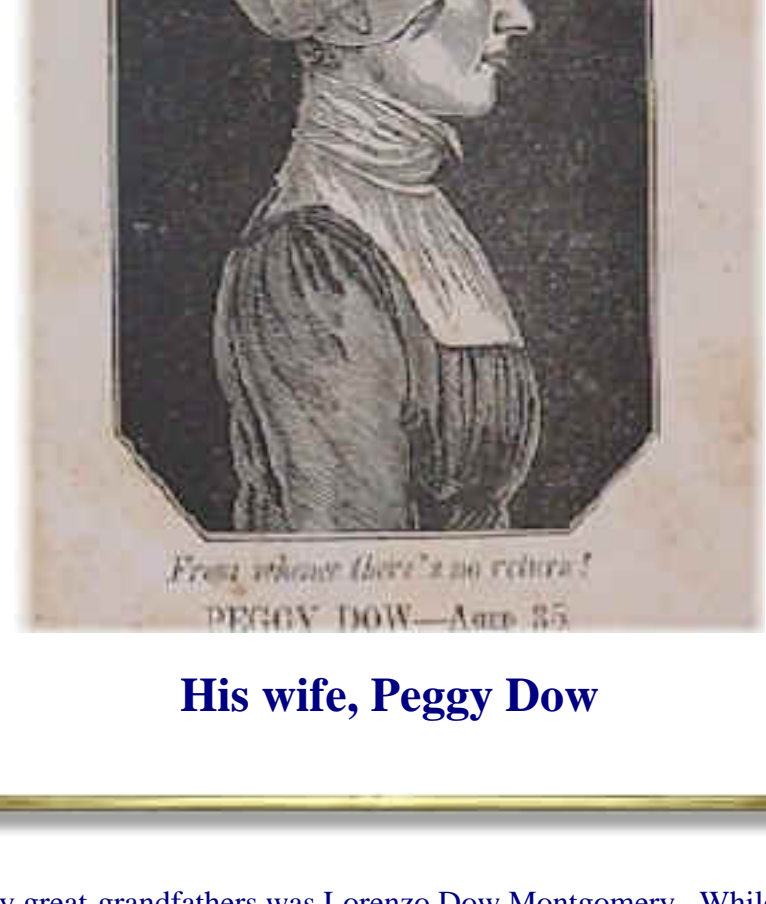


# Denton Family Genealogy

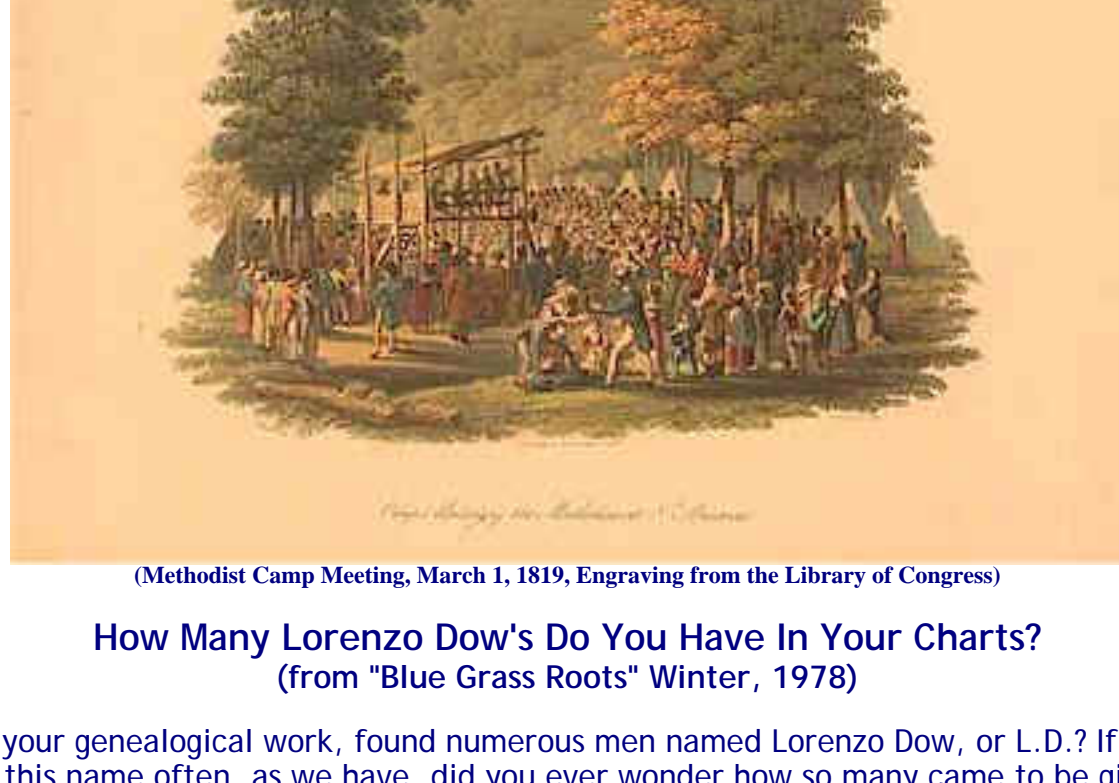


**Lorenzo Dow**  
October 16, 1777 - February 2, 1834



**His wife, Peggy Dow**

(Note from Sue: One of my great-grandfathers was Lorenzo Dow Montgomery. While trying to determine why he was named as he was, I discovered the story of the 'original' Lorenzo Dow for whom thousands of children were named in the last century. I am quite certain that the parents of my ancestor, Lorenzo Dow Montgomery, heard this notorious, eccentric preacher and liked what they heard! Below are a few of the stories I have gathered along the way about this incredible man. I also have the text of an extensive article about Lorenzo Dow printed in 1906 in "Holston Methodism, From Its Origin to the Present Time" by R. N. Price. It is about 40 pages and does not scan well, but if you will e-mail me your street address, I'll be happy to send you a copy.)



## How Many Lorenzo Dow's Do You Have In Your Charts? (from "Blue Grass Roots" Winter, 1978)

Have you, in your genealogical work, found numerous men named Lorenzo Dow, or L.D.? If you have encountered this name often, as we have, did you ever wonder how so many came to be given this name? We found the