

MILLS, JOHN B.

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MILLS , JOHN B \_\_\_\_\_, JR.

Born at \_\_\_\_\_, New York \_\_\_\_\_, 18\_\_\_\_.

Son of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Went to. the far west from near Peekskill, Westchester County, New York; acted as Spanish interpreter for Major David Ferguson of the California column on an exploratory trip from Tucson to La Libertad, Sonora, and return, October 10 to November 11, 1862. While at La Libertad he did the triangulation for a map of the bay on the Gulf of California; W.W. Mills, the collector of customs at El Paso, Texas, said that he was his deputy at Tucson at the time when he and Edwin Stevens were killed by Apaches near the reduction works of San Antonio Mine on the Santa Cruz; the following account of their death was written by J. Ross Browne:

"At an early hour on the morning of the 29th of December, while Mr. Yerkes was preparing breakfast in his cabin, Mr. Mills and Mr. Stevens rode up and stopped on their way from Santa Cruz to the Mowry Mine. Mills was in the employ of Sylvester Mowry, Esq., the proprietor of the mine, and was about to turn over the management to Stevens, who had just arrived from Guyamas.

"After staying about an hour they mounted their horses and rode off toward the cañon. This was the last Mr. Yerkes ever saw of them alive. A short time after two Mexican boys came running in, breathless and panic-stricken, stating that while on the way over to the mine, a little beyond the entrance into the cañon, they saw on the top of the ridge, which they had taken for safety, a large number of fresh Apache tracks, forming a trail into the cañon. They immediately turned back but had not proceeded far when they saw two Americans on horseback rapidly enter the cañon. Suspecting that an ambush was prepared in advance, they shouted, "Apaches! Los Apaches!" but owing to the distance, or noise of the horses's hoofs, failed to make themselves heard. They then waited awhile till they heard the firing of many guns in rapid succession, by which they knew that the Indians had attacked the two horsemen.

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"Mr. Yerkes and three American employees at his house immediately seized their arms and rode out to the cañon. It was quite silent. The dead bodies of the two young men lay by the road-side, naked and disfigured with wounds. Arrows were scattered around them, and many were found sticking in their bodies. Stevens was doubtless killed at the first fire. He lay close to a little arroya that intersects the trail, and seemed to have fallen directly from his horse at the point of attack. The body of Mills was found thirty yards to the left, on the slope of the cañon, close by a tree behind which he had evidently made a stand and fought for some time. Marks of a desperate struggle were seen all over the ground. Both bodies were entirely stripped, with the exception of a portion of the boots, which the savages in their hurry could not pull off. Stevens's body was lanced in several places, but he had evidently received his death-wound from a rifle-ball at the first fire. That of Mills was pierced with balls, arrows, and lances, showing seventeen distinct wounds, most of them mortal.

"It is characteristic of life in Arizona that both of these young men were well acquainted with the dangers of the country. Stevens had served on the Overland Mail route, and was universally esteemed as a brave, sagacious, and intelligent man. Mills had lived and travelled in Arizona for several years, and had seen many tragic examples of the cunning and cruelty of these Indians; but like all who have lost their lives in a similar manner, had become accustomed to such scenes."

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Browne, J.R. - Adventures in the Apache Country, N.Y. 1874,  
pp. 138, 151, 196, 198,  
200, and 202.

Farish, T.E. - History of Arizona, Vol. 4, p. 130.