

# Western Road Trip Newsletter



Sunrise in The Devil's Garden

## Hello to my Family and Friends!

Sunrise this morning was about 6:54. Since I am camped in the Devil's Garden Campground and Landscape Arch is a short hike down the Devil's Garden Loop Trail, I wanted to give you a shot of sunrise on what may be the largest natural rock span in the world. The picture above was taken on the way there.



At 6:40 I was only the third vehicle in the parking lot, so I knew there were already photo bugs out there on the trail. I took another sunrise shot on the trail as I raced to beat the sun to the Arch.

Day 19  
Wednesday  
November 13th

Another day  
in  
Arches  
National Park

### Stats

75 miles today  
2694 total miles this trip

### Weather

High Temp: 54  
Low Temp: 30's  
Conditions: Mostly Cloudy

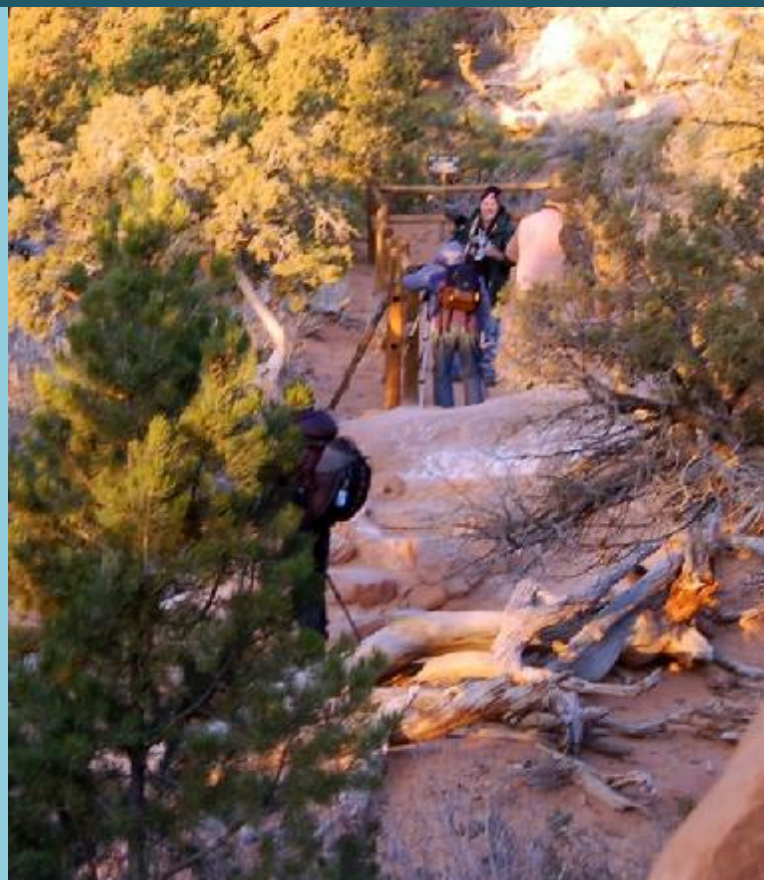
*"I did most of the  
above in my  
bedroom slippers!"*



Some of the  
Rangers started  
getting fancy with  
their rock cairns



Yup. There were about six others down by the arch waiting for the sun, most had tripods, I gave up carrying a tripod many years ago.

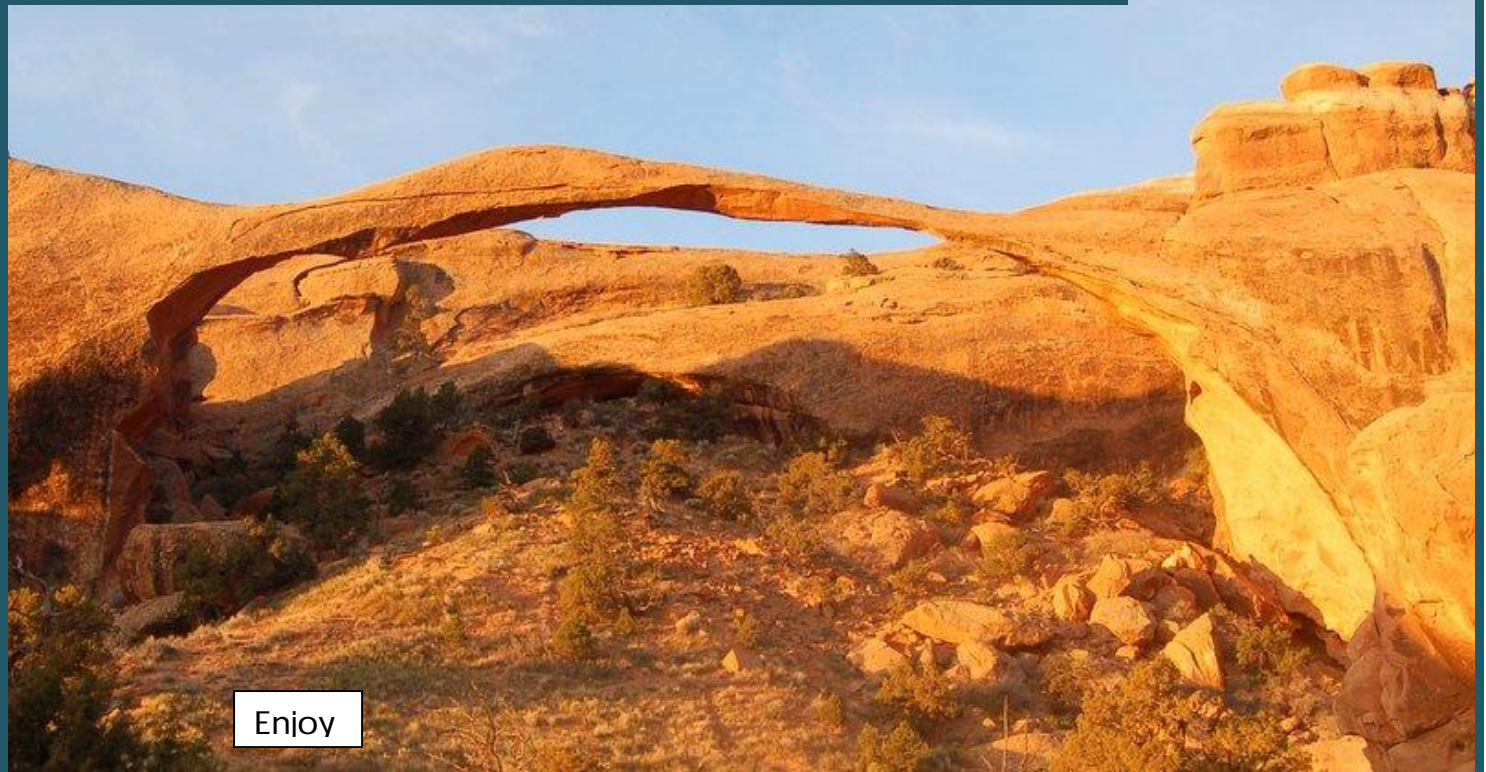


## Landscape Arch

September 1, 1991 – Hikers thought they heard cracks of thunder from distant clouds. Visitors resting under Landscape Arch noticed loud cracking and popping noises overhead. They fled as small rocks tumbled from the slender 306-foot-long span. Moments later, a 60-foot-long rock slab peeled away from the arch's right side. When the dust settled, 180 tons of fresh rock debris lay scattered on the ground.

What caused this cataclysmic event? Water had been slowly shaping the arch for countless centuries, dissolving cement between sand grains, seeping into tiny cracks, freezing and expanding. What had finally upset the delicate balance?

Unseasonably heavy rains the preceding ten days may have filled pore spaces within the sandstone. The added weight may have finally overwhelmed the rock slab in its timeless struggle with gravity.

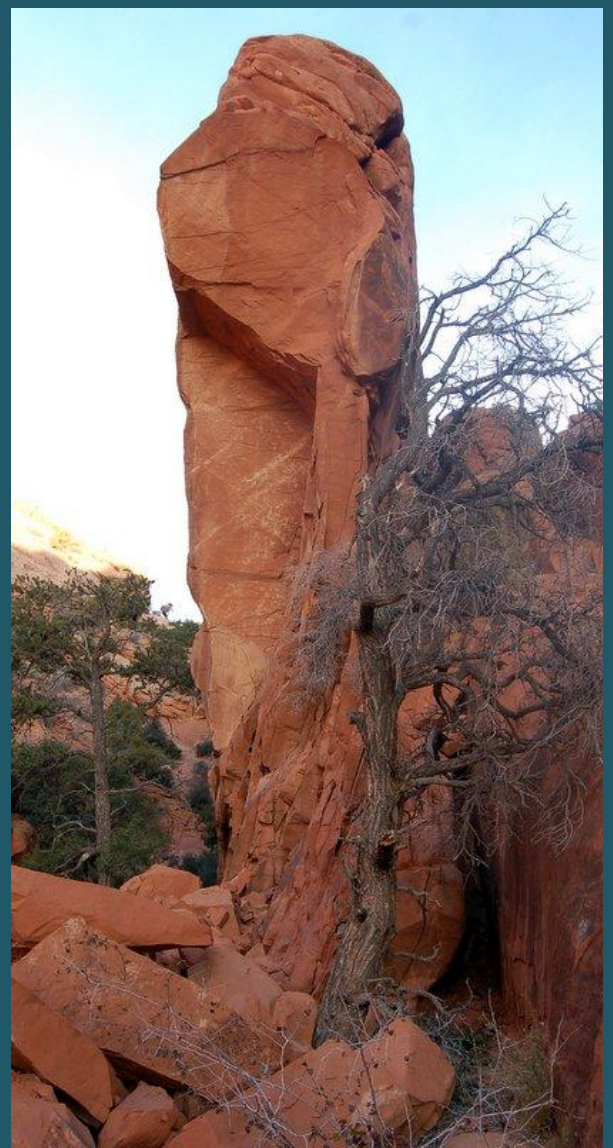


Enjoy

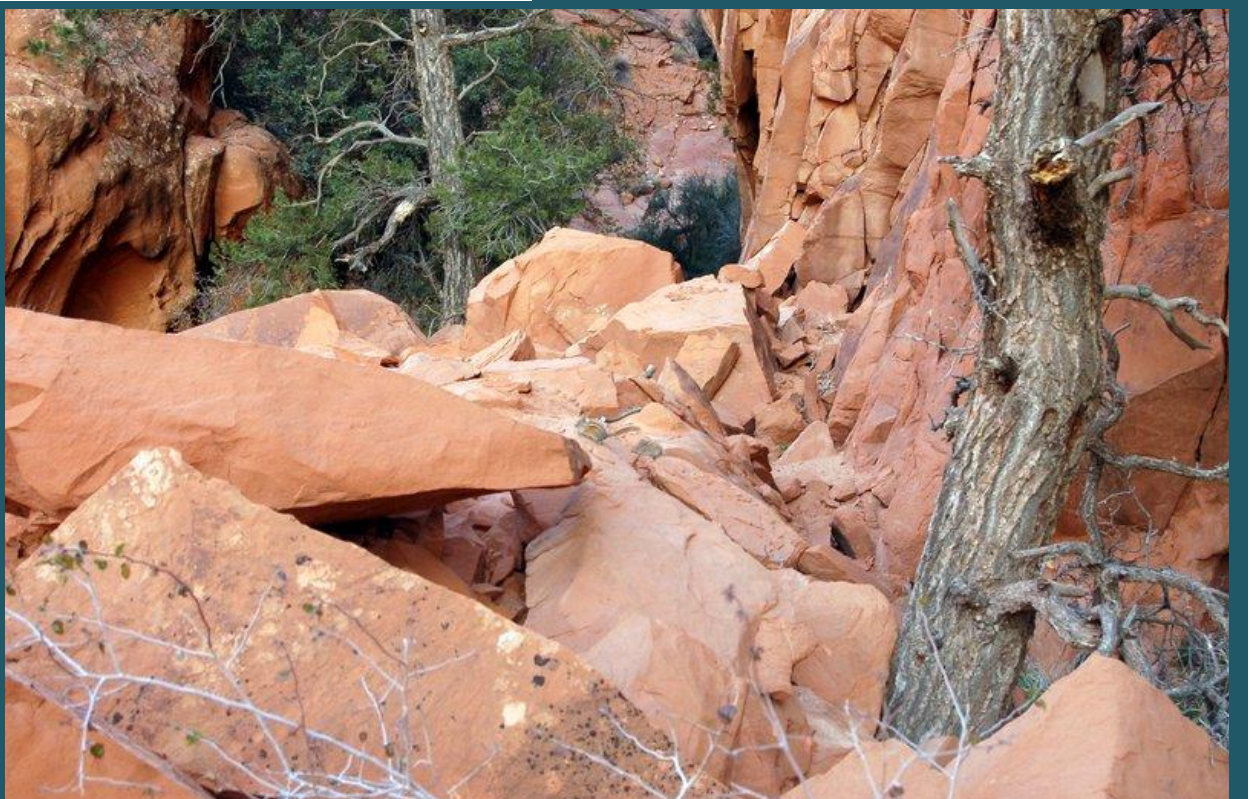
This was the best of about ten shots.



Left is a "Fin", long, tall and skinny.

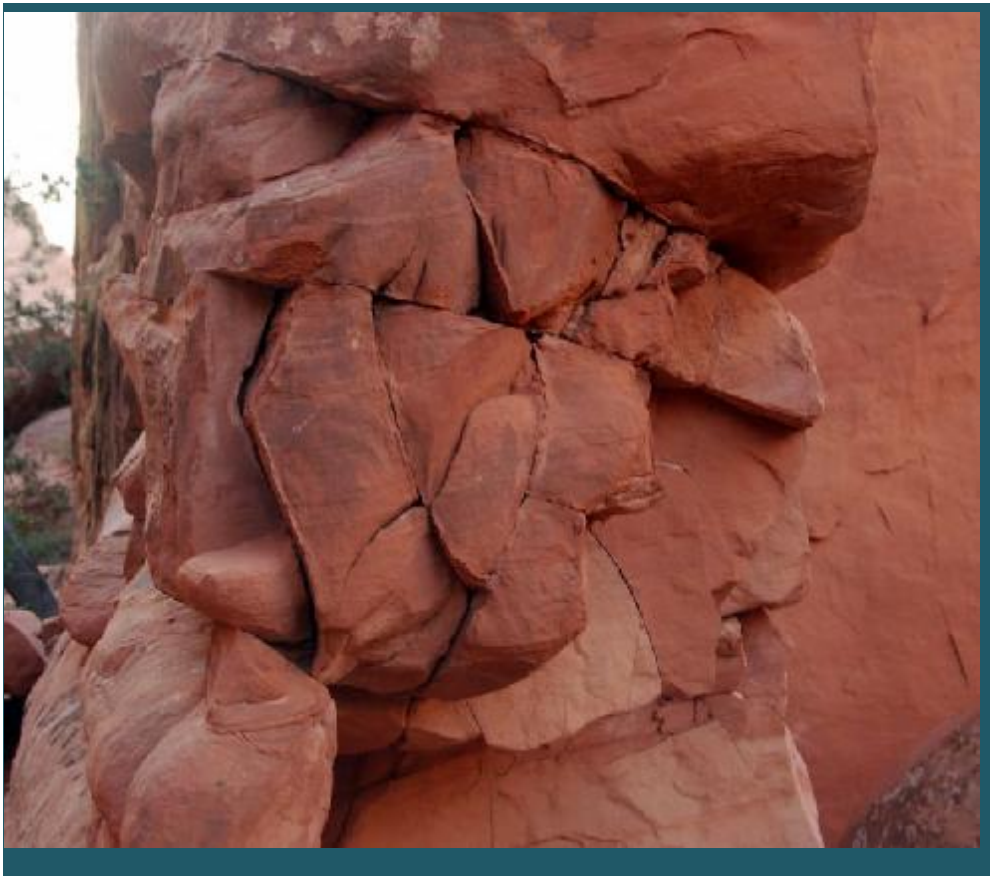


Right: I thought it was interesting how the rock shears away in thin pieces. Below: It looks like this may have been a much larger fin that came apart and crashed down leaving the large rubble pile.

