

**Gypsum Mine - Buck Mtn Way Point Data**

Revised 2018-03-15

Way Point	Latitude		Longitude		Remarks
	Degrees	Minutes	Degrees	Minutes	
GM-BM-01	34°	43.551'	114°	18.904'	Meet at Chevron Station at I-40
GM-BM-02	34°	44.027'	114°	15.473'	Take off at Franconia Rd. and turn left
GM-BM-03	34°	44.708'	114°	14.960'	Santa Fe RR Crossing
GM-BM-04	34°	48.590'	114°	15.843'	Gypsum Mine
GM-BM-05	34°	44.403'	114°	16.100'	Train Wreck & Cemetery (See page-2)
GM-BM-06	34°	42.713'	114°	14.239'	Turn Left onto National Old Trails Rd.
GM-BM-07	34°	43.576'	114°	12.522'	Turn Right
GM-BM-08	34°	40.049'	114°	10.543'	Turn Right onto Spirit Ridge Rd.
GM-BM-09	34°	39.981'	114°	10.776'	Turn Left onto Yucca Mine
GM-BM-10	34°	39.203'	114°	9.244'	Yucca Mine (See Page 8) Return to WP GM-BM-09 and Turn Left onto Franconia Rd. (to North)
GM-BM-11	34°	40.611'	114°	11.654'	Turn Left onto Rice Rd.
GM-BM-12	34°	39.160'	114°	14.379'	Turn Right on Rice Road bypass
GM-BM-13	34°	39.740'	114°	14.826'	Turn Left on Havasu Heights Rd.
GM-BM-14	34°	39.758'	114°	18.457'	End Run; Air-up

Start: 34° 43.554' N - 114° 18.905' W (Chevron @ I-40)  
 End: 34° 39.761' N - 114° 18.854' W (Havasu Heights @ SR-95)  
 Approximate Distance: 43.2.0 mi.

**Gypsum Mine - Buck Mtn**  
 (Lake Havasu TMP)

**The following is an excerpt from the Arizona Pioneer and Cemetery Project**

**Written by Kathy Block, Historian**

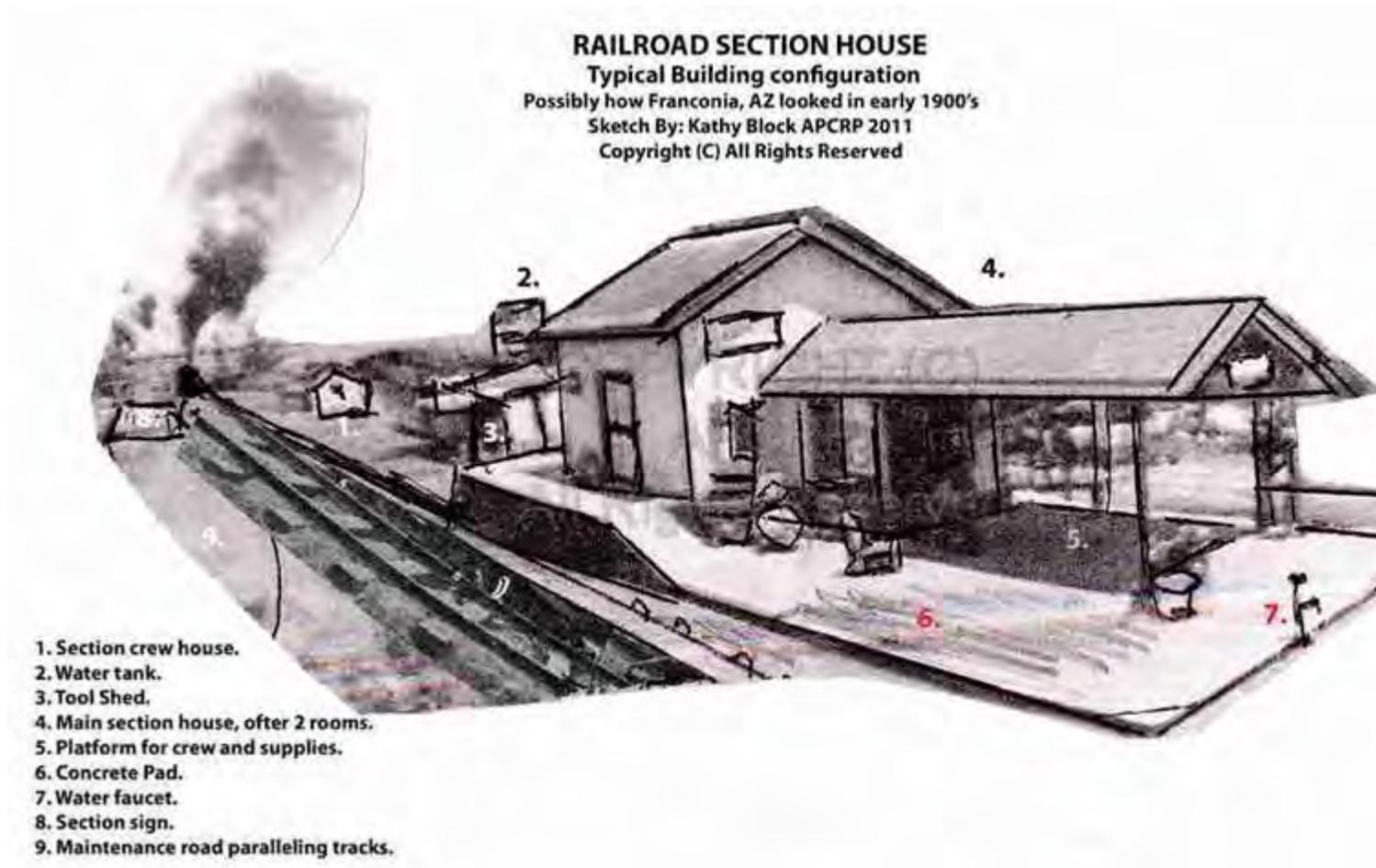
**“FRANCONIA, Arizona is a derelict railroad siding stop, formerly the site of a section house for the Santa Fe Railroad. It was named by F.W. Smith, a railroad general superintendent, born 1857 in California, for his son Frank. In the 1900 Census, three people were stationed there. J.R. Carroll was the section foreman with two Japanese RR Laborers, Inni and Ymoanoto (no first names). The data indicated that Carroll, Age 26, was born in England in Dec.1873, had been in the U.S.A. for 13 years, and was nationalized.**

