



HANNAH DUSTON — 1697

Boscawen, New Hampshire



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*Heroine of 1697 Massacre
of Indian Captors on River Islet
at Boscawen, New Hampshire*

This is a first comprehensive history ever compiled of the courage and fortitude of Hannah Duston, who led the massacre of Indian captors at Boscawen on March 30, 1697, and fled back to her Havehill, Massachusetts home. This pamphlet was prepared by Leon W. Anderson, Legislative Historian, for the third in a series of historic bottles produced by Jim Beam Distillers for the New Hampshire state government.

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Duston-Dustin Family Association



The Hannah Duston historic bottle is sponsored by the New Hampshire State Liquor Commission. Shown, left to right, with Mrs. Gale Thomson, wife of Governor Meldrim Thomson, are Commissioner John Ratoff, Chairman Costas S. Tentas and Commissioner James P. Nadeau.

Cover Photo: This photo of the Duston statue in Boscawen, New Hampshire was taken in October of 1999, after being repaired and cleaned by Perry Brothers Monument Company, Concord, New Hampshire. — Photo by Cedric H. Dustin, Jr.

Original Cover Photo: The title page shows an example of the original cover photograph that was used for the booklet. This close-up of the Boscawen statue shows the 1697 heroine in graphic pose. It features her Indian-slaying hatchet at the ready and a bundle of scalps in her left hand. The sculptor emphasized her tawney tresses. Loss of her nose is shown. — Photo by Saunderson.

The RARE courage of an adopted daughter is recalled as New Hampshire prepares to commemorate its role in the 1776 birth of this nation two centuries ago.

She was Hannah Duston, the doughty Indian slayer of 276 years ago, whose Boscawen statue on an isolated islet is the first permanent memorial honoring a woman in this country.

This 39-year-old mother of twelve sparked the massacre of ten sleeping Indians as she was being hauled to slavery in Canada, and fled back to her Haverhill, Massachusetts, family with the scalps for bounty.

Mrs. Duston's heroism was aided by her nurse, 50-year-old Mrs. Mary Corliss Neff, and a 14-year-old boy captive, Samuel Leonardson of Worcester, Massachusetts.

The two women had been taken captive on March 15, 1697 during an Indian raid upon Haverhill, in which 27 settlers were killed and scalped and 15 others carried off for bounty sale to the French to the far north. The boy had been held by the Indians for some two years and spoke their language.

The daring pre-dawn escape occurred on March 30, or 15 days after Mrs. Duston was pulled from a sick bed with her six-day-old baby, Martha, and forced to trudge in the spring cold into unknown terrors. Mrs. Neff, a neighboring midwife, refused to flee as the Indians sacked and burned the Dustons' outskirts home, and bowed to captivity to continue her succor of the mother and child. But the Indians bashed the baby to death against a tree, within the hour, because of its hunger squawls.

Site of the feminine valor was a four-acre island in what is now the southeast corner of Boscawen, just north of Concord, at the confluence of the Contoocook river as it empties from the west into the Merrimack river, which runs south and then twists east through Haverhill to the ocean.

The band of 20 Indians which conducted the March 15 raid on Haverhill split after passing Concord, enroute to the St. Francis settlement in Canada. One group with most of the surviving captives continued on. But two braves who "owned" the two women and the Leonardson boy, halted for a rest period with their squaws and seven children (the youngest believed to have been aged six), along with an elderly Indian woman, on the island.

Two of these dozen savages escaped the massacre. One was said to have been the elderly woman, who fled badly hacked about the head into

the darkness and later told the gory details to a woman prisoner in the other party. The other was the child of six, who Mrs. Duston planned to take with her back to Haverhill, but escaped in fear but unharmed.

Historians and descendants of Hannah Duston have compiled many variations of her captivity and death-dealing dash to freedom. But the only first-hand account was written by the Reverend Cotton Mather of Boston, the Puritan witch-hunting moralist noted for his prolific recording of the first century of Massachusetts life.

Mather was a youthful 34 when he interviewed Mrs. Duston, Mrs. Neff and the Leonardson boy, as they went to Boston to be honored and voted bounty money by the Legislature.

Their story became a three-page chapter entitled "A Notable Exploit – Dux Femina Facti" (A Woman the Leader in the Achievement), in Mather's massive two-volume "Magnalia Christi Americana," an ecclesiastical history of New England, published in London in 1702.

Reverend Mather's story in his exact words is as follows:

On March 15, 1697 the salvages made a descent upon the skirts of Haverhill, murdering and capturing about 39 persons, and burning about half a dozen houses.

In this broil, one Hannah Dustan, having lain-in about a week, attended with her nurse, Mary Neff, a widow, a body of terrible Indians drew near unto the house where she lay, with the designs to carry on their bloody devastations.

Har Husband hastened from his employments abroad unto the relief of his distressed family, and first bidding seven of his eight children (which were two to 17 years of age) to get away as fast as they could unto some garrison in town, he went in to inform his wife of the horrible distress come upon them.

E'er she could get up, the fierce Indians were got so near that utterly despairing to do her any service, he ran out after his children; resolving that on the horse which he had with him, he would ride away with that which he should in this extremity find his affections to pitch most upon, and leave the rest to the care of the Divine Providence.

He overtook his children about 40 rod from his door; but then such was the agony of his parental affections that he found it impossible for him to distinguish any one of them from the rest; wherefore he took up the courageous resolution to live or die with them all.

A party of Indians came up with him; and now though they fired at him, and he fired at them, yet he manfully kept at the reer of his little army of unarmed children, while they marched off with the pace of a child of five years old; until, by the singular Providence of God, he arrived safe with them all unto a place of safety about a mile or two from his farm.

