

The Aunts

stories and photos compiled by Jane English in 2021

as background information for Great Grandmother's Griddle - a book of historical fiction

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Aunt Sarah Blodgett Parkhurst

My 3-great grandmother Thankful Colburn Hills never knew her own grandmother, her namesake Thankful Boldgett Adams, who died in 1760 at age 41 in childbirth with twins, her 9th and 10th children.

Wondering how I might include in our story the older part of the mother-line, earlier than the younger Thankful, I did some research and found that Thankful Boldgett Adams had a much older sister, Sarah Blodgett Parkhurst who also lived in Dunstable.

While reading what follows, please refer to the mother-line time-line chart that shows how all these women's lives overlapped.

In 1760, the year both Thankful Blodgett Adams and her husband Ephriam Adams died, Mary Adams, the mother of younger Thankful (not yet born) was just 16 and had younger sisters ages 13, 11, 9, 7, and 5, as well as the newborn twin girls. There were also two older, but not yet married, brothers, ages 18 and 21.

What happened to these now-orphaned children?

Both Ephriam and Thankful had numerous siblings, but only two, Thankful Blodgett Adams' ten year older brother Josiah Blodgett and twenty year older sister Sarah Blodgett Parkhurst, lived in Dunstable where Ephriam Adams and Thankful Blodgett Adams had lived.

Of these two it seems most likely that Sarah was the one who took care of the orphaned children. Sarah's husband Ebenezer Parkhurst had died in 1757 and their youngest child, a son Joel, was in 1760 now 19. So Sarah was available and at age 62 not too old take care of her younger sister's brood, with the help of sixteen-year-old Mary and the older boys.

Sarah lived 25 years longer until 1785, dying at age 87. By then Sarah's grand-daughter (Mary Adams' daughter), Thankful Colburn was age 9. Thus we have in our story a young Thankful asking her Great Aunt Sarah about her namesake, Thankful Blodgett Adams, the grandmother she never knew, and about the earlier mother line.

Sarah Blodgett Parkhurst (1689-1785) would have known both the grandmother of the Blodgett sisters, Mary Hildreth Warren (1650-1730) and the mother of the Blodgett sisters, Mary Warren Blodgett (1675-1749). Also, Sarah might have heard from them stories of the original immigrant Elizabeth (1625-1693).

The younger Thankful's mother Mary Adams (1744-1842) as a 5-year-old might have herself known her grandmother Mary Warren Blodgett.

So that is how I piece together the stories of the older part of my mother-line. Were stories told of life as an early settler in Chelmsford? of the Indians? of moving to Dunstable?

Rachel Hills

She sister of James Hills - Thankful's husband- was born April 10, 1765 in Nottingham West (now Hudson, NH). On April 29, 1788, at age 23, she married Zacheus Colburn. They had 3 boys, Thomas, Eljah and Zacheus, born in 1792, 1795 and 1801. They lived in Nashua. The two younger sons became doctors in Manchester, NH.

Thankful's father, George Colburn was a 3rd cousin to Rachel's husband Zacheus. When Rachel had her 3nd boy in 1801, Thankful was 25 and her youngest sibling Olive was 15. Thankful was no longer needed at home in Wilton, NH to help with younger siblings, so for our story we have Thankful going from Wilton to Nashua to live with her future sister-in-law Rachel to help with the boys.

Thankful is there at Rachel's when James Hills' first wife Abigail dies in November 1804, leaving him alone with 8 children. During that winter after Abigail's death, Hannah, the wife of James' brother Joseph, who lives next door to him in Hancock, does her best to help care for the eight motherless children, ages 2 to 16. but Hannah has seven of her own, ages 1 to 13. It has become obvious that James, age 41, needs another wife.

Thankful, now 28, is an obvious choice - she knows the family, she has a lot of experience with young children, and she is well on her way to becoming an old maid. So on a visit to his sister Rachel, James proposes to Thankful. They marry on October 17, 1805. They quickly have eight more children, to whom James' sister Rachel is Aunt Rachel. Thankful's fourth child, and third girl, is named Rachel after her aunt.

Aunt Rachel appears again in our story in the 1830's when we have her niece and namesake coming to stay with her when she comes to Nashua to learn tailoring.

Growing up on the farm in Hancock the younger Rachel Hills learned to spin and weave (see the linen pillowcase we have - initials RH on it show it to have been made before whe married in 1839). But with the coming of the industrial revolution and the big textile mills in Manchester, Nashua and Lowell, homespun cloth loses its value. The skills Rachel has learned are no longer needed. So she comes to Nashua to

learn tailoring, making clothing from the cloth produced by the mills.

In Ida Rachel's writing there is mention of the younger Rachel Hills going to Nashua, "Grandma Rachel Hills came to Nashua to learn tailoring, and in some way she met Grandpa (Samuel Stevens Taylor)." Later on in the same writings is, "... the wall clock Grandma (Rachel Hills) Taylor earned by tailoring the first winter after their marriage . . ."

