

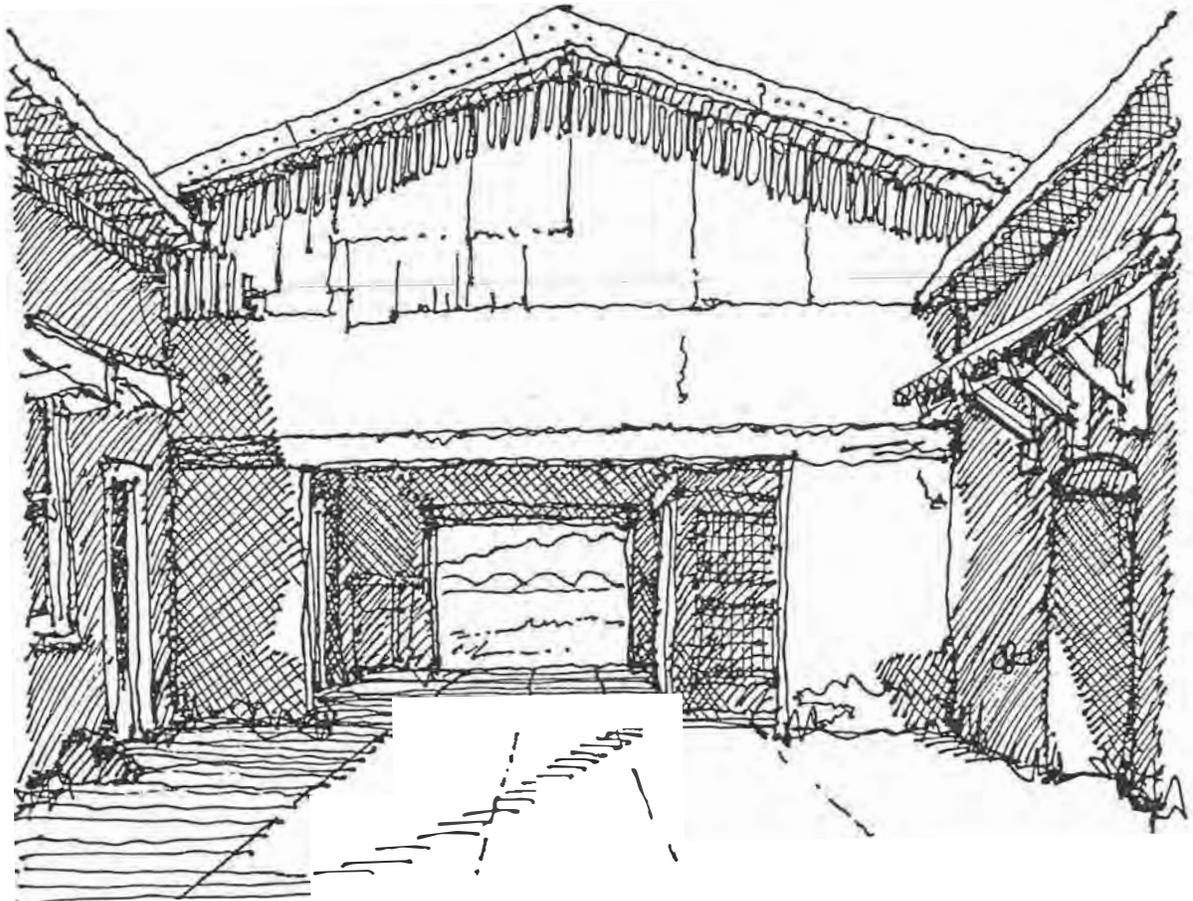
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[version 1.1]

HEART OF THE EMPIRE  
HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT  
EMPIRE RANCH, ARIZONA

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December 31, 1992



HEART OF THE EMPIRE

## EDITORIAL NOTE

The Heart of the Empire Historic Structure Report was never finalized. The primary author, Laura Soulliere Harrison informed the Empire Ranch Foundation that funding to complete the report was not available so that this draft version 1.1 is the final work product of her efforts.

Nevertheless, the draft report contains much valuable information about the history of the Empire Ranch and the architectural features of the Empire Ranch headquarters. As a result the draft report has been converted from a typescript manuscript to this pdf version, page numbers have been added to the existing content, and the photographs used in the Illustration section of the report have been enhanced whenever possible.

Alison Bunting  
ERF Archivist/Historian  
July 2020

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## PREFACE

## HEART OF THE EMPIRE

### PREFACE

There is something about the Empire that gets into the depths of your soul. The vast expanses of open space go on forever, and the rolling hills of the range are like undulating golden waves as they gently descend down Empire Gulch toward Cienega Creek. The mesquite trees along the hills are as tough as the cattle that roam the landscape. And the tall cottonwoods trace the water courses in that dry country.

The first time I saw the Empire, I was enchanted by its mystical charms. It is an area where the coyotes howl at night and in the early morning before the hunt. A full moon rising over the ranch seems twice its normal size as it illuminates the landscape with a golden-silver light. The air is sharp and crisp and dry with an electricity to its pungent desert aroma. It is a place of magic.

But more than this, the Empire is a place of hard work and heat, and the sweat and blood of several generations of families who grew up and worked there. The buildings hold physical clues to the patterns of life on the ranch, and the people who lived and worked there retain an instinctual knowledge of the ranch and a deep emotional bond with its landscape. They know the wells and the canyons, the quicksand spots along the creeks, the cooler shady places for a trail lunch on a hot day, and the best places for deer hunting. They know where to find the stray cattle at round-up time and how to get back to cover the fastest way during a hail storm. They know the old roads, the gas line, the old trails, and a few more short cuts. They know where to find the largest Emory Oak in the United States, and they know how to keep an orphaned calf alive. They know the land of the Empire, and all of them retain a piece of it in their hearts.

This brief history is dedicated to all of them: Laura Vail Ingram, Bob and Miriam Boice, Steve Boice, Sherry Boice Buzzard, Jack and Oliene Cooper, Rick and Pat Nickerson, Dick and Eva Jimenez, John Donaldson, and all of the others who helped with this study and who belong to the Empire.

Laura Soullière Harrison  
Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas  
December, 1992

## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

This project has been a cooperative venture between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the National Park Service (NPS). The agreement called for the completion of two products: Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Level III graphic documentation and a historic structure report. The HABS documentation was completed during 1991 and 1992, and it will be submitted to the Library of Congress and the Bureau of Land Management. This document is the second product: the historic structure report.

This study tracks the physical history of the ranch house and headquarters of the Empire Ranch, analyzes the existing conditions of the structures, and provides general treatment recommendations. The document is a standard NPS study that is prepared whenever there is to be a major intervention into historic structures or where activities are programmed that affect the qualities and characteristics that make the property eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The document is centered on the main ranch house and headquarters at the Empire Ranch near Sonoita, Arizona.

The information documenting the history of the ranch is erratic. Some short periods of time have graphic and written primary sources, while other periods of time have none. Key bits of information are missing. Even after the completion of this report and the extensive research that went into it, there is no conclusive evidence about the dates of construction and builders. Keeping records on buildings was not a high priority on a ranch where sustaining the lives of families, cowhands, cattle, and horses was necessary for the operation to survive.

Another factor clouding the history of the ranch is the vast amount of myth surrounding it. Stories--some originally told as conjecture--evolved into what is now considered accepted fact. Many of these "facts" have been printed and reprinted in both popular and scholarly publications. Sorting through this evidence to separate fact from myth has been challenging.

Compounding the matter of the ranch's physical history is the nature of architecture in an isolated area. Because acquisition of building materials is difficult from the outset, these elements remain at a premium. Materials are fabricated and re-used over and over again. Windows and doors are removed from one structure and added to a new building. Door openings are cut into formerly solid walls, and others are closed off. Walls are torn down and new partitions are constructed. This process of recycling building materials and modifying structures to accommodate new uses further

gums up the process of tracking the physical history.

The challenge of piecing together the history of the Empire Ranch house and headquarters has been a great one, and a number of people contributed in many ways to this project. Historical architect Barbara Zook of the National Park Service was the project manager. Archeologist Bill Gibson of the Bureau of Land Management began research on the project, flexibly turned over his initial research materials, and continued runs to the state archives and through General Land Office records with haste and enthusiasm whenever he received a request. Historical architects Ptolemy Dean and Robert Scrimgeour from England and Scotland respectively, came as interns on a program sponsored by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). They completed the finish schedules of all of the rooms of the main ranch house, and they completed the extensive rectified photography for all of the ranch buildings. BLM volunteer Pat Haddad graciously assisted them with the photography.

Architect Jim Garrison of the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office came to the ranch and offered valuable information on available materials and technologies in southern Arizona during various decades in the nineteenth century. His keen eye for architectural detail pointed out some of the architectural enigmas we had encountered. Archeologist Lee Fratt gave a thorough tour of the Total Wreck Mine site.

BLM Bureau Historian Carl Barna made quick jaunts to the Library of Congress and the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Modern Video Productions of Philadelphia donated professional time and expertise, use of equipment, and tape stock for transferring three of Mary Boice's home movies from their fragile 8 mm format on to video. Rick and Pat Nickerson's love for and knowledge of the ranch and its buildings proved invaluable in understanding the subtleties of the Empire and its people. Dick and Eva Jimenez, Henry Dojaquez, and Jack and Oliene Cooper added texture and substance to the Empire's history. John Donaldson provided a window into a potential new age of ranching--where public lands and grazing cattle might prove to be a symbiotic relationship. The Bureau of Land Management furnished housing and vehicles for the troops involved in this undertaking.

Particular thanks go to the Vail and the Boice families, whose love for the Empire and enthusiasm for this project opened many doors and provided more insights into the workings of the ranch than any historian could have hoped for. Their contributions have been boundless.

LSH

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Max: This is the section that BLM must complete. I need about a paragraph each on "Institutional references and the relationship between the HSR and other planning documents. Requisite BLM management information in this section identifies the need for this section to be written by BLM."

What that translates as is as follows: Give a general idea of the present planning status of the larger Empire/Cienega RCA and the general thrusts that BLM has or is planning to have underway. Include information on grazing and ranch operations. Then get specific about the ranch: what BLM is going to do with it (even though that is still in the very formative stages right now, and part of what can be done hinges on what we turned up in this document). You can always phrase it in very general proposal terminology. The fine tuning will have to come later.

Then include information on present levels of staffing. Include both of the Nickersons, because Pat is truly indispensable, and include Bob Haile and the new emphasis on a BLM preservation team. Explain how they function now, and how the agency plans to have them function in the future. Again, very general terms are fine. Also include the temporary summer staff--the fire crew. During their down times they certainly can come in handy for brush removal, etc., around the historic structures.

Finally mention any cooperative agreements, special use permits, and the like. This should include information on concurrent or exclusive law enforcement jurisdiction, fire protection agreement (if any) with the Sonoita volunteer fire department, length of time and terms of grazing lease with Donaldson, any outstanding mineral claims, etc. The whole business will probably all fit on one page. Call if you have any other questions about this part.

LSH

HISTORICAL DATA

## II. HISTORICAL DATA SECTION

The Land of the Empire. Fifty miles southeast of Tucson the land has a gradual rise up into a basin surrounded by mountains. On the north end of this basin are the Empire Mountains. To the west are the Santa Ritas. On the east are the Whetstones, and to the south are the Canello Hills and the Huachucas. Centered in this basin of high sonoran desert and rolling grasslands are small areas with permanent streams. One of these is Empire Gulch.

This basin was the place where dreams of cattle ranching started and evolved into reality. Two families in particular--the Vails and the Boices--managed this vast land and the cattle they placed on it for nearly one hundred years. Several generations of each family tried their hand at growing cattle at a profit to feed the burgeoning nation. For decades the ranch survived until a time, like most other cattle ranches in the western United States, the big business aspects of cattle ranching overtook the family business aspects of cattle ranching. Increased pressure for development, changes in breeding and grazing management practices, and a steady decline in the cattle market all contributed to the dissolution of the ranch as a family corporation.

For a time the Empire was one of the largest cattle ranches in the southwestern United States. It was unusual for its sheer size and the number of cattle it supported. But also it was unusual for the impressive list of characters who created it and the often adverse conditions under which they operated. Each of its owners brought a unique background and method for implementing a dream on this piece of land called the Empire.

E.N. Fish. The first documented person to develop the ranch was a man named Edward Nye Fish. Fish was born in Barnstable, Massachusetts, a small town on Cape Cod, in 1825. While growing up in Massachusetts, he learned two practical trades: that of wheelwright and tinsmith.<sup>1</sup> He sailed to California as a forty-niner to seek his fortunes in the gold fields of California, but he soon discovered that his gold lay in the mercantile business. He started with a hardware store and tin shop in Sacramento and then moved closer to the gold fields. While on the north fork of the American River panning for gold, he and a partner started making gold pans out of sheet iron. They sold them for \$16.00 each. When his partner went into San Francisco on a trip to replenish

<sup>1</sup>Untitled typewritten manuscript, in E.N. Fish Biographical File, Arizona Historical Society (AHS).

supplies, the word got back to Fish that he was drinking and gambling away all of the supply money. As a result, Fish went into business by himself.<sup>2</sup>

In 1864, Fish came to Arizona and started a number of business ventures. He received the contract with a partner named Garrison to be post trader at Camp Mason in Calabasas, Arizona.<sup>3</sup> In 1867, he moved to Tucson and started a mercantile business with a man named Simon Silverberg. In addition to that operation, he also had a contracting and freighting business, and he sold hay and grain to mines, ranches, and the federal government.<sup>4</sup> In 1869, he had mule trains that carried supplies for his mercantile business between Yuma and Tucson. The goods came from San Francisco to Yuma by steamer at the rate of 1.5 cents a pound; and Fish's mule train made the fastest round-trip possible--thirty days.<sup>5</sup> Fish had four 12-mule teams and one 16-mule team for his freight business. Thus by 1870 Mr. Fish was well-equipped and very experienced in moving freight.

Also by 1870, Fish had his hand in a number of other businesses. He bought a flour mill in 1874.<sup>6</sup> He had noticed a shortage of good flour for his mill, so he started a business by supplying wheat seed to the Pima Indians near Florence out of his trading post at Sacaton. In payment for the seed, he received a percentage of the crop. He purchased much of the remainder.<sup>7</sup>

Fish was just under 5'8" tall, and he had broad shoulders, blue eyes, white hair and a full white beard which had turned white when he was a young man. He was agile and quick in his movements--both physical movements and business activities. He grasped at opportunity even if it just knocked softly. He and his wife, Maria

<sup>2</sup>Untitled handwritten manuscript, E.N. Fish Biographical File, AHS.

<sup>3</sup>Fish's partner Garrison was also known to be a heavy drinker. Legend states that Garrison "was such a heavy drinker that his breath was so saturated with alcohol that it ignited from his cigar as he was lighting it and burned him to death." Untitled typewritten manuscript in E.N. Fish Biographical File, AHS.

<sup>4</sup>Typewritten Manuscript "Edward Nye Fish (1827-1914)," E.N. Fish Biographical File, AHS.

<sup>5</sup>Untitled typewritten manuscript in E.N. Fish Biographical File, AHS, citing Weekly Arizonian, April 18, 1869 and Arizona Daily Citizen, February 15, 1873.

<sup>6</sup>Typewritten Manuscript out of the Hayden Papers, included in E.N. Fish Biographical File, AHS.

<sup>7</sup>Untitled handwritten manuscript, E.N. Fish Biographical File, AHS.

Wakefield Fish, contributed generously to philanthropic pursuits including the construction of the first public school in Tucson and the first protestant church.<sup>8</sup>

Among the businesses that Fish pursued in his early years in Arizona was a sawmill in the Santa Rita mountains just southwest of the property that became known as the Empire Ranch. In 1871, Fish advertised the following goods from his sawmill:

Pine Lumber! The Santa Rita Saw Mill Co. are now prepared to furnish all kinds of LUMBER AND SHINGLES at the Lowest prices and of the Very Best Quality ever offered in this market. Parties wanting any kind of lumber will please have their orders at the store of Messrs. E.N. Fish & Co., and they will be promptly filled.<sup>9</sup>

At the time, Fish was in the lumber business as a partner of Tom Gardner who also owned land on the eastern slopes of the Santa Rita Mountains.

Sawn lumber was still at a premium in that area of Arizona in the late 1860s and early 1870s. One sawmill had existed in the Santa Rita mountains west of the Empire Ranch as early as 1869. "Frenchy" Lazard operated that mill which supplied good pine lumber at 10 cents a board-foot in 1869 and 1870.<sup>10</sup> Before that time, most sawn lumber was hauled in by wagon from New Mexico.<sup>11</sup>

The Empire Property. By 1871 Edward Nye Fish owned in some fashion what became known as the Empire Ranch, and he and a partner owned outright a sawmill in the mountains to the southwest. Fish had expected to make the Empire property his home, but he ran into

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Advertisement in The Arizona Citizen, June 17, 1871, Page 3, Column 1. The advertisement also appears in the Tucson Citizen of July 1 and July 8, 1876. Both are available on microfilm at the Arizona Historical Society.

<sup>10</sup>The Weekly Arizonian, April 16, 1870, 3; and same, November 6, 1869, 3; and October 30, 1869; and February 26, 1870. Frenchy Lazard was killed by Apaches one day when he and a team of Mexican woodcutters working for him were hauling a load of lumber to the Total Wreck Mine by 20-mule team. The five of them were buried in a graveyard at the Total Wreck. See Bernice Cosulich, "Empire Ranch and Total Wreck Mine," Arizona Daily Star, March 13, 1932.

<sup>11</sup>The Weekly Arizonian, February 26, 1870, 3.

trouble with the Apaches so he moved back to Tucson.<sup>12</sup> Despite these bits of documentation on Fish in the vicinity, the deed and tax records and the oral traditions concerning Fish's acquisition of the property presented confusing and often conflicting evidence about the early history of the ranch even before the 1876 sale of the Empire to the Walter Vail.

Several reports stated that although the Empire Ranch belonged to Fish, "it had originally been located in the name of his brother-in-law Wm. Wakefield."<sup>13</sup> An 1875 statement under oath of property owned by E.N. Fish & Company included "Empire Ranch Imp."--meaning improvements to the Empire Ranch--valued the ranch at \$500.00.<sup>14</sup> This also documented the fact that in 1875 Fish called the place the Empire Ranch. At the time, Fish listed no cattle on his personal property. But the statement under oath for E.N. Fish and Company done the following year--in April, 1876--did not list Empire Ranch at all. One source recalled hearing from Walter Vail that he had bought the ranch from Fish in 1876, and that Fish had received it on a foreclosure from his brother-in-law William Wakefield.<sup>15</sup>

Further complicating the issue was a General Land Office document dated March 19, 1877 noting that William Wakefield (brother-in-law of E.N. Fish) had made full payment on the 160 acres forming the core of Empire Ranch.<sup>16</sup> This document went through the General Land Office nearly one year after Fish sold the property to Vail. Yet the Pima County Real Estate deeds recorded that William Wakefield sold the 160 acres of the Empire land to his brother-in-law E.N. Fish and Simon Silverberg of San Francisco for \$500.00 on

<sup>12</sup>Walter Vail to his father, December 11, 1875, unprocessed donation from Laura Vail Ingram, AHS.

<sup>13</sup>"The Empire Ranch," as told to Mrs. George Kitt by Edward L. Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS. Heffner recalled in 1954 hearing a story that Fish had acquired the property in about 1870 from "a Mexican who owed him considerable money for merchandise purchased and money loaned from time to time." See Harry Heffner to Mary Boice, February 5, 1954, Harry Heffner Biographical File, Special Collections, University of Arizona (UA).

<sup>14</sup>Pima County Records, Statement Under Oath, May 3, 1875, Special Collections, UA.

<sup>15</sup>Harry Heffner, Interview with Charles U. Pickerell, Ghost Ranch Lodge, Tucson, Arizona, June 4, 1960, 11. Transcript available at Special Collections, UA.

<sup>16</sup>Certificate #79, noted that William Wakefield "has deposited a Certificate of Register of the Land Office fulfilling the requirements for ownership of the 160 acres." General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix, Arizona.

June 19, 1876.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the early ownership of the ranch was confusing, but most of the documentation showed that Fish was connected with the ranch in some manner from 1871.

The earliest known map on which the property appeared was an 1874 cadastral survey and map, where it was shown as "Fish's Ranch." The survey notes attached to the maps stated "Enter Valley in which is Little Cienega, Fish's Ranch."<sup>18</sup> The ranch was on the road between Camp Crittenden and Tucson, and the road ran to the west of the ranch house.<sup>19</sup>

The Beginnings of an Empire: Walter Vail and Herbert Hislop. The Vail family contained a number of highly motivated people who sought their fortunes in a variety of enterprises. The elder men and women of the Vail family gave guidance and financial support to the children. One of these was Walter Vail. Walter was born in Liverpool, Nova Scotia on May 15, 1852, and he grew up on the family farm near Plainfield, New Jersey. He saw no future in farming in the east, so he headed west.<sup>20</sup> In the fall of 1875 Walter Vail struck out from his home in Plainfield, New Jersey on a grand tour of the west. He passed through Arizona after sightseeing in California, and he eventually circled back and found work as a timekeeper in the Comstock Mine in Nevada. But something about Arizona kept drawing him back.

