

1848 DEAR PARENTS LETTER

The following letter has been in the files since the 1960's when I first started researching the Whitlock family. It was passed on to me by Catherine Johnson (1895-1978) of Falmouth, Cornwall. The letter is written by Samuel Whitlock to his parents back in Langtree, Devon. It is evident he has been away from home for several years and this is his first letter home!! Unfortunately, despite the wealth of detail the letter contains it is still not clear which Samuel Whitlock this is. The most likely candidate is Samuel Whitlock bp.Nov.21,1819 the son of Richard & Mary (Knight) Whitlock as he had brothers Elias and Phillip who are mentioned in the letter. Unfortunately he also mentions brother William and sister Susan that I do not show. One point that makes me question this is the correct Samuel is he would have been 25 in 1845 and the writer mentions paying to go to school.

The letter gives wonderful detail about a young man off to the New World to a country with endless potential. I hope you find it of interest.

Cleveland July the 16th 1848

Dear Parents

I wish to apologise to you for my well known disobedience in not writing to you before and now Dear Parents as I write to you I hope that these few lines will find You in good health as they leave me at present for which I heartily thank our Heavenly Father. Dear Parents when you addressed us as offsprings and not as Children we was struck with a severe scene of our disobedience and ungratefullness toward you. We knew very well where to direct for you and we also knew that you did not know where to direct for us, Dear Parents I ask you to confide in what I say and let me assure you that I have fully determined in my mind that you shall have no more occasion to write to us as you have had before and now to you I pledge my obedience as a dutifull son never to give you anymore trouble of this sort or of any other as long as I live. As you asked how I was getting along and what we were doing & what kind of a Country it is and so forth I will now give you a little information about the whole of what you asked for. When we first came here it was a very dry summer labour was scarce and wages was low and consequently I was very much disappointed. The first of your acquaintance that I saw after I arrived here was Charles Balkwill, John Hopper, Mr. Whitlock, Mr. Stoneman and the first work that i done here was quarrying stones 9 miles distant from this City. this I done in the summer and in the winter I went to Chagrin Falls and Worked for a Doctor, for him I done small jobs as Chop fire wood fetch water and milk the Cows and to Cut a long story short I used to wait on the girls that were hired in the house, these jobs I used to do mornings and evenings for which I got my board and washing and lodging, and in the day time I went to School for which I paid two dollars for 3 mounths. Then I went into the bush a Chopping of Cord wood for Wm. Hutchings then I went work for Brother Pugsley Clearing a Six acre lot of wood land then I went to work with Ford of Langtree town Sawing of Ship timber for a company of Ship builders in the adjoining city which is Separated from this by a fine naval river which is from 6 to 8 or 10 rods wide and the Depth of water from 16 to 26 feet I was to work on this Job by the mounth for which I got 20 dollars pr mounth and my board & lodging then the next thing that i done was rafting timber on lake Erie and working in the Ship Yard by the day for which I got 7 shillings pr day or 87 & 1/2 cts which is equivalent to 7 shillings I worked at that business about 2 mounths then I went to work with a man at Saweing again for which I got one half we earned which is customeary when we was saweing by the foot we averaged about 2 dollars and 50 cts pr day each one of us and when we got through that Job by the foot we worked by the day for 14 shillings pr day each of us then I went to work in the yard again for 7 shillings pr day for a short time then I went down to the falls again framing a barn where I was taken Sick with the Ague I had this sickness on me pretty much all summer

