

# Albert & Alfred Whitten - Travels overseas in 1912

**Albert E Whitten** born April 25, 1881 at Lowestoft. Left NSW with his brother **Alfred G Whitten** on April 10, 1912 for a tour of the Holy Land and parts of Europe, including England and Ireland. They spent time in Egypt. My father mentioned seeing the Sphinx and pyramids.

They spent about 10 days in "Holy Land" - one of the main reasons for theological students going there. While in London, they went to the Crystal Palace and heard Handel's Messiah. 4000 performers. I think the Royal Family attended. My father often mentioned the event at Easter to his congregations. The most awe-inspiring event in his life.

In Paris in mid-June 1912, they saw an aeroplane flying in the distance, probably the first they had seen. While in Europe, they went through Belgium and somewhat surprisingly for two Methodist pastors, they visited the Vatican as well.

They also went to Roscrea in County Tipperary, Ireland, where grandfather Whitten came from.

While in England they decided to visit the USA. They travelled, via Cherbourg in France, to New York on the four funnels, Olympic, the sister ship of the Titanic that had struck an iceberg and sunk earlier in the year. My father said that he and Uncle Alfred often exchanged preaching times on different ships.

After a six-day passage, they anchored at Ellis Island in New York Harbor. All people coming to the U.S. had to go through Customs and Immigration there.

Both enrolled at Drew Theological Seminary (Methodist) in Madison New Jersey, to compare theological education. After 6 weeks, Uncle Alf left (Oct 17, 1912 \*\*) Madison NJ for Buffalo, New York and Niagara Falls. He then went to Toronto and by train across Canada to Vancouver. He left Victoria by ship for Hawaii and New Zealand, then to Sydney.

*\*\* and a comment from Maurice Whitten in February 2010.*

*Last night after I had gone to bed, I suddenly thought that Uncle Alf went to Vancouver on his way home to Australia after leaving Drew Seminary in Madison, New Jersey. Today I looked in his Journal. He arrived in Vancouver at 9:45 A.M. on Saturday, Oct. 25, 1912. "Stayed at Victoria House, Pender and Horner Streets".*

For Tuesday, Oct. 29, Uncle Alf wrote: "Morning writing. Afternoon went up to North Vancouver, visited a Red Indian village, saw children and women (squaws) ...Then went to Capilano Canyon... back to Vancouver."

Wednesday, Oct. 30 ..."left by Princess Charlotte for Victoria."

Wednesday, Nov. 6, "We arrived in Honolulu about 4 P.M."

I thought you might be interested in this "ancient history".

Love and best wishes,                      Maurice & Doris

Albert finished the year (1912-1913) at Drew and transferred to Boston University School of Theology (Methodist) for 1913-1914. He was planning on returning to Australia. A friend who was a minister in the "old" East Maine Methodist Conference wanted to take a church in the western US. In order to do this, he needed to find a replacement. Albert was the replacement. He was ordained at the Conference at Presque Isle, Maine in April 1914. His first parish was East Pittston and North Whitefield.

**Albert Whitten** married Caroline A Steere at Oakland, Rhode Island on April 10 1918. Their first child, a daughter, died at birth August 18, 1919. She is buried in South Thomaston, Maine.

Maurice Mason Whitten was born in Providence, Rhode Island on October 1, 1923. He graduated from Colby College, Waterville Maine, in June 1945. He became a chemistry teacher. Received a Masters degree from Columbia University in New York City in 1949. His Master's degree is signed by President Dwight D Eisenhower (he was president of Columbia before he became President of the US). He later received a PhD from Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio in 1971. He was a member of the Chemistry Faculty at the University of Southern Maine (and its predecessor institutions) from 1955 until his retirement in 1983.

He married Doris Ruth Mann at Gorham Maine on May 21, 1983. They live at 11 Lincoln Street, Gorham, Maine 04038.

*(Photo needs to be found)*

This photo would have been taken in 1924 when my father was pastor of the Methodist Church in Vernon, Connecticut.

Reverend and Mrs Whitten lost most of their belongings in the disastrous forest fires of October 1947 which destroyed most of the town of Newfield, Maine, including the Methodist Church and Parsonage. Albert retired from the Maine Conference in May 1948, they settled temporarily in Limerick, Maine where Albert died on April 2, 1949.

Caroline Whitten died at the home of her son in Gorham, Maine on October 24, 1973 at 93 years of age. Caroline and Albert are buried in the Highland Cemetery in Limerick, Maine.

According to Uncle Alfred's notes, Grandfather Anthony Whitten was at St Charles, a town on the Missouri River in the USA. If he was there between 1861-1865 it would have been at the time of the Civil War in the US. My father (Albert) said on a few occasions that his "father never liked living in the US." I believe grandfather was in St Charles about two years. A possible reason might be that the Civil War was raging at that time and Missouri was a "slave state", that is slavery was permitted in the state from the time it entered the Union (1820) until the Civil War ended in 1865.

*Taken from Phyllis' diaries by Charlie Hohnen (Dec 2009) and edited by Maurice Whitten for confirmation & comment 10 Jan 2010.*