

## **Arizona History**

### **AZT Passage 1-Huachuca Mountains**

by Preston Sands

The first passage of the Arizona Trail begins along the international border with Mexico in the Coronado National Memorial. Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, a Spanish explorer, is believed to have been the first European to enter what is now Arizona in 1539, just east of the monument that now bears his name.

Coronado's massive expedition made its way north along the San Pedro River through eastern Arizona, looking for the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola, which were said to have streets paved with gold. Coronado's expedition located the Grand Canyon and the pueblos of the Hopi and Zuni people during its time in Arizona, but no gold.

Miller Peak, the highpoint of the Huachuca Mountains, received its name from an early sawmill located in Miller Canyon, on the northern flank of the peak. "Mill" Canyon eventually became "Miller," and so did the peak.

Tombstone, the legendary silver boomtown, located across the valley to the north, lacked the important resources of water and lumber during its boom period. Enterprising individuals looked to the Huachuca Mountains for a solution. The Huachuca Water Company was formed, and water from dams constructed in Miller and Carr Canyons was piped to thirsty Tombstone mines and residents. Lumber furnished from a number of sawmills in the Huachuca forests was hauled to Tombstone by wagon.

Carr Peak, on the north side of Miller Canyon, is named for James Carr. Carr purchased a sawmill on the north slope of Carr Peak from Richard Gird, one of Ed Schieffelin's partners in the development of the Tombstone mines. Just below the site of Carr's sawmill is the abandoned Reef Mine, named for the "Reef" or massive cliff wall beneath it. The Reef Mine produced gold, silver, and tungsten from the 1890's through the 1950's. A small settlement grew up near the mine, first known as Reef, then Palmerlee, and then finally, Garces. Today, this settlement with three names is a ghost town as well as a campground.

On the north side of the Huachuca Mountains is one of the largest cities in southern Arizona, Sierra Vista. Originally known as Garden Canyon and then Fry, Sierra Vista grew up next to and owes its existence to Fort Huachuca, which was established by the U.S. Army in 1877 to protect residents from Apaches. It was here that soldiers warned prospector Ed Schieffelin that the only thing he would find on his prospecting forays in the area would be his tombstone. Schieffelin found a bonanza of silver instead, and appropriately named his first mining claim "Tombstone." During the early 1900's, the legendary all African-American Cavalry regiments known as the "Buffalo Soldiers" were stationed at Fort Huachuca, and one of these regiments pursued Mexican Revolution leader Pancho Villa into Mexico, after he raided a town in New Mexico.

The trail hugs the mountain crest above the forested depths of Ramsey Canyon. In these depths is the site of Hamburg, a once thriving mining community of nearly three hundred

residents in the early 1900's. Work centered on the Hamburg and Stromberg copper mines nearby. Tall fir trees have reclaimed the site of Hamburg, but some old foundations hint at the past.

At the bottom of the Sunnyside Canyon stretch, the Arizona Trail passes near the site of Sunnyside. Sunnyside was an unusual town in Arizona, in that it was founded as a religious commune. Samuel Donnelly, leader of a religious sect known by outsiders as the Donnellites, settled here along with his followers in the 1880's and began working mines nearby. The residents pooled their resources, and everyone was expected to pull their weight. Drinking was forbidden. The Donnellites were viewed by others as odd, but were noted for their generosity toward those in need. After one of their mines flooded and Donnelly passed away, the commune began to fade away. Sunnyside experienced a ranching revival after the Donnellites departed, but ultimately, Sunnyside became a ghost town. A couple of old buildings remain.

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