

# THE WESTCOTT FAMILY QUARTERLY

Issued Quarterly — January, April, July, October — Noting Activities of the Society  
of Stukely Westcott Descendants; mailed free to members, to non-members \$7.00 yearly

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KNOW YOUR KINDRED BETTER

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Edmund (Ned) Morris was guest speaker at the National Reunion in 1988. With five of his own grandsons in the audience, Ned shared these memories of his grandfather, Roscoe Whitman, author of the Westcott Genealogy, and founder of our Society.

When I was first approached by our cousins to share with you memories of my grandfather, Roscoe Leighton Whitman, (whom my brother and I called "Gramps"), and, to recall the circumstances surrounding the writing of the Stukely Westcott genealogies, Initially wondered: "How do I do this? What can I tell that won't turn into a personal profile of a man who had a great influence on my own life?" Then, I realized that there are few people remaining who were on the scene when the books were published, and I the only one who can tell just why Volume I originated. Let me pause to say, I don't think Grandfather set out to form a society of descendants!

Like many things in life, the genealogy was the result of happenstance - for I doubt that early in life Grandfather did indeed have the intention of spending the last 20 odd years of his life searching for the writing about Westcotts of the world.

But, we'll come to that later.

Roscoe Whitman was born in 1869 in West Oneonta, NY, the first of two sons and three children of Henry Cutler Whitman and Zilpha Abigail Westcott (there is your first clue as to how the genealogies came into being!) Grandfather's mother died when he was thirty years old, his father remarried and many if not most of his mother's papers came into Grandfather's possession.

Grandfather's early years were spent on his family farm where his father was interested in hop-raising. When Grandfather was twelve, the family moved to the Village of Oneonta and a few years later, they moved to Albany.

Grandfather loved farm life as a boy growing up. I recently came across a letter he wrote to my mother, Dorothy Potter, recalling his childhood. Because I found it a delightful description of times, I have had copies reproduced for any of you who might enjoy having it to read. His education was in a one room school house and I think his strong belief in American family values stemmed from these early years. His affection for his parents is evidenced in his dedication of Volume I to his father and mother.

His business career started in journalism at age 19. We do not know if it was Albany, but I can say wherever it originated, it was not long after that he went to Amsterdam, NY, and joined a local newspaper.

Any one who really knew Roscoe Whitman would have to tell you that he had a strong sense of family. He abhorred divorce, regardless of the reasons, was somewhat bigoted with religious prejudice even though he was not a frequent church goer, insisted upon truth and loyalty, was a tease, had a temper, he would take a strong stand, sometime in public on issues he believed in. A man of simple tastes who liked bread and milk (add fresh berries in season) for Sunday night supper, a Democrat who voted Republican when Roosevelt ran for a third term - one more example of his strong beliefs in American tradition

*Every "Westcott" Descendant is eligible*

fought for by our forefathers. (Incidentally, Grandmother was a Republican which provided more than one interesting breakfast table conversation!) He was self-educated and for his time, extremely successful in his profession, advertising.

He would readily tell you that he would never have achieved his success had it not been for his wife, Susan.

Susan Felthousen Kline was born in 1873, grew up in Amsterdam, NY, graduated from the Misses Bell School, taught in the public schools until her marriage. She was one of three children, having a brother Adam, a sister, Eva. Her father, Perry Kline went west at age 19 to the Gold Rush of '49 and was sufficiently successful to return and establish a woolen knit goods factory and business in Amsterdam.

Married in 1894, Roscoe and Susan settled in a small flat in Amsterdam. He was working for the local newspaper and I remember being told he made \$18.00 a week (I also recall that Grandmother saved at least a dollar of that amount every week - pattern which would continue throughout their more than sixty years of marriage. More than once Susan came to Roscoe's aid during unexpected financial need.)

