

**CHAPTER II**  
**NEGROES OF TUCSON, ARIZONA, BEFORE 1900:**  
**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**PART I. ESTEVAN AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO TUCSON**

The first man (not counting the Indians), as far as we have a record, to come to Arizona was not a white soldier, nor a priest, but a gigantic Negro, Estevan, a native of Morocco.<sup>1</sup> This explorer was first the slave of Dorantes, later of Mendoza, and then finally served as guide to Fray Marcos de Niza.<sup>2</sup>

It was this black guide, Estevan., who first stepped over the line which forms the southern boundary of Arizona to break the way for Spanish exploration, conquest, and military enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

There is a unique relationship between Estevan's crossing the southern boundary of Arizona and the present site of Tucson. For according to the routs he traveled, his itinerary crossed between the Pima Villages and Florence, near Tucson.<sup>4</sup> Estevan was not on an expedition of his own; he was a mere guide to Fray Marcos de Niza. Nevertheless, this native of Morocco deserves credit for not only being the first person to put his foot upon Arizonian soil, but also for being the first Negro to come near Tucson. The party of Fray Marcos usually kept four days behind Estevan.<sup>5</sup>

It is of peculiar interest to consider how Estevan became guide for this group of explorers, how this Negro slave chanced to be the first person to enter into Arizonian territory and later approach near Tucson, how Fray Marcos got to be honored as the first white man to enter the southern boundary of Arizona, and finally why this group of explorers undertook this great expedition to the Northwest.

The unfortunate expedition of Navaez, authorized by the Council of the Indies, was sent out to the new world to conquer the country from the Rio de los Palmos to the Cape of

Florida.<sup>6</sup> This ill-fated expedition landed on the west coast of Florida in the spring of 1528.<sup>7</sup> Through hardships and sufferings, this crew of men decreased from four hundred to two hundred and forty-seven. Then the members of the group further died until there were eighty men left. These eighty men were finally reduced to only four men. These four men were De Vaca, Alonzo del Castillo Maldonado, Andres Dorantes, and his Negro slave, Estevan.<sup>8</sup>

In 1536, eight years after they had been shipwrecked in Florida, the group of four arrived at Culiocans where they were received by the Viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza. Mendoza at once commissioned Fray Marcos de Niza, who was at this time Vice Commissioner-General of New Spain, together with a large group of Christian Indians to set out on an expedition northwestward for the express purpose of annexing the Seven Wonderful Cities of Cibola to New Spain.<sup>9</sup>

There were Mexican and Indian legends about the Seven Wonderful Cities of Cibola told to the Spaniards. These strange and weird stories pictured these Seven Cities as containing houses of lime and stone and some of them being four stories high.<sup>10</sup> It proved, however, in the end that the Seven Wonderful Cities of Cibola were none other than seven Indian villages in Zuni County, New Mexico. Estevan, who had been purchased from Dorantes by Mendoza was to serve as guide for the party, since on account of his eight years of experience in wandering around in the uninhabited region of the Southwest with this remaining group of the ill-fated crew of Navaez, he was the most capable man to lead the explorers to the Cities of Cibola.

The Negro was instructed to precede the party by the distance of from fifty or sixty leagues (from 150 to 180 miles) north.<sup>11</sup> If Estevan should discover something of merit, he was to send a message back by Indians to the group following, and he was to remain in his place until the explorers could reach the spot. The Negro could not read, so he used a wooden cross as a sign for notifying Fray Marcos of his discoveries. If the discovery were of small significance, he was to send back a cross as large as his hands; if the discovery were of greater importance, a cross the size of Estevan's two hands was to be sent back to Fray

Marcos, and so on. But imagine the Indian's coming back after four days' journey bearing a cross as big as the gigantic Estevan himself!<sup>12</sup>

