

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE FAMILY

As mentioned in the Preface to this book, the challenge began several years ago, when my daughter Deborah and Gordon Boothe were married. The research resulting from questions of the new couple's heritage revealed a maze of ancestors; but the following will map out the early beginnings of America and four families who migrated here and intermarried. The search began with the Whitesides branch -- Deborah and Gordon's common ancestors -- but continued on with the Evans, Thomas, and Benner families. Here, then is a story of neighbors, cousins, and the very founders of our nation who have given us a heritage for which we can be proud!

The ancestry in early America could best be expressed by the migratory patterns of the families involved. The Evans's began in Radnor and the Thomas's in Newtown township, often referred to as the Welsh tract. But the uniting of the two families occurred in the land holdings on French Creek. Phillip Thomas removed to the land held east of French Creek in the very early 1700's. He was blessed with several daughters. Next came the Evans brothers from Radnor and they settled on the west of French Creek. These areas were later known as East Vincent and West Vincent. It was quite a natural coincidence that Phillip Evans' son Joshua married Phillip Thomas' daughter Mary and they resided in the township of Tredyffrin. This close family relationship existed for a period of four generations, often third and fourth cousins inter-marrying (which makes research most difficult because of the use of common names such as Phillip, Joshua, Mary, Penninah and Elizabeth).

The next family to arrive -- and complicate the ties -- was the Benner family. Not one Henry but two -- probably no relationship. One settled in Coventry and the other in West Vincent. The Henry involved with this family married Dinah Thomas, and they settled in West Vincent.

Then to further compound the problem, a Daniel Evans

yes vBC  
1743 - 1820

VBC ages 2  
dated 8/10/1870  
Dinah (Parker)  
Benner

arrives from Wales near the same time and he has to marry t  
lovely daughter of Henry and Dinah Benner with the name  
Esther. The next generation of the Thomas family moves clos  
together when Joshua Evans (son of Joshua and Mary) marri  
Elizabeth Evans - daughter of Daniel and Esther and this becom  
third generation cousins.

Not too many years later, James Whitesides arrives fr  
Ireland and marries an Ann Evans. This union brings to o  
attention a James, Jr. who meets and marries Penninah Eva  
(daughter of Joshua and Elizabeth Evans) and this then involv  
the fourth generation cousins.

If this seems difficult to the reader, don't give up! T  
research was even more difficult to bring all these recor  
together. But read on, and learn the fascinating facts abo  
the Evans - Thomas - Benner - Whitesides families.

LINERAGE CHART OF CHARLOTTE WHITESIDES BECK

William Howell 1616  
Wales

William Evans 1642

John AP Thomas

Margaret Gomer = David Evans 1670 = Mary Jones 1674 Wm Thomas 1662 = Elizabeth Phillips 1666  
(1st wife) (2nd wife)

John Evans 1684 = Mary Davis Phillip Evans 1699 Phillip Thomas 1697 = Esther Iddings

James Evans 1734 = Mary John 1736 Joshua Evans 1739 = Mary Thomas 1746 Dinah Thomas 1737 = Henry Benner 1733

Penninah Evans 1779 = Henry Benner 1773 Esther Benner 1759 = Daniel Evans 1743

Ann Evans 1757 = James Whitesides 1757

Joshua Evans <sup>10/21</sup>1775 VBC = Elizabeth Evans 1783 VBC  
d 6/16/1827 d 11/29/1834

James Whitesides, Jr. 1794 =

*who is Hannah Whitesides wife of James  
2/11/1803 = Mary 25, 1828*

Mary Ann Whitesides 1825 = Edward Hunter

Lewis Whitesides 1828 = Susan Perkins

Sarah Ann Hunter 1844 = Hyrum Boothe 1840

William Whitesides 1873 = Mary Adams

Wm LeRoy Boothe 1884 = Lillian Reader

Ferris Whitesides 1904 = Alice Stewart

Wm Hyrum Boothe 1916 = Helen Heiner

Charlotte Whitesides 1927 = James Beck

Gordon Craig Boothe 1952

= Deborah Beck 1953

Charles Boothe 1977  
Natalie Boothe 1980  
Jennifer Boothe 1982

## THE EVANS FAMILY

In the beginning, we find our James Evans, father of Ann Evans and Ann is the wife of James Whitesides, in West Chester Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. James Evans is listed on the tax records in 1756 with other Evans, namely his father John, his brother Morris, Rees, David, Thomas, William. John (the father) is listed first in 1730 with another John and Thomas. Morris is first listed in the year 1735.<sup>3B</sup> This established fact leads to the following statement, "The Evans Family is one of the oldest families in Chester County, and traces its trans-Atlantic ancestry to Wales, where the name of Evans has figured with honor for several centuries in the history of that country. The first of the family to come to Chester County was Thomas Evans. He was just one of forty-four first cousins who were native of Wales, and came with William Penn on his second voyage to the colony of Pennsylvania."<sup>1</sup>

The families first settled in the east end of the Great Valley, a lengthy bottom land reaching from Schuylkill to the Susquehanna River. The area is located 18 miles from Philadelphia. This is the township of Tredyffrin (a Welch word meaning valley), Chester County, PA.

The early Welch settlers came from two main Baptist groups in Wales -- 1) Oilfowyer and 2) the Llamnarth. These were the original founders of the Old Great Valley Church. These two groups were an original group in 1652 in Abergavenny in Wales. This area is located in the northeastern part of Monmouthshire, Wales, in the valley of Usk, and as the late Kilsby Jones remarked, "The word is not yet coined to describe the beauty of this valley." A thought from E.P. Ingersoll, a great sage, probably describes the religious belief's of the Welch people better than I:

"It is both a daring and dangerous thing to live secretly for Christ. It breaks of the sprouting tendrils of the new life and so there can be neither bud, blossom nor fruit. A light shut up tight in a

lantern only soots and burns that which contains it. So it is with the soul. It is its nature to shine forth, but turned back upon itself it dims and dies. There are some in every congregation who are trying in a half-hearted sort of way 'to be good,' that is too indefinite. There are no sharp outlines to it. It does not mean anything humble is heroic."

History reveals that the Welsh nation was never conquered. They were incorporated into the British nation by agreement. They exhibited a very strong, stern, uncompromising firmness in both political and religious convictions.

A few tenants of the religion are: the Lord's Supper to be administered on the first Sabbath of each month and the following Wednesday was to be spent in fasting and prayer. The church was to meet at Abergavenny every Sabbath and for convenience for those who lived at a far distance, a preaching service was to be held at the home of some brother on the first day of communion, and then a general meeting of all members was to be held the fifth day after communion. Also, preaching services were to be held every Sabbath at Llangybe and the preaching to be done by the brethren recommended by the church and the Lord's Supper was to be administered there every three months and weekly meetings on the fourth day at the home of some brother. In this arrangement we see the missionary spirit and systematic method that characterized the Christian work.

When they came to America they exhibited this same spirit and methods. Another facet of religious belief was the laying on of hands after a convert baptism. This was a serious conflict of belief between the English and Welsh Baptists.

The Political Act was enforced by the Commonwealth under Cromwell, 25 Feb, 1649, "An act for the better propagation of the Gospel in Wales." The act authorized the appointment of a committee to examine preachers and those recommended received aid from the state. Some of the preachers who received aid were Baptist preachers and the members soon realized they had compromised their principles by this blunder. The Llanewenarth Church felt so deeply on the matter that they made a written complaint

that their minister "Mr. William Pritchard was advised to reject all state money and advised all members with paid ministers to withdraw from the sect." They advocated that this was unwholesome doctrine and should not be allowed to be fostered or preached. Surely this is a complete separation of church and state.

This same principle prevails in America, many years later. In a bill introduced into the Congress of the United States at Washington D.C. in 1820 to abolish all state appropriations for religious purposes, the author of the bill stated that the Baptist denominations were the only denomination that positively declined to receive any state aid.

The Baptists in Wales formed a Baptist Association in 1650 and held annual meetings and grew constantly. With growth, opposition also grew and they were assailed by pen and tongue from all quarters. Then in 1656, they met and published "An Anecdote Against the Times." This was probably the first Welsh Baptist open rebellion and soon after the restoration of Charles II of England to power, 29 May 1660, no more open meetings were held for 28 years. During this period they were bitterly persecuted so that they could not walk the streets and even abused in their own homes.

Many acts were passed to crush them but final relief came when William and Mary came to the Throne in 1689. Then the "Act of Toleration" was enacted by the parliament of Great Britain. A general conference of Baptists met in England the same year and over 100 churches were represented, among them seven ministers from Wales. The conference set forth a confession of faith. Then, on the 6th of May, 1700, ten churches in Wales met at Llanwenarth and formed a Welsh Baptist Association.

Even after the English Toleration Act of 1689, the Baptists of Wales with unflinching firmness bore their share of the persecutions of the non-conformists. This undoubtedly created an impulse to migrate and to establish a community in a place promising religious freedom -- America.

