



# In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



Day 20  
Wednesday,  
January 22nd

Back to  
Joshua Tree  
National Park

Weather  
40's to 60's and Sunny

## Hello to Family & Friends

On to my third day in Joshua Tree National Park. I spent the night at WalMart again, let it warm up a little, then headed into the park to do some more hiking. Along the way I pulled over at the Hemingway Buttress (I could find no reason for that moniker), 'also known as Poodle Wall, offers the best of face and crack climbs that Joshua Tree is famous for.' Quoted from some climber website. Since there was really no specific trail to hike I continued on. But I am keeping this spot in mind for on the way back.

## In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,  
A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow,  
Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song,  
In search of Eldorado.

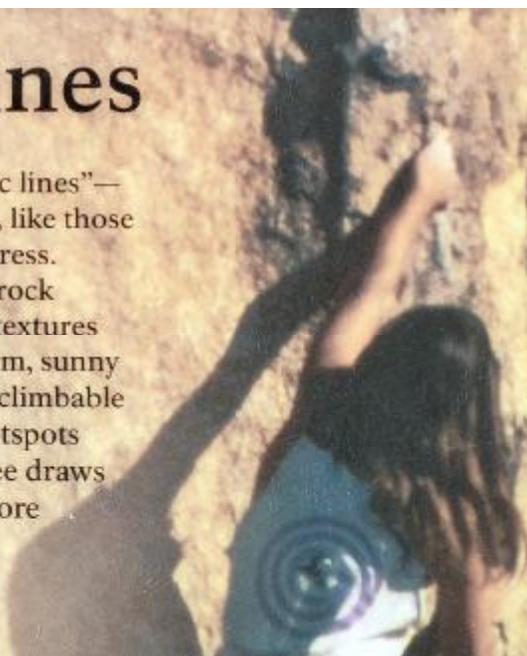
But he grew old—  
This knight so bold—  
And o'er his heart a shadow—  
Fell as he found  
No spot of ground  
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow—  
'Shadow,' said he,  
'Where can it be—  
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,'  
The shade replied,—  
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

## Classic Lines

Nature has sculpted the "classic lines"—cracks and folds—in the rocks, like those found here at Hemingway Buttress. Joshua Tree National Park is a rock climber's paradise. The rough textures of the granite rock and the warm, sunny conditions here make it a very climbable place. When other climbing hotspots are covered in snow Joshua Tree draws climbers from far and wide. More than 5,000 climbing routes are described within the park and still more are being pioneered.



Names are funny things

Hemingway Buttress offers climbers fine-crack climbs and established descent paths for rappelling. Whimsical route names like Poodles Are People Too, White Lightning, and The Importance of Being Ernest identify some of the more challenging and popular climbs here.



## Wall Street Mill

At the edge of the Wonderland of Rocks sits the Wall Street Mill, the finest example of a gold processing mill remaining in the park. A two-stamp mill, the building that covers it, the well that supplied it water, and the well pump all remain. A 2.2-mile round-trip trail leads to the mill site.

During the Depression, the mining regions here experienced a second gold rush. As miners arrived, long-time rancher-miner Bill Keys recognized the need for a gold

I finally arrived at my next hike. After gearing up I followed the trail marker, only to find that I could have driven another  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile on a dirt road and saved myself a  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile hike. But there was a group there getting ready to take off. Since I never saw them again I assume they took the Desert Queen Well trail. That's good, I only saw about seven other people on the trail.



Someone call up Jed Clampett and let him know we found his truck.

After saying hello to the first couple I met, I asked if this was the Mill Trail, since the trailhead from the gravel parking lot was not marked (I will admit there was a guy there with a post, so he might have been replacing it), she said "Yes, it's right there." And pointed to the windmill. I proffered my thanks and said to myself as I walked over to the windmill "This can't be right, there is no way I have walked a mile already, I am only 10 minutes down the trail." I took one look and thought "If she thinks this is a stamping mill she's had a very short hike." This is a water windmill. The tiles below are from the roof of the structure.



Here is what's left of the structure. There was also a water tank. I continued on down the trail.



## Worth Bagley Stone

This is the location of a shootout between Worth Bagley and William F. Keys in 1943. According to Keys' testimony, the two constantly argued over land ownership and use. Their arguing culminated in a gunfight after Bagley ambushed Keys. The gunfight ended with Bagley dead and Keys convicted of manslaughter.

After his release from San Quentin State Prison in 1948, Keys returned to his home at Desert Queen Ranch (Keys Ranch) and carved a stone marker that once stood here.

Someone vandalized the marker in 2014. Park staff relocated the stone to the park's museum for safekeeping. This sculpture is a to-scale representation of the original marker.

Inscription reads:

Here is Where  
Worth Bagley  
Bit the dust  
At the HAND  
OF W.F. KEYS  
MAY 11 1943

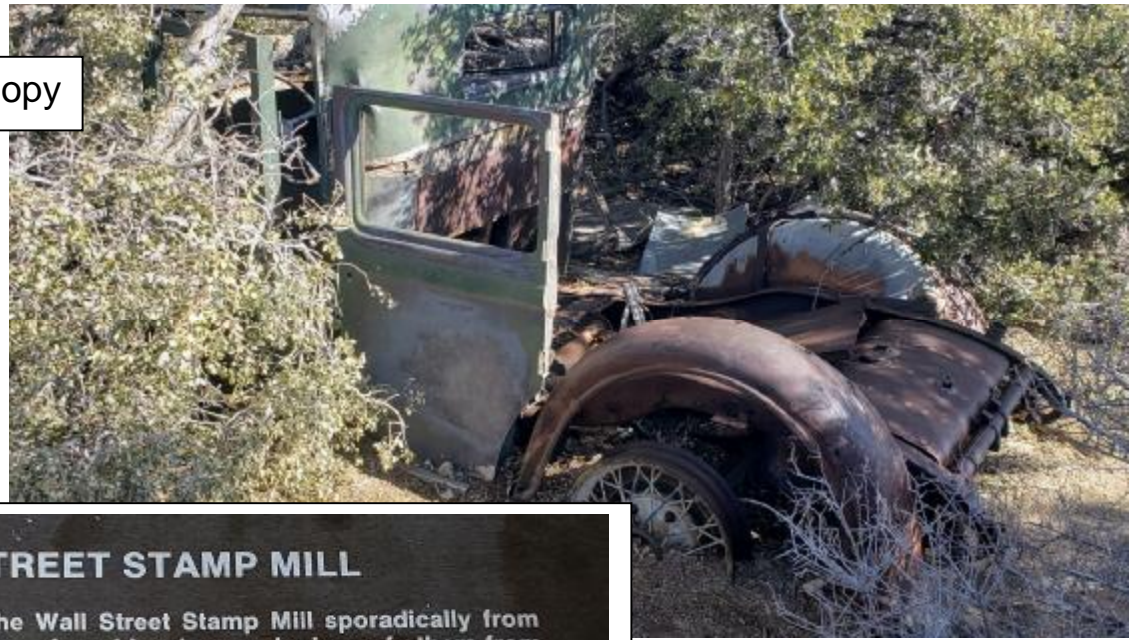
Historic artifacts and structures are protected by federal law. Please report vandalism.

