

LANGTREE, DEVON WHITLOCKS, WHICH WAY NOW?

Each of us stuck at the 'top' of our lines. How to make that next generation connection is the problem that faces all family historians. Mine own Northern Devon family is no exception. The only advantage I might have over others is that there have been several others working on bridging the same gap.

The Whitlocks of Langtree, Devon line is headed by Thomas Whitlock who married Mary Heaman in 1673. We have been stuck at this point since the 1960's. A couple of years ago the late Jim Whitlock of Plymouth, Devon was fairly certain he had uncovered documents that indicated that Thomas' father was Richard Whitlock who died in 1687.

The main premise centred around the connection to the Heaman family and an indenture dated 1687. Jim first puts his conclusions in his letter dated Sep.24,1991. "Yes, I am confident that the Thomas Whitlock who died in 1715 was the husband of Mary Heaman. It feel that there is little doubt about this now, and I think that we should enter it. I was pleased to see that John [John R. Whitlock] was on the same track, because he is working independantly, as it were, so he isn't really being influenced by us. The point about 1687 I now feel is also more than coincidence. You see It wasn't only the year, the day and month of Richard's probate is exactly the same as that of the lease. So yes, I do think that Richard was Thomas' father. Also if you carefully study the pattern Thomas used to name his children, the names all fall into place."

The connection with the Heaman family is complicated. We are fairly certain that Rose Whitlock the widow of Thomas Whitlock who died in 1643 is the same Rose who married Christopher Heaman as his second wife. Christopher's daughter Mary Heaman married our Thomas Whitlock in 1673.

John R. Whitlock lays out some interesting facts and assumptions in his letter of January 19, 1998:

"FACT There is no burial for Rose Heaman in either Frithelstock or Langtree. Now this fact is crucial to the following assumptions. I must state here and now that I totally agree with Jim's statement that Rose was the widow of Thomas Whitlock who died at Langtree in 1643. This also is crucial to the following.

FACT Mary Whitlock, nee Heaman was the step-daughter of Rose. Mary's husband, Thomas would have been the step son in law of Rose.

ASSUMPTION Thomas Whitlock who married Mary Heaman was the son of Thomas and Rose.
[Therefore born before Thomas' death in 1643]

ASSUMPTION Rose Heaman was buried at Langtree with her first husband, Thomas Whitlock. This is fairly common practice in North Devon, even today - I cannot speak for the rest of the country - so let us suppose that a clerical error was made by the parish clerk whom completing his registers. The general practice was that he would keep a 'rough day book' and fill his 'fair register' at a later date. In some smaller parishes this could be up to a year later. Clerical errors were fairly commonplace in those days. So what if he wrote in his day book 'Rose, wife of Thomas Whitlock' and then when filling in the register he put the following entry: 11 February 1687 Rose Whitlocke [instead of Rose Heaman] Do you see what I am getting at? The date fits with the 1687 document as good as the Richard Whitlock date and Rose is mentioned in the document.

FACT Christopher Heaman was buried at Frithelstock on 18 August 1688 and the document of 10 February 1688 (the same year don't forget) clearly states 'Land LATE in the tenure of Christopher Heaman by right of his wife Rose'.

ASSUMPTION Christopher Heaman was buried at Frithelstock with his first wife, Katherin Crocker.

The above assumption that Rose had died before the 1687 document and the fact that Christopher died before the 1688 document could explain why there were two documents that appear to be very very similar being drawn up a year apart.

Let us look at the children of Thomas [Whitlock] and Mary [Heaman] in the light of the above assumptions regarding their naming:

Thomas 1674 named after his father and his grandfather?

Rose 1675 named after he grandmother?

Catheren 1677 named after her maternal grandmother? [Crocker]

Christopher 1680 named after his maternal grandfather? [Heaman]

Richard 1681 named after his father's brother?

John 1689 named after his mother's brother (John,1646) [Heaman]"

John's assumptions have merit but it will be interesting to see if we can confirm the parish register entry for Rose's burial is incorrect.

One point that does work with this assumption is the connection between Thomas Whitlock and his wife, Mary Heaman. Under John's assumption Thomas' mother, Rose married Mary's father Christopher Heaman. Had Thomas Whitlock and Mary Heaman been raised together as brother and sister the connection would have been doubtful but the second marriage took place May 20,1657 when Thomas would have been at least age 14 if not older. This would have linked Thomas and Mary together in a way that could easily resulted in an attachment.

Another connection that works for John's assumptions is the name Rose. Rose is a very unusual Whitlock name in the 1600's. We only have two others born pre1675 in all the Whitlock files. Thomas and Mary Whitlock must have named their daughter Rose after Rose (??) (Whitlock) Heaman so the connection was likely a close one.

Theories and assumptions are the method family historians come to conclusions and proof. This is where we are on this part of the family. I would be interested to hear any other theories or assumptions from anyone also trying to piece together this connection.