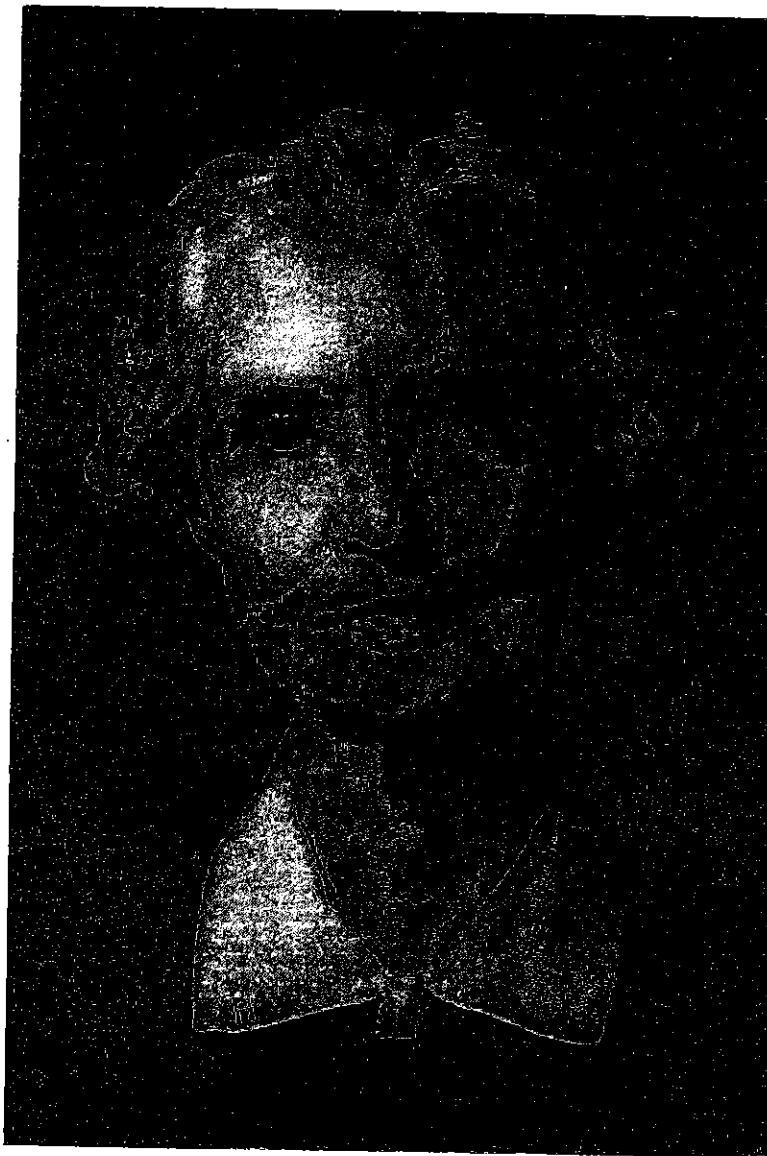


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*HELEN H. SEARGEANT*

House  
by the  
Buckeye Road

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by

Helen H. Seargeant

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*Se. 17h  
Arizona*

Dedicated  
to all Pioneers . . .  
those adventurous souls  
who led the way into wild, new lands  
in search of the benefits  
God might give them

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8. Short visit to Canada. Papa's impressions (capsule) of two countries. Mother-in-law starts work on my house. Home, and find house all "set," so can have no say in it. Mr. Marshall and his work. Jose Juan and his doings. House "gals" — Liz Thompson, the Klondike Cook, and spitfire, Mary Ferami. Beginning the dairy business with high-hat dairyman, Pablo Rodriguez. A bit of Mexicana.
9. People. (The people around us.)
10. John's addiction to Model-T cars. Account of the "cold-morning, hot-teakettle" routine, and the kettle's final journey. Model-T adventures. Old river ferries, and some old trails. Seeing birthplace, and looking for lost Williamson's Valley. Jim Cashion's switch-back railroad to Crown King. The Oro Bell mine. Jerome's peculiarities.
11. Apology for Progress. Second comer's disrespect for historic names and places — and what Progress has done to Salt River. Some analyzation of early and late people's reactions to progress — and what progress did to Uncle Billie Moore.  
The growth of the mesquite tree, and the passing of the wood-carrying cradle. The *House* is still home, with compensatory "push buttons" for old "Peter."

