

# THE WHITEHILLS AND ROBERT JENKINS IN CONGRESS

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James Whitehill, the pioneer ancestor of this family of prominence, settled in Salisbury township, on Pequea creek, a short distance from its source and near the Pequea Presbyterian Church, about two miles from the Old Road and in provincial times called the "King's Highway," in the year 1723. His name appears on the assessment list for the year 1724. Warrants for 700 acres of land were granted to him in the years 1723, 1724 and 1743. Some of this land lay on what was then known as Whitehill's run, now Henderson's run. He also owned land in Cumberland county. In 1736 he was chosen assessor, the board of assessors and County Commissioners constituting what was called in provincial times the County Board. He was elected County Commissioner for the years 1739-41, and appointed justice of the peace, serving for the years 1736, 1737, 1741, 1745, 1749 and 1752.

James Whitehill was born February 1, 1700, in Ireland. He was married twice, but his first wife's name is not known. He married, secondly, Rachel Creswell, who died on the 29th of June, 1795. James Whitehill died February 2, 1766. They were buried in Pequea Presbyterian Churchyard.

## John Whitehill, a Congressman.

The son of James Whitehill, the pioneer, was born December 11, 1729, in Salisbury township, Lancaster

county. He married August 13, 1755, Ann Sanderson. John Whitehill was a zealous patriot, and was prominent in serving on committees at the time of the Revolution, holding many positions of trust, viz.: Appointed Justice of the Peace November 3, 1779; on a committee for inquiring into the state of the Pennsylvania Treasury, February 9, 1780; a member of the Council of Censors, October 20, 1783. This so-called Council of Censors constituted the recognized legal check on the executive and legislative branches of the Government, and in it alone was vested the means whereby the Constitution could be amended or altered.

This Council was to be elected once in seven years by the people, each county and city to be represented by two councillors. It was to exist and have power one year from the date of its election, and no longer. It was a feature of the Constitution of Pennsylvania from 1776 to 1790, and of that of Vermont from 1777 to 1869. (Pennsylvania Magazine, October, 1898, page 266.) He was a delegate sent to the Supreme Executive Council, December 23, 1784, succeeding Samuel John Atlee on the Board of Pardons, October 3, 1785, and August 6, 1787; a Councillor December 22, 1784, and commissioned Associate Judge, August 7, 1791. John Whitehill took his seat as a member of the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States on the first Monday of December, 1803, and remained there as a member until 1807. He belonged to the Jeffersonian school of statesmen.

In Pennsylvania, the opposition to the adoption of the Constitution came chiefly from some Presbyterians. In 1787 the anti-Federalists in the Pennsylvania Convention had for

their leaders in the debate the three Scotch-Presbyterians, Whitehill, Finley and Smilie, who came from Cumberland, Fayette and Westmoreland. The Federalists also looked for leadership in the Scotch-Presbyterians, viz.: Wilson and McLean; and when the final vote was taken among the nays were the names of John Whitehill and Robert Whitehill, his brother (from Scotch-Irish by Hanna, pp. 35 and 36).

John Whitehill was a trustee and elder in the Pequea Presbyterian Church. In a record of the session dated June 6, 1806, the elders present were: Amos Slaymaker, James Grier, William Brisbin and John Whitehill. His tombstone in this old God's acre bears the following inscription: "In memory of John Whitehill, died September 16, 1815, aged eighty-five years;" and beside him we find: "Here lyeth what was mortal of Ann, the wife of John Whitehill, died December 25, 1805, in the 71st year of her age."

#### **James Whitehill, a Congressman (from 1813-1814).**

This son of John Whitehill was born February 1, 1762, and died February 26, 1822, in the town of Strasburg, Lancaster county, where he established a business, having moved from Salisbury township. He married Elizabeth Bickham, October 9, 1792, and she died February 7, 1867. James Whitehill was commissioned an Associate Judge, January 3, 1811, but, having been elected to Congress in 1812, resigned the office the first of February, 1813. A second commission as Judge was granted to him on October 17, 1820. He was honored as his father had been, and represented his native county in Congress from 1813 to 1814, and he resigned in 1814. In

the roll of Pennsylvania Volunteers in the War of 1812-1814, we find a record of James Whitehill as Major General in Division No. 4. Mr. Whitehill is buried in Leacock Presbyterian Churchyard. Mrs. Jane E. Slaymaker and her son, Harry C. Slaymaker, members of the Historical Society, are descended from the pioneer James Whitehill by his first marriage.

**Robert Whitehill, Congressman From  
Cumberland County From  
1805 to 1813.**

Robert Whitehill, the brother of John Whitehill, was born July 24, 1735, in Salisbury township, Lancaster county. In 1772 he removed to Cumberland county. In 1779 he represented that county in the Supreme Executive Council, and in the year 1794 was elected to the General Assembly. He was sent to Congress in 1805 from Cumberland county, serving the same time his brother, John, represented Lancaster county. He died on April 8, 1813, when in office, in East Pennsboro township, Cumberland county. Robert Whitehill was also one of the commissioners to examine the Susquehanna river, with the hope that it could be made navigable. Mr. Whitehill's speeches when in public life, it is said, "displayed more than ordinary elocutionary powers." He married Eleanor Reed, daughter of Adam Reed, Esq., of Hanover township, Cumberland county. She and her husband are both buried in Silver Spring Presbyterian churchyard.

