

# KEAM, THOMAS VARKER

01

KEAM, THOMAS VARKER, born at Kenwyn, a suburb of Truro, County of Cornwall, England, August 6, 1842; son of Thomas Varcoe Keames (a Mariner) and Grace (Stevens) Keames; married by the tribal basket ceremony to Astzan Ashihih (Salt Woman), (1852-1939) a Navajo of the Moqui Buttes region, at Fort Defiance, Arizona Territory, 1869; children, Tom (Hasthin Dedezahih - Mr. Point-of-a-Mesa), born, 1870, and Billy (Hasthin Bini Diti'ohih - Mr. Bearded-Face), born, 1872.

Went to sea as a boy, sailing as midshipman in the English mercantile marine to Sidney and Newcastle, Australia; came to California as a sailor late in 1861; enlisted, age 19, on January 22, 1862, at San Francisco, Cal., to serve three years as Private, Captain E. D. Shirland's Company C, 1st California Cavalry; crossed southern Arizona with the Column from California, May and June 1862; stationed on the Rio Grande, July to December, 1862; was at Fort West, N.M., when the Apache Chief, Mangas Coloradas, was killed on January 19, 1863, and marched late that month on a scout to the San Francisco River, A.T.; returned to the Rio Grande in April and was stationed on the Mimbres River, N.M., from August, 1863, to May, 1864; on the march down the Gila and at Camp Goodwin, A.T., June and July, 1864; transferred to Company B, same Regiment, at Fort Sumner, N.M., October 8, 1864; honorably discharged on expiration of enlistment at Santa Fe, N.M., January 22, 1865; enlisted at Fort Bascom, N.M., and mustered in to date from February 18, 1865, as 2d Lieutenant, Company E, 1st New Mexico Cavalry, Colonel Christopher Carson, Commanding; was Post Adjutant at Fort Stanton, N.M.; honorably discharged at Santa Fe, N.M.,

September 29, 1866.

Remained in New Mexico and was granted a license by the Indian Bureau to trade with the Capote and other bands of Ute Indians, February 4, 1868; served as Clerk and Interpreter at Fort Defiance, A.T., 1869-72; after the murder of Agent Miller by Ute Indians on June 11, he was appointed by General O. O. Howard at \$1200 per annum as Special Agent for the Navajos, August 5, 1872, and served in that position until July 28, 1873; while acting as Special Agent he organized the first company of Navajo Indian Police consisting of 130 men under Chief Manuelito, which rendered good service in maintaining order on the Reservation; he was in charge of the Agency at Fort Defiance from the departure of Agent Miller on June 4, until the arrival of F. W. Hall, as agent, on September 17, 1872.

Naturalized as an American citizen in the District Court of Bernalillo County, N.M., 1875, after which he made a visit to Cornwall to see his mother; employed at \$100 per month as Interpreter and Superintendent of Apache Indian prisoners of war at Fort Wingate, N.M., September 29 to November 30, 1877; employed at same salary as Chief Packer on duty with Indian prisoners at Ojo Caliente, N.M., from December 1, 1877, to March 15, 1878.

Established an Indian trading post in partnership with William Leonard a mile south of Fort Defiance, A.T., 1879; removed in 1881 to Peach Orchard Spring (since known as Keam's Canyon) 80 miles west of Fort Defiance, where he built a store of his own to trade with the Navajos and Hopis and learned to speak both of their

languages fluently; here he extended hospitality to scientific explorers and others who visited the region; made collections of prehistoric Indian artifacts the largest of which was for the Museum of Ethnology at Berlin, Germany; other collections of antiquities were sent to the Peabody Museum at Cambridge, the University of Pennsylvania, the Field Columbian Museum at Chicago and to the National Museum in Washington, D.C.; while at Keam's Canyon he located a number of copper mining claims on Kaibito Plateau but was unable to develop them after the area was included in the Western Navajo Indian Reservation.

Sold his trading post to Lorenzo Hubbell of Ganado, A.T., May 16, 1902, and, being in failing health, soon afterwards returned to his birthplace in England; came back to the United States in 1903 to dispose of some of his interests and made his will at Philadelphia, Pa., in July of that year; after a short visit he returned to Truro and died there on November 30, 1904, aged, 62; interment in the Churchyard of the Parish Church of Kenwyn.

His estate was appraised at £ 11,718,17.6 (\$56,000) and a death duty of £ 462.6.9 (\$2,250) was paid to the British Government; the principal item was 120 shares in the First National Bank of Albuquerque; The Executors were his cousins, James Stevens of Truro and Frederick A. Wing of London, to each of whom he left a legacy of \$5,000; the estate was completely wound up, October 24, 1906, in the Principal Probate Registry at London, but the total amount realised was insufficient to pay the bequests in full;

the residue, amounting to about \$25,000 was left to the Royal Institution of Cornwall of which he became a member in 1895; to the Museum of which he had made a number of contributions including a fine series of Navajo silver ornaments.

Member, United Service Club, Philadelphia; Companion, Pennsylvania Commandery, Military Order, Loyal Legion of the United States, 1890-1904; Keams Canyon Post Office and Indian School, Navajo County, Arizona, named for him.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Farish, T.E. - History of Arizona, Vol. 7, p. 167.  
 Beadle, J.H. - The Undeveloped West or Five Years in the Territories, Phila, 1873, pp. 524, 541, 613.  
 Orton, R.H. - Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion, Sacramento, 1890, p. 114.  
 Barnes, W.C. - Arizona Place Names, Tucson, 1935, pp. 230-231.  
 Commissioner of Indian Affairs - Annual Report, 1872, pp. 302-304.  
 The American Anthropologist - Lancaster, Pa., Vol. 7, pp. 171-172 (Obituary by Stewart Cullen)  
 New Mexico Historical Review, July, 1931, p. 322.  
 Pennsylvania Commandery, Military Order of the Loyal Legion - Circular No. 13, June 14, 1905.  
 Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, England, 1905, pp. 170-171.  
 Pearson, A.S., - Superintendent Registrar, Truro, Cornwall, England - Birth and Death Certificates and letters of February 26, March 5 and May 14, 1940, through Henry M. Walcott, American Consul, Plymouth, England.  
 The National Archives - Old records of the Indian Bureau.  
 Navajo Central Agency, Window Rock, Arizona - Old files.  
 The Adjutant General of the Army - Military service records.  
 The Quartermaster General's Office - Archives and Claims.  
 The Great Register of Voters - Apache County, A.T.