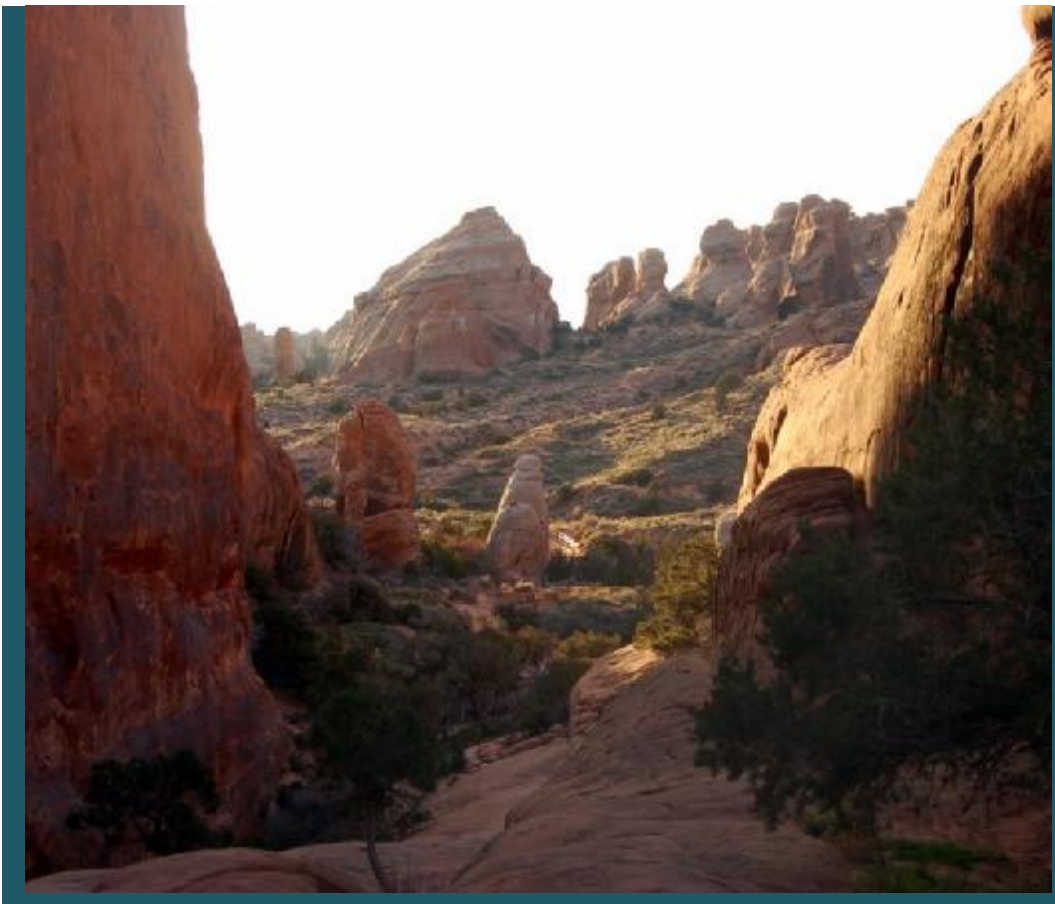




Photographs do not show the sense of size unless there is something in the pic to compare to. I have done this a few times already and will again later today. I used a different method above.



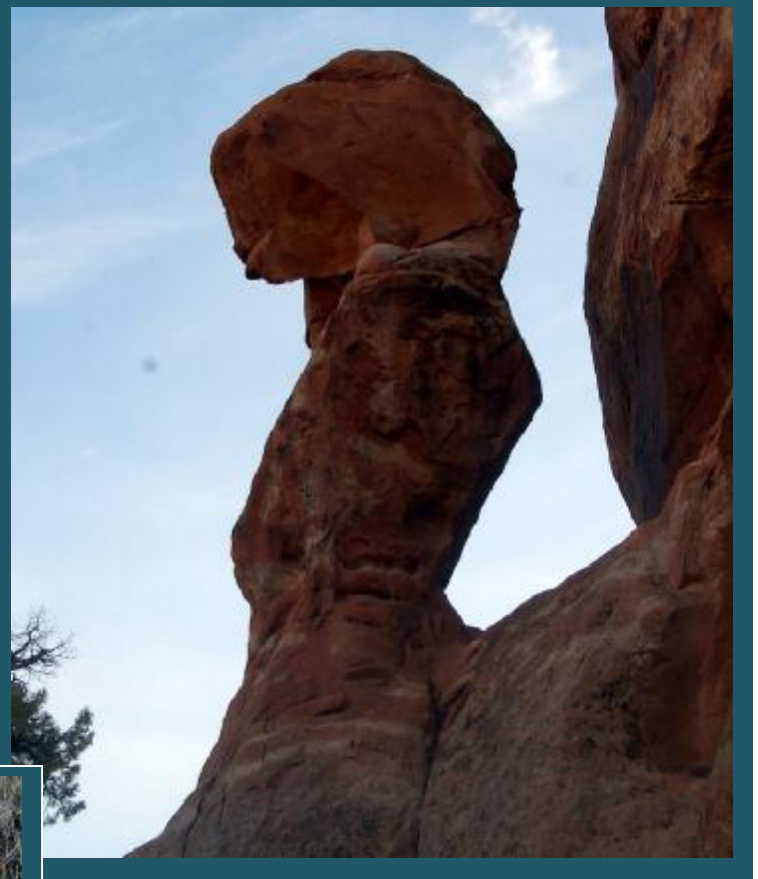
This is the first time out here I have seen rocks cemented together in different shapes, it is usually like slices of bread next to each other.



I only hiked an additional few hundred yards down the trail. It is a 7 mile loop that I had no interest in tackling before breakfast.

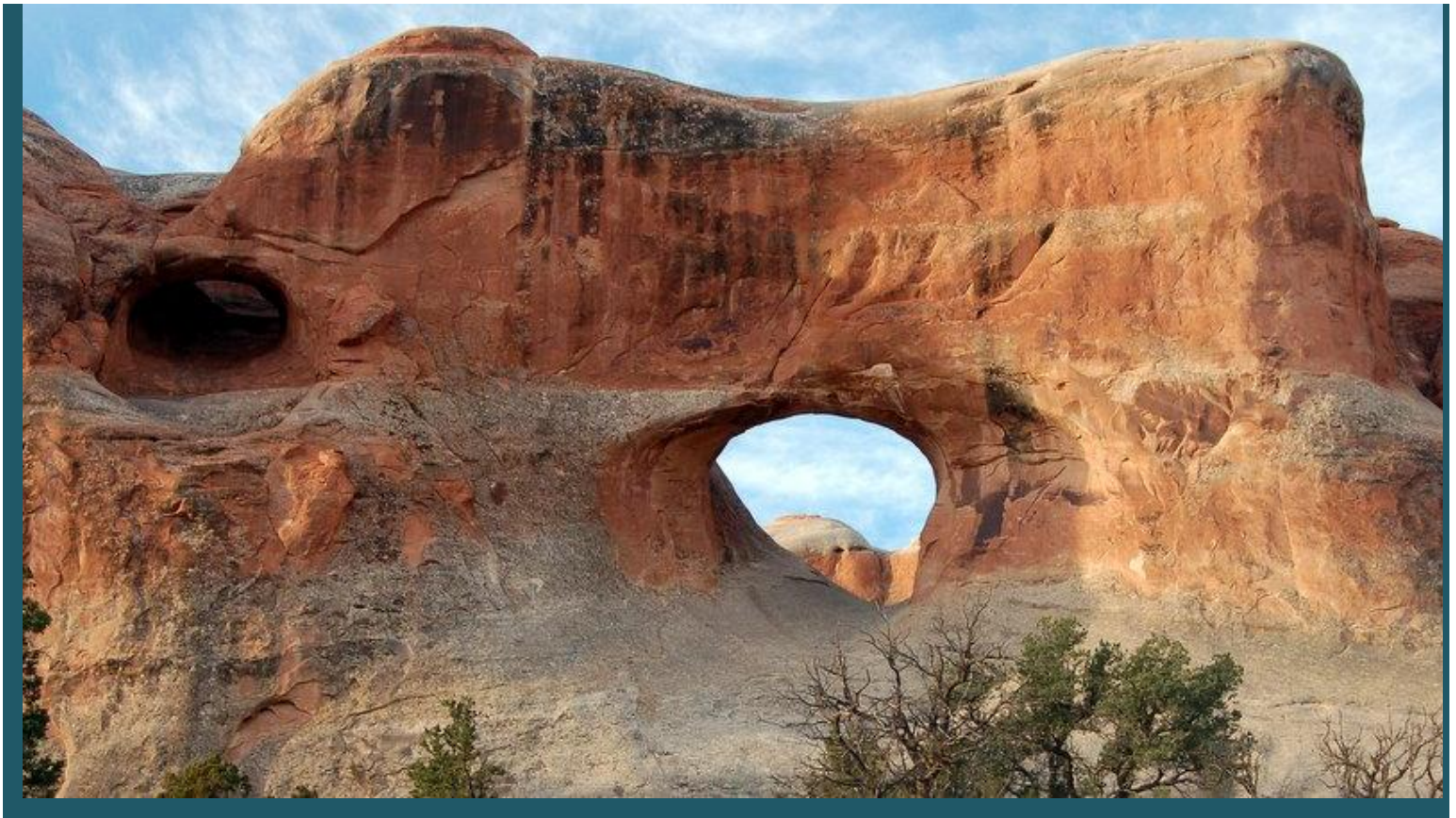
As I scrambled up some slickrock this was the view behind me. I took the picture then started back to camp. I knew there were supposed to be a couple spur trails to other arches. I seemed to have missed them on the trek out, probably because I was in such a hurry.

I thought the little guy below (again about 20' high) should have a name, how about "The Praying Mantis"?

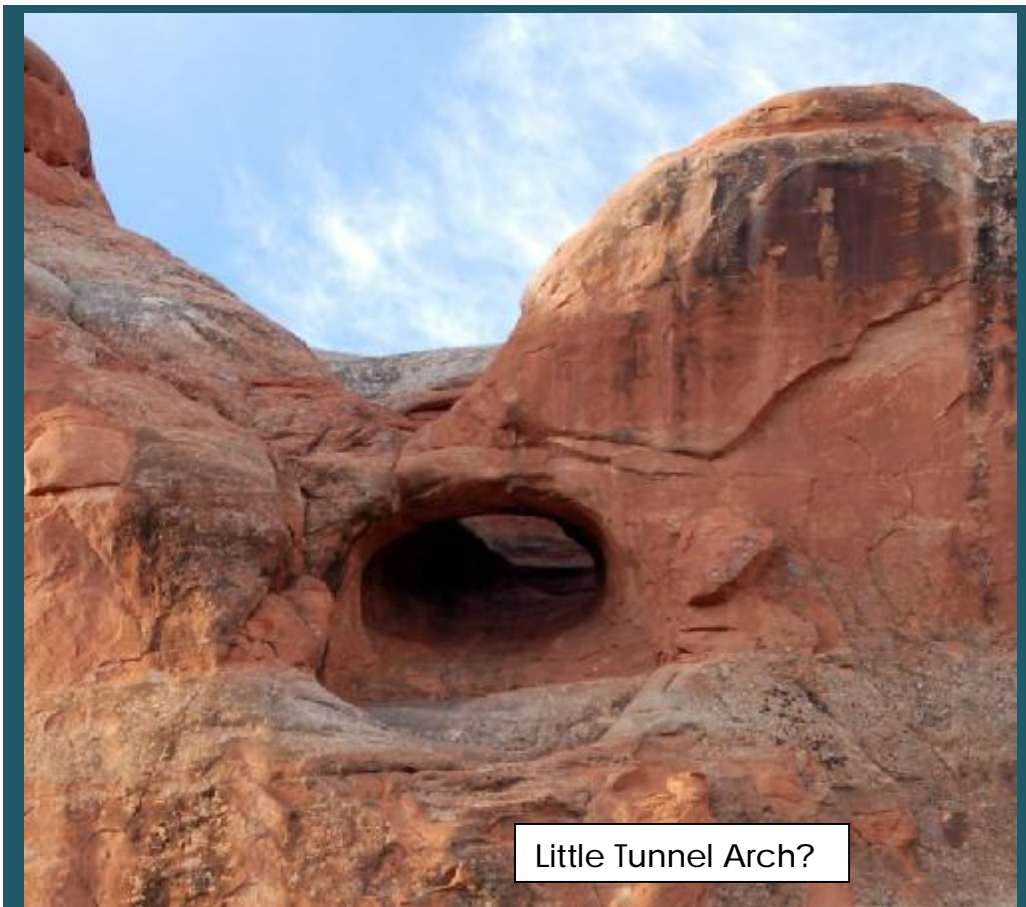


Aha! I was right. Pine Tree Arch and Tunnel Arch. I came across the spur trails on my way back. Let's see what these arches look like.

