

THE OLD CIENIGA STATE STATION NEAR PANTANA⁶

BY

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The Southern Pacific has an excursion route to Globe and thence via the Roosevelt Dam to Phoenix which is well worth while. It is called the Apache Trail Route. It is not necessary, however, for a tourist to leave the main line of the Railroad or the southern State Highway, which closely follows the old Butterfield Stage Road much of the way, to find Apache Trails.

If the traveller will read Arizona history he or she will find that from Deming to Tucson are many old Apache trails; that at "San Simon", "Apache Pass", the "Dragoon Pass", "La Cieniga" and many other places on the old highway incidents have occurred that would make Jack London's stories read like a Sunday School primer in comparison. These are true stories of what the early pioneers in Arizona suffered from those Indians. The most important locations of historical interest should be marked so that the tourist would know their location and learn their story.

I have been well acquainted with the Cieniga (Pantano) from 1880 when the Southern Pacific Railroad reached there. At that time there was no deep wash through the bottom as at present, but a succession of meadows thickly covered with sacaton and salt grass. A number of springs fed the main stream that ran down the valley. The mesquite did not cover the country as at present but only grew in the gulches that drained into the main wash with occasional groves in the wash itself and a few hackberry and china-berry trees.

In 1881, the year after the railroad reached La Cieniga, to which they gave the name of Pantano (the depot being about 4 miles east of the old Cieniga Stage Station) a tremendous flood washed out most of the track which had been laid on the bottom near the stream and they were compelled to move their track to higher ground.

In 1884 I was in charge of the Pantano Ranch then owned by Vail and Vosburg. It had been stocked with several thousand cows from the Empire Ranch and we were kept in the saddle most of the time to get them located on their new range. In riding over the range I frequently passed the Old Cieniga Stage Station which was then in a fair state of preservation. Quite near the station was a small graveyard with slabs at the head of each grave and when I read the names and inscriptions I was surprised to see that all or nearly all had been killed by Indians. The names I have forgotten, but I remember

some were soldiers as the company and regiment to which they belonged was given; others were station keepers and stage drivers. A few years later the Railroad was again moved and ran through the little burying ground of which there is not a trace today.

The following is copied from the 8th volume of Farishes' History of Arizona:

"From 1864 to March 1866 no newspapers were published in Tucson and no records of Indian killings are available for that period."

During the next three years 1869 to 1871 the list of those killed by the Apaches at or near this old Cieniga Station is given as follows:

"Dec. 14. The bodies of three men murdered near Cieniga were found.

"April 17th. The Indians visited the ranch of J. Miller at the Cieniga and killed one of the soldiers stationed there.

"August 8th. The mail rider and two other men, Scott and Young, were murdered at Cieniga, 25 miles eastward from Tucson. The station with much property was destroyed.

"Nov. 27th. Indians stole two horses from the station of J. Miller at the Cieniga.

"July 11, 1872. A compnay of infantry under Capt. Smith was attacked by a band of Cochise's Indians between the Cieniga and Rio San Pedro; one private W. H. Harris was killed and three wounded.

"Cieniga, or as it is now known, Pantano, was a noted station in those days and it is claimed that murders were committed by the stage employees who posed as honest hosts. At one time they murdered the U. S. Paymaster and his Guard, securing \$75,000.00.

"The Apaches in turn murdered all the bloodthirsty crowd at the Cieniga. These atrocities were committed in the early seventies. In 1897 four men, who passed as prospectors when they passed through Tucson, came from San Francisco; honeycombed the whole place. It is supposed they had some knowledge of treasures hidden there and that they took away a large amount with them."

Of the truth of this robbery story I have very grave doubts as if a U. S. Paymaster was killed and robbed of \$75,000.00 the event would be a matter of record.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Charles H. Tully, Secretary of the Arizona Pioneers, I found the following account of this fight which is given by Mr. A. F. Banta in the Prescott Courier of April 18, 1921. Mr. Banta knew Es-Kim-En-Zin well and the story of this fight was related by the old chief himself to Mr. Banta. The freight wagons that were attacked by the Indians belonged to the old firm of Tully and Ochoa of Tucson, and the wagon master was Mr. N. B. Apple with whom I was acquainted some years later. I also knew the approximate location of the battle ground which is between Pantano and Mescal Station on the Southern Pacific Railroad. It is a hilly country and there were some ponds of water near, known by the Mexican ranchers as the "Charcos."