A HISTORY OF WILLCOX, ARIZONA, AND ENVIRONS

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
In the Graduate College
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

1957
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CHAPTER I

SETTING THE STAGE

The first organized party of Americans to enter Arizona for purposes of exploration was the United States Boundary Commission under the direction of John R. Bartlett. In 1850, a portion of this commission entered the southeast corner of the territory by way of what is now known as "Apache Pass" in the Chiricahua Mountains. Bartlett wrote about the area:

In the Chiricahua Mountains we found water in abundance. So copious indeed was the supply (although but the basin of a spring), that after all our animals, about one hundred and fifty in number had drank (sic) of it, we could perceive no diminution. The mountain pass was well wooded, with plenty of grass.

He added that between these mountains and the San Pedro River there was "an undulating plain intersected by a mountain range, with brackish water in some parts."

Dr. Thomas Antisell, who was with Lieutenant G.

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3 Ibid.
Parke's railroad exploration group in 1853, observed "toward the middle of the plain a series of pools or springs which yield a large supply of water." He found it unpleasant tasting, as it was "slightly saline, sulphurous and highly impregnated with decaying vegetation."  

The area referred to above, which has been appropriately named the Sulphur Springs Valley, first appears to be one vast plain, but it is really a series of basins. The valley is nearly a hundred miles long and approximately fifteen miles wide. Extending from the northern spurs of the Sierra Madre in Sonora almost to the Gila River, it is one of the finest stock ranges in the West. The smaller valleys and hillsides in the area are also excellent for grazing purposes. The altitude of from 3900 to 4400 ft. produces an excellent climate with no extremes of heat or cold, and cattle raised in the area are remarkably healthy.  

The mountains of southern Arizona are of the type described as "lost mountains." That is, mountains or small ranges have no apparent connection with each other. However, they all have a northwest-southeast direction,
indicating that they were produced by the same upthrust. It is possible (by winding around the bases of these mountains) to pass through the entire system without going much above or below the elevation of 4,000 ft.

To the north of the Sulphur Springs Valley are the Pinaleno Mountains, of which Mount Graham, with an altitude of 10,713 ft., is the highest.

The eastern boundary of the valley is formed by the Dos Cabezas Mountains to the north and the Chiricahua Range extending southward. The former group is separated from Mount Graham by a gap about eight miles wide. These mountains are made up of many radiating ridges and spurs with serrated and pinnacled crests. The Dos Cabezas Mountains are so called because they have two pinnacles that are very conspicuous for height and uniformity of figure and dimension. These are the "Dos Cabezas," meaning "two heads," and guard the western entrance to Puerto del Dado, or Apache Pass, as it is more commonly known. This district was quite rich in minerals at one time, a gold mine and 10-stamp mill being reported there as early as 1869.

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This pass is a narrow winding trail with many small valleys and canyons opening into it. The valleys are elevated considerably above the Sulphur Springs Valley and are enclosed between the crests of small ranges that run from east to west. The accumulation of water in the impervious bottoms of the valleys produces many springs and makes shallow wells practical. When Parke went through there with his railroad survey he noted "there was an abundance of good grass and small timber; oak, cedar, and walnut, arbutus and wild cherry were the common growth...." The seven miles of the pass east of the summit descends through a narrow canyon with steep walls, a favorite location for the Apaches to ambush their white enemies—thus the name "Apache Pass."

Farther south in the Chiricahus is the area which was proclaimed Chiricahua National Monument by President Calvin Coolidge in 1924. It covers seventeen square miles of canyons, hills, and fantastic rock formations. The rhyolite rock, which is of volcanic origin, was originally deposited in vast beds. Erosion resulting from the action of wind, rain and sun has carved out hundreds of thousands of pillars and pinnacles. Many of them bear a striking resemblance to human features, animals and other familiar objects.

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Here also is the mountain which, when viewed from a distance, resembles the face of a reclining Indian, and is appropriately called "Cochise's Head," as this was familiar territory to that great chief of the Apaches.

The Sulphur Springs Valley is bounded on the west by the Dragoon, Mule, and Winchester Mountains, rising from one to three thousand feet above the floor of the valley.

The Playa de los Pimas, or Wilcox Playa, is immediately to the west of the Dos Cabezas Mountains and covers an area of about sixty square miles. It is a level plain of white sandy clay, which appears to be as level as a frozen lake, but it does rise gently toward the north. The playa is now 4134 feet above sea level, but fossilized shells and bones found in it indicate that it was once the bottom of an ancient sea. Although it very seldom has a drop of water in it, there occurs continuously a phenomenon known as La Playa Mirage. To people as far away as twenty-five miles, depending upon weather conditions, the lake may appear as a cool, rippling expanse of water.

The Indians found in southeastern Arizona were the Chiricahua Apaches. "Apache" is the Zuni word for "enemy," and "Chiricahua" means "great mountain," referring to that
range which was their stronghold. Farish described them as follows:

Physically they do not differ materially from the other Apaches. The men were well built, muscular, with well developed chests, sound and regular teeth, and abundant hair. The women were even more vigorously built, with broad shoulders and hips and tending to corpulence in old age.  

The Chiricahua Apache made most of his clothes from buckskin, the women wearing short skirts and the men folding skins about the waist. Long-legged moccasins made of deerskin were the characteristic footwear. Both men and women ornamented themselves with necklaces and ear pendants. The hair was long and flowing, but the men plucked out the hair of the beard with tweezers.

Like the other Apaches, they built no permanent dwellings but merely rude huts of branches, which were burned when they changed camps.

The diet consisted of fruits, nuts, and berries, the fruit of the giant cacti and yucca being considered great delicacies. Although they would not eat fish or pork, horse and mule meat were thought to be very tasty. An intoxicating drink called "tulapai" was made of corn buried in the ground until it sprouted.

Since the Apaches subsisted almost entirely upon plunder and game, they were found in small, swift-moving

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parties that often covered a great deal of territory in Arizona, New Mexico, and northern Chihuahua and Sonora. Captain John C. Cremony, who saw military service in the area, estimated that there were fully twenty-five thousand of them.

The warfare of the Apaches was described by J. A. Munk as follows:

In warfare the aim of the Apache was to see, and not be seen, to kill and not be killed! He was very skillful in concealing his person and could so hide his body in the sand, grass or brush, that his presence was not suspected until he began to shoot. They signaled to each other by smoke or fire or by leaving signs on the trail telling their comrades of the presence of enemies. Their leaders were often brilliant strategists, and all of the Apaches seemed to have a great natural shrewdness and keen animal instinct.

Fray Marcos de Niza, who was probably the first white man to enter Arizona, took possession of the region in 1539. He was followed a year later by Coronado, whose route probably was down the San Pedro River to the present location of Benson and then northeasterly across the Aravaipa Valley to Eagle Pass, the opening between the Santa Teresa

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and Pinaleno Mountains. Journeying into northern Arizona, Coronado conquered the seven cities of Cibola, which had been reported to be fabulously rich but proved to be nothing more than agricultural people living in houses of stone and adobe.

Southern Arizona was not explored and settled by the Spanish until more than a hundred years later. In 1687, Father Eusebio Kino, who was responsible for much of this work, established a mission at Dolores in northern Sonora.

Four years later, upon request from the Pimas to the north, he and Father Salvatierra visited the village of Tumacacori and baptized a number of infants. After a return visit a year later, he went on to Bac, which he renamed San Xavier del Bac in honor of his patron saint. Journeying eastward from there, he visited the village of Quiburi at the mouth of Babacomari Creek just across the river from Fairbank. He returned home by way of Cocospora, stopping at other villages along the way.

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15 Bancroft, op. cit., p. 45.
17 Ibid., p. 264.
18 Ibid., pp. 268-70.
His curiosity aroused by tales of a Casa Grande farther north, Kino made the first recorded visit to it on November 27, 1694. On other trips into the area, he took stock to found ranches and continued his explorations whenever there was an opportunity. On one such journey, he traveled about six hundred and fifty miles in a wide circle beginning and ending at Dolores. 19

The first regular mission in Arizona was San Xavier del Bac, where Kino laid the foundation for the church in April, 1700. 20 Although Father Leal, his superior, had promised that Kino would be relieved at Dolores so he could stay at San Xavier, Father Gonzalo was sent there instead. 21 The last time it is certain that Kino was at San Xavier was in 1702, but he probably did return many more times before his death nine years later. 22 As a result of his efforts, other missions were built in the Santa Cruz and San Pedro valleys. None were located farther east, however, as that was Apache country.

About the middle of the eighteenth century, the Apaches began their inroads, destroying the missions and settlements. The priests and most of the Spanish settlers were

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19 Ibid., p. 377.
20 Ibid., p. 506.
21 Ibid., pp. 509-11.
22 Ibid., p. 512.
either massacred or driven off, as were the peaceful Papagos and Pimas in the area. Tucson, which was first mentioned as a ranchería visita of Bac in 1763, became a Spanish settlement and Presidio in 1776. It and Tubac, established in 1752, were the only protected white settlements in Arizona for many years.

All of Arizona north of the Gila River remained a Mexican possession until the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, and the balance was added by the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.

The most notable American expedition into southern Arizona during the Mexican rule was that of the Mormon Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Phillip Cooke in December, 1846. They passed through the San Bernardino Ranch in the southeastern corner and on west to the San Pedro River, which was followed about as far as Benson. Turning west again, they took a route to Tucson which approximates that of the Southern Pacific Railroad. After seizing the almost deserted garrison, they went on their way to California by way of the Santa Cruz and Gila valleys. This reasonably easy route came to be known as "Cooke's Road" and was used considerably by immigrants in later years.

The United States Boundary Commission of 1850, which was mentioned earlier, entered Arizona in a heavily armed, closed carriage drawn by four mules. After crossing
the Sulphur Springs Valley, they journeyed on to the San Pedro. Bartlett reported seeing the ruins of haciendas that had been abandoned for years and herds of wild cattle roaming through the valley. He also visited the deserted missions at San Xavier and Tumacacori. 23

Although the Gadsden Purchase was approved in 1854, it was not until two years later that the United States took military possession of it. Four companies of the First Dragoons were stationed first at Tucson and later at Calabasas. Fort Buchanan was established the following year on the Sonoyta River about twenty-five miles east of Tubac. 24 Fort Breckenridge was built below the junction of Aravaipa Creek with the San Pedro River, and part of the garrison from Fort Buchanan was stationed there.

The first important public transportation system through the area was the Butterfield Overland Mail Company, which had a contract for carrying the mails over the southern route. There were two termini at the eastern end, one at St. Louis, Missouri, and the other at Memphis, Tennessee. The roads merged at Fort Smith, Arkansas, and from there,


24Bancroft, op. cit., p. 496.
the coaches covered over two thousand miles of desert country before reaching San Francisco.

When operations were begun in 1858, there were one hundred and forty-one stations reported. The number was later increased to nearly two hundred. These stations were, on the average, twenty miles apart, the distance depending upon the terrain of the area and the location of a suitable water supply. At the eastern end of the line, the stations were log houses, but those in Arizona and surrounding areas were either stone or adobe. The number of employees at the stations depended upon the relative danger from Indians in the neighborhood, some of them in Apache country having as many as eight or ten men.

The trip was a difficult one and was made only by those to whom speed was important, as it was much less strenuous to travel to the west coast by the water route around Cape Horn. The coaches ran night and day for twenty-one to twenty-five days over rough and treacherous roads, and the travelers had little protection from the elements. 26 The

26 Farish, op. cit., II, 4.
meals provided were, on the whole, not too satisfactory, judging from what one passenger had to say about them: "There is an old saying that 'every man must eat his peck of dirt.' I think I have had good measure with my peck on this trip, which has been roughing it with a vengeance." All through reservations were usually taken far in advance, but other passengers were picked up along the way. The heavy 'way' passenger traffic was much complained of by the through fares because of the resultant overcrowding.

Another factor that added to the discomfort of the trip was the fear of an Indian attack, as the government did not provide sufficient military protection. However, the only reported attack on one of the coaches occurred in Apache Pass early in 1861. About a mile and a half from the station, those on the westbound stage discovered that an attempt had been made to block the road with a fire trap made of heaps of grass. The road was cleared, and going on about half a mile, they came upon the remains of an immigrant train that had been attacked and burned. All the members of the party were massacred, and their mutilated bodies were

27 Waterman L. Ormsby, The Butterfield Overland Mail (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1942), p. vii. Ormsby was a special correspondent of the New York Herald and the only through passenger on the first westbound stage.

28 Conkling, op. cit., II, 139.
scattered about. Eight of the unfortunate victims had been chained to the wagon wheels and burned alive. According to a sign which has been erected at the site, there were thirty-two who lost their lives there.

Continuing on its way, the westbound stage met the eastbound about half-way between the western entrance to the pass and Ewell's station, the next station west. The occupants of the eastbound stage were determined to venture on to the Apache Pass station even though they had been warned of impending danger. Just after the coach had reached the summit of the pass and began the down-grade, shots from ambush killed two of the mules. All the men on board returned the fire and held the Indians off while the conductor and one of the passengers cut out the two wounded animals. They managed to fight their way to the station "with the wounded driver still holding the reins over the remnant of his team."29

After these incidents, additional troops were stationed along the route, and the mails were not molested during the few remaining weeks this route was used. On April 1, 1861, the Butterfield Route was discontinued and the service transferred to the Central Route from St. Louis via South Pass and Salt Lake to Placerville, California. The

29 Conkling, op. cit., II, 135-36.
Civil War was about to begin, and the Butterfield Route was, of course, through Southern territory. Secessionists in Texas had already marched over part of the road and confiscated stock and equipment at various stations. The recent Indian depredations in the Apache Pass area also was a factor in making the change.

In spite of this inauspicious termination, the Butterfield Overland Mail could not be termed a failure. Although it had run for a distance of over two thousand miles over rough, unimproved roads, the mail was nearly always on schedule. By the year 1860, more went this way than by the ocean route, and postal receipts amounted to $119,776.76. Villages clustered around many of the stations because of the protection and communication they provided. This stage line was an important factor in the settlement of the western frontier and was responsible for a colorful period in the history of southeastern Arizona.

About the only physical evidences of the route that may be found today are ruins of several of the stage stations. The one at Stein's Peak just across the line in New Mexico is perhaps the best preserved. It was built of stone, and because of its isolated location has not suffered much at the hands of vandals. Dragoon Springs Station near the

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30 Conkling, op. cit., I, 142.
present town of Dragoon, another stone station, is fairly com-
plete. All that can be found of the San Simon station is a
mound of washed-down adobe on the east bank of San Simon
Creek. There is nothing left of the Apache Pass Station, and
its exact location is not known.

Until 1859, there had been no trouble with the Chiri-
cahua Apaches in this area. Cochise, a very able leader and a
man whose word was trusted by those who knew him, had a con-
tract with the Butterfield stage line for supplying wood at
the Apache Pass Station. There was a very friendly relation-
ship between the men stationed there and the Indians, and this
probably would have continued indefinitely if what is known as
the "Bascomb incident" had not occurred.

Some Indians had driven off livestock from Ward's
ranch nearby and also had kidnapped the son of Ward's Mexican
mistress. It was not known what tribe these Indians were
from, so the commandant at Fort Buchanan sent one Lieutenant
Bascomb to see the Chiricahuas and to obtain whatever inform-
ation he could from them.

Arriving at the pass, Bascomb raised a white flag.
Cochise and five other chiefs responded to the signal and were
invited into a tent for a conference. When questioned about
the child and the cattle, Cochise said truthfully that none
of his men were responsible, but if he were given time, he
could find out who had taken them and see that they were re-
turned.
Bascomb, not believing Cochise, placed him and his companions under arrest. One of them was knocked down and pinned to the ground with a bayonet when he tried to escape. Four others were bound, but Cochise cut his way through the tent with a knife and escaped in spite of being wounded by an outside guard.  

Cochise then captured three men at the Butterfield stage station, including J. F. Wallace, the station agent, and held them as hostages. He offered to release them, as well as return the stolen stock, if Bascomb would in turn release the Apaches he was holding. Wallace pleaded with Bascomb to make the deal, but instead he hanged the Indians. Cochise retaliated by torturing the white men to death, after which he attacked the troops at the station. Bascomb and his men escaped only after reinforcements had arrived.  

For more than twenty years following this incident, Cochise carried on a war of extermination against the whites. The cause and effect were ably summed up by Farish: "Bascomb's stupidity and ignorance probably cost five thousand American lives and the destruction of thousands of dollars;"
Many people living in Cochise's hunting grounds eventually abandoned everything and went to Tucson or Tubac. Others concentrated at one or two ranches for mutual protection.

The only Federal troops in the territory were ordered removed at the outbreak of the Civil War, and all the forts were to be destroyed. At Fort Fillmore, however, 500 Federal troops surrendered to 250 Texans. Another force of 300 Texans under Captain Sherod Hunter took possession of Tucson for the Confederacy on February 27, 1862. Most of the inhabitants had either fled to Sonora or stayed to join the Rebels.

Not long after Tucson had fallen to the Confederates, Hunter received word of the advance of a large force of California volunteers under the command of Colonel James H. Carleton. He retreated to the Rio Grande, leaving Arizona to the superior forces. On May 20, the Stars and Stripes were again raised over Tucson, and shortly thereafter, Forts Buchanan and Breckenridge were reoccupied.

A bloody battle occurred at Apache Pass shortly after the reoccupation of Arizona by Federal troops. Nearly three

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33 Farish, op. cit., p. 33.
34 Pumphelly, op. cit., p. 17.
36 Bancroft, op. cit., p. 515. They were later abandoned a second time and the sites were destroyed.
thousand soldiers of Carleton's California Column were advancing upon the Confederate forces in New Mexico. The force consisted of artillery, infantry and cavalry. Upon entering Apache Pass, the advance guard under a Captain Roberts was attacked by Indians.

Roberts ordered three men to report back to Captain John C. Cremony, who was in charge of the pack train, and give him orders to camp for the night with preparations for anything that might happen. On leaving the pass, they were attacked by a band of Apaches. One man was wounded in the arm and another, John Teal, was cut off from his companions. They gave him up as dead and went on.

Much later, Teal showed up at camp on foot to report that after his horse had been shot from under him he had fought off the Apaches alone for an hour. They finally went away after he had shot one Indian in the breast. It was later determined that the man he had wounded was no less than Mangas Colorado, one of the chiefs of the tribe.37

Roberts and his men fought their way to the old stage station near the springs, as they had had no water for eighteen hours. During this time they had marched forty miles and engaged in a furious six-hour battle. After eating,

37 Cremony, op. cit., p. 176. Mangas Colorado was taken to Janos, Chihuahua, to a Mexican physician for treatment. The doctor and all the people in town were threatened with death if Mangas died. Fortunately for them, he survived.
Roberts marched with half his men back to Ewell's Station to escort Cremony's train through the pass. This was accomplished without incident early the next morning. The Apaches were driven out of the pass with artillery, and the troops marched on through without further trouble. 38

Before leaving, Carleton detached Company G, Fifth Infantry, California Volunteers, under Major Theodore A. Coult to guard the strategically important spring in Apache Pass. Coult was also instructed to escort all wagon trains and parties of travelers through the pass and well out into the open country. The Apaches were to be attacked whenever they were found in the area. 39

This post was called Camp Bowie, in honor of Colonel George W. Bowie of the California Volunteers. From an encampment of 113 men near the old stage station, it grew to be one of the most important army bases in the Southwest, after being officially established as a fort on July 28, 1862. 40

After peace was made with Cochise and the Apaches were removed to reservations, the main function of the post was to supply men for operations against hostiles escaping

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38 Cremony, op. cit., pp. 144-167.
40 Ibid., p. 61.
from San Carlos. Fort Bowie was no longer considered important after Geronimo and the other leaders were removed to Florida in 1886. Furthermore, in June 1890, the water supply became insufficient for the needs of the fort. From that time on, except for brief periods following heavy rains, strict economy measures were necessary, and water had to be hauled in from a spring west of the post to meet the minimum requirements.

These considerations, together with the fact that General Alexander McCook wanted the troops in Colorado, led to the War Department's decision to abandon Fort Bowie in 1894. Troops B and I, Second Cavalry, marched out of Apache Pass for the last time on October 17 of that year, and the military reservation passed into the hands of the Department of the Interior.

A board of peace commissioners was appointed by the federal government in 1867 for the purpose of managing Indian affairs. In October, 1872, General O. O. Howard, the commissioner for the area, decided he would attempt to negotiate for peace with Cochise. He sent for Captain Thomas Jeffords, who was a personal friend of Cochise, and asked to be taken

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42 Murray, op. cit., p. 277.
43 Ibid., p. 303.
to see him. Jeffords agreed to do so, on condition that Howard would go alone with him and do as he said. After Howard consented to this arrangement, they proceeded to the Apache camp.

Cochise greeted them courteously and heard the commissioner's terms. After meeting with his tribal council, he told Howard that they would make terms of peace if they could have a reservation in the Sulphur Spring Valley and Jeffords would be their Indian Agent. Jeffords was not anxious for this responsibility, but as he felt it was the only way to stop the bloodshed in the Chiricahua country, he agreed to do it. The understanding was that he was to be in absolute control of the reservation, no one being allowed to come or go without his permission.

The agency was at Sulphur Spring first, and after several moves, was finally located at Apache Pass. By the end of the year, over a thousand Apaches were fed, according to Jeffords' report. During the four years that Jeffords was agent, the Chiricahuas caused no trouble, mainly because of the relationship between him and Cochise. Jeffords said of him: "He respected me and I respected him. He was a man

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44 Farish, *op. cit.*, II, 235.
who scorned a liar, was always truthful in all things, his religion was truth and loyalty."

Before his death in June, 1874, Cochise, with the approval of his head chiefs, selected his oldest son, Taza, as his successor. All of them promised Cochise that they would always do what Jeffords wanted them to, and they were faithful to their promise.

Unfortunately, however, the treaty with Cochise did not bring permanent peace with all of the Indians, for in 1876, a group of them at Sulphur Spring became intoxicated and went on the warpath. After this incident, all Indians were ordered removed from the reservation by Superintendent L. E. Dudley. A hundred and twenty-five of them were to go to Hot Spring, 325 under Taza were sent to San Carlos, but the remainder, probably about 400, ran away to make raids on the border. Those under the control of Taza were the only ones who did not give any trouble.

Victorio of the Hot Spring group escaped with a number of men, as did Geronimo and Juh. They terrorized the border until 1879, when Victorio was killed by Mexicans and the others were brought back to the reservation. There were other outbreaks in 1881 and 1882.

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46 Jeffords, quoted by Parish, op. cit., II, 229.
47 Bancroft, op. cit., p. 566.
In the latter year, General Orlando B. Willcox, who had been in command of the Twenty-Third Infantry at Fort Bowie since 1877, was succeeded by General George Crook. Crook had been in command there before but had been transferred to another area in 1875. Upon his return, he perceived that drastic action was necessary to restore peace in the area. Much of the trouble with the Apaches had been caused by the interference of unauthorized whites, so Crook "insisted upon the expulsion from the reservation of all unauthorized squatters and miners, whether appearing under the guise of Mormons or as friends of the late agents." Another of the difficulties had been that the Indians would make raids in southeastern Arizona and then flee across the international border. Willcox could not follow them without fear of trouble with Mexico. Crook succeeded in negotiating a treaty with Mexico which would allow either country to chase renegades across the international line and capture them.

In March, 1883, a group of Chiricahuas was raiding Sonora when Chato crossed over into Arizona to get ammunition and killed thirty people in one week. Crook followed them to their stronghold in the Sierra Madre and defeated

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them. He was able to convince the Chiricahua that he would treat them fairly. They then voluntarily sent out runners to bring in any stragglers, who might not know of the surrender, so they could go back to San Carlos with the others. Chato, Geronimo, and all the other chiefs were taken back to the reservation except Juh, who had escaped. There was a total of 52 men and 273 women and children.

Peace reigned until 1885, when Geronimo and Nachez left the reservation with a band of warriors and began raids along the border again. Crook once more pursued them into Sonora and captured them in March, 1886. However, on the way back to Fort Bowie, they escaped with part of their men. A company of Apache scouts was enlisted from the tribes on the reservation to trail the renegades, which they did very effectively when they were allowed to do it in their own way. By August, they were all rounded up and forced to surrender unconditionally at Fort Bowie.

After the hostiles had been disarmed, they were marched to the Southern Pacific Railroad Station at Bowie and sent by train to Fort Marion, Florida.

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51 Crook, *op. cit.*, p. 248.
The rest of the Apaches were settled on the San Carlos and White Mountain reservations. In 1905, Munk reported: "The fierce Apaches are rapidly becoming civilized--engaged in farming and stock raising, and give every promise of becoming useful and honorable citizens of the nation."\footnote{Munk, op. cit., p. 245.}
CHAPTER II

WILLCOX IN ITS FORMATIVE YEARS

Very few white people were living in or near the Sulphur Springs Valley in the early 1870's. Fort Bowie, which had been established in Apache Pass in 1862, was the only outpost of civilization in the area until the founding of Fort Grant ten years later.

Colonel Henry Clay Hooker was one of the first men to establish a ranch in Arizona after the Apache reign of terror. His Sierra Bonita Ranch was located in 1872 at a choice spot on the slopes of the Galiuro Mountains at the northern end of the Sulphur Springs Valley. It is twenty-two miles north of Willcox and ten miles south of Fort Grant. This ranch was developed into one of the finest in the territory.  

The adobe ranchhouse was built in the form of a hollow square with the only doors and windows opening on the inside of the square. Various provisions were made to make it easily defended in case of attack by Indians, but this was

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1 Joseph Fish, MS, "History of Arizona," p. 585.
never necessary. Hooker recognized their prior right to the land and treated them fairly, giving them cattle from time to time so they would not steal from him.²

A later location in the Sulphur Springs Valley was that of Thomas Steele, who built a stage station at Croton Springs in 1874. This was on the old Butterfield route and about nine miles southwest of the point at which Willcox was later located.³

In 1854, Lieutenant G. Parke had made a survey through this area for a transcontinental railroad. His first survey was through Apache Pass in the Chiricahua Mountains. This route proved to be unfavorable, as the grade was two hundred feet to the mile. Furthermore, the descent from the pass was broken by many small valleys and would have required too many fills in the construction of a road bed.⁴ Parke then made a reconnaissance around the northern end of the Dos Cabezas Mountains and south of Mount Graham, where he discovered

³ Fish, op. cit., p. 586.
an easy and practicable railroad route. The heaviest grade was only sixty-four feet to the mile, in contrast to two hundred for Apache Pass.

