



In Search of El dorado

A daily journal of my travels and adventures in my.....Search for Eldorado

Hello to Family & Friends

Monday, February 15th 2021 Day 29

Happy President's Day! Or is it?

The Truth behind the Holiday

In 1879, the United States made Washington's February 22nd Birthday a federal holiday. Today, the third Monday in February is frequently referred to as "Presidents' Day." So which is it? We get to the bottom of what's official and what's not.

A Federal Birthday Celebration

George Washington was a humble man who did not enjoy flashy celebrations. During his lifetime, Washington paid little attention to his own birthday, and often "celebrated" it by responding to letters or attending to matters at Mount Vernon.

However, national celebration of his birthday began while he was alive and continued after his death. While his birthday is still recognized to this day, the parameters around it changed in the late 20th century, when it unofficially became known as "Presidents' Day".

The road to what the majority of the public in the United States now recognizes as Presidents' Day is a long and confusing one. After Washington died in 1799, his birthday was informally celebrated across the country. It wasn't until January 31, 1879, that Washington's birthday became a federally recognized holiday.

Moving to a Monday

Until 1968, Washington's Birthday had always been celebrated on February 22. It was tradition and a powerful reminder of the man who helped create what we have today in the United States.

On June 28, 1968, Congress passed the "Uniform Monday Holiday Act". This law was to provide uniform annual observances of certain legal public holidays on Mondays. The act was also created to provide federal employees with more three-day weekends. Under this new law, Washington's birthday would be celebrated on the third Monday of February, partially losing the value and identity of the importance of his birthday. Washington's birthday has not been celebrated on the actual day of his birth since the law took effect in 1971.

The "Presidents' Day" Misnomer

Today the nation typically combines Washington's Birthday with Presidents' Day, celebrating both days on the third Monday in February. However, Presidents' Day is not the official name of the holiday.

While the name "Presidents' Day" was proposed for this Monday holiday in 1951, the U.S. government never officially changed the name. In the 1980s, thanks to advertising campaigns for holiday sales, the term became popularized and largely accepted.

The idea behind the name was to create a holiday that did not recognize a specific president, but rather celebrated the office of the presidency. This joint recognition would also celebrate President Lincoln's February 12 birthday within the same period, but arguably, George Washington (the Father of our country) deserves his own day.

George Washington Day

While it may seem like the entire nation observes "Presidents' Day," Virginia, Illinois, Iowa, and New York specifically recognize the third Monday in February as "Washington's Birthday" or "George Washington Day." Some states, such as Virginia, celebrate Washington's birthday the entire month of February. In the city of Laredo, Texas, an annual Washington Birthday Celebration that began in 1898 lasts the entire month!

Thanks to mountvernon.org for that bit of historical data

I leave you with the beautiful sunset picture that kali took today in Wausau, Wisconsin.



When I went to bed last night I set the clock on the microwave, it only works when plugged in. This morning it was back to 0:00, meaning the power had gone off during the night but was back on now. I ate breakfast and then went over to talk to my host. They said the power was out (and it was when I went back to the RV) and their pipes were frozen also. I had a similar situation, no water. I could hear the water pump running, but nothing came out. Hopefully there is no permanent damage. Heading through Zapata towards Laredo I found all of the traffic lights were out and most of the buildings dark. Gas stations were not open. I guess it must be a city wide outage.

As I entered the Laredo city limits an hour or so later, I noticed a couple dogs on the side of the road, tearing at something. I could not tell by what was left of it, but they were enjoying the raw meat of something almost the same size as them. I know, disgusting right? Most of their traffic lights were out here also. I guess it was more than city wide, I was informed that a good portion of Texas was without power. At that point my RV was better prepared than over two million Texans. I did find portions of Laredo with power, but I35 northbound was closed off putting all of that inbound traffic from Mexico on the frontage roads with no working lights. I'm surprised there weren't more accidents the way some people just flew right through those intersections.

I had contacted a few campgrounds, but they were without power also. Stinson's told me to try back in the afternoon. Being a holiday none of the museums were open and the wind was too cold to go tramping about outdoors, so I drove around, charging my batteries, eating lunch, checking out the lay of the land, until about 3:00. I gave Stinson's another call and Vanessa told me the power had come back on for a short time but was off again. However, one of the residents was going to get a large generator and she would put me next to it if I wanted to come on down.

Stinson's is back south of Zapata, an hour drive back the way I had come. It keeps the batteries charged and the cabin warm so I'm ok with it.

Forty dollars a night, even with no electricity, no game room, no pool, I wonder what I'm paying for. But, there is a chance the power could come back on at any time, and that's worth the price. There are NO campgrounds in or near Laredo except the State Park, which is closed. A truck stop could work, there are three of them, but I was still hopeful of having power, even if it was from a noisy generator.

I think my water froze last night because the tank is in the slideout. So when I extended that at 4:00 p.m., the wind was hitting that side of the RV all night. Tonight I am leaving the slide in until I go to bed. That makes the cabin smaller, less space to heat, the floor warmer (my feet always freeze at the dinette because I'm sitting in the slideout, just a couple inches between my feet and the cold outside), and keeps the water tank warmer. So far, so good. The batteries are holding up better than they have in the past cold weather. It helps that the wind has died considerably. The sun even came out today, causing all the ice on the roof to melt away throughout the day. I was always dripping water.

Speaking of water, I did not see any water leaking from under the RV so I think it survived.

It's going on 9:00 and the guy is not back with the generator, I bet he stopped at a hotel for the night.

Obviously no photos today and, the internet is terrible here. I have the booster hooked up to my secondary portable battery and I am lucky to get my email, even on the phone. So I'm not sure this will go out tonight or not.

Enjoy the sunset photo above and Keep Warm Everyone!

Until next time.....