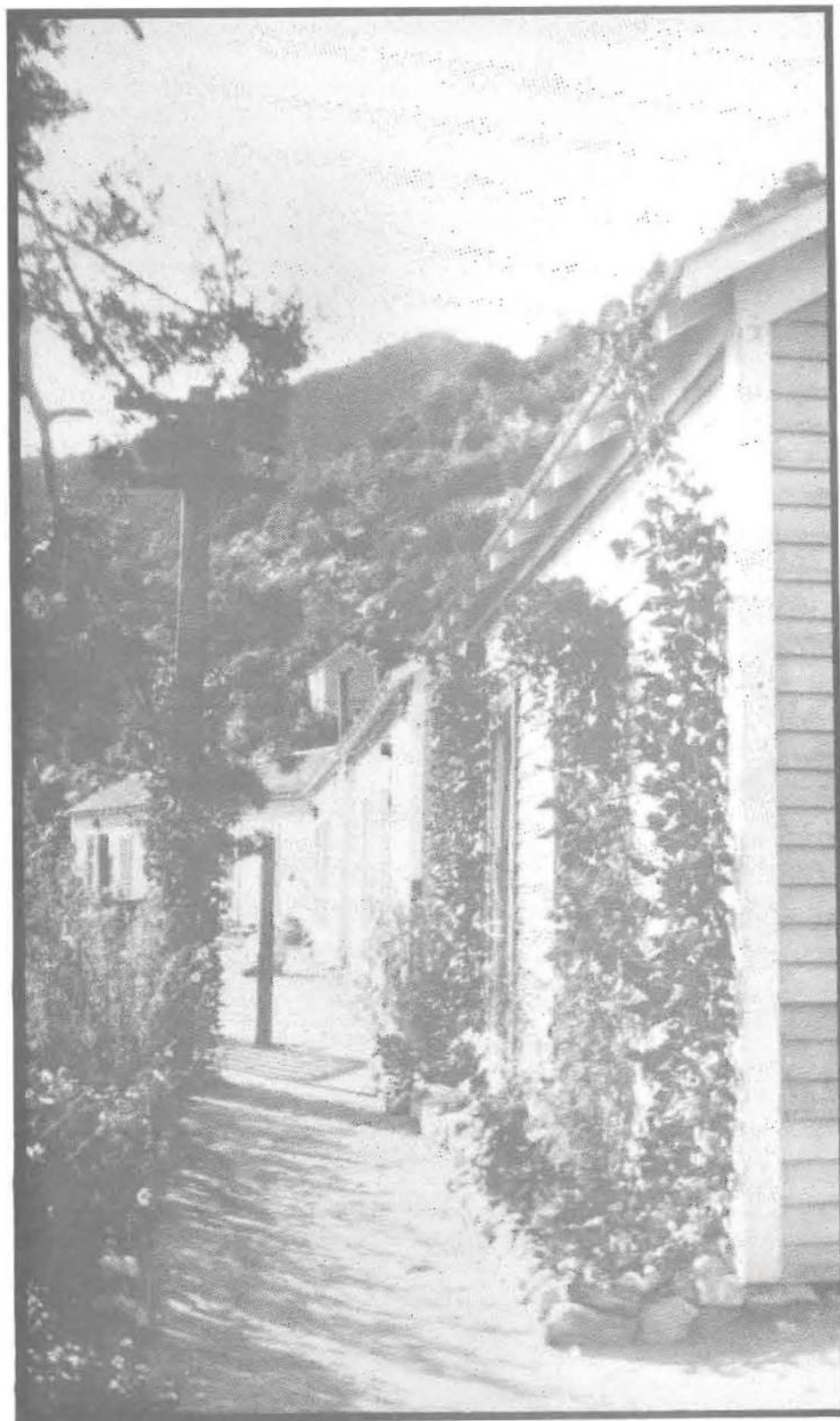


# The Cochise Quarterly



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Teacher at Hilltop</b> .....	<b>3</b>
by Maryan Stidham	
 <b>Letters to the Editor</b> .....	 <b>34</b>

**About the cover:** This is the middle row of houses at the Hilltop townsite. The house closest to the camera was occupied by Blackie and Ruth Stidham. They planted vines and flowers in the foot or so of space available next to the cottage. The buildings had two rooms, a kitchen and living room-bedroom.

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## TEACHER AT HILLTOP

By Maryan Stidham

After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley in May, 1924, my sense of adventure impelled me to look for a position in a rural area. A primary teacher was needed in the little mining community of Hilltop in Cochise County, Ariz., and in early September I was crossing southern Arizona on the Southern Pacific railroad.

We wound through hills and valleys, stopped briefly at Tucson and Douglas and rounded the southern end of the Chiricahua Mountains. That was a strange name and I wondered how it was pronounced. Suddenly I caught a view of mountains almost like the Colorado Rockies, then lesser formations, and finally one outstanding peak as the train stopped at Rodeo, N. M.

There was just one person in sight, a woman somewhat older than I was, coming briskly toward me with hand outstretched. She introduced herself as Mary C. Fritz, the principal and teacher of the upper grades at Hilltop. She led me to her Chevrolet touring car which, she said, had seen better days but was our link to the outside world. Mary was a widow with an 11-year-old son who attended school at St. David.

I wondered why the oversized yellow railroad station had been built for such a small community. Then we were in the car and headed for the mountains on a dirt road which churned up dust.

Mary told me that she'd met Mrs. C. W. Bush in Douglas and she had invited us to spend the night with her family who lived at the edge of the mountains. Then we could get a fresh start for Hilltop in the morning. Mrs. Bush's brother, Shelton Keeling, was staying with them, but there was plenty of room for us.

Mary confided that Shelton Keeling and Helen Brown, our county school superintendent, were good friends, and that she, Mary, also found Shelton interesting. I smiled inwardly, as young women will, at the thought of these older friendships.

I also kept noticing things along the way. The barbed wire fences had other wires strung along the tops of the posts. As there were no telephone posts in sight, I correctly assumed that the fence posts did double duty.



Mary Fritz, principal of Hilltop school 1925-6 stands on the main street of Rodeo, N.M. waiting for auto repairs.

The mountains grew more beautiful as we came closer. Presently we turned off to the left onto a narrower dirt road and could see a dark green house with trees around it. We drove around to the back as obviously everyone did. Not far from here, I would later learn, was the old dugout where the youngest Hands brother and a friend had been killed by Apaches on their last raid through this region.

Mrs. Bush came out to greet us. She was a tall, pleasant woman, probably used to pioneering, I thought. We walked through the house to the screened-in porch overlooking the valley from which we had come. Soon the men came in, with their big hats and cowboy clothes, reminding me of illustrations in the popular novel, Chip of the Flying U.

Mr. Bush sat down in the rocking chair beside me, and I asked him something about ranching. "It's terrible," he assured me. "Hardly a drop of rain all summer and the cows are losing weight."

I protested that the trees around the house looked nice and green. Yes, he agreed, but they were watered from an old Indian spring near by. As I remarked that even the pastures in the valley looked green, Mrs. Bush came to the door.



"But that's just mesquite," she informed me. "Cows could starve to death on that. What they need is good ole grama grass and plenty of rain. That's why we moved to the Cherry cows. Thought we'd get good rain over here."

Cheery cows! So that's how the word was pronounced. I absorbed this information and we all went in to supper.

Later it was suggested that we go for a ride up Cave Creek, as there was a full moon and so we could see Cathedral Rock. Shelton Keeling drove the Model T Ford.

"High enough off the ground to miss most of the rocks," he said.

Mary sat beside him and Mrs. Bush and I climbed into the back seat. Soon we came to the big sycamores along Cave Creek, their white bark and huge leaves gleaming in the moonlight. The top of the car kept me from seeing much of the mountains, so I was glad when Mary suggested that Mrs. Bush and I get out at Sunny Flat for a good view while she and Shelton went up a little farther to turn around.

The view of Cathedral Rock, a huge shining cliff reaching up into the moon-lit sky, has been one of my most impressive scenic memories. "It looks more like a church from down below," was Mrs. Bush's practical comment. I have seen it many times "from down below" in the years since then, and I do agree with her.

Back at the ranch house, I was introduced to another "first." As Mrs. Bush was lighting the kerosene lamp in our bedroom, she said, "I hope you like to sleep on feather beds, 'cause that's what this is."

I had never slept on a feather bed and I was glad to have one more new experience. Actually, I had a little trouble with the feathers. I kept trying to find something solid to stretch out on, and the feathers seemed to melt away at every move.

The next morning dawned bright and cool, and our hostess kept adding to my store of information, explaining the houses we would pass, their probable occupants, and the trickiness of sand washes — "Just stay in the tracks and keep going, not too fast. You won't meet many cars." She wasn't sure when the big ore trucks came down from the Hilltop mine; but no use in worrying about everything. So with many thanks for her kindness, we were on our way to Hilltop.

On crossing Cave Creek, we saw that it was bone dry. There were four or five small buildings in sight, and on top of a small hill we passed the house of a Mrs. Roush who, at times, kept the Portal post office. Now we arrived at an ideal spot for a view of the portal to Cave Creek, which gave the name of Portal to the small settlement.

