



# In Search of Eldorado

Day 47

Wednesday

February 20th

Sierra Vista

To

Bisbee

Weather

40's and Sunny

## 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!'



## Hello to Family & Friends

Good morning all. After sleeping on it, I decided to keep to my original plan. My first stop is a monument to the Battle of the Bulls.

The pull-off was the opposite direction of where I wanted to go, but it was only twenty minutes down the road so I decided to spend the time and visit. I will start with the photo above which again appears to be a bridge to nowhere, but I think this one was just abandoned as being too old and too narrow for the new road.

The Battle of the Bulls. This site was not even on Roadside America, maybe I will send it to them, so I had to gather the information from the net. I will paraphrase.

Along the San Pedro River is the site of the only battle in Arizona during the Mexican-American War. The Mormon Battalion, you may remember them from the Tucson Presidio and the trail in Sonoran Desert National Monument, battled a herd of wild bulls. You can read the words on the monument below. No other information or description is provided, but here's the story: In 1846, a pack of wild bulls roamed Southeast Arizona; the remnant of what was once thousands of head of cattle. They came from abandoned ranches. Near-constant Apache raids drove off their owners a few years earlier. Most of the cows and calves had been killed off a while ago, according to Tucson historian Jim Turner, but "bulls were a little more difficult." They traveled in herds to protect themselves from predators like mountain lions.

Brigham Young offered the men of the Mormon Church as volunteers to help protect the southwest from Mexico. They were given money for uniforms, most of which they gave to the church to facilitate a mass move west.

United States army officers led them on the journey, commanded by Philip St. George Cooke. Though they didn't have uniforms, the men of the battalion had a white sash and a rifle. They looked like a ragtag band.

The soldiers trekked from Council Bluffs, Iowa, destined for California.



Five months after they began the march, the battalion stopped to camp on the banks of the San Pedro River. It was dark. The men had worn through their shoes; they hadn't seen a human face since they left what is now the area of Silver City, New Mexico, a few weeks earlier.

They walked down to the riverbank in the gathering dusk.

All of the sudden, a pack of bulls came upon them and charged.

It is speculation as to why the bulls actually charged the men. It is not in their nature to charge humans. Best guess is that they were spooked.

The probable site of the Battle

The charge caused "great confusion and fear," according to the diary of Colonel Cooke. He writes that "they charged men, mules, and wagons," killing three mules. "Cooke had ordered the men to unload their guns," said Turner. "But they didn't listen to him and their rifles were already loaded. Imagine his surprise when the bulls are coming and men are firing at them!"

Three men were injured, according to the diary. One man had his thumb partially ripped off when reloading his rifle. Another was "trapped between a bull's horns," and the last was gored in the leg.

In the end, the bulls were no match for guns. "One of the blessings of fighting the bulls was not just meat but hide," said Dalton. "They were wrapping strips of hide around their feet for shoes."

"Armies think they can live off the land but you can't do that in Arizona," said Turner. They were so hungry that when they encountered the bulls "they were going crazy killing bulls and making sandals and jerking meat."

Finally Colonel Cooke told the men it was time to leave for Tucson. "The diaries said they were really mad because they couldn't stay long enough to dry the meat," said Turner.

The confrontation was the only time the men of the battalion would use their guns. According to Dalton, "Brigham Young promised they wouldn't face any conflict. The Battle of the Bulls was the only time the men used their guns in an offensive way."





I find that an interesting story.

On to the Coronado National Memorial. I won't be doing the planned on six mile hike to the peak, still very cold and windy.

The visitor center is to the right.



## Welcome to Coronado National Memorial

Imagine searching for Seven Cities of Gold—for two years—and finding none! In 1540, some 1,500 seekers came this way, probing territory that was all new to them. Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's journey started the Spanish era of exploring and settlement in this region.

The history of this expedition and its lasting impacts are part of the heritage shared by the peoples of both Mexico and the United States.

Spanish conquistador, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, led the expedition from central Mexico to the Great Plains.

## Life in the Sky Islands

The mountains in southeastern Arizona and northern Mexico are called "sky islands." They provide high-elevation habitat in a sea of low-elevation desert and grasslands.



This was a great 3D model of the entire park and its surrounds. Too bad the sun and shadows spoil the shot.

Coronado himself reported in a letter to the King of Spain that his army had come 3,250 miles to reach Quivira in today's central Kansas. The exact way they traveled is still unclear. Archeologists and historians continue to look for new evidence to reveal the expedition's route.



