

THE HISTORY OF
THE LOWER SAN PEDRO VALLEY IN ARIZONA

by

Bernard W. Muffley

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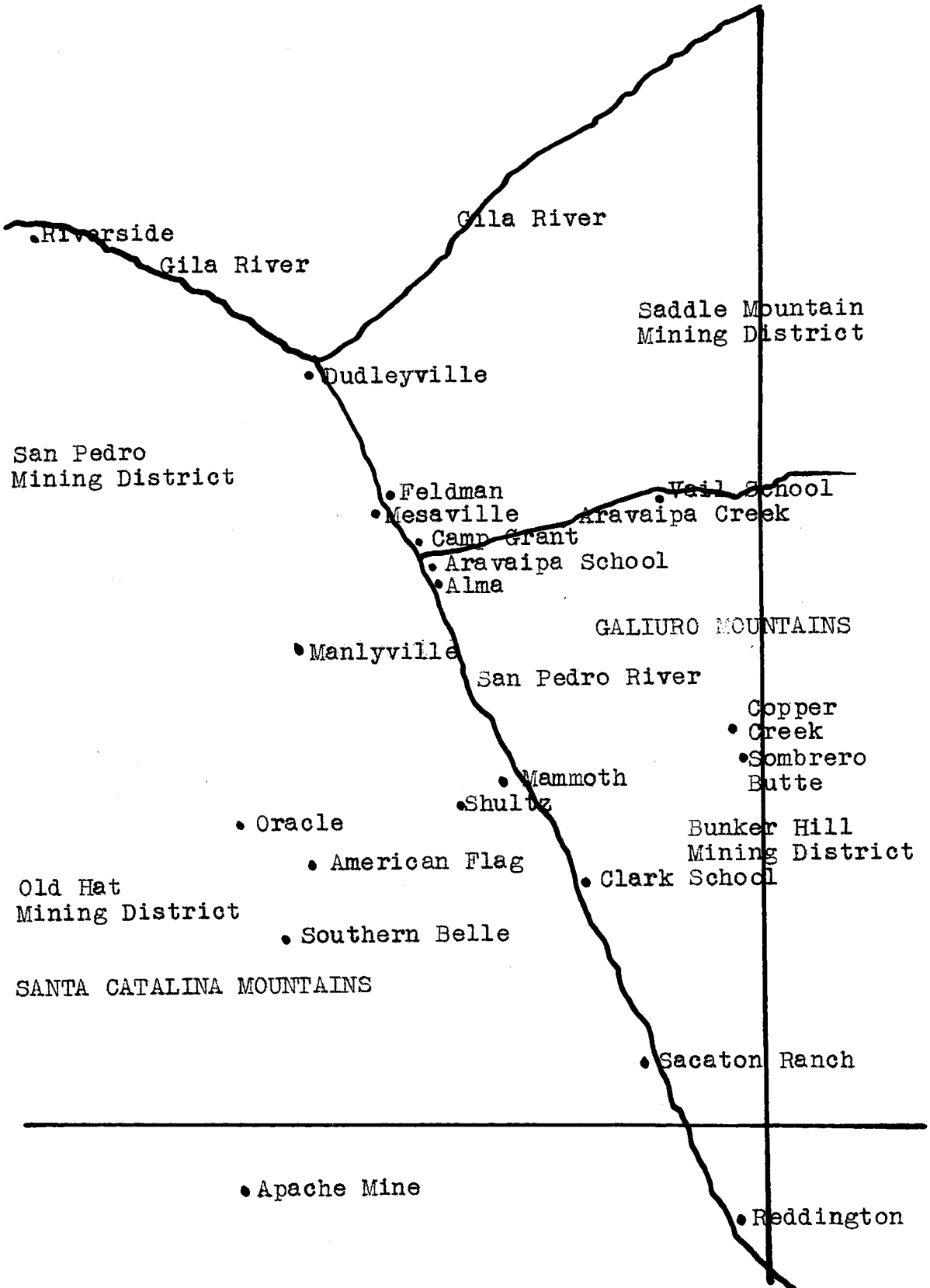
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Introduction

The term lower San Pedro Valley has been coined by the author to designate that part of the San Pedro Valley lying in Pima and Pinal Counties.