The nurse, trying to escape with the new-born infant, fell into the hands



CROSSING TO THE CONTOCOOK.

Century-old stories of Hannah Duston included this rare sketch of her Indian captors paddling to their island rendezvous. Mrs. Duston, Nurse Mrs. Neff and the Leonardson boy are depicted in the front canoe.

of the formidable salvages; and those furious tawnies coming into the house bid Dustan to rise immediately.

Full of astonishment she did so; and sitting down in the chimney with a heart full of fearful expectation she saw the raging dragons rifle all that they could carry away, and set the house on fire.

About 19 or 20 Indians now led these away, with about half a score other English captives, but ere they had gone many steps, they dash'd out the brains of the infant against a tree, and several of the other captives, as they began to tire in the sad journey, were soon sent unto their long home; the salvages would presently bury their hatchets in their brains, and leave their carcasses on the ground for birds and beasts to feed upon.

These two poor women were now in the hands of those whose "tender mercies are cruelties," but the good God, who hath all "hearts in his own hands," heard the sighs of these prisoners, and gave them to find unexpected favour from the Master who hath laid claim unto them.

That Indian family consisted of twelve persons, two stout men, three women and seven children; and for the shame of many an English family, that has the character of prayerless upon it, I must now publish what these poor women assure me.

"Tis this: in obedience to instructions which the French have given them, they would have prayers in their family no less than thrice every day; in the morning, at noon, and in the evening; nor would they ordinarily let their children eat or sleep, without first saying their prayers.

Indeed, these idolaters were, like the rest of their whiter brethren, persecutors, and would not endure that these poor women should retire to their English prayers, if they could hinder them.

Nevertheless, the poor women had nothing but fervent prayers to make their lives comfortable or tolerable; and by being daily sent upon business, they had opportunities, together and asunder, to do like another Hannah, in “pouring out their souls before the Lord.” Nor did their praying friends among ourselves forbear to “pour out” supplications for them.

Now, they could not observe it without some wonder, that their Indian master sometimes when he saw them dejected, would say unto them “What need you trouble yourself? If your God would have you delivered, you shall be so.”

And it seems our God would have it so to be. This Indian family was now traveling with these two captive women (and an English youth taken from Worcester a year and a half before) unto a rendezvous of salvages, which they call a town, somewhere beyond Penacook; and they still told these poor women that when they came to this town, they must be stripped and scourg’d and run to the gantlet through the whole army of Indians. They said this was the fashion when the captives first came to a town; and they derided some of the fainthearted English, which, they said, fainted and swoon’d away under the torments of this discipline.

But on April 30 (Mather meant March) while they were yet, it may be, about 150 miles from the Indian town, a little before break of day, when the whole crew was in a dead sleep (reader see if it not proves so!) one of these women took up a resolution to imitate the action of Jael upon Sisera; and being where she had not her own life secured by any law unto her, she thought she was not forbidden by any law to take away the life of the murderers by whom her children had been butchered.

She heartened the nurse and the youth to assist her in this enterprise; and all furnishing themselves with hatchets for the purpose, they struck home some blows upon the heads of their sleeping oppressors, that ere they could any of them struggle unto any effectual resistance “at the feet of these poor prisoners they bow’d, they fell, they lay down; where they bow’d, there they fell down dead.”

Only one squaw escaped, sorely wounded, from them in the dark; and one boy whom they reserved asleep, intending to bring him away with them, suddenly waked, and scuttled away from this desolation.

But cutting off the scalps of the ten wretches, they came off, and received fifty pounds from the General Assembly of the Province, as a recompense of their action; besides which they received many “presents of congratulations” from their more private friends; but more of them gave a greater taste of bounty than Colonel Nicholson, the Governor of Maryland, who, hearing of their action, sent them a very generous token of his favour.

New Hampshire had become a colony in its own right in 1680 and its tiny government was situated at Portsmouth. But Massachusetts claimed the Merrimack river and its adjacent territories in those early days, so the



Early stories of Mrs. Duston's heroism included this century old sketch. This vivid artist's imagination depicts Mrs. Duston at the left beside Nurse Mrs. Neff, with the Leonardson boy in the background, poised to bash ten sleeping Indians to death, to escape threatened slavery, or worse.

Legislature at Boston, called the General Court, was turned to for the scalp rewards.

The Massachusetts government had posted a bounty of 50 pounds per Indian in September of 1694, which was reduced to 25 pounds in June of 1695, and then entirely repealed in December of 1696.

Wives had no legal status in those days, so Mr. Duston petitioned the Legislature for the special bounty for Mrs. Duston. On June 16, the following became law:

Vote for allowing fifty pounds to Thomas Duston in behalf of his wife Hannah, and to Mary Neff, and Samuel Leonardson, captives escaped from the Indians, for their service in slaying their captors.

Voted, in concurrence with the representatives, that there be allowed and ordered, out of the public treasury, unto Thomas Dunston of Haverhill, on behalf of Hannah his wife, the sum of twenty-five pounds; to Mary Neffe, the sum of twelve pounds ten shillings; and to Samuel Leonardson, the sum of twelve pounds ten shillings (three captives, lately escaped from the Indians); as a reward for their service in slaying divers of those barbarous salvages.

Mrs. Duston had borne 12 children in 20 years of marriage, but four had died when she gave birth to the ill-fated Martha. A 13th and last child, Lydia was born in October of 1698.

Hannah Emerson Duston was the oldest of 15 children of Michael Emerson and Hannah Webster. At 20 she became the tawny-haired bride of Thomas Duston, then about 23, who was born in Kittery, Maine, but came to Haverhill as a boy when his widowed young mother married Matthias Button of that town.

