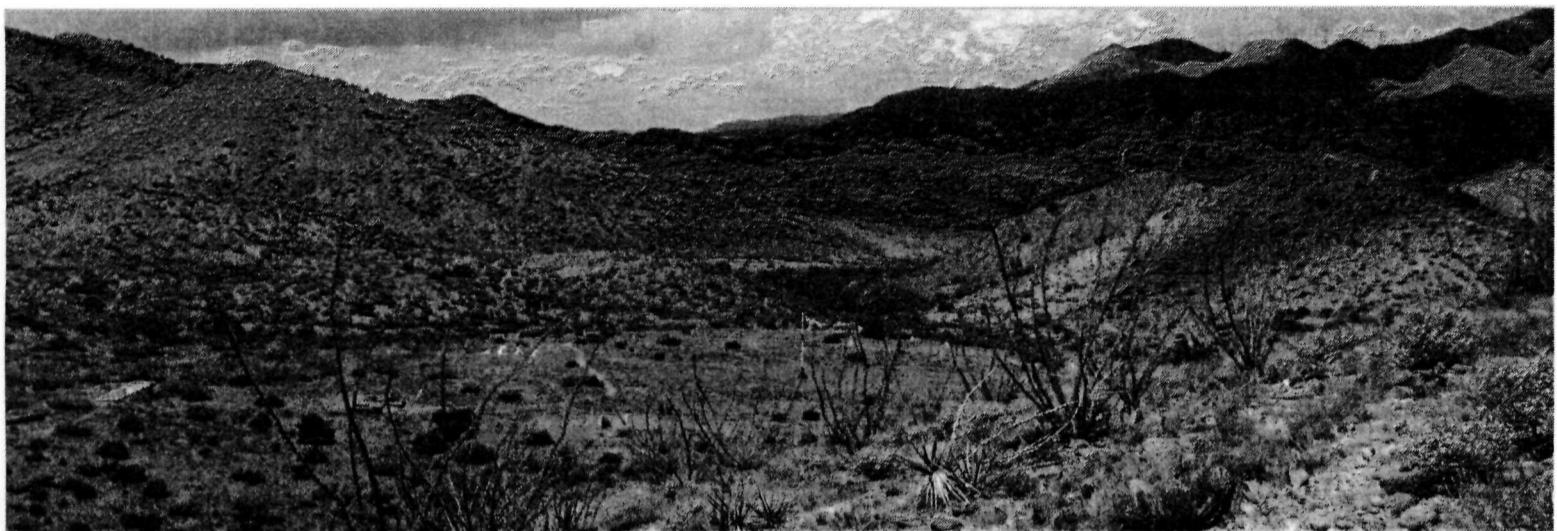




Mining in Apache Pass



Introduction

Established on July 28, 1862, the first garrison at Fort Bowie was Company G, 5th Regiment California Volunteer Infantry. Recruited in Placerville, many of these men were miners who had only recently emigrated to the west. The Civil War may have suspended mining operations of their claims in California, but they soon realized, as would thousands of others, that Arizona possessed its own valuable mineral resources.

The Early Years

Informally started by members of the California Volunteers in 1864, the "Harris Lode" was located on Bowie Mountain approximately one mile southeast of the first fort site. In 1869 military shareholders transferred their claims to Colonel John Stone, founder and superintendent of the Apache Pass Mining Company. It was Stone's intent to extract and process gold-bearing ore, but the company's enterprise was tragically cut short by Stone's death at the hands of an Apache raiding party in October 1869.

Eventually this claim passed into the hands of Chiricahua Agent Tom Jeffords, who in 1876 established additional claims with Fort Bowie post trader Sydney DeLong. The firm apparently did not have time to work the claims and permitted their patent to expire in the autumn of 1877. The expansion of the military reservation less than two months later closed the area to all prospectors.

The surrender of Geronimo to General Nelson Miles in September 1886 put an end to Apache activity in the area thereby justifying abandonment in 1894.

The Quillen Mines

The two Willow Gulch mines were established by John and Tom Farley and F.G. Downey in July 1905, "one and one-half miles southwest from Fort Bowie...". Thomas Quillen of Bowie, Arizona was witness to that filling.

One year later Tom and Eula Quillen bought out the Farley's and Downey's interests and expanded their Apache Pass operation with the addition of ten more claims that were all located in the Willow Gulch area, approximately 1-2 miles southwest of Old Fort Bowie "on the south side of the wagon road".

By 1914 the Quillens had expanded their operation to include eighteen mines in the Willow Gulch area which produced about "600 tons of spotty gold and silver".

From 1916 to 1927 the Quillens worked claims below Helen's Dome in John Stone's old Apache Pass Mining District yielding 29,000 pounds of lead, 150 pounds of copper, and smatterings of gold and silver. The mines remained inactive until sold in 1936.

Conclusion

While not a major producer of mineral wealth, especially when gauged against the industrial giants of today, the Quillen operation none the less represents one of the few noteworthy mining successes associated with Apache Pass.

Clearly not an example of industrial organization in the formative years of the modern west, the Quillen Mines are perhaps one of the few physical reminders of the independent mine owners and their role in the Arizona mining industry.