

# The Whitesides of Colerain:

## The Revolutionary Captain and the Congressman

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The pioneer days of our country were a fitting school for the training of both the minds and bodies of the men and women who first helped to clear the forests and build the homes of our people. The early settlers were, perhaps, less rugged and cast in a less heroic mould than were their children who first saw the light in the then wilderness in the new world, and grew to manhood and womanhood in the open, surrounded by trials and dangers, with and against which they had to battle, and battle successfully, or perish.

Hence it seemed a wise dispensation that the destinies of our country were in the hands of this second generation when the crucial period of its history came upon us; and that fact answers the query how and why this colony was able to battle successfully with the mother country, and, in the end, to win its freedom and dedicate it forever to liberty. The County of Lancaster, as is well known, was settled in the main by three distinct classes of people. The great bulk of our population was the German and Dutch elements, who came in at different periods and under different leaderships, but all alike were of the non-resistant class, whose religious tenets and practices of life were against war and strife; and at or

about the same time another class came into the southern end of our county, namely, the Friends, or Quakers, who, like the Germans, counseled peace, industry and the more lowly life. The third was a so-called Scotch-Irish race, which included many of pure English stock, and these of our county's early population were of the rugged, fearless, fighting stock.

They were of the blood of those that followed the Scottish chiefs, the English dukes and the Irish kings, in the days when all the British Isles were the great battlefield, with the clans of each and all battling for supremacy, under first one leader and then another.

When transplanted to this land of freedom, they were more generally found upon the extreme frontiers, and of and from them the armies of Washington were largely drawn. In this county, the portion selected by them lay, the one to the northwest, central about the Donegals, and the other to the southwest, central in the Drumores, Britain and Colerain. Unlike the peaceful Quaker and the Mennonite, their prime object seemed to be the construction of a country and the formation of a Government, while his rather centered in the building of a home and the tillage of his land.

Restless and dauntless, this English and Scotch-Irish race battled their way to the front, and in the doing thereof developed many strong characters, and men of mark, who made their impress upon their country's history and left descendants with a like spirit, who have continued to take a prominent part in the affairs of their adopted land.

Quite by accident I stumbled upon the subject of this story in trying to

fulfill a request to secure a picture of Congressman Whiteside, who served from this district in Congress two terms, about and succeeding 1815. I found there seemed to be but little of record concerning him, and at first it was even difficult to find from what parentage he came. In the course of my investigation I uncovered the story of this family, and, incidentally, brought to light the activities of many of their neighbors and other families with whom they became associated in business, connected by marriage or as comrades in the War of the Revolution. I found it so interesting that I concluded to make it the subject of a paper to this society, as it contains much that has remained hitherto unwritten.

The first Whiteside to come to this country was John Whiteside, believed to be an Englishman, who landed in Philadelphia in 1700, and he seems to have had brothers, Peter, James and William, who, however, did not follow him into this country. In 1700 John Whiteside took out a warrant for 200 acres of land, in what was then Pequea township, Chester county, now Sadsbury. This John had a son, William, who took by warrant 330 acres of land in Little Britain township in 1738, which lies immediately south of the Robert Fulton tract, and is now owned by the family of Blacks, who are lineal descendants of this John Whiteside. The farm is now in three parts, occupied by William Black, Flora Rea and Robert Black's heirs. As illustrating the activities of the neighbors who up to 1770 owned adjoining land, or were close neighbors, we find the records disclose the names of Edward Hughes, Isaac Sidwell, Colonel James Porter, General William

