

Individual Narrative of Abigail⁶ Leverich [55] First Wife of Alexander Whaley

Abigail Leverich^{1,2,3,4,5} was born on 16 Jul 1752 at Newtown, Queens Co, New York, the daughter of William Leverich and Dorothy Morse. The birth date is reported by James Riker in the *Annals of Newtown*, but a source is not cited.⁶ Abigail Leverich was baptized on 24 September 1752 at the Newtown Presbyterian Church. Also baptized on the same date were her half-brother John and half-sister Amy.⁷ Abigail married Alexander Whaley on 4 Mar 1773 at Newtown, Queens, New York, at the Newtown Presbyterian Church.^{8,9}

Alexander Whaley was born 27 July 1746 in Montville, New London Co, Connecticut. Alexander was the son of Alexander Whaley and Elizabeth Shaw.^{10,11,12,13,14}

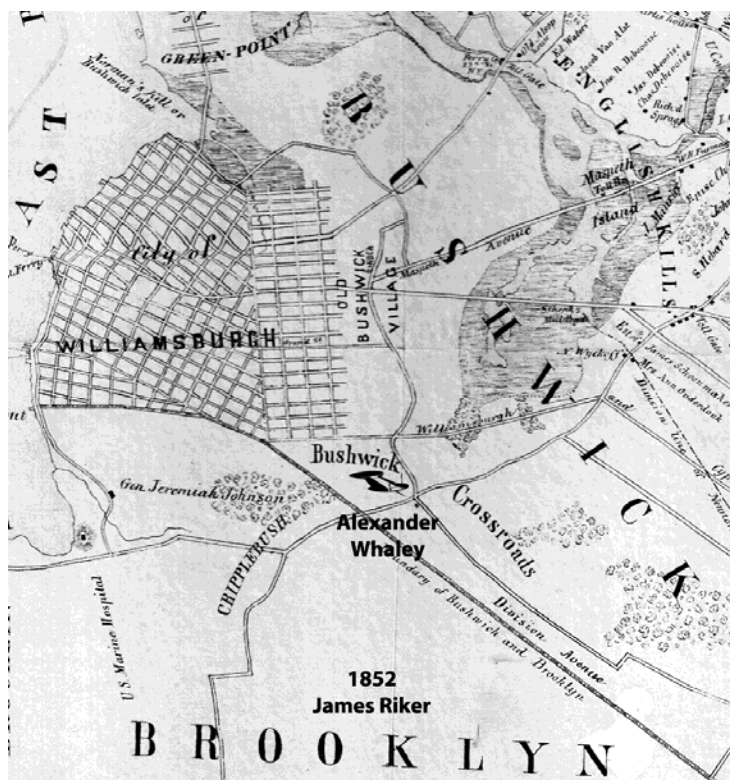
Tradition has it that Alexander Whaley was a patriot and fervent supporter of the whig cause during the American Revolutionary War. The Brooklyn historian, Henry Reed Stiles, writes of Alexander: "Alexander Whaley was one of those decided characters of whom we should be glad to learn much more, than we have been able to ascertain ... He was a blacksmith residing at the Bushwick Cross Roads, on land forming a part of Abraham Rapelye's forfeited estates, and which he purchased at the commissioners' sale, March 21, 1785. The building which Mr. Whaley occupied was erected by himself, on the south side of the present Flushing avenue, his liberty-sign pole rising from a little knoll some twenty feet west of the house ... Bold, faithful, and patriotic, and odd withal, he made his mark upon the day and generations in which he lived. His obituary notice says that "he was one of the pioneers of American liberty, being one of those who assisted in throwing the tea overboard in Boston harbor. He was the confidential friend of Washington, and in all the relations of life he always did his duty."^{15,16}

Although Alexander has not been associated to service with a specific military unit, he is listed in the Daughters of the American Revolution Ancestor database in the category "patriotic service New York". The DAR defines this as follows: "Patriots of the Revolution are considered to be those men and women who by an act or series of actions demonstrated unflinching loyalty to the cause of American Independence from England."^{17,18}

A list of voters for and against Deputies to represent in Provincial Congress, was taken at Jamaica in and for Queens County on Tuesday November 7, 1775, and continued to Saturday following 5 o'clock afternoon. Alexander Whaley was listed among those voting in support of deputies.¹⁹ Evidence to confirm Alexander Whaley's participation in the "Boston Tea Party" has not been found. He is not included in a "list of known participants" published on the web site of the Boston Tea Party Historical Society. However, the site also notes that "not all of the participants are known".²⁰ In an application to join the Sons of the American Revolution, George Clinton Whaley, a great grandson of Alexander Whaley, states that "It has been a family tradition that Alexander Whaley carried the last dispatch from General Washington after the Battle of Long Island."²¹

