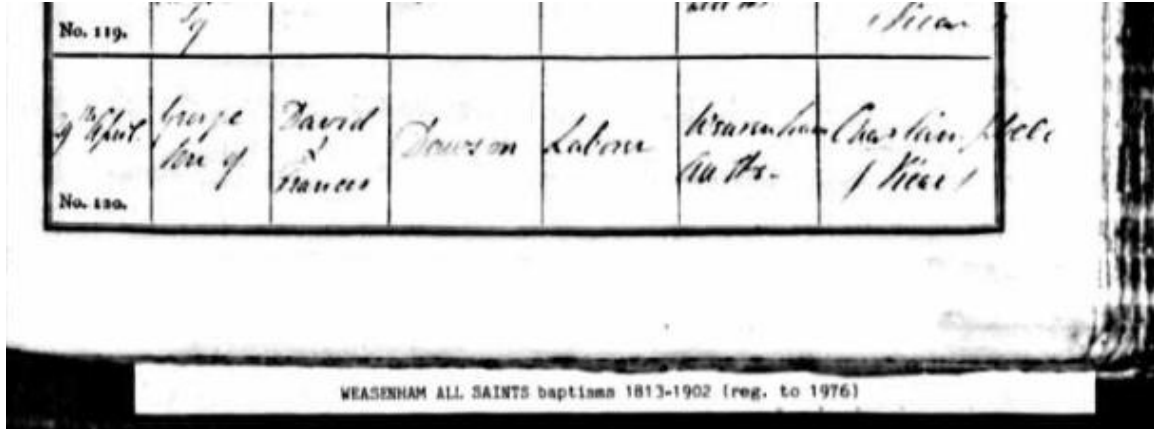


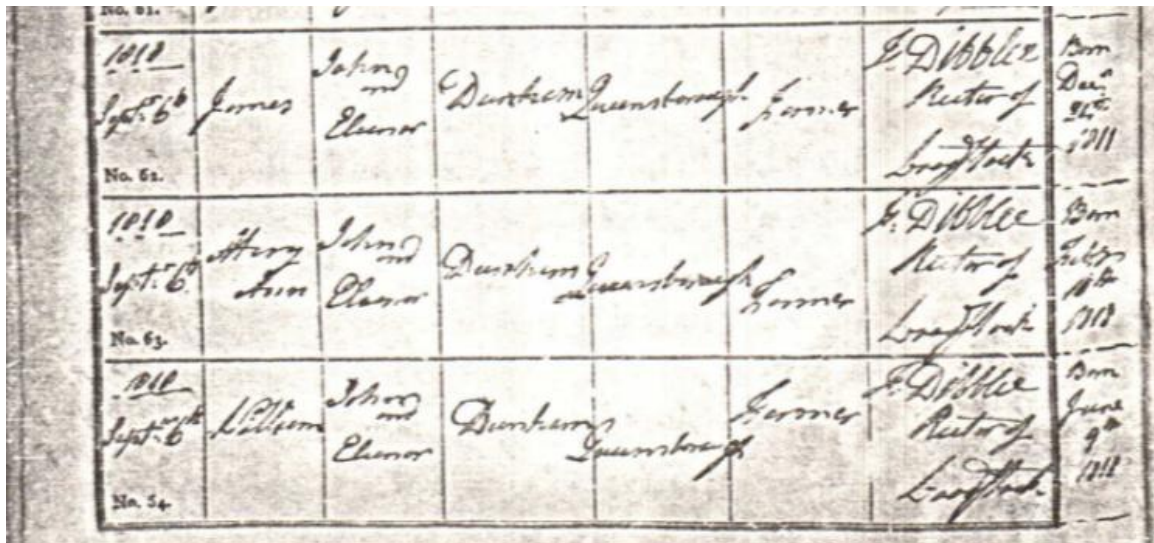
## Biography of George DAWSON and Mary Ann DUNHAM

George Dawson was born 1 April 1827 in Weasenham All Saints, Norfolk, England to David Dawson born 1796 Weasenham All Saints, died 1737 Hamilton, Ontario.



The circumstances of George's early life are perhaps reflected in the biography of his father David (poverty, alcohol, abuse).

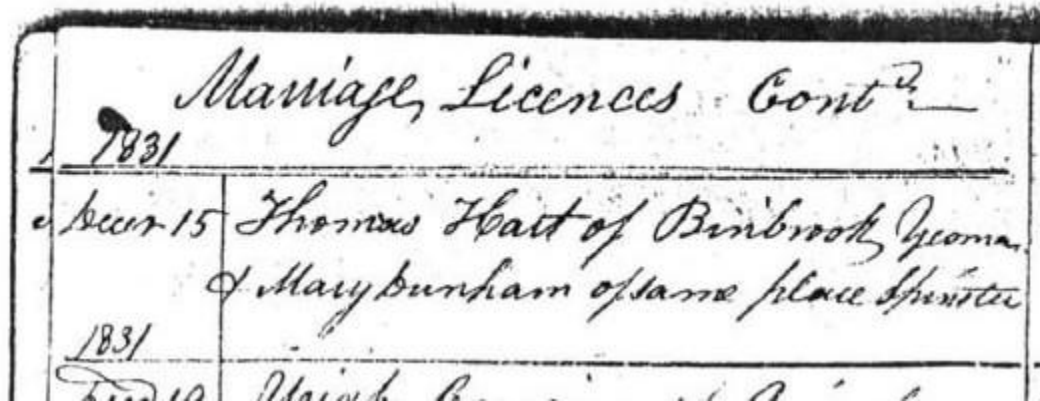
Mary Ann Dunham was born 11 February 1815, Queensbury, York County, New Brunswick to John Dunham (1788 NB to 1846 Binbrook Township, Wentworth County, Ontario) and Eleanor Stairs (1789 NB to post 1861 Queensbury, NB).



