HISTORY OF GRAZING ON TONTO NATIONAL FOREST

The history of grazing on the Tonto National Forest from the time of early settlement to the present was collected in 1926, by former Forest Ranger Fred W. Croxen, 1st. That pertaining to the Verde River and Cave Creek country was collected by former Forest Ranger Joe E. Hand (now deceased). Of the nineteen (19) early day cattlemen from whom this history came, only one now survives./940.

These old-timers from whom I secured this data are among the first settlers on what is now the Tonto National Forest, and while their dates may not always be correct and they may not agree in some regards among themselves, I feel that all are reliable men and the information secured from them as to conditions in the past is reliable. They are men who have seen this range at its best, have seen the stock industry rise to the peak and descend to its present conditions (1926). Stories told by these old men while I have been with them, sound like fairy tales, for everything differed so much in those days from what we see of the ragged end of it all at the present time.

Arizona had been traversed in the northern and southern parts for several decades before white men ventured to any extent into the part now covered by the Tonto Forest, for the early California gold rush was on and the greater part of the people had eyes only for that. There was little trading to be done with the Indians of these parts, as they were treacherous and warlike, and travelers were only too glad to stay to the main routes of travel and let this, then little known, country alone.

Gift of the author, Jan. 1966

Shortly after the Civil War, the government began to renew interest in this remote and arid country and established a few army posts throughout the territory, most of which were poorly manned. The troops made scouting trips throughout the country in the late '60's and '70's. A few prospectors, traders, packers, and other venturous characters accompanied the troops, found indications of the precious metals in the mountains and took out stories of the fine grasses and ideal climate to others of their kind who were interested. The cattlemen, always anxious to spread out and find newer and better ranges for their cattle soon brought small herds to these mountains, which grew into larger ones, while larger herds were driven in at later dates.

Florance A. Packard, probably the oldest living man to settle in Tonto Basin, came from California to the Salt River Valley in 1874, where he was told of the Greenback Valley by an army officer. He came to Greenback, liked it and settled there in 1875. He came as a professional lion hunter, for the territory paid a bounty of $20.00 at that time, and was a keen observer. He tells of Blackfoot and Crowfoot Grama grass that touched ones stirrups when riding through it, where no grama grass grows at present. The Pine Bunchgrass grew all over the Sierra Anchas in the pine type and lower down than the pine timber on the north slopes. There were perennial grasses on the mesas along Tonto Creek where only brush grows at the present time. Mr. Packard says that Tonto Creek was timbered with the local creek bottom type of timber from bluff to bluff, and the water seeped rather than flowed down through a series of sloughs and fish over a foot in length could be caught with little trouble. Today, this same creek bottom is little more than a gravel bar from bluff to bluff. Most of the old trees are gone,

some have been cut for fuel, many others cut down for the cattle during droughts and the winters when the feed was scarce on the range, and many have been washed away during the floods that have rushed down this stream nearly every year since the range started to deplete. The same condition applies to practically every stream of any size on the Tonto. The first real flood to come down Tonto Creek was in 1891 after it had rained steadily for twelve days and nights. At this time the country was fully stocked, the ground had been trampled hard, much of the grass was short, or gone, gullies had started and the water came rushing down. This flood took a good deal of the agricultural land from the ranches along the creek and was so high that it filled the gorge where it entered the Salt River at t he present site of the Roosevelt Dam and backed a house up the Salt River about a mile.

E.M. (Chub) Watkins, whose father, Captain W.C. Watkins, settled on Tonto Creek in 1882 at what is now known as the H-4 Ranch, tells about the same story of early conditions as Mr. Packard. He says Curley Mesquite grass covered the foothills but did not extend to so low an elevation as at present, these lower elevations having been covered by grama and other grasses now gone. His people came from Indian Territory and brought the finest horses that ever came to this part of the state, if not the entire state, owned a bunch of greyhounds as well, and used to run jack rabbits all over the mesas along Tonto Creek from the box to the mouth. There were no washed at all in those days, where at present arroyos many feet deep are found and at places cannot be crossed.

Cliff C. Griggin, the present owner of the 76 Quarter Circle Ranch on Tonto at the mouth of the Wild Rye Creek, came to Salt

River and settled in 1884 on some of the part now covered by the Roosevelt Reservoir. He says the principal grass was Black Grama and a species of Sage. The Black Grama used to cover the slopes on each side of the river. In those days this came up in bunches, approximately five inches at the base, grew to a height of two to two and one-half feet with a sheaf like spread of two to two and one-half feet. This was very nutritious, making the finest kind of feed for cattle. He says in early days the settlers used to chop this grass for hay, using heavy hoes for chopping and with a hoe, rake and fork he could fill a wagon in two hours time with this grass.

