

# ADAMS, JUDGE F.

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## TUCSON IN 1847

(Reminiscences of Judge F. Adams--Description of the Fort, Etc. From the Arizona Daily Citizen, June 13, 1889)

Judge F. Adams, of San Louis Obispo, Cal., a partner of Mr. Frank Proctor, is in the city. Judge Adams is an old pioneer, the oldest in fact in Arizona today. He was first here in 1847 when Tucson was a Mexican garrison. A command of sixty men under Lieut. Schoonmaker left for Fort Bliss, Texas, as bearer of dispatches to General Kearney, then in California. They reached Tucson in November and attempted to take the fort, but having neither cannon to knock it down nor ladders to scale the walls they were obliged to content themselves with holding the town, which consisted of about 25 families attached to the Mexican garrison stationed here.

One walled square constituted the town proper. This square was about 300 yards in extent and was walled solidly about. The rear end or side of every house was built into and against the wall, with the doors-- windows there were none--opening into the interior plaza. The mode of ingress and egress was through two immense doors made of heavy timber put solidly together. The rear of the houses adjoining the wall were built four or five feet higher than the front or sides and thus afforded an effective breast work to shoot from in case of attack. The ~~XXXX~~ fort was also a walled square about 250 feet in diameter. It was situated about 300 yards from the town square. It was built of adobe. The walls were about 12 feet high and commanded by two bastions situated at opposite corners and so constructed as to infilade the walls from the point of each angle. They were supplied with one small cannon, which, however, did no damage. The attacking party could do nothing but ride around the walls, as the garrison refused to come out. In this class of manoeuvring they had a mule killed and that made up the sum total of casualties on both sides. The Americans pitched their camp by one of the big gates of the town and to guard against surprise, stationed pickets both inside and out. On the fourth day they were joined by a detail of five men from Fort Bliss, who had been sent after them to order their recall. On the fifth day they began their return march up the Santa Cruz, followed by the Mexican garrison. When between Tucson and San Xavier they surprised a camp of three Apaches and killed them. They killed another near San Xavier, and still another at or near Canoa. The Mexican garrison made a great show of pursuing them, but whenever the Americans faced about they would scamper back in the direction of the town at a great rate. Judge Adams said that he subsequently learned that the garrison claimed to have won a great victory, but if they did it consisted largely in keeping out of the way.

In April, 1849, in company with the party of Texans under Capt. Schoonmaker, they camped one night on the Mimbres River, in New Mexico, when they were attacked by a party of Apaches and part of their stock stolen. They followed the Apaches into the Mimbres mountains, where ill luck still waited on them. In the fight which followed Captain Schoonmaker and six men were killed and the balance of their stock taken. They then cached their provisions and footed it back to Fort Bliss.

At this post Colonel Marcy was outfitting to survey the boundary line between the United States and Mexico. Mr. Adams joined his command as a private and was at once assigned to the division of topographical engineers. The company to which he belonged consisted of thirty-two men, there being less than a hundred men in the entire force. They broke camp June 1, 1849, and headed for Cow Springs; thence they marched to the head waters of the Gila, where they established the initiatory monument. From this point their course lay down the Gila, which they followed to its confluence with the Colorado. From the beginning to the end it was nothing but one continual wage of war. The Apaches had left the higher ground and were camped along the river bottom. At the big bend of the Gila, some 50 or 60 miles above Solomonville, they lost 14 men; another was lost a short distance above where Solomonville now stands; another at the mouth of the San Pedro; still another at Cienega; another at Gila Bend, and another near where Tacna station now is; and so they dwindled down until at the crossing of the Colorado but six men remained out of the company which had started out with such joyous hopes from Fort Bliss, thirty-one strong but a couple of months before. The missing 25, including Lieut. Henry, commanding the company, brave frontiersmen, had died at the hands of the Indians. Some had fallen in battle; others had been killed while hunting a short distance from the troop. The other divisions of the command suffered proportionately.

At the crossing of the Colorado the Yumas disputed the passage with great obstinacy and held the troop 13 days, running off whatever stock they had left. The Indians also suffered severely, losing, as one of them afterwards told Mr. Adams, 47 men; and for a long time subsequently others continued to die of the wounds received in attempting to resist the white man's crossing.

At Antelope Peak, on the Gila near Tacna, they found the body of a white woman. She was lying on the brush on the river bank. She had evidently been dead some time as the body was considerably dried. The wolves had torn the clothing from the body and mangled it some, but her wealth of rich golden hair betokened her nationality. They dug a grave and reverently wrapped a blanket about her wasted form and buried what undoubtedly was the remains of the first white woman that ever trod the desert sands of Arizona. Her lonely resting place was marked by a mound of stones, a portion of which is yet to be seen.