The history of the movement in America shows the strong religious beliefs of these people. They established services in the late 1600's, and one of the first members of the church was James Davis. He had his record of membership in the Baptist Church of Rydwilim in Carmarthenshire Wales. Another member was Margaret Evans. On the records in the year 1710 is listed a John and Margaret Evans, and the Minister was Rev. Hugh Davis, a licensed minister of Wales. On 22 April 1711, they organized and established the St. Peter's Church of the Great Valley. They met at the home of Richard Miles in Radnor Township until 1722. At this time they built a log church on land deeded by a member. This church still exists today.

Many members of the Great Valley Church resided about the year 1735 at or near Yellow Springs (now Chester Springs) in West ~~Pike~~<sup>Vincent</sup>land. In 1737 a lot of 4 acres was donated to the church by Mr. Cox; the land was located in West Vincent Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. Also, William George donated 180 Pounds to be used by the churches -- two thirds for the Great Valley and one third for the Yellow Springs branch. This branch was given rights and privileges from the mother Church. A list of a few members include Lettice <sup>1711-1735</sup>Evans (wife of Morris Evans); William Gronow (who later married into the Evans family); a William Davis who came from Wales to Vincent in 1722, then returned to Wales and back again. He supplied the church with preaching. He died 3 October 1768, age 73 years, in Newbriton, Kent County. The historical records indicate that he left two children in the area, who united with the Evans and Wells. He had fourteen grandchildren. After William Davis moved from the area around 1747, Owen Thomas was the teaching elder in Vincent. He was buried in the Vincent Baptist burial ground and his epitaph reads as follows:

"In yonder house I spent my breath and now be simmering  
in death there lips shall wake and then declare heaven  
to truths they published there."



In 1770, the branch church in West Vincent became a constituted church. The members were released from the mother, Great Valley Church; there were 51 members in all. A few descendants on the list of members were as follows: Mary Phillips, Joseph Phillips, John Thomas, David Thomas, Ruth Thomas, Lettice Thomas, Lettice James, Eleanor Davis, Elizabeth Martin, David Jenkins, Martha Jenkins, George Lewis, David Phillips, Mary Phillips, Adams, William Wells, Rebecca Wells, Sarah Evens, Thomas Morris, Hanna Morris, and Mary Lloyd. All these names may be found graven on the stones in the burial ground. The longest rows of graves include McClure, Evans, Dalby, Thomas, Christman, Jones, McFarland and Eachus and many after the church was constituted in 1771. The first Reverend was a John Blackwell and through his missionary efforts, the membership of Vincent Church equaled the membership of the Great Valley. Unfortunately, the years 1771-1791 are without records. They were either lost, destroyed or never recorded.

In another interesting Will of Daniel Evans of Vincent Township in the year 1775, he left to the Vincent Church 2/3 of the income from a farm some five miles from the meeting house to help sustain the preacher. Lettice Evans' Will in 1783 gives 20 pounds to the Great Valley Church and only 5 pounds to the Yellow Springs Church to help to repair the burial grounds. This may indicate that a number of the members of the Great Valley Church didn't transfer membership to the Vincent Church. It was also obvious in the 1771 transfer of membership records as her name did not appear. Many other wills reviewed on the subject of donated monies revealed that the greater part was given to the Great Valley Church.

A quote from a newspaper article in 1894:

"Among the many places of interest in historic Chester County, there is one that has made for itself a peacefully, hallowed record, although existing through the Revolutionary period. We refer to the Vincent Baptist Church that is located in West ~~Pikeland~~ Vincent, a short drive from Chester Springs -- the site of General Washington Hospital while the Army lay at Valley Forge.



boat, and from the lack of proper accommodations for so large a party; and, as recorded, many died through want of necessary provisions and others from the remaining effects of their suffering in Wales. Mr. Ellis remained here only nine months, made many land speculations in the area, and left his young son and uncle in charge of the operations. Very shortly after, these deals eventually caused his financial ruin.

The Evans family experienced similar financial problems and they eventually lost most of the early land claims, either by wills or unscrupulous land dealers.

The real clue to finding John Evans in West Vincent comes from two sources: First, the land occupied by his father was an inheritance from his second wife and could only be transferred to the blood line of the mother as was written in the will. Second, his father had purchased land in other areas and to maintain ownership, it was nearly mandatory that he reside there.

So, we find John and his half brothers residing in West Vincent to maintain the ownership. John was the only son to remain in West Vincent and finally the land was transferred to his son, James Evans, and legal title to the land no longer continued with the family name after the expiration of James Evans.

The name Evans is prominent and distinguished in professionalism and quality, moral traits, etc. Just a few examples:

1) Daniel Evans learned the business of a surveyor. He also served as a soldier in the Revolutionary Army. The records of his service are preserved in Harrisburg.

2) J.B. Evans, in early life, studied dentistry and practiced his profession at Phoenixville until 1855. He is a gentleman of deserved high standing in the community.

3) Capt. Lewis H. Evans devoted his life mainly to agriculture and was a federalist in politics. He served as a member of the state assembly in 1782 and 1783.

4) Abel Evans, was a member of the Baptist Church which, with his family, he attended and freely offered contributions.

The Evans family is very numerous in the county and has always been distinguished for his thrift, public spirit and devotion to its adopted country.

5) Hon. William Evans, an ex-member of the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, was a leading and influential citizen.

6) William Evans was noted for thrift and energy, and all the qualities that go toward making the patriotic and useful citizen.

7) Rev. Joseph S. Evans, an honored minister and respected citizen, served continuously for 32 years as pastor of the Baptist Church.

THE EVANS GENEALOGY  
A Lineage founded in Wales

"Howell" -- What a strange approach! But the facts lead me to this -- search, search and study, and now the acid delivery: two John Evans in West Vincent, Chester, Pennsylvania. How do you distinguish the different Johns?

Sheeder, in his research in 1845, associated John Evans "Major" with a son John; the other John Evans with a son Morris. The tax records were more indirect, but leading (if one will follow) John Evans (Jenkins) and John Evans (Howell) to a very early record 1737-1750. This being true, then four brothers and a cousin came to West Vincent early in the settlement; namely: John, Caleb, David, Evan and the cousin Rees.

First Generation:

Howell in Wales, before 1616.

Second Generation:

William AP Howell, born 1616 at Llanvchreth Mrnths, Wales.

Third Generation:

William Howell had two sons:

- 1- Evan AP Williams, born in 1642 same area and married a Gwen. He died at sea on the voyage to America.
- 2- John AP Williams, born in 1644.

Fourth Generation:

**David Evans**, (first generation in America) was the son of Evan, born in 1670, same area, and married Mary Jones (wife #2). She was born in 1674 at Nantmel, Radnor, Wales. They were married 8 Aug, 1690 in Pennsylvania. Their children were:

- 1- Caleb, born 1690.
- 2- **Joshua**, born 1693.
- 3- Evan, born 1695.
- 4- David, born 1697.
- 5- **Philip**, born 1699.
- 6- Sarah, born 1707.

David's first wife was Margaret Gamer, and their children were:

- 1- **John**, born 1684.
- 2- Gwen, born 1686.
- 3- Mary or Margaret, born 1688.

Fifth Generation:

**Philip (Fourth generation #5)** married and one son is recorded:

- 1- Joshua Thomas Evans.

**John (Howell) Evans (son of David and Margaret Gamer)** married a Mary Davis and they record four children:

- 1- Morris, married Lettice \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2- James, married Mary John.
- 3- Mary, married John Lloyd.
- 4- Lettice, married Owen Thomas.

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- 2- James, married Mary John.
- 3- Mary, married John Lloyd.
- 4- Lettice, married Owen Thomas.

Sixth Generation:

**Joshua Thomas Evans (son of Philip)** married Mary Thomas and their children were:

- 1- Thomas.
- 2- **Penninah**, married Henry Benner.
- 3- Philip Thomas, married Anna Elizabeth VanReed.
- 4- Sarah, married Lewis Evans.
- 5- **Joshua**, married Elizabeth Evans.
- 6- Mordecai.

**Morris Evans (son of John and Mary, fifth generation #1)** married Lettice and had the following children:

- 1- Martha, married Abraham Lewis.
- 2- Dau, married William Gronow.
- 3- Margret, married George Fitzsimmons.

**James Evans (son of John and Mary, fifth generation #2)** married Mary John and had the following children:

- 1- Elizabeth.
- 2- **Ann**.
- 3- William.
- 4- John.
- 5- Sarah.
- 6- Thomas.
- 7- Mary.
- 8- Margret.
- 9- George.
- 10- James.
- 11- Henry.
- 12- James.

Seventh Generation:

Joshua (son of Joshua Thomas Evans, sixth generation #5) married Elizabeth Evans, and the children were:

*She is buried VBC.  
dead young -  
he remarried  
is not buried  
VBC*

- 1- Penninah, married James Whitesides.
- 2- Horatio Gates.
- 3- Isaac.
- 4- Mary Ann.
- 5- Esther.
- 6- Jonathan.
- 7- Sarah.
- 8- Ruth.
- 9- Allen.
- 10- Elizabeth.