Mr. Griffin told of a George Allen who had a ranch and bunch of cattle opposite the mouth of Tonto Creek, who milked Devon cows and sold butter in Globe for $.75 per pound. He put up Alfilaris hay for these cows, by pushing a kind of rake or sweep across the mesas and collecting it in windrows, it grew so rank. This was in 1886 and alfilaris was not in Arizona until after the advent of the sheep from California. Florance Packard says he saw a little of it in Sunflower Valley about 1880. While mentioning the Allen Ranch, Mr. Griffin said that Mr. Allen told him he was going to get $5,000 for it some day, as he had a reservoir site, meaning the present sight of the Roosevelt Dam. This was in 1886 and Mr. McCormick, former state historian, claims to have been one of the party who discovered it in 1889.

William Craig, at present a resident of Payson, settled on Weber Creek, on the Pine District with his partner, Paul Vogel, a Frenchman, came to old Marysville, a small mining camp three miles west of the present site of Payson, February 10, 1881. He says Black and Crowfoot Grama covered the ridges and foothills at

that time and Curley Mesquite was mostly along the draws. This speaks well for the Mesquite grass and bears out the statement of many stockmen that, "if it wasn't for the Curley Mesquite, there wouldn't be any grass."

Mr. Craig says Big Green Valley which is now the Charles E. Chilson Ranch; Long Valley, where the present town of Payson is located, and Little Green Valley, fourteen miles northeast of Payson, were waist high in grass and certainly pretty to look at. He says the Pine Bunch grass in the pine timber under the Rim was three feet high and stood in great bunches. The cattle and horses that grazed on it ate only the heads. Sheepmen first set fire to the Pine Bunch grass under the Rim when passing through, so they would have young, tender feed for their sheep the next trip. These sheepmen were from New Mexico and Daggs Brothers and others from the Little Colorado slope. The influx of Texans, Colonel Jess W. Ellison, on Ellison Creek, Walter Moore on Moore Creek, a little west of Ellison Creek; Sam Haught, Sr., who settled on the head of the East Verde with his sons Sam Jr., and Fred, and others killed much of Pine grass by following their former methods of the plains by burning the old mature grass. The roots of the Pine grass are very close to the top of the ground, so it was soon killed out in this way. There is little of this grass to be found under the Rim at present.

Revilo Fuller, a resident of the Pine settlement, first came to Tonto Basin in 1877. He says, " on Hardscrabble Mesa there was a Red Topped grass that had a good head and grew to a height of about sixteen inches. This was not a bunch grass, but grew on stems, similar to Blue Stem." There is none of this grass to be found now.

All the men interviewed state that there was little brush in the country at the time stock was first brought in, and it was possible to drive a wagon nearly anywhere one desired. The little that there was, was only on some of the mountains and some of the slopes. Chub Watkins stated that nearly all the north slope of Mt. Ord was a Pine Bunch grass country. At present this is one of the brushiest pieces of range on the Tonto, as anyone will agree who has been unfortunate enough to have come in contact with it.

Such was the condition of the country, the streams, and the grasses at the advent of white men with their herds of cattle, horses, and sheep. It is little wonder they flocked to this stockman's paradise with its fine grasses, well-watered ranges and ideal climate.

One thing that was of assistance to new settlers coming into the Tonto Basin country was the roads that were built by the army under the regime of General Stoneman. It was he who first built the road from Camp McDowell on the Verde River to Fort Reno in Tonto Basin, and from Fort Reno up through the Basin and connected with the military road he built from Camp Verde to Fort Apache. Both of these roads were used by the incoming early settlers. Stoneman Lake on the Coconino Forest is named after General Stoneman.

As I have already mentioned, the stockmen soon came in after the Apaches were somewhat overcome by the soldiers, they having heard such glowing accounts of the Tonto Basin from these soldiers, scouts, prospectors and packers. To show just how rapidly it was settled, I shall name some of the outfits, the dates they came in and the herds they had or acquired and how they increased or decreased as fortune favored them in their efforts.

The early influx was from California and Oregon, while some came from the Mormon settlements in Utah, later settlers came from Texas and New Mexico.

According to Florance Packards, the first cattle to be brought to Tonto Creek were by John Meadows in 1876. There were fifty head of these, mixed Red Durham cows and they were brought from California.

