

# STACEY, MAY HUMPHREYS

1

STACEY, MAY HUMPHREYS, born at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 2, 1837; son of Davis Bevan and Sara (Van Dycke) Stacey; married Mary H. Banks, (1847-1918) daughter of Thaddeus Banks at Hollidaysburg, Pa., December 9, 1867; children, Edward Cecil, Cromwell, Aubrey Banks (Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_) and Delia Van Dycke (Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Muller).

Educated in private schools in Philadelphia; he and two other young men, Hampden Porter and Joseph Bell, prevailed upon Lieutenant E. F. Beal to let them go with him on an expedition to demonstrate the use of camels as pack animals for the Army which left San Antonino, Texas, June 25, 1857, and arrived at Fort Bliss, on the Rio Grande July 27; followed up that stream to Albuquerque arriving August 10; the expedition reached Zuni on August 30 and then went via Jacobs Well and the valley of the Little Colorado to Leroux Spring near the San Francisco mountain arriving September 12; from there on there was much difficulty in finding water but the expedition arrived at the Colorado River at what was afterwards known as the Beal Crossing on October 18.

While passing through the Walapai Country the Indians stole the rifle of a member of the party and in seeking to recover it an old Indian was captured; the return of the rifle is described in Stacy's diary for October 11, 1857, as follows:

"Just as we were hitching up, an Indian came walking boldly into camp with Mr. Williams' gun on his shoulder. He walked up to Mr. Beale and handed the gun to him, and then made a long speech of which we, of course, understood nothing. To stop his mouth we gave him half a sheep, a Navajo blanket and some calico. This pleased the fellow mightily and he immediately commenced diving into the sheep meat. Mr. Beale happening to look over his shoulder spied a black head looking at the camp about 200 yards off. He picked up a very flashy serape and walked out of camp to this poor devil of an Indian and gave it to him, and then turned round and walked back followed by this elegant specimen of humanity. He had no leggings

and nothing in the world around his body but a short fur piece made of rabbit skins. I thought how this human being must suffer during the time of snow and rain. As it was, this morning he stood shivering and shaking by our fire like one with the ague. Presently he sat down and all three (Indians) went to work on the mutton, and there we left two (of them), taking with us our captive, who had promised to show us a spring, -- which he did, at about ten (o'clock)."

From the Colorado River he went by way of Fort Tejon to San Francisco; returned to Philadelphia by sailing around the world via Calcutta and the Cape of Good Hope; served for sometime with the U. S. Coast Survey and was Acting Master's Mate from July 1, 1859, to July 31, 1860, on the U. S. S. CRUSADER, then engaged in intercepting slave traders in the West Indies.

Appointed 1st Lieutenant, 12th U. S. Infantry, May 14, 1861; severely wounded at the battle of Gaines Mill, Va., June 27, 1862, carrying the bullet in his side until his death; participated in the battles of Antietam, Fredericksburg and other major engagements; seriously injured by a fall from his horse, December 25, 1862; on duty with Company F, 12th Infantry, during the draft riots in New York City, July, 1863; participated in the Wilderness Campaign and the assault and siege of Petersburg, Va., promoted Captain August 19, 1864; brevet Major and Lieutenant Colonel for gallant and meritorious service during the campaign terminating in the surrender of General R. E. Lee; rejoined the regiment in the Department of California, 1868; in command at Fort Mohave, A.T., from June, 1869, to February, 1871; in command at Fort Thomas, A.T., from December, 1878, to June, 1880; absent sick until June 1881 when he returned to duty at Fort, Grant, A.T., in the field in pursuit of hostile Apaches from September to November of that year; in command at Fort Lowell, near Tucson, until September 9, 1882; in command at Plattsburg Barracks, N.Y., from September 17, 1882; died from paralysis, the result of service, at Fort Ontario, New York, February 12, 1886, aged 48.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Lesley, L.B. - Uncle Sam's Camels, The Journal of May Humphreys Stacey, supplemented by the report of Edward Fitzgerald Beale, Cambridge, 1929 (portraits).

House Executive Document No. 124, 35th Congress, 1st Session (Wagon Road from Fort Defiance to the Colorado River ) pp. 51, 54, 60, 70, 72, 73.

L.R. Hamersley & Co. - Records of Living Officers, U.S. Army, Philadelphia, 1884, pp. 286-287.

U.S. Census, July, 1870, - Mohave City, A.T., and wife.

California Commandery, Military Order, Loyal Legion, Circular 5, March 1, 1886.

The Adjutant General of the Army - Military service records.

U.S. Navy Department - Personnel records.

U.S. Veterans Administration - Pension records.

The New York Tribune, February 13, 1886, p. 2, col. 2.

The Buffalo Express, February 13, 1886, p. 2, col. 4.

The Army and Navy Journal, N.Y., February 13, 1886, p. 575.