

LA POSTA



ARIZONA IN THE 1880's

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LA POSTA is the research journal of the Mountain & Desert West Postal History Research Society. It is published on an irregular basis with six issues per volume. The subscription rate is \$5 per volume, and single copies are available at \$1.50 each. For additional information, or to place a subscription, write: Richard W. Helbock, Editor, 1635 Mariposa Drive, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001.

ARIZONA IN THE 1880'S

By Richard W. Helbock

[Western historians generally cite 1890 as the year which marked the end of the frontier in the Western United States. The Census of 1890 reported such a conclusion, and numerous writings since that time have added their support. The attainment of substantial population densities in some western settlement areas, greater accessibility to the East through an expanded railroad network, and the conclusion of a long series of "Indian Wars" all lend credence to the theory that the Western frontier came to an end during the 1880s. Of course the West was and is a mighty vast territory, and there can be little doubt that in some states and territories life was still frontier rugged and wooly during the 1890s and perhaps on into the twentieth century. Given these likely exceptions and our common sense which tells us that it is unlikely that something as important, and yet abstract, as the frontier could possibly be ended at a specific year, La Posta herewith embarks upon a project which is intended to examine in turn the postal service in each state and territory of the West during the last decade of the frontier. The amount of work anticipated is considerable, and the project is considered to be one of long term. If we can complete the task by 1985, that should be considered success.]

In 1880 Arizona Territory was accessible from the East only by a long sea voyage around Cape Horn and thence by wagon road across southern California, or alternatively by a long and dangerous overland trek by horse and wagon. The less than 10,000 people who had inhabited the Territory in 1863 when it was separated from New Mexico had seen their numbers increase, but not in a startling manner. Prescott and Tucson had both served as the territorial capital, and in 1880 the seat of government again rested in Prescott although Tucson was the most populous town. Mining was the chief economic activity of 1880 Arizona, but the great booms of Tombstone and the Chiricahuas were just beginning. Apaches still menaced travellers in the mountains of the south-east, and all in all life in Arizona demonstrated well the rigors of the frontier.

The Official Register of June 30, 1879, listed only 57 post offices in Arizona Territory. Only three territorial postmasters, those of Prescott, Tucson, and Yuma received compensations more than \$1000. The Phoenix postmaster, W. A. Hancock was paid \$873, and the Globe postmaster, J. J. Vossburg, was paid \$503.31. The Florence postmaster, Joseph Collingwood, was the only other person to receive a salary in excess of \$500 as an Arizona postmaster in 1879.

A rapid expansion in the number of settlements early in the decade is indicated by the Official Register listing of July 1, 1881. In that list 102 Arizona Territory post offices appear, and six offices had postmasters who received salaries in excess of

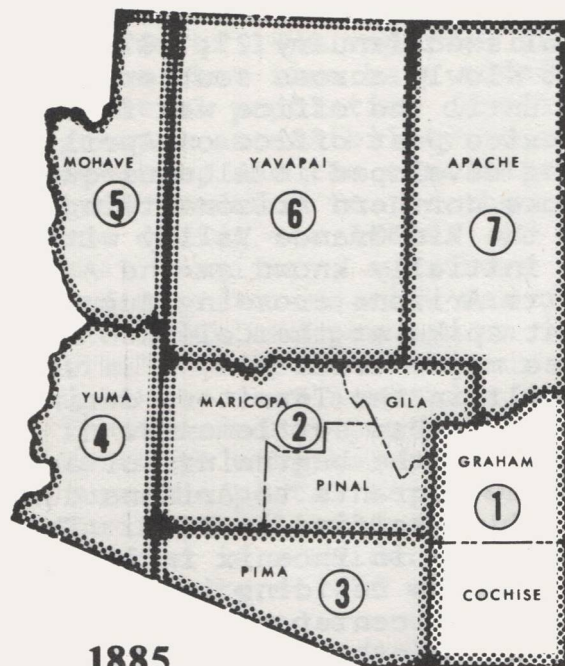
\$1000 (Globe, Phoenix, Prescott, Tombstone, Tucson, and Yuma).

Transportation improvements were rapidly underway in 1880. The Southern Pacific Railroad was laying track across southern Arizona from Yuma toward Tucson and beyond to the New Mexico line. Terminus post office, which served railroad workers at the head of track, had been established January 27, 1879. For the next 26 months Terminus crept slowly across southern Arizona with the track construction crew until the office was finally converted into the Deming, New Mexico post office on April 11, 1881. Meanwhile, plans were being developed in Albuquerque and elsewhere to push a railroad across northern Arizona tying the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe in the Rio Grande Valley with California. This northern line, initially known as the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad, completed its Arizona crossing August 9, 1883, with the driving of the last spike at the Colorado River bridge near Powell. Both of these major truck lines, as well as a small number of feeder lines built in the Territory during the decade, gave rise to quite a few new urban settlements.

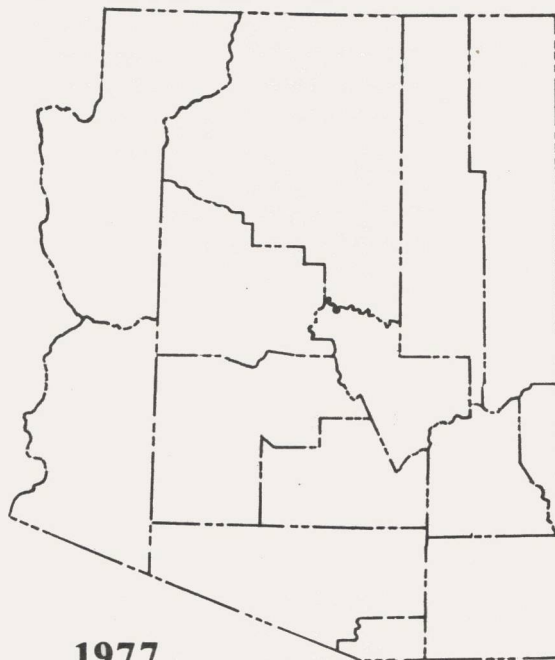
Railroad construction, mining, and the beginnings of agriculture and ranching all brought new migrants to Arizona during the 1880's. The Apaches were finally pacified in 1886. The territorial capitol was finally settled in Phoenix in 1889. By 1890 the Census enumerated 59,620 people residing in Arizona. Tucson was still the largest population center with 5150, but Phoenix was gaining fast with 3152. No other community had as many as 2000 people, but six numbered between one and two thousand.

