

THE FIRST WHITNEY

Eustace De Whitney was of Flemish descent. Of his mother, Agnes, it is recorded in Domesday Book, "Agnes relictā Turstini Flandrensis, et Eustacius Miles filius ejus, Dominus de Whitney, dederunt ecclesiae Sancti Petri, Glocest; unam hidam terrae in Pencomb, etc. [Agnes, widow of Turstin the Fleming, and Sir Eustace, her son, Lord of Whitney, gave to the church of St. Peter, at Gloucester, one hide (120 acres) of land in Pencomb, etc.] Some of the early Lords of Whitney were of Welsh descent, one of whom, Sir Peidge Exrog, was a Knight of the Round Table and "to King Arthyr's time he lived at his castle at Cardmore at Cardiganshire."

ORIGIN OF THE NAME AND FAMILY

Whitney, as a surname, owes its origin to the ancient, but obscure parish of Whitney, on the western confines of Herefordshire, near the border of Wales. This is not to be confounded with Witney in Oxfordshire, so famous for its manufacture of woolen goods. But, possibly, both names are the same in meaning, and have not always been differently spelled.

Witney appears in ancient records as Wittney, Witenie, Witeney, Witteneye, Wytney, Wyttneye, Wyteney, Wytteneye, Whiteneye, Whitteneye, Whitney; and Whitney we find also written Whiteney, Whyteneye, Witenie, etc. It lies in the valley of the river Wye, which is here a mountain torrent, subject to sudden and destructive freshets. This circumstance affords a probable explanation of its name Whitne, being perhaps derived from the Anglo-Saxon words hwit-white, ey-water, and so literally meaning white water. Other examples in Herefordshire are (seen in notes and queries, 5th series, volume 6, page 119) Whit-bourn, the white brook, Whit-church, the white cyrc (church), and Whit-ton, the white town, the last of which occurs in six other places in England. But more ambitious etymologies of the name are not wanting.

The Rev. Dr. Giles, in his history of Witney and the neighboring parishes in Oxfordshire, says: "But if Witney received any fresh peculiarity of character from the Saxons, it certainly takes its name from the occupation of that busy and plodding race of men." The Witan-eye, or, as it is also written in Anglo-Saxon, or Old English dialect, Witan-ige, evidently signifies "The Island of the Wise Men or of the Parliament." By parliament in this connection should be understood merely an assemblage of the witan or wise men of the folc or shire, and not a great national council of the Anglo-Saxons or Witena-gemote (in which witena is the genitive of witna), as it was termed. Thus the word Witney means, etymologically, parliament island, though no record has been handed down to us to tell for what reason such a name was given. There is a large house still named Parliament House at the corner of the Crofts Lane, which to the minds of some conveys a tradition concerning the etymology of the name Witney.

Dr. Thomas Wright, the eminent Angle-Saxon scholar, made other suggestions in a letter addressed to Mr. Henry Austin Whitney, February 1, 1860: "I think Dr. Giles' derivation of Witney in Oxfordshire a very probable one. Some meeting of the Whitan or leading men of the district had probably been held there and the island had been named from it like what is now called Magna Charta Island in the Thames. But the great difficulty in fixing the derivation and meaning of these local names arises from the circumstance that the name is in the majority of the cases derived from that of a Saxon possessor of the land. I should think Whitney is not the same thing as Witney. It has

either something to do with white, or it perhaps contains a man's name, as Hwitenes-ege, the island belonging to Heitene."

There is certainly no improbability in supposing that ige or ege, signifying the island, was the termination of a Herefordshire Whitney, situated, as it is, on the river Wye, and at times overflowed by it; indeed the old church and rectory were entirely washed away by mountain torrents in 1730.

There seems to be no record of Whitney in Herefordshire prior to the Domesday Book. This work was compiled between the years 1081 and 1087 by order of William the Conqueror, and contains the general survey of all the lands in the kingdom, their extent in each district, their proper tenures, value, and the quantity of meadow, pasture, wood and arable land which they contained, and in some countries the number of tenants, cottages and slaves of all denominations who lived upon them. This book places it in the hundred of Elsedune, and spells the name Witenie. In the general distribution of land among the followers of The Conqueror, it fell to the lot of Turstin the Fleming (Turstinus Flandrensis), the son of Rolf, who besides his possessions in Herefordshire, held lands in Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Berkshire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, Gloucestershire, Buckinghamshire and Wiltshire. Nothing further is known of him except that his wife was named Agnes, and that his son, Sir Eustace (Eustacius Miles) was called from Herefordshire – hamlet, Lord of Whitney, and so founded the family of DeWhitney. The particle was gradually dropped from the name, in some cases, as early as the twelfth century, and it has long since entirely disappeared.

The parish church of Whitney is about four miles from The Hay, in Beacon, Wales, and seventeen miles from Hereford. The parish contains nearly 1,500 acres, the chief owners being Tompkins Dew, Esq., and the Rev. Spenser Phillips. In old times it was a portion of the long stretching debatable ground within which were 141 little lord ships, often at war with each other, and amendable only to their several feudal chiefs. It was not included in any of the three adjoining countries until 1535; by act of parliament for the incorporation of England and Wales, Huntington, Clifford, Winforton, Eardesley, and Whitney were united into the hundred of Huntington. The castle of Whitney, the family stronghold, stood on the north bank of the Wye, and is now represented by a group of mounds and also by Whitney court, the residence of the present proprietor.

