

EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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www.empireranchfoundation.org

Welcome Back!

The National Day of the Cowboy celebration provided the perfect opportunity to welcome our members, supporters, and friends back to the Empire Ranch. Our first volunteer workday on July 10th attracted 25 eager workers who spruced up the Ranch House and made minor repairs. Docent-led tours, held on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month, were back on the schedule in August.

Planning for the Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival, scheduled for November 6-7, is in high gear. We're excited to be expanding the event to two days, as suggested by many of you. We need your help to ensure the success of the 2021 Festival. Please consider becoming a Sponsor or contribute to the Silent Auction using the forms enclosed with this issue of the newsletter. We also need many volunteers to help before, during, and after the Festival—see the article on p. 3. Donation and volunteer sign-up forms are also available on our secure website.

We're excited about the positive reception our online Gift Store is receiving. We're so pleased to be able to make Empire Ranch Foundation goods available to our out-of-state supporters.

It is wonderful to be "back in the saddle" at the historic Empire Ranch.

Faith Boice, *President*



*Day of the Cowboy moments
(photos: A. Bunting, S. Reichardt)*

Celebrating Cowboys and Rain

Outdoor summer events in Arizona are risky. The heat can be extreme, or the monsoons can strike. In 2021 the July 24th celebration of National Day of the Cowboy was wet. Despite the steady rain over 200 smiling visitors turned out to enjoy the morning. Arizonans are so grateful for every drop of rain, and don't mind getting a bit soggy.

Promptly at 8 am a line formed at the EZ Cattle Company Cow Camp Café and Chuckwagon for the savory biscuits and gravy breakfast. The Stone Corral provided a sheltered place to eat and a good view of the corral where Empire Ranch cowboys tethered their horses.

Demonstrators and vendors were throughout the Ranch House, and everyone enjoyed exploring, learning, and shopping. Western skills demonstrators included: leather artist Phil Parks; reata expert Dick Schorr; rancher Bill Schock; and saddle maker Brad Faulkner.

Steve Boice and Teresa Warrell brought horses and ponies from Horse'n Around Rescue Ranch, and Regi Richter provided groundwork horse training demonstrations. Volunteers at the Foundation outreach table were busy all day, answering questions and selling items from the ERF Gift Shop. Over 40 participated in the docent tours, and a total of \$305 was raised in the 50/50 auction.

We are so grateful for the support of everyone who made the 2021 National Day of the Cowboy a success. Most especially the more than 30 volunteers who worked cheerfully and tirelessly in the rain.

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.

Empire Ranch Corporate Era

Part 1—Gulf American Corporation

The Empire Ranch was privately owned for 93 years. In October 1968 Tucson newspapers reported the possible sale of the Empire Ranch by Boice & Co.:

“The Empire today contains 42,000 acres, 27,000 of which is deeded land. ...it is in the heart of the prime cattle country and has been viewed by real estate developers as an ideal location for a housing subdivision.

Gulf American officials whose company is developing Rio Rico, today admitted they are interested in a similar project in the Sonoita area.” [Tucson Daily Citizen, 10/30/1969].

In December, the sale of the Empire to Gulf American Corporation (GAC) was announced.

“Gulf American plans include an entire city, with a central business district, industrial sites, multiple housing and homes ranging from three to one per acre.” [Tucson Daily Citizen, 12/18/1969].

The sale agreement included a provision for Boice & Co. to retain a grazing lease, so Pancho Boice and his son Steve continued to live at the Empire Ranch and manage the Empire ranching operations.

In mid-1970 GAC submitted development plans to the Pima County Planning and Zoning Commission. The first proposal called for

“...58,266 residential units, which includes 1,000 acres of mobile home development. Planned density ranges from 3.4 homes per acre to one home per four acres. A total of 1,325 acres is for industrial use, which is east of Sonoita and south of Highway 82.” [Tucson Daily Citizen, 4/16/1970].

Concerns about the project surfaced at the first P&Z Commission meeting, and GAC was required to provide additional information. GAC’s Empire Ranch area



Wilsey & Ham, Cella, Barr, & Evans (architectural firms). Map of proposed GAC real estate development of the Empire Ranch.

plan was eventually approved by the P&Z Commission with important limitations.

