



# In Search of Eldorado



## Hello to Family & Friends

Since the Queen Mine RV Park is only a couple hundred yards from the mine tour building, I made it my first stop, planning to be on the 10:30 tour. Being a gentleman I allowed the lady from the tour bus to go ahead of me. She paid for and picked up her tickets and the attendant turned from the window to answer the phone. When she turned back she taped a sign to the window that read “all tours sold out for today”. Wonderful. That’s what I get for being a gentleman. JK. Not that jumping in front of the lady would have gotten me a ticket, hers were all reserved anyways. But I did take a walk through the building and found some great dioramas. Being a model train buff you know I love dioramas.



Day 48

Thursday

February 21st

Bisbee  
To  
Someplace

Weather  
40's & 50'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!'





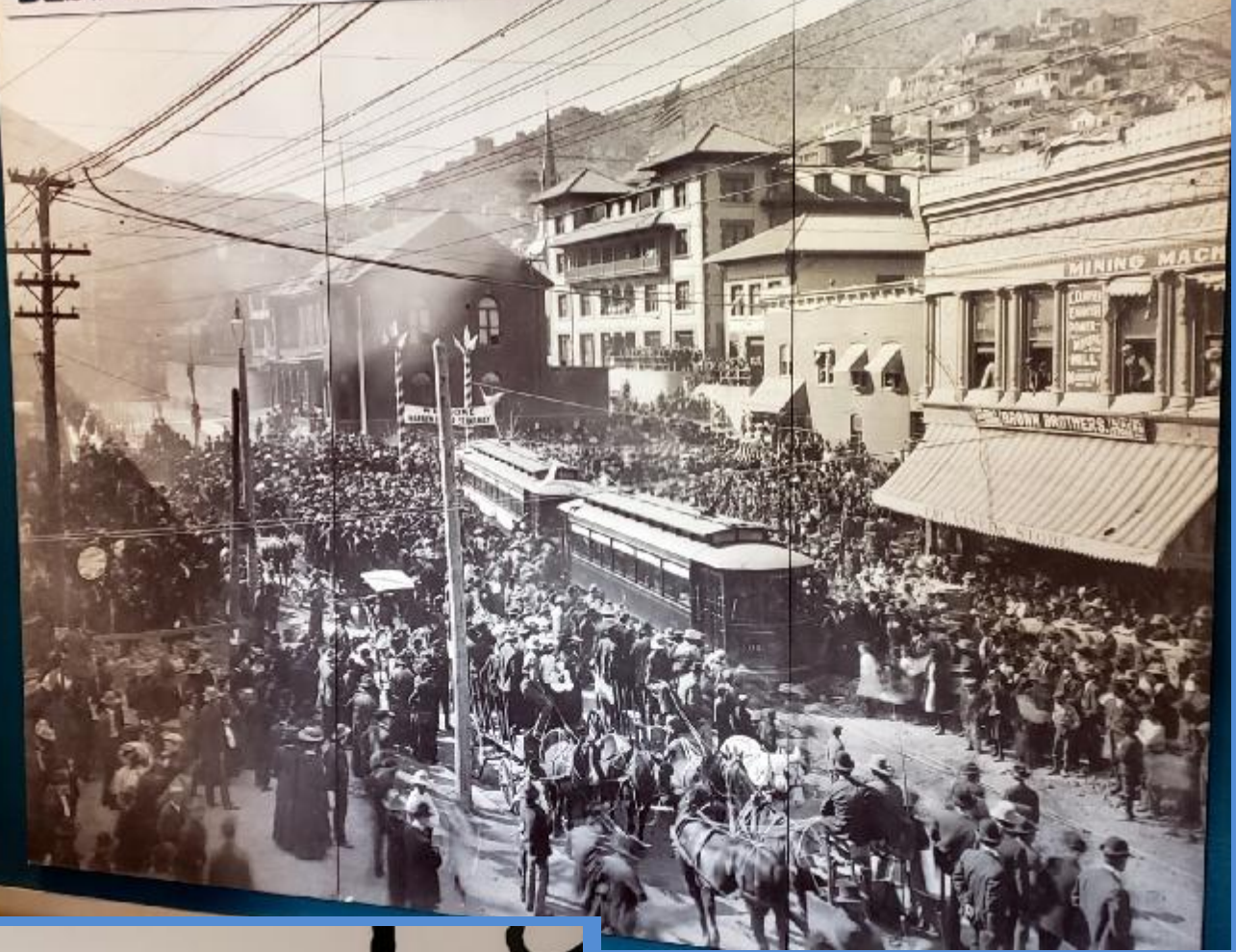
This mug was in the gift shop. Who would need coffee to wake them up in the morning if you had something, anything, to drink from this mug.

