

Chapter 2

Arizona's Silver Belt

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"Men move eternally, still chasing Fortune; and, Fortune found, still wander." This quote is from Robert Louis Stevenson's 1883 book, *The Silverado Squatters*. It was written about California, but applies just as well to the nineteenth century fortune seekers in Arizona. They came in search of gold; silver would do, but always there was the hope, the dream, of finding gold.

Many prospectors appeared in Arizona in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Most had failed elsewhere - Colorado, California, Nevada, New Mexico - and came to Arizona to try their luck. They were joined by soldiers, cowboys, merchants, professionals and drifters. Any report or rumor of a promising claim lured men by the hundreds. A large amount of gold was found at various places in Arizona, but silver was the more prevalent precious metal, and its mining became an important factor in the growth and economy of territorial Arizona.

Much of this silver mining activity centered in what later became southern Gila County and an adjacent area of Pinal County. This area became known as Arizona's "silver belt." Millions of dollars worth of silver was taken from the mines at Silver King, Globe, Richmond Basin, McMillenville and other locations.

The Search For Color

Prior to 1860, the future "silver belt" was an empty land, occupied only by the roving and warlike Apaches. Trappers had been through the region, along with an occasional prospector, explorer, or military detachment. In 1857, a geologist named Humboldt said of the area: "There lies the future treasure-house of the world." Spurred on by such reports, prospectors moved into the area a few years later, led by one named Doc Thorne.

Doc Thorne

Doc Thorne was an Army surgeon in New Mexico in the early 1860s. After he had successfully treated an Indian with an eye affliction, he was persuaded to travel to Arizona's Apache country, where the disease was endemic.

While in the area, Thorne took some time to explore the countryside. When he returned to New Mexico, he reported that he had seen gold and silver-streaked rocks,

silver nuggets and ledges of precious metals. He noted that these findings were located near "a butte that looks like a hat."

Thorne allegedly made subsequent visits to the area, but was unable to relocate the site. His glowing reports, though, opened the door for other prospecting adventures.

King Woolsey

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, most of the Army was called away to fight in the east. Indian depredations increased, and Arizona civilians took it upon themselves to play the military role. Men from all walks of life joined to retaliate against the natives, especially the "troublesome" Apaches.

In early January of 1864, up to 400 head of livestock were reported stolen in Yavapai County. King Woolsey, a rancher on the Agua Fria River, initiated an expedition, consisting of ranchers, miners and traders, whose purpose was to retrieve the livestock and "exterminate" the Apache thieves. This expedition culminated in the Bloody Tanks massacre, in which a large number of the enemy were killed.

On this and two later expeditions, Woolsey and his men explored the land for signs of silver and gold. On Tonto Creek they "found color, but not in paying quantities." Later they proceeded to the heights of the Pinal Mountains and again "found gold - - and some good-looking quartz lodes." In his report Woolsey wrote: "I cannot help thinking that there is in that part of the Territory great mineral wealth."

The Banta - Cooley Party

Corydon E. Cooley, while enlisted in the New Mexico Infantry, met Doc Thorne and heard about the fabulous fortune the latter had seen near the hat-shaped butte. Cooley dreamed of finding that treasure, but it was not until July of 1869 that he had a chance to do so. He and Alfred F. Banta, along with a friendly band of Apaches, left Zuni, New Mexico on their quest for gold. They prospected at Sombrero Peak, near the mouth of Cherry Creek, but found nothing. They then moved on to Fort McDowell, where they commented that the expedition had been "a wild goose chase."

Cooley regrouped at the Fort and again headed for the

upper Salt River. In a skirmish with unfriendly Apaches, he lost two horses. Upon the recommendation of Colonel Sanford from Fort McDowell, Cooley agreed to join forces with another group of prospectors in the vicinity.

The Jackson Party

At about the same time that Corydon Cooley set out on his second trek, Calvin Jackson and twenty-nine other men left Prescott for the same destination and for the same purpose. They also prospected at Sombbrero Peak with negative results, and then headed for the Salt River, where they joined Cooley's group. Together they explored about thirty miles up the Salt River but found no indications of precious metals. Discouraged, Cooley and most of his men returned to the Salt River Valley.

At this time Jackson and his men were joined by William A. Holmes, a member of the Cooley party. They turned southwest to prospect along the streams that flow from the Pinal Mountains. In Big Johnny Gulch, just a few miles from present-day Globe, the group was menaced by a band of Apaches. For protection, they constructed a crude rock fortress in a shallow cave. When the Indians were out of sight, they looked around and found some good-looking black ore which, when assayed later in Prescott, proved to have a high percentage of silver.

