



KENTUCKY CAMP CHRONICLE



Newsletter of the Friends of Kentucky Camp

April 1999

Hiking the Ditch

by Betty Leavengood

(Reprinted with permission of *The Desert Leaf*)

I'd hiked all of the Kentucky Camp ditch in the Santa Rita Mountains but never all at the same time. The ditch is not your ordinary ditch. It is an 8.5 mile water system built in 1904 to carry water to the placer mines in Boston Gulch near Greaterville. I studied the map and decided the best way to achieve this and not have to retrace any steps (my favorite way to hike) was to have someone drop me off at the Gardner Canyon Trailhead, hike up to the Walker Basin Trail, and then cut down on the Arizona Trail to the beginning of the ditch.

I talked up my scheme, telling friends about the spectacular scenery of the foothills of the Santa Rita Mountains. The hike, I added, would be mostly flat, with a total distance of 14.3 miles. I even promised little "history moments" with interpretive signs and additional fascinating details from my research. As a final enticement, I told them we would end the hike at the adobe buildings of historic Kentucky Camp, headquarters of the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company, now being restored by the Forest Service with the help of the Friends of Kentucky Camp.

WELCOME TO NEW FRIENDS!

Pete and Connie Cathcart
Douglas Dunn
Joe Meade
Judy Propper
Eugene and Lavonne Palusky
Gene and Luisa Simpson
Dolores and Jack Stephenson



Jo Haslett hiking along ditch.

I managed to convince two friends – Linda Cross and Jo Haslett – to join me. Linda's friend, Bill Gray, dropped us off at the Gardner Canyon Trailhead at 9:00 a.m. Jo's husband Glenn planned to pick us up at Kentucky Camp late that afternoon.

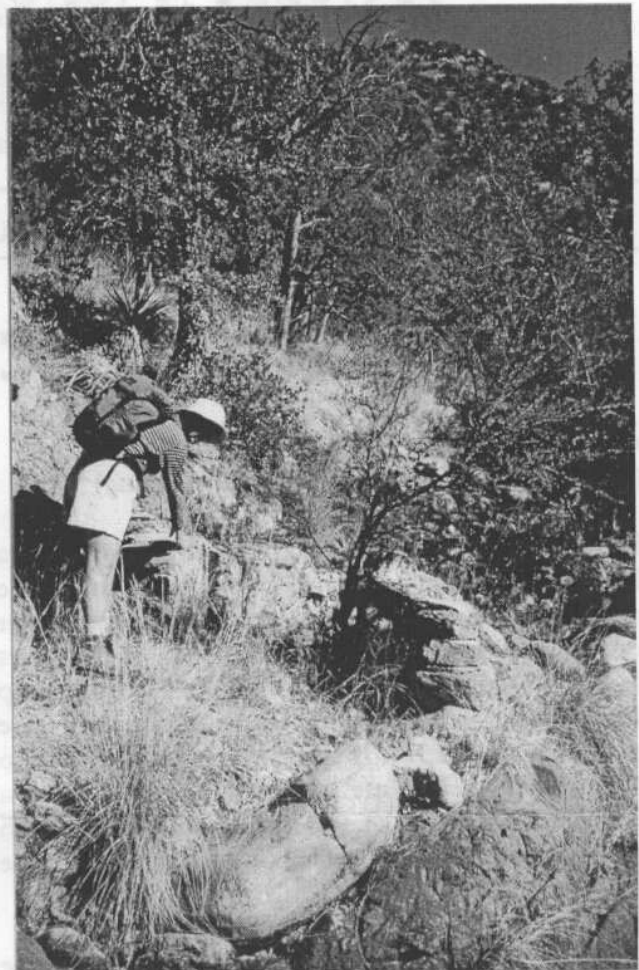
"I thought you said the trail was flat," Linda comments ten minutes into the hike as we climb the Gardner Canyon Trail. "Almost flat," I counter, as we make our way the 1.2 miles to the Walker Basin Trail intersection. This is the steepest climb of the entire hike – from 6,340 feet at the trailhead to 6,720 feet at the intersection. It is also an introduction to a remote and beautiful area of the Santa Rita Mountains. Tall pines

shade our path and there is evidence that bears have been this way recently. Our plan, if we see a bear, is to stand our ground, look the bear straight in the eyes, and scream. We hope we don't get the opportunity to put this plan into action.

