History of the Higginbotham Name - Posted 25 jul 2009 by wilcoxpr1

Higgenbotham Family - Added by lhostler135 on 9 Feb 2008

THE NAME AND FAMILY OF HIGGINBOTHAM

The surname of HIGGINBOTHAM is generally believed to be derived from the residence of its first bearers at a place called Higginbottom, in the neighborhood of Marple and Macclesfield, East Cheshire, England. It is generally agreed that the name, itself, was first given to “the bottom, or hollow depression in the land, where Higgin or Hickin resided”, Higgin and Hickin being diminutive forms of the nickname Hick, for Richard. Some historians, however, maintain that the name is of German origin and a corruption of the name Ickenbaum, meaning “an oak tree”.

In ancient English and early American records the name appears in the various spellings of Hickinbottom, Higginbottom, Higenbotam, Higgenbotam, Higgenbottom, Higginbottom, Hyggynbothom, Hyggynbottom, Hichinbothome, Hichinbothom, Hichinbottom, Hickinbothom, Hickingbottom, Hickenbothom, Hickenbotham, Hickinbotham, Higgenbothom, Higginbothom, Higginbotham, and innumerable others.

Of the forms mentioned, the last is the spelling most often used in America in modern times, while several of the others are also occasionally in evidence. Early seated in the English Counties of Chester, Derby, Lancaster, and York, the families bearing this name were, in some part, of the landed gentry of the British Isles.

According to some family traditions, the family went from Germany to England at an early date and settled at Hayfield or Glossop, in Derbyshire. Certainly, Ralph Higginbottom was resident in that vicinity at an early period. The records of this line are not, however, complete.

Other early records of the family in England include those of John Hyggynbothom, of Cheshire, as early as 1563; those of Nicholas Hickingbotham or Hichinbothome, of Marple, in Cheshire, about 1579; and those of Alice Higginbotham, of Marple, in 1595.

The parish registers of Stockport, in Cheshire, alone contain eighty-eight references to the Higginbotham family between the years 1584 and 1620. These evidences of the early residence of the family in the County of Chester bear out the first theory of the origin of the name, as given above.

One branch of the family settled at an early date in Ireland. Of this branch, John Higginbotham, a Cromwellian soldier, died about 1656, in which year his will was probated, probably in Dublin.

The records of the various lines of the family in the British Isles are not complete; and it is not definitely known from which of these branches the first emigrants of the name to America traced their descent.

Early in the seventeenth century the cousins Otwell and John Higgenbotham settled in the Barbados, in the West Indies. The will of Otwell, dated 1649 and proved at London about 1651, mentions his cousin, Captain John Higginbotham, in the Barbados, and his children, John, Joan, Martha, Sara, Alice, Priscilla, and Mary. The executors of the will were Nicholas Higginbotham, of Cheshire, England, and Captain John Higgenbotham, of Barbados.

Captain John Higginbotham, mentioned above, was living in the Barbados as early as 1638 and may have been identical with the John “Hickcombottom”, aged twenty-four years, who sailed in the Bonaventure from London for Virginia in 1634. In 1666 he was styled “Lieutenant Colonel Higgenbottome”. It is thought possible that the Barbados line may have been the parent line of the family in Nansemond County, Virginia, but this is not certain.

John Higgenbotham and his wife, Frances Riley, came from Ireland to Virginia in the early eighteenth century, bringing with them numerous children, among whom were Moses, John, Aaron, James, and Anne. This family settled in Goochland County, where are believed to have been born at least four more children, Benjamin, Joseph, Rachel, and Thomas.

Moses Higginbotham, apparently the eldest son of John and Frances, purchased two thousand, four hundred and thirty acres of land in Albemarle County (formerly part of Goochland County, Virginia, as early as 1745. By his wife Frances, he was the father of Joseph, Robert, Moses, William, Rachel, Charles, and Frances.

Joseph, eldest of the sons of the first Moses of Virginia, made his home in Amherst County, Virginia, and died in 1827, leaving at least two children, James S. and Frances.

Moses, son of the first of that name in Virginia, removed to Tazewell County, Virginia, before 1800, probably with his brother Robert, since one of that name appears in the Tazewell records about 1802. Robert, however went with his wife Nancy to Madison County, Alabama, as early as 1823. By his wife Elizabeth, Moses Jr. was the father of eleven children, William K., Moses, James, Joseph, George, Aaron, Charles, Thomas, Rachel, Frances, and Jane.

William, son of the first Moses of Virginia, died in 1832 in Amherst County. He was married in 1790 to Mary Shannon, of Augusta County, Virginia, and their children included Robert and Jane S. Higginbotham.

Captain John Higginbotham, son of John and Frances (nee Riley), was married in Amherst County, Virginia, in 1767 to Rachel Banks, of that place. To this union were born Thomas, James, John, Anne S., David, Jesse, Daniel, Mary, Tirzah, Francis Riley, Eugene, and Reuben.

Thomas, eldest son of Captain John of Amherst County, died in 1834, leaving no issue, but a considerable estate, which was divided among his brothers and sisters. Of these, John married Margaret Washington Cabell and was the father by her of two children, William Thomas and Laura; and Reuben married a Miss Vaughn, of Kentucky, by whom he probably left issue.