In November 1870, Calvin Jackson and his men, this time with a military escort, returned to the fortress in Big Johnny Gulch. Fifteen claims were located and staked, one for each member of the party and one each for two of the military escort. They quickly returned to Prescott and filed the claims with the Yavapai County Recorder. These claims, entered as the Pinal Claims, were the first to be filed from the area of the future city of Globe.

The Miner—Safford Party

Tom Miner bragged that he had seen signs of gold in the Pinal Mountain region in the early 1860s. Ten years later he and eighteen other prospectors from Nevada organized the Mogollon Mining Company. Its purpose was to re-discover Tom Miner's riches. His recruiting efforts in Prescott attracted only thirty men, but Arizona Governor Anson P. K. Safford happened by, and he decided to fall in with the party. Safford recruited seventy men from the Salt River Valley to join the expedition.

In July of 1871, the group, who now called themselves the Pinal Prospectors, went on a round-about trek to the Pinal Mountains. From Prescott to Florence to Fort Grant to the San Carlos River, they finally ended up in the Sierra Ancha, hopelessly lost. Arguments between Miner and Safford regarding the proper route caused dissension in the group, and the men were divided into two factions. Safford and his men separated from the party at Wheatfields and returned to their homes. The Mogollon Mining Company continued to explore the area. They prospected along Pinal Creek, Pinto Creek and Queen Creek and in the Pinal and Superstition Mountains, but came away empty-handed.

Hunkydory Holmes

William A. Holmes came to Arizona from the Republic

of Texas in the early 1860s. His story is as interesting and colorful as any in the west.

According to Globe historian Jess G. Hayes, Holmes' career in Arizona started as a Methodist colporteur; that is, he distributed Bibles and religious tracts and books for a living. Later he did some farming in the Phoenix area, but the gold bug eventually got him, and he joined the ranks of Arizona's prospectors.

Holmes was a member of Cooley's second expedition in 1869. Rather than give up with Cooley, he joined the Cal Jackson group, and assisted in the construction of the stone fortress in Big Johnny Gulch. He apparently was not present on Jackson's return to the area, as he is not included on the list of men who made claims at that time. However, Holmes, H. B. Summers, an old prospecting buddy, and a group of men that included twin brothers Robert and David Anderson, made seven claims a short distance from the stone fort. Later that year Holmes and the Andersons were part of a group that discovered the Silver Queen Mine near present-day Superior.

Holmes' most profitable claim, the Daisy Dean, was adjacent to the Ramboz Camp, established by Henry Ramboz in 1875. Holmes reportedly made a "small fortune" from the Daisy Dean Mine.

While at Ramboz Camp, a man named Marco Banjevich jumped Holmes' claim. This deed resulted in the death of Marco by a bullet from William Holmes' six-shooter. Holmes spent most of his "small fortune" on the defense of his case. Since claim-jumping was considered justification for killing in those days, Holmes was declared innocent by a jury of his peers.

During the 1880s Holmes was a permanent resident of the city of Globe. He did odd jobs, dabbled in politics, served as deputy to Sheriff George Shute and Sheriff Glenn Reynolds and wrote some poetry. It is said that he recited his poems in a local saloon. One of the poems entitled "Hunkydory" is probably the source of his nickname.

In November, 1889, the Apache Kid and several other convicts were being transported by stage to the Territorial Prison at Yuma. Deputy Hunkydory Holmes accompanied Sheriff Reynolds on the trip. On a steep and sandy grade beyond the Gila River near Riverside, Reynolds, Holmes, and some of the prisoners were forced to walk in order to lighten the loaded stagecoach. After driver Middleton and the shackled Apache Kid travelled ahead, the other prisoners suddenly attacked and overwhelmed the two armed law officers. Both Reynolds and Holmes were killed. The Apache Kid and his cohorts disappeared into the surrounding hills.

Silver Mines and Camps

Within just a few years in the mid-1870s, mining camps sprang up near the new mines of the "silver belt." Although similar in many ways, each had a distinctive history. Only one of them - Globe - became a permanent city.

Silver King

General George Stoneman founded Camp Pinal in 1871. A first order of business was to construct a wagon

road from Picket Post to the new camp. While working on the steep stretch of road known as the Stoneman grade, a soldier named Sullivan found a heavy piece of black ore, which turned out to be silver. He showed off his chunk to the citizens of Florence, resulting in a furious but futile search for more such ore by local men.

In March, 1875, four prospectors were returning from Pinal Creek with ore samples from the Globe Ledge claim. They camped at the foot of the Stoneman grade and spent some time looking for the elusive Sullivan silver. One man stumbled across an outcropping of promising rock. They took samples and proceeded to Florence, where the assayer reported a value of \$4,300 of silver to the ton. The four men filed a claim, and the Silver King Mine came into being.

