

EVA (WHITLOCK) LIPINSKY & THE BON MARCHE

After 42 years of research I am amazed when items come to light that have evaded our net of data collection for so long. Perfect example is the Whitlock connection to the American department store chain, The Bon Marche!!

Included in the disc Lawrence Otis sent in September 2009 is a great collection of papers from the University of North Carolina in Asheville detailing the history of the Lipinsky family and the origins of the Bon Marche stores.

The biography of Solomon Lipinsky states:

“Solomon Lipinsky appears in the Asheville census, in 1880. He was born in Richmond, Virginia on February 23, 1856 and at the age of 21 he moved to Tarboro, North Carolina and remained there for four years. He came to Asheville when he was 25 years old with his wife, Eva Whitlock Lipinsky and his brother-in-law, Solomon Whitlock. Sol and his brother-in-law opened a dry goods store at various locations on S. Main Street (now Biltmore Avenue) during the 1880s and 1890s. One of his first stores was Lipinsky and Ellick, a partnership with his half-sister, Eva Ellick. Sometime around 1911 or 1912, he had moved his store, by then called Bon Marche', to the northwest corner of Lexington and Patton



Solomon Lipinsky

Avenues (19-23 Patton Avenue). In 1928, Bon Marche' moved again to the northwest corner of Haywood Street and Battery Park Avenue and in 1933, the store moved across the street to 33-35 Haywood Street. His three sons followed in their father's footsteps and Morris and Whitlock ("Whit") worked in the local Asheville store, while Louis was placed in charge of the store in Charlotte, North Carolina, founded by Solomon in 1920. Another Bon Marche store had been opened in Wilmington, North Carolina in 1916 but closed in 1921 and a Columbia, South Carolina Store was operated between 1920 and 1923.

Solomon was active in many civic organizations. As Director of the National Bank of Commerce, he played a major role in the economic construction of Asheville. He was an active member of the Knights of Pythias, the Masons, and the Odd Fellows. He played a central role in the administration of the Congregation Beth Ha Tephila as its President. His work as president of the local Institutional Service Committee, was well known and his attempts at social reform in Buncombe are well-documented. His obituary

notes that his "many activities show that he did not concern himself solely with business. His love for his fellow man was demonstrated by many acts of kindness. Asheville has had few citizens who have been held in greater affection than Mr. Lipinsky. His kindness and courtesy, his unflinching consideration for others, made him one of the most beloved of Asheville citizens."

Eva (Whitlock)Lipinsky & Solomon Lipinsky

Solomon's home at the time of death was at 156 Cumberland Avenue in the Montford section of Asheville. Previous to that he and his family lived at 36 Montford Avenue.

Solomon Lipinsky's name appears in the Vol.2 Sherrills Inn ledgers which are found in the D.H. Ramsey Library Special Collections. D.H. Ramsey, who annotated the ledgers, notes that "... S. Lipinsky who founded Bon Marche was a frequent visitor to Sherrill's Inn. He has just moved to Asheville and gone into the Mercantile business here when his name first began to appear on the register. His wife was a Whitlock. S. [Solomon] Lipinsky was the father of Clara, Morris, Whitlock, and Louis Lipinsky."

The Lipinsky family shows on the 1880 census of Asheville, Buncombe Co., North Carolina. Eva and her brother Solomon Whitlock both show age 25 born in Poland with both parents born in Poland. Eva (Whitlock) Lipinsky died November 7,1926 in Asheville. Her death certificate shows her date of birth as March 18,1852 and place of birth as Brest Litovsk, Poland (now Brest, Belarus) Her father's name is very hard to read but may be Simeon Whitlock. No mother's name is given on the death certificate.

There is also the family of Philip Whitlock (1838-1919) who came to the USA in 1853. He was born in Kovel, Poland (now Ukraine). Kovel and Brest are neighbouring cities on opposite sides of the current border between Ukraine and Belarus. (See article on Philip Whitlock "Richmond Grays" in the December 2005 issue of the WFA Newsletter). Due to the close proximity of their birthplaces it is likely that Eva Whitlock's and Philip Whitlock's families are connected. Finding these two Whitlocks origins in Poland also likely rules out the possibility that the name Whitlock was adopted upon their arrival in America. Philip Whitlock founded the *Old Virginia Cheroot* company and was a financial supporter of many Jewish organizations in Richmond, Va.

I have made contact with a descendant of Solomon & Eva (Whitlock) Lipinsky to determine if they have more on the origins of Eva Whitlock. Hopefully as more research is done we will determine if Eva & Philip's families are connected.



The Whitlock name is English and I am hoping some of the descendants of the Polish Whitlocks will have information regarding their origins. I have a Richard Whitlock (1565-1624) of London who went to live in Elbing in 1580. He and his wife Katherine Dambits had 16 children and the family stayed on the continent. I suspect many of the German, Swedish and Polish Whitlocks likely descend from this part of the family. The recent advent of DNA testing has proven very useful to indicate the likely origins of many of these families and I am hoping to come across male Whitlock descendants of this part of family willing to be tested.

SOURCES: X6792