Montgomery, James Ramsey, George Ewing, Francis Armstrong and others who afterward became prominent in the Revolutionary period and thereafter. This William Whiteside died on the homestead June 1, 1750, leaving a wife, Janet, and three sons, Thomas, Abraham and Hugh, and a daughter, Mary. Of these children, Thomas and Abraham became very prominent. Abraham was made a Justice of the Peace, and history shows that he was a leading man in that section, prospered financially, and became a large land owner. He died April 20, 1797, leaving sons, John and Thomas, and daughters, Hannah, Martha, Mary and Isabel. One of the daughters married Samuel Nieper, and he is the ancestor of the well-known Nieper family of Fulton township, whose home was on the farm that William H. Kennedy now owns. Another married Aaron Black, and from her are descended the family of Blacks, whose members still live upon the old homestead. Abraham's son, Thomas Whiteside, became a physician and practiced medicine, first in Lower Oxford township and afterwards returned to the homestead, whence he practiced medicine until his death. He was the first regular practicing physician in lower Lancaster county. He was a soldier in the Revolution, under Captain David Hayes, of Chester county, and Colonel Uriah Evans. Some analysts get him confused with Captain Thomas P. Whiteside, who is the leading subject of this sketch, but he was a nephew of Captain Whiteside. The other son of William Whiteside, sometimes the name appearing as Thomas P. Whiteside, with whom we are more particularly concerned, became very promi-

ment in the Revolution, and from him have descended the most prominent men and women of the family. After his father's death in 1750, he seems to have left the homestead to his brother, Abram, and to have located, about in 1757, in Colerain township, where he became the owner of a large tract, immediately west of Kirkwood, which remained in the Whiteside name for many years, and included what are now the farms of G. W. Collins, Esq., George A. Hogg and Mrs. W. M. Schaum. The deed is dated January 2, 1778, Recorder's book R-485. It contained 452 acres. Afterwards, in 1788, besides purchasing several other tracts, he patented a large tract of 389 acres under the name of "White Plains." (Patent book 16, page 233). This included land to the west and south of his first holdings, now or later occupied by L. R. Patterson, Cromwell Blackwell estate and others. He likewise later acquired the John Barkley tract, or a portion of it, in which the Union village is located, and considerable farmland surrounding this village. Some time in his later life he established a distillery on the small spring stream which runs between the lands of G. W. Collins and the George A. Hogg farm. This distillery did an extensive business in its days, the whisky being hauled to Lancaster. Afterwards his son, John, the Congressman, was a part owner thereof, if not the sole owner. Prior to the Revolution he was on the Committee of Safety, and was an officer in the militia of his township. In 1774 he was commissioned one of the justices of the county for Colerain, Bart and adjoining townships, and was one of the lay Justices of the Court of Common

Pleas of the county, in which capacity he served for many years. In 1776 he was commissioned a Captain in the Revolutionary Army, under Colonel Thomas Porter, and in August 13, 1776, he went to the front with his company and joined the army in the State of New Jersey. The records show that on that date advance payments were made to him of 112 pounds and 10 shillings on account of equipment of his command. From the reading of the muster roll, it would appear that his company was enlisted mainly from Colerain and immediate adjacent townships, and the following is the roster: William Patterson, James Ramsey, Samuel Cooper, Thomas Patterson, John Acheson, Thomas Reed, David McCombs, John McGeehan, John Brooks, James McElwain, Samuel Rhea, Samuel Mooney, Frederick McFerson, John Cooper, James Common, Thomas McDowell, Abraham Whiteside, a brother; Samuel Criswell, Samuel White, Joseph Warnock, Oliver Caldwell, Miller McDowell, John Pennell, James Reed, James Watson, James McGraw, John Miller, Samuel McKinney, Andrew Ritchey, Edward Dugan, James Stewart, John Plunkett, James Black, John Tannehill, Nathan Tannehill, James Marshall, Robert Moore, James Campbell, John Mitchell, John Neiper, Thomas McLaughlin, Owen Murphy, John Grimes and Joseph McCrery.