Photo: Captain R.A. Gibson stands at the exact spot as William Keys retreats. The scene of the actual fatal shooting of Worth Bagley. Unrelated photograph.



I thought this was pretty interesting. I mean, you hear about gunfights in the desert west of the 1800's, not normally in 1943. In 1870 he would have just buried the body and no one would have known. In 1943 he served time at San Quentin.

Another old jalopy



## WALL STREET STAMP MILL

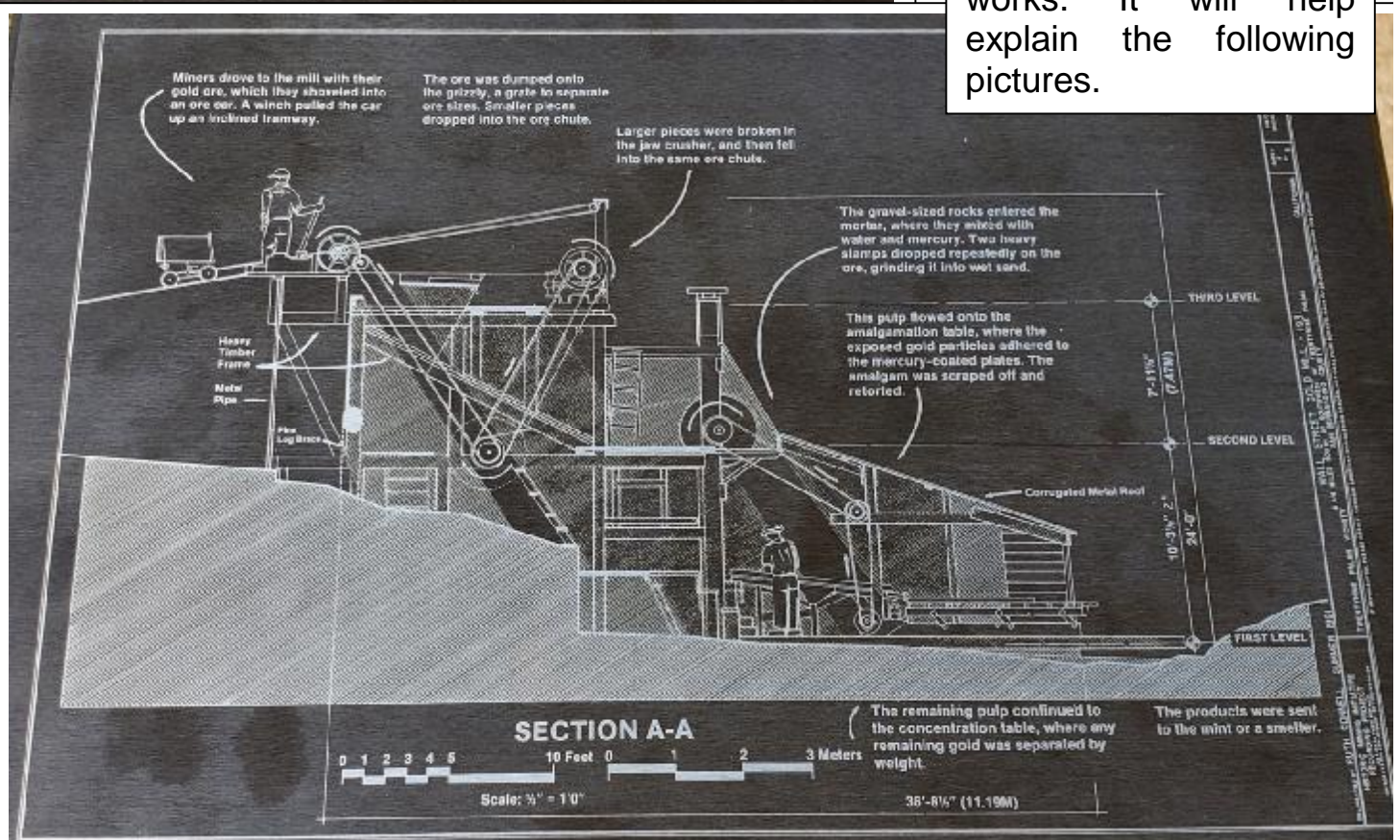
William F. Keys operated the Wall Street Stamp Mill sporadically from 1930-1966, processing gold ore from his mines and mines of others from this region of the desert.

Prior to milling operations, other activities took place in the area. Native Americans used the natural food sources and rock shelters in the vicinity. In the late 1800s, William McHaney dug a well and this became a popular cattle watering area.

The most recent activity here was the search for the ever-illusive precious metal — gold. In 1928, Oran Booth and Earle McInnes filed a claim at the well site, built a cabin, and named the site "Wall Street." They left Wall Street due to other opportunities and on July 1, 1930, William Keys filed a milling claim on the site. Keys completed the bunk house, built an outhouse, and transported a two-stamp mill ore crusher to the site.