After spending some time looking at brochures and maps, I thought I would take a drive through Bisbee. After my drive I decided to find a parking spot and walk around Bisbee. This town kind of reminds me of Ketchikan, Alaska, where Gops and I walked around in the rain. Of course that was a mining town also.



First stop is the official visitor center, right next to the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum.

Bisbee: Urban Outpost



*Do you know where  
your miners are?*

# In

When a miner reported for duty, the timekeeper handed him a brass tag. This routine was called “brassing in.” Stamped with a number, the tag was a vital piece of identification and sometimes a key to survival.

A miner kept his “brass” with him at all times while underground. At the end of the workday, he returned it to the timekeeper. A missing brass could mean that a miner was lost or injured underground, and a search was quickly organized.

In most cases, the “lost” miner had simply forgotten to return his brass. Men who spent precious after-work hours searching for a missing friend took a dim view of such absentmindedness — especially if they found the man comfortably seated in his favorite bar.

## Digging Deeper

Why use brass tags?

Why not cards or sign-in sheets?

There was a gruesome reason for using durable brass tags. In case of an explosion, cave-in, or other disaster, the numbered brass would survive to identify a miner’s body.

Bisbee was once known as the Queen of the Copper Camps. Billions of dollars in copper, gold, silver and other minerals were removed from this small town in the Mule Mountains. This small mining town grew to over 20,000 people by the early 1900's and was the largest city between St. Louis and San Francisco in its heyday. Look at the crowded streets in the photo above.



*The Statue of Liberty contains 179,000 pounds of copper!*

## MINER'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

### VI

**"Thou shalt not address the boss by his Christian name, neither shalt thou contradict him when thou knowest he is lying, but thou shalt meekly say 'yes' or 'no' to all that he suggests; and laugh when he laughs and keep on laughing when he relates a story, even though it be older than thy grandmother."**

From "The Miner's Ten Commandments," about 1910

Once the corporate headquarters of the Copper Queen Mining Company, the museum is at the center of town, an important part of its history. A few years ago this museum was a victim of declining attendance. Something had to be done. The museum became the first rural affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution nationwide, forming a partnership between the nation's largest museum and one of its smallest. And you can tell. The quality of the displays and the way they are laid out and organized is fantastic, a real gem in the desert. I enjoy my time there immensely.

### IX

**"Thou shalt not, in order to breathe, steal from the drilling machine compressed air intended for drilling purposes."**

From "The Miner's Ten Commandments," about 1910

## MINER'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

### V

**"Thou shalt not eat onions when going on shift, even though they be as cheap as real estate in Clifton . . . for the bulbous root . . . causeth the interior of the mine to be an unpleasant place."**

From "The Miner's Ten Commandments," about 1910



Taking a break

## *What's this miner taking home?*

### *Open and see.*

Some miners collected minerals. Some "borrowed" lengths of copper pipe from the mine, for home plumbing projects. Several houses in Bisbee are entirely plumbed with 9-inch lengths of pipe.

Above - Can you imagine a whole house being plumbed with 9" pieces of copper piping? The labor involved in soldering all those joints would be very time consuming.

Right - They made it look like you were walking through an actual mine.





This was a collection of minerals found in the mine. The shapes and colors are phenomenal.

Right – I laughed out loud at this sign in the bathroom – Anything weird. Some people flush something weird down their toilet every day.

