

THE NOGAI JOURNALS

Volume Twenty-four

BELLE, THUNDER, SPANKY

AND

MATTHEW MIDGETT

“Your posts offer an idyllic escape -- hooves in snow, juicy
creekside grass, horses gazing out trailer windows with ears
forward, and newborn calves...”

Debra Lee Baldwin
Best Selling Author



Come along and ride with us!

THE NOGAL JOURNALS

Volume XXIV

Part 2 of 3

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to Randy Clarke-Ianiero and Clem Ianiero-Clarke
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Deep in Bonito Canyon is a long-forgotten historic apple orchard. The trees (varieties of apples virtually unknown today) were carried here in pioneer wagons during the 1870's 'gold rush' period. Each sapling was padded with sawdust and wrapped in burlap for the long, long journey from back East.

Along the way we stopped by Blue Pond, which on this day reflected a more jade green color.



2022-05-03 - Old Apple Trees

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The pond sits in a beautiful, secluded forest setting, but the horses are most enthused about the lush green grass along its shore.



They work their way along . . .



. . . Snacking as they go.



"Delicious!", they all agree.

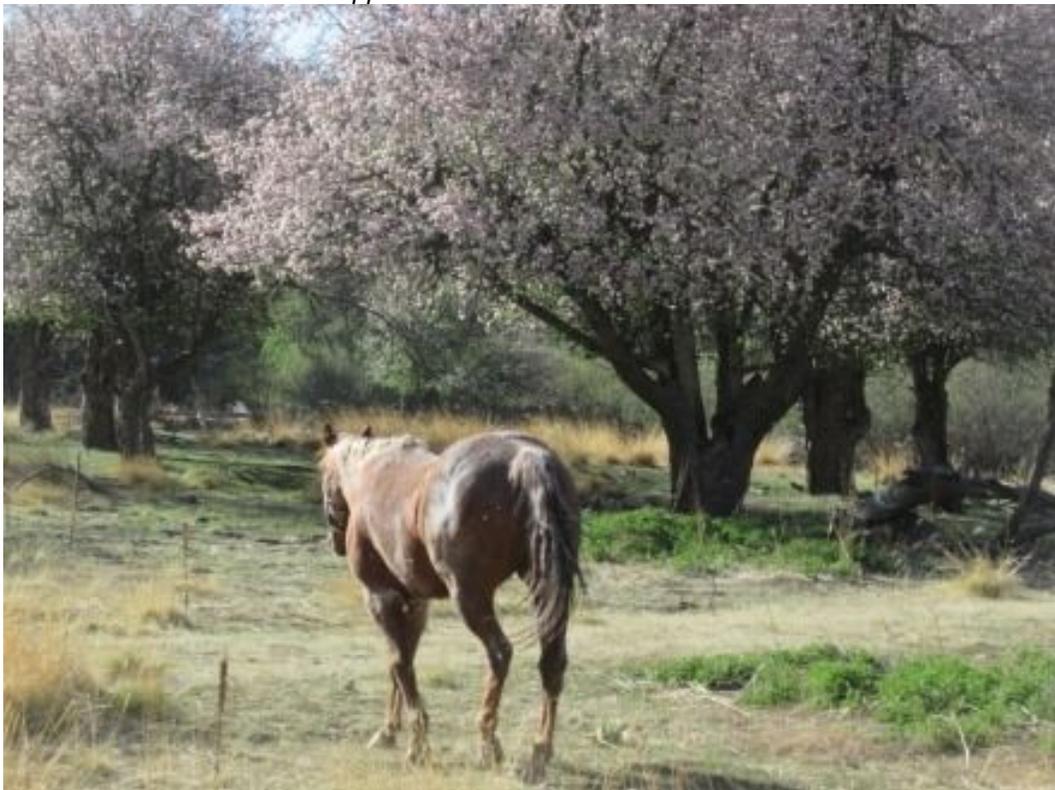




Spanky would likely say something along the lines of, "This is great!" - but his mouth is full.



Then it's time to move on to the old apple orchard.



2022-05-03 - Old Apple Trees

The neglected trees still boast a beautiful show of blossoms - like a forgotten dowager wearing her finest gown as she sits alone.



Each variety seems to have its own color shade.



Nearby is a little brook, with more lush green grass and wild watercress.



"Yum!"



2022-05-03 - Old Apple Trees

We pass the old trees on our way home, mindful of their remarkable story- and stubborn tenacity.



MM

Studies show that many young people today don't actually know where their foodstuffs come from (some even think they are created in the supermarket). The youth organization Future Farmers of America (FFA) "makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education". Each year our local club hosts an 'Agricultural Day' for students at the Carrizozo school complex - including exhibits about farming and ranching, and the food chain. Once again, the horses were invited to participate.

We started the day extra early, which pleased the deer. "Oh, goody! An early-bird breakfast!"



Speaking of birds - when the deer were nearly done, our wild turkeys arrived to join them.



"Who invited YOU?"



Some of the FFA members who coordinated the Ag Day greet the family.



This year they assigned student handlers for the horses. I wasn't sure how they would accept being led around by strangers, but it worked out just fine.



The horses enjoyed it - even the sometimes-standoffish Thunder. "These kids are cool!"



This little cowgirl has things well in hand.



Of course, free grass is always appreciated.



The children first attend indoor displays and talks about agriculture. They're surprisingly attentive.



Then they got to come outside and meet the horses.



They asked some very good questions - like "How fast can a horse run?" (On average about 30 to 40 mph, though one Quarter Horse was clocked at 55 mph!); and "How much do horses eat in a day?" (About 25 pounds or so. Maybe a bit more for Belle . . .) "Cheap shot!", she says.



Of course, Spanky got to make some grass angels.



As always, there were moments of real connection.





I was very proud of how the horses handled all the attention for nearly three hours.



So as a reward, we then visited their favorite area of quiet arroyos for some relaxation.



Athletic Thunder leaps out of an arroyo.

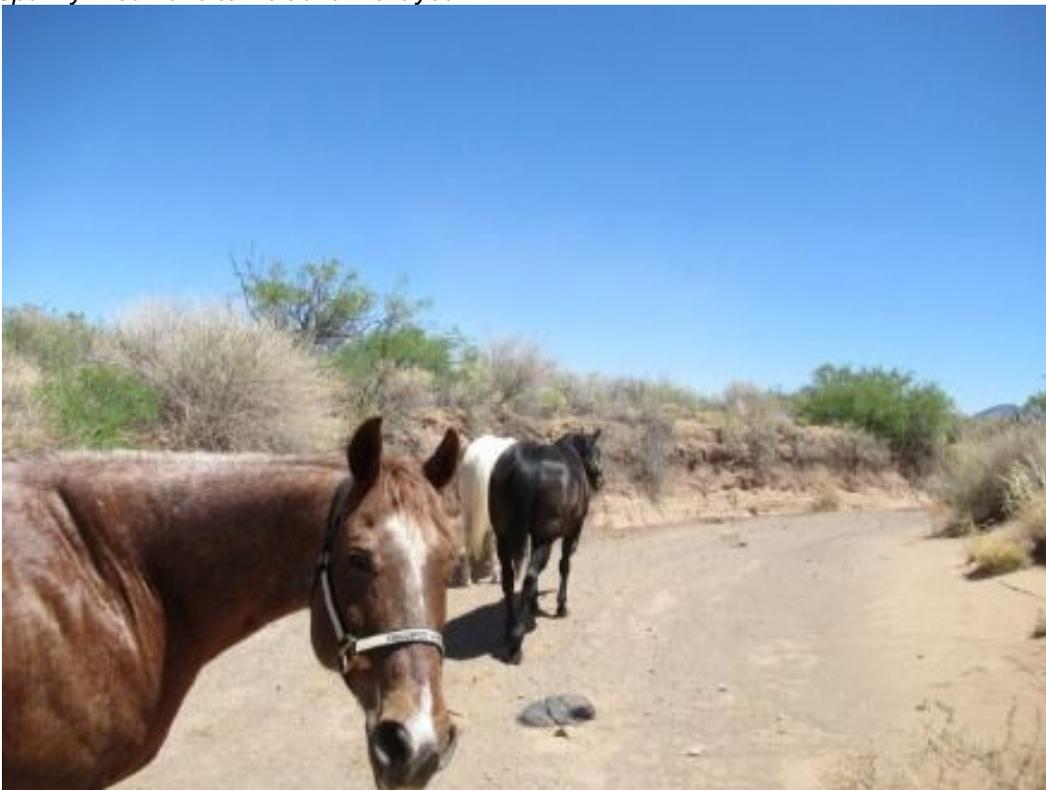


"Hey! Where are the kids?"