The table and maps which follow are an attempt to portray in detail the distribution and growth of urban settlement in Arizona during the 1880's. Postmaster compensation, a rough proxy for the volume of business done by a post office and hence the relative size of a community, is listed for each post office for each odd-numbered year in the decade. These data have been extracted as they appear in the Register of Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States (often listed as simply the Official Register). There are undoubtedly errors contained in the originals, and no attempt has been made to correct for them. The maps are extracted from the Post Route Map of the Territories of New Mexico and Arizona, 1884 (as corrected to October 1885).

This presentation is in no way intended as a comprehensive postal history of Arizona Territory. Rather the attempt is made to present a glimpse of the postal communication system during one narrow slice of time: the 1880's. Readers wishing additional details on the postal history of Arizona are referred to John and Lillian Theobald, Arizona Territory Post Offices and Postmasters; Sheldon H. Dike, The Territorial Post Offices of Arizona; and, Sheldon H. Dike and Owen H. Kriege, Arizona Territorial Postmark Catalog, 2nd Edition. These are the basic sources of Arizona Territory's postal history.



1885



1977

THE ARIZONA POSTAL ROUTE MAPS OF 1885

LEGEND FOR MAPS ① THROUGH ⑦

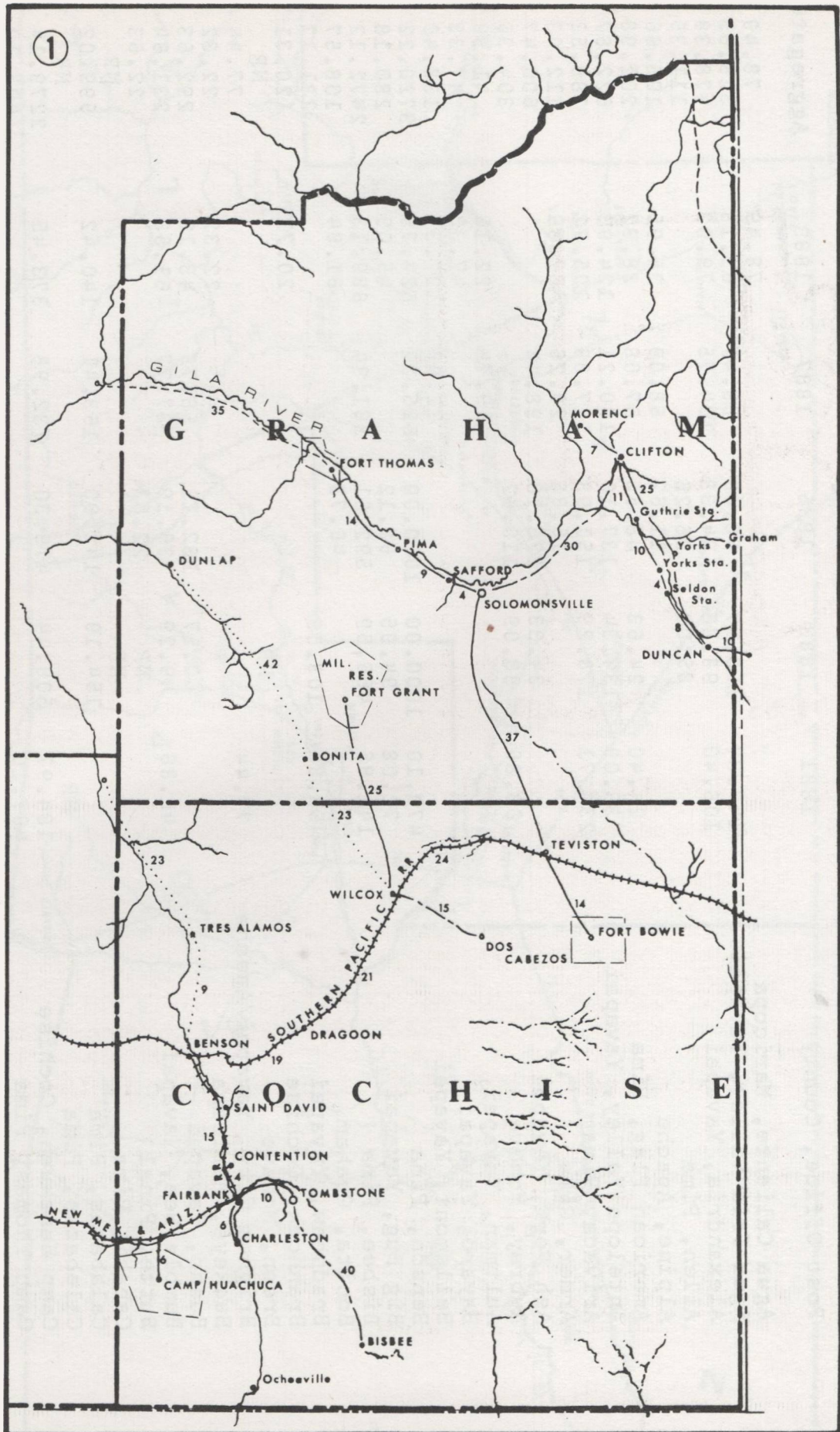
Places: ○ - COUNTY SEAT
 o - POST OFFICE
 o - Non Post Office Place

Routes: —+—+—+— RAILROAD
 ——— 6 or 7 trips per week
 - - - 3 " " "
 - - - 2 " " "
 1 " " "