William Keys died in 1969. In 1975, the Wall Street Stamp Mill was entered in the National Register of Historic Sites due to its local technological/mechanical significance. It is a complete gold ore crushing mill featuring late nineteenth century two-stamp mill machinery.

I hope you can blow up the page enough to read the diagram below of how a stamping mill works. It will help explain the following pictures.





The incline tramway

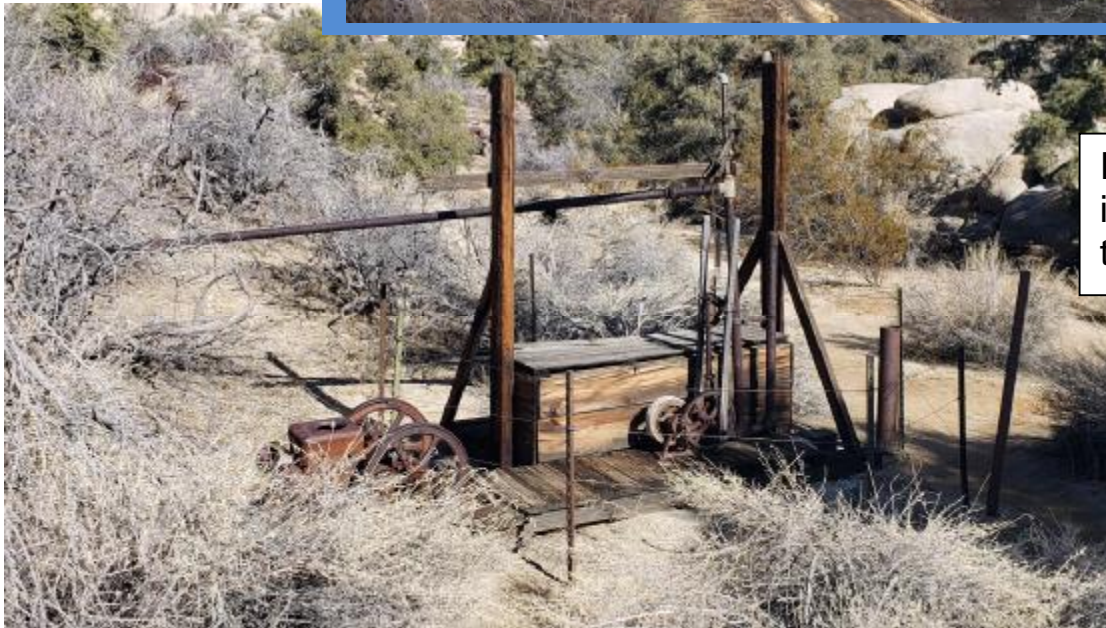


Dumping the ore car into the ore chute



The roof of the amalgamation table

The best picture I could get of the interior of the amalgamation table. The whole site is fenced off with barbed wire.



I'm not sure what this is. It was sitting down the hill a little ways.



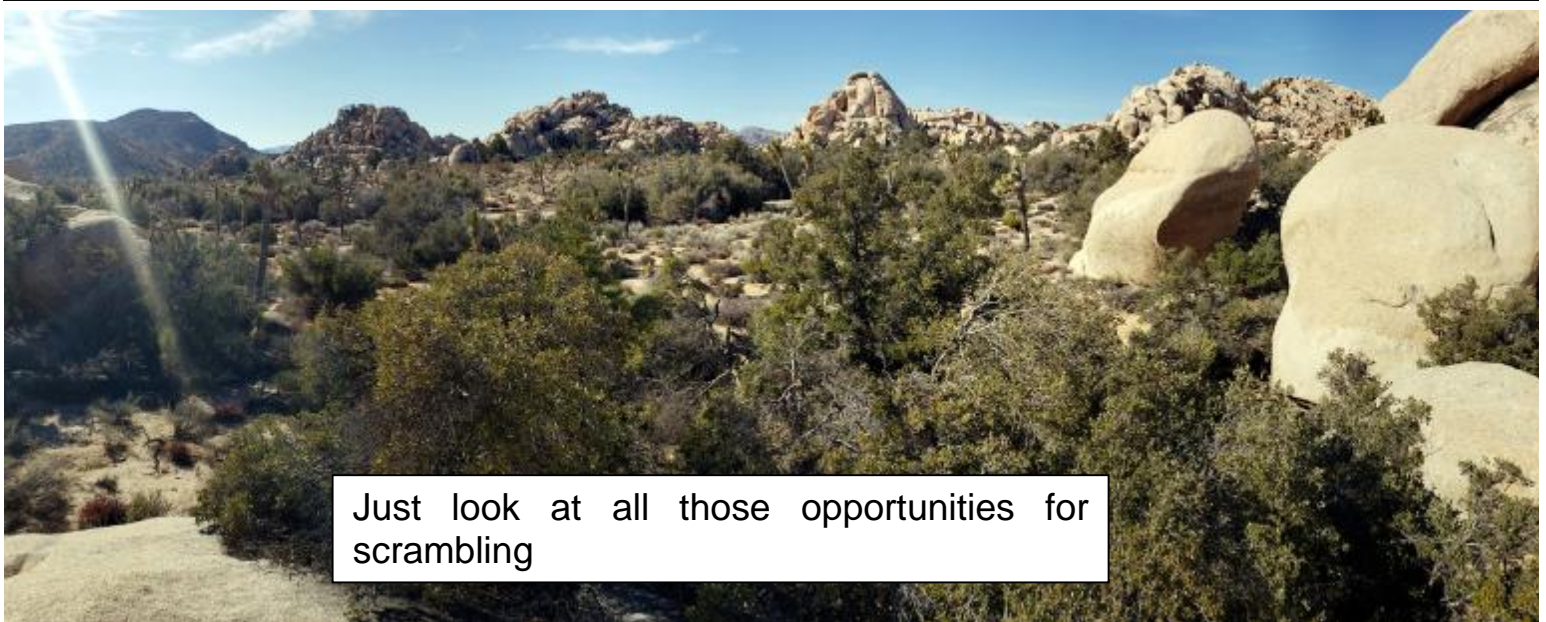
This one is a dump truck



This was difficult to get to. At first I thought they were tombstones, surrounded by a thicket of thorns. Another couple and I pondered over these for a little while. I thought maybe a foundation support of some kind? There were more similar stones lying nearby, and I found another larger stone that had marks from being split the old fashioned way – digging a hole with a hammer and chisel, then inserting wooden pegs and wetting them down so they expand and split the granite. I remember that from an earlier trip of mine.