On March 7, 1539, the expedition set out, Fray Marcos with his thirty-five men and a group of friendly Indians, and the guide with his group of Christian Indians preceding. Estevan erected at stated intervals sheds for Marcos' accommodations.<sup>13</sup> After four days the Indians came back bearing a huge wooden cross. This cross was not only the sign of the discovery of the Seven Cities of Cibola, but three other magnificent cities which lay beyond them, Marota, Acus, and Tatontiac, cities greater than those of Cibola. Estevan did not wait for the party to catch up with him as were his instructions, but he went on by himself to the Seven Cities of Cibola, where he was warned not to enter.<sup>14</sup> Fray Marcos followed Estevan until on the last day of May, when he was within two days' journey of Cibola, he met some of the Indians coming telling of the sad news of Estevan's death. Estevan was dared to enter the Seven Cities of Cibola. He ignored the Indians and was killed by the inhabitants of these cities.

It took a long time for Fray Marcos to induce the Christian Indians to follow him any further. Finally, two of the number agreed to conduct him to a high hill from which he could see the town of Ahacus, which is identified as that of Hawikuh, a pueblo occupied by Zunis until 1870, when the Apaches compelled its abandonment.<sup>15</sup>

From the time of Estevan to about the middle of the nineteenth century, there is no account to be had of Negroes in Tucson. There might have been Negroes in Tucson before 1850, but there is no information available on the subject.

## **PART II. NEGROES OF TUCSON--1850-1900**

There was no record of the population of Tucson before 1900. However, by making a study of the number of Negroes who lived in Pima County since 1880, there may be gleaned some idea as to how many Negroes were in Tucson during this time. In 1880, there were seventy-six Negroes in Pima County; in 1890, there were fifty-seven; and in 1900, there were

one hundred eighteen. The last figure can be compared with the number of Negroes in Tucson at this time as a basis of estimating how many Negroes might have been in the county and the number in the town proper. In 1900, there were eighty-six Negroes in Tucson. This left only thirty-two Negroes residing in Pima County excluding Tucson. This ratio gives an idea as to how many Negroes may have been in Tucson from 1880 on. This also shows that the majority of the Negroes of Pima County probably lived in Tucson. Of this group living in Tucson, there will be discussed the lives and economic activities of some twenty Negroes. This cross-section of the activities of these twenty Negroes will serve as a prototype of the lives of all the other Negroes who came to Tucson during these early days.

### **Mr. and Mrs. Wiley Box**

The first Negro settlers of Tucson, as far as investigation was able to obtain facts, were a Negro woman from Oklahoma and a Negro man from Louisiana. Mr. and Mrs. Wiley Box were married in the Territory of Oklahoma and came to Tucson between 1850 and 1855. Mr. Wiley Box was the son of an English physician and a Negro woman of New Orleans. Mrs. Hannah Box was the daughter of a Negro man and a Cherokee Indian squaw. There was no particular kind of work that this couple followed. Their method of gaining a livelihood carried them into various and diverse pursuits of labor. First, stage coach driving would be resorted to, then manual labor was tried. The Boxes did some prospecting in mining, but to no avail. Mrs. Box realized quite a bit of revenue at one time from gathering for the market rarely figured and uniquely colored rocks from the mountainsides. They managed to buy a home and resided therein on Convent Street.

This couple remained together until the late eighties, when the death of Mr. Box was brought about as the result of a trick played on him by one of his Negro friends. One day, while Mr. Box was sleeping, this friend tied a rag around Mr. Box' first toe, saturated the cloth with kerosene and ignited it, only intending to frighten the reposing friend. The flaming cloth could not be removed until it had inflicted a wound upon the flesh of Mr. Box. The patient

was immediately put under the care of a physician, but blood poison set in and he died. Mrs. Box lived only a few years longer.

### **Mr. Charley Embers**

About 1866, Tucson witnessed the coming of another Negro, Mr. Charley Embers, who came from the state of California. He was born in San Bernadeen, California, in 1849, of Negro parentage, his mother and father being natives of the states of Tennessee and North Carolina, respectively. Mining in those days was quite an enterprise, and this undertaking began to attract Negroes from various sections of the country due to the fact that then there was a great demand for Negro cooks in these places. It was this incentive that brought this Californian to Tucson. Upon his arrival here, he immediately began cooking at the mining camp at Ajo, getting \$30.00 a month, room, and board. He cooked there for ten years, after which he got a job unloading freight at ,Maricopa Wells. This place was a freight junction northwest of Tucson. All of the overland freight passed this way since the railroads did not come to Tucson until 1881. At this job he received \$40.00 a month, but no room and board.