\*\*\*\*\*

Now, the other Evans Family, Ancestors of Elizabeth, who married Joshua:

First Generation:

Lewis Evans (Shoemaker) from Carnarvonshire, Wales, born in 1716. He married Sarah, she was born 1712, same area, came to America with 6 children, the last of whom was born at sea. Their names are:

- 1- Daniel, married Esther Benner.
- 2- John.
- 3- Barbara.
- 4- Jeremiah.
- 5- Sarah.
- 6- Abel.

*Gyvarne*



2 Generation

Daniel (first generation #1) married Esther Benner and they had the following children:

- 1- Lewis.
- 2- Isaac.
- 3- Elizabeth, married Joshua Evans.
- 4- Sarah.
- 5- Ezra. X
- 6- Mary.
- 7- Jesse.
- 8- Daniel.
- 9- Abel.
- 10- Henry Thomas.

This, then, is the early generation of Evans from these two families in America.

EVANS BIBLIOGRAPHY DOCUMENTATION

1- NAME

Origins in Wales, early 1600's, with Howell whose son William AP Howell had a son Evan AP William. His son then was known as David Evans. Pedigree Chart (Howell) 1X, pg. 64, Bk #974.8 F2G.

2- LAND RECORDS

- A. Land Deeds, Film #558034.
- B. Mortgages Deeds, Film #558011.

3- TAX RECORDS

- A. Film #020995 - Chester Co. PA, Vincent TWP:
  - 1719: John Evans
  - 1724: Evans, Evan, Caleb, David, Rees
- B. Film #020901 - Chester Co. PA, Vincent TWP, Evans Family:
  - 1729: Thomas Lloyd
  - 1730: Thomas Lloyd, John Evans, Thomas Evans
  - 1732: ~~X~~ Lewis Gronow, Thomas Evans, Morris Evans, Thomas Lloyd
  - 1734: Same
  - 1735: Same, plus one more John Evans
  - 1737: John Evans (Jenkins), John Evans (Howell), William Thomas, Morris Evans, Thomas Lloyd
  - 1739: David Evans, John Evans, Morris Evans, Thomas Lloyd
  - 1740: Morris Evans, John Evans (Jenkins), John Evans (Howell), James Evans (Freeman)
  - 1748: William Thomas, Morris Evans, John Evans (Jenkins), William Gronow, David Evans (Freeman), Evan Evans (Freeman), James Evans (Freeman)
  - 1751-1753: Morris Evans, John Evans, Owen Thomas, William Gronow, John Evans (Jenkins), David Evans, Rees Evans
  - 1754-1756: John Evans (Jenkins), Robert Ralston, William Gronow, Morris Evans, Owen Thomas, William Gronow, James Fitzsimmons, David Evans, Rees Evans, Daniel Evans (Freeman), Griffith Evans (Freeman), James Evans (Inmate), Lewis Evans (Inmate), William Evans (Freeman)

*Handwritten note:*  
 A. Source of  
 1737

3- TAX RECORDS (continued)

- 1759-1760-1762: Evans, Rees, David, Morris, William, John (Freeman), James Fitzsimmons, Robert Ralston
- 1764: Land Ownership - Evans, James (110A), Morris (70A), Daniel (30A), William (90), George Fitzsimmons (60A), William Gronow (65A), Rees Evans (60)
- 1771-1772-1776: Evans, William, James, Morris, James, Rees, David, Thomas, Thomas Wilson

C. Film #5116, Pt. 5: James Evans had 100 acres of land 3 horses, 8 cattle and 10 sheep and 1 servant.

4- COURT RECORDS

- Set of  
the Publics and  
1/13  
Revised*
- A. James Evans, deceased 19 March 1783 intestate Adm Owen Thomas and John Lloyd, brother-in-laws. Final settlement 10 May 1790. B Vol 2, pg. 314 and 315.
- B. Lettice Evans, deceased 6 Sept 1786. Wife of Morris Evans. Film #5116, pt. 5.
- C. John Evans deceased, 12 Jan 1767. Will Book B Vol 2, pg. 189 and 234.
- D. Morris Evans, deceased 4 Mar 1783. Wife Lettice, brother James, sister Lettice Thomas, granddaughters Elizabeth and Lettice Fitzsimmons.
- E. Film #5116, pt. 7. John Evans Alias Jenkins Evans, deceased 25 Aug 1760. Wife Ann, sons William, David James, John, Dau, Eleanor (married to John Doddson), Ann (married to Michael Doddson), also one Dau Jane Rees living in Wales.
- F. William Evans, deceased 12 June 1783. Married Sarah Smith, 14 June 1761. RM70.
- G. Film #561055, Book 1 Vol II, pg. 551-552. Will of Mary Evans.
- H. Bk 3 974.8 F 2B, pg. 216. Will of John Evans.
- I. Film #1035725, pg. 215. Will of David Evans.
- J. Probate Records: Penninah Evans, ciphering books in East Nantmeal in 1825.

5- CENSUS RECORDS

1790  
1820  
1850  
1860

6- CHURCH RECORDS

A. Film #568861. Vincent Baptist Church.

B. Film #020995. History of the Great Valley Church. Several families from Wales arrived and settled in the east end of the Valley in the year 1701-1702. In 1710 it lists John and Mary Evans; also in the year 1711, they are deceased members. Never-the-less the church grew and was considered a church as of 22 April 1711. They met at the house of Richard Miles in Radnor until 1722. In 1722 a log house was built in Tredyffrin and by 1770 contained galleries and a stove.

Members in 1726: Mary Evans, Margret Evans by baptism, Evan Lloyd, Thomas Lloyd.

In 1738: Thomas Lloyd from Wales with a letter of his standing in the church.

1748: Members in Vincent - 25 in all - John Evans, xJohn Gronow, William Thomas, Mathew Davis, Thomas Roberts.

1750-1760: Lettice Evans, John Gronow, James Fitzsimmons, William Gronow, David Thomas, Ruth Thomas, Lettice Thomas.

Reverend Owen Thomas preached until he went ancient, health impaired. He died 12 Dec 1760 at age 69. He had two sons, David and Owen.

1765-1771: A branch church was located at Yellow Springs, a church on 4 acres of land in West Pikeland. *Vincent* 92 families belonged to the two branches. Members mentioned are: Evan Thomas, Sarah Evans, Mary Evans, Mary Thomas, Margaret Smith, Lettice Thomas, Mary Lloyd, William Evans, xLewis Gronow, Robert Ralston, James Fitzsimmons, John Evans (Warden), John Lloyd, Owen Thomas, Margret Gronow, William Gronow.

The records of the church from 1771 to 1791 are lost, or destroyed.

6- CHURCH RECORDS (continued)

- C. Film #568861. St. Peter's Reformed Church, West Pikeland.
- D. Film #986477. Wales Baptist Church.
- E. Film #5047. Reformed Church East Coventry and East Vincent Brownbacks.

7- BOOKS

- A. Glenn, T.A., Welsh Founders of Pennsylvania. Bk #974.8 F 2G, Vol. 1.
- B. Browning, Welsh Settlement of PA. 1912. Film #1035725.
- C. A Rare and Pleasing Thing, Radnor. Bk #974.814 1R3 H2C.
- D. Biography of Chester and Delaware Counties, Bk #974.81 D 2C V2.
- E. Biography and History of Chester County, Film #1000549
- F. SAR PA, #974.8 C4r, PA Society.

## THE THOMAS FAMILY

In the beginning, we find Mary Thomas married to our Joshua Thomas Evans on 12 Dec 1764. This Mary Thomas lineage parallels the Evans family until after they settle in America.

It is most interesting to note how people will stand so firm on a religious doctrinal issue, and then left unto themselves, will quickly create a disagreement that is often never fully breached. Such is the issue involving the Welsh Baptist church in America.

The word "Keithite" appears on the religious preference of Mary Thomas. What is a Keithite? I was completely lost, but with this in mind, let me develop the history of the Thomas branch in America.

This is the story. In the last decade of the seventeenth century, Edmund Dunham was a deacon and licensed preacher in the Baptist church at Piscataway, New Jersey. In 1702, he took occasion to reprove a Mr. Bonham for performing labor upon the first day of the week, whereupon Mr. Bonham challenged him for proof that it was a sin to labor on that day. Whether Mr. Bonham was a Sabbath keeper or not is not clear; but the challenge caused Mr. Dunham to make a thorough investigation of the whole subject which resulted in his conversion to the Sabbath. The whole community appears to have been deeply stirred over the matter and many people betook themselves to prayerful study of the scriptures and a number of persons were lead to acknowledge of the claims of the Sabbath. It was not the intention of the brethren to separate themselves from the Baptist church. But the agitation became so strong and feelings on both sides so intense that the only hope of peace and the enjoyment of freedom of speech and practice lay in their separation and the organization of the Seventh Day Baptist Church.

Meanwhile, George Keith from Wales arrived in Philadelphia in 1684 with the Penn Quaker's. He and eight others broke from the Quakers in 1691 and joined the Pennepek Baptists and later

this group joined with the Seventh Day Baptists, often referred to as the Keithian Baptists.

This was accomplished in the summer of 1705 under the name of the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Piscataway, New Jersey and its membership was composed of seventeen.