Aunt Rachel died September 23, 1840, less than a year after her niece Rachel married Samuel Stevens Taylor on December 31st 1839.

Ida Rachel's writings state, "They (*the younger Rachel Hills and Samuel*) were married in Hancock on the last day of December, 1839. Grandpa's brother drove up there with him in a snowstorm. They could hardly have made it in one day, 40 miles of winter travel, from Dunstable to Hancock. But in those days travelers could have a night's lodging at some farmhouse, when it was needed."

Sarah Taylor

She was sister of Samuel Stevens Taylor, was born three years after him in 1815. Of her Ida Rachel says, "Some of the older people in town used to say Dena (Ida Rachel's sister, born after Sarah died) looked very much like Grandpa's sister Sarah, who lived at home, never married and 'enjoyed' poor health, as the old folks used to say. The tiniest pewter porringer we have was one she used to warm her bit of medicine, whatever it was, by the hearth fire."

Dena also never married. I find myself wondering if this was a self-fulfilling prophecy, one that is repeated in my own life. I was said to resemble my Aunt Grace, my father's unmarried sister who died fairly young at age 42 before I was born, and I too am unmarried (*in the conventional sense of having a family. I was with Gia-fu for 4 years*).

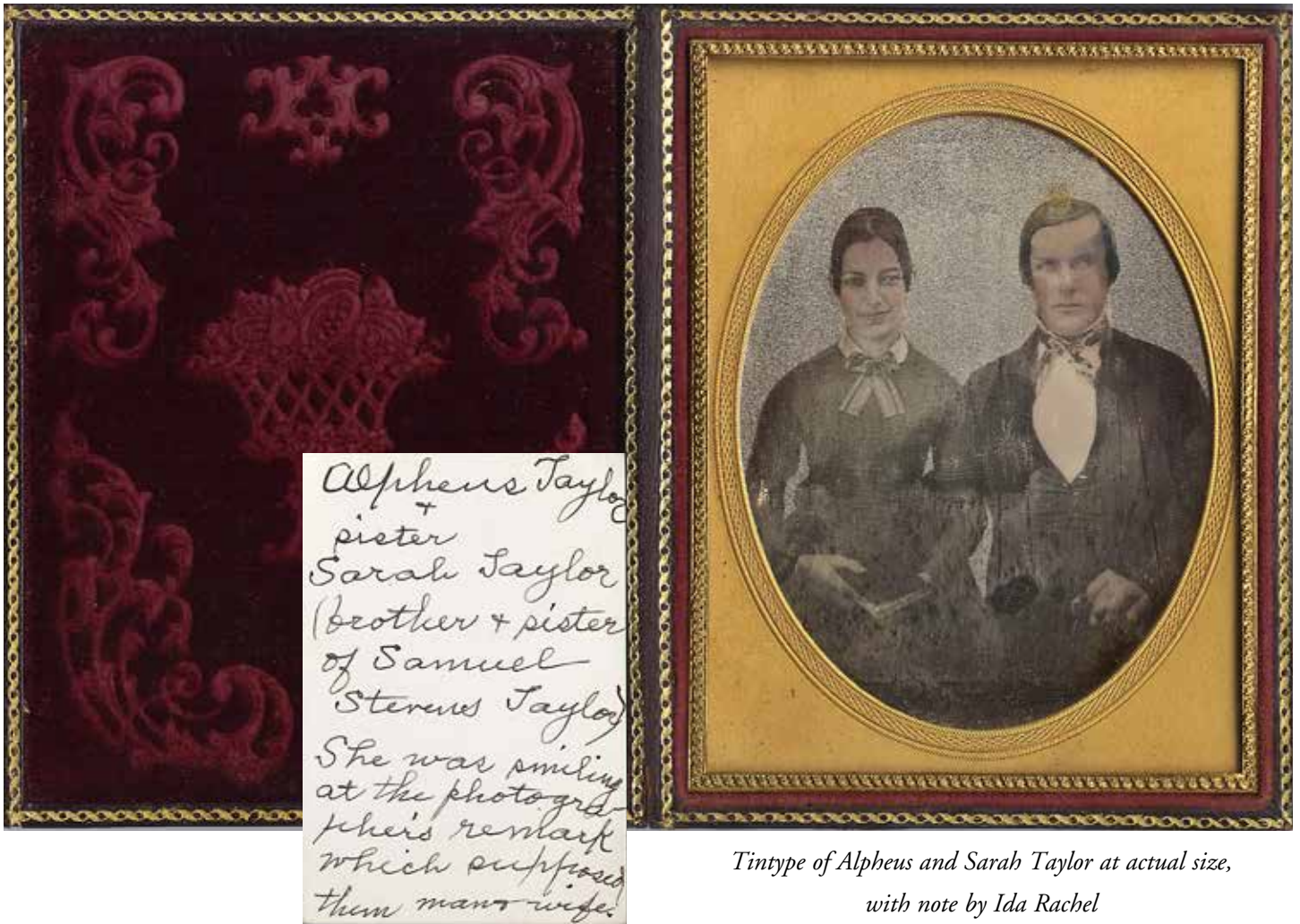
Aunt Sarah enters our story only peripherally, having died fairly young at age 38 in 1854. We do have a photograph of her with another brother, Alpheus, and we have the treasure of a sampler she "wrought" at age 9, as well as some fancy embroidery she did.



