



In Search of Eldorado



Hello to Family & Friends

I think this is going to be fun, something I never tried before. You'll see it when it comes along.

Willcox to Bowie, about 25 miles by Interstate, but some very interesting things in-between. My first task is to explore Willcox; a couple museums, Railroad Park, 1880 train depot, sounds good. The lady at the RV Park assured me the museums were open today.



I guess Historic Downtown Willcox is just about as busy on a Sunday as historic downtown Kingman was.

Day 51

Sunday

February 24th

Willcox
To
Bowie

Weather
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!'



I forgot this one yesterday. It's a panoramic from the turn-around point of my hike.



Monday - 10 A.M. - 1 P.M. - With Live Music
Tuesday - Saturday - 11 A.M. - 3 P.M.
Closed Sunday



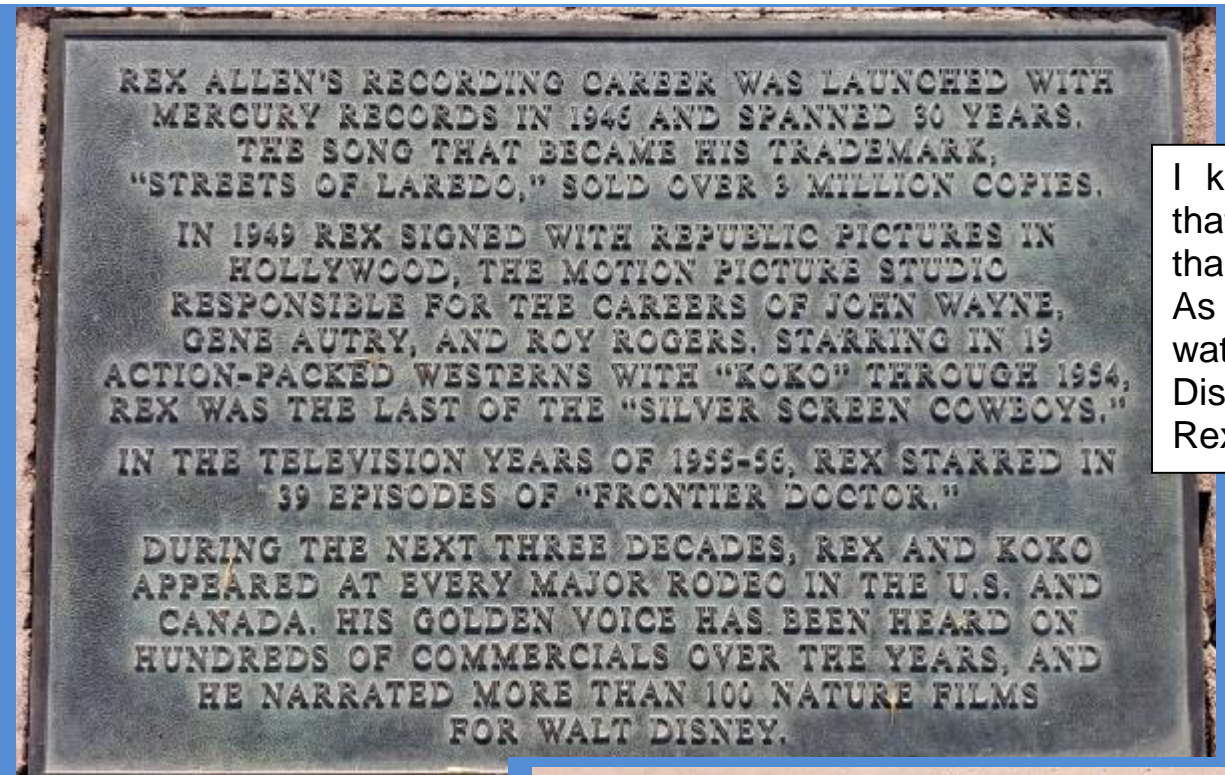
At least the Park was open. The local War Memorial to the far right.





