

CHARLES WILLIAM WHITMORE

“Commanche”

OBITUARY

We say this word when it speaks of Indians, Commanche with emphasis on the “e” but Whitmore was called Commanch (without the “e” sound!)

Charles William Whitmore was born to Jacob and Susan (Susannah) Whitmor[e] as shown in the 1860 U.S. census (1 year). Born in St. Louis, MO, in 1859 or this small town near St Louis called Prairie, Schuyler, MO. His father was from Switzerland and his mother from Germany. At that time the Whitmor[e]s had three children: Jacob, Jr. (8) and Louisa (4) and Charles ((1).

Commanche told the community of Ten Sleep that as a young boy he and his sister had been stolen by hostile Indians along the Santa Fe Trail and he was later sold to the Spaniards where he worked the silver mines. He felt that his life with the Indians had made him an appropriate man to scout out the Little Big Horn situation. It was a wild tale, but the 1870 census shows the Whitmores[now spelled Wittmers] still in Prairie, Schuyler, MO, but Louisa and Charles are not named. Jacob, Jr. at that time was 18.

Also, Whitmore told around the town of Ten Sleep that there had been a military parade ground in the vicinity of what is now called Sitting Bull Park on the Big Horn NF. It seemed an attempt to justify his having served as a scout with the 7th U.S. Cavalry. Just prior to 1970, an Army canteen and a leather pouch that soldiers of that era carried bullets in, was found in Sitting Bull Park as evidence that there might truly have been a parade ground there. Thus, another of Commanche’s wild tales seems to have been verified.

There is a photo of Commanche in the book *Vanguards of the Valley*, by Faye V Bell. It was loaned to Faye by Margaret Sutherland Cogdill in 1985 for inclusion in the book. It shows him on a camping outing perhaps at roundup time or on a hunting trip. He was a small man and probably didn’t weigh over 115 pounds even ‘wringing wet”. ^[1] Charles William Whitmore passed away in 1934 at the age of 75.

^[1] This, too, is from *Vanguards of the Valley*

Old Pioneer, "Comanche" Dies After Short Illness

Charles William Whitmore, perhaps better known throughout the northern part of Wyoming as "Comanche", died in Worland Tuesday evening. His sudden demise was caused from a severe attack of stomach trouble, augmented by tick fever.

It is not definitely known if any relatives are living, altho in 1930 he had a sister, Mrs. Ben Brain and a brother, J. W. Whitmore both of whom lived in Colorado Springs Colorado.

Comanche was widely and favorably known in Northern Wyoming, especially among the older settlers, having traversed the Big Horn Basin area as a trapper and prospector as early as 1870 with his father and has lived closely in this region since 1878.

Born in Brown County, Ill., Comanche believed his birth day to be August 2, 1848 or 1858, and he did not know which date was correct his age was believed to be much older than he believed, by many old timers, who had known him over a period of many years.

He was captured by the Comanche Indians when just a small boy and lived with them for several years when he made his escape and by sheer accident ran across his father whom he prospected and trapped with until in the early seventies when he became a Free Lance Scout assisting the early settlers and rendering a most valuable service to the Government Troops on many occasions.

Comanches' life history if written up would portray a most interesting career. He was a man with few if any enemies and a world of friends. Proud independent resourceful courageous, he led a life, simple, sad and unpretending.

His great happiness was his generosity, his sincerity of purpose, and his love of the outdoors.

His life continually reflected a warmth and glow that will not