Embroidered collar made by Aunt Sarah Taylor



detail





Front and back of Sarah Taylor's sampler - embroidered on homespun linen - brighter colors on the less faded back

Aunt Frances

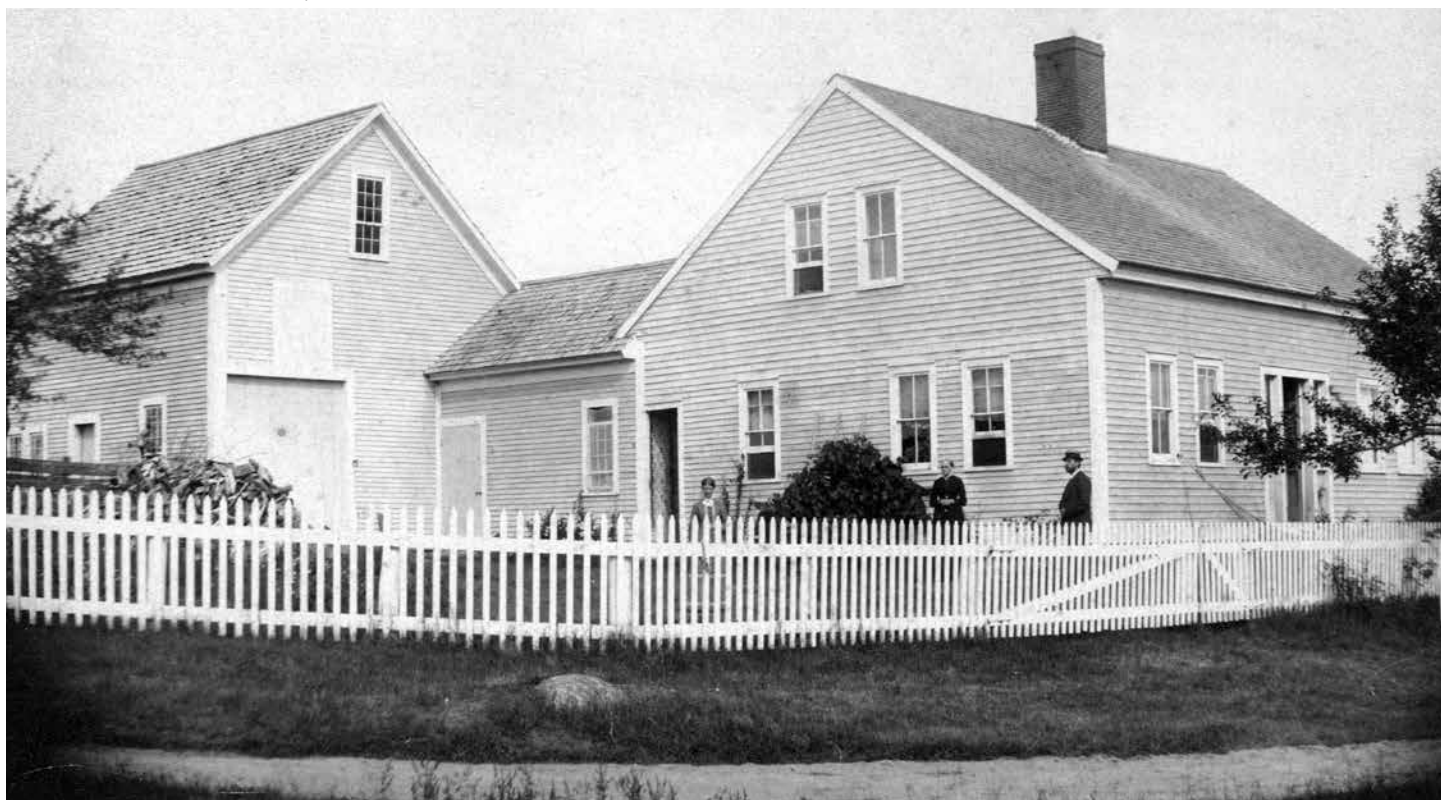
Frances Hills Thayer is of the same generation as Aunt Sarah. Frances was my great-great-grandmother Rachel Hills' older sister. A yet older sister, Fannie, had died in infancy. Frances was born in Hancock, NH on May 26, 1809. In 1848 she became the second wife of Emmons Thayer of Braintree, Massachusetts. At that time he had two daughters, ages 13 and 16 from his first marriage. Frances had no children of her own. Emmons and Frances moved back to Hancock in 1855 and most likely provided a home, after 1860, for her mother, Thankful, whose husband James Hills had died in 1846, until her death at age 91 in 1867. Frances' husband Emmons died just two days before Thankful so it is likely that the same illness carried them both away - a time of huge change for Frances. Frances lived on in Hancock another 32 years until the 6th of March in 1898 when she died at age 88.

