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Outpost Skirmish



Table of Contents

Douglas Under Fire: an Account of Villa's Battle for Agua Prieta.....	3
Ervin Bond - "Mr. Cochise County".....	13
An Historic Landmark - The Cochise Hotel.....	19
Book Review: "Mining Town Trolleys: A History of Arizona's Warren-Bisbee Railway".....	23



Cochise Head

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DOUGLAS UNDER FIRE: An Account of Villa's Battle for Agua Prieta

by Carl H. Cole

Almost due west of the towns of Douglas, Arizona and Agua Prieta in Mexico is the beautiful cone of the mountain called San Pedro. The road to Cananea, Sonora skirts the south of San Pedro on a rising slope. About 12 miles out that road is a notch in the ridge which is named Anavacachi Pass. On October 22nd, 1915 this pass was filled with the army of Pancho Villa's Sonoran 'Jefe', the Yaqui General Urbalejo. The day before, this force had taken the border town, Naco, in a bloodless exchange of power, the defending troops quietly withdrawing to the main army in Agua Prieta.

A week earlier, Colonel Beltran with 200 men secured Cananea for Villa. In that incident the Carranza forces retreated northwest to Nogales, destroying the railroad as they went. Isolated, Cananea was by now running short of food and fuel.

General Mendez, in command of about 600 troops, mostly cavalry, moved into Esqueda, 20 miles south of Agua Prieta. Mendez represented the Villa advance guard and by straddling the rails to Nacozari, closed the door to the south.

And a final item: the main body of Villa's forces, a column of soldiers, guns, baggage wagons and camp followers estimated to be 20 miles long was slowly advancing north into the San Bernardino Valley from the Sierra Madre mountains. The first estimates of the numbers in this column ran "...2600 soldiers, mostly mounted."

Those whose loyalty lay with Carranza or whose interests were opposed to further anarchy were being crowded into Nogales and Agua Prieta; nearly 2000 refugees entered the latter town in a three day period, prompting an urgent request for food and clothing, sixty thousand dollars worth.

This pattern of movement northward: the evacuation from Hermosillo, the occupation of Cananea, Naco and Esqueda, and the blocking of Anavacachi were all parts of the tightening noose around Agua Prieta. This was the ground which Villa would attack and the town which the Carranza forces would defend.

Such scurrying for protection or position was driven by fear and love respectively for the man leading his army up from the south. Francisco (Pancho) Villa, born Doroteo Aranga, in four years of revolutionary battles had honestly earned that fear and that love. He had been among the earliest to declare against the rule of Huerta after the assassination of the duly elected Francisco Madero.

Zapata, from the state of Morelos in the south, was also one of the first; and many others joined in the effort to oust Huerta. One of these was Venustiano Carranza who presented himself as candidate to be the next head of state. It can be argued whether Villa also sought that position or not; in either case he was by now the declared enemy of Carranza, the bearded, ex-school teacher from Coahuila.

Villa's support came mainly from peasants, to whom he promised loot and land, peasants mostly from his own home state of Chihuahua. Of all the revolutionary leaders, none generated more passionate feelings or more admiration. His humble beginnings and lack of education appealed to the masses and his personal flair earned devotion. In Mexico he was dubbed 'Centaur of the North', and the U.S. Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, likened Villa to Sir Galahad! Villa had tried repeatedly to lure the Gringos' support; he was polite to American reporters and actively sought help from U.S. mercenaries. In January of 1915 posters appeared along the border inviting:

*** DYNAMITERS *** MACHINE GUNNERS *** RAILROADERS ***
Ride With PANCHO VILLA for GOLD and GLORY *** Viva Revolution ***.

Mexico's revolution took on all the characteristics of a civil war once Huerta was forced out. Several factions vied actively to fill the leadership vacuum and while Villa was daring in battle and had captured the attention of the U.S. press, Carranza proved to be more adroit. By whatever promises necessary, he had enlisted the loyalty of the two leading generals in the north: Álvaro Obregon and Plutarco Eliás Calles. Obregon had twice defeated Villa in pitched battles in the summer of 1915, promoting Carranza as the most likely leader and earning Villa's hatred. These recent defeats in battle combined with emerging stories of his savagery tarnished his glamour. Villa badly needed a border victory which would both re-establish his reputation as an invincible leader and set up a U.S. supply point for his troops. Agua Prieta was targeted to fill that need.

His bid for a new image came too late however. What Villa didn't know was that President Wilson was preparing to end the unrest in the south by recognizing Carranza as chief of state **de jure**. Possibly it was the appeal of one ex-school teacher for another; more likely, Carranza simply held most of the high cards. In either case, on Wednesday, October 20th, newspapers announced that the U.S. had formally recognized the claim of Carranza to lead Mexico. **The New York World** agreed that Carranza, "although not imposing was better than the anarchy of Huerta", and dismissed Villa and Zapata as "brigands".

During the revolution American attitudes had ranged from alarm through condescension and even amusement at the antics of 'our little brown brothers'.

Now however, having recognized Carranza the U.S. could not risk any chance that its choice was the wrong one. The way to remove any doubt was of course, to guarantee that Carranza should win. This the U.S. was prepared to do. General Calles was in command of 7000 troops defending Agua Prieta, and it was vitally important to know how big Villa's force was. This was difficult to guess for as the **Douglas Daily Dispatch** put it: "The estimates of numbers vary greatly according to the excitability of the person talking, ranging from 6000 to 20,000. The latter is considered ridiculous." Ridiculous or not, one dare not ignore the psychological factors; these were not just rebels, these were Pancho Villa's Dorados! Enough of Villa's charisma still existed to give his enemies a shiver of fear.

To offset any psychological edge it was proposed to reinforce the defenders, but in order to be effective it would have to be immediate. The nearest available troops were in General Benjamine Hill's command of 2000 in Piedras Negras, Coahuila. The United States offered to move them via the SP Railway from Laredo to Douglas where they would be crossed back to Mexico. The legal and ethical questions involved in transporting foreign armed troops through a neutral country were dismissed and Hill's army with its attendant supplies and ammunition was boarded on October 27th. None of these arrangements were known to Villa, not yet.

Douglas is separated from Agua Prieta by a wire fence. Politically and culturally it marks a huge gap but to bullets and artillery shells it does not exist. First Street in Douglas parallels the border a few hundred feet away. Each subsequent block is about 300 feet further from the international boundary. Tenth Street which is the residential main street is therefore about half a mile from Mexico. It is understandable then that the residents of Douglas exhibited alarm when it became obvious that a battle would be fought.