On 21 March 1785, Alexander Whaley, blacksmith of Bushwick, Kings Co, New York purchased 20 acres of land for £525 from Isaac Stautenberg, one of the Commissioners of Forfeiture for the Southern District of New York. The land was part of a farm confiscated from the loyalist Abraham Rapelye. The property was bounded southerly on the road from Brooklyn Ferry to New Town, easterly by the lands in the possession Simon Lamberson, northerly by the lands in the possession of Abraham Lagnair and lands in the possession of Jacob Boerum, and westerly by the lands in the possession of Gabriel Cook, being divided into two lotts by the Road that leads to Bushwick Church, and also a piece of Salt Meadow at Bushwick Meadows. The deed was witnessed by William Leverich Jr.²² Eugene L. Armbruster, in his book *The Eastern District of Brooklyn*, further describes the property of Alexander Whaley as being located on the south west corner of the intersection of what was then (1912) Flushing Avenue and Bushwick Avenue. A liberty pole stood in front of his blacksmith shop.²³

Alexander Whaley Residence: Bushwick, Kings Co, New York



Alexander Whaley is included on the 1786 Tax List of Newtown, Queens Co, New York.²⁴

William Leverich Sr of Newtown made his will dated 6 June 1787. In his will, he names his daughter Abigail Whaley, as well as her siblings Jesse, William, Edward, and James Leverich, Hannah Mc Donnough, Elizabeth, Sarah and Deborah Leverich. Also mentioned is grandson William Moore, son of deceased daughter Amy Moore.²⁵

Alexander Whaley appears in the 1790 U.S. Census for Bushwick, Kings Co, New York. The census tallies appear to account for all known family members, except sons David and James.²⁶

Abigail Leverich Whaley, "Mrs. Alexander Whaley", died on 18 Feb 1794 probably at Bushwick, Kings Co, New York. A place of burial has not been determined, but since her death was recorded at the Newtown Presbyterian Church, she may have been buried in the Church cemetery.²⁷

Alexander Whaley and Abigail Leverich had nine children:

- i. William L. Whaley, born 22 March 1774, died before 1832
- ii. David Whaley, born 16 February 1776, died May 1796
- iii. James Whaley, born 23 January 1779, died before 1832
- iv. Elizabeth Whaley, born 23 March 1781, died 1865, married first John Frederick Tunnard, married second Thomas Cowgill
- v. Sarah L. Whaley, born 8 March 1783, died 7 April 1865, married first Saint Armand Frere, married second Robert McDermot
- vi. John Whaley, born 22 April 1785, died at sea c 1810
- vii. Francis Whaley, born 28 September 1787, died as a child
- viii. Thomas Whaley, born 16 May 1790, died 14 February 1832, married Rachel Pye
- ix. Alexander Whaley, born 15 September 1791, died 2 February 1840, married first Maria (unidentified), married second Elizabeth Lane.^{28,29,30,31,32,33}

The birth dates were documented in a Whaley Family Record, communicated by Mrs. Ida Whaley Strahan of Montclair, New Jersey in a 12 March 1924 letter to Dr. Charles K. Clearwater. A transcription of this record is appended to the *Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths of the Bushwick Reformed Church*. Dr. Clearwater was the minister for 28 years at the Colonial Reformed Church at Newtown. A review of that Church's records did not disclose any Whaley family records.³⁴

In 1799, the State of New York enacted legislation providing for the collection of taxes on real estate and personal property. Alexander Whaley, husband of Abigail Leverich, is recorded on the tax assessment roles at Bushwick, Kings Co, New York for the period 1799-1801. The property was valued at \$2862.00 during this period of time.³⁵

Alexander Whaley appears in the 1800 U.S. Census for Bushwick, Kings Co, New York. The census tallies appear to account for all known family members, except perhaps sons John or Thomas.³⁶

The following advertisement appeared in the *New York Daily Advertiser* of 4 March 1803.

To let, for one or more years, a commodious house, situate in the township of Bushwick, Long-Island, at the cross roads, on the public stage road leading to Newtown and Flushing, five miles distant from Brooklyn Ferry, and one from Bushwick landing, where boats are constantly plying. The house has been occupied as a grocery and tavern, for which it is in every respect perfectly adapted, it contains eight rooms and a good dry cellar, has a pleasant garden, good sheds for horses, and an excellent well of water contiguous to the house. The flourishing and increasing state of this part of the Island would render this an eligible situation for a grocery or tavern. For particulars, enquire on the premises of ALEXANDER WHALEY. Bushwick, Feb. 28, 1803. N.B. Possession may be had the first day of April.³⁷

Alexander Whaley married a second time on 10 January 1805, Maria Shute Pollard, probably at Bushwick.^{38,39} Alexander Whaley and Maria Shute Pollard had five children.

