



CITY OF COTTONWOOD  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
826 N. MAIN STREET

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

### AGENDA

October 14, 2015 6:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER.
2. ROLL CALL.
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF September 9, 2015 MEETING
4. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND UPDATES: *A brief summary of current events by Chairperson, Commission members, and/or staff. (The public body does not propose, discuss, deliberate, or take legal action on any matter brought up during this summary unless the matter is properly noticed for legal action.)*
  - a. November meeting date changed from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> due to the Verteran's Day Holiday.
  - b. Historic Home Tour
5. CALL TO THE PUBLIC: *This is the time for the public to comment on any matter that does not appear on the agenda. Commission members may not discuss items not identified on the agenda. Action taken as a result of public comment will be limited to directing staff to study the matter, responding to criticism, or scheduling the matter for consideration at a later date. Comments are limited to five minutes for each person*
6. OLD BUSINESS: The following items are for Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action by the Commission:
  - a. Approval of Property Inventory Map-Historic Overlay District Map.
  - b. Approval of Historic Property Inventory and Maps- Old Town and Main & Mingus areas.
  - c. Founding Date of Cottonwood.
7. NEW BUSINESS: The following items are for Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action by the Commission:
  - a. Discussion regarding historic status of 753 N Main St., Healing Arts Center, formerly Marcus J. Lawrence Memorial Hospital.
8. ADJOURNMENT.

***Pursuant to A.R.S. § 38-431.02(B) the Commission may vote to go into executive session on any agenda item for discussion and consultation for legal advice with the City Attorney.***

***The Cottonwood Council Chambers is accessible to the handicapped in accordance with Federal "504" and "ADA" laws. Those with needs for special typeface print or hearing devices may request these from the Planning Department at 634-5505 (TDD 634-5526). All requests must be made at least 24 hours before the meeting.***

**City of Cottonwood**  
**Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**September 9, 2015 6:00 P.M.**  
**Council Chambers 826 N. Main Street, Cottonwood, Arizona**  
**86326**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Elinski called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Historic Preservation Commission Members Present:**

Tim Elinski, Chair      Glenda Farley  
Ryan Bigelow          Karen Leff  
Marie Palowoda

**Historic Preservation Commission Members Absent:**

Annabel Sclipa, Vice Chair  
Christian Vernosky

**Staff Members Present:**

Berrin Nejad, Community Development Director  
Tyler Roberts, Community Development Assistant Planner  
Christina Papa, Community Development Planning Technician, Recorder

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 15, 2014 MEETING**

**Motion:**            *To approve the minutes from 8/12/2015*

**Made by:**          *Commissioner Palowoda*

**Second:**          *Commissioner Leff*

**Vote:**                *Unanimous*

**4. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS AND UPDATES**

Fandango- update with Building Inspector Steve Jackson.

**5. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

No comments.

**6. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. APPROVAL OF PROGRAM RESOURCES BROCHURE-Staff

Commissioner Farley had mentioned that the date 1879 was not correct and that in fact Cottonwood was founded in 1885. Chairman Elinski mentioned that the commission should look into those dates and figure out what date should be used. Chairman Elinski asked the commission if they had any other changes to the brochure other than the date. Commissioner Farley mentioned that the one picture on the front of Bing's Burger needed to be changed as it is not a historical place. Staff mentioned to the commission that they were all asked to provide pictures to staff for the brochure, Vice Chair Sclippa was the only one that provided pictures and they were not able to be used due to them being pictures of individuals, staff needs whatever pictures that the commission wants to use and it will be added to the brochure, besides the date and the photos is there anything else that the commission would like to change. Commissioner Farley had mentioned that the wording under financial incentives where it says historical places to change it to..... Chairman Elinski mentioned that before staff changes the date that they need to see the research, this should be put on the agenda.

There was a brief discussion regarding the date.

Commissioner Bigelow mentioned that all evidence of the 1885 and the 1879 date needs to be looked at, and once that has been done a decision on what date should be used can be made. Chairman Elinski asked commission if they would like to table this item. Staff asked commission if they can just take the date out for now. Chairman Elinski listed changes to staff of taking the 1879 date out, changing historic property to historic places, and take the Bing Burger photo off and add a new photo. Staff asked commission if they will be providing staff the photos. Chairman Elinski mentioned that he could take the photos, and also mentioned that the photos used should be of properties that have been landmarked, such as the Civic Center, the Old Jail, and hopefully Garrison's property (Liberty Garage). Commissioner Farley mentioned that maybe they should use the Civic Center, Garrison's property, and a historic home. Chairman Elinski mentioned that they are only looking at commercial properties. Commissioner Leff mentioned that the Eden House is very colorful and would be a good photo to use on the cover. Chairman Elinski mentioned that all commercial or some residential, what does the commission think? this is intended to go along with the overlay district, the commission should maybe see how the brochure goes with that first and then look into a residential one. Staff mentioned that another brochure can be made. Commissioner Bigelow said that they should start with what they have now.

***Motion: Motion to approve the Program Resources Brochure with the following changes; the date be removed, historic property be replaced with historic places, and the photos on the cover be replaced with the Civic Center, Old Town Jail, and the Liberty Garage.***

***Made by: Commissioner Elinski***  
***Second: Commissioner Bigelow***  
***Vote: Unanimous***

- b. APPROVAL OF HISTORIC PROERTY INVENTORY AND MAPS-OLD TOWN AND MAIN & MINGUS AREAS-Staff

Commissioner Leff mentioned that buildings that have been gutted, and redone completely should reflect a different color on the map. Chairman Elinski mentioned that changes can be made to a certain extent, and wanted to know about the gray structures and if the commission is looking into dates for those ones. Staff asked if Commissioner Farley would like to take the map again to fill it in more, or if it looked good. Commissioner Farley thought that it looked good. Chairman Elinski mentioned that changes can always be made later as it is an electronic file. A member of the public suggested that there should be some recognition that a building was originally built and is historic, even though it has had modifications. Chairman Elinski agrees, they should be recognized as a historic structure with modifications, these buildings could have been torn down and rebuilt brand new, but instead the people that bought them used the structures.

**Motion:**            *Motion to approve Cottonwood Historic District map with changes.*

**Made by:**        *Commissioner Glenda*  
**Second:**        *Commissioner Leff*  
**Vote:**            *Unanimous*

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

### a. LANDMARKING LIBERTY GARAGE-Staff

Chairman Elinski likes that all the information is attached, and appreciates all the hard work that went into the application, that everything is filled out and the property owners willingness to landmark his property, also that this will be the first privately owned property to be landmarked. Property owner Randy Garrison came up to speak to the commission briefly about his property.

**Motion:**            *Motion to approve the Liberty Garage Landmark.*

**Made by:**        *Commissioner Leff*  
**Second:**        *Commissioner Elinski*  
**Vote:**            *Unanimous*

### b. PUBLIC OUTREACH LETTER-Staff

Chairman Elinski asked if this was going to be posted in the newspaper. Staff responded that this would be a letter that can be sent to individuals. Commissioner Palowoda mentioned that it could be put in with the water bills and sent out that way. Staff mentioned that this would be something that they could take to Old Town Association (OTA), just as something to be used for public outreach. Chairman Elinski mentioned that he wasn't sure why the commission wouldn't approve it, and the document would have more weight if it came from the commission. Staff will make revisions to the letter and send it out to the commission for input and any further modifications. Commissioner Farley asked if it could get sent out with the water bills. Staff mentioned that they will

mail them out individually. Chairman Elinksi mentioned that it would probably be more effective if it was sent out on its own and not in the water bills.

***Motion:***        ***Motion to approve the Public Outreach Letter with changes.***

***Made by:***       ***Commissioner Elinksi***

***Second:***       ***Commissioner Leff***

***Vote:***           ***Unanimous***

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

***Motion:***        ***To adjourn the meeting.***

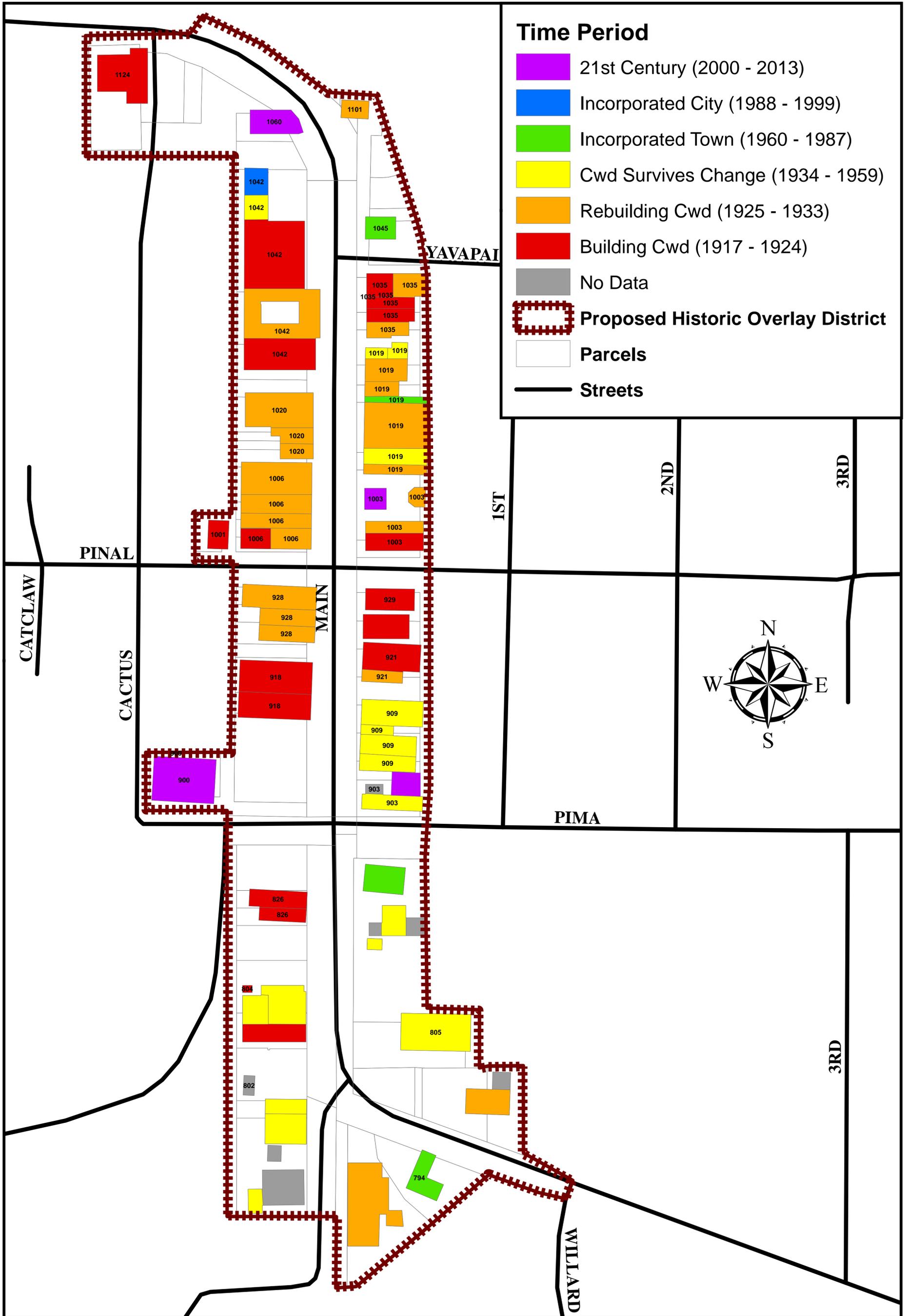
***Made by:***       ***Commissioner Bigelow***

