

WHITESIDE AND WHITSETT PIONEERS

And The Whitsett Family of Lancaster County Pennsylvania

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May, 2008

<u>WHITESIDE AND WHITSETT PIONEERS.....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>And The Whitsett Family of Lancaster County Pennsylvania.....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Whiteside and Whitsett Pioneers and The Whitsett Family of Lancaster</u>	
<u>County, Pennsylvania.....</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Introduction.....</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Clues From Family Legends.....</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>John and Alpha (Witty) Whitsett of St. Louis - Descendants of John Whitsett of</u>	
<u>Orange County, North Carolina.....</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Dr. William Heth Whitsitt - Descendant of William and Elizabeth (Dawson)</u>	
<u>Whitsett.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Henry G. Whitsett - Descendant of William Wirt Whitsett.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>James “Sim” Whitsett - Descendant of Samuel and Margaret Whitsitt of Ky.....</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Albert Scott Whitsitt - Descendant of Samuel and Margaret Whitsitt of Ky.....</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Julian C. Whitsett - Descendant of Samuel and Margaret Whitsitt of Ky.....</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Professor William Thornton Whitsett - Descendant of John Whitsett of Orange</u>	
<u>County, North Carolina Through Samuel and Mary (Stockard) Whitsett.....</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Pennsylvania Origins.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>The Whiteside/Whitsett Family of Lebanon Township, Lancaster County,</u>	
<u>Pennsylvania.....</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>William Whitsitt and Elizabeth Dawson.....</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>William Whiteside 1750 Land Warrant and Survey.....</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Ralph Whitsett and Sarah Wilson.....</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Samuel Whitsitt, Son of Ralph.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>William Wirt Whitsett, son of Ralph.....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>William Whiteside of Menallen Township, Fayette County, Pa.....</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Joseph Whitsitt, son of Ralph.....</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>John Whiteside/Whitsett.....</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>Elizabeth Whitsett (Whiteside) Welsh.....</u>	<u>38</u>
<u>James and Ann Whiteside.....</u>	<u>39</u>
<u>Other Pennsylvania Whitesides and Whitsetts.....</u>	<u>41</u>

Whiteside and Whitsett Pioneers and The Whitsett Family of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

By Ronald N. Wall in collaboration with William R. Whiteside
May 2008

Introduction

What follows is the result of several months of research of Pennsylvania state records by William R. Whiteside, chief historian for the Whiteside Family Association and me. Most of these records came from various sites on the Internet. I believe that there is much more material available at the local level in the areas where the Whiteside's and Whitsett's lived in Pennsylvania. Those resources are records in local historical societies and records kept in county archives. An additional bonus would be church records if they could be found. Investigating those types of records is beyond our capabilities at the present time. More and more records are being made available on-line. Perhaps in the future we will be able to access local records on our PC's from the comfort of our homes. We need additional evidence in the form of concrete documentation of the make up of these families. That type of evidence is usually found in wills, probate records, court records and deeds. In Pennsylvania, all of these records are kept at the local level.

This essay contains theories and educated guesses based on the documents we were able to locate. The path to the truth begins with a hypotheses and this text represents the first step on that road. What we have been searching for is historical fact, not a convenient explanation. If our theories are good they will stand the test of time and if not, they will fall by the wayside, rightfully so. The conclusions represented here are not carved in stone. We are willing to consider any documented evidence. There is always the possibility that we misinterpreted our documentation. If you dispute our analysis, we will welcome a constructive discussion of that evidence. You may not change our minds, but I assure you we will give your views the consideration they deserve. Documentation is critical. Claims by family historians not backed up by solid evidence are no good for our purposes. All too often, family historians are looking for a quick and easy account of their family history. This does everyone a disservice. Of what value is a family history if it is not true? It is especially damaging when others copy these "histories" and family trees and pass them on as fact with only the previous author quoted as the source (sometimes there is not even that level of documentation). Letters and accounts by members of the family being researched are a valid source - as long as they are clearly identified. Often these remembrances contain many inaccuracies but just as often we find a kernel of truth in them.

The footnotes in this text cite sources for the data being discussed. Often, those sources are not the only ones available but represent what I consider representative of the bunch.

A note here about Pennsylvania land records. The system in Pennsylvania for new lands was administered by the land office. The Pennsylvania Land Office issued warrants for survey, to the first person to actually occupy the land. After 1769 the tracts were limited to 300 acres at 13 cents an acre. The land did not have to be paid off until a patent was taken out. Under this system payment could be deferred indefinitely. Obviously, many took advantage of this and the land was not paid for and patents issued or decades after the first owner received his warrant. The first private owner of the land had to pay off any debt in full before he was issued a patent. The land was resurveyed based on the grant to the original warrantee and the survey was then "returned" to the land office with an accurate report of the actual number of acres in the patentee's tract. These surveys attempted to name the original warrantees of the

surrounding tracts at the time of the original warrant, even when the patent was issued decades after the warrant. Most of the surveys that we have are the patent surveys, which were copied at the beginning of the twentieth century from the original survey books. These were gathered together, recorded and labeled as “copied surveys.” The original warrant survey, if there was one, is apparently lost and the later patent surveys were scattered. Because the original warrant and surrounding property identified was identified on the patent survey, the circumstances were at the time of the original warrant have been preserved. I have seen examples where it appears that the original warrant was annexed by a neighbor into their own warrant. The original warrant was then marked void, annexed or appropriated. Sometimes the original warrantee would simply walk away from the land after living on it for years. Once the land was patented, subsequent transfers of the land were documented by the normal type of deed and were recorded at the county level. Even though considerable effort was made to preserve these records, a sizeable number are still unaccounted for.

Clues From Family Legends

We should never dismiss family legends out-of-hand. Neither should we accept them as gospel. Often they contain at least a kernel of truth. On the other hand, if it sounds too fantastic to be true, chances are good that it is a bit of romantic legend, concocted in the fertile imagination of some descendant. If you had one of these imaginative relatives in your family tree, you can take pride of the creative gene he passed down. I use family legends simply as a starting point. Each of these stories below contains an element of fact. Some are closer to the truth than others, but they all give us some insight into how that particular family thought of themselves. The closer in time the event is to the narrator, the better the chance we have of having the true facts of the story. It is the old child’s game. What goes in the ear on the first person in line is rarely anything like what comes out of the mouth of the last person in line. The same holds true with stories passed down from one generation to another. Another common phenomenon in a family legend is the compression of generations. What appears to be one or two generations in the legend can easily turn out to be five or six in reality. If one of the ancestors remained in the same place all of his life and never did anything considered interesting, the less likely that he will be remembered as the story goes from one generation to another. Below are some of the stories that I have collected. The descendants of the Whitsett and Whiteside families that came from Ireland to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania told these stories. Can you spot the fact mixed in with the fiction?

John and Alpha (Witty) Whitsett of St. Louis - Descendants of John Whitsett of Orange County, North Carolina

The source of this story was apparently the subject James Whitsett of St. Louis, or perhaps one of his children. The Goodspeed Publishing Company of Chicago published it in the series of local histories. “... James Whitsett, a native of Guilford County, N.C., is the eldest of a family of fifteen children, and was born June 10, 1818. His parents John and Alpha (Witty) Whitsett, also natives of Guilford County, N.C. moved to St. Louis County, Mo., in 1836 ... *John Whitsett was the son of James and Mary (Moore) Whitsett, of English and Irish descent, respectively. William Whitsett, father of James, was born near the northern boundary of England, and was the father of nine children, two girls and seven boys; six of his sons fought in the Revolutionary War...*” *HISTORY OF FRANKLIN, JEFFERSON, WASHINGTON, CRAWFORD & GASCONADE COUNTIES, MISSOURI, Goodspeed Pub. Co., Chicago, (1888).*

Jan. 16, 1920 - “Today is the 100th birthday anniversary of Grandpa, John P. Lollar. Grand Ma was a few months older and I knew them so well; and I remember Great Grandmother Alpha Whitsett, who lived to be 85 years old and died in 1885, very well. ... *Great Grandpa Whitsett’s*

name was John was born in N.C. and married Alpha Witte of N.C. Great, great grandpa Whitsett's name was James (Sr.) and he lived in N.C. during the Revolution. He had 5 sons in the American army but he himself was a loyal old Scotchman and was hanged for a Tory but a soldier who knew him cut him down saying, 'Let the d--d old fool say what he liked as it did not amount to anything since he has five sons in the American Army!' " Journal of **John Albert Dover, (1920)**; contributed by Leroy Dover of Montana to the Rootsweb Whitsett Mailing List, [from the same family as the Goodspeed history above]

Dr. William Heth Whitsitt - Descendant of William and Elizabeth (Dawson) Whitsett

The Reverend William Heth Whitsitt was a highly respected Baptist clergyman and scholar. He taught the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary as a well respected professor of Church History and Polemical Theology until his elevation to the office of President in 1895, when he became the third head of the seminary since its original founding in South Carolina. Dr. Whitsitt's unflinching honesty in the historical accuracy of some Southern Baptist dogma caused him problems as President of the Seminary, and in 1899 he resigned that position and accepted a professor's position in the Department of Philosophy at Richmond College in Virginia. He remained there as a professor of Theology and Philosophy until 1910. Dr. Whitsitt died in 1911 and his personal papers were donated to the University of Virginia Library and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, none of his notes on his family's history were among those papers. He wrote a series of four articles that appeared in the American Historical Magazine, published in Nashville during 1904. His articles opened with the following paragraph.

"The Whitsitt family is widely extended. Persons bearing the surname and blood may be found in nearly every portion of the United States and Canada, as also in Ireland and Scotland. ... The Blakey family, of Russellville, Kentucky, has kept the best records of these. They rest upon the industry and authority of three persons, namely, Mrs. Margaret (Whitsitt) Blakey; her son, Doctor George Douglas Blakey, and her grandson, Honorable Churchill H. Blakey, all of whom are now deceased. They were industrious chroniclers, and the family owes them a debt of gratitude. ... 'William Whitsitt, the son of William Whitsitt, the son of Samuel Whitsitt (all of Ireland), married Elizabeth Dawson, of Ireland. William Whitsitt, son of the aforesaid William, married Miss Ellen Menees, daughter of James Menees, who married the widow of Ranney Breathitt, formerly Miss Ellen Cardwell; died at the residence of his son, the Rev. James Whitsitt, in the vicinity of Nashville, Tennessee, July 14, 1811. Ellen Menees Whitsitt, his wife was born -----, and died at Rural Choice, Kentucky, the home of her son-in-law, George Blakey, September 13, 1818.' ... Here are four generations of the family. Of these the first two died in Ireland, William Whitsitt the second was the immigrant, and shortly after the year 1731 he came over the sea with his wife, Elizabeth (Dawson) Whitsitt, and their son, William Whitsitt the third, who had been born in their Irish home on the 20th of August, 1731. ... It is assumed that the Nashville Whitsitts landed in Pennsylvania along with the other Scotch-Irish immigrants; but the ship that bore them and the precise date of its arrival are as yet unknown. If William Whitsitt, the immigrant, had other children besides his son William the third, the family records take no account of them; nor does any tradition of them survive in the memories of the family." **WILLIAM H. WHITSITT, "Annals of a Scotch-Irish Family: The Whitsitts of Nashville, Tenn."** *American Historical Magazine, Nashville.* (Published in four consecutive issues in 1904).

Henry G. Whitsett - Descendant of William Wirt Whitsett

Nov. 11, 1929 - **Letter from Henry G. (H.G.) Whitsett of Brevard, N.C. and Eustis, Florida to James Edward (J.E.) Whitsett of Weatherford, Texas** "... I am the youngest son of Ralph Crawford Whitsett and Rachel Dunn Whitsett of Va. My grandfather, Wm. Whitsett, fought in the Revolution, was under Col. Crawford and married Col. Crawford's niece, Hadessa. I am of Scotch-Irish descent and all my forebears came from Va. Grandfather was born in 1752, Father in 1801, and self in 1852. If you can figure out any relation I would be pleased to hear from you... My oldest Brother's name was James Estel Whitsett; I have one Brother, A. H. living at Mt. Ida and sister, M. H. Whitsett Hindron living in Dayton [Dayton] Wash. She is past 90."

Nov. 1929 - **Letter from Henry G. Whitsett of Eustis, Florida to James Edward Whitsett of Weatherford, Texas.** "... Your letter of Nov. 24 received here. Owing to bad weather in mountains we did not get started here till the 19th and got here on the 21st and it takes some time to get things cleaned up after six months absence. I am confident that we are some kind of kinfolks. I will give you our family tradition as I remember it. We are of Scotch Irish decent and are from Virginia. James - John and William Whitsett left Va. To go south and my Grandfather William stopped in Pa. And his two brothers went on south and grandfather never heard from either of them while he lived. My grandfather William was born in 1752 and married Hadessa Crawford a niece of Col. William Crawford of Revolutionary fame. Grandfather fought under Col. Crawford. Col. Crawford and grandfather lived at Connellsville Pa and the City has recently erected a monument to his memory. Grandfather William also lived at Layton Pa. And Pittsburgh and Jacks Run Pa. Grandmother died and was buried at Layton Pa. Grandfather and Grandmother had thirteen children. Twelve girls and one boy who was the youngest and my father born in 1801 and died at my house in 1892. ... My daughter Gertrude Whitsett Kipp is applying to get into the Daughters of the Revolution. Grandfathers service record under William Crawford in the state records at Philadelphia Pa. Are the same as our tradition. An old history of Fayette Co. Pa. By Nelson speaks of my grandfather as being a great indian fighter and scout and a friend of George Washington. I was born in Fayette Co. Pa. Was in Ky. Six years and came to Fla. In 1890.

[Signed H.G. Whitsett]

James "Sim" Whitsett - Descendant of Samuel and Margaret Whitsitt of Ky.

"Among the pioneer settlers of Jackson county is numbered this gentleman [J.S. Whitsett of Jackson County, Mo.], who for many years has been identified with the best interests of the locality ... The Whitsett family was of Scotch origin, and was founded in America in the early history of this country. The great-grandfather of our subject [Samuel Whitsett] served as sheriff of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He was at one time a very wealthy man, but owing to his great generosity lost much of his property. He removed to Kentucky when his son, James Whitsett, the grandfather of our subject, was a lad of 12 years." *A Memorial & Biographical Record of Kansas City and Jackson County, Missouri, Chicago, Lewis Publishing Co. Part 4; J.S. Whitsett, (1896)*

Albert Scott Whitsitt - Descendant of Samuel and Margaret Whitsitt of Ky.

June 18, 1930 - **Letter, from Albert Scott Whitsitt of Deputy, Indiana to Leroy Whitsitt, Decatur, Illinois.** [Albert Scott Whitsitt died on 16 Dec. 1930 six months after this letter was written] "... I am myself compiling knowledge and historical data of our family on my father and mother's side of the house with the purpose of publishing a small pamphlet concerning the

same for the benefit of those now living and those that will come on like yourself ... *Originally the Whitsitts are of Scotch or possibly Scotch Irish descent the first emigrants of the name John and Samuel arrived in the port of N.Y. from Londonderry, Ireland about 1767 so far as I have gone and emigrated to western Pennsylvania they married each of them and emigrated - John to Tennessee and Samuel to Ky. Thus forming two wings so to speak - we, the Ind. Branch are of the Sam wing, that wing many of them remaining in Ky. And quite a few emigrated to Ind. ...This is only a casual explanation of the whereabouts of yourself and there is much more that might be added. I could give dates to most all I have written, but that would add much to the extent of this letter via I will state that *President Jas. K. Polk's wife's mother was one of John's daughters of the southern wing of our family where they spread out from Tenn. To North and South Carolina and lots of John's descendants in Georgia. ... This will give you a little idea so I'll close by adding I'd be pleased to meet you and wish you up a little more about the family if further desired.*"*

Julian C. Whitsett - Descendant of Samuel and Margaret Whitsitt of Ky.

Oct. 27, 1958 - *Letter from Julian C. Whitsett, Ashland, Oregon to Charley Whitsett, Orland, California.* [Great-great-grandson of Samuel and Margaret Whitsett] "... *There are three branches of the Whitsett Family. Three brothers came over from Ireland before the Revolutionary War. One settled in Virginia; one in Pennsylvania and the other I think in West Virginia & finally into Kentucky. The branch from which I descended was the Pennsylvania brother if I have it straight. My Grandfather, William Whitsett was a Circuit Rider of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Jackson [and] Johnson Co. Mo. There were three sons & several daughters. The sons; Jeff, Gib, and Young William...*"

December 1858 - *Letter from Julian C. Whitsett to Willis Whitsett [son of Charles]* "... *Coming back to the Whitsett Family. The Whitsett's of Lafayette County, Mo. were of the same branch of the Family tree as my father's family. They were mainly located around Odessa, Mo. Looking back about 65 years I remember I think his name was Oliver Whitsett a 2nd cousin of my father's. The rest of them I do not recall... Just looked at "Family Tree" I have copy of and find these names correct... Briefly - Samuel Whitsett after Rev. War settled in Pa. His son John settled in Mo. (my Great Grandfather) His son John R. -my grandfather, settled in Johnson County. (There was 4 other sons)..."*

Professor William Thornton Whitsett - Descendant of John Whitsett of Orange County, North Carolina Through Samuel and Mary (Stockard) Whitsett

Professor William Thornton Whitsett was the founder of the Whitsett Institute, an educational academy, which was located in his hometown of Whitsett, Alamance County, North Carolina. Professor Whitsett was a poet, educator and author of several pamphlets on family and local history of Alamance and Guilford Counties in North Carolina. His work is now in the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina. Professor Whitsett's deficiencies as historian have caused a few, including myself, to question his accuracy. His work on the Whitsett family history is a disappointment. He fails to document any of his claims, some of which can be easily shown to be wrong. In all fairness, it must be stated that his papers were part of an unfinished work. It is impossible to say what a published version of his family history would have contained. Unfortunately, several Whitsett family researchers have accepted this unfinished work at face value and Prof. Whitsett's erroneous and undocumented claims have been circulated as proven fact. His papers begin with the following statements.