She appears to have born into a somewhat dysfunctional family, as can be viewed in the biography of her grandparents Lewis Dunham and Catherine Sleight.

It is likely that Mary Ann arrived in Binbrook, Ontario from New Brunswick in 1825 with her grandmother Catherine (Sleight) Dunham – Dayton, her father John Dunham, and her uncles Daniel Dunham, and David Alston Dunham with the latter's wife Grace

(Vail) Dunham. At age 16 she married Thomas Hart who resided on the farm directly across the road from the Dunham farm in Binbrook Township.



The couple moved to Saltfleet Township and had three sons before Thomas Hart died, leaving Mary Ann a widow, but with an estate from the sale of the farm.

About 1846 she married George Dawson who appears at that time to have been residing in Saltfleet with his mother and step – father. Thus George at about age 19 married a woman 13 years older than himself, and who had three young sons. Clearly he was up to the challenge, but the circumstances are a bit unusual.

In the 1850s the family moved with George’s mother and step – father, as well as his brothers William and Frances (brother Richard moved to Brantford – but the families all stayed in touch with family reunions at the latter place until at least the 1920s).



*Home on Rymal Road at the northwest corner of Ryckman’s Corners*

The 1871 Census shows George (a Labourer) in Barton Township, residing there with his wife, two youngest sons, and his eldest son John, the latter's wife Hannah Adelia Young, and their daughter Clarissa. See the entry in the biography of his son John for information on George's part in the elopement of his son, and the interesting subsequent events which shed considerable light on the character of George.

According to the agricultural census accompanying the personal census of 1871, there was only one house on the property, plus a barn. George also owned 3 waggons and sleds. On his one acre he had a garden (e.g., raising beans and potatoes) and an orchard. As to livestock, he had 2 horses over 5 years old, one milk cow, and two pigs. This ties in to the recollections of his descendants.

George's granddaughter Ada Artemus (Dawson) Crowe recalled that George drank a lot and always rode his horse Jenny to the tavern. Apparently it was not unusual for George to throw the harness over Jenny and allow the horse to find her way home to the barn since he was often too inebriated to find his own way home.



*George Dawson and Jenny*

His great granddaughter Eva Fern recalled George driving his buckboard full of produce down the Mountain and visiting her and family in Hamilton. In the 1881 census of Barton Township George was noted as being a "Wheelwright", and was residing with his wife Mary Ann, and their adopted daughter Mary E. In the in 1891 census (George being a Waggon Maker), and all were members of the Church of England.



***George Dawson, Mary Elizabeth Sharp, Mary Ann (Dunham) Dawson***

In Mable Burkholder's "Out of the Storied Past" column (of 19 March 1955, Hamilton Public Library Special Collections, p. 122) she reported on an interview she had with Arthur E. Young who resided near Ryckman's Corners. Mr. Young described the Allison blacksmith shop at the Corners, and noted that, "*George Dawson had a wagon repair shop just back of the blacksmith's shop. Both he and his wife smoked clay pipes and both liked to sit and smoke on the wood blocks around the door of the shop. They made repairs in wood and interchanged jobs with the blacksmith. One worked on the wood, while the other worked on the iron parts*".

Mary Ann died 3 September 1899 at her home in Ryckman's Corners. The tombstone is located near the southern aspect of Barton Stone Church, which was a Presbyterian Church. At some point George and Mary Ann decided to be buried near their two sons who predeceased them rather than at the nearest Anglican Church (where their adult children and grandchildren were baptized), St. Paul's Anglican Church, Glanford.



George Dawson wrote his will on December 20th, 1899. Herein he indicated that he was a "Carriage Maker". All of his personal property was bequeathed to his adopted daughter Mary Elizabeth Sharp. In addition he bequeathed to his daughter Frances Dawson 5 dollars, his daughter Ellen Dawson one dollar, and his son John Dawson one dollar. Among the executors of his estate was his step - son Jarvis Allen Hart.



*Henry Pontius, Mary Elizabeth Pontius, Mrs. Winchester, George Dawson*

The above picture, dated about 1905, shows George Dawson with his adopted daughter, her husband, and a neighbour.

George's cause of death on 24 November 1907 was certified as Organic Heart Disease by the attending physician (RGO).





*Close up of inscription on Dawson tombstone*

Dr. David K. Faux  
Cypress, California; Caledonia, Ontario  
1 July 2017