



# In Search of Eldorado

Day 44

Sunday

February 17th

Nogales  
To  
Sierra Vista

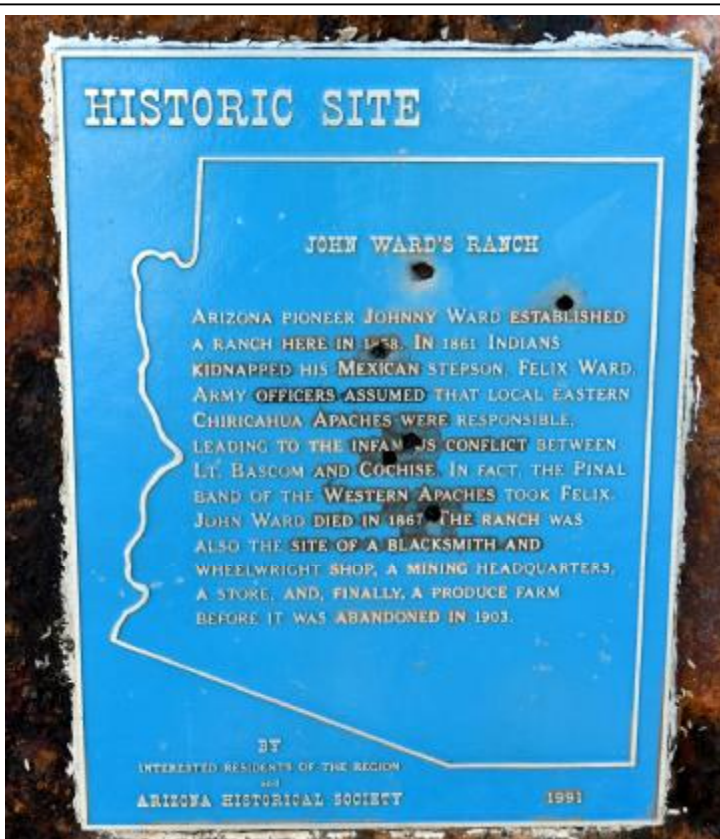
Weather  
50's and Sunny



## Hello to Family & Friends

After breakfast I checked the website for the Nogales visitor center – closed on Sundays. Go figure. Just down the road from me is HWY 82, The Patagonia – Sonoita Scenic Road. The map actually has it starting from Nogales, but I skipped Nogales and headed for Patagonia.

The only pullout along the way was this historic plaque and the shrine.



Some of you may remember my relating the story of Lt. Bascom and Cochise, and how a child that Lt. Bascom thought Cochise had kidnapped was the start of the Indian Wars. This is the site of the ranch the boy was kidnapped from, and it was by Western Apaches and not Cochise.

## 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!'



This might not be appropriate, but it's probably a good thing not all parents made a vow for their sons safety, or we might all be speaking German right now.



Patagonia is a little town with two main streets separated by a park. Each street has galleries, antiques, yard sales and restaurants. I parked and walked down to the visitor center, which the internet assured me, was open 7 days a week from 10-4. A little post-it note on the door stated "closed until 12:00" It was only 11:15 so I decided to push on, but as I was leaving town I saw a sign for a museum. Could be - there are cars parked nearby - Closed on Sundays.

In one of the shops I did visit I entered in the middle of a sale, a lady asked her husband which one he preferred. In the time honored tradition of intelligent males throughout the world he answered, "I prefer whichever one you like best." Gotta love it.

