

# Santa Cruz River



The Santa Cruz “holy cross” River is located in southern Arizona and Northern Sonora, Mexico. Approximately 184 miles long.



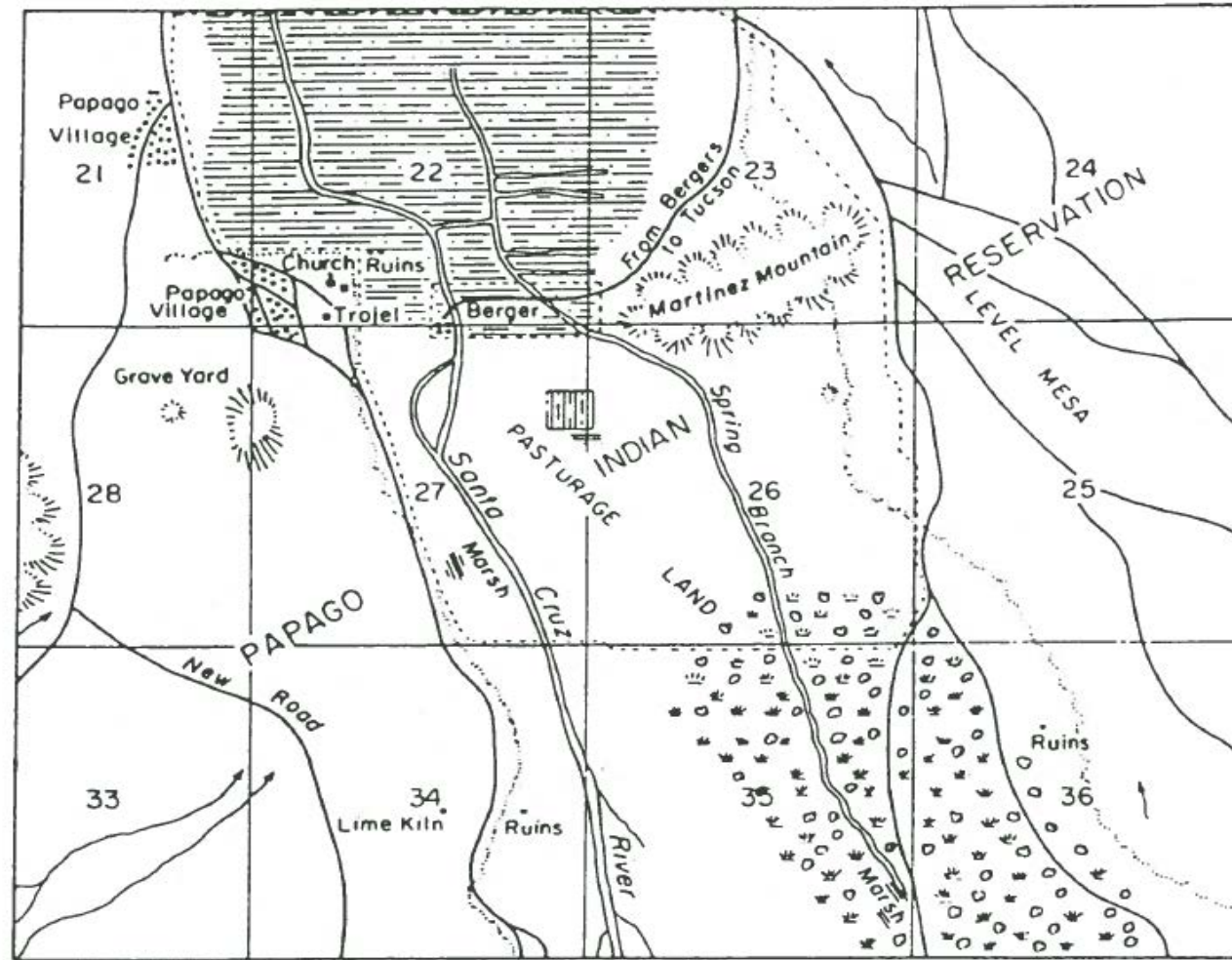


Figure 12. Map of the San Xavier Indian Reservation in 1888 (Chillson, 1888).