when I got well again I went to work in the yard again for 7 shillings pr day and after a while I agreed to work as an apprentice for the same wages as I got by the day and board myself I agreed as an apprentice for 6 months which time has long since been expired. Last February I was taken sick with inflammation on my lungs I was considered very dangerously ill for 2 weeks but thank the Lord for his merciful goodness and loving kindness in restoring me to good health again. Now for a little about the country. I have travelled but very little since I came to this place, But my informants has been the newspapers in general together with individuals who has travelled through the Country to a considerable extent some more than others with whom I use the name of Thomas Gorden that used to live at Langtree town with Mr. Wm. Blight, he has been in many different states of the Union he has been in York state & Pennsylvania & Virginia & Kentucky in these two states there are thousands of Negroe Slaves held in bondage by the government of this country who authorizes their masters as they are called to hold them as long as they the slaves shall live or to dispose of them at their will, these 2 states are situated south of Ohio in which I live, this state is bounded on the north by lake Erie & on the south by the Ohio River, this state is about 100 or 125 or 50 miles from north to south, the Ohio River is one of the well known Popular Rivers of the world for its length and width so well navigated by hundreds of steamers it also runs through a very fertile Country its banks produce iron & coal and the best of Clay for hard tough durable earthenware and fire brick, this Country is a Splendid one Canada also is a productive Country take the Canadas and the states and South America and you may rely on them as being very productive of such things as are necessary to produce Comfort, the Continent of America is noted for its fisheries and for its hunting grounds and some parts of it for its well known cultivation and let one Century more pass over its forests and unknown resources of Copper & Silver and Gold and let some more of our enterprising Countrymen together with other old Country folks come here with us and with our native Americans both Yankees and Indians and we will fit it fit for the reception of any decent well behaved beings whose aim is to advance the welfare of the Country and the world and to unite us in one band of help together brethren, we already have a free Constitution for whites and a great number of free institutions, we have quite a variety of Churches of all denominations Protestants and Catholics and a great number of free thinkers, we have a Society of Land Reformers in the states whose aim is to pass national and congressional law prohibiting the sale of land and the permission of Capitalists buying up the land from the poor and not cultivating it, so we want more national Reformers to carry the day against the oppressive surly dogs for they exactly resemble the dog in the manger who would neither eat the straw or let the Ox. there is a long stream of fresh water running by here it embraces Lake Superior which is the farthest west then Lake Michigan then Mackinaw straits then Lake Huron the River St. Clair then Lake St. Clair then Detroit River then Lake Erie then Niagara River and falls or the Welland Canal which is Capable of Conveying Vessels of 1000 tons burthen through by which means vessels pass from the Lower to Upper Lakes and down again this canal is in Canada then this Stream of fresh water continues to run along through rivers and Lakes until it reaches the mighty Atlantic, So you see that this Country is blessed with plenty of Springs rising in the west and rivulets running to the east continually crossing watering and refreshing our blessed adopted Country this allabounding flow of accommodating waters enabling us to transport our western farming productions and the western wild and costly fur down to our eastern markets and to all countries where its asked, runs the distance of 3500 to 4000 miles our lakes is well adapted to easy navigation with a great many rich abounding parts my informant T. Gorden has also been up and down the Ohio river he has been an eye witness to these things of the south he has also been in the states of Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana & up and the several lakes and hundreds of rivers which I have not mentioned for my acquaintance of them is rather limited, this country is Young yet, and stands in need of much improvement So we are improving of it as fast as we can we have 2 railroads cutting through this state now which will be 3 or 4 hundred miles long one end of each road will be in this city, Green apples 50 cts pr basket Dried apples 75 cts fresh roll butter 11 to 14 cts pr lb butter in keg 9 to 13 cts Beef by quarter 3 to 4 cts Corn in ear 31 to 44 cts bushel Corn shelled 48 to 50 cts Corn meal 50 to 75 cts Cheese 5 to 8 cts pr lb eggs 11 to 14 cts pr Doz flour \$5 to \$5.75 cts hams 5 to 8 cts Hay \$6 to \$7 pr ton Oats 25 to 31 cts pr bush. prime pork 8 dollars pr bbl Pork by the hog 2 1/2 to 3

1/4 cts pr lb potatoes 50 to 75 cts pr bush. Wheat \$1 to 105 cts Rio Coffee 8 cts to 10 cts Candles 12 1/2 cts pr lb molasses 37 to 62 cts pr gal. raisins 16 cts pr lb rice 6 to 8 cts starch 7 to 11 cts oats 137 pr 280 lbs brown sugar 7 to 9 loaf sugar 11 to 13 maple sugar 5 to 6 Teas 25 cts to \$1 or 100 cts the above is abstracts of Cleveland market 100 cts is worth \$1 and 5 of this money is worth 1 sovereign but 1 Sovereign in gold is worth but 4 dollars 84 cents in this country