The U.S. State Department acted speedily. The day after recognizing Carranza, special representative George C. Carothers was ordered to Douglas to protect Americans from the Villistas. The mayor of Douglas, C. O. Ellis, was apparently not impressed by the visiting heavyweight for he wired the War Department in Washington demanding that the attack on Agua Prieta be "not allowed." His telegram went on to say that: "The lives of 20,000 Americans will be jeopardized if Villa is permitted to come within artillery range". In answer, the commanding officer in Douglas was given authorization to cross into Agua Prieta, "...if this would appear necessary to defend the city". In addition, the War Department assigned its own envoy, General Funston, and reported that his strategy would be to use artillery against "the outlaw Villa." As a final assurance two more U.S. infantry regiments arrived from El Paso.

South of Agua Prieta the noose tightened. Colonel Mendez moved north along the Nacozari railroad first to Fronteras then to Cabullona just twelve miles away. Urbalejo moved his troops eastward to link with the main body of Villa's army which was advancing slowly toward the border east of Agua Prieta. John Slaughter's ranch straddled the line at that point, some twenty miles out. It was here where Villa first heard that the U.S. was reinforcing Calles and, even more serious, that the United States had formally recognized the government of Carranza. Villa was furious. The U.S., he declared, was ungrateful for the protection he had given to Gringos and to their property; he swore that he would no longer honor that policy. He threatened to take Douglas itself if he was fired upon from the U.S. From the west General Urbalejo promised to retaliate against U.S. property in Naco and Cananea if the U.S. intervened. The **Douglas Daily Dispatch** characterized this mood as: "Inflamed Against the United States" and at the same time: "Heartened by Promise of Lots of Loot if Douglas is Captured."

On Saturday, Oct. 30th, the first armed engagements took place. Two cavalry detachments from Agua Prieta contacted the Villistas, one at Cabullona the other on the Cananea road. According to Calles' report, in both actions they drove the rebels back.

Reports came in from Villa's camp south of Slaughter's ranch. An aide, Col. Franco claimed that Villa's force consisted of 18,000 men, sixty 80 mm cannon and "all the ammunition he needed." Villa's claims were more modest: he had "only 13,000 men", he said, but with these he was going to "come calling on Calles" and that the battle would be over in an hour. He went on to say that he would take on all the Carranza forces **and** the U.S. army at the same time if necessary!

There was other, less sanguine evidence however: a sixteen year old, a soldier from the Mendez outpost, who received a shattered hip in the Cabullona skirmish reported from the Agua Prieta hospital that Villa had no food other than beef, had had no flour or beans for many weeks. A group of American workmen helped many of Villa's soldiers by giving them water. They filled canteens passed through the fence until Calles' protest forced them to stop.

On the American side, preparations for the battle started with a full alert for the military, all passes were cancelled even though the Commander, General Davis, "...doubted that there would be an attack, under the circumstances." He did, however, issue this warning: Keep off the streets during battle and stay home! The area between Fifth and Sixth Streets was defined as the line of retirement for the Army. They dug trenches east to the hills, "A series of mutually supporting strong points," on a line some 400 yards north of the border. Douglas schools were ordered closed. Of the two smelters operating, the Calumet & Arizona made news when its Superintendent, H. A. Clark, declared, "We will have to be directly bombarded before we will pull our fires".

Approximately 2300 Mexican refugees, mostly women and children, were passed across the border by special permission of the Immigration Service. They were installed temporarily in the stock loading pens just west of the city. Here they were safe even though food and blankets were in short supply and they were exposed to the weather.

A participant in the battle who was recently interviewed in Kino Bay, Sonora explained that barbed wire was strung outside of trenches dug in a semicircle around Agua Prieta. This man, Edmundo de la Rosa, was conscripted into Calles' army and served as a machine-gunner in those trenches. Incidentally, he maintains that Villa's attacking force was never more than 600 soldiers, total!

And so, on Monday, November first, we come to the battle of Agua Prieta.

Villa's artillery started firing at 1:15 Monday afternoon and continued intermittently all day. The defenders' guns answered when there was a target. It shortly became clear that a daylight assault would not come against such a formidable defense. During that night, actually the next morning at 1:50 a.m., the main attack on Agua Prieta began. There was continuous noise from artillery fire, the bursting of shells, and both rifle and machine gun shots. For this battle the whole area was lighted by large carbon-arc lights, provided, it is reported, by the U.S. Army Engineers. These lights were among the early casualties; all were finally knocked out and two of the six operators were killed. It was over soon and suddenly. At about four in the morning the attacking guns fired three rounds of shrapnel over the town, then ceased.

Calles issued an early report of light casualties, 45 dead and 90 wounded. None of Villa's men broke through the defense perimeter. Only a few came close to the barbed wire as their bodies attested in the morning. Sr. de la Rosa remembers that the biggest problem he experienced was that of noise and dust; he claimed to have been deafened for two weeks after the battle.

Villa and his Dorados, defeated for the first time in Sonora, withdrew southward toward Cabullona. There he met and joined Urbalejo; they both moved to Naco that same day. In Naco the army took an uneasy rest while Villa prepared his Naco Manifesto in which he claimed that Carranza had granted mining and business concessions to the Gringos in return for their help in defeating Villa. On Thursday, starving Villistas were reported raiding in Cananea for food and supplies. When the main body of the army reached Cananea, they demanded and were paid twenty thousand American dollars by The Four C Copper Company. Villa's reported strategy was to leave about 4000 troops in Sonora to maintain a presence, the rest would switch to guerrilla tactics, retiring to Chihuahua in small bands. When asked if Calles pursued Villa, de la Rosa smiled and said, "Yes, but not too close".



Insurrectos? "Yes,"

Back in Agua Prieta the clean-up started. Calles declared an amnesty for Villa deserters and there were bunches--47 the day after the battle, all nearly starving. The dead were collected. A cemetery on the southern edge of town was where 15 soldiers fell, one appeared to be no more than 12 years old. By late Wednesday the bodies, including many animals, were beginning to decay and the Mexicans could not cremate them because of the shortage of fuel. The Standard Oil dealer in Douglas provided fuel oil and the cremation took place. In all, there were some two to three hundred bodies.

Douglas survived the battle. Of the thousands of bullets and shells fired northward, 9 struck and wounded Americans, one killed an American soldier. The Bank of Douglas and The Gadsden Hotel were scarred as were many other houses. The dead soldier was Pvt. Harry J. Jones who was struck in his ammunition belt by a stray bullet, this set off his own bullets fatally wounding him. It was first reported in the **Douglas Daily Dispatch** that he was struck while sleeping on the edge of his fox-hole, sleeping outside because his trench mate was such an uneasy sleeper. This story was immediately amended to indicate that he had been walking his guard post at an ammunition hut. Whatever the truth, he achieved a measure of fame in that the Douglas military base became officially Camp Harry J. Jones.

