

LEE, JAMES

Written by R

W.P.A Worker

01

LEE, JAMES, was born in Londonderry, Ireland, March 17, 1833. He went to Canada in his youth, where he remained for some time, then left for St. Louis, Mo. and later started for Arizona with the Overland Mail Co. stage he conducted for two years. He arrived at Tucson, April 10, 1854. Some time after that he went to Sonora, where he remained several years, and acquired a good knowledge of the Spanish language.

In 1859 he returned to Tucson to start in the flour milling business, and shortly after that married Maria Ramirez and established his home permanently in the Old Pueblo.

That same year he engaged in business jointly with Wm. F. Scott, who was a Justice of the Peace in Tucson for many years. They established a water power flour mill, located about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles southwest of Tucson. A large reservoir was constructed. Water rights to the Santa Cruz flow were obtained and the abundant water flow supplied not only the running of the mill but the surrounding farms profited as well. The mill was called 'Jimmie Lee'. In time agriculture flourished and all the land located west of Main St. extending to the 'A' Mountain, and north and south beyond the Jimmie Lee Mill was in cultivation, making the old Pueblo an 'Oasis in the Desert'.

This same mill, prior to the ownership of Messrs Lee and Scott, when Company C of the 1st California Volunteer Infantry came in 1861 to force the Confederates to evacuate the town, the mill was taken over in reprisal, and was run for some time to supply the troops with flour, as when the Confederates retreated an attempt had been made to make the machinery useless, but being in a hurry, the damage was little. It was repaired and in a few days Fred Frill was put on reprisal service by the Company and he operated the mill in the capacity of miller for some time.

Lee, James, -2-

Some years later when the Jimmie Lee Mill closed down, the place was sold to F. Maish. In 1880 the reservoir was extended in the Santa Cruz river over several acres. The place was picturesque, and was used for a pleasure resort with boats available for sailing, rowing and fishing up the river beyond the lake. A two story hotel was constructed and also a race track where eastern people displayed their well trained race horses from New York, Texas and California, and the place was then called Silver Lake.

On Feb. 26, 1870 Messrs Lee and Scott started construction of their new steam flour mill, located on S. Main St., and known as the 'Eagle Mill'. It was completed and placed in operation Aug. 6, 1870. It was known to be the most expensive and largest building that had been erected in Tucson. The mill contained a three runff stone, with a capacity over 7000 lbs. per day of 12 hours, and the price of flour then was \$5.00 per 100 lbs. Several years later this mill was sold to E. N. Fish who continued to operate it.

Mr. Lee also invested in mining in the Amole District, where he had patented a silver and lead mine called "Naguila" in 1869. It was the first mine to be patented. It was a high paying mine, but the Apache disturbances caused the mine to close down after a visit from Esquimencin, one of the Apache Chiefs, and his band of Apaches. They cleared the place completely of all live stock; no harm was done to the people, the family was there at the time. The children burst into tears at sight of their milk cow being driven away and slaughtered within their view about half a mile distant; some of the meat used and the rest thrown away.

✓ % also invested in cattle and established his ranfh in the San Pedro valley where he raised blooded horse stock and cattle.

✓ In 1873 Mr. Lee ran for sheriff of Pima County as an independent candicate; he was defeated by *one* vote only.

This active successful pioneer's life terminated suddenly at the age of 51,

having contracted pneumonia he passed away leaving a family of eight children.
The present survivors are Mrs. ^{Austen} ~~Osten~~ Moss and Mrs. Cress Menderman of Oracle.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Weekly Arizonian, Jan. 1, 1870; Feb. 26, 1870; Aug. 6, 1870.

Tucson Citizen, June 21, 1873; Nov. 1, 1873; Jan. 17, 1874.

De Long, Sidney R., Manuscript. Pioneers Historical Society, Tucson

Pioneers Historical Society, Membership Book, (old volume), Apl. 7, 1884.

Mrs. ^{Austen} ~~Osten~~ Moss, (daughter) 248 E. 22nd St. at 4th Ave. General information.