

# CLAUDE H. WHAITE

**aka Claude Hamilton Blake**

Linked to Australasia and the Far East between 1889 and 1915, Claude H. Whaite first came to the region with the Brough and Boucicault Company. After several years working as an actor he moved New Zealand (1894-1903), establishing himself there as a scenic artist and manager. He later traversed both countries as an advance rep, and theatre and tour manager. Among the firms he was associated with were Maggie Moore, Forbes Wilson, Ada Juneen, Percy Dix, Brough-Flemming (and later Herbert Fleming), Harry Rickards, Allan Hamilton and West's Ltd. Whaite died in England in 1924 some four years after inheriting £14,000.

Claude Hamilton Blake (later Claude H. Whaite) was born on 9 September 1865 at Bayswater, Middlesex, the third child, and second son of Henry Blake, Clerk to the Commissioner of Sewers, and his wife Mary Anne (nee Kynaston). His other siblings included Henry K (1861-), Marion (1863), Blanche D. (1868-) and Beatrice (1870). The family later moved to London, with 1871 Census data recording that they and two servants were then living at 13 Horbury Crescent, Kensington, London. The 1881 census also records that Claude, then aged 15, was living at St Thomas Road in household of William Holt Schoolmaster.

By the time of his arrival in the Australian colonies on 28 October 1889 aboard the *Ormuz*, Blake had already adopted the new surname, Whaite, and established himself as an actor at the Savoy London.<sup>1</sup> Little is yet known about the four years he initially spent in Australia apart from the fact that he came here under engagement to Messrs Brough and Boucicault<sup>2</sup> and that he toured with Maggie Moore's company in the early 1890s. During this period he appears to have been employed largely as an actor, and is recorded as having appeared with Forbes Wilson's dramatic company in a season at the Theatre Royal, Brisbane in August 1893. That engagement, which included a production of *The Guv'nor*, appears to have ended on a sour note, however, with Whaite taking his employer to court in mid-September for wages owed - in this instance £6.15s.6d.<sup>3</sup>



*Theatre Magazine* (Sydney) Apr. (1907), 21.

In mid-1898 Whaite was engaged by [Ada Juneen](#) to act as the manager for what would become her ill-fated New Zealand tour. By the following year he had settled in Wellington, providing scenic art for local amateur and professional touring companies on both the North and South islands. By 1900 he was providing scenery for [Percy R. Dix](#), an association that led to him being appointed Dix's manager in Wellington and later his touring manager.



**Mel. B. Spurr**  
State Library of Victoria.

In September 1902 Whaite accepted an offer from Robert Brough to go with his company upon its Eastern tour including India China Japan. After the tour concluded he returned to the United Kingdom having received an offer to provide scenic art for a London-based theatrical firm.<sup>4</sup> While in England he was engaged by Herbert Flemming to bring English comedian and monologue entertainer [Mel. B. Spurr](#) to Australia and then travel ahead as his advance manager. The tour began in Melbourne on October 31 followed by Sydney, Tasmania, return seasons in Melbourne and Sydney (Town Hall), and later a tour of Northern New South Wales, Brisbane and New Zealand. After organising the latter tour Whaite returned to Australia to arrange Spurr's return tour, beginning in Melbourne to be followed by South Australia and Western Australia. The hugely popular tour ended abruptly near the end of the Melbourne season, however, when Spurr died in his hotel on 26 September from complications relating to diabetes.

Following the abrupt end of the Spurr tour, Whaite piloted the Turner Operatic and Concert Party through Tasmania (1904-05) and later managed the advance publicity for the Brough-Flemming Comedy Company's New Zealand and Australia tours (1905-07) and Herbert Flemming's Comedy Company (1908).

<sup>1</sup> *Nelson Evening Mail* (New Zealand) 21 Aug. 1899, 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Bush Advocate* (Dannevirke, New Zealand) 29 May 1902, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Brisbane Courier* 15 Sept. 1893, 4.

<sup>4</sup> "Entertainments Etc." *Evening Post* (Wellington, NZ) 15 Aug. 1902, 4.

After managing boxer Tommy Burns briefly in early 1909, an engagement that included Melbourne and New Zealand, Whaite took up an offer from [Harry Rickards](#) to oversee the entrepreneur's operations in Adelaide while M. Marcus (the theatre's regular manager) took a company on tour to New Zealand. In May Whaite also returned to New Zealand, this time in connection with Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company. He continued his association with Rickards in November, taking control of the entrepreneur's Dominion tour.

In May 1909 Whaite took a leave of absence from Harry Rickards to act as New Zealand tour manager for Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company. He then returned to the Rickards fold in October as advance agent for the entrepreneur's vaudeville company. Whaite began his association with film exhibition company West's Ltd, in 1911. His name is mentioned in connection with the opening of West's Wellington base, having collaborated with Victor Beck in providing decorations, and possibly art work, for the newly built the King's Theatre.<sup>5</sup> If he was not the theatre's manager by that time he was certainly engaged by West's sometime that year, a position he held until moving to Sydney for the company in late-1912.