Duston was a farmer turned brick maker and long a leading public official. But the heroine soon faded into historic obscurity, with one surprise exception. According to the Duston-Dustin Family Association, in 1929, some old papers were discovered behind an old gallery pew in the Haverhill Center Congregational Church, which included a 1727 membership application by Hannah Duston. It read as follows:

I Desire to be Thankful that I was born in a Land of Light & Baptized when I was Young; and had a Good Education by My Father, Tho' I took but little Notice of it in the time of it: — I am Thankful for my Captivity, twas the Comforatblest time that ever I had; In my Affliction God made his Word Comfortable to me. I remembered 43d ps. ult — and those words came to my mind — ps 118.17.

... I have had a great Desire to come to the Ordinance of the Lords Supper a Great while but fearing I should give offence & fearing my own unworthiness has kept me back; reading a Book concerning a Suffering Did much awaken me.

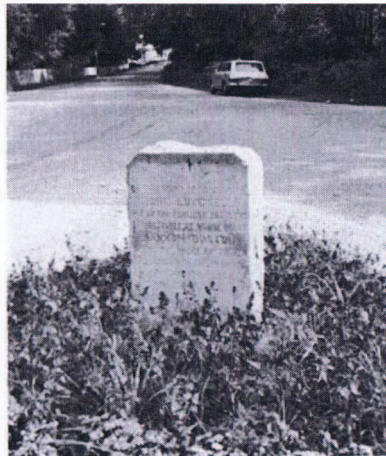
In the 55th of Isa. beg. We are invited to come: — Hearing Mr. Moody

preach out of ye 3d of Mal. 3 last verses it put me upon Consideration. Ye 11th of Matthew has been Encouraging to me — I have been resolving to offer my Self from time to time ever since the Settlement of the present Ministry: I was awakened by the first Sacram^tl Sermon (Luke 14.17) But Delays and fears prevailed upon me: —

But I desire to Delay no longer, being Sensible it is my duty — I desire the Church to receive me tho' it be at the Eleventh hour; & pray for me — that I may hon^rr God and obtain the Salvation of my Soul.

Mrs. Neff was the oldest of seven daughters of George Corliss and Joanna Davis of Haverhill, born in September of 1646. She married William Neff of Newbury, Mass., at 19, they moved to Haverhill in 1681, and then he joined the militia and died in Maine fighting Indians. After the 1697 episode, Mrs. Neff lived a quarter of a century with her son until her death.

The Leonardson boy learned upon his return home that his parents had moved to Preston, now a part of Griswold, Conn. He proceeded there; married a girl named Lydia (last name unrecorded), and reportedly died in 1718, at 35, leaving three sons and two daughters.



This is the modest tablet which marks the spot in Nashua where Hannah Duston and her party spent the night, enroute down the Merrimack River to her Haverhill home.

The Boscawen monument was erected in 1874.

An earlier Hannah Duston statue of marble was put up in Haverhill in 1861. But the sponsors were unable to pay for it as the Civil War engulfed the nation. So it was resold and moved to Barre, Mass., where it still stands as a remodeled soldiers' memorial.

Then in 1879, Haverhill got a second Duston monument, somewhat smaller than the Boscawen shaft, which still dominates the city's major civic square.

In 1902 a boulder was dedicated at the Nashua site of the John Lovewell river-side cabin in what was then called Dunstable,

where Mrs. Duston's party with their ten scalps were said to have spent their first night paddling down the Merrimack to Haverhill.

In 1908 a huge boulder was enshrined on the site of the Duston home in which Mrs. Duston died at Haverhill.

In 1910, Worcester sponsored a modest tablet honoring the Leonardson boy at the site of his boyhood home.

Hannah Duston's Boscawen island monument looms 25 feet high, entirely of Concord granite. It was dedicated and presented to the state of New Hampshire as a public trust on a Bunker Hill battle anniversary, June 17, 1874.

This memorial was sponsored by Attorney Robert Boody Caverly of Lowell, Massachusetts, poet, author of Indian lore and native of Strafford, N.H., assisted by Major Eliphalet S. Nutter of Concord, wealthy railroad financier and native of Barnstead, N.H. They devoted two years to the project and most of the \$6,000 cost was contributed by Granite State citizens along the Merrimack.

Porter E. Blanchard of Concord produced the granite blocks and erected the statue. William Andrews of Lowell was the sculptor. Andrew Orsolini, from Italy, James Murray, native of Scotland, and Charles E. Andrews of Lowell were listed as contributing artists.

Concord's Daily Patriot reported at the time that \$4,500 had been raised and the Massachusetts Legislature was expected to contribute \$1,000. It described the figure:

The hair is flowing, the arms bare to the shoulder. The body is enclosed in graceful folds of drapery. The feet are partially uncovered.

Mrs. Duston is depicted with a hatchet in her right hand, and a bundle of scalps gripped in her left fist. Her granite image stands seven feet, six inches tall. One foot is bare, for she was said to have lost a shoe when rushed from her burning home into captivity.

Caverly's unveiling of the Duston monument 99 years ago was of unique proportions.

Newspapers reported from 3,000 to 5,000 persons packed the tiny island for the dedication, and Caverly's mini-sized four-page program listed 16 historical speakers, interspersed with music, songs and a noon collation.

Cannon was fired from a nearby bluff to greet Governor James A. Weston of Manchester and a delegation of legislators and other state dignitaries. A special Concord train hauled hundreds six miles northward to the scene, for a rail line has crossed the islet since before erection of the monument.

