

Russell'n Through the Leaves

A Genealogy Detective Story

By Jeffrey T. Dickerman

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If it can be said that our ancestors are the roots of our family tree, then surely the living descendants would be the leaves. And like leaves, the descendants of our distant ancestors seem to be scattered by the winds. My own family was likewise scattered and landed here in Michigan. My great-great-great grandmother left her home in New Hampshire to take shelter and comfort with a brother in Michigan. Her husband had died in a failed quest to find fortune in the gold fields of California.

As time and generations passed the descendants lost track of one another. Younger generations replaced the older ones and occasionally someone might try to recall who was related to whom, but memories fail and relationships fade. By the fourth and fifth generations, many ancestors were forgotten and the descendants, now distant cousins, became strangers. But eventually, someone decided to piece together the family tree. Inquiries were made. Letters were written and a new correspondence began. This is the story of one of those searches for distant cousins.

So it was in 1986 when a letter arrived at my grandfather's mailbox. My Granddad, Edward Henry Dickerman, a jolly man always with a twinkle in his eye received the letter. The letter began:

Dear Sir:

I am doing a little research on the Dickerman ancestry. I got your name from the telephone book and wondered if there was any connection between you and Edward H. Dickerman who was born on February 20, 1840 who lived in Fenton, Michigan. He was married to Elvira G. Colwell, and he should be my great uncle. He, Mary Diantha, James H. and his mother Mary (Russell) Dickerman went to Michigan around 1851 or shortly after, her husband Samuel R. Dickerman died in California. My great-grandfathers were Samuel R. Dickerman and also Albert L Dickerman, Edward's brothers, who stayed in New Hampshire.

The letter was dated January 20, 1986. Its author was Russell E. Dickerman of New Hampshire.



*Russell E. Dickerman and his 1948 Indian motorcycle
at the farm in Millford, N.H. - 1949.*

Now, Grandpa Dickerman wasn't much interested in genealogy but his son, James Samuel Dickerman, my Uncle Jim, had been doing research of his own for some time. In 1980 he had published the lineage of his own son, John Dickerman. He was happy to receive Russ's letter.

In 1986, I was stationed at Camp Pendleton in California with the U.S. Marine Corps and first heard word of Russ's letter while visiting Jim's daughter, Susan, in San Diego. I believe it was Christmas time and Jim and Cara were visiting from their home in northern California. Later on, Uncle Jim mailed a copy of Russ's letter to me along with other genealogy information including copies of letters from Albert Dickerman, James Russell, and other members of the family. Most of these letters and documents were dated between 1867 and 1901. But back to Russ's letter.

Russ went on to describe an old letter in his possession written by Edward H. Dickerman to George H.A. Dickerman, Russ's grandfather. This letter was dated Mary 17, 1895. The text of that letter explained that Edward's father, and George's "Grandfather Dickerman went to California in 1849 & died there in 1851." In the letter, Edward went on to say:

Fenton March 17th 1895
Dear Nephew & niece
Your most welcome
letter came to hand in due season & we were
glad to hear from you & I hope that
we can keep up the correspondence & keep
track of one another. it seems as though
our family is destined to be separated any way
we have always been separated & can't seem to
keep track of one another. I will give you a little
sketch of the family history & you can see
for your self how things are scattered.
Your Grandfather Dickerman went to California
in (1849) & died there in (1851) my mother
with three children came to Mich. (James
myself & Sister Diantha) leaving in N.H.
Charles & Albert. your father was already in
Mich came here direct from the Mexican
war to live with Uncle Albert - Russell
my mother's brother that is how we came to
move to Mich. Mother & her family were

"My mother with three children came to Mich. (James, myself & Sister Diantha) leaving in N.H. Charles & Albert. Your father [Samuel R. Dickerman] was already in Mich. Came here direct from the Mexican War to live with Uncle Albert Russell my mother's brother. That is how we came to move to Mich. Mother and her families were raised in Mason, N.H. & Father's folks in Vermont. Most of Father's folk now live in Minnesota."

This 1895 letter went on to describe the rest of Edward's immediate family:

"My father died in California. Mother and Diantha died and are buried in Gratiot County Mich. Brother James is buried in

Washington D.C. & your father we do not know where but down south somewhere & the living, are scattered as bad as the dead." Edward went on to describe his brother James' children still living in Michigan and of the "pleasant visit" he had in New Hampshire the short time he was there.

From your affectionate Uncle
E.H. Dickerman

The 1895 letter was signed, "from your affectionate Uncle, E.H. Dickerman."

So it seems that even a hundred years ago our family tried to remain in contact with each other, with an interest in keeping the family history together and to remember where we each came from. Somehow part of the memory was lost somewhere along the way. Russ's letter put it simply:

I do not know who Mary & Albert Russell's parents were, only that they were of Mason, New Hampshire. The book states of Nashua but I don't believe so. Nevertheless, I would like to hear from you.