#### ILLUSTRATIONS

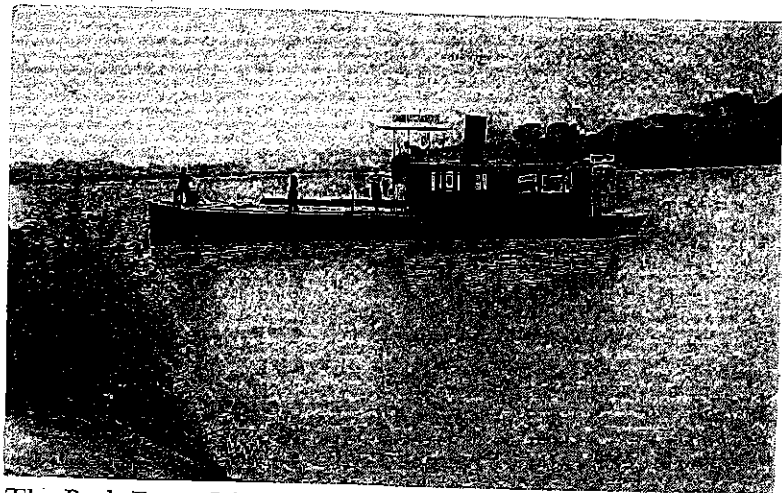
A Picture Section containing nineteen photographs appears between Pages 94-95.

## Introduction

**N**ONE OF MY IMMEDIATE FAMILY ever lived in Buckeye, but my cousin, Tom Shultz, lived there at one time, and in the early nineties he edited a newspaper that was, by report, "about as big as two postage stamps"; he named it the *Buckeye Blade*. The little town of Buckeye does not figure very strongly in this writing, but if there had been no Buckeye there would have been no Buckeye Road, and therefore I make mention of it.

The Buckeye Road was named that when it was the only road to Buckeye, first stop on the trail to Yuma — and on to California. It used to be a dusty strip, through mesquite and greasewood and occasional patches of shadscale sage over across the Agua Fria River, with *romeria* and salt bush in the alkali stretches down toward Buckeye. It had variety in its very foundation. There were spots that, when barely wet, were as slick as glass, and when it worked up into lumps and dried hard it was rough as rocks — the kind of soil in which "you can't make tracks," for the reason, (quoting my father) "when it's dry it's too hard, and when it's wet you take your tracks with you," and there were silt spots that when dry made chuck holes full of fluffy dust that flew like flour when the wheels hit bottom.

It crossed the Agua Fria through the sand, snaking here



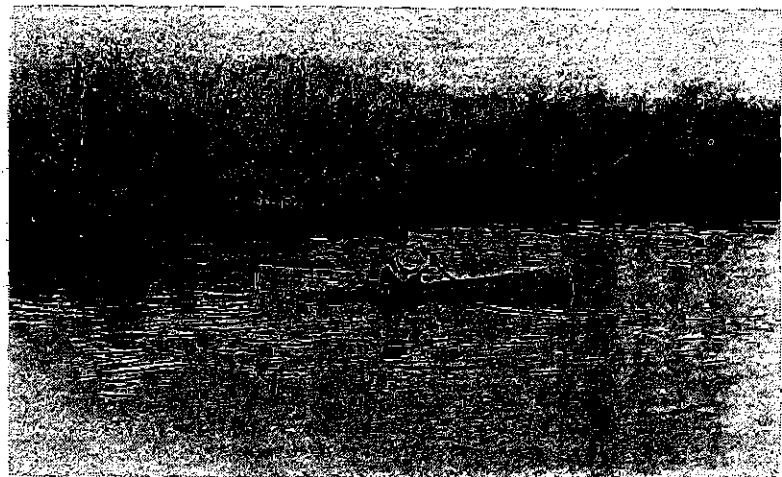
The Bush Ferry, The Nellie T. on the Colorado at Parker, 1920.



Bill and the "Petrified Pumpkin"



Giants' Skulls below Vermillion Cliffs, 1927



Boating on Salt River.

leading the semi-conscious Fred around, face all skinned and bleeding. He didn't want Fred's wife to see how horrible he looked, so he brought him in the house and cleaned his face some. Then took him down and got his wife and she went with them to the hospital. He seemed about half conscious and would ask, "What happened?" every once in a while and then lapse into unconsciousness again. It wasn't till next day about noon that he woke up to realize where he was and said, "What am I doing here? I've got to get at that milking job," and he didn't know that he'd been out all night. Fred just wasn't constituted to be a dairyman, so it wasn't long till they decided to give it up and go back to a town job.