Douglas began to empty of curiosity seekers. On Monday and Tuesday during the battle the town's hotels, lodgings and homes had been filled to capacity; many had slept in pool halls, hotel lobbies or had simply walked the streets. One of those curious visitors became a late casualty: while hunting souvenirs on the U.S. side of the border, he was ordered away by a Mexican guard; when he refused he was ordered to accompany the soldier to his commander in Agua Prieta. When he declined this invitation he was fired upon and struck in the foot; the soldier fled.

That this battle achieved some national attention was reflected in the southwestern press. Editorial comment mostly took it lightly:

The Dallas News: "Both the Mexican armies seem to hone for Agua Prieta but at this distance we can't understand why either side wants it."

Albuquerque Journal: "Villa is going as far away from barbed wire (as he can) but he is not taking **all** his men with him."



A short ten days later the whole affair was nearly forgotten. Villa's whereabouts was declared "...a mystery", and the complete front page headlines of the **Dispatch** on Nov. 11, 1915 were as follows:

AMERICANS VICTIMS OF SUBMARINE, SAYS PAGE	
BULGARIAN ATTACK IS WITHSTOOD BY ALLIES	BRITISH BANKS WANT CREDIT IN US
SIXTY KILLED BY TORNADO IN KANSAS	
CARRANZA OFFICIALS LEAVE FOR CAPITOL	

Truly, Pancho Villa's battle for Agua Prieta was over.

Notes and Acknowledgements

I have a more-than-passing interest in this particular battle because I was there, aged three weeks at the time. Our family history has it that we moved from the bedrooms, on the south side of the house, to the living room area for the duration of the danger from northbound bullets. It is understandable, then that my interest quickens at the mention of this particular incident in the Mexican Revolution.

Over the past few years I have spent a great deal of time in Mexico where I have incidentally found a few bits of information which I felt were not known; also I met and interviewed a participant in that battle. These things whetted my appetite but nothing further would have happened had not Mrs. Margie Conder encouraged me. She did more, she introduced me to Mr. Loney at the Douglas Daily Dispatch, whose microfilms of the period provided the detailed story of the battle on a day by day basis. Mrs. Conder is well known to Douglas residents as teacher at the High School and native resident of Douglas until last year. I want to hereby thank her for that help and encouragement.

About the Author

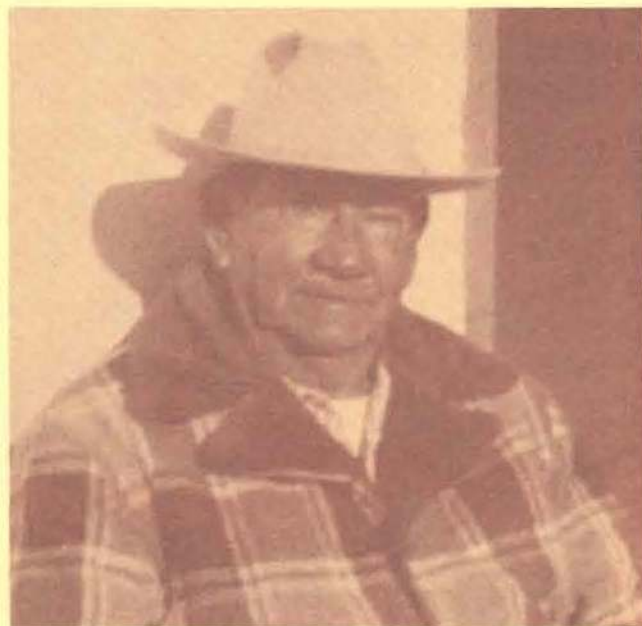
Carl H. Cole spent his first seventeen years in Douglas; went to Clawson School and the old 12th Street High School. He graduated from the University of Arizona in Tucson in 1938, with a B.A. in History. Married Helene Weathersby of Tucson in 1939. Spent the war years in Los Angeles where two sons were born.

For fifteen years was with AiResearch in Phoenix, the last three as manager of Support Sales covering all of Western Europe, based in Geneva, Switzerland. Upon retiring in 1967, Cole returned to school in Flagstaff, earning his M.A. in History in 1968, and serving at N.A.U. as Instructor in Humanities until 1973.

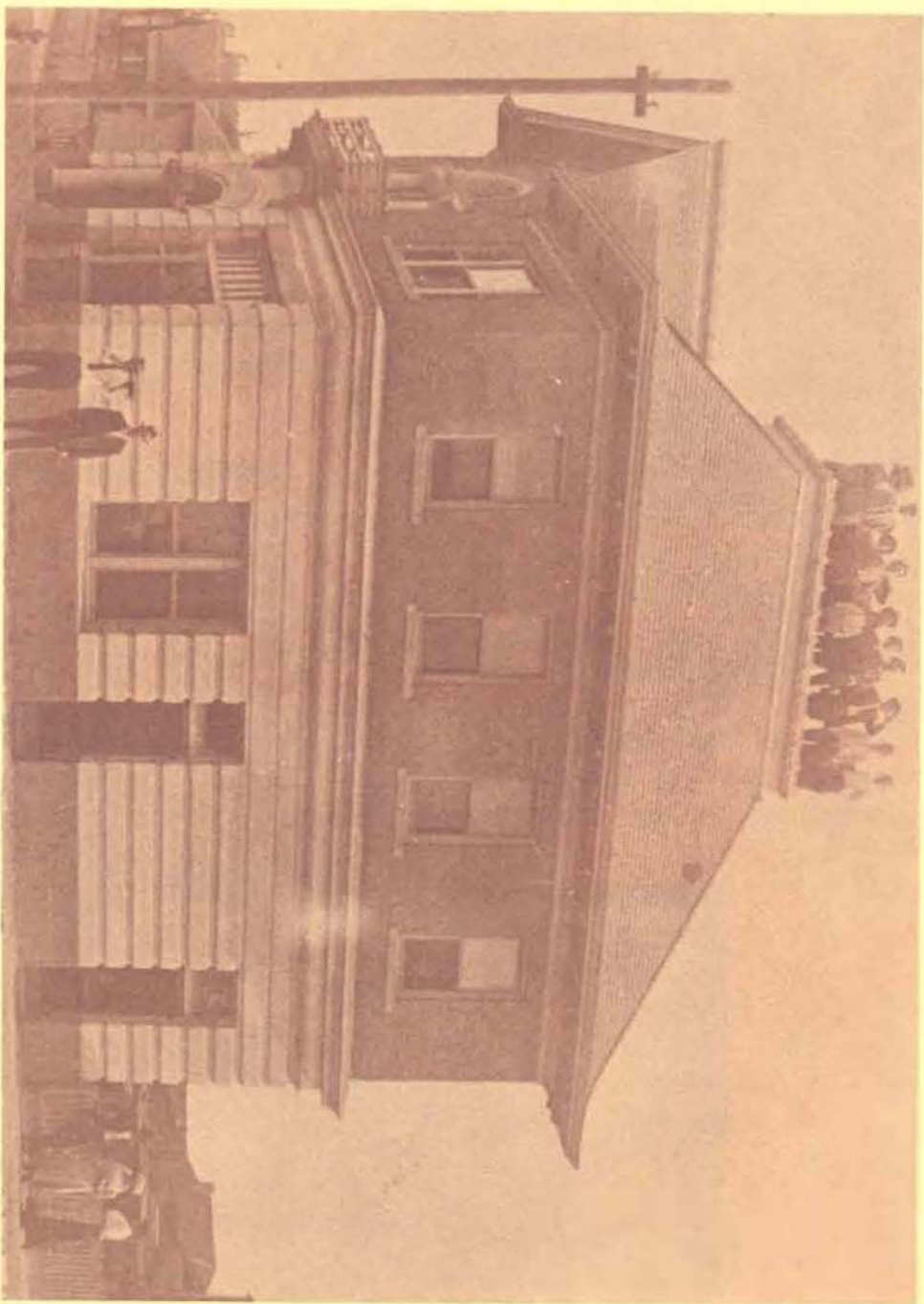
The Coles now divide their time between Kino Bay, Sonora and Prescott. Their two sons live in Oregon and Northern California and have given the Coles seven grandchildren.



