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A HISTORY OF
THE HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE

AND
THE HIRAM STEVENS FAMILY

AND
U.S. MARSHAL MILTON B. DUFFIELD

by
Bettina Lyons
Curator of Historic Sites
Tucson Museum of Art

January 1981

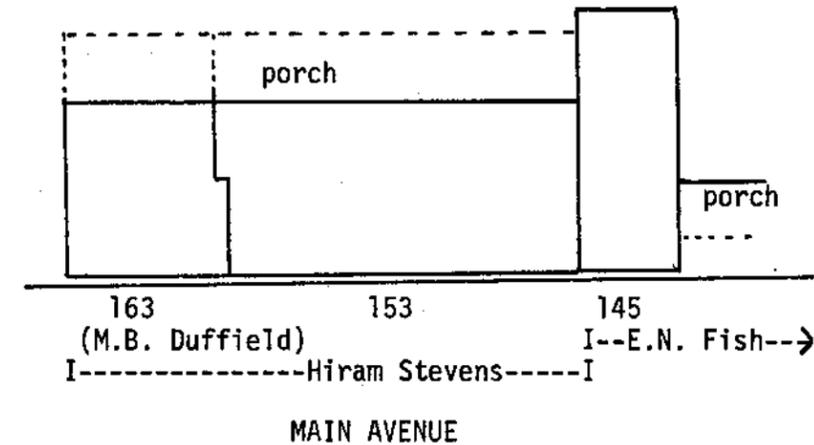
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Stevens house

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE

PROPERTY HISTORY

Block 183, lots no. 5 & 6 (Stevens House) and lots 3, 4 & north half of 7 (Stevens property). So numbered in accordance with the 1872 Foreman Map of Tucson.

Addresses: 153 (formerly 212) & 163 (formerly 214) North Main Avenue.
Current address: 150 North Main Avenue



The Hiram Stevens House is located in Tucson's oldest historic area. Tucson was established in 1776 as a Spanish Presidio; a military fort built for the protection of the priests and settlers at San Xavier Mission. In 1783, a 12 foot high, 3 foot thick adobe wall was completed which encircled the 10 acre village. The northwest corner of the Presidio was located where Main and Washington Streets intersect today. Main Avenue, once called Calle Real, was the principal street leading into the fort. Historians believe that portions of the Edward Nye Fish and Hiram Stevens houses could have been built on the footings of the old Presidio wall or in some cases even incorporate portions of that wall.

In 1980, archaeologist Edward M. Fortier excavated sections of the oldest portions of the Stevens House (in the Duffield room) and found the original earthen floor ten inches below the existing floor. The wall foundations are composed of adobe bricks and exist to a depth of 16 inches below the existing floor. At 20 inches

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the lots to the south which included some buildings. In 1868, Edward Nye Fish purchased the Aldrich property and immediately began construction of a house for his family. Mr. Fish tore down some of the existing improvements, but incorporated at least portions of an older structure, that adjoined the south wall of the Stevens house.³

The two houses appear to be joined together, but in fact there is a one foot space between the Main Street rooms. This was discovered during the 1979 renovation of the Stevens House. When Hoagland Gates purchased the Fish property in 1936, he removed the front porch and the two rooms behind it, creating an open space closed only by two wooden gates in the single remaining wall. Today, this is the main entrance to the Tucson Museum of Art. The three rooms to the north of the entrance were once part of the Fish house.

Milton B. Duffield died in 1874 and, in two separate transactions, Hiram Stevens purchased his home and lot. He purchased half of the lot in December, 1874, from Mary E. Vaughn and the other half from the beneficiaries of the Duffield estate. Milton Duffield had come to Tucson in 1864 as the newly appointed United States Marshal in Arizona. He bought a house on Main Street on April 1, 1864. This house is shown in the 1862 Fergusson map and, according to the 1862 Tucson Property Records, was built by D. Curley, probably in the late 1850's. By the time Stevens bought the property, the house had been enlarged, either before or after Marshal Duffield owned it.⁴ Sometime before 1883, Stevens joined his house to the former Duffield house by a long, narrow connecting corridor.⁵

The property north of the Duffield house, in the northwest corner of the block, was owned by Antonio and Rosa Grijalba. In October 1880, Stevens bought this lot and house for \$1,200.⁶ Antonio's father, Juan Grijalba, had purchased the lot from Trinidad Barrios in 1839 for \$30 and, according to the early Tucson property records,

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was living on the property at the time of his purchase. The Grijalba house remained on the block until it was torn down by J. Knox Corbett in 1909 to make way for a formal garden. Mary Sheean, a niece of Mrs. Corbett, recalled that the six room adobe house at the corner of Main and Washington was rented by Stevens to different families.⁷

Stevens planted an orchard between his house and the Grijalba house, where he grew apricot, peach, fig and pomegranate trees, as well as a grape arbor and gooseberry bushes.⁸

In November, 1880, Hiram Stevens purchased another parcel of land in the "Museum Block." This time he bought the vacant lot to the east of the Grijalba and Duffield properties from William S. Oury and his wife.⁹ Stevens used this lot as an access from Washington Street to his carriage house and stables located in the center of the block. In September, 1891, Stevens bought half of a lot (no. 7) owned by Manuella Ortega¹⁰ located directly behind his home. Stevens constructed his chicken coops and stables there.¹¹

During his lifetime Hiram Stevens deeded all of his houses and property in the "Museum block" to his wife, Petra. Stevens died in 1893 and, soon after, Petra remodeled the north end of her home, demolishing half of the former Duffield house.¹² In 1900, she gave her daughter, Eliza, the three lots north of her home (no. 3, 4 & 5; the northwest corner of the block). In May, 1903, Eliza deeded the lots back to her mother.

Petra sold the same property to J. Knox Corbett in August, 1905. Corbett was married to Elizabeth Hughes, a niece and godchild of Petra Stevens. As a lonely widow, Mrs. Stevens was happy to have the young Corbetts build a house next door to her. After Petra's death in 1916, the Corbetts purchased the remaining Stevens property. They leased the Stevens house as two apartments and eventually, in 1936,

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sold the deteriorated old home to Hoagland and Margaret Gates.