Agnes, widow of Turstin had also estates in the parish of Pencombe, in the same county, one hide (about 120 English acres) of which she and her son, Sir Eustace de Whitney, bestowed upon the Church of St. Peter, at Gloucester, free from all tax, in the time of the Abbet Reginald.

In the reign of Henry III., 1216 – 1272, Pencombe was stated to consist of 15 hides of land, one moiety of which was held by John de Whytene and Robert Tregoz, and the other moiety by Thomas de Henegan and Robert de Whytene by military service, and both of the honor of Ewias.

In the earlier times when Bohuns Mortimers and bishops of Hereford convulsed the whole country and overshadowed even the royal authority, little trace of the Whitneys appeared upon record; yet, in A.D. 1306, a Eustacius de Whyteneye was knighted at the same time with a Corbet, a Lacy, and a Marnyon, and previous to that the same Eustacius, in 1277 – 1280, acted as patron of the living of Pencombe, and in the latter

year presented a Roger de Whitney. In 1342 W.D. de Witenie was the incumbent; in 1353 Baldwin de Whitney, and after 1378 Eustacious Whitney.

Among the patrons of this living, at various times from 1353 to 1590, were: Robert de Whitney, 1355; Baldwin de Whitney, 1357; Robert Whitney, knight, 1419 – 28; Robert Whitney, 1539; then the Crown during the minority of a Robert Whitney, and again in 1567 a Robert Whitney, knight, and lastly James Whitney, knight, in 1590. In 1593 John Whitney was a portionary or prebend in Broxash hundred.

The name of Robertus Whitney, Chevalier Cortland was returned in the list of gentry, etc., in this country, made by commissioners in 1434 (1-2) Henry VI.

In the offices of sheriffs of their country, knights of the shire in parliament and justices in the commission of the peace of the name Whitney may be traced in Herefordshire from Henry V., 1413, to George III., 1799. Thus of sheriffs of Herefordshire have been: Robert Whitney, 1377-78; Robert Whitney, 1413-14; Robert Whitney, knight, 1427-28; Robert Whitney, knight, 1432-33; Robert Whitney, 1436-37; Robert Whitney, 1475-76; James Whitney, knight, 1585-86; Eustace Whitney, 1595-96; Robert Whitney, knight, 1638-39.

Among the knights of the shire in parliament we find: Eustace de Whitney, 1312-13; Eustace de Whitteney, 1351-52; Robert Whitteney, 1377; Robert de Whitteney, 1378-79; Robert de Whitney, knight, 1379-80; Robert Whitteney, 1395-96; Robert Whitteney, knight, 1417-18; Eustace Whitney, 1467-68; Robert Whitney, knight, 1558-59.

The Robert Whitney of the parliament of First Elizabeth, 1558-59, received the honorable order of knighthood in the time of the reign of Queen Mary, and his crest, we are informed, was the head of an ox. Another Sir Robert Whitney with the same crest is recorded to have been "dubbed at Wynesort" after 1556, and before 1570. Green records the circumstance that Sir James Whitney, knight, who, in 1574, was a member of parliament, was suitor for the hand of Barbara, Countess of Leicester, in 1584-85.

The following legend explanatory of the Whitney crest is given: Sir Randolph de Whitney, the grandson of Eustace (founder of the name), accompanied Richard Coeur de Lion to the Crusades and distinguished himself greatly by his personal strength and great courage. On one occasion he was sent by Richard on a mission to the French commander, and as he was leaving the British camp the brother of Saladin (who he had twice before defeated) followed him, and with two Saracens in his company, and riding around a small hill, suddenly made a furious attack upon Eustace, knight. De Whitney defended himself with the greatest vigor, but his assailants were gaining upon him when a furious Spanish bull, which was feeding near the scene of conflict, was attracted by the red dress of the two Saracens he dispatched them and proceeded upon the mission of the king. According to the superstitions of that time, Sir Randolph attributed the event to the especial interposition of the Virgin, a medal of whom, consecrated by the pope, he had continually worn on his breast. On his return to England he erected a chapel to the Virgin, which was called Our Lady of Palestine Oratory, the walls of which remain to this day, adjoining the grounds of the ancient family mansion of Whitney on the Wye.

As a matter of course, the name Whitney occurs in the lists of gentlemen in the commission of peace of Herefordshire, as a temp. Elizabeth, Eustace Whitney. About 1673, Thomas Whitney, of Whitney; in 1799, James Whitney of Norton Canon, related to the Whitney family of Whitney court.

Probably to the same family is to be assigned John Whitney, the author of a very rare book entitled "Genteel Recreation; or, the Pleasure of Angling," a poem, with the dialogue between Piscator and Corydon, 1700. There was a Rev. George Whitney instituted in 1807 to the rectory of Stretford, Herefordshire, who died in 1836. I have read somewhere, says Mr. Green, that a Captain Whitney was a companion of Sir Walter Raleigh, and of the name a lieutenant fought at Worcester on the Royalists; side. Sir Robert Whitney, knight of King James' and Charles' reign, had four sons, who all died without issue, and four daughters, to whom the estate descended. They all married and enjoyed shares in the property. Robert Rodd, the only son of Thomas Rodd, married Hannah Whitney, one of the four daughters, and conveyed her share to Robert Price of Foxley, by whom it was sold to William Wardour. The latter acquired the rest of the estate and built the present Whitney Court, and also in 1740, Whitney church, to replace the one swept away ten years before by a flood on the Wye, a calamity which involved the destruction of all the old family monuments but one, and to the memory of Williams of Cabalva, in the neighborhood, who married into the Whitney family. Mrs. Bourne held the property from William Wardour, and left it to her grandson, the grandfather of the present owner, Tompkins Dew, Esq., and of his brother, the Rev. Henry Dew, rector of the parish.