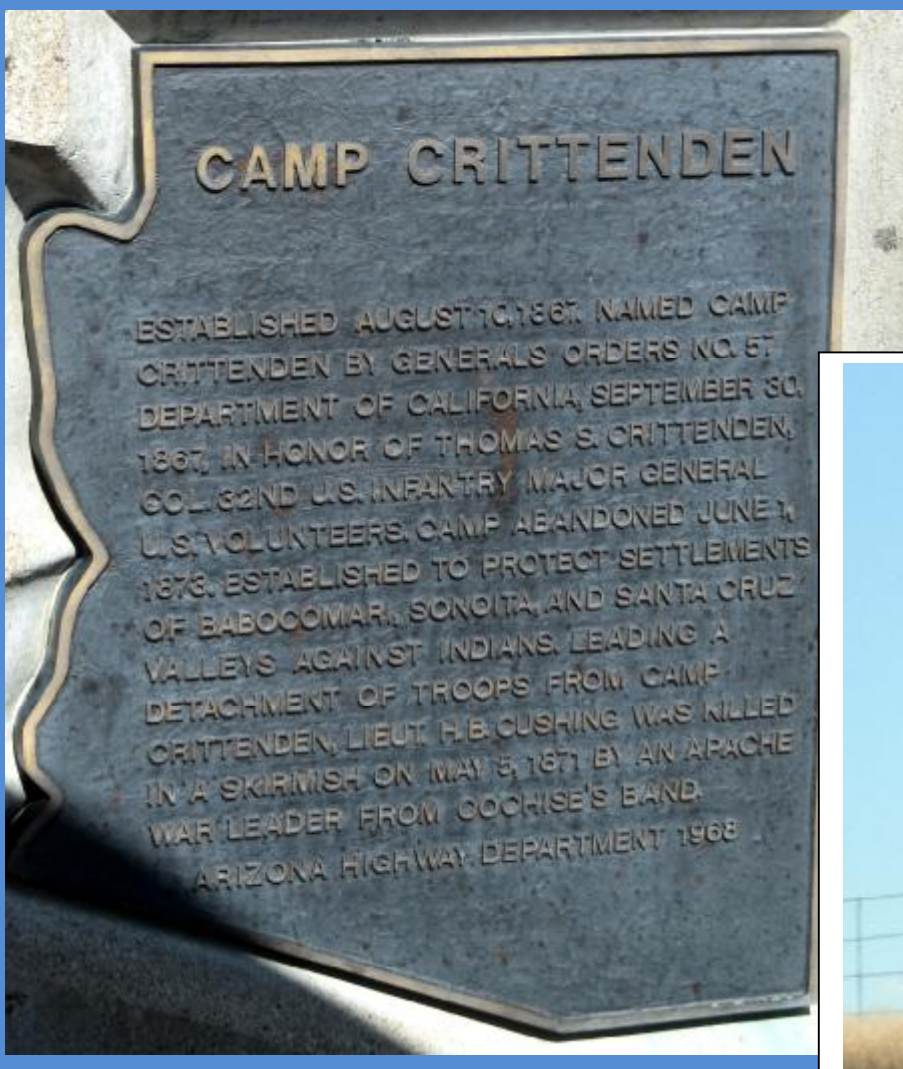


I would hate to be a right fielder at this baseball diamond. This is the view from the left hand batters side of the backstop. It's a real short porch out there, and quite a wicked drop off. I hope they have more than one ball. Ha Ha, shades of THE SANDLOT.

