# THE PRIVATE LIFE OF RUBY, MINING GHOST TOWN

# Arizona History Convention Safford, Arizona

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#### PREFACE - ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sparked by family genealogy research, brothers Bob and Al Ring are long-time investigators of the history of mining in Arizona's south-central borderland area.

Natalia "Tallia" Pfrimmer Cahoon lived in Ruby as a youngster, during the mining camp's heyday in the 1930s. She has been conducting historical tours to Ruby for Pima Community College since 1994.

Previous to this paper, the authors have presented papers at the last four Arizona History Conventions:

- 2003 "The Ruby Mercantile Murders: Separating Fact from Myth" (Bob and Al Ring, Tallia Cahoon)
- 2002 "Gold and Silver Mining at the Montana Mine in the Arizona Territory Borderland" (Bob Ring)
- 2002 "The Montana Mine Becomes the Largest Producer of Lead and Zinc in the State of Arizona" (Al Ring)
- 2002 "Ruby: From Its Heyday in the 1930's to Ghost Town" (Tallia Cahoon)
- 2001 "Warren, Arizona The City Beautiful" (Bob and Al Ring)
- 2000 "Life in the Oro Blanco Mining Camps in 1900" (Bob and Al Ring)

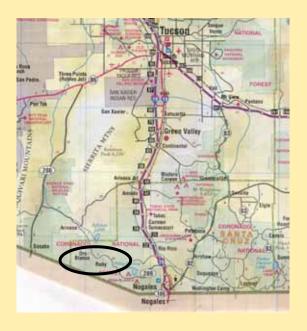
The authors currently write a twice-monthly column, "Along the Ruby Road," for the *Green Valley News*. The column highlights the colorful history of the Oro Blanco Mining District, with emphasis on the mining ghost town, Ruby.

The authors are also preparing a book on the history of the Montana mine and the Ruby mining camp.

# THE PRIVATE LIFE OF RUBY, MINING GHOST TOWN

#### Introduction

Ruby is the mining camp that supported the Montana mine, about 70 miles southwest of Tucson, Arizona in the Oro Blanco Mining District, near the Mexican border.



Ruby is located in south-central Arizona, only four miles from the international border with Mexico.

(Map courtesy Gousha)

Settled at 4,200 feet altitude, amongst beautiful rolling hills and rugged canyons west of the Atascosa Mountains, the mine and old mining camp lie at the foot of 5,370-foot Montana Peak, the most distinctive landmark in the area.



The ghost town of Ruby lies at the foot of 5,370-foot Montana Peak. (Photo by Bob Ring, 2001)

Spanish prospectors first came to the Oro Blanco area around 1740 and named the region Oro Blanco (white gold) because the gold they found had a high silver content, giving the gold a whitish color. The Spanish, then the Mexicans after winning their independence from Spain in 1821, worked the gold mines of Oro Blanco for many years. After the Gadsden Purchase from Mexico in 1853, prospectors from the United States started mining in Oro Blanco.

Americans first recorded a claim for the Montana gold and silver mine in 1877. The Montana mine was different from the other mines in the Oro Blanco Mining District. Gold and silver were less prevalent minerals than lead and zinc. But early prospectors discovered the gold and silver first, on or close to the surface of the ground.

The Montana mine attracted a significant number of miners by the mid 1880s, and a small mining camp, initially named Montana Camp, began growing.

From 1877 to 1912, the Montana produced mostly gold and silver, but was not among the most successful gold and silver mines in the Oro Blanco Mining District. Montana Camp's population during that period never exceeded 50 people.

When Arizona became a state in 1912, Montana camp opened the "Ruby" post office, named for the postmaster's wife, whose maiden name was Ruby. Gradually the entire camp became known as Ruby.

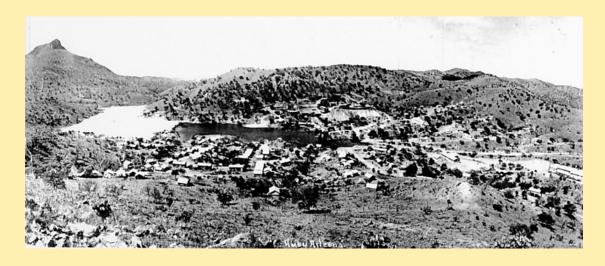
During the years 1912-1926, the Montana mine successfully transitioned from producing silver and gold to producing lead and zinc (with some silver).

In 1917/1918 the Goldfield Consolidated Mining Company accomplished the first significant mining of lead and zinc at the Montana. The company produced \$202,000 worth of ore in a short one-year operation.

Ruby residents of that period built most of the adobe buildings that stand today in ruins.

In 1926, under the Eagle-Picher Lead Company, the Montana mine began its most productive period. By the mid 1930s, 350 men worked at the mine, in three shifts per day. The mine shaft dropped to 750 feet below the surface of the ground and there were six principle working levels extending thousands of feet along the ore vein. In the late 1930s, the Montana mine produced more lead and zinc than any other mine in Arizona.

Ruby reached its population peak in 1938, a bustling mining camp of 1,200 people. The mining camp had a nine-bed hospital with a doctor and a nurse. More than one hundred and fifty children went to a school with eight grades and four teachers. Ruby had a confectionary, a pool hall, a jail, and the infamous Ruby mercantile, where in the early 1920s two double murders shocked southern Arizona. For recreation, Ruby had a baseball team and a rifle team. Living accommodations included a few adobe and wood frame houses, two bunkhouses, a couple of boarding houses, and a sea of temporary housing in the form of wood-foundation tents.



In the late 1930s, the Montana mine produced more lead and zinc than any other mine in Arizona. Ruby's population peaked then at about 1,200 people.

(Photo from Pat and Howard Frederick's private collection)

The Montana mine closed in 1940 when the ore gave out. Eagle-Picher sealed the mine by dynamiting the main shaft entrances.

Estimates of total Eagle-Picher production value range up to \$10,000,000.

Local assayer Hugo Miller took over the Montana mine in 1944 and for the next 17 years explored nearby shafts and tried (generally unsuccessfully) to mine the old ore tailings from the Montana.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Ruby's Sale to Private Interests**

In late 1961, Hugo Miller sold the Montana mine and Ruby mining camp to five Tucsonans. Hugo Miller and his wife Gladys, and one of the new owners Lawrence Roberson and his wife Genevieve, signed the "Deposit and Receipt Agreement," dated November 25, 1961.<sup>2</sup>

The property included the 19-patented mining claims of the Montana group of mines. Long time mine owner Louis Zeckendorf had patented ten of the claims in 1907. Eagle-Picher Company patented the other nine claims in 1933.

