

KENTUCKY CAMP

CHRONICLE



Newsletter of the Friends of Kentucky Camp

December 2003

Local Students Learn History at Kentucky Camp

By Chris Schrager

On Nov. 4, 2003 approximately 20 students from five elementary schools in the Vail School district visited Kentucky Camp. The students, who were accompanied by two teachers, have been working on an interdisciplinary unit on mining and Arizona history. Coordinated and led by archaeologists from the Coronado National Forest Heritage Program, students were given a history and tour of the site; a presentation on gold mining and opportunity to pan for gold and operate a sluice box; and enjoyed a hike to Boston Gulch to observe the hydraulic mining pits from the brief operation of the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company. The visit ended

with a question-and-answer session during a picnic lunch on the porch of the Administration Building.

In addition to expanding the Heritage Program's Educational Outreach component, the field trip provided an opportunity to enhance our partnership with the Desert Gold Diggers of Tucson, a local recreational organization whose members offered the gold mining presentation. In addition, they have committed to expand the presentation for the March 2004 Centennial Celebration at Kentucky Camp, as part of Arizona Archaeology Month. It has long been a goal of the Friends that Kentucky Camp be used as an educational resource by local school districts; we hope that this is the beginning of regular visits by school groups eager to see history as we've preserved it.



2003 ANNUAL MEETING AND OCTOBER WORK WEEKEND

Our annual meeting was held at Kentucky Camp on October 11. Our traditional potluck was a great success and fun was had by all. Vice-president Nancy Hough announced the results of the Secretarial election. Sandy Doumas agreed run for another two year term, and was reelected by votes received from over 50% of our membership as required by the Friends of Kentucky Camp bylaws. President Mark Doumas and Forest Service Liaison Chris Schrager reviewed progress at Kentucky Camp during the past year. The new entry road alignment, electrical repair, and many other accomplishments were discussed.

Mary Farrell presented the status of the Kentucky Camp Rehabilitation Plan. She provided recent drafts of the plan which is currently going through a review and approval process within the Forest Service. The plan contains an outline for what remains to be done to rehabilitate Kentucky Camp as well as an updated view of how the site will be used to promote this important Southern Arizona historical site. The plan contains many before-and-after photos so you can see the great progress that's been made in rehabilitating the site during the past fifteen years. (Contact Mark or Sandy at doumas@mindspring.com if you want one of the extra copies.)

The October Annual Meeting this year coincided with one of our newly inaugurated work weekends. Projects for the weekend included mud maintenance on cabin C, more electrical work in the headquarters building, and lots of weed whacking!

100 Years on the Range

By Bill Gillespie

A number of local entities celebrate their centennials in the early 21st century, including the Coronado National Forest, the Forest Service itself, the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company and Kentucky Camp. One nearby centennial organization is the Santa Rita Experimental Range located on the "other" side of the Santa Rita Mountains from Kentucky Camp, on the open sloping country north of Madera Canyon and between the mountains and the Santa Cruz River. The headquarters of the range are located at Florida Station, on the Coronado National Forest, about 6 miles west of Kentucky Camp.

This November the University of Arizona and its partners such as the Forest Service celebrated the centennial anniversary of the Santa Rita Experimental Range with a

conference, tours, and a party at the Range headquarters in Florida Canyon. This 80-square mile grassland area is the longest continuously operated research area dedicated to the study of rangeland use and ecology in the United States. It

also represents a unique case of 100 years of cooperation between the University, the Department of Agriculture, and local cooperating ranchers. It is also of interest to those of us on the Coronado National Forest because its origins are entwined with the origins of the Forest.

The very first land unit in what would eventually become today's Coronado National Forest was the Santa Rita Forest Reserve, established by a proclamation by President Theodore Roosevelt on April 2, 1902 (a centennial that went largely uncelebrated).

Roosevelt followed up by proclaiming three more Forest Reserves in the summer of 1902 – the Chiricahua, Santa Catalina, and Mount Graham. The remainder of the 12 units which now comprise the Coronado NF were established between 1906 and 1919.

