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THE COCHISE COUNTY HISTORICAL JOURNAL

A COCHISE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION

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Em -Bar - Bee Desert Lodge

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Historical Journal

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President's Letter

Dear Member,

Spring has most certainly sprung here at the Slaughter Ranch, with the arrival of three baby goats and five new kittens. There has been a flurry of activity as the bees are a-buzzing, birds a-singing and building nests, and frogs a-leaping. The garden is well on its way, the trees are leafing out, and the grass turning green. All this means extra, but enjoyable, work.

CCHS is in a bit of a whirlwind as well. As this issue of the Historical Journal comes to light, our editor, Ellen Cline, has put the finishing touches on stories in the Sulphur Spring Valley area. A great big thank you to everyone who has contributed and worked so hard to make this journal come to fruition. If this issue triggers memories from your past, please inform CCHS, and we will

place a note in our files for another issue. Our next one will feature historical articles from the Willcox-Dos Cabezas area.

Each Tuesday afternoon from 1 to 4 p.m., we continue to meet at the Douglas/Williams House to do filing, data entry, research and conduct tours of the home. We invite you to stop in and see us when you are in the area.

The grant was received for the restoration of the old Pearce store and work will begin soon on that project. You can never imagine the amount of paper work it takes to get a project like this under way. Hang in there, Mike and Patti Burris, it will be completed one of these days.

By the time you receive your Spring/Summer Journal, our "Viva la Rana" field trip will have taken place. We vis-

ited the Matt and Anna Magoffin ranch to see where the endangered Chiricahua Leopard Frog was discovered by Matt in one of his ponds. After that first discovery, they hauled water for four months to keep the frogs alive.

Douglas High School teacher, Hans Bodenhamer, adopted the frogs as a special project for his Applied Ecology class. They have developed five ponds where these frogs are being raised, and the class has received national acclaim for this project.

We also visited the San Bernardino Fish and Wildlife Refuge to see the frogs through their viewing window and the artificial stream which provides shelter for these endangered frogs. Following this, we had a great lunch at the Slaughter Ranch and visited the ponds Hans has developed in Douglas. All-in-all, it was a very educational day and everyone had a good time.

If it can be arranged, we would like to sponsor a trip to the Kartchner Caverns when they open. Should you have a

place you think would make a nice one day field trip, please let us know, and perhaps we can make arrangements to visit your spot.

CCHS is in the process of trying to get a grant to purchase a new computer and the necessary software to facilitate the publishing of the Journal, as well as other tasks. This will be a "prepress" system which will allow us to create all types of brochures and monograph type booklets, as well as the Journal, and have them all ready to go to the printer, including scanned photos. This should help us contain costs (in spite of the postal service) and we would like to be able to offer this service to other county historical societies for a nominal fee to cover costs.

As this issue of the Journal goes to press, we notice several members have not sent in their 1999 dues. If you get a pink slip in your issue, that signifies that we have not received your dues. We do make mistakes, so please let us know if we sent the pink

slip in error, and we will correct our records so you can receive the Fall/Winter issue. Otherwise, this will be a final issue if we do not receive notice or your \$20 check for 1999 dues.

Yours for the preservation of Cochise County history,
John Lavanchy, President

Editor's Notes

The evolution of an issue of the Journal is an interesting phenomenon that sometimes takes on a life of its own, and such is the case with our Spring/Summer issue. We were planning to do a review of the Lynn Bailey book, *We'll all Wear Silk Hats*, but couldn't get copyright permission.

Instead, the Em-Bar-Bee story presented itself as an interesting bit of Sulphur Spring Valley history. I thank Bud McCormick for his personal memories of building and running the guest ranch in the first years of its existence. For the remainder of the story, we had to depend on clippings from our vertical files in the research library, and the efforts of Michael Parnell, then publisher of the Douglas *Daily Dispatch*. Our thanks to you, Michael. While we didn't want to dwell on the tragedy that engulfed the ranch, it is part of the history, and we think the present use in some ways mitigates those dark times.

A Sulphur Spring Valley issue would not be complete without stories from long-time correspondent Mabel Brown. Mabel has been prolific in reporting the happenings in and around the Elfrida-McNeal area for many years, and it was difficult to "weed out" just which articles to use. We regret we did not have room to print Mabel's biography in full (additional information is available in the CCHS research library), because she has so many interesting stories to tell of early life in Douglas and Cochise County. Thank you, Mabel, for all your help in "getting the story right."

Alice Wooldridge provided a great deal of information on her father and mother, presented in our Pioneers in Profile section. Again, Alice, thanks for helping to get it right.

A special thanks to Mary Magoffin, our oral historian, for her diligence in reporting on our Guardians of History. These ladies have been such a part of Sulphur Spring Valley history, it is indeed a pleasure to honor them in this issue.

Thanks go to all our loyal proof-readers and faithful workers who meet Tuesday afternoons at the Douglas/Williams house. There is no way to adequately reward you, but you do have my deep felt appreciation for all you do to make these Journals possible. It is the financial support of our members that also enable us to continue to publish the Cochise County Historical Journal and to conduct tours to interesting places—our thanks to all of you.

Ellen Cline, Editor

Death Signs the Guest Register

Tranquility, Tragedy and Reaffirmation



Part 1 Tranquility

The Em-Bar-Bee Desert Lodge

Allen "Bud" McCormick didn't start out with the idea of owning and operating a "dude" ranch in Southeastern Arizona. His original experience in Arizona began when he was a student at the University of Arizona, where he graduated with a degree in business administration in 1939. As a

student, he worked part time and during vacations at various resorts in the Tucson area, so it wasn't a completely alien concept. He enjoyed the work and the interesting people he met, and retained the idea in the back of his mind while he worked in sales and production at the A. C. Williams Co. iron and magnesium foundry in Ravena, Ohio.

Bud met his wife, Mary, while they were students at the university, and they were married soon after graduation in 1939. They became parents of two boys; Pete, born in 1940, and Mike, born in 1943.

The McCormicks, having spent most of their lives in the sunny southwest (Bud grew up in southern California), decided the chilly winters of Ohio were not for them, so they began searching for something more to their liking. Through their experiences in Tucson, they knew southern Arizona held the edge as a place where Bud could fulfill his long-held

dream of owning a cattle ranch, with the possibility of a guest operation as well.

Bud's sister, Hermine, was married to John (Dusty) King who was stationed at the Douglas Army Air Field. Dusty was also somewhat of a celebrity as a "singing cowboy" who performed in a number of movies and became the manager of a Douglas radio station.

Through their association, the McCormicks were attracted to the area and began their search for the perfect spot to fulfill their dreams. They found it just east of Elfrida, on 160 acres owned by a bank in Bisbee.

"I don't know how the bank acquired the property, perhaps it was used as collateral for a defaulted loan, I just don't know. A local rancher had been grazing the land for free, and though we became very good friends, he wasn't too happy when we bought it," Bud mused.

He paid cash for the land, and arranged financing to build the ranch structures.

That was the easy part. It was 1946, just after World War II, and there were no building supplies to be had.

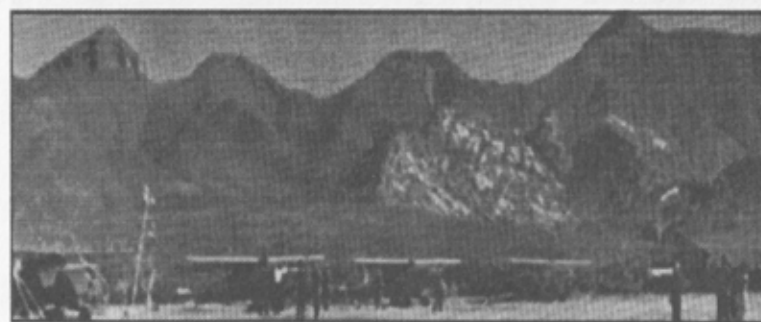
"We salvaged old timbers from abandoned gold mines in the Dos Cabezas area. You could still see names and dates carved in the heavy timbers by the former miners, even after we used them as supports on the porches and other areas where they were exposed.

"Nails were so scarce, we had to meet shipments that came into Tucson, where they were sold on a 'first come, first served' basis. We bartered for tubs and toilets in Mexico. We had gotten some tubs and toilets from a building contractor who was to have

built a Japanese internment camp, but the war ended and it wasn't needed. The tubs were about three inches deep, and the toilets were very low to the floor.

"We traded those for the toilets and tile tubs from Mexico. We also bartered for the roofing tiles — 50 years later, I don't remember just what we traded, but it was the only way to get them. Items from Mexico had to be returned to the States through the same port they had entered Mexico, or we would have had to pay duty on them. It was a tough job just getting the materials we needed to build the place," Bud explained.

Power in the area was supplied by the REA, but they told Bud they had no



men or equipment to do the work, so, in the steamy months of July and August Bud and his crew dug the holes for the power poles. Then the REA told him they had no wire to connect the ranch with the grid, so, Bud sent to El Paso for enough #6 wire to do the job. It was one excuse after another why the work couldn't be done, and it finally took a threatened law suit to get power to the ranch.

"Our Em-Bar-Bee Desert Lodge was completed in 1947. We had 20 guest rooms, the kitchen, dining room, lounge and recreation room. Dusty entertained for us in the

lounge for a few years. We had a swimming pool and horses the guests could ride. We also had our own air strip, and often hosted fly-in breakfasts with pilots coming from all over the southwest.

"We had guests from across the country and I remember visitors from France and Saudi Arabia, and many people returned several times. Douglas people were guests at the events we catered for Phelps Dodge and other corporations. They were wonderful people, and I remember one Phelps Dodge president, his name was Page, and his family were staying at the



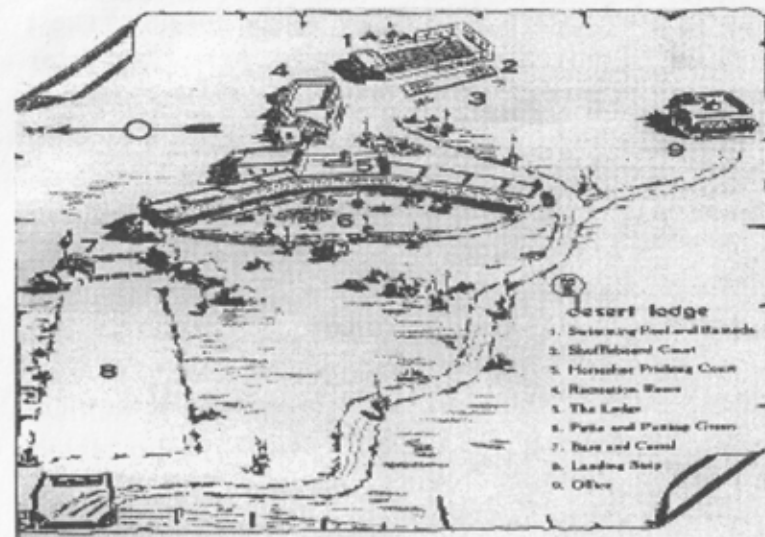
Guests ride the range with the Swisshelm Mountains in the background
Cochise County Historical Journal • Spring/Summer 1999

ranch when the dishwasher broke. They pitched in to help, and this corporate executive was up to his elbows in dirty dishes. We had some wonderful times, and enjoyed both aspects of the ranch: the cattle side and the people side," Bud reminisces.

In the late 1950s, things were slowing down a bit, Bud said, and the McCormicks decided to sell the ranch. Their sons were students at Douglas High School: Pete was president of the student body during his senior year. When Pete had graduated and was bound for college, and Mike

had a few years to go, they decided it was a good time to leave.

They sold the ranch to a former pilot named Held, and a group that had joined in a financial consortium to buy it. Some long-time Elfrida residents think the ranch changed hands several times before a former Chicago plumbing and heating contractor, Charles Thumm, and his wife acquired the ranch. It was a purchase that would have fatal consequences, and the peaceful ambience of the guest ranch would be shattered and forever changed.



Cochise County Historical Journal • Spring/Summer 1999

Part 2

Tragedy

Murder on the High Desert

"4 FOUND SLAIN AT GUEST RANCH," read the headlines of the Dec. 5, 1977 edition of the *Arizona Daily Star*, followed by a story by reporters Armando Durazo and Tom Beal that revealed a crime almost unbelievable for a tiny community in rural pastoral Arizona.

"I've been here 44 years and I have never heard of anything like this, especially in a small farming community, [Cochise County Sheriff] Judd said. "These things you expect in Detroit, Chicago or Los Angeles," he said, commenting on the deaths of four people at the Cochise Lodge and Guest Ranch.