He was in the battles of Princeton, Trenton and Monmouth, and lost an arm in the service, but at what battle I could not ascertain. He died in Colerain township about November 1, 1805, and left a will, which was dated March 12, 1804, recorded in Will Book J, Volume 1, page 363, leaving Alexander Morrison and James Patterson

as his executors. He left surviving him a widow, Jean, and a large family, as follows: John, who afterwards became the Congressman; James, Abraham, Thomas and William. His daughters were Mary, Rebecca, Martha, Violet and Elizabeth. All of them married and formed alliances with what were then or afterwards became among the leading families of that section. John, the Congressman, married Mary Filton, of Little Britain township. James married Elizabeth Dickey, who was a cousin of Rev. Ebenezer Dickey, who at that time was pastor of the Oxford Presbyterian Church. Abraham married Isabella Ross, who was twice a cousin of Robert Fulton and likewise a cousin of the Dickeys. Thomas moved to South Carolina, married there, and his descendants are prominent in the neighborhood of Charleston. William left this section unmarried. The daughters, from whom have sprung prominent descendants, married as follows: Mary married Robert Elder, a cousin of Rev. John Elder, and moved to Westmoreland county with him, where he became very prominent and his descendants still are thereabouts.

The other three sisters, by rather remarkable coincidence, married three brothers, as follows: Rebecca married Hugh McConnell, Martha married David McConnell, Violet married Samuel McConnell, all grandsons of Alexander McConnell, who settled in Drumore township, where Chestnut Level is now situated, and sons of Samuel McConnell, of Colerain township. Elizabeth married Benjamin Dickey, brother of Elizabeth Dickey.

From this union of daughters with the McConnell family have descended Judge A. D. McConnell, Judge of

the Courts of Westmoreland county; Judge James Marshall, of Iowa, and Judge J. P. Smith, of Tennessee; also Rev. S. D. McConnell, D.D., rector of St. Trinity's Church, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Rev. David McConnell Steele, rector of St. Luke's Church and Church of Epiphany, N. Y.; Joseph Russell, chief counsel of the Michigan Central Railway Company, of Michigan; Jackson E. Reynolds, professor of corporation law, Columbia University, and general attorney of the Central Railroad of New Jersey; Abraham McConnell, still residing in Colerain township, and their children are direct lineal descendants, as are likewise the children of Samuel McConnell, who is now deceased. Of the sons, I have time only to take up the life and family of John Whiteside, the oldest, who became Congressman. He came to Lancaster some time prior to 1800, although he seemed to retain some interests in Colerain township thereafter, especially in the distillery, which his father had established there. Before proceeding to this, I will say concerning the other two sons, James and Abraham, that they remained upon the farms in Colerain township and raised families who lived there for a generation or more. Most of their descendants bearing the name of Whiteside, however, have left that section, some of them living in Philadelphia, some in Oxford, Chester county, and there is none of the name in the township now. The present Whitesides, who own extensive farms in that township, are descended from James and Samuel Whiteside, who are an entirely different family, and in no way related to the Captain Whiteside family. As I have stated, John Whiteside came to Lancaster



and began business, first apparently as a hotel keeper, and herein I will find it necessary to refer briefly to some of the early hotels, which were in Lancaster early in the 1800's, although I will make no pretense to give exact data, only so far as John Whiteside was connected with them. The story, briefly, is this: In 1799 one John Hatz appears to have kept a tavern, the "Pennsylvania State Arms," situated opposite the well-known "Michael's Hotel," on North Queen street. Shortly thereafter, or in 1801, John Whiteside succeeded him and kept the house until 1803, when he was succeeded by Gustavus Stoy. John Whiteside then opened a new hotel, called "The Lion," a short distance north of the Court house in Centre Square, which he kept till 1811, at which time he opened a tavern on West King street, near the then market house, now the Central Market. He was apparently proprietor of this tavern, and at the same time a Justice of the Peace, when he was elected to Congress in 1815. I was not able to clearly establish the fact exactly when he took charge of the "Fountain Inn" Hotel. This hotel was in operation at least as early as 1796, and was then owned by a man by the name of Edwards. John Whiteside bought it eventually, but did not take a deed to it till 1822, which was after his two terms in Congress. However, the fact that the "Fountain Inn" was at that time, and it was some time prior thereto, one of the leading hotels of the city, and was the headquarters for the Democratic party, for quite awhile, in this county, and apparently a gathering place for the political leaders of the party when in the city, did seem to indicate that he

may have been proprietor of the hotel for some time before he bought it. It is well to remember that inn-keepers in that day, according to the custom of both this country and the old, were usually very important men, and often were the political leaders of their section. The temperance sentiment that prevails at the present day was comparatively unknown at that time, and the liquor business in all its forms was quite as respectable and often as important as any other business of the town or community. At any rate, it is evident that he continued to be both landlord and Congressman, at the same time, and continued as owner of the hotel at the time of his death.