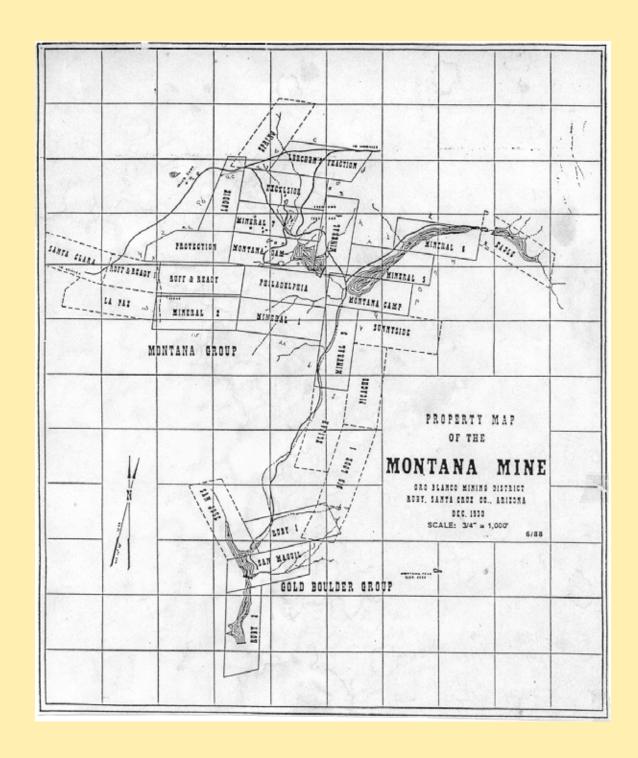
The mining claims covered a total of 362 acres. The northern Montana Group of 16 contiguous claims covered 302 acres. The southern Gold Boulder Group of three contiguous claims covered 60 acres.

# Along with the ghost town of Ruby, Hugo Miller sold these 19 patented mining claims to five Tucsonans in 1961.

No.	Mine	Original Location Date	Located By	Patent Date	Patented By
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Philadelphia Montana Camp Montana Dam Mineral No. 1 Mineral No. 2 Mineral No. 3 Mineral No. 4 Mineral No. 5 Mineral No. 6 Mineral No. 7	May 13, 1889 January 4, 1893 November 2, 1894 December 29, 1898 December 29, 1898 December 29, 1898 December 29, 1898 November 6, 1899 November 6, 1899	W. J. Cheyney George Cheyney George Cheyney J. N. Curtis	April 23, 1907	Louis Zeckendorf
11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19	San Miguil Protection Ruff and Ready Excelsior Ruby No. 1 Ruby No. 2 Laddie Spear Lerchen's Fraction	February 6, 1878 April 16, 1894 November 21, 1894 March 7, 1895 December 8, 1915 December 8, 1915 January 13, 1928 January 13, 1928 February 17, 1928	J. J. Miller George G. Mullins O. A. Hyatt A. E. Bogan, et al C. A. Hartman C. A. Hartman Sam J. Hayhurst, et al Sam J. Hayhurst, et al Frank H. Lerchen	February 3, 1933	Eagle-Picher Company

The property also included two lakes and 700,000 tons of mining tailings, the residue from decades of deep mining for lead and zinc.

About a dozen buildings remained to remind the new owners of Ruby's up and down again mining history. The Montana mine's mill and primary mining buildings overlay the original Philadelphia mining claim.<sup>3</sup> The mining camp started in the 1880s atop the Montana Dam claim. Over the years, Montana Camp, named Ruby since 1912, expanded eastward and northward from the Montana Dam claim to spread over the Mineral No. 1, Mineral No. 7, and Excelsior claims.



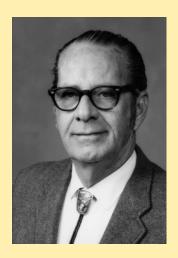
The solid lines identify the 19-patented mines that make up the Ruby mining ghost town. Three of the 19 mining claims (in the southern Gold Boulder Group) are separated from the 16 mining claims of the northern Montana Group.

(Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon private collection)

On December 11, 1961 Tucson's *Arizona Daily Star* announced the sale "for and undisclosed sum." The new owners were:

Louis E. Daugherty Richard Frailey Frank Hardy Lawrence Roberson Dr. George Shetter

That same newspaper article identified Richard Frailey, a Tucson real estate broker, as spokesman for the group.



Richard Frailey, real estate broker, was the spokesman for the five Tucsonans who bought Ruby from Hugo Miller.

(Photo from Pat and Howard Frederick's private Ruby file)

According to Frailey, his group bought Ruby as a real estate investment.<sup>5</sup> They also had an interest in the outdoors and planned to use Ruby as their private playground, a retreat where they could relax, fish for bass and hunt at a relatively short distance from their homes in Tucson.<sup>6</sup>

Several other ideas for what to do with (or at) Ruby occurred to the private owners in the next few years. In 1965, a six-man promotional group took an option to develop Ruby into a movie set and private club. In 1968, Frailey talked about making the two lakes into one 32-acre lake, opening the town as an historical attraction or trading property to the Forest Service for other property. He said the owners would even consider selling the town for \$350,000." In 1974, a former Ruby resident proposed developing a TV series around Ruby and its history. None of these ideas ever materialized.

Attempting to preserve their ghost town and natural hide-away, the private owners discouraged visitors for more than 30 years. They posted warning signs on the gate to Ruby and protected the ghost town with armed caretakers. Only rarely was permission given to enter the premises. (These prohibitions for visitors would ease by the 1990s; see below.)



In 1965, the ghost town's owners posted this sign to keep unwanted visitors out of Ruby. (Photo courtesy Margaret Adams, Green Valley News)

Commenting in 1982 on closing Ruby to the general public, Anthony Saeli observed in the *Green Valley News*:

It has been saved from the destructive acts of vandals and overeager souvenir hunters and, although here and there are signs of deterioration the old camp, in contrast to many other ghost towns is remarkably well preserved.<sup>10</sup>

Another reason the owners had to discourage visitors was accidents. In May 1965, three young men from Tucson snuck into Ruby, eager to have fun in the ghost town. They found two rowboats with holes in their hulls on the shore of Ruby Lake. Racing across the half mile long by 200 yards lake, one of the boats capsized in the middle of the 30-foot deep lake. Unable to swim, two of the men drowned.<sup>11</sup>

#### **Exploring Mining Opportunities**

Almost a century of mining at the Montana mine left 700,000 tons of tailings (refuse byproducts from milling the ore) positioned east of the old mill in a canyon with fairly steep sides. The tailings pile, or dump, was 1,100 feet long, 300-500 feet wide at the top, and up to 50 feet thick.<sup>12</sup>

The mining of lead and zinc in 1917/1918 and 1928-1940 produced most of the tailings, which contained small amounts of gold and silver. With increasing prices for gold and silver, the private owners wondered if they could make any money by mining the tailings for the precious metals.

So in 1964, the owners hired Jacobs Assay Office in Tucson to assay the tailings. The assayers even took samples from the bottom of the two lakes. Results were encouraging, but for the moment with the price of gold at \$35 per ounce, the owners didn't think the mining prospects were economically sound.

But the dream of riches from mining wouldn't go away. In January 30, 1968, the owners incorporated "Ruby Limited," with the stated objective of:

To carry on the business of mining, milling, concentrating, converting smelting, exchanging, and otherwise producing and dealing in gold, silver . . . <sup>14</sup>

With no specific immediate mining plans, on February 28 1972, the owners updated the incorporation

documents and changed the name of the corporation to "Ruby Mines, Inc."

