



## WHEN NO ONE HAD A CAMERA

### EDWARD ZINNS' PAINTING OF THE TULLY & OCHOA WAGON TRAIN FIGHT

by Jay Van Orden

“Leave the wagons and you can go,” the Aravaipa Apache war leader Cisco called out. His large band of Indians stood on a hill above a wagon train in the arroyo road below (Figure 1). Wagon-master Santa Cruz Castanida shouted back, “You can have the wagons when we can no longer hold them.” Thus began a 10-hour battle on May 11, 1869. The previous day, the Tully & Ochoa Company wagon train had departed from Tucson, heading northeast to the Camp Grant Military Reservation in Arizona Territory. That evening, the train camped at Cañon del Oro. After the teamsters had broken camp the next morning and started down a narrow arroyo, Cisco confronted Castanida with this demand.

Edward Zinns, a young miner and talented artist, was riding with the wagon train during the battle. Ironically, he probably accompanied the train for protection from Indian attack. In this regard, Zinns was unlucky. Fortunately for historians, however, his presence resulted in a highly detailed and accurate painting that today represents an

important graphic eyewitness account of the fight.

Apache attacks on wagon trains at this time were not uncommon. Lieutenant John G. Bourke of the Third Cavalry described a similar battle:

*“It was a ghastly sight, one which in its details I should like to spare my readers. There lay all that was mortal of poor Israel. One of the teamsters, stripped of clothing, a small piece cut from the crown of his head, but thrown back upon the corpse—the Apaches do not care much for scalping—his heart cut out, but also thrown back near the corpse, which had been dragged to the fire of the burning wagons and had been partly consumed and death would come from the ear to ear cut, through which the brain has oozed.”*

Conflicts between Indians and invaders often resulted from a tribe’s determination to prevent outsiders from oc-



Figure 1. The full painting “When No One Had a Camera” by Edward Zinns, representing the Tully & Ochoa wagon train fight.



cupying their territory. However, the motivation for the attack on the Tully & Ochoa wagon train, this time, was clearly to stave off starvation. They did not want to fight the teamsters!

### Historical Background

During the decade from 1860 to 1870, increasing numbers of American settlers established mines, ranches, and farms in Arizona Territory. These activities had significant consequences for the Aravaipa and Pinal tribes. In 1867, the army issued General Order No. 31, instructing military commanders in Arizona “to keep troops actively in the field employed against the hostile Indians . . . to destroy their food sources, crops, prevent harvesting and hunting.” As an example of this practice in April 1869, just before the Tully and Ochoa wagon train fight portrayed in Zinns’ painting, Camp Grant troops destroyed the village, food, and belongings of 200 Indians in Aravaipa Canyon, rendering them destitute and near starvation.

When President Ulysses S. Grant took office in 1869, he hoped to resolve “the Indian Question” by establishing better relations with tribes to minimize military conflict. His policy was to place Indians on reservations, temporarily feed them, and teach them to farm for themselves. Indian-Anglo conflict actually declined in some parts of the west, but in Arizona, tribes continued to resist surrendering their sovereignty and homelands.

By 1871, American and Mexican citizens could not venture far from Tucson without fear of an Indian attack. Neither settlers nor the government extended a great deal of mercy toward these indigenous people. Captain John G. Bourke of the Third Cavalry, who was at Camp Grant, observed that most Americans “have so frequently fought, so generally mismanaged, and so completely failed to understand” the Aravaipa Indians.

### Chronology of the Wagon Train Battle

Headlines in the May 15, 1869, issue of the Tucson Weekly Arizonan newspaper announced: “Indian Out Rage: The most daring as well as disastrous in result, among the many raids made by Indians in this section of Arizona, was that enacted on Tuesday last [on] the train of Messrs. Tully & Ochoa, consisting of 9 wagons and some 80 mules, . . . laden with government freight for Camp Grant.” This post was built in the center of what was the main Aravaipa village.

Monday, May 10, 1869 - At about 7 am, the wagon train left Tucson for Camp Grant, 52 miles away (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. The Tully & Ochoa wagon leaving Tucson.**

About 5 pm, the wagon train reached its regularly scheduled night camp near the Cañon del Oro mines, about 27 miles north of Tucson.