The Gateses were from Elkton, Maryland, and fell in love with Tucson and its early architecture. They purchased both the Stevens and the Fish houses and saved them from condemnation. They renovated both houses extensively and moved into the Stevens house with their two daughters, living there until 1941.¹³ Mr. Gates became ill and moved his family back to Maryland, where he died soon after. Mrs. Gates owned the property for many years, acting as an absentee landlady until the city purchased the property from her in 1968 as part of its Urban Redevelopment Program. The city in turn leased the deteriorated houses, which were now considered historic structures, to the Tucson Museum of Art.

The Hiram Stevens House has undergone many minor alterations and changes over the years, but basically it is the same high ceilinged adobe house it was when Hiram Stevens lived there over 100 years ago.

Mrs. Mary H. Sheean, born in 1885, was the youngest child of Sam and Atanacia Hughes and a niece of Mrs. Stevens. She is able to recall many details of the Stevens House, remembering how it looked when she was a young girl living next door. "The house," she said, "had a deep porch across the back, where Aunt Petra had an aviary and many bird cages. Behind the house was a large grape arbor and a building that combined the outhouse and laundry. A carriage house and hay barn extended back of the Fish house."¹⁴

Mrs. Sheean recalls that the master bedroom was to the left of the front door and the parlor to the right. On the patio side, the dining room was on the north and her uncle Hiram's office across the hall on the south. His office was turned into his bedroom later in his life when he was ill a great deal of the time.¹⁵

The kitchen was at the north end of the house with a family room or pantry between. In the pantry, there were a stove and table for breakfast and lunch and a sewing

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machine. After Hiram's death, Petra moved into the north portion of the home where the Duffield house once was. She turned the pantry area into a religious shrine and sitting room.¹⁶

Charles Velasco, Hiram Stevens' grandson, was born in the house on October 19, 1904. When he was a boy, his mother, Eliza, moved with his brothers and sister into the Stevens house to live with their grandmother. At that time, according to Charles, his grandmother was leasing the four rooms in the original house to boarders. He remembers a large screened porch across the entire east wall of the house and a patio filled with lots of trees. In front of the house there were four pepper trees.¹⁷ Mrs. Edith Kitt, of the Arizona Pioneer Historical Society recalled that Mrs. Sam Hughes once told her that, "Mr. Stevens planted the first pepper trees ever brought to Tucson."¹⁸ One of these trees exists today.

Hiram Stevens was twice elected to the United States Congress and frequently entertained Washington officials and other important men in his Tucson home. According to the reminiscences of his daughter, Eliza, there were servants to serve good food and good wine at these occasions. In fact, Eliza recalled that "everything was in abundance in the house in which I grew up."¹⁹

Tucson historian Frank Lockwood wrote, "Stevens did things in a big, breezy, western way,"²⁰ The Arizona Citizen reported that in 1874, after Stevens returned from an election canvass of the Territory, he was greeted by a delegation of 200 people nine miles out of Tucson. The procession passed through the center of town to Mr. Stevens' residence, where he gave a general invitation to enter and partake of refreshments.²¹

The house was handsomely furnished, and silver pieces purchased while Stevens was in Washington serving as a delegate to Congress were on display. According to the reminiscences of Eliza and her son, Charles, these furnishings became the property of

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE

the Corbett family. Some things were taken by them after Hiram's death, the rest were purchased at a reduced value from Petra's estate.²² Eliza and her children did not inherit the house or any of the furniture or personal belongings of her parents. According to William Bell, grandson of J. Knox Corbett, much of the furniture remained in the Stevens house after Mrs. Stevens death and was part of the furnished apartments leased by his grandparents.

After Petra's death in 1916, her daughter, Eliza, continued to live in the house until the estate was settled, after which the Corbetts asked her to leave. The house was leased as two apartments up until the time the city took over the property.

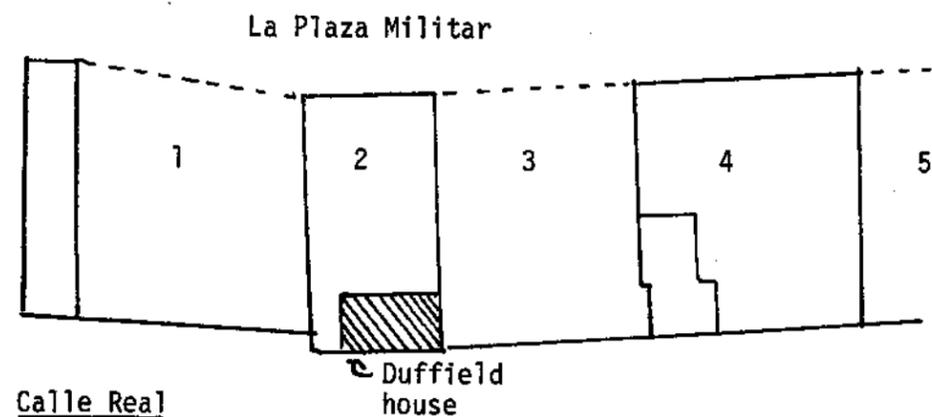
Some of the tenants who lived in the house were:²³

| | | |
|--------------------------|---------|----------------|
| Alfredo Arriaga | 1927-36 | 153 North Main |
| William Wilde, Architect | 1952-57 | " " " |
| Gerry Pierce, Artist | 1940-53 | 163 North Main |

