

Fort Huachuca, in a beautiful mountain setting, is being transformed into a pleasant year-round resort community.

Fort Huachuca Enterprises

BY DICK STITT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHIL STITT

To most residents of the Baby State, mention of "vacation wonderland" or "scenic splendor" may bring to mind the vast northern and central Arizona resort areas. But while the chambers of commerce steadily extol the virtues of their respective climes, a non-profit corporation is quietly working to add southern Arizona to the tourist map by establishing a year around resort atmosphere at colorful Fort Huachuca.

Established in 1877 by the United States Army, Fort Huachuca (pronounced Wah-choo-kah, an Apache-Chiricahua Indian word meaning "mountains-with-water") boasts historical elements typical of the great Southwest. It was at first a small military outpost in hostile Indian country, where pitched battles flared at a moment's notice. Cavalry troops kept constant vigil on the summits of the Huachuca Mountains.

A squad of weather-toughened Indian scouts occupied the Post for 70 years, the last leaving in 1947. When the Fort was expanded, and electric and gas facilities added, the gnarled scouts, although still a segment of the U. S. Army,

remained true to the era they knew best by refusing to trade their wood stoves and kerosene lanterns for the more modern luxuries. Remnants of their mode of living are still in evidence on the post.

Generations of people—civilians and soldiers alike—have lived on, and subsequently left, the Fort, which has served as a training base through two world wars. It has seen cavalry troops relinquish their horses in favor of mechanized motivation. Stables have been replaced by shops, and these by complex repair buildings with hydraulic equipment.

Because of continued advancement made in warfare methods, old Fort Huachuca is no longer deemed fit for full scale military training. Now, for just two weeks each summer, Arizona's National Guard troops reactivate the post for intensive maneuvers. After their departure only a forlorn flagpole, flanked by two cannons, serves as witness to the martial array that previously passed beneath it. The once thriving military establishment has seen its resident soldiers all leave. Now it is welcoming the peace-minded citizens.

In order to prevent deterioration of the Fort, established at a cost of many millions of dollars, and to develop its assets for the benefit of Arizonans, Fort Huachuca Enterprises was incorporated in 1950. Headed by John Pintek, Bisbee attorney and state senator from Cochise County, the group consists of interested professional and business men in the southern part of the state. The eleven members forming its board of directors come from all walks of life. There are doctors and lawyers, a game ranger, a funeral director, a labor leader, a minister, and owners of businesses—all donating their time and energies to establishment of the Fort as a residential and vacation area.

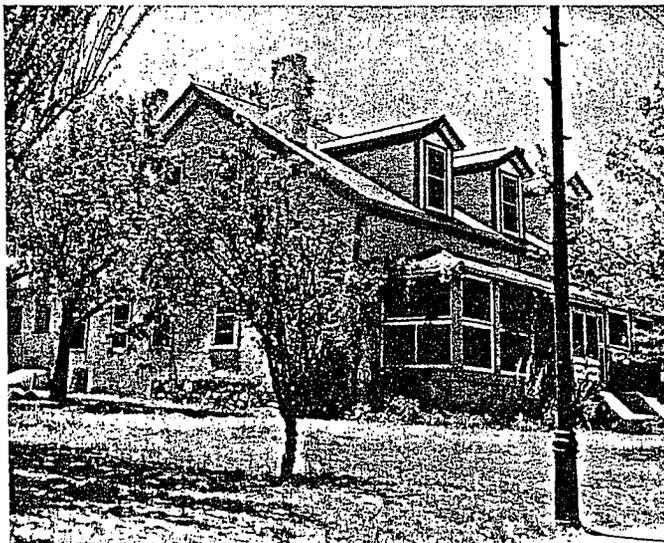
That the corporation was formed was neither happenstance nor matter of course. Its formation was the result of a tedious struggle by Pintek to overcome a general lack of interest in the project on the part of his fellow legislators.

It was during the regular session of the 19th Legislature in 1949 that Pintek secured enactment of Senate Bill 139, authorizing acceptance of the Fort by Arizona as a gift from the federal government. Despite the feeling of some senators that the Fort would be just a white elephant to the state, it was pointed out that federal maintenance allotments for the annual National Guard operation, amounting to \$31,000, would alone assure self-sustenance. It was also felt that it would be far safer to have the state and a non-profit organization in possession of the Fort than to risk its exploitation by individuals or private groups. Passage of Senate Bill 139 was effected in March, 1949. Thus Fort Huachuca, with its history and lore, its beautiful setting and abundant wildlife, and its countless points of interests, became the property of the State of Arizona.

