

**CENTENNIAL EDITION
CELEBRATING THE COCHISE SCHOOL LIBRARY BUILDING
1911-2011**

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF COCHISE, ARIZONA

**BY
BRAD SMITH**



(Previously published as: **Cochise, Arizona: A Brief History to 1920**. Now with new information and photographs.)

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Cochise School District No. 26

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Stephen C. Webb, Superintendent

August 12, 2011

Welcome to the 100 year reunion of the Cochise School!

It is exciting to delve into the history of the School, School District, and the community. So many exciting and tremendously interesting events have transpired. So many people have affected the lives of so many of us.

As each of us reminisces we can relive and relearn many of the things that are important to us along with what was once a part of our lives and what has helped shape who we are today.

We welcome those that are able to return and hope that you have the time to stroll through the campus and classrooms. To see the school as it was when you were here as well as witness the changes that have been made.

Among the changes over the years is a new Solar Panel that provides the School with cost reduction power to our electric bill. Many will see classrooms that didn't exist 30 years ago, along with other aesthetic changes.

The Spirit of Cochise School is still alive and well.

We hope you enjoy your reunion and may the words "I remember" be a wonderful part of your visit.

Sincerely,

Stephen C. Ulrich

Stephen C. Webb
Superintendent

“A Great Place to Learn”

Cochise, Arizona is a settlement of approximately 30 residents. It is located in the southeast portion of Arizona, about 6 miles south of Interstate 10, off of Highway 191, in Cochise County.

Cachise Station

In early August 1880, the Southern Pacific transcontinental line was laid to where Cochise stands today. The railroad brought a boom to the previously undeveloped area.

Present day Cochise County had several mining districts which had already been worked and discovered in the 1860's and 1870's. The expense to freight large mining equipment and construct entire camps was too great to interest investors. However, following the arrival of the railroad the two mining districts closest to present day Cochise enjoyed the interest of Eastern States investors. The Cochise Mining District at Johnson (including the Golden Rule Mine), and the Dragoon Mining District located on the north edge of the Dragoon Mountains enjoyed the influx of Eastern development money.

With the completion of the Southern Pacific's main line came the development of Cochise County. The railroad employed mostly Irish and the Chinese workers. They were the ones who toiled under the hot sun of the desert region. The Chinese who had endured extreme prejudice in California decided to brave the hard labor required in railroad work. The Chinese camps were well organized and the workers began their days early (during the summer). When the work camps reached Tucson in 1880, the United States Census counted 1,153 Chinese in Pima County (which included present day Cochise County) many of whom were railroad laborers. When the Southern Pacific finished laying the track through Arizona, the Chinese continued to work as section hands.

Section stations were established at regular intervals along the track as the railroad bed required frequent upkeep. One such station was established at the intersection of the Southern Pacific's main line and the Croton Spring road. The station was named Cachise, after the famous Apache chief. (The Southern Pacific continued to name the station Cachise until after the turn of the century. While the post office and town was named Cochise.) The 1882 Census lists nineteen residents of Cachise Station (including one entire family): (Father) P.M. McCann, (Mother) M.B. McCann, (children) J.P., Mary, Bridget, J.H., and Sarah. Also on the census: Lonnie Sullivan, S.J. Williams, Min Soy, Hop Sing, Men Sing, Lo Joy, Cha Lee, Sing Nay, Hop Lee, Sue Lee, Sam Long, and Sue Long.

Cachise Station probably consisted of railroad cars to house the workers. It was simply a siding with no amenities. Few trains would have stopped here although the station does appear on timetables as early as 1884. The station would have been also used as a freighting stop but its main function was as a section camp.

John J. Rath, Cochise's town father, arrived in the area in 1894. It was announced in the April 17th *Arizona Range News* under its Bowie News column. It read, "W. Goodman night operator (for the Southern Pacific) at this place for a year left last Monday for California. Mr. Rath now occupies his place." All that remained was the catalyst to get him to Cochise. That came soon enough in the form of a nearby mining boom.

In 1894, America was in its worst shape in 30 years. Huge numbers of laborers were out of jobs and many of those men became wandering hobos. Those who did work, went on strike for better wages and hours. Also, at the time a move was made for bimetallism in the United States monetary system. "Silverites" supported a policy for unlimited silver currency and set a price for silver at 16-to-1 to gold. The Western interests advocated this because of the West's large silver mines. The Midwest supported it in the hope that commodity prices would rise after interest rates fell. But the Eastern interests won and the United States adopted the gold standard.

The silver panic, starting in 1893, caused many mines in Cochise County to close including some in Tombstone. One miner, John Pearce, decided to take up ranching in the Sulphur Spring Valley. In early 1895, one of his sons was tending stock when he spotted a rich piece of ore. The specimen was assayed at \$22,000 per ton in silver and \$5,000 per ton in gold. The report caused a rush to the area. John Pearce did not have the resources to develop his Commonwealth Mine, but he did not have to worry because investors would soon arrive.

Soon, John Pearce would be rich and a small ore shipping town named Cochise would begin to take shape.

Arrival of John J. Rath

Before the year 1895 had ended, John Brockman of Silver City, New Mexico offered John Pearce \$300,000 for the Commonwealth Mine. Pearce declined that offer because the Brockman's down payment was not enough. Early in 1896, Brockman was allowed to work the shaft and the results were so promising that he quickly offered \$250,000 cash. John Pearce accepted the offer. The boom town of Pearce grew up near the mine. Some of its early business owners such as Soto Bros. and Norton & Co. were well known in nearby Willcox and would open stores in Cochise. Those businesses were also involved in freighting as well.

The section camp named Cochise became a shipping depot for the ore from the Commonwealth Mine. Because there were no roads between Pearce and Cochise, a 16-mile road was constructed to accommodate the ore shipments.

A newcomer to the area would have been impressed by the strength of the Norton & Co. draft horses. The twenty-four horse teams hauled the ore to the railhead. After the ore was unloaded the wagons would return to Pearce loaded with equipment and supplies. Henry Clifford a local freighter first appeared in Cochise County in 1882. At that time he was a freighter for Morse's Sawmill in Pinery Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains. That sawmill provided lumber for the mines in Tombstone and, later, for the buildings in

Pearce and Willcox. When the huge pump and boiler for the Commonwealth Mine mill arrived at Cochise in May, 1897, it was Henry Clifford that freighted it to Pearce. Two mills were to be built and would be in operation within 60 days. On August 15, 1897 the first mill run by a Corliss Engine began operation and smoke from the mill could be seen in Cochise.

Once the mill was running, the Commonwealth Mine shipped bullion to Cochise. When the smelter was going, the bullion extracted were silver and gold bars weighing 2,000 ounces each. The method of bringing the bars to Cochise was surprisingly uncomplicated. Ordinary farm wagons that could haul 1 ½ ton were used. There were no guards for the lone driver because each bar was too heavy for any robber to take away quickly. Each freighter may have made several trips per month, and once the bullion arrived at Cochise, it was shipped to the U.S. Mint. The quantity of bullion shipped from Pearce varied. Twenty silver and gold bullion bars worth \$40,000 (today worth over \$1,000,000) were shipped one month. The next month, nine bars worth \$18,000 came from the mine. The two month total of 29 bars of bullion would be worth over \$1.5 million today.