**Our Sewer System  
is Historic.**

Please  
**Do Not Flush**  
paper towels,  
sanitary napkins,  
Depends, or  
anything weird

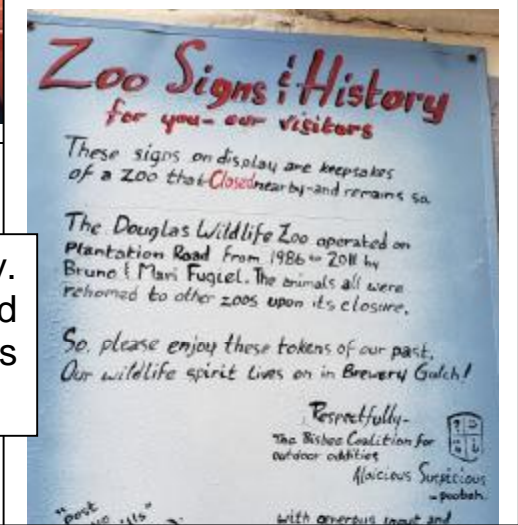
Below – As I started my walking tour I came across this city park. Those scenes are painted on the bleachers, each row separate from the next. Very interesting.





I know most of you will appreciate this one - St. Elmo's Bar opened in 1902. It's the oldest continuously operated bar in Arizona.

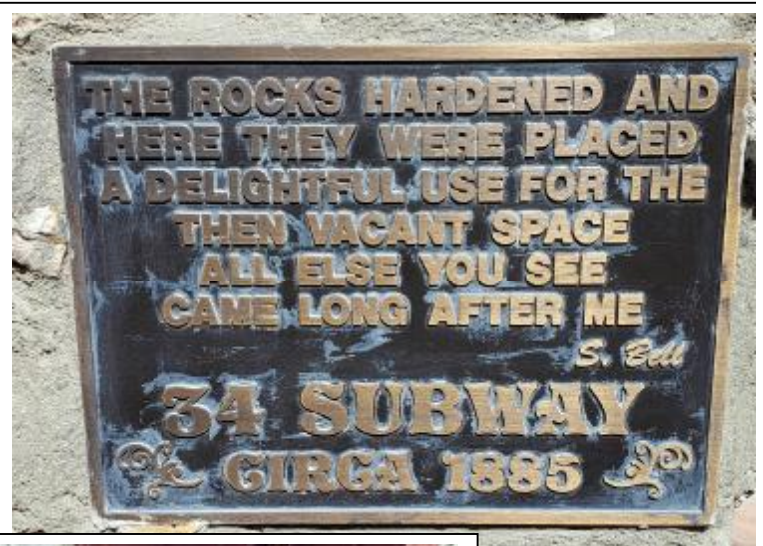
Just up the street from St. Elmo's was this alley. All of those works of art are screwed to the wood siding of the building. There are another almost as many further up on the opposite side.