Even on his first visit to Arizona in November of 1875, Walter was already assessing the real estate situation. He wrote that acquiring a horse or mule to ride around the Arizona country was difficult, but so was the prospect of acquiring land. He wrote:

I was very much disappointed after I got here to find

<sup>17</sup>Pima County, Arizona Territory Real Estate Deeds, Book 3 502-503, Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records.

<sup>18</sup>General Land Office, 1874 cadastral survey notes and map. Available at Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix District Public Room. Also, information from Box 1, file "Information, Historical. Coronado #2. Empire Ranch" of the Frederick Winn Collection, AHS, states that the Empire Ranch "was first owned by E.N. Fish and went by the name of the 'Fish Ranch' on some old maps. When Vail and Hislop bought it from Fish they called it the Empire Ranch. P.O. established May, 1879, John L. Harvey, PM."

<sup>19</sup>Another 1874 map of the area--the Arizona Public Survey Map copied from a map in the National Archives and available at the Bureau of Land Management in Phoenix--shows Fish's ranch as "Mescal Ranch" on the road between Camp Crittenden and Davidson Canyon. This is the second source that uses this as an early name for Fish's Ranch, although some other maps show Mescal Ranch in a more southeastern location.

<sup>20</sup>Handwritten notes, Box 5, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

that it was impossible to buy any land unless you find a man who has been on his ground for three years, his title is of no account and as the country is all new on account of the Indian trouble such places are very hard to find (I mean places of good title).<sup>21</sup>

Walter wrote to his brother about the natural wealth of the country: the grasslands--fine for grazing cattle--and the mining possibilities in the area. He saw the future of Arizona as being "destined to be one of the richest States in the Union."<sup>22</sup> He already foresaw the inevitability of statehood.

Walter, determined to establish a life in Arizona if he possibly could, saw the Empire for the first time in December, 1875. He wrote to his father that Fish's Ranch was wonderful grazing country, and that:

Mr. Fish's title only covers 160 acres but as he has all the water in his section of the country there is very little danger of anyone settling near there, the nearest water that lasts through the dry season is at least eight miles off and every way you go for a radius of fifteen miles is covered with fine bunch grass which will keep either horses or cattle rowling [sic] fat both winter and summer.<sup>23</sup>

He noted in the letter that Fish had told him he "took up" the ranch four years earlier (1871) and had expected to make it his home, but he moved back to Tucson because of trouble with the Apaches. Fish told Vail that he had grazed 1200 head of cattle there in 1874, but since that time he only kept about 25 mares, a handful of colts, and some sheep on the property. The sheep had not fared as well, but Walter Vail perceived that primarily as a management problem. Vail, during this 1875 visit, noted that a sheepherder and his family, which included five boys, lived at the ranch.<sup>24</sup>

Vail wrote that the sheepherder's boys were quite agile and all rode bareback better than

the majority of men do in New Jersey, it is fun to see the smallest get on a horse without any help, he climbs up the horses front leg far enough to catch hold of the

<sup>21</sup>Walter Vail to Edward L Vail, November 23, 1875, Letters written to Edward Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Walter Vail to his father, December 11, 1875, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 2-3.

mane then he pulls himself up on the neck then he crawls down on the horses back as happy as a king. Mr. Fish offered to sell his place for just what the improvement cost which is \$3800. which would be cheap for the place if anyone was prepared to put 300 good Texas improved cows on it. . ."<sup>25</sup>

Walter also wrote to his father about the quality of the Arizona climate. Although he felt that he could make a good living in agriculture in Iowa--another option he had considered--he felt that Arizona's greatest asset for a stock raiser was the climate. Shelter and winter provision were not necessary, and he noted that Arizona would be a good market for both cattle and wool when the railroad went through.<sup>26</sup>

Upon returning to Virginia City, Walter learned a few more things that came in handy. After his first stint as a timekeeper for the Comstock mine, he began working as a carpenter for the mine. He constructed the heavy timber framing required to support the tunnels and shafts. Walter Vail was not a big man. When he left New Jersey, he only weighed 135 pounds, but he gained twenty pounds of muscle while honing his carpentry skills.<sup>27</sup>

In March, 1876, he wrote to his uncle that he was "still working with the carpenters which of course is giving me an idea of tools, which will never come amiss."<sup>28</sup> He also wrote to his brother Ned (Edward L.) Vail about the accuracy required for the framing work. Despite the huge size of the timbers, he wrote, "all the timber will have to be framed so that it will fit like cabinet work; if they don't come together snug they will not answer." In the same letter, he wrote about how enamored he was with Arizona:

I wish you had been with me in Arizona. I think you would agree with me that it is a strange looking country. I think I saw the handsomest sunsets down near the Mexican line I ever saw. The general appearance of the country is different from any I have ever seen. When I have a warmer room and don't feel so sleepy, I will try and give you a description of the part of Arizona I saw.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>27</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, January 23 and February 9, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>28</sup>Walter Vail to Uncle (Nathan?), March 31, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>29</sup>Walter L Vail to Edward L. Vail, February 9, 1876, Box 2, 1875-1935, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

Walter Vail was building up his carpentry and management skills and working on his financial status, and he was deciding where to establish his roots. Even after a single visit to Arizona, he soon realized that the possibilities for his future there were boundless.

Walter kept seeking ways to finance a possible Arizona endeavor, and finally his uncle Nathan Vail came up with a possibility. British venture capitalists often sought to make profits in the cattle industry in the west, and Nathan Vail had found some likely prospects to help him out. In April of 1876 Walter wrote to his brother Ned:

I had a letter from Uncle Nathan the other day in which he says he has found three young men, who wish to join me in the cattle business and they all have the cash to put in so this looks more like business. I hope they will come and will like the country well enough to stick. Anyone that goes there expecting to lead an easy life and make money without working or standing some hardships will be disappointed, but from what Uncle N., says of the parties, I don't think when they have once started they will turn back.<sup>30</sup>

One of the men that Nathan Vail had turned up as a financial partner for his nephew was a young Englishman named Herbert Hislop. Hislop had arrived in Arizona in 1876 for his health, and as he phrased it "two years of roughing it saved my life. I had never even done so much as black my boots before," but the work of cattle ranching appealed to him.<sup>31</sup> He also liked the profit potential he foresaw.

Walter Vail wrote to his uncle Nathan that Fish had a number of things for sale:

I see by the paper that Fish has advertised everything for sale in Tucson and amongst other things is his ranch, I think the sale comes off the latter part of this month. . . We are going with Mr. Fish on Sat. to look at his place, he has a good deal more stock on it than he had when I was here last and I am doubtful whether we can do anything with it.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, April 15, 1876, Box 2, 1875-1935, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

<sup>31</sup>"Reminiscences of Herbert R. Hislop, as told to Mrs. Geo. Kitt, March 29, 1929," Hislop Biographical File, AHS.

<sup>32</sup>Walter Vail to "Dear Uncle," July 11, 1876, Letters Written to Edward Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS. A search through the Arizona territorial papers available on microfilm at the University of Arizona and the Arizona Historical Society did not turn up

Fish had married his second wife, Maria Wakefield, in March, 1874.<sup>33</sup> He may have been consolidating some of his holdings and thus decided to sell the Empire. Fish, however, did not totally abandon the neighborhood. In the early 1880s he owned the Bay State Ranch in Fish Canyon and took his daughter Clara up there when she was a child.<sup>34</sup> His ranching operation concentrated primarily on raising horses. Fish, after all, prided himself on his fast driving teams, perfectly matched and able to make tracks across the Arizona territory at great speeds. Fish liked to travel at night because he believed his teams fared better when out of the heat of the Arizona sun, and he believed he tended to avoid Indian attack if he travelled at night.<sup>35</sup> Also, he sold at least one horse to the Vails after they had bought the Empire Ranch.

At about the same time during the summer of 1876, Walter Vail's partner, Englishman Herbert Hislop took a look at the ranch and wrote his own assessment of the situation to Walter's uncle Nathan Vail. In describing Fish's Ranch, Hislop wrote:

I like it very much, it reminds me of Brighton Downs, as it is much the same sort of country and there seems to be plenty of water about it, the house might be made very comfortable indeed with laying out a little money on it. It is nicely situated on an elevation and has a very nice corral at the back of it. He has built a good fence around his water and several other improvements which he says cost him over \$1,000 but of course we can discount this as we like. As to price he asks about \$3,800 but we have not had any talk to him about renting or price yet, be expect to today or next day. . . The stock around about the country look pretty well and finer specimens than I expected to see.<sup>36</sup>

The key to the ranch, however, was the water. Empire gulch contained a permanent stream, and by controlling the water source Vail and Hislop also controlled the surrounding land.

Hislop wrote prolifically to his relatives about the trials and

anything on Fish's proposed sale. Unfortunately, many of the newspaper microfilms for those years are missing out of the collections at both institutions.

<sup>33</sup>Untitled typewritten manuscript, E.N. Fish Biographical File, AHS.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Herbert Hislop to Nathan Vail, July 18, 1876, An Englishman's Arizona: The Ranching Letters of Herbert Hislop, 1876-1878 (Tucson: The Overland Press, 1965), 19.

tribulations of ranch life, and over the course of his letters his preference for a softer life than what he had in Arizona emerged. Both Hislop and Vail went through their times of frustration and disappointment that things were not progressing exactly the way they wanted them to.

Walter thought he kept this a secret from his family, but he openly conceded it to his confidant and future wife, the young Miss Margaret Russell Newhall. Walter had left her behind in New Jersey. He wanted to build a solid future for them both before he brought her out west. He wrote to her that at one point he wished that he had taken his money and gone off to the Centennial exhibition at Philadelphia as she had done and had some fun. Although he did not want to quit building a life in the west at that point, he admitted that when he worked as hard as he did and had as many setbacks as he did, he did not think "one can be blamed for having a slight touch of the blues now and then."<sup>37</sup> He readily admitted that he pined away for his "Dear Old Girl" Maggie and had lost sleep over her. On one hand he wondered why she bothered to spend the best part of her life waiting for a person with "no brighter prospects than I have," but on the other hand he admitted that she was the only woman he had ever loved in his life and losing her would be very hard on him.<sup>38</sup>

Walter's family, however, had already sensed his loneliness and frustration, and his Uncle Nathan wrote to Walter's brother Ned Vail that he should make certain that he should keep writing to his brother Walter "if it is only to say the cats have not disturbed the chickens. He & Hyslop [sic] have undertaken a hard uphill work and I want them kept cheerful."<sup>39</sup> The Vails supported each other.

When Walter Vail and Herbert Hislop visited the ranch on July 15, Walter wrote to his dear Maggie that the rolling hills reminded him of the Iowa prairie.<sup>40</sup> Of the same trip, his partner Hislop wrote in his diary that his bed consisted of the mud floor of the ranch house and a blanket. Vail, too, commented on the mud floor, for he had dreamed of his fair Maggie the night that he spent at Fish's ranch, and he dreamt he was back in New Jersey with her taking a walk around his home place and showing her the places where he used to play as a child and having "an old fationd [sic] confidential talk when imagin [sic] my disgust when I woke up and found myself rowld [sic] up in blankets on the dirt floor of Mr. Fishes house

<sup>37</sup>Walter Vail to Margaret Newhall, August 2, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Nathan R. Vail to Ned (Edward L.) Vail, July 24, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>40</sup>Walter Vail to Margaret Newhall, July 18, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

with Mexicans, miners, and sheep herders lying all around me."<sup>41</sup>

Hislop, in the same diary entry he noted that the house had "no windows." He elaborated later in the same entry that "The house is situated on a hill but is not finished, having no doors or windows in but with a little money could be made very comfortable." Thus, in 1876 the openings existed but they contained no frames, sashes, doors or windows.<sup>42</sup> Hislop's diary entry mentioned that Fish had a proprietor living at the ranch, and the proprietor furnished them with horses to ride over the ranch (this may have been the same Mexican family that Vail saw in December, 1875). Later sources during the same decade mentioned a second structure on the property.

"A Fellow May as Well Live Comfortably While He can." Walter Wail and Herbert Hislop acquired the property on August 24, 1876. Walter dashed off a note to his dear Maggie that they had bought the place and they were busy with lawyers and storekeepers. He wrote:

I expect we will be kept pretty buisy [sic] for some time as we have to fix up the house which has never been finished on the inside since it was built -- it is a one story adobe house with four rooms which are 20 feet squaire [sic]. It is a very rough looking place now but we hope to make it look a little more like a home before we are in it long, though even after we fix it it would be thought a pretty rough place for a white man to live in, that is if it were in civilization.<sup>43</sup>

Toward the end of the next month they were in Tucson trying to hire workmen to work on the house.<sup>44</sup> Hislop wrote to his sister on September 23, 1876 that the ranch they bought was called the Empire Ranch, and:

The ranch we own is the one I have called Fishes ranch in former letters and I believe I have described it there. Now we are at work to make it fit to live in and I shall

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., and also noted in diary entry of July 15, 1876 and sent to his grandmother in August, 1876.

<sup>43</sup>Walter Vail to "My Dear Maggie," August 25, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>44</sup>From 1874 until 1876, however, the property appeared on maps as "Fish's Ranch." So, even though Wakefield may have owned the property, Fish perhaps carried the mortgage on it and seems to have developed it and ran cattle on it. See Dowell, 12, and maps.

be very glad when all is finished.<sup>45</sup>

Hislop wrote that he was miserable in Tucson, but very happy when he could return to the ranch. Vail echoed his sentiments. When things were too rowdy for him with bullfights and tight-rope performance in Tucson, he wrote "I often think that the Devil has a mortgage on this country and that he will foreclose sometime and take the whole thing."<sup>46</sup>

Vail and Hislop were able to hire two Indians to "do our plastering to the house" and he noted that they intended to live as comfortably as they could under the circumstances. They were, however, unable to hire a carpenter because of the high cost of doing so. Instead, they made all of the windows and doors themselves. Undoubtedly, Walter Vail's heavy timber framing work in the mines of Virginia City came in handy. Hislop noted that they had started using one of the interior rooms as a kitchen, and that they even had a stove. Another room they used as a bedroom. Hislop also wrote that the governor of Arizona was pleased that people such as he and Vail were living in the area.<sup>47</sup>

When Vail and Hislop acquired the holdings of an adjacent ranch, they acquired 612 sheep along with a two-horse wagon, two horses, two sets of harness, five sacks of wool, farming implements, and cooking utensils.<sup>48</sup> This acquisition gave them trading stock--the sheep--as well as helping them to outfit their own ranch. Undoubtedly Hislop, with his new-found love for cooking, revelled in the acquisition of more kitchen accoutrements.

Hislop was a highly domestic person as the topics of discussion in his letters indicated. Although he said that the only thing the ranch lacked was about 5,000 head of cattle, Hislop's writings tended to dwell on creature comforts of the ranch house. He and Walter Vail made the ranch's first furniture themselves, and Hislop noted that in his room he had a table, stool, bed, and towel horse. He had bought a tin bath in Tucson which he considered his only luxury.<sup>49</sup> They did have a cooking stove which they bought in Tucson and for which they paid dearly (\$75), and Hislop ended up as the

<sup>45</sup>Herbert Hislop to Amy Tate, September 23, 1876, An Englishman's Arizona, 37.

<sup>46</sup>Walter Vail to "My Dear Maggie," August 25, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>47</sup>Hislop to Amy Tate, September 23, 1876, An Englishman's Arizona, 38.

<sup>48</sup>Empire Ranch Papers, Box 1, File 1, Papers of the 1870s, Special Collections, UA.

<sup>49</sup>Hislop to Amy Tate, October 22, 1876, Ranching Letters, 42-43.

better cook of the two. He often baked bread.<sup>50</sup>

By the end of November Walter Vail and Herbert Hislop had the ranch house in fairly good shape. Also by that time, they had taken in a third partner to increase the amount of working capital they had for acquiring additional stock and range. Another Englishman, John Harvey, joined the two in October, 1876. At the time, the Empire Ranch branded its horses "VH" rather than the earlier single "V," and the cattle, when they bought some, would receive a brand of a heart. The outfit became known as "The English Boys' Outfit."

By the middle of November, 1876, Vail and his partners still had no cattle, but they were working on it. Vail wrote that they had "a small band of between 600 & 700 sheep and about 50 head of horses & colts, but we are trying to buy cattle which we expect to stock the place with them & don't intend to do much in the horse or sheep business."<sup>51</sup>

Herbert wrote to his sister Amy that the house contained four rooms which they had used as two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a storeroom. He also wrote:

.at the back of the house is the corral for corralling the cattle in. The reason it is put at the back of the house is on account of the Indians so as one can keep their cattle safe at night, as that is rather a favorite time for the Indians to run off stock, but they will never attack a white man at night. . . The house and corral are built of mud, that is mud-bricks baked by the sun but not burnt and the roofs are simply mud and I am very sorry to say that they very often leak when there is a heavy rain and the water drips through onto the floor, but that does not hurt as it is simply a mud-floor. We have not got any rooms boarded yet as it is too expensive, the lumber costing delivered at our ranch over 14 cents . . . a foot. It seems awfully dear but it simply compares with all other luxuries in this country. We have got bedsteads and mattresses now and in fact blankets, pillow cases and sheets and I generally manage to sleep pretty comfortably in them I have also made some blinds for my room and next time I go to Tucson I intend to buy some stuff for curtains, as my maxim is, a fellow may as well live comfortably while he can.

Hislop also wrote in the same letter to his sister that they heated

<sup>50</sup>Walter Vail to "My Dear Maggie," August 25, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>51</sup>Walter Vail to "My Dear Old Girl," November 19, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

their house with mesquite wood.<sup>52</sup>

Hislop included a plan of the house in his letter to his sister. In it he showed the two northernmost rooms, on either side of the hall, as being used as bedrooms (rooms 1 and 3). The room on the southwest was used as a kitchen (room 4), and the room on the southeast was the storeroom (room 6). With the exception of room 4 being turned into the cowboys' dining room a few years later, these rooms remained with the same uses through the mid-1950s.

When the ranch started up, Vail and Hislop had two people working for them. Hislop termed them "servants." One was a 12-year-old Mexican boy who was the shepherd for the ranch. Nightly he was in charge of bringing the sheep into a corral they had 400 yards from the house at a corner of their field. They also had a scotsman who looked after the cattle with them. The boy and the scotsman slept in the storeroom. For a short time they had another Mexican and his wife living at the adjacent ranch they had acquired, but the man went on a drinking binge so they terminated his employment.<sup>53</sup>

Hislop also wrote about:

another little house on the place at one corner of the field. Our field has a fence all round and encloses about 20 acres of land, this we are thinking of ploughing up and planting next spring but I think we have plenty to do at present. We have just finished a trench 600 feet long and 2 ft. in depth it has taken 4 of us to do it in 3 days. This is for making another corral away from the house as we do not think the drainage would be good for the house from the corral.<sup>54</sup>

The Empire as Haven. Life in the early days of the ranch was rough. The road from Tucson to the ranch passed through Davidson Canyon, and heavy rains during the late summer of 1876 washed away parts of it. This made hauling supplies up to the ranch difficult at best. Also, this fifteen-mile long canyon had been known as "quite a stronghold for the Apaches" in previous years.<sup>55</sup> In late November of 1876, the ranch adjoining the Empire had all of its horses and some cattle stolen by Apaches, and Walter was concerned about the Empire's stock. He wrote: " . we like to be careful of our horses. We look after them through the day and at night we put them in the field or in the corral, which joins the house,

<sup>52</sup>Herbert Hislop to Amy Tate, November 26, 1876, An Englishman's Arizona, 46-47.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 46-47.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>55</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, August 23, 1876, Letters written to Edward L. Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

which makes them pretty safe." He also wrote that they intended to ask for federal protection, but he thought that the military was "trying to keep as far from the Indians as possible."<sup>56</sup>

About six weeks later, Walter wrote that they were having "pretty hot times with the Apaches" in that area of Arizona. When Walter was on the San Pedro River gathering cattle the Apaches came within 50 yards of his camp and stole his string of horses. The Apaches then moved up into the neighborhood of the Empire and stole more horses and cattle from the surrounding ranches. They had also killed a three men in the vicinity. Apparently the local requests for military assistance for protection against the Apaches had been heard. Walter wrote that "ever since the Indians did the killing and stealing our house has been crowded with soldiers and settlers who have lost their horses and are making tracks for Tucson."<sup>57</sup>

After troubles with the Apaches settled down, the ranch was still a stopover point for soldiers on their way to the new Fort Huachuca, 24 miles south of the ranch, and for neighbors on their way to and from Tucson for supplies.<sup>58</sup> In late October, 1876, the Army again camped at the Empire Ranch. The captain of the company, which had been out searching for Indians, invited the three men down to his tent to share a bottle of brandy. Vail noted that the captain was a graduate of Brown University.<sup>59</sup>

The architecture of the earliest part of the ranch housed reflected the social conditions of the time. Basically, it was a fortification that could be defended easily if the need arose. Although not fortified in the extreme sense, the structure was a transitional type where only two windows faced out of each elevation, and the important stock or those to be used the next day were protected within the confines of a small adobe corral. Obviously the architecture reflected traditional design choices that had evolved out of cultural and climatic circumstances, but the frontier, too, had its effect on the building form.

