

# THE WHITFIELD FAMILY

Abigail Whitfield, daughter of the Reverend Henry Whitfield, was the first wife of the Reverend James Fitch. It was through this marriage that our line descends.

The Reverend Henry Whitfield was the mentor of young James Fitch and it was he that brought James to America and into the ministry. He was the first minister and founder of Guilford, Connecticut.

The line of descent begins early with one William Whitfield of Whitfield Hall, Cumberland who was married to a daughter of Richard Holme of the manor of Alston Moor in Cumberland. His son and heir married Maude Wheatley, daughter of John Wheatley. The line then goes through the eldest sons, John to William to Richard to his son Richard to Myles to Robert Senior and to Robert Junior.

I do not put a great deal of credence to these early lines going back to the 1300s as only heirs were ever mentioned and we may well belong to younger sons. It gets a tad confusing until about the mid 1400s or early 1500s when things start getting documented.

I will start with the elder Robert Whitfield.

## **ROBERT WHITFIELD SR.**

Robert the elder was born about 1490 at Alston Moor, Cumberland County, England. He married Agnes Giles about 1515 in Kent. She was a daughter of John Giles of Biddington, Kent. They moved to Wadhurst in Sussex and there the children were born. Robert died in Wadhurst on June 2, 1541 and Agnes died there in 1567.

Robert had at least two children: Robert who married Ann Roberts and John who married Elizabeth Crowe.

## **ROBERT WHITFIELD**

The younger Robert Whitfield was born in Wadhurst, Sussex in 1517. He married Ann Roberts in the early 1540s. Ann was a daughter of George and Rose Roberts of Brenchley, Kent.

Robert died in Thame, Oxfordshire, England on December 9, 1597. I do not have a date for Ann's death. They had at least one child, Thomas Whitfield.

## **THOMAS WHITFIELD**

Thomas Whitfield was born in 1545 in Wadhurst, Sussex. He became a lawyer and moved to London. He married Mildred Fortune Manning in London on January 10, 1584/85.

Mildred was a daughter of Henry Manning and Katherine or Cathrina Kirkner of Kent. She was born about 1560 in Greenwich, Kent. Through the Manning line that the family has ties to

Geoffrey Chaucer and the poet Percey Shelley. The Manning goes back all the way to forever. The line ties in with the Shelley, Petley, Brampton and many other lines.

Mildred died in Worth, Sussex on September 1, 1627 and Thomas Whitfield died there on May 1, 1629.

Their children included the Reverend Henry Whitfield; John Whitfield who married Elizabeth Culpeper of Wakefield, Surry; Frances; Bridget; Elizabeth who married Richard Southcoll of Devonshire; Katherine who married William Godfrey and Lucy Whitfield.

## **REV. HENRY WHITFIELD**

Henry Whitfield was born in June of 1590 in Mortlake, Surrey, England. He married Dorothy Sheaffe in September of 1617 in Cranbrook, Kent, England.

Dorothy was born in Wickham, Berkshire in about 1595. She was a daughter of Thomas Sheaffe and Maria Wilson. Thomas Sheaffe was a clergyman from Cranbrook and then in Berkshire County where he married at Windsor. The Sheaffes go back a long way in Kent County. Maria was a daughter of the Reverend William Wilson of Windsor, Berks. Her brother, John Wilson, was the first minister in Boston, Massachusetts.

Henry Whitfield was a graduate of New College at Oxford and became the Rector of Ockley in Surrey for some twenty years. He left England in 1637 and came to America. He settled in the New Haven Colony and founded the town of Guilford and became the first minister there

Henry remained in Guilford for some twelve years and then returned to England in 1650. He wrote several books both on religion and on missions to the Indians in America. He became a minister at Winchester and died there on September 17, 1659. Dorothy died there in 1669.

They had nine children.

**DOROTHY WHITFIELD** married Col. Samuel Desborough, the first magistrate of Guilford, Connecticut.

**SARAH WHITFIELD** married the Reverend John Higginson of Salem, Massachusetts.

**ABIGAIL WHITFIELD** was born in August 1622, and was baptized on September 1, 1622. She married the Reverend James Fitch. This is our lineage and their lives are contained in the FITCH FAMILY HISTORY, which precedes this section.

**THOMAS WHITFIELD, JOHN WHITFIELD, NATHANIEL WHITFIELD, MARY WHITFIELD, HENRY WHITFIELD** and **REBECCA WHITFIELD** who all remained in England except for Nathaniel who briefly went to Guilford and then returned to England.