Borders: ——— COUNTY
 - - - - - TERRITORY

SCALE FOR MAPS ① - ⑤

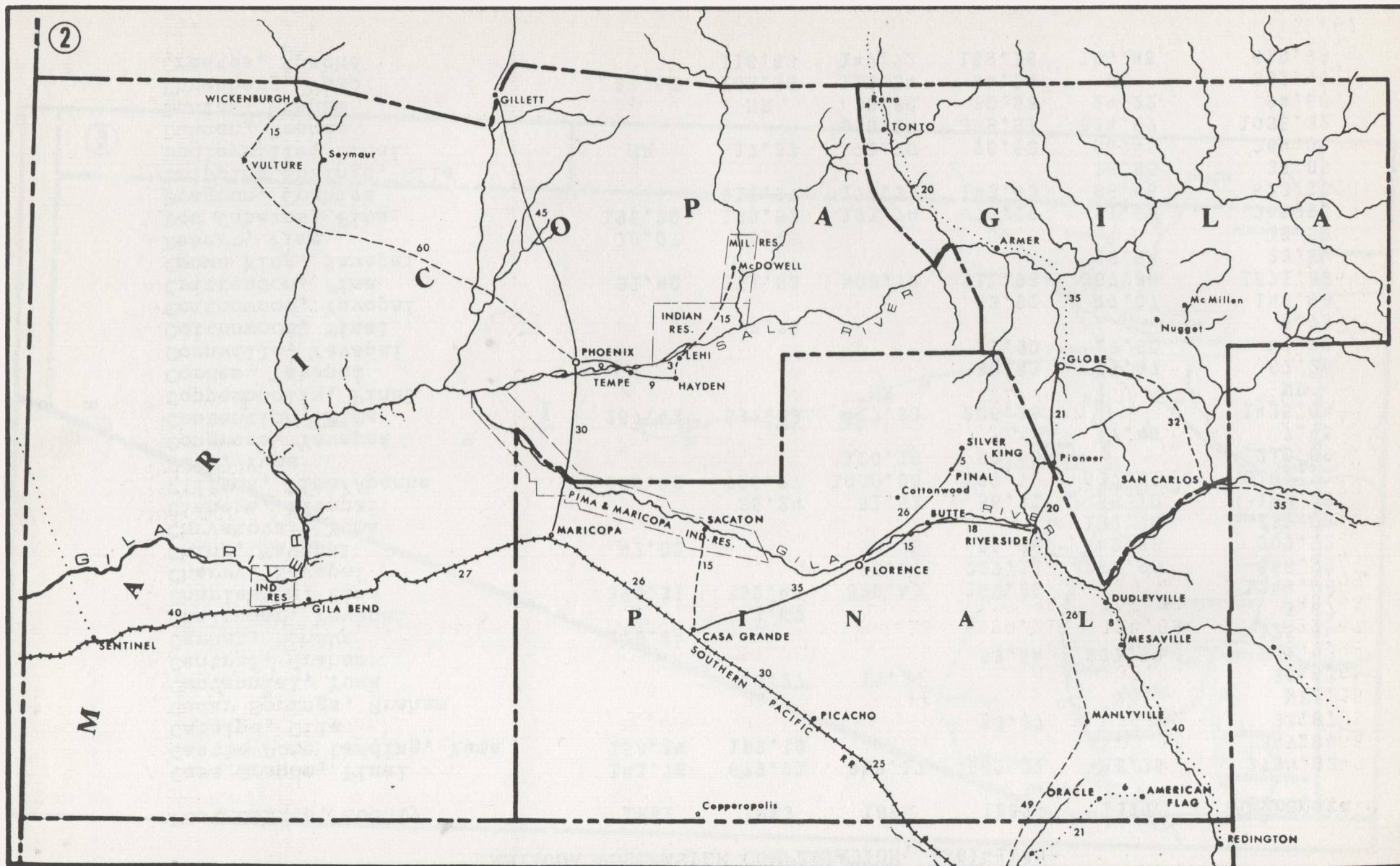




ARIZONA POSTMASTER COMPENSATION, 1881-1889

Post Office, County	1881	1883	1885	1887	1889	Aggregate
Agua Caliente, Maricopa					78.49	78.49
Agua Fria Valley, Yavapai	147.37	153.97	68.66	89.47	69.18	528.65
Alexandria, Yavapai	106.40	93.83	94.38	104.75	79.02	478.38
Allen, Pima		85.09	26.26			111.35
Alpine, Apache			11.62	58.09	35.95	105.66
American Flag, Pima	24.40	24.63	48.55	67.08	38.32	202.98
Antelope Valley, Yavapai	36.09	134.34	137.10	190.21	124.93	622.67
Arivaca, Pima	234.71	178.29	151.93	117.88	105.72	788.53
Armer, Gila			15.88	28.26	67.89	112.03
Ash Fork, Yavapai		34.33	376.70	198.44		609.47
Aubrey, Mohave	68.86	88.09	110.62			304.36
Aultman, Yavapai				19.74	22.15	41.89
Bayard, Yavapai					47.33	47.33
Bellefont, Yavapai				11.03	127.37	138.40
Benson, Pima	470.10	1000.00	1000.00	625.37	624.75	3720.22
Big Bug, Yavapai	72.08	94.95	68.12		45.03	280.18
Bisbee, Pima	141.85	466.59	592.61	381.94	889.13	2472.12
Bonita, Graham			46.73		61.84	108.57
Bradshaw, Yavapai	54.85	103.09				231.17
Brannock, Cochise					20.71	20.71
Breon, Mohave		NR				NR
Brigham City, Yavapai/Apache	77.44					77.44
Buckeye, Maricopa					22.32	22.32
Bueno, Yavapai		60.57	132.11	56.79	43.16	292.63
Bumble Bee, Yavapai	46.86	49.29	36.19	37.77	61.53	231.64
Butte, Pinal		NR	22.63			22.63
Cababi, Pima		NR				NR
Calabasas, Pima		154.19	141.00	163.41	140.42	599.02
Calabazas, Pima	NR					NR
Camp Huachuca, Cochise	184.97	508.44	479.30	732.98	373.45	2279.14
Camp Thomas, Pima	407.10					407.10
Camp Verde, Yavapai	398.56	380.45	325.43	388.14	328.46	1821.04
Canon Diablo, Yavapai					67.42	67.42

