



# In Search of Eldorado



Day 21  
Friday  
January 25th  
Boulder City, Nevada  
to  
Pearce Ferry

Weather  
Great today. 60's and sunny

## Hello to Family & Friends

I am finally ready to embark on my exploration of Arizona. I know it might involve some off-roading with the RV, I was thinking of using the hill pictured above for practice. What do you think?

Said my goodbyes to Allen, Deb and Aunt Joan last night. I have been here in Henderson since January 7<sup>th</sup>. The water heater is fixed and working properly (an expensively learned lesson), my projects at their condo are complete, and this morning I hit the road.

I truly enjoyed my stay in Henderson. I spent every evening, mostly with Allen, sometimes with Deb, and I always spent a little time visiting with Aunt Joan. She is in home hospice care and I probably saw her and talked to her more in the past two months....oops, sorry, 17 days (just kidding) than I have my whole life. It was special. I even called Gpops last night and he had a chance to talk with Joan also. It was great.

## Eldorado

By Edgar Allen 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!'



The Railroad Pass Hotel and Casino...the oldest Casino in Nevada. This is where I spent most of my overnights. They allow camping in the parking lot for 3 days in a row, but since I was just sleeping there and leaving every day, there was no issue. Just as a plus with the RV, after 25 days on the road I have not yet paid for a campsite, and I still have cold milk in the fridge and ice cubes in the freezer. Thanks to the Nevada sunshine on those solar panels.



I decided to take a peek inside the casino since it had been so good to me. I thought there would be some significant history to the building and location, but only an 8' display case with some memorabilia.

However, they were having a silent auction of the items above. Take a look at the size of those World Series rings.



was sorely tempted to bid on the one below





First stop was a scenic overlook along HWY 93.



Lake Mead National Recreation Area

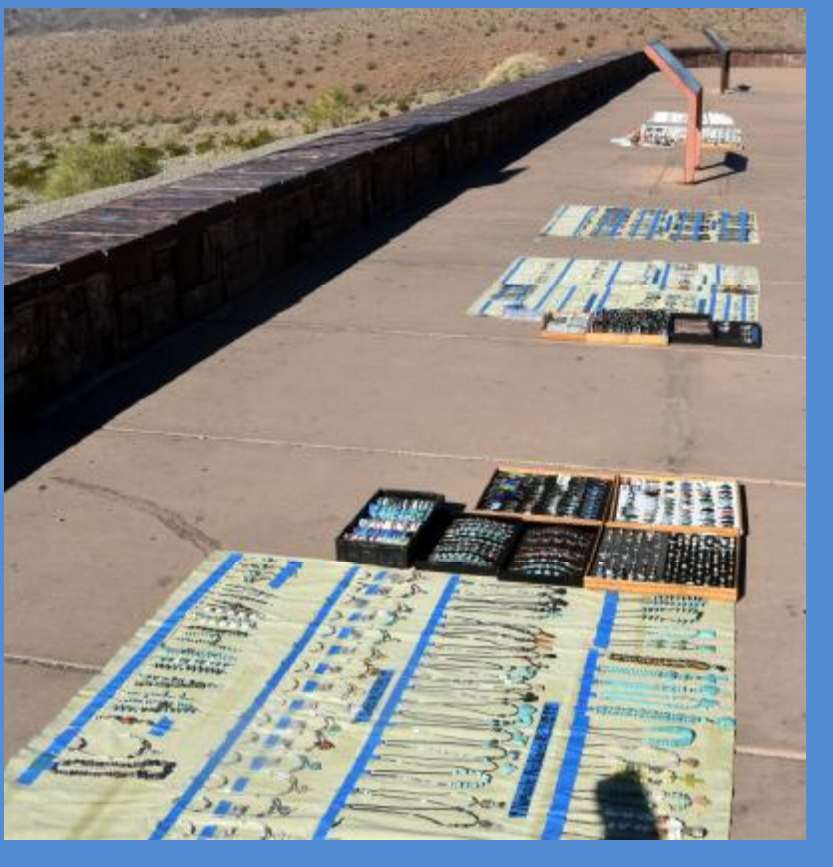
## Taming the Colorado

You are looking into Black Canyon and a narrow, river-like portion of Lake Mohave. To your left, about 59 miles downstream, is Davis Dam. To your right, 11 miles upstream, is Hoover Dam. The U.S. Government built the dams to tame the periodic flooding of the Colorado River, provide irrigation during dry periods, and generate electricity. The dams essentially accomplished these goals.