“The history of the earliest branch of the Whitsett family in the United States traces back to the family group that reached Pennsylvania in 1740; a group of five consisting of the three brothers, William, John, and Joseph Whitsett together with the wife and son of William Whitsett. ... When they landed in Pennsylvania in 1740, William Whitsett and his wife, Elizabeth Dawson Whitsett, had one son as stated, William Whitsett, then nine years old; their other children were born here. John Whitsett and Joseph Whitsett married soon after their arrival and both had large families, so even before the Revolutionary War there were both children and grandchildren of the three original Whitsett brothers who had come across as the first immigrants of this family line...” *Professor William Thornton Whitsett, (The Whitsett family) in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, (1934); Whitsett family data from folder 16. In addition, Mrs. Carrie Whitsett Hayes of Whitsett, Alamance County, North Carolina, daughter of Professor Whitsett, gave copies of his typewritten notes to Mrs. Pearl Whitsett Morgan about 1980-81.*

Pennsylvania Origins

Professor William Thornton Whitsett’s story (above) is based on stories passed on to him by his family, particularly his uncle Alfred. He also borrowed heavily from Dr. William H. Whitsitt’s 1904 family history published in four parts in *The American Historical Magazine* of Nashville, Tennessee. We know from Professor Whitsett’s daughter Carrie that he was in touch with the family of Ralph Crawford Whitsett of Fayette, Pennsylvania. Henry G. Whitsett, son of Ralph, confirmed this in a letter he wrote in 1929. Supposedly, Professor Whitsett borrowed that family’s Bible, which contained details that he copied in his own writing.¹ Unfortunately, Professor Whitsett did not document any of his sources, making it impossible for us to determine for certain what he borrowed from whom. He stated that he had visited Ireland and copied records there.² He specifically mentioned the Heath Money Rolls (a list of tax payers for their homes based on how many heaths - fireplaces - the home had). These records contain many Whiteside and Whitsett names, places and dates, but give you almost no information on relationships. It is my feeling that Professor Whitsett was careless in assuming certain names represented our family.

In addition to Professor Whitsett’s writings, the family stories I have repeated above are mostly legends, but they give us an outline to which we can compare the historical record and reach some conclusions about our early Whiteside/Whitsett family in Pennsylvania. By all accounts they came to Pennsylvania from Ireland, but they seem to have originated in northern England (not Scotland as many believe). We have studied the records of Pennsylvania - those that we have collected and also those of Dr. Don Whiteside and other researchers associated with the Whiteside family. Beginning in the fall and winter of 2007, William R. Whiteside, chief historian for the Whiteside Family Association, and I have located a hefty amount of data on the Whiteside and Whitsett’s over the Internet. I am sure that there are still more records available, but we have not been able to research those that are not available on the Internet. Many of these records are kept at the local level in the counties of Pennsylvania where the Whiteside and Whitsett families lived. Even if we had access to all of the records it appears that it is nearly impossible to identify and separate all of the Whiteside and Whitsett individuals living in early Pennsylvania into specific family groups. In the first one hundred years, from William Penn’s founding in 1681 until the end of the American Revolution, we have as many as five or six generations. During that time there was a steady immigration of Whiteside/Whitsett individuals and families into America making it even more difficult to separate them all. Several families came directly from Ireland and England to settle in

¹ Based on a conversation between his daughter Carrie (Whitsett) Hayes and Mrs. Pearl Whitsett Morgan in about 1980 at Mrs. Hayes’ home in Whitsett, North Carolina. Pearl provided me with a copy of the notes she obtained from Mrs. Hayes in about 1982.

² William Thornton Whitsett papers, The Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill;

Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas. Although the Whiteside group of immigrants was not especially large, there were enough individuals with similar given names to make it a daunting task to place them in specific family trees. Eventually, perhaps years from now, the solution may rest with results of many yDNA profiles of Whiteside and Whitsett males. In the meantime, we have been able to put together a convincing profile of our particular branch. This essay describes the evidence for our family in Pennsylvania, some of their descendants and their migration to other parts of America.

Professor William Thornton Whitsett's narrative suggests that the first Whitsett family to arrive in Pennsylvania was ours, and that they came here in 1740. We can easily demonstrate that they were not the first, that there were Whitsitt's in America much earlier. Even if Professor Whitsett intended his remarks to apply only to the descendants of the first immigrants who today use the version Whitsett or Whitsitt, the documentary evidence still shows that ours was not the first. Plus, I believe it is unproductive to separate the families that used the Whiteside name from those that used a version of Whitsett. Among the Scotch-Irish in the 17th and 18th centuries individuals in the same family used both versions without regard to the spelling their patriarch favored.

The Whiteside/Whitsett Family of Lebanon Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

I have looked very hard at this family of Whiteside/Whitsett's found in Lebanon Township of Lancaster County from 1738 through 1760. The area they first settled is today Lebanon County near the city of Lebanon. What I found to me is exciting. Perhaps to some it may be a bit controversial because it contradicts some of the conclusions of modern day Whitsett researchers. There are several indicators that point to these Whitsett's as the ancestors of the many Whiteside/Whitsett/Whitsitt families in North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Missouri and other states. Tradition of the family and descendants of Samuel Whitsett/Whitsitt, who died in Montgomery County, Kentucky in 1815, suggests that there is a close connection between Samuel, William Whitsitt (who married Elizabeth Dawson) and John Whitsett (ancestor to Sarah Childress Polk, wife of President James K. Polk). I have been skeptical of this connection until recently. The records I have found not only support this tradition but also make clear what those connections were.

This original group consisted of four apparent brothers and a sister: Ralph, John, James, William and Elizabeth. Despite Professor Whitsett's assertion, we have not found any records of a Joseph that could have been a part of this original group. The surname of this family is spelled in the records as Whiteside(s), Whitside, Whitsitt, Whitsett and a couple of other variations. There are two things that link these four men and one woman. One is, they all had some association with the pioneer Lutheran minister John Casper Stoever,³ who owned land-adjointing Ralph's in Lebanon Township.⁴ The other is that, except perhaps for John, all had ties to James McNees also known as James Menees.

A question arises, why would this documented Presbyterian family be associated with the Lutheran Church in Lancaster County? Perhaps it was because Reverend Stoever was a close neighbor to John, Ralph and brother-in-law John Welsh (husband of Elizabeth). Stoever's land is depicted on surveys as joining Ralph Whiteside on the north.⁵ Also, that area of Lancaster County that is today Lebanon County was mostly populated with German Lutherans from the Rhine Palatinate. It may have been a choice of attending a neighbor's Lutheran Church or not

³ Baptismal Records of Rev. John Casper Stoever, and Marriage Records of Rev. John Casper Stoever, PAgGenWeb Project, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania, Church, Bible, and Graveyard Records

⁴ Penn. Historical and Museum Commission, Pennsylvania State Archives, Records of the Land Office, COPIED SURVEYS 1681-1912, Book A1-282, C182-186

⁵ Ibid

attending church at all. A side note: my direct ancestors, Noah Frederick, and his father George Frederick, also settled in Lebanon Township. Noah was killed by a group of ten Shawnee warriors while plowing his field in 1756 at Swatara Gap. Noah's oldest son Thomas was captured. The British later returned Thomas to Lancaster after a transfer of captives in 1763. Thomas was my 3rd great grandfather. It is very possible that the Fredericks were acquainted with the Whitesides, as they were also members of one of Rev Stoever's congregations. It also illustrates some of the hardships the Whitsett families must have endured during the French and Indian War.

The Menees family also settled in Lebanon Township near to the Whitsett siblings. In the Lancaster County register of warrants, James' name is spelled Meniece,⁶ obviously a variation of Menees. In the church records and tax rolls his name is usually spelled as McNees. At a later date, on the militia rolls of Cumberland County are James Meenes and John Meenes⁷ descendants of the same family. The Whitsitt family of Nashville said that James' name was originally McNees but was changed to Menees.⁸ There was more than one James McNees/Menees in Lebanon Township. There is little doubt that one of them was the father of Eleanor who married William Whitsitt Jr. in Lancaster County in 1764.⁹

Dr. William Heth Whitsitt, in his history of the Whitsitt family of Nashville,¹⁰ states that records kept by the daughter of William and Eleanor (Menees) Whitsitt show that her grandparents William Whitsett and Elizabeth Dawson were married in Ireland. Dr. Whitsitt using these records states that William's father was also named William and his grandfather was named Samuel. Even though we have no other source for this information (excluding William Thornton Whitsett), there is little reason to doubt his statement. Thus, we possibly have a family tree for these four brothers and their sister: (1) Samuel Whitsitt or Whiteside, probably born between 1660 and 1670 in Ireland and probably died there before 1750; (2) William, son of Samuel, probably born between 1680 and 1690 in Ireland and probably died in Ireland before 1770. The children of William the 1st were (3) William, born about 1709-1710 in Ireland, married Elizabeth Dawson in Ireland, and possibly died in Amherst County, Virginia; John, probably born between 1710-12 in Ireland and died in Orange County, North Carolina in 1786; Ralph, probably born about 1713 in Ireland, married Sarah Wilson and probably died in Cumberland or Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, after 1765; James, probably born between 1714-20 in Ireland, married Ann (maiden name unknown), and died in Cumberland County in 1761; Elizabeth, born in Ireland probably between 1718-1720, married John Welsh in 1738¹¹ in Lebanon Township, Lancaster County and died there probably between 1740 and 1744.¹²

⁶ Records of the [Pennsylvania] Land Office, WARRANT REGISTERS, 1733-1957, Lancaster County, pg. 137

⁷ Pennsylvania Archives, Series 5, Vol. VI, pg. 566

⁸ William Heth Whitsitt, *Annals of a Scotch-Irish Family: The Whitsitts of Nashville, Tenn., American History Magazine, Nashville (1904)*

⁹ Rev. Stoever Marriages

¹⁰ Whitsitt, "Annals of a Scotch-Irish Family"

¹¹ Rev. Stoever Marriages

¹² John Welsh married Ann Sharp in Lebanon Twp. on June 9, 1742 indicating that Elizabeth had died (Stoever Marriages)

William Whitsitt and Elizabeth Dawson

The oldest of the brothers in Lancaster County, and the first to come to America was probably William. According to Dr. Whitsitt, he, his wife Elizabeth Dawson and son William Jr. came to Pennsylvania probably about 1732-34 shortly after the birth of William Jr.¹³ William Thornton Whitsett claimed that the family came to Pennsylvania around 1740. I believe the earlier date is closer to the truth. William Whiteside took out a warrant for 100 acres of land on April 24, 1750 in Cumberland County.¹⁴ Surveys show that the tract actually contained more than 200 acres. The surveys also show his name spelled as Whitesite. The general belief of Whitsitt researchers is that William and his family settled near Harris' Ferry (now Harrisburg). William's warrant for survey was for a tract located in what later became Allen Township of Cumberland County. Before 1750 Cumberland County was part of Lancaster County. It was west of the Susquehanna River a short distance from Harris' Ferry. In about 1760, William's brothers Ralph and James moved from Lebanon Township to Allen Township in Cumberland County.

In 1751, both William Sr. and William Jr. appear on the Cumberland County tax list for the Middleton district.¹⁵ One of the Williams also appears on the 1762 tax list for Carlisle, the county seat for Cumberland County.¹⁶ I suspect that William Jr. was living in Carlisle in 1762, shortly before he purchased land in Virginia.

The records of Rev. Stoever record the marriage of William Jr. to Eleanor McNees, daughter of James McNees (Menees), in Bethel Township of Lancaster County (Bethel was created from Lebanon Township and was directly north of the town of Lebanon). Stoever united William and Eleanor McNees in marriage on May 30, 1764.¹⁷

What we know about William Sr. is mostly from the family record kept by his granddaughter Margaret Whitsitt Blakey.¹⁸ I believe, contrary to some researchers, that William and Elizabeth Dawson Whitsitt lived in Pennsylvania almost thirty years before moving to Virginia with their son William Jr. Why are there so few records of him? We have found only his land warrant, survey and tax lists of Cumberland County in 1751-52 and 1762.¹⁹ I believe it was probably because William Sr. was engaged in some sort of trade, perhaps traveling around Lancaster County or in Philadelphia. He may not have come to Lancaster or Cumberland County for a few years after his brothers had settled there. Some support for this theory is that his brother James in his will written in 1754 listed his trade as "weaver".²⁰ Most of the Irish Protestant settlers to Pennsylvania in the 1730's and 40's were engaged in a trade before coming to America. Very few were farmers who had owned or leased land of any sizeable quantity in Ireland. Many left Ireland in that period because of the collapse of the Irish wool business brought on by the monopolistic practices of the English woolen industry. It is reasonable to think that these "Scotch-Irish" continued their trades in America when possible. However, whether William was a tradesman or not, is simply speculation.

¹³ Whitsitt, "*Annals of a Scotch-Irish Family*"

¹⁴ COPIED SURVEYS, Book A14-4

¹⁵ Research notes of William R. Whiteside, Cottage Hills, Illinois (from Pennsylvania Archives).

¹⁶ From "*History of Cumberland County*," William R. Whiteside research notes

¹⁷ Stoever MARRIAGE RECORDS

¹⁸ William H. Whitsitt, "Annals..."

¹⁹ William R. Whiteside research notes, Cumberland County Tax Lists (extracted from Pennsylvania Archives)

²⁰ Index, Cumberland County Will Book A-83, WHITESIDE, James, Lebanon Township, Lancaster Co., proven in Cumberland Co. 21 April 1761; Accompts signed by Ralph Whiteside

In 1753 William Jr. applied for a patent for sixty acres in Amherst County, Virginia (then part of Albemarle and today is Nelson County), located on the South Branch of the North Fork of Davis' Creek. He was nearly twenty-two years of age. The tract was surveyed for him on March 29, 1754.²¹ William never completed this purchase, but in 1763 he bought 200 acres from John Wade and his wife.²² The 1754 survey shows that the original tract was adjacent to the estate of John Wade. My belief is that William Whitsitt, Jr. stayed in Pennsylvania because of the French and Indian War, possibly to be close to his parents. Cumberland and northern Lancaster Counties were wracked by the war. After hostilities had faded, William Jr. then bought the land in Amherst County. He returned to Lancaster County at least long enough to marry Eleanor McNees in Bethel Township probably at the home of her father, James. William Jr. then took his new wife and perhaps his mother and father to Amherst County. Shortly after this, Eleanor's father James Menees also left Pennsylvania and moved south to Virginia. It is claimed by some researchers that William Sr., husband of Elizabeth Dawson, died in Amherst County, Virginia about 1770. I have seen nothing to support or contradict this. Others claim he died in Orange County, North Carolina probably before 1780. I doubt this, but I cannot disprove it. Eventually William Jr. and his wife Eleanor Menees Whitsitt moved from Amherst to Henry County in Virginia. Then in about 1790 they moved to Davidson County, Tennessee. In the early 1800's they moved to Rural Choice in Logan County, Kentucky. William died at the home of his son James near Nashville in 1811.²³ Eleanor died in Rural Choice, Kentucky in 1818.²⁴

Professor William T. Whitsett in his family history²⁵ says that William was a "great Indian fighter."²⁶ I think this is a bit of romantic legend. William Sr. and William Jr. by necessity would have been "Indian fighters" in the period of 1755 through 1763 simply out of necessity. Homes were few and far apart in that area of Lancaster and Cumberland County, which were then on the frontier between Indian lands and the white settlements of Pennsylvania. After hostilities began and Indian attacks became frequent, neighbors would band together in small militia groups to help defend, or at least track down the attackers. They would attempt to free captives and exact revenge on the war party. Usually, if these militia groups consisted of twenty or more men, they were considered a large company. Many "forts" were built in the area of today's Cumberland and Lebanon Counties and several are referenced in Pennsylvania records. These forts were simply stockades hurriedly erected by farmers for the protection of their family and any neighbors that could make it to the stockade when an alarm was raised. Usually, it was too late for the intended targets of the Indians, who attacked in small bands without warning and quickly disappeared into the woods and mountains.

There are a couple of things that I find peculiar about the history of William and Elizabeth's family. The first is that there appears to be no record, except for William Jr., in Pennsylvania or elsewhere of any other children. This seems a bit odd for the time. Before modern times, families tended to be large, only in part because of the lack of any sort of artificial birth control. The fortunes of most families depended to some degree on the labor of their children, especially on farms. If she bore no other children we have to wonder why, and when did she die?

²¹ William H. Whitsitt, "Annals..."

²² Davis, Rev. Bailey Fulton. The Deeds of Amherst County, Virginia 1761-1807 and Albemarle County, Virginia 1748-1763. Publisher: Bailey Fulton Davis, Amherst County, VA, 1970, Amherst Co. Deed Book A, pg. 129, 5 Sept. 1763

²³ There are several sources for this conclusion, which I will not list here; William R. Whiteside found evidence of James Menees in North Carolina while researching the Whiteside/Whitsett families there; other sources are William Heth Whitsitt and a biography of Rev. James Whitsitt, son of William and Eleanor Menees Whitsitt of Nashville.

