

OCCGS Civil War Veterans Project

Veteran's Information

Veteran's Name: Jacob WILLITS

Birth Date: 18 February 1824

Location: Queens, New York

Death Date: 11 June 1919

Location: California

Buried at (Cemetery): Santa Ana Cemetery

Plot Location: J-17-1-7

GPS Coordinates: N33° 46' 06.57200" W117° 50' 26.91325"

(DMS) Datum: NAD83. Coordinates are +/- 1.00 feet of the grave location.



Side Served: Union

Rank: Sergeant Major

Company: G

Unit: 2nd Infantry

State: Kansas

Occupation: Rancher and Owner of the Pacer, Silkwood

Family Information

Parents –

Father: Obadiah Willits

Birth Date/Location: 28 February 1772, Hempstead, Nassau County, New York

Death Date/Location: abt 1842

Mother: Phoebe Downing Dodge

Birth Date/Location: 1 December 1782, New York

Death Date/Location: abt 1826

Spouse: Sarah Elizabeth Pettit

Birth Date / Location: October 1834, Babylon, Suffolk County, New York

Death Date/Location: 18 July 1891, Santa Ana, Orange, California

Marriage Date / Location: Bef 1853

Children –

Name: George W. Willits

Birth Date / Location: 17 May 1853, Nassau County, New York

Death Date / Location: 31 July 1928, Tulsa County, Oklahoma

Name: Thomas Willits

Birth Date / Location: 14 September 1858, Wyandotte County, Kansas

Death Date / Location: 18 June 1950, Orange, Orange, California

Name: Grace W Tucker – adopted daughter

Birth Date / Location: abt 1863, Kansas

Death Date / Location: unknown

Spouse: Eureka Butler (Rupel, Willits, Halverson)

Birth Date / Location: June 1865, Oregon

Death Date/Location: aft 1930

Marriage Date / Location: 29 August 1894, Orange County, California

Name: Juanita Rupel – step-daughter

Birth Date / Location: 14 June 1888, Oregon

Death Date / Location: 7 March 1984, Solano County, California

Additional Information

Member of Sedgwick Post No 17, GAR

Jacob Willits arrived in Orange County in 1888 from Topeka, Kansas where he owned two valuable farms, one of 1240 acres and the other of 160 acres. When he came to Orange County he was reportedly worth \$100,000. He bought the H. H. Roper ranch of 120 acres located on Bristol Street. He worked at raising fast horses one of which was Silkwood. Willits trained the colt and often raced him not trusting another driver. Silkwood's record of 2:07 on the Santa Ana track was unsurpassed for a number of years.

Three of Jacob's grandsons saw service during World War I

- Coit F Willits enlisted in the Navy 19 January 1917
- Louis G Willits enlisted 10 January 1917 in the Navy as a Third Class Fireman serving on the US Cruiser San Diego
- Thomas H Willits enlisted in the aviation service and started training 19 February 1918 in San Diego.

Photograph of headstone for Jacob Willits, Santa Ana Cemetery, Orange County, California taken by Charles Lewis Beal, 3/5/2007. Used with the permission of Charles Beal.

Sources

"Pioneers in Blue and Gray", Civil War Veterans in Orange County by Gordon Bricken, First Edition, The Bricken Press, Santa Ana, California, Copyright 2009

Orange County California Genealogy Society Quarterly Journal, XVIII, #2, June 1981 – Roll of Honor for the Sedgwick Post No 17 GAR.

Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

- Huntington, Suffolk County, New York; Roll M432_601, Page 2B, Family 29, Record for Jacob Willetts

1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.

- Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas Territory; Roll M653_352, Page 654, Family 137, Record for

1865 Kansas State Census. Microfilm reels K-1 – K-8. Kansas State Historical Society.

- Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas; Roll kx1865_7, Family 160, Record for Jacob Willits

Tenth Census of the United States, 1880. (NARA microfilm publication T9, 1,454 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C. United States of America, Bureau of the Census.

- Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas; Roll T9_397, Page 177C, ED: 009, Family 233, Record for Jacob Willits

Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900. T623, 1854 rolls.

- Topeka Ward 3, Shawnee County; Roll T623_500, Page 1B, ED: 0153, Family 32, Record for Jacob Willits
- Junction, Lane County, Oregon; Roll T623_1349, Page 2A, ED: 0108, Family 36, Record for Eureka Willits

Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910 (NARA microfilm publication T624, 1,178 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

- Westminster, Orange County, California; Roll T624_90, Page 6B, ED: 0060, Family 138, Record for Jacob Willits
- Salem Ward 6, Marion County, Oregon; Roll T624_1284, Page 15A, ED: 0208, Record for Eureka Willits

California, Death Index, 1905-1939. California Department of Health and Welfare. California Vital Records

- Record for Jacob Willits

State of California. *California Death Index, 1940-1997*. Sacramento, CA, USA: State of California Department of Health Services, Center for Health Statistics.

- Record for Thomas Willits, Mother's Maiden Name: Pettet
- Record for Juanita Rupel, Mother's Maiden Name: Butler, Father's: Rupel

Findagrave.com, searchable database of cemeteries with tombstone inscriptions, memorials and photographs

- Memorial 8722176, Created by Shiver, Record for Jacob Willits
- Memorial 8866961, Created by macso, Record for Elizabeth Willits
- Memorial 35018316, Created by Richard Moberly, Record for George W Willits
- Memorial 8866969, Created by Eldora Sasser, Record for Thomas Willits

Long Island Genealogy, Long Island Surnames Database, <http://longislandsurnames.com/>

- Record for Obadiah Willits

"1890 The Great Register of Orange County", State of California, Compiled by Orange County California Genealogical Society, Orange, CA 92668, 1996

- Willits, Jacob, 65, New York, stock raiser, living in Santa Ana

"Owner of Silkwood Dies at Hospital", Orange Star Vol XXXV, No 68, Orange, Orange County, California, Friday June 13, 1919, Pg 3, Column 4

The Topeka Daily Capital, Topeka, Kansas, Tuesday, July 21, 1891, Pg 4 Col 6

- Death notice for Mrs Jacob Willits

Los Angeles Herald, Los Angeles, California, Wednesday, August 29, 1894, Pg 8, Col 1

- Marriage of Jacob Willits and Mrs Eureka Rupel (age 28)