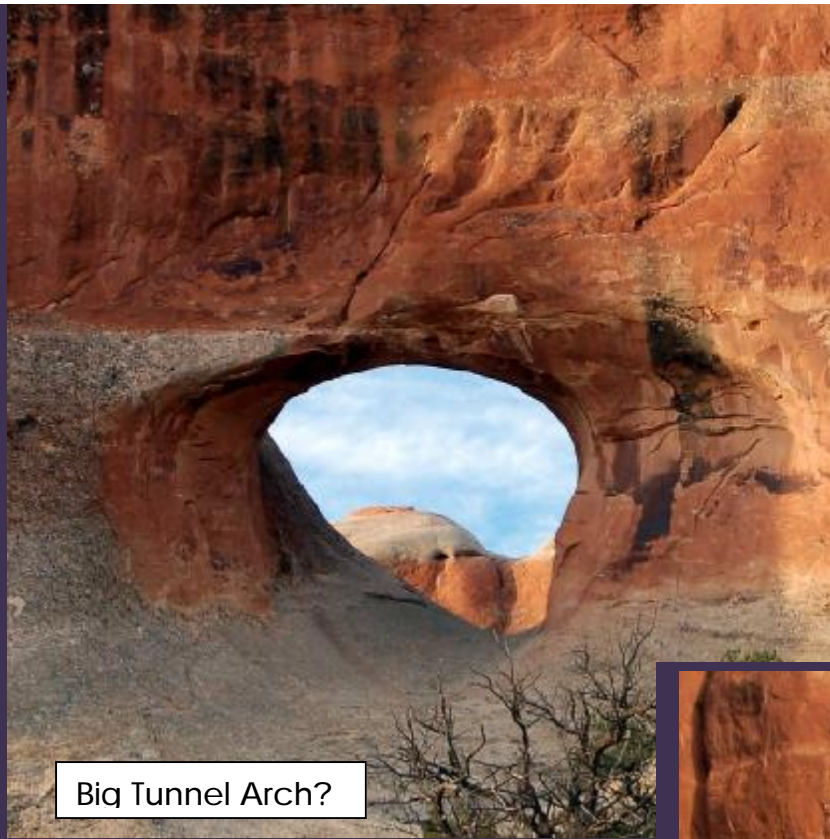




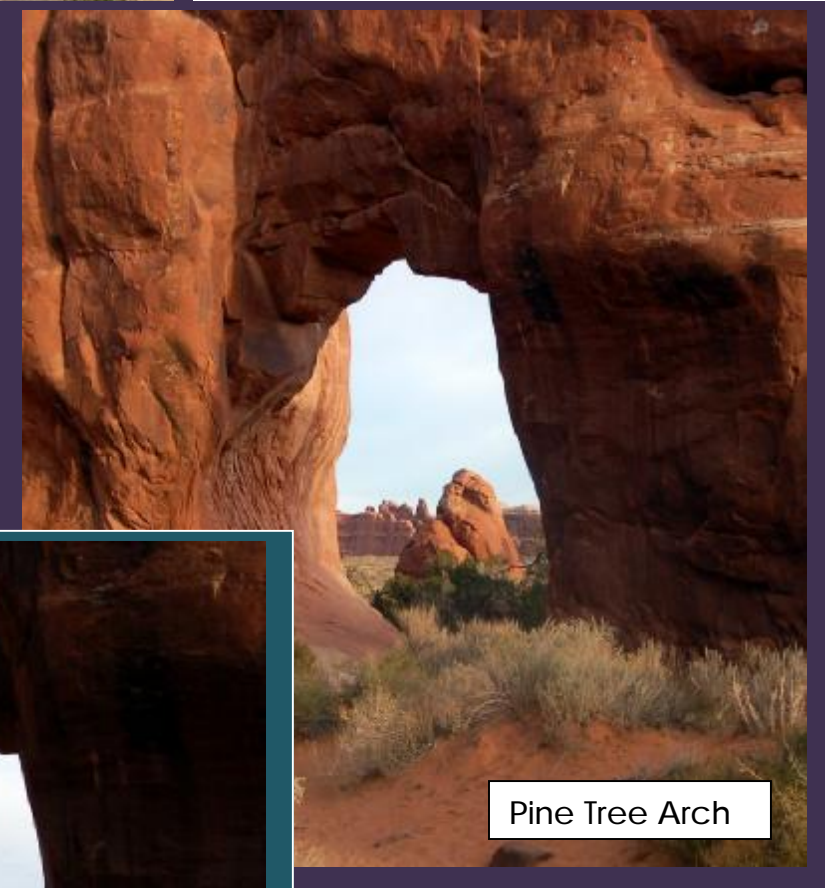
There is one thing I have noticed here at Arches, the lack of information regarding each individual arch or sight. Yesterday I did not know what rock formation was the Courthouse Towers, today there is no plaque telling me which arch is Tunnel Arch and why it was given that name. It also told me Tunnel Arch was this direction, and then I find two arches. I have no idea if they both have names or not.



Little Tunnel Arch?



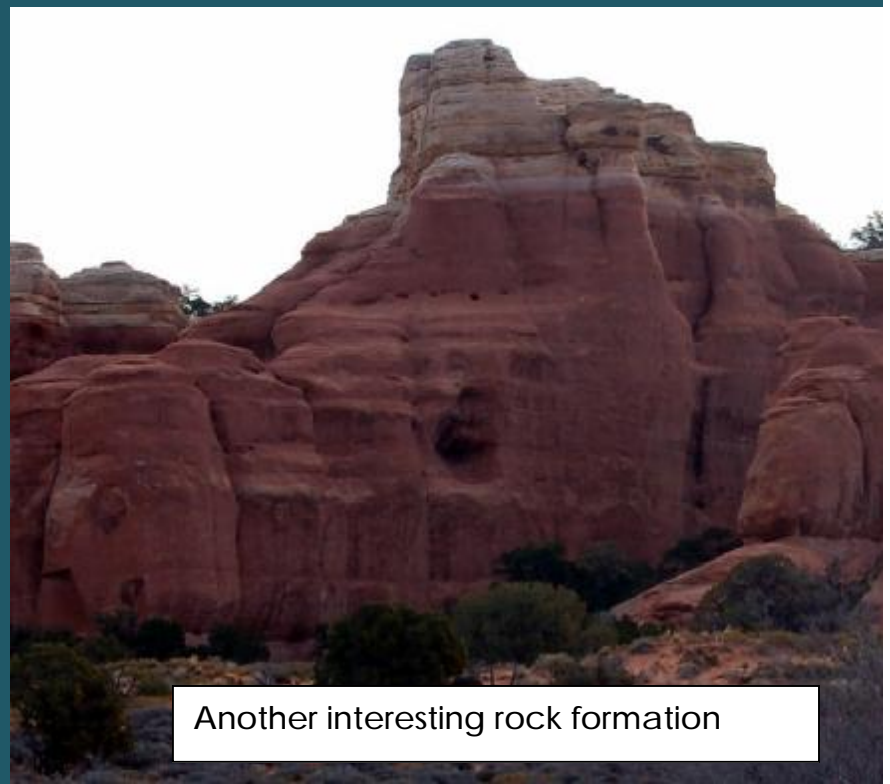
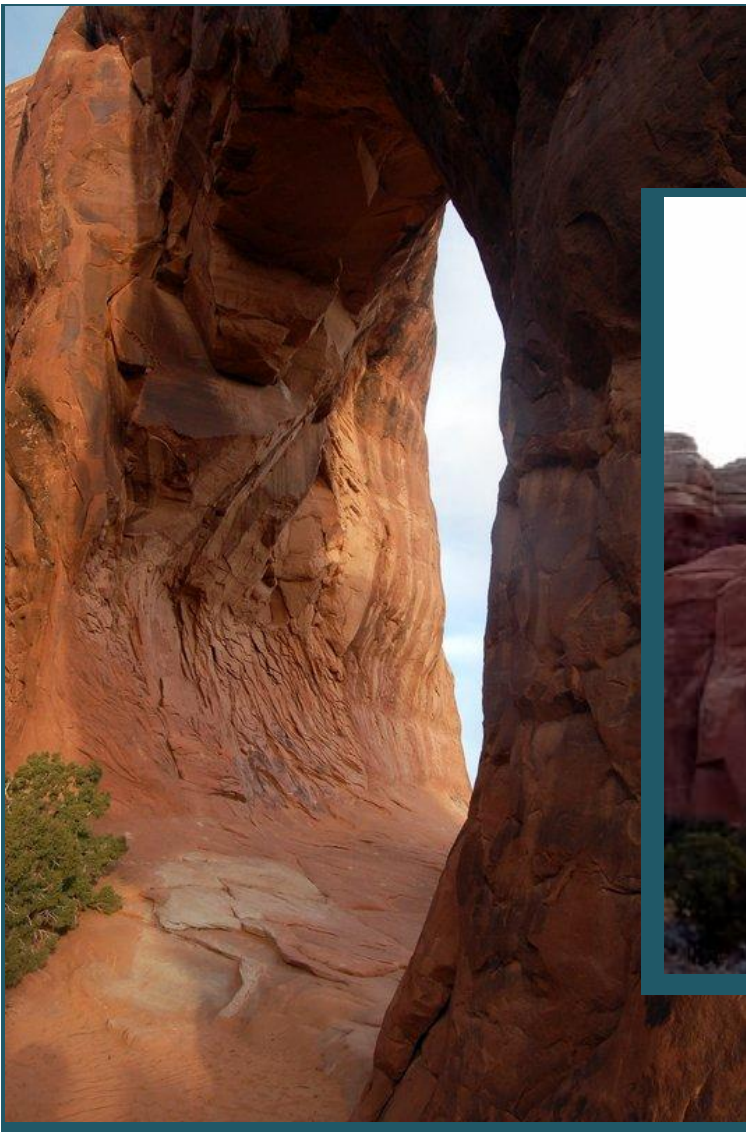
Big Tunnel Arch?



Pine Tree Arch



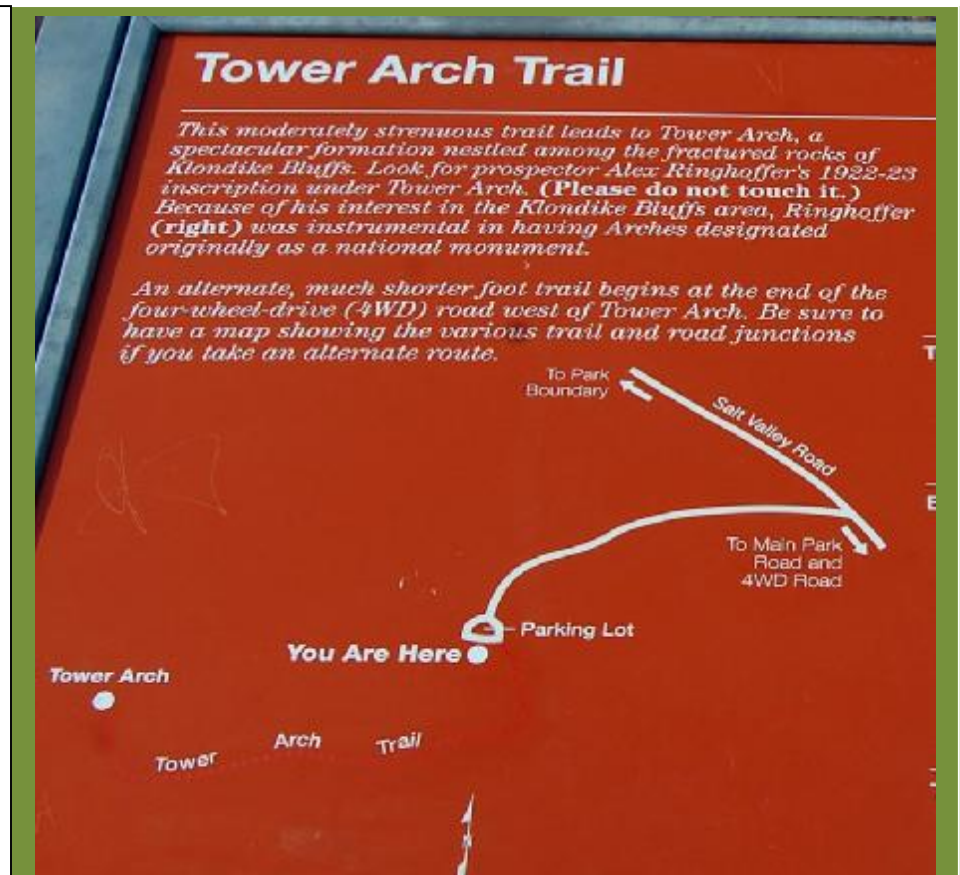




Another interesting rock formation

I made it back to camp, cleaned up and ate breakfast. While eating the Ranger Couple who are the campground Hosts, stopped to admire my camper. I asked them if the unpaved road to Tower Arch was open – Yes, and if there were still Ranger guided hikes through The Fiery Furnace – Yes, but I had to get my ticket at the Visitor's Center. Darn, I forgot about that when first arrived, and now I have to go all the way back there. Oh well.

So I made sure I had everything I needed for my hike and headed down for a little off-roading to Tower Arch. The drive there was uneventful, so I will get right to the pictures from the hike.

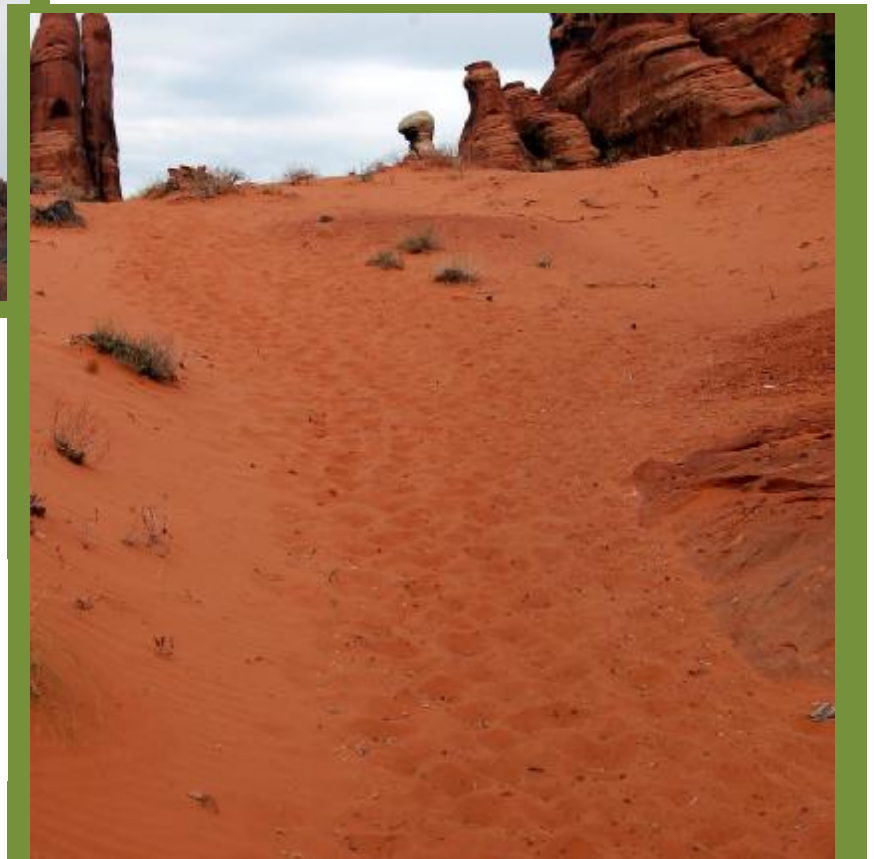




Here again, I am in a state of confusion, not unusual for me as you all know. Along the trail I am supposed to pass "The Marching Men". To me this kind of looks like a group of soldiers, in tight ranks, marching along. However, the map shows the feature on the opposite side of the trail. As I moved further along I came across the photo below. Maybe this is "The Marching Men"? Doesn't quite fit the bill in my eyes. I will think about it and get back to you later.