The Articles of Incorporation authorized one million dollars of capital stock and listed the original five owners and their wives as the incorporators.<sup>15</sup>

Between April 1973 and May 1974, the owners considered several proposals to "reclaim" the lead and zinc tailing to obtain gold and silver. The trick was to find an economically feasible process that would be worth the effort. They even considered relocation of the tailings and forming a recreational lake from the two existing lakes for a tourist attraction for the old Ruby mining camp.<sup>16</sup>

Still not convinced that there was money to be made, the owners did not move forward on any of these proposals.

For a brief period in 1975, the Henderson Companies of San Francisco held an option to buy the Ruby properties, but this effort languished with the death of Richard Frailey.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, in late 1977, "as a direct result of soaring prices of silver and gold," the Dallas Texas firm of Tech Associates leased the Ruby property in order to process the tailings. It took the Company two years to figure out a way to do it. They laid a sprinkler system to drop chemicals, with cyanide as a principle ingredient, onto tailings wastes that they bulldozed onto plastic sheets. The chemicals leeched through the wastes and combined in a solution with gold and silver. In April 1980 the Company's "cyanidization" process reportedly produced 300 ounces of silver and four ounces of gold. But, this production return was not good enough to pay expenses, so Tech Associates gave up their lease.

Between late 1981 and mid 1983, three different companies held what turned out to be short-term mining leases on the Montana mines property. These companies included Holland Petroleum of Dallas Texas, Santa Sarita Mining Co., Ltd., and Arivaca Silver Mining.<sup>20</sup> The headquarters of the Arivaca Silver Mining Company was actually Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. (During this period Canadian mining companies explored opportunities in southern Arizona because of the "unusually cold weather" in Canada.) None of these leases resulted in any mining at Ruby.

Based on a prospectus<sup>21</sup> he had put together earlier in the year, H. A. Kinnison leased the Montana mines in mid 1985. Kinnison formed the K & K Mining Co. to sell limited partnerships. He planned to construct a heap-leach pad on the existing tailings dump and mine the upper six feet of tailings. He figured he would be able to work about 100,000 tons of ore from the 700,000-ton dump. He planned to start with a cyanide treatment to mine gold from the tailings. He raised some money, and bought and installed his equipment. However, over the next three years he could never get the gold recovery process working efficiently. Out of money, he ended the last mining operation at the Montana mine in 1988.<sup>22</sup>

The Montana mine suffered one last metallurgical assessment. In 1990, Sierra Precious Metals of Sparks Nevada ran some tests to determine if an economic concentrate could be recovered from the tailings. No mining started as a result of these latest tests.

For the last 14 years, there has been no additional mining or even tests of mining feasibility at Ruby.

#### **Hippie Invasion**

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Ruby became a haven for young people looking to escape the bright lights and mayhem of urban civilization, and to get away from the world's problems. The *Tucson Citizen* observed that, "They were called hippies by most. The Forest Service had another name – squatters."<sup>24</sup>

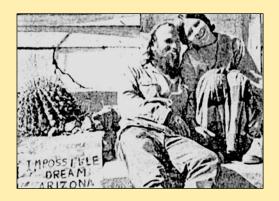
The mountains and valleys of the Oro Blanco region were a perfect place to escape and you couldn't beat the peaceful natural setting. Tucson was 70 miles to the northeast and Nogales 30 miles away to the southeast. Even the tiny (fewer than 100 people) village of Arivaca was 12 miles north.

In early 1968, the *Arivaca Briefs* announced that, "The old ghost town of Ruby is now a Hippie headquarters, where all may have their love-ins." The hippies were generally peaceful, but they were also destructive. They used wooden planks from some of Ruby's old buildings, including some from the roof of the Ruby mercantile, for firewood.<sup>26</sup>

Thirty-three year old Terry (no surname), a wanderer from Reno, Nevada, labeled his Ruby house, "Impossible Dream." He described it as "a haven for anyone who had decided to take to the road, especially those refugees from the cities who seek a rural existence." "We're a fluid community too," he said. But we avoid the cities and the street freaks. We avoid each other also, for any long period anyway. The straights think we're all alike. That's a laugh – you can't get six of us to agree on anything."<sup>27</sup>

By 1971, another hippie community nestled on 20 acres in California Gulch, about four miles southwest of Ruby and only two miles from the Mexican border. Ten adults in their 20s and 30s and their six small children lived in five tepees. They called themselves the HIPI Corp., supposedly engaged in mining. The Forest Service considered them unlawful campers and successfully prosecuted them for that "crime" and littering. The hippies received six months probation and were told to clean up the site.<sup>28</sup>





Ruby was a haven for hippies in the late 1960s and early 1970s. (Photos courtesy of Tucson Daily Citizen and Tucson Daily Star)

The hippies were also ordered out of Ruby and the evidence of their eviction can still be seen on one of doors of the old mine manager's house: "Eviction Notice – As of this day March 22, 1971 this house will be evacuated as prescribed by law." One of the hippies apparently penciled in the reply, "We love you." 29

By 1976, most of the hippies were gone from Ruby and the local area.<sup>30</sup>

#### **Ruby on National History Register**

After the hippies had left Ruby, and between attempts to mine the enormous tailings dump, the owners of Ruby nominated the old mining camp to the National History Register.

From January through March 1975, Louis Daugherty, one of Ruby's private owners worked with the Arizona State Historic Sites Preservation Office in Phoenix, Arizona to prepare the nomination form to be sent to the National Register of Historic Places, under the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service.<sup>31</sup>

The nomination form<sup>32</sup> required a detailed description of Ruby and its historical significance, plus historic photographs of the old mining camp. Louis Daugherty got some help on old photos of Ruby from Phil Clarke's family. (Phil Clarke was the builder and original storekeeper of the Ruby general store.)

The form described the (then) current condition of Ruby:

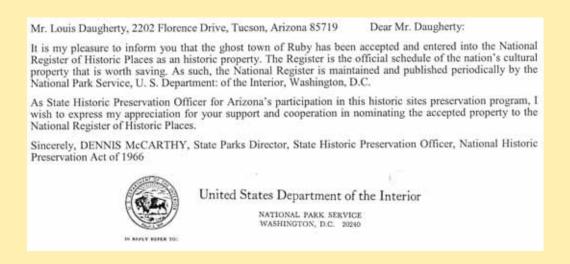
Approximately a dozen deserted and dilapidated buildings, including the store, the school, and the clinic, remain. The property is now fenced and locked because of extensive vandalism.

One of the more challenging requirements on the form was to draw an outline of the town on a map. As the description part of the form stated:

Ruby derives its irregular boundaries [in two separate pieces] from the fact that it is really a collection of old mining claims. There is therefore, no particular geographical or topographical logic to its shape.

Dorothy H. Hall, Arizona Sites Preservation Officer, submitted the completed form to the U.S. Department of the Interior on March 25, 1975.

On May 6, 1975, the Arizona State Historic Sites Preservation Office notified Louis Daugherty that "the ghost town of Ruby has been accepted and entered into the national Register of Historic Places as an historic property."



