

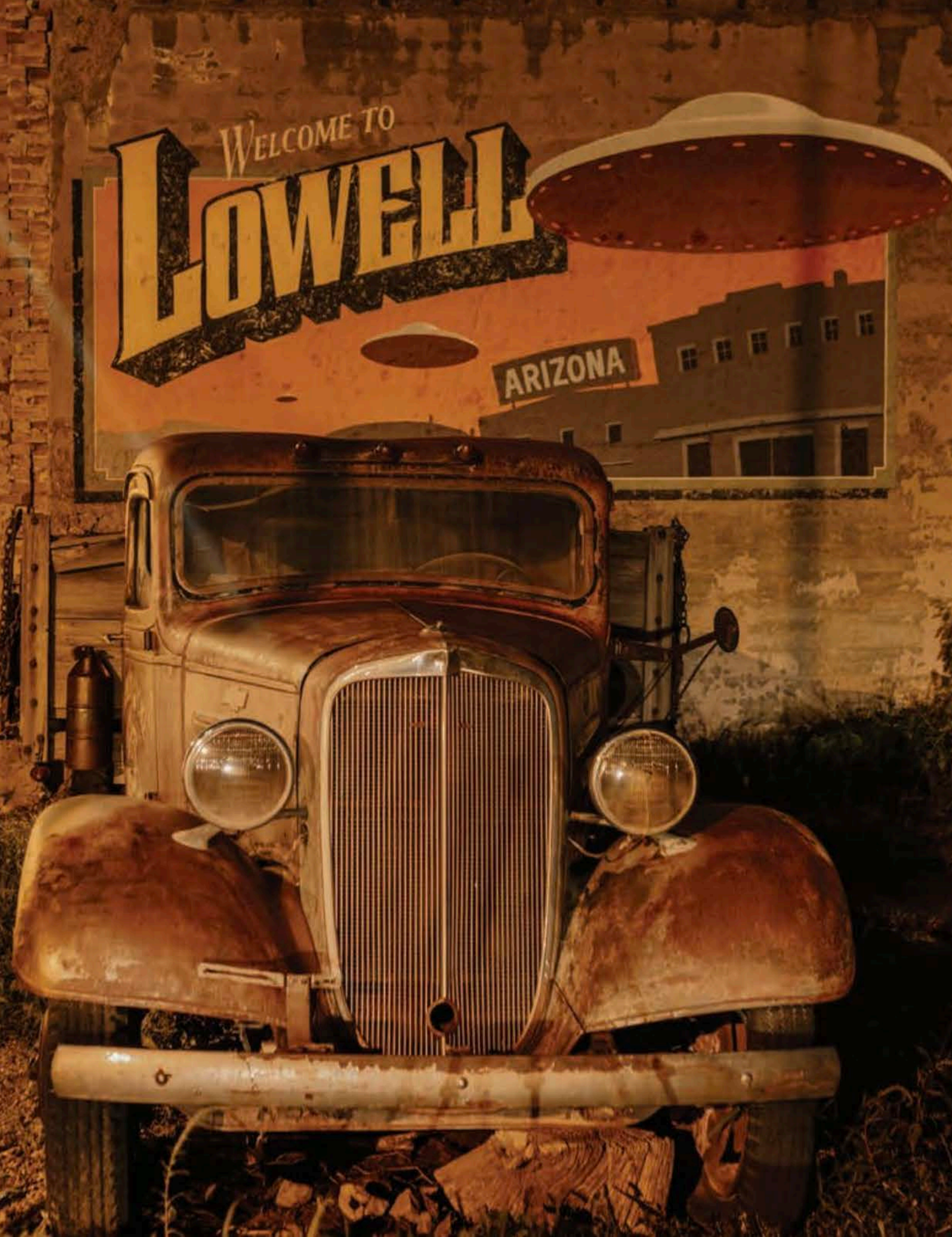
# WHERE TIME FORGOT

Once some of the state's most thriving destinations, these historic towns are now picturesque relics of the past

