

JOHN WHITLOCK, STATIONER

The late 1600's were again a time of upheaval in Britain. In 1688 the nobility had thrown their support behind William of Orange and his wife Mary and forced Mary's father James II to flee the country. Following Mary's death in 1694 William of Orange ruled the country alone.

John Whitlock's print of the late Queen's funeral procession landed him in Court. The press was tightly controlled and Kings Advocate, William Oldys "brought an action against Richard Smith and John Whitlock for publishing a print of the procession at the Queen's funeral without authority or licence" 15 March 1694/5. The Earl Marshall dismissed the pair advising them "not to do like for the future".

This John Whitlock was the son of Richard Whitlock (1614-1665) Painter-Stainer (See WFN Vol.11:2:9) and our first reference to him is in the administration of his father's estate following the death of both his parents and four of his brothers and sisters of the plague in 1665. Administration is granted to Rose Dove, widow and aunt of John and Ann Whitlock, children of Richard.

I would estimate John was born about 1653 and was about thirteen when he was apprenticed to Edward Thomas, Stationer on August 7, 1666 for seven years. John completed his apprenticeship May 3, 1675 and appears to have set up in business immediately as he takes on the first of five apprentices in 1676. John was also married at this time to Elizabeth the daughter of Randall Taylor, "Citizen and Stationer of London".

Randall Taylor's business was located in Stationer's Rents, near Stationers' Hall and it is from this location that John Whitlock appears as a bookseller from 1683 until his death in 1696. John was again in trouble with the authorities in July 1695 when a warrant was issued "to James Kitson to apprehend John Whitlock, John Salisbury and Robert Everingham for printing, publishing or dispensing false and seditious news".

Following John's death his wife, Elizabeth carried on the printing business and also the controversy. In November 1696 a warrant was issued "to John Gellibrand to search the house of Mrs. Whitlock, Widow, for a dangerous and seditious libel, entitled, 'A Dialogue between a modern courtier and an honest English Gentleman,' great numbers of which are supposed to be in her custody. If the books are found they are to be seized, and brought with Mrs. Whitlock herself to be examined."

Elizabeth also published several theological pamphlets and 'A Compleat List of the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses of the New Parliament', 1698. There is also 'A Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade' including an article on vitriol, tables of market prices and some interesting advertisements, 1697. Elizabeth died in 1698 between August 29 when she made her will and September 7 when it was probated.

John and Elizabeth Whitlock had seven children and we assume most of them lived as Elizabeth mentions her four sons in her will. The only one we have been able to trace further is their son Randall b.1691 who was apprenticed as a Draper in 1706. Randall married Ann Harrold in 1719 and we know they had at least four children between 1719 and 1728. Hopefully as more information is uncovered on the London families we will be able to trace some descendants of John Whitlock, Stationer

Sources: X528; X1761; X1262; R78/260; R89; R112/202,203; R308; UBC58,146,150; GH69,145,146; PRO3