They had one child, my mother, Dorothy, born in Amsterdam in 1896. As a child growing up, she was surrounded by her mother's family - the Klines, Youngs and Schylers. After her parents moved to the New York City area, summer vacations were spent back in Mohawk Valley and later at her Aunt Eva's farm near Saratoga Springs. They were a fun loving bunch of people - I used to visit there as a child and young adult and well recall laughter, mirth and song.

Soon after the turn of the century, the family moved to New York City and grandfather founded the Whitman Advertisers' Service which today would be known as an advertising agency. He serviced a number of accounts: Lillian Russell Cosmetics was one and I recall him telling me that whenever he called on the beautiful (she was a famous "show girl" and close friend of Diamond Jim Brady), Miss Russell to discuss advertising plans, he always took her a box of her favorite cigars. He also handled advertising for the Cooper Siegal Department Store for which he established what became almost a household by-word in the area, "Meet me at the Fountain". His work in retail advertising came to the attention of Mr. James Cash Penney. Mr. Penney asked grandfather to give up his agency and join his firm as Advertising Director for the growing chain of retail stores. He did. He traveled a great deal and I recall one evening that the family gathered around the radio and we listened to his speech at the opening of yet another outlet for Mr. Penney. (It must have been a milestone one to have made the airways.) During these years, the chain expanded from coast to coast and grandfather planned and directed all of the advertising and promotional activities.

Pretty good for a small town farm boy who probably did not have the equivalent of today's high school education.

But in 1928 he had enough. Fortune had indeed smiled upon him, he was financially secure, there was a lovely home in Westfield, New Jersey, staffed by a live-in couple, George who was chauffeur, gardener, butler, and Henriette was cook and housekeeper. Grandfather decided it was time to retire and begin to travel with grandmother.

He had been a very active member of the New York City Advertising Club, and, early in 1928, the club began to plan for "a grand tour of Europe". This was what they were waiting for. They signed on and included my mother. No expense spared, first class all the way! Sailing from Hoboken midsummer and to tour for three months.

While he was always an "American First Person", particularly a New England American First - he was also an Anglophyle and was looking forward to their visit to England and

the north country. In later years, after he had gotten into research of the Westcott family, he regretted he was not familiar with Stukely Westcott's origins, to have visited Yeovil, had there been the opportunity. (I will note that my wife, Fran, and I did visit the church two summers ago, and though it was closed and we could find no one to open it for us, I felt that we were there for Gramps!)

The tour of Great Britain was a great success. Grandmother had a bit of Irish in her ancestral background and I think the three travelers felt they were indeed returning to some of their roots.

But, not so the tour of the continent. They arrived in Paris and it was a disaster as far as Grandfather was concerned. Beginning with their settling into their suite at The Ritz where he was furious that there was no toilet in the large bath room. Of course, there was but the country boy from Oneonta didn't realize it was camouflaged by a wicker chair. Worse was his inability to get a good cup of coffee. He just did not like France, the French or their customs. Germany was another matter: he admired the cleanliness, but sensed fear in the political stirring.

The tour completed, they set sail for home and the crash of the stock market. It was a great shock - Grandfather had no pension, there was no Social Security; the banks were closed (but not to grandmother who appeared at the door, was admitted and went to her safe deposit box where she had \$1000 put away for an emergency). When he retired, he and grandmother believed they had saved and invested wisely. How many others thought the same?

Well, it was time for reevaluation. The live-in couple was gone and grandfather weighed the wisdom of returning to New York and reactivating his advertising agency. But, first, it was a good time to get into the third floor storage rooms and sort out the years' accumulation. There was that packing case containing his mother's papers.

You may be guessing it! That was the beginning of the Stukely Westcott genealogical research in 1929.

Conditions settled down. My parents were separated and brother Jim and I moved in with our grandparents. I mention this only to record that I was on the scene - "in-house" so to speak when the genealogy was being written. The Foreword of Volume I tells us pretty much of grandfather's sources. Aside from family records of his mother's in the packing case, published material was a major part. But, also were volumes of correspondence, trips to cemeteries, county clerk offices, visits with aging family members, the putting together of hundreds - thousands - of bits of data. That, of course, is the obvious part of any genealogy writing.