The Seventh Day Baptist movement was begun by Able Noble among the Keithian Quaker Baptists near Philadelphia. Almost within the first quarter of the 18th century there had sprung up four or five churches of considerable size among these people; the church locations were at French Creek, Pennepek, Upper Providence, Nottingham and Newtown.

While each church had its own place of meeting and maintained its own appointments for worship, there was a yearly meeting which all were expected to attend. As the churches were located in several adjoining counties, this was not too difficult. Newtown appears to have been the principal place of assembly. This was probably the strongest branch of the church, although in 1745 the yearly meeting was held at French Creek. In 1713 the Newtown church established what is known as the Seventh Day Baptist Burial Ground. This was also called "God's Acre," the location described as being on the roadside situated between the Newtown Baptist Church and its parsonage -- about 15 miles due west of Philadelphia.

Elizabeth Wayne (the mother of General Anthony Wayne of Revolutionary War fame) was the daughter of David Thomas of the Newtown Church and it was said that Elizabeth Wayne was a strict Sabbath keeper.

The third church of the group was at Nantmeal, Chester, Pennsylvania -- also known as French Creek or Conogocheage. Mr. Julius Sachse speaks of the church as follows:

"The first quarter of the century had not elapsed before we find a branch of the Newtown congregation organized at East Nantmeal in the northwestern part of Chester County about thirty miles from Philadelphia. Conspicuous among the brethren composing the society, we find the family names such as Iddings, and Thomas, members of the Newtown families with similar names.



Four years after the initial group was organized, it was reinforced by a number of families from the Great Valley Church sixteen miles eastward in the same county. The family names involved were Phillip Davis, Lewis Williams, Richard Edwards, Griffy Griffiths and William James, who broke from the original Baptist Church because of their sentiments regarding the Sabbath day. The immigration was soon followed by others and the society at Nantmeal became the strongest in the county."

The Nantmeal church is said to have manifested great activity during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Morgan Evans states that the church in 1770 was composed of 18 families and 24 communicants. They built a church in 1762, the only one built by this group of churches. Before this the yearly meetings were held in the spacious home of David Thomas in Newtown. This epoch is referred to as the "Nantmeal Revival" pertaining to the English and Welsh Seventh Day Baptists who settled in the French Creek Valley in Nantmeal, Chester, PA. There was a desire on the part of the members to have a community of their own, where they could live undisturbed and exercise the dictates of their own conscience according to their own laws.

A number of families of the Providence (Newtown, Delaware County) Church had surveyed to them in the year 1717 large tracts of land on the north branch of the Brandywine and French Creek for the purpose of promoting the principles mentioned above. Prominent families who settled the land were the following: Lewis David, William David, William Iddings, John James, Mordecai Lincoln, Simon Meridith, Samuel Nutt, Jeremiah Piersol, John Piersol, William Phillips, David Roberts, Owen Roberts, Philip Rogers and John Williams.

Then the tide of war invaded the peaceful and secluded precincts of the Seventh Day Baptists. Although the communities volunteered services and buildings, military might prevailed and on many occasions the commissary sergeants -- not withstanding the protests of the members -- seized hymn books and other printed matter and used them for cartridges. The very pages intended to spread the Gospel of peace and love to all

mankind were absconded for use in war!

The French Creek congregation was then the only English speaking society which had a meeting house. This was a log cabin which stood within the graveyard in Nantmeal. Numerically this was the strongest and, through the efforts of Hazael Thomas, it was subsequently incorporated in 1786 -- mainly for the purpose of claiming the property in Philadelphia left by Richard Sparks of the Pennepek Church for use of the denomination. During this period the Newtown Congregation continued their meetings at the Philip Thomas homestead. The years after the revolutionary struggle was over -- and intervening until the adoption of the Federal Constitution and a newly organized system of government -- proved another period of doubt and unrest for this religious group.

Another deterring effect of this movement was the "Sunday Law" passed by the Pennsylvania Legislation in 1794.

It is difficult to determine who of this line was the exact first in America, but the records suggest that a group from Wales came about 1690. Benjamin Franklin in the **Pennsylvania Gazette** of 30 September 1730 gives the following account:

"Sunday last, died of a flux at Newtown in Chester County, Philip Rhyddarch in the 102nd year of age (1628-1730). He was born in Caermarthenshire in South Wales and came to America about 40 years ago. He is a man of peaceable disposition, very religious and remarkable for his temperance, having never been overcome with drunk during his whole life."<sup>8</sup>

More Thomas's: 18 March 1682, William Penn of England conveyed 5000 acres to John AP Thomas and Dr. Edward Jones for 100 F. The group in Wales collected the fund from 17 friends and 1 woman. The following contributed: John AP Thomas 25 F., the largest amount for 1200 acres. He died before he came to America, but his wife Kathryn Thomas, maiden name Roberts, immigrated and in America the children took the name of Jones. The party sailed on the ship **Morning Star** along with a party of 20 from the Wales area. The passenger list includes a Rees Thomas, John Bevin, John Thomas and three sons, and William

Thomas, wife and two son's. Included were William's two brothers, namely David and Thomas.

The first Thomas's in America has to made by conjecture, that is to say it is difficult to zero in on the first; nevertheless, this is the solution: John Thomas came to America in 1683, from Glamorganshire, Wales with two sons - William and David and a cousin Rees. They probably came with means for they purchased large tracts of land at Newtown, French Creek and Radnor. They were also a family that adopted the surname Thomas before coming to America.

An interesting side line: What was the fare to American in 1683? Monetary value was 38.26 F (1960 value -- 1 F = 20 cents, thus the total cost of the voyage \$7.65). In addition they took excess cloth, harness, and implements to sell for profit to buy more land. They were also required to bring the following articles for the voyage: "Shurt, hatts, shoues, stokins, drawers, 4 gal of brandy, 24 pds of sugar." They arrived in the Pennsylvania area the early summer, surveyed the land, encamped, cleared fifteen acres for plowing, cut timber, built a house, harvested the crops and prepared for winter. I would call this a very, very busy summer time.

The cost for the first year in America:

Passage clothes	(Francs)	38.02.06
Construct House and barn		15.10
Living Expenses		17.17.06
To stock farm		<u>24.10</u>

TOTAL 96.00 F

\$ 19.20

One of the key names to the Thomas family is the name Rees; this appears over and over, as the cousin of William and David, as the nephew to John Bevin, an Uncle of his still living in Wales. It behooves me to introduce Rees and to give his immediate family genealogy.

The party were members of the second company from Wales, arrived in September 1783, with Widow Kathryn Thomas, Uncle John

## THE THOMAS GENEALOGY

### First Generation:

**John AP Thomas**, born in Wales. He had two sons that we know of  
- William, born about 1662 and Rees, born about 1665.

### Second Generation:

**William Thomas (son of John AP Thomas)** married twice. His first wife was Margaret, and their children were:

- 1- John, about 1686.
- 2- Ann, about 1687.
- 3- Thomas, about 1689.

William's second wife was Elizabeth Phillips, born about 1666. Their children were:

- 1- Thomas, 12 May 1690, married Sarah Jarman
- 2- David, born about 1692, married Ann \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3- William, born about 1694.
- 4- Philip, born about 1697, married Esther Iddings.

**Rees Thomas (son of John AP Thomas)** was born in Glamorganshire, Wales before 1662, arrived in America 1683. He married Martha Awbrey 18 June 1692 in Haverford PA. Martha was born in Glamorganshire, Wales, the daughter of William Awbrey and Elizabeth. She was the 9th child of William and Elizabeth. Their children were:

- 1- Rees, born 22 Apr 1693.
- 2- Aubrey or Awbrey, born 30 Jan 1694.
- 3- Herbert, born 3 Sep 1696.
- 4- William, born 2 May 1701, married Elizabeth Rhytherach.
- 5- Elizabeth, born 10 Aug 1698.
- 6- Richard, born 23 May 1703.

Third Generation:

Philip Thomas (son of William Thomas and Elizabeth Phillips Thomas) married Esther Iddings. Their children were:

- 1- David, born abt 1735.
- 2- Dinah, born abt 1737, married Henry Benner.
- 3- Hazael, born abt 1738, married Juliana Thomas
- 4- Mordecai, born abt 1739.
- 5- Penninah, born abt 1743, married John McCracken.
- 6- John, born abt 1745, married Lettice Evans.
- 7- Mary, 1 Jul 1746, married Joshua Thomas Evans.

*"they  
mother's desc.  
Juliana  
Aunt  
Nance  
to husband  
Jonathan  
Thomas*

## THOMAS BIBLIOGRAPHY DOCUMENTATION

- 1- NAME - Family originated in Wales.
- 2- LAND RECORDS

Following is from of history of Vincent Township, written in 1846. The author was German and had some trouble writing -- he didn't punctuate.