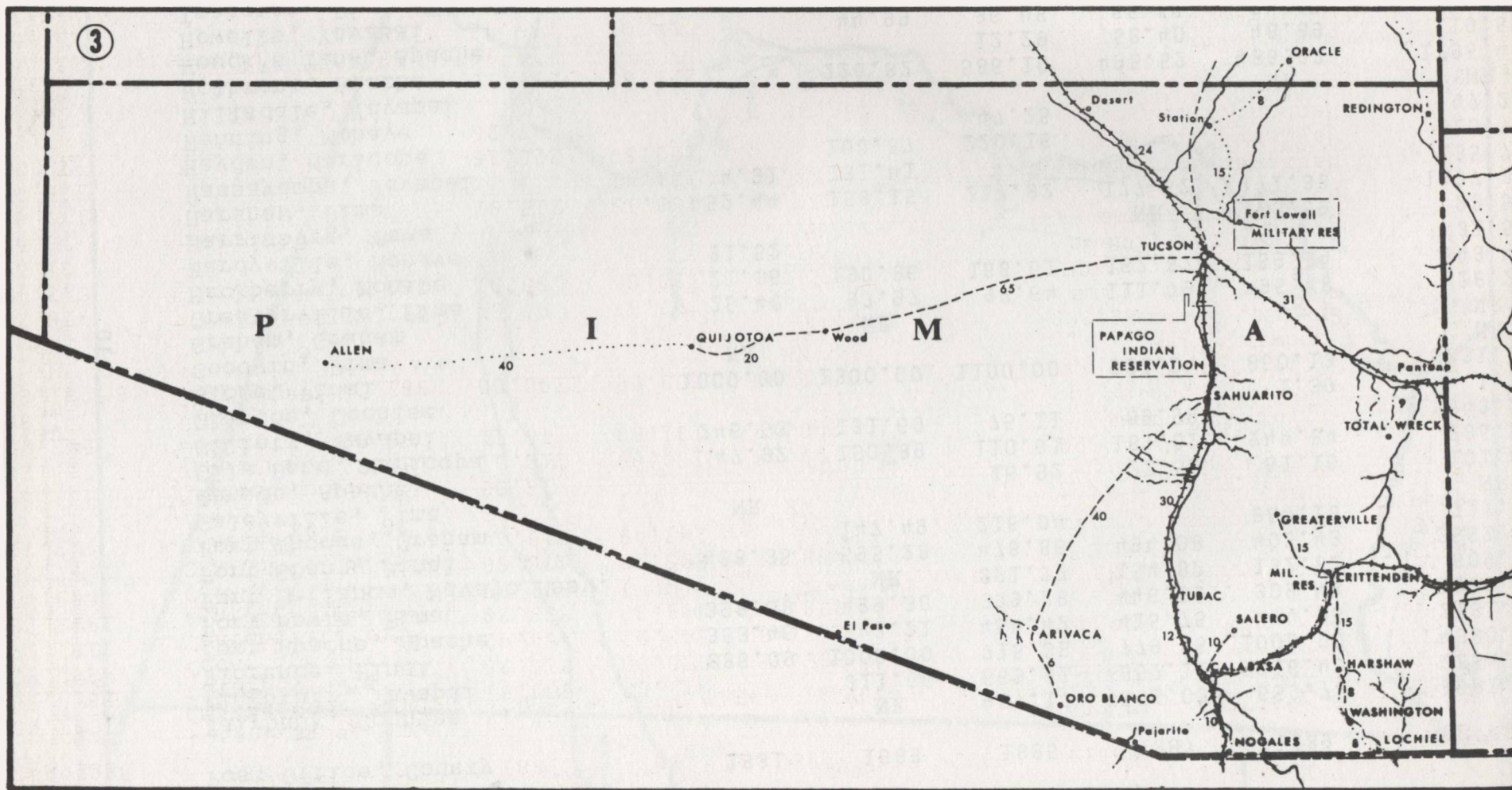
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ARIZONA POSTMASTER COMPENSATION, 1881-1889

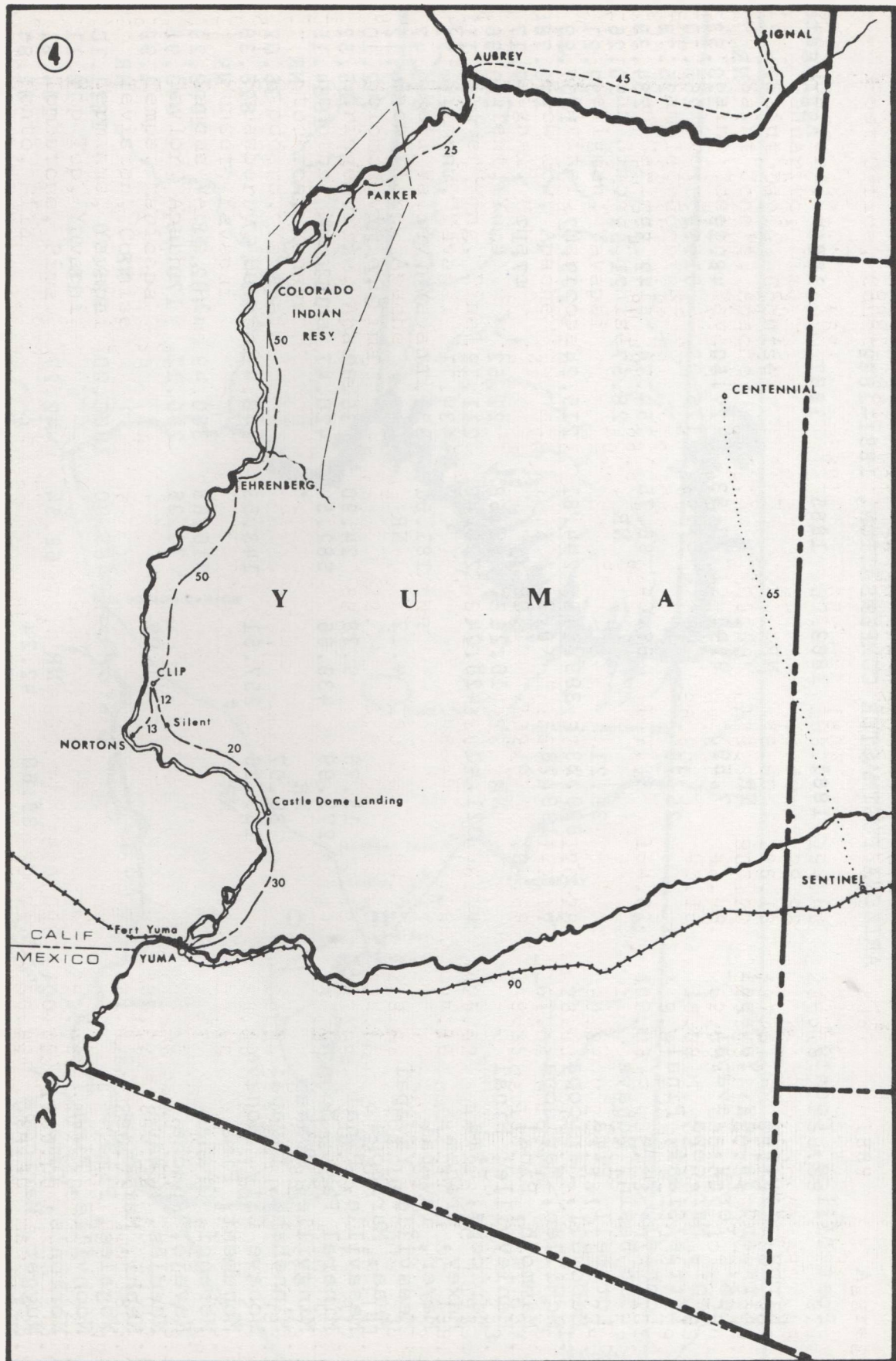
Post Office, County	1881	1883	1885	1887	1889	Aggregate
Casa Grande, Pinal	141.79	679.91	948.17	562.71	401.75	2734.33
Castle Dome Landing, Yuma	158.84	189.10				347.94
Catalpa, Gila				33.07		33.07
Cedar Springs, Graham					NR	NR
Centennial, Yuma		19.27	19.34			38.61
Central, Graham				93.54	207.89	301.43
Cerbat, Mohave	125.64					125.64
Chalender, Yavapai		3.67				3.67
Charleston, Pima	390.31	352.48	336.43	164.86		1244.08
Cherry, Yavapai			95.97	297.12	263.90	656.99
Chino, Yavapai	42.02		33.26	85.96	48.68	209.92
Chrystoval, Yuma					132.78	132.78
Cienega, Yavapai		35.24	51.51	56.41	55.10	198.26
Clifton, Pima/Apache	260.48	726.27	1000.00	567.75	637.81	3192.31
Clip, Yuma			120.10	90.59		210.69
Congress, Yavapai					7.46	7.46
Contention, Pima	267.43	533.33	417.33	206.95		1425.04
Copperopolis, Pinal			NR			NR
Cordes, Yavapai				30.83	31.37	62.20
Cornville, Yavapai				21.80	27.60	49.40
Cottonwood, Pinal		3.73				3.73
Cottonwood, Yavapai				63.92	77.07	140.99
Crittendon, Pima	31.40	251.83	408.78	511.98	367.84	1571.83
Crown King, Yavapai					28.54	28.54
Desert, Pima	10.07	9.46				19.53
Dos Cabezos, Pima	195.29	198.03	191.74	79.16	81.68	745.90
Dragoon, Cochise		216.97	176.33	143.43	86.45	623.18
Dripping Springs, Gila					36.85	36.85
Dudleyville, Pinal	NR	17.33	73.70	96.53	96.45	284.01
Duncan, Graham			330.54	379.91	324.87	1035.32
Dunlap, Graham		NR	39.80	30.58	24.22	94.60
Ehrenberg, Yuma	81.52	103.36	113.34	84.24	NR	382.46
Erastus, Apache		116.63	147.72	169.18	186.46	619.99

