

Larcena Pennington Page Scott

Larcena Pennington was born to Elias and Julia Ann Pennington in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1837. After the mother died, Elias moved her and her seven sisters and four brothers to Texas. In 1857 or 1858, the family was on its way to a better economic future in California. As their wagon train passed Sonoita Creek, now a part of Benson, Arizona, the family had to remain in order to rest their animals and because Larcena had mountain fever. While living in the area, there were many skirmishes with the Indians and some family members died as a result. In the meantime, a fellow by the name of John Hempstead Page, born in 1834 in Maryland, had also reached Arizona by way of California. He was traveling with a group of filibusters planning to join Henry Alexander Crabb in Sonora, Mexico.



On December 24, 1859, Larcena and John became the first white couple to be married in Tucson, Arizona. They moved to Madera Canyon to live in John's camp with John's homeboy, William Randall, and 11 year-old Mercedes Sais Quiroz. On March 16, 1860, just over two and a half months after the wedding, the camp was attacked by Apache Indians while John and Randall were out hunting. Despite Larcena's efforts to save Mercedes with a revolver, both were captured

and told that John and William had already been killed, which was a lie.

The girls were made to walk through the rugged desert terrain. Larcena began to leave pieces of her dress as a trail for rescuers. The Indians soon discovered her ploy and separated the two. After walking for more than 16 miles, Larcena began walking very slowly and the Apaches decided to kill her. They stripped off her clothes and boots, shot her several times, threw her over a small cliff where she landed in a snow bank. They threw rocks down on her and left her for dead. She was unconscious for a few days before awakening to hear the voice of her husband and other rescuers. She tried to call for help but was too weak from dehydration and lack of food to make her voice heard. She fell unconscious again and upon awakening cured some of her wounds by rubbing them with snow.

It took her fourteen days to walk and crawl off the mountain. She survived by eating grass and drinking melted snow. She found a recently deserted camp that still had a fire going. She found some flour and managed to make some bread, her first meal in two weeks. She could hear the sounds of the men who had left the camp, but they were too far away to hear her. So she crawled for another day and was finally found. Seeing that she was broken, bleeding, hurt, hungry, and thirsty, the men took her to a doctor in Tucson. It was reported that the first thing she asked for was a chew of tobacco.

She was reunited with her husband and learned that Mercedes was still alive. The Apache band had traded Mercedes to Fort Buchanan military men for some Indian prisoners. Larcena was hailed as a hero across the west. But her happiness was to be short lived. In 1861, her husband was killed by another Apache raid and buried where he died. She never got to even see his grave. She was pregnant at the time and John never got to see his daughter, Mary Ann.

The Civil War was starting and Larcena knew the military would be reduced in size and unable to provide protection. So she moved with her father and the rest of the family to Patagonia, Arizona. But safety was not to follow them. Mary Ann was born during an attack by Indians and a small pox epidemic. So the family moved to Tubac, Arizona where by 1864 the Penningtons were the only family living there. In 1867, Larcena's sister died of malaria. In 1868, her brother Jim was killed by Indians and in 1869, her father and another brother were murdered while working their farm. Again the family headed for California. But, 20 miles outside Tucson, another sister, Ellen, became sick with pneumonia and died, despite returning to Tucson for medical help. That left only Larcena and a younger brother Jack. He soon moved to Texas. She refused to leave Arizona in spite of all the hardship she had suffered.

In 1870, she married William Fisher Scott, a Scottish lawyer and a judge. Scott adopted Mary Ann and they had two children of their own, a son and a daughter. Larcena became a born again Christian and one of the first members of the Congregational Church in Tucson. She was named president of the Arizona Historical Society. She remained in Tucson and led a quiet life until her death on March 31, 1913. Tucson named a street in her honor. She and Scott are buried side by side in the Evergreen Cemetery in Tucson.

