



THOMAS wrote seeking information from a Mrs Leary
(USA) a descendant of Ralph (Harry)

21, Bathfields Crescent,
Whitchurch,
Shropshire.

17th February, 1983.

Mr. H. Wheelock,
Horfield,
12, Nursery Drive,
Moreton-on-Lugg,
HEREFORD, HR 48DJ.

Dear Mr. Wheelock,

Thank you for your letter of February 10th enclosing the copy of Mrs. Leary's letter.

We are no experts on genealogy, but several of our friends are involved in tracing their family history, and we gather from them that the beginning of the 17th century is the great sticking point for most people (if they are lucky enough to get back as far as that), simply because parish registers were not kept before that time. Royalty and nobility have their family records usually, but the humbler folk lived and died unrecorded and, sadly, it is very difficult to learn anything about them.

As you probably know, it is only fairly recently that churches have been required to lodge their Parish Registers at the local Records Offices, and terrible things have happened in the past to the Registers - fire, flood, mice, etc. etc. We have friends locally who are thwarted in their research simply because (within living memory) an over-zealous housekeeper had a bonfire on the Vicarage lawn when spring-cleaning, and some of the Registers were included in the 'rubbish'!

Our records at Whitchurch do not begin until 1620 (and the early ones are almost illegible), but because Ralph and Abraham Wheelock attended Sir John Talbot's Grammar School we have been able to find out something of their lives from an admirable history of the school written by a Mr. Clark who taught there some years ago. Also, as Abraham was an eminent man in his time there is a considerable amount of information about him in the dictionary of National Biography (of which there are 15 volumes in Whitchurch Library) and my husband has extracted the salient points of his life, but there is a good deal more if you care to look it up. There should be copies in any good library. Ralph is not mentioned in that publication, but it does seem fairly certain that they were brothers. It is possible that their respective colleges might have even more detailed records - it might be worth contacting them. This is the information we have gleaned :

RALPH WHEELLOCK born Shropshire 1600. Matriculated sizar at Clare College, Cambridge, Easter 1623; B.A. 1626/7; M.A. 1631; ordained Deacon (Peterborough) 20th September 1629. Went to New England 1637 and settled in Dedham, Mass. Deputy for Mass. General Council for Dedham 1639 and 1640; for Medfield 1653, 1663/41 and 1667. Town Clerk & Local Justice in Dedham 1642. Became leading founder of Medfield, Mass. 1651. Died there 11 Jan. 1683/4. Probably brother to Abraham.

Ctd/

ABRAHAM WHEELLOCK 1593-1653

Born at Whitchurch and spent early years at Loppington, attended Sir John Talbot's Grammar School and matriculated sizar Trinity College, Cambridge 1611. B.A. 1614 - M.A. 1618; B.D. from Clare College 1624. Ordained deacon 1619 (London); Curate at Whixall 1620. In 1632 married Clemence Goad; in spite of publishing Greek works etc was often in poverty - after much canvassing obtained post (at end of 1629) of Librarian and amanuensis at Cambridge University Library. He urged Sir Thomas Adams to induce a city company to endow a chair of Arabic at Cambridge. At first Adams refused but later offered a stipend of £40. for that purpose for 2-3 years, so that Wheelock was first professor and his appointment was later made permanent. His name is chiefly remembered for his Anglo-Saxon work, and in 1643 for his Anglo-Saxon translation of Bede which was well thought of by scholars. He suffered a good deal of ill-health and died in London on September 1653, ~~leaving 5 children.~~ His funeral sermon at St. Botolph's, Aldersgate Street was preached by Will Sclater and was published in 1654. (He also translated the Bible into Persian).

I do hope that this will tell you something which you do not already know and wish that we could tell you at least the names of the parents, but we cannot. It is purely guess-work on my part, but I do wonder if the father was a clergyman as they seemed to have moved round Shropshire when they were boys, and they both went into the Church. I think sons often followed their father in those days - but this is all supposition. If we find anything more about them we will of course let you know.

I am enclosing a copy of this letter, which you might find useful to send to Mrs. Leary and do hope that we have been of help to her.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret James

Hon. Secretary.