

# ROODS, WILLIAM B.

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ROODS, WILLIAM B. (Bill Rhodes or Rude), born in Kentucky or Tennessee about 1820; married, Felicita Gonzales (1844-1863) at Tubac, Dona Ana County, N.M., 1858; children, Adelaide G., who married Joseph H. Godfrey, a nephew of Isaac Polhamus.

In the winter of 1849-50 he went with the "Jayhawker Party" from Utah to California; they discovered and suffered hardships in Death valley where he carved his name "W.B. Roods 1849" on a rock located in Lemoine Canyon about two miles northwest of the present National Park Service Emigrant Springs Checking Station; came from Stockton, California, to the Gadsden Purchase, 1855; settled first at Sopori where he engaged in mining and raised cattle; moved to a ranch which he developed near the Santa Cruz River about 18 miles north of Tubac. At Sopori, on December 30, 1856, he wrote a letter to Marvin Wheat, whom he had known at Stockton, Stating:

"At last, about six weeks since, the troops arrived under command of Major Steen. Tucson he did not think a proper place for encampment, and so he went to Calabazas rancho, to the great disappointment of all the Tucson fellows; the most of whom have gone to Tubac to take up land for raising a crop for the next year. Provisions are very high. Wheat is worth two dollars and fifty cents per bushel; corn and barley, five cents per pound; potatoes, ten cents per pound, and not to be had at that, even for seed. From all appearances, all kinds of produce will keep up to present prices for more than a year to come. Store goods are sold at the California prices of 1849. Cattle are very high, and will be worth more here than at any place in the west. Most of the old ranchos are destroyed by the Indians, but if those in command of the troops here do as they say they will, we will soon be rid of these plagues — then will be the time to take up land in this country."

Listed, U.S. Census, September 11, 1860, at Lower Santa Cruz settlement, age 40, born in Kentucky, occupation, Brickmaker, property valued at \$9,000; was the sole survivor of a desperate fight with Apaches on the Santa Cruz, 1862; moved to northern Yuma County early in 1863 where he located a number of mining claims in the La Paz, Weaver and Castle Dome Districts, interests in some of which he sold at different times for a total of \$1,470; for a time in 1864 he operated

a ferry across the Colorado River; listed, Territorial Census, April, 1864, at La Paz, A.T., born in Tennessee, age 45, single, resident in Arizona nine years, occupation, Ranchero; the Sheriff's census of Yuma County lists him in the Eureka District in May, 1866 and at Roods Ranch, about half way between Yuma and La Paz, in April, 1867; in a report of his observations On the Colorado River in November, 1866, G. W. Gilmore of San Francisco, stated:

"Above the Barriers is the well-known rancho of William Rhodes, extending 16 miles along the east bank of the river. The land is cultivated to a small extent, and sustains large numbers of cattle which thrive remarkably well."

Roods named the place "Rancho Los Yumas" and the area was afterwards known as Cibola Valley; in April, 1869, he went from San Bernardino to Death Valley with George Miller and two others in an unsuccessful search for the lost "Gunsight" silver mine; elected in 1868 for the long term as Member of the Board of Supervisors of Yuma County and was serving at the time of his death near his home on April 29, 1870, which occurred as follows:

"The deceased, an old and highly respected pioneer of this territory, in company with W. G. Poindexter, started in a small boat to cross the river. About the middle of the river the boat struck a snag and turned over. Roods got on a sand spit and stood for a moment up to his waist in the water, when he suddenly sunk and has not been seen since. Poindexter saved himself by clinging to the up-turned boat. The river was rising fast and a gale was blowing at the time.

"The tidings of the sad fate of one of our first pioneers, who was a friend to old and young of all classes of the population in this town, (La Paz) spread rapidly, and sorrow is seen on every countenance. Wm. B. Roods had no enemies in this place, he was a friend of every one and was respected on this river by all."

The following news from Arizona City was printed in the Tucson Arizona Citizen of February 18, 1871:

"The body of a man was found a few days since up the Colorado River. A jury decided it to be that of Wm. Rhodes, who was drowned nearly a year ago."

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