name in numerous families, in several generations, in various states and counties. We had wondered about it for years, and had made many inquiries, but to no avail. Finally, we found the answer.

Lorenzo Dow was born 16 Oct. 1777, in Coventry, Connecticut, of English ancestors. He was in poor health all his life, suffering from asthma, and had several serious illnesses. He died in D.C. in 1834. Of his 57 years, he spent 39 in the ministry. He began as a Methodist, and although never officially accepted as a Methodist minister, he was closely associated with Methodists, including Bishop Francis Asbury. Dow traveled in every state in the Union, seventeen at the time, Canada, England, Ireland, and Wales. His wife Peggy accompanied him on many of his travels. Their only child was born in Ireland, and died in England.

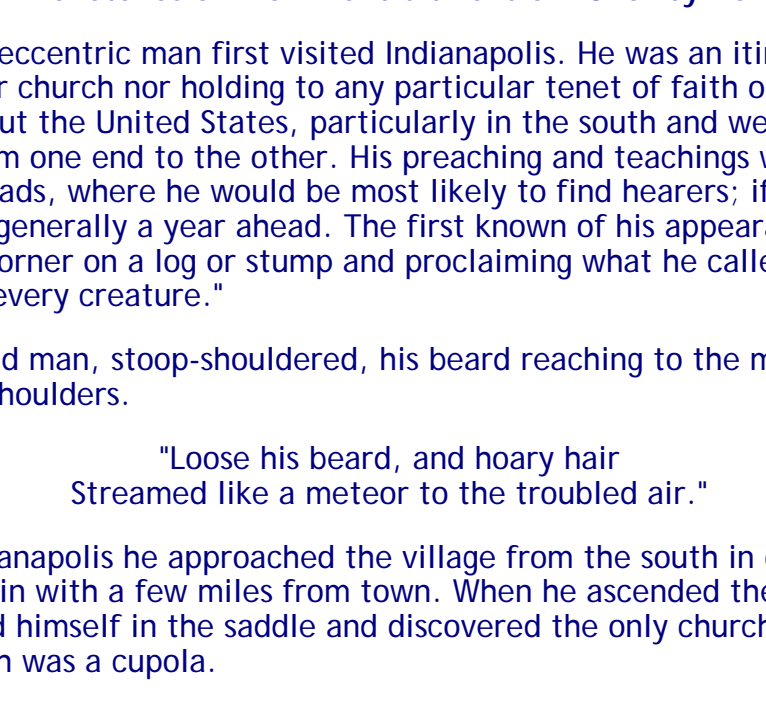
He kept a journal which was published as "History of Cosmopolite, or the Writing of Rev. Lorenzo Dow," published in 1859. He reported traveling through Kentucky in 1797, preaching in "Beardstown," Frankfort (at the State House), and in Lexington. In 1804 he attended the Western Conference of the Methodist Church and then spoke at "Herodsbury" and Springfield, where his money was stolen.