It was indeed possible to see that Cathedral Rock resembled an Old World cathedral. The over-sized boulders reclining near it seemed like slumbering beasts from ages past. In the foreground was a neat orchard of apple trees owned by Mrs. Gurnett, whose home was hidden by trees up the canyon.

Off to the right, a narrow road wound through mesquites to the Toles sisters' place. Helen Brown had told Mary about them. Myriam, in her late 20s, was tall, dark-haired and good-looking, though she paid little attention to her appearance. Elsie, some years older, had been elected Arizona Superintendent of Schools (she was Republican at a time when most Arizona officials were Democrats) and she was seldom home. Also tall, she was friendly, nice-looking and neatly dressed. A younger brother, Silas, had served in World War I and attended the University of Arizona. He now worked in Bisbee where they had grown up and was more like a typical collegiate than anyone else in this area.

A few years earlier, Myriam had gone to Hawaii and taught native children without any school equipment. In San Jose, Calif., she made puppets and put on shows. Later, she ran a small girls' school at Portal. She was a writer and fine artist. I'm proud to own her picture of a bowl of flowers which Dorothy Bliss bought at the Douglas Art Gallery.

We didn't stop this time to get acquainted with the Toleses, however, but kept on toward Hilltop. Dipping into a sand wash, Mary successfully navigated a narrow place between two boulders and maneuvered up a narrow, rough road where it would be impossible to pass another car. At last we reached a smoother stretch where we could catch our breath.

The scenery was now gentle, with the Paradise Cemetery off to the left. Around another bend or two, there was another dry creek with a string of mailboxes on the other side. This was Paradise. We could see a few small buildings up the creek but did not stop to explore. We turned to the right, soon passed notorious Galeyville without realizing that it was there and kept criss-crossing the dry creek, overshadowed by large sycamores which were fast becoming my favorite Arizona tree.



Ruth Wynne stood on the bridge leading to the main street of Paradise, Ariz., in 1923.

been a general store at some time in the past. This was the Morrow home. It was here that we would get our water and Mary had brought two shiny new buckets for us to carry the water in.

Almost at once we came to the little frame house, on the left side of the road, unpainted but looking quite new, with a small porch in front. This was to be our home. We looked it over, living room, bedroom, kitchen, pantry, clothes closet, bookshelves, a heating stove in the living room awaiting winter, and a cook stove in the kitchen. We spotted a meager supply of wood in the yard and saw that we would soon have to arrange for a larger wood pile. We began unloading the car, ate a quick lunch from Mary's supplies and walked to the Morrows' to fill our water buckets.

Soon we climbed up to smoother land and could see in the distance the spacious San Simon Valley. Turning left at a small sign, we went through a pleasant field of yuccas with Whitetail Creek off to our right. Now we were on the home stretch to Hilltop.

In the distance we could see, now and then, a small frame house. At last there was one, quite close to the road on our left — the Colvin place. Suddenly, on the right side of the road, there was a larger building which could have

Mrs. Morrow, a plump, pleasant little lady, showed us to the well



in the side yard, and her two youngest children, Dorothy, with dark hair and eyes, and little blond Mary, soon appeared. They were to be in my room at school. Mrs. Morrow said that her husband and older sons were working in the mine, but they had promised to put a better rope on the well bucket. She suggested we just fill one pail now, and everything would be fixed when we came back. This proved to be true, and in due course we met Mr. Morrow and his son Ralph, who was even taller, if not thinner, than his father. The Morrows all seemed to be very nice people.

For supper that first day, we decided to go up to the boarding house at the mine, as we had been told that Mrs. Mosely sometimes took extra guests. So we drove the Chevy up the narrow, twisting road to the mine site. There were a few turn-outs and in one of them were half a dozen small boys who had spotted us as the new school teachers and we all waved to each other. Soon we pulled up onto a level area, rather crowded with mine buildings, a store run by a Mr. Kirby and the boarding house. There were tiers of cottages, most of them small, running up the hillside. The mine manager's home was on the highest level.

We were a little early for supper, but Mrs. Moseley told us she would fix us something. She was agreeable, but somehow distracted and we soon found out why. Her only son, Sam, still in his teens, was getting married Saturday to Violet Kuykendal, a sweet and pretty young girl, just 16.

Her father worked at the mine, as most men did here, and they lived in the last house to the left, just before we started climbing the hill. These children were way too young for marriage. The Kuykendals thought so too, but what could you do?



Hilltop, Ariz., about 1925



All of this came out as Mrs. Moseley served our supper and we quietly resolved not to linger any longer than necessary. Suddenly, young Sam came bounding in, a tall, blond teenager, full of plans for Saturday. His mother told him who we were, he nodded briefly, and went on with his plans.

Many years later, my husband and I were visiting with Sam at some cattlemen's gathering that he had come to with his wife, Josie, from their ranch near Apache Pass. Another old timer came up and said, "What year was that you married Violet Kuykendal, Sam?"

Sam looked a bit flustered and said, "Uh, I don't know. About 1925, I guess." I gently corrected him. Of course he didn't remember meeting the new school teachers in the fall of 1924.

The next day we walked up to the school house, as the little road which turned off at the Kuykendal place was sometimes impassable, we were told, except on foot. First we passed the Fred Hall house. Their three children would be in Mary's room. A little farther on was the Oley Rider place. They had one bright little girl who was too young for school. Near the schoolhouse road was a tent-house occupied by the Ben Pague family. Their two oldest daughters, Evelyn and Eleanor, would be in Mary's room and Bennie Hope would be in mine.

The short road up to the school yard was indeed rocky, as the few light rains of summer had washed away any soil that might have been on it. It was not impassable, however, and as time went on, Mary would drive the car to school if there were any reason for it. I went early for the piano lessons and to prepare for the day ahead.

On this first occasion, we were pleased to find a big yard with various trees and bushes growing around the edges. The school building was painted blue, and the first room, facing east, was for the upper grades. Large folding doors divided the rooms, to be folded back on occasions such as school programs or community dances.

The outside door to the primary grades opened to the west. Book cupboards held text books for each grade. There were desks and seats of the usual type and a desk and chair for each teacher. An old upright piano stood in one corner and I winced as I tried it out. Later we were to acquire a shiny new one.

Mr. Cochran, the president of the school board, came with another member to talk over school arrangements that evening. The school was not overly generous with supplies and money was carefully



The Hilltop School in 1925 showing the door to the upper grade classroom. The door to the primary class room is on the other side of the building.

spent.

My salary this first year was \$150 per month. The principal's was \$185 but she had extra duties such as making out monthly reports. I earned extra money from piano lessons. These salaries were higher than in most towns at the time, so we were well satisfied.

On Saturday morning, there was a great honking of horns from up the canyon and presently a Model T Ford came rushing by, decorated with "Just Married" signs. The newlyweds, the young Moseleys, were on their way.

We had a few visitors before the opening of school. Among them were Alice and Margaret Colvin, attractive teenagers in summer frocks with hats to match. Later we met their brother George, or "G.T." as he was called in those days. All three would be in Mary's room, as she taught grades 9 and 10 if needed, in addition to the usual upper grades.

Among all these pleasant happenings, there was also a real tragedy which struck the community about a week before our arrival. Johnny Underwood, a miner, married and the father of two little boys, was killed in an accident in the Hilltop mine. The mother had taken the boys, Lamar and Harry, to visit relatives for a short time, so they would be a week late starting school. This event naturally cast a pall over all the conversations.

The first day of school dawned bright and beautiful. The



children, all clean and starched, gathered in little groups in the school yard. Three or four mothers came and I was glad to have them see that our school year was getting off to a good start. At nine o'clock, Mrs. Fritz rang the school bell and I organized my classes to march single file into our school room.

Desks had been arranged by Agustin Ortiz, one of the larger boys who was our paid janitor and general helper. We had 15 minutes of opening exercises, including the singing of "America" and a couple of other songs. I had seen to it that the piano was turned at an angle so that I could play it and still keep an eye on the room full of youngsters, about 25 of them.

I had divided the school day into 15 minute sections so that each of the four grades would receive its share of instruction. This timing was flexible, according to requirements which seemed to change daily. I emphasized the three R's, history and geography where suitable, and music. My weak point was art, but the teacher just before me had been good at that, so I thought it would not hurt the youngsters to have a little different emphasis this time around.

There was no such thing as a school bus in those days, so most of the children walked to school. The three Wesson children, who lived "on the other side," came through the first or top level tunnel of the mine (the Caspar tunnel), wearing lighted mine caps especially fitted for them by their father. Ruth, the oldest, was in the fourth grade. Her younger brothers were Carlos and Willie. If I remember correctly, Willie Wesson was the only child in my room to have a perfect attendance record that year. The next year, their younger sister, Rose, joined them.

Harvey, Frances and Van Noland had farther to come but from the other direction. Their father's ranch sloped down toward the San Simon Valley, several miles from school. Harvey, the oldest, walked, taking a short-cut through the hills. Frances and Van sometimes both rode on the same horse, or Frances rode and Van walked.

The George Hall daughters, Nellie and Thelma, also lived some distance down the road and were usually brought by their father on his way to the mine. They arrived early enough to start their piano practice and I came in a little later for their piano lessons.