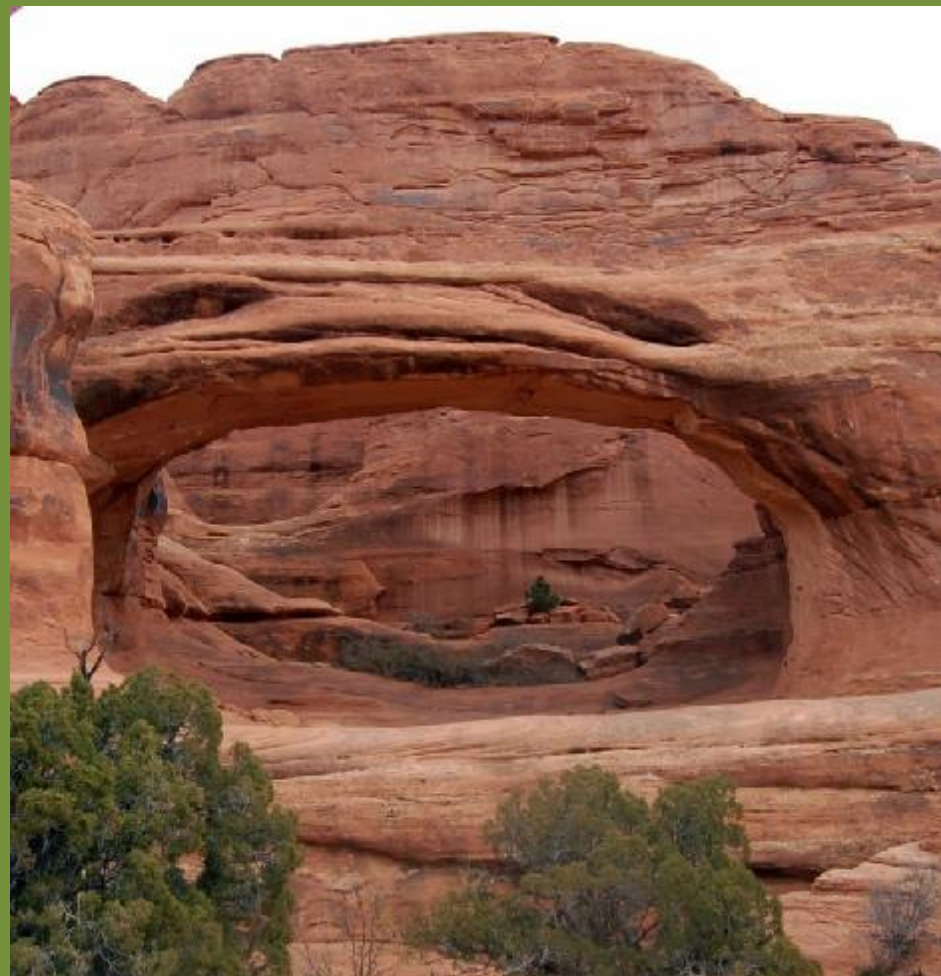
Looks like the tail fin to an airplane, but this one is a couple hundred feet high and probably 50-60' wide.



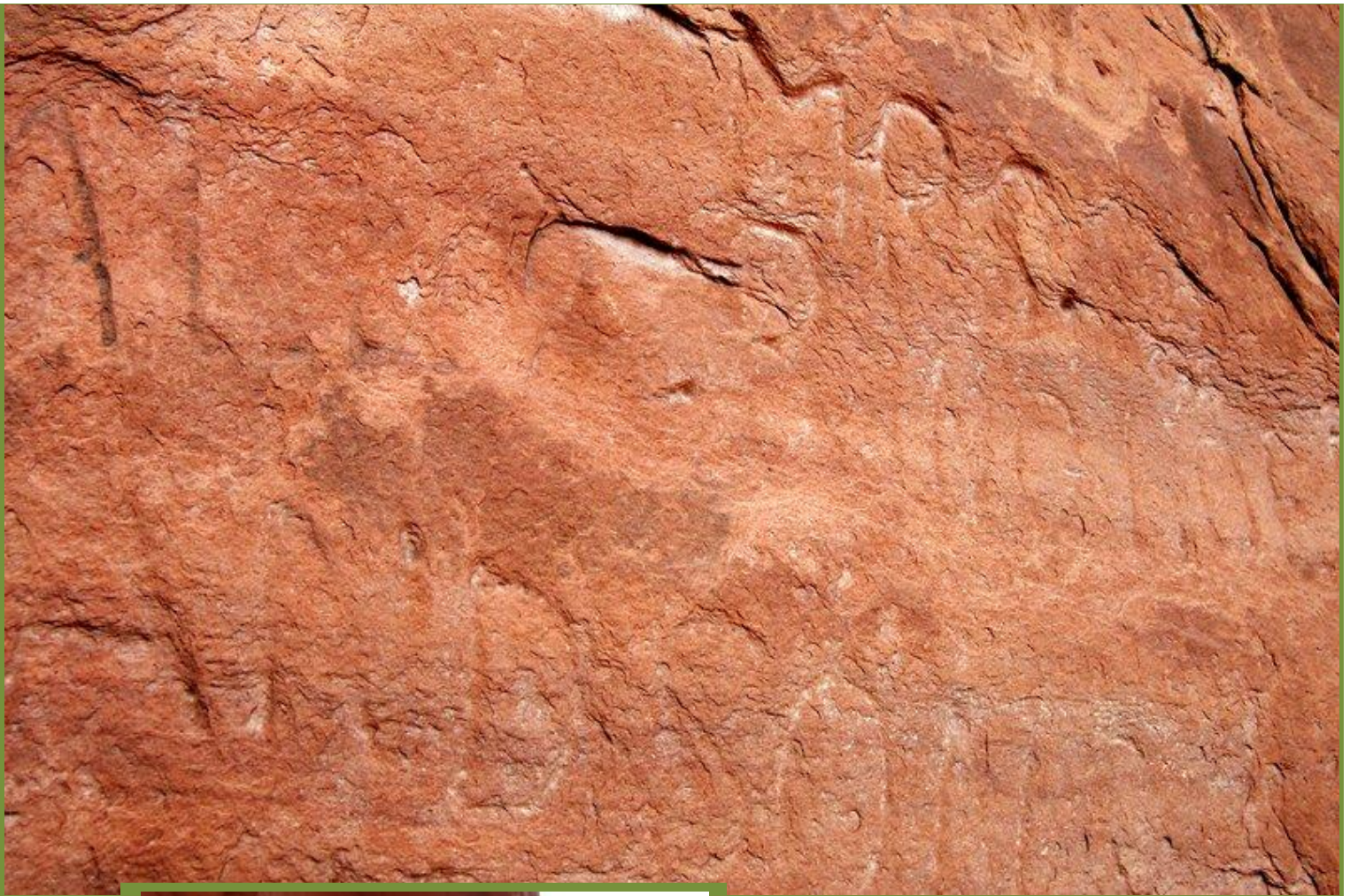
A lot of the trail was just straight sand like that to the right, very hard going. I am glad I had both trekking poles. They help a lot.



Above: The trail led into this neat little valley. Can you find the cairn I am following? The arch is middle right, just over that dome of rock.



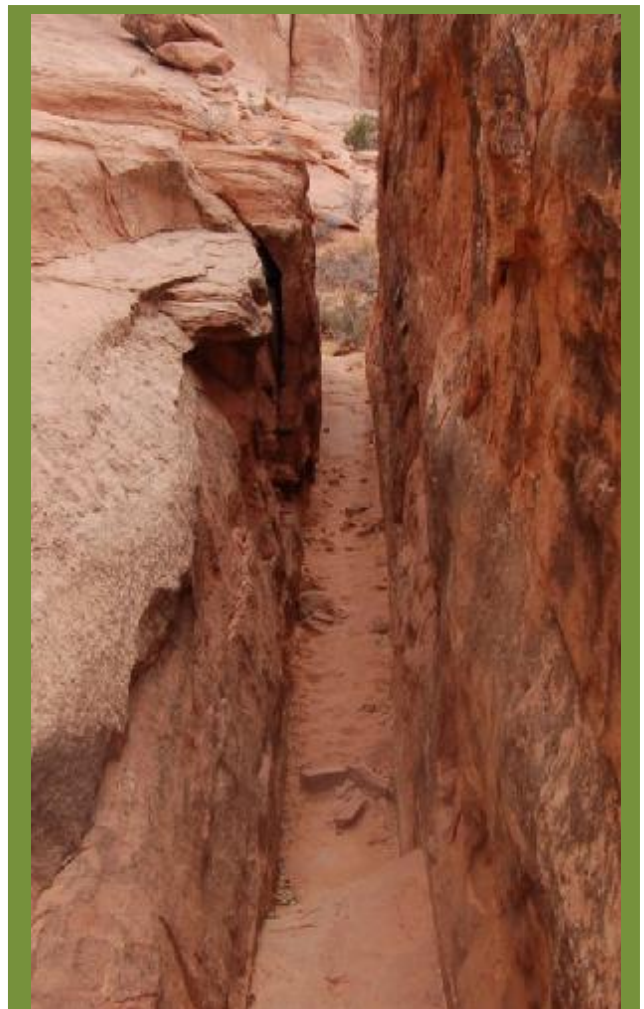
Left: Tower Arch. Not real impressive from this angle, but just wait.



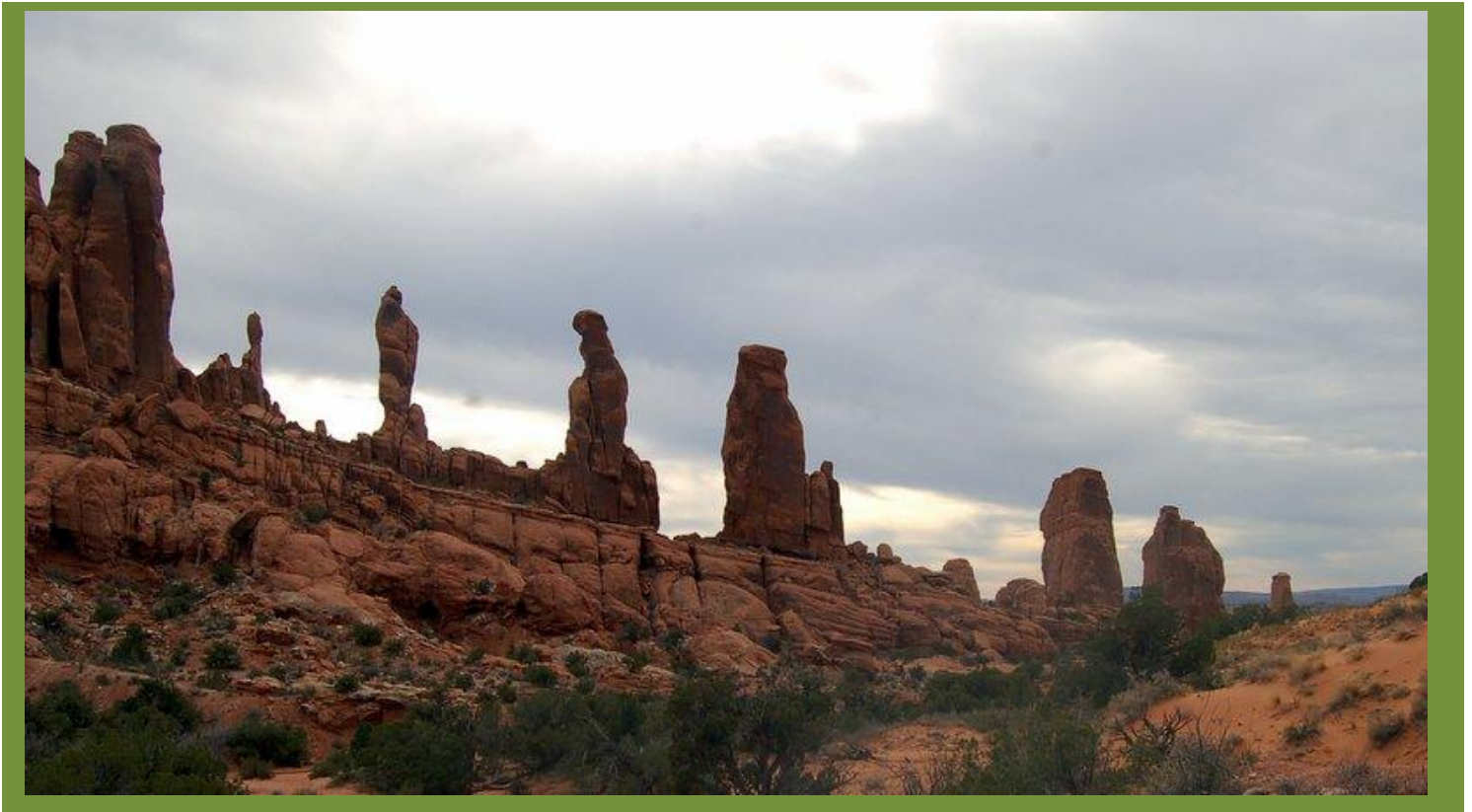
It is possible to walk up right under the arch, and through it. The photo above is supposedly the inscription left by Alex Ringhoffer, the man who first discovered the arch.

Left is a view of the underside as I looked up at it.

