



# In Search of El dorado

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

Hello to Family & Friends

Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 Day 39



I have a 12:30 reservation for a factory tour. The day is gray and misting rain which pretty much eliminates the air museum. I stopped for a haircut (sorry Jane but it's been two months, see you when I get back), then Sam's Club for some jerky and cashews (snacks while driving), then WalMart for some muffins and steaks. I drove in the employee entrance of the factory and had to sit awhile until the security guard directed me where to go. Once parked, I ate lunch and headed in for my tour. It's the SAS Shoe Factory. I had never heard of SAS until my research, and the shoes are all over \$100 so I won't be buying them, no matter how comfortable they are.

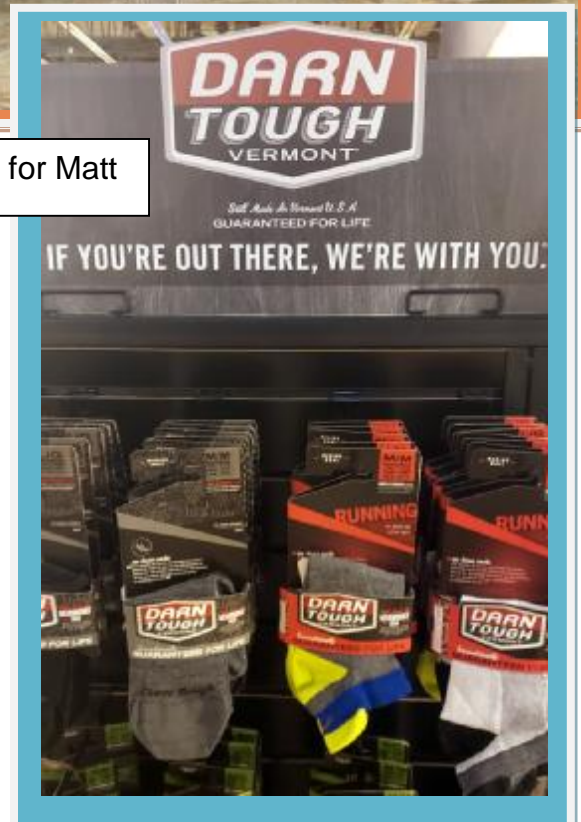
The gift shop is built to look like an old western town and they have a lot of classic vehicles out front. What was nice is that I was the only one on the tour. What is not nice is that no photography was allowed in the factories. So it was a very interesting tour, every shoe is handmade and Grace took me through the entire process.







This one is for Matt





JOHN COLEMAN (b. 1949)