Uncle Jim had responded to Russ's letter and eventually, I too, began a correspondence with Russ. Russ and his wife, Geri, sent me an incredible amount of material regarding this part of the family - pedigree charts, letters, maps, and photographs of family members and gravestones. Uncle Jim and I talked about it and challenged each other to discover who Mary (Russell) Dickerman's parents may have been. Jim had forwarded copies of all his documents to me about this same time. It was the old letters from the late 1800's that especially fascinated me. I believed that they held the clues needed to unravel this mystery. One letter in particular, from James Russell, captivated my attention for quite some time. I believe the original copy of this letter is in the possession of Jim.

The letter was dated June 19, 1886 and was addressed from "Greenville, N.H." and began:

Greenville, N.H., June 19, 1886.
Dear Cousin Ed,
Yours of 3rd came in all right, in due time, and found us all alive and feeling about "midelling."
Was very glad to hear from you and hardly knew whether it was my turn to write to you.
We have just had a nice rain, and everything is looking gay. Hope your crops will be all right this year, and worth something.
Am sorry you have been having such an unpleasant time settling your father's estate, but none of us "craves" at such times is the rule rather than the exception.
I settled my account last Tuesday on an estate of 15 or 16,000, after two years and a half of fighting among the heirs, during which they

"Dear Cousin Ed,

Yours of 3rd came in all right in due time, and found us all alive and feeling about 'midelling.'"

The letter goes on to talk about a Mrs. Bolles and "an estate of 15 or \$16,000 after two years and a half of fighting among the heirs." James Russell was quite resolute in his belief that Mrs. Bolles had been wronged in this family dispute. There was mention in the letter of "a lot of spoons" which were "divided among the nephews and nieces of Mrs. Bolles." Yet, Mrs. Bolles was apparently still alive at the time and quite upset by the whole affair.

I thought to myself that James Russell was probably a nephew of Mary Russell Dickerman and her brother, Albert G. Russell. Finding his parents might lead to the parents of Mary and Albert. I had mentioned this theory to my wife, Tina, many times and said that if I

ever got back east I would want to check the probate offices. Possibly, there would be court records of this probate matter. Perhaps this estate would lead us to the parents of James Russell and ultimately to Mary Russell's parents, as well.

Well, years passed. I had already checked local sources for information on Albert Russell and had even found his grave in Hubbardston, Michigan. Mary Russell had remarried in Michigan to the first pioneer of Gratiot County, Arnold Payne. She lived north of Maple Rapids, in “the wilderness” as described by Edward H. in one of his letters. Her daughter and Edward’s sister, Diantha, died a young woman and was buried not far from Albert Payne and Mary (Russell) Dickerman’s grave in the “old Payne cemetery” now known as Fulton Township cemetery.

Dorr Dickerman and his wife are buried at Fulton as well. I have tried to contact Dorr’s descendants but as yet have been unsuccessful.



Over the years I had visited Hubbardston and Ionia, the county seat, looking for clues to Albert Russell’s parentage. Finding Albert’s gravestone in October of 2000 with my children provided the date of his death so we could look for an obituary.



Jenna and Lee Dickerman
Gravestone of Albert G. Russell

The local newspaper known as the *Hubbardston Advertiser* had long since ceased publication. Many locals have helped in the search for the late September issue of 1878, but to no avail. I have searched the microfiche at the Library of Michigan but nothing is available from 1878. An old copy of the paper may surface at some point in time but even recent contact with Hubbardston residents and historians has not yielded an obituary or any additional information.

The *Ionia Sentinel* newspaper has been published continuously since the mid-1800’s. Though difficult to read on the negative microfiche, I was able to locate Albert’s death announcement and a report of his funeral on page one of the October 4, 1878 issue. The paper did not mention his parents or origin and could not help solve the Russell mystery.

Meanwhile, Russ and Geri had scoured the vital record sources in New Hampshire without finding any birth information for either Albert G. or Mary Russell. The mystery continued.

At some point in the search I had come across a microfiche listing of probate records here in Michigan and found reference to a file in Gratiot County for Samuel R. Dickerman. The entry was listed as:

HUBBARDSTON
The Fair – Death of A.G. Russell.

Mr. A. G. Russell died on Thursday night and was buried on Sunday with Masonic honors, the lodge at Maple Rapids participating. Services at the Cong'l church. Mr. R. was one of the earliest settlers of H. and has been identified with its business interests from the very beginning. The village owes not a little to the labor and public spirit of Mr. Russell. In fact, the beginning of our present thriving fair association is very largely due to him. He was, we believe, about 63 years of age; though much worn and broken by care, he looked somewhat older.

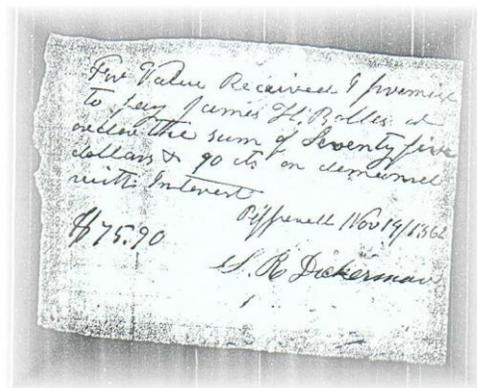
DOMI

The funeral services of A.G. Russell were held at the Congregational church, under the pastoral conduct of Rev. W. Hanson, editor of the *New Covenant*. Few men in any community are missed as Mr. Russell will be in this; having been a citizen in this vicinity for nearly forty years, and largely identifying himself with the various public enterprises which always are necessary in a growing community. The Masonic fraternity (of which he was a Royal Arch member) turned out in large force, there being full delegations from Ionia, Palo, Carson and Maple Rapids. Probably not less than 500 people were in attendance at the funeral.

