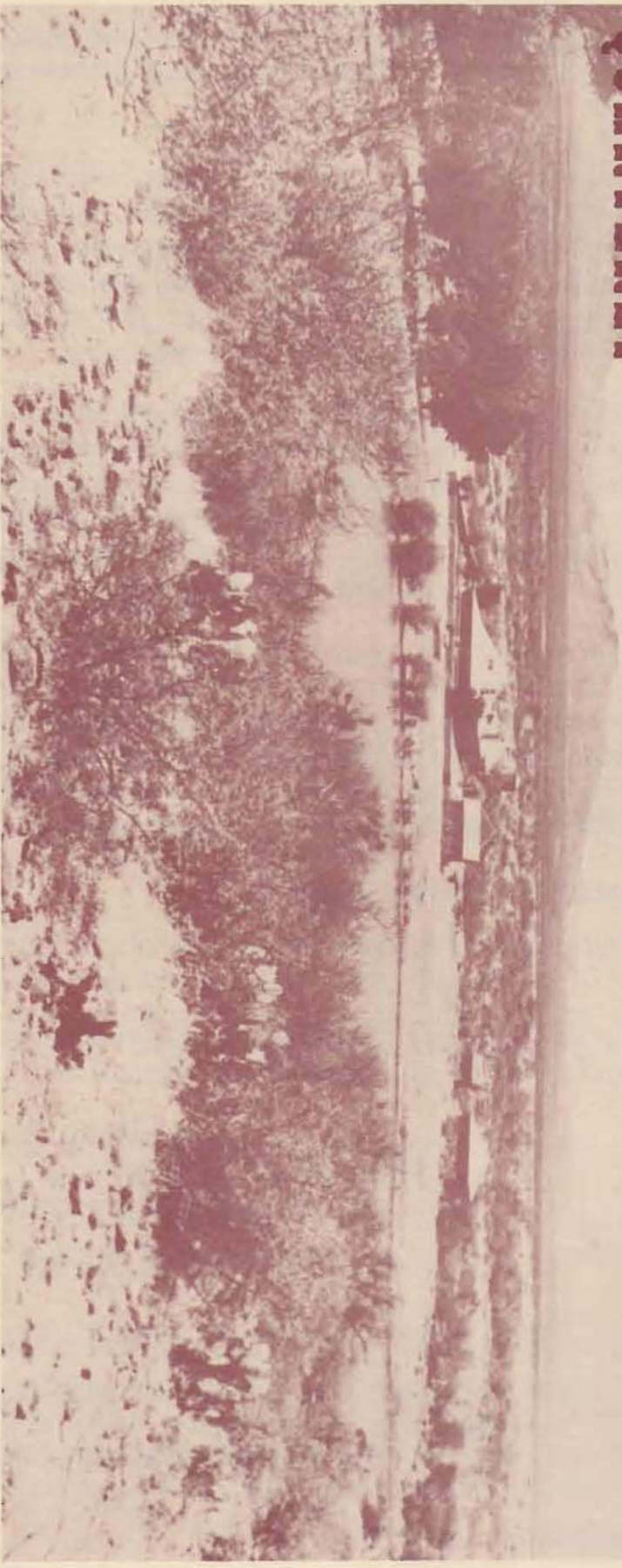


THE COCHISE QUARTERLY

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The San Bernardino Ranch, c. 1965 (Fort Huachuca Historical Museum)

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Photographs have been furnished through the courtesy of Johnson Historical Museum and Wendy P. Glenn. Credit is given for the source of each photograph.

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A NOTE ABOUT THE EDITORS

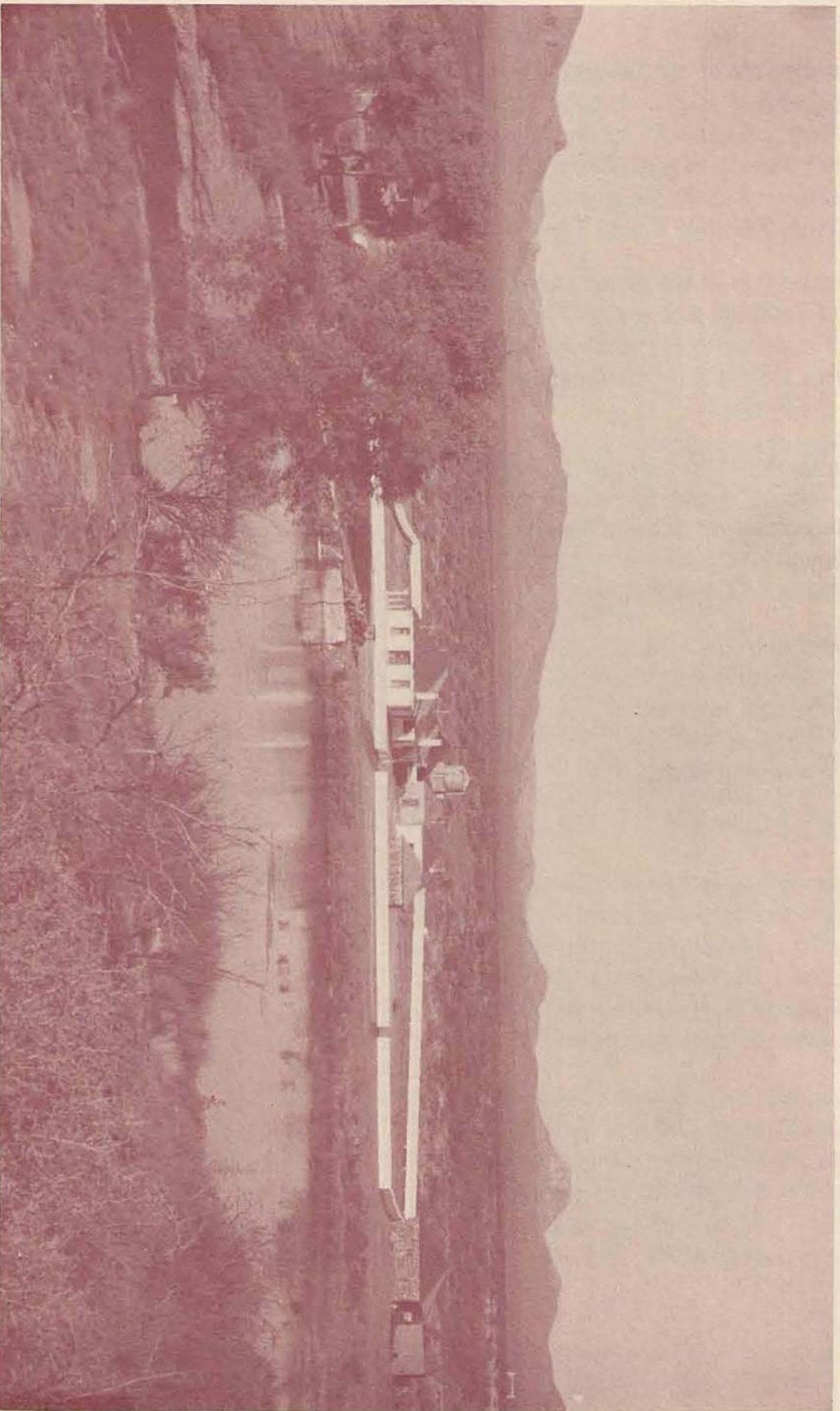
REBA BENGE WELLS is the youngest daughter of a pioneer family who homesteaded in southeast New Mexico in 1913. She has been a resident of Phoenix since 1982 but her interest and background in Arizona history go back much further. Her degrees are from the University of New Mexico in education, southwest history, and history of the American West, with special emphasis on the Spanish Borderlands and Territorial periods in New Mexico and Arizona.

Dr. Wells became involved with research on John Slaughter and the San Bernardino ranch when she worked as a historian for the Phoenix architectural firm of Gerald A. Doyle & Associates who did the 1984 restoration of the Slaughter ranch house compound. She has continued doing historical research and photograph conservation for the current owner of the ranch buildings, Johnson Historical Museum, and is, at present, a freelance historical consultant.

The Stillman manuscript has been provided and edited by a well-known resident of Cochise County, WENDY PAUL GLENN, of the Malpai Ranch. Wendy and her husband, Warner Glenn, lived at the Slaughter Ranch from 1962 to 1969 and still reside on a portion of the original ranch. She and Warner are third generation natives — both of their grandfathers came to Cochise County as children, and both of their fathers were born in the county.

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The Slaughter ranch house compound after restoration, 1985. (Johnson Museum Collection)

THE SAN BERNARDINO RANCH

by Reba B. Wells



(From Slaughter family album)

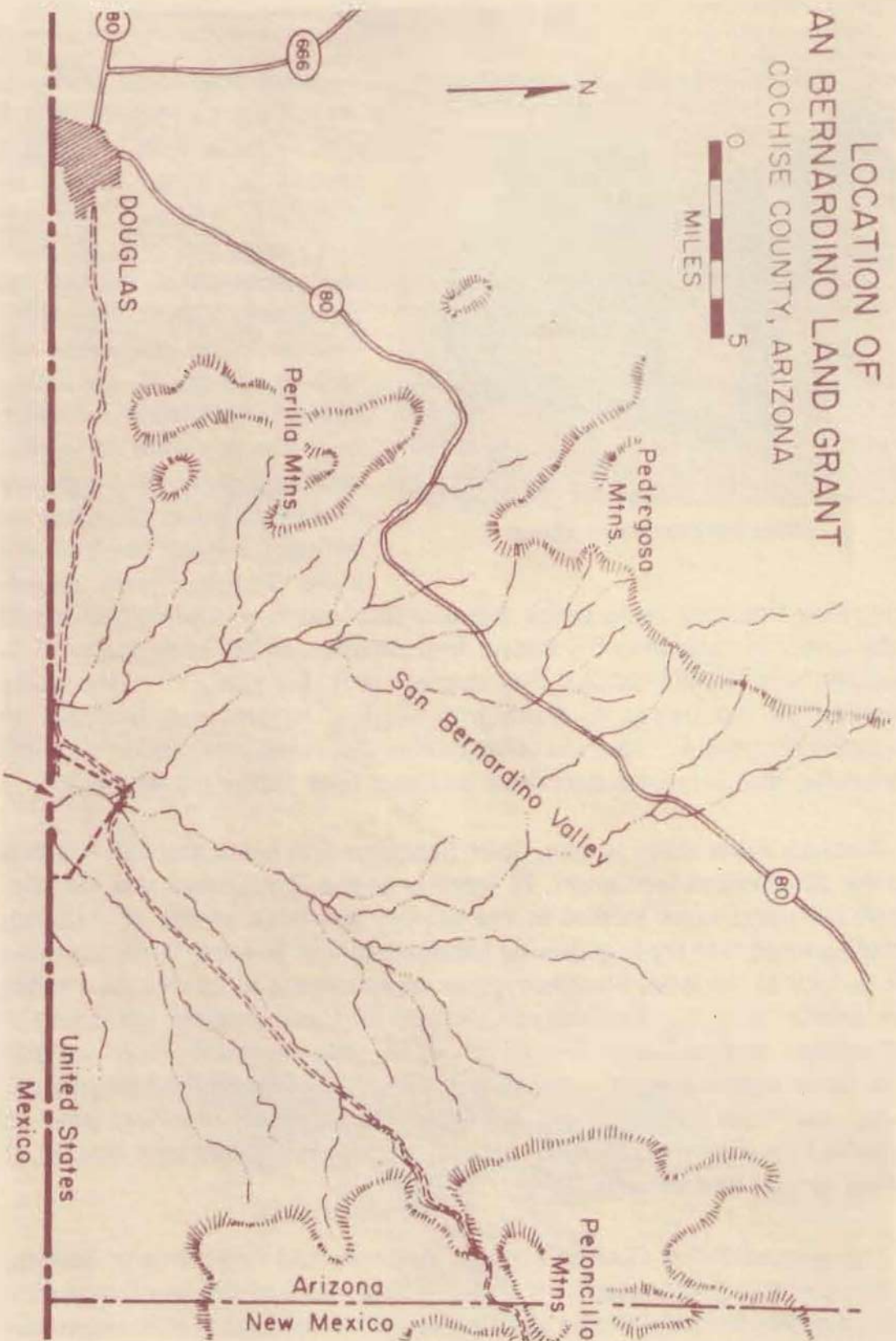
One afternoon, probably in the early autumn of 1884, a man and a woman in a buggy paused at Silver Creek in southeast Arizona Territory and looked out over the long oval expanse that was the San Bernardino Valley. Since they were no longer newlyweds and were products of the often uncommunicative frontier, there possibly were no spoken words indicating the magnitude of the vista before them nor the feelings it evoked; but John and Viola Slaughter were experi-

encing their first look at the ranch they had just bought — a place that would be the center of their lives for almost four decades. In her later years, Viola Slaughter nostalgically recalled that moment and that view, “. . . the valley stretching far out before us down into Mexico, rimmed and bounded by mountains all around,”¹ and she reflected that she would never forget the thrill of knowing that it belonged to them and that their future lay within it.²

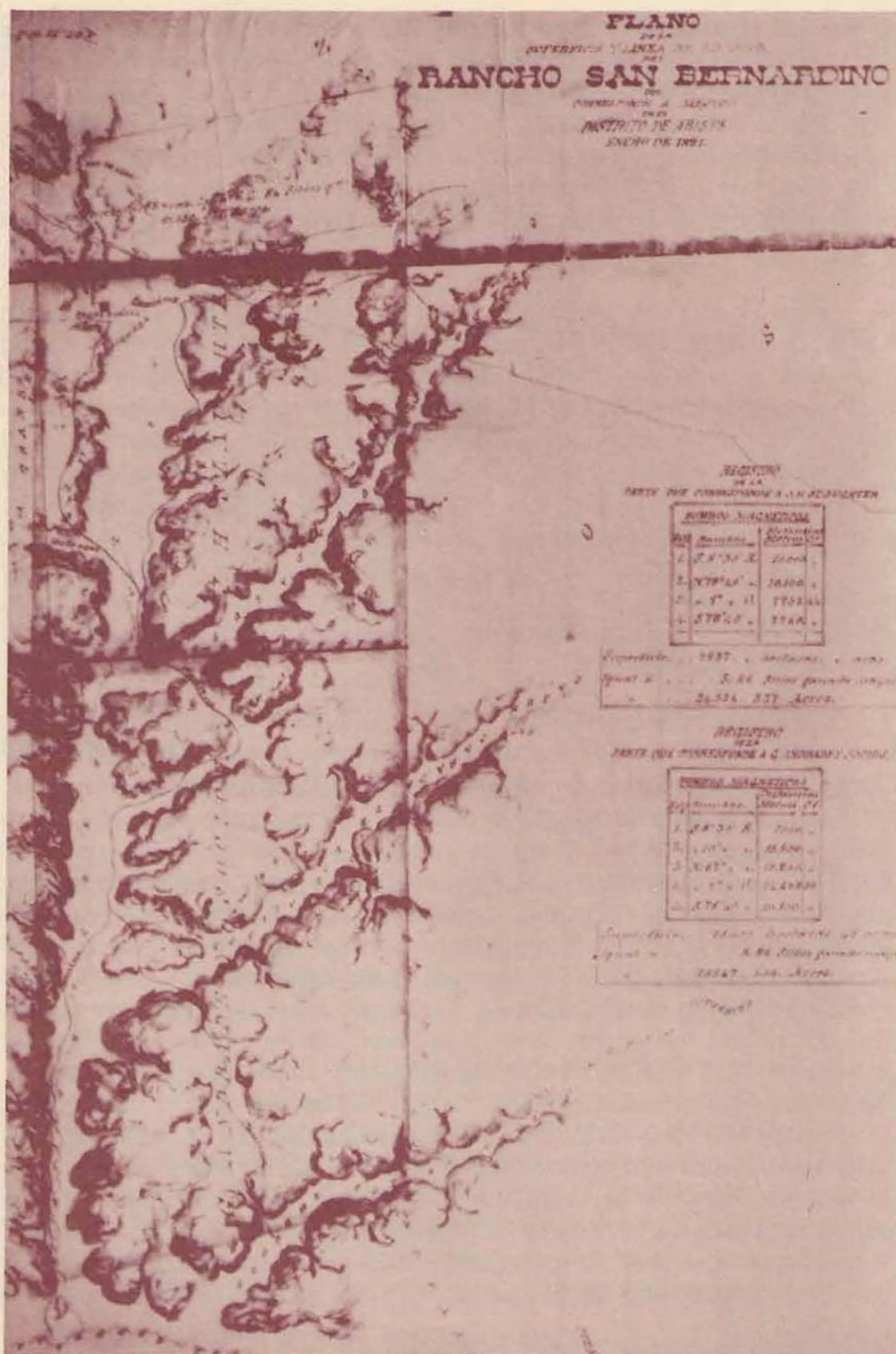
Looking for a ranch to buy, John Slaughter had heard through a friend that the old Mexican land grant, El Rancho de San Bernardino, was for sale, several thousand acres located in the extreme southeast corner of Arizona, extending south into the neighboring Mexican state of Sonora. Without taking time to look at the land, Slaughter made an agreement to buy the vast ranch from *Señor* Guillermo Andrade of Guaymas who was acting as agent for the land holders, assignees and descendents of the original grant owner, Ignacio Pérez. In the next few months, Slaughter made trips to Nogales and Magdalena, Sonora, and there signed papers which gave him a ninety-nine-year lease on approximately sixty-five thousand acres of grasslands watered by a number of flowing springs and streams.³

Lying one-third in Cochise County, Arizona, and two-thirds in Sonora, Mexico, the land grant occupied the east to west width of the San Bernardino Valley, running from the Perilla and Pedregosa (or Swisshelm) Mountains east to the Peloncillo and Guadalupe ranges, and from the watershed of the San Simon Valley south to Pitaicachi Peak in the Sierra Madres of Mexico. By the time the Slaughters visited the valley that long ago day, the Pérez ranch had been deserted for almost fifty years, the victim of Apache depredations in the

LOCATION OF
AN BERNARDINO LAND GRANT
COCHISE COUNTY, ARIZONA



Map showing location of San Bernardino Land Grant.