Within six months there were fifty men working at the Silver King Mine. Thirty tons of silver ore were being shipped to San Francisco each month. In 1877, the locators of the mine sold out to the Silver King Mining Company, with James Barney in charge. In a period of nine years, the mine produced over \$6,000,000 in silver.

Mine buildings, shops and the company office, along with the crude homes and boarding houses for the miners, made up the town of Silver King. Because water was more abundant along Queen Creek, a milling town was formed at Picket Post. By the end of 1878, Picket Post had four stores, six saloons, a hotel and a mill. The name of the town was changed to Pinal the next year; soon a post office, a bank, a newspaper office, a church and many more buildings were added to the town.

Both Silver King and Pinal reached their heyday in the mid-1880s. In the last years of the decade, the ore quality declined and silver prices plummeted. Silver mining continued for several more years, but profits tapered off. The Silver King property was taken over by the Magma Copper Company after the turn of the century. Other mines in the area, including the Gem and the Silver Queen near Queen City (Superior) and the Reymert and the Silver Bell near Picket Post Mountain, also faded away by the end of the century.

The Globe District

On September 9, 1873, two separate silver claims were located simultaneously in Alice Gulch not far from the Jackson and Holmes holdings. These were the Globe Ledge claims, one of which was filed by the Anderson brothers along with three of the four men who later discovered the Silver King Mine. Development of the Globe Ledge was delayed for three years because of Apache depredations in the vicinity.

The first settlement in the region was the Ramboz Camp, established in 1875 by Henry Ramboz. A few houses and a small store made up the town. Nearby were the Rescue, the Ramboz and the Bluebird mines. The Rescue was the richest of these, yielding thousands of dollars of silver to the ton.

A year later the discoverers of the Globe Ledge claims returned to begin development of their property. Soon a cluster of buildings arose at the mouth of Alice Gulch, marking the beginning of a new town, Globe City.

Globe City was laid out and organized in 1876. The name supposedly came from the discovery of a large,

almost-pure silver nugget whose spherical shape and surface markings resembled the planet earth. The town's name was changed to Globe in 1878 at the urging of newspaper editor Aaron Hackney.

Globe City grew rapidly southward along Pinal Creek. The main business district was established almost a mile south of the mines. The first building was erected by Charles M. Shannon and Bob Metcalf, who later became well-known in the Clifton district. The first store was operated by T. C. Stallo, who sold his wares from a tent. Other merchants, tradesmen, professional people and ladies of the night soon were on the scene to provide their respective services to the miners.

The census takers in 1880 counted 704 individuals living in Globe, plus many miners and a few cattlemen in the surrounding area. Globe became the county seat the following year when Gila County was formed. In a few years, Globe had progressed from a small mining camp to a promising, permanent city.

The Haskins wagon road went northeast from Globe to several small silver mining camps. The first one, about two miles from Globe, was Cottonwood Spring. The *Arizona Silver Belt*, in 1879, called this "the pioneer campground of the district." Beyond this the road came to Mineral Hill, McNelly, Oakville and Watsonville. Oakville was the site of the Julius Mine, which had an excellent assay office operated by H. W. Kearsing. Watsonville, just a few hundred yards up the road, was the home of the Etna and New Era mines. It boasted a hotel, a blacksmith shop and, naturally, a saloon.

The town of Miami, Arizona, was established in 1909, but the name had been around for over thirty years. In 1875, G. C. Nolan and Caleb M. Dodge located the Miami silver claim west of Globe. The Miami Mining Company later purchased the property from the locators and built a ten-stamp mill near the confluence of Pinal Creek and Bloody Tanks Wash. The settlement that grew up near the mill, known as Miami City, had a general store, a restaurant, a hotel and the "Up and Down Saloon."

In 1878, the mill began to process ore from the Miami, the Emeline and other nearby mines. The next year a near-disastrous fire broke out in the mill. The flames damaged the belting, causing a flywheel to increase in speed until it broke, sending pieces in all directions. One piece passed through a whiskey barrel and two walls of the saloon, but fortunately missed everyone inside. It took the best part of a year to repair the damage and resume operations. The mill, along with the Up and Down Saloon was shut down in 1883 and sold for taxes.

In Richmond Basin to the north of Globe, silver nuggets were first found in surface float. A German prospector named Schultz discovered the Nugget claim. Not aware of its potential value, he traded the claim for a horse and a saddle with the Chilson brothers. The new owners were soon shipping high-grade ore from the mine. The small town of Nugget had a post office in 1881, but it was discontinued in 1884, signifying a declining population and the end of a brief mining career.

