

Pinal

NUGGET

SPRING 2024

FREE

Copper Corridor
Restaurant Guide,
pages 10-13

GOOD EATS IN THE COPPER CORRIDOR

A community publication of Copperarea.com

Those Cotton-Picking Fascists

John Hernandez
Pinal Nugget

During World War II, a labor shortage was created in the United States by the number of men drafted or enlisted in the armed forces. As much as 20 percent of the pre-war labor force were now in the military. The farming industry was hit hard as they relied on migratory hand labor for growing and harvesting crops. The farm labor shortage was compounded by the need for women and migrant laborers to work in factories and construction.

NUGGET

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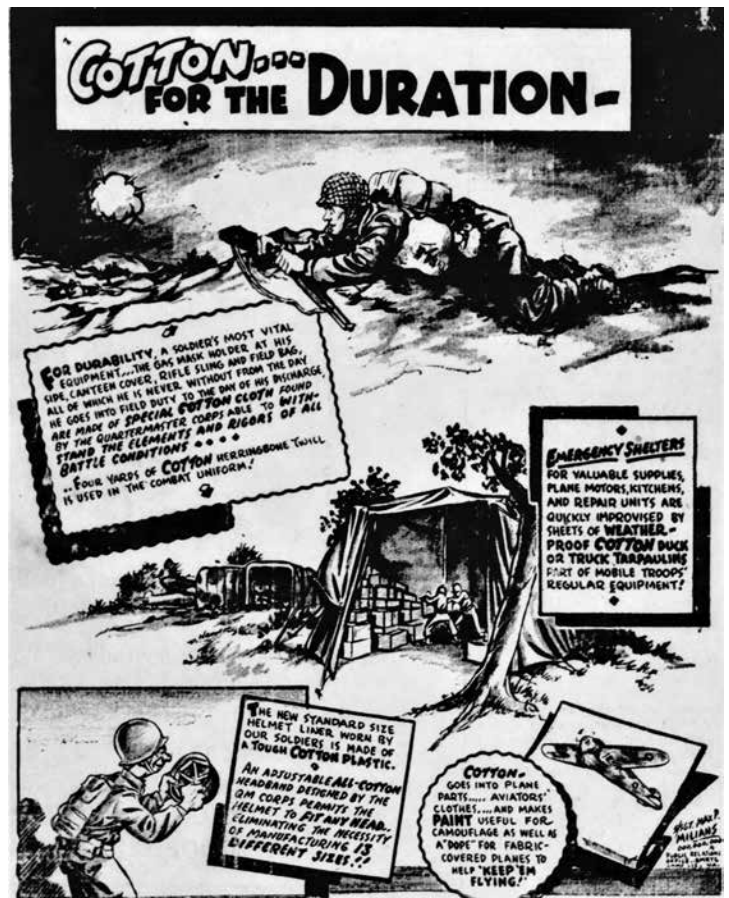
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— Anne Murray

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COTTON PROPAGANDA

This poster, drawn by Staff Sgt. Max P. Milians of the Public Relations Office at Quantico in Virginia, explains the need for cotton as used by the military. The poster is c.1940s.



PRISONER OF WAR picking cotton in the fields of ranches near Coolidge. A huge camp housing more than 7,000 German prisoners is located near Florence.

POW

Prisoners of war picking cotton in the fields of ranches near Coolidge. A huge camp housing more than 7,000 German prisoners was located near Florence.

In 1943, the United States government brought 51,000 Italian prisoners of war (P.O.W.s) from the battlefields of Europe and North Africa to the United States where they were transported to military prison camps. The Florence Internment Camp in Florence, Arizona was one of these camps. The Florence camp had been hastily constructed in 1942 and in May 1943, the first prisoners arrived. Colonel William A. Holden was the commanding officer. There were 400 military soldiers assigned as guards and a number of civilians hired as support staff. Over 4,000 Italian prisoners were placed at the camp. It was the largest P.O.W. camp in the United States.

It was soon announced that the prisoners would be supplied to provide labor for local farmers for essential agricultural work. Farmers were advised that the prisoners would only be supplied to help with serious shortages of labor and under no circumstances would they be used to compete with other sources of labor. The method of pay would be for the farms to pay the prevailing laborer wage which was around \$3 per day. Out of this the prisoners would receive 90 cents per day. Ten cents would be given to the prisoner to spend at the prison commissary and 80

cents would be put in a trust account until the prisoner was released. The rest would go to the U.S. government to defray costs of the prison maintenance.

