek originating in the south part of the tract. The land was certified to David Dinsmore on 27 February 1768, with William Wofford issuing the certificate. It would fall into Spartanburg County when that county was created in 1791.

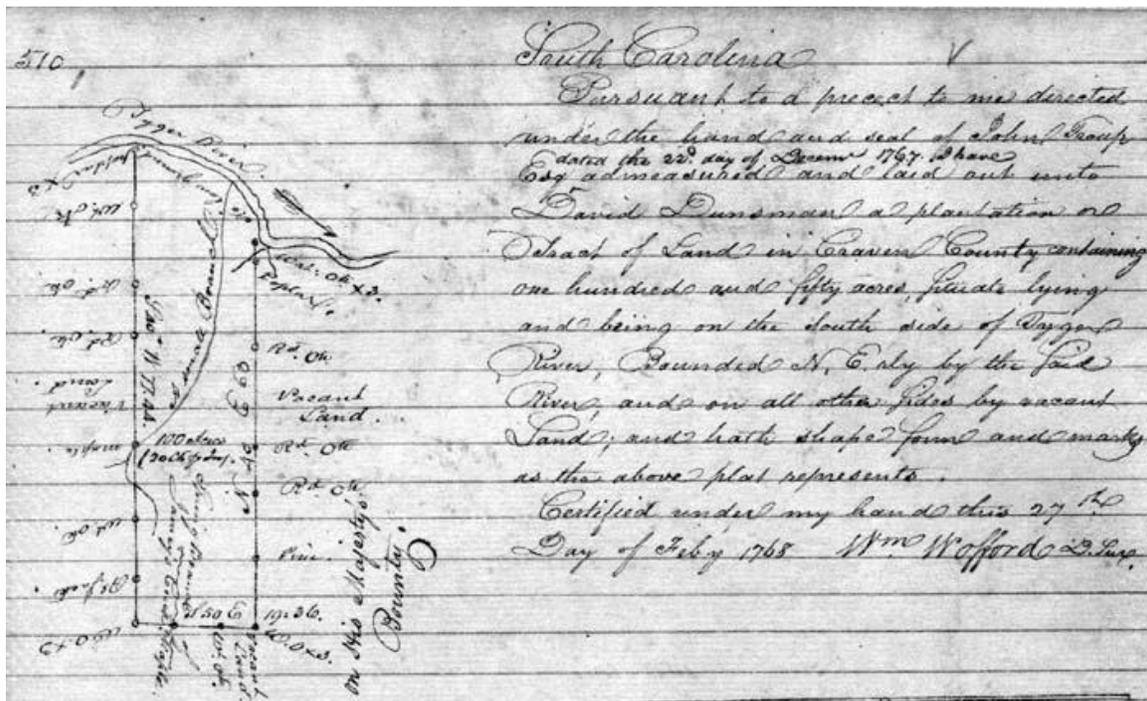


Figure 3: Plat, 1768 Bounty Land Grant to David Dinsmore, South Carolina Colonial Plats 14, #510

Several months later on 13 May, a South Carolina royal grant for 100 acres was also recorded for Dinsmore in Craven County on the south side of Tyger.<sup>26</sup> Since the royal grants were an attempt to create an alternate list of the colonial land grants, it seems very likely that this is simply a re-recording of the original bounty grant, though why the grant would have been reduced to 100 acres in this entry when

<sup>25</sup> South Carolina Colonial Plats 14, #510.

<sup>26</sup> South Carolina Royal Grant Book 17, #257; South Carolina Council Journal 9, p. 137, 13 May 1768; and South Carolina Memorial Grant Book 8, p. 191.

every other reference to the tract shows it as 150 acres is murky. (It should be noted that if Dinsmore's age as recorded in the initial South Carolina Council Journal entry of the *Earl of Donegal* settlers is correct, he was actually under the age of 20 specified by the 1761 bounty act for land grants of 100 acres.)

At some point soon after he obtained his land grant, Dinsmore appears to have sold the tract to John Langston, or Langston later acquired it from someone else, since when he sold 150 acres in Ninety Six District (later Spartanburg County) to James Beard on 27 January 1789, the deed notes that the land was on the south side of the Tyger and had been granted to David Dunaman on 13 May 1768 (Spartanburg DB B, pp. 233-4). (Deeds for David and his family appear in Spartanburg County deed books with the surname spelled Densmore, Dunaman, Dunamore, and Dunsmore.) This deed also notes that Langston had lived on the land previously. As will be seen later, when Dinsmore filed his Loyalist land claim in Nova Scotia in 1786, he noted that his family's residence was on a tract of 250 acres he had purchased from John Kissler in 1774.

Dinsmore was still evidently the owner of his original grant of 150 acres on 6 January 1773, however, since a land grant bearing that date to James Sloan, a member of the Rev. William Martin party of settlers, states that Sloan's tract of 250 acres was on a small branch of the waters of the Tyger bounded south by John McCrory, west by John Raynard, David Dinsmore, and Jacob Earnest, and east by John White and William Dunlap.<sup>27</sup> It's tempting to think that Dunlap is the man of that name who is listed among the *Earl of Donegal* immigrants in December 1767.

On 10 December 1774, Dinsmore bought 250 acres on Jamey's Creek of the Tyger from John and Hannah Kissler (Spartanburg DB B, pp. 452-5). Kissler (or Keighler, Kighler, or even Meighler: these spellings are found in other documents)<sup>28</sup> was in this region by 5 December 1769, when a land grant to Richard Chesney shows that the 150 acres granted to Chesney on Jamey's Creek bordered John Keighler on the south.<sup>29</sup> This deed is interesting, too, because it's a land grant to someone who appears to be closely related to a Chesney family that, as will be discussed later, came to South Carolina from the vicinity of Ballymena in Co. Antrim, Ireland, some of whose members came along with the party of Rev. William Martin in 1772.

And so by the end of 1774, David and Margaret Dinsmore had settled on a farm of 250 acres in what would become Spartanburg Co., South Carolina. Various documents that will be discussed later suggest that by this date the couple had at least two and possibly three children: Mary (b. abt. 1770), John (b. 15 September 1774), and perhaps James, whose birth appears to fall somewhere in the decade

---

<sup>27</sup> South Carolina Colonial Plats 19, #517; South Carolina Memorial Book 2, p. 370.

<sup>28</sup> A 10 July 1792 deed of James Woodruff to Nathaniel Woodruff for land on Jamey's Creek spells the name as Keighler (Spartanburg DB G, pp. 42-44). In the 5 October 1797 deed of John Jackson to Zachariah Leatherwood for land on Jamey's Creek, the name is given as Kighler (*ibid.*, pp. 135-6). David Dinsmore's 1786 Loyalist claim in Nova Scotia, cited below, will render the name as Meighler.

<sup>29</sup> South Carolina Colonial Plats 14, p. 71.

1770-1780. Dinsmore had cleared a portion of the land and had begun a working farm that, if his Loyalist land claim in Canada is to be credited, had begun to prove bountiful and valuable.

And then the revolution arrived.

### III. *The Revolution*

A number of sources document Dinsmore's service under British military commanders during the Revolution. On 19 April 1786 at Halifax, Nova Scotia, Dinsmore filed a land claim for his Loyalist military service.<sup>30</sup> The claim states that in 1775, he had taken up arms under General Cunningham, joining Campbell in Georgia. Cunningham is apparently William Cunningham, the British commander tagged as "Bloody Bill" by many Whigs, due to his role in atrocities committed against South Carolina rebels—though in 1775, he was not yet a general and in fact had begun his service in that year on the Whig side.<sup>31</sup> His origins are not entirely clear, though it's apparent he was a cousin of several influential Tory Cunninghams of Scotch-Irish descent, all brothers, who came to South Carolina from Pennsylvania in 1769 and who settled in Ninety Six District. These included Robert Cunningham, the first magistrate of Ninety Six District, and Patrick Cunningham, deputy surveyor of the province of South Carolina.

