

NEWCOMER AND LONG-TERM RESIDENT PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY IN BISBEE, ARIZONA

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Historically, the Intermountain West has been a region characterized by transformation. In recent years, newcomers have continued to influence the shape and character of the region and have flocked to states like New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah. Newcomers have not only moved into large urban centers, but also have relocated to small communities with resource-extraction-based pasts. This article focuses on one such place—Bisbee, Arizona—and the perceptions of newcomers and long-term residents of their local environment. Special emphasis is placed here on how long-term residents and newcomers respond to and identify with the landmarks, images, symbols, and history of Bisbee, as well as the kinds of features that are drawing newcomers to Bisbee in the twenty-first century. Findings from a survey demonstrate that long-term residents of Bisbee tend to be drawn to the history of the community, while newcomers tend to be drawn to quality-of-life features. *Key Words:* long-term residents, migration, newcomers, place image.

Bisbee, Arizona, is a town like many others in the Intermountain West in that it initially developed in conjunction with resource-extraction-based activities. Many of these communities faced a period in their histories where they had to deal with the adverse realities of dwindling resource supplies or trying economic conditions associated with downward shifts in world markets or more difficult and expensive resource-extraction techniques. Bisbee and other towns throughout the Intermountain West have thus faced a moment of truth at some point in their histories—a crossroads that meant either adapting to change or slowly fading into obscurity, even perishing as a community. Town survival often involved the migration of a different set of newcomers to the community.

The movement of newcomers to the Intermountain West has been characteristic of the region's past, and it is a trend that continues today. The confluence of

newcomers and long-term residents in towns such as Silver City, New Mexico, Butte, Montana, Aspen, Colorado, Park City, Utah, and Bisbee, Arizona, has restored economic vitality to many of these communities but in the process has also produced a number of consequences. Frequently, the problems center on differing images of a place, for it appears that long-term residents often hold a much different perception of a community than newcomers.

These perceptions are based on different histories with the community, various ideas of a place's future shape, form, and identity, different socioeconomic backgrounds, and varying symbols and structures of importance based on the way the residents form their attachment or bond to the community. Understanding the perceptions of newcomers and long-term residents is important because these perceptions often lead to civic involvement and activism, which ultimately influence patterns of growth, preservation, and overall direction of a community.

This article specifically provides insights regarding contemporary newcomer and long-term resident perceptions in Bisbee. This case study helps elucidate what landmarks and areas in Bisbee are celebrated and why. It also highlights current focal points of discussion and debate and helps identify the areas and landmarks of Bisbee that face potential transformation in the future. This analysis can benefit other communities in the Intermountain West that share common backgrounds with Bisbee and possess similar types of issues regarding future growth and preservation.

This study focuses on place perceptions among newcomers, a cohort defined here as living in a place for five years or less, and long-term residents in Bisbee, Arizona. As place perception is a diverse and varied topic, the heart of this piece will include a brief overview of Bisbee's newcomers and long-term residents, the landmarks and areas of the community deemed important to these two cohorts, and how different perceptions are manifested through disagreed-upon areas of the community.

Past studies have explored the meaningfulness of important landmarks or sites for the community-at-large as it ties to symbolic meaning, place perception, and attachment (*e.g.*, Milligan 1998; Morgan 2002). These studies demonstrate the

importance that landmarks possess as visible symbols of community identity and as a framework for understanding elements of place perception. This article contributes to the body of literature by focusing upon newcomer and long-term resident perceptions of specific sites and landmarks in the community, as both cohorts are instrumental in determining the future course of a community.

Landscape meaning, place attachment, and place identity represent important dimensions of place perception, and each provides insights into how newcomers and long-term residents perceive local landscapes. Some geographers go so far as to say that "Landscape is all embracing—it includes virtually everything around us—and has manifest significance for everyone" (Penning-Rowsell and Lowenthal 1986, 1). Lowenthal feels, however, that landscape meanings and values vary across space and time. Landscape is also defined as "a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolizing surroundings" (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988, 1). Here, landscape is seen as something more than merely a static concept that is viewed or something that surrounds the viewer. In this definition of landscape, the viewer also becomes an active agent, one who has power to define and change the landscape he or she is a part of.

The symbolization of surroundings that Cosgrove and Daniels allude to in their definition of landscape, and thus human agency's ability to render symbols in the landscape, make symbolic meaning an important variable when considering group relations or a community's structure. "It is clear that symbolic landscapes...arise out of deep cultural processes as a society adapts to new environments, technologies, and opportunities and as it reformulates its basic concepts of family, community and the good life" (Meinig 1979, 184). For others, symbolic meanings are held intact by "power," and it is "only by challenging a definition that we can discover where this power is" (Smith 1993, 89).

Geographers like Cosgrove and Meinig have viewed landscape as an image. Landscape is not only what we see, but also a construction and composition of the world (Cosgrove 1984). Landscape becomes an image or way of seeing the world. A landscape is both what lies before our eyes and in our heads (Meinig 1979). The perspective from which a landscape is viewed affects the meaning that a land-

scape has for an individual or social group (Cosgrove 1985). Others feel that personal and group histories of a place are constructed in a manner that confirms the views and convictions of the present, and warrants the building of particular futures (Massey 1995). Long-term residents have a more expansive longitudinal perspective of local landscapes than newcomers. This factor influences the composite images and meanings that these two cohorts have of home communities.

