



# EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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[www.empireranchfoundation.org](http://www.empireranchfoundation.org)

## Hope to See You Soon!

Under the guidance of the Bureau of Land Management this summer we will begin a gradual restoration of ERF programs and services. The first step will be the implementation of a greeter program. Trained volunteers will be stationed outdoors on weekends, in front of the Visitor Contact Station, to answer visitor questions and sell gift shop items. The Ranch House remains open to visitors for self-guided tours.

As COVID restrictions are lifted we will reinstate docent tours and volunteer workdays. We're hoping that we will be able to host National Day of the Cowboy on July 24th. And please save the dates for a two-day Cowboy Festival, November 6-7.

I'm excited to announce that BLM has approved our proposal to begin working with an architect to develop plans for the renovation of the New Ranch House into a Western Heritage and Education Center. See the article on p. 3 for more details.

Special thanks to all who have renewed their membership in 2021. Your dues allow us to continue our important work. If you are not yet a member, please join today. Our website has a secure membership donation form or use the envelope enclosed with this newsletter issue.

We are so grateful for the support of our members and friends. We're looking forward to seeing you in person soon!

Faith Boice,  
President



Top: Frank and Henry G. Boice at New Mexico Military Academy, 1908. Bottom: Henry and Frank Boice, 1949.  
(photos: M. Madani)

## The Making of Boice Men

Abbie Keith, long-time secretary of the Arizona Cattle Grower's Association published some of Henry G. Boice's recollections of learning the cattle business under the tutelage of his father, Henry S. Boice.

"One spring I remember when school was out Father brought us three boys to the ranch to work. Frank was 17, Charley was 10 and I was 19. Father said we'd be there until school time in September. Before he left, I overheard a conversation between him and Fred ---- who had come to buy some cattle. He said to Father, 'Henry, aren't you afraid to leave these boys out here in this big open country by themselves all summer? Something might happen to them.' And Father replied, 'Yes, Fred, I am somewhat afraid but it's the only way I know of to make men out of them.'"

"And we got along all right. The worst thing that happened was when Frank broke his hand and had to ride 40 miles to get it put in a cast. On his way back he intended to stay with one of the Indian Agents, at his camp overnight, but when he got there the man was gone and left no grub cooked; so Frank had to cook his supper with one hand. He even had to make bread and he told me about it afterwards; said his whole left hand got covered with dough and with his right hand in the cast, he couldn't use it so he had a time getting the dough off, but he managed some way and showed up where we were the next evening. That was the only casualty I can remember happening that summer."

*Continued p. 2*

*Published by the Empire Ranch Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management. The purpose of the Foundation is to protect, restore, and sustain the Empire Ranch historical buildings and landscape as an outstanding western heritage and education center. Donations to the Foundation may be sent to: P.O. Box 842, Sonoita, AZ 85637-0842.*

## Boice Men *(cont'd from p. 1)*

"I remember one range we bought a little later on where the owner had never bought a bull--he just turned out likely looking calves. When we got the place, Father wanted to put in registered bulls so he told us to catch all those bulls that were on the range and castrate them. They were big animals, strong and wild for it was one of the rougher ranges where all the cattle were wild."

"There were four of us working, and we each had five horses in our mounts. We'd ride until we spotted one of the bulls and then have to run him a mile or two before we could get a chance to try to rope him. They were ferocious and wild as deer, and when we'd get a loop around one's neck he'd fight like a tiger. We didn't bother with dallies - we tied our ropes fast and took our chances. The bull would run to the end of the rope and the force would yank the horse maybe 30 or 40 feet, then he'd run at the horse and try to hook him. We got so we didn't throw a rope until two of us were ready so we could drop two loops over his head about the same time. Then another boy would catch him by a hind leg, and we'd lay him down and castrate him."

"In those days there weren't any corrals or chutes or traps, there weren't any fences either, so everything you did to cattle you had to do with them tied down on the ground. We didn't lack for exercise that summer, but we did get 54 of those wild bulls castrated. I don't remember that anyone got hurt, but my horse got hooked once."

*Excerpt from "Cowpunching (NOT) Deluxe," by Abbie Keith. Arizona Cattlelog, May 1963:55-56.*

## Miss the Gift Shop?

We started the ERF Gift Shop in the Huachuca House over seven years ago, and it's become one of the most popular stops for any visit to the Empire Ranch. While we had to temporarily close due to COVID-19, that hasn't stopped us from bringing in new merchandise and moving sales online.

Our new Online Shop, launches in June and, carries t-shirts, hats, mugs, and some new surprises. Check our [empireranchfoundation.org](http://empireranchfoundation.org) website for the Grand Opening announcement and we'll be sure to post it on Facebook. Every purchase directly benefits the Empire Ranch and helps us keep the Gift Shop growing!



*New gift shop items include a long-sleeved t-shirt featuring Vail and Boice brands, and a fleece lap robe (photos: K. Patterson)*



## Departed Friends:

### Marty Maynard



Marty Maynard died on February 5, 2021. He and his wife Kathie began volunteering for the Empire Ranch Foundation in 2009. A retired Air Force Captain he worked for Boeing and Northrop Grumman. His volunteer contributions included carpentry and other repair work on headquarters buildings and assisting with all events.

Marty was a great storyteller and gave several Empire Ranch history presentations. Just prior to his death he was collaborating on the creation of a presentation about the 1890 cattle drive from the Empire Ranch to southern California. Marty was appointed to the ERF Advisory Committee in 2020.

### Doug Pyne



*Doug and Sally Pyne in Empire Ranch Family Kitchen, 2014. (photo: C. Auerbach)*

Doug Pyne died on March 6, 2021. He and his wife Sally moved from Michigan to Arizona in 1997 to work for Tucson Medical Center. After his retirement in 2007 he became a school crossing guard.