The morning program was comparatively brief, under rain-threatening skies. The Reverend Nathaniel Bouton, noted Concord historian and a co-sponsor of the affair, gave the opening prayer. The Reverend Elias Nason

of Billerica, Mass., read an historical sketch prepared by Caverly; the latter's two daughters, Carrie and Mary, sang a duet, and then Caverly read his own poem of 27 verses, which stressed that the statue was dedicated to "motherhood," as exemplified by Hannah Duston.

Women of Fisherville, as Concord's suburb of Penacook was then called, served a bountiful lunch amidst the groves of trees which then covered the three-fourths of the island west of the railroad. And bands and chorus groups from Concord, Fisherville, and Franklin entertained throughout.

Concord's Daily Patriot reported:

The beautiful grove opposite the statue presented a very lively scene. Tables were arranged from which were dispensed refreshments for the crowd, and a general pairing off of young people, and slow quiet walks in the cool, retired parts of the woods suggested ideas of the "spooning" that is always done on such occasions.

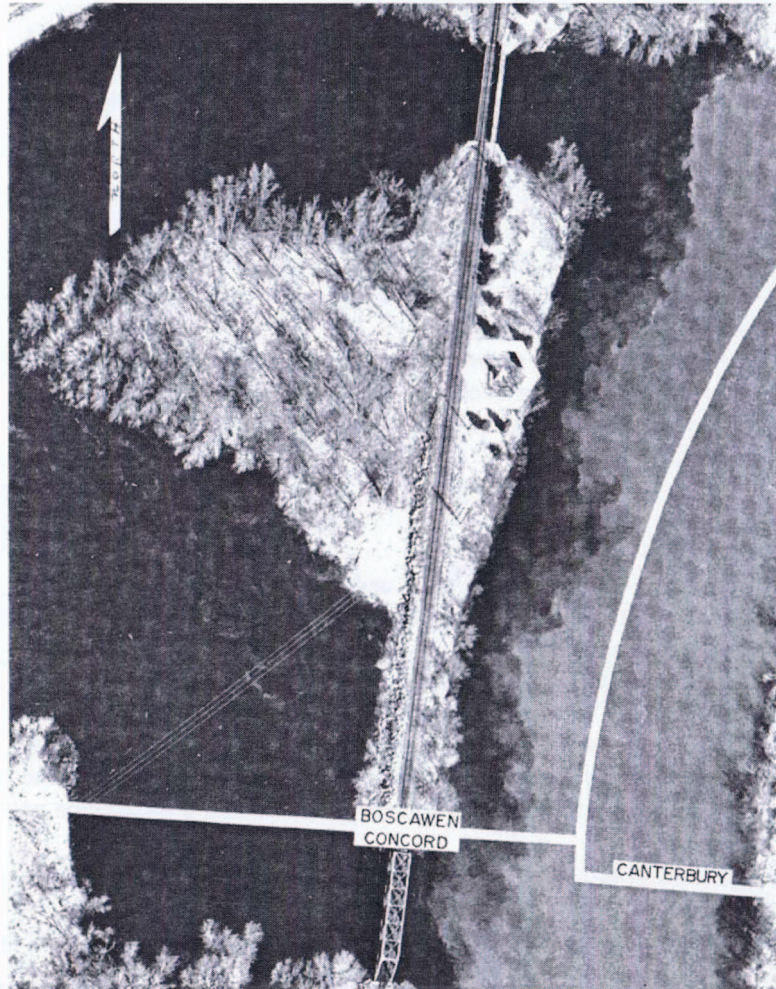
A few rods north of the statue was erected a platform, the main part of which was to accommodate the speakers for the occasion, and which was covered by a canopy. The platform also had seats for the bands and singers.

The major speaking program got underway soon after one o'clock in the afternoon as the rain clouds thickened.

Major General S. G. Griffin of Keene told of military progress since the days of Hannah Duston, and Attorney David O' Allen of Lowell told of "orators... of yore." Veteran Secretary of State Benjamin Franklin Prescott of Epping sponsored a rising vote of thanks to Caverly for sponsoring the Duston monument, followed by Attorney John H. George of Concord, who extolled the legal profession, and Reverend Nason, with a dissertation on church music.

Rain set in about two o'clock and Caverly was forced to abandon a dozen additional speeches. Governor Weston was hurriedly given the spotlight, for acceptance of the monument and the land around it, on behalf of the state, with a pledge to maintain it for posterity.

The deed was in poetry form as written by Caverly. Still preserved in state archives, it reads:



New Hampshire's Duston monument is in Boscawen, and not Penacook as generally believed. This aerial view, courtesy of Public Works Director Ronald Ford of Concord, graphically depicts the location of the statue, and how the railroad of 1846 still bisects the two and one-half acre island in the southeast corner of Boscawen. The Merrimack river is to the right, the Contocook flowing into it from the left, out of the west.

To His Excellency James A. Weston, and to
all the Governors of New Hampshire —
Know ye that we the underwriters,
For reasons rightful, valid, divers,
By deed of quit-claim do deprive us
Of title traced

To all our lands in the Contoocook,
However bounded, knoll or nook,
On which that block we undertook
Is built and based.

A generous people, grateful, plant it;
To the State in which it stands we grant it,
That the tide of time may never cant it,
Nor mar nor sever;

That Pilgrims here may heed the Mothers;
That Truth and Faith and all the Others,
With banners high in glorious colors,
May stand forever.

To witness what this deed reveals,

We've given our hand, and set our seals:

NATHANIEL BOUTON
ELIPHALET S NUTTER
ROBERT B CAVERLY

Witnesses:

B. F. Prescott

Isaac K. Gage.

Then were the grantors all agreed

And true; 'tis made their act and deed.

Merrimack, ss. — June 17, 1784. Before me,

ISAAC K. GAGE,

Justice of the Peace.

