

ALDRICH, MARK

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MARK ALDRICH

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Gregg, Thomas. History of Hancock County, Illinois. Chicago,
C. C. Chapman & Co., 1880. pp. 637, 653-4.

"Warsaw was laid out in 1834 by John R. Wilcox, Mark Aldrich, John Montague and John W. Vineyard; and, in 1836, addition was made to it by Mark Aldrich, John Montague, L. Warren. . ."

"Mark A. Aldrich was born in Warren county, New York, in 1801. He was of English descent, his ancestors emigrating to this country prior to the American Revolution. He received a thorough collegiate education, and commenced the study of law, which he subsequently abandoned. In 1829 he married Miss Margaret Wilkinson, of Calvert county, Md., and removed to St. Louis, where he received an appointment in the American Fur company. He left St. Louis June 19, 1829, on the steamboat Red Rover, and after a two weeks' trip, landed at the Point (now Keokuk, Iowa), on the 2d of July, and took charge of the company's station at that place. In 1832 he removed to Fort Edwards, and in 1833 entered the land where Warsaw now stands, and built the second house that was erected outside the fort. In 1836 he was elected to the Legislature, and in

"1838 was re-elected to the same office. Two of his contemporaries in that body in after years inscribed their names in imperishable characters on the roll of fame: Abraham Lincoln and the gifted and lamented Stephen A. Douglas. Mr. Aldrich was a man of great enterprise, and took a leading and active part in the early affairs of Hancock county. In 1850 he removed to California, and a few years later went to Arizona. He was a member of the Arizona Legislature for five years, and held other important offices in the Territory. He died in Tucson, Arizona, on the 22d of October, 1874.

"His wife, Margaret Wilkinson Aldrich, was born in St. Genevieve, Missouri, in 1812. Her father, Dr. Joseph Wilkinson, a Surgeon in the United States Army, was at that time stationed at Jefferson Barracks. Mrs. Aldrich's ancestors were among the earliest settlers of Calvert county, Maryland. Her great-grandfather, James Wilkinson, second son of Sir Robert Wilkinson, of Northumberland county, England, came to this country in 1693. Her grandfather, General Joseph Wilkinson, and her uncle, General James Wilkinson, both served with distinction through the War of the Revolution..."

According to the Executive Record, 1837-1843, v. 3, p. 178 (Arcives Division, Illinois State Library), Mark Aldrich was

-3-

commissioned Lieutenant Colonel of the 59th regiment of Illinois militia, February 19, 1840. He evidently served with the Hancock militia during the Mormon War in 1844, as he was one of the men brought to trial for the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Colonel Levi Williams was another of the militia men brought to trial for the same offense. This was evidently the connection in which Aldrich served with Williams. While the trial of the men charged with the murder of the Smiths was long drawn out, they were all discharged in 1845. (Governors' letter-books, 1840-1853; edited by E. B. Greene & C. M. Thompson, Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, v. 7, pp. xcvi-xcix; Daniels, W. M. A correct account of the murder of Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith... Nauvoo, Ill., 1845, pp.7, 21.)

ALDRICH, MARK A., born in Warren County, New York, 1801; married (1) Margaret Wilkinson (1812-18___) in Calvert County, Maryland, 1829; children, Joseph Wilkinson, Mark A. Jr., Willard Gay, Agnes M. (Mrs. _____ Mitchell), agnes Wait (Mrs. _____) and Katherine Orton (Mrs. _____); (2) a common law marriage with Teofla Leon, 1825-18___), his housekeeper, in Tucson; in his will he recognised her child, Faustina (who afterwards married _____ Thomas) as his daughter.

Received a collegiate education and studied law; went to St. Louis in 1829 where he was employed by the American Fur Company and took charge of its station at The Point (now Keotuk, Lee County, Iowa) in July of that year; Captain J. W. Campbell, Resident of the Lee County Old Settlers Association said of him in 1876;

He was a small man in stature, stoop-shouldered, dark complexioned, black piercing eyes, brimful of vivacity and always ready to participate in the amusements of the day. The Indians called him Petete-Ah-Kah-Kaw, meaning Little Black Sparrow.

