

Needle's Eye & Dick Spring Trip Itinerary

December 7 & 8, 2002

David Miller and Tom Jonas

Purpose: Investigate the detour taken by the boundary surveyors in 1851 and possibly locate the wagons they abandoned.

Saturday December 7, 2002

Left house about 7:10 a.m., mileage 96475. Took Hwy 60 through Superior and Globe, then Hwy 70 east out of Globe. At the east edge of Cutter airport turned south onto the old Coolidge Dam Road. Traveled 18 miles to the dam and took some pictures. We went back to the dam construction road to try to access the river below the dam but found a locked gate after about 1.5 miles. After asking at the store we talked to Bill, at his house near the dam, who said Terry Johnson (TJ) has the key and gave us directions to TJ's house. We then tried 2 roads north of the gate but failed to reach the river. Went to Peridot to see TJ. He got permission from his boss, Randy Shaw, to take us down to the river on company time.

We took the road just north of the locked gate (N33° 11' 27", W110° 33' 05") but followed a different branch and reached the river at the corral (N33° 09' 41" W110° 32' 54"). This is near the location of Wheaton's view from the November 25 campsite which was probably on the left bank of the river at about N33° 09' 30" W110° 32' 53". We continued down the river to the washed-out bridge near the Hook and Line Ranch and parked. The river was too deep and swift to wade across, the flow being about 225 cfs. From there we hiked north along the river but were unable to go far before we were forced to climb the bluffs and hike along the plateau hoping to reach Dick Spring or the Needle's Eye. We turned around at N33° 09' 19" W110° 33' 51" due to failing daylight. We took TJ home and Dave gave him \$50. We then drove to the Apache Gold Casino/Hotel at N33° 21' 30" W110° 40' 10".



Terry told us that the river is shut off annually for one month around November for maintenance. He also said he may be able to arrange for horses on a future trip.

Sunday December 8, 2002

We had breakfast at the casino and left around 7:40 am, driving to the dam via Indian Route 3. We took the gravel construction road to the first side road (with stop sign). We followed this road about 3 ½ miles to a wash where we parked at N33° 11' 20", W110° 34' 49". We hiked down the wash about ¼ mile then climbed the hill to the west. After exploring this ridge and examining the map we found we

had to cross a canyon to get to the next ridge west. We followed this ridge south to its end, keeping mostly along the summits and saddles. At the end of the ridge (above and north of the power line tower) we got a good view of Dick Spring and its lower canyon below us (right). We climbed down to the spring and searched for the wagons but found nothing. We speculated that a flat open area just south of



David Miller at Dick Spring

the spring (N33° 09' 03", W110° 35' 03") was Whipple's probable campsite and the low slope at its western edge was his likely path the next day.

Our return trail closely followed our forward one except that near the end we continued north toward the car instead of crossing the canyon and meeting the wash where we had left it in the morning. We got to the car after sunset and drove out. Our hiking distance was about 4 miles there and 3 ½ miles back on the map. Considering our vertical movements and exploring at the spring we probably walked about 8½ miles. Pertinent elevations: Dick Spring 2390 ft., highest summit we crossed 3520 ft., parking spot 3380 ft. Car mileage at home: 96824.

CONCLUSIONS

October 25 campsite location: This camp must have been on the left bank of the river near N33° 09' 30" W110° 32' 53". This is Wheaton's viewpoint for the iron mountain sketch and is confirmed by Whipple's mention that they traveled 1 ½ miles and crossed the river 3 times before leaving the river the next day.

Exit point from the river on October 26: The only likely path for wagons to take out of the canyon begins due west of the Hook & Line Ranch house at about N 33° 09' 00", W110° 33' 40"

October 26 campsite: Flat clearing just south of Dick Spring on the right bank of the creek.

Probable trail out of Dick Spring Canyon on October 27: Up the gentle slope at the west edge of the campsite. About halfway up the mountain they probably had to turn north along the face of the mountain to find an easier climb to the summit above Grapevine Spring. Their summit camp was likely above Grapevine Spring near N33° 09' 09" W110° 36' 07".



Near Hook & Line Ranch

Location of Eastman watercolor: We originally thought this was about a mile downstream from the ranch at around N33° 08' 42" W110° 34' 31", or possibly farther downstream at the "Needle's Eye". Due to heavy stream flow we did not reach either of these places. From observing the upper canyon walls on our two hikes it appears that the terrain in the first location may fit. Therefore, my tentative position of

the watercolor viewpoint continues to be somewhere around the mouth of Dick Spring Wash until proven otherwise.

Emory's Detour: We observed the mouth of Salt Creek canyon as the possible start of Emory's detour around the canyons. It looks plausible that Emory and Kearny traveled up this canyon about 1½ miles and then followed a side canyon to the west, where there is now a dirt road. They could have followed this road alignment for a couple of miles before veering slightly north to the ridge crest to avoid the steep canyons. This trail passes immediately below and southwest of a distinctive 3841-ft. mountain which I dubbed "Emory's Butte". After following this ridge for 2 or 3 miles they may have dropped down into upper Soda Canyon and followed one of its branches to the summit of a 4620 ft. pass just east of Red Whiskers Spring. From there they would have followed a creek west to the junction of Tulapai and Ranch Creeks. Their November 3 campsite may have been somewhere between the pass and the creek junction, maybe near one of the two springs.

Tom Jonas

December 12, 2002