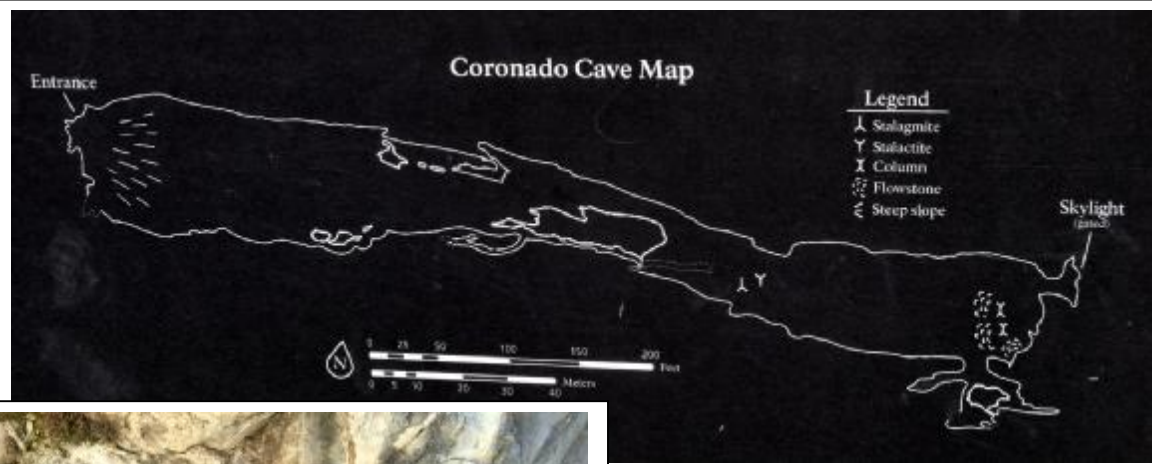
Of course I learned about Coronado back in school, but I definitely do not remember him advancing all the way into central Kansas, I thought he traversed mostly New Mexico and Arizona.

# Coronado Cave Trail



The view east from about half way there

## Welcome to Coronado Cave



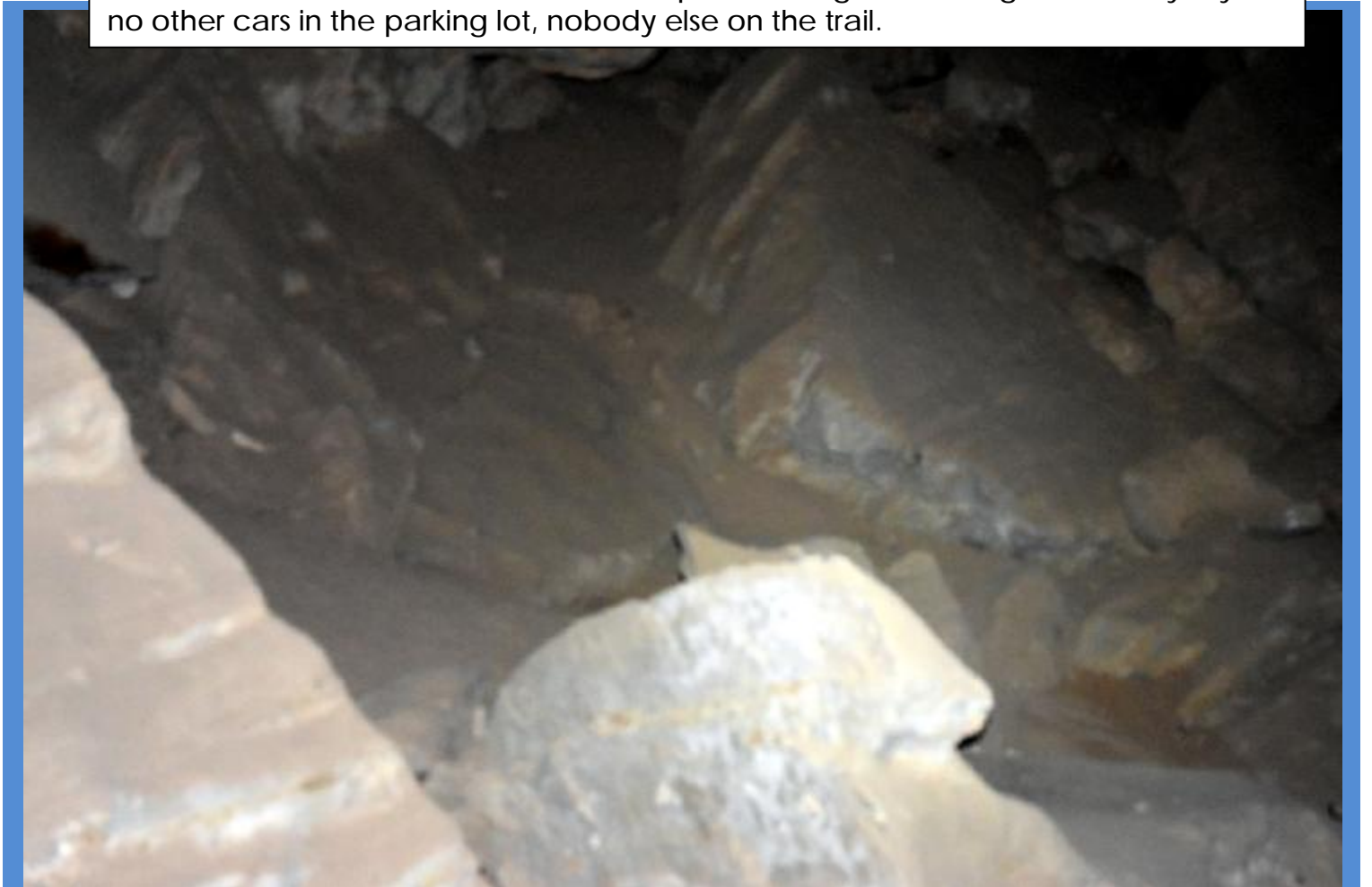
Looks kind of ominous doesn't it?