Leaving this job, he began working for Mr. A. W. Maxten, assisting him in surveying. At this job he worked for five years at \$45.00 a month, receiving no room or board. Of his sixty-seven years of residence in Tucson he has worked at a number of places, including the San Xavier Hotel, the Eagle Mills, and with private families. He kept his money at home because he "never trusted banks". During his lifetime, he has owned three homes. His first home was purchased in the early eighties, his second home was bought in the nineties, and his last home at 38 North Tenth Avenue was bought in the early part of the twentieth century. He was married only once, his wife being a Mexican girl from Sonora. To this union one child was born, who now lives in California. Mr. Embers is the oldest living person in Tucson and is also the first person living who came to Tucson. Now, eighty-four years of age, he resides at the County Hospital, among his very aged and unfortunate friends.

### **Mr. Emmet Woodly**

About 1869, Mr. Emmet Woodly, "Dick Woodly," made Tucson his home. He was a native of Arkansas, and while enlisted in the United States Army, he came to the western territories to protect them against attacks carried on by Indians. Upon receiving his discharge from the army in 1869, he came to Tucson and began working for M.E.N. Fish as a common laborer at his flour mills. There he worked for eight years for \$20.00 a month. The employer, becoming very fond of him, took Dick Woodly to his home to be employed as a cook, housekeeper, and general handy man around the house. It is here that this employee spent the greater part of his then remaining life, helping to rear the family of Mr. Fish. The daughter of this family, Mrs. Fred Roberts, now lives at 925 Tyndall Avenue. Mr. Woodly got \$30.00 a month, room and board.

It was at this place, while working, that he espoused and married a Mexican girl. To this union was born a boy and a girl, whose history we are unable to trace. Mr. Woodly never owned any property. He lived in Tucson until the late eighties, and then left. His present address is unknown.

### **Mr. Joe Mitchell**

The first Negro to homestead land in Tucson was Mr. Joe Mitchell, a barber. He homesteaded 160 acres of land, and his residence was in the southern part of Tucson. Although barbering was his profession, he resorted to chicken raising as an avocation. His barbershop could accommodate two barber chairs. He employed a Mexican helper, who got about \$30.00 a month. After paying this wage to the Mexican and paying rent, which was \$10.00 a month plus other monthly expenses, Mr. Mitchell was able to clear about \$70.00 or \$80.00 a month. The barbershop had white trade exclusively. There is no account of how much money he saved, but evidently he did not have much money. On Sunday, August 4, 1873, he was arrested for shielding in his home two deserters from the United States Army-- John McEntire and Blank Rose, Negroes. His bond was \$600.00, which he was unable to

raise. However, he was able to get one of the best attorneys of Tucson at that time, Judge P. E. Hughes. The attorney for the United States Government was United Commissioner J. E. McColfroy.<sup>16</sup> Mr. Mitchell was acquitted of the charge.

Mr. Mitchell continued to reside in the southern part of Tucson until his death, in the middle of the nineties. He married a Mexican girl and there were three children born.

### **Mr. Harvey Merchant**

Not only was cooking in mining camps alluring to Negro men, but working on ranches and attending to cattle caused many Negroes to be employed too. Harvey Merchant, born in Texas in 1860, came to Tucson in 1870 and began working on a ranch as a dish-washer. But he had a desire to become a cowboy some day and this aspiration was fulfilled.

When a boy eight years of age he left Texas with two white boys ten years of age and three white men. The party started across the wild Indian territory and was captured by them. The three white men were killed and the three boys were taken back as captives by the Indians. They remained with the Indians in the northern part of Arizona for about four months. In the fall of that same year the Indians went on a campaign across the Arizonian territory and thence into New Mexico. But while passing on a trail near Tucson, half of the tribe was killed by the soldiers of the United States Army, and the small boys were rescued and brought to Tucson. It was at this time that Mr. Merchant, who was then a small boy, began work washing dishes on a ranch for \$10.00 a month. He later became cook for the ranch and received \$30.00 a month, room and board. At the age of thirty years, he became skilled enough to become a cowboy and received \$85.00 a month until about a year ago. He also got room and board free.