Enough milling around, time to do a little bouldering.

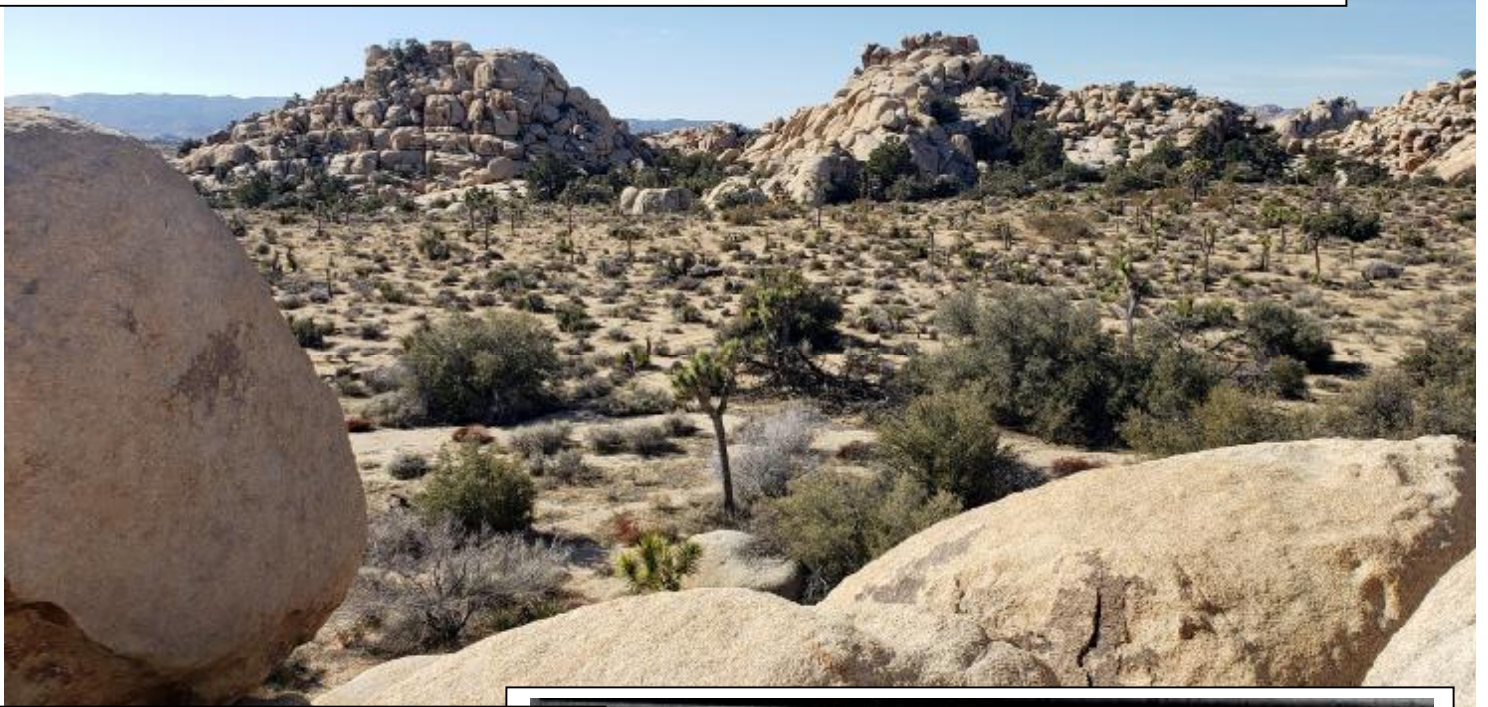


Just look at all those opportunities for scrambling





The other day I mentioned how difficult it is to get a good shot of a Joshua tree 'forest'. As you can tell, I have climbed fairly high. This is a pretty good one.