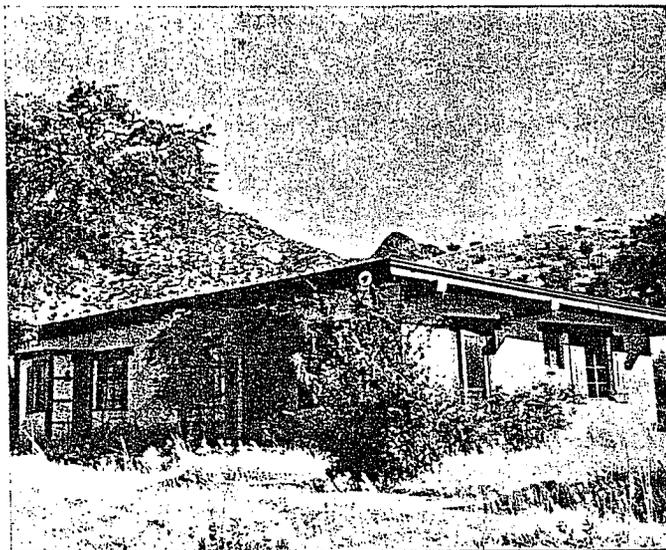
Then Fort Huachuca Enterprises drew up its Articles of Incorporation in which they precluded the possibility of the area's coming under control of an individual for private gain. A ten year lease agreement, with right of renewal for another like period, was drawn up and signed by the corporation and the governor.

The area leased by "Enterprises," and now available for residential and commercial development, covers about 12,000 acres of land lying at the mouth of Huachuca Canyon at a temperate altitude of 5,550 feet above sea level. Twenty-eight airline miles west of Bisbee, the Post has experienced a range in average daily temperature from 33 degrees during January to 91 degrees during the summer months. In 41 years, on only six days has the mercury at Bisbee remained continuously below freezing. Snow falls occasionally between December and March, with perhaps an average of two or three inches per month. Only 50 days a year are cloudy, 74 partly cloudy. Two hundred and forty-two days find the sky over the Post completely clear. There is never any fog at the Fort, which has been described by the U. S. Army as an ideal location for a health resort. In the latter days of July and early in August, cleansing afternoon showers follow in the wake of thunder and lightning storms crashing through the canyons.

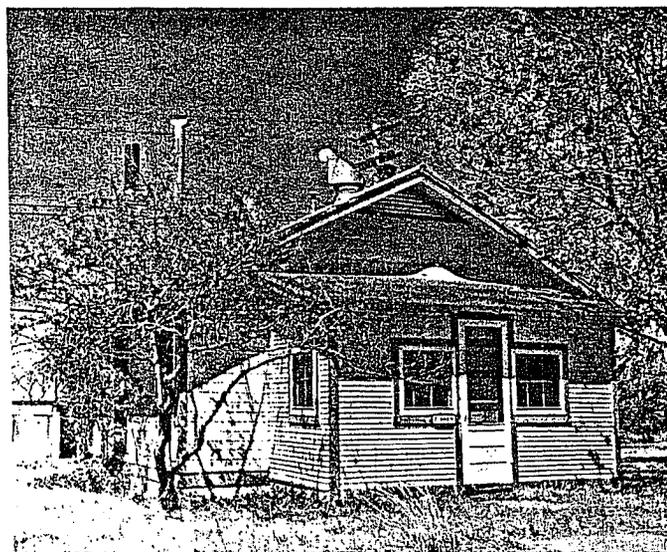
In the space leased by the corporation are approximately 500 one- to five-bedroom homes available for vacationing or permanent residence at nominal rental. The largest of these, palatial officers' quarters, were constructed in 1885 with 20-inch thick adobe walls providing warmth in the winter and coolness in the summer. Floors are of polished maple throughout the five bedrooms, kitchen, dining room, living