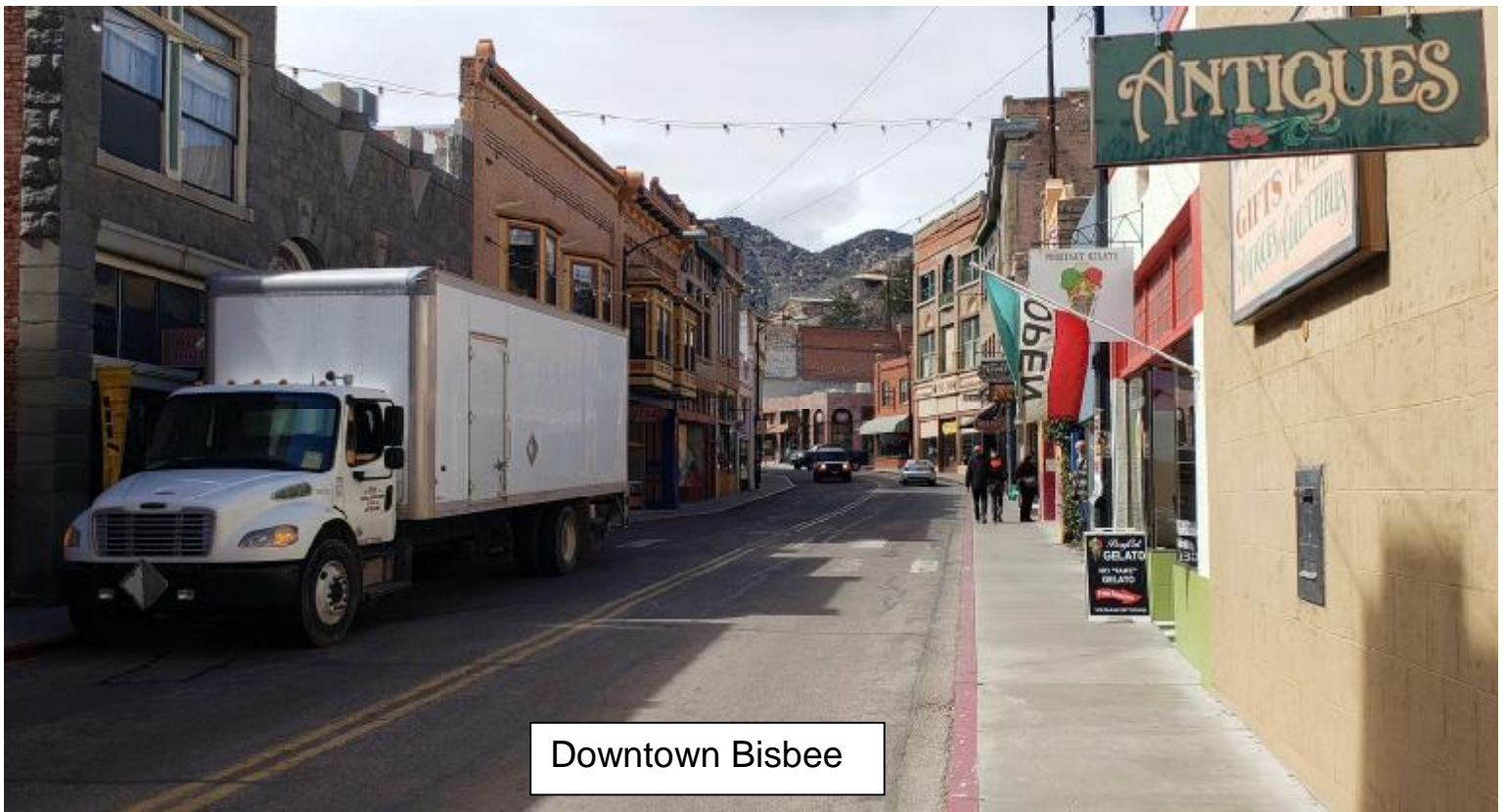






I know a lot of art is 'in the eyes of the beholder' and some should be tossed down the sewer, but I am not sure I have ever seen an art show with junk FROM the sewer. This show will probably be a riot to be at. The bottom line states that 'creative attire is encouraged and welcome'. I may have to stop back for some 'pre-trash drinks and nibbles'





Downtown Bisbee

These are only the first level of steps, they continue up and up.



‘Dedicated to those Virile Men the Copper Miners whose contribution to the development of the wealth and lore of the State of Arizona has been Magnificent’

A local artist was paid \$1800 in 1935 to make this copper covered, bare-chested figure.



This 3D artwork on the wall was very cool. Unfortunately, the city of Bisbee chose to place about 10 trash bins right in front of the right-hand section, so this is the best photo I could get without the trash cans. Although from what we saw earlier, trash in Bisbee is artwork.

I thought this was another mission when I first noticed it, but it turns out to be the Cochise County Courthouse



As I kept walking I noticed this large drainage ditch running along the right side of the road. Several homes had driveways and walkways over the ditch to gain access, like the ones you see here.



But here, the entire house was built over the ditch on steel girders. This is the main reason I thought of Ketchikan. Several buildings there, mostly the red light district, are built out over the river.