The present representative of the Herefordshire Whitneys is Thomas Whitney, Esq., of Bath. The Whitneys were also established at a very early date at Cheshire, and had a seat at the Coole Pilate, a township in the widespread parish of Acton, near Nantwich, almost as soon as those of Herefordshire were settled upon the Welsh border. The manor of Coole Pilate was anciently parcel of the barony of Wich Malbank, is now the property of Kilmorey. In this township were two halls with considerable estates annexed, one of which belonged to the Whitneys, who became possessed of it in the reign of Richard II., 1377-99, and had a seat there for many generations. This estate was purchased in 1744 of Hugh Whitney, by whose death the family is supposed to have become extinct. The purchaser was John Darlington, whose daughter brought it in marriage to Henry Tomkinson, Esq., of Dorfold, the present proprietor. The hall is occupied by a farmer. Toward the end of the last century (1700 rcb) Mr. Silas Whitney, also a poet or writer of verse, from the neighborhood of Nantwich, carried on business in Knutsford as a cotton manufacturer. He was reputed to be descended from the Whitneys of Coole Pilate, and a relative of the celebrated Josiah Wedgwood. When political feeling ran high and fierce about the first French Revolution, he is said to have emigrated to the United States, where, however, no trace of him has been found.

VALLEY OF THE WYE

It is the scenery on the banks of the Wye which has gained for it the name of the most beautiful river in England. Turbid and hurried in itself, it runs through some of the most lovely landscape in England. The views are of the most beautiful description of perspective, arising from the mazy course of the stream and the loftiness of its banks. A tiny steamer now and then forges up the river against the fierce current, or readily floats down on the top of it; but the Wye may best be judged from its banks; and as the Wye Valley Railway carries the tourist from one end of the valley to the other, the more practicable plan is to take the train from point to point up the valley, the beauties of which occupy – speaking within bounds – a fair hundred miles. It is the extent of the sylvan and other beauties of the Wye which have made it so perfectly celebrated. From its source, near the summit of Plinlimmon, to its union with the lordly Severn, the Wye is continuously beautiful. In the midst of the Welsh hills it is exceedingly wild and rugged; but no sooner does it reach the vales of Herefordshire than it becomes singularly smooth and placid, and thence flows through Monmouthshire until it loses itself in the Severn.

At Ross are to be found, in the parish church, the celebrated elms which sprang up through the floor of the pew once occupied by John Kyrle, Pope's celebrated "Man of Ross." Near Chepstow is the celebrated stretch of private property called Piercefield, which possesses three miles of paths winding along the edges of the cliffs above the Wye. From the summit of the Wynclyff, which is seven to eight hundred feet above high water, the observer may see portions of seven English and two Welsh counties, and the river at this point winds through the landscape like a carelessly thrown river of silver.

VISIT TO WHITNEY ON THE WYE

By Hon. William Whitney Rice

In the month of June, 1892, I took the train accompanied by my wife from Hereford to the parish of Whitney on the Wye, seventeen miles distant, to see if perchance I could learn anything there of our ancestors.

There are none there now bearing the name of Whitney, but there are the manors of Whitney and of Clifford formerly owned by the Whitney family and not yet wholly alienated.

Whitney is a section of beautiful country with an old stone church, stone cottage for the rector, and a somewhat modern manor house. We could get no public carriage for our conveyance.

We found that we had an hour and a half before the departure of the next train for London, and we resolved to make the most of that time, with such directions as we could get from the station master, who was very accommodating and intelligent. He referred us to the rector, Rev. Henry Dew, as a gentleman who would receive us hospitably and furnish us all the information that there was to be had on the subject of our inquiries.

From the station the outlook over the surrounding country embraced in the manors of Whitney and Clifford was as lovely as anything we had seen in England. The Wye flowed through the valley a few rods below the station while the broad fields and forests stretched away in the distance toward the Welsh mountains which were the principal features in the landscape.

The rectory was quarter or half a mile distant. Going from the station we passed by the pretty little church. We entered the churchyard and searched for Whitney memorials. We found none, because, as we afterward learned, some time in the middle of the eighteenth century the Wye, in a freshet, swept away the old castle, the old church and the monuments and graves of the Whitneys from the time that they settled in that place. The new church contains many of the old granite stones which were left from the ruins of the old church. The old font, hollowed from a solid granite block, which was there before the freshet, probably from the original building of the church and in which the Whitney infants have been baptized probably from the eleventh or twelfth century, was also recovered from the ruins and placed in the new church, where it still stands.

I have a photograph of that font taken since I was there, which I shall be happy to show any of the modern members of the family.

Leaving the church we went up a hill, through a lane bordered by trees, to the rectory where we were first saluted by the vigorous barking of a small, black dog. A young lady, whom we afterward ascertained to be a daughter of the rector, soon made her appearance. She left us to seek her father, and he soon came and took us to the garden in the front of the house where he had been working among his flowers.