In the meantime, Agustin had cleaned the rooms and brought a bucket of water to each room from the Kuykendal well at the foot of the hill. Each child and teacher had a personal drinking cup, kept in his or her own desk. And woe be to anyone who wasted that water! Agustin

would be mad!

I had two little Mexican first graders who spoke no English, and I still regret my inability to give them enough time in their struggle with a new language. I thought they would pick up some English from other children on the playground but that amounted to very little. They did learn the words in their lessons but that was not enough to make them fluent in English.

I used the blackboards a great deal, writing lists of spelling words and arithmetic problems. What happened then was that a bright second grader, for instance, would polish off the second grade work and then do the same with third grade work. This happened in the case of pretty little blond Mary Morrow, and by the time I left Hilltop I couldn't see anything else to do but to promote her to the fourth grade instead of the third. Ordinarily, I do not like the idea of having children skip grades. I have often wondered how it worked out for her.

Things were quite well organized by the end of the first week. On Saturday we had callers: Ruth Wynne Stidham, who had been the teacher of "my" room for the preceding two years, and her new husband, A. B. Stidham, better known in the community as "Blackie." He was a young cowboy from Texas who had come to the Arizona mines "to strike it rich." I supposed he was given that nickname because of his wavy black hair, but it turned out that he called himself Blackie after working in a particularly grimy part of the mine.

The following Monday, the Underwood boys were brought to school by their mother. A hush fell over the playground as their car chugged its way up the hill. I went to welcome them, saying we were glad to have them join us. Some of the second graders, who had been Lamar's classmates the year before, came to greet him and his little brother in an effort to show kindness without bringing up the subject of their father's death.

The school bell was ringing, so the boys were eased into line and were soon at the desks which had been saved for them. By recess time, things were on an ordinary basis and I have thought in the years since then that I have never seen a group of people handle a difficult assignment with more finesse than the Hilltop school children displayed that day.

Soon Mary Fritz and I were making plans to go to Douglas for the Cochise County Fair, which was held early in October. We found out a little late that we should have some kind of display from our school. Our



hastily gathered samples won no prizes, but at least we had some idea of what to do for next year.

Mary's mother, Mrs. Criley, and her sister, Christine, were renting a little house in Douglas which belonged to our county superintendent, Helen Brown. Christine was teaching in Douglas, and their sister Martha, also a teacher, was bringing Mary's son, Johnny, from St. David. So there was quite a houseful of people and they all seemed to be talking at once.

Suddenly a car drove up and there was Helen Brown. I was rather in awe of one who had been an outstanding educator and was now an elected official. She was a handsome woman with dark brown hair and eyes and a well tailored suit and becoming hat. She welcomed me to Arizona, and then joined the general conversation.

Soon after that weekend in town, we began meeting more



These people paused for a photograph on a 1925 trip up Whitetail Creek. They are, top row left to right. Martha Criley, Christine Criley, Grandma Criley, John Blumberg; middle row, "Call-shot" Pool, Ruth Stidham, Blackie Stidham, Bill Sanders; bottom row, Mary Fritz, Maryan Williams, Johnny Fritz.

interesting people. There was John Blumberg, a man in his early 50s. He was a Russian refugee of the upper classes, a friend of Trotsky's, he said, and one who had made it out of Russia just ahead of the Bolsheviks. He was caretaker of a mining property not far from the Hilltop mine. He lived in a neat, one-room shack near the Ben Pague family.

He was gone for a while that fall, and Myriam Toles, Mrs. Walter Hawley and little Jean Hawley used his place as a vacation spot for a couple of weeks. Walter and Joe Hawley were owners of a prominent assaying business in Douglas and had done some business with John Blumberg. Years later, when I mentioned John, Myriam would say, "That old fraud!" Be that as it may, Mary and I enjoyed his company.

John was more Mary's friend than mine, but he took a fatherly interest in me and was quick to give advice about any young man I might be dating. He especially cautioned me about Larry Gurnett, whose mother had built the beautiful house up Cave Creek. Later on, I met Larry Gurnett in his mother's living room one pleasant afternoon, and while Larry was a handsome young man, neither of us was interested in the other.

John Blumberg definitely had a foreign accent, which I found hard to get used to, but I still like to think of the way he told of being with Trotsky and some other friends in Paris. "Und you know vat? Trotsky still owes me 30 shillings!" Then he would break into uproarious laughter.

Vincent Lee, of the famous lion-hunting Lee brothers, took me horseback riding one day, to the canyon just south of Whitetail Canyon. I was truly a greenhorn with horses, but Vincent was very patient, getting off his horse and holding mine by the bridle as we went down a particularly steep slope. I had one dance with his brother Clell — or was it Dale? — one time in Willcox. And that is all I know of the lion-hunting Lee brothers.

Ruth Wynne had been friendly the year before with a young miner everyone called "the Jew." No offense was meant and none taken. It simply seemed a good name for the lively young man with the hooked nose. John Blumberg grudgingly consented to bring him down to meet "the teachers" one evening, but John was ill at ease and the evening was not repeated.

Another young man he brought down was of a different kind. He was a dude from the East, barely out of his teens, sent out to the Faraway Ranch on the other side of the mountains in an apparent effort by his



family to toughen him up.

They almost got more than they bargained for, as he set off by himself one day to explore the Chiricahuas and got lost. For two or three days and nights, the Ericksons of Faraway and an assortment of cowboys and forest rangers hunted for him. At last he was found, a bewildered young man, resting his weary bones against a pine tree in the high mountains.

He was brought in to Hilltop, and from the mine telephone he put in a call to the Ericksons at Faraway, as he was sure they would be worried about him.

"Now you won't believe me," he said in an aggrieved tone, "but they weren't worried about me at all. They thought I had skipped out without paying my bill!"

Now I must introduce Mrs. Gurnett, a fine-looking well-dressed Easterner, who had come out from Maine to visit her brother, Archie Wilson, at Willcox. She fell in love with Arizona, bought a piece of land with just the right view of the portal to Cave Creek Canyon and built a lovely modern home, which nestled into the scenery as though it belonged there. Her husband preferred to stay with a thriving business in Maine, but he came for a visit occasionally. Their only son, Larry, would also turn up now and then.

Mrs. Gurnett had her own electric plant and plumbing as in any nice house in town. Her furnishings were all in good taste. The south side of the living room was taken up with a large fireplace, with glass doors on both sides opening out onto the patio. Whenever it was cool, there was a welcoming fire going in the fireplace. The couches were comfortable and the long low table usually held a few good books. I remember that one of them was Richard Arlen's "The Green Hat."

There was a step up into the dining room, and one evening when we were there with Myriam Toles, it was suggested that we should get up a play and use the dining room as a stage. We could find enough people in the neighborhood for actors, Myriam's brother Silas for one. He often came out from town for weekends.

We all got quite excited about the idea. Mrs. Gurnett found a book of plays, Myriam started reading some parts, deciding that the actors could make their entrance through the door to the kitchen. But absolutely nothing came of these plans. We were busy enough with other things.

We sometimes stopped at Myriam's (now the Willy place) on our way to town and asked if there was anything we could bring out for her. Often there would be a few things, so we would stop again on our way back. One night we were rather late, so we were persuaded to spend the night there. We slept on quilts on the living room floor.

Silas happened to be there that weekend and the next morning he went to the well for a bucket of water. On the way back, he saw Mary in the back yard and he flipped a little water her way. Immediately, a grand water fight was on. It seemed hilarious, having a water fight on a dry ranch. But a truce was finally declared and Silas got into the house with his second bucket of water.

I have thought lately that if the city of Tucson is really serious about water conservation, it should arrange that each household should carry its entire supply of water for the distance of one average city block. At that rate, water could be guaranteed for the next millennium.

One weekend we planned to go to town, and I truly wanted to for I needed a haircut. For some reason we decided to postpone that trip and drove over to Myriam's to let her know that we would not be shopping in Douglas. Several people were there, including Neil Carr, the tall, blond Englishman who was Mrs. Gurnett's foreman.

I was embarrassed at the way my hair looked and said so. Immediately, Neil said he would give me a hair cut. I was seated in a chair in the middle of the living room, a big towel draped around me. Neil clipped away at my hair, someone else (I think it was Silas) gave me a shoe shine and someone else buffed my nails. The results were not exactly what I would have had in town, but it was a lot more fun.

Sometime during that first year, we decided to take our evening meal at the Colvins. Their house was small, but somehow Mrs. Colvin managed to cook delicious meals for three or four guests, in addition to their family of five. John Blumberg often ate there and sometimes Joe Hawley. On the way home, the men would play the cavalier and carry our buckets of water for us from the Morrow place. We felt they might begin to tire of that, so we contrived to get our water at other times.

The Colvins were determined that their children should have a good start in life and in this they succeeded. Alice became a teacher of art in the Douglas schools, went on to Phoenix and became active in various civic enterprises. George was in the service during World War II and retired as an Army colonel. Margaret also made a good start, but



unfortunately, she died before her time. During the 1970s, Alice and George and their spouses were faithful attendants at the Pioneers' Picnics, which were held in Paradise.