Campbell is Col. Archibald Campbell, a member of a prestigious Scottish family who sought to secure coastal Georgia for the British as the war began.<sup>32</sup> He had arrived off Savannah from Jamaica in December 1778, taking Savannah that month.<sup>33</sup> At this point, he moved to Augusta to establish a base for backcountry Loyalists, taking that locale for the British in January 1779. His troops were then joined in February by troops led by Zachariah or Zacharias Gibbs, another name that appears in various records of David Dinsmore's military service in these years.<sup>34</sup>

Gibbs was a Virginian who settled in South Carolina on Fair Forest Creek a few years before the war. When the war broke out, he recruited troops and marched through Ninety Six District into Georgia.<sup>35</sup> In 1780, Gibbs mustered men for the Spartan or Upper Regiment of South Carolina—men largely gathered from Ninety Six District, which had many residents with decided Tory sympathies.<sup>36</sup> It seems very likely that

---

<sup>30</sup> See Alexander Fraser, *Second Report of the Bureau of Archives* (Toronto, 1904), pp. 171-2 (#100). The claim was filed again on 19 July the same year.

<sup>31</sup> See Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (NY: Oxford UP, 1975), pp. 80-81; J. B. O'Neal, "Random Recollections of Revolutionary Characters and Incidents," *Southern Literary Journal and Magazine of Arts* 41 (July 1838), pp. 40-45; and Edith Greisser, "Bloody Bill," *Carolina Herald* (Oct.-Dec. 2010), pp. 9f.

<sup>32</sup> See Robert Stansbury Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1987), p. 66.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>34</sup> See Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, p. 82.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

those mustered by Gibbs at this time included David Dinsmore, since he is on a payroll for Lieut. Col. Zachariah Gibbs of the Reg. Spartanburg Militia, Ninety Six Brigade from 13 June to 14 December 1780.<sup>37</sup> In fact, due to the reference to Campbell in his Loyalist land claim, it seems more than likely that Dinsmore had taken part in Campbell's military actions in Georgia before he served directly in Gibbs's Spartanburg Militia. According to C.L. Bragg, in June 1780, two hundred Loyalists from Ninety Six District mustered there, as General Clinton returned to South Carolina in the spring of 1780 and trapped rebel troops in Charleston in May.<sup>38</sup>

On 7 October 1780, Gibbs brought to the battle of King's Mountain about 100 of the men he had recruited for the Spartanburg unit (presumably including Dinsmore), many of these being either killed or captured.<sup>39</sup> Gibbs and his unit were also involved at the siege of Ninety Six from 22 May to 18 June 1781, in which Gibbs was captured, and, again, it seems very likely that Dinsmore was with Gibbs at Ninety Six, particularly because his pay abstract for service in Gibbs's Spartanburg Militia states that he was being paid for accompanying Lieut. Col. John Cruger as he assisted Cruger in evacuating Loyalists from Fort Ninety Six to Orangeburg following the fall of Ninety Six.<sup>40</sup> In fact, according to Bobby Gilmer Moss, Dinsmore was captured by the Revolutionary side at the battle of Ninety Six.<sup>41</sup>

John Harris Cruger was the British commander during the siege of the fort, and when the British were defeated at Ninety Six, many of the Tories and their families then evacuated to Orangeburg and finally to Charleston with Col. Francis Rawdon, who had brought British troops to Ninety Six in June 1781.<sup>42</sup> As Robert Stansbury Lambert notes, the majority of these evacuees were from Ninety Six District,<sup>43</sup> and it's clear that they included David Dinsmore—though not his wife Margaret and their children who, according to the testimony of his Loyalist land claim in Nova Scotia, remained behind on his farm at Jamey's Creek in Ninety Six District (later Spartanburg County). The children by this point numbered five: in addition to those mentioned previously, a daughter Mary Jane had been born in 1779, along with a daughter whose given name has not been discovered, and who married James Woodruff, who brought their children to Lawrence Co., Alabama, in the first part of the 1800s along with their uncle John Dinsmore and aunt Mary Jane Dinsmore Lindsey.

---

<sup>37</sup> Murtie June Clark, *Loyalists in the Southern Campaign*, vol. 1 (Baltimore: Geneal. Publ. Co., 1981), pp. 277, 280.

<sup>38</sup> C.L. Bragg, "Pragmatism and Principle: Capt. Alexander Chesney and the Revolutionary War in South Carolina," in *The Consequences of Loyalism: Essays in Honor of Robert M. Calhoon*, ed. Rebecca Brannon and Joseph S. Moore (Columbia: Univ. of SC Press, 2019), p. 95.

<sup>39</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, pp. 141-2.

<sup>40</sup> Clark, *Loyalists in Southern Campaign*, pp. 277, 280.

<sup>41</sup> Bobby Gilmer Moss, *The Loyalists in the Siege of Fort Ninety Six* (Blacksburg, SC: Scotia-Hibernia, 1999), p. 40-1.

<sup>42</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, pp. 100, 171-3, 182, 217-8, 229.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

How is one to understand David Dinsmore's choice to support the British during the American Revolution—a choice that proved exceptionally costly to him and his family, since it resulted in his exile to Nova Scotia as Charleston fell to the American troops? Lambert's study of South Carolina Loyalists notes that the Revolution was a virtual civil war in that colony—particularly in the upcountry region, and notably in Ninety Six District, where the largest concentration of Tories lived.<sup>44</sup> According to Lambert, in 1775, perhaps a fifth of the free population of South Carolina were Loyalists.<sup>45</sup> C.L Bragg notes,

Irishmen, generally Scotch-Irish, made up about 25 percent of South Carolina Loyalists, and most of these in the backcountry were poor or moderately poor farmers. The Ninety Six District, where the Chesneys resided, held the largest concentration of such Loyalists outside Charleston.<sup>46</sup>

The Revolution was, in fact, a civil war in South Carolina that not uncommonly divided families: Lambert cites the case of David “Dunsmore” as an example of such a family.<sup>47</sup> He also points to Elizabeth Bowers, a daughter of German immigrants on Hard Labor Creek, who was expelled from her home by her husband for supporting the British. She went back to her parents' household, and, after the fort at Ninety Six fell and Whigs had beaten her father, she and her father were evacuated to Charleston.<sup>48</sup> According to Lambert, when another upcountry couple, William Meek and his wife Mary Coleman, became refugees in Charleston and then in Canada, Mary's siblings remained in South Carolina.<sup>49</sup>

Lambert and other historians have also noted that many of the South Carolina Loyalists were (like David Dinsmore) immigrants, largely German and Ulster Scots, who had arrived in the colony not long before the war broke out, who were immersed in opening new farms and plantations on land they had just been granted by the Crown, and were understandably reluctant to defy the authority from which they had gained their land.<sup>50</sup> Many of them had arrived in South Carolina after the Cherokee War of 1760, and did not share the animosity of many of the colony's older settlers to the British for Britain's alliance with the Cherokees.<sup>51</sup>

Lambert points to the case of Alexander Chesney, whose Loyalist claim for reimbursement for land he lost on Broad River in Ninety Six District due to his British sympathies, a slave, and a schooner he left behind in Charleston, was

---

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 300.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>46</sup> Bragg, “Pragmatism and Principle,” p. 91.