This work traces the social, economic, and population trends from the time of Anglo-American occupation, shortly after 1850, to 1920. A few remarks have been made regarding the period after 1920. This period was not described in full because it would necessitate discussion of living personalities.

The people of the lower San Pedro Valley were of many nationalities. In the early days Anglo-American women were scarce. A number of white men married Mexicans. Several of these Mexican wives were abandoned in favor of white women in later years. This intermarriage produced over half of the present population. A few of the families are of mixed Indian or Negro blood. One of the most successful early day residents of Mammoth and Oracle was a negro. His descendants are mixed with Indian, Mexican, and Anglo-American blood. This tendency toward racial intermarriage seems to have been typical of all southern Arizona. Some of the prominent business men of Tucson are mixed blood.

The historical facts for this work are widely scattered and have been secured from many sources. The principal helps have been the newspapers of the time and the memoirs of old

settlers. However, these have been augmented by historical works, government reports and documents, personal letters, travel books, reminiscences, and many other sources.

It is the hope of the author that this short history may help to fill one of the obvious gaps in the history of Arizona, and that it may record for the future the names and deeds of many deserving pioneers.

CHAPTER II
PERMANENT SETTLEMENT A REALITY
1874-1890

A traveler who journeyed down the lower San Pedro Valley in 1875 reported that there was not a single resident. Only the ruins of former homes greeted the eye.¹ Even the Indians were "officially" gone, for they had been put on reservations in 1871.² Of course it was not uncommon to find the fresh remains of a camp. Some of the Indians were still at large moving secretly from place to place to avoid being trapped by scouting bands of soldiers. However, the white man had not forgotten the apparently fertile and abundant land that was lying idle, for in 1877 and 1878 this land was surveyed and thrown open for homesteading.³ During the next three years hundreds of home seekers and prospectors flocked into the valley. Community after community sprang up as if over night. Permanent homes were built by people who seemed to forget that only a few years before this same ground had been sprinkled with the blood of settlers who likewise hoped to establish homes.

1 A. C. Bittick, Interview, Dudleyville, Arizona, Oct. 20, 1935.

2 Hubert Howe Bancroft, op. cit., XVII, p. 565-66.

3 Annual Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1878, p. 351.

The vanguard of this group explored and prospected the Santa Catalina Mountains which made up the safer side of the lower San Pedro Valley. In the late 1870's and early 1880's many locations were made in the Old Hat Mining District so called because an old hat was found on the discovery location in the area.⁴ This original location, also known as Old Hat, was made by Louie Depew and W. E. Guild⁵ in 1878.⁶ Although in an early day it was described as the most promising mine of the district,⁷ it never was developed beyond the prospect stage. Of the hundreds of claims that were recorded in this district during the first few years of its existence, only a few were sufficiently developed to deserve mention. The American Flag Mine was the first on which extensive work was done. It was located in the late 1870's by Issac Lorraine, a Frenchman.⁸ By 1880 there were enough people at the mine to warrant a post office. December 28th of that year the office was opened under

4 Mrs. Lalie C. Dodge, Letter to Dr. Frank Lockwood of Tucson, San Francisco, California, Sep. 23, 1919; Arizona Blade and the Florence Tribune, Florence, Arizona, Nov. 14, 1903. This paper tells a different story which does not seem very probable. It states that there were a number of "tar heels" from North Carolina settling in this area. They all wore large white hats which soon became very old; thus the district became known as Old Hat.

5 E. O. Stratton, Reminiscences.

6 Arizona Weekly Enterprise, Florence, Arizona, Nov. 26, 1881.

7 Ibid., Nov. 12, 1881.

8 E. O. Stratton, op. cit.

the name American Flag with Peter H. Loss as the first post-
master.⁹ By 1881 there were forty men working in the mine for
the Richardson Mining Company of New York which had purchased
the property early in that year.¹⁰ After that time little more
was heard of the mine. The man who opened it became discouraged
and started a cattle ranch.¹¹

Further south, also on the east slope of the Santa Catalina
Mountains, in 1880, O. A. Wyatt and Pete Dumphrey located the
Apache, a copper property. The next year it was purchased by
Eastern interests which formed the Santa Catalina Copper Company
of Boston.¹² Development on the mine, still known as the Apache,
proceeded rapidly. They built a mill, a smelter, a sawmill, and
numerous other buildings. E. O. Stratton, a neighboring rancher,
built the road from the mine to the San Pedro River. Every de-
tail was carefully checked except to determine whether they had
sufficient ore for profitable operation. After work was started,
this problem soon presented itself.¹³ In May, 1882, operations
were suspended. About \$20,000 worth of ore had been mined, as
compared to expenditures totaling ten times that sum.¹⁴ The
property was abandoned and later relocated by other men. Just

