Roger Dent (1470) married Anne Ferwycke

- George Dent (born 1502)
- Rawfe Dent (born 1504)
- Thomas Dent (born 1506)
- Robert Dent (born 1510)
- Richard Dent (born 1512)
- Katherine Dent (born 1514)
- William Dent, Sr. (1500-1582)
  - Christopher Dent (born 1523)
  - Edward Dent (1525-1597) married Agnes Fleminge
  - Leonard Dent (born 1529)
  - Thomas Dent (1530-1589)
  - William Dent Jr. (1531-1613) married Anne Swayne
  - John Dent (1532-1595)
  - James Dent (born 1527)

  - Peter Dent I (1575-1642)
    - George Dent (born 1598)
      - Jacob Dent (born 1633)
      - Peter Dent (born 1635)
      - James Dent (born 1637)
      - John Dent (1640-1712) married Mary Hatch
      - George Dent (died 1721)

- Cicilys Dent (born 1602) married Richard Moon
- Peter Dent II (1600-1671) married Margaret Nicholson (1602-1687)
  - Thomas Dent, Sr. (1630-1676)-emigrated to America
    - Margaret Dent (1662-1712) married Edmond Howard (1659-1712)
    - Thomas Dent, Jr. (circa 1663) married Anne Bayne
    - Peter Dent (circa 1665-1711) married 1) Elizabeth King Wilson, 2) Jane Pittman Gray
    - George Dent (1666-circa 1702)
    - Barbara Dent (1676-1754) married Colonel Thomas Brooks, Jr. (1660-1730)
Colonel William Dent, Sr. (1660-1704) married 1) Elizabeth Fowke (1668-1703), married 2) Sarah Brooke (1683-1724)

Thomas Dent (1685-1725) married Anne Bayne
William Dent (1687-1695)
Gerard Dent (??)
George Dent (1690-1754) married Anne Harbert
Peter Dent (1694-?) married Mary Brooke
Philip Dent (?? died young)
Elizabeth Dent (1688-1699)
Anne Dent (1692-??)
Elizabeth Dent (1699-??)
Colonel George Dent (died 1754)

*Peter Dent (from just above) married Mary Brook

*Peter Dent Jr.

George Dent (1765-?) married Susannah Dawson Cromwell

Frederick Fayette Dent (1786-1873) married Ellen Bury Wrenshall (died 1857) - 8 children

- John Cromwell Dent (1816-1889)
- George Wrenshall Dent (1819-1899) married Mary Isabella Shurds

- Frederick Tracy Dent (1820-1892) married Helen Louise Lynde
- Lewis Dent (1823-1874 married Ann Elizabeth Bain (1839-?)
- Ellen Wrenshall Dent (1828-1904) married Alexander Sharp (1824-1904)
- Mary Dent (died in infancy)
- Emily Marbury Dent (1836-?) married James Finnie Casey (1836-1888)
- Julia Boggs Dent (1802-1902 married Ulysses S. Grant (1822-1885)
  - Frederick Dent Grant (1850-1912)
  - Ulysses S. Grant, Jr. (1852-1929)
  - Ellen Wrenshall Grant (1855-1922)
  - Jesse Root Grant, Jr. (1858-1934)
Introduction

The Dent surname is largely associated with the states of Maryland, specifically Charles County and St. Mary’s County, and Virginia in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Prior to the appearance of the name in America, it was a surname associated with Yorkshire, Northern England. The name has a very rich and impressive history and generation after generation produced some exceptional individuals. The family seemed to have been blessed with a constant supply of male Dents which carried their name throughout English and American history. A good part of the research I completed was based almost entirely on the paternal and fraternal lineage. Information based upon the women was much harder to come upon. They were of course present throughout the family trees, but not much more than that. It was the males throughout their history who gained the most recognition. I would like to go through the origin of the Dents and clarify individual Dent biographies in order to understand when and why they came to America, and where the some of the branches ended up. In due course, the Dents would become stellar contributors to the political and public office realm in early American history.

