



Women in Arizona Mining History

Stephanie A. Brown, Avi Buckles


WestLand Resources, Inc.

Engineering & Environmental Services



Nurses

- Arizona Copper Company hospital, Clifton, AZ, ca. 1905



Teachers

- Clifton Highschool, Clifton, AZ, ca. 1920



Service industry

- Employees of the Detroit Copper Company Store, Morenci, AZ, 1928



Mining

- Employees of the Arizona Copper Company, Clifton, Arizona, ca. 1913



Superstitions

- Black cats
- Women (especially redheads)
- Whistling
- Working on Good Friday
- Dogs
- Killing spiders
- Warm breezes
- Ladders
- Strange lights
- White rats

violation of this act.

SECTION 38.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN MINES—EMPLOYMENT PROHIBITED.

No woman or girl, and no boy under the age of 16 years, shall be employed or permitted to work underground in any mine; and it shall be unlawful for any operator to employ such persons within a mine. Before any boy shall be permitted to work in any mine he shall produce to the operator, superintendent, or mine foreman thereof an affidavit made by the parent, guardian, or next of kin of said boy, duly verified, containing a statement that he, the said boy, is at least 16 years of age. Any violation of, or failure to comply with, the provisions of this section shall constitute a misdemeanor, and shall be punished as provided in section 52 of this act.

Provided, however, That nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the employment of women, or children under 16 years of age, in the offices or buildings connected with a mine.

SECTION 38. WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN MINES—EMPLOYMENT PROHIBITED.

No woman, no girl, and no boy under 16 may work underground, but such may work in office or buildings; no boy may be employed without having presented affidavit that he is over 16.

SECTION 131. EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

No child under 16 years of age is permitted to work in or in connection with any mine. No woman may be employed in any mine.



The 19th and Early 20th Centuries

- Women prospectors were active as early as 1849 in the gold fields of California
- In 1886, the first known female prospector located the San Juan copper property above Safford
- Women in the western frontier were able to earn large sums of money from the sale of their mineral claims far surpassing any waged work opportunities available to them





Lillian Malcom

- Lillian Malcolm and two unnamed women pan for gold in Nevada, ca. early 1900s



Nellie Cashman

- Nellie Cashman in her later years, from "Interesting Westerners," *Sunset: The Pacific Monthly* 46(5):48 (May 1921)



Clara Fish Roberts '97

Clara Fish
Roberts

- First student to register at the University of Arizona in 1891, she graduated with a degree in mining in 1897.

