

BERNARD, REUBEN FRANK

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BERNARD, REUBEN FRANK, born In Hawkins County, Tennessee, October 14, 1834; son of John and Mary (Mereleok) Bernard; married (1) Alice Virginia Frank (1849-91) at Washington, D. C., December 6, 1866; (2) Ruth Lavinia Simpson at Baltimore, Maryland, February 22, 1892, who died on December 24 of that year; (3) Elsie May Camp (1866-1938) at Knoxville, Tennessee, October 26, 1898; children, Harry E., John J., George R., Thomas P., Robert S., Fannie E., Kate M. (Mrs. B.B. Buck), and Mary A. (Mrs. W.C. Babcock).

Worked on his father's farm and received limited schooling; left home at the age of 20 and learned to be a blacksmith and horseshoer In Knoxville; enlisted to serve 5 years in the U.S. Army at Knoxville, February 19, and joined Company D, 1st U.S. Dragoons at Fort Craig, New Mexico, September 13, 1855; promoted to Farrier, October 1, 1855, and served as such until December 3, 1856.

In action against Apaches on the headwaters of the Gila River March 28 and on the Mimbres River, N.M., April 5, 1856; marched with the Company to Camp Moore, later called Fort Buchanan, in the Gadsden Purchase, where he was promoted to Corporal June 1, 1857.

Sent with 15 men in pursuit of outlaws who had murdered several Mexicans and stolen their pack trains; captured 2 of them at Tubac and recovered all of the pack mules; made 18 trips in charge of details carrying the mail across the Apache infested region between Fort Buchanan and Fort Thorn on the Rio Grande; resigned as Corporal at Fort Buchanan May 1, 1858, because of illness which confined him to the pest hospital for several months.

on expedition under Captain I.V.D. Reeve and was in action against Apaches in Pinal Mountains, December 25, on the San Carlos River December 27, and again in the Pinals, December 30, 1858; promoted to Corporal March 1, to

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Sergeant May 5, and to 1st Sergeant June 6, 1859; stationed with the Company at Fort Breckenridge and was in action against Apaches on the San Pedro River November 9, 1859.

Reenlisted at a camp 40 miles north of Tucson February 19, 1860; transferred to Fort Buchanan in command of a cavalry detachment of 12 men where he was listed in the U.S. Census, August 23, 1860; was with Lieutenant G.N. Bascom when Cochise was seized and escaped at Apache Pass February 4, 1861; strongly protested against the refusal of Bascom to exchange prisoners with Cochise for which he was tried by Court Martial at Fort Buchanan for insubordination and acquitted.

After the destruction of Forts Breckenridge and Buchanan, marched with the troops to Fort Craig, N.M.; appointed Acting 2d Lieutenant, Company D, 1st U.S. Cavalry, at a camp in the Socorro Mountains, N.M., January 6, 1862; in action with Confederates near Fort Craig, February 19 and in the battle of Valverde February 21, 1862; participated in the battles of Apache Canyon and Glerieta, N.M., March 28, and 30; in action at Albuquerque, and Peralta, April 25 and 27.

Commissioned 2d Lieutenant, 1st U.S. Cavalry at Fort Union, N.M., September 15 as of July 17, 1862; took part in 65 battles, engagements, and skirmishes in Virginia during the Civil War; promoted 1st Lieutenant June 23, 1863; brevet Captain for gallant and meritorious service at the battle of Todd's Tavern, Va., May 6, 1864, where he was wounded; brevet Major for bravery at the battle of Smithfield, Va., August 28, 1864; brevet Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel for distinguished service during the War, March 13, 1865.

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After the Civil War his regiment was sent to the Pacific Coast; defeated a band of Snake Indians at Rattlesnake Creek, Oregon, July 26, 1866; promoted Captain, Company G, 1st U.S. Cavalry, July 28, 1866; on recruiting service at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 1866-68, and made four trips with recruits to California via Panama in one year.

Sailed from New York with 150 recruits in August, 1868; landed in San Francisco and went to Fort Yuma in October; proceeded to Tucson and from there was sent to Sonora to purchase pack mules being gone from December 8 to January 29, 1869; assumed command at Camp Grant, A.T., on February 1 and left there the following morning with 73 men on a 9 days scout in the Aravaipa Mountains of which the following account was printed in the Tucson Arizonian:

The weather was exceedingly unpleasant, nevertheless the Col. started from Camp Grant with his men as well as Lt. A.H. Stanton and 20 of Co. K, 1st U.S. Cav. They traveled about 30 miles in a south-easterly direction through snow from twelve inches to two feet deep, over a rough trail, the animals being nearly exhausted, having nothing to stimulate them but the tracks of a large band of Indians that had preceded them.

Suddenly upon turning the point of a rugged mountain they came upon a body of about 60 Indians. Fighting then commenced in good shape and in less than three hours the Indians were completely routed, leaving 8 warriors upon the field dead, innumerable wounded having escaped owing to the excessive roughness of the country, the snow and bare rocks were literally covered with blood and gore for miles.

