

# JAMES H. WHITLOCK (1829-1901) of QUINCY, PLUMAS CO., CA

Over the past 28 years of writing newsletters it has been difficult not to repeat myself or to write about persons who have been the subject of previous articles. In the case of James H. Whitlock I have made an exception because such interesting new information continues to come in about him. In June 1996 I did an article about the Whitlock mountains of Arizona and while we knew at that time that the mountains were named for James H. Whitlock, we knew very little about him at the time. In September 1998 new details about his life were known and I did another article at that time. The following article, send in by Lawrence Otis, adds so much more detail to the story I decided it was worth a third article.

This article is part of the Plumas Co. Biographies and is from *Illustrated History of Plumas, Lassen & Sierra Counties* written in 1882 by Fariss and Smith

MAJOR JAMES H. WHITLOCK was born May 15, 1829, in Union county, Illinois. Early in 1850 he started on the long journey across the plains to California. He left his home on the second of April, went to St. Louis, and paid in advance for a passage on a wagon train. Going to Fort Leavenworth by steamer, they started overland on the fourth of May. They met with many reverses on the journey, and when they reached Salt Lake City most of the horses were dead, and the proprietor of the train was a bankrupt individual. Mr. Whitlock and two others accepted one horse as their share, and started on foot to complete the journey, accompanied by one hundred emigrants, most of whom were in the same predicament. They hired a Mormon to pilot them into California; but after getting them across the desert, during the passage of which some of the emigrants died, he suddenly disappeared. On the twentieth day from Salt Lake City they finally discovered the emigrant trail, and after many hardships and privations, arrived at Hangtown (Placerville) on the twenty-fourth of August, Mr. Whitlock having lost sixty pounds of flesh on the trip. He engaged in mining during the fall and winter on Weaver creek, and made about \$2,000. In March, 1851, he came to Nelson creek, now in Plumas county, where he sunk all his money in a river claim in six weeks. Then he mined six miles farther up, with better success. He and his two comrades took a contract to furnish lumber for a flume, and made considerable at it by Christmas. In the spring they all engaged in fluming, and came out dead-broke in the fall, with numerous debts to pay. They then mined at Fiddler's flat and Henpeck flat, on Nelson creek. In January, 1853, their camp being without the means of subsistence, they left one man to take care of the claims, and the rest, twelve in number, went below for food. They experienced terrible hardships in breaking a trail through the snow, and finally the party got divided, Mr. Whitlock's party reaching a house on the third day. The others were not so fortunate. When they were rescued Walter Goodspeed was dead; H. Brown lived about two weeks, and William Phillips died six months afterward from the effects of the trip. At the fall election in November, 1854, Mr. Whitlock was elected county surveyor on the whig ticket, and was re-elected four successive subsequent times. Though elected in the fall of 1861 he did not qualify. He then raised a company of sixty-six men, was elected captain, and they were mustered in as company F., fifth infantry, California volunteers. Mr. Whitlock's commission dated from October 2, 1861. The company left Sacramento, February 2, 1862, established Camp Drum in Los Angeles county, now Wilmington, and from there went into Arizona. Whitlock was commanding officer at Tucson until April, 1863, when he was ordered to New Mexico, and did active service against the Indians. For gallant conduct in a battle with the Apaches in March, 1864, when a government train was recaptured from them, Mr. Whitlock was brevetted major. In October his company was mustered out, and he took a position in another regiment; he had charge of Fort Seldon, most of which he built, and afterwards was at Fort Garland, in Colorado, with the command of General Kit Carson, where he served the balance of his time until discharged at Santa Fe, December 5, 1866. He returned to Plumas county in April, 1867, having been absent five years and a half. In the fall he was

engaged in merchandising at Taylorville, but sold in 1868, and in 1870 embarked in the same business at Greenville, which he followed until 1876, when he sold again, went to the centennial, and was married in March, 1877, at Warren, Illinois, to Miss M. H. Baldwin, by whom he has had one son, Robert Greenleaf, now three years old. He returned to Plumas in April, 1877, and was elected to the legislature by the republicans, with a very large majority. In the fall of 1878 he commenced business at Quincy, and was appointed postmaster October 28, 1878.

-----

James H. Whitlock is part of our WHITLOCK23 chart, The Whitlocks of Henrico Co., Virginia. He was the son of William C. Whitlock and his wife Elizabeth. In March 1877 at Warren, Illinois, he married Mary H. Baldwin and they had one son, Robert Greenleaf Whitlock born about 1879. James H. Whitlock died in Quincy July 11, 1901. In 1901 Robert Greenleaf Whitlock is shown as a graduate of the California College of Pharmacy and in 1905 he was living at the Cooper Medical College in San Francisco. He graduated in 1907 and was a Stanford Alumnus as Stanford took over the Cooper Medical College in 1909. Robert Greenleaf Whitlock died Apr. 22, 1934.

SOURCES: X6756; X6778