***Second:***       ***Commissioner Palowoda***

***Vote:***           ***Unanimous***

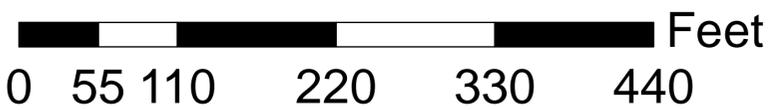
Chairman Elinksi adjourned the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

# Proposed Historic Overlay District

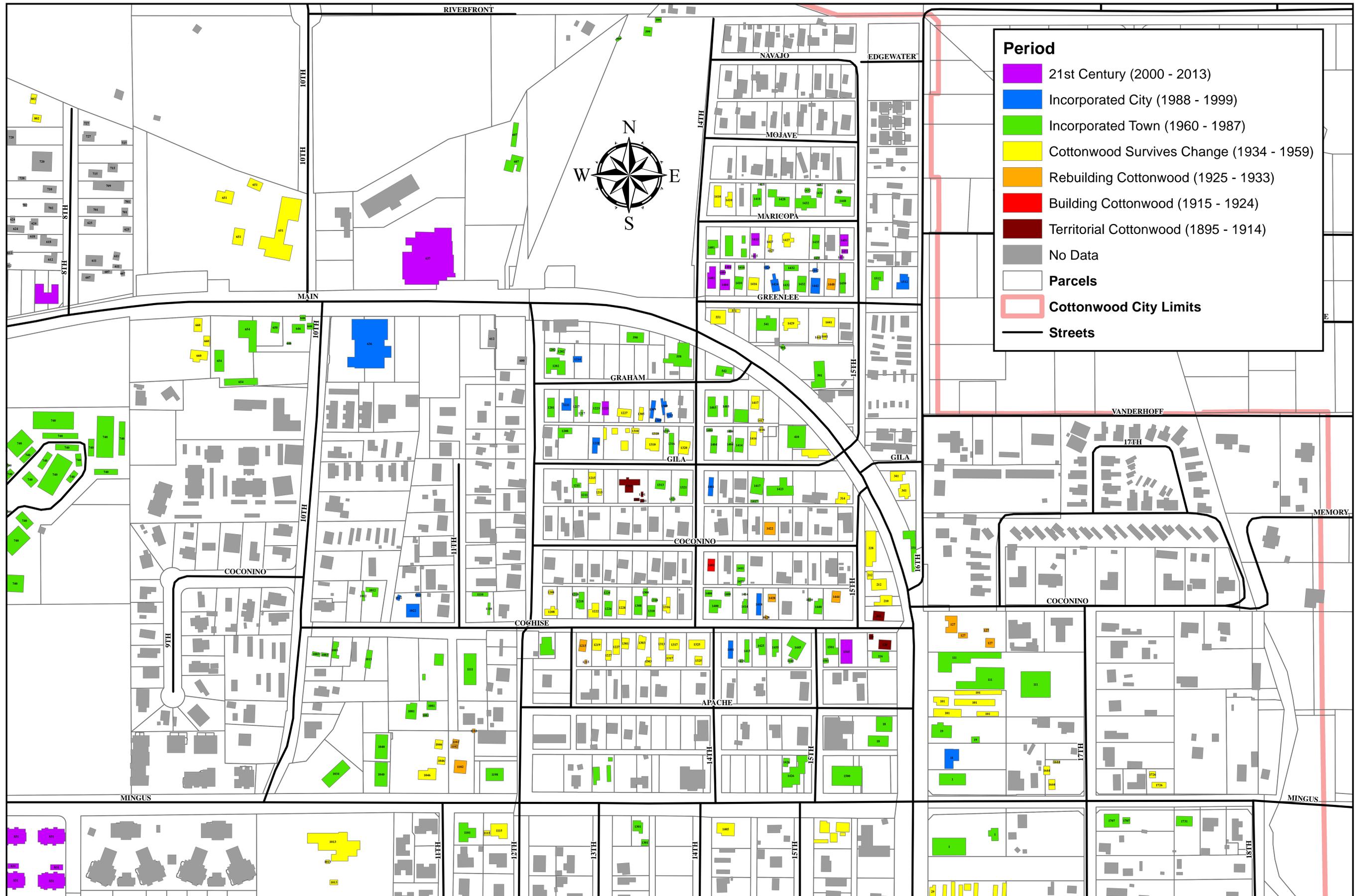


## Time Period

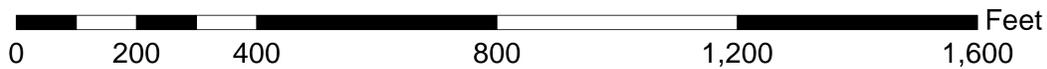
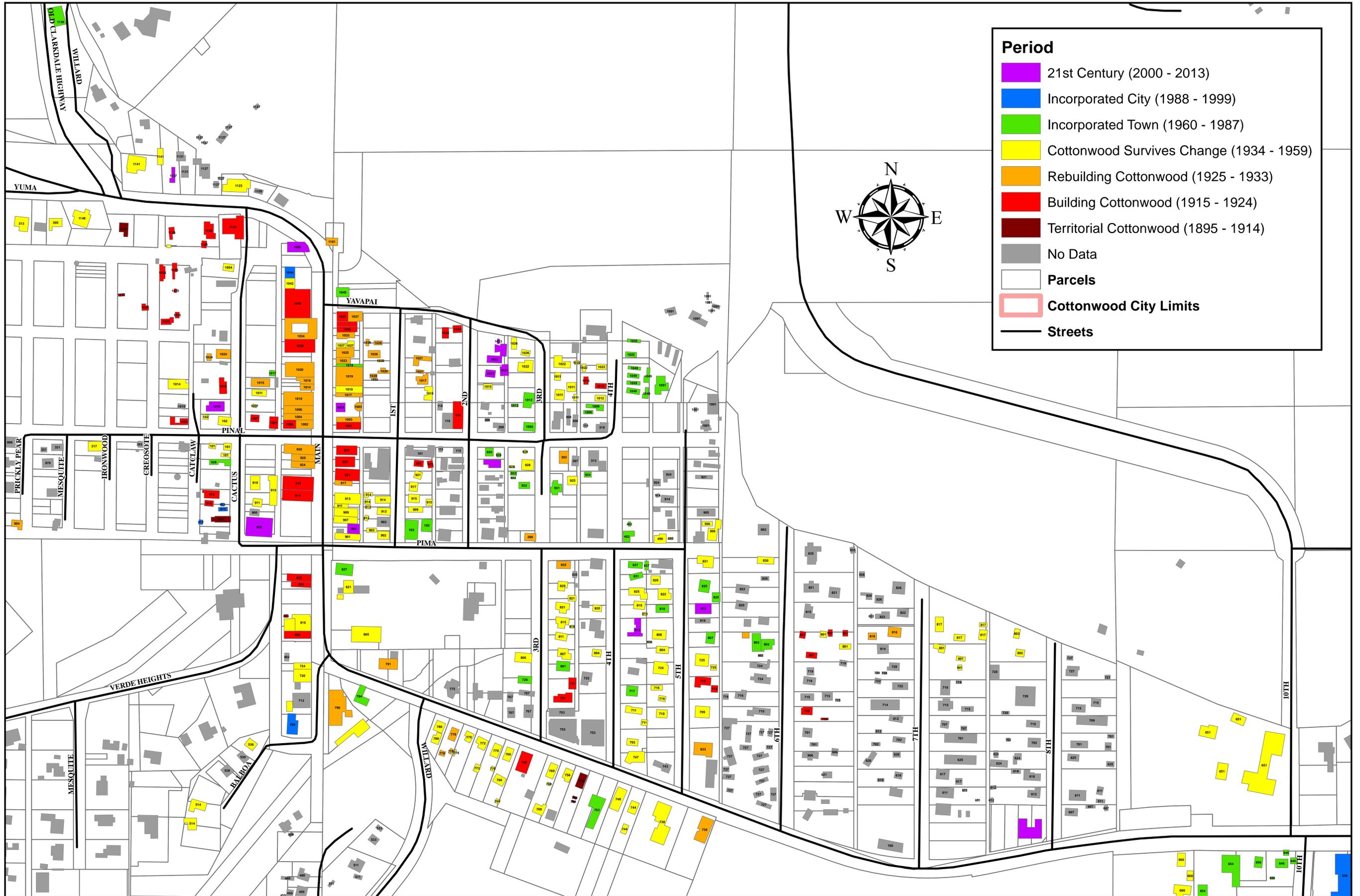
- 21st Century (2000 - 2013)
- Incorporated City (1988 - 1999)
- Incorporated Town (1960 - 1987)
- Cwd Survives Change (1934 - 1959)
- Rebuilding Cwd (1925 - 1933)
- Building Cwd (1917 - 1924)
- No Data
- Proposed Historic Overlay District
- Parcels
- Streets