He was a straight, dignified English clergyman who, when he learned who we were and what we desired, at once gave us a cordial and hospitable welcome. He invited us into the house, where another daughter, Miss Jane, joined us. We prolonged our call there with him and his daughter as long as we could remain. Out of that call sprang a most interesting correspondence with Miss Dew, the daughter, from which I have derived much of the information made use of in the following record. I presume that I have more than twenty letters from her, generally very long and full of interesting details. I think she must spent a great deal of her time in looking up ancient records to find material for her letters to me. I shall always entertain sincere friendship and respect for the Rev. Henry Dew and his accomplished daughter, Miss Jane.

Rev. Henry Dew was a brother of Sir Tompkyns Dew, the last owner of the estate. He was a descendant of the Whitneys through some one of the female members of the family to whom the estate came by failure of the male line. Sir Tompkyns' little daughter, at the time of our visit a child about five years old, represents the broad acres of the estates of Whitney and Clifford, now, I regret to say, so heavily mortgaged that it seems quite possible, if not probable, that by the foreclosure of the mortgages they will soon pass into unknown and alien ownership.

I believe that the rector's tenure of the living can not be terminated during his life, but at his death the pretty rectory, where he has lived more than fifty years and has much beautified, will pass to strangers with the rest of the estate, and thus the last Whitney traces be obliterated from the spot with which they have been so long connected.

After the conquest the manor of Whitney, so called, was given by William the Conqueror to Torstinus, one of his soldiers. It was one of nine tracts granted to this same person according to the Domesday Book, and the one upon which he settled.

He was a valiant fighter, one of the northern sea-rovers who joined the army of William on the expedition for the conquest of England. The amount of bounty allotted him by

William shows that he was a man of position and consequence. He was specially commissioned to guard the frontiers against the incursions of the Welsh, and for this purpose had his castle situated on the Wye and within the bounds of the present manor of Whitney.

His son Eustacius, who inherited his property, assumed the name of Whitney, which has been borne from that date to the present time. The Whitneys were the chief men in the vicinity, sheriffs of the county and Members of Parliament. Several of them lost their lives in the wars at home and abroad, to which they were summoned by their kings.

A decree of King Henry IV dated Feb. 14, 1404, commences as follows:

"The King to all to whom, & c., Greeting -

Know ye that since the father of Robert Whiteney, Esquire, and his uncle and a great part of his relations have been killed in our service at the capture of Edmund Mortemer, and his property has been burned and destroyed by our rebels of Wales, so that the said Robert has not any castle or fortress where he can tarry to resist and punish our aforesaid rebels as we accept (accessimus) We, of our special grace, have granted to the said Robert, the Castle of Clifford and the lordships of Clifford and Glasbury, together with all the lands, tenements," & c.

By this act the lordship of Clifford, on the opposite side of the Wye and adjacent to Whitney, was added to the domain of the Whitneys and has so remained until the present day.

In the last part of the 17th century Sir Thomas Whitney, lord of these estates, died leaving his son, Sir Robert Whitney, as his heir. Sir Robert had four sons, who all died without issue. He also had four daughters, to whom his estate descended, upon his several sons dying without issue.

One of these daughters, Hannah, married Robert Rodd, to whom and the other daughters the estates came, apparently by the law of inheritance. Through them it ultimately came to William Warden, who was the owner at the time of the freshet, by which the church and the castle were destroyed. He rebuilt the church and the manor house. The ruins of the castle may still be seen where the freshet left them.

This property passed from the male line of Whitneys to the female descendants, through whom it is still held. Thus, although the name of Whitney still remains attached to the property, the individuals of that name are not connected with it, but are widely scattered both in England and in this country.

July 20, 1592, John Whitney was baptized in the St. Margaret's Church, London. He was son of Thomas, who was grandson or great-grandson of the last Sir Robert Whitney. In 1635 with his wife, Eleanor, and five children he embarked for America. Here he settled either in Watertown or towns near it. His grandson, Nathaniel, settled in the western part of Watertown, which is now Weston.

Arms.	Azure, a cross chequy or and sable. Upon a canton, gules; a lion rampant argent.
Crest.	A bull's head couped sable; horned argent; horns tipped with red.
Motto.	Fortis sed non ferox.

JOHN WHITNEY, PURITAN EMIGRANT

By Henry Melville, Esq.

He was the first of the name in America, and the son of Thomas Whitney, "gentleman," of Westminster, by his wife, Mary Bray, and was baptized in St. Margaret's, the parish church standing in the shadow of the famous Abbey on the 20th day of July, 1592.

Thomas was not a native of the city of his residence, but had come from one of the oldest and most distinguished families in the west of England, the Whitneys of Whitney, where, on the banks of the Wye, the crumbling ruins of their ancestral castle could still be seen surviving centuries of border warfare. His uncle Sir James, knighted by Queen Elizabeth at Winsor in 1570, was lord of Whitney, Clifford, Pencombe, Ocle Pitchard, Kings Capell, Boughrid, Tremayne, Icomb, Clifton and Comwich, and sheriff of Herefordshire; his grandfather, Sir Robert, knighted by Queen Mary in 1553, represented that county in parliament, and from the latter could be traced back a long knightly line of Whitneys and De Whitneys to the twelfth century, when the name originated, and, beyond them, Norman ancestors with other names even to the conquest.

