History of Don Alonzo Sanford and the Development of the Stock Valley Ranch in the Cienega Valley
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This timeline covers the ten-year period from 1873 to 1882 of Don Alonzo Sanford’s arrival in Arizona, his settlement in the Cienega Valley with numerous Sanford and Bloxton family members (many of whom work for or with Don Alonzo), and his departure from the Valley when Sanford’s Stock Valley Ranch was purchased by the Vail family and associates. The Vail acquisition of Sanford lands was a critical component of their control of the Cienega Valley lands and later the northern lands of the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area. The Stock Valley Ranch included 2080 acres of fee land spanning 5.5 miles of prime ranch and farmland along the Cienega Creek. The sale included water rights, physical improvements, “grazing rights” across the lower portion of the Upper Cienega, and a 5-acre surveyed and platted parcel known as “Empire City” which is the likely location of Walter Vail’s later pump site that later supplied the Total Wreck mine and town with water.

Don Alonzo Sanford was an enterprising and competitive businessman who acquired large quantities of land and made use of many different resources to fund his business operations. Like many others of the era (including the Vails), Sanford laid claims on numerous mine sites. Sanford ran both cattle and sheep on his ranch lands – much to the consternation of his cattle-only-raising neighbors who despised sheep.

Sanford made use of all of the legal, and sometimes less than legal, means to acquire watered grazing lands including all of the land on both sides of the Cienega Creek from the Ag Fields to the area just South of the Narrows. With his associated ‘range rights’ (i.e. his control of access to water – though not ownership of land), Sanford had the use of more than 25,000 acres of prime grazing land with little interference from others. In his 10 years in the Cienega Valley, Sanford gained both money and significant social standing among the successful entrepreneurs of Southern Arizona. He also made many enemies.

Figures 1 and 2. Don Alonzo Sanford and Louisa Bloxton Sanford
Many people from both the Cienega Valley and the Sonoita Valley flow in and out of these notes. Denton, Don’s older brother, leaves the Cienega Valley to establish his own ranch in Sonoita. Denton often returns to help Don’s work and vice versa. Sanford marries Louisa Bloxton from Virginia and persuades much of her family to come participate in his businesses and land acquisition efforts. Brother Franklin Sanford, a TB sufferer, comes to live with Don and Louisa Bloxton Sanford for a number of years, then with Denton, but dies apparently at the Stock Valley Ranch. Robert Bloxton, Louisa’s brother, works for Don but later owns a ranch in Sonoita. Hired help, like John Cady, Chinese Sam Key and Louey Bockey, move back and forth between Sonoita and Cienega Valleys. Denton Sanford dies in 1885 and leaves his Sonoita Ranch to Don’s three children; Don manages Denton’s ranch for years afterward. That ranch is sold later to become the Circle Z Ranch.

Don Alonzo Sanford put in place many of the land activities that continued through the Vail and Boice, and Greenway and Bell eras including large-scale water management (ditching) and farm development in the Ag Field area. He initiated landscape changes that are still present, though little understood, in the landscape today. This collected information presents a remarkably detailed 10-year window into the early activities in the Cienega Valley and its resources as well as life in Southern Arizona.

The timeline is assembled from a variety of resources including: Pat Garber’s “Westward Bound with the Bloxtons” 2019 that provides excepts of Bloxton and Sanford family diaries; articles from Tucson newspapers from Newspapers.com; J Jefferson Reid’s archaeological assessment of the Sanford home site in “Collection of Cultural Resources at Sanford Ranch” 2005; Sanford family documents, letters, diaries, photographs, and ledgers mostly generated by Don Alonzo and Louisa Bloxton Sanford now archived in the UA Special Collections; John Cady’s memoir entitled “Arizona’s Yesterday” 1916; and General Land Office records for Townships 18S Range 17E and 19S 17E.

Notes in red are my comments on these records, what I think they mean, and how they relate to each other and to outside historical events.

Late 1872- Early 1873.

Don Alonzo Sanford (age 32) and his brother, Denton G Sanford (age 41) return to southern AZ trailing the remains of a larger herd of cattle from Texas. While traveling through Texas, the herd was attacked and raided by Comanche Indians. Don and Denton choose to settle and plan to file homestead claims in the upper Cienega Valley in Township 18S Range 17E about 6 or 7 miles NNE of EN Fish’s Empire Ranch. (EN Fish was the likely builder of the ranch house that Walter Vail and Herbert Hislop later purchase in 1876.) Few other brave souls (Tom Gardner and family may be the only ones) are living in the valley. The short-lived Chiricahua Apache Reservation had recently been established in the Sulphur Springs Valley; habitation outside of the nearby Tucson area is, for the moment, relatively safe. Don and Denton, originally from New York, had discovered Arizona and the town of Tucson when they, as part of the Union’s California Column under James Carleton, marched through in 1862.
1873 Don Alonzo Sanford (DAS) journeys East to Washington DC to make claims for remuneration for his and Denton’s (DGS) losses of cattle to Comanche Indians. While there, DAS meets Louisa Jane Bloxton, a Virginia resident, working as a seamstress in DC. He returns to AZ in late 1873 or early 1874. DGS remains in AZ to continue residence on their preemption land claims and manage the growing cattle herd.

August 1873 DGS buying horses in San Antonio

3/21/1874 Sanford (DA or DG?) is trailing 1500 head of cattle westward. The short articles and notes in the Tucson newspapers were often generated by individuals who came into the office and reported their own activities and events.

6/6/1874 Sanford (DA or DG?) is residing in the Cienega Valley.

8/22/74 Sanford brothers living on the Cienega.

**Figure 3.** T H White’s map of T18S R17E showing the Sanford Ranch (marked in yellow), Cienega Creek (highlighted by the red crooked line) and the Empire Mountains in the Northwest. DAS’ and family later land acquisitions also added. Note the discontinuity of the White’s Cienega Creek. White suggests the area is one large marshland (location of the later Ag Fields).
8/29/74 TF White will soon begin surveying the Cienega Valley over the Sanford Brothers ranches. Theodore F White was a surveyor who worked for the General Land Office (GLO). He surveyed much of the early land and mining claims in SE AZ. Without an approved survey of the land, a potential homesteader could not file a formal claim and leaving any home settlement efforts in legal jeopardy. This newspaper report suggests that the Sanfords were paying White to survey their area in advance of other townships. Only relatively wealthy ranchers could afford to hire the surveyor. Surveyors were usually assigned to record the most valuable, in-demand lands – generally mining districts – first. Unpopulated ranching areas (with less well-off families) usually were last in line. White chose (for unknown reasons) to survey a N-S line of 8 townships spanning the area from the south-facing Rincon slopes down to Camp Crittenden near Sonoita and the township around Greaterville all between October 1874 and December 1874. The Sanford and EN Fish ranches happened to fall within those townships. Note the newspaper’s use of the plural Sanfords. This is likely to refer to DGS but could also include Franklin Sanford (FS). No known date of Franklin’s arrival in AZ is recorded but it was subsequent to DGS and DAS settlement in the Cienega.

9/5/74 DG Sanford in from Cienega Ranch. Notes considerable fever in the area.

