

George Pusch's San Pedro Ranch and Feldman, Arizona

Andy Laurenzi



Archaeology Southwest

Technical Report No. 2015-101

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GEORGE PUSCH'S SAN PEDRO RANCH AND FELDMAN, ARIZONA

BACKGROUND

As you drive south on Arizona Highway 77 from Winkelmann to Mammoth, if you gaze west toward the San Pedro River, a large adobe and stucco structure with a red, gabled roof, dormers with windows, and an expansive wrap-around veranda may catch your eye. Its size, architectural style, and deteriorated condition quickly capture your imagination: What was that old building (see cover page) I just saw along the river?

If you stop and ask someone in the area, the answer you will most likely hear is “the PZ Ranch,” often said to have been a hotel, stage stop, and ranch headquarters back in the day (Walenga 1995). On closer inspection, you notice several other structures nearby, looking as old as the headquarters, and all in dilapidated condition. With a little further investigation, you may learn that on some older Arizona maps, the place has another name: Feldman, Arizona¹.

Today, Feldman, Arizona, and the PZ Ranch exist largely in the reflections and remembrances of local residents, sometimes captured in an occasional newspaper article or local magazine story. In the not so distant past, Feldman, Arizona, and what is now called the PZ Ranch were part of the San Pedro Ranch², owned for nearly forty years by George Pusch, a prominent southern Arizona businessman, landowner and politician, and by his successor entity, the Pusch Land and Cattle Company (PL&CC). A German immigrant, George Pusch settled in the Tucson area in 1874, owned a butcher shop and icehouse in Tucson along with several city lots, and a few thousand acres of rural land in Pima and Pinal counties. Pusch served in the Arizona Territorial legislature and for several terms on the Tucson City Council, participated in the State Constitutional Convention of 1910, and sat on the Arizona Livestock Sanitary Board (including as Chairman for part of his tenure). He served on several corporate boards, including the Tucson, Globe and Northern Railroad Company and an early Arizona bank (McClintock 1916).

The Pusch San Pedro Ranch property anchored the northern end of an extensive area where Pusch likely grazed cattle under the PZ and other livestock brands (Live Stock Sanitary Board of Arizona 1898; 1908). The Steam Pump Ranch, a few hundred acres of private land also owned by George Pusch, anchored the southern end of the grazing area (Figure 1). In between, most of the land was open range: public lands, or land held in trust by the State without leasing rights. The Steam Pump Ranch property was acquired in 2007 by Pima County, who transferred ownership to the Town of Oro Valley for the purpose of historic preservation and interpretation. It is listed in the National

¹Feldman is mapped on the 1961 and earlier Arizona State Highway Department maps published by Rand McNally, but is not on the 1971 map.

²Two references used in this report refer to the private land along the San Pedro River owned by George Pusch, as either “Feldman Ranch” or “San Pedro Ranch.” One reference directly related to Pusch during his lifetime is a letter to Mr. Pusch written by Hugh Ballinger dated 1914 and on ranch letterhead “San Pedro Ranch.” In the deed conveying the private land from the Pusch Land & Cattle Company to Joseph Nickerson, the property is referred to as the “Feldman Ranch.” Throughout this report, we will refer to Pusch’s private holdings on the lower San Pedro River as the “Pusch San Pedro Ranch.” The name “PZ Ranch” was first used after the Pusch Land & Cattle Company sold the ranch to Joseph S. Nickerson. In the 1928 Arizona Business Directory under the Feldman entry, Mr. Nickerson is listed as a livestock operator and is associated with the “PZ Ranch”. This report refers to the property as the “PZ Ranch” after 1928.

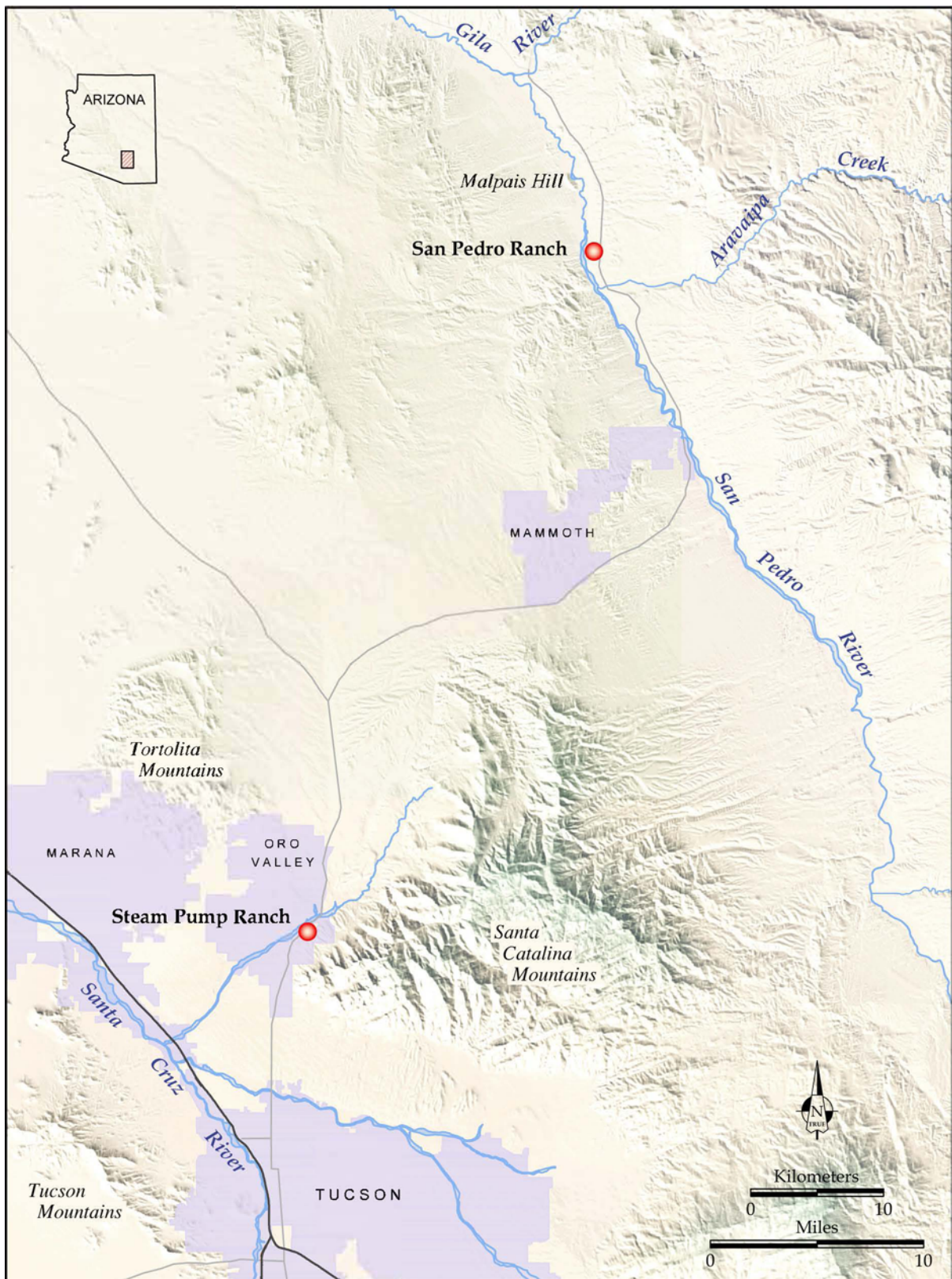


Figure 1. General location of Pusch's Steam Pump and San Pedro ranches, Pima County and Pinal County, Arizona.

Register of Historic Places and is now managed as a historical park. The Oro Valley Historical Society's efforts to document the history of the Steam Pump Ranch have revealed many aspects of George Pusch's life, including the Pusch San Pedro Ranch and Feldman, Arizona. With the courtesy of the Oro Valley Historical Society, the information in the "George and Matilda Pusch Collection of Historic Documents" provided the foundation upon which this report is built.

Most of the original Pusch San Pedro Ranch property is now owned by ASARCO, LLC, a fully integrated miner, smelter, and refiner of copper in the United States. ASARCO has two industrial wells on the property that provide supplemental water to the Ray Mine and the Hayden Smelter. Although the property is no longer managed as part of a larger ranch, the company does lease out a significant portion for farming. Because of safety concerns related to the stability of some of the existing buildings, ASARCO commissioned Archaeology Southwest to undertake an architectural documentation of the buildings (Drachman 2015) and this historic context study of their property.

This report traces the history of the lower San Pedro River valley between its confluence with Aravaipa Creek and Malpais Hill, six miles downstream. It emphasizes the period beginning when George Pusch began his land-acquisition efforts there at the turn of the nineteenth century to the present day. The focus on the Pusch San Pedro Ranch and Feldman, Arizona, contribute to understanding the life and times of George Pusch, an important landowner, businessman, and politician in southern Arizona, and provides an important example of the settlement and ranching history of southern Arizona just before and after statehood in 1912.

LOCATION AND SETTING

The project area for this report includes the private land located within the floodplain of the San Pedro River, from its confluence with Aravaipa Creek downstream roughly six miles, to the base of Malpais Hill. Today, this land supports irrigated agriculture and undeveloped land with natural vegetation that includes dense stands of mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*) bosque, a riparian woodland, and a Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*)-Goodding willow (*Salix gooddingii*) riparian forest.