History of Guisborough

Guisborough, North Yorkshire, England, in a village called Ormesby, is where the Dents primarily habituated and centralized. Guisborough has a long history and is probably most well known for its Priory, which dates back to 1119. This area was also well acquainted to outsiders and unruly times. One of two highlights begins with the Romans. The Romans, who invaded England in 43 A.D, had a presence in England that lasted for centuries. They built fortresses strategically throughout the country and many forts that they created are now present day towns and cities; Yorkshire was no exception. Forts were also built in York, Bath, and London.
Newcastle, where the Dents would begin their history of public office, was too originally a fortress. As far back as the 1st and 2nd century, the Romans traded with England which was well beyond the frontiers of their empire. Lead, from the north of England, tin, cloth, wool, and grain were the primary resources exported from England in return for glass, wine, spices, and other goods. Many of the roadways used today for travelling in England from city to city are based on the Roman roadways. A few Roman artifacts have been uncovered in Guisborough.

The Romans in England preceded the Dents of Guisborough by centuries. The next event, however, coincided with the Dents presence in England. The English Civil War (1642-1651) is the second highlight that dramatically influenced Northumberland. Civil war broke out in England due to the falling out of Parliament and King Charles I. There were already major disputes over religion between Parliament and the king, but to make matters worse, Charles I disputed the idea that Parliament had control of the army; in his eyes he was in control of the army. In response, some members of the army were loyal to Parliament, while others were loyal to the king. Tensions elevated and the civil war erupted. Scotland and its border with England were witness to many skirmishes. Oliver Cromwell, (1599-1658) and his army, who sided with Parliament overpowered Charles I. Charles went on to be executed on January 30, 1649, while Cromwell went on to become “Lord Protector” of the English Commonwealth. The endurance of the English Civil War is aligned nicely with the dates of the first recorded Guisborough Dents that would eventually venture to America.

**The Early Dents of Guisborough**

Roger Dent, who was born around 1470, was the first of a long line of Dent men to be officially recognized and recorded as a public official. He was the official sheriff of Newcastell
(sic) in 1510, and went to become mayor in 1515. He married a woman named Anne Fenwycke around the year 1495. Sir Roger Fenwycke and Dorothy Widdrington were Anne’s parents. Her father’s family was well known throughout the region due to their interactions and exchanges with the Percy Dukes of Northumberland. (1) Roger Dent and Anne Fenwycke had seven children; namely: William Dent Sr. born 1500, George Dent born 1502, Rawfe Dent born 1504, Thomas Dent born 1506, Robert Dent born 1510, Richard Dent born 1512, and Katherine Dent born 1514.

William Dent Sr. followed his father’s footsteps and also became sheriff of Newcastle in 1562. He and his wife had seven children. They were: Christopher (born 1523), Edward (1525-1597), who married Agnes Fleming, James (1527) Leonard 1529, Thomas (1530-1589), William Jr. (1531-1613) who married Anne Swayne, John (1532-1595). William Dent Sr. died in 1582.

William Dent Sr.’s son James had Peter Dent I who was born in 1575 and died 1642. Peter Dent I had 3 children, namely: George Dent born in 1598, Peter Dent II (1600-1671) who married Margaret Nicholson (1602-1687) and had a son Thomas Dent Sr., and Cicillye born in 1602 and married Richard Moon.

The New World

In 1588, led by Philip II of Spain, a Spanish fleet was sent to invade England, which was led by Elizabeth I. Britain defeated the Spanish Armada in the Battle of Gravelines. Prior to this the Spanish Armada was thought to be invincible. By defeating the Spanish the English became a dominant power on the seas and they set out to pursue and explore. In 1607 the very first English settlement was establishment at Jamestown, Virginia. Twenty-two years later the
Puritans founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The English would come to encounter the
native people of North America, but much was misunderstood about the natives. The English
portrayed all Indians as being uncivilized and assumed all were aggressive or violent. The
Piscataway Indians inhabited the region where the English settled; they lived throughout what
would come to be called St Mary’s County, Charles County, and George’s County. The new
settlers interrupted and devastated the native’s society and culture. Virginia’s Jamestown from
the beginning was primed for capital success. During this period, trade and cash crops,
particularly tobacco, was dominating the commercial realm. There was a huge demand for
tobacco in England, so this set the stage for the beginning of New World and Old World trade.
America was a huge success profit wise for the English. It is estimated that by the end of the
seventeenth century around 350,000 English people had crossed the Atlantic Ocean (Morgan p.
6).