Place attachment has been defined as “the emotional link formed by an individual to a physical site that has been given meaning through interaction” (Milligan 1998, 2). Place attachment often coincides with an awareness of a community’s past. “In trying to unravel the meaning of contemporary landscapes and what they ‘say’ about us as Americans, history matters” (Lewis 1979, 22). A historical component to place attachment is represented in Lowenthal’s “Age and Artifact”. In this essay, Lowenthal views the recognition of familiar people, places, and objects as a window enabling people to construct past events. “Awareness of the past is essential to the maintenance and purpose of life. Without it we would lack all sense of continuity, all apprehension of causality, all knowledge of our own identity” (Lowenthal 1979, 103).

New residents’ place attachment and experience have been looked at within environmental psychology (Craik 1986). One of the questions that Craik poses focuses on how individuals become acquainted with the landscape of a new region. He concludes that “acquaintance is not provided instantaneously but rather accrues from continuing exploration and interaction, both focused and incidental” (Craik 1986, 56). Duration of time is considered by a number of geographers and sociologists to be an important factor in place attachment, yet not as influential as the quality, intensity, and meaningfulness of experiences in a given place (Tuan 1977; Cuba and Hummon 1993; Milligan 1998, 2003). Thus, newcomers to communities can conceivably have similar degrees and feelings of place attachment as long-term residents if their interactions with given locales have been particularly meaningful.

Place identity is sometimes interpreted as involving feelings of identification or association with particular landscapes. Two broad approaches have character-

ized past perception studies on place identity: display and affiliation (Cuba and Hummon 1993). Display-based studies incorporate how people use places to communicate qualities of the self to the outside world, and affiliation-based studies explore how people use places to establish a sense of attachment to home. Place identity is defined as the “interpretation of self that uses environmental meaning to symbolize or situate identity...Place identities are thought to arise because places, as bounded locales imbued with personal, social, and cultural meanings, provide a significant framework in which identity is constructed, maintained, and transformed” (Cuba and Hummon 1993, 112).

Geographical research incorporates sociopolitical variables in looking at identity. The “processes of representation, signification, and performativity are fundamental components of the way identities are constituted and articulated” (Fincher and Jacobs 1998, 3). In this vein, identities (whether class, gender, etc.) are a fluctuating conglomerate of difference that are constantly transformed by power, history, and culture. Community is “characterized by dissension, disharmony, and power hierarchies that celebrate some people and groups and marginalize others” (Nagar and Leitner 1998, 229). The concept of identity can also be applied to place through a temporal lens. Here, place identities are constructed out of internal and external articulations of particular locales, and simply not the result of a self-contained, unitary evolution (Massey 1995). Power struggles take place in a plurality of cultures in which meanings are contested according to interests (Jackson 1989). In terms of power, this can take place in many forms—high/low, black/white, masculine/feminine, gay/straight, and newcomer/long-term resident, to name a few.

These diverse themes provide a framework for seeing how landscapes evoke images for different individuals and groups of people. The images are defined not only by the time period in which residents first begin to experience a place, but also by the past events and interactions (and their magnitude) that contribute to their sense of place, as well as their anticipated future interactions with a place. Through the events and interactions with communities such as Bisbee, residents derive values and meanings regarding the landscape, and various locations

throughout the community become important symbols of what the community is or what it represents. Residents also suffuse a place with characteristics and a “personality,” based on their life experiences, backgrounds, values, and interpretations. Whether through cooperation or conflict, past events carry different meanings to individuals in communities like Bisbee, and are conveyed and reproduced in a manner that enhances or promotes the self-interest of an individual or group.

Bisbee, Arizona, and the Contemporary Intermountain West

Bisbee is nestled within the Mule Mountains in southeastern Arizona, approximately 100 miles southeast of Tucson and 6 miles north of the Mexican border (Figure 1). At the turn of the twentieth century, Bisbee was the largest city in Arizona, but today it is a relatively small town of approximately 6,000 residents. The community is in the transition area between the Sonoran Desert and Arizona Uplands at an elevation of 5,280 feet above sea level. The climate is therefore marked by cooler winters and milder summers than many of its Arizona neighbors. At one time, the area possessed an abundance of manzanita, juniper, and oak trees. This changed shortly after the town came into existence in 1881. The vegetation dotting the Mule Mountains was stripped away in order to provide firewood for mining and residential activities.

The mineral environment of Bisbee consists of rich deposits of mineral ores, most notably copper. In fact, it was the mineral wealth within the Mule Mountains that initially drew people to Bisbee, and it remained an integral part of the community for nearly 100 years. The copper-mining activity that took place in Bisbee between 1880 and 1975 reflected a significant human presence in shaping the physical landscape of Bisbee. Nearly eight billion pounds of copper were extracted from the local region in this time period (Graeme 1992). The underground mines below Bisbee form a complex labyrinth of tunnels. However, the most visible human-induced impact upon the physical landscape is Lavender Pit, a giant, canyon-like feature distinguished by its burnt-red hues and concentric rings. Other mining-related features such as Dump #7, a human-made mountain consisting of copper waste tailings, also influence the look and feel of the local landscape.