The nearby Mac Morris Mine was the most productive silver mine in the basin. Morris built a ten-stamp mill a few miles away at Wheatfields to process the ore. The

mine and mill put out some \$1,750,000 in silver during their few years of operation.

The silver ore in the Globe district began to play out in the early 1880s. Mining continued to some degree, but returns were meager. The discovery of a few large nuggets in the 1890s sparked interest, but the boom times were gone. By the end of the nineteenth century the silver mines were all but played out.

McMillenville

"A trip to McMillenville would not only convince a casual observer that its citizens are generous and hospitable to strangers, but that the place is thrifty, enterprising and flourishing. Improvements are steadily going on, buildings are springing up on every side and business is generally prosperous. With its energetic inhabitants and, being surrounded as it is by the best mines in the district, a bright future is inevitable."

Those were the words of Editor Aaron Hackney in the *Arizona Silver Belt* on May 9, 1878. McMillenville did briefly live up to Hackney's glowing prediction. In a span of less than eight years, it went from uninhabited desert to a bustling and prosperous mining camp to a deserted and desolate ghost town.

Silver was discovered there on March 12, 1876. The oft-told popular story varies in detail and credibility from writer to writer. We will quote the colorful version of author Dan Rose:

In the year 1876, one Charlie McMillen, a desert rat from Nevada, and a prospector from the old school, and Dory Harris, a tenderfoot, a combination that was not uncommon in those days, left Globe to prospect in the White Mountains. They were mounted, and had three pack mules to carry their supplies.

McMillen, who had been irrigating himself with 'tarantula juice' in Globe for some days back, halted the outfit where the trail ran through a group of shady trees, and as the day was hot, the temperature made him drowsy, and he lunged from his horse to an inviting shade and was soon in a deep sleep. Harris, cursing his inebriate partner, tied the stock to a tree and sat down on a moss-covered ledge. While he fumed and fussed he picked into the moss-covered ledge when, to his surprise, he beheld a metal which he did not recognize. He pondered over it for a while and then, going to McMillen, aroused him from his drunken stupor and showed him the ore. Angry at being awakened, McMillen told him to go to blazes, and that he didn't give a whoop for any kind of ore, but catching a glimpse of the metal, he sobered up immediately.

'Where did you get this?' he roared.

'Over there,' Harris answered, pointing to the spot.

The old prospector rushed to the place and, upon picking up some more, he yelled, 'By the Eternal Graces, Harris, we've struck a bonanza! It's natural silver.' Thus, by booze, drunken stupor, anger, sheer indifference and plain luck, the famous Stonewall Jackson Mine was discovered.

While this is an interesting and widely-accepted story, there is very little truth to it. In 1913, Theodore Harris was interviewed by Walter J. Scott, and his story appeared in the *Arizona Silver Belt*. According to Harris, he and McMillen were actively prospecting in the area and separated to search on opposite sides of a hill. McMillen discovered "a lot of horn silver scattered over the surface of the ground." He at once built the monument for the Stonewall Jackson claim. He then crossed a dry wash and located the Little Mac and, further west, the Florence claims. He returned to camp that evening and

reported to Harris that he had "struck it rich."

Within a month, hundreds of men were on the scene seeking their fortune. The next month the Hannibal and the Washington claims were discovered, and the Robert E. Lee later in the year. The first stamp mill was freighted in from Silver City by Si Tidwell. Soon there were stores, a post office, saloons, boarding houses and quickly-made homes. In the meantime, the mines were yielding many tons of high-grade silver ore.

McMillen and Harris worked their mines until the fall of 1877, when they sold out to men from San Francisco for \$120,000 in cash. By the end of the decade, the camp was at its peak of success. An estimated \$4,000,000 in silver was unearthed from the McMillen mines. The town had grown to about 1,700 people, the second largest camp in Arizona Territory. There were a good number of professionals, businesses, stores and saloons. The Hannibal Hotel offered lodging, a grocery store and a "first class corral." A new ten-stamp mill was in place to process the ore.

Very early the citizens of McMillenville realized that the mines and the town were located on the San Carlos Indian Reservation. The problem was brought to the attention of Indian Agent John Clum, who notified the Indian Bureau in Washington. The controversy resulted in a scandal in which government officials attempted to get a piece of the McMillenville wealth. After a prolonged brouhaha, a twelve-mile wide strip was removed from the Reservation. John Clum was offered a reward for his favorable recommendation on the matter, but he later wrote: "Those early pioneers forgot all about their proposition."