The Walker Basin Trail circles above Big Casa Blanca Canyon and is mostly level, with a few minor ups and downs. When we cross the major drainage at the head of the canyon, we find rusted pieces of equipment that could be from one of several sawmills operated in this area in the 1870s and 1880s. Lumber brought a high price in Tucson and men risked Apache attacks to make substantial profits. Past the site we get the first of many views that are the reason I return to this trail again and again. After 1.5 miles on the Walker Basin Trail we turn left on a newly developed section of the Arizona Trail. We stop often to look at the bald summit of Mount Wrightson, the high point of the Santa Ritas, silhouetted against the bright blue sky. We'll climb it another day. For now we switchback steeply down to Bear Spring where I play tour guide for the first "history moment."

Masonry still remains where Casa Blanca Creek once entered the ditch. Designed by a California mining engineer, James Stetson, the ditch worked on the principle that as long as the source of the water was higher than its eventual destination, and it never rose above that elevation, gravity would deliver the water. Here at Bear Spring the elevation is 5,500 feet. In Boston Gulch the elevation is 5,100 feet, so despite ups and downs, never higher than the beginning elevation, the water made it to its destination during the month the system operated. Today the system is dry, but we imagine how it must have looked when the water was flowing.

No one complains as we walk along the ditch, known officially as the Casa Blanca Ditch. Although much of the original 6 feet wide ditch has silted in over the years, it is still obviously a ditch. We stop to examine one of five overflow gates. Stetson insisted on using California redwood and there are still scraps of timber near the gates. After 2.5 miles of pleasant walking, we come to a tunnel. This nearly 1,000 foot tunnel connected the Casa Blanca Ditch with Gardner Canyon and the rest of the water system. When workers were digging the tunnel, they intercepted a spring. We climb the short, steep hill above the tunnel and drop down to Gardner Canyon Road where a small



The beginning of the Casa Blanca Ditch near Bear Spring, with Betty pointing to masonry.

round tank collects water from what is now called Tunnel Spring. At this point, the water left the ditch and flowed into Gardner Canyon Creek.

Our route follows the road. By now, it is 1:15 p.m., and, on these short winter days, time is a concern. Jo wonders if we will make it to Kentucky Camp before dark. We walk down the road for one mile to rejoin the trail, which cuts off to the left. "Seven more miles!" Linda exclaims, as she reads the large metal sign. "This sign is wrong," I explain. "From here to Kentucky Camp is more like 4.5 miles." We leave the road and cross Gardner Canyon Creek. An interpretive sign points out Stetson's Dam. Little remains of the 100 foot long, ten foot high dam built to store water to use in the hydraulic mining operations, but at one time the dam backed up a small lake.

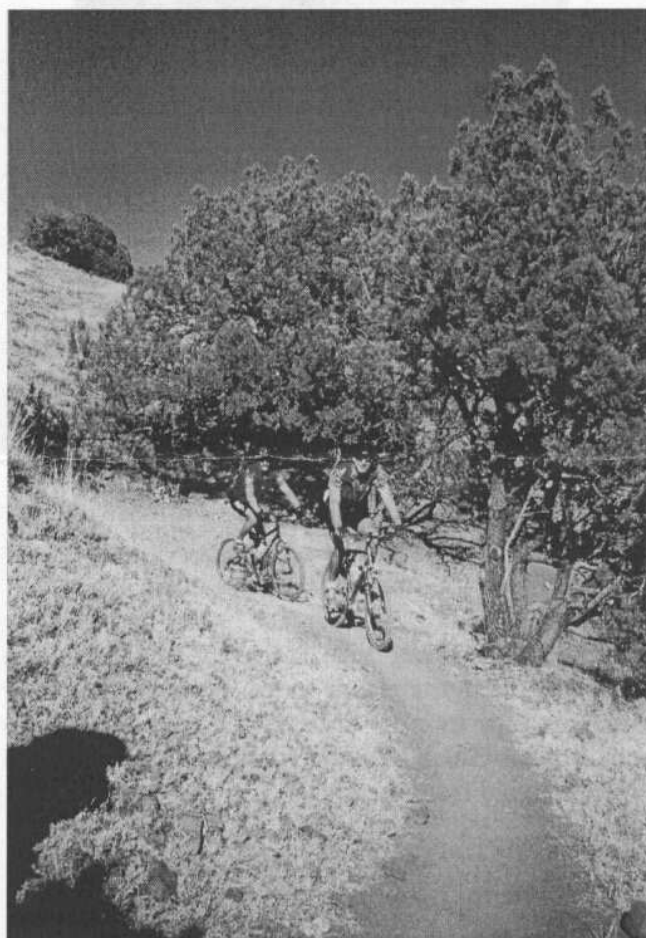
During a snack break by the dam, I deliver on my promise to provide some "fascinating details." On May