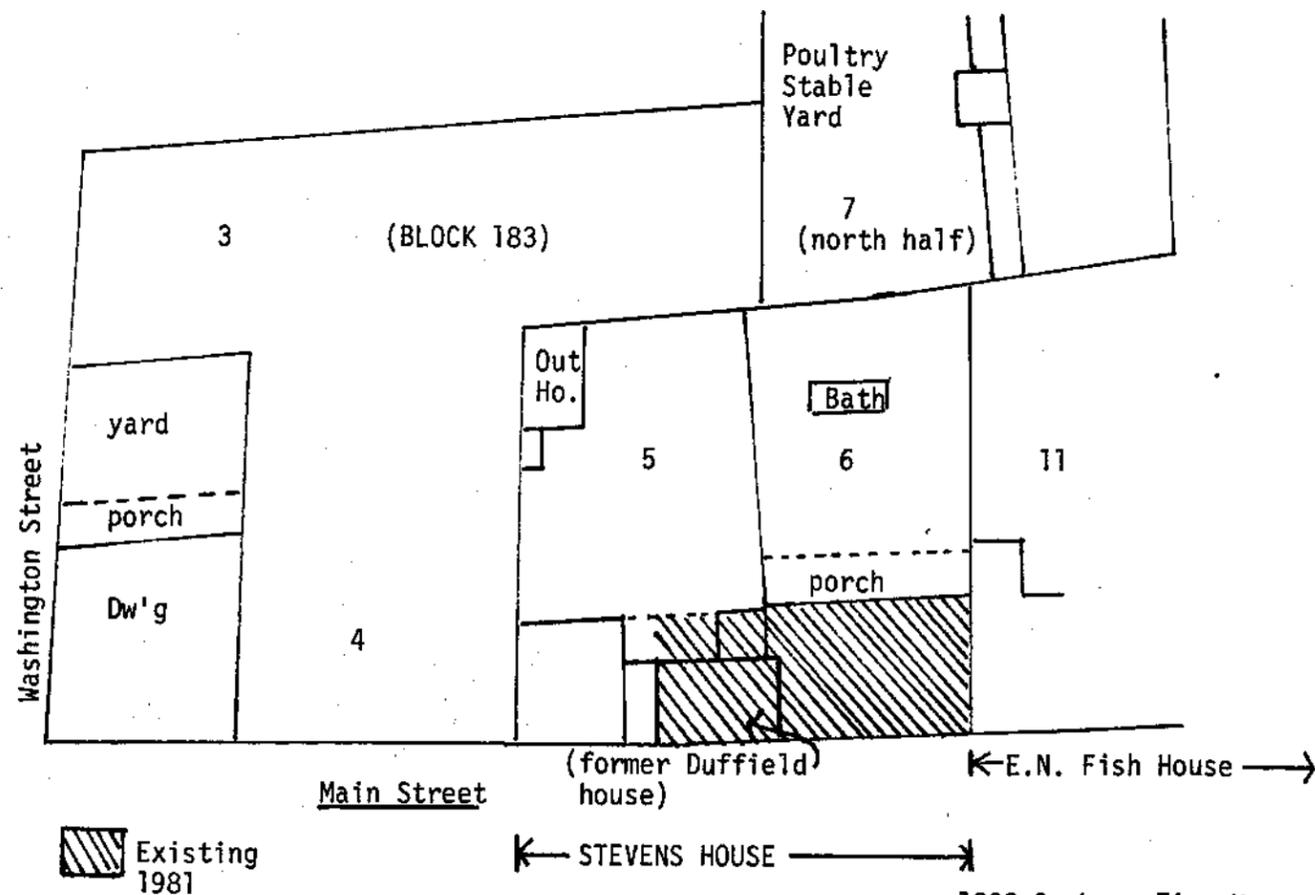
Hoagland Gates purchased the Stevens House in 1936 and remodeled it by adding electricity, air coolers, a kitchen and bathroom. He rebuilt the east wall of the central hallway to accommodate two large french doors that came from the Fish house. The flower mural around the new doors was painted by an unknown artist. In addition cement floors and false ceilings were added to some of the rooms and an attic storage and closets were built into the corridor between the old Stevens and Duffield portions of the house. Mr. Gates removed what remained of the back porch and replaced it with a brick terrace.²⁴ Mr. Gates lived at 153 North Main from 1936 to 1942.

The Tucson Museum of Art has preserved this historic structure for use as a gallery. All false partitions and ceilings have been removed and a new porch was added to conform to descriptions of the original.

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE
Property History



1862 Fergusson Map section



1883 Sanborn Fire Map section

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE

BIOGRAPHY OF HIRAM SANFORD STEVENS 1832-1893

Hiram Stevens was born in Vermont, March 20, 1832. From childhood, he had an ardent desire for a life of adventure on the frontier. At 19, he enlisted in the United States army and was sent to New Mexico with Company 1, of the First United States Dragoons, to fight the Indians. After his term of enlistment expired, in 1855, Stevens retired from the army and came to Arizona.²⁵

Stevens was living in Tucson in 1856 on a ranch in the Santa Cruz Valley, near Sentinel Peak ("A"Mountain), where he was in partnership with a man known as Dorsy.²⁶ Stevens made considerable money supplying the army posts with hay and beef. In those days he had a reputation as a "sporting man." His association with the gambling fraternity was to pay off for him in later years.

From 1858 to 1860, Stevens was a post trader at Sacaton under the firm name of Capron and Stevens, selling merchandise imported from San Francisco to the soldiers and their families stationed throughout Arizona.²⁷

Hiram Stevens was married, in 1859, to Petra Santa Cruz, a beautiful Mexican girl from an old Tucson family.²⁸ His daughter, Eliza later told the story that when her father first came to Tucson he was looking for someone to do his laundry and he happened upon the grandmother (Guadalupe "Lupe" Santa Cruz) of his future wife. Hiram decided he wanted to marry the little girl of the household, but it took three years for him to convince the grandmother that he was worthy. "We don't want anything to do with these Americans and besides he isn't a Catholic," she was reported to have said. Hiram tried to get the priest to baptize him, but in those days, the priest came to Tucson only once each year. Finally, after three years of begging, the priest consented. The grandmother agreed to the match provided it was what little Petra wanted.²⁹

Mrs. Stevens was 20 years old in 1861 when her husband took her back east to

Vermont, where they lived for three years.³¹ More than likely Petra was unable to adjust to New England life, where a Spanish speaking, Catholic girl would not have been readily accepted.