**The Maryland/Virginia Dents**

Thomas Dent Sr. (1630-1676), whose great-great grandfather was Roger Dent, was the first
of the Dents to voyage across the ocean to the New World. America was just being pieced
together as he grew up. In fact, he was born the year after the Massachusetts Bay Colony was
discovered. It was 1658 when Thomas, about 28 years old, crossed the Atlantic and headed to
Virginia. He was considered “gentry” upon arrival, and his occupation was profiled as a
merchant and planter (Papenfuse p 265). Thomas attended the University of Cambridge in
Cambridge, England. The book *A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635-
1789, Volume 1: A-H* simply states him as “literate”. Thomas met and wed a Rebecca
Wilkinson, whose parents were the Reverend William Wilkinson (who was the first Anglican
clergyman in Maryland) and Naomi (Hughes) Wilkinson. Thomas and Rebecca had 6 children: Margaret (1662-1712), she married Edward Howard (1659-1712), Thomas Jr. (circa 1663), married Anne Bayne, Peter (circa 1665-1711), he married 1) Elizabeth King Wilson, and 2) Jane Pittman Gray, George (1666-1702); Barbara (1676-1754 married Colonel Thomas Brooke Jr. (1660-1730), and William Dent Sr. (1660-1704) married 1) Elizabeth Fowke (1668-1703) and 2) Sarah Brooke (1638-1724). The Wilkinsons, Rebecca’s parents / Thomas Dent’s parents-in-law came out of West Riding of Yorkshire and Westmorland. The Reverend first ventured to Maryland in 1634. On November 20, 1635, Reverend Wilkinson received 700 acres of land at “Linhaven”, which is located on the Chisopeian River. He was granted this land for his own personal work, for his own private use, and for his family and 3 servants to live on. On June 21, 1644 was granted another expanse of land measuring 100 acres. This land was located in near Buckerowe in Elizabeth City County. He was granted this land by a Mr. Henry Herrick and his wife Anne Herrick. The tract of land given to him by the Herricks was adjoined to a property of 700 acres owned by Madame Elizabeth Claiborne and her husband William Claiborne.

Wilkinson lived in Virginia, where his wife died for over a decade and then moved to Maryland. In October of 1650, before his death, he “applied to his Lordship’s Land Office” in St. Mary’s County for a huge 900 acres. This expanse of land was also granted to him. In 1663 William Wilkinson died leaving an intact will behind. He divided his property between his daughter Elizabeth, his grandsons, and the remainder was bequeathed to William Dent and William Hatton, his son-in-laws.

Thomas Dent Sr., who belonged to the Anglican Church, resided in St. Mary’s County, Maryland where all of his children were born. He wore many hats throughout his life time and
served St. Mary’s County generously. He served in the Legislative Lower House 1669, a Justice from 1661-1664, High Sheriff from 1664-1665, coroner in 1669, and alderman in 1673, and became one of the first alderman / municipal judges, in St. Mary’s City in 1673. In 1662, Thomas was granted an acre of land called “The Lawyer’s Lodging”. The following year Thomas built a house on Aldermansbury St. next to the residence of Governor Thomas Notley. On September 4, 1663, he applied for a very large expanse of land. He was warranted the land which measured approximately 850 acres; the land was situated on the east side of the Anacostia River. Thomas named the property “Guisborough”, which was the town he and his forefathers came from. Thomas had made a name for himself and had become a well respected and important citizen of America. Thomas died in 1676. Just after his death, in May 1677, his wife Rebecca was remarried to Colonel John Addison. Thomas’ will left all of his property and estates divided up among his children and wife. It wasn’t quite divided evenly because his daughter, Margaret, was only bequeathed 1 acre of land. Since Rebecca remarried to John Addison, he also fell into a large portion of Thomas’ estate. Upon survey, Thomas Dent’s personal property was estimated at 596.8.0 sterling. With his property came 6 slaves, 8 servants, and books. Also upon death he owned 1,083 acres, plus 3 plantations of unspecified acreage (Papenfuse p. 265).