20, 1905, Stetson left his home at Kentucky Camp to come to Tucson to attend the Board of Directors meeting of the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company. He checked into the Santa Rita Hotel around noon and climbed the stairs to his room, number 319. The son of a painter working at Ronstadt's Hardware across the street from the hotel later reported seeing a man sitting on a windowsill on the third floor wearing only his trousers and undershirt. The maid cleaning room 219 heard a thud on the windowsill and looked up to see a body flying by the window. As reported in the next day's Arizona Daily Star, "when picked up, Mr. Stetson was a corpse."

Were there financial problems that Stetson did not want to disclose at the next day's Board of Director's meeting? So much so that he jumped to his death? Or did someone, perhaps wanting to keep Stetson silent, push him out the window? Or did he simply misjudge his seating and fall? Whatever the answer, what remains of Stetson's Dam is in a beautiful and serene setting. The water from the dam was diverted back into a ditch, now called the Gardner Canyon Ditch. We follow again the nearly level route. By now, nearly 9 miles into the hike, we are tiring. The shadows lengthen and we step along, hoping to make Kentucky Camp while the sun still shines. This segment is one of the most scenic of the entire route. We hike above the Gardner Canyon Road with the cliffs of Big Casa Blanca Canyon on our right and views of the rolling Sonoita Valley in front of us.

In 30 minutes we come to a penstock designed to sift out gravel and other debris from the water before it entered a 24-inch pipe. This is the first time we encounter the pipe but from now on the system will alternate back and forth between a pipe and a ditch. We check out the penstock, peering into the pit where we can see the protruding pipe, all the while keeping an eye on the sun which is dropping quickly toward Mount Wrightson. We descend a rather steep hill and imagine the water gathering speed as it dropped 200 vertical feet through the pipeline. As we cross the road, the trail is absolutely flat. The pipeline is covered with mounds of rock and looks like a collapsed prehistoric wall. We are now near Apache Springs Ranch and see buildings in the distance before we drop into the ravine cut by Cave Creek. Originally the pipe crossed the creek on wooden supports. A portion of rusting pipe still protrudes from the side of the ravine.

We're getting close to the trailhead parking area," I point out as we climb out of the creek bed. We cross Gardner Canyon Road and rejoin the trail, walking a few hundred yards to a parking area for the Arizona Trail. Several large interpretive plaques show the route of the trail. "What happened to the pipe?" Jo asks, as we start the short, steep climb to the ridge, known as Dead Horse Mesa. I point out sections of the pipe at the base of the hill. "The water actually flowed up the



Cyclists use the ditch trail, too.

hill to the top of the ridge," I explain. "The key is the elevation. The water dropped 200 feet from the penstock, but had to climb only 160 feet."

At the top of Dead Horse Mesa Jo calls Glenn on my cell phone to tell him we are about an hour from Kentucky Camp and that he should be on his way. The water continued in the pipeline for a short distance before entering the Dead Horse Mesa Ditch. The views are again amazing, especially near sunset. "This is incredible," Linda says, as she looks across the valley. After almost a mile, we leave the trail for a few yards to



Betty Leavengood holding a piece of redwood used in the overflow gates. Notice the masonry construction.

view the end of our hike along the ditch. Here a penstock sifted the debris once again as the water entered a pipe to cross Little Fish Canyon and drop into Boston Gulch where strong jets of water once sifted the gold from the gravel.

