

BRADSHAW, WILLIAM DAVID

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BRADSHAW, WILLIAM DAVID, born in Tennessee, about 1826; was a member of the Bear Flag party which captured Sonoma, California, on June 14, 1846; appointed 1st. Lieutenant, Captain Sear's Co. D., Mounted Rifleman, Fremont's California Battalion, October 6, 1846; honorably discharged April 7, 1847; appointed by the Governor of California to command a detachment of Militia because of a threatened revolt of the French miners at Mokelumme Hill, in 1851 and brought about a settlement of the difficulty without bloodshed; he was a member of a miners committee that drew up laws regulating mining at Vallecito Camp in Calaveras County on June 24, 1853; in "Reminiscences of a Ranger", Horace Bell of Los Angeles wrote the following about him:

Mention having been heretofore made of Bill Bradshaw, his having given name to the famous Bradshaw Mining District in Arizona, it will now be in place to give a brief account of this curious character. A more curious or a more marked character this careful chronicler never knew-- one of nature's most polished gentlemen and brightest jewel in America's collection of true born chivalry. Bradshaw was brave, generous, eccentric, and in simple truth a natural lunatic. In manly form and physical beauty, perfect; in muscular strength, a giant; in fleetness of foot and endurance, unequalled.

The first account I have of Bradshaw was in Sonoma in 1846, then about 20 years old, at work, under Captain Salvador Vallejo, Mexican Post Commander, building a picket fence. Don Salvador, with all the pomp and circumstance of despotic authority came around where Bill was at work and expressed his marked displeasure at the manner in which it was being done.

Bill, with all the dignity of true born American importance, flatly told the Don that he didn't know what he was talking about, which sass so kindled the ire of the offended Mexican dignitary that he whipped out his trusty Toledo and tried its temper on Bill's supposed seat of honor, striking

him with the flat thereof.

Vesuvius! Stromboli! Cotapaxi! what are thy fires as compared with those that raged in the bosom of this young hero upon being struck an ignominious blow with the flat of a Mexican sabre? In an instant the domineering Don was down, felled like an ox with a redwood picket, wielded with terrific force by this outraged American boy who seized the sword of the apparently dead Captain, and in a fury of uncentrollable rage pounded it into pot-hooks with his axe that lay conveniently near.

Then realizing what he had done Bradshaw saw that he must choose, and that immediately, between instant flight and a Mexican prison, chains, and ignominious punishment. So hurriedly he sought his temporary lodging place, seized his rifle and struck out for the Sacramento Valley, and only returned to Sonoma when that military post fell into the hands of the Bear Flag party, Bradshaw being one of the most daring and energetic of that adventurous band.

Salvador Vallejo commanded the garrison at Sonoma, and finding the young hero of the redwood picket in the ranks of his captors, was greatly alarmed, and said to the Bear Flag commander, "Now I suppose I will be murdered, finding this assassin in your force," pointing to Bradshaw. "Oh, no," responded Bill; "we are now friends, so far as I am concerned. An American never strikes an enemy when he is down. You are down now, and I am up, so here's my hand; my friendship is yours if you need it." Don Salvador, who was really a fine fellow, manifestly chagrined, shook the proffered hand of the victorious young Filibuster, vowing future friendship, and ever after the two were fast friends.

The next we know of Bradshaw is in Los Angeles in '47, as a Lieutenant in Fremont's Battalion, where his wild freaks astonished the Dons and won the hearts of the Donas, among whom he was a universal favorite.

Bill was one of the most witty fellows to be found, and wherever he stopped a crowd of eager listeners would surround him, and rears of

merriment would respond to his well turned points.

Alas, poor Bradshaw! A better fellow never lived, and we will now in charity draw the sombre curtain of forgetfulness over his unfortunate death.

Beattie's "Heritage of the Valley" credits him with ^{finding} a shorter route from San Bernardino to La Paz, where he had been early in the spring of 1862, not long after the discovery of gold near there, and states:

There was already a road from San Bernardino through Cajon Pass to Fort Mohave, and from that point there was at least a trail that could be followed down along the (Colorado) river to the (La Paz) mines. But on May 31, 1862, the Los Angeles Star announced that "Parties who have left town for the Colorado placers intending to take a cut-off by way of San Geronimo Pass, thence on a straight line to the new diggings, have sent word that the new road is in first rate condition and perfectly practicable".

The "new road" was the so-called Bradshaw Road. W.D. Bradshaw, a man well known for adventurous exploits in the State during years past, was one of the first to make the trip from Los Angeles to the new gold fields. Guided by a map drawn for him by a Cocomaricopa Indian, who, with Chief Cabezon of the Cahuillas, had visited the mines previously, Bradshaw made his way from San Geronimo Pass to the River. The route he followed became the road that bore his name.

In The Los Angeles Star of July 12, 1862, is the following statement:

Too much credit cannot be given to Bradshaw the pioneer explorer, who by piloting nearly a hundred men thus far and through to the Colorado river no doubt saved many valuable lives. His indomitable perseverance and sleepless vigilance prevented a good many animals from being lost, for there were many men who, after arriving in camp unsaddle or unpack and leave their animals

to get water or grass the best they can.