9 Frederick J. Haskin, Letter to Bernard Muffley, Aug. 8, 1936.

10 Arizona Weekly Star, Tucson, Arizona, July 28, and Aug. 18, 1881.

11 E. O. Stratton, op. cit.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Arizona Weekly Enterprise, June 3, 1882.

above and just below the Apache were two other properties, the Stratton and the Daily, like the Apache they had extensive development work but were unable to produce at a profit.

The next mine of note was the Southern Belle located between the American Flag and the Apache. This location was developed in the early 1880's as a gold property. During the years 1886, 1887, and 1888 it produced considerable quantities of gold. The camp had a post office and store which was operated by J. L. Clark. As profitable ore could no longer be obtained after 1888, the mine closed.¹⁵ Many attempts have been made to reopen, but as yet they have all failed. Last, but greatest, of the larger mining developments on the eastern slopes of the Santa Catalinas was the Mammoth. Location was made there by Frank Shultz in 1881. Intensive development beginning after 1885 was rapid and profitable.¹⁶ The history of this mine parallels so closely that of the town of Mammoth that they are jointly described below.¹⁷

The Bunker Hill Mining District, east of the San Pedro River, was organized in April, 1880, by William N. Miller, Ely McDaniels, T. H. Peters, Tom Lyons, and Frank Perria. Many locations were made, but none of these were developed beyond the prospect stage until much later.¹⁸ Besides the Bunker Hill

15 A. A. Ramsay, Interview, Oracle, Arizona, Dec. 15, 1935.]

16 E. E. Putnam, Interview, Tempe, Arizona, Jan. 1, 1936.

17 See below p. 35.

18 Martin E. Tew, Interview, Copper Creek, Arizona, Sept. 21, 1935.

District, on the east side of the river, there was the Saddle Mountain District. This area was prospected by the settlers from Dudleyville. Most prominent among these were W. A. Lattin and sons, and Dudley Harrington.¹⁹ On the west side of the river and north of the Old Hat District, Dudleyville settlers prospected another section known as the San Pedro Mining District. John T. Bates, J. M. Roberts, and L. K. Watson sold, in this area, the Silver Queen for \$30,000.²⁰ Later, however, the mine proved to be of no value.

Simultaneously with the development of the mining operations, permanent farming communities began to appear. The Redfield brothers settled where Reddington is now located late in 1875.²¹ Soon other people followed and formed a community of several families. A post office was established October 7, 1879, with Henry F. Redfield as postmaster. The name of the office, Reddington, was coined from the name Redfield.²² During this early period it was known that outlaws used the territory east and west of Reddington as a safe "hide out."²³

The outstanding episode of this region, tinged with the romance of the old wild west, occurred late in the summer of

19 Arizona Weekly Enterprise, Dec. 31, 1881.

20 Ibid., Dec. 31, 1881.

21 Fred W. Lattin, Interview, Winkleman, Arizona, Oct. 20, 1935; Francis J. Vaughn, Reminiscences.

22 Ibid.

23 W. E. Bayless, Interview, Oracle, Arizona, Oct. 6, 1935.

1883. Following a stage robbery and a murder one and one half miles north of Riverside Station, the Sheriff of Pinal County and his posse proceeded up the San Pedro Valley to find the criminals. At several places along the way they were given word that the alleged culprits were believed to have passed. Finally, upon reaching Reddington, Joe Tuttle and Lem Redfield were found at Redfield's place. A search revealed several suspicious articles including a United States mail sack. These two men along with Frank Carpenter, a nephew of Redfield, were taken to Florence.²⁴ During their stay in jail, Tuttle made a complete confession, stating that Jack Almer watched at Florence until the treasure box was so heavy that it took two men to load it, and then rode on the stage, his presence being a signal to the robbers. He also stated that he and Charley Hensley committed the actual robbery and that Redfield was to get a "cut" of the money which was hidden below Dodson's (Mesaville).²⁵ This charge was denied by Redfield.