Moved to Fort Edwards, Illinois, 1831; in 1833, he entered part of the land on which the town of Warsaw, Hancock County, Illinois, was laid out the following year; served as the first Postmaster at that place from November 14, 1834 to August 1, 1839; elected as Representative from Hancock County to the Illinois General Assembly, 10th and 11th Sessions, 1836-1840, of which Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas were members.

Commissioned, Lieutenant Colonel, 59th Regiment, Illinois Militia, February 19, 1840; said to have participated in the so-called

ALDRICH, MARK A.

-2-

Mormon War in 1844 until the Militia was ordered disbanded by Governor Thomas Ford in June; he and eight others were indicted by a Grand Jury on October 26, 1844, as members of a mob who murdered Joseph and Hyrum Smith, by shooting them in the Hancock County Jail at Carthage on June 27, 1844; after a protracted trial he and the other defendants were acquitted on May 30, 1845.

Went to California in 1850 and came from there to Tucson late in 1855, while the town was still garrisoned by Mexican soldiers, and opened up a store in partnership with John Davis; with the departure of Mexican troops on March 10, 1856, he was selected by the Americans as alcalde to succeed Juan Elias.

Presided over a mass meeting in Tucson, August 29, 1856, which memorialized Congress to organize Arizona as a Territory; appointed by Governor L. S. Owings as Treasurer of the provisional Government of the proposed Territory of Arizona, organized at a Convention held in Tucson on April 2-5, 1860, of which he was a member; listed, U.S. Census, 1860, at Tucson; occupation - Merchant; property valued at \$52,000; elected at a mass meeting in Tucson, August 26, 1860, as Criminal Court Judge but resigned in disgust on November 1, saying:

With the exception of a few cases for stealing (and the accused were Mexicans) where public whipping was inflicted, not a single complaint has ever been made for the arrest and punishment of persons who do not hesitate, for any offense (either supposed or real) to violate and set at defiance the laws, by shooting at each other in the streets and saloons, endangering the lives of other citizens in their immediate vicinity.

But yesterday a man was shot dead in the street, in open daylight, in the presence of a number of citizens, and not a word is said about arresting the person who committed the deed, or seeing the laws enforced.

ALDRICH, MARK A.

-3-

If the time has arrived when the law-abiding portion of the community, either through fear of giving offense or for want of moral courage, fail to make the necessary complaint for the arrest and trial of those who commit a breach of the peace, I think they have no use for Judge or Court.

Appointed Postmaster at Tucson, Pima County, New Mexico, November 11, 1857, and served until the office ceased to be active when the Overland Mail route was discontinued in 1861; remained in Tucson during its occupation by Confederate troops from February to May, 1862; reappointed Postmaster when the office was reestablished in Arizona Territory on July 13, 1865, and served until November 1 of that year when he was succeeded by D. H. Stickney.

Member from Pima County, 1st Territorial Council at Prescott, September 26 to November 10, 1864; located land in the San Pedro Valley above the mouth of Arivaipa Creek on December 15, 1865, and joined with other settlers in taking out an irrigation ditch; appointed by Governor R. C. McCormick as Probate Judge of Pima County, May 14, 1866, and served until September 15, when he resigned; Member from Pima County 3d Territorial Council at Prescott, October 15 to November 6, 1866 and was elected its President; listed U.S. Census, 1870, at Tucson, occupation - Retail Merchant, property valued at \$15,000; again elected from Pima County to the 7th Territorial Council at Tucson, January 6 to February 14, 1873.

Died at Tucson, Pima County, A.T., September 21, 1873, aged 72; the following is quoted from an obituary in the Tucson Citizen:

He was the first American merchant in this town, the first Postmaster and the first Alcalde. Of the latter office he has told us many amusing incidents. There was no secure jail, and

ALDRICH, MARK A.

-4-

punishments were generally inflicted by whipping; he would therefore sentence the accused to receive a certain number of lashes, but instructed the police officer to only inflict half the number and then inform the prisoner that on a certain day he must report for the balance of the punishment; but strange to say the prisoner never returned nor did he remain to commit more crimes.

He discharged all his public and private trusts with fidelity and was possessed of quick, clear judgement. A very large number followed his remains to the grave. The Masonic Brotherhood took charge of his remains and buried him in accordance with the rites of the Order.

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