"Yeah! They're fun!"

Sorry, Spanky. You have to wait until next year.



MM

Warm spring days are perfect for spending time under newly leafed-out trees - along a stream of cool, cool water.

Emerging spring grass makes this a special treat for the horses.





As always, they're really good about not wandering off.





Belle always finds the best stuff.

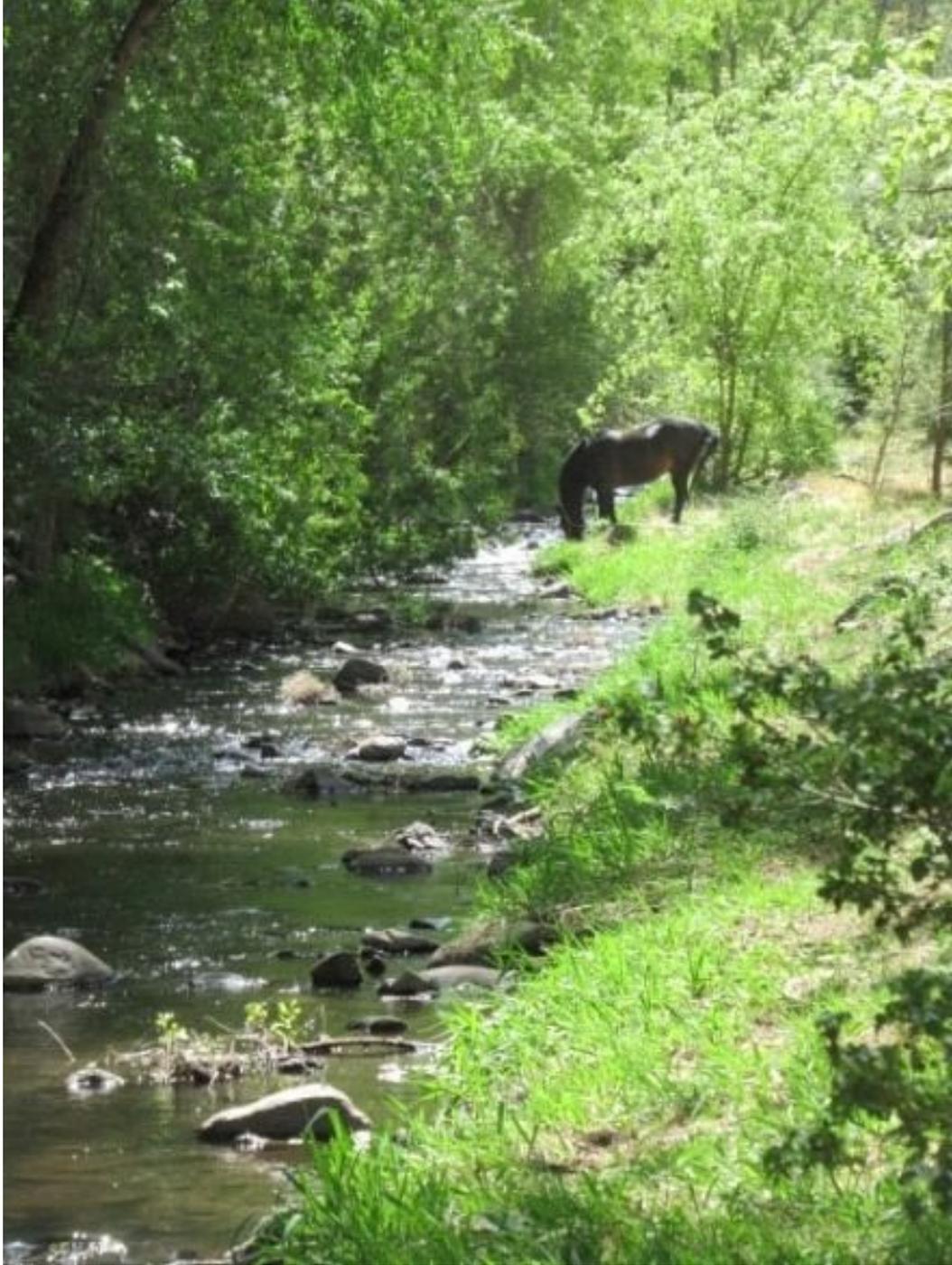




"The sound of the water makes me sleepy . . ."



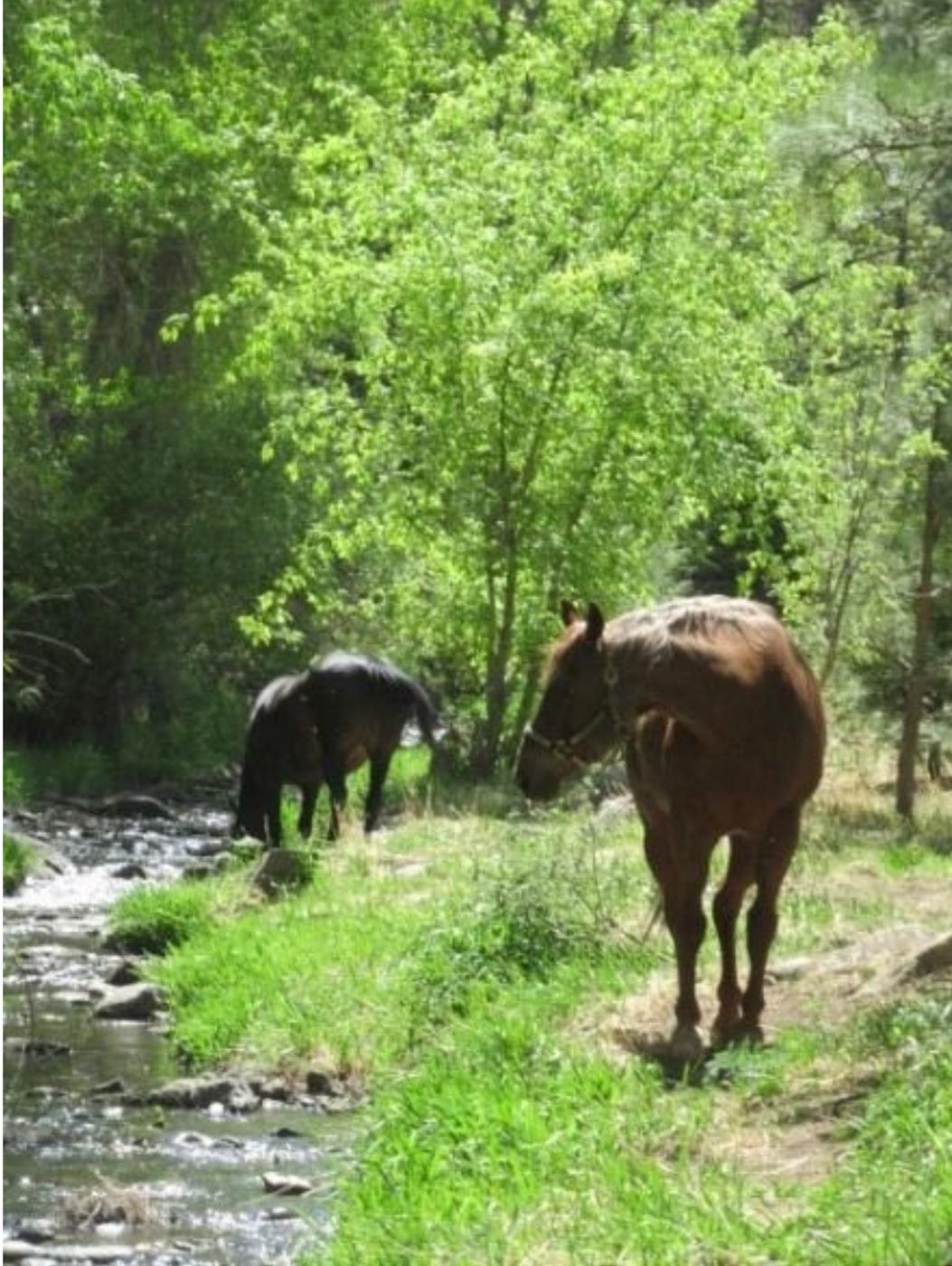
It's kind of a dreamy afternoon.