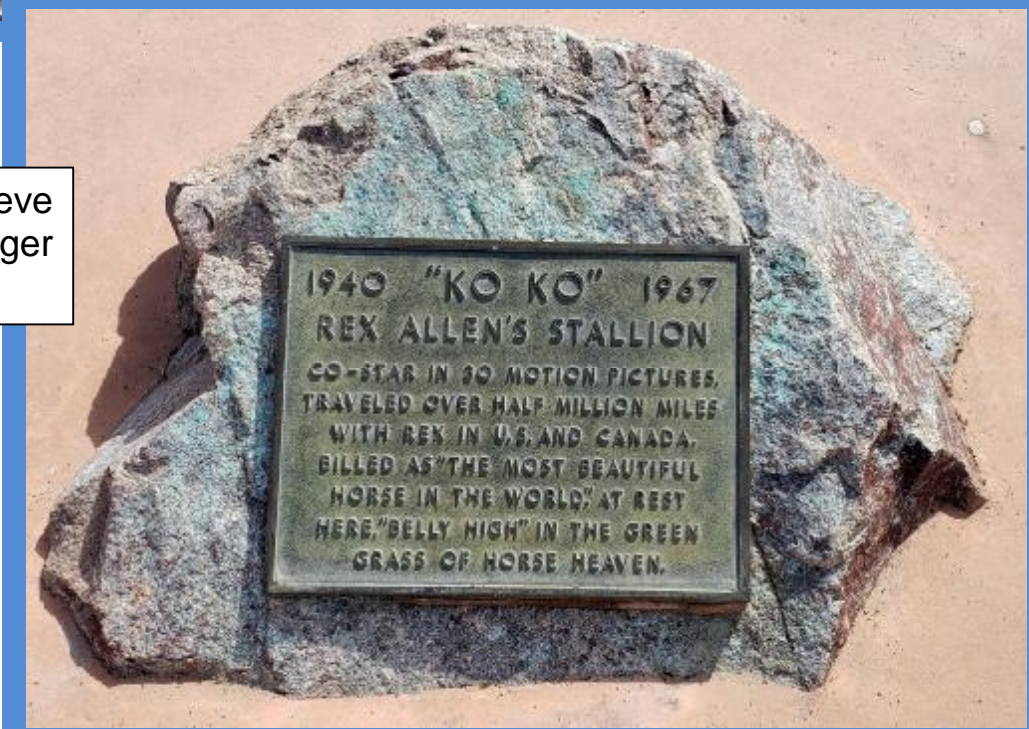
They put the statue the wrong way again

BORN DECEMBER 31, 1920 TO
HORACE AND FAYE ALLEN IN WILLCOX,
REX ELVIE ALLEN WAS CROSS-EYED AT BIRTH.
AS A YOUNG BOY, REX SANG IN THE BARBER SHOP
ON THIS VERY STREET. HE AND HIS DAD PLAYED
FOR DANCES AND RODEOS IN THE 30'S AND HE
EXCELLED IN GLEE CLUBS AND CHURCH CHOIRS.
REX LEFT HOME DETERMINED TO FIND HIS PLACE IN
THE CAREER HE LOVED-MUSIC. IN 1945 AT
WLS RADIO IN CHICAGO, HE GAINED NATIONWIDE
POPULARITY ON "THE NATIONAL BARN DANCE."
IN 1946 HE MARRIED BONNIE LINDER,
THE MOTHER OF HIS CHILDREN:
REX JR., CURTIS, MARK, AND BONITA ALLEN.
THROUGH THE GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO,
REX ALLEN STARRED WITH THE GREATS:
RED FOLEY, LULU BELLE AND SCOTTY,
AND GEORGE CORNELL.



I knew I recognized that name from more than western movies. As kids we probably watched every Disney Nature Film Rex Allen narrated.

I find it hard to believe that Ko Ko was a bigger star than Trigger.



Well that certainly doesn't look like a historic 1880 train depot.





That's more like it. Below is the full view, but it didn't have the town name, so I included this end view. It's the City Hall now and was not open on a Sunday.



As I was searching the web for things to see in Willcox, I came across a site that named this building as the one where Warren Earp was shot and killed. Warren was one of Wyatt's brothers. Warren is also the only Earp that is buried in Arizona. However, I also ran across the Willcox Walking Tour brochure which named another building as the one where the dirty deed took place. So the choice is yours.



Above – That has got to be about the most classic shot of a western Cemetery that you could wish for.

Right – The grave marker of Warren Earp. He is not actually buried here. Nobody was sure where his actual grave is, so they just erected this monument near the back of the cemetery.



This one cracked me up as I headed towards the Interstate.



