

Road Trip for Book Sales—a Pilgrimage

Part Three By Doug Boren

About a month after *Beyond the Horizons* was released, I decided to make an extensive road trip to the locales where the story took place. I thought that my chances of getting it into some of the tourist shops and bookstores in the area were good because of the “local” significance. But more than that, it was a pilgrimage of sorts for me. I had lived in years past at or near many of the locations, and the story came to mean so much to me, that I felt I owed it to my characters to walk the same ground they had. To live vicariously a small part of their lives, even if for a short time.

Day One, continued

There are probably more different Indian Reservations around Albuquerque than anywhere else in the world. I counted over a dozen... Hopi, Zuni, Isleta, Navajo, Jicarrilla, and others. And they all touted with big neon signs their casinos.

I thought it was a shame I didn't have time to stop at the numerous bookstores in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, not to mention the other smaller towns. Surely some of them would take an interest in stocking my book with such local significance. But there just wasn't time. It would take *weeks* to do that. I'd have to try through correspondence for that.

When I reached Glorieta Pass, I'd left the desert behind for pine covered mountains. The interstate followed the old Santa Fe Trail exactly. Reaching the summit, I saw the historic marker sign that gave directions to my goal.

The first thing I saw was a wide spot in the road with a wooden sign that proclaimed “Apache Canyoncito”. Once again, my flesh chilled with goose bumps as I got out of the car. This is where Major Chivington had destroyed the Confederate supply train, wresting a Union defeat into a victory. This is where he had made his devilish charge through the gauntlet of withering musket and cannon fire.

As I took pictures of the pine covered slopes of the canyon, I could visualize Mace, Tom, George, and Louie up there, firing down on this spot. Looking around the canyon floor, I could see the old Texas veteran Walsh as he was captured by Chivington's men. I kept telling my self over and over again... this is where it *really* happened! I felt a certain satisfaction in knowing that my book's description fit exactly with the real environs of the countryside.

I drove a few miles on a secondary road until I reached the site of the Battle of Glorieta Pass. There was yet another historical marker along the side of the road explaining the significance of the spot, but it also said that the main battlefield area was some distance north of there, where “Pigeon's Ranch” was.

I knew that there was a ranger station nearby, and that was where I needed to go to try to sell my book. As I drove on, my heart nearly skipped a beat when I saw a small road sign that said, “Pigeon's Ranch Road”. *That* was where the main battle had taken place! I had to get up there!

But the road looked impassable. Strewn with boulders and ruts, I knew it would take a 4 wheel drive vehicle to get there. I also knew from my research, that ranger guided tours are given there, so I needed to get with them to get up that road.

I so desperately wanted to see the place where so many hundreds of Union and Rebel soldiers had fallen. I wanted to walk the hallowed grounds for myself. I wanted to see the place where Mace had nearly killed Captain Rawlings during the heat of battle.

But it was not to be. I found the ranger station all right, but had failed to take into account that it was Labor Day... a Federal Holiday. Surely, even so, a tourist oriented place like this would be open, holiday or not. Nope. The place was locked up and no one was around. The sign on the door said they would open at 10:00 the next morning.

I was crushed. Besides wanting to tour the battlefield, this was the most important tourist center to try to get my book stocked. The Battle of Glorieta Pass is integral to my book, and *needed* to be sold here. This was one of my main reasons for making the trip... to get my book stocked in this particular gift shop.

My trip was on a fairly tight schedule. I knew I had over a thousand miles to drive before it was over. Did I dare stay over to the next day? In a moment, I made my decision. God knows if I'll ever be here again. I have to stay and do what I can. Tomorrow, I reasoned, it will all turn out all right.

As I looked around at the pine covered slopes, and smelled the clean mountain air, the shadowy sounds of shouting men, screaming horses, and cannon fire echoed through my mind.

To be continued...

To learn more about *Beyond the Horizons*, go to: www.doughboren.homestead.com/Beyond.html