**1876, Gall – Sitting Bull –  
Crazy Horse, ca. 2011**

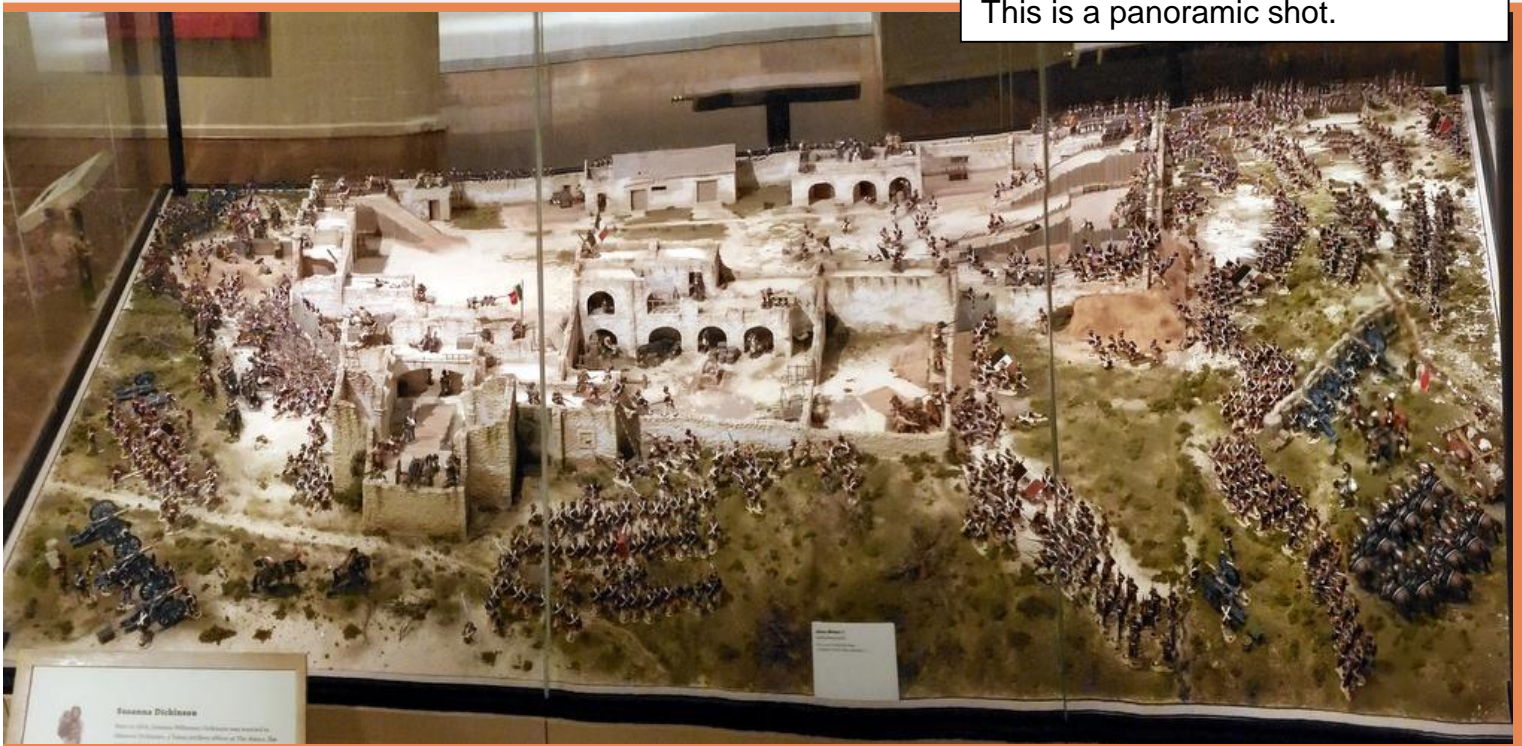
I was able to find parking on the street downtown, and since the cars parked near me did not have stickers on the windshield, I didn't bother to pay either.



**Alamo diorama 2013**

Made by King & Country

This is a HUGE diorama of the battle of the Alamo. Very detailed. This is a panoramic shot.





XIANG ZHANG (B. 1954)

*Coal & Oats*, 2019



Ye olde chuckwagon





This is one I did NOT see at the Buckhorn. This is a better close-up of a Javelina than the photos I took.

CURT WALTERS (b. 1950)

*Cimmerian Whispers*, n.d.



The detail was so exquisite in this painting it could be a photograph, especially of that cliff face to the right. You can't see it here, but there are sparkles in the cliff, just as there might be from bits of mica or other rocks.



TERRI MOYERS (b. 1953)

***Contemplación* 2013**

Once again, you are at the mercy of my taste in artwork, so you might not like what I like. Tough beans to you. If you want to show your own particular tastes, get your own newsletter.

As you probably know I am not much on the portrait side of artwork, but I found this one to be excellent.



GREG KELSEY (b. 1971)

***Sundance and the Wild Bunch Hit the Union Pacific*, 2015**





ROY ANDERSON (1930-2019)

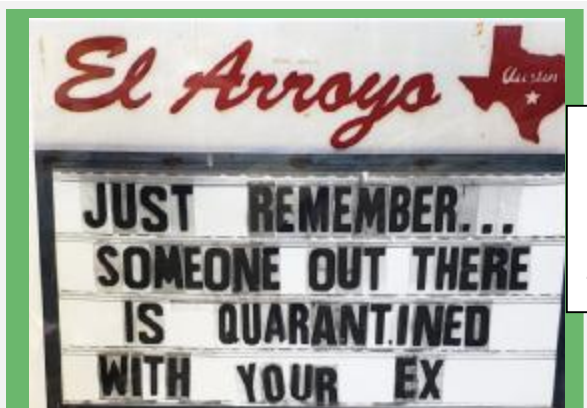
*Return of the Sisters* n.d.