9/19/74 DAS in town. He sold 300 head of cattle. The Sanford Brothers have 1,300 head and 600 calves, a large corral and plenty of water.

11/7-14/74 TF White surveys Township 18S Range 17E around Sanford’s settlement. “Good grazing land in South and East portions of the township. Cienega Valley lies along the eastern portion and contains rich land with an abundance of water for all purposes of stock raising. There is comparatively little timber with a scattering of oak and mesquite trees.” White notes that Sanford’s ranch (singular) contains 3 buildings; a road nearby exists running within the floodplain of Cienega Creek; the soil of the floodplain is rich; a water hole (spring) sits at the boundary between sections 34 and 35; water in the Creek is ½ mile wide just north of the hole; and the bajadas near the floodplain are covered with “considerable grass”. The detailed information within these surveyor notes was used by prospective homesteaders to decide where to make their settlements and file a claim. TF White’s survey was officially filed (made public) on January 8, 1875. It is on this date that settlers like DAS and DGS can formally apply for one (or more) of many kinds of land claims. Alternatively, they can buy the land outright at $1.25 per acre.

1/2/75 DAS Advertisement in the newspaper says his brand is DS and that no one else should sell cattle with his brand on them. At this time there was no formal published register of brands; ranchers needed to publicize their brands so that everyone (butchers, buyers, nearby ranchers, and thieves) would be aware of ownership.

1/18/75 DAS proposes marriage to Louisa Bloxton. He warns her that he has two bachelor brothers (DGS and FS) who may be living with them.

2/9/75 John B Bloxton and DAS recorded as witnesses who swear that Franklin Sanford (FS) settled on the land 160 acres in W1/2NW1/4, NW1/4SW1/4 in section 35 and SW1/4SW1/4 in section 26 T18S R17E in April 1874 and built a house April 12, 1874. John B Bloxton, Louisa’s
brother, was not present in AZ on this date. How he can act as a witness is unknown – unless someone else is standing in to act as JBB. This action is typical of how DAS makes his long-term plans for future land acquisition and how he manipulates the land system legally and illegally to achieve those aims. If someone claimed that he had settled in advance of the filing date, that settlement action and date had to be verified by someone else as witness – a procedure easily falsified by friends and easy acquaintances.

2/25/75 Louisa Bloxton accepts proposal and prepares to travel west. One Sanford/Bloxton family story states that after their engagement, DAS sent Louisa a nugget of gold in the shape of an ear. The elements of the story suggest that DAS may have had early success in gold mining in Greaterville.

4/27/75 Franklin formally files a preemption claim of 160 acres in W1/2NW1/4, NW1/4SW1/4 in section 35 and SW1/4SW1/4 in section 26 T18S R17E. Franklin was the elder brother of Denton and Don (born 1827) who came west after DAS and DGS in hopes of curing his tuberculosis infection. His preemption and later desert land claims in the Cienega Valley covered the most valuable lands, now known as the Ag Fields.

5/1/75 DAS and brother, Franklin, in Tucson from ranch in upper Cienega.

5/4/75 DAS files a preemption claim on NE1/4 of section 23 T18S R17E. Claims that he settled on the land on 7/6/74.

6/12/75 “Louisa Bloxton” files for a preemption claim of 160 acres on E1/2SE1/4, SE1/4SW1/4 in section 23 and NW1/4NE1/4 of section 26 T18S R17E and claims “she” settled on the land on 4/20/75. DAS must have filed for her since she is still in Virginia.

8/15/75 Louisa and her brother, John Benjamin Bloxton, are on a train heading to San Francisco where they will meet DAS. From there they will sail to LA. According to family stories, DAS buys horses, wagon, and camping equipment in LA and transports Louisa and ‘Bennie’ to Tucson.

9/11/75 DAS “some years a resident of Tucson, who has been on a visit to CA, came in by his private conveyance last Thursday (September 2 or 9) in company of John B Bloxton and his sister.”

9/11/75 Bennie Bloxton files on a homestead claim

10/5/1875 DAS and Louisa Bloxton married in Tucson.

12/10/75 DGS goes to home. Denton likely claimed land or purchased a ranch in Sonoita shortly after Louisa arrived. Nonetheless, DGS, a bachelor, continues to visit Cienega Valley regularly.

12/20/75 Franklin goes to sawmill. The “sawmill” is frequently referred to in LBS’ diary entries. Not certain whether she is referring to Sawmill Canyon or the milling site that EN Fish is running in Sawmill Canyon or another sawmill in the area. Franklin appears to be living still with DAS and LBS.
12/25/75 Bennie is still living with Louisa and DAS. Bennie’s homestead claim is on land along Cienega Creek south of Louisa’s claim.

2/20/76 Louisa writes to Bennie. Thus Bennie no longer staying at Sanford ranch.

2/19/76 DAS brought in 29 oz of placer gold from the Santa Rita Mountains. Over the years, DAS files numerous mining claims in the Greaterville and Empire Districts.

5/15/76 Louisa Bloxton Sanford receives title to 160 acres in sections 23 and 26, T18SR17E. Given that JBB and LB arrived in Tucson only 7 months earlier, DAS must have filed on the land and paid for her title with cash in advance. If “Louisa” applied for a preemption claim, DAS must have filed it no later than March 1875 – just after they were engaged. Under GLO rules at this time, only one member of each household can file on a claim. It was essential that Louisa’s name be put down on a claim before she was married.

8/11/76 Etta Sanford, 1st daughter, born.

9/16/76 DAS files a Timber Culture claim on W1/2SW1/4 and W1/2NW1/4 in section 11 T19SR17E. The Timber Culture Act was passed in 1873 to encourage settlers to plant and nurture trees in open landscapes. The act allowed claimants to make claims of 160 acres at no cost if they planted 40 acres of trees and cared for them for 10 years. The acreage that DAS claimed (where #914 drops down into the Cienega Creek east-side floodplain) appears to have important springs. DAS is “threatening” the newly arrived Vail and Hislop by making a nearby land claim in order to justify his grazing use in their area. DAS relinquishes the claim on 11/4/1882.

10/10/76 DAS receives title for a preemption claim for 160 acres in the NE1/4 of section 13, T18SR17E. This is the historic location of the Sanford Ranch and HQ. The Preemption Act became law in 1841 and allowed a squatter who was a US resident, older than 21, and head of a household to claim 160 acres of land that he (she) had lived on for 14 months.

10/10/76 Franklin Sanford receives title to a preemption claim of 160 acres of land in section 26 and 35.

10/10/76 Bennie Bloxton receives title to a preemption claim of 160 acres of land in section 26. It is likely that DAS applied for a land claim when he knew in August 1875 that Bennie was accompanying Louisa and might stay with the family for a while. All of the Fee lands of the Ag Field and the headquarters of the Cienega Ranch derive from Franklin’s preemption claim, his later Desert Land Entry (DLE) claim, and JBB’s preemption claim immediately north in section 26. Theoretically, FS and JBB would be building their own homes, living in them and running cattle on their own lands before they proved up on those claims. It appears more likely that Frank and Bennie (before 2/76) were living with or near DAS and LBS.