ASARCO is the predominant landowner today, and a portion of the land the company owns is leased to local residents for agricultural purposes (fide Jack Garrity, Technical Services Manager, ASARCO, LLC, Hayden, Arizona). No direct diversion of surface water from the San Pedro River channel or associated springs occurs presently. Two industrial wells located on the property supply additional water to ASARCO's Ray and Hayden copper mining operations, and to wells for irrigation of the leased farm land. Within the private land there are also small parcels of residential property and some parcels owned by state and federal agencies for purposes of natural resource conservation.

In addition to the private land within the project area, a focus of this report is a cluster of structures owned by ASARCO. The structures are located between the San Pedro River channel and what is today called the South PZ Ranch Road, a short distance from Highway 77 (Figure 2). Eight of the nine structures were reported to be part of the Pusch San Pedro Ranch in 1924, when Henry G. Zipf lived there as a boy (Franea 2010), and collectively constitute Feldman, Arizona. One of the structures was built at a later date ("Unknown residence") and is not included in this report.

All structures are in poor condition and deteriorating rapidly. The blacksmith shop has recently undergone some demolition due to extensive structural deterioration. The largest structure is the main house where Zipf lived in 1924, and pictured in Figure 3. The architectural documentation was conducted on seven structures; the corral and unknown residence were excluded. In addition to these structures, other improvements on the property include irrigation and industrial wells.



Figure 2. Present day aerial view of Feldman, Arizona. Structures were identified on site by Henry Zipf (Ffrannea 2010).

CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE LOWER SAN PEDRO RIVER VALLEY (9000 B.C.–A.D. 1865)

The San Pedro River valley has a long history of human habitation, spanning from the earliest known inhabitants of North America up to the present day, and the valley has supported a diverse array of pre- and post-contact cultural groups (Clark et al. 2012a). Researchers believe that, after the demise of Pleistocene megafauna (9000 B.C.–6500 B.C.), small bands of mobile hunter-gathers were present in the lower San Pedro River valley, although archaeological evidence is scant³. While there is growing evidence of increased sedentism and canal-based agriculture in other areas in southern Arizona beginning at about 1000 B.C. (Early Agricultural/Early Ceramic period), such activity has yet to be firmly documented in the lower San Pedro basin. However, Masse (2014) did recover Early Agricultural/Early Ceramic period artifacts from a site on the Pusch San Pedro Ranch property. There is definite archaeological evidence of human habitation in the valley at A.D. 600. Thus, possibly as early as 500 B.C., people in the lower San Pedro River valley began to lead a more sedentary lifestyle, and agriculture emerged as the predominant lifeway.

³Similarly, there is no archaeological evidence from the lower San Pedro River valley documenting the presence of people archaeologists refer to as “Paleoindian.” Such groups are considered the earliest inhabitants of North America.



Photo courtesy of Ocie Anderson

An historic picture of the old PZ Ranch house is part of the photograph collection of the Anderson family, who in the mid-1930s resided at the cattle ranch in southeastern Pinal County for more than a year.



Figure 3. The earliest known picture of the main house taken in the mid-1930s (courtesy of Pinal Ways), and the main house in 1978.

Over the ensuing centuries, the human footprint expanded greatly throughout the lower valley, probably reaching its precontact zenith in population in the period of A.D. 600-1300. Archaeologists use the term "Hohokam" to identify the archaeological record of this period, which includes a cultural phenomenon defined as "Salado" (Clark et. al 2012b). During the Hohokam period, people invested considerable energy in irrigation systems, and experts surmise these ancient farmers cultivated significant parts of the floodplain. Today, there remain extensive precontact habitation areas and related archaeological sites from this period on lands within and immediately adjacent to the project area. Beginning around A.D. 1300, population began to decline. After A.D. 1450, for approximately 200 years, the valley was inhabited by people whose lifeways produced little in the way of material remains that we can discern today.

The first written accounts of the area were produced when Father Eusebio Kino and company visited the San Pedro River valley beginning in 1692 (Burrus 1971). In 1697, Kino traveled nearly the length of the San Pedro River to its confluence with the Gila River. Kino and his fellow travelers documented several Native American villages along the lower river, including one at the confluence of Aravaipa Canyon and the San Pedro River. The villagers, referred to today as "Sobaipuri," were a subgroup of O'odham, or Pima, people living across large parts of central and south-central Arizona. These groups were ancestral to O'odham peoples who today live primarily in the Tohono O'odham Nation, Gila River Indian Community, Akimel O'odham Indian Community, and Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (Masse 1981). Archaeological evidence indicates Sobaipuri village size and manner of living was greatly reduced from earlier Hohokam practices, and cultural relationships to Hohokam traditions are uncertain. Kino's account reports that irrigated agriculture was part of village life, and some of that irrigated agriculture probably occurred in the floodplain within the Pusch San Pedro Ranch area.

Father Kino also noted the presence of Apache people, who were engaged in conflict with the Sobaipuri. On his visit in 1697, Kino encountered a much-reduced population of Sobaipuri (many may have succumbed to diseases Kino and his companions introduced). The conflict with the Apache began to take its toll and by the mid 1700s, the remaining Sobaipuri on the San Pedro River relocated to the Santa Cruz and middle Gila river valleys (Ferguson and Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006). Apache alone remained.

The next written accounts from the area are the recollections of mountain man and explorer James O. Pattie, who visited the area in 1825. He describes dense, luxuriant vegetation along much of the river, marshy conditions, and a preponderance of beaver (Davis 1982). He makes no mention of human settlement along the river. An attack on one of Pattie's nearby camps along the Gila River showed that Apaches were in the area. The lower San Pedro River valley was part of Mexico when Pattie visited, yet his journal does not indicate any Mexican residents were living along this part of the lower San Pedro River.

Given Apache use of the area, Sobaipuri relocation, and the lack of any formal military presence on the part of the Spaniards or Mexico on this northern frontier edge, it is reasonable to conclude there were no Spanish or Mexican settlements in the lower basin. From at least the accounts of Kino through the time of early American settlement, Apaches were the sole continuous human presence in the area. According to ethnologists, groups in this part of the lower San Pedro River valley were the Aravaipa band of the San Carlos group of the Western Apache. They did not practice any substantive sedentary agriculture (Goodwin 1942), so the valley almost certainly existed in an undeveloped state.

With the Gadsden Purchase of 1854, the San Pedro River valley became part of the United States. Shortly thereafter, Lt. John G. Parke traveled along the lower San Pedro River to reconnoiter a southern railroad route. Parke recommended a route through the lower San Pedro River valley that would avoid the long stretch of desert north and west of Tucson (Parke 1855). Much to the consternation

of Tucson residents, Parke's recommendation was followed. Congress commissioned the Fort Yuma-to-El Paso Wagon Road shortly thereafter, and under the command of Superintendent James B. Leach, workers completed the road in 1858, more or less along the route Parke had recommended (Pry and Anderson, 2011).

Parke's report also advised the establishment of a military installation at the confluence of the San Pedro and Gila rivers as the best means of protecting travelers from hostile Indians. In 1860, troops established Fort Aravaipa at the confluence of the San Pedro with Aravaipa Creek, on the eastern side of the San Pedro River and north of Aravaipa Creek, eight miles above the San Pedro River's confluence with the Gila River. The second United States military installation in Arizona, Fort Aravaipa was intended to protect settlers traveling the Fort Yuma-to-El Paso Wagon Road (Collins et al. 1993). When the Civil War broke out, the U.S. military destroyed all Arizona installations to ensure they did not fall into Confederate hands. After the war, troops rebuilt the post in the same area. The fort was thereafter known as Camp Grant, in honor of victorious general Ulysses S. Grant.

EURO-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT

Camp Grant and Vicinity (1865–1885)

Camp Grant probably provided sufficient authority along the lower San Pedro River to safeguard American settlers from Apache raids, or at least offered a sufficient measure of security for the more adventurous to attempt settlement beyond the military reservation. As noted above, prior to establishment of the camp, it is unlikely any Spaniards, Mexicans, or Euro-Americans settled along this stretch of the river. In addition to the security the camp provided settlers, it also created a market for farm goods and other services that helped stimulate settlement in the area. Settlement consisted of small farms and ranches growing subsistence food. Settlers may have brought in additional income by selling produce and beef to mining communities nearby, and possibly even to more remote markets, such as Tucson. At least two post offices served the area between Aravaipa Canyon and the Gila River from 1865 to 1880⁴.

The presence of a local settlement, distinct from Camp Grant, is confirmed by several accounts of conflicts that occurred between settlers and Apaches. Farish (1918) noted attacks on Euro-American settlers residing along the lower San Pedro River. In 1864, "a white man, name unknown, was murdered on the ranch of Jesus M. Elias, near Camp Grant." Summarizing from another source, Farish stated that "Messrs. Kennedy and Israel⁵, returning to their ranch one mile below Camp Grant, were attacked by 40 Apache Indians." In a report on the killing of four people, the *Weekly Arizonian* of April 22, 1871, referred to them as "the last of a thriving colony which a few years ago occupied the San Pedro valley."

