

IAEGER, LEWIS JOHN FREDERICK 001

IAEGER, LEWIS JOHN FREDERICK, (JAEGER*YAGER) Mexicans called him "Don Diego" and the Yuma Indians "Yek"), born at Greenwich Farm, near Hamburg, Berka County, Pennsylvania, October 8, 1824; son of Rev. Gottlieb F. I. and Mary (Audenreid) Iaeger; married to Cleofa Sais by the Commanding Officer at Fort Yuma, California, 1860; children, Lewis J. F. , Jr., and Conception (Chonita) (Mrs Conception Jaeger Martinez or Mrs. Gabriel Martinez) .

Attended the public schools of Berka County and learned the machinists trade in the Baldwin shops at Philadelphia; replayed as a machinist at the Washington, D. C. Navy Yard, 1846-48; sailed from Philadelphia on the ship "Mason" around Cape Horn and arrived in San Francisco, California, October 6, 1849; came with B. M. Hartshorn and 12 others to establish a f erry across the Colorado River near Pilot Knob, July 11, 1850; a stockade was erected and a flatboat built of cottonwood lumber; the ferry business was very profitable because of the large number of people who were going to the California gold fields by the Gila Route.

Went to San Diego in November, 1851, and on the return trip with a Mexican helper and 9 pack roles was attacked by Yuma Indians about 3 miles from Pilot Knob; his left arm was twice pierced with arrows and, just as he reached the stockade, was struck in the back of the neck by another arrow; the ferry was abandoned that night and he was taken to San Diego where pieces of the arrows were removed from his neck and arm; returned to the Colorado River when troops under Major S. P. Heintzelman reestablished Fort Yuma, February 29, 1852; built three large boats with lumber hauled from San Diego at a cost of 25 cents per pound; located a ferry about a mile below the fort where he erected an adobe house to accommodate 10 men; this place was known as Yagerville and became the Overland State station in 1856; there he conducted a general merchandise

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store, blacksmith and wagon shop, engaged in cattle raising and hay cutting, and became interested in gold digging.

Upon the arrival of the advance guard of the California Column at Fort Yuma in November 1861, a number of his boats were destroyed for fear that the Confederates, then at Tucson, might attempt to cross the Colorado River, except the large ferry boats which were moved up stream and tied under the guns of the Fort; was commended by Colonel J. R. West for his cooperation in all efforts to promote security but was never compensated for this loss; supplied large quantities of forage and furnished many beef cattle to the Federal troops; favorably mentioned in reports as one not disposed to take advantage of the Government by charging higher prices; changed the location of his business to Arizona City (now Yuma) after the great flood of January 20-23, 1862; engaged in freighting supplies to army posts; hauled the first gold ore from the Vulture mine; became interested in the Ajo Mine and shipped copper ore from there to San Diego; owned ranches and large numbers of cattle, sheep and horses; advanced money to assist in budding the Swilling Ditch, the first irrigation canal in the Salt River Valley, so that hay and grain could be grown for his teams; sold his ferry at Yuma to the Southern Pacific Railroad Company in 1877; retired from business and went to reside at Agua Mansa, near Colton, San Bernardino County, California.

Went to Washington, D. C., to press a claim against the Government for the loss of a ferryboat valued at \$3,000 which was carelessly burned by Yuma Indians on the west bank of the Colorado River opposite Pilot Knob on August 16, 1872.

Died from an operation from appendicitis at Garfield Hospital in Washington, June 30, 1892, age 68; in accordance with an expression in his last will, his

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remains were shipped to Hamburg, Pennsylvania, and there buried in the lot of his father in the Cemetery of St. John's Lutheran Church.

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