

# MILLER, John Johnson

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MILLER, JOHN JOHNSON, born in Surry County, North Carolina, October 8, 1799; the given name of his wife was Meridosia, also born in North Carolina about 1804; they were living in Rock Castle County, Kentucky in 1830 but had moved to Illinois by 1835 and the 1850 census shows them as residents of Peoria; children: Jacob Leroy, Charles, Samuel Carron, Thomas, William Logan, Meridosia, Hester, and three others, one of whom was Mrs. C. J. Nickerson.

He and his two sons, Jacob and Samuel, were in Kern County, California, in the spring of 1861 when they joined a prospecting party headed by Joseph R. Walker which crossed what is now Northern Arizona to Albuquerque, New Mexico; that fall most of the party went on to Colorado but returned a year later to New Mexico; late in 1862 the party was on the headwaters of the Gila River and went westward to Tucson and thence into Northern Arizona where gold was discovered in the Hassayampa River in April; he remained in Tucson until the party returned to Maricopa Wells in June for supplies where he rejoined and went with them to what is now Yavapai County.

As a member of the Walker Party, he recorded Claims No. 3 and No. 17 for mining purposes in the Pioneer District on July 15, 1863, situated above the discovery on Lynx Creek and each 100 yards in length; on November 22 of that year he preempted a claim on Rich Gulch, about 400 yards from its mouth, consisting of 100 yards in length."

Listed in the Territorial Census, April, 1864, as resident in Arizona one year, married, wife in Illinois, property valued at \$225; in the manuscript of a history of Arizona by Joseph Fish is the following:

"The Apaches rarely besieged houses but this was sometimes done. The father of Jake and S. C. Miller, of Prescott, located a ranch some seven miles north of Prescott, in 1864, and built a log cabin. In

1865, he was besieged nearly a whole day and night by a large number of Indians. During the fight, Miller killed seven Indians. The next day, when relief came, the faithful dog (Bull) was found dead, but he still retained a firm hold on an Indian's throat who was also dead. As soon as the house was abandoned, the Indians set fire to the premises, burning some of the place, but the house escaped the fire. The place has since borne the name of the 'Burnt Ranch'."

E. W. Wells, who came to the Miller cabin the next morning, gives an interesting account of the fight in Argonaut Tales; the following is from an obituary printed in the Arizona Miner:

Mr. Miller, with his two sons, Jacob and Samuel C., came here with the Walker party in 1863, and passed through much hardship and many hair breadth escapes from Indian hostilities, including the celebrated siege at Burnt Ranch and Willow Creek, where the old gentleman and one other white man (Ed W. Shepard) successfully defended themselves for several hours against a large band of Apaches. He emigrated to Oregon in 1866 where he remained until he returned to Prescott and took up his residence with his son.

Died at the borne of hisson, S. C. Miller, in Miller Valley, near Prescott, A.T., October 10, 1877, aged 78; buried Citizens' Cemetery, Prescott.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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- Hamilton, P. - Resources of Arizona, S.F., 1884, p. 393.
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- Fish, Joseph - Manuscript, History of Arizona, p. 386.
- Barney, J. M. - Story of the Walker Party, Manuscript, 1943, pp 3, 6, 12
- Journal of the Pioneer and Walker Mining Districts, 1863, p. 122
- The Weekly Arizona Miner, Prescott, October 12, 1877, 2:2-5 (obituary).
- The Journal Miner, Prescott, April 7, 1899, 1:1
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