Ida Rachel, her grand niece, wrote of a visit in the 1890's, "We had not much cash to spend so were to stay the first night with Evangeline's uncle and aunt in Wilton, NH, and the second night with my Great Aunt Frances Hills Thayer in Hancock, NH. This was a little out of the way, but she was willing to have us and we could see a bit more of the country. We had an open wagon and only umbrellas for storm protection, but I cannot remember using them much, so our weather was good for driving, if not for climbing. There is nothing much from Hancock that I remember especially, save that Aunt Frances, well along in years, was still milking and taking care of her cow, something like her sister, my Grandma Rachel Hills Taylor."

It is most likely through this and other visits to Aunt Frances in Hancock that the younger generation, Ida Rachel, Dena and Grace, stayed connected with Hancock and the stories of their ancestors who had lived there.



Frances Hills Thayer in the 1880's



Home of Frances Hills Thayer in Hancock, NH in the 1880's

Aunt Catherine

Catherine Hills Beatley, was another of Thankful's daughters. She was younger than both Frances and Rachel, having been born January 28, 1814, three years after Rachel. A boy who lived only to age 5 was born between them. Catherine married Ralph Beatley in 1846 and moved to Chelsea, MA. Their son James Augustus Beatley went to Harvard then taught in Boston. He had for years a summer home in Hancock, NH, his mother's hometown. James' daughter, who was also named Catherine after her grandmother, stayed in touch with my mother over the years and provided her with the map and description that allowed Heather and me in 2001 to find the cellar hole of Thankful and James hills' farm in Hancock. Catherine died in 1902 at age 88.

Ida Rachel's writings mention Catherine several times:

"Grandma Rachel, for whom I was named, used to tell of her long walk to school, especially hard in winter when snow was sometimes knee deep. Generally in those early days, school terms were short in winter and were held mostly in spring and fall. But when they reached school they did not need gymnastics to exercise their muscles, nor did they need to be amused when they got home—there was work enough to do. I wish now I had questioned her more about details. In contrast to Grandma's remembrances, her younger sister Catherine (our great-aunt Katy Beatley) told us with a smiling face, "I can remember it still, how good my porridge used to taste in my little bowl." Grandma used to say, "Old porridge, how I hated it!" I think she used to say they were not allowed much milk, since it had to be saved for other uses. I know when I was young we were not allowed cream on our food; it was used to make butter which we sold to buy our groceries. Evidently Aunt Katy did not have the hardest work, being younger, and she enjoyed her plain food. The same way, my sister Dena used to say I never had to do much because I was the baby."

"When Mother was young there was a row of willow trees along the boundary wall, besides one or two nearer the house. When her cousin James Beatley came there as a boy, he used to call it Willow Hill. In my young days only broken or dying ones remained."

*Catherine Hills
Beatley about
1884*



"The prettiest picture book I ever had came to me at this time from Aunt Katy Beatley, Grandma's sister. It was quite a large white book and had on the cover the heads of three kittens and bunches of bright red cherries. It was entitled, "Tit, Tiny and Tittens." Oh how proud I was of that book! It was read and re-read to me and always handled with the greatest of care. Bertha and Flossie (*her Sargent cousins*) enjoyed it, too, the years we were of the right age. The print was large and the verses short, so after a few readings, I could say it all myself, but I still loved to have it read to me. It began, "Tit, Tiny and Tittens were three little kittens, with fleece as white as snow, who went out to play one sunshiny day where bright red cherries do grow." The book was kept safely for the children I might have, but was misplaced in the shuffle of moving from 14 Liberty Street in Waltham to Portsmouth in 1905, and never found until we moved back to Waltham in 1919. Then Ruth and Arthur were far too old for it, while by the time grandchildren arrived there were many more attractive books given to them. But they never could have appreciated any of theirs as much as I did my one."



"When I was seven or eight, Father had taken me to Boston for the day. We visited the State House, rode on the swan boats in the Public Gardens, visited the Navy Yard, climbed Bunker Hill Monument and went to Chelsea to visit Aunt Katy and Uncle Beatley."

