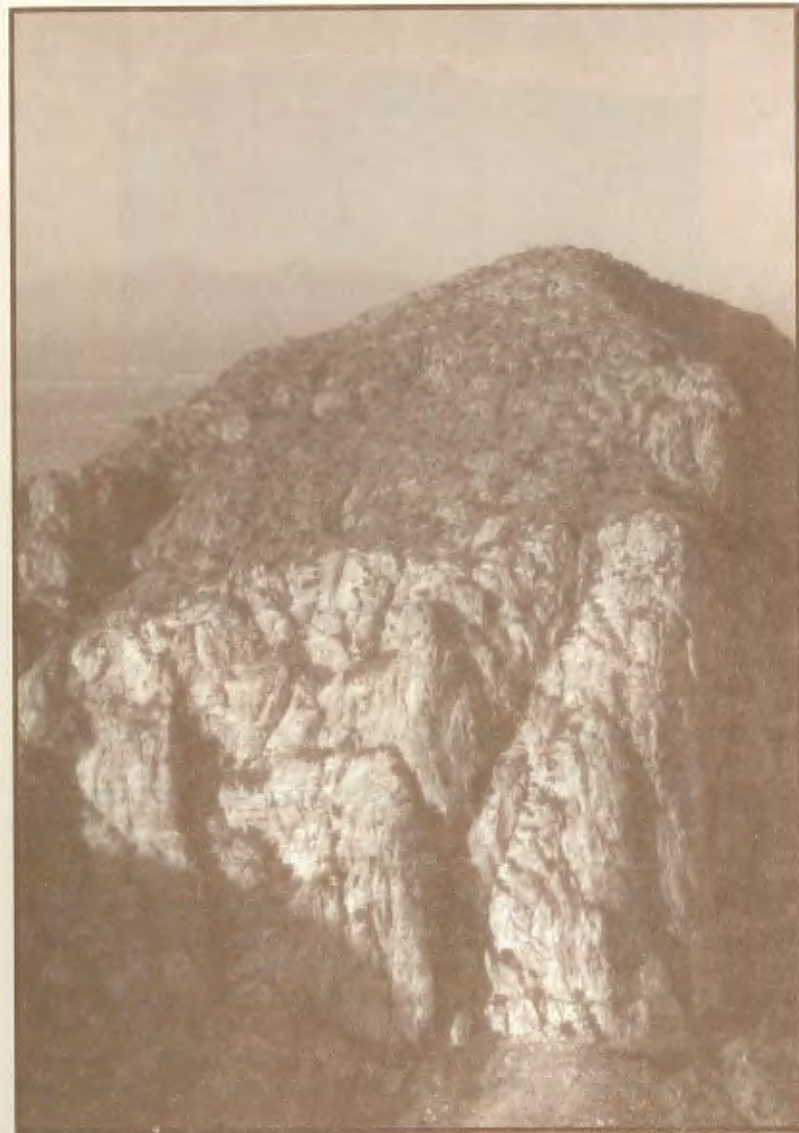


# Who Named The Mountains?

Coronado National Forest



**"Windows on the Past"**

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## Who Named the Mountains?



*A lone beargrass on the lower slopes of the Chiricahuas.*

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Place names have a history of their own. Names given to the mountain ranges of southeastern Arizona may be quite recent in origin or very old. Mountains of the Coronado National Forest commonly received different names over the course of time, often in the language of new residents. This process has been ongoing for over 400 years.

Our earliest records are from the Spanish era and extend back into the 17th century. In assigning names to places, the Spaniards followed a set of priorities. They first named the settlements and springs, then the valleys and rivers, and eventually the sierras, or mountain ranges. Because of the low priority given to naming mountains, a single range could receive several names while other ranges remained unnamed. On the other hand, a group of ranges might be known by a single name. The Spanish period names include Indian as well as Spanish words, suggesting that some names were given by native guides or informants.