Hey guys - time to go . . . "Huh?"



"Come on, Belle - we gotta go home now."



"Okay. Just a sec - I need a drink first."



Gracie snuggles with Mommie Cat. "Oh, you're home! Have a nice time?"



"I need a hug!"



MM

Grindstone Lake is a jewel in the mountains. It's gotten much more popular during the summertime (photos of the horses swimming there have been used by the Ruidoso Tourist Dept. to promote it), but this time of the year we pretty much have it to ourselves.

There is a parking area reserved just for horse trailers - nice . . .



... and a mounting area, with information kiosk and picnic table ...



... but the big attraction is the lake, nestled in the mountains.



The views from the access trail are inviting.



They enjoy some beach time.



As well as a cool drink.





It's a good spot for Spanky to have a 'splash-a-thon'. "There he goes again . . ."



Although even Belle has to admit that the cool water is refreshing on a warm spring day.



"I still don't like getting my mane wet!"



"But he's fun to watch."



Above the lake are miles of quiet trails to explore.



With 'forever' forest views . . .



. . . and the lake, far below.





At home, Spanky tells Gracie all about the day. "But what's a lake?", she asks.



"Sounds beautiful! (I'm not sure I'd be keen on the water part . . .)"



"I'm glad he had a good time! (But that splashing thing doesn't sound like my cup of tea.)"



MM

The nearby lower Bonito Canyon is a special place this time of year.

Gently flowing water, fresh green grass, and shade under the trees - even a serene mallard couple (in the foreground) - make it a favorite spot.



The shade is welcome on a warm spring day.



Then, a wonderful surprise. The little band of wild horses (technically 'feral') come to say hi.



Oh, those babies! (One filly; one colt.)



So sweet.



By now, everyone knows and trusts one another. Even the stallion is relaxed. There is mutual respect.



They follow along as we mosey beside the water.



Naturally curious, they all exchange friendly looks.



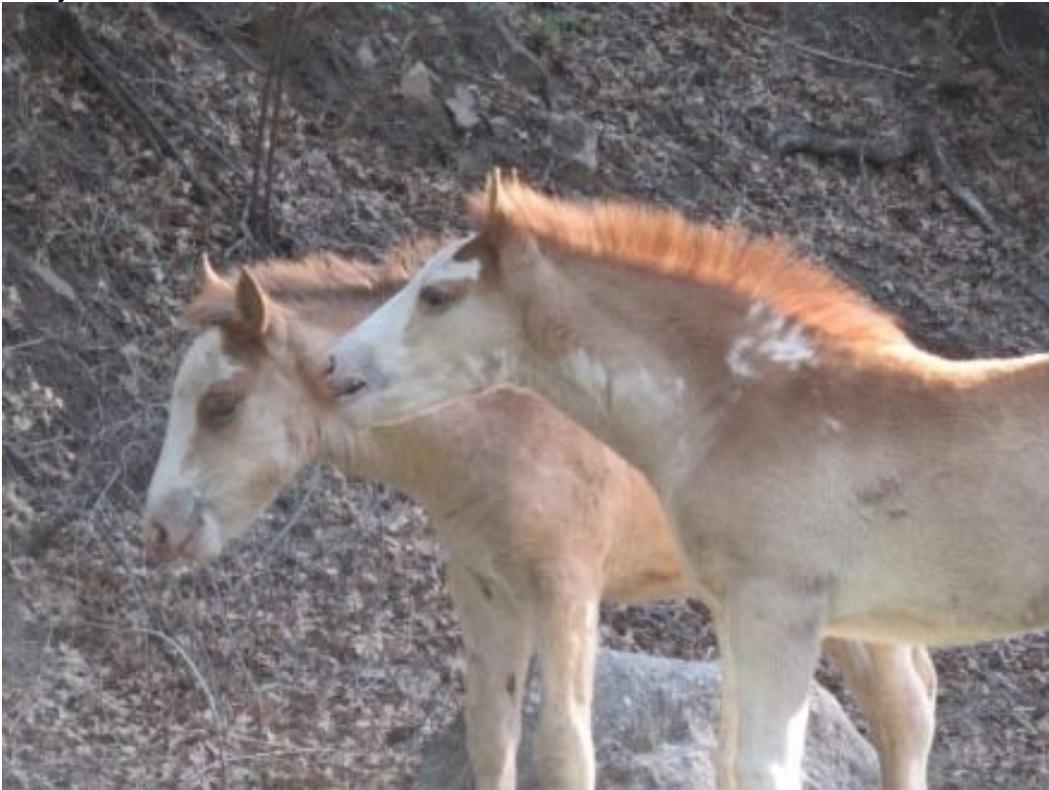
I'm proud that my horses behave so well.



While the parents graze, the babies affectionately 'groom' one another.



They're lucky to have a best friend.





The moms come for a close-up visit. "Nice to see you again! We love living here - where do you come from?"



Then it's mealtime for the babies. Spanky has a flashback. "Oh, yeah . . . I remember that with my mom!"



A very special afternoon.



The band follows us back to our trailer. Along the way, Thunder wanders over to them.



Time to say goodbye for now. "Come back soon!"



Awww . . .



Later that night, a remarkable 'super flower blood moon' rises over the hills (before the spectacular eclipse began).



A special day, indeed. Happy to share it with you!

MM

The cows continue to have their babies, and the horses like to keep up with the new arrivals.

We've been enjoying occasional 'summer-like' skies.



Classic cattle country.



Thunder knows all the shortcuts to where the cows are.



We just follow along.



Although she's eager to see the new babies, Belle is 'okay' with stopping for a snack. "Oh! A little nourishment!"



They're on a mission.



"I think they're over there . . ."



Yup - a mom and her newborn, under a sheltering juniper tree.



This little one stays close to its mom.



Spanky spots a frequent occurrence. When the moms need to move faster in order to get food or water, they leave their babies in a secure spot (often a single cow will keep her eyes on several babies who are waiting for their moms to return).



Safe in a comfy hollow.



They wait patiently for mom to bring the milk bar back!



"I hope she hurries - I'm getting hungry!"



The horses are thirsty, so we visit a trough of nice cool water. "Ah, that hits the spot!", says Spanky.



We aren't alone. "Leave some for us, please!"



Of course, the little calves are always curious. "Wow! You're really TALL!" (Note the strands of Spanky's tail across her nose.)



This one seems a bit baffled. "Hmmm . . . this isn't my mom . . ."



Headed home.



Oh - this is Gracie's first time seeing the 'red hot poker' (Kniphofia) blooms. "What are these? And where'd they come from?", she wonders. "So many surprises around here!"



MM

Spring continues to bring its magic.



The best places to see spring around here, are close to water.



Or in a shady meadow.



This mallard couple keeps us company.



They seem interested in the horses.



While the horses are interested in . . . green grass.



Spring idyll.



Thunder keeps an eye on the ducks, who are having fun in the water . . .



