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BABBITT TIMES REVIEW

SPECIAL EDITION!

FREE



BABBITT RANCHES HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE



August 2006

BABBITTS CELEBRATE 120th ANNIVERSARY

By BONNIE STEVENS

When David and Billy Babbitt stepped off the train at sunrise in their fine business suits to snow-covered mountains and the burnt remains of a post-fire Flagstaff they may not have known that their destiny as cattle barons was as clear here as the chilly mountain air.

It was on April 7, 1886, that the brothers made the transition from Cincinnati businessmen to western pioneers after a trip that led them up the San Francisco Peaks to view the vast rangeland and stranded them in an unexpected overnight stay in the snow. With \$17,640 and the will to take on a new adventure in the untamed West, the brothers purchased 1,200 head of stock, reported to be "all first class and in fine condition." They sent word back to their brothers Charles (C.J.), George and Edward.

Today, 120 years later, David and Billy might be surprised again to revisit northern Arizona's bustling mountain town and witness how involved the Babbitt family has been with the people, the arts, the businesses and the community. For more than a century, the Babbitts have played a significant role in the economic, civic and cultural development of Flagstaff and most recently, as a leader in conservation and environmental science.

At one time, the Babbitt ranching and mercantile empire ranged from Dodge City, Kan., to southern California. The Babbitt enterprises were as varied as the personalities of the original five Babbitt brothers. Over the years, their ventures included cattle, sheep, trading posts, a livery stable, an automobile dealership, a department store, mining operations, farms, oil development, an ice plant and a funeral parlor.

They were described as bold gamblers, yet compassionate neighbors, often taking on new businesses by accepting them as payment for Babbitt goods.

Public service has been as much a part of the Babbitt DNA as entrepreneurship as generations have served in public office. David agreed to be Flagstaff's mayor in 1891. His brother, Ed, served in the Arizona Territorial Legislature. James and John Babbitt, sons of C.J., represented northern Arizona in the state senate. Paul Babbitt, grandson of C.J., has been Flagstaff's mayor and Coconino County Supervisor, and Paul's brother Bruce served as Arizona's governor from 1978 to 1988 and then sought the Democratic nomination for President of the United States.

The Babbitt influence is well-documented throughout northern Arizona, including in the buildings

at Northern Arizona University, an institution supported and promoted early on by George.

Today, the Babbitts operate the CO Bar, the Espee and the Cataract ranches in northern Arizona. They are known for their top-quality cattle and their horses that still carry the legendary Hashknife brand. Their premium Hereford stock has earned the Babbitts honors from the Hereford Association and the Arizona and National Cattleman's associations. Last year they received the prestigious Best Remuda Award from the American Quarter Horse Association and Bayer Animal Health.

The Babbitts' wildlife habitat research and land management efforts have been praised by conservation organizations. In 2003, Babbitt Ranches received the National Private Lands Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Award from the International Association

of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

In 2001, the Babbitts were applauded nationwide by their bold move to set aside some 41,000 acres of the Cataract Ranch for open space. In an agreement with The Nature Conservancy and Coconino County, this action would create Arizona's largest conservation easement and protect the ranch lands from being developed.

The Babbitts of the 21st century carry on the spirit of adventure, exploration and love for the land. The ranches remain busy with activities that bridge the pioneer age to the space age. Babbitt Ranches are where cowboys ride and rope as they've done for a hundred years; where researchers study the grasslands, antelope and soil; where engineers test Mars rovers over the rocky terrain while IMAX movie producers capture the scene; and, where scientists explore the idea of harvesting

northern Arizona's wind as a sustainable energy resource.

In 1886, the Babbitt brothers set out to start a cattle ranch. In good times and bad, the Babbitts have had their ranch and seemingly a taste of just about everything else the West has had to offer. One hundred and twenty years later, the Babbitts still have a cattle ranch. The original Babbitt brothers would no doubt be pleased to know the CO Bar brand continues to represent American ranches at their best.

"Land use stewardship and regional planning go hand-in-hand," said Babbitt Ranches President Billy Cordasco, "and will be the foundations for future Babbitt enterprises."

This publication is produced by Babbitt Ranches to celebrate the lives and legacy of the last 120 years and to catch a glimpse of snapshots in time for nostalgia and enjoyment.