“...rezoning will be limited to a 5,300-acre area designed to accommodate 38,000 people, representing 9 per cent of the total 60,357 acres in the area plan and 21 per cent of the total projected population.” [Arizona Daily Star, 9/30/1970].

The next step was the Pima County Board of Supervisors meeting in December, where any action on the proposal was delayed.

As GAC faced delays in permitting approvals in Pima County they developed a proposal to develop some Empire Ranch land in Santa Cruz County. GAC experienced setbacks there as well.

“The supervisors are asking assurance that there is sufficient water in the area to support a community the size GAC envisions. Another doubt about the project quite rightly plagues the supervisors. That is the sewer service. They take exception to GAC’s plan to use septic tanks as a sewerage system because the land is red clay and will not absorb sewage.” [Tucson Citizen, 3/18/1971].

The SCC Board eventually approved the proposal in October, with some reductions in the scope of the project.

Pima County eventually gave its approval. In late 1972 GAC announced it “...is only a step away from starting its proposed 32,000-acre Empire Ranch satellite city in southern Pima County. There has been no decision yet on when this construction will begin or when lot sales will begin.” [Arizona Daily Star, 9/1/1972]. But a year later the delays and GAC’s worsening financial situation led them “...to sell its undeveloped 35,000-acre Empire Ranch property near Sonoita, ...to company in the state.” [Tucson Citizen, 6/27/1973]. Read about Anamax Mining Company’s purchase of GAC’s holdings in our December issue.

Departed Friend: Henry Dojaquez



Local Sonoita legend, Henry Dojaquez, died on July 15, 2021, a few weeks short of his 104th birthday. Henry’s father Miguel “Mike” was an Empire Ranch cowboy in the early 1900s. Henry worked at the Empire in 1936 when he assisted with the Roundup and helped build a dam designed by Frank S. Boice on the Cienega Creek; the dam was washed out in a flood in 1938.

When the Empire Ranch Foundation was established, Henry provided invaluable assistance documenting the history of the ranch to ERF and the BLM. He gave an oral history interview in 1992, and was always willing to tell a few stories and answer questions about ranch and local history.

Dedicated Gifts

The Empire Ranch Foundation gratefully acknowledges gifts recently received

In Memory of:

Barbara Ann Cech,
Marty Maynard,
Annie McGee

In Honor of:

Alison Bunting,
Emil Franz’s Voices of the west.net

Outreach Update

July 4th saw Kimberly Patterson, Paul Haaksma, Matt Greenway, and Marti Conroy in Sierra Vista at the Rotary Club of Sierra Vista’s 4th of July Celebration at Veteran’s Park. We talked about the Ranch and our upcoming events to over 100 people and sold some items from the Gift Shop.

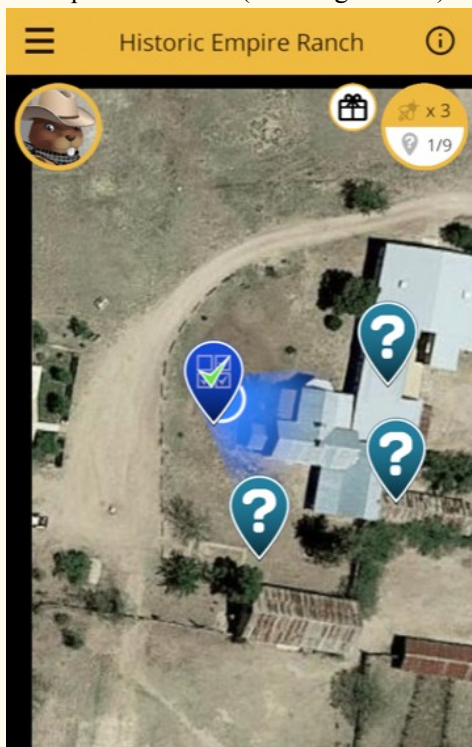
In August we attended the Presidio

San Agustin de Tucson event, Celebrating All Things Tucson/S-cuk-son. Next up in September is the Sonoita Labor Day Rodeo and the Southeastern Arizona Livestock EXPO in Willcox.