The bonanza at Pearce attracted miners throughout the West, including a miner from Colorado named John Gleeson. He worked an area at the southern tip of the Dragoon Mountains near the settlement of Turquoise. Gleeson discovered a copper deposit and christened his claim the Copper Belle. The ore from the Copper Belle was freighted to Cochise for shipment to Clifton. Once there the ore was smelted for its iron and sulphur content by the Arizona Copper Co.

The Gold Cliff Mining Co. was formed early in 1897 and became important to the early development of Cochise. It operated mines in the Turquoise District near the town of Gleeson. The copper ore was freighted to Cochise for many years. The largest investors in the company were W.H. Wren and R.H. Knight of Los Angeles, California. George H. Fitts (of Tombstone and founder of Fittsburg, a settlement near Pearce) was President and Fred Stock was Vice President.

In April 1897 the Golden Queen Consolidated Gold Mining Co. was incorporated. All the players in that company were from out of state. The company was capitalized at \$500,000 with shares at \$1.00 per share. The company owned the Golden Rule Mine in the Dragoon Mining District. The mine is the only one in the district that has been worked to any real extent. By 1902, 8,000 tons of gold ore had been extracted but little work has been done since then.

In April of 1899, John Powell, the Golden Queen's manager, expected the arrival of a shipment of 20,000 feet of lumber for a mill to be built at Cochise. A couple of months later, the mill frame had been built. The mill was located on a five acre parcel directly across the street from the Norton & Co. store near the railroad tracks.

The Peabody Mine at Johnson also shipped copper ore to Cochise. Freightier Henry Clifford was the superintendent at the Peabody and his close ties to Cochise assured that the ore-freighting business came to Cochise and not the closer town of Dragoon. The Dragoon Mining Co. ran the Peabody until 1906 when the Bonanza Belt Copper Co. took it over. Although other mines were active in the area, it appears only the Peabody ore was shipped to Cochise. Clifford also continued to run ore wagons to Cochise from Pearce. As his freighting business grew, Clifford became involved in a wider variety of interests. In 1900 he was the Road Overseer, a bonded position that gave him the responsibility for collecting road taxes and maintaining the roads in the Johnson area (including the Cochise-Johnson Road).

The tiny town of Cochise grew quickly as a shipping point for Pearce, Johnson and the Turquoise mines. Ore was going out and machinery, men and merchandise were freighted to those areas. The *Arizona Range News* described Cochise in its February 9, 1897 edition. "The town of Cochise is fast assuming city airs. She now boasts a store, post office, express office, restaurant and meat market. The latter is conducted by Mr. Thos. Steele in connection with his mercantile business. Mr. Steele is killing his own cattle and is, of course above suspicion (of slaughtering diseased or stolen cattle). Still, for the sake of regularity and to satisfy everyone, there should be (a cattle) inspector at that point."

In June, Joe Davis, who was a partner with Thomas Steele, opened the first saloon in Cochise. He later sold it to partners Hiram P. Newton (the stage operator) and Martin Crowley. Meanwhile, Norton & Co. had already set up a general merchandise store in Cochise with W.A. Bowles as manager. Another Norton & Co. employee, W. de H. Washington, also worked in the store in Cochise. Later, he would have his own store in Johnson and, still later, he would become one of the first merchants in Douglas.

When the new century arrived, Cochise was a growing town where entrepreneurs were involved in numerous enterprises. Among them was Neal Henderson who ran a saloon at the end of Rath Avenue on the Southern Pacific side of Front Street (now Cochise Stronghold Road). As bartender, Henderson was described as "doing a good business dispensing liquid refreshments to his numerous friends." His interest in the saloon was bought by H.P. Newton in 1902 whereupon Newton leased the saloon to Henry Morgan. Albert Eaton opened a sporting house which included gambling (roulette), a bar, and a restaurant. The bar had "fixtures seldom equaled in the West," and the restaurant was known for its, "first class meals day and night." John Collins came to town with his wife and bought the Cochise Dining Hall which he then sold to Charles Halderman. The dining hall was located across the railroad tracks to the southwest of the crossing.

Mail service a sure sign of civilization began in the fledgling town of Cochise. The post office opened in 1896. The first postmaster was Charles R. Sims. He was postmaster from September 19 to November 28. The post office was housed in an abandoned railroad car only eight feet from the Southern Pacific main line.

The next postmaster was Thomas Steele, a rancher and former stage station operator. He stayed on as postmaster until town father, John Rath, took over in 1898. Although postmaster was an important position it did not pay all that much. The 1897 postmaster compensation was \$58.49. (In 1899, it was only \$174.71 and, in 1901, \$316.28)

The contract for the postal route from Cochise to Pearce was won by Hiram P. Newton. The mail was delivered to Pearce twice a week until May 1897 when the route was changed to three times a week. The stagecoach that Newton used for passengers and mail was a 1 1/4" Studebaker Covered Spring Wagon.

Stage operator Hiram P. Newton was born in Genesee County, New York on January 25, 1836. His family emigrated to Beloit, Wisconsin in 1845. At 21, he left the Midwest to go to California. While there he worked at several occupations including ranching, general merchandise, mining and stagecoach operator. He went to Union County, Oregon in 1880 then to the Wood River area in Idaho where he was a miner. In 1884, he loaded his wagon and his team of six horses and traveled to Arizona. After a journey lasting seventy-six days, he arrived at Bonita Canyon in the Chiricahuas. He was employed as a teamster for the sawmills located in that area. By 1886, Newton became a miner and was living Willcox. Then he became a stage driver on the Willcox to Dos Cabezas route. Newton was one of the first people to relocate to Pearce when the rush started. In mid-December 1896, he bought out the Owen Williams and J. Harper water well. The well was located "about 1,500 feet east from the main street in Pearce." Newton's well provided water for the entire town. When he won the contract to deliver mail between Cochise and Pearce, his headquarters in Cochise was a simple dugout. He had married twice and had three children. Otis, Alexander and Hattie all lived in California.

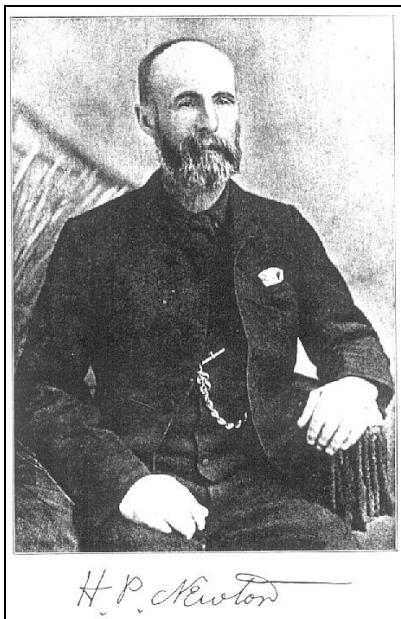
In late July, 1897 the railroad depot at Cochise was nearly finished and described as "quite an imposing structure." On October 19, soon after the depot had opened, the Southern Pacific's new passenger train the Sunset Limited arrived at Cochise during its inaugural run. The first railroad timetable that included Cochise appeared in November.

