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Laurence Dunn, March 4, 1825-January 2, 1895

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LAURENCE DUNN

March 4, 1825 - January 2, 1895

Deborah D. McNeal
Historical Research, 300
Dr. Roger Warlick

July 31, 1980

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Armstrong Atlantic State University. Savannah, GA 31419-1997.

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An Irish immigrant who came to Savannah in about 1851, Laurence Dunn quickly established himself in financial and community affairs. His business interests included real estate, a grocery store and saloon, and some involvement with the shipping industry. Mr. Dunn married Catherine Mitchell in 1854 and together they had five or six children, three of whom lived to maturity. He enlisted to serve in the Confederate Army in 1862. Catherine M. Dunn died in late 1889 and Mr. Dunn survived her by five years, dying in January, 1895. The Dunn descendants were and are active members of the Savannah community in the fields of education, medicine, commerce and law.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure

1. Genealogical Chart on the Family of Laurence Dunn
2. Diagram showing Lot 28, Washington Ward - 31-33 and
35-37 Houston Streets
3. "Valuable Real Estate Improvements," Savannah Morning
News, August 2, 1875, p. 3
4. Map showing Dunn family lots in the Catholic Cemetery

I. THE EARLY YEARS: 1851-1868

A. Family Life

There are three different year dates for the arrival of Laurence Dunn in Savannah: 1848 (his obituary),^{1/} 1851 (Immigration Records),^{2/} and 1853 (a possible newspaper reference).^{3/} The 1851 date seems most valid and it is almost certain that he was here before December 11, 1854^{4/} -- the date of his marriage to Catherine Mitchell, a woman of English descent.^{5/} The local newspapers from 1851 to 1861 were silent regarding Laurence Dunn, with the exception of the September 20, 1853 arrival, on the steamer PLANTER, of one L. P. Dunn.^{6/}

Laurence M. was born to Laurence and Catherine on about August 2, 1855, and appears to have been their first child.^{7/} According to his tombstone, Laurence M. lived five

^{1/} "Mr. Laurence Dunn Dead," Savannah Morning News, 3 January, 1895, p. 8.

^{2/} Georgia Historical Society, Emigration Records Card File, No. E-198 "Dunne, Lawrence," Savannah, Georgia.

^{3/} "Arrivals," Daily Morning News, 20 September, 1853, p. 1.

^{4/} Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, Savannah, Georgia, Marriage Records, Book 16, unnumbered.

^{5/} Interview with Misses Mary F. and Helen A. Dunn, 205 East 52nd Street, Savannah, Georgia, 24 July, 1980.

^{6/} Daily Morning News, 20 September, 1853, p. 1.

^{7/} Catholic Cemetery, Tombstones, Savannah, Georgia.

months and eleven days, dying on January 13, 1856.^{8/} The Chatham County Health Department Vital Records files show that his death was caused by "spasms" and his date of death as February 14, 1856.^{9/} Existing church records provide the following entry regarding a baptism believed to have been performed on February 9, 1856: "Supplivi ceremonios Baptismi Laurentium Mattheum Dun [sic], ss Rev. James Kirby, et Brigitta Mitchell."^{10/} There are several possible explanations for the discrepancies above -- that the tombstone was erected some time after the child's death, that the marble carver was in error regarding date of death; that the record entries were erroneous; or that the "baptism" was recorded after the child's unexpected death to insure him a place in Heaven or in the Catholic Cemetery. (The latter theory is in keeping with the laws of the Catholic Church.) (See Figure 1, attached.)

The 1860 Census for the City of Savannah shows the following entry:

636/619	Dunn, Laurence	Grocer	37	M	Queens Co., Ireland
	" Catherine		34	F	Lestrism[Leicester?]
	" John		3	6/12M	Savannah
	" Matthew		8/12M		Savannah ^{11/}

^{8/} Ibid.

^{9/} Card File for 1856, entry "Dunn, Laurence M."

^{10/} Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, Savannah, Georgia, Baptismal Records, Book 23, p. 20.

^{11/} 1860 Population Census for the City of Savannah (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Record Service, General Services Administration, Microcopy 653, Roll 118.