²⁴ Whitsitt, "Annals of a Scotch-Irish Family"

²⁵ William Thornton Whitsett

²⁶ Professor Whitsett attributed this to the wrong William Whitsett; this was a statement made in reference to William Wirt Whitsett of Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

Dr. William Heth Whitsitt in his family history cites some Albemarle County, Virginia deeds and church records dated between 1754 and 1770 as evidence of the existence of Elizabeth Dawson Whitsitt, some of which contain her given name. One document in particular that Dr. Whitsitt references is dated in 1770. It tells of Elizabeth, wife of William Whiteside of Amherst County, being examined about her dower rights in the sale of land in Albemarle County by her husband William. This seemed to be good evidence that Elizabeth was alive as late as 1770. However, we can now show that these documents are in fact associated with Elizabeth Stockton and her husband William Whiteside later of Rutherford County, North Carolina. Significantly, 1770 is about the time this couple and their large family removed from Virginia to North Carolina. The Albemarle County records dated in the 1750's would contradict our assertions that both William Sr. and William Jr. were in Pennsylvania during that decade. However, a careful analysis of these records show that almost without exception they refer to William and Elizabeth Stockton Whiteside, not William and Elizabeth Dawson Whitsitt. The records document the settlement on Ivy Creek and Mechum's River by the Whiteside and the Stockton families. The Stockton name almost always shows up somehow with the Whitesides in these documents.

The Stockton relatives and in-laws of Elizabeth and William Whiteside witnessed several of the deeds involving William Whiteside of Albemarle County. A look at historical maps of Virginia, taking in account the changes in county boundaries does little to help us distinguish the William of Ivy Creek on Mechum's River from either of the William Whitsitts who came to Amherst County from Pennsylvania during the 1760's. Both of these families were in Amherst County at one time or another. However, the Amherst County records pertaining to the Pennsylvania family usually use the name "Whitsitt" rather than "Whiteside."²⁷ We had one advantage over Dr. Whitsitt when we were doing our research. We knew about William and Elizabeth Stockton Whiteside. I feel certain that Dr. Whitsitt did not, or he probably would have noticed some of the discrepancies that indicate these were two separate families. I believe that we need a more thorough examination of Virginia Colonial records to help us clarify who was who, and who was where during the Amherst period of their lives.

If Elizabeth Dawson lived until the 1770's, it seems very odd that Margaret Whitsitt Blakey took no note in the family records of children other than William Jr. Even Dr. Whitsitt made specific mention of this in his family history. Other than just a lack of documents, there could be other reasons why no other children are found in this family. I am inclined to believe that Elizabeth died not long after the birth of William Jr. Many lives were lost in the Atlantic crossing and the victims were buried at sea. Young pregnant women were especially vulnerable. Elizabeth could have been among them. If William remarried, his second wife did not bear him any children. The second fact that I find odd is that William Jr. was thirty-three years of age when he married Eleanor Menees, much older than the average. Not only do the records of Rev. Stoeber support the fact that the couple was married in 1764, but also the birth dates for most of their children as recorded by Margaret Whitsitt Blakey point to that date. The birth date of the oldest daughter, Frances, is not given in Dr. Whitsitt's history, but is estimated to have been early in 1765. The second daughter, Elizabeth Dawson Whitsitt, was born on November 23, 1765. Is it possible that William Jr. was married once before he married Eleanor? We know that Eleanor was at least eight years younger than William. That much of an age difference was not unusual for a second marriage, but was unusual if it was the first marriage for both. Of course, I can speculate all I want. The fact is that I have found no records to help support my theory. But, when we find these types of curiosities in a family history, it is important to keep them in mind while continuing our research.

William and Eleanor Menees Whitsitt had the following children, as documented in Dr. William Heth Whitsitt's, "The Whitsitts of Nashville, Tennessee" and multiple other sources. This is a brief summary. For more information please see "Annals of a Scotch-Irish Family: The Whitsitts of Nashville, Tennessee. Copies of the four articles that appeared in the American Historical

²⁷ Whitsitt, "Annals of a Scotch-Irish Family"

Magazine, Vol. IX published in 1904 are available from the Tennessee State Library and Archives in Nashville are available for the cost of the copies. Copies of these articles are a must for anyone researching this family. Daughter Frances, the oldest, was born probably in 1764 in Amherst County, Virginia. Daughter Elizabeth Dawson Whitsitt was born on November 23, 1765 in Amherst County, Virginia, married William Breathitt and died in Kentucky on April 3, 1834. Daughter Margaret was born on October 26, 1767 in Virginia, married George Blakey and died in Kentucky on October 25, 1859. Daughter Jane was born in 1769 and died in Virginia in 1775. Son James Whitsitt was born on January 31, 1771 in Amherst County, Virginia. He was a well-known Baptist clergyman and the founder and minister of the Mill Creek Baptist Church near Nashville. There is a lot of material available on him over the Internet. Son Samuel Whitsitt was born about 1773 in Virginia and died at the age of 19 in Tennessee. Daughter Nancy Whitsitt was born about 1775 in Virginia and died sometime after 1811 in Tennessee. Daughter Ellen Frances Whitsitt was born about 1779 in Virginia, married Judge Reuben Ewing and died in Kentucky in 1834. Daughter Susan Whitsitt was born in Henry County, Virginia about 1780 and died as a young girl around 1790 in Henry County. Son William Whitsett was born in 1780 in Virginia, married Emily Haden in 1799 and died in Canton, Mississippi in 1842. Daughter Sarah Whitsett was born about 1783 in Virginia, married Reese Porter in 1805 and died in Kentucky in 1810.

William Whiteside 1750 Land Warrant and Survey

Records of the Penn. Land Office, WARRANT REGISTERS, 1733-1957

Cumberland County

Warrant No: 1

Warrantee: Whiteside, William

Description: Survey

Quantity: 100 (the surveys actually show more than 200 acres of the original warrant subsequently patented by four different individuals between 1804 and 1817. See the survey below).

Warrant Location: ? Twp.

Date of warrant: 24 April 1750

Date of Return: 27 June 1804, Acres: 124. 110 (124 acres and 110 perches) Patentee: John Guyer Vol. P No. 54 pg. 339

Date of Return: 30 Oct 1812 Acres: 12. 69 Patentee: Abraham Smith Vol. H No. 7 pg. 574

Date of Return: 2 Nov 1812, Acres: 101. 76 Patentee: John Weaver, Vol. H No 7 pg. 582

Date of Return: 8 July 1817 Acres: 7. 77 Patentee: Michael Ege Jr. Vol. H No. 15 pg. 46

[Note says part of warrant was destroyed]

COPIED SURVEYS 1681-1912, Book A14 pg. 4

[At top is a sketch of a tract labeled "William Whiteside 245 as. 143 ps. & allo. Bordering this property is: David Hoover (north corner); Samuel Martin (nw side); Jacob Kenower (sw side); Jacob Crisher (south side); Jno. William's heirs (south east side); Geo. Moyer (ne side)]

"The Draught of a tract of land Situate in Allen Township Cumberland County containing two hundred & Forty five acres & one hundred & forty three perches & allowance &c. Resurveyed 29th December 1803 on a warrant granted to William Whiteside Dated 24th April 1750.

Wm. Ramsey, D.S.

To Samuel Cochran Esquire

Surveyor Gen'l of Pensy'a

Ralph Whitsett and Sarah Wilson

The most satisfying find for me in the Pennsylvania records was Ralph Whitsett. The families of William Wirt Whitsett of Fayette County in Pennsylvania and Samuel Whitsitt in Montgomery County, Kentucky had a fondness for the name Ralph. In Samuel's family the name was passed down at least two more generations. The descendants of Joseph Whitsett of Harrison County, Kentucky also have a tradition that Joseph had a son named Ralph. I have thought for a long time that there must be a Ralph somewhere up the family tree before Samuel and William. I was a bit stunned when I found him that no researcher, including myself, had stumbled onto Ralph Sr. while researching Samuel and William. How did he fly under the radar for so long? He was right where most of us suspected that the cradle for Samuel and William lay, in Lancaster County near Harrisburg. He was missed, certainly not because of a lack of records in Pennsylvania. Today, we have almost a year-by-year account in the Pennsylvania records of Ralph covering twenty-three years from 1742 until 1765. There are also clues in these Pennsylvania documents linking Ralph to his sons Samuel, William and Joseph Whitsitt. How did all of us manage to overlook this? Now, I must admit that the evidence is circumstantial. There is no document that says, "Ralph Whitsett of Pennsylvania, born in Ireland, had sons Samuel, William and Joseph." However, taken all together, these documents tell a story that might as well have said just that. I believe that the circumstantial evidence is so strong that anyone who disagrees with it must find a document that clearly contradicts this conclusion. I must add that I am willing to change my mind if I do see evidence good enough to counter our conclusions, which were made based on the mountain of documents we have found.

The earliest document to name Ralph Whiteside is a warrant for 125 acres dated April 23, 1742. His tract was located on the south bank of Quittapahilla Creek just southwest of today's town of Lebanon.²⁸ The land, surveyed for him four years later, showed that the actual amount of land included in his tract was 216 acres.²⁹ His land was adjacent and immediately east of John Whiteside's tract. Other tracts surrounding Ralph belonged to William Allen on the north side, Casper Stoeber on his northeast side and Robert Varner whose property touched Ralph's on the southwest corner. The widow Crider (Kryter) was located on his south side and the land of George Stoitz (Steitz) made his eastern boundary.

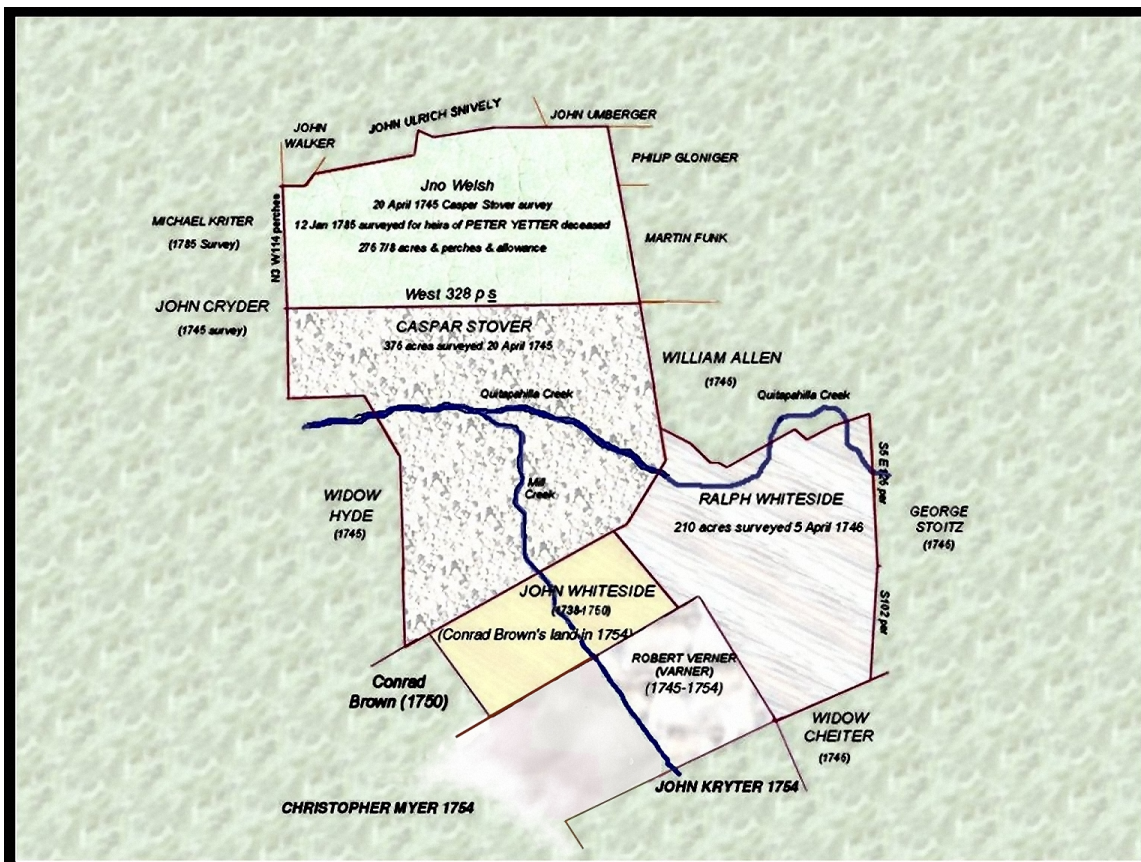
On December 3, 1742, George Stoitz obtained a survey of 52 acres.³⁰ The survey was based on his warrant dated March 17, 1741. The survey shows Ralph Whiteside's tract adjoining Stoitz's on Stoitz's west side. Immediately to the north was Stoitz's original tract of 316 acres. George Stoitz was the man who laid out the town of Lebanon on his property sometime between 1750 and 1754.³¹ This and other surveys, allows us to pin point Ralph's property southeast of Cleona, Pennsylvania. On modern maps it was a short distance southwest of the suburb of Pleasant Hill in North Cornwall Township. Today, it would be partly within the city limits of Lebanon.

²⁸ COPIED SURVEYS, Book A5 pages 76 and 77

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ COPIED SURVEYS, Book C185 pg. 160

³¹ Lebanon County Historical Society: Annals (1940) article published in the Souvenir Program for Lebanon's Bicentennial, celebrated June 30 - July 5, 1940.



Land surveys in Lebanon Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania 1738-1760 - James Whiteside (1746) and James McNees tracts were just to the north and east of these tracts in North Lebanon Township

In August 1744, Ralph signed his name as Ralph Whitsitt on a petition asking for a road in Lancaster County.³² This is the first reference of that version of the name among the Whitesides of Lebanon Township. It is interesting that he signed his name as “Ralph Whitsett” in 1761 on documents for the probate of James Whiteside’s will in Cumberland County. In 1745 Rev. Stoever had his land on the waters of Quitapahilla and Mill Creeks surveyed on April 20, 1745. A sketch of the survey shows that Quitapahilla Creek almost evenly divided it into north and south sections. Running through the middle of the south section was Mill Creek. Adjoining tracts are shown as belonging to John Welsh on the north; John Cryder and Widow Hyde were on the west side; John Whiteside and Ralph Whiteside bordered the south and southeast sections; William Allen was located on the northeast side. The Hill Lutheran Church, also known as the Quitapahilla Church, was founded by Rev. Stoever and was on the northern edge of his land. This is supposedly where John Welsh and Elizabeth Whiteside were married. This historic church still stands today.

Ralph’s land in his 1741 warrant was surveyed for him in April 5, 1746. The land was resurveyed in 1746 because part of his brother John’s property line overlapped his. On December 11, 1747 Ralph’s neighbor William Allen made his will. He named Ralph Whiteside and Thomas Hammersley as executors. Hammersley was also a neighbor. A little more than a

³² Egle, William Henry, Notes and Queries, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (from the research notes of William R. Whiteside, Aug. 2007)

month later, William Allen's will was proven on the testimony of Ralph Whiteside and Thomas Hammersley.³³

Ralph Whiteside is one of 130 taxables in Lebanon Township in 1750.³⁴ The following year Ralph is taxed 4 shillings, 6 pence in Lebanon Township.³⁵ In February 1754, Ralph's brother James made his will in Lebanon Township.³⁶ This important document helped us to put together the puzzle of the Whitsett family in Pennsylvania. It appears from the will that James was suffering from some sort of long-term illness; he died seven years later in Cumberland County. James stated his occupation as "weaver." This bit of information tells us that James, and probably all of his brothers, had a trade learned in Ireland, which they practiced after coming to America. James also mentions his wife Ann and son John, and the fact that he had seven children. He states, "I herewith constitute make and ordain my only and sole executors of this My Last Will and Testament Ralph Whiteside, & James McNees & Thomas Hammersley." The will was written and signed in the presence of John Allen, Mary A. Wyland and Isabell Hammersley (probably the wife of Thomas). Both James and Ann signed the document with their marks. The will was probated in Cumberland County in 1761 and the court documents indicate that both Ralph and James (and their families) had removed from Lebanon Township in Lancaster County to Cumberland County.

The WARRANT REGISTERS for Lancaster County shows that Robert Varner (sic) obtained a warrant for 200 acres on Mill Creek in Lebanon Township.³⁷ This land was surveyed on December 3, 1754.³⁸ The survey records his name as Robert Verner and returned 272 acres on the southern boundary of John Whiteside's tract and touching the southwest corner of Ralph Whiteside's property. The following year Ralph Whiteside is on the tax roll for Lebanon Township.³⁹ The next reference to Ralph is in the baptismal records of Rev. Stoever. On June 14, 1756 Ralph Whiteside and his wife, Sarah Wilson sponsor the baptism of Susanna Gambil, daughter of John Gambil.⁴⁰ Two years later in 1758, Ralph Whiteside is again listed on the tax assessment list for Lebanon Township.⁴¹

It appears that Ralph moved to Cumberland County about 1760. His Lebanon Township land was surveyed and patented by George Reynolds.⁴² The survey draft shows that on May 16, 1760 Ralph Whiteside had 216+ acres adjacent to tracts originally granted to John Whiteside, Robert Verner, Casper Stoever, Martin Funk, George Stoitz and the Widow Kryter. Between 1742 and 1760 various surveys for property in Lebanon Township show that adjoining Ralph's land was that of John Whiteside, Robert Verner (Varner) and Casper Stoever, among others.⁴³ When this survey was made and the land sold to George Reynolds, Ralph was probably already living in Cumberland County, just west of Lancaster County across the Susquehanna River from today's Harrisburg, and a relatively short distance from Lebanon Township.