John Whiteside's first essay into political service seems to have been when he was elected to the Legislature in 1810, and re-elected again in 1811. He was first elected to Congress in the year 1815, served for two terms, and again in 1817, serving till 1819. He was elected to the office of Register of Wills in this county in 1821, served for four years, when he was again elected to the Legislature in 1825, and served for one year. His period in Congress covered the Administration of James Madison. So far as the records show, he did not take any particularly active part, other than voting. Considerable important legislation seems to have come before the Congress during that period. It was the period immediately following the readjustment of affairs after the War of 1812, and examination of the record shows that the principal questions of national importance that were considered and more or less of action taken upon them were the Fugitive Slave Laws, which were then discussed quite extensively, and the

care of the Revolutionary soldiers, who were in want. There seemed to be no general pension legislation then as now. The navigation laws attracted quite a good deal of attention and the international relationship with reference to them. Likewise the banking and currency laws were largely under discussion, as was the proposition for a uniform bankrupt law throughout the United States. The neutrality laws, as affecting and governing this country in its relations to the various nations of Europe, who were at war with one another, seemed to call forth considerable discussion. Among other matters of wide importance then was the administration of the Mississippi Territory, as it was then called, and the establishment of territorial government for the same. Through both terms there was a wide discussion upon the question of compensation, so-called, to the members of Congress, who, apparently up to that time, had not been allowed compensation for their services. Six dollars per day was the compensation suggested. We also note that the Congressman's son, William, was appointed Register of Wills of Lancaster county in 1830, and served for six years.

The deeds of record in this county show that the deed for the hotel property was to John Whiteside from assignees and trustees of Henry Reigart, Esq., dated April 1, 1822, and recorded in Deed Book 24, page 216. After his death the property continued to be held by his children for a number of years, and was not disposed of until April 23, 1849, by a deed recorded in Deed Book O., volume 7, page 138. This deed was executed by his children and devisees under his will, which I will hereafter note. The signers to

the deed are William Whiteside, Elizabeth Whiteside, John Whiteside, then resident of Cincinnati, and Lucy Whiteside, to William Wright, of Lancaster, Pa. It may be noted here that some of the interests had been bought out and transferred to some of the grantors above named. Congressman Whiteside died in 1829, left a will dated August 13, 1828, proven and recorded August 7, 1830, in Will Book P, volume 1, page 514, witnessed by Emanuel Reigart and Henry Carpenter. This document is rather an interesting paper, as indicating some of the characteristics of the man, and, if we are to judge from his library, he was a man of quite an intellectual turn of mind, as well as a student of religion and morality, if he was a reader of the books which it contained. He left the greater part of his library, indicating it by name, to his son, William Whiteside, who was at that time a member of the Lancaster Bar, having been admitted in 1826. Among the books especially bequeathed we note the following: Thomas' History of Modern Greece, in five volumes; Smith's Lectures in two volumes; Ramsey's History of the American Revolution, in two volumes; twelve volumes of the English Encyclopedia; Biographies of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, in nine volumes; Josephus' History of the Jews, in two volumes; Brown's Dictionary of the Bible; Brown's History of Missions, in two volumes; Davis' Sermons, in five volumes; Thompson's Story of the Bible, in five volumes; Blair's Sermons, in five volumes; the Temple of Truth, and Christian's Companion and Confession of Faith, in two volumes. He left all school books and his books of Greek language to his grandson, John. All of his law books, State papers and Gazetteer he left to his son, the lawyer, William

