

HALL, WILLARD PREBLE

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HALL, WILLARD PREBLE, born at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, May 9, 1820; son of John H. Hall and Satira (Preble) Hall; married (1) Annie E. Richardson at _____ on _____, 1847, children, William R. (Major Surgeon, U.S. Army), Willard P. and J. _____ N. (2) Ollie L. Oliver at _____ on _____, 1864; children, 2 sons _____ and daughter _____ (Mrs. _____).

Attended a private school in Baltimore, Md.; graduated from Yale College, 1839; admitted to the bar at Huntsville, Mo. 1841; commenced practice at Sparta, Buchanan Co., Mo., 1842, and was appointed Circuit Attorney in 1843; Presidential elector from Missouri on the Democratic ticket for Polk and Dallas, 1844.

Enrolled June 19 at Liberty, Mo, and mustered in at Fort Leavenworth Jun 20, 1846 to serve one year as Private in Company C, Colonel Doniphan's 1st Missouri Mounted Infantry; on arrival at Santa Fe he was detailed with Colonel Doniphan by Brigadier General S.W. Kearney to prepare a code of laws for the Territory of New Mexico which was published on September 22, 1846 in English and Spanish as the "Kearny Code" and which became the basic law of that Territory until 1912; was granted a furlough from his company and went with General Kearney via the Gila route to California; while passing through what is now Arizona in November was elected from the St. Joseph District as Representative in Congress from Missouri; was at a camp fire with Gen. Kearney when he first learned of his election to Congress; participated in the battle of San Pasquale, California, December 6, 1846, and in the engagements near Los Angeles, January 8 and 9, 1847; at Los Angeles on February 11 Lieutenant Colonel John C. Fremont, acting as Governor of California, wrote him a letter saying:

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"I learn with surprise and mortification that General Kearny, in obedience to what I cannot but regard as obsolete instructions from the Secretary of War, means to question my right, and, viewing my position and claim clear and indisputable, I cannot, without considering myself derelict to my trust and unworthy the station of an American officer, yield, or to permit myself to be interfered with by any other, until directed to do so by the proper authorities at home, predicated in full and ample dispatches that I forwarded to Washington as early as August of last year.

"Intimations, not perhaps susceptible of positive proof, have reached me that you were using your talents and high character as a member of the American Congress, in your intercourse with citizens of this place and the troops under my immediate command, to raise doubts, if not questioning altogether the legitimacy or validity of my tenure of office.

"I feel myself constrained therefore, in obedience to the behests and high interests of my government, as well as the respect I cherish for the position you occupy, to inquire of you, in frankness, whether the intimations alluded to have any foundation in fact or truth."

Went with Kearney from Monterey to Los Angeles to contact Fremont arriving May 12 and returned with them to Monterey; left there May 31 with Gen. Kearney, Lieut. Col. Cooke, Lieut. Col. Fremont, Major Swords, Capt. Turner and Lieut. Radford of the Navy with 13 men of the Mormon Battalion and 19 men of Fremont's topographical party; traveled via Great Salt Lake and South Pass to Fort Leavenworth, arriving August 22, 1847; went to his home in Missouri and thence to Washington where he took his seat as a Member of Congress, December 6; on December 11 at Washington Arsenal, D.C., he appeared as a witness at the Court Martial then considering charges of mutiny against Lieut. Col. Fremont and testified that at the time he received the letter from Fremont in California he "was a Private in Company C, First Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers" and that he then considered that Fremont "meant to avow that he would not permit anyone to interfere with him".

Reelect^ded as a Democrat to the 31st and 32d Congresses and served until March 3, 1853; resumed the practice of law at St. Joseph, Mo., and was an unsuccessful candidate for the United States ^{secession} Senate, 1856; opposed ~~transmission~~ as a member of the Missouri Constitutional Convention of 1861 which decided that the State should remain in the Union and became ^{provisional} ~~provisional~~ Lieutenant Governor. Appointed Brigadier General, Missouri Militia, August 25, 1862, and was in command of the North-western district of Missouri until July 23, 1863; upon the death of Governor H. R. Gamble on January 31, 1864, he became acting Governor of Missouri and served until 1865; resumed the practice of law and was recognized as one of the leading lawyers of the State, died at St. Joseph, Mo., November 2, 1888, aged 68; buried Mount Moriah Cemetery, St. Joseph.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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