

"THE FIFTY"

This May 4th marks 160 years since "The Fifty" sailed away from Bideford, Devon on the barque, "Bolina", 4th of May, 1831 and entered Millsborough Bay, Prince Edward Island four weeks later, the 5th of June. After landing at Little York the craft stayed ten days, moving on to Winsloe Rodd and from there leaving for Quebec. Sixty-one passengers had been on board and family stories say that fifty of those sixty-one were Whitlocks or their relatives, all from the Langtree area of Devon.

Several of the families that had disembarked in P.E.I. soon left the Island and settled in Ontario and Ohio. William and Isaac Whitlock made Exeter, Huron County, Ontario their home after walking over a hundred miles from Port Hope where they had landed. Richard Whitlock with thirteen children chose Orange Township, Cuyahoga County, near Cleveland, Ohio and we know from old letters that several others settled near Chagrin Falls, Ohio including the Pugsley and Stoneman families.

Charles Whitlock, who married Mary Grace Allin remained on Prince Edward Island and died in mysterious circumstances at sea in 1855 (see Vol.5 No.3, Sept.1986). Their sons, Isaac, Jesse and Edwin were born in England and a daughter, Rebecca born in P.E.I., died age twelve in 1845 from burns following an explosion of gun powder. Isaac had a family of five daughters and one son, Isaac. The girls married and remained resident; the father died and the son, a blacksmith, moved to Guelph, Ontario. Edwin married Sarah Smith in 1852 and they had seven sons and one daughter. A second daughter was born seven months after Edwin's death in 1872 but died in 1880. All others married and settled on the Island.

Jesse Whitlock was born at Langtree, Devon November 21, 1824 and came with his parents to P.E.I. as one of the "The Fifty". He became a Bible Christian Minister and in 1854 married Mary Martha Metherall the daughter of Rev. Francis Metherall. In the book "The West Country Preachers" by Michael J.L. Wickes there is a quote by Rev. Francis Metherall that describes the conditions the early settlers found in P.E.I. "Sometimes the roads are in such a state that a man could not travel at all without the assistance of a horse. I travelled on foot the first three winters that I was on this Mission, but I found it very great slavery. I have often suffered much, and one time was likely to lose my life in a storm". I must have been vastly different from his home in Morwenstow, Cornwall or his first Ministry on Guernsey Island in 1827!

Jesse & Mary Martha Whitlock had six children, three sons and three daughters. The eldest, Francis Metherall Whitlock was born in P.E.I. in 1855 and also became a Bible Christian Minister, later settling in Ohio and joining the Congregational Church at the time the Union. His parishes included Monroeville, Indianapolis, Cleveland and lastly Marietta, Ohio where he was when the United States entered the Second World War in 1941. In his eighties Rev. Whitlock began a correspondence with his distant cousin Leslie Whitlock of Holsworthy, Devon that continued until the end of the war in 1945. This wonderful collection of letters is in the Whitlock Family Association files (see REF105).

Jesse Whitlock

Mary Martha Whitlock

There are still descendants of "The Fifty" in Prince Edward Island but many have followed the earlier generations and spread out across Canada and the Northern United States.

Sources: REF68; REF85