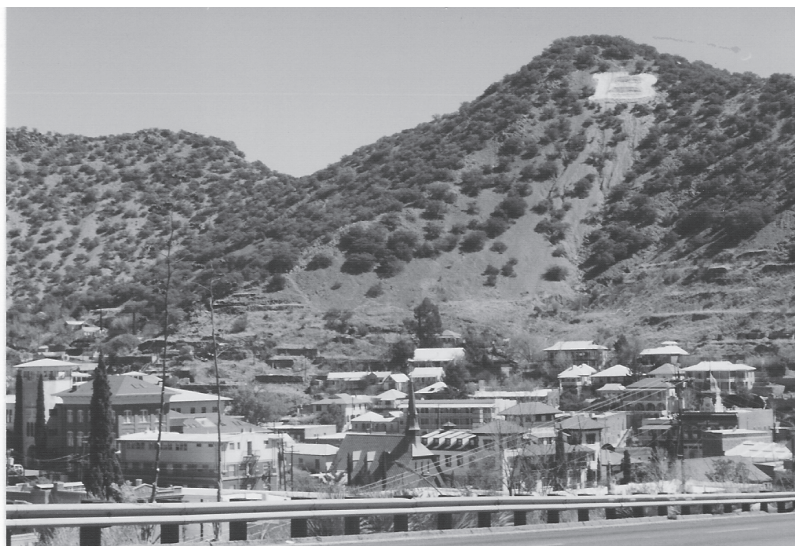


Figure 1. A view of Old Bisbee. This is the oldest of Bisbee's three primary districts, founded in 1881.

Bisbee is composed of more than a dozen boroughs or neighborhoods, each with unique histories. In present-day Bisbee, however, there are three primary districts: Old Bisbee, Warren, and San Jose. These three districts contain close to 90 percent of Bisbee's overall population but are all geographically separated from one another and topographically distinct. These geographical separations are due to the mountain terrain as well as the mining-based imprint upon the landscape. The physical settings of Old Bisbee, Warren, and San Jose evoke distinct feelings from one another and contribute to a different sense of character in each district. The communities that compose Bisbee are located in diverse geographic settings—some in canyons, others in open locations at the upper reaches of broad alluvial fans—and are themselves diverse, with no two towns laid out exactly alike. Thus, the layout of the district is characterized by diversity; a variety of town sites with individual identities are interconnected by main roads that weave around the prominent features of the natural and manmade topography (Francaviglia 1991).

Old Bisbee, the original town site, is located in a steep canyon within the Mule Mountains. The canyon is shaped by hills and other physical undulations in the landscape and is set along a fault line. Three miles to the south of Old Bisbee is Warren, located on a gently sloping reach of the Mule Mountain terrain. Most of the residential and commercial area of Warren lies upon a plain that is enclosed by hills in three directions and a tailings dump to the north. San Jose is about five miles southwest of Old Bisbee and two miles west of Warren, and is located on a relatively flat expanse of land along the west-facing slopes of the Mule Mountains. San Jose is situated in an area of wide-open space and far-reaching vistas characteristic of many Arizona communities. Because of its location, San Jose tends to receive more sunshine during the day than its district neighbors.

The immediate impact of the copper mine closures in 1974 and 1975 hit Bisbee with ferocity. The population and local economy took a sudden dip as a number of businesses shut their doors, homes were left vacant, and many of the Phelps Dodge Mining Company's employees were relocated to other operations in Ajo and Morenci, Arizona, and Playas and Tyrone, New Mexico. "In the resulting slump, miners' homes could be purchased for as little as \$1,000" (Schwantes 1992, 22).

Remarkably, Bisbee found a way to persevere. Its location in the Sunbelt, with a desirable climate and surrounding scenery worked in its favor. Having the Cochise County seat of government firmly established in town left residents with some sense of stability. It was the residents themselves, however, who ensured the town's survival and viability after the mine closures.

With a strong sense of place, rootedness, and commitment to Bisbee, many of the old residents remained in town when the mines closed and tenaciously held on as Bisbee clung to life. Many of the old mining families took an early retirement from the Phelps Dodge Mining Company in order to remain in Bisbee. Many residents demonstrated resourcefulness and ingenuity in finding new jobs in neighboring communities like Sierra Vista and Douglas, and developed and promoted what Bisbee still possessed—character and a mining heritage. Bisbee residents recognized their unique history and townscape and began promoting it as a tourist

destination. This was best exemplified in the late-1970s with the reopening of the Copper Queen Mine, this time for tourism purposes and to share Bisbee's mining history with the outside world. The Copper Queen Mine remains a popular tourist attraction to this day.

Another factor that helped keep Bisbee alive, perhaps ironically, was the affordable home values that followed the mine closure. This, along with Bisbee's character and climate, drew in a significant number of retirees, artists, and counter-culture types—frequently referred to as “hippies”—to the area. Low rental costs, housing prices, and affordable studio spaces (in former business spaces) attracted these groups of people to Bisbee. The newcomers of the late-1970s resuscitated the community with a new vibrancy and perspective. Although the viewpoints and values of artists and “hippies,” in particular, frequently clashed with residents from Bisbee's mining days on lifestyle and environmental issues, the effect of their presence was beneficial to Bisbee's overall wellbeing.