In the meantime Henry Redfield decided that his brother was unsafe, so early in September he arrived in Florence with J. J. Bullis of Benson, Deputy United States Marshal Evans of Tucson, and seven other men. They stated that the purpose of their visit was to remove Lem Redfield to Phoenix where he

²⁴ Arizona Weekly Enterprise, Aug. 18, 1883. (This article was written by Thomas F. Weeden, editor of the paper, who was a member of the posse that arrested the men.)

²⁵ Arizona Weekly Enterprise, Sept. 8, 1883.

would be safer. Immediately the citizens of Florence superseded the law enforcement agencies and hanged Lem Redfield and Joe Tuttle in the hall of the jail. Frank Carpenter was spared but warned that this should be a lesson to keep better company in the future.²⁶ Much doubt has existed as to whether Redfield had any part in the crime for which he was lynched. The truth will never be known. Jack Almer and Charlie Hensley were killed October 3, 1883, by Sheriff Paul of Pima County twelve miles from Wilcox. Thus as in many cases of the time, the affair was closed without any of the men having had a trial by jury.

The Reddington community continued to grow despite the loss of one of its prominent citizens. In 1885 the Bayless and Berkalew Company purchased the homesteads of William and Edward Peck. Near by on a school section they founded a ranch later known as the Sacaton. From this humble beginning the company gradually increased its interests until at one time it comprised 9000 acres of patented land.²⁸ Starting about the same time, Demitrus Markham built up a large ranch between Sacaton and Reddington. Later, however, this land was acquired by Bayless and Berkalew.²⁹ The trade of this section

26 Ibid.

27 Arizona Weekly Enterprise, Oct. 6, 1883.

28 Charles H. Bayless, Interview, Tucson, Arizona, Oct. 5, 1935. Patented land here refers to land granted by the government (homesteads and mining claims.)

29 Ibid.

of the San Pedro Valley became so important that in the summer of 1885 a road was constructed across Cabadillo Pass into the San Pedro Valley.³⁰ On this same road Dr. C. H. Davis, brother of W. C. Davis of the San Pedro Valley, was ambushed and killed by the Indians early in June, 1886. Thus the fact is shown that bands of renegade Apaches were still at large.³¹

Down the river and only six miles above Mammoth were located the holdings of George Acton and J. L. Clark. These two adjoining farms were watered from the same ditch which irrigated over 500 acres of land. Below Clark and stretching along the river for over three miles were the holdings of the San Pedro Cattle Company. This Company later sold to John Brown and was then known as the Seven B Ranch.³²

A post office was established below the junction of the San Pedro River and Aravaipa Creek in 1878. It was known as Mesaville and had J. N. Dodson as postmaster.³³ Above and below this small post office and store several farms and ranches were developed. The largest of these holdings were those of George Pusch. This place, later known as Feldman, eventually

³⁰ The Weekly Citizen, Sept. 29, 1885; Mrs. Ida Leonard, Paper in possession of Arizona Pioneers Historical Society.

³¹ Mrs. Ida Leonard, op. cit.; E. O. Stratton, op. cit.; Charles H. Bayless, op. cit.

³² W. E. Bayless, op. cit., Oct. 6, 1935; E. E. Putnam, Interview, op. cit.; A. A. Ramsay, op. cit.; Severo Zapata, Interview, Mammoth, Arizona, Oct. 13, 1935.

³³ Frederick J. Haskin, op. cit., Aug. 26, 1936.

embraced the holdings of Mr. Dodson. Near by, George Cook held a small farm which for a short period was noted for its productivity. Proceeding up the river one passed ranches belonging to Putnam Brothers, Brown and Woods, and Andrew Cronley.³⁴ For a while during the late 1870's and early 1880's Dan Murphy had a herd of thoroughbred cattle near the Cronley ranch. During those years nearly every cattleman in southern Arizona secured some bulls from this herd. Mr. Murphy died about 1880 and left the cattle in charge of John Rhodes, Sr. They were gradually sold until in 1885 E. O. Stratton bought the last of the herd.³⁵ Even though Mesaville had received an early start, its life was short. With the big development at Mammoth in 1887, Mr. J. N. Dodson started a store there.³⁶ A year later, March 13, 1888, the post office was discontinued at Mesaville.³⁷

East of Mesaville in Aravaipa Canyon several small fruit ranches were established. Unlike most parts of Arizona, water

34 Severo Zapata, op. cit.; Juan Mechado, Interview, Dudleyville, Arizona, Oct. 13, 1935; Fred Lattin, op. cit.; Mrs. Bridget McHale Cronley, Reminiscences.