<sup>47</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, p. 273.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* and p. 307.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-9.

witnessed by Zachariah Gibbs, John Phillips, James Miller, and Samuel McKee, all except Gibbs having come from Ireland within five years of the Revolution.<sup>52</sup> Chesney kept a journal which states that he was born in Dunclug near Ballymena in Co. Antrim, Ireland, in 1756.<sup>53</sup>

The journal indicates that Chesney's family came to South Carolina aboard the *James and Mary*, arriving in Charleston on 16 Oct. 1772 with the group of settlers from the region of Ballymoney and Ballymena brought over by Rev. William Martin.<sup>54</sup> The family obtained about 400 acres on the Pacolet about 12 miles from where it empties into the Broad, not far from an aunt of Chesney who had preceded his family to South Carolina. When the war arrived, Chesney took the British side, serving with Gibbs and Rawdon and ending up back in Ireland following the Revolution.

#### IV. *Exile to Nova Scotia*

David Dinsmore's 1786 Loyalist land claim in Nova Scotia states, "At the Evacuation of C. Town he came to this Province, and is now settled in Rawdon."<sup>55</sup> After the fort at Ninety Six fell and the South Carolina Loyalists retreated first to Orangeburg and then eventually to Charleston in the latter part of 1781, they began making arrangements to leave the colony. According to Lambert, by mid-August 1782, 4,200 Loyalists had registered to leave South Carolina, including nearly 2,500 women and children with 7,200 enslaved Africans and African-Americans.<sup>56</sup> Prior to their departure, on 18 April, Zachariah Gibbs and other South Carolina Loyalists prepared a petition to the Crown indicating that a large number of Tories—perhaps as many as 300, they claimed—had been murdered by the Whigs in the colony, with the majority of these in Ninety Six District.

Ships began leaving Charleston for East Florida in September and October, and a fleet set sail for Nova Scotia in late October heading for Halifax with 500 Loyalists, among whom were included 50 slaves, under Col. Samuel Campbell of North Carolina. On 21 November the ships *Free Briton* and the *John and Bella* arrived in Halifax carrying many of the South Carolina refugees. According to Lambert, more than 20 of the families and as many single men, all from South Carolina, then settled at the community of Rawdon about 60 miles north of Halifax. Rawdon was called after the Col. Francis Rawdon who had assisted the South Carolina Tories in retreating to Charleston.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>53</sup> "The Journal of Alexander Chesney, a South Carolina Loyalist in the Revolution and After," ed. E. Alfred Jones, *Ohio State University Bulletin* 26,4 (Oct. 1921), pp. 1-166.

<sup>54</sup> See also Stephenson, *Scotch-Irish Migration to South Carolina*, p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> Fraser, *Second Report*, pp. 171-2.

<sup>56</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, p. 254.

<sup>57</sup> Lambert, pp. 255, 271, citing Great Britain, Hist. MS Commission, *Report on American Manuscripts in the Royal* (London, 1904-9), III, p. 179; and Marion Gilroy, *Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova* (Halifax, 1937), pp., 43-54, 60-1.

More Loyalists from both North and South Carolina followed into the winter months, according to historian Neil MacKinnon, who notes that 500 refugees arrived in Halifax from South Carolina during the winter of 1782, a particularly cold winter for which many of these new settlers were ill-prepared as they arrived from a much warmer climate and without many of their possessions.<sup>58</sup> MacKinnon notes that the majority of these were "true Loyalists," supporters of a losing cause who had to give up their homes because of their commitment to the cause. The numbers coming from South Carolina were augmented by North Carolinians who had fought at Moore's Creek Bridge early in the war, and had then been imprisoned or forced to go into hiding, and/or had their property confiscated.<sup>59</sup> In all, the proportion of Southern Loyalist settlers was particularly high in Nova Scotia, MacKinnon thinks, with South Carolina disproportionately represented.<sup>60</sup>

The research of Carol Troxler indicates that at least 15% of Nova Scotia Loyalists were from the South, and, if those arriving as slaves of African descent are counted in, the total is even higher.<sup>61</sup> Troxler also notes that of the Carolina-Georgia Loyalists whose origins she has been able to trace, 72% had come to the colonies from Scotland, Germany, and Ireland.<sup>62</sup>

Regarding the Rawdon community, in particular, Troxler notes that by 1788, 74 Southern backcountry men and their widows had obtained land grants at Rawdon, constituting almost the entirety of the settlement.<sup>63</sup> The large majority of these were from Ninety Six District in South Carolina, and of Scotch-Irish origins.<sup>64</sup> Also settling at Rawdon initially was Dinsmore's previous commander, Zachariah Gibbs, who first went to East Florida and then Jamaica after Charleston was evacuated, but finally settled (briefly) at Rawdon.<sup>65</sup> In the spring of 1786, Gibbs filed a Loyalist claim in England for his Nova Scotia land.<sup>66</sup>

David Dinsmore was indubitably among those South Carolina Loyalists who sailed from Charleston to Halifax in the fall and winter of 1782, and at some point after his arrival, it's clear he settled at Rawdon, since when he filed his Loyalist land claim in 1786, he noted Rawdon as his residence. Rawdon historian John Victor Duncanson thinks, though, that Dinsmore may not have come to Rawdon with its first settlers in

---

<sup>58</sup> Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova 1783-1791* (Kingston/Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 1986), p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>61</sup> Carol W. Troxler, "The Migration of Carolina and GA Loyalists to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of North Carolina, 1974), p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* See also Troxler, "Origins of the Rawdon Loyalist Settlement," *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 8,1 (1988), pp. 63-76; and "Community and Cohesion in the Rawdon Loyalist Settlement," *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 12,1 (1992), pp. 41-66.

<sup>63</sup> "Origins of the Rawdon Loyalist Settlement," p. 64.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>65</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, p. 272.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

1784, but only after having filed his Loyalist claim.<sup>67</sup> Duncanson also supposes that David Dinsmore married a daughter of Hezekiah Cogswell of Cornwallis after his arrival in Nova Scotia.<sup>68</sup> However, Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, the authority Duncanson cites for this supposition, states only that Martha, a daughter of Hezekiah Cogswell, married a Densmore and does not state his given name, and various sources identify Martha's husband as a Samuel Densmore.

David Dinsmore filed his Loyalist land claim at Halifax initially on 19 April 1786 and then again on 19 July.<sup>69</sup> Both claims provide essentially the same information about his Loyalist service during the American Revolution. Though he asked for £600 pounds 10 shillings to reimburse him for the 250 acres of land and personal property he had lost in South Carolina, he was granted £90 for the land and £30 for his personal property.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> John Victor Duncanson, *Rawdon and Douglas: Two Loyalist Townships in Nova Scotia* (Belleville, Ontario: Mika, 1989), p. 177.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, citing Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, *The History of Kings County* (Salem, MA: Salem Press Co., 1910), p. 610.

<sup>69</sup> See Fraser, *Second Report*, pp. 171-2; Audit Office, Am. Loyalist Claims, Am. Series 12/49/87-90 and Audit Office, Am. Loyalist Claims, Am. Series 12/68/33; and British National Archives, Z.5.134N, V49, 175; V68, 53; V109, 130/1162.

<sup>70</sup> Audit Office, Am. Loyalist Claims, Am. Series 12/49/87-90; Audit Office, Am. Loyalist Claims, Am. Series 12/68/33.

p175

(New claim)

To the Honorable the Commissioners  
 appointed by Act of Parliament for enquiring  
 into the Losses & Services of the American Loyalists.