The next important event in Cochise was the arrival of town father John J. Rath. He arrived in December, 1897 and began to build a house in Cochise. Rath and his wife, Lula Belle, moved into the house in February 1898.

John Jacob Rath was the son of John J. Sr. and Susie (Antz) Rath both natives of Germany. He was born in Queens, Long Island, New York on March 25, 1870. At 13, he left home, as many boys that age did, and went West. He worked in Colorado for two years and lived in California until the year 1893. In April 1894, he became the night telegraph operator for the Southern Pacific at Bowie. Later, he was promoted to chief clerk at the station. He met his wife Lula Belle in 1895 and they were married on April 20, 1896. About December 1897, he was transferred to Cochise to become the station agent.



**Left: First Train
Cochise to Pearce.
1903. John Skinner,
Engineer.**



Hiram Newton ca. 1901. He owned the Cochise & Pearce Stage Co.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John J. Rath".

Town father John J. Rath ca. 1901.

John Rath's wife, Lula Belle Olney was born in 1875 in Texas. Her father was Joseph Olney (born October 19, 1849) and her mother was Agnes Jane Olney (born October 31, 1850). The 1870 Burnett County, Texas, census lists Joseph as a stock raiser. Over time, Joe ran into trouble with the law in Texas and changed his name to Joe Hill.

Joe Hill, at one time, was one of the most wanted men in New Mexico Territory along with the likes of Billy the Kid. The Hill family then moved to Arizona and ranned between Bowie and Solomonville. Lula Belle's father was among the outlaws in the powerful Curly Bill-Clanton gang. In Tombstone the gang's opponents were the Earp Brothers and the gunman Doc Holliday. Members of both sides began a murderous feud near the OK Corral in Tombstone on October 26, 1881. The gunfight ended with three cowboys dead. Retaliation came in the form of an assassination attempt on Virgil Earp and the assassination of Morgan Earp. Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday and others began a bloody vendetta throughout the countryside. They killed members of the outlaw gang including Curly Bill. Although the outlaw gang was effectively broken up, the Earps and Holliday left Arizona Territory. Still, one wonders if little Lula Belle knew any of her father's friends in the outlaw trade. That is easy to answer. The 1882 census lists outlaw gang members John Ringgold (aka John Ringo) and Ike and Phin Clanton at the Hill Ranch along with (Lula) Belle Hill, aged 7.

Lula Belle's parents died when she was still young. Her father Joe died on December 3, 1884 when a horse fell on him and her mother died on October 3, 1887. Lula Belle spent most of her youth attending school at the convent in Tucson. After she graduated in 1895, she taught school for the year in Solomonville. Then, she met John Rath and they were married at the home of her brother, Benjamin, and sister-in-law Vina.

The two had been married a little under two years when they moved into a new frame house at Cochise in February, 1898. In late March, Rath applied for a homestead. The original homestead included an additional 40 acres which Rath relinquished back to the United States. His homestead claim was for 120 acres covering the SW ¼ of the NW ¼ and the N ½ of the SW ¼ of Section 20, Township 15 South, Range 24 East of the Gila & Salt River Meridian. The homestead law called for the settler either to "reside upon and cultivate the land...for a period of five years," or, after fourteen months, the settler could pay for the land with cash after making proof of settlement. Rath opted for the latter.

In June 1899, John Rath began the several-month process to file proof on his homestead claim. That included completing several documents and publishing his intent to prove upon the land. Witnesses gave testimony on his claim. The witnesses were Hiram Newton and Rufus McKinney, a local rancher. The witnesses were given twelve questions dealing with the legal issues of the claim

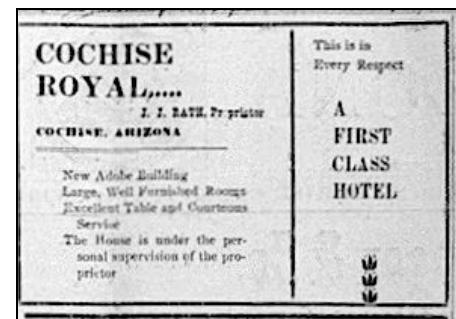
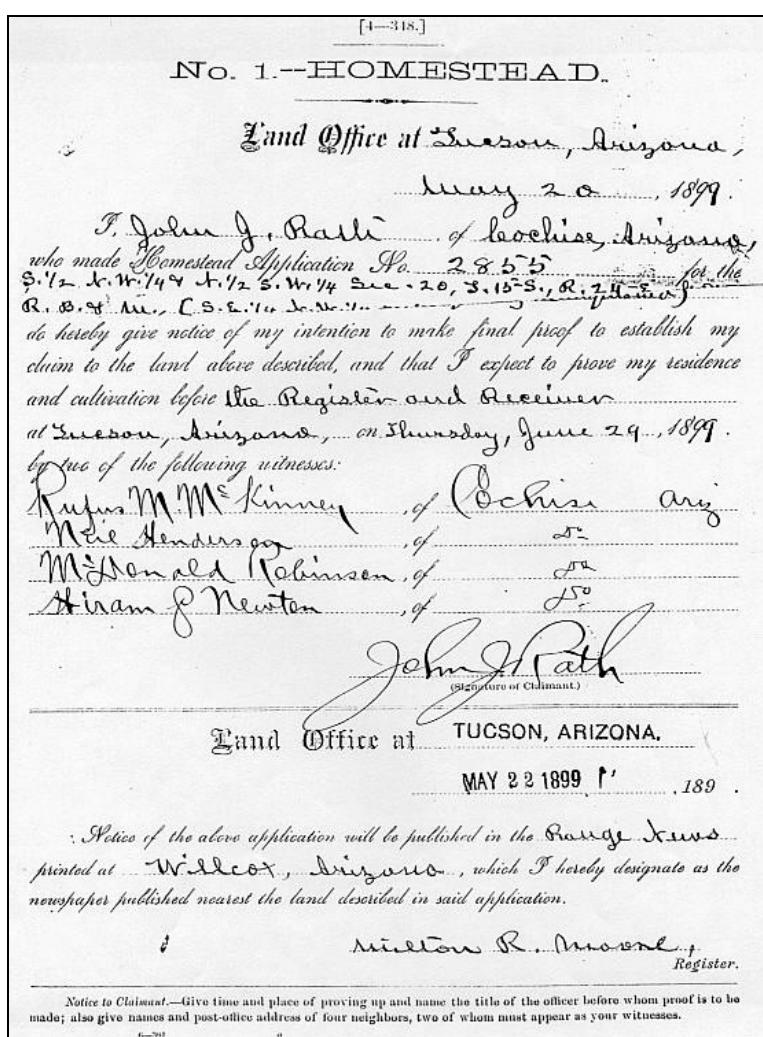
such as the length of time the settler had been on the property and so forth. One of the questions is quite intriguing. Question 3 asks, "Is said tract within the limits of an incorporated town or selected site of a city or town, or used in any way for trade or business?" Homesteads were meant for land to be used solely for cultivation and not as speculation or development. Newton answered, "It is not within a town nor near a townsite. There is a little store." Actually, there was a lot more going on and very soon a plan for a townsite was planned.

