

WILLISCROFT FAMILY
HISTORY
AND MEMORIES OF
MY FATHERS
WHEELWRIGHTING
BUSINESS

Keith Williscroft

WITH THANKS TO –

**DOROTHY
BRADBURY**

FOR MANY HOURS OF RESEARCH FROM PARISH
RECORDS,

GILL SYKES

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

JILL DIXON

WILLISCROFT/WOOLISCROFT
ONENAME STUDY (UK)

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com>

CHARLENE PICKERING

THE MIDDLETON/WILLISCROFT TREES
(ALBERTA CANADA)

<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com>

LOCAL HISTORIAN
L.W.H.
CLAIMS THAT THE
WILLISCROFTS HAD
MOVED TO COLTON
BY THE EARLY 14TH
CENTURY

(NO EVIDENCE FOR THIS CLAIM)

ORIGINS OF THE NAME WILLISCROFT

The following names have been found in the Staffordshire area which are thought to be linked-

WILLANESCROFT 1136, WILLANES CROFTUM 1136,
WERLASCROFT 1286,1312, WILLIANESCROFT,
WILLANESCROFT 1311, WYLLANESCROFT 1310,
WILLANESCROFT 1310,1321, WILLIAMESCROFT 1314,
WILLIANSCROFT 1314, WYLLARDDYSCROFTE 1377,
WYLLARDSCROFT 1377,
WYLASCROFT 1442, WOLLASCROFT 1488,
WEYLESCROFTE 1557, WILLESCROSSE, WOLLASCROFT,
WILLOWESCROFTES, WYLLERSCROFTES 1605,
WALLESCROFT 1836.

Ref – Jill Dixon, williscroft/wooliscroft Onename Study

FROM EVIDENCE AVAILABLE,
THE SURNAME WILLISCROFT AND
WOOLISCROFT
MAY HAVE ORIGINATED FROM A
HAMLET CALLED WOOLISCROFT NEAR
STONE.

A WOOLISCROFT FARM SURVIVES IN
THAT AREA AND THE NAME PREDATES
1500.

THERE IS ALSO REFERENCE TO
WOOLISCROFTS IN THE AREA OF
CAULDON, NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE.
THE NAME WOOLISCROFT IS STILL MORE
CLOSELY LINKED TO NORTH
STAFFORDSHIRE.

WILLISCROFT (WOOLISCROFT) ORIGINS IN COLTON

RECORDS SHOW A RICHARD WILLISCROFT
FARMING AT THE LOUNT FARM COLTON
IN 1689.

THOMAS WOOLISCROFT MARRIED SARAH
KNOWLES IN 1733,

RICHARD WOOLISCROFT MARRIED SARAH
TOOTH IN 1747,

RICHARD AND THOMAS THOUGHT TO BE
BROTHERS BUT NO POSITIVE LINK
ESTABLISHED.

WAS THOMAS WILLISCROFT RELATED TO
RICHARD AND THOMAS WOOLISCROFT?

THE FAMILY TREE

RICHARD WOOLISCROFT – SARAH TOOTH M1747

B 1722 WILLIAM, MARY, HANNAH, ELIZABETH, SARAH, RACHEL,

D 1802 BENJAMIN, EMMA, MARTHA, JOHN, THOMAS, ANNA.

WILLIAM WOOLISCROFT – ELIZABETH DAY M

B 1747 JOHN, WILLIAM, ANN, MARY, ELLEN, ELIZABETH, SARAH,

D1793 RICHARD.

JOHN WILLISCROFT – ELIZABETH YATES M

B 1764 BENJAMIN, THOMAS, DANIEL, JOHN, JOSEPH, MARY,

D 1822 WILLIAM, ELIZA, ELLEN, SUSANNAH, SARAH.

BENJAMIN WILLISCROFT – ELIZABETH JACKSON M1837

B1814 JAMES, JOHN, LUCY, ANN, CHARLES.

D1874

JAMES WILLISCROFT – HARRIET M

B1848 BENJAMIN, ELIZABETH, ELLEN, SAMUEL, HARRIET,

D1926 LEONARD.

BENJAMIN WILLISCROFT- PHOEBE MIDDLETON M

B1888 BERNARD (MAURICE), BENJAMIN (GEORGE)

D1961 CELIA,

BERNARD (MAURICE) WILLISCROFT-HILDA WAIN M1941

B1917 KEITH.

D1996

KEITH WILLISCROFT-ELAINE FEREDAY M1979

B1952 BENJAMIN, ANNA.

