Kentucky Camp Chronicle

Newsletter on the gold mining and ranching heritage of Kentucky Camp, AZ February 2009

Gold Processing Building Discoveries

By: Jim Britton

This small building, also known as the Assay Building, is a very important component of Kentucky Camp. As I mentioned in my November, 2004 documentation report on this building, it represents why this site was built. It is the only building of the remaining five original structures that defines the specific purpose of this site. Based on the ore processing features in this building, it may be assumed that mining was the main reason for establishment of this camp.

There was an article entitled "The Buildings of Kentucky Camp – Inventories from the Early 20th Century", written by William Gillespie, in the February 2008 issue of the Kentucky Camp Chronicle. This article included detailed accountings of inventories of property made for the estate of George B. McAneny, the head of the company. The inventory was most likely prepared within a year or two after McAneny's death which occurred on August 1, 1909.

Jim Britton (center in blue shirt) briefs the team on Gold Processing building progress at 2008 PITLE

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Since I had spent a lot of time in the Gold Processing Building preparing the interior documentation report and restoring the pedestal and platform, I took special note of the information under the heading "Assay Office and Laboratory". It stated the following: "Adobe and frame construction. 25 x 35 feet. Storage addition for chemicals, 5 x 8 feet. Contains office and cement floor, laboratory furnace, benches, tables, shelves, furnace accessories, chemicals, apparatus, moulds, crucibles, tables, core-drill records, running water and telephone connection. Shingle A roof."

During the April, 2008 PITLE (PIT-Like Event), I decided to look for the storage addition used for chemicals. My investigation led me to the north side of the building. I have always wondered why there was a 2 x 4 nailed to several "gringo" boards approximately six feet above the floor level but about 10 feet above the sloping hillside and the building's stone foundation. Why would they have gone to so much trouble to have a 2 x 4 that high above grade? Then I noticed a pile of several stones slightly down slope from the building foundation. Taking a closer look, there seemed to be a stone alignment running from the building to this pile and possibly another running to the west toward the Administration Building. This indicated that the pile of stones I first noticed was actually a corner. Being filled with excitement, I whipped-out my tape measure. Since the stones had been exposed to over 100 years of weather and people activity, they were slightly disarrayed and

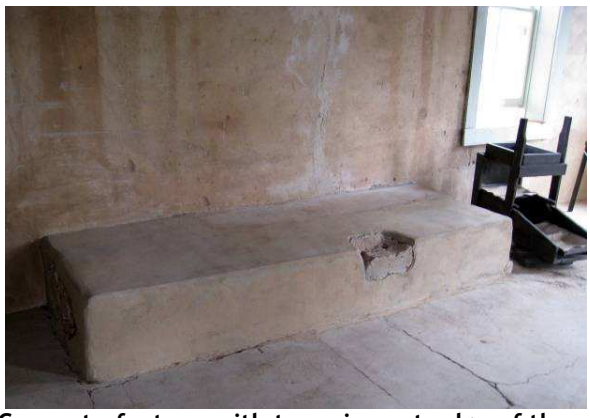
no longer formed a perfect room alignment. Therefore, I had to use some judgment as to where the vertical corner had been located. Since I did not do any excavation or probing for a west wall which would have attached at the base of the foundation, I assumed that the storage room would have been flush to the west wall of the building. Yes, believe it or not, it measured 5 x 8 feet. It now all made sense. The 2 x4 high on the wall would have been where the storage room roof attached to the building. The wall alignments would have been constructed to equal the height of the building foundation and a wooden floor would have been built for the storage room.

It will be important for someone with extensive wall alignment excavation experience to confirm the actual foundation alignment. I think we should try to recover stones that once were part of this foundation that have fallen down slope. The stones recovered could then be used to reconstruct a portion of the foundation. This would make it possible for visitors to learn about the chemical storage facility and understand the 2 x 4 roof attachment on the north side of the building.

Chemical storage room corner stones and 2 x4 roof attachment.

Another interesting discovery in the Gold Processing Building made during the April 2008 PITLE involved the two little pipe openings located in the concrete feature on the edge of the platform. The two pipes had openings with different inside diameters. In my documentation report, I had made the assumption that the pipe to the left extended through the wall into the small room. It and the pipe protruding from the wall in the small room had the same inside diameter. Where the right side pipe went remained a mystery.

Doug Maus decided to solve the mystery. He wanted to determine if both pipes were connected to the pipe in the small room. He patiently dripped water into the dirt plugged pipe openings hoping to soften the contents and open the pipes. Later, John Weiss was able to attach a "can of air" to the pipe in the small room. The air flow forced muddy water from both pipe openings. The mystery was solved. Even though the two pipes had different sized openings, they were both connected to the pipe extending through the wall. What we don't know is if they are connected by a "Y" or a "T" connector. Without some sort of x-ray equipment we most likely will never know which one.