The Santa Rita Forest Reserve as it was established in 1902 has a unique characteristic that is not seen in any other local Forest. That is, it included more low-lying range land than it did forested mountain slopes. While the Forest Reserve included the main part of the Santa Rita Mountains, it also extended 40 miles north of



This 1936 photo shows the Santa Rita Experimental Range Director's house at Florida Station after a winter snow storm.

the mountains to the outskirts of Tucson. The north end of the Forest Reserve later became Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. The Reserve did not include the area around Greaterville and Kentucky Camp – that area was added in 1907 after the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company operation had largely ceased operations. Contrary to the connotation of its name, less than 15 percent of the Santa Rita Forest Reserve's lands was classed as "timbered land."

So why did the Forest Reserve contain so much unwooded land? The answer lies in the Range Reserve whose centennial we're marking. It's clear that Santa Rita Forest Reserve was created with a range reserve clearly in mind. And that in turn is because two of the main forces behind the delineation of the Forest Reserve were Robert Forbes at the University of Arizona's Agricultural Experiment Station and David Griffiths of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry. Both of these researchers had been studying the range lands of southern Arizona and were alarmed at the deteriorated conditions of the grasslands. A significant drought in the early 1890s combined with serious over-grazing had led to depletion of grasslands, increased erosion, and the starvation of large numbers of cattle. Forbes and Griffiths had laid plans to launch a study of the rangelands south of Tucson to investigate how the productivity of the severely degraded grazing lands could be recovered. The two apparently had

enough clout to ensure that the first Forest Reserve in southern Arizona included some 300 square miles of range land for their study.

Soon after the Forest Reserve was created, the Department of Agriculture and the Experiment Station, likely represented by Griffiths and Forbes respectively, drafted an agreement for "cooperative range investigations." Early in 1903, a 49-square mile area was surveyed and a contract for fencing

awarded to local rancher/miner William McCleary who had a camp near the mouth of what is now known as Florida Canyon (at that time it was McCleary's or Stone Cabin Canyon). McCleary had previously been one of the main promoters of the largely unsuccessful Rosemont Smelting and Mining Company, located 6 miles north of Kentucky Camp (McCleary's Camp became the town of Rosemont and in 1894 McCleary served as the first Postmaster of Rosemont).

By the end of May 1903 the range enclosure fence was nearly complete and Griffiths instructed local ranchers to come for a roundup to claim their stock. Though it had no official designation at the time, this 49-square mile enclosure became

the core of what is now the Santa Rita Experimental Range. McCleary secured an appointment as the on-site custodian and designated representative of the Bureau and the Station, charged with maintaining fences, keeping weather observations, and reporting on activities in and around the reserve. While grazing was nominally excluded from the large enclosure, it was not untouched land.



This shaded relief map shows the Santa Rita Range Reserve a few years after the main enclosure was fenced in 1903. The added labels show the ranchers that were cooperating with the range reserve in

McCleary's ranch served as the field headquarters for the range reserve. As the enclosure was completed, the Bureau sought to develop cooperative agreements with local ranchers, establishing pastures adjacent to the enclosure where regulated grazing was permitted. Within a few years, cooperative agreements were established with four local ranchers: McCleary, Charles Proctor, Feliz Ruelas, and William MacBeath. Although participants have changed, of course, the tradition of cooperative grazing experiments has continued to the present.

On July 1, 1910, President William Taft issued a pair of executive orders pertaining to the Coronado NF and the Range Reserve. First, the size of the Coronado National Forest was significantly reduced, with over 400 square miles of the low-lying areas north and west of the Santa Rita Mountains, from the Empire Hills to Tucson, returned to the public domain. Simultaneously, an area of approximately 65 square miles of range was proclaimed as a reserve "for the use of the Department of Agriculture for the purposes of an agricultural experiment station for experiments in improving forage production." This formally designated experimental range encompassed both the original 49-square mile enclosure and the adjacent pastures of the cooperating ranchers.