- i. Abigail Whaley, born 6 June 1806, married Simon Healey
- ii. George Clinton Whaley, born 18 July 1808, married Catherine Bogart, died 11 June 1879
- iii. Susannah Whaley, born 22 April 1810
- iv. James Whaley, born 21 August 1813
- v. Lousia Shute Whaley, born 28 October 1818.^{40,41}

Alexander Whaley appears in the 1810 U.S. Census of Bushwick, Kings County, New York, heading a household of ten persons.⁴²

Alexander Whaley published the following advertisement in the *Long Island Star* on 17 May 1810.

Twenty Dollars Reward! On Saturday night, the 10th instant, about the time when "wander forth the sons of Belial, fraught with insolence and wine," a gang of midnight desperadoes proceeded to the property of the subscriber, and cut down his sign, together with the Liberty Pole from which it was suspended. By such dastardly conduct did those heroic children of darkness, attempt to manifest their enmity not only to me, but also to the emblem of liberty, to which I have reason to conclude they were always opposed, and which I have no doubt they still abhor. One of my neighbors informs me that he saw them at a distance, galloping off as if Old Nick was at their horses' heels (and no doubt he was) as fast as their horses' heels and a guilty conscience could drive them. He says they pursued a northerly direction, and supposes if they have kept on at the same rate they started they might by this time have reached Nova Scotia, where the sight of a liberty pole may no longer present to their affrighted imaginations, the fearful idea of a gallows, which, no doubt, they have so long and so richly deserved. There their delicate ears would no longer be annoyed with the terrible sounds of 'Tompkins and Liberty.' There they may sing without censure, 'God bless Great George, our King.' Nor will their adoption of the name, as a mask, and profession of attachment to the principles of Washington be longer necessary; and from thence, I sincerely hope for the good of my country, and the peace of society, they may never again return. Should they, however, not yet have passed the lines, and should they be found skulking in any part of the United States, whoever will bring them forward, so that they may be prosecuted to conviction, shall receive the above reward.

Alexander Whaley. "Bushwick, May 16th, 1810.

P. S. It is intended in the course of a few days to erect another liberty pole, and this I hope to accomplish without drawing on the funds of the Washington, the Washington Benevolent, or the Kings Co. Humane Society.⁴³

Alexander Whaley appears in the 1820 U.S. Census of Bushwick, Kings County, New York, heading a household of eight persons.⁴⁴

The following notice was published in the *New York Statesman* on 26 October 1824.

KINGS COUNTY. Flatbush, L.I. Oct. 19, 1824. At a meeting held in pursuance of public notice and adjournment this day, at the house of Simon Voris in this town, formed of Freemen from the towns in Kings County, who are opposed to caucus nominations and who are in favor of the People choosing the Presidential Electors of and who adhere to the great Republican truth that the majority of the people should govern in all cases. Resolved, that the following persons be appointed a Committee of Vigilance in the several towns in the county, with authority to aid in promoting the election of the above candidates ... Bushwick: Noah Waterbury, Daniel S. Griswold, Alexander Whaley, Peter Wyckoff.⁴⁵

On 5 February 1830, the *New York Spectator* published this death notice: "Suddenly, last evening, at Brooklyn, Long Island, Mrs. Maria Whaley, wife of Alexander Whaley, Sen., aged 50 years."⁴⁶

Alexander Whaley appears in the 1830 U.S. Census of Bushwick, Kings County, New York, heading a household of five persons. Alexander's son Thomas Whaley, appears in the 1830 census in Manhattan, Ward 6, New York County, New York, heading a household of 12 persons. Alexander Whaley, son of Alexander, appears in the 1830 census in Manhattan, Ward 20, New York County, New York, heading a household of 8.^{47,48,49}

On 16 February 1833, the *New York Commercial Advertiser* published the following death notice: "Another Revolutionary Soldier gone. At Bushwick, Kings county, L.I. on Friday afternoon, Mr. Alexander Whaley, in the 88th year of his age. He was one of the pioneers of American liberty, being one of those who assisted in throwing overboard the tea at Boston. He was a confidential friend of Washington, and received his commendation, and in all the different relations in life he always did his duty."⁵⁰

Alexander Whaley prepared a will dated 12 July 1832. The will was proved 17 May 1833. The probate record names the following heirs: grandsons John Whaley and David Whaley, sons of William Whaley, deceased; grandchildren John L, Henry H, Thomas, Rachel and Harriet Whaley, children of Thomas Whaley, deceased; sons Alexander Whaley Jr, George C Whaley, and James Whaley; daughters Elizabeth Whaley (Cowgil), Sarah L. McDermott, Abigail Whaley (Healy), Louisa Whaley. Nicholas N. Wyckoff and Nicholas Wyckoff were named executors of the will, and the will was witnessed by Peter V. Remsen and Tunis Rappelyea.⁵¹