Sometimes when I read about the "Flaming Youth of the Roaring Twenties," I think I must have been on another planet. The nearest that Hilltop came to roaring was on the occasion of a dance at the schoolhouse. It had been arranged that Helen Brown's office would pay half the cost of a new piano for the school, if the Hilltop community would raise the other half. So now and then we would have a dance, the proceeds to go to the piano. Ralph Morrow played the fiddle.

Those dances occurred, of course, during Prohibition but some home brew and other concoctions found their way to Hilltop by devious means, perhaps through the cienega across the New Mexico line. On one occasion, it was whispered that some of the men had hidden bottles out in the bushes around the school yard.

Several of the men disappeared and reappeared, suspiciously,



Hanging on a clothline at Hilltop 1925, left to right, Mary C. Fritz, Christine Criley, Ruth Stidham, Maryan Williams and an unidentified friend from Douglas.

during the evening. Suddenly, near midnight, a shoving and pounding took place and then a full-fledged fight. Most of the onlookers were amused. I felt embarrassed, but not Mary Fritz.

The fighters had bumped into desks in her room and she entered the fray. She grabbed hold of each man, calling, "Stop it! Stop it! I won't have you destroying school property!" The two men looked around in amazement, finally focusing on the little woman who was pulling them apart and, without further ado, they shuffled out the door. The dance broke up as gracefully as possible. So much for the "Roaring Twenties."

Before I came to Hilltop, some friends had worried that there might still be Indians on the warpath in Arizona. But I soon found that the last man to be killed by Apaches in the Chiricahua area was the youngest of the three Hands brothers, Alfred.

One afternoon a group of us went to see John Hands and his exceptionally fine collection of Indian pottery. I was cautioned not to mention his brother's death, for if I did, we would immediately be ordered off the place. So I was very quiet when we entered the adobe room with its dirt floor and looked over the many bowls and jars, all of museum quality, stacked against the walls.

The other brother, Frank, had by this time moved to the other side of the mountains. I was once riding down Pinery Canyon with friends, when we saw a tall, athletic-looking woman opening the gate to the Frank Hands' place. This was Mrs. Frank Hands, and the story about her went like this:

On her arrival as a visitor from the East, she was in a gathering which included the little Irish aunt of Ida Berry Riggs, who right away suggested that the newcomer had come to Arizona to find a husband, and here was Frank Hands who wanted to get married. "So why don't you two get together?" Within a short time they were married and, as far as I know, lived happily ever after.

During this year, I began to have a greenhorn's respect for some of my third and fourth grade boys who were beginning to follow in their fathers' footsteps as practical pioneers. One morning, three or four of them came hurrying up, almost late for school. They explained that they had been out running their trap lines and two of them had caught big ringtails, which might bring \$3-4 each. Of course they had to do the skinning and then get cleaned up for school, so they just barely made it in time.

All this was before the day of the Sierra Club. There seemed to



Ruth Stidham struggles to make a snowball after a 1924 snow storm. The photo was taken below the Stidham house at Hilltop. The mountain peak in the background is Cochise's Head as seen from Hilltop.



be plenty of wildlife and grown men were glad to rid the ranges of coyotes to make room for cattle, and pick up a little hard cash on the side.

We had some snow that first winter, but not enough to be a great burden. The woodpile was on the north side of the schoolhouse and Agustin attended to the stoves in both rooms. Of course we had a Christmas play, made up of Christmas carols and appropriate Bible verses. Margaret Colvin made a lovely Virgin Mary and the tallest boys were wonderful as Joseph and the Three Wise Men.

Others were garbed in gunny sacks as shepherds, carrying tall sticks and the girls made beautiful angels, clad in old sheets. Someone brought a large doll, which was carefully wrapped in swaddling clothes. The cast had a dress rehearsal during the day and went outside for picture taking. Some were kneeling in a couple of inches of snow. But after all, snow is not unknown in the little town of Bethlehem.

I found that winter does not last long in Arizona. When spring came, we did some hiking. On one occasion, I walked through the mine tunnel with some of the children, all of us wearing miners' headgear.

The view from the west side of the mine seemed even more spectacular than from the east side. To the north, the Dos Cabezas Mountains joined the Chiricahuas at Apache Pass. The Two Heads had acted as guideposts to Indians and white explorers alike in the previous century. The Sulphur Springs Valley was a broad one, with the Dragoon Mountains and Cochise Stronghold facing us in the west.

The end of the year finally rolled around and I was glad to be asked back at a raise in salary. Some of today's teachers have asked me what kind of supervision I had in teaching, and I would have to say there was very little. I had quite a few suggestions from my first principal in Idaho, but after learning-by-doing that year, I was largely on my own. I was asked to return, at a raise in salary, from each of my three years of teaching, so I must have been doing something right.

Today's overburdened teachers then ask me about disciplinary problems and I can think of only one. Some of the children had made a noontime game of running down a slope on the west side of the school yard, onto the road that came down from the mine. They tried to see how fast they could run without falling on their faces.



When I first saw them doing this, I had visions of a heavily loaded ore truck coming around the bend too fast to stop. I lectured them severely and thought they were duly impressed. But soon they were at it again, and this time I soundly spanked the two older boys. So far as I know, there was no more of that little game.

For anything else that might have been a problem, a few stern words seemed to suffice. Several parents assured me they were behind me in any troubles. That pressure from home made an entirely different situation from the ones that face teachers today.

Of course we did not get through that year without a bit of car trouble. One evening, Mary and I were coming back to Hilltop rather late, and had reached part of the road, a mile or two north of Galeyville, where the road swung around a bend, turned sharply into a sand wash, then went up a steep slope on the other side. Mary was driving and apparently did something wrong in the sand wash. The tires kept spinning and she could not get the car up that hill.

She finally gave up and I took the flashlight and walked to the small house on top of the hill. All was dark, but I knocked loudly on the door. Presently a kerosene lamp gave its yellow glow in the kitchen and soon a tall, thin man came to the door in his long johns.

I told him our troubles, though I could see that he was hardly enthusiastic about them. But he did don more clothing and followed me down to the car. He stood and scratched his head a few times and then told me to get in. He gave Mary curt directions. She followed them implicitly and we were soon once more on our way to Hilltop.

After our summer vacations, Mary again met me in Rodeo, this time with a flashy new (second-hand) red Maxwell touring car. (She had been offered a deal she just couldn't refuse!) This car had wind-wings sprouting from each side of the windshield, running boards on each side, and the lines of the car were smooth and modern. It still looks good in the only picture I have of it.

During the fall, we began to get the first rumbles of bad news. The Hilltop mine seemed to be on the verge of closing, but no one seemed to know when. A few men were laid off and we had fewer pupils in school.

Blackie Stidham, having been among the last hired, expected to be among the first fired. He and Ruth had become the proud parents of little Ben on Aug. 20. They also owned a shiny new black Model T Ford touring car. They wondered what they would do if the mine really closed.

The mine did not suddenly close, however, and the school year went on with its usual schedules. We seemed to be seeing more of the Portal people and their friends. Mrs. Gurnett enjoyed having company and among those who came out from town were Myrtle Downs and her two school-age children, John and Peggy. Miss Willa McNitt, the Douglas city biologist, was also a visitor.

That year there was a Hilltop marriage that drew everybody's attention. In December Juanita Kuykendal and Ralph Morrow had gone off and got married! Juanita was a beautiful girl, a cousin of Violet Kuykendal who had married Sam Moseley. Juanita and an older brother were in Mary Fritz' room at school and a younger brother, Eric, was one of my fourth graders. Juanita was, I think, 15, and Ralph was in his upper 20s. Of course she quit school, as she was a married woman, busily cooking and keeping house for her husband in one of the little houses at the mine townsite.

Through the years, their paths have crossed with mine many times. Ralph and Juanita had a beautiful apple orchard, renowned for miles around. It is my sincere opinion that their marriage was among the happiest I have ever known. I was glad to attend their Golden Wedding celebration in December, 1975.

In 1967, shortly after his retirement from the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Ralph decided to move the Hilltop mine superintendent's house down to the area just west of the teacherage. According to his daughter, Audrey Miller, he took off the top story, took out the chimneys, ceilings, windows, doors and floor, cut the first story into quarters with a chainsaw, loaded them one by one into a cotton trailer bought from Harry Turner, and brought the whole shebang down the mountain. He put it back together, mostly by himself, though Audrey says he was no carpenter. Today his granddaughter, Custy, lives there with her husband Lloyd Mauzey, and the orchard is still bearing.

At the beginning of 1926, Johnny Fritz came to Hilltop to live with his mother and me and have his mother for a teacher. She insisted that he do his share of the chores around the house, including making the fire in the kitchen stove in the morning and bringing most of our water supply.

Johnny and Dana Wakefield soon set about to make a wagon out of boards and wheels collected here and there, and they acquired a big (5 or 10 gallon) metal container to hold the water. Someone had given Johnny a large brown dog and this dog was trained to pull the water wagon.

I have a snapshot of the two boys, dog, wagon and container.



Somehow the whole scheme was soon phased out, but the picture is still a poignant memory for me, as Dana Wakefield was the first of our Hilltop children to die early in life.

