

WEST WHITLOCK RECREATION AREA

In South Dakota, near the town of Gettysburg there is a popular recreation area or park called West Whitlock. The park is one of a string of parks on the Lewis and Clark Trail and borders the Lake Oahe Reservoir on the Missouri River. The area was once a popular campsite with the Arikara and Mandan tribes and a replica Arikara earth lodge is one of the highlight of the area's past history. The area now boasts a modern campground with cabins and swimming and boating facilities. Fishing and hiking are the main summer activities and in the winter the park is open to cross-country skiers. The northern pike spawn in Whitlock Bay each Spring. There is also the Whitlock Salmon Spawning and Imprinting Station nearby which offers tours each Fall.

The area takes its name from the nearby settlement and ferry landing called Whitlock's Crossing. *Potter County, People, Pictures and Progress 1883-1983* compiled by the Potter County Historical Society, 1983 has pictures of the first Missouri River bridge on US highway 212. This replaced the ferry at Whitlock's Crossing. There is also a picture of Whitlock's Crossing's post office established July 9,1935 and discontinued March 15,1954.

Our first reference to the family the area derives its name from came in the 1960's from researcher, Noel Ross of Melrose, Florida. Mrs. Ross was researching the Whitlocks of Fulton Co., New York and in particular the family of George Washington & Fanni (Banta) Whitlock (M1834). On the back of the questionnaire Mrs. Ross sent in she noted that the son, John Whitlock and his wife Agnes lived at Whitlock's Crossing, South Dakota and their mailing address was Gettysburg, South Dakota.

This son was John Franklin Whitlock who was born in Fulton Co., New York Feb.5,1858 and died in Chicago, Illinois Feb.29,1920. John received a BS com from the University of Illinois in 1878 and became a merchant and banker in South Dakota. In 1894 John married Agnes B. Nicol. Agnes was born in Aberdeen, Scotland and a graduate of Edinburg University. The family shows in the 1905 census living in Forest City and by 1915 they are in Gettysburg.

The family lived in Forest City for twenty-seven years where John operated stores on both sides of the river, traded with the local Indians and handled government contracts. He built up extensive ranching interests and participated in all aspects of business in the area. John was also an early stockholder in the Potter County Bank and eventually became a half owner in 1910. He ran the Bank until his death in 1920. At the time of his death John was also a partner in the Whitlock and Ronne trading post and a partner with C.F. Swift in the Big River Ranch.

John Franklin Whitlock was also interested in politics and he shows as the Republican representative for Potter County to the State Senate for 1897, 1901, 1905, 1913 and 1915.

John and Agnes Whitlock had two children. An adopted daughter, Evelyn and a son Robert Laird Whitlock born Dec.31,1896 Fairbank, South Dakota. Robert Laird Whitlock shows with his parents in the 1915 census as a graduate of Shadtuck Military School. On May 3,1918 he enlisted in the Canadian Army at Windsor, Ontario. His military records show he was 5' 8 3/4"

of fair complexion with brown eyes and dark brown hair and he also had poor vision and wore glasses. On Jul.10,1918 Robert sailed for England and was stationed at Witley. By Oct.30 he was on service in France. In March 1919 Robert was back in England at Bramshott Camp in Hampshire and in April 1919 he was demobilized in Ontario. It is not clear from the military records whether Robert returned to South Dakota or not.

Robert's grandfather, George Washington Whitlock was the son of Abel & Catherine Whitlock (M1811-12?) of Connecticut and Milton, Saratoga Co., New York. This family is detailed on our WHITLOCK09 chart, The Whitlocks of Connecticut.

We do not know when Agnes (Nicol) Whitlock died but it is clear the park was named for her and it was her land that was either sold or donated to become the West Whitlock Recreation Area.

SOURCES: Q38; R1006; R1033; R1034; R1983; X3809