1/27/77 Ruling against DGS for delinquent payment of $7,173 means that the parcel of land of 160 acres known as the Sanford Ranch in Sonoita will be put up for auction. DGS moved away from Cienega Valley to a different ranch 18 miles south of DAS, apparently as a purchase of land. This first ranching effort was apparently lost in non-payment of debt. No information on location of land or claimant.
2/23/77 Louisa “goes to Frank’s”. Franklin could be living in Sonoita either with or near Denton. If so, LBS would be riding or driving 18 miles to Sonoita. Otherwise, Louisa was only riding 3 miles south to the Ag Field area.

3/2/77 Letter to Margaret Newhall, fiancée to WLV, from Walter Vail. “Our next neighbor Mr. Sanford is married to a Washington girl, we all like her very much and feel sorry for her as her husband is a rogue and scamp and one of the biggest liars I ever saw. So far we have got along together very well but how long it will last it is hard to tell. I don’t think he would steal anything he couldn’t get away with but my opinion is that his getting away with capacity is pretty large.”

3/11/77 DAS, LBS and John Cady went fishing in Cienega Creek. DAS caught 42 fish. Cady was a close friend and intermittent employee of DAS over decades and author of a colorful narrative about SAZ in the mid-late 1800s.

3/18/1877 DAS and LBS go fishing in Cienega. Caught 20.

5/20/77 Etta and Louisa walk up on “High Mountain.” The bajada west of the Sanford home?

5/17/77 Hislop comes to dinner. Herbert Hislop was Walter Vail’s first partner with whom he purchased the Empire Ranch in 1876. There was no love lost between Vails, Hislop or Harvey and DAS but they all liked Louisa.

5/27/77 Herbert Hislop writes to his sister, Amy, “I am afraid that we are likely to have trouble with a neighbor who has come to settle down near us with some sheep and will not keep them on his own range, and the consequence is it drives all our cattle all over the shop. He is trying to annoy us as much as he can but he will find he has got hold of the wrong kind to try that on. I showed him how I could shoot with a revolver and rifle one day and made splendid shots, it’s just as well to let them know you can shoot pretty well, as a man is respected more in this country if he can shoot pretty straight. He brings sheep even to our water at another ranch we own. We had a row with him straight off and told him if we caught him there again we would stampede the whole of his sheep …”. It is likely that Hislop is referring to Sanford who runs both sheep and cattle on his range.

6/3/77 DAS and John Cady to the mines. Not stated which ones.

6/5/77 Franklin Sanford applies for a Desert Land Entry claim of 640 acres in sections 26, 34, and 35 as well as section 3 in T19S R18E. FS pays $160. The application is witnessed by DAS and John C Bullard, another homesteader to the south. Franklin’s DLE claim surrounds on 3 sides his previous 160-acre preemption claim greatly expanding his agricultural lands.

6/7/77 3 chickens drowned in “saca”. Hawk catching them. Sanford’s ranch was situated just above the floodplain of the Cienega Creek. Many diary entries referring to the “Saca” or “Saco”. The words are anglicized versions of “acequia”. It is likely that the Sanford ranch had ditched and irrigated areas in the immediate vicinity around the ranch HQ as well as at the larger farmed fields further south on Franklin’s Ag Field.

6/8/77 DAS applies for a 640-acre Desert Land Entry claim in SW1/4, N1/2 of SW1/4, and NW1/4 Section 13; SE1/4SW1/4 and E1/2 of Section 12 T18S R17E and pays an initial fee of
$160. John C Bullard and Franklin Sanford are witnesses. The Desert Land Act was approved on March 3, 1877. It is the first piece of legislation that allows for claims of up to 640 acres – 4 times the amount of land allowed by the Homestead or Preemption Acts. DAS and Franklin are both moving very fast to make these large acreage claims before anyone else does so in the Cienega Valley.

7/6/77 DAS files for a Homestead claim on the E1/2SE1/4 of section 23 and E1/2NE1/4 of section 26 T18S R17E. All of these multiple Bloxton and Sanford claims are attempting to cover the full length of the Cienega Creek floodplain in this Township. In doing so, DAS denies anyone else’s cattle access to water and essentially removes all potential grazing competition.

8/6/77 Two fish caught in San Pedro River.

9/5/77 Denton to saw mill.

9/19/77 Amo Sanford, 2nd daughter, born.

10/6/77 Indians prowling Sonoita and Davidson Canyons. 2 head of cattle stolen from DGS in Sonoita. The Chiricahua Indian Reservation was eliminated in 1876. The Chiricahua Apaches were formally relocated to San Carlos Reservation. However, periodically, a small group would flee the reservation and return to old patterns of depredation.

10/15/77 Charley (Chinese cook?) killed 12 wild ducks.

11/7/77 PM Hilton to dinner. Bought very nice leg of bear.

For the first 7 months of 1878, DAS was again in Washington DC, probably attempting to persuade the federal government to grant him and Denton reparations for the lost cattle. Denton was often at Stock Valley Ranch helping. Other ranch hands were hired including Jerry Green (who worked for the Vails as well). LBS takes on more of the running of the ranch. Franklin Sanford’s TB becomes worse.

1/31/78 Sanford Brothers of Sonoita (DGS and FS?) selling Bacon and 70,000 lbs of Corn

2/2/78 Maish visiting. In later years, DAS leased or purchased the Buenavista Ranch, the last remnant of the Buenavista Land Grant north of the border, near Nogales from Frederick Maish and Tom Driscoll (also owners of the Canoa land grant). DAS was good at maintaining business relations with many of the ranch owners in Southern AZ (except for the Vails).

2/5/78 Got grape vines from California. These were likely planted around the Sanford HQ. Sanford was always interested in importing plants (shrubs, vegetables, fruit and other trees) and planting them around the house. Records of purchases found in personal ledgers. DAS also planted a long line of cottonwood trees on the east side of the Stock Valley Ranch house; decaying remnants of that line still present today.

2/16/78 Old Charley died. First of 2 hands known to die at the Ranch and mentioned by LBS this year.
2/26/78 Green plowed the yard. Mexicans leveled it. Suggests that the yard being readied for planting was nearby. Site for purchased grapevines?

3/2/78 Manuel, Mexican worker, died. Potentially 2 graves at or near the ruins of the Sanford Ranch.

3/13/78 Letter to Ned Vail from Walter Vail. “Harvey and I intend to take up a mine claim near our place that was shown to me by a man that is working for Mr. Sanford (Jerry Green). He gave Harvey some of the rock to have assayed and said we might have the claim if we wanted it. So we told him we would take up the mine and if we ever made anything out of it, we would give him a third of the profit.”

4/2/78 Denton and hired hand set willows on the saca. Either planting willows to hold ditches in place or placing willows as some component of a gate? No info as to where “saca” was located.

5/16/78 Robert V Bloxton arrives in AZ. Commences work 5/20. Robert (RVB), LBS’s oldest brother, arrives from Virginia. Few of the Bloxton children now remain in VA. The south is still recovering from the devastation of the Civil War. Robert stays for years in AZ as helper to LBS and right-hand man to DAS. He often oversees many of DAS’s projects. He had been exempted from fighting in the Civil War because of his scoliosis. Nonetheless, he is an active individual working for Sanford.