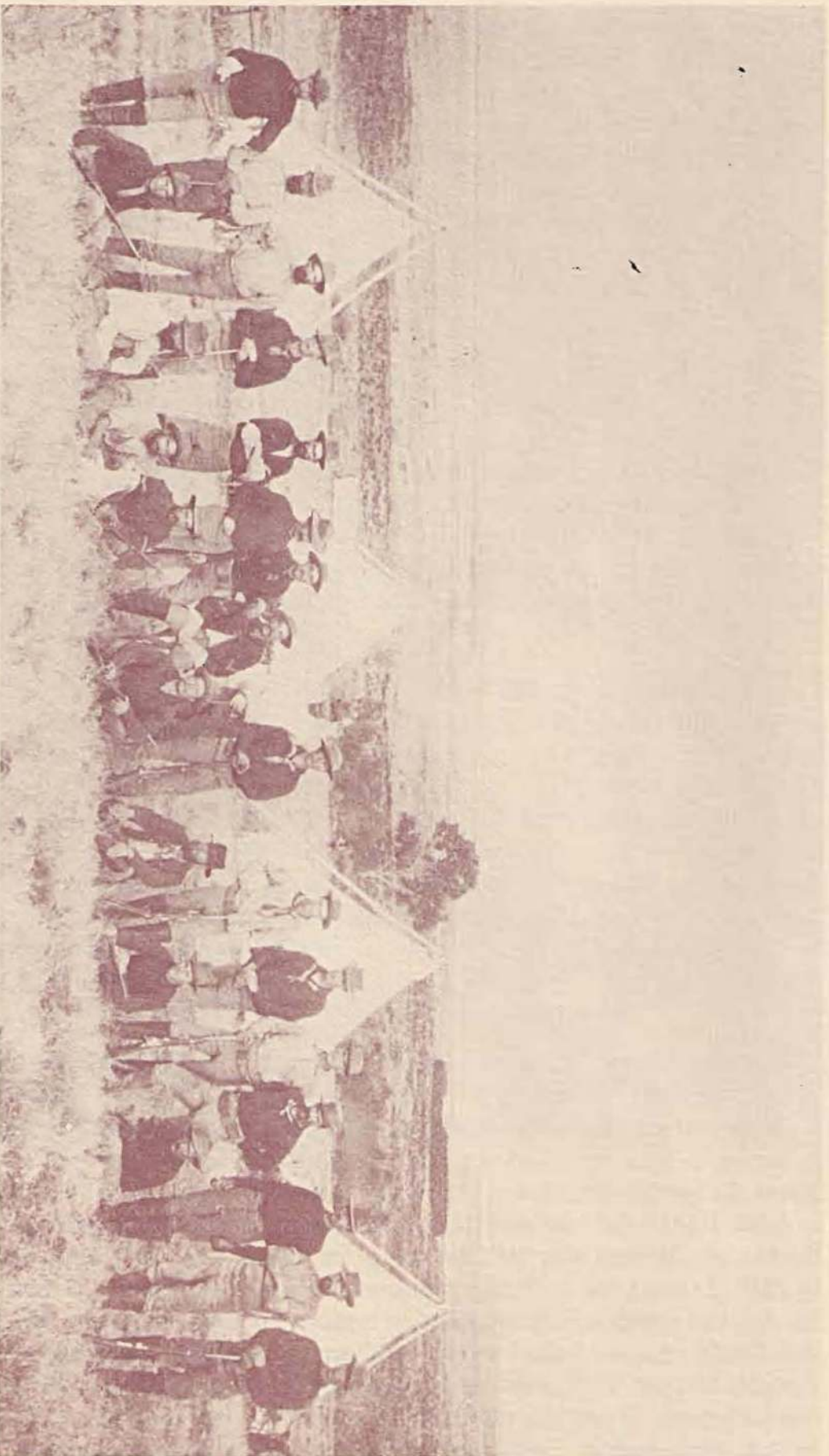
Photograph of 1891 "Plano de San Bernardino" showing the outline of the land grant purchased by John Slaughter. The grant is divided into three portions and the dark line near the top of the photo is the international boundary. "Casas viejas," just south of the boundary indicates the location of the Perez hacienda. (Johnson Museum Collection)

one who built there the fortified hacienda and developed the ranch. A close relative and business associate, Don Rafael Elias, paid for the four thousand head of cattle which Perez purchased in 1821 from the mission at Tumacacori,⁶ and Elías may also have been the real entrepreneur although title remained in Pérez' name. Whether Pérez or Elías, however, ranching on the frontier was a precarious business, and by the mid 1830s San Bernardino suffered the same fate as similar operations in northern Sonora. Apache raids increased again and settlers drew back to safer areas, buildings were forsaken to the elements, and cattle and horses were abandoned to run wild on the range.

When California and the Southwest were opened to Anglos during and after the war with Mexico (1845-48), thousands of travelers on the southern Gila route passed through the valley, happy to reach the green oasis that marked San Bernardino's perennial springs. In many of the journals and diaries,⁷ the travelers commented on the picturesque adobe ruins of the old ranch, and of the pleasure of adding fresh beef to their dwindling food supplies. A few, however, were not so pleased with the wild cattle. In 1846 members of the Mormon Battalion were encamped at San Bernardino for several days.⁸

Gold was discovered in Arizona Territory, as well as in California — gold not only in the form of rich mineral ores, but the gold of rich grasslands. The influx of settlers, of all kinds, especially after the Civil War, brought a need for military protection from the Indian inhabitants and several forts were established in southern Arizona. San Bernardino Valley once more knew military activity as the United States Army mounted campaigns against the Indians, especially the Apaches. Troops were stationed at various locations in the valley and nearby, such as Silver Creek and Guadalupe Canyon, and for a brief time in 1878, Camp Supply was located at the springs just north of the international border.⁹

After Colonel George Crook returned to command the Department of Arizona in 1882, he was able to settle most of the still-marauding Arizona Apaches on San Carlos Reservation, but he was concerned that those who were in hiding in Mexico would continue their traditional raiding back and forth across the border. He felt that local peace in the Southwest could not be achieved without destroying "the nest of hostile Apaches in the Sierra Madres."¹⁰ San Bernardino Springs was the base camp for Crook's Sierra Madres campaign in 1883. Leaving the bulk of his troopers to guard the border, Crook took a handpicked group and disappeared in Sonora for forty-two days. When word was finally received from him, he had been successful in negotiating with the Apaches and they had agreed to go peacefully to the reservation. In his mid-1884 annual report, Crook was able to report that "for the first time in the history of that fierce people, every member of the Apache tribe is at peace."¹¹



A military encampment on the mesa just south of Aston's Springs, possibly mid-1880s. Note the rock "corral" in the background. (C. S. Fly photo used Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum)



Possibly the first Slaughter buildings on the ranch. The older couple in front of the house may be Mary Ann and Amazon Howell, Viola Slaughter's parents, c. 1886. (A C. S. Fly photo, Arizona Historical Society)

untenable position by his War Department superiors that the only professional thing he could do was ask to be relieved of his departmental command. It was September 1886 before the wily Geronimo was finally taken again, and Crook's successor in the Department of Arizona, General Nelson A. Miles, received the accolades.

While Geronimo was at San Bernardino, either before he began drinking and bolted, or at another time, he "presented a handcarved wooden spoon to Grandma Howell."¹⁹ The spoon has been preserved and can be seen in the Slaughter Memorial Collection at Arizona Historical Society in Tucson. Addie Slaughter saw Geronimo when he was being sent to Florida from Fort Bowie. She was fourteen and visiting Mr. and Mrs. Joe Hill Olney and Geronimo was waiting for the train. "Geronimo . . . motioned to the young lady and when she stepped up to him, he took from his neck a strand of fine beads and gently placed them about the girl's neck and bowed to her."²⁰ The beads have been passed down in the family, and now belong to Addie's granddaughter, Addie Slaughter Greene.

Along with all other southern Arizona ranchers, Slaughter lost many head of livestock on the San Bernardino Ranch to the Apaches though many stories have circulated that his losses were less severe than others because the Indians both feared and respected him. The depredations did not cease with the capture and deportation to Florida of the Chiricahuas in 1886, but the bulk of Slaughter's losses were prior to that date.²¹



John and Viola Slaughter. (Slaughter Family Album)

In addition to the Indians, there were two other types of cattle thieves operating in southern Arizona in the last quarter of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries — the open rustlers, and the thieves who posed as honest ranchers. As rancher, and later as the elected sheriff of Cochise County, John Slaughter had occasion to deal often with both classes of badmen. Many stories have been written about his exploits as the fearless sheriff of Cochise County. All seem to have elements of truth, but no factual account utilizing official records has been written. It is clear that Slaughter was an active lawman and brought many criminals to justice. *The Tombstone Prospector* (October 7, 1887 and November 6, 1889) called the Tombstone jail, "Hotel de Slaughter." Some have said that he acted not only as sheriff, but as "judge and jury."²²

By the time his tenure as a lawman was completed, John Slaughter's prestige was high, his niche in Arizona history was secure, and he had become a "legend in his own time." Slaughter liked his job as sheriff, perhaps even more than he loved his ranch, but he did not run for a third term in 1890 even though his party asked him to do so. When the Democratic county chairman, Dr. F. A. Sweet of Bisbee, asked why he declined to run, Viola gave him the answer: ". . . I do not think I could stand another term. . ."²³

It had been necessary to borrow the money to purchase the San Bernardino, and the years as sheriff had been expensive ones, too. Viola said in her memoirs that ". . . it seemed as if nature, the cattle market, and many things were conspiring against us." The cattle boom had collapsed in 1885 and the next

few years were not good ones for the ranching industry in southern Arizona. Ranges had been overstocked and sharp declines in cattle prices took their toll. Cattle that had brought thirty-five dollars a head in 1883, brought ten dollars or less in 1885. Transcontinental railroads had simplified the marketing process, but eastern markets were glutted with cattle from Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and western Kansas. The search for new markets and the exorbitant prices being charged for shipping, led the Territorial Cattle Growers' Association in 1887 to appoint John Slaughter, Brewster Cameron, and C. M. Bruce as a committee to check on establishing an overland cattle trail to Wyoming and Montana. The committee made a favorable report on the feasibility of such a trail, but no large numbers of cattle ever used the route selected.²⁴

Problems, whether rustled stock or capricious customs officials, were handled by Slaughter in whatever way he deemed most expedient. One time he had been riding his Mexican range and "saw a lot of calves in a corral . . . the person who had stolen them was trying to ween (*sic*) them from their mothers who stood about bawling for their babies. The mothers all had the Slaughter brand. Mr. Slaughter came back to his ranch and was very disturbed about it, but during his light sleep that night, figured out a plan. Leaving the ranch before dawn, he went to the corral on the Mexican side and let down the corral bars and drove sixty of his calves and their satisfied mothers back to the home ranch on the American side. There he burned out the Mexican's brand and put on his own 'Z'." ²⁵ The Z brand that Slaughter used was that of his father-in-law, Amazon Howell, who had come to Arizona with John Slaughter in 1879.²⁶ Howell put the Z on the left hip and jaw; when Slaughter adopted it, he ran his iron on the right shoulder. The Z brand passed to Marion Williams when he bought the San Bernardino Ranch in 1937 and currently is in the possession of the Williams family of Douglas.

Once Slaughter bought a "clean" herd from the Gabilondo brothers in Sonora, but when he got it to the border, a "very hard customs official" refused, out of sheer "spite," to let the herd cross. Slaughter sputtered and fumed, then went back to his Gabilondo friends with whom he did much business, and got them to cross the herd over the border as their own stock. The "very same inspector let them go by without question."²⁷

The San Bernardino Ranch, as it was developed by John Slaughter, was truly a "domain of baronial extent," much more than just the Mexican land grant. Over the years, Slaughter bought up homesteads ²⁸ and leased a large amount of public domain land. When a visitor in the early 1920s asked him how much land he had, he replied in "a drawly voice, 'About one hundred thousand acres, leased and owned.' "²⁹

When Slaughter acquired the San Bernardino, it had been a truism for some time in southern Arizona that ranching success depended upon the possession of water and an abundance of native forage. Those who controlled the rivers

and streams also controlled the unfenced land, even though they did not actually own it. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, one of the trends that emerged out of the difficult period following the deflation of the cattle boom, was the development of artificial water. Wells were dug, natural depressions scraped out, and piping constructed from foothill springs. Even after he lost acreage during the validation process for his private land grant, Slaughter controlled most of the springs and streams that fed the Rio San Bernardino which was the northernmost tributary of Sonora's important Yaqui River. He also had the advantage that many of the natural springs on the ranch could be easily converted to artesian wells. He built reservoirs and channeled the waters of ten warm springs, then had additional wells drilled. Each of those went to a depth of approximately four hundred feet and had a steady flow of approximately seventy gallons per minute.³⁰ Problems were not lacking. For example, at Astin Dam, "... every year [Slaughter] would take a lot of workmen and horses. . . and fix the dam [because] every year portions of it were washed out when flood waters came." Viola said she would tell John each time, "Mr. Slaughter, if you'd get a surveyor and really put in a proper dam you'd not have all this trouble, taking up the time of all your workmen, but he. . . simply would not."³¹

In addition to the 20,000 acres of San Bernardino land on the north side of the border, Slaughter paid taxes in the 1890s and early 1900s on "the Smith place,"³² and a ranch in Guadalupe Canyon, possibly the Hall place. It is impossible without more documentation to say how many head of cattle he ran, but between 1887 and 1903, he paid taxes on as few as eight hundred head and as many as seventeen thousand.³³ In the same period, Slaughter lost some grazing land to legitimate homesteaders, along with his loss of land grant acreage to the United States government. He succeeded in discouraging some squatters on "his" range, but others, such as the McDonald brothers in Cottonwood Canyon, stayed, and later became his friends, as well as his neighbors.³⁴

In 1891 after his second term as sheriff was concluded, John Slaughter began to spend much of his time at the ranch. The next year, Viola told him that she was moving to the ranch, also, but he "... simply wouldn't listen to that." She insisted, saying, "Yes, Mr. Slaughter, we are. We'll all go out there and put our shoulders to the wheel. We can't give up now and I can help." She told him they would give up the Tombstone house, and she told him, "... just you give me a plain house with wide board floors, muslin ceilings and board finishes around the adobes. That's all I want. But I'm coming out."³⁵

As seems to have often been the case, Viola had her way and she moved out to the San Bernardino Ranch. By that time, Addie was twenty, Willie fourteen, and both of them away at school part of the time. The home Viola and John occupied at the ranch was probably the one he had built to replace the original house destroyed in the May 3, 1887 earthquake, the largest quake known to have caused damage in Arizona.³⁶ The epicenter was just south of



Viola and John Slaughter at San Bernardino Ranch. (Slaughter Family Album)

the Slaughter ranch in the southern part of the San Bernardino Valley, near Bavispe, Sonora. There were fifty-one deaths in Sonora, and major destruction of property in both Mexico and the United States. Fortunately, Viola's parents and brother and other Slaughter employees on the ranch escaped injury, but ". . . out of 7,000 adobes that were used to build the two houses of the ranch, there were but 120 whole ones recovered from the ruins."³⁷ The Howells moved back to Tombstone and Slaughter built another house nearer to the base of Mesa de la Avanzada.