The cave is about 600 feet deep to the back wall.

Descending into the cave requires climbing down some boulders. I am sure that for the rest of my life I will get visions of my fall every time I boulder downwards.



Please keep in mind that the camera flash really only extends 15-20 feet into the darkness. That's right, did I mention darkness? There are no lights, no path, no handrails. It is recommended that each person bring two flashlights. I am by myself, no other cars in the parking lot, nobody else on the trail.



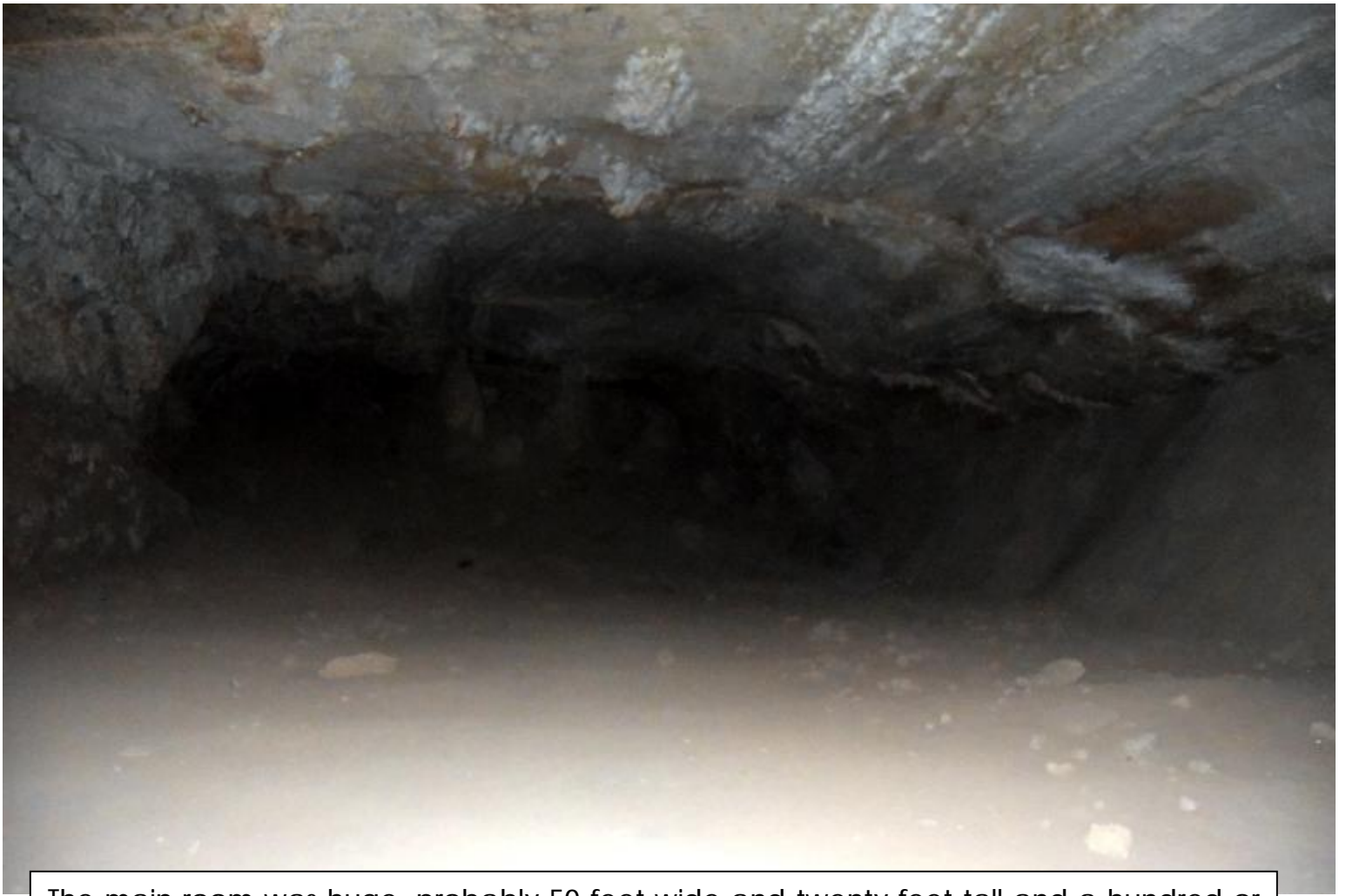




I'll admit, it was a little scary at first, but I got used to it. The biggest problem is that everything is gray, which robs you of your depth perception. I am glad I had my hiking pole, which I used almost like a blind person's cane.







The main room was huge, probably 50 feet wide and twenty feet tall and a hundred or more feet deep. No water that I could see or hear though. A bonus was the temperature, about 60 degrees and no wind. Ahhhh, no wind.





I see light ahead. Is it? Is it? Yes, it is, the exit.



The trail ahead. Thank goodness it's all downhill



The wall along the Mexican border. Above you can tell by the straight line. Below - Follow the dark line into the distance.





I did not drive up to Montezuma's Pass. The road is gravel, although it was just graded last week. The problem is no vehicles over 24 feet allowed because of the dips through the washes. There is also a stretch near the top that does not get any sun and they are recommending that not even rear wheel drive vehicles try it. So I will let it pass for now.

