

## **Introduction to John Dunn's Letters**

These letters are from John Dunn, husband of Priscilla (Drano) Dunn.

They were written to Priscilla while John was in the service of his country in 1864. John and Priscilla had 3 living children: James, Emma and Lillie. Two daughters died in early childhood.

The family of Lillie (Dunn) Long found them when they were going through some of Lillie's things. The original letters are very fragile so the family copied them in longhand and made copies to share with others.

April 18, 1864

We will get pay next month and I will send you all I get for four months pay. If you need any write, I shall send you all my pay as fast as I get it. My dear Priss. Last night I received your letter of the 2nd which found me all right. We have had a march of 170 miles through the swamps of Alabama and are now at Ringed, Georgia. On the front can hear guns all of thee day we out of old brigade and some talk of going a foot the rest of our time but all right you wanted to know how I got in the fight. I went on the raid to show horses and when they went up to fight I was along a Winton I only shot 9 times. Don't know if I hurt any or not but I saw some dead on the ground and one wanted me to shoot him. He was shot through the bowels. But I could not do it. They think there is no signs of a ifht here soon you wanted to know if I had quit drinking and searing. I have quit drinking. You will never see me drinking any more but for the swearing you must wait until I get out of the service. Priss I am willing to live a different life from what I ever have when I get home. You wanted to know if I was tired of the war. There was never a soul heard me say that I was. I am tired o the life and so with the boys it is a hard life to live but when we think of the cause we are here for we think that we are in the right place. I don't believe the war will close this summer and if you want me to come home in the fall I will if I can but I can't stay long. Dea the boy that I sleep with says that I was dreaming about you all night. He told me our name this morning. He says he thinks I love you. What I said I don't know but he says I bit him on the nose. How do you get along with your teeth and are you going down home Write if you think I had better be

a veterans or not or if it will pay to come home this fall and if you want photon on a mule. I think some of going into a Negro regiment. Get as commission as chaplain. What do you think of that. Did you ever get the hair I sent you or not. This is the first letter I have had for a long long time. If you want only write every other week or twice a week. I think I will write in a few days again. Old Elder I have not seen since the wheeler raid last fall they say he is not a nurse in the hospital. He is reported as a deserter. What they will do with him I don't know. Take his pay I guess. Uncle Bill is going to sea in a few days so that lady must get some others. Tell her ??je is a good soldier that is in the field. He has written to Ian Perine. But got no answer letter does a soldier a great deal of good. Priss you write just when an idea you have or our camp life, and how you think we are living, and if you think we have any women in camp and I will tell you how it is, O.K.

I will get the directions write all the News. Write often. Don't have any trouble bout me.

Kingston, Georgia, June 19, 1864

My dear Priss,

Once more I take time to drop you a few lines to let you know I am all right. I received your letter of the 9<sup>th</sup> and was glad to hear that you were well. That is one of the greatest comforts that I have. You tell Harriet that she must keep up good spirits for to break one leg is nothing in this country. At the battle of Resaca I was in one house that a shell struck and killed 2 children and the old man and broke the old woman's hip and killed 4 rebs. The old woman she died. That shot ended one whole family. I was over the battlefields the other day. It is an awful sight. You could see their armies and feet out of the ground and such a smell. We are now watching Wheeler to keep him out of our rear. There has been hard fighting for the last four days and today harder still, and it has rained here all the time. Today is Sunday and raining hard and the cannon would deafen you if you were to hear it. The wounded comes backed boxed in the carloads. How the thing will go I can't tell but believe we will whitt them at every point. Well Priss we have got our pay and I gave it to the cap to send to you. We drawed 4 months and I sent you 50 dollars and have a little more but will keep it until you want it. I make a little money shoeing for the Shoulder Straps so you see I don't spend any money for whiskey for I don't use it but sear some. And I can send you all the money I draw now if you get anything from your folks tell me how much and if it is not enough to buy you teeth I will send you some for you must have them. I will write often when I can. I must close for this time. Will write in a day or two again.

Good bye Priss.