At the time of going to study in Boston: "Then Dena took me to Waban Street in Roxbury to see Cousin James Beatley's family, which was to be my one contact with relatives if I became homesick, but I do not remember I ever was after that one night."

*Catherine
about
1900*



Aunt Emma

Emma Sarah Henrietta Taylor, was the third child of Rachel Hills Taylor and Samuel Stevens Taylor. She was the younger sister of George Taylor who later died in the Civil War, and of my great-grandmother, Mary Ella Taylor. In the summer of 1847, not long before Emma's birth on November 18, 1847, Rachel and Samuel had moved to the brick house on the hill in Dunstable, three children being too many to continue living with his parents on the Taylor farm in Dunstable as they had for the first seven years of their marriage.

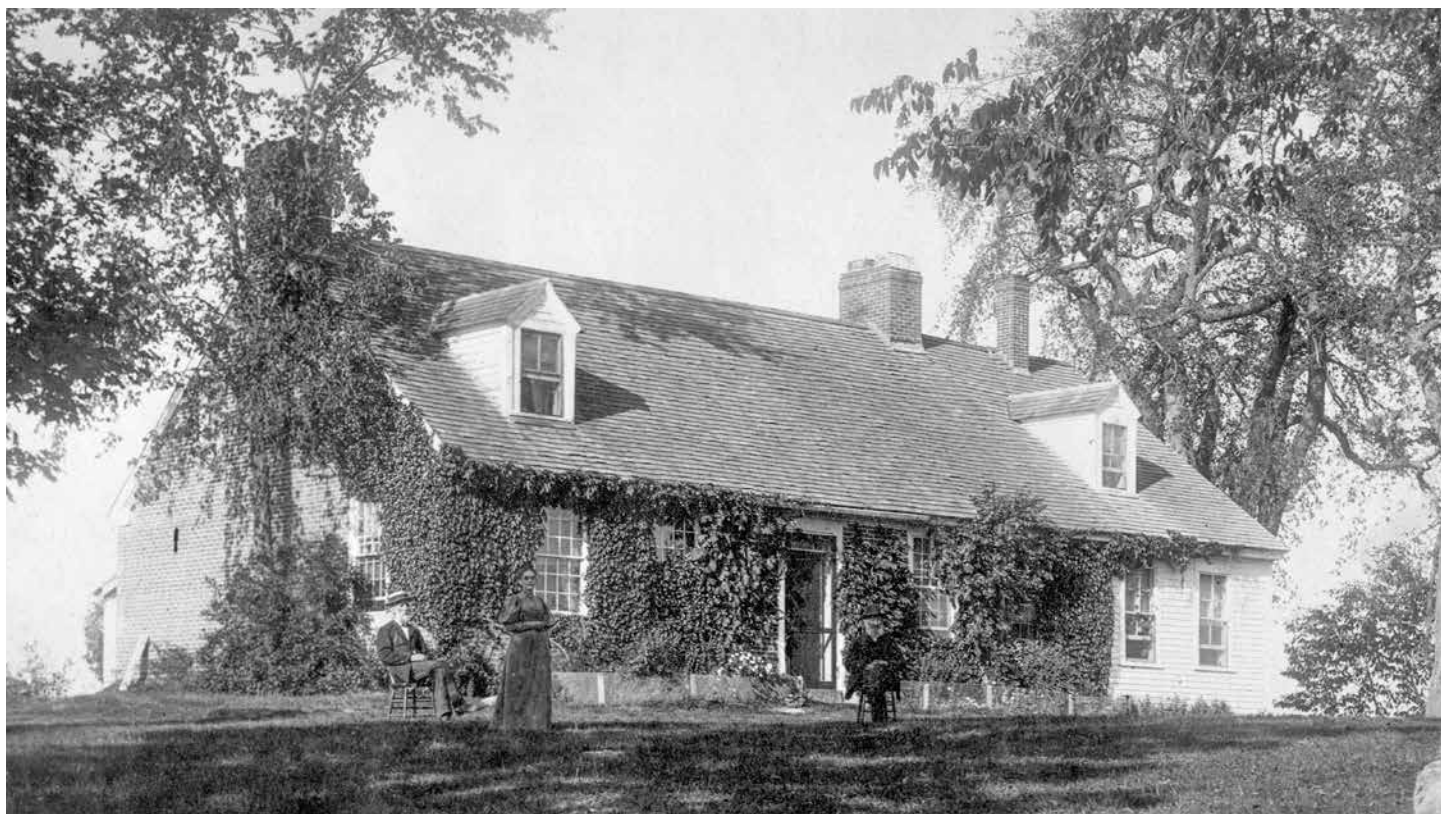
At age 22 in 1869 Emma married Rev. Frank Dana Sargent. Their children Bertha, Florence and Harold were about the same age as Mary Ella Taylor Butterfield's three girls and visited frequently.