The U. S. Department of the Interior accepted Ruby on the National Register of Historic Places in May, 1975. (Letter courtesy of Arizona State Historic Site Preservation Office)

Daugherty responded to the Arizona Office in a July 17, 1975 letter: "Thank you for sending me the beautiful certificate in commemoration of placing Ruby on the National Register of Historic Places. Please express my gratitude to all involved."<sup>34</sup>

In a final letter on December 5, 1975, the Arizona Historic Office advised Daugherty that Ruby was eligible for a Federal Historic Sites Preservation Grants-in-Aid program.<sup>35</sup> However, it would be another 18 years (see below) before the owners of Ruby attempted to get government money for a Ruby preservation/restoration program.

#### **PBS Television Show**

As we saw earlier, after the hippies left, Ruby went through its last cycle of mining attempts, with the Tech Associates operation in 1977-1980 and the K& K Mining Inc. efforts in 1985-1988. With mining objectives seemingly finally put to bed, Ruby was about to become a TV star.

Sometime in 1990, Gerald Harwood, a Tucson producer/writer with Anubis Productions got the idea for a television program about the "natural history of a ghost town." Three years later, the result was *The Ghosts of Ruby*, a one-hour natural history documentary set in the ghost town of Ruby. The documentary aired on the PBS series "Nature" on May 9, 1993.

The film was a joint effort of the PBS in the U.S. and the BBC in Britain. Cooperation included creative talent, technical expertise, and shared financial resources. Many local Arizona individuals and organizations provided scientific and historical resources. Former residents of Ruby and the group of private owners helped. Also assisting were the Arizona Historical Society (Tucson), the Pimeria Alta Historical Society (Nogales), the University of Arizona, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and Sonoran Athropod Studies.<sup>37</sup> Reenactment sequences featured children from Tucson and Vail.

Filming in Ruby took place over the spring and summer of 1992. "Additional filming locations included the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum, Colossal Cave, Old Tucson and Mescal, Tombstone, the Queen mine in Bisbee, and the Broken Circle Bar G [ranch] in Pomerene." <sup>38</sup>

Maggie M. writing in *The Connection*, described the untraditional nature documentary:

Wildlife cinematography, historical photographs and reenactments, and an original musical score, are combined with science, drama, and humor to tell the story of a Western town's development and abandonment by humans, and its recolonization by nature. Interactions between people, wildlife, decaying buildings and the elements are woven into vignettes flavored with an aura of the American frontier.<sup>39</sup>

Nature's stars included bats, tarantulas, scorpions, swallows, Gila Monsters, coyotes, foxes, carpenter bees, snakes, packrats, and wolf spiders.

Bonnie Henry, writing in the Arizona Daily Star, added additional descriptions:

Produced by Oxford Scientific Films in association with WNET and the BBC, the British version was narrated by Robin Brown, who wrote the script. . . Gerald Harwood served as associate producer-writer for the project. . . The original script was adapted for Nature's American audience, with George Page doing the narration. <sup>40</sup>

The Ghosts of Ruby was rebroadcast on May 15, 1993. Video copies of the film can be obtained from Anubis Productions in Tucson.

# **Ruby Restoration Grant**

Since Ruby was put on the National Historical Register in 1975, no repair, preservation or other protection was accomplished until 1993. In February 1993, Pat Frederick, daughter of original private owner Richard Frailey, who died in 1975, and Ned and Jim Daugherty, sons of original owner Louis E. Daugherty, "worked toward and were awarded a two-year, \$28,000 grant from the State Historic Preservation Office."

A month later, Frederick appealed to the public in the March 1993 issue of Arivaca's *The Connection*:

The town of Ruby is now recognized as DESPARATELY in need of help and repairs as she has been disintegrating since 1949.

# Frederick went on to say:

The Ruby owners have applied for and received a grant, which will last two years (1993, 1994). The Arizona Preservation Foundation has responded to Ruby's need by sponsoring her to the State Parks Board. The Arizona Preservation Foundation will govern use of the funds and supply much needed advice on the restoration when that time comes. In the meantime, Ruby has gained a matching fund grant, which will allow the owners and any volunteers to keep her from any further deterioration. Matching funds means money, volunteer time and any other donations of material particular to the job at hand will get matching funds for purchased materials or skills to keep Ruby from moldering any further. The grant money comes from the State Historic Preservation Office and is from Heritage funds.

Our first job involves waterproofing, erosion control, roofing, adobe building, and fencing.<sup>42</sup>

Frederick's husband Howard oversaw construction. Nearby residents pitched in to help, moving equipment, repairing roads and offering to repair windows at cost. The initial phase one objective, funded by the grant, was to re-establish perimeter fencing and to stabilize the remaining buildings.

Interviewed in December 2003, Howard Frederick remembered:

. . we bought linseed oil and some tools, sprayers, and mud-smearers and things that would make it easy to do that stabilization. It went on for about two-and-a-half years and lot of volunteer work went into it and I think we accomplished a lot in that time.

We were donated a lot of material from the Buenos Aires Wilderness near Sasabe. The ranch was sold to the Fish and Wildlife Service. All the old fences and corrals were removed. . . we went down there two weekends, and hauled truckloads of good fencing . . a fair bit of equipment/materials that we used for bits and pieces and repairing.<sup>43</sup>

The Fredericks had hoped to start actual restoration of the Ruby ghost town in a second phase of the grant program, but unfortunately the State Historic Preservation Office did not fund a second phase.

However, in late 1995, the Arizona Game and Fish (G & F) Commission approved a cooperative 10-year agreement with the owners of Ruby. By 1998, the G & F Commission spent nearly \$30,000 to fence the entire, irregularly shaped, "two piece" ghost town against trespassing cattle, preventing them from damaging the buildings and consuming native vegetation. The big-game fence also allowed access for wild life and protected the property's ecosystem.<sup>44</sup>

Ruby has more than 20 special status wildlife species as well as a variety of bird life. A side benefit from the fence was the noticeable improvement of water quality of Ruby's two lakes. In previous years, cattle would wander into the lakes, adding a burdensome nutrient load and stirring up the bottom silt, make for low visibility. Since the fence was completed, the lakes are a lot clearer and there is less weed encroachment.

# **Ruby Caretakers**

Over the years since private owners took over the ghost town, the "Caretakers" of Ruby have been the only full time residents. Yes, there were occasional efforts to mine the tailings dump, and for a few years, hippies populated Ruby, but these were sporadic and relatively short-term occupations.

The owners needed someone onsite to manage and protect the property, open and close the gate for visitors, including mining and metallurgical people in the early years, and public visitors more recently. As the old mining camp was opened up for visitors (see below), the caretaker collected entry fees if applicable.