Unfortunately, although the ditch system worked well, other problems in addition to Stetson's death forced the cessation of operations after the first month. But here we are, high on a ridge overlooking Kentucky Camp with Glenn headed in our direction. We have no time to mull over the fate of the elaborate water system we have been following. We head along the trail to Kentucky Camp. The last mile is the longest. We have hiked nearly 14 miles as we drop into Boston Gulch. Kentucky Camp is 20 minutes away. The sky turns pink and the sun drops behind Mount Wrightson. We trudge up the last part of the trail, not stopping to read what is surely an excellent interpretive sign about Boston Gulch. I point out the holes dug by early miners and no one cares. We want to go home and soak in a hot tub. Finally, we see the buildings of

Kentucky Camp. There's Glenn's van. We don't have to walk another step. We climb in the van, pull a cold drink out of the cooler, and relax. We have hiked the ditch!

Directions: To reach the Gardner Canyon Trailhead, follow Highway 83 towards Sonoita to Gardner Canyon Road (FR 92). Follow FR 92 to FR 785. Turn left and follow FR 785 until it dead ends at the trailhead. A portion of the route requires four-wheel drive. Kentucky Camp is also off FR 92. Nine-tenths of a mile after leaving Highway 83, turn right on FR 163 and follow the signs to Kentucky Camp.

Caution: Do not attempt this hike unless you are an experienced hiker. Much of the 14.3 mile hike is in a remote area where obtaining emergency help is difficult. The hike should not be done during the summer months. For a map of the ditch system, see the April 1998 issue of the *Kentucky Camp Chronicle*.



STILL LOOKING FOR MONEY

Arnold Franks and Kathy Makansi attended the state Heritage Fund grant workshop in March, and learned how to score higher with our next grant application. The Friends & Forest Service hope to apply for money to build the porch on the office, the big building.

But it takes work— filling out forms, taking photos, writing blurbs, doing cost estimates. The Board is already stretched thin, and the grant application must come from the Friends, rather than the Forest Service— can anyone help? Please call Kathy or Arnold to volunteer!

Reminder

JUNE IS THE MONTH OF RENEWAL

If your *Friends'* membership is due to expire, you will receive a renewal form with the next issue.

Clippings by Lew Orrell

Whoops, a blooper! The previous column stated that "Tucson's Mount Bigelow was named to honor Lt. John Bigelow, Junior, of the U. S. 10th Cavalry who scouted the Santa Rita Mountains in the 1870s." Not so; in part, at least. Such a blunder. It leaves the author no less culpable because his source was the U. S. Board of Geographic Names. Now, there's just a chance that someone out there (you know who you are) reads these musings. Were that person to repeat erroneous information, we might both be embarrassed. Although it is doubtful that this event has perturbed the daily rotation of the earth or its orbit about the sun, the record must be set straight instantly.



Lt. John Bigelow, Jr.

When John Bigelow, Junior, "Soldier, Scholar, Military Historian," graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1873, he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant and assigned to duty with the 10th Cavalry in west Texas. The 10th was one of six regiments (two cavalry and four infantry) authorized by Congress in 1866 to enable Negro soldiers from the Union Army to serve in the regular peacetime army. Their notable performance during the Indian wars earned them the respect of their Apache and Comanche adversaries who dubbed them Buffalo Soldiers.

By 1885 trouble with the Indians in Texas had moderated, whereas Geronimo and other Apaches were intensifying their harassment of settlers in the Arizona Territory. Accordingly, the 10th Cavalry was transferred to the Department of Arizona and its regimental headquarters moved to Fort Whipple near present-day Phoenix. The Troops of the 10th were dispersed among several forts spread from north to south in the eastern half of the Territory. Bigelow's Troop was headquartered at Fort Grant which lies about 80 miles northeast of Greaterville. When K Troop was further divided, Lt. Bigelow and his detachment were assigned to patrol an area stretching from Tucson to Nogales. Making his base at Mowry's Mine near Patagonia (see *Kentucky Camp Chronicle*, April 1998), he established a regular patrol that went south from Tucson to Nogales (probably through Tubac), east along the Mexican border, then north along the eastern slopes of the Santa Rita Mountains. The first such patrol was in 1885 (not in the 1870s) and the last in 1889. Imagine the added sense of safety inculcated in the miners in the placer gulches and in the residents of Greaterville by the periodic appearance of the mounted Buffalo Soldiers.

