

DENNIS, JOHN THOMAS

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DENNIS, JOHN THOMAS, born at Norwich, Muskingum County, Ohio, January 8, 1840; son of John and Sarah (Lewis) Dennis; his father, a native of New Jersey, served in the Militia of that State as a soldier for 4½ months during the war of 1812; his mother died when he was six weeks old; married, Mrs. Ada (Hogan) Bowers, daughter of Granville H. and Narcissa Hogan, at Phoenix, March 27, 1888; step-son, Ulvah Bowers, son of F. W. Bowers.

Accompanied his father to Fairfield, Jefferson County, Iowa, when 7 years of age and returned with him to Ohio in 1853; crossed the plains with ox teams via Omaha, the North Platte and Humboldt River and arrived in California after 4 months, 1859; commenced mining at Pine Grove, Anador County, and afterwards in other parts of the state; left San Francisco July 5, 1862, and rode horseback with pack-mules to La Paz on the Colorado River arriving on the 30th of that month; was placer mining on the Hassayampa in 1863; listed, Territorial Census, 1864, at La Paz, occupation - Miner, resident in Arizona 2 years; went to Wickenburg and hauled freight for the Vulture Mine, 1865-68; on December 8, 1868, he located a quarter section of land which was patented to him and which he first platted as an addition to the City of Phoenix on November 16, 1883; the Dennis Addition is now bounded by Van Buren and Roosevelt Streets between 7th and 12th Streets in Phoenix.

When he first settled on his homestead there was not a house on the site of Phoenix; he was among the first to raise a crop of barley in the Salt River Valley; suffered numerous losses from Indian depredations and particularly from a raid by Yavapai Apaches who stole a number of his cattle and horses; built the store in which the first Phoenix Post Office was located; originally obtained his supplies from Wickenburg but later hauled them with his own freight teams from Yuma; was one of the organizers of the Salt River

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Town Association, October 20, 1870; acquired other ranches and engaged in the live-stock business; erected the Dennis Block, two stories and a basement at the corner of Washington and Second Streets, Phoenix; also owned property in Tempe.

The 1870 Census lists him as a farmer in the Salt River Valley; according to Hinton's Handbook to Arizona he and James Murphy were partners as freighters in 1878; Benschel's Phoenix City Directory, 1892, gives his residence as on the corner of Monroe and Pima (now 4th) Streets.

Joined the Society of Arizona Pioneers at Tucson, April 29, 1887; elected as a Republican a Member of the Phoenix City Council; served as a Member of the Territorial Insane Asylum Commission; was Vice-President and for 7 years a Member of the Board of Directors of Maricopa and Phoenix Railroad Company; the following dispatch from Santa Monica was printed in the Los Angeles Times:

John T. Dennis, a retired Arizona business man, was struck and killed by a Pacific Electric car at 10 o'clock this morning at Trolleyway and Pacific Street, Ocean Park. Mr. Dennis, whose home was at 826 Trolleyway, Venice, had lived in that city for more than fifteen years and was widely known.

For sometime Mr. Dennis had been a patient at St. Catherine's Hospital. He attempted to hail a south bound car and evidently under the impression that it was about to stop, approached too close and was struck, fracturing his skull.

Died at Ocean Park, Los Angeles County, California, October 7, 1921, aged 81; his body was cremated in Los Angeles.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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- Hinton, R.J. - Handbook to Arizona, San Francisco, 1878, appendix, p. 58.
- Bensel Company - Phoenix Directory, 1892, p. 63.
- Fish, Joseph - History of Arizona, Manuscript, pp. 444, 445, 472.
- Arizona Pioneers Historical Society - Membership book.
- Arizona Historical Review, Phoenix, Vol. 5, No. 4, January 1933, pp. 278, 279.
- California Bureau of Vital Statistics, 1921, Death certificate No. 1209.
- The Arizona Republican, Phoenix, October 10, 1921, p. 3 (obituary).
- The Arizona Gazette, Phoenix, October 11, 1921, (obituary).
- The Los Angeles Times, October 8, 1921, Part 2, 10:5 (obituary).