Christopher Cline and his five sons drove a herd in the same year and settled on lower Tonto. There were four hundred head in this herd, so far as I can learn. These were also driven from California, coming from the vicinity of San Diego. Christopher Cline was the grandfather of George Cline family, now grazing permittees on the Tonto.

A. A. Ward stocked the Sunflower Ranch on the west side of the Mazatzals about 1880, but I do not know how many cattle he had.

Along the Verde River were the Ashurs, the Sears, and the Menards, all bringing cattle in from California in the early '80's. Charley Mullen, now a resident of Tempe, once told me that he and his brother had cattle at the Club Ranch high up on the west side of the Mazatazals in 1882. He said this was the finest grass country he had ever seen, and it must have been for it still is one of the best ranges on the Tonto although it has been heavily stocked for as long as any on the Tonto.

The first cattle to be driven to the Payson country was in 1877 by William Burch and William McDonald, two bachelors, who drove their cattle, about 50 head, from the Walapai Mountains in Mojave County to Tonto Basin, coming through the Verde Valley then up over the Camp Verde-Ft. Apache Military Road to what is now known locally as Calf Pen Draw and down Nash Point to Strawberry

Valley and on to where they settled in Big Green Valley. They had a mule team and light wagon, a saddle horse and pack mule. This outfit allowed them to travel where their fancy suited. These men later married two of the Hazelton sisters, relatives of the Hazelton family now living in the Buckeye country on the Gila. William Burch was the father of Haze Burch, the Phoenix policeman killed by two outlaws while trying to arrest them in February 1925. They also had the first sawmill in Payson and hired Vi Fuller of Pine to haul it from Maricopa for them in 1879 or '80. Many of the old stumps are still standing on the area logged by this mill. When Sm. Craig came to Payson in 1881, the herd of Burch and McDonald had increased to about 100 head.

Houston Brothers were located at Star Valley, six miles northeast of the present town of Payson, at the time he came in. They had about 300 head of cattle and had driven them from Tulare County, California. They branded the U Bar, which is still in existance and is run by the Clear Creek Cattle Co. above the Rim.

Andrew M. Houston, now a resident of Tempe, Arizona, informed me that he and his brother, Samuel, first came to Arizona from California in 1876 to look over the country. He returned to California that year, but 1877 was so dry he could not trail cattle through and had to wait until 1878 for their return with the cattle.

They settled in Star Valley, about six miles east and north of the present town of Payson, on what is now known as the Nellie M. Beard Ranch, and built the house and barn now on this ranch.

They called it Star Valley, after a man named Star who lived at the same ranch in 1877. Star died there and is buried just

southwest of the barn on the ridge. When they fenced the barn, they built the fence so his grave would be on the 'sienega' side of the fence and would not be trampled by stock.

The Houstons drove about 300 head of Durham cattle from Tulare County, California, and built them up until they were branding 1,000 calves. They used the U Bar brand, which still exists and is run by the Clear Creek Cattle Company, southwest of Winslow, Arizona. Their cattle range was from Sunflower Mesa to Houston Pocket, all under the Diamond Rim. They also brought some very fine bred horses to Arizona with them and sometimes summered these on the Mogollons. Their summer camp for horses was on what is now known as Houston Creek and their camp was where Pinchot Fireman Camp is now located.

Andrew Houston, kept up this strain of horses until about three years ago, when the last one was stolen from his ranch in the Salt River valley was never recovered. It is reported on very good authority that it was brought to the Payson country and later shot rather than be a liability to those who stole it. A small U was their horse brand at all times.

Sam Houston was killed near the Old Merritt Place, on the head of the East Verde, by the accidental discharge of his six-shooter which cut the large artery in his leg, causing him to bleed to death.

The Houstons were always highly respected people and are always spoken of by the old timers with great respect, who say they were good people for the country. They also had the name of keeping up and improving the breeding of their cattle and horses to a high standard.

O. C. Felton, father of George A. Pelton who resides on Tonto Creek, and his son-in-law, Brady, a half-breed cherokee, came from Oregon and California in the late '70's, spent one winter on Lower Oak Creek in the Verde Valley and then came to Tonto Basin, bringing cattle and horses with them and settled on Tonto at the mouth of Rye Creek.

Marion Derrick settled at what is now the Indian Garden Ranger Station in 1882. His brother-in-law, Levi Berger, settled Little Green Valley in 1883. Derrick had 180 head of improved Mexican cows and Durham and Devon bulls. The bulls were purchased on the Verde River and one of them was an improved Devon bull from England.

