

DAVIS, CORNELIUS

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DAVIS, CORNELIUS (Jeff), born in Ohio, about 1833; listed, Territorial Census, April, 1864, 3d District, Yavapai County, age 30, single, resident in Arizona 3 months, occupation - Miner; that he was well known, well liked and cheerfully accepted all the risks of pioneering are shown by the following extracts from the Prescott Arizona Miner:

June 10, 1871 - - C. Davis is cultivating his ranch, near the head of the Hassayampa, about 8,000 feet above sea level, where, in former years, he has grown magnificent "murphies", and various other vegetables. Most of the travel from Prescott to Bradshaw goes by this beautiful mountain ranch, the proprietor of which talks some of starting a half-way house for the accommodation of fortune hunters and those who have already found fortunes. He has promised, when we go over, to treat us to a feast of strawberries.

February 24, 1872 - - Our irrepressible savage foes have been very active during the past ten or twelve days. Their first move was the killing of some cattle belonging to Messrs. Campbell and Baker, at a point on the Verde river, not far from Chino Valley.

Shortly after this bad break of theirs, a large party of warriors paid their respects to the head of Hassayampa Creek, distant about nine miles from Prescott, where although they succeeded in stealing five animals - the property of Co. Davis, R. W. Groom and one other man, they paid dearly for them, as Mr. Davis shot two of the savages dead and wounded another one.

The day previous to this occurrence, Mr. Davis was out in the woods, hunting deer, and while doing so, he saw a large flock of wild turkeys, none of which he could kill with his rifle. So, next day, he started out, armed with a rifle, shot-gun and revolver, and while proceeding toward the place where he had seen the turkeys, a deer, which appeared to be very badly frightened, ran by him as fast as its legs were able to carry it.

This circumstance aroused his suspicions; that thought of Indians being near flashed across his mind, and, no sooner had it done so than, lo and behold, an Indian arose, near by, and was shot down by Davis. Then about twenty Indians were seen rushing in every direction, apparently not knowing the direction the shot which had

proved so fatal to their comrade came from; Mr. Davis then raised his shot-gun, took aim, when another red-skin sank down to rise no more.

Soon the other barrel was emptied and another Indian fell, badly wounded. But he was carried off by his comrades, and Davis contented himself with picking up and carrying home three bows and as many quivers filled with arrows. He only regrets that he was not, at the time, armed with a repeating rifle, which would have enabled him to do greater execution.

June 8, 1872 - - C. Davis, who, since 1863, has been a peon to the Apaches, arrived from his home, at the head of the Hassayampa, early this week and started back Thursday last, in company with Judge Berry and other weighty citizens of Prescott, who go to rusticate on the backbone of the Sierra Prieta range of mountains, where the Judge has promised to take some notes for the Miner.

July 6, 1872 - - "Our" Jeff, from Upper Hassayampa, came to town Tuesday last riding a lively Dolly Varden pacer, which pacer, we fear, will disappear, next full moon, going at more than a 2:40 gait before a band of Apaches. Jeff had many horses, mules and other animals in his day, in this section of the county, but "whar, or whar, are day now?" "Dat am the question." Why, their bones are bleaching all over this Apache-land, while their hides are being worn under the feet of many "noble" red men.

September 28, 1872 - - "Jeff" Davis and Sam Ball arrived from the head of the Hassayampa Wednesday last, with several fat deer, which they had killed, strapped to the backs of their pack animals. Jeff informed us that he was expecting another visit from his "friends," the Apaches--who have stolen over twenty head of animals from him in the past six or seven years.

October 5, 1872 - - Our friend, "Jeff" Davis, who has lost ever so many horses, mules and asses by the Apaches, arrived in town soon after the news of the recent victories over the varmints and has, ever since, felt "just as happy as a big sunflower."

April 9, 1875 - - C. Davis, sometimes called "Jeff", for short, went out a day or two ago with a live hog in a spring-wagon, either Intending to inaugurate a

summer campaign as manager of an annual show or bent on having pork in camp. The grunter was very fat and the temptation to indulge in "corn-dodger and sop" will doubtless decide the fate of the pig.

January 14, 1876 - - Jeff Davis, who visited the Peck mine on Wednesday brings word that they have struck a deposit of native silver in one of the shafts. This is the first indication of free metal that has shown itself in that fabulously rich mine.

In later years there are the following references to him in the Prescott Journal-Miner:

✓ August 10, 1892 - - Jeff Davis, the Walnut Grove JP, who possesses the happy faculty of marrying a couple on Sunday and divorcing them on Monday, procured a large stock of marriage licenses this afternoon to be used in several ceremonies next week. Jeff says since Phoenicians have found out that he ties and unties the matrimonial knot to suit the convenience of all, he has been doing a thrifty business of late and thinks of petitioning the Court for an independent circuit of his own.

January 11, 1893 - - Jeff Davis, the matrimonial J.P. of Walnut Grove, was in town yesterday and stated that the marriage epidemic had struck his section. He backed up his report by displaying a trosseau in the shape of a bolt of highly colored "kaliker".

✓ October 18, 1893 - - Jeff Davis, the Walnut Grove rancher and justice of the peace, was in town today. When asked if there were any Populists in his baliwick, "nary a d--n pop," was the prompt but emphatic reply of the Judge. "There are several Democrats who have grown tired of their party leaders, but they have declared themselves in favor of the Republican party", he added.

Died at Wagoner, Yavapai County, A.T., July 24, 1903, aged 70; buried in the Walnut Grove Cemetery; in reporting his death, the

Prescott Courier stated :

His name really was Cornelius Davis, but he was known all over Arizona as "Jeff". He was a quaint and original character, a diamond in the rough. His death

is sincerely regretted, for a brave and true man has been called away. He was a native of Ohio, unmarried and had no relatives in Arizona.

The following item is taken from an obituary in the Prescott

Journal-Miners

He was a typical frontier character, big hearted, jovial and of rough exterior, but a man universally liked. He came to Arizona at a time when it was not the most pleasant place on earth to live, as a man starting on a journey of a few miles never knew what might befall him on account of the Indians who lurked along almost every trail ready to pick off a traveler. Many were the thrilling experiences he as well as others of the early settlers had with the red men.

For several years past he has resided at Wagoner, living in a cabin alone. He was at one time deputy postmaster there. He was also Justice of the Peace of that precinct and just the day before he was taken sick, as ex-officio coroner, he held an inquest over the remains of Jake Merchant, another old timer of that section.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Hamilton, P. - Resources of Arizona, S.F. 1884, p. 396.
 Farish T.E. - History of Arizona, Vol. 5 p. 284; Vol. 8, pp. 103, 172.
 The Arizona Miner, Prescott, June 10, 1871, 3:1; February, 24, 2:1,
 - June 8, 3:1; July 6, 3:2; September 28, 3:1; October 5, 1872,
 2:1; April 9, 1875, 3:3; January 14, 1876, 2:2.
 The Journal-Miner, Prescott, August 10, 1892, 3:2; January 11, 3:4,
 October 18, 1893, 3:3; July 28, 1903, 6:3 (obituary).
 The Prescott Courier, July 31, 1903, 4:4 (obituary).
 The Arizona Republican, Phoenix, December 12, 1897, 3:1 (reprint
 from Prescott Courier).