3



ARIZONA POSTMASTER COMPENSATION, 1881-1889

Post Office, County	1881	1883	1885	1887	1889	Aggregate
Fairbank, Cochise		NR	437.17	592.05	652.73	1681.95
Flagstaff, Yavapai		311.06	669.91	857.11	1016.48	2854.56
Florence, Pinal	886.09	1000.00	715.38	779.35	1000.00	4380.82
Fort Apache, Apache	353.46	543.21	454.42	415.75	414.35	2181.19
Fort Bowie, Pima	398.68	499.30	339.28	446.59	309.44	1993.29
Fort Defiance, Navajo Resv.		NR	321.77	154.82	132.82	609.41
Fort Grant, Pinal	488.35	695.28	478.86	494.08	405.43	2562.00
Fort Thomas, Graham		147.49	216.04		354.18	717.71
Galeyville, Pima	NR					NR
Ganado, Apache			16.92	23.56	61.16	101.64
Gila Bend, Maricopa	47.92	150.89	110.61	181.02	244.84	735.28
Gillett, Yavapai	246.53	131.60	75.11	89.99		543.23
Glencoe, Cochise					1.30	1.30
Globe, Pinal	1000.00	1300.00	1100.00	981.24	850.13	5231.37
Goodwin, Pima	NR					NR
Graham, Graham		NR				NR
Greaterville, Pima	25.40	97.97	97.64	111.79	95.48	428.28
Hackberry, Mohave	21.36	130.86	168.61	162.87	159.74	643.44
Hardyville, Mohave	31.52					31.52
Harrisburg, Yuma				NR	23.59	23.59
Harshaw, Pima	452.44	158.15	217.92	177.52	171.33	1177.36
Hassayampa, Yavapai	4.31	131.41				135.72
Hayden, Maricopa		100.57	220.16			320.73
Henning, Mohave			47.25			47.25
Hillsdale, Yavapai					NR	NR
Holbrook, Apache		226.82	586.10	495.52	486.97	1795.41
Houck's Tank, Apache			12.29	58.40	48.89	119.58
Howells, Yavapai		44.99	36.48	66.51	34.61	182.59
Isaacson, Pima		156.16				156.16
Jerome, Yavapai			214.75	18.53	143.49	376.77
Juniper, Yavapai		12.06	50.03	46.51	67.81	176.41
Keam's Canon, Apache		NR	29.03	43.33	164.34	236.70
Kingman, Mohave		NR	345.69	488.66	653.73	1488.08



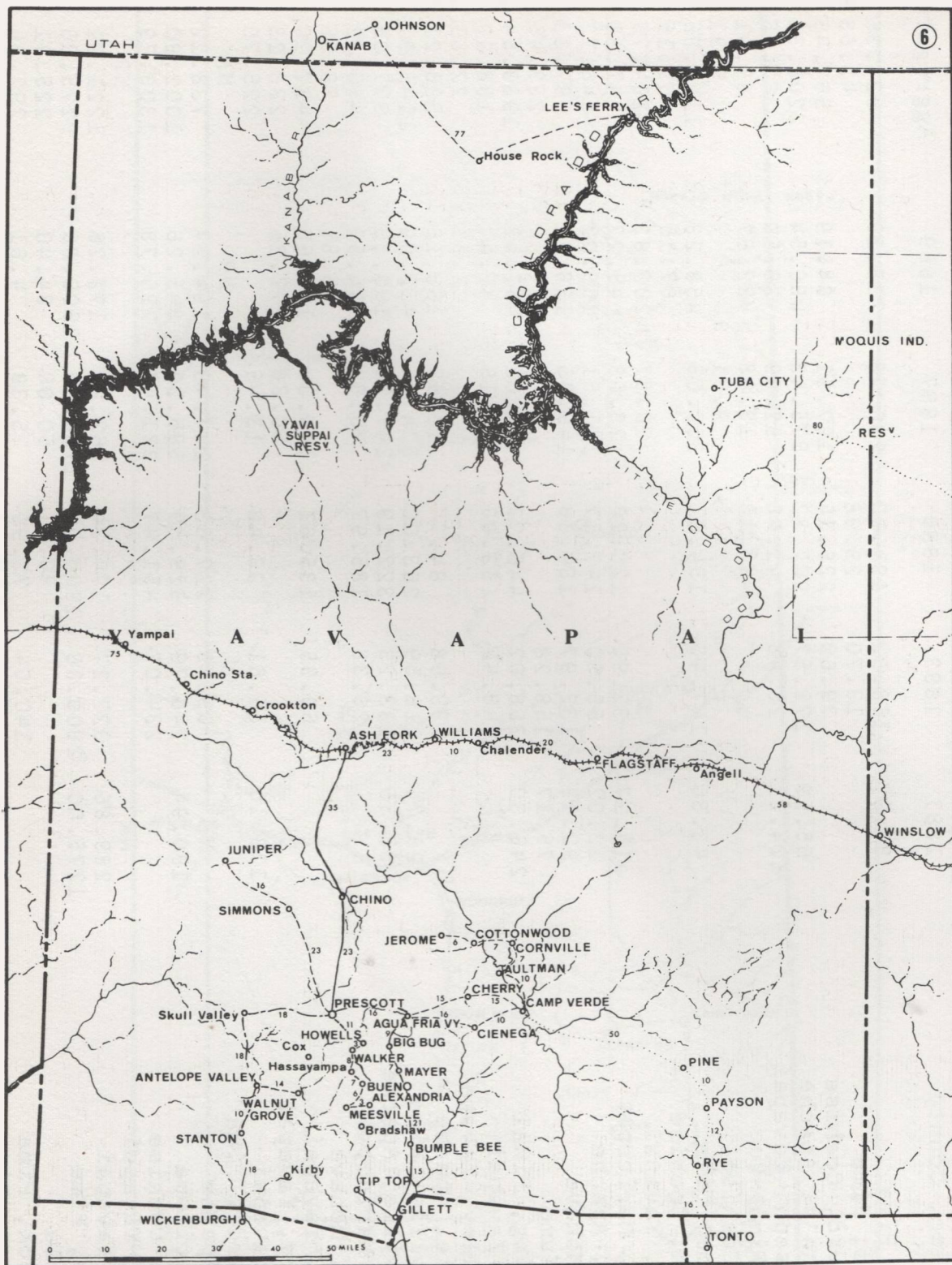
ARIZONA POSTMASTER COMPENSATION, 1881-1889

