



EMPIRE RANCH FOUNDATION NEWS

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Back in the Saddle Again

It was glorious to ride again on Las Cienegas National Conservation Area on a glorious spring day. Empire Ranch Foundation volunteers were excited to welcome everyone to the April 2, 2022, Spring Trail Ride after a two-year hiatus. 109 riders took advantage of the 4 different trail ride opportunities, and 23 enjoyed the wagon rides.

Steve Boice and Jared McCabe led the three-hour ride, while Faith Boice handled the 90-minute ride. Rider Tiane Kennedy posted on Facebook: "Thanks for a great day. All the guides were amazing and made the ride so much fun."

Wagon riders learned about the history of the Empire Ranch and LCNCA landscape from docents Alison Bunting and Matt Greenway. The pulled pork

chuckwagon lunch served up by EZ Cattle Company Cow Camp Cafe' Chuck Wagon Catering hit the spot before or after the rides.

Throughout the morning it was fun to watch the Sonoran Plein Aire Painters paint a variety of Empire Ranch scenes, and later listen in on their critique session. We are so grateful for the invaluable assistance of the volunteers who ensured the trail ride was a success.



(photos: C. Smith, K. Patterson, A.Hooper)

Last Train from Gun Hill

On June 4, 2022, at 8pm, the Foundation, in collaboration with the Loft Cinema, will host a free outdoor showing of the 1959 classic movie, *The Last Train from Gun Hill*. The screening is part of the Loft's Solar Cinema program that travels throughout Southern Arizona with a van outfitted with solar panels that power a 12 or 20-foot inflatable screen and state-of-the-art mobile projection system.

During the filming on the Empire Ranch Mary Boice suggested to neighbors Mary and Bob Bowman, that they all drive over to see the film site. On nearing, someone ran over saying "you just ruined a take by driving through it." However, when Mary Boice gave her name, they were cordially escorted to the film site. There, Hal Wallace was very gracious, inviting them to dine. And the photo (below) was taken on that occasion. Mary Bowman later explained her smile is strained in the photo, as she had accidentally backed up into a barrel cactus when shot was taken.



(l-r) Actor Anthony Quinn, Mary & Bob Bowman, Mary Boice, and Director Hal Wallace (photo: Mary Bowman)

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.

Gerald Korte's Recollections

In 2008 Gerald Korte wrote the following account based on his experience as an Empire Ranch cowboy from 1946-48.

Cowboys on the Empire Ranch in the Boice Era Prior to 1950

Cowboys worked seven days per week, some days, sun up to dark, other days sun up to 3 or 4 p.m. During roundup time they worked early light to after dark. Cowboys carried no canteens for water during the day; they drank water at windmills, springs or seeps and out of Cienega Creek. Cowboys rode the range year-round checking cattle for problems any might have and also checking windmills, storage tanks and watering troughs to make sure they were working properly. They also distributed salt by packhorse to locations which had no roads to them. Salt and cattle were widely distributed over the range to avoid over-grazing in any one location. In those days a cowboy didn't get off his horse ten days in a year. A cowboy was a cowboy and rode horseback to wherever he was going--no horse trailers. Some springs were 15 miles from the ranch house. All livestock, when moved, went on their own four legs--no cattle trucks or trailers.

During warm months, cowboys doctoring cattle for screw worms. Doctoring on the range required roping the animal and restraining the animal by appropriate methods. During the summer rains a cowboy could doctor an average of 15 cattle per day.

A cowboy had to be able to shoe horses and only shod his own string (of horses). However, at roundup extra help was hired and everyone pitched in shoeing their own string and some of the extra horses in the remuda. Horses that might be a problem to shoe were shod up by the full-time cowboy who knew their quirks.

Cowboys wore light colored, broad-brimmed hats for weather protection: straw in summer and felt in winter; long-sleeved shirts, handmade boots with a round toe and under slung heels about two or more inches high to keep the foot in the stirrup. The boot tops were 12 to 14 inches high to keep dirt and twigs from getting into the boots and protect the lower leg. They also wore chaps for protection from brush.

In addition to breakfast before sun up and supper after dark most days, cow-



Roping horses and treating cattle in the 1940's (photos: Boice family, Jim Gilbert)

boys usually had lunch. The chuck wagon was camped at Rosemont and the Farm area (Cienega Ranch) for roundups. You could expect lunch if a pickup truck could be driven to you. In areas with no road, there was no lunch and maybe no water. All year long meals were excellent including while on roundup. Those roundup cooks were the best.

Cowboys ate very well: meat at every meal, pinto beans, rice, fried potatoes, eggs, biscuits, honey. Pies or cobblers made from dried apples, peaches and apricots and Son of a Gun pudding were staple fare. Hot weather meals were chicken, canned meat from the ranch, and jerky. Of course, there was coffee at every meal.

The fall roundup in October was when cattle were sold: old cows, some calves, old bulls, and the yearling steers and heifers. Each day during the fall roundup the cattle gathered were cut into two bunches: cattle being sold and the cattle remaining on the range. The latter were treated as in the spring roundup. When the cowboys were done with branding, etc. of the cattle staying on the ranch, the cattle being sold were driven away toward the holding pasture. The remaining bunch was pointed another direction and turned loose so as not to mingle into the sale bunch.

Cowboys drove all cattle sold in October to Sonoita. The steers were brought

Gerald Korte Remembered

Faith Boice, ERF President, welcomed everyone to the March 12, 2022, memorial celebration to honor Gerald Korte, a founder of ERF and its first President. The program included presentations on Gerald's many contributions to the Empire Ranch and ERF by Alison Bunting, ERF Historian/Archivist; Shela McFarlin, retired BLM Tucson Field Office Manager; Teresita Majewski, Statistical Research, Inc. (SRI) Executive Vice President; and Steve Boice, representing the Boice family.