Diversion and Discontent. Herbert Hislop never really adjusted to ranch life, and compounding the matters were his partners and friends who always found something to rib him about. For a firearm, Hislop carried what he termed "a little pea-pistol." His neighbor, Tom Gardner looked over the gun one day, handed it back

<sup>56</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, December 3, 1876, Letters written to Edward L. Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

<sup>57</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, January 20, 1877, Letters Written to Edward L. Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

<sup>58</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, March 24, 1877, Letters written to Edward L. Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

<sup>59</sup>Walter Vail to Edward L. Vail, October 24, 1876, Ingram Donation, AHS.

to Hislop and commented: "'Ha! If a man shot me with that I'd kick him.'"<sup>60</sup>

Edward Vail remembered that Hislop "used to carry around a pocket water filter with a long tube through which he sucked the water. We made fun of him but it came in handy when we had to drink from a watering trough or a small sink hole full of wiggles."<sup>61</sup> Hislop noted years later that he had brought the charcoal filter with him from England, and he was glad to have it despite the fact that the cowboys with whom he associated "looked on it with contempt."<sup>62</sup> In later years, however, even Herbert Hislop was able to look back on his ranching days with a sense of humor.

When the railroad was approaching Tucson, Hislop wrote to his sister that he hoped he thought it might be wonderful to take a few days and run up to San Francisco on vacation and then come back to the ranch and work.<sup>63</sup> He loved the ranch, but he missed his earlier life.

By February of 1877, Hislop, Harvey, and Vail had 772 cows and some work oxen, and they had started branding their stock.<sup>64</sup> The cattle, however, were a tad on the wild side. One hooked Walter and laid him up for a day. Another one chased him through the kitchen window. A third cow chased him and one of their hands through the house.<sup>65</sup>

Three months later, in May of 1877, their herd had increased to 800 head of cattle and the outfit was in the process of acquiring more bulls in New Mexico. They boasted more horses than any other ranch in the area, and Hislop expected the foals dropped that spring would bring them up to 50 head. They retained a few sheep for meat. They had so much stock that Hislop was concerned that the Apaches would be visiting soon to relieve them of some of it.<sup>66</sup> In

<sup>60</sup>"Reminiscences of Herbert R. Hislop," Hislop Biographical File, AHS.

<sup>61</sup>"The Empire Ranch," as told to Mrs. George Kitt by Edward L. Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

<sup>62</sup>"Reminiscences of Herbert Hislop," Hislop Biographical File,

<sup>63</sup>Herbert Hislop to Amy Tate, May 6, 1877, An Englishman's Arizona, 56.

<sup>64</sup>Hislop to Amy Tate, February 24, 1877, An Englishman's Arizona, 53.

<sup>65</sup>Walter Vail to Margaret Newhall, March 2, 1877, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>66</sup>Hislop to Amy Tate, May 6, 1877, An Englishman's Arizona, 57.

the same letter he wrote that lumber remained at 12 cents a board foot, so the house still only had dirt floors.

For diversion in the early days of the ranch the men hunted, Herbert Hislop improved his culinary skills, and they raced horses. They had a place "about a mile in front of the house which we call our racetrack" where they raced their horses. Also, the sometimes went up to the mines "about 8 miles away" and pitted their stock against the miners'.<sup>67</sup> Hislop also honed some frontier doctoring skills and used them on his neighbors when they needed them.<sup>68</sup> When Walter Vail wrote home to his family, most often he discussed the acquisition of stock for the ranch rather home improvements or spare-time activities. His letter did mention, however, the prolific wildlife in the area: quail, antelope, deer, turkey.<sup>69</sup>

In June, 1878, Herbert Hislop left for England. His family back there was having a financial crisis, and a difference of opinion with his partners provided additional impetus for leaving the ranching operation. Vail and Harvey were convinced they should hold on to their cattle for at least another year before selling, and Hislop disagreed. Hislop had commented as early as March of 1878 that he wanted to sell out his stock and interest in the Empire, and at the same time Vail confided to his brother that he thought that they might do better at the Empire without him.<sup>70</sup>

Walter Vail borrowed nearly \$7,000 from his Aunt Anna (Nathan's wife) to buy out Hislop's interest in the ranch. Hislop willingly sold out his interests in the Empire Ranch to his Vail and Harvey. Fifty years later, Herbert Hislop recalled his early ranching experiences as "reckless, happy days still very vivid in my mind and I look back on them with pleasure."<sup>71</sup>

Growth of the Ranch and the Total Wreck Mine. In February, 1878, Walter Vail wrote to his brother that they almost got the beef contract for Fort Huachuca, but they just missed out. He was glad, however, that the fort was going to be a permanent one because he thought it would cut down on Indian troubles. At that time, they

<sup>67</sup>Herbert Hislop to Amy Tate, An Englishman's Arizona, 57.

<sup>68</sup>"Reminiscences of Herbert Hislop," Hislop Biographical File, AHS.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, March 13, 1878, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>71</sup>"Reminiscences of Herbert R. Hislop," Hislop Biographical File, AHS.

had two men working for them. One of them was the cook.<sup>72</sup>

In April, 1878, Walter Vail listed the Empire Ranch and improvements as valued at \$800.00 for tax purposes. At that time the ranch had approximately 600 head of cattle and 20 head of horses. Vail listed no furniture or other personal property.<sup>73</sup> In May of 1879, Walter Vail listed under his sole ownership 99 cows, 150 yearling cattle, 40 2-year olds, and 30 3-year olds; at the same assessment time Vail, Harvey & Co. listed 450 cows, 310 2-year olds, 400 yearlings, 40 bulls, 62 mares, 15 horses, 1 stallion, 10 2-year-old colts, 30 yearling colts, one wagon and harness, one mower and rake, and \$400 in household goods.<sup>74</sup>

Compared with the statements for 1880, Walter Vail's numbers of cows and yearlings decreased, his 2-year-olds increased, and he had added 10 mule colts. The Vail, Harvey & Company had changed to 350 cows, 210 three-year olds, 300 2-year-olds, 600 yearlings, 40 bulls, 50 mares, 12 horses, 1 stallion, 8 3-year old horses, 20 2-year olds and 20 yearlings, and they had added a buckboard to the wagon and harness collection. The household goods remained the same.<sup>75</sup>

The ranch house appears to have stayed the same size until about 1878. That summer Walter Vail and Harvey had two setbacks. They "lost all the adobies [sic] we had made for the addition to our house." Also, they lost their "government station . . . from . . . which we have been clearing about \$50 a month on."<sup>76</sup> Walter Vail did not elaborate on the type of "government station" the Empire was, but this use, whether it was a freighting stopover for government supply trains or just a mail stop, added to the Empire's importance as a social hub. Thus, by 1878, the original ranch house had become too small to house all of the functions of the ranch, and expansion was necessary.

The Empire Ranch had already started expanding during the Vail/Hislop days when they acquired a sheep ranch on the Little

<sup>72</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, February 9, 1878, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>73</sup>Statement under Oath, April, 1878, Pima County Records, Special Collections, UA.

<sup>74</sup>Statement Under Oath, Pima County Tax Records, May 24, 1879, Special Collections, UA.

<sup>75</sup>Statements under oath, Pima County Records, for W.L. Vail and Vail, Harvey & Company for 1880, Special Collections, UA.

<sup>76</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, August 30, 1878, Ingram Donation, AHS. A post office was established in May, 1879, and John L. Harvey was the post master. See Frederick Winn Collection, Arizona Historical Society.

Cienega on Elgin Draw about two miles from the Empire. They used this for range.<sup>77</sup> This was the beginning of a series of expansions of the Empire Ranch. In 1879, following the departure of Herbert Hislop, Walter's brother Ned joined in as a partner in the ranch. Although he had no direct experience in cattle ranching, he, too felt that the cattle industry was ripe for making money.

In 1882, they acquired the Sanford's (Meadow Valley or Stock Valley) Ranch--28 square miles of land between the Whetstones and Empire Mountains--just north of the Empire. In 1879, Vail and Harvey filed several claims north of the ranch. Only one of these, the Total Wreck, panned out.<sup>78</sup> They acquired Sanford's ranch specifically for the purpose of getting water for the Total Wreck mine. Walter Vail had never trusted Mr. Sanford and considered him a liar and a rogue. They made an effort to get along as neighbors, but he thought that Sanford would not steal anything he could not get away with, "but my opinion is that his getting away capacity is pretty large."<sup>79</sup>

They pumped water from the Sanford ranch into two 50,000 gallon redwood tanks and ran it by gravity feed to the mill at the Total Wreck mine. Shortly thereafter Walter Vail began buying government scrip (navaho and Santa Fe) and placed it on acreage where there was water--in Whetstone Gap, then at springs in the Santa Ritas, Apache Spring in the Whetstones, and "a piece of land at the head of the Cienega where they dug wells."<sup>80</sup> The Vails knew that controlling the water meant controlling the land. Next, the company bought the Happy Valley Ranch--360 acres in the Rincons east of Tucson. Later, the Vails acquired the Mary Kane and Gardner Ranches, both in Gardner Canyon.

In about 1880, Ned Vail, who had always had a strong interest in mining, moved away from the ranching operation at the Empire to become assayer at the Total Wreck. Although he had some experience working in a Wall Street assay office in New York City, his family sent him to Tombstone for six months to study with the chief assayer at the Contention Mine.<sup>81</sup>

In 1880, Nathan Vail became the principal manager of the Total

<sup>77</sup>"The Empire Ranch," as told to Mrs. George Kitt by Edward L. Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

<sup>78</sup>Gregory Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch" (Master's Thesis, University of Arizona, 1978), 30-32.

<sup>79</sup>Walter Vail to Margaret Newhall, March 2, 1877, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>80</sup>"The Empire Ranch," as told to Mrs. George Kitt by Edward L. Vail, Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

<sup>81</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 38-40.

Wreck Mine. When the Southern Pacific Railroad reached Pantano, five miles north of the Total Wreck, Nathan Vail financed the construction of a wagon road from the railhead to the mine. They charged a toll for use of the road, and by November, 1881, J. Ingram & Company ran a stage line along the route between Benson and Nogales. The Stage stopped at the Total Wreck, at Harshaw Camp, and at the Empire Ranch House.<sup>82</sup> Apparently the road only remained in use as a stage road for about a decade, because Harry Heffner recalled that the only route he remembered (he arrived in 1893) was a mail route that left Tucson, went to Andrada's, up Davidson Canyon to Rosemont, to Greaterville, to Lander Young's, then through Sonoita to Fort Huachuca.<sup>83</sup>

In 1882, there was a great deal of construction at the Total Wreck Mine. A stamp mill, 600-foot tramway and other equipment existed. Perhaps one of the biggest money-making operations were the house sites in which the Vails speculated. Even the local newspaper noted "The surface ground is proving a bonanza whether one is ever found below or not."<sup>84</sup>

In 1883, the Total Wreck mining camp was at its peak. It contained more than 50 houses, a brewery, four saloons, three hotels, and ten chinese laundries. The Vails ran the butcher shop and kept it full of beef from the Empire Ranch. They also ran the bank, lumberyard, and a large bunkhouse.<sup>85</sup> But big deposits at the mine did not pan out. In June, 1883, the stock price dropped, and the Vails and James Requa bought out the remaining shares. Operations shut down at the mine for a few months, but then opened in August, 1883. Although the mine limped along for a few more years, it closed down permanently in 1890, and Walter Vail ended up buying the Total Wreck Mining and Milling Company for delinquent taxes.<sup>86</sup>

During the time that the Total Wreck was in business, the Empire thrived. The ranch provided all of the water, all of the beef, and all of the house lots for Total Wreck City. The Empire had begun selling cattle in the mining district of Tombstone, and this ready market even closer to home increased profits. Walter Vail enjoyed the high profile his ranch was receiving, and in 1878 he became involved in politics and was elected to the Tenth Territorial Legislature.<sup>87</sup> In the meantime, John Harvey had married and

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>83</sup>Heffner Interview, 21.

<sup>84</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 40, citing Tucson Weekly Citizen, May 21, 1882.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 45-52.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., 27.

brought a wife to the ranch and built her a house, and the chief cook at the ranch was a chinese man named John.<sup>88</sup>

By April, 1881, the Empire Ranch had a "store," and Walter Vail finally took some time off to head back to New Jersey on a mission of love. His Uncle Nathan and Aunt Anna had ventured temporarily to Arizona to watch over the Vail family's Arizona interests and await his return.<sup>89</sup>

Miss Newhall's Patience Pays Off. Walter Vail finally took the hand of his bride during the summer of 1881. In August, 1881, the Tombstone Epitaph carried the following announcement:

Hon. Walter L. Vail, of Empire Ranch; Mr. N.R. Vail of Los Angeles, and John Moore, Esq., a prominent grain merchant of New York City, are stopping at the Grand [Hotel in Tombstone]. Sir Walter has recently returned from a trip East, where he took unto himself a wife from the charming daughters of New Jersey. The Epitaph extends congratulations and best wishes.<sup>90</sup>

The patient Miss Margaret Newhall had waited six years to marry Walter while he established himself in the west. She brought with her \$10,000 and with it they bought out the interests of John Harvey and Aunt Anna Vail in the Empire Ranch.<sup>91</sup> Walter Vail also bought out John Harvey's interest in the Total Wreck.

Although they had married earlier in the summer, Maggie was still living in New Jersey at the end of the summer, and she was busy making preparations to head west. Walter returned to Arizona temporarily, but he was planning on returning back to see his wife by the end of August. He wrote to her:

. . . you will be surprised to hear that I have bought both Uncle N & Harveys interest in the Empire Ranch and all its belongings and I think both you and I will be better off as we will be ing and alone. I think Mrs. H. has been feeling a good deal as I expected she would and I am very much afraid she will not be happy in any place. I think both Harvey and she were both glad to see me as he was and looked more homesick than I ever saw him. I have bought his house and all the furniture so I don't think we will require much when we commence keeping

<sup>88</sup>Bernice Cosulich, "Empire Ranch and Total Wreck Mine," Arizona Daily Star, March 6, 1932.

<sup>89</sup>Nathan Vail to Walter Vail, April 14, 1881, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>90</sup>Tombstone Epitaph, Sunday, August 7, 1881, page 4, column 1.

<sup>91</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 56.

house. I also bought a very nice open carriage today from Uncle Nathan which Aunt Anna had built for herself to use while in A T [Arizona Territory] so I think we will be pretty well fixed. . . I don't think you need do anything about sheets as I expect Harvey will want to sell me what he brought and . please don't say anything about my buying the Ranch as I don't want anything said about it at present.<sup>92</sup>

On August 13, 1881, John Harvey wrote a note stating:

this is to certify that I have this day sold to Margaret N. Vail all my right title & interest in my house and furniture situated on the Empire Ranch Pima County Arizona for the sum of one thousand dollars to be paid by the surrender of a certain note given by me to Walter L. Vail on the ninth day of June 1881, giving her a clear & perfect title to the same.<sup>93</sup>

Harvey stayed in the vicinity to oversee some of the mining interests he had retained, and he remained there through 1884.<sup>94</sup>

These documents presented more conflicting information. John Harvey built a house for his wife at the ranch, and Harvey had married in the late 1870s. Exactly which structure and furniture Walter and Margaret bought was not documented, but the house and furniture may well have been the gable-roofed addition on the southwest corner of the ranch--rooms 20, 22, and 23. Considering that Harvey sold the house and furniture for \$1,000--a princely sum at the time--the house to which the documents referred may have been the victorian adobe section of the ranch house.

Continuing Expansion. The infusion of Margaret Vail's capital to the Empire was a turning point for the ever-expanding ranch. By the mid-1880s, the ranch headquarters had grown to include a kitchen, pantry, cook's room, foreman's room, business office, and main house. During the fall branding, 1882, the Empire Ranch had twenty men working just on branding cattle.<sup>95</sup> In 1884, the Empire Ranch had a much larger inventory on its tax lists: 4 wagons, 3 stallions, 100 mares, 60 geldings, 2 jacks and/or jennets, 10

<sup>92</sup>Walter Vail to Margaret Newhall Vail, August 5, 1881, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>93</sup>Handwritten note by John Harvey, Ingram Donation, AHS. In a follow-up telephone conversation with the author, Mrs. Ingram said that this was confusing to her, too.

<sup>94</sup>Margaret Newhall Vail to her mother, August 27, 1884, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>95</sup>N.R. Vail to Mahlon Vail, October 26, 1882, Ingram Donation, AHS.

mules, 1 milk cow, 6,000 head of stock cattle, 120 common bulls, 8 graded bulls, and one purebred bull, 10 hogs. Also in 1884, the Empire Ranch built a barn to accommodate a new venture--breeding racehorses. The standardbreds, brought in from New Jersey and New York.<sup>96</sup>

Walter Vail In December, 1883, Walter and Edward (Ned) Vail drew up the articles of incorporation for the Empire Land and Cattle Company, with Walter Vail owning all but two of the 2500 shares.<sup>97</sup> The company incorporated for fifty years. The articles stated that the company planned to acquire by purchase or lease grazing and other lands and

holding, using and improving the same; the buying and selling of and dealing in grazing agricultural and other lands; the leasing, buying, improving, exchanging, selling and dealing in horned cattle, sheep, and horses and other livestock, and the slaughtering of cattle and sheep for market and the selling of their carcasses in bulk or by retail for profit; the construction, [illegible], using and maintaining slaughterhouses and appliances for slaughtering sheep and cattle and owning [illegible] and using of [railroad] cars or other means of transporting live cattle and sheep or their carcasses to market and primarily the object of said corporation is the acquisition by purchase, holding, using and maintaining, improving and selling at pleasure the tracts of land situated in Pima County Arizona and generally known as the Empire Ranch and the Stock Valley Ranchos with their improvements and appurtenances and the . . . livestock thereon consisting of about twelve thousand head of cattle & horses.

The articles went on to state that the office (room 11) and principle place of business for this corporation was at the Empire Ranch, and that the capital stock of the corporation was \$250,000 divided into 2,500 shares. The by-laws also established the seal of the Empire Land and Cattle Company--a roped cow stretched out by two horses.<sup>98</sup>

The new corporation continued to expand the Empire holdings, and in July, 1884, Walter Vail agreed to operate the 2,700 acre Pantano Ranch that filled in the gap between the Rincons and the Empire

<sup>96</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 67.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 60-64.

<sup>98</sup>Empire Ranch Papers, Box 9, Empire Land & Cattle Col., Minutes of the Board of Directors, Volume 1, Articles of Incorporation, Special Collections, UA.

mountains where Happy Valley was located.<sup>99</sup> In 1884, Vail was elected president of the Arizona Stock Growers Association. The association pushed for several improvements: levying fines on outfits that brought diseased cattle into the Territory; suggesting a system of recording brands and earmarks; requesting that the governor establish a livestock sanitary commission for overseeing quarantines on infectious diseases; and writing tighter trespass laws.<sup>100</sup>

By 1887, Walter Vail started to ship out his three-year old cattle to fatten on alfalfa in the Salt River Valley on leased pasture. A year earlier Vail was leasing pasture in Kansas rather than California to get the cattle closer to the Kansas City Market just prior to slaughter.<sup>101</sup> Even by this time, the ranges of the Empire were overgrazed.<sup>102</sup>

Margaret Vail was well settled into her ranch life by that time. She wrote to her mother that during the summer of 1884 the ranch looked exceptionally beautiful. They had mushrooms for dinner, their neighbors Tom and Mary Gardner had come over to visit them with their children for the day, and she was about to make a bed for the children on the sofa.<sup>103</sup> The children's sickness, however forced her to take them away from the Empire during 1886.

Despite Margaret Vail's absence, the ranch house continued as a social hub for the neighborhood. In April of 1886, when the Vails were absent from the ranch, and Mrs. Vail received correspondence from a woman named Mary E. Nickolls who worked for Mrs. Vail at the ranch. Mary wrote to her employer to assure her that she was all right but some people had been killed to the south near the Crittenden, Richardson and Gormley ranches. Because her husband was sick and some of the other workers gone, she and "John the Chinaman" were running the ranch. She wrote her concern that "if Mr. Vail should trod in on us he would find things rather untidy just now."<sup>104</sup> Most of the cowboys were away attending the rodeo, and one of their neighbors had just brought his family to the Empire for protection. Mary commented that Mrs. Vail "would laugh

<sup>99</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 68.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 71.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 74.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 74. Contemporary photographs also indicated that the ranch in the vicinity of the ranch house was overgrazed by the late 1880s.

<sup>103</sup>Margaret Vail to her Mother, August 27, 1884, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>104</sup>Mary Nickolls to Mrs. Vail, April 30, 1886, Ingram Donation,

to see Mr. Scofield, Moore and Denman marching about the yard with their belts and pistols on generally sitting on top of the house looking for Apaches.<sup>105</sup> Mary hoped that the Vail's son was in better health. She had planted a garden and was hoping the Vails would return soon to help them eat the watermelon.<sup>106</sup>

The Earthquake. On May 3, 1887, the Empire Ranch house was rocked by an earthquake. Margaret Newhall Vail wrote to her mother:

Walter was loading some shells and we were all in Lon Mathers room--the room in which you slept the last you spent on the Ranch. I was sitting in a big chair which began rocking and for an instant did not realize what was the matter. Lon came to the door and picked up the baby, then we all went out in the sawan [sic]. I thought the gable end of the front part of the old house would fall it rocked so. My cook Jim--and darky nurse (Frances) were ironing. They came tearing out of the kitchen not knowing what was the matter. Russie began to cry. For 30 seconds Walter says, but I thought it must be several minutes everything rocked. The bricks came off our chimney and some of the adobes off of the other chimneys. Pictures swung crooked--but nothing fell. Shin was out working in the garden and was very much frightened. The water in all of the springs sprouted up as if from a hose, twenty feet in the air. The haystack fairly danced. I thought the house must fall, but it could not hurt us if it did as we all were in the corral--in the midst of the commotion an old hen rushed in greatly excited clucking to her brood with all her might. After it stopped Walter went in the stable.<sup>107</sup>

Although Margaret Vail referred to the "gable end of the front part of the old house," she may have just been referring to the parapet around the flat roof rather than the true gable. If that was the case, then repairs after the earthquake would have been an appropriate reason for putting a gable roof over the northernmost section of the ranch house. In any case, however, the earthquake was strong enough to damage the adobe structure.