The homestead was approved in late July and John Rath paid \$1.25 an acre for the 120 acres. The land was patented on September 30 and transferred to Rath on October 13, 1899.

On June 20, 1899 Edith O. Rath was born to John and Lula Belle. When John made a trip to Willcox, the *Arizona Range News* editor described the baby as "...a nice baby girl. The nicest in the country if we can believe Mr. Rath." Edith was joined by Lillian in 1902 and Agnes in 1905.

John Rath had been named postmaster a couple of years prior to his announcement in September 1900 that he was going to open a mercantile and grocery store with partner H.D. Mars. Mars was the manager at the Norton & Co store in Cochise. Mars association with Rath was short-lived, lasting only until 1901 when he moved to Michigan. Previously, in late August 1899, a hotel Rath was building was reported as progressing nicely. "The building is constructed of adobe, 30X60 feet in size. Walls, are up and roof almost complete." The hotel was finished in mid-September and opened for business about November 15. (The hotel is now closed.) The hotel was christened the Cochise Royal and was advertised as having large, well-furnished rooms and courteous service. After the hotel opened, Rath resigned his position as agent for the Southern Pacific but continued as Wells, Fargo agent and postmaster.

About the time the hotel opened for business, a woman was hired to help Mrs. Rath. The woman was Mary Katherine Cummings. She was once known as Big Nose Kate, the girl friend of Wild West gunman Doc Holliday. Of course, Lula's father would have been bitter enemies with Doc Holliday. It would be interesting to know if either one or both ladies knew the history of the other. There is some speculation that Mrs. Rath did not like Mrs. Cummings. So, Lula Belle may have known who Mrs. Cummings really was. Mary Katheryn left Cochise after June 8 (she is listed on the 1900 census). She moved to Dos Cabezas and kept a house for a man there for many years.



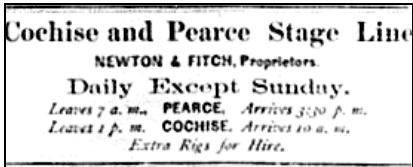
Advertisement from
Arizona Range News
ca. 1900.

Intention to make final proof of Homestead.

Cochise – The Town

As the new century began in Cochise there was continued influence by large investors and, in turn, a greater presence of large stores. The stores required a variety of support services and businesses which also necessitated town services such as a school and lawmen.

After the turn of the century the Southern Pacific Railroad began to eye Cochise as part of its expansion plan to supply the smelters in Cochise County with coal from Colorado and Mexico. Epes Randolph, the head of the Southern Pacific, visited Cochise in March, 1901.



Advertisement from *Arizona Range News* ca. 1901.

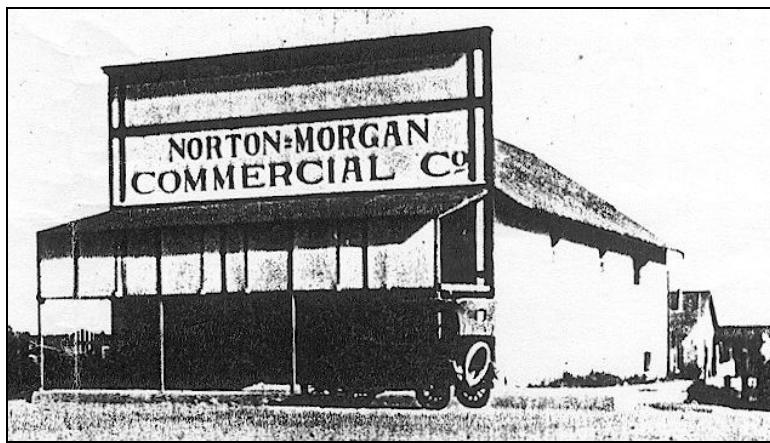
In 1902 the plan came closer to reality with the incorporation of the Arizona & Colorado Railroad. The railroad would link to the Ferrocarril de Cananea, Rio Yaqui y Pacifico, a Mexican railway, of which Epes Randolph was President and General Manager. Originally, the route was to have a terminal at Douglas, Arizona. Later, the Articles of Incorporation were amended and Cochise was made a terminal.

Railroad ties and supplies began to arrive at Cochise in December. Rights-of-way for the track were bought during January 1903. R.R. Coleman, a railroad contractor from Prescott, was contracted to complete the first leg of the railroad to Pearce. After the track was graded during April, the rails were laid about May 1. The first train from Cochise pulled into Pearce on May 28, 1903.

Two different engines ran on the line. One was a small engine weighing 66,000 pounds, built in 1886. The other was a 126,000 pound Cooke engine (#2439) built in May 1899. The first timetable appeared in the *Arizona Range News*, November 13, 1903. The train left Cochise at 7:30 a.m. and arrived in Pearce at 9:30 a.m. Then again it left Cochise at 2:20 p.m. to arrive in Pearce at 4:10 p.m. When the Arizona & Colorado Railroad completed its line to Pearce, all the local freighters lost their jobs and the Cochise & Pearce stage was no longer needed.

Large mercantile establishments looked to have a presence in Cochise in order to expand their business into some of the mining camps.

Norton & Co. was founded by John Norton who was a post trader at Fort Grant in 1876. He and M.W. Stewart also started a freighting business and, in 1880, opened a forwarding business in Willcox. Norton & Co. freighted goods up to Globe and had stores along the route. Henry Morgan bought out Stewart's interest and the firm became the Norton-Morgan Commercial Co. The original Norton & Co. store in Cochise was a frame building. In 1901 B.C. Gleason was store manager and the firm was the forwarding agent for other mercantiles in the area including Fiege & Co., Dragoon Mining Co. in Johnson and the Commonwealth Mine at Pearce.



Norton-Morgan Commercial Co. store ca. 1913.

Another mercantile in Cochise was Soto Bros. It was the partnership of brothers Pablo and Mariano Soto. Previously, the brothers opened a store next to the Norton-Morgan store in Willcox. The firm had various partners who invested in their stores including John Fall in Willcox and Thomas Chattman in Pearce. After selling his interest to Charles Renaud, Chattman became a merchant in Dos Cabezas. The firm Soto Bros. & Renaud eyed Cochise as its forwarding location for an area bounded by Johnson on the north and Gleeson on the south. The company bought out John Rath's mercantile and grocery store. The firm also bought the first recorded

property in the Cochise townsite on February 20, 1901. F.E. Steele was the manager and forwarding agent for Soto Bros. in Cochise. The modest frame building was located next to Rath's hotel.

John Rockfellow surveyed Rath's homestead on February 1, 1901. The survey outlined Blocks 1-8 of the town. The complete townsite survey was not fully completed until 1902. Up until then property could be sold in the town only in the blocks that had been surveyed. To interest people in the town, John Rath dug a well and provided water for the whole town. The wellhouse was located just behind the hotel.

Most of the early lot sales in town were along Front Street. Early landowners included Sam S. Falvey, a locomotive engineer and J.E. Dalas who ran a saloon.