After their return to Tucson, Stevens lost no time in launching into a new merchandising venture; this time in partnership with Solomon Warner under the firm name of Warner and Stevens. Also in 1865, Stevens was in business with Sam Hughes, his brother-in-law, securing government contracts and merchandising in a store which was later known as the "Mariposa Store."

Stevens did a large and profitable business as Post Trader at Fort Huachuca and Camp Crittenden (near Tubac, Az.) from 1866 to 1872. The H. S. Stevens & Company ran an advertisement in the Tubac paper, that read:³²

Hiram S. Stevens, Camp Crittenden, A.T. would respectfully give notice to the trading public in and around Camp Crittenden that I have just received a large and well selected stock of dry goods, clothing, groceries, hardware, drugs, medicines and all kinds of necessary articles for officers, soldiers and citizens direct from San Francisco to sell at my store at Camp Crittenden.

In 1870, H. S. Stevens & Co. was ordered to leave camp for selling liquor to soldiers.³²

In 1865, the same year the Stevens returned from Vermont, they purchased property from John W. Sweeney which, according to the deed, was located on the Main road (Main Avenue) and was bordered by the Military Plaza on the east, the property of Mark Aldrich on the south and by the house and lot of M. B. Duffield on the north.

Stevens built a beautiful home for his bride; most likely the grandest one in Tucson at that time. Shortly after the house was finished, in May 1866, the Stevenses sold their home to George Tyroll. The sale coincided with Stevens' new venture at Camp Crittenden and perhaps the couple decided to move to that locale. It is not hard to imagine that Petra was unhappy living in an American army camp, but whatever the reason, Stevens bought his former home back from the Tyrolls in 1867.

In 1873, Stevens went into the hotel business. He had purchased some buildings in 1869 from Francis M. Hodges for \$3,000 at the corner of Ott and Main Streets, (where the governmental complex exists today) and began construction of The Stevens House Hotel,³³ which was managed by D. A. Bennett. The hotel was later renamed The Cosmopolitan and was to become the finest hotel in the Territory. Stevens sold The Cosmopolitan in the 1890's to Mrs. DeGroff, formerly Mrs. Orndoff and she renamed the hotel The Orndoff. The hotel was a city landmark until it was torn down in 1937.

Mr. Stevens was a man of many business interests. The 1870's saw him branching out into mining, real estate and sheep raising in Colorado, all of which were lucrative ventures for him. His most ambitious business venture began in 1872, when he joined with William E. Stevens (his nephew) in a partnership with Thomas "Tom" Hughes in the hardware business under the name of Hughes Stevens and Company. Tom Hughes was manager and three quarters owner in the company and the Stevenses had a investment of \$16,000 worth of stock and goods.³⁴ The company sold every description of hardware, furniture, crockery, cutlery, glass, Molina wagons, buckboards, carriages and carts, as well as, tin, sheet iron, cooper work, plumbing and gas fittings. The store was located at the corner of Congress and Main and its business extended over the northern parts of Mexico and Southern Arizona.³⁵

For all of Stevens' business endeavors, he was better known for his political contributions. Stevens first entered politics in 1868, when he was elected as a member of the lower house of the 5th State Legislature. The following year he served in the Upper House. In 1871, Tucson was organized as a Village and Stevens was elected as its first Treasurer. In 1874, Stevens decided to run for the United States Congress as a Territorial Delegate. He ran against R. C. McCormick, who had served several terms and was supported by both the Territorial and National administrations. Stevens enlisted the support of the gambling fraternity which was very numerous and

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE
Biography of Hiram Sanford Stevens

influential. He took \$25,000 of his campaign funds and sent his agent to all the prominent gamblers in the Territory, saying, "Bet \$1,000, \$2,000 or \$3,000 on Stevens being elected, and if you win, return to me the amount which you have wagered, keeping your winnings."³⁶ He was elected by a handsome majority.

Stevens left for Washington in March 1875, where he resided at Arlington House.³⁷ His wife joined him the following September.³⁸ Stevens served until January 1879, when he lost his seat to J. G. Campbell. Once again he returned to his interests in Arizona.

The 1870's and early 1880's were a time when the Apache Indians were frequently a serious threat to life and property. Hiram Stevens took a prominent role in the "Camp Grant Massacre," held April 1871. An Indian reservation existed near Camp Grant, 60 miles north of Tucson, and the Indians located there were known to go on raids. The citizens of Tucson, in desperation, formed a vigilante group to attack the reservation. Stevens aided by furnishing arms and ammunition and he saw to it that sentinels were posted along the road to Camp Grant so that no news of the intended raid might get to the military.³⁹ Many Indians were massacred; though mostly they were only the women and children. Those responsible, including Stevens, were brought to trial for murder. The men were acquitted and found "not guilty" by the jury. "Not a jury in Arizona would have found differently,"⁴⁰

In May 1883, "Mr. Hiram Stevens and two or three others were over to the Rillito (river) on business matters. They were "jumped" by the Indians and the only one who escaped with his life was Mr. Stevens, who dodged through the brush of a friendly wash."⁴¹

Stevens wasted no time getting back into politics and in 1884, he was elected County Treasurer. That same year he purchased the Peach Stock Ranch in the Sierrita Mountains, 34 miles south of Tucson.⁴² Here he soon had one of the finest ranges

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE
Biography of Hiram Sanford Stevens

in the area and raised an excellent breed of cattle.

Electricity came to Tucson in the 1880's. In 1884, the City Council voted to renew its contract with the Gas Light Company to light the City's streets. Stevens supported this action, though there was great pressure put on the Council to contract with the new electric light company.⁴³ Stevens had been one of the founders of the Gas Light Company and was serving as its president at the time the issue came before the Council. Ultimately Tucson did switch to electricity and Stevens' stock in the gas company was worthless at the time of his death.