³³ Abstracts of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Wills, 1732-1785, Willowbend Books (2006); (from the research notes of William R. Whiteside, August 2007)

³⁴ Rupp, I. Daniel, "History of Berks and Lebanon," (1844), Lancaster County Genealogy Project (contributed by Roxanne Eckenrode); Egle, William Henry, "History of Dauphin & Lebanon Counties, Pennsylvania (1898)

³⁵ Egle, William Henry, "History of Dauphin & Lebanon Counties, Pennsylvania," (1898)

³⁶ Cumberland County, Pennsylvania Will Book A63 (Research of William R. Whitesides (2007))

³⁷ Records of the Land Office, WARRANT REGISTERS 1733-1957, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, pg. 225, Robert Varner.

³⁸ COPIED SURVEYS, Book A78 pg. 132, Robert Verner

³⁹ Egle, "History of Dauphin & Lebanon Counties, Pennsylvania"

⁴⁰ Rev. Stoever Baptisms

⁴¹ Egle, "History of Dauphin & Lebanon Counties, Pennsylvania"

⁴² COPIED SURVEYS, Book A5 pages 76 and 77

⁴³ *ibid*

Some researchers of the Tittle family that lived near the Whitsett's in northern Lancaster and in Cumberland County state that Ralph's daughter Sarah Whitsett (Whiteside) married Peter Tittle, Jr. in Cumberland County.⁴⁴ If so, the marriage probably took place shortly after the family arrived in Cumberland. For the next five years the name Ralph Whitsett in its various versions appear in the official records of Cumberland County.

In January 1761, Ralph was subpoenaed to appear before the Cumberland County Court of Quarter Sessions. The court document reads, "The King vs. Ralph Whitesides - For keeping a Publick House with [out] license. Defendant being solemnly called appeared not."⁴⁵ I am not certain exactly what constituted this offense, but it must have been a rather common one. Peter Tittle was issued a similar subpoena at about the same time.⁴⁶ This must have been a very minor offense, because in January 1761 Sheriff Ezekiel Smith returned his list of grand jury members and it includes Ralph Whitesides and Peter Tittle.⁴⁷

On the 21st of April 1761, letters testamentary were issued in common form to Ralph Whiteside, James McNees and Thomas Hamersely (sic). This was the beginning of the probate process for the estate of Ralph's brother James. On December 1, 1761 Ralph Whitsett and Thomas Hammersley as executors exhibited the will of "James Whitesides, late of Cumberland County" at the Registers Office at Carlisle, county seat for Cumberland County and validated their signatures.⁴⁸

In 1762 the list of taxables in Allen Township, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, included John Giles, Thomas McGee, Peter Tittle and Ralph Whiteside. The significance of those names is that John Giles married Ann, widow of James Whiteside; Thomas McGee married Elyse (Alice),⁴⁹ daughter of James and Ann Whiteside around this time, and Peter Tittle is suspected of being the husband of Ralph's daughter, Sarah. On April 20, 1762 the Cumberland County Court of Quarter Session lists grand jurors for the coming session and among them are Ralph Whitesides (sic) and Peter Tittle. On January 8, 1763 Ralph Whitesides is again sworn in on a grand Jury inquest, as he is again in January 1764 and April 1765.⁵⁰ Thus, Ralph Whitsett and Peter Tittle served together on the grand jury of Cumberland County for three years from 1762 through 1765.

In 1763, Tobias Hendricks was appointed by the court to layout a road from near Ralph Whitesides' Mill on Yellow Britches Creek to Harris' Ferry, or to the County Road leading to Hendricks' own place. This order was followed by a "petition setting forth the gread [great] disconveniency and damage to petitioner by road being laid out from Ralph Whitesides Mill near Yellow Britches Creek to Tobias Hendrix." In July 1763, the minutes of the court lists the "Account of roads confirmed commencing July Sessions Beginning at Ralph Whitesides' Mill to Harris Ferry, April 1763."⁵¹ Ralph Whiteside's mill was located in or near the village of Lisburn in Allen Township of Cumberland County and lay in a bend of the Yellow Britches Creek.⁵² It

⁴⁴ "History of Cumberland Co., Pa.," Research of M. A. "Buddy" Taylor, Thomaston, Georgia (1999) MATayL@accessunited.com (research notes of William R. Whiteside to Ron Wall)

⁴⁵ Greene, Diane E., Cumberland County Quarter Sessions Docket 1, 1750-1761, Docket 2 1761-1765; Clearfield, Baltimore, MD (2001); (Research notes from William R. Whiteside, Cottage Hills, Illinois, to me in Jan. 2008)

⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁷ *ibid*

⁴⁸ Cumberland County, Pennsylvania Will Book A63 (Research of William R. Whitesides (2007))

⁴⁹ According to Egle, Thomas McGee married Ayles Whiteside, daughter of James Whiteside, although other sources give her name as Else, etc.; later records in Mecklenburg, N. C. give her name as Alice which is very close to the pronunciation of "Ayles."

⁵⁰ Cumberland County, Pennsylvania Quarter Session Dockets 1750-1785 Docket 1, 1750-1761, Docket 2 1761-1765)

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² Buddy Taylor, "History of Cumberland Co."

was only a few miles southwest of Harris' Ferry, which was located near the confluence of the Yellow Britches and the Susquehanna River. This mill is an important clue that helps to tie together Ralph and his son William Wirt Whitsett.

On November 26, 1909 John R. Miller read a paper to the Cumberland County Historical Society titled, "Callapatscink, the Yellow Breeches Creek." Included in the paper was the following passage.

"The mill at this point was established by Ralph Whitesides who took title from Frazier prior to 1767. He borrowed money on mortgage from James Galbraith and built a mill and saw-mill, etc., and failed. Galbraith foreclosed his mortgage and Sheriff Holmes sold the property on January 28, 1767, to James Galbraith."⁵³

Sometime in 1765 Ralph Whitsett sold to William Bennett the lot in Lisburn "where Jacob Flickernell had built his brick house." The last record I have found of Ralph is dated June 21, 1765. Ralph Whiteside entered a Caveat against the acceptance of a Survey and patent being granted to Thomas Stuart and his father Arthur.⁵⁴ These records dating between 1760 and 1765 indicate that Ralph lived somewhere between Mechanicsburg and Carlisle, a description that could apply to Lisburn. I can find no record of Ralph after 1765. The Craig Sharrow genealogy for the Sharrow and Charron families states that the Whitsett family left Cumberland County in 1770 because Indians had burned out their flourmill.⁵⁵ That sounds much less embarrassing than telling everyone the business had failed and the mill foreclosed on. It is my guess that Ralph removed to Westmoreland County and probably lived with one of his children there. He may have died in Fayette County. There is a marker in the Mt. Washington Cemetery of Perryopolis, Pennsylvania for Ralph Whitsett but has no dates. It has a plaque from the Daughters of the American Revolution. Ralph's grandson Ralph Crawford Whitsett is also buried there, but he was born long after the war (in 1801). E. M. Whetsel copied the markers in the cemetery for the Fayette County Genealogy Project (Rootsweb) but some of the dates he copied make no sense.⁵⁶ The markers in this cemetery need to be verified.

Evidence is suggesting that Ralph was the father of William Wirt, Samuel (erroneously referred to by some as Samuel Varner Whitsitt), and Joseph Whitsett/Whitsitt. Ralph's son William fought in the Revolution and is buried in the Perryopolis cemetery. William Wirt Whitsett named his only son Ralph. Ralph's son Samuel married Margaret (possibly Margaret Tittle) and removed about 1786 to Kentucky. He died in Montgomery County in 1815. One of his sons was also named Ralph. Ralph's third son, Joseph married Mary Clifford in Fayette County and removed to Harrison County, Kentucky after the Revolution. Some researchers have suggested that Joseph and Mary also had a son named Ralph, although I have not located any source documents to support that assumption. However, the names of these grandsons tell us pretty clearly that Ralph Whiteside/Whitsitt was the heretofore-invisible ancestor of the Kentucky and Fayette County Whitsett and Whitsitt families. I am utterly amazed that he was under the radar for so long with so many researchers (including myself) looking for the origin of these families. Today, we have multiple descendants of Samuel in the Whiteside Family Association yDNA project that should be very interested in Ralph.

⁵³ Miller, John R. (1909) *Callapatscink, the Yellow Breeches Creek*: read before the Cumberland County Historical Society on Friday evening, November 26th, 1909. (from Ancestry.com)

⁵⁴ PA Archives, S3, v2, p 310, Caveat Book #2, 1765 PA Lancaster/Cumberland Land Office, 21st June, 1765

⁵⁵ <http://worldconnect.genealogy.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=craigsharrow&id=I461457> (based partly on a 1929 letter by Henry G. Whitsett, son of Ralph Crawford Whitsett and grandson of William Wirt Whitsett; also, partly from "Nelson's History." (I hope to soon visit the cemetery and clarify this information)).

⁵⁶ Fayette County Genealogy Project; Mt. Washington Cemetery - Perryopolis; Compiled by E. M. Whetsel

There were probably other children of Ralph and Sarah Wilson Whitsett, but the ones we know about, or have some evidence for are as follows. Son Samuel was born about 1745. See below for more on Samuel. Daughter Sarah was reportedly born on June 13, 1748 in Lancaster County. She married Peter Tittle in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania in 1771. Sarah died on October 14, 1812 probably in Westmoreland County. Craig Sharrow references sons James and John Whitsett as brothers of William Wirt Whitsett. We have no other information on either John or James. Son William Wirt Whitsett was born in 1752. There is more on William below. Son Joseph Whitsett was born about 1750 in Pennsylvania. There is more on Joseph below.

Samuel Whitsitt, Son of Ralph

Why do we link Samuel to Ralph? The evidence is certainly circumstantial, but I believe it is very strong circumstantial evidence. We must use the family traditions given at the beginning of this essay as a guide. These stories are the “Keepers of the Clues.” Some traditions link Samuel Whitsitt to Lancaster County while others say he was born in Ireland or Virginia. The evidence as a whole, which we discuss below, points the finger to this Samuel in Pennsylvania. Not the least of the evidence is that Samuel named one of his sons, Ralph. Next, the family tradition states that Samuel was a Sheriff in Lancaster County. This is not true, but not far wrong. He was the goalkeeper (Jailer) in newly formed Westmoreland County in the 1770’s. Then there is the tradition that Samuel had a brother John who went south and was the grandfather of first lady Sarah Childress Polk. For years I have dismissed this part of the tradition as simple exaggeration based on the fact that Mrs. Polk’s grandfather was a John Whitsett. Evidence now tells us that John, uncle to Samuel, was actually Sarah Polk’s great grandfather who migrated from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania eventually to Orange County, North Carolina, and her grandfather was John Jr. who came to Tennessee from North Carolina. Each of these clues and the evidence for them is discussed below.

I want to discuss here some names. Somewhere at sometime a family researcher made the assumption that Samuel Whitsitt, Sr. of Montgomery County, Kentucky was named Samuel Varner Whitsitt. In the research I have done, which I believe to be considerable, I have not found a single mention of Samuel’s middle name. The assumption that it was Varner has not been documented and I believe it is wrong. Regardless, many have gone along with this assumption with only a handful of researchers questioning it. This error may have stemmed from family records, which mention “Samuel Varner Whitsitt, Jr.” I think that someone simply assumed that since the son was named Samuel Varner Whitsitt, Jr. the father must be Samuel Varner Whitsitt, Sr. This seemingly insignificant error may have helped to confuse the origins of this family.

The second name is that of Margaret Tuttle. There appears to be no documentation for the claim that this was the name of Samuel’s wife. An article in *THE ADVOCATE* of Mt. Sterling, Kentucky written by Mrs. Hazel M. Boyd in 1981 says that “a correspondent” of hers stated that it was Margaret Tuttle, but offers no other proof. Even if this person did find a document with the name “Tuttle,” that could simply be a transcriber’s error. The reason I think it to be an error is that during the time and in the areas where Samuel was born and raised, and where he likely was married, there were no Tuttle families. The first mention of a Tuttle individual living in an area anywhere near the Whitsitt’s is in western Pennsylvania and dated long after Samuel and Margaret removed from Pennsylvania for Kentucky. In contrast, there were numerous Tittle’s in all of the areas where Samuel lived, from Lebanon Township in Lancaster County to Westmoreland County. We have discussed Peter Tittle, both father and son, in our sketch of Samuel’s father Ralph. Tittle family researchers tell us that Peter Sr. had brothers George and John who came to America and settled in northern Lancaster County about the same time as the Whitsett’s. In the documents of Lebanon Township and the church records of Rev. Stoeber are found several other Tittle names including women Elizabeth and Rachel and a child named John Peter Tittle.

Thirdly, I have my own theories about the name “Varner.” While discussing Ralph Whiteside/Whitsitt above, we mentioned Robert Varner/Vernor who was Ralph’s close neighbor. The Varner name shows up in Lancaster County documents as Varner, Vernor, Verner and Varnar. Some of this family settled in northern Lancaster County after coming to America from Ireland. Later they seemed to have followed the same path as the Whitsitt and Tittle families to Cumberland and even later to Westmoreland and Fayette Counties. A Google search of the Internet turns up several links for the family history and genealogy of the Verner/Varner family. I do not want to get into the family history of the Varner family except to illustrate my point, so I haven’t included here specific sources. A simple search using Google will give you enough sources to back up my statements. The Varner name was originally Werner a German variant of Warner. The family came to Northern Ireland from Germany; probably about the time the Whiteside/Whitsitt families arrived there. Because of the German pronunciation of “W” as “V” Warner or Werner was written as “Varner” and “Verner” (and a few other variations). This occurred first in Ireland and continued in America.⁵⁷ What does this have to do with us? During the era when Samuel Varner Whitsitt (junior) was born, it was a common practice to give at least one child the mother’s maiden name, sometimes as a first name, but usually as a middle name. While contemplating the coincidence of a Varner being the neighbor of Samuel, Sr. when he was young, I began to think that perhaps Margaret was Widow Tittle when she married Samuel and her maiden name was Varner. According to the birth dates of their children, they must have been married in either Cumberland or York County, Pennsylvania. Margaret may have first married one of the several Tittle young men in Lancaster or Cumberland County; her husband dying soon after, perhaps before any Tittle children were born of the union. Margaret Varner-Tittle then married Samuel about 1766 at about the time Samuel first gained a warrant for survey of land in York County. I readily admit that this is all conjecture and will probably remain so unless marriage records, a probate record or some other form of solid documentation is found.

Various researchers have given Samuel, Sr. birth dates ranging from the early 1740’s to as late as the 1760’s. His birthplace has ranged from Northern Ireland, to Virginia. A few have placed it in Lancaster County. None that I know about have given a specific source to prove either the date or the place. Family legend supports the theory that he was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and the most likely date seems to be about 1746.

The first record of Samuel is his warrant application on April 10, 1767. The warrant register lists his name as Samuel Whitsitt and the land was 300 acres located in Fairfield Township, formerly Newbury Township, York County, Pennsylvania.⁵⁸ A survey for a portion of the land was done many years later. In 1833, when this final survey was made, the land belonged to Jacob Stromenger. The survey indicates that at least part of the tract had been annexed into a warrant for Abraham Norblett originally issued in April 1760. It is not clear to me what is the significance of that fact; does it mean that Samuel eventually walked away from the land or did he sell at least a portion of it to Norblett when he left York County.⁵⁹

Eight years later, Samuel’s brother Joseph had his tract surveyed on April 7, 1773.⁶⁰ The survey was based on his warrant of April 1, 1773. The survey shows that Joseph’s land was adjacent to Samuel’s on the west side and was located on Yellow Breeches Creek very near where Ralph Whitsett had his mill on the opposite side of the creek in Cumberland County. Also adjoining Joseph’s land on the south side was that of Peter Tittle.

⁵⁷ The search for the pedigree of John Verner, Sr., born ca 1725 (an attempt to separate fact from fantasy by Foy Varner, Jr.) December 19, 2005

⁵⁸ Records of the Land Office, Register of WEST SIDE APPLICATIONS 1766-1769, index pg. 345; Warrant No. 3423 Whitsitt, Samuel Fairfield Twp formerly Newbury, 300 acres. {series #17.40} <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/>

⁵⁹ COPIED SURVEYS Book D55, pg 153

⁶⁰ COPIED SURVEYS 1681-1912, Book C220, pg. 300

Samuel must have left York County for Westmoreland about the same time that his brother Joseph took out his warrant. Westmoreland County was created by an act of the government of the Colony of Pennsylvania on February 26, 1773. Hanna's Town was selected as the temporary county seat of Westmoreland County, chosen over Pittsburgh. Robert Hanna, also from York County, laid out the town on his land. The usual size of the lot was 60' by 120' and the cost was about 2 pounds. The buyer also had to pay an annual quit rent of 15 shillings. The new owner was required to build a house of a certain size on his lot within two years. These early deeds are recorded in Westmoreland County Deeds, Book A.⁶¹ One of the reasons we have not found any warrants or surveys for Samuel, or his brother William, may be that they purchased one of these town lots rather than farm land. If so, those deeds were probably recorded in Deed Book A.