I like things that have a back story to them. That, to me, is what makes them interesting.



This painting depicts an incident that occurred on the Southern Plains. Two Kiowa sisters were rescued from their Cheyenne captors by a white trader, who later married them and eventually returned to the land of the Kiowa. The girls stayed with their people; however, the trader mysteriously disappeared. His whereabouts remain unknown.

I think we can all make a pretty good guess as to where his remains are.



Sorry MB, I just couldn't resist. There were a bunch of these little cards with sayings on them in the gift shop.



HARRY JACKSON (1924-2011)

***The Marshal, (John Wayne  
as Rooster Cogburn) 1980***



The Duke Rides Again!!!

Next up are the Hot Wells Ruins and Museum. I found the ruins, but no museum. Maybe they just mean the info plaques that surround the ruins.

**HOT WELLS OF BEXAR COUNTY**

**REBECA CLAY-FLORES COUNTY COMMISSIONER PRECINCT No. 1**

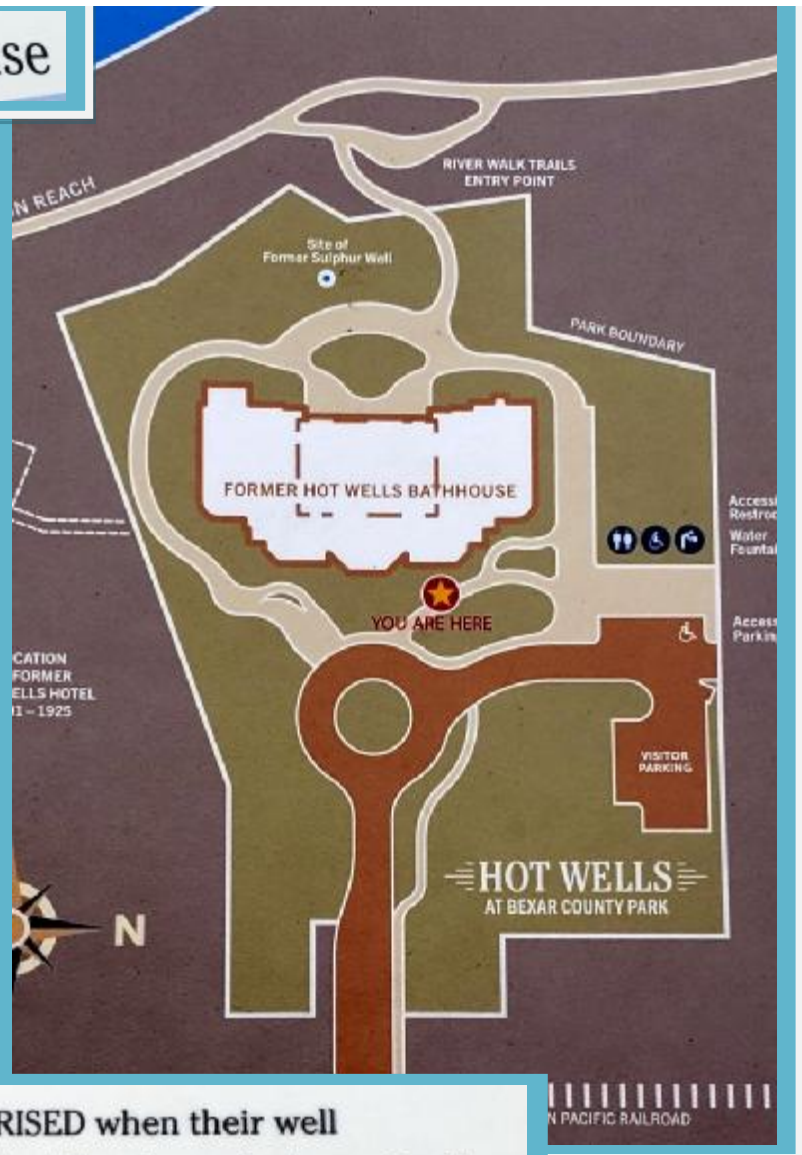
5503 SOUTH PRESA





## Hot Wells Hotel & Bathhouse

I had no idea this place was so extensive until I arrived on the scene. My research just said healing waters ruins or something to that effect, worth seeing.