# Cottonwood Historic Buildings: Main & Mingus

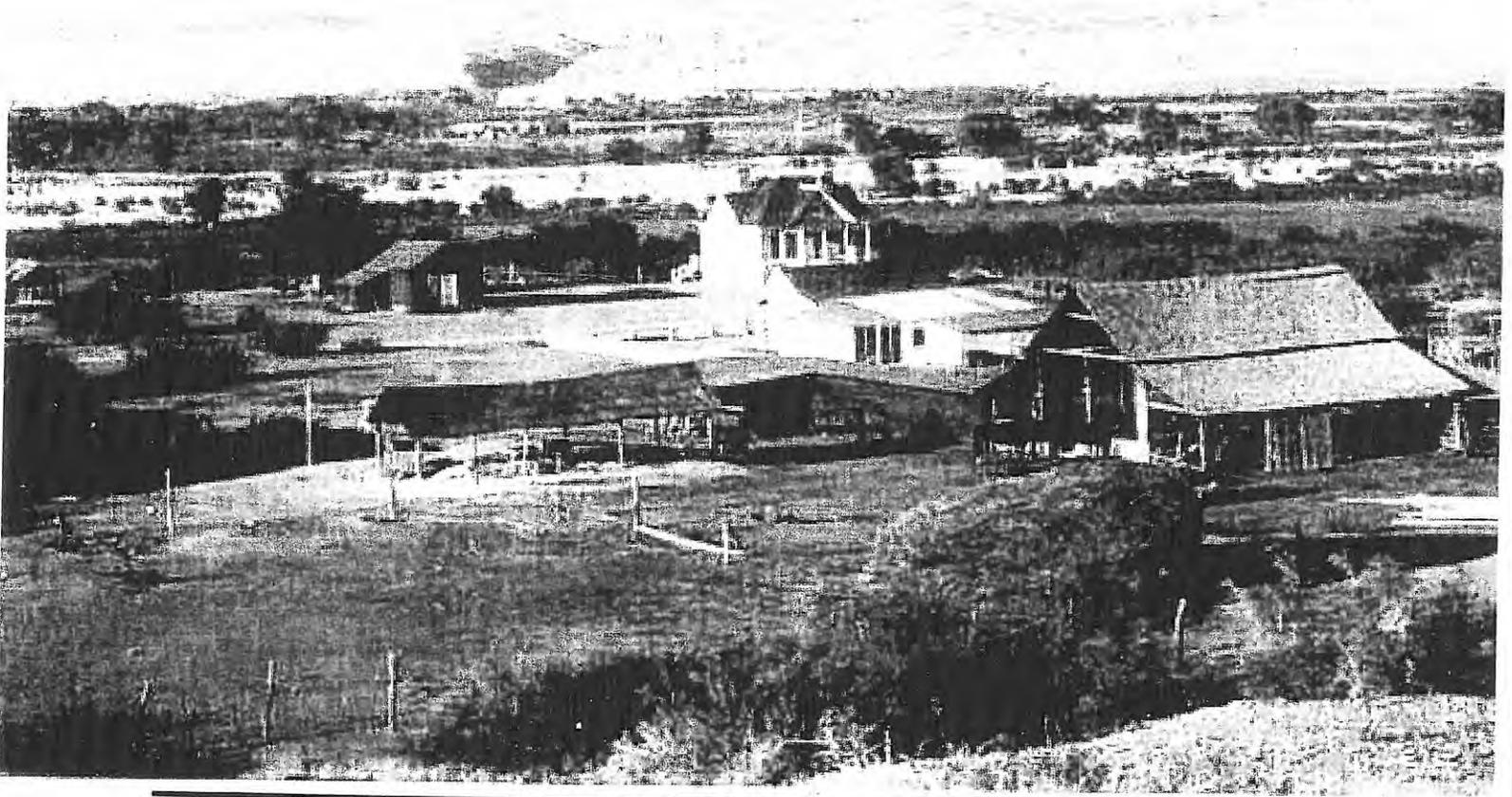


# Cottonwood Historic Buildings: Old Town



HISTORY  
of the  
**Cottonwood Post Office**

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*Established on July 9, 1885, the Cottonwood Post Office has existed for 130 years  
2015*

Compiled by Glenda Farley

# Finally Resolved, Mac Willard First Cottonwood Postmaster

By Elizabeth Rigby

Respect people have for the printed word is sometimes frightening.

For example, because the WPA Arizona State Guide, first published in 1940, said that Sedona was originally a Mormon settlement, which it assuredly was not, so it has gone down in history, the mistake endlessly repeated in publication after publication by writers who have relied upon this secondary but supposedly reliable source.

Something similar has happened with regard to the date of establishment of Cottonwood's first post office and the name of the first postmaster.

When Cottonwood's new post office building was dedicated in 1961, Don Willard of Sedona was introduced as the son of the first postmaster, George MacDonald ("Mac") Willard, and it was said that the establishment of the original post office had been authorized on July 9, 1885. Much to Willard's embarrassment, the speaker of the day, a well known Arizonan, immediately denied both statements.

A careful and generally accurate man, the speaker had done his homework for the 1961 dedication, and he based his denial on information given in the then newly published book, "Arizona Territory Post Offices and Postmasters," by John and Lillian Theobald, sponsored by the Arizona Historical Foundation.

The Theobalds have long been students of the subject, and the research that went into the book was exhaustive, but into each work of this kind some errors must creep; and so, on page 93 of this volume, the date of the establishment of Yavapai County's Cottonwood post office is given as March 6, 1879 and the name of the first postmaster as William H. McMichael. The book goes on to say that the post office was discontinued on June 4, 1880 and reauthorized July 9, 1885 with George M. Willard as postmaster.

"I couldn't say anything on that public occasion," Don says, "but I knew absolutely that there had been no post office in Cottonwood before 1885 (residents had to go to Camp Verde for their mail before that)

miles to Camp Verde for their letters and papers, all of which is wrong. There should be a post-office at Stemmer's on Ash Creek, one at Captain Jackson's on Oak Creek, with another at Beaver Head, and a mail route between Stemmer's and Beaver Head by way of the above named places. It would be the means of supplying at least 300 people with mail, who are compelled to travel from 14 to 40 miles for all correspondence, etc...."

This, of course, is a flat and contemporaneous rebuttal of the claim that there had been a Cottonwood post office in the Verde Valley between March 6, 1879 and June 4, 1880 and in the same book that says there was!

Next Longfellow consulted the Great Register in the County Court House at Prescott. This was a pre-census record of all individuals in the county and told where they had come from, what they did, where they went, how much they were worth. Longfellow looked up William H. McMichael, the rival "claimant" (posthumously) to the honor of having been Cottonwood's first postmaster.

McMichael, it transpired, had come to Arizona in the '70's and lived near Mayer (where a post office was established January 11, 1884 and was named for its first postmistress, Sarah B. Mayer). He had never lived in the Verde Valley or on the Verde River. He was in the bar and restaurant business and in 1879 had proposed to set himself up in business in a grove of Cottonwood trees near Big Bug Creek. The post office would be in his establishment (a common practice in those days) and would serve workers in the many small mines that were springing up in the area, which is also in Yavapai County.

Government authorization was given, the name Cottonwood assigned, and McMichael appointed postmaster, but he never activated the post office. Longfellow reports on the basis of interviews he later conducted with oldtimers in the Mayer area. Such fly-by-night or non-existent post offices were fre-

AMERICA.

was appointed  
and advised

was appointed by law

referred  
To hold the seat  
the pleasure of the

His Department to be  
in the year  
of the United States the

Postmaster General

Elizabeth Rigby Photo Given to the Post Office Building dedicated in 1961. Cottonwood's first postmaster I. Longfellow, and first-

## Wild Crime Increase In Of Sedona

able snow and cold have been prevalent in Sedona, Oak Creek Canyon, as

Despite that fact, the "long hot summer" has been an unusually early area of unusually early fires of thefts, burglaries, of vandalism. Coconino Sheriff's deputies in the area busier in the past few days than they normally are, and several arrests apprehended so far have turned out to be out-of-state, in the main.

On Monday, April 5, between 8 and 10 p.m., five Phoenix youths, ages from 14 to 18, broke in the back door of

es of thefts, burglaries, vandalism. Coconino Sheriff's deputies in the area busier in the past few years than they normally are, juveniles apprehended so far from the area as to be out-of-state, in the main.

On Monday, April 5, between 8 and 9 p.m., five Phoenix youths, ages from 14 to 18, broke in through the back door of Benson's summer home on the Puerco Lodge and jimmyed a storage shed, making off with an assortment of valuable items. They were later found under the wheels of a vacant trailer down

the youths returned to the area today morning, April 7. Of the two remaining in the Dick Herman house on the creek, just north of the area.

was investigated by Deputy Paul Brockman.

Juveniles were scheduled to appear before the proper authorities Tuesday. Results of the investigation are not available at press time. The 18-year-old will be treated as an adult, according to

The suspect is out on a \$1,000 bail set by Harold H. of Sedona Justice Court earlier before the Superior Court date.

Monday night, April 10, approximately \$1,500 was stolen from Puerco Lodge by five youths, ages 13 and 14, members of a tour from Torrance, California. Investigators in this case are Paul Brockman, Jewell and

currently unoccupied, property of George Babbitt. Included broken windows, plumbing pipes broken, damage to the walls, a neon sign damaged to a gas pump, pipes ripped from the building, locks damaged beyond repair. Involved were the bar, grocery store, a three- and a six-apartment building and rest rooms.

Prostitution, held at Sedona, was confessed. They were turned over to the juveniles in Flagstaff. The youths reached in California to make good the damages. They were then released to the custody of the director of the group of which they are members.

vandalism at the Faye ranch and of the theft

master as William H. McMichael. The book goes on to say that the post office was discontinued on June 4, 1880 and reauthorized July 9, 1885 with George M. Willard as postmaster.

"I couldn't say anything on that public occasion," Don says, "but I knew absolutely that there had been no post office in Cottonwood before 1885 (residents had to go to Camp Verde for their mail before that), and I knew that my father had been the first postmaster. This I was determined to prove."

Don Willard called upon Harold H. Longfellow for help, knowing that Longfellow has been a student of Arizona postal history for over 30 years and owns the most extensive collection of Territorial and Pre-Territorial Arizona "covers" in existence.

Longfellow followed several different courses in his effort to secure confirmation that there had been no Cottonwood in Yavapai County before 1885 (before that date the entire area from where Clarkdale now stands to the mouth of Oak Creek below Bridgeport was called Upper Verde), and that George M. Willard had indeed been the first postmaster when the post office was established.

The first step was a simple one. The researcher turned to page 73 of the same Theobald book that claims otherwise and found a quotation from the January 13, 1880 issue of the Arizona Miner, an early Arizona newspaper: "...The people of Upper Verde and Oak Creek have to go from 15 to 25

## Wires To Vanish In Sedona West

One phase of the community beautification program at Sedona that has presented special difficulties because of the rocky terrain has been the installation of underground utilities and elimination of overhead wires and scenery-obstructing poles.

Nevertheless, for the past several years all new subdivisions have been managing such installations, and the Mountain States Telephone Co. has made preparations for conversion to underground lines in one midtown section.

Now, for the first time, a subdivision with existing above-ground poles and wires is planning to convert. It is Sedona West, where more than half of the subdivision was developed originally with all underground utilities. Conversion

up in the area, which is also in Yavapai County.

Government authorization was given, the name Cottonwood assigned, and McMichael appointed postmaster, but he never activated the post office, Longfellow reports on the basis of interviews he later conducted with oldtimers in the Mayer area. Such fly-by-night or non-existent post offices were frequent in early territorial days, he adds.

After authorization for McMichael's "Cottonwood" was rescinded, another Cottonwood, this one in Pinal County, was established on November 9, 1881. It continued in existence only until February 4, 1884. Verde Valley's Cottonwood was established a year and half later, as proven by the official commission papers to his father that Don Willard had for many years and which now hangs in the modern post office. Longfellow points out that the government would not have authorized two active post offices by the same name in any one state.

While Harold Longfellow was conducting his investigations, Don Willard was carrying out some of his own, chiefly with oldtime residents in the Cottonwood area. Among these was his own uncle, Charles D. Willard, who arrived in the Verde Valley in 1879 and lived at Cottonwood until his death there at the age of 99.

All confirmed that there had been no post office at Upper Verde before 1885, and that George M. Willard had been the first postmaster, a position he held until August 31, 1899.

On September 3, 1966, two weeks before Wingfield's death, Willard secured the signature of R. W. Wingfield of Camp Verde, member of a well-known pioneer family in the area, to a statement that he, Robert Wingfield, had known McMichael in the Mayer area in the early days, and that to his certain knowledge McMichael had "never been identified with the Verde Valley as a postmaster or even as a resident."