Thomas’ son, William Dent (1660-1704), who married Elizabeth Fowke (1668-1703), followed in the footsteps of his father who thrived in public office. William had nine children: Thomas (1685-1725), William (1687-1695), Gerard (??), George (1690-1754), Peter (1694-??), Philip (??), Elizabeth (1688-99), Anne (1692-??), and Elizabeth (1699-??). William would come to succeed his father in public office. He was born in Charles County and resided in Nanjemoy, Charles County. He is recorded as being “literate”, studied law under Thomas Burford (??-1686/87), and affiliated with the Anglican Church. Second generation “Burgess” was his social
status. His occupation was described as prominent lawyer, planter, and merchant, and served Charles County. From 1686-1688 he served as a clerk for the Lower House of Charles County, a Naval Officer from 1694-96, Deputy Attorney General from 1694-98, Attorney General from 1698-1704. From 1692-93 he served in the Lower House of Charles County as a chairman, from he served in 1698 he served in the Upper House, from 1701-1704 he was Speaker of the Lower House. He was appointed as a judge at Battle Towne, Calvert County, Maryland. He was also appointed to a career in the law making body known as the General Assembly. William also went on to write *The Rules for the Provincial Court*. William was a very wealthy, but upstanding man, and he was well aware of his status in the public eye. He donated over 2,000 pounds of tobacco to go towards the funding of new public schools in Charles County. In July 1696 he became a trustee of King William’s College (which is now known as St. John’s College, Annapolis). He was elected Speaker of the Lower House of the General Assembly in October 1704. He was also appointed as a member to the Maryland Privy Council. Thomas died in 1704 as one of the largest landowners in Charles County. He owned a great deal of land in the Nanjemoy area of Maryland. He also was granted 70 acres of land known as “Baltimore’s Gift” near Nanjemoy Creek. His property was surveyed at approximately 4000 acres. William Dent died in November 1704. Upon death he owned over 2,171 acres. His personal property was documented to be worth 3,023.19.1 sterling. This included 34 slaves, 7 servants, 153 books, and merchandise worth 300 pounds sterling. It is William Dent who Julia Boggs Dent is directly descended from.

Thomas Dent (1685-1725) was William Dent’s son. He is the third generation of Dents in America and was born and resided in Charles County. Thomas married Anne Bayne in 1704. He was also “literate”, was a member of the Anglican Church, and his occupation was planter.
Thomas, like his father and grandfather, entered public office, but he was not so successful in later life. He was a member of the Lower House in 1715, Clerk in Prince George’s County from 1702-1709, Justice in Charles County from 1706-1711, and Sheriff in Charles County from 1711-1714. Thomas inherited approximately 2000 acres from his father and gained a large measurement of land from his wife Anne. Thomas took quite an interesting turn during his life; he was unlike his father and grandfather in one respect. He was a heavy gambler and was put into “debtor’s prison” in 1722. He is documented as being “penniless” upon death.

George Dent (1690-1754) was another son of William Dent also served in Charles County public office just as his forefathers did. During his lifetime he accrued 43 slaves. He died in 1785 in Charles County.

Thomas Dent Sr.’s son, Peter was born in 1665 in St. Mary’s County, but resided in St. Mary’s and Somerset County. He is documented as being “literate”, associated with the Protestant Church and was second generation burgess. He was an attorney, served in the Lower House of Somerset County from 1701-1704, also served as a Clerk from 1697-1705 and was the Deputy Commissary for Somerset County from 1700-1708. His personal property at death was estimated at 644.5.8 pounds sterling which included 4 slaves, 1 servant, and books.