**Tuesday, May 11th** - At about 6 am, the teamsters broke camp and continued north on the second half of their trip to Camp Grant. The road into Aravaipa territory took them over terrain broken by many arroyos



**Figure 3. The confrontation between Apaches and the teamsters erupted at 8 am.**

Meanwhile at Camp Grant, at about the same time, Sergeant Warren Allison and six troopers from Company G, First Cavalry, left Camp Grant to leisurely return to Camp Lowell in Tucson on regular military business. They arrived at the ongoing-battle in the afternoon.



**Figure 4. The cavalry arrives.**

**Wednesday, May 12** ~ The 16 surviving soldiers and teamsters escaped the battle and arrived back in Tucson around daybreak after traveling all night.

**Thursday, May 13 and Friday May 14** ~ Fruitless pursuits of the Aravaipa Apaches were launched from Tucson and Camp Grant.

**Saturday, May 15** ~ The Weekly Arizonan publishes the story of the Tully & Ochoa wagon train fight, and Camp Lowell military personnel enter their reports in the post returns. All the accounts confirm the action elements in Zinns' painting.

### The Participants

On May 11, 1869, enemies from two cultures met in battle: 14 Tully & Ochoa teamsters and 7 cavalymen from Camp Grant versus a reported 200 Aravaipa Apache warriors and 100 late-arriving Indians of the Pinal tribe.

Wagon-master Castanida was an experienced teamster and a skillful Indian fighter. The 14 Mexican-American teamsters had earned a reputation for being "a fairly rough lot." The artist Edward Zinns, who was not a company employee, was traveling north and attached himself to the wagon train for safety.

The 80 or so Indians portrayed in the painting who were likely led by Aravaipa chief Eskiminzin and war leader Cisco, a Mexican raised as an Aravaipa, launched the attack on the wagon train.

The band of Aravaipas (Tse'jine'), meaning "black rocks people," had established their ancestral home in the area, which they called tu'dotlish sika'n, meaning "blue-water pool" in the Athabaskan family of languages. From this, the name for their homeland was and is Arapa.

The image of the 80 or so Aravaipa warriors shown is consistent with a number of sworn statements in the Arizona Territorial publication, Memorials and Affidavits, regarding similar large-scale attacks in Tse'jine' eyes, the purpose of their raid on the wagon train was to obtain needed food and supplies.

Sometime during the afternoon about 100 Pinal tribal members, under Chief Bob-Chee-a-a (Ba Ch'ie, or Red Coyote) who were probably returning from a raid, joined the fight. These late arrivals hoped to share the bounty, particularly the mules and the military supplies. The Tucson newspaper account of 200 Indians later increased to 300 involved in the fight. I believe this is likely exaggerated.

### Zinns' Depiction of the Battle

Unlike a photograph, which freezes a single moment in time, Zinns' painting of the wagon train fight depicts the different phases of the 10-hour battle. By studying the painting, you can unravel the sequence of events.

In the middle ground, a large group of Indians stand, armed for attack, on a ridge overlooking the road through Cañon del Oro. The Santa Catalina Mountains are in the background. This is the moment when Wagon-master Castanida first became aware of the Aravaipas (Figure 5).



**Figure 5. The fight begins.**

Castanida stated that he "brought the wagons together and fought" soon after spotting the attackers. Zinns is certainly correct in placing the wagons together. There was no room to corral them. The Indians had shrewdly selected this site for the confrontation.



Into this scene an Indian approaches, carrying a white flag. Castanida speaks with the man, whom he recognizes as Cisco. Calling the wagon master by name, he issues an ultimatum in Spanish: "Castanida, leave the wagons and you can go." Castanida, knowing that he has a surprise, his cannon (which he correctly calls a howitzer) hidden in one of the wagons, boldly retorts: "You can have the wagons when we can no longer hold them."

Rebuffed, and desperately in need of food and supplies, the Aravaipas attack "yelling like demons."

Castanida orders the teamsters to haul out the cannon and place it in an advantageous position a short distance away. At first the cannon proves itself an effective weapon against the Indians, some of whom are armed with guns, but most of whom brandish lances and arrows. At every opportunity, the teamsters ram a charge down the barrel, insert grapeshot, possibly bits of used horseshoes, and let loose. The weapon keeps the Indians at bay until the teamsters run out of ammunition, and then abandon the cannon. Throughout the day, the teamsters fire rifles and pistols at their attackers from defensive positions in, around, and under the wagons.