Inscribed on the westerly side facing the railroad:

HEROUM GESTA
FIDES — JUSTITIA.
HANNAH DUSTON
MARY NEFF
SAMUEL LEONARDSON
MARCH 30, 1697
MID-NIGHT

The easterly side, facing the Merrimack, reads:

MARCH
15 1697 30
THE WAR-WHOOP—TOMAHAWK—FAGOT
AND
INFANTICIDES
WERE AT HAVERHILL,
THE ASHES OF THE CAMP-FIRES
AT NIGHT
AND TEN OF THE TRIBE
ARE HERE.

The northerly side lists the names of 23 of the more prominent donors, while the southerly side is inscribed:

STATUA
1874
KNOW YE THAT WE WITH MANY PLANT IT;
IN TRUST TO THE STATE WE GIVE AND GRANT IT,
THAT THE TIDE OF TIME MAY NEVER CANT IT,
NOR MAR, NOR SEVER;
THAT PILGRIMS HERE MAY HEED THE MOTHERS,
THAT TRUTH AND FAITH AND ALL THE OTHERS,*
WITH BANNERS HIGH IN GLORIOUS COLORS,
MAY STAND FOREVER.
*GRACES

These northerly side words are signed by Bouton, Nutter and Caverly, with long-time Secretary of State Benjamin F. Prescott of Epping and Isaac K. Gage of Penacook, donor of the monument site, as witnesses.

The names of 23 donors were inscribed on the northerly panel, although Caverly otherwise listed 440 men and women and firms along the Merrimack, and as distant as Louisville, Kentucky, and Dexter, Maine, as contributors to his project.

Listed on the panel included Judge George W. Nesmith of Fanklin, former Governor Onslow Stearns of Concord, and the noted General Benjamin Franklin Butler of Lowell and native of Deerfield. From Fisherville there was John S. Brown and Henry F. and D. A. Brown, John C. Gage, and Almon Harris. Listed from Concord were Edward L. Knowlton, Joseph P. Stickney and George A. Pillsbury. From Franklin there was Jonas B. Aiken



Mrs. Gale Thomson, wife of Governor Meldrim Thomson, is shown beside Chairman Costas S. Tentas of the State Liquor Commission, with a model of the Hannah Duston commemorative bottle. Looking on are Cedric H. Dustin, Jr. of Concord, vice president of the Duston-Dustin Family Association, and Mrs. Dustin.

and Walter Aiken.

Listed from Lowell were Artemus L. Brooks, Dr. James C. Ayer, Mrs. Jefferson Bancroft, and Emily and Elizabeth Rogers.

Much of potential historical value was washed out as the dozen speakers went unheard, and one can only trust that some of it perhaps remains hidden in niches of antiquity. Former Governor Ezekial A. Straw of Manchester was to speak on agriculture; Judge Nesmith on early settlers; Dr. Edward Spaulding of Nashua on education; Reverend W. T. Savage of Franklin on Indians; Attorney E. C. Bailey of Concord on newspapers; former Governor Stearns on roads, and the Reverend George Duston of Peterborough was to dwell on the descendants of Hannah Duston.

Draped by a huge American flag, the statue was unveiled as cannon boomed and bands blared, to terminate the morning exercises. And the inscriptions on the base immediately met with misgivings, and even censure, which continue to this day.

The Concord Monitor voiced blunt censure, saying:



This is a new photograph of the first permanent statue in the United States to a woman. It is the 25-foot Hannah Duston memorial at Boscawen dedicated and given to the state as a public trust in 1874. — Photo by Saunderson.

Unfortunately the monument is disfigured with some doggerel and other evidence of bad taste, which we hope to see obliterated some day, in justice to the generous donors who furnished the "material aid" which caused its erection.

It is due to the donors to say that their names were inscribed without their knowledge or consent, and this breach of good taste and priority meets with no approval from them.

There is no punctuation on the tablets.

The statue is a fine figure and exceedingly creditable to the sculptor.

We can only wish the rest of the word corresponded with it.

David Arthur Brown, one of the listed donors, observed in his 1902 history of Penacook:

To many persons the inscriptions on the monument seem hardly adequate, and it is doubtful if any one could learn from the

inscriptions what the monument was intended to commemorate.

It is hoped that the state may at some time cover the inscriptions with bronze tablets, on which shall be given the main points of the tragic story, the date of the massacre, and the date of dedication of the monument.

It was historian Brown who induced the state to finance a handsome iron fence, on a granite base, which he designed and handled its erection.

The dedication, like the statue itself, was all Caverly, from start to finish. His historical sketch, as read by Mr. Nason, oozed Caverly ardor. He penned this prose:

...At midnight, pursuant to a previous appointment which Mrs. Duston had made with Mrs. Neff and Leonardson, the boy, they rose up while their oppressors were still asleep.

They, silently, stealthily creeping about, obtained from the belts of their enemies three of those blood-stained weapons of death which had been used at Haverhill.

Now they are taking their positions.

Alas! How much depends on the eventful happenings of a moment! Every step of the foot, every breath that moves the air, is taken cautiously; the snap of a brittle twig, the rustle of a leaf, or the least mishap or mistake in their concert of action, must have been the startling signal of death to themselves.

Ah! a strange divinity attends them. Their wigwam camp-fires, hitherto brilliant, had begun to fade.

That noisy old forest which had been waving above the slumbering tribes, ominously, as if by magic, ceased to move. The whispering west winds, previously boisterous in the lofty tree-tops, are hushed to silence. The stars of night, and the ghosts of a thousand slaughtered pilgrims, are looking down.

Three tomahawks uplifted are seen to glimmer in the light of the camp-fires, and ten savages, in garments crimsoned with the blood of men, women and children, slept their last sleep.