The Dents continued to flourish throughout the 18th and 19th century. Many separate family branches were formed. I will highlight a few who had unique stories or established themselves an important role in the Dent family. Also, it is these names which are recorded on the 1790 Charles County census and the 1800 Maryland Census.

Captain George Dent (1756-1813) married Anne Magruder. From 1782-1790 George served as a member of the Maryland State legislature. The next year he was elected to the state Senate. He entered the House of Representatives in March 1793. On April 4th, 1801, he was
appointed by Thomas Jefferson as Marshall of the District of Colombia. He did this only for a brief period and then moved to twelve miles outside of Augusta, GA. He died on December 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1813 as a result of complications from an accident a few years earlier where his horse violently threw him off while riding.

Dennis Dent (1796-1863), son of George and Anne Truman, moved to Georgia with his parents and in 1815 he married Martha Tennison Beall. He later moved to Mobile Alabama, died there. This couple is important because this is the first mention of the Dents in the extreme deep South.

Now, in order to make the connection between the Dents and Julia Boggs I have to jump forward a few generations. Thomas Dent Sr.’s son William Dent had a son Peter, who had a son Peter Dent Jr., who had a son George, who had a son Frederick. Frederick who married Ellen Bray Wrenshall, had a daughter Julia Boggs Dent. Julia was born January 26, 1826.

Colonel Frederick Dent also had a daughter Emily Marbury Dent, born 1836 at White Haven Missouri. She was the youngest and last surviving child of Frederick’s. She married James Finnie Casey (March 22, 1830), son of Nicholas Wagner and Susan Gibson (Finnie) Casey of Caseyville, Kentucky. Emily and James had a child James Finnie Casey born January 16, 1872 at New Orleans, Louisiana. He married Antonia Lynch, daughter of Edward J. Lynch and Margaret Harvey of New York. Along with Dennis Dent and Anne Truman, this is one of the only references to the deep South of America.

Frederick Fayette Dent (1787-1873) son of George and Susannah Dawson was born in Cumberland, Maryland. He lived in Pittsburgh and in 1812 and settled in St Louis County, Missouri. He named his estate “White Haven” after the ancestral home of his family in
Maryland. He is the father of Julia Boggs Dent, who married Ulysses S Grant. Frederick Fayette Dent (who owned 30 slaves) is father in law to Ulysses S. Grant.

Julia Boggs Dent was born into a family who had already made a “dent” in local American history. Public office and law had been the Dents’ forte throughout the generations, but it was Julia who gained more recognition than any of her past relatives and for a very different reason. Julia was well read, was an excellent horsewoman, and excelled at botany, which at that time was apparently was a fashionable past time for girls. She was introduced to Ulysses S. Grant through her brother Frederick Tracy Dent, who was classmates with Ulysses at West Point Military Academy (In my family the story was that General James Longstreet, relative of the Minors who was also their friend at West Point introduced Julia to Ulysses. In any case, after the war, Longstreet became a scallywag and was appointed by grant to post master in the New Orleans after the war for which he became especially hated by the unreconstructed rebels who blamed him for the loss at Gettysburg. Mother’s uncle, who published History of the Democratic Party in 1928, was writing a history of his uncle Longstreet when his house burnt with the manuscript and all the backup copies). Ulysses spent much time at White Haven, the Dent family estate in St. Louis, Missouri. It was here where Julia and Ulysses fell in love. They were married on August 22, 1848 at her family house. Ulysses’ parents, who lived in Ohio, refused to come to the wedding because the Dents owned slaves. The 1790 Census of Charles County, Maryland and 1800 Census of Maryland document that most Dents were slave owners.

Together Julia and Ulysses had four children: Frederick Dent Grant (1850-1912), Ulysses S. Grant Jr. (1852-1929), Ellen Wrenshall Grant (1855-1952), Jesse Root Grant Jr. (1858-1934).

