

Pinal **NUGGET**

July 2018
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FREE

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Superior,
pages 6-8

Photo by Cat Brown

MURDER
IN
HAYDEN
pages 2-5

A community publication of Copperarea.com

The Killing of a Mexican in Hayden

**John Hernandez
Pinal Nugget**

On January 22, 1911 a man was killed in Hayden, Arizona. The *Arizona Republican* story headline read: MEXICAN KILLED BY DEPUTY SHERIFF.

The newspaper reported the story like this:
“Last night Frank

Hawkins, deputy sheriff at Hayden, shot and killed Feliciano Bracamonte,

a prominent Mexican of Hayden. Bracamonte was drunk and disorderly, and Deputy Hawkins arrested him and started with him, when a large number of Bracamonte’s friends made a rush on the deputy. Bracamonte was taken from the officer by his friends, and the officer followed protesting against their action. Finally, as the Mexican was about to be placed in a wagon to be carried off by his friends, the officer shot him three times, resulting in the Mexican’s death.”

became excited, and for the moment lost control of himself. There is a persistent rumor, however, among the friends of the dead man, that there has been trouble before, and that this figured in the action of the officer.”

On January 23rd, an inquest was held. The verdict was that Bracamonte came to his death from gunshot wounds inflicted by Hawkins. An arrest warrant was issued for Hawkins. Newspapers reported that there was fear of serious trouble between the Americans and Mexicans in the Hayden-Winkelman area.

A different version of the incident appeared in the January 25 issue of the *Arizona Daily Star*. The article said:

“The killing occurred at a Mexican dance. Bracamonte is said to have been sufficiently under the influence of liquor to be quarrelsome. It is said that Hawkins advised him to go home with his friends, whereupon Bracamonte became abusive. He started toward the deputy, it is alleged, and it is said reached for his pocket with the supposed intention of drawing a weapon on Hawkins. By this time Hawkins was surrounded

The article went on to report that the friends of Bracamonte turned on Deputy Hawkins and he escaped to his home with some difficulty. Hawkins armed himself with a Winchester and “awaited further attack”. Winkelman Deputy Sheriff Palmer went to Hawkins’ home and advised him to leave town on account of threatened hostilities by the Mexicans. Hawkins made his way to Globe. (The Winkelman deputy’s last name was actually Parmer.)

The *Republican* article said of the deputy’s action, “That the officer did what he believed to be his duty is not doubted by his friends, but that the action was justifiable is quite another matter. He doubtless

NUGGET

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James Carnes.....Publisher
Jennifer Carnes..... Managing Editor
Michael Carnes.....General Manager
Mila Besich-Lira.....Advertising Director
John Hernandez.....Reporter

Email:

Editorial: jenniferc@MinerSunBasin.com
Advertising & Questions: michaelc@MinerSunBasin.com

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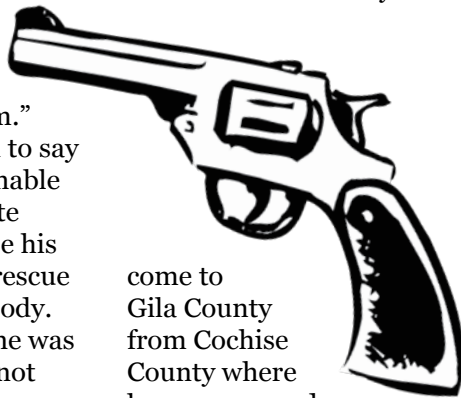
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by the Mexicans, it is said, and when he shot with the intention of scaring Bracamonte his arm was jerked and the ball struck the Mexican in the leg. This did not stop him and as he continued to try to jerk his weapon from his pocket, Hawkins shot again, this time to kill. He put two bullets into the Mexican's breast and killed him."

