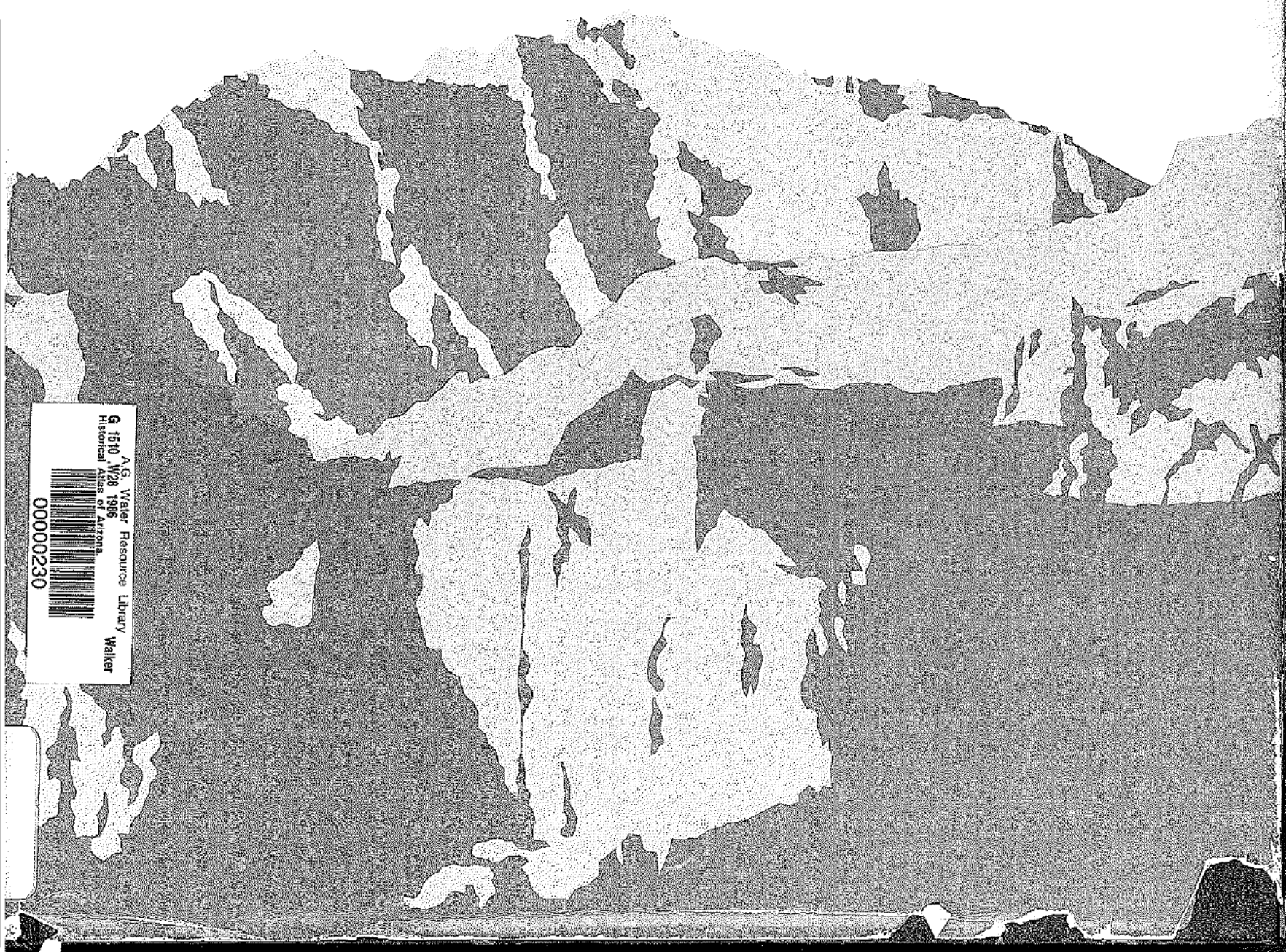


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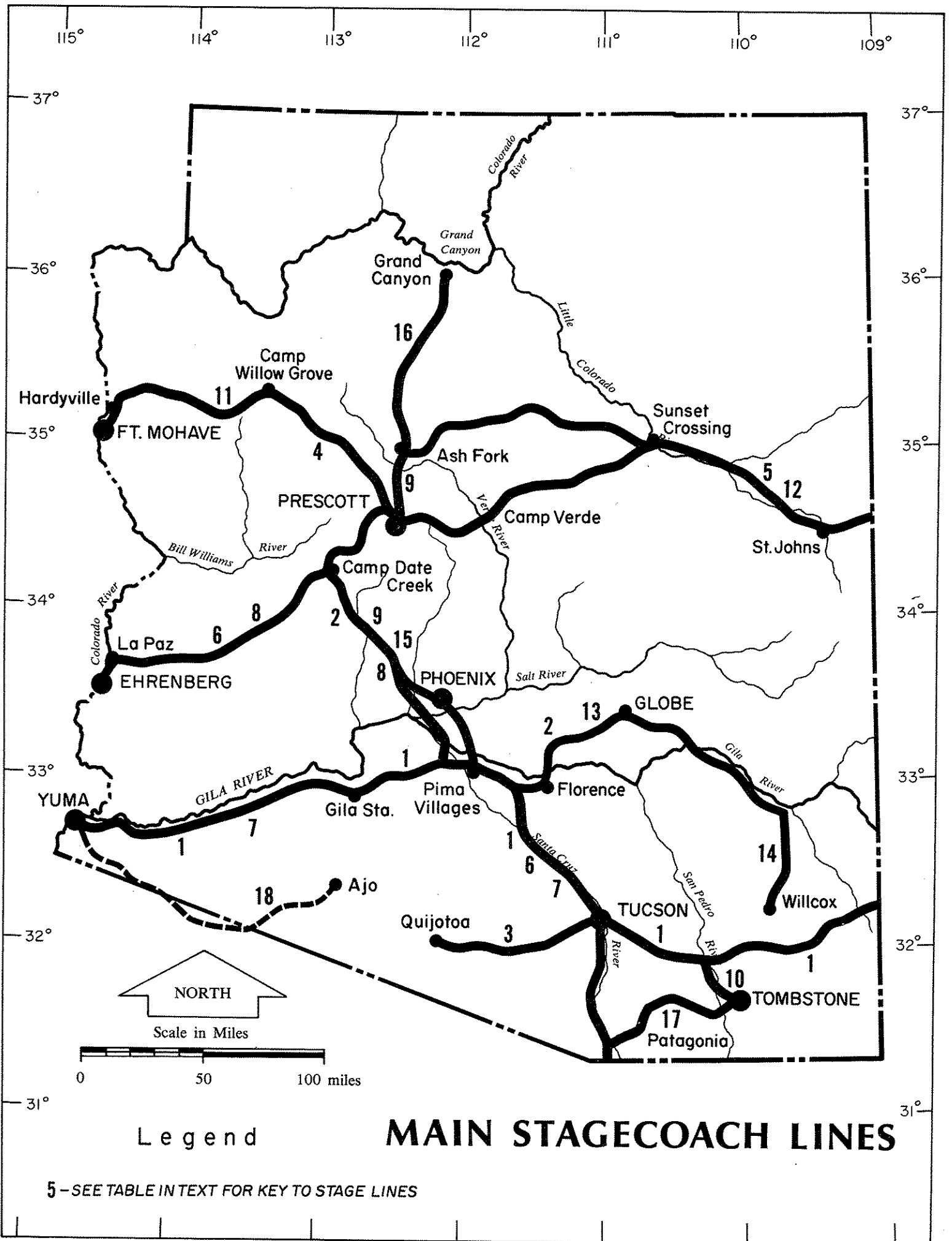
Second Edition

Historical Atlas of Arizona

By Henry P. Walker and Don Bufkin



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41. MAIN STAGECOACH LINES

IN 1853 TUCSON and the area southward along the Santa Cruz River were isolated from California by some 350 miles and from New Mexico by at least 250 miles. Under these conditions, communications were vital to the development of the territory. The first line with the outer world was the San Antonio & San Diego Mail Line, which began operating a semimonthly service in mid-1857. The line has been described as running from nowhere, through nothing, to no place, and it was nicknamed "the Jackass Mail."