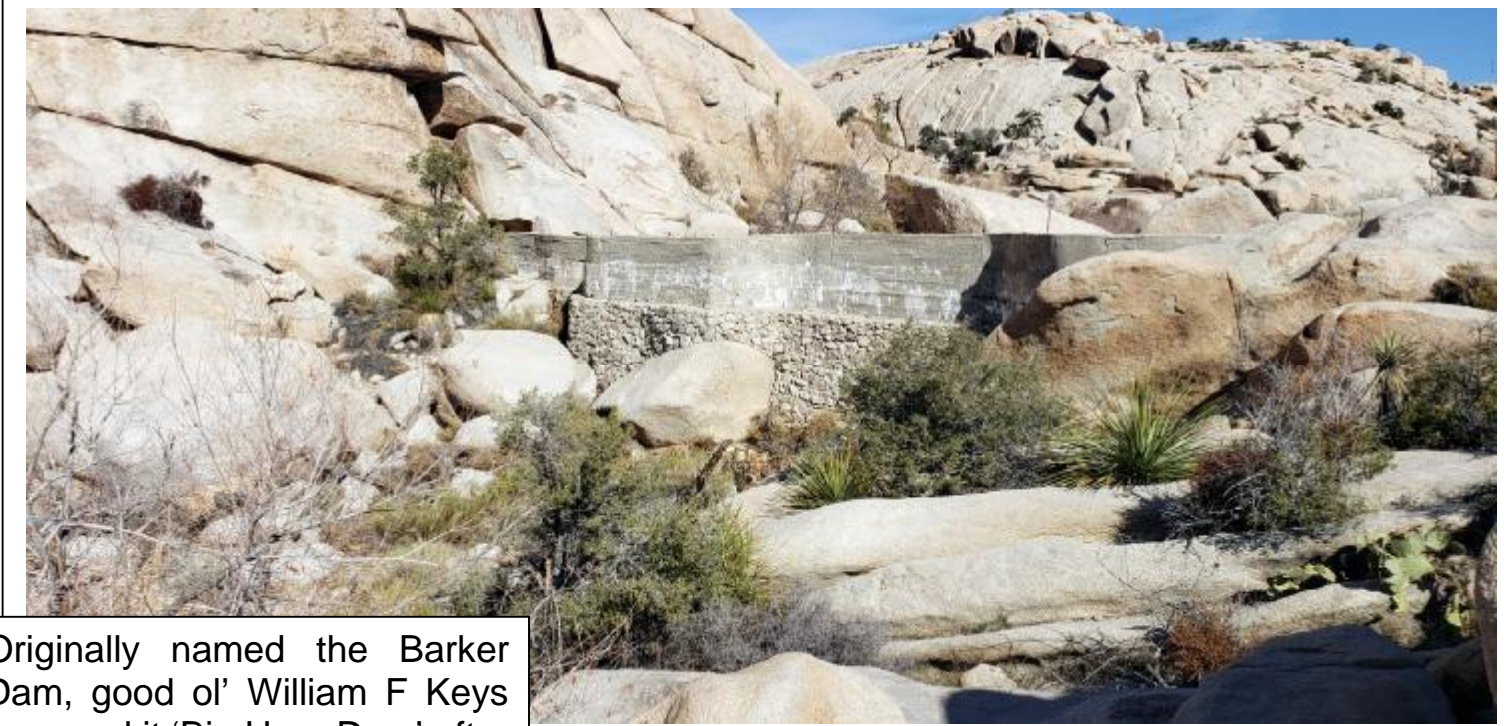
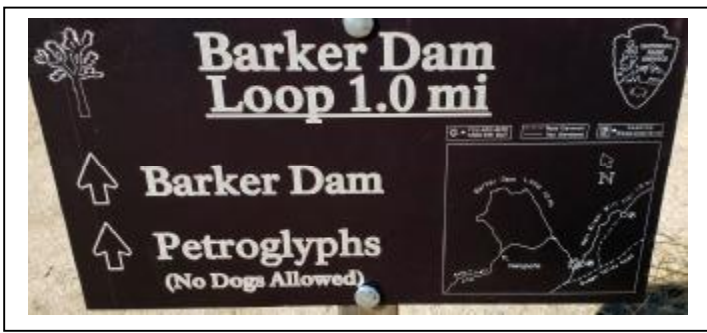


I spent quite awhile scrambling around out there, and having a lot of fun I might add, but now it's time for the Barker Dam Loop Trail, from the same parking lot. And guess what I did? The ten people in front of me all headed straight ahead, just as the sign tells you to. I took a left and worked it backwards. It just seems like a lot less people when they're passing by than when you can see all their rear ends in front of you. Best of all you get to set your own pace, not wanting to be rude by passing people up.

Joshua Tree National Park

## Barker Dam

Built by cowboys to water their cattle, Barker Dam today is a small, ephemeral lake that attracts an array of animal life in an otherwise parched environment. A 1.3-mile loop trail with interpretive markers leads to the rain-filled pool.



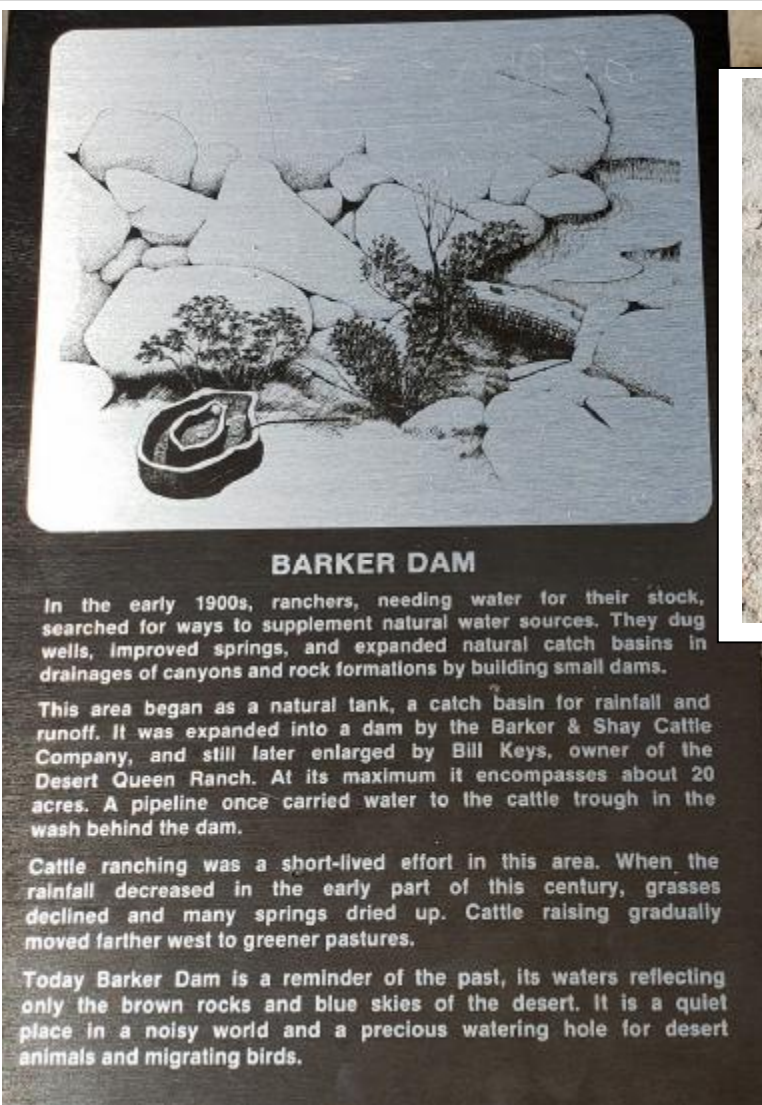
Originally named the Barker Dam, good ol' William F Keys renamed it 'Big Horn Dam' after raising it in 1949.



