

# SIMMONS, Thomas Wilson

01

SIMMONS, THOMAS WILSON, born near Tomahawk, Searcy County, Arkansas, June 3, 1837; son of John Wilson and Mary(\_\_\_\_\_) Simmons; married (1) \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_, Texas, on \_\_\_\_\_, 18\_\_ (about 1860); children John Lee, Mary J. (Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_), and Margaret A. (Mrs. William A. Deering); married (2) Fanny \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_, Texas, \_\_\_\_\_, 18\_\_ (about 1870); children, Amos W., Thomas J., Sophrona (Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_), Lulu F. (Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_), and at least 2 others. \_\_\_\_\_.

Went to Missouri with his parents in 1843 and to Texas where he resided from 1846 until he moved to Kansas about 1861; came to Arizona in 1864 and is listed in the 1870 Census with his father, mother, brother John F., and his children, Mary J., age 11, Margaret A., age 8 and John Lee, age 6; listed, U. S. Census, 1880, with his wife, Fanny, and their children, Sophrona, age 8, Amos W., age 6, Thomas, age 4, and Lulu F., age 1; the following extract is from an obituary printed in the Prescott Journal-Miner:

Among the many adventures Simmons had in the early days in Arizona was a battle, single-handed, against a band of Indians. Warned by his mother not to take the cattle out to water alone, he nevertheless did so one day in 1865. As the cattle were drinking, they began to stir and became uneasy, sniffing the air. He realized they scented Indians, and put himself on his guard. Then, looking through the branches of a juniper tree, he saw an Indian, and guessed that others were near.

He was armed with a muzzle-loading rifle, and two cap and ball pistols. He fired at the Indian, who toppled over, and then jumped behind the juniper tree. Other Indians began to crawl up on him, and sighting one, he fired. When the savage fell, Simmons discovered that he had killed two with one shot, another having been behind the first.

Presently his weapons were all unloaded, and he got in among the cattle, who were becoming excited and scared. Protected by the herd, Simmons loaded his revolvers and fired back at the Indians as the cattle, more and more frightened, circled around him. Part of the time he was holding onto one of the animals to keep up with the herd and the protection they offered him.

Then, realizing his position, he made good his escape through the herd, whom he left to the Indians. They, having got what they wanted, fell back, and Simmons escaped.

Meanwhile, a Mrs. Sanders, living nearby, had heard the shots, and started toward the scene of the fight with a shotgun. Then she turned back and made for Fort Whipple, which bordered on the scene of the fight. Some men driving a load of hay stopped at her signal, and unhitching a horse started to Simmons' aid. The sound of the firing had also roused Simmons' father, who came running. By this time the Indians had dispersed, and Simmons' father stood on a rock waving his hat. His son answered him with a wave of the hand, from where he was laying hidden in the grass.

Upon examination of the scene of the fight, it was found that Simmons had killed seven of his attackers. The cattle had dispersed and were found at Granite Dells, near what is now the Biaconi ranch.

During his years in Arizona, Simmons at various times held several offices. He was Deputy Sheriff under old Joe Walker, Deputy

County Assessor under Tim Lowery, at the time when Coconino County was a part of Yavapai, and was once Coroner.

About 3 months before his death he entered the Arizona Pioneers Home at Prescott where he passed away on February 15, 1921, aged 83; buried, Simmons Cemetery in Miller Valley near Prescott.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Arizona Division of Vital Statistics - Death Certificate  
The Journal-Miner, Prescott, February 16, 1921, 1:1 (obituary).