The Jennings family, among our dairy partners, had three children. Carl—about a year younger than our Bill—and younger sisters Mildred and Dorothy. Carl and Bill got along fine together; they did some regular boy's tricks once in a while and really put their minds to it. Once they took a three-foot length of inch-and-a-half pipe and threaded and capped one end, then filled it with water and drove in an oak plug stopper made of a piece of wagon wheel spoke. Then they put this prospective bomb on the forge fire and cranked the blower until they figured the pipe was hot enough to pop, and then they ran around behind the shop and waited for it to blow up. It did! It blew burning charcoal all over the shop and into the grass which was dry; by the time they got the fire out they decided it wasn't so much fun after all. Once they found a stick of dynamite and some caps (John used to have some for blowing out stumps) and blew up an old milk can—fortunately mixing enough logic with their sport to make them do the blowing on one side of the big cement silo, while they retired to the other side of it to hear the results.

Bill was fond of reading and especially liked the adventures of Huckleberry Finn and his raft on the big river. One summer he and Carl decided they would like to go boating on Salt River, and into the Gila—they had visions of the

Colorado—and on into Mexican waters. They wanted to build a boat and looked around and found a quantity of ten-inch shiplap material that had been used as forms in cement work. When they asked John if they could have it for their boat building project, he said, "Go to it." He thought they couldn't hurt themselves and it would be good exercise for them—so they beat the dried cement off the boards and built a boat all by themselves. It was three feet wide, ten feet long, and one and one-half feet deep, tapered at both ends. They caulked the seams with strips of canvas dipped in hot tar and it was really watertight.

They loaded up with what they thought they would need for a trial trip, and Jose Huerta got out the old Model-T ensilage truck and hauled them and the boat to the river and left them there. They stayed out one night. The mosquitoes were so bad they didn't sleep much—and then, there was an old man who lived by the river. He told them overpowering yarns about how the river went underground here and there and didn't come up till miles below, and what a lot of difficulties they were in for, and all of it quite dissipated their enthusiasm, so they came home next day. I think it is too bad that old man quenched the ambitions of two possible real pathfinders. It was only a mile to the junction of the Gila, and there would have been plenty of water after that. Maybe too much—was what that old man thought.

Carl went with us to the Grand Canyon one summer. He and Bill took a lunch and walked down the Bright Angel Trail to the river. It happened to be the day that a group of railroad executives from New York were going down the trail on a sightseeing trip and the boys had more fun watching the dude executives than they did looking at the scenery. The executives had brought chaps and big hats, and special boots and spurs from New York. They wore leather jackets, too, and everything seemed to fit except the chaps, which, according to the boys, were too tight and knee length. Carl

oldest sister) and her family; Uncle Joe Shultz and a whole string of boys: Bob, Tom, Jim, John, and Joe, and one girl, Belle, about as old as Kittie. Aunt Lizzie had brought our grandfather Humphreys to Arizona with her, and I remember sitting on his knee, as he smiled at me and said I might "pull his beard" if I wanted to, but I was afraid and would only touch it gently. I have only a faint recollection of the way the rest of them looked except Aunt Lizzie, who was sort of dried and brown looking, but we loved her because she was so good to us. She took care of Mama when May was born, so Mama didn't have to go back to Prescott again. Kittie and Belle liked each other and had good times together. Aunt Lizzie, in later years, took my grandfather to Phoenix and lived there awhile.

Besides those I have already mentioned, there were, scattered through Williamson's Valley then: the Dillon, Harlow, Collins, Davis, and Young families. The Wes Coughran family, too, with the girls, Lena, Kate, and Annie, and the Cook family with the girls, Stella and Lottie Cook. Stella married Bill Stuart and, a long time after we left there, our cousin Bob Shultz married Lulu Dillon.

Lucy Young was my Uncle Tom's sweetheart. He built a little house and prepared the walls with flowered wallpaper to make it beautiful for that wild country, but before their plans could be completed poor Lucy became very ill and died suddenly. Papa brought Lucy's coffin from Prescott. I remember seeing him — standing up and driving his team in a hurry — with the coffin on the wagon boards behind him. It was a big wagon with only a narrow, flat bed and no sideboards at all. The coffin was roped on to keep it from jouncing off. My uncle never did live in the little house and remained a bachelor to the end of his days.