Brother Joseph & Sister Mary is living at Chagrin Falls on the farm that they have bought, it contains 28 acres, distant from this place 18 miles, when i heard from them last they & their Children where all well they have had an increase to their family which was a fine little son its name is Samuel, instead of an increase it is just enough to keep the number what they had when they left the old Sod, it is poor little grace that was ripened for the harvest and selected by our saviour to enter his kingdom of rest and blessedness

I saw Fanny Whitlock the day that she arrived here she has made a visit to her relatives in orange and she is now living in this place and doing well she gives her best respects to the whole of you. Mr. Wm. Jud is living in this City and has got him a wife and a boy. Grace Hutchings is living in this city also and is well, I don't know but Mr. Stoneman's folks are all well and I know no other about Mrs. Whitlocks folks.

List of wages, Labouring men for \$1 to 125 cts pr day. House Carpenters from \$1 to \$1 & 50 cts pr day. Ship carpenters from 7 shillings to \$1 & 75 cts and \$2 pr day. Blacksmiths from \$1 to 125 cts pr day by the mounth board themselves Farming men teamsters etc from \$10 to \$14 pr mounth through the year, they that work on shore has to work 26 days for a mounth so that they can make just 12 mounths in a year and sailors have to work 30 days for a mounth reckoning in their time sundays as well as working days. The raise of wages took place at the same time that the work commenced busily and the demand for men was made, which was in the fall of 1845 It has been good ever since. The summer of 1846 was a good one we had a bountiful harvest then and we are very likely to have another one this year, I think that the weather here is a little warmer than at home or at least where you are and a little colder in the winter if their is any difference at all; we have not got so much rain here as you have their but on the whole i think that their is not much difference, others thinks that it is no colder at all here in the winter or warmer in the summer than it is in England but people that have not been here at all here's a Great many different stories so they do not know which to believe, you will please to observe in your map of the world that climate's alters according to the distance and latitude of the country for I know that is a great deal colder in the north & east of america than it is with you and it is much warmer in the south of these united states than it is with you

My Room for writting anny more is not much so I must now conclude by asking you my Pardon for not writting to you before as I promised you when I left England as I have no reasonable excuse to make for not writting to you before I am Compelled to confess that it was nothing more or less than my wilful Dishonourable & disobedient neglect.

My Best wishes to Brothers and sister's William, Phillip, & Elias together with their families & Dear sister Susan and her betterself and family is ever for you andthe folks at Collacott and in Cornwell and all enquiring Friends their is much more that I would be glad to say concerning the country and other things if I had but got room.

Thomas Gorden would be very much obliged to you if you would please to be so kind as to give his best respects to his Uncle & Aunt & Cousin Banbery at Berry farm and to Mr. blight and folks at Langtree town.

Please to answer this as soon as possible if you please as i would like to hear from the whole of you and when you write please to direct as follows, Samuel Whitlock, Cleveland, Ohio, United States, North America Dear Parents please to accept of the warmest heartfelt Love of your Undutifull Son, Samuel Whitlock N.B. i am waiting for my pardon Adieu Adieu

In the 1850 census of Cleveland, Cuyahoga Co., Ohio there is a Samuel Whitlock age 27 carpenter & joiner, born in England with a wife Jane age 20 born in Ireland. There are several other Whitlock families in the area. In Orange, Cuyahoga Co. is Christopher Whitlock age 26 with his mother Mary [Stoneman] Whitlock and several siblings. There is Fanny Whitlock age 20 born in England. This is likely the Fanny Whitlock mentioned in Samuel Whitlock's letter. There is also John Whitlock age 23 with his wife Mary living in Orange. This is likely Christopher Whitlock's brother John and his wife Mary Jenkins who were married in 1850. Most of these Whitlocks appear in the 1860 census for Ohio but so far we only have the index and have not extracted the actual entries. This may give us additional clues.

In our Marriage Register there is a Samuel Whitlock married to a Jane Cain October 4, 1849. I have assumed this is same Samuel. Hopefully we will eventually track down which Samuel wrote the letter and determine how the family connections mentioned in the letter fit in.