

## HOMESTEAD RUIN HISTORY

*These are the findings on Homestead Ruin, #1368, in the Arizona Site Steward Program. My husband, Bobby, and myself are Site Stewards, Hassayampa Region, and our Co-Ordinator is Shelley Rasmussen. We "adopted" the Homestead Ruin, as it is known to us, approximately 3 years ago. This is considered an historic site as it is obvious it was a ranch, of some type, in the past. It is approximately five miles south of Aguila, Arizona, on Eagle Eye Road and a little more than one mile in to the site itself.*

*The site is composed of three partial cobblestone cabins, one older than the other two. The oldest one is near the "stone corral" which sits near an area of bedrock with a spring fed (Eagle Eye Springs) stream running over the bedrock below. This cabin is made of cobblestone and adobe and is slowly "melting" back into the earth. The other two cabins are quite a distance to the north, sitting above this same wash. They are reached by a two track which is quite rocky....it is easier to go in on foot. They are roofless as is the first cabin also, but these are made from stones or "cobbles" and concrete. They also had concrete floors. All had fireplaces at one time, now only the largest cabin has a functional fireplace. Also, near the oldest cabin there is a stone cistern and a concrete watering trough. There is evidence of steel pipe which filled the trough by gravity. This is all part of an elaborate water system, there having been a windmill at the site of Eagle Eye Springs. I use the term "Eagle Eye Springs" and have only recently become aware of this name. To the folks around Aguila, mostly the older population, this name denotes the springs and this location in particular.*

*There is a massive array of huge boulders behind the two cabins, to the North and to the West. The vegetation is typical of the area with many saguaro, ocotillo, cholla and other native cactus. There are ironwood, palo verde, cat claw, mesquite, jojoba, creosote and various other trees and bushes. It is to be noted also, this entire area has numerous stone walls, above and around the bedrock area and on either side and above the cabins. These have all been built by hand!!! These walls are rather low in areas but most are still in excellent condition. In many places, the natural boulders have also formed an entire wall or one side of a pen or corral. All in all, this is quite a unique pastoral setting.*

*Bobby and I, along with our Co-ordinator and friend, Shelley Rasmussen have wondered and pondered about this location, the cabins, the fences.....who built them and when? Who had so much foresight and ambition to build a cistern and then pipe the water closer to the animals and homes?? It has been quite a mystery and one we were determined to unravel!!!! If we could!!*

*Finally one day in February, when we were out at Homestead Ruin, we met a lady on horseback. She was Mrs. Arijia Powell. We talked with her and asked about the cabins, corral etc. and she told us what she knew, the story having come down through her husband's grandfather. She said we should talk with her husband,*

*Leon, as he was quite knowledgeable about the area and Aguila in general. We told her we would be in touch and make arrangements to talk with him in the near future.*

*I then contacted the BLM Office in Phoenix and through their Information Access Center (Tina, March 2, 2006) attempted to find out more about the land. According to the legal description, there are 640 acres or one section. It is and always has been Federal Land. Therefore, it was never Homesteaded!! Whomever built the "herder's cabin" and the other two cabins were really squatters. The Access Center's only other information was that, at one time, there was a gas and oil lease on part of the property and that had long since been terminated.*

*We then made an appointment to meet and visit with Mr. Leon Powell at his home in Aguila. We drove out on Thursday, March 9, 2006. Leon Powell is a very personable, gregarious and outgoing man of 78 years. He welcomed us openly and said he would try to remember about his earlier years plus what his father and grandfather had told him. The following statements are true to the best of his knowledge and the birth and death dates are accurate.*

*Great-grandfather..... William D. Powell .....Birth & Death not available at this time. He was a veteran of the Spanish-American War. He homesteaded property in what is now present day Aguila and eventually owned a section (640 acres) or more.*

*Grandfather.....Venia A. Powell....1872 to 1955. He owned property across what is now US 60, about 1 mile to the west. Wife....Lena R. 1877 to 1955.*

*Father. ....Alton R. Powell....1905 to 2002. Wife....Lorene G. 1904 to 1962. These were Leon's parents. Alton was brought to Aguila when he was about 3 years of age. His folks had run a dairy, in what is now Mesa, before moving. He attended the first school in Aguila, as a 6 year old in October, 1911.*

*Leon Powell.....1927 Born and educated in Aguila and Wickenburg. Various occupations but is back in Aguila with present wife Arija. As one can see this family has been well established in Aguila, Arizona, for many years. They have ranched, farmed and otherwise enhanced this small community.*

*Now back to Eagle Eye Springs! According to his grandfather the man who built the oldest or herder's cabin was a man by the name of Dushey. He raised goats there for a period of time. We are assuming he is the person who built the stone corral and the walls around and across from the bedrock area. There is also a canyon west of Aguila, in the mountains, named Dushey Canyon and a Dushey Well. He is supposed to have migrated there after leaving the Eagle Eye springs area.*

*His father related that as a young man, being out and about Eagle Eye springs, those cobblestone cabins were already abandoned. The rest of the story is: About 1905 to maybe 1915, a fellow from back East, came to Arizona to get well. He had tuberculosis (TB). He also raised goats, actually living off of them; dressing them to eat and also milking them. He finally got well and departed!! No one around town*

*actually "knew" him or his name.*

*Now we know a little more but I'm sure this is not all. The questions remain...who built the cistern, water trough and the two cobblestone cabins and when?? What was the time frame; obviously some time between Dushey and the fellow with TB!! Why did they move on? There are still many questions unanswered. However, anyone who could remember and give us information is probably deceased simply due to the years that have passed.  
Hopefully, this will be of help to someone and of interest to others.*

*Bobby and Dawn Clark*

*March 12, 2006*