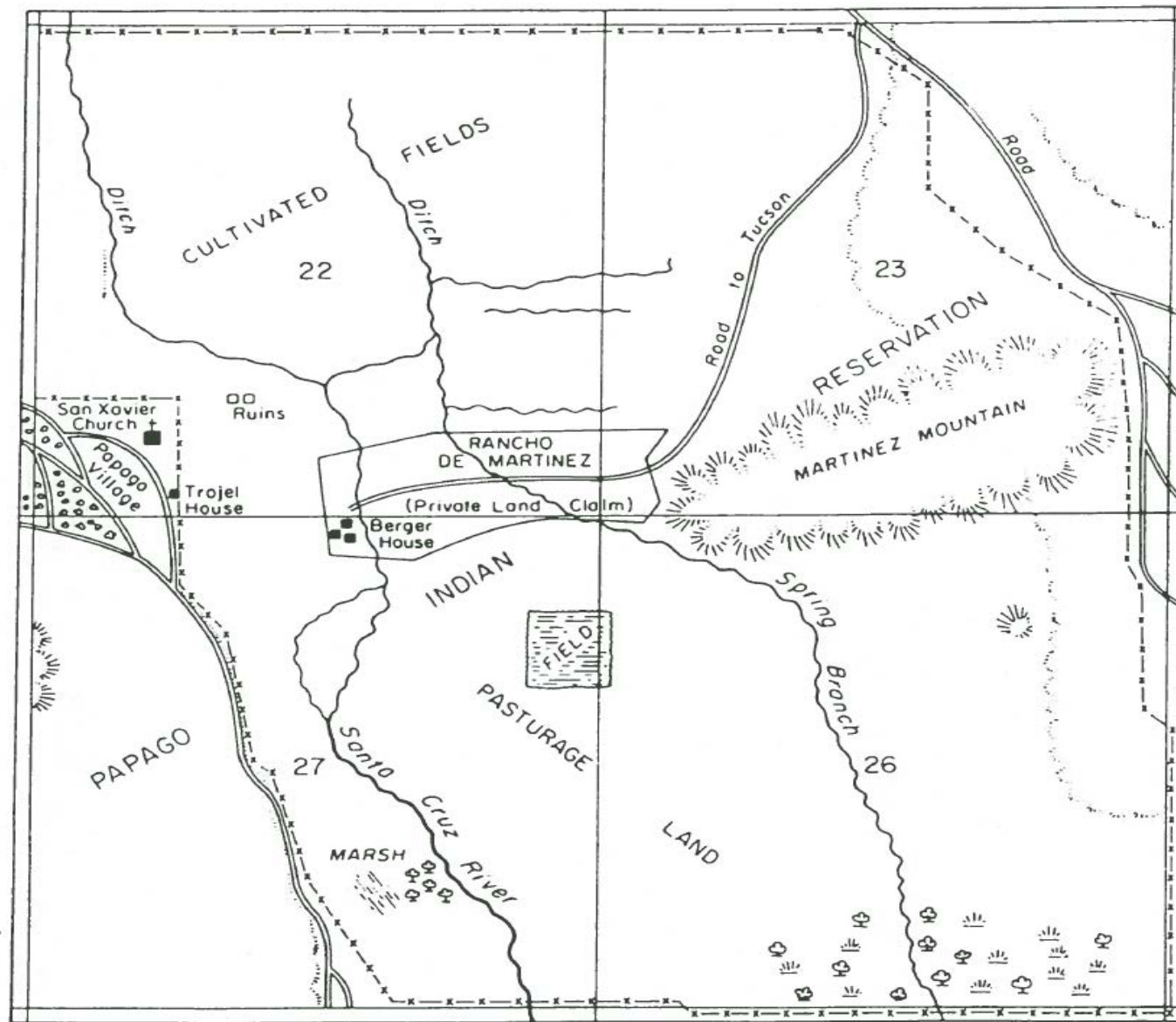


Figure 13. Map of San Xavier Indian Reservation in 1891 (Surveyor General's Office, 1891).