Westmoreland County, when it was created, encompassed all of the counties in today's southwestern Pennsylvania. It was also a difficult place for white settlers. In 1774 a number of petitions, all with similar wording, circulated among the settlers in western Pennsylvania asking the Governor for protection from Indians. The signatures of a group in Westmoreland County contain the names of Samuel Whiteside, Robert Hanna and one hundred thirty-two others. "The people of the border counties assembled and petitioned Governor John Penn, setting forth "that there was great reason to apprehend that the country would again be immediately involved in all the horrors of an Indian war; that their circumstances, at that critical time, were truly alarming; deserted by the greater part of our neighbors and fellow subjects, unprotected with places of strength to resort to with ammunition, provisions, and with almost every other necessary store. Our houses abandoned to pillage; labor and industry entirely at a stand; our crops destroyed by cattle; our flocks dispersed; the minds of our people distracted with the terrors of falling, along with the helpless and unprotected families, the immediate victims of savage barbarity. In the midst of these scenes of desolation and ruin, next to the Almighty, we look to your Honor, hoping, from your known benevolence and humanity, such protection and relief as your Honor shall see meet."⁶²

By December 1774 Samuel was the goalkeeper in Hanna's Town. He soon found himself caught up in the border dispute with Virginia over the authority of Virginia to collect taxes in Westmoreland County. Lord Dunmore governor of Virginia sent his tax collectors into Westmoreland County. When some residents resisted because they believed themselves to be citizens of Pennsylvania, the Virginia tax collectors would often break into the house and take anything they could find of value, sometimes causing injuries to the occupants of the house. These troubles led up to what became known as Dunmore's War, considered by some to be the first shots of the American Revolution. In 1774 Lord Dunmore issued a proclamation declaring Virginia's claim to all of the territory that included today's Fayette, Greene, Washington and Allegheny Counties in western Pennsylvania. Lord Dunmore sent John Connolly to the area to enforce his edict. Connolly raised a militia force in Virginia and marched to Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) and took control of the Fort. Connolly changed the name of Fort Pitt to Fort Dunmore. Justice of the Peace for Westmoreland County, General Arthur St. Clair raised militia, built forts and blockhouses, and regained Fort Pitt. Westmoreland County officials arrested Connolly and jailed him at Hanna's Town. He was released after posting bail but he soon returned to Hanna's Town with more than one hundred fifty men. He arrested some county officials and took them back to Virginia. That fall he again returned to Hanna's Town and released all of the prisoners in the goal in Hanna's Town, including two murderers. The motivation seems to have been that some of the prisoners were Virginia tax collectors arrested for breaking into people's houses. Because of the trouble, not many crops were planted that

⁶¹ Ed Hahn, "Hannastown The Founding of a Village on the Pennsylvania Frontier," Westmoreland County Historical Society, Greensburg, PA

⁶² The History of Indiana County, Pennsylvania by J. A. Caldwell, P. 138; Newark, Ohio, 1880; Petitions of the Inhabitants of Westmoreland and Ohio Counties

year and the severe winter of 1774-75 caused serious problems for the settlers in Westmoreland.⁶³

On December 24, 1774 Connolly and his group confronted Samuel Whitsitt, who was the goalkeeper in Hanna's Town. After the incident, Samuel made the following deposition before Justices Robert Hanna and Arthur St. Clair. "Before us Robert Hanna and Arthur St. Clair, Esquires, two of his majesty's Justices for Westmoreland County, personally appeared Samuel Whiteside, keeper of the Goal of the said County, and being duly sworn according to Law, deposes and saith: that on this Instant, twenty-fourth of December, a number of armed Men came to the Goal of said County, and ordered him to open the Prison Doors, and turn out a certain William Thomas, then in his Custody on sundry Executions; that he believes a certain William Christy and Simon Girty, who seemed to be Officers from their dress, were at the head of their party; That he, this deponent, refused to deliver his prisoner or open the door where he was confined; that they then talked of throwing down the house, when a certain Major Conolly came up, enquired who resisted the releasment of the prisoners, threatened to tie and carry off him this deponent; ordered the party to fire their pieces against the house, and strip off the roof, on which he, (this deponent) being afraid of ill consequences, both to his person and property, did open the door to allow the prisoner to speak to the party, and one of them rushed in, seized him [William Thomas], and dragged him out, and also turned out a certain William Dawson, who was likewise in his custody on execution, and that it was Conolly himself who laid hands on Thomas and dragged him out."⁶⁴

A few weeks later, on February 7, 1775 Samuel was again confronted with the same situation. That same day he made another deposition to the Justices of Westmoreland county: "Deposition of Samuel Whitesitt, 7 Feb. 1775, Westmoreland County. Personally appeared before us, the subscribers, three of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the county aforesaid, Samuel Whitesides, who being duly Sworn upon the holy Evangelists of Almighty God, did depose & say that this day being the Seventh day of February, in the morning between twilight, there came a number of Armed men, and with a large Sledge, about ten poundweight, broke open the outside Goal door & one of the Inside doors, both being lock'd and sent the prisoners then in the Goal, being three in number, who were committed (one by Name of John Neil for a Riot & throwing down a man's house, (with a number of others) the other two by Name Samuel Wardin & Samuel Wilson, who were committed for a Trespass) of and giving each of them the prisoners after the Goal being broke a Pistol, and told them, the prisoners, that they had help'd them so far, and to Clear their own way: and the said Samuel Whitesides further says, that he heard the number of armed men aforesaid say that for their so doing they had orders from Captain William Crawford... [signed Samuel Whitesitt]. Carnachan, Esquire, Sheriff of the County, ... [asked] one Benjamin Harrison, who appeared to be their head man, whether they had orders for their so doing ... and he read a paper & said it was Captain William Crawford's orders. Foreman also saw one Samuel Wilson make a push at Robert Hanna, Esquire (one of the Justices of the Peace) with a Gun. [Robert Hanna's statement] The sledge was stolen from the smith shop. William McGeery came to Robt. Hanna about daybreak to inform him of the break in. "One Benjamin Harrison said, "What they had done they did by Authority from Virginia."⁶⁵

Justice William Crawford who had ordered the raid was the same William Crawford who was the uncle of Hadessa Crawford Whitsett, wife of William Wirt Whitsett. This makes me wonder which side the Whitsitt's were really on. It could be that Samuel's depositions were his attempt to mitigate his role in the affair. One of the reasons for the strong feelings in this dispute was because some of the Westmoreland County settlers had obtained their land under

⁶³ Van Atta, Robert B., THE MASON-DIXON LINE A Short History, TRIBUNE-REVIEW, Greensburg, Penn., Sunday, November 12, 2000

⁶⁴ Pennsylvania Archives, Colonial Records, Vol. X, pg. 227, 228

⁶⁵ Pennsylvania Archives, Colonial Records, Vol. X., pg. 234

the authority of Virginia, rather than Pennsylvania. Others had warrants issued by the Colony of Pennsylvania. Sometimes these claims overlapped, which was always a sure-fire formula for violence. I have read somewhere that many of the land records for grants from Virginia for land in Westmoreland and Washington Counties, Pennsylvania were recorded in Virginia and not Pennsylvania. This may be the reason we have not found land records in Westmoreland County for Samuel or William Whitsitt. It may also explain why some descendants have claimed that the brothers Samuel, William and Joseph were from or born in Virginia.

In May, 1775, anticipating a war with Britain, the two sides put aside their differences, at least temporarily. In that year men of Virginia and men of Pennsylvania produced the Hanna's Town Resolves, declaring in no uncertain terms that they would take up arms to defend their rights against British oppression.⁶⁶ Hanna's Town became the center for recruitment of militia to fight the British and their Indian allies in Ohio and Detroit.

Whether or not Samuel favored the authorities of Pennsylvania or Virginia, he was one of the signatories of a petition to Governor John Penn of Pennsylvania pleading that the Governor return troops to Hanna's Town for the protection of its citizens. The petition is undated but appears to have been organized about 1781-82. Hanna's Town was completely destroyed by Indians acting with the blessing of the British on July 13, 1782, almost a year after Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. The official end of the war came another year later in September 1783 with the Treaty of Paris. Several of these petitions, worded exactly the same were sent to Governor Penn. Most had more than twenty signatures. Among the signatures were Samuel Whitsitt and Robert Clifford. Clifford was the brother of Mary Clifford who married Joseph Whitsett, Samuel's brother.

The petition reads, "To the Honorable John Penn Governor in and over the province of Pennsylvania, and the counties of Newcastle, Kent and Sussex on the Delaware; The Petition of Sundry of the inhabitants of Westmoreland County--- Humbly showeth, That your petitioners in consequence of the first Alarm in these parts, did assemble at Hanna's Town; where at their own expense they Erected a Small Fortification as a shelter for their Wives and Families during the Troublesome times, and under the direction of the Gentlemen of the Association Voluntarily took up arms for the general defense of this part of the country, 'till such times as your Honor and the Honble Assembly were pleased to approve our proceedings. Your Petitioners thought themselves extremely happy and Secure, when your Honor Assembly so considerably order'd a number of troops to be embodied for our General protection and Safety; but your petitioners are now rendered very uneasy, by the removal of these troops, Their Arms and Ammunition, on which your Petitioners further understand are ordered to the Kittaning, a place at least distant from any of the settlements, Twenty five or Thirty miles. Your Petitioners by being left thus exposed without Arms or Ammunition, humbly conceive themselves to be in great Danger from the Enemy, and are sorry to observe to your Honor and the Honble Assembly, that 'tis the General, as well as the humble opinion of your Petitioners, that removing the troops to so distant and uninhabited a part of the Province as the Kittaning, cannot answer the good purpose for which they were intended, but appears calculated only by the advice of some who prefer their own private interest to the Public Welfare. Your Petitioners are further most humbly of the opinion, that some ill disposed person or persons have misrepresented our real Situation to your Honor and the Honble Assembly, otherwise we could not conceive that Your Honor and the Honble Assembly would leave us exposed and defenceless in the manner we now are. Your Petitioners therefore most humbly request that your Honor would be pleased to consider their alarming Situation, and order such assistance as their Defenseless condition requires. And your Petitioners as in duty bound shall pray &ea, &ea."

⁶⁶ I have used several on-line sources for information on Hanna's Town, including this one; I am not documenting all of these sources since they are simply for historical background.



HANNASTOWN IN 1782, JUST BEFORE BURNING

(From Painting by Homer F. Blair)

Hannastown in 1782, just before it was attacked and destroyed by the Senecas; from a painting by Homer F. Blair, a contemporary of Hannastown.

The destruction of Hanna's Town on July 13, 1782 was especially hard on the settlers in young Westmoreland County. All of the court and other county records of the time were destroyed. That may be one of the reason we have found so few records of the Whitsett's in Westmoreland County before the Revolutionary War. Hanna's Town was not rebuilt. Court continued to be held there until 1786 when the county seat was moved to Greensburg, a few miles south of Hanna's Town. By 1783 Samuel Whiteside had relocated to Mount Pleasant, located just north of today's Fayette and Westmoreland County borders. In that year he was taxed on 200 acres.⁶⁷ A transcript of property in Westmoreland County also lists him with 200 acres.⁶⁸ According to the family records of Mirian Holstine, a descendant of Samuel and Margaret, their son Samuel Varner Whitsitt was born in 1784. It is a safe guess that he was born in the Mount Pleasant area of Westmoreland County. In 1786 Samuel, Sr. is again on the tax rolls in Mount Pleasant. There was also a Samuel Whitesides on the tax roll in Tyrone Township of Fayette County in 1785.⁶⁹ Were there two Samuel Whitesides in the area in the 1780's? That may be, but Tyrone Township in Fayette County is not far from Mount Pleasant in Westmoreland. It could be that Samuel owned two pieces of property. Jacob's Creek marks the boundary between Westmoreland on the north and Fayette on the south. Tyrone Township is on the south bank of the creek. Just north is Huntington Township and near it on the east is Mount Pleasant, so it probably is not unrealistic to assume that Samuel had property in both. Samuel's brother Joseph Whitesides also appears on the tax list for Tyrone Township in 1785.⁷⁰

Evidence from records in Kentucky and Indiana seems to indicate that Samuel took his family to Kentucky in about 1786. This is supported by the fact that the 1786 tax roll in Westmoreland County is that last record we have of him in Pennsylvania. The family may have gone to Clark County originally but in 1804 Samuel purchased land on Lulbegurd Creek in Montgomery County, Kentucky. Much of the makeup of this family is documented in several probate records in Montgomery County, Kentucky for the estate of Samuel Whitsitt who died in 1815.

⁶⁷ Pennsylvania Archives, Series 3, Vol. XXIV, Westmoreland County, Tax Lists 1783, 1786

⁶⁸ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XXII, pg. 393; Transcript of Property in Westmoreland County

⁶⁹ Pennsylvania Archives, Series 3, Vol. XXIV, Fayette County, Tax Lists 1785-1786

⁷⁰ *ibid*

The make-up of the family of Samuel and Margaret is pretty well documented in the estate records of Montgomery County, Kentucky. Even so, there are some details that are not completely clear. Their children were: William, born May 6, 1767, died on May 9, 1854 in Indiana; John H., born about 1768, died in Missouri in 1845; James W., born about 1771, died in 1844 in Kentucky; Joseph, born about 1774, died in 1824 in Indiana; Ralph, born on July 27, 1778 in Pennsylvania, died on August 19, 1849 in Indiana; Margaret, born before 1782 and died about 1849; Samuel Varner Whitsitt, born about 1784; Nancy O., born about 1786; Sarah, born May 6, 1787; Rachel, born in 1789, died in Kentucky in 1860; Mary, born about 1793.

William Wirt Whitsett, son of Ralph

One of the reasons I believe it is important to discuss William Wirt Whitsett is because of the confusion sometimes with William Whiteside, husband of Hannah Miller, who also lived in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. Shortly after the American Revolution, this Quaker family came to Menallen Township in Fayette County from Chester County, Pennsylvania. We will talk about him more below. William Wirt Whitsett, when living in Fayette County resided in the northern townships just south of Westmoreland County. The Quaker William Whiteside lived in Menallen Township about the middle of the county.

Once again we have only circumstantial evidence to link William W. Whitsett, Revolutionary War hero, "Indian fighter and friend of George Washington" to Ralph Whitsett. Much of what we know about him comes from two letters written by his grandson, H. G. Whitsett of Brevard, North Carolina, in November 1929. We would know more, probably, if it were not for a flood that destroyed many of the records of the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) in Washington, D.C. Destroyed were documents submitted by Gertrude Whitsett Kipp, the daughter of H. G. Whitsett, which supported her admittance to the society. Her D.A.R. record supports the middle name "Wirt". In November 1929, H. G. (Henry) Whitsett wrote to James E. Whitsett of Weatherford, Texas after he saw James' name in a newspaper. James had been the foreman of the jury in a Texas murder trial that was apparently covered by newspapers in North Carolina. Henry inquired about James' ancestry and gave a very brief description of his. After he received a reply from Texas, Henry wrote a second letter containing much valuable information on his family. The complete text of these two letters can be found above near the beginning of this essay.⁷¹ In one of his letters he mentions that he had written to William Thornton Whitsett but had not met him. Henry was obviously the source for most, if not all of Professor Whitsett's comments on William Whitsett of Pennsylvania. Professor Whitsett apparently confused William Whitsett who married Elizabeth Dawson, or his son William who married Eleanor Menees with the much younger William Whitsett of Fayette County, Pennsylvania.

Henry G. Whitsett in his letters wrote nothing about his grandfather's ancestors. If he had, our job here would have been much simpler. As with Samuel Whitsitt, a key piece of evidence is that William named his only son, Ralph. A contributing factor for our conclusion that William was the son of Ralph of Lancaster and Cumberland Counties is that he was in the right place at the right times; however, that can often be misleading. Our assumption is also supported by bits of information from other researchers. Below, we discuss all of the evidence, both primary and anecdotal. One important clue is a statement found on the Craig Sharrow family tree posted on Rootsweb's World Connect: "William's family ran a flour milling operation in the John Harris's Ferry (Harrisburg) area until they were burned out by Indian raids around 1770."⁷² The specific source of this quote is not given. This must be a reference to Ralph Whitsett's

⁷¹ Letter from H. G. Whitsett of Brevard, N.C. to James Edward Whitsett of Weatherford, Texas, Nov. 1929; These letters were sent to me by Maida Whitten, grandniece of J. E. Whitsett; Maida was given the papers (the originals) by a family member because Maida was researching their family history. Maida sent me photocopies of these letters and other material from James' files.

mill in Lisburn, Allen Township, Cumberland County, located within a few miles of Harris' Ferry. It certainly is an indicator that William was Ralph's son. It is unfortunate that we are unable to determine on who made the statement and on what it is based.

Henry stated that his grandfather William Whitsett was born in 1752. Other sources state he died in 1842. Henry was born in 1852, a decade after his grandfather William Whitsett died. Thus, what Henry knew about him must have come from his father, Ralph Crawford Whitsett. Henry said that William was from Virginia and settled in Pennsylvania. As far as we know, William never lived outside the boundaries of today's Pennsylvania. I am certain the belief that he was from Virginia goes back to the border dispute between Virginia and Pennsylvania. It seems to indicate that William was part of the Virginia faction in Westmoreland County during that dispute. One of the reasons we have not found a warrant and survey for him in Westmoreland County is that he may have obtained any land he owned prior to the American Revolution through the authority of Virginia.

If William was born in 1752, we can surmise that he was born in Lebanon Township, Lancaster County. Henry said that William had brothers John and James who "went south" and William never heard from them again. Again we have the legend of John who went south. We have a little evidence of a James Whiteside, and much less evidence of a John, in western Pennsylvania in the 1780-90's. According to Henry, William married Hadessa Crawford, the niece of Colonel William Crawford, the Revolutionary War hero and chief justice of the court in Westmoreland County. Crawford family researchers support this and also add that her full name was Esther Hadessa Crawford, and that "Hadessa" is the Jewish version of the name Esther.⁷³ This does not mean that the Crawford's were Jewish, only that they were aware of the connection between the two names.