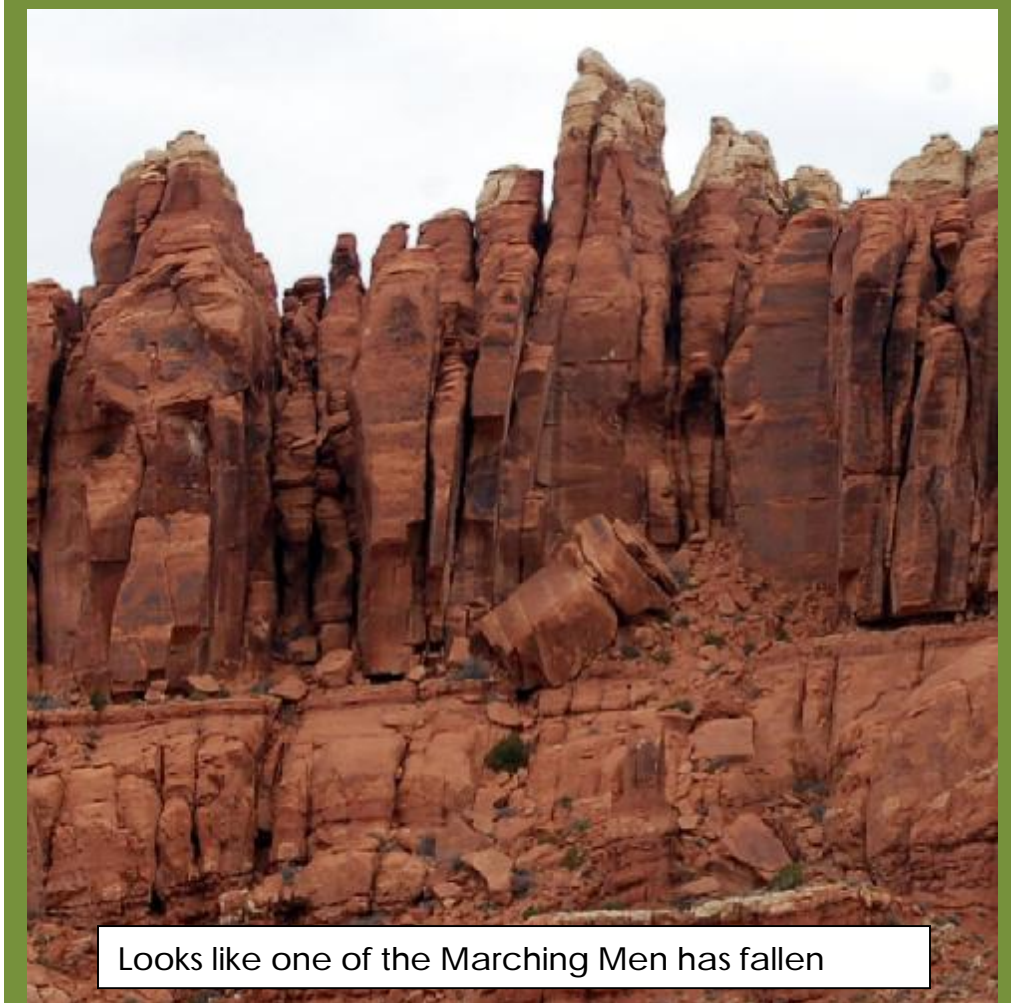
Below: A beautiful shot of the valley from inside the arch. This view made the hike very worthwhile. It was still too early for lunch, so I sat and enjoyed a snack while I took in the view. I was glad I started early and had the place to myself. As I was leaving I heard voices and saw another group of four had just arrived – Perfect timing.



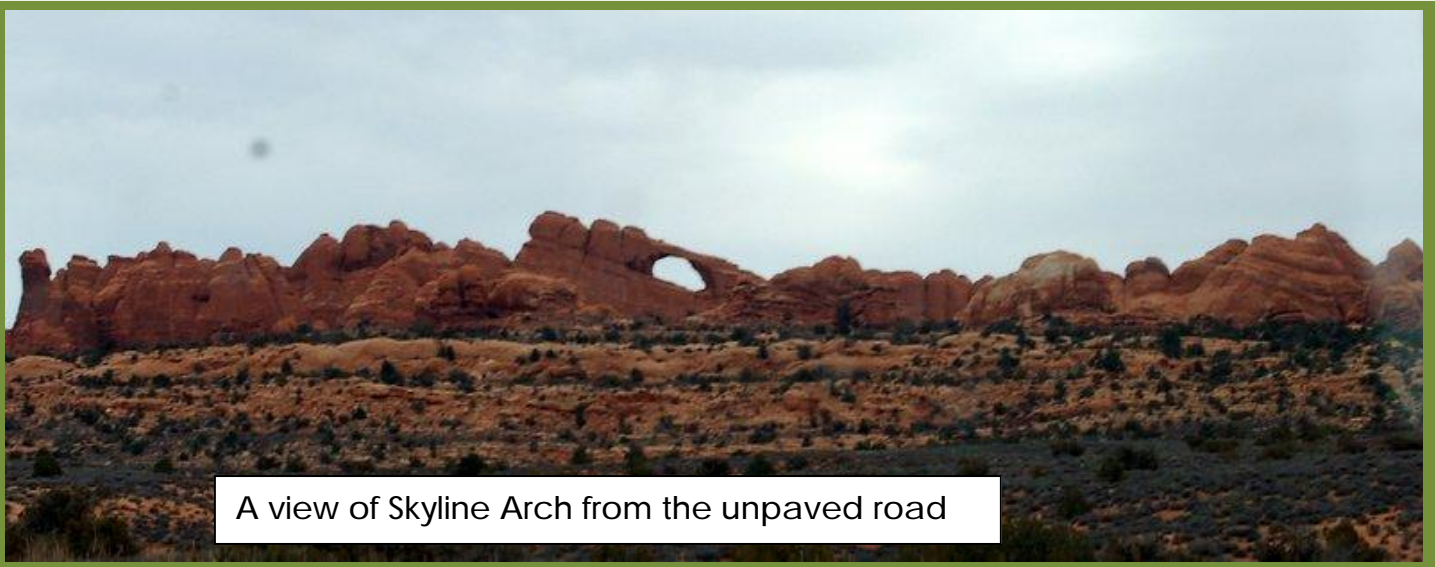
On the trail back



Here is this photo again. After some time to think about it, it reminds me of the end of *The Sound of Music*, when the Von Trapp Family is making their way over the Austrian Alps



Looks like one of the Marching Men has fallen



A view of Skyline Arch from the unpaved road

After I regained hardtop roads, I made my way to the Visitor's Center where I remembered this plaque and took my camera to get a shot of it. I also bought a ticket for the Ranger guided Fiery Furnace Walk. Drove into Moab for some milk, then stopped at Park Avenue to eat lunch.

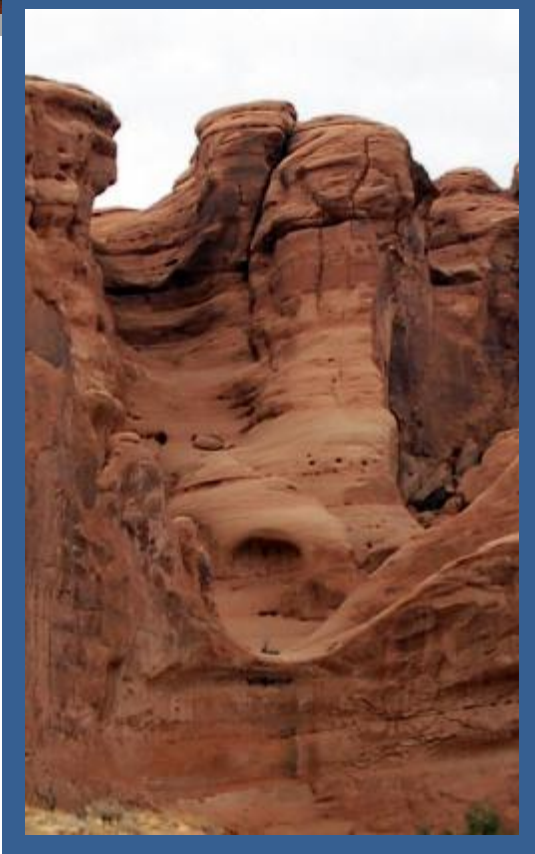
*"National parks are not playgrounds, nor theme parks, but sanctuaries, meant to be forever; they are priceless time capsules for tomorrow that we are privileged to know and enjoy today."*

— Michael Frome, 1995

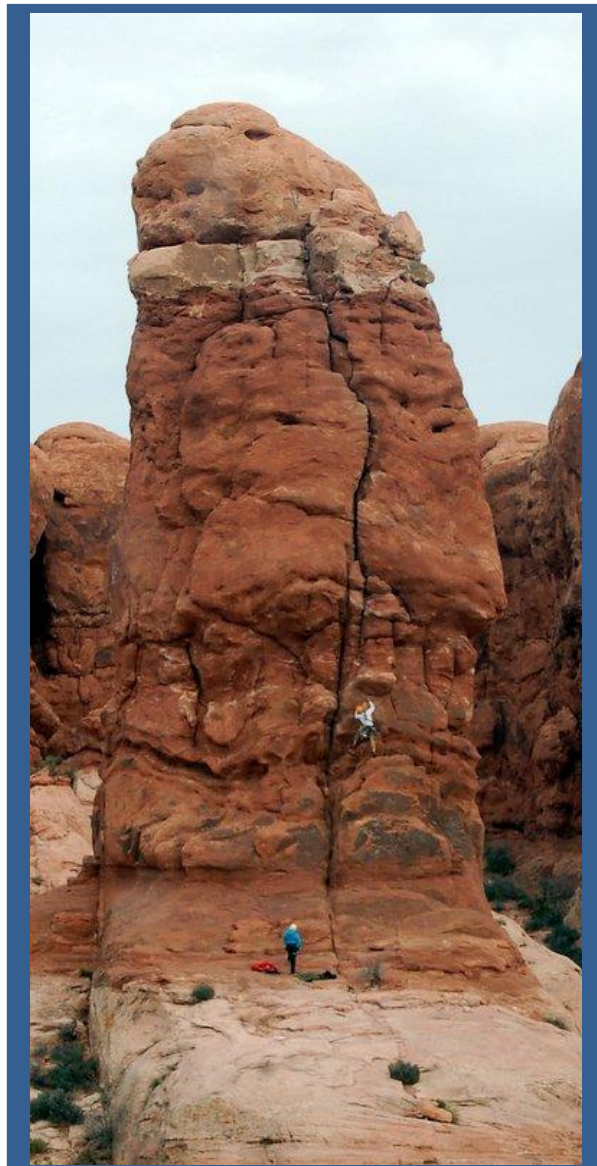


Park Avenue





Above: Kinda looks like a house right out of Dr. Seuss, don't you agree?

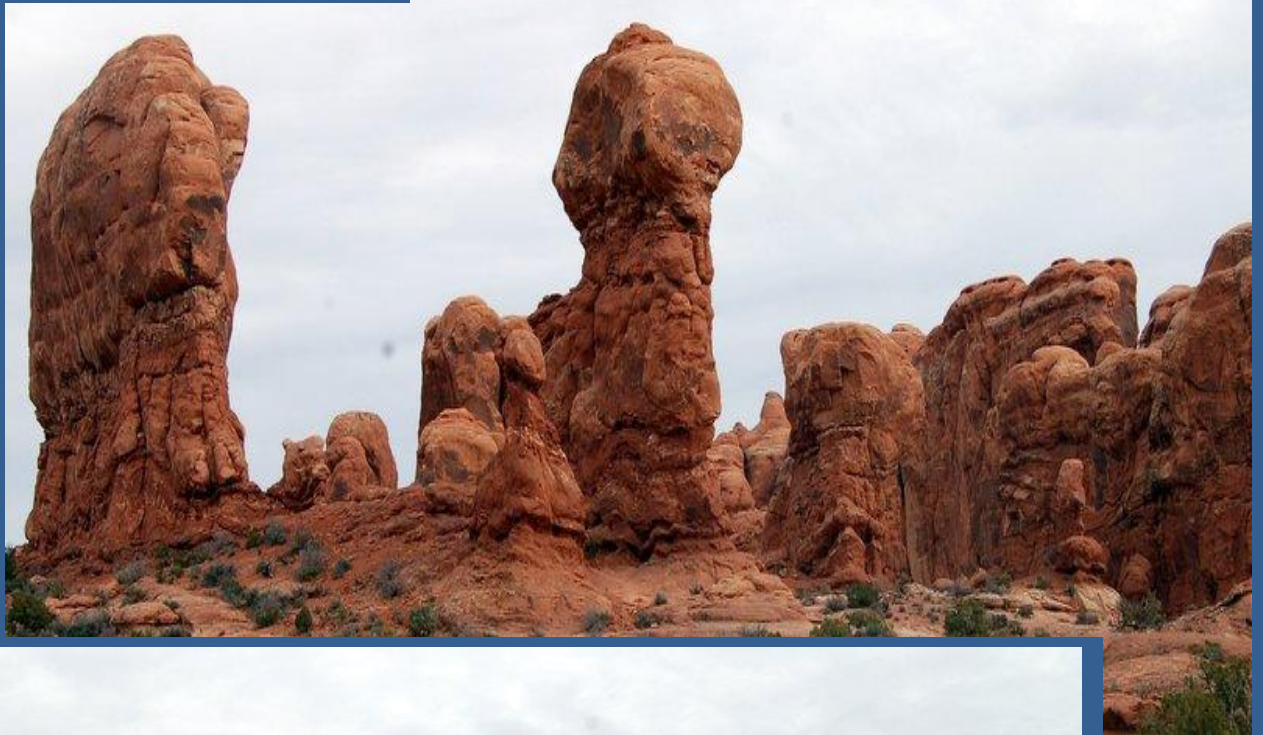


Right: On my way to The Windows I noticed these two starting to climb.



The climbers were at the Garden of Eden viewpoint. I pulled in, parked and started walking to a sign in the distance that I caught a glimpse of. It turned out to be the same sign from the road. Once again, no plaque telling me where to look or any other info about the sight. I assume the photo below is the Garden of Eden.

I think the bottom picture below is the Cove of Caves.





## Windows Trails

*A trail leads to North and South Windows, and a short spur trail goes to Turret Arch, a distinctive landform with two openings. Hiking to these arches is relatively easy.*

*A longer and more difficult alternative is to return via the primitive loop, around the back of the two Windows, for a view of "the Spectacles." The trail is less developed (follow the cairns), climbs one hill, and returns across the blackbrush flats, ending a short distance to your left from here.*

## How Arches Are Formed

In the Windows area, you can see many stages of arch formation. Look closely. Some arches are hard to see because of rock walls behind them.

Entrada Sandstone — the rock in which arches are formed — was deposited here as sand more than 150 million years ago. Over time it was buried by new layers, hardened into rock, and shaped by the powerful forces of erosion.