This one was on Roadside America – ‘A big shuttered stucco teepee stands quietly in a downtown that's seen busier days. Business closed, architectural folly remains. Bowie's apex of fine dining is a teepee shaped building covered with gray checkerboard tarpaper. It sits on the main street, not far from the Wee Blev Inn (no longer there)’

If it wasn't for the acres and acres of orchards surrounding Bowie, it would be a good candidate for a modern ghost town. Bowie (boo-e) has more boarded up buildings than un-boarded up buildings. What are those trees anyways? It turns out Bowie is home to almost 4000 acres of Pistachio trees. The quality of their nuts (he he) is so sought after in Europe and brings a premium price, that none of the nuts are sold here in the US.

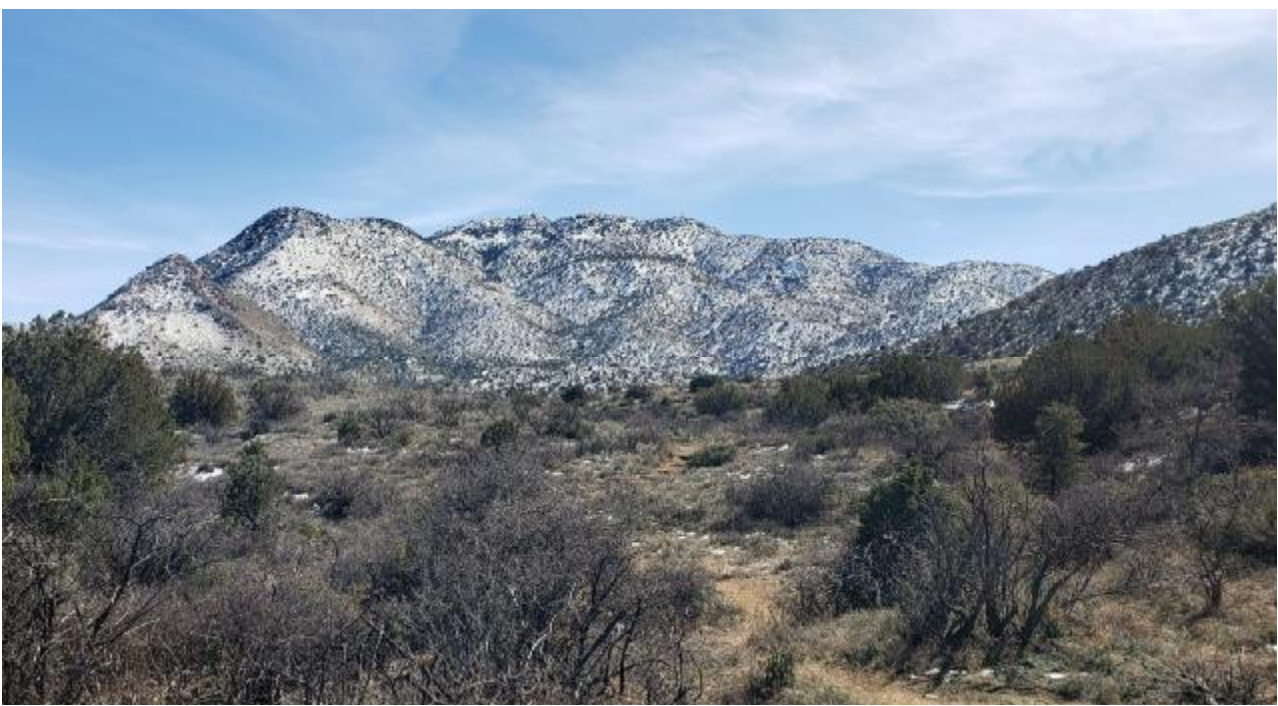
Return to Fort Bowie

Chapter 1

After finally escaping the marauding Apaches, but losing my horse in the melee, I made my way across the scorching Arizona desert.

Three days without water. My tongue felt as though it filled my entire mouth. There was no more sweat to wipe from my brow.

I needed to make my way to Apache Spring and then on to Fort Bowie. I still carried the dispatch pouch for General Crook slung across my shoulder.



I could see the see the beginnings of Apache Pass, between the Chircahua Mountains on my left and the Dos Cabezas Mountains on my right.

It's not called the Pass of Death for no reason. That life giving liquid called water, found nowhere within 20 miles of Apache Spring, brings friend and foe alike to drink from its cool waters.



There, just ahead, is that a lookout post? Just the ruins of the Apache Pass Stage Station. I remember when this place was first built, back in 1858 I think it was. What a meal you could get here then – bread, coffee, meat, and beans – for fifty cents.