By June prison labor was being used to harvest essential food crops in the Casa Grande Valley. A branch camp had been set up at the Rhinehart farms located about three-quarters of a mile north of Eloy. It was the first of a number of work camps that would be set up in south central and southern Arizona. One hundred and thirty-seven prisoners harvested carrots at the Rhinehart farm and Jack Pretzer's ranch near Eloy. After the carrot harvest, they would go to work on the potato crops in the area.

On June 3, 1943, 80 Mexican Nationals working as ditch cleaners for the Salt River Valley Water Association near Mesa quit working in protest of a wage dispute. The Mexican workers argued that per their contract they were to get the same pay as everyone doing the same job. They found out that Yaqui Indian workers were getting time and a half pay over 40 hours while the Mexicans were paid straight time for hours over 40. The Yaqui workers were union workers and working under a union contract while the Mexican workers, under

a contract between Mexico and the United States, could not be unionized. The Food Production Administration investigated the matter and it was announced that 125 Italian prisoners would replace the striking workers. The 80 strikers along with 190 other Mexican workers who had not participated in the strike were loaded on special train cars of the Santa Fe Railroad at Alhambra. They were then shipped to Colorado to work on farms there. This action was ordered by Col. Phillip Bruton, Director of Interstate and Foreign Labor for the War Food Administration.

In July, the Italian prisoners began training to pick cotton. Cotton farmers were asking the government to provide them with as many as 5,000 workers for the upcoming fall harvest. Cotton was considered an essential crop and war material used in everything such as uniforms, rifle slings, helmet liners, tarpaulins, airplane parts and more. Additional Italian prisoners were brought to the Florence Internment Camp from around the U.S. and more soldiers to act as guards. Farmers in Maricopa, Pinal, Pima, Graham and Yuma counties were asking for workers. These farmers were told that they would have to build or upgrade their work camps. The government would supply the prison labor but the farms would have to provide the building materials.

In September, newspapers reported that enough guards had been assigned to allow over 5,000 prisoners to work on farms in five counties. Five hundred Italian prisoners were working for the Cortaro Farms Company in Marana. Plans were underway to build another military prison at Papago Park in Maricopa County. Farmers became concerned after it was announced that the Italian government had agreed to an armistice with the United States. They were worried that the Italian prisoners would be repatriated back to Italy. Senator Ernest McFarland informed them that there were no plans to send the prisoners to Italy as there are not enough available ships to transport them, there was a food shortage in Italy and the Germans still controlled most of the country.

By mid-October, 5,000 prisoners were harvesting cotton and other crops. A news report said that the Italian workers were

Continued on page 5

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Cotton

Continued from page 3

picking 50 pounds of cotton a day as opposed to experienced American and Mexican workers picking 100 to 200 pounds a day. In December, it was reported that the Italian workers had picked 2,510 bales of cotton out of the 30,093 bales picked state-wide in November. Even though the inexperienced Italians were slower at picking, their work had saved part of the cotton crop that would have just rotted in the fields.

In 1944, following the end of the cotton harvest season, Italian farm workers were recalled to the internment camp. They were soon being phased out of the farm work in Arizona and being removed from the Florence Internment Camp to make room for German prisoners. Italian

prison workers were being offered for road work and construction. Five hundred Italians were shipped to California to help with the citrus harvest and another 500 began work on the dismantling of military camps in Arizona and California.

Thousands of German prisoners arrived in Arizona and were placed in the Florence camp and the camp at Papago Park. The "hard core" Nazis were interned at the Papago Park facility. Plans were initiated to make the German prisoners available for agricultural labor. At the branch farm camps, stockades were being built and plans for extra security were initiated as it was felt that the Germans would not be as cooperative

Continued on page 18

CARROTS FOR THE EYES OF THE MEN IN THE Air Force!



Picture above is J. C. Rheebock in his carrot field, at Eloy, Arizona. He has sheltered all growth for carrot production, getting as high as 800 crates per acre.

Arizona-Grown Carrots Contain More Vitamin "A" Than Carrots Grown Anywhere Else In the United States!