The house Viola Slaughter moved into when she first went to the ranch was "a three room adobe [which was] later used for the school house, still later burned and rebuilt into a two-room house."³⁸ The large, rambling, almost palatial adobe structure which became synonymous with the Slaughter name was probably built in 1893. That year, John Slaughter took out a mortgage which could have been for construction of the big house, or at least, the first portion of it.³⁹ Prime evidence for 1893 as the construction date comes from an incident which happened when the house was being built. A cowboy was killed by Indians in the mountains on the Mexican side of the ranch and Slaughter used boards from the new house to make a coffin for him. In her memoirs, Viola does not give a complete name but only called the cowboy Bowan, and she did not give a date, saying only that the incident occurred when "the new ranch house was in the process of being built." Further research has revealed that the dead cowboy was probably Jake Bowman who was killed at Cajon Bonito in the Sierra Madres in late April 1893.⁴⁰

After the house was built, other buildings were added to the compound at various times, up to about 1915. There was a board-and-batten bunkhouse, a commissary, icehouse, washhouse, granary, and a shed for the automobiles which John Slaughter about 1912 began to purchase but never learned to drive. One room on the east side of the commissary was utilized for employees, usually the Chinese cook when there was one. When additional hands were needed at the home ranch, they slept in the tack room of the big hay barn, along with the Mexican cowboys. These men were mostly Yaquis, and it is remembered that they "could ride and rope with great skill. . . and always smelled of sweat." The Mexican-Yaqui cowboys were paid ten dollars a month, and the other ranchhands made about thirty-five to forty dollars a month.⁴¹

Two of Slaughter's employees have almost become legends themselves, John Swain (also known as John Swain Slaughter), and "Old Bat,"⁴² both black, both born in slavery, and both of whom came to Arizona with John Slaughter. John Swain was a household servant, Viola's "first houseboy," she said, and "not a body-guard for John Slaughter." Swain apparently did not "cotton to de fambly," and left Slaughter's employ soon after the move to San Bernardino Ranch. He spent the rest of his long life in Cochise County, and in his twilight years, lived in a small house on the outskirts of Tombstone. He was proud of his association with John Slaughter. In February of 1945, he died, almost one hundred years old, and was buried in the Boothill Cemetery at Tombstone.

"Old Bat," as he was affectionately known, was a respected and beloved Slaughter family retainer and servant, and usually was out on the cattle drives and buying and selling trips with Slaughter. His true age was not known, nor apparently, even his surname because he is referred to in various accounts (including the census records) as John or John Baptiste Henan, Heenan, Henall, Hinnaut, Hennings, and in his January 18, 1919 obituary, simply as John Baptiste.

Ranch hands who had families lived in small houses scattered far and wide over the ranch on both sides of the border. The drilling of wells had made possible the cultivation of several hundred acres of land. This was farmed mostly by either tenant farmers, or Chinese gardeners who raised vegetables for sale in Tombstone, Bisbee, and Douglas. (See two stories elsewhere in this issue, "The Mormon House" and Frankie Howell Stillman's "Memories of San Bernardino Ranch.")

A number of ranch employees had children⁴³ and for their benefit as well as that of the foster children who lived with John and Viola Slaughter over the years, a school operated at the ranch from 1902 to 1911 — Slaughter School District No. 28. Neither John nor Viola had been privileged to have formal education and they were especially concerned that the next generations not be so deprived. The school was held in the house the Slaughters lived in when they first moved permanently to the ranch, near the base of the mesa just across



John Swain outside his Tombstone home. (Arizona Historical Society)

the pond from the big ranch house. It had evolved into a building with a “dog-trot” breezeway wide enough to drive a buggy through. The desk and seats for the school were made by Thomas Rynning, second captain of the Arizona Rangers and a friend of the Slaughter family. He came out to the ranch and stayed with them until he had finished constructing the furniture.⁴⁴ There are few extant school records so it is not certain just how much money was spent, who the teachers were, the length of the school term, or even whether sessions were held each year. Viola said in her memoirs that the first teacher was a Miss Glasgow from Nebraska, and she listed two others, Rosalie Newenham from Illinois (who later married Willie Slaughter), and Minnie Minus. Miss Minus, a niece of John Slaughter, wrote to Viola and John asking if her brother Clarence who was sick might come and stay at the ranch. Viola responded, “Yes, if you come and teach school here.” Miss Minus later married a cowboy, Wiley Fitzgerald, and they lived on the ranch and in the Yuma Valley, near Somerton.⁴⁵

It is likely that Edith M. Stowe also taught at the ranch school although Viola does not list her as such. Miss Stowe did sign the last Slaughter School District census as “School Marshal,” just before the school was moved in 1911 to the neighboring McDonald Ranch near Cottonwood Canyon.⁴⁶ Miss Stowe had been a teacher in the Bisbee schools, but made her home with the Slaughters from the early 1900s until her death in Douglas in 1938. She was affectionately known to family and friends as “DeeDee.” Over the years, she served as John Slaughter’s secretary and bookkeeper, the ranch postmistress,⁴⁷ commissary clerk, chauffeur, assistant hostess, and companion and close friend of Addie



"Old Bat" (Slaughter Family Album)

and Viola. Addie and Edith were about the same age, had possibly gone to school together, and when Addie was married in 1903 to Dr. William Arnold Greene, Edith was her bridesmaid.

The ranch was somewhat remote — sixty-five miles from Tombstone, forty-five from Bisbee, and eighteen from Douglas which was not founded until 1901. For the convenience of ranch employees and neighbors on both sides of the border, John Slaughter maintained a postoffice and a small store, or commissary, stocked with staples. Mexicans and Yaquis came regularly to get "flour, rice, frijoles, raw coffee beans, sometimes some gaudy cottons and some black, and a little hard candy."⁴⁸ The postoffice operated from 1906 to 1918 and had two postmistresses during that time—Edith Stowe and Elizabeth McAlister who married a young friend of the Slaughters, George D. Stephens.⁴⁹

For a number of years, a group of Kickapoo Indians from a colony near Bacerac, Sonora, made San Bernardino Ranch their headquarters as they came across the border periodically on horse trading trips. They would also go into Douglas and Agua Prieta to make major purchases of clothing, saddles, etc.⁵⁰ In May of 1908, the ranch was the scene for a significant meeting between the Sonoran Kickapoos, the rest of the tribe who had remained in Oklahoma, their agents, and other government officials.⁵¹

The heyday of San Bernardino Ranch was the early years of the twentieth century. Viola Slaughter presided with skillful organization and management over the domestic aspects of the busy establishment. The house was always filled with family members (Grandma Howell, Edith Stowe, foster children, elderly and health-seeking relatives, ranch schoolteachers, and grandchildren) and guests — visiting friends, neighbors, surveyors, outfitters, lawmen, military officers (both American and Mexican), passersby, boarders. The ranch was a mecca for health seekers, and for several years there were paying guests at the ranch. In some cases, the guests became close friends and associates, as was the case with George Stephens who first came in 1904.⁵² Frederick Baxter came to stay for a week, "worming his way into the household, begging permission to stay because he loved the place," and stayed on for months. In 1911, he returned

with his bride and outfitted at the San Bernardino for a horse pack trip the two of them made from there to Yellowstone National Park. He said his bride "just had to see this place and know how happy I've been here."⁵³ Mary Phelps, daughter of a Los Angeles judge, was a wealthy young lady who wanted to stay at the ranch so badly that when she was told there was no room and she'd have to sleep on a cot on the porch, she eagerly said "that was just what she wanted — fresh air." While she was at the ranch, Mary received a birthday check for ten thousand dollars, and Viola said it meant no more to her than a hundred dollar check would have to the Slaughters.⁵⁴

Friends, such as school teachers from Bisbee or Douglas, or Mathilde Hampe from Rucker Canyon, would come for visits of a few days or a few weeks. Picnics and parties were often planned for entertainment. One of the most popular events was an outing to Cajon Bonito, the site of hot springs in the mountains south of the home ranch. John Slaughter thought the hot water was beneficial, especially for his rheumatism, and often recommended the springs to others. One summer there were seventeen in the outing party.

The San Bernardino was always a working ranch, but as the Slaughters became more affluent, the standard of living change was reflected in the dining room where there was "the finest of linens, silver, china, and. . . excellent service. . . and only the best of manners were allowed."⁵⁵ Mrs. Slaughter used to say "if a man had a cow he ate with us, if he didn't, he ate in the Mexican [cowboy] dining room."⁵⁶ Actually, the cowboys were welcome in the main dining room but were usually pretty dirty so preferred the cowboy dining room. Also, they were expected to wear coats and leave their spurs outside. Only John Slaughter was allowed to wear his military spurs to the table. Women could not come to the table still wearing the divided skirts used in horseback riding. Anyone who came late or after a meal was concluded, no matter who they were, had to go into the kitchen and fix their own food and eat in the Mexican dining room. There were, at least, twenty-five persons to be fed each day, including ten cowboys and the family; at times, that number swelled to as many as forty in the family dining room. This did not include the Mexican cowboys with families who had their own homes on the ranch, nor the Chinese, nor the constant stream of guests.⁵⁷

It was hard to keep cooks on the ranch in the early days because it was so isolated. John Slaughter thought only Negroes could cook, but finally Viola persuaded him to let her get a Chinese cook. He said, "Well, if you can't get anyone else. . . " Viola came home with a Chinese cook. On his first day there, she planned the usual large noon meal — soup, roast with vegetables, salad and dessert — and Addie suggested that since the cook was new and would be so busy, that she would make a pudding for dessert. Slaughter and the cowboys were all making a fuss over having a Chinese cook and one cowboy wouldn't touch anything. When the suet pudding was served for dessert, he decided to take a taste: "Bah! tastes just like a Chinaman made it."⁵⁸ Of course, Addie and Viola enjoyed a good laugh. After that, the Slaughters had several



Kickapoo Indian conference on the San Bernardino Ranch, May, 1908. (Slaughter Family Album)

Chinese cooks, and it is remembered that they were all proficient in the kitchen. The cook worked seven days a week, bringing breakfast to the table around 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. each morning, then he would have a rest period in the afternoon. It seems most of the cooks were very particular about the kitchen, keeping it spotless, no easy task when the stoves were wood-burning ones. One family member recalled a cook named Lee who "ran everyone out of his kitchen."⁵⁹ When the young people or summer guests wanted to make candy in the kitchen, they had to build their own fire, make the candy, then be sure they had "taken out every ash," leaving the stove as spotless as Lee had left it.⁶⁰

Baking at the ranch called for thirty-four loaves of bread in one day — biscuits, cornbread, rolls — cakes, pies, cookies, everything in mass production. Food supplies came from many sources to the ranch. Range cattle supplied the meat and milk but butter was also brought in wooden tubs from town. There was always a garden, a strawberry patch, a vineyard, and orchards with apples, apricots, figs, and other fruits. After the icehouse was built, ice was brought out the eighteen miles from Douglas by wagon, and "shoved down a chute." In the cold storage, there was room for three beeves though usually there was only one. A hydraulic pump below the house pumped water to a tank which stood above the ice house. Slaughter was so particular about the water that he used the tank water for utilitarian purposes only and drinking water was piped directly to the house from the spring. Milk and cream, eggs and other perishable foods were kept in the spring house which was just above the pump. Foods were also stored in restaurant proportions in a giant refrigerator in the ice house. Great shelves built to the ceiling contained canned fruits and preserves. A massive meat block stood near the ice box. In the summer and fall, there was constant canning going on, the preserving of fruits, making of wines, and brandying of grape preserves.⁶¹

*Joe Lee May, the Chinese cook, 1910.
(Slaughter Family Album)*



In 1906, the Democratic party persuaded John Slaughter to once more run for political office. He was elected as Cochise County's representative to the Territorial Legislature and served one term. When news of his victory at the polls came, he and Viola were in the Gadsden Hotel in Douglas. Viola told John that she was going to go right down on the street that morning shaking hands with every man she met. John said in his stuttering way, "I say, I say, Vi, you can't do that. Why do you want to?" She answered him, "Because I can't remember faces and I don't want to miss anyone who voted for you."⁶² While attending the legislative sessions in Phoenix, the Slaughters lived in the Adams Hotel. They were accompanied by Edith Stowe who obtained a position as a committee clerk. Viola did not enjoy John's tenure as a lawmaker. She said she despised the wives of most of the legislators, and she could not handle the hypocrisy.⁶³

What kind of man was John Slaughter — Texan, rancher, sheriff, politician, family man, legend? Physically, he was not imposing, standing no more than five feet seven inches tall. Some have said that he had a "bantam rooster complex," which is often found in small men. Slaughter was modest, quiet and reserved, but not the silent taciturn man "who never talked, [as] every writer insist[ed] on putting down," according to Viola Slaughter. When Frederick Bechdolt was interviewing Slaughter for his 1922 book, *When the West was Young*, Viola said that John "talked so much Bechdolt's head swam."⁶⁴ He was not given to small talk, but talked only when he had something to say. He abhorred being conspicuous or pointed out. Once, in St. Louis when he and Viola were attending the World's Fair, someone rushed up behind him and exclaimed, "I knew it was you, John Slaughter, by that big hat you always wear!" Slaughter went immediately to a store and purchased a smaller hat and never again wore a big Stetson.⁶⁵ As sheriff, Slaughter acquired a reputation as an iron-nerved, deadly accurate gun-slinger, a man who delivered his ultimatum in three words, "Hit the road!"⁶⁶ The truth, however, seems to be that he never went looking for trouble, but when it came, as was inevitable on the frontier, he could, and did, take care of himself. Any fictional account of Slaughter makes mention of his eyes — "light blue with a sharp glint," "black

eyes that could make a man's back crawl," "cold black eyes," and on and on. Viola said his eyes were brown and just like his daughter Addie's which were "bright, with much laughter in them."