35 E. O. Stratton, op. cit.; Arizona Live Stock Journal, Tucson, Arizona, May 10, 1884, p. 1; Ed. Vail, Reminiscences; Frank C. Lockwood, Pioneer Days in Arizona, p. 239. Mr. Lockwood made a mistake in Mr. Stratton's name and also in the date on which he purchased the cattle from the Murphy estate. All other authorities including Mr. Stratton himself give E. O. Stratton instead of George B. Stratton and 1885 instead of 1880.

36 E. E. Putnam, Interview, op. cit.; Severo Zapata, op. cit.

37 Frederick J. Haskin, op. cit., Aug. 26, 1936.

was plentiful, and land was scarce. During the 1880's some of the more prominent farmers in that vicinity were J. W. Brandenburg, Emil Kielburg, E. W. Childs, J. A. Vail, and M. P. Gibson.³⁸

Near the mouth of the San Pedro River, Dudleyville was founded; the largest of the strictly farming communities in the lower part of the valley. A large number of settlers located there after the survey of 1877-78.³⁹ At first they traveled fifty miles to Florence for supplies and mail; later mail was available at Mesaville and at Riverside Station some twenty miles down the Gila River. In May, 1881, this condition was remedied by the establishment of a post office,⁴⁰ the name of which was formed from the first name of Dudley Harrington who was one of the earliest settlers.⁴¹ Later the same year a store was started at Dudleyville by a Mr. Miller of Tucson.⁴² Soon the store and post office were both under the management of one man, W. D. Harrington,⁴³ the son of the man after whom the settlement was named. He operated them

38 Arizona Daily Citizen, Tucson, Arizona, Sept. 9, 1889.

39 A. C. Bittick, op. cit.; Annual Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1878, p. 351.

40 Will C. Barnes, op. cit., p. 136.

41 Fred Lattin, op. cit. (*letter*)

42 Arizona Weekly Enterprise, Nov. 26, 1881.

43 A. C. Bittick, op. cit. (*letter*)

for about two years and then sold to George F. Cook⁴⁴ who operated the store and post office successfully for many years.

During these early years (up to 1890), Dudleyville prospered. Most of its citizens were engaged in cattle raising as well as farming. In this business they took advantage of the open range both east and west of the valley. Also, as has been mentioned above, there was some prospecting in this vicinity. Grain, hay, fruits, and garden vegetables seem to have comprised the larger part of the farm products.⁴⁵ Most of these were consumed in the valley as it was a long, difficult trip to take products to market. The ready cash needed was produced by the sale of beef cattle which were driven out of the valley, thus saving transportation costs.

Possibly the only serious handicap at this time was the constant fear of an Indian outbreak. From time to time many of the citizens left the valley only to return a week or two later and again try to live there.⁴⁶ A typical Indian "scare" took place in June, 1882, when Mrs. Watson killed an Indian. For many days appeals were sent to Sheriff Gabriel of Pinal County asking aid to prevent what they feared would be an Indian outbreak. For some reason, not fully explained, the Sheriff did not arrive with help. Finally Mrs. Watson's

44 Arizona Weekly Enterprise, Sept. 29, 1883.

45 Patrick Hamilton, The Resources of Arizona; Arizona Weekly Enterprise, Dec. 10, 1881.

46 Fred Lattin, op. cit.

brother, W. D. Harrington, was able to quiet the Indians by giving forty dollars to the dead warrior's brother.⁴⁷ As time passed the Government tried to move all of the Aravaipa Apaches to San Carlos. Chief Eskimizine and some of his followers objected and were allowed to stay on the San Pedro between Dudleyville and Mesaville. A surveyor's map of 1885 shows six plots of land held by the Indians.⁴⁸ Also several Indians held land on Aravaipa Creek about four miles above the San Pedro River.⁴⁹ The Indians were not good farmers and had great trouble getting water out of the river onto the land.⁵⁰

Of all the early lower San Pedro Valley settlements only Oracle maintained higher cultural standards than Dudleyville. The little settlement, anxious to train their young, opened a temporary school as soon as there were enough children in the community. A permanent school was built in the summer of 1883, classes being held in September.⁵¹ Besides the attention devoted to education, religious services were conducted by the Reverend Mr. Graves.⁵²

47 Arizona Weekly Enterprise, June 10, and June 18, 1882.

48 George Roskruge, Plat Showing Location of Indian Settlements on San Pedro River, Pinal County, Nov., 1885. The Indians shown on the map were: Ha-ca-tes, Eskimizine, Segulas, Frans Buh, and Coyote.

