

Benedict Spaulding Whitehouse (1868-1941)

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, Ky., 2004

e-mail from Paul Urbahn (Paulurbahn@aol.com) to Jerry Long, 7 March 2004:

Jerry Long and David Baker,

I don't know if you know each other but I assume you do since both are interested in History and members of Ancestral Trails.

As you know I like to find little unknown individuals and research them when there is an interesting story. One such person i am working on for the Summer 2004 issue of Ancestral News , benedict Spaulding Whitehouse was a brief resident of Owensboror in the 1930s. When he died in 1941 he was the subject of a nationwide radio broadcast in March 1942. Here are some excerpts to fill you in on what I am working on.

Excerpts start: National Attention given to the death of Benedict Spaulding Whitehouse of West Point, Kentucky. During the golden age of network radio, one of the popular weekly programs in the late 30s and early 40s was the CBS program, The Court of Missing Heirs. It's my guess, that in those days of the great depression, the American public tuned in to the program each week to see if they had inherited a large or small fortune from some long lost relative.

At 8 PM on the evening of March 24, 1942, assembled in the CBS studios in New York City a group of radio professionals gathered to present the facts regarding the estate of Benedict Spaulding Whitehouse, of West Point in Hardin County, Kentucky, in an effort to locate the whereabouts of his son, Ivan Whitehouse. Ivan had not been seen in West Point by family members for over 24 years. According to the provisions of the will, Ivan was to inherit \$1.00.

But there is more to the story. At some point Benedict married a young lady from near Irvington, Kentucky. I have not been able to connect a name with his first wife. However, she was the mother of Ivan Whitehouse. According to Census information provided by Cookie Goldsmith, Richard and I figure Ivan was born about 1895 because he appears as 15 years of age in the 1910 West Point census. It's hard to figure when Ivan left the West Point household because estimates in the newspapers vary as to how long it had been since he was last seen from 24 to 30 years. 1915 would seem like a reasonable date, as he is not in the 1920 West Point census.

We can only assume, Benedict outlived his first wife and remarried. This time his bride was Ann Amelia Sawyer who was 7 years his senior. Census information indicates they were married about 1904 when Benedict was 26 and Ann was 42. Census information indicates that Benedict was a flagman for the Louisville, Henderson and Saint Louis Railroad. A fairly complete history of that railroad in our area appeared in the last issue of the Ancestral News. Richard Briggs feels

that Benedict Whitehouse probably came to West Point just after 1907. He does not appear in the 1900 West Point census. Whitehouse was a flagman and was one of three men that operated the Interlock Tower at West Point. This tower was constructed after the Louisville Henderson and Saint Louis Railroad built its own lines to Louisville to safely control train traffic through West Point. This created a situation where their railroad lines crossed the Illinois Central tracks. Since the new construction of track by the LH and St L, created a dangerous situation, that line was responsible for construction and manning the Interlock Tower. Richard says the three men who worked there was Whitehouse, a man named Ford and a third unknown individual.

Whitehouse and his wife were still living in West Point during the 1920 census on a house located in the 1100 block of present day Elm Street. 1930 Kentucky Census finds the railroad had apparently reassigned Whitehouse to Owensboro Kentucky where him and Ann appear to be living in an apartment in the 400 block of Crittenden Street. Sometime during the 30s they returned to West Point and lived in-a- house on present day Main Street.

End Of Quote: Looking at the attached graphic of the census page looks like benedict and his wife lived in the same building as Mary Jones at 427 Crittenden Street. If column #2 is the address. I can't read the tops of the columns very well.

I wonder if either of you know anything about this man? Naturally I'll gladly share all I have with you when I finish but i am still digging in local court records.

Thanks
Paul Urbahns
editor
Ancestral News

e-mail to Paul Urbahn (Paulurbahn@aol.com) from Jerry Long, 8 March 2004:

Mr. Urbahn:

"Benedict S. Whitehouse & wife, Amelia" are listed in the 1930 Owensboro City Directory. His occupation was given as flagman and they were residing at 429 Crittenden Street. They were not listed in the Owensboro Directories of 1920, 1922, 1925, 1926, 1928, 1933, 1935 or 1937. The other years in between these are missing.

I found copies of the death certificates for both Benedict and his second wife: 1941- #28655, Benedict Spaulding Whitehouse, died 30 Dec 1941 West Point, Hardin Co., KY; widowed; RR maintenance; age 73-1-8; born 22 Nov 1868 Mattingly, KY; parents - Isaac Whitehouse & Rose Ann Mattingly; buried Bethany Cemetery. [Note: Mattingly is in Breckinridge Co., KY]. 1937 - #4128, Emelie A. Whitehouse, died 6 Feb 1937 West Point, Hardin Co., KY; wife of B. S. Whitehouse; age 76; born 20 Feb 1861 Pasadena, Cal.; parents Jonathan Sawyer & Francis Lamour. [Note: Her place of birth in the 1910 & 1920 Hardin County censuses is given as KY.]

Benedict S. Whitehouse married first Rose Elizabeth Hinton in Breckinridge County, KY on 13 Oct 1891. They were married at the St. Rose Catholic Church near Cloverport. Their marriage

bond recorded that he was a farmer, age 23, born Breckinridge Co., KY; son of Isaac Whitehouse & Rosa Mattingly. His wife was age 21, born Breckinridge County, daughter of Leo Hinton & Mary Askin. I could not find Rose Hinton Whitehouse listed in the published books of Breckinridge & Hardin County cemeteries. Could not find Benedict, Rose or Ivan in the 1900 US Census index on the Heritage Quest Internet site or in the 1900 Kentucky Soundex. Also could not find Ivan W. Whitehouse (born c1895) in the 1920 or 1930 censuses indexes on Heritage Quest or Ancestry.com .

Ivan W. Whitehouse possibly could have a baptismal record at the Old St. Rose Catholic Church in Breckinridge County, where his parents were married at. The Breckinridge County Archives may know if these records still exist. If you had his full name and birth date you could check by his birth in the US Social Security Index. Possibly he appears in records later under a different name.

I hope this helps a little. Thanks for thinking of me.
Best wishes,
Jerry Long

e-mail from Paul Urbahn (Paulurbahn@aol.com to Jerry Long), 8 March 2004:

This helps a lot, I have always valued your knowledge of your area, its just that seldom do the items I am working on venture that far west. Thanks a bunch. Paul