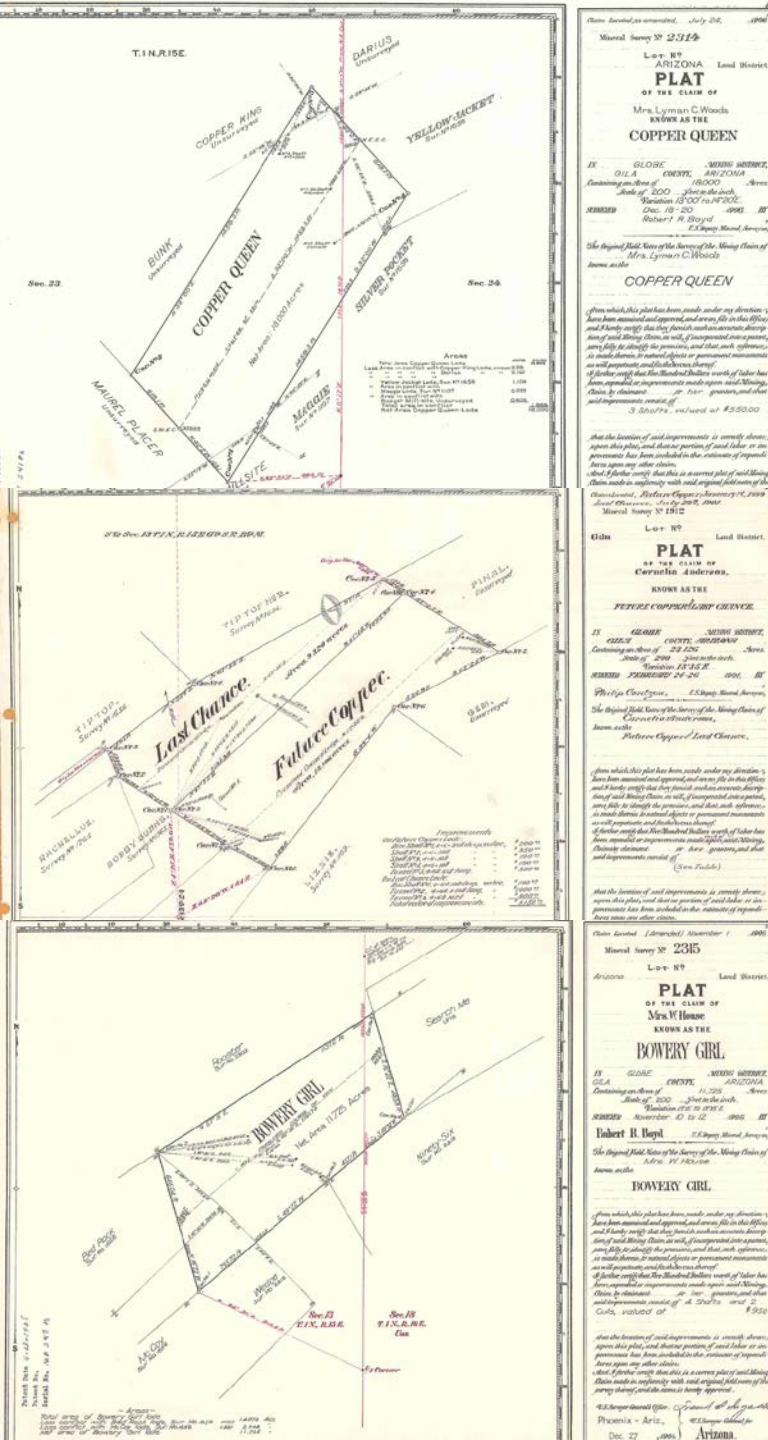


Recent Research

Recent work at the Old Dominion conducted by WestLand has identified three early 20th century female mine owners in the Globe-Miami mining district



Mine Owners



- Carolina Woods (a.k.a. Mrs. Lyman C. Woods)
- Cornelia Anderson
- Elizabeth House (a.k.a. Mrs. W. House)



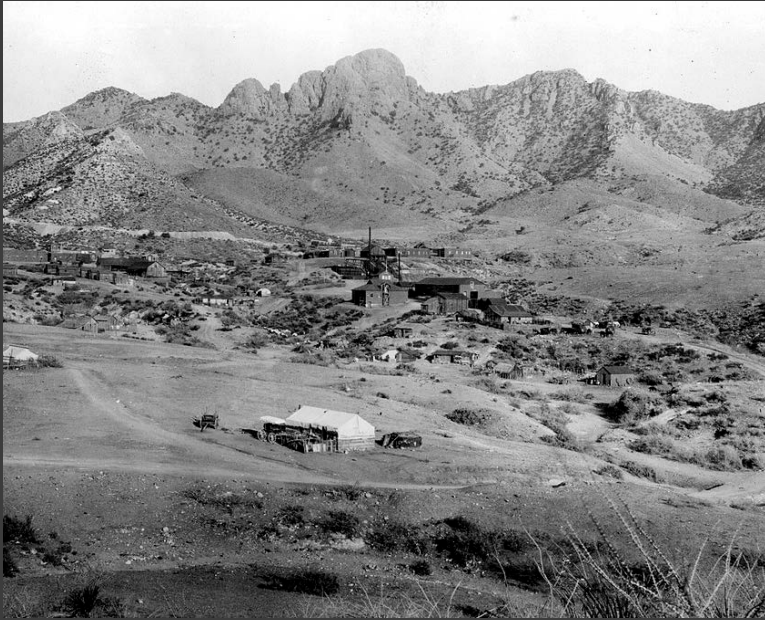
World War II Era

- Women leaving the change room heading to work at the ball mill in Morenci



Blanche Elise
Lightowler

- Blanche Lightowler, University of Arizona School of Mines Class of 1944, working at an assay furnace



Recent Research

- Research conducted by WestLand in 2017 identified a single woman mine owner at Helvetia, who operated in the early 1940s



The Leader mine

- Overview of the Leader mine in 1941




Ruth B.
Blankenship

April 7, 1943

PERSONAL

Mr. J. S. Coupal
413 Home Builders Building
Phoenix, Arizona

Dear Mr. Coupal:

I have been trying to deal with Mrs. Blankenship on the Helvetia property for the past two days. I first wanted a sixty day option, then I finally asked her for a thirty day option. She is willing to entertain the offer as outlined by you, but will give no one an option on the property. I tried to explain to her very fully that your people would not consider a deal unless they had sufficient time to make a thorough examination, but she said there were so many people who are interested and wanted to go out there and make an examination. You know, as well as I, that 95% of the people have neither the money nor the connections to tackle a mine of that size and being a woman it is impossible to argue with her or to get her to listen to anything that is within reason. 

Maybe later on she might be willing to give us a thirty day option. If I hear any more, I will be glad to drop you a note, and I further believe that I might run across another mine which will have better chances of making a success.