Although the ranch headquarters had expanded tremendously by the time the 1887 earthquake hit, exactly how it looked at the time of the earthquake was undocumented. The letterheads for the Empire Land and Cattle Company provided some clues. In 1890 through 1894, the letterhead for the Empire Land and Cattle Company included a

<sup>105</sup>Ibid.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid. From the tone of the letter, the Vails were not in Arizona.

<sup>107</sup>Margaret Vail to her mother, May 3, 1887, Ingram Donation, AHS.

lithograph showing the ranch house with a flat roof on the northernmost and oldest section. An 1897 letterhead depicted a gable roof on the northernmost section.<sup>108</sup> The preparation of updated stationary, however, may have fallen behind the construction of the gable roof, because Margaret Vail mentioned that the gable was there in 1887.

Ranch Life in the 1890s. Life at the Empire was never dull. Cowboys working for the Empire Land and Cattle Company started at \$15.00 a month as a new hand, and increased their pay to \$20.00 after two years and \$25.00 after three years. Tom Turner, Vail's foreman during the early 1890s, was responsible for about 30,000 head of cattle drew wages of \$75.00 a month.<sup>109</sup> The ranch fed and housed the cowboys and furnished their horses. Walter Vail even got out and worked directly with his cowboys. He was good with horses, and he knew cattle. He never ordered his cowboys to go out and do anything; instead, he said "Come on, let's do it."<sup>110</sup> The cowboys were all single because Walter Vail didn't give them enough time off to change their status.<sup>111</sup> Life at the ranch was hard work for the cowboys.

Usually the ranch had about ten cowboys who worked there year-round, and they added ten more on the spring and fall round-ups. Walter Vail had a policy of hiring any neighbors that he suspected were rustling cattle from him. He believed that it was cheaper and safer to watch them that way than to let them run loose; and as one of Vail's employees said, "He had some scalawags working for him at times."<sup>112</sup>

In the 1890s the cooks at the ranch tended to be chinese, but the camp cook who worked out of a wagon was always Mexican. The cowboys ate plenty of beef--jerky in the summertime and fresh meat in the winter. Dried Fruit and canned tomatoes were a delicacy that they usually had about once or twice a week. Usually the fruit consisted of dried apples or prunes.<sup>113</sup> One young cowpoke who ended up as ranch manager was Harry Heffner. When he began working for the Vails in 1893, Heffner had developed a reputation as a wrestler; but after Heffner ran off one of the chinese cooks,

<sup>108</sup>Letterheads available on letters dated December 12, 1890, and September 15, 1897, in Empire Ranch Papers, Miscellaneous Box 1, Files 2 and 3; and February 1, 1894, Miscellaneous Financial Papers, Box 6, File 3, 1880-1903, Special Collections, UA.

<sup>109</sup>Heffner Interview, 14.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 6.

Walter Vail chose a cook with wrestling experience. This chinese cook managed to throw Heffner around enough that after one incident in the cook house at the Empire, Heffner never again complained about bad beans or flies in the meat.<sup>114</sup>

Despite the hard life out on the range, the only one to carry a gun out on the range, however, was the foreman Tom Turner.<sup>115</sup> Even Tombstone had quieted down by the 1890s, and the worst problems the cowboys ran into were intermittent appropriations of a horse or cow, and a few more organized rustlers. When it became apparent that the local sheriffs could not control the rustlers, the formation of the Arizona Cattle Growers Association that supported a cadre of rangers slowed down the illegal activity.<sup>116</sup>

In the 1890s, the cowboys broke horses with a hackamore and then moved into reining them with a spade bit. They all used center fire rigs on their saddles, and used old army blankets for saddle pads.<sup>117</sup> They did not use grass ropes, but made their own riatas that usually ran about 45 or 50 feet long. They had cowboys on the ranch whose specific jobs were to break horses. Then, the newly broke horses were turned over to the best cowboys on the ranch. As Walter Vail saw it, the horse from the withers forward belonged to him. From the withers back belonged to the cowboy.<sup>118</sup>

During the 1890s, the Vails used to bring in Mormons from St. David to cut their hay. The mormons received \$1.50 a ton. They cut grama grass hay on the mesas around the Empire first, and came back later and cut the sacaton grass when it was very green. For a number of years one Mormon man in particular came over to cut the hay, and he brought eight or ten wives and about 40 children.<sup>119</sup>

Usually when the ranch sent someone to town for provisions, they brought back about 6,000 pounds, primarily flour, beans, and

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 37.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., 42. Heffner noted that the San Pedro was considered the dividing line between the California and Texas styles of training and tack. The Texas style, looked upon with disdain by the western cowboys, included double-rigged saddles and different training methods. In Arizona, they also never used breast collars or cruppers on their saddles. They had different methods of roping cattle. The use of a double-rigged saddle west of the San Pedro might cost a man a job offer. See Heffner, 34-36.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 68.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 70.

coffee.<sup>120</sup> They hauled it by 6-mule team in a wagon back up to the ranch. Because the haul was so steep in places, they limited the provisions carried to 1,000 pounds per mule.

In 1893, the ranch house had evolved and included a short extension (8 and 9) on the south end of the east wing and a longer extension (10,11,12, 14) on the west wing. In addition, the newer adobe house (20,22, 23) was to the southwest of the original portion. South of this complex was the adobe barn where Mr. Vail and Tom Turner kept their top horses. The cowboys lived in a wood frame second-story of an adobe building incorporated into the original adobe corral wall.<sup>121</sup> The tradition of keeping the horses close to the house continued nearly two decades later. Even when Heffner lived at the ranch beginning in 1893, the horses they were going to use the next day were always kept up in the adobe corral adjacent to the house.<sup>122</sup>

Evolution of the Empire. In 1896, Walter Vail moved his family to Los Angeles to his new corporate headquarters. He left the Empire under the management of foreman Harry McFadden.<sup>123</sup> By this time the Arizona portion of the Empire Land and Cattle Corporation was strictly a breeder operation. The cattle were moved out of the state as yearlings to fatten, most often in California. At the same time, the Empire's new partner, Carroll Gates, moved to Kansas City to oversee that end of the Empire holdings.

Harry Heffner started working for Walter Vail in 1893, and in his later years he provided a great deal of information on the ranch history. He had worked in a bank in Los Angeles, but when the bank failed he asked one of its solvent customers--Walter Vail--for a job. When Walter Vail found out that he had been riding all of his life, Vail hired him to move cattle off Catalina Island. The cattle were suffering because of the lack of pasture there, so they needed to be fed up for shipping and then moved to Kansas City.<sup>124</sup> That was Heffner's first job for the Vails.

J.C. Oliver was the bookkeeper for the Empire Ranch when Heffner moved there in 1893. He was married to Charlotte Newhall, Mrs. Vail's sister. When Oliver died in 1893, the ranch needed a new bookkeeper, so Harry Heffner filled in for a while. The main set

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 64.

<sup>121</sup>Harry Heffner to Mary Boice, February 5, 1954, Harry Heffner Biographical File, Special Collections, UA. Heffner lived in this building as a cowboy.

<sup>122</sup>Heffner Interview, 12.

<sup>123</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 102.

<sup>124</sup>Heffner Interview, 1-4.

of books, however, were kept in Los Angeles.<sup>125</sup>

In the mid-1890s, the Empire was branding about 10,000 calves per year, and probably had about 30,000 head total on ranges from Happy Valley to the Whetstones to the Babocomari, to the Canellos to the Pennsylvania Ranch to Greaterville and Andrada on Davidson Canyon. At that time the ranch probably controlled approximately 1.5 million acres.<sup>126</sup> Tom Turner was the range boss at the time, and he may have started working for Vail as early as 1884.<sup>127</sup>

Hard times hit the Empire Land and Cattle Company in the late 1890s. Because the range at the Empire was in poor condition, Carroll Gates had the idea of leasing Catalina Island and shipping the cattle there to feed. During droughts in 1898 and 1899, they had only been offered \$2.50 a head for cattle at the Pantano railhead, so the company decided to hold off selling them and ship them to market in California for fattening. They shipped the cattle, but then the drought hit California, too. The grazing was so bad on Catalina that they shipped them back to Kansas, but the locusts had devastated the feed back there. So, with all of the cattle losses, freight, feed, and lease on Catalina, it cost the company about \$49.00 a head. They ended up getting \$18.00 a head for them when they finally went to market. So they took a huge loss.<sup>128</sup>

Also, at some time during the late 1890s, the company rounded up about 3-4,000 head of wild horses and sold them at \$2.00 a head.<sup>129</sup> In 1899, the company was also considering the possibility of going into the horse meat business. They planned to slaughter the horses in Kansas City and ship the meat to Europe.<sup>130</sup>

In 1897, Vail and Gates purchased 2,520 acres of grassland on the San Ignazio del Babocomari grant. At that time they started holding their young steers to fatten on Arizona land, and they overspeculated. But then the Kansas City livestock market took a dive, so they were forced to hold on to their cattle longer, after they had bought up even more to pasture on Arizona land. Also, there was a drought in California, so Gates got busy trying to find places on feedlots in the midwest for his cattle. In short, the corporation of Empire Land and Cattle had gotten too big and too

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 4-6.

<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 49.

<sup>130</sup>E.L. Vail to C.W. Gates, July 27, 1899, Box 1, Letter 57, Empire Ranch Papers, Special Collections, UA.

complex.

Even Carroll Gates, who had a knack for the business end of managing cattle, was stressed out by the operation. In January, 1899 Gates wrote to Walter Vail:

I am in favor of getting our business cleaned up in shape so that we both will not have to work as we have. In know that I cannot stand the strain that I have been under for the past two years, and I feel that if we can get our business closed up and in good shape, we will both have plenty to keep us for the rest of our lives and we can have a little pleasure as we go along.<sup>131</sup>

Gates' strong suit was his financial wizardry, but he was tired of working the magic. As Harry Heffner recalled, Gates "knew how to borrow money. He borrowed it from everybody. He had just one policy: if you had any money you should let him have it."<sup>132</sup>

Vail and Gates seemed to reach a consensus of selling all but the California holdings of the Empire Land and Cattle Company, and they even had an offer from a British investment syndicate. The company, however, wanted Vail and Gates to take out a substantial mortgage on the property and with that money buy one-third interest in the syndicate. This proposal did not interest them, because they were trying to divest themselves of some holdings, not keep them. They decided not to sell.<sup>133</sup>

In 1898, Vail and Gates bought up one thousand acres of scrip in the Sierra Forest Reserve which they held for a requisite year. After that times, they were able to make exchanges for areas of government land southeast of the ranch and along the Empire mountains. This added nearly 3,600 acres of grassland.<sup>134</sup> In 1900, Vail and Gates were able to send a number of cattle to market and start the Empire on the road to financial recovery.

In 1896, when Walter Vail moved his family to California, and his foreman, Tom Turner left. H.J. McFadden out of San Luis Obispo County, California, took over as foreman until 1900, when Heffner became manager.<sup>135</sup>

In 1901, Vail, Gates and their partner J.V. Vickers sold the Turkey

<sup>131</sup>Carroll Gates to Walter Vail, January 8, 1899, Box 1, Gates Letterbook, Empire Ranch Papers, Special Collections, UA.

<sup>132</sup>Heffner Interview, 60.

<sup>133</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 105-112.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid., 116.

<sup>135</sup>Heffner Interview, 14.

Track ranch and 10,000 cattle. Since it did not adjoin the Empire or any of their other properties, it was more difficult to manage.<sup>136</sup> After they sold that, they went in with Oscar Ashburn and bought the Crittenden Land and Cattle Company that included 5,280 acres including the Pennsylvania Ranch. They concentrated on purebred herefords.<sup>137</sup> This consolidated their land base.

They also saw potential for expanding the Empire Land and Cattle Company's ventures into other operations. They invested some money in Los Angeles real estate and a water company along with oil wells along the coast. They used the ranch to finance other investments. Then in 1901, Vail and Vickers bought Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands and stocked them with cattle. Between 1901 and 1902 they put ranch profits into California enterprises along the coast (Huntington Beach and Shell Beach).<sup>138</sup>

In 1904, the Empire Ranch suffered additional drought. The Empire Land and Cattle Company bought four Mexican land grants in Riverside County, California, in 1904 and 1905. Harry Heffner ran the Empire in Arizona by this time. The company, however, had expanded to a point where it was extremely difficult to manage.

The Death of Walter Vail. At the end of November, 1906, Walter Vail stepped off a streetcar in Los Angeles, and he was hit by an on-coming streetcar. At first his injuries seemed minor, but his condition deteriorated within twenty-four hours of the accident. After lingering for a few days, Walter Vail died.<sup>139</sup>

Following Vail's death, Carroll Gates' settlement with the estate was that he gave Walter's heirs all of his interest in the Empire Land and Cattle Company, the Pauba Ranch Company (Riverside County), all land scrip, his portion of the Crittenden Cattle Company, and his interest in the Warner Ranch. Gates received a number of shares in the Chiricahua Cattle Company, an interest in pasture lands in the Texas panhandle, real estate in Kings, Kern, and Fresno counties, California, shares in the Huntington Beach Company, and a cash settlement.<sup>140</sup> The Chiricahua Cattle Company later became the Boice, Gates, and Johnson Cattle Company. The arrangement suited Walter's widow Margaret Vail, because in her

<sup>136</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 116-117.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 118.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 120-122.

<sup>139</sup>Telegrams in the Edward L. Vail Papers at the Arizona Historical Society trace the accident and his subsequent and unexpected death several days later. See Box 2, 1875-1935, file "checks, tax receipts, telegrams concerning death of Walter Vail 1897-1904," Edward L. Vail Papers, AHS.

<sup>140</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 126-129.

letters it was evident that she did not trust Gates. She was glad to get him out of the family business.<sup>141</sup>

The home ranch of the Empire continued as a breeding operation, but after the death of Walter Vail, the Vail children divided up responsibilities in a reasonable fashion. Nathan, Mary, and Margaret Newhall Vail were the board of directors of the Empire Land and Cattle Company. In 1913, William Banning Vail became foreman and superintendent of all Arizona properties. Mahlon Vail went to the Pauba Ranch in Riverside county. The Vails continued to run the Empire as a breeder operation, and finding additional grazing land was always a challenge. The Vails even fattened cattle on pasture land in Sonora, Mexico. In 1925, the Vail drove more than 7,00 steers along the Santa Cruz River to the Mascarena Ranches in Sonora.<sup>142</sup>

William Banning Vail and his family lived at the Empire from 1913 until 1927-28. The family spent the school year at the ranch, and during the summers the mother and children went away to the coast. Banning was known by the people who worked for him as "chaqueta" for a signature Levi jacket he always wore or carried with him. He managed the ranch the way his father Walter had--by rolling up his sleeves and pitching in with the work, and not asking his people to do anything he would not do.<sup>143</sup>

Although exact documentation of the ranch buildings is lacking, the area contained more buildings in the early 20th century than it does now. The adobe wall of the first corral that appeared in Herbert Hislop's 1876 drawing remaining, but an adobe barn with a wood-frame second story was incorporated into the historic adobe wall. Laura Vail Ingram, Banning's daughter, remembered other key changes to the ranch. The concrete floors were there when she was a child, as was the wood frame addition tacked on the back of the structure. The screened porch was added to the house in 1924 or 1925.<sup>144</sup> Even the orientation of the ranch house had been altered. By 1919 the main road ran to the east of the Empire Ranch house rather than the west.<sup>145</sup> When the gable-roofed adobe portion was constructed, its front faced the setting sun.

During the 1920s, the Empire Ranch had a number of hands living there including a mexican cowboy and his family, an African-American family (Freda and Willie Brown and their children). Freda

<sup>141</sup>Margaret Vail to her children, September 4, 1907, Ingram Donation, AHS.

<sup>142</sup>Dowell, "History of the Empire Ranch," 132-134.

<sup>143</sup>Interview with Henry Dojaquez.

<sup>144</sup>Ingram Interview, 31.

<sup>145</sup>Pima County Highway Map, 1919, AHS.

Brown was the cook and Willie was a ranch hand. They also had a nursemaid to help take care of the children.<sup>146</sup> An Indian named Apache Joe was the woodcutter for the ranch, and he also milked the cows, tended the orchard, and did general maintenance.<sup>147</sup>

The Boice Era. In 1928, the Vails sold the Empire Ranch to Chiricahua Ranches Company, which was under the direction of a man named Frank Boice. Like the Vail family, the Boice family had many lines of stories to tell. In 1860 Henry Stephen Boice was born in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He was the son of a doctor named Stephen Boice--an early trader along the Santa Fe Trail who had been in partnership with Henry Connelly, the governor of New Mexico. The Boice & Connelly freighting company ran prairie schooners out of Independence and Kansas City. Dr. Boice died in 1865, and his son Henry set out from home while still a teenager.

As a young man, Henry S. Boice noted that the herefords he saw in Colorado fared very well through a drought that was followed by a severe winter, so he began to working up to specializing in hereford cattle. The first large outfit he owned was the Boice-Berry outfit, known as the 777, on the Missouri River near the Montana/North Dakota boundary. The 777 bordered on Teddy Roosevelt's ranch. The 777 bought Texas and Arizona cattle and drove them or shipped them north to the ranges of the vast ranch. The cattle stayed on the grasslands up there until they went to Chicago as beef when they were four or five years old. The 777 was the largest supplier of beef to the Chicago market. By the time the Boice-Berry operation sold out in 1897-98, Henry S. Boice had married a woman named LuBelle Gudgell, the daughter of the man who had the first purebred hereford herd in the state of Missouri.<sup>148</sup> The Gudgell and Simpson herd was built up of bulls imported directly from England.

In 1897, Boice organized the H.S. Boice cattle company and bought a ranch in southeastern Colorado and northwest Kansas, but ten years later a severe drought and depressed cattle prices forced the company under. Boice then accepted the job as general manager of the XIT Ranch in Texas, and he managed that outfit from 1905-1912. During that time, he formed a syndicate that bought out the Block Ranch around Carrizozo and Roswell, New Mexico, and then he became general manager of the Chiricahua Cattle Company. For a short time, he was manager of all three--XIT, the Block, and Chiricahua.

<sup>146</sup>Margaret [name unknown] to Olive Stoddard, August 5, 1987, letter in BLM file "Olive Stoddard, Interview with Pat Nickerson;" and Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 29.

<sup>147</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 30; and Interview with Henry Dojaquez conducted by Laura Soulliere Harrison, June 23, 1992.

<sup>148</sup>Richard G. Schaus, "Hereford Tradition of Arizona's Boices," American Hereford Journal, July, 1959, reprint 1-7.

In 1908, the Chiricahua Cattle Company, formerly a Vail, Vickers, and Gates operation, became Boice, Gates, and Johnson, and this new company bought out the XIT stock. The Vickers sold out their interests in the company.<sup>149</sup> Henry S. Boice died in 1919, but he had three sons--Frank S., Henry G., and Charles. All three sons eventually joined in the Chiricahua corporation, and they managed separate ranches that the company owned. Harry Heffner became manager of the Chiricahua Cattle Company after Gates died in 1920. He managed it from 1920-1933.<sup>150</sup>

When the Indian Service discontinued permits for grazing on Indian lands, Henry G. Boice and his brother Frank bought the Eureka Ranch near Willcox, the Empire, the Rail X, and the Arivaca. Although each ranch was big, the Empire was the largest of the group. Over a 5-year period, they moved their Chiricahua cattle off the San Carlos Reservation on to the group of ranches.

The company bought the Empire in 1928. Frank S. Boice managed the Onyx Ranch on the Kern River in California, but in 1929, he came to the Empire, also one of the Chiricahua company ranches. That Chiricahua company dissolved in 1944, and the three Boice brothers formed a partnership. Charles left the partnership in 1946, and his older brother bought out his interests. In 1951, Henry and Frank Boice divided up the last of Chiricahua company's holdings. Henry received the Arivaca Ranch while Frank Boice took the Empire.<sup>151</sup>

Frank S. Boice and his wife Mary were sole owners of the Empire. Frank had accomplished a great deal in his life. He was a president and member of the board of directors of both the American National Livestock Association and the Arizona Cattle Growers Association; director of the Farm Credit Administration, a member of an advisory committee to the secretary of agriculture representing the livestock industry; chairman of the National Livestock Tax Committee, and as such drew up the tax accounting system for Congress and the Internal Revenue Service. In addition, he received degrees in mechanical and electrical engineering from M.I.T.<sup>152</sup>

The Ranch Buildings. Many of the building and room functions were the same during the Vail and Boice eras, but each family made its own modifications and additions. When Frank Boice ran the Empire, the office remained in Room 11 where the Vails had it. The desk in

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<sup>149</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>150</sup>Heffner Interview, 59.