"Oh, boy! Rapids! Hold on, honey!"



The horses seek more tranquil pools, where the grass grows soft and new.



At home, spring fosters interesting connections. When I first saw Onyx on this windowsill, she was nose to nose (on the other side of the glass) with a curious sparrow. By the time I got my camera, she had settled a little farther away.



Still, they seem comfortable, even looking at the same view together.



Of course, the sparrow knows that glass is there . . ."Ha! Ha! Ha!"



While Gracie had a chat with a friend. "Gee! Your new antlers are already beginning to grow!"



MM

2022-05-22 - High Country Calling

The high country was calling to us - with its siren song of solitude.

Late in the day. All is quiet as we head up the mountain.



A shady trail under the Gambel oak trees.



Some early-season mountain ferns unfurl in the sunlight . . .



. . . and lots of wild mountain iris celebrate the season.



Spring comes later up here. We climb past trees now awakened from their winter slumber.



This hive has been thriving for at least 10 years in the hollow of a big old living oak tree .



The bees are so industrious - they know flowers are in bloom at last. There must be a LOT of honey in there!



We pass by without disturbing them. "Let's just keep moving along . . ."



Snack break next to a little brook.



More iris.



Thunder loves to race to the top.



We sure do love the high country.





Such good (and happy) horses.



Nogal Peak in the distance.



Then . . . in the soft light of sunset, we come across several herds of elk. They seem to be wondering what we are doing up here. "Where in the heck did, they come from?"



Another herd along the way. They keep an eye on us. "Did you invite them?"



"Gotta run! We're meeting friends!"



"Wow, this is a great ride!" . . . "Yeah, but those elk could have asked us to meet their friends for a drink . . ."



MM

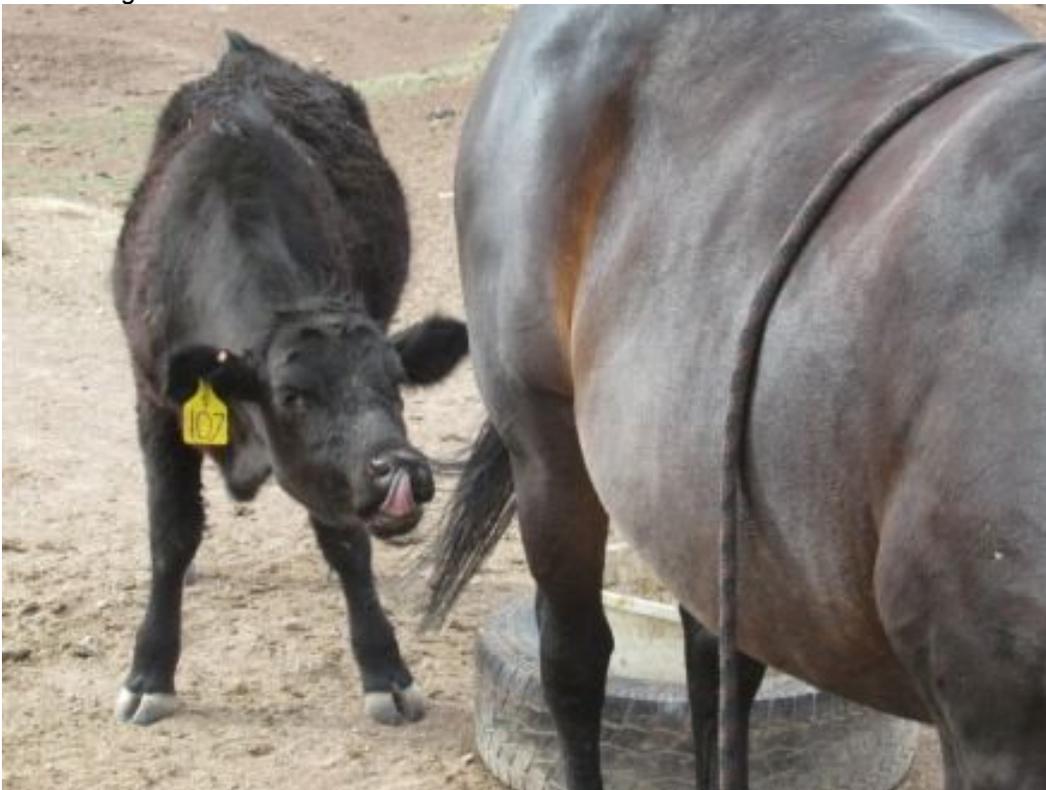
We visited 'our' calves again.



Belle has a little snack of protein supplement. "Uh, wait a minute! That's for us!", says an older calf.



"If I just bite her right there! . . ."



They are used to us by now (the owners say the cows seem more relaxed since we've been spending time with them). This little guy spotted Thunder, and thought he was special.



Thunder has always attracted calves, but this one really bonded. "Hello, mister horse!"



Thunder was very patient.



He stood still as the calf approached him.



Awww.



A gentle nuzzle.



Babies got an itch.



Even when the baby went looking for milk . . .



"Where is it?"



"Hey! I'm not a cow!"



"Oh, gee! Sorry!"



"That's okay. I think your mom is calling." . . . "Oh, yeah. It's time for lunch! Bye!"



"Gotta go now. See you later, mister horse!"



"Don't you go bothering those nice horses, son . . ."



MM

Our region is laced with small - sometimes seasonal - springs which sustain a variety of wildlife.

The Ranchman's camp area and adjacent private ranches (which we are privileged to ride) have many such springs and 'seeps' - places where ground water sometimes pools on the surface. It's hard to imagine them, when riding over the dry rolling hills.



Then suddenly we come upon one. This is named 'Swan Spring', though it's doubtful a swan has ever been seen here.



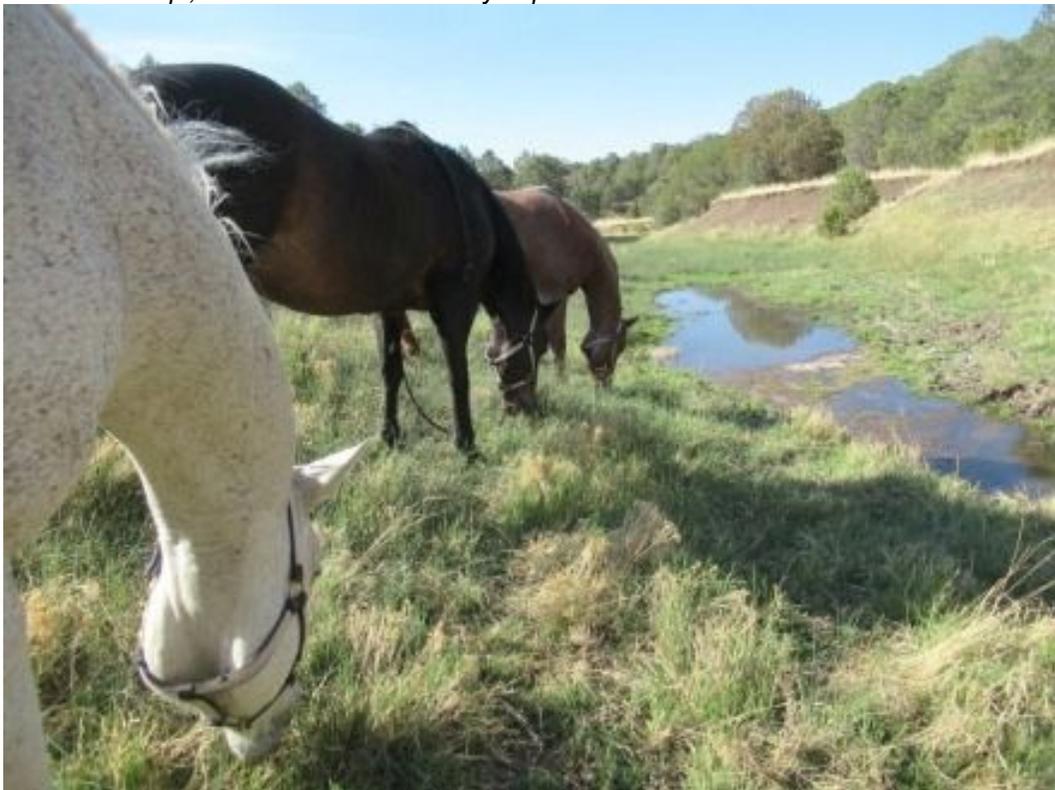
It supports tiny, delicate flowers growing along the waterline.



