

# FERGUSON, WILLIAM HENRY

001

FERGUSON, WILLIAM HENRY, born at Glenville, Schenectady County, New York, August 4, 1835; son of Duncan and Hannah Ferguson, both natives of New York; married, Maria Jesus Valdes (1840-1926), daughter of Celestino and Luz (Barela) Valdez, at San Xavier Mission, A.T., December 4, 1866; children, Gilbert Smith and Maria Andrea (Mrs. William Henry Dante).

Listed with his parents, U.S. Census, 1850, Schenectady County, New York, age 17; in 1855 he went to New Zealand and Australia, returned to America, landing at San Francisco in 1862; the following narrative was printed in the Prescott Journal-Miner:

His death revives an incident in early manhood that few, if any, know in this community, and which was filled with a thrilling experience. At the age of 23, he left New York City with a party of about 30 for Australia on a gold seeking mission. After a long sea voyage they disembarked at what is now the city of Townsville. Later they outfitted and went out to the northern part of the island and established a camp in the Mt. Powell range, where they prospected for the yellow metal. Success followed and the aggregate wealth of the party reached several thousand dollars. Returning to the nearest settlement after supplies, their nationality directed investigation and they were taxed to a "finish", as the deceased stated on many occasions in after years.

After a few years in locating new gold fields of promise, and after exploring the country to ascertain the source of the metal, they were summoned by the Governor of the province to swear allegiance to the Crown of England. The civil war had begun, in the United States, and the motive for the extraordinary reaction was grasped as an instant. Other Americans from remote places were also rounded up, and the total strength was an even 60. Protests were advanced against this arbitrary action of the ruler, but the iron will of that official prevailed.

The handful of aliens banded themselves into a solid front and held a secret meeting. All emphatically and indignantly refused to have the yoke placed around their necks with the exception of only one, and so informed the magistrate. They were ordered to leave the country in three days, but speaking for his party Mr. Ferguson advanced to the front with a demeanor that was firm and yet courteous, and asked for only one day in which the Americans would comply with the order. A sailing vessel was lying in the harbor, where the 59 boarded it, and inside of 50 hours were sailing away. All landed at San Francisco late in 1862, and the majority enlisted in the army to fight for the Union.

112  
FERGUSON, WILLIAM HENRY

-3-

Enlisted, age 29, at San Francisco, September 17, 1862, to serve 3 years as Private, Captain Charles Atchisson's Company I, 4th California Infantry; occupation when enlisted - Teamster; joined the Company at Benicia Barracks and went with it to Southern California in April, 1863; stationed at Fort Mohave, A.T., from June, 1863 to March, 1865; honorably discharged at Drum Barracks, near San Pedro, California, July 28, 1865.

In 1866 he went to Tucson, A.T., where he was employed as Quartermaster clerk under 2d Lieutenant, Gilbert Cole Smith, 9th U.S. Infantry, for whom *he* named his son who was born there on July 28, 1869; listed, U.S. Census, 1870, at Tucson, occupation - Laborer, property valued at \$150; the Journal-Miner also stated that:

Afterwards his services were secured by Hinds & Hecker, the contractors who were supplying the military of Arizona with meat, and the deceased had charge of that important duty. He was compelled to travel from one post to another, and in this line of work had a dangerous duty to perform, the country being infested with the Apache. Leaving the military and the contracting firm, the deceased followed mining in this field (Yavapai County) for over forty years, but with varying success.

The passing of this Pilgrim of the Gila, is a sad one, as there is removed to another sphere one of those men who helped to make history for the old Territory and through whose diligence and industry the borderland was redeemed that others might enjoy the fruits of the hardships borne by the early Hazzaymper who blazed the way and builded after he finished the work that was attended with privations and dangers but few of this generation appreciate.

An obituary printed in the Prescott Courier reads in part:

Later he took to his old vocation of prospecting and about 1875 discovered what is now part of the holding of the United Verde Copper Company; also he was the original locator of the ground now known as "Copper Chief" named "Mammoth" by Mr. Ferguson. These claims he knew were very valuable, but he was unable to retain them. He was also the locator of several other lodes which since have become noted for their productiveness.

Deceased was a typical pioneer and a skillful prospector and was one of the men who made life easier for those who followed them into the wilds of Arizona and who made known her mineral wealth to the miners and capitalists.

FERGUSON, WILLIAM HENRY

-3-

Listed, U.S. Census, 1880, at Bradshaw City, Yavapai County, A.T., age 46, occupation - Miner; Comrade, Barrett Post No. 3, G.A.R., Prescott, A.T., 1869, Post Commander, 1897; visited his old home in New York about 1893; died at Prescott, Yavapai County, Arizona, February 4, 1913, aged 79; buried, Citizens Cemetery, Prescott.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Orton, R.H. - Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion, Sacramento, 1890, p. 659.  
The Adjutant General of the Army - Military service records.  
U.S. Veterans Administration - Pension records, W.C. 761,851.  
The Prescott Evening Courier, February 4, 1913, p. 6, c. 2-3 (obituary).  
The Journal-Miner, Prescott, February 6, p. 4, c. 1-3-4, and February 8, 1913, p. 5, c. 1 (obituary and funeral).