One or more of his forefathers had gone on a crusade to the Holy Land, one had fought under Edward I in the Scotch war of 1301, another had twice represented Richard II abroad in important affairs of state and had been slain "at the capture of Edmund Mortimer," a fourth had followed Henry V in the triumphs of English arms in France, a fifth had risked land and life for the "White Rose" and had had his praises sung by the Welsh bard, Glyn Cothi, and nearly every one had been sheriff of his shire and had sat in the great national council. They quartered on their shields the arms of Milbourne, Eynesford, Furnival, Verdon, Lovetot, Baskerville, Boteler, Rees, Lienthall, Le Gros, Bredwardine, Sollers, Brugge and Blackett, and their marriage alliances had been, almost without exception, with families whose names are great in history, through at least two of which Thomas could claim blood relationship to royalty from William the Conqueror to Edward I.

The family name, Whitney, or, as originally written, De Whitney, was derived from the name of the parish where the castle stood. Aluard, a Saxon, held the land before the Conquest, but at the time of the "Doomsday Survey," 1086 A.D., it was "waste" with no owner, save the King as paramount lord.

Sir Turstin, one of the Conqueror's Knights, commonly known as "Turstin the Fleming" and "Turstin De Wigmore," married Agnes, daughter of Alured De Merleberg, one of the great barons of the realm, who settled on her, with other land the Pencombe estate. Agnes had two sons, Eustace and Turstin, to the former of whom the property passed. Eustace's son, or grandson, some time between 1100 and 1200 A.D., engaging in the border wars, built a stronghold and took up his residence at Whitney, on the banks of the Wye, and thus, after the custom of the times at Whitney, on the banks of the Wye, and thus, after the custom of the times, acquired the surname De (of) Whitney, as one of his neighbors gained that of De Clifford, and another that of De la Hay. The first mention of a De Whitney in any record now extant is that of "Robert De Wytteneye," in the Testa de Nevill 1242 A.D. There are numerous records relating to Robert's son, "Sir Eustace De Wytteneye," and from the latter down an authentic account can be given of each head of the family in the long line.

After more than four years of research and two visits to England, Henry Melville, Esq., of the New York bar, has compiled and published a richly illustrated book entitled;

THE ANCESTRY OF JOHN WHITNEY

Which is the authority for the foregoing statements, and which those mentioned in the following pages as among the descendants of the latter will wish to see, and from the two works combined learn the names of their progenitors in unbroken series for eight hundred years.

Of the life of Thomas Whitney nothing is certainly known beyond the following facts: On May 10, 1583, he obtained from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster a license to marry Mary, daughter of John Bray, in which he is described as "Thomas Whytney of Lambeth Marsh, gentleman," "Lambeth Marsh" is a name still applied to a locality near the Surrey end of Westminster bridge. There were born to him nine children, viz: Margaret, Thomas, Henry, Arnwaye, John, Nowell, Francis, Mary and Robert, but only three, viz., John, Francis, and Robert, survived childhood. Of these John emigrated to Watertown, Mass., Francis died at Westminster in 1643, and Robert in the parish of St. Peters, Cornhill, London, in 1662. In 1611 it is recorded that Thomas paid the subsidy tax, and December 6, 1615, on the probate of the will of his father-in-law, John, and November 8, 1624, his son Robert. The record of the latter, like the marriage license, describes him as a "gentleman." September 25, 1629, he buried his wife, and in April, 1637, died himself. His eldest surviving son, John, being then out of England, administration of his estate was, on May 8, 1637, granted to the other two, Francis and Robert.

The accounts of the latter show that the deceased was in comfortable circumstances.

John, in whom we are most interested, probably received, for those days, a good education in the famous "Westminster School," now known as St. Peter's College, and February 22, 1607, at the age of fourteen, was apprenticed by his father to William Pring of the Old Bailey, London. The latter was a "Freeman" of the Merchant Tailors' Company, then the most famous and prosperous of all the great trade guilds, numbering in its membership distinguished men of all professions, many of the nobility and the Prince of Wales, and, on March 13, 1614, Whitney at the age of twenty-one became a full-fledged member. Marrying soon after he took up his residence at Isleworth-on-the-Thames, eight miles from Westminster, and there three children were born, baptized on the following dates: May 23, 1619, Mary; September 14, 1621, John; and January 6, 1623-4, Richard. There, too November 8, 1624, his father apprenticed to him his youngest brother, Robert, who served seven years. Soon after the latter date he moved from Isleworth, probably back to London. Entries in the registers of the parish of St. Mary Aldermery indicated that he lived there-in "Bowe lane," near Bow church, where hang the famous bells – for several years, during which time Mary died, and his son Thomas was baptized December 10, 1627. In September, 1631, he placed his eldest child, John, Jr., in the Merchant Tailors school – where according to the registers, he remained as long as the family were in England – and, early in April, 1635, registered with his wife Elinor and sons John, Richard, Nathaniel, Thomas, and Jonathan as a passenger in the ship "Elizabeth and Ann, Roger Cooper, Master," which, a few weeks afterward, completed her lading and set sail for the New World.

Extracts from the books of the Merchant Taylors' Company, of the city of London, England. July, 1592, Thomas Whitney, son of Henry Whitney of Minehall, in the county of Surrey, gentleman, apprenticed to William Persie of Watling street.