**The laborers, labeled “Jp N”, were both born in Japan. Inni, age 25, was born in 1875, and Ymoanoto, age 19, was born in 1881. Inni had been unemployed for nine months. All could read and write and speak English, and all were single. They may have lived in small houses at Franconia. There are ruins of concrete pads with remnants of foundations and walls to the north of the railroad tracks, and piles of rusting cans, broken glass, and other debris scattered throughout the area. Some workers lived in railroad cars that could be hauled from section to section. These were parked on unused sidings.**

**A note from Kay Ellermann, librarian at the Mohave Museum of History and Arts, indicated that: “As far as I can tell, there was only a section house at Franconia. We have a letter on file stating that a lady's father was born at Franconia on Oct. 3, 1908. The Grandfather was a section foreman for the railroad. They could have had a few houses for workers there also, but I can't find any information to verify it.” Later Kay wrote that “They probably lived in a section house made from a railroad car. Most times they went from job to job that way.” She found that the RR at Franconia had two small wooden houses, valued at \$100 each in May, 1887.**

**Two fascinating legal documents from the “Solicitor” for the Atlantic and Pacific Railway Company in Albuquerque, N.M. To the Mohave County Assessor, dated May 28, 1887, challenge the legality of the assessment of “2 small wooden houses” at Franconia plus other buildings at Kingman, Yucca, Powell, and East Bridge for a total of \$18,615.38 value.” The grounds for dispute was that “the improvements and buildings placed thereon for the purpose of operating and maintaining said road, are, by Act of Congress, exempt from taxation within the county of Mohave.”**

The railroads also built section houses by the railroad tracks for section crews. They were typically two-room buildings. The railroad companies divided the tracks into sections between 10 and 30 miles long and assigned a foreman and crew to tend each section. These workers used the section houses, which were often near a water tank or well. The ruins at Franconia had drain holes in the concrete, probably for the kitchen area. They probably had clap board siding. In 1935 section houses down by the tracks were given away for the hauling from the site. .



Typical section house

Typical Section House



Present day ruins of platform where the section house may have stood.

Workers on the railroad were often killed by accidents and poor safety practices. Death Certificates for the early 1900s reflected deaths from falling off trains, being caught between cars, getting run over. No Death Certificate could be found for this man in this news report, from the June 20, 1903 *Mohave County Miner*, Kingman, Arizona: *“George Payne, a Santa Fe engineer, was crushed beneath his engine last Saturday evening while oiling up. The engine was standing on a side track at Franconia when from some cause it moved ahead and the unfortunate man tried to get out between the drivers and was caught and crushed. He leaves a wife and two children.”* Possibly the death was recorded in Needles, CA. This death was two years after a major disaster at Franconia.



**HISTORIC SANTA FE RAILROAD  
SECTIONS From Needles, CA. to  
Kingman, AZ. Early 1900s.**

Sections were usually 10 miles apart. Here are distances by railroad.