In 1980, Bisbee's population was at 7,100, down from the 1970 Census, but a number that indicated that the community had safely rebounded from the tumultuous events of the early-1970s. What's more, the population of the community had diversified, contributing another layer to its already rich ethnic diversity. With the transition from a one-industry town to a community with a multidimensional economy, Jennifer Boice noted in a *Tucson Citizen* article on October 11, 1985, that the areas within town were able to focus on “revitalization without losing the charm that attracts tourists to the shops and galleries—people who will come, spend their money and then go, leaving room for the artists, artisans, town residents and the hangers on.” Meanwhile, Warren and San Jose remained centers for families in town. Warren, in particular, also began drawing in more retirees who were attracted to its historic, small-town stateliness. San Jose started being looked at as a potential growth area, and in the 1980s, a large commercial shopping center, with what would become Bisbee's only major grocery store as its centerpiece, came to further define San Jose as an important service center for local residents.

There are indications that Bisbee has had a growing base of newcomers in recent years to add to the base of long-term residents. Bisbee is viewed by one key

informant as consisting of three main “waves” of residents in its contemporary mix: the industrial wave, consisting of former miners and their families, the “hip-pie” (or counterculture) and artist wave of residents who moved into town after the mine closure in 1975, and the tourist and entrepreneurial wave of residents who have moved to Bisbee in the past ten years (Michael Parnell, personal interview, March 28, 2000). The situation in Bisbee is similar or relevant to other communities in the Intermountain West (Table 1), which includes the eight states of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). Like a number of communities in this region Bisbee experienced a “boomtown” period in the late 1800s based on mineral discoveries. Bisbee shares another commonality with a number of these communities as economic transformation has been characteristic of these places over the past fifty years. Between the mid-1960s and early-1980s, the principal mining activities in Bisbee, Butte, Park City, and Moab shut down. Whether recreation or heritage based, these communities have turned to tourism as an important economic activity. Bisbee is much like Silver City, Park City, and Butte in that it has a district of town that is designated on the National Register of Historic Places. Bisbee is much like Aspen, Butte, Silver City, and Moab in that it possesses a pronounced public-sector role, serving as

Table 1. Bisbee’s similarities with other communities in the Intermountain West.

Community	Founded	Extraction- Based Past (Primary Mineral)	Population: Year 2000 ¹	County Seat	Home to Historic District
Bisbee, Arizona	c. 1881	Yes (Copper)	6,090	Yes	Yes
Aspen, Colorado	c. 1879	Yes (Silver)	5,914	Yes	No
Butte, Montana	c. 1867	Yes (Copper)	33,892	Yes	Yes
Moab, Utah	c. 1878	Yes (Uranium)	4,779	Yes	No
Park City, Utah	c. 1869	Yes (Silver)	7,371	No	Yes
Silver City, New Mexico	c. 1870	Yes (Copper)	10,545	Yes	Yes

¹Source: U.S. Census (2000).

the seat of government for the county that it is located within. Bisbee is also comparable in size to each of these communities, with the exception of Butte. Additionally, these communities are all situated in states that have had an influx of newcomers in recent years, particularly from California.

In-migration to the Intermountain West has continued to accelerate in recent decades (Rudzitis and Johansen 1989; Rudzitis 1993). From 1995 to 2000 alone, the region gained more than 700,000 people in net domestic migration (U.S. Census Bureau 2003). Migration patterns have shifted; accompanying the traditional east-to-west movement, large waves of migrants have moved to the Intermountain West from the Pacific coast states, particularly from California. The migration patterns have not only been flowing to the urban centers of the region, but to small towns as well. New waves of migration have resulted in local economic shifts, have contributed to increased property values and taxes, and have imported a different set of ideas and values regarding the future of communities in the region.

Current literature addresses the issues of growth and transformation in the Intermountain West, particularly in resort towns such as Aspen, Park City, and Jackson (Ringholz 1992, 1996; Wright 1993; Shovers 1998). Newcomers to the region in recent years have been "a mixed group with divergent values, many are retirees or escapees from big-city pollution and congestion and have been drawn by the scenic natural settings and recreational opportunities in these resort communities" (Ringholz 1992, 113). Research has also covered reasons why people migrate from urban to rural areas and to communities with resource-extraction-based pasts throughout the western U.S. (Rudzitis and Johansen 1989; Rudzitis 1993), and about the effects that growth might have upon homogenizing communities (Yahner and Nadenicek 1997). Current literature on the Intermountain West establishes that growth and historic preservation are key contemporary issues in the region, especially for small towns with resource-extraction-based histories.

Methods

A survey of Bisbee residents serves as the basis for this study.¹ The survey provides the large sample size desired to provide a representative cross-section of

the images, attitudes, and perceptions of Bisbee's newcomers and long-term residents. Overall, 325 surveys were completed and used for analysis. A combination of closed- and open-ended questions helped to provide important demographic data on newcomers and long-term residents and allowed respondents to provide additional insights and opinions regarding sites and matters of importance in the community. The first section of the questionnaire asked respondents to identify how long they had lived in Bisbee and the areas of town in which they lived. This section contained open-ended questions about the aspects that they liked most and least about the community, as well as the landmarks and areas that they felt were the most important and most disagreed upon and the reasons behind their answers. Another section focused on residential perceptions of growth, preservation, and the future economy of Bisbee, as well as community feeling and activity levels. Respondents were asked to provide a few of their demographic characteristics in the concluding part of the questionnaire. The survey results were complemented by informal, semistructured interviews with three key local informants. In each of these interviews, Bisbee's past, present, and future were discussed.

