

EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

P.O. Box 842 • Sonoita, Arizona 85637-0842

www.empireranchfoundation.org

A Job Well Done

All parties to the effort took a deep breath of relief and satisfaction in April, knowing that critical *Action Plan* preservation repairs to the roof, drainage and foundations of the most historic portions of the Empire Ranch House had been completed.

While only a first step toward future restoration and reuse of the ranch house, these repairs assure that the stabilized roof structure, and ranch house foundations and associated walls will stand, be safe, and will not collapse or continue to deteriorate.

The repairs were identified as highest priority in the 2001 report *Action Plan for Completing Stabilization and Repair of the Roof, Drainage, and Foundation Systems at the Empire Ranch House*. Statistical Research, Inc. (SRI), a Tucson-based his-

toric preservation firm, prepared the original report, and as noted in previous articles performed the work as part of a long term contract the Foundation awarded to SRI following a competitive bid process.

Means Design and Building Corporation, a specialist subcontractor to SRI, performed this first series of preservation tasks under the new contract. True to expectations, Means Design completed work on time within a demanding schedule, and fully met or exceeded exacting requirements contained in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995).

Both ERF representatives and inspecting BLM historic preservation professionals commented on the fine professional pride and care exhibited in the handcrafted preservation work completed, and the well-coordinated teamwork of SRI and its subcontractors. The entire experience bodes well for continued success in the ambitious planning and preservation work that lies ahead.

What's planned next? Plenty! Please see the *Preservation Projects Summary*, page 2.

Members—We Need You!

Please send in your annual membership contribution. Help the Empire Ranch Foundation preserve and save more threatened buildings. Support restoration and education programs at the Empire Ranch.

Your becoming a 2002/2003 member now will make a real difference in how soon and how well we'll be able to preserve and interpret this special place for future generations.

All 2002/2003 members will continue to regularly receive the quarterly *Empire Ranch Foundation News*, and will be listed in our May 2003 issue List of Supporters, in addition our listings of volunteers, respondents to special appeals, and other contributors. All contributions are fully tax deductible.

Membership levels range from \$25 "Homesteader" to \$10,000 "Territorial Governor." We will appreciate your participation at whatever level you can afford!

Please use enclosed reply materials, or send contributions to: 2002/2003 Membership, Empire Ranch Foundation, P.O. Box 842, Sonoita AZ 85637-0842. Thank you!



It's Back! Yep, It's Back!!

Saturday, September 14

EMPIRE RANCH FALL ROUNDUP OPEN HOUSE

For all of you who so faithfully await the fun at the Empire Ranch each fall, rest assured that you will be gratified. Always on the third Saturday in September, this year's Roundup will take place on **September 14**.

Mark your Calendars now, and look on page 3 for more information.

Working Calendar

June

18 Board meeting

Weekends Construction volunteer days planned! Please call (520) 455-4603

July

4 Patagonia Parade

20 Board meeting

August

17 Board meeting

September

14 Empire Ranch Roundup Open House & Western Art Show - To volunteer to help please call (520) 455-4603

October

19 Board meeting

November

17 Board meeting and annual elections

Muchas Gracias!

Heartfelt thanks to our many, wonderful supporters and volunteers this past fiscal year, acknowledged by name in the enclosed Supporters List for 2001/2002.

Recent creative donations included a limited edition volume of Herbert Hislop's letters, and a valuable painting intended to be sold by the Foundation to raise funds. We welcome such creative gift giving!

Last but not least, our sincere gratitude to the more than 30 friends who have already responded to our membership drive for the coming year. These great people include our first "Cattle Baron" members for 2002/2003, Chuck and Pat Pettis.

Tours (cont'd from p. 3)

We were delighted that several of our "tourists" came from some distance. Charles Pace's nephews and nieces are descendants of Herbert R. Hislop who was Walter Vail's first partner. Mr. Pace has taken a great interest in our efforts to preserve the ranch house. He was accompanied by his Tucson neighbors Jay and Caren Franz. Also from Tucson were Bob and Bobbie Stewart, Chuck and Pat Pettis, and from Mesa, Jim Britton. Elon Danziger, who worked on the ranch house's roof in 1998 as an Americorps volunteer, visited from Washington, D.C., accompanied by his parents and sister.

Preservation Projects Summary

Preservation of the Empire Ranch House and other buildings is a primary mission of the Foundation. With *Action Plan* repairs completed, limited maintenance funds have been made available by BLM under our partnership agreement to contract SRI for the emergency shoring projects listed below.

Funding for the other long term stabilization work and planning remains to be secured, however, and is our immediate focus, with first priority given to fully funding Stone Corral stabilization.

Projects recently completed, underway, or scheduled are noted below. Projects we have previously shown as complete are not repeated here.