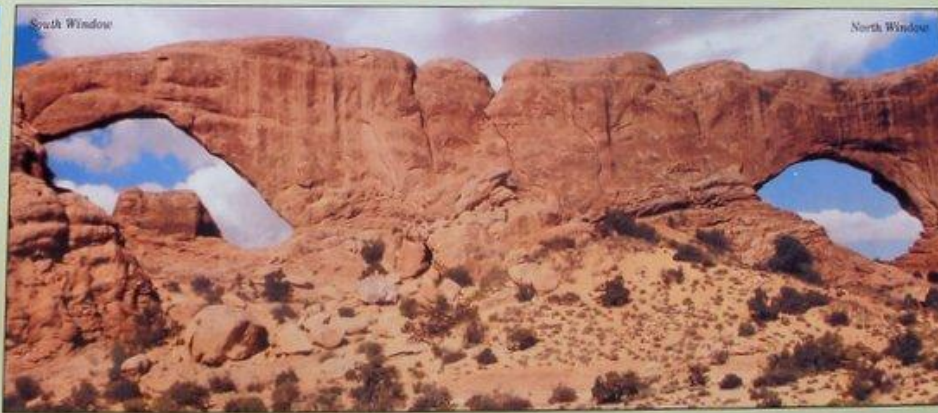
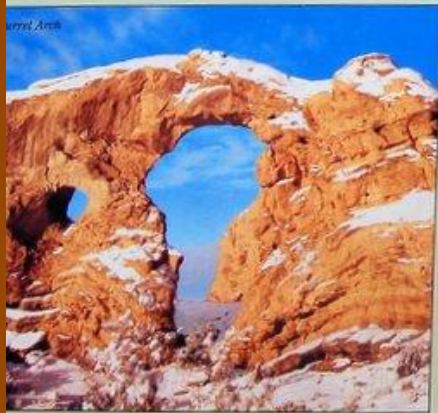
❶ A series of uplifts and collapses caused severe cracking in the 300-foot (91-meter) layer of buried Entrada Sandstone.

❷ When overlying rock layers eroded away, the Entrada was exposed to weathering. Cracks slowly widened and parallel rock walls, called fins, were formed.

❸ Rainwater continually dissolves the natural cement that holds sandstone together. This process combines with the pressure from water freezing in tiny cracks and causes the sandstone to flake and crumble. Eventually, enough rock falls out of a fin that an opening is formed.

❹ These holes continue to erode, and in time, the same forces of weathering that created arches will destroy them.

ature's Sculptured Landscape





The North Window



Turret Arch



I believe the Colorado River winds around that bluff in the center of the picture. The Colorado is the south and east borders of the park.



A better shot of Turret Arch with clouds and blue sky visible through both arches.



The South Window

### Double Arch Trail

*This short, easy stroll through some loose sand leads to the awe-inspiring twin arches. The larger opening has a span of 144 feet (49 meters)—the third longest in the park—and a height of 112 feet (33 meters)—the highest in the park. In the past, Double Arch was called Double Windows, Twinbow Bridges, and the Jug Handles.*

Double Arch

You Are Here

Parking Lot


Parking Lot

Primitive Loop Trail

North Window

South Window

Turret Arch

You are here → 

[www.hudonpark.com](http://www.hudonpark.com)

# Double Arch

For a closer look at Double Arch, walk this easy trail and stand underneath the towering arch. From there, look up and see the rim of what was once a pothole, now open to the sky.

At Double Arch three major openings are enlarging side by side. They all began as one pothole arch.

The third largest arch is the Pothole Arch, which is 144 feet wide by 212 feet high (44 by 64 meters). The smaller opening is 67 feet wide by 86 feet high (20 by 26 meters).

## Pothole Arch Formation

Pothole arches start as depressions near a cliff face.

Pools of water collect and slowly deepen the pothole. Over time, water seeps through to the cliff face, forming an alcove.

Eventually, the enlarging pothole meets the roof of the expanding alcove, creating an opening. The arch matures as erosion continues.





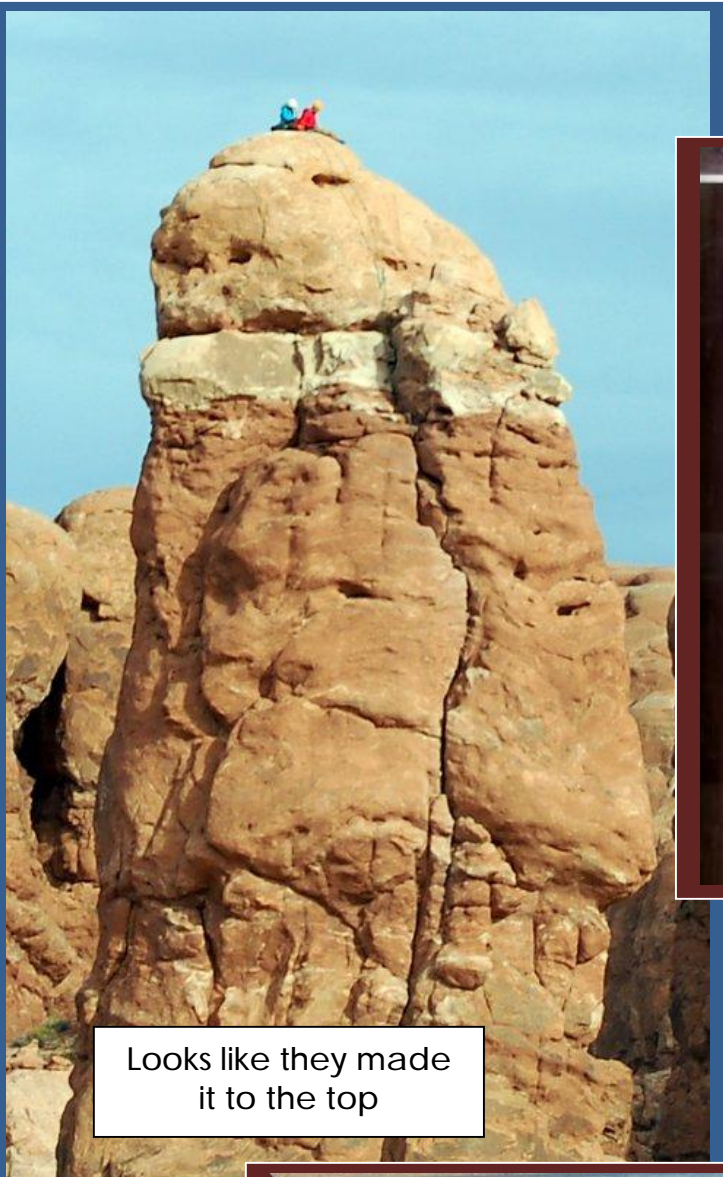




I thought you would be able to see it better but I guess not. My trekking pole is leaning against the boulder in the lower middle of the picture. That boulder is as big as my truck. That might give you some sense of the size of this arch and why it is so hard to get it into a photo. I don't have a wide angle lense.

There was a family of 6 that I was kind of following from viewpoint to viewpoint. They had a little boy about 2 years old. This has got to be his footprint in the sand.





Looks like they made it to the top

## Remnants of the Past

A short walk up the trail brings you to the Wolfe cabin. John Wesley Wolfe and his son Fred settled on the banks of Salt Wash around 1898. Drawn by the climate, which was drier and "healthier" than their previous home in Ohio, John and Fred spent more than a decade leading lives of solitude and hard work.



Family members at Wolfe Ranch, circa 1906.

Beyond the cabin you can see rock art created by the Ute people depicting a hunting scene with riders on horseback from around the 1700s.

While the human story goes back thousands of years, the geologic story reaches much further. The remnant of rock born about 150 million years ago currently known as Delicate Arch, serves as most travelers' destination. Surrounded by sky and pierced by nature, Delicate Arch stands as an iconic image of Arches National Park.

From the Windows I drove over to the Delicate Arch trail. At the trailhead is Wolfe Ranch. It is hard to believe how well preserved this site is. Must be the dry desert air.

## Wolfe Ranch

John Wesley Wolfe settled here in the late 1800s with his oldest son Fred. A nagging leg injury from the Civil War prompted John to move west from Ohio, looking for a drier climate. He chose this tract of more than 100 acres along Salt Wash for its water and grassland — enough for a few cattle.

The Wolfes built a one-room cabin, a corral, and a small dam across Salt Wash. For more than a decade they lived alone on the remote ranch.

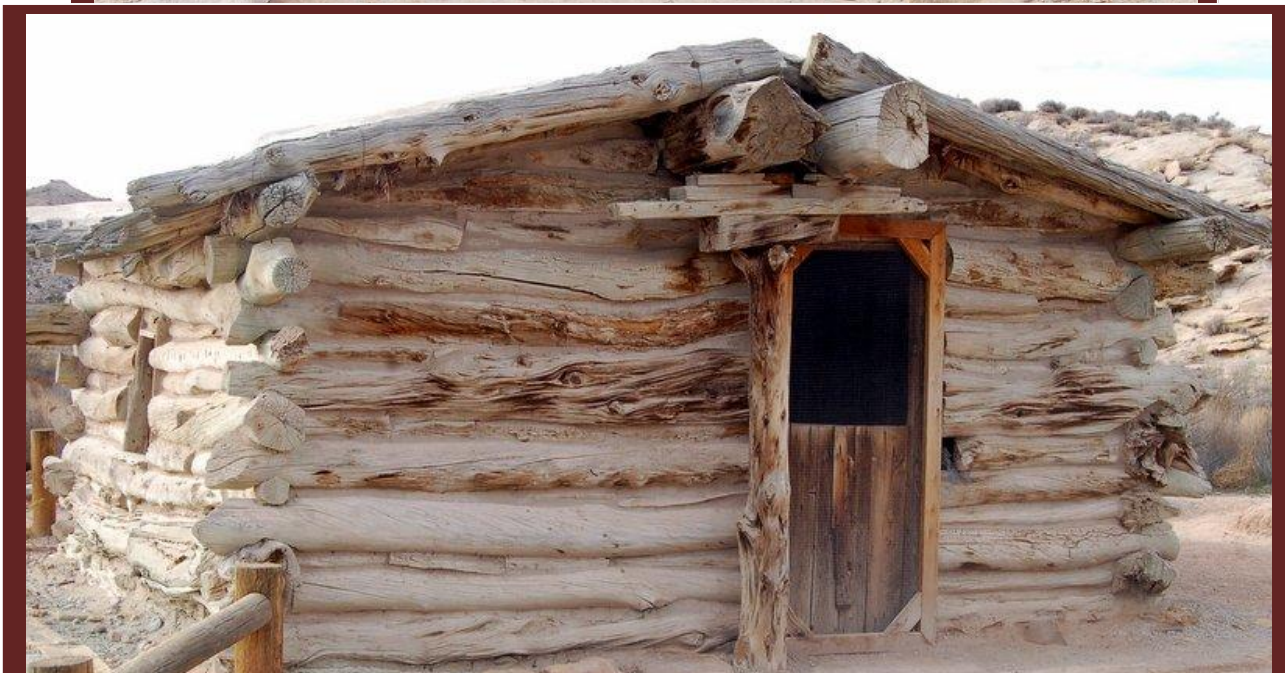
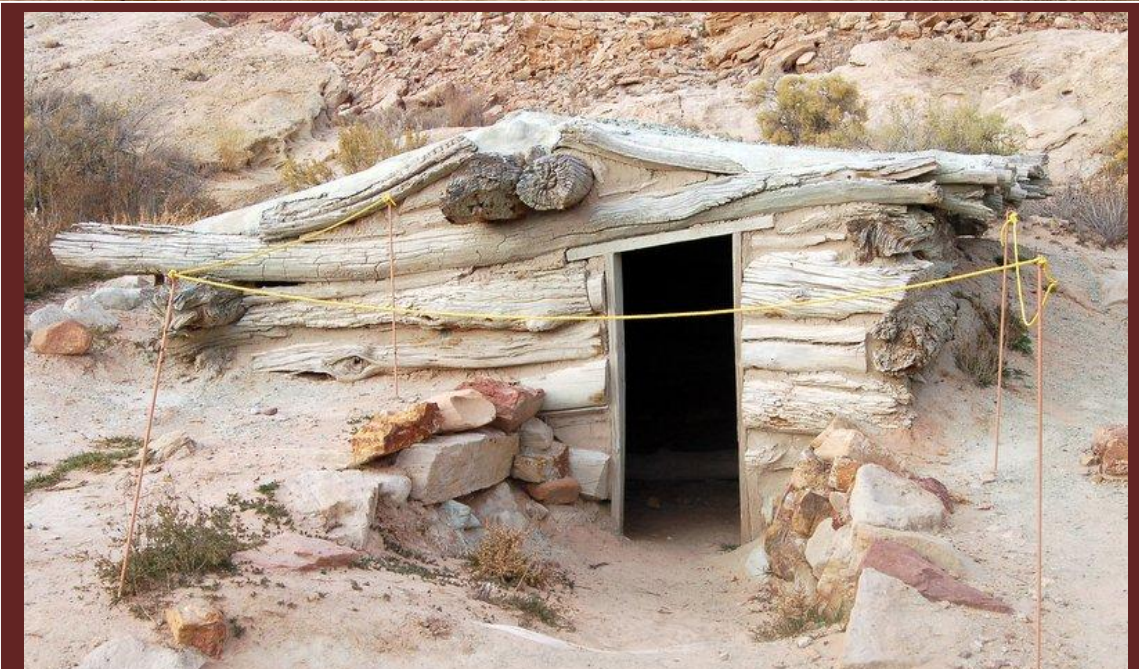
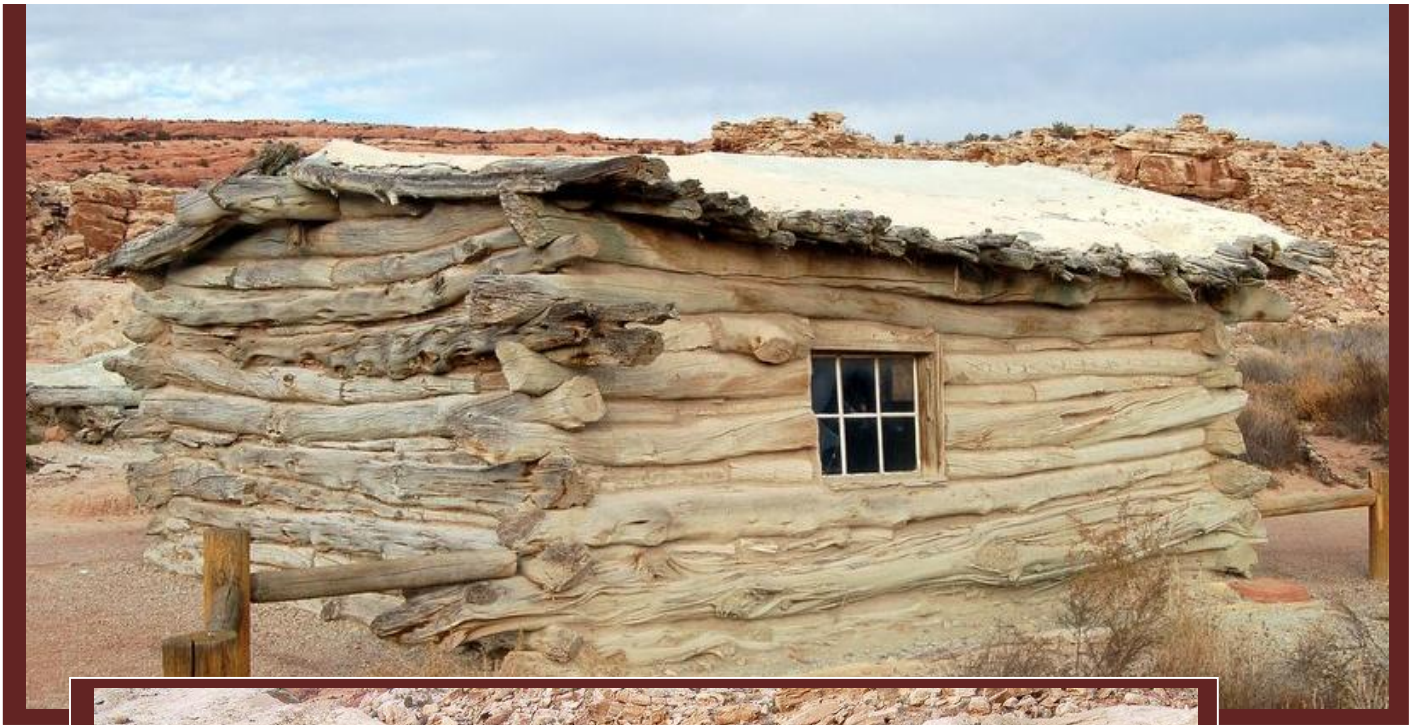
In 1906, John's daughter Flora Stanley, her husband, and their children moved to the ranch. Shocked at the primitive conditions, Flora convinced her father to build a new cabin with a wood floor — the cabin you see today.