The Memorial of David Dunsmore  
 Humbly Sheweth

That your Memorialist late of New Jersey  
 had District in both Provinces but now of Brunswick  
 County in the Province of Nova Scotia was  
 Loyal to His Majesty such an early part in favor  
 of British Government in the late War and served  
 with the Royal Army till the Siege of Carolina  
 in consequence of which his Property fell into the  
 hands of the Enemy and was converted to their  
 Use.

Your Memorialist therefore prays your  
 Honors to take his Case into Consideration  
 and to grant him such Relief as in  
 your Wisdom you may think proper.

And your Memorialist as in Duty bound will  
 ever pray

Audit Office, Am. Loyalist Claims, American Series  
 12/49

Figure 4: David Dunsmore, Loyalist Claim, Audit Office American Series 12.49, p. 175

Peter Wilson Coldham, whose book *American Migrations 1765-1799* has a brief biographical entry for David “Dunsmore,” explains the process by which American Loyalist refugees in Canada applied for land and reimbursements. He notes that the Loyalist claims office was set up in London, and this did not help Loyalists in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick who could not afford to travel to England to file a claim. The act providing relief to American Loyalist refugees was not even published in Québec until October 1783 after the last ship had departed from Canada to England for the winter, though the act stipulated that all reimbursement claims were to be filed by March 1784.<sup>71</sup>

In 1785 the act was renewed and claimants in Nova Scotia were permitted to submit

<sup>71</sup> Peter Wilson Coldham, *American Migrations 1765-1799: The Lives, Times, and Families of Colonial Americans Who Remained Loyal to the British Crown Before, During and After the Revolutionary War, as Related in Their Own Words and Through Their Correspondence* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000), p. 679.

claims in Nova Scotia itself up to 1 May 1786. Commissioners Thomas Dundas and Jeremy Pemberton were sent to hear evidence in Halifax, Shelburne, St. John, Québec City, and Montréal.

This process created a wide range of records that have been arranged in two principal series designated as Audit Office 12 and Audit Office 13 at the British Public Records Office. Series I (AO 12) includes the minute books and reports of the commissioners, various tables and lists of claims, claimants, and decisions, as well as certain types of "evidence" received in support of claims and administrative records. Series II (AO 13) contains the memorials of claimants together with supporting documentation that includes affidavits and depositions, originals, transcripts, and certified copies of legal documents such as property deeds and wills, correspondence, and a variety of notes compiled during the hearings or on receipt of the claims.

Coldham's summary of David Dinsmore's claim notes that, though he had settled at Rawdon after his evacuation from Charleston in 1782, he reported in April 1786 that he had only recently heard of the act to compensate Loyalists. He claimed 250 acres of land to reimburse him for his loss in South Carolina.<sup>72</sup> Alexander Fraser transcribes the claim as follows:

He (David Dunsmore) is a native of Ireland & went to America in 1765 [*sic*], and in 1775 was settled in 96 district, S. Carolina. He took arms under Gen. Cunningham in 1775, & joined Col. Campbell in Georgia. Says he never served with the Rebels, but was obliged to take an Oath to them. He has been with the British Army ever since, excepting 5 months he was a prisoner. At the Evacuation of C. Town he came to this Province, and is now settled in Rawdon.

250 acres of land on James Creek. He bought it from John Meighler about three years before the War. He gave a negro wench & 100 pounds S. Car. Cury for it. After he bought it he made considerable improvments on it.

He had 47 acres cleared, and a House and Barn. He thinks the land & improvts. was worth 300 pounds sterling.

Says he was offered 2 Negroes for it soon after the purchase. He cannot say in whose Possession it is, but his 5 children are in S. Carolina taken care of by Rebels, & believes they are not in Possession.

Stock, 12 horses at 15 pounds 180.0.0; 12 head of Cattle at 30 sh. 18.0.0; 28 head hogs 14.0.0; 7 sheep 8.10.0; furniture & tools 30.0.0.; 200 bushels Corn, growing 15.0.0; 260 pounds 10.0.

---

<sup>72</sup> Coldham, *ibid.*, citing AO 12/49/175, 68/33, 109/130; AO 13/138/542-544.

Witness Robt. Alexander, Sworn:

“Says Claimt. went into the Country & has always remained with the settlers at Rawdon. He was ever a good Loyal subject & never joined the Americans. He knows his farm on James Creek. Believes he had 250 acres. It was remarkable good land. He had a considerable stock on it. His children are in the Country but the House was destroyed and all the improvemts. to prevent his enjoying it. He thinks it is all lost to him.”<sup>73</sup>

Despite his request for 250 acres, the Crown granted Dinsmore only 100 acres. According to Duncanson, the land was in the southeast section of Rawdon township in Brushy Hills.<sup>74</sup> The Robert Alexander who witnessed Dinsmore’s Loyalist claim was a neighbor in South Carolina. Duncanson indicates that Alexander was born in Northern Ireland about 1757, the son of a John Alexander, and came to America in 1773 with his parents, settling in Ninety Six.<sup>75</sup>

What became of David Dinsmore after he obtained his land grant of 100 acres in Rawdon is somewhat unclear. On 24 Aug. 1786, he bought from a William Densmore who appears to have been his kinsman 300 additional acres in Hants County, the county in which Rawdon is situated. The land was out of a tract of 1500 acres granted to James Densmore (Hants DB 4, pp. 535-6). The deed indicates that Wm. Densmore was of Newport, Nova Scotia, and had a wife Elizabeth.

According to Duncanson, James Densmore was a native of Co. Londonderry, Ireland, who came to Nova Scotia with his family before November 1768, settling at Newport.<sup>76</sup> In 1780, James Densmore received a grant for 1,500 acres at Noel Shore on the Cobequid Bay. Duncanson states that the James Densmore family has a tradition of descent from the John Dinsmore of Scotland who moved to Ireland and settled at Ballywattick, Co. Antrim in 1667. William Densmore with wife Elizabeth was a son of James and his wife Letitia Moore, and was of the same generation as David, according to Duncanson.

Several months after he bought 300 acres from William Densmore, David Dinsmore sold his 100-acre Loyalist land grant at Rawdon on 9 Jan. 1787 to one Thomas Parker with Zachariah Gibbs and Richard Fenton witnessing the transaction (Hants DB 4, pp. 526-7). The deed leaves David’s place of residence blank (“of the Province

---

<sup>73</sup> Fraser, *Second Report*, pp. 171-2. For further information on David Dinsmore’s Loyalist claim, see Leonard H. Smith, Jr., and Norma H. Smith, *Nova Scotia Immigrants to 1867* (Baltimore: Geneal. Publ. Co., 1992), p. 336.

<sup>74</sup> Duncanson, *Rawson and Douglas*, p. 177.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 165-172.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, James, a native of Londonderry, who came to Nova Scotia with his family bef. Nov. 1768, settling at Newport. In 1780, James received a grant for 1500 acres at Noel Shore on the Cobequid Bay.

of ---"). Zachariah Gibbs proved the deed on 3 June 1788, and it was recorded on the same day. On the same day, a deed of William Densmore to Samuel and James Densmore (his brothers) was registered, and appears beside the deed of David Dinsmore in the Hants County deed books (DB 4, pp. 527-9).

The January 1787 deed is the last certain record I find of David Dinsmore. I find no record to show what became of his 300 acres from William Densmore after David purchased that land. Carol Troxler thinks that after he sold his Loyalist grant in January 1787, Dinsmore returned to South Carolina. She notes that the 1787 deed is the last reference to be found for him in Nova Scotia.<sup>77</sup> As she notes, his Loyalist land claim specifies that his wife and five children and unnamed "rebels" were in possession of his 250 acres in South Carolina, and so his land had not been confiscated—and Troxler believes he returned to Margaret and the children after he sold his 100-acre grant in 1778.<sup>78</sup> Bobby Gilmer Moss agrees.<sup>79</sup> David is definitely not on the 1791 or 1795 tax assessment at Rawdon or anywhere else in Nova Scotia, and this would seem to corroborate the deduction that he left Nova Scotia after 1787—and perhaps returned to his family in South Carolina.