It can't be too far to the Spring now. On quiet days, meaning no Apaches in sight, they used to bring two ten gallon wooden kegs of water, by burro, from the Spring.




I was just a tyke when Bascum met with Cochise, right over there in that field. Bascum should have never accused Cochise of kidnapping that boy, He had no evidence at all, only hatred for all Apache, and Cochise especially. His racism started this Indian War

That boy is a man now. After living with the White Mountain Apache he became a scout and interpreter. I can't remember why he changed his name, but I saw Mickey Free over at Fort Huachuca just last year.

What Happened to Felix Martinez Ward?

Felix was kidnapped by Apache, but not Cochise's Chiricahua. He was traded to the White Mountain Apache and raised among the children of Nayundlie, a local group leader. As an adult, Felix became a scout and interpreter for the US Army and changed his name to Mickey Free.




I have to keep going. I'm almost on my hands and knees now. There's the Butterfield Mail Trail. Twenty-five days to travel 2,800 miles from St. Louis to San Francisco. John Butterfield must have been crazy with sunstroke when he took that contract back in '57. Good thing he invented the Celerity wagon. Cochise learned a lesson when he tried to attack the first time. The second attack was not until 11 years later.

There's a fence up ahead. It must be the Post Cemetery. I knew most of those soldiers in there that were killed by Apaches.

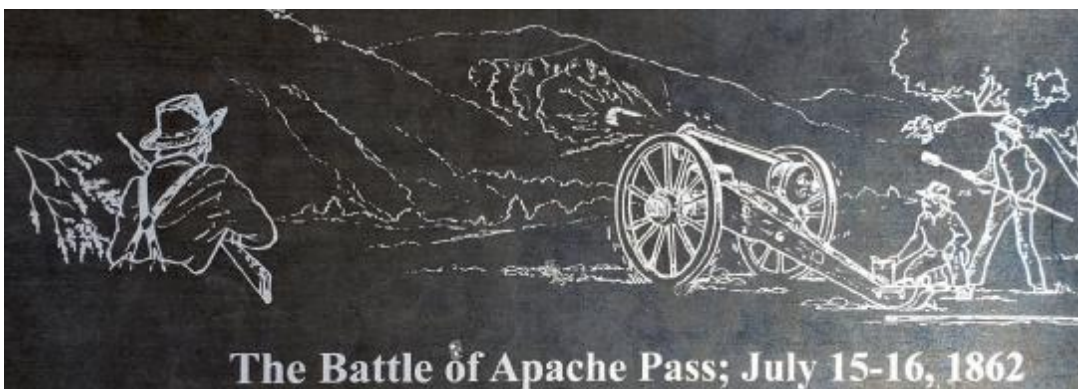




I'm getting closer. Why are there no guards out here today? A man could die in this heat.

What's that? Uh, the old Indian Agency building. I always had a lot of respect for Tom Jeffords. To make friends with Cochise was no easy feat. Governing some 900 Chiricahua Apaches here in '76 was an unequalled undertaking. Too bad Cochise died in 1874. That left the Apache in disarray and Jeffords no longer had much sway with them. The government tried moving them to a reservation, but Geronimo would have none of it.

I would continue on, but it's getting late. I will just have to finish the old fashioned way.



An advance guard of 96 California Volunteers, marching toward the San Simon River to establish a supply depot for the California Column, followed the Butterfield Road through Apache Pass. As they approached the abandoned stage station, Cochise and his ally, Mangas Coloradas, with a combined force of 140 - 160 warriors, ambushed the rear of the column. The Californians countermarched from the station, driving the Apaches into the hills, only to find they had taken up new positions around the spring. The Californians attacked again, and finally reached the water, after dispersing the Apaches from rock fortifications commanding both flanks of Apache Spring.

This battle led directly to the establishment of Fort Bowie. Sergeant Albert Fountain, chronicled the event:



The Hunt

An Apache hunter chose the straight stalk of a sotol for his lance. A strong bow was fashioned from the branch of a mulberry tree, the sinew of a deer's leg formed the bow string and a light reed provided the arrow. Deer was the principal game animal. Pronghorn, mountain lion, wood rat, squirrel and rabbit were also hunted. Horses, mules and cattle taken in raids, supplemented the Apaches' diet.



The real Apache Spring. Not flowing like it used to, but still flowing nonetheless.