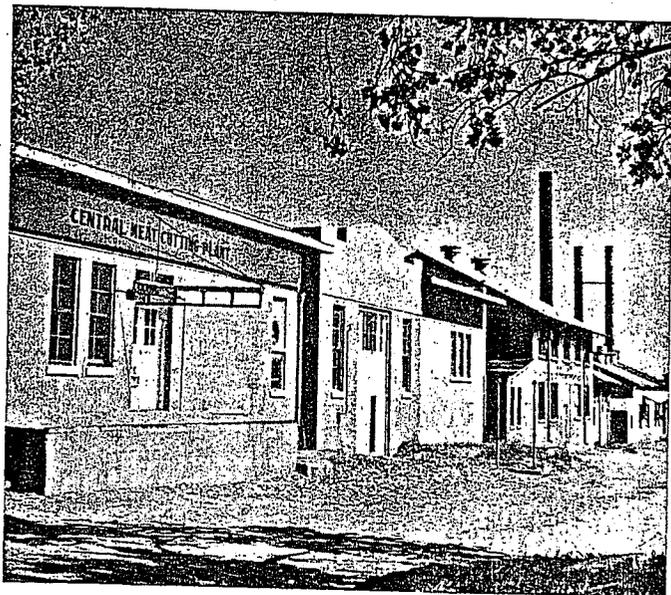
Spacious homes, once used by military people, are available.



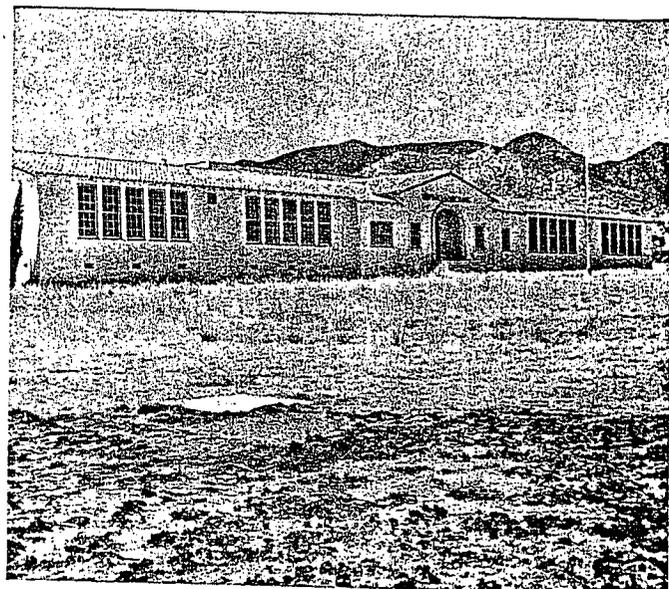
Rents range from \$10 to \$75 per month for various dwellings.



Retired couples have at their disposal small, neat cottages.



Space available for small businesses.



A school plant is ready for operation.

room and study. Front and back screened porches, three baths, a laundry room, two fireplaces, numerous closets, and separate maids' quarters complete the layout of these mansions which rent for only \$75 per month. At the other extreme, both in size and cost, are two-room cabins with kitchen facilities renting at \$10 monthly. In between is a great variety of homes and apartments available in nearly any size at proportionate cost.

Regardless of the fact that rentals are extremely low, means must be afforded many full time residents to earn a living. To the small businessman and light industrialist, Ft. Huachuca offers practically unlimited opportunity. Among businesses already established are a restaurant and grill, a grocery store, barber shop, novelty store and a motion picture theater.

Vacant buildings of varied sizes provide facilities for

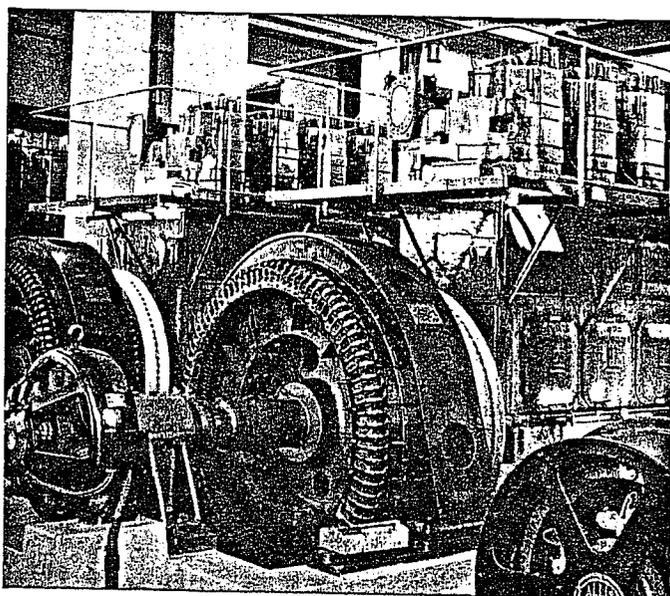
many other enterprises. Two bakeries, an ice-making plant with 40 ton capacity, two laundry and dry cleaning plants capable of handling the needs of up to 30,000 people are on the Post.