Ulysses S. Grant Sr. went on to be the 18th President of the United States. He was inaugurated in March 1869 and held office for two terms (1869-1877) while Julia joyfully held
the title of First Lady. She was well known as a gracious host and was at ease entertaining guests. She was very well suited to the job of First Lady; she was very well travelled and her style was impeccable. On her decorating skills in the White House:

"The parading women reporters took notice

of the lace curtains that had taken the place of Mrs. Lincoln's tatters, the fresh draperies of crimson
brocatelle, the chandeliers blazing like mimic suns,
the gilt cornices, frescoed walls and ceilings, and the
oil portraits of former Presidents that had been
moved from the East Room to the hall. The exterior of
the building had been steam washed (Ross p. 209).

Ulysses S. Grant Sr. died on July 23, 1885 and Julia died on December 14, 1902.

**Slavery**

Slavery arose in Maryland in the year 1634. The thriving tobacco and sugar trade demanded much physical labor. The West African coast was the primary location that Europeans stole men and women and brought them to the New World. The earliest Maryland Census on record dates back to 1790. This is more than one hundred years after Thomas Dent Sr. arrived in America. However, the census does show that most of the Dents of this era, both men and women, owned slaves. Benjamin Dent was the only one from that year not to have owned any slaves. George Dent of Charles County owned the most slaves at 38. The average number of slaves per head of household averages out to 10.9. During the same year, names such as the Fowkes, the Fenwicks, and the Elgins were also in possession of many slaves. In the 1800 census
of Maryland, only 1 out of 23 Dents did not own any slaves in 1800. His name was George Dent who resided in Allegany County, Maryland. In that same year Thomas M. Dent of Charles County, Maryland possessed the most slaves with 34.

The climate in Maryland was ideal for growing tobacco. Slaves were considered property of their owner and were basically at the mercy of them. Only in 1808 was the shipment of slaves to America banned.

Conclusion

To sum up the Dents that were discussed, they were very driven and very successful. The early Dents are part of a very important period in American history. They were responsible for shaping their community and their country.

There was one very confusing aspect while researching the Dent family; the same names were used repeatedly throughout each generation. It was very hard to keep track of who is who unless you have a full family tree with dates in front of you. There were numerous Peters, Georges, and Williams strung through the generations. I would have been lost without the help of A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635-1789, Volume 1: A-H. It clarified the different generations quite well.

Another book, The Hammond-Harwood House, Atlas of Historical Maps of Maryland, 1608-1908, was also an excellent resource. It has a lot of very large maps which focuses on Maryland. It was very helpful because it provided a mental picture.

Also, I provided a picture of the coat of arms used by the Dents from North Yorkshire, England and the Dents from Maryland. The Maryland Dent’s version is more decorated than the original.
Original Dent Family Crest

Modern Dent Family Crest
Endnotes

1. *Percy* is a name well associated with North Yorkshire and the Scottish border, but it did not originate there. It is thought the surname came from the region where they lived across the English Channel. The Percy Forest was in the Province of Maen in Normandy. They crossed over into England along with William the Conqueror in 1066 from Normandy, but eventually settled in the north of England. The year 1309 is when the first Lord Percy took possession of Alnwick Castle. They also possessed most of the surrounding land which was and still is used mainly for agriculture. The line of the Percy Dukes of Northumberland still exist today with the 12th Duke of Percy continuing the name.

2. Refer to chart #2.
Bibliography


http://www.alnwickcastle.com/percyfamily.php


Rdentl@dot.state.wv.us.


**Chart #1.**

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<th>Head of Family</th>
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Dent, Hatch       1     1     3
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Dent, John Jr.    1     1
Dent, Rev. Hatch  1     3     4
Dent, George (Esq.) 1     2     5
Dent, Warren (Esq.) 1
Dent, George      2     1     9


Chart #2-edited version.

Maryland, 1800 Census Index

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