First Fort Bowie

To your right, a spur trail follows a military road 300 yards to the first Fort Bowie ruins.

On July 28, 1862, a 100-man detachment of the 5th California Volunteer Infantry began construction of the primitive fort, completing it two weeks later. A four-foot-high stone wall surrounded a collection of tents and a stone guard house. The camp was named after Col. George Washington Bowie, the 5th Infantry commander.

General James Carleton, commander of the Department of New Mexico, ordered the fort commander

to attack the Apaches whenever he finds them near his post, to escort all trains and couriers through the pass and well out into the mesa, and to take the liberty of sending out detachments strong enough to give protection to soldiers and killing when he deems it wise to do so.

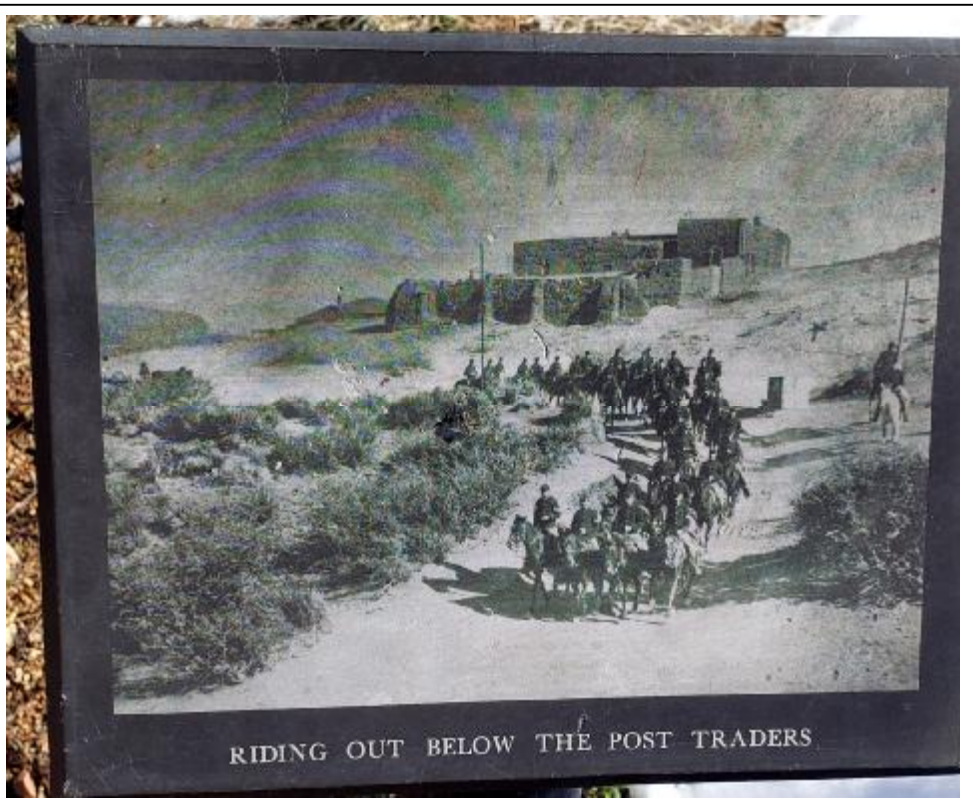


First Fort Bowie, 1867

The Apaches no longer controlled Apache Spring, but they continued raiding and killing travelers not escorted by the military. During the first fort's six-year history, sporadic patrols pursued the elusive Apaches with little success.