Derrick hired Paul Vogel, now living in Payson, to build the log fences still to be seen at Indian Garden. In 1883, he and other settlers built the old log house, still standing as a protection against the Indians. Derrick is said to have been a good man for the country, but unfortunately, went broke through his expenditures for improvements, etc.

Wm Craig built the adobe at Little Green Valley in 1884, which is the main room in the present house.

John H. Hise, from Chicago, formerly a merchant of Globe, purchased Little Green Valley from Berger and later sold it to the Allen Brothers.

Wm. Craig and Paul Vogel, the first a mule skinner and wagon-master for Government contractors in the Southwest, and the latter a Civil War Veteran and bull whacker for contractors across the Great Plains, settled the Spade Ranch on Weber Creek on the Pine District in 1883. The mines on Weber Creek were discovered the same Spring and were of a considerable aid to them. They set out an

orchard in the Spring of 1884, getting the trees from Hirtsville, Alabama. This grew to be one of the very best orchards in the country and at one time had 1200 bearing trees, all well-cared for. They started in the cattle business with one cow and calf, later buying five more. Their increase the first few years was 80 to 90% and one year was 100%. It never was below 70% all the time they were in the cattle business. Mr. Craig always kept his cattle broke to salt and to come at the call. They first secured salt from the mine at Camp Verde of very poor quality, but after a few years were able to purchase salt from the Mormons who freighted it from Salt Lake, New Mexico.

Mr. Craig says the securing of salt was a great handicap and many did not do it, losing many cattle as a result. He says while at the Zulu mine on Wild Rye Creek, in the early days, he has ridden the length of it and not been out of the odor of dead cattle and they were dying in grass knee high - for the want of salt.

William O. St. John, one of the original locators of the Oxbow mine, came to Tonto Basin in 1878. He located on what is known as the St. John's Place, four miles south of Payson and maintained his headquarters camp there for himself and others, mostly army men. Al Sieber, Crook's Chief of Indian Scouts, who was accidentally killed on the Roosevelt Road in 1907, and Sam Hill, an army packer, still residing south of Payson, were two of St. John's compadres and hung out at this ranch. Mr. St. John started with a few milk cows and grew a small herd, later disposing of them and acquiring the Pyeatt herd of goats about 1885, building them up to about 5000 head. He disposed of these to Max Bonne, at one time owner of the H-Bar outfit, who wanted the brush range for winter range for his cattle.

Colonel Jess W. Ellison, an old-time Texas cowman and trail driver, shipped a herd of something like 2000 head of cattle and a large ramuda of fine horses from Texas to Bowie, Arizona, unloaded at that point and trailed to Tonto Basin, settling with his family on what is now known as Ellison Creek directly under the Big Rim in 1886. Owing to these cattle not being used to this climate and not knowing where to drift to a warmer range, about one-third were lost the first winter because snows were heavy and the grass covered up. Like most of the early settlers, Mr. Ellison planted fruit trees, setting out an orchard of 3000 trees at this place. A great many of these trees are still standing and bearing fruit.

Walter Moore brought in 700 head of cattle in 1886 and settled on what is now called Moore Creek, about two and one-half or three miles west of Ellison Creek. From all accounts, these cattle met with about the same hardships as the Ellison herd and due to other negligence in handling them did not pay, so his brother who had staked him had the remnant gathered and taken out.

Sam Haught, Sr., and his sons, Sam, Jr., and Alfred, the former son now living on Walnut Creek on the Pleasant Valley District and the latter on his mining claims on Spring Creek, trailed 700 head of cattle from Texas and settled on the upper East Verde in 1886 or '87. At least a part of these cattle were driven to the mountain in the summer and held in the vicinity of General Springs Canyon. The ruins of the Old Fred Haught cabin are still to be seen about a mile below the General Springs Fireman Camp.

According to Mr. Craig, a Mr. Stinson was the first man to put cattle in the pleasant valley country. These were bought from the Mormons in the late 70's in the colonies around Snowflake and St. Johns.

The Tewksburys came into Pleasant Valley from northern California in the early 80's. He was a Scotchman and his wife a California Indian. They brought their stock with them.

The Grahams came from Iowa, brought stock, but I do not know from where or how many.

These two families were the leaders in the famous Graham-Tewksbury War, sometimes called the Pleasant Valley War.

