

EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

P.O. Box 842 * Sonoita, Arizona 85637-0842 * (888) 364-2829

www.empireranchfoundation.org

Happy New Year!

2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the designation of Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, the home of the historic Empire Ranch. We are so grateful for the vision and efforts of those who worked to insure the preservation of this special place.

I'm so proud of the dedicated work of our board members and volunteers! The Outreach Committee and docents did an amazing job in 2019. We talked to over 2,300 people at thirteen community events and gave five presentations on the history of the Empire Ranch to 300 individuals. We gave docent tours to 630 visitors, an 81% increase when compared to the 348 who attended tours in 2018.

In January I had the opportunity to give a presentation to our youngest audience yet. About 100 third graders from Twin Peaks K-8 school in Marana learned about Arizona's 2nd "C": Cattle. It was such a fun experience for me and them. We'd love to visit more schools and share our knowledge of Arizona's ranching heritage.

This newsletter issue reports on one of our 2019 interpretation projects (Office, p. 2), the adaptive reuse of the Feed Barn/Mechanic's Shed, and our plans to interpret the Tack Room (p. 3). We also invite you to join us for the Spring Trail Ride on April 4th.

Thanks so much for your friendship and support! If you're not a member, please join us! We have plans to make this next decade even better than the past one.

Faith Boice
ERF President,



Celebrating the Holidays

December 14th dawned crisp and cool for the almost 300 visitors who welcomed the holiday season at the Empire Ranch House.

Christmas at the Empire Ranch has become an annual tradition—the Ranch House is decorated with trees, wreaths, villages, and other holiday items. Members of the ERF Board and others supply cookies and candies that were served on the Screened Porch, and Sonoita Heritage Coffee provided hot “joe” throughout the day.

Bill Ganz entertained the crowds with a selection of Western holiday tunes, and the Saguaro Strutters' line dancing performances were enjoyed by all. Mountain Santa provided a wonderful opportunity for young and old to confide their Christmas wishes.

Ten-year-old Kannon was enthusiastic about his experience: “He was the best Santa I've ever seen!” The “Make and Take” ornament room (Master Bedroom) was busy all day—the youngsters were especially proud of their creations.

Sales were brisk at the vendors and the ERF gift shop, and the raffle and silent auction tables saw plenty of action. A special art sale room in the Visitor Contact Station displayed donated paintings, posters, and photographs. Proceeds from the raffle, silent auction, and art sale help to support the Foundation's work to protect and preserve the historic Empire Ranch.

Special thanks to all the volunteers who made this happy tradition possible.



ERF 2020 Leaders

Officers elected at the December 20, 2019, ERF annual meeting include: **Faith Boice**, President; **Ray Patrone**, Vice President; **Sally Pyne**, Secretary, and **Christine Haaksma**, Treasurer.

We are delighted to welcome a new board member: **Jeff VanRiper**, of Elgin. Jeff is a former Michigan dairy farmer who became a television/radio professional in 1990. In 1998 he established SpeedySpots.com which provides high-quality voice overs to TV & radio stations, and in 2015 he introduced Audio Acres, a state-of-the-art recording studio in Chelsea, Michigan. For the past year Jeff has been an active participant at ERF volunteer workdays and events.

Dave McNamara was elected to a second term on the Board. Continuing board members include **Steve Boice**, **Don Butler**, **Marti Conroy**, **Dave Daiss**, **Kathie Maynard**, **Kimberly Patterson**, **Sally Pyne**, **Cheryl Rogos**, **Bill Schock**, **Kristin Tomlinson**, **Joanne Triplett** and **Tim Vail**.

We are most grateful for the time and support provided by these valuable volunteers.

We bid farewell and give special thanks to five departing board members.

Beth Borozan (2016-2019) served as liaison to the Pima County Board of Supervisors and facilitated the 2018 Pima County proclamation honoring Walter Vail's induction into the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and declaration of July 28th as "Empire Ranch, Walter L. Vail, and Arizona Cowboy Heritage Day."

Jim Cosby (2016-2019) was instrumental in obtaining significant financial sponsorships for the Cowboy Festival and other events.

Therese Perrault (2016-2019) assisted with fundraising and events and plans to continue as an ERF docent in coming years.

Gene Raymond (2013-2019) has been ERF's Treasurer since 2014. He provided thoughtful and effective oversight of ERF's finances and was instrumental in the preparation of BLM Assistance Agreements.

Peggy Theibert (2010-2019) served as Secretary (2011-2015, 2018) and Vice President (2015-2017) in addition to assisting with fundraising for the Foundation.