Mr. Stevens ran for Pima County Supervisor in 1892. The Arizona Star wrote; "Mr. Stevens has always been and is now one of the heaviest tax payers in Pima County, a careful and correct businessman of the strictest integrity." Stevens was elected and a few months later went out with members of the Board to inspect the newly surveyed Nogales road. He returned to his home at noon on March 21, 1893 and only a few hours later the town learned that Hiram Stevens had shot his wife and shot and killed himself. Tucson was stunned, and as the Arizona Daily Star reported, it could talk of nothing else.

After Mrs. Stevens recuperated from an operation, where a bullet was removed from her head, she told what happened the day her husband returned home ill after his trip to Nogales. According to her story, he had gone to his room complaining of a headache and she too had gone to lie down in another room. Suddenly she was aware that her husband had gently put his hand over her forehead. Then a gun went off and she felt a burning sensation on her head. Mrs. Stevens told how she grabbed for the revolver in her husband's hand and it went off again, with the ball passing through her hand. She continued to struggle with the gun, when it went off again, this time the ball went into the bed. Her husband dropped his revolver and picked up an old army forty-five colt and shot himself in the forehead collapsing with a terrible wound in his head.⁴⁴

Mrs. Stevens related that she had been fearful of her husband lately and that he had not been acting right. "It was well known," she said, "that he was not of late a well man." A Coroner's Jury held an inquest and reached the verdict that Stevens had taken his own life while laboring under temporary insanity. There were rumors that he was in deep financial trouble, in particular with Hughes Stevens & Co. Four days after his death the company was attached by its creditors.

Stevens had written a will only three months before his death, in which he had bequeathed everything to his wife. Most of what he had in the way of real estate had been disposed of before he died. Mrs. Stevens inherited a few parcels of land, worth \$833, and personal property worth \$1,901. She also inherited her husband's interest in Hughes Stevens & Co., which was insolvent and of no value.⁴⁵ The only heirs named in the will were Petra Stevens and his legally adopted daughter, Eliza R. Stevens, age 11. Stevens also had an adopted son, Thomas, who, according to a news account, was 15 years old and working at his father's ranch when he died.⁴⁶ There is no explanation why Thomas is not mentioned in the will. Perhaps his adoption was not a legal one. Prior to his death, Stevens left his wife property valued at \$4,000-\$5,000 and his daughter the family ranch, valued at over \$1,000.⁴⁷

In his obituary it was said that: "Hiram Stevens was an ideal Arizonan. He had the frontiersman's nerve and endurance: was brave: a splendid marksman: possessed good business judgment: was always methodical and quiet; did everything he undertook with all his might; never boasted; did things in a big, broad western way; and had popularity and everyone's esteem."⁴⁸

Stevens was a wealthy man and there was always curiosity about exactly how wealthy he was. In 1882, Sam Hughes responded to this saying; "Stevens had securities and property worth \$150,000. He made his money by improving the splendid business opportunities of the early days, in every honorable manner. He was a post trader for years. He followed a valuable branch of ranching, lent money at two percent a month, he sold goods, did government contracting and made money at mining."⁴⁹

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE

BIOGRAPHY OF PETRA SANTA CRUZ STEVENS 1841-1916

Petra Santa Cruz was born in Tucson in 1841.⁵⁰ She was the daughter of Juan Santa Cruz and Manuella Borquez, both second generation Tucsonans. Her father served as a soldier in the Spanish, Mexican, and Indian wars.⁵¹ He died in 1850, shortly after the birth of his daughter, Atanacia. His wife died a few years later.⁵² Petra had a younger brother, Filomeno Santa Cruz, and an older brother, Juan, who died at an early age.

The Santa Cruz family was one of the first to build on the edge of the fields outside the protection of the presidio walls. The house was located directly across the street from the great city gate, at today's intersection of Main and Alameda streets.

When Manuella Santa Cruz died, Guadalupe Santa Cruz inherited the family home. Guadalupe's kinship is uncertain. According to one account, she was the widow of a brother of Juan Santa Cruz,⁵³ but she might also have been his unmarried sister. Guadalupe became the guardian of the younger Santa Cruz children. Years later Petra's daughter recalled that when Hiram Stevens came to Tucson in the 1850's, he happened upon the "grandmother" of his future wife.⁵⁴ So there is that possibility also, although it was common practice in Mexican families to refer to an older female member affectionately as "abuela" (grandmother).

In 1858, Guadalupe leased the Santa Cruz home to William Buckley for hotel accommodations for the Butterfield Stage passengers. The stage station became known as the Buckley House. The business was successful and William Oury wanted to purchase the Buckley House for himself. In March 1859, Oury traded another house and lot, which he purchased from Hiram Stevens for \$150, to Guadalupe Santa Cruz in exchange for the old Santa Cruz home.⁵⁵

Petra was living with her "grandmother" when Hiram Stevens first came to Tucson in 1856. He was looking for someone to do his laundry when he came upon the Santa Cruz family. "They were very poor and lived with great privations, but with strict cultural

codes,"⁵⁶ recalled Eliza Stevens. Her father decided he wanted to marry the little girl in the household, but it took him three years to succeed. "The grandmother insisted she didn't like him and wouldn't do his laundry anymore." She was supposed to have said, "We don't want to have anything to do with these Americans. Besides he isn't Catholic." After three years of trying, Hiram finally succeeded in getting the priest to baptise him and the couple was married in the little Tucson chapel.

Petra wore her best dress, which she kept for many years. Eliza inherited the gown, which she finally lost, but recalled that it was made of some kind of light material, like lawn, which had been brought from Hermosillo by a trader. "It was a funny looking dress, pulled together with a draw string around the waist. In those days, they did not know how to cut and put a dress together, nor did they have the odds and ends that go into making a dress."⁵⁷

Years later, Petra told her little daughter stories of how her family seemed to have less and less in the way of comforts and civilized living. They had no light except the flicker of the indoor fire. The girls would fill a tub with water to see their reflections when getting ready to go to a dance. They took their clothes down to the Santa Cruz river to wash them on the rocks. Water for home use was carried in buckets from the river each day.

