

BENSON, HENRY MCKINLEY, born at Franklin, Howard County, Missouri, December 1, 1839; son of James Hoard and Ruth Penn (Switzler) Benson; married, Mary Francesca Paty, at San Francisco, California, August 1, 1867; children, Henry P., John Paty, Maud (Mrs. Edward C. Green), Ruth (Mrs. Holbrook Blinn) Dora (Mrs. Henry Huntley Haight) and Francesca Paty (Mrs. Elmo Warner).

As a boy he crossed the plains to Marysville, Yuba County, California, with his parents by ox teams in 1850; attended Durant's Academy and studied law in the office of his step-father, H. P. Watkins; was at one time Captain of a company of college students at Oakland.

Enrolled, August 16, age 22, and mustered in at San Francisco, August 27, 1861, to serve 3 years as 1st. Lieutenant, Captain W. P. Calloway's Company I, 1st. California Infantry; went with the Company to southern California and Lieutenant Colonel West, who was in command at Camp Wright, reported on October 25 that he had "dispatched Lieutenant Benson with 7 men, accompanied by Keene, the guide, to clean out the wells" and four days later stated that "the advance party under Lieutenant Benson is doing excellent service preparing water for us."

The Company arrived at Fort Yuma in November and was designated as a part of the advance guard of the California Column, commanded by Captain Calloway; Lieutenant Benson left that post on March 24, 1862, and was nearby when Lieutenant Barrett and two soldiers of a cavalry detachment were killed by Confederates at Picacho Pass on April 15; he joined with all the other officers in protesting against

the retreat to Stanwix Station as ordered by Captain Calloway.

Returned with the Company to the Pima Villages on April 29 and arrived at Tucson via Fort Breckenridge and Cañada de Oro on May 22; left there for La Mesilla on the Rio Grande, July 23, 1862; promoted Captain and transferred to Company F, same Regiment, at Fort Craig, New Mexico, January 22, 1863; left Fort Craig in October and marched via Fort Wingate in an expedition commanded by Major E. B. Willis to the new gold discoveries in northern Arizona; in a letter dated at Fort Whipple on December 21, 1863, Major Willis stated that "the last of the three trains under Captain Benson arrived here safely this evening."

Listed, Territorial Census, April, 1864, at Fort Whipple, age 24, resident in Arizona 4 months, occupation - Soldier; stationed at Fort Whipple until July, 1864; in June, he was with his Company on a scout after Indians when 5 Apaches were killed, 2 wounded, and large quantities of corn and beans destroyed; honorably discharged with the Company at Los Piños, New Mexico, August 31, 1864.

Appointed, Major, 4th California Infantry, at San Francisco, California, May 22, 1865; was in command at Fort Whipple, A.T., from September to December, 1865, and engaged in expeditions against hostile Indians south and west of that place; honorably discharged at the Presidio of San Francisco, California, January 31, 1866.

Appointed 2d. Lieutenant, 18th U. S. Infantry, February 28, 1866; promoted 1st. Lieutenant and transferred to 36th U. S.

Infantry at Fort Columbus, Governor's Island, New York Harbor, September 21, 1866; transferred to 7th U. S. Infantry, May 17, 1869, and was Adjutant of the Regiment from October 11, 1871, to November 1, 1874, during which service he found time to map a large part of Montana Territory; was on sick leave in the East when he heard of the outbreak of the Nez Perce Indians and hastened across the continent to join the campaign against them, arriving in time to be severely wounded at Camas Meadows, Idaho, August 30, 1878, for which he was made a Brevet Captain.

Promoted Captain at San Diego Barracks, California, May 1, 1882; retired for disability incurred in line of duty, November 14, 1885; promoted Major on the retired list, April 15, 1904; Companion, California Commandery, Military Order of the Loyal Legion, 1884-1915.

Died at Key Route Inn, Oakland, Alameda County, California, Thursday, July 15, 1915, aged 75; interment, National Cemetery, The Presidio, San Francisco, California; the railroad station and town of Benson, Cochise County, Arizona, was named for him.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Records of the Rebellion, Series I, Vol. 26, 48, 50.
 Orton, R.H. - Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion, 1890, pp. 359, 372, 599.
 Report on Condition of the Indian Tribes, 1867, p. 262.
 Heitman, F.B. - Historical Register, U.S. Army, 1903, p. 212.
 L.R. Hamersley & Co. - Records of Living Officers, U.S. Army, 1884, pp. 264-265.
 Farish, T.E. - History of Arizona, Vol. 2, p. 250; Vol. 3, pp. 31, 284; Vol. 4, p. 126.
 California Commandery, Military Order, Loyal Legion of the United States, Circular No. 21, August 17, 1915.
 The Adjutant General's Office - Military Service Records.
 The San Francisco Examiner, July 17, 1915, 3:5 (obituary).
 The San Francisco Chronicle, July 17, 1915, 4:7 (funeral notice).

WANTED

Obituaries in Arizona newspapers and any references to him in the Arizona Miner, particularly the Indian fight in June, 1864.