Johnny and I went on several hikes around Hilltop. On one occasion we decided that "Hilltop" was not an accurate name for the mine or community. We climbed up and over the rounded hill which contained the three mine levels and looked over the houses and mining buildings clustered about both the east and west entrances. Then there were the houses and the school scattered here and there down the valley on the east side. We couldn't think of an exact name for this accumulation, so we decided to be content with "Hilltop."

I felt Mary would very much like to have a step-father for Johnny, but somehow Shelton Keeling never found his way to Hilltop and John Blumberg was not the marrying kind. There was a visitor from Colorado who was interested enough to invite Mary and her son to his place in the Colorado Rockies the following summer. But Johnny had been raised by a mother, grandmother and two maiden aunts and was not exactly a man's boy. So he never did acquire a step-father.



Hilltop townsite 1924. The large building on the left had a recreation room in the basement and showers for the men when they came off shift from the mine.



Early in 1926, Blackie Stidham took a job with the Forest Service to work on the road started on the west side of the mountains near the Rhoda Riggs place. The road was to go over the mountains, thus connecting the two sides.

It started out nice and wide, but as it climbed up Pinery Canyon, winding around among the high mountains, it seemed to get narrower by the mile. At Onion Saddle an adjoining road was built to Rustlers' Park. From Onion Saddle, the road twisted its way down to Cave Creek and on to the Portal post office. Blackie claimed later to have worked on every foot of that road.

He found a house for rent, known as the old Grauer place, in North Pinery Canyon. He then moved his little family and their possessions, including a large baby basket for Ben, taking as many trips as necessary down the east side of the Chiricahuas to Douglas and up the west side to Pinery Canyon. The new Ford did yeoman service on this move, getting everything to the Grauer place in good shape. I can attest to the fact that the baby basket came through unscathed, for they later gave it to me to use for my baby daughter.

When Ruth and Blackie and Ben were well settled, Mary Fritz and I went over to see them one weekend, hiking up to the mine tunnel, donning our lighted mine caps, walking carefully beside the narrow tracks used by the ore cars, glad of the daylight at the other end of the tunnel. The Grauer place was a mile or so below the mine, if I remember correctly.

Another time, when I walked through the tunnel with some of the school children, we stopped by the boarding house on the west side run by Nora Stafford. Right away, it seemed as though I had known her forever. She was a person of very positive opinions.

While she went about her work of preparing the next meal, she gave me a brief history of the pioneers on the west side of the mountains. Her husband, Tom, was born in a cabin belonging to Neil and Emma Erickson, who now called their place Faraway Ranch. They had three children, Lillian who was Mrs. Ed Riggs, Ben, and Hildegard, Mrs. H. H. Hutchinson of Sanger, Calif.

I finally had to leave, but through the succeeding years Nora briefed me on many things. I found that she was an excellent boarding house keeper and the mine officials were glad to find something for Tom to do in order to keep Nora there.

Somewhat later, Nora told me that she could barely read and

write since schools in Illinois at the turn of the century hardly extended to the rural areas. This was true of Texas and many other states, I imagine, at that particular point in history. But Nora kept plugging away at the newspapers and always had very definite opinions about upcoming elections.

In their retirement years, Nora and Tom bought the place known as Mrs. Roush's. In 1939, Mrs. Roush had married Col. Pugsley, a retired Army doctor who had come to Cave Creek serving the last of the CCC camps in Arizona. In later years, Ann Pugsley loved to tell anyone who would listen that she and Pug got married because each one thought the other one had money. "And we both got fooled," she would say.

As to Nora, she eventually sold the Portal place to Henry and Estelle Beumler and moved to the Douglas Apartments. During that last part of her life, she found herself at one time in Tucson. She wanted to get in touch with somebody or other, but she could no longer drive a car. However, Helen Brown Keeling could. And here I must catch up on Helen Brown Keeling.

She had decided, back in the 1920s, to marry, not Shelton Keeling, but his brother who owned a large ranch in Texas. For a few years, she made a valiant effort to become a ranchwoman. But she finally decided that ranch life was not for her, so she went to Tucson, was welcomed back by the school professionals, became a school principal, and now has a school named for her, the Helen Keeling Elementary School, at 435 East Glen St. Her portrait still hangs in the office.

Upon retirement, Helen Keeling stayed in Tucson and it was here that Nora Stafford found her that day she needed a ride. Of course Helen was glad to do a favor for an old friend from Portal. She picked up Nora, and they headed into an outlying area, hunting for a rather indefinite address. They got lost, just as people did in the old days, and the car slid off into mud and they got their good shoes all muddy. They finally called it quits, but not before they had a rousing good argument, as old friends often do.

But I must get back to that spring of 1926 in the Hilltop-Cave Creek area. What a spring it was! Good soaking rains to please the most pessimistic of cattlemen. The lower slopes of the wide valleys became deep yellow with California poppies. In another week or two there was a riot of many colored blossoms. I have never seen such a gorgeous display of wild flowers along the road from Portal to Douglas. The spring of 1973 was good, but I would have to rate it second best.





Ruth Wynne Stidham visited some school children "on the other side" in this 1923 photo. The other side was the part of Hilltop on the west side of the Chiricahuas and necessitated a trip through the Hilltop mine's tunnel from the east side of the mountain.

So we enjoyed our trips to Douglas that spring of 1926, but we had our problems. Coming back from town just before sundown one evening, with me as the driver, we went around a large bend to the place where the road came closest to the railroad and then turned northward. Suddenly, something whizzed by my left ear, slashed off the wind wing and flew on ahead of us. Our left rear wheel had come off!

I slowed down and eased the car off the road, then went for the wheel and brought it back to the car. The Maxwell was sagging woefully where it had lost its usual support, but we took time out to count our many blessings. What to do next? The only thing we could think of was to wait until someone came along who knew more about cars than we did.

Soon a pickup with two cowboys in it came by and stopped. They figured they should go to Apache, several miles down the road, and get the man at the filling station to bring some tools and see if he could put the wheel back on. Within an hour, this was done, and that wheel stayed on for as long as Mary had her red Maxwell. She never tried to replace the wind wing and I was just as glad to have it gone.

One weekend in early spring, Mrs. Gurnett invited me to spend two days with her while Mary and Johnny went on into town. It was a lovely, relaxing time. Two Mexican women did most of the housework and on Saturday morning Mrs. Gurnett asked me to come and crawl into



bed with her and we would have our breakfast in bed. Such luxury!

Later I went out to watch Neil Carr work on the lily pool which had been planned for the center of the patio, just south of the living room. He was busy digging and measuring and bringing cement. I was a little surprised that he didn't have a Mexican helping him, as Mrs. Gurnett also had two Mexican men on the payroll.

About 11 o'clock, Mrs. Gurnett asked if I would like to ride to the post office with her and of course I did. She had a new Ford sedan, with glass windows that could be rolled up or down. No struggling with those heavy fabric curtains with their isinglass windows which were usually cracked or broken.

We went down the road which is now sometimes called "the old road" but was then simply the road. We passed a nice turn-of-the-century house which, I understand, was later to become the home of the Carson Morrows. Still later, I used to visit Edna Hastings there. Farther down, there was a big adobe chicken house and when I asked Neil later how the egg business was doing, he said they had eggs to sell, literally, and wouldn't I like to have Sid Karrh, our obliging mail man, bring us a dozen to Hilltop now and then? This was arranged, and much of the correspondence I had with Neil Carr that spring was about how many eggs we would like and when.

I have never been able to understand it, but some decades later, this chicken house, by some alchemy of architecture, was transformed into the lovely two-level home of Arch and Esther Steele. Blackie Stidham was, by that time, unofficial chief carpenter of the Portal area, and I have his solemn word that he did much of the rebuilding himself.

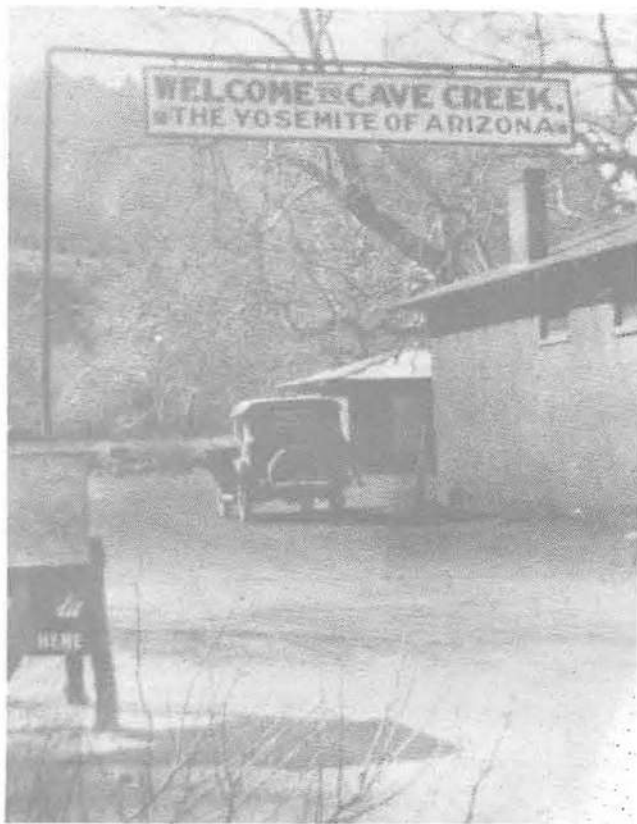
From this distance in time, my memory of that particular visit to the post office with Mrs. Gurnett is a little dim. But I do remember seeing perky little Mrs. Roush behind a counter, against a background of grocery shelves. A small section of the room was partly enclosed, with a window open to the public and topped by an official pronouncement that this was a U.S. Post Office. Outside, at one time, there was a tall iron pipe going up the side of this building across the road and down the other side, bearing this sign:

Welcome to Cave Creek  
The Yosemite of Arizona

Mrs. George Bergfield gave me a picture of this sign and its setting. I have always been thankful that the crowds of Yosemite have

not found their way to our Cave Creek in the Chiricahuas.