It was not until November 19, 1878, that the actual construction of the Southern Pacific was begun in Arizona. The track was laid from Yuma eastward until Casa Grande was reached on May 19, 1879. Work was not resumed until January 26, 1880. The first train arrived in Tucson on March 20, 1880.

Grading was being done in the Sulphur Springs Valley in 1877, and a camp had been established at the present site of Willcox some time before January 3, 1878.

On August 26, 1880, the *Arizona Star* carried an item concerning a new city called Maley, located forty miles east

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9 *Arizona Daily Star*, April 26, 1935. Mrs. Annie Smith McGuigan arrived there on that date with her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Moriarty, who were on the way to Tombstone to make their fortune in silver. Moriarty decided to accept a position with the grading contractors instead.
of Benson, which would have a post office in a few days.\textsuperscript{10} The railroad reached there some time during that month, but the exact date has not been determined.\textsuperscript{11}

The name of the town was changed to Willcox in honor of General O. B. Willcox, well known for his military operations against the Indians, who was on the first train to arrive at that station.\textsuperscript{12} Elliot had the following to say about the naming of the town:

\begin{quote}
It (Willcox) was named after General Willcox, department commander, then stationed at Fort Whipple, Arizona. The first child born here was a son of Anthony Powers; and General Willcox, in honor of the event, presented the youth with a silver cup on which was engraved the general's initials, in consideration the boy should be named Willcox Powers.\textsuperscript{13}
\end{quote}

That Willcox was becoming a permanent town is indicated in the following newspaper item:

\begin{quote}
Down at Willcox they are building adobe and frame houses very rapidly. Heretofore tents have been the principal shelter, and when a man's floor became so dirty that he could not get around comfortably, he
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{11} Statement by Harry O. Parks, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, August 2, 1955.
\textsuperscript{12} El Paso Times as quoted in the Arizona Range News, August 4, 1911.
\end{flushright}
would call half a dozen of the boys and move his residence. Brooms form a large portion of the stock on hand in the grocery store.

In the early days, there was confusion regarding the spelling of the name. The Southwestern Stockman, the local newspaper, spelled it with one "l" until the issue of January 4, 1890. However, letters dating as far back as 1884 have been found with two "l's" in the postmark.

Colonel J. W. Sculler, the quartermaster at Fort Grant, proposed that Willcox be moved two and a half miles east to a location that would make it more convenient as a distribution point. This site would have been on higher ground and less susceptible to floods. The proposed move was never made, even though there were no permanent buildings at that time.

As Willcox had been built upon public land, it was necessary to take legal action for the residents to obtain title to the land upon which they had built their homes and business establishments. An application for a town site was filed October 1, 1881, with the Judge of the Probate Court of Cochise County and entered in the United States Land Office at Tucson. William J. Osborn, William S. Oury, and

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14 Arizona Weekly Star, October 28, 1880.
16 Arizona Daily Star, September 30, 1880.
Andrew Conley were appointed commissioners "to assign, ad-
judge, determine the respective interests of the residents
of said town of Wilcox." By November 24, the work had
been completed to everyone's satisfaction. The foresight of
the founders is indicated by the following newspaper item:
"They set apart two blocks for public squares and one block
for school purposes; also four lots each for the Methodist,
Baptist, Catholic, and Presbyterian churches."18

The village was located in the center of one of the
best grazing areas in Arizona and was fortunate in having a
supply of water so near the surface that a well could easily
be dug with a pick and shovel. It soon became the supply
point for many of the ranchers on the Gila, and accordingly
it was reported that "more extensive stocks of goods are to
be seen here than in any town of Arizona of equal size."19
Hamilton reported that in 1884 the town had a population of
five hundred.20

17 "Notice of Application for Town Site," Tombstone
Daily Nugget, October 6, 1881.
18 Arizona Weekly Star, November 24, 1881.
19 Arizona Daily Citizen, October 14, 1889.
20 Patrick Hamilton, The Resources of Arizona (San
While the town was becoming established, railroad construction moved eastward. The track was apparently completed as far east as San Simon, the next station, on September 21, 1880, as a passenger train was scheduled then to leave Tucson for that destination. It was also announced that the railroad from Benson to San Simon would be turned over to the Southern Pacific Company the following day, and freight would be received for Willcox and San Simon. 21 By September 30, a considerable amount of freight had been shipped to these stations, including eighteen cars of general merchandise, barley and coke consigned to Willcox. 22 Construction was completed to Lordsburg, New Mexico, in mid-October and a junction effected with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe at Deming on December 15. 23

It was believed at that time that Willcox would be second only to Tucson in importance as a southern Arizona shipping point. 24 The prophecy was soon fulfilled, as it was the station from which the freighters departed for Dos Cabezas, Fort Bowie, Fort Grant, Camp Thomas, San Carlos and

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21 Arizona Weekly Star, September 16, 1880.
22 Ibid., September 30, 1880.
24 Arizona Weekly Star, November 18, 1880.
Globe. This continued to be true until the railroad from Bowie to Globe was completed in 1898.

Among the earliest business men in Willcox were John H. Norton and M. W. Stewart. Norton started in business as a post trader at Fort Grant in 1876. The firm of Norton and Stewart, founded somewhat later, handled a large number of government freighting contracts and also carried mail. In 1880, they set up a commission and forwarding business in Willcox. Their warehouse was one of the first business buildings in town and was designed to "give shippers excellent facilities for storing their goods."26

Norton and Stewart also ran a stage line from Willcox to Camp Thomas, Fort Grant and Globe, using six-horse coaches. In 1881, they ran every other day to these points. The fare to Globe, a distance of 128 miles, was $20.00.27

Elliot reported that in 1884 they had:

- A large warehouse, corral and feed yard, beside a large commodious store which is well stocked with a well-selected class of goods including agricultural implements, and machinery. They also own a very fine store and hotel at Fort Grant, and do the heaviest business of any firm outside of Tucson or Tombstone.28

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25 Disturnell, op. cit., p. 198.
26 Arizona Weekly Star, November 18, 1880.
28 Elliot, op. cit., p. 243.
BULL TEAM USED IN TRANSPORTING SUPPLIES FROM WILLCOX TO THE SAN CARLOS RESERVATION, 1882
Willcox freighting business suffered in 1884 when the quartermaster awarded the contract for government freighting to Solomon and Wickersham of Bowie. It was claimed that Willcox merchants had bid $1,500 below them and that the contract had been offered to the highest bidder again in 1885. Apparently the matter was rectified, as John H. Norton and Company of Willcox had the contract again in 1889.

The following gives a picture of the freighting operations to and from Globe in the early days:

Messrs. Lieberman & Co. have the contracts for the freight hauling to Globe and employ about 45 wagons and 50 teams. The teams average from 10 to 20 mules each, and haul from two to four wagons. The round trip from Willcox to Globe is made in 20 to 30 days when the roads are in good condition.

Willcox enjoyed a steady business growth in the first twenty-five years of its existence. Not only was there an ever increasing number and variety of establishments, but some of them grew to be rather large operations.

The Norton-Morgan Commercial Company, for example, was formed when Henry A. Morgan purchased the Stewart interests in the firm of Norton and Stewart, one of the original freighting and mercantile establishments in Willcox. Morgan had worked for the firm approximately four years in various

29 Daily Epitaph, January 29, 1886.
30 Arizona Daily Citizen, October 14, 1889.
31 Ibid.
capacities before leaving to operate stores in Fort Thomas and Solomonsville. Shortly after his return as a partner, a new store was built at the corner of Railroad Avenue and Stewart Street. Both wholesale and retail business were carried on for many years, and at the height of the operations, six people were employed in the office and sixteen in the store. The business recession following World War I made a reduction necessary, however, and finally in 1923, Morgan was forced into bankruptcy.

John C. Fall, another early merchant in Willcox, left his native Virginia for Ohio and then went on to Sacramento, California, during the 1849 gold rush. After the business he set up in Marysville was lost in the flood of 1861, he moved to Nevada, where he made a fortune in silver mining. Fall lost practically everything when the price of silver went down, so he decided to try his luck in Arizona. The small store he opened in Willcox in its infancy was very successful and grew with the town. He took as his partners sometime during the '80's, Mariano and Pablo Soto, thus establishing the firm of Fall and Soto Brothers. The

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32 Henry A. Morgan, "Reminiscences" as told to Mrs. George F. Kitt. This account is on file at the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson, Arizona.
33 Arizona Range News, June 16, 1905.
34 Statement by Mrs. J. C. Wilson, personal interview, February 8, 1956.
Sotos, who were of Spanish descent, were well educated and came to be highly respected in the community. In 1893, they purchased the interest of Fall, who died a year later at the age of eighty-six. 35

The new firm of Soto Brothers and Company purchased the old store and warehouse of J. Lieberman and Company in 1897 to use for storage and in 1902 completely remodeled their store, making it one of the finest between Tucson and El Paso. 36 Suffering severe financial reverses in the Panic of 1907, from which they had not recovered two years later, the Sotos sold their Willcox store and departed to pursue their business ventures elsewhere. 37

Business firms that had been established by 1881 included Barnett and Block, commission merchants; L. C. Hartman, meat market; A. Powers, hotel and restaurant; L. W. Blinn and Company, lumber yard; and J. F. Rolls, news agent and confectionery. There were five general stores, five saloons, three forwarding and commission

35 See Southwestern Stockman, July 1, 1893; Sulphur Valley News, December 18, 1894.
36 Arizona Range News, January 19, 1897; July 11, 1902.
37 Ibid., February 5, 1909.
merchants, three stage lines, two blacksmiths and wagon-
makers, and two hotels.  

Another hotel, the Wllcox House, was built on Rail-
road Avenue by John G. Fall in about 1883.  It was enlarg-
ed by twenty-three rooms in 1891, with a ground-floor addi-
tion as well as a second storey. The parlor, with its
scratchy horsehair furniture, was one of the best furnished
places in town, while the dining room was noted for excellent
banquets served to lodges and private parties. Dances held
there were carefully supervised to be sure that no one under
the influence of alcohol was admitted. Surprisingly enough,
too, either evening clothes or Sunday clothes were required.

Management and ownership of the Wllcox House chang-
ed many times, but the reputation for fine food and excel-
lent accommodations was maintained. In 1900, along with
other improvements, "patent water closets and bathrooms."

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38 Disturnell, op. cit., p. 199. See also Arizona Weekly Star, December 23, 1880.
39 Deeds of Real Estate, Cochise County, Arizona, Book 1. A real estate deed, filed January 2, 1883, shows the sale of Lot 16 in Block 30, with fifty feet of front-
age on Railroad Avenue, and the back one-half of Lot 17, with twenty-five feet of frontage, by H. M. Thomson to the firm of Baker and Davis.
40 Southwestern Stockman, June 6, 1891.
Various other hotels are mentioned in the early newspapers, but the Macy Hotel, located several doors west of the Willcox House, was apparently the only one that would not have been more accurately described as a rooming house. The Macy was, for a time, operated as an annex to the larger establishment.

In addition to the dining rooms at the two major hotels, there were other eating establishments that claimed their share of business. Since they opened, closed, and changed management frequently, it would be difficult to give a well-organized account of them. One Chinese gentleman named Charley Ho held forth in several different locations, with one in the King Building being called, strangely enough, the "American Restaurant." The editor of the local newspaper made this unfavorable comment in 1894: "The proprietors of the three restaurants in town have combined and raised the price of regular meals from 25¢ to 35¢." The ownership of meat markets seemed to change quite often. Fred Storm was in and out of the business several times between 1893 and 1901.

W. A. Fiege, the Dragoon

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43 Arizona Range News, October 11, 1899.
44 Ibid., April 12, 1899.
45 Sulphur Valley News, July 10, 1894.
46 See Southwestern Stockman, July 15, December 2, 1893; Arizona Range News, October 18, 1901.
cattleman, had been operating a shop for two years when he sold it to W. H. Mayor in 1903. About two and a half years later, Mayor sold it back to Piege again. Others who operated butcher shops at various times were Tom Fulghum, Otto Moore, Charles DeBaud, and A. Morales.

The hot, dry summers in southern Arizona produce, as a natural result, a great demand for liquid refreshment. As early as 1897, Wilcox had a soda bottling works, and by 1901, F. E. Caldwell was bottling a thousand bottles of beer a day.

Ice was also being shipped in from Tucson in 1889 and was sold by George Raum at the Fashion Saloon. On July 11, 1899, the production of ice was begun locally by the Wilcox Lighting, Pumping, and Ice Company, operated by F. E. Caldwell and T. D. Swatling. This plant had a capacity of five thousand pounds in twenty-four hours. In 1901, Swatling purchased the interest of Caldwell, later selling it to John Brockman. A year later, they were shipping a ton of ice to Cochise every other day and were also bottling beer and carbonated waters. The plant was leased

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47 Arizona Range News, May 29, 1903; December 8, 1905.
48 Ibid., July 20, 1897; March 8, 1901.
49 Ibid., August 9, December 13, 1901; May 9, 1902.
50 Southwestern Stockman, May 4, 1889.
51 See Arizona Range News, March 22; July 19, 1899.
by J. B. Jardine and L. H. Flickinger in 1906 and operated for a time under the name of the Willcox Ice and Cold Storage Company. The capacity of the ice plant was increased and other lines of business added, including the operation of a swimming pool. In 1914, the plant was being operated by L. G. Wilson.

Another very essential business in any community is a drug store. J. A. Bright established the first one in Willcox in 1890, selling it to E. A. Nichols five years later. Dr. J. M. Nicholson assisted him with the prescriptions. Then in 1897, Dr. Nicholson and his brother, M. J. Nicholson, purchased the business. They operated it until 1902, when it was sold to their brother, A. A. Nicholson, who eventually passed it on to his son Marshall. Until January, 1955, this was the oldest business in Willcox continuing under the same name. At that time, George Austin purchased a half interest from the widow of Marshall Austin and added to the name, making it the Nicholson-Austin Drug Store.

52 Ibid., October 19, 1906.
53 Arizona Citizen, March 20, 1914.
54 Sulphur Valley News, September 10, 1895.
55 Arizona Range News, March 30, 1897.
The first banking operation in Willcox was carried on by the Soto Brothers in conjunction with their store in about 1888. Anyone who so desired could deposit money with them and, for a small charge, receive checks bearing the name of the firm. These could be cashed anywhere in the area without difficulty.  

In 1890, a local branch of the North American Savings, Loan and Building Company was established with John H. Norton, H. A. Morgan, W. F. Nichols, J. A. Bright and Charles Pugh as the board of directors. Eight years later, the Industrial Building and Loan Association of Denver also organized a branch at Willcox. The institutions, as the names suggest, were primarily for the purpose of providing building loans and opportunities for investment.

Willcox still needed a commercial bank, for, as the editor of the *Arizona Range News* pointed out in 1901, it was the logical center for several rapidly growing mining regions as well as the large cattle interests of the Sulphur Springs Valley. Finally, on November 2, 1908, the Willcox

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58 *Southwestern Stockman*, May 16, 1890.
59 *Arizona Range News*, January 25, 1898.
Bank and Trust Company was incorporated. It opened for business on January 18, 1909, with H. A. Morgan as president; Horace Dunlap, cashier; John H. Norton, Thomas Allaire, and A. Y. Smith, directors. 61

The Sulphur Springs Valley Bank was incorporated in 1912 with John M. Gleeson, president, and W. Kalt-Resauleaux, manager. Temporary quarters were in Gleeson's Cash Store. Although the Arizona Range News announced that it was "a stable affair and has unlimited backing," it closed its doors on July 1, 1915. The Sulphur Springs Valley Bank Adjustment Company was formed to liquidate the affairs of the defunct bank and pay the depositors seventy-five per cent of their deposits. 62

In October of the same year, the Central Bank was organized, with deposits of over thirty thousand Dollars. It was a branch of the Central Bank of Phoenix and had S. B. Brown as its manager. 63

Not all of the business in Willcox was conducted by men. As early as 1889, a Mrs. W. C. Ragsdale was operating a millinery shop; and in 1892, the town had a lady barber, supposedly the only one between Los Angeles and Albuquerque. 64

62 Ibid., July 12, 1912; October 22, 1915.
63 Ibid., October 22, 1915
64 See Southwestern Stockman, November 3, 1889; November 12, 1892.
Although the John H. Norton Company had an automobile agency in 1902, cars were not common for a number of years. Dr. J. C. Wilson was ridiculed for the purchase of one of the vehicles in 1909, but that did not stop him from using it for his calls from that time on. In this same year, L. G. Wilson and Charles Johnson began using cars to take prospective homesteaders out through the valley to look over the land. Johnson had a regular route, but Wilson would take people anywhere in the area, including mines and nearby towns. The first garage was built by Henry Diers in 1912, but apparently there were not enough automobiles to keep him busy, as he also made repairs on many other types of machinery. During the next two years, several more dealerships were organized, and the number of cars increased considerably.

As in most towns, the Willcox business district was not planned but gradually developed a pattern, which has not changed very much since it was established. The streets, built to coincide with the railroad tracks, run northeast by southwest. All land and buildings from the tracks to the opposite side of Railroad Avenue, which runs parallel to them

66 Ibid., February 5; April 2, 1909.
67 Ibid., June 21, 1912.
on the northeast, were Southern Pacific property when the town was laid out. At the edge of this thoroughfare, within the space of two blocks, were most of the business establishments of the early days. Intersecting Railroad Avenue was Maley Street, extending for one block in a northeasterly direction to connect with Haskell Avenue. Maley was soon built up on both sides, but development on Haskell was much slower. The only business there in 1909 was a blacksmith shop, the other buildings on it being the homes of various merchants such as H. A. Morgan and P. B. Soto. 68

No paving was done until fairly recent times, so the streets were usually either dusty or muddy, depending upon weather conditions. The editor of the Southwestern Stockman wrote in 1885: "Norton and Stewart are filling up the big pond in front of their warehouse. It would be well if others follow suit and fill up some of the hog wallows around town." 69

Since the drainage from the southern slopes of the Graham Mountains is into the Willcox Playa, the town has always had a flood problem when heavy rains occur. On September 1, 1894, a flash flood covered the streets to a depth of two or three feet in less than half an hour. 70

68 Letter from C. F. Schuman to the editor of the Arizona Range News, August 17, 1951.
69 Southwestern Stockman, January 10, 1885.
70 Sulphur Valley News, September 4, 1894.
WILLCOX BUSINESS DISTRICT FLOODED IN THE LATE 1880's
The next serious flood was on October 13, 1896. The streets had been flooded all the previous day, and when the town was aroused by pistol shots at two o'clock A.M., water was a foot deep in some of the buildings. The railroad embankment acted as a levee to hold it in the main part of town, as there was only one culvert to let the water through. The damage was extensive, as many of the buildings were adobe and would not stand much soaking. 71

Finally, in 1898, the Southern Pacific installed another and larger culvert northeast of town. A third one, over a hundred and fifty feet in length, was installed after the flood of August 21, 1910. 72 The openings in the embankment made it possible for the water to drain off much more rapidly.

Only Railroad Avenue had sidewalks until 1913, when it was reported that embankments were being thrown up for some on Maley Street. 73 The early walks were built of boards. Since the individual property owner was not especially careful to have his on the same level with those of his neighbors, the pedestrian had to watch his step. 74

71 Sulphur Valley News, October 13, 1896.
72 Arizona Range News, November 11, 1898; November 4, 1910.
73 Ibid., August 29, 1913.
When the old board walks were taken up and replaced with concrete in 1915, the small boys watching the operations found numerous coins that had been dropped through the cracks throughout the years. 75

In common with most small town residents, the people of Willcox have always had a great interest in the events of the day. However, the local newspaper had a very precarious existence in the early days. George W. McFarlin and Phil S. Montague founded the Sulphur Valley News in April, 1884. Five weeks later, McFarlin sold out to Montague, who a short time later consolidated it with the Arizona Livestock Journal and changed the name to the Southwestern Stockman. Publication ceased in April, 1885, when Montague's funds were exhausted, and H. M. Woods and others brought suit against him. On April 11, the property was sold by the constable to Norton and Stewart, who gave Woods a half-interest in lieu of the amount for which the judgment was rendered in his favor.

Montague loaded up the press and other necessary equipment on the night of April 16 and shipped it to Tucson. He was soon arrested on a charge of grand larceny and the evidence returned to Willcox. 76 Montague's position is indicated by the following: "Phil was last evening lodged in

75 Statement by Mac Browning, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, August 10, 1956.
76 Sulphur Valley News, April 10, 1894.
the county jail, preferring to remain in custody rather than to give the required bond. It is understood he will commence suit for false imprisonment. The civil case which developed was decided in favor of Woods, the defendant. Montague, however, was awarded his books and private papers.

Having thus obtained possession of the Southwestern Stockman, Woods took in John M. Bracewell as joint owner and, six months later, sold out to him. D. N. Hunsaker, who edited and managed the paper while Bracewell served on the legislature, became proprietor on May 21, 1887, when his employer failed to meet wages. He continued to operate it successfully until his death in 1890.

Charles W. Pugh purchased the newspaper plant, a frame building near the railroad station, on January 26, 1891. A short time later, he began publishing two papers, the Sulphur Valley News and the Southwestern Stockman, the latter being essentially a livestock journal. In 1894, a cylinder press powered by a gasoline motor was installed to replace the old Washington hand press that had served for nearly ten years. A daily edition of the Sulphur Valley News appeared

77 Tombstone, April 23, 1885.
78 Arizona Daily Star, quoted in Tombstone, July 13, 1885.
79 Sulphur Valley News, April 10, 1894.
80 Southwestern Stockman, March 17, 1894.
during the fall of that year but apparently was discontinued because of a shortage of news.

Pugh moved the *Stockman* to Phoenix in September, 1895, leaving A. D. Webb in Willcox as editor of the *Sulphur Valley News*. Webb was replaced by F. L. Blome of Arizola in July, 1896, who remained until the paper was sold to Horace E. Dunlap in August.

Dunlap changed the name of the publication to the *Arizona Range News*, making it a combination livestock and general newspaper. It has continued under this name until the present time.

In 1900, C. O. Anderson, who had been publishing the *Holbrook Argus*, purchased the paper from Dunlap and operated it until 1903. New equipment was added to the plant, and the size of the paper was increased considerably during these years. Anderson also began doing job printing of all kinds. Moving to the state of Washington in 1903 because of his wife's health, he sold out to S. N. Kemp, who operated the *Arizona Range News* until his return in September, 1917. Anderson then repurchased it and continued as editor

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81 *Sulphur Valley News*, September 24, 1896.
82 Ibid., July 21; August 4, 1896.
83 *Arizona Range News*, July 18, 1900.
84 Ibid., September 7, 1917.
and publisher until 1926, when he sold out to L. J. Fulmer. E. H. Beverly of Colorado acquired the publication in 1929 and retained it until October, 1940, when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. D. F. Mellenbruch of Benson. Various partnerships have been formed and dissolved since that time, but Mrs. Ruth Mellenbruch has remained as editor and continues to promote the growth and improvement of Willcox as did her predecessors.

The first telephone system in Willcox was for communication with Fort Bowie and was installed by the federal government in 1890. The first system for civilian use was installed by D. A. Adams, who owned a ranch at Texas Canyon. He started out by stringing a line on crooked sticks and mesquite poles from there to Benson for his own use and that of his neighbors. Other communities heard of the success of the operation and wanted the service, too, so the Adams Telephone Company was formed. In 1907, a line was run to Cochise and Willcox with diverging lines to the mining camps at Johnson, Gleeson, Courtland, and Pearce, as well as to various ranches along the way.

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85 Arizona Range News, January 24, 1941.
86 Southwestern Stockman, March 29, 1890.
88 Arizona Range News, March 1; 29, 1907.
Among the first telephones installed in Willcox by the Adams Company were those at Gleeson's Cash Store and the Willcox Drug Store. At the latter location, the first switchboard was installed four months later. At about the same time, the Riggs family built a telephone line connecting their ranches in the Chiricahua and running on north to Dos Cabezas. A year later, the line was extended to Willcox.

The Adams Telephone Company also continued to expand, running lines to Safford, Bowie, and the newly settled areas in all directions. Finally in October 1911, a connection with El Paso was established.

The New State Telephone and Telegraph Company was incorporated in July, 1912, to combine the telephone interests of the Adams, Riggs, and Smith lines, with headquarters at Willcox. This company continued to operate until it was sold to the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1918.

Along with the steady growth of business and communication in Willcox there was an increase in the population.

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89 Arizona Range News, July 5; November 1, 1907.
90 Ibid., March 22, 1907; March 6, 1908.
91 Ibid., October 20, 1911.
92 Ibid., July 12, 1912.
93 Ibid., January 25, 1918.
and a resultant development in the residential sections of town. Willcox was listed in an unofficial census in 1882 as having a population of 324. In that same year, the Great Register showed 125 voters registered there. By 1896, there were 195 voters, which would indicate a proportionate increase in population. The 1890 census showed that the town had a population of 396. The Willcox precinct, which included some of the outlying areas, had increased to 1,632 in 1910. An article in the Bisbee Review in 1909 gave an estimate of 800 to 1,000 for the population of the town itself.

A number of the early homes in Willcox are still in use. Among them are the homes of H. A. Morgan and Mariano Soto, located on Haskell Avenue. Also, between Haskell and Railroad Avenues on Stewart Street are the old Pablo Soto house and the Schwertner place.

94 Tombstone Epitaph, July 15, 1882.
95 Great Register of the County of Cochise, 1882.
96 Ibid., 1896.
The last house mentioned was built by the federal government as a reception center for young army officers on their way from West Point to Fort Grant. Later, it became an officers' club and was operated by a retired army officer. Josef Schwertner, a saloon and store keeper for many years, purchased the house in 1897, shortly after his arrival in Willcox. Albert Schwertner and Mary Schwertner Nordhus, his son and daughter, still make it their home. It is a very interesting example of the type of house built in the eighties and nineties, as apparently very little, if anything, has been done to modify its original outward appearance.

For many years, Willcox had a housing shortage. The Arizona Range News reported in 1900 that there was not a vacant house in town and pleaded for the erection of at least a dozen cottages. In 1908, a building boom was indicated by the announcement that one real estate man, W. S. McCurdy, had sold between sixty and seventy lots in the Morgan and Angle Addition in the northwest corner of town. Five or six new houses were to be started within the next thirty days. Fifteen or twenty new buildings were in the course of erection in April, 1909, and the realty market

100 Arizona Range News, May 9; August 29, 1900.
101 Ibid., December 18, 1908.
was still very active. Four years later, every business house and residence was occupied. Furthermore, every new building was put into use as soon as it was completed. This was still the case in 1915, but the newspaper stated optimistically that the supply would soon catch up with the demand, as many rental houses were being built.