In our research of Pennsylvania records available on the Internet, we have found only a few official records related to William W. Whitsett. The first record we have is the "Transcript of Property in Westmoreland County." It shows that in 1783 William Whitesides owned 100 acres in the county and there were three inhabitants in his household.⁷⁴ In September 1783 Fayette County was formed from Westmoreland and this "Transcript of Property" was probably related to that split. If the 1783 entry is indeed William Whitsett, it supports assertions that William and his wife Hadessa were married about 1781 and their oldest daughter was born about 1782-83.

William's service during the American Revolution is recorded in the Pennsylvania Archives. They list him as William Whitsett, Private in the Westmoreland County Militia, Continental Line.⁷⁵ He is listed as being paid as a soldier in the Frontier Rangers, Westmoreland County Militia between 1778 and 1783. An undated entry shows that he also received depreciation pay. It is my guess this was probably about 1783. Depreciation pay was an attempt by Pennsylvania to reimburse its soldiers with "hard" money because of the depreciation of Continental script with which they were originally paid. Records of the Pennsylvania Comptroller General, Department of Public Records has another pay record for William Whitsett, Westmoreland County Militia dated from April 1, 1784 to March 30, 1785.⁷⁶ This was after the 1783 Treaty of Paris officially ended the war. Troubles with the Seneca Tribe and other Indians plagued the area for several years after the war; perhaps this pay was for his "Indian Fighter" period.

⁷² Craig Sharrow, "Sharrow, Charron, Sharon, Carveth, Abbott, Armstrong, Miarecki and other Ancestors," William Wirt Whitsett <http://worldconnect.genealogy.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=craigsharrow&id=1461457>

⁷³ Craig Sharrow

⁷⁴ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XXII, pg. 393; Transcript of Property in Westmoreland County, 1783

⁷⁵ Pa. Archives, Series 5, Vol. IV, Westmoreland County Militia, pages 460, 760

⁷⁶ Public Debt Records of the Comptroller General at D.P.R. Certificate No. 8090(?) issued 21 Dec. 1785, vol. A, pg. 254. "WHERE A MILITARY CONNECTION IS SPECIFIED (but not elsewhere) THE BASIC RECORD PROVES ACTIVE DUTY."

People in that area of Pennsylvania considered these problems a continuation of the war with Britain.

An unidentified family source states that William was one of the defenders of Hanna's Town on July 13, 1782.⁷⁷ The temporary county seat of Westmoreland County, Hanna's town consisted of about thirty buildings. This would indicate that the total population of the town was probably not much over one hundred people, counting wives and children. One of the best descriptions of that "battle of Hanna's Town" was published in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in an article by Len Barcoucky titled, "Eyewitness 1782; While Fort Pitt is Spared, Hanna's Town Burns."⁷⁸ Only a few lives were lost on either side during the attack. A party of farm laborers spotted the invaders and warned residents, who took refuge in the small stockade on the edge of town. When the Indian war party arrived, they found the town deserted. After looting all of the buildings they set the village ablaze. Most of the town was within rifle range of the fort, yet the defenders held their fire. This was probably a wise decision. One account says that there were only nine guns among the settlers and the raiding party consisted of hundreds of Seneca warriors and a couple dozen British soldiers. Had the raiders wanted to overrun the fort, they could have easily done so. It was best not to provoke the raiders. The eyewitness to the raid, a white prisoner named Matthews, said that an Indian warrior put on the military coat of one of the residents and paraded around in it, taunting the refugees in the fort. His obnoxious behavior was rewarded with a bullet from one of the defenders. Bones, believed to be his, were found later among the ashes of a house. A young girl in the fort was killed when a bullet struck her in the chest. Another account of the attack states that another young girl was mortally wounded while she was rescuing her small brother. After destroying Hanna's Town, the raiders turned their attention to Miller's Station, not far from Hanna's Town. The residents there had no warning and several lives were lost.

Sharrow's notes say that after the destruction of Hanna's Town, William settled at Stewart's Crossing and married Colonel William Crawford's niece, (Hadessa) Esther Crawford. They lived for a while in Connellsville, Pennsylvania on the Youghiogheny River, located in today's Fayette County. The couple purchased property on the bank of the Youghiogheny River opposite from Connellsville, in the village of New Haven in Unity Township in Westmoreland County. Today, this location is in Dunbar Township in Fayette County. William bought the property from John Crawford, Esther's father, on July 23, 1798. Crawford considered this property to be all of Esther's inheritance upon his death. Shortly after John Crawford died, William sold several properties with Esther co-signing. William and Esther then moved from Connellsville to nearby Layton, then to Pittsburgh and Jacks Run, a few miles northwest of Pittsburgh. While living near Pittsburgh, William had a wagon building business at Wood and Smithton Streets. William's only son Ralph was born in Jacks Run in 1801.⁷⁹ Hadessa (Esther) died about 1828 in Layton, Pennsylvania and she is buried in a cemetery near there.⁸⁰ Apparently, William and Ester returned to Fayette County in the 1820's. William is buried in the Mt. Washington Cemetery in Perryopolis, Pennsylvania.⁸¹ His marker in the cemetery gives his date of death as 1842.

Henry G. Whitsett's daughter, Gertrude Kipp, joined the D.A.R. Before she could gain membership, she had to document William's service in the American Revolution and also her relationship to him. Unfortunately, the documents she compiled in 1929 for that purpose were later destroyed in a flood in Washington, D.C. The only record that remains is the D.A.R. certification. In his letter, Gertrude's father Henry mentions a Fayette County history by

⁷⁷ Sharrow Family Tree

⁷⁸ Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Sunday, January 13, 2008; <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08013/848634-426.stm>

⁷⁹ Craig Sharrow Family Tree

⁸⁰ *ibid*

⁸¹ Fayette County Genealogy Project Mt. Washington Cemetery-Perryopolis Compiled by E. M. Whetsel, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~pafayett/>

“Nelson” which contains a sketch of William and labels him as a great Indian fighter and friend of George Washington and Colonel William Crawford. I have not been able to locate a copy of Nelson’s history, but I believe it to be S. B. Nelson’s, *Biographical Dictionary and Historical Reference Book of Fayette County*; published in Uniontown, Pennsylvania in 1900.

Until I began this project, I considered the story that William Whitsett was a friend of George Washington to be a myth. Today, I am not so sure. Perhaps as early as 1770, Washington purchased a large tract of land in what was to become Fayette County. Washington recorded in his diary October 15, 1770 how Colonel William Crawford helped him in the purchase. The estate included the future site of Perryopolis. Washington’s agent Gilbert Simpson supervised the construction of a gristmill on the waters of Washington’s Run, which is a short distance south of Perryopolis. Construction was completed in 1776.⁸² In 1782 Washington took out a warrant for several hundred additional acres in the area.⁸³ Simpson ran the gristmill for a few years as George Washington’s agent. According to Washington’s diary, he visited the site at least once.

George Washington and William Crawford had been close friends from the time they were both seventeen years old. Washington taught Crawford the surveyor’s trade and Crawford was responsible for surveying the land that Washington bought in Westmoreland County.⁸⁴ William Whitsett probably met George Washington because of his connection to the Crawford family. Whether or not he was actually a friend of Washington’s, or just an acquaintance, might be difficult to document. Only a reference to William Whitsett of Fayette County in one of Washington’s many diaries would prove that their relationship was more than a casual acquaintance.

In April 1792 a William Whiteside was issued a warrant for a survey for land on the Big Beaver Creek. This land was located in the Donations Land, land set aside for sale to raise funds for the depreciation pay of war veterans.⁸⁵ Today the land would be located on Mahoning Creek in Mahoning Township of Mercer County.⁸⁶ Was this our William Whitsett? We are told that he and his family moved to Pittsburgh about this time and the location of this warrant is about 55 miles north of Pittsburgh. Whether or not this is the case, William Whiteside or Whitsett never patented this land.

Ralph Crawford Whitsett, the only son of William and Hadessa, sold the family farm at Jack’s Run while he was in his early twenties.⁸⁷ This may be the time that William and Hadessa returned to Fayette County. From Pittsburgh, Ralph Whitsett took his family to West Newton located on the west bank of the Youghiogheny River in Westmoreland County, a few miles north of the Westmoreland-Fayette County line. A few years later he moved down river to Port Royal, Westmoreland County. In 1845, Ralph founded the town of Whitsett, Pennsylvania in Fayette County. A map of Perry Township in Fayette County shows that Ralph had several pieces of property in the Township by 1872. He was a successful merchant and businessman. He is buried in the Mt. Washington Cemetery along with his father.

⁸² Gladys Powell, “Perryopolis History, George Washington’s Grist Mill - 1776” <http://f.fay-west.com/articles/history/perry.php>

⁸³ WARRANT REGISTERS, Westmoreland County, pg. 156

⁸⁴ Ceane O’Hanlon-Lincoln, “County Chronicles A Vivid Collection of Fayette County, Pennsylvania Histories,”

⁸⁵ Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau of Archives and History, Pennsylvania State Archives; RG-17, Records of the Land Office, WARRANT REGISTERS, 1733-1957 [series #17.88], <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/>

⁸⁶ Records of the Land Office, COPIED SURVEYS, Book D1, page 208, Mercer County.

⁸⁷ Franklin Ellis, “History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania With Biographical Sketches,” 1882; <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/fulltext/>

According mostly to the Sharrow genealogy, William and Hadessa had the following children: Ralph Crawford Whitsett, born January 16, 1801, died in 1893 in Perryopolis; daughters Amanda, Hadessa Nancy, and Sarah Whitsett. We have no further information on the daughters of William and Hadessa.

William Whiteside of Menallen Township, Fayette County, Pa.

During my research of William Whitsett of Fayette County, I discovered that some family historians have confused William Whiteside of Menallen Township in Fayette County with William Whitsett of Connellsville and Perryopolis. We can show with a high degree of certainty that they were two separate, probably unrelated individuals. This is a brief account of what we know about the other William Whiteside.

In August 1784 William Whitesides received a warrant for 500 acres of land in Menallen Township, Fayette County.⁸⁸ In October of the same year, 294 acres were surveyed for him based on his warrant. He patented the land in February 1785. The survey and patent locate the land at the mouth of Sand Lick Run on Dunlap Creek on the road from Uniontown to Crawford's Ferry.⁸⁹ On today's maps of Fayette County that is about half a mile south of Fairbank, Pennsylvania. These documents are the first record of William Whiteside in Fayette County.

During the years between April 1784 and March 1785, William Whitsett was serving in the Westmoreland County Militia, eliminating the possibility that he was the William who patented the land in Fayette County. William Whiteside of Menallen Township appears to be the same person as the William Whiteside who appears in the records of Chester County, Pennsylvania.

The first notice we have of him in Chester County is in 1765. He is on the tax list for New Garden Township and his occupation is listed as "chairmaker."⁹⁰ On April 23, 1766 William Whiteside and Quaker Hannah Miller of the Friends Kennett meeting were married.⁹¹ Since Quakers forbid the inter-marriage of a Quaker with a non-Quaker, William was also a Quaker, at least at that time. Hannah's father William Miller of Kennett, Chester County died between August and November 1767. His will was proven on November 14, 1767.⁹² In his will he mentions daughter Hannah, wife of William Whiteside. In 1774 the New Garden, Chester County tax list indicated that William Whiteside, chairmaker, was an "inmate"⁹³ - this term was used to identify the taxable person as on active duty with the county militia and exempt from paying the tax that year. From 1781 through 1783 Captain William Whiteside appeared on the muster rolls of the Third Battalion, Chester County Militia commanded by Colonel John Hannum.⁹⁴

William Whiteside had apparently already relocated to Fayette County by the time he patented his land in February 1785. Hannah must have followed him at a later date, perhaps after

⁸⁸ WARRANT REGISTERS, 1733-1957

⁸⁹ COPIED SURVEYS 1681-1912 Book D6 pg 78

⁹⁰ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol XI, 3rd Series, "Proprietary Tax Lists, Chester County, 1765-1771"

⁹¹ Research by Warren E. Whiteside, Whiteside Family Association, Odessa, Delaware, Dec. 28, 2004 (Chester County Historical Society).

⁹² Lineages, Inc., comp.. Chester County, Pennsylvania Wills, 1713-1825, Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2000. Original data: Chester County Wills.. Located at the Chester County Archives and Records Service.

⁹³ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol XI, 3rd Series, "Proprietary Tax Lists, Chester County, 1765-1771"

⁹⁴ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XXII, 3rd Series, Muster Rolls of the Navy and Line, Militia and Rangers 1775-1783

William built a cabin for them to live in. On December 14, 1786 Hannah Whitesides was received in the Westland Meeting on a certificate from the New Garden Monthly Meeting dated May 4, 1786. This is the last record we have of Hannah. The Westland Meeting covered Quakers living in parts of Fayette and Washington Counties.⁹⁵ In 1790 William Whiteside is among the names of Quakers at the Fayette County, Westland Monthly Meeting. This meeting later became the Redstone Monthly Meeting in Union Township of Fayette County. In 1790 he witnessed the marriage of Abel Campbell and Susanna Dixon.⁹⁶

On February 1, 1815 the following notice appeared in the "Genius of Liberty and Fayette Advertiser" newspaper of Uniontown, Pennsylvania: "Died on Friday last, William Whiteside, of Menallen Twp, age about 73 yrs."⁹⁷ William Whiteside is buried in the historic Presbyterian Public Cemetery in Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

There are many more records pertaining to William Whiteside of Menallen Township. I have included only those that help to identify him for our purposes here. There is a hint that his sister may have been the wife of the William Allen whose will was witnessed by Ralph Whitsett and Thomas Hammersley in Lebanon Township. More research needs to be done on Captain Whiteside to prove or disprove this and to sort out the make up of his family. There are a lot of missing details in his story and some intriguing coincidences that cry out for an explanation. This research for now must wait for a future paper.

Joseph Whitsitt, son of Ralph

Joseph Whitsett's family has been researched and documented on Hugh F. Clifford's web site, "*Clifford Website, Generation Four, Clifford's New Jersey to Pennsylvania and Beyond*," <http://www3.telus.net/cliffordweb/content/generation4d.html>; Mr. Clifford does not identify Joseph's parents, but does give a list of his children. Mr. Clifford's interest in Joseph was mainly because of his wife Mary Clifford. Our goal here is not to document every detail of Joseph Whitsett and his family; our goal is to show his connection to the Lancaster County Whitsett/Whiteside family. For the purpose of this essay I am relying on Mr. Clifford's description of the make up of this family. As always should be the case, those of you with a specific interest in Joseph and his family should verify Hugh Clifford's documentation with research of your own.

We first find mention of Joseph in the Pennsylvania records with his application for a warrant. It was granted on April 1, 1773 for 200 acres in York County, Newberry Township (today's Fairfield Township). His tract adjoined that of Peter Tittle on the south side and Samuel Whitsitt on the east.⁹⁸ Joseph wasted no time in patenting his land. It was surveyed on April 7th and patented ten days later on April 17th. The survey shows that a part of the northwest boundary lay on the Yellow Breeches Creek (or, Yellow Britches). Several small tributaries of the creek ran through the middle of his tract.⁹⁹ Although the precise location is uncertain, his land and that of his brother Samuel lay across the Yellow Breeches Creek opposite Lisburn and the grist mill owned by their father Ralph Whitsett.

⁹⁵ William Wade Hinshaw, *ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN QUAKER GENEALOGY*, Volume IV, Ohio,

⁹⁶ History of Fayette County with Biographical Sketches, Franklin Ellis; Contributed for use in USGenWeb Archives by: Wes Campbell

⁹⁷ Rentmeister, Jean, *Fayette County Newspaper Extracts, 1805-1854*, Closson Press, Appallo, PA, 1981, "Marriage and Death Notices Extracted from the Genius of Liberty and Fayette Advertiser of Uniontown, PA 1805-1854

⁹⁸ WARRANT REGISTERS, 1733-1957, York County, pg. 169

⁹⁹ COPIED SURVEYS 1681-1912, Book C220, pg. 300

Ten years later we find Joseph in Westmoreland County. He first appears there on the 1783 tax list of Fairfield Township in Westmoreland.¹⁰⁰ Fairfield Township lay in the northeastern corner of Westmoreland County. That same year Joseph Whiteside is listed in the Transcript of Property in Westmoreland County. This inventory of property owners in Westmoreland County apparently had something to do with the formation of Fayette County taken from the southern section of Westmoreland in September 1783. Although the transcript does not give an exact location, it does state that he owned 100 acres and his household consisted of five inhabitants.¹⁰¹ Three of those household members would probably be Joseph, his wife Mary and the oldest daughter Sarah. According to the Clifford genealogy, Joseph and Mary were married about 1774 (probably in York or Cumberland County). Their first daughter, Sarah, was born about 1775. Their daughter Nancy was born in Westmoreland County in about 1784.¹⁰² Nine years between the birth of the oldest daughter and the next oldest is a considerable gap. It would easily accommodate two unnamed children making up the five members of the home in 1784.