April 14, 1600, Thomas Whitney made free by Henry Pratt, his assigned master, from Mr. Rowe, who was his assigned master from William Persie, his first master. The report of Mr. Rowe for two years and by Mr. Persie for two years and three months, certified by their letters to Henry Pratt for the residue.

June 23, 1593, Thomas Whitney, son of Nicholas Whitney of Carsleton, in the county of Hereford, gentleman, deceased, apprenticed to Robert Davies of St. Andrews in Holborn. July 19, 1602, Thomas Whitney made free by Robert Davies, his master.

THE FAMILY IN AMERICA

The Whitney family is very numerous in America; not only in New England are they abundant, but in nearly every state and territory in the United States. A very large share of those who bear the name are the descendants of John and Elinor Whitney of Watertown, in the Massachusetts colony. No relationship is located there in 1665, and the genealogy of whose descendants, both male and female lines, have been published by S. Whitney Phoenix, being the most exhaustive and expensive work of this kind ever published in America.

John Whitney was born in England in 1589, and dwelt in the Parish of Isleworth-on-the-Thames, opposite Richmond, nine miles from London, from May, 1619, to January, 1623-4. The record "of persons permitted to embark at the port of London after Christmas, 1634," manuscript folio page 35 in Rolls office, Chancery Lane, gives the following names and ages: John Whitney 35, Elinor Whitney 30, John 11, Richard 9, Nathaniel 8, Thomas 6, Jonathan 1.

The Record reads as follows:

The Elizabeth and Ann, Roger Cooper Mr., April, 1635

These p'ties hereunder expressed are to be imbarqued for New England, having taken the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacie and likewise brought Certificate both from the Ministers and Justices when their abidings were latlie, of their conformitie to the Discipline and order of the Church of England, and yet they are no Subsedy Men. Jo. Whitney, 35; Jo. Whitney, 11; Richard Whitney, 9; Nathaniel Whitney, 8; Tho. Whitney, 6; Jonathan Whitney, 1; Ellen Whitney, 30.

The ages of John Whitney and his five sons, as thus given, were all too young. The parish register of Isleworth contains the following entries:

1621, Sept. 14, John Whitne and Ellin had John their son baptized.

1623-4, Jan. 6, John Whitne and Elinor his wife had their son Richard baptized.

It is suggested that the non-conformity acts might have had some influence in making the ages of the several members of the family younger than they were.

They settled in Watertown, in the Massachusetts colony, in June, 1635, where his son Joshua was born the 15th of July following, he being the first of this line born in America. John Whitney was admitted freeman 3d of March 1636, and the following year was for the first time elected by his associates as one of the Select Men of the town. He held the office for many years afterward, until 1655, at which time he was elected town clerk. June 1, 1641, he was appointed constable at Watertown by the General Court at their quarter session held in Boston.

At that time constables were appointed by the General Court, and, besides the duties attached to the office in latter times, they were required to collect the taxes of the town and the levies by the General Court; to pay the debts of the colony due to individuals in their respective towns; to supply the town with sealed weights and measures; to set or order in those towns where no captain dwelt, and to inflict the punishments ordered by judicial authority, "where there was not another appointed to do it within his own town, unless he can get another to do it." As a badge of his office a constable was required to carry a black staff five or five and a half feet long, with a tip or head five or six inches long.

His very early admission as a freeman and his election as a Select Man show that he held a respectable social position in the community.

He was grantee of eight lots in Watertown and purchaser of 16 acres, his homestead lot, where he continued to reside. This latter property was granted to John Strickland, and was bounded east and south by William Jennison, west by Martin Underwood, north by Isaac Mixer. His eight lots amounted to 121 acres, to which he subsequently made additions, as shown by the Registry of Deeds. Later the homestead became the property of his son, Joshua, of Groton, who sold it to Dea. Nathan Fiske, Oct. 29, 1697.

The death of John Whitney is registered in the church record of Watertown, 1673, thus: "John Whetny, Widdower, Deceased first of June, aged about eighty-four years." His wife, Elinor, mother of his eight sons, died in Watertown May 11, 1659, aged about 60 years (though called 54). He married Judah (Judith) Clement, Sept. 29, 1659.

His will, dated April 3, 1673, is as follows:

I John Whitney senior of Watertowne in ye county of midlesex being perfect and sound in my memory and understanding blessed be god for it: I do declare this to be my last will and testament. In maner and form as followeth.

1ly I committ my spirit into ye hands of god yt gave it: and my body unto the earth from whence it was taken:

2ly I give unto my Son John Whitney: my meadow called beeverbrook meadows with yt upland yt doth appertain thereunto: and a yoke of oxen: or nine pounds ten shillings: and ten acres of my land called devedent and a trunke and one pair of sheets and one pair of pillows beers and two pewter dishes a great one and a small one and ye bed whereon I lie with all the furniture thereunto belonging.

3ly I give unto my son Richard Whitney my ten acres of land called devident and two cowes and a great sea chest.

4ly I give unto my son Thomas Whitney ten acres of my land called devident and two cowes and a sad colered sute namely a payer of breeches and a close coate and a puter dish.

5ly I give unto my son Jonathan Whitney an iron kittle and a great brass skilet.