This photo was taken by my uncle, A. C. Cole, of a dead soldier in Cananea. My father, C. H. Cole, is the man wearing the cap in center. (Caption by author)



Edmundo de la Rosa at his home in Kino Bay, Sonora, where he is retired. He was a conscript into Calles' army at age 15, participated in the defense of Agua Prieta in November 1915. (Photo by author taken 1983.)



Watching the battle at Agua Prieta

ERVIN BOND--"MR. COCHISE COUNTY"

by Larry D. Christiansen ¹

In 1926 two individuals came to Douglas, Arizona with different motives, intentions, and both planned short stays. The first was the most famous woman evangelist, Aimee Semple McPherson, who began making history apart from her ecclesiastical robes. The second came for health reasons and his stay lengthened into a lifetime, and he became a recorder of history in his new home area. Although the history-maker caused a tremendous stir and turned the eyes of the nation on Cochise County for a short time, her total contribution to the area was fleeting. While the second individual caused no splash, he served in his quiet way by helping preserve the heritage of his adopted homeland. Thus, the history-recorder proved the more important of the two 1926 visitors to Cochise County.

What follows is not designed to be a biography of a fine person but a few words of tribute. The author asks the indulgence of his readers for the inclusion of his personal comments.

The subject of this article, Ervin Bond, was born in southern Mississippi, a good twelve hundred miles from Douglas, Arizona, on January 24, 1906. Three things occurred in his life in Mississippi that had a significant impact on his future. First, his father told him while still very young that he was part Indian. This aroused in him a concern to know more about the Indians. Next, when about fourteen, someone gave him a little nickel magazine which featured an article on Arizona and the Chiricahua Indians. The article claimed that artifacts and signs of these Indians still abound in their old stomping grounds. Ervin had sought these evidences around his Mississippi home but found none of his Choctaw heritage. The last factor came five years after the magazine article and seemed to be a negative element, but in the mortar of his life would prove otherwise. In July of 1926 he contacted a light case of malaria fever, and his doctor recommended a short stay in a higher and drier climate to remedy it.

Ervin had an aunt and uncle in Douglas, Arizona, and by coming to visit them everything would line up. He could resolve his health problem and satisfy his interest in the Indians and find some of their signs. So he came to Douglas in the summer of 1926 and witnessed the aftershocks of Sister McPherson's last visit to Cochise County. More impressive to the Mississippi low-lander were the mountains, and he immediately wanted to climb one. His relatives lived on 19th Street which provided a grand view of Saddle Gap in the Perilla Mountains to the east. It became the object of his attention, and his initial measuring of his first mountain placed it as smooth and only two miles away. After lunch

¹ Beth Noland Willis, who married Bond in 1983, graciously assisted with the material for this article by conducting a taped interview of her husband for this author.

on his first Sunday in Douglas, he informed his uncle he was thinking of walking out to Saddle Gap that day. His uncle quickly informed him his calculations were off, and he had better plan for a two day trip rather than an afternoon hike if he intended to walk all the way.

A short time later Ervin climbed his first mountain and met his first Cochise County character. He went more prepared as he included an early start, water, lunch and drove a car out closer to his objective. He carried a small shotgun since his aunt had cautioned him to take a gun and look out for rattlesnakes, mountain lions or even a wandering Indian. Instead he encountered rough terrain, a momentary scare from some pigs and discovered "the dirtiest human being" he had ever seen. Ervin ran into the old cave-dwelling hermit, Capp Watts. Both took stock of each other, and apparently Capp thought his company needed a cup of coffee. Ervin considered the hermit's appearance and his residence far from appealing but the coffee was the final straw. Capp dipped his coffee pot into a muddy pond or puddle of water, and Ervin quickly announced he did not drink coffee, which he admitted was his "biggest lie." The full appreciation of Bond getting out of this predicament can only be envisioned by those who know how much he loved his coffee.

Ervin returned to his aunt and uncle's home late and they were relieved that one of their warnings had not occurred. Instead he had received his initiation to the mountains and interesting personalities, thus planting a seed for later germination. Unknown to Ervin at the time, he was not through with Capp Watts. Ervin lived a year with his aunt and uncle until his family moved to Douglas. Ervin went into the grocery business and Capp bought his groceries from Ervin the last six years of Capp's life. To Ervin's credit he saw more in Capp than dirt, long hair and coarse manners. The coffee and lodgings of the hermit were repulsive, but he was quite an individual and had a fantastic story if one looked deeper than his physical appearance. Capp was an important link in the development of the quarter horse and he provided the inspiration for one of the great western ballads. Ervin measured Capp and did not find him wanting. He has told Capp's story many times and put it into print. The best written account of the whole experience is Ervin's article "Ghost Riders In The Sky--Stan Jones and Capp Watts" published in **The Cochise Quarterly** (Summer/Fall 1972). Without Ervin's efforts, Capp's story would have been lost; instead we have it with a personal reflection.

