



tourists who visited the area. In 1919, there were several stations along the Apache Trail. There was Government Well, Mormon Flat, Tortilla Flat, Fish Creek Lodge and Snell's Station between Mesa and Roosevelt Dam. The completion of the Phoenix-Globe Highway through Superior in May of 1922 completed the famous Circle Route that allowed drivers of automobiles to circumnavigate the entire Superstition Wilderness Area, an almost roadless region.

Lets take a trip over this famous route. Starting in Apache Junction, drive northeast along State Route 88 (Apache Trail) for about four miles and you will come to Mining Camp Road on your right. Drive one miles up this road and you will arrive at the Mining Camp Restaurant established in 1961. This popular restaurant has been a landmark for the past thirty-five years in the Apache Junction area. On the left-hand side of the "Trail" just beyond the Mining Camp Road turn-off you will find Goldfield Ghost Town Tours, Inc. This modern re-creation of Goldfield has a mine tour, train ride, a museum and many specialty shops. Here at Goldfield you will find Apache Trail Tours & Superstition Mountain Adventures. They offer spectacular Jeep, Hiking and Helicopter tours throughout the Apache Trail and Superstition Mountain area. As you continue up the Apache Trail you will see the Bluebird Mine Curio Shop on the right side of the roadway. This curio shop and pop stand has been operated continually since 1948, when "Red" Monigan first opened it. Both Goldfield and the Bluebird are located in the Superstition Mountain Mining District. A hundred years ago this was a booming gold mining town on the desert twenty-three miles east of Mesa. The Mammoth Mine produced about three million dollars in gold bullion over a four year period 1892-1896.

A short distance up the road on the right-hand side is located the entrance to Lost Dutchman State Park. This park was established in 1967 because of the popularity of Superstition Mountain. This giant monolith towers some three thousand feet with its cliffs and spires above the Lost Dutchman State Park. The state park provides fee camping and there are miles of beautiful hiking trails.

Immediately after leaving Lost Dutchman State Park you enter Tonto National Forest. You will notice the absence of billboard and advertising signs. No commercial signing is permitted along the historic and scenic Apache Trail for the next forty miles. The Apache Trail was designated Arizona's first historic and scenic highway in 1988.

About two and half miles down the road from Lost Dutchman State Park is located the site of Government Well. This site was an important stage stop in the early days (1903-1915) for teamsters and their teams when traveling the Mesa-Roosevelt Road (Apache Trail) during and immediately after the construction of Roosevelt Dam (1906-1911). The first automobile to travel the Apache Trail was on August 25, 1905. This car was a Knox Automobile built in Springfield, Mass. The car would carry seven passengers and it had a 20 horse power gasoline engine to power it.

The drive from Lost Dutchman State Park to Canyon Lake is eleven miles over good asphalt roads. The volcanic rock formations along the roadway are spectacular. Most of the rocks were formed during the Tertiary Period of geologic time about twenty-nine million years ago. This is the case for most rocks in the western portion of the Superstition Wilderness Area. Most of the rocks are composed of volcanic ash and basalt. From Apache Junction to Government Well, a

distance of seven miles, the most famous mountain in Arizona looms on the eastern horizon. Superstition Mountain rises approximately 3,000 feet above the desert floor. This mountain is the second only to the Grand Canyon as the most photographed landmark in Arizona.

Driving along the shores of Canyon Lake (formed in 1925, after the completion of Mormon Flat Dam) is a real contrast for the desert. The visitor seldom expects to see such a large body of water in the middle of the desert. At Canyon Lake you will find a restaurant, marina and the "Dolly". Enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner at this beautiful lake side restaurant or take a cruise on the "Dolly." Tourists have been visiting the beautiful waters of Canyon Lake since October of 1925: first on the S.S. Geronimo, today on the "Steamboat Dolly".

Our next stop, just two miles from Canyon Lake, is the famous stage stop of Tortilla Flat. This stage stop was constructed in 1904 as a staging area for the construction of the Mesa-Roosevelt Road from this point to the bottom of Fish Creek Hill. Here you can enjoy food, drinks or just do a little shopping.