In 1923 construction began on a new Range Reserve headquarters facility further up Florida

Canyon on the Coronado NF. Starting out as little more than Range Director Matt Culley's home and office, Florida Station grew to more than 20 buildings structures by 1934. Most of the construction occurred during the early years of the Great Depression, between 1931 and 1934, using funding and labor from Depression from a variety of emergency relief agencies. With 16 surviving buildings (an office, six residences, the bunkhouse, five storage buildings, a small barn, a workshop, and an ice house), the station is the largest depression-era administrative site on the Coronado National Forest. All of the residential structures are rectangular wood frame structures built on concrete foundations and typically with medium gable roofs, clapboard siding, one or more screened-in porches.

Florida Station has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, both for its association with Depression relief programs and for the architectural qualities that reflect the construction methods and styles characteristic of Forest Service administrative facilities of the 1930s. In 1988, the lands of the Experimental Range were transferred to the Arizona State Land Department in a complicated deal. However, the headquarters facility at Florida Station remained with the Forest Service since it is located on the Coronado National Forest. It is currently leased to the University with management of the buildings carried out in cooperation with the Forest.

Volunteer Opportunities for Friends of Kentucky Camp

By Mark Dumas

Many of us are aware of the hard work required to keep the Kentucky Camp site on a path to rehabilitation. There have been projects for rebuilding historic roofs, windows, porches and mud walls. Many hours are spent on maintenance of the water, electrical and gas systems. Keeping the site clean and clear of weeds is a priority activity during the early summer forest fire season. However, there are also many ways to make a volunteer contribution to Kentucky Camp that do not require physical labor or travel to the site. The 2004 Kentucky Camp Centennial will require more of these "non-physical" projects in the coming year.

Here's a list of some of our more immediate needs:

- Research historical records for descendents of Stetson or McAneny. We're interested in seeing if any distant relatives of these two Kentucky Camp historical figures are available to join us at the October 2004 centennial bash. This effort will require researching the records of Lew Orrell at the Forest Service offices in downtown Tucson.

- Design a Kentucky Camp Centennial logo. We're in need of a commemorative logo that can be used on shirts, caps, and commemorative pins for fund-raising purposes.
- Update and maintenance of the Friends of Kentucky Camp Internet web site. We already have some help lined-up for this project (Thanks Emily!) but could use some additional help in getting the new site off to a good start.
- Organizing the Friends of Kentucky Camp newsletters for 2004. Next year we plan to publish four newsletters in order to keep members well informed of the centennial activities. This activity involves development of a timeline for publishing the newsletters, collecting/editing articles, then working with the Forest Service to have the newsletters mailed out.
- Research and design of several interpretive displays. We need to develop some additional displays for the Kentucky Camp visitor's room in preparation for our centennial celebration. The work location will vary depending on the project, but most of the displays will be based on information maintained at the downtown Tucson offices of the Forest Service.

Please consider taking on one of these projects during the coming year!
Contact **Mark Doumas** at doumas@mindspring.com if you are interested.

“...only a mile from the old McAneny Place...”

By Chris Schrager

Roughly a mile due south of Kentucky Camp is another historic structure, built a quarter-century later and for a very different sort of enterprise. The Fish Canyon Rock House, built between 1930 and 1933, is located on Forest Service land along Fish Canyon, a primary drainage on the eastern slope of the Santa Rita Mountains. It consists of a one-room fieldstone masonry house with a dugout subterranean room, two ramadas, and a scatter of historic and recent trash. In addition, a prehistoric site occupies the terrace on which the house was built, on the north side of Fish Canyon.

