

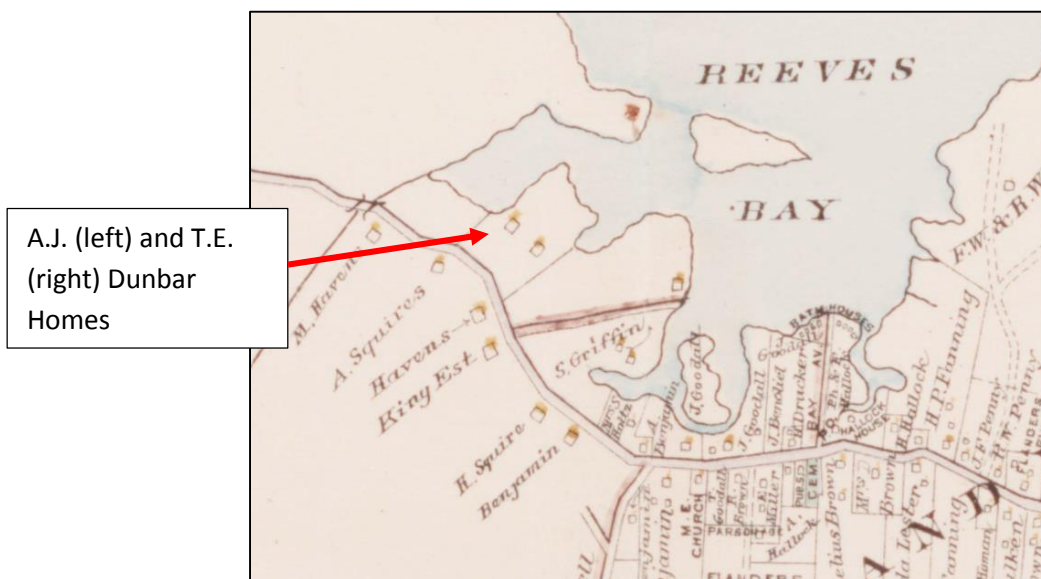
## The Thomas E. Dunbar Residence

17 Huntington Lane, Flanders

By Sally Spanburgh; March 15, 2015



The summer residence for Thomas E. Dunbar is located in the hamlet of Flanders, town of Southampton, Long Island, New York. It is situated near the northwest end of the main boulevard that runs through the hamlet and overlooks Reeves Bay. In the past the property's address has also been referred to as 924 Flanders Road. Immediately west of the property is a similar home built at the same time for one of Thomas' brothers, Augustus J. Dunbar.



*Detail, Plate 5, Atlas of Suffolk County, Long Island, Vol. 1, Ocean Shore, E. Belcher & Hyde, 1902*



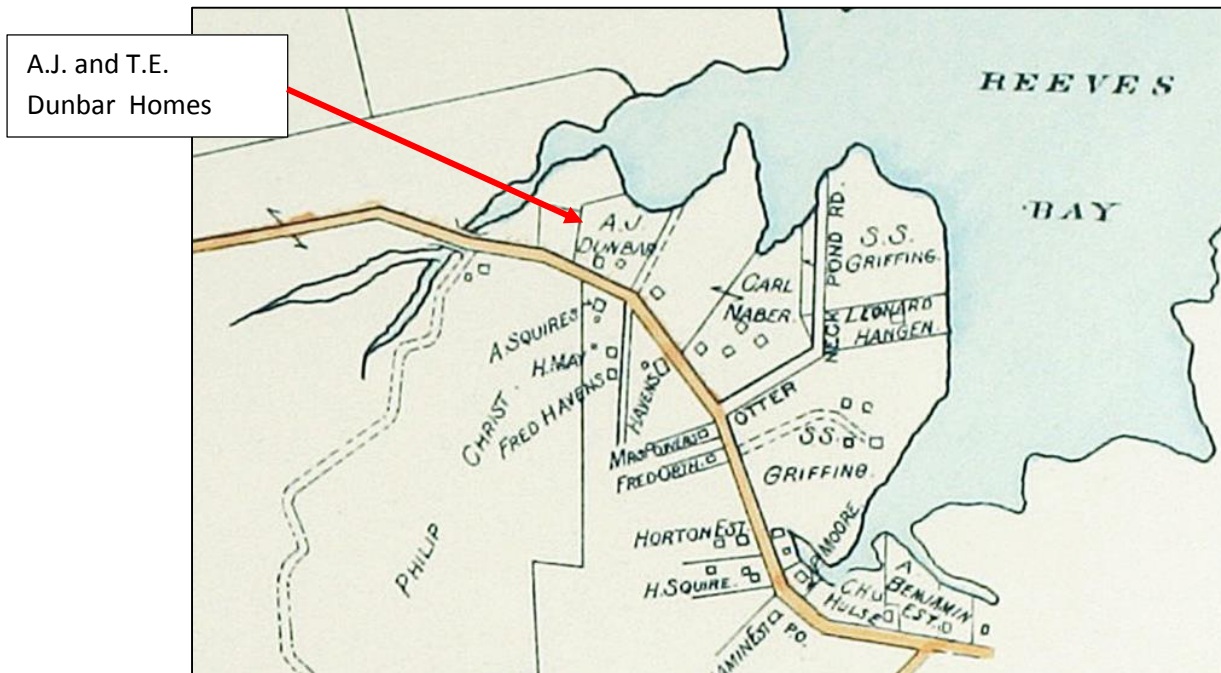
*Front (south) elevation, photographed December 2014.*