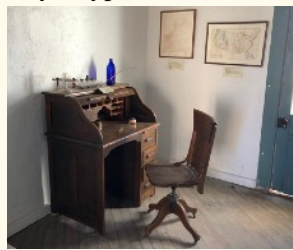
Office Interpretation

Guests at the Cowboy Festival in November were the first to view the newly interpreted Office (Room 11) in the Empire Ranch House. Walter Vail added on the room he used to conduct his business and political affairs about 1878. It still houses the Empire Land & Cattle Company safe in which Walter locked his whiskey when he was away from the



ranch. The Boice family also used this room as an office, and the safe was used to store the company's books and records. The room also contains a record/mailbox cabinet dating to the Vail era.

The room's walls and interior woodwork were painted. The cabinet was repaired, oiled, and cleaned. A donated roll-top desk, rolling desk chair, and old Royal typewriter have been added to the



furnishing. Reproductions of five framed maps, which illustrate the location of the Empire Ranch and its holdings, including the Total Wreck Mine, are now mounted on the walls. These include: *Map of the United States exhibiting the military depts. & posts*, 1860; *Ranches in Stock Valley, Pima County*, 1880s; *Official Map of Pima County*, 1893; USGS, *Patagonia Quadrangle*, 1904; and a Vail family map of Empire Ranch holdings, ca. 1906.



Still to come is the installation of a vintage "candlestick" crank telephone and the addition of interpretive items such as reproductions of Empire Ranch ledger pages, letters, and other business records. Special thanks are due to the donors of the items described above, ERF volunteers, and John Weiss (Friends of Kentucky Camp volunteer) who expertly repaired the desk and cabinet.

School Desks Find a New Home



In 2007 the Bureau of Land Management obtained some classic school desks from the Tombstone Schools for use in the rehabilitated Fairbank Schoolhouse. Desks not needed at Fairbank have been in storage at the Empire Ranch Headquarters until recently. On December 7, 2019, the desks were picked up by Patagonia Museum curators, Tom and Linda Shore (pictured above). ERF volunteers helped load the desks for transport.

The desks eventually will be placed in the historic school house in Lochiel, AZ, southeast of Patagonia. Built before 1905 of adobe and used as a schoolhouse through the 1970's, the Lochiel Schoolhouse, which is owned by the Patagonia School District, has been leased by the Patagonia Museum for the purpose of preserving this historic site as a historic and educational facility for students and the community.

Dedicated Gifts

The Empire Ranch Foundation gratefully acknowledges gifts recently received

In Memory of:

Bob & Mary Bowman,
Eldon Corkill,

Jean Grantham DeVore, Snuff Garrett,
Dusty Vail Ingram, Deborah Stitt

In Honor of:

Christine Auerbach,
Susan Vail Hoffman,
Gerald Korte

Adaptive Reuse in Action

A basic principle in historic preservation is "Buildings that get used, get maintained." As BLM and ERF continue to stabilize the outbuildings at the Empire Ranch Headquarters, we're always on the lookout for functions—often different from their original purpose—that will keep a building useful and in good shape.

A master plan for the Mechanic's Shed/Feed Barn (pictured below) has been developed that will adapt that building's interior space for more efficient use, now that structural and safety concerns have been addressed.



Mechanics Shed/Feed Barn exterior view (photo: K. Timmerman)

What had historically served as storage for feed and workspace for equipment repair, will now house tools and materials for landscaping, preservation, and interpretative efforts; as well as housing the riding mower and golf cart. Under the new arrangement, all historic built-in cabinetry will be preserved; the Feed Barn will once again be a vital part of BLM and ERF's ongoing efforts to preserve and maintain the site.

At the January volunteer workday some ERF volunteers focused on packing up the "Christmas at the Ranch" decorations and cleaning the Ranch House. Others worked to organize a connex (shipping container used for storage), sorting through the contents to determine which items could be moved back into the public areas for display; saved for future preservation and interpretive efforts; donated to other organizations; or discarded.

Soon equipment and material stored in the Tack Shed will find new homes in the Mechanic's Shed/Feed Barn or the connex. The net result is that the Tack Shed will become available for interpretation and public viewing. If you'd like to help, check the schedule for upcoming workdays, and join us!



Empire Ranch Headquarters, ca 1900 (photo courtesy of Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Empire Ranch Collection)

Soldiers Help Save the Empire Ranch House

A May 12, 1910, article in the Arizona Daily Star reported: "Flames Monday [May 9] afternoon destroyed practically all the buildings and barns at the Empire ranch, which comprises a part of the Vail estate..." This preliminary report, conveyed by telephone, noted that the "residence" was saved and that the fire perhaps originated in one of the stables.