Tragically, although the Fort was commissioned to safeguard American settlers from Apache attacks, it was the Apaches who needed protection from the Americans. In the early morning hours of April

⁴A post office established at Grant (Camp Grant) in 1869 and discontinued in 1873 was reestablished at Camp Grant in 1875 and again discontinued in 1879 (Theobald and Theobald 1961). Mesaville, near old Camp Grant, was chartered as a post office in 1878. Mesaville was first called "Dodsons," but applicants were unable to secure a post office under that name (Barnes 1988). A post office was also located at Dudleyville, five miles below old Camp Grant. A decade later, in 1888, Dodson moved upstream to Mammoth, Arizona, to open a general store. The Mesaville post office closed on March 13, 1888. Mail then came to Dudleyville, 6 miles downstream. The continuous presence of a post office after the closure of Camp Grant indicates a community existed there.

⁵One mile below Camp Grant is the location of the McVeigh surface-water rights claim, filed in 1878. The claim identifies the water source as one mile below Camp Grant from "Israel's spring."

30, 1871, vigilantes from Tucson attacked a settlement of Apaches near Camp Grant. The Aravaipa Band of the San Carlos Apache was living there and had regular contact with Camp Grant and the Camp's commanding lieutenant. The attackers brutally murdered more than 150 people, almost entirely women and children. After the massacre, most of the surviving Apaches were removed to the San Carlos Indian Reservation farther north (Jacoby 2008).

In 1872, Camp Grant was relocated to the base of the Pinaleño Mountains in neighboring Graham County, where it was renamed Fort Grant. A traveler, who journeyed down the lower San Pedro River valley in 1875, said not a single resident could be found (Muffley 1938). Taken together with the April 1871 newspaper reference to the "last of a thriving colony," this suggests that for a period after Camp Grant was abandoned, so was the lower San Pedro valley. The abandonment—if it happened—was brief. The original General Land Office (GLO) surveys for Townships 6 and 7 South were completed in November and December 1877 and filed with the Tucson District Office on May 4, 1878. Six structures were recorded with the owner's name, along with several ditches and *acequias* along the San Pedro River between the Aravaipa Canyon confluence and the confluence with the Gila River. One structure in Section 32, Township 6 South, Range 16 East is attributed to Dodson (Figure 4). On March 14, 1879, the *Arizona Citizen* reported Joseph N. Dodson's visit to Tucson. Dodson came to sell produce from his ranch on the San Pedro below Aravaipa, and he reported that "settlers along the Gila and San Pedro in his section are doing well." Moreover, "Mr. Dodson had 60 acres in small grains and his neighbors had many large fields under cultivation," and "there are at least 100 settlers in the vicinity"⁶.

Pusch Era (1885–1925)

Settlement Laws

The GLO survey was filed in May of 1878 with the District Land Office in Tucson, Arizona, and land along the San Pedro was officially open to settlement. Federal settlement laws established a process whereby private citizens could obtain a patent to public land. These included the Land Act of 1820 (16 Cong., Ch. 51; 3 Stat. 566), the Preemption Act of 1841 (27 Cong., Ch. 16; 5 Stat. 453), and the Homestead Act of 1862 (37 Cong., Ch. 75; 12 Stat. 392).

The Land Act of 1820 established the right of citizens to acquire land no longer subject to Native American claims. At first, land was auctioned to the highest bidder. If no bids were received, the land could be opened to private entry in unlimited amounts at the purchase price of \$1.25 per acre. Many settlers and their supporters opposed the public auction system, however, because speculators would buy vast areas and resell land to arriving settlers at greatly inflated prices. Moreover, in many instances, settlers had already settled some of the best lands, lived there, and made improvements, but could not afford to compete at public auction, which resulted in their displacement. Furthermore, the threat of public auction served as a disincentive to settle land in advance of a formal survey (Gates 1987).

With the Preemption Act of 1841, Congress formally recognized what had long been conceded in practice: the preferential right of settlers to buy, at a reasonable price, the land they had already settled. It was Congress's intention the settler of surveyed land need not worry about settling upon the land prior to its public auction (Gates 1987). A preemption claim required the settler to file a

⁶The first recorded patent certificate issued by the General Land Office along the San Pedro River between the Aravaipa Creek confluence and the confluence with the Gila River was for 160 acres to Joseph N. Dodson on May 20, 1885. This was a Homestead Patent, which would indicate that, at a minimum, the initial application by Mr. Dodson was in 1880, if not a year earlier.

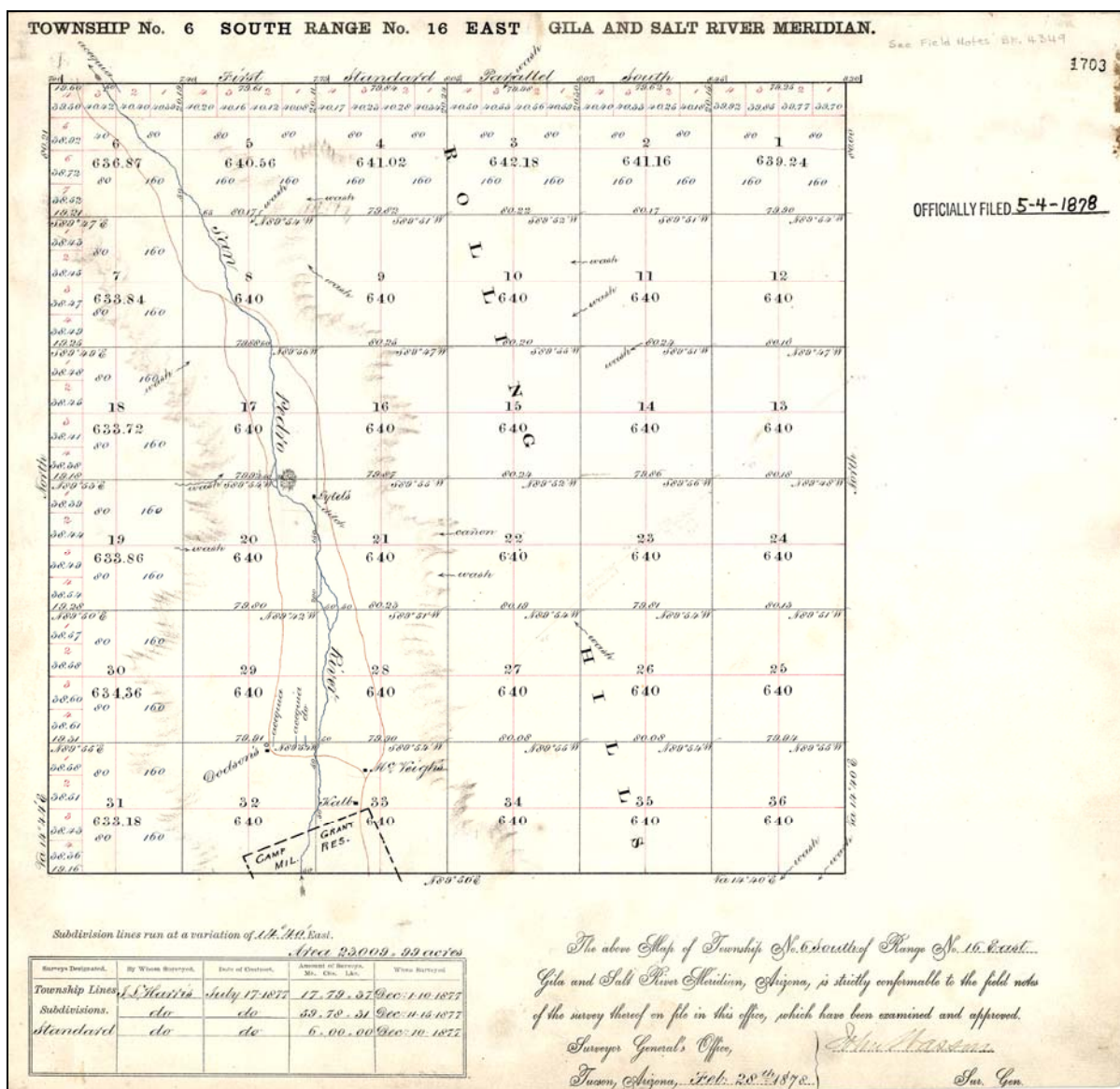


Figure 4. General Land Office original survey plat Township 16 South, Range 16 East, originally filed May 4, 1879.

declaratory statement attesting to several preconditions, including that the claimant had settled on the land, that the statement was filed within thirty days of settlement, and that he had not previously filed a preemption claim for other land. A process then ensued to notify the public of the claim, to allow for any contests to the claim, and to validate the settler's claim. Preemption claims could not exceed 160 acres.

Nevertheless, for many, buying the land was financially untenable. Across the country, there was continued pressure to open settlement of public lands for no consideration, provided the settler was willing to improve the land, construct a residence, and live there. Thus, in 1862, the Homestead Act did just that: it enabled a settler to patent upwards of 160 acres of land at no cost⁷ provided he was a citizen (or intended to become one), was 21 years of age, and head of household; that he had not

⁷ There were administrative fees, but they were small – probably a hardship for some, nevertheless.

taken up arms against the United States; and that he began living on the property within six months of application, continuing to reside there for five years while constructing a residence and cultivating the land (Bradsher 2012).