<sup>151</sup>"Frank S. Boice, Empire Ranch Owner, Dies at 61," Arizona Daily Star, April 4, 1956.

<sup>152</sup>"Frank S. Boice, Empire Ranch Owner, Dies at 61," Arizona Daily Star, April 4, 1956.

the room was set on the diagonal, and the cabinet and safe were in there. The room originally contained a pot-bellied stove sitting on an asbestos mat to prevent the wood floor from catching fire. Later the pot-bellied stove was replaced with a gas grill.

Rooms 1 and 3 continued in used as bunkhouses, and the cowboys rolled out their bedrolls on the metal bed frame (similar to the one now existing in the room). Room 6 was still the ranch commissary, and the bathroom (room 7) partitioned off in the northeast corner of the room did not exist until after the mid-1950s. Although the meat was butchered in a small slaughterhouse (now gone) east of the stone corral, the meat was still hung in the cooler in the hall (room 2)--the same cooler that was left over from the Vail's time at the ranch.

Dee Edwards had been a foreman for the Boices up in the Chiricahuas, and when he retired Frank Boice moved him to the Empire to run the store.<sup>153</sup> Edwards lived in Room 8. He was a watchman/supervisor, and he also managed the commissary. Whenever a cowboy came in from one of the outlying camps, Dee wrote down everything he supplied him with. The cowboys weren't charged for food, but they were charged for anything extra.<sup>154</sup> The commissary function stayed in this room until 1955, when it moved to room 1. The store usually had on hand tobacco, dried fruit, beans, canned goods, and the usual cooking items like flour, lard, and beans. Dee always kept a toolbox under his bed for fixing things around the place. He was always the first one up in the morning and had the coffee pot on before the cook got up. He was renown of his tortilla-making capabilities.<sup>155</sup>

The cowboys' kitchen (room 10) and office (room 11) retained their original use, but room 12, formerly the bookkeeper's quarters, became the cook's quarters. Room 14 became Mary Boice's pantry, and the family kitchen remained the same. During the process of changing the functions, the Boices cut door openings into the south wall of room 14 and the south wall of room 12.<sup>156</sup> These openings provided a connecting link between rooms 12, 14, and 17. The door between rooms 14 and 21 had been closed off. Frank and Mary Boice used room 22 as their bedroom, and Pancho (young Frank) and Bob slept in room 23.

The Boices made a number of changes to the ranch house in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The remnants of the original adobe plaster

<sup>153</sup>Interview with Henry Dojaquez, June 23, 1992.

<sup>154</sup>Interview with the Boice Family (Bob, Miriam, Steve Boice, and Sherry Boice Buzzard), October 26, 1991.

<sup>155</sup>Bob Boice, Boice Family Interview, October 26, 1991.

<sup>156</sup>Telephone Conversation between Laura Vail Ingram and Laura Soulliere Harrison, January 29, 1993.

on the house had worn thin, so the Boices hired a man named Contreras to set the chicken-wire mesh and replaster the exterior with a cementitious-based plaster. They renovated the upper kitchen (room 17) and added the metal cabinets and shelves extant in 1992. Remodelling the kitchen was very frustrating for Frank Boice, an engineer schooled at M.I.T. and used to square corners. The kitchen walls were adobe, and approximately one foot short of being square. The metal cabinets and counters, however, were perfectly squared. So the engineer chipped into the adobe walls to make them accept the modern metal cabinets. The metal sash windows were installed at the same time.<sup>157</sup>

At the same time the Boices renovated the living room and its bay window. They lowered the ceiling in the living room, and rebuilt the bay window with modern sashes. They added a tongue-and-groove wainscot in the dining room and built panelled shelves to close off the former door opening between the living room (room 20) and the master bedroom (room 22).

Bob Boice and his wife Miriam attributed the changes that happened to the ranch in the late 1940s and early 1950s to a change in business. The improvements happened at about the same time that Frank Boice bought out his partners in 1951. Before that time, any money spent on the Empire (or the other ranches for that matter) was company money. After that time the money spent on the Empire was his own.<sup>158</sup>

Natural gas and commercial power came to the ranch in 1955.<sup>159</sup> The building that the Vails had erected to the west of the ranch was still the generator house until commercial power was installed. The Boices called this structure, now gone, the "Kohler plant."<sup>160</sup> The ranch had butane as a fuel source in the 1930s.

Eva Ferra and her grandparents lived in the small adobe house (building N) to the northeast of the ranch house. Her grandfather cut and hauled wood with the help of an old white horse, and her grandmother washed clothes for the cowboys. Eva started working for Frank and Mary Boice when she was in her early teens.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>157</sup>Bob Boice, Boice Family Interview, October 26, 1991.

<sup>158</sup>Bob Boice, Boice Family Interview, October 26, 1991.

<sup>159</sup>Boice Family Interview, October 26, 1991. Also Steve Boice recalled digging the hole for the installation of the telephone pole in the zaguan when he was a small child. After the pole was installed and the new concrete poured around the base of the pole, Steve ran over the fresh concrete with his tricycle and left the incised skid marks.

<sup>160</sup>Bob Boice, Boice Family Interview, October 26, 1991.

<sup>161</sup>Ibid.

Also, Hollywood had discovered the Empire. Classic westerns such as Red River and Duel in the Sun were filmed at the Empire. Actors like John Wayne and Burt Lancaster frequently visited the ranch. Bob Boice recalled that when the movie people came to the ranch in the late 1940s, they sprayed the galvanized tin roofs of the adobe barn and outbuildings with a brown paint. The company promised that the paint would wash off with the next rain, but the rain also took some of the galvanizing with it so the roofs started to rust.<sup>162</sup> The stucco coating on the exterior of the walls was put on during the late 1940s between the two movies Red River and Duel in the Sun.

The structure known as the "stone corral" (building B) was used for firewood storage. The monolithic concrete block in the structure held a motor and saw. At one point during the early 1950s, the stone wall started leaning toward the south, so the Boices propped it up, dug underneath it, and poured a new concrete foundation under it.<sup>163</sup>

While the Boice lived at the ranch, the yard areas on the west side of the house underwent considerable change. Mary Boice had planting beds laden with tulips and irises. The ell formed by the southwest corner of the house contained a trellis and rose bushes. In 1939 or 1940 the Boices also had the swimming pool constructed. A family event during the 1950s was for all of the children to go out and clean the buckets of frogs out of the pool, then patch it and paint it before they were allowed to swim.<sup>164</sup>

The End of an Era. In 1960, the Boices sold the Empire Ranch to Gulf American Corporation (GAC), but they retained the grazing lease on the property. Gulf American planned to develop the property as a satellite city. In 1970, GAC Properties hired the planning firm of Wilsey & Ham Cella, Barr, Evans & Associates to prepare a document entitled the Empire-Sonoita Regional Land Use Plan. Spread out all over the land area of the Empire ranch were single and multi-family dwelling units, mobile home lots, parks and open space, a regional park, bird preserve, agricultural reserve, fairground, neighborhood convenience area, village and town centers, elementary, junior, and senior high schools. Conspicuously absent from the document was any mention of plans for the historic ranch house.<sup>165</sup>

The plans, however, did not pan out. In 1974, a year after the death of Frank (Pancho) Boice, GAC sold the property to Anamax

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<sup>162</sup>Ibid.

<sup>163</sup>Ibid., Bob and Miriam Boice.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., Sherry Buzzard.

<sup>165</sup>Wilsey and Ham, Empire-Sonoita Regional Land Use Plan: Planning Report, May 8, 1970, Special Collections, UA.

Mining Company. Anamax was a joint venture between Anaconda and Amax mining companies. Anamax acquired the land in hopes of developing the water for a mining operation the company planned in the Santa Rita mountains. Anamax, however, did not renew the Boice's grazing lease, so the family was forced to sell the cattle. On December 19, 1975, the Boices sold the last 890 herefords of the Empire herd. All of the cattle were direct descendants of the original Gudgell and Simpson herd that were brought to the United States from England.<sup>166</sup>

The management of Anamax then contacted John Donaldson. Donaldson was born in Philadelphia, but he came out to Arizona as a teenager to attend school. Even as a child he had always liked the idea of being a cowboy, because the thought of working on horseback appealed to him. He studied agriculture at the University of Arizona, and eventually he worked into ranching in Arizona and New Mexico after World War II. Anamax approached Donaldson about a possible joint venture where Anamax put up the land and Donaldson put up the cattle. That arrangement was changed after a couple of years to a retroactive and continuing lease on the Empire.

Rather than following the traditional ranching practices that the Vails and Boices had used for decades, Donaldson moved into a one-herd concept. In the one-herd concept, the cattle, sometimes five times as many as the land traditionally held, were kept in the same pasture for a shorter amount of time. Then, the herd was moved to another location. The grass was allowed to rest and the plants were not continuously grazed. This allowed for a higher use factor of the Empire lands.<sup>167</sup>

In addition, Donaldson moved away from the hereford breed that made up the greater portion of most of the Vail and Boice herds, and he moved into brahma crosses. He believed that *Bos indicus*, the brahma, was better adapted to the Arizona climate than the *Bos taurus* (European types such as herefords and angus). Brahmas tended to be naturally nomadic, sweat through their skins, were more insect resistant, and were much better adapted to heat.<sup>168</sup>

During the time that Donaldson lived at the Empire, he made very few changes to the structures. He lived in the "old Huachuca House" (now BLM residence) east of the ranch house, and he used the main ranch house only for entertaining and housing visitors and ranch hands. In the 1970s he tore down the saddle rack that bordered the eastern edge of the zaguan. It was in deteriorated

<sup>166</sup>Tucson Citizen, December 20, 1975.

<sup>167</sup>Interview with John Donaldson conducted by Laura Soulliere Harrison, October 28, 1991.

<sup>168</sup>Ibid.

condition.<sup>169</sup> He also did some re-wiring in the ranch house.

On December 11, 1987, Anamax Mining Company signed an option to swap the Empire and Cienega Ranches--75,000 acres of land--with other federal land.<sup>170</sup> But an article of June, 1988, stated that BLM was completing a land exchange of 37,500 acres of the Empire/Cienega ranches with developer Huddie Bell.<sup>171</sup> Seven West properties bought the Empire/Cienega for \$30 million from Anamax, and the Gubler-Frei Ranch north of Grand Canyon for \$2.3 million. These they traded to BLM for some properties under its management.<sup>172</sup> On June 8, 1988, the transaction officially took place.<sup>173</sup>

Summary. Since BLM acquired the property in 1988 only a few minor changes have been made to the ranch house and the adjacent outbuildings. BLM installed a french drain in the southwest corner of the building (adjacent to room 22), removed the tree damaging the foundation adjacent to room 21, and installed a gutter on the north wall of room 21. Because portions of the ranch house and most of the outbuildings remain in use, the structures have deteriorated considerably less than they would have if they had been left vacant. But now the task ahead is to rehabilitate and use the historic fabric in a way that will encourage its preservation.

Although the early history of the ranch is somewhat cloudy, certain conclusions about it remain probable, while others are backed by solid evidence. The builder of the four-room main house was probably Edward Nye Fish, who had the financial wherewithal and the nearby sawmill to finance such an undertaking. He probably did this in 1871.

Two sources--the tax records and Hislop's letters--document the fact that the ranch was called the Empire Ranch before Hislop and Vail acquired it in 1876. The additions to the south of the original four-room section were put on between 1876 and 1881. Vail and John Harvey were putting on additions in 1878, but exactly which additions were constructed first is a matter of speculation

<sup>169</sup>Ibid.

<sup>170</sup>Newspaper clipping, "Anamax to Swap Empire, Cienega for BLM Land," December 12, 1987, unnamed newspaper, probably out of Tucson, from BLM files, Tucson.

<sup>171</sup>John Dougherty, "BLM Land Exchange Shrouded in Secrecy," June 7, 1988, Mesa Tribune.

<sup>172</sup>"Experts, Records Indicate Land in Swap is not of Equal Value," June 7, 1988, Mesa Tribune.

<sup>173</sup>Douglas Kreutz, "'Invaluable' Empire, Cienega Land is now Officially Under BLM Control," Arizona Daily Star, June 9, 1988.

until fabric investigation can determine the final result.

The large adobe wing--basically a three-room house--on the southwest side of the ranch house may be the house that John Harvey built for his wife and sold to Margaret Vail in 1881. Walter wrote that he and his bride would be living separately, and Margaret Vail bought the house and all its furnishings for \$1,000. This was a substantial amount of money.

Another structure existed on the property when Vail and Hislop acquired it. This was probably the small adobe structure that appears in the corner of figure . The small adobe building to the northeast of the ranch house is probably the house that Banning Vail constructed for "Ma and Pa Farrar"--really the Ferras, who were the grandparents of Eva Jimenez of Sonoita. The Vails added the wood-frame addition on the south end of the ranch house by 1898. The screen porch on that addition was added in 1924 or 1925.

The Victorian adobe was oriented to face west, which faced the main road as it passed through the ranch. When the road changed by 1919, visitors had to do a half-circle around north of the ranch house to get to the front door. Despite this approach, the principle garden areas to which Mary Boice applied her green thumb were on the west side of the house; but her and lawn areas were manicured and her gardens were contained in planting beds.

Although the ranch house had started as a simple, functional, four-room structure, it expanded as the ranch expanded and the hands' and family's needs did. Undoubtedly the most significant fact about the Empire is how little the ranch headquarters really changed. Considering the evolution of the ranching operations and functions, the buildings retain an extremely high level of integrity from the 1920s/1930s decades, and the evolution from fortified house to ranch headquarters is evident throughout.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Empire Ranch has been fortunate to be the subject of a large number of still pictures. Some were taken as early as the 1880s. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Mary Boice took hundreds of still pictures and some movies of the ranch and ranch life. Three of these movies have been transferred on to video tape, and they are in the collection of the Boicefamily.

The biggest problem, however, is that nearly all of the historic photographs of the ranch were taken of the exterior. Only two early interior photos are known to exist as of this writing (1992). For those reasons the illustrations for the historical data section are grouped in this one section. In general they are arranged chronologically with the exception of comparative shots--where a recent photograph was taken matching as closely as possible the angle and distance of a historic photograph. These comparative photographs are placed adjacent to each other.

In some instances, the dates remain elusive. Specific, accurate dates are recorded as definite; all others are dated to the best available information (i.e., "circa 18 "or "prior to 19\_ ").



Figure 1. This early photograph of the ranch was taken in about 1885 looking southwest. The flat roof of the main house, the gable roofs of the Victorian adobe and the adobe barn are allevident. A small structure to the northwest of the complex was most likely the second building to which Hislop referred in his letters of 1876.

A 430-1, Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram



Figure 2. In this photograph (ca. 1885) taken from the northwest, the general layout of the ranch is evident. The older section of the ranch house had a flat roof, and the front porch of the Victorian adobe house faced the main road through the ranch. A thin fence enclosed the yard area around the house. The adobe barn (1884) and a large water tank were south of the house. The north wall of the adobe barn had one large door opening, and three window openings. An adobe wall ran between the wooden water tank and the barn.

A413-1, Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram



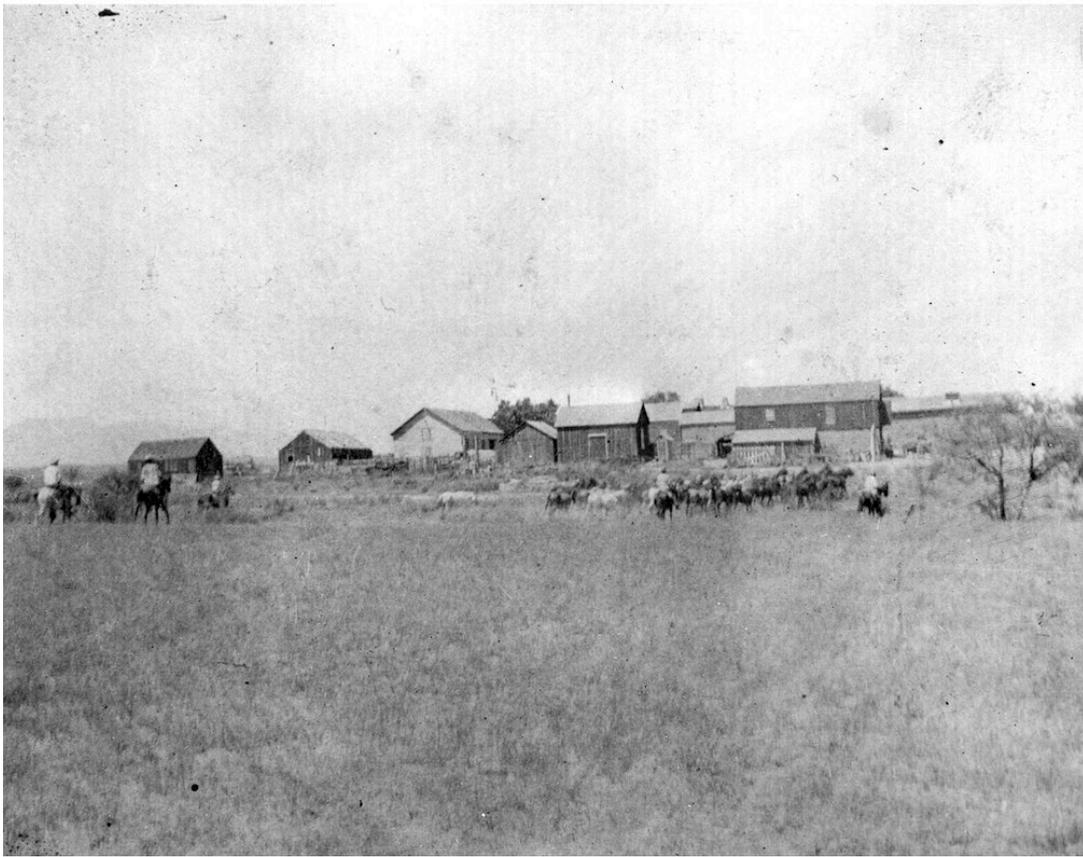
Figure 3. Ranch complex looking west-southwest, circa 1885. The catch pens and corrals used for working cattle were here, east of the ranch house (on their present location). The east wall of the adobe barn had two openings, and an adobe wall ran from the barn's northeast corner toward the house complex. The cowboy cook's quarters (rooms 16 and 18) had been constructed but had a flat roof. The sections of the original adobe wall (covered by vegetation on the left and between the house and the one-story adobe outbuilding) still remained.

A412-1. Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram



Figures 4 and 5. The photograph above shows the zaguán, circa 1885+. Although the openings in the wall are in exactly the same locations, the sizes of the appanages have changed. The historic photograph shows the original adobe wall and eastern entrance to the zaguan. Note that the original wood lintel (left). A300-062 (above); D300 158 (below).





Figures 6, 7. The Empire Ranch circa 1900 (above) and circa 1925 (below) looking west. Note the difference in the numbers and types of outbuildings, and the amount of vegetation. In the lower photograph the buildings are nearly identical to what exists today.  
A300-107 (above); D200-018a (below).





Figure 8. This contemporary photograph (1992) show the structures as they appear today, looking due west.

D300-039, Harrison photograph for BLM



Figure 9. In the upper photography (Circa 1886) rooms 16 and 18 have a roof, and stone corral is in use. The adobe wall separates the zaguán from the corral area, and the former door on the east wall of room 11 is now a window. In general, the adobe is in fair condition.