Newcomers and Long-Term Residents in Bisbee

Approximately 19 percent of the respondents to the Bisbee survey were newcomers (Table 2). Newcomers and long-term residents were differentiated on the basis of respondents' period of residence in Bisbee, newcomers having arrived within the last five years. In order to provide greater definition to the length-of-residence cohorts, a middle cohort of respondents who had lived in Bisbee for 6 to 20 years was grouped in a different category from long-term residents (*i.e.*, those who had lived in Bisbee for 21 years or more). Within Bisbee's three primary districts, the highest proportion of newcomers was found in Old Bisbee, with 30 percent of the respondents having moved to the district within the past five years. San Jose and Warren, conversely, had the highest proportions of long-term residents. About 61 percent of San Jose's respondents were long-term residents, while 60 percent of Warren's residents had lived in Bisbee for more than 21 years.

Over 76 percent of the survey population was not born in Bisbee. These

Table 2. Respondents’ home districts and lengths of residence.

District	Length of Residence ¹			Total	(%)
	0–5 Years	6–20 Years	21+ years		
Old Bisbee	17	20	20	57	(17.5%)
San Jose	9	22	49	80	(24.6%)
Warren	28	36	96	160	(49.2%)
Other	7	5	16	28	(8.6%)
Total (%)	61 (18.8%)	83 (25.5%)	181 (55.7%)	325	(100%)

¹The respondents in the “0–5 years” group are “newcomers”, the “6–20 years” group is the “middle cohort,” and “21+ years” are the “long-term residents” of Bisbee.

residents were asked about their place of residence immediately prior to living in Bisbee, what attracted them to Bisbee, and what distinguished Bisbee from the last place in which they resided (Table 3). The survey reflected a large number of in-migrants who came to Bisbee from communities throughout Arizona, California, and other states throughout the Intermountain West. The trends of the past five years have reflected a greater intensity of movement into Bisbee from California and the primary urban centers of Arizona.

Strikingly, the survey indicated that more in-migrants have come from California than any other area over the past five years. People who moved to Bisbee more than 20 years ago often did so for employment reasons. In the past five to ten years, the attraction to Bisbee has diversified to reflect such features as the small-town setting, affordability, and the attractiveness of the mild climate, well-suited to retirement. These quality-of-life features appear to hold a particular appeal to those trying to escape the congestion and heat of Phoenix and Tucson, and the high costs of living and the overcrowded conditions found in many parts of California.

Of the respondents who had moved to Bisbee in the past five years, most cited quality-of-life features such as climate and “smaller community” as the main

Table 3. Place of residence prior to Bisbee.¹

Last Place of Residence	Number (and %) of Migrants to Bisbee	Number (and %) of Migrants to Bisbee, past 5 yrs.
Tucson	37 (15%)	10 (17%)
Phoenix (Maricopa)	22 (9%)	6 (10%)
Arizona (Other)	36 (15%)	5 (9%)
California	36 (15%)	12 (20%)
Intermountain States	23 (10%)	4 (7%)
Other Pacific Coast States	7 (3%)	3 (5%)
Texas	12 (5%)	2 (3%)
U.S. (Other)	61 (25%)	17 (29%)
International	8 (3%)	—
Total	242 (100%)	59 (100%)

¹Of the 325 survey respondents, 242 identified that they had moved to Bisbee at some point in their lives.

differences distinguishing Bisbee from their prior place of residence. These responses provide supporting evidence that these are the very features drawing newcomers into Bisbee. Some 41 percent of the newcomer respondents noted that the primary contrast with their prior place of residence was that Bisbee was a smaller town. Another 16 percent said that Bisbee had a different climate than their previous home. Interestingly, 19 percent of the respondents said that Bisbee had a different attitude or mentality than their prior place of residence. Those who elaborated on their responses had mixed comments about the mentality in Bisbee. One newcomer from San Francisco who had moved into Old Bisbee described Bisbee as having “No yuppies; *i.e.* humble.” Another newcomer who had lived in Tucson said that people in Bisbee “are friendlier and not so hurried.” Others saw the mentality in Bisbee as a negative feature. One respondent from Rhode Island said that “culturally, I moved from a cohesive community.” A vast majority of newcomers (over 73 percent) liked Bisbee more than the last place they lived, and another 14 percent liked the community as much as their last place of residence.

Survey results showed that long-term residents (outside of those who are Bisbee natives) had largely been drawn to the community based on making a living, while newcomers generally appear to be drawn to quality-of-life features such as a favorable climate, low crime rate, less congestion, and lower cost of living. Employment was cited more than any other feature by long-term respondents (32 percent) as the primary reason that they moved to Bisbee, whereas quality-of-life features (including climate, small town, and affordability) attracted 37 percent of the newcomer respondents into Bisbee. Quality-of-life features also drew a large proportion of long-term residents to Bisbee (32 percent), but the best distinction between newcomers and long-term residents centers on employment's influence on attracting residents into the community. The survey indicated that employment has become a much weaker migrant draw for Bisbee over the past 25 years (from 32 percent of long-term residents to less than 17 percent of newcomers), suggesting a diversification of the community as well as the kinds of people who are attracted to it. This reinforces literature arguing that people migrate to communities like Bisbee due to perceived attributes in its physical geography, environment, and way of life (Rudzitis 1993) and as an attempt to emancipate themselves from the crime, pollution, and crowding of cities (Ringholz 1992; Stegner 1991).