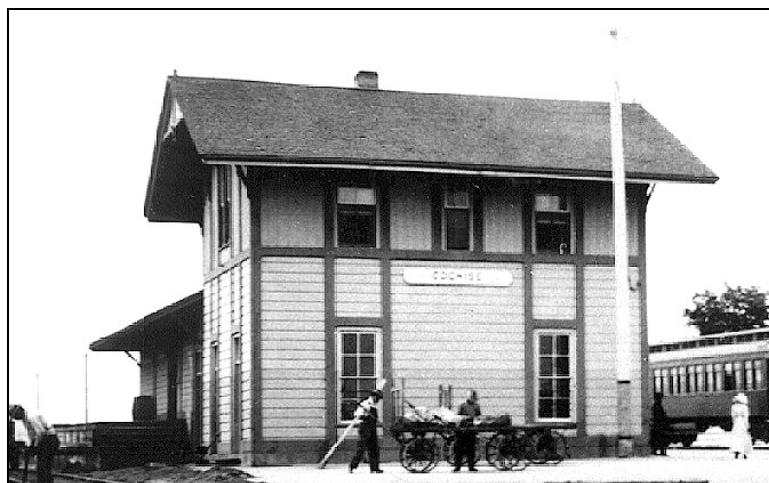
Early townsite landowners included Lee Kinnard, and Willis O. Huson, a Yuma attorney. Early resident Clay W. Garrard had bought out Albert Eaton's Saloon on Front St. and Willis Huson became a partner. After Clay died and his estate was settled in early 1903, Lee Kinnard bought the remaining stock. In turn, Woodson Garrard then bought out Huson. Later, Woodson eventually opened his own saloon and restaurant.

Of course, Hi Newton ran the Cochise & Pearce stage until the railroad went to Pearce. While the stage was still running, Newton was having some problems with his health. He needed a partner in the business. So, John Fitch, a long-time freighter, became Newton's partner in the stage company. After June, 1901, Martin Bostwick (who ran the Pearce and Turquoise stage) became Newton's partner. That partnership dissolved in November with Bostwick keeping the Pearce to Turquoise route and Newton the Cochise-Pearce section. The Cochise & Pearce stage was closed with the coming of the railroad to Pearce in July, 1902. The stock, building and leases were sold to freighter Henry Clifford. Hi Newton continued a livery service in Cochise until 1905 when he ran the stage to the mining camp of Johnson. On April 21, 1910 Hiram Newton, the old teamster and stage driver, died. He is buried in the Johnson cemetery.

There were some other businesses that opened in the small town. They include the short-lived blacksmith firm of L.P. DeBaud (who quit to begin ranching) and N. Jim Hyland. Later, there was the blacksmith and machinist firm of Guitard and Bentley. They also had a branch in Pearce. A.W. Bouldin and Jackson Henderson were partners in still another blacksmith firm. Prior to 1905, the short-lived Chinaman Restaurant had opened. Chauncey Newton (Hi's brother) came to Cochise to become a barber. And the Cochise Royal changed from being a hotel to a rooming house.

In 1903 the post office which had been in the depot, was moved to the Cochise Royal. Although Rath continued as Wells, Fargo agent, in May, John Rath handed over the postmaster duties to Albert Peterson. Peterson was a salesman for the Norton-Morgan Co. store, and later became its manager.

Although businesses were springing up, there was little population growth in the town from 1900 to 1905. The population rose from 50 in 1900 to 75 in 1905. In 1902 the Arizona & Colorado was established but Cochise did not benefit from being the railroad terminal. Cochise lost the both the freight & transfer businesses for camps to the south of town. After 1902, the mill for the Golden Rule mine was moved a few miles south to Manzora.



Cochise Train Depot ca. 1910-15.

The losses in town were balanced by a new factor in the area. Dry farmers began to arrive and, as the surrounding lands were opened to homesteading, a few emigrants made claims. Although the results often led to the farmer abandoning the lands, there seemed to be plenty of people coming in to give dry farming a chance.

There was always plenty of work to do on the farms. Even so there seemed to always be plenty of local entertainment to offset work. The small town of Cochise had a lively social scene. Along with the gambling and saloon activity in town, dances and

masquerade balls were held at the depot. At one dance, forty couples showed up on one hot and humid August evening. Local parties were held at various places, including Steele's Ranch. Another popular activity was to take a short trip on the train to visit friends in Willcox, and later take the westbound train back to Cochise. Some of the larger venues drew the locals to other parts of the county for a day or so. Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show was held in Douglas one September. The Ringling Bros. circus performed in Douglas in 1909. One of the biggest and most popular events in Arizona Territory was Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. That was held in Bisbee and Douglas on October 26 and 27, 1910.



Southern Pacific RR Section house ca. 1910.

While the social scene was great for the locals, there was a darker side to Cochise. One incident became famous in the annals of the Wild West. Just before midnight September 9, 1899 the Southern Pacific #10 westbound train pulled into Cochise and was held-up by a gang of masked men. The train had just slowed to a stop at the station, when the masked men came out of the darkness. The passengers were advised by one of the gang members that none of them were going to be molested. He went on to explain that they were only after the money in the express car. The Wells, Fargo express car and engine were uncoupled from the rest of the cars. The engineer was ordered to pull forward a short distance while the mail and passenger cars were to be left behind.

The train pulled forward about a half-mile to a point pre-determined by the robbers. A request was made to Charles Adair, the Wells, Fargo agent, to open the express car door, but he refused. Then the bandits set up a charge of giant powder under the Wells, Fargo car. After the explosion the bandits jumped aboard the damaged Wells, Fargo car and quickly filled a pack. Their horses, held nearby, were mounted and, with a parting shot, the bandits were on their way. The entire event lasted about half an hour.

Afterward when the train backed up to the station, one excited tenderfoot in the passenger car came out from under his seat, quickly ran out of the car, and fired two shots. Brakeman Gray recovered the revolver from the man, and he was escorted back to his seat. The train was reunited and then continued to Tucson.

In Cochise, townspeople gathered as the small settlement learned of the robbery. There was some talk of gathering a posse, but, since there was no lawman in town, it was hard to put together a group of determined men. Still, a posse formed and found a trail leading toward Willcox. The posse followed the trail along a route that went north to Steele's Ranch near Croton Springs and then east toward Willcox. The trail played out among many tracks just 100 yards from town.

Many theories abounded for a while about who the robbers were. No arrests were made until early the next year. On February 15, 1900 a north bound train was held up while stopped at Fairbank station, north of Tombstone. During the robbery, express messenger Jeff Milton was shot. But, he was able to severely wound one of the gang. "Three-fingered" Jack Dunlap escaped with his companions, but was soon abandoned. He was found by a posse and before he died in jail, he spilled the beans. He implicated several men involved in the Cochise train robbery. They were: Burt Alvord, the Constable at Willcox, Billy Stiles, his Deputy, Matt Burts, a former Deputy and William Downing. Stiles was found and confessed to the robbery. Downing was found in Pearce, while a posse went to get Alvord in Willcox. Alvord and Downing were brought to Cochise and held there until a train could transport them to Tombstone. Burts was eventually captured at Evanston, Wyoming.