5/18/78 Boardman hauls rocks to the spring. Not known which spring LBS refers to.

5/18-23/78 LBS details much of Franklin’s decline. Appears that Franklin is dying of tuberculosis at Sanford Ranch.

5/24/78 Frank in a stupor all day. Dies at 7:25 PM.

5/25/78 Sent for PM Hilton, Green and a hired hand. Buried Frank. According to other newspaper records, Frank was residing at DGS’s Sonoita Ranch and was buried on what is now called Sanford Butte above the Circle Z Ranch. However, from the descriptions in Louisa’s diary entries, Franklin died at the DAS Ranch and probably was buried there too. Not obvious that Denton was present.

If true, then there are 3 bodies may be buried near the Sanford Ranch ruins.

7/30/78 DAS and Ida Bloxton, LBS’s younger sister, return from the East.

9/12/78 Robert killed a wild goose.

9/22/78 Ida and LBS went up on top of high hill (behind house to the west?)

10/1/78 DAS is appointed by Pima County Probate Court administrator of Franklin Sanford’s estate.

10/26/78 Sanford Brothers on the Cienega have good grass, water, rich agricultural fields, and improvements.
11/14/78 DGS files for a preemption claim in Sonoita at the Florence Land Office for 160 acres in T22S R15E Section 21.

1/11/79 DAS and PM Hilton (rancher & miner on east slopes of Empire Mountains) enter into partnership to run and supply a butcher shop in Tucson on the corner of Congress and Church Plaza called the Stockton Market.

1/16/79 Denton advertising smoked hams and bacon from pigs raised on the Sonoita Ranch. The meats are sold at the Stockton market.

1/31/79 Denton brought barley. Barley was the crop that DAS planted on Franklin’s DLE and preemption claims (the Ag Field area) as evidence of agricultural efforts. Successful crop production was essential to proving up on and gaining title to any homestead or DLE claim.

February 1879 Letter from LBS to DAS “Wright is talking about preempting some of John Bullard’s land. I suppose to sell to the English.” … “I don’t know how I can live in one room. I want to see the place. I don’t like living as we are at all.” John Bullard filed a homestead claim in the 1870s and finally got title to it in 1881. He claimed land in section 10, T19S R17E (land at the eastern end of Empire Gulch where it joins the Cienega). The “English” refers to WL Vail, Herbert Hislop, and John Harvey who came from Nova Scotia and/or England. LBS appears to be struggling to live in a small house with too many other bodies and 2 young children. It is possible that DAS is proposing to build a larger house in a different location or additions to the present one.

2/9/79 Robert and DAS to Summit and Bob Tail Ox Mines. Two of his long running mining claims in the Empire area.


3/20/79 LBS finished sheet for large room. New construction?

March 1879 DAS is investing in land for development in Tucson.

4/3/79 DAS will deliver fresh beef to Camp Lowell at 11.25 cents/lbs

4/11/79 DAS wins contract to supply Camp Huachuca with 100,000 lbs of barley. Had proposed 200,000. It’s likely that DAS can’t supply all of that material; he is probably selling barley from Denton’s farmlands too.

4/30/79 DGS gains patent to preemption claim in Sonoita in remarkably short time.


6/1/79 Harvey to ride horseback with Ida.

6/20/79 The Tucson Telegraph office moves into a downtown building owned by DAS.

7/15/79 Sanford and Hilton dissolve partnership. Sanford will run meat market alone. Uncertain that business actually continues for long. Last Stockton Market advertisement in August 22, 1879 newspaper.
1879 DAS is either building a new or reconstructing part of an existing road from Pantano to the Stock Valley Ranch. The road crosses the Cienega Creek and requires one or multiple bridges to maintain ready access. He expects to be able to charge a toll for the use of his road/bridge access. This kind of private construction was not uncommon during this era when there were few public funds for road construction and maintenance. Apparently he hired a man to take toll payments to cross the bridge.

8/25/79 DAS brings from Sonoita 2 old shovels & 2 shovel handles, 2 three tined forks, 4 trace chains & a lot of pieces, 1 Set harness, 4 collars & 4 bridles. Jim Quinn and 9 men worked on fence filling in.


8/30/79 5 hired hands on fence. 4 hands on bridge hauling stone in AM and dirt in PM.

9/1/79 Robert & others drew dirt on bridge. Jim Quinn on fence with 6 men. To ‘draw dirt’ means to collect it using a fresno scraper, a wooden clam shell-like structure, pulled by horses or mules that scooped up dirt and was dragged to where the dirt would be dumped. Stock tanks were often dug out with this tool.

9/5/79 Robert, hired Mexicans, and DAS went after posts with 2 wagons. 3 hired Mexicans fixed road. Robert & hired hand brought 2 loads of poles. 2 hired hands ploughed at fence & Jim banked up dirt

9/6/79 Robert & Valenzuela drew posts. Jim and hired help worked on fence. DAS marked out saco with plow in AM. To “draw a post” means to skin it of bark. A drawknife was a hand tool that removed bark from a log or post before using that wood in construction.

9/8/79 3 hired men fixed road at posts

9/12/79 Jim and all hands on ditch across Cienega

9/15/79 DAS goes to CA to purchase wool press, mower, reaper and other agricultural equipment.

11/8/79 DAS, RVB and 3 hired hands fix 9’ saco at RR bridge for saco to Milk Ranch. Put in stone and logs. Milk Ranch may have been another ranch owned by DAS or DGS. Only source of location information about this ranch is from George Roskruge’s 1893 Map that places ‘Milk Ranch’ adjacent to DGS’ ranch in Sonoita.

11/10/79 DAS, RVB, Walter, and 6 hired hands and 3 RR men on saco above Milk Ranch hauled dirt and fixed dam in AM. RVB and 6 men at Rock Point at turn to Milk Ranch.

11/12/79 RVB and 6 men on Milk Ranch sacos. Fix to arroyo at cross fence.
11/13/79 DAS, RVB, Walter, and 9 hired Mexicans on aqueduct between Milk and Farm Ranch. Hauled rocks, logs, etc.

12/27/79 DAS and RVB up to Bob Tail Ox and Summit mines. Burrus commences to sink shaft for assessment work for $100. In order to retain “ownership” or control of a mining claim, the claimant had to invest $100 before the end of each calendar year and document that effort.

December 1879/January 1880 Ada Sanford, 3rd child, born.

1/14/80 DAS delivers 500 head of cattle to San Carlos Indian Reservation.

2/13/80 DAS bought 8 sacks of barley. DAS likely planting in Franklin’s DLE lands in order to show “results of improvements on the land.”

3/2/80 DAS publicly (in newspaper) locates Summit mine in Empire district SW of Contention and Justice mines.

3/3/80 Franklin estate in probate court. DAS, as administrator, asks to sell property to ‘pay for Franklin’s debts’. DAS later ‘sells’ Franklin’s land to DGS and then buys it back to sell to the Vail family.

3/9/80 Robert plowed, other hands cut brush and cleaned saco.

3/11/80 Dan and Robert plowed saco in field, with 3 hands cleaned out.