John Slaughter (Slaughter Family Album)

John Slaughter was widely respected and well-liked by those who worked with him and knew him well. His friends and employees called him "Don Juan," but they did not pat him on the back — he was not that kind of man. He had a bad temper but kept it under control so that it was seldom seen. He, of course, had enemies and envious detractors. John Slaughter was a heavy smoker and had a cigar constantly in his mouth. He had a very large mouth and was sensitive about it because someone had once called him "fish mouth," so he wore a beard as a cover-up.⁶⁷

Slaughter never wore levis or overalls and always had on a vest. He never wore the large Mexican spurs but preferred the small military type. Viola said he never had a store-bought suit in his life. Once, the tailor in Tombstone made up a suit for him with the pants and coat from different bolts of material, and when Slaughter brought it home, Viola made him take it back. The tailor, a man named Harris, was angry with Viola about it and made the remark to a Slaughter friend, Dick Wilson, that he had made a suit to fit Slaughter but it didn't fit his wife. According to Viola, Mr. Harris must have said something else because their friend Wilson knocked the tailor down in indignation. She said Harris never again tried to palm off the ends of his bolts on the Slaughters.⁶⁸

John and Viola had their "ups and downs" of married life, but they apparently had a wonderful understanding of each other and each respected the other's opinion. Gambling probably caused more problems for them than anything else, but, even that, they were able to work out. Viola's mother had objected violently to their marriage in 1879, partially because of John's known addiction for gambling but he had promised Viola then that he would not play for money. Viola said she believed him completely, only to learn that his promise was one that was difficult for him to keep. He would play all night, usually winning, and he gambled for "money, cattle, all sorts of things." A compromise

was effected and John would give Viola a big part of his winnings and she would use the money to buy nice things. For example, she once paid two hundred dollars from poker winnings for a Navajo rug in Phoenix. A few years later, she was offered a thousand dollars for it.⁶⁹

When soldiers were stationed on the ranch during the Apache wars, John began to go to their camp every evening to play poker. Viola said she noticed that he was "very solicitous [and] helpful getting [her and Addie] mounted" for their regular evening ride, obviously wanting them to get started so he could go play. He assured her that they were just enjoying ". . . social games, . . . for a half a cent a point," but she knew that heavier gambling was going on when she heard that one soldier had lost eighty dollars in one night.⁷⁰ When the soldiers left the ranch, Slaughter missed the nightly poker games. He moped around awhile, then suggested that he teach Viola and Addie to play. He apparently taught them well and Viola became quite proficient. Once, an overnight visitor asked if they ever played cards and the reply was " 'once in a while', in an innocent tone." The man said he knew right away that he had not brought enough money when they sat down at the table and Viola began to shuffle the cards, causing them to "run clear up to her elbow."⁷¹

Viola was John Slaughter's second wife and was nineteen years younger. They had met in New Mexico in 1879 and were married a few months later as Slaughter and Viola's father, Amazon Howell, drove their herds west to Arizona together. John's first wife, Eliza Adeline, had died of smallpox in Phoenix in 1878, leaving two small children, Addie and Willie. Viola and John never had children of their own but she raised her stepchildren with a great love which was returned by them. In addition, the Slaughters raised and educated a number of foster children — orphans, semi-orphans, or offspring of relatives and friends — because they loved children and believed they could help give them a better life through a good education. At one point, in about 1896, they had living with them an Indian child, a Negro child, a Mexican child, and an Anglo child. The youngsters worked along with everyone else on the ranch. None of the children were officially adopted, but most of them remained close friends, and several were remembered in Viola's will. Lola Robles lived with the family for fourteen years. Frank "Pancho" Anderson came about 1901 when he was eleven and stayed until he entered World War I. The little Indian girl, Apache May, was the delight of John Slaughter for four years until her tragic death in 1900.⁷² (See her story as told by Frankie Stillman elsewhere in this issue.)

Viola always called her husband "Mr. Slaughter." She said it came from her Southern background. She had been accustomed to hearing her father addressed by her mother as "Mr. Howell," so she continued the tradition. After the children came to the ranch, she said she sometimes called him "Daddy," as did his own children and grandchildren. Foster children called him Uncle John, except Apache May to whom he was always "Don Juan." When grandchildren began arriving, the first in 1905, Viola said she "put her foot down." She said, "I've been Auntie Slaughter and he's been Uncle John to half of Cochise County and we're not going to be called Grandpa and Grandma!"⁷³



Dr. William A. Greene, Sr.



Addie Slaughter Greene, c. 1904.

(All photos from Slaughter Family Album)



Rosalie Slaughter with second son, John Horton, who was born in 1910.



Willie Slaughter with first son, William John, who was born in 1909.



The four Slaughter grandchildren: Billy Greene, John Slaughter, Adeline Greene, and John Greene. (Slaughter Family Album)



(Right to Left) the little boy in the white dress is Arthur Fisher, Lola Robles, Blanche Anderson, and Apache May in the yard at San Bernardino, c. 1897 or 1898. (Slaughter Family Album)

In 1903, Viola's brother, Jimmie Howell, married Frances (Frankie) Todd, whom he had met in California, and Addie Slaughter married William Greene, a Bisbee doctor who had come to Arizona from Rhode Island in 1890. After a short stay away from Arizona, the Greenes returned to Douglas where Dr. Greene served as a dedicated and respected family physician and community leader until his death in 1924. He and Addie gave the Slaughters three grandchildren, John Slaughter, William Arnold, Jr., and Adeline Slaughter Greene [Adeline told the author that her birth certificate reads Slaughter, her baptism record reads Howell]. The youngsters, especially Adeline, spent a great deal of time at San Bernardino Ranch. In about 1908, Willie Slaughter married one of the young women who taught at the ranch school, Rosalie "Rose" Newenham. They were the parents of two sons, William John (who died in 1910) and John Horton. Willie had been in poor health for a number of years, and he died of tuberculosis in 1911.

During the years when John was "slowing down," he and Viola continued to live at San Bernardino. Leasing out the ranch gave them the opportunity to travel and they made trips to Texas, California, and other places. In May of 1921, a close friend and former ranch foreman, Jess Fisher, was murdered in an attempted robbery at the ranch.⁷⁴ John Slaughter was in poor health, and since it was believed that an attempt might be made on his life, or Viola's, they decided to leave San Bernardino and move into Douglas.



Last photograph of John Slaughter (marked with x) taken at Indian Hot Springs in the fall of 1921. (Slaughter Family Album)

By the fall of 1921, the Slaughters and Edith Stowe had moved into the Fisher Apartments on D Avenue, and were living there when John Slaughter died on February 16, 1922. He was just a few months past his eightieth birthday and died quietly in his own bed as he had always predicted he would. The ranch property was transferred by his heirs to a family corporation, the John H. Slaughter Ranch, and the running of affairs was handled by Sam Applewhite and the Bank of Douglas. The ranch was leased, both the Sonora and Arizona portions, until 1937 when there was a division of the old land grant at the international boundary, and the American part was purchased by Marion Williams and his son, Ben.

Except for one brief visit in 1925, Viola Slaughter did not return to the old adobe home at San Bernardino Ranch for fourteen years. She knew that the part of her life which had started that long ago day in 1884 when she and John sat and look out over the valley was gone. It had come to a close, along with, as she put it, "all the happiness our work, struggles, and play gave us at San Bernardino."⁷⁵

NOTES

¹ Cora Viola Slaughter was interviewed in her Douglas home, December 9-11, 1937, by Berniece Cosulich and Edith Stratton Kitt. Typescript in Cosulich Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson (AHS), hereafter cited as CVS Memoirs.

² CVS Memoirs.

³ The discrepancy between the 65,000 acres given in CVS Memoirs, the 73,240 acres of the original grant, and the 67,000 acres listed in other documents can be traced to Slaughter's land exchange after his 1884 purchase. He gave up the 99-year lease in return for clear title to a lesser portion of the grant. Land Grant Documents in Johnson Historical Museum Collection, in private collection, and in Slaughter Folders, Brophy Papers, AHS.

⁴ Lawrence Kinnaird, *The Frontiers of New Spain: Nicolas de LaFora's Description, 1766-1768* (Berkeley: Quivera Society, 1958); Sidney B. Brinckerhoff and Odie B. Faulk, *Lancers for the King*. . . (Phoenix: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1965); Alfred Barnaby Thomas, *Teodoro de Croix and the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1776-1783* (Norman: University of Okla. Press, 1941).

⁵ Translated copy of original land grant petition, "Testimony of four sites of land for cattle breeding purposes in the Hacienda of San Bernardino," No. 650, Brophy Papers; *San Bernardino*, Arizona Private Land Claims No. 19, Records of the General Land Office, National Archives, Washington.

⁶ Francisco R. Almada, *Diccionario de Historia, Geografia y Biografia Sonorenses*. Chihuahua City, 1952; John L. Kessel, "Father Ramon and the Big Debt, Tumacacori, 1821-1823," *New Mexico Historical Review* 44 (1969): 53-72.

⁷ Dozens of travel diaries mention the deserted rancho of San Bernardino. Four of the most informative are: John Russell Bartlett, *Personal Narrative*. . . , vols.1-2 (Chicago: Rio Grande Press, 1965); Henry F. Dobyns, ed. *Hepah, California: The Journal of Cave Johnson Coutts*. . . (Tucson: Arizona Pioneers' Historical Society, 1961); Douglas S. Watson, ed. *The Santa Fe Trail to California, 1849-1852: Journal and Drawings of H. M. T. Powell* (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1931); transcript of Official Journal of Lieut. Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, LDS Church, Dept. of History, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁸ Manuscript journals of members of the Mormon Battalion, LDS Church, Dept. of History, Salt Lake City, and Brigham Young University Library, Provo.

⁹ "Report of Col. O.B. Willcox," Annual Report of the Secretary of War, 1878, Washington; S. R. Albert, "History of Camp John A. Rucker," Dedication Talk, September 23, 1973.

¹⁰ Dan L. Thrapp, *The Conquest of Apacheria* (Norman: University of Okla., 1967) hereafter cited as Thrapp.

- ¹¹ Thrapp.
- ¹² Thrapp.
- ¹³ CVS Memoirs.
- ¹⁴ John Gregory Bourke, *On the Border with Crook* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1891; reprint edition 1969) hereafter cited as Bourke.
- ¹⁵ Bourke.
- ¹⁶ CVS Memoirs.
- ¹⁷ Bourke.
- ¹⁸ Bourke.
- ¹⁹ CVS Memoirs.
- ²⁰ Newspaper clipping, Adeline Greene Parks Scrapbook, private collection, hereafter cited as Greene Scrapbook.
- ²¹ "Indian Depredations: A Claimant Who Lost Heavily," clipping, Greene Scrapbook; CVS Memoirs.
- ²² Herbert Brandt, "The John Slaughter Ranch," *Arizona and its Bird Life*. . . (Cleveland: Bird Research Foundation, 1951) hereafter cited as Brandt.
- ²³ CVS Memoirs.
- ²⁴ J.J. Wagoner, *History of the Cattle Industry in Southern Arizona, 1540-1940*, University of Arizona Bulletin #20, April 1952, Tucson.
- ²⁵ CVS Memoirs.
- ²⁶ CVS Memoirs.
- ²⁷ CVS Memoirs.
- ²⁸ Documents (originals and copies) Johnson Historical Museum Collection, and private collection.
- ²⁹ Walter Noble Burns, *Tombstone: An Illiad of the Southwest* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1927).
- ³⁰ Brandt.
- ³¹ CVS Memoirs.
- ³² The exact location of Slaughter's "Smith Place" has not been determined.
- ³³ Viola Slaughter said in her memoirs that one year 10,000 head of cattle were shipped from the ranch to California, and that the range was so densely populated that the cattle were not even missed.
- ³⁴ Lawrence and Rex McDonald, oral interviews December 5, 1983-June 3, 1984, with Reba N. Wells, in Douglas, hereafter cited as McDonald interviews. There are other stories told about Slaughter that are not so genial; they may have a basis in fact, or may be the usual detracting tales about a well-known personality.
- ³⁵ CVS Memoirs.
- ³⁶ Susan M. DuBois and Ann W. Smith, *The 1887 Earthquake in San Bernardino Valley, Sonora*. . . , Special Paper #3, Bureau of Geology and Mineral Technology, University of Arizona (December 1980) hereafter cited as DuBois.
- ³⁷ DuBois.
- ³⁸ CVS Memoirs.
- ³⁹ Physical evidence discovered during the 1984 restoration of the ranch house suggests that the building was constructed in two phases: the first consisted of six almost equally-sized rooms, three on either side of a wide central hall; the second, an addition consisting of family dining-living room, kitchen, bathroom, and cowboy dining room. Gerald A. Doyle & Associates, Phoenix.
- ⁴⁰ Tombstone *Epitaph*, April 28, 1893.
- ⁴¹ John Slaughter Greene letter to Adeline Greene Parks, September 6, 1981, hereafter cited as Greene letter; CVS Memoirs.

⁴² CVS Memoirs; letter from Artie Slaughter Roberts Pearsall (John Slaughter's niece) dated April 4, 1949, Slaughter File, Macia-DeVere Collection, Tombstone; Lawrence Cardwell, "Grand Old Man of Tombstone," *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine* (September 1, 1940); U.S. Census Records, Territory of Arizona, Cochise County, 1880, 1900, 1910, Fed. Record Center, Denver; "Beloved Colored Man Died Friday," clipping (January 18, 1919) Greene Scrapbook.

⁴³ The first baby born on the San Bernardino Ranch was probably Hattie Altagracia Leyva Stitt, on June 25, 1889. Her parents were Guadalupe Leyva (a Slaughter cowboy from Sinaloa, Mexico) and Juanita Rojas (from Spain) who had been married on the San Bernardino Ranch when Juanita was fifteen. The family lived on the ranch until Hattie was about ten when her father moved them to Bisbee because he wanted the children to be able to go to school. Perhaps that situation inspired John and Viola Slaughter to increase their efforts to have a school established at San Bernardino. Hattie Stitt lived a long life in southeast Arizona—she died May 19, 1984 in Tucson.

⁴⁴ CVS Memoirs; Cochise County Board of Supervisors Records, 1902, *Minute Book 5*, Bisbee; Cochise County School Records, 1909-1922, Bisbee.

⁴⁵ CVS Memoirs; "Pioneer Woman Writes of Days Spent on Ranch near Douglas," Letter to the Editor, *The Daily Dispatch* (April 23, 1985; "A Pioneer Winthrop Daughter in Arizona," *Winthrop College Alumnae News*, Rock Hill, S. C. (October 1926).

⁴⁶ Cochise County School Records, Bisbee; McDonald interviews; CVS Memoirs.

⁴⁷ CVS Memoirs; John and Lillian Theobald, *Arizona Territory: Post Offices and Postmasters* (Phoenix: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1961) hereafter cited as Theobald.

⁴⁸ Greene letter.

⁴⁹ Theobald; George D. Stephens, oral interview May 13, 1971, AHS, hereafter cited as Stephens interview.

⁵⁰ McDonald interviews; Jess Norval Braly, oral interview, April 4, 1984, with Reba N. Wells, in Nogales.

⁵¹ A. M. Gibson, *The Kickapoos: Lords of the Middle Border* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1963); Douglas *Daily Dispatch* (May 11, 16, 17, 20, 1908).

⁵² Stephens interview.

⁵³ CVS Memoirs.

⁵⁴ CVS Memoirs.

⁵⁵ CVS Memoirs.

⁵⁶ CVS Memoirs.

⁵⁷ Frankie J. Howell Stillman, "Memories of San Bernardino Ranch," 1960, private collection, hereafter cited as Stillman Memories.

⁵⁸ CVS Memoirs.

⁵⁹ Stillman Memories.

⁶⁰ Stillman Memories.

⁶¹ CVS Memoirs; Stillman Memories.

⁶² CVS Memoirs.

⁶³ CVS Memoirs.

⁶⁴ CVS Memoirs.

⁶⁵ CVS Memoirs.

⁶⁶ Frederick R. Bechdolt, *When the West was Young* (N.Y.: The Century Co., 1922).

⁶⁷ CVS Memoirs.

⁶⁸ CVS Memoirs.

⁶⁹ CVS Memoirs.

⁷⁰ CVS Memoirs.

⁷¹ Stillman Memories.

⁷² CVS Memoirs; Greene letter; Harriet W. Hankin, "True Story of Apache Girl Captured from Indians Wins First Prize in Essay Contest," Douglas *Daily Dispatch* (October 3, 1926); "Report of N. K. Averill, 2nd Lt., Seventh Cavalry," May 9, 1896, Office of the Adjutant General, Records of the War Department, National Archives, Washington.

⁷³ CVS Memoirs.

