

Cornville Historical Society E-MAIL NEWS

P.O. Box 1200, Cornville, AZ 86325

CENTENNIAL COUNTDOWN EDITION

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The mission of the Cornville Historical Society is to gather, preserve and share information about the history of rural life within the Cornville postal area from 1860 to the present. This is the fourth in a series of "Centennial Countdown" articles leading to Arizona's 100th Birthday on February 14, 2012.



Hidden Valley

By Linda Allen-Kappel

Hidden Valley, a beautiful isolated parcel of private land that straddles Oak Creek near the north end of Page Springs Road, was originally inhabited by Sinagua Indians, as evidenced by many ruins. Later, it was part of the Yavapai Apache Reservation. It was pioneer James T. Munds who procured the first conveyance of 80 acres from the General Land Office on December 16, 1889. In 1914, the property went from his daughters, Hattie and Jennie Wingfield, to Oliver and Getha Benedict. They transferred the property in 1930 to W.G. and Mattie Kinsey. After the Kinseys, it went to Leon and Ann Crane in 1945. The Kinseys or the Cranes sold off a piece of the property across the creek to Everett Norvell.



The Author Linda Allen-Kappel

In 1949, Hidden Valley is shown as being owned by Lee and Ingrid Matthews. They lived here before that date and probably rented from the Cranes. Ingrid Matthews was my mother. Her husband Lee was a career naval officer who had graduated from Annapolis and served on the aircraft carrier Lexington, as well as other sea duties between the wars. Being a navy man and not a farmer or rancher he really didn't know what to do with a large tract of land. When they divorced sometime in the early 1950's, the property was split between them into two distinct parcels of about 32 acres each.

My mother was born in Minnesota and made her way to Arizona via Hawaii, Florida and Nevada. She used to tell us how much she hated the cold weather and the stories of walking to school with her sister and brothers in snow past her waist. She had two sons, Mitchell in 1938 and Jaxon in 1940,

before arriving here where Lawrence was born in 1947 in Cottonwood. My mother married Thomas M. Allen in 1952; and I came along in 1953.

My father, Tom Allen, was born in Pennsylvania and made his way to Arizona via Colorado where he spent the summers on his grandmother's ranch. He tried to enlist and when they wouldn't take him, he joined the American Field Service and served in places such as France and South Africa as an ambulance driver. He showed up in Arizona in about 1947 according to letters that he sent to his mother back east.

In 1948, my father started building a little cabin just outside the Matthews property on Forest Service land. At this time, my mother was still married to Lee and my father did various odd jobs for them as well as others. He would gather rocks and other building supplies or trade for materials. About that time, he decided it would be an interesting business to sell rock. The idea of Hidden Valley Stoneyard was born. At first it was called Tom and Dale Quarries, Dale Ralston being the other gentleman in the mix. It wasn't until 1970, that he incorporated the business under Hidden Valley Enterprises. At one time, he had the largest inventory of stone in Northern Arizona and owned multiple quarries on Casner Mountain and many permits for surface material. People loved to come and visit with him as much as to buy rocks. In the 1960's, he built a bigger ranch style house that my brother Lawrence lives in today.

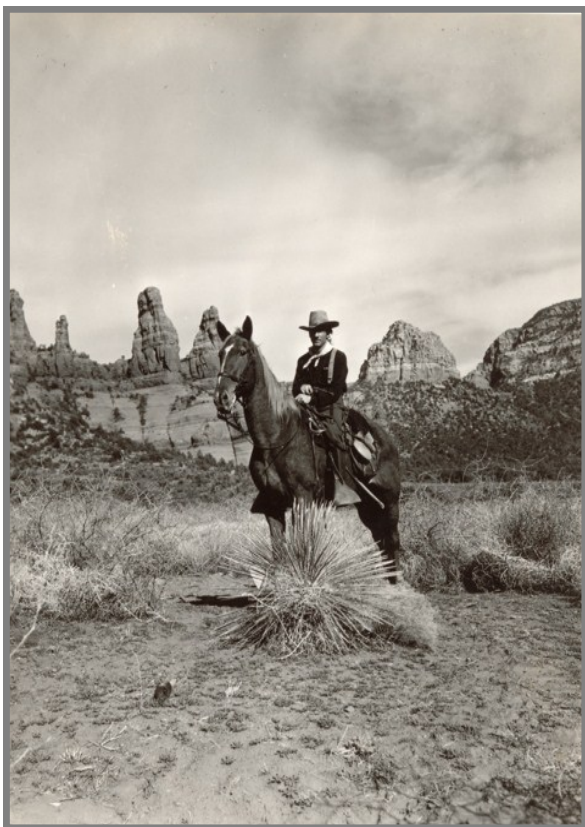
The other parcel that Lee Matthews retained after the divorce was owned by several absentee owners after he left. E. O. Davis was the first one that comes to my mind. After Mr. Davis, came the Porters. Mr. Porter had his spine fused and he would show up in a big station wagon in which he was lying down. They would roll him out and prop him up and then he could walk around. Hubert Cluff and his wife lived there as caretakers. They were great fishermen, and we spent a lot of time trying to catch big catfish. An investment group made up of about four pilots came next. They wanted to divide Hidden Valley into little 1/2 to 1 acre trailer parcels. My parents were within a few thousand dollars of purchasing that half back, but they decided not to in the end. Clyde Hutchinson did purchase it and later First Federal Savings took a portion of it back. That's when the property was divided into multiple 2.5 and 5 acre parcels in the mid 1970's. The Sims, Groats, Hatchs, Luecks and Candy Cashman all ended up owning property. Others who lived there included the Littles, Nye's, Wheatons, Jacksons, Byrds, Findleys and probably some I've forgotten.