Like most western towns, McMillenville had its moments of violence and excitement. Billy the Kid and two partners, according to one source, showed up one day "to levy toll on the horse herds." A Law and Order Committee was quickly assembled, and the rustlers were ordered to "vamoose and never return," which, the story goes, they promptly did. More reliable sources say that Billy had stolen a fine horse from Sgt. Hartman at Fort Grant and was seeking safety at McMillenville. A military posse chased and overtook him on the trail to McMillenville. The soldiers retrieved the horse and left Billy to walk the rest of the way to the mining camp.

Dan Rose describes two killings in the town, one involving claim jumping, in which both parties were slain, and the other a lover's quarrel. Disputes occasionally erupted, even among the "good" citizens. Rose says: "These scrapes were fought on the square; that is, both had an equal chance, for the forty-five colts in the hands of each placed them on equal footing, and when the duel was over, no matter who won, the verdict was self-defense." One such incident involved a bartender who argued with the butcher over the quality of his beef. The bartender was shot in the leg, but, not seriously hurt, he got up, shook hands with his assailant and offered the watching crowd free drinks.

In 1882, a roving band of Apaches escaped the Reservation and headed for McMillenville. The citizens were forewarned and prepared for battle. The men took up arms while the women and children hid in the

Stonewall Jackson tunnel. At daybreak on July 7, the miners became Indian fighters and held the hostiles at bay until military help arrived. The Indians abandoned their attack, but went on an extended rampage, which ended in their defeat at Big Dry Wash.

By this time, silver mining at McMillenville had started to decline. Although the mining companies were accused of "incompetence, mismanagement and extravagance", the fact is that the lodes had played out. One by one the mines shut down. The post office and the last business closed in late 1882. The McMillenville citizens moved on to new endeavors. A few determined individuals, including J. D. LaRue, the recorder for the mining district, refused to give up. Claims were filed with LaRue until February of 1884, but the once-thriving camp had become a ghost town.

When Charles McMillen sold his share of the mines in 1877, he moved to California and reportedly drank himself to death within eighteen months. Theodore Harris went to San Francisco and lost his earnings on the stock exchange. He later returned to prospecting and eventually came back to Globe, where he worked at a variety of jobs, but apparently not mining.

"Uncle Charlie" Newton lived at McMillenville for over fifty years. He worked with McMillen and Harris after they staked their claims. He accompanied McMillen with the shipment of discovery ore to Florence, and returned with a load of supplies. He lived and worked at McMillenville during the camp's brief and hectic existence, and watched as hundreds of people moved elsewhere when the mines died out.

Charlie did not leave with the rest. For many years he was the lone inhabitant of the abandoned town. He was certain that the diggings had not played out. Year after year he poked around, dreamed, dug, worked and waited. In his later years, he tended his orchard and relaxed on his porch, smoking his pipe. The walls of the old house were papered with editions of the *Arizona Silver Belt* from the 1880s.

Late in 1928, visiting friends found Charlie in poor health. They convinced him to go to the hospital in Globe to "rest up a bit." A few weeks later, he died, dreaming to the end that McMillenville's glory would return.

In the mid-1910s, there was renewed activity at the old silver camp. In January, 1916, the *Arizona Record* rumored that "a great strike of ore" had been made in the Stonewall Jackson claim. Nothing came of this, and soon all efforts to revive the mines were abandoned.

Gold!

Although the region never produced gold in great quantity, a few remarks are in order. Many came looking for the yellow metal; some was discovered and some was mined. A few lucky people made a few bucks. And, according to the eternal optimist, much still lies beneath the surface, just waiting for the right person, at the right place, and at the right time to make a lucky strike.

One person who found a little gold was Black Jack Newman, a Prussian immigrant who later made a fortune in copper. In the mid-1880s, he teamed up with Bill Sparkes and worked the Vixen Mine north of Globe.

They hauled out gold ore until they reached the line of a neighboring claim. Newman and Sparkes allegedly shared a \$7,000 profit from the property.

About seven miles west of Globe, the Lost Gulch United Mines Company was developed by investors from back east. The *Arizona Silver Belt*, in 1910, said: "It is safe to affirm that this property is one of the best gold producing properties in Arizona." Its facilities included a mill, an assay office, boarding houses, bunk houses, good stables and an ample water supply. The only thing it lacked was an ample supply of gold. The ore, assayed at only \$10 to \$15 to the ton, pinched out within a few years.

Way down near the southern tip of Gila County, in early 1927, Dan McGraw and James B. Girard reported a fabulous gold discovery near Tornado Peak. They organized their fifty nearby claims into the Tornado Gold Mining Company.

