



# In Search of El dorado

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

Hello to Family & Friends

Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup> 2021 Day 22



Nobody came by and told me to move, so it was a good night. I did not stick around too long in the morning though, just in case.

I have time to kill until 12:30 when I have to be at my boat. I will get to that later.

Above - The Long Island Swing Bridge between Port Isabel and Long Island is the only operational swing bridge in the state of Texas. The section between the uprights swings open like a fence gate allowing ships to pass. This used to be the main channel to South Padre Island.

Left - An interesting, and appropriate, bus stop shelter.





As I was standing around hoping for the bridge to open (not much channel traffic on a Sunday morning), I noticed the ant super highway to the right. The traffic on this highway was hoppin'. It left the home base and followed this track for about forty feet before crossing over a shallow concrete drainage ditch and dispersing into the grass. The ants are red but I don't know if they are fire ants or not. They didn't seem to be aggressive towards me at all. I guess they were all keeping their eyes on the road.



Next stop is the Whaling Wall #53 (note that it is spelled differently from the one in Jerusalem). Painted on three exterior walls of the SPI Convention Center by environmental artist Wyland (no first name). He wanted to show homage to whales and other creatures of the sea by devoting his talent to painting 100 walls across the world. These walls serve to capture the grandeur of his subjects, since drawing giant whales on tiny canvases became extremely limiting. As you can see, this is number 53 and the first one in Texas. It spans 153 feet over those three walls and is 23 feet high. It took 100 gallons of paint, 100 volunteers and nearly four days to complete. That seems pretty quick to me.











I believe it said this was the longest fishing pier in Texas. Shaped like a sideways 'T'. The section below continues on from the one above just past that little shack. Below is a panoramic which also shows the Queen Isabella Causeway and, in the distance, the north end of South Padre Island.



Avast ye! It be near the time to be boardin' The Black Dragon and sailin' the Laguna Madre seekin' out another victim for plundering. When Mr. Scully fires the cannon ye'll be knowin' it's time to come aboard.





Aye, she's a fine ship she is, The Black Dragon. Stow yer gear below and report to the fo'csl to raise the mizzenmast. Up the Jolly Roger me hearties, the Cap'n wants to strike whilst the iron is hot and the wind be at our backs.

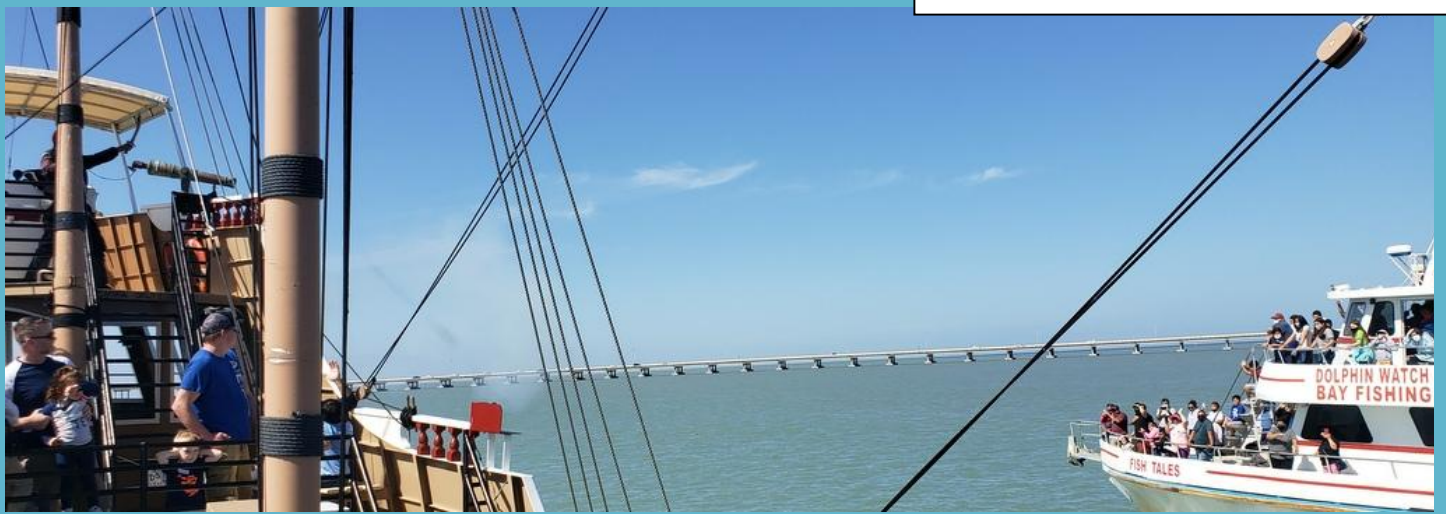






The captain was quite a character. He's the one with the red bandanna.