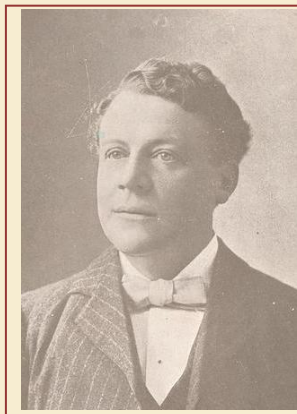


*J.C. Williamson's Life-story Told in his Own Words (1913).*



*Sydney Morning Herald 9 Aug. 1913, 2.*

**Herbert Flemming**  
National Library of Australia



After returning to Sydney, Whaite took up a managerial position at the Glacarium for West's but after the company temporarily ceased its operations there he was transferred to the Olympia in Oxford Street. He remained there up until at least February of 1915. After that time his name fails to register (in newspapers currently available through Trove) until 1920, by which time he had returned to England. The news from 1920 concerns the fortune left to him by a relative - the sum reported being in the vicinity of £14,000.<sup>6</sup> Four years later a number of newspapers in both Australia and New Zealand reported Whaite's death 26 August at Reading, England. He left behind a widow and one child.<sup>7</sup>

### **ADDITIONAL QUOTATIONS**

- A Mel. B. Spurr Reminiscence": Claude Whaite, at present in charge of the Olympia (Sydney) for West's Limited has been with that firm for three years. He put in the greater portion of this time in New Zealand. It was in October last that he came over here. Until West's Limited closed down at the Glacarium (Sydney) he was in charge there. Mr Whaite was with Brough and Boucicault, then with Brough, and lastly with Brough and Fleming [sic]. On and off he was with the Brough firm for 14 years. It was in that connection he went to England and returned to Australia with Mel. B. Spurr. He was with Mr Spurr throughout the latter's Australian season. "Yes," remarked Mr Whaite to the *Theatre*; "Mr Spurr's death was dramatically sudden. It occurred in Melbourne. Mr Spurr was not feeling well, with the result that he decided to take a week off. Neither Mr Spurr himself nor anybody else thought it was anything serious. Monday was to be the re-opening night. On the Saturday night Mr Fleming went out to see him at the George Hotel. He found him writing a song. "This," said Mr Spurr, referring to the song, "is going to be the biggest hit I ever made. I shall sing it on Monday night." Mr Fleming returned to his hotel-Menzie's. When he got to the hotel he was told a telephone message had been received that Mr Spurr had taken a bad turn. Mr Fleming returned to the George Hotel. He took Dr. Felix Myers with him. "He will not," said Dr Myers to Mr Fleming, after examining Mr Spurr "live till the morning." He died at four o'clock on the Sunday morning. He had been suffering from diabetes for over ten years (*Theatre Magazine* Sept. 1913, 34).

<sup>5</sup> "The King's Theatre: To Be Opened Tomorrow." *Dominion* (Wellington, NZ) 15 Mar. 1910, 6.

<sup>6</sup> "News of the Day." *Colonist* (Nelson, NZ) 25 Feb. 1920, 5. [column continued from page 4]

<sup>7</sup> "Mimes, Music, Records." *Evening Post* (Wellington, NZ) 8 Nov. 1924, 21.

## HISTORICAL NOTES AND CORRECTIONS

1. **Claude H. Whaite and Harry Whaite:** In its 1 September issue of 1906, the *Theatre Magazine* incorrectly aligned both men as being related. The par reads:

A contemporary tells us that courteous Claude Whaite of the Brough-Flemming Company, is a talented scenic artist. It must run in the family, for that is Harry Whaite's specialty, and frequenters of the Criterion during the coming season of the Brough-Flemming Company will find historic scenes among the main attractions (5).

It is not surprising that some confusion over identity occurred in relation to the two men as both also associated with Robert Brough during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Harry Whaite, for example, is known to have furnished the scenic art for Brough's production of *The Liar* (Opera House, June 1900).

2. **Claude H. Blake Last Will and Testament:**

This is the last will and testament of me Claude Hamilton Blake of Crown Farm Colnbrook Co Bucks Gentleman I appoint the Public Trustee to be the Executor and Trustee of this my Will I give and bequeath unto Edwin Geach of Cliff House Cremorne Milson Road Sydney Aust who has always been my best friend my gold Watch with an enamel portrait of Duke of Wellington on back together with my Gold Curb Chain and Seal I give devise and bequeath unto my Trustee all my real and residual personal estate including my land at Mirina Wellington NZ which is registered in my stage name of C.H. Whaite upon Trust that my Trustee shall sell call in and convert the same into money or each such thereof as shall not consist of money and shall with and out of the proceeds of each sale calling in and conversion and with and out of my ready money pay my funeral and testamentary expenses and debts and shall stand possessed of the residue then remaining in his hands In trust for and I give and bequeath the same to my Housekeeper Elsie Vernham of Crown Farm Colnbrook aforesaid absolutely I revoke all former Wills made by me IN WITNESS WHEREBY I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of November 1923. C.H. BLAKE. SIGNED by the Testator Claude Hamilton Blake as and for his last Will and Testament in the presence of us both present at the same time who at his request in his presence and in the presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names witnesses C.H. WOOD M.R.C.S.; R.C.P. Hermitage, Langley Bucks; M. THOMSON, Solicitor Slough.

On 22 October 1924 Probate of this Will was granted to The Public Trustee the sole Executor.

[Source: Ken Wheeler. *Professional Family History Research* ([www.thamesvalleyancestry.co.uk](http://www.thamesvalleyancestry.co.uk)).