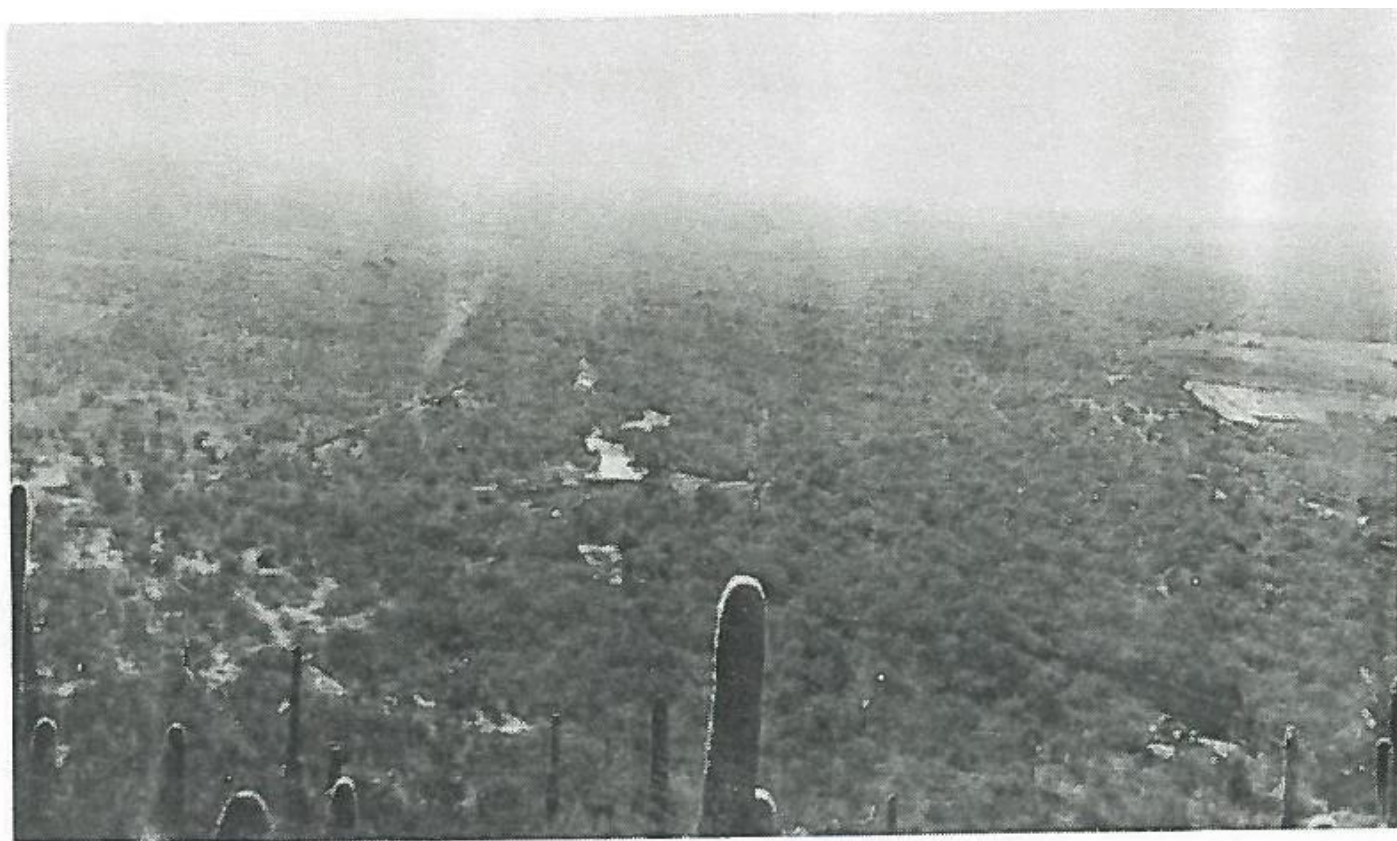


Figure 48. Upstream view from Martinez Hill in 1912, with dense mesquite growth in the valley bottom. By this date, a channel 9 m deep marked the course of the Spring Branch, with a steep headcut terminating just below the dam in the center of the photograph (from Olberg and Schanck 1913, National Archives, U.S.G.S. Stake 1057).