Tom Hazelwood, trailed 5000 head of cattle from Texas and settled in Pleasant Valley in 1885 or '86. He was warned by the warring factions not to come in, so wintered in Luna Valley, New Mexico, and came on in the next spring.

W. T. McFadden, father of Pecos McFadden, trailed the M-O Brand of cattle from Texas in the early 80's, settling on Spring Creek at the place now resided on by Jim-Sam Haught. I did not learn how many cattle were in this herd, but there were several hundred head. Mr. Haigler, owner of the Bar X Ranch northwest of Young Post Office, used to buy steers from the Salt River outfits as yearlings, grew them out on his ranch and drove them to the railroad at Holbrook for shipment.

According to Mr. Craig, a good many bulls were purchased from the Murphy Brothers of Tulare Country, California, from herds they trailed through to their holding in old Mexico. They hired only Mexican punchers and it was easy to arrange to have good cattle dropped out of the herd by them. The last herd driven through was all sold out on the San Pedro River, so many having been taken out that they knew all would be lost before they could be gotten through.

Cliff C. Griffin, the present owner of the 76 Quarter Circle Ranch on Tonto Creek, with headquarters at the mouth of the Wild Rye Creek, came to Salt River March 1, 1884. He purchased Devon cattle that year from Jim Hazard on Salt River and has either owned cattle or been interested in them in a financial way ever since. I have already given an account of the range conditions as seen by him at that time.

There were several farming and stock ranches on the river at that time. Simon Kenton, a descendant of the old Kenton family of Indian Scouts on the west side of the Alleghany Mountains was one of the first settlers, coming in 1876 from Oregon with Roan Durham cattle and settled on Salt River just above the mouth of Pinto Creek. He had two bulls that weighed a ton each. At one time he butchered two three-year old steers that dressed 1300 pounds each.

Henry Armer, the father of the Armer boys, brought Red Durham cattle from Oregon and settled on Salt River about 1876. At one time he bought a yearling steer from Simon Kenton that dressed 500 pounds.

Jim Hazard ran an outfit for Welbridge and Fisk on shares, with headquarters on Salt River opposite the mouth of Pinto Creek. This outfit had about 400 head of Devon cattle, which was a big outfit for that part of the country in those days.

Mr. Griffin says that cattle did not drift up as far as Walnut Springs when he came to Arizona in 1884, but grazed in the valley and along the lower foothills.

While conversing with Mr. Griffin in regard to early range conditions, he mentioned that he has butchered 18 month old steers that dressed 472 pounds and he once sold a two-year old steer that

dressed 630 pounds. Pete Bacon butchered a two-year old steer in the vicinity of Reynolds Creek Ranger Station that dressed 700 pounds. Steaks were cut from the outside of the ribs of this steer. These cattle were all raised and fattened on grass only, which proves that there was real grass in those days. Compare the cattle of today that graze on the same ranges. Cows calved every month in the year and raised calves every year, and cows bred and raised calves until they were twenty years old and older. Mr. Griffin said that after the stockmen got to trailing their cattle to Holbrook they were herded during the roundups instead of being held in pastures, which caused them to become footsore. A good percentage had to be turned out as they could not be driven up the hill out of Salt River on the Holbrook drive.

Mr. Griffin said that in 1884, he and J. H. Baker, who was a resident of Salt River, went up on Aztec Mt. This country was not known to settlers of that date but they found a log cabin and a white man's grave at what is now the Peterson Ranch. Baker raised 22 tons of potatoes at this place that year and packed them across the Pinal Mountains to Silver King, building his own trail to get them across and sold them for one-half cent per pound.

He also mentioned that Glen Reynolds, at one time Sheriff of Gila County, who was killed by the Apache Kid while taking him and other Indians to the State prison, first located the present site of the Reynolds Creek Ranger Station and built the old log house now on the place.

At first, the mining camp of Globe and a few small surrounding camps was the market these cattlemen had to depend on, but there was nothing regular about it. The average price was $25.00 for yearling steers.

The early settlers on Salt River raised what was known as Egyptian Corn, which was similar to Milo Maize but had a larger head that hung down from its own weight. They had to discontinue raising this product on account of the damage done to it by the birds.

My information as to the Mormon Settlements of Pine and Pine Creek, Mazatzal City on the East Verde and Gisela on Tonto Creek, was secured from Vi Fuller, one of the original locators on the East Verde. His story is that in 1877 a party of six men with pack animals started out from the Mormon settlement of St. George Utah, consisting of his oldest brother, Wid Fuller, Woodward Freeman, Thomas Clark, John Willis, Alfred Randall and himself. They crossed the Colorado River at Pierces Ferry, below the Grand Canyon. After looking around they decided to locate on the East Verde River in the Tonto Basin.