John Dunn's death came about two years later, according to a January 10, 1862 newspaper invitation to friends of Mr. and Mrs. Dunn to "the funeral of their eldest son, John."^{12/} Matthew's birth was followed by Mary's on November 28, 1861, and by Laurence J.'s on July 17, 1864.^{13/}

The Chatham County Health Department's records show the death of one Catherine Dunn (age 9 months) from consumption on May 23, 1857, and her burial in the Cathedral Cemetery.^{14/} Neither John Dunn nor the above-mentioned infant, Catherine Dunn, are found buried in any of the three Dunn family plots.^{15/}

B. Business and Community Involvements

The first documented date for Laurence Dunn's grocery business was 1858, being on the Southeast corner of Jones and Purse Streets.^{16/} In 1859 he moved the business to a location on South Broad between Montgomery and Jefferson Streets.^{17/}

^{12/} Daily Morning News, 10 January, 1862, p. 2.

^{13/} Catholic Cemetery, Tombstones, Savannah, Georgia.

^{14/} Vital Records Card File for 1857, entry "Dunn, Catherine."

^{15/} Catholic Cemetery, Tombstones, Savannah, Georgia.

^{16/} Savannah Public Library Microfiche Collection, Item No. 1385, Directory of the City of Savannah for 1858, Compiled and Published by David H. Galloway, George N. Nichols, Printer, Savannah: 1858, p. 26.

^{17/} Ibid., No. 1386, Directory for the City of Savannah for 1859, Compiled by W. Eugene Ferslew, John M. Cooper & Co., Publisher, Savannah: 1859, p. 73.

The year 1860 finds both home and store in the same location.^{18/}

On February 26, 1862 Laurence Dunn was "elected a First Lieutenant in the Mitchell [Volunteer] Guards,"^{19/} a fact also recorded in the Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia 1861-1865.^{20/} Following his listing in this collection, however, appears simply the notation "No later record."^{21/} There is no further coverage by local newspapers regarding his military service and it can be assumed that he was neither promoted, demoted, discharged, nor injured during his military career.

There are no city directories for Savannah for the years 1861 through 1866,^{22/} and the next published record of Mr. Dunn's activities comes on August 21, 1865.^{23/}

Messers. Laurence Dunn and James J. McMahon made application to the Provost Court for recovery of premises at Bay Lane and Drayton Streets, which permission was granted.^{24/} That same

^{18/} Ibid., No. 1387, Directory for the City of Savannah for 1860, John M. Cooper & Company, Savannah: 1860, p. 69.

^{19/} Savannah Daily Herald, 26 February, 1862, p. 2. (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Library, March, 1958).

^{20/} Lillian Henderson, Compiler for the State of Georgia, 5 vols. (Hapeville, Ga.: Longino & Porter, Inc., 1960) 5:4.

^{21/} Ibid.

^{22/} U.S. City Directories, Savannah, Georgia, 1861-1881, (New Haven, Conn.: Research Publications, Inc.)

^{23/} Savannah Daily Herald, 21 August, 1865, p. 3. (Note that this reel is damaged and my information comes solely from the Savannah Newspaper Digest, Vol. 16, p. 296.)

^{24/} Ibid.

year, Dunn and Brown, Shipping Masters, advertised that they "[were] prepared to furnish crews at the shortest notice..." with offices located at 35 East Bay Street.^{25/} The 1866 City Directory shows "Dunn, L. bar-keeper se corner Drayton and Bay St. lane."^{26/}

On July 2, 1867, Laurence Dunn was appointed a member of the Board of Health.^{27/} Later that same year, in October or early November, a retail grocery establishment was opened on Broughton near Barnard going by the name "Doyle and Dunn," with a newspaper advertisement and article regarding the opening appearing in the same issue.^{28/} This was the only reference found regarding the partnership.

The Workingman's Benevolent Association (of which Mr. Dunn was a member) petitioned the Superior Court Judge for the incorporation of said association "for a twenty-year

^{25/} Savannah Daily Herald, 11 October, 1865, p. 2.

^{26/} U.S. City Directories, Savannah, Georgia, 1861-1881, (New Haven, Conn.: Research Publications, Inc., 2 Rolls), Purses' Directory of City of Savannah for 1866, Purse & Son, Savannah: 1866, p. 53.

^{27/} Daily News & Herald, 12 July, 1867, p. 2.