My father was running his freighting business then and wasn't at home very much of the time. One of the Dillon boys (I think it was Dave) was his extra teamster. Mama called him "the man who wore no socks," but I wouldn't

be surprised, if she'd been in a position to know what most people wore if she might have discovered that a good many men — in those days — lived entirely without the benefit of socks.

There were two ten-mule teams, one to each freight wagon with a trailer wagon attached that hauled freight from Maricopa to Prescott. Freighting in those days of rough roads without bridges, presented some difficult operations at times. Between Maricopa and Phoenix both the Gila and Salt rivers were to be crossed. My father, relating his experiences, told us how on one occasion, when he was lucky enough that only the Salt was in flood, he was able to hire teamsters and equipment to haul his freight from Maricopa to the Salt River, where he got Indians to ferry the goods across the river in canoes — then he moved it from there to Prescott. Had the Gila been up at the same time there would have been no freight moved until low water.

I saw some of those big canvas-covered wagons several times when he would come home with them. He would unharness and turn the mules loose in the corral to roll, before he would water and feed them. I was always waiting to climb on his knee the minute he was ready to sit down and he would tell me about how smart Buck and Blanco (his best "swing team") were about stepping over the trace chains, to keep the wagon on the curves. "Best pair of mules this side of Yuma," he'd say, and I was as proud of them as he was — and it was my great delight to run and bring his bootjack when he wanted to take off his tight, high-heeled boots.

In his first days in Arizona my father had started with my Uncle Tom in cattle raising; after a bit he bought the freighting outfit and hauled freight between times; later on he went into sheep raising on his own accounts, finally wound up his Arizona days with mining and prospecting.

In the nomadic life of the range we often stayed in some lonely cabin while Papa would be away for days on his work.

## Chapter 11

**C**ONCERNING ALL THESE VALLEY ROADS I have mentioned — the Christie, the Yuma, the Buckeye, the Lower Buckeye, and River Roads — it seems that I am going to have to apologize again for Progress, this time in the matter of the names of these old Roads.

When this country was new, the roads that led out of Phoenix were named to show where they were going. Thus, the east and west middle street through Phoenix was the Tempe Road on the east side, and the Yuma Road on the west side. The main roads were a mile apart, and the Christie Road was the next road north of the Yuma Road. Colonel William Christie had his home west of town, and they named this road for him on the west side; but the east end pointed toward Fort McDowell, so the east end became McDowell Road. The Buckeye Road started at the west edge of Phoenix (there was no road east at that point then) and ran west to Buckeye, so it is Buckeye Road. The Lower Buckeye and River Roads ran only a short way west and anyone traveling there had to come north to the Buckeye Road to cross the river, going west.

It is strange what inconsistent creatures these second coming people are. They want to come to this wide-open country because it is different. They like the wide-open

spaces, but as soon as they discover them they go perfectly batty about how wide the spaces are; they work frantically to fill it full of people. They want to come to this country because it is different — but right immediately they start making it over into something just like the place they came from.

It would, I am sure, be a unique and wonderful thing to have the only city in the United States that could have main roads a mile apart through the heart of it — roads with special names to commemorate first places, and the men who came first and left the rich heritage to the nation — but, no, these copybook planners just keep trying to fix things, so it may be that when you come looking for these roads you will find few of them.

There is another little item I have to charge off to Progress, and that is what it has done to our Salt River. Time was when the river bottoms of the Salt and Gila were beautiful places — where there were rocks and ripples visible, many pretty pebble beaches, and cottonwood trees growing on the banks of a beautiful stream. We used to go fishing in the Salt and to have picnics on the river bank — and I have stood on the tongue of land where the Salt and Gila came together — the confluence of the Gila and Salt, if you please.

Confluence is a beautiful word; it is much sought after and used by modern writers who like pretty words to describe the joining of rivers. Our *Arizona Highways Magazine* says it is published “a few miles north of the confluence of the Gila and Salt.” On the south side of the river and just west of this confluence of rivers stands the little mountain that is the starting point for all surveys in Maricopa County. It is the Gila and Salt River Base Meridian; I became familiar with that name long before I ever saw this butte. In Mr. Cassidy’s office in Phoenix I wrote those words, or the abbreviation, G. & S.R.B.M. on many a document.

Well, the Base Meridian mountain is still there, but the “confluence” has gone to glory. Salt River no longer “con-