As the town grew, it began to acquire some of the comforts and conveniences of urban life. The possibility of an electric lighting system for Willcox was considered as early as 1892. It was not until seven years later, however, that F. E. Caldwell and T. D. Swatling organized the Willcox Lighting, Pumping, and Ice Company. The generating plant was equipped with two Westinghouse seventy-five kilowatt, one hundred and twenty-five volt generators running in series on a three-wire system. The plant was put into operation on August 3, 1899, much to the delight of the local citizens, who turned out to gaze in wonder at the brilliantly

102 Arizona Range News, April 9; 30, 1909.
103 Ibid., February 19, 1915.
104 Southwestern Stockman, March 12, 1892.
105 Arizona Range News, March 22, 1899.
106 Ibid., July 19, 1899.
lighted business establishments. About a month later, two large arc lights were installed to light the downtown area. One was in front of Hauser's Saloon, near the corner of Mal­ey Street and Railroad Avenue, and the other was near the Norton and Company warehouse, at the east end of Railroad Avenue.

On October 10, 1900, it was announced that the electric lights would be run all night, but in September, 1901, the operators began shutting down the plant at midnight, as the number of lights in use after that hour did not seem to justify its operation until morning.

The plant continued to operate upon this basis until 1902, when many of the local residents were hard pressed to meet the necessities of life and failed to pay their electric bills. The owners decided to close down the unprofitable generating plant and concentrate upon the mine at Pearce in which they were also interested. The machinery was sold in Mexico, and the town was without electricity until 1926.

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107 Arizona Range News, August 9, 1899.
108 Ibid., September 6, 1899.
109 Ibid., October 10, 1900; August 30, 1901.
110 Ibid., July 31, 1953.
As the value of property increased, so did interest in fire protection. An attempt was made to organize a volunteer fire department as early as 1885.\textsuperscript{112} Apparently it was unsuccessful, as it was not in operation in 1896 when a small frame building on the alley back of Railroad Avenue burned. The local newspaper pointed out the fact that since the town was built almost wholly of wood, such a fire could have spread and destroyed the entire business section if there had been a strong wind. The editor suggested the purchase of ladders, fire buckets, etc. so the town would be better prepared in case of another fire. In another part of the paper, it was mentioned that again there was some talk of organizing a hook and ladder company, but still nothing was done.\textsuperscript{113}

Finally, in 1909, the long awaited volunteer fire department was organized with twenty-one members, and subscriptions were taken for the purchase of equipment.\textsuperscript{114} Buckets and axes were stored at strategic locations around town, and water was supplied by private windmills and tanks. Norton and Morgan, along with the Schwertners, later installed a four-inch pipe line from the Southern Pacific water tank

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Southwestern Stockman}, October 10, 1885.

\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Sulphur Valley News}, January 28, 1896.

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Arizona Range News}, December 17, 1909.
across the tracks to supply hydrants near their business estabishments. On May 3, 1910, a whole row of frame buildings on Railroad Avenue between the Willcox Hotel and the Maley Street intersection burned. The fact that the post office building on the corner had a solid adobe wall, with no windows on the side toward the fire, probably prevented the flames from spreading farther.

As a result of this fire, a mass meeting was held at Norton's Hall to act upon the matter of purchasing more fire fighting equipment with funds that had been contributed for the purpose. It was decided that a hook and ladder truck would be most useful. Apparently not enough funds were available to purchase this equipment, as the firemen built a hose cart from two old buggy wheels instead. It carried four hundred feet of one and a half inch canvas hose. The water was supplied by gravity from the railroad tanks at a pressure of approximately ten pounds per square inch. Not until 1915 did they obtain a hook and ladder cart.

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117 Ibid., June 17, 1910.
118 Ibid., April 27, 1951.
When a town is founded, a concern for the welfare of the children is normally one of the first to become evident. A public school was established in Willcox in 1881 upon petition of a number of the heads of families. The building was a one-room frame structure, with long benches of rough wood, and was located at what is now 322 East Maley Street. In 1885, the following item appeared in the *Southwestern Stockman*:

> There is in the county treasury $602.76 to the credit of the Wilcox school fund. Let us have the children at school as long as there is a cent for the purpose.  

When school began in September, 1885, twenty-nine pupils were enrolled.

By 1889, from fifty to sixty pupils were attending the ungraded school. The Board of School Trustees decided that the school should be divided into two departments—a grammar and a primary—and employ two teachers for the next year. They rented a building next-door to the newspaper.

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120 *Southwestern Stockman*, January 17, 1885.
122 *Ibid.*, June 1, 1889.
office and fitted it out for the primary department as a temporary measure. Twenty-one were enrolled in the grammar department that year and twenty-three in the primary. In a subsequent special election, the townspeople were confronted with a proposal to raise $1,000 by a special tax to build an addition to the schoolhouse. H. N. Hunsaker, the editor of the Southern Stockman, was pleased that the vote was unanimously in favor of it, but deplored the fact that only eleven votes were cast. On April 5, 1890, it was announced that the public school building was completed and the primary department would move into it the following Monday. The school library was started that year with funds obtained from admissions to a program given at Thanksgiving time.

By the spring of 1900, the school was again overcrowded, and a $7,500 bond issue was approved for erecting and furnishing a new building. Since the majority of the children lived north of the railroad tracks, it was decided that

124 Ibid., August 3, 1889.
125 Ibid., September 4, 1889.
126 Ibid., September 21, 1889.
127 Ibid., April 5, 1891
128 Ibid., March 22, 1890.
129 Arizona Range News, June 20, 1900.
the school would be located there on what is now Haskell Avenue.

The cornerstone for the new building was laid on November 30, 1900. Inside it were placed various items, including a list of the names of the children in school that year as well as those of the teachers and trustees, a copy of the teachers' monthly reports, and current issues of various newspapers. 130

Only about a month later, the old school was destroyed by a fire of unknown origin. Some local residents thought the fire had been set, but it was never proved. School was held in Norton-Morgan Hall, the structure now occupied by B. and G. Motors, until the new building was finished. 131

In March, 1901, the new building, a substantial four-room brick structure, was accepted by the trustees. 132 It was more than adequate to accommodate the pupils attending at that time, as two of the rooms did not have desks installed in them until the fall of 1908. 133 By 1915, however, a six-thousand-dollar bond issue was passed for an addition to the school. 134

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130 Ibid., December 7, 1900.
133 Ibid., October 30, 1908.
134 Ibid., October 1, 1915.
High school work was first offered at the grammar school in the fall of 1908, with seven students enrolled. In November of the following year, a bond issue for a high school building was approved almost unanimously. That interest in secondary education was growing is also indicated by the fact that the average daily attendance for 1909 was thirteen.

The first high school building, a four-room structure located on El Paso Avenue at the site of the present junior high school, was dedicated on February 21, 1911. It was converted into an auditorium when additional wings for classrooms were built around it in 1921.

Enrollment had increased to twenty-one when classes began in the fall of 1911, and a year later it had reached thirty-seven. The first graduate of Wilcox High School was Florence Dickey Hubbard, the only member of the class of 1912 to finish. Thirty-nine attended during the school

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139 Ibid., May 24, 1912.
year 1913-14, six of whom graduated in May. One of the 1913 graduates was Mrs. Hubbard, who had returned as a post-graduate student to take the business courses that had been added to the curriculum that year.

The first church building in Willcox was non-denomina-tional. Colonel Henry C. Hooker, seeing the need for a place of worship, constructed a large adobe building with the usual long benches and a rostrum across one end. Any religious denomination could use it without charge, and it was so utilized for many years.

An early attempt by a Baptist minister to establish a church was unsuccessful, according to the following account:

Rev. Mr. Alexander who has been laboring in this portion of the moral vineyard for some weeks past takes his departure for California today. We trust the reverend gentleman will not be disheartened by his failure to create a religious awakening here.

The Methodists started by having Sunday School, with occasional worship services under the direction of

140 Letter from G. V. Hays to the editor, Arizona Range News, August 10, 1951; Black, op. cit., p. 55.
143 Southwestern Stockman, June 27, 1885.
itinerant ministers. In 1886, they built a small adobe church south of the tracks. E. K. Crews, the first resident pastor, arrived from Colorado a year later.144

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized in March, 1909, with arrangements for semi-monthly services under the direction of the Reverend R. J. McElroth of El Paso.145 The small building erected west of town was replaced in October, 1910, by a considerably larger one at the corner of Maley Street and Curtis Avenue. The Reverend J. Coy Williams had become their pastor in January of that year.146 In 1915, the two Methodist congregations were united, and the newer building of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has since been used as their place of worship.

The Catholics' spiritual needs were administered to by a priest who came weekly from Benson, beginning in 1885. Their first church was built in 1891. A priest from Nogales made periodic visits from 1901 until 1907, when one from Solomonsville took charge. This arrangement continued until Father Mariano Uson was sent to Willcox as resident pastor in 1934.147

144 Arizona Range News, October 31, 1941.
145 Ibid., March 12, 1909.
146 Ibid., October 7, 1910.
147 Ibid., March 12, 1948.
MEXICAN FUNERAL IN THE 1880's
The Christian Church was organized in 1911, beginning regular services in July of that year. It was the sixth church of that denomination organized in Arizona. 148

Several fraternal orders were organized early in the history of Willcox, among them being the Ancient Order of United Workmen, the Knights of Pythias, which had a large membership in 1899, and the Masonic Lodge, which received its charter on November 11, 1891. The local Order of the Eastern Star was organized on March 5, 1903. 149 These lodges from the beginning took an active part in the development of the town and promoted many worthwhile activities. The first two mentioned encountered financial difficulties during or shortly before World War I and passed out of existence; however, the Masonic orders weathered the storm and are still very active. 150

An interest in dramatics in the early days is indicated by the fact that several clubs were organized to provide entertainment of that nature. As early as 1884, the Sulphur Valley News reported a very successful production of Among the Breakers by the Willcox Dramatic Club. 151

148 Ibid., March 27, 1953.
149 Ibid., October 31, 1941.
150 Statement by Harry O. Parks, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, August 10, 1956.
151 Sulphur Valley News, September 4, 1884.
number of prominent people in the town participated in these productions, which consisted of everything from serious drama to minstrel shows, and were presented in Norton's Opera House to large audiences.

As evidence of an interest in music, the Willcox Brass Band was organized in 1890 with fourteen members. It was not a permanent organization because the directors worked on a voluntary basis, and whenever one of them moved out of town, the band usually went out of existence for a time. Among the early bandmasters were Sidney Page and a Mr. Harmon. C. S. Gung'l, who had been in charge of the Fort Grant band, reorganized the Willcox group in 1912, and it was very active for several years. Among the important occasions at which the band appeared was the opening of the Mascot and Western Railroad between Willcox and Dos Cabezas in 1915.153

Athletics were not neglected, either. On September 5, 1891, an athletic club was organized by the young men of the town "for sports and exercise with gloves, Indian clubs, dumbbells, rowing machines and various other devices."154

152 Ibid., June 28, 1890.
154 Southwestern Stockman, August 22, 1891.
A baseball club was organized in 1901, and for a number of years it maintained an enviable reputation. The home games were played on a diamond at the present location of the junior high school.  

Many dances were held at Norton's Hall in the 90's and early 1900's. Committees were chosen to make elaborate plans, especially for dances held on holidays such as New Year's Eve and St. Patrick's Day. The band was usually from Fort Grant, and of course many soldiers joined the local people in the festivities.  

Not all of the entertainment was by local talent. Professional elocutionists, lecturers, and musicians occasionally made their appearance, keeping the local citizens in contact with the culture of the East. Traveling dramatic companies also presented such classics as Monte Cristo and Uncle Tom's Cabin.  

Circuses came to town as early as 1893, although in the opinion of the local press, at least one of them was not so spectacular as the showbills had indicated:

Norris & Rowe's two-bit show here last week for the price of one dollar, was very well attended, indeed. All kinds of suckers were in evidence--and the local scribe was there with the rest of the bunch.  

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155 Mac Browning, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, August 10, 1956.  
156 Mrs. J. P. Cummings, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, March 31, 1956.  
157 Arizona Range News, November 4, 1904.
Moving pictures made their appearance in 1897, presented by a traveling projectionist. The following advertisement appeared in the newspaper:

At Norton's Hall Saturday night, the Animated Projectoscope, Edison's latest invention, showing the great Corbett fight complete, with knockout clearly shown, also the great Spanish Bull Fight and many other beautiful scenes....

Later, a movie theatre was set up in a building at the corner of Maley Street and Haskell Avenue, where the Valley National Bank is now located. In 1914, shows were being presented on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights of each week.

In spite of early evidences of culture and refinement, it must not be forgotten that Willcox was on the frontier. Being a cattle town, it was the place of entertainment for cowboys for many miles around. While most of them were law-abiding citizens, there was a boisterous element that created considerable excitement at times, especially when too much liquor was consumed at the local saloons.

That there was a great demand for liquor is indicated by the story that one of the early merchants arrived in town with two barrels—one of flour and one of whiskey. He had not been in business long before he discovered that

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158 Ibid., August 3, 1897.
159 Statement by Mrs. J. C. Wilson, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, February 18, 1956.
he had too much of the former and not enough of the latter commodity. 161

Among the more popular resorts in the early days were Patty Cooper's, at the site of the present Willcox Theatre; Kasper Hauser's, where the Navajo Hotel is now located; the George Raum Saloon, at the corner of Maley Street and Haskell Avenue; and the Bucket of Blood Saloon, which was advertised as "the only second class house in the city." 162 At one time seven saloons were located on Railroad Avenue alone. One of the more innocent pursuits of inebriated cowboys was to amble along the board sidewalk and shoot at the knots underfoot. 163

In the northeast corner of town was located a thoroughfare called "the alley," which was the local red light district for many years. It operated continuously until 1910, except for brief periods following unpleasant incidents that aroused the ire of the townspeople. 164

164 Arizona Range News, July 11, 1900.
All minor disturbances were handled by the local deputy sheriff and the justice of the peace. In 1896, the local newspaper editor thought it highly commendable that the Justice Court was not only self-sustaining but a source of revenue to the county. He stated that a ten-dollar fine paid in cash was far better than the county's having to bear the expense of keeping a man in jail for thirty or sixty days.

Nevertheless, it was sometimes necessary to lock up offenders. A petition was sent to the Board of Supervisors on January 1, 1885, asking them to appropriate six hundred dollars for the purpose of building a jail. The letter which accompanied the petition stated, "It is most urgently needed as parties under arrest here have suffered inhumanely from exposure in Box Cars (the only available place of confinement)." The jail was approved and a contract awarded to W. M. Constable of Tombstone for its construction.

165 Ibid., January 14, 1896.
166 This petition and the letter from R. F. Hughson to the Board of Supervisors, Cochise County, January 5, 1885, which accompanied it, are on file at the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society.
167 Southwestern Stockman, January 14, 1885.
By 1897, the jail was badly in need of repairs. It was built of two-by-fours and had been set on fire many times by disgruntled prisoners. Finally, a young escapee from a California reform school succeeded in lifting part of the floor and digging out under the wall. When the building was remodeled the following year, steel cells were installed to prevent any more such escapes. The original jail was replaced in 1914 or 1915 by one constructed of concrete, south of Haskell Avenue near the present location of the Greyhound Bus Depot.

Disrespect for the law seemed to be on the increase in Willcox in June, 1897. Bert Appel, the constable, knowing that one of the reasons was personal antipathy toward him on the part of certain cowboys, resigned. After this happened, Burt Alvord, who had established a reputation as a fearless peace officer in the neighboring town of Pearce, twenty miles away, was asked to assist in restoring order in Willcox. This task was accomplished so effectively that the Willcox precinct hired him on a permanent basis about six weeks later.

The ruthlessness of Alvord was shown by his shooting of Billy King because of a personal grudge. King, who had

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168 See Arizona Range News, July 13, 1897; February 12, 1908.
169 Ibid., June 15, 1897.
170 Ibid., August 3, 1897.
been partly responsible for his humiliation in a bar room incident two nights before, had offered his apologies and apparently made amends to Alvord's satisfaction. The officer later asked King to accompany him out back of the saloon, as he wanted to talk with him in private. When he stepped out the door, Alvord evidently shot him in the back six times. Claiming that King had pulled a gun, forcing him to shoot in self defense, Alvord was exonerated in court. A number of cowboys, disliking the decision, joined forces for the purpose of lynching Alvord, but nothing was done. Tempers cooled, and they realized that since the officer had many people on his side it was best not to take the law into their own hands.

As one of his deputies, Alvord had a man named Bill Downing. It was believed by some that his real name was Jackson and that he had been a member of the Sam Bass gang of train robbers in Texas. This has not been proved, but it is known that he caused a great deal of trouble around Willcox.

For example, one day in May, 1899, Downing entered the saloon of Thomas Fulghum on Maley Street. When a man

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Leonard Alverson, "Reminiscences," as told to Mrs. George F. Kitt, October 8, 1938, pp. 24-26. This is on file at the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson, Arizona.
named Bill Traynor dropped his hands to his side as though he were reaching for a pistol, Downing shot him. A coroner's jury gave the verdict that the killing was done in self defense. A feeling of enmity was said to have existed between the two men because Traynor had accused Downing of burning brands, and each had threatened the life of the other.¹⁷²

Another of Alvord's deputies was Matt Burts, who, although not charged with killing anyone in Willcox, seemed to enjoy "shooting up" various local establishments. He did not confine this activity to saloons, but on one occasion at least, made a raid on a butcher shop.¹⁷³

Many of the shootings that took place were the result of excessive drinking and quick tempers. One of the best known of these was the killing of Warren Earp. He did not participate in the famous Tombstone feud with the Clantons, but had lived around Willcox for a number of years. Earp was not regarded as troublesome, but one night in July, 1900, he and another cowboy had a quarrel.¹⁷⁴ The details vary in different accounts, but it seems that Earp, who was unarmed except for a pocket knife, dared the other man to shoot him. The opponent took the dare, with fatal

¹⁷² Arizona Range News, May 24, 1899.
¹⁷³ Letter from Mrs. J. N. Clifford to the editor of the Arizona Range News, August 10, 1951.
¹⁷⁴ Morgan, op. cit.
consequences. At a preliminary hearing held before Judge W. F. Nichols, it was ruled that there was probably insufficient evidence for a grand jury to find an indictment, so the killer was released.\textsuperscript{176}

The usual number of robberies took place, as well. One of the most humiliating ones was the stealing of all the guns from a detachment of Fort Grant soldiers. The weapons were left on their saddles while the men were inside a saloon getting something to eat.\textsuperscript{177}

Among the most spectacular crimes committed near Willcox were several train robberies, the first of which was on January 30, 1895. Grant Wheeler and Joe George, after buying a large supply of giant powder in Willcox for "mining purposes," rode out to a point five miles west of town. There they stopped a Southern Pacific passenger train and forced their way into the express car. A small safe was easily blown open, but they encountered difficulty with the

\textsuperscript{175}William Whelan, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, November 25, 1955. Whelan stated that the killer was known as Johnny Boyd and that both Boyd and Earp worked for Colonel H. C. Hooker. Arizona Range News, July 11, 1900. The newspaper carried the name as "John Boyett" and stated that ill feeling had existed between the two men for several years. Morgan, op. cit., stated that "Bogett," as he called him, later went insane, presumably because of the killing.

\textsuperscript{176}Arizona Range News, July 11, 1900.

\textsuperscript{177}Sulphur Valley News, December 17, 1895.
large Wells-Fargo safe. After several unsuccessful attempts, they finally placed a very heavy charge on top of the strongbox and weighted it down with sacks containing, according to most accounts, eight thousand Mexican silver dollars. 178

The safe was not only blown open, but the express car was wrecked as well. The silver pieces, going through the roof, were scattered over the desert in all directions, some of them not being found until thirty years later. Others were imbedded in telegraph poles and the timbers of the car. 179

When word of the holdup reached Willcox, a posse went out to search for the robbers, with no success. Wheeler and George had escaped with a comparatively small amount, however, when it was compared with the amount of property damage involved. 180

W. M. Breakenridge, a peace officer for the Southern Pacific, eventually trailed Wheeler to Mancos Canon in Colorado, where the desperado shot himself to avoid capture. 181

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180 Ibid., p. 476, placed the amount at $1,500. The Sulphur Valley News, February 5, 1895, estimated $200 to $500.
181 McClintock, op. cit., p. 200.
George was killed later while attempting another train robbery in California. 182

On September 10, 1899, another passenger train was held up by masked men near the Cochise station, about twelve miles southwest of Willcox. Several bandits uncoupled the express and baggage cars and took them some distance away, where they dynamited and robbed the safe. Since it was the day before pay day at the Pearce mine, the robbers were expecting to find $75,000 or more in the safe. They did find an estimated $2,000 or $3,000, but the payroll had been taken off at Willcox and was being hauled across country in a wagon. 183

When news of the Cochise robbery reached Willcox, Bill Downing organized a posse for the pursuit of the robbers. After following the trail a short distance, Downing told the men with him that nothing more could be done until morning, when he would organize a larger posse. 184

182 Walters, op. cit., p. 200.
184 Walters, op. cit., p. 191.
Sheriff Scott White and his men set out for the scene of the crime as soon as the news reached Tombstone. They found the trail of the bandits one one-fourth of a mile from Wilcox and followed it to the neighborhood of Fort Grant, where it was lost.\textsuperscript{185}

Mainly through the efforts of Wells-Fargo agents, evidence was produced leading to the arrest of the entire gang, which included Downing, Alvord, and Burts. Many people were reluctant to believe that Alvord had been involved, because of his record as a peace officer. However, one of the men, Billy Stiles, made a full confession which substantiated the evidence against him as well as the others.

During the Downing trial, the details of the plot were revealed. Stiles and Burts had actually carried out the robbery, but Alvord had supplied the powder and Downing the horses. The loot was carried to Downing's place the following day and hidden in a haystack until it was divided among them.\textsuperscript{186} On the basis of the evidence presented, Downing was convicted and sentenced to a seven-year term in April, 1901.

Matt Burts pleaded guilty to the charge of assault with intent to commit robbery and was sentenced to five years. This term was not finished, however, as he was

\textsuperscript{185} \textit{Arizona Daily Star}, September 19, 1899.
\textsuperscript{186} \textit{Arizona Range News}, December 14, 1900.
pardoned by Governor Murphy in April, 1901.

Alvord, Stiles, and some of the other members of the gang escaped from the Tombstone jail in April, 1900, while awaiting trial. They were all recaptured, although it took nearly three years to find Alvord. When he pleaded guilty to one of several indictments against him, he was sentenced to two years at Yuma and the other charges were dismissed. \(^{188}\)

After his release from the territorial prison in 1908, Bill Downing returned to Willcox and opened a notorious establishment called the Free and Easy Saloon, located on the corner of Curtis Avenue and Grant Street at the site of the present telephone office. He not only violated the law by keeping women in the place but deliberately made himself obnoxious to the townspeople in various ways. One of his amusements was going to the proprietors of various business places and ordering them to close up. They usually complied with his requests to avoid trouble. \(^{189}\)

Downing was arrested and fined on two consecutive days in July, and in both cases, Arizona Ranger Billy Speed

\(^{187}\) Ibid., December 21, 1900; April 26, 1901.

\(^{188}\) Ibid., December 11, 1903.

had assisted the constable. As a result of this action, Downing had made open threats against the ranger's life.

On the night of August 4, Downing abused a woman who was an inmate of his resort. She had a warrant sworn out for his arrest, which Speed went to carry out the following morning. When encountered on the street and ordered to hold his hands over his head, Downing reached for his hip pocket. Speed, taking no chances, shot him. Thus ended the career of Bill Downing.190 From this time on, the lawless element dwindled away, the members of it either reforming or departing for a more favorable environment and leaving the citizens of Willcox to their peaceful pursuits.

The story of Willcox in its formative years would not be complete without mention of two organizations that worked diligently to improve the town and promote its continued development. The first of these, the Willcox Board of Trade, was organized in 1908 after a visit from C. W. Hibbard of the Sunset Magazine, who was very enthusiastic about the undeveloped resources of the Sulphur Springs Valley. Dr. J. C. Wilson was elected president; J. W. Angle, vice-president; R. W. Keyes, secretary; and A. A. Nicholson, treasurer. Twelve or fifteen members signed the roll

190 Arizona Range News, August 7, 1908. Walters, op. cit., p. 196, states that Downing was unarmed, having gone out for an early morning drink without taking time to buckle on his gun.
at the first meeting.

A year and a half after its founding, the Board of Trade had sixty-five members and was doing its best to publicize the merits of the Willcox area. The dues of the organization were used largely to print leaflets, which people were encouraged to enclose in letters to friends in the East. The Board also persuaded the Southern Pacific to include publicity for Willcox in a book they were publishing. An excursion rate to the town was also established, although previously not even a stop-over had been permitted. Advertisements placed in weekly papers in the midwest and in daily papers on the Pacific coast brought many inquiries. On one day in November, 1913, the secretary received and answered forty-one of them, and during that year, the average was a hundred and fifty or more per month.

The Board of Trade was also vitally interested in such matters as improving sanitation and developing new water supplies. In 1911, the board undertook to drill an artesian well, which would be valuable from the standpoint of publicity as well as for the water produced. It was

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191 Ibid., October 23, 1908.
192 Ibid., April 8, 1910.
193 Ibid., March 3, 1911.
194 Ibid., November 28, 1913; October 9, 1914.
first proposed to drill near the railroad tracks, but eventually the committee decided that the fair grounds on the northwest side of town would be a more favorable location. The sum of three thousand dollars was subscribed by various citizens, and a Deming, New Mexico, concern began drilling. Many people had high hopes for the success of the venture as the local paper made regular reports upon its progress. After drilling nine hundred feet, a weak artesian flow was brought to the surface. Thus ended the great artesian well project. However, one could not say it was a complete failure, as it encouraged more successful attempts later and provided a great deal of publicity for Willcox.

The organization of the Willcox Woman's Club in 1911 might be regarded as symbolical of the beginning of a new order. The Arizona Rangers, having completed their work, had been dissolved for two years, the constitutional convention was meeting, and a woman's suffrage campaign was being carried on. The ladies of Willcox decided that it was time for them to do something to improve the town from a cultural standpoint.

