

BROWN CANYON

Brown Canyon is located in the Huachuca Mountains north of Ramsey Canyon and just south of Fort Huachuca. It is named for John Thomas Brown who first settled in the area around 1880. An 1880 edition of the Tombstone Epitaph referred to the first canyon north of Ramsey Canyon as Brown Canyon and the name stuck. Over the years, the canyon has been the site for both ranching and mining activities. The Brown Canyon Trail # 115, in addition to providing a pleasant hike up the canyon, provides ready access to the upper regions of the Huachuca Mountains.

BROWN CANYON RANCH: The Brown Canyon Ranch was also known as the Barchas Ranch because of the long period (1957 to 1998) that it was owned by the Barchas family. The land comprising the Brown Canyon Ranch was first occupied by John Brown. The Brown family was listed on the 1880 territorial census but not on the 1900 census indicating that they had moved out of the area. It went through several subsequent occupants before it was homesteaded by James Haverty. James was the elder son of Robert & Amanda Haverty who had moved to the eastern slope of the Huachuca Mountains in the early 1900s. James and his brother Tom built the three room adobe home at the mouth of Brown Canyon (currently referred to as the Brown Canyon Ranch House) during the 1905 to 1907 time frame. It was the first house in the area to have the modern facilities of running water, a kitchen sink, bathtub, wash basin and toilet. James submitted a homestead application in 1908 and received a patent for the homestead in 1912. The James Haverty family lived there until 1921 when a feud between James and his brother Dick resulted in tragedy. The two brothers argued over cattle ownership with the result that James killed Dick.



Figure 1. Brown Canyon Ranch House

When James went to prison, the ranch (including the livestock) was sold to William and Margaret Carmichael, major landowners in the area. The Carmichaels did not live on the Brown Canyon Ranch but instead used the ranch as an extension of their ranching activities. The Carmichaels took over Haverty's permit to graze cattle in the Coronado National Forest and also took over the water pipeline bringing water from the spring in upper Brown Canyon even though the water rights were owned by the Boquillas Land and Cattle Company (the Forest Service gave him permission to use the water). During the Carmichael years, a wide variety of people lived on the ranch. Pete Haverty (Jim's brother) and his family rented the ranch house for a few years in the early 1920s. A minor named Harvey James periodically rented the house and a Yaqui Indian named Chico Romeo lived there at one time. The names of other families that lived there

at one time or another included the Garcias, Lagunas and the Valenzuelas. Mary Molina operated a laundry out of the ranch house at one time.

In December 1946, the ranch was sold to Roy & Stella Rambo who also owned the OY Ranch (a large ranch west of the San Pedro River and south of Hereford). The Rambos also took over the grazing permits and in 1948 purchased the water rights and pipes from the Boquillas Land and Cattle Company. Like the Carmichaels, the Rambos did not live on the ranch. Roy Rambo initiated an extensive cattle crossbreeding operation at the ranch that resulted in several awards. He crossbred Hereford with Brahma and Brahma with Black Angus



Figure 2. Living Room (2016)

In 1957, the Rambos sold both the OV Ranch and the Brown Canyon Ranch to Samuel and Cecile Barchas. In 1961, Sam sold the OV Ranch but passed ownership of the 160 acre Brown Canyon Ranch to their daughter Sarah. Sarah continued to use the old ranch house as headquarters for the cattle operation until 1997. She always wanted to preserve the ranch so in 1988 she began consultations with the US Forest Service to achieve that goal. In 1998, the ranch was deeded to the Forest Service in a land exchange. The Friends of Brown Canyon Ranch assist the Forest Service in the preservation of the ranch. The property, including the ranch house, is currently (2019) open to the public. Photos of the property are depicted in Figures 1 through 6.



Figure 3. Dining Area (2016)



Figure 4. Kitchen Appliances (2016)



Figure 5. Early Washing Machine



Figure 6. Out Buildings & Corral (2014)

BROWN CANYON: There are several interesting sights to visit when hiking up the canyon to the west of the ranch house. The first is the gravesite of William Hines Frierson (Figure 7). The grave stone inscription only says W. H. Frierson 1855 to 1928. In 2016, a supplemental wood marker with additional information had been added to the gravesite. In addition to the wood marker, supplemental information that was found in a genealogy web site revealed the following: William Hines Frierson was born on 16 May 1854 in Pontotoc Mississippi to Boston Lee Frierson and Helen Louise Hines. He married India Ann Branson in either 1870 or 1880 depending on which source you believe. The 1880 date sounds more realistic since India would have been only 15 in 1870. They had two children, Julia Emily in 1881 and Etoile on 12 October 1885. India died in Texas in 1919 and William died in Arizona on either 27 June or 30 July 1928. We could find no information on whether his activities in Brown Canyon involved ranching or mining.



Figure 7. W. H. Frierson Gravesite

The second site is the remains of a cabin. All that remained in 2016 were portions of the foundation, some scrap wood and scrap metal. We could find no information as to who might have been the occupant of the cabin. Maybe we can speculate that it might have been Frierson. He was single



Figure 8. Remains of Cabin

during his stay in Brown Canyon, the cabin was relatively small and the gravesite was close to the cabin. Maybe a reader of this article will be able to provide some information pertaining to the cabin.

The third item of interest is an abandoned mine that is part of the Lucky Strike mine complex. The Lucky Strike comprised surface pit and tunnel operations and produced tungsten, lead, silver and gold. Mine operations over the years appear spotty. It is thought that some gold was produced in the early 1900s and considerable tungsten during World War I. The Gold, Silver & Tungsten Company owned and operated the mine from 1935 through 1938. The mine was in operation again from 1950 to 1955 primarily producing tungsten. In addition to the tailings, there are two interesting remnants of the operation that are readily accessible. The item of most interest is the remains of a six cylinder engine (Figure 9) that was used to power mining equipment. The other is what is left of the ventilation tower for the mine tunnel (Figure 10). Another mine in the Brown Canyon area is the Pomona Mine (also referred to as the James Mine). The Pomona Mine is located high on the canyon wall just below Scheelite Ridge and is accessed by the Pomona Mine Trail #116 that branches off of the Brown Canyon Trail near the stock tank in Brown Canyon. The primary mineral mined was Scheelite, a tungsten ore. The mine was particularly active during the two world wars and was last active in 1963.



Figure 9. Six Cylinder Engine



Figure 10. Ventilation Tower

Summarized by T. Johnson from placards posted in the ranch house, Wikipedia, various other web sites, the AZ Bureau of Mines Bulletin 148 on Tungsten Deposits and the Mindat web site.

All Photographs by T. Johnson/

Additional Material: GVHC Library File 31