Bisbee's Most Important Landmarks

The Lavender Pit (Figure 2) was cited as Bisbee's most important landmark by nearly half of the survey respondents, and far more than any other landmark in Bisbee (Table 4). The Lavender Pit is easily the most visible landmark in Bisbee. Not only is it directly adjacent to the main highway that traverses the town, but it is also seen by any resident that travels between Old Bisbee and the other districts in town. Open-pit mines capture more attention and stir the imagination more than any other topographic features associated with mining (Francaviglia 2004). There was remarkable consistency in the survey responses, as Lavender Pit was the most often cited landmark in each demographic group, length of residence group, and residential district.



Figure 2. Lavender Pit, Bisbee's most important and disagreed-upon landmark.

Of the 109 survey respondents who made follow-up remarks on the Lavender Pit's most important landmark status, 34 percent made comments with a positive connotation and another 59 percent replied with neutral comments. Positive remarks included how the Pit represented the town's existence and symbolized the hard work of miners over the years. One such example is from a respondent who said, "Bisbee probably wouldn't have become the very special place that it is if it hadn't been so rich in minerals." Another respondent mentioned that "Mines and the miners made Bisbee one of the greatest mining towns in the U.S." Neutral remarks about the Pit centered on it being the community's "most noticeable" or "largest" landmark, and a historic representation of the activities for which Bisbee is known.

The survey indicated that newcomers and long-term residents consistently selected the Lavender Pit as the most significant landmark in town. Although there was agreement as to what landmark was most significant, the reasons for the significance varied. Newcomers generally made neutral comments about the Lav-

Table 4. Bisbee’s most important landmarks.¹

Landmark	Percentage of Respondents
Lavender Pit (and other mines)	48.4%
Iron Man Statue	11.6%
Old Bisbee District	8.1%
Courthouse	5.6%
“B” Hill	4.2%
Copper Queen Hotel	3.9%
St. Patrick’s Church	1.7%
Other	16.5%
Total	100%

¹A total of 285 residents responded to the question in the survey regarding the community’s most important landmark.

ender Pit’s immense size or its historic symbolism. In fact, of the twenty newcomers who made follow-up comments regarding the Lavender Pit, 70 percent made neutral comments along these lines. Long-term residents, on the other hand, tended to take the historic symbolism of the Lavender Pit (and Copper Queen Mine) one step further, often citing the feature as representative of the town’s founding, its heritage, and its sustenance. Some 40 percent of the 62 long-term respondents made positive comments in this vein. One long-term resident pronounced that mining “started Bisbee and the Queen Mine Tour is what is supporting Bisbee as we speak!” Another long-term resident said, “the Lavender Pit represents what Bisbee is and always will be—a mining town.” Long-term residents often noted that Bisbee wouldn’t be what it is today had it not been for mining, and that mining-related features such as the Pit were highly symbolic of the community’s identity and genesis.

An important influence upon how the Lavender Pit and other mining features in town are perceived may be whether or not residents had a direct link to Bisbee’s mining days. Over 37 percent of the respondents either had worked in Bisbee’s

mines or had a relative who had. Whereas only 5 percent of the newcomers had this kind of connection to Bisbee's mines, over 60 percent of the long-term residents either had worked or had a relative who worked for the mining company in town. For the respondents who had worked in Bisbee's mines, 45 percent had positive follow-up comments about the Lavender Pit and the remaining 55 percent made neutral comments. The proportion of neutral comments increased with those who had had a family member work for the mines (60 percent of the 35 respondents) and those with no connection to the mines (60 percent of the 60 respondents). Only 2 percent of the respondents with some mining connection made negative comments about the Pit, whereas 10 percent with no connection made negative remarks. Whether the mines served as a place of employment or way of life thus appears to have been a factor upon influencing the different responses of long-term residents and newcomers in their perceptions of the local mining-related features.

The Iron Man Statue, which has been a Bisbee fixture since 1935 and was designed by R. Phillips Sanderson to symbolize Bisbee's bygone days of copper mining (Boyd Nicholl, personal interview, February 22, 2000), was the second-most cited landmark in the survey. The Iron Man Statue was predominantly cited by long-term residents (21 of the 33 Iron-Man responses came from long-term residents). Their responses can best be encapsulated by a resident who said that the Iron Man Statue "represents the industry that made Bisbee and the people who developed Bisbee." Other residents in the community, however, also recognized the Iron Man Statue as an important landmark. One newcomer said that the Iron Man Statue "is a symbol of the industry that attracted a multicultural workforce and left a legacy of diversity and some pretty fine architecture." Follow-up responses regarding the Iron Man Statue were all either positive (33 percent) or neutral (67 percent).

The entire Old Bisbee district was cited by 23 respondents (third-most cited) as the community's most important landmark or symbol. Of the respondents who followed up with comments about Old Bisbee, 55 percent made positive comments, and 45 percent made neutral remarks such as "many tourists visit here."

Other landmarks found within Old Bisbee, such as the Cochise County Courthouse, “B” Hill (also known as Chihuahua Hill), and the Copper Queen Hotel, were cited by more than 10 respondents each. The courthouse was noted as an important symbol of Bisbee’s governmental role in Cochise County. The courthouse and Copper Queen Hotel were both noted for their aesthetically pleasing architectural style and historical significance. The “B” Hill was cited as a symbol of nostalgia and visibility. One respondent said that the “B” that sits atop Chihuahua Hill is “visible and defining, and no one seems to find it offensive.”