Mr. Merchant never saved any money. He refers to his long years of employment as "saving up money for two or three months, coming to town and blowing it in". It is really pathetic when one considers his present condition, working now at the age of seventy there as cook and yardsman for \$7.00 a week and board. His lodging accommodations are poor, as he

lives in a one-room house with no modern conveniences whatsoever. He was married once, his wife being an Indian squaw from Oklahoma. They lived together for twenty-five years. There were no children.

### **Mr. Charley Williams**

The person with the most illustrious career and the Negro who by far stamped his personality upon the pioneer citizenry of Tucson more than any other Negro was Mr. Charley Williams-- known to all Tucson music lovers as "Banjo Dick". Any of the old settlers of Tucson who are able to recall the reminiscences of the gay seventies and eighties in old Tucson, cannot help but call back to their memories the beautiful strains played on the banjo by this serenader.

"Banjo Dick" was born in Kentucky on December 30, 1849. Between this date and 1870, he went to California and sought employment as a common laborer, later finding employment with Mr. Beaumont, a United States Army Officer. Leaving the employment of Mr. Beaumont, Mr. Williams came down to Yuma, Arizona, on a boat. It was at this time, in 1871, that "Banjo Dick" met Mr. L. A. Smith and later became employed by him.

In 1872, the Smith family, together with "Banjo Dick", moved to Tucson. "Dick" then proceeded to become general utilitarian around the home. Mrs. Shaw,, the daughter of Mr. L. A. Smith, and who is now located at 937 North Stone Avenue, refers to "Banjo Dick" as an "all around man"--raising the children, washing, ironing, and taking care of the livery. For this work he got around \$25.00 a month, room and board.

But Mr. Williams is not remembered for his work around the Smith home. He is remembered for his sweet strains of music. As a means of expressing his soul and also as a method of getting a little extra money, "Banjo Dick" began to play this instrument. He would even play it while going on errands to and from stores and back home. At night, after he had finished his work, he would put the cowhide string around his neck, the instrument under his

arm, and go on a serenade, thrilling the entire populace of Tucson.<sup>17</sup> His biggest attraction was that of playing at Le Vennis Park, the exclusive rendezvous of the Tucson aristocrats.

In 1891, Mr. Williams went to Nogales, Arizona, put up a shoe shining parlor and ran it for some three or four years. He never married.

### **Mrs. E. Lucas and her son--Dave Lucas**

The coming of General Carr to Fort Lowell brought two more Negroes to Tucson. These Negroes were Mrs. Elizabeth Lucas and her son, Dave Lucas. The two were born in Kentucky. There is no definite date as to when they came here, but it is assumed that they came here about 1873. This date is based upon the fact that in 1873, the United States government erected in the northeastern section of Tucson, Fort Lowell. Mrs. Lucas cooked at Fort Lowell, while her son took care of the dining hall and cared for the horses of General Carr. For this work they averaged around \$40.00 and \$25.00 a month for mother and son, respectively. Mrs. Lucas died in the eighties and her son continued to live at Fort Lowell until his death. While working at Fort Lowell, Mr. Lucas became skilled in handling horses and soon became a jockey with unusual ability. The other jobs held by Mr. Lucas consisted of working for Captain J. T. Young at the Catalina mountains for \$30.00 a month, room and board. In the later years of Lucas' life he worked for Mrs. Meneger on South Stone Avenue. Later he worked for Mr. Manning on Main Street. The photo below is the picture of Mr. Lucas' home. This home was bought while he worked for Mrs. Meneger. The house has been vacant for about twenty-five years. It is the oldest Negro home now standing in Tucson. Mr. Lucas married an Indian girl and to them two children were born.