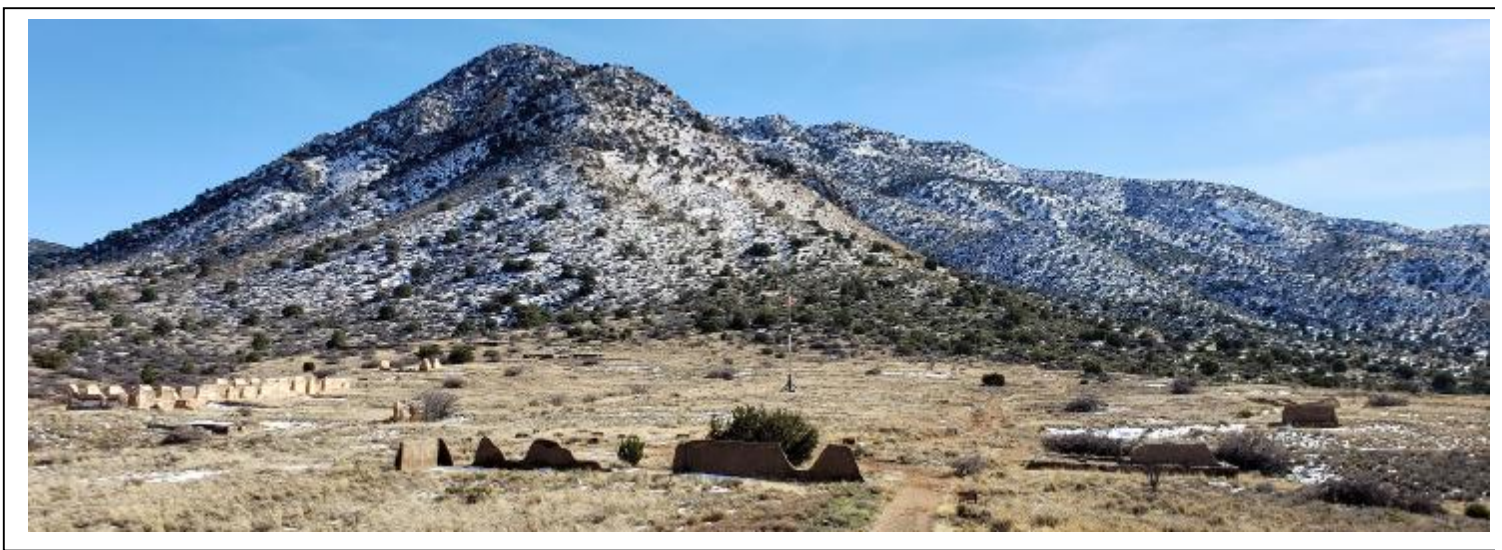
It was an undesirable duty post. Isolation, bad food, sickness, crude quarters, and the seldom-seen but ever-present Indians led to low morale and frequent troop rotation.

In 1866, regular soldiers relieved the Volunteers and, in 1868, finished construction of the new Fort Bowie on a spacious plateau to the east, where it functioned for another 26 years.



RIDING OUT BELOW THE POST TRADERS

First signs of the fort





FORT BOWIE 1894

Fort Bowie, 1894

Second Fort Bowie

Two years after the 1872 peace agreement with Cochise, the great Apache chief died. Several hundred Chiricahuas were relocated on the San Carlos Indian Reservation. However, Geronimo and over a hundred of his followers escaped the roundup, to begin a ten-year period of raiding and pillaging on both sides of the border. During this time, Fort Bowie was the hub for military operations against the hostile Chiricahuas.

Arduous "search and destroy" missions into Mexico, by regular troops and specially

recruited Apache scouts, finally wore down the Geronimo band. The Chiricahua's last surrender in September 1886 signalled the end of the nation's Indian wars.

Fort Bowie settled into its final, leisurely eight years of existence. Cottonwood trees, planted in 1885, flourished and kerosene street lamps lit pathways between frame buildings. A tennis court graced officers' row. There were flushing toilets and an ice machine. The men attended dances, played baseball, hunted, and held training maneuvers. Fort life was more relaxed.

Commanding Officer's Quarters

The fort's most elaborate structure, a two-story, Victorian-style mansion, was built in 1884-85 for about \$4,000.00. An expensive home at that time! Among its thirteen rooms (originally designed as a duplex) were a drawing room, a sewing room with skylight, a dining room, and seven bedrooms. The exterior included two verandas and two wings covered with fancy shingles in bands of alternating colors.

Post Commander Major Eugene Beaumont, the home's first occupant, complained: "The large amount of useless and unnecessary ornamentation has been of great expense and waste of time, and such a plan should never have been designed to make work for the carpenters."

But the waste was not total. Beaumont gave away two of his daughters in marriage to Fort Bowie officers in this house.



Then....

Commanding Officer's Quarters, ca. 1885

Now...



The sign says kitchen and mess hall. Not a bad view for fixing breakfast every morning.



An overview of Fort Bowie from the ridge trail. Rode horses on this one last October.

