

# Fountain Fox Letcher

Fountain Fox Letcher (known as F F) was born May 1825 in Kentucky.<sup>1</sup> He was a 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant in Company H, First Regiment of Missouri Mounted Infantry (1846-1848).<sup>2</sup> He married Mary Wilson in 1848 in Callaway, Missouri.<sup>3</sup> On the 1850 census, Fountain was a tailor, living with wife and daughter in home of Israel and Miriam Grant in Callaway, Callaway, Missouri.<sup>4</sup> By 1852, they had moved to Santa Clara, California.<sup>5</sup> Fountain was a farmer, living with his wife, three children, and his brother, in San Luis Obispo, California, in 1860.<sup>6</sup> He was registered to vote in San Simeon, San Luis Obispo, California, in 1866.<sup>7</sup>

Mary must have died, because Fountain married Mrs. Martha J (Young) Moore in 1867 in Santa Clara.<sup>8</sup> On the 1870 census, he was a stock raiser, living with his wife and two children in Santa Rosa, San Luis Obispo, California.<sup>9</sup> He was registered to vote in various towns in California (Pajaro, Alameda, Fresno) through 1879.<sup>10</sup> Somewhere at this point he was in Pioche, Lincoln, Nevada, and Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory.<sup>11</sup> The he moved to Galeville, Cochise, Arizona [now a mining ghost town], where he was a miner and registered to vote.<sup>12</sup>

Fountain was farming and registered to vote in Fresno, Fresno, California, in 1884.<sup>13</sup> In 1887, he received a pension from the Mexican-American War.<sup>14</sup> In 1890, he patented land in Fresno, California.<sup>15</sup> He also became a member of the Board of Supervisors, and later served as chairman.<sup>16</sup> He retired from the board in 1897, having never missed a meeting. He was lovingly known as "Pop"<sup>17</sup>, but he also was stubborn when he needed to be. In 1894, while he was chairman, he was often found verbally fighting with R B Butler. One day, when a \$6000 general road fund was transferred to his district, Butler claimed it was robbing his district, and called Letcher a liar.<sup>18</sup>

Letcher was over seventy years old, but he sprang from his chair, and with his fists clinched, rushed at Butler, who did not rise, but answered, "You have come far enough. I am armed". Letcher replied, "Got a pistol, have you?" and ran to his desk, jerked open a drawer, and flourished a revolver in his hand, saying, "You are armed, now fight it out with me." Butler kept his seat, saying he was not hunting trouble, and would rather kill a coyote because he could get something for the scalp. Letcher

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<sup>1</sup> United States Census, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> US Mexican War Pension Index, 1887-1926; *fold3.com*

<sup>3</sup> Missouri Marriages, 1750-1920.

<sup>4</sup> United States Census, 1850.

<sup>5</sup> California State Census, 1852.

<sup>6</sup> United States Census, 1860.

<sup>7</sup> California, Voter Registers, 1866-1898.

<sup>8</sup> California County Marriages, 1850-1952.

<sup>9</sup> United States Census, 1870.

<sup>10</sup> California Great Registers, 1866-1910

<sup>11</sup> *Salt Lake Herald*, 22 December 1880, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Arizona, Voter Registrations, 1866-1955.

<sup>13</sup> California, Voter Registers, 1866-1898.

<sup>14</sup> US Mexican War Pension Index, 1887-1926.

<sup>15</sup> *thelandpatents.com/patents/cacaaa-127099*

<sup>16</sup> *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 19 August 1890, p. 1; *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 June 1890, p. 6; 15 January 1895, p. 3; *Los Angeles Herald*, 16 January 1895, p. 5.

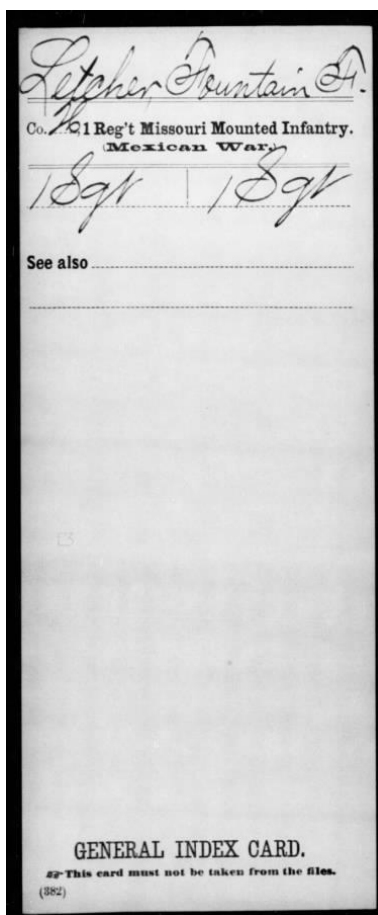
<sup>17</sup> *Fresno Weekly Republican*, 1 January 1897, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 May 1894, p. 3.

demanded he meet him in the committee room, and left. Butler stayed seated, and Letcher returned some minutes later. The meeting was adjourned for five hours to patch up the peace.<sup>19</sup>

In 1895, Fountain commenced action in the Superior Court as a taxpayer (even though he was a member of the Board of Supervisors), to enjoin County Auditor Barnum from issuing warrants for the payment of salaries of two deputy district attorneys. He claimed that they had been appointed under a section of the county government act which was unconstitutional. Court decided in favor of Letcher and deemed the appointments unconstitutional and barred payments.<sup>20</sup>

On his voter registration in 1896, he was described as six foot one and ¼ inches tall, with blue eyes and gray hair. He had a stiff thumb and a crooked fourth finger on his left hand.<sup>21</sup> Martha died in 1898 in Fresno.<sup>22</sup> On the 1900 census, he was a widower living in Fresno.<sup>23</sup> He died of senile gangrene on 18 September 1900 in Fresno.<sup>24</sup>



(Image from *fold3.com*)

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 5 September 1895, pp. 3-4; *San Francisco Call*, 3 December 1895, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> California, Voter Registers, 1866-1898; California Great Registers, 1866-1910.

<sup>22</sup> *Familysearch.org*

<sup>23</sup> United States Census, 1900.

<sup>24</sup> California Death and Burial Records from Select Counties, 1873-1987.