Thus the spurious controversy seems to have been put at rest beyond possible contention. The correct name of Cottonwood's first postmaster and the correct date of the post office's establishment both appear in Harold Longfellow's section of the Sedona Westerners' forthcoming history book, "Those Early Days," and because this also



# ARIZONA POST OFFICES

1988

by  
Alan H. Patera  
and  
John S. Gallagher

## YAVAPAI COUNTY

POST OFFICE	ESTABLISHED	DISCONTINUED	MAIL TO
Agua Fria EB	1 Feb 1869	29 Dec 1879	C to Prescott Valley C/O
Agua Fria Valley	12 May 1875	21 Jul 1895	C to Aguafria
Aguafria	22 Jul 1893	31 Jan 1895	Tucson
Formerly Agua Fria Valley			
Alexandria	26 Aug 1876	15 Apr 1896	Crown King
Antelope Valley	1 Sep 1875	15 Jan 1877	Kishkum Valley
Formerly Stanton			
re: Ash Fork	23 Feb 1877	11 Dec 1890	Stanton
re: Ash Fork	2 Apr 1883	30 Jul 1885	Peach Springs
re: Ash Fork	11 Nov 1888	11 Jan 1890	Peach Springs
re: Ash Fork	1 Jan 1892	OP	
Ashfork' from 1894 until 1950			
Aultman	9 Jul 1885	14 Apr 1900	Cornville
re: Aultman	5 May 1897	30 Apr 1907	Camp Verde
re: Aultman	15 Jan 1915	15 Mar 1923	Camp Verde
Bagdad	26 Feb 1916	15 Jul 1915	Hillsdale
re: Bagdad	12 Jul 1947		

## YAVAPAI COUNTY, cont.

POST OFFICE	ESTABLISHED	DISCONTINUED	MAIL TO
Cordes	9 Jun 1886	15 Nov 1944	Meyer
Cornville	9 Jul 1885	OP	
<del>Cottonwood</del>	<del>6 Mar 1879</del>	<del>4 Jun 1880</del>	<del>Prescott</del>
re: Cottonwood	9 Jul 1885	OP	
Cox	16 Jul 1883	17 Dec 1883	Prescott
Craig	13 Aug 1894	30 Apr 1900	Walnut Grove
re: Craig	4 Sep 1900	15 May 1903	Walnut Grove
Crown King	20 Jan 1882	31 Dec 1950	C to RR of Meyer

THE TERRITORIAL POST OFFICES

of

ARIZONA

by

Sheldon H. <sup>*Holland*</sup> Dike

Published by

Dr. S. H. Dike  
1611 Bayita Lane NW  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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ARIZONA TERRITORIAL POST OFFICES

Town	Co.	Date estab. or re-estab.	Name chg'd from	First postmaster	Date discont.	Name changed to	Remarks
Copperopolis	Pinal	17 Oct 84		Edward E. Hellings	4 Sept 85		Mail to Casa Grande
Cordes	Yava	9 June 86		John H. Cordes	31 Jan 12 (1918)		Mail to Mayer
Cornfields	A'che	1 Apr 10		J. C. Karigan			
Cornville	Yava	9 July 85		George A. Kingston	13 Apr 11	Lincolnia	
Cottonia	Moh	12 May 10		Edmund Lincoln	4 Feb 84		Mail to Florence
Cottonwood	Pinal	9 Nov 81		Charles D. Henry			
Cottonwood	Yava	6 Mar 79		William H. McMichael	4 June 80		
		9 July 85		George M. Willard			
Courtland	Coch	13 Mar 09		Harry Locke	17 Dec 82		Mail to Prescott
Cox	Yava	18 July 83		William Durbin	(1912)		
Craig	A'che	24 Jan 11		Ellis W. Wiltbank	9 Apr 00		M. to Walnut Grove
Craig	Yava	13 Aug 94		George W. Craighead	15 May 03		M. to Walnut Grove
		4 Sept 00		Samuel Tinguely			
Crittenden	Pima	11 June 73		Thomas Hughes	27 Apr 82	Casa Blanco	
Crittenden	Pima	26 July 82	Casa Blanco	Thomas Hughes	20 Aug 83		
		31 Mar 84		Thomas Hughes			
	S. C.				15 Feb 01		Mail to Patagonia
Crowley	Gila	20 July 07		James Lightfoot	15 Aug 08		Mail to Globe
		30 Apr 09		Charles M. Thorsen	14 Feb 11		Mail to Miami
Crown King	Yava	29 June 88		George P. Harrington	31 Dec 03		Mail to Briggs
Crownpoint	Yava	12 Jan 00		R. J. Bignell	31 Mar 02		Mail to Harrisburg
Cullings	Mar	17 Oct 96		Joseph S. Drew	23 Mar 95		Mail to Big Bug
Curtiss	Yava	27 Nov 91		Joseph E. Curry	16 Feb 74		
Date Creek	Yava	1 Mar 72		George H. Kimball	18 Oct 80		
		31 Oct 78		Henry Addonis	9 Nov 75		
Defiance	Yava	6 Jan 75		William F. M. Army	11 Apr 81	(Estab. in N. Mex. 11 Apr 81)	
Deming	Pinal	16 Mar 81	Terminus	Charles H. Dane	1 Apr 91		Mail to Pinal
De Noon	Pinal	19 Mar 90		John Knight	2 Sept 85		Mail to Tucson
Desert	Pima	10 May 80		Charles H. Saberee	2 May 94		Mail to Turquoise
Descanso	Coch	23 May 92		William O. Abbott			
Dewey	Yava	18 July 98		Fred Hiltenbrant			

## THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

The Postmaster General was a very important position. The Postmaster General was a member of the President's Cabinet beginning in 1829. The entire Post Office Department was elevated to cabinet status in 1872, until it was superseded by the U. S. Postal Service during 1971.

Between 1850 and 1890, the number of Post Offices more than tripled, from 18,417 in 1850 to 62,401 in 1890. Inconsistent geographic name usage and spelling were deemed "a serious and growing evil in the publications of the government." During 1890, President Benjamin Harrison created the U. S. Board on Geographic Names. A series of orders were issued by the Postmaster General to clarify policy on the naming of Post Offices.

Before 1891, the Post Office Department had no written policies about Post Office names. Post Office names were derived from several sources, including names of towns, townships, neighborhoods, crossroads, or from the postmaster's name or place of business. (*Records and Policies of the Post Office Department Relating to Place Names*; [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)). The earliest instructions found regarding the selection of Post Office names appears on the "Application" to establish a Post Office, which stated during the 1840's: "The name of the candidate for postmaster should not be applied as the name of the post office. It is preferable to have some LOCAL or PERMANENT name, which must not be the name of any other office in the state and you should aim to select a name not appropriated to any other office in the United States." During the 1880's, instructions were more specific: "Select a short name for the proposed office, which, when written will not resemble the name of any other post office in the United States." During the 1890's, the last words were changed to: "in the state."

According to Post Office instructions in place during 1885, a community was not allowed to name their Post Office after a postmaster candidate.

Unfortunately, there is no copy or record of the actual "Application" submitted to the Post Office Department during 1885, requesting the establishment of the Post Offices of **Aultman**, **Cornville**, or **Cottonwood**, nor is there a copy of the actual Postmaster General letter. At that time, line item entries were handwritten into giant log books to record when letters were sent. Later, due to the size of the Post Office Department and huge number of records, many postal records were destroyed. Therefore, it is a fact that no application is on file --- only the single line entry.

"In order to find the truth, Cornville Historical Society members Judy and Dave Miller went to the National Archives" Building (700 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D. C.), where they viewed and copied the official *Postmaster General Ledgers* in the Microfilm Reading Room. "Upon personal examination of the ledger, the entry clearly indicates that on July 9, 1885, a letter was sent by the Postmaster General of the United States, establishing post" offices named **Aultman**, **Cornville**, and **Cottonwood**. (M 601: *Letters Sent by the Postmaster General 1879-1886*.) A portion of the ledger is copied below (courtesy of Judy Miller).

NOTICE, Walker Co., Ark.  
A. G. ...  
Re. Red Land, Postoffice ...  
H. ...  
Cornville, ...  
Aultman, Garapan Co., Ariz., ...  
Charles ...  
Cornville, Garapan Co., Ariz., ...  
George ...  
Cottonwood, Garapan Co., Ariz., ...  
Geo. M. ...  
Microfilm ...



## POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT MAIL AND STAGE ROUTES

Obviously, once the population of an area is sufficient, the first step is to establish a mail and stage route to carry the mail from one population center to another, and the second step is to establish convenient Post Offices along that route.

The first mail and stage route was established from Prescott and Fort Whipple to Santa Fe, New Mexico, beginning in 1864. Stations were established along the route where fresh horses were available and the stage drivers or horseback riders would be fed. On Beaver Creek, near Montezuma Well, Wales Arnold operated a station for the stage and mail carriers. This was discontinued when the route was changed and Beaver Head Station was built.

1879: "Hon. J. A. Walsh, proprietor of the Prescott and Santa Fe mail line, leaves for the East today. Mr. Walsh, a thorough business man, has placed his line in No. 1 running order, and we believe that people coming from the east, or going in that direction, will find this the cheapest and quickest line to patronize. We are satisfied that mail from Washington or New York reaches Prescott at least 36 hours in advance of that coming round from San Francisco." (*The Weekly Arizona Miner*; Prescott; September 16, 1879; p. 3.)

### The weekly Arizona miner. (Prescott, Ariz) 1877-1885, October 03, 1879, Image 2

Image provided by Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records; Phoenix, AZ

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**PRESCOTT.**

**STAR LINE**



**Mail and Transportation Co.**

JOHN A. WALSH, PROPRIETOR.

PRESCOTT, A. T.,  
—TO—  
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

*Carrying U. S. Mails!*

By way Camp Verde, Beaver Head, Pine Springs, Brigham City, St. Joseph, Little Colorado, Horsehead Crossing, A. T., Fort Wingate, and Intermediate places to Santa Fe, N. M.

Shortest, Cheapest and only direct route from Central and Northern Arizona

NEW YORK, CHICAGO, ST. LOUIS  
and other points East.

Via Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe R. R.  
now at Las Vegas, N. M.

Passengers and Express matter through from Prescott to Santa Fe in 4 days. By this route time two days shorter, and fare \$50 cheaper from Prescott to the East than by any other route.

## WHERE IS COTTONWOOD?

---

The cottonwood is the state tree of Kansas and Wyoming. The cottonwood tree is one of the most widespread trees at low elevations in the Southwest. Cottonwood trees flourish in moist soils along streams in areas up to an elevation of 6,000 feet. Most cottonwoods in the Southwest are classified as the Fremont cottonwood, *Populus fremonti*. (*Verde View*; "Cottonwood: a town – a tree;" Peter Corbett; October 15, 1981; p. 4.)

*Alamo* is the Spanish word for cottonwood. *Alamo* is a popular place name in the Southwest. In the Verde Valley, *Alamo Dairy* was started by Charles D. Willard before he started the *Jerome Dairy*. *Alamo* was also the name of an auto court for tourists in downtown Cottonwood (now, an office complex for attorneys). "*Remember the Alamo*" is a slogan originating in Texas.

*Cottonwood* is a popular place name and occurs in multiple states. *Cottonwood Township* in Yolo County, California, was where some of the Willard family settled during the 1850's.

In Arizona Territory, there were several places named *Cottonwood*. One of the older place names is *Cottonwood Island* in the Colorado River. On the old stage road across southern Arizona Territory, there was a place named *Cottonwood* or *Cottonwood Station*.

When the military troops and Territorial government employees were arriving in Arizona Territory during 1863 and 1864, there was a place north of Fort Whipple they called *Cottonwood* or *Cottonwood Tank*. A branch of the Santa Maria River in Yavapai County is named *Cottonwood Creek*.

*Cottonwood* mine in the Lynx Creek area near Prescott. *Cottonwood Mountain* is in Graham County.

*Cottonwood Canyon* is located in Apache County, Arizona. *Cottonwood Canyon* is a place in Utah. *Little Cottonwood Canyon* is in the Wasatch Mountains, a short distance from Salt Lake City, Utah.

*Cottonwood Camp* is a place on the Bright Angel Train in Grand Canyon. *Cottonwood Creek* is a place in Grand Canyon. It was the home of 9 burros during 1954.