Eloy Carrots Are Among the Finest Grown in Arizona

Following a study of the comparative content as recorded in food tables, Dr. Margaret Cammack Smith, nutrition chemist at the University of Arizona experiment station, stated that Arizona-grown carrots contain more vitamin A than those grown anywhere else in the nation. Dr. Smith has conducted a series of experiments with Arizona-grown carrots during the past few years. Not only did she find that Arizona carrots are "evidently superior to others on a basis of carotene content," but contrary to popular belief she found that the larger the carrot the greater its vitamin A precursor content. "Arizona carrots contain from three to ten times as much carotene as the average carrot reported in the established food tables," she said. "Carotene prevents night blindness and heightens resistance to infections of the respiratory tract."

HISTORIC ARTICLE

An article in the Tucson Citizen touts the vitamin content of carrots grown in Pinal County. The article was published in the early 1940s.

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Tri-Community Food Bank

Feeding Neighbors for 40+ Years

Mother Theresa once said, “If you can’t feed a hundred people, then feed just one.” This is a truth that volunteers at the Tri-Community Food Bank and Thrift Shop takes seriously.

The food bank, located at 108 Redwood St. in Mammoth, serves more than 300 families or 900 individuals a month. Clients come twice a month. They can take what they want from the lobby, overstock and older bread. Things left over from the thrift store are also available. Clients can also receive assistance once a year for rent or utilities.

The Tri-Community Food Bank and Thrift Shop (TCFB) was founded in 1980-81 by Jean Peterson and Beverly Pyritz. It was originally located in one room in a Pinal County Building in Mammoth. Early funding was from local grocery stores, local resident donations, and the small thrift shop. When the Food Bank expanded and moved to another building in Mammoth, the thrift store remained in the original one room. There was also a thrift store in the new space.

The United Way of Pinal County was the first larger funding source for the Food Bank. In 1997, funding of food started with TEFAP - The Emergency Food Assistance Program through the United Food Bank of Mesa. In 1998, the first SaddleBrooke Community Outreach (SBCO) Food Drive was held. The SBCO Food Drive continues to be held each year and is a major food and monetary funding source for the TCFB.

Cynthia Chevalley became Chairperson of the Tri-Community Food Bank in 2005. Cynthia was determined to do something about the leaky roof and limited heating and cooling at the Food Bank facilities. In 2008, she coordinated with the town of Mammoth and Pinal County Supervisor Lionel Ruiz to develop a grant to renovate the Redwood Inn Restaurant. The county eventually purchased the former Redwood Inn Restaurant at an auction. In 2010, TCFB moved into the renovated, former restaurant at a nominal yearly rent, paid to Pinal County.

Cynthia shepherded the Food Bank



FOR THOSE IN NEED

The Tri-Community Food Bank has been feeding those in need for more than 40 years. The food bank has been located in the old Redwood Inn Restaurant building since 2010.

through many notable periods of growth and improvement. These included the installation of an outdoor cooler (2013) and freezer (2021), the purchase of a van (2019), and the COVID epidemic, during which time the Food Bank remained open as usual, but the Thrift Store closed permanently. Cynthia served as Chairperson until her retirement in 2021.

Upon Cynthia’s retirement, an Executive Board was established to oversee the operations of the Food Bank. In 2022 a new warehouse was constructed behind the main Food Bank building, to replace the former storage space located on Main Street in Mammoth.

The year 2023 saw an update to the Food Bank lobby, a new cooler, and new Mission Statement - “Feeding Neighbors in SE Pinal County”.

The Tri-Community Food Bank has always been an all-volunteer organization, spending 0% for administration costs. We need ongoing and substitute volunteers, especially during the summer months. To volunteer, please call the Food Bank

at 520- 487-2010, during business hours. The TCFB is located at 108 Redwood Rd, in Mammoth, and is open 5 days a week (Monday – Thursday and Saturday) from 9 a.m. to noon. We serve the communities of Oracle, San Manuel, Mammoth and Dudleyville.