Ervin decided to stay in Cochise County and good fortune smiled on him again. In the fall of 1928 he and a companion went deer hunting in Turkey Creek Canyon. They arrived in the evening and set up camp and around the fire Ervin received a lot of tips about his first deer hunt. After retiring he had a hard time going to sleep as two thoughts kept going through his mind--the next day's hunt and John Ringo the outlaw who died in the canyon many years before. The next morning the hunters separated and before long Ervin bagged

his first deer. He field dressed it and then experienced some difficulty in trying to pack the deer out. While so engaged a fellow on a horse came by and asked Ervin if he was a "greenhorn." Ervin admitted he was, and the tougher-than-nails cowboy showed him how to pack the deer out. Ervin may have had "buck fever" earlier, but a new fire burned within him as he pumped information from the cowboy Henry Smith. He wanted to know more about John Ringo's death, his grave and who the cowboy thought killed Ringo. From Smith and those to whom Smith directed him, Ervin received the stories of Turkey Creek pioneers, who, except for the killer, were the last people to see Ringo alive, heard the fatal shots, and viewed the body before the coroner's jury. The "greenhorn" with his easy manners made friends with the cowboy and the others involved in the Ringo story. The deer hunt paid a bonus and when the opportunity came, he made the most of it. Ervin has told the Ringo story countless times and put it into print in his "John Ringo's Death--Murder or Suicide?" in **The Cochise Quarterly** (Spring 1973). Forty-five years after the deer hunt, he served as a prime mover in upgrading the Ringo gravesite and erecting a historical monument at the site.

If his historical experiences had ended with these two encounters, he would have been well rewarded for coming to Cochise County. We share in the good fortune because he has shared them with others. Ervin had the opportunity to play several baseball games with the local club which had some former Chicago Black Sox players on the team. They had been banished from the Major Leagues due to the famous scandal and were in Douglas playing for pay. Right from his earliest years in Douglas Ervin ran across or sought out many of the county's pioneers. At first he just talked to them; the recording would come later. Besides those already mentioned he met Mrs. John Slaughter, John A. Rockfellow, Lillian Riggs, Bill McDonald, and a host of others. The list goes on and on--fifty-eight years' worth. Besides the people, he sought out interesting places, ranches, springs, mountains, buildings, trees and other things of note throughout the length and breadth of the county. His formal education ended after the eighth grade but his inquisitive spirit and thirst for knowledge gave learning a high and continuing priority.

In 1933 Ervin married Irma Dalton and they had three daughters, Lenore, Leona and Carol. (Irma died in 1981.) His girls proved the inspiration to move him deeper into what had only been the shadow of a hobby. Around 1960 he decided to "make some notes" of his visits with the county's pioneers for his daughters, hoping they would enjoy them someday. Previously he had taken many pictures as he believed a good photograph was worth a whole page of writing. Mrs. Opie Burgess Lea, author of a book on Bisbee, suggested he take pictures and write a short account for each. So evolved a history hobby that grew to magnificent proportions. His film processor gave back two copies so he put a picture or two on a sheet of paper, wrote his text and put it in a plastic cover. Then he made a duplicate copy. He retained one copy and gave the second

copy to the people it concerned or the ones who helped him research it. This thoughtful duplicate became a trademark of Ervin Bond.

As the hobby grew, the Bond family began giving Ervin film for Christmas, his birthday or other occasions instead of another necktie or pair of socks type presents. He kept his articles in large ring binders or albums. There came to be twenty-two albums as he divided the county from his home city by the routes used to see the county. He entitled his collection "My Five Ways to See Cochise County." They contain today more than 6,000 pictures and over 2,000 articles. This collection cost him in out-of-pocket money approximately \$20,000 with nothing counted for his time and energies. It did take time. Prior to his retirement very few, if any, weeks went by without his working on his history. During this period he would average at least twelve hours a week working on it. If he was not out in the county gathering material, he worked at home putting it together. A large number of his weekends, especially Saturdays, were spent in the field tracking down stories. Quite often he set up a half dozen appointments for his field day but seldom made it to more than two or three as the people he interviewed were never rushed. So he would have to reschedule the missed appointments. After his retirement in 1973 he had much more time to devote to his work of gathering history. It was not unusual for him to labor six or seven days a week on it; as Ervin put it, "I really got with it for a few years."

All was not fun and good times; it took determination, dedication and a love for the work to stay with it so faithfully over the years. Everyone he sought out was not pleasant, co-operative, or even considerate. Some points eluded the researcher even after his diligent efforts, requiring him to dig deeper to unravel it. The routine and disappointments took a toll, but only momentarily as he concluded he had too much in his hobby to quit. Then three years of illness sidetracked his labors somewhat.

Somewhere along the way his hobby took on the added dimension of a history of a county rather than a "few notes" for his daughters. In the late 1960s more and more people became aware of his history and he was called to ever widening circles. The historian began giving talks about his beloved county. He shared his experiences and research with school students, ladies groups, service clubs, retired people, and all that asked anywhere in the county. He was ready, willing and very able. He has spoken to the same group more than once, a compliment to the man and his story. Besides the spoken word, he began writing articles for publication thereby sharing and preserving what he had discovered over the years.

Because he had done his work well, a story finally sought him out and gave him an opportunity denied all others. Percy Bowden, an old lawman in the county and long time chief of police in Douglas, had an eventful and fascinating career. He knew of or was involved in many of the important events that

transpired in Cochise County from the late 1910s to 1970. Many tales and innuendoes arose around him and these along with his personality caused him to be extremely tight lipped about his life and experiences. Many tried unsuccessfully to get him to relate his story. Even Ervin experienced a couple of rebuffs. Initially he asked Bowden for permission to take his picture and write a short article to accompany it which would go into Ervin's albums. Percy refused and declared that hundreds had asked for his story but he would not give it. In 1971 a writer from **Life** magazine came to Douglas and offered Ervin money if he could get him an interview with Bowden. They went to Bowden's home and Percy almost threw them out when he learned what they wanted. Bowden said, "You know better than to bring someone up here, Bond; I'll never tell anyone my story!"

Two years later Percy asked Ervin to come to his home and do his life's story. The details of this and the problems encountered in getting Bowden's story are related in the introduction of Ervin's book **Percy Bowden: Born to Be a Frontier Lawman**. Percy told Ervin he had chosen him over professional writers for a couple of reasons. First, he had read Ervin's article on Capp Watts; he had known Capp and liked the way Ervin had written it. Secondly, he knew of Bond's integrity and how he would keep the story as told and not gloss it up. Bowden's ill health and death terminated the story gathering before Ervin had half as much material as he would have liked. However, he had more than anyone else had been able to get.

