

# The Historic Hogland Country Store

By Karla Alborn

Often called by its original name, Pleasant Valley, the village of Young has had a dramatic past. The Valley was home to the prehistoric Anasazi people long before white people set foot on the continent. Ruins of their civilization can still be found in the area. Later, the valley was inhabited by Apaches, who roamed throughout the central mountain belt of present-day Arizona. The first white settlers—cattle ranchers who were drawn by the lush grass of the valley—began arriving in the late 1870s. In addition to the difficulties of settling in a remote region, they had to contend with occasional Apache attacks—into the mid-1880s.

New violence erupted in 1887, when the notorious Pleasant Valley War got under way. The feud, between the Tewksburys and the Grahams, probably started over cattle rustling. Eventually, it involved most of the people living in the Valley. The feud was the bloodiest ever fought in this country. It lasted five years and resulted in the deaths of an estimated 50 men. The war ended in Tempe in 1892 when the last Tewksbury shot and killed the last Graham. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Young continued to be a ranching community. During World War II, there were several sawmills and mines in the area.

The infamous Pleasant Valley War ended in the late 1800s. In the early 1900s, a young man named Bragg came to the Valley. Without a penny in his pocket and no shoes on his feet, he went to work at the Bar X Ranch. After having saved sufficient money, he built a little country store which was located on the Graham ranch. For several years, he had a prosperous business. In the early 1920s, State Highway 288 was constructed, extending through Young and bypassing the old Bragg Store and post office, thus almost putting Bragg out of business. Mr. Bragg then purchased the present store location, and Will Peace and Bill Turner constructed the new store building. The old cabin on the hill, (between the old barn and the water tank and oil shed) was the only structure on the property before construction of the store. The cabin was built in the very early 1900s.

After construction of the new Bragg's Store, a large building was built behind the store, which became their first oil building. That structure is no longer standing. A shed was then constructed on the east end of the store which was used as the post office. Ola Young was postmistress. When the post office was first established in Pleasant Valley, in 1890, it was discovered there was already an Arizona post office of that name so the post office was named for the postmistress, Miss Ola Young.

The Bragg/Hogland Store is historically significant as it was the gathering place of the community for 66 years, as residents waited for the delivery of mail. In summer, the people of the town sat in rockers and on wooden benches on the porch and discussed topics of importance while waiting for the mail to arrive from Globe. The men were part of the Spit and Whittle Club—one of a variety of names of the organization. In wintertime, they gathered around a potbelly stove which still provides the aura and warmth of yesteryear.

The post office was later moved, when Miss Ola retired following 50 years as the town's postmistress. In 1931, the store was purchased from the Bragg estate by Ray and Beth Hogland.

Ray, who was working for the railroad at the time, had met Beth when she was a nurse at the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation. She had been reared in a foster home. Her foster parents sent her to nurse's training at Loma Linda Hospital in California. Pleasant Valley called Beth their own Florence Nightingale. She delivered babies and took care of the sick day and night. She treated many accident victims and patched up many cowboys and injured sawmill workers. Beth was a gregarious woman who was involved in many facets of Valley life. She wanted Pleasant Valley to grow and she wanted to improve the school. She was willing to work hard to achieve such goals. Ray's brother, Glen, came to help in 1940. He enlisted in the Army in 1942 and returned to Pleasant Valley following the end of the war.

The Store, which was by then known as the Hoghland Store, was open 365 days per year. There, one could find many things impossible to find elsewhere. If Ray did not have an item in the store, one might be lucky enough to go into the back rooms. Sometimes referred to as “the dungeons,” they were a maze of rooms and tunnels. Each fireproof room is separated by heavy metal doors. The walls are of solid 12-inch concrete. They were stacked to the ceiling with every type of merchandise imaginable. When inventory was taken, many people of the community assisted in its achievement. When anyone has an opportunity to tour the rooms, it’s suggested that he or she not go alone, as it can be difficult to find one’s way out. Too, it is not recommended if one is claustrophobic!

Through the years, the rooms were periodically used as jail cells. The story is that occasionally rowdy cowboys came into town and had a bit too much to drink. Pleasant Valley had no jail, so the cowboys were thrown into said rooms, which had no windows nor light, and they had steel doors. There the drunkards remained until sober. It’s guessed that they probably never caused problems in town again!

Ray and a hired hand built the solid concrete walls and ceilings of the dungeons by hand-mixing concrete along with sand from Cherry Creek. With the help of wheel barrows, they probably mixed between 400 and 500 yards of concrete. The mixer and wheel barrows remain on the property.

Pleasant Valley did not have electricity until 1965 so the dungeons were used for cold storage. Old propane refrigerators remain in the dungeons, some still filled with merchandise from yesteryear. Connected to the dungeons is a rock house made of native materials from the area. It was constructed for storage in 1941 (before the dungeons) by Pete and John Saunders. The dungeons were added after World War II.

After Ray purchased the store, he added three small rooms off the back, which constituted their living quarters. One was used as an office, one as a kitchen, and the other was a bedroom. As they spent most of their time in the store, working from dawn to dusk, having their living quarters within the store building was convenient.

Another oil and gasoline building was constructed, which is located by the windmill. Gas was pumped from the building, through underground pipes, to the gravity-flow gas pumps located in front of the store. The pumps held only 10 gallons of gasoline.

It is believed that the oil building was constructed in the early 1930s, and the Braggs became a Union Oil dealership. The windmill, the well and the storage tank were installed in the same period of time. The cowboy bunkhouse and the house nearest to the road were built in the 1940s, as rental property. Through the years, many ranch hands have lived in the cabin.

