

GILES, JAMES SHARON

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GILES, JAMES SHARON, born in Sussex County, Delaware, 1836; son of Thomas D. and Hetty W. Giles; never married.

Came to New Mexico from Missouri and arrived at Fort Whipple with Governor Goodwin's party on December 27, 1863; listed, Territorial Census, April 1864, 3d District (Yavapai County) age 28, resident in Arizona 3 months, occupation - Miner; member from Prescott, 3d District, 1st Territorial Legislature, 1864; member from Yavapai County, 2d Territorial Legislature (Speaker), 1865; Chief Clerk, H. of R., 3d Territorial Legislature, 1866; member from Yavapai County, 4th Territorial Legislature, 1867; A. F. Banta stated that he was elected to the 1st Legislative Assembly while cutting hay with a hoe below Point of Rocks; that he later engaged in farming in that vicinity is indicated by the following quotations from the Prescott Arizona Miner:

October 23, 1866 (advertisement) - - Stock owners. The subscribers are prepared to take care of any amount of stock. They will herd horses, mules or cattle. They will herd horses or mules and feed them corn fodder at night.

Park Ranchos, four miles north of Prescott.
Jarnes S. Giles & Co.

October 24, 1866 - - James S. Giles entertained Judge Backus on his ranch four miles north of Prescott.

November 28, 1868 - - James S. Giles has some 20 men employed on his ranch on Lower Granite Creek, gathering corn. As soon as he gets through, he proposes going to Black Canyon with a stock of goods to sell to the miners.

Went East with several thousand dollars in 1869 and visited for over two years in Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi and Texas; appointed Postmaster at Prescott, September 14, 1874; on July 9, 1875,

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he gave **the following** statement to **the local newspapers:**

My resignation of **the office** of Postmaster at Prescott will be sent to **the President** by next **mail**. **It is for the people to petition, naming my successor. Slaving from four o'clock** in the morning till nine at night **is breaking me down,** and I am **going to give it up.** There is more work **in the office than one man can do,** but the compensation is not sufficient for **two.** I apologize to anyone to whom I may have **given a curt reply.** Try **it yourself** and you will see how hard it **is** to always keep your **temper.**

His worries drove **him to drink** and as a result of **"the in-**ordinate use of **liquor"**, about August 15, 1875, he took **all** of the **cash** in the Post Office, principally money order **funds,** and **left** Prescott with a man named **Mehan,** alias **Mike McCool,** in a light wagon with a span of **horses;** his disappearance caused great **ex-**citement and the following description of him was published in the Miner:

James S. Giles is about 40 years of **age,** nearly 6 feet tall, **slight built,** sandy beard and **hair,** **face inclined to freckle,** slow **in speech,** husky **voice,** of rather solemn **mein,** affects **literature, especially** sentimental poetry which he is **apt to quote in con-**versation, **is cosmopolitan** in his **manners, is apt** to grumble at **table,** and in fact is the champion **growler.**

He and **Mehan** were captured by **Deputy Sheriff John H. Behan** at **St. Thomas, Nevada,** with over **\$6,000** and returned to Prescott early **in September;** on October 1 the following **editorial** was printed in the Arizona Miner:

Several of our patrons have found fault with the **mild manner** in which we have treated the **matter** of the embezzlement of **the funds** of the **Post Office,** and absconding of **the Postmaster.** The only apology we have to offer **is,** that after he was caught and

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lodged in jail we considered him safe, and were content to let the law take its course.

We have no sympathy with that character of bravery that strikes a man when he is down, or keeps up a continual scalp-dance over the remains of one whom we have had no hand in killing. We are no Spotted Tail or Red Cloud to raise a bloody cleaver and go on the war path determined on vengeance; and if we were we should stop at the portals of the bastille and not clamor for blood at the door of the prisoner's cell.

He was indicted by a Grand Jury at the October, 1875, term Of the ~~U.S. District~~ Court and on the 20th plead guilty by making a statement to Judge A. A. Tweed of which the following is a synopsis:

As your Honor will indulge me, I desire to submit a few thoughts for the consideration of the Court; I stand today in an attitude in which I never stood before; one in which none of my name -- an old and honored family name -- ever stood. In entering this place I disgrace the name and memory of a father who (it may be mentioned as a coincidence) was 38 years ago today laid in an honorable grave -- I, then, an infant in my mother's arms. I break the heart of that, now aged mother, and consign her grey hairs in shame in the grave, wither the hearts of three loving sisters and cause their pure cheeks to blush at the future mention of my name.

I bow the head of a noble and manly only brother in deepest shame: I disappoint the hopes and destroy the confidence of friends that I have-aided me; I forfeit the friendship and esteem of my fellow men; I destroy that which I once possessed and which is better than riches -- a good name, and leave myself standing before your Honor a ruined man. With this deep disgrace upon my name I can never again stand face to face with my kindred and those I love.

There is no punishment known to human law that is equal in severity to that which I am now suffering from these considerations. I am glad that it is so. I am glad that I do keenly feel the deep disgrace of the position in which I stand; that my heart is not so callous as to render me insensible of the shame that the position brings upon me. In this I find a

gleam of hope for the future, that I may be able to rise again and in some measure, at least, repair the wreck of the past.