He and William A. Werringer established a ferry across the Colorado River about 6 miles below La Paz at Providence Point, the name of which was later changed to Olive City; their first advertisement appeared in the Los Angeles Star of June 14, 1862:

Werringer & Bradshaw have established a ferry on the Colorado River at the place named Providence Point, the termination of the straight line of travel from Los Angeles.

A good and substantial boat will be on the station by the 16th of June capable of carrying passengers and freight; and as soon thereafter as possible a large ferry boat will be put on capable of supplying all the requirements of the public.

That he had disposed of his interest in the ferry in order to engage in mining near Rich Hill and the Weaver Diggings is indicated in the following letter that he wrote at Olive City, N.M., August 1, which was published in the Los Angeles News of August 14, 1863:

I started a few days after Capt. Walker and Weaver and overtook them two days south of William's Fork, nearly at the mines. The next day after our arrival, I went out across the country and discovered a gulch, eastward, out of which I obtained in four days labor, 28 ounces and \$12. This gulch is called Indians Gulch.

Nine persons took up the ground between Antelope and Indian creek. They have taken out as high as five pounds per day to the hand. I obtained a claim just above them, from which I obtained two dollars to the pan. Our grub was getting scarce, so I left what provisions we had with my partner, and arrived here in four days and a half. I have been a miner in California for 14 years, and I believe that these diggings are as good, or better than any I have ever seen.

There is a great cry that the Mojave route

is the way to the mines. It is out of the way 150 miles and the object is to take you over the Cajon Pass toll road. There is still another; when you arrive at St. John's ranch or slough, go to Bradshaw's Ferry. It is the nearest and best road to La Paz. Although the Ferry goes by my name, I have disposed of my entire interest therein. I am well known in California, particularly by the mining community and to them I send this information.

I shall start back to the mines day after tomorrow by way of New Water. At the request of Mr. John Rhea, I have made a large map of the road from Olive City to the mines and of the mining district, which will be kept at the Ferry for the benefit of our mutual friends and the public generally, with a table of distances from water to water, grass, etc.

Listed, Territorial Census, May, 1864, at Olive City, A.T., age 38, single, born in Tennessee, resident of Arizona 2 years, occupation - Miner; on May 26, 1864, Governor Goodwin issued a call for the first Territorial election; Edward D. Tuttle, who was then in what later became Mohave County, stated that shortly thereafter:

"David Bradshaw visited us enroute from Prescott to La Paz. He talked to the voters, announcing himself as a Candidate for Delegate to Congress."

At the election held on July 18, 1864, he received only 66 votes, the least number for any candidate; an Act of the 1st. Territorial Legislature, approved, November 7, 1864, granted to him and his associates for 20 years, the exclusive right to keep and operate a ferry across the waters of the Colorado River at any and every point between what is known as Mineral City and a point five miles above La Paz.

The Act then provided that they shall be authorized to charge, demand, and collect the following rates of toll, viz: For a wagon and two animals, \$4.00; for every additional two, \$1.00; For every carriage with one animal, \$3.00; For every beast of burden, \$1.00; For every horse or mule with its rider, \$1.00; For every footman, 50 cents; For every head of loose cattle, horses, mules or jacks, 50 cents; For every hog, sheep, or goat, 25 cents.

The old Yuma County records show that on September 6, 1864, he bought from W. W. Thompson and William McCoy for \$300 their rights to a ferry claim of land from which he could operate a ferry across the Colorado River at La Paz; it is possible that he and his elder brother, Isaac A. established a ferry there rather than at Mineral City (later called Ehrenberg) which is assumed to be the place where the Providence Point or Olive City ferry was located in 1862.

The following report of his death at La Paz was printed in the Los Angeles News of December 17, 1864:

James Grant arrived here about the middle of the present week, with express matter from Prescott and La Paz.

We learn from Mr. Grant that William Bradshaw, of Bradshaw route notoriety, well known to miners and mountaineers, committed suicide at La Paz on the 2nd instant, by cutting his throat. Bradshaw had been on one of his "big benders", was probably under the influence of liquor at the time; he was pursued by ghosts, etc. He walked deliberately into a carpenter's shop, took up a drawing knife, and with one stroke nearly severed his head from his shoulders.

BRADSHAW, WILLIAM DAVID

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WANTED

Any references to him in the Arizona Miner;
 a report of his death should appear in December, 1864.

BRADSHAW, William D.

(From Our Special Traveling Correspondent)

SAN BERNARDINO, July 11, 1862.

....
 The Colorado Mines.

I have nothing new to report of the Colorado Mines. Mr. Bradshaw arrived here two days ago from the river. He says there are about 1,000 men in the mines, and that their average wages are half an ounce a day to the hand. Provisions are not scarce--flour sells at 24 cents per pound, other provisions and groceries vary from 50 cents to a dollar. He thinks the mines are extensive, stretching off into the Apache country, where the whites are not allowed to go. He estimates the distance to the river, over the central route, leading through the San Gorgonio Pass and then directly east, 150 miles from here. The mines are from 10 to 20 miles beyond the river, which makes the entire land travel from San Pedro 260 miles....

----Daily Evening Bulletin (San Francisco) July 14, 1862, 1:2