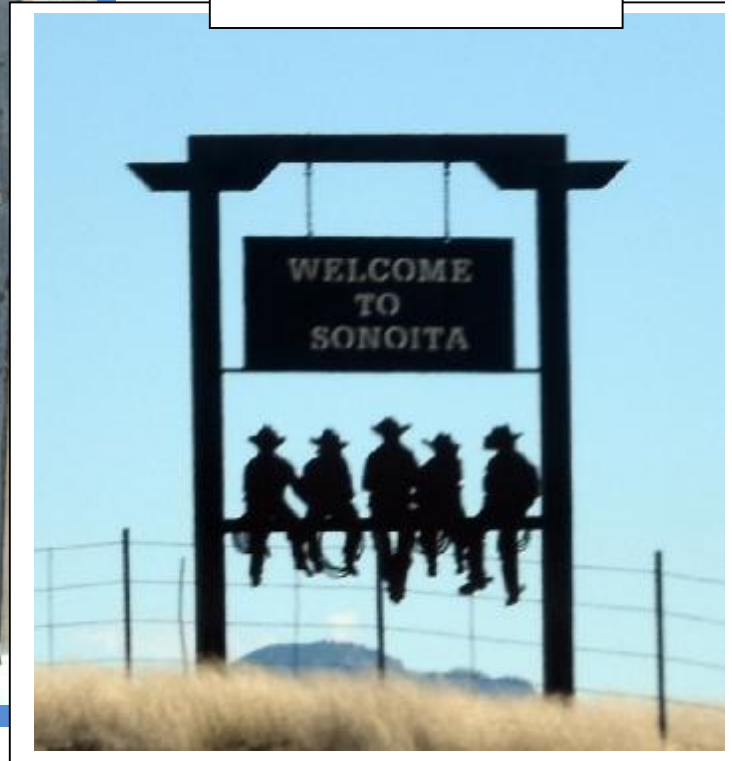




The scenery is quite a bit different in this area, trees (yes I said trees), grass growing on most surfaces and older more eroded, rounded mountains.



Next stop is Sonoita. There are several wineries in this area for you wine lovers; Lu, Beth, Erin, Morgan, Todd, Maureen, but not Mark, so no tastings or tours for me.



Somehow, I was under the impression that one could take HWY 83 south from Sonoita and end up in Sierra Vista. I read something on the internet, and I am sure I can believe the internet, that Parker Canyon Lake was a good rest stop on the way from Sonoita to Sierra Vista.

I will admit, it was a scenic, twisting and turning drive which I enjoyed, I just wish there hadn't been SO much for me to enjoy.



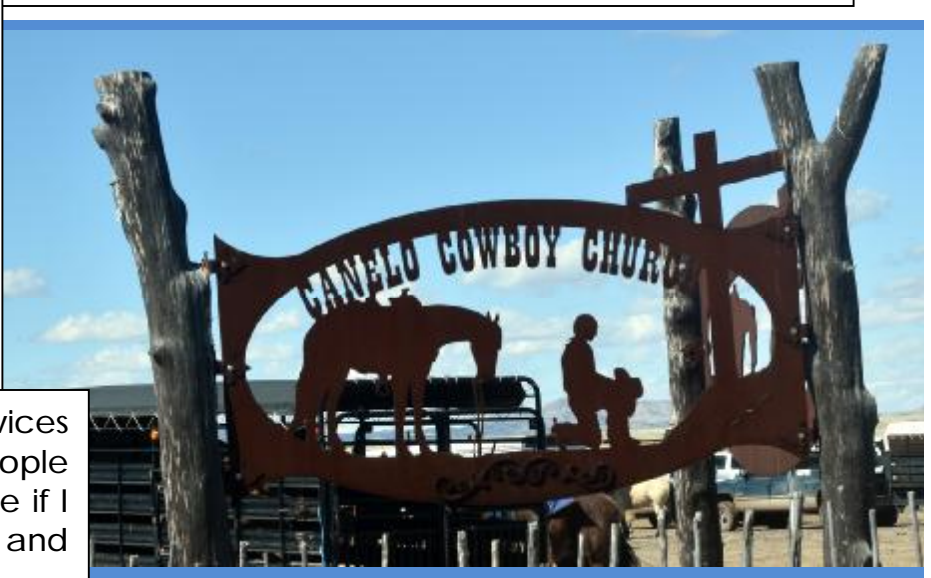
Sonoita is obviously a place for cowboys and horses. I was told the scenic drive is almost all ranches since the grazing is exceptional for the cattle. Just past the start of HWY 83 are the Fairgrounds. The full-size, life-like statue below stands by the entrance. Too bad it faces north or you could see the detail.

TRIBUTE TO RANCHING  
BY  
DEBORAH COPENHAVER FELLOWS





A little farther down the road I noticed all these horse trailers with saddled horses tied to them and I decided to pull in and check it out.



