

# GENERAL JOHN WHITELOCKE

An item received from John Whitlock of London regarding General John Whitlocke read as follows: "...the unfortunate Whitlocke was found guilty of cowardice and treason and cashiered. The fact that he was not shot was popularly attributed to his illegitimate connection with a member of the royal family." We have quite a bit of information on this "unfortunate Whitlocke" and I thought a re-examination of the information was warranted.

We know John Whitlocke (1758-1833) was a descendant of Bulstrode Whitlocke (1605-1675) through his son Samuel. His parents were John Whitlocke (d.1787) and Sarah Liddiard and his father's will sheds quite a bit of light on John's origins. It reads: "Sarah Liddiard, d.of Moneas? Liddiard late of Hungerford, Maltster by Ann his wife, hath lived with me of whose body have been born, now living four sons and four daughters. viz." He then names each one and gives their date and place of birth. John Whitlocke is listed as follows: "John born March 13, 1758: Bapt. St. Catherine Coleman Ch. on March 22. Reg. as John Brown, now known as John Whitlocke"

Sarah Liddiard was one of the executors of the will and it would appear that she and John Whitlock, Sr. were never married so the illegitimate story has some basis but the connection to the royal family has never been mentioned before.

John Whitlocke (1758-1833) chose a career in the military and his rise through the ranks can be traced in the Gentleman's Magazine of the time. In St.Catherine's, Jamaica April 8, 1783 he married Mary Lewis and they are known to have had three daughters. Mary Ann, Jane and Harriet Georgina.

A brief summary of his career was printed in the Miniature Wargamers Magazine, Feb.1986. "John Whitlocke: born 1757, son of the 4th Earl of Aylebury's steward, educated at Marlborough Grammer School and Lochee's Military Academy, Chelsea. Commissioned Ensign in 14th Foot on 14 Dec.1778, and within months was the Adjutant to a battalion of flank companies. Promoted Lieutenant 26 Apr.1780; Captain 26th Foot 12 May 1784; Major 60th Foot 2 Oct.1788; Lieutenant-Colonel 13th Foot 30 Mar.1791; local Colonel Santo Domingo Sep.1793. Led the principal column in the attack on Port au Prince 'with the greatest gallantry' 4 June 1794. Promoted Brevet Colonel 21 Aug.1795; Colonel 6th West India Regiment 1 Sep.; Brigadier-General 10 Sep.1795; Brigadier-General on Guernsey 12 Jan.1798; Lieutenant-Governor Portsmouth 29 May 1799; Major-General 18 Jun.1798; Lieutenant-General 20 Oct.1805. His last appointment prior to the Buenos Ayres expedition was as Inspector-General of Recruiting.

Sir John Fortescue describes him thus: 'It is not easy, after the misfortunes that subsequently befell the man, to form an opinion as to Whitlocke's ability; but he had certainly done good service in the West Indies and was not without knowledge of his profession. His most objectionable characteristic seems to have been arrogant but spasmodic self-confidence, with an affection of coarse speech and manners which he conceived to be soldier-like bluntness, but which often degenerated into mere rudeness towards some of his inferiors and familiar obscenity of language towards others. He stooped to court the favour of the rank and file by affected use of their phrases, with the inevitable result that he earned only their thorough contempt. The inference is that he sought popularity with the lower ranks of the Army because he was unable to gain the respect of the higher. Such an officer is wholly unfit for any command.'

Whitlocke's assault on the city of Montevideo was a disaster and again I quote from the above source: "They had lost between 2,500 and 3,000 men killed, wounded and prisoner (of 4,500), but had captured 1,000 Spaniards and over 30 guns. However, Whitlocke, instead of renewing the attack with the remaining troops and reserves (estimated at 6,000), or adopting his original, and superior, plan for taking the city, became

totally despondent and negotiated a truce... On his return to England Whitelocke was tried by Court Martial and ignominiously cashiered. He died on 23 Oct.1833"

Sources: REF169; X988