We gave an in-person presentation to the Rincon Rotary in August and will provide a virtual presentation to the Tucson Corral of Westerners in September.

Young Adventurers

Early on a summer morning Cole (13), Natalie (9) and Celine (6) visited the Empire Ranch Headquarters to try out the *Agents of Discovery* Empire Ranch Mission. As soon as they saw the headquarters map on their mobile devices, they set off in search of the locations illustrated with question marks (see image below).



At each stop they read some background information about that location and had the opportunity to answer a few questions. After completing the questions, they received a congratulatory check mark and dashed off to the next location. It wasn't easy for the adults to keep up with them! When asked what she thought about her experience Celine responded: "I felt like an adventurer, and I was a good navigator." Natalie liked learning about the windmill and water tank that provided water to the families living at the ranch.

Instructions for downloading the *Agents of Discovery* app and missions are available on the ERF website: <https://www.empireranchfoundation.org/2021/07/agents-of-discovery/>

(Photos: C. Schlappy)

A Collapse Reveals a Treasure



In June 2021 the ceiling of the Pantry, located between the Bookkeeper's Room and the Family Kitchen, partially collapsed (see top photo above). The pantry was constructed as part of the Rear Addition to the 1870s Ranch House, and the original ceiling was of the same viga/latilla/grass/mud construction as the rest of that wing. Sometime later a drop ceiling was installed, consisting of corrugated metal (roofing) sheets attached to a suspended framework. The metal sheets are of fairly heavy gauge and weight, and the framework eventually gave way under the added weight of dirt from the original roof filtering through the grass & wood.

Clean-up will be undertaken under Federal safety and preservation guidelines; for the time being, the Pantry and the Bookkeeper's Room will remain closed. The collapsed framework and metal, along with dirt and rubble from above, will be safely removed and disposed. We hope then to be able to secure the remaining 4-foot metal ceiling sections along the room's west side for future interpretation; and clean off the exposed vigas & latillas of the original ceiling which appear to be in excellent condition (see lower photo above). Once the work is completed both rooms will be cleaned and re-opened, providing a new interpretive opportunity to further their understanding and appreciation of the historic Empire Ranch House.

(Photos: BLM)

**Coming November 6 & 7!
Don't Miss it!**



20th Annual Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival

Saturday & Sunday,
November 6-7, 2021

10am to 4pm

at Empire Ranch Headquarters

An exciting, educational, and
fun family event.

Western Music & Entertainment
History & Culture Demonstrations
Ranch Life Exhibits
Kids Activities
Artisans & Speakers

Free and open to all!

For more information, please see
enclosed Festival flyer or visit
www.empireranchfoundation.org



Volunteers, Volunteers, Volunteers

We are in high gear since we just received notification that we can, indeed, hold the Cowboy Festival this year. Please let us know if you can help as a volunteer this year. For the first time the festival will be held for two days, Saturday, November 6th and Sunday, November 7th. Our preparation days will be November 4th and 5th, with take-down day November 8th.

To volunteer go to the ERF website and fill out the Cowboy Festival volunteer form [www.empireranchfoundation.org]. Do you have questions? Contact Marti Conroy by email at Wrangler4504@gmail.com or phone: (520) 247-6097. We hope you can help!

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, for more information, call (888) 364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org.

September

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

11&26 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House, 11am-12pm. Free, open to all.

October

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.

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

November

4&5 Cowboy Festival Set Up, Volunteers Needed, 8am-3pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829.

6&7 20th Annual Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival, 10am-4pm. Empire Ranch Headquarters, Free, open to all.

8 Cowboy Festival Tear Down, Volunteers Needed, 10am-2pm. To volunteer call 888-364-2829.

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

December

11 Christmas at the Ranch, 10am-2pm, Empire Ranch House. Free, open to all.

11 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! Call 888-364-2829 for location.



Flag Day!

Many thanks to Caleb Everhart of Monument Steel Builders for donating his time and equipment to repair the flagpole at Empire Ranch Headquarters. It was wonderful to be able to raise Old Glory again!