

## JACOB ALMY (1408-3135)

Every American knows the story of Custer and the tragedy of the Seventh Cavalry at the Little Big Horn. Perhaps so much focus on this story has obscured the history of the Fifth Cavalry and its participation in two of the most unusual military encounters ever to take place in the United States --- Summit Springs in Nebraska and the Battle of Skeleton Cave in Arizona.

1st Lt. Jacob Almy played an important role in each of these battles.

The men of the frontier army have been considered more significant for their actions than for their thoughts. They bring to mind waving pistols, flashing sabers and thundering hoofbeats as they ride to the rescue of ambushed wagon trains in hundreds of Westerns. Actually, many officers were thoughtful, troubled by moral qualms, and were among the most intelligent and best educated people in the West. Lt. Almy was just such a man.

Jacob Almy was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on November 20, 1842, the son of James and Ruth Potter Almy. He completed the course of instruction for teachers at Bridgewater Normal School in the Spring of 1862 and, along with several classmates, enlisted in the 33rd Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. For a

boy of Quaker parentage this was a difficult decision but for him, as for many Quakers, the rightness of the Union cause overrode Quaker pacifism. The 33rd served on provost duty in Alexandria, Virginia, and was marginally involved in the Battle of Fredericksburg in December of 1862. Jacob, a corporal, was part of the fiasco known as the mud march in the aftermath of that battle, and then in February left for home to prepare for matriculation at the U. S. Military Academy in June. When cadets from the South ceased to be at West Point after the start of the Civil War, Congress had made a special provision for qualified enlisted men to be appointed in their stead.



Jacob graduated in the Class of 1867 and joined the Fifth Cavalry in Aiken, South Carolina, for a year of Reconstruction duty. By 1868, problems were arising on the Plains from Indians obstructing railroad work crews on the transcontinental line in Western Nebraska. The Fifth Cavalry moved via "the cars" to St. Louis, continued by water to Kansas City and overland to Fort McPherson, Nebraska. In May 1869 the Fifth Cavalry with "Buffalo Bill" Cody as scout was involved in a cat and mouse game chasing Dog Soldiers, a Cheyenne warrior society, culminating in the spectacular fight at Summit Springs. To

the blaring of a bugle, the Fifth Cavalry mounted a genuine cavalry charge the like of which has rarely been seen on the American continent. For his part in it Jacob was proposed for a brevet captaincy. "Buffalo Bill" became in due course the famous showman who climaxed his "Wild West Show" with a reenactment of Summit Springs in such places as New York's Madison Square Garden. Once, having brought his show to New Bedford, he visited with Almy's widowed mother, according to a family story.

Early in 1872 Jacob went overland to San Francisco and, by way of the Gulf of California, finally arrived at Camp Grant, Arizona Territory. He was involved in mopping up operations with another young officer, John Gregory Bourke, in pursuit of Apache renegades, and on December 28, 1872 led a company, guided by Apache scouts he had recruited, in the Battle of Skeleton Cave. Scaling a canyon wall, camping overnight on a narrow ledge in the cold, the soldiers, 220 of them, surprised a large band of Youapai Indians. Apache scouts yelled out a surrender appeal, answered by shouts of defiance. The soldiers, surrounding the cave entrance from every side, rolled rocks down from above and aimed at the cave roof from below, causing bullets to ricochet. When this range fight was over, bodies of 76 men, women, and children lay dead in a heap. Unlike Summit Springs where the enemy was fighting men who had brutally tortured white captives, this action at Skeleton Cave was a massacre not a battle. Almy and Bourke knew this and felt deep distress. Almy's mind was on ways of peaceful accommodation with Apaches in future.

In the Spring of '73 he was assigned command of the troops at the San Carlos Reservation, a trouble spot with a history

of unrest and corruption on the part of former Indian agents. On May 27, 1873, an Indian threatened the newly arrived agent with a spear as crowds of Indians were assembling to draw rations. Almy with a small guard, himself unarmed, hurried up to try and defuse the situation. A shot rang out from the crowd and he was instantly killed.

An officer who replaced him wrote in criticism that, though an excellent officer, brave, prompt, and obedient, he was a divided man being pressured by constant letters from friends and relatives in Massachusetts to be "soft on Indians." Still another fellow officer wrote, "Thus passed from the roster of the Fifth Cavalry a man whose modesty, gentleness of manner, unassuming courage and freedom from self assertion gained him the good will of most men."

If Almy had lived longer might he have become a soldier-scholar like his friend John Gregory Bourke who wrote of their friendship in his classic account of the Apache Wars "On the Border with Crook?" He has attained a kind of immortality since every book chronicling those wars mentions the episode of his murder which set off a massive hunt for the assassin who fled the reservation. Anyone interested in a modern retelling can find it in a 1993 Simon & Shuster book by David Roberts *Once They Moved Like the Wind: Cochise, Geronimo, and the Apache Wars* available in most public libraries.

Ruth A. Turney

*The author is the namesake of Jacob's niece, Ruth Almy Brownell, a friend of her family's in New Bedford, Massachusetts in the 1930's. Ruth Brownell was, in turn, the namesake of Jacob's mother, Ruth Potter Almy. So, though not related, she has a tenuous link to Jacob.*

**DENNIS DEAN ALMY (1233-4668-1721)**

Killed when he's pinned against forklift.

Dennis Almy, 23, of Minot, North Dakota, worked in the assembly department of an implement company. The accident occurred shortly after 10:30 a.m. while workers, including Dennis, were assembling an air drill in the yard of the shop.

They were apparently using a forklift to move an 8-by-10 foot frame for the air drill. The arms of the forklift were elevated when the right arm of the forklift came loose. Dennis tried to re-attach the arm to the forklift, but the frame, which was by then balancing on one arm, teetered off toward Dennis and pinned him against the forklift.