Haverhill's ill-fated first Hannah Duston monument was a 25-foot Italian marble obelisk, five feet square at the base.

It was sponsored by the Dustin Monument Association, founded in 1855 for that purpose, and dedicated on June 1, 1861. The Haverhill Gazette reported it was produced by R. Pickering & Company of Woburn, Mass., for \$1,200.

Mrs. Duston's name was inscribed on the front base block. The Gazette also said the front of the shaft had a shield surrounded by a musket, ball pouch, powder horn, bow and arrows, a tomahawk and a scalping knife.

Subscribers reneged on their pledges as the Civil War broke out. So after four years of litigation over payment failures, the monument was repossessed, and then resold and remodeled as a 35-foot soldiers memorial at Barre, Mass., where it still stands to this day.

Haverhill's present Hannah Duston memorial is 15 feet in height. The heroine is life-size in bronze, on a granite base. This monument was dedicated on November 25, 1879, and was entirely financed by E. J. M. Hale, one of that city's first millionaires, who vainly tried to remain anonymous in the gift.

Mayor Nathan S. Kimball accepted the statue as the City Council and other civic leaders participated in the modest afternoon program.

Mrs. Duston is displayed in a militant posture, with a half-raised tomahawk in her right hand, and her other arm outstretched for balance. There are four bronze plaques on the sides of the base. They depict the heroine and her companions at the massacre scene, returning home in their canoe, the initial capture of the two women, and Duston's rescue of the seven children.



Shown is the soldiers' monument at Barre, Mass., originally erected in 1861 at Haverhill, Mass., to honor Hannah Duston.

for her extraordinary feat, we claim for the pure and lofty heroism of the father, a larger share of the world's applause than has yet been awarded him.

Some historians have maintained that Hannah's 44-year-old husband, Thomas, has been unfairly overlooked in the homage paid her heroism.

George Wingate Chase stressed this point in his 1861 history of Haverhill, Said he of Mrs. Duston:

It was not with her a question of life and death but of liberty and revenge.

But of Mr. Duston, Chase observed:

It was a father's love that served his arm and not revenge.

While therefore, we would not, wittingly, detract one jot or little from the full credit due the mother,

The Reverend John Lauris Blake extolled Thomas Duston's virtue, as compared with Hannah's "slaughter" of the Indians, in his "Historical Reader" of 1821. This youthful Episcopal rector served in Concord and Hopkinton and organized a Young Ladies School, as he produced this textbook for schools, before moving to Boston and becoming a prolific author.

In relating the story of Mrs. Duston and her two associates, the Reverend Blake wrote:

Whether all their sufferings, and all the danger of suffering anew, justified this slaughter, may probably be subject of inquiry by moralists.

The truth is, the season of Indian invasion, burning, butchering, captivity, threatening and torture, is an unfortunate time for nice investigation and critical moralizing.

A wife who has just seen her house burnt, her infant dashed against a tree, and her companions coldly murdered, one by one; who supposed her husband and remaining children to have suffered the same fate; who was threatened with torture, and indecency more painful than torture; and who did not entertain any doubt that the threatening would be fulfilled; would probably feel no necessity, when she found it in her power to dispatch the authors of her sufferings, of asking question concerning anything but the success of the enterprise.

But whatever may be thought of the rectitude of her conduct, that of



The Duston monument at Haverhill, Mass. stands 15 feet tall, in Grand Army Park. It includes bronze plaques depicting her capture by Indians and her daring dash to freedom.

her husband is most praiseworthy.

A finer succession of scenes for the pencil was hardly ever presented to the eye, than is furnished by the efforts of this gallant man, and their interesting appendages.

The artist must be destitute indeed of talents, who could not engross every heart, as well as every eye, by exhibitions of this husband and father, flying to rescue his wife, her infant and her nurse, from the approaching horde of savages; attempting, on his horse, to select from his flying family, the child he was least able to spare, and, unable to make the selection, alternately and sternly, retreating behind his inestimable charge, and fronting the enemy again, receiving and returning their fire; and presenting himself, equally, as a barrier against the

murderers, and a shelter to the flight of innocence and anguish.

Judge Charles R. Corning, one of Concord's most respected historians at the turn of this century, presented a philosophical defense of Hannah Duston's deed before the New Hampshire Historical Society in February of 1890. He said:

That part of the story relative to the killing and scalping will never be fully believed by a majority of people; and yet, when the deed and the circumstances that led to it are seriously considered, skepticism is considerably lessened.

The possibility of the bloody act being done by helpless and bleeding women has long been the subject of doubt and discussion, and arguments have been advanced tending to prove its impossibility.

How could civilized women and mothers forget the nicer impulses of their sex; and become more savage than the savages themselves? Whence came that fierce desperation that crushed pity in their hearts, and filled their veins with the black current of revenge? How account for that steady nerve and unflinching courage that directed the fatal blows and did the sickening mutilation?

In the horrors of the fireside massacre at home, in the agony of beholding innocent infants dashed against rocks or impaled on sharp stakes, in the terror of the wretched future, in the vengeance of outraged womanhood, and in the holy belief that red-skins were devils incarnate,



Shown is the pewter tankard given to Hannah Duston by the "Great and General Court" of Massachusetts for her 1697 bravery, treasured by the family association.



This is supposedly the Hannah Duston hatchet, now treasured by her family association.

comes the reason. Look upon them in the pangs of their captivity, and fancy the terrible sensations suffered by those captives — and the deed, marvelous and unheard of, loses its doubtful aspects and stands out in bold consistency.

