

# LEON, FRANCISCO SOLANO

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LEON, FRANCISCO SOLANO, born at Tucson, Sonora, Mexico, August 24, 1819; son of Jese and Francisca Leon; married Ramona Elias, daughter of Luis Elias, at Tucson about 1843; children, Cirilo S., Francisco, Manuel S., Eusebio, Librada, Francisca, Maria, (Mary Jane), Pas L. (Mrs. Demetrio Romero), Cleofa who became a Nun (Sister Amelia) and Guadalupe, who married Henry S. Holmes and after his death married Peter Stoller.

The following is taken from his testimony given at Tucson on June 14, 1886, as a witness for the Government in opposition to the confirmation of the so-called Tres Alamos land grant on the San Pedro River:

He was a soldier in the Mexican Army, and for a time was stationed at the Presidio at Tucson. He first visited and knew that part of the San Pedro valley called "Tres Alamos" about 1838. There were then no persons living there, nor ranches or settlements; but he remembers seeing acequies (ditches) and some other evidences that portion of the valley had been cultivated, but the settlers had been driven out by the hostile Apaches. There was no town or pueblo known as Tres Alamos, but he remembers three cottonwood trees (Tres Alamos) which he supposed gave name to this part of the valley, and that they stood, as nearly as he can recollect, on the west side of the San Pedro River and about one-fourth of a mile from the river.

He further says that there was no road crossing near the Tres Alamos, but owing to the beaver dams the lands along the San Pedro, below and above the "Tres Alamos," was pantano (marshy) and could only be-crossed in places by a single horse; that there were several trails through the valley but no defined road, the main crossing being near where the town of Benson now stands.

He also remembers that the Commander of the Presidio sent troops to escort the laborers to the Tres Alamos and guard them while cultivating the crops, and as soon as the crops were gathered the laborers returned to Tucson with the troops and spent the winter. A portion of the subsistence for the troops at the Presidio was obtained in this way.

When Bishop Lamy sent Father J.P. Machebeuf, the Vicar-General, from Santa Fe to Tucson in 1859 Leon gave him a house which was used as a church; listed, U.S. Census, 1860, at Tucson, occupation, Farmer, property valued at \$1,200; Territorial Census, 1864, at Tucson, occupation, Farmer, property worth \$700; member from Tucson and Pima County, 1st and 2d Territorial Councils at Prescott, 1864 and 1865; again served in the 6th

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Council from Pima County at Tucson, 1871; listed U.S. Census, 1870, at Tucson, occupation, Farmer, property valued at \$15,000.

He was a successful stock man with ranches in the Rincon and Baboquirari Mountains; also farmed irrigated land near Tucson and at one time had a store in the town; was a devout Catholic and made substantial contributions to the Church; died at Tucson, March 1, 1891, aged 71; buried in the Catholic Cemetery at Tucson; an obituary in the Arizona Daily Star stated:

The deceased was highly respected by all of the old people who knew him, for he was the soul of honor and a light for good among his people. In his death Tucson has lost one of her very best Mexican citizens.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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 Senate Executive Document No. 59, 50th Congress, 1887, Tres Alamos Land Grant, p. 27.  
 Journals, 1st, 2d and 6th Territorial Legislatures, 1864, 1865, 1871.  
 Probate Court of Pima County - Docket No. 520.  
Arizona Citizen, Tucson, March 2, 1891, p. 3, col. 1 (obituary).  
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