Accounts in the Douglas *Daily Dispatch* at the time indicated that the Thumms had moved to Arizona in 1961. They leased a Tucson area guest ranch called Sahuaro

Vista, and later attempted to purchase the property. After the deal fell through in 1964, they looked for other guest ranch property and later bought the former Em-Bar-Bee and renamed it Cochise Lodge. One local resident, who described himself as a friend of the Thumms, said they had purchased the ranch in the early 1970s, and were in the process of selling it at the time of the murders.

The ranch is located about five miles east of Elfrida in a

rather isolated, typically desert setting. The Swisshelm and Pendregosa Mountains on the east and the miles of desert surrounding the lodge made it an attractive place for a quiet vacation. The original 160 acres owned by the McCormicks had been reduced to about 20 acres by the time the Thumms bought the ranch, but there was no development and the views were unobstructed.

In the ranch complex (see map on prior page), the Thumm's personal dwelling (9) was separated from the 20-room guest quarters (5), with employee quarters attached to a very large adobe barn (7). Several hundred feet separated the barns and corals from the guest house.

At the time of the incident, reports indicate the Thumms had just returned to the ranch after a two-week absence. Working at the ranch was 17-year-old Gerry McFerron from Tucson who worked as a wrangler, the ranch cook, 51-year-old George Martin Jr., and James Dean Clark, 20, who worked

as a general handyman. There were four guests staying at the ranch at the time.

From the *Daily Dispatch*
Dec. 6:

"According to a preliminary check by the pathologist, Judd said the Thumms and McFerron were shot in the head. Investigators said that Martin was stabbed about seven times in the chest. Judd was unsure whether or not Martin was shot.

"None of the victims were tied up and no apparent motive has been established, Judd said. He added [that] officers found a few items 'strewn around a little bit' but nothing to indicate a burglary. Officials said the victims were shot at close range with a handgun but no weapon has been found and there is no evidence of forced entry, Judd said.

"Judd said one guest had awakened Sunday morning to what she thought were gunshots, but went back to sleep when her husband told her she was probably dreaming.

She could not tell deputies what time that was.

"The bodies were discovered by a guest who went to the main office to pay for lodging about 9 a.m. . . . When he could not find anyone to take his money, he went to the employees' quarters where he found the body of one of the men. Another guest then drove to Elfrida and contacted a Department of Public Safety officer, Judd said."

Later editions of the *Arizona Daily Star* indicated that Thumm relatives had helped authorities identify saddles and shotguns as missing, and that the cash box had been emptied, thereby establishing robbery as a possible motive. The Thumm's 1975 Chevrolet station wagon was also missing.

"Law enforcement agencies throughout the United States were sent a bulletin to detain James Dean Clark of Michigan, the former employee wanted for questioning and considered a possible suspect, and authorities in Mexico also were asked to be

on the lookout for him," a *Star* article noted. It also said Clark was wanted in Michigan for failure to appear for sentencing on a stolen property conviction involving an automobile.

"CLARK CAPTURED IN EL PASO," read 2 inch headlines on the Dec. 8 edition of the *Daily Dispatch*.

The suspect had been arrested on a downtown street in El Paso by three patrolmen who had been looking for him since he had been seen in the area the day before.

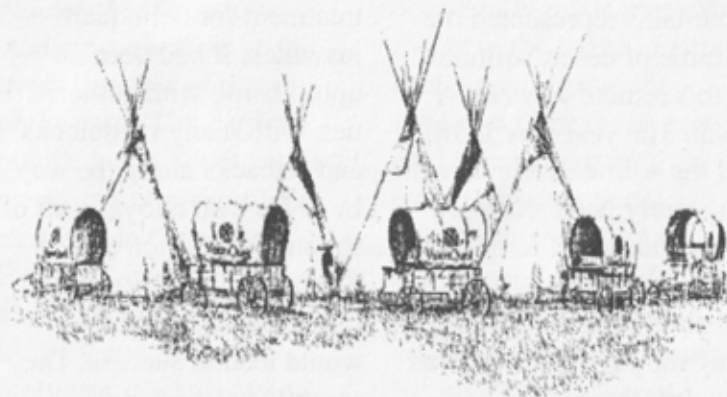
"Clark used one of Thumms' credit cards Wednesday to purchase a ring in an El Paso jewelry store. When he left the jewelry store employees noticed it was a stolen credit card and notified police.

"Clark filed a report Tuesday that a gun had been stolen out of his car. The gun was described as one missing from Cochise Lodge and Guest Ranch. "We think Clark made the report on purpose trying to find out if we knew anything about the murders . . . officers said."

Clark was returned to Cochise County and appeared before Justice of the Peace George Martin (no relation to the slain George Martin) in Douglas. He was bound over for trial and in 1978 he was found guilty of four charges of first degree murder. He was sentenced to die by lethal in-

jection, but, due to appeals, the sentence was not carried out until April 4, 1993. Many Elfrida residents were upset that it took so many years for justice to be served.

Long before the execution, the ranch had been sold to VisionQuest, a rehabilitation program for delinquent juveniles.



Drawing of a VisionQuest Wagon Train quest site.

Part 3 Reaffirmation



VisionQuest

It was springtime and the creamy-white spires of tall yucca plants silhouetted against the peaks and valleys of the Swisshelm Mountains represented the epitome of desert solitude on this remote western ranch. The year was 1978, and the solitude, which had so recently been shattered by the murder of four people, was deceptive. What had once been a quiet hide-away for paying guests was now developing into a "wilderness" lodge for wayward youngsters.

Robert "Bob" Burton and his partner, Steve Rogers, had been working for years to develop their concept of alternative treatment for delinquent juveniles. It had been an uphill battle with authorities, with many roadblocks and setbacks along the way. In 1973, with a loyal staff of supporters, Burton and Rogers had finally established a foundation that would lead to success. They recently celebrated Visionquest's 25th anniversary with a party at The

Desert Pony restaurant in Elfrida. Many VisionQuest officials from across the country joined the Elfrida Lodge staff and local residents to commemorate the event.

In 1978, with little money and lots of problems, Burton and Rogers purchased the tainted Cochise Lodge and Guest Ranch with a small down payment and large visions of what the place could become for their organization.

Burton's program of rehabilitative treatment for his resident youngsters is based on Crow Indian philosophy. The globe, or medicine wheel, is an important part of that philosophy. The cardinal points, north, south, east and west, stand for essential elements in their lives. Essential areas concern the ability to plan and how to identify and deal with problems; alternatives to violence or abuse most of the youth have suffered;

how to make a commitment to change and improve their lives; and anger management and how to keep emotions from ruling actions.

Facilities at the Elfrida lodge can best be described as "primitive," as is appropriate to the VisionQuest philosophy. These primitive facilities include outdoor toilets and showers. All youth and their adult tipi parents have sleeping bags with pads and sleep on the wooden platform which serves as the floor of the tipi.

Though VisionQuest has continually made improvements to the lodge in areas such as sanitation, the facility will never be considered anything more than essentially functional, no frills basics. The idea behind treatment is for the youth to focus on their serious problems without having to worry about creature comforts--everyone is on an equal footing.

When the youth, both boys and girls, arrive at the lodge, they are issued VisionQuest clothes: jeans, t-shirts, sweat shirts, underclothes, shoes, and hats. The clothes may be different colors, but they are identical. No gang colors are allowed and unusual hairstyles aren't permitted.

As the youth advance in their treatment programs, a series of awards are available, with celebrated rites of passage an important self-esteem part of the system. Ultimate goals of participation in "quests" encourage each child to do their best. Though there are several types of quests, the cross-country wagon trains and the public appearances of the "Buffalo Soldiers" drill teams at fairs, parades and other functions are the most popular quests and represent the highest achievements for the participants.

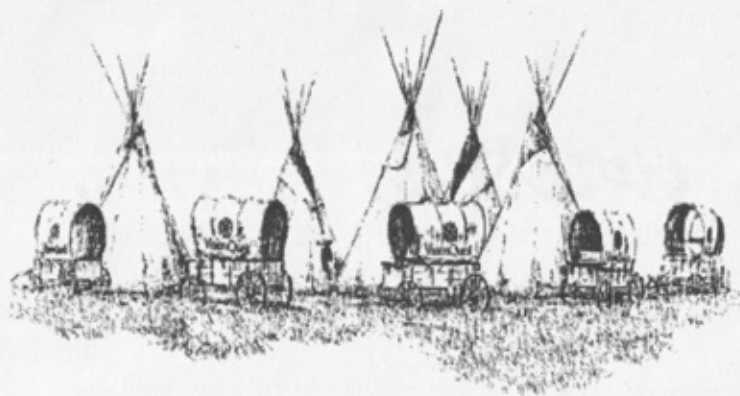
By teaching values and better decision making

processes, the VisionQuest program gives these youngsters an opportunity to learn to live more successfully in the hostile environments they will again inhabit when they leave the lodge after a year's residence.

The youth are here only because they had a choice of coming to Elfrida or becoming more deeply mired in the juvenile court systems which have failed to help them in the past. For most of them, prison was a very real, haunting nightmare clearly visible in the foreseeable future. For those who are willing to commit to making the changes that will so affect their future, it is the opportunity for starting over with a better chance to make a positive contribution to themselves, their families and their communities.

While it is not possible to hold physical properties responsible for bad things that happen there, the stigma of murder sometimes

can be attached to a place where such terrible things have occurred. The establishment of the VisionQuest program in such a place could be seen as having a cleansing and redemptive effect to a space that was so tarnished by violence, an opportunity to rehabilitate the place as well as the lives of these young people.



VisionQuest

Mabel Brown

writes. . . .

As a tribute to long-time Elfrida resident, Mabel Brown, we are reprinting several articles written by Mabel and published by the *Douglas Daily Dispatch*. Mabel has been an ardent observer and reporter of the Elfrida-McNeal scene for many years, and we hope she continues her job well-done for many more. Thank you Mabel, for recording the history of your corner of Cochise County.

Webb Mothers' Club

Nov. 22-23, 1997
Douglas Daily Dispatch



Members of the Webb Mothers' Club about 1940

The Webb Mothers' Club had its beginnings Oct. 18, 1912, when six mothers and Miss Miner, Webb School teacher, met at the Webb schoolhouse and drew up by-laws and a constitution.

Their goal was to bring parents, children and teachers closer together, to improve the schools and to encourage social activities in the community. Mrs. E. D. Harris, Mrs. Ella Scherrer, Mrs. R. A. Jean, Mrs. Lee Tyler, Mrs. Sarah Higgins and Mrs. Helen Tucker were the young, enthusiastic and

energetic charter members. Mrs. Harris was the first elected president of the group.

These women were rural homemakers, sometimes separated by miles from each other. It was a lonely life, and the club meetings were a welcome time of work and social interaction. Some members walked miles across fields and along dirt

roads to attend. Others rode horseback and some came in wagons and buggies. When it rained, there would be no meetings because the roads were impassable.

The by-laws stated that gossip was prohibited at the meetings, and later it was added that "politics shall not be discussed" at the meetings. Meetings were held in the school house or at members homes, with a potluck dinner a feature of the meetings. The club provided for the men-folk as honorary members. It was an important place to exchange ideas and to catch up on the local news.

Those pioneer community-minded leaders, homemakers and rural business women accomplished truly amazing things with their fund raising activities and the consequent donations to every worthy cause. They had countless socials, box and pie suppers, hosted numerous dinners and celebrated special occasions. When the Webb Rodeo was held west of the Webb School, they helped prepare and serve the barbe-

cue dinner. In addition to giving to the community, they made their own homes and family life better.

Times were hard in the valley and the community did well to provide the children with a school building, a teacher, and the necessary books and supplies. Through the years, the club managed to provide the school with a number of needed items, including a fence for the school yard. Since there was no electricity in those days, members donated lamps to provide lighting, and donated dishes and silverware.

In 1917, Club members began talking about a piano for the Webb School. Different companies were contacted and prices compared. In March, they purchased the piano for \$260 — on time. In June, the club gave a "Musical," using the new piano. They charged 35 cents admission for adults and 15 cents for children. They sold ice cream and cake for 15 cents a serving, and with the proceeds, they made a \$25 payment on the piano.

Webb Mothers' Club became affiliated with the extension service of the University of Arizona in 1914, but since it had started on its own two years before and was an ongoing entity, it was given credit for these years.

Miss Helen Church was the visiting Home Economist from the UA and occasionally attended club meetings. She traveled to the valley by stage coach. Miss Vertha Virmond was the first resident County Home Demonstration Agent when she came to Willcox in 1924 with the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Extension Service. Folks referred to her as "that government woman with the Model-A Ford," which she drove throughout Arizona helping to improve the lives and education of rural women.