Off we go again!



This is more of a 'seep', which collects in a sandy depression.



Here is a true spring, coming cold and clear through an opening in bedrock.



It's a pretty spot.



Some seeps support salad bowls of grass.



Thunder picks among the purple desert verbena flowers (which horses don't eat).



We mosey on.



A wide swath of grass in a low spot gets Belle's attention - "Hmmm . . ."



Then it's time to go home.





MM

Our family went for an outing where the 'wild' horse family lives.

It was a nice afternoon on the trail . . .



. . . and especially along the stream.





Water music.



Some wild roses already have begun to bloom.



Not sure what these white flowers are . . . might be 'Love root', or 'Queen Anne's Lace' (the horses ignore it).



They concentrate on the grass.



A tiny island with tall sprouts.



The other family was out for a picnic, too. They went their way, and we went ours.



Baby with dad.



Mine went back to their snacking . . .



. . . but when we returned to our trailer, they were there to greet us (pretty smart horses).



The babies are so curious.





Once again, it's Thunder who is the attraction.



They took a short nap together before we went home.



MM

2022-05-31 - Trip to the Top

The day before the Forest was closed to visitors (to protect it from the campfires and cigarettes of careless campers and hikers during this unusually dry period), we decided to take a trip up to the top of Argentina Trail - one of our favorite rides.

It was a beautiful day for it.



The trail was shady and cool.





Along the way, little springs offered refreshment for the horses.



2022-05-31 - Trip to the Top

Mountain ferns and wildflowers are growing now - in anticipation of the summer monsoon rains.



At a spot which always reminds us of a putting green, the horses enjoy the naturally short (and tasty) grass.



This has always been our favorite 'Christmas Tree' up here.



The wild iris are still blooming.





Thunder races to the top.





"I love this view!", says Belle . . . "Me, too, honey. Especially with you." . . . "Awww . . ."



High above the Tularosa Basin.



I take in the view, too - including some really pretty horses, contentedly grazing.





Belle comes my way . . . "Got treats?" (Of course.)



Thunder negotiates a rocky stretch on the way down. "No problem."



A peek at a distant peak.



What a nice ride.



Happy to share it with you!

MM

This is our driest time of year, so any rain is a real blessing.

The 'red hot pokers' are happy - they require very little water.



Looks like a good apple crop coming up this year.



2022-06-03 - Calf Check and Some Rain!

We're still checking on the calves at our neighbors' ranch. Often, one mom will be 'assigned' babysitting duties, while the other cow moms eat and drink.



Thunder is a favorite with the calves. This one spotted him and trotted right over.



Buddies . . .



They're a curious bunch.





"Ya look'in at me?"



Another babysitter.



Lunchtime is pretty much all the time.



This one finds a back spigot! "Oh . . ."



We mosey up to check a large water tank on the hill. Thunder gives Belle an affectionate 'nip'. "I wuv you!"

"Oh . . . stop . . ."



2022-06-03 - Calf Check and Some Rain!

The big metal tank holds water before it is fed by gravity, down to 'drinkers' for the cattle. Spanky peeks over the edge. You might spot a school of goldfish in the water - they help prevent algae.



Then, a nice cool drink.



Belle finds a perfect 'belly scratcher'. "Ahhh . . ."



The three amigos.



Gracie has special friends of her own.



While Chile continues to supervise the loading of fresh hay into his barn's feed room. "Make certain you stack 'em straight!"



2022-06-03 - Calf Check and Some Rain!

Afternoon 'monsoon-like' clouds form. Could it be? . . .



Yay! Rain! A true blessing - especially this time of year. It doesn't bother the deer during their happy hour.



Sure grateful for that rain.

MM

Gracie has lots of friends.

"I guess I'm just naturally popular!"



They stop by for frequent visits. "Hi! Deer!"



"Is that an apple you're eating?" ("I don't care for them, myself . . .")



"Is that a good one?"



"Sorry, but I don't speak 'cat' ", responded the deer rather confusedly.



She also has elk friends. But they are more reserved.





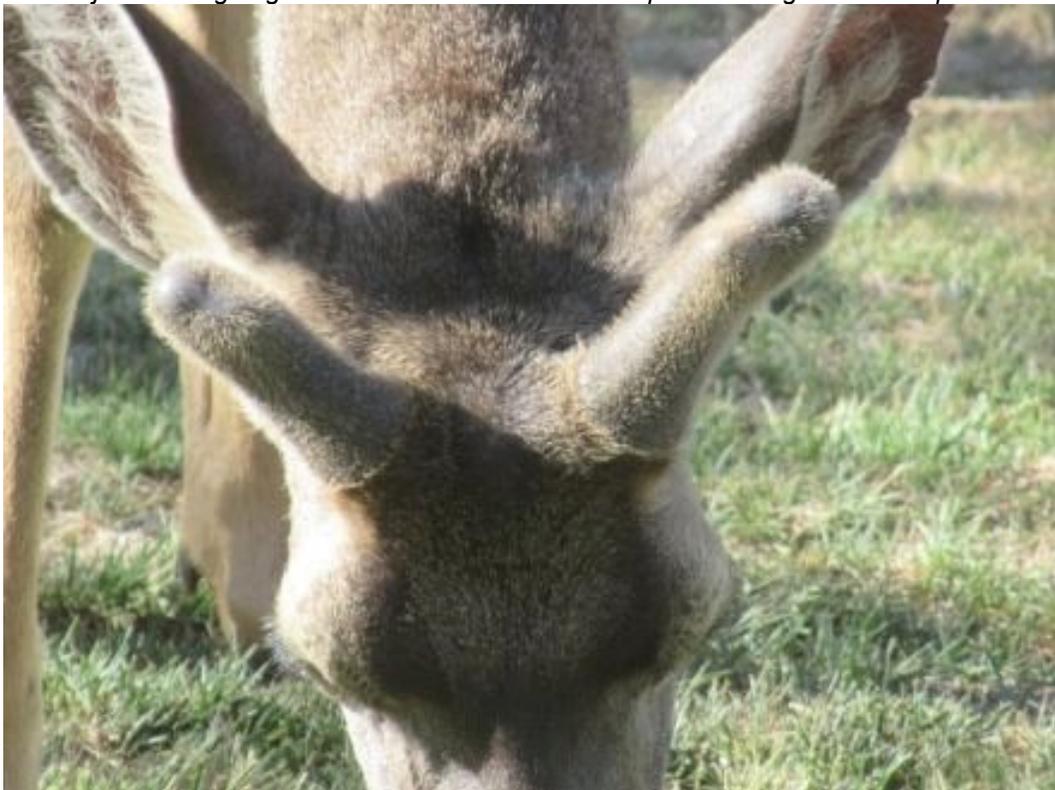
A healthy young cow elk.



The deer are not shy about reaching for (baby) apples. "I saw kangaroos do this in a documentary . . ."



The bucks are just starting to grow their antlers. It's an annual process of 'grow/shed/repeat'.



They find Gracie's antics amusing. "What IS she doing now?"



"Busy little thing, isn't she."



They enjoy hanging out together in the shade of the apple tree.



"I still don't understand the apple thing."



That's the end of this Gracie tail.



MM

We had a brief preview of the monsoon season (we're hoping it will arrive in earnest next month).

The clouds have that 'monsoon look'.