In the midst of a den of wild beasts, Hannah Duston, Mary Neff and the boy, Leonardson, found themselves, and, with the paralyzed feelings of human beings condemned to torture, they unhesitatingly destroyed every vestige of life in order that their own lives might be spared.

The story of Hannah Duston is portrayed with appealing drama and warmth in a 1954 biographical novel, the "Gallant Warrior," by Mrs. Helen R. Mann of Methuen, Massachusetts, a descendant.

Based upon extensive research, this is a skillfully woven fictionalized presentation of the life and soul of the Haverhill heroine. The authenticity and interpretations of this book are of such fascinating merit that history may well rank it as a more worthy tribute to Hannah Duston and her rare courage against frightful adversity, than all her monuments combined.

Understandably, the "Gallant Warrior," of limited edition, is highly prized by members of the Duston-Dustin Family Association, some 2,000 strong.

The Matthew Thornton Chapter, DAR, erected the 1902 Nashua tablet at the site of the John

Lovewell cabin where Hannah Duston's party stopped the first night they paddled down the Merrimack to Haverhill.

The tablet reads:

ON THIS POINT OF LAND DWELT JOHN LOVEWELL, ONE OF THE EARLIEST SETTLERS OF DUNSTABLE, AT WHOSE HOUSE HANNAH DUSTON SPENT THE NIGHT AFTER HER ESCAPE FROM THE INDIANS AT PENACOOK ISLAND, MARCH 30, 1697.

The hatchet Mrs. Duston supposedly used in her escape was turned over to the family association in 1955. The late John B. Jameson of Concord financed its purchase from Miss Mary Hackett of Stanstead, Quebec.

Thanks to the assistance of Mayor Edward Struthers of Stanstead, some of the weapon's history was obtained for this pamphlet.

Miss Hackett was given the hatchet, a French trading item, by her late sister, Mrs. Sybil Parsons, wife of Dermont Parsons, a jeweler and merchant like his father. He in turn obtained it from his father, Robert Cooney Parsons, born in Stanstead in 1842. The latter's parents, said to have descended from the Duston family, brought the prized weapon from Massachusetts when they settled in little Stanstead, along the United States border above Vermont.

Two Rochester men negotiated the actual purchase. They were Dr. Cecil Calvert Dustin, present President of the Duston-Dustin Garrison House Association, and his brother, Clifton Henry Dustin, retired educator and former president for 15 years.

New Hampshire has given but sporadic attention to its Hannah Duston guardianship. The Legislature financed a \$300 fence in 1875. It voted \$20 in 1881 to paint it and another \$75 in 1911 to paint it again. But neglect followed.

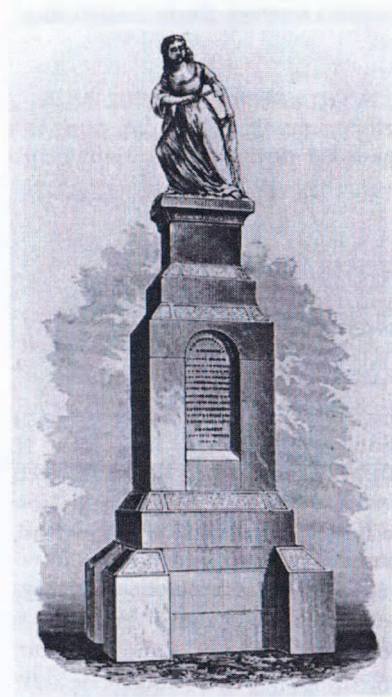


This is the seal of the Duston-Dustin Family Association.

The late Miles H. Dustin of Rochester, veteran city official and legislator, battled long and vainly on the hero's behalf. He long was a patriarch in the family association, which he helped nurture in its early years.

In 1933, Miles Dustin sponsored a law making the State House superintendent custodian of the Boscawen monument. But only \$50 was voted for the chore.

Dustin tried again in 1939. He



This is the first draft of Boscawen's Hannah Duston monument, used to raise funds for its 1874 erection. The heroine's posture was improved as finally carved.

induced the Legislature to make the Governor and Executive Council responsible for Hannah Duston's welfare. But neglect continued.

Pioneer vice presidents of the association were listed as: John K. Dustin of Gloucester; W. D. Brickett of Haverhill; Warren Clough of Lowell; S. T. Page of Haverhill; Mrs. Frank Corson of Derry, N. H.; Mrs. Ella M. Thom of Methuen, Mass.; Moses T. Page of Lowell; Mrs. G. E. Whitten of Haverhill, and Reverend Mr. Hersey.

Mrs. Curtis reported the Duston-Dustin genealogy, begun in the 1890's, has grown to several volumes of approximately 500 pages each, plus index, and an eighth book is being processed.

The Capitol Neighborhood of Swift Water Girl Scouts Council, centered in Concord, has been operating a Hannah Duston Day Camp each summer for more than a score years.

Concord's suburb of Penacook has a Hannah Duston Rebekah Lodge, which was organized on May 12, 1872, two years before the statue was erected.

While the Massachusetts Legislature gave part of its bounty reward to "Leonardson," and historians have invariably used that name, the boy hero's family actually was "Lenorson."

It was the Worcester Society of Antiquity which sponsored the "Lenorson" tablet and dedicated it on October 22, 1910. The Worcester Sunday Telegram reported it was hung upon the 42-foot Davis Tower in Lake Park, beside the site of the Lenorson boyhood home. It was of bronze, 18 by 30 inches and cost \$80.

The Sunday Telegram recently said the tablet was stolen four years ago and a city official suggested it's being treasured by an unidentified college fraternity.

The stone tower, an 1889 gift to the city at a cost of \$8,000, was demolished in 1971 because of disrepair.