On the far west pasture, a two-story barn had been built. For many years, the barn was used for storage of all lumber from the sawmills. In later years, it was used to house cattle. It became necessary to tear down the barn; however, it lives on—all the materials having gone into the Hoghland Store site.

Ray Hoghland was an epitome of the country storekeeper. In bad times or good, local residents were always able to purchase on credit and pay when able—or perhaps when they felt like it! He had said he didn’t go into the business to become rich, but to serve his community. Before and during the war, as many as seven or eight sawmills were in business. Hoghland’s business boomed, earning approximately \$100,000 annually. He was busy night and day as he hauled lumber out and supplies in. Concerning local businesses, there was logging, along with mining, and many ranches existed in the area. And all purchased supplies from Hoghland. For many years, the Cibicue Indians rode their mules from the reservation, over the mountains, to purchase supplies.

Ray did not clear a large sum of money, however, as the cost of hauling and paying employees, along with bad debts, affected his profits. Statements have been found concerning those who did not pay their charges to the store, which added up to thousands of dollars lost per year. And Ray just let it go! In those days, that was a great deal of money to lose.

It has been said that the mail days were very special. The residents of the valley planned the entire day around the Store and the twice weekly trips of the mail carrier. Folks would get up early and spend the entire day visiting. Cars were usually so thick that the mail carrier sometimes had trouble getting up to the post office to unload the mail. When the first telephone line came to the valley, the store had the only phone in town. The telephone had to be cranked, and the telephone numbers were only two digits. As the Hoghland Store had the telephone, gas, mail and groceries, it was the most popular place in town.

When Ray's brother Glen went there to live, he drove the 1938 Chevrolet truck to Globe for supplies each week. The truck is still on the property—by the oil building. It was said that if the truck broke down on the south road enroute to Globe, sometimes it would take days to get it back to town. It can be imagined how bad the roads were back then! One of the old timers said he remembered having seen Glen on the south road lying beneath the truck, sound asleep. He had contracted sleeping sickness in the military and sometimes he could not stay awake.

Ray died in 1984. His wife Beth preceded him in death. They did not have children and Glen was the sole heir of Ray's property, including the Store. Glen sold the Store to Hod and Arlie Sanders in 1986. Glen continued to live in Pleasant Valley until his death in 1998, at the age of 83. Hod and Arlie Sanders lived on the property and had the store open as a museum a few times for Pleasant Valley Days. In 1986, Irv and Diana Wilson purchased the store. Irv had a dream of owning the store from the time in 1962 when he walked into the Hoghland Store and purchased a candy bar from Ray Hoghland. Thirty years later, his dream was fulfilled. However, he was never able to totally fulfill his dream of renovating the store. Thus, once again the store was locked up and forgotten—falling down around itself—with all its history fading away.

In November of 2015, it was purchased by this writer and her husband (Robin and Karla Alborn), who also own the DeadBroke Corral, down the road a short distance from the Hoghland Store. Having been married for 35 years and having been involved in renovating properties throughout those years, it was thought the property would be a good retirement project. We have worked every day since purchase, cleaning, repairing, tearing down and building up. It has been an exciting adventure, learning about the history and finding treasures around every corner. And it has been exhausting at times. The buildings, the history and the spirit of the place have a tremendous appeal. Every treasure found by us has a story behind it—boxes of old records and receipts from the 1940s through the 1980s, indicating that gasoline in 1958 was 36 cents per gallon and the cost per gallon in 1974 was 56 cents; with a loaf of bread priced at 30 cents in 1965; a package of bacon was \$1.60 in 1958; a pack of cigarettes was 23 cents in 1959. And how about buying two work shirts for \$5 in 1959! In 1970, a loaf of bread cost 60 cents and in 1974, the cost of five gallons of gasoline was \$2.85. The numerous items remaining on the store shelves today are treasures from the past—from the 1940s to the '80s.

In walking through the doors of the Store today, one has a feeling of having gone back in time—and one is mindful of the fact that thousands of souls have walked through the same doors over a period of many years.

It has been said that a cowboy is seen quite often roaming the store during the night and that other inexplicable figures have been seen roaming the grounds. I, too, have caught a glimpse of the cowboy. Don't be surprised to see or hear something strange. It's even possible that something might be thrown off a shelf. Upon experiencing such an occurrence, we go about our business and ignore it. We feel they are here for a reason. And since they were here first, they are welcome to remain.

This year is the beginning of many to come for the Hoghland Store. Please check with us periodically to see the changes that are yet to come.

NOTE: You can check out the progress of the renovations and scheduling of tours for the historic Hoghland Country Store at [www.deadbrokecorral.com](http://www.deadbrokecorral.com) or you can contact Karla at [karla-az@hotmail.com](mailto:karla-az@hotmail.com) or 928-462-4022.

Anne....I condensed the below paragraph into the NOTE above.

**Hi, Jenny, All this is fine, I was wondering if they could put our web-site at the ends of the articles and say something like. If you want to follow the progress of the Hoghland store and scheduling for tours, check out the Historic Hoghland Country store on [www.deadbrokecorral.com](http://www.deadbrokecorral.com) We have a page dedicated to the Hoghland store and will someday have it's own website. I don't want people to come down thinking we are open dailey, but we will be coming up with some kind of schedule in the near future. Or if you can't do that, maybe put call [928-462-4022](tel:928-462-4022) to schedule a group tour or e-mail Karla at [karla-az@hotmail.com](mailto:karla-az@hotmail.com) Anyway, thank you and Carole, so much for all of this. See you soon**