3. **THE LONDON GAZETTE: 25 November 1924** [ctd. 9/11/2013]

NOTICE is hereby given, that all persons having any claim or demand against the estate of CLAUDE HAMILTON BLAKE (otherwise Whaite), late of Crown Farm, Colnbrook, Bucks, deceased (who died on the twenty sixth day of August, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-four, unto whose estate Probate was granted by the Principal Probate Registry on the twenty-second day of October, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-four), are hereby required to send particulars of their claims to the undersigned by the twenty-seventh day of December, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-four, after which date the distribution of the assets of the deceased will proceed amongst the persons entitled thereto, having regard only to the claims of which notice shall then be given. Dated this twentieth day of November, 1924.

Sarjeant and Budd, 150, Friar-street, Reading.

4. **Probate:**

Be it known that Claude Hamilton Blake of Crown Farm Colnbrook, Buckingham, died 20 August 1924 at 155 Bath Road Reading, Berks. And be it further known that at the date hereunder written the last Will and Testament of said deceased was proved and registered in Principal Probate Registry of H.M. Court of Justice and that administration of all the estate which by law devolved to and vests in the personal representative of the said deceased was granted by aforesaid Court to The Public Trustee the sole executor named in the said will dated 22 October 1924 Gross Value of Estate 842 pounds 16 shillings and 10 pence Net Value of Personal Estate 827 pounds 19 shillings 4 pence.

[no details]



## CAREER AND PERSONAL CHRONOLOGY

The following articles and reports, compiled by Joy Whaite,<sup>8</sup> relate to Claude H. Whaite's life and career from 1892 onwards. Additional information has been provided by Clay Djubal. All newspaper sources are from New Zealand unless otherwise noted

### 1892

**ca. May:** Appears with Maggie Moore Company in *Struck Oil* and *Forty-Nine* on tour through Queensland. Itinerary includes Rockhampton (Theatre Royal, ca. 16 May).

**ca. November:** Appears with Maggie Moore Company in *Struck Oil* and *Forty-Nine* at the Theatre Royal, Sydney. The season begins ca. 5 November. Whaite as cast as a waiter in *Forty-Nine*.

### 1894

- [Wellington] "Brisbane Gaiety Pantomime Co." *Sinbad the Sailor* [1893] including superb splendid and sensuous Transformation Scene specially painted by well known scenic artist Mr Claude H. Whaite" (*Evening Post* 30 Apr. 1894 3).

### 1897

- 5 February: Arrival Name: Mr C. Whaite Port of Departure: Melbourne Port of Arrival: Sydney, New South Wales Vessel Name: Tyrian.

### 1898

- Engaged as manager for [Ada Juneen's Melbourne Burlesque and Comedy Company](#) tour of New Zealand (*Evening Star* 16 June 1898, 3).

### 1899

- LOCAL AND GENERAL. Huia Minstrels at Hearn's Kiosk Worsley Bay...items given by Claude Whaite...contribution of last named being a clever exhibition of lightning painting in water colours (*Evening Post* 6 Feb. 1899 4).
- WELLINGTON WING WHISPER - Claude H. Whaite who painted scenery for recent Christchurch production of *Pirates of Penzance* is painting interiors for our Dramatic Students comedy *The Cabinet Minister* (*Otago Witness* 4 May 1899, 47).
- THE CABINET MINISTER. Scenery is the creation of Claude H. Whaite whose effects compassed with aid of F. Roberts of Opera House staff were splendidly illustrated in the opening act. A conservatory decorated after Eastern style in brilliant and harmonious colours with fountain of water playing among ferns and palms (*Evening Post* 11 May 1899, 6).
- Collier's comedy-opera *Dorothy* will be produced tomorrow by Nelson Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society... Scenery has been painted by Claude H. Whaite formerly of the Savoy London (*Nelson Evening Mail* 21 Aug. 1899, 2).

**DOROTHY**  
AT THE THEATRE ROYAL.  
OPENING NIGHT--  
**TO-MORROW,**  
(TUESDAY).  
DRAMATIS PERSONAE.  
Squire Bantam .. .. Mr F. Condel  
Geoffrey Wilder .. .. Mr J. Richard  
Henry Bhamwood .. .. Mr F. Kideo  
Leichter .. .. Mr F. Shalleras  
Tom Strutt .. .. Mr L. Lewis  
John Tuppitt .. .. Mr J. H. Fiane  
Servant to Bantam .. .. Mr E. Marks  
DOROTHY .. .. Miss M. Prat  
Lydia .. .. Miss H. Bovee  
Phyllis .. .. Miss T. Webb-Bowe  
Mrs Privet .. .. Mrs Langtre  
Lady Betty .. .. Miss G. Fe  
Front Seats, 1/-; Stalls, 2/6; Gallery, 2/-  
Pit 1/-.

*Nelson Evening Mail (NZ) 21 Aug. 1899, 3.*

### 1900

- NZ Electoral Roll City of Wellington #15171 Claude Hamilton Whaite, "Alabama," Little Buller St., scenic artist, residential.
- ENTERTAINMENTS. Criterion Theatre... model of garrison and defence works with two thousand model soldiers of Ladysmith during siege... from sketch ... Melton Prior... whole affair designed and modelled by Claude Whaite assisted by H. Fitzgerald [described as two young Wellington artists] (*Evening Post* 24 June 1900, 5).

<sup>8</sup> Joy Whaite is not a descendant of Claude H. Whaite/Blake. She is, however, a member of the Whaite family that is related to scenic artist Harry Whaite and his son Fred Whaite (composer/music director).