A place named *Cottonwood Wash* is located in both Navajo and Pinal Counties.

**Cottonwood Post Office** was established on November 9, 1881, in Pinal County, Arizona Territory. Charles D. Henry was the Postmaster. When this Post Office was discontinued, the mail was sent to nearby Florence, Arizona Territory. (*Arizona Territory Post Offices and Postmasters: 1863 to 1912*; John and Lillian Theobald; 1961; Arizona Historical Foundation; page 93.) It was on the stage road from Florence to Old Camp Grant.

**Cottonwood Post Office** was established on March 6, 1879, in Yavapai County, Arizona Territory. William H. McMichael was the Postmaster. The Cottonwood Post Office was discontinued on June 4, 1880. There was no mail service in the Upper Verde according John and Lillian Theobald, who quote newspaper articles dated September and October of 1879, and January 13, 1880. (*Arizona Territory Post Offices and Postmasters: 1863 to 1912*; John and Lillian Theobald; 1961; Arizona Historical Foundation; pages 73, 93.) When this Cottonwood Post Office was discontinued on June 4, 1880, the mail was sent to nearby Prescott. (*Arizona Post Offices*; Alan H. Patera and John S. Gallagher; 1988; page 196.) This Post Office *was not located in the Verde Valley*.

**Cottonwood Post Office** was established on July 9, 1885, in Yavapai County, Arizona Territory. George M. Willard was the Postmaster. Cottonwood Post Office continues to function. (*Arizona Territory Post Offices and Postmasters: 1863 to 1912*; John and Lillian Theobald; 1961; Arizona Historical Society; page 93.)

## COTTONWOOD POST OFFICE - March 6, 1879 to June 4, 1880

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Once there was a contract to carry mail from Phoenix to Prescott, stage stations and Post Offices were established along that route.

**Cottonwood Station** was located south of Prescott on Big Bug Creek at the intersection of the Black Canyon and Peck Mine roads. William H. McMichael was the station keeper during 1879. Also in 1879, Big Bug Station came into existence 2½ miles south of Cottonwood Station. At that time Snyder, Muncy and Company held possession rights to 160 acres and the station. By 1880, Snyder had apparently sold out to his partner as William M. Muncy was then owner of the land and station. By 1885, Cottonwood Station had ceased to exist, although William McMichael was still living in the same location. (*Catch the Stage to Phoenix*; Leland L. Hatchett, Jr.; 1998; pages 155-156.)

**Cottonwood Post Office** was established on March 6, 1879, with William H. McMichael as the postmaster. It was discontinued on June 4, 1880. (*The Territorial Post Offices of Arizona*; Sheldon H. Dike; 1958.) When the Cottonwood Post Office was discontinued, the mail was sent to Prescott. (*Arizona Post Offices*; Alan H. Patera and John S. Gallagher; 1988.) This Post Office was not in the Verde Valley and neither was William McMichael.

**Big Bug Post Office** was established on March 31, 1879 with William Muncy as the postmaster. It was discontinued on March 16, 1880. (*The Territorial Post Offices of Arizona*; Sheldon H. Dike; 1958.)

During the 1880 Census of Yavapai County for Gillett, Agua Fria, Black Canyon, Bumble Bee and Big Bug, etc., on June 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10, the following are listed in Enumeration District 22:

92 108	Snyder, W. W.	37	Station Keeper	born in Illinois
92	Snyder, Ida J.	22	Wife, Keeps House	born in Georgia
92	Cawthon, K. W.	4	Son-in-law, At Home	born in Georgia
97 114	Bolin, Otto	30	Keeps Station	born in Sweden
98 115	Muncy, Wm.	40	Keeps Station	born in Tennessee
98 116	McMichael, W.	35	Boarder, Keeps Station	born in Kentucky
98	Ger Fong Lee	35	Servant, Cook	born in China
98	Humphreys, W.	35	Boarder, Stage Driver	born in Ohio
99 117	Kelly, Maggie	27	Cook	born in Ireland

William H. McMichael came to Arizona Territory during 1875 and had his first home in Prescott. He moved to the area of Big Bug Creek, where he worked keeping a stage station, then became a rancher. He married Millie McKenna on March 11, 1884. Their son is Judge Harry McMichael of Mayer. William McMichael died in the Arizona Pioneers Home in Prescott on December 21, 1931. (Sharlot Hall Museum Library and Archives.) William McMichael was never listed as a resident of the Verde Valley in the *Great Register* of Yavapai County from 1875 to 1900.

William Muncy sold out his rights to the 160 acres to Joseph Mayer for \$1,200 on July 13, 1882. Joseph Mayer built a new home and station next to the general merchandise store which had a small bar at one end. Mayer soon became famous for meals and hospitality. Joseph Mayer soon had a lock on the stage business in Mayer. (*Catch the Stage To Phoenix*; Leland L. Hatchett, Jr.; 1998; pages 155-156.)

**Mayer Post Office** was established on January 11, 1894, with Sarah B. Mayer as the postmaster. (*The Territorial Post Offices of Arizona*; Sheldon H. Dike; 1958.)

Sedona, Sept. 3, 1966

Mr. Robert W. Wingfield  
Camp Verde, Arizona

Dear Bob:

Recalling our recent conversation concerning the post office at Cottonwood and a misunderstanding of certain records as to the date and first postmaster, I have wanted to set the record straight, as I told you.

On the occasion of the dedication of the new post office building in 1961, I was introduced as the son of G. M. Willard, the first postmaster. Bob Prochnow as speaker of the day got up and flatly contradicted that fact with a statement that "records" showed a William H. McMichael to have started the office in 1879. Although I was absolutely certain my father had started the first office in 1885 (and later I presented the certificate appointing him, as Cottonwood's birth certificate, to Mrs. Howard, the postmistress) I was not at the time prepared to submit the evidence which has since been found.

Comparing the dates of McMichael's supposed tenure, March 6, 1879 to June 4, 1880, with Theobald's book, page 73, quoting the Prescott MINER of Oct. 1879 and again on Jan. 13, 1880, there had then been no mail service to people of the Upper Verde and Oak Creek. They were going to Camp Verde for their letters and papers. This agrees with all the old timers' reports telling of the entire period until 1885, among them my uncle the late Charles D. Willard who arrived in 1879 and lived in Cottonwood to the age of 99. It will be noted that the term Upper Verde was used, not Cottonwood, and also that there was a post office called Cottonwood in Pinal County from 1881 to 1884. (Theobald, page 93)

Your statement of having known McMichael to have never been identified with the Verde Valley as a postmaster or even a resident, has been confirmed by other first hand witnesses; and your acquaintance with him in the early days in the Mayer area where he had then lived many years, would seem to be very significant. The Mayer post office was not started until 1884. The McMichael home was located three or four miles above there on Big Bug Creek. Since many little mining camps were springing up in that district, some often lasting for only a year or so, it seems more than idle speculation to the belief based on hearsay, that McMichael was briefly running a post office at one of them.

I realize the difficulty in correcting records, but feel the effort justified, and would appreciate very much if you would attest the accuracy of the facts discussed, as above outlined, by signing this letter with me so I can hand a copy of same to the post office at Cottonwood.

Sincerely, your friend

Donald W. Willard

The statements above are true and correct to the best of my personal knowledge. There was no Cottonwood post office in the Verde earlier than 1885. I knew "Billy" McMichael very well when I worked in the Mayer area, where he had lived for years. I myself was appointed postmaster at Huron near there in 1904, again at Cherry in 1907, and at Camp Verde in 1909.

Witness:

Robert W. Wingfield

R. W. Wingfield  
Date Sept. 3, 1966

## UPPER VERDE, YAVAPAI COUNTY

During 1864, Ed. G. "Peck secured the first hay contract at Fort Whipple, which was then located in Chino Valley. It was for three hundred tons of hay at thirty dollars a ton, to be cut with hoes." (*History of Arizona*; Thomas Edwin Farish; Vol. II; 1915; p. 249, 262.) In connection with this hay contract, Ed. Peck and his associates are credited with building the first wagon road into the Verde Valley, which was used to haul hay out to the military post in Chino Valley.

1870: Sometime since Mr. Ed. Peck discovered a lake on the east side of the Verde River, and last week Messrs. Pierce, Pace, Arnold and Peck, took a trip up the valley of the Verde, looking for locations for ranches, and being in the vicinity of the lake, went to it, and named it *Lake Peck*, in honor of the discoverer. The lake is about 1.2 miles long and some 300 yards in width, and the present resort of thousands of cranes, ducks, geese, mud-hens and other water fowl. Deer and antelope are plenty near the lake. (*Weekly Arizona Miner*; September 24, 1870; p. 3.)

1870: "A number of persons are here" at Camp Verde, "on their way to settle at Peck's Lake, some 18 or 19 miles distant up the Verde River." (*Weekly Arizona Miner*; December 17, 1870; p. 3.)

1871: **Water Right Notice:** We the undersigned claim 3000 inches of the waters of the Verde River; also the waters of this slough through which the line of our ditch runs, to be used for farming purposes. We intend to resume our work on said ditch at the earliest possible opportunity. *Jas. H. Wilkerson, Wm. Sherard*, dated February 12, 1871. (Recorded September 12, 1871; Book 1 of Promiscuous Records; page 65.) Theft of 4 horses from ranches on the *Upper Verde* by Indians was reported June 3. (*Weekly Az. Miner*; Oct. 14, 1871; p. 1.)

### RIO VERDE INDIAN RESERVATION - October 3, 1871 to April 23, 1875

Commissioner Vincent Colyer wrote from Camp Verde on October 3, "I have concluded to declare all that portion of country adjoining on the northwest side of, and above the Military Reservation of this post on the Verde river, for a distance of ten miles on both sides of the river, to the point where the old wagon road to New Mexico crosses the Verde, supposed to be a distance of about forty miles, to be an Indian Reservation." (*Weekly Arizona Miner*; October 21, 1871; p. 4.)

1873: Dr. William H. Corbusier moved from Date Creek to the Verde. (*Az. Citizen*; September 13, 1873.)

1875: *The Exodus* began on February 27, 1875, when 1,476 Native Americans left their Verde Valley homes for their long walk to the San Carlos Reservation.

1875: Land Opened for Settlement: President Ulysses S. Grant signed an Executive Order which revoked and annulled the Verde Indian Reservation on April 23, 1875. The land was thus available for settlement. (*Arizona Weekly Miner*; June 4, 1875.)

"The historic grove of cottonwoods from which Cottonwood derived its name extended almost half a mile from the banks of the river," according to Colonel William Henry Corbusier during an interview in 1922. He had "entreated Julius W. Mason, commanding officer of the post, to move to higher ground. But much time and money had been spent in establishing the camp and putting up an adobe building near where Charles D. Willard's barn" stood in 1922. Dr. Corbusier remembered that the valley was "peopled almost entirely by Indians and soldiers. Only three white families resided" there. (*Verde Copper News*; July 11, 1922.)

1875: The first permanent settler in what would become Cottonwood was **David A. Strahan**. Mail had arrived for him at the Prescott Post Office by July 30, 1875. (*Arizona Weekly Miner*; July 30, 1875.) David Strahan, age 29, born in Illinois, and Peter W. Strahan, age 23, born in Texas, are both listed as residents of the Verde Valley in the *Great Register* of Yavapai County for 1875. In a letter from the *Upper Verde* on February 10, 1877, his neighbors name him as "the first settler here." (*Arizona Weekly Miner*; February 16, 1877; p. 2.)