On this particular day, Mrs. Gurnett came out with her mail, much of it addressed to "Sierra Linda," as she had named her place. It is a beautiful and appropriate name, but I can't remember that anyone used it. We always just said we were going to Mrs. Gurnett's.



This sign welcomed visitors to Cave Creek in the early 1920's. The building on the right with the chimney is now part of the property owned by Henry Beumler.

When World War I erupted Neil was in Germany and so spent the entire war in a German prison. He said he was not abused, though he often went hungry. After the war, his health seemed impaired, so he went to stay with an uncle in southern California for a while. Later he went to Willcox and then to Mrs. Gurnett's. By that time, he was the picture of health.

Neil had an excellent sense of humor, which surprised me, as I had gone along with the thinking that the English had no sense of humor. Neil and John Blumberg got along famously. They could talk in a meaningful way about world affairs and they found plenty to laugh about.

On the way back from the post office, we passed a long, low adobe building which seemed to be uninhabited and I asked Mrs. Gurnett what it was. She said that Mexicans had once lived there, but it was vacant just then. It had been there a long time. Little did I think that it would in the future belong to me.

That day Mrs. Gurnett told me a few things about Neil Carr. Neil was from an upper class family in England; his brother had been personal physician to the Prince of Wales. Neil had begun his university work at Cambridge, but took time out for a tour of the Continent, as was often done in those days.



There was one thing that bothered me about Neil, his attitude toward Mexican workers. Other Anglos I had come to know in Arizona seemed to have an easy-going relationship with Mexican help. Certainly everyone around Hilltop welcomed the grandfatherly Mexican, Elijio, with his burros piled high with firewood, though there was often exasperation at his lack of a sense of time. But Neil's attitude was almost one of bitterness. I wondered if he had some kind of a British Raj complex, left over from the times when Britannia not only ruled the waves, but many foreign lands as well.

After that delightful weekend at Mrs. Gurnett's, we had a spell of warm weather and Mary and I were wishing we had some place to keep our food a little cooler. John and Neil were seized with the idea of building us a "desert refrigerator."

Many people had those structures at that time and found them very useful. Boards were acquired and gunny sacks and a large pan to hold water on top. Four empty tin cans were put under the four legs, kept filled with water so ants could not climb up to the food supply. More gunny sacks were cut into strips and saturated, so we had a trickle-down effect that worked to keep our food cool. The bottom of this box-like



Elijio brought wood to Hilltop's cottage occupants. The building in the background is the warehouse.



creation made one shelf and another one was added, so we had plenty of room even for fresh vegetables from town. I have a snapshot of John and Neil laughing over their handiwork. I am sorry that I failed to get a picture of the refrigerator.

Whenever Neil made trips to Hilltop, he came in Mrs. Gurnett's car. It was part of their working agreement that he could use the car whenever he wanted it. Not everyone had a car in those days. John Blumberg did not have a car and neither did Myriam Toles. I did not have a car but helped out on Mary's car expenses. Plans were often made or unmade by the scarcity of transportation.

There was one Very Important Person who helped to ease our transportation troubles: Sid Karrh, our obliging mail man. He lived with his wife and three children in a make-do kind of house, a little above us on the Hilltop road. He lived in Hilltop so that he could start out from there in the morning, pick up outgoing mail along the way, take it to Rodeo and wait for the train to bring the incoming mail. Then back along the same route, this time delivering instead of picking up. He was steady and reliable and his two sons in Mary's room showed the same traits. Alfreda was too young for school then, but years later she became a school librarian in Douglas.

We all had a mail box out front and any letters we had to mail were put in our home-made sack, ready for Sid's pick-up. If there was anything really needed from Rodeo, or along the way, he would do the neighborly thing and get it for us. If we had a guest coming in by train to Rodeo, he would meet the train and bring the person safely to Hilltop. Sometimes his old touring car was pretty crowded, but I don't remember a time when it broke down.

I never used a telephone while I was at Hilltop. No one thought of using the mine telephone, except in case of an emergency.

Around toward Easter that spring we planned to spend the weekend in Douglas, attending the Easter services at the Episcopal Church. Neil Carr planned to come in Easter morning, take me to church and to dinner afterwards. I would then go out with him to Mrs. Gurnett's and Mary and Johnny would pick me up there a little later.

Neil and I had enjoyed many things that spring, riding horse-back up Cave Creek, and going to the Hilltop school on Sunday afternoon where I accompanied him at the piano as he sang familiar songs. He had a good tenor voice. But I became uneasy as I felt he was beginning to have thoughts of love and marriage. I did not feel that way, so I was kept busy

trying to avoid the issue.

Easter dawned bright and clear. The church was filled with people, choir and congregation sang beautifully and the service was conducted by the Rev. Simonson, who was probably the best-loved clergyman in Cochise County.

After dinner, we went to the Crileys' and waited for Mary to come. She and her family had also gone to church and dinner. Suddenly Neil put his arms around me and told me that he loved me. I pushed away, saying, "Oh, no. Please!" He looked so hurt and surprised that I felt sorry, but there was nothing more to say. At that moment, Mary and her family drove up and there was a great commotion about which things should go with me as far as Mrs. Gurnett's.

By the time Neil and I started for Portal, thin clouds were gathering and a few strong breezes whirled around Mrs. Gurnett's car. But how nice it was, to roll up the windows and watch the weather from the inside of the car! Soon we came to the vast fields of California poppies but the clouds were darkening. We spoke very little during that 60-mile drive to Mrs. Gurnett's.

Mary in the red Maxwell soon arrived and there were pleasant-ries all around as we crammed me and my possessions into the Maxwell. Mary asked me to drive while she helped Johnny cope with his big brown dog. It was approaching sundown, and the skies were getting darker by the minute, but I made it through the sand washes, even the tight fit between the two huge rocks, and began the climb up the narrow, rough stretch of road just beyond.

Suddenly there was a loud noise and a shaking of the car. I stopped immediately. We had lost another wheel, this time the right front one. We were blocking the road, in what was surely the worst of all possible places on the way to Hilltop.

Mary said she would walk to Paradise and use the phone there. She would call Neil and ask him to get the Rodeo garage man to bring his tools out. I was horrified at the thought of asking a favor of Neil and told her something of that afternoon. But neither of us could come up with any other ideas and we had to get the road clear before Sid Karrh came down on his mail route or there was traffic to or from the mine.

Mary started her walk into Paradise, flashlight in hand. The night hadn't turned out to be a stormy one after all and Mary thought she could talk to Neil better than I could.



Johnny and the dog in the back seat and I in the front tried to catch a few minutes of sleep. Tomorrow was a school day and this was certainly harder on Mary than on me. I don't even remember how long it was until we saw the flashlight and Mary with it, coming down the hill.

Neil had said he would drive in to Rodeo and wake up the garage man, who did not have a phone at home. He would try to impress the man with the fact that the road must be cleared for traffic. So we settled down again for an eon or two, waiting for the garage man.

It was not the garage man, however, but Neil who drove up, parked the sedan and walked down to tell us what to expect. The garage man could not be moved to come to the rescue at night, but before daybreak he vowed that he would bring his cousin with him and come the way Neil had just traveled. That was what is called the Foothills road today, angling around toward San Simon, where there was a road between two hills, so bad that no one ever drove it except in desperation. Neil offered to take Mary and me on to Hilltop, so we could catch a little sleep before time for school, if Johnny and dog would guard the car the rest of the night. I felt terrible about Mrs. Gurnett's car having to go over that road and about Neil's efforts on our behalf. But Mary kept telling me that we were in a situation where anybody would help.

The garage man and helper turned up as promised, got the wheel back on and one of them drove the Maxwell to Hilltop while the other followed in the garage car. So Sid Karrh got through with his mail car and no other cars or trucks had needed to use the road during the time we had it blocked. We had no more trouble with lost wheels on the Maxwell.

There was not much more time left in the school year. I was planning to stay with Ruth and Blackie and little Ben for a while after school was out and then go to California to visit my parents. Mary Fritz and I had both applied for positions in the Douglas schools for the following year.

We had the usual closing exercises the last day of school, an evening program to which the community was invited. And there was one last laugh which Mary and I shared privately. We had noticed that there was a certain man who seemed to be making eyes at Mary, or at me, or maybe both of us. Of course he came to the program and at the close of it, when everyone else was departing, he lingered on.