A fully equipped meat cutting and packing plant stands deserted on the Fort, while available storage buildings contain over 16,000 square feet of space. Other warehouses, located on a Southern Pacific railway spur, afford 318,000 square feet of space. Numerous repair shops, formerly used in the reclamation of clothing and similar items, are available. As an indication of their potentiality, it is of note that 10,000 pairs of shoes were repaired in these shops in a single month during World War II.

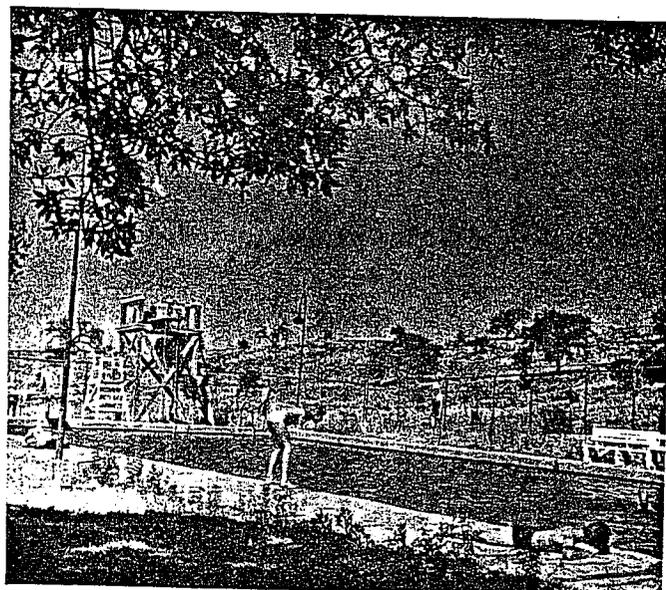
To the imaginative and resourceful, Ft. Huachuca thus offers almost unlimited business and industrial opportunities.

Everyone likes some form of play. And few resorts in any

Powerhouse can supply ample power.

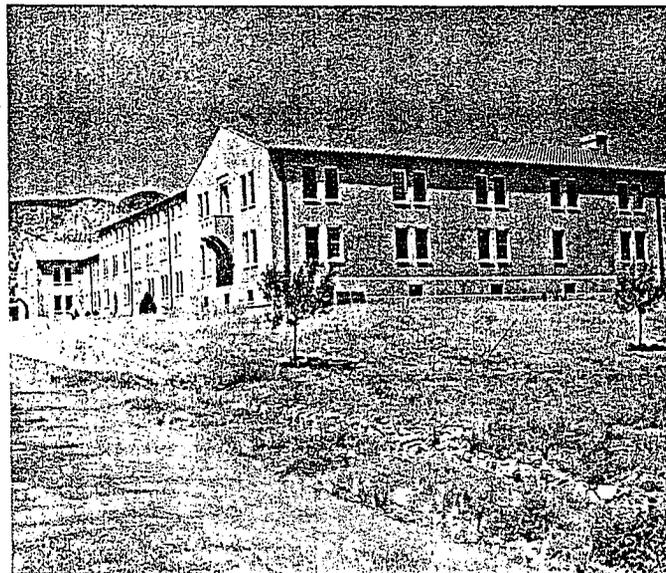


Swimming pools open for residents.





Extensive warehouse facilities.



Dormitories are used by camp groups.

part of the United States could offer a greater variety of recreational facilities, regardless of cost. Extended to occupants of the Fort is a recreative medium to fit the desires of the most selective.

For the more sedate individual, a game of croquet on a cool front lawn might be suitable. The dashing sportsman, on the other hand, might find use of the polo grounds more to his liking. Two swimming pools can be kept filled. Perhaps a brisk hike or horseback ride through the mountains' wooded paths is preferred. Or maybe a few holes over the Post's golf course for the ardent golfer. Many tennis and badminton courts are in the area, plus three baseball and softball diamonds, as many football fields, and several basketball courts.