- ENTERTAINMENTS. The Grand Duke Wellington Amateur Operatic Society....Special scenery has been painted for the production by Claude H. Whaite whose painstaking brush work has been hard at work for some weeks past (*Evening Post* 13 June 1900, 6).
- [Wellington] "*The Babes in the Wood*." Magnificent new scenery by Claude H. Whaite, [Dix Gaiety Company](#) (*Free Lance* 22 Dec. 1900, 9).
- ENTERTAINMENTS, ETC. THE ARNOLD COMEDY SEASON. The scenic artist Claude H. Whaite has painted a succession of excellent canvasses which culminate in a transformation scene illustrating the seasons (*Evening Post* 27 Dec. 1900, 5).

## 1901

- DIX'S GAIETY. [Auckland] Claude H. Whaite who has been in charge of Wellington theatre is not only a capable manager but is an excellent scenic artist. Most of the charming stage pictures used as first parts have been from his prolific brush (*Observer* 6 Apr. 1901, 10).
- Dix's Gaiety Company. Various artists. Business Manager Claude H. Whaite (*Evening Post* 11 Apr. 1901, 6).
- ENTERTAINMENTS ETC. Tonight for the first time, a new first part setting entitled "The Silver Court" will be used. Claude H. Whaite has been engaged on the work for some time and something unique and handsome is promised (*Evening Post* 6 May 1901, 5).
- DRAMATIC AND MUSICAL. A very striking and picturesque first part entitled "The Silver Court" was introduced.... It is one of the handsomest set Claude H. Whaite has painted and does him very great credit. A picturesque court gleaming with silver and gold pierced with several archways affording visions of the gardens beyond... it has a really dazzling effect under the brilliant light of over 200 fairy lamps (*Free Lance* 11 May 1901, 14).
- MIMES AND MUSIC. Mr Claude H. Whaite local manager for [P.R. Dix](#) returned on Thursday night from a trip to Rotorua. Mr Whaite was much impressed with the wonders of Geyserland (*Evening Post* 5 Oct. 1901, 5).
- ENTERTAINMENTS ETC. [Madame Darto](#) had been presented with a handsome Maori mat... that she wore during an exhibition game of ping pong which she played later on in the evening with Claude H. Whaite manager of the Gaiety Company (*Evening Post* 6 Sept. 1901, 5).

## 1902

**T H E A T R E   R O Y A L .**

**DIX'S GAIETY COMPANY.**

Tremendous success of our new artists. The general verdict Nothing like it evrr seen before in this city. The best and biggest organisation of vaudeville talent ever introduced to the colonies. Greeted last night by a packed house. Calls and recalls, culminating in cheers and yells at those quaint performers, the

**THREE LENTONS,**

Ernest   Frank.   Kitty.

The renowned Novelty Acrobats and Hat-spinners. A Sensational Success.

(By arrangement with Mr. Harry Rickards.)

A Perfect Revelation to all who see it. Then there is that Popular Comedian,

**CHARLES FANING.**

**MURPHY AND MAC,**

The American Knockabout Comedians.

**MR. BERT INGRAM,**

The marvellous Bird Imitator and Siffleur.

The Lingard Sisters   Mr. Ernest Brinkman

Miss Georgie Devoe   Mr. Fred Norris

Miss Pearl Lovell   Mr. George Dean

Miss Ethel Gwynne   Mr. Les Warton

TUESDAY NEXT, 14th JANUARY,

First Appearance of the Charming Serio

**MISS MAY LEWIS.**

Prices 2s and 1s   Box Plan at Holliday's

Booking fee, Sixpence extra.

Business Manager, **CLAUDE H. WHAITE**

- AMUSEMENTS, MEETINGS, ETC. Claude Whaite, representative for Mr Dix, arrived in Wanganui today and Company opens on 12<sup>th</sup> instant (*Wanganui Herald* 5 May 1902, 3).
- DIX'S GAIETY COMPANY. P.R. Dix's Touring Co in Town Hall Dannekirke. Managed by Mr Claude H. Whaite (*Bush Advocate* 24 May 1902, 2).
- [Dannevirke/Hawkes Bay] PECULIAR CONDUCT. Claude Whaite who is in charge of Mr Dix's Touring Company has been identified with Mr Dix's business for the past 3 years... Mr Whaite originally came to Australia under engagement to Messrs Brough and Boucicault (*Bush Advocate* 29 May 1902, 2).
- [Wellington] Claude H. Whaite who has managed in Wellington since Mr Dix first started leaves for England shortly (*Observer* 9 Aug. 1902, 6).

*Free Lance* (Wellington, NZ) 11 Jan. 1902, 17.

- ENTERTAINMENTS ETC. Claude H. Whaite, who has been manager for P.R. Dix at Theatre Royal... has accepted an offer from Robert Brough to go with Brough Company upon its Eastern tour including India China Japan. Mr Whaite will leave Wellington on 20 September. He will afterwards accompany Mr and Mrs Brough as far as London where he has employment offering as a scenic artist a brand of work for which he has a special gift (*Evening Post* 15 Aug. 1902, 4).
- [Christchurch] Mr Claude H. Whaite, Manager for Mr Dix has accepted an offer to manage Mr Brough's Eastern Tour. [He] will leave Wellington on September 20 (*Star* 15 Aug. 1902, 3).
- [Wellington] MR. ALFRED HILL'S CONCERT. Claude H. Whaite who during past 2 years had acted as Wellington manager for P. R. Dix was entertained at a supper in Searls (Club) Hotel...by his friends prior to his departure from the Colony. Sir Joseph Ward...presented a well furnished travelling bag... and wished Mr Whaite the best of good fortune in his travels (*Evening Post* 20 Sept. 1902, 5).