The Butterfield Overland Mail began semiweekly service from Missouri via El Paso, Tucson, and Los Angeles to San Francisco in 1858. Operation continued until March, 1861, when the equipment was transferred to the route through Nebraska, Wyoming, and Utah.

Until 1864 Arizona had to rely on military couriers for mail service. In that year Dukes & Company started a line from Prescott to Fort Mohave connecting with their line to Los Angeles. The Santa Fe Stage Company provided service, in 1866, from Prescott to Denver and Kansas City and connections between Prescott and Tucson. The Arizona Stage Company in 1868 ran from Prescott and Tucson and connected at La Paz with the Noble & Winters line to San Francisco.

Stage companies went out of business or changed names with exasperating frequency. A very important element in the financial health of a stage line was the contract to carry the United States mail. The loss of this contract, or a successful bid that was too low, might ruin a company. Carrying the Wells-Fargo treasure box was an additional source of income, if somewhat risky.

The Tucson, Arizona City [Yuma] & San Diego Stage Company started operations in 1870 with triweekly service. The business was sold to James A. Moore and L. W. Carr in February, 1872. Connections to the east were offered by J. F. Bennett & Company running from Tucson to Mesilla, where the connections were made. In 1872 the Tucson, Prescott & San Bernardino Line left Tucson weekly for Wickenburg, where connections were made with the semiweekly stage from Prescott to San Bernardino.

The fare from Prescott to San Bernardino was about forty dollars.

Kerens & Mitchell, proprietors of the Southern Pacific Mail Stage Lines, offering triweekly service from San Diego to Mesilla in 1874, claimed to have the longest stage line in the country. After April, 1877, daily service was offered, and the fare from Phoenix to San Francisco was quoted at ninety-three dollars.

In 1878 Gilmer, Salisbury & Co's Stage Lines took over the two-year-old California & Arizona Stage Company and later offered service from Prescott to Ash Fork on the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad and from Dos Palmas, California, on the Southern Pacific to Prescott. Early the next year the Tucson & Tombstone Stage Line offered four trips per week, but increased this schedule to daily service later in the year. The fare was ten dollars, and the running time was seventeen hours.

With the completion of the two major railroads across the territory in 1881 and 1883, short lines proliferated, connecting the larger settlements with the rails and to each other. As the railroads developed branch lines, the stages disappeared.

| NUMBER ON MAP | MAJOR STAGE LINES |
|------------------|-------------------|
|------------------|-------------------|

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1. | San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line, 1857-58 Butterfield Overland Mail, 1858-61 Texas and California Stage Line, 1878 Southern Pacific Mail Line, 1874-78 National Mail & Transportation Co., 1878 |
| 2. | Southern Pacific Mail |
| 3. | Pedro Aguirre & Co. |
| 4. | Duke's Express, 1864 |
| 5. | Santa Fe Stage Co., 1866 |
| 6. | Arizona Stage Co., 1868 |
| 7. | Tucson, Arizona City & San Diego Stage Co., 1870 |
| 8. | California & Arizona Stage Co., 1875 |
| 9. | Gilmer, Salisbury & Co. Stage Lines, 1878 |
| 10. | Tucson & Tombstone Stage Lines, 1879 |
| 11. | Hugh White & Co., 1879 |
| 12. | Prescott-Santa Fe Stage Line |
| 13. | Arizona Stage Co., 1881 |
| 14. | Norton & Stewart, 1881 |
| 15. | Prescott & Phoenix, 1886 |
| 16. | Grand Canyon Stage Line, 1895 |
| 17. | Tombstone & Patagonia Express, 1880 |
| 18. | Jaeggars Pack Trail, 1854 |