The first known reference to a mountain range in the Coronado National Forest is to the **Sierra de Huachuca**, south and west of Sierra

*Cover Photo: Pusch Ridge, Santa Catalina Mountains.*

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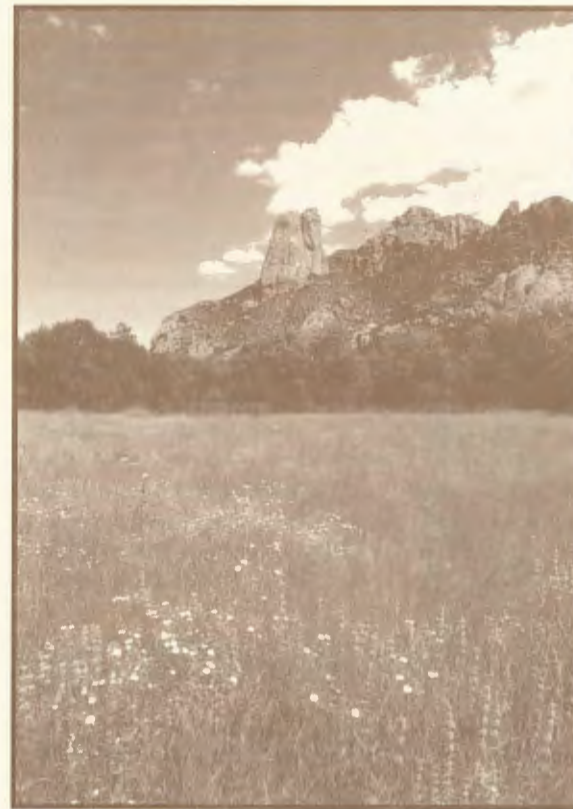
Vista. The Spanish Captain Juan Mateo Manje, a frequent companion of Padre Eusebio Kino, made passing mention of this sierra in his journal for June 1694. The name Huachuca, or Guachuca as it was also spelled, may have been taken from a nearby Piman village rancheria visited by Kino and Manje in the 1690's. Maps produced soon after Arizona became a U.S. Territory in 1863 labeled this range the Sierra Espuela; otherwise, it seems always to have been the Huachuca Mountains.

Another range whose name dates at least to the late 1600's is the **Chiricahua Mountains**, the territorial homeland of the Chiricahua Apaches. The word "Chiricahua" (or "Chiguicagua," or "Chi-ri-ca-hui") was, however, in use as a place name before it came to designate a particular band of Apaches. The "Sierra de Chiricahua" was mentioned by Kino and the Spanish General Juan Fernandez de la Fuente, who led a military expedition that scouted the mountains in 1695. Chiricahua may be an Opatá Indian name that means "mountain of the wild turkeys."

East of the Chiricahuas, on the Arizona-New Mexico border, is a long range of mountains now known as the **Peloncillo Range**. Peloncillo is a Spanish word that translates as "little sugarloaf."



*A dusting of snow in the Chiricahua Mountains.*



*Rhyolite spire above a grassy meadow.*

Sugarloaves, round-topped cones of coarse sugar, were frequently carried by 19th century travellers. Throughout the West, similarly shaped landforms now bear the name "Sugarloaf." The name may have originated with the conical Stein's Peak, an important landmark along the old stage route through the mountains. An 1860's map identifies the peak as "La Peloncilla," apparently because of its similarity to a sugarloaf.

Throughout the latter 19th century, the mountains were also known as "Stein's Peak Range."

Prior to the mid-1800's, travelers who crossed the Peloncillos generally used the names shown on a 1784 Spanish map. This source divided the entire chain into four segments: from north to south they were the "Sierra San Marcial," "Sierra San Vicente," "Sierra de Nochebuena," and "Sierra Sarampeon." At the south end of the Peloncillos, where the boundaries of Arizona, Mexico, and New Mexico come together, are the **Guadalupe Mountains**. This small range appeared as "Cuesta de Guadalupe" on a 1762 map of the region.

The names for the highest mountains in southeastern Arizona, the **Pinaleños** or the **Grahams**, are relatively recent. In 1695 General Fernandez de la Fuente referred to them as the "Sierra de Santa Rosa." Two years later Captain Manje called them the "Sierra de Santa Rosa de la Florida." Neither name continued in use; over the next century and a half they were known as the "Sierra de la Florida" or "Sierra Bonita."