In the end, it appears Alvord, after getting out of jail, took off for Central America, where he died in 1910. Billy Stiles changed his name to William Larkin (Larkin was his middle name) and became a lawman in Nevada where he was shot to death. After William Downing left jail, he ran the notorious Free and Easy Saloon in Willcox. He was killed by Arizona Ranger Billy Speed in 1908. Matt Burts eventually ended up in California. He was killed in a shoot out at Government Holes in 1925.

Following the train robbery a reluctant John Rath was persuaded to become the town's Justice of the Peace. The typical case brought before Judge Rath was not very exciting and more or less consisted of cases like that of Mariano Sanchez. Constable Bud Snow of Willcox arrested Sanchez who was wanted for the burglary of T.K. Mitchells' house in Johnson. The trial was held in Cochise

and Sanchez was found guilty. He was sentenced by Judge Rath to six months in jail.

During the year 1905 the town saw little change, but disaster would strike by years end.

On September 17, John Rath and several of his friends rented a buckboard from Newton's Livery. The group left Cochise about noon, heading out of town to hunt. Rath sat with his loaded shotgun next to him, the butt of the weapon resting on the floor. Just outside of town, the buckboard hit a rough spot, causing a jolt. Rath's shotgun slipped from his grip and then the hammer caught as it slid down. The shotgun fired with the discharge entering the right side of John Rath's neck, killing him instantly.

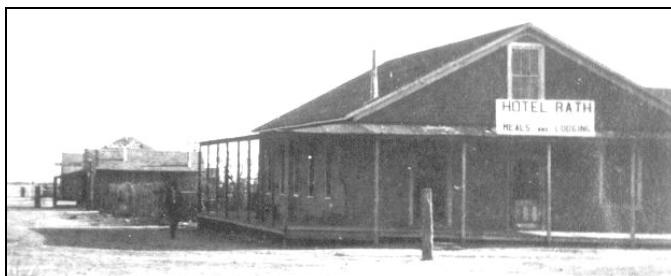
The buckboard returned to Cochise and Judge Page and Constable Bud Snow came in from Willcox. A coroner's jury was summoned and an inquest was held. Rath's death was ruled accidental.

On Monday morning, a procession left Cochise. It included Lula Belle and Rath's three daughters Edith, Lillian and Agnes. Most likely, John's younger brother George from Benson was there, too. Others included Mr. & Mrs. W.H. Lawrence, Mr. & Mrs. C.M. McKean, Mrs. White and C.M. Renaud. As the procession passed through Willcox on its way to Bowie., it was joined by Mrs. P.B. Soto, Mrs. M.J. Soto, and Mr. & Mrs. J.N. Lean. A ceremony was held at 1:00 p.m. in Bowie with the Rev. A.A. Hyde of Tombstone officiating. John Rath was buried in the Olney family plot at the Desert Rest Cemetery. Today, there is a small concrete headstone marking his grave.

Lula returned to the town, a widow with three daughters. A few weeks later a man broke into the rooming house. The children saw the intruder and quickly found their mother. Lula told the man to leave. He laughed and continued to rummage through a bureau. She grabbed a gun and again told him to leave. He left, still laughing. The man was arrested and found to have stolen a watch. The prisoner was transferred to Tombstone for trial.

In early November Lula and her daughters left Cochise to live with William Olney, her brother in Globe.

Lula returned by April 1907 to assume the responsibilities of postmaster and to reopen the boarding house.



Hotel Rath ca. 1912



Hamilton Lumber Yard. Ca. 1912.



Left: Norton-Morgan Store ca. 1910.



Right: The Kealy residence inside a railroad boxcar. Ca.1909

After John Rath died his estate went to probate. The problem was that John Rath's estate was frozen. Half of the estate was Lula's, the other half his three daughters'. The girls were minors and nothing could be done about their half unless it was decided that it would be in their best interest. The matter went before a probate judge in April 1909. The judge ordered a public auction of the minors' half of the estate.

News of the auction was published in three newspapers for ten days before the sale. On June 8, 1909, George Olney offered the winning bid of \$1,700 for half the interest in the estate. The court accepted the bid on July 9 and the matter was settled. On July 21, George Olney sold his interest back to Lula for \$1,700 so that the lots in the townsite could be sold.

One would not think there was a pent-up demand for lots in Cochise but there was. In less than six month's time, seventy-five lots were sold. The average sale price was \$20 per lot. The population in 1909 in the Cochise area, including homesteaders, townspeople and ranchers was close to 100.

About one year after the auction, Lula Belle married Charles A. Cornell on June 16, 1910 at the Minister of the Gospel church in Tombstone.

Charles Cornell was born in Missouri in 1877. His father was from New York and his mother from Missouri. He was a widower when he bought the rooming house just prior to his marriage to Lula. The rooming house was renamed the Hotel Rath in 1910.

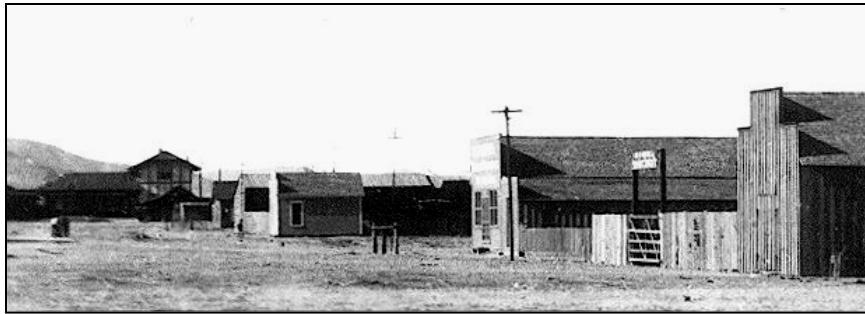


A homesteaders house near Cochise ca. 1914.

The Homesteaders

Homesteaders who had gotten the news about the opportunities in agriculture came to the Sulphur Springs Valley by the trainload beginning in the winter of 1909-10. They came from Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Georgia and Alabama.

One of the new arrivals was Mabel Ratenour Conroy. She arrived with her sister, father and fifteen other families from the Hutchinson, Kansas area. Her sister, Bernie, filed for a homestead and the two lived there. They had no money for the first year so they built a dugout. They dug a four foot deep pit and erected a 12 X 14 foot canvas tent over the pit. When it rained, a tarp covered the opening at the front. Later, the two sisters began to make adobe bricks for a house. The dirt for the adobe was plentiful but water to mix it was not. The two pushed and pulled a spring buggy three miles each day with two barrels on it. They filled the barrels with water and pushed it back the three miles.



Looking West on Rath Avenue ca. 1912.

Eventually, they had a 12 foot by 14 foot adobe house. Window frames were made from found lumber and a tarp was put over the windows until they were screened. Furniture consisted of apple boxes from the grocery store. Thick mesquite limbs were made into a table.

After she turned 21, Mabel filed for her own homestead. For three years, she hauled water before she and her sister hand-dug a well. She and Bernie dug down to about 30 feet. While one dug the other would windlass. The neighbor boys dug the remaining 30 additional feet, before water was reached.