Dennis died at the hospital that afternoon. He had severe head and chest injuries. The owner of the company said he had known Dennis since he was 5 years old and said "he was a real energetic young fellow who wanted to find a job. Like every body else, he was looking for a future."

Dennis started at the implement company last August after moving back to Minot from the Wahpeton area so he could be closer to home and his parents, David and Elaine Almy.

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Remember When ...

Dad put tiny American flags on the radiator cap on the Fourth of July?

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**A VISIT WITH  
MIGNON ALMY (1407-1C74-1)**

**BY  
PAUL ALMY MARTIN (1407-1C71-11)**

Paul wrote that he had a box 1900-1915 snapshots of Almy/McReynolds cousins who he couldn't identify. Dorothy Blythe Estes Munson (1407-1C72-53), granddaughter of Florence Almy (1407-1C72), his great aunt, couldn't either. So in a visit with Mignon (age 91), they had a grand time going through the box. Mignon was able to identify them all. Paul wrote that he was fortunate for she (who was in many of the pictures) is the last living person who could have done so.

Paul wrote further that "it's unfortunate that we too often wait too long to do this. I can think of a lot of things I would love to ask my mother - and I'm afraid my children will wait too long before they become interested."

In commenting on my article on our American Beginning in the last Newsletter, Paul wrote that the book *Saints and Strangers* by George F. Willison interesting reading by any Almy interested in our American beginning.

This book, of which I have a copy, is very interesting to me as it has many of my ancestors in it. I descend from 11 of those Pilgrims who came to America in the Mayflower in 1620.

Paul asked if I ever thought of putting all my charts together as a book. With 10,000 descendants of William Almy on my charts, it would be very difficult to publish all the charts that would be needed. However, I am in the process of writing a book on the descendants of William in genealogical book format. I will write more on this subject at a future date.

## **CHRISTOPHER ALMY (1282) PATERNITY SUIT**

By writ dated 14 July 1721 (Newport Court Files, 1721), Eunice Greenman, "spinster" (daughter of John Greenman), sued Christopher Almy, son of Job Almy, in a paternity case. They had been courting since the beginning of May 1715, Eunice became pregnant the end of March 1719, and in September of that year Christopher had banns published for his marriage to Elizabeth Almy.

Several people gave testimony supporting Eunice and her good reputation. Among those who testified were Eunice's sisters Leah and Lois. Leah stated that Christopher Almy has owned the child born of her sister Eunice as his. Lois made a deposition on 26 March 1722 that about the time the child was born, she heard Christopher say that he would marry Eunice "but his father hindered him. But for time to come, he would marry her notwithstanding his father being against it. About the same time he gave the child a pair of gold buttons." The identity of the child, which must have been born around Christmas of 1719, has not been learned. Eunice evidently never married, and later taught school in Newport, where she died 12 March 1761 in her 64th year and is buried in Newport with her father who died 30 September 1727.

It is interesting to note that John Greenman, father of Eunice, and his son Edward, born 1695, were accused of counterfeiting in 1718 (Newport Court Book A, 290, 311). Edward escaped from jail and was not heard of again.

Christopher and Elizabeth had 5 children; four died in infancy and there is no further record of their other child.

### **EVERETT C. ATWELL (1233-5180-33W)**

Everett C. Atwell, 95, of Greensboro, North Carolina, died 9 April 1994. Everett was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on May 1, 1899. He was married to Edith Almy for sixty-two years before her death in 1990.

Before his retirement in 1969, he worked as a research chemist for Burlington Industries. In the nineteen years he had with B.I., he had seventeen patents to his credit. His primary work was with polymers. He attended M.I.T. and later worked for A. D. Little, Atlantic Rayon and Textron. He lived in Greensboro and maintained his home and yard right up to the time of his death. His surviving descendants include daughter Phyllis, son Alan, five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

### **SAGE DYLAN BROWN (1233-4692-4131-21)**

Sage Dylan Brown was born 18 January 1994 in Albany, New York, the son of Lenard M. and Deborah (Cole) Brown, and grandson of Ralph and Linda Marie (Almy) Brown.

**GENERAL KNOWLTON HONORED**

General William A. Knowlton (1252-9773-34), grandson of Sylvia Bassett Almy, was honored in March by award of the Annual Lyman Lemnitzer Award to a retired four-star General for lifetime contributions to joint and combined military operations. Selection is made by new Brigadier Generals and Admirals at the National Defense University.

Sylvia's Almy's husband was Hosea Morrill Knowlton, who tried Lizzie Borden just over a hundred years ago, for the murder of her father and step-mother.

## The Almys Since The Civil War

Washington, D.C.

This past month both my son and I received the ad for this book. It states the book lists 293 Almy namesakes from all walks of life and lists the names and addresses of 436 Almys who live in the United States today.

The information they offer does not contain Almy genealogy and does not claim to do so. So beware!

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Following is a listing of those cousins who have sent in contributions, since the last issue of the Newsletter, to help defray the costs of printing and mailing these Newsletters. This help is most appreciated. Many thanks to you all.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Almy Number</u>	<u>Residence</u>
Marian Bower	1233-4668-123	North Dakota
Linda Almy Brown	1233-4692-4131	New York
Ernestine Almy Benson	1233-5147-234	Florida
William A. Knowlton	1252-9773-34	Virginia
Paul Almy Martin	1407-1C71-11	New York
Gideon W. Almy	1408-3832-422	Virginia
John Bernier	1408-6504-11	Massachusetts
Ralph Winkler	1542-31xx-731	California

Your Cousin (1408-3312-112),

Merwin F. Almy  
17835 SW Shasta Trail  
Tualatin, OR 97062

HAVE A BEAUTIFUL AND INTERESTING SUMMER!!!