

# JOHNS, THOMAS DENTON

JOHNS, THOMAS DENTON, born at Erie, Erie County, Pennsylvania, January 16, 1825; son of William and Nancy (Dunn) Johns; married Sophie Chester at Erie, Pennsylvania, February 9, 1853; children, Walter Chester, Sophie Chester (Mrs. Alfred C. Coursen) and Marion (Mrs. Charles H. Hickok).

Cadet at West Point, 1844-48; Brevet 2nd Lieutenant, 1st U. S. Infantry, July 1, 1848; on frontier duty at Ringgold Barracks, Texas, 1848-49; promoted 2nd Lieutenant, and transferred to 2nd U. S. Infantry at Fort McIntosh, Texas, June 8, 1849; stationed at San Diego, California, 1850-51; resigned from the Army December 3, 1851; candidate for Presidential Elector from California on the Whig ticket, 1852; became junior partner in the shipping firm of Case, Heiser and Company at San Francisco; served as Captain-of an artillery Company, California Militia, at San Francisco, 1852-57.

In a letter dated March 3, 1857, and addressed to Colonel S. Cooper, The Adjutant General of the Army, written as Commander of the Post at Fort Yuma, California, Lieutenant Sylvester Mowry stated that a well armed force of about 150 men under Henry A. Crabbe had arrived on March 1st at that place; the organization was rolled the "Arizona Colonization Company" but was military in character with a daily routine of mounting guard, Officer of the Day, etc., and an attempt at severe discipline by inflicting punishment; among the officers, T. D. Johns, graduate of the Military Academy and late Lieutenant, U. S. Army, was listed as Chief of Artillery.

The expedition left Fort Yuma on March 12th and marched about 45 miles up the Gila to a place thereafter known as Fillibusters Camp; it is evident that dissection occurred either at that point or Fort Yuma, because only about 90 men lost their lives when all but one of Crabbe's followers were killed by the Mexicans at Caborca, Sonora, early in April; Johns was undoubtedly among those who wisely abandoned the enterprise.

Upon his return to San Francisco his artillery unit, known as the First California Guard, was disbanded and became a vigilance company; sailed from San Francisco to Santa Barbara, California, in a schooner with 25 men in an unsuccessful attempt to capture Edward McGowan, who was in hiding from the Vigilance Committee, July, 1857; engaged in mining at Washoe, Nevada, 1859, and was selected by citizens of Virginia City as Military Commander during the Indian disturbances; was Superintendent of Silver Mines at Nevada City, California, 1860-62.

Having determined to take part in the Civil War, he went East and on February 22, 1863, was commissioned Colonel, 7th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry; participated in the Storming of Marye Heights, Virginia, May 3, 1863, where he was twice severely wounded; engaged in numerous combats in the Army of the Potomac, including the Battles of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania and Cold Harbor; mustered out of service, June 27, 1864; Brevet Brigadier General, U. S. Volunteers, March 13, 1865, for gallant conduct at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia, and for distinguished service during the War.

After the War he practiced his profession as Civil and Mining Engineer, except for a period in 1873, when he was Inspector of Public Schools, in New York City; died at Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County, New York, July 31, 1883, age 58; buried Erie Cemetery, Erie, Pennsylvania.

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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