Arizona weekly miner. (Prescott, Ariz.) 1874-1877, February 16, 1877,  
Image 2

Image provided by Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records; Phoenix, AZ

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**LETTER FROM UPPER VERDE.**

UPPER VERDE, A. T., Feb. 10, 1877.

**EDS. MINER:** -As our settlement in this the Upper Verde, has never been noticed or reported in the columns of the MINER we propose to write you for publication a brief history of the progress which has been made within the short period since the same has been settled.

The first settler here was Mr. David A. Strahan, who came in here about one year ago; and there are now seven Ranches which are all well watered. The main and most important of the irrigating ditches is the old Government ditch, which is now being extended and enlarged sufficiently to afford an abundant supply of water for all of the following ranches, J. O. Bristow's, D. A. Strahan's, W. G. Wingfield's, Wm. Cliff's, Barney Bros. and J. W. Anderson's; the length of the ditch being seven miles.

The next ditch of importance on the opposite side of the Verde from the old Government ditch, is the one covering the Ranches of Lamm, Clem and Jones, which is also being enlarged and extended the entire length of which, when finished, will be six miles. Also covering the Ranches of Mr. Conway Bristow and Erastus Hawkins.

killed at all, has never been

Were we to give credence yesterday, and should the reliable, we should have man killed at the Saphor that there is a mistake so the Pima County people affixed, it is hard to say where

**Miller's Road and the Capt**

An act authorizing the directors of Yavapai County to Iron Spring Wagon road and the payment of the same; a rects the Board of Supervisors the cost of construction not to exceed \$18,000 and bonds for the same to bear rate of eighteen per cent. per rest and twenty per cent of be paid annually. The Board are authorized and direct annual tax sufficient to pay twenty per cent of the bonds.

An act to permanently lo

Arizona weekly miner. (Prescott, Ariz.) 1874-1877, February 16, 1877,  
Image 2

Image provided by Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records; Phoenix, AZ

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Conway Bristow and Erastus Hawkins.

The inhabitants are all good, kind and intelligent people.

We have erected a neat and comfortable adobe school house, 20x22 feet, in which there is now a school in progress, being taught by Mrs. Rubottom, recently from Kansas. We have divine service the second Sunday in each month, by the respectable Elder Groves.

We, the writers of this feel proud of the progress and growing prospects of this little settlement, and think it one among the most beautiful and most fertile spots in Arizona.

If required, we will give a more minute and general description of the prospects of our growing settlement in our next communication. Yours Respectfully,

CONWAY, BRISTOW & CLEM.

We shall be glad to receive communications whenever convenient to send them.—  
[ED. MINER.

CLUM A GOOD STEP DAD.—Some of the Indians captured by Major Brayton on his recent scout have been taken three times and when interrogated as to the cause of their leaving the San Carlos reservation, answered that their Daddy Clum was starving

An act to permanently territorial seat of Governmentapai County, Arizona Territory and after the first Monday the seat of Government shall be located at Prescott.

SUNSET CROSSING, LIT  
Messrs. Murion & Beach—C

Will you be kind enough through the columns of your otherwise, why it is the Miner irregularly. About one in es this office. Respe

As you have a regularly and a reliable Postmaster as we mail your paper, we cott office, it is hard for us questions. We will try and the fault lies and, if possible adjusted.—EDS. MINER

CAMP VERDE,

EDS. MINER:—As there tices, three Constables, six and one Notary Public her respectfully suggest through your paper that Doc. Wil

## LACK OF MAIL SERVICE IN THE UPPER VERDE - 1875 to 1885

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1877: "F. E. Jordan, of Jordan Brothers of Upper Verde, or old reservation which is the largest settlement on the river, arrived in town to-day from his home. *Upper Verde* as they have named this settlement contains about sixty souls and is one of the prosperous settlements, of the many, which we have in this county. **With a town of sixty souls and no mail facilities it seems that some effort should be made to give them mail service and a postoffice.** ... The valley is being settled up fast and many new residents are looked for soon." (*The Weekly Arizona Miner*; Prescott; July 6, 1877; p. 4.)

"We have called the attention of Major Truman to the fact that at least one thousand people in the eastern portion of this county are entirely without mail facilities, and have received the promise from the Major that he will make such recommendations to the Department at Washington as will immediately place these tax-payers in possession of mail communications with the entire territory. ... We have also called his attention to the fact that the **citizens living on the Upper Verde, over 300 souls, are compelled to travel from 10 to 25 miles**, and have recommended the establishing of a route from Camp Verde to the upper settlements on the Verde, with service at least three times per week, and we are satisfied that the Major will do all in his power to have the route immediately established." (*The Weekly Arizona Miner*; October 25, 1878; p. 2.)

The **Cottonwood Post Office** established on March 6, 1879, with William H. McMichael as postmaster, was discontinued on June 4, 1880. (*Arizona Territory Post Offices and Postmasters*; John and Lillian Theobald; 1961; page 93.) This Cottonwood Post Office *was not located in the Verde Valley and did not provide mail service to the Upper Verde.*

**There was no mail service to the Upper Verde during 1879 and 1880.**

1879: "A mail is much needed from Spaulding's to the *Upper Verde* via Cherry Creek. This would accommodate 200 people living on the route." (*The Weekly Arizona Miner*; Prescott; September 19, 1879; p. 3.)

1880: "The people of Smithville, Cherry Creek district, about 100 in number, have to come to Prescott, 40 miles for their mails. The **people of the Upper Verde and Oak Creek have to go from 15 to 25 miles, to Camp Verde, for their letters and papers, all of which is wrong.** There should be a postoffice at Stemmer's on Ash Creek, one at Smithville, **one at Upper Verde**, one at Captain Jackson's on Oak Creek, with another at Beaverhead, and **a mail route between Stemmer's and Beaver Head**, by the way of the above named places. It would be the means of supplying at least 300 people with mail, who are compelled to travel from 15 to 40 miles for all correspondence, etc. A tri-weekly mail would be sufficient and of the utmost importance. Will our Postmaster General see to this matter at once, or will Col. Walsh draw the gentleman's attention to this much needed service?" (*The Weekly Arizona Miner*; Prescott; January 23, 1880; p. 3.)

1882: "Hon. John Goodwin is exerting himself to get up a **petition for mail service and post offices in the Upper Verde country, where there are 300 people living, who are compelled to go all the way from 20 to 30 miles for their mails.** It is a proper move, and we hope Mr. Goodwin may be successful in his efforts in this matter. (*The Weekly Arizona Miner*; Prescott; May 19, 1882; p. 3.)

# Post Office Department

William F. Vilas,

POSTMASTER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas, On the 9th day of July, 1885, George M. Willard was appointed Postmaster at Cottonwood, in the County of Yavapai, Territory of Arizona, and whereas he did, on the 28th day of July, 1885, execute a Bond, and has taken the Oath of Office, as required by law:

Now know ye, That confiding in the integrity, ability, and punctuality of the said George M. Willard I do commission him a Postmaster, authorized to execute the duties of that Office at Cottonwood aforesaid, according to the Laws of the United States and the Regulations of the Post Office Department: To hold the said Office of Postmaster, with all the powers, privileges, and emoluments to the same belonging, during the pleasure of the Postmaster General of the United States.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the Post Office Department to be affixed, at Washington City, this thirteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and tenth.

  
W. F. Vilas  
Postmaster General.

## COTTONWOOD POST OFFICE - Established on July 9, 1885

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The first step in the establishment of a Post Office was a contract with a mail carrier or company to provide mail service from an existing Post Office into the new area. The Camp Verde Post Office had been opened on March 14, 1873, with George W. Hance as the Postmaster. Mail and passengers were traveling on the route from Prescott to Santa Fe, New Mexico. There were settlers on Central Verde just north of the Military Reservation beginning during 1875. George Hull built a store just outside of the Military Reservation and became the Postmaster of the Verde Post Office established there on June 24, 1878. It was near a crossing of the Verde River on the mail and passenger stage route from Prescott to Beaver Head Station then on to Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Jerome Post Office was opened on September 10, 1883, with Frederick F. Thomas as the Postmaster. Mail and passengers were taken from Prescott to Jerome and back to Prescott. However, there was no mail and passenger stage route out of Jerome and through the Verde Valley before July 1, 1885.

1885: Mail Lettings: NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS. Post Office Department, Washington D. C., February 2, 1885. "Proposals will be received at the contract office of this department until four p.m. of April 11, 1885, for carrying the mails of the United States upon the routes, and according to the schedule of arrival and departure specified by the department, in the Territory of Arizona from July 1, 1885, to June 30, 1886. Lists of routes with schedules of arrivals and departures, instructions to bidders, with forms for contracts and bonds, and all other necessary information, will be furnished upon application to the second assistant postmaster general. *Frank Hatton*, Postmaster General." (*The Weekly Az. Miner*; Feb. 27, Apr. 10, 1885.)

In connection with the contract for a mail service and passenger stage between the Camp Verde Post Office (established on March 14, 1873) and the Jerome Post Office (established on September 10, 1883), there were 3 new Post Office locations established on July 9, 1885:

Central Verde or Middle Verde would have a new location named the **Aultman Post Office**;

Lower Oak Creek would have a new location named the **Cornville Post Office**;

Upper Verde would have a new location near the Verde River named the **Cottonwood Post Office**.

The name *Cottonwood* was available in Arizona Territory because the Cottonwood Post Office with William H. McMichael as postmaster located south of Prescott, had been discontinued on June 4, 1880, when the mail was sent to Prescott, and the Cottonwood Post Office in Pinal County had been discontinued on February 4, 1884, when the mail was sent to Florence.

A stage stop was located at each Post Office. Leaving Camp Verde early in the morning, the stage would stop at Aultman, then travel on the east side of the Verde River to be at Cornville about noon. Fresh horses were hitched to the stage or wagon. Food and "conveniences" were available for the stage driver and passengers. Travel continued on the east side of the river to 1 of 3 river crossings near Cottonwood, which was the next stop. A corral, barn and fresh horses were kept next to the Cottonwood Post Office in case they were needed. There was a water trough for the horses. During 1899, the Post Office was closed at the Willard homestead and opened in the Strahan "General Merchandise" store, where it remained (except from October 1, 1919, until May 25, 1920) until December 30, 1923. The mail stage or wagon would not reach Jerome until late in the day. Stages with mail and passengers traveled northward one day and southward the next day, except Sunday.

"Mails go to Cottonwood, Cornville, Aultman, Camp Verde, etc. every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, returning Monday, Wednesday, and Friday." (*The Jerome Chronicle*; March 23, 1895; p. 2.)