Apparently he was poor most of the time, with no income except what he was paid for his itinerant ministry. However, at times, he had money enough to help others in financial difficulties. Today, with such wide coverage by newspapers, magazines, books, radio and TV, it is easy to see how a preacher can become well-known to millions. But how did a poor, odd, wandering minister in the early 1800's get so well-known that many babies were named for him?

Perhaps the answer can be found in words in the introduction to his book, written by the publisher. "Though the author of the following work has passed away, his character was so indelibly engraved upon the age in which he lived, that a transcript seems to have been impressed upon the present generation. Who has not heard of Lorenzo Dow? Who that has heard of him has not felt an anxiety to see to hear him speak?"

"Lorenzo Dow was a well-known itinerant preacher. He was one of the most remarkable men of his age, for his zeal and labor in the cause of religion. . . His eccentric dress and style of preaching attracted great attention, while his shrewdness, and quick discernment of character, gave him no inconsiderable influence over the multitudes that attended his ministry. . . it is probable that more persons have heard the Gospel from his lips, than any other individual since the days of Whitefield."

The odd, wandering preacher probably never dreamed that his name would show up on so many genealogical charts 150 years after his death.



## VISIT OF LORENZO DOW TO INDIANAPOLIS (From: "Sketches of Prominent Citizens of 1876" by Rowland)

About the year 1827 this eccentric man first visited Indianapolis. He was an itinerant preacher, being well known throughout the United States, particularly in the south and west, having traversed the country on horseback from one end to the other. His preaching and teachings were mostly in the villages or at the cross roads, where he would be most likely to find hearers; if he made regular appointments they were generally a year ahead. The first known of his appearance in a village would be his standing on a street corner on a log or stump and proclaiming what he called his mission from God "to preach the gospel to every creature."

He was a large, raw-honed man, stoop-shouldered, his beard reaching to the middle of his body, his hair loose and flowing to his shoulders.

"Loose his beard, and hoary hair  
Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air."

When he first visited Indianapolis he approached the village from the south in company with a friend of the writer, whom he fell in with a few miles from town. When he ascended the high ground on South Meridian street, he raised himself in the saddle and discovered the only church in the place (the old Presbyterian), upon which was a cupola.

"Ah," said he, "the devil has been here before me: see that church with a steeple, that church is built in honor of the devil." He hitched his horse on the northeast corner of Washington and Meridian streets and commenced his harangue. He soon had the entire population of the village as hearers. After the service was over he was invited by the Rev. Edwin Ray to dine, and, it being Saturday, to remain over Sunday and preach again. This invitation he readily accepted, and was the guest of the writer's mother. While here Mr. Ray asked him to what particular religious faith or doctrine he adhered, to which he replied:

"I am Methodist chain and Quaker filling." On Sunday he preached in the woods south of town. Some boys had climbed a tree above where he stood. Said he, "Boys, come down; Zaccheus once did that; it was never known whether he saw the Lord or not."

During his sermon a child annoyed him by crying; he stopped speaking and fixed his gaze upon the mother of the child, and said: "When Peggy (meaning his wife) took her children to meetin' and they cried, she always took them home." Said the woman, "I would not take it home to save your life!" "Well, well," said he, "there will be no crying babies in heaven." At the close of his sermon he announced that fifty-two weeks from that day he would again preach to the people of the place.

The Rev. Edwin Ray had occasionally reminded the people of Mr. Dow's appointment, consequently the Court House was filled to it's utmost capacity. High water prevented the reverend gentleman from being present, and Edwin Ray filled the appointment.

Some said that Mr. Ray had kept them in mind of Dow's appointment merely to get a large audience for himself. On the next Sunday Dow made his appearance; the house was again filled. He heard what had been said of Mr. Ray's motives. When he ascended the judge's bench from which he preached, he inquired "Is brother Ray here?" Upon being answered in the affirmative, said he "Brother Ray stand up.

Some people are like buzzards, they don't like fresh meat, but let it become putrid until it stinks then they will wallow in it as well as eat it. Just so with preaching, last Sunday you preached them an eloquent sermon, but they wanted the putrid and stinking sermon of Lorenzo Dow." He then addressed the women who were present, many of whom were decked out in the tawdry fashion of that day. "Here you are," said he,

"Curled, bobbed and gathered,  
Ringed, combed and feathered,  
How the devil will make them  
feathers fly when he gets you."

The entire bar of the place, Calvin Fletcher, Hiram Brown, William Quarles, William W. Wick and Harvey Gregg, sat immediately tender and near the railing. He seemed to know they were lawyers. At the close of his sermon he leaned over the stand and addressed himself particularly to them; said he,

"If a lawyer you would be  
You must learn to lie and cheat,  
For lawyers, not like other men  
Have honest bread to eat."