In 1846, Lieutenant William Emory, the topographical engineer who chronicled the march of General Kearny's Army of the West to California, used the name "Pinon Lano" for the mountains on both sides of the Gila River. The name was taken from what Emory believed to be the name of a band of Apaches the army encountered there. Within a few years, "Pinon Lano" was replaced on maps by "Pinaleño." Emory's chronicles of this expedition also include the first use of the name **Mt. Graham** for the highest peak in the Pinaleños, apparently in honor of Lieutenant Colonel James Duncan Graham, a senior officer in the Army's Corps of Topographical Engineers.

The remote **Galiuro Mountains**, east of the San Pedro River, have had many names through the centuries. Two Spanish campaign journals from the 1780's used the name "Sierra de Santa Teresa." On the other hand, Spanish maps dating from 1780 and 1784 both clearly



*Dagoon Mountains.*

showed the modern Galiuro range labeled as the "Sierra del Arivaipa." During the late 18th century the Galiuros were known both as the Sierra del Arivaipa and as part of the Sierra de Santa Teresa.

By 1858 the El Paso and Fort Yuma wagon road project was using the term "San Calisto Mountains" for the modern Galiuros. Beginning in 1859 army and civilian maps identified the entire mountainous chain east of the San Pedro Valley as the "Sierra Calitro." The transformation of Calitro/Calisto to Galiuro took place over the next few decades.

Located just north of the Galiuros, the **Santa Teresa Mountains** apparently have borne that name for at least two centuries, but have known many others as well. On a 1780 Spanish map the "Sierra de Santa Teresa" was marked at its present location. However, a 1789 Spanish diarist called this remote range the Sierra de San Calisto, "in which were found many abandoned rancherias." On maps from the mid-19th century, the range was considered a part of the Pinaleño Mountains. The Santa Teresas reappeared as a distinct entity only around 1880.

Two of the smaller ranges in the Coronado National Forest have English names: the Whetstone Mountains and Winchester Mountains. The

**Whetstones** supposedly contain a deposit of a hard fine-grained rock that could be used to sharpen cutlery and tools. Colonel B. L. E. Bonneville's report of an inspection tour in southern Arizona during May 1859, cited these mountains repeatedly. Previously, Spanish maps of the 1780's had identified the Whetstones as the "Sierra del Babocomari," an Opatá name dating back at least to the time of the early Spanish explorers.



