

GAGE, ALMON F.

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Born at _____, New Hampshire July 14, 1817.

Son of _____ and _____.

Studied theology with Rev. 1)???. George W. Montgomery and became a Universalist Minister; began to preach in 1848 and for 10 years traveled and itinerated in the South; he had pastorates at Richmond, Virginia, Louisville, Kentucky and Lewiston, Maine.

Appointed from New York by President Lincoln as United States Attorney for the Territory of Arizona in place of John Titus of Pennsylvania who became Chief Justice of Utah Territory; he took the oath of office in New York City, July 13, 1863, and left Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, on September 25 with Governor Goodwin and other Territorial officials; crossed the plains to Santa Fe and thence to Navajo Springs, within the Territory of Arizona, where, on December 29, 1863, he joined the other appointees in taking a second oath of office.

Except for a term of court which he attended in Tucson in May, 1864, all of his service as District Attorney was performed at Prescott where he was residing when he tendered his resignation on October 1, 1865; he also served as Secretary of the 1st. Territorial Council from September 29 to November 10, 1864; the following account of some of his activities as United States District Attorney is abridged from an article entitled "The Confiscation Cases" published in the Tucson Arizona Citizen of December 3, 1870;

Almon Gage, Esq., United States District Attorney of Arizona Territory, established himself at the Territorial Capital in Prescott

and learning that a term of the District court of the First Judicial District had been appointed to be held at Tucson, commencing on the last Tuesday of May, 1864, he in company with Levi Bashford, Esq. then the Surveyor General of the Territory, whose office had been located at Tucson, started for this place with a mule each, with no other persons with them. The Indian signs were numerous everywhere.

After passing Sacaton Station, instead of continuing on the road to Tucson, they took the left hand road to Ft. Breckenridge, now Camp Grant. After going on this road to near the Fort, and seeing Indian signs everywhere, and at night seeing the Indian camp fires, they made a hasty retreat on their back track, being satisfied they were on the wrong road. In the meantime, their friends at Tucson, feeling that there was something wrong because they had not arrived here, procured an escort from Lieut. Col. Coult, then in command of the Post at this place, which started in pursuit, and were greatly delighted in finding them at the Point of the Mountain, worn out with fatigue in running the gauntlet with the Apaches.

Mr. Gage arrived at Tucson a few days before the commencement of the Court, and at once commenced business by bringing suits to confiscate the property of Charles Lauer, F. A. Neville, Alfred Frear, Granville H. Oury, Palatine Robinson and Elias Brevoort under an Act of Congress approved August 6, 1861 on the charge that they were engaged in waging war against the Government of the United States.

Orders of publication were procured, since the defendants were not in the Territory and personal service could not be had, and Mr. Gage returned to Prescott. In the Spring of 1865, Mr. Gage expecting that Judge Howell would return in time to hold the April term of the court at Tucson, started for this place, but on arriving at Salt River, he found the water very high, and in attempting to cross that stream the wagon in which he was riding, drawn by eight mules, was carried down the river. Mr. Gage, however, safely returned to the same side of the river from which he had started. The

wagon and mules were taken down the river, and the mules drowned. The "carpet bag" in which were copies of all the papers and laborious briefs in these cases, were carried down the stream and never recovered.

There were no courts at which these cases could be tried until the arrival of Judge Backus to hold the spring term of 1866. The Judge, however, declined to hear the cases because the United States was not represented, there being no United States District Attorney, Mr. Gage having resigned in 1865. C. H. Spencer and John A. Rush both declined appointments as Attorney General and the office remained vacant until C. W. C. Rowell was appointed in January, 1869 who did nothing about these cases.

On the 21st instant, Hon. Coles Bashford, appearing for persons who had purchased various parcels of this property, moved the Court that these cases be dismissed and that the defendants have judgment as in the case of non-suit. In support of the motion he read from Proclamation of President Johnson of July 4, 1868, granting "a full pardon and amnesty for the offense of treason during the late Civil War, with restoration of all rights of property except as to slaves."

After hearing James E. McCaffry, Esq., Assistant United States District Attorney, upon the questions involved in the case, Chief Justice Titus, granted the motion of Mr. Bashford. At last these familiar cases have been disposed of.

He engaged in the practice of law at Prescott and again served as Secretary of the Council during the session of the 4th Legislature from September 4 to October 7, 1867; he left Arizona in the Spring of 1868 and the Prescott Arizona Miner printed the following on July 18:

We have seen a letter from A. Gage to Judge Howard, which states that he, Gage, had arrived in New York. He was taken with Panama fever and came very near kicking the bucket. Major Mills, Joe Young, Bill Veck, Ed. Smith

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and other Arizonians, who went East on the same steamer that carried Mr. G., arrived all right and had gone to visit their old homes.

Two additional references to him have been found in the Arizona Miner:

April 17, 1869 - - Almon Gage, an old Arizonian, who left here over a year ago for the states, has recently met with quite a windfall. In a letter to Judge Howard, of this place, he states that he has sold a piece of property in Chicago, for over \$20,000 which before coming to the Territory, he purchased for a trifling sum. More good luck to you, Almon.

August 17, 1877 - /' Rev. Almon Gage, who filled the pulpit of the Universalist Church in this city during several months a few years ago and was afterwards settled over the Bates Street Church in Lewiston, was expecting to spend most of the summer in this State, but was called to his home in Canandaigua, New York, on account of the illness of his father. -- Augusta (Maine) Standard.

Mr. Gage formerly resided in Arizona, but belonged to quite a different profession, it being that of law. Mr. Gage was Attorney-General of the Territory and was considered a man of more than ordinary ability and honesty.

The following is taken from an obituary published in the Universalist Register for 1896:

Many years ago he practically retired from the ministry, though he kept his interest in pulpit work and religious themes. With an independent fortune, he was a life long student. He graduated as a lawyer and for a time was the attorney-general of Arizona; he took a medical course, but with no thought of adopting the profession, studied finance and was the first greenback candidate for the governorship of Maine. He investigated nearly every system of religion and every theory of government and was omnivorous in his reading.

Few men were more widely read and few excelled him in debate or conversation. His memory was tenacious and he was as fascinating as he was stimulating and instructive in conversation. He was without ambition, and refused many places of honor and profit which were tendered him. Until the last he was a brilliant and effective speaker, but shrank from publicity. His loyalty to friends was marked and his charities were as constant as they were unostentatious. He was a man of high character, despising shame and pretence.

Died at Rochester, Ontario County, New York, February 18, 1895, aged 78; buried _____ Cemetery.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Arizona Historical Review, Vol. 2, July 1929, p. 10 (portrait).
Farish, T.E. - History of Arizona, 1915, Vol. 2, p. 325; Vol. 3, p. 94; Vol. 5, p. 2.
McClintock, J.H. - Arizona, The Youngest State, Vol. 2, p. 314.
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1st and 4th Arizona Territorial Legislatures - Journals, 1864, 1867.
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The San Francisco Bulletin, November 8, 1867, 1:2.
The Arizona Miner, Prescott, September 19, 1867, 2:2; July 18, 1868, 2:2; April 17, 1869, 2:2; August 17, 1877, 1:7.
The Arizona Citizen, Tucson, December 3, 1870, 1:2.
The Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, February 19, 1895, 9:1 (death notice).
The Universalist Register, Boston, 1896 (obituary).