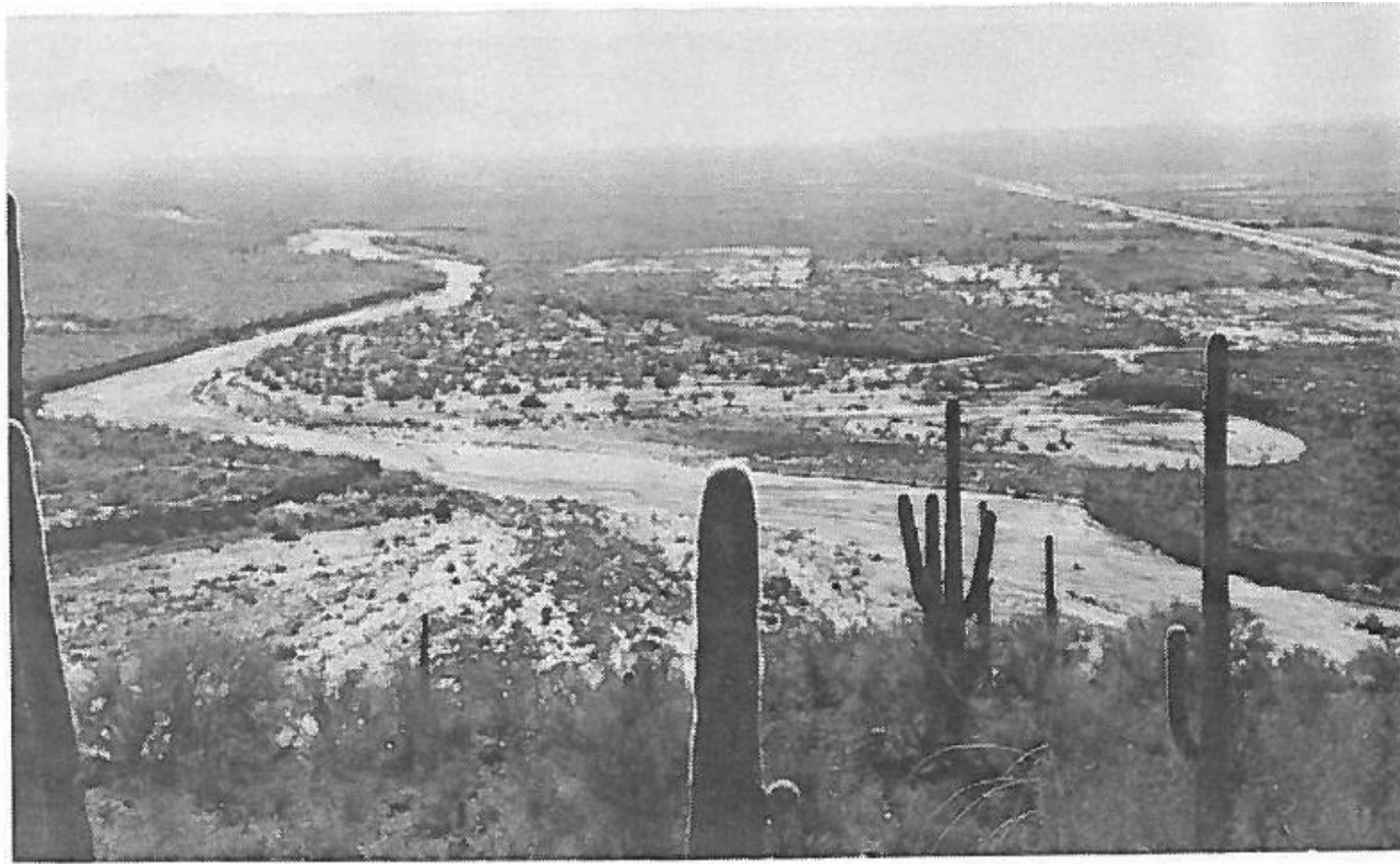


Figure 49. Similar view as Figure 48 on December 15, 1981. The floodplain is now sparsely vegetated due to a substantial drop in the water table, the consequence of heavy pumping since 1940. The Santa Cruz now courses along what was formerly the Spring Branch in a deeply entrenched and broad channel (Photograph by R.M. Turner, U.S.G.S. Stake 1057).