Who knows but this great calamity may have been permitted to befall me by a good providence as the most efficient means of bringing me to consider whether I was drifting, to call me back to duty and as a warning to others. I now submit my case to your Honor's impartial judgment, in the hope and belief that "Justice will be Tempered with Mercy," remembering that we are all frail.

He was sentenced the next day to 2 years in a Federal penitentiary and to pay fines aggregating \$9,790, being the amount embezzled, of which \$6,082 had been recovered; on the recommendation of Judge Tweed the Attorney General agreed that the Yavapai County Jail be the place of his confinement rather than to send him to California for imprisonment; on March 19, 1877, he applied for a pardon which was granted by President Hayes on May 9 as a result of the following recommendations submitted by Attorney General Devens: The Petition for his pardon is sworn to, and it states:

1. That after his arrest he paid upon the account of his embezzlement of money-order funds \$6507.34, leaving about \$3300 due on the whole amount of his embezzlement, and that his means of paying are exhausted.

2. That always before the said Giles had borne a good character, and that he had filled elective offices of trust and honor in the Territory.

3. That he had for sometime indulged in the excessive use of ardent spirits, and that upon fully realizing what he had done he suffered great remorse, and has evinced deep penitence.

4. That while he might, upon several occasions, have escaped from jail, he has chosen to remain and suffer his punishment.

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5. He has never before asked for pardon, and that now, as his term of imprisonment, with the deductions-therefrom for good behavior, will expire on the 21st of next month, his pardon is asked that he may be restored to citizenship, and also relieved of the amount due upon the said fines, which he is totally unable to pay.

Attached to the petition are the recommendations of Chief Justice Tweed who presided at his trial, and of Mr. Pomeroy who as District Attorney prosecuted him, who say that he is sincerely penitent for his offense, and will, in their belief, be hereafter a good and useful citizen.

The Governor of the Territory (A.P. K. Safford) writes an earnest letter to the same effect.

Upon the whole, it would seem that a pardon in this case, while it would aid and encourage the prisoner to reattain his standing in the community, would do no harm to the interests of justice.

Not long after his release from jail he was appointed by Edward F. Bowers, Sheriff of Yavapai County, as Under Sheriff; the Prescott Arizona Miner of December 28, 1866⁷⁷, reported that:

Tax Collector Bowers and his Under Sheriff, J. S. Giles, turned over to County Treasurer Cook, this morning, another installment on County Taxes, amounting to about \$17,000.

Died very suddenly at Prescott, A.T., April 25, 1878, aged 42; buried, Citizens Cemetery, Prescott; in announcing his death the Arizona Miner stated:

He was a man of much more than ordinary intelligence, and although he had his trials and difficulties, and was not free from faults, he was yet a useful citizen and doing all in his power to retrieve past errors. He was, at the time of his death, Under Sheriff under Ed. F. Bowers, Sheriff of the County, and was a good and efficient officer.

The following is taken from an obituary in the Prescott

Arizona Enterprise:

James S. Giles was one of Arizona's brightest citizens. His career has been an active one; his success as a farmer and legislator, has always been admitted. His knowledge of parliamentary law was about as commanding as he could well wish. He was honored by the citizens of this County quite as often as any other man that has ever resided among them. His social qualities were good. His faults and missteps we will leave where they belong.

A large number of ancient Arizonans paid a last tribute of respect to the memory of the deceased by following him to his grave, into which he was lowered by old-time friends. The Reverend Thos. R. Curtis read a Masonic funeral service.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- W. W. Elliott & Co - History of Arizona Territory, S.F., 1884, pp. 308, 309.
- Farish, T.E. - History of Arizona, Vol. 3, p. 90; Vol. 4, p. 149; Vol. 5, p. 18.
- Kelly, G.H. - Legislative History, Arizona, Phx. 1926, pp. 2, 18, 13. Journals, 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th Territorial Legislatures, 1864, 1865, 1866, 1867.
- Probate Court of Sussex County, Delaware, November 7, 1837 - Estate of Thomas D. Giles.
- Department of Justice - Attorney General's files.
- The Arizona Citizen, Tucson, July 18, 2:2 and October 17, 1874, 2:1; January 9, 1875, 2:1.
- The Salt River Herald, Phoenix, April 27, 1878, 2:3 (death notice).
- The Florence Tribune, May 6, 1899, (reprint of Banta's reminiscences from he Prescott Pick and Drill).
- The Arizona Enterprise, Prescott, April 27, 1878, 1:4, 2:2, 2:4 and 3:3 (obituary and funeral).
- The Arizona Miner, Prescott, October 23, 3:2 and October 24, 1866, 2:1; November 28, 1868, 3:1; March 9, 1872, 3:1; July 9, 2:1; August 20, 3:2; August 27, 3:2, September 3, 3:1-2; September 10, 3:2; September 17, 3:1; October 1, 3:1; October 22, 1875, 3:2; November 23, 3:2 and December 28, 1877, 3:2; April 19, 3:4 and April 26, 1878 (obituary).