The call for the initial meeting was unsigned, as considerable sentiment was known to exist against such an organization, and no one wanted to take an open stand for it

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until there was evidence of considerable support. This meet-
ing, held on September 30, 1911, was well attended, but the second meeting, held a week later, had less than ten present. Although only five were brave enough to sign the charter roll, the constitution and by-laws were adopted. The ob-
ject of the organization was stated to be "social, intellectual, civic and philanthropic work." The ob-
ject of the organization was stated to be "social, intellectual, civic and philanthropic work." 196

At the fourth meeting, held on November 11, the final steps in organization were completed with the election of of-
ficers and the selection of a program committee. Among the first officers were Mrs. C. O. Anderson, president; Mrs. H. A. Morgan and Mrs. J. W. Moore, first and second vice-
presidents; and Miss Irma Keller, recording secretary. The charter roll was closed with a membership of nineteen, which increased to fifty-five by the end of the year.

All the activities of the Woman's Club were watched with great interest and not without alarm in some quarters. It was rumored, among other things, that the women were organ-
ized for the purpose of running the town, "to the neglect of their homes, their husbands, and their children." 198

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196 Ibid., October 13, 1911.
197 Ibid., October 13, 1911.
198 Ibid., October 21, 1938.
went on, however, it became evident that members of the fair
sex were interested in a gradual improvement of the town
through education rather than by revolution, and the senti­
ment against the organization diminished. Among the early
activities they sponsored were parent-teacher meetings, a
series of lectures by members of the University of Arizona
faculty, and an art exhibit.

The formative years of Willcox were coming to a
close. It was no longer merely a settlement that had sprung
up along the Southern Pacific and developed into a cattle
shipping center. The days of survival of the fittest and
every man for himself were over. Community spirit and a
desire for a better organized society were rapidly develop­
ing, and as early as 1910, there was agitation for the in­
corporation of the town.

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Arizona Range News, October 21, 1938.
CHAPTER III

THE DAYS OF THE OPEN RANGE

The cattle industry in Arizona, as first established by the Spanish early in the eighteenth century, was terminated by raids of the Apaches about fifty years later. The only vestiges of its existence that remained when the Americans came into the area were the ruins of the haciendas and scattered remnants of the herds.

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 brought about a great influx of population and with it an ever increasing demand for beef. While most of the cattle that reached the west coast the first decade after the annexation probably came from Mexico, many were driven from the Middle West and Texas. These great herds usually followed a trail that entered Arizona by way of Stein's Pass to Fort Bowie, nine miles south of the present town of Bowie, and on into the Sulphur Springs Valley by way of Apache Pass. 1 This route was undoubtedly taken because there were several springs on the way that could be used to water the cattle. The size of these herds increased, and in 1869 William

Osborn reported seeing over fifteen thousand head of Texas cattle between Apache Pass and Phoenix. With herds of this size, one can readily see that the route was often determined by the water supply. The lush green grass of the southeastern corner of Arizona undoubtedly appealed to the trail drivers who traveled through it, but the menace of the Apaches kept them from settling there.

One of the first ranches in the area was the Sierra Bonita, established in the upper Sulphur Springs Valley in 1873. Colonel Henry Clay Hooker, a native of New Hampshire, went to California in 1853, where he first engaged in mining and later became interested in merchandising at Placerville. In 1867, he and his associates made the first deliveries of cattle into Arizona. For several years they supplied the entire military organization in the territory as well as the Indian Service with beef. Hooker's men drove in as many as 15,500 head yearly from Oregon, Idaho, California, and Texas. Herds of several thousand were held near the various posts so that small numbers could be had.

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3 *Arizona Range News*, December 13, 1907.
on short notice. 4 Lockwood tells the story of Hooker's decision to locate in the Sulphur Springs Valley as follows:

One night in 1872, Mr. Hooker encamped at a watering place called Oak Grove in the Galiuro Mountains with a herd of cattle that was left over after he had filled his government contracts. During the night the herd stampeded. The vaqueros followed the trail of the cattle and found them at a spring and cienega in the Sulphur Spring Valley. This location appealed to Colonel Hooker so strongly that he homesteaded it, built the fine Sierra Bonita hacienda with cowboy labor, and later brought his family to live there.5

Hooker's ranch, located twenty miles north of Willcox and ten miles south of Fort Grant, was in the midst of the finest range country in Arizona. The whole region was government land, so the territory over which his cattle grazed was almost without limit; however, he actually controlled a range thirty miles long by about twenty-seven miles wide.6

The Sierra Bonita was originally stocked with long-horn cattle from Texas and Mexico. They were well adapted to the range and climate, but Hooker was not satisfied with

6 Ibid.
the quality or quantity of beef they produced. Within a year, he had purchased eighteen American bulls, ten of them Durhams. These bulls were bred to the long-horn cows with the object of developing a half-breed animal that would produce more beef than the Spanish variety but would be better adapted to the climate and the range than pure-bred American cattle. After experimenting with various breeds, Hooker came to the conclusion that a Hereford cross was best.

The size of Hooker's operations is indicated by the fact that he spent thirty thousand dollars at one time for two hundred bull calves imported from Illinois. Other purchases of sixty-five to seventy-five bulls at a time are recorded. He speeded up the process by shipping in some blooded cows until eventually ninety percent of his cattle were "white faces." While Hooker was improving his own herds, he also helped other ranchers to do the same by furnishing them with bulls. Thus the stock throughout southern Arizona was gradually improved.

7 The Arizona Sentinel, November 8, 1873.
9 Lockwood, op. cit., p. 233.
10 Ibid., p. 232.
By 1895, Colonel Hooker owned a half-dozen outlying ranches and his herd had increased to approximately twenty thousand head. He had irrigated land at several of these locations and was producing hay and grain for supplementary feeding.

Many small ranches were operating in the Graham foothills by this time, and their strays were continually drifting onto the Hooker range. Not wishing to share his grass and water with other ranchers, Hooker built twenty miles of fence on each side of the Sierra Bonita and installed three special corral arrangements called "boomerangs." The cattle were funneled into them by fences running into a "V" so that one man stationed there on a platform could separate the strays from those bearing the crooked "H" brand. The unwanted cattle were then returned to their owners. The other ranchers did not approve of this system. Some even went so far as to burn the "boomerangs" several times, but Hooker immediately rebuilt them. 12

Having become convinced that it would be more profitable to fatten a comparatively small herd of pure-bred

William Whelan, quoted by Connie Cook in "Billy Whelan, 83 Years Young," Arizona Cattlelog, XI (March, 1956), 18

cattle than to continue with great numbers on the open range, Hooker rounded up and sold all the cattle on the outlying ranches in 1897. From that time on, he centered his efforts on the home ranch. 13

Not only excellent cattle but many fine horses were produced on the Sierra Bonita, both for use there and for sale. The government purchased great numbers of them, as did other ranchers, and as many as a hundred would be broken at one time. 14 Hooker always had several teams of fast driving horses for his carriage and was known to try them out quite often.

The Sierra Bonita has remained in the family through three generations and is now being operated by Mrs. Harry Hooker. Although a large part of the range has dwindled away through the years, it still comprises seventy-five sections, about fifty-five of which are deeded land and the balance state leased land. 15

Another pioneer rancher in the Sulphur Springs Valley was Brannick Riggs, who was a native of Alabama and a

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13 Lockwood, op. cit., p. 150.
Confederate soldier during the Civil War. He spent a short
time in Texas after the war, after which he loaded his family
and possessions into covered wagons and started westward.
The trip was a slow one because he was driving his dairy herd,
and stops had to be made now and then to let the cows recup­
erate. Army camps always provided a good market for milk, so
Riggs usually camped near them. 16

The Riggs family spent some time in Colorado, but
the eventual goal was the Pacific coast. They first arrived
in Arizona in 1877 and settled at Fort Apache, moving to a
location on the Gila River near Fort Thomas a year later. 17
From there they went to the San Simon Valley and camped at
"Nine Mile Water Hole," living in tents and a covered wagon.
Their herd did very well there until the dry season came and
the water failed. Riggs packed up and moved through Apache
Pass with the intention of going on to California. Mrs.
Riggs, however, liked the place at which they had camped on
the west side of the Chiricahuas and refused to go any farth­
er. In this way, the Riggs Home Ranch was located. 18

16  B. K. Riggs, personal interview, Dos Cabezas, Ariz­
ona, November 12, 1955.
17  Arizona Range News, September 13, 1929.
18  B. K. Riggs, personal interview, Dos Cabezas, Ariz­
ona, November 12, 1955.
Fort Bowie, ten miles north, provided the Riggs family with a market for dairy products and vegetables. They had no beef cattle when they arrived, but William, one of the sons, went to work for Colonel Hooker and learned the cattle business. The Riggs herd, which was started with cattle purchased from Hooker, was soon built up to be a paying business. A slaughter house was built at the home ranch, and beef killed there was hauled to the fort in a wagon.

Although the Indians raided all around, they never bothered the Riggs ranch. This was due to the fact that the family, knowing many of the Indians personally, often fed them at the ranch and helped them in other ways.

The members of the Riggs family were very industrious and cooperated unusually well. Their herd was improved by purchasing as well as producing thoroughbred bulls. Furthermore, they did not buy cattle, run them a short time and then resell them as many cattlemen did, but kept their own increase. Whenever a member of the family became of age, he was given a ranch and a start in the cattle business. As a result of this policy, Riggs ranches are today strung

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along the Chiricahuaas from Dos Cabezas almost to Rodeo, New Mexico. This area, known as the "Riggs Settlement," included in 1929 about 100,000 acres of patented land in addition to 50,000 acres of leased land and 25,000 acres under Forest Reserve Permit. The Riggs Home Ranch is now operated by B. K. Riggs, the only surviving son of Brannick Riggs, Sr.

Also among the important men in the cattle industry was John A. Rockfellow, who came to Arizona in 1878 and shortly joined Walter Servoss and Pete Kitchen in the cattle business, with a ranch at Cochise Stronghold. Later, Rockfellow developed a water hole in the Sulphur Springs Valley and established the Esperanza Ranch. He hired a man to operate the ranch while he engaged in other activities, such as teaching, surveying, and serving as cattle inspector at Willcox. The Esperanza or N Y Ranch, as it was later called, was sold to Judge S. W. McCall in 1907. It is now owned by Duncan Brothers of Willcox. Rockfellow kept the Stronghold Ranch until 1934, when most of it was sold. A small portion still remains with the family.

One of the largest ranches east of Willcox was the Munk Ranch, which was located in Railroad Pass by Edward and

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21 Arizona Range News, September 13, 1929.
22 "John A. Rockfellow," Arizona Cattleglog (October, 1953), back cover.
William Munk in 1882. Their brother, Dr. Joseph A. Munk, became a partner two years later. While there were no definite boundaries of the ranch at first, it was later limited to a seven-mile square. Their first cattle were long-horns bought from John H. Slaughter's San Bernardino Ranch near the Mexican border. Steers were shipped to northern pastures or feed lots in the corn producing states, where they were fattened for the Eastern markets. Cows and heifers were retained for breeding purposes, and the herd was gradually improved until it was composed entirely of Herefords.

Two of the Munk brothers were active in other fields of endeavor besides ranching. Dr. Joseph A. Munk, in addition to being a successful physician, wrote several books. Arizona Sketches and Southwest Sketches give especially valuable information about Arizona in the '80's and '90's. Edward was probate judge of Cochise County from 1886 until 1890 and also served as county superintendent of schools.

Judge Munk managed the ranch until his death in 1924. After the death of Dr. J. A. Munk in 1927, it passed on to Grace and Edward Munk, a niece and a nephew. It has since

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23 Lockwood, op. cit., p. 237.
25 Ibid.
become the property of the Cook Cattle Company. The excellent library of Dr. Munk was divided among the Munk Library in Los Angeles, the University of Arizona, and the Willcox Library.

North of town was the J H Ranch, operated by Captain W. H. Mckittrick in the 1890's and early 1900's. In partnership with General Shafter of Spanish-American War fame, his father-in-law, he bought out a number of smaller ranches and consolidated them. At the peak of operations, the J H was running as high as twenty-eight thousand range cattle. Their range extended all the way from Willcox to the ranch proper, fourteen miles to the northwest. This land was not patented, however, and was eventually all homesteaded by farmers.

Another of the larger operations that should be mentioned is the Chiricahua Cattle Company. It was organized by White, Vickers, and Pursley and later purchased by Henry S. Boice. At one time, their range was seventy-five miles long by thirty-five miles wide and supported one of the

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26 Arizona Star, April 26, 1935.
largest herds in the territory. Here again, as in the case of the J H Ranch, the land was encroached upon by farmers until there was none left, and the remainder of the herd was moved to the Sonoita Valley. 29

In the early days, there were also many smaller ranches, but most of them were consolidated with larger holdings as time went on. The northern portion of the Sulphur Springs Valley came to be almost completely in the control of five large outfits: the 76 Ranch, the Sierra Bonita, the Eureka, the O Bar O, and the J H.

The completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad through the Sulphur Springs Valley in 1880 was a great incentive to the growth of the cattle industry in this area. Not only were the grazing lands made more readily accessible to prospective cattlemen, but transportation to outside markets was provided.

Beef was in great demand for home consumption at this time. Railroad construction companies, government posts, and mining camps furnished the principal markets within the territory; and virtually all of the cattle were either sold

29 B. K. Riggs, personal interview, Dos Cabezas, Arizona, March 26, 1956.
locally or shipped to California until 1885.\textsuperscript{30} The average price per head advanced from ten to thirty dollars between 1881 and 1883.\textsuperscript{31}

The speed with which the available range was utilized under these favorable conditions is indicated by the following account:

Men who had accumulated fortunes in the territory, their friends in the states, adventurous spirits throughout the United States and foreign countries who were always ready to take great chances for promised large fortunes—came here, and in the years 1883 and 1884, every running stream and permanent spring were settled upon, ranch houses built, and adjacent ranges stocked with cattle brought in by foot and rail from the states of Sonora, Durango, and Chihuahua in Mexico—from the territories and states of the Union as far east as Maryland.\textsuperscript{32}

In 1885, the inevitable happened. As a result of overstocking the range, a severe summer drought caused heavy mortality among cattle. At the same time, the home market failed, and ranchers had to find another without delay. Therefore, the first shipment of five hundred head of three and four year old steers to an eastern market was made in


\textsuperscript{31} Wagoner, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 84.

November of that year, netting the owner $27.40 per head.

Ranchers began a new policy the following year—that of selling immature steers to cattle feeders in other parts of the country rather than trying to fatten them on the open range.

Rainfall was heavy during the winter of 1888-89, causing cattlemen to become more optimistic. Continuing through 1890, many of the dry washes were running steadily for about three months in the spring, and there was an abundance of water everywhere.

Cattle production in Arizona and the Willcox area reached its peak in 1891. It is estimated that one and a half million cattle were on the ranges that year. When the rainy season passed with less than half the usual amount of precipitation, the ranchers began to realize that they had again overstocked their ranges. By June, 1892, the grass was nearly all gone, the waterholes had failed, and cattle were dying in great numbers. The only solution was to remove the stock to better pastures. Special railroad rates

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33 Ibid.
34 Statement by B. K. Riggs, personal interview, Dos Cabezas, Arizona, March 26, 1956.
35 Haskett, op. cit., p. 42.
were offered for the starving cattle, and during September and October, thousands were shipped to California, Texas, Indian Territory, Oregon, and Montana. Some were sold as feeders, but others were placed upon rented pastures in these areas. In spite of these drastic measures, from fifty- to seventy-five percent of the cattle were lost. 37

No rain fell in 1893 until the middle of July, but that was soon enough to save the remainder of the cattle. 38 Rains during the next two years were below average, but due to the fact that there were now fewer cattle, the range improved considerably.

The situation in 1895 was evaluated as follows in the Report of the Governor of Arizona for 1896:

In the year 1895 better times for the stockmen seemed in the very air, and with renewed energy our people grappled the situation, and the result manifests an increase of cattle on our ranges netting a fair profit, and well founded hope for the future. 39

Statistics on cattle shipments for that year are not available, but in 1896 it was reported that 209,836 head of cattle were shipped out of the territory and 24,097 killed for

37 Haskett, op. cit., p. 42.
That Willcox was becoming one of the important shipping points is indicated by the fact that in the period beginning January and ending June 16, approximately twenty-five thousand cattle passed through the stock pens there. The Sulphur Valley News had this comment in the issue of June 2, 1896:

Not less than 5,000 head of cattle will be shipped from Willcox this week. When one stops to think that 5,000 cattle means about $65,000 in the pockets of the stockmen in this vicinity, people cease to wonder that this is a busy town.

Willcox led Tucson, its chief rival, in the number of cattle shipped that year, by 661 head.

The friendly rivalry that had developed between Willcox and Tucson continued in 1897. By May 2 of that year, Willcox had shipped 26,828 head out of the territory to Tucson's 22,469. At the end of the year, Willcox was still ahead with 37,292 against 36,795 for Tucson. Other important shipping points that year were Bisbee with 26,997, Geronimo

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41 Sulphur Valley News, June 16, 1896.
42 Ibid., June 2, 1896.
43 Southwestern Stockman as cited by Arizona Range News, January 25, 1897.
44 The Oasis, June 1, 1897.
and Holbrook with almost 20,000 each, and Phoenix with 11,591.45

When shipping was at its height in the spring and again in the fall, herds of as many as two thousand cattle at a time were driven into Willcox, and the town would be full of them as the cattlemen awaited the necessary trains to ship them out.46 The following item appeared in the local newspaper on March 18, 1897:

Yesterday morning there were about seven train loads of cattle in the vicinity of town awaiting shipment. They are going out at the rate of two trains a day, but the jam is likely to continue for a week or two.47

The year 1898 was a poor one for the cattle industry, and shipments from Willcox to points outside the territory dropped to 27,945—a decrease of 9.347 from the year before. Tucson was still in second place with 17,215.48

A glowing account of the cattle business in the Willcox area for the year 1899 is given in the Governor’s Report:

Good rains have fallen and prices have been excellent, and as a consequence stockmen feel like princes.

45 Arizona Range News, February 2, 1898.
47 Arizona Range News, March 18, 1897.
48 Ibid., January 25, 1899.
Willcox still holds its place at the head of the list of cattle shipping towns, having shipped 31,791 head to September 1; and still stockmen aver the number can scarcely be missed off the ranges, so abundant are the stocks in the Sulphur Spring Valley and on adjacent ranges. A great impetus has been given by the excellent prices which have prevailed during the year.49

John P. Cull reported that 49,985 head were shipped from Willcox that year at prices averaging $10 a head for yearling steers, $12 for two-year steers, and $14 for those three years old or more.50

A severe drought hit southeastern Arizona in 1900. It did not affect the grass very much at first, but a critical water shortage developed. Those ranchers who had not prepared for such an emergency suffered as a result. It was estimated by one writer that $300,000 worth of cattle were lost in this area.51 According to the local editor, however, this figure was a greatly exaggerated one:

We have recently interviewed a number of stockmen and find that they in reality were more scared than hurt....Comparing the average losses incident to every season with the losses during the present one we find this year's losses will exceed but very little the average loss of any previous year.52

51 Phoenix Gazette, cited by Arizona Range News, July 18, 1900.
52 Arizona Range News, July 18, 1900.
When the tanks and water holes dried up, an estimated two thousand range cattle remained inside the town limits and watered at the drain from the ice plant. "After they get a drink they rest under the shade trees along the streets, and one sociable cow was seen enjoying the shade under Judge Monk's office porch." 53

Just when the water shortage became so severe that a continuation of it would have meant complete ruin for the ranchers, the long awaited rains came. It rained daily for over a week in the Sulphur Springs Valley and surrounding mountain ranges. As the waterholes filled and the grass became green, ranchers became more optimistic than they had been for a long time. 54

By August, however, the range was very dry again. Some of the ranchers went to Colorado, Kansas, and Texas to secure pastures for their cattle. Brannick Riggs, for example, shipped two trainloads, totalling about 3,500 head, to the Pecos country in Texas. Although they were nearly starved, most of them survived the trip. 55

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53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., July 25, 1900.
in the early part of September saved many ranchers the necessity of shipping their cattle out, as Riggs and others had done.

During the year ending June 30, 1900, Willcox was again the leading shipping point with 27,887 head; Benson was now second with 18,066; and Tucson third with 15,723.\textsuperscript{56}

Rainfall was sufficient for the next three years, but again in 1904, drought forced cattlemen to ship their herds to greener pastures in Oklahoma and Texas.

The year 1905 is the wettest one on record for the Willcox area. The official observer of the United States Weather Bureau reported a total of 23.52 inches. This was more than double the average rainfall of 11.21 inches reported for the thirty-eight years between 1892 and 1930.\textsuperscript{57} One storm that arrived on March 17 deposited a total of 2.06 inches, causing considerable damage in the town by flooding.\textsuperscript{58} In the nearby mountains, there was water running in every canyon nearly all year long.\textsuperscript{59} Rainfall was average or

\textsuperscript{56} Arizona Range News, February 15, 1901.
\textsuperscript{57} Official reports of the United States Weather Bureau Observer, D. F. Mellenbruch, Willcox, Arizona.
\textsuperscript{58} Arizona Range News, March 24, 1905.
\textsuperscript{59} Statement by Mrs. Anna Lawhon, personal interview, Bowie, Arizona, April 14, 1956.
better during the next four years, and the cattle business prospered as it never had before.

One of the most obvious needs in the early days was a dependable year-round water supply. To encourage this, the territorial legislature had in 1875 offered a reward for the first artesian well. This was won by W. J. Sanderson of the Sulphur Springs Valley for his well that began producing on May 12, 1883. It was thirty-eight feet deep, six inches in diameter, and had a flow of 40,000 to 50,000 gallons in twenty-four hours.

As early as 1888, the Chiricahua Cattle Company had a well equipped with a steam pump which produced 15,000 gallons an hour. They also installed windmills on other parts of their range. Other outfits followed their example when they found that water was relatively close to the surface in most of the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Although the success of cattlemen in the days of the open range depended to a great extent upon the amount of rainfall and the water supply, other factors must be considered. Indian depredations were a hindrance until 1886, when Geronimo

61 Sulphur Valley News, July 10, 1894.
and his band were captured, although it had been thought that the death of Cochise and the subjugation of the Apaches in 1874 would bring about permanent peace. Raiding bands of Indians would kill a beef, eat what they wanted, and then leave the remainder to spoil. These losses, as well as the effect that fear had upon investments, kept the industry from developing rapidly during this period.

Rustlers were also a problem for many years. Cochise County, in which Willcox is located, was an excellent locale for their operations because of its proximity to Mexico and its multitude of good hiding places for stolen stock in the numerous canyons and arroyos. Many of them came to Arizona after being forced to leave states farther east as law enforcement became more efficient. At first they preyed only upon ranches across the border in Sonora, selling the stolen livestock to new arrivals in southeastern Arizona. These individuals were so pleased at being able to purchase the stock at low prices that they asked no embarrassing questions.

The Mexican officials were aroused to action after one of their pack trains was ambushed in Skeleton Canyon in July, 1881, and captured some of the rustlers. Soon some of

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63 Wagoner, op. cit., p. 100.
the cattlemen in Cochise County who had been doing business with the outlaws found that their own cattle were disappearing, and appealed to the law to stop these losses. Through the efforts of John Slaughter, the sheriff, many of the rustlers either left the country or were killed. 64

Rustling became an acute problem again in 1900, when the outlaws were operating on such a large scale that local law officers were unable to cope with them. 65 The wealthier ranchers were able to hire enough men to keep them away from their herds, but many of the small cattlemen were being forced out of business.

It became evident that drastic measures were necessary to save the Arizona cattle industry, and by an act of the legislature approved March 21, 1901, the Arizona Rangers organization was made possible. 66 It was to operate under strict military discipline and was to consist of a captain, a sergeant, and ten privates. These men were chosen for their ability as frontiersmen, familiarity with the type of men they would have to apprehend, and knowledge of the topography of Arizona. They were not concerned with small


crimes but only the more important offenses, such as cattle rustling, train robberies, and so on. Whenever crimes were reported, the man or men best suited to cope with the situation were sent to the scene as soon as possible. Sometimes they cooperated with local law enforcement officers, and at other times they operated in secrecy so their presence was not known in the community until their work was completed.

Charles Burton Mossman, who had for years been foreman of the Aztec Cattle Company near Holbrook, was appointed captain by Governor Murphy. Headquarters were set up at Bisbee because of its proximity to the border and most of the trouble. The methods used by Mossman were effective, but they did not meet with the approval of local law enforcement officers and their supporters, so he resigned in 1902.

Thomas H. Rynning replaced Mossman as captain on September 1, 1902, and transferred the ranger headquarters to Douglas a short time later. The force was also increased to twenty-five men. But since the principal work of the Arizona Rangers was enforcing the stock laws of the territory, and the situation was well in hand by February, 1909, they

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68 Heffner, op. cit., p. 4.
were disbanded by legislative act.

The enforcement of livestock laws referring to theft and inspection is one of the main functions of the Livestock Sanitary Commission created by the territorial legislature in 1887. All cattle sold since that time have had to be inspected for health and the legality of marks and brands. Also, any cattle coming into the state are inspected to guard against the introduction of any contagious disease.

Fleuro-pneumonia, a disease carried by ticks was a great threat in the late '80's and on through the '90's. The United States government established a quarantine line around the infected area but allowed cattle to be shipped from there to any part of the country between November 1 and January 15. It was believed that cold weather during this period would kill the ticks; and the disease would not be spread.

A shipment of cattle from below the quarantine line was offered to the Southern Pacific Railroad at El Paso about December 16, 1897, and the railroad asked for permission to bring them into Arizona. They were met at the state line by Dr. J. C. Norton, the territorial veterinarian, and placed in quarantine at Willcox for ninety days. Even though Dr. __________

Heffner, op. cit., p. 5.
Norton assured them that the danger of infection was past, a group of cattlemen made up a purse to buy the suspected cattle. They were taken to an isolated pasture for two or three months and then sold for beef. The Livestock Sanitary Commission later permitted cattle from the tick-infested areas to be brought into the territory, only upon condition that the owner pay the expense of a ninety-day quarantine at Willcox.

Not willing to depend entirely upon the territorial government, the Arizona Stock Growers Association had its beginning in Willcox in February, 1897. W. F. Nichols was elected first president and H. E. Dunlap, secretary. The organization showed satisfactory growth from the very beginning and took an active part in promoting the interests of the cattlemen. Measures were taken not only to obtain evidence against violators of stock laws but to strengthen and improve these laws.