^{28/} Daily News & Herald, 1 November, 1867, p. 3.

period."^{29/} In the same issue of the Savannah Morning News, the Association posted a notice to "Merchants, Captains and Stevedores of Savannah..." setting pay rates for "their men on board ships..."^{30/} A third mention of Mr. Dunn appeared in that same issue, stating that he had been elected as a special deputy to serve in a political election.^{31/}

II. THE PROSPEROUS YEARS: 1869-1895

A. Family Life

Little material was found regarding the activities of the Dunn family during the 1870's. The 1870 Census does show Laurence and Catherine as living separately, and that the children were living with their mother in a boarding house.^{32/} This was either a very temporary split or an error in record-keeping, rather than a lengthy separation because this is the only reference to separate addresses that could be found. Although no addresses are given on the Census, it may be that Mr. Dunn was listed at his business address. The 1870 City Directory does not show separate listings for

^{29/} Savannah Morning News, 2 November, 1868, p. 2, c. 6.

^{30/} Savannah Morning News, 2 November, 1868, p. 2, c. 5.

^{31/} Savannah Morning News, 2 November, 1868, p. 2, c. 4.

^{32/} 1870 Population Census for Chatham County (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Record Service, General Services Administration, Microcopy No. 593, Roll 141.)

Catherine and Laurence but merely "Dunn, L. grocer 11 e
Broad."^{33/}

In 1883 "Pvt. L. J. Dunn," a member of the Irish
Jasper Greens was on a committee to arrange an excursion
to Tybee,^{34/} and in 1887 helped plan a similar affair at
Warsaw.^{35/} In 1890 Laurence J. was handling the administra-
tion of the estate of James Buckley,^{36/} and in the 1890 and
1893 Sholes' City Directories he was listed as a merchandise
broker.^{37/} Laurence J. married Mary E. Ybanez on January 10,
1889 at the Sacred Heart Church.^{38/} Their child, A.
Matthew Dunn, was born on January 11, 1900,^{39/} with Laurence
J. dying shortly thereafter, on September 15, 1900.^{40/}

^{33/} Directory for the City of Savannah 1870, Alex Abrams and
Co., Compilers, (Savannah: Morning News Steam Printing
Office, 1870) p. 82.

^{34/} Savannah Newspaper Digest, 1883, p. 618.

^{35/} Savannah Newspaper Digest, 1887, p. 297.

^{36/} Savannah Newspaper Digest, 1890, p. 116.

^{37/} City Directory for 1890, (Savannah: The Morning News
Print, 1890), p. 154; City Directory for 1893, (Savannah:
The Morning News Press, 1893), p. 208.

^{38/} Chatham County Courthouse, Probate Court, Marriage Records,
M-354.

^{39/} Catholic Cemetery, Tombstones, Savannah, Georgia.

^{40/} Ibid.

Even less is known about Mary (Dunn) Carolan -- she married James M. Carolan on February 10, 1892 in the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist,^{41/} bore a child on November 6, 1892,^{42/} moved to Baltimore with James sometime thereafter,^{43/} and eventually returned to Savannah without her husband.^{44/} Both Mary D. Carolan and her daughter Katherine are buried in the second Dunn lot in the Catholic Cemetery.^{45/} James Carolan, who was asphyxiated by a gas heater at his home in Washington, D.C. on October 5, 1925 (at age 65) is also buried in the Catholic Cemetery, outside the three Dunn lots.^{46/}

Matthew Dunn became a doctor sometime prior to 1890, reportedly graduating from Columbia University Medical School.^{47/} He married Augusta Blun in the Cathedral on August 9, 1893,^{48/} and together they had six children.^{49/} Dr. Dunn died on May 29, 1912 and is buried in the Catholic Cemetery with his wife Augusta and his son Matthew F. Dunn, Jr.^{50/}

^{41/} Chatham County Courthouse, Probate Court, Marriage Records, I-298.

^{42/} Catholic Cemetery, Tombstones, Savannah, Georgia.

^{43/} Interview with Misses Mary F. and Helen A. Dunn, 205 East 52nd Street, Savannah, Georgia, 24 July, 1980.

^{44/} Catholic Cemetery, Tombstones, Savannah, Georgia.

^{45/} Ibid.

^{46/} Interview with Misses Mary F. and Helen A. Dunn, 24 July, 1980.

^{47/} Chatham County Courthouse, Marriage Records, J-201.

^{48/} Catholic Cemetery, Tombstones, Savannah, Georgia.