Every morning Petra and her sister would carry a jar of wheat or corn to Silver Lake to be ground into flour. "There was a large grinding stone with a deep hole worn in the middle of it, with a pestle motivated by a burro for grinding the grain."⁵⁸

Petra's life changed drastically after her marriage. She moved into the big house that her husband built for her and no longer had to do the washing. She learned to sew, which according to her daughter, she did all day long.⁵⁹

Petra's sister, Atanacia, lived with them for a time. It was here she met Hiram's business partner, Sam Hughes. They married in 1863, when Atanacia was only 13 years

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE
Biography of Petra Santa Cruz Stevens

old. The Hughes house was next door to the Stevens property and the two families shared a common corral (the Hughes house exists today at the southwest corner of Main and Washington streets, just north of the J. Knox Corbett House). The Hughes had fifteen children, ten of whom lived to adulthood. From time to time the Hughes children lived with their aunt and uncle, the Stevens. Elisabeth "Lizzie" Hughes, the oldest child, was Petra's godchild. Later she married J. Knox Corbett and built a house on the vacant land between the Hughes and Stevens houses.

Soon after their marriage, Stevens took his young bride back to Vermont. Petra told her daughter that she wanted to get out of Vermont in a hurry. She hated the snow and everything else about it, but Hiram's mother had been very sweet and kind to her.⁶⁰

When Hiram was serving in Washington D.C. as Territorial delegate to Congress, he took Petra back with him. "He loved to dress her up and buy jewelery for her. Petra was a success at the Capital. She was tiny and pretty, but could speak not a word of English." Petra soon grew tired of the social life and demanded to go home to see her family. Because of his business, Hiram could not leave, but in exasperation he ordered his nagging wife to pack up and he sent her on her way alone. Petra was terrified of Indians. She took the train as far as St. Louis and from there traveled by stage under special military escort to Tucson.⁶¹

Eliza recalls what a generous woman her mother was. She kept a cash box in the parlor and would give out coins to the tramps that stopped at the front door or would purchase hand-drawn handkerchiefs from Mexican women. Her mother would frequently take people who here in need and allow them to stay awhile.⁶²

Petra had plenty of servants who served good food and wine to her husband's guests, including Washington officials and other important dignitaries who came to town. One time, when Eliza was a young girl, she recalls that her mother decided to have a party

of her own. Hiram was away when Petra invited in a group of her lady friends. "She seemed though, to have no idea of how to make preparations for a party and she had no entertainment or refreshments planned. Finally with her guests on her hands, in desperation she hunted for one of the big bottles her husband always brought out when people came, and plunked it down in the middle of the table. The wine was an unfamiliar luxury to her guests and when Hiram unexpectedly came home he was very upset to find a noisy crowd of ladies. He dismissed the guests and told his wife that wine was for men only. He forbade her to ever give a party again."⁶³

The Stevens, having no children of their own, adopted the daughter of Placidio Ruelas, born March 15, 1882. They named her Eliza after Petra's godchild, Elizabeth Hughes.⁶⁴ At some later date the couple adopted Thomas, born in 1876.⁶⁵

Hiram Stevens died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in 1893. He had attempted to kill his wife as well, but Petra survived. She was wearing a Spanish comb in her hair and this may well have saved her life, as the bullet hit the comb and only grazed her scalp.

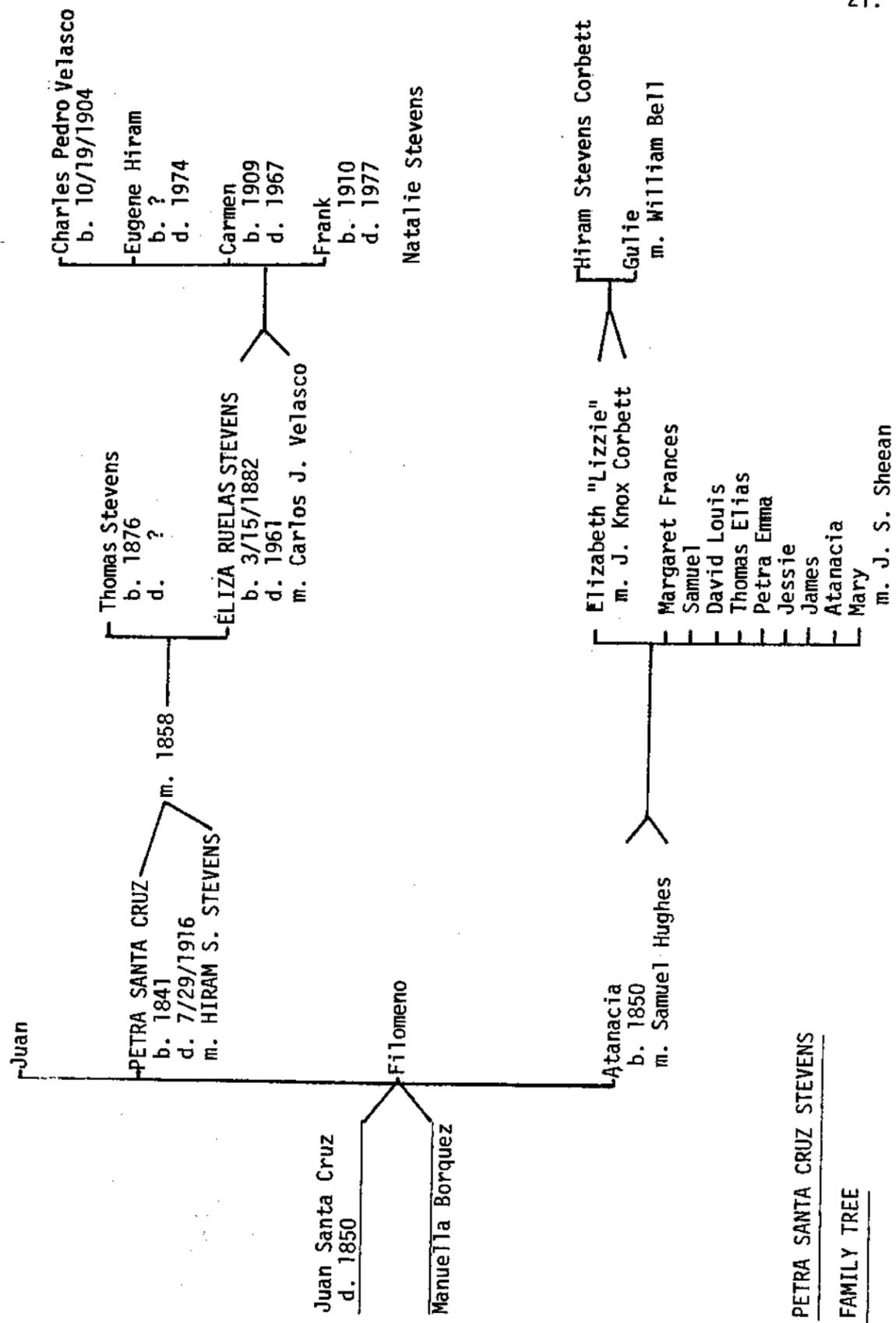
After Hiram's death, Petra moved into the north portion of their home (the Duffield section) and leased the rest of the house to boarders.⁶⁶ Eliza Stevens lived with her mother until her marriage to Carlos J. Velasco, 1903. The match was not a happy one. Carlos was an addicted gambler and soon dissipated his wife's dowry. Eliza left her husband and in 1914 moved back into the family home with her four children. In the summer of 1916, Petra went to California to stay with the Corbetts in their Los Angeles home. She died there on July 29 of that year.