Doug became an ERF docent in 2011 and actively participated in volunteer workdays and events. He was a meticulous painter and carpenter and restored the meat cooler in the Zaguan, the worktable and shelves in the Cowboy Kitchen, the metal cabinets in the Family Kitchen, and many of the doors and windows of the Empire Ranch House.

## Empire Ranch Virtual Tour Video Available

The Foundation is pleased to announce the release of a virtual tour of the Empire Ranch House. The eighteen-minute video tells the story of the families who owned and operated the Empire Ranch, starting about 1871, and walks the viewer through the rooms of the ranch house, describing their varied uses over the years. It's a great way to visit the ranch from the comfort of your home or to prepare for your visit to the ranch. The



link to the YouTube video is available on the ERF website: <https://www.empireranchfoundation.org/about/media/>





## Agents of Discovery Is Now At Empire Ranch

You can now explore Historic Empire Ranch in an exciting new way. It's called **Agents of Discovery**, the not-so-secret, secret agency dedicated to learning and playing outdoors. Walk throughout Empire Ranch Headquarters to unlock location-based challenges and discover more about the history of Empire Ranch. ERF collaborated with the BLM to develop an Empire Ranch mission.

**Agents of Discovery** is an award winning Move to Play & Learn mobile game that can be downloaded for free and played on a mobile device. **Agents of Discovery** requires no WiFi or data connection while you're out exploring. You will need WiFi to download the application itself and the different missions. But you don't need to worry about cell phone data charges as you complete the mobile game!

Studies show that outdoor classrooms and nature-based experiential activities lead to significant gains in student academic performance (American Institutes for Research 2005). The game encourages youth to get outside and start solving mysteries by using gaming technology to enhance outdoor experiences. **Agents of Discovery** missions are available for sites in parks, forests, recreation areas, and museums around the country, including other nearby BLM sites: the San Pedro House, Fairbank, and Murray Springs Clovis Site.

To get started:

1. Download the free Agents of Discovery app to your mobile device at the Apple App Store, Google Play or visit [www.AgentsofDiscovery.com](http://www.AgentsofDiscovery.com).
2. After downloading the app, click on the Missions button and select the ones you want to play.
3. Preload the missions and head out to the Historic Empire Ranch to start completing your challenges!



*The new ERF outreach tent debuts in Willcox. Thanks to Anna Welch for this donation. (photo: M. Conroy)*

## 2021 Outreach Activities

The Foundation was pleased to provide two virtual presentations on the history of the Empire Ranch in April for the Catalina UMC Methodist Men's Breakfast and the retirement community of Splendido at Rancho Vistoso. Next up in May and June were in person presentations at the Rotary Club of Casas Adobes and the Community Performing Arts Center of Green Valley.

Our first outreach booth of the year was in April at the Willcox West Fest & Ranch Rodeo in Willcox. We are excited to be able to return to spreading the word about our Empire Ranch and hopefully get back to our usual busy schedule.

We need volunteers to help with our outreach efforts: setting up, talking about the ranch, taking down and recording the contact information for people/groups who would want to have presentations. If you have any ideas or can help, please contact the ERF outreach coordinator, Marti Conroy, at 520-247-6097.



*ERF display table at the Community Performing Arts Center of Green Valley (photo: M. Conroy)*

## New Ranch House Conversion Update



We are pleased to announce that BLM has approved the Foundation's plan to contract with architect Bill Mackey of Tucson to prepare schematic design documents for the conversion of the New Ranch House into a Western Heritage and Education Center (WHEC).

Preliminary ideas for the WHEC include remodeling the interior of the New Ranch House to include a kitchenette, conference room, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, and an office area. A new exterior deck would be added to the north side of building. Structural upgrades recommended by BLM inspections will be incorporated, and plans developed for water harvesting and solar power.

All proposed work will be in accordance with Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

Please consider a gift for the New Ranch House fund to help us create our Western Heritage and Education Center. Contributions can be made on our secure website or by using the envelope enclosed in this newsletter.

## Dedicated Gifts

The Empire Ranch Foundation gratefully acknowledges gifts recently received

*In Memory of:*

E. Neil & May Carr,  
Ferne Kemp Lewis,  
Arthur & Marie Madson,  
Travis Cody Kerekes Martin,  
Marty Maynard,  
Doug Pyne,  
Linda Tuck

*In Honor of:*

Alison Bunting,  
Frank Hedgcock,  
Horse'n Around Ranch & Foundation,  
Walter L. Vail, III

## Working Calendar

Board meetings are held via Zoom. To participate call (888-364-2829) or email [admin@empireranchfoundation.org](mailto:admin@empireranchfoundation.org). COVID permitting, we plan to hold the other events listed below. Please confirm their status on the ERF website.

### June

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

### July

**24 National Day of the Cowboy**, 9am-1pm. Free, open to all. Empire Ranch Headquarters. COVID-permitting.

### August

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

### October

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

### November

**6&7 Save the Dates for the Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival!**



**SAVE the DATE for  
National Day of the Cowboy**  
at the  
Historic Empire Ranch  
Sonoita, Arizona

**Saturday, July 24, 2021  
9am-1pm**

**COVID-Permitting,  
We Hope to Host a  
FREE Family Event  
Demonstrations, Presentations,  
Ranch Tours**

Lunch available for purchase

Empire Ranch Headquarters  
Las Cienegas National Conservation  
Area, off Scenic Highway 83,  
East Empire Ranch Road  
[www.empireranchfoundation.org](http://www.empireranchfoundation.org)