### **Mr. Henry Conley**

Mr. Henry Conley became the first Negro employed by the city of Tucson. He was hired by the city as garbage man, getting \$40.00 a month and living in city property, residing on South Convent Street.

While working for the city, Mr. Conley began to develop a project out at the Rillito, in the Fort Lowell Area. The project was first begun by Mr. Conley buying a ranch on the Rillito from a Mexican by the name of Sarachin. The tract of land consisted of 160 acres of homesteaded land. It is claimed that Mr. Sarachin had government papers on the land. But this is doubtful from the standpoint that when the claim of the land as held by Mr. Conley came into conflict with some of the claims to the same land, Mr. Conley was dispossessed of the part in question. However, he possessed the land again when Fort Lowell was abandoned. The money that Mr. Conley bought the land with was borrowed from Mr. William Neal, then Negro cook at the Maison Dairy, located then where the Plaza Theater is now.

Horses were brought from California, placed on the ranch and Mr. Conley began to farm. The operation of the entire farm proved too much for Mr. Conley, so he offered eighty acres of his land to Mr. Henry Ransom, a Negro friend of his. Mr. Ransom refused this gift on the grounds that there was no water on the land. Later Mr. Conlev sold the entire one hundred sixty acres of land to a telegraph operator in Tucson. Mr. Conley then moved into the San Xavier Mission vicinity, where he lived until his death, which was approximately eleven years ago.

### **Mr. William Neal**

In 1878, Mr. William Neal came to Tucson with the United States Army. He stayed in the army only one year after he came here. After receiving his discharge papers, he began working as cook at the Maison Dairy for \$40.00 a month, room and board. While working here he began to launch out into other fields of undertakings. His first job was the acceptance of a contract to dig a cellar under a building which was located where the present site of the Legal Tender Building is. The contract stated that the cellar was to be completed thirty days from the time of beginning. The contract was not complied with and Mr. Neal lost \$300.00. Over this work, Mr. Neal put Mr. Henry Ransom as foreman, giving him \$1.50 a day and board. Under this foreman were employed from five to seven Mexicans a day at \$1.25.

Through the advice of Mr. Ransom Mr. Neal saved his small bank account. There was a custom among the Mexicans that they had to be paid off every evening. The foreman had Neal, on the Saturday, draw all his money out of the bank in order to always have it on hand. Mr. Neal drew his money out of the Hudson Bank on a Saturday and it closed on the following Monday, May 9, 1884.<sup>18</sup> When the contract expired, Neal quit cooking and began taking freight from Tucson out to a junction north of Tucson. Later, he got a contract hauling ore from the Mammoth mines over to the mills on the San Pedro River. The horses which Neal used in hauling this ore were obtained from the foreclosure on Mr. Conley's horses since Mr. Conley had no money to pay when the mortgage came due. The wagons were made in Tucson. Later on Mr. Neal went to Kansas City and bought a carload of mules, had more wagons built and continued to launch out in the carrying business. To get this start, Captain Johnson, who owned the mines, advanced Neal the money. The contract which Neal had with the company stated that in case Mr. Neal caused delay he would pay all the expenses due to the mill's lack of ore.

In 1885, Mr. Neal obtained a contract from the government to carry mail from Tucson to Oracle. It was at this point that he moved to Oracle and began operating a hotel. Mr. Neal is still living at Oracle. He was married twice and has one daughter.

### “Lee”

On Tuesday, October 18, 1878, Miss Anita Rose, together with a group of pioneers coming from the East entered Tucson. With them came a Negro man, to whom Miss Rose refers in a series of letters written to friends back east, as "Good and obliging Lee". Lee was added to their group in Silver City, New Mexico, October 16, 1878.<sup>19</sup>

On the journey from Silver City to Tucson, this Negro acted as sentinel in the rear, in order to give warning if Indians should appear. According to Miss Rose, the population of Tucson then was six thousand, one thousand floating. Among that six thousand inhabitants,

there were only two hundred and fifty white Americans, the remainder of the population consisted of foreigners and Mexicans.

