

Belfast Has Role In It

An Irish Aside to Fourth of July

By SUSAN E. SMITH

MISS DOROTHY DENISON DUNLOP has several reasons for hanging out the flag today. Perhaps the best is that her grandfather's great uncle, John Dunlop, who was official printer to Congress, printed the Declaration of Independence.

"We don't know too much about John Dunlop except that he was born in Ireland and came to Philadelphia and that he's buried in Philadelphia. We have some letters that he wrote to his family in Ireland but they aren't very interesting," Miss Dunlop said.

What is interesting is that the press which John Dunlop used to print the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution is an historic attraction in Strabane, Northern Ireland.

Miss Dunlop learned about the press a few years ago but when she wrote in 1966 to ask if it could be purchased, she learned that the Northern Trust had bought the press and the print shop, "Gray, Printers," and was planning to restore it and the nearby farmhouse where the grandfather of President Woodrow Wilson was born. In June of 1966 Miss Dunlop was invited by the government to be a guest at the dedication ceremonies and as a souvenir she was permitted to run off her own copy of the Declaration on the press.

"There's no proof that this really was the press but the owners, the Gray brothers, believed that it was," she said. "The shop has one room downstairs and the press is upstairs. It's been restored, as you see, and there's a gold eagle on top," she said holding out photographs of the shop and press.

Miss Dunlop plans to hang out the flag today at the Cole Farm which she recently purchased. The house, just a few blocks from her home at 140 Blackstone Blvd., dates from 1731 and is rich in historical associations.

"George Washington is known to have visited the deputy governor of Rhode Island, Dairus Sessions, there. Sessions married into the Cole family," she said. Her sister, Miss Marion Dunlop, an artist, has a studio in the building.

Is there any association of her family with the flag? "We're descendants of Betsy Ross on my mother's side. We used to have a sampler in the family. Her maiden name was Claypool, and it said, 'Elizabeth Claypool is my name; America, my nation; Philadelphia, my abiding place and God, my salvation.'"

"We're also direct descendants of Mrs. McHenry. Fort McHenry was named for her husband and that's the fort that the 'Star Spangled Banner' was written about."

It is not surprising that Miss Dunlop is interested in history and is a member of several historical societies.

"I'm a member of the Mayflower Society. I'm an 11th generation descendant of John Howland and Elizabeth Tilley. Elizabeth Tilley was the last surviving passenger of the Mayflower, and she's buried in Little Neck Cemetery in Riverside.

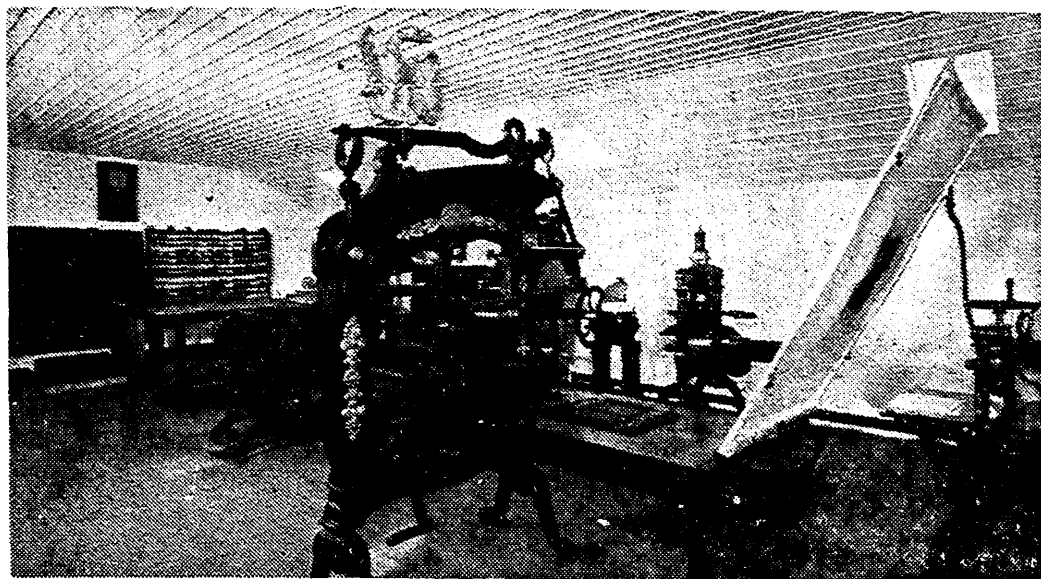
"I'm a member of the George Denison Society of Mystic, Conn. Captain George Denison was a settler of Mystic, Conn., my mother was a Denison and my father was Charles Denison Dunlop."

Miss Dunlop is also a member of the Rhode Island Historical Society and the Pilgrim John Howland Society.



—Journal-Bulletin Photo by H. RAYMOND BALL

MISS DUNLOP raises the flag at old Cole Farm for the Fourth of July.



—Photos by A&C Photography, Belfast

ABOVE is press believed to have been used to run off Declaration of Independence and, lower right, is Gray Printers in Northern Ireland where press is housed. Press has been restored.