*from the Ionia Sentinel
dated October 4, 1878.*

Dickerman, Samuel R. North Shade and Nashua, N.H. lost during War.
Adm. Albert G. Russell. Ionia Co. June 2, 1868.
Heirs- Mrs. Samuel N. Dickerman, Nashua, N.H.
James H. Bolles, Pepperell, Mass, creditor.
2 minor ch. Nashua, N.H.
Albert G. Russell, creditor.
Sur. W. Reynolds and N.J. Rogers.
Wit. A.D. Luce and M.R. Weatherwax.

Just recently, I finally visited the courthouse in Ithaca, the Gratiot County seat. Though the file did not provide any additional evidence or clues to the parents of Albert or Mary, I photocopied everything that seemed important. Included among the documents was a promissary note signed by Samuel (S. R.) Dickerman to James H. Bolles. Was this James H. Bolles related to the Mrs. Bolles mentioned in James Russell's letter and also in Edward H. Dickerman's letters? It seemed likely.



Samuel R. Dickerman was the oldest of the nine children of Samuel Dickerman and Mary Russell. At least three of the boys – Samuel R., James H., and Edward H. Dickerman fought on the Union

side in the Civil War. James was wounded but survived for a time, but died in 1868. Edward saw action at Blackburns Ford, the First Bull Run, the Peninsular Campaign, the Siege of York Town, Williamsburg, and Fair Oaks. He was discharged October 14, 1862. Samuel R., the oldest, was already a veteran of the Mexican War when the Civil War broke out. Samuel joined the New Hampshire regiment in 1861.

According to the 1867 petition of Albert G. Russell in the matter of his estate in Michigan,

“..sometime in the year A.D. 1863, he the said Samuel R. Dickerman wandered away from his said Regt. And was lost and has not been heard of by any of his Comrades and friends from such time to this time.”

Further,

“Petitioner is informed and verily believes with out deception, where he was heard of as being Confined as a prisoner of war at Andersonville in the State of Georgia.”

Samuel R. Dickerman was never heard from again and is believed to have died at Andersonville. A late addition to the file is a letter dated June 28, 1885 and written by George H.A. Dickerman. In this letter, he writes,

“...I will say that he [Samuel R. Dickerman] was taken a prisoner and died at Andersonville prison just before the close of the war. The last time he was heard from was when two of the men that went out in the same regiment escaped and reported that he was there & suffering from the effects of prison hardship.”

I believe all this information had already been known to Russ & Geri Dickerman, but include it here for completeness. We have openly speculated that the “R” in his name may have stood for Samuel Russell Dickerman though I am not yet aware of any evidence to support this.

So after many years of searching we were really no closer to finding the parents Mary and Albert G. Russell. I hoped that I might someday find time to make a trip back east to meet Russ and Geri and follow up the James Russell lead. Maps of the area indicated that Greenville was just west of Mason, New Hampshire. Russ & Geri lived just to the northeast in Milford.



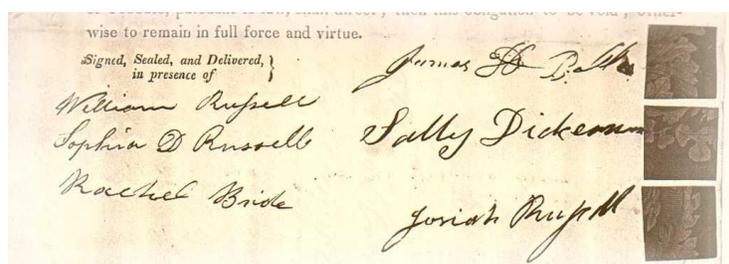
Samuel R. Dickerman
(1828- 1864)

Then, for Christmas 2001, my wife Tina presented me with the most thoughtful gift. Inside a hand-painted Christmas ornament was a long tale about a couple who had always dreamed of owning a Bavarian-style bed-and-breakfast like the ones they visited in Europe. The story, written on a single long strand of paper, went on to say how they fulfilled this dream by building one at their home in Milford, New Hampshire. Tina’s gift to me was a trip back east to finally meet Russ & Geri and to do a little research. I think it’s the best Christmas gift I’ve ever received.



On Thursday, January 24th, Tina and I flew into Boston airport for a 3-day weekend visit. We rented a car and drove to Nashua and Milford. We met Russ & Geri that night and after breakfast the next morning, they escorted us to the Probate Office in Nashua where we spent most of the day looking for Russells and the Bolles record in particular.

There were a number of files which helped us to piece together part of the story. In particular, File No. O2715 for “*Dickerman, Samuel, et. al.*” described the fate of Samuel, Amos, Alonso, and Lydia Dickerman, the children of John and Sally (Dakin) Dickerman. John⁷ was the son of Samuel⁶ and Persis (Richardson) Dickerman and an uncle to Samuel⁸ R. and Edward⁸ H. Dickerman. John died October 12, 1838 and, according to the court documents, James H. Bolles became their guardian. The court petition was signed by William Rufsell, Sophia D. Russell, Rachel Bride, James H. Bolles, Sally Dickerman, and



Josiah Rufsell. Undoubtedly all were relatives of the children in some way.

