

# WHITLOCK JEWELRY STORE, EUFAULA, ALABAMA 1860's

The following email was received from Sonny Harrison:

Hello.... I am responding to your September 18 letter to Whitlock Jewelry Store. My wife and I have owned the business since 1976. It is the oldest Jewelry Store in Alabama, being established by Whitlock brothers in 1865.

The last Whitlock's in the business was circa 1929 or 1930, I suspect having failed in the Great Depression. I know the business was sold to an investor, E P Clark, who planned to liquidate it, but he was convinced by W.V. Neville, who was also his brother in law to allow him to continue to operate it as a partnership, later, approx 1940, Neville bought out Clark and we purchased from Neville. While I have never completely researched the Whitlock's, and they have no survivors in Eufaula since the 40's to pass along information, the following is what I do know.

There were two Whitlock Brothers from Vermont {this has been confirmed with Whitlock's in Vermont who continue in the Jewelry Business, I think Burlington} who migrated South in the early 1860's. It is believed they were sympathetic to the South, they operated a Jewelry Store in Perry, Georgia until 1863 when they joined the Confederate Army. Perry is about 110 miles or so East of Eufaula, only a few miles South of Macon, Georgia. One of the primary rail lines in the deep South at that time ran from Macon to Montgomery, Alabama thru Eufaula. Eufaula also was a riverboat landing for Cotton shipments. There was very little else in Eufaula at that time, and the town as we know it today was not even laid out or surveyed until after the War by a Yankee Carpetbagger named Seth Lore around 1870. At any rate when the War ended, the Whitlock Brothers settled in Eufaula, not returning to Perry. It is my understanding one brother was Johnny B Whitlock and was an Optometrist and the business was run as a Jewelry, Watch Repair, and Optometry. Quite successful and the Whitlocks were outstanding community leaders, helping found one of the Banks and Country Club, and active in Literary and other community affairs.....You cannot miss their names in anything in the Community from 1900 to 1930. I do not know if this is of much help to you, good luck with your research..... R A (Sonny) Harrison

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This letter follows an item in the September issue of the Whitlock Family Newsletter where I reported that I had recently discovered which John Henry Whitlock it was who founded the Jewelry business in Eufaula. Sonny Harrison's letter confirms I was on the right track.

John Henry Whitlock was born May 17,1837 in Crown Point, New York and died in Eufaula, Alabama May 3, 1900. In 1850 John, age 14 is shown living with Lafayette Preston of Castleton, Vermont. Mr. Preston was a goldsmith/jewelry in the Castleton/Hubbardton area from the 1850's through the 1880's. It is assumed it is during this time that John learned his trade. By 1860 he is living in Houston, Georgia and is shown as age 23, Jeweler.

He married Clara M. Griffith February 16, 1866 in Barbour Co., Alabama and the John Benjamin Whitlock that Sonny mentions as a brother was actually John Henry & Clara Whitlock's son born 1867.

The brother that appears to have gone to Alabama with John Henry Whitlock was the youngest son, George William Whitlock born in Hydeville, Rutland Co., Vermont October 12, 1854 and died in Alabama, likely in Eufaula. John's mother Mary (Sanford) Whitlock also appears to have joined her sons in Alabama as she died in Eufaula March 3, 1894. Their father John Gilbert Whitlock (1811-1869) died in Rutland Co., Vermont. This family is detailed on the WHITLOCK09 chart, The Whitlocks of Connecticut.

Our thanks to Sonny Harrison for the above information and to Arthur W. Cole for additional details.

Sources: X5322; X5329