Ervin had earlier published a book on the history of Douglas, Arizona and followed the Bowden book with his latest--**Cochise County, Arizona, Past and Present**. The first and last books drew heavily upon his initial "My Five Ways to See Cochise County" compilation. These albums contain even more history than his published works. They are priceless. Those who have had the privilege of thumbing through its pages perceive its value, while those who study each picture and read every word truly know of the treasure. They also assure us that he learned much about the Indians and saw evidences of their being in the land. Not as much as he would have liked, but more than he envisioned while in Mississippi and thus he was not disappointed.

In 1975 Ervin was elected Historical Advisor for the Douglas Bicentennial Commission. The commemoration of the nation's birthday with its focus on the past gave Ervin the opportunity to share some of his material via the radio. His work came to receive even greater attention and he personally received a shower of tributes and honors richly deserved. This article's design is to add another laurel to his list. The author of this article has known Ervin since the late 1960s. I have had the privilege of working with him on activities for the Cochise County Historical and Archaeological Society plus going out into the county

researching history. I have seen first hand his technique, heard his talks and looked into his collections. At every opportunity I quizzed him about his experiences, especially with the pioneers of the county. How I would have liked to have been with him when he first met Capp Watts, interviewed Henry Smith, drove Viola Slaughter to her ranch, talked with John A. Rockfellow, listened to Percy Bowden and the list goes on. I tried several time to interview Percy Bowden. Shrewdly, so I thought at the time, starting with a group of photographs of Aimee Semple McPherson and asking for his comment on them, thinking I would eventually win him over and get his story. I never got into his house. I do cherish the historical experiences we enjoyed together, and appreciate Cochise County pioneers more because Ervin shared his encounters with them. Ervin is a very good friend of mine, but it is not his friend who wrote this article. The author is a colleague in the history and love for Cochise County. From that standpoint I write and make the best judgments I am capable of making out of my association with the best historian of the county.

More than any person, past or present, Ervin Bond merits the title--"Mr. Cochise County." The appellation is not given lightly but after due consideration of the man, his works and contributions to the county. We thank him for the memories--his talks, articles and books--and for all he has done and is still doing. He has searched and shared the county's past like no one else in its history, and in so doing became a part of its fabric. Without being presumptuous the author feels he is just the spokesman for numerous Cochise County residents and others who know the man and his works. The poet Sam Foss wrote: "Bring me men to match my mountains." Ervin measured his first mountain back in 1926, fifty-eight productive years later he truly matches the mountains he loves--both grand, majestic and "OURS."



Ervin L. Bond in 1975

AN HISTORIC LANDMARK — THE COCHISE HOTEL

by Enid C. Howard

A signed, now paved, road, off Highway 666 on the road to Douglas, Arizona, along with two small signs proclaiming The Cochise Hotel and The Cochise General Store, directs the traveler to Cochise, Arizona.

There are no promotional Chamber of Commerce signs extolling the attractions of Cochise because the small settlement, which was named after the great Apache Indian Chief Cochise, is a quiet community, somnolent in the solitude of its isolation from neon lights and the noise of traffic, except, of course, for the trains.

A small gem of still-functioning Arizona Historical Landmarks, the old adobe hotel, originally a rooming house, was built probably in 1881 or 1880. Guests who adventure off Highway 666 either with a sense of curiosity or of weariness, are pleasantly surprised to find a nostalgic bit of Arizona history along with comfortable and clean accommodations. The Cochise Hotel has been on the National Register of Historic Places since October 22, 1976.

It was built at the junction of the Southern Pacific and old Arizona Eastern Railways. Located at the front of the long hotel hallway, the Wells Fargo freight office serviced the SP Railroad Station across the street, and handled the ore shipments from the mines of Johnson and Pearce in their heyday. The office still exists, complete with the old Greene Cattle Company safe, as sturdy and grim as the day its paint was new.

The moment you cross the threshold of The Cochise Hotel, you are transported into turn-of-the century Arizona. Standing in the parlor, you are surrounded by authentic furnishings of the 1800s: a wind-up phonograph, heavy walnut tables and chairs, rocking chairs, a carved wooden sofa upholstered in tan colored velvet (reputed to have belonged to Jenny Lind), a huge wardrobe with mirrored doors, another sofa and several old chairs arranged in stiff formality around an oriental carpet, all softly illumined by a painted china and brass chandelier with dropping crystal pendants.

Guest rooms have been restored to retain their authentic flavor, with modern baths and heating installed in each room as inconspicuously as possible to provide visitors maximum comfort.

Delicious meals are served family style where guests are seated around a huge antique dining table. The hotel can accommodate 10 to 12 guests and has registered travelers from every state plus some from foreign lands.

A country road is the front yard of the hotel just as it was in the 1880s. Its high square front stands proud and white above a "sitting and visiting" covered veranda that runs along the north and west walls. An enclosed rear yard is a cool retreat under high old china-berries where a weathered wood structure of bygone days supported a large water tank.

The Cochise Hotel's beginnings were rooted in the needs of cattlemen, miners, and yes, a motley group of outlaws who roamed this last outpost of that hardened breed of men and women who were determined to tame and settle Arizona Territory.

Cochise, Arizona is situated about midway between Willcox and Benson along what was originally the route of the Butterfield Stages to California. The Southern Pacific Railroad more or less followed the same general route when two ribbons of steel were laid out across the desert to provide shipping facilities for sprawling Sulphur Springs Valley.

In 1873, Texas cattlemen had driven thousands of head of Texas longhorns into Arizona Territory and found Sulphur Springs Valley to be a vast undulating sea of virgin grass belly-high to horses and cattle, in the southeastern corner of Arizona. A paradise for cattle operations on open range.

Willcox, Cochise and Benson became the staging depots for loading and shipping cattle to market. At one time in 1896, it was reported that 209,836 head of cattle were shipped east out of the area.

The town of Cochise was situated in the center of an untamed desert land that was without law and order or tranquility. Cattle, mining and space was the catalyst that blended cowboys, miners, outlaws, and hard-working homesteaders into one big conglomerate of trouble. So many stage, train robberies and killings took place regularly that they drew little attention or comment from ranchers as long as the outlaws let them alone.

One train robbery that popped a hornets' nest took place on September 9, 1899, when \$10,000 was heisted from a Southern Pacific passenger train near Cochise Station. Several masked bandits uncoupled the express and baggage cars and let them roll some distance away, where they dynamited the safe. They were after the \$75,000 Commonwealth Mine payroll, for Pearce, Arizona, which was usually shipped to Pearce, twelve miles from Cochise on the old Arizona Eastern Railroad. But the payroll had been taken off the train at Willcox and was enroute across country by wagon. The unsuccessful train hold-up loosed a hornets' nest because two local officers of the law were involved in the plot and were recognized. So much for frontier honesty!