6ly I give unto my son Joshua Whitney twenty acres of my land called devident and a cupbard and a little table and a chest and a great kittle and a warming pan and a skilett.

7ly I give unto my son Benjamin Whitney the old mare if she live.

8ly My will is yt what of my estate be left after all is paid out as ye aboves namely of my moveables yt it be equally devided between my executors and I doe nominate and apoynt my well beloved sones John Whitney; and Joshue Whitney to be my executors to this my will and testament and I doe desire my loveing friend William Bond sen to se yt this my will be performed according to ye true intent of it as is aforesaid and doe set to my hand this 3d of Aprill 1673.

Ye centerline in ye line 24 ye wood devided was don before any subscribing or seaining.

The marks of X

John Whitney sen and a seale in ye presence of William Bond sen, Sarah Bond sen.

This is an inventory of the estate of Mr. John Whitnie, sene, taken this 4th of June, 1673, by us whose names are hereunto described.

A sad coleired sute coats and breeches	001 10 00
The rest of both linen and woolen and shooes stocking hats gloves being much worne	002 10 00
The bed wheareon he lay with all the fumiture thereunto belonging	005 00 00
Three pillows beers three sheets and three small old table clothes	001 00 00
An old feather boulster and feather pillows a sea chest	000 10 00
Two old chests an old trunke an old box and an old Cubbard	000 14 00
two old tables one forme 4 old chaires	001 00 00
Three pewter platters one basson a sacer and old great pott and old pewter bottle and a chamber pott	000 12 00
A brass kitle 2 brass skilletts a brass skimer a warming pan a small Brass mortar a little ladell of brass	001 02 00
An iron pot and pott hooks a tramell a iron kittle a spit a smoothing Iron and two old frying pans	001 05 00
Three earthen vessels a great grater 2 chuny dishes a dozen of trenchers a wooden dish 3 cheese moats.	000 03 00
A small trevit a pair of tongs and a small payer of scales pound and half in waits a spindell for a whele and an iron bullet.	000 02 00
A churme and other lumber.	000 05 00
Four coves.	010 00 00
Two oxen	009 10 00
A old maer.	002 10 00
An old sadle an pillion.	000 10 00
An old paire of soops and boxes for a cart a payer of iron pins For the extree a payer of lines pins and washers.	000 10 00
A chaine a iron bar a spoone of iron an old adsc a set for a saw two wedges and an iron pin for a cart a hay crome and other old iron.	000 12 00
A grind stone with the iron to it.	000 04 00
An old haire a cart rope an old bage two old cushins.	000 02 00
Fifty acres of land caled devident.	025 00 00
Three acres of meadow at beaver brooke with an acre and half of upland to it.	020 00 00
An acre of meadow called plaine meadow.	010 00 00
A forke and a shovell.	000 02 00
All so of	000 14 00

Joseph Underwood
William Bond
Nathan Fiske

A quarter Court, held at Boston, the first of the 4th mo., 1641.

John Whitney was chosen constable at Watertown and tooke oath.

There was granted to goodm. Nutt, Marten Vnderwood, John Whitney, Henry Kemball and John Witheredge allowance for 83 ½ yrd. Of cloth, valued at 12 d. p. yrd.

1655. In answer to the peticon of Mr Lymon Eires, Jno. Stone, Jno. Whitney, Wm. Page, etc, the Court judgeth it meete to referre the petitioners to the retourne of the commissiones appointed to settle the matters in difference betweene them those acts this Court doth approove of and contjnew, as they are presented to this Court, and are on file.

WHAT HENRY AUSTIN WHITNEY SAYS

John Whitney probably arrived in June, and immediately settled in Watertown, where his son Joshua was born the 15th of July. He purchased a sixteen acre homestead, which had been granted to John Strickland, who was dismissed from the Watertown church May 29, 1635, and was one of that colony from Watertown that went and planted Wethersfield, the oldest town on Connecticut river. This homestead was the permanent residence of Mr. Whitney. In 1668 he requested his youngest son, Benjamin, who had settled in York, Me., to return and live with him on his homestead, with the assurance that it should be his own after his father's decease. In 1671 Benjamin, with his father's consent, conveyed his rights and obligations in this homestead to his brother Joshua, who had settled in Groton, for L40. After the decease of his father Joshua returned to Groton, and on the 29th October, 1697, sold this ancient homestead to Dea. Nathan Fiske. It was situated at a little distance north of Belmont street and east of Common street. (See the map of the original allotments in Bond's Early History of Watertown.)

It is stated above that Mr. Whitney purchased his homestead, but before 1642 the town had granted him nine other lots of land, amounting to 198 acres. The registry of Deeds, which contains comparatively few of the early conveyances, shows that he made several purchases of land, and it is probable that he had aided all his other sons in their settlements as he did Jonathan, to whom he gave 39 acres about 1659 – and Benjamin, to whom he gave the homestead as we have already noticed. Jonathan and Benjamin received these gifts from their father when they were quite young, and it is possible that they shared in some later division of his estate, which may account for the fact that Mr. Whitney in his will, while he bequeaths parcels of land to all his other sons, merely gives to Jonathan "one iron kitle and a great brass skillet;" to Benjamin, "the old mare if she live."

Mr. Whitney was admitted freeman March 3, 1635-6; appointed constable of Watertown by the General Court, June 1, 1641; selectman, 1638 to 1655, inclusive, and town clerk, 1655.