The Thomas E. Dunbar home is a Queen Anne style structure built about 1895. It is two-stories tall with a gabled roof, a distinctive Queen Anne color scheme, and a cruciform plan layout. The front-facing cross-gable is decorated with a Jerkin-head lined with spindlework, patterned shingles, a double-hung window with Queen Anne divided light pattern and stained glass, and a wrap-around porch at the first story with a hipped roof and supported by turned columns paired with decorative brackets. The west (left) end of the porch does not wrap, but rather extends as if to gather someone arriving by carriage. Its gable end is decorated with trimwork in a sunburst pattern. The home rests on a brick foundation and has an asphalt shingle roof. It has been enlarged with two non-original wings, both designed to match the character of the original residence. The eastern (right) wing was added near the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, shortly after the home was originally constructed; the western (left) wing in the 1980s. In 2007 the home was renovated and enlarged with a one-story full-width extension to the rear (north).



An original barn/carriage house exists on the property and is situated to the southeast of the residence. It rests on locust posts and is one-and-a-half stories tall with a front-facing gable roof with exposed rafter ends. It is clad in vertical wood siding with patterning at the eaveline, a color scheme that coordinates with the residence, and is topped with a vented cupola at its center. At the rear (north) of the barn is an original shed extension. While some of the barn's original doors survive, other alterations such as the introduction of additional windows and a small western dormer have been made.





Detail, Plate 2, *Atlas of a Part of Suffolk County, Long Island, New York, South Side – Ocean Shore, 1916*, Vol. 2, E. Belcher & Hyde.

The property was jointly purchased in March of 1895 by Augustus J. Dunbar and Thomas E. Dunbar of New York City for \$10 and other considerations from Harvey P. and Zola M. Fanning of Flanders and originally included fourteen acres.<sup>1</sup> Augustus J. Dunbar (1854-1929) and Thomas E. Dunbar (1861-1949) were born in New York to a Portuguese father and Irish mother along with three other siblings. Their given surname was Gonsalves. Both were involved in New York City theatre in a variety of roles including executive positions, advertising agents, and actors and did quite well for themselves in that industry. Thomas also worked as a stage, and later house, carpenter. It is assumed that they changed their surname for “show business” related reasons.

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| <p>W. Ayres,<br/> <b>A PARLOR MATCH.</b><br/> W. D. Mann, manager; Leon Mayer, business manager; James T. Galloway, stage manager; Marcus Mayer, musical director. Tour begins Sept. 15 at New York City.</p> |  |
| <p>Charles E. Evans,<br/> William Hoey,<br/> E. C. Jobson,<br/> James T. Galloway,<br/> M. J. Sullivan,<br/> William Keough<br/> Peter Randall,</p>   | <p>Clara Thropp,<br/> Marie Louise Day,<br/> Three Sisters Levey,<br/> Grace Gayler Clark,<br/> May Stevens Hubbard,<br/> Hugh Mack,<br/> Thomas Dunbar.</p> |

*New York Dramatic Mirror, “The Theatrical Roster of 1890-1891: First Instalment”*

<sup>1</sup> Liber 424 of Deeds, conveyance page 534, dated March 18, 1895, recorded March 29, 1895.



Thomas worked at the Herald Square Theatre (1883-1914) in the late 1800s-early 1900s at which time he was a part of the “A Parlor Match” revival production. Upon its debut it “was one of the biggest hits of its time.”<sup>2</sup> He was also in the production elsewhere, such as at the Gayety Theatre in Williamsburg, Brooklyn (1892-1932), and may have traveled with it elsewhere in the country. The present homeowner has a trunk that came with the house and is purportedly associated with Thomas’ theatre/traveling days.

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| ed<br>d<br>d<br>d<br>is | <p>walk on an ordinary telegraph wire.</p> <p>GAYETY THEATER.</p> <p>“A Parlor Match” shifts its ground from the Grand Opera house to this variety theater tomorrow, where Evans and Hoey and their associates will play it with their assured vim. The graceful Merriloes sisters will sing in five languages and the De Forests will dance. Mr. Evans will deliver two new songs and Mr. Hoey has a new make up that is so striking it may nearly be called stunning. The company: James T. Galloway, M. T. Sullivan, Hugh Mack, Sidney DeGrey, William Keough, Peter Randall, Peter F. Johnston, T. E. Dunbar, W. P. Brown, Minnie French, Lillie Allston, Cheridah Simpson, Georgia Metzger and Stella Bonheur.</p> <p>LEE AVENUE ACADEMY.</p> <p>“Outcasts of a Great City” will be played this</p> | void<br>Ind<br>ilar<br>mus<br>ven<br>two<br>void<br>yet<br>aro<br>scal<br>teri<br>prio<br>in<br>incl<br>ber<br>Th<br>mez<br>than<br>Am |
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*The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, December 31, 1893*

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia

Augustus and Thomas hired Arthur M. Havens (1867-1936) to build their houses.<sup>3</sup> Havens was a native of Flanders and a reputable local builder that constructed many homes in the area.