Primary Areas of Disagreement

The meaning of landmarks and areas of a community can often come to symbolize dissension among residents. Focusing upon points of dissension provides valuable insights as to how past and present interactions with sites contribute to contemporary attitudes of different residential groups. Points of dissension can also serve as indicators of a changing community dynamic, and who (in this case, newcomers and long-term residents) is responsible for affecting the features that remain steadfast in a given place versus those that change. The Lavender Pit and Old Bisbee emerged as the two most clearly defined areas of disagreement in town (Table 5). Whereas a majority of respondents had positive or neutral comments about these areas in the survey questions concerning Bisbee’s most important

Table 5. Bisbee’s most disagreed-upon landmarks/areas.¹

Landmark/Area	Percentage of Respondents
Lavender Pit and other mining features	41%
Old Bisbee (including parking lot and Grassy Park)	38.5%
Other (Sewers, Iron Man, etc.)	20.5%
Total	100%

¹A total of 200 residents responded to the question in the survey regarding the community’s most disagreed-upon landmark/area.

landmark, the follow-up comments on Bisbee's most disagreed-upon areas were generally negative or neutral.

The primary disagreement over Lavender Pit appears to be between those who believe that it symbolizes environmental degradation and those who believe that it is an inevitable feature of a traditional mining landscape. Of the 75 residents who elaborated upon their initial response of Lavender Pit, 15 percent made positive comments about it, 34 percent made negative remarks, and 51 percent conveyed both the positive and negative elements of this pronounced feature in Bisbee, making their response neutral. One resident who related both sides said "miners are proud of the copper history and their labor—others see the reminder of Phelps Dodge exploitation." Another resident mentioned that "some people think it is a modern wonder and others believe it is a rape of Mother Earth." The question evoked passionate responses on both sides. One respondent representing a "traditional" view said "although it's part of our life, the newer clientele blames a lot of our environmental problems on the miners and owners." Another person, representing an environmental perspective, asserted that the Lavender Pit "represents scarred Earth, company greed, and a poor ecological plan." Significant differences or patterns do not appear to be distinguishable by any demographic or length-of-residence groups; rather, they appear to represent a divergence of opinion between environmentalists and mining traditionalists. "Conservationists may reject the ideas that mining landscapes are 'beautiful', but they do so not on aesthetic grounds but rather in light of real or imagined impacts to the natural environment or attitudes toward the mining industry that created such 'waste-lands'" (Francaviglia 2004, 49). One noteworthy outcome, however, was that long-term residents represented 91 percent of those who described the Lavender Pit as being a positive feature in the local landscape.

The survey results indicated that Old Bisbee was the second-most disagreed-upon area in the community, with 38.5 percent of the respondents indicating that either the entire district or certain locales within Old Bisbee such as Grassy Park or the convention center parking lot were centers of dissension. As with the Lavender Pit, negative follow-up comments were more prevalent than positive remarks

when elaborating upon Old Bisbee. Residents who followed up with comments on Old Bisbee most frequently referenced parking fees (23 respondents), social groups (14 respondents), and historic guidelines/change (9 respondents).

Ironically, the convention center parking lot in Old Bisbee apparently is more symbolic of unity than dissension. Respondents who discussed it in the survey appeared to be unilaterally opposed to the parking lot's fee status. The parking lot thus represents a battle between private owners of the property and the rest of the community. Tourists who use the parking lot unknowingly contribute to the tensions by virtue of bringing in revenues to the lot's owners, providing the belief that having a paid parking lot can be a profitable enterprise. Other than the parking lot, Old Bisbee appears to be a symbol and microcosm of the different views of newcomers and long-term residents, environmentalists and people with ties to the area's mining days, residents with "alternative" versus "traditional" lifestyles, and between people who have different conceptualizations of restoration and renovation of the many historic homes and buildings within the district. It can also potentially symbolize tensions along class lines, for if property values in Old Bisbee continue to increase at a more rapid pace than the other districts in town, Old Bisbee's poorer residents might be pushed out of town, and class division may stratify Old Bisbee further from Warren and San Jose. If tourism continues to increase, congestion will probably drive residents out of the area—residents who were originally drawn to the district's small-town intimacy and charm (Michael Parnell, personal interview, March 28, 2000).

The survey results reinforce notions suggesting that claims and counter-claims about the present character of a place depend on rival interpretations of the past (Massey 1995). In the case of the Lavender Pit, it appears to be different interpretations of mining and what that represents. In the case of Old Bisbee, different interpretations are expressed through the ways in which former miners' shacks and other buildings are kept up, maintained, and restored. In addition, different views about particular social groups in Old Bisbee seem to subtly reflect whether Bisbee is interpreted by locals as a town that was historically homogeneous and unified or as a community that was always characterized by diversity.

Conclusions

“Understanding interactions will contribute to answering questions of why landscapes are perceived as they are, what they mean to individuals and groups, and how they contribute to one’s sense of well being or quality of life” (Zube *et al.* 1982, 24). The survey results indicate that in Bisbee, long-term residents are strongly influenced by the history of a place, whereas newcomers are largely affected by the character of a place. Newcomers and long-term residents find the same kinds of areas and landmarks important. However, newcomers’ images and perceptions of these sites vary from those who have lived in the community for more than 20 years. The Lavender Pit is an example of how the character of a landmark seems to be an important aspect in how newcomers view a place. Character is construed here as encompassing environmental, physical, aesthetic, or “personality” features. Many of the newcomers surveyed appear to incorporate character in their identification with features and areas of the community, whether it is the size of the Lavender Pit or the charm of Old Bisbee.