"Is it going to rain on us? You know how Belle is about her hair . . .", frets Spanky (although it was coming down in the distance, it didn't look like rain was likely on our ride).



We took our chances.



Such remarkable skies.



Thunder takes it all in.



Then a snack break.



A sweet moment.



We spot the 'pronghorn shepherd', watching his herd of cattle.





He's very devoted to them, and still wary of our presence.



We fall in behind some cows on their way to a water 'drinker' tank.



It's a friendly group.



In fact, Thunder wanted to stay with them! Hey, over here, Thunder . . .



. . . but the clouds were building, so we headed home.



We did get a little rain (always welcome!) . . .



. . . and even a big rainbow, too.



MM

The High Mountain Youth Project of Lincoln County is a volunteer organization which provides a variety of services to local young people in need. Once again, the horses were invited to join in their annual outdoor 'fund and friend raising' event.

There were lots of fun games and activities.



Including this odd contraption, in which people bounce around in giant clear plastic balls. "Humans are so interesting", observed Belle. "(I don't think I would fit . . .)"



One of the big attractions was a chance to meet the horses up close.



As usual, they are friendly and patient equine ambassadors.





Spanky wonders if Belle has seen this hair color. "It might look good on her! Naw . . ."



After the fair, they deserved a treat - and we headed to nearby Grindstone Lake.



Along the way, there was plenty of grass . . .



... and cool water to drink.





"This is great!, enthused Belle after her public appearance."



She even got in a little beach time . . .



... and Spanky got to play in the water. "Splish, splash..."



It was a good cause - and a nice outing, too.



Thanks for coming along.

MM

2022-06-10 - A Little Green

Even during the dry times, horses know where to find a little green.

Just as the deer know where they can get some corn . . . (our happy hours are very popular).



. . . and for this sweet doe, a delicious apple out of season (Gracie still doesn't understand the attraction).



"Apples don't even smell like fish!"



An elk reaches high for leaves and baby apples.



"Who? Me?"



On a late afternoon ride, green treats along a quiet creek.



A shady place of reflection and thanksgiving.



They just mosey along their salad bar. "Oh! Some clover!", exclaims Belle.



Enjoying a cool sip . . .



. . . and some tasty bites.





2022-06-10 - A Little Green

It's time to go, Spanky. "Okay! Be right there!"



Gracie doesn't seem interested in hunting . . . but she proudly brought me this leaf she had 'caught' outside. "Look at what I captured! It tried to get away, but I grabbed it!"



MM

Portions of the National Forest are made available for 'grazing leases', allowing ranchers to pasture their cattle there. Our friends have such a lease on a part of the forest within riding distance of our home. They asked us to keep an eye on their herd, which we are happy to do.

Hey, guys, let's check on the cows! "Right on! Let's get to work!"



So, we rode out our back gate . . .



Before long, we spotted the herd.



Thunder runs ahead to greet them. They recognize us because we have visited them on their ranch.



Thunder stands sentinel (near center of photo) as the cows and calves move along, under growing clouds.



Knowing they are headed to a water 'drinker', we follow them.



They like having our company.



Especially the little ones (that's quite a big cloud overhead).



This 'drinker' is made from an old tractor tire, sealed to hold the water.



A mom joins us.



"What's that pink stuff in the water?", asks Spanky. The pink color comes from a harmless sort of algae which sometimes forms at the bottom of the tank (depending on water temperature, etc.).



"Oh, okay then!"



As usual, Thunder attracts the respectful attention of a calf.



Our job completed; Belle suggests we move on.



As we leave, the moms gather around the water cooler. "You wouldn't believe what my little boy did this morning . . ."





As we mosey home, the clouds begin to grow in earnest



Sure enough - in a little while, a most welcome rain squall moves through.



"Boy! We made it just in time!", exclaims Spanky from under cover.



MM

2022-06-16 - Gravestones and Yardage Markers

Page 1 of 10

From its establishment in 1855, Fort Stanton has had many lives. In continuous use for 167 years, it has served as a cavalry post; the first federal tuberculosis hospital; Civilian Conservation Corps camp; WWII POW camp (probably the best anywhere); home for the developmentally disabled; various minimum-security prisons; and a drug rehabilitation facility. Thanks to hard-fought efforts to preserve it, today the old Fort is a New Mexico State Historic Site. We recently visited a couple of its 'eras' on an afternoon ride.

We climb a hill adjacent to the Fort. Waiting for the boys to catch up.



"Sorry, we got distracted . . ."



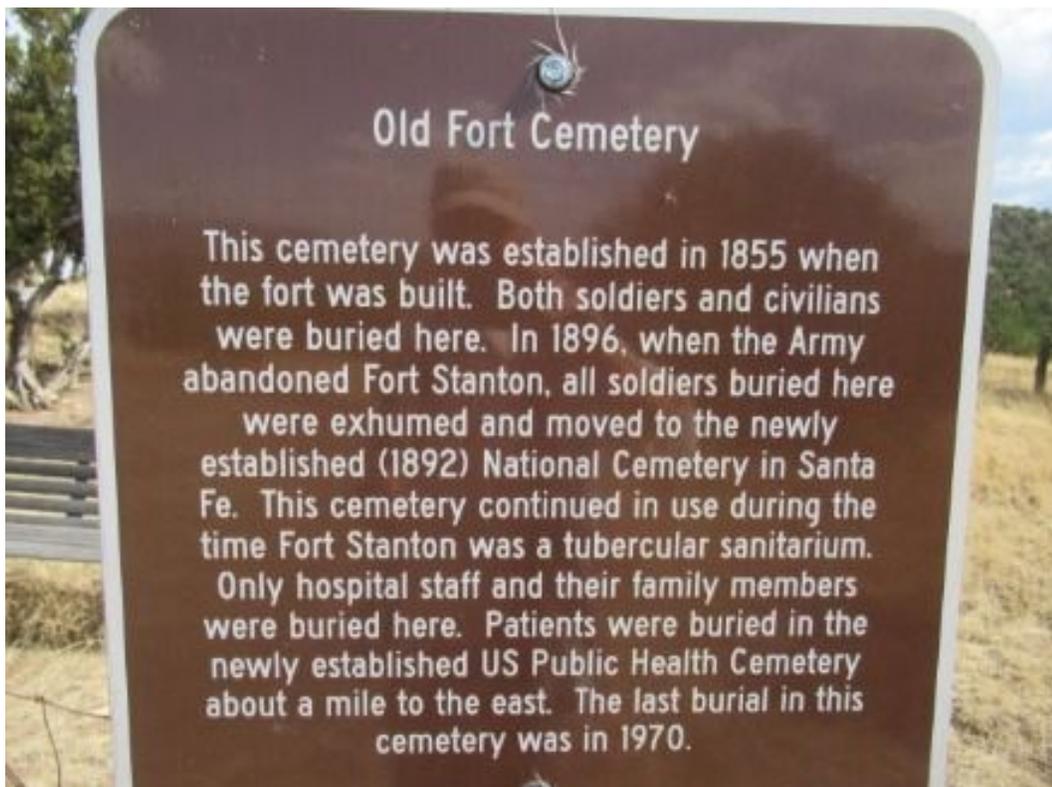
The original Fort cemetery sits dignified and alone, with an inspiring view of the Capitan Mountains. Note the white marble monument.