*"A traditional story of the beginning of the town is that the troops from Camp Verde maintained an outpost in an adobe house that stood near a grove of cottonwood trees a quarter mile from the river. The town became an important trading center as development of mines at nearby Jerome created a market for farm products and cattle." (Arizona Territory Post Offices and Postmasters; 1863 to 1912; John and Lillian Theobald; 1961; Arizona Historical Foundation; p. 93.)*

*"The historic grove of cottonwoods from which Cottonwood derived its name extended almost half a mile from the banks of the river," according to Colonel William Henry Corbusier during an interview when he visited Cottonwood during 1922. "Much time and money had been spent establishing the camp and putting up an adobe building near where Charles D. Willard's barn" stood in 1922. (Verde Copper News; July 11, 1922.) Dr. William H. Corbusier had moved from Camp Date Creek to the Verde during September of 1873. (Arizona Citizen; September 13, 1873.)*

Flooding of the Verde River broke all high water records during February of 1920. *"A cottonwood tree which was an old landmark and for which the town was named, was a victim of the flood, leaving but one cottonwood tree standing in the town." (Verde Copper News; February 23, 25, 26, 1920.)*

**Cottonwood Post Office** was located in a small building (with a white door) west of a large grove of cottonwood trees. There was a small barn and a corral for the horses used by the stage company, and "conveniences out back" for the passengers. Water from the Old Reservation Ditch (Cottonwood Ditch) was used for drinking and was in a trough for the horses. The 2-story brick house was built for Mary G. (Vineyard) Willard during 1887. Across the County Road, the brick home of Charles D. Willard was completed before he was married on June 11, 1890. *Photograph from the Jennie (Willard) Garrison Collection of Glenda Farley.*



Supervisor's Dist. No. 22  
 Enumeration Dist. No. 22

June 1, 1880, will be OMITTED. Members of Families who have DIED SINCE June 1, 1880, will be INCLUDED.  
 Note C.—Questionk Nos. 13, 14, 22 and 28 are not to be asked in respect to persons under 10 years of age.

SCHEDULE I.—Inhabitants in Elizabethton, Sevier, Polk, and Blount Counties, in the County of Sevier, State of Arizona  
 enumerated by me on the 1st day of June, 1880.

Ed. A. Coon

Name of Person	Sex	Age	Color	Married	Profession, Occupation, or Trade	Number of months this person has been unemployed during the Census year	Health				Place of Birth of the Person, as well as the Country, if foreign, of his parents, if foreign born.
							18	17	16	15	
97 Banister Ben M. M. 63	M	63	W	1	Farmer						Quercia
" Mary M. F. 40	F	40	W	1	Wife						Russia
" George M. M. 10	M	10	W	1	Son						California
" Catharine M. F. 6	F	6	W	1	Daughter						Oregon
" Hans M. M. 2	M	2	W	1	Son						Arizona
98 Young George M. M. 19	M	19	W	1	Son						China
99 Travis William M. M. 45	M	45	W	1	Farmer						Texas
" Cora M. F. 15	F	15	W	1	Daughter						Texas
" Carter M. M. 13	M	13	W	1	Son						California
" Marshall George M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
" Myrtle Laura M. M. 21	F	21	W	1	Boarder						"
100 Lucas George M. M. 26	M	26	W	1	Boarder						"
" Dennis M. M. 20	M	20	W	1	Boarder						"
" Virgie Morris M. M. 07	F	07	W	1	Boarder						"
" Lopez Calisto M. M. 13	M	13	W	1	Boarder						"
" Eugene M. M. 8	M	8	W	1	Boarder						"
101 King Frank C. M. 20	M	20	W	1	Boarder						Arizona
" George M. M. 14	M	14	W	1	Son						Mexico
" John James M. M. 23	M	23	W	1	Boarder						"
" George M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
102 " M. M. 26	M	26	W	1	Boarder						"
" " M. M. 28	M	28	W	1	Boarder						"
103 " M. M. 24	M	24	W	1	Boarder						"
104 " M. M. 20	M	20	W	1	Boarder						"
105 " M. M. 20	M	20	W	1	Boarder						"
106 " M. M. 25	M	25	W	1	Boarder						"
107 " M. M. 20	M	20	W	1	Boarder						"
108 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
109 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
110 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
111 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
112 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
113 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
114 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
115 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
116 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
117 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"
118 " M. M. 22	M	22	W	1	Boarder						"

Note D.—In making entries in columns 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

## COTTONWOOD POSTMASTER



**George MacDonald "Mac" Willard** became the Postmaster at Cottonwood on July 9, 1885. The Post Office was located west of where the brick home of his mother, Mary Willard, was completed in 1890. "Mac" Willard was appointed in 1913 to be the Arizona State Game Warden by Governor W. P. Hunt. In connection with a work assignment, "Mac" contracted meningitis and pneumonia and died April 5, 1926. In 1883, "Mac" and Jim Willard had ridden from Pine Valley, Nevada, to join their brothers on the Upper Verde, Arizona Territory.

**Cottonwood, Ariz. 2 - 7 - 1888**  
**Pen Cancelled Stamp**

The envelope appears to have been cancelled and addressed  
by Postmaster George MacDonald "Mac" Willard  
and was mailed to his future brother-in-law,  
John L. Munds, who was attending Stockton Business College.

*Cottonwood Ariz*  
*2-7-88*



*John L Munds*  
*Stockton Business College*  
*Stockton*  
*Cal*

Email this Collection Guide

## Ernest Killebrew Collection, 1885-1912.

Collection number: NAU.MS.104



### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator</b>	????
<b>Collection Name</b>	Ernest Killebrew Collection,
<b>Dates:</b>	1885-1912.
<b>Physical Description</b>	
<b>Abstract</b>	The Cottonwood Postal Records as represented at Northern Arizona University contain approximately 1100 separate items including registered package receipts, registry bills, registry return receipts, registered package envelopes, registered package tags and miscellaneous materials.
<b>Collection Number</b>	NAU.MS.104
<b>Language</b>	English.
<b>Repository</b>	Cline Library. Special Collections and Archives Department Northern Arizona University Cline Library P.O. Box 6022 Flagstaff, AZ 86011-6022 Phone: 928 523 5551 Fax: 928 523 3770 Email: Special.Collections@nau.edu

### Biographical Note

## Administrative Information

### Credit Line

Ernest Killebrew Collection, 1885-1912, NAU.MS.104, Northern Arizona University.  
Special Collections and Archives Dept.

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### Container List

#### Postal Records of Cottonwood, Ariz., 1885-1912.

This series contains various postal records of Cottonwood, Ariz.

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| Box  | Registration Book showing Matter Registered and Dispatched, 9/1885-1/1886.                                  |
| 1.1  |   |
| Box  | Registry Receipt Book, 5/1888-2/1889.   |
| 1.2  |   |
| Box  | Registry Receipt Book, 10/1895-9/1896.  |
| 1.3  |   |
| Box  | Registry Receipt Book, 11/1896-11/1897.   |
| 1.4  |   |
| Box  | registry Receipt Book, 10/1899-10/1900.   |
| 1.5  |   |
| Box  | Registry Receipt Book, 4/1909-6/1910.   |
| 1.6  |   |
| Box  | Record of Registered Matter in Transit, 6/1899-4/1903.  |
| 1.7  |   |
| Box  | Record of Registered Matter Received and Delivered, 2/1903-?.   |
| 1.8  |   |
| Box  | Record of and Receipts for Transit and Local Outgoing Mail Dispatched,<br>6/1903-3/1909.                    |
| 1.9  |   |
| Box  | Window Registration Book / Miscellaneous Correspondence, Oaths, and<br>Contracts, 8/1907-7/1908; 1890-1908. |
| 1.10 |   |
| Box  | Registry Bills (2), 1898.   |
| 2.11 |   |
| Box  | Registered Package Receipts (21), 1899.   |
| 2.12 |   |
| Box  | Registry Bills (26), 1899.  |
| 2.13 |   |
| Box  | Registry Return Receipts (4), 1899.   |
| 2.14 |   |
| Box  | Registered Package Receipts (19), 1900.   |
| 2.15 |   |
| Box  | Registered Package Receipts, cont. (15), 1900.  |
| 2.16 |   |

# G. M. Willard Was First Postmaster Here

The handsome 1,976 square foot fire brick structure built at a cost of \$28,000 which is Cottonwood's United States Post Office today is a far cry from the buildings which were headquarters for Cottonwood's first post offices.

It was first established in 1885 as a fourth class post office with the late G. M. (affectionately known as "Mack") Willard as first postmaster.

One oldtimer remembers quarters were in a temporary residence until a permanent site was built.

A building on the east side of Main Street which recently was leveled served as a post office as did the home of "Grandma" Willard. This is the home now owned by the present postmaster, Mrs. Mamie Howard.



G. M. Willard



*William F. Vilas,*

POSTMASTER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas, On the 4th day of July, 1885, George M. Willard was appointed Postmaster at Cottonwood, in the County of Maricopa, Territory of Arizona, and whereas he did, on the 28th day of July, 1885, execute a Bond, and has taken the Oath of Office, as required by law:

Now know ye, That confiding in the integrity, ability, and punctuality of the said George M. Willard, I do commission him a Postmaster, authorized to execute the duties of that Office at Cottonwood aforesaid, according to the Laws of the United States and the Regulations of the Post Office Department: To hold the said Office of Postmaster, with all the powers, privileges, and emoluments to the same belonging, during the pleasure of the Postmaster General of the United States.



In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the Post Office Department to be affixed, at Washington City, this thirtieth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and tenth.

*W. F. Vilas*  
Postmaster General.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT—Above is an engraving of the original document commissioning G. M. Willard as Cottonwood's first postmaster in 1885. The document was loaned to The Verde Independent by Don Willard, his son, who now resides in Sedona.

# An Old-Timer's

## Sciencebook



By Don Willard

# A Roundup From the Range of His own Recollections and Observations

1984

## The Cottonwood Post Office

The occasion of the first, or some other centennial year of a town's beginning, often calls for a celebration. In 1979, it was decided that one would be held in Cottonwood. Incidentally, the surviving Willards from the time of Charles D. Willard and his brothers were also planning for a family reunion to mark a century since Willards arrived in the valley. Without any question as to accuracy it was announced as a historical fact that a post office named Cottonwood, with a Wm. McMichael as postmaster, was established March 6, 1879.

Some years before that centennial, when a new post office building was being dedicated, I was introduced as the son of the first postmaster of Cottonwood, G. M. (Mack) Willard. I was not prepared for the embarrassment and humiliation to which I was subjected. Familiar as I was with the truth as to the stories told by parents and Uncle Charlie, (as was the then current postmaster), I had never heard of Wm. McMichael among the dozen or so familiar names of the first settlers in the upper Verde. The speaker of the day with glib authority announced that there was a mistake, since post office records proved the establishment of an office in 1879.

All I could do was decide to do some checking of my own. Uncle Charlie and others had often told how they used to go to the Post at Camp Verde for supplies and mail in the years prior to 1885. It was the custom that whoever was making a trip down the river to Camp Verde would get all mail for the families at "the cottonwoods," and leave it at the Strahan's for others to pick up.

The recent residents of Cottonwood were not in possession of the facts that were so well-known to those who had direct and

first hand knowledge of their accuracy. When they chose the year 1879 to mark the opening of the first post office as Cottonwood's beginning, they were not aware of the complete evidence I soon discovered.

I have a copy of the book ARIZONA TERRITORY POST OFFICES AND POSTMASTERS by John and Lillian Theobald. Mrs. Theobald, the daughter of the late T. P. Gabbard, who was in charge of a school for Indian children when the Gabbards were our close neighbors at Camp Verde, was an infant when our family was occupying the old commanding officer's quarters now part of the Fort Verde State Park. I found on Page 93 of that book the following information as to records:

Cottonwood, Yavapai Co. Mar. 6, 1879, Wm. McMichael  
June 4, 1880, Discontinued

Cottonwood, Pinal Co. Nov. 9, 1881, Chas. D. Henry  
Feb. 4, 1884, Discontinued

Cottonwood, Yavapai Co. July 9, 1885, G. M. Willard  
Office continuous thereafter. So it would appear I was convicted of misrepresentation. But there is some positive evidence to be considered. I went to page 73 in that book and read enough to positively discredit the hasty conclusion which seemed so convincing.

