

Dempsey Dubois Crews
1806-1892

Dempsey Dubois Crews was born in Colleton District of South Carolina on 23 Jul 1806. Dempsey was the son of Alexander Crews, born 1771 in Charleston District, and his second wife, Lucy Dubois who was born 1785 in South Carolina (her birth date being determined from the 1870 Camden County Census). DD's parents married during 1805.

Dempsey was the first born of Alexander and 2nd wife Lucy. His rather unusual given name is not that hard to trace. As shown, in the 1810 Federal Census for Colleton, South Carolina, the Dubois' and Crews were neighbors. Hence, Dempsey Dubois Crews was named for his maternal grandfather Dempsey DuBois (he was born about 1765).

The Alexander Crews family relocated from the Colleton District of South Carolina to Camden County, Georgia between 1816-1818. Dempsey grew up in the "Great Satilla River" area of Camden.

DD is likely the male child enumerated in father Alexander's the 1820 Camden Census (male 10 – 15) and again in the 1830 census in Camden (male 20-29). Stephen was listed separately in 1820 Camden and William returned to South Carolina (his 1812 pension record stated he married Sarah Bradley in Beaufort, SC in 15 Jun 1820) and is in Ware along with, now returned, brother William by the 1830 census. Dempsey has yet to be married.

However, Dempsey's marital status changes about 1835. During the mid 1830s, Dempsey marries Piety Collier (date based on birth of first child Henry B.), a daughter of Henry Collier of Dooly County, Georgia (Piety Collier Crews is listed as an heir in Henry's estate proceedings. John Collier, Senior, who previously was said to be her father, is more likely her brother. Piety was born in 1820 in Georgia.

After DD's marriage to Piety, he served three different enlistments during the 2nd Seminole War, enlisting from Columbia County, Florida:

Enrolled in 22 Jun 1836 to 22 Oct 1836 in Captain William B. North's Company of 1st Regiment, 2nd Brigade Florida Militia as a Corporal

Enrolled in 15 Jun 1837 to 18 Dec 1837 in Captain William B. North's Company of 1st Regiment, 2nd Brigade East Florida Militia "Columbia County Rangers" as a Sergeant. Discharged from Ft Gilliland.

Enrolled in 12 Jul 1838 to 12 Jan 1839 in Captain William B. North's Company of 1st Regiment, 2nd Brigade East Florida Militia as a Private. Discharged from Ft Gilmer.

By 1840, both Dempsey, half-brothers Stephen and William and his parents are found living in Ware County, Georgia.

About 1948, Dempsey moved his family to Columbia County, Florida. He was found in the 1850 census of that county, where he was a farmer, along with some of Piety's relatives who had also moved there. By December 4, 1850, Dempsey had moved from Columbia County to Hamilton County, Florida. There he applied for a land grant under the newly passed Bounty Warrant Act based on his earlier Indian War service. The bounty and pension applications and/or papers in the military files of Dempsey Crews show that he served in the following military units during the 3rd Florida War:

Muster Roll of Captain Asa A. Stewart's Company of Florida Mounted Volunteers, commanded by Col. S. St. George Rogers called into the service of the United States by Special Instruction from the President dated War Department, Washington, May 28, 1857 at Alligator, Fla. on the 27th day of July 1857 to serve for the term of six months unless sooner discharged - served from 27 July 1857 to 26 Jan. 1858.

This muster was certified at Fort Brook, Fla.,

7. CREWS, Dempsy D . , 45

Descriptive Roll of Captain A. A. Stewart's Company of the Regiment of Florida Militia Volunteers mustered out of Service; 26 day of January 1858.

CREWS, Dempsey D., Colleton, SC; 5'10", dark-blue-light, farmer.

NOTE: This is a handwritten roll containing the following designated columns: (1) Rank, (2) Name, (3) Where born: (town, county, state or kingdom), (4) Height (feet-inches) (5) Color (complexion, eyes, hair) and (6) occupation.

7. CREWS, Dempsy D., 45

After his final enlistment in the 3rd Indian War, Dempsey moved his family to South Florida, where he was found in the 1860 census of Manatee County. Not long after, Piety Crews died of Smallpox and was buried at the New Hope cemetery, outside of Zolfo Springs, Florida. Dempsey became Justice of the Peace and a cattle rancher in Manatee County.

He registered the following mark and brand there in 1863: Swallowfork and underbit in one ear, nothing in the other; brand "DC".

In a 15 Jan 1956 newspaper article in the Tampa Tribune, Dempsey's son, Reverend Thomas Crews states, "Dempsey Crews Senior., blazed the first road from the Fort Green-Wauchula territory across the Peace River to the territory of

Zolfo (Springs) and (a later established settlement named) Crewsville. He selected the site for the ford, graded the slopes, and drove the first yoke of oxen across it. Being first known as Crews Ford, later as Beannen Ford, it was about a half mile east of the present state road from Wauchula to Zolfo”.