⁷⁴ CVS Memoirs; O. Gibson, "Brief on Behalf of Appellant," *Manuel Garcia and Jose Pérez, Appellants vs. State of Arizona, Appellee*, 1924, typescript, private collection; Stephens Interview; Allene Taylor, oral interview April 1, 1984, with Reba N. Wells at Douglas; Charles M. Wood, "Arizona Argonauts," typescript, AHS; clippings, Greene Scrapbook.

⁷⁵ CVS Memoirs.



Edith Stowe, John Slaughter, and John Hankin at boundary marker No. 77. (Cochise County Historical and Archaeological Society)

SLAUGHTER RANCH OUTPOST

The San Bernardino Ranch was affected, along with Douglas and other Arizona border towns, by the civil revolution that swept Mexico from 1910 to 1929. For twenty-three years United States troops were stationed at Douglas, and for much of that time a military encampment of some sort was maintained on the Slaughter Ranch. Never more than a tent city, the ranch outpost was on a mesa just across the pond from John Slaughter's ranch headquarters. The purpose of the outpost was the same as for others scattered along the international border at that time — patrolling and constant vigilance to protect American lives and property. The Arizona border towns of Nogales, Naco, and Douglas were important to the Mexican revolutionaries as ports of entry for contraband, recruits, and escape; battles for control of their Sonoran counterparts (Nogales, Naco, and Agua Prieta) were waged in 1911, 1913, 1914, and 1915, at a cost of American resources as well as Mexican. After the 1915 Battle of Agua Prieta there was no heavy fighting near Douglas, but the revolution continued and there was the added threat of invasion of United States soil by Germany and the Central Powers during World War I. After 1918 the Slaughter Ranch Outpost was used for practice marches and bivouacs.

Indications of impending conflicts began in Mexico in the summer of 1910, but the first American troops, one hundred men of Company B, 18th Infantry from Fort Whipple, were not sent to Douglas until November 1910,¹ the same month that Francisco Madero actually began the revolution by challenging the **rule of long-time dictator President Porfirio Díaz, who had controlled Mexico since 1877. There were many rebel leaders all over Mexico, but for a time, the** most significant activity centered in the states of Chihuahua and Sonora. Rebel action was not coordinated and desertion to another faction or even to the government side was common. It was difficult to distinguish between the true rebel (Maderista, "Red Flagger," Constitutionalist, and others), and the ubiquitous bandit, all of whom were roaming northern Sonora under the rebel banner. Douglas townspeople, in the main, seem to have been sympathetic with the rebel cause, the Insurrectos, rather than with the government forces, the Federales.²

John Slaughter on his strategically located San Bernardino Ranch managed to "Steer a clear course and keep the peace"³ with both government and rebel leaders. As a cattleman buying and selling in Arizona and Sonora for more than thirty years, and as former sheriff of Cochise County, John Slaughter was well-known, and apparently respected, by Mexican officials and other men of importance, and he was welcomed into the homes of some of Sonora's "best families."⁴ Colonel Emilio Kosterlitzky, in 1910 the chief of Sonora's rural police known as Rurales, was a frequent guest in the Slaughter home. He and John Slaughter had been friends since the early days when they had cooperated with each other, and later the Arizona Rangers, in apprehending cattle rustlers on both sides of the border.⁵ Viola Slaughter said Colonel Kosterlitzky was "an

awful liar," but admitted that she liked him and found him intelligent, handsome, and very entertaining; she just could not understand why he was such a "show-off," and told such exaggerated stories of the "terrible" things he had done.⁶

Slaughter hospitality was extended to all comers, Federales or Insurrectos. After Pancho Villa's unsuccessful assault on Agua Prieta on November 1, 1915, the "Villistas swarmed across the line to the ranch as well as elsewhere hungry and ragged, needing clothing, begging food."⁷ Viola telephoned the mesa outpost via the Douglas operator and asked for permission to feed the pathetic rebels. The permission was granted. Leaving his horse and guns near the barn, one of the Villa officers came on up to the ranch house on foot. The Slaughters invited him in, fed him, and made him a bed for the night. The officer flashed a great roll of money, but the Slaughters would not accept any pay. When the man left, he gave Viola "a great hilted sword and silver mounted saddle and rifle."⁸ The sword is part of the John H. Slaughter Memorial Collection at the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson.



Kitchen and tents on the mesa, Slaughter Ranch Outpost, 1916. Photo taken by Colonel Vernon Peterson, Ret., when he was stationed there. (Johnson Museum Collection)

But to John Slaughter, there was a distinction between being hospitable and being robbed. In late October of 1915, on their way to assault federal forces at Agua Prieta, Pancho Villa and his army of eight to ten thousand men arrived at John Slaughter's ranch south of the border, **hungry, thirsty, and exhausted**. Out of beans and flour since leaving Casas Grandes in Chihuahua, the Villistas had crossed the Sierra Madres and had had little or no food and water for the past twenty-four hours. At Slaughter's place, they helped themselves to the abundant fields of ripe corn and to fifty head of cattle which they slaughtered for beef. John Slaughter watched the Villistas' activity from the porch of his home north of the border, glowered for a while, then called for his saddle horse and shotgun. When he was asked what he was going to do, seventy-four-year-old Slaughter answered, "I am going down and jump old Pancho Villa." He rode the half mile or so across the border, talked with Villa, and when he

returned, he had United States twenty-dollar gold pieces in his saddle bags in payment for the cattle. Some considered the incident John Slaughter's "nerviest deed."⁹

During the long years of the revolution, the ranch outpost was utilized for patrol duty along the border from the ranch east to the Animas Valley of New Mexico. It was manned on a rotating schedule by both cavalry and infantry units from the camp at Douglas which, in 1916, became known as camp Harry J. Jones.¹⁰ Troop strength at the outpost varied from ten-man detachments in 1911 to six hundred men with three machine guns during the "Pancho Villa scare" of 1915-1916.¹¹ A good road connected the outpost with Douglas which was four marching hours or seventeen miles due west, and supplies for the encampment could be brought out by wagon.

The camp was just a collection of pyramidal tents with one or two rock shelters covered with canvas, located on top of Mesa de la Avanzada,¹² a prominent rise of ground near the Slaughter ranch home. In April 1916, for example, the modest post exchange was a six by six foot rock shelter with canvas cover, the mess hall was just a tarpaulin stretched as a shade, and the commanding officer lived in a tent like everyone else.¹³ At some time later, labor was expended to put a rock wall, four to five feet high, around the perimeter of the camp (fourteen hundred feet long and roughly following the edge of the mesa), and machine gun embrasures, walkways, and other rock features were added.¹⁴

Daily routine was uneventful: tidying camp, caring for the animals, repairing wagons and gear, hauling water, carrying off trash, or making patrol. Most soldiers seem to have considered outpost duty to be dull, even boring, though the vast open spaces of the ranch were fascinating to young men from east of the Mississippi.¹⁵ Malaria was a problem because of the *ciénagas* or marshes in the area, and the weather was not always pleasant. Then, as now, "Sonora and Arizona often swapped 'real estate'," and strong winds and swirling dust-devils could flatten tents in a matter of minutes.¹⁶ There was no recreation, and one soldier stationed there in 1916 said that his unit hardly saw any of the Slaughter family or ranch personnel, except the foreman, Jesse Fisher, who would drop by each day for a chat. John Slaughter was ill so he was on the mesa top only once during that time.¹⁷

In the first years of the outpost before he became ill, John Slaughter and his family and guests were more visible to the soldiers stationed there. Slaughter probably played poker with the officers as he had with the men stationed on the ranch during the Apache campaigns. Viola said that John never had any use for the Army until then, but that "the men in camp became his great friends,"¹⁸ because of his passion for gambling. She said he could hardly wait until she and Addie left each evening for a horseback ride and he could visit the army camp for the card games.

Officers dashed in and out of the ranch headquarters, sometimes using motorcycles. Once when the military paymaster had come out from Douglas, Viola was chatting with him, and to be polite, commented on his motorcycle and said she would like to ride in the wicker sidecar. To her dismay, the officer sent the cycle back with a soldier to take her for a ride and John Slaughter insisted that since she had asked for a ride, she had to do it. Viola said she "rode in the basket clear up to the Silver Creek, half scared all the time but liking it."¹⁹ When she returned, the soldier took all the children for rides.



Pvt. Prince, John Fielding, Alice Cowan, Anna Lundine, Jean Cowan, Pvt. Johnson, November 17, 1918. (Slaughter Family Album)

Some of the soldiers became good friends of the Slaughter family. One of those was a Lieutenant Emory²⁰ who was crazy about ranch life, loved the food, and begged to be allowed to eat at the ranch instead of in camp. The first time he ate with the family, he wanted to repay them by washing the dishes, but Viola vetoed that — no guest in her home could be allowed to do dishes. Viola said the only time Emory stayed away from the big house was when one of the girls had mumps and he was afraid he would catch them; even that, however, did not keep him away for long. Emory also loved to accompany the Slaughter cattle drives, and Slaughter paid him the compliment of saying that Emory was "one of the best men I ever had to help me."²¹

A story members of the family tell is about a joke that Lieutenant Emory played on Viola Slaughter. Secretly arranging several sessions with Viola's pet parrot, Emory taught the bird a new phrase. One morning when Viola greeted her pet with the usual affectionate "Good morning, Muzzer's little darling. How is Muzzer's little pet?" the parrot responded, to her great consternation, "Muzzer, go to hell!"²²

Having the troops on the mesa curtailed bathing time for the Slaughter family and guests at the bath house by the artesian well which gushed warm water all winter. The Slaughters were allowed one hour a day, the military officers one hour, and the soldiers and cowboys the other twenty-two.²³ According to Viola, the family "always bathed just before dinner [because] we dressed for dinner, so we'd have the buggy hitched up (we never walked anywhere in those days) and would drive down to the well and bathe. Returning home we dressed and were ready for the evening."²⁴

Other than watchful vigilance and patrols, the only action at the outpost during its twenty-odd years of existence happened in January 1918. During a practice march east from Camp Harry J. Jones, Troop B of the 17th Cavalry had camped at the ranch, and on Friday, January 4, several parties were out hunting rabbits and other small game. Captain David H. Blakelock and Second Lieutenant George J. Lind were "about six rods [100 ft.] to the east of the monument boundary marker and a little north of the boundary line," when they were suddenly "held up" by a small party of Mexicans to their right front and a second party to their rear. The officers were disarmed and taken by a roundabout way to a "Chino [Chinese] adobe hut about a mile to the south." A few minutes after that occurred, other Mexicans fired on three American troopers who were also hunting, but further north of the boundary line. When the troopers sounded the alarm in camp, a detachment crossed the border, without orders, and rescued the two officers. In the skirmish, two Mexicans were killed.²⁵ It was a number of years before the incident was cleared up.

After 1918, the Slaughter Ranch outpost was used only for practice marches and target shooting. It was completely abandoned when Camp Harry J. Jones closed in 1933. After the San Bernardino Ranch was sold in 1937 to Marion Williams, many of the rocks used on the mesa were hauled down to the ranch house and incorporated by Mr. Williams and his son, Ben, in an outbuilding and a rock wall around the ranch compound.²⁶

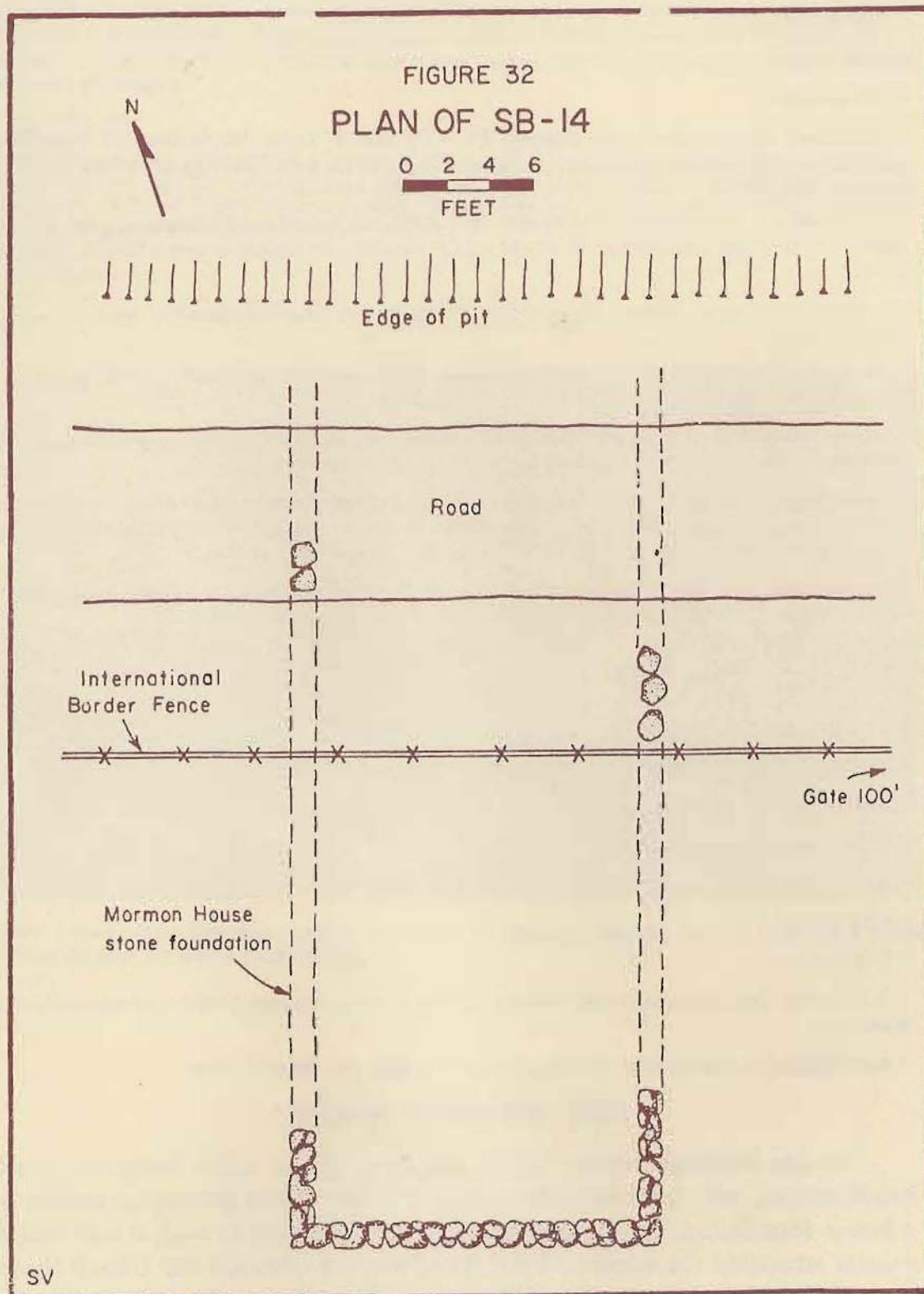
Notes

¹ Larry D. Christiansen, "Bullets Across the Border," Part I *The Cochise Quarterly* 4:4 (December 1974); pp. 4-5.

² Robert S. Jeffrey, "The History of Douglas, Arizona," Master's Thesis, University of Arizona, 1951, p. 74.

³ Cora Viola Slaughter, oral interview December 9-11, 1937, Berniece Cosulich Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson (hereafter cited as CVS Memoirs).

⁴ CVS Memoirs.



Sketch from archaeological report prepared for Johnson Historical Museum by Archaeological Research Services, Inc., August 1982.

⁵ CVS Memoirs; Cornelius C. Smith, Jr., *Emilio Kosterlitzky: Eagle of Sonora and the Southwest Border* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1970), (hereafter cited as Smith, *Kosterlitzky*).

⁶ CVS Memoirs.

⁷ CVS Memoirs.

⁸ CVS Memoirs.

⁹ Christiansen, Part III, *The Cochise Quarterly* 5:4; p.11; Allen A. Erwin, *The Southwest of John Horton Slaughter, 1841-1922: Pioneer Cattleman . . .* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1965), pp. 275-276 (hereafter cited as Erwin, *Slaughter*).