*Santa Catalina Mountains*

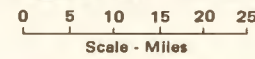
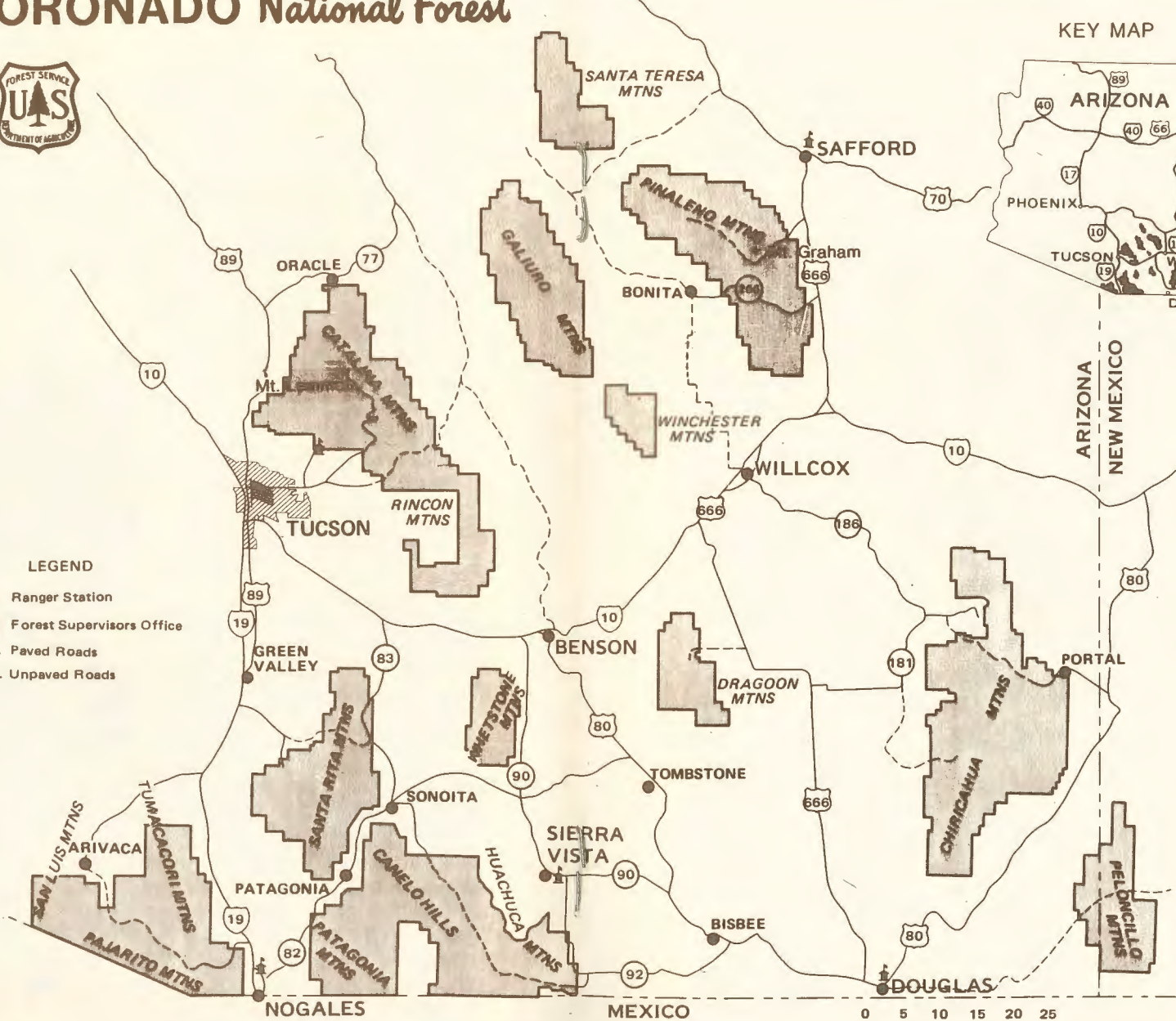
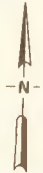
# CORONADO National Forest



## KEY MAP



- LEGEND**
- Ranger Station
  - Forest Supervisors Office
  - Paved Roads
  - Unpaved Roads





*Mt. Wrightson, Santa Rita Mountains.*

The **Winchester Mountains** were not recognized and mapped as a separate range until around the end of the 19th century. Prior to that time this small range was regarded as a southern extension of the Galiuro Mountains. The name probably was taken from the Winchester mining district, established there in the early 1800's by a mining developer named Henry D. Winchester.

The **Dragoon Mountains**, near the center of the Coronado National Forest, were visited and described in the late 1600's. General Fernandez de la Fuente reported that in September 1695, his troops marched east and apparently camped at

Middlemarch Pass in the southern Dragoons. He said the pass was in a canyon in a Sierra mui Peñascosa, meaning "a very rugged range." A Spanish map of 1780 identified these mountains as the "S. de la Peñascosa." A century later a Hispanic informant told the archaeologist Adolph Bandelier that "only the northern part of the Sierra del Dragon is thus called on account of a Mexican dragoon who died there," while the southern part bore the name Sierra Peñascosa. A "dragoon" is a mounted soldier armed with a carbine. Since the late 1860's, maps have labeled the entire range as the Dragoon Mountains.

It is said that the **Santa Catalina** and **Santa Rita Mountains**, surrounding the Tucson Basin on the north and southeast respectively, were so named by Father Kino in the late 1600's. While this may be true, there is no hard evidence for the claim. Whether these ranges even had names during the early 1700's is not known. Father Kino visited,

and may have named, an Indian rancheria called "Santa Catarina de Cuytoabucam," on the Santa Cruz River northwest of Tucson, and the name of the mountains may have originated there.