Mary had brought her car, as there were things we needed to



take from the school. So she whispered to me to take them to the car and we could come back tomorrow for the rest. She would have someone else do the locking up. I sneaked out and soon Mary did too and we drove off, laughing at our escape.

As it turned out, there were pupils enough for a small school at Hilltop for several more years. But I would not have been teaching there anyway, as Ruth and Blackie saw to it that I met a certain Alex J. Thompson, one of the Thompson brothers whose ranch lay south of the Dos Cabezas Mountains. Alex and I were married on July 24 that summer.

In the 1930s, we sold the ranch and moved with our daughter and our son to Douglas. We would sometimes go to Cave Creek as a special treat. Ruth and Blackie had moved back to that side of the mountains, and sometimes we stopped to see them. They lost their little Ben October, 1927.

Mrs. Underwood, the mother of Lamar and Harry, married Ben Erickson of Faraway. Later still, Lamar was killed in a one-car accident. But I saw Harry at the last Pioneers' Picnic in Paradise in the 1970s. He was a middle-aged man and we had a good time catching up on the news of more than half a century. But I could still see the haunted eyes of a little boy who had just lost his father. He lived only three or four years after our meeting in Paradise.

There have been others of the Hilltop children to mourn. Little blond Mary Morrow, herself a wife and mother, was a loss to the whole community. And there was Van Noland, whose widow I met in the 1970s.

On a lighter note, the Colvin place at Hilltop was purchased by Robert Pague, who was not yet born while I was at Hilltop. It seems right that there should be a connection between those old days and the present.

I feel that I should make one correction: John Blumberg was the marrying kind after all. He married a winter visitor, a widow who seemed to have a little money, and they lived in Douglas. Myriam Toles dropped around to see them one day and John answered the door in an elegant silk lounging robe.

"Imagine that!" she would say, laughing. "John Blumberg in a silk lounging robe!"

Within a few years, his wife was again a widow, and I met her at

a Music Club tea. I thought she might like to hear something of John's life at Hilltop, but she was a sad little thing, not much interested in anything.

A few years after 1926, Neil Carr married a young English woman who had come to visit her uncle, a dentist in Douglas. They lived on a ranch near Patagonia where Neil was ranch foreman. One morning after we had moved to Douglas, Mary Fritz called and told me Neil had been shot and killed by a Mexican worker, who claimed self-defense. The widow refused to prosecute, saying that nothing would bring Neil back and the Mexican was needed to support his family.

Among all the sadness and all the joys, I like to think back to one incident in early spring, 1926, that always gives me a smile. It happened one afternoon when most of the snow had melted and I wanted to concentrate on some work for my older children.

I couldn't think of any "busy work" for my first graders until my eyes fell on Willie Wesson, a second grader, not an A-plus student, but dependable. I asked him to take the four or five first graders outside, maybe to the woodpile if the snow had melted there, and have them review their last two reading lessons.

Willie's eyes shone at this awesome responsibility. He marshaled his little troop out the door, making sure they all had their books, and I immediately concentrated on my older children. In a little while, a youngster from the other room came bursting in with the news that "Willie Wesson's got those little kids up a tree!"

I rushed out and sure enough, there was Willie with his young charges, up among the branches of a bare tree, the only dry spot on the school yard. They were reading, holding onto books and branches, Willie making corrections, until he saw me. He began to explain that the woodpile was too wet, but I assured him he had done just the right thing.

I thanked him for his help and we all went in the school house. That incident was just one of the many pleasant memories I carried away that spring when I left Hilltop.

## Notes

This article is derived from a letter written by Maryan Stidham to Barbara Miller. Barbara showed it to Portal resident and author Jeanne Williams, who edited it. Barbara and her husband, Pete, now



own the Stidham house where the author lived for many years.

The author graciously reviewed the edited manuscript, made additions and corrections and supplied the photos. Karen Hayes enlarged and printed some of these from old negatives. Most of the pictures are from Ruth Wynne Stidham's collection. Ruth was a close friend of the author and once taught at Hilltop.

Alden Hayes supplied C. W. Bush's initials and pointed out where certain things were located. Finn Richards confirmed where the youngest Hands brother was killed.

Audrey Miller told the editor how her father, Ralph Morrow, moved the superintendent's house to its present location.

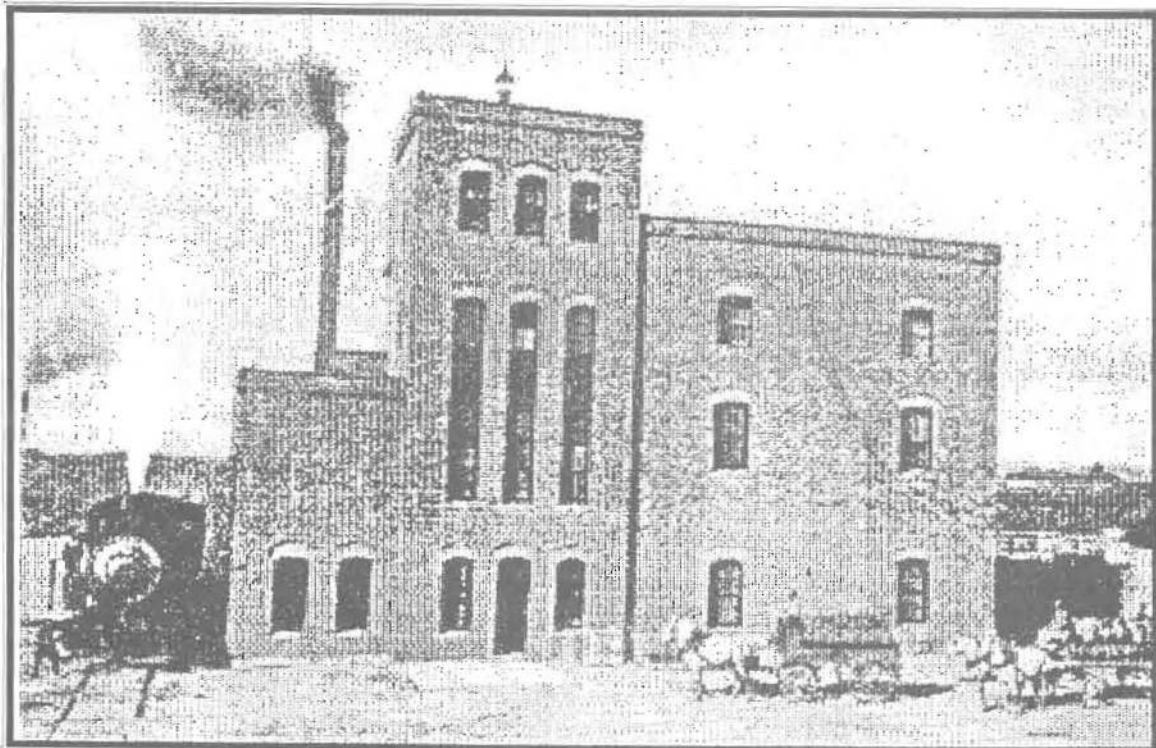
The editor lives in the old Gurnett house and the drain where Neil Carr put in the lily pond is still on the patio.

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Dear Editor:

At last we have a postcard of the Copper City Brewing Company! (The Cochise Quarterly, Fall, 1989)

From the known dimensions (stack height 40 feet, standard railroad track guage of 4 feet 8 inches, and the average man's height of 5 feet 2 inches to 5 feet 5 inches), I can scale dimension the brewery's facades and convert them to as close as we'll get



Picture postcard of the Cooper City Brewery, Douglas, Ariz. Postcard from collection of Charles B. Harvey of Tucson.

dimensions: boiler house, 13 feet wide by 22 feet 5 inches high; brew house, 17 feet 5 inches wide by 43 feet 7 inches high (including cornice); stock house, 48 feet 6 inches by 33 feet 7 inches high (including cornice); cornice, 15 inches high for actual building height of about 32 feet; three floors, ground — 13 foot ceiling, less flooring for 12 foot ceiling; middle — 9 feet 6 inches ceiling, less flooring for 8 feet 6 inches ceiling; top — 9 feet 6 inches ceiling less flooring for 8 feet 6 inches ceiling.

Comparing the photographic postcard (same scene as 1909 fire map with old, small office), the only real "imagineering" the letterhead has is to add a second floor of windows to the power house, to move the (later, larger) office closer to the stockhouse and to move the smoke stack so it would be "lost" behind the brewhouse. The engraver evidently also added a flagpole to the brewhouse roof. The postcard shows only a conically capped vent pipe. The estimated distance (from postcard) between stock house and old office (1909 map) is 18 feet.

So to return to the original question that prompted the article, the letterhead stationery owned by Leon Beebe of Tucson is a relatively accurate picture of the Copper City Brewing Co. as it looked in 1912-14, allowing for a small bit of artistic license.

**Fil Graff**  
Naperville, Ill.

**Dear Editor:**

When I received my copy of the Winter 1989 issue of The Cochise Quarterly, I read every word in it before the end of the day since it primarily concerned the Slaughters and their San Bernardino Ranch. I thoroughly enjoyed the articles, but there is one point which I believe is in error. Usually I do not respond when there is something I believe is wrong. However, in this case I feel strongly enough that I must.

