

SHERIFF ANDREW WASSON  
January 1872 - December 1873

Andrew Wasson was born in New York state in 1840. He attended school there and in 1854 migrated to California. After arriving in California, he tried his hand at mining for several years without much success, and eventually made his way to Monterey County.

From 1863 to 1870 Wasson was the keeper of the light house located at Los Pinos in Pacific Grove. He successfully ran for Sheriff in 1871 and took office in January 1872 assisted by Under-sheriff Jacob R. Leese, with Henry Aunpach and the Assistant Jailer.

Wasson's years as Sheriff were punctuated by the notorious, and often brutal activities of the bandit Tiburcio Vasquez. From the newspapers of his day, Wasson was held to account for the failure to capture or kill the bandit. Many articles derided him and evoked assistance from Santa Clara and other neighboring counties in capturing Vasquez.

The April 18, 1873 Salinas Index stated, "The outrageous operations of the notorious outlaw Tiburcio Vasquez and his band . . . calls for two Sheriffs, such as Adams of Santa Clara and Harry Morse, of Alameda, who would not rest until such desperadoes were safe beneath the sod, or dangling from the gallows. The Governor has offered \$1,000 reward . . . and he Sheriff has started in pursuit of their scalps."

Wasson not only had the likes of Vasquez to worry about, but also had to cope with the sad state of the county jail. The board of supervisors continually failed to answer the question of a new jail and Mr. Wasson, as Sheriff, was continually troubled over the safety and welfare of his prisoners.

Wasson was also criticized by the County Auditor for failing to keep account of the taxes that were collected, which further ruined his chances for re-election.

Wasson ran against J/B/Smith in 1873, but lost to Smith after receiving 1,025 votes to Smith's 1,305. Wasson remained in Salinas City after his defeat, and in 1878, moved to Gonzales.

Shortly thereafter, Wasson traveled to San Francisco and was Sergeant-At-Arms for the State Legislature for three consecutive terms.

Her later moved to Sacramento, and through shrewd business ventures, he accumulated considerable property and wealth. Wasson later was appointed by President Benjamin Harrison as Collector of Customs for the Northwest District, with offices located at Seattle.

After serving as a federal officer, Wasson traveled to Mexico and started a mining concern with moderate success. He returned to the Puget Sound area of Washington State, and in 1891 was elected to the State Legislature and later, to the State Customs House.

After his term expired her returned to Sacramento to live in retirement. After suffering a stroke, he died on March 7, 1911 at his home, located at 1415 L Street.