This is the 1889 Davis Tower at Worcester, Mass., upon which was hung a tiny plaque in 1910 honoring Samuel (Leonardson) Lenorson, the boy who helped Hannah Duston flee Indian captors in 1697. The tower was demolished two years ago because of disrepair and the tablet disappeared four years ago. The Worcester Historical Society has a plaster cast of the tablet. — Photo by Worcester Telegram & Gazette.

When Governor Sherman Adams reorganized state affairs in 1950, life finally perked for Boscawen's Hannah Duston, under supervision of the State Recreation Division. In 1952 the monument was sandblasted to remove her weather wrinkles and rain smudges. Maintenance Chief Robert Sullivan, next arranged for a State Prison crew of seven men to improve the premises, with a cash outlay of \$2,100. They removed the dilapidated fence, dumped 100 tons of granite along the embankment to halt erosion, and made substantial improvements enjoyed to this day.

For the past nine years, Arthur Muzzey of Penacook has served as the summer season caretaker.

The Duston-Dustin Garrison House association was formed in 1945, with Educator Clifton Dustin serving as president for the ensuing 14 years. Cedric H. Dustin, Jr., of Concord, vice president and general manager of the Concord Natural Gas Corporation and recent president of the New England Gas Association, next headed this group for a dozen years. The leadership shifted back to Dr. Dustin in 1971, and following his death the presidency reverted to Cedric Dustin.

Miles H. Dustin, father of Educator Dustin and Dr. Dustin, and the legislature who long battled state officialdom to improve the care of Boscawen's Hannah Duston, served as president of the family association for a dozen years up to his death in 1956. Dr. Arnold P. George of Haverhill is present president, with a decade of such service.

Haverhill's immense Duston boulder marks the site of Jonathan Duston's home, where Mrs. Duston lived her final years with a son. Haverhill public library records say it took 30 horses with 14 drivers to haul it to the present location. Its weight is estimated at from 30 to 60 tons.

The late Mrs. Harriet B. Curtis of Swampscott, Mass., historian of the Duston-Dustin Family Association, explained the Duston name first was Durston, and two of Hannah's sons called themselves Dustin, and from this developed the double-named association.

Mrs. Curtis said the association was formed in 1905, sparked by Mrs. Mary Duston Page Watson of Haverhill and Oakland, Cal., who became the first president, and later the first historian. Her records also show first secretaries were Charles E. Dustin of Hartford, Conn., and Mrs. Hattie Dustin Kilgore of Gloucester, Mass., and the Reverend Harry Adams Hersey of Stafford, Conn., was first treasurer.

Mrs. Kilgore then became historian, followed by her son, Harold Dustin Kilgore and her daughter, Mrs. Curtis, the trio totaling 58 years of such association service.



Legislative Historian Leon W. Anderson is shown (left) reporting to Governor Meldrim Thomson Jr., on some of the rare pictures he researched for a pamphlet history of Hannah Duston, the noted Indian slayer of 276 years ago, which will feature a commemorative bottle of the heroine.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

CONCORD 03301



MELDRIM THOMSON, JR.
GOVERNOR

March 30, 1973

Costas S. Tentas, Chairman
State Liquor Commission
Storrs Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Dear Mr. Tentas,

Congratulations to your Commission for plans to feature the heroism of Hannah Duston, the 1697 Indian slayer, for the third of your commemorative containers. Your action will help underwrite New Hampshire's participation in our national 1976 Bicentennial.

This project is of special historic value because it includes the first history ever compiled of the courage and fortitude of this Haverhill, Massachusetts, mother of twelve. The first monument to a woman in this country was erected in her honor 99 years ago at the scene of her bravery, on a river islet in Boscawen.

Legislative Historian Leon W. Anderson is also to be commended for his admirable research and colorful portrayal of the story of how Hannah Duston tomahawked herself and fellow prisoners to midnight freedom, to escape permanent captivity or worse, 276 years ago this date.

I am sure that Hannah Duston's descendants will appreciate this special tribute to the memory of her valor. And I take modest pride in the fact that my good wife, Gale, is one of them. Her family stems from the Emersons of the early Dover area, and Mrs. Duston was of that family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Meldrim Thomson, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Meldrim Thomson, Jr.

MT/fkp



Robert B. Caverly of Lowell, Massachusetts, sparked Boscawen's Duston statue into being.



Workmen of the John Swenson Granite Co., of Concord are shown patching Hannah Duston's nose, and other vandalism scars. Robert C. Sampson did the surgery with granite dust, assisted by Emanuel Brochu.

New Orleans long claimed the distinction of boasting the first statue erected in this country honoring a woman. This memorial was erected on July 9, 1884 for the saintly Margaret Haughery, who devoted her life to service for orphans and the poor.

But in recent years, historians of that lore-laden city have for the most part come to recognize this distinction belongs to New Hampshire, by a full decade.

When pictures were taken of Boscawen's Hannah Duston for this pamphlet and the commemorative bottle in her honor, it was discovered her nose was partially gone.

It had apparently been shot off since the statue's 1952 repairs, without anyone ever noticing the vandalism.

The John Swenson Granite Company of Concord made a friendly offer to graft a new granite nose upon the Heroine's handsome image as soon as warm weather insured success of the operation.

But such mishap is not new in Hannah Duston memory. Back in 1934 on Halloween eve, Haverhill's monument lost its hatchet. Early that October 31 evening, according to Haverhill Gazette, a small boy brought the weapon into a nearby police station saying he found it beside the memorial. It was welded back in hand.

The Merrimack Journal of Franklin, then a three-year-old weekly, issues a mini-sized pamphlet of Hannah Duston's dedication party, of 26 pages for 10 cents.