Aaron Higginbotham, son of John and Frances (nee Riley), died in Amherst County, Virginia, in 1785. His will, of that date, mentions his sons, Samuel and Aaron, and four daughters, Frances, Mary Ann, Tamasin, and Margaret. His wife was Clara Graves, a direct descendant of Captain Thomas Graves of Jamestown, Virginia.

Samuel, son of the first Aaron, was the father by his wife Jane of at least two children, John and Joseph, of whom the former was married in 1792 to Anne Staunton Higginbotham, daughter of Captain John and Rachel (nee Banks) Higginbotham. This family is believed to have removed to Georgia, but the records concerning it are not complete.

Aaron Higginbotham Jr. married Nancy Croxton and had issue by her of at least three children, Joanna, Elizabeth, and Absalom.

Colonel James Higginbotham, son of the immigrant John and Frances (nee Riley), was married in 1779 to Rachel Campbell, of Amherst County. He served in the Revolution and died in 1813, leaving four children, Joseph Cabell, George Washington, James Jr., and Judith.

Of these, Joseph Cabell Higginbotham was the father by his wife, Lucy Wills, of Joseph Cabell Jr.; George Washington first married Elizabeth Cashwell, by whom he had a son named James, and later married Joanna, daughter of Aaron and Nancy Higginbotham, by whom he had further issue of Daniel, Nancy, Mary Ann, and Jennie; while James Jr. married Eliza Thomson, of Bedford County. The names of the children of the last couple are not, however, at hand.

Benjamin Higginbotham, who is believed to have been the first of the children of John and Frances (nee Riley) to be born in America, is known to have removed to Elbert County, Georgia, where he died in 1800. By his wife, Elizabeth Reid, he was the father of Ann, Caleb, William, Joseph, Benjamin Jr., and Francis.

Of the last-mentioned brothers, Caleb had a wife named Mary Ann, and served as a Captain in the Revolutionary forces; William married a daughter of John Sandidge and, after serving in the Revolutionary War, settled in Tennessee; Joseph was married in 1788 to Frances, daughter of Moses Higginbotham Sr.; Benjamin was married in 1782 to Mary Gatewood, of Amherst County, Virginia; and Francis married Dolly Gatewood, a sister of his brother’s wife, in 1783.

Joseph Higginbotham, son of John and Frances (nee Riley), died in Amherst County in 1805. He married as early as 1768 and was the father by his wife Hannah of Joseph Jr., Benjamin, William, Susanna, Rachel, Frances, and Jacob.

Joseph Jr., son of Joseph and Hannah, died in 1823, leaving the bulk of his estate to his brother Benjamin and to his cousin, James S. Higginbotham; while Benjamin, son of Joseph and Hannah, died probably unmarried, in 1833.

Of the younger sons of Joseph and Hannah, William married a daughter of John Sandidge and died in Amherst County in 1803; and Jacob left issue by his wife Anne, whom he married in 1772, of a son named John.

Thomas Higginbotham, probably the youngest son of the immigrant John and Frances (nee Riley), was living in Albemarle County, Virginia, in 1751, but removed about eight years later to Georgia. In 1766 he was recorded as having a wife and ten children, but the names of his progeny are not in evidence.

Emmanuel Higginbotham, who settled in Kentucky in 1795, is said by some historians to have been descended from an emigrant from Scotland, but is seems highly probable that he was descended from one of the before-mentioned lines, the more so since he had previously resided in Amherst County, Virginia. He married a Miss Reid and had, among other children, a son named William. As early as 1680 one Richard Higginbottom, a tailor, was living at New Haven, Connecticut. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Munson, of that place, and had issue by her of at least one child, Rebecca. He removed before 1692 to Elizabethtown, but returned to Connecticut and settled at Stamford, in that colony.

Quiet, unassuming, but strong in their convictions, the Higginbothams have been chiefly engaged in business and agricultural pursuits. They have been characterized in general by their tolerance, piety, prudence, energy, and practicality.

Members of the family who served with the Colonial forces during the Revolution included Sergeant William Higgenbotham or Higgenbottom, of Virginia; Benjamin, Lieutenant Colonel James, Captain Joh, Samuel, and Lieutenant Colonel William Higginbotham, of Virginia; Thomas Higginbottom, of Pennsylvania; and others.

John, William, Thomas, Benjamin, James, Joseph, Moses, Charles, Robert, Samuel, and George are some of the masculine Christian names favored by the family for its progeny. Among those of the name who have been prominent in America in more recent years are:

• Harlow Niles Higinbotham (b. 1838), of Illinois, soldier and merchant.

• William B. Higginbotham (b. 1845), of Georgia, business man.

• Jasper N. Higginbotham (b. 1846), of Arkansas, farmer and stockman.

• Mary W. Higgenbothem (b. 1853), of Georgia, civic leader.

• Walker Higginbotham (b. 1856), of Arkansas, builder and merchant.

• Sam Higginbottom (b. 1874), of England, America, and India, missionary.

The coat of arms of the English family of Higginbotham or Higgenbottom, to which the American families of the name are believed to be related, is described in heraldic terms as follows (Burke, General Armory, 1884):

Arms:--“Argent, a rose gules, barbed vert, seeded or.”

Crest:--“A dexter and sinister arm shooting an arrow from a bow, all proper.”

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Frances Riley (1692 - )

John Higgenbotham (1640 - 1713)

Charles Higgenbotham (1666 - )

Aaron Higgenbotham (1717 - 1785)

Aaron Higgenbotham (1752 - 1794)

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