49 A. C. Bittick, op. cit.

50 Arizona Weekly Enterprise, Feb. 25, 1882.

51 Ibid. Sept. 29, 1883.

52 Ibid. From all sources cited above the following people seem to have taken the most active part in the Dudley-

As has already been mentioned earlier in this chapter,⁷ profitable development at Mammoth came after 1885. It was in that year that a mill was started on the River at the present site of Mammoth. Commercial extraction of the ore dates from 1887⁵³ which was the same year that the post office was established.⁵⁴ However, the school dates from the time that work was started on the mill.⁵⁵ Several stores and saloons were established. The earliest permanent institution in Mammoth was the store of J. N. Dodson, the postmaster of Mesaville. His new establishment was started about a year before the post office at Mesaville was discontinued. Another business which operated for many years was the saloon of Johnny Dubois.⁵⁶ Other permanent establishments date after 1890 and are considered in the next chapter. Perhaps, the most important of the temporary institutions was the general merchandise store located about fifty yards north of the present town. Unfortunately, its location proved to be the water course draining a large area back of Mammoth. After only a few years the store was completely destroyed by water. J

ville Community (1877-90): William Lattin and sons, William Cunningham, W. D. Harrington, William Sellick, D. C. Sellick, H. H. Young, Oliver Swingle and sons, A. C. Bittick, Henry Schoshusen, Charlie O'Dell, John Bates, and J. M. Finch.

53 E. E. Putnam, Interview, op. cit. 7

54 Frederick J. Haskin, op. cit.

55 E. E. Putnam, Interview, op. cit.

56 Ibid.; Frederick J. Haskin, op. cit. J

The Company did not build another, but instead from time to time gave certain privileges to various individuals.⁵⁷

The mine at Mammoth was located about four miles up the hill west of the river and about 800 feet above the town. The reason for this separation of mine and mill was the shortage of water at the mine. To get the ore to the mill it was necessary to use eighteen mule teams. These teams were owned by William Neal, who contracted for the hauling of the ore with the mine superintendent, Captain Johnson. Neal also had a contract for furnishing wood and water.⁵⁸

By 1890 Mammoth probably contained between six and seven hundred people.⁵⁹ The school had seventy pupils and one teacher.⁶⁰ By this time there had been milled about 50,000 tons of ore which yielded considerable quantities of free gold.⁶¹ Thus Mammoth, depending primarily upon mining, but also on agriculture, developed very rapidly.

The story of Oracle before 1890 was divided into two parts: the location of mining claims, and the establishment of ranches. Strange to say, the mining claims at Oracle were never important as mines but served rather as a building site for a ranch. The first claim was located in the neighborhood

57 E. E. Putnam, Interview, op. cit.; Severo Zapata, op. cit.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 E. E. Putnam, Interview, op. cit. Mr. Putnam was the third teacher at Mammoth. He was preceded by Miss Hiser and Mrs. Margret Clifford.

61 Ibid.

of present day Oracle in 1877 by Albert Weldon who was "grub staked" by James Lee of Tucson.⁶² Weldon called the claim the Oracle after the ship on which he came around Cape Horn in 1875.⁶³ The next year, December 25, 1878, Weldon and Alexander McKay located the Christmas mine; one week later they located the New Year mine.⁶⁴ During the following summer James Lee erected the first permanent house. It was located across the wash south west of the present library building.⁶⁵ James Branson and his mother lived there for several years. They were keeping a herd of cattle belonging to Robert Leatherwood, Mayor of Tucson.⁶⁶

During 1880, quite by accident, Mrs. Edwin S. Dodge accompanied her husband to look at a mining claim near the Oracle. The climate agreed with her so well that they decided to locate there. Mr. Dodge and an Englishman named Jack Aldwinkle became partners in the cattle business. Soon, however, the Dodges conceived the idea of keeping guests who were in bad health and in need of rest. In 1885 they built a large ranch house and called it Acadia Ranch after the district in Canada from which they came.⁶⁷ After the arrival of the Dodges,

62 Alexander McKay, Interview, Tucson, Arizona, Mar. 14, 1936; Mrs. Catherine Moss, Interview, Tucson, Arizona, Mar. 14, 1936.