IN 1892 WELL DRILLERS WERE SURPRISED when their well produced 103°F sulphur water instead of the clear artesian water they were hired to locate. Unable to use this water, the State of Texas which owned the well, leased it to Charles Scheuermeyer. He opened an indoor pool and promoted the water as a cure for many diseases. Before vaccines and antibiotics (and before FDA regulation), it was common practice for owners of mineral well pools to extoll a wide range of health benefits.

After Scheuermeyer's hotel plans failed, the well was leased to McClennan Shacklett, who purchased 10 acres along the San Antonio River and built an imposing bathhouse, filling the pools with the "healing" waters. Shacklett's bathhouse burned in 1894, and the resort operated in temporary buildings until 1901. Then, local brewer Otto Koehler purchased and expanded the property and built Hot Wells Hotel and Bath House, a grand hotel modeled on hot springs resorts throughout the United States.



The hotel remained a stylish destination for local residents and tourists alike through World War I. However, Prohibition (nationwide ban on the sale of alcoholic beverages, enacted in 1920) hastened the hotel's demise. The hotel closed in 1923 and was converted to a school. The hotel building burned in 1925, and tourist cabins were built in its place. In 1937 new owners opened the Flame Room, a popular nightclub, in the surviving bathhouse.

After the Flame Room closed in 1977, the bathhouse condition declined, but visitors continued to bathe in the hot sulphur pools until the 1980s. Fires and weather took their toll, and the property fell into ruin. In 2015 the Hot Wells ruins and surrounding land were acquired by Bexar County for preservation, public use, and as a historical feature along the restored Mission Reach of the San Antonio River. ■

7867. The Hot Wells Hotel and Bath House, San Antonio, Texas



This is what I would call a major resort. From the postcard above it would seem to rival the Coronado Hotel in San Diego. That main peak looks to be about seven stories high. The ruins are of the building to the left. The octagonal building no longer exists, even as ruins.

Just a funny side note on the mention of prohibition above – The eighteenth Amendment gave us prohibition, then eighteen months later all of those ‘sober’ politicians gave us the nineteenth Amendment. Just sayin’.