Being that it was after 1 p.m. the services were over, but there were a lot of people standing outside the building. Not sure if I might be interrupting, I turned around and continued south.







Coming from Wisconsin, and especially considering that I live in what is called Lake Country, its strange not seeing a lake everywhere you turn, so Parker Canyon Lake was a welcome sight.



I imagine there is a pretty nice view of the lake from those homes on the hillside.







This reminds me of golfing – Someone get a chainsaw and cut that tree down. Otherwise this would be a great shot.

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As I was leaving the Parker Canyon area, I started to turn right on the road to Sierra Vista. WHAT? It's a dirt and gravel road. I am still 30 or more miles from Sierra Vista and this gravel roads winds through the mountains. I check the map (I was not using GPS because there was only the road I was on) and find that about 12 miles ago there was a turn-off towards Sierra Vista. Back along that 12 mile scenic drive to Cimarron Rd and turn right.

After about 5 miles I came to a security gate. A military ID is required to access the army base. You have got to be kidding me. Why is there not a sign at the intersection telling people they cannot go more than 5 miles without a military ID? And yes, I did double check, there is no sign, I didn't just miss it as per usual.

Now I have to travel almost all the way back to Sonoita, another 18 miles, til I can turn towards Elgin. When I reach Elgin, not even a wide spot in the road, I reorient myself again and realize I have to go back up to HWY 82 in order to get to Sierra Vista. So instead of driving 32 miles on HWY 82 from Sonoita to Sierra Vista, I drove 119 miles, and I ended up rejoining HWY 82 only 9 miles from Sonoita. I will admit, this is not the first time I have accomplished something of this magnitude. But, it is never, well rarely, in search of a shortcut, like today, it is just a scenic roundabout.

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When I was stuck at the security gate and searching the web for answers, I noticed there was a visitor center at the army base, Fort Huachuca (wa-CHOO-ka), so I decided to check it out. The guard at the gate responded to my question of what there is to see by telling me there were six museums on the grounds, but I needed to park, go into the visitor center and get an ID badge for access. Sounds good to me. I don't think I have ever been on a military base before, I was at the Air Force Academy but that's a school on a base and not an active military installation. I was number 82 and they had just called number 69. I filled out the form and sat down to wait. Numbers 74, 75 and 76 were called but no one advanced. Then he said "ok, who has the next lowest number?" I called out 82 and some lady said 84, so I was next. I now have an ID badge allowing me access to the Fort Huachuca military base for 30 days. This is, of course, the very ID badge I needed to pass the security gate over on Cimarron Rd. Talk about ironic!

I got back in the RV and had to go through security to turn around unless, I asked the guard, they have an RV park on the grounds? "There is an RV park on the grounds" he tells me. Excellent, how do I get there? With map and directions in hand I enter Apache RV Park in the GPS and follow directions. Of course they take me to the wrong spot, but I did get the picture above of the deer before I turned around.

I pull into the RV park, enter the office, Anne gives me instructions, then she asks for my ID. I give her the ID I just received. Sorry, that's not a military ID, I can't stay in the park. Oh, well, there are two RV parks in Sierra Vista, and that's where I am now, at the Mountain Vista Mobile Home and RV Park. \$24.54/night. I wanted an RV park for the next couple of cold nights so I can use the electric heater instead of the gas furnace. Upper 20's and low 30's with snow in the forecast. I know, I know, not like you're getting back home, 7 degrees tomorrow night, but I came to Arizona for the warmth and it sure is sporadic.

Tomorrow is a government holiday, Happy Birthday George and Abe, so I will try and get to the Coronado National Memorial tomorrow and do some hiking, even though I am not really prepared for hiking in the snow. All the museums at the Fort will be closed, so I will do those on Tuesday, probably lots of buildings to photograph and plaques to read.

I am looking forward to it.

Until next time.....