After her death, Petra's will, executed December 15, 1909, was probated. Mrs. J. Knox Corbett was appointed executrix and, according to the terms of the will, she sold and disposed all of Petra Stevens' property, both real and personal. Eliza was to receive an upright piano, a Mexican serape, two pillow shams, one handmade silk quilt

and one Spanish silk shawl. All these items were crossed out except the piano and pillow shams. After a few other minor bequests to friends, the Stevens' house and personal items were sold and the income was divided equally between Petra's sister, Mrs. Samuel Hughes; her brother, Filameno Santa Cruz; her nephew, Lazero Borquez; and her niece, Mrs. J. Knox Corbett.

Knox Corbett purchased the Stevens house and furniture and an additional improved lot of land for a total sum of \$8,500. His son, H.S. Corbett, paid \$120 for a miscellaneous lot of jewelry and silver plated ware. The estate was settled and Eliza and Thomas each received \$1,605. The grandchildren received nothing. The Stevens house with its beautiful furniture, silver and jewelry belonged to the J. Knox Corbett family.⁶⁷

In 1919, Knox Corbett evicted Eliza and her children and leased the house as two apartments. Charles Velasco, Eliza's son, was 14 years old when his grandmother died. He says that his grandmother always promised that his mother and her children would be taken care of and that the family home would be theirs.⁶⁸ Sadly, this was not the way it was and it is all too long ago to know what really happened.



PETRA SANTA CRUZ STEVENS
FAMILY TREE

BIOGRAPHY OF ELIZA RUELAS STEVENS DE VELASCO 1882-1961

Eliza was the daughter of Placido Ruelas and granddaughter of Francisco Ruelas, a farmer.⁶⁹ Eliza's mother died giving birth to her on March 15, 1882. Hiram and Petra Stevens were neighbors and friends of the Ruelas and had been the promised godparents of the expectant child. The Stevens took the baby girl into their home and later adopted her.⁷⁰

Eliza was brought up with every luxury and was adored by Hiram Stevens. Her cousin, Mary Hughes, remembers that Eliza was the envy of all the neighborhood children. "She had beautiful clothes and every afternoon she would ride her horse wearing a long black riding habit. She was only allowed to ride side saddle, which set her apart from all the other girls."⁷¹

Years later, Eliza would relate how she loved to go with her father to their ranch in the Sierrita Mountains where there were large numbers of cattle, horses and mules. "He was always patient and kind with me. My mother would say that I couldn't go to the ranch this time because I had to go to school, but Hiram would laugh and tell me I could come along, and we would stay maybe several weeks..." Sometimes they went the 35 miles by wagon and other times on horseback.⁷² Stevens gave his daughter the ranch in August 1884.⁷³

Eliza was 11 years old in 1893, when her father died. She continued to live with her mother until her marriage. Gulie Corbett Bell (Elizabeth Corbett's daughter) recalled in 1937 how fortunate Eliza was: "She had everything, was treated exactly like a daughter. She had lovely clothes from the east, she went to the University, she had a carriage of her own. When she was married, it was a large social event."⁷⁴

Eliza married Carlos J. Velasco, January 21, 1903. Carlos was the son of Carlos Ygnacio Velasco who came to Tucson in 1862. He published the successful Spanish speaking Tucson newspaper, El Fronterizo from 1878-1914.

The marriage had been arranged by her mother and, as was the custom, Eliza was

given a substantial sum of money for a dowry. The couple went to Mexico City on their honeymoon, accompanied by Mrs. Velasco and Mrs. Stevens.⁷⁵

It was no secret that the marriage was an unhappy one for Eliza. Only four months after her wedding, she executed a will in which she bequeathed her property and the care of any children she might have to her "beloved mother." Her husband's name is not even mentioned.

For a time Carlos ran his wife's ranch. The couple had four children: Charles, Eugene, Carmen and Frank.

Charles Velasco recalled years later that his father was an addicted gambler. He gambled away his wife's money, sending his debtors to collect from her.⁷⁶ Clara Fish Roberts lived next door to the Stevens and remembers that Carlos "went through Eliza's money and property and then left her." Eliza hated her husband and eventually divorced him and took back her maiden name.⁷⁷ Left without any means of support and with her own fortune gone, Eliza moved her family in with her mother in 1914.

Soon after Petra's death, Eliza was asked by the Corbetts to leave the family home. The younger children went to live with the senior Velascos. Their father had remarried and apparently did not want the responsibility of his children. Young Charles remained with his mother.

For a time after her mother's death, Eliza lived in the Stevens house. She began seeing a Mexican gentleman by whom she had a child. The baby girl, Natalie Stevens, was born in the Stevens house December 8, 1917⁷⁸ (other accounts give 1918 as the birth date).