¹⁰ Private Harry J. Jones, for whom the military camp at Douglas, was renamed in February, 1916, was born August 7, 1891, in Blue Island, Illinois. He died of a gunshot wound received while on duty in Douglas, November 2, 1915.

¹¹ Telegram from General Funston, March 9, 1916, Camp Harry J. Jones Ephemera File, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.

¹² The Spanish name for this rocky promontory means "Mesa of the Advance Guard" and apparently dates back to the early Spanish colonial period.

¹³ Colonel Vernon Peterson, Ret., oral interview June 16, 1984, Douglas, with John Meeks; telephone conversation July 25, 1984, with Reba N. Wells (hereafter cited as Peterson information).

¹⁴ Lyle M. Stone and James E. Ayres, "A Description and Evaluation of Archaeological Resources, San Bernardino Ranch National Historic Landmark, Cochise County, Arizona." Prepared for Johnson Historical Museum of the Southwest by Archaeological Research Services, Inc., Tempe, Arizona, August 1982.

¹⁵ Frances Keene telephone conversation January 30, 1984, with Reba N. Wells. Mrs. Keene is the widow of Clarence Keene, 1st Cavalry, who spent some time at the outpost in c. 1919-1920.

¹⁶ Peterson information.

¹⁷ Peterson information.

¹⁸ CVS Memoirs.

¹⁹ CVS Memoirs.

²⁰ CVS Memoirs. It has not been possible to determine a full name for the young lieutenant.

²¹ CVS Memoirs.

²² Adeline Greene Parks, oral interview September 22-23, 1984, Malpai Ranch, with Reba N. Wells.

²³ CVS Memoirs,

²⁴ CVS Memoirs.

²⁵ U.S. Special Claim Commission File, Military Archives Division, National Archives and Records Service, Washington.

²⁶ Ben Williams, Sr. oral interview December 5, 1983, Douglas, with Reba N. Wells.

THE "MORMON HOUSE"

On the Mexican border south and east of the John Slaughter ranch headquarters, near Boundary Monument #77, there is an interesting outline of a house foundation.¹ A building was constructed there in such a way that it exactly straddled the border. Why? That was the question the United States Deputy Surveyor John A. Rockfellow asked himself when he was running the San Bernardino land grant boundaries on July 19, 1901.² As he sighted along the boundary line, Rockfellow said he realized that he was looking right through the breezeway connecting two parts of a well-built adobe house, one part in Mexico, and one in Arizona.³ Moving west on the line, Rockfellow approached

the east side of a picket corral, then a garden plot, and the east entrance to the uniquely-located house. He said it was a three-room building, forty feet by seventeen and one-half feet, bearing north and south. West beyond the house was a barbed wire fence bearing north and south, the end of the garden, and a "spring house 18 ft. left."⁴

Since he was staying with the Slaughters while doing the surveying work, Rockfellow that evening asked his host why the house had been so constructed. John Slaughter replied smilingly, according to Rockfellow, that "he had a Mormon gardener, the husband of two wives, and as protection against the U.S. Courts, he built so that while one wife had a legal residence in the United States, the other lived in Mexico."⁵

The interesting house is long gone but the foundation remains, along with the story, but it was still something of a mystery. No one seemed to know — was the story true? Did a polygamous Mormon family live on the ranch at one time, in a house half in the United States and half in Mexico? Some Cochise County residents thought they remembered hearing of a family named Tiffany who lived on the ranch. John Slaughter's granddaughter remembered her mother, Addie Slaughter Greene, telling an amusing anecdote about a Mormon family named Tenney whose children used to visit at the ranch house.⁷ But with only a surname and no clear date of residency, diligent searching for Tiffanys and Tenneys in the U.S. Census, and in records of the LDS Church in Salt Lake City, Utah, revealed nothing definite.

Then, in the *Great Register of Voters* of Cochise County for 1894, there was found listed a resident of San Bernardino who gave his age as forty-nine, his occupation as a farmer, and his name — A. M. Tenney. That record seemed to answer the question of whether a *Tiffany* or a *Tenney* had lived on the ranch, but was this voter a Mormon? Could it even be possible that he was *the* well-known Mormon patriarch, polygamist, and Arizona pioneer, Ammon Meshach Tenney?⁸ The initials were certainly right. The age was right, too. Ammon Tenney was born in Lee County, Iowa, in November 1844,⁹ so if he had registered to vote in September 1894, he would have been forty-nine years old.

The circumstances seemed to be favorable, too, for Ammon M. Tenney to be in southeast Arizona in the 1890s. As the son of a devout Mormon family which had migrated to Utah in 1848, Ammon Tenney had been involved in missionary endeavors for the church since his youth. As he moved up the hierarchical ladder of church leadership, he had answered his church's call to establish LDS colonies in New Mexico, Arizona, and northern Mexico, and to proselytize among the Indian and Mexican populations. He had plural wives, Anna Sariah Eager,¹⁰ whom he married in 1867, and Eliza Ann Udall¹¹ whom he married in 1872. In 1884, Tenney had been one of several prominent Arizona Mormons who were imprisoned for their belief in polygamy. After serving his sentence in Detroit, Tenney was pardoned by President Grover Cleveland in

1886 and returned to his families at St. Johns, Arizona.¹² In March of 1890, Ammon Tenney married for the third time — Hettie Millicent Adams, a young woman from Colonia Díaz, one of the LDS colonies in Chihuahua.

With plural families to support, and the issue of polygamy still a highly controversial one (both within and without the LDS Church), it did not seem unreasonable that Ammon M. Tenney might have sought out a tenant farm in a fairly remote area of Arizona. He may have looked upon a few years of farming for John Slaughter at San Bernardino as a welcome respite, a quiet haven of legality close to relatives in eastern Arizona and those in Colonia Díaz, Chihuahua.¹⁴

Proof of the supposition that Ammon M. Tenney might have been the Mormon farmer who lived on the ranch with his two younger wives, Eliza and Hettie, came with the discovery of a brief autobiographical sketch written in about 1965 by one of Ammon M. Tenney's daughters, Millicent Tenney McKellar,¹⁵ his first child by third wife Hettie. The following is taken from her manuscript:

In 1892, John Slaughter hired my father to run the farm on his ranch. So he moved his family to the ranch and we lived there one year.¹⁶ Mr. Slaughter had been married and had two children, Addie and Johnnie [sic] his first wife died, and then he married Charlotte [sic].¹⁷

Soon my brother Eugene and I were very welcome in the Slaughter home. Mr. Slaughter had a big house about a mile from where we lived. He and his wife were partial to both of us. They tried to get my mother to give us to them. Of course she took this as a joke.

There are many memories I have of those kind people. Mrs. Slaughter often made a bed for us at the foot of her bed so we could stay all night. Mother had a nice singing voice, and the family was often invited to spend the evening, for mother played chords on the piano and sang. This made an evening on a ranch a little nicer.

Across the fence from us was a Mexican family. Their daughter, who was about my age, and I ran away one day. When we got close to the big house, I realized I had a dirty dress on, so I got Juana to unbutton it and I put it on back to front. As soon as I got there, Auntie Slaughter sent me home, for she knew I had run away. But she had Fisher, one of the cowboys, take me home on his horse. I was just three years old. . . .

Come Christmas, Auntie Slaughter gave me a set of dishes, even with knives, forks, and spoons. She also gave me a lovely satin chair and a doll. I could keep my doll clothes in the seat of this chair. I remember a family came to visit my folks, and mother fixed a play dinner for me, as there were two little girls, one older and one younger. We did have a grand day, for they had their dolls too.

Behind the Mexican house was a Negro family. His name was Bat, hers was Lavinia. Everyone liked him. He raised a big garden and was kind to

everyone. Lavinia was always cross and we were all afraid of her. One day mother went to the garden to get vegetables, which was her privilege. Bat was in the field helping my father. Mother looked up, and here came Livinia with a big knife. Mother grabbed me and got out of the garden right then.

The Slaughters had a swimming pool.¹⁹ Auntie Slaughter used to take my dress and petticoat off me and the young people would swim a little with me, then set me on the edge of the pool to watch. Johnny [sic] always teased me. He made me think he was going to pull me into the pool. I knew it was too deep for me, so I was afraid.

My folks went to Tombstone to get their groceries, and of course Eugene and I went also, but I have never been back, and cannot remember anything about the town . . . [which] didn't impress me as the ranch did. Somewhere Mother got a pretty little bed for me. She put it at the foot of her own, but I wanted it fixed so my head was next to her. She moved it as I wanted, and one night I looked up to see a wild Indian looking at me. I called Mother and she picked me up and took me into the other room, where she rocked me to sleep. But my Father went out and talked to the Indian, and I was never scared again.

One day, Eugene and I were on Mr. Slaughter's lap. He took his gun out of his belt and had it in his hand, almost in my lap. I thought he was going to shoot a calf that had pushed its head into a can so far that no one could get it out. It scared me, because I thought that shooting a big calf like that would be wicked. But he gave the calf to one of the girls who was visiting there, and he showed me that I could touch the gun without getting hurt.

I remember that when anyone had a birthday, Auntie Slaughter always had a party. And, of course, Eugene and I were included. All the cowboys were unmarried, and sometimes there would be girls there for the party. But the big thing to me was that I either slept with Mr. and Mrs. Slaughter or she made a bed on the floor for us. That was the next best thing. Then, in the morning, we had breakfast there, and some of the boys took us home before dark. . .

Auntie Slaughter came to see us in Safford, Arizona in 1910, and again begged Mother to give me to her, because she could put me in school. But Mother was really ill, so I didn't want to go with her.

After the years, Mr. Slaughter died, but before his death he cleaned Cochise County of bad men. For that the state should be thankful, for in those days there were many of them. But John Slaughter was afraid of no man. As I think of him now, he was short and sturdy, but I may be mistaken. I saw Auntie Slaughter after I was twenty, and she was still a very beautiful and intelligent lady. I am certain that John Slaughter was no ordinary man, or Charlotte [sic] would never have been his wife.

I feel free to say they were all law-abiding people and respected. Young though I was, I learned many good things from Auntie Slaughter. And, as John Slaughter could not abide bad men, he had the sterling quality of demanding decency in his associates. He was a wonderful man, just the sort

the West needed . . . I wonder if there is one Arizonan who has never heard of John Slaughter. He was famous for good reason. Even his cowboys were strong men who were not afraid to stand for the right. If they were weak or dishonest, they didn't last long.

Now the ranch is sold. This little article is in memory of those two wonderful people.

In the summer of 1895, Ethel Robertson (later Mrs. Bert Macia of the famous Rose Tree Inn in Tombstone) and her friend, Cora Gray, spent several weeks at the San Bernardino Ranch. The two young girls accompanied Cora's sister from Tombstone out to the ranch where she worked at various times as a seamstress for Viola Slaughter. In her memoirs, Ethel Robertson told of being called home because of the illness of her mother and that she returned to Tombstone with "a Mormon man who was taking one of his wives to Tombstone to be with her daughter who was having her first baby."²⁰ It is possible that she returned with Ammon Tenney who was taking his second wife, Eliza Udall Tenney, to Tombstone (or Fairbank) to catch the train for Safford to be with her older daughter, Olive Eliza, who had married Albert J. Curtis in March 1891.²¹ It is known that by 1903, Ammon Tenney was definitely not living at San Bernardino because his own journals document the fact that he was elsewhere.

John Slaughter may have had any number of Mormon families living on the ranch over the years since it is known that he was sympathetic and helpful to the LDS colonists who were forced to leave their homes in Chihuahua and Sonora during the early years of the Mexican Revolution.²² So, the mystery of the "Mormon House" remains — was that unusual house straddling the Mexican border really built for a polygamous family? There is always the possibility that John Slaughter's reply to John Rockfellow's query was an answer that Slaughter might have given in jest — a typical Slaughter joke.

Notes

¹ Lyle M. Stone and James E. Ayres, "A Description and Evaluation of Archaeological Resources, San Bernardino Ranch National Historic Landmark, Cochise County, Arizona." Prepared for Johnson Historical Museum of the Southwest by Archaeological Research Services, Inc., Tempe, Arizona, August 1982.

² John A. Rockfellow, "Field Notes of the Survey of the Boundaries of the San Bernardino Private Land Grant, July 15-20, 1901." Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix (hereafter cited as Rockfellow, "Field Notes.").

³ John A. Rockfellow, *Log of an Arizona Trail Blazer* (Tucson: Acme Printing Co., 1933; reprinted edition, Tucson: Arizona Silhouettes, 1955), p. 152 (hereafter cited as Rockfellow, *Arizona Trail Blazer*).

⁴ Rockfellow, "Field Notes," p. 24.

⁵ Rockfellow, *Arizona Trail Blazer*, p. 152.

⁶ Marsha Weisiger notes, oral history interviews, June 1982, Johnson Historical Museum of the Southwest Collection.

⁷ Adeline Greene Parks, "Mother's Stories," based on oral history obtained from Addie Slaughter Greene.

⁸ Winn Whiting Smiley, "Ammon M. Tenney, Mormon Missionary to the Indians," *Journal of Arizona History* 13:2 (Summer 1972): 82-108.

⁹ Autobiography, Ammon Meshach Tenney File, Arizona Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Tenney Autobiography).

¹⁰ Diary, 9 vols., Ammon M. Tenney File, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson. Eager, Arizona, is named for Anna Eager's family who homesteaded in the area in the 1870s and gave land for the founding of the town in 1888.

¹¹ Eliza Udall was a sister to David King Udall. *Arizona Pioneer Mormon: David King Udall, his story and his Family*, 1851-1938 (Tucson: Arizona Silhouettes, 1959).

¹² Tenney Autobiography.

¹³ Smiley, "Mormon Missionary," p. 103; Letter from Hettie A. Tenney to David King Udall, May 5, 1913, Private Collection.

¹⁴ Biography of Anna Sariah Eager by her daughter, Lurlene Tenney Whiting, Ammon M. Tenney File, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson. The biography indicates that about 1890, Ammon M. Tenney left Colonia Diaz with his two younger wives; in Tenney's own diaries there is a gap in the record for the period of the early 1890s.

¹⁵ "Reminiscences of Millicent T[enney] McKellar," Private Collection.

¹⁶ Mrs. McKellar wrote this tribute to the Slaughters some seventy-five years after her family lived at San Bernardino, and it is understandable that some details may be erroneous. The family probably lived on the ranch more than one year since the voting record indicates they were still there in 1894.

¹⁷ Mrs. Slaughter's name was Cora Viola, not Charlotte, and John's son was Willie, not Johnnie.

¹⁸ Millicent Tenney was born December 25, 1890, and her brothers: Eugene, August 23, 1892, and Heleman Pratt, April 4, 1895, all three births at Colonia Diaz, according to family genealogical records. It is possible that Hettie Tenney went back to her parents' home in Colonia Diaz for the births, or the Tenney families may have left Colonia Diaz after the birth of Eugene and returned before the birth of Heleman Pratt. Other evidence seems to indicate that the Tenneys were still at San Bernardino in the summer of 1895.

¹⁹ The "swimming pool" was the large two-acre pond created when John Slaughter dammed up the flow from springs near his ranch house north of the border.

²⁰ Typescript, Slaughter File, Macia-DeVere Collection, Tombstone.

²¹ Tenney Family genealogical records, Private Collection; Letter from Winn W. Smiley to Reba N. Wells, March 15, 1985.

²² Barney T. Burns and Thomas H. Naylor, "Colonia Morelos: A Short History of a Mormon Colony in Sonora, Mexico." *The Smoke Signal* 27 (Spring 1973): 142-180. See also Frankie Howell Stillman manuscript, 1960, Private Collection.

A CAMP NEWSLETTER

Horseback rides, midnight serenades over the countryside, picnics, and well-chaperoned camping trips often enhanced the social life at San Bernardino Ranch. The following is taken from a small notebook belonging to Harriet O. Warning,¹ and is indicative of the innocent pleasures that marked the many outings of the young people at the ranch. The “newsletter” was probably written at Cajon Bonito, Sonora, site of a popular hot spring.