Post Office, County	1881	1883	1885	1887	1889	Aggregate
Kirby, Yavapai		NR				NR
Kirkland Valley, Yavapai	NR					NR
Lee's Ferry, Yavapai	7.59	9.42	27.83	27.50	48.19	120.53
Lehi, Maricopa			87.68	126.03	51.39	265.10
Little Giant, Pinal	25.78					25.78
Lochiel, Pima			86.75	154.74	42.89	284.38
Lost Basin, Mohave			NR	28.57	21.69	50.26
Luttrell, Pima	39.21					39.21
McDowell, Maricopa	329.23	309.24	244.81	215.24	209.47	1307.99
McMillen, Maricopa	193.78					193.78
Mammoth, Pinal					47.17	47.17
Manleyville, Pinal	NR	16.26	82.58	21.52		120.36
Maricopa, Pima	321.40	420.04	228.48	211.19		1181.11
Maxey, Graham				434.71		434.71
Mayer, Yavapai			181.61	331.77	330.09	843.47
Meesville, Yavapai		4.12	NR			4.12
Mesa, Maricopa					342.10	342.10
Mesaville, Pinal	15.75	9.28	24.90	35.59		85.52
Mineral Park, Mohave	279.99	439.66	582.54	420.47	161.49	1884.15
Mingville, Graham	NR					NR
Minnehaha, Yavapai	36.07					36.07
Mohave City, Mohave	153.26	257.51	143.53	146.41	124.67	825.38
Monument, Pima	NR					NR
Morenci, Graham			316.65	300.49	482.15	1099.29
Navajo, Apache			70.36	200.17	170.45	440.98
Needles, Mohave		1.99				1.99
Nephi, Maricopa					NR	NR
Nogales, Pima			485.90	1000.00	835.20	2321.10
Noonville, Pima					18.11	18.11
Norton's, Yuma		NR	62.54	42.27		104.81
Nugget, Maricopa	39.60	42.24				81.84
Nutrioso, Apache		NR	58.12	36.15	35.74	130.01
Ochoaville, Pima	1.35		29.42			30.77

A detailed map of Mohave County, Arizona, showing its major roads, towns, and geographical features. The map is oriented with North at the top. The Colorado River forms the western border with Nevada and California. Major towns and cities include El Dorado Canyon, Rioville, Lost Basin, Red Lake, Hualpai Indian Res., Breen, Hackberry, Cerbat, Kingman, Beal Spr., Henning, Powell, Franconia, Needles, Aubrey, and Signal. The map also shows the Hualapai Indian Reservation and the Hualapai Indian Res. The county is divided into several sections by major roads, including Highway 45, Highway 23, Highway 25, Highway 26, Highway 28, and Highway 60. The map is labeled with 'MOHAVE' in large letters across the center. A small circle with the number '5' is in the top left corner.

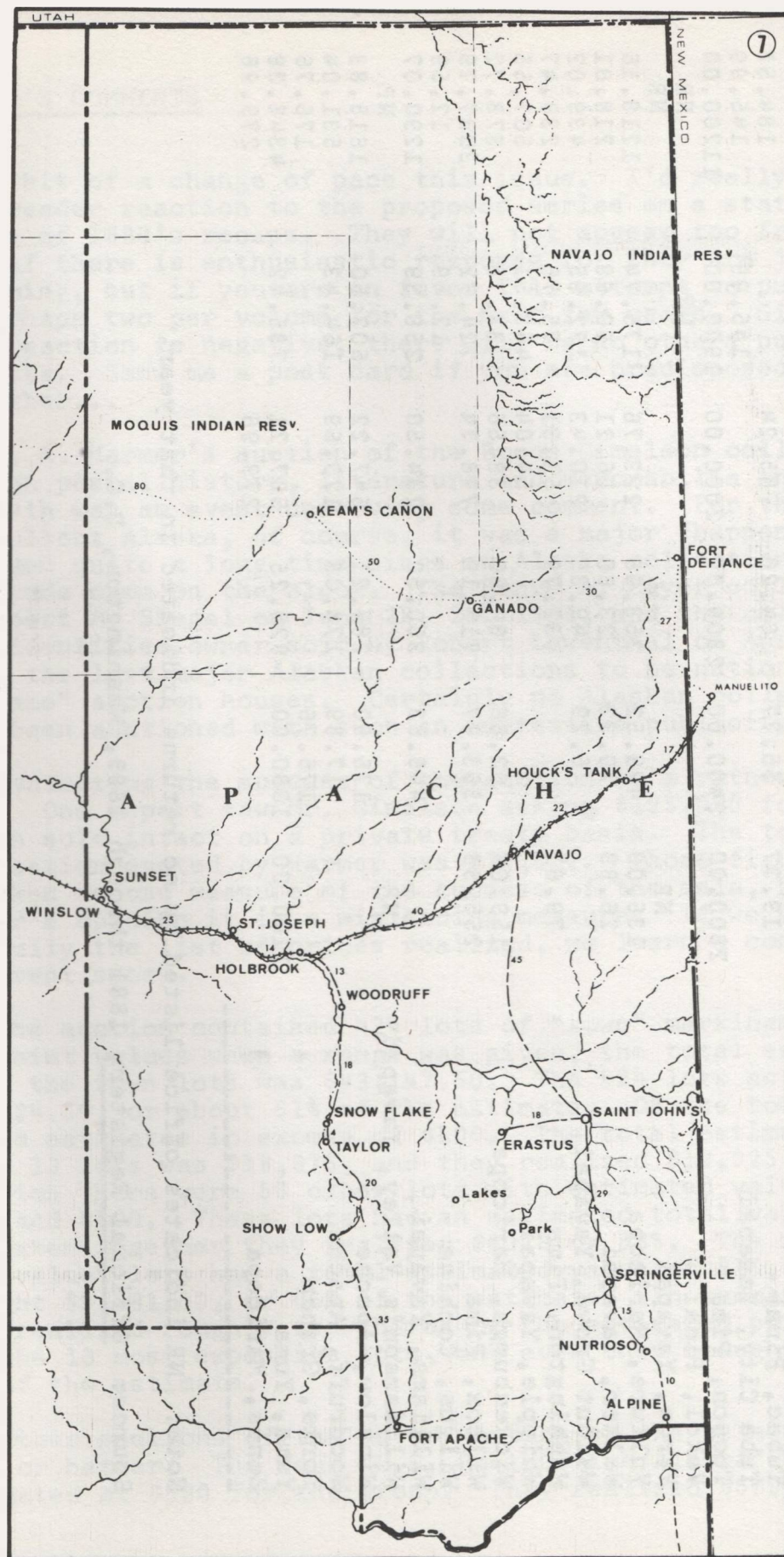
ARIZONA POSTMASTER COMPENSATION, 1881-1889