Although Bigelow was a gregarious, empathetic person and although known to have scouted the Rincon and Santa Catalina Mountains, there is no evidence that either he or other of the officers of the 10th Cavalry was identified with the Tucson area in the minds of the local public as was Wrightson, et al., with the Santa Ritas. However, his exploits in the Territory became well known in the East thanks to his brother. Poultney had founded and published the popular *Outing* magazine in which he printed extracts from John's journals. The articles were illustrated with sketches of the Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th Cavalry which were drawn by the then unknown Frederic Remington. Later, the articles were republished as *On the Bloody Trail of Geronimo* which gave a big boost to Remington's career and must have gained wider recognition for Bigelow.

Ultimately Lt. Bigelow retired from the military with the rank of Lt. Colonel, but not before being severely wounded by multiple gunshots while leading the D Troop of the 10th in support of the Rough Riders in their charge up San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War. One newspaper stated, "If it had not been for the Negro cavalymen, the Rough Riders would have been exterminated." Rather than for his presence in the Santa Rita Mountains on routine patrol, it seems much more likely that Mt. Bigelow was so named to honor the bravery, scholarship and dedicated service of John or, perhaps, to honor his only son, Braxton, who was killed in action in France in 1917 while serving as a Captain with the Royal Engineers.

*(My thanks to Guy Bigelow whose biography of Lt. Col. John Bigelow, Jr., in *Forge, The Bigelow Society Quarterly*, was my source for the foregoing. FLO)*

WORK UPDATE

by Mary Farrell and Michael Kovach

The Passport in Time Caretakers have been keeping busy at Kentucky Camp. Dick Regan and Michael Kovach repaired the floor in one of the rooms of Cabin C (the one with the porch). The operation required gently pulling up the fitted tongue-in-groove floor boards, repairing and replacing rotted floor joists beneath, and then replacing the floor boards. The result: the floor is now safer, more stable, and resistant to rot.

Pete Cathcart and Michael added a new floor in the room in the big building that was previously missing one – now, what once looked like a sad storage area for adobe bricks looks like a nice room! Pete and Michael also removed the rotted floorboards in Cabin A and evaluated their condition to use as replacements elsewhere, corrected a potentially serious problem with the septic pipe for the trailer, and installed a permanent plastic-pipe wastewater system for the big trailer.

Pete has also fixed a nagging gas leak in the stove of the small trailer. In between helping with the carpentry, Connie Cathcart has been greeting visitors, and developing ideas for fund-raisers. Michael continues his work disguising the concrete footers of the new porch with artful rock work.

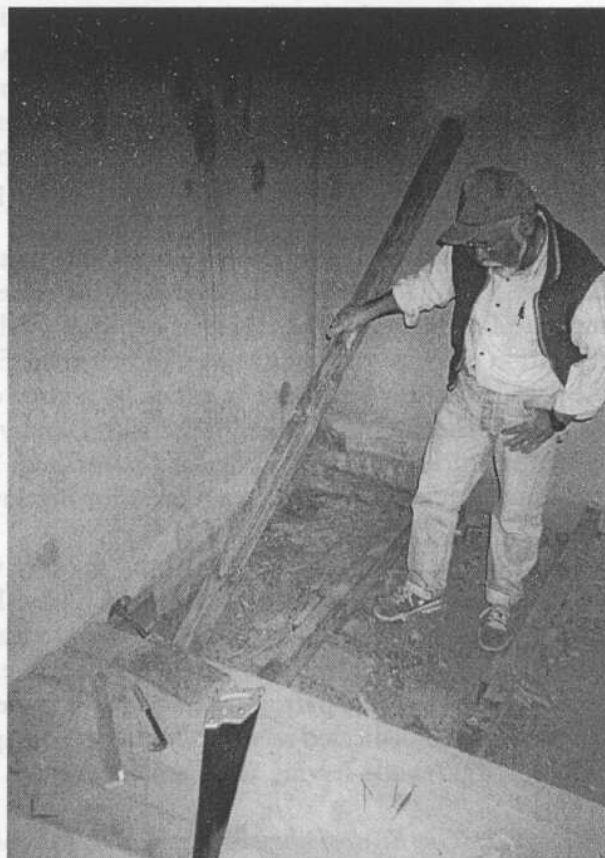
The Cathcarts and Michael also provided information and assistance to the adobe specialists, architect Martha Robles and conservator Rudolfo de Castillo from the Instituto Nacional de Anthropologia e Historia, of Hermosillo.