The Homestead Act is recognized as a revolutionary concept in American history for distributing public land (<http://www.nps.gov/home/historyculture/abouthomesteadactlaw.htm>). The laws were written to prevent speculation and the assembly of large tracts of productive land by wealthy individuals, presumably at the expense of the common person (Gates 1987). A quarter of the private land in Arizona today was acquired through the provisions of the Homestead Act alone (Stein 1990). An important provision of the Homestead Act stated nothing in the act “shall be so construed as to impair or interfere in any manner whatever with existing preemption rights.” At any time, a claimant, also known as an “entryman,” could commute their claim to a preemption claim and pay \$1.25 per acre, as long as they lived on the property for at least six months.

Thus, after 1862, a settler of the lower San Pedro River could acquire a patent certificate from the federal government by: (1) competing at public auction to buy offered lands; if no bids were received, acquiring the tract through private sale at \$1.25 per acre; (2) filing a preemption claim of prior entry and paying cash at the set fee of \$1.25 per acre; (3) filing a homestead claim and, after six months, commuting the claim to a preemption claim and paying cash (\$1.25 per acre); or (4) living and working on the land for five years from date of entry to receive a patent at no cost.

Assembly of the Pusch San Pedro Ranch (1885–1914)

George Pusch was a German immigrant to the United States who settled in Tucson, Arizona, in 1874. Shortly thereafter, Pusch opened a butcher shop with another immigrant acquaintance, John Zellweger. A few years later, presumably realizing the benefits of more vertical integration, Pusch and Zellweger purchased a ranch north of town and registered the PZ livestock brand. The ranch was located along the Cañada del Oro, beside a stage road between Tucson and Camp Grant. In the late 1870s, after Pusch and Zellweger installed a steam-pump-driven well, their ranch became the Steam Pump Ranch (Allen-Bacon 1997).

In 1880, the year the Southern Pacific Railroad came to Tucson, the partners’ prodigious well soon became the last watering point for thousands of cattle—Pusch and Zellweger’s herds, as well as those from other area ranches—before shipment out of Tucson. The advent of the railroad initiated a boom period in cattle ranching in Arizona, as ranchers now had the opportunity to meet the demands of an extra-local market (Collins 2009). Because cattle prices were based on weight, well-hydrated animals could command a better price at the rail depot. It is likely that Pusch and Zellweger benefitted accordingly by watering cattle at the Steam Pump Ranch.

In 1883, in two separate transactions, the first in June and another in October, Zellweger sold his interests in the PZ brand and the Steam Pump Ranch to Pusch (Oro Valley Historical Society, n.d.). Shortly thereafter, Pusch began acquiring land along the lower San Pedro River and Zellweger acquired a ranch farther north and west on the Gila River. Pusch continued to use the PZ brand for many of the cattle he raised at the San Pedro Ranch, and in later years, many people continued to think the two men owned the San Pedro Ranch together. Zellweger did not acquire any land along the San Pedro River, but the two did share ownership of one brand, the location of which was listed in 1920 as Feldman, Arizona. They remained business partners in many ventures, including the Tucson wholesale butcher operation, Tucson Ice House and Cold Storage Company, and with their Ice House partner, Noah Bernhard, the Arivaca Land & Cattle Company. It is certainly possible that some of the cattle grazed at the Pusch San Pedro and Steam Pump Ranches were owned in partnership with John Zellweger.

In those early days of ranching in southern Arizona, most land was open range. The number of cattle on the range was not controlled, although ranchers did exercise some control over whose cattle used the open range by controlling the limited water sources that occurred outside the major river valleys, including the San Pedro, Santa Cruz, and Gila. During this period, large numbers of cattle roamed the range; coupled with manual harvesting of grass as supplemental feed in some areas, this caused rangeland to suffer.

One sign that the good times would end occurred in 1885. A low-rainfall year combined with a steep drop in national cattle prices led to a brief bust in Arizona's cattle business (Collins 2009). Still, cattle numbers rose again, reaching record levels in 1890. Beginning in 1891, a severe three-year drought hit the state, and much of the livestock industry was devastated. In many areas, rangeland conditions were severely degraded (McChristian 2005).

George Pusch began to acquire land along the San Pedro River in 1885. By 1899, he had acquired nearly 1,800 acres, along with three water-right and ditch claims (Figure 5). These lands, referred to herein as the Pusch San Pedro Ranch, were intended, in part, as a response to drought and deteriorating range conditions. A testament to Pusch's business acumen, the *Arizona Weekly* in 1902 reported, "George Pusch is the best fixed cattleman in Southern Arizona to withstand the drouth [sic]. Mr. Pusch has big alfalfa fields on his lower San Pedro ranges, and where there is a dry season like the present one, Mr. Pusch places all his cows and calves in the fields... In this way he does not lose any cattle at all." The Pusch San Pedro Ranch anchored the northern end of an extensive area likely grazed by Pusch's cattle. The Steam Pump Ranch anchored the southern end. It would be a misnomer to call the entire area the Pusch ranch in that the land between his private holdings was public land, or land held in trust by the State, without leasing rights. This was open range and a cattle brand was the only stake to ownership.

Pusch's assembly of land along the San Pedro provides an interesting illustration of how land was acquired in the years following Arizona's establishment as a U.S. Territory, and in the early days of statehood. It also serves as an instructive example of how larger land holdings like the Pusch San Pedro Ranch were established under one ownership, despite federal settlement laws designed to counter the monopolization of land by wealthy individuals. From 1885 to 1914, George Pusch acquired title to 20 tracts, 160 acres or fewer in size, totaling 2,070 acres, more or less⁸. Pusch patented eight of the tracts himself and he acquired the other 12 tracts from individuals, 11 of whom had received the original patent to the land⁹. Six of these original patents were homestead certificates, and six were cash-sale certificates. Although it was not possible to review all cash-sale land entry files (except for one discussed below) to discern whether the initial application was through private sale, cash preemption, or commutation of a homestead claim, the result was the same: the settler patented the land by buying it. Three of the 12 private land acquisitions included significant water-rights claims on the San Pedro River or Aravaipa Creek. Pusch filed a separate water-rights claim in 1895 and acquired a fifth water-rights claim in 1903, with the acquisition of the McVeigh tract¹⁰. During this time, water-rights claims were filed with the county recorder. Collectively, these lands and associated water rights are referred to herein as the Pusch San Pedro Ranch. In 1918, acting as guardian for George Pusch

⁸Copies of all Deeds involving George Pusch, along with the Original Patents, are on file at the Oro Valley Historical Society in the George and Mathilda Pusch Collection of Historic Documents.

⁹One was acquired from an individual who had, in turn, acquired the property from the parties who had received the original patent.

¹⁰Also on file at the Oro Valley Historical Society is a deed for a partial acquisition of water rights by George Pusch from J. H. Brooks, dated May 1917. At that time Pusch had been declared an incompetent person by the Courts, so the nature of this acquisition is unknown.

