

"A Quaker Elopement"

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Duck Creek Monthly Meeting, Henry County, Indiana, minutes read: "1831-02mo-24 Mary Hutson (form Maudlin) Duck Creek Preparative Meeting complained of for marrying contrary to discipline and deviation from plainness. Condemned her misconduct."

This entry in Quaker records is explained in a family story handed down through several generations. Joseph and Violet (Bell) Maudlin/Modlin did not approve of their daughter's planned marriage to James Hutson. The cause of their disapproval is not known as James was the son of Quakers Nathan and Lydia (Presnall) Hutson.

"Polly" Maudlin defiantly announced her plans on the day of the planned elopement, 1831-Feb-03. Her family took action - boosted her up the ladder to the loft of their home, shut the trap door and held the would-be bride prisoner. Polly

pathetically complained of the cold prison in which she was being held so they passed a pan of coals from the fireplace up to her so she could warm herself. Her family had not reckoned with Polly's inventiveness. When she heard the commotion of the grooms arrival she set fire to a pile of wool cardings stored in the attic. Her shouts of "Fire! Fire!" brought results: she was quickly freed. Her father and brothers rushed into the task of putting out the fire while Polly rode away with her soon-to-be husband.

After many years of marriage, a large family and an 1853 migration from Henry County to the new state of Iowa, their story ends with two small markers in the Peoria Cemetery in Story County, Iowa: Rev. James Hutson, 1808-Feb-25 - 1879-Sep-25.; Mary Hutson, 1811-Dec-17 - 1892-Nov-18. This story came through their daughter, Elizabeth (Hutson) Dunlap to her son, James T. Dunlap, who passed it along to his son George Dunlap, named for his grandfather who died in the Civil War, father of Mrs. Parmenter, who first heard it as a small child, long before she knew of any connection to the Quaker religion or the possibility that the story could be verified in the minutes kept by a meeting so long ago.