A number of historians note that many of the Carolinians who were exiled to Nova Scotia eventually returned to the Carolinas, and had, in fact, begun to drift away by 1784.<sup>80</sup> As Lambert notes, the 1785 Provost Marshall's report states that by that year, many Carolina loyalists had abandoned their land in Nova Scotia.<sup>81</sup> According to Lambert, the 1791 tax assessment in Rawdon indicates that fewer than half of the families who had come from Charleston were still there. In 1791, Zachariah Gibbs gave notice that his two farms at Rawdon were for sale, and he planned to leave in the spring.

Lambert indicates that many Loyalists of Ninety Six District, in particular, came back to South Carolina after some years in exile. He cites the case of Patrick Cunningham, who reclaimed his lands in Laurens Co., South Carolina, after having gone to Nova Scotia, and in 1790, was elected to the South Carolina House.<sup>82</sup>

If David Dinsmore did return to his wife Margaret and their five children after he sold his Nova Scotia land grant in January 1787, however, then it seems strange that Margaret is listed as head of her household in Spartanburg County on the 1790 federal census. A 19 November 1799 deed of Jane McClurkin to Paul Castelberry, both of Spartanburg County, says that the land bordered on the east on Margaret Dunmore's land (Spartanburg DB G, pp. 159-161).

---

<sup>77</sup> Troxler, "Community and Cohesion," p. 57.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>79</sup> Moss, *Loyalists in the Siege of Fort Ninety*, p. 41.

<sup>80</sup> See, e.g., MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, p. 62.

<sup>81</sup> Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists*, pp. 274-5.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 300-302.

In addition, when Margaret moved in 1800 with her son John and daughter Mary Jane and Mary Jane's husband Mark Lindsey to Wayne Co., Kentucky, she and John jointly sold 82 acres of David's land in Spartanburg County, indicating that they were its current owners. They deeded the land to Nathaniel Woodruff on 28 August 1800 with the deed noting that the land was part of a tract of 250 acres that David Dinsmore had bought from John Kissler in 1774 (Spartanburg DB L, pp. 95-6).

The preceding deed and the fact that Margaret is listed as head of the household in 1790 suggest that if David Dinsmore did leave Nova Scotia after selling his Loyalist land grant in January 1787, he did not return to his wife Margaret and their children in South Carolina. It is possible, of course, that David left Nova Scotia and went someplace else than to his family. He might, for instance, have returned to Ireland or to another location in Canada. Alternatively, it's possible he died in Nova Scotia soon after buying more land there in 1787. Or that he moved to some location in the new United States other than South Carolina . . . .

There is one tantalizing reference to a David Dinsmore in the records of Buncombe Co., North Carolina, in 1790. On 25 Sept. 1790, when a number of residents of the area petitioned for the formation of Buncombe County, an Adam, James, William, and David Dunsmoor all signed the petition consecutively.<sup>83</sup> This is an interesting document, since Adam Dinsmore spent the end of his life in what became Morgan Co., Alabama, the county next door to Lawrence County, where David's children John and Mary Jane moved in the first part of the 1800s.<sup>84</sup> In fact, because of the proximity of these two families and the fact that Adam had a son named David, the progeny of Adam and David (with wife Margaret) have been confused by a number of family historians.<sup>85</sup>

Adam Dinsmore appears to have been born before 1745 and possibly as early as 1740, since he had a son James whose date of birth can definitely be placed in 1760. He's thought to have been an Ulster Scots immigrant, but there is some uncertainty about when and where he arrived in the colonies. A man believed to be this Adam signed an oath of fidelity in Frederick Co., Maryland, in 1778. By 1790, Adam was definitely in Burke (later Buncombe) Co., North Carolina, and appears to have remained in Buncombe County up into the early 1800s, when he and his son James moved to Madison Co., Mississippi Territory. James then raised his family in Morgan

---

<sup>83</sup> The petition and list of signatories are transcribed on the website of the Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society at <http://www.obcgs.com/ffob.htm>; accessed June 2012.

<sup>84</sup> Adam died in 1815 in Madison Co., Mississippi Territory, from which Morgan and other counties were cut when Alabama became a state. See Madison Co. WB A, pp. 163-164.

<sup>85</sup> On the descendants of Adam Dinsmore, see J.T. Morrow, *Morrow Family History* (priv. publ., 1961); John Knox, *History of Morgan County, Alabama* (Decatur: Decatur Printing Co., 1967), p. 134; and Lina Vandegrift Denison Cherry ms. collection at Arkansas History Commission (box 22, file 223). Morrow (pp. 223-4) erroneously places David Lewis Dinsmore, son of David and Margaret's son John Dinsmore, as one of Adam Dinsmore's sons. Yet the biography of William Lewis Dinsmore, son of David Lewis Dinsmore (see above, n. 22) explicitly states that his father David was son of John Dinsmore of Lawrence Co., Alabama.

Co., Alabama, and died there in 1837.<sup>86</sup>

If David Dinsmore left Nova Scotia to join the family of Adam Dinsmore in North Carolina, then I can find no further reference to him in the records of Buncombe County after the 1790 petition for the county's formation. The David Dunsmoor signing that petition is thought not to have been the son of Adam Dinsmore of this name, since that David was not yet of age in 1790.

The David Dinsmore of Ninety Six and then Nova Scotia does continue to be mentioned in land transactions in Spartanburg County after Margaret and their children had all moved to Kentucky, but never with any clear indication that he had returned to the county to live on his land—though a 7 October 1807 deed of Longshore Lamb to Christopher Bell for 250 acres on a branch of the Tyger says that the land was bordered on the west by David Dunsmore and Jacob Earnest (Spartanburg DB N, pp. 284-5). And a 19 August 1809 deed from Christopher Bell to Richard Chesney of the same tract after Lamb sold it to Bell also mentions David Dunsmore's and Jacob Earnest's land bordering it on the west (Spartanburg DB N, pp. 280-1).

A 14 February 1808 deed of Isaac Crow to Joseph Wofford for 100 acres south of the Tyger also notes that the land was in part from a grant to David "Donamore" (Spartanburg DB Q, pp. 114-5). And a 16 February 1809 deed of William Pearson to William Shackelford for 99 acres on Jamey's Creek of the Tyger notes that the land was out of the 250-acre tract "formerly owned by David Densmore" (Spartanburg DB M, pp. 185-6). Jonathan Moore and William L. Allen witnessed this deed, with Allen proving it on 5 February 1810. William Lindsey Allen was the husband of Mary Calvert, who had previously been married to Dennis Lindsey (d. by January 1796), whose son Mark married Mary Jane Dinsmore, a daughter of David and Margaret Dinsmore.

But if David Dinsmore did return to Spartanburg County at some point, then he left no estate record there, and is not on the federal census in that county in 1790, 1800, or at any point thereafter.