The file also includes specific requests by Sally Dickerman and Milo Dickerman, each dated Nov. 5, 1838, that James H. Bolles be appointed guardian of the minor children including Milo, who was over the age of fourteen. Apparently, James Bolles and his wife, Dorcas Bolles, kindly took in the Dickerman children - these cousins to Samuel R. and Edward H. But still, that did not tie in a relationship that would lead directly to the parents of Mary and Albert Russell.

The next file of interest, File No. 8195, was dated many years later and entitled "Guardianship of Dorcas R. Bolles." The original petition date appears to be December 4th, 1882. Apparently, Dorcas was deemed to be "an insane person" though my understanding is that after the affairs of Mary Todd Lincoln it was quite fashionable to deem women insane in those days. In any event, Dorcas Bolles came to be under the guardianship of James Russell - the same James Russell in correspondence with E.H. Dickerman. Indeed, this file includes a petition dated 29th of November, 1882 by Edward H. Dickerman of Tyrone, Livingston County, Michigan recommending James Russell "of Mason" to be appointed guardian. The part that caught my attention was that Edward was listed as "next of kin and heir" indicated a blood relationship to Dorcas R. Bolles.

To the Hon. Judge of Probate for the County of Hillsborough :

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS. *Edward H. Dickerman* - at law
of *Tyrone, Livingston Co. Mich.* in said county, a next of kin and heir
of *Dorcas R. Bolles* of said *County of Hillsborough* that
said *Dorcas R. Bolles* has been decreed to be an insane person, and that a guardian
should be appointed over ~~him~~ *her*

Your petitioner respectfully recommends *James Russell*
of *Mason* as a suitable person for that trust, and prays said
James Russell may be appointed accordingly, and the said *James Russell*
hereby consents to take upon himself said trust of guardian.

Dated the *29th* day of *November* 18*82*.
Edward H. Dickerman

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, }
Hillsborough, S. S. } At a Court of Probate holden at
in said County, on the _____ day of _____ A. D. 18 ____ :

Upon due consideration of the foregoing petition :— It is decreed, that letters of Guardianship issue to
the said _____ accordingly.

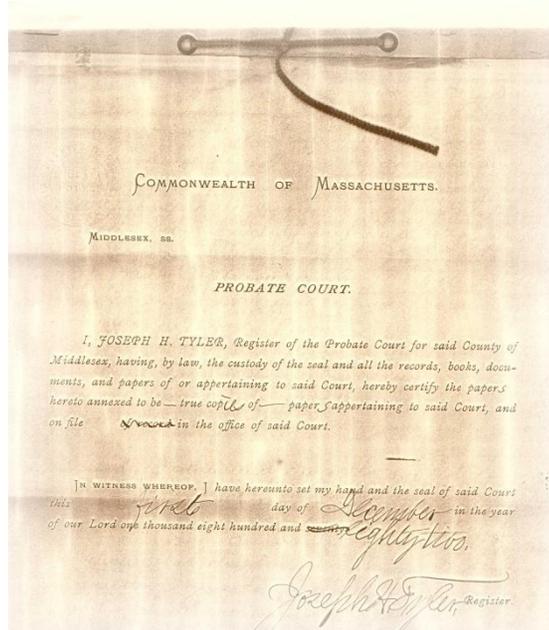
Judge of Probate.

Another petition in this file was signed by James Russell, Flora L. Russell, Ellen M. Goldsmith, Jennie L. Russell, Jason Russell, and Warner Russell. So there was a definite close relationship

between these Russells and E.H. Dickerman. The guardianship was eventually awarded to James Russell, which lead us to the last file we dug out of the archives – the “Estate of James H. Bolles.”

James & Dorcas Bolles were actually residents of Pepperell, Massachusetts in Middlesex County. The Hillsborough County Probate Office in Nashua, New Hampshire lists the matter as File No. 8193 and includes the documents from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Middlesex County Probate Court.

The file includes the full text of the Last Will & Testament of James H. Bolles. Evidently, James Bolles was a man of substance at the time and had built a valuable estate. The will was dated October 7th, 1882. James Bolles left a “lot of land” and \$200 to Frank Bolles Dickerman, “otherwise called Frank D. Bolles.” As yet, I have been unable to determine exactly who Frank Dickerman was. It’s likely that he was one of the Dickerman children who James and Dorcas had assumed guardianship over. However, Frank is not listed as one of the children of John and Sally (Dakin) Dickerman in the *Dickerman Genealogy* book¹. It’s altogether possible that he retained the name Frank Bolles.