This was a little strange. Just down the road is a place called Miracle Valley. The following is from *Roadside America*:

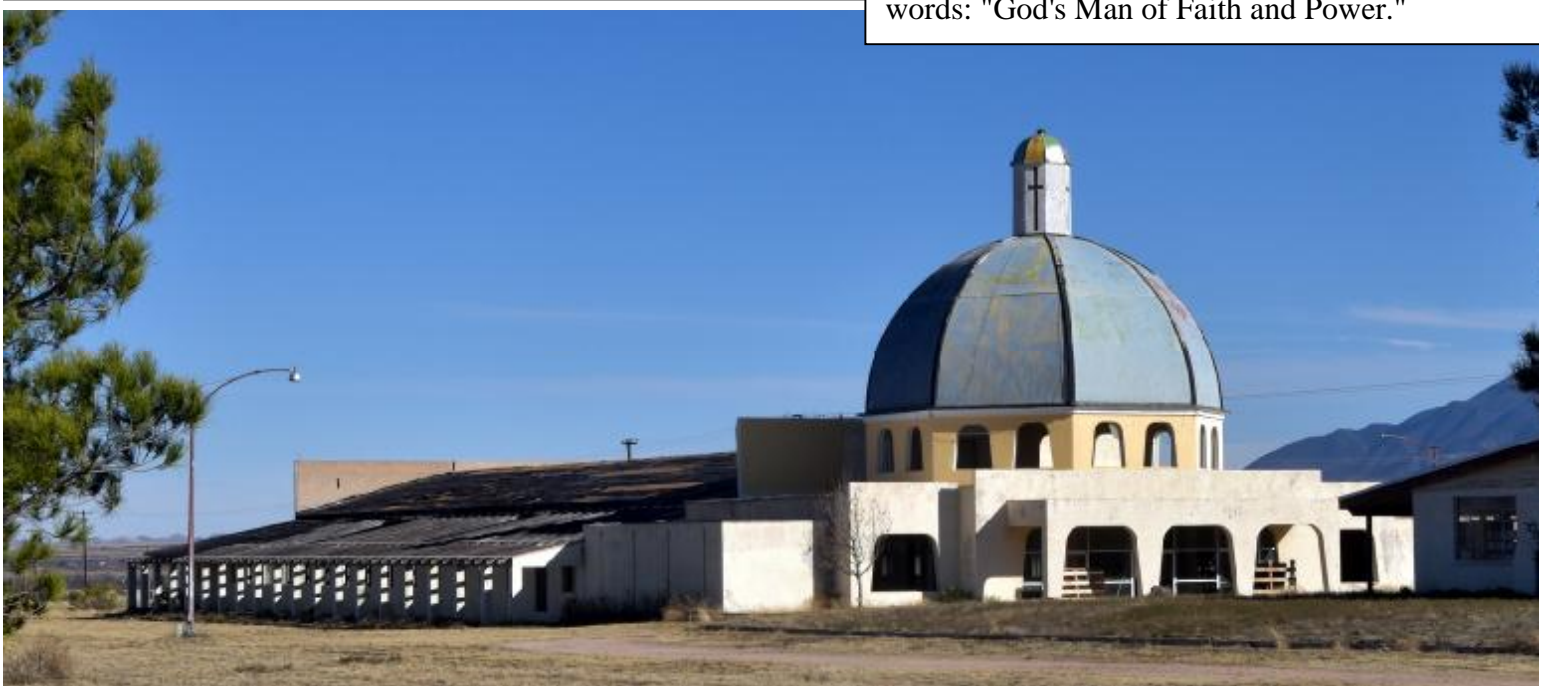
Miracle Valley was founded by radio preacher Asa A. Allen on 2,500 acres near Bisbee. He also founded Miracle Valley Bible College, built an airstrip, and a Christian record company. The municipality included a "Pool of Bethesda," which was said to contain healing waters. A.A. Allen's own house had a swimming pool with a simulated stained glass canopy over it.

Allen's radio programs inspired many followers. According to the book *Border Radio*, when Allen started broadcasting that he could raise the dead, people reportedly started **shipping bodies of loved ones through the mail**. Allen got on the radio and told people to stop -- not because his claim was untrue, but because they were violating postal regulations and other laws.

Allen is buried above ground behind the Bible College. His monument is inscribed with a drawing of praying hands, a revival tent, and the words: "God's Man of Faith and Power."



There are places along the fence that open seasonally to allow floodwaters to flow through. There are other special openings where wildlife can cross.





As I drove through the gates and into the compound, I found the classroom buildings, library and housing, along with the church pictured above. Everything was falling apart, broken windows, missing doors, missing windows, overgrown driveways and sidewalks.



but as I made the loop, a man came out to meet the RV. Louie introduced himself and asked about the RV, he really liked it. I told him I had read out Miracle Valley on Roadside America and he said "really? I'll have to check that out." Then he told me that he had bought the property about five years ago and did not have electricity for the first four years. He is in the process of remodeling the compound as a place for religious retreats.



Left is the dome ceiling.