By 1785, both Joseph and his brother Samuel had apparently moved out of Westmoreland south to Fayette County. The tax list that year lists both men in Tyrone Township,¹⁰³ which was located just south of the boundary with Westmoreland. In June the previous year an arrest warrant was issued for Joseph Whitesitt of Tyrone Township, Yeoman tenant for failure to make a lease payment to Christopher Beeler.¹⁰⁴ Obviously, Joseph moved to Fayette late in 1783 or early 1784. In 1786 Joseph is again taxed in Tyrone Township.¹⁰⁵ On August 23, 1786 Joseph Whitesitt received a warrant for 160 acres in Tyrone Township of Fayette County (the warrant register, which was not compiled until early in the twentieth century, incorrectly lists the tract as being in Franklin Township).¹⁰⁶ In November the following year the land was surveyed, documenting a plot of 144 acres with allowances for roads located on the waters of Jacob's Creek.¹⁰⁷ John Cannon patented this same land in April 1798 several years after Joseph and his family removed to Kentucky. The 1787 survey shows adjoining tracts belonging to Christopher Beeler, Thomas Forsythe, Peter Studebaker and Jacob Lowry. Franklin Ellis, in his *HISTORY OF FAYETTE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA* says, "Joseph Whitsett took up a warrant for 144 acres in the section (near Oliver Porter and John Bryan, once owned by Peter Reed)."¹⁰⁸

Joseph appears on the tax list for Fayette County in 1789.¹⁰⁹ In February 1790, Joseph witnessed the will of his brother-in-law Robert Clifford in Bourbon County, Kentucky.¹¹⁰ He appears on the tax list for Bourbon County, Kentucky in 1791.¹¹¹ Strangely, he reappears on the tax list for Tyrone Township in Fayette County, Pennsylvania in 1796.¹¹² However, it seems clear that he and his family removed to Kentucky about 1790.

The Clifford Genealogy gives Joseph's birthday as 1750 and incorrectly states that it was in Northern Ireland. If the date is correct, he was probably born in Lebanon Township of Lancaster County. According to Hugh Clifford, Joseph died about May 1814 in Harrison County,

¹⁰⁰ Pennsylvania Archives, Series 3, Vol. XXIV, Westmoreland County, Tax Lists 1783, 1786

¹⁰¹ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XXII, pg. 393; Transcript of Property in Westmoreland County, 1783

¹⁰² Clifford Website, "Generation Four, Cliffords New Jersey to Pennsylvania and Beyond"

¹⁰³ Pennsylvania Archives, Series 3, Vol. XXIV, Fayette County, Tax Lists 1785-1786

¹⁰⁴ Clifford Website, Generation Four, Cliffords New Jersey to Pennsylvania and beyond

¹⁰⁵ Pennsylvania Archives, Series 3, Vol. XXIV, Fayette County, Tax Lists 1785-1786

¹⁰⁶ WARRANT REGISTERS 1733-1957; Fayette County, pg. 132; Warrant No. 46, Joseph Whitesitt, 23 Augt. 1786, 160 acres

¹⁰⁷ COPIED SURVEYS 1681-1912, Book A52 pg 170

¹⁰⁸ Ellis, Franklin, *HISTORY OF FAYETTE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF MANY OF ITS PIONEERS AND PROMINENT MEN*, L. H. Everts & Co. (1882); University of Pittsburgh

¹⁰⁹ Clifford Website, Generation Four, Cliffords New Jersey to Pennsylvania and beyond

¹¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹¹ *ibid*

¹¹² *ibid*

Kentucky. His wife Mary was born about 1762 in New Jersey and died in Harrison County about 1801. According to the Clifford web site their children were: Sarah, born 1775 in Pennsylvania; Nancy, born 1784 in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania; Charles, born in 1786 in Fayette County, Pennsylvania; Rebecca, born the same year in 1786; Jane, born 1791 in Miller's station, Bourbon County, Kentucky; Margaret, Mary and Matilda, born between 1794-96 in Bourbon County; Emily, born in 1801 in Harrison County, Kentucky. My friend Kathy Whitsett, who for many years was an ardent Whitsett researcher, also listed a son, Ralph (birth date and place unknown). Kathy and I corresponded for years until a few years ago when she retired from the Whitsett research business and moved on to other projects. When I last wrote to her in fall of 2007 she was unable to give me a source for the name.

John Whiteside/Whitsett

John Whitesides, Jr. took out his warrant for land in Lebanon Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania on October 31, 1738.¹¹³ John was the first of our Whiteside/Whitsett group to appear in the records in Lebanon Township, four years before Ralph Whiteside obtained his warrant and whose land bordered that of John Whitesides. I believe that this John was the John Whiteside/Whitsett who went to North Carolina about 1750-53 and settled first in Anson County before part of it was split off to become Rowan County. He later moved to Orange County where he died in 1786. I have no single item of proof to show that John of Lebanon Township is the same John who died in Orange County. But, once again the circumstantial evidence we have collected, and the instinct that comes from working on this family for more than thirty years, tells me he is. Even so, without firm evidence you must consider this as only a hypothesis. I believe he is the John whose son John was the grandfather of first lady Sarah Childress Polk, wife of President James K. Polk. The Whitesitt family legends support this conclusion, even though in some accounts they skip a generation or two.

It is interesting that John is listed as John Whitesides "Jr." on his 1738 Lebanon Township warrant application. Unlike today, in that era, "Jr." simply meant that he was the younger of at least two John Whitesides who lived in the same general area. Who was the "Sr."? Could John Whitesides, Sr. be the John Whitesitt of Peque Township? If so, were they related in any manner? For now, those are unanswered questions.

I can find no other John Whiteside/Whitsett in the records of Pennsylvania that I can identify as the John Whitsett of North Carolina. There is the John Whitesitt on tax lists and petitions dated from 1718 to 1735 in Sadsbury and Peque Townships of Lancaster County.¹¹⁴ However, I feel that this John would have been a bit too old to be our John who died in 1786 in North Carolina. The probable birth dates of the children of the North Carolina John also argue against it. The John of Peque Township must have been born no later than 1696 since he obtained his warrant for land from the Proprietors of Pennsylvania in January 1714/15.¹¹⁵ Even if he were only eighteen in 1715 he would have been almost 90 in 1786. Not impossible, but unlikely. Even so, historian Robert W. Ramsey of North Carolina states that the North Carolina John Whitsett was from Peque Township in Lancaster County.¹¹⁶ Whether he is right, or I am right, we both agree he came from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

¹¹³ WARRANT REGISTERS, 1733-1957; Lancaster Co., John Whitesides, Jr., Oct. 31, 1738; COPIED SURVEYS, 1681-1912; Book A5 pg. 76

¹¹⁴ Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XIV, 6th Series, "Early Petitions" pg. 261- 262, 272-274, 298-299

¹¹⁵ OLD RIGHTS INDEX FOR CHESTER COUNTY; Jno. Whiteside, warrant, 200 acres Jan. 15, 1714-5; COPIED SURVEYS 1681-1912, Book D69 pg. 293, *John Whitesides, 200 acres; date of survey order "15th day of first month Anno Domini 1714/5"*

¹¹⁶ Ramsey, Robert W., *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762*, U of NC Press: Chapel Hill, pp. 111-112 (William R. Whiteside research notes, 19 Jan. 2008)

It is interesting that John Whiteside's name appears on an adjoining plot on several surveys of property in Lebanon Township dated from 1742 until 1750.¹¹⁷ That would imply that John was in Lebanon Township for at least a few years. I doubt that the land would be identified as belonging to John Whiteside for all those years if he had not lived there for some period of time. When Ralph's warrant was resurveyed in 1760, at the time he sold the land, the survey showed that there was a conflict in Ralph's original warrant survey of 1742 and John's 1738 survey. It showed that Ralph's original survey intruded on John's by a few acres. To resolve the conflict an additional survey was ordered in 1760.¹¹⁸

When Robert Varner's tract was surveyed in 1754 an adjoining tract shown as belonging to John Whitesides on earlier surveys was labeled as belonging to Conrad Brown.¹¹⁹ I believe this is why John Whitesides' warrant is shown as void on the warrant register and no date or patent information is given.¹²⁰ Often, the original warrantee would simply walk away for his land (or sell it or turn it over to a neighbor). Another landowner adjacent to the vacated tract sometimes would appropriate the land into his own warrant. The vacated tract would usually be listed in the registers as vacated if abandoned, and void or appropriated if another warrantee adsorbed it. That seems to be the case with John Whitesides. Conrad Brown received his warrant for 100 acres in April 1750.¹²¹ At the time of the warrant, John Whiteside is shown adjacent to Brown's tract on the east side. In 1754 when Varner received his warrant, both Brown's and John Whitesides' land is shown as belonging to Conrad Brown. This indicates to me that John Whiteside vacated his tract sometime between 1750 and 1754. This is important because the first record of John Whiteside/Whitsett in Rowan County, North Carolina is dated June 1753.¹²²

I believe that John left Pennsylvania with his family for Anson County, North Carolina about 1750. The trip from Pennsylvania to North Carolina could not have been an easy one. Just how did these Pennsylvania settlers come to North Carolina? Samuel J. Ervin's *A Colonial History of Rowan County, NC* describes the route the Scotch-Irish and German settlers from Pennsylvania took to western North Carolina:¹²³

The route which the German and Scotch-Irish settlers took in making the overland journey from Pennsylvania to western North Carolina is described by Colonel Saunders as follows:

On Jeffrey's map, a copy of which is in the Congressional Library at Washington City, there is plainly laid down a road called "the Great Road from the Yadkin River through Virginia to Philadelphia, distant 435 miles." It ran from Philadelphia through Lancaster and York [counties in Pennsylvania] to Winchester [Virginia], thence up the Shenandoah Valley, crossing the Fluvanna River to Looney's Ferry, thence to Staunton River, and down the river through the Blue Ridge, thence southward, crossing Dan River [Virginia] below the mouth of Mayo River, thence still southward near the Moravian settlement [North Carolina] to the Yadkin River, just above the mouth of Linville Creek and about ten miles above the mouth of Reedy Creek.

Many Scotch-Irish settlers to Virginia followed the upper part of this road to their destinations in Augusta, Albemarle, Amherst and Rockbridge counties in Virginia. Some of those same

¹¹⁷ COPIED SURVEYS, 1681-1912; Book C1 pg. 75 (Conrad Brown); Book A5, pg. 77 (Ralph Whiteside); Book A1, pg 282 (Casper Stoeber).

¹¹⁸ COPIED SURVEYS, 1681-1912; Book A5, pg. 77 Ralph Whiteside

¹¹⁹ COPIED SURVEYS, 1681-1912; Book A78 pg. 132, Robert Verner Survey

¹²⁰ WARRANT REGISTERS, 1733-1957; Lancaster Co., John Whitesides, Jr., Oct. 31, 1738.

¹²¹ COPIED SURVEYS, 1681-1912; Book C1 pg. 75 (Conrad Brown)

¹²² McCubbins Collection of Extracts of Rowan County, N.C. Court Records to May 1770, LDS Microfilm 019,88; Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹²³ *ibid*

Virginians later came to North Carolina on the lower part of the same road.

North Carolina's Rowan County was formed from Anson County in the spring of 1753. In June of that year the newly formed county court was held for the first time somewhere in Rowan County. A number of urgent issues for the new county were addressed during this first session.¹²⁴ John Whitsett was appointed tax commissioner in John Robinson's District, was named as treasurer of Rowan County and was appointed one of the commissioners to run the dividing line between Rowan and Orange Counties.¹²⁵ Finally, he was appointed to see that land for public buildings in the new county seat of Salisbury was laid out in a suitable manner. His appointment to these offices indicates that John was already a landowner within the new county. It also indicates that he was a man of substance with an education better than most new settlers. It is evident that John Whitsett had been in the area long enough to gain a favorable reputation with the officials of the newly formed county. I have attempted to find records of him in Anson, the parent county of Rowan, but so far have been unsuccessful. Robert W. Ramsey author of "Carolina Cradle" states that John was in Rowan County by March 1754, and was operating a public mill on or near Grants Creek by 1757.¹²⁶ During his stay in Rowan County his name shows up several times in the records of the county, but we need not go into further detail.

The last reference to John Whitsett in Rowan County is a deed from James Carr and wife Hannah Carr to John Briggs dated October 22, 1760. Briggs purchased 656 acres on Grants Creek from the Carr's. The land is described as being adjacent to John Whitsitt and Alex McCulloh.¹²⁷ In 1761 John Whitsett appears for the first time in the records of Orange County, North Carolina.¹²⁸ Eight years later, on October 25, 1768 John Whitsett sold 100 acres in Orange County to Benjamin Stone. The deed is proved in court on the oath of Lawrence Thompson.¹²⁹ Lawrence Thompson, Sr. was the father-in-law of John Whitsett's son who was also named John. To confuse matters even more, in 1768 Lawrence, Sr. had an adult son who was also named Lawrence. It is impossible to tell if this record reflects the senior John Whitsett and Lawrence Thompson, or the junior John Whitsett and Lawrence Thompson or, a mixture of both. About 1769-70, John, Jr. married Sarah Thompson, daughter of Lawrence Thompson and Sarah Finney.

On February 7, 1769 John Whitsett, Sr. and John Whitsett, Jr. both signed a petition in Orange County applying for lots in the newly formed Quaker settlement of Wrightsboro, Georgia.¹³⁰ Orange County Quaker leader Joseph Maddock founded Wrightsboro in 1767. The Quakers found life under North Carolina Royal Governor Tyrone intolerable. English laws forced everyone to pay a tithe to the Church of England, regardless of faith. For a while only ministers of the Church of England who charged a stiff fee could legally solemnize marriages. The Scotch-Irish and the German population largely ignored these laws but they still had a chilling effect on religious freedom. The colony of Georgia, on the other had, promised complete freedom of religion. The Quakers, probably in an attempt to populate the new

¹²⁴ Ervin, Samuel James Jr., *A Colonial History of Rowan County, NC*, The James Sprunt Historical Publications, THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, The North Carolina Historical Society; Edwards & Broughton Printing Company (1917)

¹²⁵ McCubbins Collection of Extracts of Rowan County, N.C. Court Records to May 1770," LDS Microfilm 019,88; Salt Lake City, Utah; Ervin, Samuel James Jr., *A Colonial History of Rowan County, NC*

¹²⁶ Ramsey, Robert W., *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762*

¹²⁷ Mrs. Jane Gray Buchanan, 114 Berwick Dr., Oak Ridge, TN, April 1986, research notes for her book *THOMAS THOMPSON AND ANN FINNEY OF COLONIAL PENNSYLVANIA AND NORTH CAROLINA*, pub. June-July, 1987; research notes of Jane Gray Buchanan (1986)

¹²⁸ Orange Co., N.C. Register of Deeds, 10 Nov. 1761 - John Whitsett to Henry Grace, 100 Acres

¹²⁹ Mrs. Jane Gray Buchanan research notes, 1986, Rowan County Court Records

¹³⁰ "Notes From Wrightsborough - 1768," and "Wrightsboro - 1799," Dorothy M. Jones, Wrightsboro Quaker Community Foundation, Inc.

colony, also welcomed the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, German Lutherans and the non-religious as well. In Orange County petitioners for land in Wrightsboro included Lawrence Thompson, Richard Bird and several other non-Quaker neighbors of the Whitsett's.

About the same time as the Wrightsboro petitions, James Whitsett appears for the first time in the records of Orange County. He was a witness to the will of John Logue dated November 1, 1769.¹³¹ Several years later John Logue is a neighbor of John Whitsett, Sr. I believe that James was also the son of John Whitsett, Sr. He is probably the James who married Mary Moore according to family tradition. This James was probably born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in about 1745.

On July 3, 1770 John Whitsett, Sr. was granted 200 acres in Wrightsboro and his son John and wife Sarah (Thompson) were granted 250 acres.¹³² Sarah's father (or brother) Lawrence Thompson was granted a like amount. Although the Colony of Georgia welcomed these peaceful Quakers and their allies, the Indians, on whose land Wrightsboro was located, did not. The Native Americans apparently made their opinions known quite forcibly almost as soon as the new white settlers set foot in Georgia. Within a year, a large number of these settlers returned to Orange County because of troubles with the Indians. In May 1771 a notice was posted in Wrightsboro listing those who had land surveyed for them but had left the colony. If those persons did not return by January 2, 1772 their land was to be forfeited. John Whitsett, Sr. is among those listed, as was Lawrence Thompson, Richard Bird and several others from Orange County. John, Jr. and his wife Sarah managed to sell their lot to John Hutchings and they also returned to North Carolina.¹³³

In November 1776 Samuel Whitsett and James Whitsett signed a petition of freeholders in Orange County complaining that the polls in Hillsboro had closed before everyone had a chance to vote. This is the first appearance of Samuel Whitsett in Orange County records. Again, without having direct proof, I believe that Samuel was also a son of John Whitsett, Sr.

On November 17, 1778 John Whitsett received a grant for 200 acres on Back Creek in Orange County. The land was located adjacent the lands of Thomas Hart and John Logue "on a great road leading to Hillsborough."¹³⁴ Given the description of the land on the survey, it is easy to find its exact location even today, 230 years later. Back Creek flows south-southwest into the Haw River a few miles below Graham, North Carolina in Alamance County. The "great road leading to Hillsboro" is today the approximate route of U.S. 70, which crosses Back Creek east of Burlington, North Carolina. John Whitsett's land was bounded on the north by the road to Hillsboro with Back Creek flowing approximately through the middle of the tract. John received his grant in 1778 but the land was not surveyed until July 1782.¹³⁵

In 1779 John, James and Samuel Whitsett appear on the Orange County tax list. James is credited with 820 acres and John with 655 acres.¹³⁶ Obviously, John had other land in Orange County besides the 200 acres on Back Creek. In July 1782, John's land on Back Creek, granted him in 1778, was finally surveyed. The survey was sworn to and signed by Thomas Logue, Thomas Mulhollan and Samuel Whitsett.¹³⁷

¹³¹ Mrs. Jane Gray Buchanan research notes, 1986, Orange County Wills

¹³² *ibid*

¹³³ *ibid*

¹³⁴ Orange County, North Carolina Deeds, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina; North Carolina Land Grants, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC [photocopies]

¹³⁵ *ibid*

¹³⁶ Jane Gray Buchanon, THOMAS THOMPSON AND ANN FINNEY OF COLONIAL PENNSYLVANIA AND NORTH CAROLINA, pub. June-July, 1987 (research notes, tax records of Orange County)

¹³⁷ Orange County, North Carolina Deeds, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina

In 1783 John Whitsett, Samuel Whitsett and James Whitsett filed claims in Hillsboro for goods and services rendered during the Revolutionary War.¹³⁸ In November 1784, Samuel Whitsett is granted land on Back Creek adjacent to the land of James Whitsett.¹³⁹ The survey, conducted in 1794 locates the land a little ways south of where John Whitsett's land was located, near Burlington and Graham, North Carolina. In addition to Samuel, several ancestors of Professor William Thornton Whitsett lived in and around Graham.