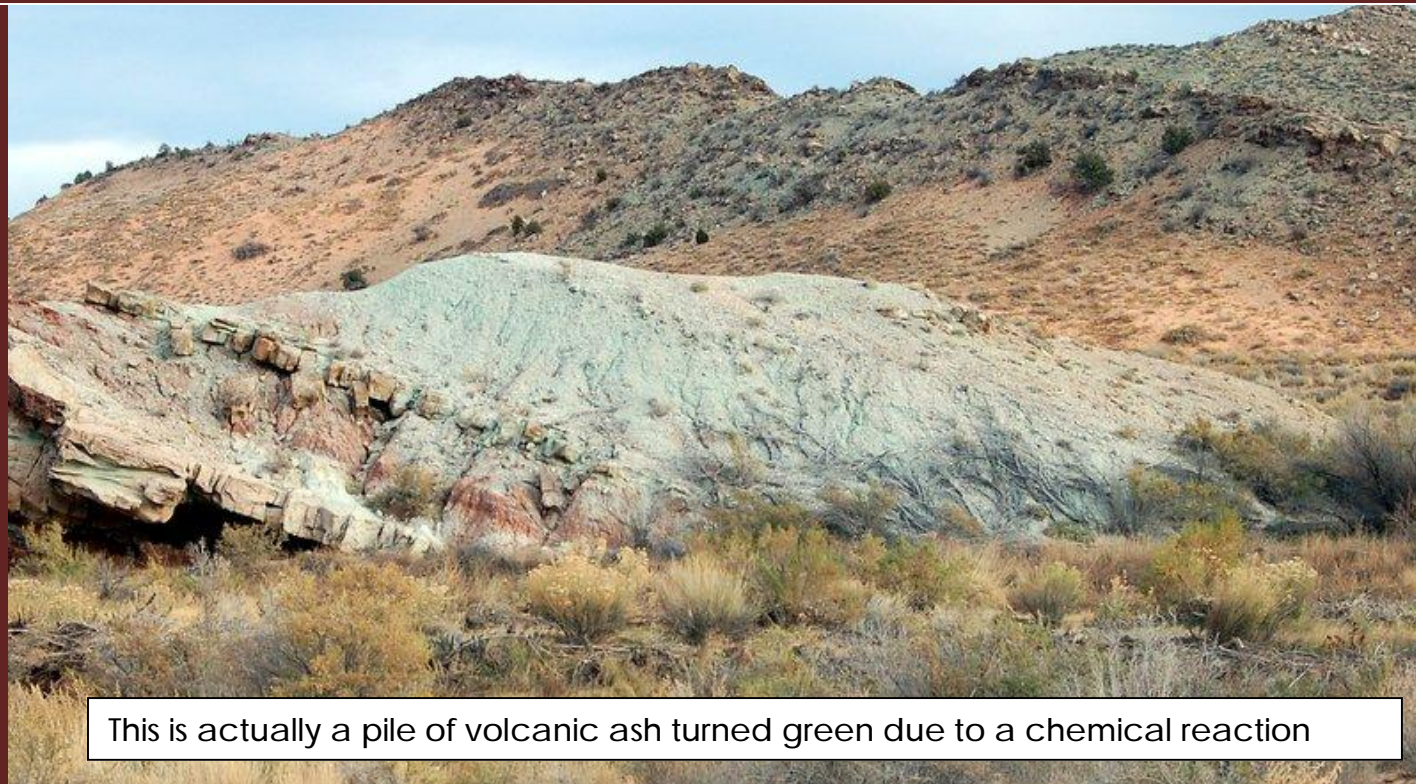
The reunited family weathered a few more years in Utah and in 1910 returned to Ohio. John Wolfe died on October 22, 1913, in Etna, Ohio, at the age of eighty-four.



John Wesley Wolfe (right) and his family cared for this place for more than a decade. You can help preserve it by looking and thinking about the character of the original caretakers. Please do not touch the walls, do not enter the buildings, and do not leave marks or graffiti on the walls. Because of its importance in local history, this site has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



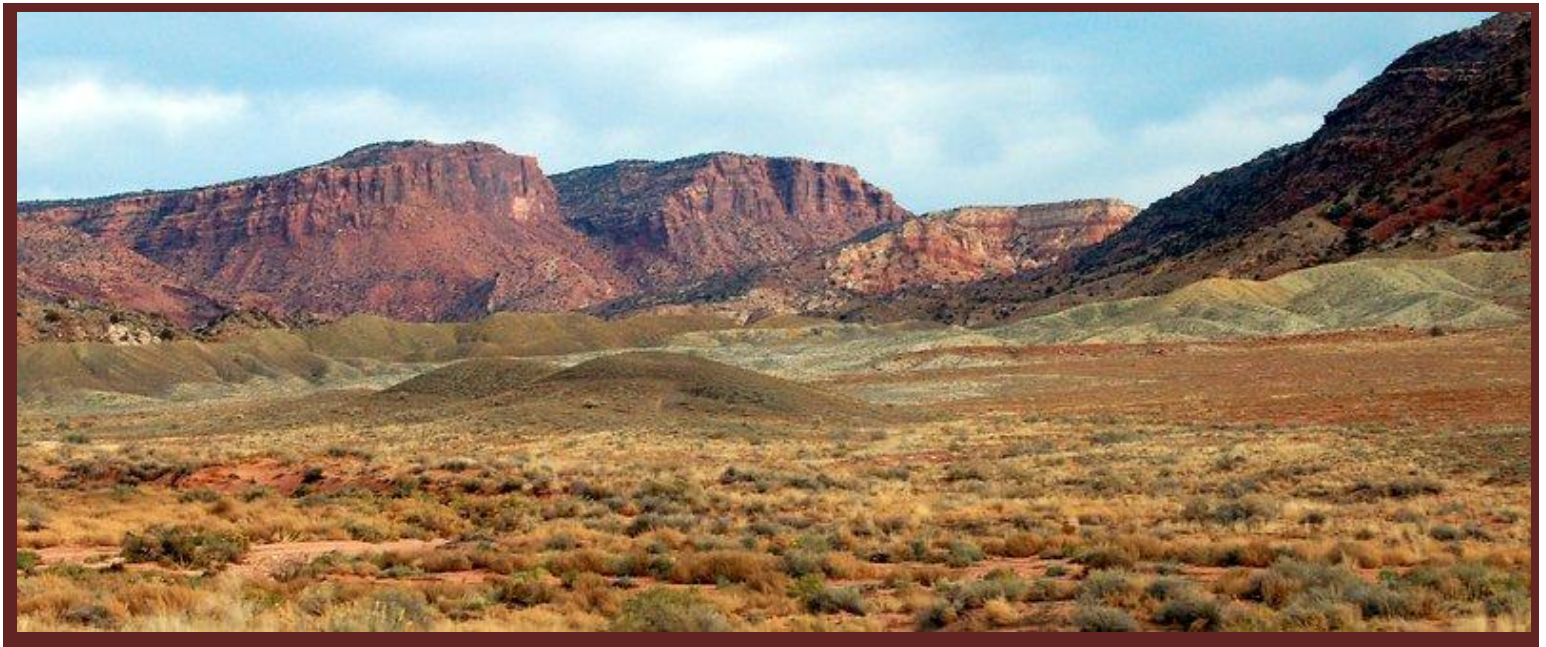




This is actually a pile of volcanic ash turned green due to a chemical reaction



The whole area around the Delicate Arch drive was full of these green mounds.



The Delicate Arch is at the end of a strenuous 3 mile round trip hike. This is probably the most recognizable arch in the world, and this is the most popular hike in the park. Just look at any Utah license plate and you see Delicate Arch; any photo of sights to see in Utah includes Delicate Arch. I was still kind of resting my toe for the Fiery Furnace hike tomorrow and I had already hiked about 8 miles today, so I decided to take a look from the easier trails listed below. If I have time before I leave the park, maybe I will give it a try.

## Delicate Arch Viewpoint Trails

There are two very different trails in this area from which you can see Delicate Arch. The lower trail, to your right, is an easy 5-minute walk. From there, you can look through Delicate Arch, which is about .75 mile (1.2 km) in the distance.

The upper trail, to your left, winds up the slickrock ridge in the foreground, for a closer look at Delicate Arch from a different angle.

Winter Camp Wash, a significant canyon, separates this area from the arch itself. To stand directly under Delicate Arch, drive back to Wolfe Ranch, drive back to Wolfe Ranch and hike the 1.5-mile (2.4 km) trail from there.



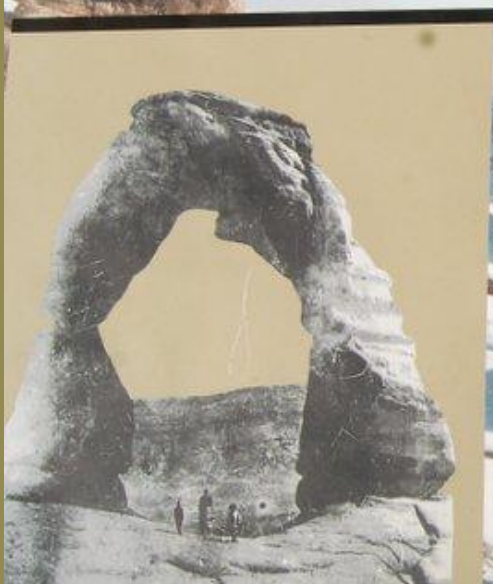
## Delicate Arch

Water and time have sculpted Delicate Arch. The span's distinctive shape has inspired such colorful nicknames as "Cowboy Chaps" and "Old Man's Bloomers."

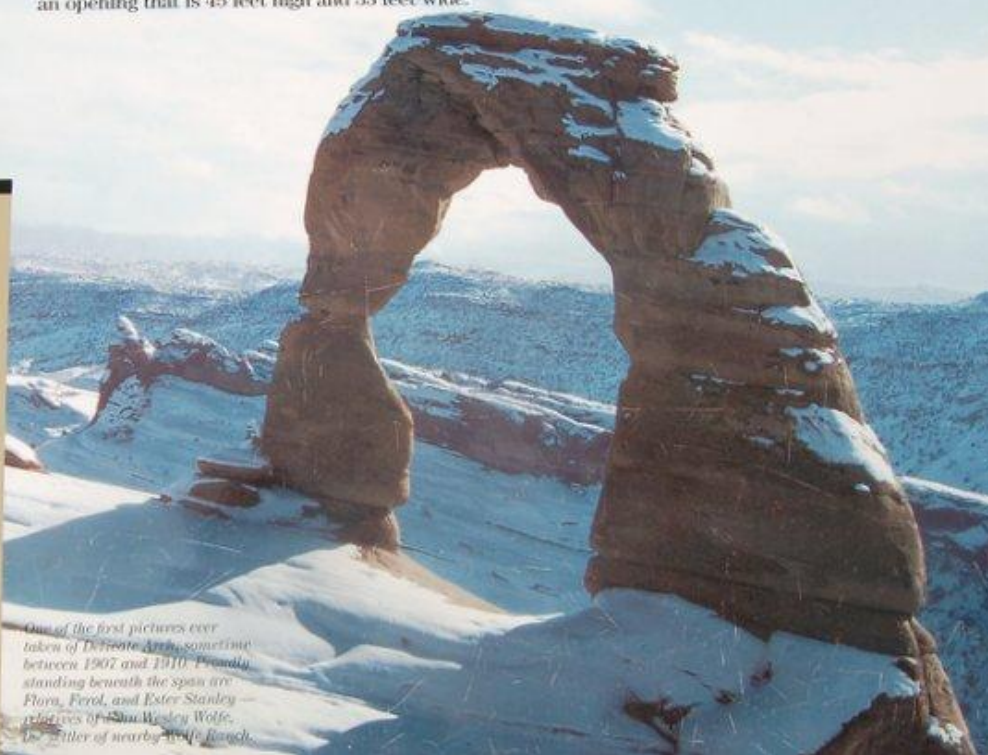
This free-standing arch is composed mostly of Entrada Sandstone. The top is a five-foot-thick layer of the Moab Tongue of the Curtis Formation. A remnant of an ancient fin, the arch today has an opening that is 45 feet high and 33 feet wide.

The rugged footpath to your left leads to the upper viewpoint and another view of the arch. To stand directly under the arch you must take the 1.5-mile (2.4-km) trail that begins at Wolfe Ranch.

Erosion continues to wear away the features of this mature span. It is only a matter of time before the geologic and environmental forces that created the arch will destroy it.

