



BLACK ROCK DESERT
HIGH ROCK CANYON
EMIGRANT TRAILS



NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA

Profile: J. Goldsborough Bruff

Joseph Goldsborough Bruff was born October 2, 1804 in Washington, D.C. Bruff attended West Point where he was trained as a mapmaker. After several minor rule infractions, however, he resigned from West Point and found work with the United States Bureau of Topographical Engineers. Bruff's drawing skills and the allure of gold, enticed him to lead a wagon company to California in the 1849 gold rush. He was made captain of the "Washington City and California Mining Association" wagon company. He proved to be a skillful wagon train leader and he kept a detailed diary including sketches of his travels out west.



Bruff returned to Washington D.C. in 1851 after unsuccessful gold mining attempts and resumed work in the Treasury Department.

He died on April 14, 1889 in Washington, D.C. at the age of 84 years old. He was buried at Congressional Cemetery.

The Evening Star, April 15, 1889

Death of J. Goldsborough Bruff

Last evening, shortly before 8 o'clock, Mr. J. Goldsborough Bruff, whose illness has been mentioned in the Star, passed away. His sickness, while prolonged, was painless and the end was not unexpected. Mr. Bruff had nearly attained eighty-five years, but such was the vigor of his constitution that he did not give up the active pursuit of his profession as a draftsman until about four months ago... For the past sixty-three years Mr. Bruff has been in government employ, and there was only one interregnum, when, in 1849, with other young men, he was stricken with the gold fever and started for California to amass a fortune. He was unsuccessful, and in 1851 he returned to Washington and resumed his work in the Treasury department. He was a member of the Oldest Inhabitants association and the Washington Monument Association. Mr. Bruff leaves a wife and five children...



Singular Rock Sketch 1849 by Bruff



Singular Rock Photo 2004

Information obtained from:
http://www.askart.com/artist/B/joseph_goldsborough_bruff.asp?ID=5184,
http://www.congressionalcemetery.org/PDF/Obits/B/Obits_Bruff.pdf.



J. Goldsborough Bruff