

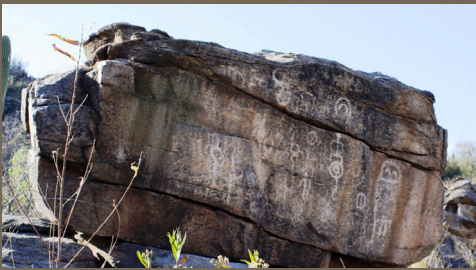
PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

The Town of Oro Valley was founded in 1974, and it encompasses an area with deep historical roots. Its distinctive natural setting, with its backdrop of the Santa Catalina Mountains, has been a focus of human settlement for more than a thousand years.

Prehistoric Hohokam villages, nineteenth century homesteads and ranches, historic transportation routes, suburban communities built in the twentieth century—all have helped shape the modern community of Oro Valley. Oro Valley has an abundance of cultural resources, many of which contribute to an understanding and appreciation of the town and its history.



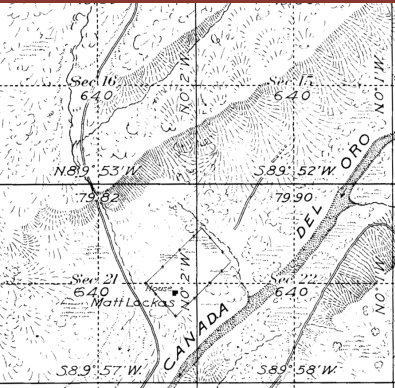
NATIVE AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES



Major Native American archaeological sites in the Oro Valley area include Sleeping Snake Village, Romero Ruin, and Honey Bee Village. All three sites are extensive Hohokam villages dating between A.D. 450 and A.D. 1450.

Archaeological investigations at the three sites have revealed a wide variety of features, including the remnants of houses (in the case of Honey Bee Village, almost 800 pit houses), storage pits, ball courts and terrace gardens. The information from these sites has allowed a significant expansion in our understanding of prehistoric Native American life in Southern Arizona. Romero Ruin is preserved in Catalina State Park and can be visited by the public, and a portion of the Honey Bee Village is preserved as an Archaeological Preserve managed by Pima County.

HISTORIC RESOURCES IN ORO VALLEY



Detail from the 1913 General Land Office survey plat of Township 12 South, Range 13 East. Note the old railroad grade at lower right, a remnant of the never-completed Tucson, Globe and Northern Railroad.

Historic-period resources, which include early roads, standing architecture, ranching and farming features (such as corrals and irrigation ditches) and historic-period archaeological

sites can be valuable both as sources of information about the past and as visual reminders of a community’s heritage. The earliest known settlers of the historic period came a decade after the Gadsden Purchase (1854) made Southern Arizona a part of the United States.

In the late 1860’s, Francisco Romero, a member of an old Tucson family that first came to Southern Arizona as part of a Spanish presidio force in the late eighteenth century, was probably the first non-native settler of the Cañada del Oro area. He established a cattle ranch in what is now Catalina State Park, centering his spread on an enclosed house compound in the former Hohokam village later called Romero Ruin. Romero’s tenure on his ranch was short lived because of the constant threat of Apache attacks, and he abandoned the property in 1870. His only son returned to Cañada del Oro and built a new ranch house in 1889, just below the ridge where his father’s house stood. The remains of his house survive today and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places which includes Romero Ruin. This Historic designation is part of the Southerland Wash Archaeological District. Professional archaeologists consider it to be “one of the most significant sites in the Tucson Basin.”

Other early residents of the Oro Valley area included William Sutherland, whose ranch can still be seen along the banks of the wash bearing his name, and William Neal, who ran a stage coach line from Tucson to the mines at Mammoth, with a stop at Steam Pump Ranch.