Let me tell you of grandfather's approach to his writing. He did not want to put together endless lists of names and statistics. Rather, he wanted to tell a story based on such data. And thus, the reader will find a great deal of personal detail concerning not only lines of descent, but also of individuals. He poured over endless copies of letters, wills, land deeds, church and library records, and corresponded endlessly.

Then, the writing began.

It took years. When a missing link would be found, there was jubilation at the dinner table! Finally, grandfather realized the research and drafting would have to stop and a book published. He worked in his den at an old Smith Corona typewriter and using a very speedy and accurate two finger system of typing, the first draft of Volume I got under way. Soon, page after page was mailed to the printer in Oneonta. I well recall when press proofs began arriving, I was hired - I think at a nickle a long orange sheet, to proof read. When the final book was printed and the shipment arrived at the house,

I am sure you can sense the feeling of great accomplishment which prevailed. Now, grandfather was in the retail book business, but not for long.

The research - compilation of data - continued, but at a slower pace. I would like to share with you a letter written to my mother which is typical of many he sent to us at this itme.

Saturday afternoon

Dear Dorothy:

Not being willing to settle down today to a final compiling of genealogy data, I decided to set down for you a little sidelight of your ancestry, just that you might have it in case I never get round to complete the appendices which I propose to write to the genealogy of 1932.

Personally I doubt whether anyone is justified in claiming superiority because of an ancestral background, but if such claim must be made then I think it should be based upon blood heritage rather than any financial consideration. However, I hope I am still broad enough in my view to let everyone speak for himself.

It has always seemed to me that it is a rather notable fact that all my ancestry with one exception started life in America in Rhode Island. The only exception I know is that of Catherine Updike, a Dutch girl born in New Amsterdam in 1640, the daughter of Gylbert Opdyke, who came from Holland in 1635. However, her mother was English, Elizabeth Smith, Daughter of Richard Smith, who had an Indian trading post at Wickford, R.I. soon after Providence was settled.

As I stated on one of the accompanying charts, I doubt very much whether there are many people who can trace their lineage back to five of the thirtteen original proprietors of Rhode Island, including Roger Williams. And the five who were your ancestors were very much in evidence in all the affairs of the colony and in so far as I have learned, they all played their parts well, with honor to themselves and the colony.

While I am of course, pleased to find that we descend from Roger Williams, I am more so because we have four others to support that contention --- Stukely Westcott, William Arnold, John Greene and John Throckmorton. Before I finally put aside this "indoor sport in which I am indulging, I truly expect to find that you and I have a "Mayflower" ancestor. Perhaps the poor old ship can stand a couple of more passengers.

Sincerely and lovingly,  
s/Dad

(Note by EWM: Grandfather did find a "Mayflower" ancestor. Anyone interested in this lineage, please let me know and I will be happy to provide the data. Also, after my marriage to Fran, her mother and grandfather established that she was descended from the Carpenters giving our children six ancestors who founded Providence plantation.)

Finally after seven years after Volume I came off the press, Volume II was published.

Grandfather realized that research of the family would never be final. New records would be made. It was his earnest hope, as stated in the closing lines of the foreword to Volume II that his work would be advanced by another. Let me quote:

"This compiler feels that there is not the percentage of speculation here that may appeal to those who have not made a long study of the matter. (referring to accuracy of the records) More or less diligent efforts have been made since October, 1929, to find positive records to substantiate these deductions and in several instances, the desired evidence has been found. In the introductions that follow, unless proof has been obtained, the probable lineal descent will be qualified. May another compiler, at some future time, be more successful."

(Note by EWM: I interrupted speaking to announce that the SSWD Board of Directors had authorized the compilation and publishing of Volume III and that Edna Jay Lewis had agreed to undertake the work.)