63 Ibid.

64 Alexander McKay, op. cit.

65 Mrs. Catherine Moss, op. cit.

66 Ibid.; Mrs. Lalie C. Dodge, op. cit., Sept. 23, 1919.

67 Mrs. Lalie C. Dodge, op. cit., Sept. 10, and Sept. 23, 1919; E. O. Stratton, op. cit.

W. H. Reed of Tucson established a saloon and over night station on the site of the Mountain View Hotel. During the operation of the Apache mine in 1881 and 1882, he did a very good business.⁶⁸ After the mine closed in 1882 Mr. Reed sold to J. C. Watterman, manager of the San Pedro Cattle Company. Mr. Watterman did not operate a saloon, but instead established a home there because of the unhealthy condition at that time in the San Pedro Valley.⁶⁹ Two years later another change occurred. Shortly after the death of James Lee in March, 1884, the Lee family moved to their house at the Oracle.⁷⁰ James Branson, who had lived there moved out to the ranch which Robert Leatherwood had occupied seven miles to the south.⁷¹ The next year, 1885, Austin Moss and his wife, the daughter of Mrs. Lee, moved to the Oracle and built a home almost on the exact site of the present library building.⁷² The following year Alexander McKay decided that the Christmas mine and the New Year mine would make better wells than mines, so he started a ranch. He built a sheep camp four miles west of the Oracle, and with the financial aid of W. C. Davis constructed a four mile pipe line to the sheep camp.⁷³

68 Ibid.; Mrs. Catherine Moss, op. cit.

69 Ibid.

70 Mrs. Catherine Moss, op. cit.

71 E. O. Stratton, op. cit.; Ibid.

72 Mrs. Catherine Moss, op. cit.

73 Alexander McKay, op. cit.

Kentucky. Later when no minister was available prayers and a sermon were read by the laymen.³⁵

The next great contribution to Oracle was the Library built in 1902 by Mrs. Henry B. Steward as a memorial to her husband. The building contained a piano, many beautiful pictures, a fine collection of books, and all of the leading periodicals.³⁶

Oracle was connected with the outside world by the building of a telephone line during the autumn of 1899.³⁷ Mr. William Neal contributed \$500 to help make this possible.³⁸ The first automobile to be driven to Oracle was a White Steamer, and made the trip in the fall of 1903.³⁹ In January, 1904, an automobile passenger line was established between Tucson and Oracle.⁴⁰

The number of farms above and below Reddington continuously decreased during the last decade of the nineteenth century. This did not mean that less land was being cultivated, but instead, that the property was being concentrated into

³⁵ Ibid.; Mrs. Lalie C. Dodge, op. cit., Sept. 10, and 23, 1919; M. M. Benton, Arizona Church Record, Phoenix, Arizona, July, 1922, p. 6.

³⁶ Mrs. J. W. Estill, op. cit.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Mrs. William Neal, op. cit., May 19, 1936.

³⁹ Mrs. J. W. Estill, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Arizona Blade and the Florence Tribune, op. cit., Jan. 23, 1904.

larger ranches. As was mentioned in the last chapter, the company of Bayless and Berkalew was gradually acquiring more land. This process was speeded up by the drought of 1891, 1892, and 1893. At the same time Demitrus Markham bought ten homesteads.⁴¹ In 1898 Markham sold his property to Bayless and Berkalew, thus giving the latter company all of the land on the San Pedro River between Sacaton Ranch and the Cochise County line, a distance of over twelve miles.⁴²

Thus ends the brightest period in the history of the lower San Pedro Valley. Farms, mines, and ranches had been developed to a high degree of productivity. The population at this time was the greatest in the history of the valley. Mammoth and Dudleyville were unquestionably the leading communities.