The list of subjects Miss Virmond, and succeeding agents, taught would fill a large book, and included such things as apron making, designing and trimming hats, sewing, tailoring, sewing machine maintenance, upholstery, furniture repair, mat-

tress making, how to dry and preserve the food they grew: countless ways to do so many things.

During World War II, club members canned all the excess food and vegetables available and donated it to the Arizona Children's Home. In the late 1940s, Pearce Union High School became Valley Union High School when the school was moved, not without controversy, to Elfrida. Webb Mothers' members helped prepare and serve a barbecue dinner to more than 2,000 people who attended the new school's dedication on Aug. 6, 1949.

In 1954, in order to have their own club house, the Mothers' club purchased an acre of land one and a quarter miles north of Elfrida on Highway 191. For the sum of \$10, Gail and Lucille Price deeded the one-acre site to the club. Three 16-foot-square army surplus barracks were trucked from Fort Bliss Army Base in El Paso to the site. Jack Mills, a skilled construction carpenter, Orvil Rau and Bill Schrader joined the

buildings together on a concrete foundation. Husbands of other club members donated their time as well. Lewis Grizzle trucked needed supplies from Tucson. Jack died in December 1994, at the age of 102.

Throughout the years, the Webb Mothers' Club has donated to all the local schools and every worthy cause. Thanksgiving and Christmas are special occasions and an annual Christmas Bazaar is held each year.

The club has always stood ready to be of service to the community, and for many years the use of the building was donated to the Arizona State Driver's License Bureau, and as a polling place for all elections. Until the program was taken over by the Cochise County Health Dept., the club sponsored a yearly blood pressure testing program. The building is currently rented to members of the community for receptions and parties, and serves a valuable purpose in the lives of the people in the area.

With new residents moving into the area, the Webb Mothers' Club is once again showing signs of becoming an active participant in Elfrida community life. New members and new ideas will continue to contribute to a better way of life for our citizens. Everyone is welcome, and all are invited to join the group to work toward our common goal of improving our community.

As one drives down Highway 191 in Elfrida and sees the Webb Mothers' Club sign, it is hoped that the individual will be aware of the history and good will behind that sign. The building may not be so grand, but Webb Mothers' Club has filled the lives of current and former members with unforgettable memories, and means so much to other Sulphur Spring Valley residents as well.

McNeal Ladies Aid Society

July 6, 1992 Douglas *Daily Dispatch*

In May of 1992, the McNeal Ladies Aid Society celebrated their 80th anniversary with an "Old Timer's Day" at the McNeal Community Center.

There were eight ladies present on May 23, 1912 when Mrs. Jennie Burton called a meeting for ladies of the community. Mrs. C. L. Rich, Miss Maude Rich, Mrs. Edna Du Bois, Mrs. Walter Murphy, Mrs. L. H. Wyatt, Mrs. E. H. Taylor, and Mrs. Burton were all young and enthusiastic, anxious to set to work for their community. Mrs. Burton was elected the first president of the club.

While the ladies were pioneer homemakers, community-minded leaders and business women, their rural farm life was relatively lonely and they viewed their club work as a time for social interaction. Some walked for miles across fields and along dirt roads to attend the Ladies' Aid. There were no paved roads in those days, including the "highways" to Bisbee, Douglas, Tombstone, and Willcox. Sometimes there were no meetings because rains made the dirt roads impassable.

Considering the times, these ladies' accomplishments were truly amazing as they raised funds for every worthwhile cause. A scrumptious dinner was held for their husbands every year, and they sponsored ice cream socials, box suppers, pie suppers, apron and quilt sales, hosted dinners and held receptions for teachers, as well as serving food at school track meets. One of their first functions was a fair held on Thanksgiving Day in 1912. They served a chicken dinner with all the fixin's and cleared \$58.60, a rather tidy sum for the times.

For their charity work, they canned food, made quilts and gathered boxes of clothes, all for the residents of the Arizona Children's Home in Tucson. For themselves, they fashioned hats in the current styles, had hat trimming demonstrations, sewing and homemaking demonstrations. These activities were presided over by Miss Bertha Virmond, Cochise County Home Demonstration Agent.

The Ladies Aid Society was a valuable asset to the community. Members made clothes for needy neighbor children, helped families with hospital bills, and provided groceries when neighbors lacked food. The sick, injured, and dying were remembered with cards, flowers, and every assistance, including hymns sung at funerals. The members assisted a local young lady in attending Flagstaff College with gifts of clothes, stamps, pin money and \$5 each month.

During World War II, a Red Cross Auxiliary was organized and members donated money, knitted socks, rolled bandages, purchased Liberty and Baby bonds, and served patriotic meals. Members voted to provide a loaf of home-baked bread each week for the local Methodist minister, the Rev. Mr. Prior. The club opened each meeting with a prayer, held scripture readings, had a church fund and gave regularly to the ministry.

Meetings were held in members' homes, but after McNeal School was built, they furnished the basement, complete with paint, furniture, cupboards, cookware and curtains so they could hold their meetings there. The McNeal School benefited by the club presence as well. The members donated a gas tank to furnish fuel for heaters and the gas lamps the ladies provided. Among other things, they gave the school pictures, phonograph records, a piano and a subscription to the National Geographic magazine to be used as a learning tool.

A major contribution to the community was the sponsorship of care and cleaning of the McNeal Cemetery. The club paid for the first well, the windmill, a cement tank and pipe,

and a fence. They had cement markers made and placed on many of the graves. Trees and shrubs were purchased and planted, with a caretaker hired to keep them watered. To this day, they sponsor clean-up days twice a year, with the men doing most of the work to maintain the entire cemetery. There is always a substantial meal provided by the club when large projects are undertaken.

Members of the McNeal Ladies Aid Society were always involved in helping every facet of the community. Their achievements are recorded in hundred of pages of the club's minutes — community history in the making. Read a few excerpts from those minutes:

Jan. 10, 1917: Discussion on excavation of McNeal School basement as to height, floor, etc. Motion made to serve lunch to the men who are working on the basement.

Feb. 14, 1917: Gave a social on St. Valentine's Day and proceeds for cemetery fund.

Feb. 13, 1918: A piano purchased from Mrs. Day for Sunday School, church, school and community.

Nov. 11, 1920: Mrs. Critchell spoke on the need of the Ladies calling on their neighbors and showing friendly attitude to people who come here to live.

Jan. 14, 1931: First meeting since November due to rain and bad roads. Next Aid day to be spent planting trees and shrubs at the cemetery. That \$10 be allowed for buying a few trees. Members to bring what they have in the way of shrubs.

Mar. 9, 1932: Plans for cleaning up cemetery and placing permanent markers at each grave.

July 10, 1935: Due to heavy winds, necessary to have windmill tower at cemetery reinforced. Discussion on how to raise money to cover the expense after the repairs. Motion to hold a community wiener roast Aug. 4 on the McNeal School grounds.

Oct. 9, 1935: A report on the windmill was made and a

new head was needed. How to raise money was discussed. Decided to make a couple of quilts and sell them.

One of the most memorable entries in the club's minutes was on Sept. 12, 1928. It read:

"It was indeed of great interest to members of the Aid as well as to other people of the community to have Miss Amelia Earhart land at McNeal and have dinner today with the Ladies Aid. It brought a new spirit to both old and young, and left a spirit which will not be forgotten. The noted 'Girl Flyer' was indeed welcome and hopes are that she may again enjoy having dinner with the Ladies Aid of McNeal in the future.

"Members present were: Mesdames W. J. Davis, Jennie Burton, Gladys Taylor, Ralph Burton, Gail Faulkner, Fred Randell, P. A. Ramsower, Ralph Cowan, E. H. Taylor, and Carmen Hand.

"Visitors were: Miss Amelia Earhart, Mrs. Rundell, Miss Veinger, Mrs. Portzline, Mrs. Wilcoxson, and Annie Appelin.

"Donations from Miss Amelia Earhart — \$1.00."

(Author's note: I owe a debt of gratitude to all the ladies who help keep and maintain the McNeal Cemetery for all the neighbors, friends, and loved ones, including my parents and my beloved husband, Tom, who are laid to rest there.)

The McNeal Ladies Aid

by R. L. Burton

May the meeting come to order
and about it don't be slow
We've a heap of business brewing
Its important you all know,
As first President of this order
The McNeal Ladies Aid
This twelve year of twentieth century
We've the start for which We prayed.
Now as the first order of business
For our Men Folks We must get
A big Ladies Aid dinner
The likes they never et,
To keep our Men Folks dreaming
With heads up in the sky
We'll feed em a big dinner
Of good old chicken pie.

At these Ladies Aid meetings
Each month as was the rule
You could see women folks a coming
By horse cart, team or mule,
At times with a meeting started
"Look, Who's coming down the pike?"
Its good old sister Laurabell
A peddeling hard her bike.
And finally with all collected

For they brought the kiddys too,
 With lunch spread on the table
 The coffee they would brew,
 After a good and plentyous filling
 Till eyes and nose were red
 The President would pound the gavel
 And the minutes would be read.

A lot of things have ben done folks
 By The McNeal Ladies Aid
 Anything the community needed
 By this group was surely OK'ed,
 They did not hesitate a minute
 In all these years gone by
 But went ahead and did it
 With no kicking or a sigh
 Some members of the Grand Group
 Have long, long since passed by
 But will never be forgotten
 For our thoughts of them are high,
 This Aid that has always done things
 Of Big Problems were not afraid
 We Home Folks all salute you
 The McNeal Ladies Aid.

McNeal Cemetery

May 16, 1993 Douglas Daily Dispatch

The first person buried at McNeal was a Mrs. Lola McDonald, whose husband operated a freight wagon line from Lordsburg to Fort Grant and Fort Thomas. She was buried in 1911 on what was considered "open land." By the time a Miss Watson established a homestead on the land, several people had been buried there. In 1919, she deeded five acres to the McNeal community for the existing cemetery.

One of the stipulations Miss Watson made when she donated the land was that burial would be restricted to Sulphur Spring Valley residents. Also, there would never be any charge for cemetery plots. Those agreements are still in effect and when a plot is needed, the caretaker, who is charged with keeping records, must be contacted.



Edward H. Taylor, who had established a homestead about two miles northwest of McNeal in 1907, became the first caretaker. When he became ill, he turned the responsibility for the records and the cemetery over to C. S. Wooldridge.

In 1993, John B. Dannelley, a former McNeal resident now living in Sedona, donated enough 5 foot chain link fencing, steel posts and gates to enclose the full five acres of the original cemetery land. Curtis Hopkins of McNeal and David Woodward Jr. of Elfrida put a great deal of work into the project. Before this work was done, there was only a partial fence, which had been donated by the McNeal Ladies Aid Society in the early 1900s.

John Dannelley was born and reared in McNeal. He is the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Walter Dannelley who are both buried in the McNeal Cemetery. The elder Dannelleys came from

Sweetwater, Texas, around 1908 and homesteaded about one-and-a-half miles northwest of McNeal. Walter Dannelley farmed, raised cattle and drilled wells.

In the early 1900s, raising cattle was the only industry in the Valley. The necessary water was generally provided by "water holes," some five or ten miles apart. Water holes usually had one or two windmills and an earthen tank or reservoir. The reservoirs were often used for swimming by kids and adults.

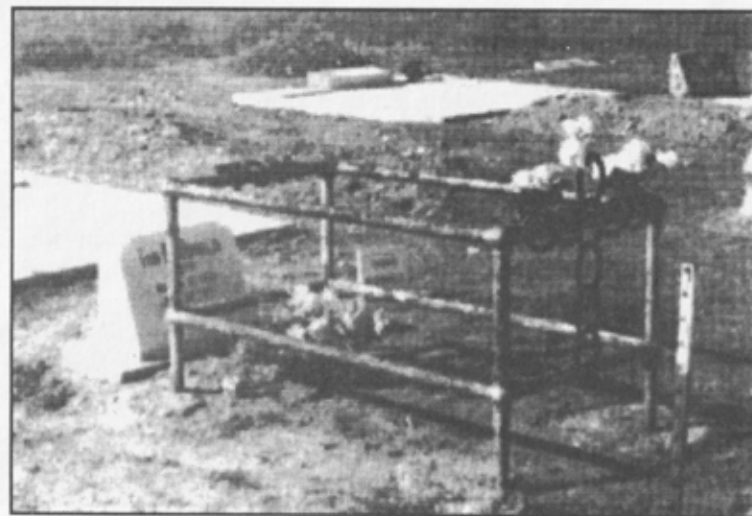
Settlers and cattlemen with herds of thirsty cattle were totally dependent on these wells for an adequate supply of water. Mr. Dannelley was responsible for drilling many wells throughout the Valley, including the drilling and upkeep of the well and windmill at the McNeal Cemetery.

