

## JOSEPHINE PEAK

The altitude of Josephine Peak is 8474 feet. It is named for Josephine Pennington, daughter of an early Tucson Pioneer and sister of Larcena Pennington Page who made history when she survived a kidnapping by a band of Tonto Apaches. The peak was given its name by George Roskruge who surveyed Southern Arizona in the early 1890s. He also named Josephine Saddle and Josephine Canyon for Josephine Pennington. Roskruge never gave a reason why he decided to honor her. Although the Pennington name was well known, Josephine had never been in the public eye and had returned to Texas when she was only 16 years old. If Roskrudge wanted to honor the Pennington name, Larcena would probably have been a more logical choice but it wouldn't have had as nice a ring to it.

Josephine Peak became a location used by the US Army in their final effort to subdue the renegade Apaches led by Naiche and Geronimo who had broken out from the San Carlos Reservation in May of 1885. They were chased by General Crook's soldiers until January 1886 when a patrol led by Lt. Maus caught up with the Apaches and arranged for them to formally surrender to General Crook at a surrender conference held just south of the border from 25 to 27 March 1886. In celebration, the Apaches went on a drunken debauch with liquor provided by a bootlegger named Tribolett who, it was felt, had ulterior motives. He was a member of a group that profited from the Indian wars by supplying the Army and also by trading with the Apaches for the livestock and goods they had plundered. The ending of the Apache wars would make a serious dent in their lifestyle. He went to work on Geronimo and convinced him that as soon as he crossed the border he would be hanged. On the night of 28 March Geronimo and Naiche with twenty warriors, fourteen women and six children made their escape back into the interior of Mexico. Having been chastised by General Sheridan for "laxity" in his handling of the surrender, General Crook asked to be relieved of his command and on 2 April was replaced by Brigadier General Nelson Miles.

General Miles felt that rapid communications between the various outposts was a necessary element in the campaign against the Apache. One of the ways the Army used to achieve this was the heliograph. The heliograph is a signaling apparatus that reflects sunlight with a movable mirror to flash coded messages. He directed the Signal Corps to operate Heliograph Stations on 30 mountain peaks in Southern Arizona, New Mexico and Old Mexico. Old Baldy (Mt. Wrightson) was initially used as a relay point but the heliograph was soon moved to Josephine Peak which was more accessible but still provided the necessary line of sight. When the Army stopped using the Heliographs, Josephine Peak lost its military utility and is now just a great destination for a hike.

Prepared by T. Johnson, 29 April 2002, and revised in June 2019