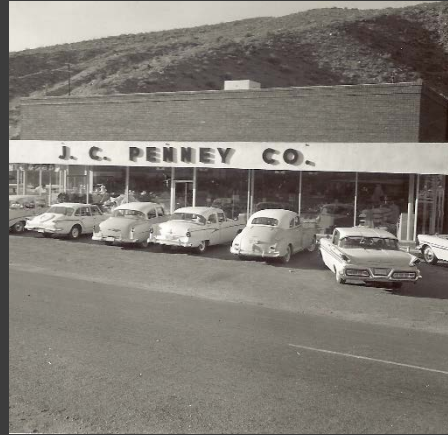
With regards and best wishes, I am

Yours very truly,

C. M. Taylor

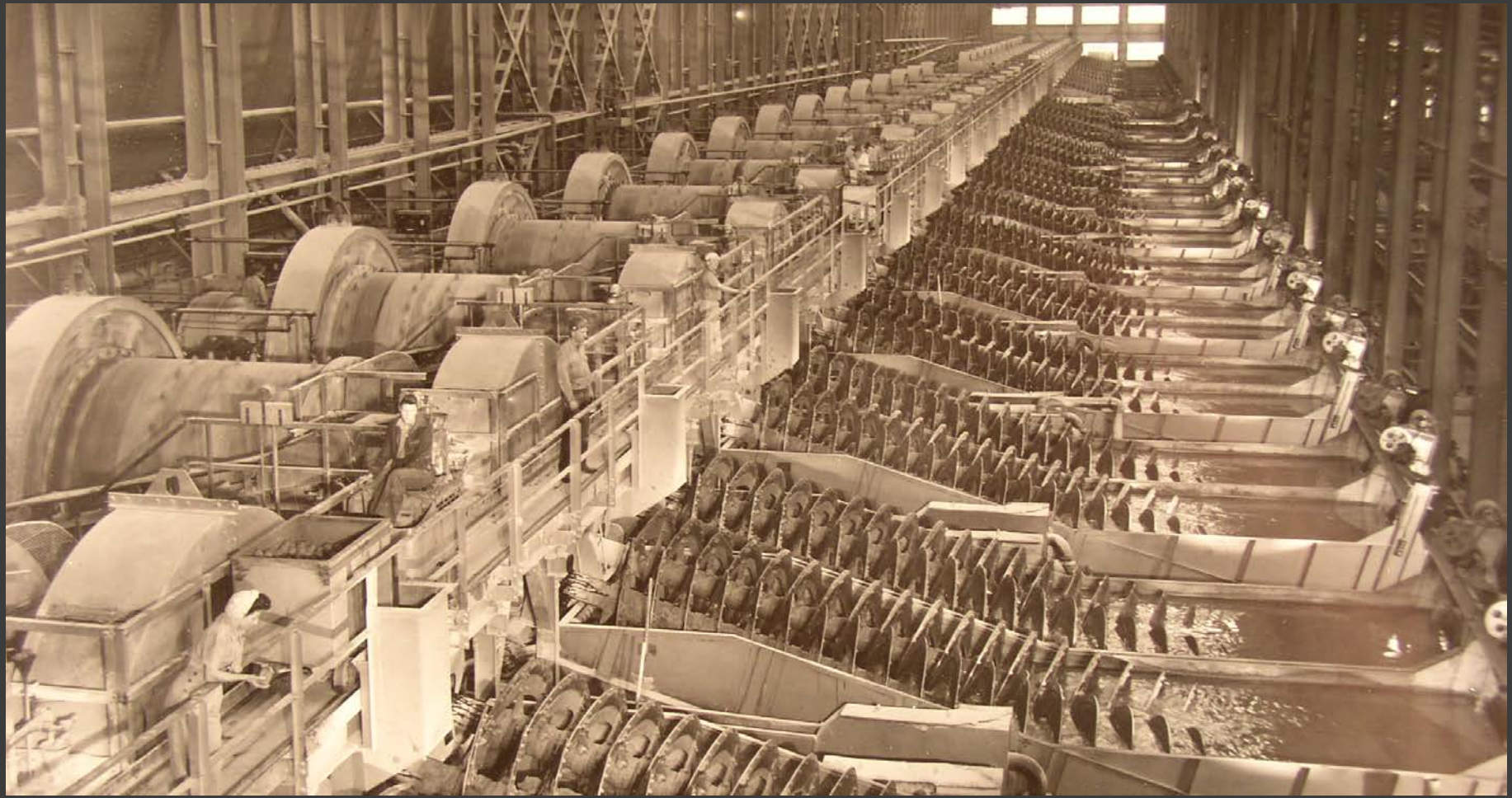
C. M. TAYLOR
County Assessor

CMT:wg



Postwar Era

- As the men returned from WWII, women were often forced out of their positions
- This era saw a strict return to gendered segregation in many workplaces
- In 1972, the Equal Opportunity Act was passed
- In the 1980s and 1990s large class action lawsuits were underway to address discrimination faced by women in the workplace



Postwar Era

- Men and women working on the flotation floor at the Phelps Dodge Corporation concentrator in Plantsite, Morenci



Postwar Era

- Men and Women employed at the Morenci concentrator following World War II



Women in mining today

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that women made up 15.8 percent of the workforce in mining, quarrying and oil/gas extraction in 2019
- Companies with female board members tend to financially outperform companies with all-male boards
- Companies with female board members also tend to outperform all-male boards in environmental and cultural stewardship