- NEEDLES EAST to Mellen\*** was 11 miles.
- Mellen**, a siding, was 7 miles **EAST** to **Powell**.
- Powell**, a siding, was 7 miles **EAST** to **FRANCONIA**, a siding.
- Haviland** to **Yucca** was 6 miles. **Yucca** was an "Agency Station."
- Yucca EAST to Kingman** was 24 miles.
- Other railroad distances:**
- Athen**, a siding, was 5 miles east of **Yucca**.
- Kaster**, a siding, was 15 miles **WEST** of **Kingman**.
- Griffith**, a siding, was 11 miles **WEST** of **Kingman**.
- Harris**, a siding, was 6 miles **WEST** of **Kingman**.
- McConnico**, a siding, was 5 miles **WEST** of **Kingman**.

\* **MELLEN** was also known as Red Rock. It was named after Jack Mellen of the Colorado River steamers. On Jan. 1, 1904, the name was changed to **TOPOCK**, the name it has today.

Map showing RR Sections.

A terrible train wreck was at precisely 5:12AM on November 20, 1901, about two miles west of Franconia. Santa Fe Flyers, No. 3 westbound and No.4 eastbound collided head-on on a sharp curve west of Franconia, described in news accounts as "a small flag station 35 miles SW of Kingman." There was only a single railroad track at this time. They could not have seen each other until they were within a few hundred feet of each other. The collision immediately killed every fireman on the two trains and many other people and destroyed three engines, the dining cars (one on each train), one Pullman, and two composite cars. The eastbound train was pulled by two oil burning locomotives and the second engine exploded, throwing the burning oil

into the wreck and setting the cars on fire! Details of the accident did not fully emerge until 1906, when the lawsuit "Santa Fe Pacific R. Co. V Holmes, 202 U.S. 438 (1906) was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court on April 18, 19, 1906. Both the full text of the case and the case preview are available on the Internet on Open. Jurist Blog. Briefly, the defendant, one of the engineers who was severely injured, sued for, and won \$9,000 on the grounds that the collision was caused by the negligence "of a fellow servant", of "the master," - the RR company.

The train dispatcher, representative of the company to "promulgate orders for the running of trains, and not a fellow servant of the engineer," had "disobeyed the orders, rules, and regulations of the company." The dispatcher failed to take into account "what a prudent man would have taken into account and done." The colliding trains were regular passenger trains. The eastbound passenger train failed to receive vital information that the westbound train was running six minutes late from Yucca but then it passed Franconia SIX MINUTES AHEAD OF TIME. The operator of the westbound train had approached Franconia station for orders and received, by semaphore signal, that there were "no orders from the train dispatcher." So, he didn't stop at Franconia.

Meanwhile, the eastbound train from Needles would have reached and been placed on the siding at Franconia two or three minutes before the westbound train came thru. Due to the six minute error, they collided one and a half miles west of Franconia. The east bound train was going 40 to 50 miles per hour and the westbound train was running 60 to 70 miles per hour!

What a fatal difference six minutes made.

There were poignant descriptions of the deaths in the Mohave county Miner.

*J.B. WILLIAMS*, engineer of the west bound train jumped and was severely injured.

*L.HOLMES* (who later won the lawsuit), jumped, and was buried in the oil from the overturned tank and was so weak it was "only by the greatest effort or will that he managed to keep his head above the oil." The oil was burning all around him, and had he not been dragged out in time, he would have burned to death!

***P. M. McELLIGOTT***, engineer of the first east bound engine, was instantly killed in jumping.

***J.L. MORSE***, conductor, was on the engine with him and was badly injured by jumping.

***F. GOLDSCHMIDT***, fireman, was instantly killed.

***H.E. BRAUNHARDT***, baggage master, was instantly killed.

***W.I. CASE*** could not initially be found. Later, his charred remains were identified by the general outline of the features.

***W.H. ARMITAGE***, fireman, was later identified by scraps of clothing in which was his watch and keys. His body was found hanging in the firebox of his engine, completely incinerated.

***SAM BROWN***, waiter, was never found.

***ROBERT HIGGINS***, conductor of the west bound train, was in the baggage car at the time of the wreck. He was surrounded by flames and gave himself up as lost, but “the thoughts of the good wife and babies at home gave him wonderful strength and he tore himself loose and was soon placed on the train under the care of the doctors. He was badly crushed and died in Los Angeles.”