### 1903

- MIMES AND MUSIC. Theatrical Clips: Claude Whaite the scenic artist (formerly manager for P.R. Dix) is in London on the lookout for opportunities (*Evening Post* 3 Oct. 1903, 11).

### 1904

- THE LORGNETTE Claude Whaite is in Tasmania arranging for Mel B. Spurr's appearance and will also herald for a New Zealand tour (*Observer* 20 Feb. 1904, 6).
- WELLINGTON WING WHISPERS. Claude H. Whaite the well-known scenic artist... writes from Melbourne that Mel B. Spurr, England's greatest society entertainer, is to begin a New Zealand tour at Auckland about 23 April. Mr Whaite is Spurr's touring manager (*Otago Witness* 6 Apr. 56).<sup>9</sup>
- ENTERTAINMENTS, ETC. SANFORD'S DRAMATIC COMPANY. [Wellington] Claude H. Whaite has arrived in town for the purpose of arranging for short season for Mel B. Spurr, which is to begin at Exchange Hall 18th instant (*Evening Post* 10 June 1904, 6).
- THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL NOTES. Claude Whaite touring manager [for Mel B. Spurr] will be in Dunedin shortly to make arrangements for the season (*Otago Witness* 6 July 1904, 68).
- PERSONAL MATTERS. [Wellington] Claude Whaite, business representative for Mel B. Spurr, is in town to arrange return season... beginning at Exchange Hall 4 August (*Evening Post* 25 July 1904, 5).
- [Ipswich, Qld] NOTES. Mr Claude Whaite returned from New Zealand to Melbourne, where Mr Mel. B. Spurr will open on Saturday next. The Land of the Moa tour is reported to have been a great success (*Queenslander*, 27 Aug. 1904, 27).

**MEL. B. SPURR**

—  
ATHENÆUM-HALL,  
—  
SATURDAY NEXT, OCTOBER 31.  
—

Mr. HERBERT FLEMING  
begs to Announce that he will have the Honour of  
Presenting, for  
A SHORT SEASON ONLY,

<p>IEL. B. SPURR, IEL. B. SPURR, IEL. B. SPURR, IEL. B. SPURR,</p>	<p>LONDON'S GREATEST SOCIETY ENTERTAINER</p>
<p>MEL. B. SPURR, MEL. B. SPURR, MEL. B. SPURR, MEL. B. SPURR,</p>	<p>LONDON'S GREATEST SOCIETY ENTERTAINER</p>

In His Entirely Original  
HUMOROUS, DRAMATIC, and MUSICAL  
ENTERTAINMENT,

is Given by Him for Upwards of 7000 Performances  
at the EGYPTIAN-HALL, LONDON.

PRICES, 3/, 2/, and 1/.

BOX-PLAN NOW OPEN at Messrs. GLEN and  
& Co.'s MUSIC WAREHOUSE, and at Menzies'.  
Doors open at 7.30, commencing at 8.10. Car  
riages, 10.15.

Business Manager, Mr. R. K. MATHEW.  
Advance Rep., CLAUDE H. WHAITE.

Argus (Melbourne) 28 Oct. 1903 12.

### 1905

- THE GHOST WALK. Claude Whaite is piloting Turner Operatic and Concert Company through Tasmania (*Otago Witness* 4 Jan. 1905, 60).
- THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL NOTES. Claude Whaite last through NZ with late lamented Mel B. Spurr forwards picture postcards of Melbourne Concert and Operatic Company which he is touring in Tasmania (*Otago Witness* 11 Jan. 1905, 60).

<sup>9</sup> The New Zealand tour does not begin until 16 May 1904.



- THE LORGNETTE. Melbourne Concert and Operatic Company will probably visit New Zealand shortly. Claude H. White is acting touring manager (*Observer* 21 Jan. 1905, 6).
- THE GHOST WALK. Claude White will act as pilot for Brough-Flemming Comedy Company (*Otago Witness* 1 Mar. 1905, 64).
- [Wellington] Late Sporting. - Napier Tips Claude White one time a Dix manager is coming ahead of Brough-Flemming Comedy Co (*Free Lance* 11 Mar. 1905, 16).
- THE GHOST WALK. Claude White responsible man in front of Brough-Flemming Company forwards striking poster of *Walls of Jericho* and souvenir of *Beauty and the Barge* and press notices (*Otago Witness* 9 Aug. 1905, 67).
- 26 August: Brough-Flemming Company opens at Criterion Theatre, Sydney. Claude White is advance manager.
- LATE SHIPPING. Claude H. White advance agent for Brough-Flemming Comedy Co was a passenger from Sydney on Monowai (*Evening Post* 5 Oct. 1905, 6).
- ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE. Claude H. White courier avant for Brough-Flemming Co reached Wellington by last week's Sydney steamer... Mr White was for a good time resident in Wellington some six or seven years ago. Mr White afterwards joined P.R. Dix as Wellington manager... and did some serviceable work as a scenic artist. Subsequently he went to India with Broughs. Then returned to the Colonies and for a time was connected with the Mel B. Spurr show. On Brough-Flemming Co being organised, Mr White was engaged as agent and opened Company to a 450 pound house Perth W.A. but on Mr Brough taking suddenly ill, no performance could be given and money had to be returned (*Free Lance* 14 Oct. 1905, 3).
- 16 MANSE STREET for SIX WEEKS ONLY, prior to leaving the colony. Call early and secure pick of stock. hours: 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Claude H. White (*Otago Daily Times* 13 Nov. 1).
- PERSONAL. Claude H. White advance manager Brough-Flemming Company arrived Auckland today to prepare for Company which opens Her Majesty's Theatre on Boxing Day (*Auckland Star* 18 Dec. 1905, n.pag.).