My grandmother, Ida Rachel, one of the three Butterfield girls tells of her aunt and cousins:

"Grandpa and Grandma lived with the old folks in Dunstable until after a boy, named George, and Mary Ella, my mother, were born. When she was two years old, they moved to the brick house on the hill, where my Aunt Emma was born. There on that Dunstable hilltop the three children, George, Ella and Emma, grew up, in the same house that my sisters and I grew up in."

"Mother's sister, Emma had married Rev. Frank Sargent, who came fresh from the seminary to being a ministerial candidate in Dunstable; then they went right to Brookline, NH where he preached for 29 years. Grandpa used to drive up there about once a year, stopping off in Pepperell to see his sister Mary who had married Jonathan Bennett. He was never gone more than one or two nights as he had to have Father stay home to do the milking in his absence after Grandma was past doing it. Mother would take us girls and drive up to stay with the Sargents for two or three days about once a year; it was a very happy event. As a child I was very shy, but never minded going there; Aunt Emma was so much like Mother. At home we had little company to stay overnight, other than my Sargent cousins. Thanksgiving meant that we looked forward to having the Sargents come down over Sunday while they were in Townsend or Brookline, but when Uncle Frank went to the church in Putnam, Connecticut, they could no longer come."

"The new northeast chamber had a double bed for Grace and Dena and a crib for me until I outgrew it, when another double bed was put in—handy when our Sargent cousins visited us. Where there had been windows in the original chambers, Father put in a door with a fair-sized glass in each, for what now became middle-chambers would otherwise have been dark. They became used for storage mostly, but beds



The brick house on the hill in Dunstable - after 1877 when the white wooden addition was made to accomodate the Butterfield family when it moved in with Mary Ella's parents, Rachel and Samuel Taylor. Mary Ella Taylor Butterfield is standing; the men may be George Butterfield and Samuel Stevens Taylor



Emma Sarah Henrietta Taylor in 1865

were also there, and when Bertha and Flossie came to stay, especially for Thanksgiving, it was cozy to sleep on one or two feather beds, with we three youngest all in one bed.”

“The three-day blizzard in 1888 was something to remember. The Sargent family had come down and Uncle Frank had gone home, leaving the rest for a week. But they were forced to stay longer as we had no connection even with the village until the fourth day . . .,”

“The hens were kept up over an open shed which covered the blue farm wagon and the half-hogshead where the animals drank. The water came by open trough from the wellhouse. A piece of ladder nailed to the building was the only approach to where the hens were kept, and I never liked to go up. When Aunt Emma and her girls made one of their periodical visits, Bertha and Flossie always wanted to go up and get the eggs. Bertha was two years older than I and could be expected to do things I could not, but when Flossie, two years younger than I, went up too, I had to brace up and do the same. I was never first to do adventurous feats.”

“I used sometimes to look at the other mothers whose children I knew and feel so glad I didn’t have anyone except my own. Aunt Emma was so much like her, with the same fine inheritance from Grandpa, that I could have been her child with good grace, had I been forced to make the choice.”

“We did not get up there (the Howe’s) very often, as it was quite a drive for the old horse in one day. It was so much nicer at Aunt Emma’s with her so dear and like Mother. Also Bertha and Flossie Sargent were nearer my age and the Howes much older.”

“Mother and Aunt Emma had shares in the first “Morning Star” missionary ship among the Micronesian Islands, as did I.”



Cousins - Ida Rachel Butterfield (back left) Harold Sargent (back center) and Florence and Bertha Sargent in front of the Dunstable School - probably in the early 1890's

Aunt Dena

Lucy Ardena Butterfield is the oldest of the aunts that I actually remember. She was born on February 13, 1871 in Lowell, Massachusetts, where her father George was a foreman in the textile mills. She was the middle of the three Butterfield girls, the youngest being my grandmother, Ida Rachel Butterfield James. Actually she was my mother's aunt and my great-aunt, but I called her Aunt Dena.



Mary Ella Taylor Butterfield with Lucy Ardena Butterfield about 1873

Ida Rachel speaks at some length about her sister Dena:

The middle of we three sisters was Dena—Lucy Ardena Butterfield. Lucy after Father's mother, and Ardena taken from a list of Lowell High School graduates because Mother liked it; it was so different, the very reason Dena, as we called her, disliked it. Strangers commented on it, asked how it was spelled, and so forth, until she was quite annoyed and used to sigh her name, "L.A. Butterfield." We never met anyone of the same name. Father had times of calling each of us by both our names. That was the common custom in earlier generations, and our second cousin, Mary Jane, daughter of Father's cousin Taylor Butterfield, was always called by two names. So when Father was in a special mood, he would say "Emma Grace", "Lucy Ardena" and "Ida Rachel".

