

# An Early Pinal County Pioneer

By Mike Miranda

Charles S. Trinkner was born April 20, 1840 in the kingdom of Wurttenburg, Germany. In 1860, three young men decided to escape the futile wars in Europe and emigrated to the United States to start a new life. Charles, along with Tom Hayden and Feldman embarked at Vera Cruz, Mexico, and eventually made their way to Arizona and then on to Florence and its surrounding areas. At this time there were very few "Anglos," less than 2,000 by some accounts, marking their place in Arizona history.

In Florence, Charles married Francisca Rodriguez, a



Charles Trinkner

young lady from Magdalena, Mexico, on February 8, 1875. They started their family, five daughters in all. Charles

being taken to Hayden for medical aid, he died in the back of a buckboard.

Charles is buried on a small cemetery located near Dudleyville, across the San



Charles Trinkner's ranch

Pedro's west side and by the railroad tracks. Many years later, a pioneer group called "The

worked in the Florence area as a ranch hand, became a good horseman and acquired cattle business acumen.

Under the Lincoln Homestead Act of 1862, he applied for and received 160 acres on June 20, 1884. This land is located in the Barkerville area, forty miles southeast of Florence, and in the Black Hills. He built an adobe house, dug a well by the stream close to the house, built corrals from mesquite branches, made cement watering troughs, dug a large garden and planted a tree, which later became a huge "La Mora" (mulberry tree).

He had already acquired a few head of cattle and some

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## Trinkner

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working horses and was now able to expand his cattle and horses by breeding, rounding up strays, and trading in order to accumulate scores of beef for sale.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, he acquired some land next to the San Pedro River, south of Dudleyville, for stocking his cattle and other livestock for auction. These were delivered out from Winkleman. His ranch was called "The PZ Ranch", and is still well-known in the area.

The cowboys around the area customarily drove their cattle to the PZ Ranch for corralling their stock until auction. On February 21, 1908, during one of these drives, Charles recognized two cowhands he suspected of rustling some of his cattle and he confronted them. In the ensuing argument Charles, being unarmed, decided to get his guns and as he turned to go, he was shot in the back. Charles was able to ride for help, but while

"Woodsmen of the World" placed a granite tombstone on his gravesite to commemorate one of Arizona's old pioneers.

Of note, the PZ ranch corrals and water troughs are still there, though covered with tumbleweed and brush. There is also an old adobe station with wide entrances on each side, which is believed to have allowed stage coaches inside for shelter from marauding Indians. Across the dirt road and south is a two-story adobe building, which appears to have been very stately for its time, but is now in serious disrepair. There is still evidence of screen porch that

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surrounded the building, two feet thick, stuccoed and white-washed adobe walls, two chimneys, a state-of-the-art kitchen, and sleeping quarters upstairs and downstairs connected by a long, intact wooden staircase.

The PZ ranch is now known as the Ruiz Ranch, named after my grandfather, Miguel Ruiz. One of Charles' grandsons, born and raised at the ranch, lives in Florence today. He is 92 and can still recall many of those early ranch days. A person can close their eyes while he talks and picture what it might have been like to live back then. It was because of the bravery and vision of pioneering people like Charles Trinkner that we are living in Arizona today. I thank them all.