

WILLIAM BICHARD : 1841-1873

William Bichard was born in 1841 on the Isle of Guernsey. With his three brothers, Nicholas, Elisha and Stephen, he immigrated to the United States, entering at the port of Boston. In 1865, the Bichard brothers journeyed to Arizona, where they entered the Gila Valley, settling at or near Casa Blanca.

In 1866, the Bichard brothers, under the name of William Bichard and Company, built and began operating a crude flour mill at Casa Blanca. The Bichards also owned and operated a small trading post at the Pima Villages. These were operated until September 7, 1868 when the Gila River flooded and swept them away. This was reported *In the Sacramento Union* on October 2, 1868.

Advices from Tucson to September 7, are received... On the 7th of September the most terrible storm ever experienced in that Territory, desolated Central Arizona. The villages of the Pima and Maricopa Indians are flooded and their crops destroyed. Harper and Company (sic, should be Hooper and Company) store at Sacabone (sic, Sacaton) and Richard and Company (sic, Bichard) at Pima are totally swept away: loss \$20,000.

The Bichard's constructed a mill in 1869 at the town of Adamsville, four miles south of Florence. This was the Pioneer Mill and was the first genuinely modern mill in the Territory. The Weekly Arizonan reported on January 15, 1870;

...Among other things, we learn from them of the movements of the enterprising firm of Bichard and Company who have just furnished their new mill at Adamsville with a new boiler, engine, and new machinery generally, and declare themselves in readiness to supply flour to the whole Territory at more reasonable rates than any other firm.

either in, or outside the Territory. We believe all this; the location of the business of the firm in the center of the grain region of Arizona, gives it an advantage over all others.

William Richard appears to ^{have} be~~e~~, enterprising indeed, because in 1870, he began constructing a mill in Phoenix. This mill, which was to serve the Valley of the Sun, was located in present down-town Phoenix where the Luhr's Building now stands. Block 64 as the location is officially designated, was given to Richard by the city commissioners. It seems to me that this might be the first time that the city fathers lured an out of town industry into Phoenix.

On July 4, 1871, the first flour ever milled In the Valley of the Sun was produced. The life of this mill was short however, for on September 2, 1871 It was burned to the ground. The cause was suspected to be arson and the loss was valued at \$10,000. William Richard continued to operate a small store in Phoenix, selling flour produced at the Adamsville mill. There also was mention of a small store operated for a short time In Prescott. This store was apparently managed by Thomas Cordis and later by C. S. Adams. In June of 1872, the Phoenix store was sold to A. Collas and Company, but In a strange transaction in October of the same year it was sold back to William Richard and Company.

Some evidence of the frontier times In which William Richard lived can be seen in a report in the Arizona Citizen, February 24, 1872;

Another Indian attack. At Mowilliams Station on the Hassayampa, some ten miles below Wickenburg, on the fifteenth, William Richard writes as follows to the firm at Sanford:

I left Phoenix on Tuesday at 2 p.m. Arrived at the forks of the old White Tanks road at 1 a.m., and was chased by a band of Apaches for 10 miles, but the speed of my noble steed safely carried me to McWilliams Station by 3 a.m. They finally gave up the chase and waited for Mr. A. Deguerre's train of six teams, and yesterday at noon made an attack, wounding the wagon master through the arm; but the Apaches were repulsed.

This article was also reported In the San Diego Union, Feb. 29, 1872. Another article in the Arizonaan, November 20, 1869 tells of the stage on which William Bichard was riding being attacked by outlaws. . Four robbers attacked the stage near Algodon Station about nine miles west of Fort Yuma. Bichard shot one of the robbers but by the time the stage was stopped and turned around, the robbers and victim were gone.

There is reason to believe that William Bichard and Company might not be as honest as we would like to think our pioneer fathers might be. For example, liquor belonging to the Bichard's was seized on or near the Pima Reservation. This went to court in U. S. v. Bichard and Company. There is also a hint of this an autobiography by Andrew Cargill (the original manuscript) where Mr. Cargill describes the Bichards as being "about as large sized thieves as were In the country." Mr. Cargill also hints at some under-the-table deals between Bichard and Co. and the Quartermaster at Camp McDowell. Camp McDowell was being supplied by the Phoenix store ran by William Bichard. Mr. Cargill tells of taking 25,000 lbs. of supplies to Camp McDowell and receiving a receipt for taking 50,000 lbs. Cargill says that the explanation given him by William Bichard was that the horses ate about 25,000 lbs. of grain and about 25,000 lbs. of

grass which the Richards also received credit for providing. How accurate an account this is ^{is} ~~I~~ was unable to determine from any other sources; so, It is only ~~as I said before~~ a hint of what might have been going on.

William Richard died young at the age of thirty-two. His death occurred on February 1, 1873, in Sanford, where the Richards owned a small store, a farm, and several houses. His death was mentioned in the Tucson Citizen and the San Diego Union and on Feb. 15, 1873 the Tucson Citizen added:

We made brief mention last week of the death of William Richard. Since that we learn that he was a native of England and born in Guernsey--where his parents now live. He was aged thirty-two years, and resided six in Arizona. Appropriate funeral services, by Rev. C. H. Cook, were held at Sanford and the remains buried (according to the request of the deceased) at Casa Blanca. The Pima Indians exhibited much grief, feeling that they had lost a good and true friend.

He was survived by his three brothers, Nicholas, Elisha, and Stephen. His estate was valued at \$66,307.82 while his debts amounted to \$67,318.10. This estate was sold to his brother Nicholas who moved to San Francisco shortly thereafter. Most of the estate was then sold off by Nicholas. The Phoenix lot ended up in the hands of a Goerge Loving (or Loring). Just how the rest of the property was disposed of however, ^{is ??} ~~I was unable to discover~~. Stephen and Elisha did not go to San Francisco with Nicholas. Stephen lived in Sanford until his death in 1876. Elisha ran the trading post at Sweetwater on the Pima Reservation until his death in 1905.

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