Photo credit:

[unknown source, D200-011a in ERF photo archives]



Figure 10. Here the adobe walls have weathered. The wood frame addition (containing room 25) has been tacked on the south end of the structure. An adobe chimney, perhaps for a forge, rises out of the ground (left). The adobe wall that bordered the eastern edge of the zaguán has been replaced with a board fence, and the opening into the corral area is adjacent to room 16. [date is 1890]

A300-037. Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram

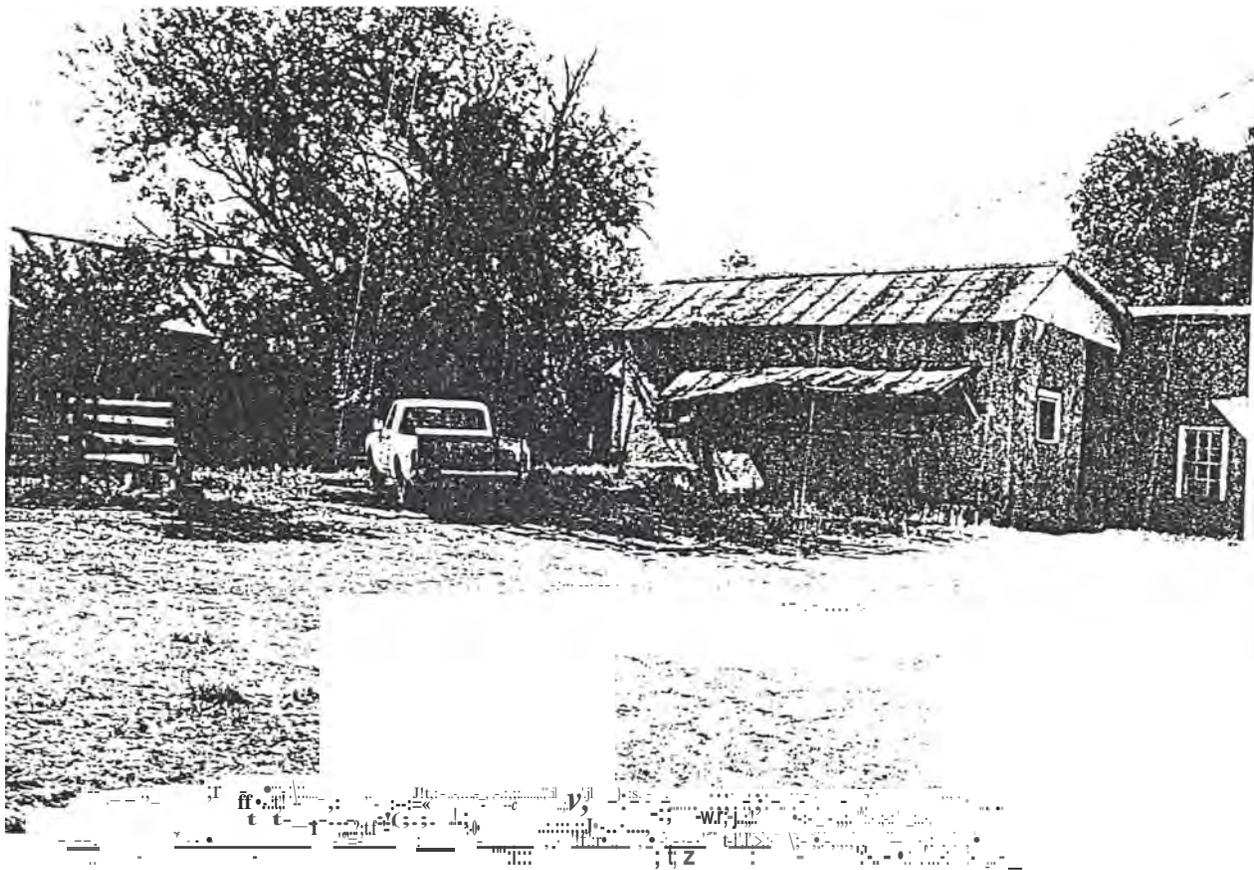


Figure 11. In this contemporary photograph, the fence line coming out of the southeast corner of room 18 has been removed. Flue openings in the east wall of room remain. The roof line and material over rooms 16 and 18 have changed from a simple gable covered with wood shingles to an extension of the main roof. The roof over the saddle rack is listing.

Harrison photograph for BLM [original image not located]

NORTH ELEVATION



Figure 12. North elevation, circa 1895. Here the gable roof has been added to the earliest section of the ranch house. The walls remain devoid of exterior plaster. A wooden fence encloses the yard area. A small wood-frame structure, no longer extant, sits of the east of the ranch house.

A300-101, Empire Ranch Collection, Special Collections, University of Arizona



Figure 13. North elevation, circa 1965. Here the stucco exterior finish is evident and in good condition. A top plate at the top of the adobe walls affords greater protection for the upper part of the wall. The true expanse of the lintel over the entrance has been hidden by the stucco application.

D300-035. Empire Ranch Collection, Special Collections, University of Arizona



Figures 14 and 15. North elevation, 1992. Barn swallows have roosted in the eaves and vegetation has hidden the structures. D300-074 (above), D300-075 (below), Harrison for BLM





Figure 16. Ranch house, looking southeast. This photograph shows double doors and (just barely) the six-over-six double-hung windows that flanked that entrance of room 21 .A dormer, complete with cornice returns, projects through the roof above the double door. Although later used as a dining room, this was probably not the original use of the room. The bay window of the living room (20) is barely visible behind the small shed on the lawn.

A300-012. Undated photograph, probably circa 1900, Arizona Historical Society.



Figure 17. Ranch house, looking southeast. Here the changes from the late 1940s-early 1950s are evident. New fenestration on the north wall of the dining room (room 21) and the bay window (room 20) replaced the historic.

D300-011. Harrison photo for BLM



Figure 18. In this photograph, looking northeast, an awning extends out from the front porch. A small wooden fence surround the back yard, just west and south of the south wing. The "screened porch" has not been enclosed. The small critter in the foreground is a purebred Hereford. The Empire began concentrating on Herefords in 1901. Circa 1900.

A530-02. Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram

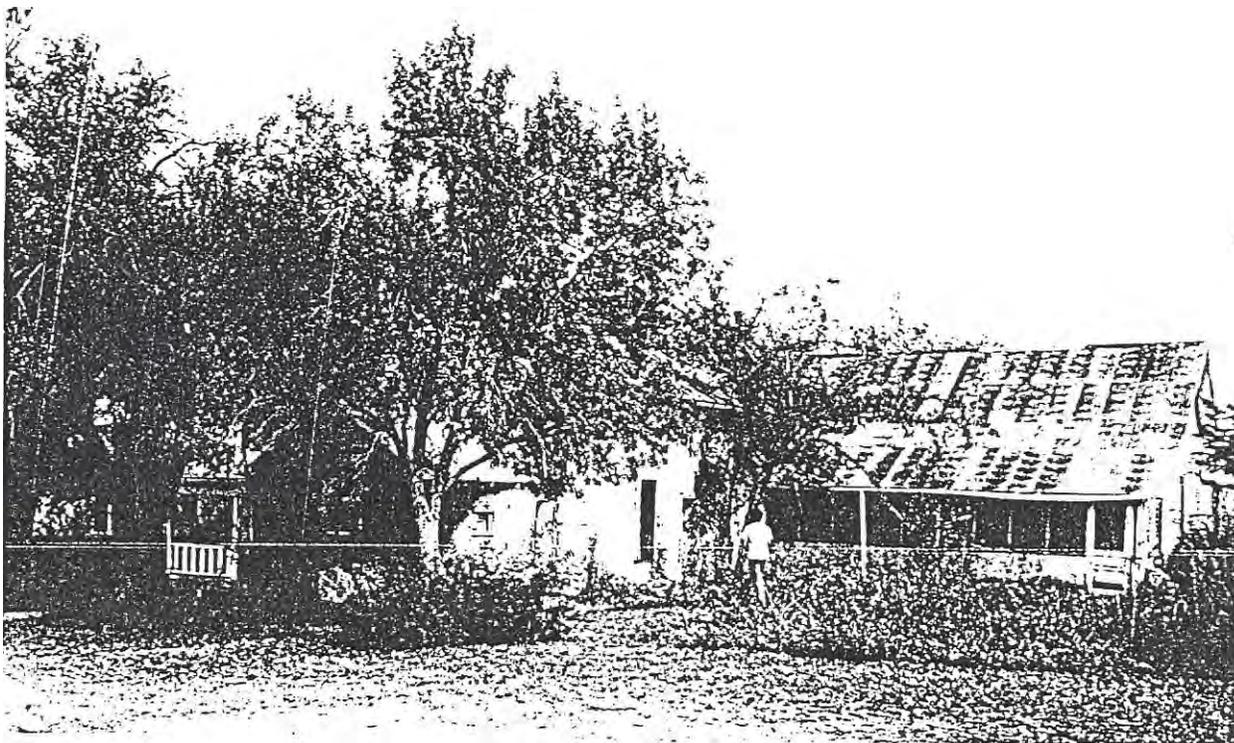


Figure 19. In this contemporary comparative photograph (1991) the changes to roofing materials and the enclosure of the screened porch are evident.

Harrison photo for BLM [original image not located]



Figure 20. Here the framework for the awning is evident. The balusters of the front porch railing were thin—probably 2 x 2s. The bare adobe shows some signs of weathering. The presence of chairs out on the front lawn is indicative of the social importance of the front porch area. Circa 1900

A536-168 Photo credit: University of Arizona Special Collections, Harry Heffner album



Figure 21. In this photograph, entitled "Mrs. H. V. McFadden with Perry and Tommy," several aspects stand out. The foundation seems to have a moisture problem, as evidenced by the dark areas around the bases of the wall. The adobes show signs of weathering. A boardwalk ran along this west wall of the house (outside rooms 10 and 11). The McFaddens lived at the ranch from 1896 through 1900.

A536-113 Photo credit: University of Arizona Special Collections, Harry Heffner album



Figure 22. Ranch house, looking east-northeast, circa 1920. Here the exterior coating has peeled away from the foundation near the office (room 11), which shows that the moisture problem evident twenty years earlier continued. The bay window appears to contain four-over-four double hung windows. The balustrade of the front porch has been replaced.

A142-1, Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram

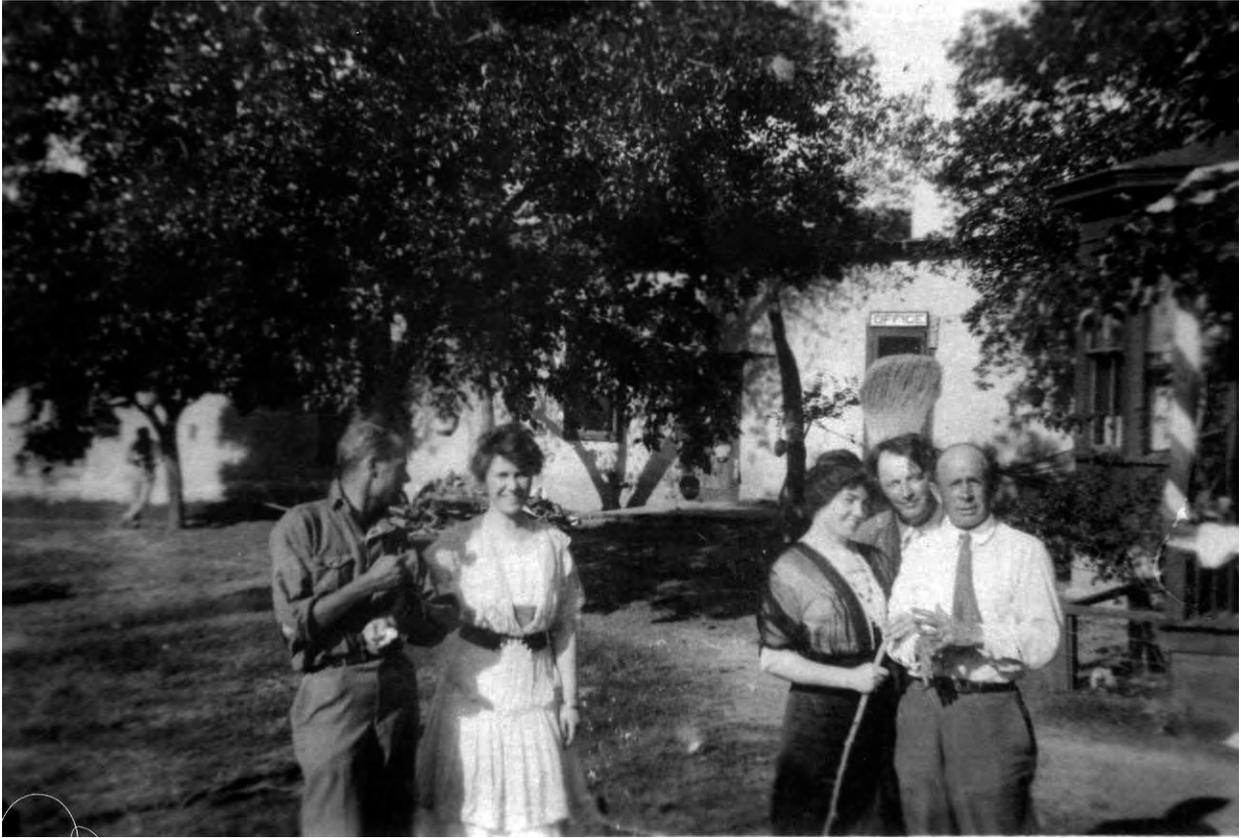


Figure 23. This photograph, taken circa 1920, shows the four-over-four double hung windows of the living room bay. Note the "office" sign above the door of room 11. The vegetation is relatively contained.

A 123-1. Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram

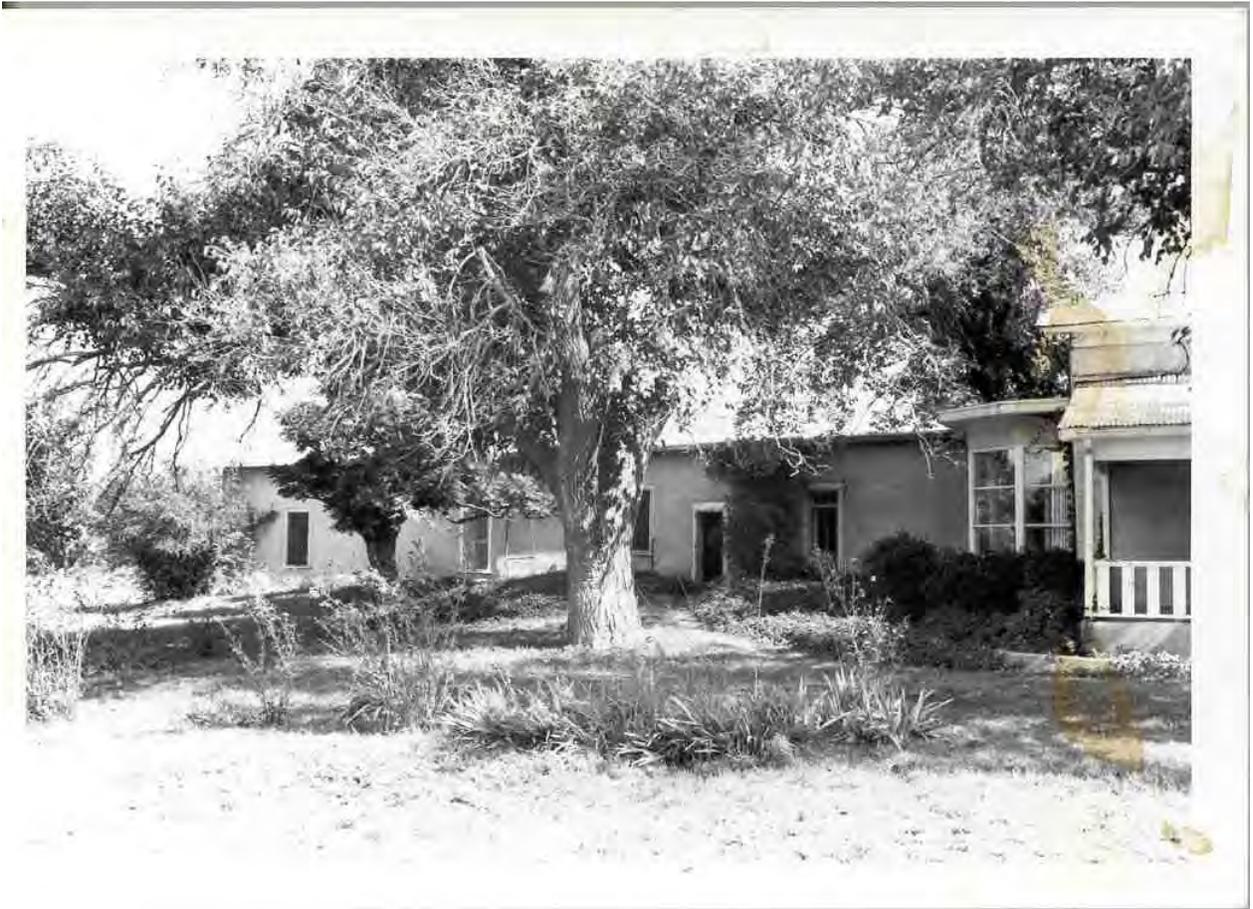


Figure 24. This contemporary photograph (1991) shows how much the Vegetation changed in seventy years.

D300-096, Harrison photo for BLM. (Similar but not the exact original photo used in original report.)



Figure 25. In the spring of 1936, ivy climbed the wall of the bathroom (room 29) and the main bedroom (room 22). A wire and ocotillo fence protected the yard area. The adobe plaster under the eaves of room 22 showed signs of cracking.

D200-020a. Photo courtesy of Steve Boice



Figure 26. Frank and Mary Boice and two friends on the front porch of the Empire, January 1, 1938. Irises bordered the walkway up to the house. The historic front door had multiple lights above (either 16 or 20) and two panels below.

Photo courtesy of Steve Boice



Figure 27. During the spring of 1936, a cactus garden was on the west side of the house. Because of different climatic conditions the garden, which would have thrived in Tucson, failed at this higher elevation. Note the deteriorated and patched plaster around the foundation and upper walls outside the office and kitchen (rooms 11 and 12).

B300-016. Photo courtesy of Steve Boice.



Figure 28. This is the east elevation of the wood-frame addition at the south end of the house. Note that even in this historic photograph (circa 1920) the east elevation has been altered. The child looking out the window may be Dusty Vail.

A144-2b. Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram.

EAST ELEVATION



Figure 29. In this comparative photograph (1991), the addition has been painted, and the lower portions of the wood frame structure show some evidence of deterioration.

D300-45, Harrison for BLM.



Figure 30. The zaguan, circa 1935. To the upper left of the child is the meat locker that remains in the hallway today. To the right of the cowboy is the washstand where the cowboys washed up before meals.

B206-048 Photo courtesy of Steve Boice.

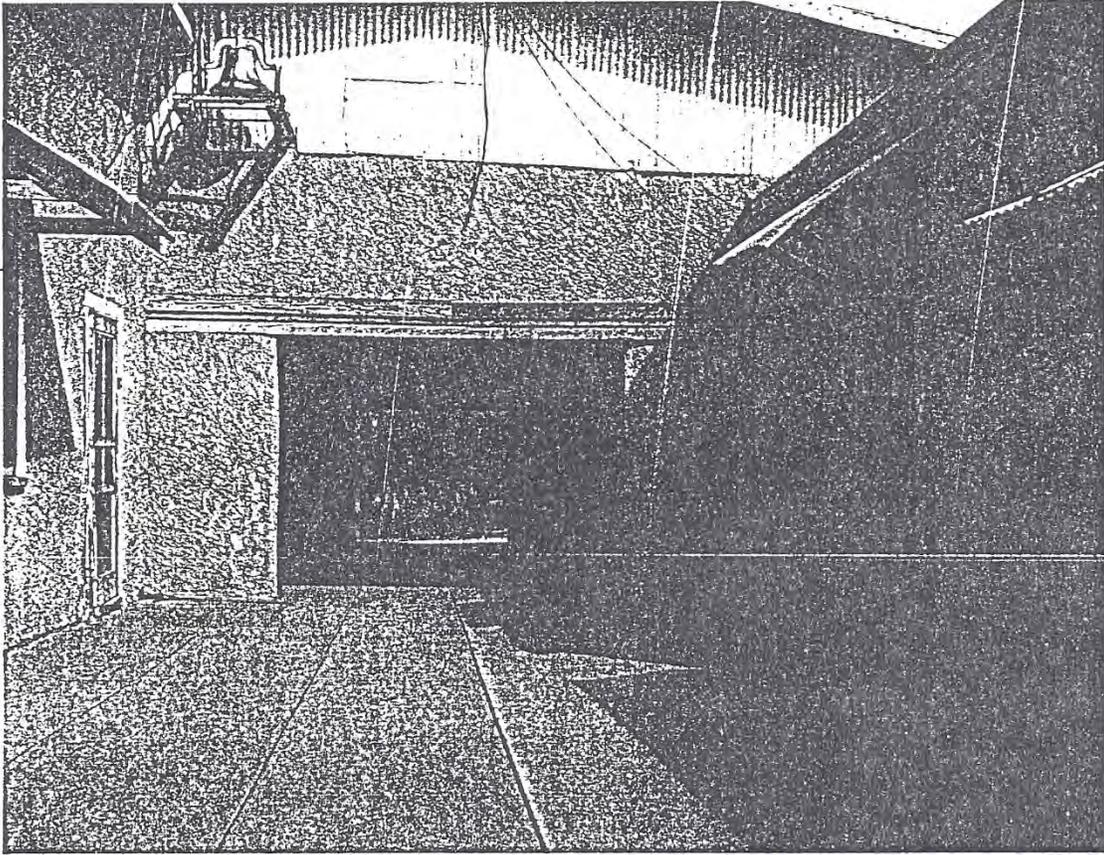


Figure 31. In this photograph taken circa 1965, the bell was in place, but the rope to operate it had been removed. The water line running along the lintel is clearly visible.

Arizona Historical Society



Figure 32. The deterioration of the lintel is evident in this 1992 photograph of the zaguan.

D300-161, Harrison for BLM



Figure 33. Room 6, looking northwest. Here the adobe wall of the original corral is intact, and an additional room (room 8) has been constructed. Note the portion of a lintel embedded in the south wall of room 6. Circa 1885.

A530-504, Courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram



Figure 34. In this contemporary photograph, fence that extends out of the east wall of room 6 is in the same location as the 1878s adobe wall, and the gate post is in approximately the same location as the original one. The Bathroom addition (room 9) came after 1930.

Harrison for BLM



Figure 35. Circa 1920. The roofed saddle rack bordered the eastern edge of the zaguan (behind the girl). At this time a water trough sat to the east of room 8 (directly behind the horse).

