



June 2018

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Marlitt, E. (Eugenie), "E. Marlitt's Countess Gisela and the naming of Gisela (Historical Fact)" (2018).
Essays. 645.

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/sophnf_essay/645

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(Robert McFarland of BYU and Associate Director of the Sophie Project contacted Jayne Peace of Gisela, Arizona about the origin of her city's name and her publication "History of Gisela, Arizona". We include here with her permission part of the exchange and her interesting historical insights):

Dear Ms. Peace:

I have an odd question for you. I have heard conflicting stories about the name of the town of Gisela, AZ. I have read that it was named after a settler's daughter, and also that it was named after a character in a book by the German writer E. Marlitt. Are one of these, both of these or neither of these stories true?

Robert,

There was no settler's daughter in Gisela by the name of Gisela. My family settled in Gisela in 1889 - the year it was named -- and the information has been handed down to me. My grandmother started attending the Gisela School in 1893 (age 6) and a part of their lessons was to learn how Gisela got its name. Her older brothers, Arthur and Curtis Neal began attending school in Gisela in 1889 - the year it was named- they were there when the name was chosen.

Gisela was named after the heroine in a book titled COUNTESS GISELA by E. Marlitt. The teacher, Carrie Stanton, was reading the book to her students when she was asked by her husband, Postmaster Fred Stanton, to name the little settlement. She asked the school children what names they liked and since GISELA was a new and different name to them, they voted to name their settlement GISELA.

The Tonto Basin is about 50 miles long and there were several little settlements in it. It was difficult for mail carriers to get the mail to the right settlement when several of them were simply known as "Tonto Basin." So each settlement took on a name. That is why Fred Stanton asked his wife to give the place a name - a name different than the rest.

They didn't know how to pronounce GISELA correctly, so they called it Guy-SEE-la.

I hope I have been of some help to you,

Sincerely, Jayne Peace