There are several interesting points along the Apache Trail between Tortilla Flat and Apache Lake. As you leave Tortilla Flat you will cross Tortilla Creek. This creek drains a large portion of the Superstition Wilderness Area. It is in this region that the alleged Lost Dutchman Mine is supposed to be located. The next creek bed you cross is Mesquite Creek. The pavement ends about four and three tenths of a mile from Mesquite Creek. The Arizona Department of Transportation has been experimenting with some soil emulsions on portions of the road beyond this point. About seven miles from Tortilla Flat you will see a sign marked Fish Creek Hill. This is certainly one of the most famous hills to automotive testing in the Southwest. Since 1906 cars have been tested on Fish Creek Hill because of its steep grade. The roadway going down Fish Creek Hill has a ten percent grade. Today professional filmmakers and photographers still use Fish Creek Hill for their work.

After your descent of Fish Creek Hill, about eight tenths of a mile from the Fish Creek Bridge on the right side of the road is the sight of the old Fish Creek Lodge that burned down January 6, 1929. You will soon cross another bridge and then you will travel along the course of Lewis and Pranty Creek until you come to the Arizona State Highway Yard and the IV Ranch. At the top of the divide you will see a sign on the right side of the road directing you to the Reavis Ranch Trail Head. It was 1910 when a group of Mesa entrepreneurs thought they could promote the qualities of the Reavis Ranch valley. This group of men started selling lots in the upper end of the Reavis Valley and promised to build a road to the site some ten miles from the Apache Trail. They called their summer resort area Pineair. A road wasn't built to the Reavis Valley until 1946. This road was built to service a ranch and not a resort. This ranch service road was closed in 1967. The Reavis Valley's greatest claim to fame has to be the choosing of the site for the first Roosevelt Council Boy Scouts' Camp Geronimo in 1921. Arizona Governor Campbell also visited Camp Geronimo.

Your next view will be a short distance up the road. At this point you can see Apache Lake (formed by Horse Mesa Dam), Four Peaks and Goat Mountain. Goat Mountain is the bluff looking mountain on the north side of Apache Lake. Several years ago the Desert Bighorn Sheep were re-established on this mountain. If you look closely at the top of the ridges just below Four Peaks you can see Ponderosa pine trees. When Apache Lake was filled in 1927, it permanently

closed portions of the Apache Trail. The "Trail" was closed for six months until a new road could be constructed. A tug boat and barge were used temporarily to move traffic up and down Apache Lake. Take a few minutes and drive down to the Apache Lake Marina. You can rent boats and even take time for lunch or supper at the restaurant. Fishing is great in Apache Lake. The lake is known for its Small Mouth bass.

Some fourteen miles from Apache Lake turn-off you can view the spectacular Roosevelt Dam. At one time this was the largest masonry constructed dam in the world. Construction began on the dam September 6, 1906 and the dam was dedicated by President Theodore Roosevelt on March 10, 1911. The dam was refitted and reconstructed between 1993-1995. The old dam was raised seventy-seven feet. This new face-lift for Roosevelt Dam has completely changed its appearance. Today the dam looks like a modern structure, rather than the traditional masonry facade one could view as they entered Horseshoe Bend for the past eighty-three years.

Once you have arrived at the dam, you are looking at Roosevelt Lake. This body of water is the largest lake totally within the boundaries of Arizona. There is great Large Mouth bass fishing here. On April 8, 1927, one month before Charles Lindbergh flew the Atlantic Ocean, an Italian pilot and his crew landed on Roosevelt Lake in a seaplane named the Santa Maria. They had flown all the way from Italy across the Atlantic Ocean. Commander Francesco de Pinedo had planned to circumnavigate the globe in 1927, but tragedy struck at Roosevelt Lake. A carelessly tossed cigarette ignited gasoline which destroyed De Pinedo's aircraft at Hotel Point on Roosevelt Lake.

Just up the road a short distance is the turn-off to Tonto National Monument. This stop is well worth your time. The national monument has an excellent interpretive center on the ancient Salado Indians and their culture. Even if you do not wish to visit the ruins you should at least stop at the center.

It is about twenty-five miles from Tonto National Monument to U.S. Highway 60 junction between Globe and Miami. The scenery between Roosevelt Dam and Highway 60 is typical upper Sonoran Desert. As you drive along Pinal Creek you can witness a typical riparian setting which includes large Cottonwood trees, Sycamore trees and Arizona Willow trees. Among all this vegetation are various types of residences.