The following advertisement appeared in the *New York Commercial Advertiser* on 6 February 1835: "Bushwick Property - six and one quarter acres of ground at Bushwick Cross Roads, formerly the residence of Alexander Whaley, deceased. On the premises are a large two story mansion, good barn and other out buildings, a well of excellent water, and a first rate orchard. The property is only about three miles from Brooklyn, and 1 mile from the Williamsburg Ferries. The sale will be positive."⁵²

Between 1 December 1834 and 5 October 1835, 11 land transactions are recorded in Kings Co, New York. The grantors are Alexander Whaley, and/or George C. Whaley, and/or Nicholas Wyckoff. The grantees include Jeremiah Johnson, Philip Reid, Peter V. Remsen, Nicholas N. Wyckoff, Thomas Nichols, Alexander Whaley, Joshua Powers, Sarah L. McDermott, Benjamin C. Watson, Lambert Wyckoff, and James M. Halsey.⁵³

The 20 February 1841 Final Accounting for the estate of Cornelia Leverich, widow of William Leverich, provides the following additional information: "the petition of Adrian Van Sinderen and John I Brower surviving executors of the last will and testament of William Leverich late of Newtown in Queens Co and State of New York, deceased ... the petitioners further show that Cornelia the widow of the said Testator, particularly named in the said last will and testament departed this life on the 28th day of January in the year 1840 without having been married since the death of said Testator; and that the Surviving Children of the Brothers and Sisters of the Said Testator, excepting Sarah as are expressly excepted in the said will, were on the day of the death of the said Cornelia, as follows, to wit ... Alexander Whaley Jr and Elizabeth Cowgill, children of Abigail Whaley, now deceased, who was a sister of the said Testator, and the wife of Alexander Whaley, now also deceased ...

And your Petitioners further show that they are informed and believe that the said Alexander Whaley Jr, departed this life on Sunday the 2nd day of February in the year 1840, being after the death of the said Cornelia the widow of the said Testator ... that the said Alexander Whaley Jr as your Petitioners are informed and believe died intestate but that no person hath as yet qualified as the legal representative of the estate ...

And your Petitioners further show that they are informed and believe that the said Elizabeth Cowgill formerly intermarried with Thomas Cowgill. That the said Thomas Cowgill on or about the 5th day of September in the year 1816 left his said wife and his home for the State of Ohio, that in the summer of the year 1817 he wrote to his said wife that he was then in the city of New Orleans and that since that period no intelligence whatsoever has been received of or from him, that it is not known what has become of him, but that he is believed to have died shortly thereafter. Your Petitioners therefore submit whether it is not safe and proper to treat the said Thomas as being presumed to be dead.”

Numerous, unsourced on-line references identify a William M. Whaley of Sevier County, Tennessee, husband of Mary Ann Ogle, as a son of Alexander Whaley and Abigail Leverich. This is unlikely. Alexander and Abigail already had a son William Leverich Whaley born in New York in 1774. William M. Whaley is found in the 1850, 1860, and 1870 census records of Sevier Co, Tennessee, which indicate that he was born about 1788 in South Carolina. Based upon the information currently available, Alexander Whaley and Abigail Leverich remained in New York, and were never in South Carolina. There are several other Whaley's present in North and South Carolina in the 1790 Census.^{54,55,56,57}

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- ⁴⁸1830 U.S. Census New York, New York Co. Ancestry.com, Provo, Utah. NARA, M19, Roll 96, Manhattan, Ward 6, page 458.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., Manhattan, Ward 10, page 32.
- ⁵⁰*New York Commercial Advertiser*, 16 February 1833, page 3.
- ⁵¹Alexander Whaley will (17 May 1833), Volume 4, pages 265-269; Kings County, New York Surrogate, 2 Johnson Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201. Hereinafter cited as 1833 Probate Alexander Whaley.
- ⁵²*New York Commercial Advertiser*, 6 February 1835, page 3.
- ⁵³Index Conveyances Kings Co NY Grantors 1685-1853 W: New York, Land Records, 1630-1975; Family Search; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; 35 North West Temple St, Salt Lake City, Utah 84150; Grantor Index 1685-1853 W; Libers 44:234 to 54:220. Hereinafter cited as Index Conveyances Kings Co NY.
- ⁵⁴WPA Project No. 165-97-6999(6115), *Bushwick Reformed Church Records*, Volume 2, page 270.
- ⁵⁵1850 U.S. Census Tennessee, Sevier Co. Ancestry.com, Provo, Utah. NARA, M432, Roll 892, Perry, page 133A.
- ⁵⁶1860 U.S. Census Tennessee, Sevier Co. Ancestry.com, Provo, Utah. NARA, M653, Roll 1270, District 2, page 390.
- ⁵⁷1870 U.S. Census Tennessee, Sevier Co. Ancestry.com, Provo, Utah. NARA, M593, Roll 1559, District 2, page 343A.