The party gave a man by the name of Jim Samuels $75.00 for his claim and divided it among the six of them. They returned to Utah next year and started with their families and stock to their new home. Vi Fuller and Alfred Randall, the father of the Randall boys at Pine, each had some cattle and then took what they called a cooperative herd from Wid Fuller for three years on shares. Their stock was too footsore to make the trip across the Mogollons so they spent the winter of 1878-79 at Black Falls on the Little Colorado River and came to the new settlement next spring. They arrived with about 80 head of regular Utah cattle and had three Durham bulls, all sired by an $800.00 Durham bull.

The first year the cattle did not do very well. Due to the trip and the poor condition of the cows, they got only a crop of 10 or 12 calves. The next year they got salt from the salt mine at

Camp Verde and the cattle did better. These cattle gradually increased and they brought a Durham Bull in occasionally to breed up the herd.

After the Indian scare of 1882, at which time the band of Indians broke out from San Carlos and were later about all killed on Battle Ground Ridge on the Coconino Forest, Mr. Fuller and the other settlers on the East Verde moved up to Pine, where they could secure better protection in case of any more outbreaks.

Mr. Fuller says their principal market was Phoenix and Camp McDowell. One drive was made to San Carlos Agency in the early 80's. Only aged steers and some old cows were sold. One drive to Phoenix was sold for $45.00 per head as they came and the butcher buying them estimated the bunch would dress 500 pounds per animal.

Another of the early markets for cattle was the then thriving mining camp of Silver King, near what is now called Superior. At that time Superior was called Queen Creek. Frank Mayer was the butcher at Silver King and came up to the settlements, bought the cattle himself and stayed with them until they were delivered. Mr. Fuller says he certainly took to any one that he saw crowd or hit one of these beef cattle. Mayer later bought the NB Ranch on the East Verde at the mouth of Pine Creek and it was run for him by George Cole, who married the oldest sister of Wash Gibson, a resident of Payson at the present time.

The old Mormon Settlement of Gisela was settled in 1881. Davy Gowan, who is credited with discovering the Natural Bridge, had a claim at Gisela and Mart and John Sanders bought this claim from him, giving him a span of mules, harness and wagon and a buckskin

horse in trade. Vi Fuller later sold these mules for $500.00 in gold. This settlement thrived for a number of years, but was later given up by the Mormons and none live there at present.

Mr. Fuller says that a man by the name of Ike Lothian, a Missourian, was settled in Strawberry Valley when his party came through there in 1877. He had no cattle, but had two mules and a saddle horse. He farmed about 20 acres of land at the lower end of the valley, raised corn, fed it to the hogs he raised, butchered them, cured the meat and packed it to the army post at Camp Verde and elsewhere. Mr. Lothian was the first settler in Strawberry Valley.

Mr. Fuller says droughts came at different periods but there was sufficient grass and browse to carry them over until the range became overstocked and over-grazed.

He says there were beaver in the streams in Tonto Basin in the early days but they were not trapped by white men. The floods caused by the denuding of the ranges finally washed them out. There was an occasional wolf in the late 70's and early '80's and quite a few lions, but the lions did not bother the stock as the deer were very plentiful, deer being the natural animal for them to prey on. He says one could ride from Pine to the East Verde settlement and see deer on every point.

It is interesting to hear Mr. Fuller recide his early experiences, he being one of the very few real old timers left in the country. He came to Utah with the first Mormon settlers in 1846, was a freighter along the line of the old Pony Express through Nevada and Utah in the early 60's, was with his father in Los Angeles in '61, at which time he saw his father pay $2.50 for a fat two-year old steer, $.60

per hundred for barley and $.40 per sack for ear corn. When they returned in '62 everything had gone up and they paid $80.00per ton for the poorest kind of hay and everything else was in proportion. He made one trip from salt Lake City to Platte City, Nebraska, the farthest western point of the Union Pacific at that time with a mule team for freight and returned with a load of reapers, at the rate of $16.00 per hundred. This trip in the early '60's took about three months.

Horses - The Tonto Basin was never much of a horse country. The stockmen and settlers usually raised their own horses but not in large numbers. The country taken as a whole is too rough and not the type adapted to the successful raising of horses. Lions have always been a handicap to the industry, getting many of the colts as well as aged animals.