When Margaret went to Wayne Co., Kentucky, with her son John, daughter Mary Jane, and son-in-law Mark Lindsey in 1800, she also appears to have headed her own household. In September 1801, the Wayne County court order book states, "At the motion of Margaret Dinsmore, satisfactory proof being made to the court, the

---

<sup>86</sup> The Lina Vandegrift Cherry ms. collection cited in n. 83 has a 7 October 1926 letter to Lina Cherry from James J. Dinsmore of Falkville, Alabama, a grandson of James, which has a transcript of James Dinsmore's family bible. This states that he was born in Co. Antrim, Ireland, in 1760. James J. Dinsmore's letter states that a family tradition shows these Dinsmores coming to America in 1776. The Revolutionary War pension application file of James and wife Jean McDonald (W7058) gives his date and place of death as 3 September 1837, though his tombstone in Falkville cemetery says he died 22 September 1837. See Morgan County loose estate files #717 for his estate file.

court is of opinion she is entitled to 100 acres of land."<sup>87</sup> It seems likely Margaret was patenting the 100 acres under the Headright Claims act of 21 December 1795, though technically that act restricted patents to men over 21 years of age with families.<sup>88</sup> Margaret's son John Dinsmore seems to have patented 200 acres in Wayne County in July of the same year.<sup>89</sup>

Margaret Dinsmore appears on the tax list in Wayne County up through 1806 and then disappears from this record, which suggests to me that she died in 1806 or 1807 in Wayne County. On 21 April 1806 she is taxed on Otter Creek next to her son John, and the following year, John is taxed for her 100 acres, with the tax books noting that this was land that Margaret Dinsmore had entered. In the same year, John also begins to be taxed for 8 slaves, only one of whom consistently remains on the tax list in his household thereafter.

As noted previously, David Dinsmore's Loyalist land claim in Nova Scotia states that he and his wife had five children. The claim states that Margaret and the five children were living on his 250 acres in Ninety Six (later Spartanburg County) in 1786. The 1790 census shows Margaret Dinsmore's household in Spartanburg County with a white male over 16 years of age and five females.

The male in Margaret's household in 1790 is almost certainly John Dinsmore, who, as we've seen, sold part of David's 250 acres along with Margaret when the family left South Carolina for Kentucky in 1800, and who appears to have inherited Margaret's land in Wayne Co., Kentucky. John's obituary in the *Moulton Democrat*, 24 Dec. 1858, states, "Died at the residence of his son, David Lewis Dinsmore, Esq., on Thursday the 16th of December 1858, Mr. John Dinsmore, an old and respected citizen—aged 84 years 3 months and 1 day."<sup>90</sup> The biography of John's grandson William Lewis Dinsmore discussed previously states that John came to Alabama

---

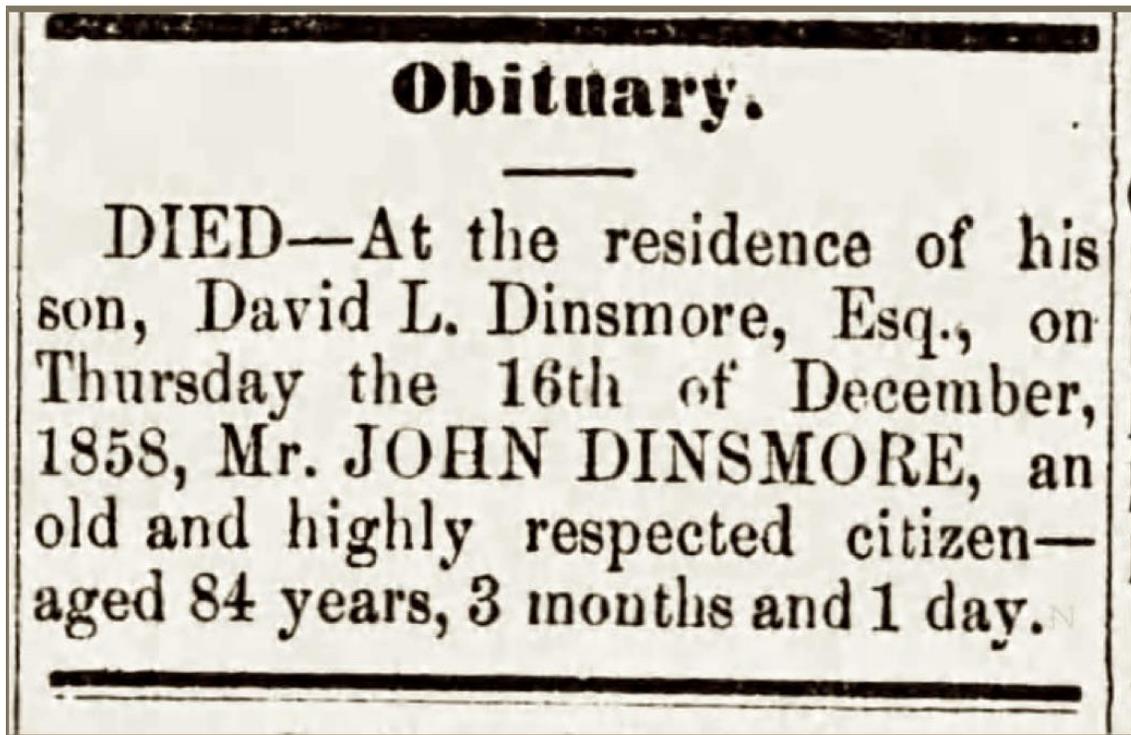
<sup>87</sup> Wayne Co., Kentucky, Court Order Bk. A, 1802-22, p. 19.

<sup>88</sup> See the introduction to Willard Rouse Jillson, *The Kentucky Land Grants* (Louisville: Standard, 1925).

<sup>89</sup> The county Court Order Book for 14 July 1801 shows him claiming 150 acres on that date (Wayne Co., Kentucky, Court Order Bk. A, p. 17). In November, he relinquished this claim, with no reason for the relinquishment recorded, though this court record specifies that the land he had claimed was given by certificate #244 (*ibid.*, p. 29). By 1801, John Dinsmore begins to appear in Wayne County tax books. In 1801, he is taxed (1801 Tax Bk., p. 2) on 24 Dec. for 2 horses. By 1802, he shows up as a landowner (p. 7, 13 Aug.), with 200 acres on Otter Creek and 1 horse. He continues to appear in the tax records from this date until 1820, always with the same 200 acres on Otter Creek (1803, p. 7, 9 Aug.; 1804, p. 11, 1 Aug.; 1806, p. 10, 21 Apr.; 1807, p. 9, 22 May; 1808, p. 7, 10 Aug.; 1809, p. 9; 1810, p. 9, 2 June; 1812, p. 25; 1814, p. 4; 1815, p. 15; 1816, p. 3; 1817, p. 23; 1820, p.--). Jillson, *Kentucky Land Grants* also lists John Dinsmore as a grantee, noting that he received a grant for 200 acres on Otter Creek in Wayne County on 24 July 1807, and citing Kentucky Grants South of Green River, Bk. 12, p. 109. It appears that Jillson has misread 1801 as 1807, since John Dinsmore first appears on the Wayne County tax records with 200 acres in 1802, and never owns other land in the county, with the exception of the 100 acres of his mother Margaret that fall to him when she apparently died in 1806.

<sup>90</sup> See Myra Thrasher Borden, abs., *Footprints in Time: Abstracts from Lawrence County, Alabama, Newspapers 1855-90* (priv. publ., Mt. Hope, Alabama, 1992), vol. 1p. 34; and Foide J. Williams, abs., "The *Moulton Democrat* 1858," *Old Lawrence Reminiscences* 6 (1992), p. 118.

from Wayne Co., Kentucky.<sup>91</sup>



John seems to have married about 1797 in Spartanburg County to a wife whose given name was Phebe, a detail we know because she signed the 26 February 1821 deed in which John and Phebe sold their 200 acres in Wayne Co., Kentucky, as the prepared to move to Lawrence Co., Alabama (Wayne DB C, pp. 228-9).<sup>92</sup> John and Phebe (who may have been a Woodruff, according to several descendants of this family) had the following three children (and perhaps others whose names haven't been found): Samuel, who was born abt. 1798 in Spartanburg County and died 1850-1860 in Chariton Co., Missouri (married Rebecca, daughter of George and Elizabeth Brent Wolfscales, 28 March 1816, Wayne Co., Kentucky); David Lewis, born 1803, Wayne Co., Kentucky, died 11 December 1888, Lawrence Co., Alabama (married Eleanor, daughter of William Kyle, 19 March 1833, Lawrence Co., Alabama); and Margaret, born 1790-1794, Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, died

<sup>91</sup> See *supra*, n. 22.

