

MAY, WILLIAM

MAY, WILLIAM, came to the Gadsden Purchase, 1857; settled on the Santa Cruz River about 20 miles south of San Xavier; Samuel W. Cozzens who met him in 1859 said;

Every one in Arizona knew Bill, - a whole-souled, generous-hearted, daring frontiersman, who never turned a traveller away hungry from his door, or refused the shelter of his roof to the unfortunate. We had passed many ranches on our way, seen many fields of waving corn, but had ridden thus far because we wanted to see Bill May. We found him at home, and he bade us "Enter" in the loud, cheery tones of a man whose heart was in his words; and the warm, friendly shake of the hand with which he greeted us spoke a sincere welcome.

May was a fine, athletic fellow, fully six feet in height, as brave as Julius Caesar, and as cool as a cucumber, never losing his presence of mind under any circumstances. He was at war with the Apaches, and took every opportunity to "bag" some of them, as he expressed it. Only a few days before, he had followed a party who had stolen some of his cattle, and not only recovered the stock, but "bagged" two of the Indians, of which fact he felt justly proud.

A hearty supper of venison, with plenty of good coffee to enliven us during the evening, and help us swallow some of the Indian stories Bill entertained us with, together with a clean, sweet bed to sleep in, - the first we had occupied since we left Mesilla, - rested and refreshed us for our morrow's journey.

On the return journey from Fort Buchanan to Tucson, Cozzens again stepped with him.

We spent the night with our friend Bill May, who, after administering to the comforts of the inner man, entertained us until a late hour with a history of the wild and adventurous life he had led upon the Mexican frontier, he having been one of the few who escaped of the party that formed the Crabb expedition into Sonora.

Joined a party of settlers who decided to abandon their homes when all Federal troops were ordered to leave what is now southern Arizona in July, 1861; killed when Apaches attacked their wagon train at the entrance to Cook's Canyon, New Mexico; Jefferson Ake said;

We had got almost to the mouth of the Canyon and was going along free and easy. Then without no warning at all, the Indians came hellity-larrup, just a-swarming outen the rocks. There was a whole cloud of 'em. The first rush they shot Wadsworth, killed May, and broke Redding's leg.

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Cozzens, S.W. - The Marvellous Country, Boston, 1876, pp. 162-3, 182.
O'Neil, J.B. - They Die But Once, N.Y., 1935, pp. 40, 42.

Fish Manuscript, p. 293.

Another old settler of the Santa Cruz Valley was Bill May, an old frontiersman, who had been in many tight places. May was one of the very few, of the party that formed the Crabb expedition, who escaped.

May, William Byrd

History of Contra Costa County. San Francisco
Slocum & Co. 1882.

b. Tenn. 10/30/1819; to Cal. 1850; Cal. Legislature 1854-55; joined Ark. Regiment during Mexican War; in Fall of 1852 embarked in mining operations which he continued until the Fall of 1853.

Biog. not copied.

NOTE: Could this be Wm. May who was in Pima County, 1851? E.K.