Mr. Art Sanders, who lives in Globe, told me that he and his brother, John, bought 1089 head on Wild Rye Creek and the vicinity of Payson in 1905, paying $3.00 to $5.00 per head for them. These were an accumulation of the range horses owned by everybody. They were sold to Senator Mayfield and Nail and shipped to South Carolina and Alabama.

There were a good many horses in the Pleasant Valley country in the early days. The big cow outfits used to drive their remudas lower down in the winter and hold them on the grassy ridges and foothills along Tonto.

Sheep - The first sheep were brought into Tonto Basin by Fred Powers, in 1876 and were held on Tonto Creek. These were brought from California to Mojave County in 1875 and on to Tonto in 1876. Davy Gowan was the herder of this band. Powers ran sheep until the varmints got so bad he had to go out of the business.

Old settlers say there were no coyotes in this part of the country until stock were brought in, and that there were no skunks in Tonto Basin until after the old Fort Reno was established, after which they followed the soldiers across the Mazatzals from Camp McDowell and the Verde country. (Draw your own conclusions.)

The sheepmen from the higher country and from New Mexico got to driving their herds into the Tonto country and on the west slope of the Mazatzals to winter on the grass and to lamb in the Spring. This country had already been fully stocked by the cattlemen and it only worked a hardship on them to have these sheep wintered on their range. Considerable hard feeling was the result, the cattlemen oftentimes drove the sheep out of the country and one man, Gene Packard , a brother of Florance Packard, was killed. A range war was about to open when the Tonto Forest was created, which put a stop to the sheep wintering on the Forest. Iwas told by Cliff Griffin that he once heard Al DeSpain remark that had he known the Forest Service was coming in and control the sheep and goats, he would not have sold his holdings on Wild Rye Creek in the finest of grama grass country, but would willingly have paid $2.00 per head for the protection alone.

One Fall, George Scott, one of the present users of the Heber-Reno Driveway, came on Hardsorabble Mesa west of Pine with four bands of sheep and heavily armed herders and tenders. Seventeen cattlemen took them unawares and disarmed the outfit, threw the bands together, shoved them off into Fossil Creek and told them not to come back. Scott camped away from the bands to save his own hide and could not be found by the cattlemen.

Another incident happened to George Wilbur, another present user of the Heber-Reno Driveway, when he drove into the Sombrero

country and started to lamb. The cattlemen, on whose ranges he was, dropped so many bullets around the outfit that they were glad to leave and promised never to come back, which they didn't.

Charley Edwards, a cattleman on Tonto Creek, stood them off for a number of years to save his range with most of the time little support from his neighbors. He finally had to shoot a camp to pieces and the next morning this band was clear on the west side of the Mazatzals and came back no more.

The above incidents are mentioned to show the condition of affairs at the time the Forest Service took over the area within the Tonto Basin. All this occurred on ranges that were already overstocked with cattle.

Goats - The first goats were brought in by Andrew Pyeatt, father of Benton and Walter who are residents of Payson, in 1882, and was only a small band used for meat. These were later sold to William O. St. Johns as has already been mentioned.

John Holder is the first man who brought goats to Tonto Basin in any quantity, bringing about 3000 head in from New Mexico about 1896. He brought several thousand more in later. He ranged his goats principally on the East Verde, but also had some of them at Gisela for a time.

J. H. Fuller at one time had goats and ran them in the vicinity of the Diamond Gap Rim and had a camp at the present ranch owned by Arthur L. Neal on Lion Creek. He also ran these goats on top of the Rim at what is locally known at "The Goat Corral", on the head of Cracker Box Canyon west of General Springs.

The Neals and Booths had goats at Gisela and Ira Hickcox had a bunch on Wild Rye Creek at his ranch just above the present H-I Ranch.

The Crabtrees and Hughes Ward had goats in the Ram Valley and Sunflower country for a number of years, and John Gilliland had goats at Sugar Loaf Butte on Sycamore Creek, four miles northeast of the present Rio Verde Ranger Station. Some of these outfits went out of business of their own accord but the Forest Service required all who had goats on the range at the time the forest was created to remove them.

Hogs - The first hogs in the Tonto Basin country that I could learn of, and I believe they were the first, were a bunch that Jim Samuels, a Scotchman, and Sam Hill, an Englishman, both from Prescott, turned loose along the foot of the Mazatzals in 1876. These hogs did little good on account of the varmints getting them. I presume these were intended to produce meat for the miners, who were coming in at that time, the mining boom being at its best from 1875 to 1881. The Dougherty was then in existence on Rock Creek at the east foot of the Mazatzals, now owned by Bert Cullum, and a two stamp mill was installed there in 1878.