On Wednesday, March 16, a headline story in the *Arizona Republican* told the public about the new bonanza. McGraw and Girard hoped that the publicity would help to sell enough stock to start development of the property. The next day 500 people drove out to inspect the mine. By Sunday, the 20th of March, some 2,000 people were roaming the hills near Tornado Peak. Some of them were ready to go to work, and sixteen tents were put up. But, five of them were hot dog stands, and the vendors were the only ones to have a profitable day.

The prospective gold miners soon realized that significant capital investment would be required in order to get a portion of the wealth, and soon interest waned. By the first of April, the venture was dead, and Gila County's gold rush came to an end.

A New Era Begins

For less than a decade silver was king in Arizona's "silver belt." By the middle of the 1880s most of the mining camps were deserted and the miners had moved on. But, copper ore was found to exist in these same hills, and soon men were digging new holes to get at the copper ore. The establishment of the Old Dominion Mine at the site of the Globe Ledge claims marked the beginning of a new and lasting era, one in which copper became the dominant factor in the area's economy.



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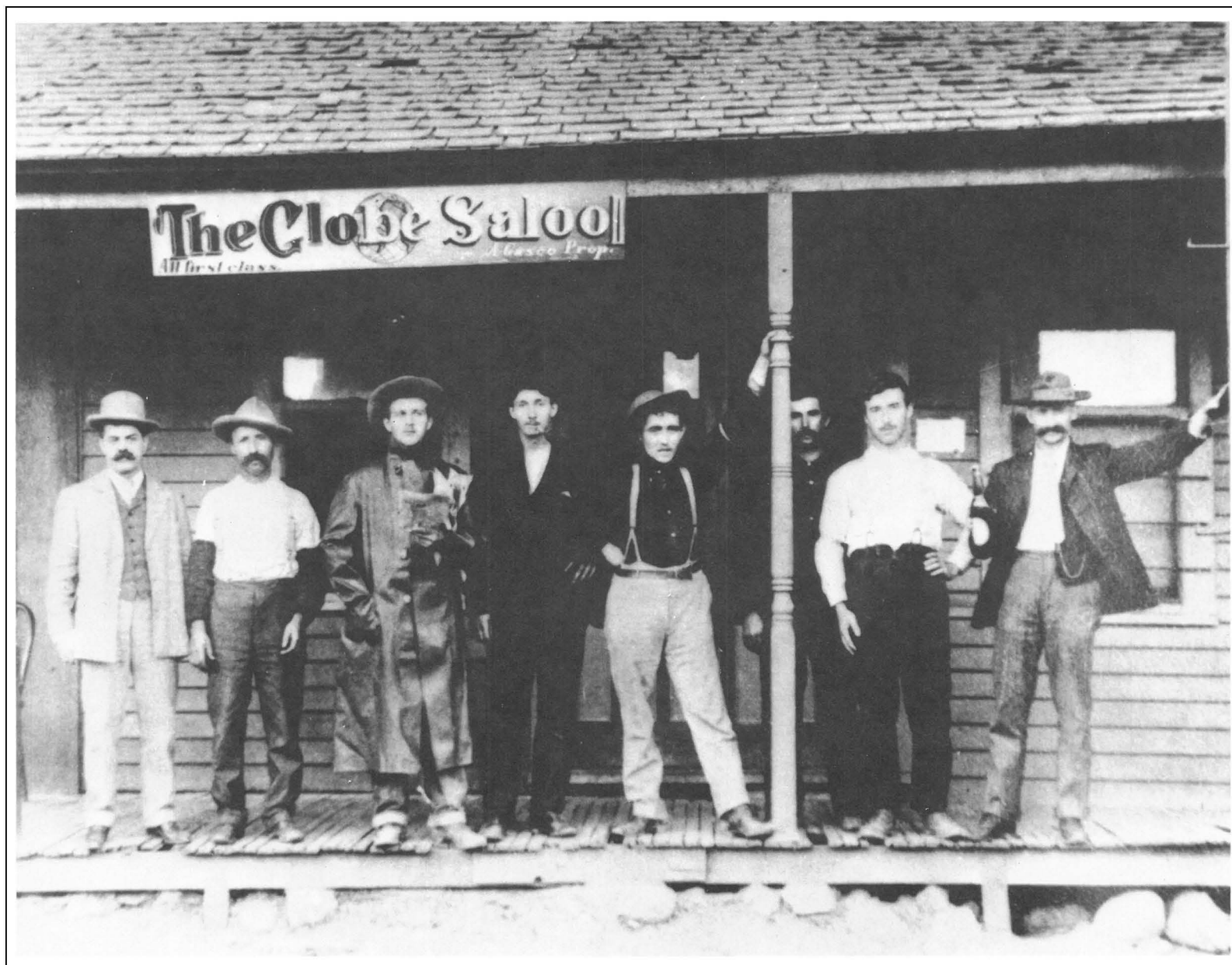
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The prospector's best friend. Courtesy of Gila County Historical Society.