Caitlin Korte, Gerald's granddaughter, sent her recollections of Gerald's love for the Empire Ranch... "We spent so many weekends in this beautiful place that, as a child, I was convinced The Empire was Granddads 'mansion' from back when he was a cowboy. It's because of his work that we are all here together today and I am confident that his legacy will live on here for many years to come."



Many stories and memories of Gerald were shared at his memorial (photos: F. Boice, A. Bunting)

from the pasture southeast of Elgin and old cows, bulls, and yearling heifers from the pasture southwest of the Ranch House. At Sonoita there were large railroad shipping corrals, scales and loading chutes. Ranch cattle were shipped on a special train because of the large numbers shipped.

Young Visitors

On April 21st ERF docents welcomed a group of twelve home schooled youngsters and five moms on their special visit to the Empire Ranch. Favorite spots on the tour of the Empire Ranch House included the “giant” refrigeration unit in the Cowboy Dining Room (see photo below), the built-in bench in the Family Kitchen, and the display of toys in the Children's Addition. After the tour the kids made fresh butter by vigorously shaking cream in a jar and enjoyed a snack of biscuits, butter, and honey. A walk on the Heritage Discovery Trail topped off the morning.



Excited kids explore the cowboy dining room's giant refrigerator (photo: A. Bunting)

Preserving Windows and Doors

Arizona's sunshine and dry climate are especially hard on wood features, such as the Empire Ranch House window frames and doors. ERF Board member, Nick Olmsted, is leading a team of volunteers who are addressing this important preservation project at monthly volunteer workdays.

By the end of April the bay window of the Victorian Addition was looking good (see top photo). In 1881 Walter Vail added the bay window as his wedding present to his wife Margaret. Margaret's window had much smaller panes of glass (lower photo). When Frank and Mary Boice remodeled sections of the Empire Ranch House in the early 1950s the bay window was reconfigured and modernized.

Tucson Festival of Books

For the first time, the Empire Ranch Foundation had an outreach booth at the Tucson Festival of Books, held on the University of Arizona campus, March 12-13, 2022. It proved to be a wonderful opportunity to tell almost 600 interested individuals about the Empire Ranch and its history.

Two publications about the Empire Ranch proved to be quite popular: *Empire Ranch* by Gail Waechter Corkill and Sharon E. Hunt, 2011, and *Diary of a Desert Trail: 1890 Cattle Drive from Arizona to California* by Edward L. Vail, 2016.



ERF display table at Tucson Book Festival (photo: M. Conroy)

ERF also participated in the Cowboy Music and Poetry Gathering in Sierra Vista and the Celebrate Oro Valley event at the Steam Pump Ranch.

We need volunteers to help with our outreach efforts. No prior experience required, just a willingness to meet and greet people. If you can help, please contact the ERF outreach coordinator, Marti Conroy, at 520-247-6097.

Volunteers Are Family

On Saturday, April 23, 2022, the ERF Board of Directors welcomed over 70 ERF volunteers and their families to an evening of dinner and dancing at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds.

The highlight of the delicious meal, prepared and served by Board members, was the beef donated by Vera Earl Ranch, Inc. The music of Tucson guitarist, Jay Faircloth, was enjoyed by all.

“ERF volunteers are a family,” said Faith Boice as she thanked everyone for their contributions on behalf of the Foundation. Judging from the lively conversations and laughter the family atmosphere was certainly present. Five lucky volunteers went home with door prize awards--\$50 gift certificates for the ERF gift shop.



Good times and hearty thanks for all ERF volunteers (photos: F. Boice, A. Bunting)

Dedicated Gifts

The Empire Ranch Foundation gratefully acknowledges gifts recently received

In Memory of:

E. Neil & May Carr,
Eldon Corkill,
Gerald Korte,
Dusty Vail Ingram,
Verna (Turner) Glover,
Virginia K. Jones

In Honor of:

Faith Boice,
Marti Conroy



(photos: M. Boice, A. Bunting)

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

June 2022

- 4 Volunteer Work Day**, 8am to 12pm, Empire Ranch Headquarters. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org
- 4 Last Train from Gun Hill**, 8pm, free outdoor movie show. Bring your own seating, Empire Ranch Headquarters. Chuckwagon dinner avail for purchase prior to movie.
- 11 & 25 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, reservations required by 5 pm the day prior to the tour.
- 16 ERF Board Meeting**, 6 pm. All welcome! Call 888-364-2829 for location.

July 2022

- 2 Volunteer Work Day**, 8am to 12pm, Empire Ranch Headquarters. To

volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org.

- 9 & 23 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, reservations required by 5 pm the day prior to the tour.

- 23 National Day of the Cowboy**, 8am-12pm, Empire Ranch Headquarters. Free, open to all.

August 2022

- 6 Volunteer Work Day**, 8am to 12pm, Empire Ranch Headquarters. To volunteer call 888-364-2829 or email admin@empireranchfoundation.org.
- 13 & 27 Docent-Led Tour of the Empire Ranch House**, 11am-12pm. Free, reservations required by 5 pm the day prior to the tour.
- 18 ERF Board Meeting**, 6pm. All welcome! Call 888-364-2829 for location.

Advance Notice!
November 5 & 6, 2022
21st Annual
Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival,
 Free, Open to all!



National Day of the Cowboy

at the
 Historic Empire Ranch
 Sonoita, Arizona

Save the Date!
Saturday, July 23, 2022
8am-12pm

FREE Family Event
Demonstrations, Trail Rides,
Vendors, Ranch Tours

Empire Ranch Headquarters
 Las Cienegas National Conservation
 Area, off Scenic Highway 83,
 East Empire Ranch Road
www.empireranchfoundation.org