Life was not all rough on the homestead. Mabel related a story about a dance at the El Dorado School near the present-day entrance to the Chiricahua National Monument and Faraway Ranch.

One cold October, Bernie was going with a cowboy named Ike Frise. The two arranged a date for Mabel with a friend of Ike's named Jim Howell so all could go to the dance across the valley. Mabel had never seen a cowboy, and she admitted she was quite amazed. Anyway, the two cowboys had brought a horse for the two girls but no saddle, because Bernie had explained they already had a saddle. The cowboys walked to the back of the dugout to get the saddle and began to laugh until they near burst at the seams. Well,

they eventually got over the fact the saddle was an English riding saddle.

They started to the dance with the two girls riding bareback on one horse and the cowboys taking turns on the other horse with the English riding saddle. By the time they arrived at the dance, Mabel reported, the two cowboys were so stiff-legged they could hardly dance.

When the happy group left later that night, it was icy cold outside and a long ways from home. Along the way, they would stop and one of the boys would light a match to some dry soapweed which would burn and warm them for a while.

Later on, Jim rode up slowly to Mabel and asked politely, "May I kiss you?" she quickly laughed because Kansas boys never asked. They just stole a kiss. She replied with "I should say not." Well, she said Jim seemed hurt like a shy dog.

The group was pretty well frozen when they came upon a homestead cabin with smoke rising out of the chimney. They were invited in and asked if they would like to eat some chili. The chili was steaming and boiling in a pot. The boys, after some hemming and hawing, said yes and gulped down the welcome treat. All proclaimed it the best chili they ever had. Its warmth helped all of them to get back home.

The next day the kind old homesteader who served the chili came over to the girl's dugout. The two sisters exclaimed over and over how the cowboys thought that was such good chili. The old man seemed a little surprised and told the sisters not to tell the cowboys that the secret ingredient in the chili was – prairie dog!

Years later, Mabel went on to marry a cowboy. Her sister Bernie married a "wild cowboy" named Pecos Higgins from the Double Rod Ranch.

While Mabel was just starting out here, the town of Cochise was changing.

The Town Transforms

The town was changing from a mining boomtown distribution point to a place homesteaders went to buy goods and services. Back in January 1901 John Rath and others had petitioned the County Board of Supervisors for a school district. The petition was accepted and the first school board election took place in March 1901. John Rath, Charles W. Halderman and John Bentley were elected. School was held in a local building.

In 1902, the teacher was Mr. J.M. Hackett. The teacher for the 1903 school year was Mrs. Jay Jacobs.

In January 1904, the school building burned to the ground while school was in session. The fire had moved so fast, some students barely made it out in time.



8th grade Cochise Arizona May 1912

**First 8th grade class to graduate from new school building.
May 1912.**



Unidentified group of students in front of the school building that was built in 1912. Ca. 1930s.

The student population at Cochise School remained modest until the arrival of the homesteaders in 1910. There were 39 students during the 1908-09 school year: sixteen returning and twenty-six new students. The 1909-10 school year saw the same number but, by fall of 1910, the enrollment jumped to 67. During that year there was still only one teacher. Two teachers taught at the school in the years 1911-16. When enrollment jumped to 92 in 1916 a third teacher was added to the staff.

In April 1911, several landowners deeded property to School District #26, so a new building could be built. They were Perry Hamilton, James and Doshia Metts, and Yancy Womack.

By mid-May, contractors Jones and Faulconer of Willcox, had nearly completed the new school building. The pre-statehood school building still stands proudly today and serves as the school library.

Another structure was built near the new school at about the same time. The Methodist Church built a church in May, 1911. To raise the \$400 needed to build the structure, the Ladies Aid Society held fund raising events, including a Saturday picnic at the nearby

settlement of Servoss. The fund raising was successful and the church was built. The church building burnt years later, but was rebuilt and dedicated in 1942. (The church still stands along Rath Avenue.)

The Ladies Aid also provided another service for the community. It held youth group meetings at the Womack Hotel. Mrs. Jane Garrard sponsored the program. Yancy Womack's Hotel was one of the first establishments to be located away from the main business section of town. It was on Rath Avenue, two blocks from the depot. The original building was two stories high, Womack's family occupied the second floor and guests, on the first. (It is currently a one story private residence.)

Another new establishment in town was Perry Hamilton's Lumber Yard, located behind the Norton-Morgan property.

In 1911, Miles H. Merrill, Jr. opened a General Merchandise store across the street from the Womack Hotel. Miles was a grandson of Philemon Merrill, the founder of St. David, Arizona. He sold the store in 1916 to Artie Slaughter who ran a stable.

Other businesses sprang up in the town. Ed Halderman opened a butcher shop, and he was praised as a welcome relief from the "meat wagons" that came through town. M.G. Crowley and S.W. McCall opened real estate offices. W.S. Utterback, a homesteader, was a local real estate investor. Dr. J.B. Ellis became the local physician.

Although a new group of townspeople were arriving the early pioneers were leaving. Early in 1913, Lula Belle, Charles Cornell and the three girls closed the rooming house and moved to Los Angles. The property was sold to Yancy Womack. It is not clear whether the property was open as a rooming house or was closed for some time.

Later, the Cornells moved to the Fresno area. Charles became a well-respected local contractor. In about 1943, the Cornells moved to Paso Robles and he was a contracting supervisor there. Charles died of a heart attack on December 5, 1948. He is buried at the Washington Colony Cemetery.

Lula and Charles had three children; Melvin, Charles Jr. and Mildred. It appears by 1948, Lilian was the only surviving child of John Rath.

Lula Belle Cornell died in Fresno County on July 17, 1966, at age 91.

Soon after Lula Belle and family left Cochise, pioneer saloon owner Woodson Gerrard sold his property to his mother, Jane. The last of the early saloon owners Eugene Dalas, closed his business by 1920.

That left only the Norton-Morgan Commercial Co. as the only business with direct ties to the early days of Cochise. Instead of closing, they erected a huge two-story adobe store in 1913. And, according to Dr. Ellis, "in erecting this monument to thrift and enterprise, (they have) shown faith in the future of the valley." (The adobe structure is now a private residence.)

Many of the land holders in the town bought their blocks of land when Lula first made lots available in 1909-10. By 1914, many were ready to sell off their holdings. One of the most eager buyers was John Skinner. He owned much of the Cochise townsite for years. The Skinners even leased the rooming house property from the Womacks before buying it and opening it as the Cochise Hotel in 1919. John Skinner added many improvements to the hotel, including running water with toilets and baths in each room.

Over time, the small mines near Cochise began to cut back production and some stopped operating. This prompted the Norton-Morgan Commercial Co. to sell their Cochise store in early 1917. The Ragsdale-Ballard Mercantile Co. bought the two-story adobe building and the stock. The company was incorporated and Henry Morgan who had moved to California was the President. E.N. Ragsdale and H.C. Ballard managed the store.

In 1920, none of the businesses operating in town harkened back to the early days of Cochise. None of the town's residents appearing on the 1920 census appeared on the 1900 census.