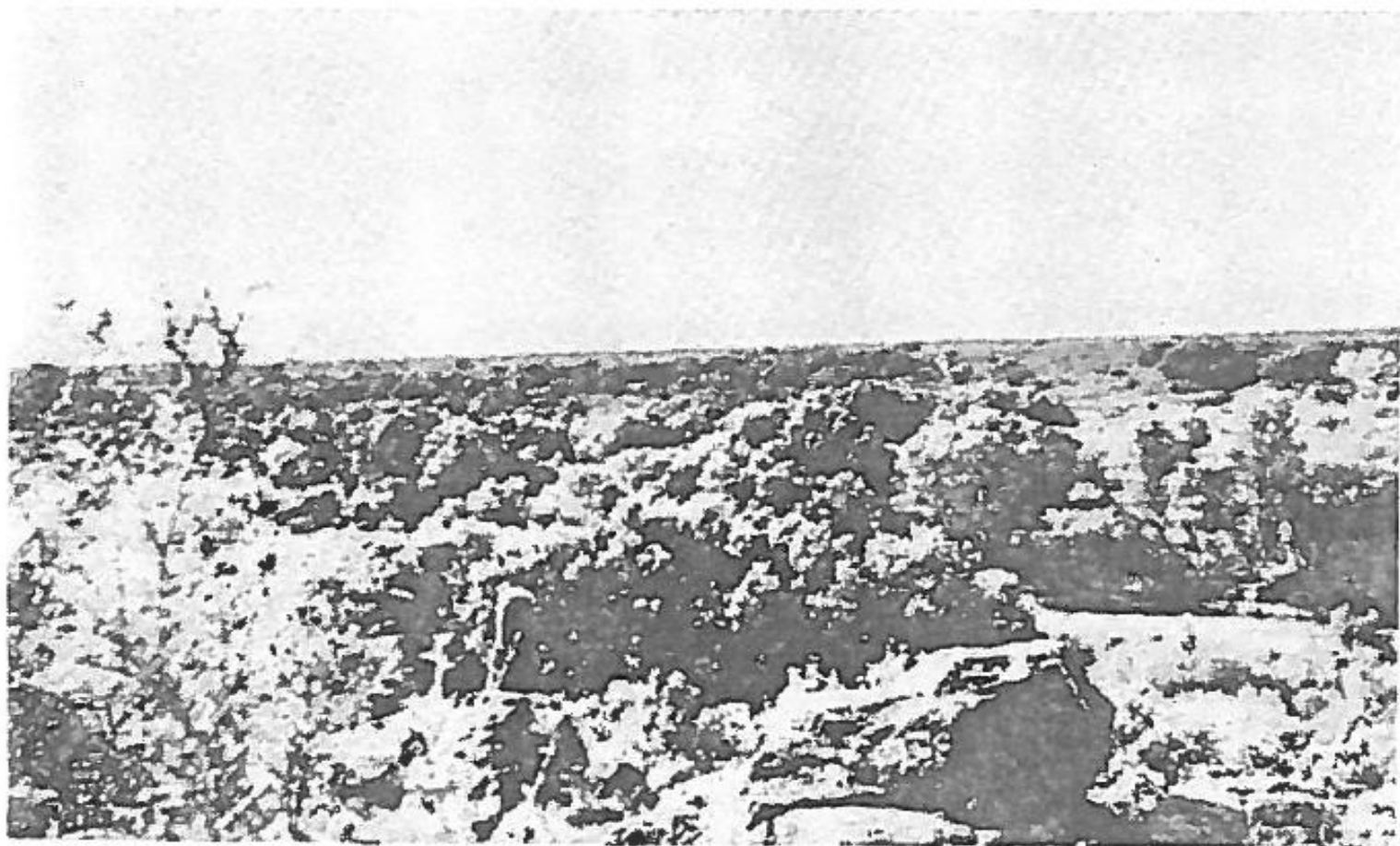


Figure 72. South view from Martinez Hill in June 1942. A gallery of cottonwoods flanks the river channel and dense mesquite occupied the bottomlands, then a haven for nesting and roosting whitewing doves. As late as 1942, one could dig by hand and find water in the streambed (Arizona Game and Fish Commission, Phoenix; U.S.G.S. Stake 937).





Figure 73. Same view as Figure 72 on May 29, 1981. Note the broad river channel and badly denuded bottomlands. The latter resulted from a considerable drop in the water table since 1940 (Photograph by R.M. Turner, U.S.G.S. Stake 937).





Figure 29. View looking upstream at Congress Street in 1902. The deep arroyo that eroded in 1890 and 1891 made river crossings more difficult. By 1902, a Pratt Truss steel bridge had been erected to span the river at Congress Street. This photograph shows a young stand of willows and cottonwoods that were probably established after the 1890 flood (Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Negative No. 26698).



Figure 30. Downstream view of the Santa Cruz river in 1902. This photograph shows active erosion where the meandering thalweg strikes the right bank. Congress Street is on far left and is seemingly in a precarious position should the meander continue eroding downstream. The Santa Catalina Mountains are in the background (Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Negative No. 26699).