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72 Arizona Range News, March 2, 1897.
73 Ibid., March 8, 1899.
This organization was succeeded by the Arizona Cattle Growers Association, which was organized on October 12, 1903, in Tucson. At the second meeting, held in Phoenix on January 4, 1904, the by-laws were adopted and officers elected. Captain W. H. McKittrick of Willcox was elected president and Harry L. Heffner of Vail, secretary. The law enforcement motives of the earlier organization were still in evidence, but this association had other purposes as well. For example, members have been able to increase their profits through the contracting of supplies in larger quantities and the use of services such as market reports and shipping questions.

The cattlemen in the Sulphur Springs Valley formed a local organization for mutual defense against rustlers as early as 1900; and in March, 1912, the Cochise County Stock Growers' Association was organized. Two years later, the Aravaipa Cattle Growers' Association was formed by ranchers in northern Cochise and southern Graham counties. These organizations were merged on December 5, 1916, to form the present Cochise-Graham Cattle Growers' Association, a very effective and influential group cooperating with state and national organizations.

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74 Heffner, op. cit., p. 4.
75 See Arizona Range News, December 7, 1900; March 8, 1912; March 13, 1914; April 14, 1939.
Beginning in the late '80s, there had been a tendency toward consolidation of small holdings. The large cattle companies that were thus formed improved their herds and carried on their business more efficiently to eliminate the element of chance as much as possible.

In 1900, however, most of the cattle in the Willcox district were of the longhorn type. It is true that Colonel H. C. Hooker, Colin Cameron, and others had brought in thoroughbred bulls to improve their herds a number of years before, but there had been no concerted effort among the smaller ranchers to do so. At a meeting of stockmen held on May 24 of that year, it was agreed that, through a purchasing committee, they would secure numbers of high-grade Hereford bulls in proportion to their holdings. The railroad companies also encouraged the improvement of the breed by making a concession of half fare to any man searching for purebred stock if he could produce evidence that he had actually made a purchase and shipped the animals over their lines. Through the continued purchasing of high-grade stock and the culling out of the scrubs, the excellent commercial cattle which now predominate in the area were produced.

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76 Statement by B. K. Riggs, personal interview, Dos Cabezas, Arizona, March 26, 1956.
77 Arizona Range News, March 28, 1900.
78 Ibid., August 8, 1900.
With the development of artificial water supplies and organized efforts to improve the breed came the policy of fencing in pastures and controlling the amount of grazing on them. Many ranchers also began to grow forage crops for emergency feeding. All of these factors, together with the increasing number of farmers taking up homesteads after 1909, made open range ranching impractical. By 1911, it had practically disappeared, and the ranchers were operating on land that was either patented or leased from the federal and state governments.

Statement by Mrs. Anna Lawhon, personal interview, Bowie, Arizona, April 14, 1956.
CHAPTER IV

LATER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

Open range cattle raising, although profitable for a short time after a new area is opened, is not practical in the long run, even in the excellent range country early settlers found around Willcox. This is due to the fact that the industry is limited by the supply of forage and water.

In the southwestern states it requires an average of thirty acres of grazing land to support an animal for a year. Whenever an area has too many cattle in it, the over-grazing makes it impossible for the grass to survive, especially in dry years.

When there were no fences, it was impossible to control grazing, for if one rancher reduced the number of cattle, it merely provided more grass for his neighbor’s herd. Likewise, if a rancher developed water, the neighbors benefited from it as much as he did. This would have

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been satisfactory if everyone had done his share, but there were always some who preferred to allow others to do their labor for them. Before any improvement in range management could therefore be expected, it was necessary for the individual user to have the legal right to control a certain area by fencing it in and subdividing it as he saw fit.

Although the Homestead Act of 1862 was of value in that it enabled the cattleman to obtain control of a water supply and a site for his ranch headquarters, it was not suited to the semi-arid lands of Arizona, upon which a hundred and sixty acres was not only insufficient for dry farming but for grazing purposes as well. Unfortunately, many people were not aware of this fact, as in the years 1905 through 1907, the precipitation was abnormally heavy in the Sulphur Springs Valley around Willcox. The normal rainfall for this area, based upon records from 1892 through 1955, is 11.62 inches, while the average for these years was 19.32 inches.²

Reports of this relatively abundant rainfall started a rush for homesteads. Many believed that enough water for supplemental irrigation could be obtained from artesian wells and that the government would eventually take the valley into a reclamation district.³ The movement reached

³ Arizona Range News, March 9, 1906.
its peak in 1909 after the passing of the Enlarged Homestead Act, which allowed an entryman to obtain three hundred and twenty acres of certain types of land as a homestead. One of these settlers whose claim was eight miles northwest of Willcox wrote:

"With the coming of the homesteaders, everything was changed, as each new occupant fenced his ground, not to impound his livestock but to keep the range cattle from eating his meager plantings."

Although most of the ranchers believed these farmers would not be successful, many of them sought to protect their own interests by having each of their cowboys obtain a homestead for subsequent sale to them.

In 1910, the rainfall was only 7.77 inches, and the next three years, while about normal for the area, it was less than the new homesteaders had come to expect. As a result, their dry farming efforts failed, and most of them either moved away or turned to ranching as a livelihood. Those who remained found it an easy matter to increase the size of their holdings by purchase. Obviously, it required too much time to acquire an adequate amount of grazing land by such piecemeal methods. The Grazing Homestead Act, passed in 1917, increased the maximum area of an entryman to

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six hundred and forty acres, provided the Secretary of the Interior had designated the land as "stock raising lands."\(^7\) This larger amount of land was also allowed under the Desert Land Act of 1877, which differed from the various homestead acts in that it specified that the land was to be irrigated within three years and required a payment of $1.25 an acre for it. Many obtained land in this way because residence was not necessary as under the homestead laws.\(^8\)

Another method of attaining land tenure in Arizona was by the purchasing or leasing of state lands. By the terms of the Enabling Act of 1910, four sections in each township were set aside for the support of the common schools.\(^9\) In 1912, the Arizona Legislature authorized the Land Commission to lease this state land for a term not exceeding five years for a minimum charge of three cents per acre.\(^10\) An amendment passed on November 5, 1918, also permitted state grazing lands to be sold in parcels of 640 acres.\(^11\)

\(^7\) U.S. Statutes, 64th Cong., 2d Sess., Part I, p. 862 (1917).


\(^10\) Revised Statutes of Arizona, 1913, par. 4567, sec. 12, p. 1480.

\(^11\) Constitution of the State of Arizona (annotated and copyrighted by the Department of Library and Archives, 1951) article X, sec. 11, p. 23; sec. 5, p. 65.
The first practical action toward the control of grazing on the public domain in Arizona was that taken by the Forest Service in 1906. Cattlemen were given forest reserve grazing permits for a certain number of cattle, based upon the estimated grazing capacity of the district. Beginning on June 30, 1907, the minimum charge of twenty to twenty-five cents a head was made for a summer permit and thirty-five to fifty cents for year-long grazing.

At first, no fenced enclosures were allowed, but only "drift fences," to restrict the movement of the stock. After several years, however, the cattlemen persuaded the Forest Service officials that better range management would be possible if each permit holder were responsible for a definite area. Also as a result of repeated requests, the Clark-McNary Law of June 7, 1924, was passed, which granted contracts up to ten years. This continued until the Taylor Grazing Act was passed in 1934, and permits were again issued on a year to year basis.

The forest grazing in the Willcox area was in what was known until 1917 as the Chiricahua National Forest. It then became a part of the Coronado National Forest, which

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13 Wagoner, op. cit., p. 96.
covers 1,432,000 acres in southern Arizona and New Mexico. In 1920, the Secretary of the Interior authorized the grazing of fifty-five thousand head of cattle and horses in this area. 15

The importance of grazing permits in this region is indicated by the reaction of the Cochise-Graham Cattle Growers in 1953 when it was announced that efforts were being made to take the Chiricahua Mountain area out of the jurisdiction of the Forest Service. Since they considered the Forest Service program efficient and beneficial, a resolution was passed that the weight of the organization be thrown against the movement. Largely because of the influence of this group, the proposal was never carried out.

Not until June 28, 1934, was there a national law to control grazing on the unappropriated public lands. Known as the Taylor Grazing Act, this law authorized the Secretary of the Interior to issue grazing permits to bona fide residents of the various grazing districts upon the payment of a reasonable fee. 17 These permits were to be valid for a

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16 Arizona Range News, April 17, 1953.
17 Wagoner, op. cit., p. 140, citing a letter from Ed Pierson, Regional Chief, Division of Range Management, April 15, 1949, stating that the grazing fee rate in grazing districts in Arizona from 1935 to May 1, 1947 was five cents per animal per month.
period of not more than ten years, with permittees having preference right of renewal upon the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior. Fences, wells, reservoirs and other improvements could be constructed on the public land if approved on the grazing permit and if they were in compliance with the state laws. Due to the fact that the land had not been classified, regular permits were not issued to Arizona stockmen in 1935 but only temporary licenses. Gradually the ten-year permits were introduced.

Many large ranches in the Willcox area are comprised of several different types of lands. In 1929, the Sierra Bonita consisted of 35,000 acres of private land, 20,000 acres of state leased lands and 45,000 acres of forest acreage. The Cook Cattle Company had at that time 3,000 acres of patented land and 100,000 acres of leased lands. The patented land offers greater security, but that is offset to some extent by the fact that taxes on it amount to more than grazing fees on public land.

20 Arizona Range News, August 23, 1929.
21 Ibid., November 8, 1929.
The cattle business in the Sulphur Springs Valley has progressed steadily since the turn of the century, in spite of adversities. One of these occurred in May and June of 1907, when there was a drought as well as a financial panic. Ranchers wanted to dispose of their stock, but buyers were unable to obtain money from the banks. By fall the situation had improved considerably, however.

Again in 1915 drought forced cattlemen to dispose of part of their holdings in order to provide sufficient food for the remainder. Winter rains encouraged the grass so that by March the range was sufficient to keep the stock in good condition.

Although there had been a decrease in the size of herds because of recent droughts, the high prices for beef brought about by World War I were a great stimulus to the cattle industry. In March, 1917, beef was worth $8.00 to $9.50, with feeders finding a ready market. Ranchers increased production by keeping most of the heifers and raising forage.

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24 Arizona Range News, September 17, 1915.
crops for supplemental feeding. Prices continued to rise throughout the war. In July, 1918, for example, the government was paying twenty-three and a half cents a pound for army beef. That the cattlemen in the Sulphur Springs Valley were meeting the demand is indicated by the fact that several thousand cattle left Willcox every week during both the spring and fall shipping seasons. Eight thousand head were shipped during the first two weeks of June.  

By 1920, however, a combination of factors threatened ruin for many ranchers. The market was very unstable, but feed and labor costs were high. To make matters worse, a severe drought set in, and it became necessary either to provide feed for the cattle or ship them. Cattlemen were so desperate they were willing to try anything as feed. The Monk outfit's experiment of grinding yucca in a hammer mill and feeding it was unsuccessful because it made the cattle sick. Mabry Lawson of the Mule Shoe Ranch was able to save many of his cattle by sending out some of his cowboys with blow torches to burn spines off prickly pear cactus so they could be eaten.

27 Arizona Range News, June 7, 1918.
28 Arizona Cattleman, II, No. 31 (October 7, 1918), 1.
29 Arizona Range News, June 14, 1918.
Many ranch owners around Willcox were new in the business, being attracted into it by the possibility of huge profits during the war. Due to their lack of experience, they made unwise investments. For example, some had purchased cattle at $160 per head that later went down to $15. The federal government had granted loans without much investigation, and when they were not repaid by 1925, began foreclosure proceedings that eventually put many local cattlemen out of business.  

A favorable trend that became noticeable in the twenties was the increase in the number of cattle shipped to the California market as a result of the great increase in population there. In 1920, the figure was 81,196 head; by the following year it had increased to 130,751. A shorter haul and lower shipping costs meant greater profits to Arizona stockmen.  

This market has continued to improve through the years until by 1948, it accounted for sixty-three percent of the total shipments.

The depression which began in 1929 did not seem to affect the cattle business immediately, but a decrease in the demand for beef, along with poor range conditions, made

32 The Southwestern Stockman-Farmer, XXXIX, No. 4 (February 28, 1922), 4.
33 "Arizona Cattle Shipments--1948 Annual Summary with Comparisons," Arizona Cattlelog, IV, No. 10 (June, 1949), 38.
the cattleman's position rather precarious by the autumn of
1930, and it continued to be for the next three years.

In the fall of 1933, ranchers were greatly interested in a proposal by the American National Livestock Association that the federal government attempt to improve beef prices by some sort of controlled production program. The following February, a group of cattlemen in southern Cochise County shipped a carload of calves donated to help defray the expenses of representatives who were working with government officials on such a plan. 34

In the spring of 1934, a severe drought, which extended over most of the nation, led the Agricultural Adjustment Administration to institute an emergency cattle program. Cochise County, along with Graham and Greenlee Counties, was declared an emergency area on June 7, and an emergency cattle purchase plan was set up to apply to the area. 35

The cattle were inspected, and those classified as acceptable were purchased for from one to fourteen dollars a head, depending upon age, and shipped out. Those condemned as too weak for shipping were purchased for from one to six dollars and slaughtered on the range. In case there were

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34 Arizona Range News, February 9, 1934.
35 Letter from Congresswoman Isabella Greenway to the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson, Arizona, June 8, 1934. This letter is on file at the above-named institution.
liens on the cattle, "benefit payments" of from three to six dollars were paid to the producer, such payment not subject to the liens. The program thus enabled cattlemen to realize a small return for stock that would probably have otherwise been a total loss. It also tended to stabilize the cattle market and provided food for the needy, as all suitable cattle were diverted to those who were unable to buy beef.

Seventy-nine carloads of cattle had been purchased and shipped from Willcox by July 4, and seven or eight hundred had been killed on the range. A total of 17,281 head of cattle, representing payments of $236,714, were shipped by the time the campaign ended on January 15, 1935.

Since heavy rains fell in the fall of 1934 and again in the spring of 1935, range conditions were improved. Fortunately, the government's slaughtering of cattle in 1934 had also brought about an improved market. In May, 1935, yearlings were bringing thirty dollars a head, as compared with eighteen dollars offered the year before.

37 Arizona Range News, July 6, 1934.
38 Arizona Daily Star, April 26, 1935.
By 1936, cattle shipments had increased considerably. During November of that year, 12,460 head were shipped from Willcox, as compared to slightly over 10,000 during the same month in 1934. 40

Apparently it was at this time that Willcox was dubbed "Cattle Capital of the Nation."

Willcox has long been acknowledged as the leading cattle shipping point in Arizona and the Southwest. According to Mr. Wootan, a United States inspector who recently visited this point, says it is now the leading shipping point in the entire United States for shipping cattle direct from the range. 41

As a result of continued scarcity of well-finished cattle, prices in September of 1937 reached $19.90 per hundred pounds, the highest they had been since November and December of 1919. Some recession occurred in October, but the market was still highly favorable. 42 Unsatisfactory feed and water supplies in October and November led many cattlemen to reduce their herds. Nearly four thousand head of cattle left Willcox during the first four days of November. The pens were too small to accommodate these heavy shipments, and some cattlemen had to hold their herds in the

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40 See Arizona Range News, November 20; December 18, 1936.

41 Ibid., December 18, 1936. The Mr. Wootan referred to was J. Frank Wootan, Livestock Sanitary Commission Inspector for Willcox District No. 6.

42 Weekly Market Report and News Letter, XVI, No. 38A (October 26, 1937.)
open flats just outside of town. During the period from July 1 to December 31, 1937, a total of 29,648 head were loaded, and the estimated total for the year was 40,000 head.

Market and range conditions remained about the same during 1938 and 1939, with a decided improvement in 1940. During the following years, the demand for cattle increased as a result of army purchases, and by 1942, top fat steers were selling for $14.25 per hundred pounds on the Phoenix market. In April, 1943, after meat rationing had begun, fat cattle prices rose to the highest peak since 1919, later going down about two cents a pound and remaining there.

The market for feeder stock was poor in the fall of 1944 because feed prices were too high in relation to the price of cattle. More and more animals were going directly from the range to the slaughter house. Furthermore, a shortage of help and late rains made it advisable for many cattlemen to curtail their herds somewhat.

A total of

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43 Arizona Range News, November 11, 1937.
45 George W. Barr, Arizona Agriculture, 1943, Bulletin No. 188, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Arizona (February, 1943), p. 188.
46 George W. Barr, Arizona Agriculture, 1944, Bulletin No. 192, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Arizona (January, 1944), p. 8.
31,032 head were shipped from Willcox that year.48

The government was purchasing fifty-five to eighty percent of all beef processed at federally inspected plants in 1945.49 Because of a heavy demand for the armed forces as well as for refugees and prisoners in Europe, very little was left for civilians. Demands and prices remained high for the next three and a half years. Cattlemen who took great risks made profits in proportion to their investments. Shipments from Willcox were only 24,088 in 1945, but increased to 29,304 in 1946 and on up to 33,605 in 1947.50

The first major reduction in cattle prices since January, 1938, occurred between July, 1948, and February, 1949. On the Los Angeles market, slaughter steers dropped from $34.50 to $21.50.51 Several factors were responsible for this decrease:

1. Availability of cheap pork.
2. Canadian imports.
3. Loss of government contracts due to Argentine imports.
4. An attempt on the part of packing houses to hold prices down.
5. A fall-off of consumer demand.

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49 Arizona Farmer-Producer, XXIV, No. 11 (June 2, 1945), 11.
52 Arizona Farmer-Producer, XXVIII, No. 3 (February 5, 1949), 17.
Fortunately, ranchers in the Willcox area had reduced their herds in 1947 and did not lose as much as they would have otherwise. Because of the drought, some of them had been feeding continuously since December of that year on into 1948 and had begun to ship cattle to pastures in Oklahoma when rains finally came about the middle of July.

Following the trend of the rest of the state in decreasing shipments, only 18,756 cattle left Willcox in 1948. Range conditions were much better the following year, and although prices were lower than in 1948, cattlemen were able to make a profit because they did not have to use supplemental feeds.

As a result of the Korean situation, meat prices went up considerably in 1951. The Office of Price Stabilization, in an attempt to reduce prices to pre-Korean levels of June, 1950, set up a schedule regulating the prices slaughterers could pay producers. This system was unfair to cattlemen because no ceilings were placed upon feed or

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56 Ibid., XXX, No. 10 (May 12, 1951), 26.
other supplies necessary to the operation of a ranch.\(^57\)

After a great deal of pressure from various cattle growers' organizations, the plan was given up in the latter part of the summer. As a result, an active demand for feeder cattle soon developed.\(^58\) Cattlemen in the Sulphur Springs Valley began selling calves earlier than usual because feed was getting short and prices were good, a top price of forty-one dollars per hundred pounds being reported.\(^59\) According to J. F. Wootan, a total of 25,000 head passed through the Willcox stockyards in 1951.

In the fall of 1952, drought conditions in Texas and Oklahoma resulted in an increased movement of cattle and offset the strong consumer demand that had been keeping prices up. Choice 900-1100 pound steers which were bringing $34 per hundred pounds in September, 1952, were worth only $27

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57 Ibid., No. 13 (June 23, 1951), 6.
58 George W. Barr, Arizona Agriculture, 1952, Bulletin No. 242, Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Arizona (January, 1952), 12.
59 Arizona Farmer-Producer, XXX, No. 23 (November 10, 1951), 25.
60 Arizona Range News, February 18, 1952.
61 Arizona Farmer-Producer, XXXII, No. 3 (January 31, 1953), 47.
in January of 1953. 62

The downward trend continued in 1953, bringing about a decrease in the demand for feeder cattle and an increase in the supply sold for slaughter, of which there was already a surplus.

Ralph Cowan, a prominent Sulphur Springs Valley cattleman and President of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association, said in an address to that organization, "a decline was inevitable, and we anticipated it; however, we did not expect the abrupt drop without a comparable decline in other commodity prices, and especially a decline in cattle feed!" 63

Drought in widespread areas, including both Arizona and Texas, brought about heavy shipments in the fall and lowered prices even more. Medium to choice feeder steers and yearlings were bringing only $15 to $18.75 per hundred pounds at Los Angeles on the week ending November 9. 64

Nevertheless, a total of 35,433 head of cattle were inspected and shipped from Willcox in 1953.

Some cattlemen favored government price supports, especially the smaller operators, but most of them were against the idea. Forrest Froelich, a Willcox rancher, expressed the reasons for their stand clearly in the following statement:

Personal opinions differ according to the particular situation; I am glad that one group of producers can stand firm even when things get rough. Northern Cochise and Graham Counties are unhappy because of a dry August. But there is nothing wrong with the cow business that rain will not cure. And I believe that is the only cure.

The cattle situation in the Sulphur Springs Valley was improved in 1954 by abundant summer rains, which not only improved the range but made plenty of water available for farming. As a result, many ranchers turned to growing feed so they could fatten their own cattle. Furthermore, cattle prices had apparently become stabilized at a satisfactory level.

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However, drought conditions had developed by May, 1955, over most of Arizona's range country, including that around Willcox, and supplemental feeding became necessary. Under the plan that was set up for government aid, the Farm Home Administration county committee determined the needs of the rancher, and a certificate of purchase was issued. This paper entitled him to purchase surplus grains at a reduced price. 

Summer rains improved the range in late summer and fall so that the program could be discontinued.

The cattle industry in the Willcox area is essentially one of range production on a cow and calf basis. Calves and yearlings are the principal source of income, but of course the fluctuations of the market and varying range conditions may make it advisable for a cattleman either to increase or decrease the size of his herd, and other types of cattle may be sold.

Shipping is largely a seasonal proposition. The spring roundup begins in mid-April and is followed by a short shipping season that extends through June, with the heaviest shipments in May. The fall roundup begins in September, and shipping continues from then until January. November is the month of greatest activity, when nearly half of the annual shipments are made.

During these roundups, all calves born since the last one are branded, earmarked and vaccinated. The cattle that are to be shipped are separated from the others and, in many cases, loaded into trucks that take them directly to their final destination. This is a procedure very much different from that of the open range days, when herds of as large as two thousand head would be driven up to sixty miles to the shipping pens at Willcox.

In 1954, an important change took place in the procedure of marketing cattle at Willcox. Practically all had until then been sold direct to feeders, packers or order buyers. On April 15, the Willcox Livestock Auction began operations in a new building a mile out from the center of town on the Bowie highway. It has 2,500 feet of floor space and seating capacity for six hundred buyers. Livestock totalling 17,700 head from New Mexico, Texas and a large part of southern Arizona were auctioned off here during its first year of operation.

Not all of the cattle were being shipped directly from the range for sale as feeders. The first cattleman in the Sulphur Springs Valley to finish cattle on a commercial basis was Harry Hooker, who installed a large feed mill shortly after he assumed management of the Sierra Bonita

Ibid., April 9; 23, 1954; April 15, 1955.
FEEDING PENS AT THE SIERRA BONITA RANCH, 1955
Ranch in 1933. The plant was equipped to handle a thousand cattle efficiently if run at capacity.

Others entering the business later were Haynes Moore and A. R. Spikes, who, along with the Hooker outfit, handled approximately 5500 head of cattle in 1954. Many small operators have also begun growing feed crops to finish their own cattle or provide supplemental feeding in case of drought, thus taking a great deal of the risk out of cattle raising. Many of these cattle are slaughtered for local consumption.

Throughout the years, the cattlemen of the Sulphur Springs Valley, along with their associates in other areas, have faced many problems. Some of them have been solved while others have not, and new ones have developed from time to time. The industry entered 1956 with a large cattle population, low prices for the finished product and high production costs. It might seem that government price supports would be an easy solution, but the cattlemen have preferred to remain on an unsubsidized basis rather than to subject themselves to government controls. They are accomplishing

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71 Ibid., February 26, 1943; August 8, 1947; "Cowboy Corner," Arizona Cattlemen, VI, No. 12 (August, 1951), 38.
73 Ibid., September 23, 1949.
this by doing everything possible to increase efficiency and decrease production costs.

One way of lowering the cost per pound of beef is to improve the herds by culling out the breeding stock that do not produce offspring with a high rate of gain, replacing them with the best available. Breeding and feeding are also regulated by consumer preferences as to types of beef.  

Several ranches near Willcox, including Rancho Sacatal and the Cowden Livestock Co., are handling registered stock on a large scale and providing these replacements. Some experimenting has been done with Aberdeen-Angus and Brahman cattle as well as with cross-breeds, but it is generally conceded that Herefords are most practical for this section.  

Range improvement is also being carried on. This includes the removal of brush and objectionable plants, followed by reseeding with grass, an expensive proposition but one which will be profitable in the long run in improving the grazing and increasing the water supply.  

The local cattlemen are also cooperating in a national beef program to promote great consumption of their product and better utilization of various grades and cuts. They are

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hoping that an increased consumer demand will remedy the price situation to some extent. Prices naturally fluctuate from day to day, but in the spring of 1956, they were about the same as they were the year before.

No formal yearly report is made of the number of cattle shipped from Willcox, but a conservative estimate, substantiated by informal reports from time to time, is that an average of forty to fifty thousand left the inspection district until 1935, when it was divided. Since that time, the average has been approximately thirty thousand a year. Regardless of what happens, Willcox is carrying on and doing its best to live up to the title of "Cattle Capital of the Nation."

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Statement by J. Frank Wootan, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, August 2, 1955. Mr. Wootan was livestock inspector for twenty-four years, from 1931 until 1954, when he was retired at the age of seventy-seven.
MINING IN THE WILLCOX AREA

Because of its importance as a shipping point and commercial center, Willcox has been greatly influenced by the success or failure of various mines located within its trading area. The Dos Cabezas Mining District, probably most important to the economy of Willcox because of its proximity, is located about twelve miles southeast in the Dos Cabezas Mountains. The first important claim there was the Juniper, located by John Casey in 1878. Although Casey did not have the capital to develop the mine, he refused to sell or lease it for many years.¹

Finally, in April, 1903, the Chicago and Arizona Copper Company was organized by a group of local businessmen with Thomas B. Chattman of Dos Cabezas as president. Others interested in the venture were W. F. Nichols, Pablo Soto, and James J. Riggs.² After developing the mine, they

² Articles of Incorporation of the Chicago and Arizona Copper Company, on file at the Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, Tucson, Arizona.
leased it to various outfits, who worked it with varying degrees of success. John Casey died in 1904, and when the probate court ordered the estate closed in 1909, Pablo Soto attempted to sell the property. Since there were no bidders, it was finally turned over to those who had heavy claims against the estate. 3

In 1917, the Dos Cabezas Gold Ridge Mining Corporation was organized to work the Casey claims, and some development work was carried on. Five years later, the property was sold to a Mr. Huntsman, the president of the corporation, who was the highest bidder. Lessees worked the mine from time to time until 1934, but the total production since 1878 has been estimated at only $36,000. 4 Much of the importance of the mine lies in the fact that rich strikes periodically encouraged prospectors in the development of other claims in the district.