BENJAMIN WILLISCROFT AND ANNA WILLISCROFT

B1981

B1984

THE WILLISCROFT FAMILY WORLDWIDE

BRANCHES OF THE FAMILY HAVE
SPREAD TO OTHER PARTS OF THE
UK, IRELAND, NEW ZEALAND,
CANADA, NORTH AMERICA, AND
AUSTRALIA.

THE FAMILY NAME SEEMS TO HAVE DIED OUT IN IRELAND
BUT IS THRIVING IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD.

RESEARCH INTO THE FAMILY NAME HAS SHOWN THAT
THE FAMILIES

IN NEW ZEALAND, CANADA, NORTH AMERICA, AND
AUSTRALIA ARE RELATED AND ORIGINATE IN
ENGLAND.

**MUCH RESEARCH RETURNS TO RICHARD AND
SARAH TOOTH AND THEIR ORIGINS IN COLTON,
STAFFORDSHIRE.**

RICHARD
WOOLISCROFT
BORN 1722, DIED 1802.

RICHARD SEEMS TO BE AT THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY TREE WHICH STARTS IN COLTON AND CONTINUES TO THIS DAY.

IN 1747 RICHARD WOOLISCROFT MARRIED SARAH TOOTH, RICHARD AND SARAH REMAINED IN THE VILLAGE UNTIL THEIR DEATH.

RICHARD RAN A SMALL FARM. IN 1766 HE RENTED LAND FROM GEORGE HOLLAND. HE ALSO SUPPLIED HAY TO THE BAGOT ESTATE IN THE LATE 1700s. IN 1798 THE LAND ASSESSMENTS SHOW HIM TO BE RENTING LAND FROM MR PEGG, TRUSTEE OF THE ESTATE OF THOMAS WEBB. THE WOOLLISCROFT NAME CONTINUES IN NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE.

WILLISCROFT PLACE

THOMAS WILLISCROFT IS FOUND IN THE EARLY 1800s LIVING IN COLTON AND DESCRIBED AS A FARMER IN 1820. THOMAS DIED IN 1832 BUT HIS WIFE ELIZABETH IS SHOWN TO BE A TENANT OF THE ESTATE OF THOMAS WEBB ON THE 1842 TITHE MAP.

THIS PIECE OF LAND ALTHOUGH IN COLTON WAS PART OF COLWICH PARISH AND IS THE SITE OF PRESENT DAY WILLISCROFT PLACE IN COLTON VILLAGE. UNTIL HER DEATH, ELIZABETH WAS THE LOCAL SCHOOL MISTRESS AT COLTON GIRLS SCHOOL.

TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE WILLISCROFT FAMILY WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE SCHOOL DURING THE 1800s.

REF: JILL DIXON, WILLISCROFT WOOLLISCROFT ONENAME STUDY.*

THERE IS ALSO A WILLISCROFT PLACE IN FORT McMURRAY, ALBERTA, CANADA

PLACE NAMES

As bearers of this surname played an important role within their communities and were amongst the first settlers in the new colonies it is thought that they had places named after them.

ENGLAND

Wooliscroft Farm, Nr Stone, Staffordshire

Williscroft Place, Colton, Staffordshire

Woolliscroft Ave, Newcastle U Lyme

Wooliscroft Road, Bucknall, Staffordshire

Woolliscroft Wharf Farm, Rugby, Warwickshire

CANADA

Williscroft Island, in the National Park, Ontario

Williscroft Post Office, Bruce County, Ontario

Williscroft Creek & Canyon, British Columbia

Williscroft Place, Fort McMurray, Alberta

TASMANIA

Williscroft Road, Lonnavale,

JAMES WILLISCROFT

MY GREAT GRANDFATHER WAS A
MILLERS CARTER, LIVING IN
HOLLOW LANE.

HE HAD SIX CHILDREN AND I
REMEMBER ALL BUT ELLEN AND
SAMUEL WHO I PRESUME DIED
EARLIER THAN THEIR BROTHERS
AND SISTERS.

I REMEMBER MY FATHER TALKING
ABOUT HIS GRANDMOTHER WHEN
SHE LIVED AT THE OLD
ALMSHOUSES AT STOCKWELL
HEATH.

BENJAMIN
WILLISCROFT
BORN 1888, DIED 1961.

MY GRANDFATHER, BEN WILLISCROFT
LIVED IN WILLISCROFT PLACE AND
LATER AT ROSE VILLA, COLTON.

