

WARNER, SOLOMON

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WARNER, SOLOMON. Born February 8, 1811, of German descent, near what is now known as the town of Warnersville, Schoharie County, New York. He was 26 years old in 1837 when he left home and made journeys down the Mississippi river. At the time of the gold rush to California he was one of the early Forty-Niners, reaching California in 1849. For a time he lived in Touloume County, California, near Sonora. In 1851 he sailed to the Isthmus of Panama and stayed there and in Nicaragua for two years. He returned to San Francisco in the spring of 1853, located in Crescent City, where he lived a year, then went back to San Francisco and from there started for Arizona.

He reached Yuma on January 13, 1855. In San Diego he met Quartermaster Major McKinster and, being a mason by trade, was employed by him to finish the walls of the buildings in Fort Yuma. Having secured a stock of goods from George F. Hooper & Company, in Yuma, he brought it to Tucson on mule pack. He arrived in Tucson on February 29, 1856, and opened the first American store in the town on March 10, 1856.

His wagon trains carrying his goods were often attacked by Indians. At one time on January 28, 1870 while traveling with a Dr. Wakefield, he was attacked by the Apaches near Fort Crittenden. Dr. Wakefield was killed and Warner was badly wounded. Three balls passed through his right arm breaking the arm near the shoulder, and an arrow penetrated his left wrist joint.

During the Civil War, he was ordered to leave the territory by Capt. Hunter of the Texas rifles of the Confederacy. He left for Mexico. His stock of goods was confiscated by the Confederates. After the Confederates evacuated Arizona on the arrival of the California Column, Warner returned to Tucson.

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On October 17, 1874, he secured the right of way for a water ditch across the "Mission Gardens" from Bishop John B. Salpointe "for a mill that the said party of the second part intends building." About October 24, 1874, he went to California to purchase the machinery he needed for his flour mill. His mill was set up early in 1875. (He could not then be the man who built the first mill in the territory as Farish says.) For years he carried on the business of milling flour. He did not make as much money milling as he did in merchandising, and sold the mill.

During the last twelve or fifteen years of his life, Solomon Warner led a solitary life. He was absorbed with the idea that he could construct a perpetual motion machine. He worked on it for almost ten years, but failed to produce such a machine. Nevertheless, he did not give the scheme up. He neglected to sleep and to eat for days at a time, working on his invention.

He died in straightened circumstances on November 15, 1899, at the age of 88 years. He was buried under the auspices of the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society. He left one son, John Solomon Warner, whom he had adopted. John was postmaster at Reddington, Pima County, at the time of Solomon's death.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Tucson.

Arizona Daily Citizen, December 30, 1893.

✓ Arizona Daily Citizen, November 14, 1899.

Arizona Daily Star, November 16, 1899.

Newspaper Clipping Books, Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson,
vol. HO-HUT, p. 73; vol. WAD-WAS, p. 61, p. 65.

Certified copy of contract between Bishop J. B. Salpointe and Solomon Warner,
Mss. file, Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson.

Pioneers' Minutes, October 4, 1887.

Membership Book, old volume.

✓ Tucson Directory, 1881.

✓ Farish, Thomas E., History of Arizona, vol. 1, p. 345, p. 346; vol. 3,
p. 237; vol. 8, p. 139.

✓ Lockwood, Frank C., Pioneer Days in Arizona, p. 142.

Hand, George O., Diary, October 20, 1875; February 22, 1876; May 23, 1876.