Figure 31. Downstream view of Santa Cruz arroyo between Congress Street and St. Mary's Road ca. 1900. Cottonwood with distinctive crown also appears in Figure 28 (Photograph by H. Buehman, Arizona Historical Society, Negative No. 1902).



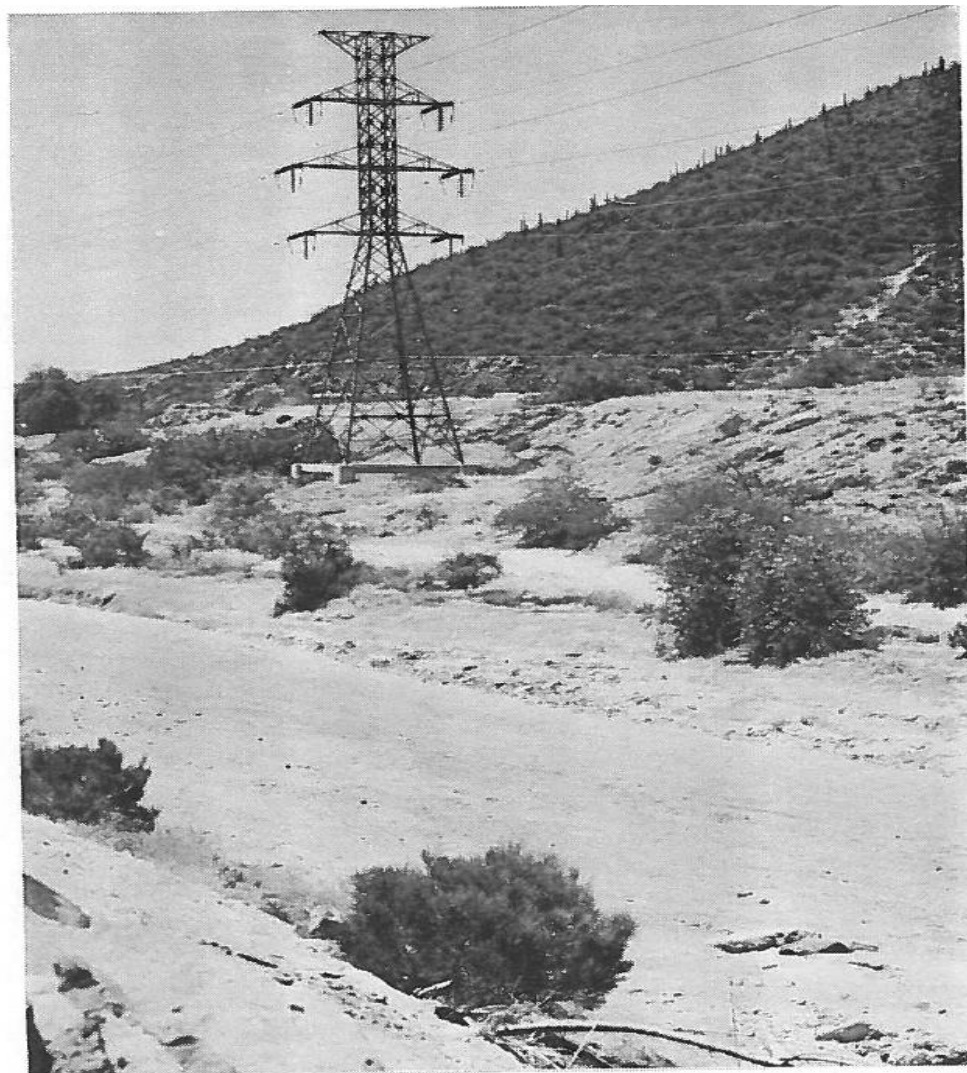


Figure 38. Same view as Figure 37 on February 4, 1982 (Photograph by R.M. Turner, U.S.G.S. Stake 1073).



Figure 48. Upstream view from Martinez Hill in 1912, with dense mesquite growth in the valley bottom. By this date, a channel 9 m deep marked the course of the Spring Branch, with a steep headcut terminating just below the dam in the center of the photograph (from Olberg and Schanck 1913, National Archives, U.S.G.S. Stake 1057).



Figure 50. The Santa Cruz River in flood at Congress Street on December 23, 1914. This was the peak flow (420 cms) for the 1915 water year. Heavy flows continued into January, eventually destroying the meander where the people in the foreground are standing (Photograph by H. Buehman, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, Negative No. 93470).





Santa Cruz River near the Hikdan Site









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