At the center of the painting, Zinns shows the wagon train under full attack. As the day progresses, the number of Indians swells with the appearance of Pinal Apaches. The teamsters' defensive perimeter shrinks as the Indians press the attack. Castanida later testified that "near sundown his stock of ammunition running short and the entire party would have been murdered but for the arrival of the troops from Camp Grant."

The cavalry, under Sergeant Warren Ellison, finally arrived in the late afternoon. On the left side of the painting, Zinns shows the troopers engaging the Indians with pistols and carbines. At left center, a trooper fires his carbine at one attacker among a cluster of five warriors who have seized two wagons and are breaking open commissary and quartermaster boxes. A mule, with arrows protruding from his belly lies in front of one wagon. A few Aravaipa Indians lay wounded or dead on the ground.

A smaller vignette, in the right background of the painting, shows Aravaipas leading away four frightened mules, two of them still hitched to a wagon (Figure 6). Teamsters in control of six wagons, at right center, have placed some of the mules between the wagons to protect them,



**Figure 6. Apaches lead away the wagons and mules.**

although three of the animals appear to be wounded and one dead. One teamster is charging his muzzle-loading rifle with a ramrod. Another teamster, standing nearby, has just fired his pistol at Indians in the foreground and is nonchalantly smoking. Perhaps this is the brave Indian fighter Santa Cruz Castanida himself. Beside him is his best friend, a canine.

One of the teamsters has been captured by the Indians, stripped of his usable clothing, and is on fire (Figure 7). He may have been a cannoneer who, when separated from the main group, became the focus for the Apaches' rage at the deaths of fellow warriors. An Indian at the left of this grizzly scene is firing at a trooper.



**Figure 7. Torture.**

A teamster is digging a grave in front of one of the wagons, and here, two other teamsters are lowering a body into another grave, in the soft soil of the arroyo road. The two burials take place near sundown, when ammunition is perilously low and the sergeant and the wagon master decide that the train is no longer defensible.

At this point, after 10 hours of fighting, the 11 surviving teamsters and 7 cavalrymen, one severely injured and two with minor wounds, abandoned the wagons, mules, and cannon and retreated, “in a body,” to Tucson. With the Indians harassing them a short distance, and “sending a cloud of arrows,” Sergeant Allison led the retreating party through the night over the 27 miles back to town. Most walked, while the wounded rode the cavalry horses, and perhaps a few mules that had been saved. In the morning, Sergeant Allison made his report of the action to Captain Bernard at Camp Lowell.

The Tse’jine’ and their allies suffered an unknown number of casualties. The Weekly reported that “several braves were lost.” Although their losses undoubtedly were much greater than those of the teamsters and the troopers, they nonetheless succeeded in seizing food and supplies for their tribes.

The many painstaking and accurate details in the painting support the conclusion that Zinns participated in the wagon train fight. These details are not only fascinating, but help identify some of the participants in the skirmish. The moustaches, goatees, insignias on the caps, carbine sling buckles, belt plates, and many examples, are all extremely detailed, demonstrating a real and uncommon attention to detail.

Most of the approximately 83 Aravaipa warriors shown in the painting carry either bows and arrows or lances, and conform to descriptions of Apache fighting men appearing “almost naked, dressed in muslin loincloths, pointed toed moccasins and hats of hawk feathers.” The face and body paint shown on some of the warriors is a well-documented practice, and the red-and-black dots design is a common motif among Aravaipa and Pinal tribesmen. The buckskin cap with turkey feathers worn by one of the warriors is perhaps the most accurately portrayed Apache object in the painting. A cape, red head bands, and quivers all appear to be authentic. Six of the Indians carry rifles and two others wield rock throwing slings, a typical hunting device.

The dashing and brave Sergeant Warren Allison, leading the cavalry charge in the distance, is easily identified by his countenance and his yellow chevrons. The chevrons and stripes on the sleeve of another trooper designate a corporal. All the cavalrymen wear Civil War-period forage caps, three are shown with carbine slings, and two troopers carry carbine ammunition boxes on their belts.