The survey suggests that, at least in Bisbee’s case, this may have to do with the different kind of relationship that newcomers and long-term residents have with the community. For example, of the newcomers surveyed in this study, only 5 percent had either worked in the mines or had a relative who had, whereas approximately 65 percent of the long-term respondents had a relationship of one of these sorts with Bisbee’s mines. This appears to be an influential factor in how newcomers view mining-related features such as the Lavender Pit. Often, newcomers seem to recognize historical significance as a character trait found in the Lavender Pit’s image. Yet, in identifying with the Lavender Pit and interpreting it as Bisbee’s most important landmark, newcomers use “historical” as an adjective or descriptor of the Pit rather than as a representation of the town’s genesis or sustenance.

Some 35 percent of the newcomers surveyed said that the reason Lavender Pit is Bisbee’s most important landmark is because of its immense size and scale. This, in fact, is the most-cited reason by newcomers for Lavender Pit’s importance. This is but one example of the disparate images that newcomers and long-term residents have of an identical feature, perhaps based upon the very different kinds of

interactions these two groups have had with the feature.

Long-term residents, through identification with mining symbols such as the Lavender Pit and the Iron Man Statue, often convey these features as pillars of Bisbee's foundation and existence. Some 48 percent of the long-term residents who identified the Lavender Pit as Bisbee's most important landmark or symbol cited that it is representative of the community's genesis and sustenance. For long-term residents, the historical impact of symbols, landmarks and images appears to correspond with meaningful integration of these features into the respondents' personal histories of Bisbee. Most of the long-term respondents surveyed (over 87 percent) lived in Bisbee during the time of Bisbee's mine closures in 1974–75. This was an event of extraordinary meaning and a defining moment in the community's history. This event changed the lives of most Bisbee residents, and the community's mining-identity was traumatized and destabilized as a result.

Interactions with places symbolic of important events and involving high degrees of meaningfulness become sites of place attachment, whether or not that meaning is perceived at that time (Milligan 1998). The survey results from the Bisbee study lend support to this notion, given that feeling a part of the community is an indication of place attachment. Nearly 49 percent of the long-term residents marked the highest option possible in terms of feeling a part of the community (responding with "5" on a 5-point scale, and close to 75 percent marked either a "4" or "5"). This result reflects a high degree of place attachment among Bisbee's long-term residents. Nostalgia is apparent in some long-term residents' responses in describing Bisbee's most important symbols. For example, "B" Hill was cited by one long-term respondent as a reminder of his/her youth in Bisbee, and the Lavender Pit was cited as being representative of "hard work at a livable wage" by a respondent who indicated that he had more than 10 relatives who had worked in Bisbee's mines. The survey reinforced contemporary research on place identity that suggests long-term residence is a factor in building sentimental attachments and provides a temporal context for imbuing place with personal meanings (Cuba and Hummon 1993, 1994). Overall, it appears that long-term residents project their feelings and identities onto images and symbols of the community that reflect an

interwoven sense of heritage regarding a place and their own experience and history of the community.

Greater than one-fifth of the newcomers surveyed said that the personality and character of Bisbee is their favorite thing about the community, most colorfully expressed by one who said that Bisbee is “unpolished, un-homogenized funk.” These are the very qualities that may be drawing newcomers to Bisbee, or how they establish their images of Bisbee based on their initial interactions with the community. History is an important part of Bisbee’s character, and its importance to newcomers who participated in the survey cannot be understated. In fact, newcomers place about the same high value on preserving Bisbee’s historic character as do long-term residents (mean values of 4.52 for newcomers and 4.47 for long-term residents on a 5-point scale where “5” is highest). This supports the literature expressing that the most active proponents of historic preservation in mining landscapes are often newcomers who appreciate the uniqueness and charm of a place (Francaviglia 1991).

When Bisbee’s last operating mine shut down in 1975, it left the community at a crossroad. Would the community adapt and survive, or would it slowly fade into obscurity? Since that time, long-term residents and newcomers alike have demonstrated a remarkable resiliency and ability to diversify. Industry has expanded to include tourism and retirement, and Bisbee’s role as a government center has become more pronounced as Cochise County’s population has grown. Bisbee’s relative success amidst this transformation created a new set of issues for the community. These issues include handling the disparate images, perceptions, attitudes, and values that exist between newcomers and long-term residents of Bisbee, as well as trying to maintain a healthy community identity. Bisbee is not alone in facing these kinds of community-identity issues, however, as they are relevant to a number of other historic small towns throughout the Intermountain West.

Notes

¹The primary source of data collection and analysis for this study is a mail survey sent to Bisbee residents in the spring of 2000. Although the analysis in this

article reflects the status of newcomers and long-term residents in Bisbee as of the year 2000, current trends indicate that the same kinds of migration patterns are taking place now as in the year 2000. In Bisbee's case, this means that newcomers to the community are primarily relocating from California and Arizona's two largest metropolitan centers. Additionally, the long-term-resident cohort discussed in this article continues to be largely intact.

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