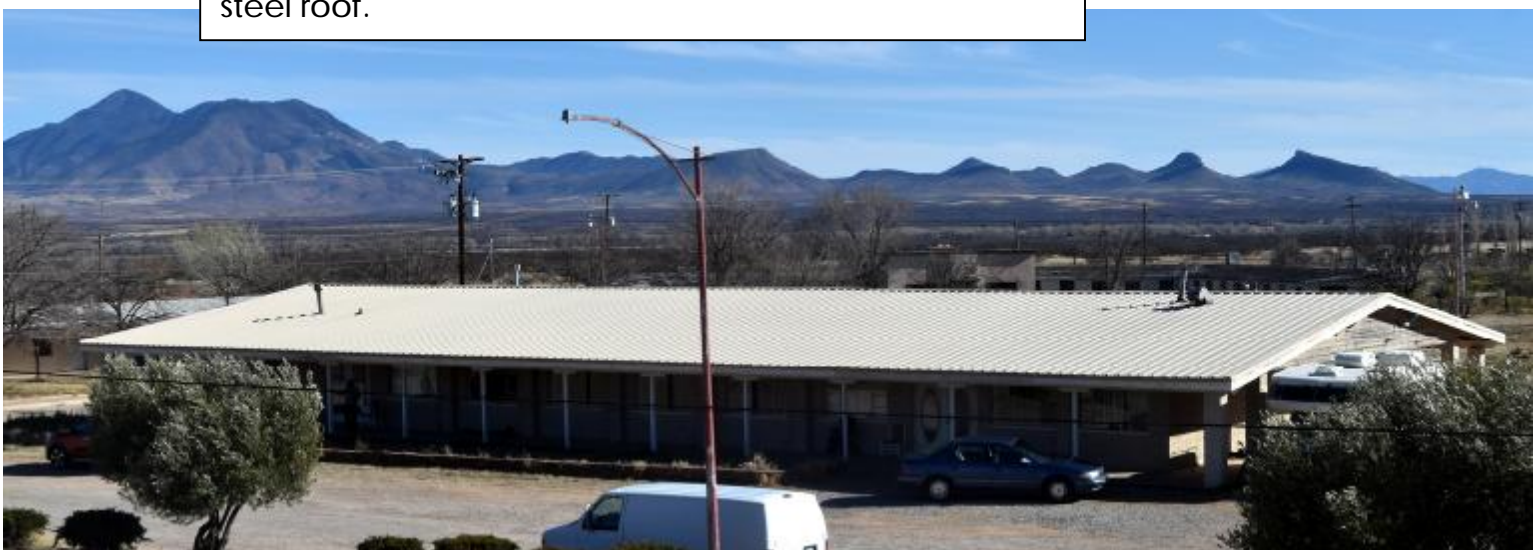
He has almost completed one building and a couple living areas and has already had a few churches hold their retreats here. Very nice guy. He thought maybe I was a Homer Smith (LILIES OF THE FIELD) come to help with the remodeling. I declined and he told me to feel free to look around.



This place was huge, at least 250 feet long. Big enough that there was a basketball court painted on the floor which did not even take up half of the space. One of the free throw lanes is pictured below.



The mural on the wall behind where an alter would be. Below is the already remodeled building, note the steel roof.





I can only assume that this is the "Pool of Bethesda" mentioned above. I guess the healing waters no longer flow.



On the north side, across the highway is a neighborhood of homes, trailers and mobile homes. It is also the site of The Miracle Valley Shootout. Some of you may remember reading about this at the time, but I don't.

The following is from Wikipedia: In 1978-1979 members of the Healing Center and Church moved from Mississippi to Chicago, Illinois. In 1980 the leader of the church, Pastor Frances Thomas, relocated the church and additional members from Chicago to Miracle Valley. Thomas was one of a reported 10,000 disciples of broadcasting evangelist A. A. Allen's Miracle Valley Bible

Church (MVBC). She attempted to purchase the 2,560 acre property and its numerous buildings that were home to Allen's MVBC. Thomas's plans were to re-establish the original bible church under her leadership. The owners at the time were prohibited from selling this property, which is situated on the south side of Arizona State Route 92 that bisects Miracle Valley. Thomas instead purchased several properties for the church's use in the subdivision along the north side of the highway across from the MVBC, including a restaurant that was converted to a church sanctuary.

Thomas's church in Arizona was established as the Christ Miracle Healing Center and Church (CMHCC). Her son William Thomas Jr., was a bishop and the church's theoretical leader.

The church was reported by sheriff's deputies to operate services almost continuously around the clock. Special assistants or watchers in the service were observed to ensure attendees didn't fall asleep by striking people's heads with long poles. Children who were church members and attended local schools were observed by their teachers to be suffering from what appeared to be severe sleep-deprivation. Local residents and relatives of church members claimed she exerted a "cult-like dominance over her followers" and described church members as having "pledged their lives in cult-like devotion to Mother Thomas". The church denied this.

The local sheriff reported that Thomas referenced the Jim Jones massacre in Guyana, stating "if you think Jonestown was a picnic, you ain't seen nothing yet"

Initial interactions between the existing, mostly white residents and the entirely African American church members were peaceful and friendly. Soon after Pastor Thomas and church members from Chicago arrived in Miracle Valley mutual distrust developed between the approximately 300 members of the church and the approximately 200 residents of this area of rural Palominas.