Activity at the site began when a mining claim was filed for the southeast quarter section of T.19 S, R.16E, Sec. 31. The Gold Seal Placer Mining Claim was registered in Pima County, Arizona on June 1, 1926, to several members of the Snyder, Hummel, and Young families. At that time, Phil Snyder lived in a small shack on the site of the current house. He had an interest in the Conglomerate Lode mining claim, located further up Fish Canyon. Between the two claims are the remains of the Fish Ranch, used during construction of the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company's water system as a pipeline construction workers' camp. In 1929, Snyder sold the Gold Seal claim, for “sixty days of labor and ten dollars”, and moved up the canyon.

The new claimholders were Bee and Helen Brothers, recently married, and their partner, Mr. Wilson. Brothers had been employed as a machinist at the Southern Pacific Railroad until the Depression forced layoffs. He took a job at a store west of Tucson, where his family had a homestead in the Tucson Mountains. Around that time he met Wilson, an older man who had come to Tucson after holding numerous jobs around the country. The two worked placers on the claim, mostly with a sluicer and rocker in a small box canyon west of the confluence of Fish and Little Fish Canyons. But the financial return on their efforts was low, and they went into the whiskey distilling business, hoping to take advantage of high demand resulting from Prohibition.

Their enterprise was wildly successful; Wilson's whiskey was in great demand, and was the “house brand” at several locations in town. It was also reputed to be popular during the years that a CCC camp was located nearby in Gardner Canyon. One story has their first still at the Fish Canyon site, with the product's success resulting in their building a second operation behind the Tucson Mountains homestead. A different version has them operating the still west of Tucson first, then expanding to the site on the Gold Seal claim. Regardless, near the end of Prohibition some Federal Agents tailed Brothers

home after a distribution run, arrested him, and destroyed the Tucson Mountains operation. Upon making bail, he returned to Fish Canyon and dismantled the still, scattering the equipment across the hills (some has subsequently been recovered by his descendants). The 18th Amendment was repealed before he went to trial, and charges were dropped.

The current structure at the site began with Brothers and Wilson excavating a room out of the creek bank in which they could conceal their still. A platform of logs and pipe was constructed at ground level, which served as the floor for the cabin above. The first cabin structure, built in 1929 or 1930, had a low frame wall that supported an arching canvas roof, in the manner of a Quonset hut. The chimney from the ground floor stove extended to the basement, in order to vent the smoke and smell from cooking moonshine without raising suspicion. The walls were soon replaced with corrugated metal. In 1933, Brothers salvaged flat fieldstones from the old Fish Ranch structures and laid them up against the metal walls. Unable to afford cement mortar, he used a clay soil mixture for the mortar joints. The tin became the roof of the rock house, and an open ramada, referred to as the "summer kitchen", was added to the east side.

Bee and Helen Brothers lived in the rock house until 1936, when a bout with Malta fever forced Helen's return to Tucson for treatment. A door had been placed in the west wall to provide access to a planned additional room, which was never completed. Bee was hired by the Navy Yard in Bremerton,

Washington during World War II; relatives used the house sporadically for several years after that.

Upon his retirement in 1969, Brothers returned to Arizona and settled in Sierra Vista. He spent that summer at Fish Canyon and began a series of maintenance and modification projects. The parapet

walls were re-jointed with cement mortar, and a concrete floor poured for the summer kitchen. In 1979 new rock masonry retaining walls were built on the south side, outside the basement entry, to stabilize the foundation after heavy runoff in the canyon flooded the basement. Several of Bee and Helen's children and grandchildren spent weekends and summers at the house, which has been maintained and used intermittently over the ensuing years. Bee Brothers died in 1989; his widow in 2001. The Ward and James families, related by

descent or marriage to Bee and Helen Brothers, are among the sources for much of this historic background. Many of the Wards recall visiting members of the Hummel family during the cattle ranching era at Kentucky Camp, which they still refer to as "the old McAneny place".

Currently, the Nogales Ranger District and the Coronado National Forest Heritage Program are reviewing options for the site, including a determination of the property's eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and an assessment of the stabilization and rehabilitation tasks required to make the property safe for public use. Updates on the progress will appear in future issues of the Kentucky Camp Chronicle.



Tired of Just Reading the Newsletter?

