

Thomas Willoughby

1600-1657 Born in 1600 (1), probably in Wallaton, Kent, England, although second sources (2) (7) indicates his birth date was 1601. a third source (3) states that he signed a deposition in November 1650 and gave his age as 52 years, making his birth date as 1598. The 1600 date is the most often used. Nephew of Sir Percival Willoughby of Wallaton, Kent. (2) Came to America in 1610 on Prosperous (7) and settled in Hampton (a trading post established by Lord Delaware) on the site of the Indian village of Kecoughtan. The area was later called Elizabeth City county. He was granted a patent of 100 acres. (3) (4) In 1625, he was given permission to take 200 acres near the York River, but hostile Indians prevented its use. (3) He made a trip to England in 1627 and upon returning, Lieutenant Pippet and Ensign Thomas Willoughby were ordered to attack the Chesapeake Indians. As a result, Thomas Willoughby became known as an Indian fighter and this battle may have resulted in the extinction of the Chesapeake tribe. (1) He patented and additional 300 acres adjoining his original 100 acres in Hampton. (3) In 1628-29 and again in 1630-32, Lieutenant Thomas Willoughby was appointed Commissioner (justice) for Elizabeth City County (Hampton). (2) He represented Elizabeth City county in the House of Burgesses from 1629 to 1632, and in the latter year became a member of the governor's council. (2) (4) In 1636, he secured a patent for 200 acres of land which included the site of the ancient Indian village of SKI-CO-AK (Norfolk) and extended north from the Elizabeth River to the current Bute Street. He also took 100 acres across the river which included the present Navel Hospital. Thomas Willoughby, in a sense, was the first citizen of Norfolk though his home may not have been in the grant. He allowed the grant to eventually escheat (revert) to the colony. (5) See map (courtesy of Kirn Memorial Library). On March 11, 1639, Captain Thomas Willoughby was presiding justice of Lower Norfolk County. (2) This indicates that he moved from Hampton to Norfolk between 1632 and 1639 although the exact date is not known. It possible occurred when he obtained the 200 acres in 1636. Upon the death of Adam Thorowgood in 1641, Thomas Willoughby sent two agents to the widow's plantation in the Lynnhaven area to make necessary appraisals of the estate. Captain Willoughby and Henry Sewell were overseers of the Thorowgood estate, and it was years before the feisty widow allowed the estate to be settled. (1) Willoughby, like Adam Thorowgood, was a leading man on the James River. He was the son of an important English and West Indian merchant. (1) In 1646, he was "High Lieutenant" of Norfolk County. (2) In the period 1644-47, he made another trip to England and upon his return, he located in Lower Norfolk County with a patent for 2900 acres in Lynnhaven Parish. (3) Another source states that he acquired 3600 acres west of Little Creek on the south shore of Hampton Roads. (6) This estate on Willoughby Point was known as "Manor Plantation" (2) and his home was called "Willoughby Hope". Located on high ground overlooking the bay, his descendants lived there for over 125 years. (4) His wife was named Alice (last name unknown) and his son, Thomas, was born in 1632 and his daughter, Elizabeth, in 1635. (3) His wife may have been Alice Layton, daughter of John Layton and Ann Burras who were the first English marriage on American soil in 1608 in Virginia. Elizabeth married before her brother, thus she may have been the eldest. This could mean that her father, Thomas married about 1628-1630. Out of an 18 year period, he spent 12 years old of colony. Much time was spent in England and probably Barbados. (7) On a deposition dated 26 November 1650, he signed it Captain Thomas Willoughby, gentleman, aged 52. He died April 15, 1657 (age 57 or 59) in Al Halowes, Barking, England. (3) (7) He left an estate in Barbados. (7) The Willoughby's were staunch Royalists. Head of the family, John W., in 1775 was unable to side with the rebels and was shunned as a Tory. He finally joined Lord Dunmore fleeing with the British fleet to England. Yet other Willoughby's fought with the Virginia Army. The fleeing of John W. ended the Willoughby claim to Willoughby Spit. (6) References: 1. Norfolk: First Four Centuries, T.C. Parramore 2. Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography: Vol 1, L.G. Tyler 3. Adventurers of Purse and Person, Virginia 1607-1625, Meyer and Dorman 4. Senior's Advocate, March/April 1990 5. Through the Years in Norfolk, Anniversary Edition 6. Gateway to the New World, F.K. Turner 7. Captain Thomas Willoughby 1601-1657, A.G. Walter http://www.willoughbyontheweb.com/Celebrate%20Willoughby/thomas_willoughby_1600.htm