THE FIVE BABBITT BROTHERS

This picture was made about 1918 upon the occasion of a visit Edwin (left) of Cincinnati, paid his four brothers in Flagstaff. From left to right: Edwin, who has been engaged in the practice of law in Cincinnati for many years; Charles J., president of Babbitt Brothers Trading Co., David (1858-1920); George (1860-1920);

and William (1863-1930). Charles, David, George and William starting with a tiny hardware business and a few cattle, built one of the largest business firms in Arizona, Babbitt Brothers Trading Company, which today does over 4,000,000 worth of business a year.

The Coconino Sun, Friday, July 7, 1939

The Coconino Sun, Friday, July 7, 1939

Four Tenderfeet Came West In 1886; Stayed, And "Grew Up With The Country"

Babbitt Brothers Went Into Cattle Business, Later Founded Trading Company

By PLATT CLINE

From the present dominant position of Babbitt Brothers Trading Company in the economic realm of northern Arizona it is a far cry back to that February day in 1886, when David Babbitt, 23, recently of Cincinnati, Ohio, arrived in Flagstaff.

The Atlantic and Pacific train (later to become the A. T. & S. F.) on which they arrived in the early evening had taken over 14 hours to make the trip from Albuquerque; the schedule in those days called for almost 65 hours between Albuquerque and Los Angeles, as compared with slightly over 15 hours on the modern streamlined trains of today.

The Flagstaff depot, the first sight that met their eyes, was a box car. "Front" street (Santa Fe Avenue) was nothing more than a mud hole, as were the other streets in the little town of perhaps 1500 people. A typical frontier town of board shacks, populated by a handful of courageous and worth-while citizens, plus a transient element of gamblers, rustlers, outlaws of every description and manner, where shooting scrapes and frequent brawls were the order of the day.

The town had recently been practically wiped out by a fire; the only stone structure in town, the building occupied by the Brannen Mercantile Co., had been completely burned out, leaving nothing but smoke-blackened walls. Brannens had erected a small frame shack on the street where they were temporarily taking care of the mercantile needs of the community.

C. J. Babbitt, still actively engaged in the business of Babbitt Brothers Trading Company, despite his 73 years, remembers that the town of Flagstaff presented a most unimpressive appearance when he arrived in May 1886. The houses were shanties, the streets were frightfully muddy in wet weather, and rivers of dust in dry weather. Hitching rails lined the streets; saloons outnumbered the total of all other business establishments.

David and William Babbitt, together with their brothers, George and Charles J., had sold out their little retail grocery store in Cincinnati a few months previous. Two years before, they had determined to go into the cattle business somewhere in the west, following a number of long talks with Jim Veasey, salesman, who knew the west, and regularly stopped over in Cincinnati. His glowing reports of the opportunities awaiting men of character and courage on the frontier had convinced the brothers that the cattle business offered the greatest possibilities for success.

Looking For a Cattle Ranch

As a result of the decision of the brothers David Babbitt had left Cincinnati in 1885, and had visited cattle ranges in Montana and Wyoming. Not finding just the type of opportunity the brothers desired, he had returned to Cincinnati. The brothers eventually decided on the northern part of Arizona Territory as the most likely location.

At the time of the arrival of David and William Babbitt

in Flagstaff in 1886, the Tonto Basin cattlemen's-sheepmen's war raging; Apache Indian raids were a constant menace; the country was infested with stock rustlers, necessitating that a stockman have a wary eye and a quick gun hand; and the Civil war was just 20 years in the past; nearer to the people of that day than the World war is to us of 1939. Flagstaff was tough, and the surrounding country was tougher; only men of courage and determination could hope to operate cattle and manage to get most of them to market.

The brothers had a letter of introduction to Dr. Brannen, a cousin of the owner of the Brannen Mercantile Co. The Babbitts called on Dr. Brannen upon their arrival, and in a short time had met most of the business men of the town, including John Lind, bookkeeper and general manager of the Brannen store. He was to become, later, a trusted employee of the Babbitts, after the establishment of the great trading company, still years in the future. The brothers took up then temporary residence with Dr. Brannen, in a small frame building standing back of the Bank hotel.

David and William spent their time, for several months, constantly looking for the range and herd of cattle that would measure up to their desires.

First Cattle Purchased

The Babbitt brothers made a deal for their first herd of cattle, over 1000 head, in early May. On May 17, the weekly newspaper, the ancestor of the *Coconino Sun*, edited by George H. Tinker, had this to say: "Just as we are going to press, we are informed that Messrs. Hosler and Warren have sold to Babbitt Bros. of Cincinnati, something over 1000 head of cattle." The cattle were of the "Boot" brand. The week following the purchase of the first herd of stock, the newspaper expanded on the article of the previous week: "The Babbitt Bros. of Cincinnati have purchased from Messrs. Hosler and Warren about 1200 head of stock, consisting of 800 cows, 35 fine grade bulls, 200 two-year olds, and about 200 yearlings. The cattle purchased are all first-class stock, and in fine condition. We are informed by a prominent stockman that he considers the herd one of the best in this vicinity, and considers that the gentlemen have made a cheap and excellent purchase." Thus the beginning of a business that was to spread far and wide, that was to operate literally dozens of business establishments, that was to employ hundreds of people in northern Arizona in years to come.