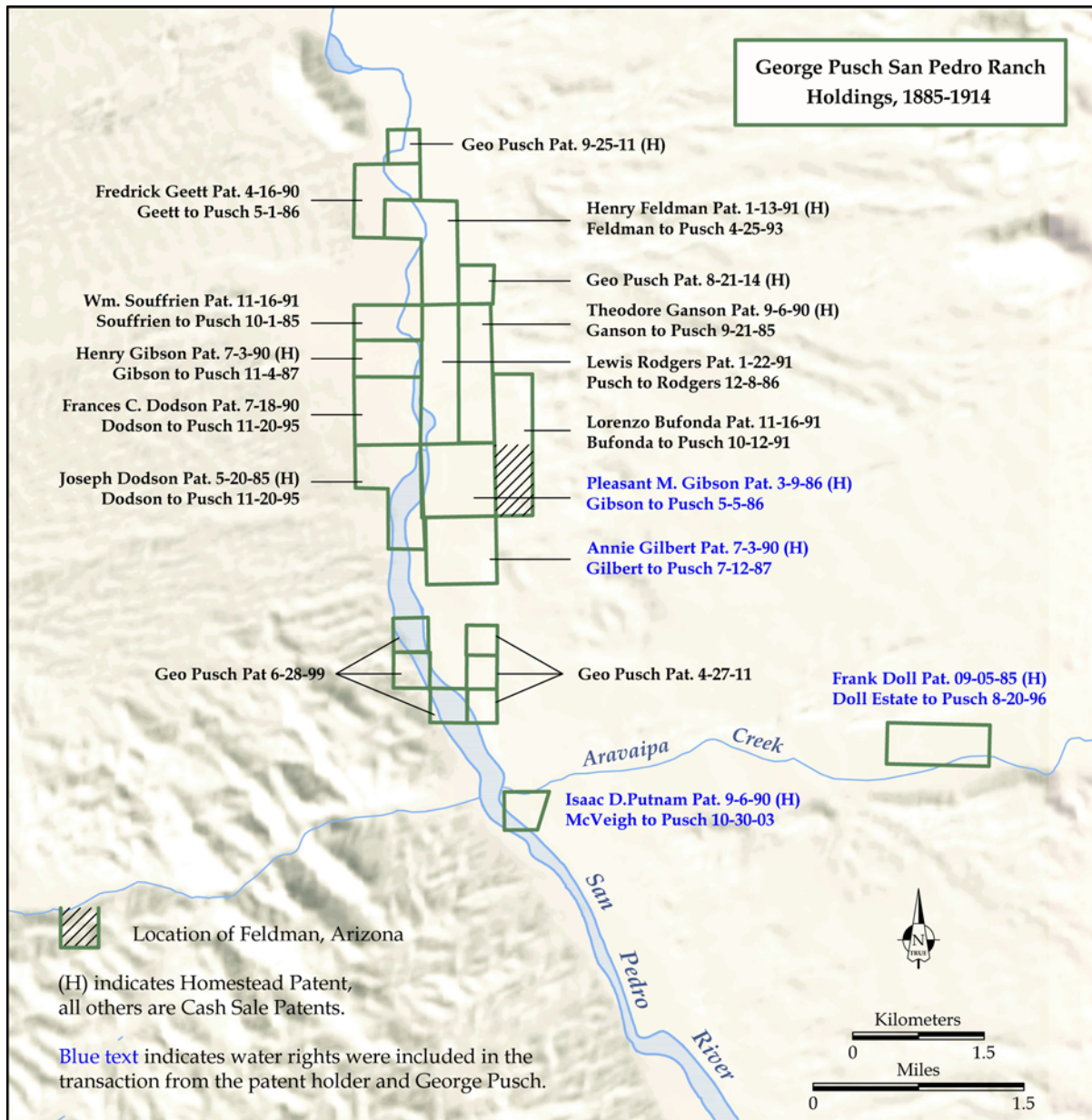


Figure 5. A map of the original parcels, acquired by George Pusch between 1885-1914, that are collectively considered the Pusch San Pedro Ranch (including the name and date of the original patent holder).

and his estate, Mathilda Pusch conveyed these lands to the PL&CC, which, 7 years later, sold them as the “Feldman Ranch” to Joseph S. Nickerson¹¹.

As noted above, of the 12 parcels acquired in private sales from individuals, 11 were acquired directly from the original patent holders. Seven of these are particularly noteworthy in that Pusch and the original patent holders executed documents that conveyed their interest in land in advance of their receiving a patent certificate—in some instances, five years earlier, making each acquisition an

¹¹Both Deeds failed to convey 40 acres of land that Pusch acquired a patent to through private sale in 1899, a parcel of land described by metes and bounds Pusch acquired from McVeigh (approx. 30 acres) in 1903, and 120 acres acquired from the Frank Doll estate. Presumably these lands were sold in separate transactions.

apparent violation of the law. Written to foster settlement and improvement of the public lands, the Preemption Act of 1841 and the Homestead Act of 1862 were departures from previous disposal policy, which emphasized revenue generation for the federal government. The shift in emphasis was motivated in large part due to land speculation occurring as a result of straightforward cash sales at public auction. In addition, the Homestead Act was intended to foster the “yeoman farmer” ideal of Jeffersonian democracy, by eliminating the need for cash provided the claimant was willing to live and work the land for five years, in a sense substituting sweat equity for cash.

The Preemption Act held that “nor he or she settled and improved said land to sell the same on speculation, but in good faith to appropriate it to his or her own exclusive use or benefit and that he or she has not, directly or indirectly, made any agreement or contract, in any way or manner, with any person or persons whatsoever.” The Homestead Act provided “that such application is made for his or her exclusive use and benefit, and that said entry is made for the purpose of actual settlement and cultivation, and not either directly or indirectly for the use of benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever...” In light of explicit language in the laws prohibiting claimants from directly or indirectly making an agreement or contract “in any way or manner with any persons or persons whatsoever,” it would appear that in all seven of these transactions, Pusch and the landowners were skirting the law – the landowners by affidavit statements that misrepresented the claims, and Pusch by acquiring substantial acreage when the laws were clearly written to preclude individuals or corporations from doing so.

An illustrative case is the Lorenzo and Cruz di Bufonda transaction, involving 320 acres of land where the main ranch house and associated buildings are located (see Feldman section below). Pusch acquired the land from the Bufondas on October 12, 1891, and the land was patented to Lorenzo Bufonda on November 16, 1891. A review of the land entry file indicates that, as a claimant, Bufonda was required to execute an “Affidavit Required of Claimant” in which he attested that he had not “directly or indirectly made any agreement or contract, in any way or manner, with any person or persons whatsoever; by which the title I may acquire from the Government of the United States should inure in whole or part to the benefit of any person except myself” (Figure 6). This affidavit was executed on October 10, 1891. Two days later, Lorenzo Bufonda and his wife Cruz de Bufonda executed a document conveying these lands to George Pusch – the same George Pusch (and John Zellweger) who had sworn under oath that Mr. Lorenzo Bufonda was a citizen of the United States on September 22, 1891, thereby paving the way for Bufonda’s patent¹². Although one could argue that Mr. Bufonda’s affidavit was technically correct, it seems improbable that only two days after executing this affidavit, the sale to Pusch occurred without the benefit of any previous discussion or understanding between the Bufondas and Pusch. By the time the patent was issued by the Tucson District General Land Office on November 16, 1891, the land was owned by Pusch. The timing is also suspect when considered in the context of the other six transactions, each of which occurred several years before patent certificates were issued, and in some instances before an application to patent was made.

Pusch also directly patented eight of the parcels, totaling 320 acres. An examination of Pusch’s direct patents indicates it was likely that three of the eight parcels were acquired at public auction. The Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office regarding the sale of land within abandoned military reservations indicates that at “Old Camp Grant,” 63.54 acres were purchased at public auction, and the unsold land was offered again on January 18, 1899, and 246.58 acres were sold (Congressional Series of United State Public Documents Volume 4457). A review of the General Land Office Records website hosted by the Bureau of Land Management for Township 7 South, Range 16 East (<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov>), indicates 244.39 acres were patented on July 6, 1899, of which George Pusch received the patent on 120 acres on July 18, 1899. We presume these are the parcels acquired at public auction as reported by the Commissioner of the General Lands Office.

¹² Lorenzo Bufonda Certificate of Citizenship on file: George and Mathilda Pusch Collection of Historic Documents.

AFFIDAVIT REQUIRED OF PRE-EMPTION CLAIMANT.
SEC. 2262, REVISED STATUTES.

I, Lorenzo Bufonda, claiming the right of pre-emption under
Section 2259 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, to the N 1/4, S 1/4 Sec 28, and W 1/2
N E 1/4 quarter of section 33, of township number 6 South, of range
number 10 East, subject to sale at Tucson at Land Office
do solemnly swear that I have never had the benefit of any right of pre-emption under said
section; that I am not the owner of three hundred and twenty acres of land in any State or Territory of the
United States, nor have I settled upon and improved said land to sell the same on speculation, but in good
faith to appropriate it to my own exclusive use or benefit; and that I have not, directly or indirectly, made
any agreement or contract, in any way or manner, with any person or persons whomsoever, by which the
title which I may acquire from the Government of the United States should inure, in whole or in part, to
the benefit of any person except myself. (Have claimant sign here. Lorenzo Bufonda)
I, Christophe Reiss, of Assistant Office at Tucson
at Tucson AZ, do hereby certify that the above affidavit was subscribed
and sworn to before me this 10 day of October, A. D. 1891.
Christophe Reiss
Reiss

Figure 6. A copy of Lorenzo Bufonda's "Affidavit of Claimant" obtained from the National Archive Land Entry File.

The Report also stated that the remainder of the land "will be subject to disposal at private sale at appraised value." A payment receipt from the General Land Office (Figure 7) indicates Pusch acquired an additional 120 acres within the abandoned military reservation at a private sale, although this was 12 years later. In acquiring land at public auction or private sale, Pusch was completely within his rights to do so. However, his last two acquisitions in the areas were two 40-acre tracts that were initially homestead claims, assigned in both cases by Daniel Banks and Bodell Olsson to George Pusch. The context for these assignments is unknown, but they represent yet another acquisition tool employed by Pusch in his land assembly.

Although settlement of the west was greatly enhanced by the 1841 and 1862 acts, and many settlers lived on and worked the land they received, these laws were subject to widespread and persistent abuse (Gates 1987). Nonetheless, it is not clear that Pusch's actions and those of the original entrymen were blatantly fraudulent and characteristic of these abuses. For example, a common abuse by individuals and corporations was the use of straw men to preempt or homestead public land, enabling them to establish significant land holdings despite Congress's explicit desire to keep them from doing so. The 1880 federal census records, which predate Pusch's initial acquisitions by five years, indicate six of the sellers to Pusch—Dodson, Rogers, Ganson, Geete, Pleasant Gibson, and McVeigh—were all residents of Pinal County, Arizona, were noted as farmers or partners, and their listing on the same page of the census registry indicates their physical proximity (<http://www.ancestry.com>). These people were probably part of the community of people on the San Pedro River described in the 1879 newspaper account of Dodson's visit to Tucson. Rogers, Ganson, Geete, and Pleasant Gibson all sold to Pusch in advance of their receipt of patents to the land they sold, but given their residence in the area, it is unlikely they were straw men. Of course, one cannot rule out that some of the others may have been acting as straw men for Pusch, as it was not possible

4-181.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
GENERAL LAND OFFICE.

RECEIPT.

No. 586984

Use COPYING INK only
on this Receipt.