Whiteside. All of his silverware he gave to his three daughters. He is buried in the Lancaster cemetery, at a point due east from the main gate, and almost due southwest from the Keller mausoleum, and his burying place is rather unique in several respects. The iron fence surrounding it is perfectly circular in form, the only one in the cemetery of that shape. A single shaft, some 18 feet high, square in form, tapering, is erected in the centre thereof, but the inscriptions thereon are singularly lacking in any information as to the lives, age or time of death of anyone. The stone was erected by Haldy, but at whose directions or cost and at what time there is nothing to indicate. The inscriptions, four in number, one on each side of the square shaft, are as follows: On the south side, "Father and Mother, John and Mary Whiteside;" on the east, "Sisters, Susan Whiteside and Eliza Whiteside;" on the north, "Sisters Margaret and Mary H. Whiteside;" to the west, "Brother, William Whiteside, died June 28, 1867, the 69th year of his age."

According to the will of William Whiteside, the lawyer, dated September 2, 1865, recorded in Book Z, volume 1 and page 80, of which A. W. Russel and Luther Richards were witnesses, we find the following enumerated as among the grandchildren of John Whiteside, the Congressman, namely, John Whiteside, George A. Whiteside, and T. Elton Whiteside, Elizabeth W. Lee, Mary E. Singer, Margaret P. Whiteside, Philip S. P. Whiteside, of Philadelphia; Margaret M. Stees. Mrs. Bertha R. Whitney, of New York State, is a great-granddaughter of Captain Whiteside, being a granddaughter of his daughter, Martha, who married David McConnell. Mrs. E'la Nagle, of Elkin Park, Pa., is another great-granddaughter of the Congressman,

she being the granddaughter of James Whiteside. Dr. J. P. McCaskey is distantly connected with the family. James H. Whiteside, now residing in Christiana, Lancaster county, is likewise a lineal descendant, still bearing the name. William Whiteside, the lawyer, was well known to a number of our older people, as he did not die until 1865. He seems to have had a fair practice, and was a man of affairs in his day, being a member of the School Board. His office was on West King street, at about where the Royer confectionery store stood.

William McCaskey, of Lancaster, was for a number of years a dentist in this city. He was also in the late Civil War, being a Captain in the army. The family of John Whiteside, a grandson, lived principally in the neighborhood of Parkesburg, Coatesville and Christiana, and it is an incident worth noting that one of the great-granddaughters was the wife of Edgar Rice, of Coatesville, the policeman, who was shot by Zach. Walker, the colored man, who was afterwards hanged by a mob.

The will of William Whiteside, the lawyer, son of the Congressman, throws some sidelights upon his life and family. He left the following bequests: \$200 to the Presbyterian Church, \$500 to the Children's Home, and \$100 to the Lancaster Cemetery, for which he provided that the said cemetery shall be kept up and in good repair, the iron fence surrounding the lot, as also the monument therein, which he had erected, as he states, to his parents, sisters and self. There occurs in the will what might be termed an Irish bull, for therein he says that he is buried in said lot, but evidently he was not buried when he wrote his will. Judge Livingston was the executor of the will, and he

directs his real estate to be sold, including the house in which he lived.

Thus, I close this sketch of the Whiteside family as one of the leading families of the English and Scotch-Irish portion of our population in the upbuilding of our great country in shaping its course, particularly in governmental affairs, in defending it in time of war, and in the lustre which they have placed upon its history, as the birthplace and home of men alike illustrious in literature, in mechanics, in engineering feats and in war, as well as in the council chamber, to whom fell the duties of framing the laws under which we live.

The story of this family probably would be repeated in importance, if not exactly in kind, of many other notable families of the southern end, and it may seem invidious that I have selected this one alone. As I stated in the beginning, it was purely accidental that I became acquainted with and first gained knowledge of their great activities and of the notable men whom it produced, and was surprised that so little had been written or seemed to be known concerning a family which had produced a Congressman from this district.

I trust I may find time, or that some chronicler may take the interest, to write up the story of other families whose life history would be equally interesting, and perhaps show that their part in the history of the county has been almost, if not altogether, as important.

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