

# THOMPSON, DEWITT CLINTON

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THOMPSON, DEWITT CLINTON

Born at \_\_\_\_\_ Texas, \_\_\_\_\_ 18 \_\_\_\_ (about 1835).

Son of William W. Thompson and \_\_\_\_\_.

Married Merejilda at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ 18 \_\_\_\_.

Children \_\_\_\_\_.

The Florence Arizona Enterprise printed the following about him on October 5, 1889:

Mr. D. C. Thompson, one of Arizona's early pioneers and a former resident of this place, is paying Florence a visit to gather proof in support of his claim against the United States for Indian depredations. He passed through Arizona in 1849, to California and returned in 1854, since which time he has resided in the territory and in Sonora, his present home being in Harshaw, Pima county. His father operated a ferry across the Colorado River.

In Bell's "Log of the Texas-California Cattle Trail" this passage appears:

During my stay at Pilot Knob (1854) I made my home at Mr. Thompson's--one of the owners of the ferry, and must do him the justice to say that a cleverer man I have not met with for many a day. Mr. Thompson has been for several years an unsettled citizen of Sonora and California and in former times kept a hotel in Austin City; he anticipates a great run of customers for some time to come, from the immigration from Sonora.

Listed, U.S. Census, 1860, at Colorado Township (Fort Yuma), California, age 30, born in Texas, occupation - Trader, property valued at \$1,000; U.S. Census, 1870, at Casa Blanca, Pima County, A.T., age 36, born in Texas, occupation - Station Keeper, property valued at \$12,500; the Tucson Arizonian stated on April 1, 1871, that a committee of five citizens of Tucson, sent to confer with General George Stoneman regarding the Indian question, met the General "at the house of Mr. Thompson, a short distance below

Florence on the Gila River"; the Florence Enterprise made this summary of his losses due to depredations by the Apaches:

In January, 1871, he lost the finest team of mules in the Territory. He had sent out several Pima Indians from Sacaton, where he had established a station, to gather a load of hay for a body of troops on their way to Fort McDowell; and the Apaches "jumped" them; took the mules and set fire to the hay in the wagon. The old iron work can yet be seen on the desert.

He lost 270 head of cattle from Sacaton and Adamsville, all stolen by the Apaches, and upon this loss he bases his claim for damages against the Government.

The following story about him was printed in the Tucson Citizen shortly after his death:

Dewitt C. Thompson, or as he was best know, Clint Thompson, was a man with a career hardly paralleled even in Arizona.

In 1868 the palmy days of the Territory were at their zenith, and Clint Thompson lived on the fat of the land, and enjoyed life to the limit of the circumstances of these days.

Sam Drachman tells that one very warm day Thompson came into his store, dressed in the coolest - a shirt and a pair of linen pants. The very natural theme of the weather was discussed as Thompson stood wiping the perspiration that almost blinded him. "Sam, give me a cigar," he said, and took money from his pants pocket. It was in bills, loose fives and tens, and they were of course very moist. "Ah, they are nasty!" said he, in tones of disgust, and deliberately tore the handful to tatters and threw them away. "Don't man, don't!" said Drachman. "You'll see the day you'll want that money." "Here's more of it, and it's nasty too" was the only reply, and another \$30 or \$40 followed the first.

He made his money from army contracts, and those were the days when the army people almost begged for supplies. Prices? Yes, indeed. In 1866 some of the posts paid as high as 25 cents a pound for barley.

The beginning of Thompson's downfall was on a barley deal. He had \$25,000 worth of barley in his barn, that he had raised in the Florence region, and Col. Head came to him in his arm chair and offered him four cents a pound for the crop. "No, you can't have it for that," said Thompson, and he leaned to

a more comfortable attitude. 'I want four and a half cents for that barley, or I won't sell it.' And he didn't sell it. First the colonel would pay but four cents, and later came orders for the removal of the garrison. This meant no market for the barley and no \$25,000 for Thompson. All anxiety on his part was kindly removed by the weevils which got at the bins and destroyed the whole."

Died at Oro Blanco, Pima County, A.T., July 2, 1891; buried there.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Farish, T.E. - History of Arizona, Vol. 8, p. 139  
The Weekly Arizonian, Tucson, March 5, 3:1, November 5, 1870, 2:1  
The Arizona Enterprise, Florence, October 5, 1889, 3:2  
The Arizona Enterprise, Tucson, March 10, 1892, 1:9  
The Arizona Citizen, Tucson, February 18, 3:3, April 1, 1871, 3:1;  
February 10, 3:3, March 2, 2:2, March 9, 2:1, March 30, 1:2,  
May 25, 1872, 3:2; November 21, 1874, 4:2; July 10, 4:1 (brief  
obituary) July 20, 1891, 1:4 (career of an Old Timer).  
The Prescott Courier, July 17, 1891, 2:1 (death notice)