Catherine Dunn died at her home on Abercorn and York Streets on December 6, 1889 of "pleuro pneumonia."^{49/} She is buried in the first Dunn lot along with her husband, one infant child (Laurence M.), and Laurence J. Dunn.^{50/}

B. Business and Community
Involvements

The year 1870 finds Mr. Dunn still in the grocery business and located at 11 East Broad Street.^{51/} Estills' 1871 City Directory gives first mention of a saloon being operated by Laurence Dunn at 2 East Bryan Street.^{52/} The city directories and newspapers showed almost continuous saloon ownership and/or liquor licenses issued for Dunn's saloon on East Bryan Street until 1877.^{53/} The grocery appears to have remained open until 1888.^{54/}

^{49/} Chatham County Health Department, Vital Records, Card File for 1889, entry "Dunn, Catherine."

^{50/} Catholic Cemetery, Tombstones, Savannah, Georgia.

^{51/} City Directory, 1870, Alex Abrams and Co., Compilers, (Savannah: Morning News Steam Printing Office, 1870), p. 82.

^{52/} City Directory, 1871, T.M. Haddock, Compiler (Savannah: J. H. Estill, 1871), p. 146.

^{53/} City Directory, 1877, George B. Rogers, Compiler & Publisher (Savannah: 1877), p. 81.

^{54/} Sholes' City Directory for 1899, (Savannah: 1889), p. 185.

Mr. Laurence Dunn's name appears in the Savannah Newspaper Digest six times between the years 1874 and 1881 to serve on the Grand Jury.^{55/} He was also chosen twice as a Manager of Elections: in 1880 and 1882.^{56/} Further community involvement of a non-business nature is found in Mr. Dunn's appointment to the Citizens' Committee to plan the October 9, 1879 Celebration of the Siege of Savannah,^{57/} and his serving as an administrator of the Estate of William Downey.^{58/}

C. Property Acquisitions

Laurence Dunn's first documented property purchase occurred on March 22, 1864 -- a 64' x 60' lot on East Broad and Bryan Streets known as the southern part of Lot 9, Washington Ward,^{59/} -- and probably the location of his store and saloon mentioned in B, ¶ 1, above. On May 8, 1869, Mr. Dunn bought a 56' x 100' lot on Taylor Street, and added a third piece to his holdings on February 6, 1872.^{60/}

^{55/} Savannah Newspaper Digest, Vol. 25, pp. 110, 294; Vol. 31, pt. 1, p. 311; Vol 32, pp. 86, 169, 297.

^{56/} Savannah Newspaper Digest, Vol. 30, p. 311; Vol. 33, p. 157.

^{57/} Savannah Newspaper Digest, Vol. 29, p. 77.

^{58/} Digest, Vol. 34, pp. 893, 899.

^{59/} Chatham County Courthouse, Deed Books, 3W-354.

^{60/} Deed Books, 4H-54, 4M-147.

Mr. Dunn purchased three other pieces of property in Savannah around this same time: Lot 24 Currietown Ward, Charlton Street; Lot 1, Anson Ward, 4th Tything, York and Abercorn; and Lot 28, Washington Ward, Houston and Congress Streets.^{61/}

Lot 28, Washington Ward was a rather involved acquisition for Mr. Dunn. He began his purchase with a deed from the Estate of Teresa J. Nave by George W. Wilson, Guardian and Administrator Ex Officio dated June 17, 1870.^{62/} On June 23, 1870 he was given a deed by George W. Wilson, Guardian Ad litem of Jencey C. Neve, minor with the following notation "...for better securing to the party of the second part the faithful payment of the debt...".^{63/} This instrument was cancelled on either February 15, 1871 or 1877, with the writing being illegible.^{64/} The final transaction cementing Mr. Dunn's ownership of Lot 28 was signed on February 15, 1871 and recorded on April 9, 1887 -- that also being the date it was cancelled.^{65/} The property was transferred from Jence Christian Neve to Laurence Dunn.^{66/}

The 1872 Tax Records for Savannah indicate an improvement on "Lot 28, Washington Ward...for the 3rd &

^{61/} Deed Books, 40-253; 6C-6; and 4H-53,54.

^{62/} Deed Books, 4H-53,54.

^{63/} Deed Books, 4H-102.

^{64/} Deed Books, 6A-306,307.

