

WHITMAN

Edward Wightman and Frances Darbye

12g-grandparents

Edward Wightman married Frances Darbye on September 2, 1593. They lived in Burton-Upon-Trent in Staffordshire, England. Their children were:

- John Wightman, born in 1594
- Priscilla Wightman, born in 1596
- Johanna Wightman, born in 1598
- Maris Wightman, born in 1603
- Maria Wightman, born in 1605
- Anna Wightman, born in 1608
- Samuel Wightman, born in 1611

Edward was a minister but held many views that did not conform to the doctrines of the established church. An outspoken man, his challenges were tolerated for a time but eventually commanded the attention of no less than King James I. He was ordered to Westminster for an "examination" and, by all accounts, became more and more obstinate. The examination led to a trial which concluded with sentencing on December 14, 1611. Edward was excommunicated, publicly denounced and condemned to burn at the stake the following spring.

This is the order issued by the King:

"The King to the sheriff of our city of Litchfield, Greeting. Whereas, the reverend father in Christ, Richard, by divine providence, of Coventry and Litchfield, Bishop, hath signified unto us, that he judicially proceeding, according to the exigence of ecclesiastical canons and of the laws and customs of this kingdom of Burton-upon-Trent, in the diocese of Coventry and Litchfield, of and upon the wicked heresies of Ebion, Cirinthus, Valintian, Arrius, Macedonius, Simon, Magnus, of Manes, Manichees, Photinus, and of the Anabaptists, and other arch-heriticks; and moreover of other cursed opinions, belched by the instance of Satan, excogitated and here to forunheard of; the aforesaid Edward Wightman appearing before the aforesaid reverend father, and other divines and learned in the law, assisting him in judgment, the aforesaid wicked crimes, heresies and other detestable blasphemies and errors, stubbornly and perniciously, knowingly and maliciously, and with a hardened heart, published, defended and dispersed, by definite sentence of the said divine father, with the consent of divines, learned in the law aforesaid, justly, lawfully and canonically, against the said Edward Wightman in that part brought, stands adjudged and pronounced a heretick, and therefore as a diseased sheep out of the flock of the Lord, lest our subjects he do infect by his contagion, he hath decreed to be cast out, and cut off. Whereas, the holy mother church hath not further in this part what it ought more to do and prosecute, the same reverend father hath left to our secular power the same Edward Wightman as a blasphemous and condemned heritick to be punished with the condign punishment as by the letters patent of the aforesaid reverend father, the bishop of Coventry and Litchfield, in this behalf thereupon made, as certified unto us in our Chancery. We, therefore, as the zealot of justice and the defender of the Catholick faith, and williing the holy church, and the rights and liberties of the same, and the Catholick faith to maintain and defend, and such like heresies and errors everywhere, so convict and condemn to punish with consign punishment, holding that such a heritick in the aforesaid form convicted and condemned, according to the customs and laws of this our Kingdom of England in this part accustomed, out to be burned with fire. We command thee that thou cause the said Edward Wightman, being in thy custody, to be committed to fire in some publick and open place below the city aforesaid, for the

cause aforesaid before people; and the same Edward Wightman in the same fire cause really to be burned in destation of said crime, and for the manifest example of other Christians, that they may not fall into the same crime. And this no ways omit, under the peril that shall follow thereon."

On March 9, 1612, a crowd gathered to witness the execution. When the flames started to burn his flesh, Edward shouted out unintelligible words. His shouting was interpreted as a recanting of his beliefs and the sheriff released him from the stake. Later, however, he refused to issue a written retraction of his position, so the process was repeated on April 11 and this time his body was "reduced to ashes."

Edward Wightman holds the dubious distinction of being the last of England's martyrs to be burned at the stake.

Following Edward's death, his family is believed to have moved to London. Both of his sons, John and Samuel, eventually moved to Rhode Island in the American colonies.



This artwork of unknown origin accompanied an internet article on the burning at the stake of Edward Wightman. Whether or not it has anything to do with Edward Wightman specifically is unknown.

Sources and Related Information

- Wightmanfamily.com
- Sandra Bray website
- Sam Behling website
- Robert and Catherine Barnes' "Genealogies of Rhode Island Families: From Rhode Island Periodicals, Volume II", by Robert and Catherine Barnes, published in Baltimore by the Genealogical Publishing Company in 1983

John Wightman

11g-grandfather

Little is known of John Wightman and various sources acknowledge that the genealogical "trail" is a little hazy at this point. He is believed to have migrated to Rhode Island from England with four sons: George, Valentine, Daniel and John. In particular, his son Valentine used the surname "Whitman."

Sources and Related Information

- Sandra Bray website

Valentine and Mary Whitman

10g-grandparents

Valentine Whitman came to the New World with his father and settled first in Warwick, Rhode Island and later in Providence. He was often employed as an Indian interpreter. His wife was named Mary and they had nine children:

- Mary Whitman, born in 1652
- Elizabeth Whitman, born in 1655
- Susannah Whitman, born in 1658
- Deborah Whitman
- Alice Whitman
- Hannah Whitman
- Esther Whitman
- Grace Whitman
- Valentine Whitman

Valentine Whitman died on January 26, 1700/01. Nothing is known of Mary's death.

Sources and Related Information

- Whitmania.com
- "A Genealogical Record of the Early Settlers of New England..." by James Savage, first published in Boston in 1860

The WHITMAN line ends with Mary Whitman who married John INMAN.