- *Action Plan* roof system repairs to the ranch house (*complete*)
- *Action Plan* wall system repairs to the ranch house (*complete*)
- *Action Plan* foundation system repairs to the ranch house (*complete*)
- Stabilization of stone corral (*work plan approved; begin work June 2002*)
- Emergency shoring of adobe haybarn walls (*June 2002*)
- Create plan and stabilize adobe haybarn (*priority item once funds are raised*)
- Complete plan and repair/replace lintel over south entry of zaguan (*partially funded; begin work summer 2002*)
- Emergency shoring to Ranch Hand's House (*summer 2002*)
- Create plan and stabilize Ranch Hand's House (*a priority item once funds are raised*)
- Emergency shoring of leaning concrete garden wall (*June 2002*)
- Straighten & stabilize leaning concrete garden wall (*priority volunteer project once shoring completed*)
- Repair ranch house windmill (*funded; in planning phase*)
- Repair floor framing of the Children's Addition (*a priority item once repair plan complete and funds are raised*)
- Plan for adaptive reuse of ranch buildings (*funded; ongoing through 2002*)



Stone Corral (north view): roof, support posts, walls and foundations are our next major project. (Photo: L. Wilkening)



Adobe haybarn and adjacent concrete wall (southeast view): emergency shoring planned until preservation repairs to secure haybarn foundations and upright leaning wall (Photo: M. Witkind)



Children's Addition (northeast corner view): deteriorated wooden floor foundations need repair and stabilization (Photo: M. Witkind)



Ranch Hand's House (southwest view): will receive additional emergency shoring until preservation plan and repairs. (Photo: L. Wilkening)



(Photo: BLM Tucson Field Office)

ERF at La Fiesta de los Vaqueros Rodeo Parade

Once again the Empire Ranch Foundation / BLM wagon joined the Tucson Rodeo Parade, held February 21, the world's longest horse-drawn parade.

Generously loaned for the day by Fred and Red Longfellow, the tall red freight wagon drawn by Steve Boice's handsome pair of Percherons was a special sight.

Trail Ride 2002: Bigger and Better than Ever

A perfect day had dawned as 41 riders followed trail boss Steve Boice for a four-hour ride. Riders gazed on beautiful mountain vistas, traversed intimate mesquite forests, and viewed the effects of a March fire, one of many to ravage southeastern Arizona this Spring. After lunch, 25 riders rode through the North Pasture and the towering cottonwoods of Empire Gulch. For 9-year-old Bini, it was her first horseback ride ever. Under the watchful eyes of the wranglers and her grandparents, she learned how to control her horse before the ride began and returned ready to ride "tomorrow."

Back at the ranch house, between rides, riders and friends enjoyed the biggest, and probably only, \$2 hamburger in the west topped with slices of tomatoes, onions, green chile and romaine lettuce. Fifty folks stayed for a great BBQ beef dinner and all the trimmings. As the sun set and a brilliant display of planets and stars emerged, guests listened to cowboy poet Bud Strom and western singer Andy Hersey in the timeless setting of the Stone Corral. An atmosphere of contentment and gratitude lingered over the crowd as it returned home to the 21st Century.

Group Tours See It All

On a sunny Saturday in March families and friends of the Empire Ranch gathered at the Empire Ranch Headquarters for tours of recently completed stabilization work on the ranch house.

Our contractor principals, Terry Majewski of SRI and Eric Means of Means Design and Building Corporation, led the tours. The groups were limited to less than a dozen people each so everyone could see, hear and squeeze into the smaller rooms.

Eric Means provided an overview of problems facing old adobe and wood building. Scarce as it is in Arizona, the greatest threat is moisture—a major factor in damage at the Empire Ranch House. Hence, the stabilization and emergency work has focused on the roofs, windows, drainage systems and foundations.

As the group walked through the house Eric pointed out examples of the ways in which problems have been fixed and provided many photographs showing work as it was being done.

He also showed us specific problems with adobe walls that will be addressed in the next phases of work, and pointed out where the Children's Addition, a wooden building, is just sitting on dirt and will need a proper foundation.

Historic secondary buildings—the



Tour participants enjoyed learning the ABC's of historic preservation from Eric Means (Photo: L. Wilkening)

Ranch Hand's House, Adobe Hay Barn, Stone Corral and Blacksmith Shop and Shed—have problems similar to those now fixed in the main ranch house; namely, insecure and leaky roofs, inadequate foundations, and poor drainage. A series of emergency actions need to be undertaken soon to save these out buildings from collapse.

(continued on page 2)

Yep, the Empire Ranch Roundup is Back!

Plan to join the fun September 14! Returning to the theme "Generations of the Empire," the Roundup will feature photo displays of the founders, owners, descendants, workers, and friends of the Empire, and conversations with honored guests. Bring your photos and reminiscences to add to the collection!

Western skills and entertainment will abound, with arena events showing a variety of horsemanship and ranching skills, while ranching crafts such as horse shoeing, reata and rope making, and mule packing will be demonstrated. All of this plus music and dances of the region, wagon rides, and special children's activities.

Equally exciting will be the Western Art Show in the Empire Ranch House, featuring work from well-known regional talent.