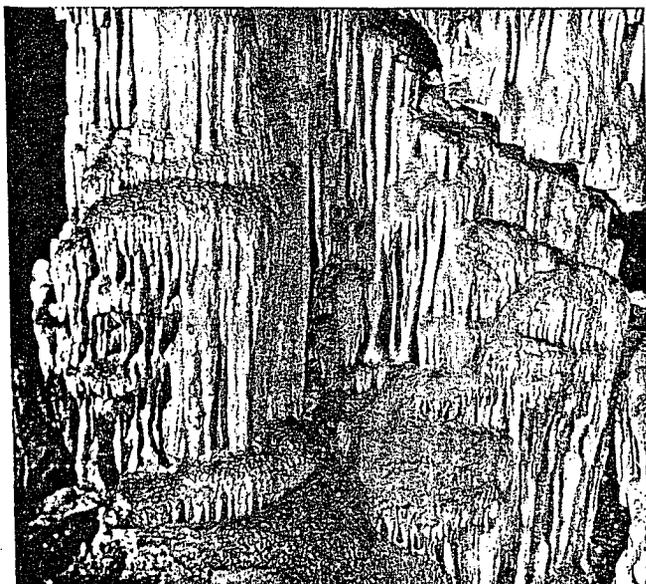
Evening social activities may center around the motion picture theater, lawn parties, or an occasional dance at the

Buffalo Club—a ballroom, dining hall, and cocktail lounge of country club style and proportions.

The Elks, American Legion, Masons and similar fraternal organizations have established areas for large groups, where picnicking and steak fries can be featured.

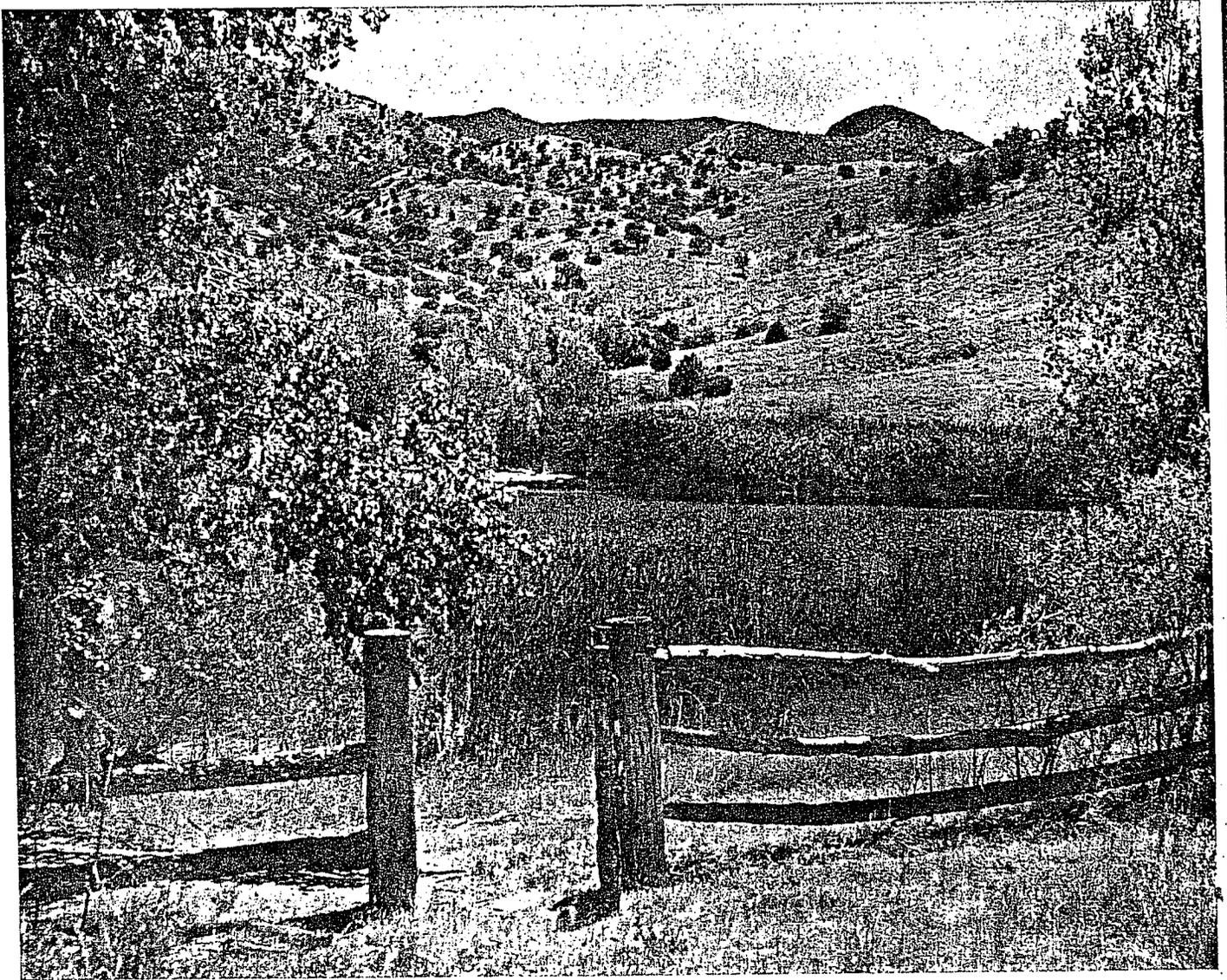
Taking advantage of the low rentals and varied recreational facilities, plus the fact that they may be used the year around, many church groups from widely scattered southern Arizona communities have rented large dormitories on a yearly basis. There they hold their summer camps and accompanying spiritual instruction, as well as winter outings. The Bisbee YWCA maintains a youth center there, and a four-state regional Y-Teen convention is being planned for next summer. Ft. Huachuca is fast becoming recognized as a mecca for youth groups as well as retired people and families of moderate income, who wish to live pleasantly.

