

DAVIDSON, MATHIAS OLIVER

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DAVIDSON, MATTHIAS OLIVER, born at Plattsburg, Clinton County, New York, March 18, 1819; son of Dr. Oliver and Margaret (Miller) Davidson; married Harriet Smith Standish at Plattsburg, April 8, 1846; children, Julian Oliver, George Trimble and Katherine Miller.

Came to Arizona in 1863 to take charge of the Cerro Colorado Mine near Arivaca; listed, Territorial Census, April, 1864, at Cerro Colorado Mine, age 44, born in New York; married, family in New York, resident in Arizona 3 months, occupation, Civil Engineer; on November 29, 1864, he wrote a letter from Guaymas to Major General McDowell in San Francisco saying:

"Mr. Elisha Baker, Major-domo of the Arizona Mining Company, has just come down from Arizona to escort me to the Territory. He informs me that a band of Confederates are encamped in Sonora, between Magdalena and the boundary, awaiting reinforcements from Texas, Chihuahua and Durango, to make an attack on the advanced military posts at Calabasas, Tubac and Tucson. If they are successful in such a raid, they will for a while have the southern portion of Arizona at their mercy."

Chas. D. Poston, as Indian Superintendent for Arizona, on February 24, 1864, recommended his appointment at \$1,000 per annum as Special Agent for the Papagos and said in his annual report for 1864:

"Colonel M. Oliver Davidson, the Superintendent of a mining company in the vicinity, kindly consented to take charge of the Papago agency; and he, as a gentleman of cultivation and morality, will exercise a beneficial influence over these friendless people."

On June 16, 1865, he advised the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that 13 bales of dry goods, 11 cases and a cask of hardware, shipped from San Francisco to Guaymas and intended for distribution to Papago Indians could not be obtained because that port was besieged by Governor Pesquiera and that he intended to leave San Francisco for New York by steamer on July 3; at Washington, on August 12, 1865, he submitted an extensive report on the Papago

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Indians from which the following is quoted:

"The Papagos have also performed during the last year important services as protectors of the settlements of their white neighbors. In accordance with the stipulations of the council of San Xavier del Baa in January last, they raised and held ready for the field 150 warriors, mostly mounted, intended to act in co-operation with the United States troops in a campaign against the barbarous Apaches. It now affords me great pleasure to report, that while waiting for the military co-operation, until it was decided that the soldiers could not move for sufficient force, the various Papago chiefs placed their young men at my disposal, and scouting parties were kept during several months scouring the country, beating up the haunts of the Apaches, and in some instances recovering cattle plundered from the whites.

"At all times when I have called upon them they have furnished mounted men, who have traversed mountains and deserts as expresses, scouts or escorts to travellers. These services were rendered at times and under circumstances that made them really valuable. In compensation I have promised them a proportion of the Indian goods allotted to this Territory. Owing, however, to circumstances already reported to the Department, the well-earned reward has not yet been paid, through Indian goods destined for them having been delayed, first by some error in shipments, second by reason of disorders in Mexico, impeding the transit through that country, the goods at this time remain at Guaymas, that ought to have been received and distributed during the last Christmas holidays."

Appointed, September 12, 1865, by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs as Special Agent for the Papago, Pima, Maricopa and Tame Apache Indians at \$1,500 per annum and served until he resigned on April 20, 1866; between August 19, 1864, and May 22, 1866, he wrote over 30 letters to the Commissioner concerning details of administration of Indian affairs in southern Arizona.

As its Engineer and Director since October, 1863, he filed a claim against the Republic of France with the State Department on October 17, 1865, on behalf of the Arizona Mining Company based upon the following facts:

The American schooner William L. Richardson sailed for the mouth of the Colorado River from San Francisco on October 11, 1864; when near the port of La Paz, in the Gulf of California, she was brought to by shots from the French

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war steamer Diamant, boarded, and 100 kegs of blasting powder belonging to the Arizena Mining Company seized as contraband of war, the west coast of Mexico being then under blockade by the French Navy. The claim was considered in 1882 by a France-American arbitration commission under the convention of January 15, 1880 and denied.

Died ● † Fordham, Westchester County, New York, September 1, 1872, aged 53.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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 Rebellion Records - Series 1, Vol. 48, Vol. 5, pt. 2, pp. 1080, 1104, 1131.
 Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs - 1864, pp. 298, 303;
 1865, pp. 297, 298, 301-303.
 Bancroft, H. H. - History of Arizona and New Mexico, 1888, p. 551.
 Moore, J. B. - History of International Arbitrations, House Misc. Doc. 212,
 53d Congress, Vol. 4, pp. 3962-3964, "Arizona Mining Co. vs.
 Republic of France, No. 13".
 The New York Times, September 3, 1872, p. 5, c. 6. (death notice).