Pastor Thomas was reported to have a distinctly hostile approach to those who were not members of CMHCC, in particular law enforcement officials, who reported she addressed them as "white boy"

On September 10, 1981, a homemade bomb accidentally detonated in a 12-passenger van as it headed on Hwy 92 from Miracle Valley towards Sierra Vista. The van was owned by a William Thomas Jr. Passenger and church member Steven Lindsey was killed instantly when the bomb detonated while on his lap. Three other passengers were injured, all of whom left the scene before law enforcement officers arrived. Three undetonated bombs were found in the van's remains, one with 6 sticks of dynamite, as well as batteries, fuses, and wires.

Pastor Thomas claimed the bombs were planted by law enforcement officials. The ATF had previously inspected the church property and found a cache of dynamite, which was not illegal at the time.

On October 22, 1982, sheriff's deputies arrived on church property to serve arrest warrants to two church members. An estimated 20 church members armed with sticks and guns surrounded the deputies and forced them to retreat.

At approximately 7:40 on the morning of October 23, a single sheriff's car entered the compound and stopped near the intersection of Faith Ave and Honeysuckle Road, in the middle of the subdivision on the north side of the highway. There were 17 cars with 35 deputies nearby ready to provide backup. After knocking on several house doors trying to locate their targets, a car drove up and discharged angry church members. After being attacked by a man swinging a pipe in a deputy's face, the deputies called for backup as guns appeared in windows of the houses. The police cars arrived and took positions up around the two open fields. An estimated 150 church members - men, women, and children - confronted and attacked the deputies with sticks, rocks, pipes, lumber, garden rakes, knives, and firearms.

Shots were fired from multiple weapons. William Thomas Jr. arrived and was seen unloading multiple guns from his car. One neighbor and at least one deputy, both non-church members, witnessed long-barreled guns being aimed and firing at the deputies. Deputies reported multiple bullets whizzing past them.

After being attacked by multiple church members, Sheriff Deputy Ray Thatcher was confronted by William Thomas Jr. carrying a rifle. Thatcher, who was the designated SWAT sniper for the day of the shootout, fired his semi-automatic rifle from close range, killing William Thomas Jr. and Aruguster Tate (Thomas Jr.'s father-in-law) during the shootout. Thatcher claimed Thomas circled around him pointing a cocked rifle at him, while facing him, before Thatcher fired. Thatcher also claimed that Tate then stooped down and picked up Thomas's rifle and pointed it at Thatcher before he fired. Thatcher admitted to shooting both men, each of whom was struck with four bullets. Of the reported hundreds of firearms rounds fired during the shootout, the only ones reported to be from law enforcement officers were those of Deputy Townsend and a single shot from Deputy Rothrock.

Multiple deputies received injuries including compound bone fractures, shattered knuckles, deep lacerations from broken glass, and wounds from shotgun pellets. In total, two church members were killed, and five deputies and two church members were hospitalized. One deputy, rookie officer Jeffrey C. Brown, would later die of injuries sustained that day. One of the injured church members was rendered paraplegic when a bullet fired by another church member hit his spine, and died in 1987.

The melee lasted an estimated 15 minutes before law enforcement officers retreated from the church compound.

Charges were laid against 19 church members for their alleged part in the shootout. The trial was prosecuted by a State Attorney in neighboring Pima County. In February 1984 charges were dropped due to Cochise County refusing to pay for legal aid defense of the indigent defendants, claiming insufficient funds in their budget. The judge ruled dismissal with prejudice, meaning the defendants could not face the same charges in future.

In the spring of 1983, church leader Frances Thomas announced the church and its members were returning to Chicago. Church members reportedly left soon afterwards, some simply abandoning their homes and properties. In February, 1990 at least 36 Miracle Valley properties owned by Frances Thomas were donated to the Christ Miracle Healing Center and Church. Thomas returned to Chicago in 1983. The church was re-established on the south side of Chicago. In 1989 it attempted to relocate to suburban Markham, Illinois, before moving to Harvey, Illinois. Frances died in 1995.