The TCFB has been an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation since 2001, thanks to the help of Bob Shogren. They are also an Arizona Qualifying Charitable Organization. *Editor’s Note: This history was compiled with the assistance of Joyce McClung, a current volunteer, and veteran volunteer since 1997. We chose to include it in the “Good Eats” edition of the Pinal Nugget because for some families, local food banks ARE the Good Eats in our community. Superior also has a food bank. Both take donations of food and money. If you wish to send money to the Tri-Community Food Bank, mail it to PO Box 38, Mammoth, 85618. If you are interested in volunteering or donating to the Superior Food Bank, please contact Patty Ann Taylor at 520-479-4633.*

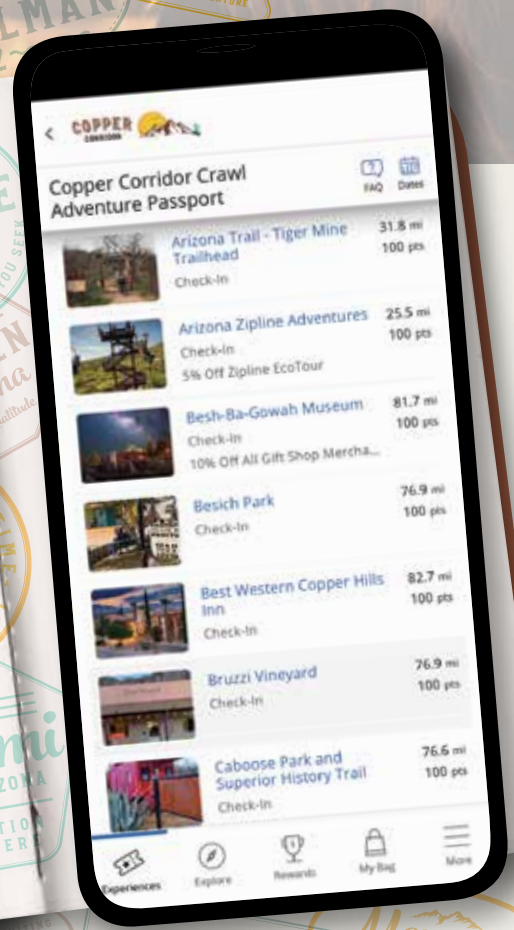


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(480) 316-0882

Judy's CookhouseAmerican
Cobre Valley Plaza, 2280 US-60, Globe
(928) 425-5366

Dick's Broasted ChickenAmerican
708 Live Oak St., Miami
(928) 473-2661

The Lyric Soda FountainAmerican
503 Sullivan St., Miami
(928) 200-4913

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304 N. Broad St., Globe
(928) 425-8400

Chalo's Casa Reynoso Mexican
902 E. Ash St., Globe
(928) 425-0515

Irene's Real Mexican Food Mexican
1623 E. Ash St., Globe
(928) 425-7904

Los Ronabertos Mexican
1666 E. Ash St., Globe
(928) 425-3221

El Ranchito Mexican
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(928) 402-1348

La Casita East Mexican
1960 N. Broad St., Globe
(928) 425-2700

La Casita Café Mexican
470 N. Broad St., Globe
(928) 425-8462

Guayo's On the Trail Mexican
14239 AZ-188, Globe
(928) 425-9969

Guayo's El Rey Mexican
716 Sullivan St., Miami
(928) 473-9960

Los Gilbertos Mexican
700 Live Oak St., Miami
(928) 473-4074

Los Gilbertos Mexican
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(928) 473-4074

Burger House Mexican, American
812 Live Oak St., Miami
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Jumbo Chinese Restaurant Chinese
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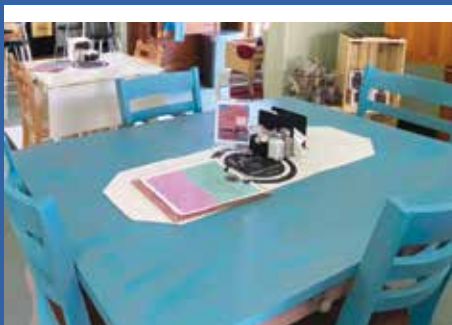
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- Leonard Paul's Pizza.....Pizza
180 S. Hill St., Globe
(928) 425-7322
- Vonnie's Pizza.....Pizza
2348 US-60 Hwy., Miami
(928) 425-2385
- KK's Fish and Chips..... Seafood
999 N. Broad St., Globe
(928) 425-8154
- Bravo Americano Moderno Mixed Cuisine
333 N. Broad St., Globe
(928) 793-3032
- Drift Inn..... Mixed Cuisine
636 N. Broad St., Globe
(928) 425-9573
- Vida e Caffè Coffee Shop
153 S. Broad St., Globe
(928) 473-1122

