

DOROTHY ELLEN WHITELOCK (1901-1982) - HISTORIAN

Starting in 1968 I wrote to Whit(e)lock(e)s all over the world using addresses I extracted from telephone directories that were available at the library. In 1970 one of the persons who responded was Professor Dorothy Whitelock of Cambridge, England. At the time I was living just north of London in Ware, Hertfordshire. The responses to these hundreds of letters were to form what has become known as a "One Name Study".

Professor Whitelock had retired in 1969 and her first letter was dated Nov.1,1970. She wrote about the numerous letters she received following the publication of her first edition of *The Beginnings of English Society* in 1952. Persons with the name Whitelock wrote from as far away as America suggesting a relationship with her family. Her comments to me were that my sister and I had taken on a big task as the name was not as uncommon as one might think. There was a summary of where each of her brothers and sister's families lived and could be contacted, as well as her two nephews, Philip and Peter. Also enclosed was a rough chart showing her ancestors back to the early 1700's in Yorkshire.

Using the information Professor Dorothy had provided I went in search of more information, starting with her career. Various Who's Who publications provided details and more recently Wikipedia.

I knew her mother Emmeline Dawson was the second wife of Edward Whitelock of Leeds, Yorkshire. There was a half sister Clara Helen Wade Whitelock the daughter of Edward's first wife, Emmeline's sister Clara Dawson. Dorothy was born in Leeds November 11, 1901. Despite her father's untimely death in 1903 she attended and was an excellent student at Leeds Girl's High School. At 20 she was able to attend Newnham College in Cambridge where she also excelled and did postgraduate work at Newnham from 1924-26. There followed Cambridge University Scandinavian Student at Uppsala in Sweden 1927-29 and the Allen Scholarship at Cambridge 1929-30, the first woman to hold this position.

In 1930 her work on nine Anglo-Saxon wills resulted in her first book being published and she began a long association with Oxford University where she held several positions before returning to Cambridge in 1957 as the Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon.

As with many female members high in their professions, Dorothy was frustrated by the male-control of academic advancement. Numerous career moves and professorships eluded her and she confided to some of her friends that she was considering leaving the study of Anglo-Saxon history. She was persuaded to continue and in 1959 finally achieved one of her goals, that of granting Oxford's women's colleges the same status as the mens.

Dorothy's work on Anglo-Saxon history continued into the 1960's and even today the majority of her work is still quoted as having had the greatest impact ever on Anglo-saxon studies. Her scholarship is still the gold standard in her field and the measure students use to compare their work. Dorothy died August 14, 1982 age 81.

Dorothy Whitelock is part of the WHITLOCK21 family and has deep roots in Yorkshire. See the article on the Will of her ancestor Francis Whitelock in this issue. Her ancestor Christopher Whitelock (1705-

1783) was a brother of Peter Whitelock (1702-1781) of St. Leonard's Shoreditch, London. See articles on the Crossley and Ventum families in the March 2012 WFN issue.

SOURCES: X0075; R3754