## 1906

- Advance manager for Brough-Flemming return Sydney season at Criterion Theatre (beginning 3 February).
- [Adelaide, SA] Advertisements - Theatre Royal, Brough-Flemming Comedy Company. *Dr Wakes Patient*. Advance Manager Claude H. White (*Advertiser* 23 June 1906, n. pag. - see also 26 and 28 June).



- THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL NOTES. Writing from Melbourne 5 November Claude White representative of Brough-Flemming Comedy Company says they intend shortly to pay New Zealand another visit. We are at present playing in Melbourne ....with *Mrs Goringes Necklace* (*Otago Witness* 28 Nov. 1906, 68).
- THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL NOTES. From Claude White or some equally responsible person of Brough Flemming Company comes to hand 2 artistic posters of *Mrs Goringe's Necklace* and *Dr Wake's Patient*. Popular Brough-Flemming Company is to commence New Zealand tour in Auckland on December 12 (*Otago Witness* 5 Dec. 1906, 68).
- THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL NOTES. Writing from Melbourne on 26 November, Claude White representative of Brough-Flemming Company advises of success of 2 new pieces *Mrs Goringes Necklaces* and *What Would a Gentleman Do*. These pieces will be staged by the company during New Zealand tour which commences Auckland on Boxing Night (*Otago Witness* 12 Dec. 1906, 60).

## 1907

- LOCAL AND GENERAL. Claude H. Waite touring representative for Brough-Flemming Company arrived Palmerston North on Saturday for forthcoming visit of the company (*Wairarapa Daily Times* 17 Jan. 1907, 4).
- LOCAL AND GENERAL. Claude H. Waite touring representative for Brough-Flemming Comedy Company is at present at Masterton making arrangements for the forthcoming visit to this town (*Wairarapa Daily Times* 17 Jan. 1907, 4).
- THE BROUGH-FLEMMING COMPANY. [Manawatu-Wanganui] We announce that Brough-Flemming Company have decided to pay a visit to Fielding. Claude H. Waite touring representative arrived in town yesterday... for visit... at Drill Hall on 30 January (*Feilding Star* 25 Jan. 1907, 2).
- LOCAL AND GENERAL. Claude H. Waite representative for Brough-Flemming Company is in town .... for company's visit to Ashburton Wednesday next (*Ashburton Guardian* 28 Jan. 1907, 2).
- Photo C.H. Waite Touring Manager Brough Flemming Company (*Theatre Magazine* 1 Apr. 1907, 21).
- 25 July: C.H. Waite Port of Departure: Cairns Port of Arrival: Sydney, New South Wales Vessel Name: Marloo.
- THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL NOTES. Claude Waite recently representative of Brough-Flemming company is now connected with Miss Florence Baines Comedy Company now appearing at Sydney Palace. [He] forwards poster and programmes...of Miss Lancaster (*Otago Daily Times* 31 Aug. 1907, 14).

## 1908

- Sands NSW Directory Alphabetical page 1328. Waite, Claude, theatrical manager, 65 Market Street, Sydney.
- 3 February: Name: Mr C. Waite Port of Departure: Melbourne Port of Arrival: Sydney, New South Wales Vessel Name: Aramac.
- PARS ABOUT PEOPLE. Claude Waite arrived in Auckland this week in advance of Herbert Flemming Comedy Company still perspires at mere recollection... Company's Melbourne season... the temperature at Princess Theatre ran up from 106 to 112 degrees (*Observer* 15 Feb. 1908, 4).
- ENTERTAINMENTS. Claude Waite touring manager of Herbert Flemming Company arrived in Palmerston yesterday (*Manawatu Times* 18 Mar. 1908, 4).
- ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE. Claude H. Waite the nice mannered young gentleman who makes the way easy and lucrative for Herbert Flemming Dramatic Company is stamp collecting. Mr Waite's collection comprises no less than 25,000 varieties to say nothing of an odd 8000 duplicates for exchange (*Free Lance* 28 Mar. 1908, 4).
- NEW ZEALAND BOOKINGS. Several entries for Waite also Municipal Theatre Invercargill Edwin Geach Dramatic Company (*Otago Witness* 13 Apr. 1908, 68 - see also 14-16 Apr.).
- MIMES AND MUMMERS. Advance agents are never believed by newspaper men but Claude Waite states that *The Mummy and the Humming Bird* Herbert Flemming has a strong dramatic interest (*Star* 16 Apr. 1908, 2).
- 14 May: Name: Mr C. Waite Port of Departure: Hobart, Tasmania Port of Arrival: Sydney, New South Wales Vessel Name: Zealandia.

## 1909

- Sands NSW Directory Alphabetical page 1361 Waite, Claude, theatrical manager, 65 Market Street, Sydney.
- MIMES AND MUMMERS. Claude H. Waite writes from Sydney "I have just accepted an engagement with Tommy Burns [Pugilist]....with a new piece...*For Fame and Fortune*...we open Melbourne 10 April and remain there for 3 weeks after which we tour New Zealand starting in south and working towards Auckland" (*Star* 11 Feb. 1909, 2).
- MIMES AND MUSIC. Claude Waite has joined [Rickards](#) and goes to Adelaide where he will manage the Tivoli for a few weeks vice Mr Marcus who is about to take up advance work for Rickards' New Zealand Company; Edwin Geach Dramatic Company will leave Sydney by Moana for Wellington (*Evening Post* 3 Apr. 1909, 11).