Olive Kreigbaum and Will Hicks, summer 1911. (Slaughter Family Album)

July 11, 1900

The Camp Smile

Editor: H. O. W.

MOTTO: Yip! How good I feel!

LOST: Young man, height 6 ft. tall, pale & distinguished looking, death on smugglers & pretty girls; occupations, deputy, line-rider, bronco-buster, & lady-killer. A reward of a Mex. 2-bit-piece will be paid for his return to Miss B. H. (Hitchcock)

Spoons are at a premium since our bright particular spoon had reformed. (Clarence)

WANTED: Handsome young rancher wants wife, not under 14 nor over 28. Ugly woman preferred so there'll be no cause for jealousy. Need not be a cook as he is willing to do all the work himself. No widow need apply. Girls, here's your chance. Address J. Fisher Anderson.

HUSBAND WANTED: Dead swell, college graduate, pale & classical features. Big fortune required, none having less than \$8,000,000 need apply. One who will make a satisfactory son-in-law for a fastidious mother. If you apply in person beware of her father's gun. Address Miss A. Slaughter.

Those who have been interested in the Howell-Stowe love affair will be relieved to learn that matters have at last reached a conclusion. The "Smile" is pleased to announce the approaching union of Mr. J. A. Howell and Miss Edith Stowe, on the 33rd of July, 1900. The wedding is to take place at San Bernardino, the home of the groom's sister. Miss Stowe is known to *all* of the men and *some*

of the ladies of Cochise Co. The young man is a prominent business man, operating one of the largest stores along the border. All who are interested are invited to the wedding.

Mr. J. Fisher Anderson and Mr. Will Slaughter arrived in camp yesterday evening. We were not surprised, though they expected us to be. You see there was a particular attraction for each.

One of the most popular young ladies in camp, and one who receives great homage from the gentlemen is our little S.[laughter] cousin. The other young ladies should take notes. She reminds us of that story of Bret Harte's of the Mongolian who said he could not play euchre, & then beat the old hands at "the game he did not understand."

Our chaperon needs a pair of glasses. When young ladies take to smoking, it's time for the chaperon to interfere.

How about the star engagement between Dr. Jennie & Dr. Shaw?

Was it a *hop* pillow that Joe Faidley put his head on? Anyway, it moved very suddenly. So did he.

Turkeys and Spaniards should avoid tree tops when our fearless Rough Rider laddie is out with his gun. Leather hat bands are popular, but a steel one would be more useful in his case.

Talk about vanity being a feminine attribute! What was it prompted Big Arthur to wear our chaperon's *zapat*os?

We hear that Will Slaughter is looking for a *mujer* to manage his prospective *casa*. Black-eyed charmers are not in demand. Those with initials B. H. have the best chance.

J. Fisher has despaired of getting a girl to change her name to his. Now he is reversing his tactics, & is adopting hers instead.

For the Benefit of Strangers in Camp: Don't make a noise before breakfast, it will disturb the chaperon. Don't make a noise between breakfast & dinner, it will spoil her morning nap after her bath. Don't make a noise after dinner, you will waken the chaperon who is resting. Be quiet before supper, the chaperon is sleeping after her 2nd bath. After supper you must not talk, nor make any noise, as the chaperon will have retired.

Brigham Young Slaughter, & Joe Smith Minus announce a Mormon revival & preaching at Druid Temple at 9 o'clock tomorrow a.m., June 12, 1900. All are invited.

Mr. J. Faidley's preference seems to be for the young ladies, but the old maids come in for an occasional smile.

Blanche likes to have everything well-seasoned. We have heard her express a liking for Pepper.

We think the other boys wish they could work this "Cousin Business." Good thing Jimmie isn't here! And say, how about these people who are "not accustomed to this Western freedom between men & women?" Seem to learn readily, don't they?

What do you think of Jesse saying, "no widows need apply"? He did not waste any time about changing his name. These widows are all dangerous!

Save all the stray pieces of rope, please. We'll need them to hobble Edith.

SUPPLEMENT: This issue of the Camp Smile is not complete as the Editor and the hunter have gone fishing. Wonder if there will be any of the "Cousin Business." We can't always tell the difference between sunburn and blushes.

August, 1900

A Tale with a Moral

To understand the ways of girls,
In vain our brains we rack;
Just when we think we comprehend,
We find we're off the track.

There's EDITH, who in guileful phrase
Will STOWE away her meaning,
And keep her suitors all in doubt
Toward which one is her leaning.

Yet each one hopes he'd be the man,
Should she her feelings voice.
Think what a joyous HOWELL (howl) there'd be
If JAMES should be her choice!

How ADDIE lights her victims on,
And sings each in turn.
To keep away from candle flame
The moths will never learn.

Yet danger hovers on her path;
A TOMBSTONE looms before her,
No DOCTOR'S power can dispel
The shadow hanging o'er her.

A bachelor old, with eyes so bold,
Will try till he has caught her
With killing glances. To his name
He then will ADDIE (add-a) SLAUGHTER.

Poor FISHER, armed with hook and line,
Angles with best endeavor;
His game is JESS A MINNIE small,
Yet it is MINUS ever.

The proverb tells you this of men
That they are gay deceivers;
But girls are quite as full of guile,
When lovers are believers.

And so, young man on pleasure bent,
In life's bright early morning;
Beware the girls! Alas, I know
That you will not take WARNING.

By Harriet Warning

The names of the young people on whose names the play of words is made are:

Edith Stowe

James Howell

Addie Slaughter

Doctor Dudley

Jess Fisher

Minnie Minus

Harriet Warning, confirmed spinster

M.D.S. of Tombstone



(Standing) Arthur Fisher, Sr., Will Hicks, Arthur Fisher, Jr., John Hankin, and Steele Wood;
(Seated) Lola Robles, Gladys Wood, and Olive Kreigbaum. (Slaughter Family Album)

NOTE

'Harriet Warning was one of Viola Slaughter's best friends. Miss Warning, a Bisbee schoolteacher, married Dr. W. E. Hankin, a Bisbee Dentist and the family continued to be frequent guests at San Bernardino. Their son, John Hankin, was a constant companion in early years to the Slaughter grandchildren. Mrs. Hankin wrote a prize-winning essay on Apache May which was published in the *Douglas Dispatch*, October 3, 1926. She also wrote a number of other published essays and poems.

FRANKIE HOWELL STILLMAN MANUSCRIPT

INTRODUCTION

The colorful way of life that was characteristic of an earlier Arizona is rapidly disappearing. Fortunately, there are pioneers who remember "the way it was" and who have taken the time to record those memories for posterity. Frankie Howell Stillman was one of those who set her reminiscences down on paper, and we can only regret that she did not tell us more. In 1960, Mrs. Stillman made a nostalgic journey back to San Bernardino where almost sixty years before she had been introduced to rural Arizona, and had met for the first time the Slaughter family. She recounts her impressions of that initial visit in 1903 which concluded with an unexpected wedding ceremony at the ranch and her marriage to James (Jimmie) Alonzo Howell, the younger brother of Viola Slaughter. The young couple settled down in Cochise County and were active in ranching, business, and politics until Jimmie's death in 1936. In 1938, Frankie married John B. (Jack) Stillman of Douglas. Mrs. Stillman died in 1968, and her papers and photographs have been made available through the courtesy of her niece, Hazel Todd Carter of Solano Beach, California.

Frankie Stillman's original handwritten manuscript is highly personal, sometimes repetitive, with dates and names left out or confused, but it is a primary source of information which provides a wealth of detail, color, and human interest, adding to our understanding of the San Bernardino Ranch and the family who built it. The selection here is only a small portion of her reminiscences of those early days. Footnotes have been added by Wendy P. Glenn, Harriette Glenn, and Reba Wells. Incidents have been condensed, paragraphs combined, and punctuation and tenses changed for readability. Deletions are noted with ellipses. The reader should bear in mind that this is not an attempt to rewrite history, but an effort to share Mrs. Stillman's remembrances with others.

— Editor

* * * * *

OLD AGE

Stories should be written
Before memory plays strange pranks,
And our English grows too weary
To give the west our thanks.

1958, by Frankie Howell Stillman

MEMORIES OF SAN BERNARDINO

by Frankie Howell Stillman

Once again I have visited the San Bernardino Ranch, owned by John Slaughter from [1884] until he died in 1922, age 81. I stopped briefly at the ranch house and met a most cordial man, [John Henson] and a worker on the ranch.

Many of the old roads are well grown up with brush and are mere cattle trails. We first tried to find the everflowing artesian well, where we once bathed in anything from underwear to Mother Hubbards. This well had a crude board-like wall around it, no top, a slippery board to stand on, but how we loved it. The water was soft and warm. The protection did not invite mixed groups. We did not find this well. We went on down to what was once known as the Watkins Place — now where the water is bottled for sale. The once home-like house has fallen apart. Snakes and other varmints have taken over.

This is where Will Watkins and wife and his family of darling little girls lived for several years. They were Margaret,¹ Ruth, and May. Mr. Watkins farmed on shares and did very well.

There is a large tank where teal ducks and mud hens live and nest. We crossed a plank over a small stream from a slow flowing well to the west to find the very old cemetery where many ranch workers are buried, also Apache May, the little Indian girl Mr. Slaughter brought in from the Sierra Madres, when the raid on a small band of Apaches was made in [1896].

The road to Aspin² Dam is overgrown and we did not try to see the dam by foot, as it is over a mile from the house. The dam is named Aspin after an old man who lived in a little hut close to it. He looked after that part of the ranch with a little prospecting on the side. Once when the rains were particularly heavy, the middle part of the dirt dam was washed away. At that time it was hard to get heavy machinery and it was not repaired for some time.

Then the western artesian well — a slow running well that feeds the little stream that fills the duck pond a mile away. There was a small plot of Muscat grape vines and a few fruit trees. These were watered from this well.

When these grapes were at their best, Gramma Howell would have tubs of them brought down to the house. She would gather the ranch children into the cowboy dining room and begin. She would cut each grape in half and peel it, then the children would take out the seeds. They would get very tired and often rebel, but Gramma Howell's word was law. After a large kettle of these grapes were ready, they would sit on the back of a large wood range and simmer in sugar until they were nearly black. I do not know if the whiskey was added before they were taken from the stove or were allowed to cool before it was

added, but it was added and plenty of it, until they were really brandied grapes. Once we were given a two-gallon crock of them. This meant hours and days of work, and they were priceless. The children were always glad when grape season was over.

I am sure little Arthur Fisher, Frank "Poncho" Anderson and Lola Robles well remember all this. There were others, too.

James Howell had built a very comfortable house for his mother and himself. Then the very wide halls through the house were considered a necessity. The house was about a mile south and east of the home ranch house. There were no trees around it—not a flower or a blade of grass, but the inside was comfortable. The kitchen was about 14 feet square — where the cook must walk from stove to table, from table to cupboard, and to the place where the dishes were washed.

The outhouse was some distance away with a last year's Montgomery Ward hanging by a string. The sun came up in the due east and nearly blinded a recent comer from southern California, where the fog doesn't raise until about 10 each morning. Another chapter of how and why I came here and how I learned to love every inch of this dry and desolate country.

There was the Mormon family who lived to the south of the Howell house. I believe his name was Mortenson.³ (See "Mormon House" in this issue.) He came out of Mexico and settled in a three-room adobe house that spraddled the Mexican-U.S. line. He had two wives, one who lived in Mexico and one on the U.S. side. There was a large middle room that had a nice comfortable fireplace — wood was very plentiful, everywhere. Each woman would keep to her side and cook over the fireplace, each on her own side. . .

One of the constant joys was a strawberry patch. The soil was good — there was a corral nearby — and much clean straw over all. These berries would grow up fresh and clean throughout the year. They were beauties and gave the families a much needed treat each day.

The Howell house burned down — the adobe house was destroyed when the Mexico-U.S. line was straightened, and the place is now a desolate dry patch.

When the artesian well was running night and day the garden below, most of it in Mexico, was like a green lawn. A lovable old Chinaman gardened on shares. He had several helpers who could not come over into the U.S. as they did not have papers. Mexico didn't require them.

This Chinaman, Lee, would load his wagon late in the evening and he would start to Douglas. It took three hours to travel the 18 miles. Since Chinamen were not allowed in Douglas over night,⁴ Lee would travel until he got to the

rise near D Hill. He would sleep until daylight and travel into Douglas with fresh crop vegetables. He sold them to the various stores, mainly to the Phelps Dodge Mercantile Co.

He would get out of Douglas before night. Once while I was visiting on the ranch, he came in at 11 o'clock. Mr. Slaughter had waited up for him.

Lee would come in and spread his receipts out on the table. The money (all sales were cash) would be counted. Mr. Slaughter would take his share — I believe it was half — and Lee, his. Never a hitch in the division. Old-time Chinamen were very honest.

There was another Lee, the cook, that ran everyone out of the kitchen. How he could cook! When the young people, summer guests, wanted to make candy, they had to make up a fire and after the candy was made, had to take out every ash and leave the stove as spotless as Lee had left it.

When a very fine looking young Chinaman had an accident, his shotgun having discharged while he was riding in a sulky (entering the front part of the leg and coming out the calf in a large hole, not breaking the bone), the older men would not allow his leg to be taken off. He was brought to the hospital and could have been saved, but the older men, maybe Lee, said there could be no cripples in China as it would be a burden on the family. He died of gangrene and was buried in the Calvary Cemetery — one Chinaman that stayed in Douglas overnight. . .

The ranch house was built in 1892⁵ with six large bedrooms, a very large dining room, a large hall through the middle, shady porches. There was a milk house filled with meat, butter, etc. Ice was carried the 18 miles in a large wagon. Much of it melted, but it was always full. A hydraulic pump⁶ below the house pumped water to a roof tank. Its click, click was always present. A spring house just above this pump was used for the milk and cream. Surprisingly, the old range cows furnished milk for a large family.

There were always guests — sometimes a few and other times many. Once, at an evening meal, with the family and guests, there were 40 people being served in the large dining room. The beef roasts that came onto the table must have weighed from 15 to 20 pounds.

Mr. Slaughter would serve the plates until he got down to a very rare cut, and he would serve himself. The balance was taken to the cowboy dining room and devoured. These cowboys were welcome at the main dining room but were usually pretty dirty and they preferred the other dining room. The food was the same, and good.

Each evening there was a card game — no radio or TV then and the evenings were long. Usually Gramma Howell and some of the younger guests would get at one end of the dining room table, but the real card sharks would get around the other end. It was usually poker with money involved.

There were many interesting guests who came and went at the ranch. Some on business, some close friends.

One frequent visitor was Mrs. Theodore Hampe, who lived in Rucker Canyon. Mr. and Mrs. Hampe had lived in San Francisco and wanted to get away from the city life. They had built a lovely home on the side of a hill in Rucker. Mr. Hampe had been a newspaper man and a beautiful artist. Mrs. Hampe had interests in a large winery in the San Joaquin Valley. They were educated people who were very individual. They would take their vacations at separate times. Once while Mrs. Hampe was at the ranch, we came in from a short horseback ride, and when she got off her horse she found she had lost a large diamond from a three-stone ring, two diamonds and an emerald. She didn't act as though it meant too much to her — said she was glad it wasn't the emerald. She was large and bony and he a real small man with a brain that really clicked.

Once while I was at the ranch we were cleaning the lamp chimneys and filling the lamps — no gas, no electricity, only kerosene lamps. Gramma Howell had a small hand and she was wiping the glass chimneys inside. One at a time she broke three chimneys. They separated like they had been cut with a knife. Finally we decided it was her diamond ring that was cutting the glass. The small diamonds were built up in a cluster, cutting the glass clean.

At night, after we got to bed, the coyotes would howl and fight over some dead animal, and I would sit up in the bed the longest part of the night. Fresh from the city, where only the street cars made the most noise, I was surely tortured. . .