I read where the editor of the Prescott MINER newspaper was stating in September and October of 1879 there was need of mail service to the Upper Verde. On Jan. 13, 1880, he was complaining that people of Upper Verde and Oak Creek had to go 15 to 25 miles to Camp Verde for their letters and papers. Here comes the question regarding McMichael and his post office. That editor did not seem able to get through to him. Why?

My friend the late Bob Wingfield gave me some interesting information. He told me that when he had been the postmaster

in 1904 at Huron (page 107), a short-lived office on Big Bug Creek above Mayer, he was acquainted with the McMichael family. They had been long-time residents of that Big Bug area. The creek was lined with cottonwoods and also in Yavapai County. Also, in those earlier years there had been a number of quite similar here today and gone tomorrow offices in temporary mining camps in that general area.

My good friend and Sedona neighbor Harold Longfellow, a recognized authority and collector of memorabilia on the territorial post offices, on a trip to Mayer discovered some significant evidence. On making inquiry, someone remembered hearing about McMichael and an old story that in early days he had been appointed postmaster somewhere on Big Bug Creek but had never set up an office. The result was there had been no service until the Mayer office was established in 1884. Hence the appointment was rescinded (discontinued? as the record shows) on June 4, 1880. Is any more evidence needed?

The facts are, first, there was no post office at Cottonwood in 1879, because the settlers had to go to Camp Verde for their mail, just as Uncle Charlie said. The discontinued office had to have been at some other location. Second, an office was established in this particular Cottonwood for the first time in 1885, with G. M. Willard as the first postmaster. Third, our folks in naming the short list of their first neighbors had never at any time mentioned a McMichael.

I am very happy that there was a centennial celebration of the year 1879, especially since that year was the beginning of the 78 years in which Uncle Charlie was so closely a part of Cottonwood's history.

That first post office was not a busy place, and being only an accomodation to the community, took very little time. I have in my possession the receipt for his stamp sales during the

*An Old-timer's Scrapbook*

fourth quarter of the year 1885. The amount was \$67.21 (see page 28 in *Those Early Days*). It can be seen the postmaster had to make his living by farming and cattle raising or otherwise. In my own recollection, prior to 1912, the postmaster was making his living by running a general store.



*The old Cottonwood store, with post office relocated after 1899.*

## THE COTTONWOOD POST OFFICE

*"Our nearest post office was at Camp Verde. Obliging friends and neighbors would bring the mail for the Upper Verde, leaving it at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Strahan to be called for by the various families." Luna B. Scott. (Pioneer Stories of Arizona's Verde Valley; p. 72.)*

Postmaster	Title	Starting Date
George MacDonald "Mac" Willard	Postmaster	July 9, 1885
<i>Post Office moved from the Willard farm east to the General Merchandise store of the Strahan family.</i>		
William Marshall (husband of Martha Strahan)	Postmaster	August 31, 1899
Samuel L. Strahan	Postmaster	January 14, 1901
<i>The Strahan family sold their store and land to the Samuel Cotton Dickinson family.</i>		
<i>Samuel Cotton Dickinson had been the postmaster at Cornville from April 2, 1887 until July 13, 1905.</i>		
Edward V. Dickinson	Postmaster	January 18, 1904
Frank Dickinson	Postmaster	August 4, 1905
<i>The Dickinson family sold their General Merchandise store to Alonzo Mason.</i>		
Alonzo "Lon" Mason	Postmaster	May 21, 1907
May M. Mason (wife of Alonzo Mason)	Postmaster	March 16, 1914
Alonzo Mason	Postmaster	December 31, 1916
<i>Post Office was moved to the new McGimsey building on the south side of Cottonwood.</i>		
Jeremiah "Jerry" A. McGimsey	Postmaster	October 1, 1919
<i>Post Office was moved back to the General Merchandise Store of Alonzo and May Mason.</i>		
Bessie L. (Mason) Thompson	Postmaster	May 25, 1920
<i>Post Office was moved to the new Charles C. Stemmer Building on the west side of Main on Dec. 30, 1923.</i>		
Charles C. Stemmer	Postmaster	January 1, 1924 (29 years, 2 mo.)
Mamie C. Howard	Acting Postmaster	February 28, 1953
<i>Post Office was moved across Main Street into the Ray Manley Building.</i>		
Mamie C. Howard	Postmaster	August 5, 1953
<i>Post Office was moved south to the new Post Office Building (corner of Main and Pima) December, 1960.</i>		
Mamie C. (Howard) Mattos (new married name)	Postmaster	March 30, 1971
Alvin "Al" E. Beckham, of Phoenix	Officer-in-Charge	December 27, 1974
Alvin "Al" E. Beckham	Postmaster	July 6, 1975
Edward C. Rutter, Jr.	Officer-in-Charge	November 5, 1976
Donald E. Schmidt	Postmaster	August 13, 1977
<i>Post Office was moved into a new building on Mingus Avenue during November of 1977. Mail was delivered to homes in town, Verde Village, and Page Springs. Delivery to "Old Town" began on September 8, 1979.</i>		
Theresa A. Hall	Officer-in-Charge	October 25, 1985
Harry L. Duke	Officer-in-Charge	January 13, 1986
Robert P. Holmes	Officer-in-Charge	August 1, 1986
Charlie E. Arnett	Postmaster	August 30, 1986
Linda Randolph (later, wife of John A. Rachel)	Officer-in-Charge	March 20, 1990
Roger L. Sparling	Postmaster	July 14, 1990
Linda K. (Randolph) Rachel	Postmaster	February 20, 1993
John A. Rachel	Officer-in-Charge	July 20, 2000
Linda A. Kazmierczak	Officer-in-Charge	August 29, 2001
Sandra G. Saucedo-Haley	Officer-in-Charge	January 3, 2002
John A. Rachel	Postmaster	May 18, 2002 (to Cornville)
Brandi L. Smith	Postmaster	May 30, 2015

## Many have become involved

# Chamber initiates the idea for a Centennial celebration

The idea for Cottonwood's Centennial celebration was initiated by the Verde Valley Chamber of Commerce. At its Feb. 14 board meeting the chamber decided to help Cottonwood celebrate its 100th birthday this year.

At a Feb. 28 meeting, Cottonwood's town council took official action authorizing the mayor to proclaim 1979 as Cottonwood's Centennial year. The action came on the heels of a request by Pete Viotti, president of the Verde Valley Chamber of Commerce. He told the council, "We (chamber members) are trying to initiate a Centennial for Cottonwood. 1979 is probably as close a date as we're going to get. We would like to have the mayor sign a proclamation designating this year (1979) as the town's Centennial year."

Documentation supporting 1979 as the town's Centennial year comes from the book "Arizona Places and Names." The book cites Mar. 6, 1879 as the date a post office was established in Cottonwood. The exact location of the original townsite and the post office is unknown.

The book is from the University of Arizona Press. The section on Cottonwood says, "In 1874 soldiers from Camp Verde were stationed at an adobe house where Cottonwood stands

today, but they had no name for the place. Gradually, as settlers moved in, a community developed and took its name from a circle of 16 large Cottonwoods growing about a quarter of a mile away from the river.

"By 1879 several families were living in the community, including the Nicholls, Van Deerens, Hawkins, Strahans and others. It is a curious fact that each of the families named had nine children making a total of 54 altogether. The adobe building once used by soldiers was turned into a schoolhouse.

Following the signing of the proclamation Mar. 7 the chamber geared up its efforts to plan special events and promotions for the celebration. The idea of a Centennial for Cottonwood caught on and many individuals and groups have become involved.

Miss Centennial is to be crowned Sept. 14 (Friday) during the halftime activities at Mingus Union High School's first home football game of the season at Beale Field in Clarkdale. Girls from 13 to 18 are eligible for the competition. The winner is to reign over the weekend festivities.

Saturday, Sept. 15, will begin with a pancake breakfast at the Civic Club in

Cottonwood put on by the Verde District Rotary Club from 7 to 10:30 a.m.

The Centennial parade is to begin at 10:30 a.m. with entrants assembling behind the town hall downtown. The parade, sponsored by the American Legion, will wind up Main Street to the fairgrounds.

There is to be a noon barbecue by the Clarkdale-Verde District Kiwanis Club at the fairgrounds.

At 1:30 p.m. dedication ceremonies for the Verde Valley Manor are scheduled at the manor located off SR 279.

There will be an open house at the manor until 5:30 p.m.

Then at 1:45 p.m. the Rio Verde Roverettes (a womens' riding group) is to perform in the arena at the fairgrounds in Cottonwood.

Following that at 2 p.m. there is to be a junior rodeo at the fairgrounds.

During this time the fair association's fall festival is to be in full swing at the fairgrounds with more than 70 art and craft displays from the Valley and around the state.

The Centennial Ball begins at 8:30 p.m. at the Elks Lodge in Clarkdale. It will run until 12:30 a.m.

It is to feature the presentation of the Centennial queen, Jenny Garrison.

There will also be flowers and refreshments at the ball.

Because of the occupancy limitations of the building only 300 tickets are being sold for the ball. They are \$7.50 per person. There is to be a 10-piece orchestra to provide the music.

On Sept. 16 there will be a family picnic at Peck's Lake sponsored by the Lions Club. Families can bring their own food or purchase the hot dogs, pop, etc. that will be provided by the Lions.

There will also be a 10,000-meter run beginning at 10 a.m. at the lake. Registration for this is to begin at 9 a.m.

Also at the lake there is to be a fishing derby for the youngsters and numerous other activities.

The chamber is also organizing a day-long sidewalk sale in town Friday (Sept. 14) and is encouraging merchants to dress like merchants might have dressed 100 years ago.

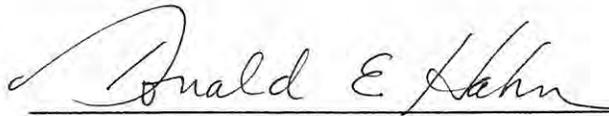
Pete Viotti, chamber president, says the Centennial celebration is costing the chamber about \$2,300.

The chamber is attempting to raise some of this money by selling Centennial plaques. Members have been working to put this celebration together since March.

## STATEMENT

Based on a listing of Post Offices with an 1879 date for a Cottonwood Post Office located on the stage route south of Prescott, the Town of Cottonwood and the local Chamber of Commerce had begun planning a *Cottonwood Centennial Celebration* when the error was discovered. After some discussion, the consensus of opinion was that the celebration would be good for the local economy, and "*What the Hell, Let's Have a Party.*" The Town of Cottonwood's *Centennial* was celebrated 6 years early. Unfortunately, the "1879" error has been perpetuated through 2015 on public highway signs and printed material listing the town founding as 1879 instead of 1885.

Signed on September 15, 2015.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donald E. Hahn". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Donald E. Hahn

Donald E. Hahn was elected to be on the Town Council where he served as Vice Mayor when Charles Garrison was the Mayor from 1977-1979. Mayor Donald E. Hahn was elected and served as the Mayor of Cottonwood for 3 terms: 1979-1981, 1981-1983, and 1983-1985. Mr. Hahn is a local historian and author, and he has a large collection of books and information about Cottonwood and the Verde Valley.