2022-06-16 - Gravestones and Yardage Markers

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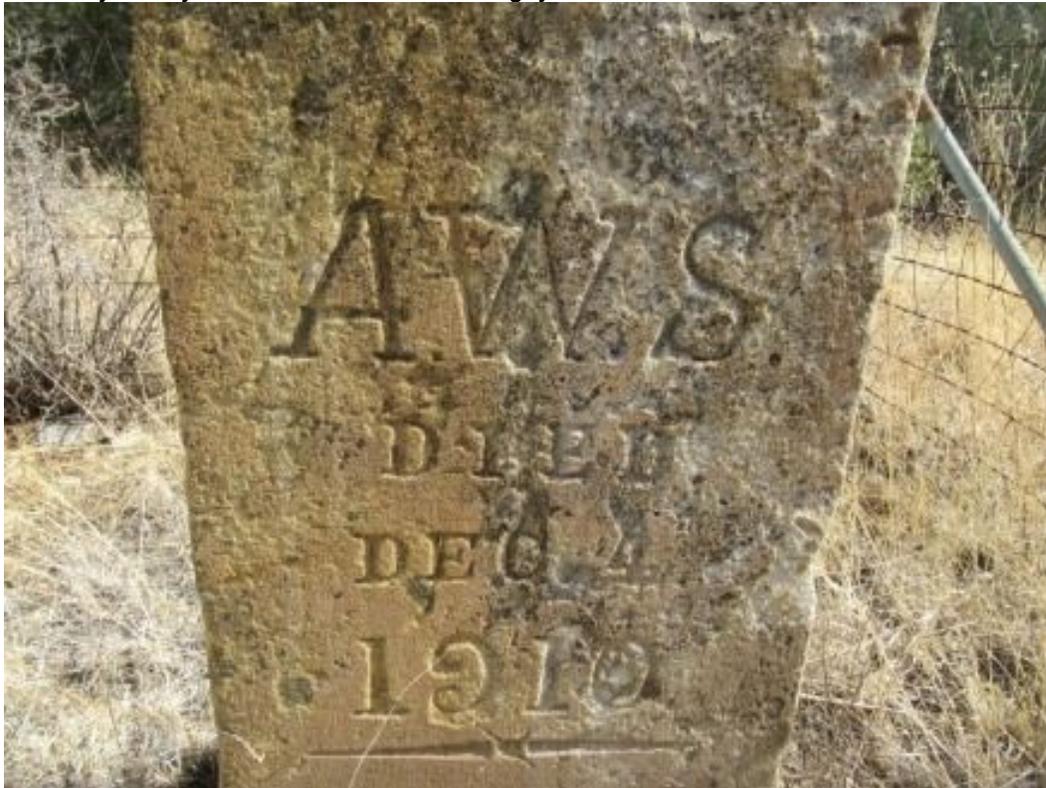
Paul Dowlin was a Civil War veteran who came to the Fort with Kit Carson in 1862. After mustering out of service in 1866, he received a land grant, built a sawmill (where Bill the Kid once hid out), and established a town called Dowlin's Mill about 20 miles south of the Fort - which eventually was re-named Ruidoso, for the 'noisy water' of the river which runs through it. Dowlin was murdered by a disgruntled employee on May 5, 1877. He was 48 y.o. Such is the history of the Wild West.



Belle didn't think this was very nice. "I'd like to pay my respects, too!"



Gee, initials only. Everyone must have known this guy.



An interesting sentiment - "Rest is thine, and sweet remembrance ours."



We move on to one of the Fort's surprises.



2022-06-16 - Gravestones and Yardage Markers

Page 6 of 10

Actually, golf had been an important part of the tuberculosis hospital since 1900. Beautifully crafted stone 'tee boxes' dot the landscape.



"It doesn't look like Pebble Beach", notes Thunder, rather cynically.



We spot other relics of the past. Look closely - though badly weathered, numbers were elegantly hand-carved into this post.



They are yardage markers, which once assisted golfers in determining which club to use . . .



2022-06-16 - Gravestones and Yardage Markers

. . . and here is a actual golfer on the course (sporting a bandage on his head from an automobile accident!) The year was 1945, and his name was Carl Ness, who managed the hospital's general store. Note how sparse the vegetation was back then. He is standing at one of the stone tee boxes, and you can spot the same white marble monument (the Dowlin grave marker) at the old cemetery in the far distance.

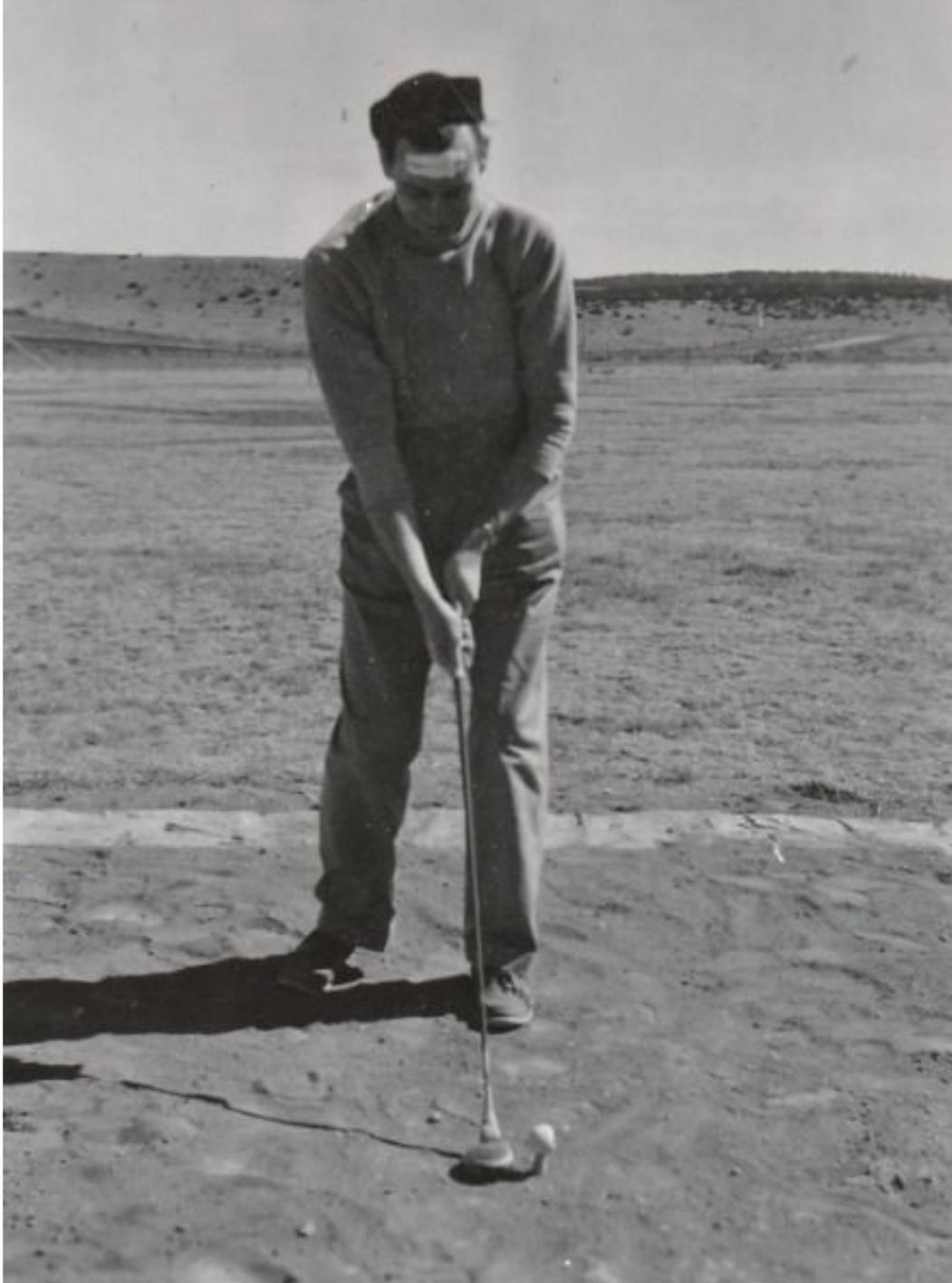


Photo courtesy Linda Ness/Ken Walter

2022-06-16 - Gravestones and Yardage Markers

Page 10 of 10

On the way home we watched this heavy cloud form over the mountain (you can just see some rain starting to come down). Fortunately, we even got a little shower at the ranch.



The history of so many lives is represented at the old Fort . . . and not forgotten.