Eliza and her baby moved to South Main Street and she took in sewing to earn her keep. Charles went to California, where he married and raised a family.

Natalie recalled that, when she and her mother lived on South Main Street, "My mother was sick all that winter and I don't know where my brothers were. Yes, whenever we

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE
Biography of Eliza Stevens de Velasco

were having the hardest time, it was just my mother and me alone. I had a little basket, one of the ones Mrs. Corbett made a show of bringing us fruit in at Christmastime, and I would run across the street to a wood lot and pick up chips. I was barefoot and I will never forget how cold it was." When Natalie was eleven she went to work at the cigar store in the court house where she worked for "Dad". After "Dad" died she took over running the cigar store.⁷⁹ Later she clerked at Delmonte Market and Kress & Co.

In 1939, Eliza and Natalie moved to 273 North Main where they lived until Eliza's death in 1961.⁸⁰ Natalie lived with her brother Charles for awhile before moving to Alpine, California. As of 1980, Charles Velasco was living in Tucson with his second wife, Clara; Eliza's other children were dead and Natalie's whereabouts were unknown.

BIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS STEVENS

Very little is known about Thomas Stevens, adopted son of Hiram and Petra Stevens. Tommy was a teenager at the time of his father's death. He was working on the family ranch when a local newspaper reported that "the Hiram Stevens ranch will not be materially impaired with the death of Mr. Stevens. Young Tom Stevens, adopted son of Mr. Stevens, 15 years old, has shown considerable ability in the handling of stock and the ranch management and was the object of the late Mr. Stevens pride."⁸¹

Tom is not mentioned in his father's will, though his sister Eliza is. According to his nephew, Charles Velasco, Tom shifted from ranching to mining and for a time worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad. Charles remembers little of his uncle, who he said led a vagabond life and drank a great deal.⁸²

Tom was alive in 1916 at the time of his mother's death and inherited a share of her estate. After that it is not known where he went or when he died.

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE

BIOGRAPHY OF UNITED STATES MARSHAL MILTON B. DUFFIELD 1810-1874

Milton B. Duffield was appointed by President Lincoln as the first United States Marshal in Arizona on March 6, 1863. Marshal Duffield arrived in Tucson in March 1864 and six months later purchased a house on the "Main Road" from Dr. G.B. Hughes. Marshal Duffield was living there when Hiram Stevens built his house next door. After Duffield's death in 1874, Stevens purchased the house and adjoined it to his own by building a connecting corridor.

Arizona's first marshal was described as a "fearless, domineering, hard-drinking man who was the perennial champion of his own opinions and the harsh critic of his fellow officers." This raven-haired giant was Arizona's angry man.⁸³

Milton Duffield was born in Wheeling, West Virginia. He married Mary Norris in 1835 and settled down in Ohio where he earned a living as a merchant and fathered four children. In 1851, he left his family to go west and he never returned. He spent nine years in the California gold country, where he bought and sold substantial tracts of land and searched for gold. Duffield's dexterity with pistols soon made him a legend. In the saloons he would win himself drinks by shooting a button from a man's vest at 20 paces. He was nicknamed "Major" because of his fighting nature.

Duffield left California for the east in 1861 at the commencement of the Civil War. He earnestly embraced the Negro cause and was sent to Nicaragua by President Lincoln to examine the possibility of removing the southern Negroes to a congenial climate in the tropics. The Negroes were emancipated before this plan could be realized. After the war, President Lincoln rewarded Duffield for his services by appointing him U.S. Marshal in Arizona.⁸⁴

When Marshal Duffield arrived in Tucson in 1864, the population consisted of 1,200 Mexicans, 150 American soldiers and 100 Anglos. The town was described as half in ruins, but still containing some fine old buildings. There were quite a few stores,

HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE
Biography of Milton B. Duffield

but no hotel, boarding house or restaurant.

Duffield had apparently taken a second wife in California: Eliza A. Duffield. He bought his Tucson property in her name, but it is doubtful if Eliza and their three children ever lived here. Tucsonans regarded a third woman, Minnie J. Duffield, as Duffield's wife and mother of his three children. She died in Tucson May 13, 1870.⁸⁵

There was not much business for Duffield in Tucson because the Territorial Courts had not been fully organized. Duffield spent his first year supervising the 1864 Census and prospecting for gold. After 18 months of service, he had still not been paid his \$200 a year salary nor had he been reimbursed for the expenses of his office. He could get no satisfaction out of Washington, so he resigned his office November 25, 1865, to take effect April 1, 1866.

Duffield engaged in real estate and mining transactions in 1866 and continued to try to collect his expenses from Washington. In 1869, he was appointed Special Postal Agent for Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado. He was highly praised for his work, but was replaced because of his "intemperate drinking and pugnacity."⁸⁶

Duffield's violent life came suddenly to a violent end. On June 5, 1874, he went to check out his claim at the Brunckow "Bronco" Mine, located on the San Pedro River. Duffield entered a house occupied by Joseph T. Holmes, a trespasser. Holmes grabbed a double-barreled gun and warned Duffield not to approach. When he did, Holmes shot and killed him.

It turns out that Duffield had recently sold his housekeeper, Mary E. Vaughn, the Bronco Mine. He had also sold her the lot north of his Tucson home. Two days before his death Duffield had prepared a memorandum of a will bequeathing one-third of his property to Mrs. Vaughn and her children, one-third to his children in Nevada and one-third to his off spring in Ohio.

Mrs. Eliza Duffield of Virginia City, Nevada, produced a will executed in November,

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HIRAM STEVENS HOUSE
Biography of Milton B. Duffield

1864, in which Duffield had bequeathed property to herself and their children.

Eli Porter Duffield, a son by Duffield's first marriage, appeared in Tucson and claimed his father's estate. In the end the judge designated Mary Norris Duffield as the legal widow of the deceased.⁸⁷

So ended the life of one of Arizona's more colorful characters.

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