^{65/} Ibid. ^{66/} Ibid.

4th Q'trs [sic] only."^{66/} As this property was purchased with one house standing, the above improvement was probably that two story brick building on the southern half of Lot 28,^{67/} Numbers 35-37 Houston Street. (See Figure 2.)

Two 1875 newspaper articles described the initial planning and the completion of a brick building on the corner of Houston and Congress Streets.^{68/} As the attached copy of the August 2, 1875 article explains, the existing frame house was moved to the western side of Lot 28 and placed on a brick foundation.^{69/} (See Figures 2 & 3.)

III. DESCENDANTS^{70/}

Coming forward through the Savannah City Directories from 1890 to 1979 provided the living descendants' names and current whereabouts. I first telephoned H. Mitchell Dunn (Matthew and August Dunn's grandson by Henry M. Dunn), who is an attorney with the same firm in which his father was a partner -- now called Hunter, Maclean, Exley and Dunn. Although cordial, Mr. Dunn advised that he knew nothing about his Dunn ancestors and referred me to his three aunts.

^{66/} Georgia Historical Society, City of Savannah Tax Books, 1872, unnumbered.

^{67/} Savannah Morning News, 2 August 1873, p. 3.

^{68/} Ibid. ^{69/} Ibid. ^{70/} See Figure 4, attached hereto.

After contacting Audrey (Dunn) Rhangos and receiving the same information, I decided not to approach their brother, Laurence.

My telephone conversation and subsequent interview with two Dunn ladies -- Helen A. and Mary Frances (children of Matthew F. and Augusta B. Dunn) -- was delightful and informative without providing any primary sources or family documents. I met the third sister, Catherine S. Dunn but, due to her recent illness, did not trouble her with an interview. The three sisters have never married and have lived together -- and in only three houses -- their entire lives: the family home on York and Abercorn Streets, 121 East 31st Street, and 502 East 52nd Street. The Misses Dunn have lived in their home on 52nd Street for the past twenty-five years.

According to these ladies, their father died when they were very young, while their mother lived a good deal longer. The location of the Dunn Cemetery lots was provided by these ladies. They also remember their aunt, Mary D. Carolan infrequently visiting from the North until her return to Savannah rather late in life. The Dunn descendants that I contacted are more knowledgeable about their Blun family history but are very interested in learning more about the first Laurence Dunn.

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Sholes' City Directory for 1893, Savannah, Georgia: The Morning News Print, 1893

Sholes' City Directory for 1899, Savannah, Georgia: The Morning News Print, 1899

United States' City Directories, Savannah, Georgia, 1861-1881, New Haven, Conn.: Research Publications, Inc., Rolls 1 and 2