Below – We came abeam of a pleasure craft and the Captain put a shot across her bows.



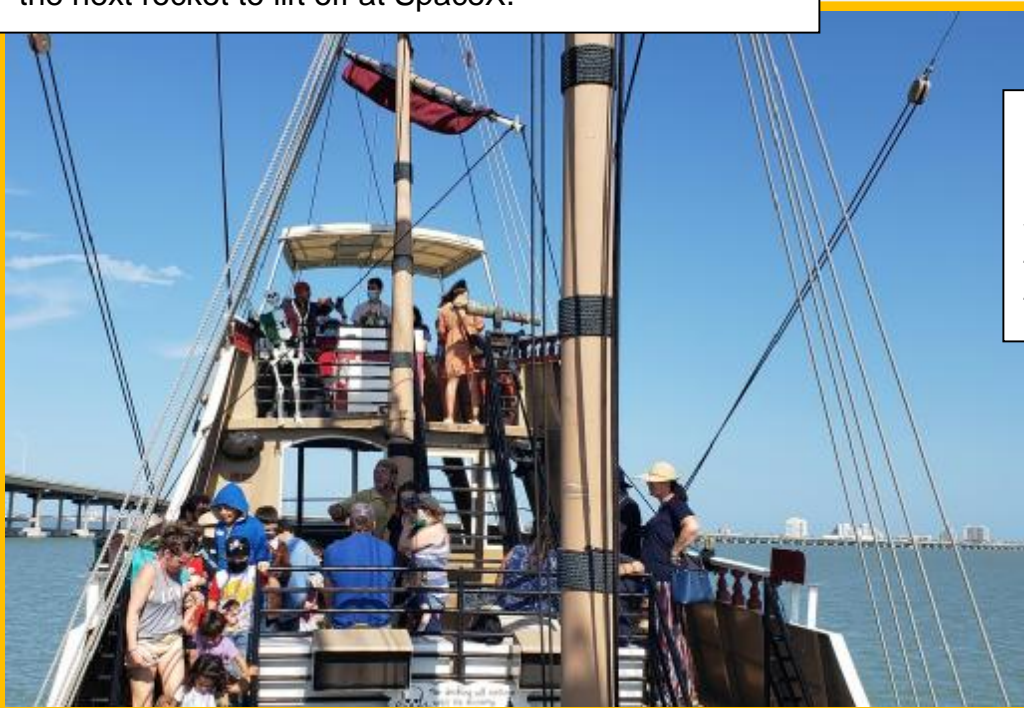
The motley crew of The Black Dragon – On the left is Seadog, in the middle is Mr. Scully and on the right is Sting Ray. I forget the bartender's name. That's right, bartender. The show is geared towards kids, so I think they serve alcohol to keep the adults interested.







Near our turn around point we saw several dolphins, at most three at one time. There is a pod of sixty that stays in the bay. Above in the distance you can see the next rocket to lift off at SpaceX.



I think the family up with the captain is a good friend or relative of Mr. Scully. They were the only ones allowed up there with him. That is one of the sons steering the ship.