His wife Elinor, the mother of his eight sons, died May 11, 1659, aged 54; and he married Sept. 29, 1769, Judah Clement, who was not living at the date of his will, April 3, 1673. He died June 1, 1673, aged 74. Inventory, dated June 4, 1673; 50 acres dividend land, 3 acres Beaver Brook meadow, and 1 ½ acres upland; 1 acre plain meadow, besides his personal property, consisting of household goods and stock on the farm. This shows that he then held but a small part of his lands granted and purchased, which had probably been distributed to his sons.

WHITNEY GENEALOGY

1. John Whitney (Thomas, Robert), b. England, 1589, settled in Watertown Mass., June, 1635, m. in England, Elinor --, b. 1599, d. in Watertown, May 11, 1659; m. 2d in Watertown Sept. 29, 1659, Judith Clement. She died before her husband. He d. June 1, 1673; res. Watertown Mass.
 - i. Mary, bap. Eng. May 23 1619; d. young
 - ii. John, b. Eng., 1620; m. Ruth Reynolds
 - iii. Richard, b. Eng., 1626; m. Martha Coldam
 - iv. Nathaniel, b. Eng., 1627; n.f.k.
 - v. Thomas, b. Eng., 1629; m. Mary Kedall (Kettle)
 - vi. Jonathan, b. Eng., 1634; m. Lydia Jones
 - vii. Joshua, b. Wat., July 5, 1635; m. Lydia --, Mary -- and Abigail Tarball.
 - viii. Caleb, b. Wat., July 12, 1640; d. buried 12 (5) 1640
 - ix. Benjamin, b. Wat., June 6, 1643; m. Jane -- and Mary Poor.
2. John Whitney (John) b. England, 1620; res. In Watertown m. 1642, Ruth Reynolds, dau. of Robert, of Watertown, Weathersfield and Boston.

He was admitted freeman May 26, 1647 ae 23; was selectman 1673 -- 80, inclusive. The will of Robert Reynolds, of Boston, dated Apr. 20, 1658, mentions his dau., Ruth Whitney and her eldest son; his dau. Sarah Mason and her son Robert. John's estate was admr. Upon by Ruth and sons, John and Benjamin. Inventory dated Oct. 26, 1692, taken by Elnathan Beers and Thomas Hammond. It embraced 18 lots or parcels of land amounting to 210 acres and prized at L197:15. It embraced one lot of 17 acres, "purchased of father Arnold." His will was not proved, it was written Feb. 27, 1685, subscribed in the year 1690. This will, written by himself, though informal and not on record, may be found, in the files at the Middlesex Probate office and provides inter alia as follows: "If any of my sonnes or sone-in-laws or daughters be quarelsom by giving to Law or troublesom to the brethren I say they shall lose the share of what I have bequeatted them. I desire they should live in love to God and one toward anothr."

Mr. Whitney first settled (1643) and always resided on a three-acre lot on the east side of Lexington street, on land granted to E. How, and the next lot south of the residence of the Phillips family, and is probably the same lot occupied by his great grandson, Bradshaw Whitney. The ground is somewhat elevated, and there is little doubt that it is the "Whitney Hill" sometimes mentioned in the records, Dr. Bond thinking it very probable that his supposition, p. 1031, respecting this hill, is incorrect.

In 1675, in a warrant issued to the people of Watertown (just a few months prior to the attack on Sudbury) for impressing twenty soldiers with provisions, arms and ammunition and good clothing for the defense of the colony, Capt. Hugh Mason made a return, and in the list is found the names of John Whitney, Sr., and Moses Whitney (the latter was probably his nephew). He d. Oct. 12, 1692; res. Watertown, Mass.

- i. John, b. Spet. 17, 1643; m. Elizabeth Harris.
- ii. Ruth; b. Apr. 15, 1645; m. June 20, 1664, John Shattuck, b. Feb. 11, 1646. He was drowned in passing Charlestown Ferry, Sept. 14, 1675; m. 2nd Mar. 6, 1676, Enoch Laurence, b. Mar. 5, 1649; d. Sept. 28, 1744. Ch. John, b. June 4, 1666; m. Mary Blood; was one of the selectmen;

killed by the Indians with his son at Groton, Mar. 8, 1709. He was the ancestor of Lemuel Shattuck, Esq., of Boston, the historian of Concord, Mass; Ruth, b. Jan 24, 1668; William, b. Sept. 11, 1670; m. Hannah Underwood and Deliverance Pease; Samuel, m. Elizabeth Blood and had nine ch.; ch. By 2nd husband, Nathaniel, b. Feb. 21, 1677; m. Hannah --. One of his sons was captain of the Groton company; Daniel, b. Mar. 7, 1681; m. Sarah --. In 1707 he moved from Groton to Plainfield, Conn., in that part which became Killingly; had two wives and 22 children; Zechariah, b. July 16, 1683; m. Abigail Parker and Lucy Lakin; Jeremiah, b. May 1, 1686. Enoch, the father, was wounded in a fight with the Indians July 27, 1694, which almost wholly prevented him from manual labor. John Shattuck was in Capt. Beers' company in the Squakeag fight, Sept. 4, 1675.

- iii. Nathaniel, b. Feb. 1, 1646; m. Sarah Hagar
- iv. Samuel, b. July 26, 1648; m. Mary Bemis.