In fact a hippie may have been the first official Ruby caretaker. According to Pat Fredericks, original private owner Richard Frailey made an attempt to enlist hippies as caretakers:

So he told one couple that they could have another couple living there besides them . . a few months later when he went back down, there were twenty-some people living there. And that must have gone on for at least six months or maybe a year . . . he eventually kicked them all out because they were being destructive.  $^{45}$ 

Since then, there have been a number of caretakers at Ruby. As Mary Noon Kasulaitis put it, writing in Arivaca's *The Connection*:

Some caretakers have been prospectors, who found a paid house and home near to the prospective gold mine. . . Some . . . have been artists who appreciated the hills for their visual beauty and the time and space for artistic development. There have been medicine women, crazy men, hippies, and loners. There have been drunks, druggies and artists. All kinds of people, some more colorful than others. 46

It wasn't easy for Ruby's owners to find caretakers. After all, Ruby was very isolated, and provided at best a dilapidated old mining camp house for a home. There was no electricity, no heat, no running water, and no telephone, except in later years, when a caretaker could hike to the top of nearby hill with a cell phone. And then there were the animals and insects, including rattle snakes and rabid skunks.

So what kind of person would be a caretaker, not only survive the Spartan existence, but relish it. Here are a couple of examples of colorful Ruby caretakers of the past.

Stan Christopher worked for H. A. Kinnison and the K & K Mining Company during the last attempt to reclaim gold and silver from Ruby's tailings dump. When Kinnison gave up and left in 1988, Christopher stayed on to be caretaker.

Stan Christopher was an artist, a naturalist, and a builder. For eight years, he was the sole resident of Ruby. He produced 150 oil paintings, studied Mexican free-tail bats that populated the old abandoned nearby mine tunnels, and hand-built a 36-foot sailboat. The all-wood boat took three years to build. Christopher took the completed boat out of Ruby on a flatbed truck along the "tortuous" Ruby Road.<sup>47</sup>

During his time in Ruby, Christopher had to deal with irate drunks with guns, demanding access to Ruby; swat team invasions, looking for drug runners; rattlesnakes in the outhouse; and being bitten on the face, while sleeping, by a rabid skunk. But with all of this, Christopher professed to love it.<sup>48</sup> According to Pat Frederick, "Stan was a wonderful caretaker."

About the time that Stan Christopher left Ruby, Tommy Tynes attended the second reunion of former Ruby residents (see below) in 1996. Hearing that Ruby was going to be short a caretaker, Tynes told Pat and Howard

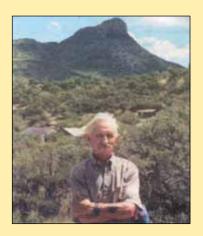
Frederick that he'd like the job.<sup>50</sup>

Tommy Tynes worked for the state of Arizona as a heavy machinery lift operator for 36 years and looked at the Ruby caretaker job as a good retirement activity. Tynes was a responsible, caring, history-loving caretaker for four years. Howard Frederick said of him, "People just thought the world of him and he was always there. . . always on the job." <sup>51</sup>

# Frederick went on to say:

He was the kind of person that there was a crisis, he was right on top of things. . . [after an automobile accident in the Ruby area] Tommy immediately was up the hill with his cell phone, calling paramedics, getting helicopter in, and all on his own back . . <sup>52</sup>

Tyne's goal was to open a self-operated museum on the property.<sup>53</sup>





Stan Christopher and Tommy Tynes were two of the more colorful caretakers of Ruby.

(Christopher photo courtesy of *The Connection*;

Tynes photo from private files of Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon)

# **Reunions of Former Ruby Residents**

Three weeks before the May 9, 1993 television broadcast of the PBS Natural History program on Ruby, Pat and Howard Frederick hosted the first reunion of former residents of the mining camp.

Some of the people who lived in Ruby in the 1930s actually requested the reunion. As Pat Frederick put it in Arivaca's *The Connection*: "The gates have been locked so long to what a lot of people consider their hometown."

The Fredericks responded to the request. That same article in *The Connection* continued:

. . Ruby owners are wanting to preserve the oral history of Ruby by sponsoring a Ruby reunion. All who worked or lived in Ruby before it was abandoned in the 1940s are cordially invited to attend.<sup>54</sup>

Frederick encouraged attendees to "bring their memories and any memorabilia and visit with others who used to live in their hometown."

The date of that first Ruby reunion was Saturday, April 17, 1993. The Fredericks were overjoyed to host 450 attendees!

Traffic was a problem. There was a single line of traffic on a dirt road. Parking was a problem. Cars parked on the tailings pond and visitors used donated golf carts to get to the gathering place and picnic tables. But everyone had a great time, renewing old friendships and sharing memories of an (now remembered) idyllic life some half-century earlier.<sup>55</sup>



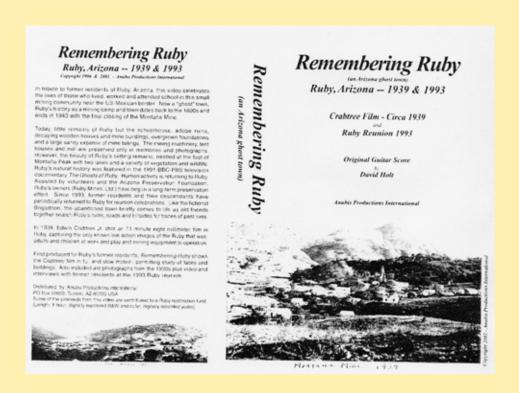
These former Ruby residents enjoyed swapping memories at the 1993 Ruby reunion. (Photo from Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon's private collection.)

A few weeks after the big event, Maggie M. wrote her impressions in Arivaca's *The Connection*:

People came from other states to return to this special place. Everywhere you looked there were smiling faces, cries of joy and hugs of people who hadn't seen each other in many years, and families reunited. The majority of those who came were Hispanic, either the workers or the children of workers, who had spent their youth in the mining town.

A number of people I talked to hadn't been back during the 50 plus years that the town has been closed. They looked for the houses they had lived in, many of which over the years have been dismantled or destroyed. Many of the workers lived in tents with their families and those folks just pointed to where their tent use to be. <sup>56</sup>

Anubis Productions of Tucson, the company that had helped produce the PBS television show on Ruby, videotaped a number of interviews with former residents attending the reunion. They combined these fascinating oral histories with an 8mm film shot in 1939 of the only known live action images of Ruby's adults and children at work and play and the mine and mill in operation. The resulting videotape, "Remembering Ruby," is available through Anubis Productions International, P.O. Box 50589, Tucson, AZ, 85703.



This video tape combines video interviews from the 1993 Ruby reunion with a 1939 film of Ruby when the mine and the mining camp boomed.

(Photo courtesy of Anubis Productions)

One of the former Ruby residents attending the reunion was Charlie Foltz. Foltz lived in Ruby as a child in the 1910s with his father, and later in the 1930s as a mineworker. Charlie was also a poet and wrote the following poem<sup>57</sup> to commemorate the event:

#### **Ruby Town's First Reunion**

By every means that word went out, Return to Ruby and learn about How Ruby died. So of course we went And it turned out as time well spent. Of friends we had so long ago Few live to tell us what they know. Old? Of course, and inclined to sit Use eyes and ears while they rest a bit. And hear again BIG DIESEL'S chuff. Non stop, rapid, chuff, chuff, chuff. Then at last someone stops to speak "I think you're one of those I seek. This makes my day! I'm glad I came!" "Yes. Me too, but ah .. what's your name?" "Come on buddy. Let's find more friends And enjoy this day before it ends. For some will not come back this way. We've only now. Right now. Today! We'll talk to them. Learn all we can From old women or an old, old man. Their remembered recollections Will give our thoughts new directions. We'll get addresses, phone numbers too. Let's hurry. Before we say adieu To this ghost town's resurrection."