The water below the dam....



....the water behind the dam. Note the waterline marks on the rocks. They actually get higher than the top of the dam



### BARKER DAM

In the early 1900s, ranchers, needing water for their stock, searched for ways to supplement natural water sources. They dug wells, improved springs, and expanded natural catch basins in drainages of canyons and rock formations by building small dams.

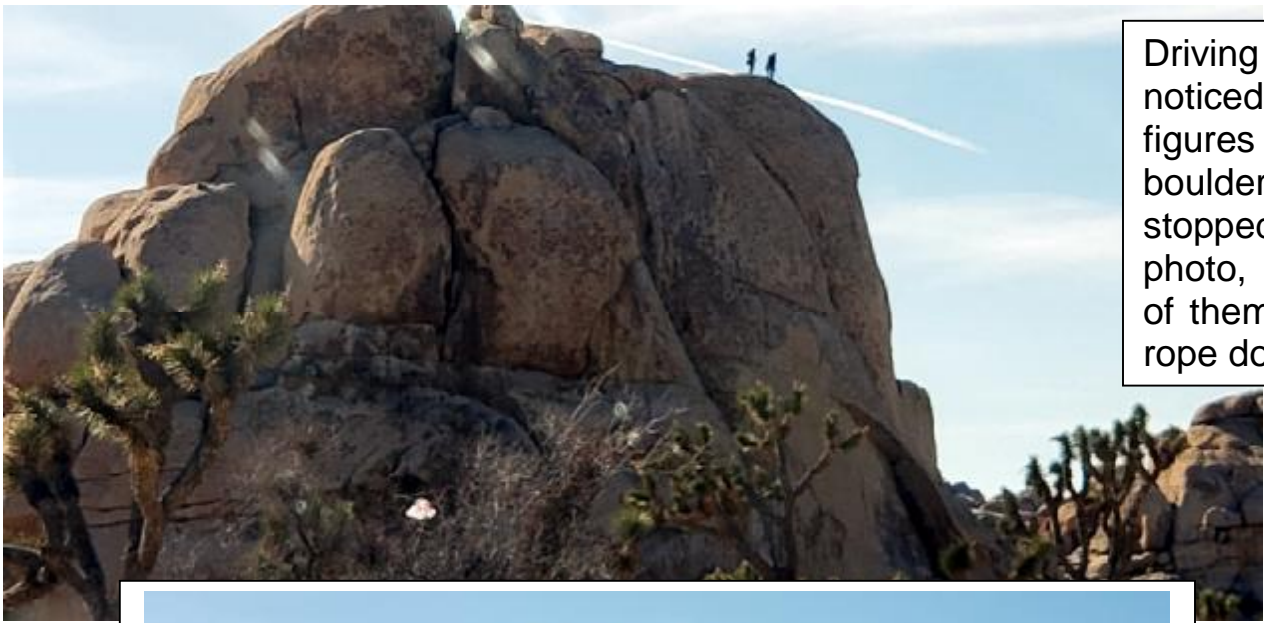
This area began as a natural tank, a catch basin for rainfall and runoff. It was expanded into a dam by the Barker & Shay Cattle Company, and still later enlarged by Bill Keys, owner of the Desert Queen Ranch. At its maximum it encompasses about 20 acres. A pipeline once carried water to the cattle trough in the wash behind the dam.

Cattle ranching was a short-lived effort in this area. When the rainfall decreased in the early part of this century, grasses declined and many springs dried up. Cattle raising gradually moved farther west to greener pastures.

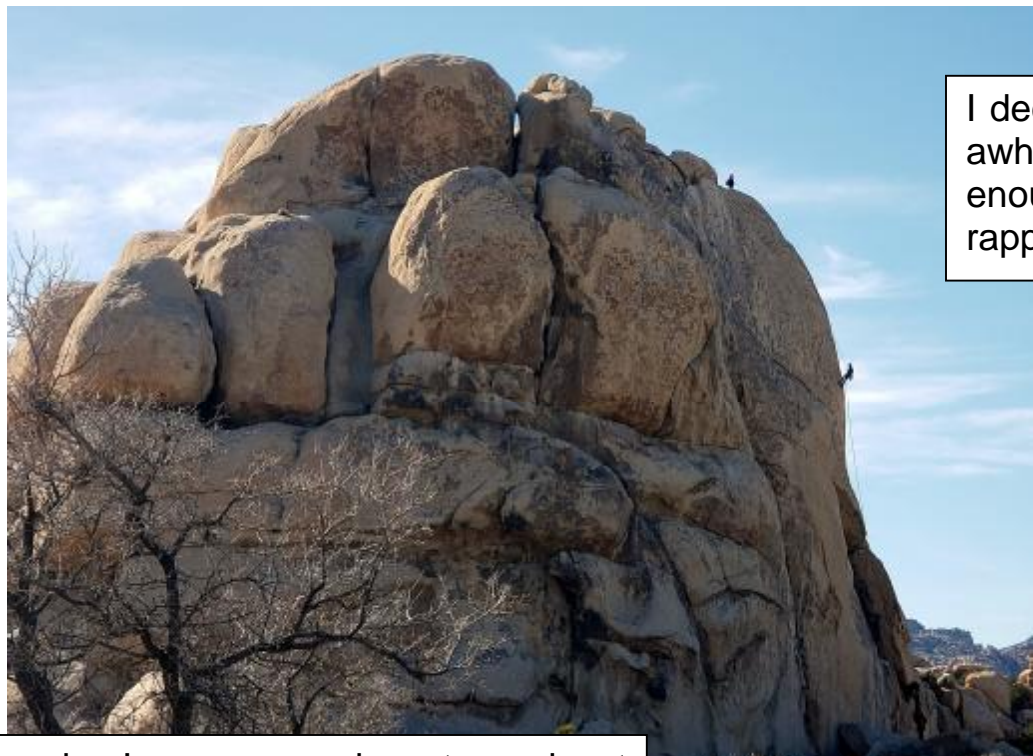
Today Barker Dam is a reminder of the past, its waters reflecting only the brown rocks and blue skies of the desert. It is a quiet place in a noisy world and a precious watering hole for desert animals and migrating birds.



