

SMITH, REES

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Born at Martinsburg, Knox County, Ohio, _____ 18____
(about 1829).

Son of _____ and _____.

Married, Alice _____ at _____ on _____
18 ____, who was born in Missouri, about 1836.

Children, James B., born in California about 1857 and Anna (Mrs.
_____) born about 1855 in California.

Was among the early emigrants to California and later came to the Gadsden Purchase; listed, U. S. Census, 1860 with wife and 2 children at the Middle Santa Cruz Settlement; age 30, occupation - Farmer, property valued at \$5,000; L. S. Owings, Governor of the proposed Territory of Arizona under a constitution adopted at a Convention held in Tucson in April, 1860, appointed him as one of 3 District Attorneys.

His name does not appear in the Territorial Census of 1864 and he may have taken his family to Napa County, California, where his son was residing at the time of his death; he had returned without his family by 1867 since his name appears at Huababi (Guibabi) in the Sheriff's Census of Pima County taken that year; the Federal Census of 1870 lists him as a farmer at Tubac; served as a member of the lower house from Pima County in the 6th Territorial Legislature which met at Tucson on January 11, 1871; the following reference to him appeared in the Tucson Arizonian of June 18, 1870:

A party of Indians made a descent upon the ranch of Rees Smith, about 15 miles from Tubac, last week, and after an obstinate fight were driven off-but not until they had first killed

a Mexican and wounded Mr. Smith. It is thought that not less than a dozen Indians were killed and wounded as the position which they occupied during the contest was found to be literally covered with blood.

On July 30, the Arizonian published a letter written at Tubac on July 18 and signed "R. S." which gave a detailed account of depredations committed by the Apaches in the Santa Cruz Valley, stating:

About the beginning of June they commenced their barbarous attacks in good earnest. Their first dash was at the Agua Fria ranch, owned by Mr. (A.C.) Ashton, from which they took off three fine horses recently imported from California and which could not have been bought for one thousand dollars. On the same day they visited the ranch below, known as the Palo Parado, and carried off four horses, besides a number of sacks belonging to Sabino Otero after having scattered their contents (barley) upon the ground.

Their next dash was at the Gue Babe (Huababi) ranch, owned by Rees Smith and Francisco Madril stripping them of everything; the former, after fighting desperately for his life, escaping with a slight wound. On the day before this last attack they killed David Holland (a native of Tennessee, age 37) and took a Mexican boy prisoner, on the Sonoita close to Camp Crittenden. The Indians all this time camped close to our homes, lived fat and fine on what they had captured at Gue Babe.

On the 8th inst. they made another dash -- this time at Calabazas -- and killed a number of work cattle. They then proceeded to the ranch of Peter Kitchen, and after killing his driver teds away four yoke of oxen. They went thence up the road toward Sonora ambushed themselves near the monument and killed three Mexicans.

They went thence to the Agua Sarca, in Sonora, and killed two men; thence toward Seyraca, killed one man, five women and one child and took two prisoners; thence back again to Arizona by the same route, crossing the Santa Cruz at the Gue Babe.

Rees Smith having gone up to his ranch, with some men, for the purpose of cleaning up his corn, happened to see them in time and concluded that it were better to keep out of their way. His men would not stop with him so he was forced to return and leave his corn uncleared.

All these raids have been made within less than six weeks. Their frequency proves that Apache headquarters have been close to us all the time. Our nearest post has not been ignorant of the most of these facts; and yet we have not heard of a single effort having been made to chastise or drive out these thieves. I had thought that the military were here for the sole purpose of protecting the settler. It seems to me very hard to be obliged to abandon all we have got and one of the finest and oldest settled valleys in Southern Arizona, for want of proper protection.

In the following articles, the Tucson Arizona Citizen first reported the risk that he took and then his death:

April 22, 1871 - - It is sickening to hear farmers tell their sad and truthful tales. They have labored for years to dig ditches, build houses, corrals, fences, &c., and are now either compelled to abandon them in poverty or stay in hourly expectation of death by savages.

Rees Smith, from Tubac, says he fears to return, and his circumstances compel him to go. Over 20,000 pounds of his shelled corn has been stolen, and several of his neighbors butchered. It is poverty to come to town and almost certain death to stay out. Quiet the Indians, and over half of Tucson people would at once cease to eke out a scanty existence here and go to the rich pastures, soils and mines around, where speedy fortunes await the prudent and industrious. But citizens must protect themselves that Infantry Camp and roads to it may be built.

June 17, 1871 - - Sad news of the death of Hon. Rees Smith reached town this morning. He had removed to Rhode's ranch, and was evidently murdered, but by whom is not known. The party who found the body just outside the house, was prevented from making any examination

by deceased's faithful dogs. Hope to get particulars next week.

June 24, 1871 - - MURDER OF HON. REES SMITH. - - We merely referred to this murder last week. It has since been ascertained that he was murdered on the 15th instant by Mexicans, who have since fled to Sonora with stolen stock, where such criminals find certain protection. Capt. J. S. Thayer, Public administrator, went out on Friday evening after the deed was done, buried the body and took charge of what property he found belonging to deceased. Smith was shot in the head and breast, but the body being badly decomposed, a close examination was omitted.

There are now remaining only a couple of the early American settlers on the upper Santa Cruz. The Indians have killed many, frightened off some, and the Mexicans under the rulings of their Government seem determined to finish the fell work, without the least provocation as in this case.

Rees Smith was esteemed an upright, useful and popular citizen; sober, industrious, brave and prudent, except, we might say in his determination to dwell amid so much danger, and this he did that he might be true to his creditors. His death is much regretted by the community at large.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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 The Arizona Citizen, Tucson, April 22, 3:2, June 17, 3:3, June 24, 1871, 3:3 (obituary) and June 21, 1873, 3:2.