GENEALOGICAL CHART ON THE FAMILY OF LAURENCE DUNN*

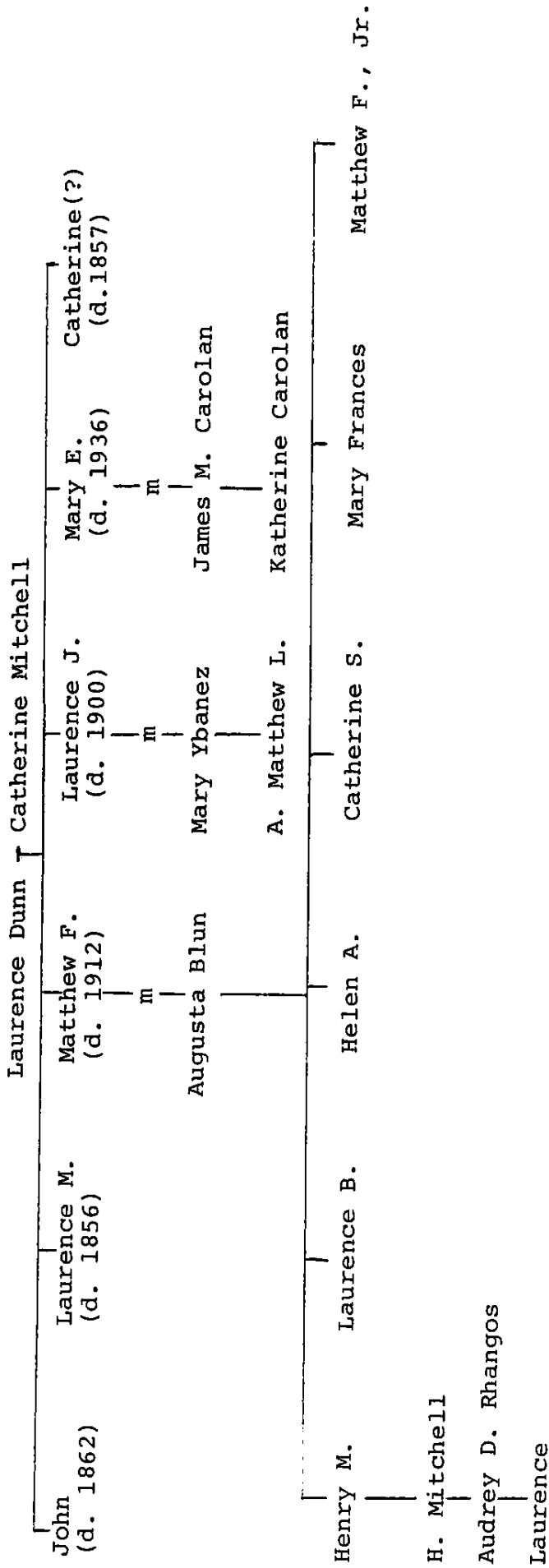
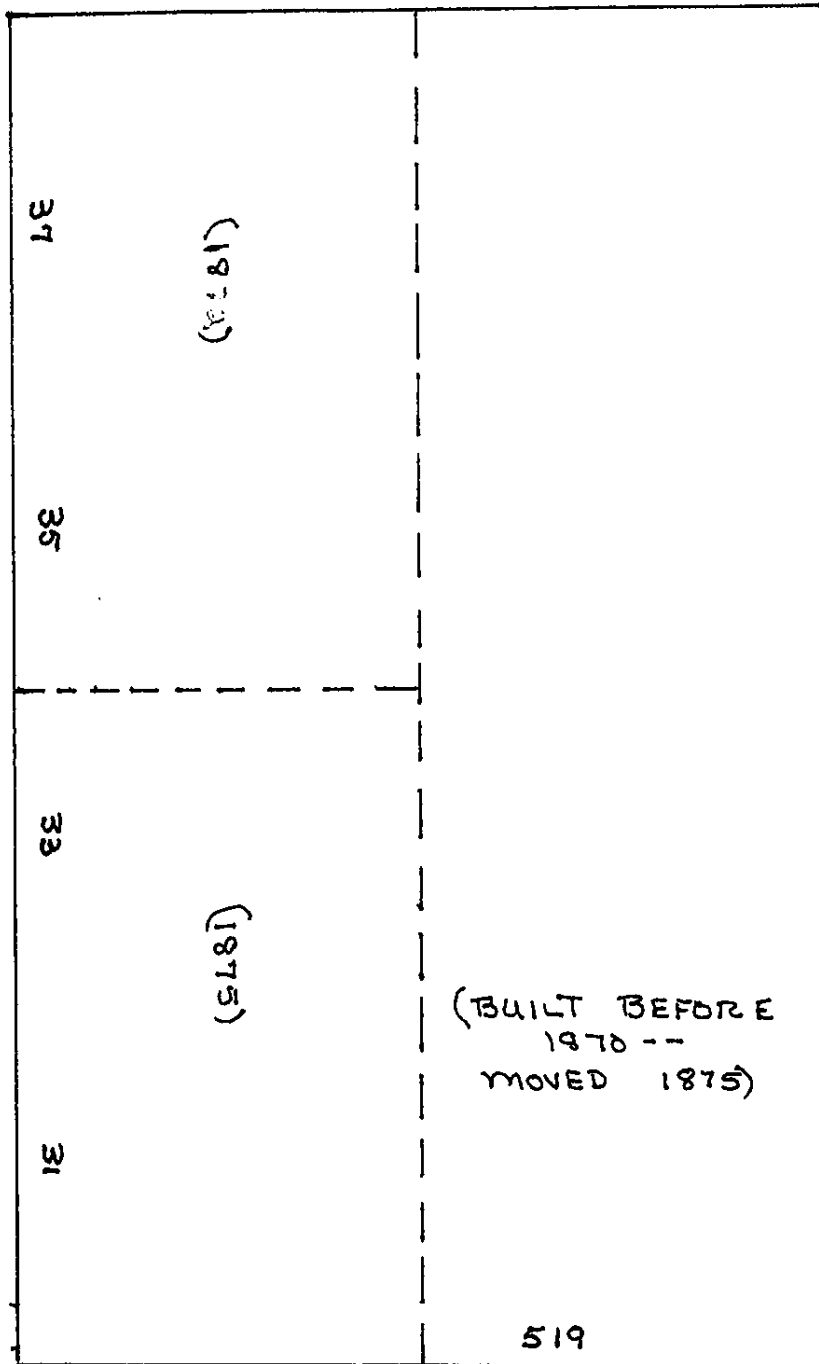