The owners of Ruby were so happy with the first reunion that they made subsequent reunions a tradition. The complete list of Ruby reunions to date is:

First Reunion	April 17, 1993
Second Reunion	April 13, 1996
Third Reunion	April 15, 2000
Fourth Reunion	April 28, 2001
Fifth Reunion	April 20, 2002

Typically, 100-200 people attended the reunions that came after the first Ruby reunion.

Each reunion year, the Frederick's invitation "advertises" food, music, and dancing. They charge \$6.00 for registration and \$5.00 for lunch, if requested. The Fredericks also provide specially made monogrammed Ruby T-shirts and baseball caps for a nominal fee.

# **Today's Ruby Ghost Town**

Today, Ruby is still owned by Ruby Mines, Inc., the Tucson consortium of the children of the five 1961 purchasers. Pat and Howard Frederick represent the owners. Contact: Howard and Pat Frederick, 6202 West Ina Road, Tucson, Arizona 85743, 520-744-4471.

Ruby is 300 plus acres of wonderful memories of gold, silver, lead, and zinc mining. The two lakes and 700,000 tons of mining tailings remind visitors of Ruby's unique history. Only about a dozen buildings remain and sadly, they are deteriorating rapidly. Now Ruby lays still, except for the wind-whipped clatter of aged, bent, pieces of rusted galvanized iron that once provided cover over the homes of Ruby residents.

In the 1930s, Ruby extended over the hills surrounding Ruby Lake, one of the reservoirs created to supply water for the mill. Up against a good-sized hill on the south end of the camp, are the remains the Montana's mine pad with head-frame and shaft, the mill to process the ore, the assay office, and the warehouse. The large area of snow-white mine tailings punctuate an area southeast of Ruby Lake, and provide a dam for Finger (Sobaco) Lake.

Living accommodations for the people of Ruby, used to spread over the surrounding hills. Neighborhoods evolved. Residents called the west area "Snob Hill" because it was on a hill and because the General Manager of Ruby and mine management personnel lived there. Adobe and frame houses were common in this neighborhood. Anglos (including author Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon's family) lived on the north side of town, called Hollywood (for unremembered reasons). Here a mix of adobe and frame buildings, and tents could be found. The Mexican area was on the east side of town, with four or five frame houses, but mostly tents.

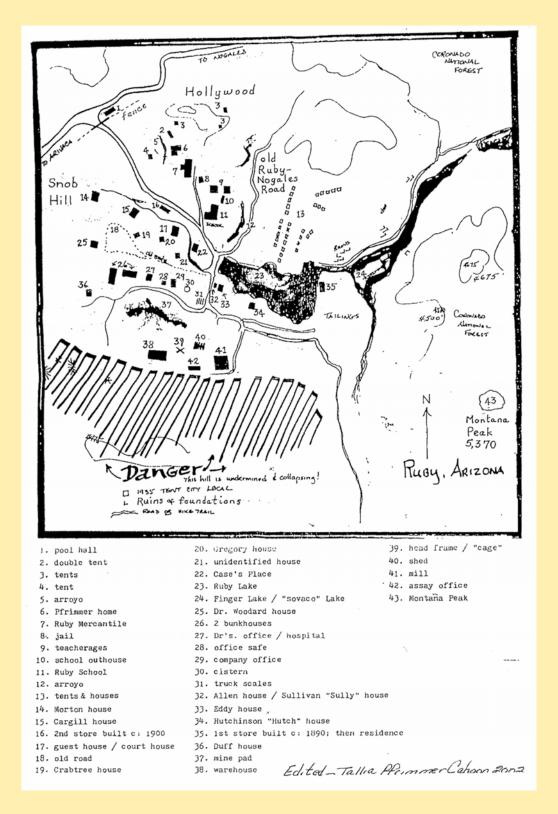
One Ruby businessman had to build his pool hall, where one could get mixed drinks, outside the company fence because the manager of the mine didn't want liquor on company property.

Ruby Road used to come right into the camp from Arivaca and then, south of the school, turned sharply north towards Nogales. Today, the Ruby Road cuts across the northern boundary of Ruby.

Author Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon describes the old mining camp today:

These days the gate at the entrance to Ruby is open during daylight hours. In the recent past it was often locked. In that case the honk of an automobile horn would rouse the caretakers.

The major mining buildings still look out over the valley below. The warehouse is still in pretty good shape. The galvanized roof of the old mill building provides a shelter for Ruby's caretakers.



This map, provided to Ruby visitors, locates the old mining camp's important sites and buildings. (Map courtesy of Pat and Howard Frederick)

Remnants of the assay office are still standing.

The lake is still there where I remember it. The size of the lake depends on the amount of local rainfall. The dam built in the late 1890's is still there, doing its job. I understand that the lake is

stocked with bass, catfish, and bluegill.

The tailings pond, the fine-grain, sand-like remains of milling the ore from the mine, still covers a huge area. You would swear it was a white sandy beach.

Only the walls of the mercantile and post office, the scene of the infamous Ruby murders, still stand.

The schoolhouse remains a whole structure. Books, pieces of furniture, and an old oil stove can be found inside. The teeter-totter board and the large slide are still there, outside the school.

The combined doctor's office and hospital building is still recognizable.

The two bunkhouses remain in fair shape.

The concrete jail appears ready for use today. The outside wooden door is covered with metal. The inside door is entirely made of steel.

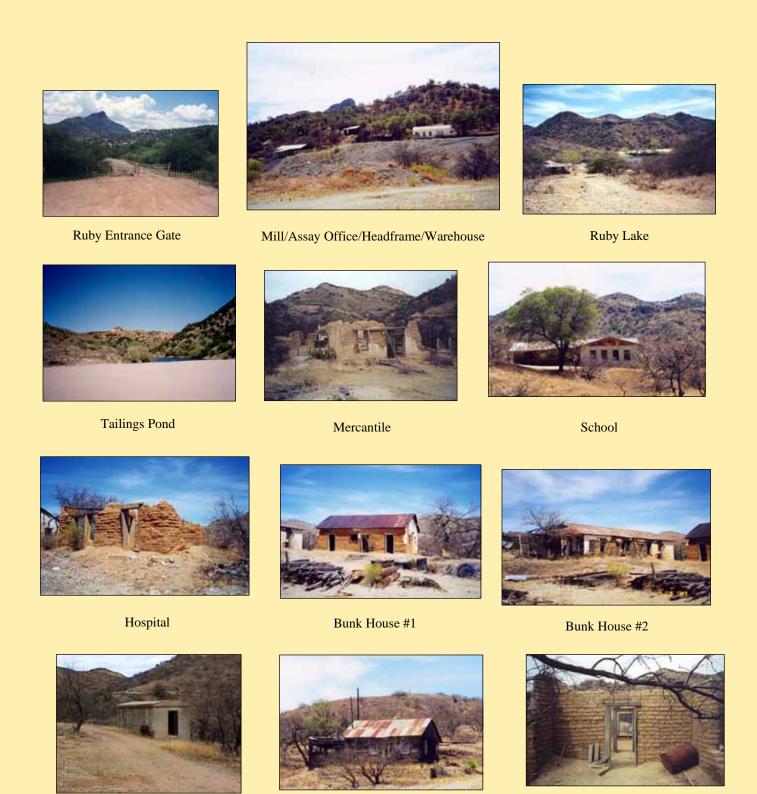
The mine superintendent's house, the home of hippie squatters in the 1970's, may be the building in the best shape, along with the school.