The McNeal Ladies Aid Society, established in 1912, always took an interest in the care and maintenance of the cemetery. The members

helped finance the drilling of the first well, then put up a windmill, and later, a fence. They had cement markers made and placed on many of the graves. Every spring they have a clean-up day during which the men do most of the work cleaning the entire cemetery. After the chores are done, a delicious community dinner is served. Friends and relatives of those buried in the cemetery deeply appreciate

the hard work and dedication, especially those who live far away and cannot care for their lots.

The residents of the Valley are indebted to John B. Dannelley, Curtis Hopkins and David Woodward Jr. for the installation of the fence. It was a project entailing much hard work and is deserving of appreciation and thanks from everyone in the community.





Elfrida Post Office - 1915

The Elfrida Post Office

July 27, 1990 Douglas *Daily Dispatch*

The U. S. Post Office in Elfrida was established on July 25, 1915. It was located in the first store in Elfrida which was owned by R. A. Leitch, father of the late Joe Leitch who lived just north of the town.

Well-known pioneer G. I. Van Meter donated the railroad right-of-way to the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad. In return, the new railway station would be named Elfrida (pronounced as two words, El free DAH, accent on the last syllable) in honor of Van Meter's mother. The EP & SW began operating in 1910, and rails were laid to Courtland, Gleeson, Pearce and Cochise. The branch line was known as the Arizona Eastern Railroad.

Cochise County Historical Journal • Spring/Summer 1999

Al Leitch noticed that Elfrida had a railroad station, but no store. He convinced his father, John McMullin Leitch, of Douglas, to buy some land from G. I. Van Meter. Leitch then had his father-in-law, Jonathan F. Harr of Apache, build Elfrida's first store in 1914. Mr. Harr was well known at that time for his construction skills. He built many rock fireplaces which are still standing even though the buildings were abandoned long ago.

Joe's mother, Marie Harr Leitch, was the first postmistress in Elfrida, serving from July 24, 1915 until 1918. Al managed the general store,

which was the only building in town and was the only place to put the post office. The store and post office were across the highway from the railroad station, which was Doug's Service Station and is now the Desert Video store. There were no other buildings in Elfrida until 1921.

Post offices were established in Kelton, where the Grizzle Peach Orchard was located, Courtland, Gleeson, Rucker, Dagoon, Pearce, Pirtleville, McNeal, Webb and Whitewater. Post offices were located in private homes or stores, because pay was based on how many letters



Elfrida Post Office - 1922

Cochise County Historical Journal • Spring/Summer 1999

went out, and later, how many stamps were sold. In those days, stamps cost 1 and 2 cents.

One senior citizen recalls that packages from the post office were loaded into canvas bags and then into a wheelbarrow and taken to the railroad station to be put on board the train. The canvas mail bags from the post office were anchored with pulleys to a post on the railway siding. When the train traveled past, an automatic metal arm snatched the mail bag from the post.

In 1918, the Leitchs moved to Hermanas, N. M., and sold their property to Art Branum, who took over managing the store and became postmaster. When Thomas B. Patterson returned to Elfrida in 1917 after serving in World War I, Barnum gave Patterson a job in the store and post office. Barnum sold out his interests, and in 1922, Patterson built a new store and post office several hundred yards north of the original store.

Alva Porter, father of Rich Porter (deceased) who lived east of Elfrida, was postmaster at the Webb Post Office, located south of the Webb School. After Alva Porter's death in 1938, the Webb Post Office was consolidated with the Elfrida Post Office. Later, Courtland and Gleeson were made a Star Route and Sid Carr delivered all the mail from Douglas.

When the Webb Post Office closed, Bill Seavers, who had been the rural mail carrier, and Rich Porter, who was the substitute carrier, transferred to the Elfrida Post Office. When Seavers retired in 1958, Thomas Patterson became the rural route carrier and continued until his retirement in 1966. Mary Jane Patterson began working in the post office in 1936, and was classified as a clerk in 1950. She was "officer in charge" when she retired in 1972.

Dave McKenzie served as postmaster from 1958 to 1966, when he took Patterson's job as rural carrier

and served until his retirement in 1976. Hootsie McKenzie assumed the position of acting postmaster in 1952, and served thereafter in various capacities. She retired in 1976 as postmaster. Bob Kennedy was regular and substitute rural carrier at the Elfrida Post Office for 16 years. Ed Stevenson took over the job of postmaster in 1966, when McKenzie transferred to the rural route. Later Stevenson was transferred to Willcox, then to Safford.

Jesse Lee has been Elfrida's postmaster since May 21, 1977. Treva Bradley is the rural carrier, a position she has held as substitute and regular carrier for 16 years.

Agnes Swisher is distribution clerk. In 1950, Mr. and Mrs. Noel Epperson bought the Patterson Store and the post office was moved back to the original building. (In 1999, Jesse Lee is Sunsites Postmaster, Agnes Swisher is Elfrida Postmaster, and Treva Bradley is the rural carrier.)

A new post office was constructed in the center of town in 1957. The first post office and store is located to the south, and the Thomas B. Patterson store and post office stands to the north of the new post office. The Elfrida Feed Store now occupies the former Patterson store building.



Elfrida Post Office - 1957

Van Meter Park in Elfrida

Sept. 10, 1990, Douglas *Daily Dispatch*



Elfrida's Van Meter Memorial Park, located on Highway 191 in the heart of Elfrida, was the gift of a true pioneer son of the Sulphur Spring Valley, G. I. Van Meter.

Garrit Ivan Van Meter was born in Canada in 1860, and came to the Arizona Territory in the 1880s as a civil engineer for the U.S. Government. He held engineering degrees from universities in the United States and Canada. Documents, papers and text books written by Van Meter in relation to his

early surveying of the West are in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and are still in use today.

Van Meter was responsible for surveying large areas of land throughout the Territory. As payment from the federal government, he received a grant of 1,400 acres in the Sulphur Spring Valley, with water rights and the right-of-way for a canal to his property from Rucker Canyon. At that time, the creek ran 11 months of the year down to where the Ernest White farm is located. One present-day senior citizen recalls that, as a boy, he saw Van Meter surveying in the Gila Valley.

Van Meter first settled in Gleeson, a mining town founded in 1896. The town was named for prospector John Gleason, a native of Ireland, who had discovered a rich copper deposit in that vicinity. Van Meter became the owner of the water works and most of the houses in Gleeson, which he rented to

the copper miners. The post-World War I depression sounded the death knell of the little mining town and Van Meter moved to his land holdings in the Elfrida area, where he farmed.

Van Meter will be remembered as a kind and soft spoken man of lanky stature. He was married at one time to one of the McLendon girls from the Gleeson area, but that marriage was of short duration. He was very solicitous of his mother, caring for her needs and hiring help to do the housework. Van Meter had lost most of his wealth when he died of pneumonia in 1948.

It was Van Meter's earnest desire that Elfrida was to have a park honoring his mother, including a burial place for he and his mother. He deeded land for that purpose to his heirs. On May 17, 1979, a deed was recorded that transferred the land from the Sulphur Spring Valley Lions Club to the Elfrida Volunteer Fire Dept.

Interesting excerpts from the deed:

Said parcel containing 3.39 acres, more or less, the granters sell and convey said property subject to the following conditions and stipulations, as to the use and enjoyment thereof by grantee, its successors or assignees:

1. At least the south 400 feet of the property described above is granted for use as a public park to be named Elfrida Van Meter Memorial Park. The park is to be developed and maintained for the use of the residents of the area.

2. The graves on said real property shall not be disturbed in any manner, and there shall be no new interments on said property.

3. There shall be no commercial building erected or placed on said property. A fire station may be placed on the northerly part of the property, provided that it shall be erected no nearer than 200 feet to the graves.

4. If the Elfrida Volunteer Fire Dept. ceases to exist, title

to the property shall revert to the Sulphur Spring Valley Lions Club, if such is in existence. If not, it shall pass to the incorporated town of Elfrida, if same exists and is capable of taking title. If not, then the property shall vest in the County of Cochise, a body politic, to be used by said county for the same purposes as expressed herein, and subject to the same conditions.

All covenants, conditions and stipulations herein contained, run with the land and upon breach of any one thereof, the property shall revert to Ralph A. Trump and Bonnie V. Bichl, their heirs, executors and/or administrators, as called for under an amended deed from said Trump and Bichl dated Apr. 2, 1979.

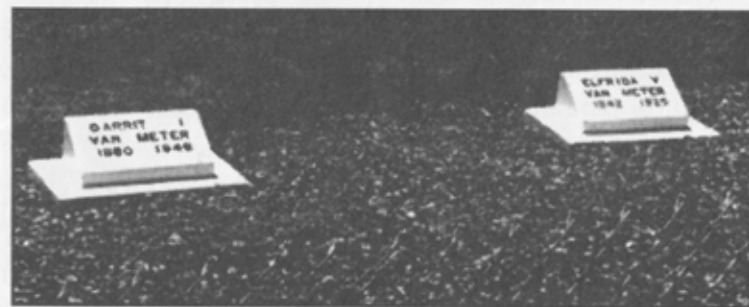
The Elfrida Park and Fire House have become an important focal point for the whole community. Among the many events scheduled during the year are Christmas programs, swap meets, pancake breakfasts, barbecues, dances and civic meetings. A

fall Harvest Festival, sponsored by the Sulphur Spring Valley Chamber of Commerce, is an annual event.

In September of 1990, the park was the beneficiary of a beautification project sponsored by the Elfrida Fire Dept., directed by Roy Lindsey, a member of the board of directors. During the clean-up effort, the grounds around the fire house were landscaped using discarded power poles from the Sulphur Spring Valley Electric Co-op, plus other poles donated by Larry and Kathy Walters. The poles were cut and used for bordering the parking spaces, walkways, and the picnic area. Parking areas were enlarged and gravel spread to accommodate vehicles, water was made available to the northern end of the park and the grass and trees continue to be valuable assets.

The picnic tables and fireplaces, which originally belonged to the state, were cleaned and painted. The tables and fireplaces, from the first roadside park in Arizona, located on Hwy. 666 (now Hwy. 191) between Elfrida and McNeal, were constructed by deceased Elfrida resident Tom Brown, who was the Douglas maintenance foreman for the Arizona Highway Dept. in the early 1950s. After the roadside park was demolished in 1976, the tables and fireplaces were given to Elfrida for residents and travelers to enjoy.

An important element of the project was the cleaning, leveling and the laying of 3/4 inch aggregate at the grave sites of Elfrida and G. I. Van Meter.



Mabel: her story

A Brief Biography of Mabel Magill Brown

Mabel was born April 8, 1911 in El Paso, Texas, to Hugh and Mildred Farris Magill. Her father, a first generation American of Scots-Irish descent, was born in Providence, R. I. on July 9, 1876. Her mother, who came from Lawrence, Kan., was born in 1883 and had some Indian ancestors, though Mabel doesn't know the details of the relationships.

The Magills met and married in Topeka, Kan., a railroad terminal town. Hugh had worked for the railroad since he was 15 years old, and when he was transferred from Topeka to El Paso in 1909, he returned to marry Mildred and bring her with him to El

Paso. Mabel was born two years later.

In 1914, when Mabel was three years old, Hugh was transferred to the new and busy "metropolis" of Dou-



Mabel Magill - age 3

glas, Ariz. The family moved into a neat clapboard house on Railroad Avenue close to the railroad roundhouse where Hugh worked as a blacksmith.

It was a two-block row of white clapboard houses with green lawns, trees and white picket fences. "Railroad Avenue is gone now, but the house I lived in is still standing on the corner of 15th Street and PanAmerican Avenue, though it's a little rough for the wear," says Mabel.

One of Mabel's memories is of running away down G Avenue when she was 5, to sit with her back against the high board fence that surrounded the livery stable and feed store where the old McClains store is. She would sit with her feet out in the path and watch the traffic: the horses pulling the buggies and wagons, and of some Model "T" Fords. Of course, it wasn't long before Mama came looking for her.

"I can still see my mother in her long black skirt and white apron, with switch in hand to take me home. Unfortunately, the switch was no deterrent to my early morning

jaunts. In desperation, my mother tied me to the clothesline in the back yard. That did the trick, and I never ran off again," says Mabel.

"My father worked at the railroad roundhouse, so called because of a huge round metal table large enough to hold a train engine. The train would go onto the round table and be unhooked, then the table would turn with the engine in whatever direction they desired.

"Because there were few telephones, the railroad hired a boy to stay all night at the roundhouse in case a train came in and had to be repaired. Many nights I remember hearing a knock on the door and a voice saying, 'Call Boy.' My father would answer the door, come back and dress and leave at any hour of the night to go to the blacksmith shop to repair the trains and keep them running."

