

An Archaeology and Historical Research Expedition
Using Historical Records and Evidence to Locate
a Lost Historic Site in Cochise County

**The Homesteader
Arizona Territory**

William Henry Harrison Drew, born in Brooklyn, New York in September 1819. Died in Contention, Pima County, Arizona Territory November 6, 1879 from Typhoid. Buried in Contention Cemetery, Contention, Cochise County (formerly Pima County), Arizona. The story on William begins with his arrival in Arizona Territory around 1877 when the historic records show him and his family being on a ranch adjacent to Henry Hookers ranch in the north-eastern part of what is now Cochise County, known as Russelville.

William left his older sons to run the cattle ranch while he took his wife, Georgiann (known as Ann), and their youngest children to a homestead he settled on the San Pedro River. William built a small adobe house, horse corral and a stage station on his homestead. The station, known as Drew's Station, was in operation from 1877 until 1882. It was located on the river road that connected Tombstone to Benson. The road was known to be from Tombstone, in a westerly direction to Watervale, about 3 miles from Tombstone, thence on to Fairbank on the San Pedro River, along the river to Contention City, onward to Drew's Station, next stop was Curtis Flats before ending at Benson. Drew's station was about the middle stopping station between Fairbank and Benson.

Ann Drew provided meals and fresh fruit pies made from the fruit in the adjacent family orchard, to the guests who stopped at the station waiting on the stagecoach that would take them to their next destination. On March 17, 1879 William was appointed Postmaster of the San Pedro Post office, an official post office was opened on April 22, 1879.

**Trouble at the Ditch
A Shotgun & A Shovel**

In June 1879 there was an altercation between Robert Mason and William Drew over an irrigation ditch. Mason, a direct neighbor to Drew, accosted Drew with a shovel, over access and ownership over the irrigation ditch. The irrigation ditch in question served several owners along the San Pedro River. Mason was arrested over the physical assault. The case went to trial and Drew subsequently won.

On September 15, 1879, Drew, Mason, Griffith and Cable (all owners of the irrigation ditch) sign an agreement with Western Mining Co. for use of the ditch to provide water to the Sunset/Head Center Mill that was located between Contention and Drew's Station. On November 6, 1879 William died from Typhoid Fever. He was buried at the Contention Cemetery. His son Edward Landers Drew arrived at the station help his mother and younger siblings run the station until 1882.

Stage Station at Drew's San Pedro Homestead

When William Henry Harrison Drew homesteaded on the San Pedro River in 1877 he would establish a stage station about 200 yards from the river road that connected Tombstone to Benson. The booming mining camp would establish regular stage routes by 1879, with stages passing by Drew's Station several times daily. Several Surveys had been conducted in the area for Contention City, the Sunset/Head Center Mill Site, Fairbank and two Spanish Land Grants that were officially recognized by the US Government.

One Spanish Land Grant in particular directly affected Drew's Property, The San Juan de las Boquillas y Nogales land grant encompassed a large portion of the San Pedro River area, beginning near Fairbank and reaching almost to Curtis Flats. Drew's homestead was at the northernmost section of the land grant. On February 23, 1881 US Government Surveyor Solon M Allis began the Preliminary Survey of the land grant. On February 26, 1881 Solon Allis surveyed River Road just 300 feet from Drew's house. Allis notated Drew's house in the survey notes as well as on the New Mexico & Arizona Railroad Survey he conducted at the same time.

The New Mexico & Arizona Narrow Gauge Railroad was scheduled to be built along the River Road of the San Pedro from Fairbank to Benson, beginning in 1882. The NM & AZ RR would have rails laid just a few hundred feet from Drew's property. On December 22, 1881, Ann Drew would sign an easement agreement with NM & AZ RR in regard to the station point located at her property. This agreement provides mileage information on the railroad track location as well as exact measurements from Drew's property to the centerline of the railroad.

Archaeological & Historical Evidence Points to the Physical Location of Drew's Station

Going back to 1879 for a moment, we can share the story of Drew and his neighbor Robert Mason. In the summer of 1878, a group of neighbors on the San Pedro River built a shared irrigation ditch, Drew, Mason, Davis, Cable, Griffith and Jennings. The San Pedro River flows from South to North, with Jennings's property being at the southerly most point of the ditch and Drew at the northerly most point. The parties would alternate use and coordinate the opening of the various ditch gates to water their respective farms and orchards. The first week of June 1879 Mason got into an argument with Drew, with Mason firing off a shot at Drew. In response, Drew hit Mason with a shovel. Mason was arrested for the assault and taken to Tucson to go before the Judge. As a result of this arrest, Mason claimed ownership of the ditch, Drew filed against that claim and the case went to court. Drew submitted a

fantastic map of the area in question, to include River Road, all owners of record on the irrigation ditch and included various measurements. The Judge decided that all parties had equal claim to the ditch and threw out Mason's singular claim.

In September 1879, the group of neighbors would sign an agreement with the Western Mining Co., which owned the Sunset/Head Center mill just down the road from the group between Drew's Property and Contention City. The agreement was for use of water from the irrigation ditch for the mill site. Subsequently, this was entered into various location records of the mill site.

It is with these three maps, the agreements, county tax records and other government records for roads, that History Raiders was able to located Drew's Station, Drew's house and more importantly the ambush location of a stage coach that was traveling from Tombstone to Benson one cold March night.

****Photos available in the Find Drew's Station Photo Gallery****

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