

Thomas Kingham, 1854-1919, paternity of Whitehouse children, DNA

Michael R. Paulick 29 August, 2023

This article outlines the DNA tests and matches which proved the paternity of some of the Whitehouse children born in Apsley End, near Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire in the late 19th century. DNA matches provided the solution to a long-standing, seemingly unsolvable, mystery.

Thomas was born in Leverstock Green on 7th March, 1854, the son of Thomas Kingham, 1816-1879, and Kezia (Travell) Kingham, 1825-1910.¹ His Kingham family of origin lived in Leverstock Green, and then at Manor Farm, Apsley/Two Waters from about 1871.² Thomas' parents are buried in the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church, Leverstock Green, their grave is marked by a headstone near the west end of the Church. Thomas' paternal grandfather was George Kingham, 1792-1842, from Great Gaddesden, Hertfordshire. In about 1841 George was the publican of the "The Olde Leather Bottle" pub which still exists in Leverstock Green in 2023. Kingham ancestors were from Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire, Edlesborough and Ivinghoe in Buckinghamshire.

The 1881 census showed Thomas, 24, a "farmers son", living at Manor Farm[house], Two Waters. It was located at the junction of Featherbed Lane and London Road, Apsley/Two Waters. The previous 1881 census page recorded the family of James Whitehouse, 31, canal boatman, his wife, Ann (Sells) Whitehouse, 23, and their 2-year-old son, Arthur.³ The Whitehouse family lived across Featherbed Lane and were neighbours of the Kinghams. There was a difference in financial status as the Kinghams lived in a large farmhouse, on a 150-acre farm, employing 4 men and a boy. The Whitehouse family probably lived in a terraced cottage across the lane.

James Whitehouse died on 10th April, 1881, of "exhaustion" following a near drowning accident in the River Gade in Two Waters, not far from his house.⁴ The details of the relationship between Thomas Kingham and widow Ann Whitehouse are unknown but are believed to have started by about September 1883, 9 months before the birth of their alleged son William and to have lasted until 1892. There is no known proof that Thomas Kingham was William's father but William was told that Thomas Kingham was his father, before his marriage on 25th December, 1905. "Thomas Kingham, farmer" was named as his father on William's marriage certificate.⁵ That is not proof of paternity. A Whitehouse family story is that Thomas Kingham fathered William Whitehouse, 1884-1973, Maude Whitehouse, 1886-1952, James Kingham Whitehouse, 1887-1953, and two more children proved by DNA matches, for a total of five. Those two DNA matched ancestors were Thomas Whitehouse, 1890-1969, and Kate Whitehouse, 1892-1986, my maternal grandmother.

To understand the Kingham DNA paternity matches we must review Thomas Kingham's family after he emigrated from Apsley/Two Waters to Brooklyn, New York. Thomas Kingham married widow Alice (Parker) Davey, 1856-1926, at St. George, Hanover Square, Register Office, on 21st May, 1892. That was 4 days before the birth of his biological daughter, Kate, with Ann Whitehouse. A few weeks later Thomas and his wife Alice, with three Davey daughters from her first marriage, emigrated to New York.⁶ Thomas and Alice had a son, Edward Kingham, born on 1st February, 1896, in Brooklyn.⁷ He married

Catherine Abele, 1900-1963, on 31st May, 1934, in the name of Keenan, but they seemed to be living together as man and wife in the 1925 Brooklyn, New York census. It is not known why his name was changed to Keenan.

His line of descent is as follows: daughter Edith Keenan [Kingham], 1928-1991, married Frank Joseph Lombardo, 1925-1996, from Brooklyn. They were Valerie Benmoussa's (MyHeritage DNA match 119.6cM in Brooklyn, to Kathleen (Cooper) Lloyd, daughter of Kate Whitehouse) grandparents. This is a very significant DNA match as it is located in Brooklyn, where Thomas Kingham lived. And it is the only known match to a Brooklyn descendant of Thomas Kingham who did not descend from a child with Ann (Sells) Whitehouse.

Family Tree DNA (from 2019) produced a very strong DNA match (287 cMs) between Kathleen Ann (Cooper) Lloyd and Edward George Kingham, 1928-2019, a grandson of Thomas Kingham's younger brother. Both lines of descent were confirmed by census, birth, marriage, and will records. The author also completed an ancestry.com autosomal DNA test. That test produced four 4-6th cousin and six 5-8th cousin Kingham DNA matches. DNA matches were for John Kingham and George Kingham but no family trees were shown. Another match was a descendant of Barnet Kingham, b. 1754, a child of Thomas Kingham and Sarah Janes, ancestors from Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire. There was a shared DNA match between Kathleen (Cooper) Lloyd and Paul Burlinson-Ely (a known Kingham descendant) to Valerie Benmoussa and to Ray[mond] Byers from Australia. Raymond is a descendant of Sarah Kingham, b. 1821, Leverstock Green, whose daughter, Eliza Jane Hunt, 1850-1936, emigrated to Australia.

DNA matches can be very useful tools for family history researchers. Sometimes they can prove relationships which cannot be verified by documentation. I have seen, previously unknown, paternity relationships proved in three family trees. Three of the five possible Kingham/Whitehouse children, Maude Whitehouse, 1886-1952, Thomas Whitehouse, 1890-1969, and Kate Whitehouse, 1892-1896, my maternal grandmother, have descendant DNA matches which prove that their father was Thomas Kingham, 1854-1919. Descendants of the other two Whitehouse children do not have descendants with DNA results. Initially, understanding DNA matches may seem quite challenging, but, after some practice, can be easily mastered.

Copy documents may be found at "Burlinson Family Tree" and "Paulick and Cooper Family Tree" at Ancestry.com. Burlinson and Paulick are descendants of Thomas Kingham, 1854-1919, and Ann Whitehouse, 1858-1923.

¹ General Register Office (GRO), FC125261, birth record.

² 1861, census at Leverstock Green, from 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, census at Manor Farm.

³ 1881 census RG11/1444, pages 32 and 33 of 34.

⁴ GRO, death certificate, 441338, 10th April, 1881, Felden Lane was also called Featherbed Lane.

⁵ GRO, marriage certificate #90.

⁶ GRO, marriage certificate # TC 918685. Some records showed arrival New York in June 1893, some June 1892.

The Kingham's daughter, Annie, was born in Brooklyn 18th Jan 1893, died of cholera, 23rd July, 1893. June 1892 is thought to be month/year of arrival. No arrival record has been found.

⁷ Brooklyn Birth Certificate, #1262.