Another early claim was that of John D. Emersley, who discovered some very rich ore in 1883. Since he was unsuccessful in obtaining financial backing, he worked alone, packing the ore out on his back and living upon home-grown


greens and vegetables. This solitary way of life was continued until his death in 1907.

The Silver Cave, the Silver Cave South, the Bear Cave, and the Greenhorn were other early mines in the district. The first of these had three veins from three to seven feet wide that averaged thirty-five dollars to the ton in gold. Some pockets assayed as high as five hundred dollars per ton. A ten-stamp mill was operating in 1884 and turning out considerable quantities of gold and silver.

By 1880, the village of Dos Cabezas had quite a number of houses, several business establishments, and a schoolhouse. The National Mail and Transportation Company made daily stops with both east and westbound stages. As an indication of the population during the period, sixty-five voters registered there in 1882.

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5 Mortimer Wien, personal interview, Dos Cabezas, Arizona, March 18, 1956.
8 Hamilton, op. cit., p. 169.
10 Great Register of Cochise County, 1882.
No great boom occurred in the early years. Although occasional rich strikes were made, no large bodies of high grade ore could be found. The small mine owners soon found their resources exhausted from futile development work. The Sulphur Valley News reported that the camp was idle in 1894, and many houses were untenanted.

In 1899, however, the Dos Cabezas Consolidated Mining Company began operating what was known as the Oregon Mine. After running a 1500-foot tunnel to top a ledge 700 feet below the surface, they struck a 60-foot ore body that assayed 25 percent copper, $3.50 per ton in silver, and $2.50 per ton in gold.

Ore bodies of considerable size were also encountered by the Philadelphia Mining Company and Scanlon and Company during the next two years, and in 1903, the Nebraska Gold Mining Company began operating a large mill in Gold Gulch. Dos Cabezas was gradually coming to life again.

In 1905, a mysterious gentleman who called himself "Mr. Page" appeared on the scene, accompanied by a mining engineer, Captain B. W. Tibbey. These two men prospected in the area and filed a number of claims. Others were

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11 Sulphur Valley News, October 9, 1894.
12 See Arizona Range News, February 7; August 29, 1900.
13 Ibid., July 17, 1903.
14 Mortimer Wien, personal interview, Dos Cabezas, Arizona, February 18, 1956.
acquired, covering an area of six hundred acres.

Page, whose real name was Thomas N. McCauley, organized the Mascot Copper Company in June, 1907, with a capitalization of ten million dollars. After a slight delay caused by the panic of 1907, development was begun on a large scale. Glowing reports of the great ore bodies being encountered appeared in the local press. The following headline is typical: "Many Thousands of Tons of Ore in Sight—Property Bids Fair to Become Arizona's Greatest Copper Producer."

The holdings of the new company were increased in 1909 when they acquired control of the Dos Cabezas Consolidated Mines Company by exchanging ten shares of Mascot stock for one of Consolidated. A great stock-selling campaign was begun in which spectacular methods were used to attract the attention of thousands of small investors. A great stockholders' banquet

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15 *Arizona Range News*, September 20, 1907.
17 *Arizona Range News*, October 18, 1907.
18 Letter from A. Prenzlauer, Secretary, Dos Cabezas Consolidated Mines Company, Los Angeles, California, to Thomas B. Chattman, Dos Cabezas, Arizona, March 1, 1909. Chattman file.
was held in the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco, and many people were taken to visit the mine in special railroad cars, all at company expense.\textsuperscript{19} Special editions of the Arizona Range News were sent all over the country with editorials praising the progress at Mascot and recommending the purchase of stock. The original selling price was three dollars a share, but it was later increased to four and finally five dollars. By August, 1910, it was reported that three hundred thousand dollars worth of stock had been sold. However, seventy-five percent of the shares remained in the hands of the promoters.

On February 22, 1910, a huge new air compressor plant began operating at the mine. According to the Arizona Range News, the enthusiasm was as great "as that occasioned by the launching of a battleship."\textsuperscript{21} It was announced two weeks later that a store, a boarding house, sleeping quarters for employees, and a new office building had been completed.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} Mining and Scientific Press, August 21, 1909.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Arizona Range News, April 10, 1910.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., May 6, 1910.
One of the local citizens had a rather dim view of the proceedings when he wrote to a friend:

I have never heard any good mines say they had enough ore to justify the extensive buildings on top of the ground they have done. You know as well as I do, that in order to sell stock they must make some kind of a showing somewhere, and they do not know enough about mining to make it underground....

Only occasional shipments of ore were made before June, 1913, as the management had stated that they did not intend to ship large quantities until a railroad had been built to the mine. At that time, however, a large truck and trailer were purchased to haul ore to Willcox, and regular shipments were begun.

A great celebration, complete with flags and bunting, was held in Willcox on January 27, 1915, when the construction of the Mascot and Western Railroad was begun. Since a special holiday had been declared, a large crowd was present to watch T. N. McCauley turn the first shovelful of dirt. After the ceremony, everyone enjoyed a barbecue while the state industrial school band provided music.

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25 Ibid., July 4, 1913.
26 Ibid., January 29, 1915.
The completion of the railroad was celebrated on June 15 at the Mascot townsitewith an estimated four thousand people in attendance. A special train from the Pacific Coast and three Pullman cars from the East brought many stockholders to witness the driving of the copper spike. 27

Officials reported that 1,256 tons of ore, netting eight dollars per ton, were shipped during October of that year, paying more than half the operating expenses of the camp. This was followed by the announcement that the November returns would place the company on a self-sustaining basis. 28

Production was curtailed for about four months early in 1916 after a fire, believed to be of incendiary origin, destroyed the power house. 30 Repairs were completed in the early part of June, and ore shipments were resumed. 31

On July 1, 1917, the Mascot property was leased to the American Smelting and Refining Company for a twenty-year

27 Ibid., June 18, 1915.
28 Ibid., November 4, 1915.
29 Ibid., December 3, 1915.
Increased production and many improvements were reported under the new management, but on April 1, 1918, the lease was relinquished. No reason for this action was announced at that time, but from information that has since been revealed, one can assume that the lessee was losing money on the proposition.

By 1920, the Mascot Copper Company was in a very unfavorable financial condition. In a statement issued August 31, the assets were listed as $12,733 while liabilities were $472,780. This state of affairs was undoubtedly due to the management’s policy of trying to impress the stockholders with the amount of work being done on the property without regard to the efficiency of their operations. Some high grade ore was encountered but not enough to justify the huge overhead they were sustaining.

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32 Ibid., April 5, 1918.
33 Walter Harvey Weed, The Mines Handbook (New York: W. H. Weed, 1920), XIV, 175. Reported production for 1918 was 13,276 tons containing three percent copper and 0.5 ounces of silver.
34 Ibid., 1924, p. 374.
35 Statement by Mortimer Wien, personal interview, Dos Cabezas, Arizona, February 18, 1956. Wien began working for Mascot in 1910 and continued in various capacities until the mine was closed in 1930. During this time, he observed many cases in which, in his opinion, the management used very poor judgment. At times the ore sent to the mill was not worth mining.
McCauley solved the financial problem, temporarily at least, by a reorganization. The Central Copper Company, with a capital stock of ten million dollars, was formed by a merger of the Mascot Mining Company, the Western Finance Company, and the Associated Copper Company. The "new" company began operating on February 15, 1919, and by January, 1921, McCauley reported that $4,500,000 had been spent on construction. This included a new mill, which was finished in September, 1919.

Soon an item appeared in the newspapers to the effect that Justice Guy of the New York State Supreme Court had "issued an order directing the Central Copper Company of Arizona, Inc. to show cause why it should not be enjoined from further selling its capital stock." This came several weeks after McCauley's announcement that since the company's financial campaign had been completed, the general offices would be moved to Dos Cabezas "in the interest of economy."

The New York Supreme Court granted an injunction prohibiting further sale of Central Copper Company stock in

36 Weed, op. cit., 1924, p. 279.
37 The El Paso Times, January 5, 1924.
38 Tombstone Epitaph, September 28, 1919.
39 Arizona Republican, January 30, 1924.
40 Ajo Copper News, January 26, 1924.
CRUSHER AND CONCENTRATOR AT THE CENTRAL COPPER COMPANY PROPERTIES, 1956
that state on February 3, 1924. This was done on the grounds that, while ample funds had been available for some time, the company had not developed its properties sufficiently to produce copper or determine their actual value. Michigan and California also refused to permit the sale of Central stock upon the advice of their engineers.

To allay the fears of its loyal stockholders who might have heard of these proceedings, the Board of Directors of the Central Copper Company published a statement of conditions in the Copper Review, the company newspaper, which all of them received:

The facts are that the general condition of the mine is excellent....Our costs are low and production satisfactory. There is no reason whatever for fear or apprehension on the part of our stockholders.  

In January, 1926, the management reported that 170 men were employed on construction work and that the number would be increased as more of the machinery arrived. A month later, about four hundred people were on the payroll at Dos Cabezas. These, along with their families, made up an estimated population of a thousand at the camp. Thirty

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41 Weed, op. cit., 1924, p. 279.
42 Ibid., p. 278.
43 Copper Review, June, 1925.
44 The Mining Journal, January 28, 1926.
45 Copper Review, February, 1926.
more new homes were under construction in July.\textsuperscript{46}

Improvements completed by December of that year included a new power plant, a crusher, a concentrator, and an aerial tramway 8,284 feet long to carry ore from the Elma Mine, which was located on the opposite side of the Dos Cabezas range. Also, a battery-operated electric locomotive replaced the horses that had been hauling ore cars from the Consolidated tunnel.\textsuperscript{47}

These improvements had been completed for only a very short time when the promoters suddenly became less optimistic about the future of the operations. In a letter dated February 21, 1927, John W. Prout, the mine superintendent, informed the stockholders that since the selling price of copper and silver had dropped, it was advisable to extract no more ore than was necessary to pay current operating expenses.\textsuperscript{48}

About a year later, it was announced that the Southwestern Securities Corporation, a holding company, had been organized for the benefit of the loyal Central stockholders. This corporation would acquire control of the Consolidated National Bank in Tucson, a million dollar bank and office building, a real estate and subdivision company, the Tucson

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{46} Bisbee Review, July 1, 1926.
\item \textsuperscript{47} Copper Review, December, 1926.
\item \textsuperscript{48} Ibid., Vol. VI, No. 9 (no date).
\end{itemize}
Trust Company, and over half the stock of the Central Copper Company. This was followed by the announcement that McCaul-
ey, who was already Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Consolidated National Bank and who owned seventy-five percent of the stock in that institution, had been elected president. On February 1, all of the offices of the Central Copper Company, except for that of the operating department, were moved to Tucson. This was done, according to McCauley, in the interest of greater efficiency.

Central stockholders were permitted to trade their shares in for an equal amount of stock in the new corporation on a two-for-one basis. The balance of the purchase price could be paid one-tenth down and the rest in nine equal monthly payments. This gave them an opportunity "to secure stability and strength through high grade and sub-
stantial types of investments which are sufficiently divers-
sified to practically eliminate risk."

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49 Copper Review and Southwestern Progress, January 1, 1928.  
50 Arizona Daily Star, January 10, 1928.  
51 Ibid., January 22, 1928.  
52 Letter from T. N. McCauley to stockholders in the Central Copper Company, Southwestern Progress and Copper Review, April, 1928.  
53 Southwestern Progress and Copper Review, April, 1928.
Production of the Central Copper Company in 1928 was 1,692 tons of ore yielding 60,515 pounds of copper, 1,339 ounces of silver, and 16 ounces of gold. No production was reported in 1929, and in the latter part of that year, only twenty-six men were employed. The total production of the Mascot and Central Copper Companies during their twenty years of operation was 3,500,000 pounds of copper and silver valued at $25,000, for a total value of $750,000.

On January 21, 1932, a suit was brought against the Mascot Copper Company by the Southwestern Securities Corporation for $1,071,600 plus interest and costs. The property of the Mascot Company was sold at public auction on February 29, 1932, and purchased by the Southwestern Securities for $100,000.

The properties were acquired by J. B. Cook in 1936 as the result of a suit brought against the Central Copper Company, the Southwestern Securities Corporation, and the Southwestern Metals Company. Then in January, 1937, they

56 Certificate of Sale No. 8379, filed March 1, 1932, by Fred A. Kenney, Sheriff of Cochise County, Arizona.
57 Deeds of Real Estate, Cochise County, Arizona, No. 120, pp. 493-98.
were sold to Gladys M. Tout for an undisclosed amount. 58

Since 1928, the only operations at the Central properties have been on a small scale. For example, in 1934, it was reported that E. I. Tout, a lessee, was shipping about a carload of ore every six weeks. 59

The Central Copper Company had over fifty thousand stockholders, most of them wage earners who were unaware of the speculative nature of their investment. 60 While the company was in its death throes, T. N. McCauley disappeared to parts unknown. When no news of operations arrived for some time and letters of inquiry went unanswered, the stockholders began to realize that their investment was one from which they could expect no returns. Thus ended the mining venture upon which many people had placed their hopes.

Most of the heavy equipment at the mines has been removed and sold for salvage, and only a few houses are left at the Mascot townsite. The Mascot and Western Railroad discontinued operations in 1931, and the tracks were torn up four years later. 61

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58 Ibid., No. 123, pp. 465-70
59 Arizona Range News, November 2, 1934.
60 Rand and Sturgis, op. cit., p. 289.
61 See Arizona Range News, February 6, 1931; Arizona Republic, October 20, 1935.
Dos Cabezas, which had been enjoying a certain degree of prosperity, soon dwindled to a ghost town. Many houses and business buildings have been torn down for materials or moved to other towns, so there is now but little left to tell the tale.

Hopes for a revival of the district came in 1932 when the Consolidated Gold Mines Company, Limited acquired several of the largest gold properties. In 1934, thirty-five men were working at the old Dives Mine, which had been operated intermittently since 1877. Between twenty-five and thirty-five thousand dollars' worth of ore was shipped in December, 1935. Three years later, nine hundred tons of ore per month were being produced, and a large rod mill and flotation plant were in operation. However, production was halted in November, 1938, and after some months of idleness, the property was leased to the Mines Development and Operating Company of Newark, New Jersey, for twenty-five years.

A number of other mines in the area such as the Gold Prince and the Le Roy have been worked at various times since

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62 Shields, op. cit., p. 45. See also Arizona Range News, March 16, 1934.
63 Arizona Range News, February 8, 1935.
64 The Mining Journal, October 15, 1938.
65 Shields, op. cit., pp. 45-46.
Except for occasional rich strikes, these properties have not been particularly profitable. Nevertheless, they have, by providing work for local men and a market for supplies, contributed to the economy of the neighboring towns.

The Aravaipa Mining District, although located approximately fifty miles northwest of Willcox has still had its effect upon the town. It had its beginning in 1870 when Lewis Douglas struck a rich body of ore which contained mostly lead with some gold and silver. By 1881, the district had "come to the front" and was attracting a considerable amount of capital. A decline in the price of silver caused most of the mines to close for several years, but in 1896, regular shipments were resumed. A few of the mines such as the Grand Reef, the Aravaipa, and the various properties of the Athletic Mining and Smelting Company have been operated on a fairly large scale. However, most of the mines in the district are small and are profitable to operate only when the metals they produce are in great demand.


68 Arizona Weekly Star, April 28, 1881.
Many Willcox people have been interested in the Johnson Mining District, twenty-three miles southwest of their town. It had its beginning sometime in the '70's when the richest ores were worked in a primitive way and hauled by ox team to distant shipping points.

By May, 1882, development work was in progress on a number of claims, including the Peabody Mine owned by the Russell Company. They were down to a depth of over a hundred feet and were running drifts for about seventy feet each way on a vein rich in copper and silver. A thirty-ton smelter was in operation at this time at Russellville, about three miles south of the mine.

In March, 1883, the smelter was moved to a site only about a hundred and fifty feet from the mine entrance, where it was believed there would be an adequate water supply. The large well drilled at Russellville the year before had been found inadequate.

A new townsite was laid out about one-fourth of a mile from the mine. This town, which was named Johnson in honor of the general manager of the company, soon had a

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69 Letter from "H. T." to the editor of the Tombstone Epitaph, May 20, 1882.
70 Tombstone Republican, March 9, 1883.
71 Tombstone Epitaph, November 25, 1882.
population of three hundred. Many homes and business establishmens were moved there from Russellville.

The Republic Mine, northwest of the Peabody, was developed by a German named George Sherrer and his partner, a Mr. Joyce. One of the best producers in the district, it has been sold and leased several times. The Cobriza Development Company, which had a lease during World War I, shipped five thousand tons a month to the smelter at Douglas. They also operated a short line railroad connecting with the main line of the Southern Pacific at Dragoon.

The Black Prince Copper Company secured a number of claims lying between the Peabody and Republic properties and began production on a small scale in 1901. The Mammoth Mine, which they developed, was leased to the Arizona Consolidated Copper Company, along with the Republic, for several years after 1905. No adequate funds were set aside for development purposes, and when the surface deposits were

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72 Tombstone Republican, March 9, 1883.
73 Arizona Range News, March 27, 1953.
75 Arizona Range News, September 27, 1901.
exhausted, these mines were shut down. 76

The Bonanza Belt Copper Company, which had been working the Peabody Mine for a number of years, also closed down at about the same time as Arizona Consolidated. Johnson was idle until 1912, when operations were resumed. 77 By 1915, the high price of copper had caused a total of eight companies to become active, hiring approximately four hundred men. 78 A number of tungsten mines were also operating in the district. It is estimated that at the peak of operation in 1917 there were five hundred people living in Johnson alone and about five thousand in the entire mining area. 79

After World War I was over, the price of copper fell, and most of the mines in the district closed again. 80 Small shipments of ore were made from some of them during the '20's and '30's, but extensive operations were not resumed until World War II brought an increased demand for copper and zinc. In October, 1941, it was reported that the Republic Mine was working three shifts. A carload

77 Arizona Range News, August 16, 1912.
78 Ibid., November 12, 1915.
79 Ibid., March 27, 1953.
80 Tombstone Epitaph, January 19, 1919.
81 Arizona Range News, October 31, 1941.
of ore, averaging from four to ten percent copper and six to eleven percent zinc was being shipped daily in June of the following year.

The Republic and Black Prince properties were purchased by the Cypress Mines Corporation, and operations were begun in 1944 under the name of the Coronado Copper and Zinc Company. A new 230-ton mill was placed in operation, and a new mine known as the Moore Shaft was developed about a mile north of the Republic.

Operations have been continuous from then until the present time, with the exception of a year beginning in June, 1949, when a decline in the price of copper and zinc made a shutdown necessary. In May, 1955, ore was being removed at the rate of 240 tons a day by 143 men operating on two shifts. The company provides some housing, but most of the employees live in neighboring towns, including Willcox and Benson.

A much more prosperous district in its day was the Courtland-Gleeson mining region. Sometimes known as the Turquoise District, it is approximately thirty-five miles

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82 The Mining Journal, June 30, 1942.
84 Ibid., May 20, 1955.
85 Ibid., March 27, 1953.
south of Willcox. Earliest production there probably consisted of turquoise gathered by the Indians. The first location was made in 1877 by John Collins, and four or five other claims were located the following year. Not much ore was removed until 1883, when the Silver Bill, Tom Scott, Gleeson, and a few other smaller mines began producing considerable quantities of silver and lead from deposits near the surface. A decline in silver prices in the early nineties discouraged these operations for several years but probably stimulated interest in the development of copper properties.

John Gleason of Willcox discovered the Copper Belle or Leonard deposit in 1896. About $280,000 worth of ore containing four to seven percent copper was shipped during the next five years. In about 1901, the settlement which had been known as Turquoise was moved to the southeast and renamed Gleeson.

The Shannon Company obtained a five-year lease on the Copper Belle and eventually purchased it for about $100,000. Operations continued until 1922, when most of the best ores were exhausted.

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87 Ibid., p. 69.

88 Ibid., p. 11.
In 1901, the Humboldt claim began to yield an important amount of copper. Intensive prospecting carried on in that area showed sufficient promise for both the Arizona Eastern and the El Paso and Southwestern to build branch lines into the district in 1909. Up until this time, all the ore had to be hauled thirty miles in wagons to Cochise, the nearest shipping point. 89

The town of Courtland was also established in 1909 at a location about three miles north of Gleeson. It was named after Courtland Young, one of the owners of the Great Western Mining Company. 90

The building of railroads into the district greatly accelerated production for a time. However, in 1910, the Calumet and Arizona and Copper Queen companies closed down, reputedly because the type of ore they produced was suffering a great loss in the smelting process. The Great Western continued operations, with the 1911 production recorded at Tombstone as $323,408.54. 91 In 1912, the other companies reopened, and the district soon reached the peak of its copper production. 92

89 Ibid.
91 Courtland Arizonian, July 13, 1912.
92 Wilson, op. cit., p. 11.
According to the 1910 census, the town of Courtland had a population of 914, while Gleeson had 600. Many fine homes and business buildings were constructed in both towns, and a school costing $65,000 was built in Gleeson in 1918. However, by 1920, the larger mines had closed down and the district was on the decline. The census of that year showed that the Courtland precinct, covering somewhat more area than the town, had a population of only 414, and Gleeson had fallen to 381. In March, 1956, the ruins of a large brick store building and the jail were about all that remained at Courtland. Gleeson still had a few houses scattered about among adobe ruins and store foundations. The only business establishment operating was a small general store.

From 1906 until 1926, the Courtland-Gleeson District produced copper worth $8,211,262 and $282,887 in lead; along with smaller amounts of other minerals. Since that time, most of the activity has been by lessees working the old claims on a small scale. In March, 1956, three mines were being operated at Gleeson, the greatest activity being at

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94 Harry Christiansen, personal interview, Gleeson, Arizona, March 17, 1956.
96 Tombstone Epitaph, October 10, 1927.
the Shannon or "Old Gleeson Mine," where the Peru Lead and Zinc Company was employing approximately fifty men. Ore containing lead, silver, and manganese was being hauled to Cochise by truck for shipment to Silver City, New Mexico, for smelting. The Tejon, formerly owned by Captain W. H. McKittrick of Willcox and the Costello or Giacome Mine were also being worked.

Considerable excitement was created in Willcox when the Commonwealth or Pearce Mine, located about twenty-five miles to the south, was discovered in 1895 by John Pearce, a Cornish miner. After working at Tombstone for several years, he had invested in a cattle ranch. There he made a more or less accidental discovery of a rich ore outcropping. The most common story is that he picked up a rock to throw at a cow, and noticing its unusual weight decided to have it assayed. When the report came back that it was rich in silver, he and his brother located six mining claims, including the famous Commonwealth, along the ridge from which the rock had come. A carload of ore taken from near the surface and shipped to El Paso yielded a hundred ounces in silver and one ounce in gold. A fifty-foot shaft sunk on the west end of the outcrop yielded ore similar to that

97 Harry Christiansen, personal interview, Gleeson, Arizona, March 17, 1956.
of the first shipment. 98

When word of Pearce’s rich strike reached nearby towns, there was a great rush to file claims in the area, and the town of Pearce sprang up overnight. First it was merely tents, but later adobe and frame houses and business buildings were erected. Many houses were also moved in from Tombstone after the mines there had closed down. 99 The Sulphur Valley News reported early in 1896 that there were about a hundred and fifty men in the camp. The John H. Morton Company of Willcox had a store, and a saloon and two boarding houses were also in operation. 100

The activities at Pearce brought a considerable increase in business at Willcox, and the local business men were active in promoting their town as the supply and shipping point for the new operations. When rumors were heard that the government planned to route the mail through Tombstone, a petition in favor of a daily mail route via Willcox was circulated in Pearce and "signed by nearly the entire camp." 101


100 Sulphur Valley News, January 28, 1896.

101 Ibid., March 31, 1896.
Various financiers visited the Pearce property, including John Brockman of Silver City, New Mexico, who finally secured an option for $275,000, the amount to be paid in two years from the proceeds of the mine. Later, Brockman and his partners, R. A. F. Penrose and D. M. Barringer, both of Philadelphia, made an offer of $250,000 cash, which the Pearce family accepted. The partners then proceeded to organize the Commonwealth Mining and Milling Company, capitalized at a million dollars. Among the stockholders were three German counts, two professors at the University of Chicago, and many other prominent men.

The new owners were soon making regular shipments of ore. As Pearce had no railroad at this time, it was hauled sixteen miles north to Cochise in four wagon trains, each train being drawn by twenty horses. This was continued until the first mill was put into operation early in 1898.

Wood for fuel was hauled from the Chiricahua Mountains until 1898, when the boilers were converted to oil. This fuel was hauled from Cochise in tank wagons, one and a half carloads per day being required to keep the power plant

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102 Smith, op. cit., p. 3.
103 Ibid., p. 4.
104 Ibid., p. 5.
105 Ibid., p. 2.
Transporting the mine payroll and bullion was a problem because of the possibility of hold-ups. The Norton-Morgan commercial Company of Willcox often hid the payroll in their regular freight shipments to confuse the outlaws. The bullion being shipped out was cast into two-thousand-ounce bars and hauled out in common farm wagons.

Although silver was selling at only sixty cents per ounce, it has been estimated that Brockman, Penrose, and Barringer each made a million dollars a year until 1904. One ore body was worth $22,000 a ton, while another stope produced ore worth $5,000 in silver and an equal amount in gold.

During its peak years from 1897 to 1904, the population of Pearce has been estimated at anywhere from one to three thousand. It had become a typical wide open western town with sufficient saloons, gambling games, and prostitutes to keep the miners occupied during their leisure time. Because of its inaccessibility, it had become the hideout of many outlaws, including the Burt-Alvord-Stiles gang. These men made a career of robbing trains, stealing horses, and

106 Arizona Range News, March 8, 1901.


rustling cattle until the law finally caught up with them after the famous Cochise train robbery.

On about January 1, 1904, the Ferrocarril Cananea, Rio Yaqui y Pacifico was completed from Cochise to Pearce. However, in that same year the Commonwealth began its decline. The good ore above the water level was nearly worked out. Pumps with a capacity of four million gallons per day were installed; there was still water in the mine. Sometime in 1905, as it was proving to be unprofitable to pump this volume of water and the danger of a cave-in was increasing, the management decided to shut down. The expected cave-in occurred ten days later.