Five privates wear regulation field dark blue four-button fatigue blouses, lighter blue trousers, and Civil War-era issue boots and brass spurs. Five privates and one noncommissioned officer are depicted with carbines. These would have been the Model 1865 Spencer 7-shot, breech-loading, repeating carbines that fired .56-50 rimfire caliber, copper cartridges. Each trooper would also have carried a Civil War-era six-shot percussion Army revolver — either from Colt or Remington — in .44 calibers. By January of 1867, all 10 US Cavalry regiments carried these arms.

The cavalrymen charge in either holding carbines in their right hands and the reins of their horses in their left hands, or firing pistols at close quarters with their right hands. Once inside the wagon train’s defensive perimeter, the troopers would have dismounted and directed their carbines at more distant targets and their pistols in close quarters. The troopers’ mounts are California broncos, many of them green-broke, trained at Camp Grant, and seasoned by hard campaigning.

None of the cavalrymen in Zinns’ painting carry sabers. By regulation, they were issued the 1860 light cavalry model, but most cavalrymen found sabers impractical and left them in their barracks, so stated Lieutenant Bourke. Zinns appropriately has omitted them. He shows four cavalrymen mounted on what appear to be issued horned California Ranger saddles, while another trooper sits atop a regulation McClellan pattern saddle. All the horses are depicted wearing the required halters; the corporal’s and two privates’ horses have breast straps to keep the saddles from slipping backwards, all incredible details.

The teamster’s iron cannon or “small howitzer” as Castanida called it was Spanish or Mexican in origin. Zinns accurately depicts it as a 4-pounder, with an ammunition box affixed to the carriage. The weapon would have been loaded with shrapnel, again possibly old horseshoes similar to a large shot gun. A wagon probably carries additional ammunition. No reports have been found of other civilian wagon trains like this that were defended by cannon. Its presence enabled the Freighting Company to forego its typical policy of paying a bribe, or mordida, to buy off small threatening Indian bands. The teamsters in Zinns’ painting are likely armed with personally owned civilian percussion rifles.

Zinns depicts the nine covered wagons in the various stages they occupied as the day progressed—three are in the hands of the Indians (two are vandalized and one is be-

ing led away), while six are still guarded by the teamsters. Each wagon wheel has the correct number of spokes with 15 shown on the front wheels and 16 on the rear wheels. The legend "Tully & Ochoa, Tucson A. T. [Arizona Territory]" is painted on the canvas covers. Thirteen other stenciled labels appear on the wagon covers, including 3 logos on cargo boxes. Five sacks containing corn, barley, bacon, and other provisions are inked "A.Q.M." [Acting Quartermaster] and "Fort Grant A. T." Boxes are marked "A.C.S. [Acting Commissary of Subsistence] Camp Grant A. T."

Although Tully & Ochoa often used oxen to haul freight, on this occasion they relied on mules which, although more expensive, were twice as fast and lived three times as long. Zinns' painting shows the brand "T.O." [Tully & Ochoa] on the necks of six of the animals. Sworn testimony in the aftermath of the fight places the number of mules killed at 10, whereas the Weekly Arizonan reports only three. The painting shows five dying mules. Whatever the number, all the dead animals were destined as food for the starving Aravaipas which, after all, was the purpose of the confrontation (mule meals on wheels!).

### The Aftermath

The results of this action, at the time, were profound and long-ranging for both Americans and Indians in Arizona Territory. Two winters after the attack on the Tully & Ochoa wagon train, Lieutenant Royal Whitman, Company G, Third Cavalry, temporarily commanding Camp Grant, met 1.5 years later with Aravaipa tribal chief Eskiminzin, who had probably been in charge during the May 11 fight. Eskiminzin, whose name means "Men Stand in Line for Him," wanted peace because his people no longer had a home, and were on the run, and were starving. He requested permission for them to settle near Camp Grant, his old village home site, located at the junction of Aravaipa Creek and the San Pedro River.

When Whitman told Eskiminzin that his people should go live with the Apaches on the White Mountain Indian Reservation some 80 miles north, the chief replied: "That is not our country; neither are they our people. We are at peace with them but have never mixed with them." This indicates that in reality there was no single entity known as the "Apache" tribe. The name Apache is a misnomer. These peoples referred to themselves as innee (people of the Tse 'jine); the word Apache is a Zuni word for enemy.