I believe this is where they build the rockets

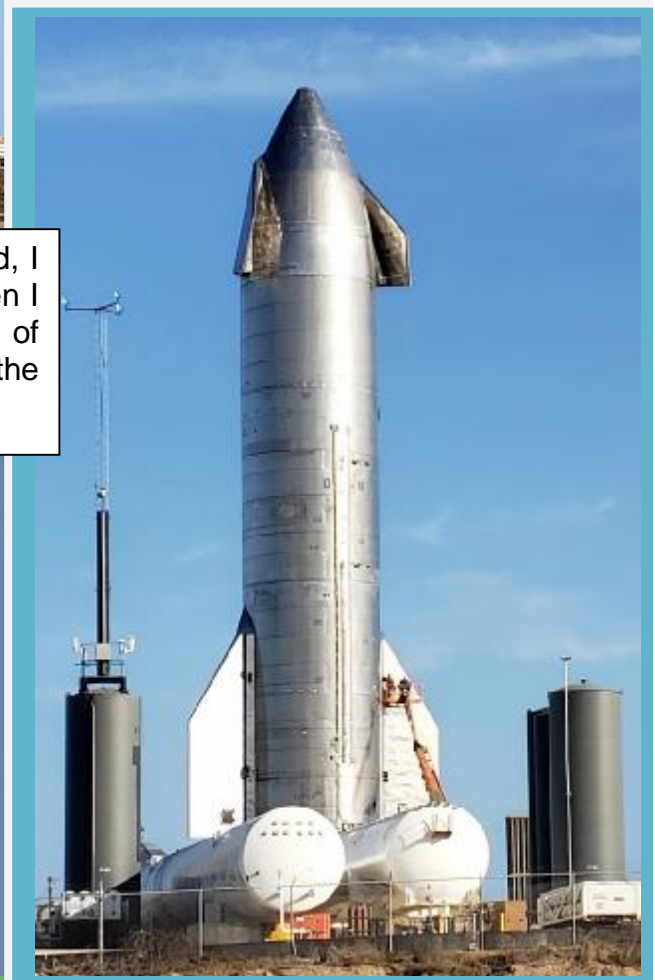




I could have sworn that I checked the launch schedules before I left home for the time I would be down here and found nothing. So what do I hear in the Iwo Jima museum the other morning? A couple talking about their experience watching the launch of Starship SN9 this past Tuesday. AAAArrrrggghh!!! Possibly SN10 will launch the end of this month. I may have to come back for that.



For Heaven's sake get your mind out of the gutter. Granted, I did not realize the significance of the photo to the right when I took it. I was trying to show an example, go ahead, laugh, of the size of the rocket and the two men below on a lift by the lower right fin. I just *know* I'm gonna hear about this one.





THESE PALMETTO PILING ARE THE REMAINS OF THE BOCA CHICA CROSSING OF THE RAILROAD FROM BOCA CHICA INLET TO WHITE'S RANCH ON THE RIO GRANDE. BEGUN BY GENERAL FRANCIS H. HERRON, U. S. A., IN 1864 AND COMPLETED IN 1865 BY GENERAL PHILIP H. SHERIDAN FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF MILITARY SUPPLIES.

THE CYPRESS PILING 1,000 FEET NORTH ARE WHAT REMAIN OF A FLOATING BRIDGE CONSTRUCTED ACROSS BOCA CHICA INLET BY GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR IN 1846 AS A PART OF THE ROAD FROM BRAZOS SANTIAGO TO THE WHITE RANCH LANDING AND CLARKSVILLE ON THE RIO GRANDE, FOR TRANSPORTATION OF MILITARY SUPPLIES.



You can just barely see the high rises of SPI on the horizon.





# Palmito Ranch Battlefield:

## Last Clash of the Blue and the Gray

Hundreds of Union and Confederate troops fought the last land battle of the Civil War here on May 12 and 13, 1865, more than a month after Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to U.S. General Ulysses S. Grant in Appomattox, Virginia.

Today, this windswept salt prairie looks much the same as it did during the fierce, two-day battle that marked the end of four years of bloody conflict.



*Private John Jefferson Williams, a member of the 34th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, was killed at Palmito Ranch. He was the last Union soldier killed in battle during the Civil War.*

Wikipedia



*Colonel Theodore H. Barrett, commander of Union forces at Brazos Island, had no combat experience prior to the battle at Palmito Ranch. Historians still debate his reasons for ordering the advance.*

Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN



*A former Texas Ranger known as "Old Rip," Colonel John Ford led Confederate troops to victory at Palmito Ranch. Ford was in command of Confederate troops stationed at Fort Brown.*

DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, Ag2008.0005.



Despite news of the surrender, Colonel Theodore H. Barrett, commander of Union forces stationed on Brazos Island, ordered an advance on Brownsville, Texas. On May 12, 1865, U.S. cavalry troops attacked a small party of Confederates, which withdrew to Palmito Ranch.

The next day, reinforcements arrived for both sides. Although U.S. forces outnumbered Confederates two to one, they were outgunned and outflanked. The battle ended in a Confederate victory when Union forces fled back to the coast.