A lease on the old tailings was subsequently granted to T. D. Swatling and A. Y. Smith, who built a cyanide leaching plant to process them. In 1906, the lease was extended to the mine and the mill. Large quantities of low grade ore were processed in the next few years.

The mine was purchased by the Montana Tonopah Mining and Milling Company in 1910. A new 350-ton mill was built and a new shaft was sunk. Operations were continued until

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110 Kelley, op. cit.
111 Smith, op. cit., p. 6.
112 Ibid., p. 7.
1917, when available ores had diminished in value to the point at which this company no longer considered it profitable to continue.

In October of the same year, A. Y. Smith leased the mine in the name of the Commonwealth Development Company and shipped approximately 115,000 tons of ore during the next ten years. This lease continued until 1933, but little work was done after 1927.

During the late thirties, several other companies subleased the tailings and treated them by the flotation method. In 1940, the mine was also being operated on a small scale, but when the United States entered World War II, the miners transferred to the copper mines. The 1940 population was estimated at 660, but now the town is practically deserted.

Other mining areas that had their influence upon Willcox were those in the Chiricahua and Swisshelm Mountains, approximately forty-five miles to the south, and the Tevis District on the north side of the Dos Cabezas Mountains.

Even mining operations at Globe depended upon Willcox as a shipping point until the Gila Valley, Globe, and

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114 Smith, op. cit., p. 8.

Northern Railroad was completed to Fort Thomas in 1895. Freight was hauled from there to Globe until 1898, when the line was completed the rest of the way.

Great freight teams of oxen and mules, sometimes twenty or more hitched together and pulling three or four wagons, hauled copper to the railroad, where it was usually loaded directly onto cars. However, in about 1904, the price of copper fell to seven cents a pound, and for about a year, very little of it was shipped out. Instead it was stacked in the streets like cordwood and became so covered with dust that one could hardly see what it was. Not much of it was stolen because the ingots weighed four hundred pounds apiece. Finally in 1905, the price of copper improved, and it was shipped out.

On the return trip to Globe, the freighters usually hauled coke for the smelters. It was stored in huge bins along the railroad tracks. From the bins it was scooped up with forks and loaded upon the wagons, often being piled twelve feet high, as it was very light.

Throughout the years, many other mines within a fifty mile radius of Willcox have used it as their shipping point, and many local residents have been employed in mining.

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operations or in other types of work that are related to mining. The success of cattle raising and farming ventures in the area has also been partly due to the excellent markets provided by mining camps. Therefore, although Willcox is not a mining town, that industry has had a great influence upon its development.
CHAPTER VI

FARMING IN THE SULPHUR SPRINGS VALLEY

As early as 1892, some farming was being carried on in the Sulphur Springs Valley by miners who had "dropped the pick to seize the plow." The Willcox Agricultural and Improvement Company was subsequently organized to publicize the agricultural possibilities of the area and bring in settlers. Their efforts were not very successful, however, because of the scanty rainfall during the next decade.

The period of drought was broken in 1905 when 23.52 inches of rain fell at Willcox, more than twice the long-term average for the valley. As word of the abundant rains reached the East, the number of settlers began to increase.

The first area to be homesteaded extensively was the Kansas Settlement, which begins about five miles southeast of Willcox at the edge of the dry lake and extends about

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1 Arizona Republican, Resources Edition, 1892, p. 10.
2 Southwestern Stockman, January 13, 1894.
4 Statement by Frank Tillotson, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, November 11, 1955.
fifteen miles to the foothills of the Dos Cabezas and Chiricahua ranges. Obviously, it received this name because most of the people locating there were from the Sunflower State.

B. H. Tillotson of Oletha, Kansas, was the principal promoter, persuading his relatives and friends to take advantage of the opportunity of settling this fertile area.

Jack Hawberry surveyed the land, located the settlers, and gave them the proper section numbers so they could file their homesteads with L. V. McCourt, the District Land Commissioner.

By the spring of 1906, a steady stream of farmers was arriving to take up homesteads in the valley. Continuing rains and the discovery of artesian water were incentives for the great influx. Many of them also believed that a reclamation district would eventually be established and those locating before this was done would stand to profit thereby.

By 1908, many settlers were locating northwest of Willcox in what has come to be known as the Stewart District. New communities such as Lompoc and McAlister sprang up practically over-night, with enough people in them that post offices were established. A school was also in operation at McAlister in 1911.

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5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., December 1, 1911.
Although water could be obtained from shallow wells in most of the valley, there was no practical way of pumping enough of it for extensive irrigation. The amount of rainfall had diminished after the unusually wet years of 1905 through 1907, and most of the settlers resorted to dry farming methods. Various crops such as corn, wheat, beans, and alfalfa were tried with varying degrees of success. Eventually, most of the farmers gave it up as a losing battle. In one township that had about sixty homesteads, only two of the original settlers remained. Those who stayed either converted their farms into cattle ranches or began irrigation on a small scale.

The first artesian well in the Sulphur Springs Valley was developed in 1883 by W. J. Sanderson. Although only 38 feet deep, it produced 40,000 to 50,000 gallons in twenty-four hours. Several years later, one was drilled to a depth of 160 feet at the O. T. Ranch, five miles west of Willcox. This well flowed at an estimated rate of 200 gallons per minute and supplied enough water for hundreds of cattle.

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8 Statement by Frank Tillotson, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, November 11, 1955.
10 Sulphur Valley News, July 10, 1894.
11 Arizona Range News, April 12, 1911.
The success of these and other wells encouraged many homesteaders to seek artesian water for irrigation purposes after the evident failure of dry farming. In 1915, for example, Leonard Berry in the Kansas Settlement drilled a 640-foot well that produced 70 gallons per minute. Evidently this was as great a flow as could be expected from an artesian well in that area, but it was not enough for extensive irrigation.

An unusual experiment was carried on in 1906 in an effort to develop an inexpensive source of power for irrigation. A Mr. Post from Boston appeared in Willcox one day with plans for building a solar motor. This mechanism was designed to utilize the heat of the sun's rays to generate steam power.

Burt Parker, a local mechanic, was hired to construct the machine on the John May ranch about eight miles southwest of town. A huge reflection disk thirty-six feet in diameter caught the sun's rays and focused them upon a copper boiler six inches in diameter and twelve feet long. The steam thus generated was piped to a six-cylinder marine engine, which was used to operate a pump. It required considerable patience and ingenuity on the part of Parker, but

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Tombstone Epitaph, April 11, 1915.
he finally completed the construction.

The machine worked amazingly well. Once the mirror was focused upon the sun, a clock movement kept it in focus for the rest of the day. The sun's heat started steam in seven seconds, and full pressure would be built up in twenty seconds. Before the motor was placed in operation, a tank with a dam across the far side had been constructed to store the water. When the pump was started, the water gushed out with such force that the dam was torn out. It was not repaired, and as the pump was throwing out 1500 gallons per minute, a large area was soon flooded. Some of this water was utilized for the irrigation of corn, watermelons, and other crops, with great success.

In spite of these developments, John May was not impressed and decided to return to the Midwest. Judge S. W. McCall then had the machine moved to the Esperanza Ranch, where he used the water to irrigate pink beans. Everything was satisfactory until one day a severe hail storm not only destroyed the bean crop but broke every glass in the reflector. (It had 4,800 of them.) The solar motor was, strangely enough, never restored to working order, and the company that had promoted it went bankrupt.  

13 Arizona Range News, July 12, 1941.
Apparently the world, or the Sulphur Springs Valley at least, was not ready for solar power at that time.

Early irrigation in the valley was mainly from shallow wells with windmills or small gasoline engines pumping from 300 to 2,000 gallons per minute. In the Kansas Settlement, most of it was along a sandy ridge a short distance back from the dry lake, because a good supply of water was available there only twenty feet below the surface. Few farmers installed large pumping plants because the cost of operation was prohibitive.

As early as 1911, many were convinced that electricity provided by a central power plant would reduce the cost of pumping to a more practical level. However, an attempt to obtain financial backing for such a plant was unsuccessful.

Finally, in 1938, the idea was revived, largely through the efforts of A. Mark Bliss, the county agricultural agent. On October 18 of that year, a group of valley residents signed the articles of incorporation of the Sulphur Springs Valley Electrical Cooperative. As soon as

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14 Ibid., Farming Supplement, January 5, 1912.
16 Arizona Range News, March 10, 1911.
17 Ibid., October 21, 1938.
sufficient membership was obtained to insure the success of the venture, the articles of incorporation were filed and officers chosen. R. R. Harbour of Willcox was elected president; J. B. Seale of Elfrida, vice-president; and Mrs. C. M. Byrd of Willcox, secretary and treasurer.  

Upon application to the Rural Electrification Administration of the federal government, a loan of $488,000 was granted for the construction of a power plant and 269 miles of distribution lines. The original plans called for a diesel power plant at Willcox, but eventually it was decided to use natural gas for fuel, and the plant location was changed to McNeal, fifty miles to the south. It was placed in operation on July 18, 1940. Only 138 members were connected at this time, but by October 31, 1941, the number had increased to 490.  

The Sulphur Springs Valley Electrical Cooperative has been continually expanding since the beginning of its operations. In 1943, the properties of the Arizona Public Service Company in Willcox, Benson, and St. David were

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18 Ibid., December 2, 1938.
19 Ibid., May 19; June 9, 1939.
20 Arizona Producer-Farmer, XVIII, No. 24 (February 3, 1940), 7.
21 Arizona Range News, July 19, 1940.
22 Ibid., October 31, 1941.
acquired. An additional power plant, located four miles south of Cochise, was placed in operation in 1948, giving the system a total of 4,300 kilowatts. As of September 30, 1954, the cooperative had 3,850 customers.

The number of irrigation pumps had increased from 165 in 1945 to 237 in 1951, with an increase in pumpage from 8,000 to 38,000 acre feet. Irrigated acreage in 1951 totaled about 14,000 acres, of which 11,000 were in the Stewart District and the balance mostly in the Kansas Settlement. Wells in the Stewart District averaged 200 feet, while the older ones in the Kansas Settlement averaged 100 to 200 feet. However, some of the newer ones in the latter area are 500 to 750 feet deep.

As a result of this increased pumping, the water level declined about 19 feet in the Stewart District and 2 feet in the Kansas Settlement between 1946 and 1951. According to an editorial written by D. F. Mellenbruch in 1952, this was not a dangerous drop in the water table, but the situation could bear watching. It was pointed out that if the underground water were overdrawn, there would be no place to

23 Ibid., June 23, 1943.
24 Ibid., September 10, 1948.
go for relief. The Sulphur Springs Valley has to depend upon the rain in its own watershed.

Before World War II the only successful farming worthy of note was in a few scattered areas near Willcox in the north basin and around Elfrida and McNeal in the south basin. The war brought about an increase in agricultural prices and increased the demand for land, especially that suitable for cotton. This, along with the economical source of power provided by the Sulphur Springs Valley Electrical Cooperative, led to a great increase in the acreage under cultivation. The trend continued after the war, and by 1949, it was estimated that 15,000 acres had been developed in the valley. Of this, from 7,000 to 8,000 acres were in cotton, and most of the balance in various vegetables, including chili, beans, peas, and so on. The 1950 census showed that Cochise County led all other Arizona counties in expansion through the preceding five years, when it was calculated on a percentage basis. In 1944, there had been 8,260 acres under irrigation, and by 1949 this had increased to 25,297 acres.

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29 Arizona Farmer, XXVIII, No. 12 (June 1, 1949), 33.
30 Ibid., XXX, No. 21 (October 13, 1951), 31.
Truck farming and fruit growing were being carried on in the Willcox area as early as 1908. In that year, J. W. Angle of the Willcox Realty Company attended the National Irrigation Congress at Albuquerque, New Mexico, as a delegate, taking along pumpkins, apples, pears, etc. for a display advertising the Sulphur Springs Valley.  

The lack of a suitable market kept vegetables from being grown successfully on a large scale until about 1928. Cauliflower was produced experimentally in that year, and by the next season, it was being shipped out by the carload. The production of tomatoes was encouraged in 1933 when two local canning plants began operations. The one operated by R. R. Harbour on his farm was capable of packing a thousand cans a day. Many other such crops could probably be grown with equal success. At the present time (May, 1957), the first commercial planting of lettuce is being harvested and processed at a new vacuum packing plant that has been built in Willcox. Two hundred and ten acres of regular head lettuce and thirty acres of romaine were planted on an experimental basis by Cochise Lettuce Growers, a firm of Phoenix financiers.

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31 Arizona Range News, October 2, 1908.
32 Douglas Daily Dispatch, November 10, 1929.
33 Arizona Range News, September 29, 1933.
34 Arizona Republic, May 10, 1957.
Spice farming was begun on a large scale in 1911, when European sources of supply were cut off by the war. That first year, 125 acres were planted in chili, 30 in paprika, and 10 in sage.\textsuperscript{35}

Chili seemed to be the most profitable, so the next year three hundred acres were planted. The Ben Hur Company built a dehydrating plant at Elfrida to process the crop, which was estimated to be worth fifty thousand dollars to the growers.\textsuperscript{36} By 1913, nine thousand acres of chili peppers were planted and another dehydrating plant had been built by C. L. Pratt of Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{37}

In 1918, green chili peppers were grown for shipment to canneries, and a year later, Stewart L. Brockman was packing forty thousand cans a day at his plant in Elfrida.\textsuperscript{38} During the peak years for chili products, many growers made a profit of four hundred dollars an acre.\textsuperscript{39} The market went down in 1951, however, and many of the farmers turned to the production of cotton instead.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{35} Arizona Farmer-Producer, XX, No. 24 (November 22, 1941), 11.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., XXI, No. 21 (November 7, 1942), 18.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., XXIV, No. 11 (June 2, 1945), 11.
\textsuperscript{38} Arizona Range News, September 16, 1949.
\textsuperscript{39} Arizona Farmer, XXIV, No. 22 (November 17, 1945), 22.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., XXX, No. 5 (March 3, 1951), 44.
While various types of truck farming dominated the agricultural scene for many years, some grains and forage crops have been grown extensively in the valley to provide supplementary feed for the cattle ranches. Alfalfa grows particularly well, as do higeria, kaffir corn, and maize. With the advent of extensive irrigation, wheat, barley, and oats also came into their own.

Specialized types of agriculture such as dairying, bee-keeping, and poultry-raising have also been carried on successfully, but on a small scale. Perhaps in future years they will play a more important part in the economy of the valley.

During the past decade, however, cotton has been the most important crop. The first unsuccessful attempts at its production were made in the middle twenties. They ended in failure for various reasons, mainly the inexperience of the farmers and low prices. In 1936, J. G. Anderson planted an acre of cotton on his ranch five and a half miles west of Willcox. When a bale and a quarter of cotton were harvested from it in the fall, local interest in the crop was renewed. Other farmers experimented with it during the next ten years. In 1945, for example, three farms in the county were reported as growing cotton, with a total of fifty-seven acres

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41 Arizona Range News, April 2, 1948.
42 Ibid., November 4, 1936.
producing thirty-one bales.

The boom did not come until 1947, when two thousand acres were planted, producing approximately one bale per acre. The success of this crop not only encouraged more local farmers to plant cotton the following year but also brought many newcomers into the area from New Mexico and Texas. As a result, acreage was tripled, with production amounting to 6,200 bales in 1948. By this time, two gins were operating in the valley, one at Elfrida and the other in the Stewart District about eight miles northwest of Willcox.

Further increases in acreage in 1949 created a severe labor shortage at picking time. Since the cotton ripens several weeks earlier in warmer areas, the workers were attracted there first. Furthermore, better housing was provided for them in the more established growing areas. The following year, the situation was much the same. By the end of October, one gin had processed only fifty-two bales of cotton, while there was an estimated five thousand bales to be picked.

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44 Arizona Farmer, XXVIII, No. 18 (September 13, 1949), 30.
46 Arizona Farmer, XXVIII, No. 18 (September 13, 1949), 30.
The situation was finally relieved by pickers coming in after the work had been finished in other areas.

In 1952, the Arizona State Employment Service sent a representative to assist in recruiting labor. This assistance, along with the increased use of mechanical cotton pickers, alleviated the labor situation somewhat. The following year, more than five hundred Mexican nationals were brought into the Willcox area. Although the cotton farmers protested at having to pay them the three dollars per hundred pounds set by the Secretary of Labor, they did solve the labor problem. Most of the hand picking since that time has been done by the braceros, as very few other itinerant workers have been available.

The valley, because of its relatively high elevation, has a short growing season. However, a variety of cotton known as New Mexico 1517, which commands a premium price on the market, can be grown successfully. With the drilling of deeper wells which deliver 2,000 to 4,000 gallons per minute, it is believed that the water supply will continue to be adequate.

The chief limiting factor on cotton production has

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48 Ibid., November 20, 1953.
49 Valley National Bank Publicity Department, op. cit.
been the cutback in acreage imposed by the Production and Marketing Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture. It is based upon a percentage of the average during the years 1947 through 1952. Because the Sulphur Springs Valley was just getting started in 1947, the cutback has been more severe than for the other cotton growing areas in the state. In 1955, the valley, with its 299 growers, was allotted 9,950 acres as opposed to an estimated 18,000 acres that were planted in 1952.51

Cotton will undoubtedly remain an important factor in the agricultural economy of the Sulphur Springs Valley but not to the exclusion of other crops. Since the decrease in cotton production, there has been a proportionate increase in the acreage of forage crops such as alfalfa and sorghum. Some farmers have also experimented with various vegetables. It is believed that the operator of the family type farm with diversified crops, and the farmer-rancher, who raises his own crops for supplemental feeding, will probably be the most successful in agriculture here in the years to come.52

52 Valley National Bank Publicity Department, op. cit.
CHAPTER VII:

COMING OF AGE, 1915-1945

While ranches, farms, and mines were being developed in the surrounding area, Willcox was striving to maintain itself as the business center of the Sulphur Springs Valley.

Agitation for incorporation was apparently sparked by S. N. Kemp in an editorial appearing in the Arizona Range News on May 6, 1910. He pointed out many needs of the town, including fire-fighting apparatus and building restrictions, "the expense of which should be borne by all in proportion as they are benefited." ¹

The proposition was subsequently brought up in a meeting of the Board of Trade and unanimously approved. Opposition and delays were encountered, however, and not until five years later was the necessary petition brought before the Board of Supervisors. On May 3, 1915, the town was duly incorporated, and six councilmen were appointed to act until an election could be held the following year. They were H. L. McCoy, H. A. Morgan, J. W. Angle, A. A. Nicholson, and L. V. McCourt. ²

¹ Arizona Range News, May 6, 1910.
² Ibid., May 7, 1915.
The first city council meeting was held on May 12 in the office of the Angle and Bush Lumber Company. H. L. McCoy was selected as clerk and H. A. Morgan as mayor. They immediately adopted ordinances specifying the time and place of future meetings, the duties of various officials, and salaries to be paid to city employees. It is interesting to note that the third ordinance to be passed was "to restrain and regulate the running at large of dogs."\(^3\)

At the time of its incorporation and for the next two or three years, Willcox was growing steadily, as indicated by newspaper reports of new home construction. Then the population leveled off and even declined somewhat as the failure of dry farming became evident. Also, the Mascot Copper Company curtailed production at about the same time. No population for the town itself was given in the 1910 census, but the population of the precinct was 1,632.\(^4\) In 1920, Willcox had a population of 905, while the precinct had dropped to 1,303.\(^5\)

During the early twenties, financial conditions became even more unfavorable, and many business establishments

\(^3\) Ibid., May 14, 1915.
were forced to file bankruptcy. Unemployment was not relieved until the Mascot Copper Company reorganized and resumed production. Prosperity was short-lived, as the 1929 depression, along with a severe drought, caused a renewal of the downward trend. The population of the town had decreased to 806 in 1930.6

Not until 1939 did Willcox begin to grow again. In that year, twenty-five or thirty new houses were built and many more were remodeled and enlarged.7 Rural electrification and the paving of the Stein's Pass road brought many newcomers the following year, and housing became scarce in spite of the new construction. The auto courts and hotels were hard pressed to provide lodging for the overflow.8 The 1940 census gave Willcox a population of 864.9

The housing shortage continued during World War II and the period immediately following it. Once in 1945, for example, the Arizona Range News published a plea for local residents to rent their extra rooms to tourists who could not be provided with accommodations at the hotels and tourist

7 Arizona Range News, February 2, 1940.
8 Ibid., August 16, 1940.
A number of new business buildings had been erected shortly after the incorporation of the town. Among them were two new bank buildings, the Gersbach Block, the Moyer Block, and the Masonic Temple. Very few were added during the twenties and thirties because of unfavorable economic conditions. Construction was on the upswing in 1940 when World War II and the resultant shortage of materials brought it to a standstill again.

Contributing considerably to development of property were the two banks operating in the city from 1915 until 1920. The Willcox Bank and Trust Company's business expanded until in 1916 they found it necessary to move to more spacious quarters. A portion of the building occupied by the Norton-Morgan Commercial Company was remodeled for the purpose. The interior of this establishment was destroyed by fire in 1928. Fortunately, all money, papers, and valuables were rescued, and the property loss was covered by insurance.

The Central Bank, originally organized as a branch
of the Central Bank of Phoenix in 1915, was incorporated as a local institution two years later.13

The Riggs Bank was organized by the Riggs Brothers in 1920 and controlled by them until 1931, when they sold a controlling interest to Dana T. Milner, president of the Bank of Bowie.14 Although it closed along with the others during the "banking holiday" of 1933, it was reopened in a short time as the Bank of Willcox.15 After being accepted as a member of the Federal Reserve System in December of the same year, it continued to operate as an independent bank until June 15, 1936. At that time, ownership passed into the hands of the Valley National Bank of Phoenix, and it is now operated as a branch office of that system.16 This has been the only bank in Willcox since 1933, as the others did not reopen after the "banking holiday."

Following World War I, the recession forced a number of stores out of business in Willcox, including the Norton-Morgan Commercial Company, which had been operating since 1880. A receiver was appointed by the Superior Court on

13 Arizona Range News, October 19, 1917.
14 Ibid., June 5, 1936.
16 See Arizona Range News, December 15, 1933; June 5, 1936.
November 20, 1923, upon petition of the Willcox Bank and Trust Company.17

The ill-fated Valley Creamery Company was organized in 1915 to buy and sell milk and cream and to manufacture various dairy products, including butter, ice cream, and cheese.18 To encourage dairy farming, the management imported dairy cows, which were sold to farmers on a time payment plan.

The creamery, which was built as an addition to the ice plant, was destroyed by fire in less than a year. When it was rebuilt a short time later, a two-ton cold storage plant was added.19 Output was increased until in 1924, three thousand pounds of butter a month was being churned.20 The business failed in a few years, however, probably because of an inadequate cream supply and generally unfavorable economic conditions.21

In spite of hard times, the city continued to develop, and the demand for public utilities increased. Willcox was

17 Tombstone Epitaph, November 20, 1933.
18 Arizona Range News, October 18, 1915.
19 Ibid., October 6, 1916.
20 Tombstone Epitaph, November, 1924.
21 Statement by Dr. J. C. Wilson, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, May 25, 1957.
without electricity from 1902, when the old Willcox Lighting, Pumping and Ice Company ceased operations until 1926, when Ritter and Walker began operations. Although Neil McMillen had been granted a franchise for a power plant in 1917, he had never made use of it. The plant was sold to the North Continent Utilities Company, along with the Bowie and Benson systems, on May 1, 1930. Later these systems were merged into the Southern Arizona Public Service Company.

A proposal for the purchase of the plant by the city was turned down by the voters in 1941, in spite of the possibility that electricity could be purchased from the R. E. A. and sold at a profit of approximately $7,500 a year. Arguments against the purchase were that extensive rewiring would have to be done if the system were tied in with the R. E. A. and that the value set on the old plant was too high. Two years later, it was purchased by the Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Co-op, Inc.

Although the situation had been discussed many times throughout the years, Willcox was still without a sanitary

23 Arizona Range News, May 9, 1930.
24 Ibid., July 25, 1941.
25 Ibid., June 23, 1943.
sewer system in 1937. In that year, a meeting was called by the Chamber of Commerce to discuss the possibility of installing one under a P. W. A. loan and grant. Everyone present was in favor of submitting the proposition to the city's property taxpayers. 26

The city council discovered, however, that no federal grant was available. Since the estimated cost of a treatment plant was $66,000, they did not believe it financially possible to install a complete system at that time. Therefore, the possibility of an installation for the business district alone was considered. 27

No action was taken until May, 1938, when an improvement district was created to install the proposed system in the downtown area. A preliminary survey was made, and upon approval of the majority of the property owners, the city council ordered the project to be carried out. 28 The system, including a disposal plant, was completed in November, 1939. Other improvement districts were added in 1948 and 1955, so that all of the city except a small area in the northeast

26Ibid., August 6, 1937.
27Ibid., August 13, 1937.
28Ibid., June 2, 1939.
corner now has sewers.  

Very little was done to improve the streets until 1933, when the Reconstruction Finance Corporation provided funds for the gravel surfacing of sixty blocks of streets under its unemployment relief program. In December of that year, between sixty-five and seventy men were at work on this project.  

In 1935, a proposal was made by the W. P. A. for the paving of thirty-two blocks of city streets. Under the proposal, the federal government was to provide $36,000 for labor and $9,500 for materials, while the city was to provide $9,500 for materials, all equipment necessary, and a superintendent. The city council approved the project at first but later repealed their decision on the grounds that it was too much to attempt at that time. Not until 1941, when local citizens were looking forward to the completion of the Stein's Pass road, was Haskell Avenue finally paved. 

Along with the improvement of streets came interest in public buildings and parks. The city hall, an attractive 

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30 Arizona Range News, December 11, 1933.  
31 Ibid., September 20, 1935.  
32 Ibid., December 6, 1935.
one-storey stuccoed building was constructed in 1936 with the help of W. P. A. funds. Located near the center of town, it houses the justice court, the office of the city clerk, the fire department, the city police, and the Northern Cochise County branch of the sheriff’s department.

Willcox had no city park until the creation of Railroad Park, so called because of its location between Railroad Avenue and the Southern Pacific tracks. This area, extending from Maley Street on the west to Stewart Street on the east, was, until 1928, merely a low spot that filled with water when it rained. Needless to say, it produced an excellent crop of weeds each year.

In spite of an attempted injunction for the purpose of stopping them, the city council secured an easement from the railroad and proceeded to fill the water hole with cinders. After these had been covered with topsoil, trees and shrubs were set out and the area seeded.

