

Images of Binghampton: A History



Overview of Binghampton, circa 1904

Welcome to Images of Binghampton: A History. Binghampton was a thriving Mormon farm village settled by the Bingham family around 1900. This community covering a significant amount of land now known as Tucson, Arizona. Today we would recognize the area bounded by Country Club and Swan roads to the west and east, Fort Lowell to the south, and land just north of the Rillito River. The family of Boyd and Jeanette Done remember what it was like in Binghampton. They reflect:

"As natives of Tucson and lifetime residents of this city, it is exciting to be part of a website that will make Tucsonans aware of part of their city that they may not have known about before. We were both born and raised in the little community known as Binghampton. The geographical center of this community was Ft. Lowell and Alvernon, then known as Maple. It was a unique and special experience, one that many who experienced childhood in a community such as this one will never forget. We are appreciative of the efforts of many to create this website and hope that it can enrich the lives of many people who take time to browse. In a day when many people are searching for their ancestors, it makes us all the more aware how special the opportunity we had in enjoying life in this community was. We express appreciation to those who have worked diligently to bring this to fruition.

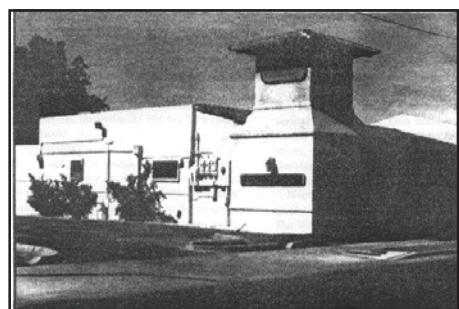
Brief History
The Binghampton Farm Village:
All That is Left.

On December 14, 1846, a group called the Mormon Battalion pioneered a route through southern Arizona, through present day Tucson, and on into California. Erastus Bingham liked what he saw and would eventually return to Arizona to settle and help found the Binghampton farm village. Erastus' sons, Dan, Jacob, and Nephi would also notice the area as they ran their freight business from New Mexico through Arizona, and in 1893 would come to Tucson to stay. Nephi would first settle in Ogden, Utah while Jacob and his parents homesteaded 220 acres of land near the McGee Ranch located at the intersection of Gardner Canyon and Sonoita Highway.

Jacob cleared the mesquite, creosote and cat's claw using their team, plows, picks and shovels. There the family farmed pinto beans on what they called the Bean Ranch. Jacob also homesteaded 420 acres called Empire Ranch near where Vail is today. It wasn't until Jacob's children were in need of a high school education that Jacob traded his farm for Hall Ranch, just north of the Rillito River in 1904. Jacob traded with Ephraim Thompson for the ranch, sometimes called Bayless Place and a little grocery store



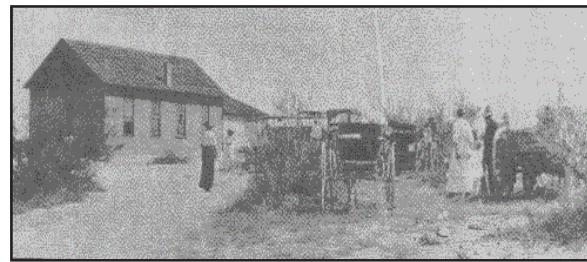
on Ft. Lowell Road. This ranch was located on present day sight of Christopher City, family student housing for the University of Arizona. Jacob and his family started a dairy farm and raised prize-winning Ayrshire cattle. Jacob's son, Millard Bingham remembers that he and his eight brothers and sisters loved the ranch and were responsible for keeping the irrigation ditch free of weeds. Millard was 6 years old when he caught the flu and was very sick. His mother eventually also came down with the flu and died as a result of that illness. She was buried in the small pioneer cemetery Millard's uncle Nephi had founded when their friend John Harris had died May 4, 1899 (see Binghampton L.D.S. Cemetery).



Nephi had moved from Utah and had settled in Casa Grande because of his rheumatism. He farmed and raised cows there until 1899 when he moved to Tucson. After his move they lived in Davidson Place and built adobe houses around a central square the children used as a playground. This property is on the land currently known as 3701 E. River Rd. This home was first the home of Nephi Bingham and later became known as the Castro Place, because Raul Castro, who subsequently was elected governor, lived at this location. The Castro Home is currently being transformed into a Montessori School. Shortly following Nephi's move to Tucson, Erastus Bingham and his wife moved to Mesa, living Nephi to lead the family.

Around 1909, Nephi took his two daughters to Colonia Juarez, Mexico to attend Juarez Academy. While he was in Juarez, Nephi convinced Heber Farr, his five brothers, and his brother-in-law Charles Hurst to move to Binghampton. December 15, 1909, Heber and his family bought a 60-acre plot of land, which is now Richey Rd on the West, Kleindale on the north, and Alvernon to the east and Ft. Lowell to the south. (See Historic Map of Binghampton) Farr would subdivide the land into 12 blocks with 4 square lost to a block. He sold them for \$125.00 each. With this large influx of people a Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was formed May 21, 1910 and Heber Farr became the branch president.

The Binghampton Branch built the Davidson school, where the children learned during the week and the branch attended church on Sunday. On September 15, 1927 the Mormons would begin to build the building that still stands at 3700 E. Ft. Lowell. The Church was the center of activity for the Binghampton settlement. The families gathered for fun, swimming, and dancing, as well as their Sunday meetings at the church.



Davidson School - 1916