# Exploring the Boundaries

## Palmito Ranch Battlefield National Historic Landmark

The Last Land Battle of the American Civil War—May 12 - 13, 1865



### BATTLEFIELD AERIAL MAP KEY

- National Historic Landmark Boundary
- ☆ YOU ARE HERE
- 1-3 Union Troop Advance and Skirmishes Toward Brownsville (May 12-13)
- 4-5 Confederate Troop Arrival from Fort Brown and Counterattack (May 13)
- 6-9 Union Troop Defensive Retreat Toward Brazos Santiago (May 13)

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- Core Battlefield Area

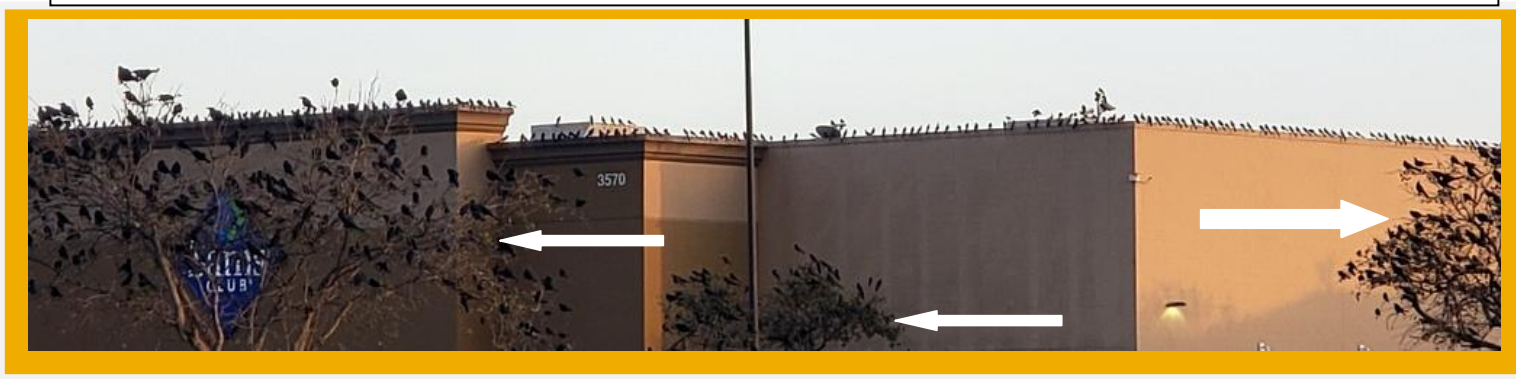




The road to SpaceX and the Boca Chica Beach runs right through the Texas Tropical Trail Region where the above battle took place. As I stood there I didn't realize that I was only 500 feet or so from the Rio Grande and Mexico. I guess the border patrol inspection station should have given me a clue.

Next stop is Brownsville, the southern-most city in Texas. There are three WalMarts here, two of them do not allow overnight parking and comments about one of them stated the lady's car was on blocks and the tires gone when she returned to it. It does not say how long she left it alone. The third Walmart has designated 80 foot spots for trucks and trailers to park. It is also farther north than the other two.

As I walked towards Walmart to do some shopping I noticed all of the birds below. The building is Sam's Club so this does not even include the trees and Walmart building itself. There must have been thousands.







The noise was unbelievable. Then they took off and I could feel the downdraft from their wings. I started looking around for the ghost of Alfred Hitchcock.

Right now, at 10:30 p.m., they are still making noise, fortunately not as loud as before.

I have plans to spend a couple days here in Brownsville, the city is supposed to be very bike friendly. I just hope I can avoid feeling too anxious leaving the RV unattended for long periods of time. But hey, I'm insured.

Remember Ranger Karen at the Palo Alto Battlefield Site? Well she mentioned about being aware of the Border Patrol when visiting some of the sites near the Rio Grande, they might swoop down on you. I mentioned that I was in an RV so it would be even more likely and she agreed. I mention this because a review/comments about one of the sites a little farther west is on a dirt road a very short distance from the Rio Grande. It's an old tree I think. Within minutes of her stopping to look at the tree, border patrol vehicles came screaming up and helicopters were in the air. That might actually be kind of fun to cause a stir like that.

Just an FYI - I pretty much ignored the Super Bowl. It deserves an AAAARRRRGGGGHHHHH!!

Until next time.....