Francisco Romero: The Great Catalina Mountain Rancher

By Nolan Baer

The people of Oro Valley love the majestic view of the Catalina Mountains that can be seen from all over our beautiful town. Many people desire to have this awesome view in their backyard. Well for Francisco Romero the Catalina Mountains was his backyard. He was a famous rancher from this area and other parts of Tucson. Francisco Romero encountered many obstacles and challenges during his life as a rancher in the Catalina Mountains. He left a big imprint over this wonderful town.

Just like me Francisco Romero was born in Tucson. He lived here for more the 80 years until he died in 1905. During all those years he was a rancher and owned many acres of land in Tucson. His ranch in the Catalina Mountains was 160 acres with 60 cattle and a ranch house. It was right where Catalina State Park is today in Oro Valley. Some of the walls he built are still standing and there are places in the park named after him such as Romero Trail and Romero Pools.

One of the biggest challenges Romero faced was the Apache. The wars he had against the Apache were brutal. He lost many animals and a lot of money because of this great challenge. For instance, the Apache would come at night to steal his cattle and Romero would chase after them and attack them. This was really irritating for him because he had to keep on chasing after the Apache and protect his land. One year the Apache stole more than $1,100 dollars worth of horses, mule, and cattle from Romero.

Romero also had another big challenge. As a rancher in the middle of the desert it was hard to get food and water. He countered the water challenge by having a well and a water tank. Parts of both of these structures are still standing in Catalina State Park. Another structure there is a bread oven that he must have used to bake food.

Even with all these challenges Romero was a successful rancher in Tucson. He died September 11, 1905. The people of Oro Valley are lucky to still have his ruins nearby us. We can visit them at any time. This is why we should never forget Francisco Romero and all he did.
Bibliography