The cattle were all re-branded with the "C-O-Bar" brand, which is still in use by Babbitts to this day. It was composed of the initial letters of "C" incinnati, "O" hio, as a tribute to the home the boys had left behind. This first herd of cattle were run in the Little Colorado river country, Charles J. Babbitt recalls.

In May, 1886, Charles, 21, arrived in Flagstaff to join brothers in the new venture. From that time on, and for almost half a century, he was to be actively engaged in the stock business. His job in later years, with his brother William, was to take care of the live-stock interests of the not-yet-born Babbitt Brothers Trading Co. He states that the first five years he was in Arizona, he spent practically every minute on the range with the stock.

Looking For Range

Constantly looking the country over for better range and water, it was natural that the brothers should become acquainted with Al Grady and Jack Smith, partners in the stock business, who controlled some excellent land and water rights, the latter consisting of a spring that is now the main water supply for Flagstaff. In company with Grady and Smith, David and William set out on a visit to the famous spring, a trip more or less beset

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Cattle Industry Got Early Start

By EARL R. FORREST

SUNfiles, 1943

John W. Young was a son of Brigham Young, one of America's great empire builders, and even though we may not agree with his doctrines and practices, nevertheless, he was one of the greatest men of his time. Like his father, the son was a man with a vision and he was quick to grasp opportunities. With Jacob Hamblin, the "Leatherstocking of the Southwest," he had explored Arizona as early as 1859, and in the seventies he had led several parties across the Grand Canyon.

After establishing his construction camp in Ft. Valley, he realized the wonderful future of the cattle business afforded by the rich pasture lands on the San Francisco Mountains and the adjacent range. A market was all that was needed and a railroad would make that possible. As soon as his grading and the contracts were completed, Young embarked in the cattle business on a large scale and with other Mormons from Utah and the Little Colorado segments, he organized the Mormon Cattle Company, with his old camp at Ft. Moroni as the home camp.

While riding for Babbitt Bros., this writer spent many a day going over those interesting records of the beginning of Arizona's first big cattle company. These showed that Young had purchased cattle personally in all sections of Arizona and New Mexico from a few head from small ranches to several hundred head from larger outfits. The checks, all signed in John W. Young's bold handwriting were all drawn on the Second National Bank of Santa Fe, N.M., beginning in 1881 and extending down through 1885.

Among other interesting items I found was an old circular of 1868, offering \$1,000 reward for the arrest and conviction of any person stealing cattle, horses or mules owned by the Arizona Cattle Company, or for tampering with any of its brands. It was signed B.B. Bullwinkle, agent and general manager.

The cattle purchased by Young were shipped to Flagstaff and during the next few years the Northern Arizona range was stocked with thousands of head, and deer and antelope which had grazed there since the beginning of time were driven farther back into the wilderness.

The cattle business on the Flagstaff range started an era of great prosperity in 1883 when Young became associated with some eastern capitalists and organized the Arizona Cattle Company, one of the largest the old west ever knew. Fort Moroni was improved and enlarged until it was the finest cattle ranch in the entire Southwest. Danger from raiding Indians was no longer a menace. The stockade was cut down to fence height, several new buildings were erected and the name changed to Ft. Rickerson, in honor of Mr. Rickerson. But this was soon shortened to "the fort" by the cowboys and as this it was known down through the years until it disappeared before the inroads of the homesteaders in more recent times. The other officers besides Mr. Rickerson during the first few

years were John C. De La Vergne, president; Henry R. Von der Holst, vice-president; Ellis Wainwright, manager director; and H.W. Guernsey, secretary.

Charles Goren was the first general manager with headquarters at Ft. Rickerson, but he only remained until the fall of 1885, when he was succeeded by Capt. B.B. Bullwinkle, a picturesque figure in the history of Arizona cattle business.