The left hand building as it looks today



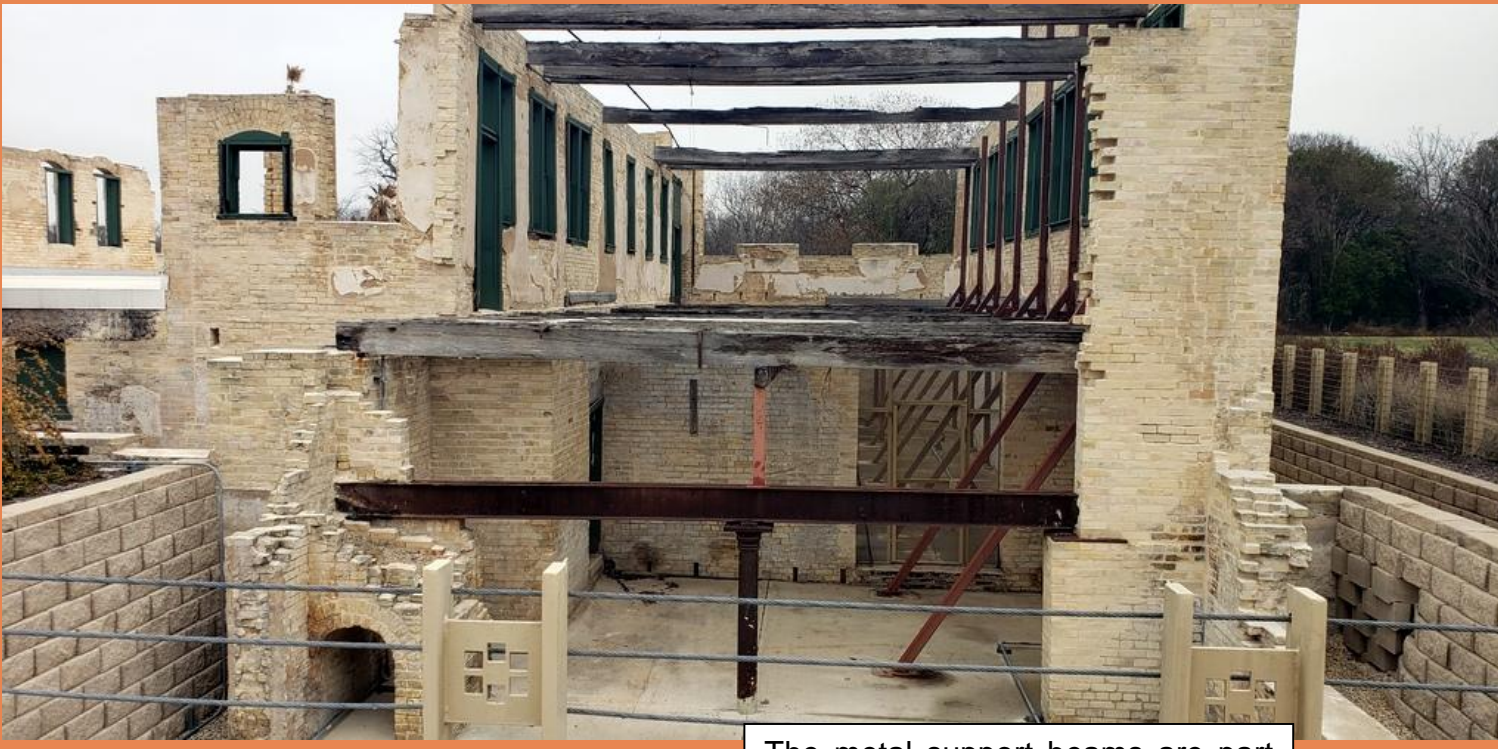
**HOT WELLS WAS A HEALTH RESORT** and an elegant hotel where visitors bathed and performed water gymnastics in hot mineral-rich pools. When not bathing, guests strolled the 100-acre site along the San Antonio River and enjoyed golf, tennis, and riding. In early 1900s, the hotel advertised excellent cuisine in its “well-appointed café and buffet” and dancing to “music by a first class orchestra.” Gambling was a major attraction at the resort – bets were placed on weekly ostrich races with the Hot Wells Jockey Club’s bookie.



**VISITORS TO HOT WELLS HOTEL** enjoyed nearby attractions, including sightseeing at the Spanish colonial missions and San Antonio International Fair and Exposition, held from 1888 until 1907. As Hot Wells’ popularity grew, recreation and amusement activities were added to entertain visitors. During the 1890s, the spa maintained a small zoo featuring a black bear sent by famed West Texas judge Roy Bean. Baseball fans could catch a game at Charlie



Carr's baseball school on the grounds of the hotel. But perhaps the greatest sensation was created in 1910 when French filmmaker Gaston Méliès established Star Film Ranch (the first movie studio to locate in Texas from outside the state) across the river from Hot Wells. The starring actors stayed at the Hot Wells Hotel and crossed the river on a swinging bridge to the studio where early silent movies including *The Immortal Alamo* were filmed. ■



The metal support beams are part of the restoration to keep the walls from falling down



SWINGING BRIDGE HOT WELLS, SAN ANTONIO, TEX

A swinging footbridge across the San Antonio River provided a shortcut to Star Film Ranch for visitors and cast members during their stay at Hot Wells Hotel.