James H. Bolles had also listed a specific bequest to Elizabeth Dickerman a sum of \$300 “in her own right.” Elizabeth (Bennett) Dickerman was the wife of Enoch Dickerman, a son of John and Sally Dickerman. An amount of \$800 per year was to be paid from his estate to his wife, Dorcas R. Bolles. Remember that by 1882 Dorcas had been deemed to be insane and was under the guardianship of James Russell. The balance of his estate had been left to Samuel P. Shattuck, “of said Pepperell, in trust, with full power to sell, invest, and reinvest as may be for the interest of the estate...” Further, James had specifically stated that “I give all the rest, and residue of my estate to the Town of Pepperell for the erection of a High School Building for the town, and for no other purpose whatever.”



I do not pretend to understand what had transpired between James Russell and James Bolles, but it seems apparent that there was some animosity. We probably will never know. James Bolles died within a month of the drafting of this final will. No where within the records is James listed as an heir of Dorcas Bolles, so Tina and I began to suspect that he was

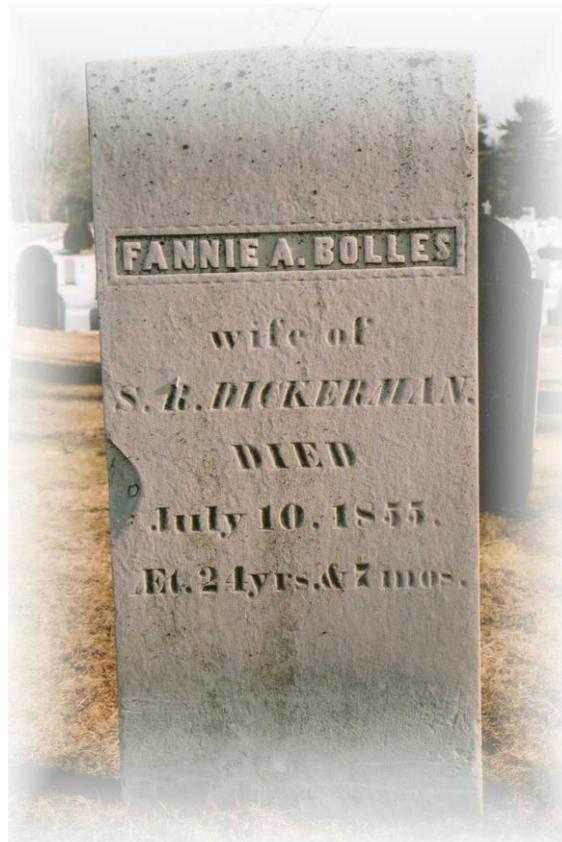
¹ *Dickerman Genealogy*, prepared and published by Edward Dwight Dickerman and George Sherwood Dickerman, 1897, with a supplement added by G.S. Dickerman in 1922. Printed by The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1922. Ref: page 113.

perhaps a brother. It seemed obvious that there was some close connection between James and Dorcas. We speculated that the "R" in Dorcas R. Bolles was for "Russell." Perhaps Dorcas was a sister to James but we needed further proof.

We were able to locate the grave of James H. Bolles in Pepperell, Mass. His marker stands alone and leans to one side. The top is gone but the letters are still easy enough to read: "JAMES H. BOLLES - Died Nov. 5, 1882 - AE. 72 yrs." Some distance away we found two other markers. The oldest, a tall slate marker for James Albert (died June 16, 1838, Aged 5 Weeks), Lucy Mary (died July 9, 1848, Aged 10 days), and Julie Lorena (died Sept. 3, 1844, Aged 16 days) had the following engraving: "Children of James H. & Dorcas R. BOLLES."

Next to this stone was the marker of Fannie Bolles. It reads:

FANNIE A. BOLLES
wife of
S.R. DICKERMAN
DIED
July 10, 1855
AE. 24 yrs. & 7 mos.



Russ and Geri explained that they had come across a record of marriage between Samuel R. Dickerman and Francena Ann Bolles, dated March 12, 1855. But I think they were previously unaware of this marker in the Pepperell cemetery. Incredibly, Russ had in his possession a lock of Fannie's blond hair which had evidently been saved by Samuel and had passed down through the family. So here was yet another connection between the Dickerman family and the Bolles family. But still we were no closer to solving the Russell mystery. More research was still needed.

Later, I searched the internet for additional records or clues. At the Genealogy.com site I found reference to the marriage of James Bolles and Dorcas Russell on Jan. 27, 1835 in Charlestown,

James Bolles found in:
Marriage Index: Massachusetts, 1633-1850
Married: Jan 27, 1835 in: Charlestown, Suffolk Co., MA
Gender: M This record can be found at: Family History Library, Salt Lake City, UT, Film # 0740994-0740995.
Spouse name: Russell, Dorcas
Data Introduction

James Bolles found in:
Military Records: Connecticut Officers and Soldiers, 1700s-1800s

Suffolk Co., Massachusetts. Still later, Tina and I were able to locate records from "The Genealogies and Estates of Charlestown, in the County of Middlesex and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1629-1818" compiled by Thomas Bellows Wyman yet another clue. On page 97 is listed the estate of David and

Lucy (Stone) Bolles, who had "issue" or children: David, b. Nov. 7, 1806, Lucy, May 7, 1808, James-Harrison, Aug, 18, 1809, and another James-Harrison b. March 23, 1811. I believe that this second James-Harrison (the first undoubtedly died an infant) is the same James H. Bolles buried in Pepperell. Further research may bear this out.