Natural wonders surround the Fort.



Wild life abounds in Huachuca area.





Perfect climate, winter and summer, makes the Fort Huachuca area a delightful place to live.

An adequate water supply, cause of worry in other parts of Arizona, is assured the residents of the Post. During the last war, with its heavy population, the largest single-day water consumption was 3,900,000 gallons—well below the 5,400,000 gallon capacity of the Fort's wells and natural springs. Sewage disposal is handled by two modern treatment plants.

For reasons of economy, Ft. Huachuca presently obtains its power from the Tucson Gas and Electric Company. However, should the demand warrant it, the Post's own plant, kept in constant readiness as a stand-by source, can fully accommodate the area. Natural gas is supplied with average main pressure of 400 pounds per square inch by El Paso Natural Gas Company.

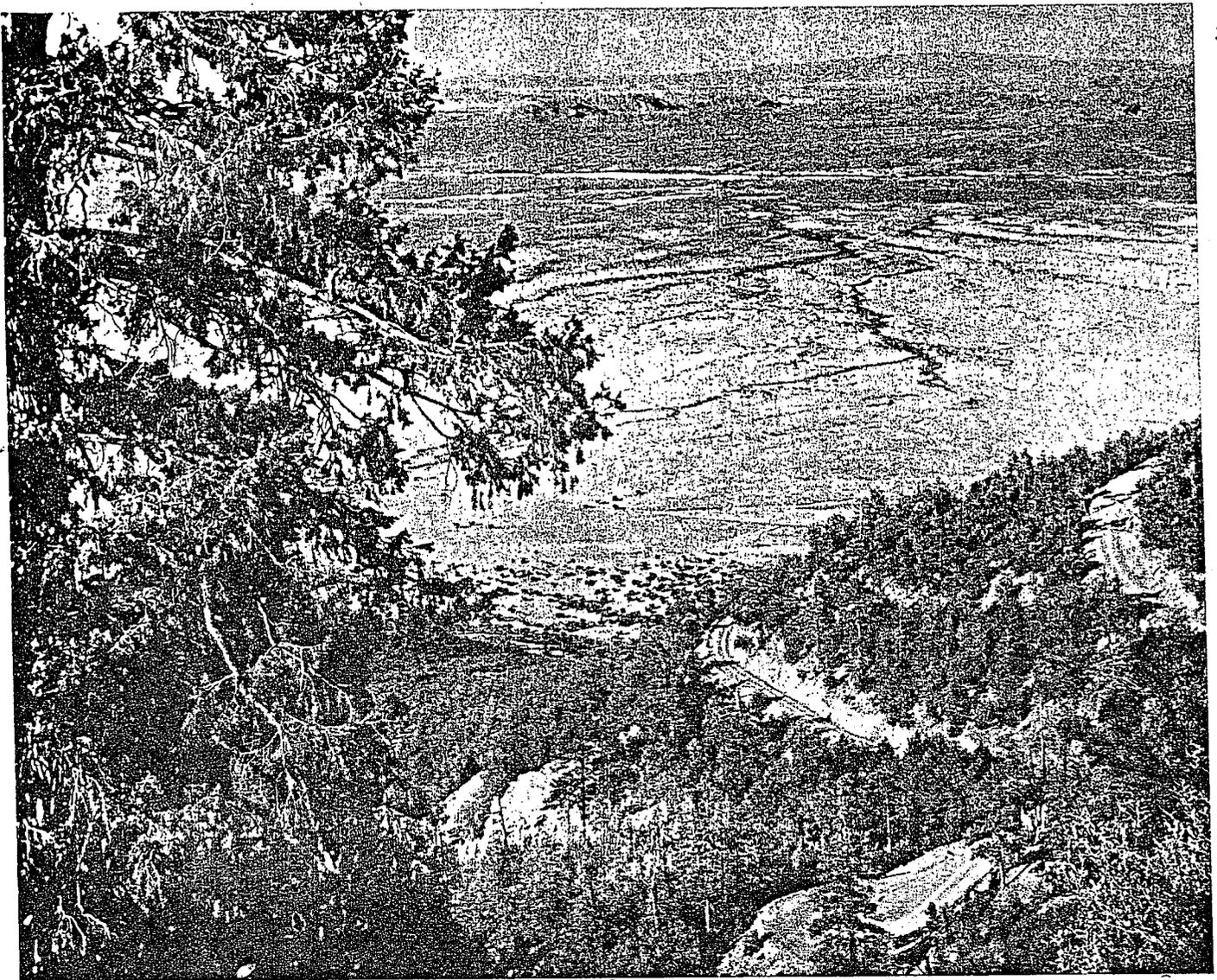
Over a period of 70 years men have built up and added to that small military outpost until, during World War II, it was able to house 40,000 people. Modern conveniences have been added there, as everywhere, to make life easier. Now Ft. Huachuca has much in the way of comfort and oppor-