Superior

- Porter's Saloon & Grill.....American
695 Main St., Superior
(520) 689-5003
- Buckboard City Café.....American
1107 W. US-60, Superior
(520) 569-5800
- Silver King Smokehouse & Saloon..... American
404 Main St., Superior
(520) 689-7100
- Bella's Marketplace and Café.....American
203 Main St., Superior
(203) 297-1182
- Jalapenos..... Mexican
649 US-60, Superior
(520) 689-5800
- Los Hermanos Restaurant Mexican
835 US-60, Superior
(520) 689-5465
- De Marco's Pizza, Subs & MoreItalian
433 US-60, Superior
(520) 689-0168
- Edwardo's Pizzeria..... Pizza
701 S. Belmont Ave., Superior
(520) 689-2628

Continued on page 12



**Los Hermanos
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329 W. Main St., Superior
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- Mountainside Coffee..... Coffee Shop
327 Main St., Superior
(480) 383-3038

Kearny

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111 Tilbury Dr., Kearny
(520) 363-7371
- G&J Restaurant Bar & Grill..... Mexican
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(520) 896-7615
- Peppersauce Kitchen.....American
35406 S. Mt. Lemmon Rd., Oracle
(520) 308-9350
- Oracle Cook Shack.....American
405 E. American Ave., Oracle
(520) 225-0005
- Oracle Inn Bar & Grill.....American
305 E. American Ave., Oracle
(520) 896-3333
- Orehouse Hilltop Tavern.....American
1200 N. Jefferson Dr., Oracle
(520) 896-3334

A Guide to Restaurants

- Casa Rivera's Taco Express..... Mexican
1975 W. American Ave., Oracle
(520) 896-3747
- Nonna Maria's Ristorante.....Italian
2161 N. Rockliffe Blvd., Oracle
(520) 896-3522
- De Marco's Pizzeria & Italian.....Italian
1885 W. American Ave., Oracle
(520) 896-9627

Mammoth

- Maria's Café.....American
739 San Pedro Ave., Mammoth
(520) 487-0136
- Mi Pueblito Mexican
706 AZ-77, Mammoth
(520) 487-2123
- Las Michoacanas Mexican
337 AZ-77, Mammoth
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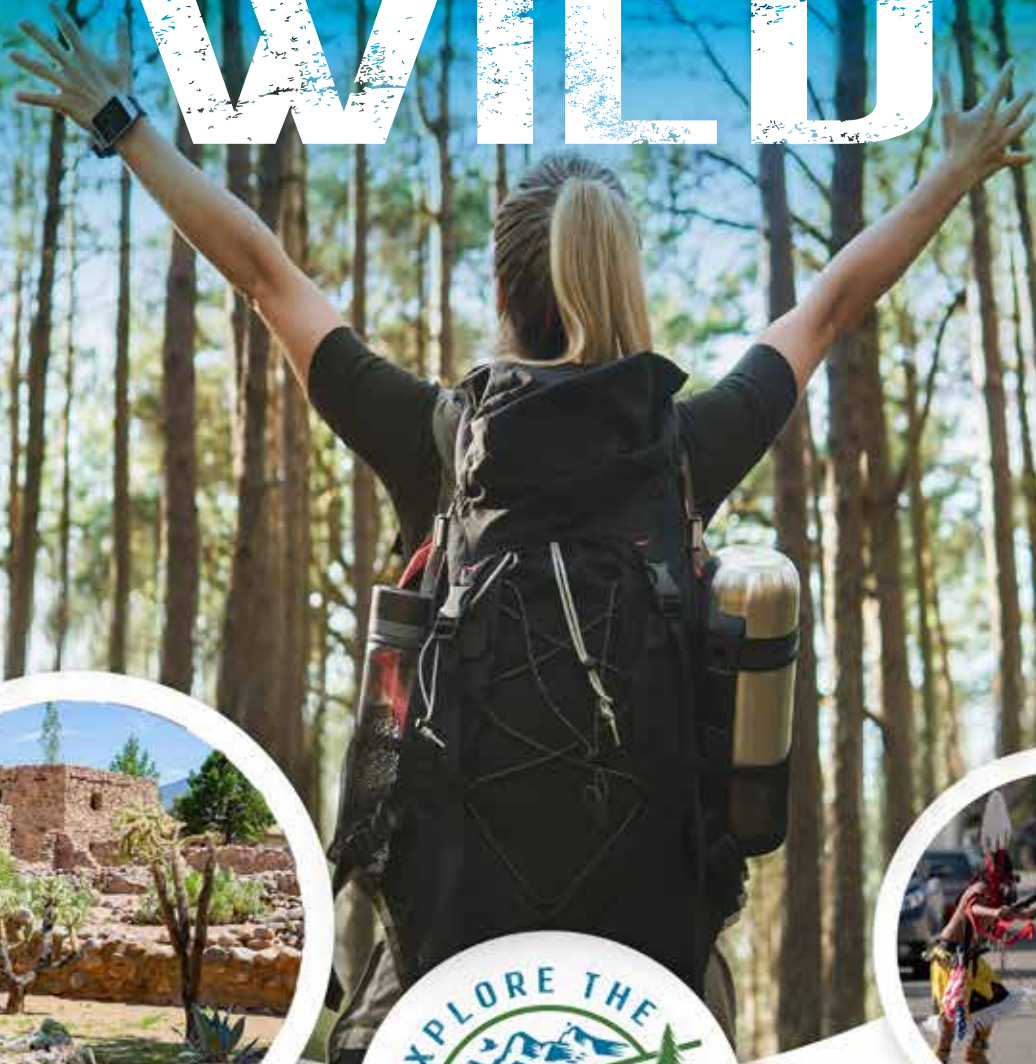
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from Superior ...