## WHO WAS ROBERT JENKINS, THE CONGRESSMAN FROM LAN- CASTER COUNTY IN 1807-1811?

The great-grandfather of Robert Jenkins was David Jenkins. He came from Wales, and settled about the year 1700 near the Great Valley Church. This is the oldest Presbyterian Church in Chester county, where a congregation was organized in 1714.

The members of this church were largely composed of settlers from Wales, and there were also mingled with them the Scotch-Irish and English, when a church was built in 1720. Among the original settlers of Caernarvon township, near Churchtown, was John Jenkins. He came to the Conestoga Valley in 1733 and purchased 400 acres of land from John Thomas and Richard Penn, the proprietaries. A portion of this land he sold to William Branson and Lynford Lardner, Esqs., who took out a patent December 28, 1742, and erected on it the lower Windsor Forge and the Mansion House, and named the place "Windsor, after the King of England's palace." Thirty years later, David, the son of John Jenkins, purchased this plant, and the Windsor Forges remained in the Jenkins family until 1850. David Jenkins was born July 2, 1731, and married Martha Armor, daughter of Robert Armor, one of the early settlers of Salisbury township. Martha Armor was born in 1739 and died April 9, 1802. David Jenkins had three sons. Robert became an iron master, William a lawyer, and David a farmer. In the Archives of Pennsylvania his name appears in various ways, showing a true patriotic spirit—as a member of the Provincial Convention, held in Philadelphia, in 1775

and 1776; as a member of the committee on December 16, 1777, appointed to take subscriptions for the Continental Loan, and again on a committee to collect clothing for the soldiers. On December 6, 1777, and 1778, we find him holding the responsible and honorable position of Colonel of the Tenth Battalion of Lancaster County Militia. David Jenkins died June 27, 1797.

### Robert Jenkins.

In the Caernarvon Presbyterian Churchyard, Churchtown, on a handsome monument is the following inscription:

#### ROBERT JENKINS,

Great Grandson of David Jenkins,  
Who Emigrated From Wales About  
the Year 1700.

Grandson of John Jenkins,  
Original Proprietor of Windsor,  
Son of David and Martha Jenkins,  
Born at Windsor,, July 10, 1769,  
Departed This Life April 18, 1848.

Robert Jenkins represented Lancaster county in the Legislature in the years 1804 and 1805, and was again honored by the citizens of this Congressional District, by sending him to represent them from the years 1807 to 1811 in Washington.

During the "Whisky Insurrection" in Pennsylvania, when a young man, he was a member of a Troop of Horse and took an active part in the field against the insurrectionists.

Robert Jenkins married Catharine Carmichael in September, 1799, who was born July 23, 1774, and died September 23, 1856. In a tribute to her memory by the pastor, the Rev. John Leaman, he said: "Inheriting from her father and more distant ancestors the blessings of the Covenant,

God, in answer to their prayers, set her apart in early faith for Himself."

Her father, the Rev. John Carmichael, born in the Highlands of Scotland, October 17, 1728, and died on the 15th day of November, 1785. He was distinguished for his love for his adopted land, and aided whenever an opportunity presented itself in the Revolutionary War. He preached to the soldiers and encouraged them with the hope that God was with them.

In his diary, under date of 1775, we find the following record: "I was this summer called to preach in the borough of Lancaster. The militia of the town requested me to preach a military sermon; accordingly, I endeavored to prove defensive war lawful, both from reason and Scripture. The gentlemen requested a copy of my sermon for the press, which I granted. It was reprinted in Philadelphia. I desire to give God all the glory, if he enables me to give, even a mite, as an offering to aid the great American cause against tyranny and wicked usurpation."

Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins had six daughters and two sons. Mrs. John Nevin, so affectionably remembered in Lancaster, was a daughter. She was the mother of Miss Alice Nevin and her sister, Blanche, who lives in the Mansion House at Windsor Forges, having purchased this home of her ancestors some few years ago. Robert Jenkins succeeded his father in the management of his business, having bequeathed to him three thousand acres of land in the vicinity of Churchtown, including Windsor Place, and continued with much success until his death, in 1848, a period of fifty years.

William Jenkins, the brother of

Robert Jenkins, was born at Windsor Place on the 7th of July, 1779, and died May 24, 1853. He was a prominent lawyer of Lancaster, and admitted to the Bar on the 10th of August, 1801. Mr. Jenkins was elected on May 16, 1815, President of the Farmers' Bank, of Lancaster. He filled the office of Prosecuting Attorney for Lancaster county, being appointed in 1817. He was also Recorder of the Mayor's Court from 1848 and 1849. He married Mary, Hubley, daughter of Lieutenant-Colonel Adam Hubley, of the Eleventh Pennsylvania Battalion of the Continental Army, February 13, 1777; and also one of the original subscribers of the Society of the Cincinnati of the Pennsylvania Line, 1783.

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