- MIMES AND MUSIC. BY ORPHEUS. COMING EVENTS. Claude Whaite will be touring manager for Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company (*Evening Post* 1 May 1909, 11).
- ENTERTAINMENTS. Claude Whaite agent in advance of Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company arrived in Wellington by Monowai yesterday (*Evening Post* 20 May 1909, 2).
- PERSONAL PARS. [Wellington] By the Warimoo which arrived from Sydney on Wednesday came Claude H. Whaite in advance of Allan Hamilton Dramatic Company (*NZ Truth* 22 May 1909, 1).
- DRAMATIC AND MUSICAL. Mr Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company has just arrived pioneered by that well known touring manager Claude Whaite (*Free Lance* 29 May 1909, 10).
- AMUSEMENTS. Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company. Claude H. Whaite, so long connected with Brough's arrived in Wanganui yesterday for their visit at Opera House Wednesday night... The scenery (200 tons) has been specially painted by Claude H. Whaite whose good work with Brough's productions will be remembered (*Wanganui Chronicle* 11 June 1909, 5).
- LORGNETTE. Claude H. Whaite writes glowingly concerning Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company of which he is touring manager ... [the company is] due Auckland 5 July for a 3 weeks season (*Observer* 12 June 1909, 6).
- ALLAN HAMILTON'S COMPANY. Claude H. Whaite so long connected with Broughs arrived in Dannevirke during the week... the whole of the scenery having been newly painted by Claude Whaite just prior to their leaving Australia (*Bush Advocate* 18 June 1909, 4).
- ALLAN HAMILTON'S COMPANY. Mr Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company has arrived in New Zealand pioneered by that well known touring manager Claude Whaite (*Taranaki Herald* 24 July 1909, 1).
- [Auckland] Theatre Royal. Allan Hamilton *In the Ranks* (*Press* 5 Aug. 1909, 1).
- New Scenery by Claude H. Whaite. Original effects electrical mechanical etc from Comedy Theatre London (*Press* 7-129 Aug. 1).
- *Message from Mars* Touring Manager Claude Whaite (*Press* 11-13 Aug. 1909, 1).
- [untitled] Claude H. Whaite arrived in Greymouth during the week for visit of Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company which will play 4 nights in [the town] (*Grey River Argus* 20 Aug. 1909, 2).
- THE ALLAN HAMILTON COMPANY. This fine dramatic company has arrived in New Zealand pioneered by that well known manager Claude Whaite and will commence at the Princess Theatre, Hokitika, on Tuesday next (*West Coast Times* 27 Aug. 1909, 2).
- [Nelson] Claude H. Whaite touring manager for Allan Hamilton's Dramatic Company has been in Nelson during the week...After playing Nelson and Blenheim company returns to Melbourne, while Mr Whaite will journey up to Auckland to take charge of a new company which opens (there) 4 October. Some 10 years ago Mr Whaite was in Nelson and painted the scenery for the Amateur Operatic Society's production of *Dorothy* (*Colonist* 4 Sept. 1909, 2).
- THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL NOTES. Claude Whaite passed through Dunedin yesterday...he leaves for Sydney shortly to join Harry Rickards show (*Otago Witness* 15 Sept. 1909, 66).
- Oddfellows' Hall [Ashburton] Allan Hamilton *Message from Mars* 20 September. Magnificent scenery by Mr H. Whaite with weird and startling electrical mechanical effects. Touring Manager Claude H. Whaite (*Ashburton Guardian* 20 Sept. 1909, 3).

**O P E R A H O U S E.**  
 Lessee, Mr. J. C. Williamson.  
 Direction **ALLAN HAMILTON**

—  
**FRIDAY, MAY 28th.**  
 —

**ALLAN HAMILTON'S  
 NEW DRAMATIC COMPANY,**  
 In the Great Stirring Military Drama,  
 "IN THE RANKS,"  
 "IN THE RANKS,"  
 "IN THE RANKS,"

Written by G. R. Sims (by arrange-  
 ment with Mr. George Rignold.)  
 Interpreted by a strong Company of  
**35 ARTISTS,**  
 including some of the most prominent  
 Actors and Actresses seen on the  
 Australasian Stage.

*Freelance* (NZ) 29 May 1909, 10.

**HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE**  
 Lessee and Manager.....ALLAN HAMILTON  
 EVERY EVENING at 8.  
 POSITIVELY SIX NIGHTS ONLY.  
 CLOSING ON SATURDAY NEXT.  
 A GLORIOUS SUCCESS.  
 Mr HARRY RICKARDS'S  
 TIVOLI VAUDEVILLE COMPANY.  
 The GREATEST CONSTELLATION OF  
 VAUDEVILLE "STARS" EVER SEEN  
 IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE.

- THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL NOTES. Claude Whaité representing Harry Rickards Vaudeville Company will shortly be in Dunedin to make arrangements for...vaudeville season at His Majesty's next month (*Otago Witness* 20 Oct. 1909, 67).
- THE HARRY RICARDS COMPANY. Oddfellows Hall Various artists including "educated dogs" of Rosanna Casselli. Claude Whaité touring manager (*Ashburton Guardian* 1 Nov. 1909, 2).
- THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL NOTES. Claude Whaité touring representative [of [Harry Rickards](#) Company] arrived in town on Monday night to arrange preliminaries (*Otago Witness* 10 Nov. 1909, 67).