"next place is Jacob Cristman's the Second Son of Henry deceased which place was first Settled by one Philip Thomas this place joins mine and the lands of Garrit Brumback's in whose behalf I have to treat largely in its turn. P. Thomas and G. Brumback been two of the first settlers in that part of the Township Thomas a Seven Day baptist and Brumback a Calvinist (Masle) Thomas a Son of his was owner for many years after the decease of his father and after the decease of Masle none of his Sons could hold it and on this place stood a large peach tree that brought sound fruit 80 years George Christman and others have heard Penina McCrakin a Sister of Masle's often relate it to them this Penina McCrakin had part of her fathers place here her father erected house and barn for her and both are occupied the boards on the floor are pinned down 2 story high, and since her decease as she had no heir as her brother's children it came into other hands and devited into three parts"

- 3- TAX RECORDS

Film #020913. West Vincent Chester PA, Phillip Thomas, 1722-1763.

- 4- COURT RECORDS

- A. Hazael Thomas, Will Book #13, pg. 21. Register of Wills office, Chester County Courthouse, West Chester, PA.

"Will of HAZAEL THOMAS. Copied from typed copy loaned by Mrs. Edward Janzen, 4026 Ormond Road, Louisville 7, KY, Mar 1, 1946. Gives his son Hazael Thomas one hundred acres of land in Uwchland Township, Chester County. Gives son Absolam Thomas fifty acres of the remaining part of plantation. Gives all residue and remaining part of plantation to three daughters, namely Ruth, Esther and Mary Thomas. Gives son Elijah Thomas 74 acres of land in Vincent Township. Gives son Mordecai Thomas 74 acres in Vincent. Gives to son John Thomas 74 acres more of Vincent plantation.

4- COURT RECORDS (continued)

[Hazael Thomas Will, continued] Gives daughter Juliana Richardson 50 acres of land - remaining part of plantation in Vincent. Gives watch and gold headed cain to son Hazael Thomas. Wills executors to place grave stones of white marble at the head and feet of his grave and of his two wives. Gives housekeeper the use of the room adjoining dwelling and liberty in the kitchen. Son Hazael Thomas and son-in-law Zadock Thomas appointed Executors.

- B. Penninah McCracken, Vincent, Chester, Co. 1 Oct 1823. She evidently had no children, for she left her estate to 1) children of nephew Thomas Evans, 2) Penninah, widow of Henry Benner, 3) to niece Sarah Evans, 4) and a few items to John McCracken Evans, Mordecai Evans, and Amelia Smith. Exec. nephew Joshua Evans of East Nantmeal.

5- CENSUS RECORDS - too early.

6- CHURCH RECORDS

- A. East Vincent Church, Film #5050, pt 13, pg. 152-244.  
B. Tombstone Records at Patterson, PA.

7- BOOKS

- A. Seventh Day Baptists in Europe and America, Vol I, II.  
Bk #268.3 Se82s.  
B. Glenn, Thomas Allen, Merion in the Welsh Tract. Bk#  
974.81 Dzg, 1920.  
C. History of Baptist in Chester and Delaware Co, PA.  
Film #001304, pg. 62, 63, 142.  
D. Futhey, Cope, History of Chester, PA.

8- NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Pennsylvania Gazette, Sep 1830.



THE BENNER FAMILY

In the beginning, we find our Henry Benner in East Vincent Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. He is listed in the tax records in 1756, and in 1757 with his brother Paul, and from thereafter until his death in 1812. The records indicated this Henry may have been born in Pennsylvania in 1735, but all my research concluded that he must have come to America as a young man near the year 1750. Finally a ray of hope in a letter from one of his great great granddaughters confirmed my conclusions:

"Dear Miss Lapp:

I am sending today the old Henry Benner (my great, great, grandfather) teapot and an old book once the property of my great grand father Conrad King. Hope the box arrived safely. My cousin, who intended coming for these articles delays her visit, maybe lack of gas.

Yours,

Lida E. Pierson"

And on the note attached to the package itself:

"We have a forlorn piece of crockery I would like to have your opinion on. An ancestor Henry Benner born in Haven (Amsterdam) Holland and before sailing bought a crockery tea pot. That tea pot is still here, but during the trip down through the ages has lost its handle, the spout and lid. Someone used putty on the holes of the spout and also made a new wooden lid with a little brass knob and used the article for a sugar bowl. I saw it first in capacity in my grandmother's kitchen. The decorations of yellow bloom and green leaves are perfect. Otherwise the crockery is a wreck, but I have had it in my family so long it seems to belong and the Evans thrift all along the line forbids my allowing it to be destroyed. We have had it 195 years. Would the Historical Society care for it?"

The exact location of Henry Benner's birth in Germany is still not evident -- the nearest place seems to be near Leibzeitg, Germany. The Germans and particularly the Germans of Pennsylvania (where they constituted about 1/3 of the population in

*from  
from  
from  
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from*

the most conspicuous non-Britanic element in their mixture of piety and efficiency, mystic yearning for a mixture of farming and business formed one theme of future Americanism.

ans in general were printers, ironmakers, and paper makers in Germany to make converts to Quakerism. He found a final migration occurred about 1677 when William Penn

ardence among pietists. a typical experience, as related. Basil Pastorius, an old graduate in law and theology from Aldorf had also studied at Strassburg, and his wife Jeva on shipboard met Thomas Lloyd, a Welsh physician. knew no English and Lloyd knew no German, but the

bound scholars conversed amiably in the tossing in. A note from Gottlieb Mittelberger remarked, everyone allowed to believe what he wishes, he is

ly to express his beliefs publicly and freely." in Reformed Church, essentially Lutheran, counted 46 in America in 1751 and also brought with them a new

nd and then across to England. and then across to England. and then across to England. and then across to England.

ual education for women in 1789 wrote a description of the knowledge in horticulture. He admired

solid farm wagons. The German farmers loaded the t and barrels of flour to make Pennsylvania the basket in the late eighteenth century.

ner resided in the upper most corner of Vincent <sup>2nd</sup> <sup>17th</sup> <sup>St.</sup>

Interesting item:  
28 July 1813 sta.

"Casualties  
farm in Vincent Township, Chester County PA (Henry  
Benner, Jr.) from a bite of a Mad Dog."

Another notice:

"To Be Sold: At public auction on the 17th of December  
next on the premises. A farm or plantation, late the  
estate of Henry Benner deceased containing 163 acres  
situated in Vincent Twnsp, Chester County, PA, adjoin-  
ing lands of John Beldler, Benjamin Shtniman and  
Jostah Phillips. The improvements are a good two  
story stone house, a stone barn 36 by 70 ft., a stone  
spring house and a wash house, a spring of good water  
near the door and a stream of water running down the  
barn yard.

The farm is divided into convenient fields  
enclosed with good fences, the whole well watered, 15  
acres of meadow and about 30 acres of woodland, well  
timbered, the remainder arable and in good state of  
cultivation. On the premises is a good apple orchard  
of about 100 trees. Sale to begin at 1 o'clock  
and conditions known on day of the sale.

Penninah Benner, Adm."

And yet another Sale, 2 November 1813:

"On the fifth day, the 25th of November next, at the  
dwelling house of Henry Benner, late of township of  
Vincent, deceased, of the following articles -- an  
eight day clock, case of drawers, dining and breakfast  
tables, beds and bedding, and a great variety of  
household and kitchen furniture, horse creatures,  
horned cattle and swine, a plantation wagon, horse  
gears, ploughs, harrows, wheat, rye, and Indian  
corn, buckwheat and oats by the bushel, wheat and rye  
in the ground, a quantity of excellent hay in the barn  
and a variety of farming utensils. Conditions made  
known on the day of the sale and attendance given by,

Evan Evans, attorney for Penninah Benner"

## THE BENNER GENEALOGY

The Benner branch enters our picture by way of two Henry's. The first, born in 1733, married Dinah Thomas (sister of Mary Thomas who married Joshua Evans). Their son Henry, born in 1773, married Penninah Evans, sister of the same Joshua Evans.

### First Generation:

**Henry Benner**, born in Germany about 1733, married Dinah Thomas of Vincent, Chester County, PA, daughter of Philip and Esther Thomas. Their children were:

- 1- **Esther Benner**, born 1759, married Daniel Evans.
- 2- Philip Benner, born 19 May 1762, married Ruth Roberts.
- 3- Elizabeth Benner, born about 1765.
- 4- Mordecai Benner, born about 1768.
- 5- **Henry Benner**, born about 1773, married Penninah Evans.

### Second Generation:

**Esther Benner (first generation, #1)** married Daniel Evans. Their children were:

- 1- Lewis Evans, born 9 May 1779.
- 2- Isaac Evans, born 1 Aug 1781.
- 3- **Elizabeth Evans**, born 16 Nov 1783, married Joshua Evans.
- 4- Sarah Evans, born 16 May 1786.
- 5- Ezra Evans, born 27 Dec 1788.
- 6- Mary Evans, born 26 Dec 1791.
- 7- Jesse Evans, born 9 Mar 1795.
- 8- Daniel Evans, born 25 Mar 1798.
- 9- Abel Evans, born 23 Apr 1801.
- 10- Henry Thomas Evans, born 26 Mar 1804.