HE WAS A WHEELWRIGHT, SERVING HIS
APPRENTICESHIP WITH MESSRS DEGGS
CART AND FLOAT BUILDERS AT THEIR
MARKET STREET, RUGELEY PREMISES
IN THE LATE 1800s.

WHEN WILLIAM DEGG RETIRED, BEN
WENT INTO PARTNERSHIP WITH HIS
SON FRANK AND EVENTUALLY TOOK
OVER THE BUSINESS WORKING AT
RUGELEY UNTIL HIS RETIREMENT
AFTER THE 2ND WORLD WAR.

MAURICE WILLISCROFT

MY FATHER MAURICE WILLISCROFT LIVED IN NO1
WILLISCROFT PLACE, ROSE VILLA, FORGE HOUSE FOR
MOST OF HIS MARRIED AND WORKING LIFE AND NO 7
WILLISCROFT PLACE IN HIS RETIREMENT.

MAURICE AND HIS ELDER BROTHER GEORGE WENT TO
WORK WITH THEIR FATHER WORKING AS WHEELWRIGHTS
AND SET UP AN UNDERTAKING BUSINESS OPERATING
FROM RUGELEY AND COLTON.

MAURICE AND HIS WIFE HILDA PURCHASED FORGE HOUSE
AND THE SMITHY IN 1942 (PREVIOUSLY A SMALLHOLDING
OWNED BY MR PRESTON AND THE BLACKSMITH WAS MR
RAVENS CROFT) AND GEORGE AND MAURICE SET UP THE
BUSINESS OF WILLISCROFT BROS FOLLOWING MAURICES
WARTIME SERVICE IN THE ARMY AND THEIR FATHERS
RETIREMENT.

GEORGE WAS THE BLACKSMITH AND CONTINUED TO
PRODUCE AGRICULTURAL IRONWORK AND ASSOCIATED
TIMBER PRODUCTS UNTIL HIS RETIREMENT IN THE EARLY
1970s.

THE FIRM CONTINUED THE UNDERTAKING SIDE OF THE
BUSINESS UNTIL 1965 AND TOGETHER WITH A STEADY
FLOW OF WHEELWRIGHTING WORK PRODUCED JOINERY
WORK UNTIL THE RETIREMENT OF MAURICE IN 1983.

DURING HIS LATER WORKING LIFE, MAURICE BECAME
WELL KNOWN AS ONE OF THE LAST REMAINING
TRADITIONAL WHEELWRIGHTS AND COMPLETED MANY
PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS OF HIS CRAFT.

KEITH WILLISCROFT

I WAS BORN AT FORGE HOUSE, LIVED IN
no7 WILLISCROFT PLACE UPON MY
MARRIAGE TO ELAINE IN 1979 AND
RETURNED TO FORGE HOUSE AS OUR
CHILDREN BEN AND ANNA GREW UP
AND FOLLOWING MY FATHERS
RETIREMENT.

I HAD THE GREAT PLEASURE OF
GROWING UP AROUND THE BUSINESS
AND `WORKING` WITH MY FATHER
FROM AN EARLY AGE.

I REMEMBER `WORKING` WITH DAD ON
MINNIE AND REG PARRS NEW HOUSE
AROUND 1956-57 KNOCKING NAILS INTO
THE FLOORBOARDS, 4 OR 5 YEARS OLD
AT THE TIME.

I SERVED MY APPRENTICESHIP IN THE
BUSINESS AND WORKED WITH MY
FATHER DURING THE LATE 60s and early
70s.

OTHER MEMORIES

THE WORKING FORGE

George Williscroft making ironwork, gate hinges and parts for farm carts etc.

HARVEST TIME

As many as ten hay wagons waiting in the yard pre-harvest time waiting for repair. Other farm implements repaired at other times of the year, seed drills etc.

VEHICLES

Other vehicles were built and repaired, lorries, cattle lorries, stock trailers etc.

WORKING FOR FARMERS

Working on farms – early times and later memories.

Collecting money and difficulty getting it !

Farmers discount. Farmers visiting house.

FUNERALS

Visits to the house.

Making the coffin.

Funeral days – dress- cars etc, horse drawn in early days.

WORKING WITH BUILDERS

Carpentry and joinery for new houses, alterations, repairs and restoration.

PRIVATE CUSTOMERS

All types of work.

WHEELWRIGHTING

Early days, changing range of work, the revival.

Making and repairing wheels.

Hooping , demonstrations and Village Festivals.