Some of the older people in town used to say Dena looked very much like Grandpa's sister Sarah, who lived at home, never married and "enjoyed" poor health, as the old folks used to say. The tiniest pewter porringer we have was one she used to warm her bit of medicine, whatever it was, by the hearth fire.

Grace was the firstborn and after two years Dena came along. I was four years behind her. She did not seem to have as

happy a disposition as she should have had, and in later years I wondered if she did not resent having me come to be petted, after she had had the "baby's place" for four years. She used to tell me I could have things because I was the baby, while Grace, being the oldest, was also privileged. But she was very capable with her hands, learning early to do good sewing and knitting, then fine fancy work later on. She was a good scholar and fond of reading, but when 13 or 14 developed a slight hesitancy in speech, of course a nervous trouble, so did not like to read aloud outside the family or recite in school. I think that was the main reason she dropped out of Westford Academy, or she would have gone back after typhoid. As she did so well with sewing, she learned dressmaking with a Lowell dressmaker, living with a Mrs. Garrett, whom Father knew. After that she came home and went around town by the day, also sewing for some families out of town, thus being at home weekends at least, which Mother liked. She also sewed for a dressmaker in Nashua and boarded with Nell Davis after the latter's marriage.

Her first adventures away from home were with Clara Sargent and Nell Davis as waitress at some of the White Mountain hotels. And I remember how vexed she was when I came home from Westford just coming down with measles the day



*George Butterfield (L) Mary Ella Taylor Butterfield (R)
Ida Rachel (standing L)
Lucy Ardena (standing R) Emma Grace (center) 1892*

before Clara, Nell and Dena were to leave for Daytona Beach, Florida to wait tables at Hotel Ormond. Of course it was not wise for her to stay in the house with me, so she was hustled off to Mrs. Blodgett's, our nearest neighbor, but it upset her plans very much. However, she escaped the measles.

One summer she and Grace went to Appledore Hotel on the Isles of Shoals off Portsmouth, NH, where Grace enjoyed seeing Celia Thaxter, the woman who went there at age two and

had a vine-covered cottage in picturesque surroundings, fitted for writing "The Sandpiper." Then they went one summer to Block Island, off the end of Long Island, but I think Grace never went again; I believe they were sick.

Also Dena and Grace did have an enjoyable trip to the World's Colombian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, honoring the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus. George Blodgett, son of the neighbor, went too. Among the many things they saw was the young Esquimo boy, Pomiuk, from Labrador, about whom we had learned from Mr. Martin in the Conversation Corner of the Congregationalist. I think that was the beginning of interest in the USA in Dr. Grenfell's work for the people of Labrador. That whole trip to the White City was an education for the girls.

Dena liked to travel and see different places, so used to take nice vacation trips, generally with a companion, thus seeing parts of Canada, Mexico, the West, and the Bahamas.

Her trip to Europe, which she had had in mind for several years, was started with Cousin Helen Leighton in 1914. They landed in England, and all went well there, through France and Switzerland, to the Austrian Tyrol, when the First World War broke out. They were told to get to England as best they could, which was by waiting in Italy for a crowded ship to England. There they had another wait and finally landed in "God's Country" again, thankful not to have been bombed.

Then Dena went back to dressmaking again, work which she always did very well, even conscientiously, as all her work was done. She made a great deal of fancy work, especially Battenberg lace. This was trying for her eyes, which were inclined to trouble her. She did a great deal of free sewing for me, making my wedding dress and a beautiful Battenberg handkerchief for the occasion. Later she sewed for Ruth and toward the end of her life braided about eighteen rugs of various sizes, some of which should last as long as Ruth needs them.

Dena's reading had always included much of history and civil government, and when the stir was started to give women the vote, she was ready to help, not liking to be classed with "children, paupers and idiots." She paraded with other

women in Boston in 1914, after which the suffrage amendment was passed by a large majority in Massachusetts. They had earlier been allowed to vote in local school questions, and she was one of the school committee in Dunstable for a few years. She



*Braided table mats,
made by Lucy Ardena Butterfield*

also helped outline in whitewashed stones, on the side hill facing the No. 2 schoolhouse and conspicuous from the highway, "Votes for Women." She was also an active member of the DAR and spent much time tracing our family history.

Father had retired, Mother was less active, so they liked Dena with them; she was restive but kept on until 1920, when Father died suddenly on May 30th. I am proud of my fine old grandfather and certainly owe much to him. It is because of such men of sterling character that our nation has grown great—men who could not be bought for money, but were content to live in their own normal surroundings, not envious of their neighbors, and doing their best as they saw it.