U. S. LAND OFFICE, Phoenix, Arizona,
November 29, 1910.

RECEIVED of George Pusch,
(Name)

Tucson, Arizona, the sum of
(Address)

One Hundred & Fifty Dollars and Forty Cents,
in connection with
Private Sale, SERIAL No. 012702, for:

Lots 5, 9 & 12, Section 4,
Township 7 S, Range 16 E G. & S. R Meridian,
120.30 acres, at \$ 1.25 per acre. \$ 150 40

Fees _____

Commissions _____

Testimony fees _____ words at _____ cents per 100 words _____

Contest fees _____ " " " " _____

Transcripts _____
of Records _____ " " " " _____

Act of July 5, 1884.

Land in Fort Grant abandoned military reservation.

TOTAL \$ 150 40

No. 586984

Chas E Arnold
(Signature)
Receiver of Public Monies.

This Receipt is evidence only of the receipt of the amount indicated, and must be issued at the time the money is received, without regard to the subsequent allowance or rejection of the application, entry, etc., due notice of which will be given.

In case of error in this Receipt, notify the Receiver of Public Monies where issued, and the Commissioner of the General Land Office, Washington, D. C.

In writing to the local land office or the General Land Office concerning the application or entry in connection with which this Receipt issued, always give the above SERIAL Number and the RECEIPT Number.

66-1186

Figure 7. A copy of the General Land Office receipt of payment from George Pusch for Lots 5, 9, and 12, Township 7 South, Range 16 East, within the Fort Grant abandoned military reservation.

to document that Henry Gibson, William Souffrien, or Anna Gilbert lived in the area, at least as recorded in 1880 census. The Anna Gilbert acquisition did include a water-rights claim that the deed indicates she had purchased from McVeigh, suggesting she resided on the land at the time Pusch acquired her interest. However, notice of a homestead application filed by Henry Gibson was published in the Arizona Weekly Enterprise on September 10, 1897, and listed Lewis Rogers, Theodore Ganson, Pleasant M. Gibson, and Henry Feldman as witnesses in support of his application. All but Feldman had already sold their property interest in the area to Pusch, and Henry Gibson followed suit a few months later. A tangled web without doubt.

Pusch's actions and those of the landowners, although suspect, may be so in large part due to the inherent ambiguities of the laws. For example, a homestead claim could be commuted to sell the land to another party or to satisfy a debt obligation. Henry Gibson filed application to his Homestead claim in 1897, but received a patent in 1890, before the end of the five year period required to prove up on such a claim. Apparently the claim was commuted. Thus, it would appear that although it was illegal at the outset to apply for a homestead claim that was not "directly or indirectly for the use or benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever," selling the land during the entry period was perfectly appropriate. The Bufonda patent certificate issued under his preemption claim took less than a year to process from the time the entry was filed with the District office of the General Land Office. So, again, it was illegal to file a claim that would in turn benefit another party, but a year later, immediately after receiving a patent certificate, the entryman was under no constraint to sell his or her interest.

It is also worth noting that although Congress wrote the laws to end abuses, it continued to underfund the General Land Office, such that there was never sufficient staff to conduct adequate reviews (Gates 1987). This—coupled with the well-established patronage system within the General Land Office—more or less guaranteed ineffective administration of the laws. Over time, the extent of such abuses and people's awareness of them, left little incentive to follow the letter of the law. Therefore, although Pusch's land assemblage appears to be in violation of the law, it may not have been a unique circumstance at that point in the Euro-American settlement of Arizona. It may be worth noting that in every instance, Pusch purchased the land from the original entryman at a cost 2-5 times that paid to the General Land Office for cash-sale acquisitions. Finally, all the land acquired by Pusch was noted in the Pinal County tax records and he dutifully paid the taxes on the land.

If we look beyond the letter of the law to Congress's intent, the settlement laws were written to incentivize the settling of the West, and to deter land speculation and monopolization (Gates 1987). The Pusch San Pedro Ranch was a significant part of Pusch's ranch operation, which stretched over 35 miles from the Pusch San Pedro Ranch land to the Steam Pump Ranch land. Pusch, and his successor entity the PL&CC, held or grazed these lands for 40 years. Clearly, he was no speculator. There is no question that his acquisitions led to a monopolization of land in the lower San Pedro area; however, Pusch made considerable investment in the area, and undoubtedly provided local employment, along with other goods and services. Years after acquiring the San Pedro Ranch lands, Pusch established Feldman, Arizona. With the exception of 320 acres that he patented directly, all other land was acquired from several individuals who had originally settled the area, and all sellers appear to have been reasonably compensated for their property interests. One could argue his investment and incorporation of the San Pedro Ranch into a larger ranching (and wholesale butchering) operation, with direct access to regional and national markets, provided more economic stability over the 40-year period than small individual farm or ranch units may have offered. In the final analysis, Pusch's San Pedro Ranch land acquisitions may have satisfied Congress's ultimate intent, which was to productively improve the land and promote settlement of the West, and not at the expense of the common man.

Feldman, Arizona (1911–1925)

Barnes (1916) notes Feldman's location in Township 6 South and Range 16 East, Section 33¹³. He states, based on a letter from C. C. Clark of Phoenix, Arizona, that Feldman was originally known as the "Pusch Ranch," and that it was named after Pusch's brother-in-law Henry Feldman, the ranch manager. Feldman, Arizona, became a "formal" entity in 1911, when the post office was moved there

¹³This is also the location of the existing structures (see Figure 2) that Henry G. Zipf identified in his oral recollections of living at the ranch in 1924 (Franea 2010).

from Dudleyville (Theobold and Theobold 1961)¹⁴, and it was listed continuously in the Arizona Business Directories issued from 1914–1915 to 1929. We were not able to locate Directories issued in 1913, 1920, 1922, or 1926. Each Feldman listing notes the population (85 townspeople increased to 90 in 1923 and 150 in 1928), as well a post office, several livestock operations, a stage line, and a mercantile store. Other services varied from year to year, and included a justice of the peace, a freighter, a public notary, a garage, and presumably a butcher listed under “Meats” in 1923.

In the 1914–1915 and 1916–1917 Directories, George Pusch is prominently identified as owner of the “Pusch Mercantile Store” and as a dealer in livestock, hay, and grain. A missive from Hugh Ballinger to Pusch dated April 14, 1914, on “San Pedro Ranch Feldman, Arizona” letterhead identifies George Pusch as owner, Henry Feldman as ranch manager, and Hugh H. Ballinger as store manager. Ballinger was George and Mathilda Pusch’s son-in-law, married to their second daughter, Henrietta. Ballinger was also the first postmaster when the Feldman post office was established in 1911. Henry Feldman, Mathilda’s brother, was listed in the area (at Mammoth) as a livestock operator in the 1897 Arizona Business Directory, the earliest Directory that we could consult after 1885, when Pusch began acquiring land in the area. Mr. Feldman and Pusch jointly acquired the “Old Finch Ranch” and cattle brand from Emeterio Padillo in 1909 (Oro Valley Historical Society, n.d.). Feldman also received a homestead patent to 160 acres of land on the San Pedro in 1891, but two years later sold the property to Pusch. Henry Feldman was a long-time resident of the area, presumably managing Pusch’s livestock interests in the area.

In 1914, George Pusch suffered the first of a series of strokes that led to his being declared an incompetent person in 1917. His wife Mathilda was appointed trustee of his estate and on November 15, 1917, the Articles of Incorporation for the PL&CC were established (Oro Valley Historical Society, n.d.), with Mathilda, Gertrude Zipf (the Puschs’ eldest daughter), and George W. Pusch (their eldest son), as the initial Board of Directors. In April of 1918, all of the land along the San Pedro River was conveyed to the PL&CC, with the exception of 170 acres more or less, as described earlier. Capital stock was issued as compensation, along with an annual stipend for Mathilda, which included caring for George Pusch, along with permission to live in their home in Tucson. In March and May of that year, both Henry Feldman and Hugh Ballinger (Henrietta’s husband) sold their property interests in the area to PL&CC. In the 1918 Directory, the Feldman listing includes the PL&CC, with the oldest son, George W. Pusch, identified as the general manager and D. L. Peterson as the postmaster and store manager.

From all outward appearances, the George Pusch era was near an end, and several family members took turns helping to manage the San Pedro ranch property for the next seven years¹⁵. Fred L. Pusch, another son, became Feldman’s postmaster in 1920. He was replaced by H. H. Herrington as postmaster and store manager under contract to PL&CC in 1922. By 1923, George W. Pusch was no longer on the PL&CC Board of Directors, nor was he associated with Feldman in the 1923 Directory listing. A letter from Walter F. Pusch to John H. Page, dated March 17, 1923, on PL&CC letterhead (Arizona State Historical Society Museum 1923), references this change: “...since Geo W Pusch left the company.” Henry W. Zipf, Gertrude’s husband, served as ranch manager, as did Walter F. Pusch, the Puschs’ youngest son. Gertrude became postmaster in 1923 and remained until 1925, when the property—referred to in the deed as the “Feldman Ranch”—was sold to Joseph S. Nickerson. Forty years after George Pusch’s initial acquisitions along the San Pedro River, the Pusch era on the lower San Pedro River came to a close.

¹⁴Feldman is not depicted on the Arizona Territory map of 1908 prepared by the General Land Office or the 1908 Pinal County map eastern half (<http://azmemory.azlibrary.gov/cdm/ref/collection/har/id/37>), each of which depicts Mammoth and Dudleyville.

¹⁵Henry Zipf in his oral recollection is quoted as saying that “members of the family took turns running the ranch at Feldman.”