to San Manuel.

BHP

Cotton

Continued from page 5

nor as compliant as the Italians were. Their concerns were warranted as the Nazis were involved in numerous incidents at the Papago Park facility including demonstrations, refusals to work, more escapes including a mass escape of 25 prisoners on Christmas Eve and a murder of a fellow inmate found hanged in an abandoned building. Seven Nazis were tried for the murder, found guilty and executed by hanging.

Farmers began calling for the German prisoners to be used for the cotton harvest. In September government authorities said that 5,500 German prisoners would be made available. Seven prisoner-of-war farm camps had been set up around the state. They were located at Litchfield, Buckeye and near Mesa in Maricopa County. In Pinal County the camps were near Eloy and Casa Grande. Marana in Pima County had a camp and a camp was located at Safford in Graham County. Each camp would hold 500 to 700 prison workers. Later a camp was constructed in Clifton in Greenlee County.

The cotton harvest began in September in Pima County. Plans were made for a new farm camp between Sahuarita and the Continental areas along the Nogales highway to be completed by November. The German prisoners were making progress in the amount of cotton they were picking. Their daily amount of cotton picked had risen from 60 pounds to 100 pounds. There were now 7,000 Germans working in the cotton fields. It was projected that the year's harvest would be a larger yield than in 1943. The 1944, Arizona cotton

harvest, which ended in March 1945, produced a total of 132,532 bales. This was 4,000 more bales than the 1943 harvest. It was determined that German prisoners picked 20 percent of the state's cotton. Pinal County led all counties in cotton production.

On May 6, 1945, Germany surrendered, ending the war in Europe. In August, farmers were told that German prisoners would be returned home as soon as possible. After Jan. 1, 1946, no prisoners would be made available for contract labor. This meant there would be a shortage of labor that could endanger the cotton crop.

The cotton harvest began in September and most of the available prison laborers were out of state harvesting beets and other vegetables. In October, it was announced that 5,000 German prisoners would be returning to the Florence camp to help pick the cotton crop. By November the cotton harvest was in full swing. On Nov. 26, newspapers reported that German prisoners would be able to work through the harvest ending in April. Prisoners would then be returned to Germany beginning in June.

The cotton harvest for Arizona was 115,586 bales picked. This was less than the crop of 1944, but it would have been much worse without the return of the German prisoners. In April 1946 the P.O.W. camps in Arizona closed down. The Italian and German fascist prisoners had helped save the Arizona cotton crops as well as assisting with food production which contributed to America's war effort.

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