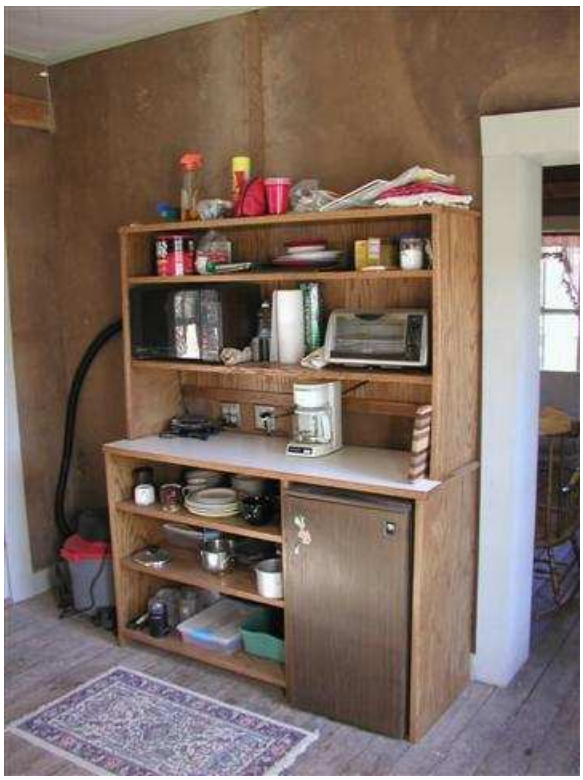


Concrete feature with two pipes at edge of the platform.

The above examples are only two of the many interesting features pertaining to this building. On your next visit, look closely at the walls and see if you see where shelves had been, and where the telephone wires entered the building.

Site Progress Report

In the December 2008 newsletter, we wrote about the new kitchen cabinet that John Weiss constructed for Cabin A. Here is a photo that shows how well it makes use of the limited kitchen space. Way to go John!



At the January work day, and for the next month or so, the name of the game is: *paint!* We painted the Headquarters Building ceiling in January. The current caretaker, Steve Waylett, is continuing to paint the dining room and hallway ceilings. At future work days we'll be painting some of the window trim, painting the natural wood ceilings in the Blue Room and kitchenette with polyurethane and re-varnishing the picnic table made by Glen Haslett.

Our next work day at Kentucky Camp is Saturday, February 14th. Bring your Valentine and help paint!

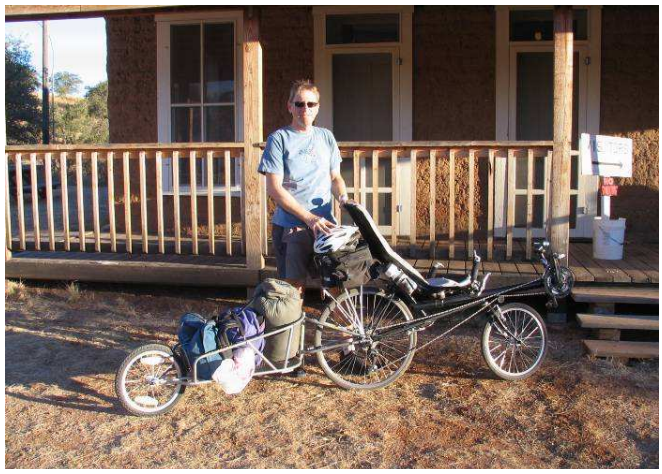
Cycling to Kentucky Camp

By: Mark Doumas

I had a great opportunity over the holidays to take an overnight cycling trip to Kentucky Camp. The main goal of this trip was to see if this would be a good ride for a larger cycling group in the spring. I have driven to this location many times over the past 10 years but I was unsure about the suitability for a cycling trip… especially the last five miles of dirt road leading to the camp.

I'm happy to report that a touring bicycle has no problem making this trip. I used a route that is about 50 miles when starting from mid-town in Tucson. It takes about six hours of pedal time to get to Kentucky Camp and about four hours to get home.

The net altitude difference goes from 2500' (Tucson) to about 5100'. (Kentucky Camp) The actual feet of altitude climb is something more than 2600' due to the rolling hills on highway 83.



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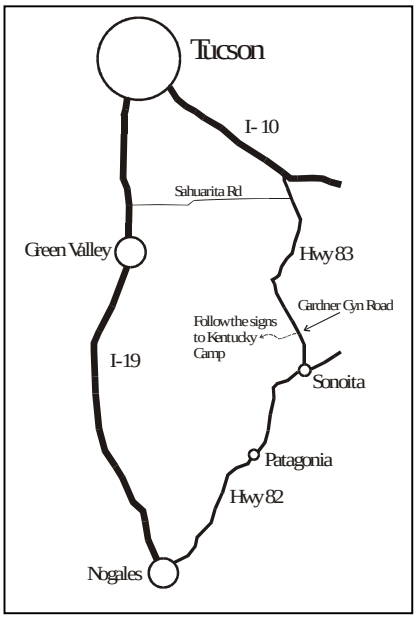

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