John Whitsett, Sr. died, leaving no will, probably in June 1786. On July 4th, 1786 his widow held an estate sale.¹⁴⁰ Unfortunately, she is referred to in the estate documents only as Widow Whitsett, thus we have no record of her given name. The inventory of the sale lists many familiar names in Orange County and neighbors of both John and Samuel on Back Creek. Among the names of buyers are those of some of John's sons and daughters: Mary Whitsett; Sarah Whitsett; James Whitsett and Samuel Whitsett. Mary and Sarah purchased household items like cookware, spinning wheel, dishes, etc. James bought a man's saddle, "a sow running at large", a couple of mares, etc. Samuel bought a mare, but he also leased John Whitsett's mill and plantation for four years.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to go into more detail on this family. Information on the many descendants of John Whitsett can be found on my website www.whitsett-wall.com. However, it is important to mention the fate of John Whitsett, Jr. He and his wife Sarah (Thompson), and his brother William and his wife Mary (Thompson) Whitsett removed to Davidson County (part which later became Sumner), Tennessee along with their father-in-law Lawrence Thompson and most of the Thompson family. Although we don't know the exact date it appears to have been prior to the death of John Whitsett, Sr. On May 18, 1789 John Whitsett, Jr. was assigned a land grant by the heirs of Pvt. William Cain.¹⁴¹ The land was located on Smith's Fork in what became Sumner County, Tennessee. John, Jr. and Sarah had a daughter Elizabeth who married Joel Childress; Elizabeth and Joel had a daughter Sarah Whitsett Childress. Sarah Childress married future President of the United States James Knox Polk in Davidson County, Tennessee. John and Sarah's sons Lawrence and James Whitsett took their elderly parents with them when they removed from Tennessee to Greene County, Alabama in about 1818 settling near Havana. John and Sarah both died in Greene County and are buried on the farm of Ed and Mary Avery just south of Havana, Hale County, Alabama. Their graves can still be viewed there today. The graves are marked with two large flat stones. John's is engraved: "John Whitsitt was born the 8th of October 1743 and died the 11th of August 1819. Sarah's is engraved "Sarah Whitsitt was born the 15th of January 1747 and died the 31st of January 1831." These stones are broken into multiple pieces and appear very old. Pictures of them are on my website.

According to the evidence mentioned above, and other evidence I have collected on these families over the years, I believe some of the children of John Whitsett, Sr. are probably as follows: John, born Oct. 8, 1743 probably in Pennsylvania, married Sarah Thompson, daughter of Lawrence Thompson and died in Greene County (now Hale), Alabama; James, born about 1745 probably in Pennsylvania and died about July or August 1790 in Orange County; Samuel, born about 1752 probably in Pennsylvania who was the great-great grandfather of Professor William Thornton Whitsett; William who was born about 1755 in North Carolina and married Mary Thompson, daughter of Lawrence Thompson; daughters Sarah and Mary Whitsett who were apparently still unmarried in 1786 when their father died.

¹³⁸ North Carolina Revolutionary War Vouchers, Treasurer's Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh

¹³⁹ North Carolina Land Grants

¹⁴⁰ Microfilm, Orange County, N.C. Estate Records, C.R. 073.508.128, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

¹⁴¹ North Carolina Land Grant, No. 966, entry No. 949.

Elizabeth Whitsett (Whiteside) Welsh

On February 6, 1738, Elizabeth Whiteside "of Quittapahilla" married John Welsh "of Quittapahilla".¹⁴² A history of St. John's Church in Jonestown, Lebanon County, Pennsylvania says, "By Quittapahilla is meant the Hill Church, on the ridge known as the Gravel Hill, about halfway between Lebanon and Annville. Quittapahilla was the earliest name of this church."¹⁴³ The Hill Church still exists and is located on the northern edge of what was the land of Rev. Stoever. John Welsh subsequently obtained land adjoining Stoever's just north of Hill Church. John Welsh married Anna Sharp on June 9, 1742 four years after he married Elizabeth.¹⁴⁴ It appears to me that Elizabeth died, perhaps in childbirth, the leading cause of death in young women before the modern era. Welsh obtained his warrant in Lebanon Township on November 25, 1745. The tract was patented many years after Welsh left it, in January 1785, by the heirs of Peter Yetter. Immediately south of Welsh's land was Rev. John Casper Stoever. Stoever's survey shows that adjoining tracts with his were those of John Cryder, Widow Hyde, both John and Ralph Whiteside and William Allen. Stoever's land is described as being on the waters of Quitapahilla and Mill Creeks.¹⁴⁵

The union between John and Elizabeth may have produced at least one child. There seems to be a continuing relationship between the Whitsett family and John Welsh long after Elizabeth died. On March 3, 1761 John Welsh obtained two town lots in Carlisle, Cumberland County.¹⁴⁶ This was near the same time that Ralph and James Whiteside removed from Lancaster County, Lebanon Township to Cumberland County. I believe the two town lots were probably for father and son. We know that by 1761 there were two John Welsh's in Cumberland County. It is my guess that one was John Welsh, Jr. the son by Elizabeth. The younger Welsh was probably 17 or 18 years old and just starting his life as an adult.

In 1762, among the taxables in Carlisle, Cumberland County were "Widow Welsh" and John Welsh leading me to suspect that John Sr. died in Carlisle shortly after moving there, survived by his wife and oldest son, John.¹⁴⁷ On the same tax list is William Whiteside. John Welsh (Jr.) apparently moved from Carlisle to Newbury Township about the same time as Ralph's son Samuel Whitsitt. Both warrant applications, one for John Welsh and one for Samuel Whitsitt, were dated on April 10, 1767.¹⁴⁸ This is just a little more evidence that there was a tie between the two families.

A John Welsh also shows up in Westmoreland County after the American Revolution. It is impossible to tell from these records if he was the same John Welsh from Cumberland and York counties. Welsh was granted a warrant in Westmoreland County for 200 acres on October 11, 1787. This tract was located in what became Armstrong County.¹⁴⁹ In January 1789, John Welsh patents a tract on a warrant originally issued to Joseph Wiles in 1786.¹⁵⁰ This tract was

¹⁴² Marriage Records of Rev. John Casper Stoever (all 1,429 marriages) Lebanon County, Pennsylvania; PGenWeb Project Church, Bible, and Graveyard Records

¹⁴³ <http://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/pa/lebanon/church/stjohnjones01.txt> Church: History: St. John's Church: Jonestown, Lebanon Co, PA Contributed for use in USGenWeb Archives by Linnea T Miller ltmiller@geocities.com (sent to me by William R. Whiteside).

¹⁴⁴ Stoever Marriages

¹⁴⁵ COPIED SURVEYS 1681-1912, Book A1 pg. 282; Survey for Casper Stover on Quitapahilla and Mill Creek by virtue of two warrants 6 Mar 1743 and 2 Oct 1745

¹⁴⁶ Records of the Land Office, PATENT INDEXES, 1684-? Pg.154, 155; recorded in Survey Book A18 pg. 6 Mar 1761 patents (2) John Welsh [town] lot, warrant dated 3 Mar 1761, Cumberland Co., Pa.

¹⁴⁷ Taxables in 1762, Carlisle, 1762: Cumberland County History, Lisburn or Yellow Britches; Research notes of William R. Whiteside, September 2007

¹⁴⁸ Records of the Land Office; WEST SIDE APPLICATIONS (Register), 1766-1769.
<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/>

¹⁴⁹ WARRANT REGISTERS, Westmoreland County, pg. 159

¹⁵⁰ *ibid*

in Hempfield Township about the middle of present day Westmoreland County (Hempfield is the location of the county seat, Greensburg and old Hanna's Town). This is the last record I have found of John Welsh. I was not actively searching for him in these records, so I am sure there are other records of western Pennsylvania that might provide additional insight into who this John Welsh was, and if he was connected in any way with our Whitsett's.

James and Ann Whiteside

James Whiteside took out his warrant in Lebanon Twp., Lancaster Co. in 1746, but I think he was probably in the area earlier. He died in Cumberland County about April 1761, the date when the probate process started on his estate. His will is extremely important because it shows a connection between James Whiteside and Ralph Whitsett, plus Thomas Hammersley and James McNees. It also gives us the name of one son, John and his wife Ann, which allows us eventually to connect the family to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina.

WILL OF JAMES WHITESIDE, 2 Feb 1754 (date Will was written):¹⁵¹

"In the Name of God Amen February the 2nd in the year of our Lord 1754 I James Whiteside of Lebanon Township and Lancaster County Weaver being very sick and Weak in Body but of perfect mind and Memory thanks be given unto Therefore calling to mind the Mortality of my Body and Knowing that its appointed for All men once to Die I do make ordain this my last will and testament that is to say Principally and first of All I give and Recommend my soul into the hands of God that gave it and for my body I recommend it to the earth at the discretion of my Executors Nothing Doubting but that at the General Resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of God and as touching such worldly estate wherewith it has pleased God to bless me with in this life I give bequeath and dispose of the same in the following manner and form Imprimis I give and bequeath to beloved wife Ann & my seven children now living An equal share of all my worldly substance to each of them and to my son John five pounds over and above the rest[?] & I further order that if any of them dies there part shall be equally divided Amongst the rest & I likewise[?] constitute make and ordain my only and sole executors of this My Last Will and Testament Ralph Whitsite, & James McNees & Thomas Hammersley I therefore utterly Disallow Revoke and Disannul all of Every other former Will or Testament by before this time.

"Revoking Ratifying and Confirming this and no other to be my Last Will and Testament In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and Seal this day and year above Written Signed Sealed and Published pronounced and Declared by the said James Whiteside to be his last Will and Testament in the presence of these witnesses Jno. Allen, Mary A. Wyland, Isbel Hamersley.

Signed Jas Whiteside, his mark. Ann Whitside her mark

"Be it remembered that on the 21st day of April 1761 letters testamentary Issued in common form to Ralph Whitsite James McNees and Thomas Hamersley on said auth named Executory to be exhibited on or before the 21st day of May and an account of the administration rendered them hereunto Required Given Under my hand and Seal of Office

Harm Aldrich [name is not clear]

"The Accompts of Ralph Whitesides and Thomas Hamersly Executor of the Testament and last Will of James Whitesides late of Cumberland County dec'd as well as all and Singular the Goods and Chattels, Rights and Credits of the said decedent

¹⁵¹ William R. Whiteside, 335 Jersey St., Cottage Hills, IL, 62018-1210; photocopy of James Whiteside will, Cumberland County Wills, Index to Will Book A and B, and Cumberland County Wills, Book A-83

which came to their Hand Possession or Knowledge as of their payments and Disbursements out of the same as follows---[omitted]

“Exhibited into the Registers Office at Carlisle the first day of December 1761.
[actual signatures] “Ralph Whitsett & Thomas Hamersly”

James first appears in our records with his warrant, dated August 15, 1746 for 100 acres located in Lebanon Township of Lancaster County. The warrant seems to indicate that James obtained it while in Philadelphia.¹⁵² I believe that he was probably working at his trade as a weaver in Philadelphia and joined his brothers John and Ralph in Lebanon Township several years after they first settled there. I have James' land survey in Lebanon Township, but am unable to tell precisely where it was located, except that it was north of the tracts laid out for the other Whitsett's and probably close to James McNees. The area later became North Lebanon Township.

When James made his will on February 2, 1754 he described himself as, “being very sick and weak in Body...” What ever his illness, he lived for another seven years. He must have removed from Lebanon Township to Cumberland County about 1760, around the same time as Ralph and his family. There are no land warrants for him in Cumberland County - he may have been too ill to work. It may be that Ralph's family was actually caring for him and his family. This, of course is speculation.

According to author William Henry Egle, James' wife Ann married John Giles in Cumberland County shortly after James' death. Egle states that Ann was the wife of Giles by December 1761.¹⁵³ In 1762 the tax list of Allen Township, Cumberland County contains the names of John Giles and Thomas McGee, along with Peter Tittle and Ralph Whiteside.¹⁵⁴ Sometime in the next three or four years, the family removed to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. James' sons William and John Whitesides appear in the Mecklenburg records beginning in 1766¹⁵⁵ and the property of John Giles is mentioned in a deed for William Bigham in April 1767.¹⁵⁶

In 2007, William R. Whiteside hired a professional researcher to search for documents in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina pertaining to this family. What he found will be a great help in further identifying the children and grandchildren of James and Ann and their eventual dispersal to other places in the country. I have not had the opportunity to study Bill's material in-depth, but I intend to do so because this family may contain clues to my own Whitsett line.

According to Egle,¹⁵⁷ James and Ann had the following children. All were probably born in Pennsylvania. The names of spouses were determined by the research of Bill Whiteside: John, born about 1736, married Rachel Bigham about 1754, died March 6, 1824, Mecklenburg County, N.C.;¹⁵⁸ Samuel, born about 1740; Alice (Ayles or Else), born about 1742, married Thomas McGee in Cumberland County, August 26, 1760;¹⁵⁹ William, born about 1743, died before 1780 in North Carolina; James, born about 1745; Margaret, born about 1747, married Robert Patterson; Elizabeth, born about 1749; Ann, born about 1750.

The Mecklenburg County, North Carolina documents are among several that link the family in Pennsylvania with the one in North Carolina. They are: the estate files of John Giles in Mecklenburg County; the estate of Widow Ann Giles, administered by John Whiteside in 1779;

¹⁵² *COPIED SURVEYS 1681-1912*

¹⁵³ Egle, William Henry, "Notes and Queries," (1881-1883), pg. 420

¹⁵⁴ Cumberland County Tax Lists, Research of William R. Whiteside, Aug.-Sep. 2007

¹⁵⁵ Hofman, M. M. (1979) Colony of North Carolina 1735-1764, pg. 52, 119

¹⁵⁶ Hofman, M. M. (1979) Colony of North Carolina 1765-1775, Vol. 2, pg. 366

¹⁵⁷ Egle, William Henry, "Notes and Queries"

¹⁵⁸ Research of William R. Whiteside, Steel Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, (September, 2007).

¹⁵⁹ Stoever Marriages

the estate of Thomas McGee administered by his wife, Alice McGee with John Whiteside as one of her securities; John Whiteside appointed guardian for Sarah Giles, minor daughter of John and Ann Giles. Although none of these documents state that the family came to North Carolina from Pennsylvania, some of the names in them are echoed in the documents of Lancaster and Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.

This family deserves to be carefully scrutinized and documented. Since I have devoted only a small amount of time on James Whiteside's family, I am not prepared to speculate any further on them. Bill (William R.) Whiteside, a descendant, was responsible for obtaining and analyzing the documents from Mecklenburg County. Questions about this family should be directed to him.

Other Pennsylvania Whitesides and Whitsetts

Besides our Whitsett family, there was a rich tapestry of Whiteside/Whitsett individuals in Pennsylvania before and after the American Revolution beginning as early as 1682. There were the Quakers who settled mostly in Chester County; in Philadelphia was a wealthy family of merchants including Peter Whiteside who with his own funds bought supplies for the Colonial Army during the war; there were Whitesides in Bucks County, Northampton County, Lancaster County and Cumberland County. After the Revolutionary war members of this clan were found in many of the counties in the transallegany areas of western Pennsylvania.

Additional research and another paper will discuss (among others), William Whiteside who married Susanna Hill in New Castle, Delaware¹⁶⁰ and the William Whiteside who married Hannah Miller in Chester County whom we discussed above. In 1772 we find Dr. Thomas Whiteside in Lower Oxford, Chester County. He was a Presbyterian and the father of several sons who settled in Maury and Rutherford County, Tennessee.¹⁶¹ Those sons included Jenkins Whiteside, a prominent lawyer and politician in Tennessee and his brothers John, William, Abraham and Thomas Whiteside. In Lancaster County was William Whiteside who had sons Abraham, Thomas and Hugh. William died in 1750 in Little Britain Township (later Colerain) and his sons took over his land and served during the American Revolution.¹⁶² This William may have been the son of John Whiteside of the 1718-20 Sadsbury tax lists. These are just a few of our Whiteside and Whitsett clan who first came to America through the gateway of Pennsylvania.

END

¹⁶⁰ Whiteside Family Association, image of original document, William Whiteside of Yorkshire and Susanna Hill marriage

¹⁶¹ Whiteside Family Association, THOSE OF WHITESIDE, DEEDS, CONVEYANCES, WILLS AND ADM.ACCT, Pennsylvania Early Wills, Chester Co. Wills

¹⁶² The Whitesides of Colerain: The Revolutionary Captain and the Congressman. McGee, David F., (1913); Lancaster Co. Hist. Soc.