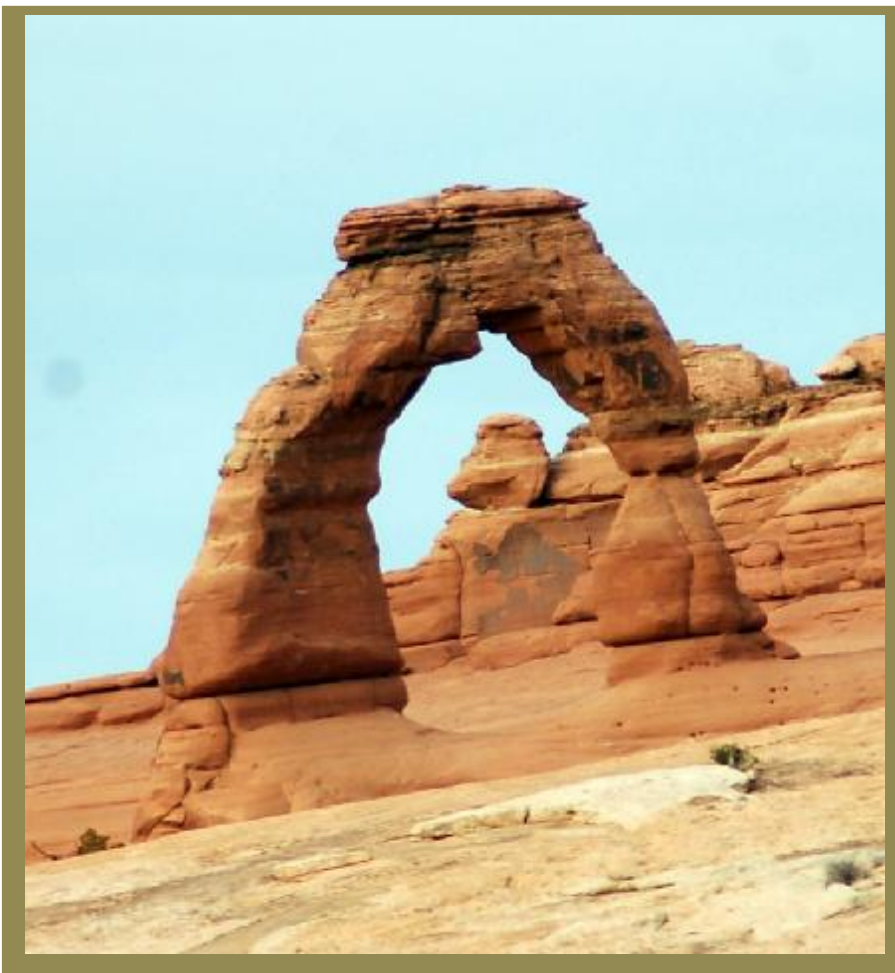


One of the first pictures ever taken of Delicate Arch, sometime between 1907 and 1910. People standing beneath the span are Flora, Ferol, and Ester Stanley—relatives of Sam Wesley Wolfe, the father of nearby Wolfe Ranch.

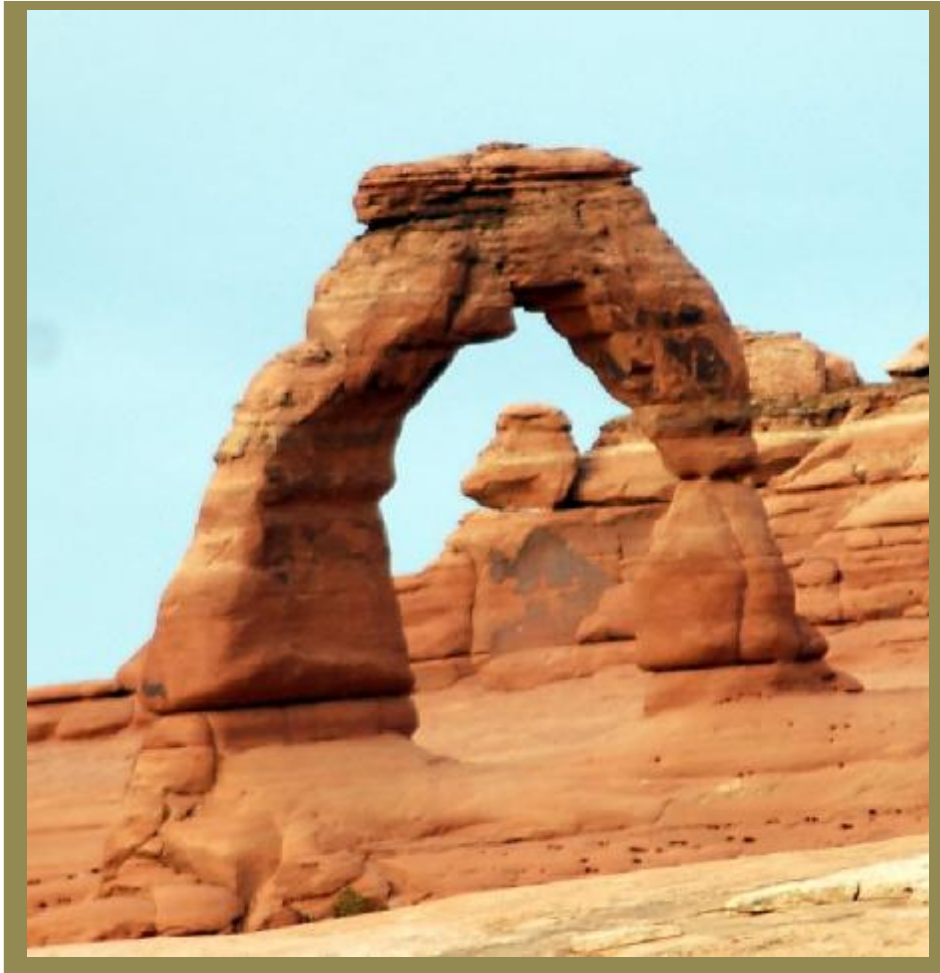




The photo above can give you a little perspective – compare the size of the arch with the people a little to the left.



The view to the left is from the upper viewpoint.



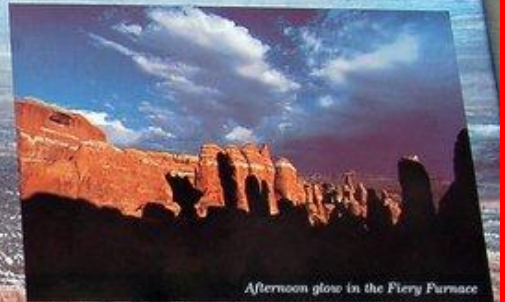
This photo is from the lower viewpoint with a telephoto lens.

## The Fiery Furnace

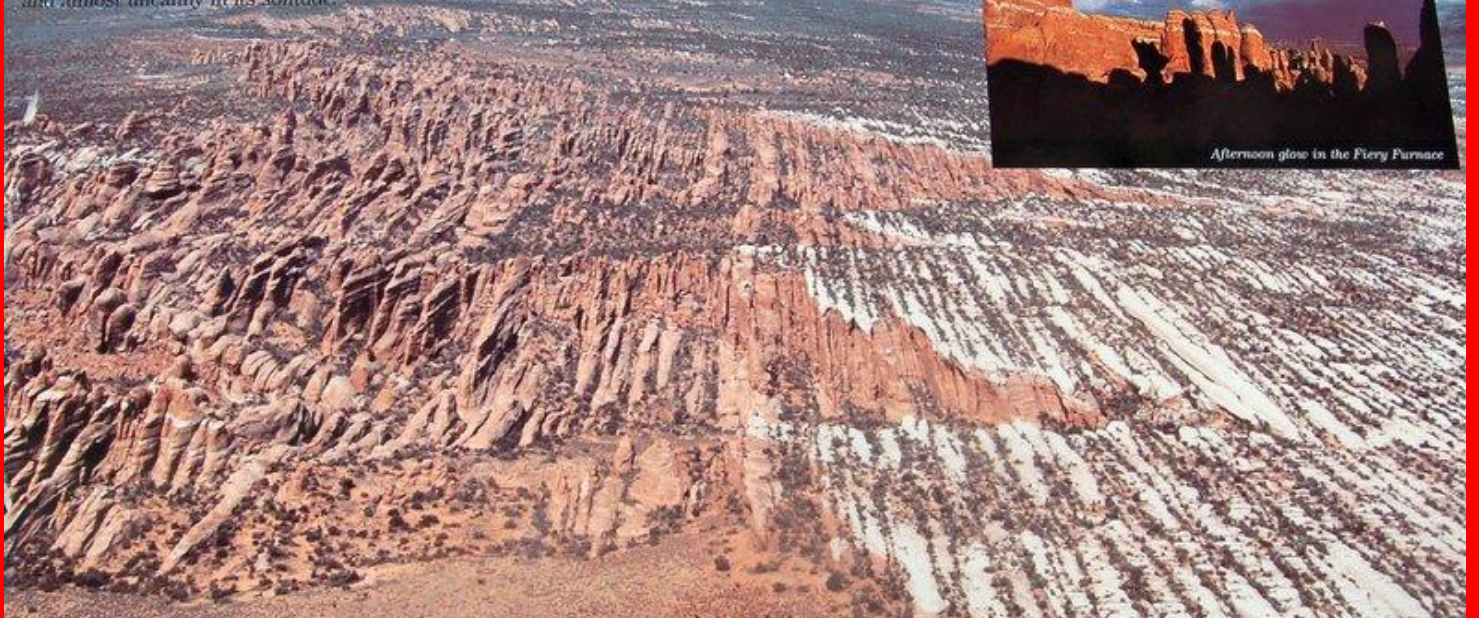
There are no marked trails in the Fiery Furnace. Ask at the visitor center about ranger-guided walks.

Contrary to its name, the Fiery Furnace is not a hot place. Named for the warm glow seen on the rocks in late afternoon, the Fiery Furnace is actually a maze of cool, shady canyons between towering sandstone walls. The chaos of fins, spires and canyons has been called "void, silent and almost uncanny in its solitude."

The many vertical rock walls – or fins – you see here are the result of movement, eons ago, far beneath the earth's surface. Over time erosion has been shaping the Fiery Furnace. Rain, snow and ice have deepened and widened the cracks, creating these towering fins.

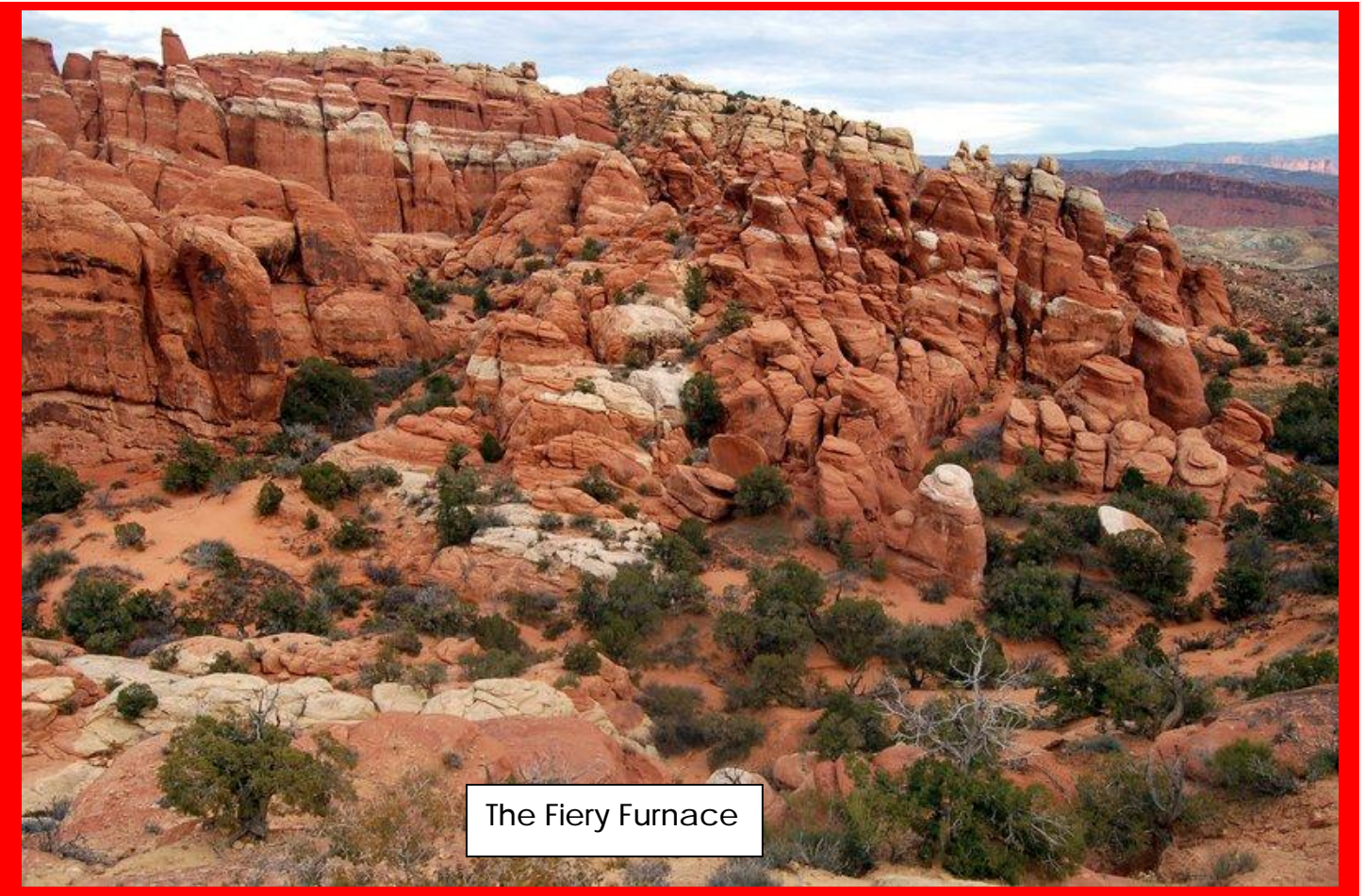


Afternoon glow in the Fiery Furnace





I stopped here on my way back to camp to give you an idea of where I am going on my Ranger guided hike tomorrow. The ranger guided tour I took in Mesa Verde provided so much insight into the area and I am hoping tomorrow's will do the same, plus, the scenery should be a lot more impressive than Mesa Verde.



The rest of the evening was pretty standard; make a fire; cook dinner; work on the newsletter; go to bed. I am planning an easy day tomorrow. Sleep late, Sand Dune Arch, Broken Arch, lunch, work on the newsletter and then the Fiery Furnace.

I did most of the above in my bedroom slippers so that my sore toe could dry out. The hiking boots I have do not seem to allow much air flow.

I also decided to stay in Arches another night and use it for my home base to visit Island in the Sky, Dead Horse Point State Park and a scenic drive along the Colorado River.

Until tomorrow....