

WEST, JOSEPH RODMAN

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WEST, JOSEPH RODMAN, born in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 19, 1822; son of Charles Shute and Anna Edwards (Smith) West; married, Jeanne Josephine Fadenilke at New Orleans, September 28, 1843, children, Russel, Marvin S., Parker Whitney (Major, U.S.Army), Jeanne Bell (Mrs. William M. Wood) and Cornelia E. who married Captain Luke O'Reilly, U. S. Army.

Moved with his parents to Philadelphia in 1824; educated in private schools and attended the University of Pennsylvania, 1836-37; moved to New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1841; mustered in June 8, 1847, to serve during the Mexican War as Private in an Independent Company of Mounted Volunteers which was attached to Maryland and District of Columbia troops; the Captain, James Boyd, was killed at Rio Calaboso on July 12 and on July 25 he was elected Captain; appointed to that grade by the President, September 17 to date from July 25, 1847; honorably discharged at New Orleans, August 10, 1847.

Went to California in 1849, engaged in newspaper work, and became the owner of the San Francisco Prices Current; commissioned Lieutenant Colonel, 1st California Infantry, at San Francisco, August 5, 1861; went to Southern California and marched to Fort Yuma in October with three companies to relieve the Regular Army garrison; went on with the vanguard of the Regiment to Tucson where he raised the stars and stripes on May 20, 1862; he was appointed Military Commander of the town and presided when a number of citizens were tried by court-martial for disloyalty; Thomas E. Farish, Arizona State Historian, wrote that Charles O. Brown, who was running a gambling house and saloon in Tucson when the California Column arrived, made the following unsubstantiated statement to him:

That he received notice from Colonel West, asking him to meet him at a certain place just outside of the town walls for a conference. After some other preliminary talk, the Colonel asked him if he would like to have the exclusive privilege of selling liquor and running a gambling hall in Tucson. Brown said he would. The Colonel then said he would give it to him if he would pay him \$500 a month for the privilege, which Brown consented to do.

The only condition placed upon him was that he should not sell liquor to drunken soldiers; that when they came under its influence, to allow them to have no more. Brown said that he made a great deal of money through this privilege; that his saloon was crowded all the time, and that he had a little back room where the officers congregated and where he gave them the best that he could find in the way of alcoholic stimulants, which kept them all in line.

After Colonel J. H. Carleton was made a Brigadier General, he was promoted to Colonel of the Regiment on June 23, 1862; George O. Hand, a Sergeant in Company G, wrote in his diary at Tucson on September 27, 1862:

Colonel Joseph R. West. Our first Lieut. Col., familiarly called the "Bald Eagle" from his having no hair on the top of his head, is a perfect brick. He has all the good qualities which help to make a Gentleman and a Soldier. He is a good judge of human nature and never for a moment forgets that soldiers are possessed with hearts not made of stone. He does not curse the men but gives the officers "down the banks" if they do wrong. He has eyes on every side, can see as well behind as before. The men all love him and the officers all tremble when he is about. He is now Colonel of the 1st California Volunteers and in command of the Territory.

Promoted to Brigadier General of Volunteers, October 25, 1862; left the Rio Grande, January 12, 1863, with 4 companies on an expedition to punish the Apaches, then in the vicinity of Pinos Altos, led by Mangus Coloradas and that chief was captured on January 16; it is difficult to determine just what happened but Daniel E. Connor, a member of the Walker Party, gave his version in a letter to T. E. Farish written on July 2, 1915:

I have General West's letters written in the seventies to the Washington Republican in support of his report to the War Department for Killing Mangus when a prisoner - stating that Mangus was captured by the troops under Captain Shirland red handed in a fight and delivered to him as a prisoner at 3 o'clock the same day; that during the following night, he placed seven soldiers over him as guards, and that at midnight Mangus rushed upon his guards to escape and was killed. I don't charge that General West deliberately prevaricated, but was deceived by his own soldiers who controlled all military correspondence and therefore not reliable.

I stand ready to make an affidavit that I was one of the sixteen of the Walker Party that captured Mangus on the mountain at Pino Alto without firing a shot, marched him down the mountain to our camp near the Old Trail (Fort McLean) where General West had arrived in our absence and took charge of Mangus, placed two soldier guards over him. During the night they aroused Mangus by burning his feet and legs with heated bayonets and upon his earnest protest shot him twice with muskets and twice ap~~ies~~ with navy six-shooters. I was an eye witness and present as guard for the Walker Party at same camp fire with the soldiers.

Fort West, a camp on the headwaters of the Gila in New Mexico, was named for him; he served for a time in Arkansas and was honorably discharged at San Antonio, Texas, January 4, 1866; became a Major General, United States Volunteers, by brevet "for faithful and meritorious service" to date from January 4, 1866.

Shortly after leaving the Army he moved to New Orleans where he served as Chief Deputy U. S. Marshal, Auditor for Customs and Administrator of Improvement, 1867-70; elected as a Republican to be United States Senator from Louisiana and served from March 4, 1871 to March 3, 1877; was not a candidate for re-election but remained in Washington, D. C. to engage in the brokerage business; served as a member of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia from July 17, 1882 to July 22, 1885; died at Garfield Hospital, Washington, D. C. October 31, 1898, aged 76; buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Wanted

The Arizona newspapers may have commented on his election to the United States Senate by the Louisiana Legislative Party in 1871.

(could locate no items)
 Miller