What effects, however, did they have on the environment? The deeper and wider waters attracted different bird species and altered the vegetation at the edges of Lake Mohave and Lake Mead. The slowing of the river's flow made the water temperature more constant, reduced sediment buildup below the dams, and disrupted the spawning cycles and habitats of native fish species.



Left and below? Self explanatory



There were a couple guys at the scenic overlook flying drones. We talked about them for awhile. Very cool and interesting. He called them toys for adults.





Next stop, the Willow Beach Marina and Fish Hatchery. Since my mom was such an avid fisherman, she never lost an opportunity to visit a fish hatchery. I remember going to several when I was just a lad.



I was a little surprised at the size of the marina here. The access road is downhill, bumpy, S-curvey and potholey, yet there are probably 150+ boat slips.



Sign says open 7-3.

Hmmm... Government shutdown 1, Mark 0.

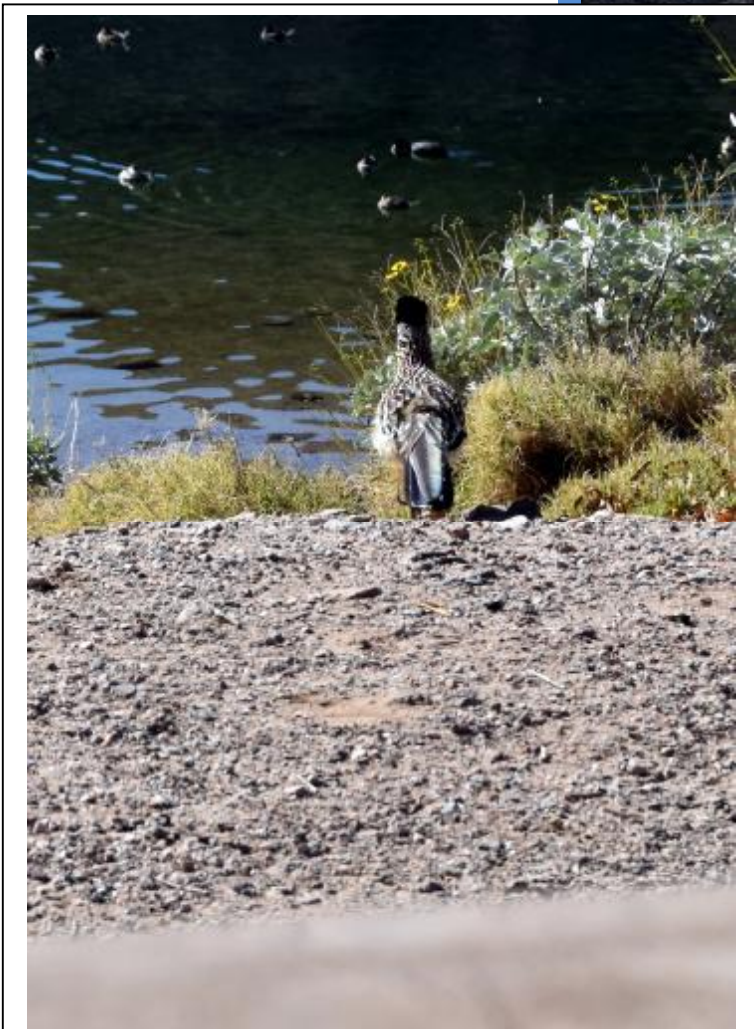
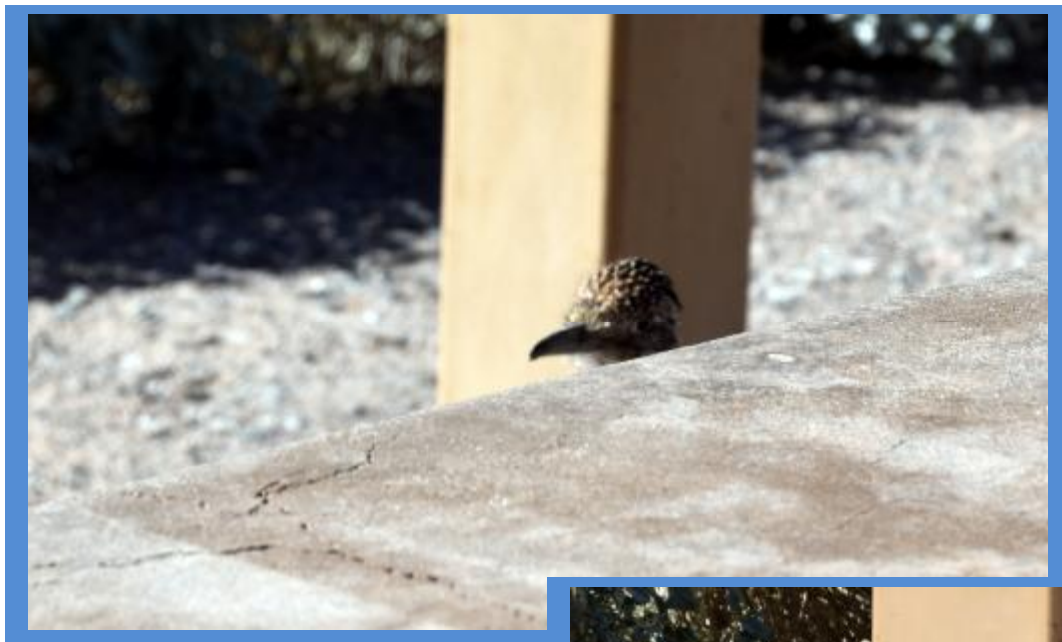