The small settlement had begun in 1882 as a small railroad section station named Cachise. It languished for years on the edge of obscurity. Then, in 1896, Cochise began its life as a shipping point for ore from nearby mines. In 1898 John Rath claimed the area as his homestead and, by 1900, a settlement grew up around the shipping and transfer point. The Cochise townsite plat was recorded and, at the beginning, sales were brisk. Several stores, mercantiles, a stage, blacksmith shops and other services were opened. But the outside influences of large area investors kept Cochise both from growing and from disappearing. Luckily, the town did not exist for only one mine or one business or it would have gone the way of many of the towns in the area – vanished with only a trace.

After John Rath's accidental death, his widow Lula owned most of the townsite. Once probate was settled, she sold off lots just as groups of emigrant homesteaders were filling the valley. This caused a boom in the population in town and the surrounding country. By 1920, the old settlers were all gone from Cochise and a new group had arrived.

The train whistle can still be heard as it always has here in Cochise. But, the wagon wheels have faded to become part of the history of the unique town of Cochise.

The End

One Hundred Years Later

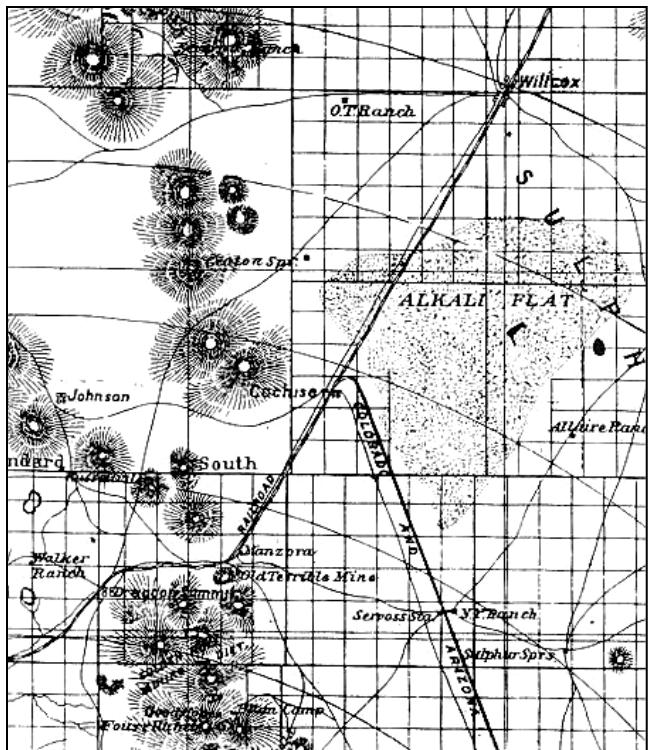
The Superintendent of Cochise Elementary School during the Centennial Year celebrating the Cochise Library Building is Mr. Stephen Webb. Kindergarten teacher is Mrs. Cori Aten. The first and second grade teacher is Mrs. Kim Bullington, and teaching third and fourth is Mr. Joaquin Ochoa. Middle school teachers are Mrs. Karen Hirshouer, Mr. Robert Spitzer and Mr. Brad Smith (and special education director). Mrs. Terry Seifert teaches spelling, music and art for all grade levels. Aiding the teachers are Mrs. Sandy Cramer in the library, Mrs. Julie Long in special education and physical education, Ms. Victoria Moore in reading, and Mrs. Pat Edie in computers. Business manager for the school is Mrs. Candy Acuna. The custodian is Mrs. Emma Stewart and Mrs. Chris Stukel prepares the lunches at the school. Mr. Joe Franco and Mr. Scott Gallagher are the bus drivers and maintenance men.

The original school building built in 1911 now houses the library, computer lab, staff offices and a classroom. In addition to the original building there are also two masonry wings housing the front office and classrooms. The former teacherage facing Bowie Avenue is now the teacher's lounge and meeting room. There is also a gym for sporting events and assemblies. During the 2011-12 school year there is an enrollment of eighty-five students.

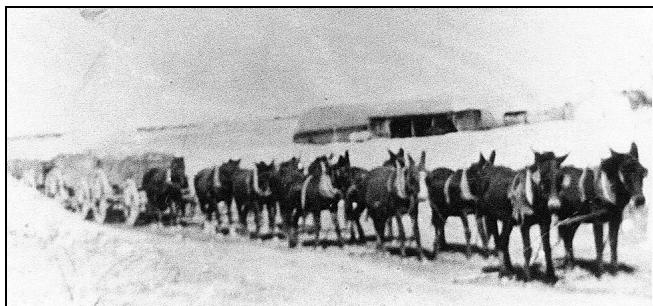


**Cochise School Students. 1909. Taken in front
of the second school building. That school
burned down while school was in session.
Everyone escaped unharmed.**

Illustrated Supplement



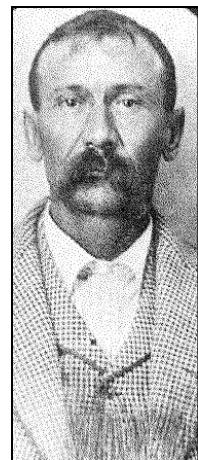
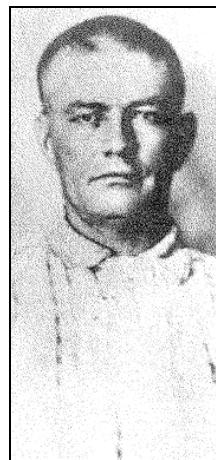
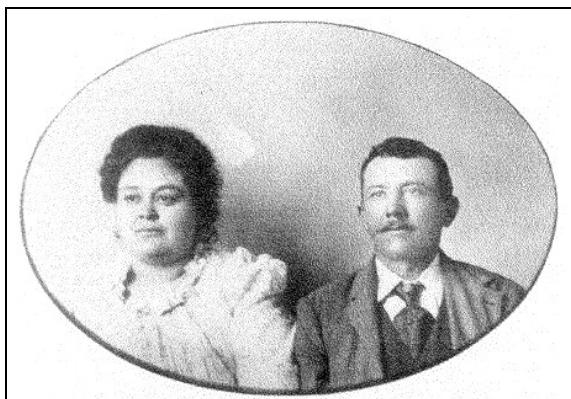
Detail of map by John Rockfellow, 1914. Area around Cochise, AZ.



Wagon train hauling ore from Johnson to railhead at Cochise.



Prospector with burros near Cochise. No date.



Cochise Train Robbers. L to R: Burt Alvord, Maria Stiles (wife), Billy Stiles, Matt Burts, Bill Downing.



**Grasshopper Meeting near Cochise at the farm of
B.O. Payne. June, 1916.**



**In the middle: Woodson Garrard's restaurant saloon
ca. 1910. Previously the Garrard & Huson Saloon. To
the left of the restaurant is the Soto Bros. & Renaud
store. That building was primarily a forwarding loca-
tion to the outlying mining towns.**



**Group of unidentified miners in front of
the main horizontal shaft of the Red Bird
Mine, January, 1912. The mine is in the
Red Bird Hills west of Cochise.**