A few months after the robbery, a cowboy known as Jess Dunlap was fatally wounded while involved in a hold-up on the Benson-Nogales train. He gave officers the information that the Cochise robbery had been planned by Burt Alvord, who was then constable of Willcox and his deputy, a well-known rancher, William Downing. The men who actually did the robbery were Matt Burts, a local cowboy, and W.N. Stiles, deputy constable of Pearce.

Once the deeds of these men became public knowledge, the Alvord Stiles gun-happy gang terrorized the area almost without restraint. Alvord was reported last seen in Panama. Stiles was killed in 1908 in Nevada. William Downing was killed by an Arizona Ranger in 1908; and after his death it became known that he was a member of the notorious Sam Bass gang in Texas.

To outwit those bandits who wanted to get their hands on the Pearce gold shipments, the mine owners melted the gold into bullion and sent it to the Cochise train station by wagon for shipment east. The bars were too heavy for the outlaws to carry on horseback and it would be too slow for wagons or burros to pack it out where they could dispose of it.

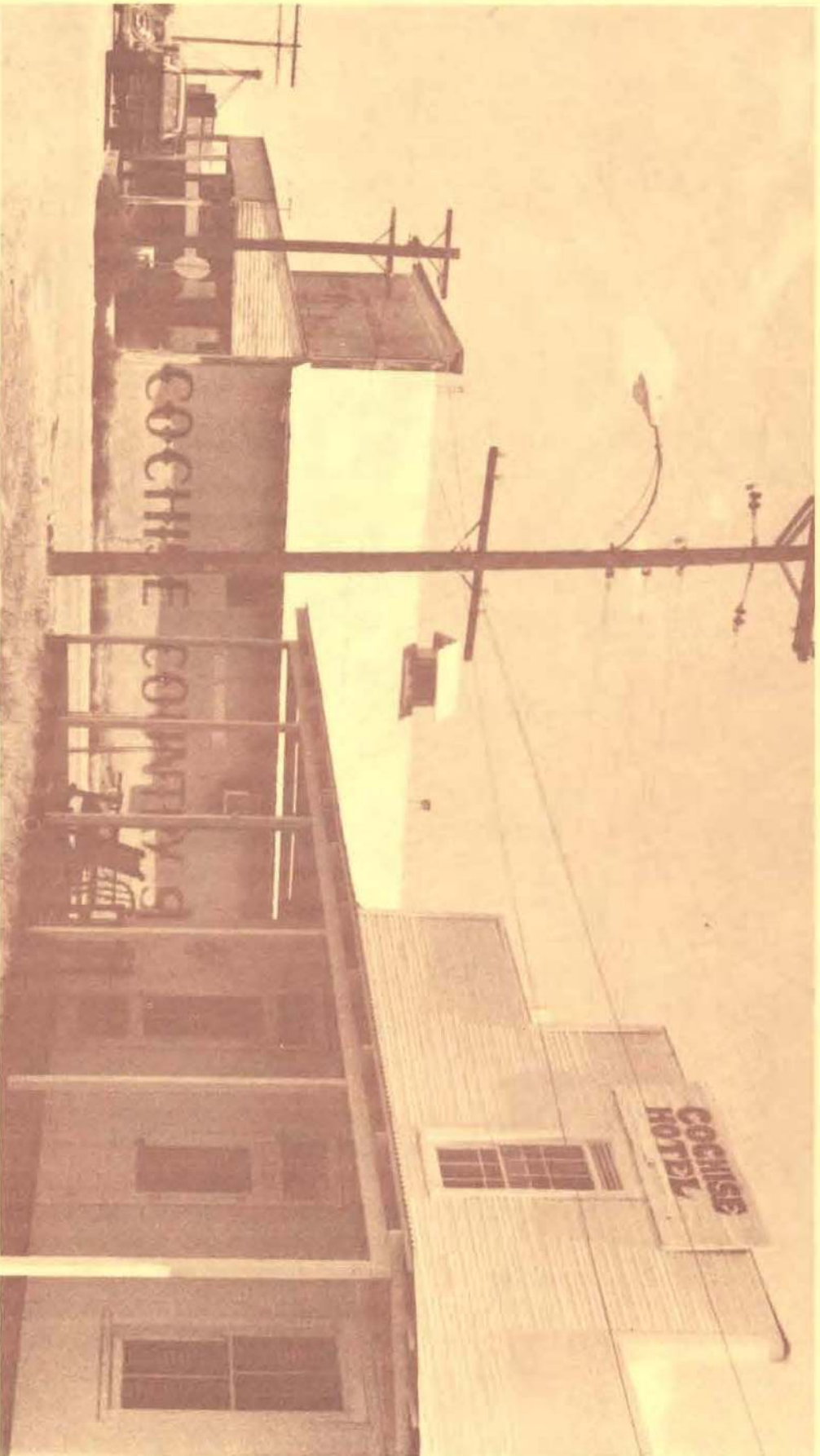
As so often happens where land was exploited beyond its capacity to produce, Sulphur Springs Valley was heavily overgrazed and this eventually hit hard at the baronial cattle empires; the gold production empires proved to be just another bubble that burst when the gold veins were worked out.

A stable economy was established by ranchers who settled and remained in Sulphur Springs Valley; and eventually the lawlessness was tamed when Arizona Territory was declared the State of Arizona on February 14, 1912.

The Cochise Hotel and the Country Store have survived the changes of the years. True, they are off the beaten path, but they stand serene along roads that have known the footsteps of Arizona history.

This article was written by Enid C. Howard, P.O. Box 505, Pearce, AZ 85625. Mrs. Thomas B. (Elizabeth) Husband, owner of The Cochise Hotel, added some material about the hotel at the suggestion of Winifred Meskus, Editor of this Volume of **The Cochise Quarterly**.





Cochise Hotel and Cochise County Store as they were in 1976. The only changes from the year 1887 are the utility poles and the cars. (Photo by Enid C. Howard)

BOOK REVIEW

by Tom Vaughan

"Mining Town Trolleys: A History of Arizona's Warren-Bisbee Railway" by Richard V. Francaviglia. Fifty pages, two maps, 28 photographs, bibliography. Published by Copper Queen Publishing Company, Box 48, Bisbee, Arizona 85603. Available at \$6.50 from the publisher and from the Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum, Box 451, Bisbee, AZ 85603.

This slender book is comprehensive and exciting; its fold-out pages are unique.

Francaviglia makes use of old timers' reminiscences, accounts of local newspapers and mining company records, maps and rare photographs, as he traces "the rise and fall of this traction line, its impact on the settlement of the Warren District, and the vestiges which still can be seen today in the district's remarkable landscape."