BARKER DAM  
 BUILT BY BARKER & SHAY  
 ENLARGED BY BILL KEYS  
 1911-1912  
 1914-1915

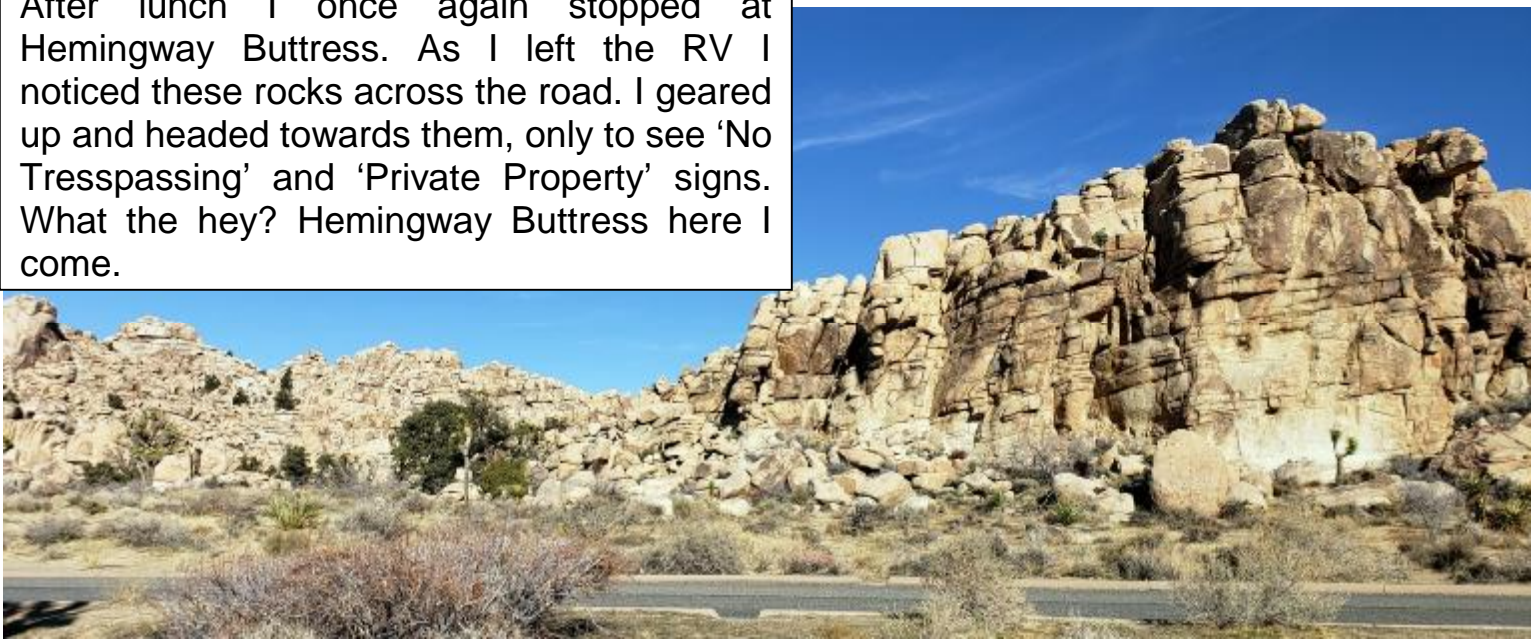


Driving along I noticed these two figures atop the boulders. As I stopped to get the photo, I noticed one of them toss a coil of rope down



I decided to hang around awhile and watch. Sure enough, he started rappelling down the side.

After lunch I once again stopped at Hemingway Butte. As I left the RV I noticed these rocks across the road. I geared up and headed towards them, only to see 'No Trespassing' and 'Private Property' signs. What the hey? Hemingway Butte here I come.



