

## Safford's Changing Streets Over the Years

Not many are alive today who still live in these parts who can remember when 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Safford went by a different name. I would guess that none would remember the first names that our streets were called.

In 1874-75 when the first business in Safford was Josh Bailey's general store, saloon and place of safety from the Apache renegades, Bailey was probably involved in naming the two or three streets in town. By 1880, a small grid of dirt streets had been laid out around the mostly empty Safford blocks. According to early newspaper articles, names such as Fort, Station and Alameda as well as Main, Safford and Graham were chosen as more streets came into being. Those names continued unchanged until 1900 when the Safford town council decided to change all the names and continuously printed an article in the newspaper telling residents and newcomers the new names.

The new avenues started with I Avenue which is now 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with each avenue to the east going up the alphabet. Thus, our current 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue became L Avenue and Central became K Avenue. The streets changed as well with our current Main street becoming 10<sup>th</sup> Street and growing in number as they headed south with current 8<sup>th</sup> Street becoming 12<sup>th</sup> Street. These designations of routes in Safford continued until another vote of the town council on 21 August 1916.

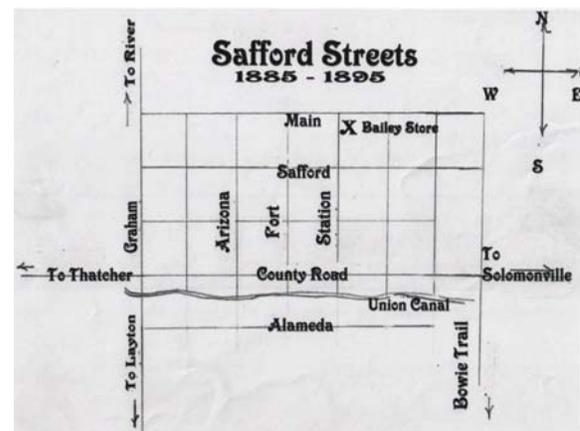
In 1916, it was decided to adopt a system much like Pima now has. The names of Main Street and Central Avenue were adopted and this intersection became ground zero in the street designation. This way our current 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue

became 1<sup>st</sup> Street West and current 8<sup>th</sup> Street became 2<sup>nd</sup> Street South.

It was on Oct 19, 1925, when our current system of streets and avenues were named according to the newspaper article.

All during this early time in Safford, improvements were being made along the different streets. The improvements at first were due to the business owners themselves. Wooden sidewalks were installed at first and then cement sidewalks were paid for by the business owners in sections in front of their stores. The city provided a horse drawn water tanker to sprinkle the dirt streets and keep the dust to a minimum. The city finally began to provide paved streets and then street lights as electricity became available. Safford improved as the people and times demanded.

Attached are two documents of interest concerning how Safford street names evolved: (1) Safford Streets, 1885 – 1895; and (2) A picture of a street with very little improvements.



Safford Streets 1885-1895



Early Safford Street: very little improvements