

# DICKSON, JOHN HAMILTON

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DICKSON, JOHN HAMILTON, born in Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee, January 14, 1820; son of Joshua and Tabithia Dickson; married, Mary Jane, daughter of Joseph and Margaret Ehle at Prescott, A.T., November 17, 1864, by Governor J. N. Goodwin; children, Joseph H., James Van, Laura E., Olive T. (Mrs. Frederick Bradshaw), Margaret P. (Mrs. J. Benjamin McCutchen), Mary F. (Mrs. Alfred Williams), Nancy E. (Mrs. Edgar W. Stephens and afterwards Mrs. William Louis Barnum) and Clara E. (Mrs. E.J. Sanders).

First crossed Northern Arizona from California with the Walker Party in 1861; returned with the party from New Mexico and was one of the organizers of the Pioneer Mining District at a meeting on the Oolkilsipava (Hassayampa) River, May 10, 1863; joined in the location of 12 mining claims between that date and October 27; he and Colonel Woolsey adopted a novel method of claiming title to agricultural land by filing the following notice on June 15, 1863, with the Recorder of the Pioneer Mining Districts:

This is to certify that Messrs. John H. Dickson and King S. Woolsey, have this day recorded as taken up by them, two quarter Sections of land, each containing one hundred & sixty acres lying on what is known as the "Agua Fria" in New Mexico or Arizona about one hundred miles north of the "Pima Villages" N.E.

Owing to the disorganized state of the country we have taken this method of proving our sincerity in taking up the above ranch claims.

Listed Territorial Census, April 1864, 3d District (Yavapai County) age 34, resident in Arizona 1 year, occupation - Laborer, property valued at \$160; in his manuscript history of Arizona, Joseph Fish states that:

Joseph Ehle and his son-in-law, John H. Dickson, took up a claim in Skull Valley in the fall of 1864. The next spring they plowed and put in some corn, but the Indians ran them out of the place. In the spring of 1866 they put in about fifty acres of corn. It yielded nearly fifty bushels to the acre which they sold to the government for the soldiers stationed nearby at ten cents per pound.

Served as Doorkeeper of the 2d Territorial Council at Prescott, 1865; the Arizona Miner reported on September 11, 1869:

From Skull Valley ----- From John Dickson, who arrived in town (Prescott) Thursday morning, we learn that the freight trains of Miller & Bro., and Dr. W. W. Jones, passed his ranch a day or two ago and may be expected here shortly. Indians have not troubled the settlers much, of late. Mr. Dickson came to town for medicine for Mrs. Joe. Hale, who was very sick when he left.

Listed U. S. Census, July, 1870, Prescott, A.T., aged 35, occupation - Farmer; the Prescott Enterprise of January 12, 1878, printed the following story about him:

John H. Dickson has had much better luck at other things than he has had at freighting. He was one of the first white men that ever set feet in this part of Arizona, and has tried his hand at every thing, with varying success. Jim Jones tells us that, 13 years ago, John started from Prescott to the Colorado, with a team after a load of freight, remained three weeks at La Pas and had to return without a load.

He let freighting severely alone from that time until about a month ago, when, after a load, everything went well with him until his arrival at Charley Gullings, when his horses started a kicking savage, the result of which was that John's best horse received injuries from which he died, and to cap all his remaining animals got away from him and never stopped until their old stopping place in Skull Valley was reached, thus forcing their owner to ride back after them. He is expected here every day and will not, we think, soon again try his luck at freighting.

Another story about him appeared two months later in the Prescott Arizona Miner:

John Dixon and family have again removed from town to their ranch in Skull Valley. John has become so expert in the art of moving that the old adage, "three moves are as bad as a fire," does not apply in his case.

It is stated that his chickens are so trained that when they observe preparations for a move going on, they lie down, cross their legs and are ready to be tied. This, of course, is not true, as he never brings his chickens to town. His Skull Valley farm is his summer villa, and like many of the land owners of England and elsewhere, he spends his summers in the country and his winters in town.

Appointed Postmaster at Skull Valley, November 7, 1879 to succeed Miss Libbie Jackson and served until the office was discontinued, March 29, 1880; the U. S. Census taken in the latter year gives his occupation as Station Keeper; Disturnell's Arizona Gazetteer, published in 1881, shows that he had a stage station at Skull Valley and his wife was Postmistress; she served in that capacity from February 14, 1881, when the office was reestablished until it was again discontinued on April 17, 1883; that

they continued to reside there is indicated by an item in the Prescott Courier of November 2, 1888, which stated that "J. H. Dickson, who came with the Walker Party in 1861, has arrived from Skull Valley with a load of fims squash one of which weighed 65 pounds"; served as Constable at Skull Valley, 1893-94.

Died at Bakersfield, Kern County, California, December 14, 1903, aged 83, buried, Skull Valley Cemetery, Yavapai County, Arizona.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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 W.P.A. - Arizona Writers Project - Journal of the Pioneer and Walker Mining Districts, 1863-65, pp. 1, 43-45, 47, 48, 64, 65, 99, 104, 108-110, 117, 119, 122, 150.  
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 U. S. Court of Claims - Indian Depredation Docket No. 7120 (Ehle).  
 The Great Register of Yavapai County - 1876  
 U. S. Post Office Department - Postmaster Appointments  
 2d Arizona Territorial Legislature - Journals  
 The Arizona Miner, Prescott, October 26, 3:2, November 23, 1864, 3:2; January 9, 2:2, September 11, 1869, 3:2; December 7, 1877, 4:2.  
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 The Prescott Courier, March 5, 1886, 3:2; January 11, 1887, 3:2; October 25, 1889, 4:1; November 5, 1890, 4:1; June 23, 1891, 4:2; July 23, 1896, 4:1  
 The Arizona Enterprise, Prescott, January 9, 3:4; January 12, 1878, 4:1

## ADDITIONAL NEWSPAPER REFERENCES

- The Arizona Miner, Prescott, March 28, 1868, 3:1; October 15, 1870, 3:4; May 11, 3:3 and August 24, 1877, 4:2; January 24, 3:2 and November 21, 1879, 4:1.  
 The Prescott Courier, December 17, 3:3 (death notice), December 19, 3:2 and December 20, 1900, 3:2 (funeral).