September 27, 1864

My dear Wife,

I once more sit down to let you know I am in the land of living and in good health. I suppose you have heard of the battle that we had. Our regiment lost 34 wounded and 4 killed. They fared well. Lieutenant Cook was shot through the hips, he is doing well. Our loss as far we have heard twelve hundred killed and 7 thousand wounded. The rebs must have lost triple ours. We had to fall back the rebs had 3 to our 1 but the way the cannon swept them down was a sight. The rebs used very little artillery. The rebs fought like demons. They gave them powder and whiskey. As soon as they is dead they turn as black as coal. It is an awful sight to see and then hear them groans all night calling for "God's sake, take me away, fetch me a drink of water, a blanket, for I am dying." That is worst then all the battles. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> day and we can hear the cannon. Our regiment was sent here to guard a fort 12 miles form Chattanooga. I am working at my trade. (blacksmith) I have no duty to do. The commencement of the fight four of us went where we could see the whole thing. If we had a bad guns I think I could got a reb well Priss we can't send any mail for 10 days. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October since I commenced my letter. I have had 2 shakes of the ague but think I have got it

broke. We have had hard times for a while. March every night we have had several frosts and very cold nights. All the country we have passed through is destroyed. Hundreds of women and children must suffer. All they have to eat is corn they grate. No salt would give any price for salt but we have none to spare. We are getting reinforcements and will clean them (the rebs) out. I am in hopes Priss you must see Nate and go there to live. I will send 50 dollars the first of next month and you can get the lime and if you can get enough to plaster it. Priss I have no had a shirt for months. Our clothes will come this week. I got the photos. Tell Em the soldiers say she is a very pretty girl and Jim looks like soldiers. I carry them in my cartridge box to my navy. The boys are in good health. Uncle Bill is all right. Tell Bob his old battery was in the fight. I will write soon as we move. You are sure and go and see about the house. Tell Nate I said I would rather live there than to have all I have seen. No more at present.

Goodbye. Priss. I dream of you often.

Brochure Notes:

1. Preservation of the Drane House
2. Sponsored by the Mayor and Town Council of Accident and Accident Cultural and Historical Society
3. Believed to be the oldest standing structure on its original site in Garrett County
4. Oldest house in Accident
5. Constructed about 1800 by James Lamar and added onto by James Drane
6. James Drane - first permanent settler in Accident area
7. Drane - immigrant from tobacco farming area of Prince Georges Co.
8. One of several early farmers who attempted tobacco culture in Garrett Co.
9. Efforts were thwarted by cool climate and great distance to market
10. Architecture - log and frame construction with of hall and parlor
11. House entered into National Register of Historical Places 11 January 1985
12. When preservation plans began, house was vacant, deteriorating, and imminently endangered by natural causes and neglect
13. 1987, Mayor and Town Council sponsored application to Maryland Historical Trust for State capital grant funds for fiscal year 1989
14. Letters of endorsement received from the Garrett County Historical Society, Board of Garrett County Commissioners, the State Senator, and Delegate.
15. Town of Accident purchased the historic landmark from Kolb Farms, Inc. in 1987/88
16. Accident Cultural and Historical Society formed in October 1987.
17. Members to the Board of Directors are appointed from different area of the community by the Mayor and Town Council
18. The building is preserved on the original site
19. Public access is from Route 219 via Cemetery Road
20. Originally the project cost for the acquisition, restoration, and site development was \$80,000.
21. Tours by individuals and groups at specified times and upon request
22. Municipality of Accident has responsibility for operation and maintenance of Drane House property.
23. Contributions are tax deductible
24. Important is representative of the first generation of settlement in this region of Appalachia
25. Log home last occupied in 1952
26. Architectural and archaeological investigation were completed 1989/90
27. Garrett County Commissioners funded a parking lot and paved entrance road completed in 1989
28. Accident Cultural and Historical Society and Maryland Historical Trust (through Grant Funding) accepted specifications for rehabilitation in 1991
29. Reconstruction began 1991
30. Building was disassembled, each part painstakingly, tagged so new foundation piers could be put in place
31. Piece by piece the house was reconstructed in its original location
32. The majority of its logs were reused with only a few needing replacement
33. Phase II of the project included chinking, daubing, and interior work in 1993
34. Dedication was Saturday, 24 September 1994