In any event, we were now able to show that James H. Bolles had married Dorcas Russell and they had at least three children who died in infancy, and in 1838 they took into their care the children of John and Sally Dickerman after John had died. It seemed more obvious than ever that there must be a blood relationship.

We now knew that Mary (Russell) Dickerman and Albert G. Russell were brother and sister. It seemed very likely that Dorcas (Russell) Bolles was also a sister, but who were the parents? We still did not have this answer but it was time for Tina and I to return home. After just a few days we said our goodbyes to Russ and Geri. They had so graciously shown us the area and were the perfect hosts. They showed us the house in Francestown built by our mutual ancestor, Samuel Dickerman, who participated in the Boston Tea Party and the Battle of Bunker Hill. They showed us the village of Mason where Mary Russell's family was originally from. We visited cemeteries and saw some of the homes of the early Russells. And we all vowed to continue the search until the Russell mystery was solved.

Tina and I continued the research in Michigan looking again for clue to the parents of Albert G. Russell. We visited the Grand Rapids library looking for hints regarding Dorcas and James Bolles. But it was Russ and Geri who finally solved the mystery by re-visiting the Mason Historical Society. On January 30th, 2002, they found the Mason Historical Society Research Room above the town offices open for visitors. Inside is an old hand-written journal that contains the original record of house calls made by Dr. Willis Johnson of Jaffrey, New Hampshire. Jaffrey is west of Mason but Dr. Willis practiced in Mason. Interestingly, this is the same Willis Johnson who made the following entry in the town records of Mason on April 4, 1828:

"Mr. Samuel Dickerman of Dunstable N.H. & Miss Mary Russell of Mason were joined in marriage by me."

Willis Johnson, Justice Peace.

According to Russ, "this medical record book was very hard to read, all info on one line and the ink was thin." Under the entry for William Russell was the following:

1819	to visit <i>Albert</i>	.22	(The cost for the visit - 22¢)
1825	to visit <i>Martha</i>	.42	
	to visit <i>Diantha</i>	.50	
Sept. 10 1818	to visit <i>Dorcas</i>	.32	
1813	to visit <i>Columbo</i>		
	to visit <i>Sephrenia?</i>		
	to visit <i>Sylvinie?</i>		

So here was a Russell family with children, Albert, Diantha, Dorcas, and others. The parents were William and Polly Russell. Though Mary is not listed (perhaps she never required a doctor's visit), the fact that she named her own daughter Mary Diantha suggests a close relation to this Diantha. Couple this with the fact that we KNOW that our Mary Russell had a brother Albert and we have what I believe to be very strong evidence of the relationship.

William Russell and Polly Dakin were married on Dec. 15, 1805 by Rev. Ebenezer Hill. Polly, also known as Mary, was a sister of Sally Dakin - the same Sally (Dakin) Dickerman whose children were taken in by James and Dorcas Bolles. So Dorcas (Russell) Bolles took in her aunt's

children when Sally's husband (John Dickerman) died. This all fits nicely into place. Further research shows that Sally and Polly Dakin had another sister, Dorcas, among many others. Their parents were Amos Dakin (son of Amos and Sarah [Minot] Dakin) and Mary Kingsley. The genealogy records of the Dakin family extends back beyond John Dakin [b. 1607], the original immigrant ancestor who came to America with his wife, Alice, and son Thomas aboard the ship "Abigail". Likewise, the Minot family history extends back to England to John "The Elder" Minott, born in 1550 in Essex.

On the Russell side, William lived and died in Mason. We found his grave at the Poll Hill Cemetery. The inscription on his tombstone reads simply:

WILLIAM RUSSELL
Son of
JASON RUSSELL
Born Oct. 6, 1779.
Died Dec. 13, 1849.

It is my belief that William Russell must have been the son of Jason Russell, who in turn was the son of Jason Russell of Menotomy, Massachusetts.



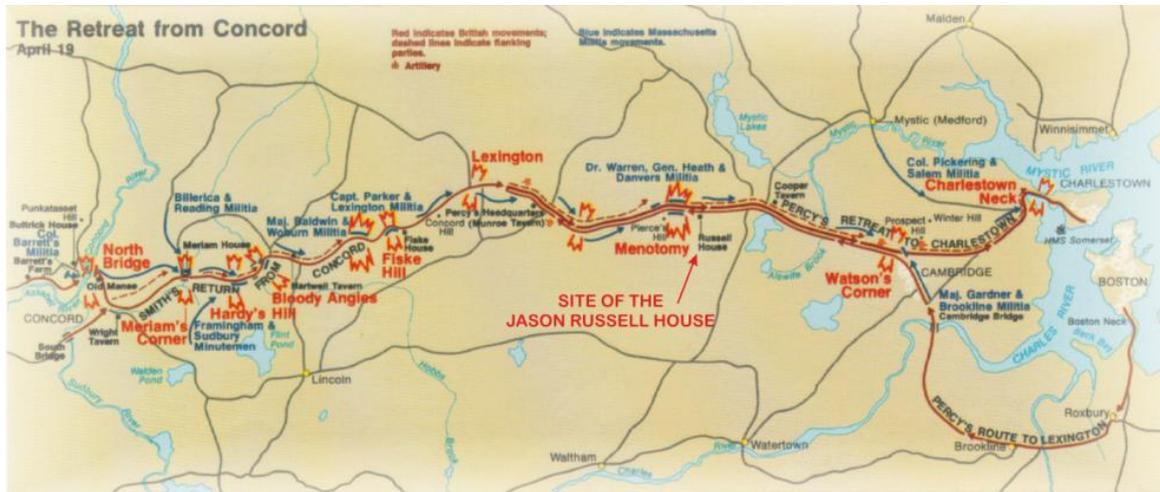
William's father, Jason Russell, is listed in the *"History of the town of Mason, N.H."*, written in 1858 by John Boynton Hill, as one of the early settlers. In fact, on page 219 of that text, Jason Russell is shown to have arrived in Mason in 1769 with brothers John and Hubbard