In the 1928 Directory listing for Feldman, a school principal and a garage appear for the first time. The post office remained, but neither the mercantile store nor any other services or offices previously listed for Feldman during the Pusch ownership period are included. Nickerson is listed in association with "PZ Ranch," the first reference to the Pusch San Pedro Ranch as such; Nickerson having purchased the PZ livestock brand, which was registered first by Pusch and Zellweger in the 1880s and later acquired owned solely by Pusch, who acquired Zellweger's interest in 1883. Feldman disappears as a separate listing in the 1929 Directory, as the post office was discontinued in 1928 (Theobald and Theobald 1961). The United States Geological Survey (USGS) map (1911) 30x30-minute series identifies Feldman, as does the 1913 version. The next USGS map revision in the area (1949) was the Holy Joe Peak 15-minute topographic series map, in which the Feldman location is identified as the "PZ Ranch." PZ Ranch continues as the place-name today.

For the most part, Feldman existed as a place-name during the period when it served as a post office (1911–1928), although it continued to be depicted on some road maps after this time¹⁶. In rural areas, post offices provided many important community functions, as they sometimes do today. Area residents would see their neighbors at the post office on a regular basis, where they would exchange news and transact some business. Mail was often delivered by stage, so post offices also served as public transportation hubs in some areas. Everett Putnam, a postmaster at Mammoth, Arizona, until 1926, provided an account of the Te-He Flyer, a San Pedro River stage line run by W. H. Cureton for 24 years (Arizona Historical Society MS 1126). Mr. Cureton was listed as a stage line operator at Feldman for several years. The May 30, 1914, Winkelman Times reported that "Old" Cureton stated there was a fire that destroyed all the mail on the Feldman and Mammoth stage the previous week. In addition, over the roughly 17 years of its existence as a recognized community, Feldman hosted a notary, freighter, justice of the peace, smithy, Catholic church, and a mercantile store that sold general merchandise, hardware, harness and saddlery, and farm implements. A review of the Arizona Business Directory listings of post offices during the Feldman period indicates most were associated with farms, ranches, railroad stops, or mining concerns, and they provided services not unlike those listed for Feldman.

So, what was Pusch's intent in establishing Feldman? It was late in his life, and 25 years after his initial land and water-rights acquisitions in the area. By 1910, Pusch was 63 years old, and his service on the Tucson City Council, Territorial Legislature, and State Constitutional Convention was at an end. Nevertheless, his acquisition of 80 acres of additional land in the area in 1911 and 1914 suggests the San Pedro Ranch remained an active Pusch enterprise and yet another manifestation of Pusch's entrepreneurial proclivities. Establishing Feldman as a commercial enterprise, of sorts, may have been a logical evolution for his land and water investments along the river, as well as a possible precursor to residential and commercial land development, given that he owned more than 2,000 nearly contiguous acres. It also provided employment for his son-in-law and at the same time honored, in part, the many years of service provided by his brother-in-law, Henry Feldman. Unfortunately, early in Feldman's history, Pusch succumbed to a stroke that within a few years had him living as a ward of his wife. The remainder of Feldman's existence was principally as an asset of the PL&CC, the management of which vacillated among several Pusch family members until its sale in 1925.

Feldman Architecture

There are currently seven buildings and a grain silo and corral in Township 6 South, Range 16 East, Section 33 (see Figure 2). Henry G. Zipf's transcribed oral recollection of his life on the San Pedro Ranch in 1924 (Frannea 2010), identifies each of the buildings and their associated functions. At the

¹⁶Rand McNally Arizona road maps continued to depict Feldman, Arizona, into the 1960s.

time, Henry and his mother and father lived in the main ranch house, and he went to school in a structure attached to the granary. The structure Zipf identified as the Catholic church is located in an area described in a deed that George and Mathilda Pusch may have executed, which conveyed a small parcel of land to the Tucson Diocese of the Church in 1914 (Oro Valley Historical Society, n.d.)¹⁷. Ocie Anderson, who owned the ranch between 1935-1937, describes the main ranch house, post office and mercantile store, and blacksmith shop in the same locations as Zipf (Walenga 1995). Oliver Anderson, Ocie's son, mentioned the schoolhouse was attached to the granary and that his uncle built one of the houses (Oliver Anderson, personal communication 2015).

The architectural documentation (Drachman 2015) indicates the main house was a remarkable example of the Territorial vernacular style, which was a hybridization of Sonoran and Anglo building styles. In his study of the historic structures in the town of Florence, Pinal County, Arizona, Sobin (1975) describes this as the Late Transitional Style. With the arrival of the railroad and the introduction of mass building materials and migrants from the eastern United States, many of the earlier Sonoran-style homes were expanded to include gabled roofs with dormers, as well as wrap-around porches. The architectural documentation states there is some indication that one portion of the main house was built first, because the floors are dirt and the doors are lower in elevation. Moreover, the stairway to the second floor was cut through the middle of the second room, suggesting the second floor was added later. The post office/mercantile store and Catholic church are also representative of this hybridized vernacular style. The granary and blacksmith shop are categorized as agricultural vernacular constructed for utility, representing an economy of materials and labor characteristic of agricultural vernacular building typologies. The Foreman's residence, however, is interesting in that it reflects the arrival of eastern United States Anglo agricultural building styles in Arizona. This is evident in the all-wood construction and in the inclusion of a dog-trot walkway, a common vernacular architectural feature of houses in the southeastern United States. This may have been the structure built by Oliver Anderson's uncle in the 1930s. Henry Zipf was uncertain about the location of the foreman's residence during his time there as a child.

The actual construction dates for the structures remain uncertain, and architectural documentation did not provide any notable clues, other than to suggest the gabled roof, dormers with windows and porch were likely constructed after 1880, when mass-produced building materials could be obtained with advent of the railroad. From Mr. Zipf's account, we know the buildings we see today were more or less standing in 1924. The structures all occur on land Pusch acquired in Section 33, Township 6 South, Range 6 East, from Lorenzo and di Cruz Bufonda. Lorenzo's "Affidavit of Claimant" indicates he built a residence valued at \$150. The Pinal County Duplicate Tax Assessment Rolls, on file at the Arizona State Library Archives and Public Records, list a value of \$615 for the improvements on all Pusch-owned land (1,240 acres) in 1891. At best, this suggests modest improvements that were unlikely to bear much resemblance to what eventually came to characterize Feldman as described by Zipf and what is standing today. Rural Property Record Cards, on file in the Pinal County tax assessor's office for the portion of land formerly owned by Pusch, include 1965 valuation appraisals for three structures, one of which was the former post office/mercantile store. In the section of the form titled "Date of Construction," in the "Date" space is written "1919" and "est" is written in the "Source" space.

A review of the Pinal County Duplicate Tax Assessment Rolls for George Pusch from 1891 to 1924, on file at the Arizona State Library Archives and Public Records (Table 1), indicates that between 1891 and 1908 the value of improvements increased 93% while the amount of land area increased from 1,240 acres to 1,808 acres. These data suggest the increase in improvement valuation between 1891 and 1908 could be attributed to an increase in the amount of land area that was taxed, some of which

¹⁷There is no record of the Deed being recorded and there is no indication the Diocese ever took possession of the land, however.

Table 1. Partial summary of the George Pusch and Pusch Land & Cattle Company, Pinal County Property Tax Records (1891-1924). On file at Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records, located in the Polly Rosenbaum Archives and History Building.

Tax Year	Value of Improvements	Acres of Assessed Land	Tax Year	Value of Improvements	Acres of Assessed Land
1891	615	1,240	1908	1,190	1,808
1892	615	1,080	1909	2,825	1,808
1893	750	1,240	1910	2,850	1,888
1894	715	1,240	1911	2,900	1,888
1895	625	1,240	1912	3,450	1,888
1896	1,000	1,560	1913	5,200	1,918
1897	1,000	1,560	1914	5,200	1,918
1898	1,000	1,560	1915	5,200	1,918
1899	1,000	1,689	1916	5,200	1,918
1900	1,000	1,689	1917	5,700	1,918
1901	1,315	1,758	1918	5,700	1,888
1902	1,265	1,688	1919	7,200	1,918
1903	1,265	1,688	1920	7,200	1,918
1904	1,265	1,808	1921	7,200	1,918
1905	1,190	1,808	1922	7,200	1,918
1906	1,190	1,808	1923	7,200	1,918
1907	1,190	1,848	1924	7,250	1,918

may have included structures when they were acquired, which would account for increases in improvement valuation. The tax record information does not provide information on the improvements, nor is their location reliable. There was also a likely increase in market value over the 17 year period. All in all, the increased improvement valuation was modest during this period. This contrasts markedly with the period 1908-1919, when improvement valuation increased 500%, with only a very modest increase in the amount of land area (1,808 acres to 1,918 acres). The increases occurred in three distinct time periods, 1908-1909, 1911-1913 and 1918-1919, rather than uniformly over the eleven years. It is doubtful such a large increase in market value would have occurred in a rural location at that time. Likely, the significant increase in improvement valuation is a reflection of changes to existing structures or new structures entirely.