He then jumped out of the window, mounted his horse and left the town without speaking again to any person.

He was an uneducated man; some thought him insane. He never made any proselytes or had any followers. There were none to doubt his true religion or good intentions. All thought, with a celebrated theologian, -- "His faith, perhaps, in some nice tenets might be wrong -- his life I am sure is in the right." He has now been dead about forty years. A plain sandstone upon which his name is inscribed, marks his resting place in the city cemetery of Georgetown, District of Columbia.

## Lorenzo Dow (Source unknown)

Lorenzo Dow was a pioneer Methodist, born in Coventry, Conn., Oct. 16, 1777; son of Humphrey B. and Tabitha Dow. His education was limited to the instruction received at a district school. His early religious convictions led him to embrace the doctrines of the Methodists, although he was opposed by his parents in this as well as in his determination to become a preacher. In 1796 he applied for admission to the Connecticut conference, but was refused. The conference, however, received him in 1798, and in 1799 he was sent to Essex, N.Y., and after a few months was transferred to Pittsfield, Mass., and from there to West, Vt., all within one year.

His conviction of a divine call to preach to the Roman Catholics in Ireland impelled him to visit that country and he sailed late in 1799. On his appearance in Ireland his eccentricities in dress and speech led hundreds to hear him and he was jeered and in many ways severely persecuted. He returned the next year to America, preaching in New York, Alabama and at Louisville, Ky., but in 1805 revisited both England and Ireland, where he instituted the Camp-meeting. This custom was such an innovation that it led to controversy, resulting in the organization of the Primitive Methodists in England. After he left the first time for Ireland he severed his official connection both the ministry of the Methodist church, but continued to promulgate the prominent doctrines of Methodism throughout his life.

His crusade against Roman Catholicism was especially directed against the Jesuits, whom he denounced as enemies to pure religion and to republican government. The prevalent opinion that he was of unsound mind detracted from the effect of his eloquence, and he was familiarly known as "Crazy Dow." He was, nevertheless, a powerful orator, speaking to men unaccustomed to listen to ordinary preaching and reaching out to the utmost borders of civilization in the south and west, where he awakened much controversy and serious thought.

His wife, Peggy, to whom he was married in 1804, was his constant travelling companion. She died at Hebron, Conn., Jan. 6, 1820. In the same year he married Lucy Dolbear. He was a voluminous writer and among his published books are: Polemical Works (1814); A Stranger in Charleston, or the Trial and Confession of Lorenzo Dow (1822); A Short Account of a Long Travel With Beauties of Wesley (1823); Journal and Miscellaneous Writings, edited by John Dowling (1836); and History of a Cosmopolite, or Writings of the Rev. Lorenzo Dow Containing His Experience and Travels in Europe and America up to Near His Fiftieth Year; also His Polemic Writings (1851), with numerous new editions.

He died in Georgetown, D.C., Feb. 2, 1834.

## Thanks to Elaine Chesnut who sent in the following:

"One who became famous on the circuit was, Lorenzo Dow. He was known for his wild appearance and impassioned preaching. Many a new mother inspired by his preaching named a child after him." Byron L. Troyer, in his "Yesterday's Indiana," relates ". . . Lorenzo Dow, best known of all the circuit riders, was a modern Elijah. When he visited Indiana, he would dash on a horse from the wood into a backwoods community, dismount, and preach with such fire and fervor he became known as "Crazy Dow."

## His obituary appeared in the February 6, 1834 Washington, D.C. National Intelligencer.

"He was one of the most remarkable men of the ages for his zeal and labors in the course of religion. . . his eccentric dress and style of preaching attracted great attention, while his shrewdness and quick discernment of character gave him no considerable influence on the multitudes that attended his ministry. He had been a public preacher for more than 30 years. He was a Methodist, in principle, though not in connection with the society."

## From History of Methodism in Alabama by Rev. [Anson?] West, D.D. February 20, 1939

### REV. LORENZO DOW

Rev. Lorenzo Dow was the first Protestant preacher to preach in any part of the territory that is now Alabama. He claimed to be a Methodist and affiliated with that denomination, but they would not be responsible for him in anything he did. In May, 1803, Rev. Mr. Dow preached to the settlers in the Tombigbee and Tensaw settlements.

This was the first preaching ever done in Alabama except by Romish priests and claimers, where these settlements of the Tombigbee were developed, and became safe from the Indians and their claims were ceded to the U.S., heralds of the cross found its people and the voice of the messengers of peace was heard in the wilderness.