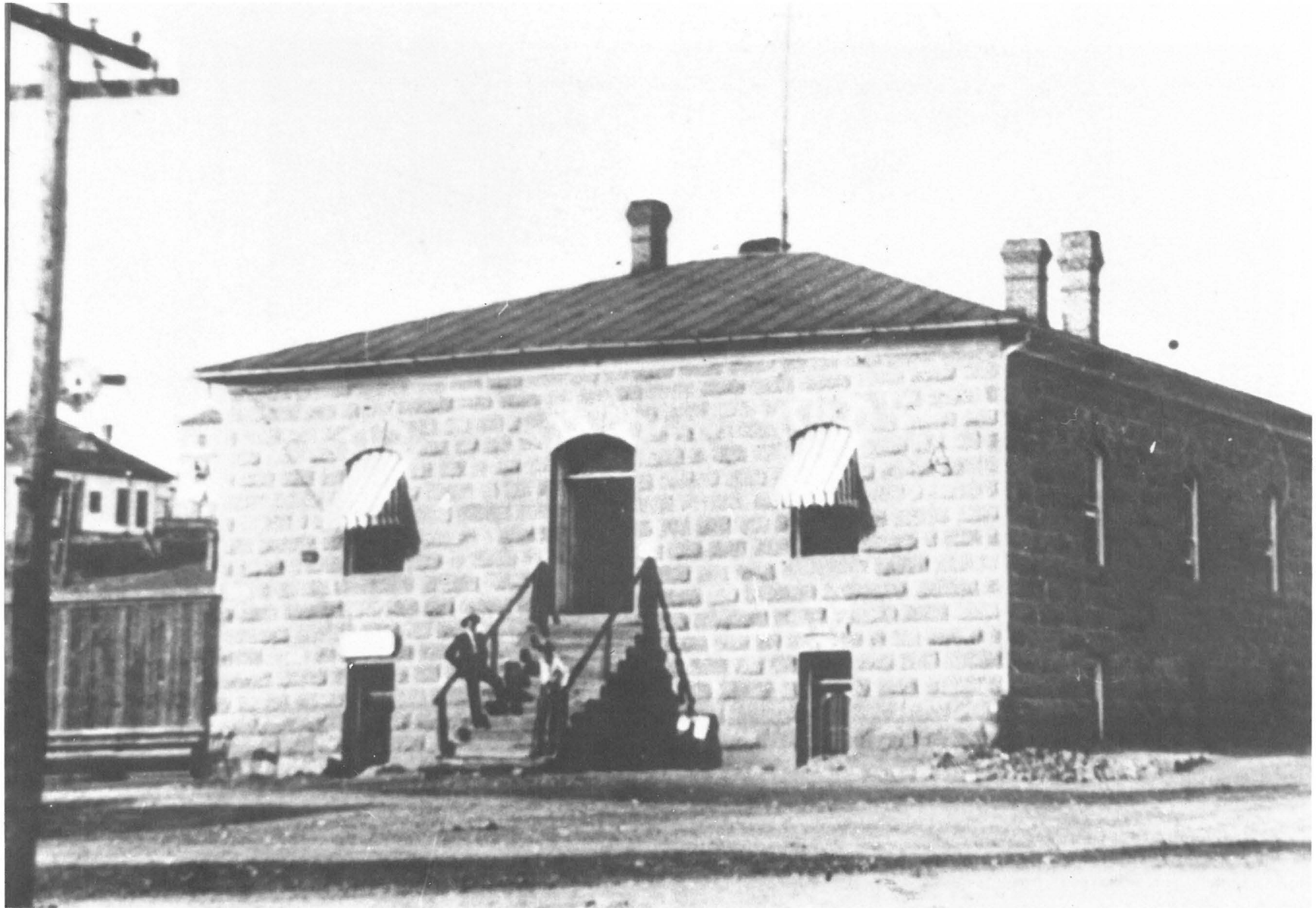
Broad Street in Globe; c. 1900. Courtesy of Arizona Historical Society/Globe.



A motley group at the Globe Saloon.. Courtesy of Gila County Historical Society.



White-bearded editor Aaron Hackney with staff and passerby. Courtesy of Gila County Historical Society.