**THINK ABOUT SUBMITTING AN ARTICLE OR
TAKING A PHOTO FOR THE NEWSLETTER!**

Written articles or photos can be submitted to the newsletter editor at hjkehres@yahoo.com.

T-shirts and Postcards

We have T-shirts and postcards of Kentucky Camp available for purchase!



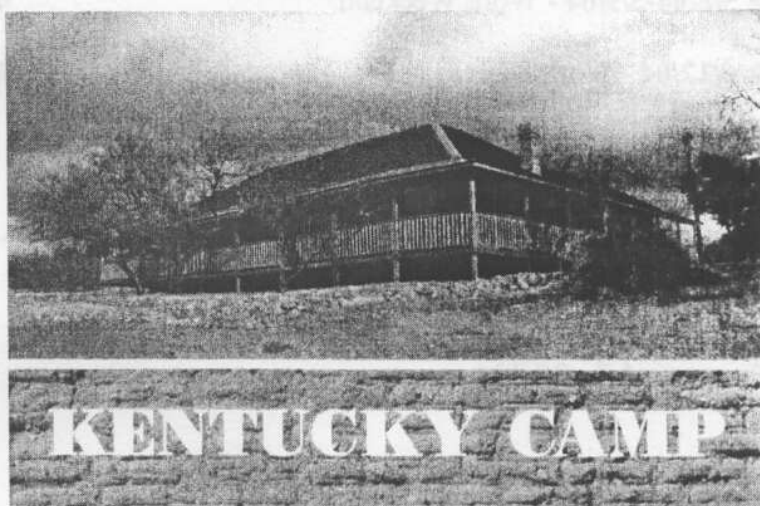
T-Shirt (front and back)

Both can be purchased through the mail using the order form on the last page. If you have any questions, call Sandy Doumas, 520-299-4281. Please include your phone number on the form, in case Sandy has any questions for you. Please be patient with the ordering process, since this is our first attempt to allow purchases through the mail.

Thanks to Jeff Burton's designs and Chris Schrager's footwork and patience in getting them "just right", these items are beautifully made and very professional.

The T-shirts are the same "natural" off-white color as our last T-shirt, with the design in maroon. The T-shirts are 100% cotton, \$15 each, available in adult sizes, Small, Medium, Large, X-Large.

The postcards, new for Kentucky Camp, show a photo of the Headquarters Building, taken from the road below the buildings, with a dramatic cloudy sky. The cardstock is as heavy as what you would normally see in a commercially-available postcard, with a matte finish. The postcards cost 35 cents each, or 3 for \$1.



Postcard

Reminder: One of our most immediate needs is to design the Kentucky Camp Centennial logo. Could the logo that you design grace the next new t-shirt?

KENTUCKY CAMP CENTENNIAL CALENDAR

2004 is a special year for Kentucky Camp: this year will mark the **100th** anniversary of the Santa Rita Water and Mining Company's initial construction and gold mining operation. To commemorate this event, we're planning some special touches to our usual Kentucky Camp gatherings. Put the following dates on your 2004 calendars now and plan to attend as many as possible. We're in the early planning stages for a special event at the annual meeting of October of 2004 to commemorate the 100th birthday so be sure to hold this important date on your calendar. More details of the key events will be published in upcoming newsletter.

Dates to Remember:

❖ **1/10/04-1/11/04** - Work Weekend

❖ **2/14/04** - Work Day

❖ **3/13/04-3/14/04** - Work Weekend and Open House

❖ **4/12/04-4/16/04** - PIT Invitational

❖ **5/8/04-5/9/04** - Work Weekend

❖ **6/12/04** - Work Day

❖ **7/10/04** - Work Day

❖ **8/14/04** - Work Day

❖ **9/11/04** - Work Day

❖ **10/9/04-10/10/04** - Work Weekend, Annual Meeting and Kentucky Camp Centennial Bash

❖ **11/13/04** - Work Day

❖ **12/11/04** - Work Day

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