<sup>92</sup> On John Dinsmore in Wayne County court and tax records, see *supra*, n. 83. John was named a constable in Wayne County on 17 March 1810, (Wayne Court Order Bk. A, p. 162). On 12 Oct. 1812, he is in the muster list of Capt. George Stockton's company of the 3rd Ky. Regiment Mounted Rifles in the War of 1812 along with a John Lindsey who appears to be a brother of John's brother-in-law Mark Lindsey (see Kentucky Legislature, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky, Soldiers of the War of 1812* [Frankfort: Adjutant General, 1891], p. 16). On 25 March 1816, he gave permission for his son Samuel to marry Rebecca Wolfscales in Wayne County on 28 March. On 26 Feb. 1819, he gave surety for the marriage of James Hale and Peggy Dinsmore in Wayne Co. On the 1850 census, John Dinsmore appears in the household of Thomas and Sarah Woodruff in Lawrence Co., Alabama (p. 406; fam. 588/dwel. 588, 8th Distr.; 28<sup>th</sup> November). John's son David Lewis Dinsmore and his family are living next door (fam. 587).

1840-1850, Hardin Co., Tennessee (married James Hail/Hale, 16 February 1819, Wayne Co., Kentucky).

Another of David and Margaret Dinsmore's children was a daughter Mary Jane, whose tombstone in the old Lindsey family cemetery in Lawrence Co., Alabama, states that she was 74 years old at the time of her death.<sup>93</sup> The stone gives Mary Jane's date of death as 10 March 1855, but Mary Jane's estate records in Lawrence County suggest she actually died in March 1853—and this appears to place her year of birth in 1779 in Ninety Six District (later Spartanburg County), South Carolina. The 1850 federal census corroborates this conclusion, since it gives her age as 71 and place of birth as South Carolina.<sup>94</sup>

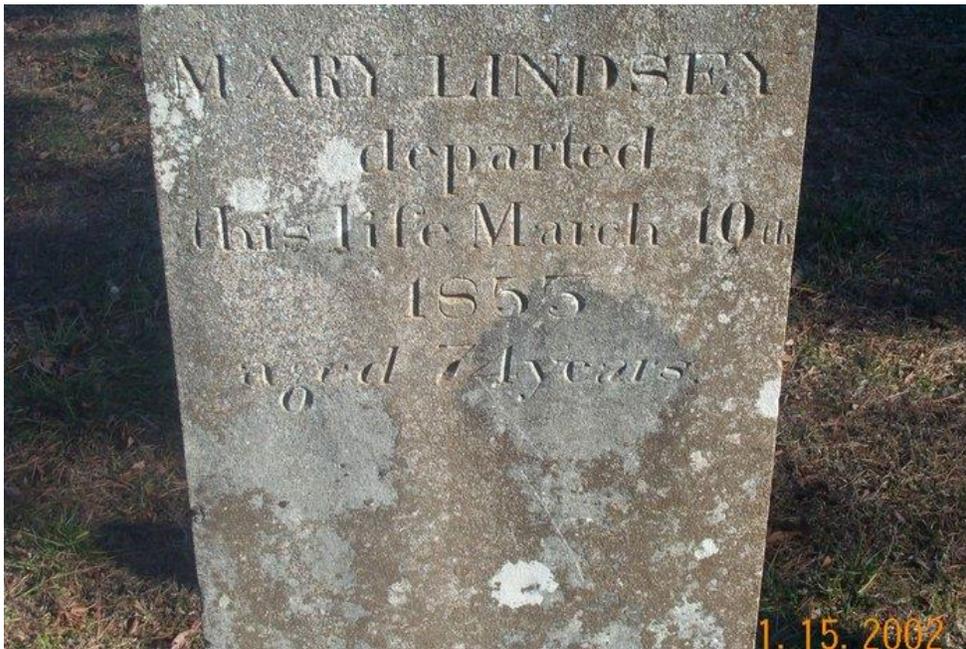


Figure 5: Tombstone of Mary Jane Dinsmore Lindsey, Lindsey Cemetery, Oakville, Alabama

Mary Jane married Mark, son of Dennis Lindsey, abt. 1793 in Spartanburg County, and moved with him, her mother Margaret, and her brother John and John's family to Wayne Co., Kentucky, in 1800. As did John and his wife Phebe, Mark and Mary Jane moved to Lawrence Co., Alabama, in 1819.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> I have visited the cemetery and photographed the tombstone. The photo included here as figure 6 is by Ray and Marty and is at the Find a Grave site for Lindsey cemetery online. Note that the cross bar on the numeral 4 in Mary Jane's age at death (74) on the tombstone is faint and difficult to see in the photo, but clearly apparent on the stone itself.

<sup>94</sup> Mary Jane is in the household of son David Dinsmore Lindsey on the 1850 federal census in Lawrence Co., Alabama dist. 8 (p. 381; fam./dwel 242, 8<sup>th</sup> distr.; 5 November). Knox, *History of Morgan County*, p. 126, mistakenly places Mary Jane's birth in Ireland.

<sup>95</sup> Mark and Mary Jane sold their land on Beaver Creek in Wayne County on 13 Oct. 1819 (Wayne DB C, pp. 118-9). In his *Early Settlers of Alabama* (New Orleans, 1899), pp. 122-3, James Edmond Saunders says that Mark Lindsey came to Lawrence Co., Alabama, from Kentucky in 1827 with his son Dennis. But Mark and Dennis are on the 1820 state census for Alabama in Lawrence County, and

Mark and Mary Jane Dinsmore Lindsey had the following children: Dennis, born 28 December 1794 in Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, died 28 August 1836, Lawrence Co., Alabama (married Jane, daughter of Thomas and Sarah Whitlock Brooks, 18 February 1813, Wayne Co., Kentucky); Nancy, born abt. 1801, Wayne Co., Kentucky, died after 1879, Hickman Co., Kentucky or Obion Co., Tennessee (married William Morris abt. 1825, Morgan Co., Alabama); William Burke, born abt. 1812, Wayne Co., Kentucky, died after 1860, probably in Bastrop Co., Texas (married Carolina S., daughter of Jared and Anne Collins Puckett, abt. 1834, Lawrence Co., Alabama); Fielding Wesley, born 11 December 1813, Wayne Co., Kentucky, died 12 March 1868, Lawrence Co., Alabama (married Clarissa, daughter of James and Nancy Isbell Brooks, 24 June 1835, Lawrence Co., Alabama); and David Dinsmore, born 3 November 1815, Wayne Co., Kentucky, died 18 March 1873, Lawrence Co., Alabama (married Sarah, a sister of Jane Brooks, above, 1 March 1838, Lawrence Co., Alabama).

The other three children of David and Margaret Dinsmore are less easy to identify. A James Dinsmore born between 1770-1780 shows up on the 1840 census in Morgan Co., Alabama.<sup>96</sup> His date of birth indicates that this is not the James who is son of Adam Dinsmore of Morgan County, who was (as noted previously) born in 1760, per his family bible. As noted previously, that James died in 1837 in Morgan County. I find no trace of the James born 1770-1780 after 1840 in Morgan County records. It's possible he's one of the three children of David and Margaret Dinsmore whose identity is not clearly established—except that the 1790 census appears to show David and Margaret with only one son and four daughters, a point that will be discussed in more detail in a moment.