My old house is rapidly deteriorating and it is sad to see. Only a few adobe walls remain to remind me of my years in Ruby.

And perhaps saddest of all, there are piles of lumber, piping, and wire sitting in front of the old bunkhouses. Trucks delivered the material just a few years ago, when dreams of preserving or renovating Ruby were blooming. But these modern building supplies remain unused (except for occasional roof repair and for picnic tables), apparently left to the same fate as Ruby.<sup>58</sup>

So as evidence of man in Ruby slowly disappears, nature's rebirth continues. When asked what animals and birds they see today, the Fredericks listed an occasional mountain lion, deer, javalinas, gray hawks, and osprey.<sup>59</sup>

Also despite its location near the international border with Mexico, Ruby has not had any serious problems with drug smuggling or illegal alien traffic.<sup>60</sup>



Ruby the ghost town is rapidly deteriorating. (Photos by Al and Bob Ring, 2001)

Mine Manager's House

Jail

Pfrimmer House

# **Access to Ruby**

The public can see the ghost town of Ruby, either privately, or on regularly scheduled tours from Pima Community College.

Private visitors should call Pat or Howard Frederick to arrange the visit and to coordinate with the onsite caretaker's schedule. Permits are \$12 per day per person for hiking, wildlife viewing, and exploring. You can also fish in one of Ruby's two lakes, stocked with bass and blue gills, for \$18 per day or \$30 for the weekend. The lakes are private, so you won't need a state fishing license.<sup>61</sup>

The owners permit camping on the property but do not allow hunting. Howard Frederick says:

We treat it as a primitive area. What you bring in, we ask that you take out. Also, because some of the plant life is rare, we ask that you bring your own firewood. . . Because of the way the mine was dug there are some hazardous spots that need to be avoided and that the risk of land collapsing in these areas should be respected. 62

You can get to Ruby by automobile from two directions on Ruby Road. The first approach is through Arivaca, coming from the north. About five miles south of Arivaca on the Ruby Road (Forest Road 39), at the Santa Cruz County line, the paved road turns to dirt and remains so for the six additional miles to Ruby. The terrain is relatively flat; the roadbed is sometimes graded and does not require a high clearance or 4WD vehicle.

The second approach to Ruby is from the southeast on AZ 289, which starts a few miles north of Nogales, off Interstate 19. AZ 289 is paved for about 10 miles, before becoming a dirt road (Forest Road 39) for the remaining 14 miles to Ruby. This dirt road twists and turns through the Atascosa Mountains and offers a spectacular view of the Oro Blanco country. Though longer and somewhat more primitive than the approach from Arivaca, this road also does not require a high clearance or 4WD vehicle.

Pima Community College conducts public tours of Ruby. The usual schedule is one or two tours per month, from October through May. The tour takes all day, from the 8:15 am departure from Pima Community College in Tucson to the return around 5:30 pm. Pickups/drop-offs in Green Valley can be arranged. Cost is \$69 per person (2004). For arrangements, contact the Registration Office at Pima Community College at 520-206-6468.

Author Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon has led these public tours since October 1994. She drives the 12-passenger van and provides a historical perspective on Ruby, from her years living there as a child in the 1930's.

Cahoon says of her nostalgic tour guide experience:

[at first] the emotion was painful because of the memories that were there and to see the houses deteriorating. . . but it became easier, until now you can't keep me away. The memories become sharper each time. You see a spot or something and you know something happened there. Then the memory comes back.

Every little bit of history, and your life there you find, is a gold mine. 63

# The Future of Ruby

The future of Ruby is anything but clear. Over the years, among the owners, there has been talk about turning Ruby into a historical site by restoring the old mining camp and turning it into a collection of museums. Alternative ideas ranged from a center for ecological research and interpretation, a wildlife sanctuary, a golf course, tennis courts, a swimming pool, an RV park, and other recreational facilities. Some owners talk about a bed and breakfast facility. To this date, no significant action has been taken to realize any of these dreams.

Speaking in 1993, Pat Frederick said:

The Ruby owners dream of nature trails connecting with the Altar valley, solar energy sources, wind generators, scientific study of riparian areas of Ruby and surrounding Coronado National Forest, educational processes for history and geology to wildlife and last but the very least . rebuilding of the Ruby mercantile which has been melting away since the roof was removed in 70s.

Ten years later in 2003 Howard Frederick still talked about the mercantile and a partial restoration of Ruby:

Twenty years from now I want the mercantile to be standing but, our goal in the restoration is to maintain the buildings that are salvageable. I think there are several that are doable in that area. The assay office has sort of really become a hard task but the warehouse, the school, the jail is indestructible, the three houses up the hill, supervisor's house are really worth . . or salvageable. <sup>65</sup>

Responding to her husband's comments, Pat Frederick said:

. . That's what I would personally like to do but I would literally have to win the lottery in order to do it. . . We have trouble maintaining the house we live in and there's a lot of effort goes into maintaining three other houses. Nature's way ahead of us down there. <sup>66</sup>

Asked if they've given any thought to renewed mining, Howard Frederick answered:

No! Never! We signed a covenant with the Game and Fish when they helped us with the fencing materials that we wouldn't mine or run cattle on the property for at least ten years and I on my own thinking said, "That's in perpetuity." It's not legal but probably fifty-five or sixty per cent of the other owners feel the same.<sup>67</sup>

In summary, Howard Frederick eloquently stated his view of the value of Ruby:

The value of Ruby is what is historically, environmentally, [and] aesthetically. That's its real value and that's a very difficult concept to get across. . <sup>68</sup>



Pat and Howard Frederick are ready to greet attendees at the Ruby Reunion in 2000. (Photo by Bob Ring, 2000)

