



# Catalina Highway Prison Camp at the Gordon Hirabayashi Recreation Area Tour

With Archaeologist  
Bill Gillespie

Saturday  
November 21, 2020  
9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Tour meets at Safeway store parking lot, 9125 E. Tanque Verde Rd. (at Catalina Highway intersection), Tucson



Example of prisoners' workmanship at a Catalina Highway drainage feature (Coronado National Forest photo)

A unique archaeological site in the Santa



Prisoners excavating a road cut through an outcrop near Soldier Canyon (Coronado National Forest photo)

Catalina Mountains is the location of a federal prison camp occupied in the mid-20th century. The facility was established for one specific purpose: to provide labor for construction of the Catalina or Hitchcock Highway connecting Tucson to Mount Lemmon. Although the project started in 1933, it wasn't until 1939, when road construction had reached the 7-mile mark, that prisoners were moved from their temporary camp at the base of the mountain to the permanent one at a relatively flat valley setting adjacent to Soldier Creek and the highway. (This appealing location was used by the Hohokam at a much earlier time, as marked by petroglyphs, grinding features, and artifacts.) From 1933 to 1951 some 8,000 prisoners worked on the highway project, often with more than 200 in the camp at any time.

Use of the detention facility ceased in the early 1970s, all of the barracks, offices, residences, and other buildings were razed, and the Coronado National Forest adapted the site to a campground/picnic area. In

1999, the Forest Service named the site the Gordon Hirabayashi Recreation Area in honor of the Japanese-American civil rights leader. Hirabayashi was imprisoned at the site for a short time during World War II after the Supreme Court ruled against him in his case challenging the constitutionality of the relocation order that directed West Coast Japanese-Americans to report to a series of internment camps. In the 1980s his case was reopened and his conviction voided, leading to President Reagan signing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 acknowledging the injustice of the internment program.

We'll tour around the different parts of the camp, finishing by lunchtime. Participants provide their own transportation, sack lunch, and water.



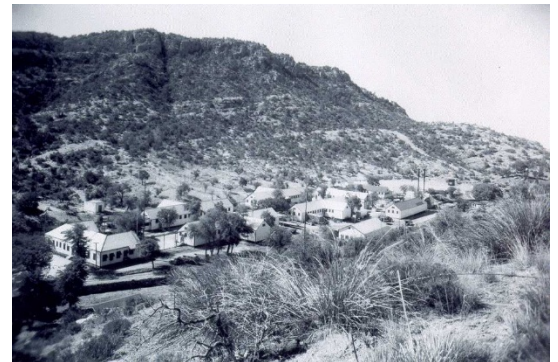
Archaeologist  
Bill Gillespie

**Tour Guide Bill Gillespie** did archaeological fieldwork at Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon, and in Jordan before moving to southern Arizona in the mid-1980s. He worked as an archaeologist for the Coronado National Forest for 25 years before recently retiring.

This is a fundraising tour – Each registrant is asked to make a donation to help cover Old Pueblo's tour expenses and support its archaeology and traditional cultures education programs.

Donations are due 10 days after reservation request or by 5 p.m. Wednesday November 18, whichever is earlier.

For details and reservations contact Old Pueblo Archaeology Center at 520-798-1201 or [info@oldpueblo.org](mailto:info@oldpueblo.org).



Overview of Federal Prison Camp No. 10 in 1945 (Coronado National Forest photo)

## IMPORTANT TOUR INFORMATION

**COST AND PAYMENT POLICY:** Reservations are accepted on a first-come basis. Full payment is due within 10 days of reservation request or by tour registration deadline, whichever is earlier. A portion of the tour fee will be a tax-deductible contribution to Old Pueblo Archaeology Center in an amount to be determined based on tour expenses compared to revenues after all expenses have been paid. Any entrance fee savings from passes, permits, memberships, etc., become part of the donation to Old Pueblo Archaeology Center. We welcome singles, couples, and groups.

**CANCELLATIONS** less than seven days prior to departure date are not refundable. Cancellation notice must be received in writing, or via email or fax, and will be effective as of the date received. Cancellations after final payment date/time will result in forfeiture of all money paid. No refund will be made for leaving a program in progress. Trip insurance is highly recommended. Old Pueblo reserves the right to cancel programs while in progress and to take action as needed on an individual or group basis, when in Old Pueblo's sole opinion the health, safety, or well-being of participants requires such action. The tour itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of Old Pueblo Archaeology Center, but participants will be notified of significant changes in advance if the change is under the control of Old Pueblo.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Registrants are responsible for their own transportation. People who wish to ride with other registrants may be able to join carpools at the meeting place. Vehicles not going on the entire trip may be parked at the meeting place at driver's own risk.

**ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS:** No lodging or meals are included in tour fee. Each participant needs to bring a lunch, at least one quart of water, and other beverages as desired. Snack foods are also recommended. Please do not bring alcoholic beverages.

**DEPARTURE:** We'll meet at 9 a.m. in the parking lot in front of the Safeway store at 9125 E. Tanque Verde Rd. (on the northeast corner of the Tanque Verde Road/Catalina Highway intersection), then drive 12 miles up the highway to the Gordon Hirabayashi Recreation Area. The end time is estimated to be around 1 p.m., after picnic lunch, but may be later considering how fast people walk and regroup at the various stops and the possibility that vehicle problems can occur.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** All driving for the tour is on paved roads. Tour leader will allow plenty of time for those who are able to visit the places to be shown on foot but who cannot walk quickly. If you have difficulty walking over uneven terrain you may only be able to view some of the historic features from a distance. Participants can walk/hike as much or as little as they wish.

**HEALTH ADVISORIES:** Bring and wear a hat that protects the back of your neck and your ears. Bring and wear sunscreen lotion. You must be in good physical and mental health to do this tour. We are concerned about your health and safety, and our tour leaders have had first-aid and CPR training, but medical services or facilities may not be readily available or accessible during all or part of the tour. You are responsible for selecting events appropriate to your abilities and limitations. If you have any doubts about your ability to participate, please contact us prior to registering. Any physical condition requiring special attention, diet, or treatment must be reported when the reservation is made, and a follow-up explanatory letter may be required.

**PARTICIPANTS MUST ABIDE** by all federal, state, and tribal regulations pertaining to visitation to historic sites, antiquities, and artifact sites. Collecting of archaeological artifacts is prohibited. Please see the State Historic Preservation Office's [azstateparks.com/archaeological-site-etiquette](http://azstateparks.com/archaeological-site-etiquette) and Old Pueblo's [www.oldpueblo.org/artifact-collecting/](http://www.oldpueblo.org/artifact-collecting/) websites regarding appropriate behavior when for visiting archaeological sites.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Becoming a member of Old Pueblo Archaeology Center opens a world of new discoveries. A \$25, 1-year "Friend" membership provides the *Old Pueblo Archaeology* bulletin and discounts on some of our tour and course fees, and publications. Higher levels of membership may provide member with opportunities to participate in archaeological excavation and other research projects if desired.

Check out this and other activities at Old Pueblo's web site: [www.oldpueblo.org](http://www.oldpueblo.org).  
For membership details visit the web site or contact Old Pueblo at 520-798-1201 or [info@oldpueblo.org](mailto:info@oldpueblo.org).