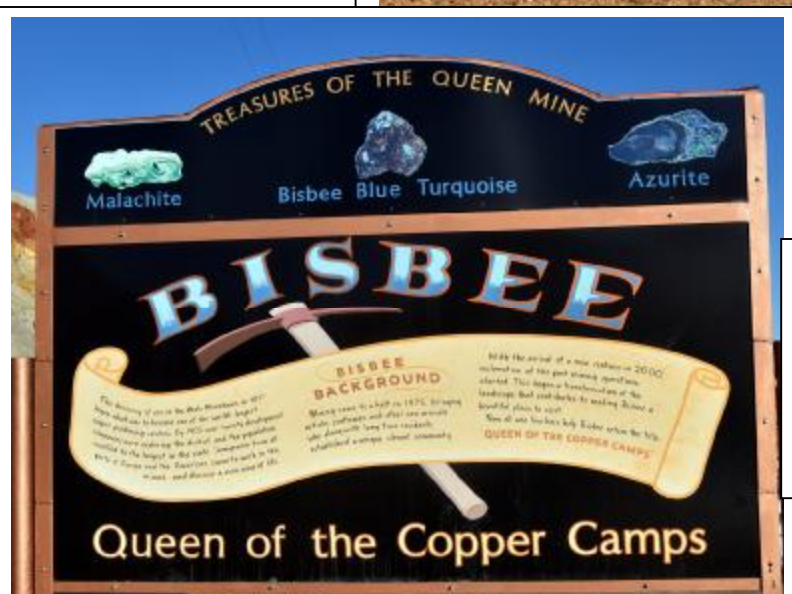
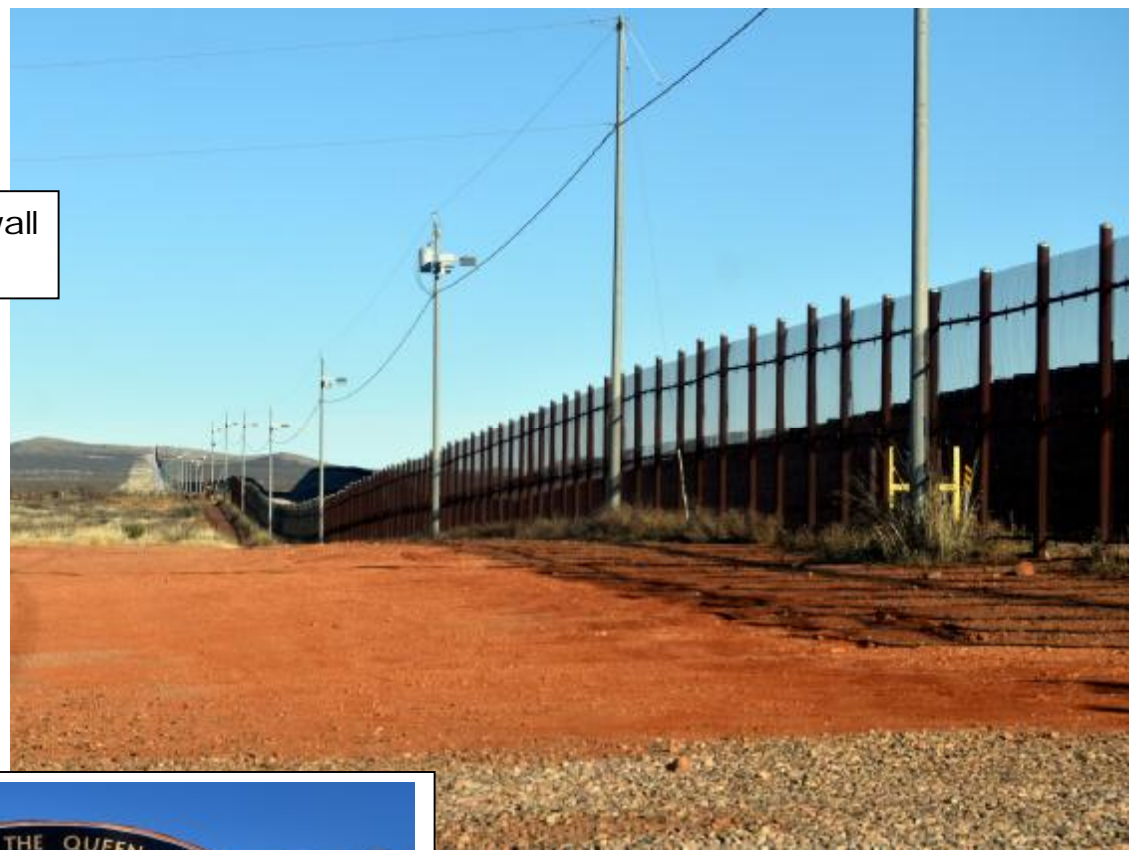
Quite a tale, right. Now, back to the photos.

---



I drove into South Bisbee, but decided to take a detour to Taco, er, Naco, and see the wall. It is actually two walls. The further one has razor wire all up and down the inside.

You can follow the wall right up over the hills.



Back through South Bisbee to Bisbee, and another open pit copper mine. Actually three of them, none of them have been worked since the 70's.

You are looking at the Lavender Pit copper mine. Open-pit mining at Bisbee began in 1917 and ended in 1974. The pit is 4,000 feet wide (north to south), 5,000 feet long, and 850 feet deep at its maximum.



#### COLORS

More than 300 different types of minerals are found in the hills around Bisbee. You can spot a few of them around the pit by their colors:

**Red**—Sulfide minerals that have been oxidized. This rusty-red surface material is found throughout the area.

**Gray**—Granite porphyry, which contains small amounts of copper. The gray color comes from pyrite in the porphyry.

**Yellow**—A thin layer of breccia (angular rock fragments embedded in clay) that surrounds the granite.

**Purple or lavender**—Limestone and conglomerate (rock composed of pebbles cemented together) along the south and east sides of the Lavender Pit. These contain no copper and are considered "waste rock."

*Note: The Lavender Pit is not named for the color. It was named after Harrison Lavender, a former Phelps Dodge general manager of Western Operations.*

These colors were amazing. The photo does not do justice to the real colors.