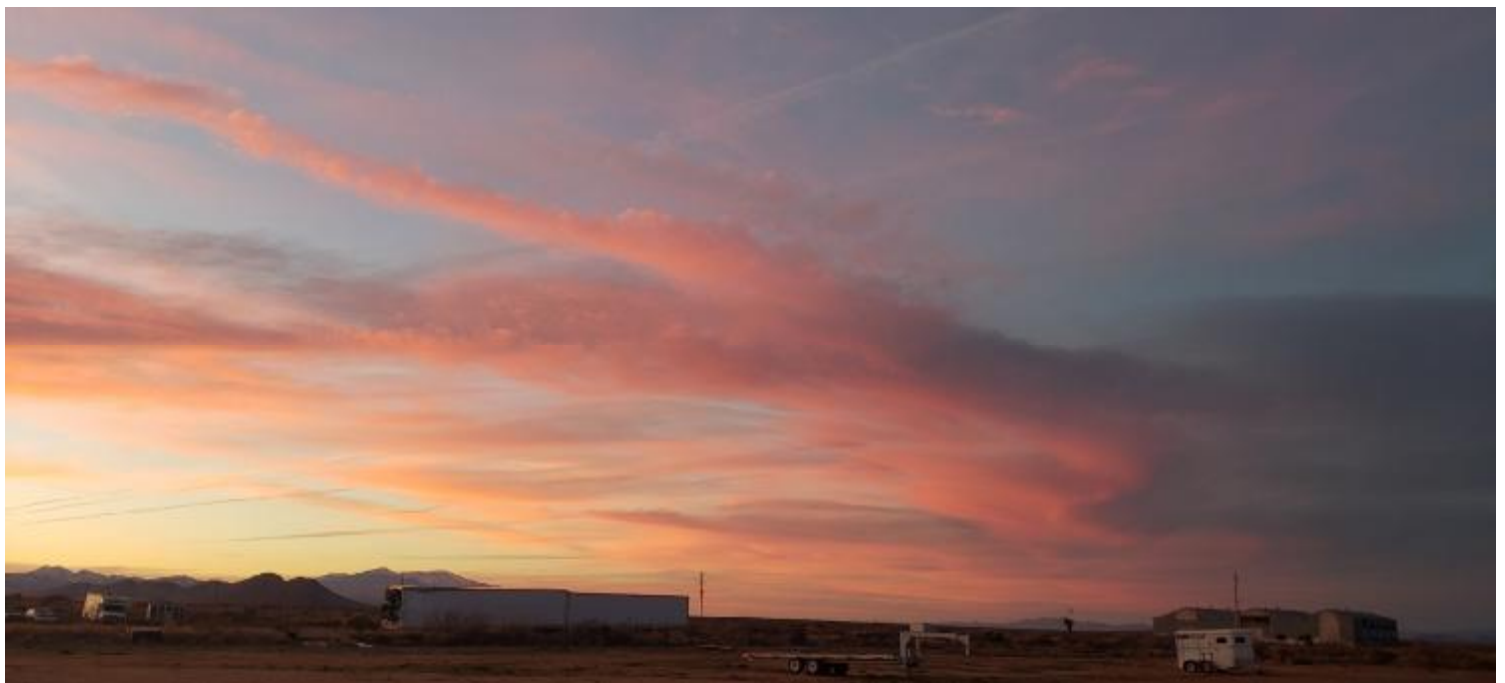


I guess you can see why it's called the ridge trail



Last view of Fort Bowie

I called it Return to Fort Bowie, because this was one of the day trips during the Vendetta Ride back in October. Since I was on horseback at the time, I couldn't thoroughly explore the site. I put down a reminder to come back some day and do it on foot, so that's what today is about. I'm glad I did, there are several things I saw today that there was no chance to see from the saddle of a horse, especially when you're holding on for dear life with one hand, and holding the camera in the other. Not to mention a good 4 mile hike to stretch the legs out and keep them limber.





A pretty nice sunset tonight. Those last two are pretty nice, except for the telephone poles and wires.

Well, an interesting day. Not quite as scenic as yesterday, lots of plaques if you want to read them. That's why I tried the story line, an attempt to make it more interesting by relating the facts on the plaques in story form rather than making you read them. I know, don't give up my day job, right!

I found out today that my original trip ending triple play (pun intended), four days of golf in the morning, Brewers spring training in the afternoon and NCAA basketball in the evenings, has not come to fruition. Unforeseen circumstances have caused a delay in spring fun time until next year.

What this does is give me an additional 10-12 days here in Arizona before I head to Houston. I will try and make the remaining days the most scenic of the trip.

Temperatures are warming up. Mid-sixties all week, even up to the Grand Canyon.

Until tomorrow.....