Mabel remembers those early days in Douglas in an oral history on file in the Cochise County Historical Society research library. She

remembers going to the roundhouse with her mother to take her father his lunch, and how her father held the red and white hot metal with tongs so he could mold it into the shape he needed. The big air hammer extended high up into the building, and he used it with just the right pressure to beat out the metal, "playing 'Yankee Doodle' as metal touched metal, beat to beat, and just for me," she says. She remembers Sunday afternoons when many local families brought picnic lunches to the depot where they would sit on the lawns and watch the trains come and go.

"It was a beautiful place in those days, a fine buff brick building, two water fountains with water splashing, and a large expanse of well-kept green lawns and trees," she reminisces.

And she remembers riding the trolley on Sunday afternoons after they had attended the Presbyterian Church in the morning, and that her father would buy her a bottle of strawberry soda

pop in a bottle with a glass stopper. Sometimes they would stop for ice cream at Mosier's Drug Store on G Avenue where she sat at a small metal table near the large one her parents occupied. Her treats didn't always sit well on her young digestive system and Dr. Adamson was called for emergency care. Usually, by the time he arrived, the patient was feeling much better and he teased her about "being the only patient he had who could heal so quickly."

Mabel tells of summertime trips back to Topeka to visit her mother's relatives. With railroad passes, Mabel, her younger brother, Hugh, and her mother would take a big picnic basket of fried chicken and other luncheon items and make the long trek.

She tells of her school days in Douglas at A Avenue School, with classmate Adeline Greene, John Slaughter's granddaughter. Then in 1922, at Joe Carlson School at 12th Street and A Avenue, with the Fisher boys whose father was killed by

bandits at the Slaughter Ranch, and of her classmate, 14-year-old George Bruno, who was run over and killed as he and other boys hunted rabbits with Mr. Grande, who owned Grande's Service Station at the west entrance to Douglas. Of course, Mabel has happy memories of her school days as well.

In 1925, due to health problems, Hugh bought the Martin Mortenson homestead in Elfrida and the family moved there. Elfrida had no high school at the time, and that led to complications in Mabel's education, causing her to change high schools every year in order to graduate.

"I was going to Douglas High School, class of 1930, when my parents moved to Elfrida. It was the middle of the year, so the next semester I finished my freshman year at Whitewater School.

"When a student graduated from the 9th grade, it was necessary to go to Douglas, Bisbee, Tombstone or Pearce to continue. I lived at the Hirst Apartments in Douglas to go

to high school in my sophomore year. I remember standing on the corner with many other people watching the Gadsden Hotel burn. The huge timbers fell like match sticks as they burned," Mabel says.

For her junior year, she lived with the principal of the Tombstone High School and his wife, the Tilfords. She has many fond memories of being in a rather privileged group of students whose parents were active in local and state-wide politics, and that Mr. Tilford went to Kansas to help manage Alf Landon's presidential campaign. There were many parties and outings, and Mabel regards this as an outstanding time in her young life.

Even though the Tilfords wanted Mabel to return to them for her senior year, and had plans for her to continue her education at the University of Arizona, her mother did not permit her to return to Tombstone. She attended her senior year at Pearce High School, and graduated in May of 1930. "A high

school education did not come easy for the youth of Elfrida in the '20s and '30s," opines Mabel.

Mabel met her future husband, Tom Brown, at a dance at Whitewater School on March 1, 1930. They were married four months later on June 28 by the pastor of the Warren Methodist Church in a ceremony in the church parsonage. It was the Depression, and in her oral history Mabel tells of their life in those rough times. Things were cheap, but money was scarce, though Tom managed to have some sort of job and Mabel worked for a while at the Woolworth store in Bisbee. They rented a very nice house in the Johnson Addition (now part of the Lavender Pit) from Phelps Dodge for \$2 a month. Their first car was a Model "T" Ford pickup which cost \$110.

Their first child, daughter Mildred, was born in 1932, and son James was born in 1934, while they lived in the house in Lowell.

"We were very thankful

when Tom went to work for Pleasant and Hassler Contractors on the construction of the new highway to Fort Huachuca in 1934. We set up camp in Oak Canyon to be close to his work. Later, we rented a house in Hereford and lived there part-time, still maintaining the house in Johnson Addition," Mabel says.

In 1937, the Phelps Dodge Corp. began the open pit operation in Morenci and Tom went to work there. The family lived in Morenci until 1940 when Tom developed health problems and they moved to Elfrida.

The Browns built a new home and established a poultry ranch, selling eggs and poultry to stores in Bisbee and Douglas. Mabel wrote the Elfrida news for the Douglas *Daily Dispatch* and the *Bisbee Review*. When construction started on the pilot training facility at the Bisbee-Douglas Army Airbase, Tom worked in the construction of the new runways.

Tom was president of the school board when it was

voted to move the high school from Pearce to become the Valley Union High School in Elfrida in 1949. Buildings were moved from the defunct airbase in Douglas to be reconstructed as the new high school. The school was dedicated in October of 1949, and Mildred Brown was one of the 12 graduates of the class of 1950.

In the ensuing 10 years, Tom worked for the Arizona Highway Dept. out of Douglas and Mabel worked for a short time at the re-opened Fort Huachuca. When an opening came in the Phelps Dodge Traffic Dept. in Douglas, Mabel accepted a job offer and ended her long commutes to the fort.

When Tom was transferred to Globe in 1960, the Browns rented their Elfrida home and purchased a new home in Kearny. Mabel went to work for Kennecott Copper Co. in Hayden. In 1967, due to Tom's ill health, they sold their Kearny home and returned to Elfrida. Tom was diagnosed with diabetes and developed skin cancer. He re-

tired and they spent the next 13 years enjoying the home they remodeled after their return, and activities in the community. On Mabel's birthday, Apr. 8, 1980, she rushed Tom to the hospital in Douglas where he died of coronary thrombosis. They would have celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 28.

Since Tom's death, Mabel has continued her community activities, being instrumental in reorganizing the Webb Mothers' Club, is a lifetime honorary member of the Sulphur Spring Valley Chamber of Commerce, honorary member of the Elfrida FFA, the Elfrida correspondent to the Douglas *Daily Dispatch*, and was named a Guardian of History by the Cochise County Historical Society. She belongs to the Southwestern Cowboy Assn., and is an active member of the Elfrida Baptist Church. She celebrated her 88th birthday on April 8, 1999.

Pioneers

in

Profile

A Short History of Webb, Arizona

A Story of the Robert M. Tyler Family

The Tombstone Epitaph, Sept. 30, 1965



Robert Tyler Sr.

Founder of Webb, Ariz., Robert Tyler and his family of eight children arrived at the site of what is now Webb, in Cochise County, on April 25, 1908. He asked the postal authorities to name it Tyler, Ariz., but they said because there was a Taylor, Ariz., there could be a conflict in handling the mail. They took his second choice which was Webb, his wife Charlotte's maiden name.

Robert Tyler was born in Washington County, Texas, at a place now known as Giddings. When he was five his family left there and drove a herd of Texas long-horn cattle to market in St. Louis. After selling their cattle they all went by boat up to Omaha and then went to Salt Lake City, riding in a box car of the Santa Fe R. R. Later

they settled for a while in Kanab, Utah, where Robert herded huge flocks of sheep about 12 miles north of the north rim of the Grand Canyon.

When Robert was 16, his family came with three other families in covered wagons to Holbrook, Ariz., arriving with their livestock on New Year's Eve, 1879. They settled in Woodruff, Ariz., a few miles south of Holbrook. Robert went to work with a crew on the extension of the Santa Fe Railroad through Arizona. Robert was as strong at 16 as the men he worked with. He and five other men of the railroad crew built the first building of any kind in Flagstaff. It was a supply house for railroad materials and food for the working men.

There was a time when the ground was so frozen that it could not be worked, so the men went about four miles south of Flagstaff to cut trees for making railroad ties. He had to chop the tree down, trim it and shape the log to specifications of a tie. He could cut 15 a day and earned ten cents each.

Later on, he drove freight wagons for the government from Holbrook down to Fort Apache. He felt a deep sadness for the unfair treatment of the Apache and had often gone out of his way to befriend them and share whatever food he had at hand. He would surely have been killed on one encounter with a group of Apaches he met while they were raiding off the reservation, but one Indian remembered his kindness to him and spoke in his behalf. He was allowed to continue on his way unharmed.

His first marriage ended tragically when his wife died at the birth of their fifth child. The child did not survive either. A year later Robert, a widower with four little children, married Charlotte Webb, a 16-year-old girl he met in Nutrioso, Ariz. He went into the sawmill and lumber business with her father, James D. Webb. Some years later they moved to the Gila Valley where he worked in a sawmill in the Graham Mountains.

He was approached and asked to accept the responsibility of bishop of his church at Eden, Ariz. He felt he couldn't accept at that time but jokingly said, "I'd rather be constable of the town first and clean up some of the rowdiness going on here."

He went away on business and when he returned, he discovered that his name had been placed on the ballot and he had been elected town constable. He was ambidextrous with guns and was a crack shot with rifle or pistol.

He did such an effective job of cleaning up the town that he was soon asked again to be bishop. This time he accepted. Then the county authorities had him sworn in as deputy sheriff. This gave him a unique place in his community — bishop, constable, deputy sheriff — and all at the same time.

He didn't receive any pay for the church office but he was paid two dollars for each arrest and ten cents a mile for his horse when he had to go out of town to make an arrest.

Once he struck a "bonanza," he arrested 11 men at the same time. Four years later as he travelled through Cochise County on horseback, he saw what beautifully rich land it was. He decided to homestead a 160 acre tract and take his family there to start a new life.

He went to Tombstone where he filed on the land of his choice. He put in a flag pole and a lightning rod on the land before he returned to the Gila Valley to get his family. Everyone was happy about making the move and made great preparations for this new venture. He sold his



Tyler twins, Lowell and Loura

property and bought supplies: 1,500 pounds of flour, 1,000 pounds of beans, many slabs of salt port and bacon, and a great quantity of corn meal. They took lots of seeds for starting their first crops, plows and all implements needed for tilling the soil.

They put all their household belongings on three wagons and with Charlotte, his wife, driving the horse and buggy, two of the boys riding herd on the cattle and horses, they started the trip to Cochise County. They were a week on the way, stopping at night at predetermined watering holes for the animals. When they arrived, they pitched their three tents close together and unloaded all their belongings.

Life on their desolate and uncleared land had begun. A few days later, at a distance they saw three men riding toward their tents. This was frightening to them because stories had been making the rounds that some atrocities had befallen a number of homesteaders. Some ruffians had created havoc by killing

the husband and running off the livestock. In some cases they had killed the entire family and had taken all they could haul away.

There were not enough lawmen to follow up on these awful deeds. Robert instructed his eight children, four of which were old enough to handle fire arms, to get inside the tent. Charlotte and the four took up positions within the tent with their rifles leveled at the approaching riders. Robert had told them he was going out unarmed to greet the three men as they rode up but he instructed them in the tent to shoot to kill them if they so much as made an attempt to reach for their guns.

Those next few minutes were tense ones for all. But when they came within close range, Robert called in to his wife and children, "It's all right, it's all right, they're Territorial Rangers," and that's just what they were. They had ridden out to offer aid and advice after seeing, in Tombstone, that Tyler had filed on a homestead out there.

Later, Tyler, being a nester, which didn't exactly please the cattlemen in the area, feared he had made a grave mistake in going there. He couldn't seem to convince the cattlemen that he had just as much legal right there as they did. He suffered unaccountable losses of his stock and found his fences cut. But this all changed after he was called as a star witness in a trial held in Tombstone involving some of these same Sulphur Spring Valley cattlemen.

It seems that the cattlemen had accused some other nesters or homesteaders of the theft of several head of cattle from the open range. Tyler knew that their accusation was right and could prove it. Although he had suffered losses from the cattlemen in the not too distant past and did not feel too kindly toward them, he testified in their behalf because "it was the only honorable thing to do." From that day on he had no more trouble with the cattlemen. On the contrary, they brought back cattle they

said had strayed into their herds and never ceased to show their appreciation for his fairness.

The Tylers weren't poor — they just didn't have any money. They desperately needed to build a house to live in. So two of the sons went to work a few miles away working for a man by the name of Higgins. He had a brick kiln and supplied brick for people in Pearce, Gleason, Courtland and surrounding areas. The young boys did backbreaking work and returned home every weekend with their pay — brick.

When they had earned enough brick to build the home, they stopped work there and returned home to help their father build the house. Everyone from the oldest down to the youngest contributed in this welcome project. In just 13 months after arriving there, they moved into their new red brick home. Four months later, their little son Glen was born.