Post Office, County	1881	1883	1885	1887	1889	Aggregate
Olive, Pima				3.62	21.17	24.33
Oracle, Pima	3.77		22.90	138.29	183.24	348.20
Orizaba, Pinal					NR	NR
Oro, Apache/Graham	28.94					28.94
Oro Blanco, Pima	189.91	130.32	89.46	64.23	54.65	528.57
Overton, Maricopa	NR					NR
Pajarito, Pima	NR					NR
Pantano, Pima	72.48	233.24		47.57	139.57	492.86
Parker, Yuma	48.56	88.66	112.84	69.14	129.05	473.27
Payson, Yavapai			99.38	275.57	198.29	573.24
Peach Springs, Mohave					286.89	286.89
Peoria, Maricopa					6.83	6.83
Phoenix, Maricopa	1200.00	1500.00	1500.00	1600.00	1800.00	7600.00
Picacho, Pinal	NR		63.25			63.25
Pima, Graham	68.80	607.36	752.26	350.65	306.86	2085.93
Pinal, Pinal	543.49	760.02	447.94	480.14	326.54	2558.13
Pine, Yavapai			224.64	297.38	73.90	595.92
Pinedale, Apache					14.55	14.55
Pine Springs, Yavapai	5.23					5.23
Pioneer, Gila		334.89	48.86			383.75
Plomosa, Yuma	NR					NR
Powell, Mohave			11.26			11.26
Powers, Cochise					9.79	9.79
Prescott, Yavapai	2100.00	2100.00	1800.00	1600.00	1600.00	9200.00
Purdy, Graham		27.25				27.25
Queen, Pinal	NR					NR
Quijotoa, Pima			485.63	218.06	107.61	811.30
Redington, Pima	1.62	6.70	48.94	57.27	49.00	163.53
Red Rock, Pinal					145.95	145.95
Reno, Maricopa	NR					NR
Riverside, Pinal	37.80	98.64	209.84	93.45	67.67	507.40
Rye, Yavapai			9.14	62.92	58.57	130.63
Sacaton, Pinal			53.45	52.20	76.27	181.92



ARIZONA POSTMASTER COMPENSATION, 1881-1889

Post Office, County	1881	1883	1885	1887	1889	Aggregate
Safford, Pima	87.97	163.92	194.40	236.18	238.89	921.36
Sahuarito, Pima		13.70	29.98			43.68
Saint David, Cochise		79.60	226.16	197.51	64.19	567.46
Saint John's, Apache	65.59	179.57	907.22	575.43	480.54	2208.35
Saint Joseph, Yavapai	124.21	25.48	41.48	52.69	36.50	280.36
Salero, Pima			43.16	18.08	22.07	83.31
Sample, Cochise				9.91		9.91
San Carlos, Gila	43.36	147.43	154.81	302.03	458.23	1105.86
San Simon, Cochise					67.15	67.15
Seligman, Yavapai				90.87	203.83	294.70
Sentinel, Maricopa	15.27	32.95	120.28	28.03	45.27	241.80
Show Low, Apache	12.02	56.50	147.17	161.51	169.02	546.22
Signal, Mohave	92.12	132.97	184.38	149.25	138.61	697.33
Silent, Yuma	75.17	158.28				233.45
Silver King, Pinal	246.30	368.02	446.77	425.02	447.43	1933.54
Simmons, Yavapai		48.44	53.03	44.16	42.47	188.10
Skull Valley, Yavapai	NR				22.51	22.51
Snow Flake, Apache		133.68	84.74	149.63	168.16	536.21
Solomonsville, Pima	23.74	118.59	263.00	324.55	412.09	1141.97
Springerville, Apache	83.35	133.23	322.19	247.89	190.39	977.05
Stanton, Maricopa		28.38	185.97	70.39	165.59	450.32
Stockton, Mohave					73.85	73.85
Stoddard, Yavapai		60.95	135.61	160.04	140.60	497.20
Strawberry, Yavapai				50.88	172.35	223.23
Sunset, Yavapai	123.16	55.61	33.48	13.45		225.70
Tanque Verde, Pima					NR	NR
Taylor, Apache	NR	68.73	227.63	247.49	194.27	738.12
Tempe, Maricopa	190.94	240.79	329.59	386.22	845.26	1002.80
Teviston, Cochise		234.07	451.47	321.47	296.78	1303.79
Terminus, Yavapai	NR					NR
Tip Top, Yavapai	289.86	322.27	174.34	262.48	172.26	1221.21
Tombstone, Pima	1275.00	2800.00	1900.00	1700.00	1600.00	9275.00
Tonto, Gila			90.71	50.80	84.40	225.91
Total Wreck, Pima		140.04	72.90	75.39	4.61	292.94
Tres Alamos, Pima	154.69	5.82	21.29			181.80