3/11/80 The General Land Office resurveys the boundaries of the San Jose de Sonoita land grant. It is likely that Denton and others will lose some part of their claimed lands. The grant lands had been surveyed in 1876 and opened for homesteading. Many settlers, including DGS, chose to settle in the Sonoita Valley based on the initial survey and past federal court decisions.

3/30-31/80 Depositions at Florence for Final Proof by DAS, DGS, and RVB regarding DAS’ DLE claim. In order to gain title to a homestead claim, the homesteader had to document his “improvements” at the general land office; he also had to bring witnesses who would describe their relationship to the claimant and the land. These witnesses would then be closely examined separately to confirm the claimed improvement efforts. Bringing business associates, family members, or hired hands was the prime mechanism for asserting claims of exaggerated accomplishments. Water rights in Arizona, prior to 1919, were acquired by first use. The spring that DAS drew water for his crops was not within the boundary of his land but he was likely the first to “make use” i.e. manipulate it to serve his needs.

DAS statement: Only one crop of 25 acres of barley planted this year.

DGS statement: 49 years old, farmer. This water was conducted on the land 2 months ago for the first time. He planted 25-30 acres a few weeks ago. DAS has conveyed water “from a small stream” into ditches to irrigate and make fertile 300 acres of land. Two main ditches ¼ or ½ miles apart with secondary ditches 50 yards to ½ mile in length. The main ditches are 3’ wide and 2’ deep. Secondaries are 18” wide and 9” deep. Cannot state whether DAS has water rights.
RVB statement: 40 years old, farmer. DAS has grown barley but the land could produce potatoes and wheat or any other crop. Water has been conveyed since last summer. Primary ditches are parallel; secondary ditches in irregular orientation. Does not know if DAS has water rights.

3/31/80 DAS, DGS, RVB and PM Hilton (neighbor in the Empire Mountains) bonded Summit and Bob Tail Ox mines for $8000 on working bond of $100 due in 60 days to Haynes and Lucas. Judge Haynes later acts as DAS defense judge when DAS accused of stealing Vail cattle.

4/7/80 Robert and DAS put keotes (? Can anyone discern what anglicized misspelling of this likely Spanish word could be?) on old kitchen and vigas on new one. Paredes and Montes peeled keotes. Rafael, Roma, and Alvera plastered springhouse and finished first coat. Elcomera mixed mud to put on keotes.

4/8/80 Robert and DAS put keotes on south new room. Paredes and Elcomera mixed mud and put on keotes.

4/13/80 Paredes irrigated in field, Medosas drew dirt for top of house. Hired hands made adobes.

4/23/80 RVB and DAS fixed door frames, cupboards behind the door and some shelves there.

4/24/80 RVB and DAS made frames to little bedroom and middle room and hung doors.

In May of 1880, DAS opens his house to operate as a stage stop for the Ingram, Wilkinson, and Lapps Stage Co. on its north-south route between Pantano, Patagonia, and Harshaw. LBS provides meals for travelers. DAS rents horses to travelers and takes tolls for crossing his Cienega Creek bridge. This new business was clearly anticipated by the building of his toll bridge in 1879. Pat Garber in her book “Westward Bound” states that DAS builds a new home in 1880; that new home was likely complete when he opened his stage stop. The Southern Pacific Railroad arrives in the new town of Pantano on April 24, 1880 as the company constructs its rail line from San Diego across southern Arizona to St Louis MO.

Ida Bloxton, LBS’ sister, marries William Ganzhorn and moves out of DAS’ home to live in Pantano.

4/27/80 Letter from Vail and Harvey regarding theft of Vail and Sanford cattle and later sale in Tombstone. Walter wants to hire a detective to investigate.

5/1/1880 DAS is having a parcel of land surveyed in an area 1 mile north of his ranch to establish the new “Empire City”. Pasturing stage horses at the Stock Valley Ranch. Mining efforts expand rapidly in all of the surrounding ranges including the Santa Ritas, Whetstones and Empire Mtns. “Empire City” was DAS’ attempt to compete with the Vails’ Total Wreck mining operation and Total Wreck town just west of the new “Empire City.” In making a claim on this town site that would include water rights to the Cienega Creek, DAS was likely anticipating Walter Vail’s urgent need of water – both for operating his mine and for the TW’s burgeoning community of miners. In the end, Empire City as a town site never progressed beyond a dream and a post office but it was a valuable bargaining chip in DAS’ later land portfolio.
5/3/80 RVB, Alvera, 1 Mexican and 1 Chinaman finish bridge across upper “saco” at Lou’s (Louisa’s) spring. Put stone in saco crossing near Lou’s house.

5/3/80 DGS “buys” FS’ uncompleted DLE for $500 from his estate. Deed filed 6/1/80. (It would not look good for DAS, as the administrator, to buy it). When DAS is about to sell all of the Sanford Ranch to Vail in 1882, he later buys back DGS’ investments in order to assemble one complete piece of property.

5/24/80 DAS advertises in newspaper for sale DGS’ Ranch on the Sonoita Creek. Will sell 1,000 head of cattle, 1,800 sheep. Ranch is next to the Aztec Mill and has 150 acres of land sown to barley. Purpose of this proposed sale is unknown. Possibly because of the impending Land grant resurvey?

5/31/80 DGS stock have all been moved to DAS Ranch. Both DGS stock and ranch still for sale.

6/3/80 “From Empire City. Don A Sanford is in from his cattle ranch. He reports that Empire City is coming to the front. A store has been opened and the foundation for several houses begun. A well of excellent water, at a depth of 22 feet, has been struck which raised six feet from the bottom. The water is excellent and is entirely free from all alkali and vegetable substances. A blacksmith and carpenter shop will soon be in operation. The people of the district want a post office. The mineral developments of the district are all most encouraging. There are a number of new discoveries reported. Many new parties are going into the district. Empire is approaching her mining boom.” These statements to the newspaper come directly from DAS and not from any 3rd party investigation.

6/12/80 Arizona Census 1880 in Cienega Valley. Under DAS household: DAS, age 40, stock raiser; Louisa age 30; Etta age 4; Ada age 6 mo; RVB age 41, farmer; Baca Cipriano age 20, farm helper; Joseph Smith, age 45, farm helper; Henry Davis age 38, farm helper; Sam Key, age 26, Chinese cook.

6/17/80 DAS advertises the New York Mine and Empire City in the Empire District in the newspaper. “In all directions from Empire City, groups of men are going out to work mines or prospect new claims. The new city will soon … (achieve) grand proportions. As soon as the rainy season has passed over, a large number of buildings will be erected. Empire City will be the center of trade for more than fifteen miles around; and from the present developments of the mining claims in the district bids fair to stand second to the Tombstone ere the year 1880 has passed. 20 stages per day to and from Pantano and Harshaw … (and) a narrow gauge railroad will soon be in order on this route.” DAS is feeding the local newspaper information about the landscape, the transportation route across his Cienega Creek bridge, his new townsite and its development opportunities, and the mine that he is investing in.

6/21/1880 Empire City Post Office opens.