Tyler and his sons had planted fruit trees and gardens for family use, but his son

Charles decided to plant enough to be able to start a fruit and vegetable route and deliver from house to house in Courtland and Gleeson. He had a great deal of success with his venture.

Brace and Clark, two younger brothers who seemed to be almost inseparable, used to drive a team of burros up to Rucker Canyon and cut wood for the family and fence posts for fencing in the homestead acres. They had some exciting experiences for two young boys only ten and eleven years old. They made two trips a week to Rucker Canyon during the summer. They carried a rifle with them always. Rucker Canyon had more than its share of lions and bears in those days. They set traps and managed to sell a few furs from small animals they caught. They often helped cut trees at Christmas time so that everyone in the area had a pretty Christmas tree for the holidays.

Robert Tyler knew that he had to educate his children and that a community was

sorely needed there. He started to write to his friends and giving them glowing accounts of the richness of the land. They began to arrive in increasing numbers to take up claims.

Tyler established a general store and stocked it with supplies he hauled up from Douglas. The railroad was being built from Douglas toward Courtland and the north. Tyler talked them into making a slight swing in order to include Webb.

He established the town site and the post office on November 19, 1909. He and some of the other homesteaders built a school, which is still standing, and Tyler was the first chairman of the board of trustees in the Webb district. The schoolhouse soon became headquarters for a very active social center. People came from Douglas, Willcox, Tombstone, and from ranches in the area to attend the dances held at the schoolhouse. The Tylers had taken a tread [pump] organ with them to Cochise County and Tyler chorded on the or-

gan while his sons, Rue and Charles played a five-string banjo and a cheap little accordion which was fine for the true western dances. All of the boys played the harmonica, too.

Life was a real struggle and no one realized it any more than Mrs. Tyler, Charlotte. As wife and mother she was a genius in resourcefulness. Canning fruits and vegetables, making soap, and sewing up dresses, underclothes and shirts all made from dyed flour sacks. Nothing was wasted.

The Tyler twins, Lowell and Loura were born on Nov. 22, 1912. This was the beginning of a great deal of suffering and hardship for the family. Mrs. Tyler had blood poisoning after they were born and was taken to Courtland for care where she stayed constantly under the care of the doctor for a year and a day.

Her little daughter, Norma, age eleven, went to Courtland to "nurse" her and her 12-year-old daughter, Charlotte, took over the stag-

gering responsibility of caring for the twin babies, little Glen, age two-and-a-half, Berma, age six and all the rest of the family of men and boys who were working in the fields. It was a miracle that she was able to do for them as she did. When their mother returned home, the twins were already walking. The debts had piled up during that year of sickness so the older boys, Robert, Rue and Charles left the ranch to work in Douglas and at the Fike's ranch on the Mexican border east of Douglas. The corrals of the ranch were right on the Mexican border.

When Pancho Villa came to the border to try to take Agua Prieta just across from Douglas, his army met with acute shortage of water on the Mexican side. Rue was arrested and taken down to the jail for giving water from a faucet inside the corral to the "Villistas." He was soon released but removed from the area so as not to give him a chance to get further involved in an international incident.

Pancho finally had to retreat without taking Agua Prieta, but two of his poor skinny mules which had hauled cannon for him to the border, got away and joined a band of mustangs on the Arizona side. In a few months of grazing on the rich grasses there and living the life of ease among the mustangs, they were fat and healthy looking.

Robert and Charles, who could ride anything, ran the mustangs and Pancho's mules into a big corral and finally roped a mule. With skill and great patience and caution, Charles finally got a saddle on him and rode him out just in time to entertain the people looking out the windows of a slow-moving train before it arrived in Douglas.

Very shortly, when the United States went to war with Germany, Robert got his call to enlist in the army. He went to Tombstone for enlistment. Charles had gone there to enlist and had just been accepted when the war was over. Robert did not come back. He died during the flu



Robert Tyler Jr.

epidemic in France. His brother, Leo, died on the same day with the flu in Miami, Ariz. The Tylers left Webb in 1920.

The Tyler Homestead was the outgrowth of a system extending through nearly 80 years and now, within the circle of 100 years since the U.S. acquired the first of her public lands, the Homestead Act, through which more than 1,600,000 persons gained small tracts of land, stands as the concentrated wisdom of legislation for the settlement of the public lands. It was

copied by no other nation's system. It was originally and distinctively American, and remains a monument to its originators.

Addendum News Release

Brothers 4,000 Miles Apart Die Same Day From Same Disease: One in France one in Arizona

Webb, Arizona, Nov. 29 [1918] — Our community was shocked by a telegram received last Friday by R. M. Tyler, stating that his son, Robert M. Tyler, Jr., had died in France of pneumonia, on October 29. This was a double blow to the parents, as only a few days before they had buried their oldest son, R. Leo Tyler, at Thatcher, on the Gila River. This son died at Miami, on the same day as Robert and from the same dis-

ease, though the brothers were 4,000 miles apart.

Robert M. Tyler, Jr., was born at Nutrioso, Apache County, Ariz. on Dec. 24, 1894. The family moved to Webb in April 1900. Mr. Tyler named the community after Mrs. Tyler's father. Robert grew up here and went to the local schools, where he graduated with honor. He was ever an obedient and loving son and brother and was considered one of our best young men.

Young Tyler was registered in the draft of June 1917, and was called to the colors Oct. 2, 1917. He was sent to Camp Funston and later to Camp Kearny. He landed in France about July 15 this year. Mr. and Mrs. Tyler have the sympathy of the whole community in their bereavement. They had five sons, all in the draft.

From the Desert in Bloom to Cowboy Coffee

by Cecil S. Woolridge as told to S ndra Henson



Cecil
Sperry
Woolridge
1929

My daddy was a dry-land farmer in west Texas when I was born in January of 1911. He was leasing land from a large ranch but there was no good water source nearby. Water was stored in a cistern but when it went dry each year, water had to be hauled from a creek

some miles away. In time, my dad got a well drilled but the water wasn't good. We couldn't drink it, we could only use it to irrigate our vegetable garden.

"My dad had a good friend named John McPeters and John had family over in Arizona near Willcox. They were always writing letters

about how wonderful Arizona was, so one day my dad decided to go and see for himself if Arizona was so wonderful. My mother asked just one thing, 'If you find us a place just make sure there is plenty of water.'

"My dad arrived in August of 1917 and found a piece of property near Oak Creek that had a deep well and the water was only six feet from the top. The mountains were green and beautiful. It seemed the perfect spot for a homestead and it was available. The man who owned this land had passed a Civil Service exam and had been called to a job. He relinquished his claim and a pile of adobe bricks for \$25. So dad returned to Texas to get the family.

"We made our move from Texas to Arizona on the railroad. In those days they had what were called immigrant trains with cars that were partitioned in such a way that disassembled wagons and household

goods, the livestock, and the men could ride in the same car. This way the men could take care of the animals en route and watch over their possessions. The women and children traveled on the passenger train. We arrived in Willcox a few days before the immigrant train and we stayed in a hotel. When dad arrived we set up a campsite a mile out of town and stayed there until dad could get everything unloaded and put together for the trip out to our new homestead.



C. S. Woolridge, Age 3

"My half-brother and I took turns running along beside the wagon for awhile then hopping in to ride for a bit. Mother just rode in the wagon and cried most of the way out. She was so disappointed in Arizona. It had been just after the summer rains in August when my dad had made his trip. He hadn't lied to mother, it was green and beautiful in August. But now it was November and everywhere my mother looked the land was as brown and barren as the land she'd left behind in Texas.

"We had made this move with several other families and we camped together on the Hooker ranch the first night and then went on to our place. The neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Bosely, were going away for a Thanksgiving celebration when we arrived. Mrs. Bosely's comment as they passed our place was 'What do you suppose those people have to be thankful for?' Mr. Bosely replied, 'Because they're here.'

"Dad hauled the adobe bricks he'd acquired to the



Jimmy Wooldridge - Sunset, AZ



Lilly Augusta Walderon Wooldridge

spot where he planned to build and stacked them in two long walls. We camped between the walls until time came to build the house. We were still camping when Christmas came. For Christmas that year my folks gave me a 5 cent box of matches. I had the matches stuck in the ground in a straight line. I would light one and watch

it spread to the next one in domino style. A bachelor cowboy named Charlie Nettles had come by to visit my folks. I remember that he complained to them about how wasteful it was to let me burn matches like that for no reason!

"My dad was instrumental in getting a school organized for our district and in the fall of 1918 our one room school opened. I was able to start school that year and I was so excited. I remember that the very first day the teacher gave me a primer and by the end of the day I could read the first two pages. My dad's friend, Mr. Curtis McPeters, came by that day and I showed him my book and read him the first two pages. He thought it was quite something, but the rest of the family didn't pay it much attention.

"I really enjoyed school and did eight grades in five years. I finished through grade eleven in my community school, but had to go away to Bowie for the twelfth grade. Albert R.

Spikes, who later was a senator in the Arizona legislature, was my teacher. Until then, I hadn't much liked history, but studying American history with Mr. Spikes changed my mind.

"Eventually I did teacher training at Arizona State Teachers College in Tempe. The fees came to \$26 a month and I got a full-time job as the school janitor to earn the money for school. During this time I met Edith. We spent time walking together to the 8th



C. S. and Edith Wooldridge - 1929

Street School where we were doing our practice teaching. Also, we both went to the First Baptist Church.

"When I finished my training in Tempe, I went by train with my friend Fred Culbert to Bisbee to try and get a job in the mines. I was hired within two weeks and when I got my first paycheck, I ordered a wedding ring. It cost \$4.95. When I got my second paycheck, I sent Edith the money to take the bus from Mesa to Bisbee. She arrived early in the morning of July 3. I tried to rent a car from an automobile dealer, but I wasn't able to, so some friends loaned me one. My friend Nick (Harold W. Nichols) took Edith back to my apartment so she could freshen up after her trip and later we went to Tombstone. I had a signed note from my father giving permission for me to get married, as I was only 18. The folks at the courthouse weren't too sure about issuing a marriage license, but they finally got it done. We went to Judge Ross'

house and he performed the ceremony. My friend Nick and the judge's wife were the required two witnesses. After the ceremony we went back to Bisbee and had ice-cream that Nick stopped and bought. Ever since then we have ice cream on July 3, our anniversary. We also went to buy some groceries. We bought a lot of rice and plenty of raisins so we could make 'speckled pup,' a dish my dad used to make when he was camping on the ranch.

"I only worked in Bisbee until the end of the summer because I was able to get a job teaching back at my old school at Sunset. I had only been away for three years and many of the students remembered me as a student. Some of them wanted to call me by my first name. We all had a little trouble with that at first.

"I taught there for three years, but the Depression came and I lost my job. I was unemployed for a whole year. I was able to

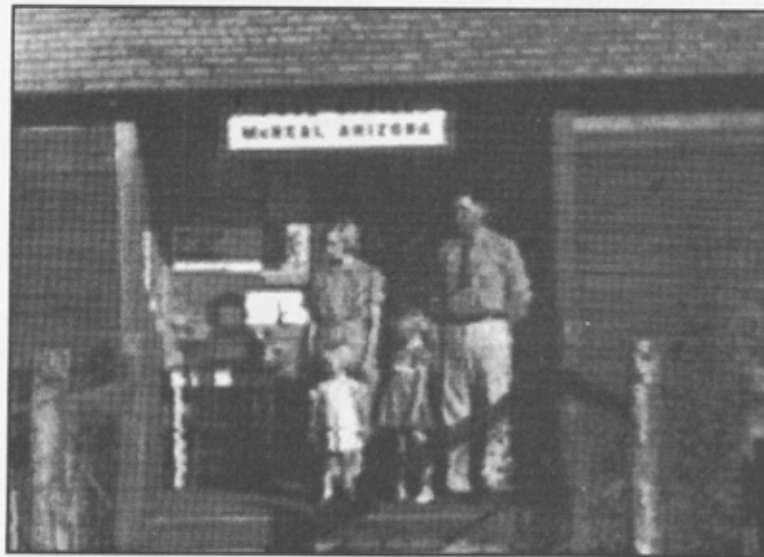
buy a crop of beans for four cents a pound, hoping to sell them for a profit in the spring, but the price of beans kept dropping and I couldn't sell them. We were able to get food from the grocer and he took our beans on account at four cents a pound. So we ate some beans and traded some beans and we got through.