Left Camp Grant with 59 men March 1 and scouted across the country to Fort Bowie, thence to Camp Goodwin and from there to the San Carlos River, where 3 Apache rancherias were destroyed on March 19; moved his command to Fort Bowie in May, 1869; In action with Apaches in the Burro Mountains, N.M., July 4; the Arizonian printed the following on July 24, 1869:

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We have been informed that some of the Lo family came to grief a couple of weeks ago at the hands of Col. Bernard. They continued to carry on their little drollery around Apache Pace - stealing cattle, destroying mail, etc., for about four consecutive weeks, and all this time adroitly baffled pursuit. The Col., we are told, having caught up with a party among the mountains, some 20 miles from the Pass, sent four of its number to pursue the phantom denizens of the "Happy Hunting Ground".

With 61 men pursued a large band of Apaches under Cochise and after a hard fight in Chiricahua Pass killed 18 Indians with the loss of two troopers on October 20, 1869; in reporting this action the Arizonian made this comment:

We have already had ample proof of the superior judgment and great energy of Col. Bernard. Gen. Devin, too, knows well the value of the man, and having full confidence in his discretion and ability, has placed him under no restrictions by which his judgment may be fettered or its sway confined.

He was later made a Brigadier General by brevet for gallantry in action on that occasion; with an increased force he fought two other engagements with Cochise in the Chiricahua Mountains on October 27 and 31 in which 15 Apaches were killed; with his troop surprised a band of Apaches in the Dragoon Mountains on January 27, 1870 and killed 13, captured 2; the next day he found and destroyed Cochise's romp; as a result of the punishment inflicted by Bernard, Cochise made peace two years later with General O.O. Howard.

Listed, U.S. Census, August 11, 1870, at Apache Pace (Fort Bowie), Pima County, A. T., with wife, son and daughter; left Fort Bowie December 21 on a scout against the Pinal Apaches; had slight skirmishes on December 27 and 28 and attacked a rancharia in the Pinal Mountains on January 1, 1871, killing 9 Indians and capturing 23 head of livestock; on February 11, 1871, the Arizonian stated that:

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Cel. Bernard arrived from Apache Pass Monday on his way to San Francisco. Through the departure of this very efficient officer, Arizona has lost a true friend and the Apaches are rid of an energetic and terrible enemy. His career has been most successful; he has rid the Territory of many a murderous, thieving savage, and now leaves the field of his labors with a clean record whether as a soldier or a gentlemen.

Marched with his troop on feet via Yuma to San Diego, went from there by sea to northern California where he was stationed at Fort Bidwell; participated in the Modoc Indian War in the Lava Beds, 1872-73, the Bannock War in Oregon, 1878, and the Sheepeater Campaign of 1879.

Was stationed at Fort McDermitt, Nevada, when his troop was ordered to leave immediately for Arizona to assist in Suppressing an outbreak of San Carlos Apaches; travelled by rail and arrived at Willcox, A.T., September 10, 1881; marched via Fort Grant and Fort Thomas to San Carlos and from there on a scout through the White Mountain Reservation during which 30 hostile Indians were captured without a fight.

Was escorting the prisoners from Fort Thomas to Fort Grant on October 2 when advised that 300 Chiricahua Apaches under Nachez, a son of Cochise, had left the San Caries Reservation with the intention of rescuing them; in a fight near Cedar Springs, at the base of Mount Graham, the Chiricahuas were driven off and the prisoners brought to Fort Grant that night.

On October 4 he was given command of 6 troops of cavalry which he leaded en a railroad freight train at Willcox and moved west to Dragoon Pass where the Apaches had been seen crossing the tracks; the men, horses, and pack mules were unloaded and the Indians hotly pursued for 25 miles until they entered the South Pass of the Dragoon Mountains where the troopers were dismounted to fight among the rocks; the pursuit was continued until the Apaches were driven into the Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico.

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Promoted Major, 8th U.S. Cavalry at Fort Bidwell, California, November 1, 1882; commended in general orders "for the promptness and discretion with which he suppressed a dangerous riot in Laredo, Texas", 1886; promoted Lieutenant Colonel, 9th U.S. Cavalry, July 22, 1892; retired after over 41 years of active military service, October 14, 1896; Deputy Governor, U.S. Soldiers Home, Washington, D.C., 1896-1903.

Was the first President of the Order of Indian Wars and retained that office for six years; died at Washington, D.C., November 17, 1903, aged 69; buried in Arlington National Cemetery; "One hundred and Three Fights and Scrimmages" published by the United States Cavalry Association, 1936, gives an excellent account of his military exploits. A concluding passage in the book reads:

With his death there passed a master of minor warfare. For leadership in the troop or battalion operations that were characteristic of the campaigns against the Indians, he was one of the most efficient Cavalry officers carried on the rolls of the Army during his long period of gallant and arduous service.

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