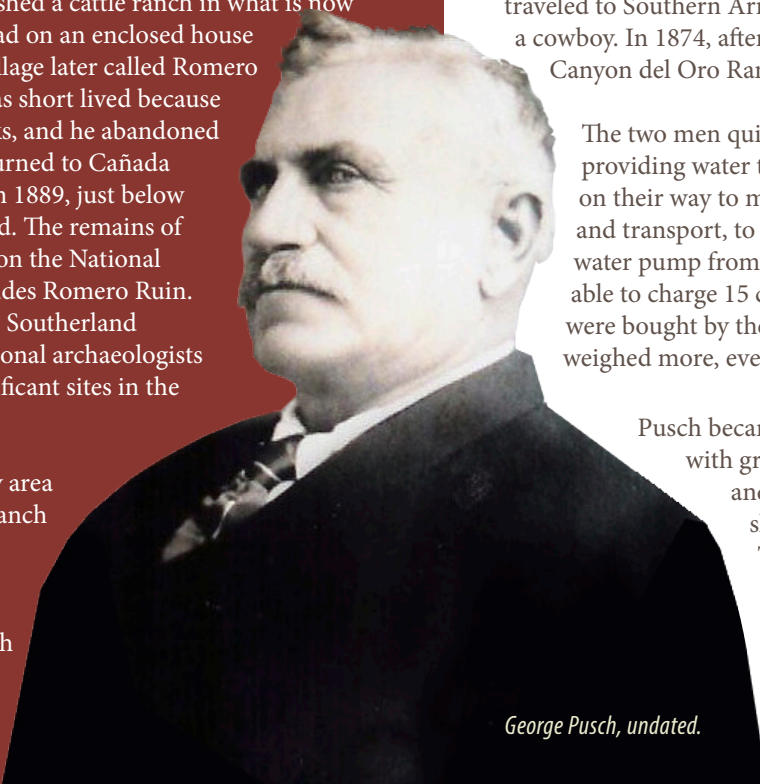
The Town acquired Steam Pump Ranch in 2007, and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2009. Restoration work on the ranch house was completed in December 2010. The fully-restored Pusch Ranch House stands in its original 1875 condition at the ranch today and is available for docent-led tours.

GEORGE PUSCH AND THE STEAM PUMP RANCH

In 1865, a young George Pusch emigrated from Germany to New York, where he met John Zellweger. After working several years as a butcher, he traveled to Southern Arizona. He knew he wanted to be a cattleman, not a cowboy. In 1874, after reconnecting with Zellweger, they bought the Canyon del Oro Ranch, and the PZ brand was registered.

The two men quickly recognized the business opportunity of providing water to the many cattle being driven past the ranch on their way to market in Tucson. They managed to purchase and transport, to this very remote area, a steam engine-driven water pump from Germany. It was a big success, and they were able to charge 15 cents per head to water the cattle. Since cattle were bought by the pound at market, and the fully-watered cattle weighed more, everyone benefitted from this arrangement!

Pusch became highly successful. He owned 15,000 acres with grazing rights from Oro Valley to Florence and Winkelman. He opened a butcher shop, a slaughter house, and a cold storage business in Tucson, and sold stock in his Pusch Land and Cattle operation in 1918. He was elected to the Territorial Legislature in the late 1800s and was a member of the Constitutional Convention from which our state was formed in 1912. He is truly one of our more successful pioneers!



George Pusch, undated.



POSTWAR DEVELOPMENT IN ORO VALLEY

History in the Cañada del Oro area did not end with the ranching and homesteading period of Romero, Pusch and other early settlers. A period of even greater consequence in the development of modern Oro Valley came just before and after World War II, when the population boom in nearby Tucson pushed people beyond the city limits and into the surrounding rural areas. Some of the earliest development during this period included well-appointed individual residences, like the home designed by Josias Joesler and built in 1940 for Joseph Mac Adams, and the Countess of Suffolk's Forest Lodge, designed by Robert Morse and built in 1937.

Four of the earliest subdivisions in Oro Valley, Oro Valley Estates, Campo Bella, Suffolk Hills and Shadow Mountain Estates, are potentially eligible for nominations to the National Register as residential historic districts. They became part of the Town of Oro Valley when it was incorporated on April 15, 1974.



The Town of Oro Valley is very proud of its heritage and continues to work at recognizing and preserving its many historic and cultural resources.

For more information please visit:

Town of Oro Valley Historic and Cultural Resources
<http://go.usa.gov/fBSk>

Historic Preservation Commission
<http://go.usa.gov/fBjC>

The Oro Valley Historical Society
www.ovhistory.org

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TOWN OF ORO VALLEY
PARKS & RECREATION



CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

OF ORO VALLEY

