

PRELIMINARY FIELD INVESTIGATION OF WHIPPLE'S ROUTE IN THE PINAL MOUNTAINS

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By Tom Jonas

1. Upper Ranch Creek



Here's a panorama taken from Highway 77 just south of where Ranch Creek crosses it. GPS coordinates are N33 14' 19", W110 46' 59". The view looks east down the valley of Ranch Creek (the probable route of both Emory and Whipple). The big mountain at right is El Capitan. Mount Turnbull is the farthest left of the faint blue mountains in the distance. The people are my friend Don Penfield and my brother Steve Jonas.



This is looking west from the same location as the above photo. The road is Highway 77, the the peak at left is Old Baldy, and the one on the right is not named. My presumed trail of Whipple passes between these two peaks as it continues west. Pinal Peak is out of the picture to the right. Old Baldy is one of the peaks we speculated might be the "Tonto Head." I didn't see anything that reminded me of a fool's head here. Our peak may be farther west. My friend Don suggested the resemblance might be to a "fool's cap" or a dunce cap. I'll have to find out what a fool's cap looks like.

2. Dripping Springs Wash



This hastily-stitched panorama was taken at N 32 08' 54", W110 50' 21" near a small community in the Dripping Springs valley. About a mile up the road to the right is the lower end of the Pioneer Pass Road, which I speculate may be the general route followed by Whipple from the high country down to the wash. Somewhere in the foothills to the right was their campsite of October 31 and one of these peaks must be his "Aztec Peak." Dripping Springs Wash is just in front of the nearest hills. This view looks generally southwest.

3. Winkelman

This is the vicinity of Whipple's campsite of November 2-5, 1851. The pictures were taken across the road from the Winkelman Cemetery near N32 59' 15", W110 46' 34".



View looking east toward Hayden tailings.

The view above looks toward where I suspect Whipple camped opposite the mouth of the San Pedro which, from Whipple's coordinates, appears to have been a little east of where it is today. I think the camp was near the Tamarisk grove at the left side of the photo. I'm standing on a man-made terrace which looks like it was cut and flattened from the natural river terrace to build the town of Winkelman.



Looking north toward Hayden

This view looks north from a point near the previous view. This must be the area where Whipple describes the "grand ruins upon the table land 200 yards NE from camp." Visible in this picture is the smoke stack at Hayden, Highway 177 in the foreground, and the Winkelman Cemetery across the street at right. The monument may have also been placed near here. I later spoke to a man who lived in Hayden as a child. He says they found potsherds all over these hills.



Looking South - the San Pedro Valley

The thick stand of Cottonwood trees across the center marks the Gila and San Pedro Rivers. The Gila is in the band of vegetation just this side of the Cottonwoods. The mouth of the San Pedro may have been at the right side of the photo when Whipple was there. The San Pedro is dry most of the time today.