Food and lodging were extremely high. A poorly furnished three room house cost \$50.00 per month. Eggs were from 75 cents to \$1.00 a dozen, apples forty cents per pound, lard and sugar were high; meats were cheap, however, the finest cuts being 12½ cents a pound.<sup>20</sup>

The arrival of Lee in Tucson did not stop his acting the capacity of guard. Around the home he acted as guard at night to protect the family from the Indians. Lee worked for his employers handling their teams and hauling express. From this work he received from two and one-half to thirteen dollars a day. On both sides of the wagon were attached signs bearing the words, "Job Work". While in this type of work he did everything from carrying a band of musicians to a Mexican funeral to carrying the musicians of the candidate for sheriff, Shiebell, to the polls on election day.<sup>21</sup>

Lee stayed here until about the middle of the eighties, according to information given by one of his friends, Mr. Henry Ransom. But from this date there has been no account available concerning him.

### **Mr. Samuel Bostic and Mr. Henry Anderson**

There were a few Negroes who came during this period, but they lived so seclusively that no one seems to have been able to know much about them. Among this group of Negroes was Mr. Samuel Bostic, who ran a barbershop for Mexicans, located on Convent Street. Mr. Henry Anderson operated a barbershop on Congress Street, exclusively for white trade. Mr. Anderson was the first barber that Mr. Moses Drachman had. Mr. Drachman refers to him as being such an accurate barber that he would often sever the body of a fly with his razor, while the insect was flying in the air, lest it disturb the customer upon whom the barber was working. Mr. Anderson was married to a Negro woman and they had four children, two boys and two girls. They owned a home located on North Stone Avenue.

### **Mr. Fred Sparrows**

Mr. Fred Sparrows, a Negro barber, also belongs to this group of men. He came from California in 1881, opened up a barber shop on Congress Street, beside the present location of the Tucson Hotel. Mr. Sparrows also operated a saloon. He finally, within a course of years, went out of business and left town. Mr. Sparrows was considered among the Negroes of Tucson as a political boss.

### **Mr. Henry Ransom**

In 1881, there came to Tucson a Negro man who was to become, within the course of years, Tucson's most famous transfer driver. This man, Mr. Henry Ransom, was born in Ozark, Arkansas, in 1855. Upon his arrival here, he became employed by Mr. A. M. Bucklow, hauling freight and ore, and receiving for his wages \$60.00 a month. Here he worked for three years. Being so faithful on this job, his employer allowed him to room on his premises, even after Mr. Ransom ceased working for hire. This concession was used by Mr. Ransom for five years after he quit working for Mr. Bucklow. Going from this job he began working for Mr. Neal, as foreman of a cellar digging contract and getting \$1.50 a day. This job did not last long, however.

The Cosmopolitan Hotel employed him as a cook. Here Mr. Ransom got \$40.00 a month, room and board. The Cosmopolitan Hotel was later changed to the Orndorff Hotel, located on North Main and Pennington Streets. But Mr. Ransom did not remain here long. The San Xavier Hotel, located at the present site of the Southern Pacific Depot changed hands and went into new management. The new management called for a crew of Negro attendants in the Hotel. There were ten Negroes brought from Kansas City, Missouri, to serve as table waiters in the dining room.<sup>22</sup> These waiters received \$40.00 a month, room and board. It was at this place and during this change of management that Mr. Ransom got a job as yard man and porter.