In December of 1863, Dempsey Crews married Molcy Hair in Manatee County, the Reverend Jeremiah Hayman performing the ceremony. Molcy was born on December 23, 1837 in Columbia County, Florida, a daughter of William Calvin Hair, Jr. (b. 1809 in North Carolina) and Sarah Jane Parker (b. 1814 in North Carolina). She was the granddaughter of William Hair, Sr. (b. 1871 in North Carolina) and of Luke and Sophia Parker.

For reasons unknown, Dempsey and son William M, were enlisted in the Union Army by Captain Crane on May 28, 1864 at Fort Myers, serving as a Private in Company B, 2nd Regiment Florida Cavalry.

“It is not commonly known that in addition to the Confederate units that were raised in Florida during the Civil War, two regiments of cavalry were organized in the state to serve in the Union Army. These units, the First and Second Florida Cavalry Regiments, consisted of elements from Florida's sizeable pro-Union minority, along with disaffected ex-Confederates. A large percentage of the men were deserters from Confederate service, while many of the unit's officers came from outside of the state”.

The Second Florida Cavalry was raised primarily at Key West and Cedar Key from December 1863 to June 1864. The unit was assigned to the District of Key West and the Tortugas, and saw continuous duty in east and south Florida. It was involved in expeditions or skirmishes at Pease Creek, Fort Myers, Tampa, Station Number 4, Bayport, Braddock's Farm, and St. Andrews Bay, as well as the St. Marks (Natural Bridge) campaign of March 1865.

Dempsey applied for an invalid's pension in DeSoto County, Florida 6 August 1889 at age 83 for service rendered to the state of Florida in Capt. North's E Company of the Florida Mounted Volunteers for the years 1835-1840.

His partial physical disability was due to the measles and mumps, contracted while serving in Captain North's Company, which resulted in nearly total blindness. He also received leg injuries while marching through the Okefenokee swamp. Dempsey Dubois Crews died July 24, 1892 at Zolfo, Florida. His will recorded in Book D, pages 243-244 in Manatee County and in Book I, pages 16-17 in DeSoto County.

Molcy applied for a Widows Pension 20 Oct 1892 based on DD's service with North's Company E, 1st Florida Mounted Volunteers in the Indian Wars

Molcy Crews died 31 May 31 1925 at the home of her only surviving daughter, Ms. Charity Allen, at Balm, Florida.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Crews at buried in the New Hope Cemetery on SR 64 just east of Zolfo Springs in Hardee County, FL. Dempsey's service to the Union Army was recognized by the United States, Records of Headstones of Deceased Union Veterans.

The children of Dempsey and Piety Collier Crews were:

1. William B., b. August 16, 1836; married Susan Wingate (daughter of William)
2. William M., b. August 27, 1838; married Charlotte Bethea April 21, 1870
3. Micajah, b. December 22, 1841, died young
4. Elizabeth, b. February 16, 1844; married Reuben Carlton (son of Daniel) April 20, 1866
5. Dempsey Dubois, Jr., b. November 23, 1846; married Frances Collins (dau. of Enoch, Jr.) August 6, 1869
6. Lydia Bea, b. May 16, 1849; married Streaty Hair (son of William C., Jr.) August 27, 1866
7. Willis, b. February 27, 1854; married Mary Ann Wingate (dau. of William) March 6, 1873
8. Crawford, b. September 18, 1856; married Edith Hart (dau. of William)
9. Mary, b. November 16, 1858; married William Lee (son of Jesse)
10. Willoughby, b. January 26, 1862; died young

The children of Dempsey and Molcy Hair Crews were:

1. Sarah Jane, b. November 13, 1864; burned to death at age 8
2. William Calvin, born November 30, 1866; married Cornelia Whidden b. February 14, 1869 (dau. Of David)
3. Isham, born July 17, 1869; married Azeline Gill (dau. of James)
4. Sophia, born January 1, 1872; married Luke Altman (son of John)
5. Thomas, born January 25, 1874; married Ava Bailey (dau. Of Willoughby)
6. Edward, born October 15, 1877; died age 8 years
7. Charity, born June 18, 1879; married 1) Chester Burnett 2) Leslie Allen.

References

National Archives: Military, bounty grant and pension record files
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1840 Ware County, Georgia Census
1850 Columbia County, Florida Census
1860 Manatee County, Florida Census
Pioneers of Wiregrass Georgia, Folks Huxford, Vol. II and Vol. V
Manatee County, Florida marriage records
Hardee County, Florida cemetery inscriptions
Manatee County, Florida Mark and Brand book
DeSoto County, Florida will records
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"United States, Old War Pension Index, 1815-1926," index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/KZPT-7MB> : accessed 25 Jul 2013), Dempsey D Crews, 1889

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Profile of John Collier, Edited by Spessard Stone from Kyle VanLandingham's revised article on John Collier in *South Florida Pioneers* 15/16 (Jan.-April 1978) as found at

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~crackerbarrel/Collier.html>

Florida Cavalry Regiments of the Union Army muster rolls, 1863-1865