Grandfather's later years were quiet ones. He did some limited writing of short stories and did write a limited genealogy of the Kline/Young families. But, after publication of Volume II, he limited himself to the Society Quarterly in which he would include new data.

The time came when he turned over his records and files to the Society believing that it was well established and his work would be carried on. He remained active until the closing days of his life when advanced years and illness prevented his participation. Let me share with you one final insight into his personality. One that may come as a surprise to many of you.

Because he could no longer travel great distances, he asked that a reunion such as this be held in Princeton, N.J. The Society denied his request. At the Greater New York Chapter dinner held annually in New York City the winter before the reunion was to take place, he was called upon to speak. Because he felt strongly (remember my describing his beliefs about issues?) that the Society had been unfair, he RESIGNED! never again to participate.

It was not too long after that he passed away, at home, in his room next to his den where he had spent those many happy years searching for and recording the lives of Westcotts.

His family is happy - and, I know he would be - that the Society is going to publish a third volume. Edna will be sending a form to the membership asking for updating of data; please return the information to her.

Let me take one final moment to thank you for giving me the opportunity to recall a wonderful creative and dedicated man, and his lovely wife, Grandmother Susan, both of whom had such a meaningful influence upon my life.

Perhaps my having done this will lead some of you to writing your memories of fathers and grandfathers no longer with you and unknown to your children and grandchildren. You will find it a pleasant task - one only you can do.

( Editor's note) Thank-you, Ned, for accepting the challenge of being our guest speaker at the National Reunion banquet. And thank-you for challenging us to document our memories. (See form in this mailing)



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HISTORY and GENEALOGY

OF THE  
ANCESTORS AND  
SOME DESCENDANTS OF

Stukely Westcott

One of the Thirteen Original Proprietors  
of Providence Plantation and the Colony of Rhode Island

WITH ESPECIAL MENTION OF  
THE WESTCOTTS OF CHESHIRE,  
BERKSHIRE COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS,

AND

THE WESTCOTTS OF MILFORD,  
OTSEGO COUNTY, NEW YORK

AND SOME OF THE ALLIED FAMILIES

Incorporating, and Extending, the Research of  
the late Hon. J. Russell Bullock of Bristol, R. I.

BY  
ROSCOE L. WHITMAN  
1932

II

BOOK OF APPENDICES

TO THE

HISTORY and GENEALOGY

OF THE

ANCESTORS AND  
SOME DESCENDANTS OF

Stukely Westcott

1592-1677

PUBLISHED IN 1932

BY  
ROSCOE L. WHITMAN  
1939

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Buy a set in memory of a loved one and donate to your local  
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Send \$ 40.00 for each set to      Edna J. Lewis  
  Box 267  
  Riverton, CT    06065

Message to Stukely Westcott Descendants:

Work has begun! We are in the process of updating the records compiled and published by Roscoe L. Whitman, 1932-1939, in his two vol set, History and Genealogy of the Ancestors and Some Descendants of Stukely Westcott and Book of Appendices. We gratefully acknowledge the work accomplished by many Westcott Cousins, and the fact that it is being shared with SSWDA. To mention only two at this time, thank you Eleanor Trismen for research on Rial and Mercy (Shaw) Westcott to May 1981, also thank you Arlene Coltey for research on the family of Frances Belle Westcott and her husband Hudson Reed, to 1988.

We are asking all Westcott descendants to help with this work. Please use the form found with this mailing to update your own line. Print or write clearly and give correct spelling of names & places. Dates should be accurate to prevent confusion for future researchers. The data you compile and send to us will be published in Book 111. Use the same format to give data for others on Westcott lines. If possible, include places and dates of birth (& deaths) for the children named at bottom of the form. Additional forms are available by writing to Edna Jay Lewis, Bx #267, Riverton CT 06065. (or you may request forms by including a note in dues envelope returned to Paul R. Lewis of the same address). Thank you, every one,  
Sincerely, Edna Jay Lewis