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CLUES TO ORIGIN OF WASHBOURNE, WILLETS, WHITEHEAD,  
WILLIAMS FAMILIES OF HEMPSTEAD, L.I., AND NICHOLLS  
FAMILY OF STRATFORD, CONN.

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Attention is called to Mr. Will O. Washburn's "Washburn Genealogy" (typed, December 1944) in the Library of Congress. This work treats of the descendants of Mr. William Washbourn who died testate at Hempstead, L.I., N.Y., a week before 11 June 1659. He, Daniel Whitehead, and Francis Nicholls had lived in Stratford, Conn., in 1647. These three men were somehow related, for William Washbourn was evidently brother-in-law to Whitehead, while Isaac<sup>2</sup> Nicholls (Francis<sup>1</sup>) was styled "uncle" in the will of John<sup>2</sup> Washbourn (William<sup>1</sup>).

William Washbourn, styled "Mr." in the annals of Hempstead, was evidently born in 1601 at Bengeworth, Evesham, Worcs., son of John Washbourne, a substantial yeoman, and his wife Martha, sister of Edward and John Timbrell of Offenham, Worcs. [a Thomas "Tumbrell" in 1563 married Eliza Yeats at Preston upon Stour, Glosce.] for note:

(1) William Washbourn of Long Island named a son John (the other son was named Hope).

(2) Records at Bengeworth last mention William in 1637; he is first named in New England in 1647 at Stratford, Conn.

(3) Baptisms of his daughters Sarah, Martha and Mary are found in the sketchy transcripts of the Bengeworth registers preserved in the Episcopal See at Worcester; these same daughters are named in the records of Hempstead, L.I.

(4) William's style, "Mr.," not common in that era, was compatible with the position in Bengeworth of the Washbourne family, who were probably somehow related to the armigerous Washbourne clan of Wichenford, Worcs., not very distant from Bengeworth.

Of William Washbourn's daughters, Sarah (1625-1695) married Robert Williams, while Mary (1629-1713) married Richard Willets [New York Gen. and Biog. Record, 80: 112-114]. Gloucester Wills include one dated 1648 of a Robert Williams, of Pebworth, some five miles east of Bengeworth, Worcs. Willets could very well have been related to one of the Willets families of Churchill, Grafton Flyford, Norton by Bredon, Worcs, and Kemerton, Glosce., all near Bengeworth, Worcs. Gloucestershire Notes and Queries, 2:558, shows that families named Willets were centered in that area. That work abstracts the will dated 1591 of Henry Willets of Kemerton, naming wife Juliana (will pr. 1598) and issue including a son Richard Willets.



As to Francis Nicholls of Stratford, Conn., he may well have been closely related to that Francis Nicholls of Witch, Worcs., whose administration is dated 1625 [Worcs. Wills]. Witch appears to be Wick by Pershore, some five miles west of Bengeworth, for early the town of Wick by Pershore had been called Wyche [Ekwall's Oxford Dict. of English Place Names].

It seems worth while to note that the Washbourn lineage given in Weis's Ancestral Lines of Sixty New England Colonists, at line 91, is not at all proved prior to John Washbourne of Bengeworth who was buried 1546, for there had been Washbournes recorded at a far earlier date in the Bengeworth vicinity. See Some Notes on the Evesham Branch of the Washbourne Family, 1914, by E. A. B. Barnard, F.S.A., which records doubt as to the exact degree of the aforesaid John Washbourne's relation to the Wichenford manor family of Washbourne. Unfortunately, the scholarly work of Barnard is ignored too often by those who refer to the Washbourne ancestry.

The Whiteheads were a family early at Bengeworth, Worcs., related to the Washbournes of that village since the mid part of the sixteenth century; see Barnard's work cited above, and works cited therein. The will of Thomas Whitehead of Bengeworth, dated 1589 and registered again in 1599, is at Worcester but names no sons. The Skidmore Genealogy shows that Daniel Whitehead, above, was born in 1603. Unfortunately, there seems to remain at Bengeworth no record of the baptism of Daniel Whitehead; however, the Bishop's Transcripts at Worcester may show something more concerning these Whiteheads. Daniel Whitehead married Jeanne Skidmore (originally Scudamore), probably sister of one of the early Skidmores of Long Island. This latter family, originally of Herefordshire, appears to have lived for some times at Westerleigh, Glouc., some 35 miles southwest of Bengeworth, Worcs., before removing to Long Island in the seventeenth century [op. cit.].

While there are several Hempsteads in England, there appears a distinct possibility that the Long Island town of that name was named in honor of Hempstead, now a suburb of the city of Gloucester, England. Future searchers as to the origin of early settlers of this part of Long Island should not neglect records of Gloucestershire and Worcestershire.

Editor's Note: Apparently there were two Daniel Whiteheads early on Long Island. One, a plain goodman, was a first purchaser in Huntington, 1653, and died before 1673, about which time his widow Jane or Jean (I have not seen the evidence that she was a Skidmore) married John Ingersoll; they had four children, Jemima (m. Jonathan Lewis), Adam (d. 1681), Elizabeth and



Thomas. The other Daniel Whitehead, dignified with the style of "Mr.," was of Hempstead and Oyster Bay, married a nameless daughter of Thomas Armitage, and died 16 Nov. 1668 aged 65; his widow was of Newtown when she declined to serve as executrix of his (lost) will. The latter were the parents of Major Daniel Whitehead who married Abigail Stevenson and was of Jamaica when his will was proved in 1704. There has been much confusion between these two Daniel Whitehead families. Thomas Skidmore was a blacksmith of Huntington. —D.L.J.



Hunt - Washbourne  
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