In March 1903 I traveled from Los Angeles over the Santa Fe to Williams, Arizona, where James met me.

It seemed I hardly knew him, I had seen him so few times. I did nurse him in Dr. Stewart's Private Hospital after he had had a bad accident on a bucking horse, on the San Bernardino Ranch where he lived and ran his cattle.

We traveled to Phoenix by train, as there were no automobiles at this time. Each time a trip across the city, which was very small then, was made, or from a depot, a buggy and a horse or a team was rented.

I met James' family in Phoenix — his mother who was then 66 years old, his sister, Mrs. John Slaughter who was 43, and Mr. Slaughter's daughter,⁷ Addie, who was 30. Mrs. Slaughter was one month older than my mother; they

were married the same year. James' mother was known to everyone as Gramma Howell. She had developed a very hard cold and was always troubled with asthma.

When the trip was planned for the Grand Canyon and northern points, Gramma Howell stayed with the Triblets [Tribolets], old Tombstone people. Mrs. Charles Clawson and son, Spencer, had come from Bisbee with the family. We all traveled to the South Rim of the Canyon. . .

[Returning from Grand Canyon], we came down to Douglas which was very, very young, and very, very dusty. The Slaughter buckboard was waiting for us. Mrs. Clawson and Spencer [had] left the train in Bisbee, where she lived, Mr. Clawson being there to meet her. Mr. Clawson⁸ was superintendent of all of Copper Queen interests in Bisbee, a fine man. They lived on the tip top of Castle Rock in a very nice home, which is still standing in good shape.

We left Douglas rather late in the evening or it may have been after dark — we traveled out 15th Street Road. The distance from Douglas to the ranch is 18 miles and it took us three hours to make the trip and that was good traveling. I had grown up in Los Angeles where we had two horses and long trips were not new to me, but this was the longest trip I had ever made, it seemed that night. The horses could have made the trip alone — they traveled it so often.

As we passed the mesquite trees and others I could only see the outlines and I asked if they were orange groves. I had many pleasant experiences and many shocks.

When we reached the ranch house we all had to relieve our over-filled bladders. I was given a lantern and led out through gates to an old-fashioned privy, where spiders and other crawlers were resting on the seats. But that night it was any port in a storm. I can't remember where I slept that night. I was so exhausted — I didn't hear the coyotes or owls that night, but later, oh, boy, what a scary place to live!

James had built a very comfortable adobe house for his mother about a mile south and east of the ranch house. Gramma Howell took me over. She knew that James cared for me and wanted one thing, and that was to marry me. This was her only boy — he was then 30, and she wasn't about to give him up. We tried to be friendly but I just wasn't her type. I had come from Los Angeles and people from Los Angeles had a terrible reputation in Arizona. It was a pretty sad time for me, as I had left my family, a friendly lot, and was alone with Gramma Howell the most of every day for a week.

I began to cling to James, which I had no intention of doing. He had accepted a position with the First National Bank in Tombstone as Assistant Cashier under Thomas R. Brandt. He could no longer ride as he once did,



Douglas, Ariz., 11/8/02.

Dear Frankie:

Returns all in. With exception of Probate Judge, full Democratic ticket elected. Jimmie ran ahead of his ticket.

J.H.

Announcing the results of the Territorial election. (Stillman-Carter Collection)

because of the injury he had from the bucking horse affair. I had planned on leaving the ranch when he did and would go on home. My mother wrote I had been away long enough.

Back to Phoenix — James had been elected as a Representative to the 22nd Territorial Legislature. We spent about a week there before the session was over. There were many nice affairs while I was there, Mrs. Slaughter and Addie attending.

Most interesting was the last night when they were trying to wind up the session. The clock was set back in the chambers and I think it was 3 or 4 o'clock when all left.

It was quite the fad to have the legislators write their names on a square of linen to be worked and made into a pillow top. This I did and still have it, although I have never made it into a pillow. These men were all strangers to me, but later I met many of them and their wives and we became good friends. There is not a man living now whose name appears here.

James was a very popular man and had many friends. His sole purpose in entering politics was to help the cattle men throughout Cochise County.

While at the ranch, two of the Castañeda girls from Benson came to visit. This family and the Slaughters had been good friends in Tombstone.

A camping party was formed and we all went into Mexico to some hot springs. They were located in the Cajon Bonita, about 25 miles from the San Bernardino Ranch. Mr. Slaughter was troubled with rheumatism and eczema on his feet, and he often went to these springs for relief. They were out in the open, only shrubs to conceal the bather, no protection from prying eyes or the wind.

There was quite a party: several Mexican men to do the camp work and keep the camp fires burning; Mr. Slaughter and James (the only white men), Addie Slaughter who was a first-class camp cook and could squat over a fire like a cowboy; Mrs. Margaret Watkins who lived on the ranch with her husband and three little girls and was the life of the group; Mrs. Slaughter; the Castañeda girls, and me.

It seems there was no end to the trail on this trip. The second long ride I had taken since I was a small girl. We were all glad to get into camp and rest. The Mexican helpers had things set up and a fire going in no time. This part of Mexico is beautiful country, deep gorges, streams, wild turkey and many deer. There was a running stream close by, full of fish. Several high powered rifles were carried and I was allowed to shoot one into a pool where many trout were lying quietly. There was no law against this in Mexico. The fish were stunned and came to the surface, where they were gathered up and later eaten.

We needed meat, so out James and I went to scan the hills. We had gone but a short distance until a deer was sighted across a canyon. A careful aim was taken and the buck was hit, but not killed. It had to be trailed, but was brought in, in an hour or so. The weather was still cool, and the meat kept well hanging to a sturdy limb.



A typical Slaughter camping trip. (Stillman-Carter Collection)

Dutch ovens had been carried on pack animals. They are the most perfect cooking utensil any time, any place. They are as black as coal, sometimes not too clean, but the food cooked in one is delicious, hot biscuits, beans and stews. We had venison every day, mostly steaks. We were all very sorry when we broke camp. The 25 miles back was hard, but we were happy.

These springs are so hot, it is impossible to stay in the water more than a few minutes. They make pools that we sat in up to our necks. Mr. Slaughter was much improved. We had a grand week and all felt better from the hot baths.

After we were well on the way home we were told by Mr. Slaughter that he had seen the imprint of a moccasin, supposedly that of "Big Foot", one of the Apaches who were holding out in the Sierra Madres. This footprint measured about 14 inches and is written about in McClintock's History of Arizona, Vol. #1. Mr. Slaughter told Addie and Margaret of this, while in camp. He also told the men, alerting them for danger, but the other women were not told.

Addie Slaughter was engaged to marry Dr. William A. Greene, who was practicing in Bisbee. Mrs. Slaughter was quilting a hand-pieced quilt top. She was always joking, but never could see any one else's jokes. She called Addie, James and Willie Slaughter her children. She had reared Addie and Willie. Addie and James were nearly the same age, only 12 years younger than Mrs. Slaughter. Addie and Willie were three [sic] and nine [sic] when John Slaughter married Cora Viola Howell in 1879. He had married Adeline Harris in Texas and had several children before his wife and some of the children died.⁹

Mrs. Slaughter kept saying the quilt would go to the first one of her children to marry. While Mrs. Slaughter was very sick several years before, the doctor prescribed champagne for her stomach. It developed later that she had gall stones and she had an operation under Dr. Goodfellow. She never was quite well as the gall bladder was not removed but cleared out and drained.

There were several cases of champagne in the attic at the ranch house. Mrs. Slaughter also said she would serve that champagne [at the first wedding]. There was a lot of joking about it.

The company at the ranch house were about to leave. I was going home so an afternoon [at the main ranch house] was planned for all. James took his mother up on horseback. She always rode sideways, with her long black dress a-flapping. They rode double. He left me alone and said he would be right back. He came right back and then is when he got serious. He told me he had loved me from the [first] day in the hospital.

He wanted a home of his own. That his mother, although he loved her dearly, was never satisfied. From the day I met James I had the greatest respect for him. My parents loved him. So the next day when he sent a telegram telling them we would be married, they were very happy.

Before we got up to the ranch house, Gramma Howell nearly had a fit. We had been too long getting there. I couldn't ride sideways because of my knee, so I did have a time making it. She was going to walk back to see what was the delay. The house was a mile away.

Early the next morning, and it was Sunday, James rode to Douglas, took the train, and arrived in Tombstone in the evening. The judge who issued the marriage licenses was at church; then he went out for the evening, so about



Jimmie Howell and Frankie J. Todd, probably about the time they were married at San Bernardino Ranch, 1903. (Stillman-Carter Collection)

Certificate of Marriage

THIS IS TO CERTIFY

That on the 28th day of
APRIL

in the year of our Lord 1903

James A. Howell.

and Frankie Todd.

WERE BY ME UNITED IN

MARRIAGE

at San Bernardino

Territory

according to the laws of the ~~State~~ of Arizona.

[Signature]
Justice of the Peace.

Witnesses

Addie V. Laughton.

[Signature]

(Stillman-Carter Collection)

¹Various sources name him as Mortenson, Tenney, Tinney, etc.

²It has not been confirmed that this was an official Douglas ordinance, but there may have been a tacit understanding between the Orientals and the townspeople.

³Mrs. Stillman gave this date followed by a question mark. Research by Reba Wells indicates that the house was probably under construction in the spring of 1893.

⁴This hydraulic "ram" pump was still on the water system in 1968 when the Warner Glenn family lived there.

⁵Daughter from John Slaughter's first marriage.

⁶Spencer W. Clawson was Copper Queen Mine Superintendent from 1901 to 1907, according to information at the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum.

⁷Addie was about six and a half, and Willie less than two years when their father married Cora Viola Howell at Tularosa, New Mexico Territory, in April 1879.

APACHE MAY

by Frankie Howell Stillman

The story of Apache May has been written and re-written and none is quite correct. I will write [it] as told to me by James Howell, Cora Henry, and Mrs. John Slaughter.¹

[In 1896] when Mr. Slaughter heard there was a small band of Apaches camped in the Sierra Madres at a natural corral,² he formed a small group of his men and with the aid of [Lieutenant N. K. Averill, 7th Cavalry] and his men, he rode to within a short distance of their camp. These men, of course, must leave their horses and walk and climb to this Indian camp.

On the morning of May 7, at 4 a.m., just before dawn, they all descended upon this camp. It so surprised them [the Indians] they scattered like leaves in a breeze. They did not know how many there were. As I remember, only one Indian was killed. He looked back as the men were poking around to see who was left, if any one. The Indian (and he could well have been the father of Apache May) looked around a large boulder and was shot. At the time this story was told to me, no one talked much about the [other] small girl who was captured. She fought like a tigress and had to be tied. She was sent to the Apache Indian Reservation.

Mr. Slaughter took the butt end of his gun to poke through the bedding that lay on the ground, when he felt something soft. She was a baby — little and soft. Mr. Slaughter picked her up and at once she put her arms around Mr. Slaughter's neck. That did it. From then on, he was her "Don Juan." After picking up the belongings and identifying the horses, they started back. . .

Right here I will write what was well known — while horses had been taken from the San Bernardino Ranch and occasionally a beef was taken for food, Mr. Slaughter was left alone by the Indians. They seemed to fear him, but as I often heard these many years ago, it was because he had Indian blood in his veins. This I do not know, and there is no one now who can verify this.

On the return trip home, a rough 75 miles, this little Apache baby, about 15 months old, rode in the saddle in front of Mr. Slaughter. She did not cry at any time.

A man was sent from the ranch to watch for this group's return. He sighted them many miles away, causing all at the ranch to rejoice.

It was quite a home-coming for this little Indian girl. She clung to Mr. Slaughter through the many approvals and disapprovals. And until she died, she did not like Mrs. Slaughter; and, when she was about four as she watched Mrs. Slaughter comb her long black hair, she said, "I'll kill you some time." That would have been another dread if she had grown to womanhood, as Mrs. Slaughter [had] lived in dread throughout her early married life. When Mr. Slaughter went out on a "man vs. man" trip she lived in agony until his return. The children at the ranch became more peaceful after Apache May's death. There was less turmoil among them. From the first, Apache May used to hiss at her playmates. This may have been a warning [signal] handed down from her parents. . .

Apache May had a tragic death when she was a little girl about five or six . . . One cold morning³ [in February 1900] long before automobiles were used on the ranch, Mrs. Slaughter and Adeline (Addie) Slaughter (Mr. Slaughter's daughter by his first wife) started to Bisbee in a buckboard. A small fire had been made to heat a large rock to be wrapped and put at their feet. They had been gone only a short time, probably not more than ten miles away, when a cowboy was sent posthaste to bring them back. The children had watched them drive away, then began to play in the coals left by the small fire.

The true story will never be known unless one of the children leaves a written statement. The children would never tell how it happened. They had sticks that were burning and they were playing. All at once Apache May's dress was on fire. She panicked as the blaze spread up to her face. She ran like a deer toward the big barn. I do not know if any of the group ran to help her, as it happened so fast, but an alarm was given and [when stopped] she was put to bed at once and given all the aid possible. Mr. Slaughter, because of the many necessities during his outdoor life, had become a doctor, nurse and advisor.

Apache May loved her Don Juan dearly and wouldn't let him out of her sight. She lived [?] days. I do not remember if I was ever told how badly she was burned, but it was pneumonia from the inhaled smoke that killed her. . .

Jess Fisher made a coffin of undressed lumber that was covered with cloth. She was buried in the little cemetery close to the lower artesian well, where once the Watkins had lived. This cemetery was carefully fenced from the tramping of cattle's feet. There were crosses made by the Mexicans who lived on the ranch, and a little fence was placed around the grave. . .



Now the fence has gone and a mesquite tree grows up through the grave. The protecting fence around the cemetery had been torn down by cattle, and all crosses and head stones had been scattered years ago, when I asked Mrs. Slaughter for one of the crosses that was placed on [Apache May's] grave by the loving Mexican women who visited this burial place. This wish was granted and I still have this wooden cross made of crude tree branches.⁴

*Cross from grave of Apache May.
(Arizona Historical Society)*

NOTES

¹The three persons named all had firsthand knowledge of the incident.

²Slaughter had reason to believe the Indians might be the ones who had been stealing his livestock.

³There are many stories about Apache May's death; this one is a bit different from the others, but does not contradict the one told by Harriet Hankin which Viola Slaughter said was essentially correct.

⁴A similar cross can be seen at the Arizona Historical Society (Tucson).



Apache May and the pumpkins, c. 1897 or 1898. (Arizona Historical Society)

POSTSCRIPT

In 1936, Viola Slaughter arranged with Marion L. Williams, a good friend of John Slaughter, to buy San Bernardino Ranch. In 1937, Williams and the John H. Slaughter Ranch, Inc. concluded the arrangement, with Sam P. Applewhite signing for the corporation. The working part of the ranch was sold to Warner and Wendy Glenn in the late 1950s, Williams keeping the home site of about 2440 acres. Upon Williams' death, the ranch passed to his estate, and Ben, his son and executor, sold the ranch on September 27, 1968 to Paul A. and Helen S. Ramsower.¹ In March 1980, The Nature Conservancy bought the ranch, pending sale to a not-for-profit organization.

In April 1982, the Johnson Historical Museum of the Southwest (P.O. Box 1897, Sun City, AZ 85372) purchased the home site and out-buildings and acreage of that portion of the ranch and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service purchased the remaining acreage. At that time, Bill Roe, chairman of the Arizona Nature Conservancy, said, "They [Johnson Museum and USFWS] have overlapping jurisdictions. The Museum will do nothing in its efforts to preserve and recreate the ranch in its original condition that would impinge upon the biological values of the area. And USFWS will not disrupt the historic preservation."²

On August 7, 1964, the San Bernardino Ranch gained national significance when the Secretary of the Interior designated it a National Historic Landmark.

NOTES

¹ Ben F. Williams, Jr., November 4, 1985.

² *The Arizona Daily Star*, June 4, 1982.

* * * * *



Cochise Head