At the time of Augustus' death, he left an estate valued at over \$90,000 to a brother, Frank Gonsalves (1869-1940), and Frank's children. He made no provision for his brother, Thomas, "because he is in comfortable circumstances."<sup>4</sup> At the time of his death (in Florida) he owned no real property. While he was buried in Riverhead, according to U. S. census data it appears he did not spend a lot of time at his Flanders home, whereas Thomas lived in his for many years and raised his family there.



*Thomas' wife and daughters, circa 1900. Courtesy of Barbara Metzger.*

At the time of Thomas' death, he left an estate, including both properties with the both brothers' homes, valued at \$15,000 to his wife, Louisa H. Dunbar (1870-1950). Upon Louisa's death, while she had two surviving daughters, she gave all but \$300, including the full fourteen acres and two homes, to daughter Alice.

Alice Dunbar Huntington (1896-1996) was a public elementary school teacher in the Riverhead school district. She may have taught at the Flanders schoolhouse, in operation from 1886 to 1959. She was also a lifelong member of the Christian Missionary Alliance Church and died, at 100 years old, at Chapel

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<sup>3</sup> *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 1, 1895.

<sup>4</sup> Probate document 31677.

Pointe, a faith-based assisted living center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania founded in 1944 and partially funded by the New York Metropolitan branch of the Christian Missionary Alliance.

In late 1920-early 1921 Alice married Dwight Huntington Jr. (1896-1950) and had two children. Dwight was related to Connecticut Gov. Samuel Huntington (1731-1796), a signer of the Declaration of Independence<sup>5</sup> and the son of a highly accomplished lawyer, politician, sportsman, author, editor, artist, and wildlife conservationist. While serving overseas during World War I, Dwight Jr. was severely injured in December 1918. After returning home and recuperating, he married Alice and later became an aeronautical engineer. Purportedly, he was unable to support his family which prompted Alice to return to Flanders where her parents helped raise her children. In late 1971, Alice sold both her father and uncle's houses and properties as well as the rest of the fourteen acres to several individuals. Huntington Lane, which bisects the original acreage and was also created about 1971 was named after Alice. Her father's house, the subject of this report, was sold to Maria S. Frazer of Garden City, New York, who flipped it ten months later to David C. and Elizabeth P. Walters. In 1997 the property was purchased by the present owner.

The property has been recognized as a historic resource in the Flanders Hamlet Heritage Area Report (FL HHAR #27) and determined as eligible for consideration as a town designated landmark by the survey of historic resources completed in July 2014 for the town of Southampton (AKRF FL-1). Specifically, it meets the following bolded criteria as described in section 330-321 (B) (1) of the town codes:

- (a) Possesses special character or historic or aesthetic interest of value as part of the cultural, political, economic or social history of the locality, region, state or nation;**
- (b) Is identified with historic personages or is the site of an historic event in the Town, state, or nation;
- (c) Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type, period, or style or contains elements of design, details, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation;**
- (d) Is the work of a designer, engineer, builder, artist, or architect whose work has significantly influenced an age;
- (e) Because of a unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood;**
- (f) Qualifies for inclusion on the State or National Registers of Historic Places.

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<sup>5</sup> There are no direct descendants of Samuel Huntington (1731-1796). He did not have children of his own, but with his wife, adopted his brother's two children.



*The trunk that remains at the Thomas E. Dunbar home. Courtesy of the present home owner.*



## Newspaper References

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too Arthur M. Havens of Flanders has the con- W  
red tract to erect two two story and attic frame W  
our cottages for A. J. and Thomas Dunbar. Se  
re- George Wigh of Mineola has the contract  
an to erect a two story and attic frame cottage

*Brooklyn Daily Eagle, April 1, 1895*

### *In Picturesque Flanders.*

FLANDERS, L. I., June 8.—This is one of the most picturesque little villages to be found on eastern Long Island, situated on the Great Peconic Bay. Its advantages for yachting, bathing, fishing, &c., cannot be surpassed. Its seclusion is one of its greatest attractions. It is four miles from Riverhead, the nearest railway station. People who wish retirement from the city are charmed with this quaint little town. The climate is healthful and delightful. A large number of persons come here annually, many cottages are being erected, and Flanders is fast coming to the front as a Summer resort. The prospects are bright for the coming season.

The Flanders Club has its home here. It is composed of such men as Hugh D. Auchincloss, Louis C. Clark, Newbold T. Lawrence, Henry C. Mortimer, Frederick R. Townsend, Henry O. Havemeyer, George C. Clark, John B. Lawrence, Jr., John I. Lawrence, Samuel T. Peters, Charles T. Vandartvoord, Henry G. Wusner, and David Downs, Jr.

The Dunbar brothers, well-known actors, are building new cottages here this season.

**The New York Times**

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