The Arizona Cattle Company was known as the A One Bar outfit. Its range covered 875 miles but the company only had title to a fraction of this area having purchased from the Atlantic and Pacific railroad 132,000 of the finest timber and grazing land in all Northern Arizona. This included every alternate section for 24 miles in one direction and 18 miles in the other and was part of the grant made by the Federal government to the railroad for construction. The magnitude and extent of this enterprise can best be understood when it is known that over a million dollars was invested by the Arizona Cattle Company in land, cattle and horses. For years, it had more than 14,000 head of cattle on the range which covered an area larger than many an eastern state. From Clark's valley to the Grand Canyon and from the Little Colorado to Ash Fork, many brands were to be seen, all owned by the A One Bar outfit.

largest outfit in Northern Arizona, this was the round-up grounds; but like almost everything else of the old west, it has vanished before the homesteader.

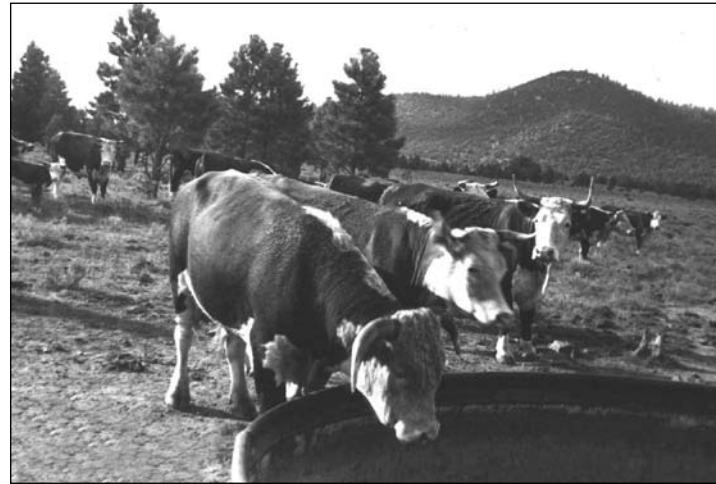
It must have been about 1885 that Young rather hurriedly left the territory. The reason for this rather sudden departure was a warrant charging polygamy, issued for his arrest by authorities hostile to the Mormons.

After rustlers had been wiped out, the Arizona Cattle Company located a winter ranch at Tappan Spring, the only asset being water as the feed in the surrounding country was poor, but a few head of cattle always drifted in the summer as well as winter and a legitimate camp would keep rustlers away in the future.

With the passing of the Arizona Cattle Company, it was never used again except for the occasional visits by packs of cowboys combing the lands for stray cattle.

Today the old Navahopi road from the Grand Canyon to Tuba City, which was constructed through this land by Fred Harvey in 1925, passes along the rim of the little basin in which Tappan Spring is located. In 1926 when I visited Tappan Spring it presented a sad picture of dilapidation and despair.

Under the management of Frank Livermore, the Arizona Cattle Company prospered for about ten years but the end was inevitable.



The fame of Ft. Rickerson as a cattle ranch spread far and wide over the Southwest and other ranches and camps were established on the summer and winter ranges. Up on the Hart Prairie on the side of the San Francisco Mountains above Ft. Valley, the ruins of the old A One bunkhouse and summer camp stood for years. Twenty miles farther north on the plains that extended to the Grand Canyon, is Cedar Ranch, the best known of all the old-time camps. One mile east of this house was the old halfway house, used in the days when tourists to the Grand Canyon traveled by stagecoach from Flagstaff before the railroad was built from Williams to the rim.

On account of its rich grazing and the fact that it was right in the heart of the range, the valley in which Fort Rickerson stood soon became famous as a round-up ground and more cattle have been purchased in Ft. Valley, as it is still called than at any other spot in Arizona. From the days of Young back in the early eighties, down into the years of the present century, long after the A One had passed out of existence, and when the C O Bar was the

Profiting by the experience of the big cattle companies in other areas, the A One management closed out its holdings in 1899 and during the summer the last big round-ups took place under the direction of Jack Diamond, the range foreman. He helped gather 10,000 head of cattle and shipped them to the east.

In November, 1899, the deed signed by Charles L. Rickerson, president, conveying 132,000 fine acres of timber and grazing land of the Arizona Cattle Company to William F. Baker of Manistee, Mich., was filed for record in Flagstaff. The consideration was \$140,000 and Baker held the lands as trustee for Manistee Lumber Company later consolidated with Saginaw Lumber Company, which cut with the best part of the timber during the next few years.

One of the most colorful characters in the history of Northern Arizona was Lot Smith. Member in the Mormon Battalion, elder in the church, commander of the Mormon Militia that harassed Gen. Albert Sidney Johnson's army

Cattle Industry...

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