Russell, and their sister, Elizabeth Webber, wife of Dea. Jotham Webber joining Jason soon after. According to the text, *"Each brought up a numerous family, and lived to old age, Jason to 84, John 86, Hubbard 88 years, and Mrs. Webber 82 years."*

Jason Russell's ancestry is well documented on the internet and through a variety of historical documents. He was born in Menotomy, Massachusetts, the son of Jason Russell and Elizabeth Winship. He appears to have been the eldest of at least nine children including John, Hubbard, and Elizabeth. Jason and his wife Elizabeth Locke, lived and died in Mason raising young William and the other children including Jason, Jonathan, Josiah, Elizabeth, Samuel, Benjamin and Thomas. Elizabeth died in 1789 but Jason lived 83 years until his death on February 19th, 1825.

The father, Jason Russell, was born January 25th, 1716/17 and was killed on the steps of his home on April 19th, 1775 during the British retreat from Lexington and Concord.





Map of the British Retreat during the battle of Lexington and Concord.

It was this Jason Russell who, at the age of nearly 60 stood against the British army and uttered the famous words “**An Englishman’s home is his castle**” refusing to leave. He was shot twice and bayoneted to death defending his home. The actions at Jason Russell’s house that day in 1775 were, as described by Sally Rogers, “the bloodiest fighting on the first day of the American Revolution.”

Parson Cooke is said to have written the inscription for the gravestone:

“Mr. Jason Russell, was barbarously murdered, in his own House, by Gages bloody Troops on y^e 19th of April, 1775 Ætat^s.

His body is quietly resting in this Grave with Eleven of our friends, who, in Like manner, with many others, were cruelly Slain on that fatal day. Blessed are y^e dead who die in y^e Lord.”

Jason Russell’s home is now listed in the National Register of Historical Places and maintained by the Arlington Historical Society. The Society acquired the Jason Russell House in 1923. It has since been turned it in to a museum. Visitors today can take an online tour or see the house in person. Bullet holes from that day so many years ago can still be seen as a visual reminder of that battle.

Though Tina and I did not have time to make the drive to Arlington, my sister, Judy (Dickerman) Craig, was fortunate enough to travel back east not long after our visit with Russ and Jeri. Judy is shown here in front of the Jason Russell House.



Judy (Dickerman) Craig at the Jason Russell House.

Built by Jason in 1740, the house initially had “but two rooms, one above the other, with the chimney and staircase on the north side” according to the Society website. As of the time of this revision the Society still provides the online tour of the Jason Russell House here: <http://www.arlingtonhistorical.org/house/tour.php>

The Revolutionary War hero Jason Russell’s genealogy has been well documented with father Hubbard Russell and mother Elizabeth Dickson. Hubbard was the son of Jason Russell and Mary Hubbard. This Jason was the son of the original immigrant ancestor William Russell who first ventured to these shores around 1636, about the same time as Thomas Dickerman.



So, after many years, it seems we have discovered the origins of Mary (Russell) Dickerman, Great-Great-Grandmother of my uncle, James Samuel Dickerman, and father, Wilford Gene Dickerman. With the help of my good cousins and friends, Russ and Geri Dickerman, of Nashua, New Hampshire, I believe this mystery is now solved.

Though Russ and I both continue to search for some sort of formal documentation tying our Mary (Russell) Dickerman to the father, William Russell, I have no doubt the connection is real. William had a son, Albert G. Russell, the same as our Mary’s brother, Albert G. Russell of Hubbardston, Michigan. Though his obituary and formal records neglect to identify his parents, I am still convinced.

This journey has allowed Tina and I to connect with our distance cousins, “leaves” who have long scattered but are now friends again. Though we go about our busy lives in this digital age, it is comforting to know that we are still all connected. Many thanks to my Uncle Jim for challenging me to make this effort, and for the help of Russ and Geri, and especially for my wife, Tina, for her unwavering support in my genealogy pursuits.



*Russ and Geri Dickerman with Tina and Jeff Dickerman
Nashua, New Hampshire - January 2002*



Addendum: March 2011

Over the years, several more “leaves” – distant cousins – have been found. Our good cousins and friends, Owen and Lee Dickerman, visited not long after our visit to New Hampshire. It turns out Owen Louis Dickerman and his son, James Dickerman, are also descendants Samuel and Mary (Russell) Dickerman. During their visit to Michigan and our home in the spring of 2002, we visited the grave of Owen’s Great-Great Grandmother, Mary Russell Dickerman.



