

WHITLOCKS OF SOUTH SHIELDS, DURHAM

The following was written by Robert Walter Whitlock for a display being organized by the Tyne & Wear Museum:

Rob's story

Moving With The Times: Whitlocks-Kennedys-Scarfes of South Shields

While my family's history is relatively simple - no illegitimate births, unknown fathers or criminal behaviour, it is one which follows historic changes in England and Canada. South Shields played a small but crucial role in that history.

Nottingham to South Shields

The Whitlock family had been centred in Nottingham between 1650 and the late 1800s. The demise of the lace industry likely contributed to the first break in that long association when my great-grandfather, Robert Stocks Whitlock, moved to South Shields to work as a marine engineer sometime in the early 1870s. In 1877 he married Isabella Kennedy, daughter of David and Martha Kennedy, at St. Hilda's of South Shields. Three of their four children survived to adulthood, including my grandfather Charles (b. 1878), brother David (b. 1882) and sister Edith "Sissie" (b. 1879).

Robert died in 1898. Quite a drinker, one story is that once in the buggy at the pub, the horse had to find its own way home.

South Shields to Canada

By the early 1900s Germany and other countries had forged ahead of England in ship-building. My grandfather decided to leave England. Their mother demanded that the brothers must travel together, and in 1903 they set off for Canada, settling in Saskatchewan. They moved to Canada as part of the Homestead program (land was free if farmed for three years).

Canada to South Shields, and back again!

My grandfather returned to South Shields often to visit his family. While in South Shields in 1915 he married Elizabeth Scarfe, daughter of Robert and Sarah Scarfe. They lived for awhile in Canada but moved back to England in 1922, we think they moved back because of my Grandmother's health. They brought with them their sons Charles "Cec" (my Dad) and David. Granddad operated a confectionary store at 114 Stainton Street. Charles and his two sons returned to live in Canada after Elizabeth's death in 1931 from TB (buried in Harton Cemetery).

Both of My Grandfather's sisters and mother remained and stayed in South Shields. Sissie lived until 1937 (married to Thomas Slater), while Isabella died in 1939.

A home away from home

I live in Vancouver now, part of the movement within Canada from farms to city. , along with two of my cousins who also live here. Another cousin still farms the original homestead in Saskatchewan. My daughter lives here as well, but my son lives in Korea, teaching English as a second language. The family

continues to move with the needs of the time!

I travel often to England - it is in my blood. I have recently completed a program in genealogy which will ensure that I continue to have a close connection with a country I love as a home away from home.

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Our thanks to Rob for sharing this with us. Rob is part of the WHITLOCK02H family.