

Harvey Howard Whitehill – NM Pioneer

Unknown Author

Submitted by: Linda S. *Turner* Stailey

Harvey Howard Whitehill is a pioneer of New Mexico of the 1860s. We of the early part of the twentieth century cannot realize the conditions which met the pioneer of even twenty-five years ago, and little less dream of the environments which surrounded the early settler, whose residence here has covered three, four or five decades. Mr. Whitehill's memory bears the impress of the early historic annals of the Territory, and he has been a participant in many epochal events. He now lives in Silver City and is engaged in developing the natural resources of the Territory, especially in the line of silver mining.

A native of Ohio, Mr. Whitehill was born in Bellefontaine, September 2, 1837. In early life he followed railroad engineering in the middle west and in 1858, when a young man of twenty-one years, went to Colorado, spending most of his time in that state in Denver, Leadville and other mining districts, engaged in mining and prospecting. He devoted one year to mining in the Russell gulch and was sergeant-at-arms of the first provincial government of the Territory in 1859-60. Afterward, he returned to his mining and took out about twelve thousand dollars. He then returned to the San Juan country and spent the winter of 1860-1.

Formerly Mr. Whitehill had been engaged in freighting in the west before the advent of railroads, and during the Civil war had enlisted at Fort Union, where he was in active duty for about a year. He belonged to the company under command of Captain Joseph Simpson and First Lieutenant H. H. Halford. He was sworn in by Colonel Chatman of the regular army, commanding officer at Fort Union at that time, and afterward by Major Paul of the regular army. Lieutenant Halford was murdered at Elizabethtown in 1872. Mr. Whitehill continued to serve until honorably discharged in 1862. All of the members of the command furnished their own horses. Following his military service he became a government contractor for grain at Fort Union.

On the 19th of December, 1865, in Denver, Colorado, Mr. Whitehill was married to Harriet M. Stevens and about 1866 or 1867 they came to New Mexico, locating in Elizabethtown during the days of the first gold excitement there. Mr. Whitehill gave his attention to placer mining and continued in that vicinity until 1870, when he moved to Silver City, where he has since been engaged in silver mining. He is familiar with all kinds of mining machinery and has done much work along that line here. He is also interested in cattle to some extent and has thus been closely associated with two of the most important sources of income to the Territory — the development of its rich mineral resources and the raising of livestock.

In his political affiliation Mr. Whitehill is a stalwart Democrat, active in the work of the party and having considerable influence in its local councils. He has filled various local offices and about 1880 was elected to the legislature. He is also 'prominent in the local Masonic lodge and is a man of genuine personal worth,' commanding and enjoying the esteem and confidence of those who know him. His life history, if written in detail, would present a characteristic picture of pioneer experiences during the days of Indian outbreaks, added to the hardships, privations, and difficulties that are always encountered upon the frontier. On various occasions he has had trouble with the Indians and has narrowly escaped with his life. One of his most exciting adventures occurred at Mogollon.

In 1894 Mr. Whitehill was called upon to mourn the loss of his wife, with whom he had traveled life's journey happily for almost thirty years. They were the parents of nine children : Harry V., who is engaged in the cattle business on the Mimbres ; Emma, the widow of W. H. Kilburn, of Silver City; Wayne W., who is interested in mining and makes his home at Silver City; Cornelius Cosgrove, who is engaged in the insurance business; Josie, the wife of Herbert H. Bishop, of San Francisco; Hattie, the wife of H. L. Dodson, of the Mimbres; Ollie, the wife of Robert Bell, of Silver City; and Carrie and Mary, who are at home with their father.

Cornelius C. Whitehill of this family was born in Silver City November 8, 1873 and was reared under the parental roof, acquiring his education in the public schools. During the earlier years of his manhood, he gave his attention principally to cattle ranching, but is now engaged in the real estate and insurance business and in both departments has a large clientage, being one of the representative and enterprising young business men of this part of the Territory. He was married on the 10th of June, 1895, to Miss May Biggs and their children are Cornelius O. and Clarice. Cornelius C. Whitehill is a member of the Elks Lodge, and is a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.