The picture on page 14 represented as the "Mormon House" does not fit the descriptions both written and oral that I have of this dwelling. It would take some decisive arguments to persuade me otherwise. From what I can guess from the article, the notion of this picture of the house being the "Mormon House" came from the photographs sent to the CCHAS in 1985 by the woman in California. Now if you will indulge me, I will explain why I believe the identification of the house is incorrect.

In the summer of 1901, Cochise County pioneer, and at the time U.S. Deputy Surveyor, John A. Rockfellow was surveying the boundaries of the old San Bernardino Land Grant which lay in the United States. The assignment necessitated re-running the International Boundary Line, which had been surveyed and marked in both the 1850s and 1890s.

As the crew moved along the border on July 19, 1901, they experienced a lot of brush which impeded their progress and had to be cleared away. A member of his crew reported to Rockfellow that there was an adobe house ahead which would bother their line of survey. Rockfellow assured him there were ways to get over or around the obstacle house. After a little more brush was removed, Rockfellow saw the complication. In his book Log of an Arizona Trail Blazer he recorded:

"I could see that the building consisted of two well-built apartments, connected by a roof. Looking through the transit telescope, I was surprised to note that the line passed through this 'sally port' between the two buildings which, though covered, was opened to the east and west."

In Rockfellow's field notes of the survey he gave the specifics declaring the house



was constructed on a north and south bearing with dimensions of forty feet long and seventeen and one-half feet wide and contained three rooms. He also noted barbed wire fencing enclose a garden plot, aspring house and the house.

That evening Rockfellow, who was staying with John Slaughter, received an explanation for the border-straddling house. Slaughter explained that a few years earlier he had a "Mormon gardener" with two wives who as a safeguard from the U.S. courts, had one wife residing in Mexico and one in the United States.

Seven decades later in January of 1972, CCHAS held its first tour of Slaughter Ranch, owned at the time by Paul and Helen Ramsower. The gracious owners allowed the three society members arranging the tour — Ervin Bond, Glenn Dunham and myself — free access to the ranch. On one of our pre-tour visits we took along George D. Stephens and his wife, and it was one of the most memorable things we did.

Mr. Stephens came to the area as a young man in 1904 and in 1909 began a 160-acre homestead which he built into the Lazy J Ranch, one of the largest ranches in Cochise County. But more germane to my point, Mr. Stephens had worked on the Slaughter Ranch and later was associated in cattle ventures with John Slaughter. He knew the famous family well and was thoroughly acquainted with the ranch.

George D. Stephens' account of the "Mormon House" went as follows. He pointed to the south and east pinpointing a location and said that a Mormon lived there in a house with two wives. His description of the house followed closely that given by Rockfellow cited above.

The two sections of the house were separated by a breezeway and the roof was the only connecting link. George had seen the house after the polygamous occupants had been gone for several years, but his account of the house and the reasons for it came from the same source as Rockfellow — no one less than John Slaughter. In January of 1972 the adobe house was long gone, but memory of it was not as George D. Stephens gave his account of the "Mormon House" and passed it on.

The "Mormon House" of both Rockfellow and Stephens' stories does not correlate with the adobe house shown on page 14 of the quarterly. It more closely resembled the structure of the San Bernardino school shown on page 17. Could it possibly be that the polygamy house found later service as a school?

One last point, Adeline Greene Parks' article identifies the Mormon as a "Mr. Tenny." She obtained this information from her mother, Adeline Slaughter Green, the daughter of John Slaughter. Furthermore Mrs. Parks stated that Mr. Tenny rented some land from John Slaughter on the Mexican side. Rockfellow had him as Slaughter's gardener. The apparent differences could possibly be reconciled by the man doing both. Either way the man was unquestionably Ammon M. Tenney, a prominent Mormon, an Arizona pioneer with time spent in New Mexico and Mexico, a polygamist, a long standing Mormon missionary to the Indians and a colonist.

Tenney was born in Iowa in 1844 to parents converted to Mormonism in New York state. He went to Utah as a child where he lived until his parents moved to the Mormon settlement of San Bernardino in southern California. There he learned to speak Spanish from an orphaned Mexican boy his family adopted. In 1857 the family returned to Utah where he met Jacob Hamblin, the noted Mormon missionary to the Indians. In 1858 Hamblin chose 14-year-old Tenney to accompany him as an interpreter in his visit and mission to the Hopi, so in the fall of 1858 Tenney first entered Arizona. Over the next dozen years Tenney was involved with the Navajos and Hopis of northern Arizona. In

1870 he accompanied Hamblin in escorting Major John Wesley Powell of the U.S. Geological Survey to Fort Defiance where a peace was made with the Navajos.

In the fall of 1875 Tenney was called by the Mormon Church to go on a mission to the Indians in southern Arizona and northern Mexico. He and companion missionaries left Utah and moved into Arizona and crossed the Colorado River at Lee's Ferry and traveled through the Hopi villages and moved on to the Pima Indian Reservation where Tenney conversed about his religion to those who spoke Spanish and then moved on toward the primary goal of the Yaqui Indians' area.

The group secured from Charles T. Hayden, the owner of Hayden's Mill in the present day Tempe area, a letter of introduction to Governor Anson P. K. Safford at Tucson. But here the missionaries learned that the Yaquis were too warlike at the time to permit work among them. So they decided to try working among the Apaches and, with a letter of introduction from Governor Safford to Indian Agent Thomas Jeffords, they traveled east to Apache Pass, entering the area which became Cochise County. The missionary labor among the Chiricahua Apaches was unfruitful so the missionaries continued eastward to El Paso where Tenney and a companion turned north to work in New Mexico while others in the group went into Mexico.

Tenney's missionary activities were primarily at Zuni. In 1876 Brigham Young appointed Tenney president of the Arizona-New Mexico Indian Mission and directed him to locate sites for Mormon settlements. Tenney suggested the Meadows on the Little Colorado River near St. Johns and a location on the headwaters of Concho Creek nearby; the first Mormon settlers came to these sites in 1879.

In the meantime Tenney's parents and his plural wives relocated in first eastern Arizona and then western New Mexico. In early 1882 Tenney moved to St. Johns about the time Apache County commenced an anti-Mormon campaign in conjunction with the newly passed Edmunds Act. Ammon Tenney was arrested and stood trial at Prescott where he was convicted and sentenced to 3-1/2 years in the Detroit, Michigan House of Correction.

Tenney, with similarly sentenced companions, left for Detroit in December of 1884. He served almost two years before being released for good behavior, and he and his companions rode freight trains home and arrived in Arizona in November of 1886.

He remained in Apache County less than a year and then responded to his Church's call to do missionary work among the Papagos. He along with two companions went to southern Arizona and traveled all over the Papago country including penetration into Mexico on the year long mission.

After this mission, Tenney went to Colonia Diaz, one of the Mormon colonies in Chihuahua founded in 1885, where he found employment operating a saw mill. One of his wives came down to the colony for the summer and then returned to her home in St. Johns. In May of 1890 Tenney married his third wife, Hettie Adams.

In the late summer or early fall of 1892 Tenney moved to the Slaughter Ranch and constructed his two section adobe house. He then relocated two of his wives to his new house — one in Mexico and one in Arizona. His third wife, Hettie, with her two children, came to the Slaughter ranch, and perhaps she resided on the Mexican side of the border. The other wife was probably Tenney's second one - Eliza Ann Udall Tenney.

Why with all of the territory he had seen had Tenney chosen the ranch in the San Bernardino Valley? First, from his missionary work he knew the border region from



the Papago Reservation to El Paso, Texas. At the Slaughter place he had a ranch which included land on both sides of the border plus it was remote yet large enough to provide employment and possessed a commissary. The ranch had enough water to make a reasonable trial at farming, and its owner was simpatico.

Next, Tenney and his religion were undergoing a difficult transition period. In October of 1890 the Mormon Church issued its Manifesto declaring that it was abandoning the teaching of plural marriage and would not allow anyone in the Church to enter into the practice. The greatest problem for those in polygamy was what should be done with and for their families already in the practice.

In Tenney's case he had three wives each with children. He had taken his last wife six months before the Manifesto, and while he complied with the directions to take no more wives, he did not abandon those he had married. He continued to live with and have children by them after the Church's declaration. Most likely Tenney sought the isolation of the ranch for his two families during a difficult transition period so he could see how and where his situation would be best. Even on the remote ranch he took the extra precaution of building his house so he did not live with two wives in the same country.

Tenney remained at the Slaughter Ranch a short time, perhaps two years or a little more. By 1895, if not the year before, he was back in the Mormon colonies, first at Colonia Diaz and then Colonia Dublan, Chihuahua. After he left the Slaughter ranch he maintained his residence in Mexico, which was more hospitable in his situation, until forced out of Mexico by the revolution south of the border. Thus the "Mormon House" viewed by Rockefeller had been vacated by the Tenney family six or seven years earlier. However, enough time had been spent there by the family to secure the "Mormon House" in Cochise County and Arizona history.

**Larry D. Christiansen**  
Kernersville, N.C.