In all likelihood, another of the children of David and Margaret Dinsmore is a Mary Dinsmore who married Samuel Woodruff in Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, around 1788.<sup>97</sup> The date of Mary's marriage (which is calculated from the birthdates of her children) suggests that she was likely the first-born of David and Margaret's children, and was likely born abt. 1770.<sup>98</sup>

---

on 31 July 1821, Mark witnessed the will of Robert Price in Lawrence County (WB 1, p. 7). Dennis patented land in Lawrence County on 4 November 1818, in section 8, twp. 7, range 6 west at the Huntsville land office (ledger 127).

<sup>96</sup> 1840 federal census, Morgan Co., Alabama, p. 32. The household has 0-0-0-0-1 m and 2-0-0-1-0-0-0 f and 1 slave.

<sup>97</sup> Though some sources state that the given name of the Woodruff who married Mary, daughter of David and Margaret Dinsmore, was Nathaniel or Samuel Nathaniel, it's clear to me from various records that the husband of Mary Dinsmore was called Samuel Woodruff. From the time he begins to appear in Hopkins Co., Kentucky, records, his name is consistently Samuel, and he is clearly one of several Samuel Woodruffs appearing in Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, records prior to this time.

<sup>98</sup> On 10 July 1792, Nathaniel bought from James Wofford 400 acres on Jamey's Creek, bordered east by John Keighler and all other sides by vacant lands, it being the west part of the tract (Spartanburg DB G, pp. 42-3). As noted previously, on 28 August 1800, when Margaret Dinsmore and her son John sold 82 acres of David Dinsmore's 250-acre tract from John Keighler in Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, as they prepared to go to Kentucky, they sold the land to Nathaniel Woodruff.

Samuel and Mary went to Hopkins Co., Kentucky, after 1810 and had children David, born 1789, Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, died May-October 1841, Hopkins Co., Kentucky (married Elizabeth Puryear Jones, 6 August 1814, Hopkins Co., Kentucky); Mary K. Woodruff, born 18 December 1792, Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, died 2 November 1852, Hopkins Co., Kentucky (married Joseph Woodruff abt. 1818, probably in Hopkins Co., Kentucky); John Willis, born 4 August 1793, Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, died 15 Sept. 1864, Hopkins Co., Kentucky (married Frances Elvira, daughter of Harrison and Martha Crockett Davis, 22 January 1818, Hopkins Co., Kentucky); Jane Virginia Woodruff, born 1800, Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, died 15 September 1864, Hopkins Co., Kentucky (married John Keyser, 20 July 1817, Hopkins Co., Kentucky); Hiram, born 12 January 1805, Spartanburg Co., South Carolina, died 29 January 1865, Caldwell Co., Kentucky (married Lydia Eliza Fox, 16 Jul 1829, Hopkins Co., Kentucky); and William.

Finally, there are a number of compelling reasons to think that David and Margaret Dinsmore had a daughter whose given name is not known and who married James, son of John and Mary Woodruff of Spartanburg Co., South Carolina. John, James Woodruff's father, was a brother of the Nathaniel Woodruff who married Mary Dinsmore. James died before June 1830 in Lawrence Co., Alabama. At the time of his death, James appears to have left a widow Naomi who is listed as the head of the household on the 1830 federal census and again in 1850.

In my view, James had previously been married to a Dinsmore daughter whose name has not been discovered' she appears to have predeceased her husband. I should acknowledge that some descendants and researchers of this line think that the Naomi who headed the family's household in 1830 and 1850 is David and Margaret Dinsmore's daughter.

My reasons for thinking it is likely that Naomi was a second wife and stepmother of James's children are twofold. In the first place, if her date of birth as indicated by the 1850 federal census is correct, she would have been born in 1790. David Dinsmore had, of course, left South Carolina in 1782, and to all appearances, did not return to his family after that date. David's 1786 Loyalist application in Nova Scotia explicitly states that his wife and five children were living on the family's land in South Carolina.

This 1786 land application in Canada indicates that the couple had had five children born prior to 1786. The 1790 census shows Margaret as head of her household in South Carolina with a male aged 16+ in the household (I take this to be her son John, born in 1774), and with five females, of whom one would be Margaret. It seems very likely to me that one of the four daughters would become the wife of James Woodruff, and that she was born in advance of 1790—and almost certainly by 1782 or, at latest, 1783.

My second reason for thinking that Naomi, James Woodruff's widow, is not likely the

mother of her children has to do with a guardianship petition filed in Lawrence Co., Alabama, in 1830. On 23 June 1830, John Dinsmore and Mark Lindsey applied for guardianship of two of James's minor children, John and Thomas Woodruff.<sup>99</sup> The most plausible explanation of this action is that John Dinsmore and Mark Lindsey were applying for the guardianship of two of their nephews after the parents of these nephews had died. In 1850, in fact, the federal census shows John living with Thomas Woodruff and his wife Sarah.

In my view, the uncles of these Woodruff boys would more likely have taken the step of applying for legal guardianship of their nephews if the mother of the children was a step-mother rather than their natural mother. The guardianship application states that the mother of the boys was not "calculated" to raise them and had hired them out where they were mistreated by their employers.

If Naomi was John's sister and Mark's sister-in-law, I think it would have been far more likely that John and Mark would have handled these matters within the family and without involving the court—though I could certainly be wrong in this deduction, and perhaps researchers who have concluded that Naomi is David and Margaret's daughter are correct.

It appears that James Woodruff and his Dinsmore wife—whatever her identity—had the following children: Margaret, born abt. 1811, Wayne Co., Kentucky (married Willis Ireland, 21 April 1836, Lawrence Co., Alabama); Thomas, born 1814-9, Wayne Co., Kentucky, died 1861, Lawrence Co., Alabama (married 1] Sarah, daughter of John and Esther Livingston Callahan, abt. 1849, Lawrence Co., Alabama, and 2] Isalena, her sister, 01 September 1852, Lawrence Co., Alabama); and Nancy, born abt. 1824-1826 in Alabama.

And with these details ends the story that began with the immigration of a young couple—to all appearances, a just-married couple with no children—from Ulster to South Carolina in 1767. A couple that was, in the course of time, to have five children, as the young immigrant couple worked to begin a new life in their new homeplace—to set up a farm and begin rearing a family . . . .

And then a war arrived, an event that must have perplexed this immigrant family newly arrived in the American colonies. As did many others in the area in which David and Margaret Dinsmore had settled, David chose not to support the revolution. He paid a high price for his choice, and his ties to his family were, it seems, permanently sundered by his exile to Canada.

His wife and children moved to Kentucky, where Margaret died in 1806 or 1807, it appears. Within a generation, a Scotch-Irish family that had settled in South Carolina in 1767 had branched out to Kentucky and Alabama. It would be interesting to know what memory these descendants retained of the Loyalist service

---

<sup>99</sup> Lawrence County Orphans Court Minutes Bk. C, p. 14.

of their progenitor in North America, and if his exile to Nova Scotia and separation from his wife and children were remembered in the generations that followed David and Margaret. Several of his children seem to have cherished their father's memory, since they perpetuated his name when they named their own children.

And this, of course, serves as a poignant reminder of the tragedy of what happened to this family when an unexpected war came along and broke the unity of the newly established immigrant Dinsmore family . . . .

William D. Lindsey, Ph.D.  
Little Rock, AR 72205  
July 2012