Figure 1

* This is not a complete representation of the Dunn descendants. Only those family members mentioned in this paper, or used as primary reference sources are listed above.

Houston St.



CONGRESS ST.

Lot 28 - Washington Ward -- an approximation

Figure 2

Valuable Real Estate

Mr. Lawrence Dunn has completed the improvements which have been a progress during the last few months on the lot corner of Houston and Congress streets, in this city. These improvements consist of the removal from the corner to the western side of the lot of a frame building, placing it on a new brick foundation and remodeling and re-covering the same throughout. It occupies now, with its entrance to the rear, the rear, a front of twenty-eight feet on Congress street, and is thirty feet deep, and contains on the first floor, besides a front stoop, two large rooms, and on the second floor two large and one small bedrooms, with closets, and in the attic two large airy sleeping apartments. The roof has been covered with tin and the outside as well as the inside has been repainted and replastered, and forms now a neat and convenient residence. On its former location at the corner there has been erected a two-story brick house, having a front on Congress street of thirty-three feet, and on Houston street of twenty-four feet, with a wing in the rear of the yard twelve and a half feet deep. The yard is sixteen by eighteen feet, and has an entrance from Houston street. The first floor of this building contains a parlor and dining-room, a store-room and several closets, and in the wing a kitchen, a passage leads from the main building to the kitchen, and to a portico in the yard. The second floor contains two large and one small bedrooms, several closets, a bathroom, and in the wing a comfortable bedroom. A passage communicates with the main house and the second floor of the portico in front of the wing, which is a great convenience. The main entrance to the house is on Houston street through a covered porch. The parlor and dining-room open out through windows cut down to the floor, to a covered verandah toward Congress street, and in full view of Washington Square. This verandah forms a pleasant addition to the convenience of the lower rooms, and by its elaborate and handsome finish adds an attractive feature to the exterior of the house. The two story portico to the wing, standing back in the yard, is also neatly finished off. The house is well and thoroughly lighted and ventilated, all the principal rooms are provided with open fireplaces, the parlor and dining room with neat slate mantels and grates. The interior of the house is beautifully plastered throughout. The roof is covered with tin, and the entire building is a model of neatness and convenience. The yard contains, in close proximity to the house, a well, a cistern and a hydrant with platform, located conveniently to the kitchen.

The main house and wings are built of hard gray bricks, the two fronts on Houston and Congress streets being faced with Savannah pressed brick. The style of the building is similar to that of the double house erected some years ago on the southern part of the lot, with such variations, however, as its superior character has demanded. The arrangement of this house has presented some difficulties, owing to the small area offered for the location of the two houses, but the problem has been solved in the best possible and economical manner, and the internal arrangement of the new brick house can be called a model for houses of that class, and is worthy of the careful inspection of those who take an interest in the improvements of real estate.

The designer and superintendent of the work was Mr. Aug. Schwab, architect and engineer, the contractor, Mr. E. L. Segur, of this city. Mr. Lawrence Dunn, the owner of the property, deserves great credit for inaugurating such improvements in that section of the city, and at the same time contriving them in such an economical manner that the modern comforts and refinements can be enjoyed by those who cannot afford to pay high rents.