*Jeff and Tina Dickerman with Owen and Lee Dickerman
Lowell, Michigan – May 2002*

Owen’s lineage parallels Russ’s, and Jim’s and my father Bill’s own lineage. Other cousins have been in contact as well, including Jacqui Dickerman.

I will continue to track down as many of these missing “leaves” as possible and challenge future genealogists to do the same. For now, here is my current listing of the descendants of Samuel James Dickerman and Mary Russell. Though I know the list is incomplete, I’m also confident we will find and contact more distant cousins over the coming months and years.

- ❖ Samuel James and Mary (Russell) Dickerman
 - Samuel R. and Sophia (Blood) Dickerman
 - George Henry Ainsworth and Martha L. Dickerman *
 - Sophia Elizabeth Dickerman
 - Arlie May Dickerman
 - Ruby Winona Dickerman
 - John Howard Russell Dickerman
 - Albert Parker Dickerman
 - Doris Lurene Dickerman
 - George Henry Ainsworth Dickerman
 - Edgar Raynald and Ethelyn F. (Adams) Dickerman
 - ◆ Russell E. and Geraldine S. (Watson) Dickerman
 - William R. Dickerman (died young in 1841)
 - Charles A. and Catherine (Madden) Dickerman
 - Edward H. and Mary Bridget F. (Shea) Dickerman
 - Charles A. Dickerman
 - Owen H. Dickerman
 - ◆ Dorothy Dickerman
 - ◆ Virginia Dickerman
 - John Albert Dickerman
 - ◆ John Albert Dickerman (“Al”)
 - ◆ Owen Louis Dickerman
 - James and Nancy Dickerman
 - Justin Dickerman
 - Alexandra Dickerman
 - Natasha Dickerman
 - ◆ Mary Dickerman
 - Albert L. and (? Robbins) Dickerman [living in Canada in 1867]
 - Martha L. and George Henry Ainsworth Dickerman [see * above]
 - James H. and Eliza (Paine) Dickerman
 - Dorr and Ida (?) Dickerman
 - Warren J. Dickerman
 - Frances Dickerman
 - Mary Dickerman
 - Nelson M. Dickerman [died young]
 - Edward Henry and Elvira E. (Colwell) Dickerman
 - Mary Russell (Dickerman) and Peter Moore
 - John G. Dickerman [died young]
 - Ada A. (Dickerman) and Jay R. Barbour
 - Maurice Barbour
 - Wilford Harry Barbour
 - Christopher Columbus Dickerman [died young]
 - Samuel James and Bessie Elizabeth (Disbrow) Dickerman
 - Mary Elvira (Dickerman) and Henry Clinton Gregory
 - ◆ Jacqueline Gregory [died young]
 - ◆ Thomas Clinton Gregory

- ◆ Richard Henry Dickerman and Betty (Dann)
 - Keith Gregory
 - Brian Gregory
 - Greg Gregory
- Edward Henry and Vivian (Brown) Dickerman
 - ◆ James Samuel and Cara Mae (Mudd) Dickerman
 - Susan Jaye (Dickerman) and Timothy Smith
 - Leah Smith
 - Todd Smith
 - Jane Marlene (Dickerman) and Edward Zavala
 - Jenna Zavala
 - John Edward Dickerman
 - ◆ Wilford Gene and Jo Anne (Underwood) Dickerman
 - Debra Jo (Dickerman) and Daryl Dann
 - Lori Anne (Dickerman) and Douglas Orser
 - Thomas Edwin Cox [father: Edwin Cox]
 - Andrew Paul Orser and Jillian Marie (Johnson)
 - Jewel Marie Orser
 - Dakota Paul Orser
 - Jaxon Thor Orser
 - Cody William Orser and Katrina Miller
 - Adam William Orser [mother: Kristi Orser]
 - Lillianna Elizabeth Orser
 - Judy Ellen (Dickerman) and Robert Craig
 - Bobbi Rae (Craig) and Jeremiah Bouchard
 - Dennis James Craig and Renee May (Kinder)
 - Leigh Ann (Craig) and Adam White
 - Billie Elaine (Dickerman) and Petter Sigurd Syse
 - Kristin Sevara Syse
 - Jannike Elaine Syse
 - Bjorn Olav Syse
 - Edward Gene and Jodi (Elliott) Dickerman
 - Bridget Elliott (Dickerman) and Dustin Demar Carroll
 - Mason Demar Carroll
 - Brody Edward Carroll
 - Talan Dale Carroll
 - Loree Lynn Carroll
 - Brittany Jo (Dickerman) and Corey James Mirrasoul
 - Landon James Mirrasoul
 - Jeffrey Todd and Tina Marie (Csolkovits) Dickerman
 - Jenna Lynn (Dickerman) [mother: Jane Sedlacek] and Christopher Curtis
 - Edward Lee Dickerman [mother: Jane Sedlacek]
- Robert James and Helen (Chahoy) Dickerman
 - Mary Diantha (Dickerman) and Lewis C. Gardner