BENNER BIBLIOGRAPHY DOCUMENTATION

- 1- NAME - Originates with Benner family immigrating from Germany.
- 2- LAND RECORDS  
East Vincent Township, pg. 87. The former old Henry Benner, the brother of Paul Benner of the uppermost corner of Vincent, Henry Stiteler now a son-in-law of the youngest son Henry Benner his name being Henry; General Benner the Iron master about Sitisgrove being a Son of this H. Benner.
- 3- TAX RECORDS  
Film #020901. 1756 - 1764 90 acres of land listed for Benner.
- 4- COURT RECORDS  
Will of Henry Benner, #11-497 proved 4 Jan 1813, listed children 1) Esther Evans wife of Daniel Evans, 2) Philip, 3) Elizabeth (deceased) wife of John Benner, 4) Mordecai, 5) Henry to whom he left the plantation. Exec. son Henry Benner and Evan Evans of Uwchland, witnessed John Deirler, Benjamin Shenana, Adam Roses.  
*Shenana* *Moses*
- 5- CENSUS RECORDS  
1790, 1800.
- 6- CHURCH RECORDS
  - A. East Vincent Brownback's Cemetery Records, Film #5047, pt. 1,2.
  - B. East Vincent Church, Film #5050, pt. 13, pg. 152-244.
- 7- BOOKS
  - A. **Notes and Queries**, printed 1896, (historical and genealogical), pg. 215.
  - B. Kerns, Esther Hogue, **Migratory Benners**. 974.8 DZg V1.
  - C. Historical Society of Montgomery County, PA, **Detective Work Among the Benners**, Vol. 7-8-9-10. 974.812 B2h.
  - D. Benner Family. Film #522108, pg. 1-308.
  - E. SAR of PA, 974.8 C4r., pg. 129.

## THE WHITESIDES FAMILY

*How  
much  
Bedwell's  
book*

In the beginning, we find our James Whitesides Sr. in West Vincent Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. He was a witness to a will of William Morgan of Vincent Township, dated 24 January 1775.<sup>1</sup>

He was a native of Ireland, but to call him Irish is misleading. These Irish people were actually Scottish by lineage, who had been living in Ireland, mainly in the Province of Ulster, Antrim County, before coming to America. They were often referred to as the low land Scots. The original nationality is an amalgamation of Celts, Romans, Frisians, Saxons, Danes, Norwegians, Normans, and Flemish. This is essentially the same stock as the English Nation.<sup>7D</sup>

The religious belief of the people was principally Presbyterian, which created a conflict with the English people who belonged to the Church of England. As a result, many Scots were transplanted to the Irish Territory to help neutralize the difference of the religious beliefs. This religious intolerance became more pronounced and was eventually instrumental in a political boycott of land, trade, and reasonable means of earning a living for the displaced Scots. This condition precipitated a movement to America, which began in 1649 and continued to the year 1776. In this period of time, it is estimated that 250,000 people came to America. The ports of embarkation were Newry, Londonderry, Lorne and Port Rush. The debarkation in America was at Philadelphia, New Castle, and Lewis on the Delaware and Charleston in South Carolina.<sup>7C</sup>

The Scots were industrious, God-fearing, aggressive, unafraid and adventurous. These traits placed them on the outskirts of the western frontier. They were well educated for the times, both in academics and in trades; the trades providing an apprenticeship for many at a very early age.<sup>7D</sup>

The Whitesides were no exception; for example, James was a tailor, Davis a shoemaker, Thomas a wheelwright (wagon maker) and



age given, is listed as a saddler. The information gleaned from census, land, tax and probate records indicates the following kin relationship: James and Davis were brothers. Thomas in East Nantmeal is either a brother or father to James and Davis. James, the saddler, is listed as a very close kin. Thomas, in East Nantmeal had a (BBS - Black Smith Shop) - at his residence. We also find that Thomas, son of James Sr., and his wife were buried in a cemetery near Nantmeal. It would seem natural that Thomas, son of James Sr., lived in the family residence and had access to the shop. Thomas, son of James Sr., is listed on the tax records as a laborer. Davis lived in West Vincent and had a shoe shop and a farm. This would suggest that the farm was shared by James Sr. and Davis, until James Sr. married; this seems to be more than just a casual acquaintance. The families seem to be a very closely knit family unit. It appears, after James Sr. married that he moved to Coventry Township adjacent to Vincent, and here followed his trade as a tailor and the farm seems to be operated as a joint family venture.<sup>3</sup>

All families have a "David and Jonathan relationship" and James Sr. was no exception. His two grandsons, Davis and Jonathan must have been great admirers of their Great Uncle Davis, because both of them became shoemakers and lived in the residency of Great Uncle Davis until Davis, son of Hugh, married in the late 1840's and at this time the written record of Jonathan ends.<sup>3</sup>

This also explains the reason for many of the early settlers' names to be on the inmate rolls, including James White-

land very difficult.<sup>7A</sup> establishing the original settlers on a particular parcel of issued until all monies had been paid. This makes the task of contracts were on a long term basis and no deed to property was to buy clause was incorporated into the contract and many of the transact all leases, collections and sales. The lease and right land holders were not residents of the area; but hired agents to further into the frontier on a more secure land system. The many of the settlers, and they sold their improvements and moved land schemes were prevalent. These scam ventures frightened The settlers were mainly on short term leases and fraudulent. to another, he could only sell his residency and improvements. clear title to the 31,000 acres of land. If one individual sold Before this time (20 June 1792) none of the settlers had a

1791.<sup>7A</sup> could be given. This type of patent was approved on 5 December leased, sold or otherwise disposed of. Later granted patents acres of this was deeded back to the state. This could be 30,000 acres dated 20 April 1686 and at a later date 10,000 Vincent, Major Robert Thompson, and Daniel Cox were each deeded groups. Large grants were made to individuals. Sir Matthew William Penn. He in turn granted settlements to individuals and tracks of land in Chester County were originally granted to secure, thus creating a difficult ownership problem. Great The clear title to the land in Vincent was difficult to

John.<sup>7E</sup> later married her - she was the daughter of James Evans and Mary Lewis: "James Whitesides Sr. was a neighbor to Ann Evans." He Whitesides, son of James Jr., as told to E.M. Whitesides, son of (following considerable research) is the verbal record of Lewis Ireland. Probably the best information concerning the residence the residence of James Sr. in Vincent after his arrival from It is a difficult task to establish the exact location of

It is a difficult task to establish the exact location of the residence of James Sr. in Vincent after his arrival from Ireland. Probably the best information concerning the residence (following considerable research) is the verbal record of Lewis Whitesides, son of James Jr., as told to E.M. Whitesides, son of Lewis: "James Whitesides Sr. was a neighbor to Ann Evans." He later married her - she was the daughter of James Evans and Mary John.<sup>7E</sup>

The clear title to the land in Vincent was difficult to secure, thus creating a difficult ownership problem. Great tracks of land in Chester County were originally granted to William Penn. He in turn granted settlements to individuals and groups. Large grants were made to individuals. Sir Matthew Vincent, Major Robert Thompson, and Daniel Cox were each deeded 30,000 acres dated 20 April 1686 and at a later date 10,000 acres of this was deeded back to the state. This could be leased, sold or otherwise disposed of. Later granted patents could be given. This type of patent was approved on 5 December 1791.<sup>7A</sup>

Before this time (20 June 1792) none of the settlers had a clear title to the 31,000 acres of land. If one individual sold to another, he could only sell his residency and improvements. The settlers were mainly on short term leases and fraudulent land schemes were prevalent. These scam ventures frightened

Henry Benner (first generation, #5), married Penninah Evans, daughter of Joshua and Mary Thomas Evahs. Their children were:

- 1- Phillip Benner, born 1806
- 2- Hauser Benner, born 1808
- 3- Penninah Benner, born 9 Apr 1810, married Henry Stiteler

Third Generation:

Elizabeth Evans (daughter of Esther and Daniel, second generation, #3) married Joshua Evahs...

And so the story returns to the Evans branch.