Rev. Dow described in some of his writings the inhabitants as mostly English, but were like "Sheep without a shepherd," and while it was under Spanish government it was a refuge for bad men.

Lorenzo Dow was born Oct. 16, 1777, in Coventry, Tolland County, Connecticut. He was descended from the English ancestors. He was the subject of early religious impressions. Before he was four years old he expressed himself as "Mused upon God, Heaven and Hell."

He was united with a society of Methodists being received into it by Rev. G. Roberts. He claimed Hope Hull as his spiritual advisor. Rev. Mr. Dow made a long and hard struggle against the conviction that it was his duty to preach, but at last yielded to the conviction that God had called him to the ministry.

He met with strong opposition from his father as to this move and still stronger from the members of the church and when he sought to obtain a license to preach he was discouraged and at first was rejected and sent away. He continued to press his claim and finally admitted on trial September 19, 1798. Ill health prompted him to come South. He was lured by the warm mild climate, and with his wife Peggy, made the long tiresome hazardous trip. The journey was both dangerous and difficult, but to Dow perils were a fascination. In his journals which have been sacredly kept, he tells of these many perils and adventures among the wild tribes he encountered.

Any feature of the uncivilized and the wilderness appealed to him. On the stages of the long journey Southward he preferred camping out at night, especially in the piney woods country. Huge piles of a straw was raked up which served as the bed and he would be lulled to sleep by the soothing monotone of the sighing pines. There was also a hope entertained that the resinous regions possessed a curative power for his malady. A singular chapter in his life was a great desire and anxiety to preach to the Roman Catholics and hearing Ireland was their greatest stronghold he would thither, but his pathway was not strewn with roses by any means. He requested a leave of absence from the Conference in order to make the trip abroad, but the request was not granted and he took the leave of absence anyway against their advice and entreaties. He consumed about twenty months on this trip, preaching the gospel incessantly and attending camp meetings.

Notwithstanding he had made the European tour against the authority of the Conference, he resumed preaching on his return and remained on "trial." However, he could not stand the test and his name was soon dropped from the minutes.

He was not careful to maintain the relationship with the Conference which he had so eagerly sought. He was sent out on circuit assignments but this did not correspond with the expansive fields of his dreams. He was discontented. In a word he did not consider a circuit his right sphere, and claimed that his connection with the conference was severed. He was never really ordained to the ministry and was without authority to administer sacrament or organize societies. In doctrinal principles he was Methodist, but was without any church influence or allegiance. He was irregular and uncertain. He was a force, but uncertain, unreliable and inefficient.

He was restless and he was a dreamer. He was contradictory and never happier than when engaged in a wordy war. He possessed scant learning, but was a very close observer of mankind. The very face of Lorenzo Dow indicated his character. His features were both rough and delicate. It was rough and effeminate but in that face there was every mark of indomitable energy.

He parted his hair in the middle and wore it hanging down his neck and shoulders and his face was radiant with kindness. His wife, Peggy, whom he married before coming South, in her writings, "Vicissitudes" gives an account of their first trip coming South and also gives an account of a trip which she made with him passing through the Bigbee settlements in Nov., 1811, from Natchez, Mississippi to Milledgeville, Ga., in the wilderness some forty miles. She says "At night we camped out in lonely deserts, uninhabited by any being except wild beasts and savages."

"I was much alarmed and uneasy, but my husband was content and slept sweetly." In giving an account of her first meeting with him she says, "He is a most singular character, and admits himself that he was known by the name of 'Crazy Dow' and called himself 'Son of Thunder'."

Despite his ill health he boasted that he held off death. He refused to die and said he must live to fight for the Kingdom. He did not believe in founding churches but preferred to preach and praise God in the wilds and in the open. However, a prominent jurist of Alabama, who is closely connected with Lowndes County, claims to have the historical facts that Dow preached from the altar one time if no more. The small church known as "Union" which is nestled in a grove between the small settlements of Burkeville and Manack, Lowndes County, claims the distinction of having him preach there in its early history.

The tradition, in part, is that Sam Manack, the half-breed, who founded the latter place and from whom it was named, met Dow during his wanderings through the wilds and led him to that altar. Union Church, now obscure, holds an interesting part in the early history of Lowndes. Dow, the first man who passed the holy words around and around in Alabama, preached there. The Graves family, ancestors of Alabama's ex-governor, worshipped at that altar. Some of which sleep in the nearby churchyard, and it is built in the road that was the route of the thorough stage coach line, "most a hundred years ago.

Rev. Dow died February 2, 1834, in Georgetown, D.C., was buried near Washington, but remains were removed and re-buried in Oakhill Cemetery, near Georgetown.