

## CHAPTER TWO

### *The Early Generations (1599-1783)*

**A**N extensive study of Cornish communities by Edward Martin has established the existence of a tin miner called Dunstan Thomas who was living in the parish of Constantine (near Falmouth) in 1522.

In his book *Stithians Families*, Martin suggests that Dunstans had moved from Constantine into the nearby parish of Stithians by 1569. They became well established there, accounting for the second highest number of Poll Taxpayers in 1660 and the second highest number of marriages from 1670 to 1812.

The following passage from Martin's book provides an interesting insight into the lives of some of my ancestors:

*“Thomas Dunstan of Trebost styled himself as a gentleman in his will dated 1696. His eldest son, Hugh, made a good match with the daughter of a gentry family from Mawnan and moved to live there. His wife was Julian Munday, descended from a Tudor mayor of London and related to the last Prior of Bodmin. Interestingly, a Munday grand-daughter had earlier married into the Bath family and Hugh's son was later to marry a Bath. Hugh's younger brother, Thomas, remained in Stithians, farming at Carncrees, but he only claimed to be a yeoman. Some feeling of the family's status did perhaps survive, for in 1778 the husband of one of Thomas' daughters noted in his will that she was to have a 'handsome maintenance, fitting for one of her degree'. That said, it is interesting to note that in 1660 several of the brothers of the 1696 Thomas were described as labourers. In fact a common feature of the Stithians 'gentry' was that they all had cousins, some quite closely related, who were ordinary miners or agricultural labourers”.*

Thomas Dunstan of Trebost was a grandson of my earliest known ancestor. He was a *William Dunston*, who lived in Stithians. William had a son *Hugh*, baptised on 3 October 1599.

*Hugh Dunston* was a tin miner who lived in Perranarworthal. In 1660 he paid 8 shillings tax on an estate of £20, and was assessed on four hearths in 1664. Hugh was a tenant of Trebost (a farm of some 45 acres) in Stithians, reeve of the manor of Penryn Corffe and yeoman of Stithians. Probate of his will was granted in 1678, and his estate totalled £113. Hugh was married to Alice and they had seven sons: Nicholas, Michael, Thomas, *Peter*, Zacharia, James and Hugh.

*Peter Dunston* was born c1640. He was a labourer and also held a lease on Trebost. In 1660 he paid 1 shilling in the Poll Tax of Perranarworthal. Like his father, he was a reeve of the manor of Penryn Corffe. In his will (probate 1720) his inventory totalled £17. Peter married Blanche Coode (daughter of John Coode, yeoman of Stithians) in April 1666 and they had nine children: Peter, *John*, Peter, James, Thomas, William, Blanch and two more daughters.

*John Dunston* was baptised at Stithians on 22 June 1668. He married twice, having two children (Hugh and John) by his first wife Mary. On 13 April 1711 he married Margaret Treweek at Stithians.

There are several references to John and Margaret in the International Genealogical Index (IGI), with a variety of spellings for the surname (Dunstan and Dunstone). Their four sons are recorded as John (1711), James (1713), Peter (1714) and *Thomas*, all *Dunstan*. I have assumed this spelling for the remainder of this book.

*Thomas Dunstan* was baptised at Stithians on 19 January 1721. On 17 September 1752 he married Jane Jewell (daughter of William and Mary Jewell of Truro) in Falmouth. Their children were: Jane (1753-1812), *William*, Richard (1758), Thomas (1760-1794), John (1766-1767) and John (1769).

Thomas' wife Jane was buried in Falmouth on 14 April 1772, and it is believed that Thomas was married again, to Mary Row on 19 October 1783 in Falmouth.