A175-1 Courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram

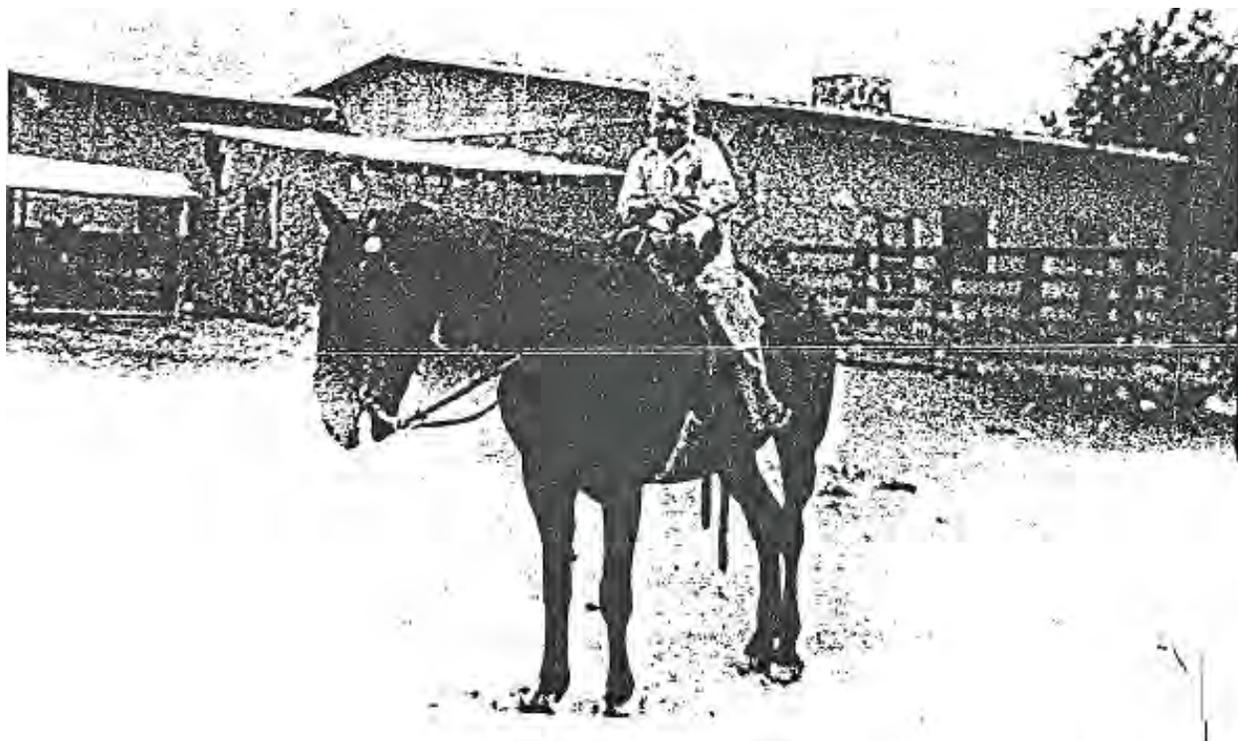


Figure 36, looking northwest. Note the condition of the plaster on the walls of the original house and the additions.  
Courtesy of Steve Boice

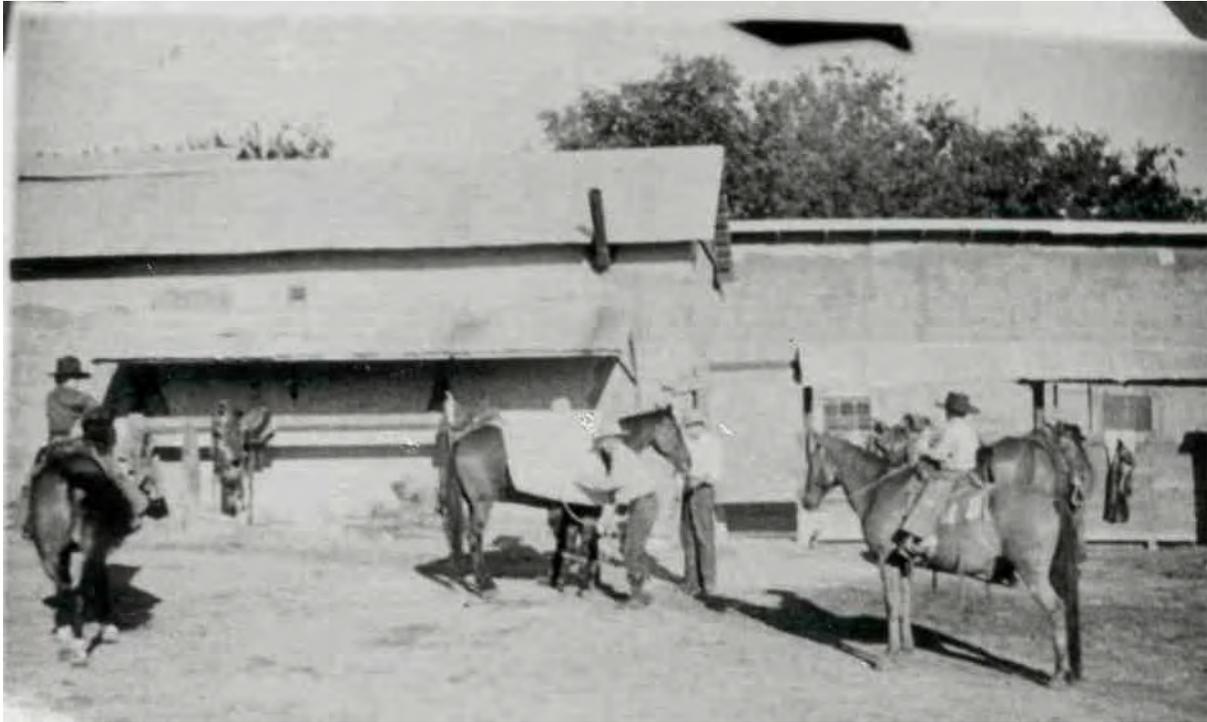


Figure 37. 1937. The second roofed saddle rack had been constructed on the east elevation of room 16 and 18.  
B300-024 Courtesy of Steve Boice.



Figure 38. 1937. This detail shows both saddle racks and the types of high-backed saddles (most of them complete with tapaderos) that the cowboys used. A bedroll lying on the ground is being prepared for packing.

Courtesy of Steve Boice.

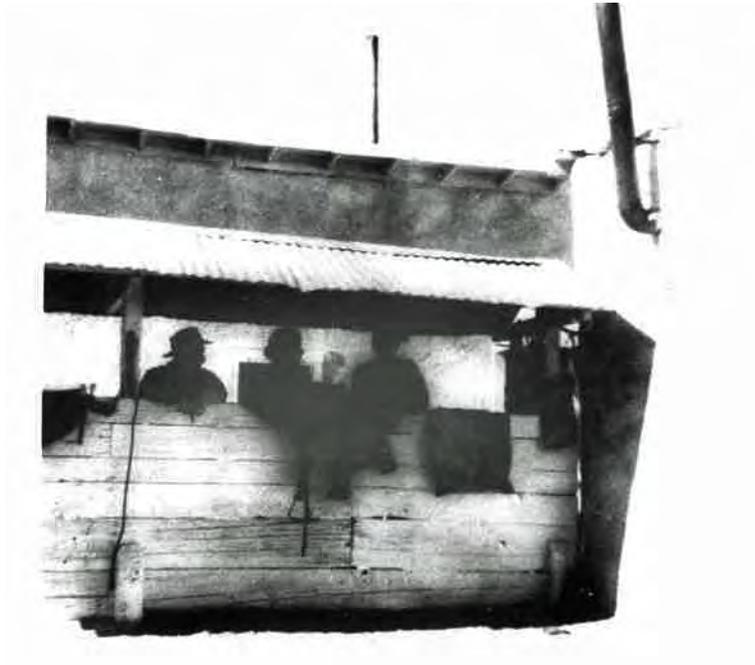


Figure 39. The shade under the saddle rack bordering the zaguan was a favorite spot for gathering. Often the children used to sit up on the rack and watch thunderstorms off in the distance.

Photo courtesy of Steve Boice.



Figure 40. East elevation, north end of the ranch house. The slight mounds of earth that bank up toward the house underneath the wooden fence are remnants of the historic adobe wall that surrounded the original corral.

B300-031 Harrison for BLM



Figure 41. The only remaining saddle rack is the one on the east side of rooms 16/18.

D300-079 Harrison for BLM

## OUTBUILDINGS

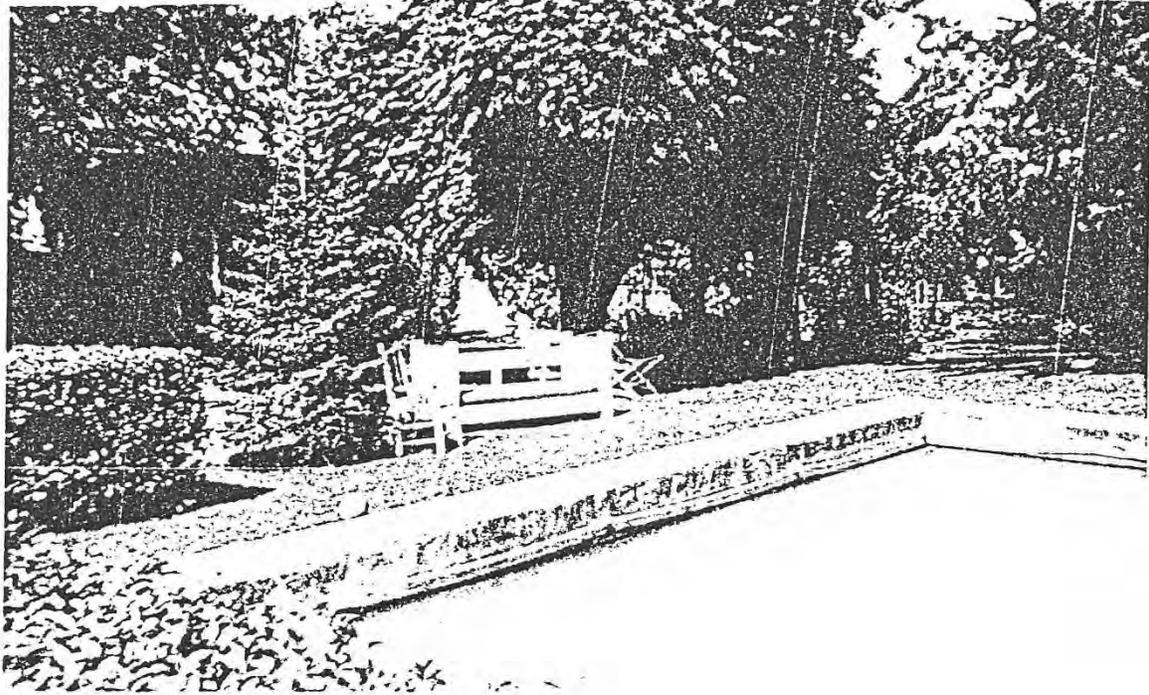


Figure 42. The swimming pool southwest of the house was constructed by 1939.

Photo courtesy of Steve Boice.

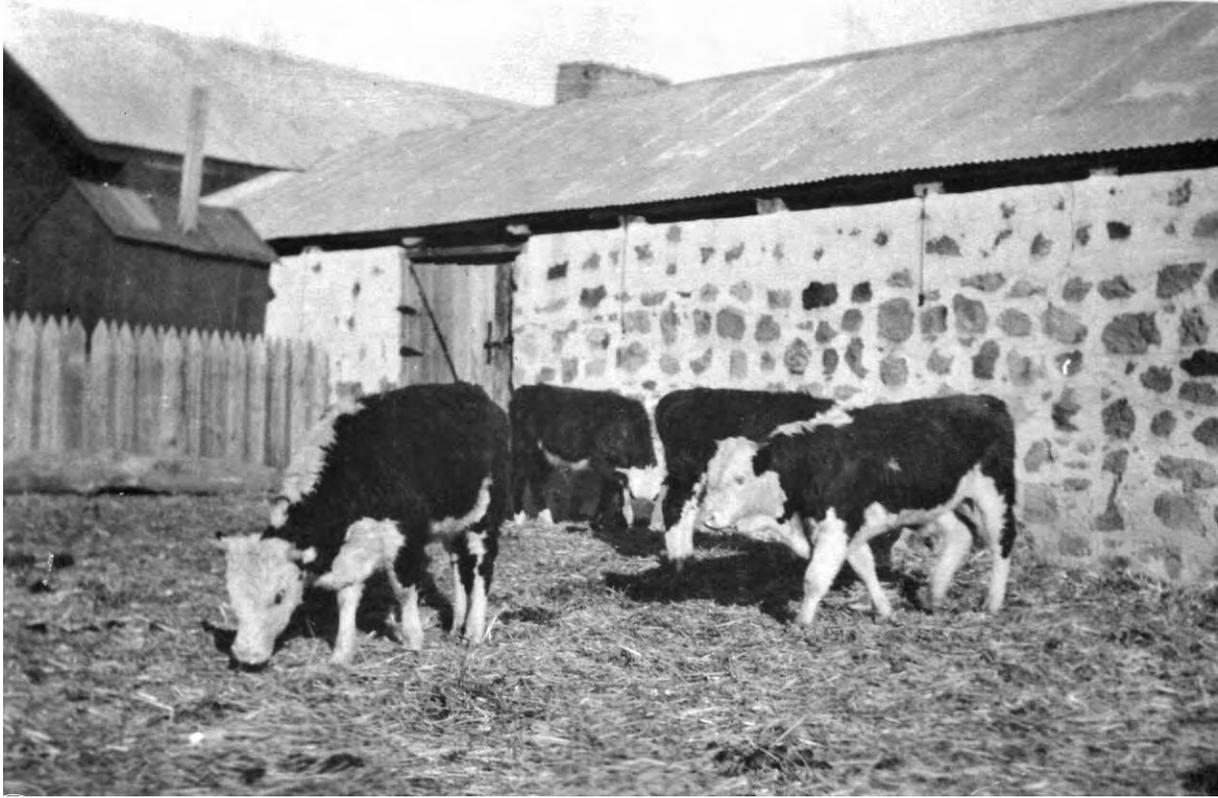


Figure 43. The structure known as the "stone corral," seen here from the southeast, was of rubble masonry construction.

A120-2. Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram.

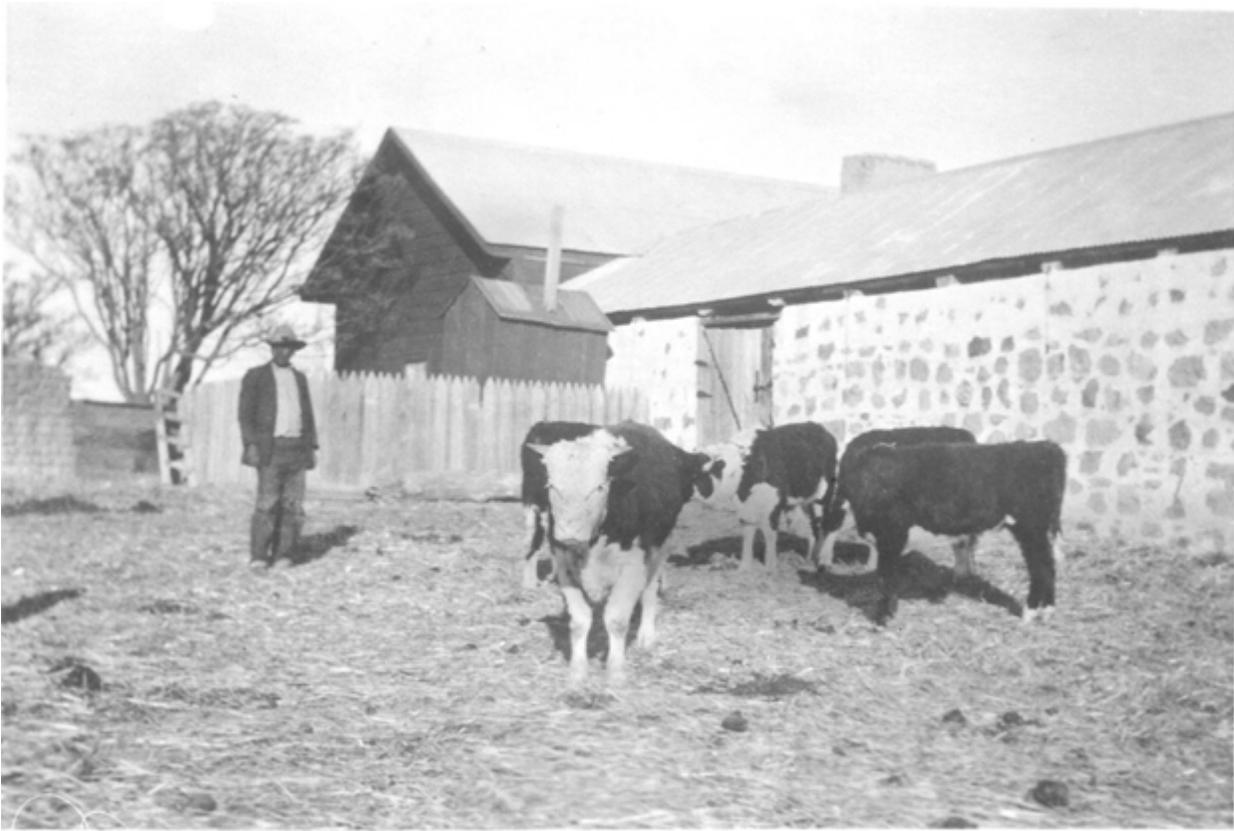


Figure 44. Circa 1900. Here the adobe wall (left) that extended from the east wall of the barn north toward the house was evident. An outhouse was adjacent to the stone corral. The southern, wood-frame portion of the house was painted a dark color.

A 121-1. Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram.



Figure 45. A concrete wall replaced the earlier adobe wall, the outhouse has been removed, and the door on the "stone corral" has been reversed.

D300-055. Harrison for BLM



Figure 46. This photograph was taken in the late 1940s during the filming of the John Wayne movie "Red River."

B350-05a. Photo courtesy of Steve Boice.

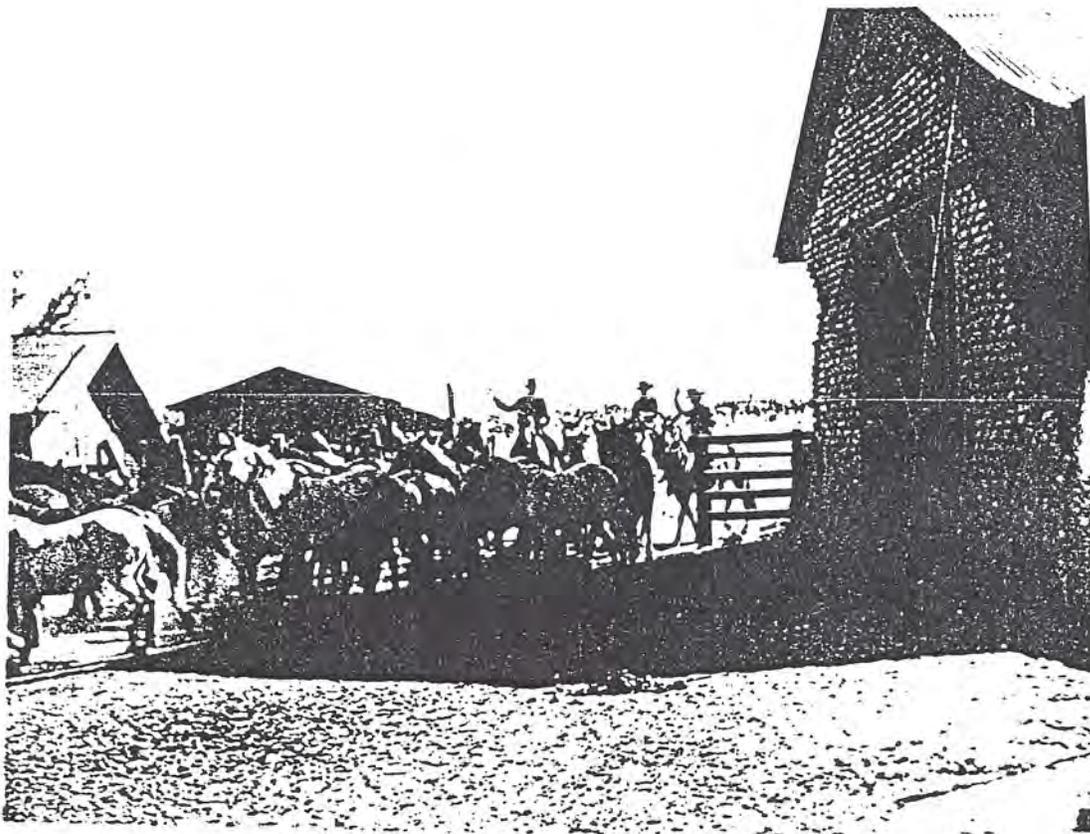


Figure 47. Although the adobe barn had burned, been repaired, and started to weather again, it was in fair condition when this photograph was taken during the late 1940s.

Photo courtesy of Steve Boice



Figure 48. Adobe barn, looking north. Erosion is evident around the foundation. The ramp on the east elevation (right), originally at grade, is now a loading dock about 18" above grade.

D300-082. Harrison for BLM



Figure 49. The small adobe house northeast of the ranch headquarters was occupied by a family, several generation of which worked at the ranch for the Vails and the Boices.