The idea of a streetcar line in Bisbee was not accepted at first. He writes, "As early as 1902 a request was made to the city council for a franchise to construct and operate a streetcar line, but...it was promptly denied as being totally absurd. The sheer engineering problems alone were too great" (Munson p1).

The Calumet and Arizona Mining Company finally got the franchise and "On March 12, 1908 between 2:30 and 4:00 all work stopped, business closed and children were marched from school so all could attend the festivities at the arrival of the first streetcar in front of the railroad depot in Old Bisbee."

Francaviglia follows the construction of the line from Warren up to Old Bisbee and later to the old country club and eventually further up Tombstone Canyon. As the book continues, we read about the rise in popularity (2.5 million passengers in 1916) and its eventual demise in 1928.

There are first-hand accounts from people like R.R. Foster, who witnessed a runaway work car while the line was under construction. Former Bisbee resident and writer Jack McDonald gives an amusing account of the Halloween prank of greasing the rails "which usually brought the big green cars to an unscheduled and embarrassing stop on the uphill sections of the track."

Francaviglia takes particular pains to give correct and detailed information regarding the color and dimensions of the trolleys, horsepower of the motors and source of power. Even the weight of the rails is given.

The mountainous terrain of Bisbee was not overlooked as Francaviglia states "...the Warren-Bisbee Railway was one of the most sinuous and steepest interurban lines in the United States."

Blended into this text are rare photographs gathered from collections throughout the state, both private and public. One extra feature of this book is fold-out pages of two panoramas, one of Upper Lowell in 1914 (a community now obliterated by the mining of the Lavender and Sacramento pits), and one of Warren as it appeared in 1908.

Two Bisbee artists, Tom Jester and Judy Perry have their work reproduced in full color by the Copper Queen Publishers (Publisher of the Brewery Gulch Gazette and Pay Dirt Mining Journal). Jester's lively watercolor of a Bisbee trolley illustrates the front cover, the back an acrylic painting of Warren by Judy Perry.

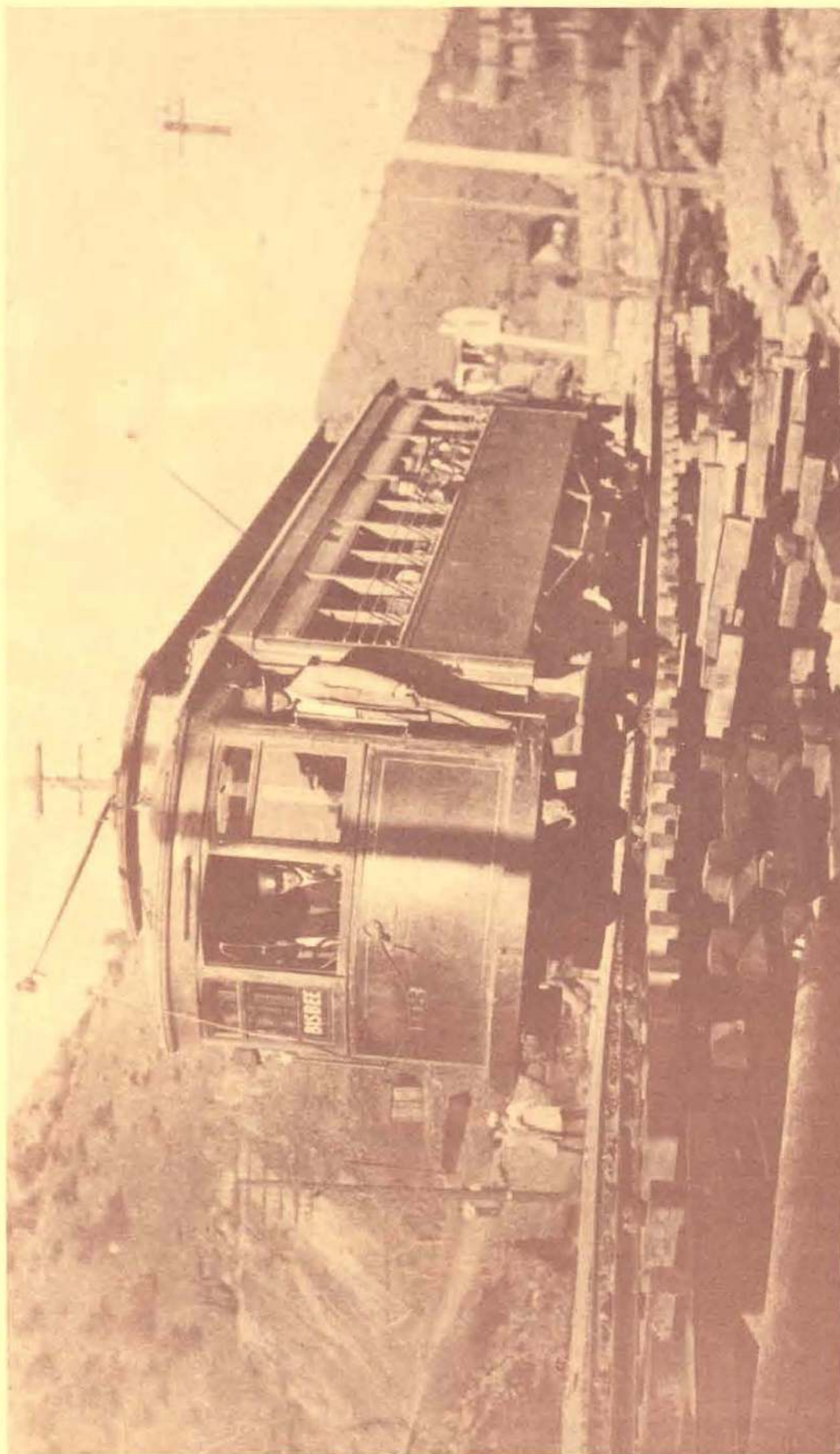
Francaviglia holds a doctorate in geography and architectural history from the University of Oregon. Until July 20, 1984, he was Director of the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum in Bisbee. He is now Assistant Division Chief of the Ohio Historical Preservation Office in Columbus, Ohio.

He is author of "The Mormon Landscape" (1978) and co-editor of "The Railroad Station Planbook" (1976). He also has written numerous articles for professional history, landscape architecture, and geography journals and for the popular model railroad press. His article "The Upper San Pedro Valley" was carried in **The Cochise Quarterly** (Vol. 14, No. 2, Summer 1984). He is now researching the history of the Douglas Trolley, which he plans to have published in book form.

(This review first appeared in the Bisbee Daily Review and is reproduced with the permission of the author, Tom Vaughan, Box 832, AZ 85603.)

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Warren-Bisbee Railway



Warren-Bisbee Railway