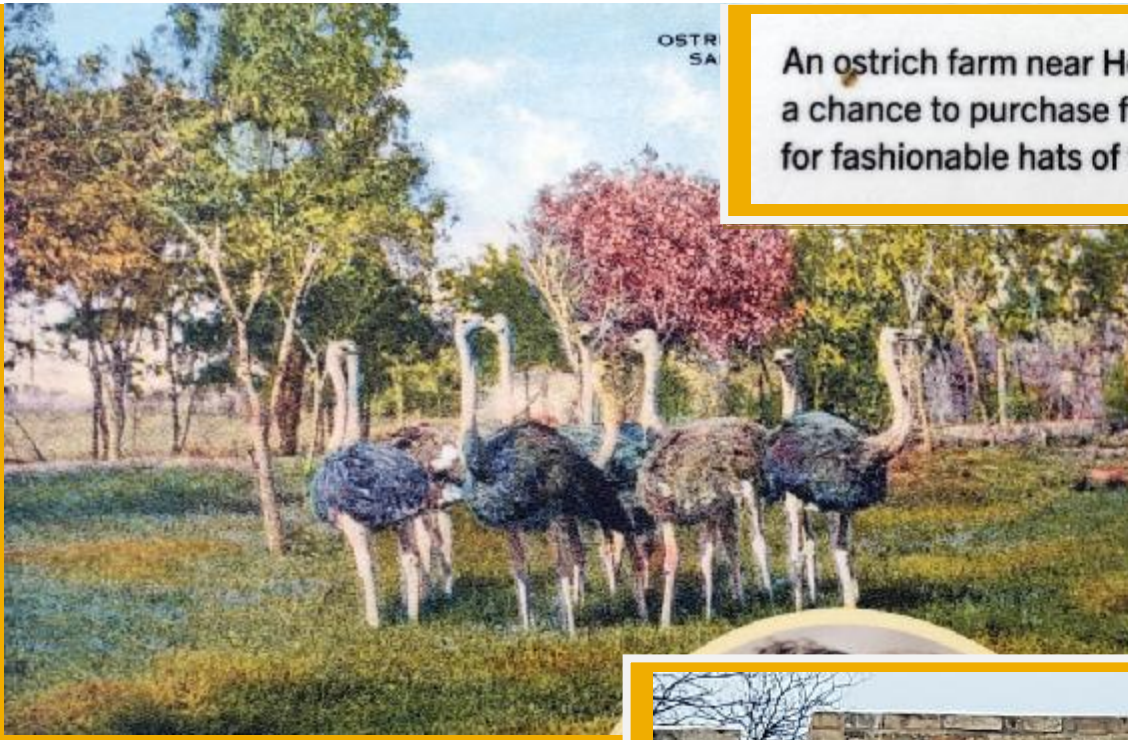
Star Film Ranch was established in 1910 by French filmmaker Gaston Méliès, brother of Georges Méliès.

Hollywood celebrities Will Rogers, Clara Bow, and Rudolph Valentino visited Hot Wells.



OSTR  
SA

An ostrich farm near Hot Wells offered ladies a chance to purchase feathers, all the rage for fashionable hats of the era.



I thought this was interesting, still being able to see the printing on the walls.







Vintage postcards of Hot Wells Hotel and Bathhouse. A fragment of the "High Diving Strictly Prohibited" sign painting is still visible today.



Almost the same angle as the postcard, including the warning.

The visiting celebrity list was long. It included Theodore Roosevelt, Douglas Fairbanks, Rudolph Valentino, Sarah Bernhardt, Will Rogers, Hoot Gibson, Tom Mix, and Mexican president Porfirio Díaz. ■



Teddy Roosevelt "took the waters" at Hot Wells Hotel.

Photo: Lt. Colonel Theodore Roosevelt (center) at Mission Concepción with two troopers of the First U. S. Volunteer Cavalry. The unit, better known as the Rough Riders, trained in San Antonio before deploying to Cuba to fight the Spanish-American War of 1898.

Later Roosevelt became the 26th President of the United States, serving two terms from 1901 to 1909.

I will have to see if this is mentioned in the book I'm reading when I get to San Antonio. I know, I know, what's taking so long? The book is 924 pages, that's why it's taking so long.



As I stood here looking at this concrete pillar/monument/marker whatever you want to call it, I couldn't help thinking that it was a little anti-climactic. I mean, this little round hole caused a flurry of activity on this location for almost 90 years. And today, almost 130 years later, it's a tourist destination.



There's a cold front moving through with misty rain still tomorrow, but it's supposed to end by 9 a.m. The Mission Concepcion might be a good visit.

I still want to get into the bar at the Menger where Teddy did his recruiting. Sean mentioned that his ghost can appear in the bar.

I have not been able to get to the Stinson Airfield yet, so that might be in the works for tomorrow.

I also want to show you the buildings lit up at night downtown, they were quite impressive the other night during my ghost walk. If you noticed inside the ruins today there are rows of lighting bars inside and outside. It might be interesting to see what they look like at night.

First stop tomorrow morning will most likely be getting into WalMart early again for milk. What ridiculousness.

Until next time.....