The article went on to say that Hawkins was unable to search Bracamonte for a weapon because his friends came to his rescue and carried off the body. Hawkins said that "he was lucky in that he did not have to kill several more of the Mexicans in order to escape with his own life". Hawkins reportedly left Hayden at two in the

morning under the guard of Deputy Parmer. He arrived in Globe at four in the afternoon and turned himself in to authorities. A warrant for murder was issued after the coroner's hearing. He was released on his own recognizance. Hawkins had recently



come to Gila County from Cochise County where he was engaged in business at Paradise. He was appointed as a deputy by Gila County Sheriff

Continued on page 4

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Hayden

Continued from page 3

Henry Thompson.

On January 29, a sister of Feliciano “Frank” Bracamonte was in town and gave another account of the incident. She had been a witness to the tragedy and her version brought to light a possible motive. The paper reported: “She and some members of the family of Bracamonte were already in their wagon ready to start home, when he was brought to the wagon. Hawkins, she said, came up at that time and she thought it was his purpose to assist in putting her brother into the wagon, but instead he drew a revolver and shot him three times. She said that some time before that there was a dance at Winkelman and the Bracamonte family was there. Hawkins, who was intoxicated, wanted to dance with a daughter of Bracamonte, but her father interfered on account of the condition of Hawkins. That, the sister of the dead man says, was the motive for the killing.”

A report by the *Arizona Silver Belt* newspaper said that “So strong is the Mexican feeling against Officer Frank Hawkins, who killed Frank Bracamonte some weeks ago, that they have hired J.L.B. Alexander, former U.S. Attorney, to assist in the prosecution of the officer.”

A February 2 report out of Florence in the *Arizona Daily Star* had the headings: COWARDLY DEPUTY DELIBERATELY KILLS MAN and WELL KNOWN MEXICAN OF FLORENCE APPARENTLY MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD. The article read: “Feliciano Bracamonte was shot and instantly killed at Hayden, Sunday evening by Deputy Sheriff Frank Hawkins of Gila County. The particulars as reported here by parties coming from Winkelman, show the shooting to have been without justification. According to the statements brought here, Bracamonte and his family were preparing to go home and get ready

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to attend a dance, when the officer came up, grabbed the victim by the shoulder and immediately shot him. At the first shot Bracamonte fell to the ground and the officer fired two more bullets into his body while he lay on the ground. If these statements are correct the killing was cold-blooded murder. The deceased resided in Florence for fifteen years and was known all that time as a peaceable law-abiding citizen. He moved to the Winkelman neighborhood about six years ago and was one of the most prominent Mexican citizens of that section. The killing caused intense excitement.”

In May of 1911, Frank Hawkins went on trial. The jury could not come to an agreement and a mistrial

was declared. The case was set for another trial in November. The trial was postponed and set for May 1912. The *Arizona Daily Star* reported from Globe on May 15: “Some of the best legal talent in this section is working on the Hawkins’ case, which came up in the superior court yesterday morning and a hard fight will be made both by the defense and the state, assisted by a special prosecutor employed by the relatives of the man whom Hawkins is charged with killing. Hawkins was a deputy sheriff at the time and said he went to arrest the Mexican who was disturbing the peace, and while on this mission he shot him. No evidence has been introduced to show that he acted in self defense,

however, but the entire Bracamonte family is on hand to testify against him.”

On May 20, 1912, word was received that S.Y. “Frank” Hawkins was acquitted in the trial for the killing of Feliciano Bracamonte. The *Daily Star* reported that “Mr. Hawkins has many friends in Hayden who are glad to hear that he has been adjudged not guilty.”

The Bracamonte family had many friends also and the Mexican community did not feel that justice was served.

No more information was found out about Frank Hawkins. Hawkins did not become a lawman again and he never returned to the Hayden-Winkelman area.



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Magnificent Monsoons Of Superior

Photos by Cat Brown

Cat Brown is a photographer for the *Superior Sun* and, occasionally, for the *Pinal Nugget*. Several of her photos have been selected as the Photo of the Day by *Arizona Highways* magazine.

When asked how she became interested in taking photos, she said:

“The paper hired me.