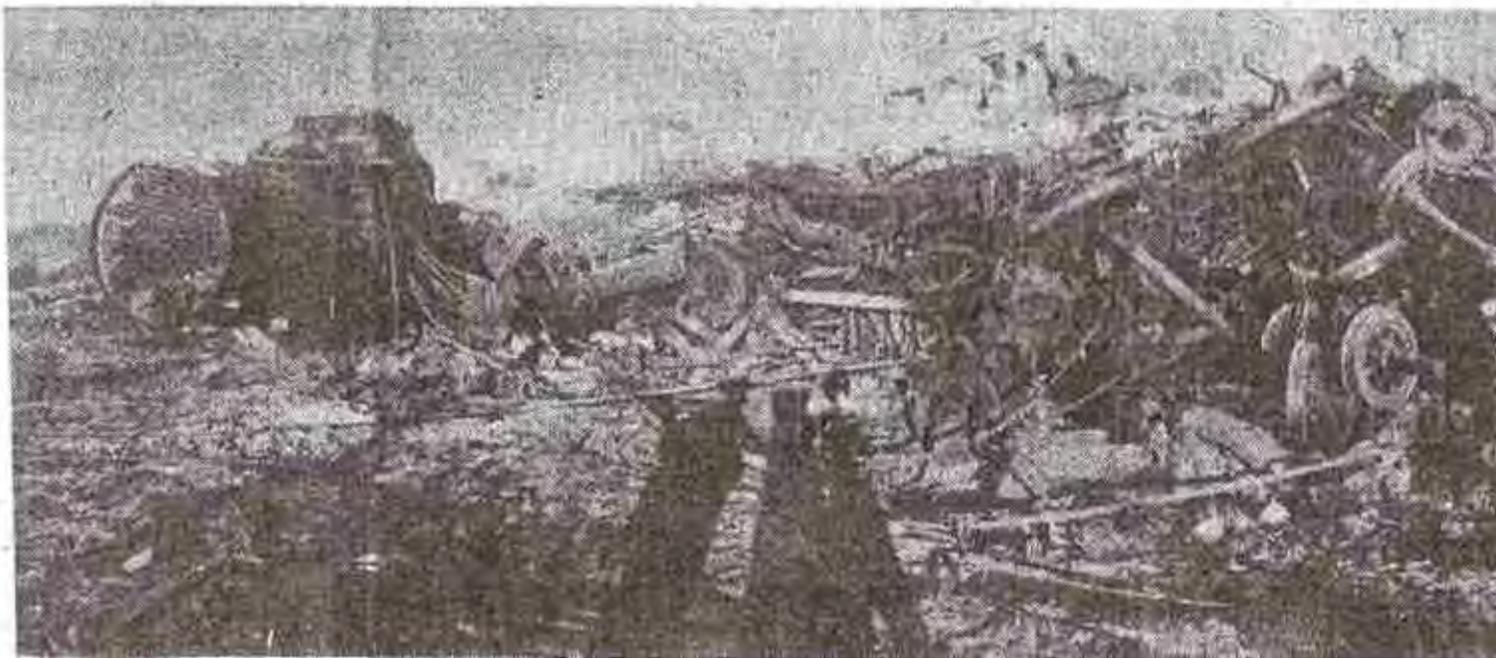
***WALTER DAVERAGE***, a colored waiter, “was so badly burned that he died while being taken aboard the relief train.

The charred bodies of several “tramps” were found later in the wreckage. Two were reported to have boarded the train just before the wreck and three others at Needles.

No Death Certificates were found for any of the victims, suggesting they were recorded in California or elsewhere. The bodies were taken by train to Needles after the wreck.

R.M. Bryant, who was working a bridge gang near the scene of the disaster, was awakened by the crash and ran with his men to the scene and saved lives and property. A relief train from Kingman with Dr. Ealy aboard was quickly sent. The wounded and dead were placed in one of the Pullmans and met at Mullen by relief train from Needles carrying doctors and nurses. Four bodies were taken to Needles. Another casualty was a coffin carrying the body of a young woman from San Francisco to Pittsburg. It was entirely consumed by the fire. Only three passengers were injured and 14 employees and trainmen were also hurt. All the mail and baggage in both trains was destroyed.

The news article concluded: "In the history of the Santa Fe road no worse wreck than this has ever occurred, and we hope it will be long before we have another to report." Unfortunately, there was another train wreck near Franconia in 1945!



The pile of wreckage from the train wreck west of Franconia. Photo courtesy *Mohave Museum of History and Arts*.



## Arrastra

The Arizona Yucca Mine workings consist of a deep vertical shaft in red rock on the east bank of the wash, and two large holes on the west. Walk up a small hill on the west side past these large holes to an old arrastra, a cement motor mount, and an old rock cabin across a small wash to the north-west. The ore came from the mine across the road was brought to the arrastra. For you folks who appreciate old relics (Like me!) this arrastra is probably in the best example of any remaining in the area. And this, combined with the graveyard, makes the trip here just like striking pay dirt!