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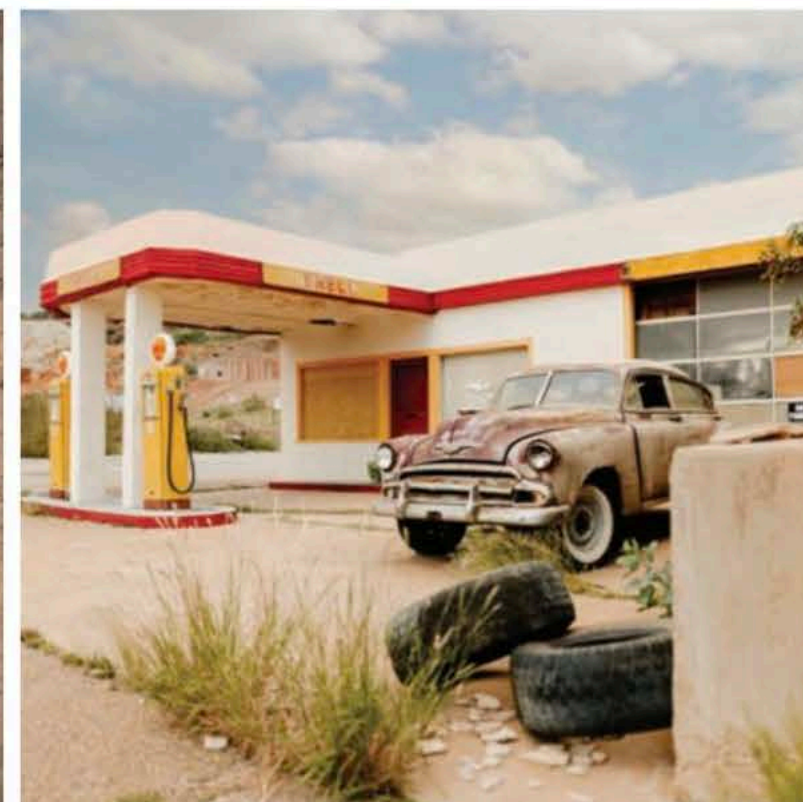
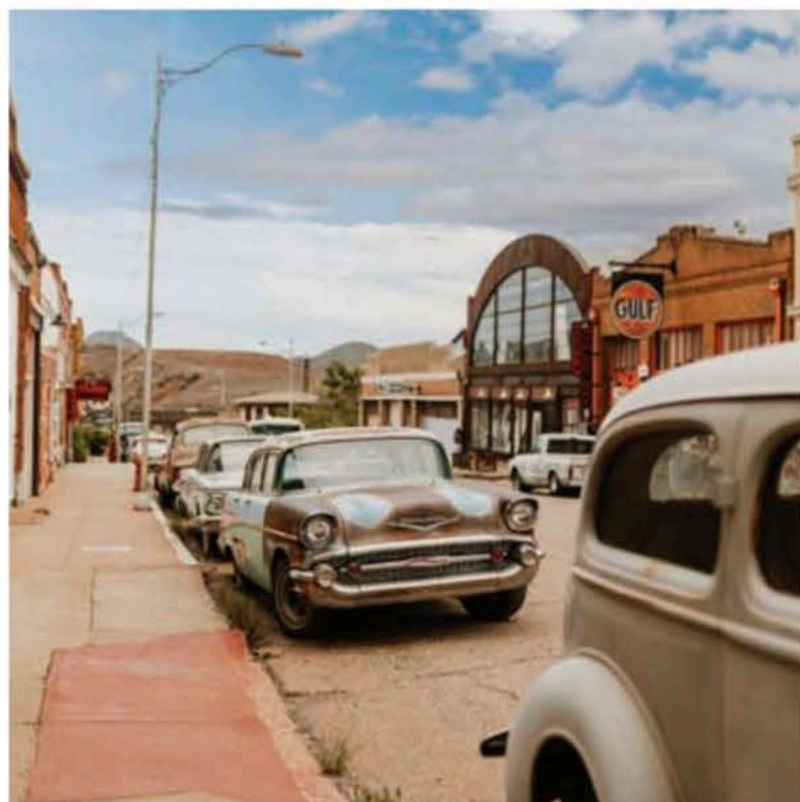


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*Both pages:*  
Scenes from the  
once-booming  
mining town  
Lowell as it is today.

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The Grand Canyon State is a hub for historical towns. Many were built during the state's Wild West days and prospered due to mining booms, but eventually they succumbed to desertion and dereliction. Some, such as Bisbee and Tombstone, have been resurrected into thriving arts and tourist destinations, while others have decayed with time.

From living ghost towns to desolate ruins, each of these destinations is a remarkable representation of Southern Arizona's past.

### A PHOTOGRAPHER'S DREAM

Like Bisbee, its neighbor to the northwest, Lowell was once a booming mining town. Now all that remains is its main drag, Erie Street, which is a photographer's dream. About 20 brick storefronts, most abandoned and showcasing displays of midcentury Americana and automobilia, line the street. Classic 1950s and '60s cars—and even an old “Strayhound” bus—sit abandoned, as if their passengers simply vanished. One business continues to draw in customers: Bisbee Breakfast Club serves up tasty breakfast and lunch options and is a favorite of visitors and locals alike.

### BLENDING HISTORY AND NATURE

Just 10 miles west of Tombstone, Fairbank began as a stagecoach stop and, with the construction of a railroad, became an important depot for cattle and ore. Visitors can explore many of the original buildings, including homes, stables, a mercantile, and a schoolhouse that now serves as a museum and information center. Walk along the railroad bed to an old gravesite or take a 2-mile hike to the ruins of the Presidio Santa Cruz de Terrenate. The Spanish military fortress dates to the late 1700s. In 1986, the Bureau of Land Management acquired Fairbank and incorporated it into the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, preserving the region's desert ecosystem.

### THE GHOST TOWN TRAIL

In the shadow of the Dragoon Mountains, near the small town of Sunsites, a dirt road winds through the desert landscape, connecting three former mining towns: Pearce, Courtland, and Gleeson. Established by miner James Pearce in 1894, the first stop, Pearce, is home to some Insta-worthy structures, including the 1896 general store and Our Lady of Victory Catholic Church, both of which are on the National Register of

Historic Places, as well as the old jail, post office, and cemetery. A few residents still live in Pearce, including a potter who owns an artisanal studio and gift shop. About 10 miles south is Courtland, where you'll find crumbling ruins and the remains of the town's early 1900s concrete jail. A small jewelry gallery offers guided turquoise collecting tours on weekends. The recently restored historic jail in Gleeson, located about 5 miles south of Courtland, is essentially identical to its decaying neighbor to the north. This last stop on the trail includes a cemetery, and the ruins of a saloon, schoolhouse, and hospital.

### A GHOST TOWN WITH ACCOMMODATIONS

While most of Arizona's ghost towns are left to decay in the elements, Kentucky Camp on the eastern flanks of the Santa Rita Mountains near Sonoita has been preserved by the U.S. Forest Service, which acquired the land in 1989, and is now an interpretive mining camp. Five historic adobe structures have been restored. The headquarters building serves as a visitors' center, while smaller cabins can be rented overnight. They're surrounded by other ruins, rusted relics of the town's mining history, and miles of hiking trails.