D300-064. Harrison for BLM



Figure 50. The wood frame barn south of the adobe barn was used for hay storage during the Vail era.

A301-001. Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram

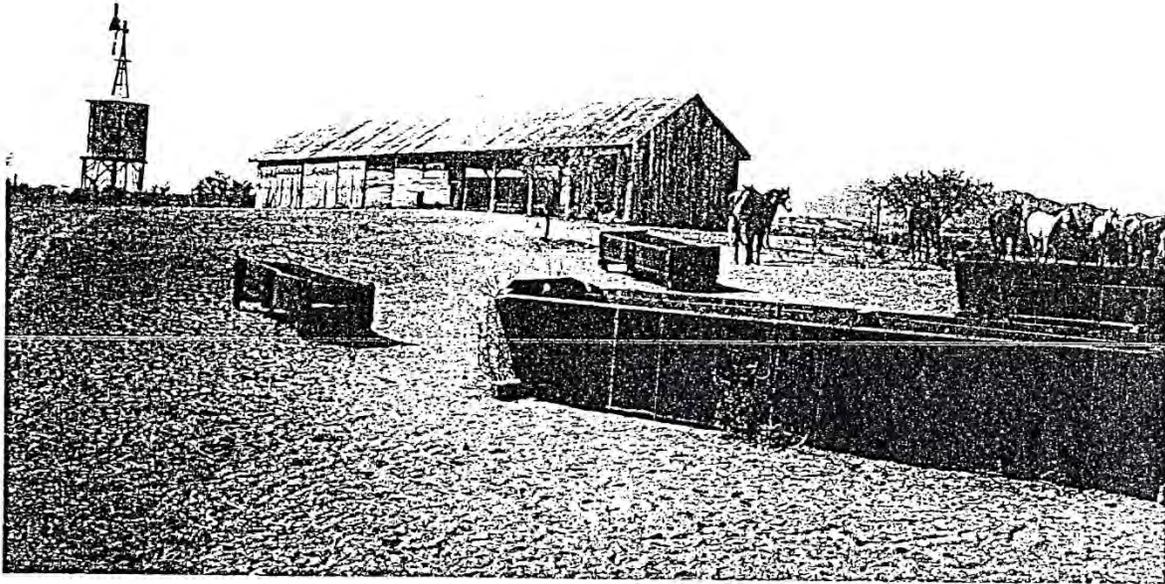


Figure 51. The former hay barn is now an open shelter for horses. Enclosed bays are used as storage.

Harrison for BLM.

PEOPLE OF THE EMPIRE



Figure 52. During the 1890s, the Vails often hired hands to help out during round-up.

A510-079a Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram



Figure 53. Apache Joe worked for the Vails for years doing a number of tasks from maintaining the orchard to cutting wood. Here (circa 1920) he is cleaning horsehair in preparation for making a rope.

A123-2 Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram.



Figure 54. Laura Vail, known as Dusty, was the oldest child of Banning Vail. She grew up on the Empire, and she learned how to ride when she was a very small child. She worked round-up and helped her dad around the ranch. In her spare time, she instigated her younger brothers into terrorizing the bookkeeper.

A068-1 Photo courtesy of Laura Vail Ingram.



Figure 55. During the 1940s and 1950s, a number of film companies made movies at the ranch. Here John Wayne poses for a publicity photo with Bob Boice, Pancho Boice, and Mary Boice. The photograph probably was taken during the filming of *Red River*, circa 1948.

B003-1 Photo courtesy of Steve Boice.



Figure 56. Dick and Eva Jimenez of Sonoita have long been connected with the Empire Ranch. Eva grew up in the adobe house to the northeast of the main ranch building. She and her husband both worked for the Boices.

D300-072 Harrison photo for BLM.



Figure 57. Jack Cooper, known as "Miraculous Jack" worked at the Empire breaking horses during the late 1930s. He lived in room 3, the cowboys' quarters, at the ranch. He met his future wife, a journalist, at the Empire when she visited one day in 1937.

Harrison photo for BLM. D300-071



Figure 58. The Boices retain strong family ties to the ranch. Bob Boice and his wife Miriam (right) left the ranch in 1955 when they bought another ranch south of Globe. Steve Boice and his sister Sherry Buzzard (left) grew up on the Empire.

D300-084 Harrison photo for BLM.

**ARCHITECTURAL DATA**

## ARCHITECTURAL DATA

Significance. The Empire Ranch is significant for a number of reasons. The ranch contributes to the broad patterns of American history. For a time it was one of the largest cattle ranches in the southwest. The families associated with the ranch, the Vails and the Boices, are a part of that significance. The Empire Ranch was the physical and economic core of the Vail family's vast domain that eventually included substantial chunks of real estate and development in California. The Boice family came to the Empire with nearly a half-century of background in the cattle industry in the west and made the ranch the center of its cattle operation.<sup>1</sup>

The ranch is significant in architecture because of the evolution of the vernacular types represented in its buildings. The northernmost and oldest portion of the building--four rooms around a courtyard or breezeway--were built in a fashion similar to other indigenous period structures found elsewhere in the territory. One noteworthy aspect of the original structure was its relatively fortified layout. There were only two entrances: one at the north end of the hall and one through a large wooden gate in the adobe wall just east of room 6. The height of the ceilings and the sawn beams of that portion were typical of the higher style vernacular structures, and those elements were found in better dwellings in Tucson and Yuma in 1870.<sup>2</sup> The additions that stretched south--with their peeled log vigas--were constructed following the same building traditions but without the benefit of sawn timbers. The victorian addition exemplified the adaptation of anglo architectural forms (three room gable-roofed cottage with central-wall chimneys) to southwestern building materials. The wood-frame building (rooms 24-27) tacked on the south end of the house was typical of nineteenth-century architecture in isolated locales: re-use of extant materials. The additive quality of the ranch buildings and the various approaches to architecture and building present a social history of nineteenth century Arizona and its architecture (fortification/expansion/upgrade into high style).

In terms of cultural landscapes, the ranch development has changed very little since the late 1920s and early 1930s. The patterns of use in and around the buildings have high levels of integrity.

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<sup>1</sup>At one point Henry S. Boice controlled more than one quarter of the cattle in the entire United States.

<sup>2</sup>Jim Garrison, Arizona State Historic Preservation Office confirmed this. Modular construction like this was typical.

Although the vegetation has overgrown its earlier bounds, most of the 1930s plantings are intact. Providing a tamed, cultured environment in the yard of a ranch house was a common method of adding a more "civilized" influence to a hard life in a rugged landscape.

Significant structural features include but are not limited to:

- adobe construction with relatively smooth exterior finish (most is probably on a stone
- ceiling (former roof) construction of sawn beams and/or peeled vigas, latias, mud, grasses and twigs.
- symmetry of the original north wing
- additive, evolutionary quality of the architecture.

Significant exterior features include but are not limited to:

- massing/silhouette
- plan
- multiple and intersecting gable roofs
- relatively smooth exterior finish
- multi-light windows
- panelled doors (often four-panels with transoms)
- metal roof finish.

Significant interior features include but are not limited to:

- scored concrete floors
- smooth plaster wall finishes
- variety of ceiling finishes, including the remnants of mantas
- wood floors where they occur, particularly the wood floor in the office, room 11.

During the course of research for this project a number of other items concerning the rooms and buildings at the ranch came to light. These are included here for a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the ranch.

General Information. The first four rooms (1, 3, 4, 6) of the ranch house, the northernmost section, was probably constructed circa 1871 when E.N. Fish had his sawmill nearby. The additional rooms were under construction by 1878. The victorian adobe section was constructed circa 1880, and the southern wood-frame addition was added by 1898. The wood-frame addition appears to have been originally constructed on another site (the Total Wreck, perhaps?) and later moved to this location.

Laura Vail Ingram thinks that the poured concrete floors for the rooms of the ranch house, the hall, and the zaguan were all done during the late 'teens. The porch on the west side of the wood-frame addition was enclosed in 1924 or 1925.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 19.

Room 1--Cowboys' Quarters. Originally this room had a simple mud floor. The concrete was added during the late 'teens.

Laura Vail Ingram remembers this room being devoid of furniture. Instead, the cowboys just threw down their bedrolls.<sup>4</sup>

Room 2--The Hall. The primary significance of the hall is as the principal historic entrance to the ranch house. Originally the house was laid out in a fortified fashion, and this was the main entrance.

The hall has been used for hanging and dressing animals since construction.

In 1878 Walter Vail wrote the following to his brother:

I had a great laugh just now at the appearance of our hall, the cook asked me to look out at the meat we had hanging up, it consisted of beef, veal, duck, pork and one of our cats that I shot last night, he used to get right under my window every night and howl so I wound up [illegible] with a six shooter, the cook says he intends to cut the hind leg off a mule and a horse that died here a few days ago he says then he will have the hole [sic] business.<sup>5</sup>

Frank Boice and Dee Edwards (retired foreman who ran the commissary) used to argue about when the first official rain would happen at the ranch. They agreed that a rain was an official one when the rain from the zaguan (13) was heavy enough to trickle down (north) through the hall (2) and out the north end of the building. Bob Boice recalled watching the two of them, one on each side of trickle, following it from the south end of the hall to the north to see if it actually made it that far and could be counted as an "official" rain.<sup>6</sup>

In the southeast corner of the hall is a small concrete pad. This is a cooler pad. The cooler was a simple structure built to keep food relatively cool in the hot climate, and it worked on the same principle as a desert water bag. It was like a screen box on four legs. Burlap covered the top and sides of the box. A small water pipe constantly dripped water over the burlap. The cooling process took place as the water evaporated. The four wooden legs of the cooler sat in cans of water to keep insects from crawling up the legs and getting into the food. The drain in the bottom of the pad drained away any excess water. It was a primitive refrigerator.

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<sup>4</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 18.

<sup>5</sup>Walter Vail to Ned Vail, March 13, 1878, unprocessed material, donation of Laura Vail Ingram, AHS.

<sup>6</sup>Bob Boice in Boice Family Interview.

Room 3--Cowboys' Quarters. Like room 1, this room originally had a mud floor. Laura Vail Ingram recalled that during the 1920s this room was devoid of furniture. The cowboys rolled out their bedrolls on the floor.<sup>7</sup>

Cowboy Jack Cooper lived in this room when he worked at the ranch between 1936 and 1938. The bed frame on which he rolled out his bedroll is identical to the one presently stored in the room. He had his bed on the east wall of the room. The head of the bed was near the window and the foot of the bed was toward the fireplace. There were other bunks on the north and west walls. A hook in the chimney (extant) is where Cooper hung an old pair of cowboy boots with a sign that said "Miraculous Jack," his nickname.<sup>8</sup>

Room 4--The Cowboys' Dining Room. During the late teens through the Boice era this room was the cowboys' dining room. Laura Vail Ingram remembered eating a number of meals in the dining room. She had a preference for the simple beans and jerky diet. During her time at the ranch the room contained a long table in the middle, and her father, ranch hands, and visitors often sat in there for long periods of time drinking coffee.<sup>9</sup>

Room 6--Company Store/Commissary. From at least the late 1870s through 1955 this room was the place where cowboys got their supplies.

Ned Vail went to town in early 1890 with a grocery list for the ranch. All of these stores would have been kept in this room. His grocery list included (verbatim):

Tea 5#  
Baking Powder  
Coffee  
Rive  
Salt  
Tea Pot 1 1/2 gal  
Coffee Pot 2 gal  
1 Dipper  
1 short Jake [?]  
Vinegar 6 gal  
Pepper 2#  
Chilles (sic)  
200 flour  
100 spuds  
5# R Coffee [Perhaps Arbuckles?]  
2# Tea  
10 Rice

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<sup>7</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 18.

<sup>8</sup>Cooper Interview.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 18.

Oat Meal  
Cod Fish  
Bacon  
Bak powder  
Salt  
Vinegar  
Sundries  
Lima Beans  
6# Prunes  
1 gal [?]  
1 doz canned corn  
Prunes or Apples.<sup>10</sup>

If this room was not in use (during the tenure of Laura Vail Ingram), the Vails often put their Christmas tree and presents in this room.

Laura Vail Ingram recalled that they had a bookkeeper named Mr. Helman who managed the books and the store for years. He was very meticulous in his habits, and he dusted off the cans and items in his store daily. Laura and her siblings used to do a quick hit-and-run with a handful of dust or sand, and Mr. Helman took off after them. Despite the fact that they were scared of him, he bought a copy of Uncle Remus and read to the children quite often.<sup>11</sup>

During the latter part of the Vail era, the store was stocked with dried apples, dried apricots, big cans of lard, a few articles of clothing. The provisions were trucked in from either Tucson or Sonoita.<sup>12</sup>

At some time after 1955 the Boices moved the store function to room 1.<sup>13</sup>

Room 8--Ranch Foreman's Quarters. During the latter part of the Vail era, foreman Blas Lopez occupied this room.<sup>14</sup> The Vail children never entered this room or any of the others belonging to the ranch workers because the workers enjoyed their privacy.<sup>15</sup>

Dee Edwards lived here during the 1930s. After retiring from being

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<sup>10</sup>Edward L. Vail Diary, Special Collections, University of Arizona.

<sup>11</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 19.

<sup>12</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 19.

<sup>13</sup>Boice interviews.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 20.

<sup>15</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 25.

a foreman, he ran the store and did odd jobs around the ranch.<sup>16</sup>

Room 10--The Lower Kitchen. During the early 1920s, this room contained a very large wood stove. The cowboys' food was cooked here.<sup>17</sup>

Room 11--The Office. This is one of the most significant rooms at the ranch house. For years it was the headquarters of the Empire Ranch operation. The office furnishings are significant. According to Harry Heffner, when Walter Vail left the ranch to go into Tucson, he put the cash out of the safe into canvas sacks and tossed them up on a shelf in the office, and he put his whiskey in the safe. Walter drank little, but his foreman Tom Turner was often tempted. Vail did this to keep Turner out of trouble.<sup>18</sup>

Laura Vail Ingram recalled several pieces of furniture in this room. During the time she was at the ranch. the bookkeeper worked in this room. He had a tall desk where he stood and worked. Her father, Banning Vail, also had a desk and chair in the room.<sup>19</sup>

Bob Boice recalled that the telephone was on the south wall, and the room contained some shelves. The combination to the safe was written on the shelves. During the 1930s and 1940s the desk sat on a diagonal, and the extant cabinet and safe were there. One side of the cabinet used to be a gun cabinet. The room contained a pot-bellied stove, and later on a gas grill. An asbestos mat sat under the stove to prevent sparks from hurting the floor. This was where Frank and Henry Boice got together and discussed all of their strategies. They both smoked pipes, and the room always had an ashtray and a stack of wooden matches. As Bob said:

Before each one would answer the other they would light their pipe. My dad was the bookkeeper and my uncle was the front man. The telephone was here. This was where you got paid off when you got fired, or where you collected your money when you went to town.<sup>20</sup>

Room 13--Zaguan. Originally the zaguan had an adobe wall on its now open east edge. Later, that was replaced with a wooden wall, and then it evolved into a wooden wall with a saddle rack and small gable roof. This was demolished in the 1970s.

<sup>16</sup>Bob Boice, Boice Family Interview.

<sup>17</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 17.

<sup>18</sup>Undated article, "Old Cowman Recalls Empire Ranch Days," in Harry Heffner Biographical File, Arizona Historical Society.

<sup>19</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 17.

<sup>20</sup>Bob Boice, Boice family interview.

The zaguan was adjacent to the pen where the wranglers ran the available horses every morning. Laura Vail Ingram recalled that she had to get up early to get her horse, otherwise it was turned out in the horse pasture in the cottonwoods (north of the house) for the day. Trying to catch the horses in there was more difficult.<sup>21</sup>

Laura Vail Ingram recalled that as a child she was too small to saddle her own horse. To remedy that situation she climbed up on the ~~saddle~~<sup>feels</sup>, pulled her horse up tight, and threw the saddle on from there.

A large dinner bell was in the northwest corner under the gable. In the zaguan outside room 8 was a washstand where all of the cowboys came and washed up before meals. The cook rang the dinner bell the first time to warn people to get ready, and rang it fifteen minutes later to let them know it was chow time.<sup>22</sup>

The reason that the lintel is rotted at the opening between the zaguan and the hallway is because a water line ran between the lower kitchen (10) and the foreman's quarters (8). The water line sweated and eventually caused deterioration.

Room 14--Cook's Quarters. During the latter portion of the Vail era, the Vail had a Jamaican cook named Lena Brown. Mrs. Brown had two children. She worked at the Empire until some time during the 1920s when she moved to California and worked for Mahlon at the Pauba Ranch,<sup>23</sup> and Los Angeles.

Room 18--Storage and Pantry. During the late teens through 1928, this room contained ice boxes. Laura Vail Ingram reported that the Vails got their ice in 300-lb. blocks from an ice house in Patagonia.<sup>24</sup> 100

Room 20--Living Room. During the latter part of the Vail era (1910s and 1920s) the room contained furniture similar to what houses in town contained. The tables and chairs were very comfortable, but they were of a higher style than what people visiting the ranch expected to find.<sup>25</sup>

The cobblestone mantles around the fireplaces in these three rooms

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<sup>21</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 21.

<sup>22</sup>Bob Boice, Boice Family Interview.

<sup>23</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 26.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 6.

<sup>25</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 26-27.

were probably added in about 1920.<sup>26</sup> This type of construction was typical of bungalow-era houses, and the addition of these would have been consistent with the poured concrete floors.

As a child, Laura Vail Ingram used to sit in the doorway of the front door on the west side of the room. She sat on a pillow between the screen door and the wood-frame door and read. It was her favorite reading spot because she could lock out her brothers and keep away flies at the same time.<sup>27</sup>

During the late 1940s and early 1950s Frank and Mary Boice completed a number of remodelling projects at the ranch. Updating the living room and replacing the deteriorated bay window was one of these projects. The panelling on the south wall was put in at that time.

Room 22--Master Bedroom. Traditionally this has been the master bedroom for the principal owner of the ranch and his wife. Walter and Margaret Vail occupied this room, as did Banning Vail and his wife. The closet on the east wall of this room may not have existed prior to 1928.<sup>28</sup>

Room 23--Middle Room. During the latter part of the Vail era, this room was referred to as the "Middle Room." It was the room where guests stayed when they came to the ranch, or where the children played while their parents visited with company in the living room. During that time period the room contained a big double bed, chaise lounge, arm chair, and similar furniture.<sup>29</sup>

During the 1930s this was the bedroom of Bob and Pancho Boice.<sup>30</sup>

Room 24--Storeroom. This is the room where the Vails stored fancy canned goods during the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>31</sup>

Room 25--Nursery/children's bedroom. Laura Vail Ingram, at the urging of her father, once rode her horse into the nursery to "upset Mother. He wanted to hear her scream and she did."<sup>32</sup>

Room 26--Children's Bathroom. The bath tub in this room is the

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<sup>26</sup>Conversation with historical architect Jim Garrison.

<sup>27</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 26.

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 27.

<sup>29</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 27.

<sup>30</sup>Bob Boice, Boice Family Interview.

<sup>31</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 28.

<sup>32</sup>Laura Vail Ingram Interview, 28.

same tub that was there during the latter portion of the Vail era. This room contained a coal-oil heater during the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>33</sup>

Room 28--Screen Porch. During warm weather in the 1910s and 1920s, the Vails kept single beds already made up on the sleeping porch. Family members and visitors often slept out there.<sup>34</sup> The sleeping porch was added during Laura Vail Ingram's time at the ranch--she estimated it was in 1924 or 1925.<sup>35</sup>

Tack Room (Building C). During the latter portion of the Vail era, this structure was the farrier shop. The building did contain other tack, however. Since the snubbing post was just outside this building, the cowboys and the Vails kept hackamores, snaffles, a couple of breaking saddles, a few blankets.<sup>36</sup>

Adobe Barn (Building G). During the latter part of the Vail era, the Vails kept baled hay in this barn. They baled the hay "down at the farm."<sup>37</sup>

At some time prior to 1935, this barn burned and was rebuilt.

Shed (Building H). Laura Vail Ingram did not remember this structure at all, so it may not have existed prior to 1928.<sup>38</sup>

Horse Barn (Building I). Laura Vail Ingram recalled that this was the last structure her father, Banning Vail, built. He kept a couple of stallions in it.<sup>39</sup>

Shop (Building K). During the latter part of the Vail era, this was the main shop. The building was the place where any heavy equipment was fixed.<sup>40</sup>

Ferra House (Building N). This is probably the house that Banning Vail built for "Ma and Pa Farrar."<sup>41</sup> Eva (Ferra) Jimenez grew up in the house with her grandparents, and she recalled that several

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<sup>33</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 29.

<sup>34</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 29.

<sup>35</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 31

<sup>36</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 22.

<sup>37</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 23.

<sup>38</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 24.

<sup>39</sup>Interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 22.

<sup>40</sup>interview with Laura Vail Ingram, 24.

<sup>41</sup>Ingram interview.

people had lived in the house prior to her arrival at the ranch. The house did not exist in ca. 1885 photographs, but it was there by 1920.

House in the Cottonwoods. The family of Pancho Boice lived in this house during the early 1950s until the new residence (now the BLM Filed Station) was constructed. This building was not included in the study, so it was not photographed, but further investigation about its history is warranted.