In the late 1700's and much of the 1800's the mountains were known as the "Sierra de la Santa Catarina" or "Sierra de Catarina." Only around 1880 did "Catarina" give way to "Catalina" as the preferred spelling. In the spring of 1881, a botanist named J.G. Lemmon and his wife, Sarah, visited the Catalinas and were guided to its upper reaches. After they reached the highest summit in the range, their guide, Mr. Emerson Stratton, reportedly christened the point **Mt. Lemmon** in honor of Mrs. Lemmon.

The pass of La Cebadilla, now known as Redington Pass, separates the Santa Catalina Mountains from the **Rincon Mountains**. In the late 1700's the Rincons were called the "Sierra de Tres Alamos." That name was derived from the proximity of the eastern part of the range to a prominent arroyo and a Sobaipuri Indian village, both named Tres Alamos. The village was located along the San Pedro River to the east of these mountains. By the middle 19th century this same range was called the "Sierra Colorado," or was simply regarded as a part of the "Santa Catarinas." By around 1880 civilian maps had begun to use



*Rolling hills in the Patagonias.*



*Pines and firs on high elevation mountain slopes.*

the name Rincon Mountains. The term *rincon* probably refers to a physiographic feature, the prominent elbow or corner on the southwest side of the range.

The Santa Rita Mountains were known by that name in Spanish accounts as early as the 1760's. The name was used on maps beginning in the middle 1800's, however, its origin is now unknown.

South of the Santa Rita Mountains lie the **Patagonia Mountains**. In the latter half of the 18th century these were called the "Sierra de Chihuahuilla." As recently as the 1870's, this range was also considered part of the "Sierra de Santa Cruz," a range extending into Mexico. This name was derived from the Spanish presidio of Santa Cruz located in northern Sonora directly south of Lochiel, Arizona. The adjacent river also became known as the Santa Cruz.

The name "Patagonia Mountains" dates no earlier than 1858. That year a group of Army officers bought one of the new silver claims in southern Arizona and named it the Patagonia Mine. The mine changed owners several times and in 1860 was renamed the Mowry Mine by its owner, Sylvester Mowry. However, the surrounding mountains and later the town on Sonoita Creek retained the distinctive name, "Patagonia."

Another portion of the old "Sierra de Santa Cruz" is now known as the **Canelo Hills**. This small range appeared as a separate entity only in the late 19th century when they were known as the "Canille Mountains." "Canelo" gradually replaced "Canille" or "Canela" in the first half of the 20th century. This name apparently refers to the light brown color of the hills.

West of Santa Cruz River and Nogales a series of rugged hills and ridges comprise the **San Luis, Pajarito, Atascosa, and Tumacacori Mountains**. These names are not recorded on maps prior to the late 18th or even the early 19th century. The origins of these names are now obscure. Pajarito is Spanish for "little bird," while Atascosa may be derived from the Spanish *atasco*, "an obstruction to passage," or *atascarse*, "to be bogged down." In the mid-1800's, the Pajarito range was sometimes mapped as the "Arizona Mountains."

The **Tumacacori Mountains** share their name with the Indian village of San Cayetano de Tumacacori located near the present Tumacacori Mission. The village was occupied by Piman peoples both before and after the Spanish entered Santa Cruz Valley in 1691. Although the origin of the name Tumacacori is uncertain, one possibility is that it evolved from a Piman name for pepper bush. The eastern flank of the Tumacacori Mountains is one of the few places in the United States where the small fiery chiltipene peppers still grow wild.

The names of the mountain ranges of Coronado National Forest come from many sources. Some are relatively recent, others are quite old. Some are derived from Native American names, others have Spanish names, and a few have English names. Most have complex histories with names changing and evolving through time. Today, they are all distinctive parts of Coronado National Forest.



*Cochise Stronghold, Dragoon Mountains*

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Information on the mountain names has been adapted from "Islands in the Desert, A History of the Uplands of Southeastern Arizona" by John P. Wilson.

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