Arnold Franks, Jack Glenn, and Glenn Haslett have nearly finished windows for Cabin C; the windows will serve well to protect the interior from weather damage and bring us much closer to having the cabin ready to use.

The Forest Service has been preparing for the upcoming PIT project, selecting volunteers, sending out maps and information, finding tools, ordering the outhouse materials, and doing the requisite environmental documentation for the new toilet at Kentucky Camp and the new trail to Boston Gulch.



Glenn Haslett working on window.



Dick Regan working on floor of Cabin C.

OPEN HOUSE DRAWS CROWD

The March 13 open house, co-sponsored by the Forest Service and the Friends of Kentucky Camp, drew over 250 visitors who enjoyed gold panning, adobe brick making and patching, and tours of the camp and nearby hydraulic pits.

Traffic, parking, and shuttle services were ably managed by Tony and Joan Bratosh, Don Fisher, and Glenn Haslett. With a walkie-talkie system the Bratoshes kept track of people needing rides, and kept the camp area from getting too crowded with vehicles.



Visitors try their luck panning, with the help of the Desert Gold Diggers.

Special thanks go to Mark Habeck, John Harris, Lonnie Riplinger, Jerry Schultz, Dolores and Jack Stephenson, and other members of the Desert Gold Diggers, and Dave Steimle of the Gold Prospectors Association of Tucson, who provided everything needed for the gold-panning demonstrations, as well as excellent lessons in the techniques.

No one struck it rich panning, but over \$300 for the Friends' treasury was raised through donations, most in exchange for brownies and pop, T-shirts and note cards, and beautiful candy rosebuds fabricated by Jayne Dotson.



Mixing mud to make bricks.

About 50 people hiked with Bill Gillespie during two tours to Boston Gulch to see the hydraulic mining pits and pipe, and Arnold Franks and Betty Leavengood gave tours at Kentucky Camp itself.

Evalyn Neuhaus and Ginny Fisher demonstrated adobe patching techniques to the visitors, making it look quite fun. Kathy Makansi, Ken Haber, and Susan Jones mixed mud for patchers and for brick-making. Glenn Haslett,



Visitors getting a tour.

Arnold Franks, and Jack Glenn continued their wood working projects, while PIT Caretaker Pete Cathcart's work on the newly replaced floor in the Office was a living history exhibit itself.

Four exhibits were on display, two by Jack Glenn: one on the window restoration project and one on the history and accomplishments of the Friends. As a new addition to the visitors' room, Betty Leavengood's photo display on Hiking the Ditch includes many full-color illustrations of the trek described in this issue. The combined Friends of Kentucky Camp/Forest Service photo display, a joint effort by Kathy Makansi, Don Fisher, Jim Britton, Mary Farrell, and Kay Rosenow, with set-up assistance from caretakers Connie Cathcart and Michael Kovach, may become a permanent display in the visitors' room too, as Jack Glenn has offered to design a display board system that could stay at Kentucky Camp.



Mark South serving lunch.

Dick & Flo Lord's professional photography documented the Open House event, supplemented with photos by Jim McDonald, Ken Haber, and Pat Spoerl, who provided the photos for this article.

Delicious "adobe" brownies and other treats sustained the masses during all the activity — special thanks to Ro Glenn, Jo Haslett, Peggy Eaton, Ginny and Don Fisher, Carolyn Gerrety, and Betty Leavengood for baking and other preparations, and to Jo and Glenn Haslett for donating cases and cases of sodas to sell. Jo, Carolyn, and Jeff Burton handled sales, while Mark South and daughter Tracy provided a burrito lunch for the gold pan demonstrators and the Friends and Forest Service folks who worked at the event.



Ginny Fisher demonstrating ace patching technique.

The Open House would not have been the success it was without Betty Leavengood, who did the press release, organized volunteers, contacted the Desert Gold Diggers and the Gold Prospectors Association, and provided the brownie recipe as well as general inspiration. Many thanks to all the Friends who provided support, making the event such a great success!