A good many of the ranchers had a few hogs but mainly for their own consumption. These hogs were turned out to live and fatten on the mast usually and there was always a heavy loss from varmints.

Early in the 70's, a fence law was passed against turning stock loose where it would damage other settlers. This was passed because there were very few settlers in the Salt River Valley that had their farming ranches under fence and the crops had to be protected. This law, of course, covered the entire state and it was not very profitable to turn hogs loose on the range, the ranchers and stockmen shooting hogs where they would not shoot other classes of stock. This fence law is still in existence.

All the old timers consulted agree that the range was fully stocked about 1890, as many herds had been brought in by that time and cattle increased faster in those days than they do now. All agree that the peak was reached about 1900 and say there were from 15 to 20 head of cattle on the range at that time where there is only one at present. Florance Packard and Chub Watkins say that along Tonto Creek where now 150 head of cattle is considered a good roundup for one day, that they used to roundup at least 2000 head and it took two days to work the herd. This was the case all over the country. There was little sale for cattle and those sold went for a low price. Nobody wanted them. As a result, the stockmen kept on branding their calves and letting their herds increase.

The range was not only grazed out, but was trampled out as well. Moisture did not go down to the remaining grass roots and the cow trails were fast becoming gullies which drained the country like a tin roof. Sheet erosion started in many places, especially on the steep slopes and the thin soil was soon washed away and only rocks were left.

Cliff Griffin says that from 1894 to 1904, after the great herds of cattle had grazed over the Salt River country, there was no rooted grass, only browse and annuals remaining. And this was only 30 years after the first cattle had been placed on the range. Then from 1904 to 1910, the seasons were good, cattle not so plentiful and the grasses started to come back and he says there is more grass on the slopes of Salt River now than there was from 1894 to 1904.

Cave Creek and Verde River Country:

Cartwright Cattle - The Cartwright family came from California, locating near the head waters of Cave Creek, in 1882, and had a

fair grade of cattle. This herd increased in size and improved in grade. During the drought of 1902 and until 1904, they lost fully 50 percent of their cattle, the same as all others on the range in that type of country. A good deal of this loss was due to the overstocking-overgrazing of the range.

Edgar cattle - the Edgar family brought cattle from California to the Cave Creek country in 1875, and located ten miles below the present Ashdale Ranger Station (then known as Ashdale). Their herd consisted of Durham cattle of a good grade.

O K Outfit- The old O K Outfit, owned by Pete LaTereatte, as well as the grandfather of the Sears boys, Perry and George, brought cattle into the Verde River country in 1875. Each outfit started from California with about 200 head of cattle, of fairly good grade.

LaTereatte, settled at the mouth of the East Verde, where he lived for a great many years, finally selling his cattle to other parties. After undergoing all the hardships of those early days, he contracted pneumonia and died.

The Sears outfit settled on the Verde, opposite the mouth of Camp Creek, with their cattle. This outfit increased in size on this range, only being sold to other interests within the past few years.

Roundtree cattle - Colonel Roundtree, brought cattle from California onto the head of Lime Creek, on the west side of the Verde River in 1876. This is on what is now the Tom Cavness range. This herd of cattle is said to have been rather poorly bred, but was grazed on this range for years, being built up in numbers as well as improved in grade.

NOTE - The above was donated by Forest Ranger Joe C. Hand, of the Cave District.

About 1890, a man named Ramer contracted 10,000 steers to be delivered in Holbrook at $15.00, $18.00, and $21.00. For the next ten or twelve years the cattle business boomed. The drought of 1904, the worst since the coming of white men to these parts, at which time it failed to rain for 18 months, hit the range country and cattle on the overstocked and depleted ranges died in bunches. Since that time there has never been nearly as many cattle as there were prior to that time - and there never will be. To quote the last words of Florance Packard when he finished telling me of old time conditions - "The range is not overstocked at present, it is just worn out and gone." And such is the case. White man, the most destructive of animals, brought his herds to a virgin range only fifty short years ago, and abused it in every way he could. We see the result today. Much of it is worthless, ruined beyond recovery, some will come back.

Presented by Senior Forest Ranger Fred W. Croxen, at the Tonto Grazing Conference in Phoenix, Arizona, November 4-5, 1926.

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