ARIZONA POSTMASTER COMPENSATION, 1881-1889

Post Office, County	1881	1883	1885	1887	1889	Aggregate
Tubac, Pima	19.37	55.77	64.20	45.24		184.58
Tuba City, Yavapai					145.99	145.99
Tucson, Pima	2600.00	2400.00	2300.00	2000.00	1900.00	11200.00
Vekol, Pinal					NR	NR
Verde, Yavapai	NR					NR
Vulture, Maricopa	136.08	429.52	253.06	223.76	175.74	1218.16
Walker, Yavapai	26.99	20.33	23.60	66.21	80.88	218.01
Walnut Grove, Yavapai		6.29	49.35	210.43	172.95	439.02
Washington, Pima	79.61		32.79	51.31	75.76	239.47
Whipple, Yavapai				54.04	453.51	507.55
Wickenburgh, Maricopa	159.06	62.66	84.66	38.56	33.78	378.72
Wilcox, Pima	255.38	563.77	715.18	778.74	724.72	3037.79
Wilgus, Cochise					12.59	12.59
Williams, Yavapai		446.68	350.50	234.50	258.39	1290.07
Williamson's Valley, Yavapai	NR					NR
Winslow, Apache		176.90	284.21	547.22	607.50	1615.83
Woodruff, Apache		17.89	178.03	170.69	164.43	531.04
Yorks, Graham		176.76				176.76
Yuma, Yuma	1100.00	1000.00	925.25	587.71	735.42	4348.38
Zenos, Maricopa				279.96		279.96

Note: NR indicates office listed by no returns indicated in that year.

Source: Official Register, 1881 through 1889, Washington, D.C.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

A bit of a change of pace this issue. I'd really appreciate some reader reaction to the proposed series on a state-by-state series of 1880's recaps. They will not appear too frequently even if there is enthusiastic response for they are just tootime consuming, but if you are in favor I'll attempt to publish one or perhaps two per volume for the next few years. Similarly, if your reaction is negative, there will be no others published in La Posta. Send me a post card if you are predisposed one way or the other...

H. R. Harmer's auction of the Bruce Gimelson collection of Alaskan postal history, literature and memorabilia on January 13 and 14th was an event deserving some comment. For those of us who collect Alaska, of course, it was a major "happening." It has been quite a long time since an Alaska collection of this magnitude came on the block. The Henry A. Meyer collection sold by Robert A. Siegel on June 25, 26, 1969, and the collection of an unidentified owner sold by Robert Lewenthal on April 25, 1971 being the last major Alaskan collections to be nationally sold by "name" auction houses. Certainly no Alaskan collection has ever been auctioned with such an impressive publicity barrage!

Evaluating the success of the auction is a rather difficult task. One report saw Mr. Gimelson asking \$125,000 for the collection sold intact on a private treaty basis. The total auction realization quoted by Harmer was \$32,612. Those figures might be taken as one measure of the success of the sale, but in this writer's opinion it is a misleading measure. If we examine very carefully the list of prices realized, we learn a considerably different story.

The auction contained 424 lots of "town" markings. Assuming mid-point values when a range was given, the total estimated value of the town lots was \$43,147.50. The 424 lots actually brought \$26,224.50, or about 61% of the estimate. Of the town lots only 13 had estimates in excess of \$500. The total estimated value of these 13 lots was \$18,875, and they realized \$10,025 or 53%. In addition there were 56 other lots with estimated values between \$100 and \$500. These lots had an estimated total value of \$9,260 and taken together they realized \$6318 or 68%. The remaining 173 "low value" lots had a total estimated value of \$15,012.50. They brought \$9,881.50, or 66% of the estimate. In summary, the town lots realized roughly two-thirds of the estimated prices except for the 13 most expensive lots, and even they brought better than 50% of the estimate.

Other sections of the cover portion of the sale did equally well or better. The four "U.S. Post Office/Alaska" covers were estimated at \$530 for the group. They realized \$600. A section

consisting of 7 lots of maritime mail covers were estimated at \$1127.50. The seven lots realized \$602. A 7-lot section of RPO covers was estimated at \$327.50. It realized \$420. Ten Alaska Commercial Covers were estimated at \$1975. They brought \$1405 for an average of about \$140 per cover.

Perhaps a better measure of the success of the sale could be obtained by examining return on investment. Unfortunately, it is impossible to compute return without knowledge of the original prices paid by the seller, and only a very few covers were of the "pedigree" class. Lot 89, the 1875 Fort Wrangel described a bit presumptuously as "almost certainly the finest known example of a Bank Note on any territorial cover" and estimated at \$3,000 to \$5,000, realized \$2,600. It sold May 12, 1971, in a Herst auction for \$900, representing a 189% increase in price in less than six years. Lot 288, a Sitka, Alaska T. postmark on a 3¢ 1861, sold for \$590 in the 1971 Lewenthal auction. It brought \$800 in the Harmer sale. Lot 378, a straight-line "Tonka, S.E. Alaska" of 1902 realized \$170 compared to its \$62.50 price-tag in the same Lewenthal auction. Lot 284, a 1895 Shakan registered cover, sold for \$42.50 in 1971. This time it fetched \$165. Lot 133, one of the elusive "Juneau" errors from Juneau, realized only \$37.50 in 1971. It sold for \$180 in January 1977. There were, interestingly, some reversals in price. Lot 168, a Killisnoo of 1886 ex-Chase, found \$80 in the 1971 Lewenthal sale. Its \$105 selling price in the Harmer sale could hardly be said to have kept pace with inflation. An even more startling reversal however was lot 174, a ms. "Island of Kodiak, Alaska Ty.", which commanded \$975 in 1971. This time it brought only \$625. On balance, it is almost a certainty that impressive gains out-numbered declines or "flat" values in this auction. We'll probably never know the extent of the investment return, but it had to be considerable.

A prudent commentator would probably stop right now with this auction post-mortem, but I am compelled to mention one other feature of the Harmer auction. Since my Postmarks of Territorial Alaska was used throughout as a guide, I feel I have a right and obligation to speak-out. There was quite a lot of the old sows-ear-into-silk-purse involved in this auction. I've already alluded to the "finest known Bank Note" comment, but there were others just as questionable made in other lot descriptions. The comment, "Stated to have once changed hands at \$10,000..." with reference to lot 429 seems particularly misleading. Especially so when no other estimated value is given. There were also several instances where lot descriptions emphasized that such and such a cover was the earliest known of a type and apparently upped the estimate accordingly. As a general rule, postal historians do not place much premium on having the earliest or latest of a type; condition of the strike and cover are much more important. Lastly a subject I discussed in Volume 7, Number 3 was most in evidence. Postmarks appearing on post cards, registry receipts, long envelopes AND EVEN AS BACKSTAMPS were valued according to the catalog as though they were proper postmarks on cover. Let the buyer beware! RICHARD W. HELBOCK, EDITOR, 1635 MARIPOSA DRIVE, LAS CRUCES, NM