You'll probably recognize some of the excellent artists in this partial list:

Deb Allen	Katherine Drummond
Bruce Andre	Keri Jelks
Bob Begier	Regina Medley
Lou Apperson	Susan Mennick
Jill Babcock	Wanda O'Dell
Bill Cook	Nancy Prevo
Juanita Bostick	Mark Rossi
Stefanie Carleton	Chris Stange
Mick Davidson	Peter Whitney
Dana Cude	Sally Whitney
Linda Davidson	Herb Wood
Sam Donaldson	

The Empire Ranch — A Special Story

The Empire Ranch Headquarters and the stories of its people present a special as well as a classic story of ranching in the west. The walls of the fortress-style four-room adobe house are among the oldest and best preserved of their kind. Still standing today as the northernmost end of the Empire Ranch House, these original walls reflect the beginning of a story started 130 years ago.

The adobe house was standing on the 160-acre Empire Ranch homestead purchased from Mr. Edward Fish of Tucson by Walter Vail and Herbert Hislop in 1876.

During the Vail family era, from 1876 to 1928, ranching in the west grew into a major industry, fueled by American expansion and the transcontinental railroads. (Railroads reached this part of Arizona in 1880.) Silver was discovered on the property in 1879, and the Vail Total Wreck Mine claim was developed into a booming mining town by 1883 (headed toward “bust” by 1887, and now abandoned). Revenue from mining fueled the expansion of the ranch to over 1,000,000 acres.

By 1882, the original four adobe rooms had expanded to twenty-two (see floor plan below), including rear addition rooms for offices and staff, and a gable-roofed “Victorian Addition” for the family—all of which we can see today.

Stories of that period include a daring 1890 cattle drive to California to protest

railroad freight rates and the last major Arizona cattle drive south to Mexico, in response to local drought conditions in 1925.

When the Boice family bought the ranch in 1928 they introduced their well known purebred Hereford cattle to Arizona, and continued the Empire’s ranching story for another 50 years.

During these years the Boices hosted numerous films and film stars, including John Wayne and Anthony Quinn, as Hollywood romanced the West in films such as *Red River* and *Duel in the Sun*, filmed on and near the Empire. In 1969, the Boices sold the Empire Ranch to Gulf American Corporation (GAC), but continued ranching on the Empire under lease arrangements until 1975.

GAC commissioned plans for a large residential community development on the Empire. When those plans faltered, GAC in 1974 sold the ranch to Anamax Mining company, a joint venture between Anaconda and Amax mining companies. Anamax leased the Empire to experienced rancher John Donaldson while considering the future of the land. [The Donaldsons still continue their grazing lease, and operate the ranch with modern, environmentally friendly methods.]

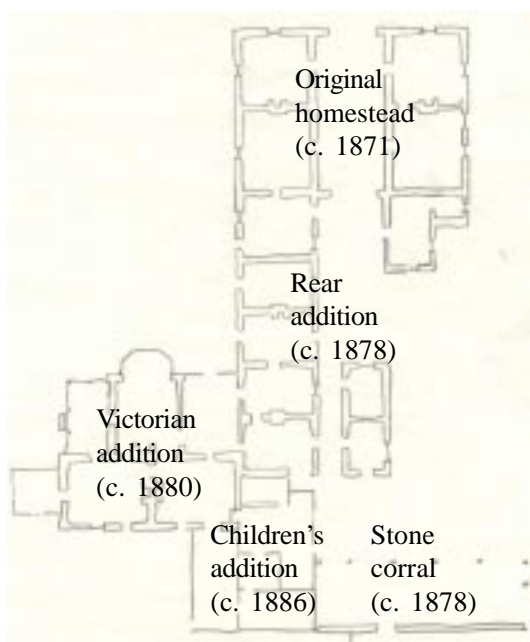
Private housing development on the Empire remained a serious possibility until 1988, when, in response to broad public support for preserving the historic ranch house and lands, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) acquired the Empire Ranch Headquarters and surrounding 42,000 acres through a series of land swaps. Legislation signed in Dec. 2000 designated the lands as the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (NCA), assuring their long-term conservation.

Saving the historic Empire Ranch Headquarters required much more than preserving the Empire Ranch from private land development, however. While standing empty since the 1980’s, the old structures experienced significant deterioration, and BLM resources for preservation, let alone restoration, were very limited.

In 1997, a group of private citizens formed the nonprofit Empire Ranch Foundation, dedicated to preserving the Empire Ranch historic buildings and surrounding landscape. The Foundation, in partnership with BLM, has recently completed critical preservation repairs to endangered roofs and foundations in the old adobe portions of the Empire Ranch House. Next, efforts will focus on repairing and preserving important outlying buildings which once were so vital to daily life on the ranch. While this work proceeds, plans are ongoing to develop the compound into a western heritage and educational site open to the public.

This latest chapter of life on the Empire has just begun. Much work remains in the coming years to ultimately achieve the visions for preservation, interpretation, and celebration of this historic place, while preserving its natural values and ranching traditions. We welcome your help in continuing its special story.

Ranch House Floor Plan



Total Wreck Mine's profits spurred growth in 1880's (Photo courtesy L. V. Ingram)



John Wayne and Boice family, while filming on site at the Empire, c. 1948 (Photo courtesy S. Boice)



Empire shipping pens, fall 1993 (Photo courtesy B. Donaldson)