I stopped at a Chocolate Shop, but they were closed, so I headed back to the RV and hit the road for Douglas, another border town. They are also supposed to have a historic district walking tour.



First stop – the visitor center. I picked up some new brochures and a map of Douglas with the sights to see marked on it. Neither of the actual walking tour brochures had a map, one gave you turn by turn instructions and the other just addresses, weird. As I ate lunch in the RV I planned out my tour of Douglas and found that the walking tour is actually in Agua Prieta, the town across the border. For some reason I just do not feel comfortable leaving the RV unattended in a border town.



I took a walk to the Police Station, not because anything was wrong, but because it used to be the railroad station.



I made my up my own driving tour and headed past the Gadsden Hotel which was built in 1907 and was named for James Gadsden who negotiated the Gadsden Purchase we have had past experience with. On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1928, a fire ripped through the hotel leaving only the elevator car cabin and the marble staircase and columns. It was immediately rebuilt on a grander scale with no expense spared. To this day the lift is one of the oldest operated manually elevators still in use west of the Mississippi. It was also one of the first hotels to feature individual bathrooms in all 160 air-cooled rooms.

Just down the street from the Gadsden Hotel is Church Square. According to Ripley's Believe It Or Not, since 1930 this is the only place in the world with four churches on one block. One on each corner, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian. This was the most interesting one architecturally.



What to do and where to go next? The Monument near where Geronimo Surrendered, effectively ending the Indian Wars is 40 miles towards New Mexico. I would have to travel that twice in order to head back north, maybe at another time. The Slaughter Ranch Museum is about 15 miles east, but they close at 3:30 and it's already going on 3:00. So I decide to head north to the Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area, then find a campsite somewhere close to there. The low is only 37 tonight, but I don't want the batteries to run out of power just when it hits 37 degrees.

## WHITEWATER DRAW WILDLIFE AREA

On January 3, 1997 the Arizona Game and Fish Department acquired the 1400 acre portion of Whitewater Draw you see before you. This property includes a 700 acre wetland with associated grassland and agriculture. The site is especially significant in supporting the wintering sandhill crane population and waterfowl of the Sulphur Springs Valley. It is also a wintering area for a number of shorebirds and raptors including golden and bald eagles. The wide variety of wildlife which uses the property also includes mule deer, javelina and numerous species of reptiles, amphibians, and nongame birds throughout the year.

Whitewater Draw will be managed for public recreational uses such as wildlife viewing and hunting without decreasing the wildlife values for which the property was acquired.

The area was acquired with a combination of Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration, Arizona Waterfowl Conservation Fund, and Heritage funds primarily for the extensive wildlife values associated with the wetland.





Winter roosting for the Sandhill Crane? You better believe it. There must be thousands of them here.



I took a short walk to get the photos above, even on a path that is closed at this time of year so the Cranes are not disturbed. I didn't get close enough to cause any harm, I hope.

I backtracked a little to the Double Adobe Campground for the night. Nice place, grass spots to park on rather than the thistle in Sierra Vista.

I hope you noticed I am using a different font. The old one was getting on my nerves. It always seemed hard to read. Let me know what you think, keep it this way or choose something else?

There is a winter storm watch for the next 24 hours in this area. 1 to 4 inches of heavy snow between 3500 and 4500 foot elevations and 2-12 inches between 4500 and 5000 feet. 8-16 inches above 5000 feet with higher amounts in the Chiricahuas. The Chiricahua National Monument is supposed to be my next stop and hardly anywhere within 50 miles is going to be over 40 degrees tomorrow. I might just hibernate for a day.

The wind gusts are supposed to reach 40 MPH tonight. Sometimes the RV, even with the stabilizers down, is rocking so much I cannot put the mouse where I want it to go, crazy.

I almost forgot to mention, on the way to the campground I saw my first Javalina. He was just disappearing into the brush on the side of the road so no picture, but it was great.

Last, but not least, I want to wish a Happy Birthday to Gpops, my Dad, the greatest guy I know. Happy 97<sup>th</sup> Birthday tomorrow (2/22/22). I love you!

Until next time.....