7/14/80 “Empire City” “…is beautifully located. 1500’ above Tucson and proportionally cool. Temperatures are not above 90 degrees. A most interesting summer resort … a thousand attractions to engage the visitor. George C Angler is the principle man of the city. He is the storekeeper, postmaster, and mining contractor. Don A Sanford’s home is located 1 mile up the
valley in a cozy nook surrounded by cottonwood trees and a young thrifty orchard. He is in possession of a magnificent tract of land with the most valuable portion of the Cienega with boundless grazing facilities. Frequent rains have coasted lands in fine pastures.”

7/15/80 DAS gives RVB a check for $200 on Safford (Sanford) & Co to pay for “Desert Tract of Land”. RVB has power of attorney for DAS and often completes transactions for him. Sanford is making final payment on Franklin’s DLE.

7/18/80 DAS and RVB drew up Desert and Homestead applications for RVB and Judge Wood. John S Wood was a probate judge for Pima County who later signed the certification document in 1881 for DAS as administrator for FS. Quid pro quo? Wood gains title to claim in 1882. Robert Bloxton does not succeed in proving up on his homestead claim in T18S R17E but his “improvements” on that land are sold to WLV in 1882.

August 1880 Louisa and 3 daughters travel to Virginia to visit family. Ada (#3) is very ill.

8/5/80 Sometime before the date, Probate Court ‘orders’ DAS, as administrator, Franklin’s estate to be sold. Money from sale of property is be used to pay for fee for proving up on FS’ DLE.

8/6/1880 DAS, as administrator of FS estate, petitions General Land Office Register and Receiver to allow sale of FS’ assets, i.e. the claim, or authorize DAS to make final proof on FS’ DLE and pay for DLE.

8/17/80 “Cienega Valley … will someday be the homes of prosperous families. … The soil is excellent, alluvial and deep, and produces a large crop of native grapes. Water can be obtained at a reasonable depth at any point in the valley.” Another statement by DAS to the newspapers.

8/19/80 “Stock Valley Ranch, owned by D A Sanford, commences at a point on the Cienega twelve miles from the railroad, takes in all the water of the Cienega Valley, and is about three miles in length and commands a fine tract of rolling pasture lands on the south, while the Empire mining district is on the north which suggests a large bullion producing district before many months. The ranch presents an interesting sight, the green pastures for miles dotted all over with bands of cattle aggregating several thousands, recall early recollections of dairy farms of eastern country life.”

8/30/80 RBV and Smith plowed saco down to Empire City

9/26/1880 Ada Sanford dies and is buried in Virginia.

October 1880 In a letter to DAS, LBS reminds DAS that work needs to be done on the mine this month.

10/4/80 DAS at Empire City all night – came home in morning, brought from Angler’s store -- 1 large can tomatoes & 1 bottle horseradish.

10/12/80 Sanford and Vail Ranches together hold 8-10,000 head of cattle.
11/5/80 DAS sends notice of Toll at bridge to Woolfolk’s and Davidson’s. Woolfolk ran the Pantano Hotel for many years. Davidson (of Davidson Canyon) ran a merchants store with Lyman Wakefield near Pantano. Notice suggests that work on the bridge is finally complete.

11/8/80 4 of Ochoa’s teams crossed the bridge and broke it. RVB and DAS and Paredes fixed bridge again. Estevan Ochoa is a sheep rancher in the southern Rincon Mountain foothills who also ran a lucrative stage freighting business with his partners, Pinckney Tully and Sidney De Long until the SPRR arrived.

12/2/80 DAS is charged with altering brand on Vail cattle, cattle theft, and is arrested. Bail set at $1500.

12/13/80 DAS records that he received $2.50 from travelers for meals and a toll payment of $0.25 from Walter Vail

12/26/80 Charley Song, Chinese cook commences work.

12/29/80 Letter to DAS from Lord & Williams (merchants and bankers in Tucson) Will pay 2.5 cents/lbs for stock. They made contract with Vail and Harvey yesterday and will take 1-200 head more.

12/31/80 RVB locates “Jenny Lind” mine 2 miles west of DAS home.

Sometime after 1880, Robert Bloxton acquires Johnny Ward’s Ranch located NE of Denton Sanford’s Ranch and near Patagonia.

1/1/81 RVB locates Silver Hill mine 3.5 miles NW of DAS home.

1/1/81 DA Sanford records 3,000 cattle and 300 sheep.

1/22/81 LBS and 2 daughters return to Stock Valley Ranch.

1/29/81 RVB puts ceiling on (outdoor?) kitchen and Lou’s room.

2/1/81 DAS papers the reception room. RVB puts glue on Lou’s room.

2/24/81 Letter sent to DAS is addressed to Stock Valley Ranche, Empire City PO Arizona suggesting the Post Office is still in existence.

3/5/81 RVB cleaned out spring house. Would that be FS’ House near his spring? Mendoza came down from the Empire Ranch and went to Total Wreck mine. $0.50 for toll. Suggests that the bridge in question is north of DAS ranch – unless more than one bridge.

3/21/81 DAS is exonerated from the charge of cattle theft brought by Vail and Harvey in 1880 for “lack of sufficient evidence”.

4/5/81 RVB, Morrison, DAS plowed saco on other side of bridge.

4/19/81 Empire City Post Office closes.
5/22/81 DAS locating mine claims “Hopeful” and “Lone Star” with TJ Sanford (?) and J H Stuart. Stuart was a mining investor from NY City.

June 1881 RVB went over to a spring NE of Empire City to locate it but found it located by Obrien.

7/8/81 Very high water came down Cienega Creek and washed out the bridge & DAS’ fence across the Cienega.

7/9/81 Mendosa Meceria & DAS put in a new bridge at Cienega. John Ingram, owner of the Stage Company using the bridge, agreed to pay all his back tolls if DAS would rebuild the bridge.

7/31/81 Ah Song starts work.

8/9/81 DAS makes final proof for Franklin Sanford’s Desert Land Entry. DAS uses RVB and Silas Bellarm as witnesses to document what improvements were accomplished on the land.

DAS states in his deposition: Before he died, FS planted a crop of barley in 1877. DAS planted a 10-acre crop of barley in fall of 1880. FS began digging ditches to transport water from springs; DAS has extended those ditches. Most of land irrigated for grass for cattle. DAS estimated that ditches carried 100 miners inches (1100 gallons per minute) from the springs and irrigated lands on both sides of FS’ preemption entry. Ditches were 2’ wide and carried spring waters 1/8 to ¼ mile distant. Main ditches were on the outer edges along the hills; side ditches carried water into the center of the field. The principal amount of irrigation water came from the spring on FS’ preemption claim. A portion of the water right is held from the spring on FS’ preemption claim. The remaining arises from the first appropriation of the spring water (to the south).

Robert Bloxton. Age 41 and living in Empire City; occupation is Farmer. States in his deposition: he knew FS and that FS sowed about 4-5 acres of barley in the SE1/4SE1/4 of Section 34 before he died (RVB was not present in AZ before FS died). DAS has irrigated ¼ to ½ of the rest of the DLE lands for grass. Spring is located on SW1/4NW1/4 in Section 35. Other one is located in NE1/4SE1/4 in section 3 in T19SR17E (neither stated locations match Exhibit B sketch). The ditch conveying water from the upper (section 3) spring carries water to the west side; the lower spring (section 35) carries water to the east side of the field.

