

Arizona History
AZT Passage 14-Black Hills
by Preston Sands

Leaving the Oracle area behind, the Arizona Trail enters lonely, high desert country. To the east lies the old Mammoth Mine. This passage of the Arizona Trail starts along the old road between Oracle and the Mammoth Mine. Located several miles north of the Arizona Trail, the historic Mammoth Mine was one of Arizona's significant gold discoveries. In 1881, Austrian immigrant Frank Schultz discovered a "mammoth" of a gold mine in the foothills above the San Pedro River. A small town named for Schultz grew up around the Mammoth Mine. As was the case with many southern Arizona mines, lack of water near the mine property hampered ore processing efforts, so the mine owners selected a mill site along the San Pedro River, only a few miles away. Wagons hauled Mammoth Mine ore to the new mill, and a town named Mammoth sprang up nearby. By the 1890's, Mammoth had grown into a town of nearly 700, boasting half a dozen saloons. The steady pounding of the Mammoth Mill's stamps, crushing ore, was said to be heard for miles.

During the early 1900's an aerial tramway, something like a ski lift with buckets instead of chairs, was constructed to haul ore down to mill, replacing the wagons. On the return trip, the buckets would haul water back to the mine. With the tramway in place, the settlement of Schultz faded away. Gold gave way to silver, lead, and zinc mining during the 20th century, and the Mammoth Mine produced countless specimens of prized minerals for collectors. The Mammoth Mine, under new ownership by the 1930's, gave rise to a new town known as Tiger, located on the former site of Schultz. After the Mammoth Mine closed in 1954, Tiger became a ghost town. During its lifetime, the Mammoth Mine produced roughly 400,000 ounces of gold and a million ounces of silver.

Around the midpoint of this passage, the Arizona Trail crosses Camp Grant Wash and a historic stage coach route connecting Tucson to the San Pedro Valley. During the 1880's, a stage stop known as Manlyville was located nearby, named for its postmaster Manly Chamberlin.

Camp Grant Wash takes its name from Camp Grant or Fort Grant, an army base constructed at the confluence of the San Pedro River and Aravaipa Creek in the 1860's to protect the area from the Apache. This was a turbulent period of Arizona history, as the territory was embroiled in the so called Apache Wars. Weary of fighting, a band of Aravaipa Apaches, led by Eskinzin, approached military leaders at Camp Grant, and asked to settle and live in peace near the fort. Lieutenant Whitman granted to permission for the Apache to settle nearby, and hundreds did so, growing hay and selling it to the fort. The army in turn offered protection to these Apache settlers, provided them with food and clothing, and fairly compensated them for their hay sales.

During this time a majority of white settlers in Arizona viewed the Apache negatively, as nothing more than bloodthirsty marauders who were an obstacle to settlement. In early 1871, a Tucson vigilante group, comprised of white, Hispanic, and Tohono O'odham residents, incensed that the army seemed to be supporting the Apaches who had settled

near Camp Grant, organized a plan to exterminate these Apaches. Knowing that a large group of armed citizens on the move would raise suspicion with the military, the vigilante group posted sentries, should cavalry forces be encountered. Early on the morning of April 30, 1871, the vigilante mob surrounded the Apache settlement along Aravaipa Creek, and opened fire upon the peaceful Apaches. When the gunfire ended, nearly 100 Apache people lay dead and mutilated. The vigilantes kidnapped roughly 30 Apache children, and headed back toward Tucson. This incident, which came to be known as the Camp Grant Massacre, made headlines as far away as Washington D.C., where a disgusted President Grant demanded that the perpetrators be put on trial. In October 1871, the massacre participants were tried in a Tucson court room, but the jury quickly found them all not guilty.

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