"In 1932, I was able to get another teaching job at Stewart School near Willcox. We lived in the teacherage and our oldest daughter was born there in 1934. That spring I came down to the McNeal area rustling for schools. My friend Nick didn't have a job and if I could find a job down here, then he could take my job at the Stewart School. I was given a contract at the McNeal school that spring and in the summer, we went back to Tempe so I could take some more courses. That's when I got sick. It was July 4 and we were at a picnic. I developed a very high fever

and a very bad headache. I was quite ill for awhile, and Dr. Irvine was at a loss as to what it was. I was also having a great deal of pain in my lower back. Dr. Irvine called in Dr. Benjamin Moeur, who had practiced medicine before he became governor of Arizona. Together they were able to determine that it was polio. Since everything in my body hurt except my eyelids, they prescribed a strong dose of codeine that was supposed to make me sleep around the clock, but it didn't. I

was a little drowsy and a little wild.

"I contacted the McNeal school and asked them to delay the opening for two weeks, but I suppose they thought I wouldn't be back and they hired a temporary teacher. But we did come back, and a few weeks after school started, I told the temporary man that I was ready to start. That first day I was still dragging one leg and had one arm in a sling. Someone recommended that we go see a Dr. Norris who was an Osteopath. he treated me with "figure



Cecil Wooldridge Family - 1939

eight" bandages that realigned my shoulder blades. I wore them all that year and I kept improving until I could do almost anything I did before, except work over my head.

"I taught at the McNeal School for four years. After the fourth year, the wrong person got on the school board and my contract wasn't renewed. I then took the Civil Service Exam and became the postmaster. A few years later I became the rural route carrier, as this paid considerably more and we now had a family of five. Our first daughter had come while we were at Stewart, the second was born at home here in McNeal, and for the third, Edith wanted to go to the hospital in Douglas. When the time came, she sent the two girls to find me as I came in from my mail route and I hurried home. When I got there Edith wasn't ready, she was taking a bath. We finally got on our way, but Alice was born in the car, along about the

Pirtleville Cemetery.

"Yes, the rural mail carrier job was a real blessing because I worked fewer hours and I could have time for chickens, a few pigs, a milk cow, and a garden. I really enjoyed this job and the contact with people. I was able to go beyond the prescribed service of the postal service and take packages right to the door and do other things to help the people on my route. I did this until the last few years when the postal regulations were such that it was prohibited.

I retired from the postal service on June 29, 1973. I decided to retire then, one month short of 35 years, for two reasons. First of all, the postal workers in Douglas had gone on strike once (which was illegal) and were talking of doing it again. I didn't want to wait as there was a good chance there would be picketing at our McNeal Post Office this time. Also, there was a cost of living increase due for those who were on retire-

ment status as of July 1 of that year. This was a six percent increase in the retirement benefit. It was clearly in my favor to retire early.

"During these years, our girls grew up and all of them were able to go to college. Patricia, the oldest, was valedictorian of her class and won the Phelps Dodge Scholarship that paid for all four years. She went to Arizona State University in Tempe. Celia went to Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff on a partial scholarship. She worked and we helped her out. Our youngest, Alice, went one year at Biola in California, and also did some of her course work at Cochise College the year they opened in 1964. She wasn't able to get too many courses because it was Cochise's first year and she was in her second year already. She finished at NAU and has been a teacher all these years.

"Since retiring from the postal service, we have kept

busy with our church and we still enjoy going to the mountains and hiking around. That's when we make a fire and grill some steaks and make a pot of Cowboy Coffee.

"To make Cowboy Coffee, you get a big coffee pot, put in a pound of coffee and add a little water, but not too much!"

I close this account of Mr. Woolridge's story with his recipe for Cowboy Coffee because it seems to be the perfect symbol for a man who came as a pioneer to Arizona. He faced the challenges of frontier life, severe illness, economic depression, all the ups and downs of raising a family, and he did it all with strength and distinctiveness. If you should have the privilege of knowing Mr. Woolridge and drinking his Cowboy Coffee, you would understand why one recalls the other. They are both all substance, no watering down, full of flavor, and memorable.

Sandra Henson

Cecil Sperry (C.S.) and Edith Marie Wooldridge

Their Lifetime of Service

C. S. Wooldridge and Edith Austin were enrolled in the teacher education program at Tempe Normal School (now Arizona State University) in Tempe when they met during their practice teaching assignments at Eighth Street School in 1929. They attended the same church and began dating by attending church functions together. Though Edith received her teaching certificate, she decided she would rather be Mrs. C.S. Wooldridge at home than to be "Miss Austin" in the classroom. Edith and C.S. graduated in June of 1929, and he went to Bisbee where he began working in the Gardner Shaft for Phelps Dodge Mining Co. When he had rented an apartment and saved a little money, he sent for Edith and they were married July 3, 1929 in the Tombstone home of Justice of the Peace John Ross.

The couple had planned a July 6 wedding, but when a fire in the shafts created gases which prevented the men from working, the company gave them an extra day off. C.S. telegraphed Edith to come right away, and she caught the 1:00 a.m. stage (bus) in Mesa to arrive in Warren later the same day. C.S. and his roommate, Harold Nichols, borrowed a car,

and after a brief freshening up, they were off to Tombstone to officially start their life together.

Cecil Sperry Wooldridge was born to Jimmy R. and Lilly Augusta Wooldridge in Winters, Texas, on Jan. 29, 1911. The elder Wooldridges moved from Texas to a homestead on High Creek in the Sunset Community, about 40 miles northwest of Willcox, in 1917. Cecil S. Wooldridge died on March 3, 1999, while a patient at a Tucson hospital.

Jimmy R. Wooldridge was instrumental in getting the High Creek School District organized and a new one room school built in time for the opening of school in September of 1918. C.S. attended the school for three years, until three local school districts were combined and two of the small school houses were moved and reconstructed in a central location. C.S. completed the 8th grade and his first three years of high school in the High Creek School. For his senior year, he attended Bowie High School where Albert R. Spikes was

principal. He graduated in 1927 and enrolled at Tempe Normal School for the fall semester.

Edith Marie Austin was born to Thomas William and



C. S. Wooldridge, 8th Grade Graduation 1923

Alice Dell Austin in Franklin County, Kansas, on June 2, 1908. She was the third youngest of nine children. The Austins moved to northern New Mexico where their

father farmed. They moved to Chandler, Arizona, in 1918, and there Thomas became a cotton farmer. Edith graduated from Chandler High School in 1927, then attended Montezuma College, a Southern Baptist school near Las Vegas, New Mexico, for two years. Because of financial problems, she enrolled at Tempe Normal School for the spring semester of 1929, with intentions to become a teacher. She drove a Model "T" Ford car from Chandler to Tempe to attend school. She received her teaching certificate at the end of the semester.

At the end of the summer of 1929, the young couple moved to the Sunset Community where C.S. became principal of the two-room school that he had left three years earlier. It was a difficult assignment to try to control and teach students with whom he had attended school as a student himself. Edith, a city girl, found the Sunset homestead where she and C.S. lived with his parents, a very big adjustment. She recalled how deso-



Edith Marie Austin Wooldridge - 1929

late that 40 mile ride from Willcox in Jimmy's horse-drawn wagon was, and what a turn her life had taken.

In 1934, after serving as principal at the Stewart School northwest of Willcox, C.S. was hired by the McNeal School District as principal (see C.S.'s personal narrative in this issue). In 1938, the McNeal postmaster resigned and C.S. was appointed acting postmaster and later,

postmaster. At that time, as part of the terms of employment, the postmaster was required to furnish quarters for the post office.

When Mrs. Frank Murphy became postmaster, the Murphys constructed a tiny red frame building, just north of the Valley Garage and south of the McNeal Mercantile Store (the store later burned), to serve as the post office.

The Wooldridges' youngest daughter, Alice, remembers that she and her parents built the present post office on their property in about 1959, and that her father still owned the building at his death. In 1940, C.S. transferred to the rural mail carrier position, and served for 33 years in the McNeal and Double Adobe areas. He retired from the postal service on June 29, 1973.

In the mid-1940s, Edith began serving as a substitute postmaster and weekend clerk in the post office. Holidays were added to her schedule in the 1950s, and she had to "put up" the

mail even on Christmas Day. For a short time, she filled in for an ailing postmaster and was constantly concerned about balancing her stamps and other accounts. She successfully completed her assignment with added confidence. She retired from the post office in the mid-1970s.

C.S. and Edith assisted in the organization of three churches in the Sulphur Spring Valley: Whitewater Sunday



C. S. and Edith in their garden

School, which later grew into the Elfrida Baptist Church; the Double Adobe Union Sunday School, which later became the Valley Bible Church; and the Independent Bible Church in McNeal. C.S. also served on the board of directors of the Chiricahua Ranchmen's Camp Meeting for 34 years, holding the position of secretary-treasurer for many years. Both Edith and C.S. maintained a keen interest in young people, encouraging them in attaining high spiritual and educational goals.

Edith believed her real mission in life was to support and encourage her husband and maintain a balanced and happy home life for her family. She was a gracious hostess and frequently there was company for Sunday dinner, sometimes local families, and sometimes visiting ministers and their families, who usually stayed with the Wooldridges during their visit to the community.

The original four rooms of the Wooldridge home had been moved down from the Sunset Community, each board numbered so the house could be reconstructed just like the original. Two bedrooms and a bath were later added, and the new quarters better provided for everyone, including the visitors. These guests became the Wooldridges' friends, and today, as Alice says, "Our friends literally can be found around the world, on every continent except Antarctica."

C.S. and Edith always planted extensive gardens, and the resulting largess was canned or (later) frozen for those large meals in the winter. They provided for themselves and usually for friends and neighbors in the community and for anyone who needed food: Edith often worried about disposing of the surplus, as she did not believe in wasting anything.

"My mother always said she hated to cook, however, she did an excellent job in the kitchen. She was anxious to get the dishes done after the

evening meal, though, and in her younger years, if you lingered too long at the table, you would find your plate in the dishpan. It became a family joke to tell her that she could have everything but your cup and whatever you could hold in the other hand," laughed Alice.

For many years, C.S. was the caretaker and record keeper for the McNeal Cemetery, which he lovingly referred to as "a rural do-it-yourself" cemetery. He planted trees which survived under his care, but when he was no longer physically able to care for the trees, they eventually died for lack of water. He was a meticulous record keeper and his books accurately reflect the changes which occurred over the years.

C.S. and Edith were the parents of three daughters: Patricia, born on Feb. 8, 1934, married to Charles Raymond and living in Scottsdale; Celia Mae, born on Feb. 22, 1937, married to Raul Garcia and living in Coolidge; and Alice Marie, born on July 9, 1945.

Alice is a retired teacher and lives in Prescott. Together, the married girls have given their parents seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. The Wooldridges were successful in the encouragement of their daughters to be good students and attain high educational goals: all three have college educations, and two of them hold master's degrees.

Edith, at age 90, lives in McNeal in the home of missionary friends, Liz and Dan Link.



C.S.'s High School Graduation - 1927

Mamie Trappman Grizzle

by Mary Magoffin



Mamie Trappman was born Jan. 17, 1908, to Ernest and Nancy Ingram Trappman, at Queen Creek, Arizona Territory. She was the second of seven children, all of whom survive at this writing.

Mamie's father was born in Germany, but emigrated with his mother when he was five years old. Ernest's father had been working at a mine in Carlisle, N.M., for five years, earning passage money for his wife and two children.

When the three of them were finally able to come to America, each was allowed to bring only one blanket and two baskets of belongings. They spent the entire voyage on the deck of the ship, fair weather or foul. Mamie said her grandmother always remembered how deeply thrilled she was at the sight of the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor.

The Trappmans left New Mexico and came to Tombstone, Arizona Territory where Herman went to work as a miner. They also had a ranch northwest of Tombstone where the Schefflin monument now stands. The Trappmans had 11 children, with nine survivors after a Tombstone diphtheria epidemic claimed two sons.

Three years after Ed Schefflin died in Oregon, the citizens of Tombstone built a monument and re-interred his body on the knoll where Schefflin had camped when he was first scouting the area looking for mining possibili-

ties. Sixteen-year-old Ernest Trappman was low bidder on the contract to build the monument designed by a Tucson firm.

With the money he earned, Ernest bought himself a fine Stetson hat and a ticket to Wickenburg where he went to work at the Great Vulture Mine. He met and married Nancy Ingram, a young woman from Oklahoma, and eventually, the young couple moved to the Willcox area.

Mamie remembers that when she was four years old, she and her six-year-old sister Lelah walked a mile every morning to attend school. They walked along a road where other children had been abducted, but their parents hoped that two small girls together would be safe. The school is now the headquarters for the Sulphur Spring Valley Electric Co-op.

The family moved to Cochise where Mamie graduated from the 8th grade in 1922. She attended the small local high school for three

years, but one day County School Superintendent Ruby Fulghum from Bisbee came to Cochise to talk to Mamie. Since the school had no facilities for chemistry classes and lacked instruction in other classes as well, she advised Mamie not to graduate from Cochise as her diploma would not get her admitted to any college.