One of the main duties of the yardman was to use all possible efforts to beautify the surroundings of the place in order to make it attractive to the tourists who stopped at the hotel. Immediately Mr. Ransom began setting out trees along the front terrace of the hotel. He got these cottonwood trees from the Santa Cruz River area. All of these trees have died but one. Mr. Ransom claims that this is the oldest tree in Tucson today. Before Mr. Ransom left this place he had seen the Hotel change hands twice. The proprietors were Mr. Phillips Crout first, and later, Mr. Thomas Cordiz and Mr. Perry. Leaving this job, Mr. Ransom secured a job of a peculiar nature at the Palace Hotel, located on Meyer Street at the head of Broadway. On this job, Mr. Ransom was to act as arbitrator in settling disputes among the degenerate women who frequented this place. For these services he received \$60.00 a month, room and board. The last job was the one which lasted him until he was pensioned. This job began by Mr. Ransom's getting employment from Mr. Jack Boldwin, an ex-sea captain from Canada. He hauled freight to various sections of the town and got from \$1.50 to \$2.00 a day. Mr. Boldwin turned his business over to Mr. DeGraw of the Orndorff Hotel. In 1890, Mr. Ransom began working for Mr. Vick DeGraw. The job consisted of hauling freight and passengers to and from the hotel. For this purpose the wagons were made by Mr. Ronstadt. For this work, Mr. Ransom received \$2.00 a day. This business was the forerunner of the present Tucson Warehouse and Transfer Company.

Mr. DeGraw finally decided that he would leave Tucson. So he sold the freight hauling project to his brother. His brother in turn gave it over to his step-son, Mr. Orndorff and Mr. Harvy Lee. Then, in 1891, there came to Tucson the Pioneer Transfer Company from Phoenix, Arizona, owned by Mr. Joe Reed and Mr. Beck. This establishment bought out the Orndorff and Lee project, taking over with the deal Mr. Henry Ransom as transfer driver.

The Tucson Transfer Company then opened up a service. But seeing that it could not compete with the principal Phoenix concern, methods were resorted to which resulted in the purchase of the Pioneer Transfer Company by the Tucson Transfer Company. The negotiation did not work to the disadvantage of Mr. Ransom. He continued working as

before, receiving the same wages. Through faithful service and honest dealing he remained with the Tucson Transfer Company from 1892 until 1931, when he was retired. As a means of gratitude for this wonderful service, the Tucson Warehouse and Transfer Company allow him a life pension of \$70.00 a month.

Mr. Ransom was married only once, his wife being a Mexican woman from Sonora. To this union one son was born. Mr. Ransom owns a home where he lives at 933 South Osborn Avenue, which he bought for \$85.00 over thirty years ago.

### **Mr. Henry Varnom**

Many of the Negroes that lived in Tucson came here in the United States Army and after being discharged made this their home. In 1894, Mr. Henry Varnom came to Tucson as a soldier in E. Troop, after having spent five years in G. Troop in Texas--South Casoby. In this regiment of sixty-five Negroes he received \$25.00 every two months. These Negro Troops were sent out at various occasions to quell Indian disturbances and to put an end to the Indian raider, Geronimo.<sup>23</sup> However, sometimes these soldiers did not stand bravely against the Indians.<sup>24</sup>

Securing his discharge from the army in 1892, Mr. Varnom went to Phoenix, Arizona, and worked for four years as porter Mr. Ainsworth's Hotel. While here he married a white girl of the Mormon faith. In 1896, his berth failed him and he had to come back to Tucson. From this time onward until he died in 1931, he worked for Mrs. Franklin, on Main Street, for \$8.00 a week and board. In 1910, Mr. Varnom bought half a lot for \$100.00 and erected a home thereon. There were three children born to this union of marriage.

### **Mr. Richard Holt**

Mr. Richard Holt, born in 1865 in Charlotte, North Carolina, and also a soldier, came to Tucson in 1884. He was a soldier in E. Troop in the Tenth Cavalry. This troop, together with H. Troop went on the campaign in 1886, against Chief Geronimo. These soldiers were put on

guard at Bonita Canyon, cutting the Indians off at their stronghold and keeping them in abeyance for nearly nine months, after which time the Indians surrendered. Mr. Holt carried mail from the railroad to the interior while on this campaign.

In 1889, he got his discharge and began working on a \$30.00 a month, room and board. This job lasted until 1897. The most of his work consisted of employment in mining camps, hotels and private families. Mr. Holt owns no property; however, he owns a small amount of personal property, an old car, some furniture, etc.--all amounting to about \$50.00. He is not able to work, but he receives a pension of \$40.00 a month from the government.

Mr. Holt has never been married, but has two children as the result of his association with his French common-law wife while working at the mining camp.