The pit was created bit by bit over a period of almost 60 years, through three mining phases:

- ① The Sacramento Pit (mined 1917–1929)
- ② The Lavender Pit (mined 1950s–1970s)
- ③ The Holbrook Extension (mined late 1960s–1970s)



I am here -----à

THIS OPEN PIT MINE IS NAMED  
**THE LAVENDER PIT**  
IN HONOR OF  
**HARRISON M. LAVENDER**  
1890 ~ 1952

WHO AS VICE-PRESIDENT AND GENERAL  
MANAGER OF PHELPS DODGE CORPORATION CONCEIVED  
AND CARRIED OUT THIS PLAN FOR MAKING THE  
HITHERTO UNPROFITABLE LOW GRADE COPPER  
BEARING ROCK OF THE AREA INTO COMMERCIAL  
COPPER PRODUCING ORE.

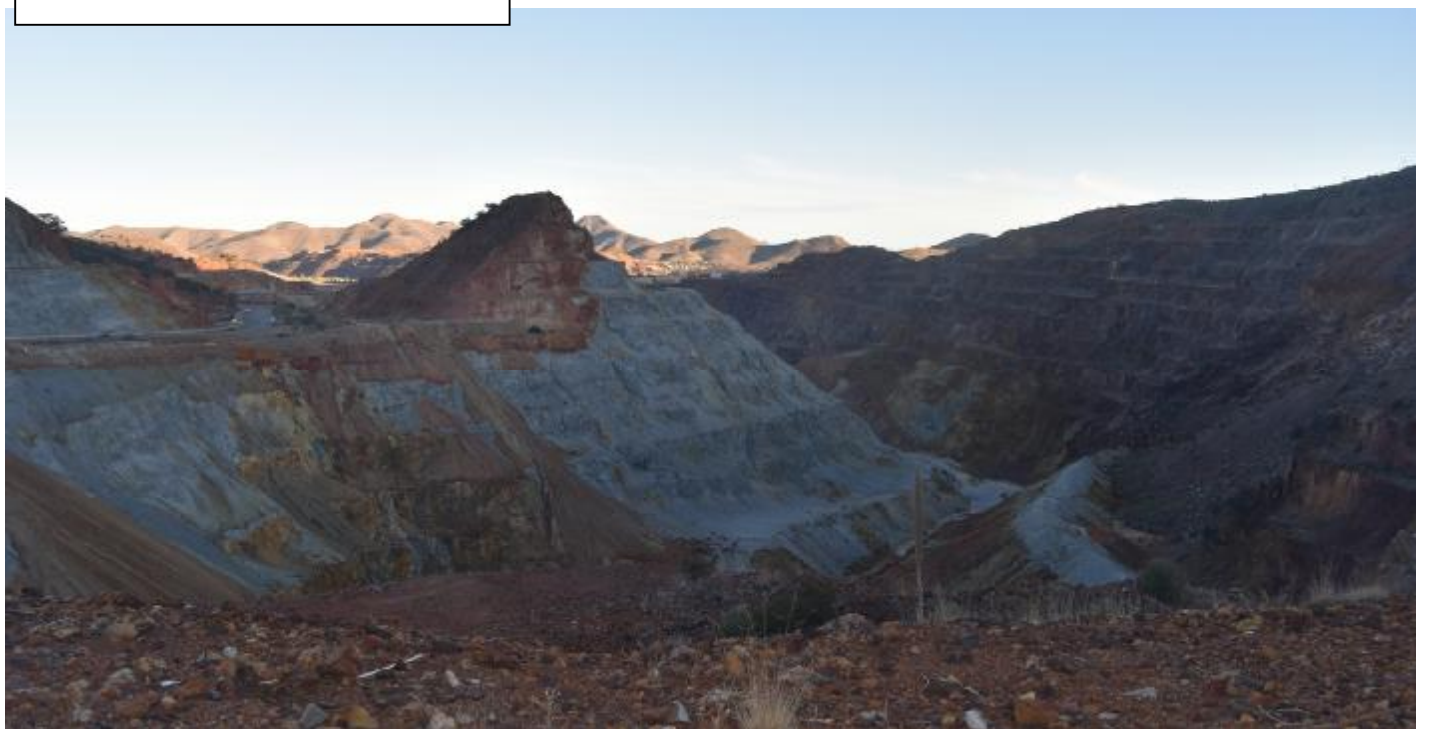
HIS DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP, HIS COMPREHENSIVE  
KNOWLEDGE OF ALL PHASES OF MINING WILL  
CONTINUE TO BE AN INSPIRATION TO HIS  
FELLOW ENGINEERS.

DEDICATED AUGUST 7, 1954

My campsite is  
about here



This is the view about 40 feet left of the RV





This is the first time I have ever used the stand-alone table in the RV. I usually eat at the dinette, but I wanted to see if I could watch something on TV. I have only watched one movie since I left January 4<sup>th</sup>, and that was at Cousin Al's, to show them how the Firestick works. There was only one channel via the antenna, which was only a black screen, and the internet connection was too slow for download. Oh well. That's the way the TV signal crumbles.

Thanks to Steve Shaw for providing the name of Frank McCarthy as the artist I had in yesterday's newsletter. I checked online and found the painting I included. It's called *Chiricahua Raiders*.

Kali, not sure if you're reading these or not, but isn't it a little ironic that I was in a drone museum yesterday?

There is another mine tour here, but I think it goes underground. If it's just another open pit tour again, I think we have all seen enough of that. I know I have.

Bisbee has several things to see. Not sure if I will be here another night or moving on. Only time will tell.

I know, too many clichés right? I will try to cut back.

Until next time.....