Silas Bellarm. Age 53 and living in Harshaw; occupation as Miner. States in his deposition: Has known DAS for 3 years. Says that barley has been planted (by DAS or hired men) on the NE1/4NE1/4 section 3 and some in SE1/4SE1/4 section 35 (Misstatement? SW1/4SW1/4? since otherwise not contiguous). He saw water flowing in the ditches 20” wide at 4-5” depth during a dry time. Bellarm states that each spring distributed water to both east and west sides of the preemption entry. A dam was created at each spring causing an overflow of water into the ditches. FS’ ownership of water rights
arises from lower spring being within his preemption claim and from upper spring by right of first appropriation.

**Figure 4.** Hand-drawn map included in the final proof documents shows location of and agricultural improvements made in Franklin Sanford’s Desert Land Entry in T18S R17E sections 26, 34, 35 and T19S17E section 3. Drawing also shows locations of two springs (dark circles in Sections 3 and 35) used to irrigate field in ditches (lines).

8/14/81 DAS locating claims “Found at Last”, “Red Bluff”, “Vacant”, and “Cut Off”

8/21/81 RVB goes to Patent Office (in DC or Florence?) to find out about his claim but has forgotten to bring documentation and can’t access.

September 1881 LBS with daughters moves to and rents house in Tucson (for girls to start school? Etta now 5. Or is this a formal separation?)

9/17/81 DGS v. PM Hilton. Motion for new trial. (Issue unknown.)

10/2/81 DAS constructing a new building on Pennington St.

10/13/81 “Toppy Johnson from Empire City stated that Indians have killed 2 Mexicans within 2 miles of Sanford’s Ranch.” “A squad of Indians camped near the road to (DGS) Sanford’s Ranch and Calabasas.”

10/20/81 Sanford & Brothers lose 2,200 head of sheep when herder drives herd across border to Sonora. DAS going after them.

10/27/81 DAS inquiring about purchasing different types of grapes

10/30/81 DAS has recovered some of his sheep in Sonora.

11/26/81 Newie Bockey (Chinese) grubbing in field with Ah Song.
12/2/81 DAS inquiring about purchasing trees and plants including apples, peaches, cherries, strawberries and grape vines.

1/11/82 DAS is selling 1000 cattle and 2,500 sheep and 15 horses from the Stock Valley Ranch.

1/12/82 Advertisement “To PM Hilton” Need to pay ¼ of $100 annual investment in Bob Tail Ox Mine or forfeit part ownership. Signed DAS, RVB, and LBS

1/26/82 DAS v. John Ingraham and Co. No other information

3/9/82 DAS is selling cows and sheep to W C Land who is buying a ranch in southern Arizona.

3/26/82 RVB sells to DGS part of section 20 in Township 22 for $370.

4/2/82 DAS orders 50 apple trees, 25 peach trees, 10-15 cherry trees, 500 strawberry plants, 500 grape vines, 1000 gum trees, 1000 lbs potatoes, 25 lbs “potato onions” to be shipped to Pantano

4/9/82 New Mexico and Arizona RR has condemned T27 and 8-10 acres in T22, a stable, and other areas of land belonging to DGS.

4/9/82 Lewie (Louey) garden (at Stock Valley Ranch) growing nicely

4/10/82 RVB and DAS to Pantano to pick up 50 trees, 500 grape vines, 500 strawberry vines.

4/14/82 Lewie plowed in field for potatoes.

4/14/82 Letter to DAS on how to raise eucalyptus trees. DAS planning to create plant nursery?

4/18/82 Chinaman cleaned ditch on south side of Cienega

4/19/82 Hong Te dug in saco

5/1/82 RVB, Ignacea, 2 of Ochoa’s men, and 1 from Vail’s rodeoed at Mescal Spring North of Total Wreck, then by Dave Harshaw’s, then to Barrel Spring, and camped at night. Had 12-14 head of cattle, 3 of them bulls and 9 of DAS’ horses.

5/2/82 Letter to DAS at Total Wreck (post office after Empire City PO closed): Norton & Stewart want 250 head of cattle at San Carlos by June 1.

5/3/82 RVB took boards down below to build a house. Was this on his homestead claim in section 14 that later was never patented?

5/5/82 Lewey (Chinese who worked for years for DAS), RVB, and DAS worked on Robert’s house.

5/6/82 RVB puts roof on his kitchen. Lewey raising truck produce.

5/7/82 Ramon and family moved in the house where Lewey Bockey lived and Lewey moved down in Robert’s house. A photograph taken by DAS when he returned to visit his Ranch HQ in 1895 shows at least 3-4 additional adobe houses that probably were built for hired help. Sanford clearly had other structures throughout his property where hired single men and families lived.
6/20/82 Final DLE patent for Franklin Sanford issued to DAS as administrator. The title is now owned by DGS who bought the uncompleted claim from FS’ estate.

9/15/82 DAS resolves Empire City contract (Conflicting claims of ownership?)

10/7/82 DAS building extensive public stockyards and slaughter yards south of Tucson.

10/21/82 DAS sells the New York mill site of 5 acres to Deo Malcom for $5000. Site commences 300’ east of old Empire City adobe store. The mill site was intended to be a source of water for the New York Mining Company to run stamping operations at its mine in the Whetstones. From local newspapers, Deo Malcom was an itinerant miner who travels from CA and first appears in AZ at the Cosmopolitan Hotel in June 1882, later bounces around SAZ for a year establishing mining claims. He then moves on to Kingman, discovers the rich Big Bug mine, and a week later, supposedly commits suicide.

10/28/82 Denton makes a cattle drive to Sonoita. The New Mexico and Arizona RR has been completed in Sonoita by September of 1882 allowing Cienega Valley ranchers to ship cattle by rail from a station closer than Pantano.

10/28/82 DAS attempts to file for final proof on his Homestead claim in section 23 and 26. Witnesses include RVB, Lowey Bockey, Edward Everett and DGS. Probably for lack of time before the sale of the Stock Valley Ranch to WL Vail, DAS does not succeed in gaining title, relinquishes his claim, and instead sells to Vail only his improvements.

Sometime before 11/2/1882. Judge Charles Silent (a partner with or at least a negotiator for the Vails) begins negotiating with Sanford regarding purchase of his Stock Valley Ranch.

11/2/82 DAS signs a “contract” with Judge Charles Silent regarding transfer of the Stock Valley Ranch lands and property. Uncertain as to how this action relates to the final contract signed by Walter Vail. Silent may have acted as a middleman if Sanford did not wish to deal directly with Vail.

11/3/82 In the newspaper announcement, Happy Valley Ranch and Meadow Valley Ranch (Meadow Valley is the same as Sanford’s Stock Valley ranch. For reasons unknown, both names were used to refer to the same land.) are both sold to Walter Vail for $30,000 and $80,000 with transfers through Judge Silent. Happy Valley Ranch stocked with blooded cattle, Meadow Valley Ranch with “improved” cattle. Sanford’s cattle were not pure-bred stock but ‘improved’ by breeding with quality bulls from the common longhorn variety.