Fourth Generation (continued):

- 5 - Mary Ann, born 29 Sept 1856 in Kaysville, Utah. Married 16 Oct 1876 to Martin Lorenzo, died 19 Sept 1892.
- 6 - William Edward, born 29 Nov 1858 in Grantsville, married 27 Oct 1881 to Lily Mae Severe, died 25 Jan 1930.
- 7 - Penninah Susan, born 14 Jan 1862 in Grantsville, Utah. Married 2 Feb 1882 to James Leischman Wrathall, died 29 May 1953.
- 8 - Hyrum Lewis, born 14 Apr 1864, married 28 July 1886 to Elsie Ann Hudson.
- 9 - Ada Rosetta, born 29 Oct 1867 in Grantsville, Utah. Married Axel Oscar Frisco Neilson, died 13 August 1897.<sup>11B</sup>

**Lewis Whitesides (son of James Jr. and Penninah) and Susan Perkins:**

Lewis was born in East Nantmeal Chester, PA on 26 March 1828. When he was one month old his mother died and he was reared in his early youth by Aunt Mary and Uncle John (Billy) Wilson in Kimberton West Vincent Chester, PA. He moved west with the father and family to Montrose, Iowa, a convert to Mormonism. After his father died in 1842, Lewis and his sister Elizabeth, married to Samuel L. Forgues, returned to Chester Co., PA; the return was of short duration, because we soon find him in Iowa again, where he met and married Susan Perkins 5 May 1850 and migrated with the Mormon Saints to the Utah Valleys, namely Kaysville, Utah. Upon his arrival, he finds his brother-in-law Edward Hunter and sister Mary, already established in a home and farm on Fidler's Creek; soon after Edward moves to Grantsville and Lewis moves into the homestead. The children were:

- 1 - Elizabeth, born 13 Nov 1851, in Council Bluff, Iowa, married Ephraim Peter Ellison 20 Jan 1873, and died 14 July 1916.
- 2 - Ann Deseret, born 20 Dec 1853 in Kaysville, Utah, married 28 May 1868 to Joshua Harris, died 16 Feb 1938.
- 3 - James Lewis, born 28 July 1856, in Kaysville, Utah, married 19 Dec 1878 to Alice Ann Bennett, died 27 Nov 1885.
- 4 - Marion Mark (Jody), born 29 July 1858, married Mary Ellen Bennett 5 Jan 1882 and died 10 Mar 1939.

sides. He probably bought land in Vincent in good faith and the legal owner filed charges against him, or the lease and taxes were too much for an immigrant to pay and the property was lost.<sup>3B</sup>

The following is probably a true story of our James Whitesides Sr.:

"Took possession - Spring following, erected a stone dwelling with Spring house and cellar under. Here I lived on year (1799) before I took a plow in my hand (pulled by one horse and one cow). Never before - I made my living at my trade (tailoring) with respect which I followed 45 years day and night. The place was very very poor, no man could make a liven on nothing but garlic and brier groweth on it and rough on accounts of stones. I took to liming a little and cleared the stone off, I ploughed deep by which means I destroyed the carlic and briers which I could -- that all of stone -- all my land I made new to yield to abundance and was clear and clean as a garden and along the woods I got ditcher made -- planted (fruit tree and berries) and the ground bore better where before nothing grew."<sup>7D</sup>

In order to establish the first residency of James Whitesides Sr., it will be necessary to use an indirect approach, because of the limited information available. Remember James Whitesides Sr. was neighbor to James Evans, father of Ann. He first appears on the tax records in Vincent Township in the year 1758; also included were the following names of the Evans Family: David, Rees, Morris and Lewis an inmate.

James and Morris Evans continue to be on the tax records until the year 1783 and 1784 or until the death of both. The acreage is not listed until the year 1765; James had 130 acres and Morris 50 acres. The Last Will and Testament of Morris Evans, 17 March 1783, included James as his brother and he bequeathed to him five pounds and a white cloth jacket. The tax records include James and Morris Evans in the same vicinity, possibly adjoining in West Vincent Township. "Morris Evans, the first settler adjoining the place now shown as Issac and Nathan Hawks' place, had their meeting house and grave yard on the ground that became Judge John Ralston's place. The Evans family

*from Shaeffer*

dispersed and the judge moved in."<sup>12</sup>

The early resident map of West Vincent indicates the area of John Ralston Property. It is on the Pugh Town Road Junction with the Eagle and Kimberton Road. Also, not on the map the estate of Sarah Pugh and the residence of Evan Roberts. This follows, the direction to location, in the advertisement of the sale of James Whitesides Sr. Land (27 November 1822):

"James Whitesides of Vincent Township purchased from Thomas Willing Esq. of Philadelphia 40 acres of land, adjoining John and Jonathan Pugh."

*see 1795 map \**

This is the best possible location of the land he settled on after coming to America. His land was probably under lease until final payment. He worked and improved the land until it was in a stage of high production as evidenced in the advertisement for sale.

The second residency of James Sr. was in Coventry. The tax records for the year 1788-1789 list James with 25 acres of land, 1 horse and 1 cow. In addition the tax records of the years 1807-1814, James is taxed as a tailor in the same township. James Jr., when he received his patriarchal blessing under the hands of Hyrum Smith dated 20 September 1841 listed the same residency: "The patriarchal blessing of James Whitesides, son of James and Ann Whitesides, born in Coventry Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, the 31 October 1794."<sup>3</sup>

### Family Life

There isn't a known written record of the marriage of Ann Evans and James Sr. The nearest approximation that can be determined is the birth of the first son, William, born 7 July 1781. We assume that the eventful marriage took place in the late 1770's and was performed by a visiting pastor in the area.

The union of this couple, brought into the world eleven children in a span of twenty years. All the children reached maturity and all married and had families, and remained in the

area or in surrounding Township's except three who died in their early years. This is a typical obituary of a family member:

"James Whitesides, one of the oldest residents of Northern Chester County, died at his home near Pughtown yesterday. His death was due to infirmities of old age, he being in his 90th year. Mr. Whitesides was born in 1820 and all his life span has been spent in Northern Chester County. He was born in West Vincent Township and was the second son of Hugh Whitesides. His grandfather came from Ireland. The paternal Whitesides believed in large families as were many of his neighbors and the Whitesides family consisted of eight children."

[It wouldn't be too far amiss to say that this James Whitesides was born in the James Sr. West Vincent Home, and died in the Coventry Home.]

"Mr. Whitesides was an ardent Democrat and voted that ticket consistently since he attained the majority. He was active for his advanced age and took a keen interest in the affairs of the world at large. His delight was to read in the newspapers the records of the world doings and he marveled at the wonders that have accomplished in all the fields since he was a boy."8B

### Religion

[1799] "When I first settled here I may safely say that one third of the inhabitants of this township did not attend to any worship -- but must say to the credit of but a few that a great change has taken place [1845] in my time respecting refinement and where we meet at neighbors' gatherings we observe but few bleeding faces like wild bullocks as in former times. In those times you could hardly gather anywhere but some had to go home with bruised and bloody faces. They did not consider a meeting honorable where no fighting took place to have something to talk about thereafter and even in harvest times there was no fun to talk about if it came off without a fight or from two or three laying in the fence corner long before night and when they came to supper to take first a dram when even they had too much already and then again after supper to take a starting dram. We read that after God had created all and cast over it all he had formed he pronounced it all good and then gave directions how people to make use of all he had made and created and all to their benefit, but not to their destruction.7D I been the first church man in these parts of the

*From  
Shedd's History*



*From Chapter*

country that refused liquors to workman as I could persive no good derive from giving it and never made a custom to use it out in the field in hay making and harvesting best paid the hands 12 1/2 cts more wages to buy themselves."7A

The church activities consisted of two groups of the Baptist faith and the Evangelical and Reformed German. The services were held in two separate areas some distance from the members. An example from the Last Will and Testament of John Evans dated 25 July 1803 shows he left money to the St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley. This church was located in Tredyfrin Township. And he also left money to the Baptist Meeting near Yellow Springs, later known as Crystal Springs in the West Pikeland Township. This was the central area of religious meetings and instructions and also many of the members were buried in the local cemetery. The regular minister resided there and traveled among the members in the outlying townships on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis. It should be noted very few members attended regular religious services.<sup>6</sup>

The Whitesides associated with the St. Peter's Reformed Church in West Pikeland. The record indicated that a great spiritual awakening occurred in 1830 which was fantastic as to members seeking religion and generous donations of time and money to religious groups.<sup>6</sup>

Just one of those miraculous occurrences which no one could explain. Even the Lutherans and the Episcopalians joined forces and built a new church which was dedicated on 12 April 1836. The ministers residing here were Rev. Jesse B. Knipe (Reformed), Jacob Wampole and Conrad Miller (Lutherans) and Levi Bull (Episcopal). The arrangement between the groups for use of the building was on a bi-weekly basis.<sup>6C</sup>

Many of the vital records of the Whitesides family are preserved here and a number of members of the family are buried in the church cemetery. (Exhibit #6, A-J)

In summary, the Ulster Scots brought to the back country where they flocked a toughness and Calvinistic Communitarianism

THE WHITESIDES GENEALOGY  
One Century of Whitesides (1775-1875)

First Generation:

- 1 - **James Whitesides** born in 1757 in Ireland and Migrated to America when he was 18 years old.
- 2 - Davis Whitesides born in 1755, came to America with his brother James.
- 3 - Thomas Whitesides - no age given, either the father or a brother.
- 4 - James Whitesides, a kin of James, no other details given.

Second Generation:

**James Whitesides** lived his life time in Vincent and Coventry Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania and married Ann Evans, a neighbor in the late 1770's and he reared 11 children and died in Coventry on the 18 Feb 1822. Second Generation Children were:

- 1 - William, born 7 July 1781 and expired 30 April 1809. There is no record of marriage or leaving issue.
- 2 - John, born 26 Feb 1783. The records are incomplete, he probably married, but in later life he lived with a bachelor relative.
- 3 - Hannah, born 28 Sept 1784 and expired 3 May 1806 without marriage or issue.
- 4 - Mary, born 1 Feb 1787, married John Wilson in the year 1815 and expired 19 June 1862. \*
- 5 - Hugh, born 19 Nov 1788, married Hannah Stevens in the year 1818, expired 17 May 1858. The text for his funeral from Isaiah 55:6.
- 6 - Margaret, born 21 June 1791, married George Priser in the year 1825, exact date of death not known.
- 7 - Joshua, born 26 Sept 1792, expired before 1820.
- 8 - **James**, born 31 Oct. 1794, married 1) Penninah Evans and 2) Eliza Kirkpatrick, expired 11 Oct 1842 in Montrose Lee County, Iowa.
- 9 - Elizabeth, born 21 Nov 1796, married Henry Smith, I have failed to find records of her family or death.