Whitman wrote to his commanding officer in Tucson, "These Aravaipa Apaches, especially their chief Eskiminzin, have won me completely. The men, though poorly clothed and ignorant, refuse to lie or steal; the women work like slaves to clothe themselves and their babies and though untaught, they hold their virtue above price. They need help to show them the way to higher civilization, and I will give them this help as long as they are permitted to stay with me."

Without doubt, this Tully & Ochoa wagon train fight and the other raids near Tucson led to the 1871 retaliatory Camp Grant Massacre by 90 Papago Indians, 48 Mexican-Americans, and 6 Anglos. That attack killed approximately 125 Aravaipa women and children and a few old men. Ultimately, this punitive measure resulted in a peace treaty in 1872 and the establishment of the San Carlos Agency, where these Indians began adapting to regulated reservation life and an alien set of cultural values.

### Edward Zinns

A mining man who was born in Virginia in 1843, Edward Zinns is listed in the 1885 census as a 43-year-old Caucasian residing in the town of Weld, Colorado. Zinns was traveling north at the time of the Tully & Ochoa fight and apparently hitched a ride with the train for protection as he passed through the homelands of the Aravaipa and Pinal Indians. Because his painting is so detailed, it is reasonable to speculate that Zinns was a learned man. He paid particular attention to the landscape. The mountains in the background match the view and skyline of the Santa Catalinas from Cañon del Oro. The terrain and the flora, prickly pear cactus, manzanita, and oak trees, appear in his painting as they do today. Signs of the dirt road to Camp Grant in 1869, as painted at the battle site, are slightly below the modern track. Zinns' knowledge of battle conditions and the progression of events throughout the day — the details of the equipment, grave digging, the numbers of wagons, Indians, and soldiers, even their ranks — are all historical indicators that can only mean that Zinns was present. It is unlikely that he could have remembered so many specifics for any great length of time. That he picked up his brush to paint his canvas soon after the battle, while his memory was fresh, is a logical assumption. No doubt he immediately returned with a military escort to Cañon del Oro, where he relived the horror of the fight, as he sketched the scene of action, and made notes for his painting.



## History of the Painting

## Conclusion

The painting's subsequent history is a trail of confusion. Because of its large size, the 28-by-54-inch oil was probably commissioned by Tully and/or Ochoa and intended for public viewing as saloon art, depicting current life at the Old Pueblo and likely displayed in the Shoo Fly Restaurant and Boarding House, or the Palace Saloon.

In 1887 it hung behind the platform, along with flags and bunting, during Tucson's celebration of the final "capture of Geronimo" by General Nelson A. Miles, an event arranged by the Society of Arizona Pioneers. Geronimo surrendered with terms and was not captured.

On January 25, 1893, Sam Katzenstein, owner of the Cosmopolitan Hotel, disposed of the building's contents, which included "The Tully & Ochoa Wagon Train Fight." Katzenstein, who had earlier turned down \$25.00 for the painting, now sold it at auction to none other than Sam Hughes, a participant in the Camp Grant affair, for \$5.50. The painting's location from 1893 to 1919 is unknown. However, when the bars closed down at the beginning of Prohibition, Hughes, a founding member of the Society of Arizona Pioneers, conveyed it to the renamed Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society – today's Arizona Historical Society.

An article dated May 23, 1929, in the Tucson Citizen, entitled "Exciting Bit of History is Recalled by Painting—Rescue of Wagon Train Is Depicted," states that the "painting was done by a trooper who was engaged in the fight and depicts the arrival of soldiers." The only hint implying that it was painted by a participant appears in a statement by Edith Stratton Kitt, secretary of the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, who marveled that "the vivid colors and life sketches make the picture realistic," and proclaimed it "one of the most prized paintings of the Society."<sup>46</sup>

As an eyewitness account, Zinns' painting, now in the collections of the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson, presents viewers with a detailed and accurate portrayal of one incident in the long struggle between American Indians and settlers over control of the continent. If a contemporary photograph had been taken of the fight, it would have shown only one moment in time. This depiction of several important developments during a full day of fighting — the appearance of the Indians, use of the cannon, arrival of the cavalry, and burials of two teamsters — is unique. Of the few contemporary depictions of Apache Indians in battle with American soldiers and settlers, none is as vivid, accurate in detail, and informative as this one. In this context it is the only known painting by a participant. As such, it is an important historical document that provides colorful and detailed information, augmenting written reports about a memorable moment in Arizona history.