

SMITH, VAN HESS CUMMINGS, born at Ludlow, Windsor County, Vermont, July 12, 1837; son of Roswell and Harriet (Cummings) Smith; never married.

Came to northern Arizona late in the summer of 1863; elected Recorder of the Walker Mining District to succeed J.V. Wheelhouse on November 24, 1863; listed, Territorial Census, April, 1864, 3d District, (afterwards Yavapai County), occupation - Rancher, resident in Arizona 9 months, property valued at \$250; elected at a meeting of citizens on Granite Creek on May 30, 1864, as one of three Commissioners to represent the interests of the Government in the disposition of lots in the townsite of Prescott as surveyed by H.W. Green; assisted in the construction of the log house known as the old Governor's Mansion in Prescott; appointed on June 18 by Governor Goodwin as Sheriff for the 3d Judicial District and served until January 17, 1865, when he was succeeded by Jerome Calkins who was appointed by the Governor as Sheriff of Yavapai County. *after* *Territorial Legislature*

went to Tombstone when that town was first established and was appointed by John H. Rehan, Sheriff of Cochise County, as his Deputy and ex-officio Tax Collector when that County was organized early in 1861; that fall he went to Fort Cummings, New Mexico, where he served as an Army Scout *at \$120 per month* from October 12 until January 31, 1862, and is said to have rendered like service at other Army posts in the Southwest.

Went to Old Mexico where he engaged in mining for a number of years; returned to Cochise County and was admitted from Douglas to the Arizona Pioneers Home at Prescott, May 12, 1913, where he died, August 29, 1914, aged 77; buried, Pioneers Cemetery, in Miller Valley near Prescott.

The following is taken from an obituary printed in the Prescott Journal-Miner:

The death of this Hassayamper removes one of the strong men of the early days in the thrilling past of Arizona, and one of its most useful citizens. His life was one filled with the perils incident to border doings, and the insecurity to life from the Apaches on the war path. Privations were but an incident to the followers of the dim trails of the long ago. The deceased was one of the pilgrims in blazing the way for others to follow.

Governor Goodwin appointed him as the sheriff of Yavapai County in 1864, and that official distinction was the first accorded a man in the whole length and breadth of Arizona. In this delicate position Mr. Smith was equal to the duty demanded. He was seldom in the office but constantly in the field. He assisted miners in going out and coming in, and through his efforts life and property were relieved of alarm. He was of gentle disposition, but on the line in duty, a more courageous man never lived.

Old-timers loved him, and looking backward into the dim past, these who remain of that era extol the memory of the man who has gone with the other pioneers. Mr. Smith left this section of Arizona in the early '70s and sought a fortune in Mexico. He prospered, but later all was lost. He took the back trail to Prescott about one year ago, and said he was going to make his last camp on the hill.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Farish, T.H. - History of Arizona, Phoenix, 1915. Vol. 2, p. 310, Vol. 3, pp. 192, 207, 247.
- McClintock, J.H. - Arizona, The Youngest State, Chicago, 1916, p. 617.
- Kelly, G.H. - Legislative History - Arizona, Phoenix, 1926, p. 139.
- Barney, J.H. - Political Activity of the Territorial Governors, Manuscript, 1942, pp. 4, 9, 41, 67.
- Board of Supervisors of Yavapai County, A.T., Minute book, 1864-65. Walker W.P.A. Arizona Records Project - Journal of the Pioneer and Mining Districts, Phoenix, 1941, pp. 5, 6, 8, 12, 26, 27, 29-48, 123, 124, 127, 129.
- The Quartermaster General's Office - Archives and claims.
- Arizona Pioneers' Home, Prescott - Admission and death records.
- The Prescott Courier, September 8, 1914, p. 8, c. 2. (obituary)
- The Prescott Journal-Miner, August 30, p. 6, c. 2 and September 3, 1914, p. 6, c. 3 (obituary and funeral).
- The Arizona Republic, Phoenix, April 15, 1936, Sec. 2, p. 6, c. 6.