

A copy of a letter written by Lucina Hancock-Lord for her Mother, Nancy Agusta Bemis-Hancock to her (Nancy's) Cousin, Mr. C. L. Dunning.

West Ninth Street,
San Bernardino, California,
August 23, 1905.

Mr. C. L. Dunning,
Oswego County,
New York.

My dear Cousin:

Sister Clarissa Curtis of Victor, Fremont Co., Idaho, enclosed your letter to me, written the 7th of this month to her. She thought, as I am next to the eldest in my Mother's family, (my eldest brother, Amos W. Bemis, died the 1st of May last) that I might give you more history of the Guernseys than she could.

My Mother Jerusha Guernsey was born June 11th, 1799, Ellisburg, Wardwell Settlement, Jefferson Co., New York (a second record - Jerusha Guernsey born in Vermont).

She was married about the year 1824 to my Father, Alvin Bemis, near Wardwell, Jefferson Co., New York. Their eldest, Amos W. Bemis, was born in 1828, and I, Nancy Agusta Bemis, was born Ellisburg, Jefferson Co., New York June 14, 1829.

My first recollection is while we were living about a mile from Pierpont Manor on Little Bear Creek. I can remember seeing my Grandmother Guernsey, and playing many times with Aunt Betsy's and Aunt Nabby's children. I can remember Uncle John Guernsey. He lived about a half mile from us.

Uncle John Guernsey was a brother to Grandpa Guernsey. So he was really my Mother's Uncle, but we were taught to call him Uncle, also.

Aunt Betsy was older than my Mother, then Jerusha (my Mother) and Aunt Nabby was the youngest.

Aunt Betsy's first husband was a Mr. Sly (perhaps this name is not spelled correctly). She had two children, one died, and the other (a boy) went to Ohio. Her second husband was named Mason, I think. She had a large family by the second husband, and I have never heard from her since we left there in 1838.

Aunt Nabby, as you have said, married Isaac Falls, and when we moved to Auburn, Cuyahoga County, Ohio in 1838, my Father (Alvin Bemis) allowed Uncle Isaac to build a house on our farm near us. They stayed there several years, then moved away, but I don't know where.

Uncle Isaac came and made us a short visit after they left, and I have never seen them since. (Uncle Isaac Falls had a sister that married a Newman Hawley at Wardwell settlement, New York).

Brother Amos heard from them through a man something like 30 years ago, but I do not know where they were living.

She, Aunt Nabby, had a large family, also a pair of twins. This man told Amos that our Cousin Henry Falls was interested in (it seems to me) an iron foundry, or machinery of some kind. I am sorry I cannot give something more definite as to where they are, and dates, but my Mother's record was burned about 50 years ago (1855) when she lost house and contents.

Cousin Dunning (you didn't give only C. L. in your address), has this fortune you speak of, anything to do with the fortune that was left to my Mother's Mother, and she failed to get it? I have often heard my Mother tell about it, and it was before the year 1812.

It seems there was a large fortune left to Grandma Guernsey by her relatives, but I can't tell you what her maiden name was, but I think it was Wilson (as my brother Amos Wilson Bemis was named for some of his relatives) and he also named one of his boys Wilson.

My Mother (Jerusha Guernsey-Bemis) often told the story and as it was so exciting even our older grandchildren can repeat it.

It seems one of Grandma Guernsey's brothers went and got his portion of the fortune, and my Mother said he brought it to her Mother's house and poured it on the table, and as a child she thought it such a heap of money. Then she tells how her Mother and Father started to go in a sleigh and get Grandma Guernsey's portion, and when they got to an Inn or tavern on their way there, the man that had charge of the tavern said, "Friend, are you going on tonight?" Grandpa Guernsey answered he was. The tavern keeper added, "There has been much robbing and killing on the road lately."

But even with this caution they did go on until they came to a strip of wood-land and there they saw a man standing by the roadside. Grandpa Guernsey ran his horses by him and the man made a grasp at the horses' bits, but failed to grasp them, then tried to get into the sleigh. Then Grandma Guernsey with her umbrella beat him over the head until he let loose. In the excitement Grandpa Guernsey lost his hat, and when they got to the next tavern, the keeper said, "Friend, it is cold to be without a hat." Then Grandpa Guernsey found he was hatless. And he didn't know just how far to trust even this tavern keeper -- didn't know but he had something to do with the robbers.

Grandpa Guernsey was a Mason, and it was a great help just now. He gave a sign and the tavern-keeper returned it. Then he knew he had a friend.

A force of men went back with them, but the robbers had escaped. So with this exciting experience they put off going for the fortune for the present, and returned home.

Grandpa Guernsey, his two sons and two daughters all died of Typhoid Fever inside of a few months. Grandpa Guernsey was a lame man. After these five died, this left Grandma Guernsey with only three girls, Betsy, Jerusha (my Mother) and Nabby. Aunt Betsy also had the same fever, and it left her lame.

My Mother's brothers' names were Amos and Seth and the sisters that died, Easter and Hilty. They were all buried at Wardswell Settlement.

5.

Soon after this, the 1812 war broke out at Sackets Harbor, and my Mother said her Mother and three girls with other women and children congregated together for protection at night, as every man and youth was called into service, and she said she had often seen her Mother with tears say she was glad that she had no boys to fight in this terrible war.

My Mother and Father had seven boys and four girls. The eldest was Amos Wilson (now dead), Nancy Agusta (myself), Samuel Nines, Edwin, William Wallace (all three dead), Henry Harrison and Clarissa Ann, twins, Harriet, Charles, Nephi (dead), and Jerusha (dead).

Samuel, Nephi and Jerusha left no posterity, and Harrison had none. Amos has six children living, Edwin has four, and William has nine.

Cousin Dunning, I hope to hear from you shortly, and give my love to my new found cousin, your wife, and please tell me her name.

Lovingly, your Cousin,

Nancy Agusta Bemis Hancock