tunity to offer. But it was Mother Nature herself who provided perhaps the strongest attraction to the Huachuca Mountains and Fort.

Resplendent in plant life, the Huachuca Mountains offer unmatched opportunity for study and observation by naturalists—layman or expert. From the rolling grasslands and desert to the 9,000-foot peaks, the Huachucas are abundant in ferns, trees, shrubbery and wildlife.

The late Dr. William Ralph Maxon, in his time foremost fern expert in the United States, and former curator of the U. S. National Museum, called the Huachucas "richer than any other similar area in the country in fern life," attributing over 50 species to the region.

With increasing altitude, plant growth and foliage become more dense and diversified. After spending years searching for and identifying plants in the Huachucas, resident botanist Leslie N. Goodding has made a comprehensive compilation of trees and shrubbery, listing 123 distinct types, as well as 84 species of grasses. Few places in the United



Surrounding mountains afford endless recreational possibilities for residents of picturesque Fort.

States can boast, for example, of having eight species of oak and five each of pine and willow.

Topographically, the area is ideal for wildlife purposes, the 32,000 acres of habitat deeded to the Arizona Game and Fish Commission having a wide range of land types. Since military activity at the Fort has prevented any appreciable degree of livestock grazing, the flora of the area provides native forage for its abundant and varied wildlife.

A herd of 130 buffalo roams nearly at will over the rolling grasslands of the lower altitudes. A little higher may be found other herds of elk and antelope. The alert observer may see the beautiful Yaqui quail, wild turkey, or the mysterious and comical chula (coati), a racoon-type animal which abounds there. Egrets and parrots from the tropics have also been observed in the Huachuclas, to which ornithologists from all over the country have come for study. The University of Arizona is considering the establishment of headquarters at the Fort for field trips in connection with bird and wildlife research. Such opportunities are unlimited.

In order to promote interest and knowledge of the Huachuclas' natural history, a museum was established on the Post in June, 1950. People from nearby settlements as well as the Fort belong to the sponsoring organization and contribute to the exhibits. Awaiting careful exploration and development is an extensive crystal cave, its ancient stalactites and stalagmites as yet unseen even by most oldtimers of the region.

Nature blessed the Huachuca area with a mild climate and abundant plant growth and wildlife. The United States Army established a Fort in that ideal location, developing and improving it for nearly a century. Then, after World War II the Post was abandoned, left sprawling over acres and acres of land.

But now, with a full time resident manager in charge of development, the enthusiasm of the families now living there, and the tireless efforts of the corporation's members, Ft. Huachuca shows definite signs of soon evolving into a bustling, southern Arizona resort town in a beautiful setting.