As you drive westward along U.S. Highway 60 toward Miami you will see a towering bank of tailings on your right side. These tailings are the results of milling thousands and thousands of tons of copper ore from copper mines in the area. Also you will notice a towering black bank that is solid. This is slag from the smelting process. This is the waste from processing copper ore for more than eighty years in the area. When the smelter was still operating it was quite a light show when they dumped slag off of the dump at night. You could see the light radiating from the molten slag as it flowed down the almost vertical walls of the dump.

Miami is an interesting old mining town. Many of the buildings date to about 1915. It is worth turning around and driving east toward Globe (about four miles) to visit the Clara Woody Museum (Gila County Museum) on the right side of the highway between Miami and Globe.

As you drive westward on U.S. Highway 60 copper mining is evident all along the route. The towering pine covered mountains on your left are the Pinal Mountains. The highest mountain is Signal Peak, 7,812 feet above sea level. This peak was used by the United States Army for a heliograph station during the Indian wars.

Shortly after you cross the Pinto Creek Bridge, on your left you can see the open pit work at the Pinto Valley Mines. Eight miles west of Miami you will arrive at a divide between Miami and Superior. This area is known as the Pinal Ranch or sometimes it is called the Top-of-the-World, which is actually incorrect. The Top-of-the-World was a dance hall started in the 1920's along the old highway east of the Pinal Ranch. This area was settled by Robert A. Irion in 1878. His step-son Dudley Craig continued the ranching tradition in the area after Irion's death.

Leaving the Pinal Ranch area on U.S. Highway 60 you soon descend into Devil's Canyon, a beautiful region filled with rock formations that would please anyone's imagination. As you emerge from Devil's Canyon you will find Oak Flat Campgrounds on your left. This road also leads to the Magma Nine Mine hoist. The shaft below the Magma Nine Mine hoist is 4,000 feet deep.

The descent from Oak Flats through Queen Creek Canyon is one of the most spectacular drives in Arizona. It was here in Queen Creek Canyon that the highway department had such a difficult time building a road. As you drive down through the canyon carefully look for portions of the old road.

Finally seven miles west of Pinal Ranch you arrive in another old Arizona mining town: Superior, Arizona. The mining history of the area dates back to 1875, when Aaron Mason discovered silver in the area. The prospect he located turned out to be the fabulously rich Silver King Mine, a mine that produced close to fifteen million dollars in silver. Pinal City served as the mill town for the Silver King Mine because it was located along Queen Creek, a permanent source of water. Today all that remains of Silver King and Pinal City are a few grave markers and the wagon ruts cut in stone by the ore wagons carrying silver ore to the mill. The marker for the wagon tracks can be found about one and a half miles west of Superior on the left side of the road.

Two miles west of Superior is the world famous Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum. This botanical garden exhibits arid land plants from all over the world. It is certainly a worthwhile visit on the Apache Trail Circle Route. The arboretum has one of the finest selections of Arizona books on sale and they also sell certain types of desert flora. From the arboretum along U.S. Highway 60 you are traveling through a typical Sonoran Desert environment. The plant indicators for the Sonoran Desert along this route are the Saguaro cactus, Teddy Bear cholla, creosote, etc.

At Gonzales Pass, about nine miles west of Superior, we will leave the Tonto National Forest. As we descend Gonzales Pass keep an eye to the north and you will see Weaver Needle in the distance. The needle was named after Pauline Weaver, a prospector, guide and mountain man. The landmark was named in 1853, because it was such an important landmark along the Gila Route.

Once you are down on the desert floor you will soon cross the tracks of the Arizona Magma Railroad. This railroad was first constructed as a narrow gauge railroad in 1915. This turned out not to be an efficient method of hauling mill concentrates so in 1921 a standard gauge railroad was constructed. The Arizona Magma Railroad was the last railroad in the United States to use steam engines on revenue runs. Arizona Magma ended all steam engine revenue runs in 1965 except for emergency runs. One of the Arizona Magma's old steam engines was used in a spectacular Hollywood motion picture titled "How The West Was Won."

At Florence Junction you might want to stop and look around. The small business there does sell soft drinks. J.W. Willoughby opened Florence Junction for business on June 15, 1923.

From Florence Junction to Apache Junction is sixteen miles. George C. Curtis opened Apache Junction for business on February 2, 1923. Now is the time to reminisce about your journey around the Apache Trail Circle Route. You have now joined thousands that have been making this trip since 1922. As you drive toward Apache Junction, once again Superstition Mountain dominates the eastern horizon and fills one's mind with tales of lost gold mines, Native American history, prospectors and cowboys.