

ROBERTS, GEORGE RILEY

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ROBERTS, GEORGE RILEY, born in Virginia, 1828, married, Sarah E. Cavaness, daughter of Jerry and Kisioh (Huckaby) Cavaness, in Tulare County, California, 1863, who was born in Arkansas about 1843; children, William Henry, George Mathew, Archibald, Amanda Jane (Mrs. Oliver A. Short, and afterwards, Mrs. _____ Woods), Sarah Ellen (Mrs. Ulysses Z. Curtis), Martha Ann (Mrs. _____ Meadows), Cora (Mrs. S. R. Langworthy), Ida May (Mrs. _____) and Bertha (Mrs. _____).

He and Abraham H. Peeples left the Cherokee Nation (now Oklahoma) about 1851 and drove 2 yoke oxen and a wagon to California; Roberts was suffering from consumption but the Indians living on the San Joaquin River gave him a tea made from Yerba Mansa which cured his cough; in 1864 he settled with his family on the Colorado River across from La Paz where he put in a steam pump to take water from a slough to irrigate his farm and in addition to his crops planted Yerba Mansa.

Went from there in 1865 to Tyson's Wells (now Quartzsite) where he owned and operated the stage station for about 7 years; listed in the 1870 Census of Yuma County, age 43, with wife and 4 children, occupation - Stationkeeper, property valued at \$2,500; moved with his family to Phoenix where a communication from there to the Prescott Arizona Miner dated September 20, 1872, stated that "G. Roberts supplies our town with new milk every morning"; on September 28 he was a delegate to the first Democratic County Convention which nominated a ticket to be voted on at the general election in November, 1872.

In his History of Arizona, T. E. Farish states that George R. Roberts and A. H. Peeples manufactured the first beer brewed in Phoenix and that in company with J. Romain, an old vineyardist from California, Roberts was the first to engage in making wine; the Prescott Arizona Miner of August 3, 1877, reported that:

George Roberts, Esq., who is extensively engaged in the grape culture at Phoenix, brought in a load of that delicious fruit this morning and soon disposed of his whole load at twenty-five cents per pound.

The Salt River Herald of May 8, 1878, stated:

Phoenix was named as the county seat in the law providing for its formation. It was first decided to build this town on the tract of land immediately north of the residence of George Roberts, (about a mile east of our present town site) and there the first building was erected by Major J. B. McKinnie and occupied as a saloon and dance house. This building is now owned by Mr. Roberts and used as a smoke house and sorghum factory, certainly a great improvement upon its first operations.

The name of that newspaper was changed to the Phoenix Herald in which the following references to him appeared:

December 19, 1879 - - George Roberts is making arrangement to fit up and open as a saloon the place next to Goldberg's store. He will also shortly put up a building on the lot adjoining Olson's boot and shoe store.

February 2, 1880 - - George Roberts is tearing down the front of his building on Washington street, next to Goldberg's and will put on one of much better finish. It will then be for rent. It is also his intention to build two places of business on the vacant lots adjoining, one of which will be occupied as a boot and shoe store. This new building will cover the last remaining vacant lot on Washington Street, in the business portion of town.

October 2, 1884 (an obituary) - - Arizona has lost another of her pioneers and Phoenix one of her earliest and most esteemed settlers in the death of Mr. Geo. R. Roberts. In 1872 he came to Phoenix,

where he has remained ever since, and had accumulated a nice little property on Washington street opposite the plaza and between the Goldman and Hooper properties. His lots are among the most valuable in the city. He was an unassuming man who made friends of all who enjoyed his acquaintance and almost everybody knew him.

In announcing his death the Phoenix Arizona Gazette said of him:

At 2 o'clock A. M. Saturday, an old true, and noble hearted Arizonan passed to his final rest. We refer to George R. Roberts, who is known all over the Territory by the old-timers, and who in his home in this country was known and respected by everybody.

Many a danger had he faced in the early history of Arizona; many a hardship had he endured in building up a home in this new land. Upright, honorable and fearless, and generous in the assistance of unfortunate fellow beings, he made many friends who now mourn his loss.

Died at Phoenix, A.T., September 27, 1884, aged 56, buried in the Old City (Pioneers) Cemetery; in his will he named his brother-in-law, Mathew Cavaness and Abraham H. Peeples, as executors; his estate consisted of lots 11, 12 and 13 in block 20, City of Phoenix; a house and lot in Murphy Addition, and from 16 to 20 head of wild range cattle; the total value of the estate was estimated at \$7,500 which included "business property rented out as a saloon"; "the annual rents, issues and profits of said real estate amount to the sum of \$1,000 or thereabouts".

ROBERT S. GEORGE RILEY

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Probate Court of Maricopa County - Docket No. 74
 Farish, T. E. - History of Arizona, 1918, Vol. 6, pp. 96, 193, 215.
 The Arizona Miner, Prescott, September 28, 1872, 1:5; August 3, 1877,
 3:3.
 The Arizona Citizen, Tucson, October 3, 2:4 and November 21, 1874,
 2:3.
 The Arizona Enterprise, Prescott, April 17, 1878, 1:3.
 The Salt River Herald, Phoenix, May 11, 3:3 and May 18, 1878, 1:2.
 The Phoenix Herald, December 19, 1879, 4:1; February 20, 4:2,
 February 27, 4:3 and April 23, 1880, 1:2; October 2, 1884,
 4:2 (obituary).
 The Arizona Gazette, Phoenix, October 2, 1884, 3:6 (obituary).

Uncle Joe Davis has left again for Wickenburg. We understand he rented his ranch on Willow Creek to Mr. George Roberts, of this town.

Arizona Miner Nov. 23, 1867 p3 c1

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Tyson's Wells station -- Mr. Peeples, of Wickenburg, has purchased Tyson's Wells station, twenty miles this side of La Paz. Our townsman, George Roberts and his excellent wife, will go down and take charge of it, and we know that they will keep it in good style.

Ariz. Miner March 28, 1868 p2 c4