41 Charles H. Bayless, op. cit., Oct. 5, 1935.

42 Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE DECLINE OF THE LOWER SAN PEDRO VALLEY

1904-1920

The story of the lower San Pedro Valley should rightly end with the last chapter, because the following years formed only an anticlimax. With the one exception of the Bunker Hill Mining District the twentieth century marked a period of rapid decline. Farmers, prospectors, and miners left in search of a more profitable livelihood.

As has been related in an earlier chapter, the Bunker Hill Mining District was organized in 1880. However, it was not highly developed until after 1900. The first mining company was formed by Frank J. Sibley in 1903 and did some development work at the head of Copper Creek.¹ In 1907 the Calumet and Arizona Mining Company took options on a group of claims north of Copper Creek. They maintained a development crew during 1908 and 1909. In 1908 the road to the San Pedro River, eleven miles away, was constructed with Apache Indian labor. The same year Martin E. Tew arrived at Copper Creek and became associated with Sibley in the Minnesota-Arizona Copper Company. The company took options on two groups of mining claims. The total purchase price of these was to be \$160,000.²

1 Martin E. Tew, op. cit.

2 Ibid.

horse feed to Camp Grant. They farmed along the river for two or three miles above and below the fort. This was a very hazardous undertaking; more than once the population outside the camp was killed. Following the removal of the soldiers to the Sulphur Spring Valley, all of the farmers deserted the lower San Pedro.

After the survey of 1877-78, a new group of farmers occupied the valley. This time they came in greater numbers with the determination to make permanent homes. The canyon of Aravaipa Creek was occupied and the permanent settlements Dudleyville, Mesaville, and Reddington were established near rich and abundant soil, thus insuring great production. The only hindrance confronting the farmer was the distance to market. This, in part, was alleviated by the development of mining communities. Soon, however, when the grass on the hills had been eaten away, and the beaver on the river had been trapped, the soil began to erode. That process continued without interruption after it started in the late 1880's. Farm after farm washed away leaving only sand. The banks became higher thus making it more difficult to take water out of the river by the use of ditches. For many years this erosion did not reduce the agricultural prosperity of the valley because of the great demand for farm products. Eventually, however, when the mines at Mammoth closed, farming decreased to relative unimportance.

Much of the remaining tillable soil was allowed to grow mesquite brush.

The future of farming in the lower San Pedro Valley is not bright. The supply of soil is ever decreasing. No effective methods have been used to save the farm land that now exists. The day is not far away when the whole level portion of the valley will be one great sand wash. Then cattle grazing will probably be the only form of agriculture.

The schools of this locality are typical of the progress in education found in Arizona. During the period of greatest population there had been only two schools, Dudleyville and Mammoth. After the beginning of the twentieth century several others were founded. Two of these, the Clark School at Clark's Ranch and the Aravaipa School near old Camp Grant, were on the San Pedro River. The others were located at Oracle, Aravaipa Canyon, Copper Creek, and Sombrero Butte. These schools continued to grow despite the loss in population, probably, because of the compulsory attendance law of Arizona. At their greatest extent Mammoth employed four teachers, Oracle three, Copper Creek three, Aravaipa two, and the other schools one teacher each. The future of the schools is well assured because of the large families raised by the Mexicans of the valley.

Possibly one reason why the lower San Pedro Valley was never a cohesive unit lies in the fact that there were no good roads. The Leach Route of 1857-58 had been only a clear-

ing in the mesquite wide enough to permit the passage of a wagon. This road had never been extensively used. The later roads were developed from trails made by the early settlers. By 1930, the quality of the highways in the lower San Pedro Valley was much below the general state average. Even then, if a traveler wanted to go from Reddington to Mammoth by automobile the best route was by Tucson, a distance of 130 miles, to cover what might easily be a level highway of less than thirty miles.

The settlers in the valley had hoped for many years to have their transportation problems solved by a railroad. This wish was almost realized in 1904 when the Phoenix and Eastern Railroad reached a point opposite the mouth of the San Pedro River. It had been planned to build the line south along the east side of the river to Benson. These plans were abandoned, because of pressure brought by the Southern Pacific Company. Thus those forces, roads and railroad, which might have molded the lower San Pedro Valley into a unit, failed to do so. This history remains a story of the commonplace, a story of a unit of Arizona which is hardly a unit, yet a typical 1000 square miles of desert and mountain.

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