Today, the trees have reached considerable size, and benches have been provided beneath them so that both local people and those traveling through may enjoy the shade. A former eyesore is now a place of beauty and a great asset to the community.

Memorial Park, located behind the Woman's Club Building, was dedicated to the young men of the community who gave their lives in World War II. Completed in 1950 by the combined efforts of various local organizations and civic minded
individuals, it is equipped with picnic tables, a fireplace, and other conveniences.

Another excellent addition to the recreational facilities of the city was the swimming pool built on the south end of the athletic field back of what is now the junior high school. Completed in 1941, it is eighty feet long and thirty feet wide, large enough to accommodate a considerable number of swimmers on hot summer afternoons.

As the town grew, so did the need for fire protection. Willcox had no motorized fire fighting equipment until in 1928, when a used Reo fire engine was purchased in Long Beach, California. The volunteer fire department was reorganized and trained in the use of the new equipment, with the result that losses from fire were greatly reduced. In 1936, a new fire station in conjunction with the city hall was built with money raised through dances and other projects to supplement W. P. A. funds.

The old Reo fire truck was replaced in 1946 by a new outfit mounted on a Ford chassis and equipped with a Mercury motor. It has a four-hundred gallon water tank and will pump four hundred gallons a minute. Also, in recent years,


34 Arizona Range News, April 27, 1951.

many additional fire hydrants have been placed in strategic locations to provide an adequate water supply almost anywhere in town.

Educational needs also increased with the expanding population. Willcox High School, which had started with seven students in 1908, had grown to an enrollment of fifty-one in the fall of 1915.\(^36\) After an inspection by a representative of the University of Arizona in 1916, it was fully approved and accredited. The average daily attendance had risen to one hundred and eight by the school year of 1921-22. The building was remodeled and enlarged for that term at a cost of $100,000.\(^37\)

As time went on, various vocational courses such as home economics, commercial subjects, and shop were added to the curriculum. Agriculture was first offered in 1930, and the program was expanded in 1937, when a new building containing a class room, a farm shop, and a tool room was built by the W. P. A.\(^38\)

The Willcox Public Library was started by the Woman's Club in 1923 with books donated by public-spirited individuals

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36 Ibid., September 17, 1915.
38 Arizona Range News, September 3, 1937.
and organizations. These books were first placed upon the shelves of the high school library and made available to the public two nights a week. When more space was needed, the library was moved to the lower floor of the Masonic Hall, where the city council met. Upon completion of the new community center in 1937, the library was moved to its present location in that building. This institution, which now contains over seven thousand volumes, is supported entirely by donations, and librarians work on a voluntary basis.\(^{39}\)

Since its founding in 1911, the Willcox Woman's Club has been very active in civic affairs. Not only have they cooperated in most worthwhile community projects such as Red Cross and war bond drives, but have also sponsored art exhibits, flower shows, parties for children, etc., as well as promoting the public library.

Soon after the club was organized, the members began to plan for the building of a club house, not for themselves alone but for use as a community center. Eventually, they set aside enough money to purchase three large lots across from the high school.

When in 1936 they requested a loan from the W. P. A. for completing the building, the funds were refused because

money could be advanced only for municipal projects. Not to be stopped by technicalities, the Woman's Club proceeded to donate the lots and $3,500 in cash to the city of Willcox. The balance of the money was provided by the federal government and the Arizona Governor's Fund. On February 13, 1937, the new building was dedicated at an opening dance. It has since been used as a meeting place by many organizations and the community at large, although the city has now signed it over to the Woman's Club.

The Scout movement was inaugurated in 1911 by the Reverend C. A. Housel. This organization, called the "Knights of the Holy Grail or Boy Scouts," had a rather short life, however. In 1915, H. O. Parks and M. J. Nicholson organized a regular Boy Scout troop, one of the first in the state. After a time, this troop disbanded but was reorganized in 1931 with a Mr. Thompson, the high school Spanish instructor, as scoutmaster. The Cochise Council, Boy Scouts of America, was incorporated in 1944 with the Willcox troop participating. The Boy Scouts have been very active

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40 Ibid., August 7, 1936.
41 Ibid., February 19, 1937.
42 Arizona Daily Star, February 11, 1941.
43 Arizona Range News, September 18, 1931.
in community projects such as scrap drives and clean-up campaigns, thus demonstrating their good citizenship and value to the community.

The Willcox chapter of the American Red Cross was very active during both World Wars, sending Christmas packages to the servicemen, knitting sweaters, making surgical dressings, and collecting money during fund drives. Since World War II, the activities have been modified, with emphasis upon disaster relief and the blood bank.

Dr. J. C. Wilson was the first commander of the American Legion post, which was organized August 30, 1919. This organization has been very active throughout the years, sponsoring the Boy Scouts, promoting patriotic meetings, and doing everything possible for civic improvement.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars was organized in 1916, with the leaders mostly veterans of World War II. This was followed in 1948 by the organization of the Willcox Veterans' Club, which included all members of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The main purposes were to maintain a social gathering place and to promote athletic events and other recreation. A building purchased from the federal government was moved from the Douglas Army Air Field

Ibid., October 31, 1941.
to a location on the Willcox golf course for use as a club house. 45

The Sulphur Springs Valley Chamber of Commerce, which was organized in 1929, was reorganized in 1937 and again in 1946 as the Willcox Chamber of Commerce. 46 The primary purpose of the organization in the early days was obtaining better roads. Since that time, however, it has fostered many other worthwhile projects such as safety campaigns, the encouragement of new business in the community, and the promotion of better government. A full-time manager and secretary is maintained, and it is regarded as one of the best chambers of commerce in the West for the size of the community.

In March, 1930, the Willcox Rotary Club was organized with Dr. J. C. Wilson as its first president. This club has been outstanding for its civic work, particularly in assisting the young people of the community. The Youth Council, which was established under Rotary Club sponsorship in 1941, has been very effective in curbing juvenile delinquency. 47

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46 Ibid., January 18, 1929; October 15, 1937; January 25, 1946.
47 Ibid., February 20, 1942.
Willcox has many other clubs and organizations, all of which make their contributions to the community in one way or another and are able to cooperate when a need arises, in spite of friendly rivalries.

One of the important factors in the recent growth of Willcox has been the paving of the Benson-Stein's Pass Road or "the cut-off," as it is commonly called. The route was originated in about 1901 by Dave Adams, who had a ranch in Texas Canyon, about half-way between Willcox and Benson. According to the commonly accepted story, he marked it out by dragging a mesquite tree behind his surrey.

The road was little more than a trail through the desert in October, 1914, when representatives from commercial organizations in Benson, Cochise, Willcox, Bowie, San Simon, Solomonville, and Safford met and organized the Northern Cochise County Good Roads Association. The purpose of this organization was to promote the development of public highways in the area in such a manner that through travel would be encouraged.

Another meeting was held a week later by representatives from the towns along the route of the proposed highway from Lordsburg to Tucson. A proclamation was issued

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48 Arizona Daily Star, February 21, 1941.
49 Arizona Range News, October 23, 1914.
asking citizens all along the way to devote two days' time in a concerted effort to improve the existing roads. On the appointed days, a number of men in the Willcox area volunteered scrapers and teams as well as labor with the pick and shovel. Although a great deal was accomplished, parts of the road between Willcox and Cochise were too wet to be worked at that time.

For the next twenty-three years, the communities along the road tried to get it into the state or federal aid system, but politicians in the southern part of the county prevented it. They were afraid that if this route, which cut by some sixty miles the distance between Lordsburg and Tucson, were improved, it would destroy the tourist business in Douglas and Bisbee.

By 1927, most of the road was improved to some extent, except for the sixteen-mile stretch between San Simon and the New Mexico line. Dave Adams, who was at that time the supervisor for northern Cochise County, attempted to obtain an appropriation for grading the sixteen miles, but was

50 Ibid., November 6, 1914.
51 Ibid., November 20, 1914.
voted down by the other two supervisors. The grading was completed by popular subscription from towns along the route and by the contribution of labor and teams. 52

In September, 1930, the Sunset National Highway Association was organized to promote the proposed Sunset Route through southern Arizona utilizing "the cut-off." William Coxon, a member of the state House of Representatives from Willcox, was elected president of the Arizona Division. 53

Early in the following year, Coxon introduced a bill in the state legislature to designate the Stein's Pass Road as a state highway. It was passed in the House by the Committee of the Whole, but did not fare so well in the Senate. The representatives from the southern part of the county, following true to form, fought the measure. 54 This was only the beginning of the struggle, as this bill became a perennial bone of contention.

In the meantime, more and more people were taking the short-cut in spite of its unimproved condition. During 1934, this road averaged fifty-two more cars per day than did

53 Arizona Range News, September 26, 1930.
54 Ibid., February 27, 1931.
Highway 80 through Bisbee and Douglas. Considerable indignation was aroused by the numerous accidents. The most spectacular was on August 28, 1935, when five passengers on a transcontinental bus were drowned. The vehicle was washed from the roadbed by a flash flood at a railroad underpass between Dragoon and Cochise.

Earlier in that year, a movement had begun to create a new county from the northern half of Cochise. Other issues were involved, including the possibility of lowering taxes, but the main issue was the highway bill. Leaders in Wilcox, Benson, and other northern towns conceived the plan as a bluff which might frighten politicians in the other half of the county into supporting the bill. On the other hand, if the bluff were called, there was a possibility of carrying out the plan. By October, enough signatures had been obtained on a petition for county division to call for an election.

Finally on February 18, 1936, the state highway commission approved the addition of the Stein’s Pass road to the state highway system. The motion was proposed by Shelton Dowell of Douglas, who had previously opposed it but said he

56 Arizona Range News, August 30, 1935.
58 Arizona Range News, October 18, 1935.
"would abide by the will of the people." The route was designated as State Highway 86, and approximately twenty-five thousand dollars was set aside in the 1936 budget for its maintenance. The following year, it was added to the federal aid system.

The first stretch of paving, which was begun in 1938, extended from Willcox approximately six miles to the east. An allotment was made to complete the paving from Cochise to the New Mexico line in June, 1939. That state had already paved the route from there to Road Forks, where it connected with U.S. Highway 80. This left only the twenty-eight miles between Cochise and Benson for which no provision had been made. Finally, in June, 1942, this last link was completed and opened to traffic.

Tourist traffic was, of course, curtailed during World War II by tire and gasoline rationing, but with the end of the conflict in 1945, it began to return to normal. Since Highway 86 saved approximately sixty miles between Lordsburg and Benson, tourists in increasing numbers took advantage of it. By 1953, it was estimated that an average

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59 Ibid., February 21, 1935.
60 Ibid., June 5, 1936.
61 Ibid., June 2, 1939.
62 Ibid., June 26, 1942.
of three thousand vehicles a day passed over this highway. Willcox has an advantage over other towns on the route in that U. S. Highway 666, the Coronado Trail, joins Highway 86 about eight miles west of town and continues twelve miles eastward before turning north toward Safford.

The service stations and motels that have been built since the completion of this highway enjoy a very satisfactory business during the height of the tourist season, as do restaurants and motels. This tourist business has contributed considerably to the economy of the town, providing employment for a number of residents.

Since 1910, when traces of oil had been found in water coming from various wells, many local people had been dreaming of the development of that mineral resource in the Willcox area. Hopes were renewed in 1923 when a concentration of oil was found in the Southern Pacific water tank located just south of the tracks on Maley Street. H. E. Lundquist began skimming it off every morning, sometimes obtaining as much as fifty gallons. Owning several lots southeast of the pumping station, he dug a number of shallow wells with a post hole digger and extracted oil with a small water pump. This "oil field" produced two to five barrels a week for several years. Since it had the appearance of

refined oil, Lundquist sold it to farmers for use in their diesel engines.  

In 1925, traces of gas and oil were encountered in a wildcat well located on the old Mascot and Western Railroad right-of-way about two and a half miles south of town. Drilling was continued for some time, but the well never produced. A second well started in the same area a year later was also abandoned.

Clarke, Holliday, and Associates leased the former Lundquist lots and drilled a well in 1930, encountering oil at fourteen feet and again at twenty-five. After reaching a depth of sixty-six feet, they capped the well, announcing they would not proceed until they had acquired more land. Drilling was resumed several times later with no appreciable success.

In October of that same year, the Geronimo Oil Company acquired the holdings of the Clarke-Holliday partnership and also a number of additional leases. They immediately began a new well on the Bruning lots on the west side of town. A flow of hot artesian water was encoun-

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65 Statement by Frank Tillotsmn, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, November 11, 1955.
67 Arizona Range News, January 3, 10, 17, 1930.
68 Ibid., October 3, 24, 1930.
tered the following January. This continued to flow at the rate of over four hundred gallons per minute for several months before it was stopped up. 69 Although the company reported striking excellent oil sand, the well was eventually abandoned. 70

Another well drilled during this period was on the Fred Arzberger farm fourteen miles southeast of Willcox. The Bendum-Trees Company of Pittsburgh went down to 2,075 feet before capping it. As far as anyone in that area knows, no oil was found here. The company did renew the lease once, but it has now expired. 71

The depression and World War II prevented further exploration, but in 1945 interest was aroused again when oil was encountered in drilling for water on the G BAR Ranch. 72 A number of wildcat wells were drilled during the next few years.

The Francis Brothers Oil Company encountered strong showings of gas and oil at a depth of 2,622 feet in their well eight miles west of Willcox near the Cochise intersection. Continuing to a depth of 2,660 feet, they struck a flow of water which could not be shut off, so

69 Ibid., April 3, 1941.
70 Ibid., June 12, 1931.
71 Statement made by Mrs. Fred Arzberger, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, November 11, 1955.
they discontinued operations in June 1949. 73

The Waddell-Duncan Company also struck gas at a depth of 6,065 feet and again at 6,169 feet at their well north of town in April, 1949. 74 In addition to drilling several other wells, this company has made extensive surveys with the magnatometer, gravity meter, and seismograph. The engineers have stated their belief that the oil and gas showings found thus far are leakage from pools somewhere below and that wells 10,000 to 12,000 feet deep will be necessary to strike oil in productive quantities. 75

Evidence seems to indicate that the oil encountered in Willcox proper was fuel oil that had escaped from various underground storage tanks. 76 However, a number of geologists have agreed that the Sulphur Springs Valley shows indications of being a favorable geological oil-producing structure. Exploration is still being carried on, but as yet, the long awaited boom has not occurred. If and when it does, the effects should be far-reaching.

73 Ibid., September 17, October 29, 1948; June 17, 1949.
74 Ibid., April 15, 1949.
75 Ibid., March 10, 1950.
AERIAL VIEW OF WILDCOX, 1956
(COURTESY OF THE VALLEY NATIONAL BANK)
Business growth was greatly accelerated in Willcox after World War II. In 1947, for example, the city rated sixth in the state in retail sales percentage gain, an increase of 35.2 per cent over 1946. A number of factors have been responsible for this increase.

The expansion of agriculture in the Sulphur Springs Valley, particularly cotton farming, has brought with it a great demand for agricultural equipment and supplies. Companies supplying irrigation pumps and other machinery, fertilizers, insecticides, etc. have been responsible for considerable business activity and have brought many new residents to the community.

Also, as has been mentioned previously, the tourist business has increased greatly as a result of the paving of Highway 86. Further increases could be expected if better roads were provided to local points of interest such as Chiricahua National Monument, Aravaipa Canyon, and Cochise Stronghold so tourists would be more inclined to visit them.

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An unofficial census taken by the Rotary Club in 1947 revealed a population of 1,348, a 55 percent gain since 1940. The official census of 1950 gave Willcox a population of only 1,266, but another unofficial census taken by the Chamber of Commerce in 1956 showed 1,809, an increase of 43 percent over that amount. That the percentage of increase is tapering off slightly is indicated in an unofficial census in 1957, which showed an increase of 79 over the previous year, for a total of 1,888. This is an increase of only about four percent as opposed to an average increase of seven percent during the previous six year period. Obviously, this increase in population has accounted for a portion of the business growth.

Another result of the increase in population has been a shortage of housing. Although many new homes were being built each year, the supply did not meet the demand until a short time ago (1957).

Partly as a result of this rapid growth, a number of problems arose in regard to the city's water system. It had been placed into operation by Ritter and Walker in 1925.

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4The Arizona Republic, April 6, 1957.
Their original intentions were to supply water only for the Southern Pacific. However, many people preferred to purchase water rather than depend upon private wells, so the system gradually grew until it served most of the city. Developing in this way, the system had not been planned to allow for adequate service as the city increased in size.  

Along with the local power plant, it was sold to the Southern Arizona Power and Light Company in 1930. After the city rejected an opportunity to purchase the system, the Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative acquired it when that organization obtained control of the power plant in 1943. Since the R. E. A. was interested only in the electrical generation and distribution facilities, the water system was sold to a corporation known as Willcox Utilities, Inc. after the city canceled its option in 1947.

The new owners soon made a request to the Arizona Corporation Commission for an eighty-seven per cent increase in water rates on the basis that the money was needed to improve and expand the system. At a hearing before the commission, this action was vigorously opposed by the city officials on the grounds that the people should not have to

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6 Arizona Range News, May 9, 1930.
7 Ibid., June 25, 1943.
pay for improvements before they get them. In spite of considerable agitation in favor of purchasing the system, the city council refused to pay the price set by the owners. The Arizona Corporation Commission, which had been awaiting the outcome of negotiations, thereupon proceeded to grant the requested increase in rates, deciding that they were not excessive in view of the improvements that were needed.

Paying these higher rates, the local citizens wanted adequate service. Serious trouble occurred in June, when two pumping motors failed, and a portion of town known as the Harris addition was without water for nearly three days. When a temporary motor was installed, service was still not satisfactory, and a protest was made to the Arizona Corporation Commission.

A short time later, following tests by the Arizona Department of Sanitation, another protest was made to the effect that the water was unsafe due to sewer pollution. Chlorination was recommended to eliminate the possibility of an epidemic, and the state engineer was requested to investigate the situation.

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8 Ibid., December 25, 1947.
9 Ibid., March 19, 1948.
10 Ibid., June 11, 1948.
11 Ibid., July 2, 1948.
After inspecting the facilities, the state sanitary engineer recommended, among other improvements, the drilling of a new well, as the water was contaminated not only by sewage but by a seepage of oil. 12 Rex Emerick, who was now the manager of Willcox Utilities, Inc., announced a week later that a chlorinator had been installed and that all recommended improvements would be carried out over a period of time. 13 A new well had been drilled by April, 1949, and by the following February, the entire improvement program had been completed. 14

In 1956, however, agitation was renewed for the purchase of the water system because of the need for larger mains and hydrants as a fire protection measure. 15 At a special election held on April 24, the voters approved revenue bonds totaling $140,000 for the purchase and improvement of the system. 16 Since that time, the city water department has looped the town with six inch mains and tied in all dead ends, thus improving the available pressure in many areas. Also work has been started toward carrying out the plan for eventually having a fire hydrant on every

12 Ibid., December 17, 1948.
13 Ibid., December 24, 1948.
14 Ibid., April 22, 1949; February 3, 1950.
15 Ibid., April 6, 1956.
16 Ibid., April 27, 1957.
Since 1949, the city has also made natural gas available for cooking, heating, and industrial purposes. It is purchased from the El Paso Natural Gas Company, whose main lines run near Willcox, and piped into town with a four-inch line. The city then distributes it to various homes and commercial users. The original two-inch line was recently replaced because it was becoming inadequate for supplying approximately seven hundred gas customers. This enterprise has not only been very beneficial to local residents but has been profitable for the city government.\(^\text{18}\)

As a result of the combined factors of population increases and the annexation of outlying districts, the Willcox schools were becoming overcrowded in 1947. However, the voters were apparently not convinced of the need for a building program, as an \$180,000 bond issue for that purpose was defeated by a vote of 137 to 49.\(^\text{19}\) More space was made available for the next several years by the purchase of barrack-type buildings from the federal government and by finishing the basement of the high school.

At a Parent-Teachers' Association meeting in 1951, a plan was revealed for the building of a new high school at

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\(^{18}\) Ibid.

\(^{19}\) Arizona Range News, May 23, 1947.
the old airfield west of town, and converting the existing high school into a grammar school. It was believed that the facilities there, especially the gymnasium and the auditorium, while inadequate for the present and future needs of the high school, would be satisfactory for the younger children.

No immediate action was taken, but in January, 1953, four citizens’ committees were appointed to study the school problems. Three months later, the development committee approved the plan that had been presented, with the addition of a fourteen-room building to house the kindergarten and first five grades. The tax committee estimated that bond issue of $35,000 would be adequate for the necessary construction and that this would require a tax increase of one dollar per hundred.21 A month later, the bond issue was approved by a vote of 258 to 127.22

The construction was begun in the spring of 1954. Since it was not completed in September, the grammar school was so crowded that it was necessary to have some of the classes meet in temporary quarters at various churches. By November, however, the new building for the lower grades

20Ibid., March 30, 1951.
21Ibid., April 24, 1953.
22Ibid., May 29, 1953.
was completed and ready for occupancy.

On May 19, 1955, the new $500,000 high school was dedicated. In addition to an adequate number of classrooms, it has a 600-seat auditorium and a gymnasium with folding type bleachers that will seat 750 persons. This building was placed into use in September, 1955, and the junior high was moved into the old building as planned. The old grammar school building was sold to the Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., to be used for its office and warehouse.

Over the years, it had become evident to many local citizens that Willcox needed a hospital, the nearest one being eighty miles away. It was not only inconvenient to go that far for treatment, but persons seriously ill or suffering from injuries were sometimes unable to endure the trip. In August, 1946, after hearing a report on a community hospital at Elk City, Oklahoma, the majority of the citizens present at a public meeting were in favor of such an institution and chose a committee to investigate the matter further.

The problem of financing a hospital was not easy,
and various plans were discussed. Finally in March, 1949, it was learned that the hospital building at the Lordsburg prisoner of war camp could be purchased as war surplus for $20,000. The money was raised by a number of civic-minded residents. A board of directors was elected and Dr. Robert Alan Hicks was hired as manager. By August, the hospital had been located on Maley Street and was ready to receive patients. 26

Shortly after the first of the year, however, the government seized the hospital equipment for unpaid income tax. The same group of people who had financed the purchase of the building eventually raised the money and paid off the claims. 27

The hospital was reopened on June 9, 1950, with Dr. William F. Havemeyer in charge. Some of the necessary equipment was available and Dr. Havemeyer used some of his own, but many items were necessary to make it an efficient unit. Also, the interior of the building was as drab and forbidding as one could expect a prison hospital to be.

Various civic organizations, business establishments, and many individuals cooperated in remodeling, redecorating, and purchasing necessary equipment. By May, 1951, the

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26 Ibid., August 9, 1949; May 5, 1950; August 31, 1951.

Valley Hospital was "a cheerful and well-equipped institution." The operation of the hospital was assumed by the city of Willcox in August, 1951. The property was leased to the city for one year with the option to purchase at the termination of the lease. It was agreed that the amount paid for the lease would be deductible from the purchase price. The purchase was made as planned, and the original investors are gradually receiving their money from the profits of the institution.

The Willcox Municipal Hospital, as it is now called, has maintained the policy of offering its services to everyone, regardless of the ability to pay. At the same time, it has tried to keep the cost of hospitalization as low as possible. This has been accomplished with funds raised by various organizations rather than by high taxes. As of May, 1953, the hospital was approved by the American Medical Association and became a registered general hospital. It was reported later in the same year that the institution was making its own way and that the city's contribution

28 "It's Safe to be Sick in Willcox, Arizona," Arizona Farmer, XXX, No. 10 (May 12, 1951), 38.
30 Ibid., April 11, 1952.
31 Ibid., May 29, 1953.
would be used to purchase new equipment.\textsuperscript{32}

One activity which was originated in 1952 to raise funds for the hospital has since become an annual event. The Rex Allen Days celebration is held in honor of the western movie star who was born and reared on a ranch a few miles from town. Originally a one-day affair, it has been increased to two days and has many interesting events including a parade, a personal appearance at the theatre by Rex Allen, a stage show, a rodeo, and a horse show. Thousands of visitors attend this festival each year and enjoy the authentic Western atmosphere. It is now sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce with the proceeds going to the hospital fund, as was the case when it was first promoted by the Lion's Club.

The Chamber of Commerce, the Willcox Garden Club, and various other organizations, as well as the local newspaper, have been working for years to increase civic pride and instill the desire to make the town cleaner and more attractive. One of the worst problems has been that of vacant lots in the main part of town that have been allowed to accumulate trash and grow up in weeds. Low assessed valuations have permitted people to hold them indefinitely, hoping to eventually sell them at a great profit. The prices asked have been so high that those wanting to build have purchased

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Ibid.}, August 7, 1953.
land at the edge of town instead.\textsuperscript{33}

Another matter that has tended to hold Willcox back has been the lack of a zoning ordinance. Any type of business could be located in any part of town, thus lowering the value of adjacent property in many cases. The much needed zoning ordinance, as well as electrical, plumbing, and building ordinances, was passed on May 14, 1957. While it is too early as yet to judge the effectiveness of this legislation, it is certainly a step in the right direction.\textsuperscript{34}

A number of churches have completed building programs in recent years, thus greatly improving the appearance of the city. The Sacred Heart of Jesus Roman Catholic Church was dedicated on March 14, 1948.\textsuperscript{35} This beautiful structure replaced the church that had been destroyed by fire the previous year. On September 14, 1952, the Community Christian Church held its first service in a new sanctuary at the corner of Maley Street and El Paso Avenue.\textsuperscript{36} The Latter Day Saints completed theirs in 1953, the Assembly of God in 1954, and the First Church of God in 1955.

\textsuperscript{33}Statement by D. F. Mellenbruch, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, March 31, 1956.

\textsuperscript{34}Statement by Wallace Lundquist, personal interview, Willcox, Arizona, May 25, 1957.

\textsuperscript{35}Arizona Range News, March 3, 1948.

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., September 19, 1952.
During the seventy-nine years of its existence, Willcox has grown from a railroad construction camp, consisting mainly of tents, into a prosperous little city of nearly two thousand population. Growth has been especially rapid since World War II, with a forty per cent increase between 1947 and 1957. \(^{37}\) Since the economy of the town is not dependent upon any one industry, one can be reasonably certain that the growth is permanent. While the cattle industry and irrigated farming are the most important, mining and the tourist business contribute their share. Willcox is, and will undoubtedly continue to be, one of the most important cities in eastern Arizona.

\(^{37}\)Ibid., November 14, 1947. See also The Arizona Republic, April 6, 1957.
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