I did hear pounding so someone is at least caring for the fish



Oh well, if you can't take the tour, at least enjoy the view for lunch.

I had several visitors for lunch. There were plenty of fat ducks around which I gave a wheat thin to and watched them fight it out. But the one that intrigued me was the Roadrunner that hopped on the bench on the other side of my picnic table. Not sure I have ever been that close to a road runner before, except maybe on Saturday mornings as a kid. Beep, Beep.



As I drove through the marina parking lot I noticed some info plaques and a walkway along the waterfront, so I took a look.



As I walked to the first plaque, I thought I was again hearing a drone. I actually looked up into the sky. Then I realized that this tree was so full of bees that their buzzing was loud enough to sound like a drone. If you look closely you can see all the little black specs.



Nice spot for a boat ride



# The Arizona Fleet

Lake Mead  
National Recreation Area

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



From California ports, ocean winds sailed south around the Baja Peninsula, then north in the Colorado River. Transferred to river steamer at Fort Huachuca, passengers and cargo then moved upriver to the many landings, mostly at mining settlements, that dotted the Colorado in the 1870s. One boat steamed as far as Caliente, more 400 miles from the river's mouth.



The *Ulla*, *Coyote*, and *Boyer* (l. to r.) steamed in 1871. The 100-foot-long steam-landers carried nearly 200 tons, and in the 1870s transported more than 200 passengers per month.

The ring bolt anchored in this rock recalls a time when this stretch of river echoed with the whistle and roar of the steam-powered "Arizona Fleet." The ring bolt came from just upriver, where rapids forced steamboats to use cables and winches. The boats attached cables to ring bolts anchored in the canyon walls. On the ship's deck a winch reeled in the cables, pulling the boat upstream.

Steamboats plied the lower Colorado from 1857 until about 1900, supplying military outposts, mines, and towns. Steamers made 5 or 6 mph upstream—slow, but easier than a 200-mile mule trek from San Diego. But beginning in 1878 came the railroads, which eventually reduced steamboats to local shuttles. Finally, dams sealed the river, and the fleet sailed no more.



In 1878 the *Explorer* (right) was the first steamboat up this stretch of river. The steersman compared

one set of rapids upstream from here, but then struck a rock and quit the journey.

I never realized that supply boats sailed around the Baja Peninsula from California and up the Colorado River to keep miners supplied. It was a long trip but still shorter than 200 miles with a mule team.





I read about this place on Roadside America. They list a lot of the oddball things I hope to show you on this trip.

Last Stop has a Monster truck (check out the photo below), Helicopter tour of the Grand Canyon, a shooting range to fire machine guns, off-roading vehicles, a gift shop and a restaurant.

Much of the exterior is painted with images of the Terminator, Blue Brothers, Rambo, etc. The one further below I thought was kinda cute.



"Curse you Red Baron!!!"



I thought there would be a little more to the White Hills ghost town than this sign, but I guess not.