**Figure 5 (below).** Don Alonzo Sanford’s final sale to the Vails in 1882 of his 5.5 miles of homesteading lands along Cienega Creek acquired by Sanford and his extended family. Along with the sale of his cattle and the ranch lands to the Vails, Sanford earns $132,000 (according to family documents), approximately $3.6M in today’s money.
11/3/82 Letter to DAS from H W Hoag stating that he has relinquished all claims to Empire City Townsite. No information found on H W Hoag and his relation to Deo Malcolm. DAS is getting all of the land ownership papers together for final transfer to the Vails.

11/25/82 DAS files notice to make final proof of a homestead claim.

11/26/82 Letter from Nathan R Vail (uncle of Walter) to Walter’s father. “It is likely that Walter and I will buy Sanford’s Ranch and stock. We are scheming to do so and will know in a day or two. He is the most wretched neighbor ever a man had; some of my men will kill him if he remains much. … By Christmas … I hope we shall have the mill (at the Total Wreck) started. The water question has delayed me some and the want of money ______. But I have the water question settled and must go into debt a little further. My pumps will soon be completed. They are two double acting 20 inch stroke 5 inch diameter (and) can use them together or separate and will raise a 6 inch stream 550 feet high and yield 300,000 gallons a day. That is, this is their capacity if required, but I can do with 60,000 gallons every 24 hours.” Nathan Vail by acquiring Sanford’s water rights and land could now access sufficient waters from the lower Cienega Creek to run his stamp machines that crushed the silver ore from the Total Wreck mine. Rather than shipping low grade ore for processing to distant sites, the Vails could refine the ore on site.
themselves and reduce transportation costs. The substantial funds from the Total Wreck mine, in turn, funded a significant expansion of the Vail cattle operations and land ownership.

11/27/82 John May moved his family to Alex Morrison’s and Newey Bockey and Ah Song took possession of the house.

11/28/82 Lewie Bockey takes DAS to Total Wreck to go to Tucson by stage. DAS buys FS’ DLE and Preemption lands from Denton for $500 in order to resell to Vail.

12/1/82 RVB and Cady at the Letson Place. They unload old lumber. Robert and Cady must be building a line camp at Letson’s Place. The Letson’s Place is noted on the Paul Riecker map of Southern Arizona of 1879. It is associated with Mountain Springs Ranch on the Agua Verde creek, a northern tributary of Lower Cienega Creek in the Rincon foothills. Riecker puts it in the wrong location on his map but its association and nearby placement with Mountain Springs were correct. What this suggests is that DAS, now leaving upper Cienega Valley is acquiring land and moving his sheep to the slopes of the Rincons and the lower Cienega Valley. James Letson purchased a hotel in Bisbee in 1890. Unknown if it the same one as Riecker appears to be acquainted with.

12/9/82 Robert and Cady brought 84 horses and mules to Letson Place.

12/24/82 DAS buys 1. from JBB his preemption land for $300; 2. FS’ DLE lands from DGS for $300; 3. FS’ preemption land from DGS for $500. DAS also buys the improvements on one unfinished homestead claim in section 14. This unfinished claim probably belongs to RVB. DAS is consolidating ownership of all of the lands within his purview of the Stock Valley Ranche (Meadow Valley). The unfinished homesteads are formally relinquished on 12/27/28 at the General Land Office and immediately refiled on by associates of the Vails. This was the standard, unwritten process of “selling improvements” i.e. those built investments such as houses, corrals etc. to the next claimant. Legally a homesteader who relinquished a claim also relinquished anything left behind and could not “sell” any part of his investment attached to the land.

12/27/82 DAS sells ~4,000 head of cattle to Vails, 2080 acres of land, and improvements on 2 unfinished claims within the boundary of the Stock Valley Ranche range. In a rough draft of the deed and title transfer papers between DAS and LBS and Vails/Silent, DAS appears to quit claim any right to the Empire City townsite, also known as the New York mill site, and possibly to undo the prior 10/21/82 sale of the mill site to Deo Malcom. An interesting proscription states that the mill site land and water could not be used to support cattle and could not be sold or conveyed to the Total Wreck Mining and Milling Co. The Vails may have gotten around that deed restriction by using Silent as a middleman or by drilling a different well or by ignoring it altogether. That proscription is indicative of the lack of love between the Vails and DAS.

Property transaction listed on pg. 644-647 of Pima County Book 11 Registry of Deeds.

February 1884 Foreclosure of mortgage sales of Tully, Ochoa and De Long properties begin

1884 Sanford records: Major court case between DAS v Tully and Ochoa re: selling 12,000 sheep for $15,000. Can’t find any documentation about court case in newspapers.
4/15/1884 Telegram to DAS from J S Vosberg: “Your 12,000 sheep on the Tully and Ochoa and Company Ranch must be removed at once. They are injuring property.” Vosberg was a partner with Vail in livestock and land in the Rincon area.

1884 Another telegram to DAS from Vosberg. “You are running sheep on ranch at Pantano. You must move sheep immediately. Will not permit you to sell here at Depot or at Ranch.”

1/22/85 DGS dies of malaria and leaves his Sonoita ranch to Etta and Amo Sanford.

1883-1884-1885. John Cady relates in his book an incidence following the sale of the Stock Valley Ranch and DAS’ new focus (he ran both sheep and cattle before) on raising sheep on the south slopes of the Rincons.

“If there was one man whom cattlemen hated with a fierce, unreasoning hatred, it was the man who ran sheep over the open range – a proceeding perfectly legal, but one which threatened the grazing of the cattle inasmuch as where sheep had grazed it was impossible for cattle to feed for some weeks, or until the grass had had time to grow again. ... In 1881 I closed out the old Sanford ranch stock and was informed by my employer that he had foreclosed a mortgage on 13,000 head of sheep owned by Tully, Ochoa, and De Long of Tucson. ... I was not surprised to hear that Sanford intended to run sheep, though I will admit the information was scarcely welcome. ... I did as I was told, and closed out the cattle stock and set the sheep grazing on the range. The cattlemen were angry and sent me an ultimatum to the effect that if the sheep were not at once taken off the grass there would be “trouble.” ... before long I became subject to many annoyances. Sheep were driven off, my ranch hands were shot at, and several times I myself narrowly escaped death at the hands of the enraged cattlemen. ... I will admit that it was with a feeling of distinct relief that orders to remove the sheep came three years later.”

Cady misremembers the date to close out the Stock Valley Ranch; it was 1882 or early 1883. The final removal of DAS’ sheep from the Rincon foothill lands probably comes after DAS (as administrator for his children) inherits DGS’ Sonoita ranch in 1885 and the sheep are moved elsewhere.

Following the sale of the Stock Valley Ranch to the Vail family, the ranch site and its buildings become a line camp for the Vail cattle operations – a second management site to house a caretaker and ranch hands living at a distance from the Vail headquarters at Empire Ranch.

Sanford returns to the Vail property in February 1885 with a camera to record his old buildings, corrals and ranch location. Today the adobe building has melted to a few bricks and the ranch lands filled in with mesquite. The stumps of his cottonwoods that shaded the house still stand.
Figure 6 (left). The Sanford house in 1885, then being operated as a line camp by Walter Vail looking West. Figure 7. Remains of the Sanford adobe home in 2019 looking North.

Figure 8. Sanford home and ranch operations looking east across the Cienega Valley. 1885