*Otago Daily Times* 15 Nov. (1909), 1.

## 1910

- Claude Whaité, Theatrical Manager, 65 York Street, Sydney in Metropolitan Chambers, Metropolitan Mutual Permanent Building and Investment Building
- THE KING'S THEATRE: TO BE OPENED TOMORROW NIGHT. [Wellington] The auditorium consists of a dress circle and the ground floor, and is calculated to seat 350 upstairs and about 1100 below. The colour scheme of the hall interior is a contrast of dark red and old gold... The decorative work is from the brushes of Messrs Claude Whaité and Victor Beck, who have done wonders in the short time at their disposal (*Dominion* 15 Mar. 1910, 6).
- [Adelaide] DRAMATIC NOTES. Mr Claude H. Whaité, who was manager for the late Mr Herbert Flemming, is at present in New Zealand (*Advertiser* 19 Mar. 1910, 19).

## 1911

- New Zealand Electoral Roll Wellington Central page 190 #9447 Claude Hamilton Whaité, Bristol Hotel, Ghuznee Street, Theatrical Manager.
- Whaité begins working as a manager for the New Zealand cinema operations of West's Limited.

## 1912

- Whaité continues working as a manager for the New Zealand cinema operations of West's Limited.
- THE DANDIES. Claude Whaité, manager of the Kings Theatre, leaves on a trip to Sydney by Moeraki today (*Evening Post* 4 Oct. 1912, 2).
- PERSONAL ITEMS. Claude Whaité manager of Kings Theatre now transferred to Sydney leaving Wellington by next Friday's steamer (*Dominion* 3 Dec. 1912, 4).
- PERSONAL MATTERS. Claude Whaité, who was manager at Kings theatre for West's and Royal Picture company recently has been transferred to Sydney and will leave Wellington next Friday (*Evening Post* 3 Dec. 1912, 5).
- 10 December: Name: C. Whaité. Port of Departure: Wellington. Port of Arrival: Sydney, New South Wales. Vessel Name: Ulimaroa.

## 1913

- **September:** The *Theatre* (Sydney) published a short article on Whaité, focusing on his career and memories of Mel. B. Spurr (see "Additional Quotations" section above for transcript).

## 1914

- [Sydney] Mr Claude Whaite, the energetic manager of West's Olympia, is a dabbler in art. His latest effort is a very big oil painting of H.M.A.S. Sydney destroying the Emden of Cocos Islands. This attraction, which is illustrated by electric light, commands many admirers in the Olympic vestibule (*Sunday Times*, 22 Nov. 1914, 16).

## 1915

- [Sydney] Mr Claude Whaite, the manager of West's Olympia in Oxford Street, as a result of the raffle for a gold watch given by him, has forwarded a cheque for £40 to the Consul-General in aid of the present Belgian Relief Fund (*Sunday Times* 25 Feb. 1915, 9).

## 1920

- NEWS OF THE DAY. Claude Whaite scenic artist well known in Wellington some years ago has, it is reported been left a fortune of about 14,000 pounds by a relative in England (*Colonist* 25 Feb. 1920, 4.).
- PARS ABOUT PEOPLE. The fact that Claude Whaite, scene-painter, has had a fortune thrust upon him will remind many middle-aged fossils that Claude used to be theatre manager for the late Percy R. Dix, the fat and frolicsome entrepreneur who ran vaudeville in Auckland and Wellington fewer than a score years ago. Claude is of the pale intellectual high-brow type, with a capacity for long-sustained diction and an artistic temperament. Remembered particularly that Claude wore a watch-chain made of "Maundy Money" of which he was most proud and now he is a semi-millionaire he'll value it more than ever. His employer the late Percy Dix (who ran afterward ran a vaudeville show at Newcastle NSW) in Claude's day imported "world turns" - hence his ruin. People like The Dartos, The Craggs, and Irene Franklin wanted so much money that Percy had none left. By the way Claude inaugurated a system of ventilation for the Wellington Dixery that filled the bill. Every seat was fitted with a silver plated air tube. The sitter simply turned the tube up and had a balmy breeze playing in his face. A compound, compensating triple-expansion engine water-cooled turn-screw engine in the base supplied the air – a commodity almost unknown to a modern picture theatre. There are no Dixonian programmes in New Zealand today (*Observer* 6 Mar. 1920, 10).

## 1924

- MIMES, MUSIC RECORDS. Claude Whaite, a well known theatrical manager who for many years was with Brough-Flemming Co and lastly for some considerable time for Wests Ltd died 26 August at Reading England. He left a widow and one child (*Evening Post* 8 Nov. 1924, 21).
- STAGE AND SCREEN [Perth, WA] Well-known Manager Dead. Mr. Claude Whaite, a well-known theatrical manager, who for many years was with the Brough-Flemming Company, and for some considerable time as secretary for West's Limited, died on August 28, at Beading, England. He left a widow and one child (*Daily News* 5 Dec. 1924, 4).

## FURTHER REFERENCE

"Mel B. Spurr Reminiscence, A." *Theatre Magazine* (Sydney) Sept. 1913, 34.

**Research for this biography contributed by Joy Whaite  
with additional material by Clay Djubal**

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