On my way to Pierce Ferry, as I passed through Meadview, these mountains were on my right. They made me think of the type of mountains seen in Egypt. I wanted to pull over and take a picture and spotted a road ahead.

I had a good laugh when I saw the street sign.

I guess I wasn't the only one who thought they looked like Egyptian mountains.





As I drove further along Pierce Ferry Rd I started to see Joshua Trees. I think this is the first time have seen them in person. It has always been photos up til now. I did not realize at first what they were, then after I saw a couple signs about Joshua something-or-other, the wheels clicked.



Weird shot. It looks like a flat plateau, but notice the valley curving through it? That is the Colorado River. I am now actually in Grand Canyon National Park, what they call "The West End". No ranger station, visitor center or entry fee over here.

# Seismograph Station

Lake Mead  
National Recreation Area  
Boulder, Arizona



What is that building on the hill?

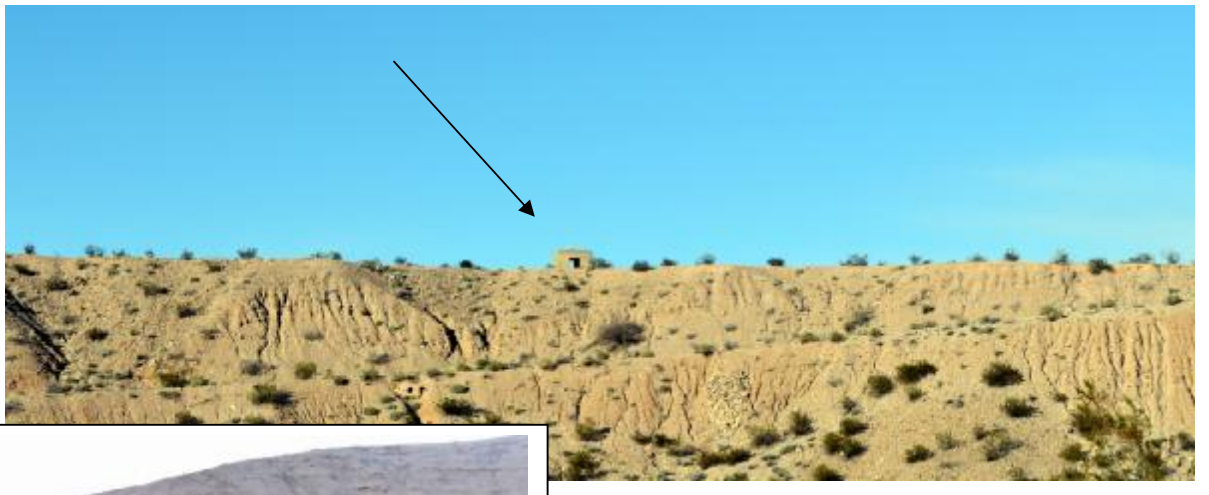
It is all that's left of a seismograph station from 1940. It was used to study the earthquakes that followed the creation of Lake Mead.

The building housed the generator for the seismograph.



## Lake Mead gets things shaking

When Hoover Dam was completed in 1936, the waters of the Colorado River were blocked, and Lake Mead was created. This was the largest feat of engineering ever attempted, and no one knew how the great weight of Lake Mead would affect the stability of the earth's crust. Scientists became concerned about a series of earthquakes that began in 1938, and built the station here to study them. After ten years, the earthquakes subsided.



This is a dynamite bunker built by the CCC during the depression. Outside and inside

A much kinder and gentler  
Colorado River down here.



My campsite for the evening. Pierce Ferry Campground. I am the only one here



A little later as the sun was setting behind me.

I will attempt to get a star shot tonight.

It was an interesting day. I am two weeks behind my original schedule, but I am not going to hurry to catch up. If I don't see it this time, I'll see it next time.

Tomorrow morning I plan on taking the bike around the Ferry area here before heading back. I am about 50 miles from HWY 93 and have to take the same road out as I took in, Pierce Ferry Rd., the last 7 miles were gravel. Not nearly as bad as the roads in Big Bend though Morgan.

Al, I told Aunt Joan you would read her my newsletters and show her the pictures. Just want to make sure you're spending enough time with her. LOL LOL

Last item is that I will be off the grid a good share of the time, I have no signal as I write this, so there may be no newsletters one day and three the next. I am going to try my cell phone booster right now. Wish me luck!