Second Generation (continued):

- 10 - Thomas, born 16 Nov 1798, married Margaret Hoffacre and expired 1 April 1872.
- 11 - Sarah, born 1 Sept 1801 and married Isaac Youngblood, expired the 25 Mar 1867. 11B

Third Generation:

**Mary (2nd Generation #4) and John Wilson:**

- 1 - Mary, born 13 Aug 1816 and expired 20 Apr 1909, unmarried.
- 2 - James, born 31 March 1820, married Elizabeth C. Emery 1846 and had 8 children.

Mary and John had two other children that died in infancy.

Mary and John Wilson took on the responsibility of rearing four children of her brother James Whitesides Jr., after the death of his wife Penninah. The children were very young, in fact the youngest, Lewis, was only one month old. Mary is buried in West Vincent Baptist Cemetery, Birchrunville, Chester PA. The text for her funeral sermon was from Amos 4:12. 11B

**Hugh (2nd Generation #5) and Hannah Stevens:**

Hugh was classified as a plasterer by trade. 11B

- 1 - Davis, born in 1819 in West Vincent and married Sarah Hamilton.
- 2 - James, born 1820 and married Mary Haffecker 23 Dec. 1856, expired 24 Feb 1909.
- 3 - Jonathan, born in 1823.
- 4 - Addison, born in 1825 and died as a child.
- 5 - Mary, born 1827, married Christian Funk.
- 6 - Benjamin, born in 1828 and married Ruth Williby.
- 7 - Nathan, born in 1830 and died in 1907.
- 8 - Rachel, born in 1831 and expired as a child.
- 9 - Hugh, born in 1833, married Susan Shaw, 24 Dec. 1874.
- 10 - Priscilla M., born in 1835 and married John Evans.

Third Generation (continued):

**Margaret (2nd Generation #6) and George Priser:**

George was a wheelwright by trade and they resided in East Nantmeal.<sup>11B</sup> Their children were:

- 1 - Abraham, born in 1827.
- 2 - Ann, born in 1828.
- 3 - Mary, born in 1830.

*at W. Davis  
Corner*

**James Jr. (2nd Generation #8)** had a very full and interesting life. He first appears on record as a schoolmaster in East Nantmeal in the year 1815. He later married Penninah Evans in the year 1820 (may I suggest she was one of his students). Not only was he a school teacher, he also appears in the courts as a lawyer in defense of individuals. He was also delegated by his mother, brothers and sisters to handle the estate of his deceased father, James Sr. He appears on the tax records as a merchant in East Nantmeal and owning 27 acres of land. His lovely wife (Penninah) dies soon after the birth of their 4th child, Lewis, in 1828. Then shortly thereafter, he seems to be associated with his brother-in-law John Wilson, in the mercantile business in Kimberton West Vincent. James Jr. married his housekeeper, Eliza Kirkpatrick. He was converted to the Mormon Faith, (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) in the late thirty's and soon after moved with the saints to Montrose Lee County, Iowa with his wife Eliza and nine children. While residing there, he contacted the swamp fever and died on 11 Oct 1842.<sup>2B</sup>

**James Jr. and Penninah:**

- 1 - Morris, born 15 June 1821, married Margaret Pierce 1844, expired in Montrose, Iowa 19 Feb. 1845.
- 2 - Elizabeth, born 3 Feb 1824, married Samuel Forgues in 1842; went west to Montrose with her father and after his death returned to Chester County, PA.
- 3 - Mary Ann, born 25 Dec 1825, married Edward Hunter nov 1843 and died 20 Nov 1914 in Grantsville, Utah.
- 4 - Lewis, born 26 March 1828, married Susan Perkins 5 May 1850 and died 23 Feb 1899 in Kaysville, Utah.<sup>11B</sup>

Third Generation (continued):

**James Jr. and Eliza Kirkpatrick:**

- 1 - Oliver, born 22 Sept. 1830, unmarried, died in Montrose, Iowa 17 Oct 1842.
- 2 - Sarah, born 18 March, 1832, married Samuel Brooke, went to California in the early 1850's and settled in San Bernardino County.
- 3 - Margaret, born 20 June 1834, died 13 Oct 1842 in Montrose, Iowa.
- 4 - Rebecca, born 21 June 1836 and died 21 Oct 1837.
- 5 - Mark, born 10 June 1838 and went to California with his mother. Unmarried.
- 6 - Parley P., born 27 March 1840 and killed by Indians in California 25 March 1866.11B

**Thomas (2nd Generation #10) and Margaret Hoffacre:**

Thomas helped his brother Hugh with the farm in West Vincent after the death of his father. He then appears in East Nantmeal and marries, he resides in East Nantmeal until he expired and is buried in the cemetery near the residence. The children were:

- 1 - Susan, born in 1825 and married M.A. Lotta.
- 2 - Henry, born in 1828.
- 3 - James, born in 1830.
- 4 - Levi, born in 1839 and expired 26 April 1863.
- 5 - Thomas Jr., born in 1841, married Mary Ann Wynn 30 May 1867.
- 6 - Harriet, born 1846 and died 8 April 1859.11B

Third Generation (continued):

**Sarah (2nd Generation #11) and Isaac Youngblood:**

They were married 27 Oct. 1824. He was a farmer and shoemaker by trade and they resided in East Coventry. Sarah expired 25 March 1867 and Isaac 23 June 1866 and they were buried in the East Coventry Reformed Church Cemetery. The children were:

- 1 - Isaac, born in 1828.
- 2 - Mary, born 23 Feb 1830, unmarried and died 9 Dec 1875.
- 3 - Ann, born in 1832.
- 4 - Eliza, born in 1834.
- 5 - John, born 25 Jan 1835 and died 30 May 1840.
- 6 - Margaret, born in 1827.<sup>11B</sup>

Fourth Generation:

**James Wilson (son of Mary and John Wilson) and Elizabeth C. Emery.**

"James Wilson, a prominent farmer and stock dealer at Kimberton for some years engaged in merchandising at Wilson's Corner is the only surviving son of John and Mary (Whitesides) Wilson, born 31 March 1820 in West Vincent Township, two children Mary Ann and James Wilson as Episcopalian." The children were:

*Wilson's Corner*

- 1 - Sarah Amanda, born 1847, expired 1 July 1848.
- 2 - John H., born in 1849.
- 3 - Emma H., born in 1852 and married Abraham Pugh.
- 4 - Mary H., born in 1855.
- 5 - Ida Ella, born in 1858.
- 6 - Thomas B., born in 1859 and married a Miss Sloyer.
- 7 - Laura, born in 1863 and married a Ralph Bush.
- 8 - Clara, born 1861.<sup>11B</sup>

Fourth Generation (continued):

**Davis Whitesides (son of Hugh and Hannah) and Sarah Hamilton:**

Davis was a shoemaker by trade and lived in West Vincent Town-  
ship, probably in the old house of Grandfather James and Great  
Uncle Davis. He married Sarah Hamilton. The children were:

*was  
Buckminster*

- 1 - William, born in 1849.
- 2 - Hugh, born in 1852.
- 3 - Susannah, born in 1854.
- 4 - James, born in 1857.
- 5 - Hannah, born in 1859.11B

**James (son of Thomas and Margaret) and Mary Hoffeecker:**

James was a stone mason by trade. The children were:

- 1 - Clara, born in 1857, married John Wiley.
- 2 - Ella, born in 1859; married George Miller.
- 3 - Ida, born in 1861.11B

**Mary Ann Whitesides (daughter of James Jr and Penninah) and Edward Hunter:**

Edward Hunter had a long and interesting story in his lifetime. They were married in Nauvoo, Illinois. He went with the Mormon Battalion through California, was one of the early Bishops, first settling in Kaysville, Utah and finally, residing in Grantsville, Utah. The children were:

- 1 - Sarah Ann, born 29, Oct 1844 in Nauvoo, Illinois. Married 3 Feb 1862 to Hyrum Ebenezer Boothe and died in Grantsville, Utah 13 July 1907.
- 2 - Margaret Whitesides, born 26 July 1848 in Salt Lake City, married William Mitten Rydalch and died 10 Oct 1867.
- 3 - Elizabeth Rebecca, born 12 April 1851 in Kaysville, Utah, married 12 Feb 1872 to George Matthews, and died 9 Dec 1950.
- 4 - Emily Jennis, born 24 Nov 1854 in Kaysville, Utah. Married 22 Feb 1874 to Gustave Anderson, died 17 Nov 1911.