“I thought I was just going to write articles but then second day on the job I was told I needed to go take some pics of school kids. The only pics I had taken up until that point were some very bad ones with my phone of my dogs for my Facebook page.

“So I started taking photos.

“A lot of photos – first of events and then more and more of landscapes. I was surprised as anyone when people started saying they liked my photos. I realized I loved being out in the desert, sometimes lying in the mud, taking photos of the desert around Superior.

“Local folks started asking me if they could buy my images. That’s how the posters and postcards in local stores happened.”

Posters are available at Picket Post Antiques, 400 Main St., Superior.

Packs of postcards are available at Save Money Market, 420 W. Main St., Superior.



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WATERFALL

During monsoon showers, impromptu waterfalls like this one pop up in the boulders of Devil's Canyon east of Superior.





FIRESKY

The mountain seems to glow while monsoon showers fall.



RAINBOW

A rainbow spans the desert near Superior.



Magnificent Monsoons Of Superior

Photos by Cat Brown

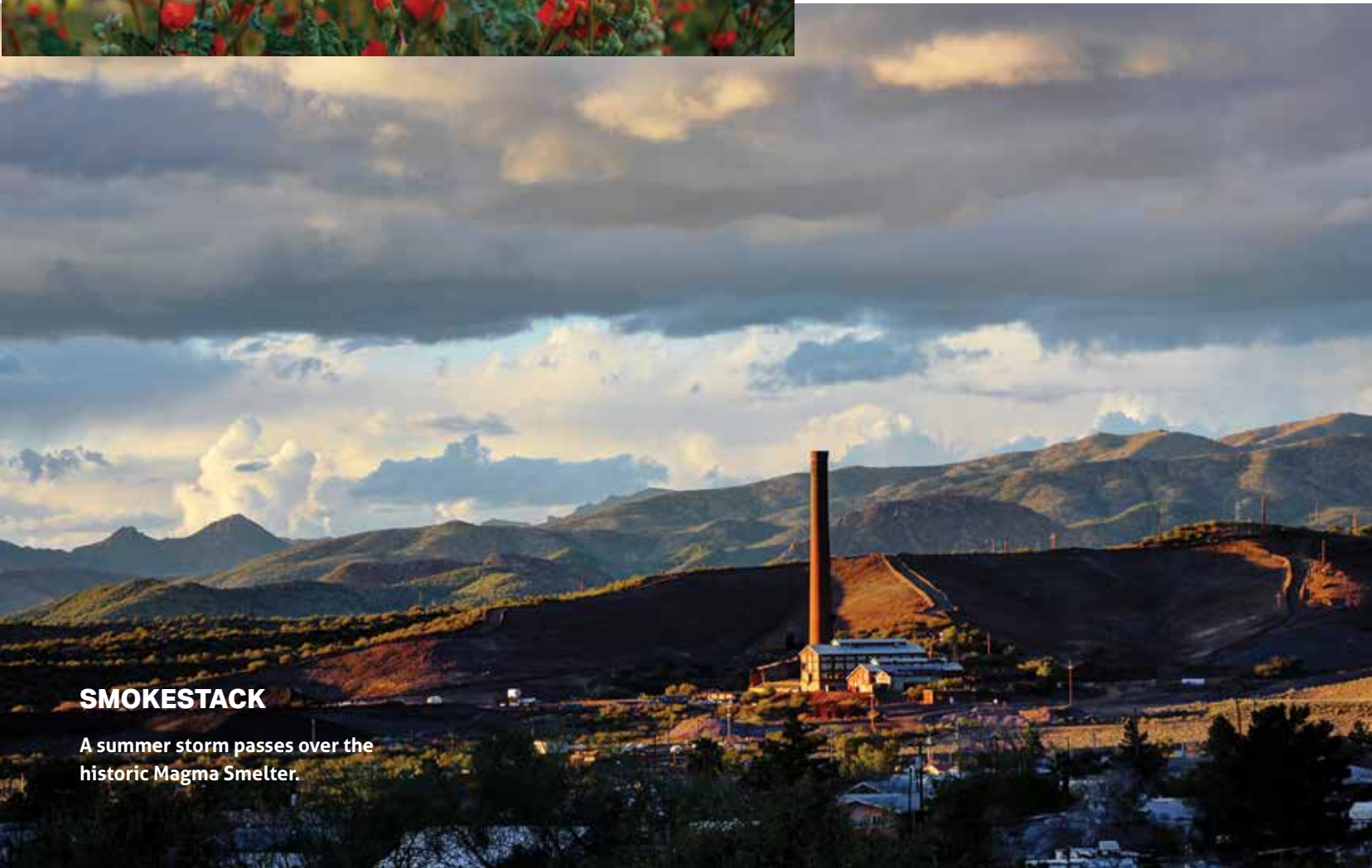


SEA OF YELLOW

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ORANGE FLOWERS

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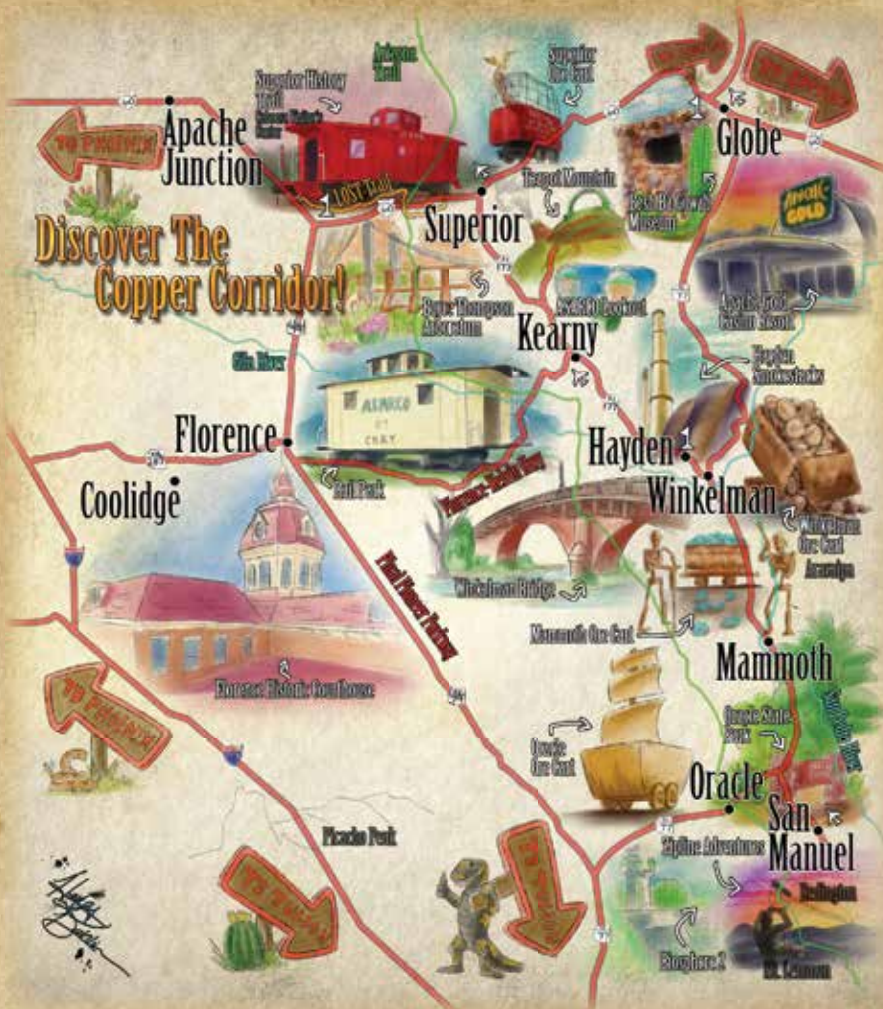
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