We surmise that up until the period right before a post office was established, the Pusch San Pedro Ranch consisted of functional agricultural structures like the granary and silo, along with some modest, one-story, flat-roofed adobe buildings that housed ranch hands. Henry Feldman was not likely one of them, as the few newspaper accounts with Henry have him residing in Mammoth, and his listings in the Arizona Business Directory indicate the same. In the 1914 Directory he is associated with Feldman. Shortly before Feldman had a post office, a larger vision began to take shape for the land, and improvements were made to the existing structures that reflect what we see today. As Feldman became a going enterprise, additional improvements were made, including changes during the PL&CC tenure, when Pusch was no longer a competent person. Notably, there is nothing on file within the George and Mathilda Pusch Collection of Historic Documents that associates the structures at Feldman with George Pusch¹⁸. Given the likelihood the buildings as they appear today were constructed during the 1908-1919 period, their association with Pusch would have been a short one, but data does suggest significant improvements were underway during Pusch's active life there and no doubt owe in part to Pusch's vision.

¹⁸There are references to the Steam Pump Ranch and photos of the Steam Pump ranch house from the time before Pusch's health problems occurred.

PZ Ranch (1925–1960)

The Pusch Land & Cattle Company sold the “Feldman Ranch” to J. S. Nickerson in 1925, drawing the Pusch era to a close. Following Nickerson’s acquisition, the ranch property changed hands seven times, passing from one ownership to another in roughly five- to seven-year increments over a 35-year period. In 1931, Nickerson defaulted on a mortgage that was secured by the PZ Ranch property, and the note holder, Pacific Coast Joint Stock Land Bank in California, acquired the PZ Ranch at the sheriff’s auction that same year. The bank sold the ranch to Garfield and Ocie Anderson in 1936.

In 1938, the Andersons sold the ranch to Armenal W. Patterson, whose acquisition integrated the PZ Ranch into the larger Willow Springs Ranch north of Oracle Junction. The latter was owned by her husband, Frederick Beck Patterson, vice-president and a majority stockholder in National Cash Register, which had been founded by his father John H. Patterson. Zola Hall, a Kearney resident today, lived on the PZ in the early 1940s when her father served as ranch foreman. She reports that most of the buildings served as residences for her family and the other ranch personnel, or were used for equipment repair and storage, although the ranch headquarters had been abandoned by that time (Zola Hall, personal communication 2009). It has remained abandoned up to the present day.

By 1945, the Dayton, Ohio, Pattersons had grown tired of ranching life in Arizona, and they traded the Willow Springs Ranch to the West Fork Timber Company, which was owned by Washington timber magnate Lowell Thomas Murray, for agricultural land in Chandler, Arizona (*Tucson Citizen* 1945). West Fork’s acquisition was intended to complement its ranching operation in eastern Washington State by serving as winter pasture (Felt 1978). The investment was a fiasco, and for years after, Murray family members considered the venture to have been a boondoggle (Murray’s grandson Lowell T. Murray III, personal communication 2014). Mr. Murray—who may not have seen the light, but felt the family heat—sold the ranch in 1950, after splitting off the PZ Ranch portion and selling it separately to Fred and Hanna Ash. Fred had worked as a ranch hand on the Willow Springs Ranch. The Ashes owned the PZ Ranch for ten years before selling it in 1960 to the Kennecott Copper Company, one of three major copper mining, smelting, and refining operations in the lower valley. Although the ranch had been acquired by corporate interests before, beginning with Patterson and followed by West Fork Timber Company, those acquisitions were motivated by its utility as a ranch. The acquisition by Kennecott Copper Company was about copper mining and production instead.

The Corporate Era (1960–Present)

Kennecott Copper’s acquisition coincided with the acquisition by mining interests of other large farm and ranch holdings along the lower San Pedro River, as well as along the Gila River upstream and downstream of its confluence with the San Pedro. At that time, Kennecott Copper Company and Magma Copper Company owned and operated three area smelters, in addition to their substantial mine holdings. The American Smelting and Refining Company (predecessor to present-day ASARCO, LLC) operated a smelter in Hayden. William Stambaugh, a local resident since 1965, said all three companies began their farm- and ranch-acquisition efforts in the mid-1960s (Stambaugh, personal communication 2014), to mitigate property damages related to smelter emissions. Jack Garrity, Hayden Technical Services Manager for ASARCO, also recounted anecdotal evidence that these acquisitions provided buffer lands for the Hayden smelter operations (Garrity, personal communication 2014).

A direct, or collateral, benefit of these targeted acquisitions was the associated water-rights claims, many of which were the earliest and largest surface water-right and diversion claims on the San Pedro River. Several owned by ASARCO are being used to substantiate the latter’s water claims

in the ongoing Gila River Water Rights adjudication (Arizona Department of Water Resources Gila River Water Rights Adjudication files). Three of these surface-water claims are claims that Pusch had acquired as he assembled the San Pedro Ranch. Near the ranch headquarters and west of the Feldman townsite, ASARCO maintains an industrial well field that provides supplemental water to the Hayden well field located on the Gila River. In 1977, Kennecott and the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) negotiated a water-rights agreement that, in part, recognized that 55 percent of the water that Kennecott pumped from the wells near Feldman is sub-flow (i.e. surface water), to which GRIC has an ownership claim. The agreement, which is in place today and used by ASARCO, allows ASARCO to continue to pump water in return for providing quarterly payments to GRIC for 55 percent of the water they pump from their industrial wells. In any one year, these wells may provide between 10–15 percent of the water used in their mining, milling and smelting operations (Garrity, personal communication 2014).

Within the last two decades, another benefit of the PZ Ranch lands has emerged, related to the natural habitats those lands support. Of the 2,000 acres, more or less, originally acquired by Pusch, much of the land is natural vegetation. In the late 1990s, ASARCO set aside 80 acres to restore mesquite bosque habitat, to mitigate the loss of wetlands at the Ray Mine. A proposed expansion of the tailings pile at Ray Mine that would have resulted in placing fill materials into waters of the United States, including wetlands, required a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. A condition of the permit included the restoration of riparian habitat offsite, as compensation for the wetland losses at Ray Mine. The restored land was conveyed to a separate entity, the ASARCO Conservation Foundation, established by ASARCO to protect and manage these lands in perpetuity to protect the natural values. These lands are now managed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) through an agreement with ASARCO. Also in the late 1990s, ASARCO sold roughly 60 acres to the United States Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), which was acquiring land at “Cooks Lake” to meet their own offsite mitigation obligations to protect wetland and riparian habitat. These obligations were outlined in a Section 404 permit that allowed BOR to destroy wetlands associated with construction of the New Waddell Dam on the Agua Fria River (<http://www.usbr.gov/lc/phoenix/biology/gorip.html>). In 2009, ASARCO conveyed land and water-rights claims to the AGFD as part of its bankruptcy settlement (United States Bankruptcy Court, Corpus Christi, Texas Case 05-21207 Document 10657-1 Filed in TXSB on 03/30/2009). Upwards of 1,000 acres of land and water-right claims along the lower San Pedro River were transferred to the AGFD as compensation for natural resources damage claims at Mineral Creek and at the Gila River, related to unauthorized releases at Ray Mine and their Hayden facility. Three hundred twenty-five of those acres were part of the original Pusch San Pedro Ranch holdings.

Thus, over the past twenty years, a number of state and federal agencies and nonprofit conservation organizations have focused significant attention and assets on the lower San Pedro River valley, based on the natural and cultural resources found there. It is anticipated the conservation values associated with the PZ Ranch will continue to focus conservation efforts there into the foreseeable future.

CONCLUSION

George Pusch was a prominent Tucson businessman, landowner and one of Arizona’s “founding fathers” participating in the state Constitutional Convention and playing a major role in the livestock industry in southern Arizona during its formative years. The San Pedro Ranch was a significant aspect of his legacy. The record of property acquisition, as revealed in various deeds and patents from the United States government, provides a glimpse into the mechanics of assembling a large

private land holding at the time Arizona first became a United States territory and later a state. The homestead laws, while designed specifically to avoid concentrating ownership into the hands of wealthy individuals, were easily circumvented as Pusch's acquisition efforts demonstrate.

Feldman Arizona, the most visible symbol today of the Pusch legacy on the San Pedro River, developed late in George Pusch's tenure as owner of the San Pedro Ranch. The Pusch San Pedro Ranch, later the PZ Ranch, and Feldman are representative of a southern Arizona ranch and town site that has grown and adapted to changing economic, social, and cultural values over time. The main ranch house is a rare example of Territorial vernacular architectural expression which is a result of the hybridized Sonoran and Anglo styles. The structures we see today were built or improved only a few years before Pusch was debilitated by a series of strokes. The Feldman we see today may owe as much to the short life of the Pusch Land & Cattle Company as it does to George Pusch. Regardless, Feldman was relatively short-lived as a place name and the iconic main ranch house fell into disuse by the 1940s and has been abandoned since that time. Today, the buildings associated with Feldman, Arizona, are known locally as the PZ Ranch, which was named by Joseph Nickerson following his acquisition of the ranch in 1925, presumably based on the PZ brand which he also acquired. At times, PZ Ranch was assumed to be the name of the ranch based upon its original ownership by George Pusch and John Zellweger who were partners in many endeavors, but ironically not the San Pedro Ranch, which along with the Steam Pump Ranch were exclusively (apart from some possible joint ownership of cattle) a George Pusch enterprise. The brief history of Feldman does highlight the role rural post offices played as de-facto town sites in many rural areas at the turn of the century, before the personal automobile came into widespread use.

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