35. Home was expanded during first quarter of nineteenth century by James and Priscilla Drane and their 8 children
36. A.J. Wiley Construction Co. of Springs, PA, executed the building stabilization
37. New foundation piers were installed, decayed subfloor system was replaced, log walls were reassembled, and the roofing system was rehabilitated with new rafters and shingles
38. A.J. Wiley given second contract for chinking and daubing and rehabilitation of the home's interior including windows, doors, finish flooring, wall paneling, and electrical service
39. Funding through grants MHT and matching funds and services contributed by the Town of Accident, Board of Garrett County Commissioners, Program Open Space, Appalachian Regional Commission, and numerous concerned citizens, local organizations, and community businesses
40. The area first contained small house probably built by the Lamars prior to 1798
41. Colonel Lamar settled his sister, Priscilla Drane, her husband Lt. James Drane, their children and slaves in Accident about 1800
42. Dranes, from Prince George's Co., became the first permanent settlers in the Accident area.
43. James Drane, born 1755, Prince George's, and became a 2nd lieutenant during the Revolutionary War.
44. Dranes had eight children: Thomas Lamar, James E., Robert, George W., Richard Elizabeth Ann, William, and Marien
45. Slaves: John, Peter, Lucy, Nancy Abraham, David, Jeremiah
46. Nearest mills for flour, lumber, and a general store were located Shelbysport, near Friendsville.
47. Farm animals - cows, horses, chickens, pigs, sheep.
48. Crops - tobacco, corn, oats, wheat, and a family garden.
49. Neighbor within 5 miles, Meshack Browning
50. Priscilla Drane's sister, Elizabeth, married Judge John Simkin (Simpkins) and settled at Bear Camp near Keyzers Ridge.
51. Neighbor at Hoyes was Singleton Townshend. Story's told Drane and Townshend were good friends who enjoyed friendly arguments. When deceased they requested to be buried with feet towards each other so when Resurrection Day arrived, they would be facing each other and ready to continue their chats.
52. Lt. James Drane died 27 June 1828
53. Priscilla Drane died 29 February 1836
54. His grave is marked by a field stone with his initials and date of death  
In 1943, his grave was marked by the Federal Government
55. Priscilla's grave is unmarked and is probably beside his.
56. Most of the children had moved away by 1838
57. Heinrich Richter moved into the home in 1856 - 1897
58. House was then used by Heinrich's son, John Leonard, as a butchering house
59. John Leonard Richter's son, Frederick, married Emma Kahl and made many changes in the home from 1901 - 1908 : rooms - papered, wainscoting placed on parlor ceiling, linoleum on parlor and kitchen floors, fireplace enclosed and

covered with wallpaper.

60. Their son, Walter Richter, born there, recalls the outside oven located about 20 feet from the porch. Evidence of it has never been located through archaeological studies.
61. George A. Lininger and his father moved into the home in 1910 - 1911
62. Albert and Clara Glass lived in it 1918 - 1922
63. House purchased by Adam Richter, 1923 John and Florence Grove Shoemaker and children resided -1934
64. Farm pond used for ice skating, ice blocks to be stored in ice house for spring and summer
65. Spring house with cooling trough and stone floor
66. 1934 - Luther and Mildred Bowser and sons, Donald and Hobart - 1936
67. 1936 - Raymond and Margaret Richter Georg -1944
68. 1944 - Smith and Margaret Ault Friend and their son Claude and his wife Jean Shoemaker Friend and daughter moved into the home - 1948.
69. Raymond Georg and family returned 1948 - 1952
70. Blacksmith, "Blacky" Mates
71. 1980, the Drane House portion of the Richter Farm was sold to Clark and Marvin Kolb
80. Area around Accident is laid out in military lots and given to Revolutionary War soldiers in lieu of cash for services rendered.
81. Most soldiers sold their lots and never lived in western Maryland