#### **NOTES**

- 1. For the complete history of the Montana mine, Montana Camp, and Ruby through 1961, see the authors' previous papers listed in the Preface.
- 2. Ruby sale <u>Description Sheet</u>, given to author Al Ring in July 2000, by Hugo Miller's son, Hugo Sarle Miller.
- 3. The first American location of the Montana Silver and Gold mine was in 1877 by James Kirkpatrick. After a period of inactivity at the mine, George Cheyney relocated the mine and renamed it the Philadelphia, after his home town.
- 4. Arizona Daily Star (Tucson, December 11, 1961).
- 5. Green Valley News (Green Valley, March 25, 1971).
- 6. Pat and Howard Frederick's private Ruby files.
- 7. Unknown newspaper (June 30, 1965).
- 8. Arizona Daily Star (Tucson, December 8, 1968).
- 9. Letter from Dan B. McCarthy to Louis Daugherty, December 3, 1974. From Pat and Howard Frederick's private Ruby files.
- 10. Green Valley News and Sun (Green Valley, September, 17, 1982).
- 11. Arizona Daily Star (Tucson, May 8, 1965). This accident was early reminiscent of a similar boating accident on the same lake in the 1930s when more than 1,200 people lived in Ruby. In the previous accident, two of three children who were boating on the lake drowned when their boat capsized.
- 12. "Proposal to Extract Gold and Silver from the Ruby Mines Tailings Pile," April 20, 1985, K & K Mining, Inc. From Pat and Howard Frederick's private Ruby files.
- 13. Assay reports on Montana mines, August 12, September 11, 25, 1964, Jacobs Assay Office, Tucson, Arizona. From Pat and Howard Frederick's private Ruby files.
- 14. "Articles of Incorporation, Ruby, Limited," January 30, 1968, Santa Cruz County Recorders Office, Dock 088, pp. 384-391.
- 15. "Articles of Incorporation, Ruby Mines, Inc.," February 28, 1972, Santa Cruz County Recorders Office, Dock 157, pp. 83-88.
- 16. James A. Briscoe, "Economic Evaluation of Proposed Re-treatment of the Montana Mine Tailings at Ruby, Arizona and Their Re-location to Form a Dam for a 35 to 40 Acre Recreational Lake," April 11, 1973. John Stephens, "Metallurgical Testing of Ruby Tailings for Ruby Mines, Inc.," March 19, 1974, Mountain States Research and Development, Tucson, Arizona. "Proposal for Lease of a Marconaflo System for Reclaim of Lead/Zinc Tailings at Ruby Arizona, Unit B M-351," May 10, 1974, Marcona Corporation. All documents from Pat and Howard Frederick's private Ruby files.
- 17. Mine Inspector's Notes, Montana Mine Files, 1966-1990, Department of Mines and Mineral Resources,

Phoenix, Arizona.

- 18. Tech Associates made their plans on the basis of the price of silver having recently increased from \$2-\$5 per ounce and a price of gold at \$45 per ounce.
- 19. Gene Varn, "Chemical Search for Gold and Silver Injects New Life into old Mining Town," *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix, Arizona, February 4, 1980). Also see Mine Inspector's Notes, Montana Mine Files, 1966-1990, Department of Mines and Mineral Resources, Phoenix, Arizona.
- 20. Mine Inspector's Notes, Montana Mines Files.
- 21. "Proposal to Extract Gold and Silver from the Ruby Mines Tailings Pile."
- 22. Mine Inspector's Notes, Montana Mines Files.
- 23. Mine Inspector's Notes, Montana Mines Files.
- 24. Peter Pegnam, "The Privately Owned Ghost Town of Ruby Has Been Home to Hard Rock Miners and Hard-up Hippies," *Tucson Citizen* (Tucson, Arizona, December 5, 1992).
- 25. Arivaca Briefs (Arivaca, February 9, 1968).
- 26. Tucson Citizen (Tucson, Arizona, December 5, 1992).
- 27. "Impossible Dream is Ruby in the Rough," *Tucson Daily Citizen* (Tucson, Arizona, December 6, 1971).
- 28. "Longhairs Back in Forest and Officials up a Tree," *Tucson Daily Star* (Tucson, Arizona, no month/day, 1971).
- 29. Tucson Citizen (Tucson, Arizona, December 5, 1992).
- 30. Sam Negri, "Gap Closes, Arivaca's Tolerance toward Hippies Grows, *Tucson Citizen* (Tucson, Arizona, October 1, 1976).
- 31. Letters between Louis Daugherty and Arizona State Historic Site Preservation officers, February 25, March 5, March 14, 1975, State Historic Preservation Office, Phoenix, Arizona.
- 32. National Register of Historic Place Inventory Registration Form, Ruby, March 25, 1975, State Historic Preservation Office, Phoenix, Arizona.
- 33. Letter from Dennis McCarthy to Louis Daugherty, May 6, 1975, State Historic Preservation Office, Phoenix, Arizona.
- 34. Letter from Louis Daugherty to Dorothy Hall, July 17, 1975, State Historic Preservation Office, Phoenix, Arizona.
- 35. Letter from Dorothy Hall to Louis Daugherty, December 5, 1975, State Historic Preservation Office, Phoenix, Arizona.
- 36. Arizona Daily Star (Tucson, Arizona, May 8, 1993).

- 37. Maggie M., "The Ghosts of Ruby," *The Connection* (Arivaca, Arizona, May, 1993).
- 38. Maggie M., "The Ghosts of Ruby."
- 39. Maggie M., "The Ghosts of Ruby."
- 40. Bonnie Henry, "Ruby Comes to Life in 'Ghosts'," Arizona Daily Star (Tucson, Arizona, May 9, 1993).
- 41. Bonnie Henry, "Ruby Residents Eagerly Awaiting Return to Ruby," *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson, April 11, 1993).
- 42. Pat Frederick, "What's Happening at Ruby?" *The Connection* (Arivaca, Arizona, March 1993).
- 43. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick by author Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon, taped on November 24, 2003.
- 44. Tom Foust, "Ghost Town to Benefit From G & F Habitat Program," *Arizona Daily Star* (Tucson, Arizona, December 7, 1995)
- 45. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 46. Mary Noon Kasulaitis, "Caretaking Ruby," *The Connection* (Arivaca, Arizona, May 2002).
- 47. Maggie M., "Stan Christopher at Ruby," *The Connection* (Arivaca, Arizona, October 2001).
- 48. "Stan Christopher at Ruby."
- 49. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 50. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 51. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 52. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 53. Remembering Ruby, http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/environment/outdoors/hiking/ruby.html.
- 54. Pat Frederick, "What's Happening at Ruby?"
- 55. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 56. Maggie M., "Ruby Reunion," *The Connection* (Arivaca, Arizona, May 1993).
- 57. Charles J. Foltz, "Ruby Town's First Reunion," *The Connection* (Arivaca, Arizona, May 1994).
- 58. Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon, "Ruby: From Its Heyday in the 1930's to Ghost Town," Paper presented at the Arizona Joint History Convention, Las Cruces, New Mexico, April 12, 2002.
- 59. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 60. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.

- 61. Sam Negri, "Ruby in the Rough," Tucson Monthly (Tucson, Arizona, February 1998).
- 62. Julia Bishop, "Ruby: A Ghost of Arizona History, Arizonian, Vol. 12, No. 28 (Tucson, Arizona, July 1998).
- 63. Remembering Ruby, <a href="http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/environment/outdoors/hiking/ruby.html">http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/environment/outdoors/hiking/ruby.html</a>.
- 64. Pat Frederick, "What's Happening at Ruby?"
- 65. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 66. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 67. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.
- 68. Oral interview of Pat and Howard Frederick.