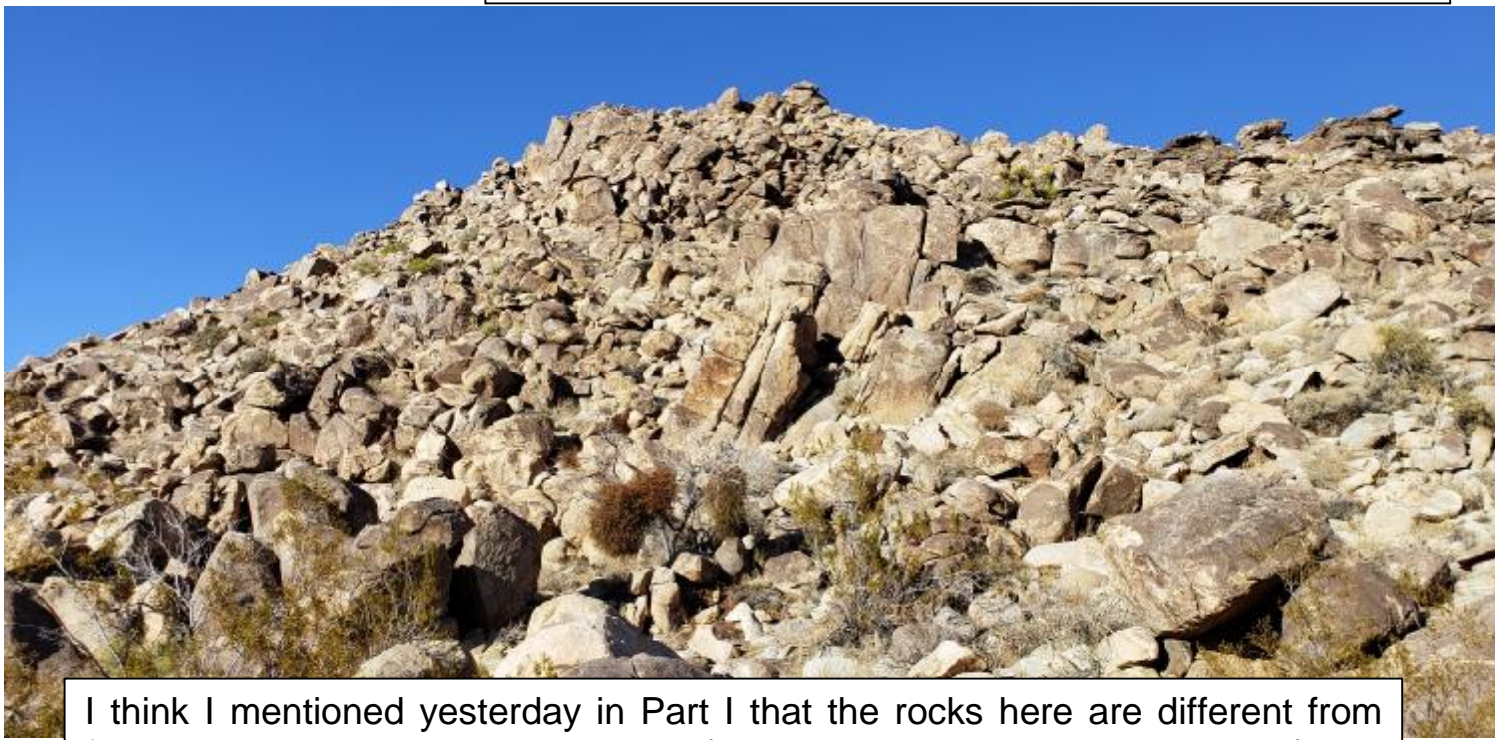


I couldn't get up any higher. No trail to follow, just searching out the easiest way to jump from one boulder to the next. It is really neat to just stand there and plan out a route until it disappears behind a boulder. You may find another stepping stone from there, or you may have to backtrack and find another route. Loads of fun. The arrow is pointing to the RV in the parking lot.





Here is where things go awry. I have the Maze Loop Trail on my list, but its 4.7 miles and I don't think there's enough daylight to finish it. So I still parked at the Maze parking lot (dirt, 4 cars wide) because there are a half dozen trails accessible from this point. The North Side Trail is only 2.5 miles. That should be no problem, right? Yeah, right.



I think I mentioned yesterday in Part I that the rocks here are different from further into the park. Not as bouldery (pretty sure I just invented that word).



It's a nice trail and when I get to the next marker, nine-tenths of a mile in, everything looks good. Only a thousand feet or so to the next marker. Got it. Next is just a connector from the North Side Trail to the North Canyon Trail. The hike has been a little mundane up to this point, so when I run across the photo below, my interest is piqued. This is more like it.



I have my fifteen dollar, National Geographic, Joshua Tree National Park map with me. The first time I have taken it along on any hike. Must have been a premonition. According to my map it's three-tenths to the North Canyon Trail. I start counting my steps. I have compared actual mileage to my figures based on my stride. I don't use a pedometer and I am pretty accurate. Three-tenths of a mile, 1,584 feet. Just before I reach my goal I am acutely aware of looking for the trail marker. I even say to myself "It should be right about here" as my three-tenths of a mile step lands in the dirt. No marker. I keep going. This is not right. I am up to half a mile with my step counting. Not only that, I am still heading northeast when I should be heading southeast and then south. I know where I am. I know the trail marker was missing. I cannot believe that I would miss a trail marker that I am counting steps to get there, that I am actively looking for before I get to that point and after. Back to the map. It looks like I am probably on the connector from The North Canyon Trail to the Burro Loop Trail. Add up the mileage: two miles back to the RV; 1.5 miles to continue on to the Entrance Station and ask for a ride. Ask for a ride? Yup. It's another 1.5 miles, all uphill, walking against traffic, to get to the RV. Another factor, after 6 miles yesterday and just about 8 miles today, not counting the bouldering, I am beginning to develop a shin splint in my left leg, so I am just slightly limping, it's getting dark and I'm getting tired.

I make it to the Entrance Station and confront Ms. Ranger. "You guys close up at 5:00 right?" "Sometimes, it depends. Sometimes we stay here later." "I think you're missing a trail marker. The one for the North Canyon Trail is missing. I'm parked at the Maze parking lot, can you give me ride?" She went into an entrance fee, she knows they've been doing maintenance work on the Maze Trail and that signs get stolen, people have gotten lost on the Burro Loop, etc., etc.

Entrance fee? I'm already parked in the Park. The pass is in the RV. Basically, I walked over to the entrance side of the kiosk, I had been speaking to her on the exit side, and when the next vehicle came through, I stuck my thumb out. I hope I looked more like a hiker and not a bum. The first three passed me by, then Ms. Ranger stuck her head out of the kiosk and asked "Are you hitchhiking?" "I sure am."

The fourth car through parked and spent some time, probably looking at the map since he was meeting a buddy to do some climbing. Then I heard a car door and he approached me from behind and asked how far I was going. "A mile and a half up the road to the Maze parking lot." "Is that all? Come on."

Ok, picture this. It's a small car to begin with and he has the passenger seat moved all the way up. I don't want to move the seat because there might be a reason he has it in this position. So I'm sitting there with my knees against the dashboard and about eight inches from my face, holding my waistpack and hiking pole between my knees and telling him how I came to need a ride. He's from Washington and just here to do some climbing. He says he is a dirty bum. Fine with me if it's fine with you.

As I said, it was only a mile and a half up the road so my cramped position only lasted a couple minutes.

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Needless to say I was a little peeved at either the park, or the idiot who stole the sign.

As I drove back through the entrance station, I stopped and told her I made it. She then tells me "I was going to give you a ride or call someone to give you a ride." Now you tell me this? I could have been picked up by some bum from Washington and murdered for my RV.

Already mentioned that I put on about eight miles today. Challenging.

I don't recall ever having a shin splint before.

Back to WalMart for the night.

A shower, some Flexall 454 on the shin and ankle, dinner, sweep the floor, and finish Part II. I was too beat to write this one yesterday. There should be fewer pics tomorrow so I should be able to catch up.

Until next time.....