In 1919, Walter had bought a house in Waltham after selling the old Portsmouth farm, so now I was ready to have Mother live with us. That same fall (1920) we sold the home in Dunstable village. Hattie and Herman Parker were going to California for the winter, so Dena went with them, found work for the winter, then was a housekeeper for a year or more in Palo Alto. She then came back east and worked at an orphanage in New Haven for one winter. Later she worked in Auburndale at the Walker Missionary Home, first as head of the Cottages, then Assistant at the main house, then Head of that for a few years. Leaving there, she gave up work and took a small apartment with Mrs. Jordan in Waltham. To be nearer the center she then took an apartment on Hammond Street, where she lived until a heart attack made it unwise to live alone. She came to live with us on Dale street from 1939 to 1949. When we moved to Topsfield, she lived with Anne May Cheney for a while."

She had always been independent and self-supporting, doing her share in the world's work, Red Cross in First and Second World Wars, and generous where she chose to give. She was a good example of the thrifty New Englanders of her generation.

It is at this point in the story that I am confronted with a choice. Do I leave Aunt Dena as described by her sister in writings she expected to make public, or do I go to Ida Rachel's diaries and to what my cousins have told me for a more complete and true picture of Aunt Dena's later years. On the one hand my New England propriety tells me I do not need to tell of the unpleasantness that happened, and that was hidden from me as a child. Yet if I am to be true to my intention of giving a picture of what seven generations is really like, it seems important to tell all that I know, conventional or not.

I think of what I read in a delightful book on old outhouses. Apparently many children, on visiting Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, inquire about the toilet he used; children want to see the whole picture! (It turns out that there was quite an elegant little outbuilding that could accomodate several sitters at once.)

In keeping with the increasing openness of our times I think I will tell the whole story here, hopefully without making too big a deal of it.

The truth is that after Anne May no longer wanted her there, she was kicked out of a series of nursing homes and spent her last year or so in the Westboro State Mental Hospital in Massachusetts. How this came about I have pieced together from what I have been told only recently by my second cousins (grandchildren of Emma Grace Butterfield Cheney, my grandmother and Dena's older sister).

At this point in my writing about Aunt Dena I got stuck for several weeks. Where do I go to from here? Looking back, it seems that all the single aunts either died young - Grace English, Sarah Taylor, Florence Sargent - or lived to be old and got labelled "crazy," like Aunt Dena.

Having escaped dying young, is it my fate to be a crazy old aunt? I don't intend that to be what happens.

September 11, 2015

I woke during the night and let myself feel some emotions and let go of some assumptions, ones that I will not try to name here, because I let them go. I felt something re-arrange itself in my body. Then I slept more then woke with a dream:

"I am near a large old institutional building -- maybe brick or stone. A man says that Dena has something for me. I look and see my Aunt Dena (actually my great aunt, my maternal grandmother's sister) coming out of the building, that is now to my left. She is very old and wearing white. She is holding out toward me an old-fashioned white envelope with a lace ribbon and maybe a white flower on it. I walk down the green grassy slope between us and hug her, joyfully exclaiming, "My Aunt Dena!" Woke here."

She had died in an old state mental hospital in Westborough, Massachusetts at age 83 in January 1955 (when I was 12).

Like me she was unmarried and never had children. The middle of 3 girls, she was a suffragette during the early part of the 20th century, fighting for the vote for women.

After she had a heart attack in 1939, she moved in with my grandparents. In 1949 when they moved to be near their daughter, Dena went to live with my mother's cousins - children of Dena's older sister who had died in 1912. My mother's cousins' family became tired of her emotional state and put her in a nursing home. She got kicked out of several nursing homes and ended up in the state mental hospital.

Was that hospital the big building I saw in the dream? Had she finally found her way out of that? Is what I released earlier this morning the anger and hurt and despair of hers that I had been carrying all these years since I knew her as a child? Was it something of hers that resonated with something of my own that I also carried, the "hook" to which her emotions stuck in me? Did my release help to enable her release -- from the emotions and from that hospital?

Perhaps only we who are alive and are living in time are able to experience change, are able to heal things that our ancestors in the spirit world still carry.

Perhaps the envelope contained a thank you card, or perhaps more than that. May I make living this dream and find a way to accept the gift she offered me.

This photo is Lucy Ardena Butterfield in 1920 at age 49. In the dream she looked like this, only much older and wearing all white.

The photo below is of the state hospital (after it was abandoned) where she died. The building is similar to what I saw in the dream wherein I walked down the slope at the right as she came out a door.



August 24, 2020

A dream snippet that followed me into waking —

"Someone is showing me the white gift with a white bow with white flowers that was handed to me by Aunt Dena in a dream on Sept 11, 2015. This time it is sitting on a table with colorful flowers around it." That is all I recall.

I now see that the gift is the genealogy work Aunt Dena did during her life. Being way before the days of internet and ancestry.com, her work was painstaking, with visits to town records and letters exchanged with many distant relatives.



At Dena's grave in Dunstable in 2004. It is interesting that I was wearing a flowered shirt and placed flowers on the grave - the first time in many years that flowers had been brought to her. This was years before the dreams.