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Miss Iola Ebandorff
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Dear Miss Ebandorff:

Father Bardos has given me your letter of last week. Over the past several years I have, for professional reasons, had custody of such early records as exist of the Episcopal Church in this corner of Rutland County. I have not actively worked on them for some time now, except when a stray genealogical query such as yours comes my way. About a month ago Mrs Swan telephoned me. You may rest assured that she and I are in collaboration, so far as such as practical. Librarian friends tell me that she seems quite skillful and efficient. I have no desire to compete with her work. As you may gather from the bad typing of this letter, I am writing in some haste, because I am on leave from the college to do research and writing in quite remote fields from Vermontiana. Please don't think I am brushing you off. There are, however, limits to my precise knowledge, and I cannot afford this spring or summer to have the fun of joining in your search. With one exception: the enclosure will show that you have spurred me to pick up a loose thread from 1981.

To answer your basic query -- no one here knows a formal church record of the marriage of Samuel Seabury Whitlock and Mary (Polly) Kelsey. Perhaps one exists in New York state, and I am following that up not just for your sake but for general historical interest. The reasons for looking there are really quite simple.

Your ancestor of Castleton's pioneers, John Whitlock, joined with two other men in 1784 to form an "Episcopal society" here. Under Vermont law then, church societies had the right to tax their adherents. On the other hand, the first society formed in a town -- any town -- had the presumptive right to tax all "freemen" (adult property holders) who did not formally enroll themselves in some other society. My research suggests that many became paper Episcopalians (or Baptists, or whatever) in order to avoid taxes to the first church gathered in their home towns. Here the first was the Congregational society, gathered in (guess when?) 1784. Now I have no right to call John Whitlock's associates hypocrites; all I know is that the society essentially existed on paper. For some years it had inspiration by a lay reader, who lived 20 miles away in Tinmouth; in 1787 he was ordained -- according to the register of the Bishop of Connecticut; Samuel Seabury -- with written testimonials from parish officers in both Castleton and Tinmouth. But Father Chittenden moved soon after 1790 to another part of the state, and thereafter visited his old friends only now and then. Add to these burdens on any tiny Episcopal church the fact that Vermonters began early to move around the state -- as Chittenden himself did for instance -- or out of state, and you have a terribly unstable situation: faint hearted members, lack of pastoral care, migration.

In 1810 John Whitlock made one more effort. A newly ordained cleric was settling in Hampton, N.Y., about 8 miles southwest of here. He organized a meeting where 6 men were elected officers of a "parish" in Castleton. John Whitlock the settler was one; three others were (so far as I know) his three surviving sons: Levi, John "Jr." and Samuel. I take it that Levi was your great-great grandfather. This organization proved stillborn, and the parish in Hampton took root. After the end of the war of 1812 John W the pioneer gave \$150, a lot of money then, as capital endowment for Christ Church, Hampton. From around 1812 his name disappears from records of Episcopalians statewide in Vermont; ~~they had~~ it had been prominent since 1790.

This morning I revisited the Whitlock graves in the old principal Castleton cemetery, next to the Congregational church. The Whitlock stones, unlike all the others, face east -- a serious point in the identify of Episcopalians then.

John	died	21 October	1828 ^d	aged	83
Jemima		25 February	1833 ^d		87
Anna		24 April	1844 ^d		60
John, Jr.		13 October	1830 ^d		59
Henry		23 July	1848 ^d		48.

I have a couple of comments here. I also have in my custody copies of records made from the registers of St James's parish, Great Barrington, Massachusetts, by the Rev Albert H. Bailey on "Sept. 5, 1867." Dr Bailey was, so far as I can tell, a wholly serious and quite careful collector of historical records; these were supposed to underlay a big history of the Episcopal Church in Vermont which he never got around to writing. He had a beautiful pair of penmanships -- one with long strokes and one rounded; he took great care about accurate spelling of names and about dates, correcting mistakes he made with great attention to legibility. Dr Bailey was also the first rector (resident pastor) of the first durable Episcopal parish here, formed at Hydeville -- a village on the western end of this township -- at the end of the 1840s. Part of his duty, according to church law, was to set up a register for the parish; common custom was to begin it with a historical section. The register for the parish in Hydeville is a commercial notebook, not something ecclesiastical and special. Conscientiously, he began it with a history, mostly based on oral and written records of the Whitlock family. In other words, when Dr Bailey moved to the northwestern extremity of the state after the civil war, he already had a body of knowledge about the Whitlock family. And from the register of the priest in Great Barrington he copied the following entries:

Lenox [Mass] May 25th [1772] Baptised
John Son of John Whitlock & Eleoner his wife

1773

Lenox Sept 19th Baptized
Jonathan Son of John Whitlock Jun^r. & Eleoner his wife.

1774

Lenox, May 2nd At a Vestry Meeting Chose (among other Officers)
John Whitlock [one of the] Church Wardens
John Whitlock Jun^r. [one of the Choristers.

1781] Lenox, June 28, Buried
Mrs Whitlock, Wife of M^r. John Whitlock MARY (LEE) WHITLOCK?

As I read this evidence, you have an ancestor John behind the settler here, so the man otherwise called "John Whitlock Jr.", Levi Whitlock's brother, was what we'd call John III. According to what Bailey wrote elsewhere, John the settler was born in Danbury, Connecticut; and when he was chased out of Vermont for loyalism after the battle of Hubbardton he returned to Connecticut. I find it crazy to think we might here have two separate lines of John Whitlocks. The age at death from the gravestone of John "Jr." 150 yards from where I'm now sitting -- let's be sticky and call it 200! -- fits one baptized as a baby in 1772.

I can't make out the problem of John the pioneer's wife's name. I can see a confusion about Mary or Polly Kelsey. I can't see a tie between the eccentric spelling "Eloener" and the widow's tombstone marked "Jemima," though the age seems right. Do you have a note on who your great-great-~~grandmother~~ great grandmother was?

I suppose the burial in 1781 would be that of John the settler's mother. But Gideon Bostwick's register doesn't say so -- doesn't give her Christian name, nor

Miss Ebendorf (3)

make clear for you or me, Mrs Swan or Dr Bailey, exactly which John he is writing about all the time....

The only church record of a burial in the Whitlock family I have ever seen is that from Wells, or maybe Poultney -- one of the two parishes south of here. As I recall that would be the burial of Mrs Jemima W in 1833. But the register in question -- whichever it is -- is eccentric in all its details; I had a merry old time four years ago trying to straighten out family names in both towns!

Dr Bailey does not record the burial of Henry Whitlock II in 1848; I don't recall seeing it in the Poultney register either, so presume it might be found, if at all, in that of Hampton.

The incorporators of the parish in Hydeville included three Whitlocks, of the third and fourth Vermont generations: Henry II, John Gilbert and Franklin Washington. I gather that F.W. was J.G.'s son. He became a leading light of the parish in Poultney, and gave (or at least sold for a song) the land where its new church was erected in 1868, next door to his home. In the pages recording names of communicants, John Gilbert's name comes almost right at the top; Dr Bailey later marked him "Removed to Hastings on Hudson, N.Y."

And that is all I can do for you today. Please don't feel inhibited about more queries. Nor feel hurt if I don't answer them as quickly as the first one; I shall be away from here off and on from now til September.

Yours sincerely,



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professor of history
senior layreader of St Mark's/ St Luke's parish