In 1925, she went to Tombstone to live with her grandmother and attend school. However, Mr. Tilford, the principal, advised her that she was so deficient in credits she would have to go an extra year in order to graduate. Mamie decided against the second year, and instead went to Tucson to live with an aunt and uncle and get her diploma.

The relatives lived about 15 miles from the school and a lot of time was wasted traveling back and forth, so Mamie found a young mother who needed help in exchange for room and board. The mother was an evening telephone operator and Mamie

did light housework and cared for the three small children. She remembers they treated her so well it was like being part of the family.

Mamie's desire was to become a nurse, but her father would not permit it as he didn't consider nursing to be a modest occupation for a young woman. Instead, in 1927, she enrolled at Tempe Normal (now Arizona State University) in the Home Economics program.

She had to work her way through school, and her first job was in the school dining hall where she put on clean table cloths, filled individualized napkin holders, brought food to the table and replenished the serving dishes, and finally cleared the dishes away at the end of the meal. Mamie had worked there about a month when Mrs. Krause, the dining hall manager, told her of a couple whose daughter had chosen to go to the university in Tucson and they had a room where she could live and do

chores. The couple lived on a corner lot near the campus and there was a lot of pedestrian traffic, so Mamie's primary job was to keep the sidewalks clean. She lived there all four years she was in college.

She graduated in 1931, but her mother had suffered a stroke and Mamie returned to Cochise to help care for her. She accepted a teaching job in Dagoon, where she taught all eight grades with 28 children, some of whom spoke only Spanish. When the school board could not decide between five applicants for the janitorial job, they simply added those chores to Mamie's teaching responsibilities. In 1933, she accepted the job as head teacher at the Cochise school.

At a dance one night in the small community of Light, Mamie met young Lewis Grizzle. She said it was like the shock of an electric current between the two, and they were married in 1934, thus ending her teaching career.

They made their home near the railroad station of Kelton, and Lewis began to realize his life-long dream of creating an orchard with peaches, pears, plums, apricots and even persimmons. The orchard was a tremendous success, with people coming from as far away as Silver City, N.M., and California to get the famous Grizzle fruit.

The Grizzles were parents of two children: James, born in 1935, and Ruth, born in 1938.

Things went well until 1987, when a series of catastrophies struck and Lewis lost heart. One of his dear friends, Noel Epperson, died; his very special little dog died from cancer, and after the fifth crop failure in a row, he lost his beloved orchard. Lewis died in November that same year.

Son James married Jo Carol Goza and they have two sons, Gary and Brent. He continues to operate the home

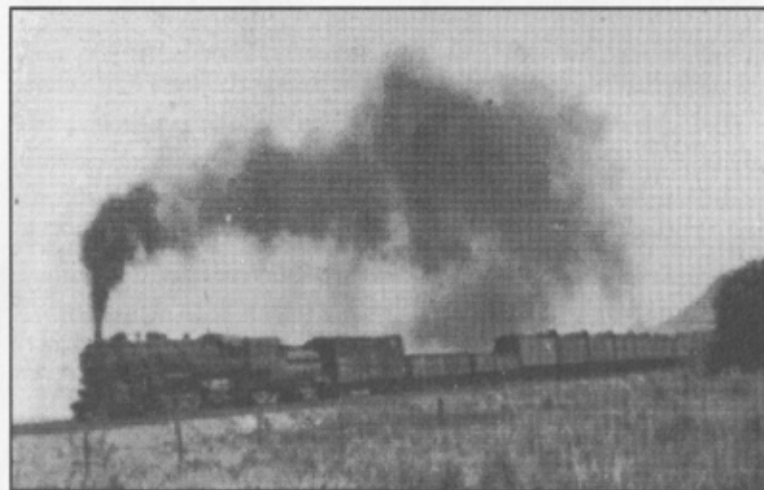
place, raising cotton, field crops and cattle. Ruth graduated from Good Samaritan Hospital, becoming the nurse her mother had always wanted to be. In 1958, she married Richard Montgomery, who died in 1998. They had three children, Mike, Steve and Linda, who gave Mamie and Lewis five granddaughters. Ruth lives in California.

In 1995, Mamie received several awards, both locally and nationally, for her in-

volvement with community and families activities.

Mamie has a home on the farm, and says she has always done what needed to be done. She prefers to eat fresh produce from her own garden, and says she thinks stress is the worst thing people have to cope with. She is 91 years young.

Thank you, Mamie, for being a pioneer Guardian of History.



One of the last trains through Elfrida, about 1934. Photo courtesy Mabel Brown.

Vera Mills



Vera and Jack Mills - 1962

While the Cochise County Historical Society is proud to honor Vera Mills as a Guardian of History, it is difficult to do so without including her husband, Jack. The Mills' were married 77 years before Jack died in 1994, at the age of 102. Vera, who recently celebrated her 99th birthday, has difficulty communicating, but is as physically well as can be expected for her age.

Vera Marie Burton was born in Iowa on March 16, 1900, but moved to Solano, N. M. with her parents, Charles J. Burton and Eva Lavina Haworth Burton, in 1908. She was 14 years old when she met Jack P. Mills, who was a U.S. Commissioner and Justice of the Peace for the area. He was eight years her senior (born Apr. 23, 1892 in Danville, Ky.), but he told her mother he intended to marry Vera.

After waiting three years, until Vera was 17, the young couple was married on June 27, 1917 at the home of her parents in Solano. Their daughter, Gwendolin, was born on April 19, 1918, and their son, Jack Jr. was born on Jan. 20, 1922.

In October of 1922, they moved to California, but 10 years later, due to Vera's ill health, they moved to the Tomahawk Ranch near Elfrida, Ariz. In 1937, the Mills' purchased 160 acres northwest of Elfrida and Jack built their present home.

After moving to the Sulphur Spring Valley, both Jack and Vera became interested in archaeology, focusing on the Salado culture who lived in the area from about 1150 A.D. to 1400 A.D. Neither was a "trained" archaeologist, but they knew some education was required for them to achieve credibility for their work.

They bought books and learned from other experts about the methods of research and excavation. As a result of thorough preparation and their detailed documentation of excavated sites, they became quite respected as researchers and speakers in the field of southwestern archaeology.

Though Jack and Vera worked on several sites, they considered their work at the Kuykendall Ranch, where they worked for 12 years, as their most important research site. Though most of the pottery artifacts at all the sites were broken when they found them, Vera became such an expert at reconstructing the pots, she often taught classes in the techniques she used. The Mills' published several booklets on their work.

When Jack and Vera were in their 80s, they decided their extensive collection of bowls and artifacts should be in a more

public place than the private museum they had built near their home, though they had hosted more than 6,000 visitors since its construction in 1947.

An article in the Aug. 25, 1983, edition of the *Arizona Daily Star* says, "They have had offers of up to \$200,000 from overseas buyers for their collection of 600 pots and 5,000 other artifacts, but they have agreed to a \$75,000 offer from the Eastern Arizona College Museum of Anthropology in Thatcher." Any-

one visiting the Safford area should take the time to see the collection.

Vera still lives in the home Jack built so many years ago. She has a resident care giver, as her son lives in Oregon, and her daughter lives in California. Her children have given her seven grandchildren and several great- and great-great-grandchildren.

Thank you, Vera, for being such a conscientious Guardian of our Cochise County History.

Dale Mortenson

Named All Arizona Superintendent for 1998

(Note: This article is a reprint of the original written by Xavier Zaragoza for the Dec. 23, 1998 edition of the Douglas Daily Dispatch)

Dale Mortenson, 52, stood in the middle of a damp road and gazed east to the Swiss Helm Mountains. Storm clouds hung above the mountain tops and a rainbow stretched across the sky.

"That's one of the reasons why I stay in Elfrida," Mortenson said, pointing to the mountain range.

His affinity for his community runs deep, which is why he stays in that town of about 1,400 inhabitants.

Mortenson was born and raised in Elfrida, an agricultural community that grows white corn, green chilies, and alfalfa.

In 1964, he graduated from Valley Union High School, the same school in which, 34 years later, he is now principal and superintendent.

Recently, for his work as the superintendent of the Valley Union High School District, Mortenson was recognized as a top administrator. He has been named All Arizona Superintendent of the Year.

In his 22 years as principal and superintendent, Mortenson has come to know many people in and around the Valley, people to whom he attributes his success.

"It's a kind of success that can come only through working closely with teachers, administrators, and parents," said Mortenson. "I may have gotten the award, but it's really a team effort."

For Mortenson, "working closely" also means knowing the first name of each of his 230 Valley Union High students.

Yet, the community's small size presents its own challenges to Mortenson, who is continually applying for grants to improve the school's educational level.

"It is an on-going challenge to find funds to do the things we want to do with our school," he said.

Recently, a state grant provided funds that bought computers for the high school, he said. A new gymnasium that also includes classrooms was built about a year ago.

As the Elfrida community continues to grow, Mortenson sees the need to continue the push for better education, classrooms, and resources for his district.

"It's the community's effort that will help make us a better school system," Mortenson said.

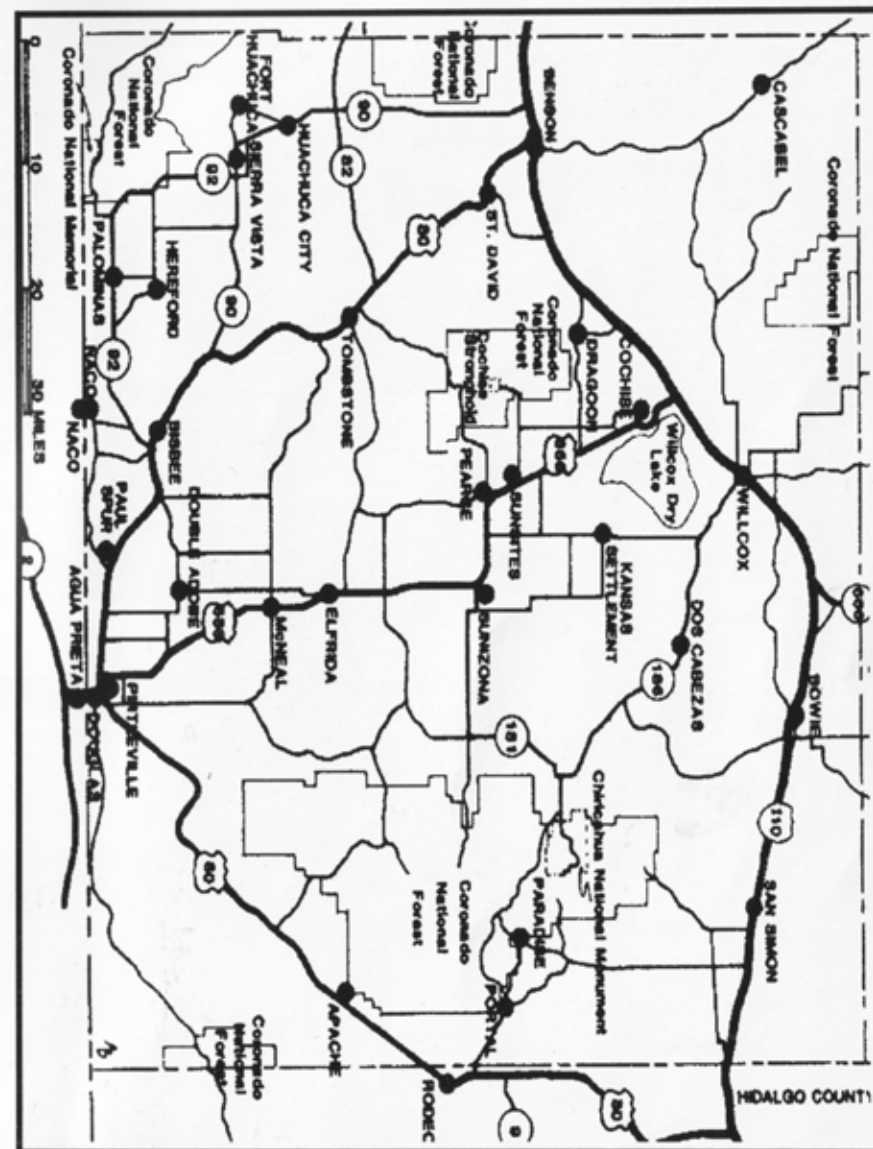
In 1970, Mortenson graduated from Arizona State University with a bachelors degree in chemistry with a

minor in Spanish. In 1972, he received a master's degree in counseling. In 1976, he received a counseling certificate from the University of Arizona.

Mortenson lives in Elfrida with his wife, Mariel.



DALE MORTENSON



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