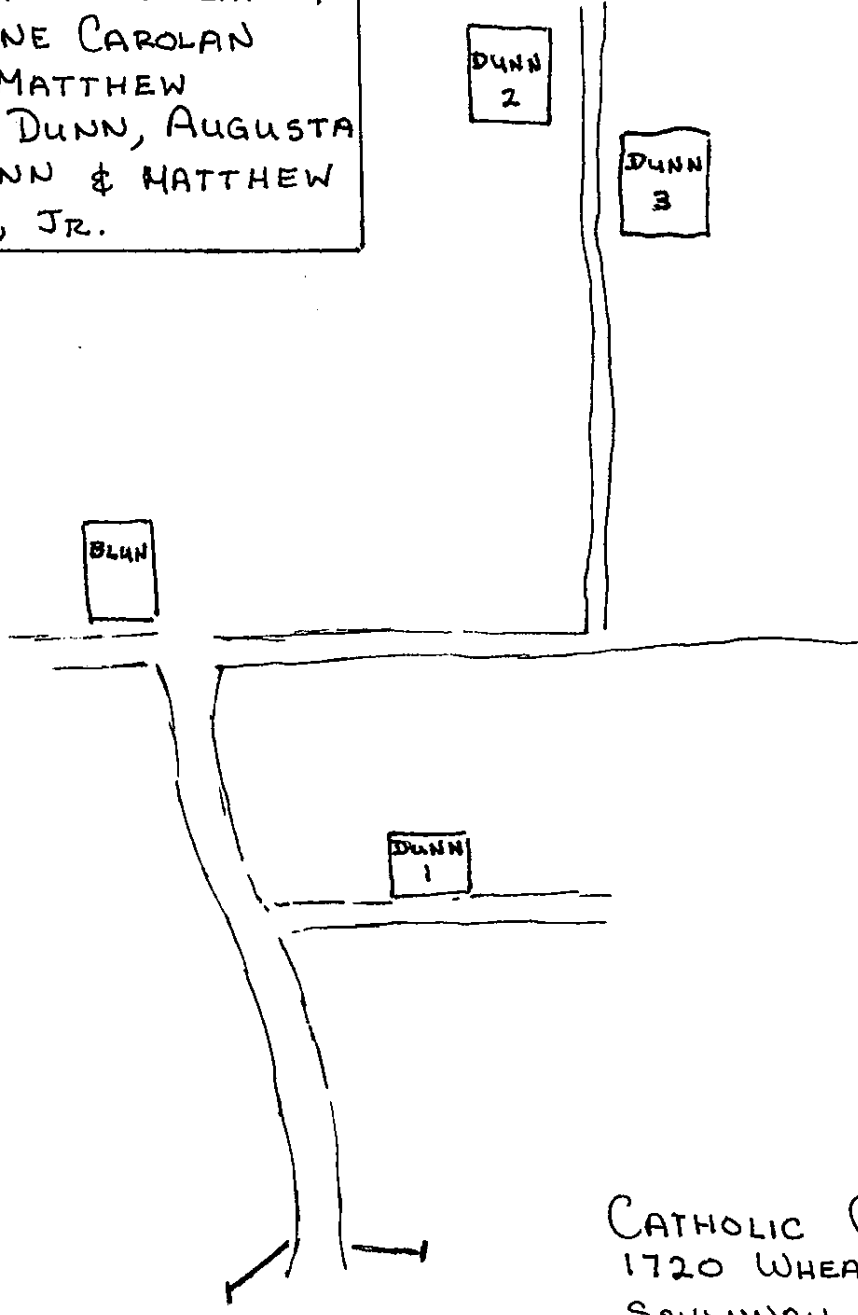
These buildings are a valuable addition to the neighborhood, and will, it is hoped, materially stimulate a spirit of enterprise among the property holders of the vicinity.

Superior Court

Judge Henry B. Tompkins, presiding. Court convened on Saturday last, when the following business was transacted: State vs. John A. Carter, Murder. Habeas corpus. Order granted admitting defendant to bail in \$5,000. Wm. H. Hoatinger, trustee, et al. vs. W. H. & C. H. Melrose. Purchase of mortgage. Rule nisi on discharge granted. David Wallahan, et al. vs. Savannah and Georgia National Association. Rule

Figure 3

LOT 1 - Laurence DUNN,
 CATHERINE DUNN, LAURENCE
 M. DUNN & LAURENCE J.
 DUNN
LOT 2 - MARY Ybanez
 DUNN, A. MATTHEW DUNN,
 MARY DUNN CAROLAN &
 KATHERINE CAROLAN
LOT 3 - MATTHEW
 FRANCIS DUNN, AUGUSTA
 BLUN DUNN & MATTHEW
 F. DUNN, JR.



CATHOLIC CEMETERY
 1720 WHEATON STREET
 SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Figure 4