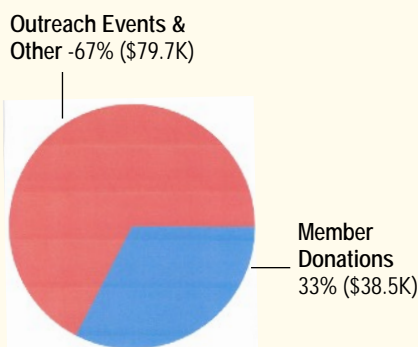
A follow up article on May 13th included commentary from brothers Nathan and Banning Vail who noted that an explosion in the laundry started the fire. "Two big barns the stables, and practically everything except the residence and blacksmith shop were burned. The stock happened to be outside and the wagons and harness were saved. However twenty-five tons of hay and a vast

quantity of corn went up in flames." Soldiers from Ft. Huachuca, who happened to be camping overnight at the ranch, were credited with helping to save the Ranch House and other structures.

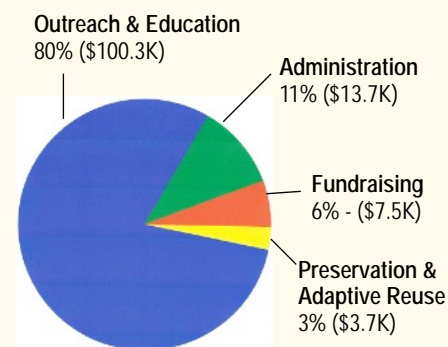
The photo above, taken about 1900, shows the buildings that may have burned. Buildings 1 & 2 were barns that were not replaced at those locations. Building 3 is the Adobe Haybarn, still in existence today. The adobe walls survived; evidence of the fire can be seen on the interior north wall of the barn. Building 4 was the slaughterhouse which was not replaced. Building 5 was the farrier's shop; a Tack Room occupies that space today. Building 6 was a cowboy bunkhouse that was not replaced.

Empire Ranch Foundation Financial Summary: January through December 2019

Income by Source of Funds: \$118,164



Expenditures, by Use of Funds: \$125,178



Income during FY19 totaled \$118,164--67% from outreach events and other sources, and 33% from member donations. Expenditures during FY19 totaled \$125,178—80% for outreach and education programs; 11% for general administration; 6% for fundraising; and 3% for preservation and adaptive reuse projects.

Not reflected in these figures is the more than 10,579 hours of labor contributed by ERF volunteers, valued by BLM at \$269,023 for grant matching purposes.

End-of-year assets totaled \$107.6K, comprising \$35.5K in BLM grant funds (fully obligated); \$25K in the Vail endowment and 6.1K in other ERF restricted funds; 25.2K in ERF unrestricted funds obligated for preservation, education, and interpretation; and \$15.8K in ERF unrestricted unobligated funds.

Working Calendar

Note: Please check our website to confirm event details (empireranchfoundation.org). Location: Meet at Visitor Contact Station, Empire Ranch Headquarters, unless otherwise noted. To volunteer, or for more information, call (888) 364-2829. or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org.

March

7 Volunteer Work Day, 8am-12pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org

14&28 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, no reservations req.

20 Spring Trail Ride registration closes.

April

4 Spring Trail Ride, 9am-2pm. Experience the beautiful grasslands on a guided horseback or wagon tour. Lunch, music, raffles, tours and more. Fun for the whole family.

11&25 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, no reservations req.

17 ERF Board Meeting, 9am-11am. All welcome!

May

2 Volunteer Work Day, 8am-12pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org

9&23 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, no reservations req.

June

6 Volunteer Work Day, 8am-12pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org

13&27 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, reservations req. at empireranchfoundation.org

19 ERF Board Meeting, 9am-11am. All welcome! Call 888-364-2829 for location.

July

11 & 25 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all, reservations req. at empireranchfoundation.org



Join Our Trail Ride!

Saturday, April 4, 2020

Come ride with us on Saturday, April 4, 2020. We'll have two guided horseback rides: a 3-hour at 9 am or a 1.5-hour at 10 am. Or, choose a horse-drawn wagon ride. Get a unique view of the beautiful rolling grasslands of Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, and learn about Empire Ranch history. A catered Chuck Wagon lunch, western heritage activities, ranch house tours, music and more are all included. Rent horses through ERF, or bring your own.

Registration is easy on our website at www.empireranchfoundation.org/ranch-events/trail-ride/. Or use the form included in this newsletter. Registrations are due no later than March 20, 2020.