MM

2022-06-18 - Blessings from Above

It's still a little early for the traditional start of our monsoon season, and so we're all especially grateful for any rain that comes our way now.

Monsoon-like clouds form in our blue skies . . . a good sign.



Then, 'boom', it began to rain. On the way back from town, I got the top up on the old Buick just in time.



"Uh . . . this wasn't in our plans for today . . ." The horses took shelter under a big juniper.



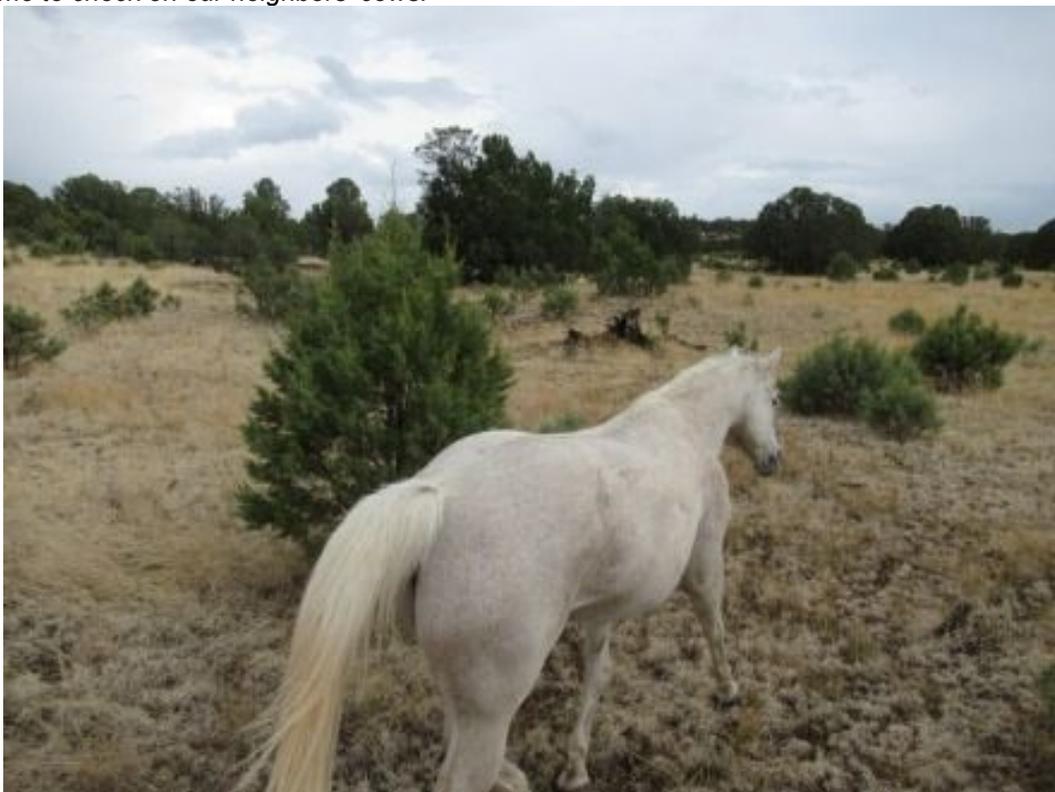
Little Gracie thought that was a good idea and scrambled for the apple tree. "Uh, wait a minute!"



"This thing leaks!" (Into the house she ran.)



The rain continued gently for a couple of hours - as the cats napped contentedly in the house, and the horses moved to the protection of their barn. Later, as things began to dry out, we thought it would be a good time to check on our neighbors' cows.



The fragrance of wet pinon trees filled the air. We stopped for a quick snack . . .



. . . and Thunder used his 'cow-dar' to locate the cattle. "They're over there . . .!"



Sure enough, they had sought shelter under some trees, too.



Now they were relaxing in the cool afternoon breeze.



The horses greeted them. "Hi!" "Hi!"



It was a very mellow gathering.



All was well.



We sure are grateful for the blessings from above.



That was yesterday. It was pretty clear this morning . . .



. . . but now (noon) it's looking like we may get some more. Yes, grateful.



MM

2022-06-20 - *Early Monsoon*

Our early monsoon is continuing, for which we are extremely grateful.

About mid-day the sky opened up and the horses ran for the barn.



It filled the tanks to overflowing.



After a couple of hours, things had dried up enough to venture out for a late ride behind the house.



Belle kept an eye on the clouds. "I don't trust 'em . . ."



They continued to hang around.



"I think we should head back now . . ."



Bet this cheery cactus flower was happy about the rain, too.



We barely made it back to the barn before . . .



Another shower blessed us, just before the sun went down.



MM

Following a prolonged dry spell, generous rain is a true blessing. The fragrance of wet woodlands is intoxicating. But anticipating the best time for a ride is tricky.

After some morning rain, it looked like there would be a break during mid-day. We took our chances. "Are you sure this is a good idea?", queried Spanky.



We kept our eyes on the sky . . . especially for signs of any approaching lightning.



We headed east, away from the darkest clouds.





Spanky made his angels, celebrating the sunlight. "Whee!"



Already, there are patches of green in the low spots.



'Snack and mosey'.



I hiked up a rocky ridge to take in the view, as they grazed far below.



Beautiful, dramatic clouds began to overtake us in earnest.



Thunder picked up the pace.



Then we spot an old friend - the 'shepherd' pronghorn who watches over our neighbor's cattle.



He saw us and came to say hello. But we didn't chat for long.



We skedaddled into the trailer and rolled home - arriving just as the rain began.



Good timing!



MM

2022-06-23 - *Gully washers, Rainbows and Friends*

Page 1 of 6

The annual New Mexican monsoon season may have begun in earnest. We're getting the characteristic pattern of nearly daily clear mornings, increasing clouds midday, and rain - sometimes heavy - in the afternoon and evening.

As clouds build, they make for dramatic skies.



2022-06-23 - Gully washers, Rainbows and Friends

Even in sunlight, the rain can come down in sheets -usually for a few minutes, and up to an hour. Temperatures are mild and cool.



The horses watch the storm through an open barn door - they're dry and comfortable as it pours outside.



This cloudburst forced Cherry Creek to overflow across our driveway.



The metal deer family seems to be admiring a distant rainbow.



2022-06-23 - Gully washers, Rainbows and Friends

Before long, the storm is over for the day.



Soon, the real deer arrive for their happy hour - and little Gracie is there to greet them.



They seem to have a special friendship.



She watches patiently, as they eat their treats.



"I still don't understand why they like apples!"



MM

2022-06-26 - Monsoon Methods

Monsoon weather requires some adjustments. The lawn gets mowed when it is dry enough - whether it really needs it or not (it usually does). Chores and riding times need to be flexible.

Skies like this say rain is likely . . .



. . . and this means 'any minute now' (it's raining just over the knoll).



So, as it pours down, we wait it out in the barn. There is no grumbling . . .



. . . and Chile snuggles in the hay. "Nap . . . time . . . yawn . . ."



*Then the sun comes out and we get on with our plans. "Isn't he supposed to be mowing the lawn?" . . .
"Shhhh! This is a better idea!"*



Heavy rain on the mountain above sends nutritious silt downstream.



The tradeoff for clear water, is fresh green grass.



The horses are okay with that. "We can drink at home!" (Actually, the water isn't all that muddy.)



"This water is kinda like Starbucks for horses!", rationalizes Belle. "Huh?", says Thunder. Spanky keeps eating.



Then he gives Belle an affectionate nudge. "Isn't this nice, honey?"



Of course, the grass 'over there' is always greener. "Oh, look! There's some REALLY green stuff here!", touts Belle. We all tag along.



Maybe she's right - she's sort of an equine culinary expert. "Yum!"



Spanky is the most particular, and searches for tender new blades.



Thunder is more of an 'aesthete' and appreciates a pretty setting. "Golly . . ."



We all do.



Glad we can share with you!

MM

End Journal Part 2 of 3

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