### **Mr Thomas Grant**

The last of the Negroes who came to Tucson with the Tenth Cavalry was Mr. Thomas Grant. Mr. Grant was born in Germantown, Kentucky, in 1848. Immediately after reaching Tucson in 1892, he retired from the army and secured employment with Mr. John L. Martin, on Court Street. He has been working for him ever since. In 1910, he homesteaded twenty-two acres of land at Fort Huachuca from the government. Upon this land he put cattle, horses and wagons .

But misfortune overtook Mr. Grant; he became mentally deranged and had to be taken to California for his malady. When he returned to Tucson, he found all of his property but the land gone. The next effort put forth by this retired soldier was to buy himself a home in Tucson. This effort was carried through. An adobe house was bought just outside the city limits on Main Street for \$45.00 for the lot and \$75.00 for the improvement. The house still stands, but the owner has lost his title and connection with the property.

His job for attorney Martin brings him in \$18.00 a month, plus a room, and he gets \$45.45 as a pension from the government. Mr. Grant has no relatives and no children, but was once married to a Negro woman from Texas.

### Mrs. Lee

About the middle of the nineties, there was a Negro woman, Mrs. Lee, who came from Phoenix, Arizona, to specialize in a restaurant, run exclusively for whites but under colored management. Mrs. Lee knew the possibilities in this line of work from past experiences in Phoenix. Coming to Phoenix, in 1888, as a cook for a rich eastern family, she sought greater opportunities for the application of her unique "cuisine art". She immediately began to operate a cafe for the white tourists who came from all sections of the country to visit Phoenix. After a few years, her place became the most exclusive eating house in Phoenix. But this did not last long; she became entangled in a love affair and was forced to leave Phoenix. Her next chance was to come to Tucson and begin all over again.

Upon coming to Tucson she immediately began negotiating plans for the renting of the dining room of the Orndorff Hotel from Mr. DeGraw. This dining room had been closed for some time, due to the fact that it was not profitable to the hotel to operate it.

Mrs. Lee at once opened the dining room. She took care of the cooking herself. In the dining room she put a number of colored waitresses. Over these waitresses she placed a Negro man. This place was operated for three years and it received the patronage of the best people in Tucson. On account of ill health Mrs. Lee was forced to abandon this work. The picture below shows the Orndorff Hotel. The upper picture shows the main entrance to the body of the hotel. The lower picture shows the main entrance to the dining room.

Mrs. Lee owned a home on the southwest corner of Stone Avenue and Third Street. She died about the beginning of the twentieth century.

Through this survey of the twenty Negroes of whom we have information, a picture can be drawn by way of deduction as to the economic existence of the entire population before 1900.

Estevan, a native of Morocco, was the first Negro to come near Tucson, but he was only with a group of explorers. Therefore, from a brief study of his existence, we can only connect him with the Negroes of Tucson through the fact that his, exploration merits it.

The lives of the twenty Negroes who lived in Tucson illustrate a more precise conception of the lives of all the other Negroes who lived in Tucson during this period. There was no staid and fixed type of work that any one Negro did during this period. They usually worked at any conceivable kind of employment. However, domestic work seemed to be a category into which we can put the majority of them. The next type of work which would apply to a large number of Negroes was that of the barbering trade. Three of these Negroes were never married, twelve of them were legally married, and one had a common-law wife. Of this group, three Negro men married Negro women, five men married Mexican woman, one man married a white woman, one man had a common-law French wife, and three men married Indian women. Thirteen Negroes owned property, and seven did not. One Negro during this period homesteaded land. The wages of the entire group during the period ranged from \$10.00 a month to \$85.00 a month.

There are only five of these pioneers living now. The picture below shows three of them. On account of Mr. Embers' being at the County Hospital, it was impossible to get him with this group. These men are also the oldest Negroes in Tucson. Of these five men, two of them have incomes from the government, three of them own property. Two of them are dependent for a means of living. One of these dependents is at the County Hospital and the other one works hard for a living at \$7.00 a week and board. One of the five receives a pension for his past work at an establishment in Tucson.