FAME & FORTUNE AWAIT

There will be two vacancies on the Friends of Kentucky Camp board come July, when the terms of Secretary Jack Glenn and Treasurer Arlene Franks come to an end. Consider yourself for the opportunity — Jack and Arlene have done excellent jobs setting up the Friends' files and accounts, and they can help the new secretary and treasurer get started. Call Arlene or Jack to find out more about what the job entails, and then call Mary Farrell to have your name put on the ballot for the June election!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The next work days are April 10, and May 8, 1999. There will be all kinds of fun chores to choose from, including:

- ☛ help fetch material for plastering and patching for the April PIT week
- ☛ sand, paint, and install woodwork
- ☛ clean and paint molding
- ☛ patch and repair adobe walls
- ☛ plus many other important activities



The Friends of Kentucky Camp, a chapter of the Coronado National Forest Heritage Society, is a non-profit organization established to help in the preservation and interpretation of Kentucky Camp. Friends sponsor work days, coordinate volunteer activities, and conduct and supervise stabilization and preservation, in cooperation with the Coronado National Forest. Student (\$5), individual (\$10), family (\$15), contributing (\$25), supporting (\$50), and lifetime (\$200) memberships are available. Send checks to Friends of Kentucky Camp, 716 Calle Rita, Tucson, AZ 85706.

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Visit Kentucky Camp on the internet at <http://www.Azstarnet.com/public/nonprofit/coronado/Intro.htm>.

See past issues of the Kentucky Camp Chronicle at <http://www.azstarnet.com/~patish/chrondx.htm>.

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome; send to Mary Farrell, Coronado National Forest, 300 W. Congress St., Tucson, AZ 85701.



Dave & Jake Yubeta and Kathy Makansi building a small wall at the Open House to test plastering techniques.

PASSPORT IN TIME APRIL 19-23

Our INAH experts from Hermosillo, Mexico, Martha Robles and Rudolfo de Castillo, visited Kentucky Camp March 11 to begin their careful analysis of the inside plaster. They took photographs and samples, made lists of the tools we'll need, and examined the sediments in the vicinity to determine the best materials source.

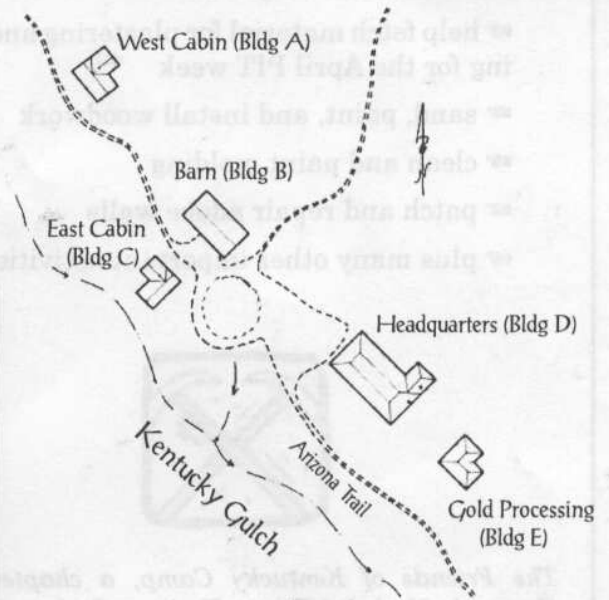
Their recommendation: proceed slowly, starting with Cabin C, and perfect our techniques before tackling the big Office Building, where the painted rooms will present even more of a challenge.

Lots of Friends have already signed on to act as work team leaders or to help with logistics, and generally make sure the PIT volunteers have fun. This year's projects will include mud plastering, site recording at Boston Gulch, restroom and trail construction, and woodwork restoration. Please call Mary Farrell at 670-4564 or e-mail her at Farrell_Mary/r3_coronado@fs.fed.us if you'd like to sign up for a day or two, or the whole week. Spanish-English translators are especially needed!

SANTA RITA WATER & MINING COMPANY KENTUCKY CAMP, ARIZONA



*Having fun at the
Kentucky Camp
Open House ... details inside*



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