The first Gila County Courthouse, built in 1888, replaced in 1906. Courtesy of Gila County Historical Society.



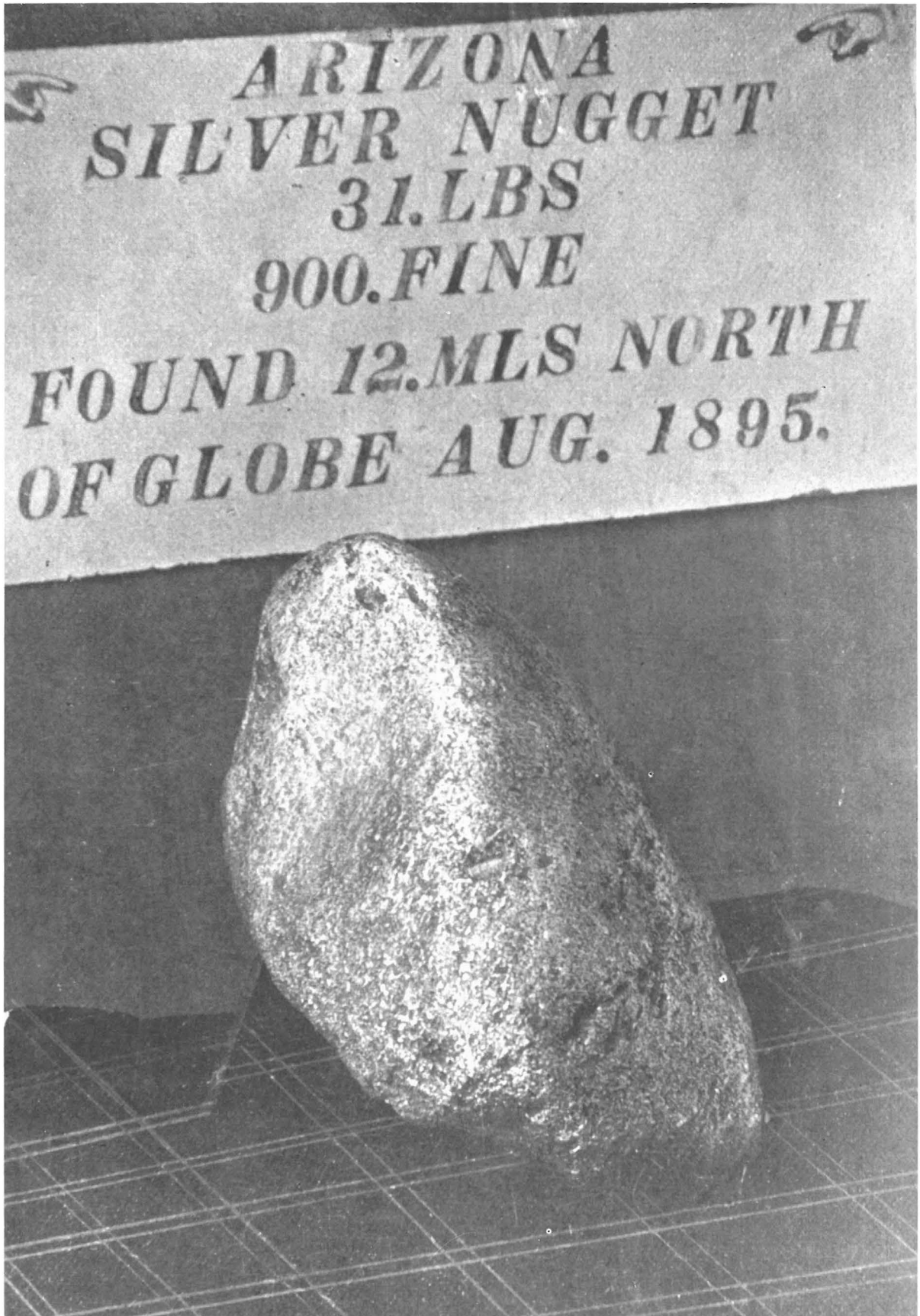
George W. P. Hunt came to Globe at the end of the silver era and later became the first governor of Arizona. Courtesy of Gila County Historical Society.



Shorty Sayles with the Old Dominion Commercial Company's delivery wagon. Courtesy of Gila County Historical Society.



The Old Dominion Mine near the turn of the century. Courtesy of Gila County Historical Society.



Thirty-one-pound, 90% pure silver nugget found near Globe, 1895. Courtesy of Arizona Historical Society/Tucson #10199.



Silver bullion from Globe mining district. Courtesy of Arizona Historical Society/Tucson, Henry and Albert Buehman Memorial Collection #B91781.

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