There is a large white house there which is one of the earliest ones built, although there are some ruins of a very small one room cabin near where my father built his cabin that was probably built before any of the other structures. Unfortunately we don't know who or when it was built. I used to use it as a "fort" when I was little and it housed various kinds of livestock over the years.

Meanwhile back on the Matthews/Allen side, my father was working whatever jobs he could find to make a living. He worked for Ruth Twining at Bubbling Ponds, Smelter City Iron Works, the Trout Farm, as well as hauling wood, fixing fences and working as an extra whenever the movies came to town. In 1948, he worked on the film "*Copper Canyon*" and made \$16.50 a day. He didn't work for Fox as they didn't pay as well and Paramount thought he was too young looking. When the road to Cornville was being paved, he tried to get work there, but the unions would not hire him. He cleared many acres of mesquites and after he married my mother, they planted an orchard and also raised some beef. My mother sold peaches in Jerome and later she had so many good customers that they came here. Lawrence and I spent many hot July days picking peaches.



The one-room cabin "fort" as it once looked



Thomas M. Allen in late 1940's
In a movie near Bell Rock

I even remember as a little girl being an extra with my mother in "*The Strawberry Roan*". They had about seven different horses that all looked alike. They were all trained to do different things. They were filming a rodeo scene at the posse grounds in Sedona. There really wasn't much there then, just some bleachers set up around an arena. It was hot and dusty and not much fun. My dad bought a horse from one of the neighbors. He was a big Tennessee walking horse named Flicker. He was a reddish color with a white blaze on his face. I would ride in later years on the weekends and summers with the Wheaton girls or meet Martina Parkinson from the Deer Pass Ranch (now called Angel Valley). He was so tall I had to "park" him next to something in order to mount up. I was too small to lift the saddle and get it cinched up tight enough so that it wouldn't roll under his belly. So it was just easier to ride bareback or with a pad.

Everett and Bea Norvell owned acreage on the portion of Hidden Valley that lies across Oak Creek. He was a World War I veteran and "would be" inventor and rumor had it, she was a mail order bride. He passed away at the VA hospital in Prescott. I was a little girl at the time and was not allowed in his room, so I stayed in the waiting area and drew pictures for him. Bea lived on her property across the creek until the mid-1970s when she moved into Cottonwood. She had a parking space across the creek and lugged her groceries and water across the creek and about 3/4 of a mile up to her house. She was a very slight woman and didn't have drinking water to her house. She also had wood heat. I loved to ride my horse over there and have tea with her several times a week when I was a girl. Later when I was married, we always

watched her chimney for smoke in the mornings to make sure she was all right. One year during a very large flood, my husband, Mike road her "go devil" across the creek to check on her. The "go devil" was a cable strung across the creek and anchored on both sides and there was a basket that you pulled across hand over hand. My mother and I visited her many times after she moved into town.

I went to school in Cornville, at the location it is today, from first through sixth grade. We had one teacher for two grades. I had Mrs. Grey, Ree Kramer and Lois Price. I finished seventh and eighth grade at Clemenceau, in Cottonwood where the museum is now. In 1971, I graduated from Camp Verde High School and married Mike Wilkin in November of that year. We lived in the little house my dad built for nine years. In the 1990's, we had to demolish the little house as it was on a 99-year Forest Service lease that they cancelled.

Mike and I started building our house in 1976 and finished it in 1980. We split up about 5 years later; and in 1986, I married Garry Kappel. Garry and I now live in that house, although it has been remodeled a bit since its original design. We have a daughter, Abigail, who is a senior at the University of Arizona, studying journalism and mass communication.

My half-brother, Lawrence Matthews, grew trees and plants for many years after he graduated from ASU and came back here. He also went to school in Cornville (in the little red school house), then to Cottonwood and to high school at Mingus Union, which was in Jerome at the time. Mitchell had polio as a youngster and then as a teenager was in a bad auto accident in which he broke his back. His father Lee lived in the Scottsdale area after he and my mother split up and Mitch was with him most of the time. He graduated from ASU with an engineering degree and worked at Motorola until his passing in 1970.

Jaxon lived for a year with my mother's sister in Minnesota. My mother had tuberculosis and was bedridden for a time. He moved to Scottsdale with his dad and went to high school there, but dropped out after three years and joined the Air Force. He went to radar school in Biloxi, Mississippi and Great Falls, Montana and was later stationed in Sioux City, Iowa. He got his degrees from San Jose State and worked as a librarian for 15 years at Stanford University. He lives in Scotts Valley near San Jose California. He acquired some property at Hidden Valley when my mother passed away in 2000, but Lawrence and I have since purchased his piece.



Some rough stone inventory.



A little corner of our gift shop at the stone yard

There are two residences on the Allen/Matthews side and various outbuildings at the stone yard, which is zoned commercial. The stone yard inventory is owned by Mike Wilkin; and Garry and I own a lapidary, jewelry business. The ten-acre parcel that the stone yard sits on is owned by Flying A Land, LLC, which is actually me. We had a cattle brand called the Upside Down Flying A, which is where I adopted the name.

The other half of the valley is owned by the Sims, Harpers and McCains, and there are eight or nine different houses. The Luecks are full-time property managers for the Harpers and McCains. Renz Jennings and David Block own parcels on the ridge above the creek, which was all part of the original Hidden Valley.



Pretty sunset with the author's functioning windmill